Early in 1565, France's King Charles sent Jean Ribault to re-supply and assume command of Fort Caroline, which had been established the previous year on the banks of the River of May (St. John's River) in present-day Jacksonville. Ribault lead a powerful fleet consisting of his 32-gun flagship, *Trinité;*, the 29-gun royal galleon *Emérillon*, and five other war, supply, and dispatch ships. One thousand French colonists and troops came with him to bolster the fledgling French colony. Unbeknownst to Ribault, a Spanish expedition lead by Pedro Menéndez de Avilés arrived in Florida at virtually the exact same time, with the express purpose of destroying the French enterprise. In a preemptive strike aimed at thwarting Menéndez' plans to found St. Augustine, Ribault sailed his fleet southwards, only to be struck by a hurricane which scattered and wrecked his ships between Matanzas Inlet and Cape Canaveral. With the loss of these ships, Fort Caroline was taken, Ribault and his men put to the sword, and Spain established a firm grip over the frontier lands of Florida. If not for these wrecks, St. Augustine would not exist today, and Jacksonville would be celebrating over 400 years of French heritage.
When found, these ships will constitute the oldest French shipwrecks ever discovered in the New World, and possibly the only 16th century French galleons to have been investigated by archaeologists.

Historian Dr. John de Bry of the Center for Archaeological Research has pledged to conduct documentary research in French archives at no charge to LAMP, to help pinpoint the final resting places of these ships and identify each when found.

Archaeological traces of survivors' beach camps, including finds of French artifacts and coins, will also help narrow down the search area for these lost galleons.

---

**La Nuestra Señora de las Olas**

**Early Spanish Merchantman, Sank: 1593**

Though little is known about this Spanish merchant vessel (what kind of sailing ship was she? what was she carrying?) archaeologists have uncovered tantalizing clues of her existence in the waters of St. Augustine. Possessing one of the more romantic names of the 275 ships known to have sunk in the St. Augustine area, "Our Lady of the Waves" is only briefly mentioned in historic Spanish records. She sailed into St. Augustine sometime during 1593 for repairs, and though she made it into port she was lost on the bar when attempting to leave. With over 300 potential "targets" identified on the ocean bottom around the inlet, LAMP archaeologists are hopeful that this very early Spanish shipwreck will be located.

- "The Lady of the Waves" is one of the earliest St. Augustine ship losses located in historical records.
- Spanish merchant vessel that entered St. Augustine harbor for repairs in 1593.
- Vessel grounded on the bar attempting to exit the harbor.
- With over 300 potential "targets" identified on the ocean bottom around the inlet, LAMP archaeologists are hopeful that this very early wreck, or one of dozens more Spanish colonial shipwrecks, will be located.
The *Dove* was on route from an unspecified West African port to St. Augustine when on October 18, 1773, while attempting to make the inlet, she instead came to grief on the St. Augustine bar. Her master, two of the crew, and eighty out of one hundred slaves chained below deck all perished at sea. At the time, on the eve of Revolution, St. Augustine was the capital of Britain’s fourteenth North American colony, East Florida. Wealthy English planters required a steady supply of enslaved Africans in order to see profits on their indigo, citrus, and sugar plantations, and ships like the *Dove* that made the infamous Atlantic passage with captive human cargoes played an integral role in the global system of forced labor and institutionalized racism that would fuel Florida’s economy for almost another century under British, Spanish, American, and Confederate flags.

- Insurance records maintained by Lloyds of London have provided the initial clues to the whereabouts of the sunken vessel, which was lost around the height of the slave trade.
- The *Dove*, if well-preserved, is potentially one of the most archaeologically significant shipwrecks known to rest in Florida waters. Very few slave ships have been archaeologically excavated anywhere in the world.
- A scientific investigation of this wreck could provide a wealth of historical and bio-archaeological data related to the Atlantic slave trade, one of the most massive violations of humanity in recorded history. Any study on such a wreck, with its potential to retain the preserved individual remains of those stolen and forced to leave behind their families, dreams, and aspirations, must be carried out with utmost respect for the dignity of the victims and the descendants of those who survived. This shipwreck would create an opportunity for scholars to engage the local African-American community in a cooperative effort to seek out and communicate this hallowed story for generations to come.
Jefferson Davis

Confederate Privateer, American-built Brig, Sank: 1861

When the townspeople of St. Augustine awoke on August 17, 1861, they saw "a black painted brig with dark canvas sails beating towards the harbor entrance". The ship was the Jefferson Davis, a Confederate privateer seeking food and water stores. This 187-ton brig was built in Baltimore in 1845 as a merchant vessel and was being illicitly operated as a slaver when she was captured off Cuba in 1858 by USS Dolphin. The U.S. Government sold her to a Charleston shipping merchant in January 1859 but with the outbreak of the Civil War she was soon granted a letter of marque by the Confederate government, designating her a privateer in the war on Union commerce. Despite her brief career, cut short by the shallow bars of St. Augustine's inlet, she remained the most successful privateer of the Civil War.

- Built in Baltimore as the 187-ton merchant brig Putnam in 1845.
- Renamed Echo, was illegally used as a slaver and captured by USS Dolphin off of Cuba in 1858; her cargo of 271 enslaved people was returned to Africa.
- U.S. Government sold her to Charleston shipping merchant in January 1859.
- At outbreak of Civil War, the brig was granted a letter of marque signed by Jefferson Davis himself, designating her a privateer or privately operated commerce raider.
- Under Captain Coxetter of Jacksonville, Jefferson Davis' first raiding cruise, described as "the last truly classic cruise in the history of private-armed sea power," succeeded in capturing nine northern merchant vessels in just seven weeks off the coast of New England, making her the most successful Confederate privateer of the war.
- Needing water and supplies, she attempted to enter St. Augustine's inlet on August 17, 1861 where she ran aground and was abandoned. Though she has never been located, her compliment of iron cannons will register as a distinctive target during planned magnetometer surveys of the old channel entrance.

Museum researchers visited the National Archives to find out more about this important shipwreck. See what they uncovered!
**Isis**

**American Steamship, Sank: 1920**

Beginning its life as a luxury yacht in 1903, Isis carried the wealthy Spaulding family of Boston, Massachusetts around the globe. This beautiful steamship later became a Navy flagship cruiser in WWI and a coastal survey vessel for the US Coast and Geodetic Survey. It was in this latter capacity in 1920 that Isis was off the coast of St. Augustine to locate the shipwreck Florida and place a buoy on her. Ironically, she struck the submerged wreck and herself began to sink. The captain ordered full steam to the nearest land--Crescent Beach--where her skeletal remains lie today.

- Built in New York in 1903 as a luxury yacht for the wealthy Spaulding family of Boston.
- Served as a Navy flagship cruiser in WW I.
- Operated as a coastal survey vessel for the US Coast and Geodetic Survey.
- In 1920 she was working off of St. Augustine to locate and place a buoy on the shipwreck Florida. Ironically, she struck the submerged Florida and sank.

**Saga**

**American Shrimp Trawler, first half of 20th century**

The development of the commercial shrimping business in St. Augustine during the 1920s was a major economic boost for the town and began a thriving seafood and boat building industry that exists today. This industry was initiated by a few enterprising Italian and Greek families from the northeastern seaboard. They brought with them an entrepreneurial spirit, innovative shrimping techniques, and their boats. One of these early shrimp boats was Saga. The design of these few
early boats had a major impact on future shrimp boat designs in Florida. Saga and many other shrimp boats sank in the waters around St. Augustine, and their remnants show the evolution of this type of vessel, and how important it was to the developing economy and maritime life-ways of this historic area.