

If you are not familiar with the North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort, or if you haven't visited in quite a while, now is the time to go! There have been many additions to the Maritime Museum and even locals who are well-versed in Beaufort history are sure to be captivated by the new exhibits the museum has to offer, the biggest being the new conservation laboratory where artifacts from infamous pirate Blackbeard's ship, *Queen Anne's Revenge*, can be seen as they are studied and prepared by conservators for the museum.

The Maritime Museum is proud to offer many educational programs that teach and inspire school groups, community clubs, and children of all ages. At the museum you can find interactive exhibits, multiple scavenger hunts for kids, educational presentations and films, guided field trip opportunities, a beautiful and accessible library, and knowledgeable staff to guide you and answer questions. You can rent out many parts of the museum for special occasions and events, and the museum also offers summer camp and outreach programs.

The Maritime Museum in Beaufort focuses on coastal culture and maritime history, featuring exhibits on seafood industry, life-saving stations and lighthouses, sailboats, and motorboats. However, recently the museum has made great strides in expanding its education and programs to also include a new surfing exhibit, the history of the Civil Air Patrol, many interactive exhibits and activities, and as the official repository for artifacts from Blackbeard's *Queen Anne's Revenge*, this is the best place to go to find information on the newest discoveries.

There are so many things for children to do at the maritime museum and it is for sure a place that will excite rather than bore. Kids of all ages have a blast throughout the museum participating in scavenger hunts of various difficulties, during certain hours visitors can go up to the widow's walk to gain extraordinary knowledge while enjoying beautiful scenery, in the works is a new interactive fishing experience, watch boat building at the Watercraft Center, and at the Discovery Cart you can check out shells and sea life of many varieties, get up and personal by touching, holding, and talking with the knowledgeable museum staff as they tell you about the types of marine life, reproduction, habitats, and more.

The new surfing exhibit was opened just in time for summer this year and features information on North Carolina's rich surfing past, the history of women in North Carolina surfing, and how it became a cultural and economic staple. Surfing in North Carolina goes back further than a century when it was used more for practical transportation than recreation. Visitors can even practice catching the perfect wave as part of the interactive exhibit.

One thing that everyone knows about Beaufort is that people here sure do love pirates. And after spending some time in the Maritime Museum the reason is clearly because of the rich history they share with Beaufort. The discovery of *Queen Anne's Revenge* has revealed the truth about these pirates and the conservation laboratory is the perfect way to see how these amazing artifacts come back to life after nearly 300 years. At the *Queen Anne's Revenge* exhibit, visitors can learn about how the economy, geography, and politics of the time created the "perfect storm" for piracy and how Blackbeard became a legend. On view from the ship are artifacts such as tools, coins, gaming pieces, beads, weapons, and more.

Also at the *Queen Anne's Revenge* exhibit you can see examples of how nautical archeologists mapped out the wreck sight for excavation and how artifacts were handled. The conservation methods to get artifacts from the sight to the museum are complex and it is so exciting to be able to see first hand the preparation that takes place as artifacts come from the ocean floor to

the museum door. The lab was designed to support a wide range of conservation activities from opening concretions and cleaning, to photography and documentation. It has both wet and dry cleaning stations, an air scribe booth, and examination areas. Broad windows on two sides of the lab let visitors easily observe the work in progress and interact with conservators. A combination of students, professional conservators, and museum staff work in the lab.

Recently the work in the lab focused on a piece of wood. How interesting can a piece of wood be? Well the answer is extremely when it is 300 years old and from the *Queen Anne's Revenge*. Students from the Institute of Nautical Archaeology were examining the wood and taking very specific measurements. Every hole and ripple was measured and charted to get a precisely accurate picture of the wood. Very little wood remains from the hull of the *Queen Anne's Revenge*, but by measuring the angle of the wood's arc and figuring out exactly where it would have been placed on the hull of the ship, the archaeologists can map out what the rest of the ship would have looked like. From that one piece of wood they can also tell more about where the ship came from due to how it was constructed. With the expanded *Queen Anne's Revenge* exhibit, the legend of Blackbeard lives on.

Currently you can typically find work being done in the conservation lab on Wednesdays, but so that will be extended to weekends as well. The extended *Queen Anne's Revenge* exhibit is made possible by generous donations by Beaufort Wine & Foods and the Friends of the North Carolina Maritime Museum. The funding for the entire exhibit was approximately \$40,000. Beaufort Wine and Food is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and proceeds from its events benefit organizations that excel in community enrichment and enhance quality of life in Carteret County. Through the generosity and support from sponsors, members and wine and culinary participants, Beaufort Wine and Food has donated more than \$525,000 to local charities and nonprofit organizations in the last decade. The entire conservation laboratory addition was made possible by a donation from Beaufort Wine and Food for \$31,000. The Friends of the North Carolina Maritime Museum continue to provide support to the museum through member donations.

The North Carolina Maritime Museum in Beaufort is open Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The museum is open to the public with free admission and donations are always appreciated. The Maritime Museum can be contacted at (252) 728-7317 or learn more at ncmaritimemuseums.com.