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Baltimore mulls selling, redeveloping 15 landmarks

by Jack Lambert, Baltimore Business Journal, Monday, March 20, 2012

Baltimore wants to explore its options for selling, leasing or redeveloping 15 historic city landmarks, including the Shot Tower, Cylburn House and the Civil War Museum.

An item on Wednesday's Board of Estimates agenda calls for the city to enter into a consulting agreement with Annapolis-based Westholm & Associates for \$46,500. If approved, the consulting group would conduct a market assessment of some of the city's historic landmarks to see what kind of improvements are needed and how the city can generate revenue from the properties.

Other landmarks on the list include the President St. Station, Peale Museum and Upton Mansion (a full list of the 15 landmarks appears below).

The city is looking to find ways to enhance the landmarks, some of which have fallen into a state of disrepair, said Cathy Powell, a spokeswoman for the city's Department of General Services. That could mean the city would enter into a public-private partnership, a lease agreement or even sell the property outright.

"At a minimum, we wanted be able to recoup the investment or provide a source of revenue," Powell said. Westholm & Associates would determine the best uses for each landmark.

Representatives from Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake's office, General Services, the city's planning

commission and the Baltimore City Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation determined which landmarks would be on the list, Powell said. The group, she said, determined that the 15 landmarks on the Board of Estimates agenda "do not have a municipal purpose."

The Department of General Services will not be contributing funds for the improvement of the landmarks. It is up to the consulting firm to find a funding plan to improve and repair some of these landmarks without costing the taxpayer, Powell said.

"We want [the landmarks] to be kept well and to be repaired," she said. "We want concrete alternatives to bring them back to good use."

The full list of landmarks to be evaluated:

Superintendent's House, Clifton Park
The Peale Museum, 225 N. Holliday St.

Shot Tower, 801 E. Fayette St.
Public Works Museum - Eastern Avenue Pumping Station, 701 Eastern Ave.

Upton Mansion, 811 West Lanvale St.

Valve House @ Clifton Park, 2803 Saint Lo Drive
Roland Park Water Tower, 4201 Roland Ave.

West Arlington Water Tower, 4025 Ridgewood Ave.

Engine House No. 6 - Baltimore Fire Museum, 416 N. Gay St.

Cylburn House and Park, 4515 Greenspring Ave.

McKim Free School, 1120 E. Baltimore St.

War Memorial, 101 N. Gay St.

Old Town Friends' Meeting House, 1201 E. Fayette St.

Civil War Museum, President Street Station

Orianda Mansion, Crimea Estate in Leakin Park, 4921 Windsor Mill Road

Trove of relics discovered at Gettysburg seminary

By TIM PRUDENTE, The Hanover Evening Sun, March 13, 2012

Crews broke through the attic and uncovered a wardrobe, nearly a century old and signed by decades of seminary students.

Letters to Civil War soldiers fell when the ceilings were pulled down. Bottles of sarsaparilla were found stashed between wall joists.

Workers discovered a plaster relief of Martin Luther and a wooden mallet, both from the 1800s.

Most surprising, though, were the shoes.

Four men's shoes were found, leather and dirty, the oldest dating to 1830. They had been cut, as if during a ceremony, then boarded within the walls of a historic dormitory at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg.

Crews made the discoveries while working to convert the 180-year-old building into an interpretive museum.

"This is actually very significant because this type of shoe concealment is not well documented," said Karin Bohleke, director of the Fashion Archives and Museum at Shippensburg University.

Though much of the superstition remains a mystery, scholars believe shoes were deliberately damaged then walled within buildings to bring good luck.

Sometimes, the shoes were concealed beneath chimneys to block evil from entering, Bohleke says.

Throughout Europe there have been discoveries of shoes, horse skulls, and even 400-year-old women's



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corsets walled within historic buildings.

"There's a lot of speculation because we have so little information about this," she said. "It's particularly interesting that the (seminary) - or its builders - embraced ritual folk magic in this way."

The four shoes were discovered during the renovation of the seminary's Schmucker Hall and they were found behind the wall in separate locations. There are plans to display the findings as part of the interpretive museum at the facility.

Discovered early this year, the shoes are just part of a trove of relics unearthed during the construction.

Adams County Historical Society archivist Ben Neely says these discoveries are among the most significant to occur in Gettysburg in recent years.

Several letters had fallen between the floorboards and were lost, concealed in the basement ceiling, for decades. Among them was one letter dated July 3, 1863, the day of Pickett's Charge. It was sent to a soldier named George Dull of the 142nd Pennsylvania

During the fighting, the "Old Dorm," as it was known, was converted to a hospital and Dull was believed to have been one of the soldiers treated there.

Dull's father wrote to encourage him to try and kill "old Jeff," referring to Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederacy. And Dull's mother wrote to say men had been jailed in Somerset County, for avoiding conscription. But nine made a hole in the jailhouse and escaped.

Also among the artifacts is an advertisement for Shriners' Balsamic Cough Syrup, believed to be from the 1850s when three bottles of syrup could be bought for \$1.

Two glass sarsaparilla bottles were found, unbroken, and were dated to the 1870s or 1880s. And a bottle of "genuine German bitters" believed to be from the 1880s was found.

Demolition crews working on the site received specialized training to spot and protect historic items. Workers also signed a document stating they promised to turn all artifacts over to seminary officials.

The project superintendent called it the job of a lifetime.

"I never imagined how exciting it would be," said Dwight Pryor of Morgan-Keller Construction, based in Frederick, Md. "Every day you go to a job like this, you don't know what you're going to find."

Seminary officials estimate that only 25 percent of the original walls have been opened during construction. More relics might be hidden, but officials are working to keep as many of the walls untouched as possible.

Many of those walls have withstood bullets and cannon balls. The building itself was engulfed in some of the heaviest fighting during the Battle of Gettysburg.

Neely takes an amount of pride in the fact that it remains standing solid.

Maybe, he says, there's something to the magic of those shoes.

Harrisburg's National Civil War Museum hires new leader

By DAVID N. DUNKLE, The Patriot-News, March 05, 2012

A Civil War historian and author from Adams County will take over the reins as chief executive officer at Harrisburg's National Civil War Museum. Museum officials announced today that **Wayne Motts**, an Ohio native who has been executive director of the Adams County Historical Society in

Gettysburg for the past eight years, will replace former museum CEO Dave Patterson, who retired in November. Motts' start date has yet to be determined.

National Civil War Museum Civil War expert Wayne Motts has been hired as the new chief executive officer for the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg.



Photo Courtesy National Civil War Museum

Motts, who is also a licensed battlefield guide at Gettysburg National Military Park, was selected from a field of more than 100 candidates for the post, according to Paul B. Whipple, chairman of the museum's board of directors. Whipple said Motts' expertise about the Civil War and proven ability to secure financial support for historical organizations were major factors in the decision.

"Wayne Motts is a very knowledgeable, well-respected member of the Civil War community," Whipple said, "and we believe his energy, enthusiasm and experience



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leading historical organizations will take the museum in innovative directions."

Motts is the author of several works related to the Civil War, including "Trust in God and Fear Nothing," a biography of Confederate Gen. Lewis A. Armistead, who was killed during the battle of Gettysburg

The Ortanna resident has a bachelor's degree in military history from the Ohio State University, and a master's degree in American history from Shippensburg University. He and his wife, Tina, are the parents of one grown child. His father, Warren E. Motts, is founder and executive director of Motts Military Museum in Groveport, Ohio.

Booth bobbleheads pulled from Gettysburg Bookstore

By TIM PRUDENTE The Hanover Evening Sun, March 12, 2012

Bobblehead dolls of Abraham Lincoln's killer have been removed from the bookstore at the Gettysburg Museum & Visitor Center.

The bobbleheads of John Wilkes Booth drew criticism last week from some visitors and a distinguished historian who said they felt Lincoln's death should not be trivialized, nor his killer celebrated with such a souvenir. Prominent Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer said he was glad to hear the figurines had been taken down.

"One could say wiser bobbleheads prevailed," Holzer said with a chuckle. "It's inappropriate to celebrate a criminal who took the life of a great American whose memory and words are celebrated at Gettysburg."

The Evening Sun asked battlefield visitors and officials with the Gettysburg Foundation about the

Booth bobbleheads Friday after receiving an anonymous complaint about them.

Officials decided to take down the bobbleheads on Saturday morning, said an email from the foundation. An story about the bobbleheads was posted online Saturday afternoon and appeared in print Sunday morning, but there was no official word about the fate of the bobbleheads until Monday.



Photo: Evening Sun – Shane Dunlap

Foundation President Joanne Hanley and Gettysburg National Military Park Superintendent Bob Kirby both agreed to remove the figurines from the shelves, the email said.

But the foundation, which operates the visitor center, and the park both declined to comment further. The bookstore stocked the bobbleheads about two weeks ago. They depict Booth clutching the pistol he used to shoot Lincoln.

The famous actor killed Lincoln in an effort to aid the defeated

Confederacy. He then fled to a farm in northern Virginia where he was tracked down and shot to death days later by a Union soldier.

The Museum & Visitor Center bookstore is operated by the San Diego-based Event Network, Inc. and company officials have declined to comment on the bobbleheads. But a sales manager at the Kansas City-based manufacturer of the bobbleheads said that he didn't see a problem.

The bobbleheads were manufactured as a gag gift for Civil War enthusiasts, said Matt Powers, of BobbleHead, LLC.

About 250 bobbleheads of John Wilkes Booth were manufactured four months ago and distributed to retailers by the Kansas City-based manufacturer.

Powers wasn't concerned to hear the Booth bobbleheads were pulled from the shelves at Gettysburg.

"We've made probably over a million bobbleheads and this is the first time it ever happened," he said. "So why change course? We've done Osama bin Laden."

Holzer was contacted about the bobbleheads last week and said while he didn't support censorship, the Booth figurines were in bad taste on the Gettysburg battlefield.

"It's like selling Lee Harvey Oswald stuffed dolls at the Kennedy Center," he said.

Iron tomb of USS Monitor gives up faces of its dead

By Michael E. Ruane, **Published: March 6, 2012**

Perhaps they were friends — the older sailor who walked with a limp and always had a pipe clenched in his teeth, and the younger salt with



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the busted nose and the beat-up, mismatched shoes.

If not comrades in life, they became so in death, drowning together in the iron tomb of the USS Monitor as it capsized off Cape Hatteras in 1862 and sank upside down in 40 fathoms of water.

Over a century later, their skeletons would be found, one atop the other — the younger man still with his shoes on — amid the guns, equipment and debris inside the famous ship's turret. And Tuesday, a few months shy of 150 years since their faces were last seen in the midst of the Civil War, likenesses of the noble Yankee seamen were unveiled at the Navy Memorial in downtown Washington. Experts have used plaster models of the sailors' skulls to create facial reconstructions that could provide clues to their identities.



Clay model forensic re-creations by LSU's Forensic Anthropology and Computer Enhancement Services Laboratory of the faces of two USS Monitor sailors whose remains were found in a

gun turret in 2002. The finished images are computer enhanced to show what the unknown sailors may have looked like while aboard the ironclad in 1862. (AP Photos/NOAA)

The unveiling is the culmination of almost 40 years of research into the Monitor shipwreck by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Navy, the Mariners' Museum in Newport News, Va., and many other groups.

"I think it's pretty amazing that we've finally gotten here," said John D. Broadwater, a retired NOAA archaeologist who has been studying the Monitor for decades. "We can look into the eyes of those two men. It's a little bit eerie, and kind of moving."

"It's really pretty impressive that we've got the technology to do that," he said last week. "Beyond all that, it's just very emotional for me."

The Monitor is famous for battling the Confederate ship CSS Virginia, formerly the Merrimack, on March 9, 1862, in history's first fight between ironclad warships — 150 years ago.



Later that year, the Virginia — which had been built out of the former USS Merrimack — was blown up to keep it out of the hands of Union soldiers. Little of it has ever been found.

The Monitor sank in a gale on Dec. 31, 1862. Most of the 63 crewmen escaped.

Sixteen men perished, but these two sets of remains are the only ones that have ever been recovered. The identities of all are known, and many crew members are depicted in old photographs — including a famous series taken on the ship by photographer James F. Gibson in July 1862.

Experts hope that the facial reconstructions might resemble one or two of the men in the pictures so historians might identify, or at least see the faces of, those who drowned in the turret.

Already, experts have noted a resemblance between the reconstructed face of the older sailor and that of the Monitor's Welsh-born first-class fireman, Robert Williams, 30.



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In two of Gibson's pictures, officials said, Williams appears in a cap and mustache, as he stands with his arms folded. He is surrounded by other members of the crew, who lounge on the deck, playing checkers and smoking pipes.

"We just did a match up of the photo of Robert Williams with the older sailor's facial reconstruction and it is very close," James P. Delgado, director of NOAA's Maritime Heri"We just did a match up of the photo of Robert Williams with the older sailor's facial reconstruction and it is very close." James P. Delgado, director of NOAA's Maritime Heritage Program, wrote in an e-mail Monday. "I wish I could Photoshop in the mustache and hat."

"To see him in the group photo, standing on that deck, arms crossed ... is why we have tried to literally put a face to these guys and move them from the anonymity [where] death and time have placed them," Delgado wrote.

One problem: Williams appears in the photos to be a strapping man, taller than many of his shipmates. But the older skeleton seems to be that of a runty fellow, about 5-foot-6¹ / ₂, according to the military's anthropological study of the remains. The wreck of the Monitor was located in 1973 by a Duke University research ship about 16 miles off the North Carolina coast in the stormy and treacherous region called "the graveyard of the Atlantic."

The two almost complete skeletons were found in the turret when it was hauled out of the water, and scientists and researchers have been studying them for almost a decade. Neither has been conclusively identified.

A few facts were gleaned from the examination of their remains: The

younger man's broken nose, for example, and indications of a possible limp in the older man, a ring on one of his fingers, and a groove in his front teeth where he bit down on his pipe.

In January, forensics experts at Louisiana State University began applying clay to the skull models, using skin thickness formulas to re-create the likenesses.

The work was done at the university's Forensic Anthropology and Computer Enhancement Services, or FACES, laboratory, where scientists often use the process to help police identify unknown remains.

"It's exciting, in a sense, to bring these people back to life," Mary Manhein, the lab director, said of the Monitor project. "It would be even more exciting if they could find out who they are, if in some small way these people could be traced to their descendants. That would be a wonderful thing."

Manhein said the lab has compiled data on facial skin thicknesses for people of different ages, sexes and population groups.

Forensic sculptors first glue the proper thickness markers, which are actually pencil erasers of varying heights, to some 40 locations on the skull.

Then they smooth on the clay at the proper thickness and contour to fill out the face, lab research associate Nicole Harris said.

Prosthetic eyes are inserted — always brown, she said, because most people have brown eyes. Upon completion, photos are often taken and the images are further enhanced. The models the scientists used are based on the actual skulls, which are housed with the skeletons at a special military identification laboratory in Hawaii.

Now that almost a decade has passed since the remains were recovered, some NOAA experts believe that the current sesquicentennial of the Civil War is the time for the sailors to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

"Let's put these two men to rest," said David W. Alberg, superintendent of NOAA's Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. They "belong to history and the nation, and it's time that the nation honors them."

Man in Civil War photo, long unidentified, finally gets his name back

By Michael E. Ruane, Washington Post, **Friday, March 9, 2012**

The old photograph shows a young Confederate soldier posing proudly in an elegant uniform, with a pistol in his belt and a saber in his hand.

It is a well-known 1860s ambrotype worth thousands of dollars, and experts have identified the style of his buckle, the make of his revolver and the cavalry outfit in which he served. But scholars at the Library of Congress, which was given the photo last year, had no idea who he was. Like scores of forgotten Civil War portraits, his was listed as "unidentified."

Until this week.

Last Sunday, Karen Thatcher of Martinsburg, W.Va., opened a Washington Post Civil War history supplement. She spotted the picture in a Library of Congress advertisement, and realized: "That's Uncle Dave!"

In an instant, for posterity, the soldier was given back his name — and his story.



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Library of Congress photo

He was a teenager named David M. Thatcher, from Martinsburg, who enlisted in Company B, Berkeley Troop, First Virginia cavalry, and was killed in battle at age 19 outside Warrenton in 1863.

He was buried in the cemetery at Martinsburg's Tuscarora Presbyterian Church after, family lore has it, his parents brought his body home with a horse and wagon.

The identification has thrilled Karen Thatcher, a retired federal government worker, as well as the library and the collector, Tom Liljenquist, who purchased the picture several years ago and donated it in October.

"We're just tickled to death," Thatcher said in a telephone interview on Wednesday. "There's something very satisfying about this 19-year-old boy who died in 1863 who was [listed as] unidentified, that we're able to put a name to that face."

Liljenquist, who has given the library almost 1,000 Civil War portraits in recent months, said: "I'm just awestruck. This anonymous young boy has gotten his life back."

The identification was made when Thatcher saw that the photo in the

advertisement looked almost exactly like a larger image she had of David Thatcher, an ancestor of her husband, Larry.

The larger image — which was likely copied from the photograph — is a "crayon enlargement," said Carol Johnson, the Library of Congress's curator of photographs.

It was a common 19th-century technique in which a smaller picture was enlarged, printed and then colored in with charcoal or chalk to make a bigger portrait.

What happened to the original photograph is less clear. "Maybe he gave it to his girlfriend, before he left for the war," Johnson said.

Eventually, someone came into possession of it and didn't know who he was, and it went onto the collectors market.

Johnson said experts were able to glean some information about the soldier from his uniform type and accouterments — his Virginia belt buckle, and the crossed sabers and number 1 on his cap.

But his name remained elusive.

Liljenquist, of McLean, said he bought the picture years ago at a Civil War show, probably in Virginia. "It's a well-known photograph," he said. "It's been published in a few books." But no name was associated with it.

David Thatcher, it turns out, served in a storied unit that was originally commanded by the South's legendary cavalry general J.E.B. Stuart.

David Thatcher was killed on Oct. 19, 1863, in the Battle of Buckland Mills, which was such a complete Confederate victory that the rebels called it "the Buckland Races."

Karen Thatcher said the Civil War still is "close" in her area and her family, with deep roots there, has long known of the story.

"If you have a family member who dies at the age of 19 in the Civil War, everyone knows that," she said. "And this picture was just always in the family. And so you just knew that that's who it was."

She said she and her husband have a small pre-war photograph of David Thatcher in civilian clothes attached to a certificate honoring his death. That, too, resembles the other images.

She said their "crayon enlargement" was a copy of one that had been in her husband's household when he grew up and was passed down to one of his nieces.

"It looks like a drawing of a photograph," she said.

A history lover, Karen Thatcher said she opened the Post's Civil War section, and staring back was an identical copy of the picture that the niece had given them.

"I thought, 'Son of a gun.' I thought, 'Gee whiz.' I thought, 'Isn't this amazing?'" she said.

She said she went to the library's online gallery, and "there's Uncle Dave."

She called the Library of Congress on Monday morning.

Johnson, the curator, said the "unidentified" designation would be removed from the gallery and replaced with David Thatcher's name.

Col. Rogers Civil War sword unites two families

by Allie Ware, WTVA.com, March 5, 2012

CORINTH, Miss. (WTVA) — The stories of the Civil War were brought to light this weekend at the Crossroads Arena in Corinth. Artifacts from soldiers who fought in this very area brought a crowd to reminisce.



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"Everywhere you look is history, but I wasn't expecting to see this one. It is extra special," luka resident Judy Walker said.

The item that stole Walker's attention (and many others) was the sword of Confederate Gen. William Rogers of the Texas Infantry who fought in the Battle of Robinette in Corinth.

The man who owns the sword said Rogers was a war hero. "He charged the fort three times," says collector Allen Wandling. "[He did so] twice with his horse, and the last time he picked up the Texas flag, he had his sword in his hand. He charged the fort and was shot 11 times."

Wandling, a serious Civil War memorabilia collector, bought the sword from a man in Joplin, Mo., but oddly enough, it had spent many years in Belleville after the war.

Wandling, of Belleville, said it probably hung in the old Grand Army of the Republic headquarters, which was east of Franklin School near downtown Belleville.



Allen Wandling poses with Confederate Col. William P. Rogers' sword from the Battle of Corinth, Mississippi. - Derik Holtmann/BND
He spent four years tracing the story of the sword.

He bought the leather scabbard of the sword in 2006 from a man who was selling it for his grandfather in Joplin. The man said his grandfather had inherited it from a sister who was married to a Belleville police officer, who got the sword when the GAR headquarters was sold at auction.

Wandling made him promise to get in touch if they found the drag, or the brass tip of the scabbard, or the sword. Six months later, he bought that piece.

Another three years later and he got a call that the family had found the sword in a closet after the old man died.

General Rogers' remains still lie in the Battlefield of Corinth.

Wandling traced the sword to William Rowley, of the 58th Illinois infantry, who cut the sword from Rogers' belt

after the colonel died, leading a gallant charge against Battery Robinette during the battle. Rogers had an armored suit on his chest but after being shot many times, finally died when a canister shot proved the suit not quite bulletproof.

Knowing the exact battle the sword was taken from makes it a rare Civil War relic, but it's also a personal favorite of Wandling for another reason.

"My family was with the 63rd Ohio that fought against Rogers," says Wandling.

Family ties got even deeper when the great-great-great granddaughter of Rogers found out that Wandling had the sword.

She came to Corinth from Texas to see it for herself.

"It gives me goosebumps," says Rogers descendant Leslie Eckert. "Growing up, I had heard the story from my parents and seen the lithograph print in our den that depicted William P. Rogers on the battlefield at his death. I had always heard about him, but coming to Corinth brought it to life."

New Museum of the Confederacy to exhibit Cleburne's coat

By Linda Wheeler, Washington Post, March 11, 2012

Although the moths long ago had their way with the handsome grey officer's coat belonging to Maj. Gen. Patrick Cleburne, it will be one of the star exhibits when the Museum of the Confederacy opens its new museum at Appomattox, Va. on March 31. Cleburne, sometimes called the Stonewall of the West, was wearing the high-collared coat when he was killed while attacking the Union



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breastworks at the Battle of Franklin, Nov. 30, 1864.

Eighty years ago, the White House of the Confederacy, which was then the museum as well, accepted the Cleburne family gift complete with numerous moth holes and stored it away. The present museum, next door to the Executive Mansion, wasn't built until the 1970s. This will be the first time the coat has been exhibited. The coat makes a link to an important figure in the Confederate military, said spokesman Sam Craghead.



Photo: Katherine Wetzel - THE MUSEUM OF THE CONFEDERACY

The new museum galleries will include 22 original Confederate flags—the largest such exhibit ever mounted—as well as the uniform and sword General Robert E. Lee wore at Appomattox, the pen he used to sign

the surrender document and the parole he and his staff signed.

Artifacts recoveries on shipwreck just in time to mark anniversary of sinking

McClatchy/Tribune - MCT Information Services, March 8, 2012

KURE BEACH, N.C. — There are hundreds of shipwrecks along North Carolina's treacherous coast, and some, like those of the ironclad USS Monitor or the Blackbeard flagship Queen Anne's Revenge, are nothing short of famous.

But that of the hapless Civil War blockade runner Modern Greece, which sits just beyond the surf near Fort Fisher, is in many ways the most important of all.

The wreck, which was excavated 50 years ago, led to the creation of the state underwater archaeology unit that studies the other wrecks. It led to a state law to protect historic wreck sites from pilfering. It yielded such a large trove of artifacts that many have been used in experiments that advanced the tricky science of how to preserve historical treasures found underwater.

As the first of about 30 blockade runners sunk along the coast near Wilmington while trying to bring arms and vital commodities to the Confederate states, it has an iconic status in North Carolina and maritime history.

And this week - just in time for events marking the 150th anniversary of its sinking - thousands of artifacts from the Modern Greece were recovered from underwater.

A team of East Carolina University graduate students and University of

North Carolina, Wilmington interns sponsored by the Friends of Fort Fisher waded into the muck of half-century-old storage tanks at the Department of Cultural Resources' Underwater Archaeology Branch facility on the grounds of the historic fort. Their job: pull out the artifacts, clean and catalog them and put them in indoor tanks where they could finally begin to receive modern preservation treatment.

New signs on the beach and roadside pointing out the wreck site are planned, and a researcher working with the state is seeking a federal grant to perform a full survey of the 30 blockade-runner wrecks off Wilmington, as well as facilities on land to put it all in proper context.

The Modern Greece, a 210-foot English ship loaded with hundreds of tons of rifles, gunpowder and other goods, was creeping along the coast, making for the Cape Fear River and Wilmington, when it was spotted in the murky light just before dawn by two Union blockade ships.

They gave chase, and the heavily-loaded ship ran aground, apparently while trying to get close enough to Fort Fisher for protection by the Confederate artillery there.

The passengers and crew escaped by lifeboat as both sides shelled the ship to keep the other from getting the valuable cargo.

According to historical accounts, some of the cargo was salvaged and brought ashore, though apparently part of a liquor shipment got no further than the Confederate soldiers on the beach.

Eventually, the sea claimed the rest. Then, almost precisely 100 years later, in the spring of 1962, Navy divers stumbled on the wreck just off the beach while visiting the area essentially as tourists.



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A violent storm had just cleared the thick bed of sand from the remains of the ship. The divers were startled to find much of the remaining cargo exposed, intact and all but begging to be pulled up.

State officials got wind of the find and asked the Navy to allow the divers to recover the cargo on behalf of the state.

By summer, 11 divers were working off a loaned Coast Guard barge anchored over the site. Eventually the divers retrieved 11,500 pieces of cargo and other artifacts from the ship.

The challenge was what to do with the artifacts after they were brought ashore.

After the Modern Greece's cargo was brought up, some was treated and eventually sent to several museums and other places for display. But much was dumped first into temporary tanks on Navy property, then into tanks at Fort Fisher.

The tanks were initially covered by plywood, as there wasn't money for proper lids, said Leslie Bright, who was hired in 1964 as assistant at the lab and later ran it.

The plywood rotted away, and the water in the tanks filled with leaves from surrounding oaks, turning the water a swampy black.

In retrospect, Bright said, the rotting leaves may have been one of the best things that could have happened to the artifacts, as it leached the oxygen out of the water and slowed the deterioration.

The work was a kind of treasure hunt, with the students never quit knowing what they would pull up next.

There were British-made Enfield rifles that were a mainstay of the war on both sides, many of them fused together in bundles the shape of the boxes that had held them.

There was tableware. There were wicked-looking antler- and ebony-handled Bowie knives, some still in the remnants of scabbards. There were bayonets, cinderblock-sized stacks of tin sheets, ax heads and chisels.

The students processed the artifacts assembly-line style, hosing them off at a gridded table setup on sawhorses, then taking them to another table covered in white plastic where they were tagged and photographed and logged in a laptop.

Finally, the items were placed in tanks of clean water in a nearby building.

By Tuesday night, nearly everything was out of the last tank, and Henry, who had been down in the morass, decided it was time to call it a day.

"Well," he told the students, "I think you've got enough to keep you busy for awhile."

Maybe even another 50 years.