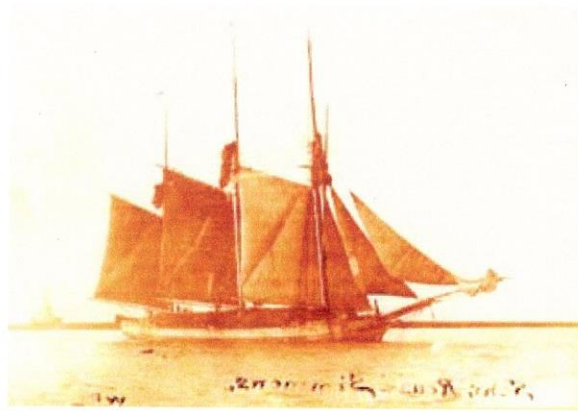

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## Sch. Rouse Simmons

"The Christmas Tree Ship"

1869-1912



VESSEL LOST:	November 28, 1912
LIVES LOST:	16 lives lost - the entire crew lost with the ship
WRECK LOCATION:	11 miles north of Two Rivers, Wisconsin
DEPTH:	170 feet of water
HULL:	Wood Three Masted Schooner; 153'L
PROPULSION:	Sail
CARGO:	General Merchandise and Christmas Trees
SHIP BUILDER:	Cleveland, Ohio
OWNER/s	Captain Herman Schuenemann

Over the centuries thousands of ships have been lost throughout the world. Most are forgotten, however, some become the stuff of legend. So became the story of the *Rouse Simmons*. The *Simmons*, a sturdy three masted schooner, delivered cargo to ports throughout Lake Michigan. The sturdy boat had a proven track record of reliably delivering cargo under the experienced hand of Captain Herman Schuenemann.

Every year in mid-November, Captain Schuenemann sailed to the frosty shores of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Once docked in Thompson, Michigan (near Manistique) crew and local laborers would begin loading

spruce and pine Christmas trees for delivery to Chicago's Clark Street wharf. The year 1912 was to be promising for Christmas trees sales as the arrival of the *Rouse Simmons* had become a local tradition that residents of the Clark Street neighborhood eagerly awaited. On November 23, 1912 a cold and bitter wind blew through the rigging as the last of the trees were loaded.

The November weather mounted as the *Rouse Simmons* shoved off from the pier headed down the frigid lake for Chicago. Some time later, a three masted schooner was spotted by rescuers at the Kewaunee Life Saving Station. The schooner was sailing low in the water with distress flags flying. The brave crew of the life station launched their small rescue boat and rowed into the waves and snow for hours before they finally got another glimpse of the schooner. However, it was too late as the vessel, believed to have been the *Rouse Simmons*, slipped below the water behind a thick wall of blowing snow. Trees, branches and other debris washed up on both sides of the lake. Some of the trees were gathered and hauled to the Clark Street wharf where they were sold. A note was found that some believe to have been written by the first mate of the *Simmons*:

*These lines written at 10:30 p.m. Schooner R.S. ready to go down about 20 miles southwest of Two Rivers Point between 15-20 miles offshore. All hands lashed to one line. Goodbye.*

*Nelson*

The statistical and historic information on this page was compiled using a broad overview of records and summaries. Enthusiasts are strongly encouraged to consult two sources in particular for further in-depth information. Richard Smith's "Out of the Past," and Brendan Baillod's "Ghosts of the Ozaukee Coast." Visit these websites for more information:

[www.ghost-ships.org](http://www.ghost-ships.org)

[www.ozcoweb.com/ronvoigt/porthistorical/ShipWrecks.htm](http://www.ozcoweb.com/ronvoigt/porthistorical/ShipWrecks.htm)



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