



Discover Unique Great Lakes Finds at Our Museum Store!

Be sure to visit our museum store during your trip! It's filled with Great Lakes gifts, unique handmade finds, apparel, and more. Whether you're looking for a souvenir or a one-of-a-kind treasure, you'll find something special. Plus, members receive 10% off every purchase.



Shop now!

NO TIME TO SHOP TODAY OR NO SPACE IN YOUR LUGGAGE?
Shop online anytime at nmglstore.org.

PRESERVING, SHARING, AND CELEBRATING THE GREAT LAKES STORY

Our mission is to preserve, share, and celebrate the past, present, and future of the Great Lakes story. We fulfill this mission by operating the National Museum of the Great Lakes, publishing our quarterly journal *Inland Seas*®, conducting underwater archaeology, offering educational programs, and conserving 20th-century Great Lakes history. We steward the National Museum of the Great Lakes through our core values of Education, Partnership, Sustainability, Inclusivity, and Leadership.

Our vision is to be the gathering place for all Great Lakes conversations—a hub of history, education, and collaboration that fosters a thriving future for this important natural resource.

Share your dedication to the Great Lakes story by helping us fulfill our mission and vision. **Donate online at:** nmgl.org/donate.

OUR HISTORY

In 1944, the National Museum of the Great Lakes began as the Great Lakes Historical Society, driven by a passion for preserving Great Lakes history. One of our earliest accomplishments was creating the award-winning *Inland Seas*® journal, which we have published continuously for over 80 years.

In 1952, we opened our first museum in Vermilion, Ohio, before relocating to our current home in Toledo in 2014. Along the way, we added two historic vessels to our experience: the *Col. James M. Schoonmaker* Museum Ship (launched in 1911) in 2012 and the *Museum Tug Ohio* (built in 1903) in 2018. You can explore their fascinating histories firsthand aboard the boats.

In 2025, we opened our Second Wave expansion featuring the pilothouse from the *St. Marys Challenger*, believed to be the longest continuously operated bulk carrier in the world. You can now enjoy new permanent exhibits, temporary exhibits, and dedicated space for Great Lakes education and programming.

MUSEUM HOURS

MONDAY - SATURDAY | 10 am - 5 pm
SUNDAY | 12 - 5 pm
Closed on Tuesdays Nov. 1 - Apr. 30.

The *Col. James M. Schoonmaker* Museum Ship and Museum Tug Ohio are open May 1 - October 31!

Winter (November 1 - April 30)
Vessels are closed for the season.

VOLUNTEER

Do you have a heart for the Great Lakes? Join our volunteer crew and help support the museum's mission. Visit nmgl.org/volunteer for more information or to sign up. *Corporate groups are welcome.*



1701 Front St.
Toledo, OH
419.214.5000
NMGL.ORG



MEMBERSHIP

Become a member today to start enjoying amazing benefits!

- Get unlimited admission to the museum and our museum ships.
- Experience multiple new exhibits every year.
- Access members only events and Great Lakes content.
- Save with exclusive discounts on programs and museum store purchases.
- Enjoy **Member Pop Up Perks**, including membership swaps and discounts to other attractions and events!

Ask our Visitor Experience Team or visit nmgl.org/membership for more information.

RENTALS

Looking for a unique venue? Plan your special event at the museum! Our museum spaces are available for event rentals. For more information or to book your event, email sales@nmgl.org.

GROUP TOURS

Plan your next group outing! Groups of 15 or more can enjoy discounted admission and guided tours. For more information or to book your visit, email sales@nmgl.org.

NATIONAL
MUSEUM
of the
GREAT
LAKES

Visitor Guide

*84% of the continent's fresh water...
a different story in every drop!*

Museum Exhibits

Our gallery is a self-guided space designed for you to wander and explore at your own pace. Dive into thousands of years of Great Lakes history, from the early fur trade and industrial growth to pivotal wars and legendary shipwrecks. Discover stories that shaped the region and the people who lived, worked, and sailed these waters.

1 THE GREAT LAKES: A POWERFUL FORCE THEATER

The Great Lakes (Ontario, Erie, Huron, Michigan, and Superior) are a force to be reckoned with. Experience their power through this 7-minute orientation film.

2 MARITIME TECHNOLOGY

Advancements in technology have made the lakes safer and cheaper to traverse. Learn how boats have evolved from crafts driven by manpower, then by wind, steam, and finally diesel.

3 EXPLORATION & SETTLEMENT

People have relied on the Great Lakes for more than 11,000 years. Explore the cultures and customs of the region's first residents and the impact of European arrival.

4 EXPANSION & INDUSTRY

Witness an age when the Great Lakes waters became a superhighway for people and goods alike, becoming a transformational force for the continent's economy and demographics.

5 SAFEGUARD & SUPPORT

Discover the early battles that determined territorial boundaries over land and water and the region's pivotal roles during the World Wars. Plus, learn about the importance of lifesaving stations and the US Coast Guard's role in keeping mariners safe.

6 SHIPWRECKS & SAFETY

Great Lakes travel can be treacherous. Mariners battle unpredictable weather, shoals, rocks, and the limits of their own technology. Better understand shipwrecks of the past and uncover their stories—just like an underwater archaeologist. Also, get up close to a second-order Fresnel lighthouse lens from the late 1800s, the largest on the Great Lakes!



WORLD GROUP FOUNDATION GALLERY

7 EVERY BOAT TELLS OUR STORY EXHIBIT

Our collective history can be told through stories from the Great Lakes. Learn about immigrant laborers in Great Lakes shipyards, an African American secretary who fought discrimination, a female salvage diver who broke into a male-dominated field, and more, as told through the Bob Sellers Model Collection.

Featuring **ST. MARYS CHALLENGER PILOTHOUSE EXPERIENCE**

8

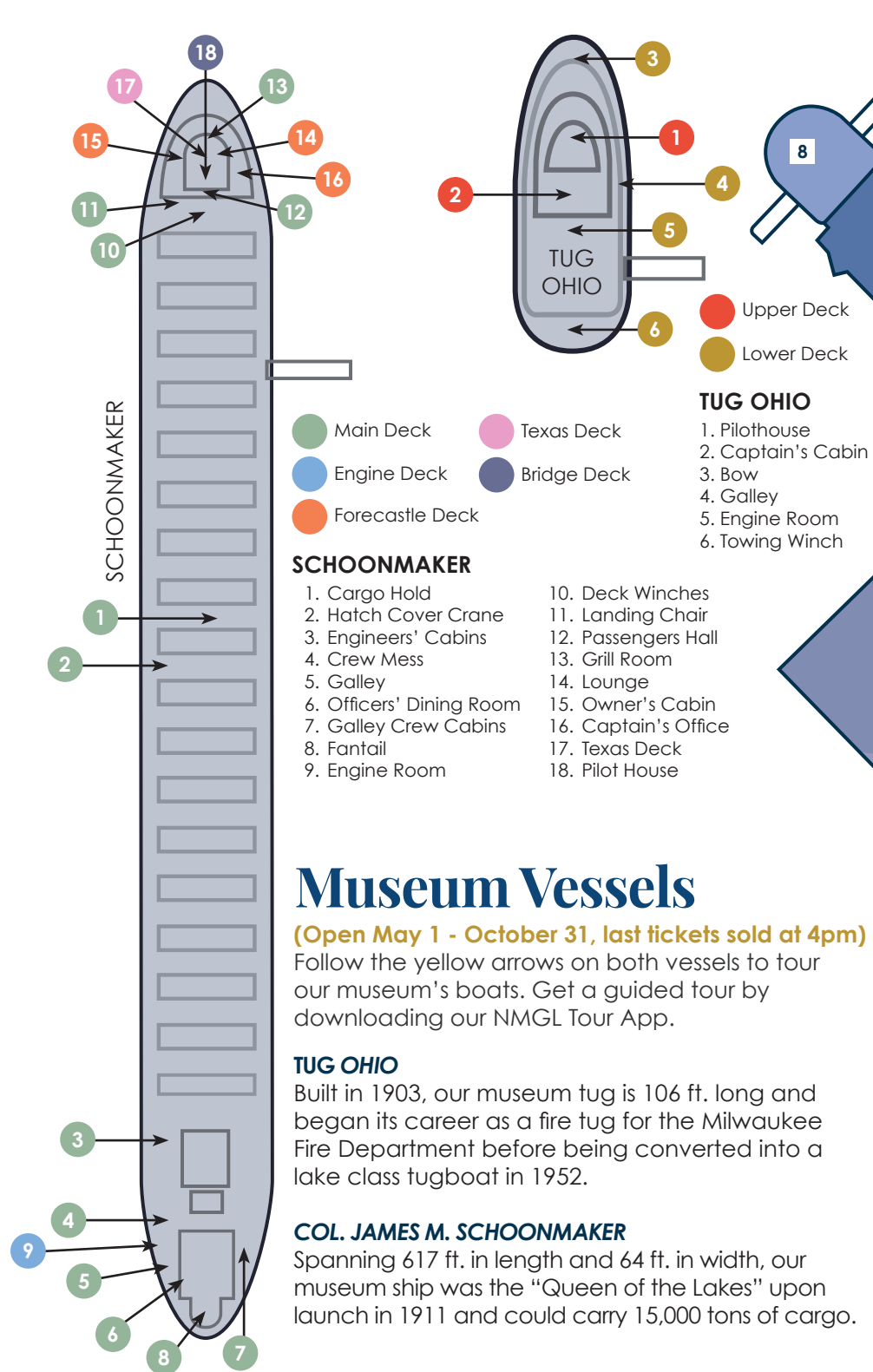
The *St. Marys Challenger* provides year-round access to a memorable pilothouse experience for all visitors. Launched in 1906, the *St. Marys Challenger* is thought to be the longest continuously operated bulk carrier in world history. Having retired as a self-propelled freighter in 2014, it sailed for 108 years and its hull continues to work as a tug barge today. This exhibit is made possible by the generous support of the Schoonmaker Foundation.

9 TEMPORARY AND TRAVELING EXHIBITS

Our temporary and traveling exhibit space offers dynamic, rotating artifacts and displays that highlight a wide range of Great Lakes topics. From exploring the region's unique wildlife and environmental challenges to uncovering untold stories from the past, these exhibits provide fresh perspectives and new discoveries with every visit.

TOUR OUR MUSEUM SHIPS WITH THE NMGL APP!

The best way to explore our museum ships is with the NMGL TOUR App! Enjoy a guided tour right from your phone, featuring images, stories, and audio recordings that bring the history of the *Col. James M. Schoonmaker* and the *Tug Ohio* to life. **Simply search "Schoonmaker" in your mobile app store to get started.**



Museum Vessels

(Open May 1 - October 31, last tickets sold at 4pm)

Follow the yellow arrows on both vessels to tour our museum's boats. Get a guided tour by downloading our NMGL Tour App.

TUG OHIO

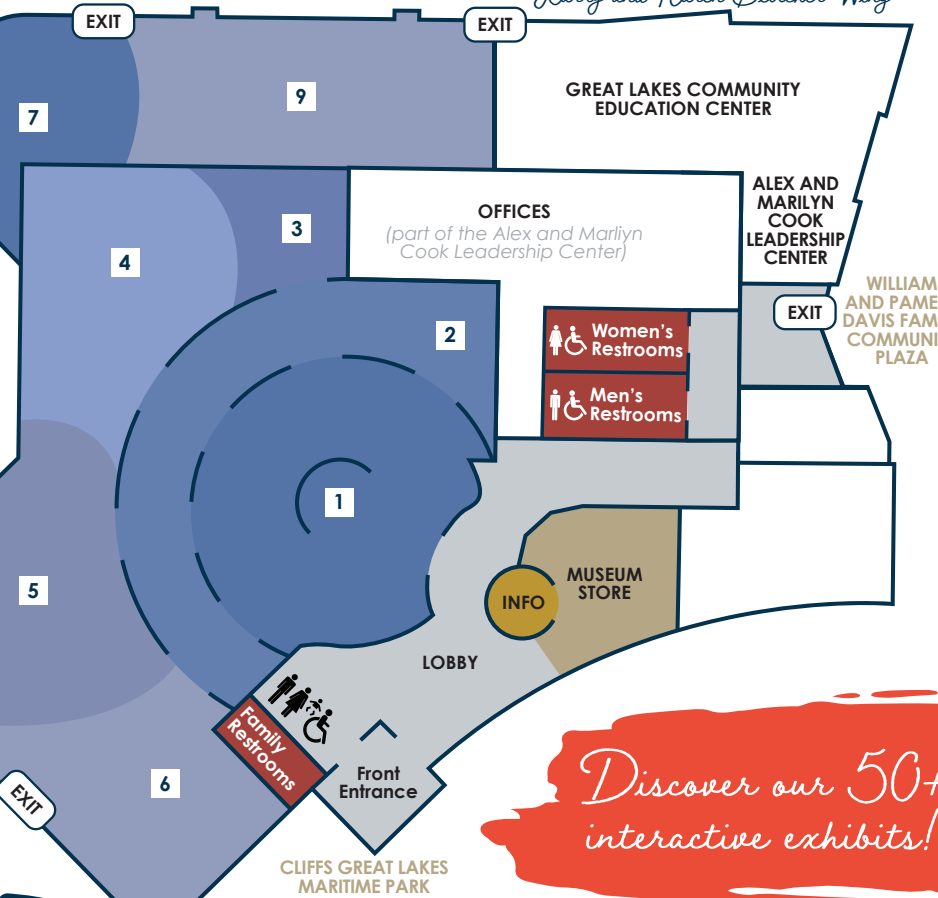
Built in 1903, our museum tug is 106 ft. long and began its career as a fire tug for the Milwaukee Fire Department before being converted into a lake class tugboat in 1952.

COL. JAMES M. SCHOONMAKER

Spanning 617 ft. in length and 64 ft. in width, our museum ship was the "Queen of the Lakes" upon launch in 1911 and could carry 15,000 tons of cargo.

Museum Exhibits

Larry and Karen Bettcher Wing



LAST TIME TO BOARD THE VESSELS IS 4 PM.

MUSEUM VESSEL SAFETY

- Please use caution aboard the museum vessels.
- Watch your step and be aware of your surroundings at ALL times.
- Follow your children when climbing up stairs and have them follow you when descending.
- Hold handrails whenever possible, and DO NOT RUN on/within ships.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to their historical accuracy, the museum ships are not wheelchair accessible. Please visit the *St. Marys Challenger* Pilothouse for an accessible maritime experience.

Discover our 50+ interactive exhibits!

CLIFFS GREAT LAKES MARITIME PARK

to museum ships