

OTHER NAME(S)

City of Ainsworth Shipwreck
Kootenay Lake Shipwreck
City of Ainsworth sternwheeler

LINKS AND DOCUMENTS

[Wikipedia web page](#)
[Virtual Museum of Canada web site, Sternwheelers of Kootenay Lake](#)
[Nelson Star article, City of Ainsworth wreck assessed, 2011 July 28](#)

CONSTRUCTION DATE(S)

1892/01/01

LISTED ON THE CANADIAN REGISTER: 2013/01/11

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC PLACE

The City of Ainsworth Shipwreck provincial heritage site consists of the remains of the City of Ainsworth, a relatively small (25.6 meter by 6.4 meter) wooden-hulled sternwheeler lost in an accident on Kootenay Lake in 1898. The wreck of the City of Ainsworth lies in 111 m of water at the mouth of Crawford Bay, Kootenay Lake, British Columbia. Associated wreckage from the vessel lies in 6 to 35 meters of water immediately offshore near the cliffs of Cape Horn.

HERITAGE VALUE

The wreck of the City of Ainsworth is valued as the best preserved time capsule of 1890's maritime history in the interior of B.C. Its remains are illustrative of the complex nineteenth century transportation network in which trains and ships such as this sternwheeler worked together to carry freight and passengers to communities along Kootenay Lake and as far away as Bonners Ferry, Idaho. Built in 1892 on the foreshore of the Kootenay Lake mining town of Ainsworth, this vessel provides a reasonably intact representative example of one of the smaller independent ships in this transportation system.

The remains of the City of Ainsworth include a significant example of advanced late nineteenth century marine technology. The ship's paddlewheel, which features offset bucket planks which were intended to reduce vibration of the wheel, is the only one of its type to be documented on a British Columbia sternwheeler.

The wreck of the City of Ainsworth is also important as a memorial to the largest maritime disaster in the history of the British Columbia inland lakes. Nine people perished when the ship foundered and sank in the southern portion of Kootenay Lake during a violent storm in 1898.

Source: Province of British Columbia, Heritage Branch files

CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

The character-defining elements of the City of Ainsworth Shipwreck include:

- The depth of the wreck, which preserves this sole, relatively intact example of an 1890's sternwheeler from the British Columbia interior
- The upright position of the vessel on the lake bottom
- Surviving elements of the ship, including the hull and paddlewheel, and about three-quarters of the main deck superstructure, which contains a large cargo door, two rear windows and three doors which remain framed, as well as some of the vessel's machinery.
- The engine and boiler, which remain buried, and the surviving proper alignment of the connecting rods leading to the paddlewheel
- The paddlewheel, with staggered or offset bucket planks (blades)
- Additional machinery, including a pulley and shaft on the starboard side of the forward bulkhead, and steam cylinders and oiling valves
- A pennant mast which remains standing on the bow, and a hogpost and chainstay system