



Michael F. Easley, Governor

Lisbeth C. Evans, Secretary

North Carolina
Department of Cultural Resources

News Release

Contact: Fay Mitchell Henderson (919) 807-7389

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Singular Symposium Examines Slave Ships and Pirate Ships at Maritime Museum

(RALEIGH—Jan. 8) – Pirates sometimes seized human cargo on the high seas while pillaging for wealth and treasure. The symposium *Pirate Ships, Slave Ships, and Colonial America* at the N.C. Maritime Museum in Beaufort on Wednesday, Feb. 21, will be the first ever to examine this phenomenon. A shackle and trading beads of the sort used in the slave trade have been found at the purported *Queen Anne's Revenge (QAR)* shipwreck, flagship of Blackbeard, now resting on the ocean floor near Beaufort.

As part of the 10th anniversary observation of the location of the shipwreck, and in celebration of the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources 2007 theme "History Happens Here," the unique symposium held during Black History Month will explore the heretofore-overlooked intersection of the worlds of slaves and pirates. Cultural Resources administers exploration of the shipwreck through its Office of State Archaeology.

Records show that Blackbeard intercepted a slave trading ship, *La Concorde*, on a voyage from West Africa to Martinique, seized the vessel, and renamed her *Queen Anne's Revenge*. He dispatched *La Concorde's* crew and most of her human cargo to Martinique in his smaller sailing vessel. But Blackbeard also kept some of the Africans, and after he was captured and killed, five of *QAR's* nine crew members who were tried and hanged as pirates were black. Pirates sometimes sold the captured human cargo, but Africans occasionally became pirate ship crew leaders.

"Pirates liked slave ships, they were fast, sturdy, and had large holds for cargo," explains David Moore, Blackbeard expert and nautical archaeologist with the N.C. Maritime Museum, and also a symposium speaker. "In fact, the owner of *La Concorde*, Rene Montaudouin of Nantes, France, lost three slave ships to pirates."

One of America's foremost experts on pirate ships, slave ships, and the maritime culture of colonial America, Dr. Marcus Rediker, from University of Pittsburgh, will speak on those topics at the symposium. He will also speak on the culture of slave ships based on research for a book that will be published this fall.

"Slave ships were among the most authoritarian vessels sailing the Atlantic, pirate ships the most democratic, and the relationship between them is puzzling," Rediker observes. "Many European pirates had experiences in the slave trade, yet they allowed blacks to join their crews. That fact is little known."

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Rediker and Moore will speak in the morning session, as will Dr. David Dennard, of East Carolina University, on class and caste in colonial America. Rediker's presentation on slave ships will be part of the afternoon session, followed by a panel moderated by Dr. Jeffery Crow, Cultural Resources Deputy Secretary for the Office of Archives and History.

Several slave ships will be explored in the 6:30 p.m. session. Corey Malcom, archaeologist with the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society, in Key West, Fla., will discuss his role in the search for *Guerrero*, a pirate ship carrying Africans into slavery that sank off the Florida coast in 1827, and other slave ships. A panel discussion of the slave ships *Guerrero*, *Henrietta Marie*, *Whydah*, and *QAR*, will follow his presentation.

The *QAR* was located in November 1996 by the Florida based research firm, Intersal, Inc., through information provided by Intersal President Phil Masters to Operations Director Mike Daniel. Cultural Resources announced location of the shipwreck in March 1997.

Registration for the free symposium is limited and required by Monday, Feb. 12. It is organized by the DCR Division of Historical Resources, and funded with a grant from the N.C. Humanities Council, and also underwritten by the N.C. Museum of History and the Office of Archives and History in DCR. Cultural Resources is a state agency dedicated to the promotion and protection of North Carolina's arts, history and culture. Now podcasting 24/7 with information about the Department of Cultural Resources, all available at www.ncculture.com.

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