



North Carolina Archaeological Society

Newsletter

109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, N.C. 27601-2807

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Wreck Discovered Off Beaufort, North Carolina Likely To Be Pirate

Blackbeard's Flagship



The North Carolina Division of Archives and History, in association with private research firm Intersal, Inc. of Boca Raton, Florida, has announced the discovery of what it believes is the remains of the *Queen Anne's Revenge*, the long lost flagship of the infamous pirate known as Blackbeard (Edward Teach). The vessel ran aground on a sandbar and sank off the coast of Beaufort, North Carolina in June, 1718.

"This is the most important underwater archaeology discovery since the USS *Monitor* was found off Cape Hatteras in 1973," said Dr. Jeffrey J. Crow, director of the Division of Archives and History and an expert on North Carolina history.

Various historians and archaeologists, along with the Intersal researchers, discussed details of this discovery at an 11 AM press conference, Monday, March 3 at the Archives and History/State Library Building auditorium in Raleigh at 109 East Jones Street. North Carolina Governor Jim Hunt made the discovery announcement at the conference.

Besides Crow, other panelists included Stephen R. Claggett, state archaeologist, State Historic Preservation Office; Richard W.

Lawrence, underwater archaeology unit supervisor at Kure Beach, N.C., State Historic Preservation Office; Dr. Jerry C. Cashion, research historian supervisor at Archives and History; Dr. F. Wilson Angley, research historian at Archives and History, specializing in the state's maritime history; Phil Masters, president of Intersal, Inc.; and Mike Daniel, president of Maritime Research Institute (MRI), a private, non-profit corporation being formed to handle Intersal's interests in this find (Daniel was on site directing operations when the wreck was discovered).

The wreck has already yielded several exciting historical artifacts including a foot tall bronze bell, inscribed with the date of 1709; the brass barrel of a blunderbuss (a short gun holding several shot balls that was used in the 17th and 18th centuries for firing at close quarters); a 24 lb. cannonball; a lead sounding weight (used by sailors to determine water depth) and other items. Many of the artifacts brought up were on view at the press conference.

Historical records along with these artifacts and others--such as the large number of cannons sighted in the wreckage--lead state

archaeologists to say that they believe the wreck is Blackbeard's *Queen Anne's Revenge*. Researchers say that further investigation and study may yield critical information about North Carolina's maritime history.

"The unique items brought up thus far came from less than an hour of diving on the site," stated Intersal's maritime historians Phil Masters and Mike Daniel. "Finding these artifacts was tremendously exciting but because we were concerned about preserving the integrity of the site and the fragility and age of the remaining artifacts, we stopped our work." Divers plan to return to the site at a later date. Intersal is working on this project under an agreement with the state.

The ship lies less than two miles offshore in the shallow waters often referred to as "The Graveyard of the Atlantic." Because of its age and underwater location, the wreck and its contents are very fragile. The state is not releasing the exact location of the find because of preservation concerns and the risk of artifact looting. Based on period historical accounts, researchers do not believe the wreck contains any type of treasure.

In state-owned waters, the shipwreck site is currently under surveillance and steps are underway to designate the wreck area as a protected preserve. Future plans include the state supervising further archaeological excavations, artifact conservation and site security, and MRI working with the state and academic institutions on excavating the site and studying the artifacts. Plans are also underway to eventually put the discovered artifacts on display at a yet undetermined location and keep them intact as a collection.

As Blackbeard's flagship, the *Queen Anne's Revenge* was used to inflict a reign of terror on land and sea that lasted only a few months, but has never been forgotten. Her captain, the fearsome Blackbeard, is one of the most famous pirates in history. In 1717, Blackbeard captured a French ship, which he later renamed the *Queen Anne's Revenge*. Upon her seizure, he added 20 guns to the 20 she already had and began his career as a pirate captain in style.

Blackbeard's reign of terror climaxed in a week-long blockade of the Charleston, South Carolina

harbor in May, 1718. While continuing up the coast one week later, the vessel became grounded on a sandbar as it attempted to enter Topsail Inlet (now Beaufort Inlet). Another one of Blackbeard's vessels, what is believed to have been the *Adventure*, attempted to come to the *Revenge's* assistance but failed and both ships sank (the *Adventure* has not been found). However, Blackbeard did manage to get what is believed to be all the treasure off the *Queen Anne's Revenge* before escaping in a small sloop.

Background:

The boldest and most notorious pirate infesting the waters of England's southern colonies in the early 1700's was Blackbeard. Occurring during "the Golden Age of Piracy," his activities and those of his contemporaries are an integral part of America's colonial history.

His infamous deeds spread his name on both sides of the Atlantic; Blackbeard's name may yet be found in history books, and in the archives and public records in Great Britain, France, Spain, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

Blackbeard's original name possibly was Edward Drummond, and he likely was born around 1680 and died 1718 in a fierce fight off Ocracoke. A native of Bristol, England, after he became a pirate he called himself Edward Teach, which most records show as Thatch, Tache or Tatch.

Indications are that Blackbeard was born into an intelligent, well-to-do family. He could read and write and corresponded with merchants. He seemed at ease with ruffians and governors.

He served in the Queen Anne's War, which lasted from 1702-1713. In the latter stages of the war he served as a privateer, sailing out of Kingston, Jamaica to prey on French ships for Britain.

After the war, Blackbeard signed on with the pirate crew of Captain Benjamin Hornigold, sailing out of New Providence in the Bahamas. He proved a fierce and able pirate, and requested he be given command of the captured French ship, the *Concorde*. Hornigold obliged. Blackbeard became captain of the ship in 1717 and renamed her the *Queen Anne's Revenge*.

The *Concorde* had already been outfitted with 20 guns, but Blackbeard increased the total firepower to 40 guns, likely adding small cannons, called rail guns (likely 2 1/2' to 4' long), that could be mounted on the ship's rail and operated by one man.

Blackbeard's reputation began with his first attack as captain. This battle was with a large merchant ship, the *Great Allen*, off St. Vincent. After a lengthy battle Blackbeard took the ship, plundered the cargo, then

burned and sank it. Next, some reports indicate he may have defeated the *Scarborough*, a mighty British man-of-war armed with 30 guns. If true, the *Scarborough* escaped, but Blackbeard's reputation was made. He also took the sloop *Adventure* during that battle, and it became an important ship in his pirate fleet.

Blackbeard designed his appearance to enhance his reputation. He was tall, had a powerful physique and had a bushy black beard from which he took his name. Before battle he would plait the beard into little pigtails, tie them with colored ribbons, and twist some braids behind his ears. Immediately before battle he would light several long, slow-burning matches and tuck them under his hat, allowing wisps of smoke to curl up around his face.

He wore pistols, daggers, and a cutlass in a belt about his waist. Across his chest he wore a sling that held three brace of pistols, all six primed, cocked, and ready to fire.

Blackbeard victimized ships from the Caribbean to New England. Legend has it that he used several hideouts in North Carolina and that Ocracoke Inlet was a favorite. An anchorage inside Ocracoke Inlet is still known as "Teach's Hole."

In May, 1718, perhaps Blackbeard's most outrageous attack was upon the city of Charleston, South Carolina, which was the busiest and most important port in the South. Blackbeard's flotilla settled outside the entrance to the harbor and took several merchant ships, capturing gold, slaves, and other valuables. He also took a member of Governor Robert Johnson's council hostage and sent one of his lieutenants into town to get supplies to refill his medicine chest. The pirates paraded boldly in the streets, and the captured gentry were robbed of money and finery. Charleston also provided Blackbeard with medicines valued between 200 and 300 pounds.

Blackbeard seems to have had a cozy relationship with North Carolina's Governor Charles Eden. Eden and some of his associates are believed to have shared in some of Blackbeard's booty and to have looked the other way on his infractions.

Virginia's Governor Alexander Spotswood was alarmed that Blackbeard would continue his pirating even though he had been pardoned by Governor Charles Eden in June, 1718 and was in semi-retirement. Pirates continued to attack along the Atlantic Coast and some of the larcenies were thought to be Blackbeard's work. Since it seemed clear North Carolina's Governor Eden was not going to interfere with Blackbeard's operations, Spotswood convinced the British military, the Virginia Assembly, and some of Governor Eden's opponents to aid him in capturing Blackbeard, and offered 100 pounds as reward to whoever killed Blackbeard.

On Friday, November 22, 1718, Blackbeard met his death in a battle off Ocracoke. Governor Spotswood leased two sloops, with British commanders and crew; each had a pilot from North Carolina. Caught by surprise, short handed, and tricked to do battle on the attacking vessel, Blackbeard came to a bloody end.

On the blood-soaked deck of the small sloop sent to attack the pirate, Lt. Robert Maynard confronted Blackbeard. It was a classic face-off of good and evil that demanded death as the only resolution. Each pulled pistols and fired upon meeting. Blackbeard missed his mark, but Maynard's shot plowed through Blackbeard's great body. They continued to fight with swords; as Blackbeard moved in for a finishing blow with his cutlass, another seaman approached and slashed his throat. Blackbeard fought on, in spite of bullet wounds and gashed neck, as other British seamen joined in for the kill. Even while being stabbed, he yet cocked a pistol to continue the fight as he fell dead. His head was then cut off and hung from the bowsprit of Maynard's ship.

Ship Characteristics:

- Weight over 200 tons (carrying capacity). About 103' long, 24 2/2' wide, depth in hold 12'9", draft 13'4" (distance from water line to bottom of keel).
- The *Queen Anne's Revenge* originally had about 20 cannons and was constructed with 20 gunports. It took four people to position, powder, and fire each

cannon. Blackbeard increased the *Queen Anne's Revenge* firepower to 40 guns, most likely adding rail guns (short cannons 2 1/2 to 4' long, mounted on the ship's rail and operated by one man) to enable attacks on well-armed merchant ships.

- The *Queen Anne's Revenge* accommodated a crew of about 125. The crew used hammocks, and slept in shifts to maintain a constant watch on deck.
- The galley (kitchen) had a brick stove with built-in kettles, and was staffed with a cook. The crew ate salt port, salt beef, and hard tack (unleavened biscuits). This was supplemented with captured booty, including sugar, cocoa, and rum.

Ship History:

- Believed to have been British built, about 1710, of white oak.
- In 1711, taken to Rio de Janeiro as the *Concorde*, fitted as Dutch flute (design changed to a bulbous body, more vertical stern post installed—a slower vessel, easier to sail). In 1713 sold to Spain, spent time off Chile and/or Peru. In 1717, acquired by a Frenchman, Mr. Montaudouin, became a slave ship sailing out of Nantes, (pr Not) France, modified to 200 tons, crew of 75. Involved in French slave trade centered off Senegal.
- Captured as a merchant ship in 1717 under the command of Captain D'Ocier. This ship was captured in battle by Captain Benjamin Hornigold and Blackbeard (Edward Teach) and his pirate crew. Blackbeard's ferocity and skill at fighting were rewarded when Hornigold gave him the *Concorde* as his prize. Blackbeard renamed her *Queen Anne's Revenge*.
- The *Queen Anne's Revenge* was Blackbeard's lead ship, though he commanded as many as four vessels for attacks such as the assault on Charleston, and had as many as 300 pirates under his command.

(Reprinted from the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources' press release dated March 3, 1997.)

1997 North Carolina Archaeology Month Poster

The North Carolina Archaeology Society and the North Carolina Archaeological Council, in conjunction with the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology, is planning to recognize October 1997 as North Carolina Archaeology Month. The theme selected for this year's Archaeology Month is "North Carolina Archaeology: Lessons in Heritage Education." As part of Archaeology Month, the Society and the Council want to produce a poster commemorating the event. The poster is designed to highlight 14 recent projects around the state which have involved the public, students, and the Native American community in either the planning, excavation, or interpretive stage of archaeology.

Our goal is to make copies of this poster available free of charge to schools, Society and Council members, and the interested public. In order to achieve this objective, the Society and Council are seeking individual, corporate, and institutional donations to fund the poster. If you wish to contribute towards the production of this poster, please make checks payable to the North Carolina Archaeological Society, and send to NCAS, 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2807. Please note on the check or attach a letter stating this is for the 1997 Archaeology Month poster. Any inquiries can be made to Dee Nelms at 919/733-7342. Thank you in advance for supporting this endeavor, and remember, **donations are tax deductible!!!**

1997 Annual Spring Meeting

The North Carolina Archaeological Society will hold its 1997 Annual Spring Meeting on Saturday May 31 at Tryon Palace in New Bern from 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM. Information on the meeting was mailed in February to all NCAS past and present members. If you did not receive information on the meeting and are interested in attending, contact Dee Nelms at the North Carolina Archaeological Society, 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, NC 27601-2807 or at 919/733-7342. We hope to see you there.

Also, the North Carolina Archaeological Council will sponsor a reception on Friday night (May 30) from 8:00-11:00 PM in the west wing of Tryon Palace. North Carolina Archaeological Society members are invited to attend. On display will be examples of modern technologies being used in archaeological research and education.

NCAS Newsletter Publication Schedule

All NCAS members are encouraged to submit articles and news items to Dee Nelms, Associate Editor, for inclusion in the *Newsletter*. Please use the following cut-off dates as guides for your submissions:

Spring Issue	March 31
Fall Issue	September 30
Summer Issue	June 30
Winter Issue	December 31

NCAS Officers

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Secretary: Linda Carnes-McNaughton, Historic Sites Section, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, NC 27601-2807

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Associate Editor: Dee H. Nelms, Office of State Archaeology, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, NC 27601-2807.

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