

# HISTORY SINKING

TWO HISTORIC VESSELS HAVE BEEN LOST IN NEW YORK DURING ONE WEEK

BY PERRY TYLER



**O**n 1 July, the former racing schooner *Pilot* sank at its moorings at Red Hook, Brooklyn, New York, in the midst of a squall. The *Pilot* had been in use as a popular bar and was owned by a local hospitality company named Crew that also owns other historic ships. The vessel was moored next to a massive disused Red Hook grain terminal and the 102-year-old ship came to rest on the

bottom with just its masts sticking up above the surface.

She was designed by William Starling Burgess in the Grand Banks style and the Boston Pilots' Association purchased her to take the place of the pilot boat *Louise No. 2* that was phased out of service in 1924. *Pilot* was constructed at the J.F. James & Son Shipyard in Essex County, Massachusetts. She was a spoon-bowed knockabout schooner,

built without a bowsprit, and equipped with a twin-screw diesel engine. She was 121 feet high overall and 98 feet at the waterline with a 25-foot beam. She cost \$52,000 (about \$1,016,000 in 2026 dollars) to build and was launched on 2 October 1924.

Under the command of Capt. Murdock McLean (who also supervised construction), she arrived in Boston on 19 November 1924. On 9 December of

that year with Capt. William H. Lewis at the helm she left Lewis Wharf in Boston with 50 guests aboard for her trial trip past the Boston Light. She continued to give excellent service up until America's entry into the Second World War. At that point, she was taken over by the US Coast Guard and *Pilot* aided in moving troop transports, cargo ships, and tankers. With the end of the war, she was returned to the Boston Pilots'

Association and continued to give valuable service until 1975.

During 1976, Californian Norman D. Paulsen purchased her with the intent of using the vessel as a research platform. She would host Jacques Cousteau for his trip to the Galapagos. In 1998, she was sold on with the new name *Highlander Sea* and would be sold several more times. In 2015 she would be purchased by Miles and Alex Pincus, the brothers

that own Crew, and converted to a maritime attraction at the Brooklyn Bridge Park. She was then operated as a seasonal floating bar from 2017 to 2025 and her berth offered sensational views of nighttime New York City. In early 2026, she was moved from her berth in Brooklyn Bridge Park to Henry Street Basin in Red Hook to undergo maintenance. While this work was going on, she was replaced by the fireboat