

Fall 1999 Assessment Plan for Shipwreck 31CR314 Beaufort Inlet, NC



Archaeological field work planned for 1999 at shipwreck site 031CR314, believed to be *Queen Anne's Revenge* - Blackbeard the pirate's flagship - will complete the assessment project begun in 1997. This three-year study has provided critical information on the vessel type, period of use, country of origin, and function of the historic ship. Investigators are also gaining a clearer understanding of the site's layout, makeup, and surrounding environment. Collectively this information will guide archaeologists during future excavations and data recovery.

The 1999 expedition will take place from October 4th through the 15th. Staff, vessels, equipment and volunteers will be furnished jointly by the North Carolina Underwater Archaeology Unit (UAU) and the Maritime Research Institute (MRI). The North Carolina Maritime Museum (NCMM) will provide vital support in the way of archaeological staging facilities and personnel, the University of North Carolina at Wilmington (UNCW) will supply a research vessel and operator, and the Institute of Marine Sciences of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (IMS) will oversee environmental studies at the site. Intersal, Inc., Surface Interval Diving Company (SIDCO) and East Carolina University (ECU) will supply equipment and volunteers for the project. Video documentation will be done by Nautilus Productions and a BBC film crew. Cape Fear Community College will provide their research vessel and crew for large artifact recovery.

As is always the case, weather and environmental conditions will play a major factor in what is accomplished. The project team, however, is extremely experienced and will make the most of the situation presented to them. In order to allow the public to keep up, daily updates will be furnished in the Directors Log.

OBJECTIVES

Primary Objectives:

1. Assess condition of the site (changes due to hurricanes). Map, stabilize and/or recover exposed remains as necessary.
2. Complete the magnetic gradiometer survey (see June '99 report). This is a continuation of the survey work started in June 1999. It will begin by taking readings every 2.5 feet over the entire shipwreck site (150' X 90') using divers to move the sensor. Readings will be recorded into an Excel spread sheet and then run through Surfer, a computer contouring program. A consultant from Harding Lawson Association will set the system up. The results will provide a better understanding of the extent of buried materials distributed over the site, and will also isolate
3. Extend excavations to the south and west to confirm the extent of buried remains. Five by five-foot units will be used. These test units may be aligned in order to confirm the existence of iron objects detected during the gradiometer survey.

4. Fine-tune artifact recording and recovery methods. Test excavations conducted during the first two years have provided an indication of what to expect. Hundreds of lead shot, specks of gold, pockets of organic sediments, delicate bottles, as well as many sizes of sand encrusted objects need to be excavated in order to collect the maximum amount of information. Archaeologists and support crews will hone the equipment and personnel used during excavation, recording, and recovery. This will involve establishing defined duties for the different investigators during excavation, mapping, and artifact recovery. Developing a system for recovering small artifacts will also be an extremely important part.

Secondary Objectives:

1. Collection of data on how sediment moves across the site will continue. This will involve recording sand levels below baseline and longitudinal reference stakes.
2. The recovery of a ten-foot disarticulated bottom plank is planned. This will be an important piece for analysis. Building material preferences, tree-ring age and construction methods may be revealed once the piece is brought to the laboratory. CFCC's R/V *Dan Moore* is scheduled to be in the area on Monday October 11th and will serve as the primary lifting vessel. Large artifacts discovered during test excavations may also be recovered.
3. Time permitting, divers will investigate anomaly targets located near 031CR314 by Intersal. These include two additional anchors to the south and east that may be associated with the shipwreck.
4. At the end of the project the warning buoy will be reattached to a position near the shipwreck site.