



Surface Interval

the Explorers Dive Club of NJ

NJ Shipwreck Revealed- Stockton College Students Map Long Lost Steamship

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The violent crash came without warning just after 2 a.m. on a cloudy and breezy morning off the coast of Atlantic City in 1860. The Robert J. Walker, a government steamboat surveying the coast, was hit hard by a passing commercial schooner that accidentally ripped a gash in the side of the ship and fled into the darkness. Most of the Walker's crew of nearly 70 jumped from their beds and tried to save the steamer. They steered the ship toward the nearest light, Absecon Light-house on the

Jersey coast. But it was too late. Within a half hour, the Walker sunk. Twenty men clinging to the wreckage eventually went down with it. "I cannot withhold ... profound regret for the melancholy fate of that portion of the crew who are still missing and who it is to be feared have found a watery grave," Lt. John Guthrie, the Walker's captain, and one of the last rescued from the water, told his bosses in a telegram a few days later.

Then ... nothing happened. With the start of the Civil War approaching, the government never investigated the disaster. No

one on the schooner was ever prosecuted. No memorial was held for the 20 dead men or another who died when he reached shore. For more than 150 years, the Walker sat at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, 10 nautical miles off the Jersey Shore, all but forgotten.

Until now. Last sum-

mer, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced it had identified the remains of the Walker 85 feet beneath the surface at a mysterious site that had been popular with Jersey Shore fishermen and divers for decades. NOAA, the government agency that succeeded the old U.S. Coast Survey agency that operated the Walker, said it wanted to honor the men who died in the shipwreck. But the agency also wanted to learn more about the site and continue to open it to divers. Last summer, students and researchers from

Richard Stockton College in nearby Galloway are using sonar and other equipment to map the complex wreck. Their work will provide the first detailed look at the deadliest disaster in NOAA's history. "I'm delighted, as are the other folks at NOAA, to see both the involvement of the New Jersey wreck-diving community and the students and faculty at Stockton College," said James Delgado, director of maritime heritage in NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries.

SHARED BENEFITS

"Archaeology is about people, and a wreck like Walker is part of our common heritage as Americans," Delgado said. "It's something to be shared for the benefit of all, for the story to be told, and for the loss of the 21 men on the ship to be remembered."

The Stockton students, who enrolled in a summer course titled the Summer Intensive Research Experience, took weekly trips to the wreckage site in a small research boat. They used advanced multi-beam sonar technology and geographic information
(continued on page 5)



President's Corner:

Welcome back! Hope everyone enjoyed the holidays. A good time was had by all at our December holiday party and October Sunday brunch. Thanks go out to Tom Montrone for hosting the Brunch.

Special Thanks to Joe Mazraani for an outstanding presentation last October on the search for, discovery and exploration of the U-550 submarine.

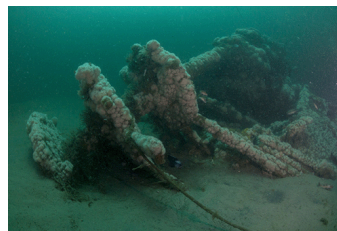
We look forward to seeing everyone at the April meeting and pre-meeting dinner.

-Karen Taylor
explorersdiveclub@gmail.com

Indonesia 2017

Interested in diving Indonesia? We're looking at Raja Ampat and Lembah Strait which are reportedly the best dive locations in Indonesia. Raja Ampat (liveaboard diving) is located on the western part of Papua Island. Lembah Strait (land-based muck diving) lies near Manado, Sulawesi. The date for this trip is not set yet, but best time to dive Indonesia is said to be May – September. No obligation at this time. This is just to see if there is any interest. Please contact Karen at explorersdiveclub@gmail.com.

New Jersey Shipwreck Symposium



The New Jersey Historical Divers Association will present their twelfth New Jersey Shipwreck Symposium entitled **"Shipwrecks: Governments, Archeologists and the Private Sector - All Working Together"** on Friday May 1, 2015 at the Info-Age Science Learning Center in Wall, NJ. Further details are available by visiting <http://www.njhda.org/eventspage.html>

Dues are Donations . . .

As a nonprofit group we rely completely on donations in the form of dues to cover our operating expenses.

The Explorers Dive Club would like to extend our sincerest gratitude for your donations over the years. Regardless of whether or not you are able to give financially at this time, we welcome you to join us for dinner, attend a meeting or an event any time you are available.

Dues are \$25 for individual and \$30 per family per year (July – June). Please see Lisa Vesuvio at a meeting or mail your check payable to "Explorers Dive Club" to:

Explorers Dive Club
c/o Lisa Vesuvio
477 Vicki Drive
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

**Get out your 2015 calendars,
date books, smart phones,
underwater slates etc.,**

April 14, 2015 - Meeting 7:30 pm @ The Spain Inn

May 12, 2015 - Meeting 7:30 pm @ The Spain Inn

June 9, 2015 - Meeting 7:30 pm @ The Spain Inn

June 20, 2015—20th Anniversary Beach Picnic

[Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park, Long Branch NJ](#)

July 14, 2015 - Meeting 7:30 pm @ The Spain Inn

August 11, 2015 - Meeting 7:30 pm @ The Spain Inn

September 8, 2015- Meeting 7:30 pm @ The Spain Inn

October 13, 2015 - Meeting 7:30 pm @ The Spain Inn



973.949.4599

Gypsyblood Dive

A "Full-Service" Dive Charter Operation



2015 BOAT DIVE SCHEDULE

Saturday, July 11, 2015 - Stolt

Saturday, August 1, 2015 - Algol

Saturday, August 29, 2015 - Gulf Trade

Saturday, September 26, 2015 - Maurice Tracey

Destinations Subject to Change Due To Conditions!

All are aboard the Gypsy Blood, now docked at Southside Marina,
311 Channel Drive, Point Pleasant, NJ

Board and loaded by 6:30AM for 7AM departure.

To reserve a spot, contact Keith Bellamy at
keithbellami@optonline.net



Socorro Trip

We're headed to Socorro January 15 - 23, 2016, the beginning of humpback whale season, on a 9-day Solmar V live aboard departing from Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. Socorro is the largest of four volcanic islands in the Pacific Ocean, the Revillagigedo Archipelago. Its abundant marine life attracts sharks and other pelagics. While Socorro is known for Giant Pacific mantas, we will be on the lookout for humpback whales, dolphins, whale sharks, Galapagos sharks, silky sharks, silvertips, and scalloped hammerhead sharks.

Live aboard cost with taxes: \$4059 per person for Standard cabin and \$4175 per person for Superior cabin. For 6 or more divers, the 10% group discount pricing would be: \$3653 per person for Standard cabin and \$3758 per person for Superior cabin. For 11 or more divers, there is a free spot discount that we will share.

Price includes double occupancy accommodations on live aboard, meals, snacks, beverages including soft drinks, beer and wine with dinner. Not Included: Airfare, airport transfers, hotel, gratuities, \$15 chamber fee, Nitrox.

Contact Karen Taylor at: explorersdiveclub@gmail.com for further information or visit – www.SolmarV.com

NJ Shipwreck Revealed *(continued from front Page)*

system software to define the size, depth and location of the shipwreck. "It sounded like fun, and it is," said Walter Poff, 25, a marine science major from Blackwood. "It's definitely the most interesting summer class available." Underwater video of the site shows much of the Walker, one of the U.S. government's first iron-hulled steamers, has survived after more than a century under the sea. The ship's hull, unique engines, paddle wheel and rectangular portholes remain nearly intact and helped identify the wreckage as belonging to the Walker. The ship is still pointing toward Absecon Lighthouse, the beacon the crew had raced to reach in the dark before the Walker sunk.

ACOUSTIC PICTURES For the Stockton students, the mapping work was labor intensive. The students and the team of researchers often spent six hours at a time on their research boat, traveling through the Great Bay, north of Atlantic City, to the site of the Walker. The students operated the multi-beam sonar to receive an "acoustic" picture of the wreckage, then take the data back to their

lab. "The students on this project are using hands-on technology, the same that they're using to search for the missing Malaysian Airline flight (Flight 370 in the southern Indian Ocean)," said Stephen

Nagiewicz, a veteran diver and shipwreck explorer who is serving as exhibition leader for the Stockton project. Chelsea Shields, one of the marine science majors in the class, said every hour of data is equal to 30 hours of post-processing work that the researchers must perform on computers in the lab. "Everyone thinks marine biology is such a glamorous job — it's not," said Shields, 19, of Mays Landing. "It's a lot of hard work. We keep a mission log every day and have mini-assignments, like post-processing and editing sonar data. You have to really like this to do it."

PHYSICAL DATA The students and their teacher, Stockton biology professor Peter Straub, prepared to turn their mapping data over to the New Jersey Historical Divers Association, a non-profit group dedicated to preserving the state's shipwrecks. The

group will use the students' data as a reference to dive to the wreck and physically measure the remains. The students also took advantage of the mapping equipment and their time at sea to do other projects, including tracking the coverage of sea grass beds and measuring sediment in the area. "Learning how to collect this data, as well as process it, is a huge thing," said Jamie Taylor, 23, a marine science major from Berlin. "Getting that maritime experience — it's been awesome."

NOAA officials said they are happy to see something positive coming out of a nearly forgotten disaster.

"Working with the community to better explain not only the story of the ship, but what exactly lies below the ocean off Atlantic City is important," said Delgado. "The students get a hands-on opportunity to work with history, to explore and learn in their own backyard, and in doing so, recognize that exploration can still happen."

Star-Ledger staff writer [Kelly Heyboer](#) contributed to this report.

Explorers Dive Club 20th Anniversary

Beach Party and BBQ

Join us for our annual summer picnic as the club celebrates it's 20th season of diving together. The party and BBQ will be held in the North Picnic Tent at [Seven Presidents Oceanfront Park](#) in Long Branch, NJ on June 20th, 2015. Friends and family members are welcome to attend.



Visit us on the Web!
www.explorersdiveclub.org



Like us on Facebook!
Explorers Dive Club NJ



Meet us on Meetup
www.meetup.com/ExplorersDiveClub

Next Club Meeting
Tuesday, April, 2014

April's Presentation

**Michael Salvarezza &
Christopher Weaver**
of [Eco-Photo Explorers](#)



Queen Anne's Revenge

For a brief period of time in the early 1700s, Blackbeard the Pirate terrorized the seas around the Bahamas, the Caribbean and the Carolina coast. Little is known of this infamous historical figure, including his real name, but his reputation as a brutal force on the high seas has long outlived him. In 1718, shortly after the famous blockade of Charleston South Carolina, Blackbeard ran two of his vessels aground near Beaufort Inlet, North Carolina, including the Queen Anne's Revenge. For nearly 300 years, this shipwreck has eluded searchers who went there to find the long lost flagship of Blackbeard's fleet. Recently, a wreck presumed to be the Queen Anne's Revenge has been found and is currently being recovered by teams of researchers and archaeologists. Join Eco-Photo Explorers on an adventure to examine the legend of Blackbeard and to dive on the wreck of his most famous ship.