

**THE WILLOCHRA DISASTER  
NEWPORT HARBOR NAUTICAL MUSEUM  
DOCUMENTARY SHORT**

**VISUAL**

**AUDIO**

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FADE IN:

**NARRATOR: VO**

W. BEARDSMORE & CO. BROCHURE, LARGE  
STEAMSHIP WITH CROWDS WAVING ON  
DOCK, HORNS, SMOKING ROOMS AND  
DINING ROOMS.

The good news of 1912 was that steamship travel had become dependable and regular, carrying passengers in elegance and comfort all around the world. Seizing on this boom, the Adelaide Steamship Company ordered three state-of-the-art steamships built at the Beardsmore Shipyard in Scotland.

THE TITANIC AT SEA, THE DISASTER, PAN  
ACROSS BROCHURE SAFETY FEATURES.

The bad news was that the Titanic had sunk that year, sending an icy chill through all civilian seafarers.

SHIP PICS, AUSTRALIAN HOSPITAL WARD  
CIRCA 1912

When the Willochra and her two sister ships arrived on their maiden voyage to Sydney, Australia, a raging smallpox epidemic had already ruined any hope of success. The Willochra was sold to a New Zealand steamship company.

NEW ZEALAND PORT CIRCA 1913, MAP OF  
WILLOCHRA'S PACIFIC ROUTES, TAHITI  
CIRCA 1913, SAN FRANCISCO

She began her new life in the summer of 1913, carrying travelers across the Pacific, stopping briefly in Tahiti before landing at San Francisco.

WILLOCHRA PORTSIDE, SYDNEY HARBOR  
CIRCA 1914, WILLOCHRA BROCHURE

Her San Francisco-Sydney service was abruptly halted by World War I in 1914, when she—like her two sister ships—was requisitioned to serve as a troopship in the New Zealand navy.

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE HEADLINE,  
WILLOCHRA IN CAMOUFLAGE, WW I PICS,  
SUEZ CONFLICT; WILLIAM BEARDSMORE  
“WARSHIPS” BROCHURE, MAPS OF ROUTES

Thus, the once-luxurious passenger ship took on the camouflage of battle, making eight voyages between England and Egypt. Under British command, the Willochra was assigned the Atlantic run, ferrying troops from America to the European battlefields.

PRISONERS OF WAR PICS, MAPS

After the war, she was used to transport prisoners of war back to their homelands. Soon, the Adelaide Steamship Company put her up for sale.

BERMUDA, NEW YORK HARBOR,  
PROHIBITION PICTURES, VIDEO CLIPS?  
PROHIBITION MUSIC (RAGTIME)

In the 1920s, Prohibition drew a thirsty New York crowd to Bermuda—and Furness Withy & Company saw a great opportunity. They bought the Willochra, and outfitted her with 373 first class rooms and 56 second class accommodations . . . and renamed her The Fort Victoria, after a Bermuda landmark. Here she found steady service from 1919 to 1929. But fate would not allow the Willochra a calm existence for long.

FORT VICTORIA (WILLOCHRA) FIRST CLASS DINING ROOM, FIRST CLASS SMOKE ROOM  
AUDIO: AL JOLSON'S TOOT TOOT TOOTSIE

Now known as The Fort Victoria, she set sail through deep fog from New York at midnight December 18, 1929, on a Christmas cruise to Bermuda—a journey she had made hundreds of times.

FOG, ILLUSTRATION OF COLLISION

Suddenly the early morning calm was broken by a massive jolt and the eerie scream of metal shearing metal. Crewmen watched in horror as a fog-blinded Clyde-steamer—the Algonquin—sunk her sharp prow deep into the Fort Victoria's port side. As the sea rushed in, she started to sink.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF RESCUE SHIPS,  
DYNAMITING OF FORT VICTORIA,

Police ships, coast guard vessels and tugs hurried to the scene. Captain A.R. Francis observed tradition, leaving the ship only after all 171 passengers and 35 crew had been saved. When the active sea lane was cleared, the Fort Victoria was dynamited and wire dragged to a depth of 250 feet, having served a mere pittance of her lifespan, yet seeing a rich and varied career in her 16 years.

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