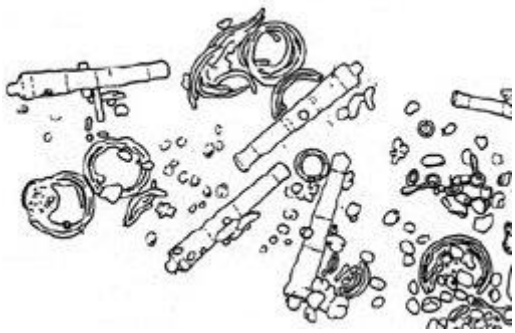
Spring 2000 Daily Reports



May 15 - May 19

With the arrival of the summer staff, which doubled our numbers, preparations for the spring dive accelerated dramatically. After two days of orientation, everyone set to work to complete revisions to the large artifact facility at Carteret Community College in preparation for the hull structure and associated artifacts. Archaeological excavation and recovery equipment, such as the dredge systems and grid squares were assembled and serviced for use. A considerable time was also spent in the conservation laboratory at the Institute of Marine Sciences reviewing conservation methods and techniques, which also began the process of clearing up a backlog of artifacts recovered during the previous three years. By the end of the week everything was in order and ready for the start of actual dive work.

Monday, May 22

Strong southwest winds prevented researchers from going out to the site on Monday. Preparations and activities in the conservation lab continued. Better weather for tomorrow is hoped for.

Tuesday, May 23

During the night a front came through the area and in the morning winds were calm. Researchers met early and anxiously headed out to the site with R/V *Seahawk* leading the way. Before R/V *Capricorn* was out the inlet, Captain Compeau radioed back that while the surface was calm, the ocean swells rolling over the site were 5 to 8 feet high. There was no reason for *Capricorn* to continue to the shipwreck, since it would be impossible to deploy equipment and safely accomplish any dredging. After turning the vessel around it was anchored in calm waters inside the inlet where researchers tested the dredge systems and communication gear. Meanwhile, experienced divers from *Seahawk* were battling the elements as they put buoys on the mooring sites, re-establish the baseline, and strung lead lines over the shipwreck. These are the first necessary steps to prepare the site for excavation and with that done efforts to recover the hull structure can begin in earnest.

Wednesday, May 24

Continuing high winds Tuesday and Tuesday night kept conditions on site to rough for working safely in the water so it was decided that the best plan for the day would be to remain on shore and catch up on lab work. Cannons C2 and C4, along with their holding tanks, were moved from the Gallants Channel facility to the new conservation lab at Carteret Community College.

Thursday, May 25

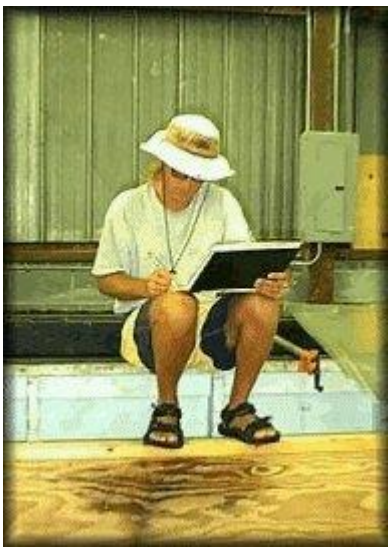
Again, high winds prevented researchers from going out on Thursday. Time on shore was used to catch up on work around the office and put some finishing touches on Preparations of the conservation lab.

Friday, May 26 - Saturday, May 27

With the full crew, excavations were begun in the area of the timbers. It was found that a layer of sand was covering them and therefore, required more work to expose them than anticipated. While the fact that the timbers have been covered was good news for their protection from marine animals, researchers are well-aware of the devastation caused by past hurricanes to this portion of the site.

Digging with the dredge is slow work and will take several days to completely uncover the timbers, a task that Hurricane Floyd accomplished in a few hours! Exposed features, such as the large anchors, were sketched from a variety of angles in preparation of taking elevation readings. Sand samples were collected from various places on the shipwreck site to test for the presence of gold dust. On Saturday a small crew was organized to take advantage of the calm weather. Researchers were able to uncover, record and retrieve the first three frame timbers from the south end of the structure. Although these frames were attached to the planks by trunnels (wooden dowels) and iron nails, they were easily worked free for recovery.

Tuesday, May 30



Although the wind was blowing at gale force it was from the northwest or directly offshore and therefore, had a minimal affect at the shipwreck site. R/V *Seahawk* was able to get out to the site in the morning and completed a successful video transmission. As the R/V *Capricorn* pulled out from its moorings, word was sent in that the current was extremely strong and seas were picking up. Frustrations are now running high since such little time has been spent out on the site. With better forecasts for the next several days, researchers are planning to work long hours to complete the recovery. Meanwhile, conservation activities continued with the cleaning, weighing, and sketching of various artifacts.

Wednesday, May 31

Researchers on site worked furiously to make up for lost time while other project personnel were involved with representatives from the media. Two boats carried them out to the shipwreck site - media divers were on Terry Leonard's Outrageous V out of Discovery Dive Shop of Beaufort and the non-diving media stayed aboard a Coast Guard cutter out of Fort Macon. As it turned out the water clarity was very good and the diving cameramen and reporters were treated to a good view of the shipwreck and the underwater activities associated with an archaeological expedition. A tour of the conservation laboratories and museum completed the presentation of the *Queen Anne's Revenge* project activities.
At the site, six pieces of timber (making up two frames) were recovered and significant progress was made to uncover the entire hull planking before the day ended. Altogether, eight frame components have been separated from the planking and recovered.

Thursday, June 1

Visibility on-site was too poor to allow still photography, but did allow archaeologists a chance to record the exposed planking with digital video and to take accurate elevation measurements. Then the tedious work of exposing and sawing through each plank began. Because of its position, which restricted sawing to short, inch-long strokes, cutting through the first timber took five dives and nearly three hours. When the cut was finally completed, the plank was recovered from the bottom. At that point, it was late in the day and dive operations ceased.

Friday, June 6

Reduced to a smaller crew, with one less research vessel, and with bad weather predicted, researchers were apprehensive that the primary objective of the expedition (recovery of the hull structure) would not be achieved. However, everything went smoothly - the remaining three hull planks were cut and brought to the surface. Water visibility, that at times exceeded 20 feet, allowed still photographers to shoot all aspects of the exposed wreckage. Artifacts lying under the planking were drawn in place and recovered. These underlying artifacts consisted of pine planks, called "sacrificial planking", which were used as an outer hull sheathing to protect the ship from boring mollusks (ship worms). These were the very same animals that we feared would destroy the remaining timbers if exposed by future hurricanes. By the end of the day a happy crew had recovered the threatened remains, secured the site, and were accomplishing what Blackbeard had not been able to do… bring the *Queen Anne's Revenge* across the bar and into Beaufort Inlet. A successful expedition was brought about by each and every one of the crew members that you see mentioned in the daily logs. Special thanks to Maritime Research Institute, NC Maritime Museum, UNC-Wilmington, UNC-Chapel Hill/IMS, East Carolina University , the Julian Price Foundation, Intersal Inc., Discovery Dive, Secretary Betty Ray McCain, and the staff of the Department of Cultural Resources.