



Truman Ingersoll's comic view of a staged disaster, 1899 (MNHS COLLECTIONS)

Holy Scow!

WHEN PHOTOGRAPHER Truman Ward Ingersoll invited family and friends to go sailing on White Bear Lake so that he could make some photos, they may not have had this type of view in mind. He certainly did, however. Ingersoll's business was making and selling scenic and comic stereographs. A popular form of entertainment at the time, stereographs were made of two very similar images printed side by side to produce a 3-D effect when viewed through a stereoscope. In 1899 he published a stereograph of a view like this, along with another showing the boat under sail. "The Dangers of Sailing—To the Rescue" is the title for this one.

The overturned boat that dunked its well-dressed passengers, including Ingersoll's sister-in-law clinging on top, is a scow-like sailboat. These flat-topped vessels have been popular on White Bear Lake for over a century. In fact, the Johnson Boat Works in downtown White Bear Lake was famous for making scows and other boats for more than 100 years: 1896–1998. At the time of this photo, there were four boat works on the lake, each developing new designs.

This was familiar sailing ground to Mr. Ingersoll, a denizen of Dellwood who made many friends on the lake while living in his log cabin, Birch Lodge. He was also a charter member of the White Bear Yacht Club. It is likely that this view, taken

from the White Bear Yacht Club area looking toward the Peninsula, was staged near Ingersoll's cabin. His platform for photographing such a rare "action" shot was perhaps his own steam launch, *Mirabelle*. A shallow spot in the lake may have provided safe ground for the intrepid man posing underwater with his hand on the tiller. I like to think he could touch bottom while Mr. Ingersoll adjusted his exposures.

—Bonnie Wilson

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