

LEGEND OF THE LAKE - New Discovery Edition Book

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by [Jim Kennard](#)

Legend of the Lake - Discovery Edition - Book NOW Available!

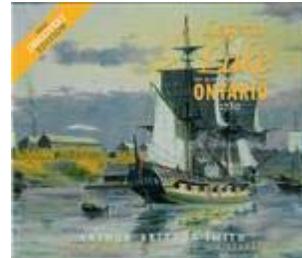
The recent discovery of the wreck of the British warship *Ontario*, “the Holy Grail” of Great Lakes shipwrecks, solves several mysteries that have puzzled historians since the ship sank more than two centuries ago. Now, for the first time, the whole tragic story of the *Ontario* can finally be told.

When the British warship *Ontario* sank on All Hallow’s Eve, 1780, she took as many as 120 passengers and crew with her to the bottom of Lake Ontario. The sinking was, and to this day, 229 years later, remains the Great Lakes’ worst-ever nautical disaster.

At the time of her disappearance, the 22-gun brigantine sloop was the pride of Great Britain’s freshwater fleet. She was also the largest vessel on the Great Lakes and a bulwark in the British defence against the threat of an American invasion. When last seen, the *Ontario* was sailing east out of Fort Niagara bound for Oswego, New York. Just a few hours after leaving port, the *Ontario* was caught in a raging gale and quickly sank without a trace. It wasn’t until the following spring that the bodies of six people believed to have been aboard the ship washed up on the lakeshore near Wilson, New York. No other victims were ever recovered.

Despite the best efforts of various searchers, some of whom sought a treasure in gold or silver rumoured to have been on board, the questions about the *Ontario*’s fate remained unresolved for more than two centuries. Kingston lawyer and businessman turned author-historian Arthur Britton Smith related the story of the doomed ship in his acclaimed 1997 book *Legend of the Lake*. However, given the mystery about the final resting place of what *Globe and Mail* writer Patrick White (June 14, 2008) dubbed the “Holy Grail” of Great Lakes shipwrecks. Smith’s narrative was unavoidably incomplete.

The *Ontario*’s final resting place was unknown until last May, when two marine engineers from Rochester, New York, finally succeeded in locating the wreck



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using an unmanned remotely operated diving vehicle. What Dan Scoville and Jim Kennard discovered was that the ship lies in one of the deepest parts of Lake Ontario, more than 80 fathoms (about 150 metres) deep. The *Ontario* settled on the bottom in an almost upright position, and she remains in amazingly good condition. The frigid waters in the twilight world where the wreck rests are a perfect time capsule; the wood and surviving artifacts have been preserved in near pristine condition. Having viewed video of the wreck Smith said, "What I saw is beyond my wildest dreams. I thought she'd be covered in silt, but she looks as if she might have sunk last week."

Scoville and Kennard's find provided the vital information author Smith needed to complete the story he began in his earlier book. And now Quarry Heritage Books has published a "New Discovery" edition of *Legend of the Lake*.

In addition to the original line drawings of the *Ontario* done by internationally known illustrator John McKay, numerous historical photos and illustrations, and sumptuous artworks by renowned marine artists Peter Rindlisbacher, Robert Averill, and Roland Stevens, this handsome 176-page book contains a treasure trove of fresh material – a new preface, three additional chapters, 23 photos of the wreck, and many new illustrations. In addition, Smith has sifted through the scientific evidence with an expert's eye to offer the most likely explanation for why this sturdily built 30-metre warship sank so quickly, so unexpectedly, and with such tragic loss of life.

But the "New Discovery Edition" of *Legend of the Lake* is more than just the story of an ill-fated sailing ship. It's also a book that offers readers a fascinating window on life in Upper Canada in the late 18th century. "This is the only vessel from that period that's in such perfect shape," Smith said. "It's a remarkable find, and I'm delighted that I've been able to finish telling the *Ontario's* story."

Legend of the Lake - Discovery Edition \$39.95 (includes tax and US postage)

<http://www.shipwreckworld.com/story/legend-of-the-lake-discovery-edition.aspx>