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H.L. Hunley Update

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H. L. Hunley Update

By Christopher Amer

Throughout the year, SCIAA has worked with the South Carolina Hunley Commission and the Friends of the Hunley to assist them in their goal of raising this historic vessel. In 1996, the commission and representatives of both the federal and state governments signed a programmatic agreement reaffirming federal ownership of this historic craft and turning over the raising and curating of the boat to South Carolina. The Underwater Archaeology Division continued its work on the *H. L. Hunley* Project through the review period. Using the ADAP III Marine Remote Sensing System, the division monitored the site for potential localized changes to the environment around this protected site. In May, the division conducted remote sensing operations over the sites of the *Hunley* and *Housatonic*. Concurrently, staff from the Naval Historical Center worked with the US Geological Survey to take core samples of sediments around the two sites. The information from these cores will be used to help plan the recovery of the submarine in 2001. In June, the Underwater Archaeology Division

and the Naval Historical Center coordinated on a project to investigate the *Housatonic* and two magnetic anomalies associated with the two sites (See article on Pages 22-25). Work focused on identifying the larger of the magnetic anomalies, which turned out to be an historic buoy that once marked the location of the *Housatonic*. Archaeologists on this project continue to conduct test excavations within the *Housatonic* site in an attempt to delineate the wreck and answer research questions about the engagement that took place on the evening of February 17, 1864. Investigation of the sites is funded jointly by SCIAA, the Naval Historical Center, and the Friends of the *Hunley*. Division staff and myself are actively assisting the commission in its efforts to raise the funds necessary to raise, conserve, and display the *Hunley* in perpetuity, through public lectures and by consulting on a variety of television, journal, and fundraising events. The recent made-for-TV movie on the *Hunley* acknowledged the assistance of the division in making the film during its recent premier.



A school group visits the Friends of the *Hunley* mobile exhibit during its recent visit to Columbia. (SCIAA photo by Christopher Amer)

LE PRINCE UPDATE

By James Spirek

Recently, five documents were obtained from the French archives, related to the corsair *Le Prince*, shipwrecked off Port Royal Sound in early 1577, and they have been translated (See *Legacy*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1998, pp. 10-13). Chester DePratter and I pooled our resources to hire Bernard Allaire, a French researcher and finder of the documents, to transcribe the original documents and to translate them into modern French and English. Each of the documents shed light on the manner in which the corsair enterprise was organized from 1575 to 1576. The Charter Party document, 10 pages in length, related the financial arrangement between the principal investors, identified key officers and sailors, the purpose of the voyage, and outfitting and manning of the vessel. The other four one-page documents reveal later investors to the voyage, such as an innkeeper and Sieur de LeRoque, as well as attempts to collect debts owed to the ship's captain, Oratio Rosso.



We are now seeking funds to conduct extensive archival research in France and Spain to learn more about the corsair and the people involved. Early in the new millennium, we will launch our survey to locate the remains of the vessel and other shipwrecks on the Port Royal Sound shoals. If you would like to help sponsor additional archival research, translation of documents, or field work activities for the ongoing investigation of the French corsair and early history of South Carolina, please consider a tax-deductible contribution, earmarked for the project, to the Archaeological Research Trust. For additional information about the project, contact me at (803) 777-8170 or spirek@sc.edu.