

Beach 'remains' unsolved

Latest and last piece sheds little extra light

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What's believed to be the final piece of buried timbers at Craigville Beach shed little new light on just what they once were.

For Victor Mastone, director of the state Board of Underwater Archeological Resources, the remains defy precise definition. When he first saw the timbers in December, his thought was a bulkhead, perhaps crafted from recycled ship's timbers.

Photos and memories of local residents of "the old wreck" at Craigville moved his thinking to a ship, perhaps a four-masted downeaster based on its size. What can be said is that it is indeed old, as it was well-worn and in place in the 1910s, when "the old wreck" moniker had already been affixed.

This final piece has Mastone thinking bulkhead, at least for this portion. Based on photographs provided to the *Patriot* and shared with the state official, what people remember as "the old wreck" was most certainly that, but the disarticulated physical evidence and limitations of the photographic record can't pin down just what type.

Wood samples from the unearthed remains are out for analysis and there's some suspicion that at least some of it is cypress, which would



LAST PIECE — Archeologists Victor Mastone (right) and David Trubey of the state Board of Underwater Archaeology examine the last known piece of "the old wreck" on Craigville Beach.

put the wreck's construction somewhere out of this country, but any such conclusion will have to wait until the analysis is completed.

The piece dug out this week was discovered but ignored during excavation of the dewatering basins for the dredge project. Mastone returned for what's expected to be the last time this week to view and photograph the connected timbers, which are to be discarded with the rest at the town landfill.

Mastone thought when he viewed the side showing in the pit that it could be a stern piece. Once it was flipped over by the town's backhoe, it became more inconclusive.

"It looks more like a land-side bulkhead," he observed.

Such wouldn't be entirely out of the question, as that area was home to the Centerville Wharf Company from 1852 until 1879, but the size of the timbers is a clue against it. Mastone said that the heavy construction would suggest ships of great size.

So the remains remain unclassified, but the name is expected to stick, at least around here: "the old wreck."



DAVID STILL II PHOTO

LAST LOAD — The final pile of dredge spoils from the Centerville River project is loaded by a P.A. Landers crew to be hauled to Sandwich, where it will become part of a sound-deflecting berm at the Casella disposal area. All that remains before the beach is reopened is a clean sweep of the parking lot and repositioning of the edge-defining boulders between the lot and beach. That work should be completed in the next two weeks. In the distant background, a backhoe searches for the final known piece of "the old wreck."