

On Wednesday evening, August 1, 2007, after work at 6:00 p.m., 12 people, including Cindy LaRosa and Kevin Magee, gathered in Cleveland's Flats on the Cuyahoga River at Scranton Road next to the fireboat station. They were there as part of Aqua Specialists' one-tank evening dive trip aboard Captain Wayne Bratton's 60'-boat "Holiday." The summer evening was warm and pleasant with clear skies, calm conditions, and a 75 deg F air temperature. After the boat left the dock, everyone enjoyed the scenery during the trip down the river while munching on the sub sandwiches provided as part of the trip. After entering the lake, it was a quick trip to the dive site, the "Algeria," which sank about a mile off the Browns Stadium in 35' of water. The 3-masted schooner-barge was at anchor in May, 1906, due to a longshoremen's strike ashore. All of the crew except three people had gone ashore in the sole yawl boat when a spring storm arrived. The ship sprung a leak and began to founder in the storm. The "Algeria" signaled distress, and a nearby steamer managed to save the cook, but the captain and engineer lost their lives when the ship sank. Ironically, this was the same captain who had lost the "Dundee", another schooner that sank off Cleveland, six years earlier.

The "Algeria" was a very large ship at 289' long and 45' beam. The remains were flattened to clear it from being a hazard to navigation, resulting in a site that sprawls over an enormous area with parts as high as 5' off the bottom. It lies east-west with the bow pointing east. The "Holiday" anchored 50'-75' off the wreck on the north side amidships, and divers descended to find good 5'-10' visibility and enough ambient light in the fading sun that lights weren't needed until the end of the dive. A reel was used to navigate to the wreck from the "Holiday's" anchor cable. The wreck sits on a hard sandy bottom rather than silt, helping the visibility and allowing much of the wreck to sit exposed rather than buried. The sides of the wreck are splayed outwards with many pieces separated from the main wreck by 10'-20', requiring many dives to fully understand the layout of the wreck. The sides of the ship contain the frames, planks, and knees. From the standing knees, it can be seen that the ship had two decks. The timbers are massive. The bow is identifiable by the anchors' hawse pipes found among the debris. Along the starboard (south) side about amidships, a stockless Navy-style anchor can be found with one fluke buried in the bottom and the shank broken. The anchor most likely came from a modern freighter, although a photograph of the ship does show it had this style of anchor, which is unusual for a schooner.

The cargo of the ship was iron ore, and it is still aboard as gray gravel filling the middle of the wreck. Centerposts stick up from this cargo along the middle of the wreck with the ore appearing to be featureless bottom at a depth of 30'. Along the port (north) side at the stern, the sides still stand enough to create a 5'-high drop off with the wooden sides holding the cargo back from spilling onto the bottom. At the stern the large fallen rudder can be seen lying on its side. A metal pulley wheel found by a diver is placed on top of it, and nearby can be

seen a 1'-diameter pipe sticking out of the debris at an angle and filled with silt. The function of this pipe is unknown. Most divers surfaced after a 30-60 minute dive with the sun just setting. A maximum depth of 37' was obtained with a water temperature of 68-70 deg F, requiring only a 3-mm (1/8") wetsuit. Afterwards, a lazy trip back to shore was done with everyone discussing the dive and the wonderful conditions. The trip was a resounding success, and another evening trip is planned for Wednesday, August 22. If anyone is interested, please contact John Norris at Aqua Specialists for details.