

From August 9-14, Kevin Magee joined several other divers in Michigan to dive some of the deeper wrecks of Lake Huron. The other divers, mostly from the Bay Area Divers (BAD), included Joyce Hayward, Gary Gentile, Suzanne Camden, Allen Jensen, and Dean Ziegler. Dean was accompanied by his wife Diane and sons Zack and Eric. Steve Lewis also joined the group during the weekend on August 11-12. The boat trips were made in Dean's boat "Ziggy II," which he trailered to Michigan, and Allen's boat "Viking," which he drove up to Lake Huron from Lake Erie. Dean removed his boat from the water every day, and Allen stayed on his boat at various marinas. The rest of the group camped together in various nearby campgrounds. The group had been diving for a week prior to Kevin's arrival, and many members stayed to dive for another week after he left. Bud and Barb Mohrman had also been with the group during the first week.

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The first day on Friday, August 10, was at Thunder Bay in Alpena, MI. An attempt was made to get out to the "Monrovia," an excellent wreck that the group had been diving earlier in the week. Unfortunately, the weather was too rough (4'-6' seas), so instead they headed to the "Grecian," which was inside the sheltered waters of Thunder Bay with only 2'-3' seas. The wreck is a steel steamer that sank in 1906 in 100' of water while under tow for repairs after a collision. A strong south current was immediately evident when the first diver hit the water, and the mooring line could only be reached by the use of granny lines running along the boats' lengths. Even then, the divers were exhausted and had to rest once the mooring line was reached. Upon descending, the line was found to be attached to some machinery on the stern's deck at 70'. Immediately forward of this the deck slopes down into the massive engine room, which can be entered through a stairwell at the bottom of the collapsed roof. Once inside the engine room, a maze of pipes, catwalks, the engine, and machinery spaces is evident. If you've ever dreamed of diving in the "William G. Mather" engine room in Cleveland, then this wreck is for you. Careful navigation through this overhead environment revealed such items as a bathtub, sinks, toilet, fuse panel, bench with a vice, tools hanging on the wall, and the normal valves and piping associated with an engine room. There are three levels that are possible to explore. The superstructure on the main deck is missing, but the ship's propeller can be examined at the extreme stern.

Heading towards the bow, which lies southwest, revealed that amidships the wreck is collapsed. The former deck with its many cargo hatches is now on the bottom. Some walleye or salmon were sighted during this swim, and a wheelbarrow was found among the debris close to the stern. Upon reaching the bow, it was found to be intact but pointed upwards with a single divot or pole coming out of the extreme bow and a windlass on its deck. The entire layout of the wreck (intact stern, collapsed middle, and upward pointing bow) is very reminiscent of the "Clarion" in Lake Erie. Good 30'-40' visibility was obtained,

bottom temperature was a warm 50 deg F, and the surface temperature was 60 deg F with no thermocline being evident. Maximum depth was 95', bottom time was 40 minutes, and total run time was 58 minutes.

Afterwards the group relocated 2 hours south to Port Austin, which is at the tip of the "thumb" of Michigan. Steve Lewis also joined the group at this time.

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On Saturday, August 11, the "Sidewheeler Detroit" was dove. This wreck lies in 200' of water and sank in 1854 after colliding with a bark. The mooring line is attached to the top of the walking beam engine at about 160'. Descending down the trussing at the center of the walking beam, one is immediately surprised to find the ship's bell nestled in the top trussing. The ship's name is not on the bell, but the name of the machine works, "New York," and "1844" are inscribed on the bell. Descending further to the main deck at 180', the entire engine can be examined and is in excellent condition. Both paddlewheels are completely intact and pass through slots in the main deck, which forms a protective surface around the wheels. Heading towards the bow, which lies to the south, one can look down into several cargo hatches to see small logs, stone blocks, crates, and other cargo items below decks. Traces of white and green paint can still be seen on some of the structure. The bow has both anchors hanging by one fluke on each side, a windlass, and a very long, thin bowsprit. At the stern the main deck is beginning to collapse in the middle and is bowing inwards, but the edges are still standing, and more spaces below deck are visible. No cabins or structures above the top deck were evident, and no attempt was made to enter the ship. A white ceramic pitcher was found placed on top of the engine, and an oiling dish resembling a goblet was seen lying near it.

This wreck is what the paddlewheeler "Atlantic" in Lake Erie should be. It is unsilted, undamaged, and contains a wealth of objects to explore and examine in detail. Unfortunately, lighting conditions were pitch black, requiring the use of strong canister lights to see, and visibility was only about 15'-20'. Furthermore, the bottom temperature was a very cold 36 deg F, limiting the bottom time that could be endured. Two thermoclines, one at 60' and one at 30', eventually warmed up to a surface temperature of 60 deg F. Maximum depth was 185', bottom time was a numbing 20 minutes, and total run time was 1 hour.

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On Sunday, August 12, the "City of Detroit" was dove to complete a "Detroit" weekend. This wreck is a wooden arched steamer that sank in 170' of water sometime in the late-1800's. The mooring line is attached to the top of the massive hogging arch on the starboard side amidships. This can be reached at 140', and it is mirrored on the port side by another large hogging arch. Both arches appeared to be intact and standing along their entire lengths.

Descending down the arch, it was discovered that most of the upper decking is gone, leaving only a bottom, main deck intact at about 160'. Much of the upper decking was contained within the arches, as evident from the knees still attached to the arches. Swimming towards the bow, which lies northeast, cargo hatches were found along with lots of ceramic dishware all over the deck. Nothing could be seen inside the hatches, and no attempt was made to enter the wreck. The white ceramic pieces include platters, dishes, pitchers, and several strange little rectangular pieces that looked like soap dishes. The bow is intact and rises up to its full original height. On the bow's deck is a large square wooden tow bit, complete with a metal cap with small rivets holding the cap to the bit. A unique swept back, ornate metal divot with a decorative grill pattern was at the extreme bow. Swimming aft, the engine was found nears the stern complete with piping, metal shafting, and gearing running to other parts of the ship. The engine was very intact and included a handled lever, valve knobs, and various mechanisms. It continued below deck, but this part could not be examined without entering the ship. The stern was partly intact with wooden ribs and framing rising up to a now gone upper decking.

Unfortunately, conditions were very dark on the wreck, requiring the use of canister lights, and visibility was poor at 5'-10', requiring careful navigation around the wreck and limiting the overall picture of the wreck's size and layout. The bottom temperature was warmer, however, at 45 deg F with a thermocline at 55' and a surface temperature of 73 deg F, an almost unheard of high temperature for Lake Huron. Maximum depth was 160', bottom time was 20 minutes, and total run time was 55 minutes.

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After Sunday's dive, Steve Lewis and Suzanne Camden left the group. Unfortunately, Monday, August 13, was a blow day with strong winds causing the lake to become rough and choppy. Instead of diving, everyone lounged about the campground or marina, got air fills in Port Sanilac, fixed dive gear, dried clothing, and caught up on their reading and sleeping. It was a relaxing way to spend the day. This ended Kevin's diving, too, so he drove back to Cleveland the next day. Overall, a great time was had, and the trip will hopefully be repeated again next year. This will allow us to get on even more great wrecks and get to such missed wrecks as the famous "Morrell" and beautiful "Dunderburg."