

8

Lake George, New York: Making Shipwrecks Speak

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Introduction

Lake George has a rich military and maritime heritage that spans several centuries. The legacy of this incredible history is encapsulated in the hundreds of submerged cultural resources - shipwrecks, marine rails, and waterfront structures like docks and wharves - found in the 51.2 kilometer (32 mile) long waterway located in the Adirondack Mountains of northeastern New York state. The reality is that several groups want a piece of the so-called “shipwreck pie.” To archaeologists, these submerged cultural resources are history’s footprints. They help answer the many questions that social scientists ask when trying to decipher and interpret the past. To scuba enthusiasts, however, wrecks are opportunities to “Dive Into History.” To local, state, and federal government agencies, submerged vessels often equate to complex management strategies that try to balance public access with historic preservation. For Lake George, where recreational and cultural tourism is an integral part of the local economy, the lure of sunken vessels is an emerging asset since they help pack excursion boats and fill lakeside motels. Following the archaeological investigation of these submerged cultural resources a variety of interpretation strategies have been employed. Recently, an emerging partnership, the alliance of underwater archaeologists and multi-media technicians, is at work at Lake George “making shipwrecks speak.”

Early Interest in Shipwrecks

Recognition of the potential of shipwrecks to stimulate tourism and generate historical interest at Lake George, often called “the Queen of American Lakes,” began as early as 1893. On June 10th of that year, the *Lake George Mirror* newspaper printed an article entitled “The Sunken Bateaux of Lake George.” It described four sunken warships visible in the shallows of the lake’s clear mountain waters. The four vessels were eighteenth-century bateaux.

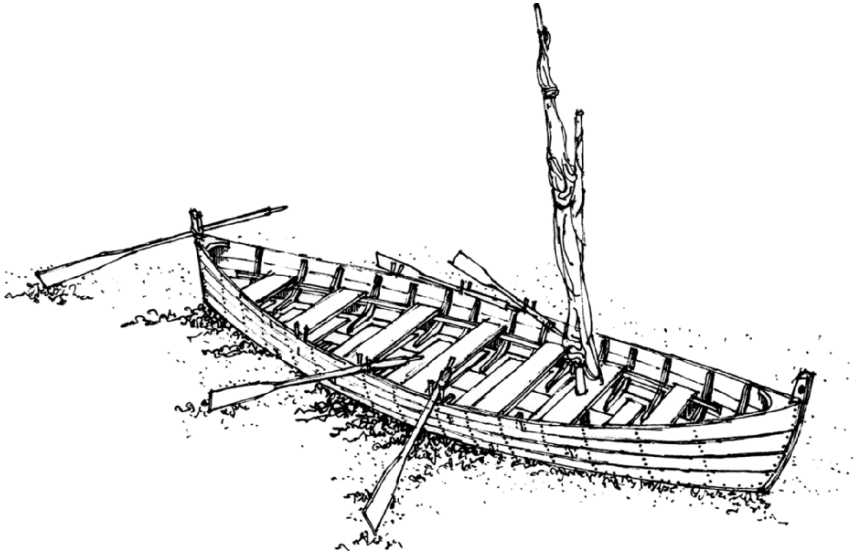


FIGURE 8.1. Artist's depiction of what a typical colonial bateau would have looked like (Illustration courtesy of Mark Peckham).

The colonial bateau (Figure 8.1) played a key role at Lake George in both the French and Indian War (1755-1763) and the American Revolution (1775-1783). The word "bateau" is French for "boat." Its origins, however, show Dutch influence. The bateau was flat-bottomed, 7.62 to 10.67 meters (25 to 35 feet) long, pointed at bow and stern, and constructed of pine planks and oak frames. It could be rowed, poled in shallow water, or sailed if the wind was behind it. An oar lashed off the stern, rather than a rudder, was used for steering (Hager, 1987:20-27).

In 1758, British and provincial soldiers deliberately sank much of their fleet at Lake George. This mass scuttling of warships was one of the great maritime events in American history. In March of the previous year, the French marched south from the Champlain Valley and crossed ice-covered Lake George to attack the British garrison of Fort William Henry. The fortress held, but the French nonetheless burned 350 bateaux and other larger vessels resting on shore. Thus, the British learned a valuable lesson about protecting their warships over the winter (Bellico, 2001:39-40).

Therefore, in the autumn of 1758 as winter approached and without a fort to protect their fleet (Fort William Henry was destroyed by the French in a second raid in 1757), the British deliberately sank their SHIPS as a cold and wet storage to protect the vessels from the enemy. Known today as "The Sunken Fleet of 1758," the submerged squadron consisted of two row galleys, two radeaux, the sloop *Halifax*, and 260 bateaux (Bellico, 2001:75-76).

The June 10, 1893, *Lake George Mirror* newspaper article reported on several bateaux observed in the shallows of the lake. The news article suggested that some of these sunken bateaux might be raised so that, "Lake George visitors will

have the pleasure of looking . . . [at] crafts built more than one hundred and forty years ago,” an early realization of the potential of these shipwrecks to help tell the lake’s history and to promote tourism.

Ten years later the salvage of a French and Indian War shipwreck from Lake George met with a disastrous result. On July 2, 1903, a 13.41 meter long (44 feet), 4.27 meter (14 feet) wide, and 2.13 meter (7 feet) deep colonial shipwreck was raised from 4.58 meters (15 feet) of water from the south end of Lake George. This British vessel is supposed to have been one of those sunk by French soldiers during their March 1757 raid. The wooden skeleton yielded several colonial artifacts including a 1743 Spanish coin. Shortly after its discovery, however, the hulk was cut up for souvenirs. A decade-and-a-half ago, several oak frames from this warship were donated to the Lake George Historical Association, a small lakeside historical society and museum. Unfortunately, the timbers were in poor condition due to lack of proper conservation treatment (Bellico, 2001:77).

Over thirty years after the 1903 salvage and destruction of a French and Indian War shipwreck, a more preservation-focused ethic began to take root. The *Lake George Mirror* newspaper of August 18, 1934, published a short article suggesting that a “war bateaux [sic]” be raised and “properly housed” in a Lake George museum. Although not recognizing the difficulties and costs to properly undertake such a venture, the 1934 news story did recognize the importance of preserving Lake George’s colonial maritime past.

Another event from the 1930s also shows the public’s interest in shipwrecks. A 1969 New York State publication on shipwreck diving noted that in the late 1930s, a homemade diving apparatus was fashioned and a diver explored a group of sunken bateaux in Lake George (Scudiere, 1969:18).

With the invention and spread of scuba, intrepid underwater explorers began to find history on the bottomlands of Lake George. W. Carleton Dunn made several scuba dives in 1953 into Lake George and retrieved artifacts for the Fort William Henry Corporation, a group of businessmen who constructed a replica of Fort William Henry at the south end of the lake. During those dives Dunn reported seeing mounds of rocks sitting upon sunken warships, probably bateaux (W.C. Dunn, personal communication, 1997).

Colonel Lorenzo Hagglund, the underwater explorer who in 1935 found and raised Benedict Arnold’s gondola *Philadelphia* from nearby Lake Champlain, also spent time diving in Lake George. His searches at Lake George in the 1950s, however, were unsuccessful as he tried to locate a sunken French and Indian War-era floating gun battery (Bellico, 1992:79).

The 1960s

Modern day interest in Lake George’s Sunken Fleet of 1758 began in 1960 when two teenage scuba divers, Fred Bolt and Dick LaVoy, located 10 to 15 bateaux lying in the southeast corner of the lake (Barr, 1960). A couple of months after this find, several sunken bateaux, probably three, were raised (Scudiere, 1969:18). After conservation treatment, one bateau was exhibited for years at the Adirondack Museum in Blue Mountain Lake, New York. The others were put into

archival storage by the state government, the custodial caretaker of these historic warships.

In 1963-1964, archaeological diver Terry Crandall conducted scuba searches in Lake George looking for more colonial shipwrecks. He located and photographed several clusters of sunken bateaux while working for the Adirondack Museum. Crandall's field study was performed under an archaeological permit issued by the State of New York. Crandall's pioneering work in underwater archaeology collected baseline data on these shipwrecks that were used a quarter-of-a-century later by an underwater archaeology group called Bateaux Below, Inc.

On July 27, 1965, the *New York Times* printed an article entitled "Lake George Divers Find 1758 Battle Craft." The story outlined what were called "salvage operations" by over 30 State Police scuba divers who planned to raise "the remains of at least eight bateaux" scuttled in 1758 (Johnston, 1965). Unfortunately, few details of this salvage operation have been found except for some sparse contemporary newspaper accounts. In fact, this salvage actually created an atmosphere that discouraged future archaeological study of Lake George's Sunken Fleet of 1758.

Bateaux Below, Inc.

In 1987, a group of scuba divers trained in underwater archaeology began mapping seven French and Indian War shipwrecks known as the Wiawaka bateaux. This grass-roots project was the genesis for the formation of an underwater archaeology group known as Bateaux Below, Inc., a not-for-profit educational corporation. Their survey of the seven Wiawaka bateaux revealed much about this cluster of eighteenth-century shipwrecks.

The Wiawaka Bateaux (Figure 8.2) consisted of seven vessels, each approximately 9.14 meters (30 feet) long. The shipwrecks rested on a slope in 6 to 12 meters (20 to 40 feet) of water. Rocks used to sink the bateaux were inside the hulls and holes drilled into the bottom planking to facilitate sinking were visible. After four years of archival research and archaeological fieldwork, Bateaux Below completed its study of this site. The group then worked with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Places to get the seven Wiawaka Bateaux listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1992. In 1996, Bateaux Below in conjunction with the Wiawaka Holiday House erected a blue-and-yellow historic marker on shore that overlooks the seven shipwrecks and helps to interpret the site for the public. The signage reads:

WIAWAKA BATEAUX

7 FRENCH & INDIAN WAR
BATEAUX SUNK HERE IN
1758. LISTED ON NATIONAL
REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
IN 1992.
BATEAUX
BELOW, INC.

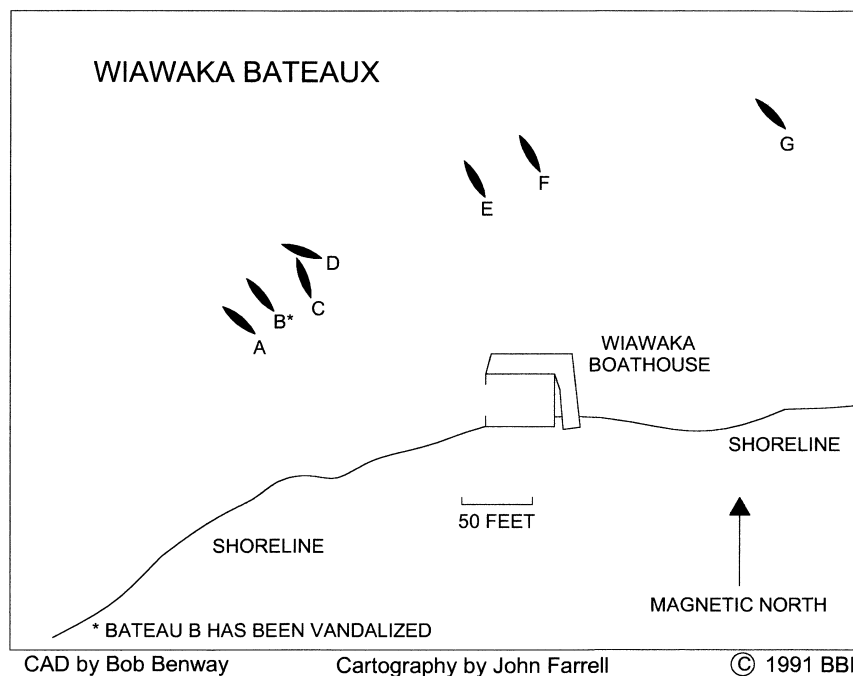


FIGURE 8.2. Site plan of seven 1758 British bateau shipwrecks known as the Wiawaka Bateaux (Image courtesy of Bateaux Below, Inc.).

On June 26, 1990, members of Bateaux Below using a Klein 595 side-scan sonar discovered another significant shipwreck of the Sunken Fleet of 1758, *Land Tortoise*, an intact 15.85 meter long (52 feet) and 5.49 meter (18 feet) wide radeau. This vessel is recognized by the Smithsonian Institution as “the oldest intact war vessel in North America” (Lundeberg, 1995). The radeau sits upright in 32.61 meters (107 feet) of water, well-preserved by its cold, freshwater environment. Unlike many shipwrecks in freshwater bodies in the United States, it is free of zebra mussels.

Radeau, a French word for “raft,” is a type of floating gun battery. The shipwreck was studied from 1991-1993 by Bateaux Below under the direction of D.K. Abbass, a Rhode Island archaeologist. A unique aspect of this archaeological study was that the team had no major grant funding, thus project members contributed not only “sweat equity,” many also contributed considerable out-of-pocket funding to complete the project.

Since *Land Tortoise* is the only existing radeau-class vessel that has been found, much was learned from its study. *Land Tortoise* is seven-sided with an oak hull and upper pine bulwarks. It is undecked and has 16 oak frames per side. For every hull frame there is a corresponding stanchion to support the upper bulwarks.

Two view holes are located in the bow, one port and one starboard. The radeau has four mooring rings, two forward and two aft, and is fastened with wooden treenails and iron nails or drifts. *Land Tortoise* has 26 sweep holes, 13 port and 13 starboard. Mast steps were found inside, but no rigging was discovered. It was pierced for seven cannons, four on the port and three on the starboard. The radeau's hull is caulked and it appears to be tarred. Because *Land Tortoise* had a short career and was stripped of her armament before sinking, no colonial artifacts were found. The radeau's real wealth is its unusual naval design and its intact structural integrity (Abbass et al., 1992:142-147).

In 1995, *Land Tortoise* was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1998, the sunken warship was designated a National Historic Landmark, becoming the sixth shipwreck with that recognition and joining the Civil War vessels *Maple Leaf* and *Monitor*, the Spanish-American War vessel *Antonio Lopez*, and World War II warships USS *Arizona* and USS *Utah* to hold that honor.

Submerged Heritage Preserves

To share these submerged cultural resources with the public, the State of New York, in partnership with several local government agencies and not-for-profit corporations, created New York's first shipwreck preserves in September 1993. Two shipwreck sites, a 13.72 meter (45 feet) long, 1906-built gasoline-powered launch named *Forward*, and the seven Wiawaka bateau wrecks dubbed "The Sunken Fleet of 1758," opened as an underwater park for divers. The sites are marked by mooring and navigation buoys. Trail lines and signage underwater guide divers as they tour the shipwreck preserves (Figure 8.3). State-produced brochures (Figure 8.4) are available that provide a site plan, vessel history, suggested reading list, regulations, emergency information, and a map to locate the preserve sites.

Over 1997-1998, the *Forward* shipwreck preserve was transformed into "The *Forward* Underwater Classroom." This site remodeling was financed through a small grant from the Fund for Lake George, Inc. A second vessel was deliberately sunk at the *Forward* site and several stations were created where scuba enthusiasts learn about the lake's geology, fish life, vegetation, and color loss at depth. An archaeological recording grid was erected over one shipwreck to simulate an archaeological field study site. At two stations underwater, divers use thermometers and recording slates stationed at different depths to record water temperatures. Furthermore, an on-site secchi disk lets divers measure and record horizontal water transparency.

Also in 1997, "The Sunken Fleet of 1758" preserve was enhanced. A 7.01 meter (23 feet) long, two-thirds scale replica of a colonial bateau was deliberately sunk into the lake. Not only did this exercise test hypothesized methods eighteenth century soldiers used to sink bateaux with the goal of retrieving them, the exercise also had two other goals. The first goal was to allow divers to see what an intact bateau looked like and to compare the replica with 1758 bateaux. The

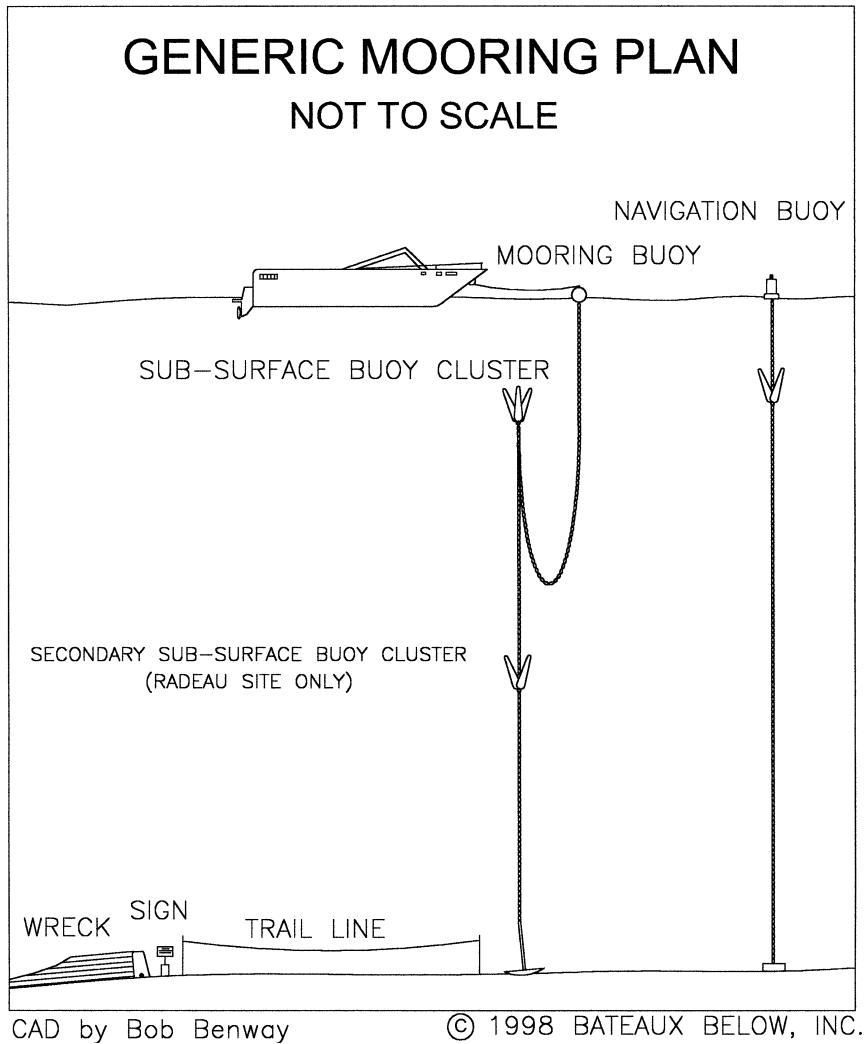


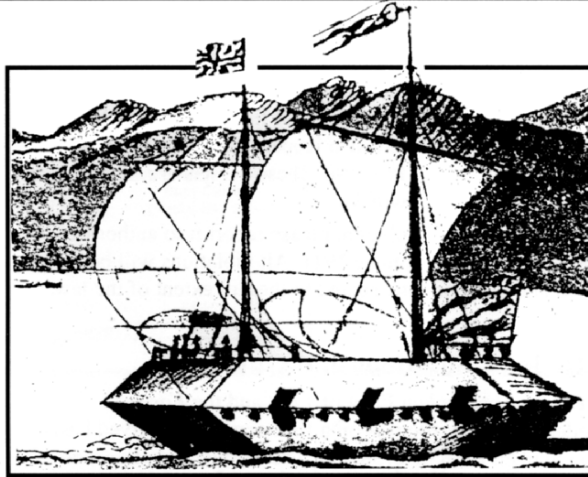
FIGURE 8.3. Generic Mooring Plan for Lake George's "Submerged Heritage Preserves" (Image courtesy of Bateaux Below, Inc.).

second goal was to provide archaeologists a way to examine how a bateau might deteriorate in a freshwater environment. "The *Forward* Underwater Classroom" and "The Sunken Fleet of 1758" are open to diver visitation from early summer into the autumn and can be visited by divers on a first-come, first-served basis.

In August 1994, *Land Tortoise* was added to Lake George's underwater state park. Due to the vessel's historical importance and because it is a deep dive, diver visitation is by registration only. Experienced divers can visit the radeau during three time slots a day from the second weekend in June through the first Monday

A Divers' Guide to Lake George

New York's Submerged Heritage Preserves Guide



Dive Into History

FIGURE 8.4. The banner illustration for Lake George's "Submerged Heritage Preserves" informational brochure (Image courtesy of New York State Department of Environmental Conservation).

in September. Prior to opening the site, a white plastic chain perimeter was erected around the vessel to discourage touching this fragile French and Indian War shipwreck (Zarzynski 2001:81-84).

It is hoped that in the near future the state will open another preserve site to diving. This is a geological preserve called "Maria's Reef." The 182.89 meter (600 feet) long and 18.29 to 22.86 meter (60 to 75 feet) wide limestone outcropping lies in 6.1 to 21.37 meters (20 to 70 feet) of water. "Maria's Reef" would be unique, the first underwater park in New York set up for divers to explore a submerged geological site. The proposed limestone outcropping preserve would have minimal signage underwater, a conscious attempt to retain its natural beauty.

The geological site was mapped in 2001 by Vincent J. Capone of Bateaux Below using an Odom Hydrotrac sonar and a RoxAnn Groundmaster; the latter capable of identifying the type of lake bottom. Divers would have needed many months to replicate what remote sensing accomplished in less than a day and undoubtedly would not have achieved the same degree of accuracy as the high-tech equipment. Scuba teams later were used to finalize mapping details (Zarzynski and Benway, 2005).

The Submerged Heritage Preserves are administered by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and are an experiment in public

access for sport divers. Most scuba divers treat these submerged cultural resources with great respect. There has been, however, minor damage to some shipwrecks and even to the preserve hardware. Because this underwater state park has no rangers on site to keep order and protect the sites, divers are on their own good behavior. Fortunately, diver-damage to Lake George's Submerged Heritage Preserves has been minimal.

1758 Military Dock

A submerged colonial waterfront structure, known as the 1758 military dock, is an intriguing cultural resource that was the focus of a recent archaeological investigation. The 1758-built dock's remaining visible section lies in .91 to 2.44 meters (3 to 8 feet) of water at the south end of the lake. This rock-and-wooden structure launched British General Jeffery Amherst's 1759 fleet of nearly 800 warships and 11,000 soldiers in an expedition that resulted in the British seizing two French strongholds in nearby Champlain Valley (Bellico, 2001:85-98). This sunken military dock was studied by Bateaux Below in 2002. Further fieldwork in 2004 revealed three disarticulated dock timbers lying off the submerged structure that were mapped into the site plan. In 1992, Lake George Historical Association and Bateaux Below erected a blue-and-yellow state historic marker at the site. This signage reads:

MILITARY DOCK

DURING THE FRENCH AND INDIAN
WAR, BRITISH AND PROVINCIAL
TROOPS USED A DOCK NEAR
HERE FOR LOADING SOLDIERS,
ARTILLERY, AND SUPPLIES.

LAKE GEORGE
HISTORICAL ASSN

Cadet (ex Olive) Steam Launch

On November 8, 1997, Bateaux Below discovered a shipwreck lying in Lake George off the town of Bolton. The Klein 2000 side-scan sonar used to find the shipwreck was provided by Vincent J. Capone, a sonar expert and a member of Bateaux Below. Several days after the discovery, a scuba team ground-truthed the sonar target. The dive revealed it was a previously unknown shipwreck - *Cadet*, a 14.63 meter (48 feet) long, 1893-built wooden steam launch. That find began a multi-year process of studying and interpreting the vessel, the best-preserved shipwreck of its class found in the northeastern United States. In 2005, seven years after its discovery, the story of this historic vessel, instrumental in the development of Lake George as a resort-era destination, has been told by a variety of interpretive outlets.

Cadet was built in 1893 at the north end of Lake George and originally was named *Olive*. Its owner, N.E. Porter, sold *Olive* to Captain Raphael Potter who used

it to run excursions and to carry supplies to hotels around the lake. In 1898, the vessel was acquired by John Boulton Simpson, one of the founders of the Sagamore Hotel in Bolton Landing. He lengthened and rebuilt *Olive* and renamed it *Cadet*. In 1899, *Cadet* hung up on rocks and had to be pulled off by the steam yacht *Vanadis*. Simpson, apparently not too satisfied with the vessel, sold it. In 1901, *Cadet* was owned by Captain Fred R. Smith. The steam launch was advertised for charter by “day or week” and it operated for several years. *Cadet* eventually disappeared from the historical record, a victim of age and an emerging technology, gasoline-powered vessels. Apparently *Cadet* was stripped of its major equipment, taken to deep water, and scuttled.

In 1999, Bateaux Below conducted a 25-day archaeological study of the shipwreck, completed entirely by volunteers since the group was unable to acquire funding. Archaeologist D.K. Abbass served as Principal Investigator for the field study. The archaeological investigation determined that *Cadet* is a 14.63 by 2.93 meter (48 by 9.6 feet), wooden-hulled steam launch with pointed bow, rounded bilges, and a fantail stern. The watercraft’s hull is intact, but *Cadet* has some damage to its stern. Coal found inside the boat was identified as stoker egg anthracite from Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania.

From 2001-2002, Bateaux Below worked with the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the State Historic Preservation Officer to nominate the *Cadet* shipwreck to the National Register of Historic Places. In 2002, *Cadet* was listed on the National Register, joining the seven 1758 wrecks called the Wiawaka Bateaux Cluster and the 1758 *Land Tortoise* radeau as Lake George shipwrecks with that historic designation.

In 2005, a blue-and-yellow historic marker about *Cadet* (ex *Olive*) (Figure 8.5) was erected in Veterans Park in Bolton Landing, New York. The signage reads:

CADET SHIPWRECK

BUILT 1893 AS STEAM LAUNCH
OLIVE, RENAMED CADET. SUNK
OFF BOLTON, DATE UNKNOWN.
LISTED ON NATIONAL REGISTER
OF HISTORIC PLACES IN 2002.

BATEAUX BELOW

Also in 2005, Bateaux Below and Pepe Productions, a Glens Falls, New York, multi-media company, produced a full color poster exhibit entitled “Lake George’s Historic *Cadet* Steam Launch.” The two-dimensional display describes the history of the watercraft and the results of the 1997-1999 archaeological fieldwork. Copies of the poster exhibit were donated for exhibit to the Historical Society of the Town of Bolton, the Sagamore Hotel, and to the Town of Bolton. The *Cadet* (ex *Olive*) steam launch project showed how underwater archaeology can uncover and exhibit a previously little-known chapter of Lake George’s past (Zarzyński and Benway, 2005).



FIGURE 8.5. Photograph of a blue-and-yellow metal historic marker entitled CADET SHIPWRECK (Photo courtesy of Peter Pepe/Pepe Productions).

Underwater Blueway Trail

In 2003, the New York Department of State working with a local municipality, the Village of Lake George, proposed an innovative program for New York state. Formally called the Underwater Resources Protection & Development Project - Blueway Trail Creation, the concept is a heritage and recreational tourism endeavor to create underwater dive sites in six maritime communities around New York state. The six waterways, geographically dispersed around the state, are Lake George, Lake Champlain, Lake Ontario, Seneca Lake, Lake Erie, and the Atlantic Ocean. The concept uses locally driven initiatives in conjunction with State of New York oversight to form a program that presents a quality visitor experience while protecting the submerged resources. Lake George, which has the most experience with shipwreck preserves in the state dating back to 1993, became the locality to help develop this program and to devise a model template for the other waterways. The end result for each of the six waterways in this pilot project is to develop one or two underwater dive preserves with associated shore-side exhibits, a tourist brochure that promotes this project, web sites about the shipwreck preserves, and to create a statewide plan that not only promotes submerged cultural resource protection, but also builds a marketing strategy for the Underwater Blueway Trail. The two-year program received a financial grant to be matched by donated and in-kind services.

Unfortunately, due largely to the slow pace that sometimes is unavoidable with any state bureaucracy, this program got off to a sluggish start. By mid-2005, however, construction of an attractive waterfront structure called the Lake George

Visitor Center began, and the center opened in mid-2006. In addition to being an informational gateway to promote local tourism, exhibit space in this building was created to inform visitors about the Underwater Blueway Trail and Lake George's Submerged Heritage Preserves. If bureaucratic red tape can be cut, the Underwater Blueway Trail could be a dynamic program to not only open shipwrecks for diver visitation, but also to attract non-divers to learn more about New York's maritime heritage.

*“The Lost Radeau: North America's Oldest Intact Warship”
Documentary*

One of the most dynamic methods to interpret shipwrecks for the public is through the video medium. Therefore, on November 30, 2005, Pepe Productions and Bateaux Below collaborated with other partners to release a documentary about a Lake George shipwreck (Figure 8.6). The 57-minute long DVD documentary, entitled “The Lost Radeau: North America's Oldest Intact Warship,” is the story of the history, discovery, and underwater archaeological investigation of the 1758 *Land Tortoise* radeau. With technical support from Black Laser Learning and Whitesel Graphics, the award-winning documentary has become a model for how to interpret shipwrecks for the diving and non-diving communities. This partnership currently is in the process of creating several other documentary productions. Furthermore, this team wants to expand its success using state-of-the-art digital technologies to create computer-based exhibits and interactive displays to optimize the interpretation of shipwrecks at Lake George.

Zebra Mussels

With the discovery of zebra mussels in Lake George, found by Bateaux Below divers in December 1999, the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's Darren Fresh Water Institute and Bateaux Below initiated a joint venture to eradicate these thumbnail-sized mollusks from the lake. The aquatic invaders came to North America from Europe in 1988, hitching a ride in a freighter's ballast water. These zebra mussels were released into the water around the Great Lakes and quickly spread to other waterways where they colonized hard substrates like rocks, docks, and wrecks. In vast numbers, their weight can collapse fragile shipwrecks and thus they pose a major threat to many shipwrecks in the inland waterways of North America. Since their discovery at Lake George in 1999, over 20,000 zebra mussels have been hand-harvested by scuba divers from three locations in the lake, thus minimizing their spread. Furthermore, concerned lake groups led by the Fund for Lake George, the Lake George Association, the Lake George Park Commission, and the Lake George Watershed Conference implemented a watchdog program to educate lake users and to fight the proliferation of zebra mussels in the lake. This successful anti-zebra mussel campaign is unprecedented and marks the first time human intervention prevented a wholesale colonization by these pesky aquatic nuisances throughout a waterway once they were introduced.

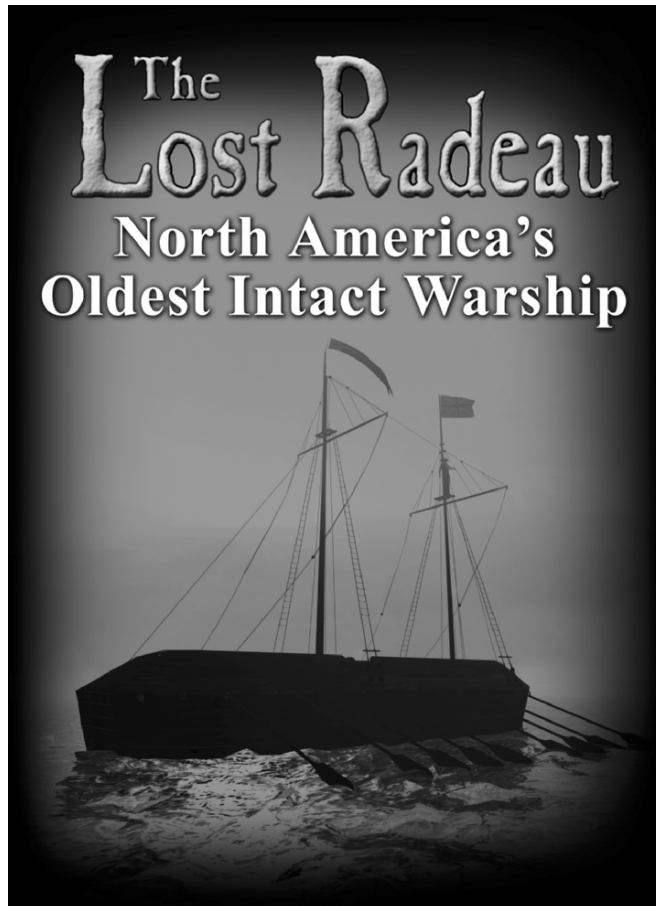


FIGURE 8.6. The DVD cover for the award-winning documentary “The Lost Radeau: North America’s Oldest Intact Warship,” the story of the history, discovery, and underwater archaeological investigation of Lake George, New York’s 1758 *Land Tortoise* radeau (Image courtesy of Pepe Productions).

Challenges

Like other underwater archaeology programs around the United States, the public interpretation of Lake George’s submerged cultural resources has met with varied success. Several shipwreck sites have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and in 1993 the first shipwreck preserve system in New York was created. Bateaux Below members frequently present lectures on their underwater archaeology projects to local audiences as well as deliver formal papers at state and national archaeology conferences. Bateaux Below trustee Russell P. Bellico is the author of several books, two on Lake George’s maritime and military history. Bellico’s books have done much to inform people about the

waterway's submerged cultural resources. In 1993, Bateaux Below worked with the Lake George Historical Association to create a permanent exhibit for their lakeside museum entitled "Historic Vessels and Shipwrecks of Lake George." Furthermore, Bateaux Below collaborated with several groups to erect six historic markers around the lake to inform people about the lake's maritime heritage. Likewise, two self-guided tours about the colonial history of the south end of the lake, including numerous references to the waterway's maritime affairs, were developed. One of the best interpretations of the 1758 *Land Tortoise* radeau shipwreck was a project that created a photomosaic of the shipwreck. The 1993-1994 project was undertaken by Bob Benway, a Bateaux Below underwater photographer, and Kendrick McMahan, a computer technician. Two hundred photographs of the shipwreck were assembled into an amazing seamless photomosaic. The result showed the vessel in plan view and created baseline data for cultural resource management of the shipwreck. In the first half of the 1990s, Bateaux Below, the Lake George Historical Association, and New York Sea Grant teamed up to present "Shipwreck Weekend at Lake George." This annual September event brought in several nationally recognized authorities to speak on shipwrecks and underwater archaeology. The conference was well attended, but was difficult to present due to the high costs associated with advertising and housing speakers. It nonetheless was an effective way to inform the diving community about shipwrecks and to promote preservation of submerged cultural resources.

The shortcomings of developing more public interpretation programs are significant. Bateaux Below has not been able to acquire dedicated office or exhibit space in one of the towns or villages along the 51.2 kilometer (32 mile) long lake. This has significantly impacted the group's ability to integrate effectively into the infrastructure of the Lake George community. One of the biggest challenges faced by Bateaux Below at Lake George is working with the state agencies responsible for managing cultural resources found on the bottomlands of state waters. New York State government is a multi-tiered labyrinth of officialdom, with agencies often having overlapping jurisdiction. Nevertheless, many state officials have done an admirable job trying to develop effective management strategies for cultural resources found in state waters.

The recent alliance of underwater archaeologists with multi-media specialists ushers in a new era for the public interpretation of Lake George's maritime heritage and submerged cultural resources. Bateaux Below helped Black Laser Learning, a Pennsylvania-based company, in its development of a series of training DVD productions focused on underwater remote sensing. Bateaux Below and Pepe Productions are developing a dynamic new web site for Bateaux Below and the groups are collaborating on several forthcoming documentary productions with a special emphasis on cutting-edge animation. This foray into multi-media interpretation of underwater archaeology projects is helping make Lake George's shipwrecks "speak."

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