

'Blow Out' Tide Reveals Wrecks on River Bottom

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Having noted that "blow out tides" in the Mullica River, and the extremely low water resulting therefrom, have in the past disclosed nautical artifacts, we planned to reconnoiter the river at the next occurrence of such a phenomena.

On March 7, the marine forecast predicted gale force winds from the west. With low tide at Little Egg Harbor Inlet in the early afternoon, conditions for observing promised to be ideal.

A stop at Chestnut Neck revealed little except an unusual amount of exposed river bottom, but no evidence of the wrecks recently the subject of an archaeological investigation.

At Clarks Landing again extensive river bottom was exposed, and the wooden frames of the wreck beached there showed the outline of a slab-sided barge. Nothing else to be noted here except for the screaming wind and resultant wind-chill factor.

At Hermann City, just upstream from Green Bank, at least half the river bottom was exposed. The remains of three vessels left there when the town was abandoned about 1873 are much in evidence. Local history records two of these as THE FRANCES and THE ARGO. The inshore ship is completely buried in river bottom, except for the ends of its frames projecting above the sand distinctly outlining a small ship shape. Also projecting is the top of a center-board trunk or casing measuring fifteen feet long; indicating, together with a beam of approximately twenty feet, that this is likely a vessel eighty to a hundred feet long. Probably a typical, small, inshore, shallow draft, coastal sloop or schooner.

The remains of a second vessel show further off shore in what remained of the river channel. Frames of this one projected above the abnormally low river surface. Even at normal low water, this wreck has the earmarks of an obstruction to navigation. Because of muck, wind, and temperature, conditions were not inviting to inspect this wreck at close proximity.

A third wreck is located upstream from the old Hermann City Hotel about sixty feet from the riverbank. In configuration and dimension, this craft has the characteristics of a heavily constructed carrier similar to the ore-boat on display under the shed adjacent to the Visitors Center at Batsto.

Evidence of the wharf which once projected into the river near the hotel can be seen in the form of waterlogged pilings, planks, and some stones.

Our reconnaissance discovered nothing new, but it did satisfy a curiosity to see for oneself some of the remaining artifacts from the historic past of the Mullica River.