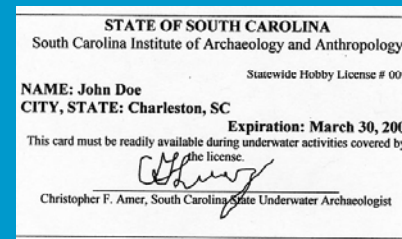


# The Public and South Carolina's Maritime Heritage: Two Heritage Trails



# Maritime Research Division's SDAMP Program

- Management of Hobby Diver Licenses
- Public presentations and workshops for dive clubs and community groups
- The Cooper River and Ashley River self guided heritage trails
- Volunteer opportunities for recreational divers



(R246, H3739)

**AN ACT TO AMEND CHAPTER 7, TITLE 54, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO SHIPRECK AND SALVAGE OPERATORS, BY ADDING ARTICLE 6 AS TO ENACT THE SOUTH CAROLINA UNDERWATER ANTIQUITIES ACT OF 1991 AND TO PROVIDE PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS; AND TO REPEAL ARTICLE 4, CHAPTER 7 OF TITLE 54, THE SOUTH CAROLINA UNDERWATER ANTIQUITIES ACT OF 1982.**

Whereas, it is the intent of the South Carolina Underwater Antiquities Act of 1991 to preserve and encourage the scientific and recreational values inherent in submerged archaeological historic properties and paleontological properties for the benefit of all the people of the State; and

Whereas, submerged archaeological historic properties and submerged paleontological properties are a nonrenewable and finite resource, and that the conservation and preservation of that resource base is of the highest priority; and

Whereas, it is only incidental to this purpose, and as a means of relieving this purpose, that licenses provided for in the South Carolina Underwater Antiquities Act of 1991 may be granted and that portions of the recovered objects may be transferred to the licensee. Now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina: **Underwater Antiquities Act**

**SECTION 1.** Chapter 7, Title 54 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

"Article 6

The South Carolina Underwater Antiquities Act of 1991

Section 54-7-610. This article may be cited as the South Carolina Underwater Antiquities Act of 1991.

Section 54-7-620. As used in this article:

(1) "Artifact," "artificial item," or "artificial material" means any object or assemblage of objects found in an archaeological context which yields or is likely to yield information of significance to the scientific study of human prehistory, history, or culture, and which have remained unclaimed for more than fifty years.

**COOPER RIVER UNDERWATER HERITAGE TRAIL**  
*Diving into the Past*  
**DIVING AND MOORING INFORMATION**

**HISTORY OF THE COOPER RIVER**

The Cooper River, named "Cooper" after the famed hunter and explorer, is the largest waterway in the Charleston area. It is a vital link between the city and the sea, and has been a major source of commerce and industry since the early days of settlement. The Cooper River is a unique and diverse ecosystem, and is home to a wide variety of plants and animals. It is also a major source of recreation and tourism for the Charleston area.

**FLORA AND FAUNA**

The Cooper River is home to a wide variety of plants and animals. Some of the most notable species include the Cooper River shiner, the Cooper River darter, and the Cooper River killifish. The river is also home to a variety of birds, including the Cooper River heron and the Cooper River egret.

**DIVING AND MOORING INFORMATION**

The Cooper River is a popular destination for divers. The river is home to a wide variety of underwater sites, including shipwrecks, historical structures, and natural formations. Divers should be aware of the following information when diving in the Cooper River:

- The river is a tidal waterway, and the water level can vary significantly throughout the day.
- The river is a narrow waterway, and divers should be aware of the location of bridges and other structures.
- The river is a busy waterway, and divers should be aware of the location of boats and other vessels.
- The river is a sensitive ecosystem, and divers should be aware of the location of protected areas and other sensitive sites.



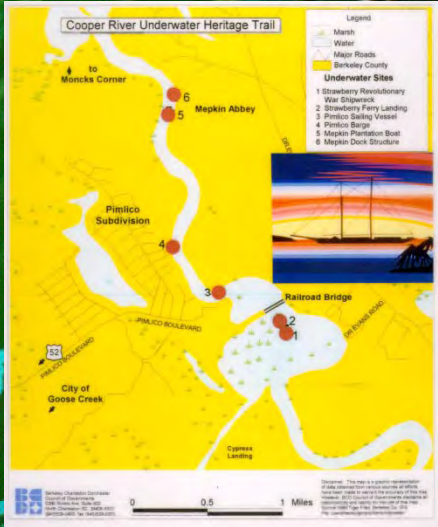
Moncks Corner



Summerville

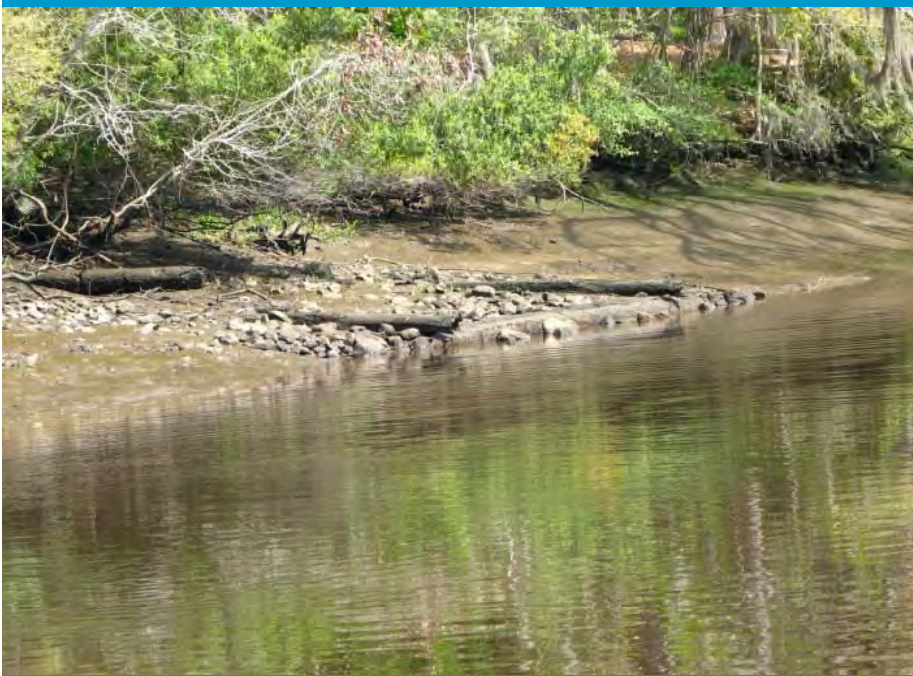


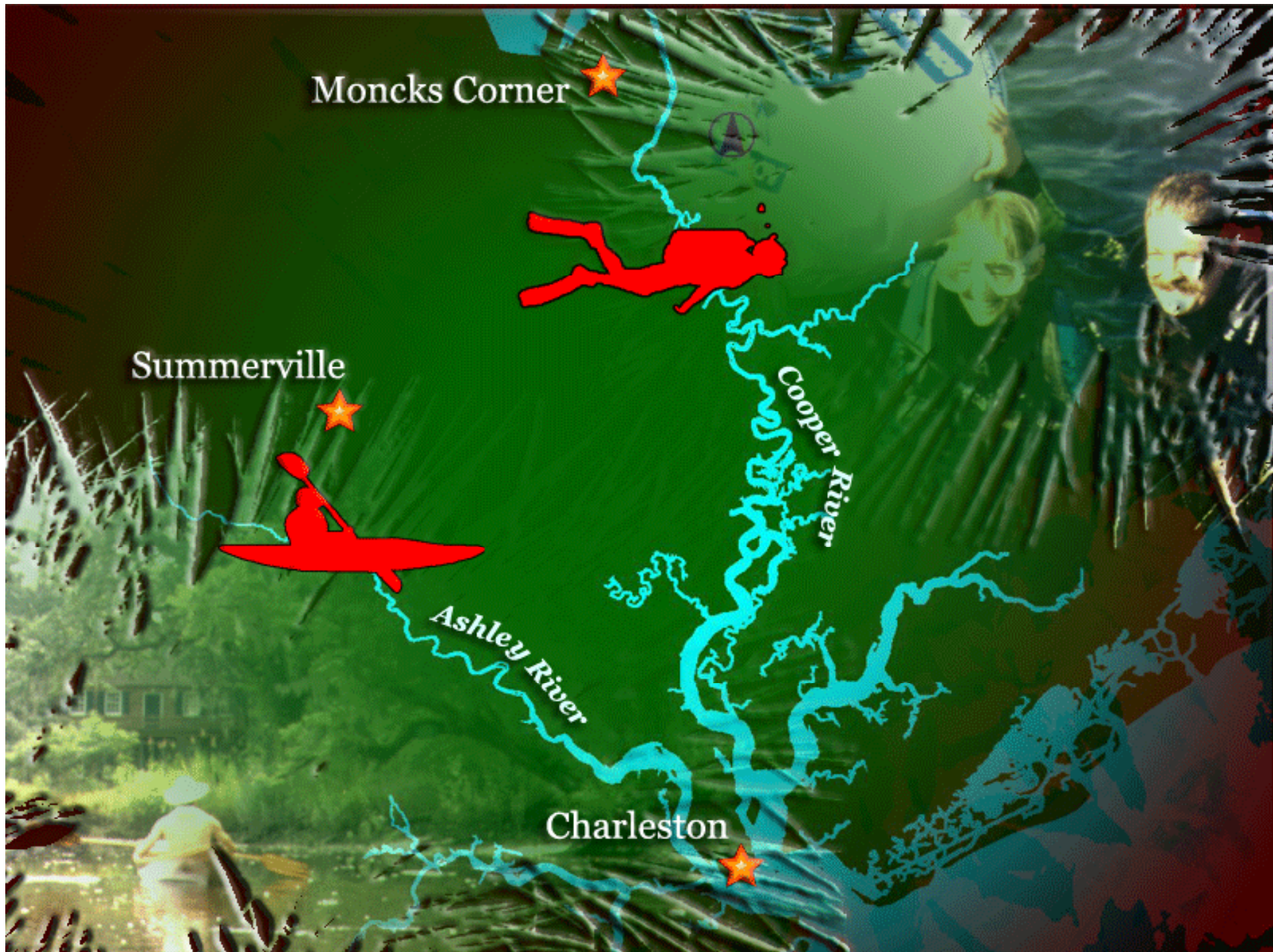
Charleston



# Ashley River Heritage Trail







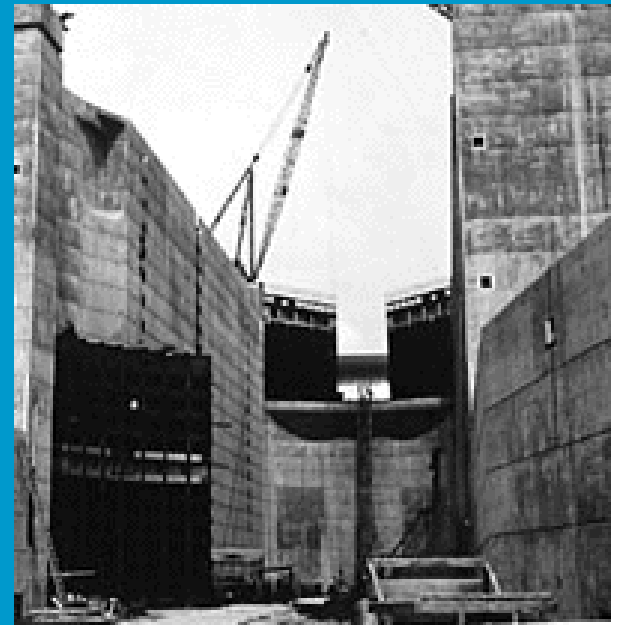
Moncks Corner

Summerville

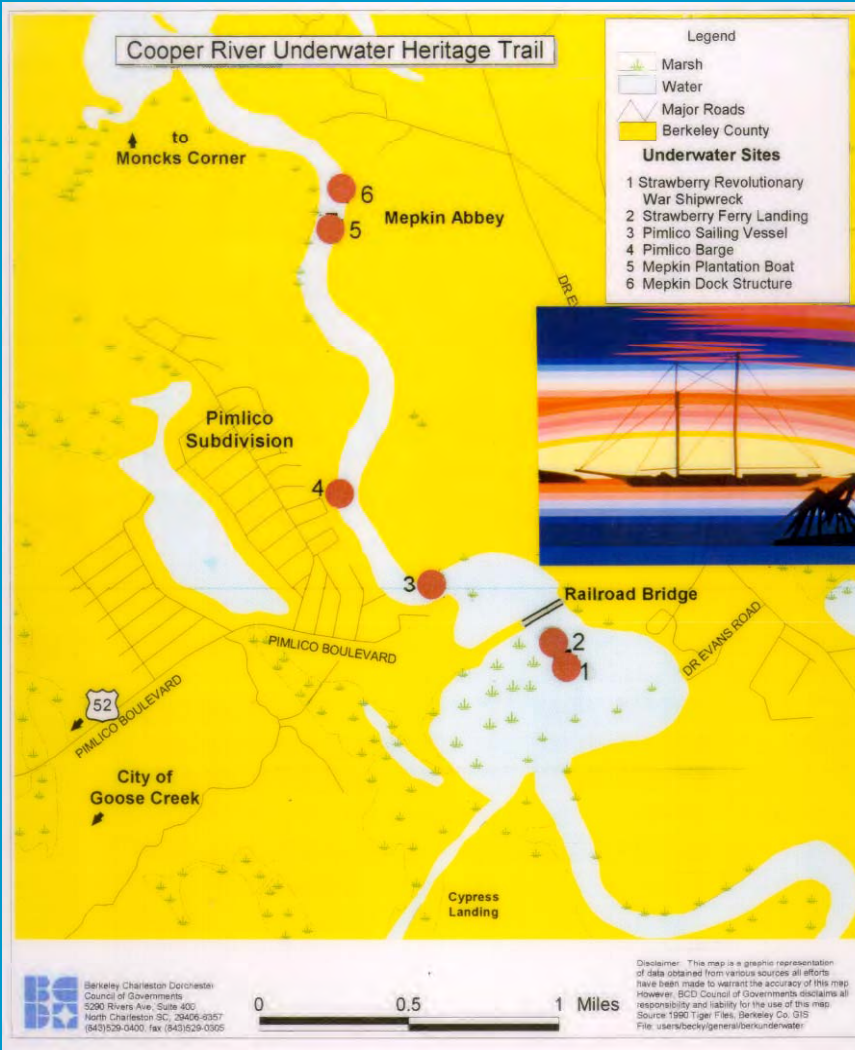
Charleston

Cooper River

Ashley River



# Cooper River Heritage Trail



## COOPER RIVER UNDERWATER HERITAGE TRAIL



### HISTORY OF THE COOPER RIVER

To the natives it was the "Edawee," this area that flowed from the heart of the land they called Chocoma, to the natural harbor at Charlestowne formed by the convergence of two rivers. Following the settlements of the port city, the colonists began settling in the interior. The Cooper River, navigable for more than 30 miles, attracted a good portion of them. By 1700 small settlements, farms, and plantations were situated on both sides of the river.

In 1751 Governor James Ogle, writing to the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations in England, noted that the "Cooper River appears sometimes a kind of floating market, and we have numbers of canoes, boats, and petyganzas that ply incessantly, bringing down the country produce to town, and returning with such necessaries as are wanted by the planters."

The Cooper River had one of the richest histories on the eastern seaboard. The west branch of the river is the most popular inland diving area in South Carolina.



Time Water

### FLORA AND FAUNA

In the upper Cooper River near Goose Creek, and upstream to the "Tee," where the east and west branches meet, brackish water becomes fresh. While many salt marsh species occur in the area, there is a trend towards greater diversity including species such as catfish, bluegills, and giant crabs.

From your dive boat you can observe a variety of wildlife on this spectacular waterway. Alligators sun themselves on the riverbanks, osprey jump around the boat, and a great variety of birdlife inhabits the locale. Species include osprey, the grey, great and blue herons, cormorants, American coots, bonaparte seagulls, and snailings.



SCSA



Quinn Water

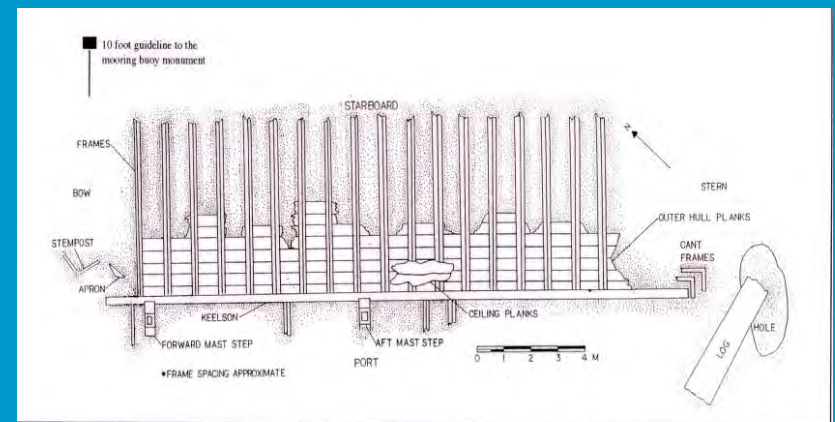
### Diving into the Past DIVING AND MOORING INFORMATION

Diving in South Carolina over is not for the inexperienced diver. Divers should use accepted safe diving practices, including the buddy system, the diver-down flag, and standard open water diving equipment, i.e., gloves and a sharp dive knife to cut moor-filament line. Lights are also essential to illuminate these dark water dive sites. During the warmer months divers should be aware of the presence of alligators and snakes in the vicinity.

The best time to dive on these sites is during the incoming tide which counteracts the natural outflow of the river thereby lessening the strength of the current. Consult local tide tables for times of tides. Generally, tides in the trail area run about three and a half hours behind the listed times for Charleston harbor. Divers should descend down the mooring line to the monument which is equipped with signage that identifies the dive site and species. A guide line is attached to the monument that leads to the site. Please do not anchor on or near the wreck. Use the mooring buoy.

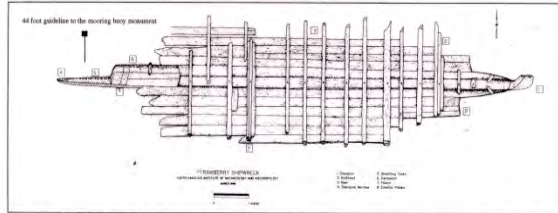
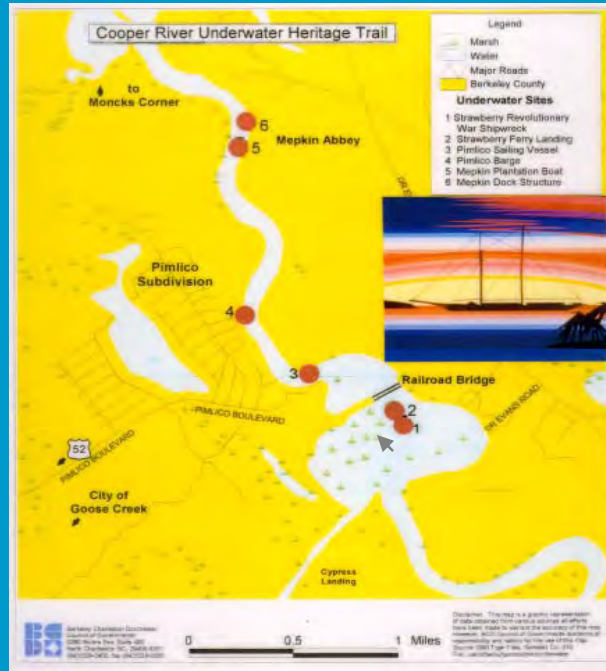
Diving on historic wooden wrecks requires careful personal and equipment control to avoid damaging these fragile structures. All goggles, hoses, and other gear should be situated so as to avoid entanglement. Avoid pulling on the structure to move about the site. During periods of heavy current divers should remain on the periphery of the site to lessen potentially adverse contact with the structure. When visiting each trail site please take only photographs and memories and leave only bubbles. To participate in an organized charter contact a local scuba diving store. To report any damage to the site or mooring system contact SCSA at (843) 702-6105.

Please help by clearing the weeds on the mooring line and wiping mud off the monument plaque. Many sport divers participated in the construction of this trail. Assistance was also provided by Highower Construction, Berkeley County Public Works Department, the SCG Council of Governments, East Coast Dive Connection and Charleston Scuba. This Underwater Diving Trail was sponsored in part by the South Carolina Institute of Archeology and Anthropology of the University of South Carolina and the National Recreational Trails Program in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism and the Federal Highway Administration of the US Department of Transportation.





# Strawberry Wreck



## ARCHAEOLOGY

Numbered plastic tags mark each framing set, starting with number 1 on the starboard side in the bow area of the Strawberry shipwreck. Archaeologists use tags as a reference system when creating a site plan or map of a wreck. Timbers are drawn and measured. Observations are made about construction methods, repairs, types of fastenings used, hull shape, and the preparation abilities of the vessel.

The Strawberry wreck was a sailing vessel—probably a small sloop or schooner. The keelson is missing, and it is not certain how many masts it carried. Frames number 4 and 13 are reinforced as single framing sets. This additional strengthening could indicate the former presence of rigging, lifting, or mooring structures in these locations.

Small flat-headed copper sheathing backs are embedded in outer hull planking on the starboard stem area and the stempost at the bow. Although the sheathing is missing, divers who visited the site in previous years report the presence of lead sheathing displaying the broad arrow, indicating that it once belonged to British Admiralty. In addition, the vessel also had copper plates under the lead sheathing.

Until the latter part of the 18th century ships were generally not sheathed with metal. As sheet metal became readily available with the application of steam power to

rolling mills, this material began to be used to sheath the water-carrying hulls. Copper sheathing was introduced into the Royal Navy in 1761, in British merchantmen in 1775, the French followed in the 1790s, and it became common to U.S. craft after 1800.

Shipwrecks earlier than the 18th century have been found with copper sheathing backs. These were more likely to have been used for lead sheathing or more venerable ones of the hull. By the middle of the 19th century, "yellow metal" or brass sheath, a cheaper alloy of copper and zinc, was introduced.

## DIVING ADVICE

The distance from the stempost to the wreck is 44 feet and the water depth is 21 feet. You will follow the guideline to the post first section. The center to the wreck gives you a sense of the underwater environment composed of a lead rocky mud bottom, sand, mud and silt. Logs are scattered along the stem, making it an undesirable area to swim. When you reach the end of the guideline, look up at the wreckage warning above you (don't knock your head!)

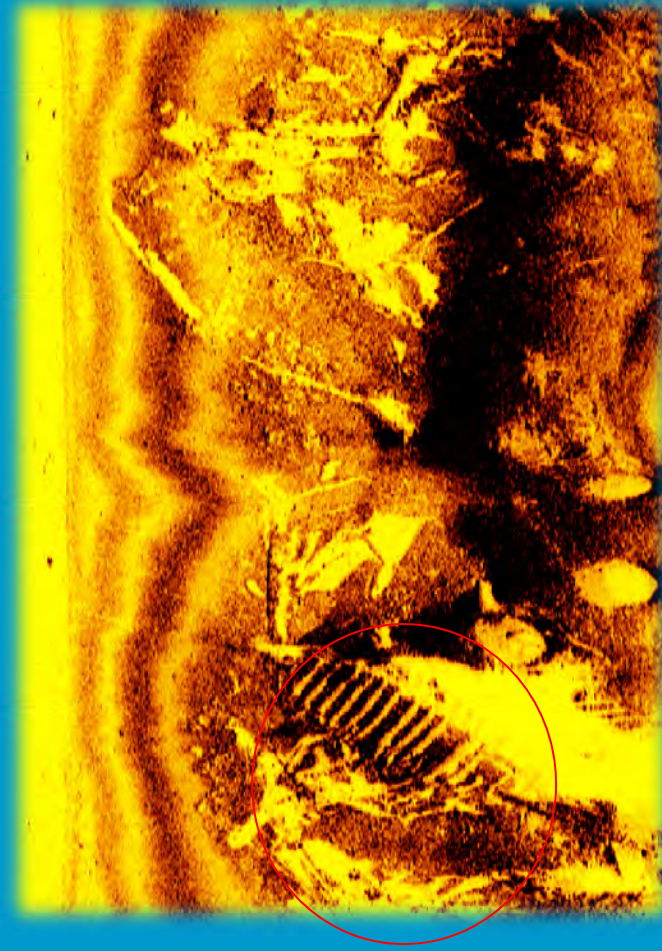
Take note of the heavy construction to accommodate the rudder in this stem area. Swim along the interior length of the vessel following the line of plastic tags attached to the

rolling mills, this material began to be used to sheath the water-carrying hulls. Copper sheathing was introduced into the Royal Navy in 1761, in British merchantmen as 1775, the French followed in the 1790s, and it became common to U.S. craft after 1800.

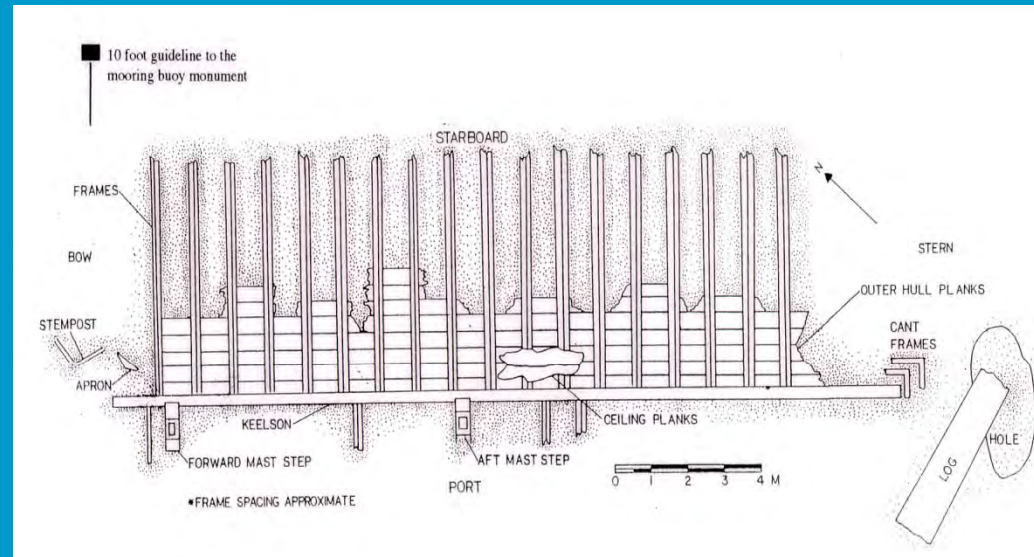
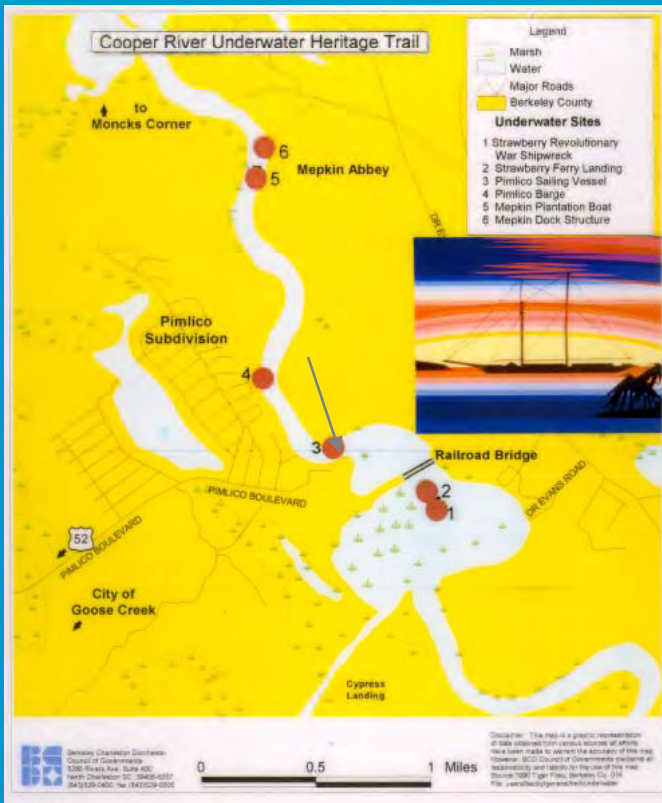
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If you continue swimming along the exterior starboard side, you will reach the stern configuration again. Notice the pattern of ribs and sheathing remnants on this area.

After your dive on the shipwreck, swim over to the landing on the surface. If you are facing the shore close to the site, look to your right at a distinct clump of trees about 20 feet away from the mooring buoy. The landing extends out into the river from below this region and is visible at low tide and a few hours afterwards. Swim along the beach outside "sniff" out the river. Take note of the log container holding the rubble in place. Enjoy the underwater environment as you venture out along this historic aquatic pathway. Imagine the old town pulling up here to land and local people, livestock, and produce.



# Pimlico Wreck

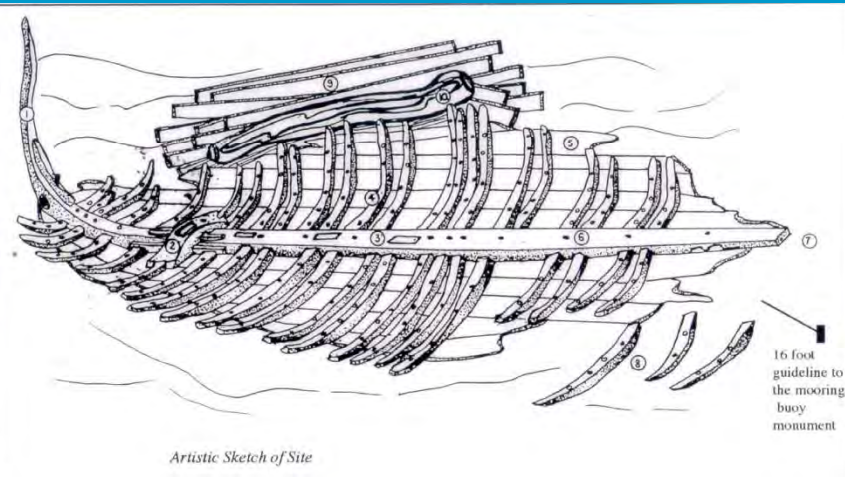


# Mepkin Wreck



**THE MEPKIN SHIPWRECK**

1. Stempost
2. Mast Step
3. Stanchion notches
4. Frame
5. Outer hull planking
6. Keelson
7. Stern area
8. Loose frames
9. Cargo of Shingles
10. Log



## COOPER RIVER UNDERWATER HERITAGE TRAIL

### Diving the Mepkin Plantation Wreck

#### PLANTATION BOATS

Small plantation-owned schooners and sloops were used for commerce within the state, to other colonies, and to the West Indies. Compared to larger vessels, they paid less duty, and required less expenditure in construction, maintenance and operation. Only decked vessels (although this term was often open to interpretation) and those that connected to ports outside of the colony were required to be registered. Now registered vessels conducted trade in the rivers and short coastal voyages, carrying plantation produce to centers like Georgetown, Charlestown, Beaufort, and Savannah.

Many of these plantation vessels had masts and the hulls were painted a variety of colors. The hull might be bright blue with a black waterline, contrasting sharply with the bottom of the hull coated in white lead to prevent barnacles and other bottom fouling growth from proliferating. Newspaper snippets describe plantation boats as ranging from 40 to 45 feet with a draft of 5 to 6 feet. Another important quality was how many barrels of cargo could be carried by the boat and how much water it would draw when loaded.

The plantation boat crew were primarily slaves, including the captain or patron. The patron was in charge of the boats and training the boatmen in boating skills and rowing songs. Boatmen represented a stratified segment of slave society having more independence and freedom of movement than field hands. They often wore boating uniforms or costumes and are mentioned by name in plantation records. Correspondence to and from Mepkin Plantation discuss several boatmen. Among the slave boatmen who worked on this plantation were distinctive personalities like Achilles, Tom Peas, and Scurranwiche who were important sources of information about the outside world for others.



#### MEPKIN PLANTATION

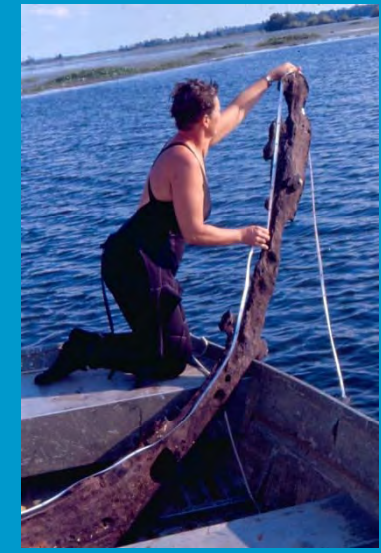
In June 1761, an oral interview of the South Carolina Gazette advertise Mepkin plantation as "Containing 5000 acres old measure, situated on the north side of the Cooper River, near Strawberry, whereon is a high and pleasant hill close to the river, and a good landing place. Any vessel that comes here may go to the said landing." The Mepkin wreck is located adjacent to the former plantation which belonged to the Laurens family since the late 1600s. The most famous member of the family was Henry Laurens.

#### HENRY LAURENS: A PLANTER, MERCHANT AND POLITICIAN

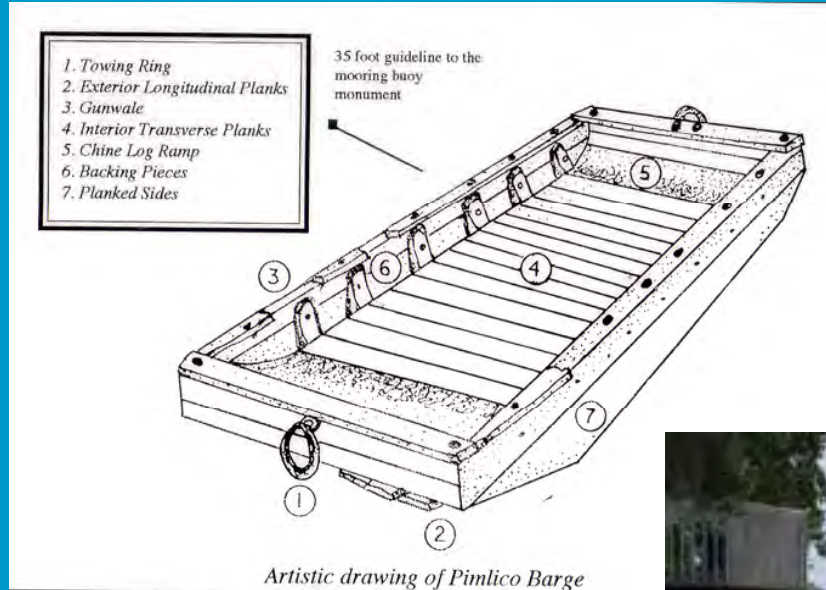
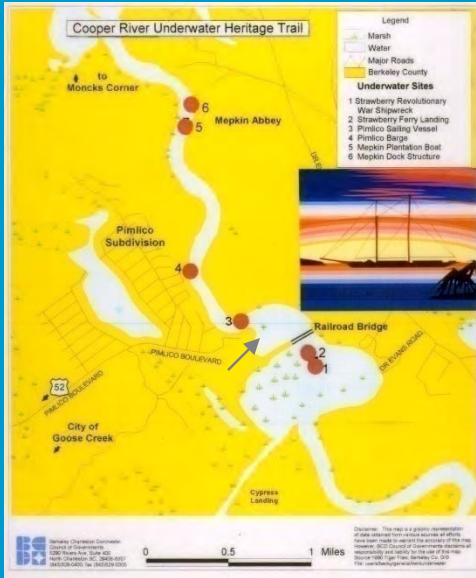
A leading entrepreneur, Laurens was not only a merchant but a prominent planter, ship-owner, slave trader, and owner of several other plantations. In 1744 he was sent to London to obtain training as a merchant, and in 1746 he was instrumental in organizing the first fire insurance company in the United States. As a leader and an army officer he participated in the French and Indian Wars. In 1761 he was commissioned to collect recruits and march into the Appalachian Mountains. He was elected to the House of Assembly in South Carolina in 1757 and was a member almost continuously until the Revolution. He was also the selected first and second president of the Councils of Safety and President of the First Provincial Congress of South Carolina in 1775.

Other interesting details about Laurens was that he was captured during the Revolutionary War and held in the Tower of London for fourteen months. He was released in exchange for Lord Cornwallis. With the exception of the Native Americans, Henry Laurens was the first documented case of treason, through his personal request, in the nation.

The former plantation is now a monastery which is open to the public. If you are interested in exploring the grounds of the abbey by land, stop at the reception center to meet with the Custodian. The grounds are open to the public seven days a week from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. No reservation or fee is required. For large group organized tours or overnight stays, reservations are necessary. The plantation house is gone, but there are paths leading through the old oak trees to the river. Visitors can also tour the cemetery down near the bluff. Many of the Cooper River families are buried there.



# Pimlico Barge and "Anchor Farm"



## COOPER RIVER UNDERWATER HERITAGE TRAIL

### Diving the Pimlico Barge

#### PIMLICO PLANTATION

The barge is located off Pimlico subdivision, formerly Pimlico plantation. After the Revolutionary War, many tracts of land under Loyalist ownership were split up and sold. Pimlico was a tract which was formerly part of Mepshaw plantation. It became the property of the Ball family, a prominent Cooper River family owning many plantations. Pimlico was owned by Hugh Swinton Ball who married Anne Channing. They had several children who all died very young. Mr. and Mrs. Ball both died in a fiery explosion aboard the steamer *Pulaski* on their way to Charleston from New York in 1835.

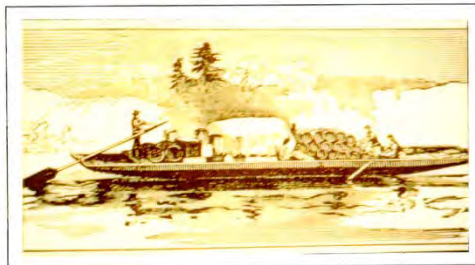
The lack of surviving family to inherit the property resulted in a lawsuit. The court ruled in favor of Mrs. Ball's family, the Channings of Boston and a parcel to a nephew, Elias Nonus Ball. Part of the property was split up and sold. The people of Cooper River were outraged and protested when, to make a greater profit, the Northerners who owned the land sold the slaves as individuals instead of the southern gentleman's custom of selling in families.

The father of Elias Nonus Ball, Elias Octavius Ball, invented the first mechanized rice thrasher on Pimlico plantation. It was run by the use of a water wheel shaft instead of the usual pestle.

#### RICE CULTIVATION

Rice plantations like Pimlico had the benefit of the tidal effects of the river for irrigation of the fertile swamp-like paddies. The maintenance of retaining mounds (dikes) of the paddies and the harvesting and threshing of rice was extremely labor intensive, and a slave labor force and the use of boats, especially the barge, was a vital part of the economic equation in South Carolina.

After the Civil War, the revival of the "plantation barge" may have occurred at a time when the abandoned rice fields became popular duck hunting preserves. The widespread adaptation of plantations into hunting preserves ensured continued survival of the dike system and the barge well into the mid-20th century.



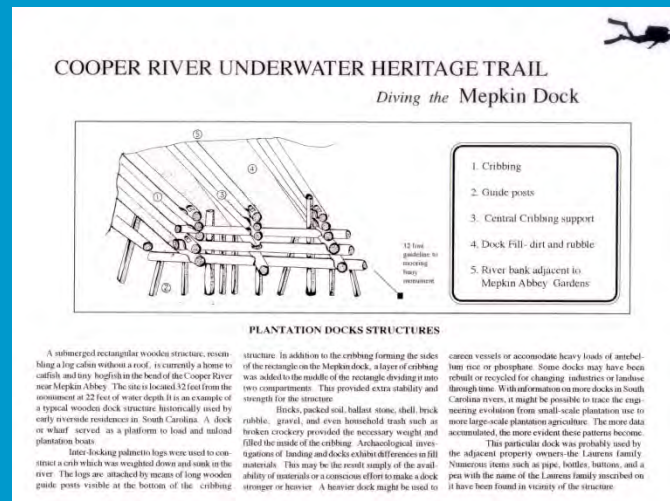
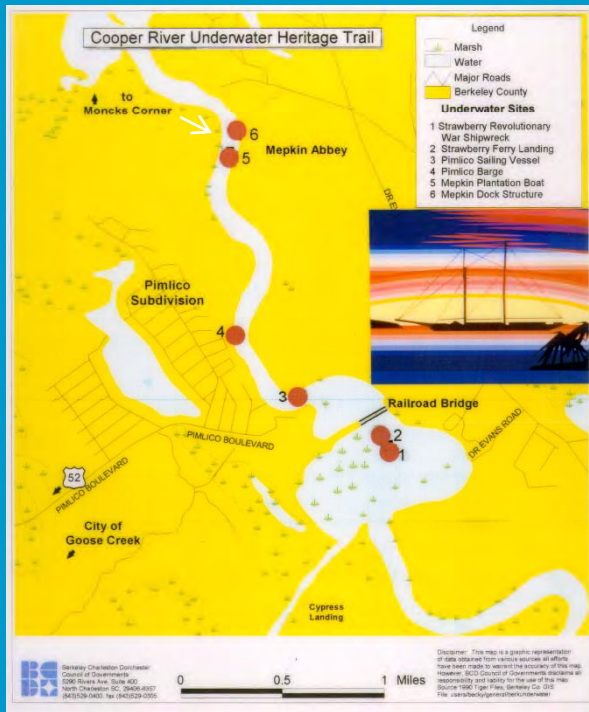
#### THE PIMLICO BARGE

Barges were basically flat, rectangular platforms of shallow draft and minimal freeboard. They were rowed, poled and propelled by the tide. These work boats operated on plantations and in the calm waters of South Carolina rivers, most often as ferries. They carried people, produce, supplies, staple crops and were also used in later postbellum phosphate mining operations.

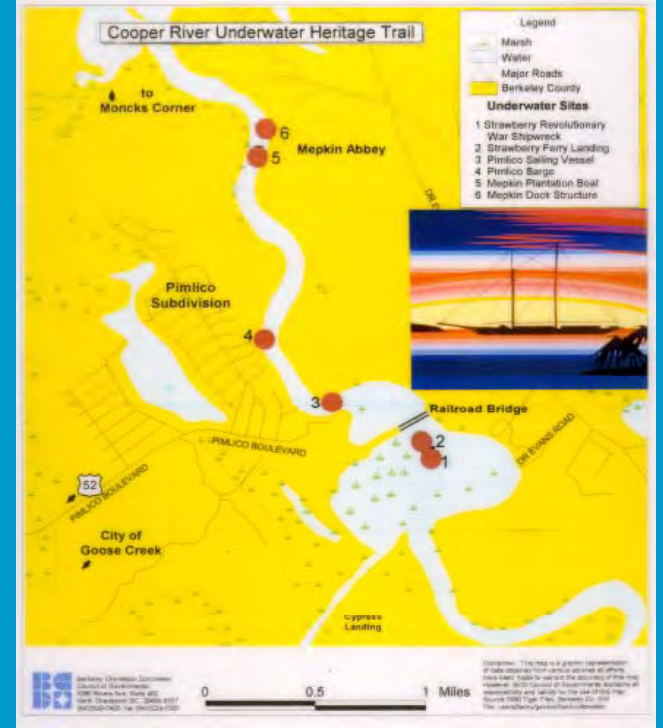
The Pimlico barge lies on a mat and sandy substrate. It has an overall length of 35 feet and beam of 1.5 feet. The planked sides are 2 feet high. The assembly of the ramp at either end consists of logs (forming a dike) with two planks attached on top for extra height. The interior floor planks run transversely and the exterior planks longitudinally. Small backing pieces, more like thick planks, attach the side planking to the barge.

The presence of towing rings suggest that the barge, or a train of barges, may have been pulled behind a steamboat to carry additional cargo or supplies.

# Mepkin Dock



# Strawberry Ferry Landing











Summerville



Christopher F. Amer  
State Underwater Archaeologist

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Link to the Heritage Trail website:

[http://www.cas.sc.edu/sciaa/mrd/scamp\\_mht.html](http://www.cas.sc.edu/sciaa/mrd/scamp_mht.html)



Ashep  
River  
Charles

