

The Wreck of the Bark *Indiana*; September 25, 1870

The Pennsylvania Archaeology Shipwreck and Survey Team

Regional Science Consortium, Diver's World, SONS of Lake Erie, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Mercyhurst University, Flagship Niagara League, PA DCNR, PA DEP – Coastal Zone Management Program, Presque Isle Light Station, and Lake Erie Adventure Charters.

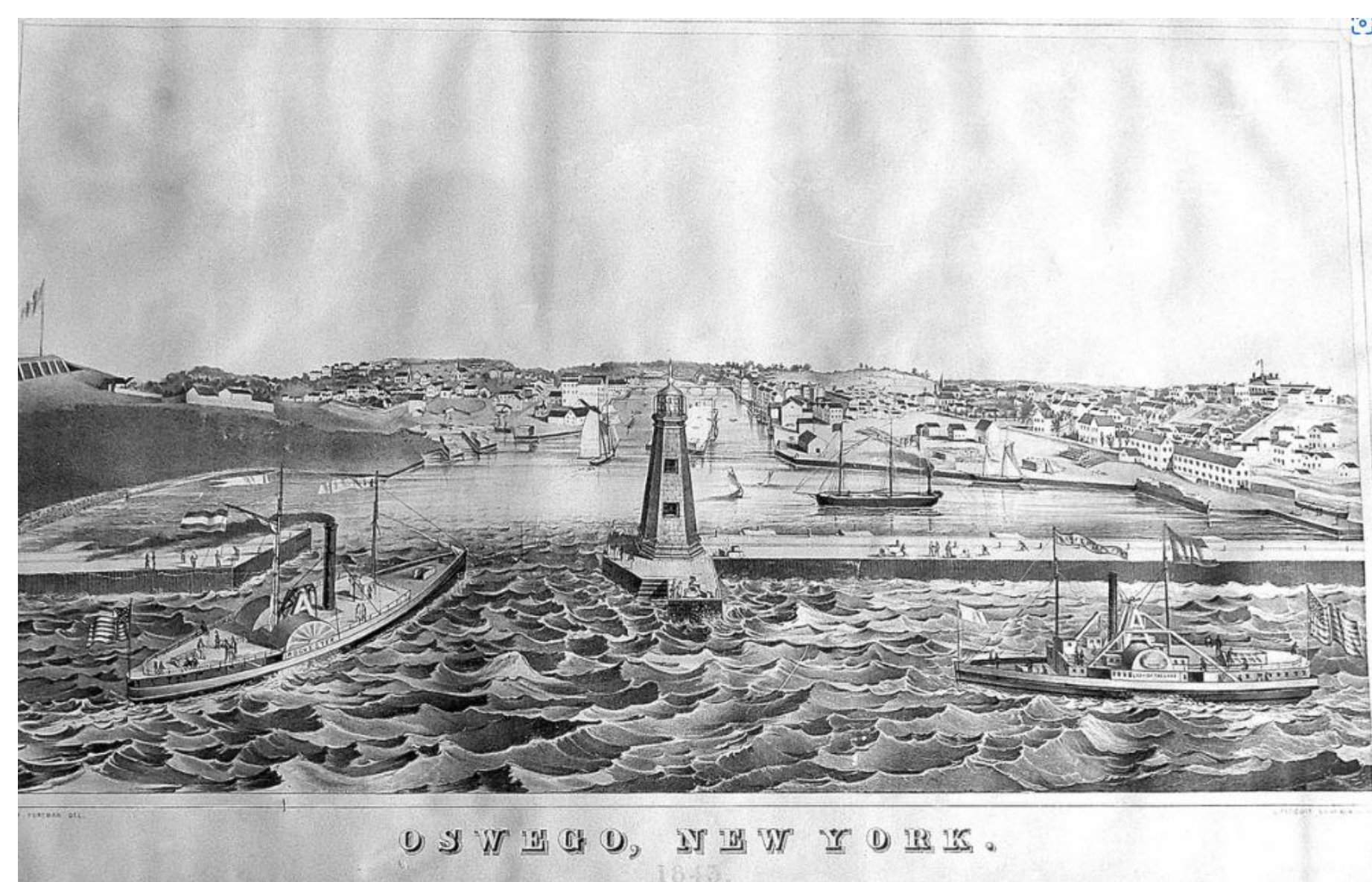


Construction

The bark *Indiana* was built in 45 days and launched on October 18, 1852 in Oswego, NY by one of Oswego's master shipbuilders – G. S. Weeks (*Oswego Daily Journal*, October 23, 1852).

At the time of the *Indiana*'s launch, it was the largest sailing vessel ever built in Oswego and cost about \$14,000. A local newspaper asserted that "she slipped her cable and glided into her natural element as supple as a duck." (*Oswego Daily Journal*, October 18, 1852).

The lithograph below shows Oswego in 1843. George S. Weeks' shipyard is to the far right in the harbor.



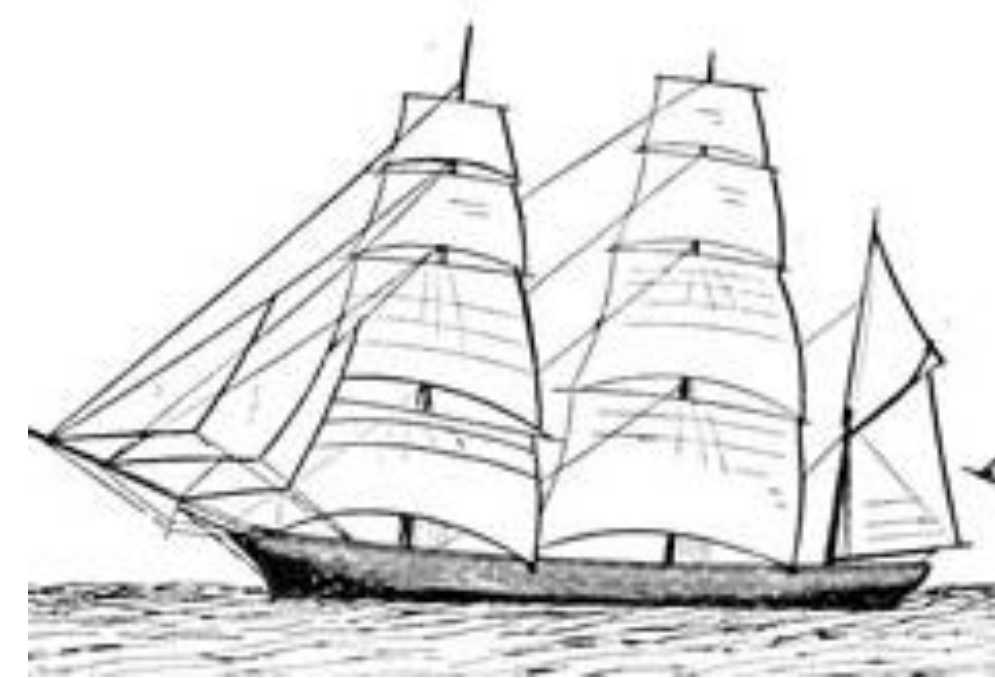
Oswego, NY 1843

George Endicott Lithograph at H. Lee White Museum (Oswego, NY)

Indiana Characteristics

The *Indiana* was a bark. It measured 141 feet 6 inches on deck, had a 25 feet beam, and a 10 foot hold. The *Indiana* would generally be manned by a crew of eight (*Oswego Daily Journal*, October 18, 1852).

A bark is distinguished by three masts, of which the fore and mainmast are square rigged; the mizzenmast is rigged fore-and-aft.



Typical Three Masted Bark

Source: *Text-Book of Seamanship: The Equipping and Handling of Vessels Under Sail or Steam*, For the Use of the United States Naval Academy, 1891

Owners

The *Indiana* over her 18-year career on the Great Lakes was owned by business interests in Oswego, NY; Milwaukee, WI; and finally, Cleveland, OH.

The first owner was H.W. Ames of Oswego (*Oswego Daily Journal*, October 18, 1852). It is hard to track individual owners as the information in local newspapers is fragmentary. In addition, there were multiple owners of the *Indiana* at any given point in time. For example, in 1866 R. K. Winslow of Cleveland purchased the *Indiana* from undisclosed Milwaukee parties (*Detroit Free Press*, August 10, 1866). But, by the time of the *Indiana*'s sinking in September 1870, it appears that Palmer & Pennington of Cleveland were primary owners (*Detroit Free Press*, May 25, 1867); ¼ of the *Indiana* was owned by the *Indiana*'s captain, Captain McAdams. He bought his share in 1868 from R. K. Winslow for \$4,500 (*Detroit Free Press*, December 19, 1868).

The *Indiana*'s Last Two Sailing Seasons (1869-1870)

In 1869, the *Indiana* was entering its 17th season as a Great Lakes bark. The primary owners were Palmer & Pennington of Cleveland. In general, the *Indiana* spent the majority of its last two years on Lake Erie going back and forth between Cleveland and Buffalo. In 1869, the *Indiana* traveled three times from Cleveland to Buffalo, primarily with oil and naphtha. The *Indiana* made four trips to Cleveland with light cargos. In 1869, the *Indiana* also briefly sailed in Lake Superior and Lake Huron. In 1870, the *Indiana* traveled exclusively between Cleveland and Buffalo. However, the cargos were different in 1870. The cargo from Cleveland to Buffalo was coal, and the cargo from Buffalo to Cleveland was paving and curb stone. Below are detailed descriptions of these voyages of 1869 and 1870.

1869: In early June, the *Indiana* was observed in Lake Superior (*Detroit Free Press*, June 7, 1869). On July 9th, the *Indiana* passed Detroit heading south back into Lake Erie (*The Buffalo Commercial*, July 9, 1869); On July 16, the bark was seen passing through the Sault Canal (*Detroit Free Press*, July 19, 1869). The *Indiana* was cleared to leave Buffalo on August 4 and it had no cargo; it likely went to Cleveland (*Buffalo Courier*, August 5, 1869). On August 10, the *Indiana* returned to Buffalo from Cleveland with 1659 barrels of oil and 589 barrels of naphtha (*Buffalo Morning Express*, August 11, 1869). A week later, the *Indiana* left Buffalo to return to Cleveland (*Buffalo Morning Express*, August 17, 1869). On August 24, the *Indiana* returned to Buffalo from Cleveland with 1786 barrels of oil and 503 barrels of naphtha (*The Buffalo Commercial*, August 25, 1869). The next day, the *Indiana* cleared Buffalo to return to Cleveland with a light undisclosed cargo (*Buffalo Courier*, August 26, 1869). As twice before, the *Indiana* on September returned from Cleveland to Buffalo with a cargo of oil: 2312 barrels (*Buffalo Courier*, September 6, 1869). On October 8, the *Indiana* arrived at Buffalo with 475 tons of coal from an unreported location (*Buffalo Morning Express*, October 9, 1869). On October 12, the *Indiana* was cleared with a light cargo to Cleveland (*Buffalo Morning Express*, October 13, 1869). On November 23, the *Indiana* was observed passing east through the Welland Canal traveling from Saginaw to Ogdensburg, NY on the St. Lawrence River (*The Buffalo Commercial*, November 23, 1869). While nearing Ogdensburg, the *Indiana* ran up on the rocks of the St. Lawrence River and sunk. It was raised and had to go into dry dock in Ogdensburg (*The Buffalo Commercial*, December 6, 1869).

1870: In June the *Indiana* made two trips from Cleveland to Buffalo to deliver coal: 475 tons were delivered on June 6 and 477 tons on June 27 (*The Buffalo Commercial*, June 6, 1870; *The Buffalo Commercial*, June 28, 1870). The *Indiana* cleared Buffalo on July 2 to return to Cleveland (*Buffalo Morning Express*, July 4, 1870). On August 16, the *Indiana* entered Buffalo with 475 tons of coal – probably from Cleveland (*The Buffalo Commercial*, August 17, 1870). On September 6, the *Indiana* was cleared from Buffalo to Cleveland with 61 cords of paving stones and 20 tons of curb stone (*The Buffalo Commercial*, September 8, 1870); it returned to Buffalo on September 19 from Cleveland with 456 tons of coal (*Buffalo Morning Express*, September 20, 1870).

Known Ports Visited By the *Indiana*: 1869-1870



The Wreck: September 25, 1870

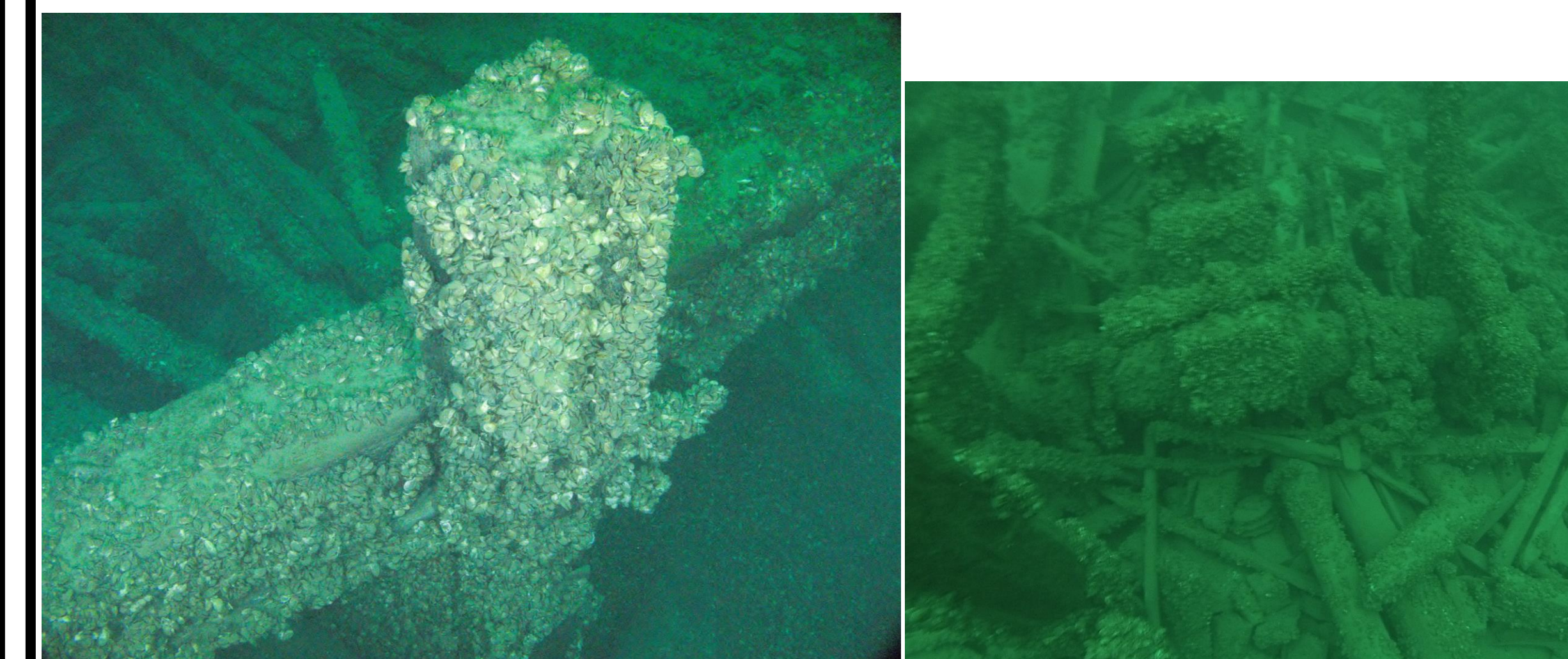
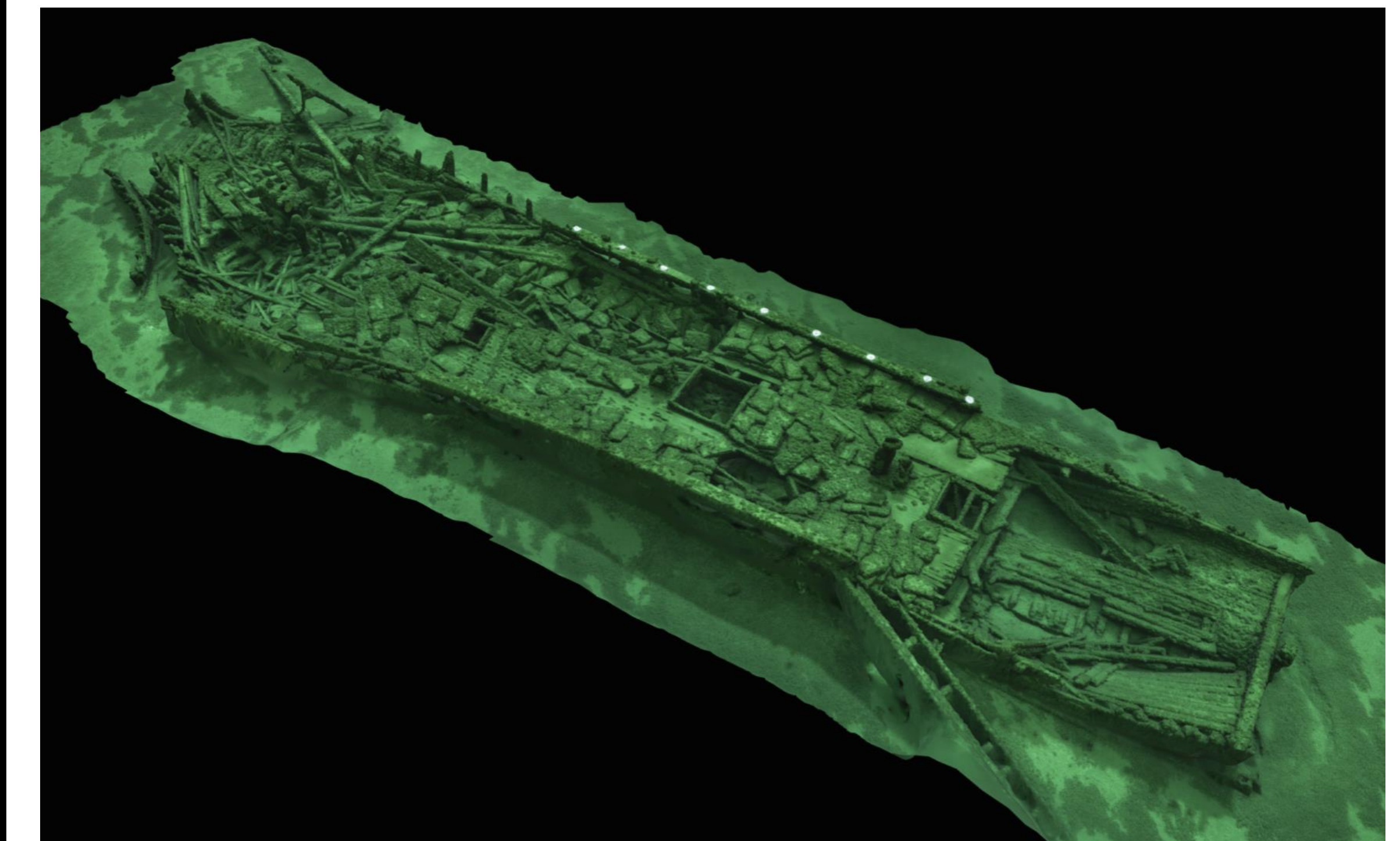
There are not many primary sources describing the sinking of the *Indiana*. An often cited account comes from the September 28, 1870 *Buffalo Commercial*. According to this account, the *Indiana* left Buffalo on September 24 with a cargo of 65 cords of paving stone and 50 tons of flagging. Then, the next morning on September 25, a dark turn occurred. According to the captain of the *Indiana*, Captain McAdams:

On Sunday, at about 10 A.M., when off Grand River and about the centre of the lake, she [the *Indiana*] was struck by a heavy squall from the northward, and it was noticed soon afterward that she was leaking. An attempt was made to run for Gravelly Bay, but this was impracticable, and the boat was headed down the Lake, the men working at the pumps until 10 o'clock on Sunday night, when they abandoned her, about 15 miles from Erie, the eight comprising her crew coming ashore in the yawl. She sank within sight of the Erie light at midnight on Sunday.

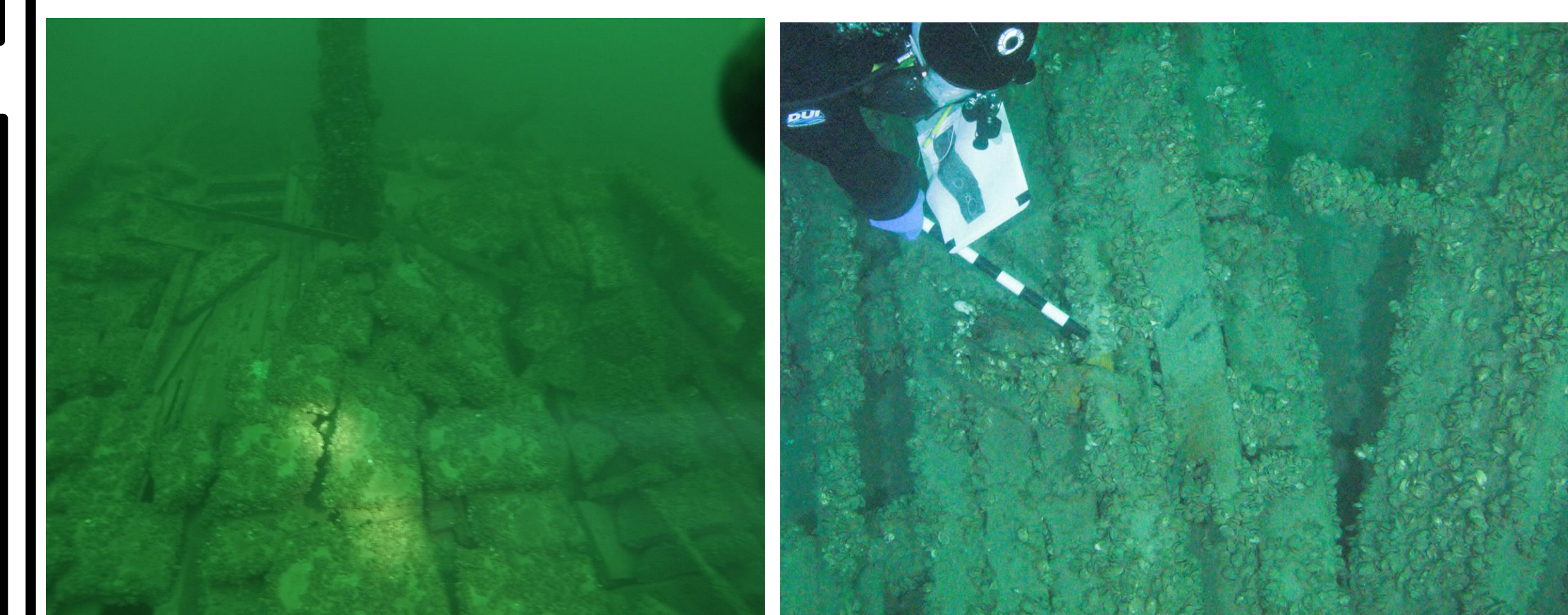
Wreck of Bark *Indiana*: September 25, 1870



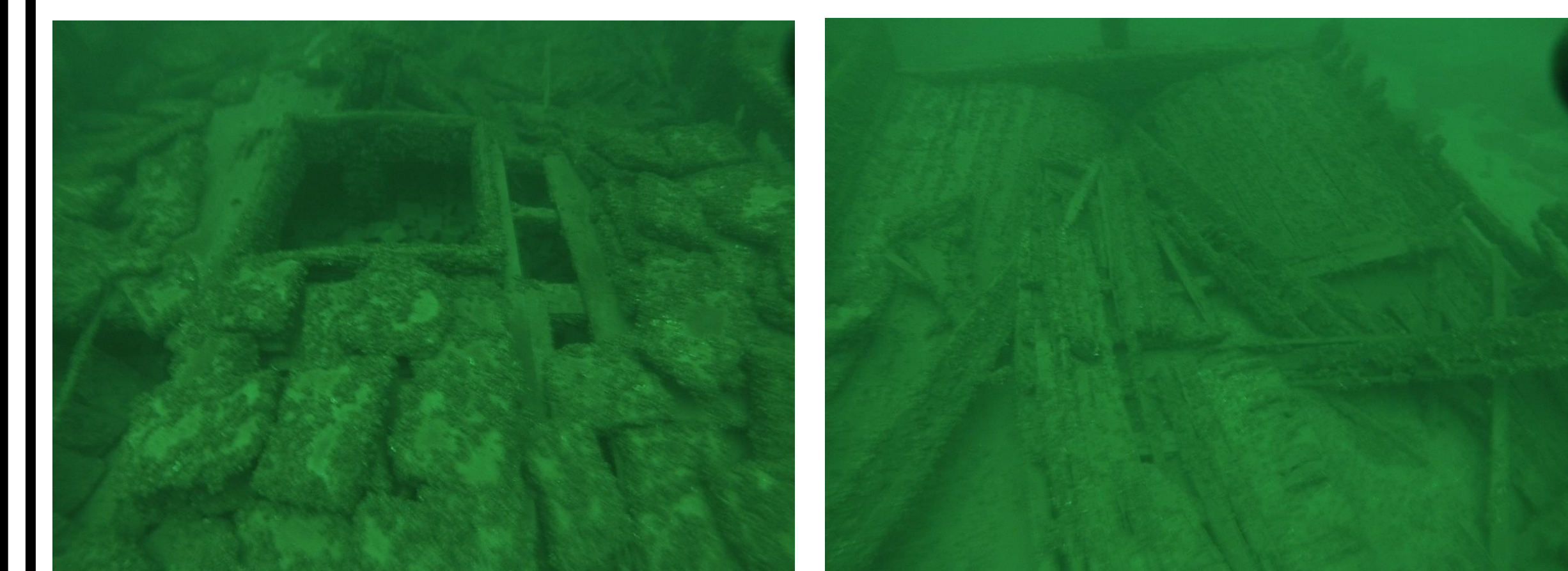
Survey of the Wreck



Point of Interest Photos: Sternpost (L) & Windlass (R)



Point of Interest Photos: Stanchion (L) & Block (R)



Point of Interest Photos: Mid-Deck Hatch (L) & Stern (R)