

Preserving Lake George's "Shipwreck Row"—The Sad Story of a 1757 British Sloop Warship



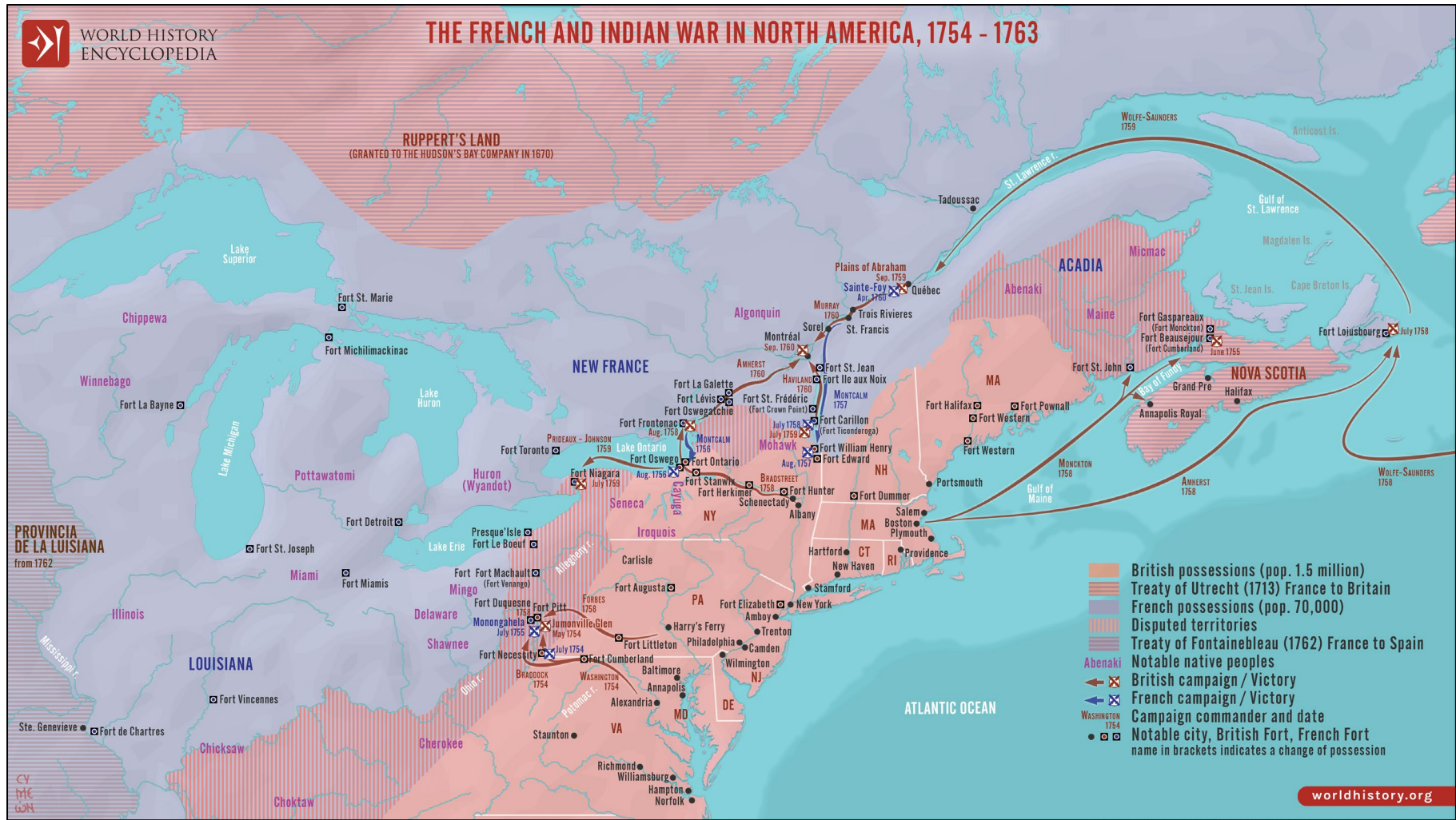
Joseph W. Zarzynski, RPA, FRGS

***(Register of Professional Archaeologists;
Fellow, Royal Geographical Society)***





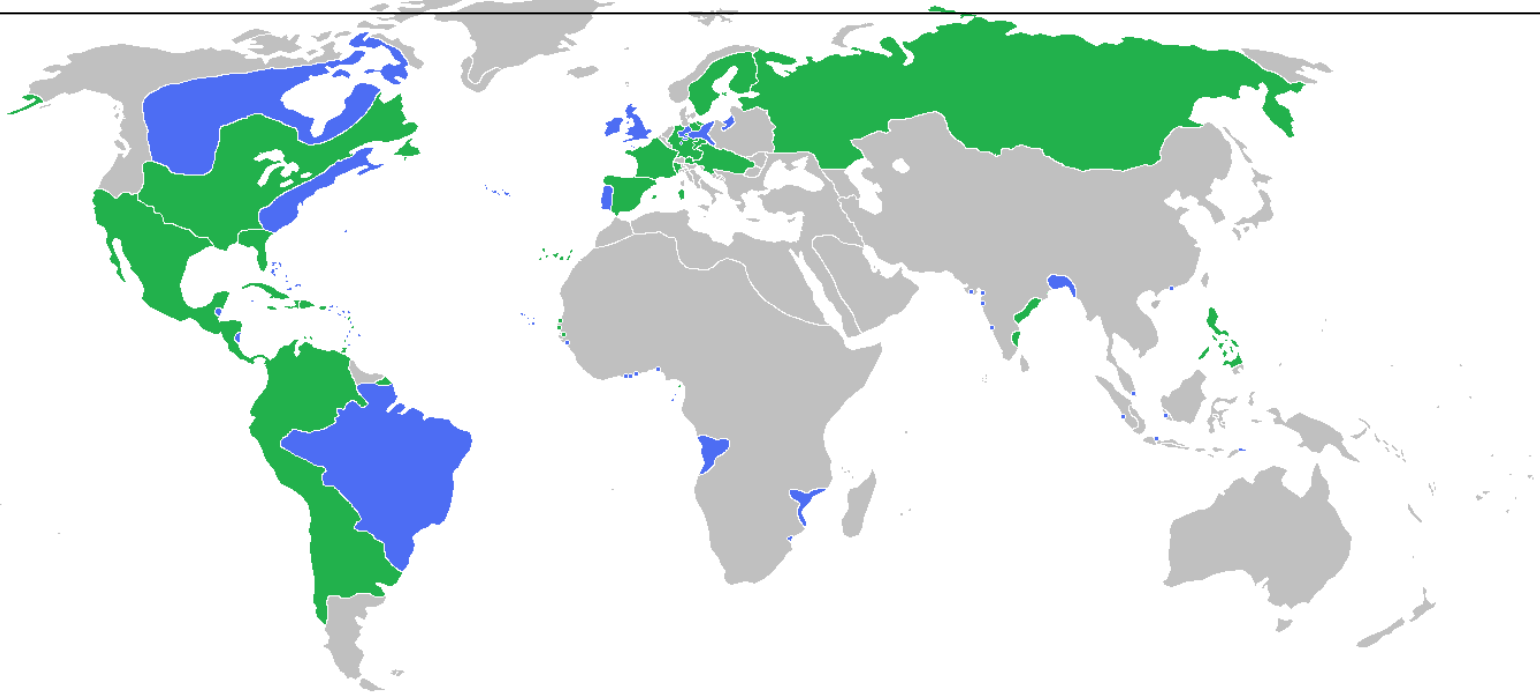
THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR IN NORTH AMERICA, 1754 - 1763



Early 1750s

Green: France, Spain, Austria, Russia, Sweden & allies

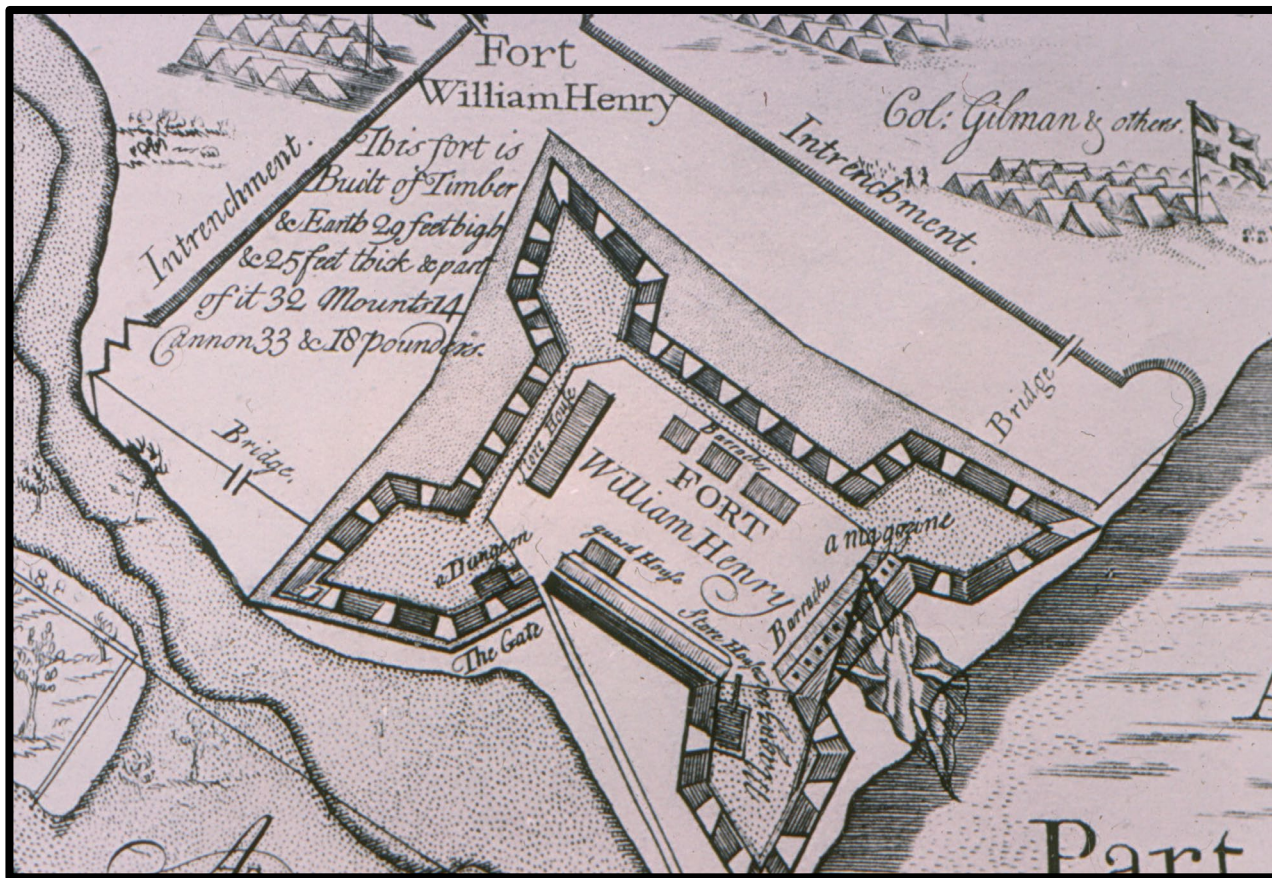
Blue: Great Britain, Prussia, Portugal, with allies



September 8, 1755 (Battle of Lake George)

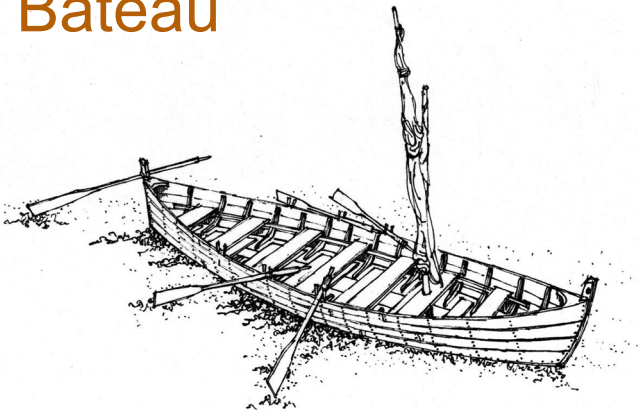


Frederick
Coffay
Yohn



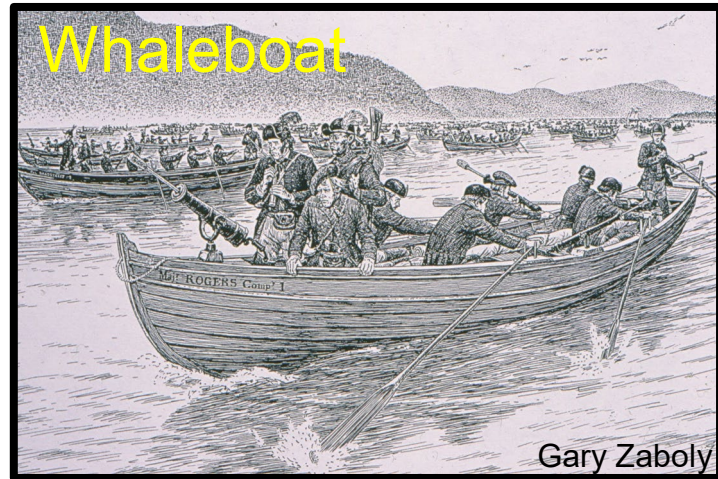
Fort William Henry (engraved and printed by
Thomas Johnston of Boston—April 1756)

Bateau



Mark Peckham

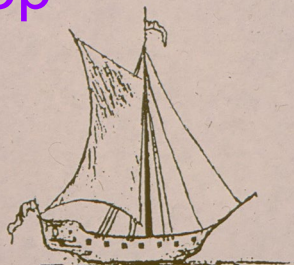
Whaleboat



Gary Zaboly

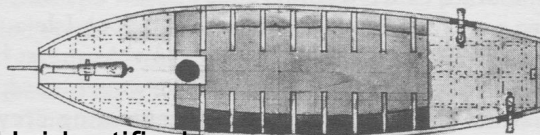
Sloop

PRO-London



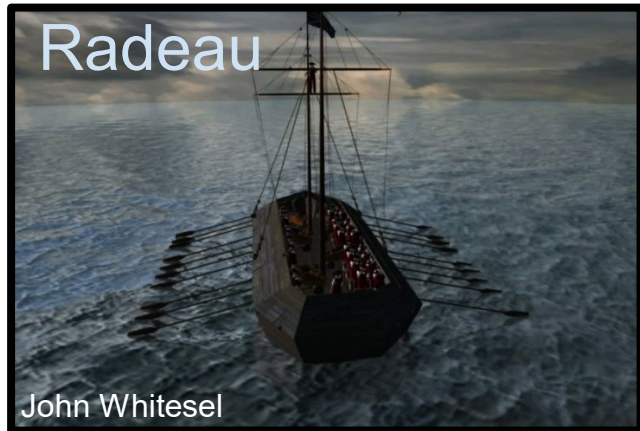
Halifax Sloop.

Row Galley



Unidentified

Radeau



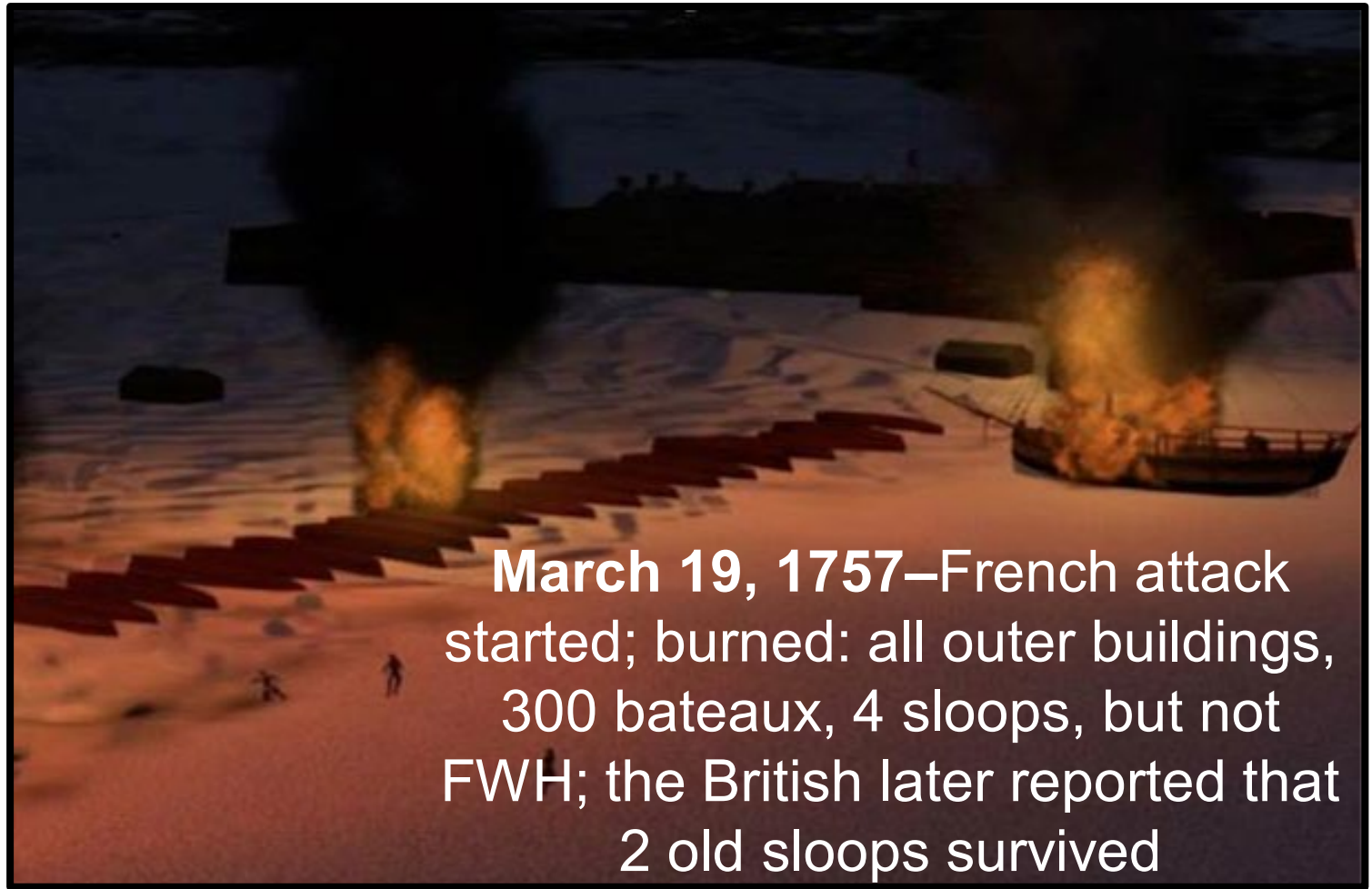
John Whitesel

Some Vessels at Lake George During French & Indian War

March 1757: French raid from Fort Carillon (aka Ticonderoga) led by François-Pierre de Rigaud de Vaudreuil with 1,600 men



Fort Ticonderoga



March 19, 1757—French attack started; burned: all outer buildings, 300 bateaux, 4 sloops, but not FWH; the British later reported that 2 old sloops survived



FWH had
346
fit troops
and 128
invalid
soldiers

August 1757



Last of the Mohicans

In March, 1757, Vaudreuil, with 1500 French and Indians, came up the lake on the ice to attack this fort. Approaching at two o'clock in the morning, he hoped to surprise the garrison. Failing in this, he burned every thing outside the fort, including a number of sloops and batteaux frozen in the ice. A blackened wreck, supposed to be one of these, still can be seen, lying off the remains of the old French dock, both under water. It appears to be about 40 feet long. Shell and cannon balls have been taken away at different times, and in 1820 two small cannon were removed from the wreck.

Chatham (NY) Courier (July 29, 1891)

TO RAISE OLD WRECKS.

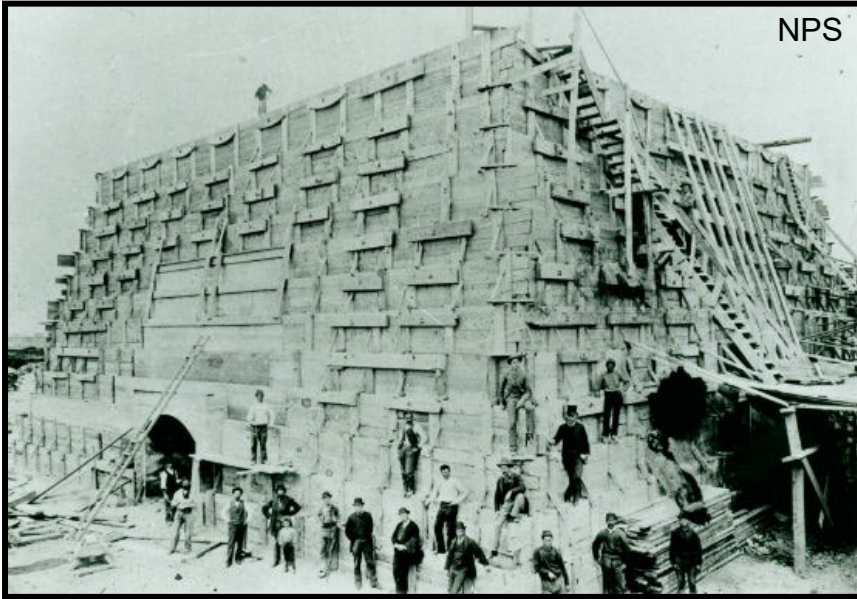
Contractor Howell's Plan for Operating
in Lake George.

NEW YORK, Feb. 17.—Alexander J. Howell, a contractor living at 330 West Nineteenth street, is just now devoting a large share of his time to a project for raising certain vessels sunk in Lake George 180 years ago. A bill introduced in the state senate last week by Senator Plunkitt authorizes Howell, at his own expense, at any time "between the years 1892 and 1898," to raise and remove the vessels or any of them.

The vessels referred to were sunk in the channel of Lake George in 1762 for the purpose of keeping out the French fleet, which was coming down Lake Champlain from Canada. Up to the present they have remained undisturbed. They have settled in the bottom of the lake, so that they are now covered by 26 feet of water, and Mr. Howell said that as the submerged vessels were constructed of pine

Rome (NY) Daily Sentinel (February 17, 1892)

NPS



ALEXANDER J. HOWELL DEAD.

Laid Out Central Park Under Andrew H.
Green's Direction.

HOWELL.—Entered into rest, Nov. 9, 1904,
Alexander J. Howell, aged 72 years.
Funeral services at his late residence, 49
West 89th St., Friday, Nov. 11, 2 P. M.

27 million people visited in 6 months



Field Museum



“Chicago World’s Fair” 1893

Beat out NYC, Washington, DC,
and St. Louis

He Has the Right of Way.

The bill permitting W. S. Tuttle to raise the old battenaux which remain on the bottom of Lake George as relics of the French and Indian wars, is still in the senate. Alexander J. Howell, of New York, secured the passage of a somewhat similar bill a few years ago, but the law became a nullity by limitation on the first of last January, thus giving Mr. Tuttle the right of way.

The Morning Star (Glens Falls, NY)
(March 15, 1894)

SOME ASSEMBLY BILLS.

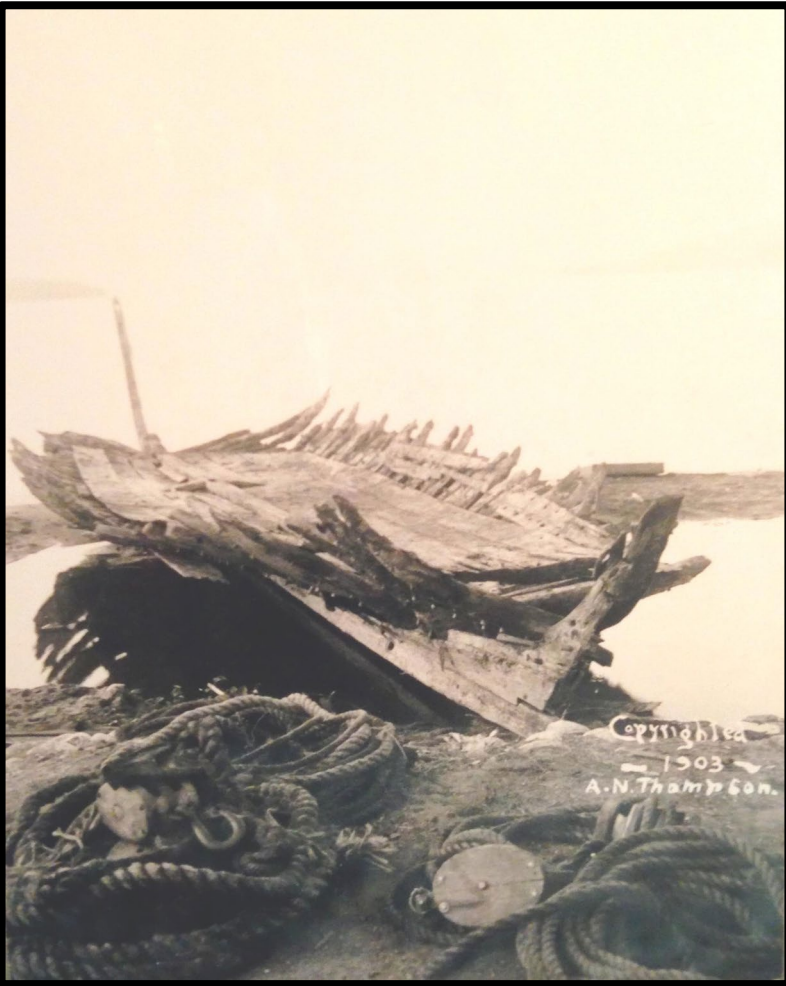
These bills were introduced in the Assembly today:

Mr. Davis—Authorizing William S. Tuttle to remove sunken vessels from Lake George at his own expense. Mr. Tuttle believes there is treasure in the warships sunk prior to 1776.

Buffalo (NY) Courier (February 4, 1903)

Divers are at work raising the hulks of some boats which were lost in Lake George during the French and Indian war. The craft were sunk near Caldwell, and a permit was given by the Legislature to W. S. Tuttle to have the work done.

The Saratogian (Saratoga Springs, NY)
September 27, 1902



Raised July 2, 1903

“It was a sailing craft
44 feet long, 14 feet
wide and seven feet
deep.”—*Brooklyn
Standard Union,
November 22, 1903*



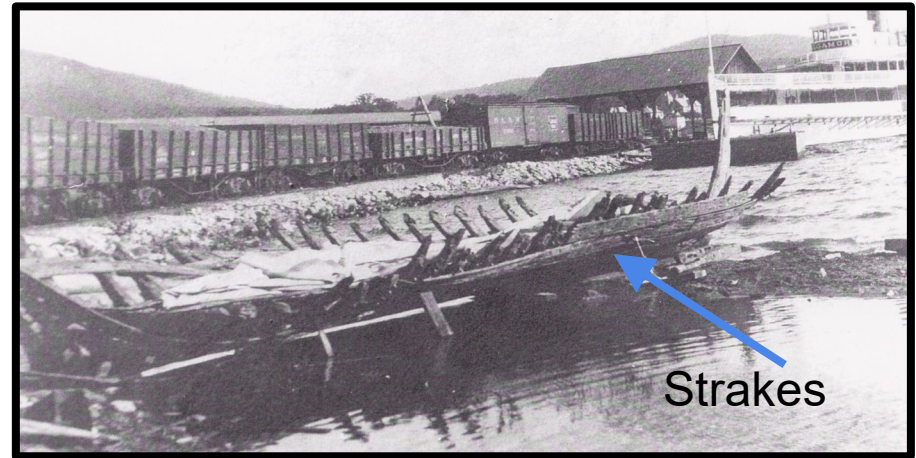
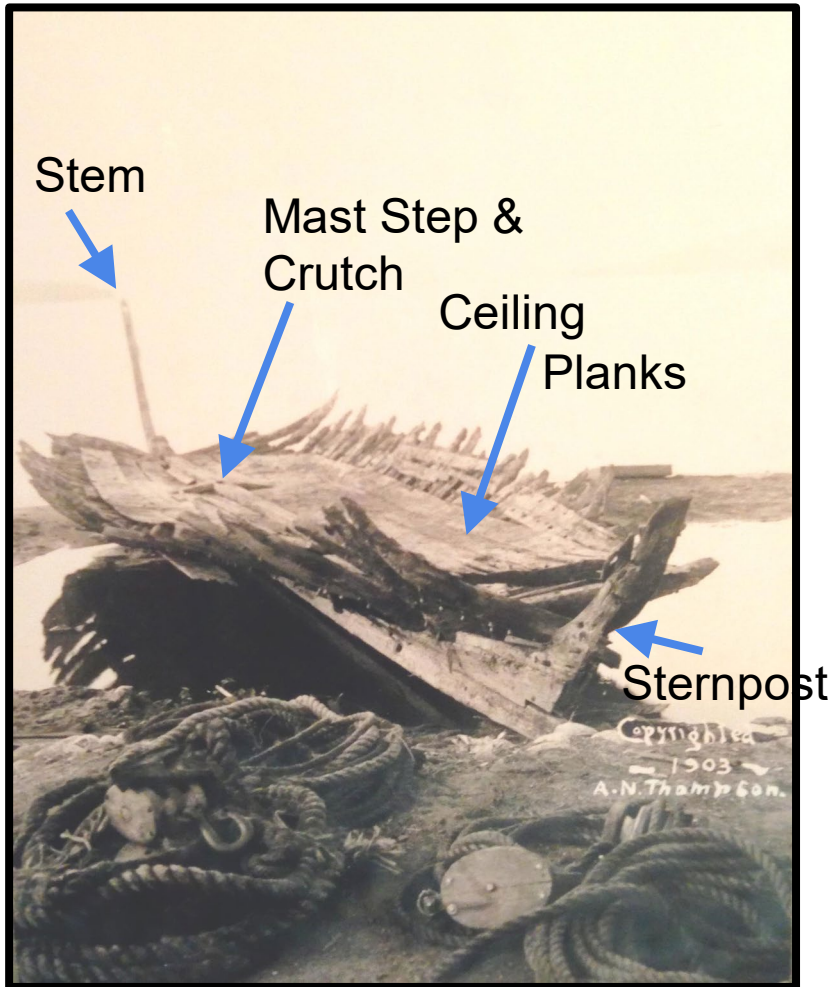
Joseph A. Smith Collection



Discovered Inside Sloop:

pewter spoons,
smoking pipes,
military buttons,
buckles,
a 1743 Spanish coin,
a peck load of musket
balls,
and about 50 cannon
balls and grape shot

What Was Left of 1757 Sloop When Raised in July 1757?





**Hulk Moved to Fort William Henry
Hotel Park; Then Cut Up for Souvenirs**

Warrensburgh Museum of Local History

GAVEL FROM HISTORIC WOOD.

At the conclusion of the exemplification of the initiatory degree on a class of candidates of Lake George Lodge of Odd Fellows Saturday evening George F. Rolfe, noble grand of St. Paul's Lodge of Schenectady, was presented with a gavel made from the wood of the war boats which were sunk in Lake George during the French and Indian war. The presentation completed the visit of St. Paul's lodge to the Lake George lodge where the Schenectady body exemplified the first degree.

The Saratogian
(Saratoga Springs), Nov. 21, 1916)



JWZ

CLOCK CASE OF OLD TIMBERS

W. L. Adee Makes Articles From Historic Material.

W. L. Adee of this city has recently completed the making of a clock case and a pair of wooden candlesticks from timbers taken from a sloop, one of four which was on Lake George during the French and Indian war and which was destroyed in 1757 by Sieur de Vandreuil, Governor of the Canadian Province of Three Rivers, who led a force of 1,500 regulars, Canadian soldiers, militia and Indians against Fort William Henry.

The four sloops were sunk at the head of the Lake and remained in the water for about 150 years until one of them was raised in 1904.

The clock case is made without the use of nails and is of splendid workmanship. The wood used is black oak.

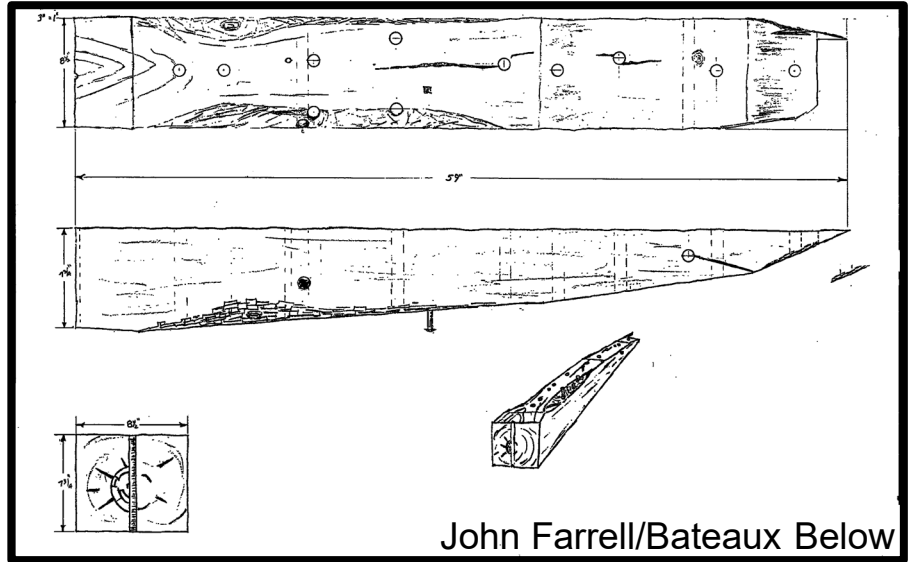
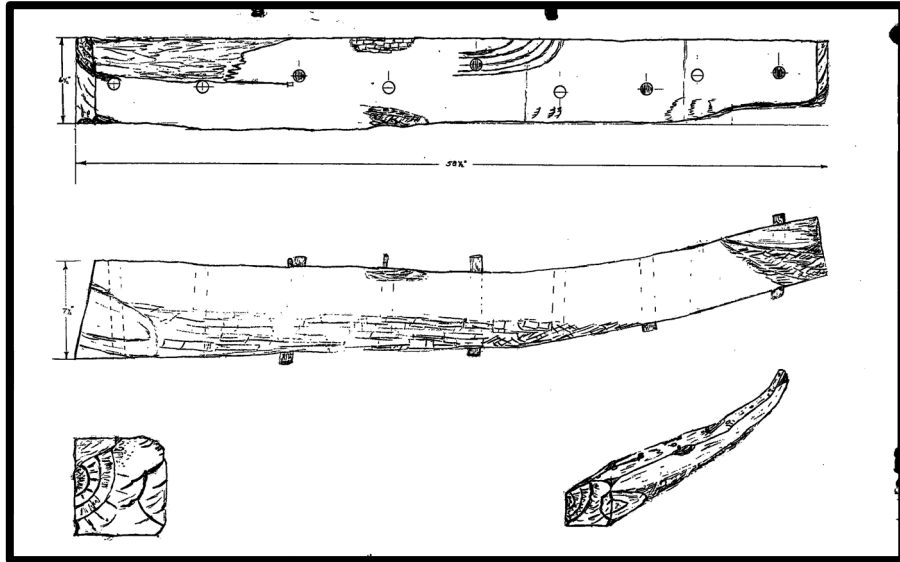
The clock case and candlesticks are now on exhibition in the F. C. Maynard jewelry store.

The Saratogian (Saratoga Springs, NY)
(April 10, 1919)

JWZ



LGHA



John Farrell/Bateaux Below

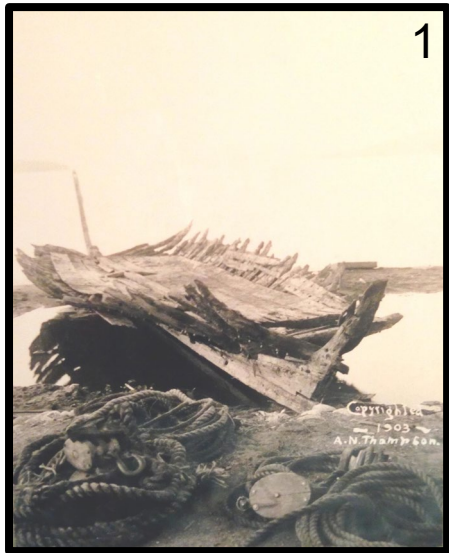
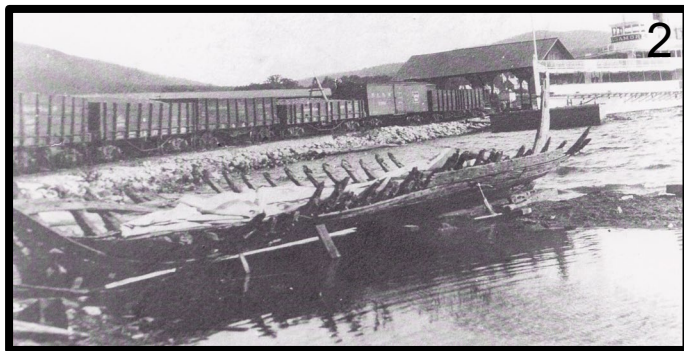


Lefner Collection/NYS
Museum—2008 Donation

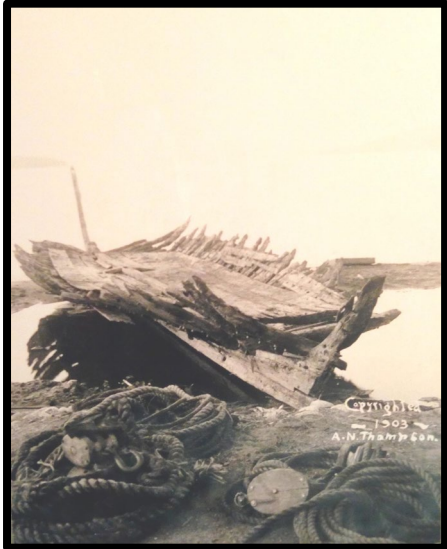
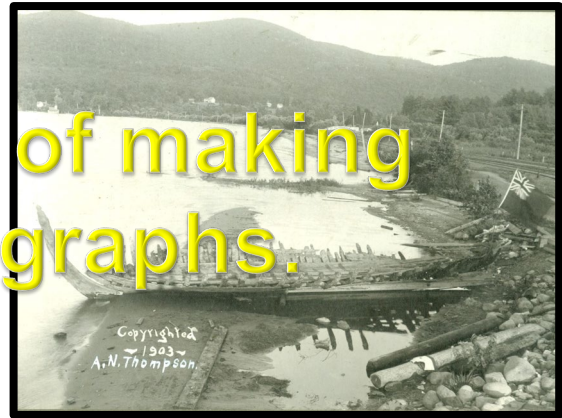
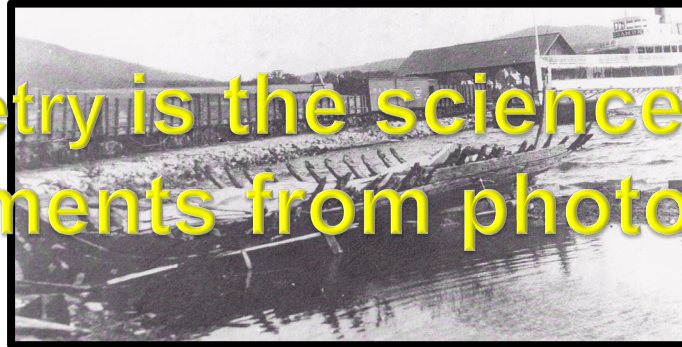
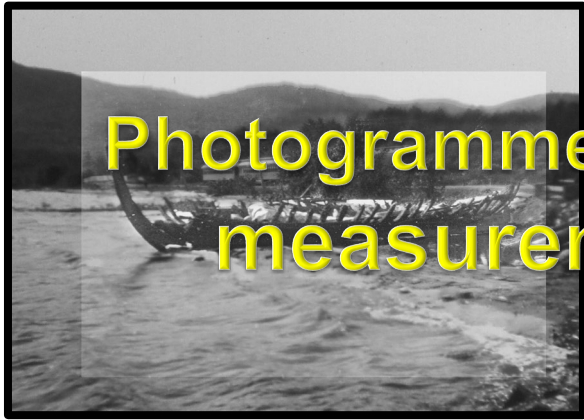
NYS Museum

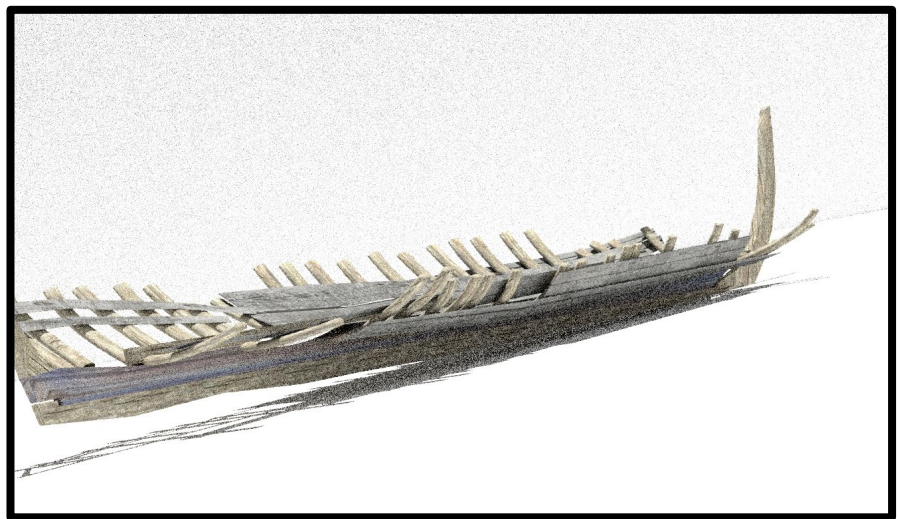
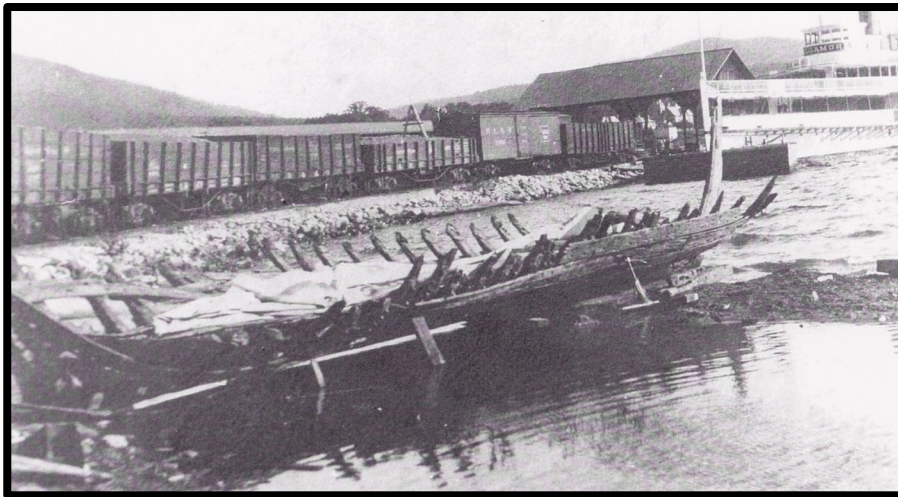


What Is Interesting About These Sloop Timbers?



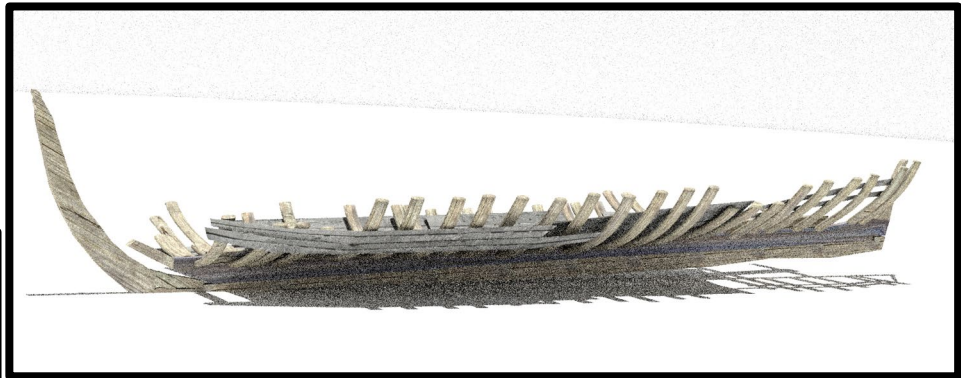
Photogrammetry is the science of making measurements from photographs.

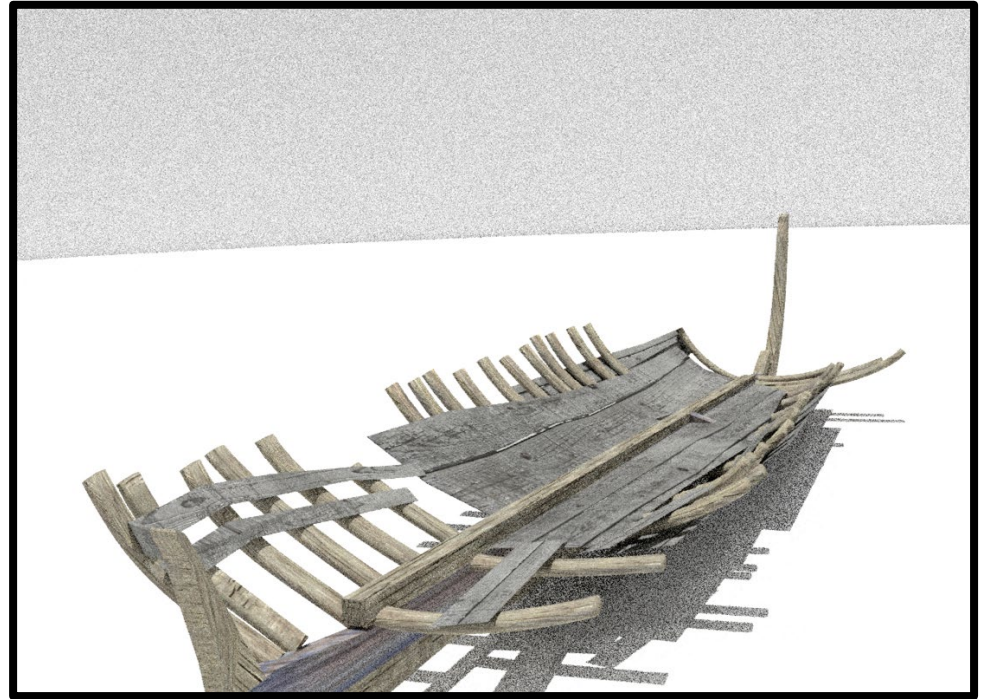




Brigid Shaw

Brigid Shaw

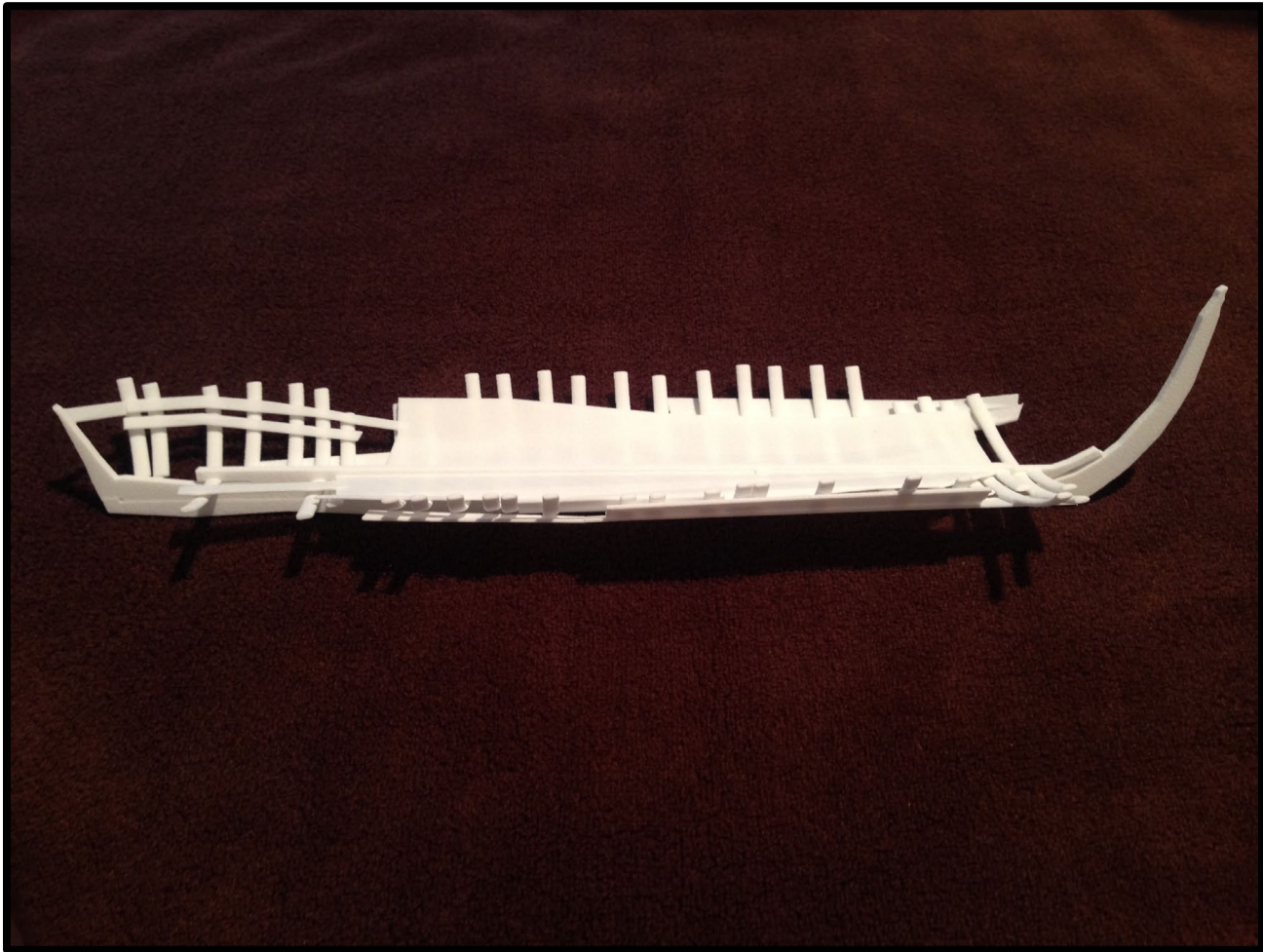




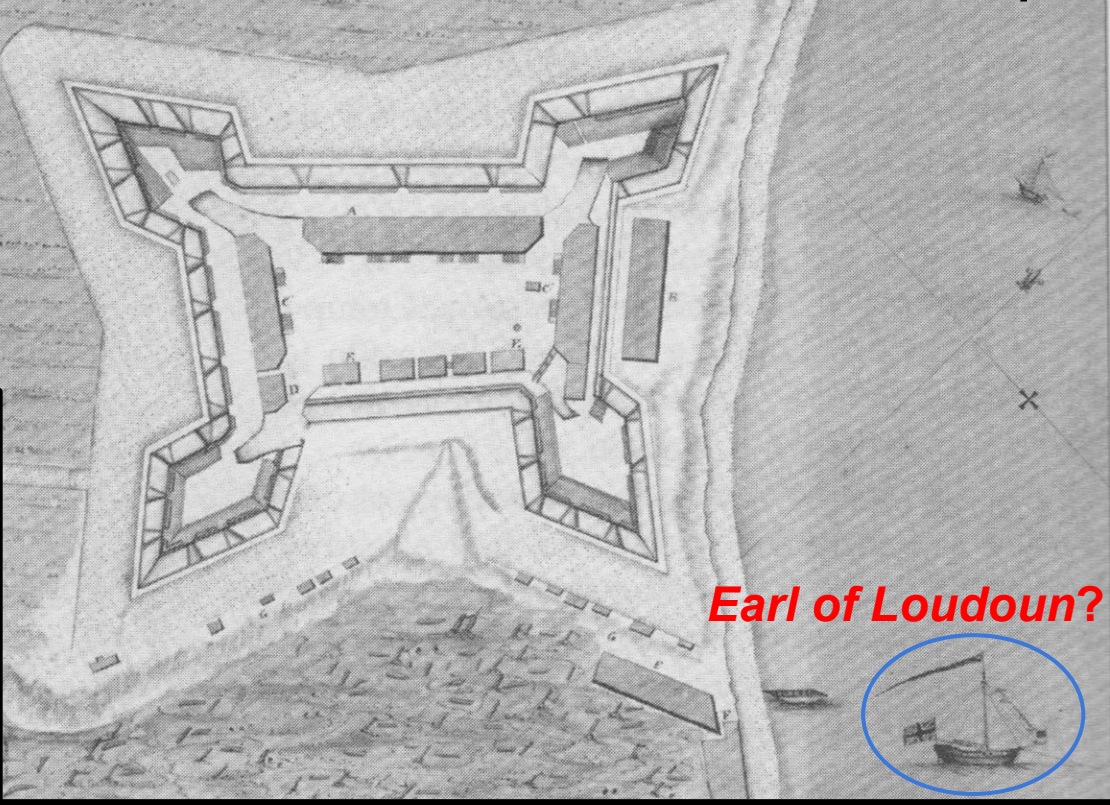
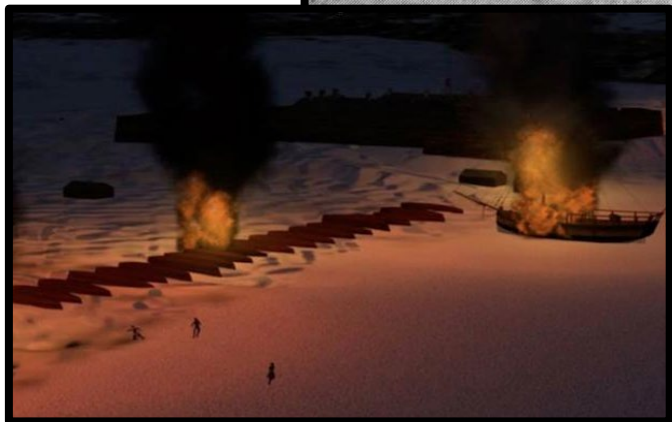
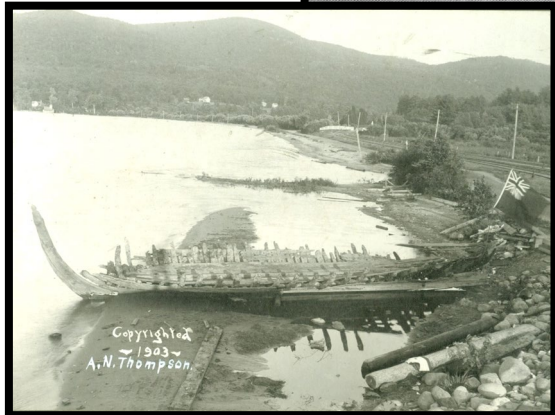
Brigid Shaw



Brigid Shaw



What Vessel Is 1903-Raised Sloop?



From-"A Plan of Fort William Henry" (1756) by John Williams

Fort William
Henry
Collection



MARCH 1757
SLOOP
TIMBER B
JAN 24, 2017



MARCH 1757
SLOOP
TIMBER A
JAN 24, 2017

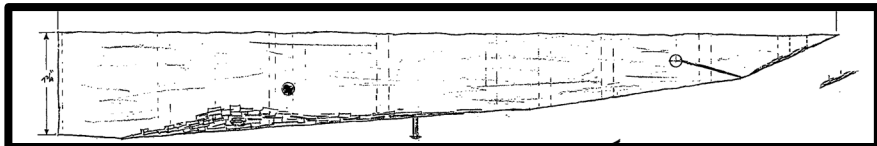
Fort William Henry Museum Collection

Treenail (aka-Trunnel)

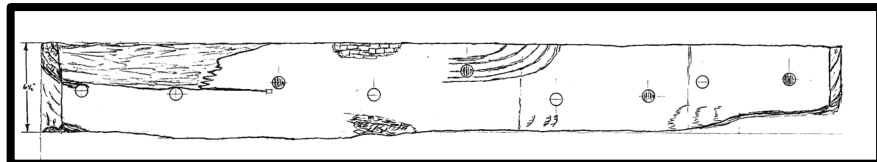


NYS Museum/
Lefner Collection





John Farrell/BBI



NYSM (below)



Hull timber fragments
measure 4 ft. 8 in. to
4 ft. 11 in. long



Artec Scanner (Eva)



Ithaca College

The Tale of the Dismembered 1757 Fort William Henry Shipwreck

By Joseph W. Zarzynski, RPA (The French & Indian War Society) & Brigid Shaw (Independent Researcher)

The Sloop

1757

In March 1757, during the French & Indian War (1755-1763), a French, Canadian, and Native American military force attacked Fort William Henry at Lake George in New York. They failed to capture the British garrison, but burned all outer buildings, about 300 bateaux on shore, and a sloop, too (Fig. 1). Several months later in August 1757, another French-led army destroyed the fort.

1903

In 1893, the *Chatham Courier* newspaper reported that a "blackened wreck... about forty feet long" could be seen in shallow water off Fort William Henry Hotel. In 1899, the New York legislature granted permission to Alexander J. Howell, a New York City businessman, to raise any sunken vessels in Lake George that sank prior to 1766. He wanted to exhibit a vessel at the 1893 Chicago world's fair. Howells' enthusiasm dwindled and his sanction was voided at the end of 1899. William S. Tuttle, a Glens Falls, New York entrepreneur, then received rights to recover sunken colonial warships from the lake. Tuttle believed some shipwrecks held treasure. In 1900, a hand-dredger began removing 30 tons of cobble ballast. In early July 1903, a D.R. H Company train hauled the submerged sloop to shore (Fig. 2). The wooden wreck was cut up and its pieces were sold.



Fig. 1, colored illustration of French-led forces burning bateaux and a sloop during the March 1757 raid on Fort William Henry (courtesy John Whithead)

Fig. 2, full-length photograph of the sloop being hauled the March 1903, such shipwrecked aquatic shore (courtesy A.N. Thompson)

The British Warship

This armed sloop had a single main deck that possibly included a quarterdeck (raised aft deck) with one mast rigged with fore-and-aft sails. The hull measured 44 feet long, 14 feet wide, and 7 feet deep. Artifacts discovered inside the vessel included powder spoons, smoking pipes, military buttons, buckles, a 22x3 Spanish coin, a peak load of musket balls, and about 50 cannon balls and grape shot.

What the Archaeology Tells Us

The warship was likely a 30 to 40 ton sloop, the first of *Ladouson* launched in 1756. The sailing craft probably lost its mast, rigging, and bowsprit during the March 1757 raid. When raised in 1903, its deck was gone. The destructive fire destroyed the sloop's upper works, so we cannot recreate the curvature of the hull's sheer or the transom shape. One of the 1903 images showed the interior missing, possibly reworked during its salvage. No cannons or swivel guns were found in 1903. Essentially, the lower half of the hull was present. The hull's ceiling planks, the interior boards that covered the frames, were still mostly intact in 1903, as was the mast step and its crutch supports. Some of the external hull planks, called strakes, were also attached to the lower hull frames (Fig. 3).

Few shortcuts seem to have been taken during construction of the watercraft. Shipwrights and carpenters undertook the task of drilling hundreds of holes into the frames. Those floor timbers and bulkheads, that make up the frames, were received wooden pegs called *coumets* that measured 4.189 inches in diameter. Spikes were also utilized to help attach the ceiling planks (interior hull planking) and strakes (exterior hull planking). The surviving frame fragments's dimensions vary somewhat over their sized dimensions, the measurement across the length, and their mutual dimensions, their height. Some floor timbers from colonial oars, axes, axes, and droppings are still visible on this page in 2012. Image courtesy of the personnel, under the direction of Dr. Michael "Booth" Rogers, listed state-of-the-art structured light 3D scanners

to fully document the three frame pieces from the Fort William Henry Museum collection (Fig. 4).

Surprisingly, the surviving floor timbers and futlocks cut in 1903 were of nearly identical lengths, from 4 feet 8 inches to 4 feet 11 inches. This suggests they were not cut as small collectibles. Rather, these long segments were for woodworkers to reassemble into objects like gavels, candlesticks, clock cases, and other items.

Fig. 3, two frame photographs identified by "see above" (courtesy A.N. Thompson)

Acknowledgments

The authors thank the following: Dr. Russ Belloni, Bob Brown, John Farrell, Terry Coadwell, and Vince Capone (Brazos Valley); Dr. Dick Abbas, Gino Mac Donald and Marilyn Mazza (Lake George Historical Association); John Leifer; Melodie Velez and Gerry Bradford (Fort William Henry Museum); The French & Indian War Society; Math Weikage and Miranda Peters (Fort Hood); Saratoga Springs History Museum; Ed Nelson; John Strough; Clements Library (New York State); Justin Smith (Saratoga Springs); Steve Jones; Steve Reiser; Steve Porel (Warrenburg Museum of Local History); Myriam Zaslavsky (Saratoga County Historical Society); Robert McQuinn; John Adair; Charles Kautsky; Mary Port-Mooney; Tom O'Don; Malcom Longford; John Whithead; Peter Booth; Dr. Michael "Booth" Rogers; (Brazos Valley); Mike Colledge; Ryan Bourque; (Lake George); 171, Sheldon Lawrence (Lamar College); 121; Bob Baker; and Tim Lagan.



Fig. 5, 3D model of the shipwreck images of the model from matching angles (courtesy A.N. Thompson & Brigid Shaw)

Modeling the Sloop

At least six photographs of the wooden warship, reportedly taken around July 4, 1903, shortly after the shipwreck was raised from the lake, have survived. It is believed that most or all of the images were taken by photographer A.N. Thompson from various angles around the sloop using a dry gelatin plate process.

Six photographs were used to create a 3-dimensional model of the shipwreck as it was photographed shortly after being raised. The images were first processed in Photoshop and then manually point-matched with *img3d* to create a basic 3D pointcloud of the sailing ship. The pointcloud in *img3d* was imported into *Blender* and photo angles were matched with these points. Finally, the 3D model of the sloop was created using the six camera angles to match up parts of the recovered British colonial warship (Fig. 5). We can scale the model to the known dimensions of the sloop - 14 feet wide, 44 feet long, and 7 feet deep. Then we use the model to measure parts of the sloop with an accuracy of around 5 feet.

While this process allowed us to create a working model of the recovered vessel, because we did not know the details of the conditions the photographs were taken under, camera size and lens focal length and position of the camera in relation to the watercraft - this model can only be an approximation of the actual ship's dimensions.

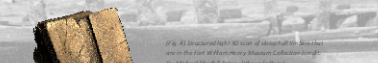


Fig. 4, Structural light scan of original hull timbers from the Fort William Henry Museum Collection (courtesy Dr. Michael "Booth" Rogers)



Hull Timbers

Repurposed

Several timbers from this warship were repurposed (Fig. 6). In 1936, O.M. Smith donated two wooden gavels to an avial Independent Order of Odd Fellows lodge. The gavels (Fig. 7) are now exhibited in the Warrenburg Museum of Local History (Warrensburg, New York). In 1936, the Lake George Lodge of Odd Fellows presented the St. Paul's Lodge of Odd Fellows (Schenectady, New York) with a gavel crafted from "wood of the war boats which were sunk in Lake George during the French and Indian war [sic]." In 1939, Saratoga Springs, New York resident W.L. Adee fashioned two candlesticks and a clock "from timbers from a sloop" destroyed during the March 1757 raid. Adee's handiwork was then exhibited in a Saratoga Springs jewelry store. In 1938, Brulow Brown donated a wooden gavel to the Order of the Eastern Star of Glens Falls. The donor's father, DeWolf Brown, made the gavel from a 1757 sloop timber.

GAVEL FROM HISTORIC WOOD.

At the conclusion of the exemplification of the initiatory degree on a class of candidates of Lake George Lodges of Odd Fellows Saturday evening George F. Rolfe, noble grand of St. Paul's Lodge of Schenectady, was presented with a gavel made from the wood of the war boats which were sunk in Lake George during the French and Indian war. The presentation completed the visit of St. Paul's lodge to the Lake George lodge where the deponent body exemplified the first degree.

Fig. 6, Gavel The Saratoga Springs, New York, November 21, 1936

Fig. 7, right from 1936-donated gavel from the Warrenburg Museum of Local History (courtesy Joseph W. Zarzynski)



In Museums

Fortunately, some sloop timber's have survived. Fort William Henry Museum and the Lake George Historical Association each have three frame pieces. In 2008, John Leifer, a Cleveland, New York real estate agent and antique collector, donated nine wooden fragments from the 1757 sloop to the State Museum in Albany (Fig. 8).



Fig. 8, Structural light scan of original hull timbers from the Fort William Henry Museum Collection (courtesy Dr. Michael "Booth" Rogers)

Conclusion

Due to the freshwater, the competence of the shipbuilders, and the quality of the materials used, the sunken warship did not undergo rapid decay in its underwater grave of 146 years. Though a colonial shipwreck was pulled from Lake George in 1903, this was a well-constructed naval vessel of suitable for use on a strategic inland waterway.



**National Maritime
Heritage Grant**

National Maritime Heritage Act (1994)



Subgrants—
Education
\$170,000

Parks,
Recreation &
Historic
Preservation



Subgrants—
Preservation
\$90,000

The French & Indian War Society at Lake George

\$392,500 Total

BOOKS BY ZARZYNSKI:

Champ—Beyond the Legend (1984)

Monster Wrecks of Loch Ness and Lake Champlain (1986)

The Radeau Land Tortoise—North America's Oldest Intact Warship,
co-author, D. K. Abbass (1993)

Lake George Shipwrecks and Sunken History, co-author, Bob
Benway (2011)

Documentary Filmmaking for Archaeologists, co-author, Peter Pepe
(2012)

Ghost Fleet Awakened: Lake George's Sunken Bateaux of 1758
(2019)

Lochend—Monster Hunting on the Run (2021)

Fort William Henry's Moments in Time (2023)

