

# INDIANA JONES WAS RIGHT.

July 29, 2011 Margie Day of Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2011, Maritime Archaeology archaeologist, diver, Elephant Butte Lake, Empire, fictional archaeologist, Hospital Canyon, indiana jones, internet research, lake michigan, maritime archaeology, Michigan, nautical archaeology, New Mexico, whip

I'm not sure how many of us would admit this, but I decided to become an archaeologist because of Indiana Jones. He had it all: action, adventure, the whip and fedora. And the theme song. Man, that theme song! When I was a kid, I used to spend my summers on the boat at Elephant Butte Lake in southern New Mexico, begging my dad to take me to Hospital Canyon so that I could see the building that were lurking just below the surface of the water. Each time we went, I would look down into the water, see the wooden buildings and tell myself that one day, I would go down there. After all, Indy would want me to.

Fast forward twenty years. I no longer live in southern New Mexico but in Northern Michigan. I never did get to go and check out the buildings of Hospital Canyon, but I did decide to follow in Indiana Jones's footsteps. Kind of. I am a student of archeology, you see- nautical archaeology. Not something I would have expected from myself having grown up in the deserts of New Mexico, but there you are. I am not a diver, which some might think would hinder my ability to participate in field work. When I started studying the subject, I honestly thought the same thing. As it turns out, Lake Michigan is the place to be this summer.

I teamed up with a couple of NASII students this summer to do a project at Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore in Empire, Michigan. We were lucky enough to have this amazing specimen wash ashore this past fall after what amounted to an inland hurricane. The structure was magnificent! We worked with an amazing archaeologist who helped guide us in our work, encouraging us in every way. I can't speak for the rest of the team, but it was my Indiana Jones "moment" and the coolest day of my life. When the survey was over, we divided up the what needed to be done to get the monograph complete and went home. Which brings me to today. Today, I am reminded of something that Dr. Jones told his students before he went off to find action and glory. He said that "Seventy percent of all archaeology is done in the library; research, reading." That is what I am doing today: research and reading. It's nothing glamorous, or sexy. And I am certainly not getting dirty digging in the dirt, or in this case knocked around by waves. But there is certainly a lot of work that goes into historical research of an unidentified vessel, the region it was found in, the circumstances under which it was found, and how it might possibly fit into the grand scheme of things. Thankfully, I spent most of my time in the library when the project plan was developed so today is dedicated to internet research: images mostly- period maps, lighthouse logs, meteorological reports. This is something I can do comfortably in my pajamas at my kitchen table.

Today isn't the most glamorous day of my archaeological career, and I'm sure it won't be the last day like it. But I know that I can say that with each bit of research I uncover, I am that much closer to uncovering the mystery identity of this unknown shipwreck. And as I sit here at the kitchen table, coffee in hand, I know that the fictional archaeologist was right. Archaeology is a lot of research. But the day that I go back out into the field, I will most definitely be humming my own theme song.