

LONG ISLAND



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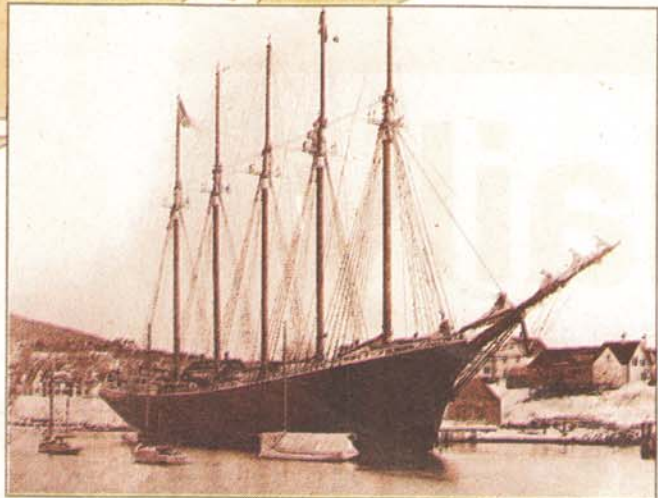


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A FRUITFUL EXPLORATION

Divers Doug Buck of Port Jefferson Station, right, and Andy Favata of Bethpage found this capstan cover recently on the remnants of the schooner T. Charlton Henry, above, which sank in a collision 60 miles southeast of Jones Inlet in 1907. Buck says the cover is the best artifact he's found in seven years.

Divers' historic find

BY BILL BLEYER
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Scuba diver Doug Buck was exploring the remnants of an old ship 200 feet below the surface of the Atlantic Ocean off Fire Island when his light glinted off a curved piece of brass.

When he brushed away the silt, he was staring at a disk-shaped object bearing the name T. Charlton Henry. Buck had identified a shipwreck, a schooner that sank in a collision 60 miles southeast of Jones Inlet in 1907.

Buck, 41, of Port Jefferson Station, who has been a recreational diver seven years, said "this is definitely the best" artifact he's found. "Identifying a wreck is definitely top of the list."

John Gorman, owner of the Freeport dive boat Lockness, said he got the coordinates for the wreck in 2007 from fisherman Richie Kissenger.

Two Llers fulfill goal of exploring 1907 shipwreck off Jones Inlet

Gorman made a trip to it that year and found the broken-up remains of a wooden sailing vessel. "It's all a rubbish pile, basically," he said.

On July 2, after earlier attempts to return were foiled by bad weather, the Lockness headed out at 2 a.m. "just to see what was on it," Gorman said.

Buck went down with fellow diver Andy Favata of Bethpage. "We were just searching around on the bottom and we happened to catch a glimpse of it. It was loose in the sand with

about 3 inches of the round edge exposed," Buck said. "I could tell by the green that it was brass so I knew we had something good. I cleared it away a little bit and saw writing on it."

He'd found the cover for a capstan, a large winch, that was engraved with the name of the ship and that it was built in Camden, Maine, in 1902.

Gorman and Buck began researching the wreck and learned that Camden historian Barbara Dyer had written extensively about the town's shipbuilding industry. They contacted her and learned the Henry's full story.

The five-masted, 2,421-ton schooner designed to carry coal had been constructed in the H.M. Bean Shipyard. En route from Baltimore to Boston carrying 4,100 tons of coal for the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad, the Henry collided in dense fog with the British steamship Chelston on

June 22, 1907.

An article in the Richmond Times-Dispatch in Virginia reported at the time that "neither vessel was seen by the lookout on the other until the steamship and schooner were no more than a few yards apart. The Chelston rammed a hole in the schooner so big that an automobile might have been driven through it. The schooner settled rapidly, and disappeared from view in about ten minutes."

The Henry's 10 crew members were rescued by the Chelston and taken to Norfolk, Va.

Buck said the capstan cover would probably be displayed at Long Island Scuba in Lindenhurst.

"We are all very excited that we were able to identify the wreck in such a short amount of time," Gorman said. "We are planning other expeditions to gather more information and map out the site." They hope to bring up more artifacts.