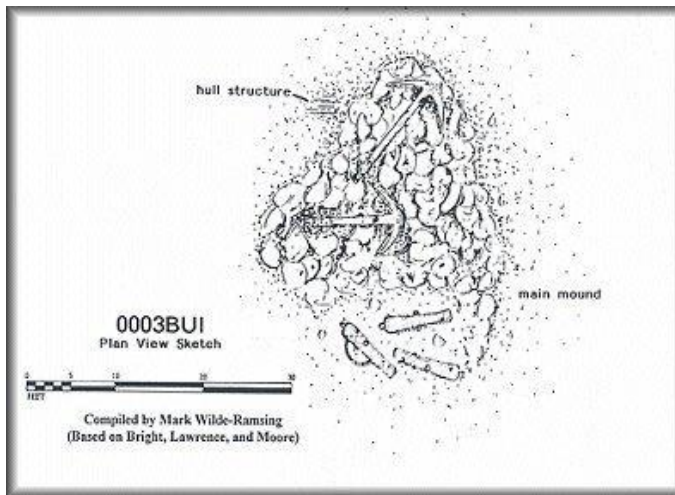


## Fall 1997 Assessment Plan



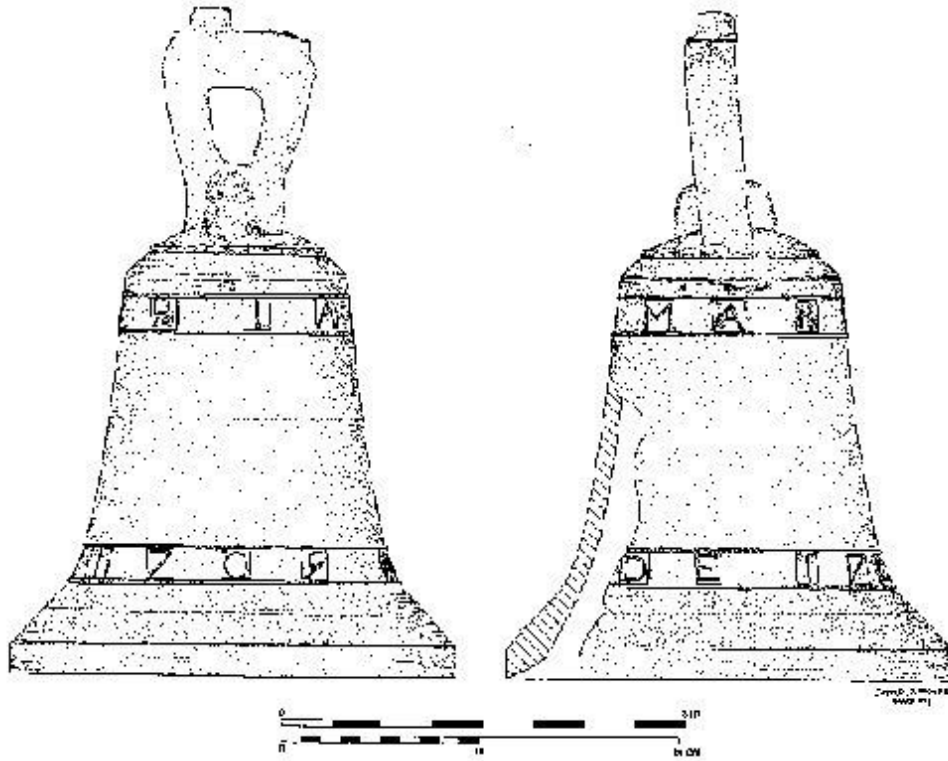
The Division of Archives and History is planning a four-week archaeological expedition in Beaufort Inlet during October 1997. Studies will determine the nature and extent of North Carolina shipwreck site 31CR314, believed to be the *Queen Anne's Revenge*, lost in the summer of 1718 at Beaufort Inlet with the pirate Edward Teach (Blackbeard) in command. Field studies will provide critical information on the vessel type, period of use, country of origin, and function for this shipwreck. Investigators will also gain insight into the site's layout, makeup, and surrounding environmental

conditions. Underwater Archaeology Branch staff will use those results to develop a site management plan that will guide decisions about future site research and protection. Expedition participants come from the Maritime Research Institute, the North Carolina Underwater Archaeology Branch, the North Carolina Maritime Museum, and also include scientists and technicians from various universities in the state.



Discovery of shipwreck 31CR314 was first made on November 21, 1996, when divers from the private research firm Intersal, Inc., reported a 20-foot by 30-foot mound of artifacts, such as cannons, anchors, and ballast cobbles, as well as portions of a wooden hull, buried under the sand. A sample of artifacts recovered from the site included a brass bell dated 1709, a blunderbuss barrel, a sounding weight, barrel hoops, lead sheets used to cover cannon touch holes, and two cannon balls. These materials provide an early eighteenth-century date for the shipwreck,

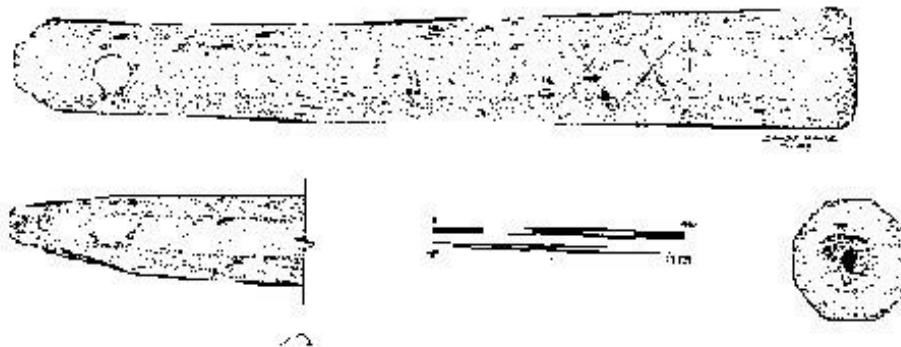
and the overall artifact assemblage matches what might be expected from a pirate vessel. Blackbeard's *Queen Anne's Revenge* and a smaller vessel, presumably the *Adventure*, which he lost at the same time, are the only two vessels presently known to have sunk in this area during the first half of the 18th century according to historical documents.



*Brass bell recovered from QAR site in 1996.*



*Blunderbuss barrel recovered from QAR site in 1996.*



*Sounding weight recovered from QAR site in 1996.*

## 1997 Dive Plan



If this shipwreck really is Blackbeard's vessel, it will provide a looking glass into the lives of pirates, eighteenth-century naval warfare and shipbuilding, and the colonial provisioning and mercantile trade. However, with so little known about shipwreck site 31CR314, the primary research objectives of the 1997 expedition are to answer specific questions related to the working conditions on the site, environmental conditions, extent of the site distribution, the nature of the shipwreck remains, and the equipment best suited to investigate the site.

The most pressing historical question, however, remains: "Is this the *Queen Anne's Revenge*?" Archaeologists feel fairly certain that it is, but they cannot rule out the possibility that the shipwreck is the sloop *Adventure*, reportedly lost at the same time, or less conceivably one of the two other similar vessels in Blackbeard's fleet- the sloop *Revenge* or a small Spanish sloop tender. Other vessels lost around Beaufort Inlet are the Spanish packet boat *El Salvador* (1750), the schooner *Susannah* (1753), the sloop *Betsy* (1771), and the sloop *Polly* (1793). Even less likely, 31CR314 is wreckage from a nineteenth - or twentieth-century vessel, or one that is currently not found in historical documents.

In order to eliminate candidates and secure its identity, archaeologists will focus on specific aspects of the shipwreck. These are:

- **Hull Size** - Given the various sizes of the shipwreck candidates, finding the ends and determining a length or width will provide key information.
- **Masts** - Determining the number or location of mast(s) on the shipwreck is important since the *Queen Anne's Revenge* carried three masts, the packet boat and schooners had two, and the sloops were single-masted.
- **Cannons and Anchors** - There were significant differences in the number and size of cannons and anchors that each candidate carried, which should be reflected in those found on the shipwreck.
- **Arrangement of Wreckage** - Placement of artifacts can reveal the circumstances of vessel loss and subsequent salvage activities, which can be compared to historic accounts of each candidate's sinking.
- **Wood Type** - The types of wood used to build 31CR314 may help define where it was constructed and can then be matched with documentation from each candidate.
- **Artifact Assemblages** - The body of artifacts can shed light on period, nationality, and function (military vs. merchant) of the shipwreck. In particular, the artifacts recovered from the pirate vessel *Whydah* (1717) provide an excellent comparative collection for those candidates associated with Blackbeard, as opposed to those that weren't.

The proposed 1997 field work is a Level I investigation, designed to retrieve the maximum amount of information with a minimal amount of disturbance to the site. Non-intrusive archaeological techniques will include remote sensing surveys using magnetic and acoustic

instruments, photography, scale drawings, and artistic perspectives. More direct site examination procedures will involve manual probing, limited test excavations using a 3-inch induction dredge, wood and sediment analyses sampling, and recovery of diagnostic and sample archaeological artifacts. The field schedule is as follows:

- **Week One** -Set up operations; install security systems; establish reference stations; define limits of the shipwreck site.
- **Week Two** -Collect environmental and scientific data; photograph and map exposed wreckage.
- **Week Three** -Conduct test excavations; recover small artifacts, collect wood and sediment samples; map exposed portions of the site.
- **Week Four** -Raise large artifacts; backfill excavations; secure the site; shut down operations.

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Artifacts recovered during the 1997 investigation will be stored, analyzed, and preserved at the Underwater Archaeology Unit Preservation Lab at Fort Fisher and/or at the North Carolina Maritime Museum's conservation facility at Gallant's Channel, which is currently under construction. A draft report on the 1997 field investigation and a site management plan will be produced by May 1, 1998. A final version is expected by July 1, 1998.