

Wisconsin Historical Society: Joseph Cochrane (Schooner) shipwreck listed in the National Register of Historic Places

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DOOR COUNTY, Wis. – The Wisconsin Historical Society announces the listing of the Joseph Cochrane Shipwreck in the National Register of Historic Places on January 22, 2026. The schooner is located in Lake Michigan near Baileys Harbor, in Door County.

Joseph Cochrane was previously listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2003 under the name Christina Nilsson. Additional scholarship and new information gathered from resources unavailable at the time of the original nomination have correctly identified the wreck as the Joseph Cochrane. An avocational archaeology team from the Wisconsin Underwater Archaeology Association (WUAA) identified the Christina Nilsson shipwreck nearby. The shipwrecks are both located in Door County, Wisconsin, in the waters of Lake Michigan near Baileys Harbor.

The Joseph Cochrane schooner was built by master shipbuilder Hosea Rogers at his yard in Charlotte, New York, and launched on May 6, 1856. Rogers was a well-known and skilled shipbuilder on the Genesee River. He was active in shipbuilding from 1840-1874. The Joseph Cochrane was carrying lumber from Cheboygan, Michigan, when it began to leak during a gale on October 29, 1870. The crew operated the pumps throughout the night and in their attempt to seek shelter, became grounded. Efforts were made for three days to save the vessel; however, winds continued to batter the ship on the reef causing it to break up and become abandoned.

State and federal laws protect this shipwreck. Divers may not remove artifacts or

structures 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: [Wisconsin Shipwrecks](#).

Additional information for the Joseph Cochrane Shipwreck is available at: <https://wisconsinhistory.org/Records/NationalRegister/NR2831>

To learn more about the State and National Register programs in Wisconsin, visit: <https://wisconsinhistory.org/hp/register/>

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 www.wisconsinhistory.org.