



SAN DIEGO SHIP MODELERS' GUILD

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NEWSLETTER

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HMS *SURPRISE* PARTY! ~ 12 AUGUST 2009 ~



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Established in 1972
by
Bob Wright
and
Russ Merrill

The San Diego Ship
Modelers' Guild is
affiliated with and
supports the Maritime
Museum of San Diego.



THROUGH THE LUBBER'S HOLE

~ BY ROBERT HEWITT ~

1800 schooner from The Buffalo News by Maki Becker

For 175 years, a ship-wrecked schooner laid virtually unscathed at the bottom of Lake Erie. The ship sailed the Great Lakes bringing grain and other goods to Buffalo New York. Shipwreck hunters who have been diving on the downed ship want to raise the eighty-five foot vessel. They want to put the ship on display in a giant water tank in the Buffalo Harbor. Pat Clyne, a videographer who specializes in filming shipwrecks, says the ship is in pristine condition. Clyne is also a member of North East Research, the group that wants to lift the schooner out of the lake.

Recent research has led some to believe that the ship may be the *Caledonia*, a British built vessel captured by the U.S. forces during the War of 1812 and used against the British in the battle of Lake Erie. After the war the *Caledonia* was sold as a merchant ship.

The schooner's existence was first detected in the early 1990's by shipwreck scavengers using sonar where some believe there are as many as three thousand sunken ships. Richard Kullenberg, owner and founder of North East Research, bought the coordinates to the location, giving him the right to salvage it. He first believed he bought the rights to a sunken payroll ship of the Civil War. More dives were made and wheat and barley grains were found in the hold. Two coins were found, a British 1797 and an American dated 1834. The 1834 coin led researchers to believe the ship sank shortly after that date. The dives discovered it wasn't the payroll ship but it was very valuable in a historic way.

The ship is in remarkably good condition except for the Zebra mussels coating most of the vessel. This makes the possibility of raising it very real. Buffalo Industrial Diving Co., an underwater engineering firm is going to strap a full sized sling around the ship and slowly bring it to the surface. The ship will be held in an old molasses tank while it is being restored. It will then be placed in a massive acrylic tank similar to the sea creature display tank in the Atlantis Hotel in the Bahamas.



Fresh water and frigid temperatures have helped preserve the vessel. Other intact ships have been found in the Great lakes including two off St Catharines, Ontario. There is a revolutionary war vessel also in Lake Ontario between Rochester and Syracuse, New York.

John Montague, director of the Buffalo State College Maritime Center, said there is no evidence that the ship is the *Caledonia*, "but it is certainly possible". There were no nameplates found, so this is speculation, he said. The plan to raise and pickle the ship is feasible, but would be extremely complicated and expensive.

Other ships that have been raised have met with disaster. The *Alvin Clark*, a wood schooner raised in 1968 off the coast of Wisconsin, was put on display at a museum in Green Bay. The museum ran out of funds and the ship rotted.

Many archeologists and maritime experts are against raising ships. They believe the ships should be documented and left in their final resting place. A cheaper alternative would be to document and replicate it and have that ship serve as a museum.

ADVERTISEMENT

The following ship model kits are for sale from Joanne Edwards. We have not determined all of the prices. Please contact Robert Hewitt if you are interested at **619-234-8032** or **rhewitt@cox.net**.

Wooden ship kits

1. Cutty Sark 1:78 the list price is \$549.00, sale \$250.00
2. Brittany fishing boat 1:25
3. DACH p6094
4. Grimsby English frigate
5. king of the Mississippi list price \$199.00, sale \$90.00
6. Forester, Model Shipways

Plastic ship kits

1. J P Morgan yacht corsair II
2. Pamir 1:150
3. Towda-Maru 1:280
4. Hannah 1775 1:70
5. Skipjack (two kits)
6. Hellen rc 1:120
7. the firefighter, harbor fire boat
8. Lusitania 1:350
9. USS Randell attack transport



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**The next meeting will be
Wednesday, 9 September 2009
aboard the Berkeley at 7:00 pm.**



*Californian in the fog off Point Loma.
30 August 2009*