

# The 'old wreck' has a name

## Old photo calls Centerville wreck 'Vera'

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To anyone else, the picture wouldn't have been much to look at, but to Debby McLister it was a revelation.

While working through boxes of photographs and other materials in her aunt's attic she came across a photo of a beached ship well into the distance, but with a couple of key notations. Hand-written on the black page containing the photo was "Wreck on Centerville Beach" and "Ship 'Vera.'"

McLister is the daughter of Centerville native Laurence Bearse, who played on the old wreck as a child and helped identify the then-unknown timbers found last year as a ship, not wharf remains.

Bearse and McLister dropped by the *Patriot* office this week with the photo album.

The photograph and other

information has been shared with Vic Mastone, director and chief archaeologist for the state's Board of Underwater Archaeological Resources, who's been involved in researching the wreck since it was discovered last December.

The wooden remains were removed to the town transfer station earlier this year.

Mastone said the file on the wreck hasn't been closed and the photo and name will provide some new avenues for investigation.

The photograph also shows people near one end of the ship, providing a sense of scale. As suggested by the sheer size of the timbers and other pieces unearthed last year, it's big. Our rough analysis of the figure and the ship makes her to be somewhere in the vicinity of 270 feet.

A search of the on-line shipping records available through Mystic Seaport showed a number of Veras listed in American shipping records, including a Norwegian vessel of 265 feet and 1155 tons. The dimensions were promising, but on-line

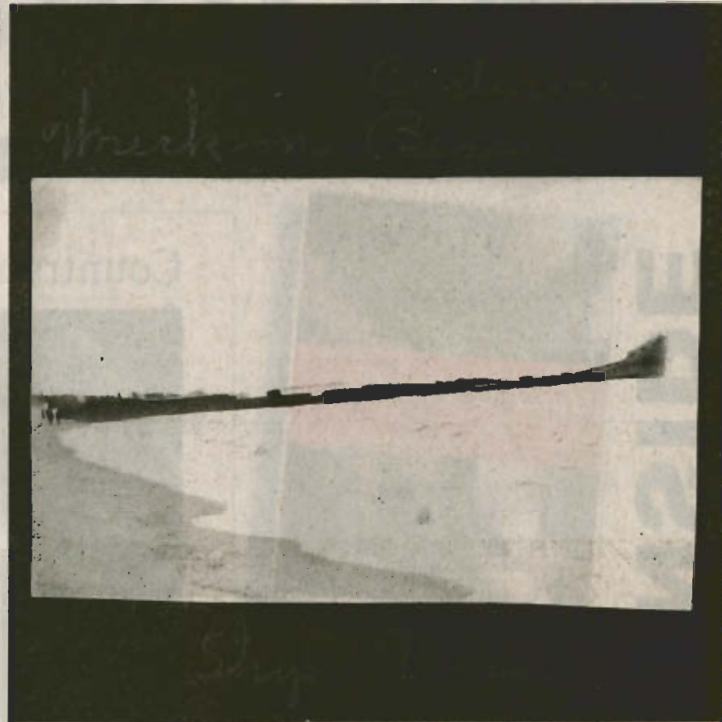


PHOTO COURTESY DEBBIE MCLISTER

**VERA** – This photo of a large husk of a ship beached at Centerville provides another clue to the name and origins of the "old wreck." The handwritten notation "Ship 'Vera'" offers a possible name for the vessel. Toward the left end of the ship are people, providing a scale to the overall size, estimated by the *Patriot* to be in the range of 270 feet.

records show this to be an iron steamer, which is certainly not this wooden vessel.

Mastone planned to share

the new information with his colleagues to see what more can be found.