

Illustration 3: To better understand the failed moorings in Buffalo, the Lake Carriers Association commissioned a map to show the positions of the largest cluster of bulk carriers before and after the storm.

On the west shore of Lake Erie and the lower Detroit River maritime traffic was delayed by a dramatic lowering of the water level as wind pushed water from west to east down the lake. At Toledo the Maumee River dropped ten feet, leaving freighters at winter moorings off Bay View sitting in the mud. At Lime Kiln Crossing the water level dropped six feet. The *Detroit Free Press* reported that "old mariners say not in years has the water level here reached such a low stage." Maritime affairs all over the region were temporarily in disarray.

Recovery

When the storm subsided, the Great Lakes shipping community was faced with a chaotic and confusing mess. At stake were vessels valued at \$14,000,000 carrying grain valued at \$7,000,000 – together equivalent to roughly \$279,000,000 today – and costs to preserve the ships, save the grain cargoes, and restore the fleet to service before spring. Damage to the fleet was serious. A few gashed and punctured steel plates existed, but more common were dented plates, bottom damage, and torn and twisted mooring gear.

²⁶ "Gale Lowers Water Six Feet at Amherstburg" and "Storm Sweeps Michigan, East," *Detroit Free Press*, 19 December 1921.