

Welcome to the second issue of SCRET's newsletter for 2004. Our goal is to publish the newsletter twice each year. Each issue will focus on SCRET's efforts to explore and document significant submerged cultural resources in the Pacific Northwest.

### ***Elliott Bay's "Wreck Alley"***

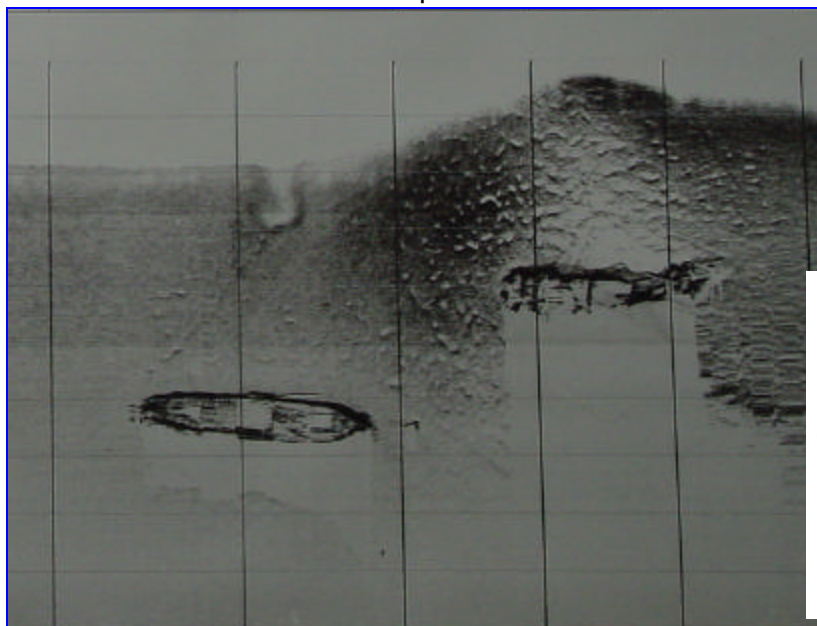
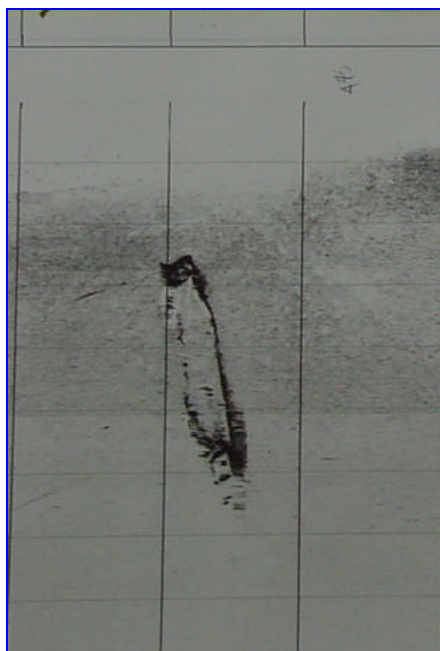
In the first issue of SCRET's newsletter for 2003, we included a "teaser" about a series of shipwrecks in Elliott Bay that we call "Wreck Alley". This area includes a number of historically significant submerged cultural resources, including the *Astorian* (ex-*Nisqually*), *A.J. Fuller*, *Bellingham* and *Multnomah*. Sections from a side scan survey showing three of the shipwrecks in Wreck Alley are set forth below. Our focus in this issue is the middle shipwreck, which we believe is the remains of Mosquito Fleet passenger steamer, *Astorian* (former *Nisqually*).

### ***Astorian* (ex- *Nisqually*)**

Name:	<i>Astorian</i> (ex- <i>Nisqually</i> )
Ship Type:	Propeller Steamer
Year Built:	1911 in Dockton
Length:	140 feet
Beam:	23 feet

In 1911, the Olympia-Tacoma Navigation Company had the steamer *Nisqually* build especially for the Olympia-Tacoma route. She was a fast propeller steamer, with triple expansion machinery, water-tube boiler, and oil burners. She was 140 feet long with a beam of 23 feet. Her two raked funnels and sharp hull gave her a look of speed. On her trial run from the Standard Oil Dock in Seattle to the Municipal Dock in Tacoma, she came within five minutes of the record for that much-raced course. Her 1,000 horsepower engine loafed along at a 12-knot cruising speed.

When the *Nisqually* began service in October 1911, she made two trips daily between Olympia and Tacoma and the fare was 75 cents each way or \$1.25 for the round trip.



**Sidescan  
Images  
Provided  
by  
Underwater  
Admiralty  
Services,  
Inc.**

**Sections from sidescan of Elliott Bay's Wreck Alley**



***Nisqually on Puget Sound***

***The Vibrator***


Ride on the New Steamer

# "NISQUALLY"

"The Best There Is"

Between

## OLYMPIA AND TACOMA

<p>Leaves Olympia 7:00 A. M. 12:30 P. M.</p>		<p>Arrives Tacoma 9:15 A. M. 2:45 P. M.</p>
<p>Leaves Tacoma 9:45 A. M. 3:15 P. M.</p>		<p>Arrives Olympia 12:00 Noon 6:00 P. M.</p>

Lands at Municipal Dock, foot of 11th St., Tacoma, and makes connection with the Steamers Indianapolis and Flyer, and Interurban Limited Trains for Seattle.

RUNS EVERY DAY BEGINNING OCTOBER 30, 1911.

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## STEAMER MAGNOLIA

DAILY EXCEPT SUNDAY

Leaves Olympia for Tacoma 4 p.m. Arrives Tacoma 6:45 p.m. Leaves Tacoma for Seattle 7:15 p.m.

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FARES—Olympia-Tacoma, 75c; Round Trip, \$1.25. Olympia-Seattle, (via Steamer from Tacoma) \$1.10; Round Trip, \$1.75  
MEALS—Pay for what you eat.

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## Olympia and Tacoma Navigation Co.

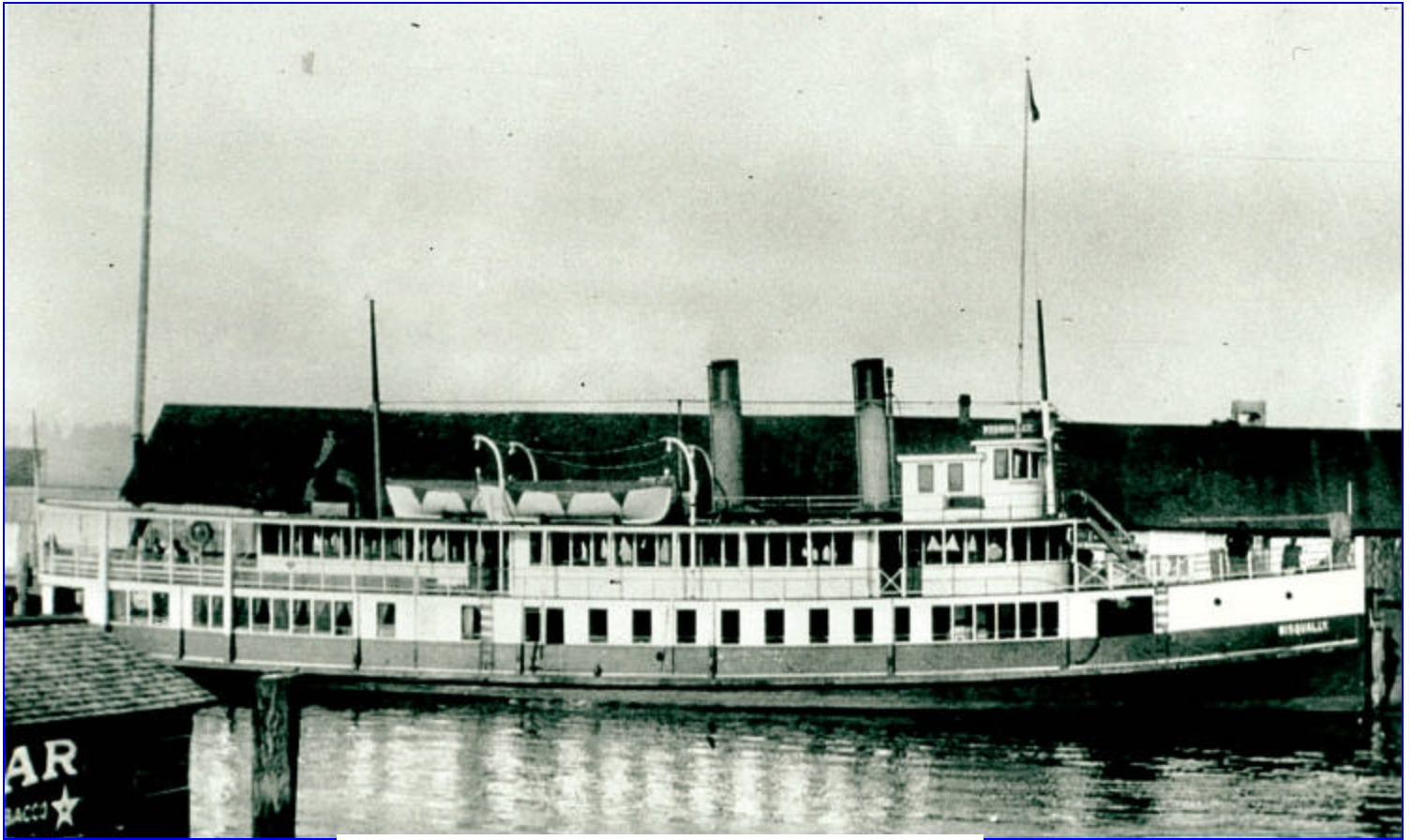
F. H. MARVIN, Manager  
Tacoma

J. C. PERCIVAL, Sec'y  
Phones 16 & 33 Olympia

The Nisqually was fleet and graceful, but she had her troubles, and she was frequently laid up with mechanical problems. The Nisqually was a classic vibrator. Captan Young, who served as her mate and pilot, relates that he had to stand his wheel watch on tiptoe to keep from being shaken blurry-eyed by the pulse of the engine. Stewards in the luxurious dining room learned to fill coffee cups only half full to avoid spilling them on passengers. A lot of money and effort was expended to cure the steamer of her jumpiness, but a complete cure was never found.

By the time of the First World War, motor cars and busses had bitten so deeply into the Nisqually's revenues that the ship was pulled off the run. In 1918, the *Nisqually* was renamed the *Astorian* and taken to the Columbia River by Capt. Fred Wilson, her master and former manager of the Olympia-Tacoma Navigation Company. The *Astorian* was placed on the Portland-Astoria route to compete with the steamer *Georgiana* of the Harkins Transportation Company. The little propeller steamers virtually had the historic route to themselves and they raced and fought for the dwindling river trade. The steamers would leave Portland





***Nisqually at Dock***

on identical schedules and usually race all the way to Astoria and back. Although they provided local service and made stops at Cathlamet, Pillar Rock, Eureka, Skamokawa and Brookfield, they made the downriver run in the creditable time of under six hours for the 110 miles, with the return trip generally taking slightly more than six hours.

Through the early months of 1920, the *Astorian* continued to operate on the Portland-Astoria route in spirited competition with the *Georgiana*. The following account of one of their races appeared in the Portland Oregonian on April 22, 1920: "In a race of 220 miles to Astoria and back to Portland with the steamer *Georgiana* for the title of the fastest steamboat on the river, the steamer *Astorian* finished first last night, reaching her dock at the foot of Taylor Street at 8:10 o'clock. The *Astorian*, however, made only two stops, at Skamokawa and Cathlamet on the way back, and passed up the oil docks in order to be the first to tie up. The steamer *Georgiana*, technically the loser in the race, made nine stops on the way back and took oil at Linnton on the home stretch. The *Georgiana*, the fast passenger boat of the Harkins fleet, has been completely remodeled since she was taken off the run at the close of the last summer season. Her boilers, burners, propeller and other vital parts are new and she has two smokestacks instead of one. The trip to

Astoria yesterday was the first of the season. Both boats left their docks promptly at 7:00 a.m., *Georgiana* three blocks closer to Astoria and having one less bridge to pass through, held the lead to Astoria and docked at the Sanborn Dock three minutes before *Astorian* reached the Callendar Dock. The *Georgiana* had made five stops and the *Astorian* two. On the return trip the *Astorian* left her dock a few minutes ahead of the *Georgiana*, which drew close to the *Astorian* several times but was unable to pass. The *Astorian* made only her two regular stops, while *Georgiana* increased hers to nine (including Altoona, Midway, Rainier and St. Helens), while the *Georgiana* claims the fastest running time and the Harkins Company maintains that as soon as her new machinery is shaken down, her supremacy of the river will be unquestioned. Until one boat establishes superiority, the race to Astoria and back promises to be a daily feature, as both leave at 7:00 a.m. daily except Friday. Through the main harbor to the Portland Flouring Mills, the speed limit on the river is eight miles per hour. From that point to the oil docks the vessels are allowed 12 miles an hour, and from there to Astoria a steamboat is limited only by the ability of its power plant." Neither steamer was able to establish a marked superiority in speed over the



other, but the *Astorian* was the victim of more of the numerous mechanical difficulties which had plagued the ship during her career on Puget Sound as the *Nisqually*. In 1921, her shaft broke while she was steaming at full speed. Before the steam could be shut off, her hull and shaft sustained costly damage, although the engine was not seriously injured. The *Astorian* was subsequently repaired and sold to the San Juan Transportation Company, which returned her to Puget Sound for a brief career.

### ***The Sinking***

On December 19, 1923, the *Astorian* entered Elliott Bay and collided with an oil barge being towed by the *Lillico No. 20*. She sank in 15 minutes in 300 feet of water. The steamer was under the command of Capt. C. E. Basford, and Capt Fred Hardwick was operating the tug. The *Astorian* had left Bellingham earlier in the day with passengers and a full cargo of island turkeys for the Seattle holiday trade. The collision occurred during heavy fog. There were no casualties.

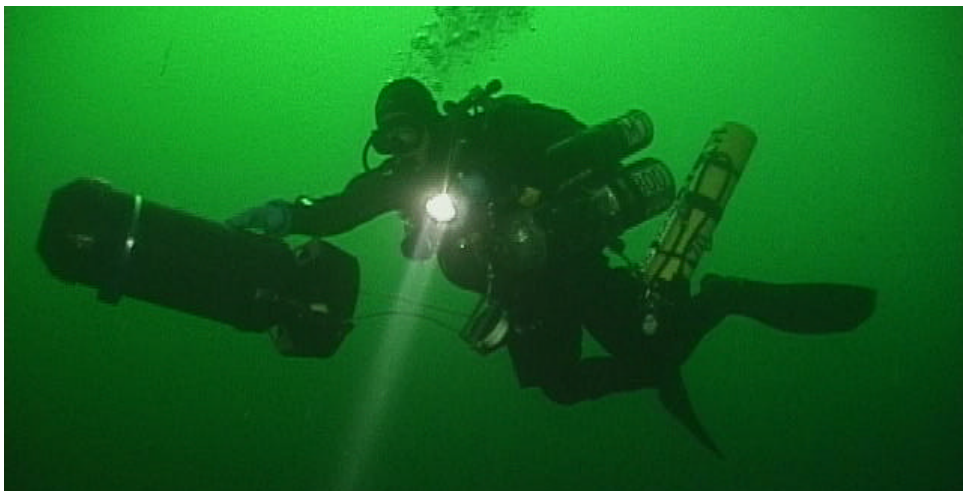
### ***The Astorian Today***

The hull of the *Astorian* sits upright on the bottom in 300 feet of water. The upper two decks, which carried passengers and cargo, are collapsed to the level of the hull. The deck of the ship is covered with a layer of 4-6 inches of silt. The vessel is carpeted with plumose anemones.

We arrived on the port side of the hull near the stern. This area is badly damaged and is probably the part of the *Astorian* that collided with the barge. We traveled around the stern and along the starboard side of the vessel to the bow. The hull is primarily intact. There are large opening in the main deck, providing access to the interior.



***Sidescan image of  
Astorian  
Provided by  
Inner Space  
Exploration Team  
2004***



***SECRET Diver Mark  
Tourtellot drops on the  
Astorian –2004***



***Bow of Astorian 2004***



***Remians of Funnel***



***Side of Hull***



***Stern of Astorian***



***Main Deck***



***Mark Takes us Home***

# I N F O

I would like to contact *SCRET* for information on a wreck – write to [info@scret.org](mailto:info@scret.org)

I would like to become a member of *SCRET* – join on-line at [www.scret.org](http://www.scret.org)

I would like to make a financial contribution to *SCRET* – mail to *SCRET*'s address shown below.

I would like to contribute an article to *SCRET*'s next newsletter – e-mail to [wjaccard@mindspring.com](mailto:wjaccard@mindspring.com) or mail to *SCRET*'s address shown below.

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