

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



1082

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Forward wreck site

other name/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & town Lake George, submerged  not for publication

city or town Lake George  vicinity

state New York code NY county Warren code 113 zip code 12845

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ruth A. Percient DRAPD 10/2/08  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State of Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
  - See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

[Signature] Signature of the Keeper Date of Action 11/21/08  
Erika K. Martin Sabert

Forward wreck site, Lake George,  
Name of Property

Warren Co., NY  
County and State

### 5. Classification

**Ownership of Property**  
(check as many boxes as apply)

- public-local
- private
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(check only one box)

- district
- building(s)
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
01	00	sites
		structures
		objects
01	00	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed  
in the National Register**

00

### 6. Function or Use

**Historic Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION - water-related (motor launch)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Function**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION - outdoor recreation (dive preserve)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### 7. Description

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: motor launch wreck  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation \_\_\_\_\_  
walls \_\_\_\_\_  
roof \_\_\_\_\_  
other wood \_\_\_\_\_

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Forward wreck site, Lake George,  
Name of Property

Warren Co., NY  
County and State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

### Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION

ENTERTAINMENT / RECREATION

### Period of Significance

1906

### Significant Dates

1906

### Significant Persons

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Gas Engine & Power Co.- Chas. Seabury & Co., New York, NY

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other Name of repository:

NYS Hist. Pres. Field Services, Waterford, NY

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## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

### UTM References

(Place additional boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

1 18 607504 4812582  
Zone Easting Northing

2  
Zone Easting Northing

3  
Zone Easting Northing

4  
Zone Easting Northing

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joseph Zarzynski, Dr. Russ Bellico, Bob Benway, Vincent Capone, Terry Crandall and Joe Farrell  
organization Bateau Below Inc. date March, 2008  
street & number P.O. Box 2134 telephone 518-587-7638  
city or town Wilton state NY zip code 12831

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative black and **white photographs** of the property.

### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title State of New York, c/o Al Bauder, NYS Office of General Services  
street & number Corning Tower, floor 26, Empire State Plaza telephone 518-473-1288  
city or town Albany state NY zip code 12242

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

*Forward wreck site  
Lake George, Warren Co., NY*

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**DESCRIPTION**

Introduction:

The *Forward* wreck site includes the hull and engines of an early generation twin-screw gasoline-powered motor launch built in 1906. The wreck is located in Lake George in 37-42 feet of water in the Town of Queensbury, approximately three and one-half miles northeast of the village Lake George. The *Forward* measures 45 feet in length with a six-foot eight-inch beam. The shipwreck is approximately 4 ft. 2 in. in height. She sits upright on the lake bottom with the bow oriented toward the northwest. Today, the submerged vessel is the focal point of an underwater park for scuba divers called "The *Forward* Underwater Classroom," part of Lake George's "New York State Submerged Heritage Preserves." The *Forward's* hull is approximately 40% to 50% intact. Because of the cold dark waters of the lake, her remains are in a very good state of preservation. The watercraft's two 30 h.p. gasoline engines are still in place. There is evidence of minor fire damage restricted to the area aft of the engines along the starboard side interior. One of the visual hallmarks of the shipwreck is its picturesque stern with a reverse-raked V-shaped transom. Surviving photographs of the vessel from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century show the *Forward* configured both with and without an upper canopy that served to shelter its pilot and passengers from the sun and rain. Though the sleek watercraft was apparently abandoned after three decades of use on the lake, the *Forward's* graceful hull lines and construction details nevertheless reveal important structural characteristics about this class of watercraft. Unlike other surviving gasoline-powered vessels from this period that are in museums and private collections and that have undoubtedly undergone significant restoration and structural alteration, the century-old *Forward* represents an unparalleled example of this type of historic launch, whose structural integrity has survived due to seven decades well-preserved underwater.

1989-1993, 1996, and 2006-2007 Archaeology and Submerged Cultural Resources Management

The *Forward* was located on June 4, 1989, by the underwater archaeology team today known as Bateaux Below, Inc.<sup>1</sup> When the shipwreck was located, archaeological divers could make out the faint letters of the boat's name—*Forward*—painted on both the port and starboard side of the vessel's bow. From 1989 to 1992, the shipwreck was archaeologically studied and mapped by Bateaux Below.<sup>2</sup> Following this initial archaeological documentation process, a set of the original plans of the *Forward* that have survived, were provided by Ted Caldwell, a descendent of W. K. Bixby, the original owner of the vessel. On May 8, 1993, Bateaux Below and Wilmington, Delaware-based Marine Search & Survey, under the direction of Vincent J. Capone, used a Klein side scan sonar to acquire a sonograph image of the *Forward* shipwreck.<sup>3</sup> On September 25, 1993, the shipwreck site opened as "The *Forward*," one of the first two shipwreck preserves in Lake George's "Submerged Heritage Preserves." The Lake George shipwreck preserves were the first state-administered underwater park for visiting scuba divers in the Empire State.<sup>4</sup> In 1993, following the archaeological mapping of the shipwreck, SeaScape International and KenMar Graphics, with assistance from Bateaux Below, created a 6 ½ x 8 in. plastic slate for visiting scuba divers entitled "SiteSlate, The *Forward*—A Lake George Shipwreck."<sup>5</sup> In 1996, a photomosaic of the vessel was completed by the archaeology team's Bob Benway (photographer) and Bill Appling (computer technician).<sup>6</sup> Over 1997-1998, "The *Forward*" shipwreck preserve underwent a transformation into "The *Forward* Underwater Classroom." This work was supported by a \$2,420 grant from the Fund for Lake George. With permission from the State of New York, a modern wooden cabin cruiser was cleaned and deliberately sunk in the lake, and a triangular trail and several informational stations were installed so that visiting scuba divers can learn about the underwater park's site geology, vegetation, fish life, color loss at depth, etc.<sup>7</sup> The 1997-1998 remodeling of the shipwreck preserve culminated in Bateaux Below's publication of the 120 page August 1998 report, *Lake George's Forward: Historic Vessel, Shipwreck Preserve, and "Underwater Classroom."* In 2006, "The *Forward* Underwater Classroom" shipwreck preserve underwent a "facelift" as its trail system and underwater signage were replaced. In 2007, Bateaux Below members conducted further archaeological mapping, underwater photography, and underwater videography to gain a greater understanding of this historic shipwreck.

Type and General Characteristics:

The *Forward* is an early gasoline-powered wooden launch, a class of vessel found on inland waterways during the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The *Forward* was built in 1906, by the Gas Engine & Power Co. and Charles L. Seabury & Co., Consolidated (Morris Heights, New York City, New York). The *Forward* was one of the first gasoline-powered vessels on the "Queen of American Lakes" and thus is a surviving symbol of the introduction of gasoline-powered water transportation to the 32 mi.



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long Lake George. According to the *Ticonderoga Sentinel* newspaper, the watercraft could reach a top speed of 22 m.p.h.<sup>8</sup> The *Lake George Mirror* described the vessel as "large and in her is embodied all of the comforts of the modern yacht."<sup>9</sup> The wooden launch's engines were described as being "very compact" and the vessel was capable of carrying "thirty people" inside a hull of "natural wood exterior with mahogany dressed deck and insid[e] finish."<sup>10</sup> In 1913, W. H. Samson, author of book, *Mohican Point on Lake George*, wrote that the *Forward* vessel was a "fast and beautiful launch."<sup>11</sup> The luxury watercraft featured a sharply pointed, raked bow, a reverse raked V-shaped transom, and was powered by gasoline engines with twin screw propellers.

Setting:

The *Forward* rests upright in 37-42 ft. of water. Her GPS-generated latitude and longitude are: 43 degrees 27.520 min. North Latitude, 73 degrees 40.269 min. West Longitude. She lies on soft sediment on a slight underwater slope in the South Basin of Lake George. The vessel's bow lies in deeper water than the stern and the bow faces toward the northwest (bow pointed at 340 degrees along the boat's centerline). The submerged vessel lies 1,530 ft. east (107 degrees) from the north end of Diamond Island; distance and direction recorded on June 2, 1991, by a survey team directed by Bateaux Below's Vincent J. Capone using a Nikon EM and Theodolite survey station. There are some patches of lake bottom vegetation, called *Nitella flexis*, near the stern and amidships areas of the shipwreck.<sup>12</sup> Scuba reconnaissance forays around the shipwreck and a review of side scan sonar records show that no other major parts of the vessel are present on the lake bottom lying off the shipwreck.

Exterior:

The forward section of the hull is intact from the stem aft nearly 6 ½ ft. The hull's side planks or strakes vary in width from approximately 3 to 5 in. The attractive wooden coaming that once wrapped around the open cockpit, clearly visible in surviving contemporary photographs of the historic launch when owned by the Bixby family, is no longer present. Parts of the hull's strakes in the amidships section are missing from just below the gunwale down to the bilges. The vessel's color scheme is still discernable in the bow area with green along the lower hull and white topsides. The *Forward* has a sharply pointed bow that is raked forward. The metal cutwater trim on the stem is missing, probably salvaged prior to its demise or removed decades later by souvenir-seeking scuba divers. The foredeck and aft deck planking is yacht-laid, that is, laid parallel to the boat's sides. Most of foredeck has collapsed inside the bow section of the sunken wooden launch. Almost all the vessel's gunwale is present. The gunwale measures 3 ½ in. wide. Moving aft from the bow, the vessel's gunwale stands intact until the amidships section, where the gunnels on both the port and starboard sides have partially collapsed, but are nonetheless still present. The starboard gunwale at the watercraft's amidships area has collapsed and moved inboard so that it now rests between the launch's two engines. To limit vessel roll, attached to the hull is a pair of 6 ft. 3 in. long bilge fins, located just forward of the transom. Several brass sockets located along the gunwale, that once received canopy supports, are also present. The canopy stanchion supports measure 4 ft. apart. A canopy stanchion support, once used to hold up the vessel's canopy top, was discovered in 2007, by underwater archaeologists. It lies inside the shipwreck and was measured at 3 ft. 6 in. long x 1 ½ in. in diameter. Each end of the canopy stanchion support has a decorative brass end cap that measure 2 in. long. The vessel's stern is mostly intact, but the aft deck has partially collapsed inside the hull. The brass gudgeon system that once held the boat's rudder is still attached to the transom. The *Forward's* electric lights, horn, flagpoles, line cleats, and other exterior equipment are not visible, probably either salvaged prior to the boat's abandonment, removed by souvenir-seeking divers in the late 1970s or early 1980s, or have fallen into the interior of the hull and are now covered by sediment and debris.

Interior:

The *Forward's* interior is open to inspection. Room-and-space, the distance from a molded edge of a frame to the corresponding point on an adjoining frame, is 9 in. (recorded just forward of amidships on the starboard). The *Forward* shows signs of the deliberate removal of some of the valuable parts of the vessel from the cockpit. This was possibly removed before its abandonment and/or from souvenir-seeking divers after it was scuttled. The launch's steering wheel, steering cable system, interior seats, and other interior parts have been removed or lie buried under debris inside the cockpit. Most of the *Forward's* propulsion system is still intact. There is evidence, very minimal, of fire damage, in the area aft of the hull along the starboard side interior.

Propulsion System:

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The *Forward* was powered by two 30 h.p. gasoline engines, probably "Speedway" units, engines commonly installed in many recreational watercraft of this era built by Gas Engine & Power Co. and Charles L. Seabury & Co., Consolidated. This engine would have been started using a hand crank with ignition created by a magneto.<sup>13</sup> The two engines are intact inside the hull of the shipwreck. Some of the engines' spark plugs are still visible. Also present on the vessel's propulsion system are the fly wheels, a single shifting lever on the starboard, and two exhaust shafts. Two mufflers lie inside the hull just forward of the transom. The launch's steering wheel, rudder, and two propellers have been removed. The metal braces that once supported the propeller shafts are present, attached below the hull just forward of the transom.

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The *Forward* shipwreck site is significant under Criteria A, C, and D as a relatively rare and intact example of an early gasoline-powered launch associated with the golden years of Lake George as a summer resort. Built for William K. Bixby as a private yacht, the *Forward* was later employed as an excursion boat. As an archaeological site, the relatively well preserved wreck represents a rare surviving example of the first generation of gasoline-powered yachts and launches. The *Forward* was designed and built by the Gas Engine & Power Co. and Charles L. Seabury & Co., Consolidated of New York, NY, a large and prominent builder of high performance recreational and naval craft. Relatively undisturbed after her sinking in the 1930s, the underwater remains of the *Forward* have the potential to reveal significant information about the watercraft's hull design and propulsion technology no longer available in records or archives.

The *Forward* was ordered and first owned by William K. Bixby, a summer resident of Bolton Landing, New York.<sup>14</sup> He was the father of Harold Bixby, a St. Louis, Missouri financier, who was the financial patron of Charles A. Lindbergh's 1927 trans-Atlantic solo plane flight from the United States to Paris, France.<sup>15</sup> Harold Bixby reportedly named Lindbergh's plane—*The Spirit of St. Louis*.<sup>16</sup>

W. K. Bixby, a wealthy American industrialist and bibliophile, was from St. Louis, Missouri. In 1899, his family purchased Mohican Point and the Mohican Hotel, located on Lake George in Bolton Landing, New York.<sup>17</sup> W. K. Bixby was the head of the American Car and Foundry Company.<sup>18</sup> In 1910, W. K. Bixby, Adolphus Busch, and other St. Louis businessmen, donated \$3,000,000 in cash and another \$3,000,000 in property to Washington University (St. Louis, Missouri) to "enlarge the medical department of the university."<sup>19</sup>

After putting the state-of-the-art *Forward* on the lake in 1906, the vessel became a personal excursion boat for the Bixby family and their friends. In June of that year, the *Forward* was used to transport a wedding party, friends of W. K. Bixby, around the lake.<sup>20</sup> The *Forward* was one of the "automobile boats" entered in the races at the Hague Regatta, an event sponsored by the Lake George Regatta association" in mid-August 1906.<sup>21</sup> Because several motor boats, including the *Forward*, were entered in the regatta, the August 23, 1906 issue of the *Ticonderoga Sentinel* described the 1906 Hague Regatta as "the Most Successful Yet Held on the Lake." The *Ticonderoga* newspaper also reported that: "This was the first automobile power race to be run over a Lake George course and was probably the best boat race ever seen on these waters."

The *Forward* remained for years in the Bixby family, but later she was acquired by entrepreneurs Alden Shaw and Leonard Irish (Lake George Marine Industries, Inc.) and used as an excursion boat.<sup>22</sup> By the 1920s, expanded private automobile ownership and improved highways made resorts such as Lake George increasingly accessible to a broader population, supporting sightseeing excursions on the lake. While serving in this capacity the *Forward* participated in the dramatic rescue of passengers aboard the burning tourist boat in 1929. The 35-foot *Miss Lake George* caught fire during a July 21 sightseeing cruise due to "a short circuit and a backfire of the motor."<sup>23</sup> The *Forward* quickly came to the rescue and picked up 8 of the 11 people aboard the burning vessel.<sup>24</sup> The others were collected by other boats.<sup>25</sup> The July 23, 1929 issue of the *New York Times* reported that the *Miss Lake George* sank into deep water within "ten minutes" of catching fire.

Although there is little historical documentation about the *Forward's* demise, historian Dr. Russell P. Bellico wrote in his book, *Sails and Steam in the Mountains—A Maritime and Military History of Lake George and Lake Champlain*, that sometime in the 1930s, during a "fishing outing near Diamond Island, the boat reportedly caught fire and sank."<sup>26</sup> No primary documentation detailing the *Forward's* final disposition has been found. It is now believed the vessel was may actually have been abandoned, a popular fate for aging watercraft at Lake George during the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The 45 ft. long wooden launch named *Forward* was built in 1906, and was one of the first gasoline-powered launches to appear on Lake George. The luxury watercraft was in fact, also one of the first gasoline-powered vessels constructed by Gas Engine & Power Co. and Charles L. Seabury Co. (Morris Heights, New York City, New York), a major Bronx-based shipyard.



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In the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many boat builders experimented with the internal combustion marine engine. One of those early boat-building firms that experimented with this type of marine engine was Gas Engine & Power Co. It opened in 1887. It was not, however, until 1894, that the first practical internal combustion marine engine that was installed in a motorboat in the United States.<sup>27</sup> In 1896, Gas Engine & Power Co. merged with Charles L. Seabury & Co.<sup>28</sup> The boat yard, which eventually occupied 1,200 ft. along the Harlem River, developed a national reputation for excellence in the construction of recreational and military watercraft. During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and in World War I (1917-1918) and World War II (1941-1945), the yard constructed many naval vessels for the American defense effort. In 1899, the Gas Engine & Power Company and Charles L. Seabury & Co., Consolidated launched the 205 ft. long torpedo boat destroyer *Bailey*. According to the *New York Times*, the steam-powered vessel was "the first United States war vessel ever launched on the Harlem River."<sup>29</sup> In 1906, the boat yard built the pleasure craft *Artful* for Payne Whitney of the New York Yacht Club. The vessel was described in the *New York Times* as "the fastest cabin motorboat in the world." The *Artful* was "fitted with two six-cylinder Speedway gasoline engines."<sup>30</sup> During World War II, the shipyard built fifty 173 ft. long patrol chasers, fourteen 85 ft. tugboats, and thirty-three 56 ft. long landing craft. The historic boat building company operated for 68 years until 1955, when the boat yard, then known as Consolidated Shipbuilding Corporation, closed; the former shipyard is today the site of Roberto Clemente State Park.<sup>31</sup>

The *Forward* gasoline-powered launch was one of Lake George's earliest vessels powered by the internal combustion engine. In the years before the *Forward's* introduction to the lake, launches of this hull size and type were powered by steam and even some by naphtha. The naphtha engine was patented by Frank Ofeldt in 1883. Several years later, Charles L. Seabury & Co. reportedly developed the first naphtha launches. Unlike steam-powered launches with their engines mounted amidships, naphtha engines were mounted aft. Most naphtha-powered engines used naphtha, a petroleum distillate, to boil and vaporize naphtha instead of water to power pistons in the same manner as a steam engine. Vaporized naphtha was extremely volatile and dangerous but its use skirted federal regulations requiring licensed engineers to operate traditional steam engines.<sup>32</sup> Naphtha was also used in some early internal combustion engines. Safer and higher performance gasoline internal combustion engines became accepted for marine use around the turn-of-the-century. Gas Engine & Power Co. and Charles L. Seabury & Co., Consolidated built its first gasoline-powered boat, the *Speedway*, in 1903.<sup>33</sup>

Gasoline engine power plants immediately offered the potential for higher operating speeds. In order to achieve these greater speeds, the traditional fantail hull design associated with steam launches required fundamental change. V-shaped hulls with deep V section in the bow and a flat V section near the stern proved more efficient at higher speeds. These hulls in turn evolved into the development of planing hulls around 1910. The *Forward* is an example of an early gasoline-powered luxury launch with a large open cockpit, a version of a waterborne stretch limo of its era. The boat's hull design illustrates the improvements in hull design made during the first decade of the twentieth century before displacement hulls gave way to planing hulls in the search for greater speed. The raked stem, V-section hull, hard chines, tumblehome quarters and reverse raked V-shaped transom characteristic of this period remain well-preserved at the wreck site. Unlike the steam engines and naphtha engines that were positioned above deck level, the *Forward's* two gasoline engines were situated low in the boat's midships area under a protective hood. With the pilot positioned forward in the open cockpit, business mogul W. K. Bixby could not only entertain guests, he likewise could sit in the stern area and conduct private business matters. Contemporaneous descriptions indicate that the boat could achieve 22 mph and that she had a carrying capacity of 30 people.

Few examples of this type and size of watercraft survive today. The Adirondack Museum, located in Blue Mountain Lake, New York, has a similar vessel in its boat collection, the 45 ft. long *Skeeter*. It was a contemporary of the *Forward*, reportedly built in 1905 by Gas Engine & Power Company and Charles L. Seabury & Company, Consolidated.<sup>34</sup> However, unlike the *Forward*, which has been submerged as a shipwreck in Lake George for over seven decades, the *Skeeter* has undoubtedly undergone some restoration. Furthermore, based upon historic photographic images, the two vessels differ somewhat in how they were appointed.

The *Forward* was introduced to Lake George in 1906, when recreational vessels on inland waterways were undergoing a transition from steam and naphtha-powered vessels to gasoline-fueled propulsion. Shortly after the *Forward's* introduction upon Lake George, the design of personal watercraft underwent a rapid change, too, moving to smaller gasoline-powered planing boats built more for speed than for a leisurely excursion in launches where boaters mixed business and pleasure. The *Forward* is a rare and extant example of a bygone era of the so-called "Great and Gracious" at Lake George when the "Queen of American Lakes" was the playground of the rich and famous.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, in the latter years of her career the gasoline-powered launch was relegated to an

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excursion boat and thus is representative of the development of Lake George as a popular tourist destination. Finally, she likewise is historically noteworthy because the *Forward* was one of the first generation gasoline-powered recreational launches built by one of America's most historic boat building firms—Gas Engine & Power Company and Charles L. Seabury & Company, Consolidated. Many gasoline-powered wooden runabouts built in the 1920s and after survive. However, few century-old gasoline-powered wooden launches of this size and this design survive.

The *Forward* shipwreck provides future opportunities to gain a greater understanding of deliberately scuttled boats. Abandoned historic watercraft such as this launch contribute to our knowledge of vessel salvage prior to abandonment, spatial dimension of boat abandonment, shipwreck site formation processes of deliberately abandoned boats, and also provide a broader understanding of the cultural perception of vessels through history. Future archaeological investigation, such as a stratigraphic excavation of the hull's interior, may also provide answers to research questions such as, why was the *Forward* abandoned and if so, how the vessel may have been prepared for deliberate sinking. Furthermore, future archaeological examination of the *Forward* shipwreck might be devised to gain insight into specific details of hull construction design and to likewise gain a greater knowledge about the marine propulsion system of early 20<sup>th</sup> century gasoline-fueled waterborne transportation on inland waterways like Lake George.

End Notes

1 William Appling, Bob Benway, and Joseph W. Zarzynski. *Lake George's FORWARD: Historic Vessel, Shipwreck Preserve, and "Underwater Classroom"*. Wilton, New York: Bateaux Below, Inc., August 1998.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

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Forward wreck site  
Lake George, Warren Co., NY

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*Forward wreck site  
Lake George, Warren Co., NY*

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**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The nominated wreck site is contained within a rectangle measuring 55 feet in length and 17 feet in width. The boundary is centered over the hull of the wreck with a minimum 5 foot space between the hull and the boundary.

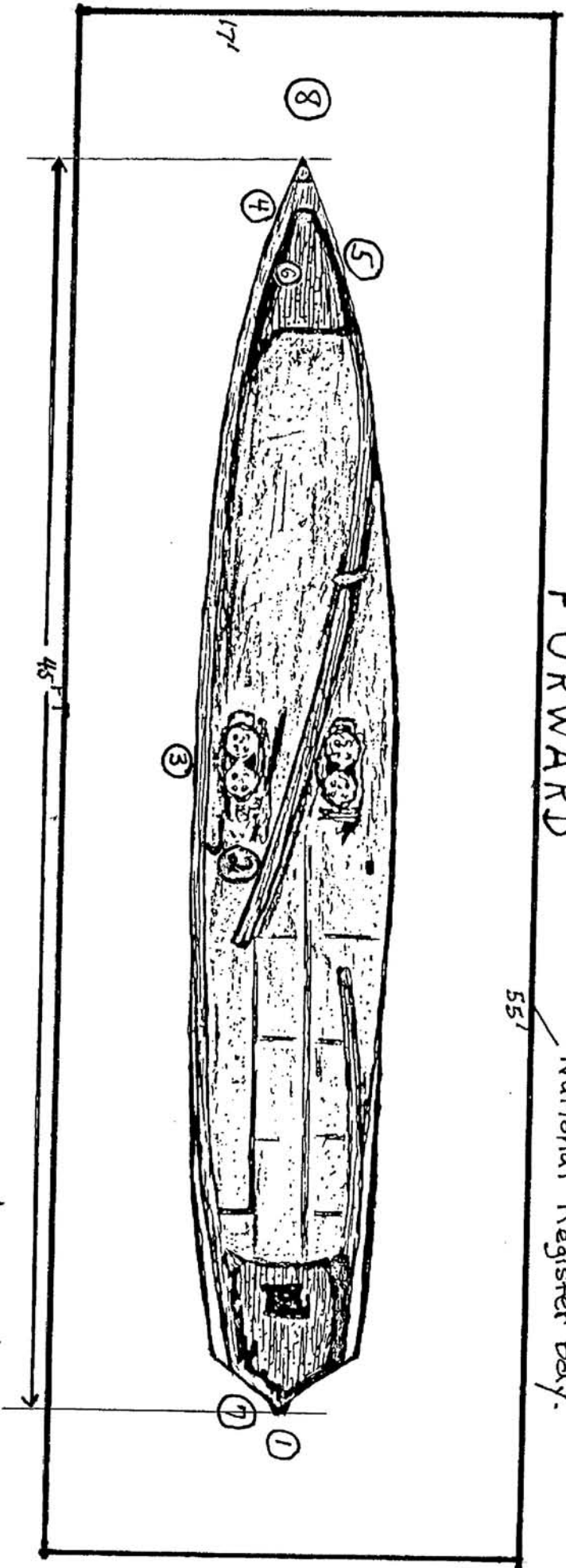
**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The boundary is drawn as a simple rectangle for ease of description. It contains the hull and all extant remains of the *Forward* wreck. Diver investigations have concluded that the wreck site does not include a debris field.

Forward wreck site  
Lake George vic.  
Warren Co., N.Y.

FORWARD

55' National Register body.



Magnetic North



Drawing - Linda Schmidt and Joseph W. Zarzyński  
Updated July 2008, Plan View  
Lake George, New York



*Forward wreck site  
Lake George, Warren Co., NY*

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Digital photos July 13, 2008

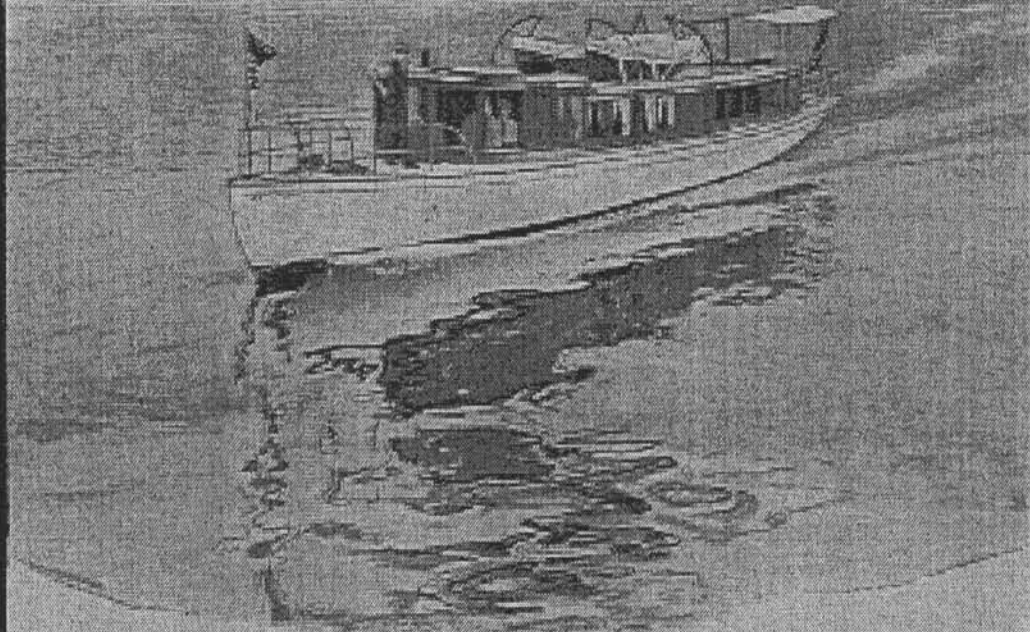
Photographer: Bob Benway

CD-R submitted with nomination; duplicate filed with NYSHPO

1. stern and collapsed aft deck looking forward.
2. midship area, port side looking forward illustrating port engine.
3. port engine, looking toward center.
4. bow looking forward.
5. bow, starboard side.
6. bow, interior.
7. port stern, looking forward.
8. bow looking aft.
9. photomosaic of wreck site by Bill Appling and Bob Benway, Sept. 15, 1996.

Forward wreck site  
Lake George, Warren Co., NY

# A CABIN CRUISER



USING OUR NEW DESIGN, THE  
"SPEEDWAY" GASOLENE MOTOR

We also build THE ONLY NAPHTHA LAUNCH  
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Steam and Sail Yachts

OUR SHOWROOMS CONTAIN 100 FINISHED LAUNCHES TO SELECT FROM

Send 10 cents in stamps for new catalogue of Small  
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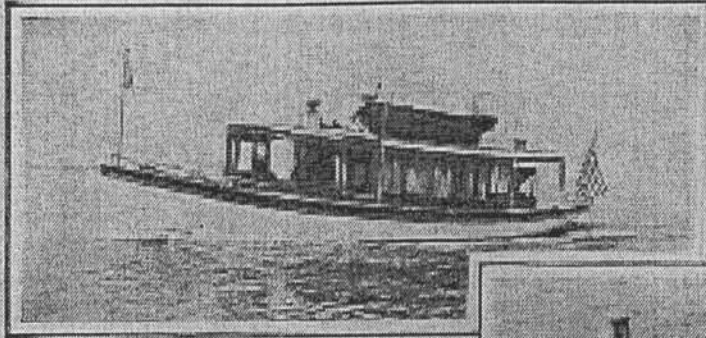
Chicago Office, 1409 Michigan Avenue

1904 advertisement  
Gas Engine & Power Co. &  
Charles L. Seabury Co., Consolidated.

Forward wreck site  
Lake George, Warren Co., N.Y.

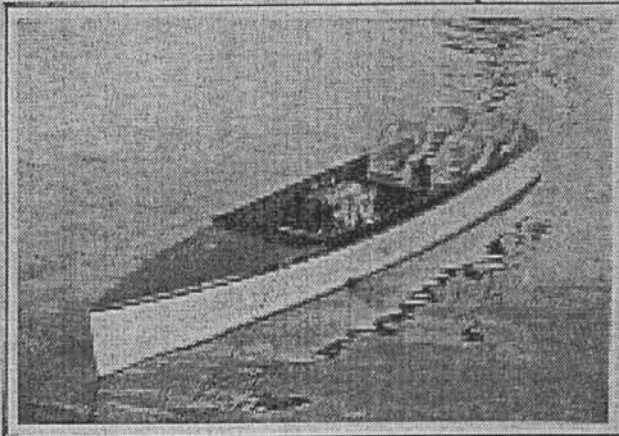
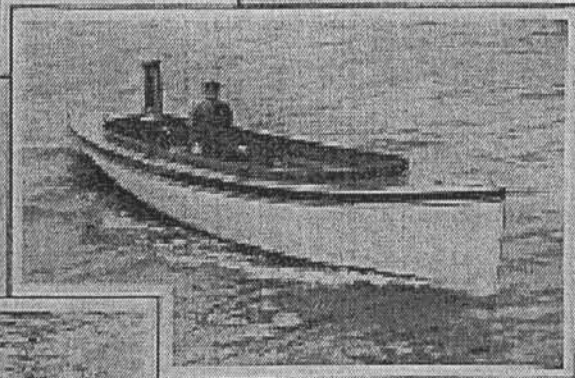
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33 ft. motor-boat equipped with 12 H. P. new design Speedway gasoline motor. We build these in sizes from 20 to 50 ft. Speed from 12 to 24 miles per hour.

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Reference:  
ACCORDS BOOK No. 41  
ACCORDS BOOK No. 42  
RECORD B.P.  
RECORD W. CO. N.  
RECORD W. P. COLLEGE 18

ACCORDS BOOK No. 41	
ACCORDS BOOK No. 42	
RECORD B.P.	
RECORD W. CO. N.	
RECORD W. P. COLLEGE 18	

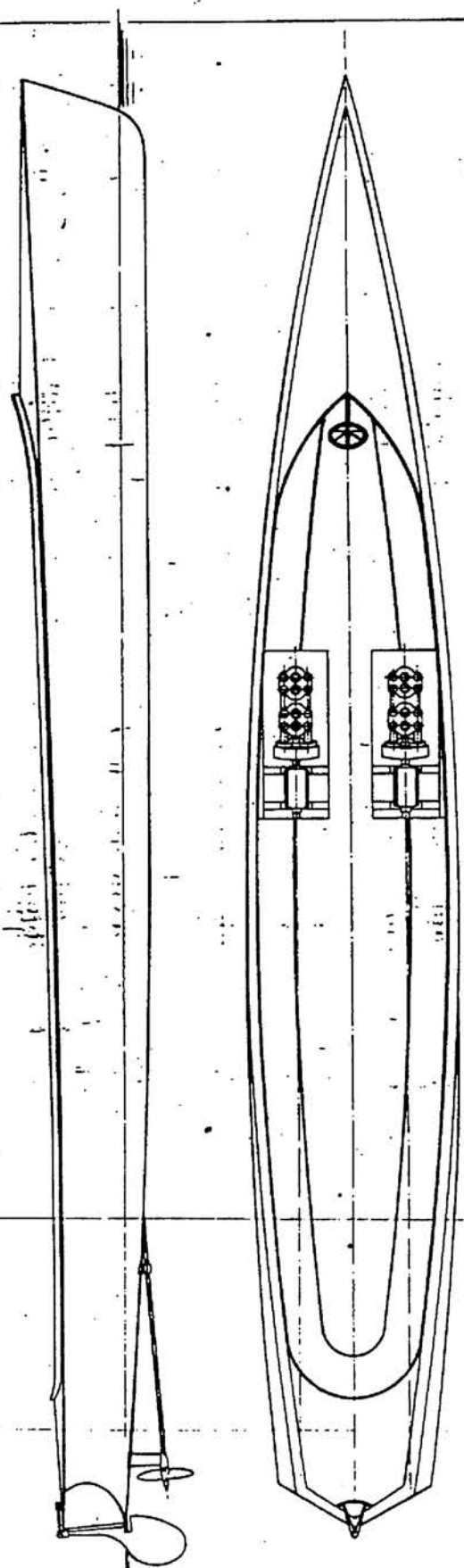
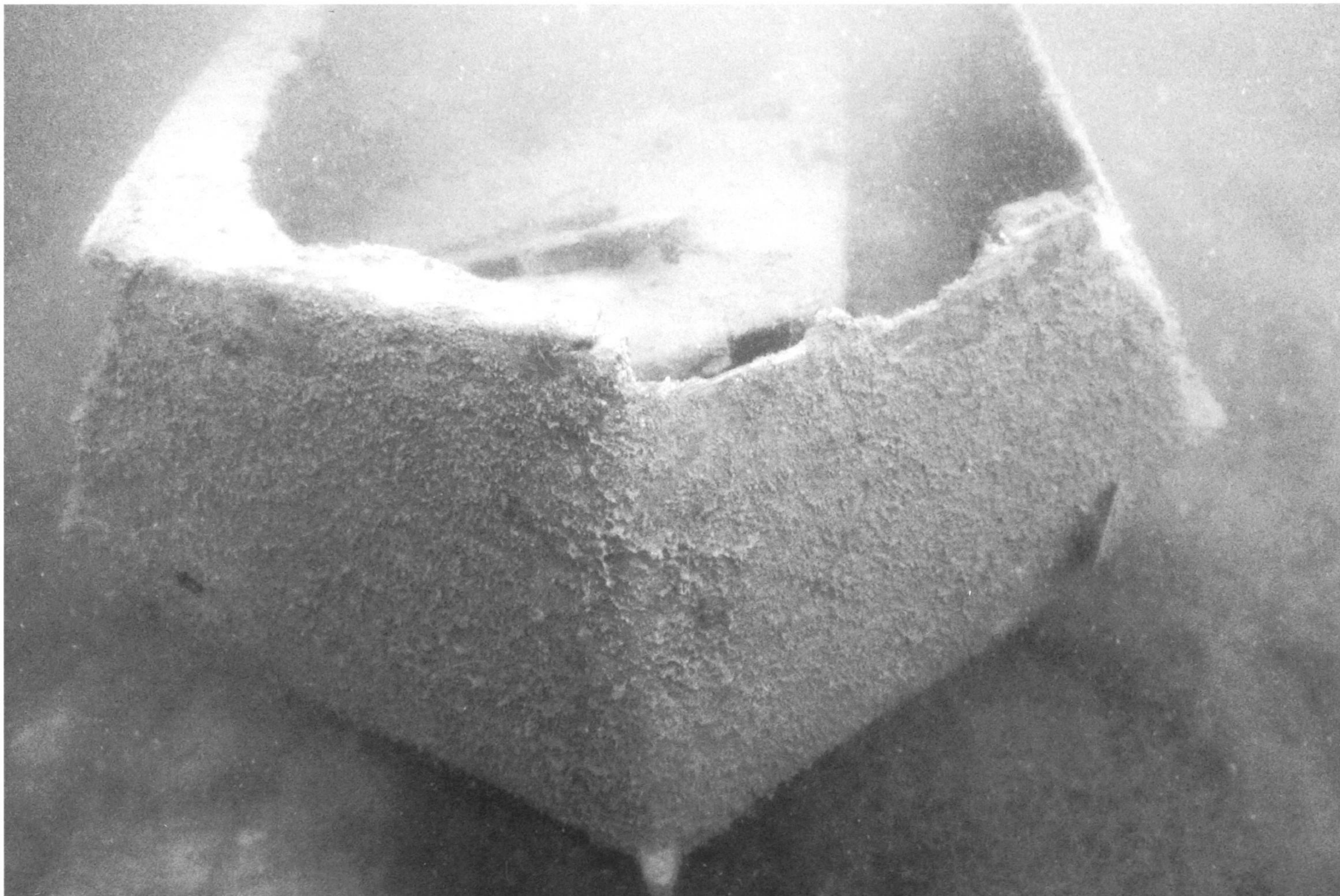


FIGURE 3

Editors's Note: Drawings of vessel believed to be the *Forward*. This has been reproduced and also reduced from blueprint copy. Drawings courtesy of Ted Caldwell and the W. K. Bixby Family.







- 1- FORWARD Shipwreck
- 2- Warren County, New York
- 3- Bob Benway (Bateaux Below, Inc.)
- 4- July 13, 2008
- 5- Bob Benway, 9 Midnight Dr., Queensburg, New York 12809
- 6- Stern, collapsed aft deck, looking forward
- 7- #1



- 1- FORWARD Shipwreck
- 2- Warren County, New York
- 3- Bob Benway (Bateaux Below, Inc.)
- 4- July 13, 2008
- 5- Bob Benway, 9 Midnight Dr., Queensbury, New York
- 6- Port, amidships, engine hardware, looking forward <sup>12804</sup> along port
- 7- #2





1- FORWARD Shipwreck

2- Warren County, New York

3- Bob Benway (Bateaux Below, Inc.)

4- July 13, 2008

5- Bob Benway, 9 Midnight Dr., Queensbury,  
New York 12804

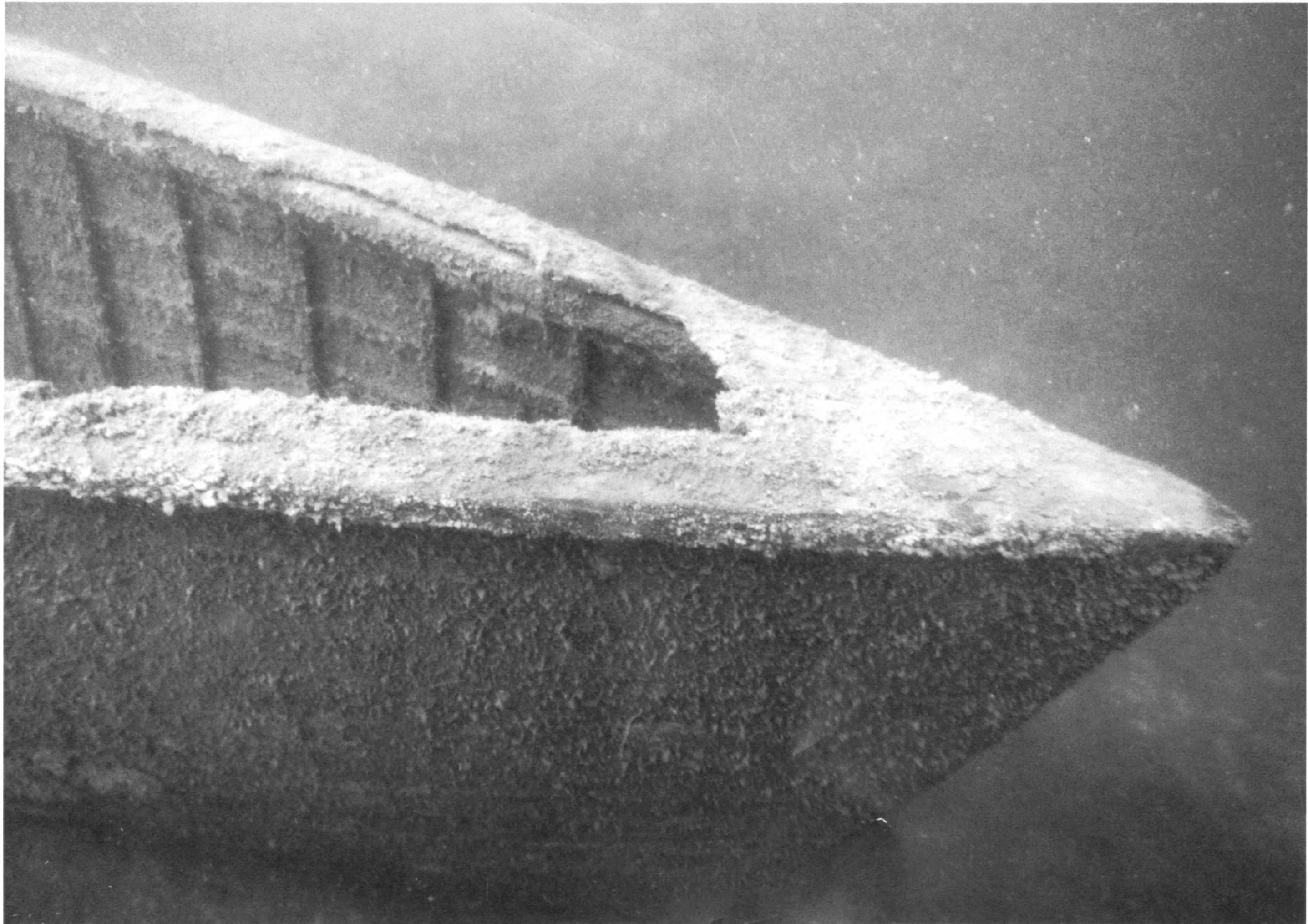
6- Port, amidships, engine hardware, looking from  
port

7- #3



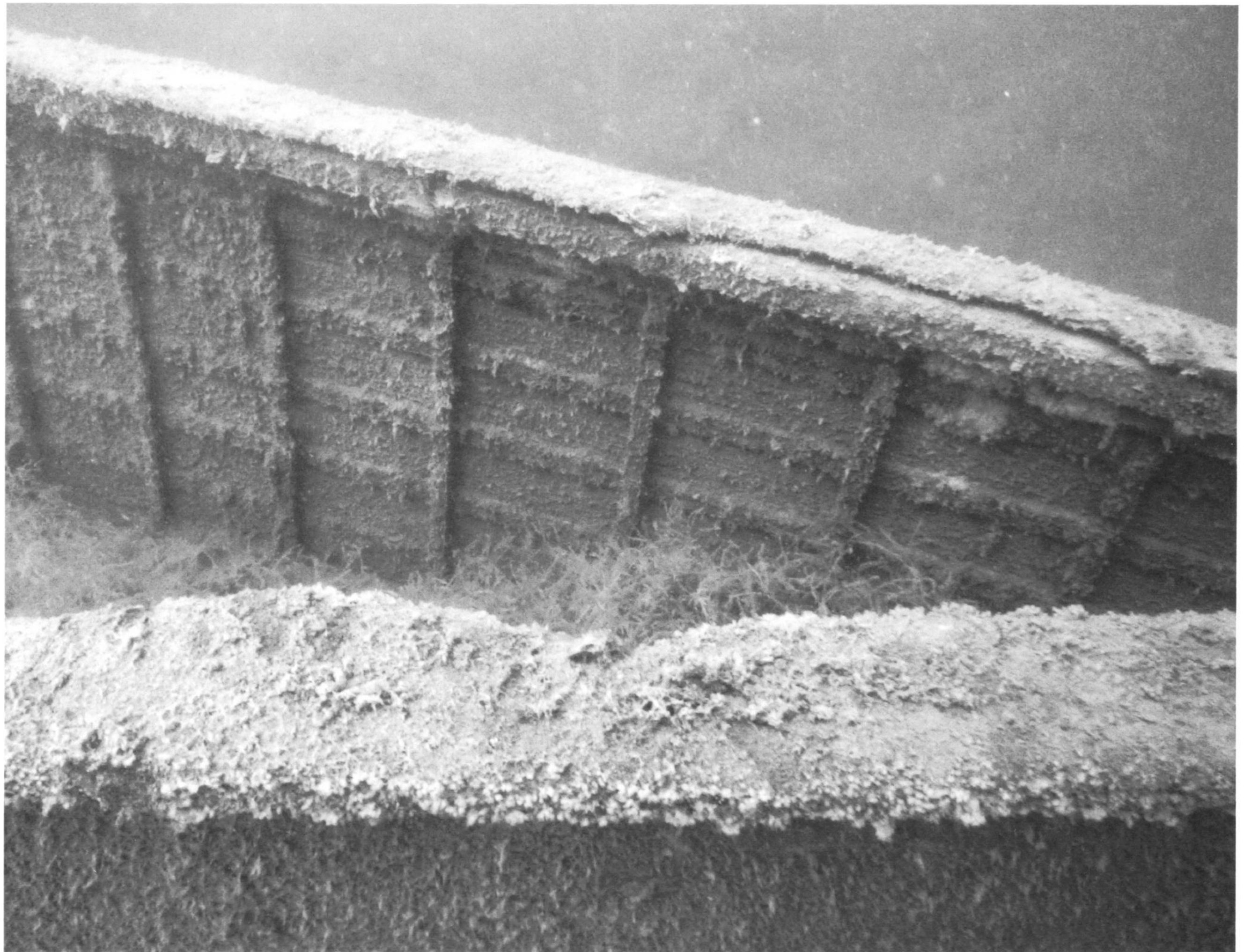


- 1- FORWARD Shipwreck
- 2- Warren County, New York
- 3- Bob Benway (Bateaux Below, Inc.)
- 4- July 13, 2008
- 5- Bob Benway, 9 Midnight Dr., Queensbury,  
New York 12804
- 6- Bow, looking forward
- 7- #4



- 1- FORWARD Shipwreck
- 2- Warren County, New York
- 3- Bob Benway (Bateaux Below, Inc.)
- 4- July 13, 2008
- 5- Bob Benway, 9 Midnight Dr., Queensbury,  
New York 12807
- 6- Bow, from starboard
- 7- #5



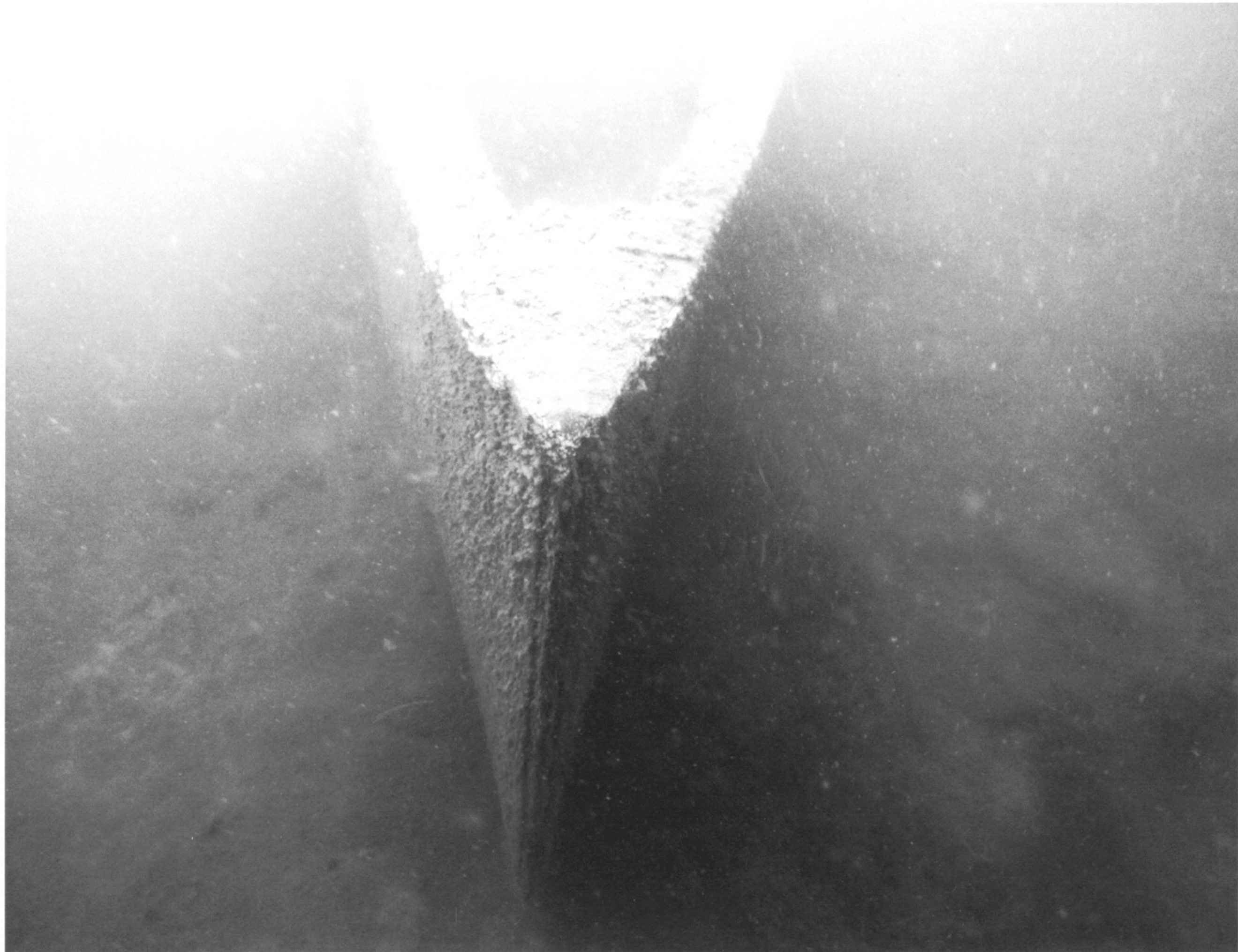




- 1- FORWARD Shipwreck
- 2- Warren County New York
- 3- Bob Benway (Bateaux Below, Inc.)
- 4- July 13, 2008
- 5- Bob Benway, 9 Midnight Dr., Queensbury,  
New York 12804
- 6- Bow, shows port interior and starboard  
gunnel
- 7- #6



- 1- FORWARD Shipwreck
- 2- Warren County, New York
- 3- Bob Benway (Bateaux Below, Inc.)
- 4- July 13, 2008
- 5- Bob Benway, 9 Midnight Dr.,  
Queensbury, New York 12804
- 6- Stern, looking forward along port side
- 7- #17



- 1- FORWARD Shipwreck
- 2- Warren County, New York
- 3- Bob Benway (Bateaux Below, Inc.)
- 4- July 13, 2008
- 5- Bob Benway, 9 Midnight Dr.,  
Queensbury, New York 12804
- 6- Bow, looking aft
- 7- #8



**FORWARD Shipwreck  
Lake George, NY**



- 1- FORWARD Shipwreck (Photomosaic)
- 2- Warren County, New York
- 3- Bill Appling
- 4- September 15, 1996
- 5- Bob Benway, 9 Midnight Dr.,  
Queensbury, New York, 12804
- 6- Photomosaic, plan view
- 7- #9, image not annotated on photo  
ID map