

Carrie A. Ryerson

Barbara Bedau Brow
White Lake Area Historical Society



The Carrie A. Ryerson was built in 1883 in Grand Haven, Michigan, by Duncan Robertson for Henry Jacobs and Henry H. Getty of Muskegon. The 66-foot wood hull Carrie A. Ryerson was classified as a Propeller and used on Muskegon Lake to carry passengers and freight from Muskegon to North Muskegon.

In 1897, David M. Wilson of Montague purchased her to make runs between White Lake, Muskegon and Grand Haven carrying passengers, baggage and light freight in connection with the Goodrich boats from Chicago and the Crosby ships from Milwaukee.

Every Saturday she made a run to Muskegon, leaving White Lake at 2:30 P.M. and returning at 10:30 A.M. The round-trip fare was 50 cents.

In 1901, the Nufer Cedar Company of Whitehall used her for a time before turning her back over to D. M. Wilson where she once again provided services as a local ferry on White Lake.

In August 1903, around 5:00 P.M., the Ryerson was returning to White Lake from the Little Sauble-Pentwater run when she became stuck in three feet of water off Ben Mac Dhui. There were fifteen passengers on board, mostly women and children. Several attempts were made with assistance of other steam yachts, but they were unsuccessful in getting the Ryerson unstuck.

By 8:00 P.M. the passengers were growing cold and feared they might have to spend the night on the boat, which had no staterooms.

Mr. Dowie sent his own yacht, supervised the transfer of the passengers and took them to Sylvan Beach where they had supper. They were then ferried to Montague where they spent the night before boarding the train to Muskegon the next morning.

In June 1906, about 6:00 P.M. on a Sunday evening, the SS Georgia was passing through the White Lake Channel into the Big Lake when the Str. Ryerson steamed in front of the boat to land some passenger on the big boat. The distance was misjudged and before the Georgia could be stopped it struck the Str. Ryerson amidships and cut quite a hole in her side.

The Life Saving crew assisted by taking the passengers off Ryerson and getting them on board the Georgia. The Ryerson then came into White Lake and beached near the Sylvan Beach dock. The damage was repaired and the Ryerson was soon back in service making runs between Muskegon, Stoney Lake and Little Point Sauble.

The Carrie A. Ryerson was sold to Thomas Young of Chicago in 1912, and in 1921 she was totally destroyed by fire in Willow Springs, Illinois.