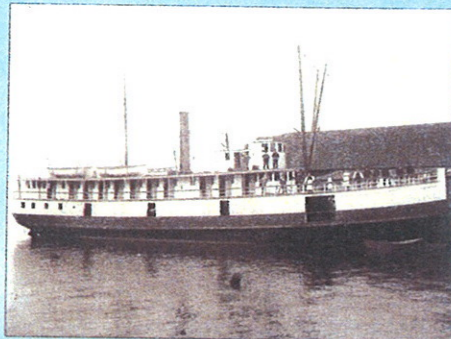


SHIPWRECKS

As long as there have been ships passing through the Strait of Juan de Fuca, there have been shipwrecks. The area where the Strait enters the Pacific Ocean is known as the "Graveyard of the Pacific," due to the large number of shipwrecks. They stretch from the coast of Vancouver Island to south of Cape Flattery. During the days of sailing ships, 1830 to 1925, 137 major shipping tragedies occurred in the immediate vicinity of the entrance to the Strait. Although the number of shipwrecks inside the Strait was significantly less, the effect on the people, communities, and shipping companies was no less devastating. The wrecks below focus on those that took place on the Clallam County coast, from Neah Bay eastward. These signs were designed and produced in a partnership between the Strait of Juan de Fuca Highway 112 Scenic Byway and the Clallam County Parks, Fair, and Facilities Department.

Alice Gertrude



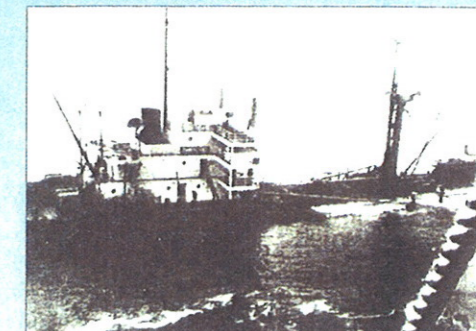
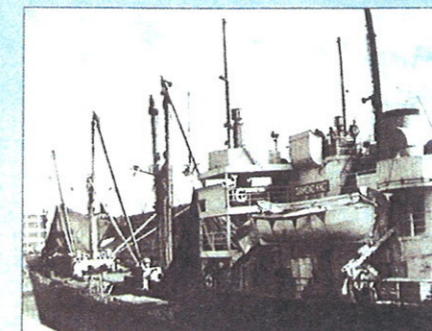
January 11, 1907, the Alice Gertrude stopped at Clallam Bay to unload and reload cargo to continue out to Neah Bay and return to Seattle. After departing, snow began to fall, the wind picked up and it was decided to return to Clallam Bay. As night fell, visibility was zero. The crew tried listening for the Slip Point foghorn, but it was turned off. The captain saw a light and, thinking it was the dock at Clallam Bay, swung the wheel to make his approach. The vessel stopped with a crash, listing on a reef a few hundred yards offshore. Tugboats were dispatched from Neah Bay, but due to the conditions, the passengers weren't rescued until daylight. The cargo, including 1,000 lbs. of butter from Forks, was salvaged along the shore by treasure hunters.

SS Clallam



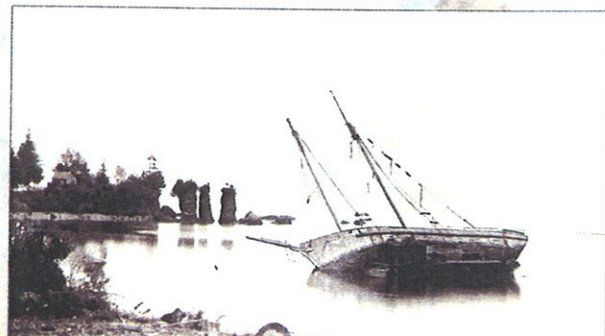
January 8, 1904, the passenger steamer SS Clallam sailed from Seattle for Victoria B.C. via Port Townsend with 92 passengers and crew on board. Leaving Port Townsend, the SS Clallam encountered heavy seas and gale force winds and, within sight of Victoria Harbor, began to founder. Fearing the vessel was sinking, three lifeboats were launched. The first launched lifeboat, filled with women and children, struck the guardrail and spilled the occupants into the sea. The second lifeboat, containing the remaining women and children, cleared the side of the ship, but was swamped by a huge wave washing the occupants overboard. The third lifeboat was upended, throwing all onboard into the water. From the three lifeboats, there were no survivors. The remaining passengers and crew kept the SS Clallam afloat until the early morning of January 9th, when she began to sink. Two tugboats rescued 36 survivors, but 56 people drowned. This was the worst maritime disaster involving a Puget Sound Mosquito Fleet steamer ever recorded.

Diamond Knot



August 13, 1947, the Diamond Knot steamed her way through the Strait toward Seattle in dense fog. She was fully loaded with more than 7 million cans of salmon. The freighter Fenn Victory outbound from Seattle carried only about 200 tons. She was riding high in the water and moving fast. At 1:15 a.m., the Fenn Victory's bow crashed into the smaller freighter. Distress calls went out and tugs were dispatched. After hours of struggle, the ships were finally free of each other. The Fenn Victory limped back to port. The tugs placed the Diamond Knot in tow and headed for Crescent Bay. At 8:57 a.m., the ship sank below the surface off of Tongue Point. This was one of the largest cargo losses ever on the West Coast. Huge siphons were devised and used to vacuum the canned salmon onto waiting barges. By the end of October, more than 5,700,000 cans were recovered. The Diamond Knot is now a popular dive site.

Louise S.



In April 1909, the little two-masted schooner Louise S. in the charge of Capt. L. B. McCoy, who had his wife and five-year-old daughter aboard, was caught in a strong tide and was driven ashore at Pillar Point where a hole was punched through the hull. Capt. McCoy secured a tug. The tug towed her to Sekiu where the hull was repaired, and two days later had her safely afloat again. The schooner was carrying a cargo of lumber and hardware to the Clallam Coal Company's mine near Pysht and was to take a return cargo of coal to Seattle.

Seventy-Six



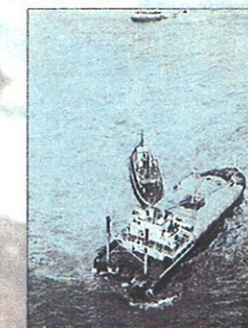
The smaller of the two ships (in front) was built in 1864. The schooner ran into trouble off Neah Bay in 1881 and was reportedly salvaged and repaired.

Shipwreck Point



Ten miles west of here, Shipwreck Point Beach, between Sekiu and Neah Bay, is a 472-acre State Natural Resource Conservation Area.

Andalusia



The Panamanian tramp steamer was carrying 5 million board feet of lumber. On November 4, 1949 her engine room caught fire. Her crew steered the stricken vessel south toward a sandy beach near Snow Creek, with thoughts of beaching the hull to save the crew. Unfortunately, the ship struck hard upon the shallow rocky reef half mile offshore from the beach. Seven large, ocean-going tugs failed to pull it off the rocks. On November 9th, gale force winds and waves broke the back of the freighter and the ship split in two. The Andalusia sank a half mile east of Seal Rock.

Other Shipwrecks

- Ellen Foster** – The American ship wrecked in Neah Bay, December 22, 1867. A bronze cannon recovered in 1929 was from this ship.
- W.A. Banks** – The American bark ran aground at Clallam Bay, November 10, 1869.
- Pelicano** – The Nicaraguan ship was stranded on the rocks on the western point of Neah Bay, January 19, 1875.
- Penelope** – The American ex-sealing schooner dragged anchor and ran aground at Clallam Bay, March 19, 1904.
- Nebraska** – The 50 foot gasoline launch, owned by Eggers Fish, sank at Neah Bay, August 1912.
- Graywood** – The steam schooner foundered three miles inside of the Strait as it was being towed to Port Angeles, October 3, 1915.
- Bianca** – The schooner went aground and totally wrecked near Clallam Bay, December 15, 1924.