

Queen Anne's Revenge
Shipwreck Project



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**Historical Background for the
Queen Anne's Revenge Shipwreck Site**

[Reprint of Chapter V from Mark U. Wilde-Ramsing's 2009 Dissertation
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Introduction

Documentary evidence related to *Queen Anne's Revenge* regarding its pre-wreck nature and subsequent loss is a critical component for the application of site information to the Gibbs' cultural site formation model. Historical records help establish its character and contents as it came into Beaufort Inlet and went through the stages of disaster. A wide range of documents and articles has been examined to ascertain the full history of the pirate ship and establish a historical context within which the vessel operated. When dates are involved a distinction has not been made between the Julian and Gregorian calendars, which differed by eleven days. To avoid confusion since each calendar began the year at a different time, any date occurring from January 1st to March 1st will include both years (e.g. February 14, 1718/1719).

Queen Anne's Revenge began its known career as the French privateer, *La Concorde*, during Queen Anne's War (1702-1713) and then continued to operate for years as a slave ship out of Nantes, France, before being captured by Anglo-American pirates. Under the command of Edward Thatch, aka Blackbeard, the pirates sailed the three-masted vessel as their flagship for seven months before wrecking at present day Beaufort Inlet in June 1718. Historical documents by no means tell the whole story. The origins of *La Concorde*, for instance, have not surfaced despite extensive research. There are also no specifics regarding provisions, cargo, or ammunition. Nor are there many reported details surrounding the circumstances of loss or subsequent salvage of *Queen Anne's Revenge*. Relevant bits of information from surviving eyewitness accounts and contemporary reports, however, provide a general picture of what happened when the ship was lost.

The most important surviving documents are the depositions and testimony presented at the trial of Stede Bonnet and thirty-three of his captured crew. Many of these men, although they did not spend much time, if any, aboard the flagship, were crewmembers of its sister ship, Bonnet's sloop *Revenge*, and thus first hand observers of the loss of *Queen Anne's Revenge*. Eyewitnesses included the captain of *Adventure*, David Harriot, and Ignatius Pell, Bonnet's boatswain, both of whom turned King's witness. Harriot's lengthy deposition and Pell's extensive testimony, to which others added minor details, form the basis for understanding the circumstances surrounding the wrecking at Beaufort Inlet (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719). The focus of the trial was Bonnet's voyage aboard *Royal James* (ex *Revenge*) after the loss of *Queen Anne's Revenge*; however, testimony covered the months prior to the wrecking. In early April the pirates set out from the Bay of Honduras sailing past Cuba, stopping in the Bahamas, before arriving at Charles Town where they held the city under a naval blockade before finally continuing to North Carolina. The accounts concerning the loss of *Queen Anne's Revenge* offered during the trials of Bonnet and his crew provided

details on what happened in the days immediately following the wrecking event when crewmembers were left ‘marooned’ by Blackbeard and later rescued by Bonnet.

While survivor recollections may have been affected by psychological trauma, as Gibbs (2002:79) warns, the disaster’s relatively low impact implies this is not likely the case at Beaufort Inlet. While Bonnet and his crew were on trial for their lives and may have bent the truth concerning their piratical activities, they had little reason to alter what they saw happen at Beaufort Inlet. Other contemporary accounts mention the wrecking event, such as the summary of charges provided by South Carolina’s Attorney General Richard Allein, the chief prosecutor at Bonnet’s trial. British Naval commanders operating along Colonial America’s Atlantic seaboard reported the loss of *Queen Anne’s Revenge* (Brand 1718; Pearse 1718; Smart 1718). Newspapers provided additional mention of Blackbeard and his contemporaries.

For vessel history and activities prior to the wrecking, a mixture of first hand accounts and secondary sources are used to reconstruct the nature of the ship, its contents, and the crew on board prior to its loss. To better understand the pre-wreck nature of *Queen Anne’s Revenge*, it is necessary to go back to its original service as a French privateer and merchantman prior to its capture by Blackbeard. Our current knowledge is due to several historians who have focused their attention on this vessel and its career (see Masters 1989; Moore 1997; deBry 1999; Butler 2000 and 2007; Moore and Daniel 2001; Ducoin 2001; Lawrence 2008).

Much of *La Concorde’s* history is based on research compiled by Jacques Ducoin (2001) from archives housed at Nantes, France. While Dr. Ducoin was not able to confirm the place and date of construction, his research provided conclusive historical evidence that *Queen Anne’s Revenge* was originally the French ship *La Concorde*. The first documented evidence of the vessel finds it leaving on a privateering voyage July 21, 1710 (Ducoid 2001:93). Other records document the vessel’s conversion to a slaver after Queen Anne’s War (War of Spanish Succession) and its completion of two successful voyages before being seized on its third voyage (Mettas 1978:16, 37, 56). *La Concorde’s* capture at the hands of ‘Edouard Tiche, English’ was thoroughly documented by the vessel’s Captain Pierre Dosset and First Lieutenant Francois Ernaut on their return to France (Dosset 1718; Ernaut 1718).

Persons accosted by the pirates aboard *Queen Anne’s Revenge* after its capture in December 1717 until its loss in June 1718, provide some details from that period but the accounts are sparse. Additional historical evidence is found in various letters and reports from Colonial governors regarding the problem they faced from pirates at the time *Queen Anne’s Revenge* was operating. Newspaper accounts from major media outlets, primarily the *Boston news-letter* and Britain’s *Post Boy*, also report the exploits of those aboard Blackbeard’s flagship. The loss of *Queen Anne’s Revenge* occurred during the height of the ‘Golden Age of Piracy’, which began at the end of the Queen

Anne's War (1713) and continued until 1726 when it was effectively snuffed out by European powers (Cordingly 1995). Captain Charles Johnson's contemporary work, *A General History of the Robberies & Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates* (1999), and subsequent editions serve as the foundation for studies of eighteenth century piracy. Other contemporary works covering topics of shipbuilding, ship handling, and available technologies provide important information (e.g. Sutherland 1711; Ollivier 1992; Faulkner 1780; Hutchinson 1794).

Modern historians have concentrated on a variety of topics relative to *Queen Anne's Revenge*, such as French eighteenth century shipbuilding and slave trading (Mettas 1978; Boudriot 1993). In recent times there has been serious scholarship focused on piracy and its impact on global economies that provides relevant information (e.g. Lee 1974; Redicker 1987, 2005; Cordingly 1995; Butler 2000; Little 2005). Locally, research delving into the Proprietary period of Colonial North Carolina provides a window to view the economic, demographic, and political landscape within which the wreck of *Queen Anne's Revenge* occurred (Butler 2007). Collectively these historical studies and primary documents supply the context for the vessel that was eventually lost in Beaufort Inlet, North Carolina.

The French Ship *La Concorde*

Origins (pre-1710)

Tracing the time and place of *La Concorde's* construction has been frustratingly difficult. While the origins of most ships owned by Rene Montaudoin are known through government documents, this is not the case for *La Concorde*. Critical government records that might have shed light on where Montaudoin first obtained the ship are not available (Ducoin 2001:18). The vessel first appears July 21, 1710 as a French frigate of 300 tons, armed with 26 cannon owned by the prominent Nantes businessman. The Montaudoin family was heavily invested in ships that were engaged in the slave trade throughout the eighteenth century and also sponsored privateering vessels during Queen Anne's War (Burgot 2008). *Le Duc de Bretagne*, a large Montaudoin owned frigate was one of the first and most successful privateers to sail during the war. Three years later it was placed into slave service (Demerliac 1992:199, 218). This conversion also occurred in the case of *La Concorde* and demonstrates the fine line between privateering and transporting enslaved Africans to the New World, both of which required vessels that balanced size, speed, power, and crew size.

Three possible origins for *La Concorde's* construction have been proposed: a naval vessel; a foreign prize captured by French privateers; or a merchantman built locally (Ducoin 2001). The first option would have the ship being built in the French Royal Naval yards for sponsorship by private owners for privateering service. This option is considered unlikely because government records do

not document its construction nor did the list of ships' names approved by Louis XIV contain *La Concorde* (Ducoin 2001:15).

A second option has *La Concorde* beginning its career as a foreign vessel, either a merchantman or an armed combatant that was captured by the French and converted to a privateer. Henry Bostock (1718), who spent several hours aboard *Queen Anne's Revenge* on December 5, 1717, stated in his deposition to authorities that he believed the ship was 'Dutch built'. The registry of prizes during Queen Anne's War, however, provides no viable candidates with the characteristics of *La Concorde* (Ducoin 2001:13-18).

The third option has the vessel being built at commercial yards for service as a French privateer. Rene Montaudoin was known to have contracted with local shipyards to build several vessels, both for privateering and the slave trade, yet none were named *La Concorde* (Ducoin 2001:16).

Depending upon which option was true, there would have been basic differences in shape and style related to the nationality and purpose of *La Concorde's* construction. Dutch flutes, for example, were designed as cargo carriers and would have been rounder in hull, provided a larger hold area, and been relatively slow. Purpose-built French frigates, on the other hand, were of light construction and built for speed (Ducoin 2001:16-17) (Figure 1).

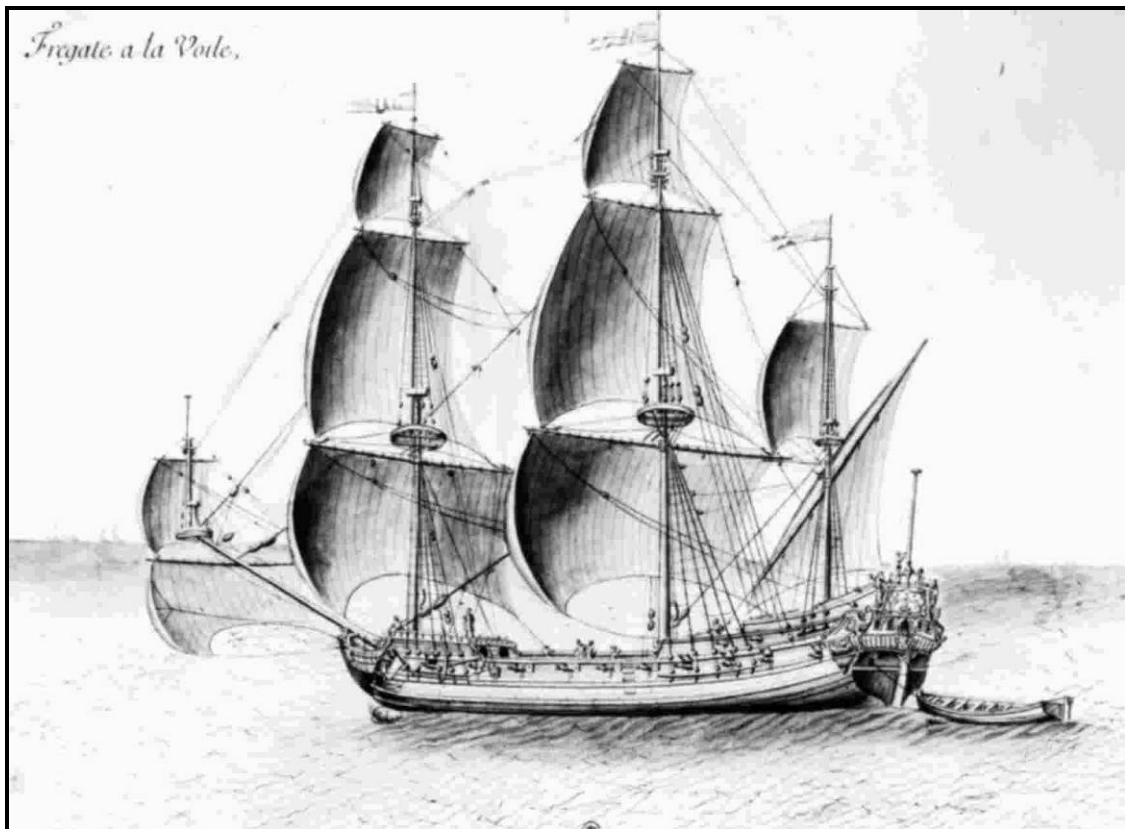


Figure 1: Image of a French frigate circa 1700 (from Boudriot 1993).

Despite the lack of definitive historical evidence, it is possible to project basic construction characteristics for *Queen Anne's Revenge* (ex. *La Concorde*) as a basis for testing the Gibbs' site formation model. It is reasonable to assume that *La Concorde* would have generally fallen within the class of light frigates that measured less than 100 feet (30.40 m) in length with a breadth of 28 feet (8.53 m), displacing 270 tons and armed with 25 to 30 guns (Boudriot 1993:52-53). Construction documents are available for the slightly smaller frigate corsair *Jules César*, which was built by the master carpenter of la Fosse, Rialland, in 1706. The vessel was 70 feet (21.34 m) on keel with a breadth of 24 feet (7.31 m) and a draft of 9 feet (2.74 m). The depth of hold below the main deck beams was 9 feet (2.74 m). The ship accommodated 24 guns with 20 ports along the main deck and the remainder in the bow or stern. The stern castle had a height of 5 ½ feet (1.67 m) (Ducoin 2001:16-17).

Privateer Voyage (1710-1711)

The known history of *La Concorde* begins when owner Rene Montaudoin sent the 300-ton vessel, armed with 26 cannon, on a privateering mission. Under Captain Le Roux, the ship sailed on July 21, 1710 from the Roads of Mindon at the mouth of the Loire River with an outgoing group of 14 ships. Difficult winds made the voyage slow but eventually *La Concorde* arrived on Africa's west coast where it captured a small Portuguese slaver. Later that fall a Dutch slave trader was taken. Because of a leaky hull and the need for major repairs, *La Concorde* sailed to Martinique, arriving in February 1711. Conveniently, this voyage to the French Caribbean provided Captain Le Roux an opportunity to sell the slaves confiscated from the Dutch merchantman. This illustrates the interchangeable missions that both privateers and armed merchantmen held at the time. After repairs, *La Concorde* cruised the Caribbean for most of the spring and summer months, capturing several English coasting vessels, before leaving Havana in late August and returning to Nantes in November 1711 (Le Roux 1711).

Slaver (1713-1717)

Two days after France signed the Treaty of Utrecht with England on April 11, 1713, ending the Queen Anne's War, ship owner Rene Montaudoin put *La Concorde* into service as a slave carrier. Despite the international truce, merchant ships were not safe from sea rovers and those that had been converted from privateer service remained heavily armed, although to a lesser extent (Mettas 1978). Ship owners sought to balance the expense of large crews necessary to man a ship's guns with the level of threat from attack by pirates. In the case of *La Concorde*, by its third slaving voyage Montaudoin had reduced its armament to 14 or 16 guns (Dosset 1718; Ernaut 1718). During the prior two successful voyages from Nantes to the West Coast of Africa, on to the French Caribbean, and then back to Europe, the ship had carried 418 and 331 enslaved Africans and crews of 62 and

65, respectively. The vessel was listed as 250 tons for both voyages, which was a typical size for slave ships sailing out of Nantes during the eighteenth century (Mettas 1978:16, 37).

Besides the reduction of cannon from its privateering days, *La Concorde* would likely have had some alterations to accommodate human cargo. The principle refit to convert *La Concorde* for slaving purposes would have been construction of two rows of half decks or shelves below the main deck where the slaves were held (Gaston-Martin 1993:28-33). These shelves would have maximized the 4'4" (1.32 m) space between decks, and been a necessity on the vessel's third voyage when *La Concorde* left Africa heavily loaded with a total of 516 slaves. To prevent insurrection, the stern castle served as a protected area for both officers and crew in a departure from the traditional ship's layout where crews occupied forward quarters. On some slavers a wall or barricade was constructed at the after end of the vessel's upper deck to further fortify the stern (Moore 2007). The galley area was also more likely to be under the stern castle instead of its traditional location forward of the main mast. The ship's magazine, rudder, and steering mechanism were also accessed from the stern instead of through the cargo area. The crew and officers sailing slave ships were mostly confined to the stern and upper deck, while provisions were stored in the lower hold, and slaves were held between decks where a fore and aft partition was erected to segregate men from women and children, respectively (Boudriot 1984:18-19).

On March 22, 1717, *La Concorde* left Nantes destined for the West African trading center of Whydah (also Judas, Judah) on the first leg of its third slaving voyage (Mettas 1978:56-57) (Figure 2).



Figure 2: 1717-1718 voyages of *La Concorde* (black) and *Queen Anne's Revenge* (red).

Ironically this was about the same time that the pirate Thatch, alias Blackbeard, first appeared in historical documents as the captain of a 6-gun sloop and commanding 70 men among a large contingency of pirates at Providence in the Bahamas (Munson 1717). The slaver and the pirate ship operated on opposite sides of the Atlantic Ocean until their paths crossed on November 17, 1717, approximately 60 miles from the French trading port of Martinique where *La Concorde* was bound. At the time of the encounter, the slave ship was in a crippled state having lost 15 crewmembers to illness and accident. With another 36 in the sick bay, only 31 sailors were available to operate the ship and man the guns. They offered no fight when approached by two pirate sloops that had a combined force of 20 guns and up to 250 men (Mesnier 1717; Ernaut 1718). After *La Concorde's* capture, the pirates sailed all three vessels a short distance to the small island of Bequia where they put the French crew and 455 Africans ashore. Afterward, they exchanged their smaller sloop for the French slaver taking 157 Africans with them and thus began the final voyage for the vessel that was renamed *Queen Anne's Revenge* and returned to its prior service as a predator operating in sea-lanes of Colonial America (Ernaut 1718).

The Travels of *Queen Anne's Revenge* (1717-1718)

The conversion and operation of *La Concorde* as the pirate flagship *Queen Anne's Revenge* was the primary contributor in forming the nature and content of physical evidence carried aboard the ship as it approached Beaufort Inlet. The discussion that follows offers insight on general vessel operations, crew maintenance, and provisioning needs during the height of piratical disruptions in the Americas.

The Flagship

English pirates working the Americas from 1715 to 1726, similar to sea rovers throughout history, selected vessels that provided speed and mobility to run down ships of prey and escape pursuing authorities. The typical pirate vessel of the period was usually armed with just enough firepower to encourage submission in conjunction with surprise, ruse and strategy (Little 2005:41-42). It may have been more than a coincidence that pirate captains such as Blackbeard and Sam Bellamy (*Whydah*) were drawn to former slave ships because they had desirable characteristics. Slave ships needed to be fast to transport enslaved Africans to Caribbean ports with minimal loss while armed sufficiently to protect their valuable cargo from pillage by pirates and privateers. Slavers provided relative speed and power plus the ability to carry, feed, and conceal a large number of men; the open main deck was also a good fighting platform (Redicker 2007).

The decade following Queen Anne's War was also a time when pirate captains and crews were emboldened to challenge authority by forming fleets of vessels sailing in consort that might include

several fast vessels and a large ship. The latter served as flagships, like *Queen Anne's Revenge* and *Whydah*, and were heavily armed battleships carrying more cannon than the ship was originally rated to carry. This emphasis on firepower diminished a ship's maneuverability and handling ability, particularly in confined waters, such as Beaufort Inlet (Little 2005:49). The eight cannon from the pirate sloop that Blackbeard exchanged with the Frenchmen were apparently transferred to *La Concorde* to supplement the 14 to 16 cannon it carried at the time of its capture. An eyewitness a few days after *Queen Anne's Revenge* was converted to piracy stated that the flagship was armed with 22 cannon (Knight 1717). The governor of the Leeward Islands, however, stated that it was generally agreed that the ship was capable of carrying 40 guns (Hamilton 1718). Subsequent reports indicate that the ship's firepower continued to increase and indeed by the time *Queen Anne's Revenge* arrived at Charles Town six months after its capture, the flagship was the centerpiece of a formidable fleet.

In June last we were again visited by the same pirate [Bonnet], but in a more formidable manner, having by that time increased their number to between three and four hundred fighting men, and had with them a large ship, mounted with forty guns, their former sloop the *Revenge*, which was now called their privateer, and two other sloops, prizes, which served them as tenders. The ship they called the *Queen Anne's Revenge*; and were all under the Command of one Capt. Thatch, but better known by the name of Black-Beard. Major Bonnet was on board, but in no command. (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:iii)

The preferred armament for sea rovers of the period were guns firing three- and six-pound shot because larger guns were too heavy and required more room to recoil than available on vessels built for speed (Little 2005:49). Beyond the original complement of 26 cannon as a privateer, any increase of armament aboard *Queen Anne's Revenge*, ex *La Concorde*, would have most likely involved swivel guns mounted on yokes along the vessel's rails. The pirate sloop *Dragon* operating during the same period reportedly mounted 12 swivel guns to compliment its main armament of 12 six-pounder cannon (Pearse 1718).

Having a well-armed ship coupled with several smaller and faster sloops manned by a substantial fighting force allowed Blackbeard to attack and overcome large merchantmen, such as *Protestant Caesar* and *Great Allen*, with a diminished fear of reprisal. Pirate commanders used power rather than speed and stealth to confront their enemies. Much of this attitude had to do with the fact that British authorities, who had relied on privateers only a few years before to fight Queen Anne's War abroad, were slow to commit naval power to the American colonies to confront piracy. In 1715 there were only three fifth-rate ships, a sixth-rate ship and two sloops to cover the entire Caribbean while only one sixth-rate and a handful of sloops were stationed along the Atlantic seaboard (Cordingly 1995:107). With *Queen Anne's Revenge* reportedly armed at the level of a fifth-rate Royal ship and

accompanied by three armed sloops, Blackbeard's flotilla would have been able to hold its own against the thinly deployed British navy.

Spawned by harsh merchant service conditions, the prospect of riches that might be gained salvaging Spain's sunken 1715 Gold Fleet along Florida's Atlantic coast and a relatively carefree life, the numbers of Anglo-American pirates swelled to 2,400 during their peak between 1716 and 1718 (Redicker 1987:257). Consequently, colonial shipping was at the mercy of attacks that generated a constant stream of pleas to British authorities by New World governors asking for more naval support. The relatively isolated port of Charles Town was particularly susceptible to pirate attack prompting South Carolina Governor Robert Johnson (1718) to insist that a warship be stationed there to keep trade from being completely disrupted. In his contemporary account, Captain Charles Johnson wrote of this dire situation:

We shall add here a few particulars (not mentioned in our first volume) of the famous Black-beard, relating to his taking the South Carolina ships and insulting that Colony. This was at the time that the Pirates had obtained such an acquisition of strength that they were in no concern about preserving themselves from the justice of the laws, but of advancing their power, and maintaining their sovereignty, not over the seas only, but to stretch their dominions to the plantations themselves, and the Governors thereof; insomuch, that when their prisoners came aboard their captors' ships, the Pirates freely owned their acquaintance with them, and never endeavored to conceal their names, or habitations; as if they had been inhabitants of a legal commonwealth, and were resolved to treat with all the world on the foot of a free state. And all judicial acts went in the name of Teach, under the title of Commodore. (Johnson 1998:60)

The capture of *La Concorde* propelled Blackbeard to pirate commander and he wasted no time in adding the ships and men that enabled him to blockade Charles Town six months later. To facilitate fleet development, Blackbeard replaced Bonnet and put his confidant and fellow pirate Lieutenant Richards in command of the 10-gun *Revenge*. In concert with the flagship, the faster sloop served as the fleet's 'pirate' used to outrun merchant vessels (Knight 1717). Later that spring, as the two vessels were preparing to leave the Bay of Honduras and start on their voyage through the Caribbean and north along the Atlantic seaboard, Thomas Harriot's *Adventure* was taken and Israel Hands put in charge. Harriot's 8-gun sloop was added to increase firepower, act as a transport and tender, and should the fleet come under naval assault be used as a fire-ship (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:45). Fire-ships were sacrificial vessels, usually older ships that were loaded with explosives, sailed within close range of the enemy, and detonated (Faulkener 1780:124). The final addition to the fleet was a small, unnamed sloop captured off Cuba that served as a fleet tender. During the incident at Beaufort Inlet when *Queen Anne's Revenge* and *Adventure* were lost, the Spanish sloop and Bonnet's *Revenge* provided rescue and eventual escape for many of the pirates.

The Crew

Historical accounts mentioning the number of pirates under Blackbeard's command vary widely from a minimum of 140 to 700 men. These discrepancies are likely due to several factors. Some historical accounts may have been reporting men aboard the flagship while in other instances everyone in the fleet was counted. Colonial authorities desperate to demonstrate the pirate threat appear to have inflated figures, such as the account from Lt. Governor Benjamin Bennett of Bermuda who reported an unlikely 700 pirates in Blackbeard's company (Bennett 1718). Based on the consensus of reports, the total number of pirates on all four ships, including African crewmembers, was between 300 and 400 men.

Regardless of the exact number of men under his command, Blackbeard would have relied on superior seamanship to make captures or escape trouble. To be successful a pirate captain needed a full complement of trained men to fill positions necessary to sail his vessels and man their guns. The British warship *Pearl*, which was on the Virginia station in May 1718 and equal in armament to *Queen Anne's Revenge*, carried 160 men and gives an indication of crew size aboard the flagship (Cordingly 1995:251). Table 1 provides another comparison from an eighteenth-century treatise containing a list, known as a quarter bill, with the positions and stations for the 160 men required to operate a twenty gun merchantmen serving as a privateer (Hutchinson 1794:225-226).

Archaeological evidence has confirmed that the main armament aboard *Queen Anne's Revenge* consisted of six-pounders not nine-pounders, thus requiring 60 men rather than 70 to fire her broadsides (Konstam and Bryan 2003:25). The number aboard the flagship, however, likely exceeded 160 men when considering that crewmembers were needed to man the swivels, plus greater numbers of musketeers and members of the boarding party (Little 2005:225). Non-fighting support such as cooks, pilots, musicians, and ordinary seamen would have completed the vessel's crew that likely numbered 200 or more. This is not unreasonable considering that on its last voyage *La Concorde* carried a combined total of more than 600 crew and slaves (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:8; Mettas 1978:56-57). Securing men to fill skilled positions must have been a constant concern for pirate captains. While ordinary seamen were easily recruited, those with experience and specialized skills often had to be forcibly taken from captured merchant ships (Cordingly 1995:122). The capture and conversion of *La Concorde* illustrates these tactics. During that episode records show that Blackbeard conscripted a pilot, three surgeons, two carpenters, two cooks, a gunsmith, and a musician from *La Concorde* (Ernaut 1718). Several months later the cooper Edward Salter from *Margaret* was forced aboard *Queen Anne's Revenge* (Bostock 1718).

POSITION	NUMBER OF CREW
Captain	1
Master	1
Midshipman	1
Quartermaster	2
1 st Marine & musketeers	25
Gun crew 2 3-lbs	4
Gun officers and gunner	3
Master mates	2
Boatswain's mate	3
Carpenter and crew	4
Gun crew 9 lbs to each of 10 guns on a side	70
Boatswain and crew	3
Gun crew 2 3-lbs	4
2 nd Marine & musketeers	10
3 rd Marine & musketeers	9
Maintop - Midshipman & men with small arms and to repair rigging (mainmast)	6
Fore-top - Men with small arms and to repair rigging	5
Mizen-top - Men with small arms and to repair rigging	3
Gunner's mate and assistant	2
Doctor and mate	2
Total	160

Table 1: A quarter bill for a privateer of twenty, nine-pounders; and four, three-pounders for the quarterdeck and forecastle (Hutchinson 1794: 225-226).

Having an excess of non-skilled labor was desirable if they could be supported because a greater work force provided more men to handle menial tasks. These were tasks such as operating the bilge pumps and procuring water and firewood when they came near shore (Cordingly 1995:91). To get out of harsh conditions, merchant sailors within the lower ranks were often willing to join Blackbeard's ranks during his captures.

It is not clear what positions and roles Africans held aboard ship. Pirates often took African slaves during their encounters, which is illustrated by Blackbeard's retention of 157 Africans when he captured *La Concorde*. Captain Dosset reportedly recovered 61 blacks on the shores of Grenada and 15 from the slave market at Martinique (Dosset 1717). Another five slaves removed earlier from *La*

Concorde were given by Blackbeard to four men of the *Great Allen* as a reward for joining the pirates and helping secure its valuables (Taylor 1718). Near the end of his final cruise, Blackbeard was still interested in Africans since he reportedly took aboard 14 slaves from a vessel just days before the loss of *Queen Anne's Revenge* (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:11-12).

Some Africans, however, appear to have been freed members of the pirate crew, perhaps depending on their ability to fight or sail, coupled with a loyalty to the freebooters cause (Redicker 2004:54). This view has validity since five Negroes were captured during Blackbeard's epic battle at Ocracoke and later tried for piracy (Lee 1974:136). The testimony of Jonathan Clarke, who was attempting to prove that he was not a member of Bonnet's pirate crew, offers an interesting glimpse into the attitudes of the time:

Pell, don't you remember that I was abaft, and one of the Negroes came and damned me, and asked me what I did there? Why I did not go and work amongst the rest? And told me I should be used as a Negroe. (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:45)

Although we may never confirm their status, it should be noted that a sizable number of Africans were present during the loss of *Queen Anne's Revenge* since Blackbeard reportedly left the scene with sixty blacks (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:46).

Provisioning

With a ship full of men and a fleet of four ships, the business of keeping the flotilla provisioned must have been a constant concern. Seldom did pirates capture vessels carrying large sums of money primarily because they were few and well protected. The vast majority of vessels carried only commodities. Even when succeeding in taking gold, silver and other valuables, pirates were not afforded the luxury of stopping at major ports to purchase provisions and make necessary repairs to their ships. Consequently, captured prizes provided the variety of goods necessary to meet basic needs for the crew and keep a pirate vessel afloat. After securing essential equipment during a raid, pirates often sought a secluded bay or river estuary to make repairs (Cordingly 1995:107-108). Reportedly *Queen Anne's Revenge* was being sailed into the harbor at Beaufort for careening and bottom cleaning when the vessel was lost (Lee 1974:51).

During the months prior to wrecking, it appears that Blackbeard's crew was conducting business in much the way of other pirates at the time. Table 2 demonstrates the range of items that were likely to have been taken based on pirate attacks reported in 14 articles from the *Boston news-letter* from 1716 to 1718 (Masters 2005b).

Type of goods taken	Number of times mentioned
Alcohol	8
Provisions	6
Ship's supplies (sails, rigging, anchors, etc.)	6
Clothing	5
Sundries	5
Money	4
Slaves	4
Arms and armament	2
Medicinal	1

Table 2: Pirate preferences as seen in the *Boston news-letter* (Masters 2005b).

While feeding the pirate crew was a primary concern, the procurement of alcohol appears to have been of greater concern. Seamen traditionally were known as notorious drinkers and many pirates stayed perpetually drunk to relieve stress and boredom (Cordingly 1995:93; Lenihan 1983:51). To satisfy these needs, spirituous beverage was the most common item taken by pirates and balance of the authority may very well have depended on the captain's ability to deliver.

“One would think these things should induce them to reform their lives; but so many reprobates together encouraged and spirited one another up in their wickedness, to which a continual course of drinking did not a little contribute. For in Black-beard's journal which was taken, there were several memorandums of the following nature, found writ with his own hand: *Such a day, rum all out:--Our company somewhat sober:--A damn'd confusion amongst us!--Rogues a-plotting:--Great talk of separation--so I looked sharp for a prize:--Such a day took one, with a great deal of liquor on board, so kept the company hot, damned hot; then all things went well again.*” (Johnson 1998:58)

To meet other needs, an array of items were selected by the crew of *Queen Anne's Revenge*, such as those taken from the sloop *Margaret* that included four beeves and 35 hogs, two thirds barrel of gunpowder, five small arms, two cutlasses, the captain's books and instruments, and some linen (Bostock 1718). It appears that the removal of clothes from their victims, often literally, was a priority and new attire was an anticipated reward for the pirate crew that successfully took a prize (Little 2005:38). This preoccupation was evident during the capture of *La Concorde* when Blackbeard's crew “grabbed all their clothes and togs making them naked” (Ernaut 1718). Before leaving Charles Town, Blackbeard “stript...all their cloths” from the crew and passengers of the six vessels he had been holding hostage (*Boston news-letter* 1718a).

While Blackbeard procured necessities he was also successful in securing items of monetary value starting with the twenty pounds of gold dust he took from *La Concorde's* officers (Dosset 1718). A large amount of “plate” and the captain’s ceremonial drinking cup was taken from the *Great Allen* (Bostock 1718:iii). The largest haul, however, came at the end of the voyage when a collective sum “...of about 1500 pounds of sterling, in gold and pieces of eight...” was removed from the captured ships and their passengers during the blockade of Charles Town (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:8). The heist netted nearly a half million dollars when converted to today’s US currency [2007\$].

Interestingly, on this occasion, of equal importance for the pirates of *Queen Anne’s Revenge* was the ‘chest of medicine’ they demanded as ransom during closure of the Carolina port (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:iii-iv). This points out the difficulty pirates had in securing adequate supplies of certain items. Meeting the pirates’ demands was also an expensive proposition for the citizens of South Carolina since the medicine they provided cost them £300 to £400 sterling (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:8).

The Wrecking of *Queen Anne’s Revenge* (June 1718)

Pre-wrecking Vessel

The approach of *Queen Anne’s Revenge* to Beaufort Inlet and the onset of the wrecking process occurred less than a week after leaving Charles Town. The pirate flagship was a battle-ready, floating fortress carrying a large force of sailors, fighting men, and non-skilled crew. These men were well clothed and the ship was fully provisioned as a result of the Charles Town blockade. A large sum of money, gold dust, silver plate and other valuables were carried on board *Queen Anne’s Revenge* during its final hours.

A contemporary event, occurring in the spring of 1718, and recorded in the minutes of Pennsylvania’s Provincial Council (1840:41-46) is especially relevant for understanding the nature of the contents and equipment on *Queen Anne’s Revenge*. It involved the sloop *Nathaniel and Charles*, whose crew, after the death of their captain, removed the vessel from merchant service and set out to “fish” the lost Spanish Gold Fleet ships along the coast of Florida. Becoming discouraged due to lack of success they turned to pirating and cruised the Atlantic seaboard taking several ships and removing both men and goods for their own purpose. Events, however, took an interesting twist when the pirates chased and halted a British merchantman. Pulling up to its stern quarter, officers and the majority of the pirate crew boarded the prize. At that instance, favorable winds provided an opportunity for those aboard *Nathaniel and Charles* who were being held against their will to overwhelm the handful of pirates left aboard the sloop and take command. After being chased

briefly, the escapees successfully sailed *Nathaniel and Charles* directly to Philadelphia where the vessel and its contents were surrendered to authorities. The detailed inventory of what was found on board is presented in Table 3 using Gibbs' (2006) artifact classification system.

Cargo and Contents	Personal Arms	30 muskets, 5 Blunderbusses, 5 Pistols, 7 Cutlasses, 8 Cartridge Boxes for small arms, 53 hand Granadoes, 4 cags of Patridge, 2 Powder Horns
	Gunnery	2 Guns Worm & Ladle, 2 Spunges, 2 Crows, 10 Organ Barrels, 5 Great Gun Cartridge Boxes, 200 Great Shot, 2 Barrl. Powder, 30 barr. of Powder
	Tools and Instruments	2 Grinding Stones, 1 Kittle, 2 Iron Potts, 3 Compasses, 1 Doctors Chest, 1 black flagg, 1 red flagg, 2 Ensignes, 2 pendants, 1 Jack, 1 Fish Hook & Pendant, 1 Broad Ax, 1 Wood Ax, 1 hand Saw, 1 pair of Canhooks [device for lifting casks], 1 hammer, 1 Augur, 1 plain
	Provisions	24 Water Casks, 1 barl. of Tar & a piece, 13 hbar. of Beef & pork, a Small Quantity of tallow, & Tobacco
	Miscellaneous	1 old piece of Junk, 13 planks, Some Iron work & Lumber, 8 Sloppers
Fixtures and Fittings	Ship's Arms	10 Great Guns & Carriages, 2 Swivle Guns, 3 Pateraroes, 4 Chambers, 6 Old Pateraroes, 4 Old Chambers, 20 Gun Tackles, 10 Breechins
	Ships Rigging	Sails (Main, fore, jib, flying jib (2), top, sprit, square), Lines (Main sheet, topmast stay, Jib halliards & Down hall, topping lift, 1 flying jib halliards, 1 Top Sail Hallieards, 1 Main down hall, 1 Jib Sheet, 1 Flying Tack), 22 spare blocks, 7 Dead Eyes, 2 Top Sheets, 1 Boom Tackle, 2 Runners & Tackles
	Ships Equipment	3 Anchors, 1 Cable, 2 pump Spears

Table 3: From the pirate sloop *Nathaniel & Charles* inventory "...the Sailors Cloaths & Necessaries Excepted" (Pennsylvania Provincial Council 1840:44).

This inventory offers an idea of what items within the Cargo and Contents and Fixtures and Fittings classifications were likely to have been aboard Blackbeard's flagship. Consideration should be given to the fact that the number of *Queen Anne's Revenge* cannon was twice those on *Nathaniel and Charles* and thus associated accoutrements would have been greater proportionally. Furthermore,

other items, such as blunderbusses, pistols and cutlasses, are under-represented in the Pennsylvania inventory because during the episode the pirate crew took their personal weapons with them as they executed their capture of the British merchantman.

Structural characteristics of *Queen Anne's Revenge*, ex *La Concorde*, have been discussed earlier with regard to the vessel's construction and use, both as a predator and a merchantman. During the three centuries after wrecking, heavy deterioration caused by the marine environment has taken a heavy toll on the vessel's organic materials – the wooden hull, sails, ropes and cables - thus greatly reducing what remains. Yet some artifacts within these groups were made of resilient materials, particularly lead and to a lesser extent iron, and have survived inundation. Lead items, including scuppers, hull patches, numerals, and window came, and iron artifacts, such as chain plates, gudgeons and fasteners of different sizes and functions, reflect the presence and absence of the ship's structural elements. Goodwin's (1988) construction details for the 20-gun, sixth-rate HMS *Blandford* built in 1719 and Sutherland's (1711) *The Ship-Builders Assistant* provide an estimate of quantity and *in situ* placement of surviving elements can help determine whether salvage of structural elements occurred.

Crossing the Bar

Having received ransom at Charles Town the pirates had a “general consultation” and afterward hastily released the captives and their ships before heading northward to the Beaufort area (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:iv). Their destination was one of the most remote and impoverished areas in British North America and a place where pirates could escape from any authority (Cashion 1998). The colony's coastal geography featured a long string of islands, known as the Outer Banks that were fraught with shallow waterways and tricky inlets providing many secluded areas and hideouts. The British Board of Trade a few years before Blackbeard's flotilla arrived noted the geographical limitations of North Carolina:

...the situation renders it for ever incapable of being a place of considerable trade by reason of...the Sea [being] barr'd by a vast chain of sand banks so very shallow and shifting that sloops drawing only five foot of water run great risk of crossing them. (Cashion 1998)

It is probably no coincidence that Blackbeard sought the seclusion of North Carolina waters in June 1718, because at that time George I was finally heeding requests for help from Colonial governors by sending an expedition under the command of Woodes Rogers to confront the pirates. The crew of *Queen Anne's Revenge* must have been very aware of the situation since they had stopped in the Bahamas a few months before Rogers's arrival as they made their way to the Carolina coast

(South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:11-12). As Rogers began to succeed in his efforts, pirates sought the unpopulated inlets of North Carolina at an increasing rate (Redicker 1987:257).

North Carolina's shoreline was also located only a short distance from coastal and outgoing transatlantic shipping lanes. Because of the deep and protected harbor inside Beaufort Inlet, Blackbeard may have considered it an excellent base of operation for preying on merchant shipping. This area later served as a primary staging area for privateers during the Jenkin's War (1739-1744) and King George's War (1744-1748) (Paul 1965).

To access the deep-water port at historic Beaufort, ships had to make an inlet crossing of 12 feet (3.65 m) at low and 16 feet (4.87 m) at high tide. The town of Beaufort, founded in 1713, however, was little more than a fishing village and saw only the rare sloop. Its development was slow and throughout the eighteenth century the vast majority of ships trading there were small sloops bound to and from New England ports (Paul 1965:1-3; Anglely 1982).

Sailing instructions that accompanied Wimble's map of 1738 indicated a channel crossing over the Beaufort bar of a minimum depth of 17 feet (5.18 m) if sailors took the proper course (Wimble 1738). A detailed coastal chart from 1899 shows what the inlet may have looked in Blackbeard's time. To successfully navigate the inlet, ships had to avoid the shallows of the ebb tidal delta and pass through a channel as narrow as 100 feet (30.40 m) before reaching safety (Figure 3).

It was not unreasonable for Blackbeard to believe he could bring the ship through the inlet and reach the deep and protected harbor lying inside. Such an attempt, however, was not without considerable risk and *Queen Anne's Revenge* was a handicapped vessel for several reasons. With increased armament, it may have been drawing 12 feet (3.65m) or more. Much of that extra weight was on its upper deck making the flagship top heavy and consequently more unstable and difficult to handle, especially if the guns were being carried "run out" (Little 2005:48). Furthermore, since the vessel had been out to sea for over a year its maneuverability and control may have been lessened due to a leaky and fouled hull (Cole 1994:6-8).

Sailing a large ship through an ocean inlet is not an easy task because captains had to balance sources of power, which came from the wind, tides, and ocean currents. In restricted channels, a square-rigged vessel would be particularly difficult to maneuver. Sailors of the eighteenth century were cautioned:

...where the dangers are so many and great, as to require not only a proper time of tide, but clear weather and day-light, to proceed with a common chance for safety. Yet such has been the imprudence and folly of pilots and commanders of ships, as to run for our dangerous crooked bar channels [Liverpool], when no guides could be seen, and no compass course nor the lead could be relied on; by which they have lost their ships and lives. (Hutchinson 1794:205)

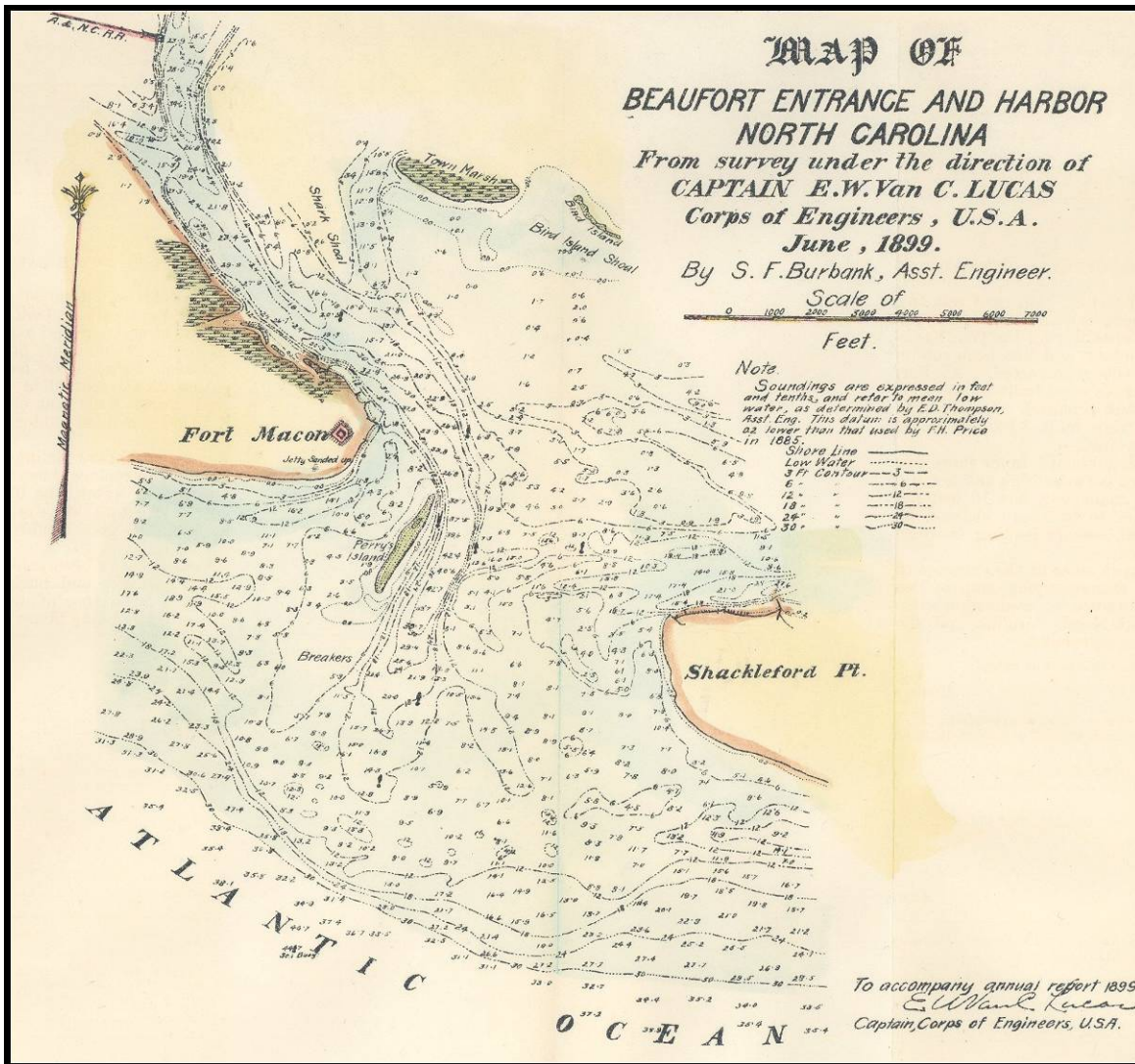


Figure 3: Detailed map of Beaufort Inlet prior to channel dredging.

Blackbeard apparently took some precautions by waiting until daylight and presumably high tide to attempt passage. *Queen Anne's Revenge* crewmembers also had the benefit of watching all three sloops successfully make it through the inlet (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:45). Despite these precautions the flagship didn't make it.

The Wrecking Event – Eyewitness Accounts and Contemporary Reports

That about six days after they left the Bar of Charles-Town, they arrived at Topsail-Inlet in North Carolina, having then under their command the said ship *Queen Anne's Revenge*, this sloop [*Revenge*] commanded by Richards, this Deponent's Sloop [*Adventure*] commanded by one Capt. Hands, one of the said pirate crew, and a small empty sloop which they found near the Havana.

That the next morning after they had all got safe into Topsail-Inlet, except Thatch, the said Thatch's ship *Queen Anne's Revenge* run a-ground off of the bar of Topsail-Inlet, the said Thatch sent his Quarter-Master [William Howard] to command this Deponent's Sloop to come to his assistance; but she run a-ground likewise about gun-shot from the said Thatch, before his said sloop could come to their assistance, and both the said Thatch's ship and this Deponent's Sloop were wreck'd; and the said Thatch and all the other Sloop's companies went on board the *Revenge*, afterwards called the *Royal James*, and on board the other sloop they found empty off the Havana. (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:45)

This quote from David Harriot's trial deposition, which was supported by Ignatius Pell, provides the most detailed account of the event. Harriot was a ship's captain and Pell the boatswain aboard *Revenge*, thus both men were familiar with sailing and assessing conditions at sea. Neither makes mention of extenuating circumstances, such as adverse weather or equipment failure, that might have contributed to the loss of the *Queen Anne's Revenge*. Harriot characterizes the vessel's demise as a grounding followed by a similar fate for the sloop *Adventure* as it attempted to provide assistance. Subsequently, all crewmembers aboard the stricken vessels were apparently brought through the inlet to safety with no mention of lives lost. The fact that Blackbeard's quartermaster William Howard made it through the inlet in the ship's boat during initial rescue operations indicates that the seas were reasonably calm.

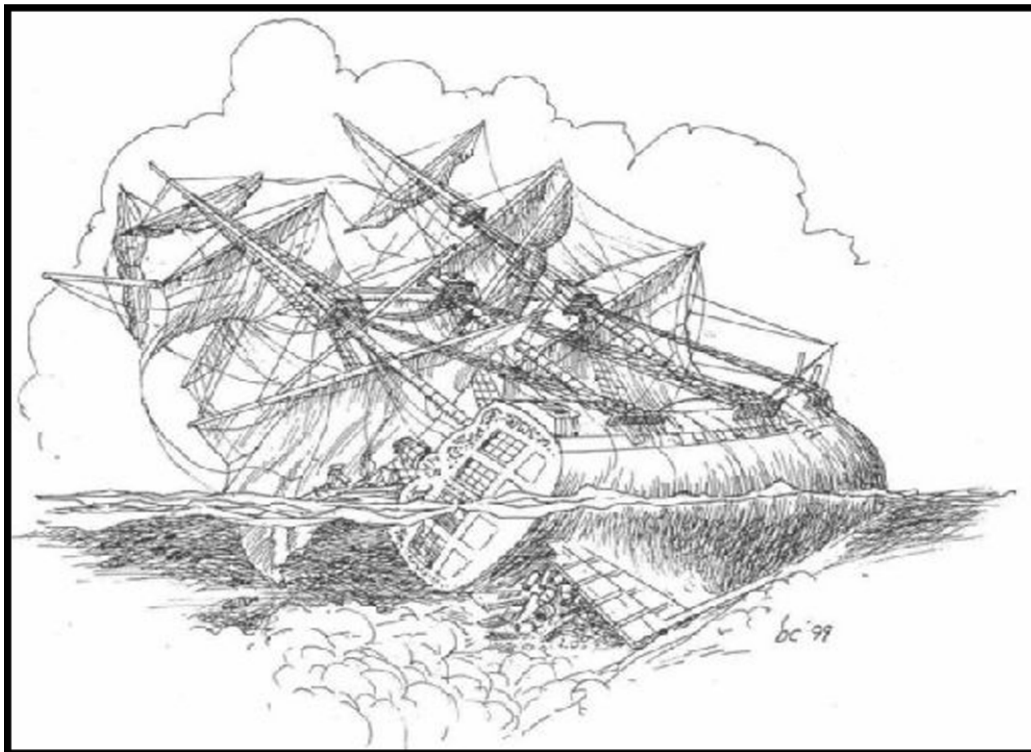


Figure 4: The grounding of *Queen Anne's Revenge* drawn by artist Bernie Case.

Testimony from the other pirates on trial with Harriot and Pell also made no mention of circumstances other than a low-impact wrecking event (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719). While none of those testifying in these trials were aboard *Queen Anne's Revenge*, they were all involved with the rescue of men aboard the flagship and must have been reasonably knowledgeable of all that was going on. Their accounts, as well as other contemporary reports, used terms, like 'run ashore', 'aground', 'struck upon the bar', and 'stranded', all of which describe a ship that hits bottom in shallow waters (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:ii-iv, 11-12, 46; *Boston news-letter* 1718b; Brand 1718; Smart 1718). Similarly, there is agreement that grounding took place on the inlet's outer shoals. This meant the stranded vessel was a mile of open water from the nearest dry land. The reputation of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century seamen as non-swimmers was well known (Cole 1994:11). The ship's stranding on the seaward side of the inlet's entrance exposed it to the winds and waves of the open ocean that probably exacerbated rescue attempts and hastened the deterioration of the ship.

The availability of the remaining two sloops and their ability to reach the scene apparently prevented loss of life and afforded the opportunity for salvage of some items aboard *Queen Anne's Revenge*. The men on trial in South Carolina collectively agreed that Blackbeard had intentionally grounded the flagship in order to remove "moneys and effects" before departing the scene. They focused on this point because the sharing of valuables among the entire crew had not occurred, as was the normal practice among pirates (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:46). Other than the removal of valuables and personal items, recovery of goods is not mentioned in historical documents. Reports detailing events occurring immediately following rescue provide a few additional clues.

According to John Ridge, after all men were safe within the inlet, Bonnet devised a plan with his quartermaster Robert Tucker and his boatswain Ignatius Pell that he would go to Bath to receive the King's pardon and get a clearing for his ship. The remaining crew stayed aboard with the purpose of preparing Bonnet's sloop for their intended voyage to St. Thomas in the Danish West Indies (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:19). Some time after Bonnet had left for Bath, Blackbeard approached the crew of *Revenge*, including Harriot, who reported the incident as follows:

...this Deponent requested from the said Thatch to let him have a boat, and a few hands, to go to some inhabited place in North Carolina, or to Virginia, there being very few and poor inhabitants in Topsail-Inlet [Beaufort Inlet], where they were; and desired the said Thatch to make this Deponent some satisfaction for his said Sloop; Both of which said Thatch promised to do. But instead thereof, ordered this deponent, with about sixteen more, to be put on shore on a small sandy hill or bank, a league distance from the main; on which place there was no inhabitant, nor

provisions. Where this deponent and the rest remained two nights and one day, and expected to perish, for that said Thatch took away their boat.

That said Thatch having taken what number of men he thought fit along with him, he set sail from Topsail Inlet in the small Spanish sloop, about eight guns mounted, forty white men and sixty Negroes, and left the *Revenge* belonging to Bonnet there, who sent for this Deponent and company from the said sandy bank. (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:46)

Additional testimony indicates that Blackbeard removed fourteen of the best hands from *Revenge* and all their arms, money, provisions, and the ship's boat before 'marooning' them (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:11-12, 14). These activities suggest that extensive survivor salvage of *Queen Anne's Revenge* was not possible and subsequently, Blackbeard was in need of additional arms and provisions. Since both Blackbeard and Bonnet sought provisions as they left the Beaufort area suggests that *Adventure* and *Queen Anne's Revenge* were not accessible for salvage soon after grounding.

Blackbeard left the area with 100 men while Bonnet had about 30 crewmembers with him. This accounts for less than half of the total number of men aboard all four ships (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:19, 46). There is no clear account of what happened to the remainder. Some likely settled locally and accepted colonial life without incident (Brand 1718). Remaining in Beaufort, however, did not appear to be a viable option for the pirates of Bonnet's crew, who considered it a "strange land" and determined the prospects of privateering with Bonnet was a better alternative. (South Carolina Court of Vice-Admiralty 1719:14). A number of other pirates may have made their way to Bath to obtain the King's pardon and settle for an honest life. Edward Salter, the cooper conscripted from Bostock's *Margaret*, appeared in Bath after the loss of *Queen Anne's Revenge* and became a successful North Carolina merchant (Bailey et al. 2002). Others present at the Beaufort Inlet incident, such as Blackbeard's quartermaster William Howard and Israel Hands, the interim captain of Bonnet's *Revenge*, were later arrested and put on trial for piracy (Lee 1974:99).

There is no mention in historical records of local pillaging or subsequent commercial salvage of *Queen Anne's Revenge*. At the time, Beaufort was a "poor little village" with few families living there, who were under constant threat from the Indians of the area (Johnson 1724:68-69; Paul 1965:19). Their capabilities for offshore salvage were likely limited. If, however, goods and materials from the flagship had washed ashore, locals would likely have taken the opportunity to recover what they could. Beaufort residents, like coastal peoples throughout the world, held no political weight and were mostly poor. They normally would have been enthusiastic when a wrecked vessel gave them free access to a variety of items including furniture, clothes and personal items, casks of food and spirits, timbers and iron fittings, all of which were hard to come by. In remote areas where there was little government authority, the only restriction would have been the inhabitants' ability to access and carry shipwreck goods back home (Cole 1994:82-83). Ironically, five years after *Queen Anne's Revenge*

grounded with a large number of serviceable cannon, the town of Beaufort's incorporation papers called for money obtained from the sale of lots to go toward the purchase of "great guns and fortifying the town" (Paul 1965:30). Apparently, there was a lack of access to the sunken flagship or the locals either could not or did not want to pursue opportunistic salvage.

It is less of a surprise that there is no mention of commercial salvage in the historical record because such activities required expensive ships, equipment, provisions and men to be successful. Investors were generally reluctant to commit to salvage unless silver and gold were involved, although the retrieval of guns was often a secondary focus. Technological advances during the seventeenth century made it possible to efficiently recover a range of items from sunken ships including heavy cannon (Cole 1994:94-95). With contemporary accounts reporting that valuables had been removed from the grounded *Queen Anne's Revenge*, its cannon alone were probably not sufficient to attract commercial salvage attempts.

Throughout this chapter, documentary evidence has been used to present a basic understanding of vessel characteristics, size and responsibilities of the crew, and the overall physical makeup of *Queen Anne's Revenge* as it approached Beaufort Inlet. This review was followed by an accounting of the reported circumstances surrounding its loss, all of which is relevant for the application of the Gibbs' cultural site formation model. The stage is now set to predict behaviors exhibited during the ship's wrecking event and to examine and discuss related archaeological evidence found at the *Queen Anne's Revenge* shipwreck site.

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