EXPEDITION REPORT
Lake Ontario Historic Shipwrecks
May 1 – October 31, 2014
The Explorers Club Flag # 202

**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 ships.

**Results:** The 2014 search for Lake Ontario Historic shipwrecks was another excellent season for us. Our team located three significant historic ships in Lake Ontario which were announced in the news media and to The Explorers Club. Additional research and is being done on several remaining shipwrecks in addition to several interesting targets that are to be investigated in FY2015. A brief summary of the three ships that we announced in 2014, are as follows:

**U.S. Air Force C-45 aircraft**
The wreck of a U.S. Air Force C-45 aircraft abandoned during flight by its crew in 1952 was located in deep water off Oswego, New York. Crippled by the failure of one of its two engines the plane continued on a 65 mile pilotless flight until it crashed into Lake Ontario. Read the details on the Shipwreckworld website. [http://www.shipwreckworld.com/articles/usaf-plane-discovered-lake-ontario](http://www.shipwreckworld.com/articles/usaf-plane-discovered-lake-ontario)
Wreck of USAF C-45 aircraft

USAF C-45 aircraft (Larry Westin collection)
Dagger-board schooner – *Three Brothers* (1827)

A rare dagger–board schooner, *Three Brothers*, has been discovered in deep water off Oswego, New York. The schooner was enroute from Pultneyville to Oswego, NY with a cargo of produce when it sank in a gale in 1833. The *Three Brothers* is the first fully working dagger-board schooner ever found and is believed to be the oldest confirmed commercial schooner to have been discovered in the Great Lakes. Dagger-board schooners were in use on the lakes from the early 1800’s until the 1830’s. Read the details of this discovery: [http://www.shipwreckworld.com/articles/early-1800s-daggerboard-schooner](http://www.shipwreckworld.com/articles/early-1800s-daggerboard-schooner)
Steamship Nisbet Grammer (1926)

The British steamship *Nisbet Grammer*, the largest steel steamer to have foundered in Lake Ontario was discovered thirty miles east of the Niagara River in a depth of over 500 feet of water. The *Nisbet Grammer* was enroute from Port Colborne to Montreal with a load of grain when she was struck by the steamship Dalwarnic in a dense fog. In September 2008 Jim Kennard and Dan Scoville began the initial search for the *Nisbet Grammer*. The search for this steamship led to several discoveries in this area of the lake including a decommissioned dagger-board schooner, modern sailboat “Polonez” and a deck cargo lost in 1981 worth at that time more than $700,000. During the next 6 years over 80 square miles of deep lake bottom were surveyed until the discovery was made by the shipwreck search team in late August.

Shipwreck Discovery Team

Jim Kennard (FN ’13) 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 system.

Roger Pawlowski has been diving on shipwrecks in the northeast and Florida for the past 13 years. He is a retired Air Force Reserve pilot and flew missions in Desert Storm. Roger owns and flies the VideoRay Pro IV 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