

The *Edmund Fitzgerald* Investigations

A Ric Mixer Lecture

The mighty *Fitz* is the Great Lakes largest shipwreck, resting in two major pieces on the bottom of Lake Superior just over the Canadian border. It was lost in a killer storm in 1975, and its entire crew of 29 simply vanished into the waves around seven that evening.

Shipwreck historian Ric Mixer is one of only a handful of people who have visited the wreck personally, diving 550 feet down in a tiny submarine to explore the site for over an hour. This was actually the beginning of over 20 years of research for Mixer, who has collected one of the largest film archives of *Fitzgerald* related material.

Ric's lecture includes exclusive footage of the building of the ship near Detroit, along with interviews from the men who worked at the shipyard. When *Fitzgerald* splashed into the Detroit River it was the largest object ever dropped into freshwater, over 729 feet in length.

The lecture continues with former crew of the *Fitz*, including a mate that sailed with the captain that was lost. Richard Orgel believes the captain pushed the ship into storms that other skippers hid from, and his commentary proves that Capt. McSorely was sometimes scared by how much the *Fitz* bent in the storms.

The wrecksite was investigated by the Coast Guard with a remote robot in 1976, and then by Jacques Cousteau in 1980. Ric shares interviews with both investigations, including Jacques son Jean-Michel who was in charge of Calypso when it searched the Great Lakes.

Investigations in 1989, 1994 and the bell raising in 1995 are also covered in the lecture, along with Ric's insight on what might have happened to the ship and crew. Ric's documentary on the *Fitzgerald* is considered to be the most comprehensive available, and it outsells all other shipwreck documentaries on the Great Lakes. He has entertained audiences all around the lakes with this topic, with a special invitation to share his scientific findings on the topic at NASA's Goddard Space Laboratory in 2019.

Total time is about an hour with time for questions and answers. Ric needs a projection screen but will provide his own projector and amplification for the video. Larger audiences (over 75 patrons) may require use of amplification such as a microphone, amp and speakers of which your facility would be responsible for. In this case, Ric would like to plug into your system using a MAC computer with earphone output for your amplification.

Lecture cost is \$300 plus travel costs from Wixom, MI. Virtual options exist and hotel room and meals are required if more than three hours drive from Oakland County, MI.

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