

## The Ella Ellinwood

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The Ella Ellenwood (also spelled Ellinwood in the early days) was one the most beautiful lumber schooners on White Lake, and while she did not wreck in or around the shores of White Lake, this was her home.

The 157-ton lumber schooner was built in East Saginaw, Michigan, in 1869, by William Dixon for Joseph Heald, lumberman and owner of the Heald, Avery & Crepin lumber mill which was located in the Maple Grove area on the White Lake. Classified as a Schooner, she was 106 feet long and 26 feet wide, with two-masts and a wooden hull. She was valued at \$9,000.

She was sailed by local resident Captain Andrew Flagstad, and was purchased in 1880 by Andrew's older brother Captain Thomas Flagstad.

The ship sailed during the lumbering boom and was especially busy transporting lumber from White Lake to Chicago after the Chicago fire, as well as other places around Lake Michigan. Not only did Chicago burn on October 9, 1871, but parts of Holland burned that same day, as did Manistee and Peshtigo, Wisconsin. The lumber mills were operating at their full capacity, providing materials for the reconstruction of these communities.

In November 1874, while owned by the Heald, Avery & Co. lumber mill, she made forty-four trips to Chicago, carrying 7,000,000 feet of lumber that season.

An October 1875 newspaper account reported that Capt. Andrew Flagstad left White Lake at 9:00 P.M. on Friday night with 170,000 feet of lumber for Chicago. He arrived in Chicago, discharged her cargo, took on 150 barrels of back freight, and arrived at White Lake Sunday morning at 9:00 A.M. - making a 36-hour trip.

Records also indicate that the Staples and Covell mills sent 227,162 feet of lumber out of White Lake on the Ellenwood in just the month of May 1885.

In the middle of September 1901, Captain Thomas Flagstad and his crew left White Lake with a load of maple edgings and shingles and headed up to Cross Village in Northern Michigan. Along the way, the ship made a delivery in Harbor Springs, before crossing the lake to Milwaukee, a particularly risky trip in early fall.

On the night of 29 September 1901, in the middle of a dark, stormy, and foggy night, the schooner ran aground off Fox Point about eight miles north of the Milwaukee harbor. Within hours, strong northerly winds and waves began to break up the schooner. The captain, crew, and Mrs. Flagstad narrowly escaped certain death as a huge wave toppled their lifeboat and tossed them on the shore. After a five-mile trek up the shore, they finally found help. The next day the Ellenwood's stern and transom were broken away and the hull had so badly worked loose that the masts wobbled in opposite directions with each swell. Only the bark shingles were able to be salvaged. The maple edgings in the hold and the schooner were left to the elements.

Incredibly, in the spring of 1902, a wooden nameplate bearing the name "Ellenwood" washed into the narrow channel to White Lake. Weather by mere chance, or fate, the Ella Ellenwood found her way home.

In 1984, the "World's Largest Operating Weather Vane" was built by the Whitehall Metal Studios and located on a man-made peninsula that jutted out into the water at the Northwest end of White Lake where the White River empties its waters. The 48-foot tall weathervane has a 26-foot wide arrow and weighs 3,500 pounds.

After nearly 20 years at that location, and problems with sinking foundations, the weathervane was moved to its current location on the corner of Water and Dowling Streets, once the site of the former White Lake Inn. Coincidentally, the Ellenwood's original dock was situated only a few hundred yards from there.