



Update on Southern Gallery Renovations



Based on the Chicago Maritime Museum's 2021 renovation plan, new exhibit content in Southern Gallery will focus on recreational maritime history of Chicago during the 20th century.

"Our goal in renovating the Southern Gallery is to showcase the recreational side of Chicago's waterways," says Vice Chairman Jerry Thomas. "Today the Port of Chicago is no longer full of commercial vessels; instead we celebrate the diverse ways locals and tourist interact with our waterways, including sailing, fishing, kayaking, canoeing and swimming."

Topics for future consideration include Bill Pinkney's solo-circumnavigation around the world, the first all women Mac Race team skippered by Evelyn Wright, and the shipwrecked charter vessel *Charlotte Ann*.



The museum is currently halfway through the planning phase for the Southern Gallery. ***The next steps include the following:***

- More on the **Ralph Frese canoes**, information both on the artifacts themselves, as well as further exploring how his life and work fit in with the indigenous populations where the originals for his replicas originate.
- An exhibit along the river gallery about the **Chicago River**, the engineering projects that allowed the city to expand, and the environmental projects that are making the river safer and more habitable.
- Progress on the **Bill Pinkney** exhibit.

These efforts are currently underway with the help of *Lafferty van Heest & Associates* exhibit designers.

Curator's Corner by Dylan Hoffmann

The Christmas Tree Ship: The Saga of the Rouse Simmons

The Christmas Tree Ship

The Saga of the Rouse Simmons

Although Theodore Charrney had only an eighth-grade education, his passion for history led him to become a specialist in the topics of Great Lakes history, Chicago architecture, and Abraham Lincoln. After more than a decade of research, Charrney wrote a two-volume manuscript totaling 854 pages. He assembled the story from newspapers and conversations with surviving members of families once employed in the Chicago Christmas Tree trade.

The first volume explores the schooner fleet's involvement in the lumber industry and its economic impact, shipbuilding, and the sailors. The subject of the second volume is *The Christmas Tree Ship – the Rouse Simmons*. In their final years, schooners turned to the seasonal Christmas tree trade, and in her last three years, the *Rouse Simmons* delivered Christmas trees from Michigan to Chicago, docking near the Clark Street Bridge and selling the trees from the boat.

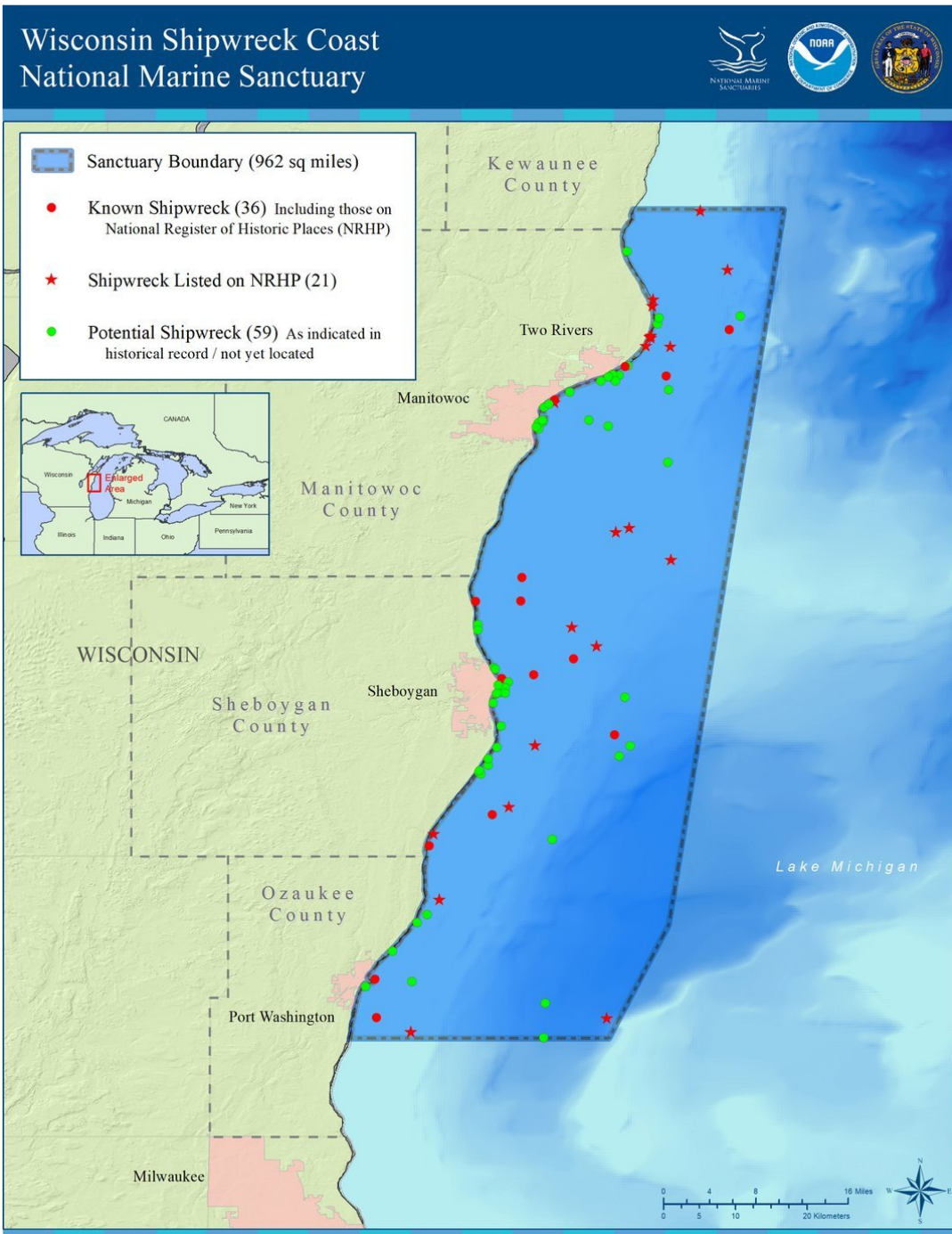
Filled with fascinating Chicago history from the 1860s to early 1900s, the manuscript includes information about Chicago's waterways, bridges, maritime commerce, and Chicago's first municipal Christmas tree celebration. Charrney sent his manuscript to several publishers who told him that it needed to be condensed and edited. Not knowing where to start and approaching the end of his life, Charrney hoped the manuscript would be held in a library collection.

The Chicago Maritime Museum is a proud home to a copy of both volumes of Theodore Charrney's *The Christmas Tree Ship: The Saga of the Rouse Simmons* manuscript. Charrney's manuscript will be preserved for future generations interested in the Chicago Christmas Tree trade.



Thanks to CMM board member, Grant Crowley, the Christmas Tree Ship model is now on display at the museum. Come on down and check out the model ship.

Smithsonian Magazine Features Wisconsin Shipwreck Coast National Marine Sanctuary



Covering 962 square miles, the sanctuary includes 36 known shipwrecks.

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This unique micronation is certainly different from the countries that reside on either side of it and it's open to visitors.

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From Bessie in Lake Erie, to Gaasyendeitha in Lake Ontario, countless sightings of curious creatures in the Great Lakes abound.

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Maritime Event Calendar

Check out local maritime events at the Chicago Maritime Museum [website calendar page](#).

Submit maritime events in the Chicagoland area or story ideas to Mary Ann O'Rourke at maorourke58@gmail.com.

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