

July
2026



Covering The
Thousand Islands

Website: Riverratgazette.com

Skip's Corner by Skip Couch

Diving on the Empress of Ireland

Back in the mid-1970s, a couple of divers from Syracuse invited me to join them on a trip to dive the Empress of Ireland. It was a chance to dive one of the most famous shipwrecks in North America, and I couldn't pass it up.

The Empress of Ireland was a transatlantic passenger liner that sank in the early morning hours of May 29, 1914, after colliding with the Norwegian coal ship Storstad in dense fog on the St. Lawrence River

near Rimouski, Quebec. The ship sank in just 14 minutes, claiming more than 1,000 lives and becoming one of the worst maritime disasters in history.

The wreck starts at about 90 feet and drops to around 140 feet. Visibility wasn't great on our dives, but there was enough light to appreciate the size of the wreck. We spent two days there and made three dives exploring different sections of the ship. That was the only time I ever dove the Empress of Ireland, but it's a dive I've never forgotten.

We're right in the middle of another summer diving season, as always—
GOOD DIVING!

Area Events

August 1- Frankie Scinta, Kring's Ranch Barn Venue

August 8-9-1000 Islands Art & Craft & Antique Festival, Cerow Recreation Park Arena

August 14-16- Bill Johnstons Pirate Days, Alexandria Bay

August 27-29-Bassmasters Elite Series, Clayton

September 19-Vintage & Classic Street Meet, Clayton

October 17-Punkin Chunkin, Clayton

Submit News To: info@riverratgazette.com

Newspaper Archives-July News

Clayton Independent-
July 18, 1890

oad cart in
nning pur-
and single
Estes.
sells the
ester. The
(1-2w)
ons of Vet-
rers at Car-
his season.
ned by Mr.
rn the river
family were
k horse and
p. Inquire
of estate of
i, formerly
the position
y's private
prator was
book agent,
Canada, sol-
er husband
ould "vote
ie express
Brown, of

The Steamer St. Lawrence Collides with the Steam Yacht Catharine and Sinks Her.—A Terrible Calamity—Brief Particulars.
Again it becomes our painful duty to record a terrible accident, the like of which has been a stranger to the river for many years. It happened at 9:45 o'clock last evening, as the steamer St. Lawrence was nearing Alexandria Bay, returning from her search light trip among the islands. She was crossing from Rockport and just turning up the American channel, when, about one-fourth of a mile below Sunken Rock light, Capt. Estes, of the St. Lawrence, sighted the red light of a small steam yacht which was afterwards found to be the Catharine, steaming toward him. The captain immediately blew two blasts of the whistle—which calls for the left side—and received two blasts from the yacht in response, the small boat continuing in her course, however. The captain of the St. Lawrence seeing this, again blew two blasts, the captain of the yacht answering the same, but still did

The cabin washed ashore. An accident the very open tendency to i on the river. After the steamed up and back again when she dis were picked. Capt. Beau mind, was ti life-boat, and ful managen was made ve. One of th himself a her life-boat, he be saved fir last. He was The St. Lav check at the wise she wou Catharine in party would drowned. The water,

expressed, the captain of the yacht answering the same, but still did not change her course to the left as he should have done. At this point, Capt. Estes, judging from the position of the signal light of the yacht, saw the imminent danger of a collision and gave the order to the engineer to stop the engine and reverse with full head of steam. The Catherine still continued on her course and shot across the bow of the St. Lawrence. She did not have time to clear, however, and the St. Lawrence struck her near the after gangway, smashing a hole in her. Capt. E. Beaupré, superintendent of the company, who was standing in front of the pilot-house with Capt. Estes, on seeing the impending danger, gave orders to lower the life-boats and throw over some life-preservers. Capt. Beaupré and E. L. Conking, advertising agent of the company, got into the first boat launched and started for the people who were struggling in the water. Other boats were sent out and in a short time all the people who could be found had been picked up. During the search for the drowning people, the electric light on the steamer St. Lawrence was turned on. As the night was very dark, it did excellent service, and no doubt many of those rescued would have met the same

rowned.
The water, i struggling, w preservers so t reach of all. all who came and the supp lost their lives themselves fr she sunk.
Immediately powerful search by its aid the fortunate part At the time of light on the S ning, and com attached to th or Capt. Estes slightest degr properly gve received.
Mrs. H. E. visited relative Mrs. F. C. Mich., is visitu town.
J. F. D. Gigt town, Pa., are Thorpe.
Very Rev. ville, Ont., wa Brice, Monday

CREATE CUSTOM BUTTONS!
SUPPORT LOCAL LOVE WINS!
YOUR DESIGN
DESIGN YOUR OWN RIGHT ON OUR WEBSITE!
ButtonsToday.com

NEED A WEBSITE?
PROFESSIONAL DESIGN
MOBILE FRIENDLY
FAST, SECURE & AFFORDABLE
LET'S BUILD YOUR ONLINE SUCCESS!
inneedawebsite.info
QUICK TURNAROUND RELIABLE SUPPORT GREAT PRICES

River History

By River Rat Gazette

ACROSS

1 Diving Club founder, who preserved shipwreck history with his books

4 Island, the Clayton-adjacent spot where Charles Emery built his castle

6 1812 warship whose remains were heavily investigated by Clayton Club

8 Schooner shipwreck in Clayton harbor, explored by early local divers

9 Beach, the popular sandy gathering spot on Grindstone Island

DOWN

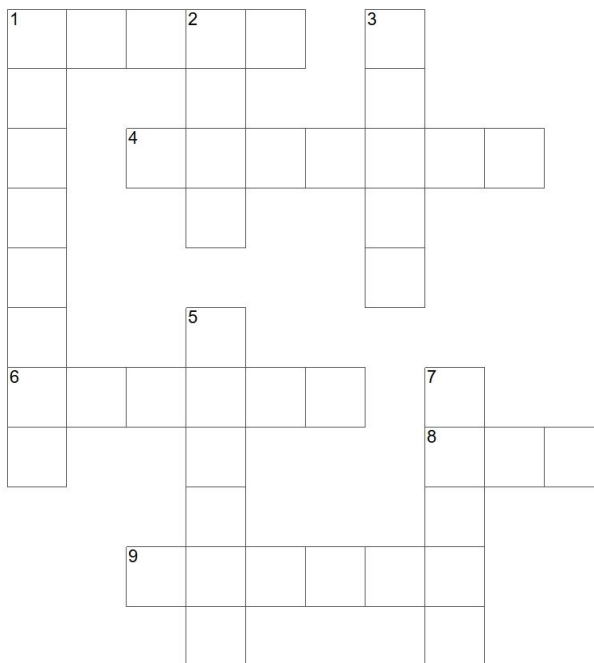
1 Historic House, the iconic 19th-century hotel estate in A-Bay

2 Motel, and Golf Club located right on Route 12 in Clayton

3 Main street running right through the heart of downtown Alexandria Bay

5 Island famous for its historic 19th-century red granite quarrying

7 Invasive species, forever changing visibility for local divers



Answers to July crossword next month or go to riverratgazette.com to get the answers now.

June Answers

Clue: George C. ____, Heart Island builder Answer: BOLDT

Clue: River smuggling vehicle Answer: RUMRUNNER

Clue: Largest Canadian Island in the chain Answer: WOLFE

Clue: 1838 Sir Robert Peel arsonist, ____ Johnston Answer: BILL

Clue: Home to the Antique Boat Museum Answer: CLAYTON

Clue: Bedrock arch: ____ Axis Answer: FRONTENAC

Clue: Island owned by Yale's "Skull and Bones" Answer: DEER

Clue: Dark Island's "Castle Answer: SINGER

Clue: War of 1812 base near Watertown Answer: SACKETS

Clue: St. Lawrence waterway passage: ____ Channel Answer: AMERICAN



www.tids.com

St. Lawrence Historical Foundation, Inc.

The St. Lawrence River Historical Foundation, Inc. (SRHF) was formed as a non-profit corporation in July of 1994 to promote research and education regarding the maritime history of the St. Lawrence River.

35669 Beadles Point Rd. W.
Cape Vincent, NY 13618
Email: srhf@twcny.rr.com



MEDICARE PLANS MADE EASY!

- ✓ Compare Plans
- ✓ Save Money
- ✓ Get Expert Help

Medicare4Today.com

GET QUOTE NOW!

