

# Wisconsin Historical Society: Transfer Shipwreck Listed on the State Register of Historic Places

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## ***Transfer* Shipwreck Listed on the State Register of Historic Places**

Milwaukee, WI. – The Wisconsin Historical Society added the *Transfer* Shipwreck (Milwaukee, Milwaukee County) on to the State Register of Historic Places on May 14, 2021.

Built in 1872 and converted in 1914, the *Transfer* was a converted barge, an unpowered vessel that was always towed, and used for hauling bulk cargos. The *Transfer* site (47MI-0554) retains excellent archaeological integrity although broken and scattered on the lake bottom. Sites such as the *Transfer* present a rare opportunity to study and learn about Great Lakes converted self-unloading barges, their modifications, and their use. As one of only three known converted self-unloading schooner barges documented in Wisconsin waters, the *Transfer* site has added a significant amount of information about the implementation of self-unloading technology in converted schooner barges and their use on the Great

Lakes.

The *Transfer* is a rare example of a vessel type that was vital to Wisconsin's economy, the economy of the Midwest, and transportation infrastructure outside of road and rail networks. The vessel's operation history offers an important look at the use of early consort systems in the Great Lakes during the mid to late nineteenth century, and the development of schooner-barges over time.

Additionally, the vessel's conversion to a self-unloader offers important information on the conversion of wooden sailing vessels, specifically schooner barges, into labor-saving tools, and allows for a more nuanced understanding of the development of the Great Lakes maritime industrial landscape. Only two examples of this vessel type remain in Wisconsin waters, making *Transfer* particularly important. Additionally, the vessel's remains allow for an in-depth look at converted self-unloading barge construction, a little understood vessel type. Additional information from the site may significantly add to our understanding of the construction of Great Lakes converted barges, specifically self-unloading schooner barges.

State laws protect this shipwreck. Divers may not remove artifacts or structure when visiting this site. Removing, defacing, displacing, or destroying artifacts or sites, is a crime. More information on Wisconsin's historic shipwrecks may be found by visiting Wisconsin's Great Lakes Shipwrecks website.

The State Register is Wisconsin's official list of state properties determined to be significant to Wisconsin's heritage. The State Historic Preservation Office at the Wisconsin Historical Society administers both the State Register and National Register in Wisconsin.

To learn more about the State and National Register programs in Wisconsin, visit [www.wisconsinhistory.org](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org).

### **About the Wisconsin Historical Society**

The Wisconsin Historical Society, founded in 1846, ranks as one of the largest, most active and most diversified state historical societies in the nation. As both a state agency and a private membership organization, its mission is to help people connect to the past by collecting, preserving and sharing stories. The Wisconsin Historical Society serves millions of people every year through a wide range of sites,



programs and services. For more information, visit [wisconsinhistory.org](http://wisconsinhistory.org).

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