Purpose: To research, locate, and document the undiscovered historic ships in Lake Ontario.

Background: For over 350 years ships have traversed Lake Ontario transporting goods and people. The remains of some of the oldest ships that still exist in the Great Lakes are located in Ontario. The oldest shipwreck discovered in the Great Lakes is the British warship, HMS Ontario that foundered in 1780 in Lake Ontario was located by our team in 2008. There were many sailing ships on the lake during the period from the late 1700’s through the early 1900’s. Some of these ships never made it to the port of their destination. Unfortunately, there are no drawings available of the construction of these old ships. By locating these historic shipwrecks we are able to provide details of their construction and cargo. As we examine our sonar and video recordings we are able to write the final chapter of these doomed ships.

Results: The 2013 shipwreck search season was the best ever. Our team located a total of eight historic ships in Lake Ontario, three of which were announced in the news media and to The Explorers Club. More discovery work is to be done on the remaining five shipwrecks in addition to several other interesting targets that are still to be closely investigated. A brief summary of the three ships that we announced in 2013, are as follows:

Schooner Atlas (1838) - Oldest confirmed commercial schooner discovered in the Great Lakes

In early May 1839 the schooner Atlas was transporting a cargo of Black River limestone from Chaumont, NY to the port of Oswego, NY. Within a few miles of its final destination the Atlas encountered gale force winds from the northwest which more than likely caused a shift in the heavy cargo taking the schooner swiftly to the bottom of Lake Ontario. The schooner sank so quickly there was no time for anyone to escape and all on board were carried to the deep depths of the lake. The Atlas, a two masted schooner, was built in Dexter, NY in 1838 and owned by Ortha Little & Son for the specific purpose of transporting building stone from the quarries in Chaumont, NY. More details and pictures are on www.shipwreckworld.com
Sketch of the shipwreck schooner Atlas (by Roland Stevens)

Ships’ wheel  Stone cargo in hold

(Video images from VideoRay ROV by Roger Pawlowski)
**Schooner Ocean Wave (1868)** - *Capsized in violent storm and remained afloat for almost 10 days.*

In early November 1890 the Canadian schooner Ocean Wave, heavily laden with a cargo of hemlock lumber and lath, was bound for Oswego from Trenton, Ontario. When the schooner was within 15 miles of its destination it encountered a sudden and violent squall from the south. High winds of nearly 50 mph may have created waves exceeding 12 feet in height capsizing the schooner. All on board were lost. The Ocean Wave remained floating for nearly 10 days until she finally sank. The Ocean Wave, a two-masted schooner, was built in Picton, Ontario, Canada in 1868 and was owned by Captains Thomas Brokenshire (57) and William Martin, both of Port Hope. The great grandson of Captain Brokenshire contacted our team with additional details of the captain and his family and the last hours before the ship’s final voyage. More details and pictures are on [www.shipwreckworld.com](http://www.shipwreckworld.com)

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**Sketch of the remains of the schooner Ocean Wave (by Roland Stevens)**

**Side scan sonar image- schooner Ocean Wave**

**Broken foremast of the schooner Ocean Wave**
Steamer Roberval (1907) – Sinking by a rogue wave and survival of the crew on Lake Ontario

In late September 1916 the Canadian steamer Roberval carried a huge load of 248,000 board feet of lumber destined to be made into matchsticks and boxes by the Diamond Match Company in Oswego. The winds increased and several waves combined into one huge “rogue” wave that caused the steamer to roll over on its starboard side spilling a portion of the deck cargo. This was followed by another large wave which caused the remaining loose cargo to slide off the deck and into the cabin at the aft portion of the steamer.

Three of the crew reached a life boat which had been severely damaged and was leaking badly. The men in this small craft bailed water and rowed for nearly 9 hours in a heavy sea all the way to the port of Oswego, a distance of over 16 miles. For the next 22 hours Captain Eligh and the other three crew members made a make shift raft out of the lumber cargo and worked non-stop during this time to keep it together. They were finally rescued over 10 miles from shore by the crew of the Big Sandy life-saving station. The Roberval was built by the Polson Iron Works in Toronto, Ontario, Canada in 1907 and was owned by Captains Eligh and Hall of Ottawa. The great grandson of Captain Eligh read of our discovery in one of the Canadian newspapers and provided a wonderful photo of the captain and his family. More details and pictures on www.shipwreckworld.com
Shipwrecked Canadian Steamer Roberval – side scan sonar (DeepVision) image – by Jim Kennard

Bow area
Forward of mid-ship

(Video images from the VideoRay ROV by Roger Pawlowski)
Shipwreck Discovery Team

Jim Kennard has been diving and exploring the lakes in the northeast since 1970. He has found over 200 shipwrecks in the Great Lakes, Lake Champlain, NY Finger Lakes and in the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. Jim is the project director and operates the DeepVision Side Scan Sonar.

Roger Pawlowski has been diving on shipwrecks in the northeast and Florida for the past 12 years. He is a retired Air Force Reserve pilot and flew missions in Desert Storm. Roger owns and flies the VideoRay Remote Operated Vehicle.

Roland ‘Chip’ Stevens is a retired architect and working artist whose watercolors, many of which have been accepted into national exhibitions, are well known in the Rochester area. He has been a sailor for over 60 years. Chip views the sonar and video images and from them creates sketches and watercolors for our shipwreck reports.

Roland ‘Chip’ Stevens, Jim Kennard, Roger Pawlowski