

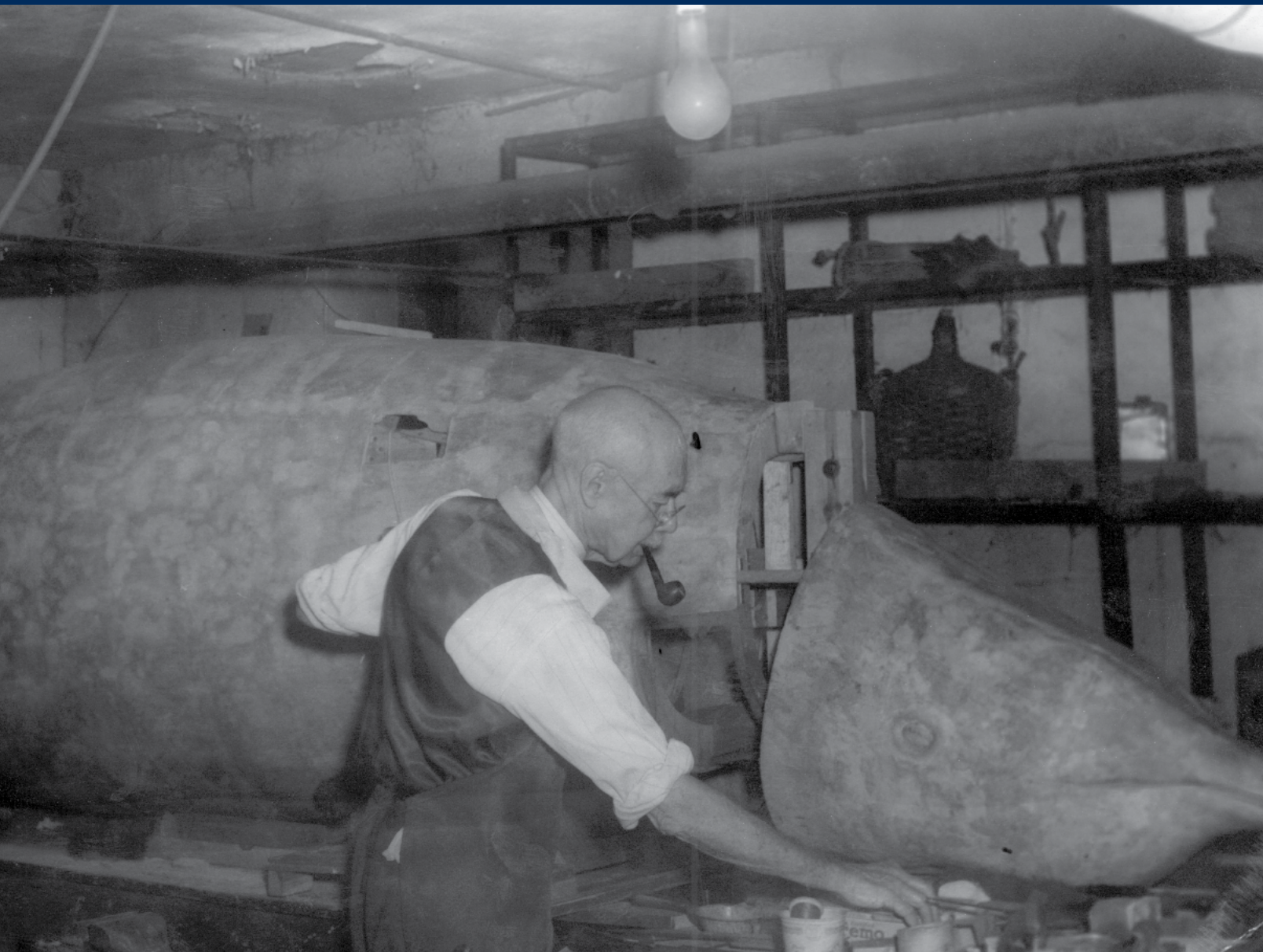
THE MARITIMES



THE MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH CAROLINA MARITIME MUSEUMS

HATTERAS • BEAUFORT • SOUTHPORT

SUMMER/FALL 2023



Herbert Brimley creating a replica
of a True's beaked whale.
See "About the Cover" on page 3.

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NORTH CAROLINA
**MARITIME
MUSEUMS**
BEAUFORT HATTERAS SOUTHPORT

THE MARITIMES

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Three unique museums.*



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Artifact Spotlight: *Doll Bust from the City of Houston Shipwreck*

By Allison Kohne

Dolley Madison served as the fourth First Lady of the United States of America from 1809 to 1817. She was noted for her charisma, political and social interpersonal connections, and for saving the Declaration of Independence, as well as portraits of George Washington, as the British burned the original White House in 1814. Her image invoked elegance and national pride, so it was no surprise to see her image suddenly begin appearing on food packaging, serving ware, clothing, bedding, and jewelry during the late 19th century. A large economic shift also took place during that time period with the rise of new industrial scale manufacturing. This era of mass production coincided with the emergence of the early form of product branding exemplified by the use of Madison's image. The wreckage of *City of Houston* includes testament to both.

City of Houston headed out in late October 1878 for what would be its last voyage ferrying passengers and freight from New York City to Galveston, Texas. The vessel sank a few days into its trip during a strong storm near the outer Frying Pan Shoals, just 39 miles offshore of Southport. The passengers and crew were rescued at the last minute by passing steamship *Margaret*. However, *City of Houston* and all its freight sank below, creating an underwater time capsule of late 19th century products and personal belongings.

The wreckage from *City of Houston* was located in 1987. Included among the many artifacts recovered at the site were such items as medicine bottles, marbles, silverware, and, notably, porcelain doll heads. These doll heads came in varying sizes and were sewn into a cloth body through several holes located at the bottom of the bust on both the front and back. The dolls' hairstyles—either brunette or blonde—were known in that early form of product branding as the “Dolley Madison”: pinned up in back with face framing curls. The dolls often featured painted blue eyes, like the former first lady had, and heavy blush on the cheeks in, perhaps, a nod to her glamorous style.

Exposure to salt water has worn away much of the paint from the doll busts retrieved from the wreck site of *City of Houston*. Despite the impact of time and tide, preserving the busts, along with other artifacts from the wreckage of *City of Houston*, in the collection of the North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport help share the story of our past to current and future generations. ■

Allison Kohne is the Collection Registrar of the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort.



Dolley Madison bust from the collection at the museum in Southport.

The Lost Steamship City of Houston.

Capt. Spicer, superintendent of the Malory line, received a dispatch at New York Sunday from Capt. Stevens, commander of the steamer *City of Houston*; lost during the storm of Tuesday night and Wednesday last, saying that the leak commenced around the stuffing box, which was finally stopped, but the water still gained from some unknown cause. The fire were all out at fifteen minutes past midnight. They used the donkey boiler till the pumps stopped at 8 a. m., when there was ten feet of water in the after part of the ship. Capt. Spicer said that the passengers would be brought back to New York by the Savannah and Charleston line, and would be forwarded to their destination in the steamer State of Texas, which will leave New York next Wednesday. The *City of Houston* was one of the finest boats on the line, and was valued at about \$200,000. She was insured for about two-thirds of her value in European companies.

The Wilmington Sun, October 3, 1878, Wilmington, North Carolina.

From The Friends

SOUTHPORT: Greetings from the North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport!

If you did not know, the North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport stands at the confluence of the Cape Fear River, the Intracoastal Waterway, and the Atlantic Ocean. The museum inhabits the officer's quarters on the grounds at Fort Johnston. From its humble beginnings in a small shop on Howe Street as the Southport Maritime Museum to becoming a state agency in 1999, the museum has seen many changes and updates. The most recent change is that there was a 100-percent turnover of the crew (our North Carolina state employees) in 2022. I am happy to report that the crew is now at full complement. We are fortunate to have John Moseley, the museum manager, Shannon Walker, the curator of education, and Kyra McCormick, the visitor services coordinator, onboard and in place. They have hit the deck running in all areas—from familiarizing themselves with all aspects of the museum to conducting educational programs and creating the strategic vision that improves upon a tremendous foundation built by their predecessors. Speaking for the Friends, we are excited for the future of the museum and look forward to continuing to support it, whether it be funding new exhibits, helping teach at summer camps, participating in special events, or assisting in daily operations. Rest assured that the museum is ready for your visit!

If you haven't checked out our Friends website in a while, please go to friendsncmmsouthport.com. You can join or renew your membership with the Friends of the Museum online. Thank you for your continued interest in preserving and sharing our maritime history — in Southport and throughout North Carolina and our nation.

Come see us in Southport!

Tom Hale

Chairman

Friends of the NC Maritime Museum at Southport ■

HATTERAS: Grateful for Community Support

Renovations and innovative ideas go hand-in-hand. This is especially true in the museum's case regarding the preservation and interpretation of history. The moving of the 1854 Cape Hatteras Fresnel lens from the lobby to the gallery is a monumental undertaking. Not only does it involve additional funds, it also requires world experts to dismantle the lens and then reconstruct it in the new location. Thankfully, we are privileged to have support in both instances. World renowned lampist, Jim Woodward was with us at the beginning when the lens arrived at the museum in 2005; and happily, he continues to oversee the relocation as well. Although parts can weigh over 1,200 pounds, he and his artisan team, Tommy Cumelia and Leon Hodge, painstakingly removed each upper and lower catadioptric system and flash panels, as well as the pedestal. The pieces are being stored until the team returns later this year and reconstructs the lens in its new location. In the meantime, John Havel and others from the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society will clean each of the glass elements.

We were fortunate to have the Cape Hatteras Electrical Cooperative, The Friends of the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum, the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, the National Park Service, and the Outer Banks Lighthouse Society provide funding for this incredible project. We look forward to the completion and we are grateful for the financial and personal support of so many.

Daniel C. Couch

President

Friends of the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum ■

BEAUFORT: Springing forward with a full calendar

As the boating season kicks off, the Friends return to the water. Our Junior Sailing Program is readying for its 31st year, and we still have a few openings. We are also hiring instructors. If you have kids interested in learning or are a qualified instructor, please reach out quickly. We are also able to provide private sailing lessons for novice and experienced sailors with our fleet of Optimists, 420s and newly added Open Skiffs. To register or for more information, contact the Friends office.

The Friends have just completed our first year of operating the Port Of Call Museum Store. The inaugural year has been a great success through the diligent efforts of the staff and volunteers. Remember, Friends members receive a 10% discount on purchases!

A series of Fall First Fridays art events at the Port Of Call Museum Store debuted in 2022, and our Spring First Fridays began in March and April. Our May First Friday coincided with the museum's Wooden Boat Show weekend. While the Boat Show Kickoff Reception was going on in the Harvey W. Smith Watercraft Center, the Spring First Friday reception took place in the museum auditorium and Port Of Call, featuring the Half Models of John Vang. The events were well attended with many guests enjoying both celebrations!

Speaking of parties, the Friends will hold its 2nd annual Boat Shoes & Bow Ties fundraiser on June 16 in the Watercraft Center and adjacent Harborside Park deck. This is our biggest fundraiser of the year and will feature a tropical theme, beach music, open bar, heavy hors d'oeuvres and live auction. We are looking for sponsors at levels between \$500 and \$5,000. Go to [our website](https://ourwebsite.com) for sponsorship levels and tickets. We are also soliciting donations for our auction, such as vacations, trips, boat rides, wines or other items. If you can donate, please let us know.

Finally, we will celebrate Maritime Day on June 16 and Independence Day on July 4 with fireworks, both at the museum's Gallants Channel Annex. See our [website](https://website.com) for more details.

Hope to see you soon!

Bruce J. Prager

President

Friends of the NC Maritime Museum in Beaufort ■

About the Cover: Some of the earliest known whale displays in North Carolina can be credited to Herbert Hutchinson Brimley, pictured on the cover. The English taxidermist was hired in 1894 by the State Museum in Raleigh to assemble a right whale skeleton for display. Brimley became a curator at the museum and eventually held the position of director. In this photo he is creating a replica of a True's beaked whale. The True's beaked whale was named for Frederick W. True, the Smithsonian Curator who first described the species from an animal that washed ashore in Carteret County in July 1912. See the more recent story of another beaked whale on pages 12-13. ■

Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum in Hatteras

Salvaged Ships, Salvaged Homes

By Molly Trivelpiece

Historically, vessels that stranded on Hatteras Island and along nearby shores were stripped for parts or dismantled for the wood to be used by early residents of the area. As more recent news broke of the fourth house since February 2022 from the Tri-Village area (Salvo, Waves, and Rodanthe) falling into the ocean, residents galvanized to clear the wreckage from area beaches. But their intent behind doing so differs from that of their predecessors.

Materials from those early shipwrecks were used for many purposes; some early houses along the Outer

Banks were even built from their timbers. For generations, local “wreckers” capitalized on the misfortunes of wayward ships. For example, the schooner *G. A. Kohler* ran aground on Cape Hatteras in 1933. What could be easily removed from the abandoned vessel was taken prior to the start of World War II in 1939. Otherwise, the ship remained largely intact until the demand for iron created by the war prompted the eventual burning of the ship’s remains to recover any scrap metal. Wrecks like *G. A. Kohler* were a resource for the people of the somewhat remote barrier islands.

continued...



Another house falls victim to the encroaching sea at Rodanthe on Hatteras Island. Photo by Daniel Pullen.



The *G. A. Kohler* after it ran aground.



What remains of the *G. A. Kohler* today.

Salvaged Ships, Salvaged Homes *continued...*

However, once lumber and other building materials were able to be brought in by developed waterways and bridges, the salvage of building materials from shipwrecks was no longer a necessity for residents of the Outer Banks. Instead of being used for building structures, old shipwreck fragments are now more commonly included in art or decorating projects that can be found along the island in homes, shops, and galleries — the museum included. Materials from three local shipwrecks were used for the entrance to the Meekins Chandlery Gift Shop within the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum. The sign displaying the name of the shop contains copper from *Kassandra Louloudis*. The wooden beam facade is made using parts from the vessels *Carroll A. Deering* and *Momie T*. The repurposed materials and unique design draw the admiring attention of museum guests.

However, the wreckage washed ashore from a home destroyed by wind and waves is not desired like the cargo and timbers from shipwrecks were. Materials from these incidents are seen as a safety hazard and an eyesore. Materials such as broken lumber, nails, wiring, and insulation are too dangerous to be left on the beach. Relying heavily on volunteers, the removal of such debris



The front of the Meekins Chandlery Gift Shop showcases wooden beams, complete with trunnels, from *Carroll A. Deering* and *Momie T*. The casing for the shop's sign is from *Kassandra Louloudis*.

is usually orchestrated by National Park Service staff from Cape Hatteras National Seashore. Instead of being used for construction or even art, everything will be loaded onto trucks and taken off the island to a landfill. The whole operation requires many hands, resources, and hours.

The shifting sands of the Outer Banks that threatened so many ships, are now doing the same to houses built along the ocean's edge. It is the perilous threat that accompanies life on a barrier island. Though there are measures that can be taken to protect structures and slow the threat, storms, high wind, and surf will continue to take their toll on oceanfront properties. Homeowners sometimes resort to moving their houses, but even that may only prove temporary. The Outlaw House—built in Nags Head in 1885—was one of the original thirteen houses constructed on the oceanfront. It has been moved back from its original location five times as the sea continues to encroach on its pilings. The structure now sits four hundred feet from the surf but is still an oceanfront house in harm's way.

Pieces of damaged structures and shipwrecks from long ago continue to appear on the shores of the Outer Banks as they are exposed by the changing islands. The more recent "wrecks" have become a more regular occurrence as well. Whether caused by storms, shifting ocean currents, piracy, or human error, the result is the same: debris strewn about the beach. What has changed is our relationship to these reminders of a difficult existence on the coast.

Beach combers are reminded that historical and cultural artifacts that exist in the Cape Hatteras National Seashore and other federal and state parks are not to be collected. The removal of such items also removes the opportunity for other park visitors to enjoy and learn about the resources that are being protected. If you come across something washed up on the beach, think about where it came from and why it ended up there. Is it modern flotsam, debris that should be safely discarded; or is it a piece of history, an artifact from the past? ■

Molly Trivelpiece is the curator of education at the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum in Hatteras.

Renovation Update: The Fresnel Lens

The first order Fresnel lens that stood proudly in the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum lobby was disassembled over the course of a week in March. Jim Woodward, renowned lampist, and his team of two, Tommy Cumella and Leon Hodge, painstakingly marked and documented each section of the lens before dismantling it. The lens was removed and stored for the ongoing renovations currently taking place at the museum. The team of lampists will return later this year to reassemble the lens in a new location. ■



Leon Hodge and Tommy Cumella carefully guide a prism panel down from the lens.



Leon Hodge and Jim Woodward lower a portion of the framework.

The Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum is Temporarily Closed.

The Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum is temporarily closed for renovations to the exhibit gallery and building. Construction of new exhibits and displays is expected to continue through late fall 2023. Follow the progress by checking in on our social media channels, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).



North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport

Bendigo: A Visible Reminder of the American Civil War in the Lower Cape Fear



View of *Bendigo* wreck site as seen from the air.
Photo by W. Hall Watters 1970, U.S. Navy.

By Kyra McCormick

Sailors navigating the waters of the Lower Cape Fear region will often find themselves navigating around shipwrecks. There are a large number of shipwrecks concentrated in this relatively small region. Each of these shipwrecks give an insight into the history of the Cape Fear and how it fits into the larger picture of American History. One of these shipwrecks is *Bendigo*, a blockade runner that grounded in 1864 near Oak Island during the American Civil War.

In 1861, the Union Navy implemented a blockade of Confederate ports to restrict foreign trade. The goal was to prevent the Confederacy from trading southern goods, such as cotton and tobacco, for military weapons and civilian supplies. The port of Wilmington was perfectly situated to take advantage of these trade opportunities since it could be accessed by two different openings to the Cape Fear River from the Atlantic Ocean. A blockading fleet would have to cover both inlets, which were separated by Smith Island and its 30 miles of sandbar laden shoreline. By August 1863, the port of Wilmington had become the most important shipping destination in the south. A railroad connected it directly to Confederate forces in Richmond, Virginia. Perhaps speaking prematurely regarding establishing a blockade in the region, Admiral David Dixon Porter, United States Navy Commanding North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, said, “I am satisfied that no vessel should escape out of Wilmington after the blockade is perfected.” The blockade at Cape Fear was never really perfected due to the difficult nature of the coastline; vessels escaped from Wilmington through January 1865.

Fraser, Trenholm, and Company, a firm in Liverpool, England, was deeply tied to the Confederacy and made a lot

of money building and financing ships for the purpose of smuggling goods and arms through the blockade. The iron sidewheel steamer *Bendigo* was built in 1863 by the firm. Though we know the ship was similar to other blockade runners financed by Fraser, Trenholm, and Co., we don’t know what cargo it was carrying when it sank. According to Stephen R. Wise’s *Lifeline of the Confederacy*, such vessels might have carried civilian goods—like shoes, blankets, and dry goods—or wartime goods—like guns, rifles, and cartridges. Once at port, the items were sold to the highest bidder; and the company profited.

THE FIRING OFF WILMINGTON.—The Wilmington Journal of the 5th says: .

We understand that the firing heard here Sunday and yesterday came from the direction of Lockwood’s Folly, where the steamer *Bendigo* had run ashore. It would seem that in the doubtful light of Sunday morning, the *Bendigo* mistook the wreck of the steamer *Elizabeth* for one of the enemy’s blockaders, and in endeavoring to run between her and the shore got aground. The *Bendigo* is a small vessel, and we suppose would hardly draw over 6 or 6½ feet of water.

It was the *Bendigo*, therefore, and not the *Roslin Castle*, as reported by us yesterday, that was ashore on our coast, although, at the time we reported it, the general impression here was that the vessel fired at was the *Roslin Castle*, probably based on the fact that she was to have left Nassau on such a day as would have brought her on our coast at the time when the firing occurred. We have no information about the *Roslin Castle*, and do not know where she is or whether she is safe or not.

Richmond Whig, January 8, 1864.

According to an article in the June 9, 1864, *Wilmington Journal*, *Bendigo* made one trip from Nassau and two runs through the blockade at Cape Fear successfully. On January 3, 1864, the blockade runner attempted to reach the port of Wilmington through Lockwood’s Folly Inlet at the west end of Oak Island. Entering the inlet, the crew mistook the visible wreckage of the blockade runner *Elizabeth* as a member of the Union blockade. This fellow Fraser, Trenholm, and Co. vessel had run aground on a sandbar at the same location four months prior while trying to outrun a blockading ship. The captain of *Bendigo* attempted to squeeze the vessel between the derelict *Elizabeth* and the shoreline but ended up running aground too. Confederate troops sailed out to *Bendigo* to unload the cargo by hand. Union forces sent the steamer USS *Iron Age* to tow the freshly stranded vessel to deeper water for salvage. Unfortunately for USS *Iron Age*, the sandbars in the inlet were in a taking mood; and it also got stuck on a sandbar. After removing what they could, Confederates destroyed as much of *Bendigo* as possible. Meanwhile, Union sailors burned USS *Iron Age*. These acts were to limit what resources, if any, could fall into enemy hands.

NAME.	From Nassau.		Other Ports.		
	Trips	Runs	Trips	Runs	
Anglia,	0	0	.....	.....	Captured.
Arabian,	1½	3	.....	.....	Lost, (part of cargo saved.)
Antonica,	12	24	2	4	Lost (total loss.)
A. D. Vance,	2	4	(Bermuda.)	3	6
Alice,	8	16	(Bermuda.)	1	2
Annie,	½	1	(Bermuda.)	.....	.....
Britania,	2½	5	.....	.....	Captured.
Banshee,	7	14	1	2	Captured.
Beauregard,	5	10	(Bermuda.)	2	4
Bendigo,	1	2	(Bermuda.)	.....	Beached (part of cargo saved.)
					Beached (cargo saved.)

A table from the June 9, 1864, *Wilmington Journal*, shows the blockade runners that made trips to Nassau and runs in or out of the Wilmington port.

Today, the wreck of *Bendigo* is still visible at “The Point” of Oak Island during extreme low tides. Its hull sticks out of the water and creates dangerous conditions for boaters just as the sandbars did for the blockade runners. Along with USS *Iron Age* and *Elizabeth*, these Civil War era shipwrecks reveal an interesting part of our nation’s maritime history and provide observers an opportunity to learn about what was happening in the Cape Fear region more than 150 years ago. The events from that time continue to fascinate locals and visitors alike. ■

Kyra McCormick is the visitor and volunteer services coordinator of the North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport.

This Summer at the Museum

JUNE

- 3 Sensory Saturday: Jiggly Jellies, 10 a.m.–noon
- 14 Little Mariners: Little Explorers, Ages 4–6 (plus their guardian), 11 a.m.–noon
- 17 Deep Dive Into History: NC Underwater Archaeology, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.
- 20 Third Tuesday: “Marines of the Carolinas,” 7 p.m.
- 21–23 First Mate 3-day Camp: It’s Revolutionary! Ages 7–12, \$40 (plus tax) per child. Registration is required. 9 a.m.–noon each day

JULY

- 12 Little Mariners: Squishy Fishies - Ages 4–6 (plus their guardian) 11 a.m.–noon
- 15 Deep Dive Into History: Maritime Weapons of the Colonial Period, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

- 18 Third Tuesday: “Bringing Gold Back To The Carolina Coast: Tidewater Grain and the Revival of Carolina Gold Rice,” 7 p.m.
- 19–21 First Mate 3-day Camp: World War Wilmington (and the Lower Cape Fear) - \$40 (plus tax) per child. Registration is required. 9 a.m.–noon each day

AUGUST

- 5 Sensory Saturday: Lovely Lighthouses, 10 a.m.–noon
- 9 Little Mariners: Ahoy, Pirates! Ages 4–6 (plus their guardian) \$5 (plus tax) per child. Registration is required. 11 a.m.–noon
- 15 Third Tuesday: “The Golden Age of Piracy: Legacy and Reality,” 7 p.m.
- 19 Deep Dive Into History: From Rosie the Riveter to Wendy the Welder, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

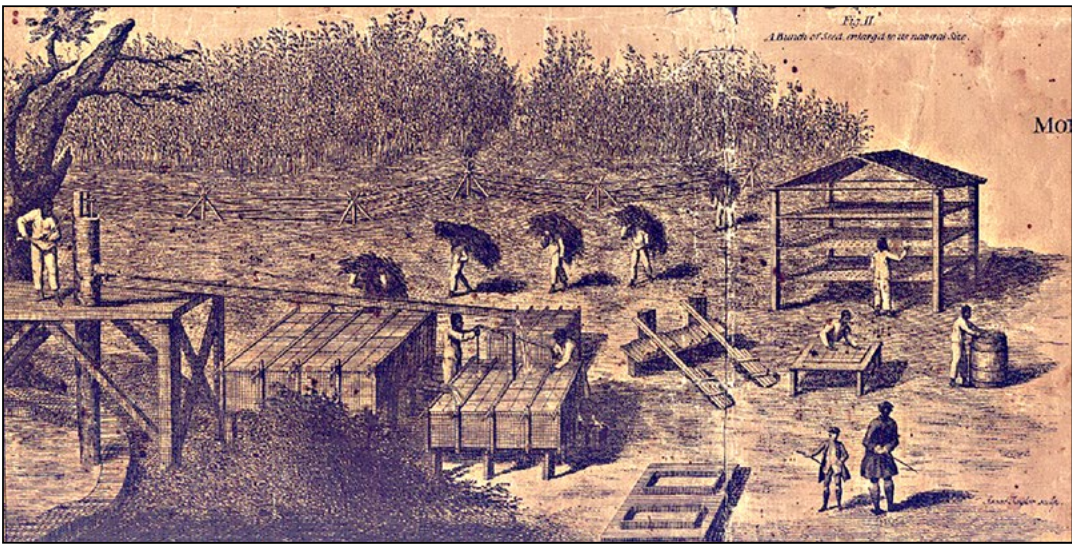
Carolina Blues: Indigo in the Lower Cape Fear

By Shannon Walker

While more often associated with South Carolina’s agricultural history, indigo was also grown in the Lower Cape Fear region of North Carolina. As a result of geography and politics, the south eastern part of the colony had more in common with the South Carolina Low Country than the upper portion of the North Carolina coast. Land in the Lower Cape Fear was opened for settlement in 1725 by Colonial Governor of North Carolina George Burrington. The first land grants were awarded to Maurice Moore, son of South Carolina Governor James Moore. The Moores and their relatives (dubbed “The Family”) quickly moved in to colonize the area, bringing with them enslaved labor and the commercial crops that were popular in the South Carolina Low Country, rice and indigo.

The Indigo Plant

Indigo was an early commercial source of blue dye. Despite its ability to produce a striking color, indigo plants are not blue. These members of the legume family are green with pink flowers. The indigo blue color comes from a substance called indican, which is stored in the leaves and stalks of the plant. Though some other plants, such as woad, contain indican, the *indigofera* species contain the highest concentrations of the substance. Indigo plants must undergo a special fermentation and oxidation process to extract the indican and convert it to indigo dye. Indigo is one of the most colorfast dyes on the planet and is compatible with every type of natural plant fiber. Unlike most natural dye stuffs, indigo dyed fabrics' hue will not change in hue (shade of color) over time, though they may fade in intensity.



The corner detail of a 1773 map by surveyor Henry Mouzon includes an example of processes used to extract indigo dye from the plants. The enslaved African men, upper center of the image, are hauling the cut plants to the fermentation vat, which is supplied with water from a well and pump system. The beaters used to aerate the indican-filled water are depicted lower center, and the drying rack and shed used to prepare the indigo dye cakes are to the upper right. *Courtesy of South Carolina Historical Society.*



The flowers of the indigo plant are important food sources for pollinators such as bees and butterflies. *Photo by Shannon Walker.*

Dye Production

Indigo dye was produced in the Carolinas, but most of the large-scale fabric dyeing operations existed elsewhere. The Carolina dye was sold to British fabric manufacturers, who shipped it overseas where a finished product was created. The production process to create the dye can be affected by many variables and requires much expertise and skill from the laborers involved. One wrong move—like the wrong temperature water being used for fermentation or over aeration of the dye waters—would be disastrous and result in loss of the dye. Those in charge of production were normally enslaved Africans who had learned and mastered the process over time.

A Cash Crop

Indigofera suffruticosa, also known as Guatemalan or Bahama indigo, was the most common plant grown in the Cape Fear region and the Low Country of South Carolina. Since early history, indigo has been cultivated



A cake of indigo dye from the collection of the North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport.

and used by various civilizations along the equatorial belt where the plant naturally occurs. During the development of the global economy and subsequent rise of European colonialism in the late 15th century, indigo was spread outside of its native range for commercial purposes.

During the War of Jenkins Ear 1739-48 (between Britain and Spain), the cash incentive to produce indigo in the South Carolina colony grew. Though the incentives for growing the plant in North Carolina were not

Account of Indigo made in North Carolina in the year 1749

On Cape Fear River

William Moore	1200
Eleazar Allen	200
Thomas Jones	200
John Ash	600
Maurice Moore	400
John Swan	
On Trent River	1200
Roger Moore	
Total	4000

Records from Royal Governor Gabriel Johnston on indigo production in the Cape Fear region 1749. *Courtesy of National Archives, London.*

the same, some still took on the endeavor. During the 1730s indigo was farmed on two plantations near Port Brunswick: Lilliput and Kendall. Numerous speculators would tout the profitability of indigo in the Cape Fear region, remarking how the soil was perfect for the crop. The importance of naval stores from the area quickly bypassed all other crops in monetary value, but indigo remained strong, in part because it could be farmed during the pine tar “off season”.

The Plantation at Lilliput: A Woman’s Blue

Sarah and Eleazer Allen moved from Charleston, South Carolina, to the Cape Fear region in 1734. Interestingly, Sarah was the daughter of Colonel William Rhett, the man who captured the infamous pirate Stede Bonnet in 1718. When her husband died in 1750, the fifty-three-year-old widow had to run and manage Lilliput. With the assistance of Scottish merchant James Murray (a big proponent of indigo cultivation) and enslaved laborers, the plantation continued to be one of the top indigo producing estates in the area. It had its ups and downs as any business does. One such experience in 1756 was an ironic event considering Sarah’s family history: A ship transporting the plantation’s indigo crop was seized by pirates, practically wiping out all profits that season.

Indigo production, like rice, was impossible on a large commercial scale without the use of enslaved labor; the two are tragically linked. Rice and indigo have corresponding labor and land requirements, taking approximately twenty-five enslaved laborers to work every fifty acres. Ideally, one would be able to extract fifty pounds of indigo dye per acre, or one hundred pounds of dye per enslaved person. Simple pleasures such as colored fabric came at the expense of hardships for others.

The End of an Era

The production of indigo in the colonies waxed and waned throughout the 18th century. North Carolina Royal Governor Josiah Martin promoted the rice and indigo industries in the Cape Fear area through the early 1770s—the amount produced tripled shortly before the American Revolution. However, the effects of the war crippled the indigo industry of the former colonies. Though the colonies gained independence, American farmers and British buyers lost their link. Without the backing of the British textile industry, there was no means for the exchange to occur on the scale it had before the Revolution, essentially ending the expansion of indigo farming in the new country. The only blues left in the Cape Fear region were those in our skies and alongside our beaches. ■

Shannon Walker is the curator of education for the North Carolina Maritime Museum at Southport.

North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort

Goose-beaked Whale from Stranding to Skeletal Display

By Keith Rittmaster



Goose-beaked whale off North Carolina.
Photo by D. Waples, Duke Marine Lab under NOAA/NMFS permit.

On June 19, 2017, a freshly dead goose-beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*) stranded at Fort Macon State Park on Bogue Banks in Carteret County, North Carolina. Five and a half years later—after a necropsy, two-year burial, cleaning, multiple soaks, bone repairs, sealing, bone rearticulation, and test hanging in the Bonehenge Whale Center—the skeletal display was installed in the Repass Ocean Conservation Center at the Duke University Marine Laboratory campus on Pivers Island in Beaufort.

Goose-beaked whales (also known as Cuvier’s beaked whales), are deep-diving squid-eaters widely distributed globally in deep temperate and tropical marine waters. At sea it can be challenging to spot and identify them unless the sea is calm. Most of what is known about them has been from strandings. They grow to 27 feet, males apparently slightly larger than females. Their two teeth only erupt out of the gums in adult males, growing into small tusks near the tips of the lower jaws. Off North Carolina, research by Duke University Marine Lab scientists suggests goose-beaked whales are present year-round with evidence of long-term individual residency. There are records of five goose-beaked whales having stranded on North Carolina beaches since 1996, this one being the most recent; all have been females. Investigating any whale stranding is a high priority for science and conservation. When the NC Marine Mammal Stranding Network received a call from staff at Fort Macon State Park reporting an unidentified dead whale on the ocean beach, a response was quickly initiated.

Biologists with the stranding network determined the 535 cm (17.7”) whale was an adult female goose-beaked whale. The necropsy ruled out signs of entanglement, boat strike, or ingestion of plastic (all common in

stranded whales). Mid-frequency military sonar has led to strandings and deaths in this species, but no cause of death was determined. She had many broken ribs, but since there was no sign of healing or associated trauma, the fractures are assumed to have occurred as a result of the stranding and subsequent handling. The ribs were notably porous and fragile. After tracing the pectoral fins (flippers), radiographs facilitated interpreting damage and accurate rearticulation. Interestingly, the radiographs revealed phalanges on one digit of the right pectoral fin missing due to injury. Staff and volunteers from the NC Maritime Museum and Bonehenge Whale Center worked together to bury the skeletal remains in a well-organized shallow, sandy grave for two years to remove remaining tissues and grease from the bones. After exhumation, the bones were treated in a two-week soak in a diluted detergent solution, followed by a four-day hydrogen peroxide soak. After thorough drying and repairs, the bones were sealed with two coats of diluted Jade 403 bookbinder

glue to add a bit of strength to fragile areas, prevent the bones from becoming chalky over time, and reduce the amount of dust that might accumulate on the bones.

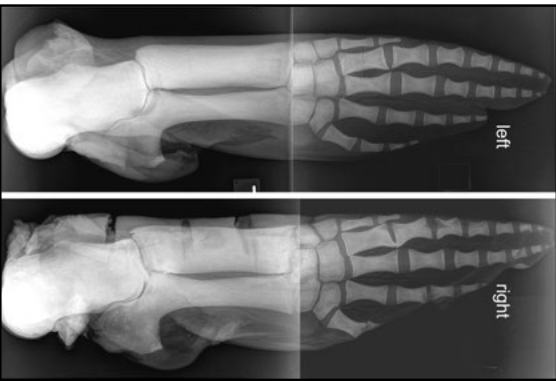
Prior to rearticulation, the bones were weighed to investigate asymmetry and determine future suspension requirements. Stainless steel hardware, Alumilite casting resin, bone dust, and Plexiglas were used for the rearticulation process. After drilling holes in the vertebrae (the source of the bone dust) the team mounted them on 5/8-inch stainless pipe. Pre-bent pipe was used to simulate an active, swimming whale. Additional alignment pins connect each vertebra to its neighbors to prevent vertebrae from rotating out of alignment over time. Polyethylene foam represents the intervertebral disks. The team



An adult female goose-beaked whale was discovered dead on the beach at Fort Macon State Park.



Installing 1/8” stainless alignment pins through the mounted vertebrae.



Flipper radiographs.



A group moves the largest component of the modular skeleton into the Repass Ocean Conservation Center at Pivers Island.



Part of the installation team stands beneath the just-installed skeletal display.

used the pectoral fin tracings to guide our cutting of the acrylic sheet to which the pectoral fin bones are mounted. The total weight of the completed skeletal display is 100 pounds, including the hardware, acrylic, adhesives, and resins—surprisingly light! Approximately 85 percent of that weight is bone.

The skeletal display was installed at Duke University Marine Lab in Beaufort during the last week of February 2023. The specimen can now be used to teach biology, anatomy, taxonomy, evolution, conservation, collaboration, and much more. A project such as this, from stranding response to skeletal rearticulation, takes a team. Collaboration makes the work more satisfying, contributing to high quality specimens, data, and interpretations gleaned from such an event. Collaboration also enhances the accuracy, attractiveness, and durability of the display. A sincere thanks for the contributions of those listed below, and the organizations they represent. More photos and information about this project can be found [online](#). ■

Keith Rittmaster is the natural science curator at the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort.

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
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Volunteers from the Harvey W. Smith Watercraft Center Deliver Custom Jackstaff to USS North Carolina

By Willie Schrader

USS North Carolina had a problem when its “jack-staff” broke during a severe windstorm. A group of volunteers from the Harvey W. Smith Watercraft Center recently delivered the solution.

A curator from the Battleship North Carolina contacted the N.C. Maritime Museum in Beaufort during the search for a new jackstaff, which is the technical name for the flagpole mounted at the bow of a military ship. Timo White, boatbuilder at the Watercraft Center, asked experienced volunteer Willie Schrader of Beaufort to take on the project. Schrader agreed and invited Doug Phelps, also living in Beaufort, to partner with him. They used the battleship’s blueprints for the jackstaff—the original drawings of which they found online—to guide their work.

Work got underway in November 2022. They cut eight, 3/4-inch thick pieces out of a 15-foot Sitka spruce plank. Those pieces were then tapered from two inches at the base to one inch at the top. The pieces were fitted using “birdsmouth” cuts, then the entire assembly was glued and vacuum-bagged. After extensive hand-planing and sanding, Schrader and Phelps coated the round, tapered staff with a sturdy marine-grade epoxy primer paint. Then they added two finishing touches, their signatures on the base and a North Carolina quarter embedded in the top in keeping with a centuries-old nautical tradition.



Volunteers Willie Schrader and Doug Phelps carry the new jackstaff to the ship's bow.



Volunteers from the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort's Harvey W. Smith Watercraft Center proudly move the jackstaff to its prominent location on the Battleship North Carolina.

Schrader and Phelps estimate they spent about 100 hours on the project.

The two, along with two other volunteers and the watercraft center manager, delivered the jackstaff to the battleship on a sunny March day.

Battleship staff painted the jackstaff and installed a metal cap to hold the top of the halyard from which the jack will again fly. The final touch: a curved brass plaque marking the museum's role was installed on the jackstaff's base. ■

Willie Schrader is a volunteer at the Harvey W. Smith Watercraft Center.



Battleship staff painted the jackstaff and installed.



TRUNKS WANTED! Join us for the museum's annual Boo-fort Trunk-or-Treat

By Christine Brin

The North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort will be hosting its third annual Boo-fort Trunk-or-Treat on Saturday, October 28, at the Museum's Gallants Channel Annex on West Beaufort Road Extension.



Amazing community participation and support has helped the event grow every year. In 2022 a dozen different trunks were featured; they were visited by more than 300 little pirates, mermaids, and other ghouls.

Trunks for the event are hosted by different members of the local community, including museum volunteers and staff members, and local organizations like the Lions Club. The decorations for the past two years have been so creative and inspiring that the museum will be hosting a decorating contest this year for participating trunks. Four different trunks will be recognized as the most original, scariest, funniest, or fishiest!

Hosts of trunks are asked to supply their own store-bought and still wrapped treats (candy, toys, etc.) for at least 300 participants. Decorations are required to be family friendly, with a preference for maritime themes if possible. The event starts at 5 p.m.; trunk hosts are asked to be on site and set up by 4:45 p.m. The evening wraps up by 7:30 p.m.

If you are interested in learning more about hosting or sponsoring a trunk for this year's Trunk-or-Treat, please contact Associate Curator of Education Christine Brin at christine.brin@ncdcr.gov or 252-504-7743. This event is weather dependent and will only run if conditions allow. ■

Christine Brin, associate education curator at the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort, organizes the annual Trunk-or-Treat event.

Registration! Summer Science School & Junior Sailing Program

Summer Science School offers courses for children entering preschool through tenth grade. Each class provides an opportunity to learn about the maritime history, culture and environment of coastal North Carolina through classroom and field trip experiences. The most popular class topics include seashore life, pirates and fishing. Registration began Tuesday, January 24, 2023. For more information about Summer Science School registration, contact the museum registrar at (252) 504-7758.

The Junior Sailing Program offers basic through advanced sailing instruction to youth ages 8 and older. This exciting program teaches the arts of rigging, sailing and seamanship, and introduces students to maritime traditions and history. The program is designed to teach the basic skills of sailing to beginners and to hone the skills of more advanced students, using a combination of time in the classroom and on the water. Registration began Tuesday, January 17, 2023. For more information about Junior Sailing or registration, contact the Friends office at (252) 728-1638.



Mark Your Calendar!

May 6, Wooden Boat Show

June 10, Maritime Day

June 16, Harborside Deck Cocktail Party

July 6 Great 4th Race

July 21 Annual Crab Cake Cook-off

Aug. 4 Traditional Skiff Rally

Oct. 14 Fall In-The-Water Meet

Nov. 4 Boatshop Bash

Dec. 2 Friends of the Museum Holiday Flotilla

Dec. 3 Annual Membership Meeting

For details call (252) 728-1638 or visit www.maritimefriends.org

Friends of the Museum
North Carolina Maritime Museum, Inc.
315 Front Street
Beaufort, NC 28516



NC DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The North Carolina Maritime Museums in Hatteras, Beaufort and Southport are part of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Reid Wilson, Secretary.



The North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums.

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Follow Us!



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in Beaufort**
315 Front Street
Beaufort, NC 28516
(252) 504-7740
www.ncmaritimemuseumbeaufort.com

Hours:
Mon.–Sat. 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
Sun. 12–5 p.m.



**Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum
in Hatteras**
59200 Museum Drive
Hatteras, NC 27943
(252) 986-0720
www.graveyardoftheatlantic.com

Currently closed for renovations.



**North Carolina Maritime Museum
at Southport**
204 E. Moore Street
Southport, NC 28461
(910) 477-5150
www.ncmaritimemuseumssouthport.com

Hours:
Tues.–Sat. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.