UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

7 DESCRIPTION

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Original Description

Monarch was built at the Dyble and Perry Shipyard in Sarnia, Ontario, and went into commission in 1890 under Canadian registry number 96843. The vessel was designed specifically to meet the demands of extended season use in the passenger and package freight trade on Lake Superior. The company, which owned the vessel until her loss on December 6, 1906, made several name and corporate structure changes. Originally the North West Transportation Company between 1890-1899, the name was changed to the Northern Navigation Company of Ontario in 1899, then later that same year it became the Northern Navigation Company, Ltd., out of Sarnia, Ontario.

Heavily reinforced with iron, <u>Monarch</u> was 245-feet long at the waterline, had a 35-foot beam and a 15-foot depth, her net tonnage was 1,372. From keel to rail she was constructed of wood; her main and promenade decks were also wooden.

Iron reinforcing was used in three major constructional elements of Monarch's hull. The main arch, or hogging truss, extending from the deadwood on the stem to the stern, was made of two pieces of iron sandwiching double oak frames. The gunwale girder or upper shear strake was also constructed of iron which ran along both the inside and outside of the vertical frames at the promenade or cabin deck level. The main shear strake, below the cargo hatches at the main deck level consisted of a single layer of iron sheeting tied to the inboard side of the frames. The use of iron in this manner provided a particularly strong, rigid hull. Side loading cargo hatches faciliated loading of passenger baggage and package freight.

A single deck of cabins, running nearly the full length of the promenade deck, were constructed of white oak like the remainder of the vessel. The builder's instructions for construction of the cabins, pilothouse and officers' quarters were that "all doors...were to be fitted so that a 25-cent piece could be slid between the door and frame all round" (London Free Press 12/1/56). The cabins had a fair rake necessitating that every window sash be made separately for its place, either port or starboard, and fitted together. The horseshoe shaped pilothouse sat well forward

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atop the cabins; the officers' quarters sat immediately aft of the pilothouse. Monarch was painted white when first launched, and her single stack, sitting aft of amidships was red with a white band and black top. These same colors are used today by the Canada Steamship Lines, which eventually absorbed the Northern Navigation Company. By 1899, the hull had been painted black and only the cabins remained white. Sometime after 1899 the officers' cabin was enlarged and the Texas deck lengthened by 30 feet.

Monarch was powered by a triple expansion engine (21", 33", 54" diameter cylinders x 42" stroke) capable of 900 hp built by Phoenix Iron Works at Port Huron, Michigan. Her twin scotch boilers, 11-feet 4-inches long and 16-feet in diameter, built by the Lake Erie Boiler Works in Buffalo, completed her steam power plant and powered her single propeller. A single mast, forward, was only a reminder of the early sailing vessels from which Monarch had evolved.

Present Description

The wreckage of Monarch

water. Water visibility around the site varies from 20 to 50 feet with locally heavy run off and algae blooms being the determining factors. There is no site number currently assigned to the vessel either by the Park or the State of Michigan.

The major field of wreckage begins

deadwood forward, lies intact on the bottom, inboard up. The deadwood is and a forward broken and a forward broken also present on the site is also broken above the bilge line and possibly from the forward portion of the vessel, along with a large

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starboard stern section are present. A port stern hull section, and two port hull sections from the amidships area are also represented. A large concentration of artifacts lies adjacent to the wreckage and includes: wooden boxes containing rivets or threaded bolts, china, brown glass bottles, portions of steam radiators, a baggage cart, cargo winch rollers, a bathtub, piping and ships fittings along with numerous other artifacts.

Post-depositional Impacts: The storm which drove Monarch put such a strain on the vessel her keel eventually broke allowing the stern to settle as she filled with water. As the strain on the vessel increased, the hull split apart aft of the pilothouse and Texas cabin; the stern then slid backwards off the rocks, before settling in her present location. The bow section remained for nearly two years eventually breaking apart as a result of storms, ice action and salvage efforts. Ice damage is evident on some shallow portions of the stern wreckage, but for the most part additional damage from natural causes appears to be minimal.

Formal salvage operations did not begin at the site until the fall of 1908. It can safely be assumed that in the intervening 21 months the bow section was visited by fishermen, visitors, and residents of Isle Royale who removed what they could from the vessel, a common practice of the period. The Reid Wrecking Company out of Sarnia, Ontario, conducted salvage operations on the vessel in late August and early September, 1908. Captain Reid was quoted as saying, "We took everything of value out of the wreck, having found conditions such that we could make a very complete job of it. We have the boilers, engine, dynamos, chains, windlasses, etc." (Port Arthur Daily News, September 26, 1908). The work took a total of 25 days and involved 14 men, 2 divers, 2 barges, and a tug.

The final disposition of <u>Monarch</u>'s steam machinery is not clear. A wide-spread practice on the Lakes following salvage was to re-use machinery in other vessels. It is highly likely, however, that the engine and boilers were lost a second time when the fully loaded barge <u>Bennington</u> sank off Whitefish Point killing two of her crew. <u>Bennington</u>, one of the two salvage vessels used during

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the work on the <u>Monarch</u> site, was in route to the Soo with derricks and other machinery from the wrecked vessel (<u>Port Arthur Daily News</u>, October 6, 1908). However, conflicting newspaper accounts of the period, alternately report that <u>Monarch</u>'s machinery was loaded onto <u>Kilderhause</u> and <u>Bennington</u>. No evidence has come to light as yet indicating the re-use of <u>Monarch</u>'s engine and boilers therefore it is possible that the machinery was indeed on <u>Bennington</u> when she sank. Additional research into the Sarnia or Port Huron papers may reveal the facts.

The site was visited in 1978 by a team of divers under the direction of Fredrick Stonehouse. The purpose of their study was to "determine the exact locations of all major wreckage...the present wreck condition and depth...produce a complete photographic record...recover all loose artifacts discovered incidental to the survey...map all wreckage into a chart overlay...[and] produce a written document" (Stonehouse 1978:1). A total of 32 dives were conducted between August 7 and August 21, A very general overlay map was produced and numerous photos In addition the following artifacts were recovered and later turned over to Isle Royale Park personnel: 5 beer bottles. 1 stained glass panel, 3 glass beads, 4 iron wrenches (24" to 40" overall), 1 sledge hammer, 1 pickle fork, 2 brass coat hooks and 1 radiator grill top. Previously the Park had received the ship's wheel, running lights, pieces of china, silver sets and windlass.

The National Park Service Submerged Cultural Resources Unit personnel conducted an extensive study of the vessel during June, 1981. The principal objective of the fieldwork was to produce a map of the site suitable for interpretive and management purposes. The investigations on site included analysis and identification of each of the structural elements present, plotting on a base map each of the major sections of wreckage, photo documentation of specific features, and 1-1/2 hours of video tapes (See Murphy, Lenihan, Carrell 1982). An experimental interpretive trail was designed and laid out by the team at the close of field work on the site. It was felt by the Unit and Park that an increased understanding of the structural elements of the vessel coupled with an easy to follow underwater guide and trail numbers would lead to an enriched visitor experience and encourage conservation of the resource. The trail and guide were designed with this

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objective in mind. The site was visited briefly again in 1982 to monitor depredation, replace some trail markers and clarify questions on specific remains for the trail guide and sketch map.

The site of Monarch has been visited regularly by sport divers at least since the middle 1960s when the current boom in sport scuba occurred. Undoubtly many smaller items have either been removed from the wreck or moved around <u>vis a vis</u> their original location. According to a diver survey published in 1980, Monarch is the fifth (of ten) most frequently visited shipwrecks at Isle Royale (Stinson 1980:15). Although removal of artifacts does impair certain aspects of interpretation and understanding of a shipwreck site, unauthorized removal of materials to date from this site has not seriously hampered the initial understanding of the vessel's construction or hinder identification of remains.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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SPECIFIC DATES 1890-December 6, 1906

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Dyble & Perry, Sarnia, Ontario

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Significance Summary

Monarch was a wooden passenger/package freighter used on the Lakes between 1890 and 1906. The vessel is significant because: 1) it is representative of iron reinforced wooden vessels designed and built for extended season use employing a construction technique which flourished for a relatively short period of time; 2) study of this vessel is likely to yield significant data on the details of transitional wooden and iron shipbuilding techniques; 3) within the Isle Royale shipwreck assemblage the vessel is the only wooden and iron passenger/package freighter represented; 4) it is the only example of this size and class of vessel still available for study in the Lake Superior shipwreck population (Heden 1966:69-80); and 5) the events surrounding the rescue of her crew and passengers are an important part of northshore regional and local Isle Royale history.

Supporting Data

Monarch is significant because it is representative of wooden and iron reinforced vessels, a transitional vessel construction technique which flourished for a relatively short period of time. Monarch was built during a period of innovation and rapid change in the shipbuilding industry. Although the insurance underwriters' vessel lists referred to Monarch's hull as oak strongly reinforced with iron, a composite of sorts, true composite vessels were more dependent on iron structural support. That is, these vessels had closely spaced iron frames, deck beams and keelsons, oak planking, and iron plates sheathing the wood at least from the water line to the main deck or above (Labadie, personal communication; Barry 1973:136). True composite hull construction was introduced by the Detroit Dry Dock Company in 1887 in response to highly skeptical attitudes about iron hulled The insurance underwriters required that the iron hulls be sheathed in wood to prolong the vessel's life expectancy and to obtain lower insurance rates (Barry 1973:136).

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Both the first iron hulled freighter (Onoko 1882) and the first steel hulled freighter (Spokane 1886) appeared on the Great Lakes prior to the launching of the first true composite freighter (Fayette Brown 1887). The fact is, however, Monarch, built in 1890 well after all three of the above construction techniques had been accepted, was built almost completely of wood. She was completely framed with wood, her deck beams, keelsons and hull planking were all wooden but her three principal areas of hull strengthening were iron. A combination of established, traditionally accepted reinforcing systems were used in her construction to provide for a tight, rigid hull.

Wooden vessels had become so large that the hull required extra bracing to keep it from hogging or sagging on either end. The Bishop Arch, developed in the 1830s to correct problems of hogging, first consisted of two large wooden cords running from the stem to stern deadwood. These early arches rose well above the cabin deck level amidships and were tied into the frames of the vessel which extended up to meet the arch. These high Bishop Arches continued in use well into the late 1870s.

The truncated Bishop Arch appeared next being commonly used at least by 1882 giving a more integrated appearance, having been cut down to a level just above the cabin deck rail. At this time arches were constructed not of built-up wooden cords but of channels or box girders of iron or steel sandwiching wooden frames. The next strengthening technique developed was the use of iron in the gunwale girder or upper shear strake at the cabin deck level and the main shear strake below the cargo hatches at the main deck level. Monarch's builders incorporated the truncated Bishop Arch of iron and the use of iron in the upper and main shear strakes. As a result Monarch's wooden hull was exceptionally strong and capable of withstanding extended season use.

It is interesting to note that after the launch of the steel-hulled <u>Spokane</u> in 1886, steel very soon became the chosen material for construction of lake freighters, with iron and true composite construction being rapidly abandoned. Wooden construction lasted a little longer, however, especially in the

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elegant passenger and supplemental package freight vessels (Barry 1973:136, 186).

Monarch was built when steel hulled vessels were becoming common and the techniques employed in her building represented both the last throes of wooden vessel construction and the epitome of integrated iron hull strengthening techniques. Study of this vessel is likely to yield significant data on the details of wooden and iron reinforced vessels.

Monarch is significant within both the Isle Royale shipwreck assemblage and the entire Lake Superior shipwreck population. The vessel is the only known wooden and iron passenger/package freighter represented at Isle Royale. There are eight known steamers sunk in Lake Superior which are within the 1,250 to 1,500 net tonnage range of Monarch. Of these vessels there are only two wooden passenger/package freighters, Starucca (1875-1888, 1313NT) and Monarch (1890-1906, 1327NT) (Heden 1966:69-80). Starucca stranded 10 miles east of Grand Marais in a blinding snow storm and was punished so severely that she was non-salvagable, although portions of her cargo and equipment were later retrieved (Wolff 1979: 41-42). Monarch now remains the only known example of her size and type of vessel available for study in Lake Superior.

Description of Loss - The Wreck Event

Monarch was lost on what would have been her last trip of the season. The events surrounding her loss and the subsequent rescue of her passengers and crew contributes an important chapter to the local Isle Royale story and regional northshore history.

Monarch departed Port Arthur (now Thunder Bay), Ontario, at 5:25 in the evening on Thursday, December 6, 1906, downbound for her home port of Sarnia at the southern tip of Lake Huron. The vessel was loaded with grain (wheat and oats), canned salmon, bagged flour and other general merchandise. A crew of 32 and 12 passengers completed her final load. At 6:28 pm off Thunder Cape the ship's course was altered

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fog and heavy seas were encountered. Conflicting reports alternately have the prevailing wind direction as northeast (Scanner 1976:9) and northwest (Marine Protest. 1908, in Barry 1980:12). Warning signals from never heard by the crew over the wind. The usual running time for the vessel near that time the second mate went aft to check the taffrail log only to find it frozen and registering less than half of the Despite the distance between frozen log, after the normal running time the captain changed to then later adjusted that slightly to allow for leeway in the ship's position due to the The course set Shortly after the second course change Monarch at approximately 9:30 pm, well off course and The impact was enough to drive the apparently without warning. bow

Monarch's angle on the cliff face, upward and listing heavily to port, prevented launching of the port lifeboats. A sounding made by the chief engineer, Sam Beatty, through the passenger gangway revealed a water depth of more than 90 feet, meaning that the vessel could quickly settle in deep water as she filled. reported in one contempory newspaper account that Captain Edward Robertson had ordered "full speed astern" (Daily News, December 11, 1906) after she struck; apparently only the quick thinking of Sam Beatty keeping the engine at half speed ahead and efforts of one of the oilers, Gillroy, who remained at his post stoking the fires, gave the passengers and crew sufficient time to work their way forward to the bow. An effort was made to lower a lifeboat with four people aboard, however, the crashing waves and steep cliff prevented a landing; eventually the four made it back on board the sinking Monarch. It was at this time the only fatality occurred. A seaman, James Jaques, was attempting to board the lifeboat by sliding down a fender rope when he either slipped or fell into the icy water.

A temporary member of the crew, Seaman Jack McCallum, volunteered to go over the bow tied to a lifeline and be swung like a pendulum from a ladder toward shore. Eventually McCallum was able to gain a foothold and scrambled up to a tree. It was at this time that

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the weight of the water in the stern caused the vessel to slip backwards 15 or 20 feet and the hull to separate forward of the funnel. The entire stern including the cabin aft of the pilothouse quickly sank, leaving only a relatively small portion of the bow on the rocks. Fortunatley there was enough time and another heavier rope available to tie to the lifeline and thread to shore where it was tied off to a tree. All of the crew and passengers either went hand over hand or into a boat and were pulled along to shore. According to the captain the only woman aboard, Rachael or Rae McCormick, a stewardess, handled the crossing as well as any of the men, "...she went down that rope thirty feet, hand over hand, into the boat without a word" (Barry 1980:14). The only person to remain on board the vessel was Captain Robertson, who was finally forced to leave his ship the next day as a result of the extreme cold. A passenger reported "one crippled axe had been taken off the wrecked steamer, and with this we chopped logs for fires...[and] we spread ourselves out before the cheering blaze" (Barry 1980:15).

It was not until Friday morning, December 7, that the party began to organize themselves for the wait until they would be rescued. Dividing into three camps, they built fires for warmth and a Bagged flour signal fire opposite and a case of salmon floated ashore and some flour cakes were cooked over the fire. Later in the day the wreck was reboarded and "a quantity of damaged bacon, bread and pie" was recovered (Barry 1980:15) along with the ships sails to be used for windbreaks (Daily News, December 11, 1906). One of the crew members, John Skinner, even managed to recover his camera and to take pictures of the wrecked vessel (Daily Times-Journal, December 11. 1906). The beacon fire burned through Saturday before attracting the attention of the lighthouse keepers. On Saturday, December 8, or Sunday, December 9, four crew members hiked to to a commercial fishing camp. The buildings were deserted although they discovered some food there (Daily Times Journal, December 11, 1906).

Evidently, late Saturday night the lighthouse keepers, Shaw and Harmenga, saw the smoke signal the lighthouse keepers, Shaw and keeper, Klass Harmenga, volunteered to take a small boat and row over to the point to investigate.

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With the instincts and resourcefulness of a true sailor, who had been twice shipwrecked in his life, he could almost smell out danger as coming events cast their shadows before. He ate a good, hearty meal and prepared a lunch and gathered up some blankets. He felt his pockets to make sure he had some matches and jumping into his small rowboat...[he] started across the cold treacherous waters....(Historical Collections of Michigan Technological University. <u>Deeds of Valor</u> by W. H. Law).

Monarch's purser, Reginald Beaumont, was able to swim out to the lighthouse keeper's rowboat as it neared shore and together they returned to the lighthouse. Later that day the steamer Edmonton was hailed and the news of the shipwreck passed on. The vessel turned around and headed back to Port Arthur, arriving at 2:00 am on Monday, December 10. Four hours later the tugs James Whalen and Laura Grace left for Isle Royale, only stopping to pick up the purser at the lighthouse. Arriving about 10:00 am on the 10th the vessels were unable to make a landing due to rough seas and so proceeded the passengers and crew

The passengers and crew of <u>Monarch</u> were drawn from throughout the Canadian Northshore area and descendants of the crew still live in Collingwood, Ontario, the city from which most of the crew hailed. Continued interest in the story of the survivors and the wrecking of <u>Monarch</u> is evidenced by the appearance of newspaper articles on the 50th anniversary of her loss (<u>London Free Press</u>, December 1, 1956) and the more recent publication in a regional journal of <u>Monarch</u>'s loss (Barry 1980). Further, the events of the <u>Monarch</u> disaster are an integral part of the Isle Royale National Park story and interpretative program.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(see attached sheets)

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