Lost at … Lake?

Often, when we think of “shipwrecks” a specific image comes to mind, perhaps a collision with an iceberg or briny gales sweeping over the ocean. What we don’t typically consider is just how many historic ships lie in the murky depths of the Great Lakes, where the temperature and freshness of the water keeps the boats intact and preserved.

One of these such wrecks is the HMS Ontario. She was discovered in 2008 by shipwreck enthusiasts Dan Scoville and Jim Kennard, who explained their findings in an article for *Shipwreck World, a website dedicated to all things shipwreck*. Kennard writes that the Ontario was a British warship, which sank in Lake Ontario in a storm on October 31st, 1780, making her the oldest confirmed shipwreck in the Great Lakes.

To locate the wreck, Scoville and Kennard used a technique called “side-scanning sonar”, developed by Kennard himself, as well as a remotely-operated submersible. No sunlight could reach the ship, so the submersible was equipped with heavy-duty lighting to take photographs such as the one pictured. This is the carved scroll on the bow, which was used to confirm the identity of the ship.

"Usually when ships go down in big storms, they get beat up quite a bit. They don’t sink nice and square. This went down in a huge storm, and it still managed to stay intact," said Scoville in an interview with NBC.

The Ontario lies on the lakebed of Lake Ontario near Niagara, though the exact location remains undisclosed due to the ship’s status as a war grave. Tragically, Kennard estimates all 120 people aboard the ship died when it sank during the American Revolutionary War.