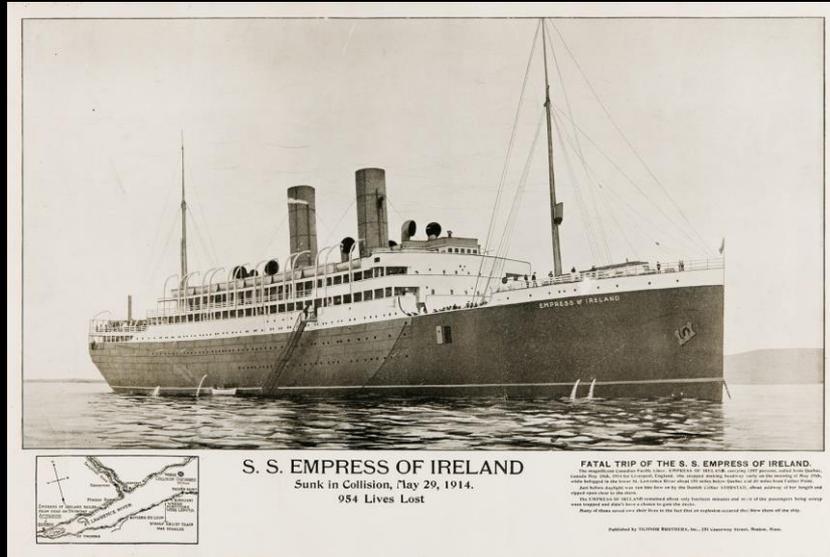
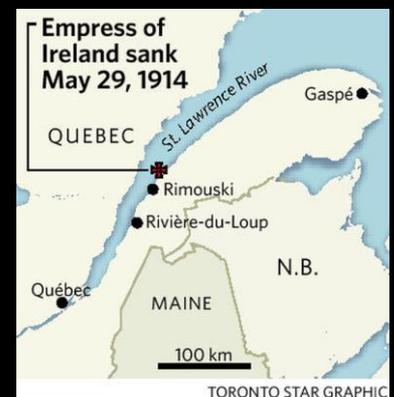




S.S. EMPRESS OF IRELAND



The wreck of the *Empress of Ireland*, was of the same magnitude as *The Titanic*, as over a thousand people died when this ship sank in a mere 14 minutes after a collision in the St. Lawrence River on 29th May 1914, with a Norwegian ship named *Storstad*, a collier of the A/S Maritim of Norway. Three months after the *Empress* sank, the First World war broke out, and the *Empress* simply passed into ‘forgotten’ history.

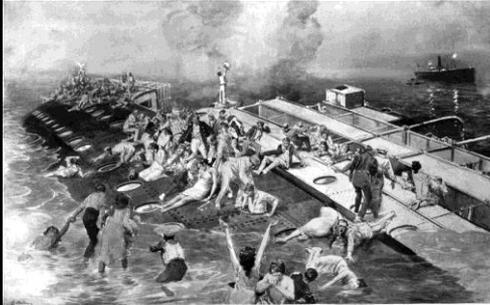




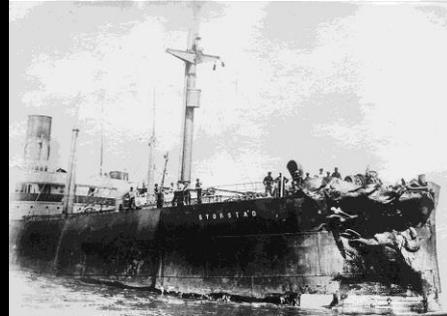
As the *Empress of Ireland* was coming up on the river, the lookout noted the lights of another steamer which would usually have passed it from the starboard side. At one point, Captain Kendall put his engines astern and signalled this with 3 siren blasts. Suddenly the *Storstadt* emerged from the thick fog and struck the *Empress of Ireland* between its funnels, thus, tearing a huge hole from its engine room. The boiler rooms flooded, the watertight bulkheads were useless and the dynamos were shut due to which there were no lights and the radio stopped functioning within seconds, although SOS messages had already been sent out.

The damage was so great, that the bow of the *Storstadt* was used to plug the hole in the *Empress*, to keep it afloat, but the *Storstadt* itself was heavily damaged and was forced to back away. This was the final blow to the *Empress of Ireland*. The accident took place around 1:55 a.m., so most passengers were asleep, and in the dark unfamiliar surroundings, only few could escape in the short time available.

I was amazed by the huge contrasts between the *Empress of Ireland* and *The Titanic* went down in open ocean due to the fault of the captain, who was travelling too fast for the conditions. It had no radio officer on duty and a high number, 688 crew members had perished. The *Empress of Ireland*, in contrast, went down in a river waterway, the captain took all correct measures, the distress radio calls from the *Empress* were heard at once and acted upon with the greatest speed possible but still over a thousand lives were lost. Unlike the *Titanic*, the passengers and crew on the *Empress* only had 14 minutes to get out and more crew than passengers were rescued.



The Sinking of the SS Empress of Ireland



The Storstad after the collision

Also known as “*Canada’s Titanic*”, the *Empress* had incredible stories of survival and tragedy. A man named Delamont, gave his life to save his mother, made headlines. One of the Irish passengers, William Clarke was especially lucky; he served as a fireman on the crew of both *The Titanic* and *The Empress of Ireland*, somehow managing to survive both catastrophes.

He later stated: “The *Titanic* sank like a sleeping baby. The *Empress of Ireland* rolled around like a pig.”



The wreck made Headlines



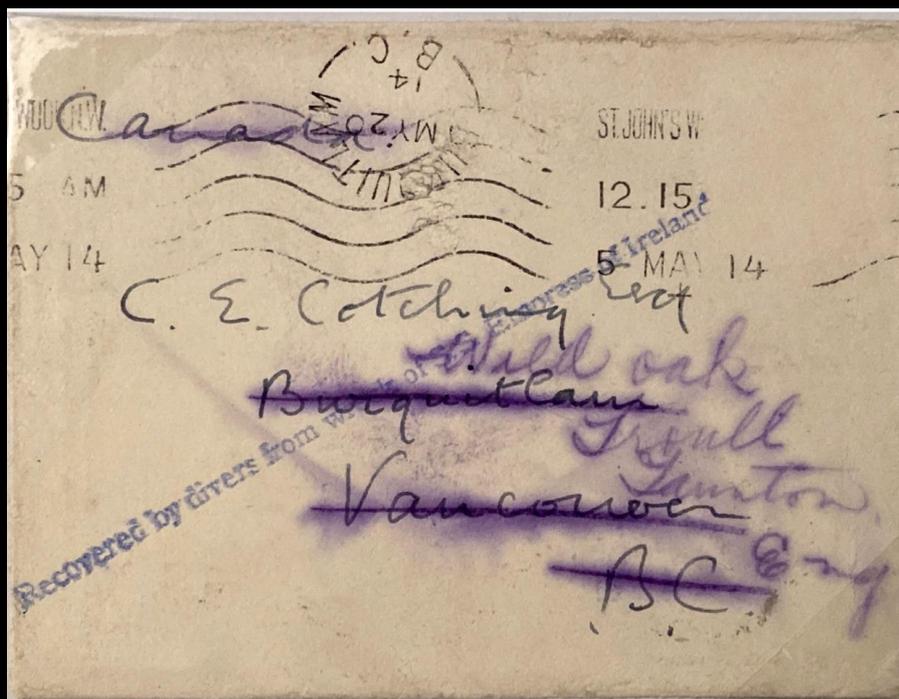
After, *The Titanic* went down, all ships of British companies were required to carry enough lifeboats for all on board. *The Empress of Ireland*, sister ship of *The Empress of Britain* had 16 steel lifeboats, 20 Englehart collapsible, 6 canvas boats, and 2,200 life jackets on board.

Only a couple of weeks after the disaster, a salvage company was hired to recover mail from the wreck.



Salvaged mail from the wreck

The mail salvaged from the wreck has a one- line cachet: “Recovered by divers from the wreck of SS Empress of Ireland”. This cachet was struck in blue, green, and purple.



(This cover is the part of the Rudraksh collection)

A very scarce wreck Cover