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*Flotsam and Jetsam* - March 2000

South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology--University of South Carolina

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Flotsam and Jetsam

Volume Eight, Number One, SCIAA, Underwater Archaeology Division, March 2000

Now That You Found It--Record It!

See Story Page 7
Field Training Course Set For August

Have you ever wanted to participate in an underwater archaeology project? Perhaps you simply want to learn more about the field of underwater archaeology? Then the Underwater Archaeology Field Training Course may be for you.

The next course is scheduled for August 2 through 6, 2000. Classroom and pool sessions will take place during the first three days. These will be held at SCIAA headquarters in Columbia and at the University of South Carolina pool. The fourth and fifth days of the course will be the open water session on the Cooper River near Charleston.

Offered by the Sport Diver Archaeological Management Program at the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (a part of the University of South Carolina), the Underwater Archaeology Field Training Course provides students with a comprehensive overview of the field of underwater archaeology, with an emphasis on the underwater sites encountered in South Carolina waters.

Classroom topics include discussions on the principles of underwater archaeology, the methods used in performing underwater surveys and site interpretations, and the basics of ship construction. In addition, classroom lectures cover artifact identification and conservation and the laws governing artifact and fossil collection. During the pool session, students practice the skills they have learned in the classroom on a simulated shipwreck site.

During the open water session, participants accompany Institute staff on a visit to several actual shipwrecks. Students will conduct a preliminary site survey of the wreck, followed by more detailed recording of the vessel timbers and associated artifacts, with results submitted for inclusion in the South Carolina Archaeology Site File Inventory.

Although the course is primarily for divers, non-divers are welcome to take the course and participate in the same exercises as the divers, only on land. Persons from all walks of life have attended the training course since its inception in 1990, including law enforcement officers, teachers, scuba instructors, housewives, high school and college students, scout groups, lawyers, telephone linemen, executives, historic preservation officials—anyone interested in underwater archaeology.

Instructors for the course are mostly Institute staff, but outside experts, such as staff members of the South Carolina State Museum, are often called on to present segments of the course.

Divers must be experienced in low-visibility river diving, and must provide their own accommodations and dive gear, including tanks. A minimum of ten students is required.

For more information about the Underwater Archaeology Field Course contact Lynn Harris or Carl Naylor at (843) 762-6105.

Cooper River Trail Slates Now Available For Sale

We now have a supply of Cooper River Trail slates available. Dive shops and river diving charter boats interested in purchasing slate sets to sell through your business, please contact us at (843) 762-6105. Cost is $10 per set.

These waterproof slates provide the background history of each site plus a map of the shipwreck. If you want your customers to have a more in-depth understanding of the history of the Cooper River and some idea of what they are looking at underwater, these slates are essential diving accessories!
We're Back!

The Flotsam and Jetsam is back!
After more than three years of being published as part of the Institute-wide newsletter, the Legacy, the Underwater Archaeology Division's newsletter has returned.
The newsletter was merged with the Legacy in 1996 in an effort to bring news of sport diver and Underwater Archaeology Division activities to a wider audience.

According to SCIAA Director Dr. Bruce Rippeteau, "Legacy has been very successful, now going to nearly 8,000 citizens involved with SCIAA. However, this publication and its purpose have led to a decision to put out two rather than four issues a year. In these will appear elements of Flotsam and Jetsam as part of the education of the other readers, just as exposure to the other Legacy elements is educational for sport divers."

"We're happy to be back," said Lynn Harris, head of SDAMP. "We think of the Flotsam and Jetsam as not only a newsletter for divers but one with much of the content written by divers themselves. Somehow we got away from this when we merged into the Legacy."

The Flotsam and Jetsam will be published quarterly and will be mailed to all divers holding a current Hobby License as well as to those who have attended one of SDAMP's Field Training Courses or workshops.
Licensed Hobby Divers are urged to submit articles for publication in the Flotsam and Jetsam. Suitable subjects include:

- recent finds—perhaps you would like to tell us about that interesting bottle you found and the history behind it;
- diving tips—such as better ways of dealing with river currents or navigating along the bottom in dark water;
- favorite diving spots—OK, so not everyone wants to reveal their secret location (and we're certainly not going to tell), but maybe you are the type of diver who doesn't mind sharing a particularly pleasant place to pursue your sport with your fellow divers.

What Can I Collect With A Hobby License?

According to state law, licensed Hobby Divers are allowed to conduct "recreational, small-scale" recovery of artifacts and fossils. The law goes on to say that recovery is limited to "objects which can be recovered by hand."

It is the intent of this law, the South Carolina Underwater Antiquities Act of 1991, to allow licensed Hobby Divers to recover small artifacts such as bottles and fossils such as shark's teeth found along the bottom of state waters. However, several incidents over the past few years indicate that even licensed Hobby Divers may not understand what those terms mean.

In 1997 a licensed Hobby Diver recovered an old anchor from the Cooper River. When contacted by SCIAA staff, he claimed that he didn't know that recovery of such a large artifact was not permitted under the stipulations of a Hobby License. After threatening to destroy the anchor, SCIAA staff along with a Department of Natural Resources law enforcement officer confiscated the anchor and the diver was written a citation.

More recently a group of hobby divers recovered an old anchor from the Cooper River. The anchor's shank measured more than six feet and the anchor itself weighed several hundred pounds.

The divers admitted using 55-gallon drums to raise the anchor and get it to the boat landing. After learning of the recovery, SCIAA staff members contacted the divers and advised them to return the anchor to the river bottom. The anchor is now part of the Cooper River Underwater Heritage Trail.

Hobby Divers are reminded that the law states: "All powered mechanical dredging and lifting devices and buoyancy equipment except a personal flotation device of any sort are prohibited including, but not limited to, prop wash, air lift, water dredge, and pneumatically operated lift bags, under the (hobby) license."

Should you find an anchor or canoe on the bottom, instead of trying to recover it, record it. Basic measurements will do—length of shank, distance between points, length of arm, width of shank, etc. If you find a canoe (or any other kind of shipwreck), basic measurements you should take include length, width, thickness of sides, and depth from sides to the inside bottom. Also, the diver should note any tool marks or evidence of burning.

Also, divers should note that the law also states: "No more than ten artifacts a day may be recovered from a shipwreck site. Divers may not destroy the integrity of the ship's structure by removing or moving timbers, fittings, fastenings, or machinery. Hobby divers who have recovered any artifacts from a shipwreck site must include in the (quarterly artifact) report both a locational reference to the shipwreck site by locating the site on a topographical or hydrographic chart and a sketch map of the wreck site showing the location where the artifacts were recovered from in relation to the wreck."

Anyone wishing a complete copy of the South Carolina Underwater Antiquities Act of 1991 should contact Carl Naylor at (843) 762-6105.
Lowcountry Waterbodies Yield...

By Lynn Harris

Not all our work involves diving. In recent months our SCIAA Underwater Archaeology Division staff based in Charleston have recorded a number of interesting artifacts discovered on the banks of swiftly flowing tidal rivers, on palm-canopied island beaches, and pulled up by dredges from the muddy waters of Charleston harbor. A canoe, an irrigation ditch, a dock, scattered remnants of a shipwreck, and a Civil War cannon were reported to SCIAA within the first few months of 2000. Each represents an important component of our local maritime history.

Department of Natural Resources staff member Mike Mckenzie showed us an irrigation ditch or trunk that had become exposed on the beach of Caper’s Island. Initially, they thought it might be a dugout canoe. Historically this portion of the land was close to a former dam—the only water source on the island. Further research is still being conducted to find out more details about the island and its inhabitants. Closer inspection of the artifact, with the help of water-control structure specialist Billy Judd from Johns Island, revealed that it was a “ditch.” It operated like a wooden pipeline with a one-way valve in the form of a bulkhead that was manually raised and lowered into a carved slot to control the overflow of water from the dam.

Mike Moore, a sailor who frequents the Hobcaw Creek, reported a section of a dock or wharf eroding out of the bank. One of the property owners on the creek told us that Mike is well-known in this suburban waterway of the Mount Pleasant area for his many adventurous escapades assisting boaters and boats in distress. He is also familiar with this section of the creek which runs between two historic shipyards. Linn’s Shipyard was owned by David Linn in the 1700s and lies on the north bank. Pritchard’s Shipyard is located on the south bank. During the colonial era it was owned by several well-known shipwrights who immigrated from Scotland such as John Rose, James Stuart, William Begbie, and Daniel Manson. In 1778 Paul Pritchard bought the shipyard.

The wharf we inspected with Mike was situated in proximity to Linn’s shipyard and was a critical construct used to load and launch boats. Only a small section of the wharf structure was visible, consisting of upright posts attached to planking. Nearby several large piles of ships ballast lay scattered along the riverbanks.

Rick Kanaski, regional archaeologist for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, reported a dugout canoe in the Combahee River of the ACE Basin Coastal Refuge. The wood has been identified as cypress by wood specialist Lee Newsome at Illinois University, and the interior surface appears to have been hollowed out with an adze. Unfortunately the ends of the canoe are broken off. It is likely to be an early historic period canoe—but it is impossible to definitively determine whether it was built by the remaining native Americans, African slaves, or European settlers without radiocarbon dating (only if there is evidence of burning) or a specific historical reference to a boat with a name (this was often the case with plantation craft). We do that know area associated with extensive rice cultivation during the 1800s and the canoe may have been...
A Diversity of Artifact Types

a rice paddy watercraft.

Ironwork artist and beachcomber Nick Hentosh reported several ship timbers washing up on Folly Beach. He has found an increasing number since hurricane Floyd at the end of 1999. Frames and planks with copper sheathing were scattered the length of Folly Island. Interestingly, the sheathing tacks had lead washers. The frames were of similar dimensions and had a combination of wooden treenails and iron spikes as fastenings for the planking. Some had iron stains on the outer surfaces. Nick and Skunk, the dog (a border collie) helped us clean the layer of sand off the timbers and take field notes. Copper sheathing was only popularly used by the 1800s. We suspect that these might be from Civil War vessels that went down in the area of Folly Beach, like the blockade runner Ruby. Between 1871 and 1876 a contract was awarded by the Corps of Engineers to Benjamin Maillefert to remove or partially remove fourteen wrecks from the shipping channels and harbor. It is also possible that the timbers are the salvage debris from the Maillefert operation.

Bob Chapelle of the Charleston office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reported that dredging operations in harbor yielded a very large cannon and section of a shipwreck.

An inspection trip to the dredging barge allowed us to have a closer look at the cannon which has been tentatively identified as most likely being a Civil War period U.S. 32-pound smoothbore that had been converted by the Confederates to a rifled and banded 6.4 inch cannon.

The shipwreck section consisted of a propeller and shaft embedded in wood from the ship's hull, and still covered in fragments of metal sheathing. These may have come from the remains of the Confederate iron-clads Palmetto State, Chicora, or Charleston. The two artifacts have been redeposited in the water in a known location due to concerns about the cannon still being full of gunpowder while decisions are made regarding the final deposition.

Many thanks to those who reported these sites. Our small staff and limited resources make your assistance an especially important part of archaeological site management in the state. When artifacts like this are reported many basic questions arise: What is it? Who built it and how? When was it made and used? Where was it made and used? Why was it used and why is it here? Historical research, drawings, and photographs are all part of the investigative procedure and quest to answer these questions. By adding one piece of information at a time we hope contribute to the overall body of knowledge of these artifacts and their place in South Carolina's maritime heritage.
Sharing Experiences On Improving Public Access To Shipwrecks

By James D. Spirek

This past January a former co-worker, Della Scott-Ireton of the Florida Bureau of Archaeological Research, and I co-organized a symposium titled “Preserves, Parks, and Trails: Interpreting our Sunken Maritime Heritage” for the 2000 Society for Historical and Underwater Archaeology Conference in Québec City, Canada.

The concept under discussion at the symposium was the ways in which managers, avocationals, and preservation-minded organizations have joined forces to improve public access to interpreted underwater archaeological preserves, parks, and trails.

The interpretation of these underwater attractions typically seeks to inform the visitor about the cultural significance, structural elements, and environmental setting of a historical shipwreck or other types of sites using illustrative guides, brochures, and ancillary land-based exhibits. Important goals of this submerged cultural resource management concept are to foster in the visitor a sense of preservation through stewardship, as well as to provide economic benefits to the host community through historical, educational, and recreational tourism. The session brought together fifteen graduate students, professionals, and avocational archaeologists from the US, Canada, and Australia to present their work on improving public access to shipwrecks and other intertidal and submerged archaeological sites.

Our session discussant was Dr. Roger Smith, Florida state underwater archaeologist, who with more than years of experience creating preserves in Florida was an ideal candidate to provide a summation of the session’s presentations. Plus, Della and I learned the ropes under Roger during our stints creating the USS Massachusetts and SS Copenhagen Underwater Archaeological Preserves in Florida in the early nineties.

The first three papers focused on ways to more fully interpret and to expand relationships with other preservation-oriented organizations. The following nine papers provided practical examples from the United States that included state, federal, avocational, and private initiatives.

Another outcome of the session is that we plan on compiling the papers into a book. This monograph should prove useful as an example of the benefits of creating these types of underwater museums for the public and for historic preservation of these unique and non-renewable cultural resources.

We are also creating a webpage that will feature the papers, as well as links to the respective organizations of each presenter. For those who want to learn more about these underwater attractions in other states, perhaps to plan a vacation, should find this webpage useful. In the interim during the website construction, I would encourage you to conduct a search on the Internet using the keywords underwater archaeological preserves or institutional affiliation of the speaker for more information.

BookLocker

Willtown—An Archaeological and Historical Perspective
review by Drew Ruddy

The first book on my reading list at the turn of the millennium was the latest archaeological publication by the Charleston Museum, Willtown—An Archaeological And Historical Perspective.

Authored by Martha Zierden, Suzanne Linder, and Ron Anthony, the book contains a flowing account of the development of the early South Carolina southern frontier. Willtown (also called New London) saw its zenith as an Edisto River community in the first half of the eighteenth century and then slowly died as the land evolved into successful rice plantations.

Excavations conducted by the Charleston Museum and anthropology students at the College of Charleston from 1997 through 1999 are described in an absorbing account of discovery. Sites investigated include two building foundations on lots 41, 42, and 45 of the original Willtown plat. Also located was the mid-eighteenth century location of the Presbyterian Church, cemetery, and parsonage. The prime site of the excavation was the James Stobo House, a study of a home of an inland rice planter with a possible occupation between c. 1700 to 1820.

Additional contributors included chapters on African American Slaves And Rice Dike Construction and Animal Use On The Eighteenth Century Frontier.

Beautifully illustrated with photographs and computer graphics, this book documents an important eighteenth century site and chronicles the continued professionalism of the Charleston Museum staff and associates. (Drew Ruddy is a SCIAA research associate and hobby diver. His upcoming publication, Willtown Bluff—An Avocational Underwater Archaeological Report, describes his underwater survey off Willtown.)
Recording Artifacts Provides A Permanent Record Of Finds

So, you found a Bellarmine jug dating to 1575, or a Chinese porcelain vase from the Ming Dynasty, or perhaps a Viking helmet with “Leif Eriksson” scrawled on the inside while diving in Black Mingo Creek, or Cuckold’s Creek, or some other body of water in South Carolina.

And you’ve cleaned your find using enough kitchen counter space and Tupperware containers to send your spouse to a divorce lawyer. And you’ve conserved it with sufficient quantities of foul-smelling chemicals so that it will last long enough to be put in your last will and testament, leaving it to rich, old Aunt Whats-her-name (provided, of course, she still calls you her favorite nephew). And you’ve shown it to everyone in five counties, impressing complete strangers, amusing close friends, and boring immediate family. And, of course, you’ve reported your find to SCIAA on your quarterly report form.

Now what? Put it on the old mantle place? Donate it to the local museum? Give it to your kids for a piggy bank? Stick on a shelf in the closet? Before you do any of those things, perhaps you should record the artifact.

Recording an artifact entails making a visual record of the item, either by photographing, drawing, or some other means. Archaeologically, recording an artifact allows important information to be passed on through publication in a scientific journal and, at the same time, retains that information should the artifact be damaged during cleaning, conservation, or (heaven forbid) day-to-day handling. But why would you, the hobby diver, want to record your artifact?

Even if there is no book publisher banging at your door, begging for a photo of your artifact for inclusion in some coffee-table book, there are several good reasons why you still might want some record of your artifact.

Perhaps you have no idea what your find is, and you want a photo or drawing of the item so that when you go to the library you don’t have to take the item itself. Or, perhaps you want to send us a photo of the item to aid us in identifying your treasure for you. We here at the Underwater Archaeology Division of SCIAA have a variety of resources available to us to help the licensed diver gain all the information available on any particular type of artifact. These resources include reference works, scientific journals, and some of the best archaeologists in the country on staff, and sometimes we can access information not generally available to the public. (While we happily provide this service, we can only assist currently licensed divers. If you are not currently licensed and you retrieve artifacts from South Carolina waters you are doing so illegally and we cannot then assist you with your artifact in any way.)

Perhaps your artifact is valuable from a monetary standpoint, and you want to include it on your homeowner’s insurance. A photograph of the item, proving its existence, can assure a minimum of delay for an insurance check and even make it possible for your insurance agent to have a smile on his face when he writes that obscenely large check should your Ming Dynasty vase or whatever be stolen.

Perhaps you plan to have your artifacts exhibited at a local museum, library, school, Moose lodge, or whatever, and suppose you don’t have enough space to exhibit all your amazing and unique finds. An exhibit can often be enhanced by displaying just a few artifacts and backing these with photographs and drawings of others. Or perhaps you just want to make sure you have a record of your displayed artifacts should they get mugged at the museum, liberated from the library, scuzzed while in school, or mashed by a Moose.

Whether you are recording artifacts for your Ph.D. in anthropology, for a slide presentations to show at your daughter’s fifth grade class, for permanent records of items for insurance purposes, or for exhibit at the museum, there are a few things you should remember.

First, there should be something in the photograph or drawing indicating the object’s precise size. This can be accomplished either by adding a scale or by indicating the exact measurements, as on mechanical drawings. The preferred method is placing a scale in the photo or drawing. This allows the observer to make measurements that were perhaps not included.

Second, you should always keep an account of each artifact, where and when it was found, cleaning and conservation methods used, previous exhibitions, present location, etc. This information can prove invaluable in any number of ways in the future. One way to record these facts is to scribble it on the back of the photo or drawing. A better way is to write the information in a journal or computer database, numbering each entry. This number can be written on the back of the photo or drawing, and what is just as important, can be put on the artifact itself.

If you do get into the habit of recording your artifacts, and should you come across an intact Bellarmine jug from the sixteenth century in Black Mingo Creek or find a Ming Dynasty porcelain vase in Cuckolds Creek, we sure would appreciate a photo or drawing of it. Should you find a Viking helmet with “Leif Eriksson” scrawled on the inside, before you do anything else, we suggest you sit down and make a list of all your friends who are fond of practical jokes.
Hunley Recovery Set For July

By Christopher Amer

Plans are now set for the recovery of the submarine H.L. Hunley. The S.C. Hunley Commission met on Thursday February 10, 2000, to review presentations by the principal groups involved in this effort. Audiovisual presentations detailed the work conducted to date on the project, the current state of funding and fundraising, the present status of the conservation laboratory (Building 255 on the old Charleston Navy Base), and the proposed recovery strategy.

Currently, the project has generated more than five million dollars, or a little over one-third of the estimated sixteen million dollars needed to ensure curation of this historic boat in perpetuity. Refurbishment of Building 255 is in full swing and the contractors predict a late April completion date for the facility. Oceaneering, the company that recently successfully recovered the Liberty Bell capsule from the sea floor, gave a highly detailed accounting of their strategy to excavate, lift, and transport the Hunley to the conservation facility. The Commission voted to move ahead with the plans pending final approval by the signatories of the Programmatic Agreement.

Current plans include a joint SCIAA, Hunley Center, Naval Historical Center, National Park Service, Oceaneering excavation and preparation of the site during the latter part of May and June with the lift occurring in July. Analysis of the hull and excavation of the interior of the boat will proceed over the following year, with conservation continuing for an estimated five or six years. The remains of the third crew, which we assume to be still inside the submarine, will be buried at Magnolia Cemetery beside the graves of Horace Hunley and his crew (the second crew) and the five sailors exhumed from beneath The Citadel (the first crew) last year.

A primary consideration throughout this project has been the safe recovery and preservation of the Hunley and its occupants. To that end, in last November the Hunley Center sponsored a symposium to explore the latest techniques and strategies for dealing with artifacts of this magnitude and complexity. Top metals conservators and archaeologists from around the world were brought to Charleston to apply their expertise to the project. The recommendations of the group are being incorporated into the excavation, recovery, and conservation plans.

When conservation of the hull and artifacts is complete, the Hunley will be moved to a yet-to-be-built wing of The Charleston Museum.

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