

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
GEORGE M. COX (U.S. Registry #150898)

AND/OR COMMON

Previously named: PURITAN (U.S. Registry #150898)

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

[REDACTED]

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE
Michigan

CODE
26

COUNTY
Keweenaw

CODE
083

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED
- N/A

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER Sport SCUBA

Unit in
Thematic Group

diving by park
visitors

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (if applicable)
NPS Midwest Regional Office

STREET & NUMBER
1709 Jackson Street

CITY, TOWN
Omaha

VICINITY OF

STATE
Nebraska 68102

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Office of the Collector of Customs

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Chicago

STATE
Illinois

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
None (see note)

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

NOTE: The shipwreck location is known as a result of informal searches by private individuals and/or by common knowledge of Isle Royale park staff and inhabitants. No systematic surveys have been conducted.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Original Description

George M. Cox was built in 1901 in Toledo, Ohio, at the Craig Shipbuilding Company. Hull number 82 was originally consigned to the Holland and Chicago Steamship Company, however, the vessel was purchased by Graham and Morton Transportation Company, named Puritan and given U.S. registry number 150898. Based out of Chicago and used primarily in the excursion trade on Lake Michigan, the vessel was 233-feet long, 40-feet wide, and 21.9-feet deep with a gross tonnage of 1,547.

From keel to rail she was constructed of steel. The main and promenade decks were also of steel, the only wooden construction on the ship was her cabins. Side loading hatches facilitated loading of passenger luggage and miscellaneous package freight. The horseshoe shaped pilothouse sat well forward on the Texas deck, with some crew and officers quarters immediately aft. Her single smoke stack sat amidships with ten life boats ringing the aft deck. Puritan was powered by a triple expansion steam engine (21", 34", 58" diameter cylinders x 40" stroke) capable of 1,700 hp. Four scotch boilers 10-feet 8-inches long and 10-feet in diameter completed her power plant. The Chicago Shipbuilding Company of Toledo built both the engine and boilers for Puritan. Although she was equipped with two masts, one fore and one mizzen, which were used to rig running lights.

As Puritan, the vessel was painted black with white cabins. In 1908 she was lengthened by 36-feet bringing her overall length to 269-feet and her gross tonnage up to 1762. She continued expanded passenger service until April, 1918, when the vessel was transferred from Graham and Morton to the U.S. Navy for use as a troop transport and training vessel and as a minelayer in the North Sea. Just over a year later, in September, 1919, she was sold to the Chicago, Racine and Milwaukee Line, a subsidiary of the Wisconsin Transportation Company. For the next several years the vessel remained in the same hands eventually being sold again to the Northern Michigan Transportation Company, which became the Michigan Transit Company as a result of a name change.

In late 1932, she was purchased by the Duke Transportation Company of New Orleans, a holding company, which retained ownership until formation of the Isle Royale Transit Company in May, 1933.

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Boiler room plating, breeching, funnel plating and saddles are present. A 150-foot intact section of the stern from the fantail to just forward of the aft cargo gangway is resting behind the boilers on the same slope with its starboard side up. The section is split open exposing a 50-foot portion of the propeller shaft to the screw, [REDACTED]. Cox's engine lies in place under this major piece of wreckage. Large portions of the starboard hull are intact up to the level of the main deck. The vessel's mast, articulated with its mast step, the rudder, wooden cabin structure, from the cabin deck staterooms, ventilators, stack, coal grates still in place, luggage carts and numerous other pieces of wreckage are lying adjacent to the stern hull and boilers. The stern wreckage field [REDACTED]

Post-depositional Impacts: At the time of her loss a large hole was punched in the hull, causing the stern to settle quickly in deep water. Much of the miscellaneous light cargo and personal belongings of the crew and passengers were retrieved shortly following the stranding. Abandoned to underwriters and salvagers, Cox was visited in July, 1933, by the salvage tug Strathmore and barge Strathbuoy which removed all retrievable machinery, equipment, furnishings and fixtures from the vessel. It was reported that the vessel became a source of scrap metal for nearly a year for Isle Royale and Northshore fishermen who removed nearly all of the remaining ships fittings. Storms eventually broke the ship into two sections, the bow on one side of the reef and the stern, from just forward of the boilers, on the other side.

The site has been regularly visited by sport divers and it is reasonable to assume that numerous smaller items have been removed or moved from their original locations. George M. Cox is the second (of ten) most visited site at Isle Royale National Park (Stinson 1980:15). The site was visited briefly for evaluative purposes by Submerged Cultural Resources Unit personnel in 1980

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and again in 1982. In June, 1983, Unit personnel spent 10 days gathering information for a comprehensive planimetric site map and to photograph major wreck features.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1901-May 27, 1933

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Craig Ship Building Company,
Toledo, Ohio

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Significance Summary

George M. Cox (1901-1933) was a steel screw passenger vessel used in the excursion run between Chicago and the upper lakes. The vessel is significant because: 1) it was used in an economic and trade activity which flourished for a limited time on the Great Lakes and of which Cox is a representative example of the later class of steel passenger vessels; 2) it is part of the continuum of passenger vessel design and construction represented within both the Isle Royale assemblage and the total shipwreck population in Lake Superior; 3) it is the only known remaining example of a steel passenger vessel of her size and class available for study in Lake Superior; and 4) due to the events surrounding her loss and the largest mass rescue ever recorded in Lake Superior history.

Supporting Data

George M. Cox is significant because it was used in an economic and trade activity which flourished for a limited time on the Great Lakes and of which she was a representative example of the later class of steel passenger vessels. Beginning with westward expansion into the lower lakes in the 1830s and eventual opening of connecting canals to Lake Superior after 1855, passenger service began to grow. Passenger service flourished between 1885 and 1910, however, the opening of the northshore highway in 1910, expanded rail service and the depression all impacted passenger trade on the lakes and by the mid-1930s it had come to a near halt. Cox (Puritan) was built at the height of the passenger vessel trade and was designed with that use specifically in mind. The successful operation of the vessel was tied directly to the excursion passenger business, package freight being only a supplemental source of revenue. Even before her loss in 1933, the vessel was placed in "mothballs" for nearly two years (1930-31) at Manistee, Michigan, due to the depressed passenger service business. The vessel was refitted in hopes of showing a sizeable

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profit as a floating hotel transporting visitors to the Century of Progress World's Fair Exposition in Chicago. The loss of Cox coupled with an extremely poor season's showing from her sister ship, as a result of the depressed passenger trade, put the Isle Royale Transit Company on a shakey financial footing. Cox's sister ship Isle Royale was put out of commission at the end of the '33 season. At the time of her loss, George M. Cox had nearly outlived her utility in the market for which she was best suited.

Formerly named Puritan (1901-1933), George M. Cox is the most recent of the three passenger vessels at Isle Royale which includes Cumberland, a wooden side paddlewheeler built in 1871, Algoma, the first steel hulled screw steamer on the lakes, built in 1883, and the modern screw steamer Cox, built in 1901. When viewed as representative examples of the continuum of passenger vessel development, these three vessels are particularly significant. Passenger vessel developmental construction techniques and the development of steam technology are well represented by these vessels. The all wooden Cumberland, a side paddlewheeler, is a classic example of the earliest type of passenger steamer used on the lakes. Paddlewheelers were eventually supplanted as the primary means of passenger transport with the appearance of the single screw, iron and later steel passenger vessel. The first single screw vessels appeared on the Great Lakes in the mid-1840s, followed by iron vessels in the early 1860s and steel in 1883 (Ericson 1968:6). Algoma is a representative example of the early steel passenger vessel, and indeed was the first to appear on the Great Lakes. At this time sail was still used regularly to supplement the vessel's steam propulsion. In the intervening 18 years between Algoma's launching and Cox's construction, the use of steel for hull construction became commonplace; the first U.S. manufactured steel vessel having appeared in 1886.

Along with the development of hull construction techniques, rapid advances in steam technology also occurred between 1871 and 1901. The wooden Cumberland was equipped with a single cylinder, vertical "walking" beam engine and a firebox boiler. Algoma's

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propulsion machinery, consisted of a fore and aft compound engine (double expansion, i.e., two cylinder) and twin scotch boilers, the next steps in steam boiler and engine evolution. The "modern" Cox was equipped with a triple expansion (three cylinder) steam engine and four scotch boilers. This engine and boiler configuration remained a standard until the introduction of the trend-setting turbine-powered coal engine in 1938 (Ericson 1968: 6-8).

These three vessels, the only primarily passenger vessels in the Isle Royale assemblage, provide an excellent representation of the evolution of steam passenger vessels on the Great Lakes between 1871 and 1901. Continued study of the Cox and the other two vessels is likely to yield significant data on the development of Great Lakes passenger vessels.

George M. Cox is significant because it is the only known remaining example of a steel passenger vessel of her size and class (1,267 NT) available for study in Lake Superior (Heden 1966:69-80). There are eight known steamers sunk in Lake Superior which are within the 1,250-1,500 net tons range; of these, three are wooden bulk freighters, two are wooden passenger/package freighters, one is a steel bulk carrier, one a steel canaller, and only one is a steel passenger vessel, George M. Cox.

Description of Loss - The Wreck Event

Cox has a significant place in the history of Lake Superior shipping due to the events surrounding her loss and the rescue of her passengers and crew on May 27, 1933. The vessel departed Manistee, Michigan on Tuesday, May 23, on her maiden voyage as the Cox. She arrived at Chicago on Wednesday the 24th and left port later that same day. After making several interim stops the vessel left Houghton, Michigan on Saturday, May 27, 1933, bound for Fort William (now Thunder Bay), Ontario. Throughout the voyage the compass was routinely checked on the various courses and found to be correct. The chart course (standard shipping

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[REDACTED]

The weather remained clear until the vessel [REDACTED] when a fog bank closed in, reducing visibility to approximately 1/4 mile. Captain Johnson stated during the board of inquiry following the accident that at approximately 6:10 pm, "Discovering that we were near abreast of the light, owing to a greater speed than I had anticipated, we received an alarm signal [REDACTED] (Daily Mining Gazette, 5-30-33). The vessel was put "hard to the starboard and steered west for 8 minutes" (Daily Mining Gazette, 5-30-33). At 6:18 pm, feeling they were at [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Cox was travelling at such a high rate of speed that nearly half of the vessel was pushed out of the water forcing her to list 45° to port and the stern to quickly sink.

When the Cox struck the reef a large hole was torn in her hull and it was reported that the impact ripped the boilers and engine from their mounts. Due to the severe list only the port lifeboats could be lowered. All of the passengers and crew boarded the lifeboats without incident and were towed to the lighthouse by the keeper's motor launch. By 7:30 pm all 121 people on board were off the steamer and transported to the lighthouse. The rescue of the 89 crew members and 32 passengers from Cox became the largest mass rescue recorded in Lake Superior history.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(see attached sheets)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA (see attached sheets)

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 206.6

Latitude [REDACTED]
Longitude [REDACTED]

Geographic
Center of
Unit

UTM REFERENCES

A [REDACTED]
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
C [REDACTED]

B [REDACTED]
ZONE EASTING NORTHING
D [REDACTED]

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(see attached sheets)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Toni Carrell, Archeologist

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service, Submerged Cultural Resources Unit

DATE

9/83

STREET & NUMBER

1220 South St. Francis

TELEPHONE

(505) 988-6750

CITY OR TOWN

Santa Fe

STATE

New Mexico 87501

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES ___ NO ___ NONE ___

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is ___ National ___ State ___ Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Spencer D. Stewart
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 6/12/84

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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1971 Shipwrecks of the Lakes, pp. 308-312. Freshwater
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- Heden, Karl
1966 Directory of Shipwrecks of the Great Lakes. Bruce
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1980 "Isle Royale Summer Visitor Study. Phase Two Diving
Survey: Isle Royale National Park." Michigan
Technological University. Unpublished manuscript. On
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Park, Houghton, Michigan and Southwest Cultural
Resources Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico.
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Train, Michigan.
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Newspapers:

Daily Mining Gazette, Houghton and Calumet, Michigan; May 30, 1933.

Daily Mining Gazette, Houghton, Michigan; April 26, 1980.

Detroit News, Detroit, Michigan; May 29, 1933.

News Palladium, Benton Harbor, Michigan; May 27, 1960.

New York Times, New York City; May 28, 29, 1933.

Documents:

Annual Report of the Lake Carrier Association, 1933, pp 35-37.

Report of Casualty, U.S. Coast Guard, Port of Chicago, Illinois; July 20, 1933.

Log of the U.S. Coast Guard Patrol Boat Crawford; May 27, 1933.

Summary of Documents of Enrollment for Steamer Puritan (1901). R6-41, NARS, Washington, D.C. Thom Holden Collection.

Collections:

Canal Park Visitor Center and Marine Museum, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Great Lakes Ship History Files. Duluth, Minnesota.

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