

2014 MICHIGAN ARCHAEOLOGY POSTER TEACHER COMPANION



This year's Michigan Archaeology poster displays a photo mosaic of the wreck of the *Pewabic*, a wooden steamship built in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1863. As one of the vessels that made up the Lake Superior Line, the *Pewabic* carried passengers and cargo between Detroit and ports along the shore of Lake Superior. On August 9, 1865, the *Pewabic* sank in Lake Huron after colliding with the *Meteor*, another steamship in the Lake Superior Line. The *Pewabic* went down in 180 feet of water just minutes

after the collision. The vessel was carrying approximately 180 crew and passengers and several hundred tons of copper. Some passengers were able to put on life jackets, and others leapt from the sinking *Pewabic* to the *Meteor*, but many people lost their lives.

It is important to recognize that the *Pewabic* is an archaeological site that reflects the period immediately following the Civil War. Copper production in Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula was in full swing in the 1860s, and the *Pewabic's* cargo of copper came from four mines: the Quincy, the Hancock, the *Pewabic* and the Franklin. The artifacts on the wreck can provide information about the lives of the people who were on board. The wreck itself instructs us about the construction and operation of the vessel, which contributes to our understanding of Great Lakes shipping during that period.

Just like archaeological sites on land, underwater sites are fragile. When they are disturbed or artifacts are removed, information about the past is lost. The *Pewabic's* valuable cargo of copper made the wreck an attractive target for salvage operations. Beginning in 1917 several salvage efforts were conducted: the most recent in 1974. Virtually all of the copper has been recovered, and other artifacts have been brought up as well. As a result of the salvage operations, much of the *Pewabic* is gone; only the lower portion of the vessel remains essentially intact.

Within the remaining portion of the wreck, however, many features of the *Pewabic* are still visible. Although salvors broke through the deck to reach the copper in the hold, some of the deck remains intact in the central part of the vessel. Both engines and boilers are still in place. As part of this teacher's guide, there is a copy of the poster image on the website that includes labels identifying various components of the vessel. In the poster image, the bow of the vessel is to the right and the stern is to the left.

Today there are laws that protect shipwrecks and their contents. In addition, recreational divers have become good stewards of shipwreck sites; they advocate leaving artifacts in place for other divers to see and experience. Preserving these fragile sites should be an important goal for us all.

Photo Mosaic of *Pewabic*

The photograph of the *Pewabic* shipwreck that appears on the poster is a photo mosaic. A series of photographs were taken by a diver who swam above the wreck from one end to the other. The photos were then put together to create a single image.

Key parts of the vessel have been labeled with definitions below.

From left to right

Transom

The stern that usually overhangs the rear end of the boat and supports the steering mechanism and rudder.

Tow Bitts

A bitt, or post, to attach a line to tow another vessel or to be towed from the stern.

Engines

The machines that powered the ship. *Pewabic*'s engine was powered by steam.

Boilers

Tanks that contained water heated to produce steam to run the engine. Coal fires heated the water.

Coal Scuppers

A shoot to pass coal through to get it into the bunker or to the boiler.

Hogging Arch

A large wooden truss to stiffen the boat longitudinally and thus prevent the vessel from hogging or sagging at either end.

Cargo Hatch

The opening into the cargo hold

Deck Beams

These are the remains of the support members for the decking.

Cargo Hold

The part of the ship where goods are kept. This is where the copper ingots were stored while being transported.

Broken Bow

Pewabic's bow was broken during collision with the vessel *Meteor*.

Lake Bottom

The fuzzy "tooth-like" parts of the photo are actually the lake bottom. The irregular edge is created by the joining of each photograph to create the mosaic.









