

Shipwreck from 1800s uncovered in Boston's Seaport District

May 27 2016, by Rodrique Ngowi



A shipwreck from the 1800s that has been uncovered during construction in the Seaport District is seen to the left of a construction vehicle, bottom, Wednesday, May 25, 2016, in Boston. According to city archaeologist Joe Bagley, it's the first time a shipwreck has been found in this section of Boston. Bagley says it appears the vessel was carrying lime, which was used for masonry and construction. (AP Photo/Elise Amendola)

A shipwreck from the 1800s has been uncovered during construction in

Boston's Seaport District.

City archaeologist Joe Bagley said it's the first time a shipwreck has been found in that section of the city, a trendy waterfront area with office buildings, expensive condos and upscale restaurants.

The vessel, which appears to be partially burnt, was uncovered last week during construction of a 17-story office building.

New York-based construction company Skanska USA has been meeting with city officials to discuss the discovery, and archaeologists have been studying the vessel and taking measurements. They found a shattered [ceramic vessel](#), a knife, construction equipment and some loose nails.

Shawn Hurley, a Skanska executive, said work has been halted for almost a week because of the find.

"There are certainly impacts, but we'll work through them," he said.

The area was once mudflats that alternated between dry land and water based on the tides, so ships "kind of sailed right over" the property, Bagley said. In the late 1800s, that section of Boston Harbor was filled in.

He said it appears the [vessel](#) had a load of lime, which was used for masonry and construction. The lime would have been unusable after getting wet, so the cargo was left where it was, Bagley said. He called that fact "pretty remarkable," since at the time ships typically would have been completely scavenged of their valuables within days of being wrecked.



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The lime was likely brought from Maine to Boston during a 19th century building boom, he said. Bagley noted the coincidence that the ship was found now, during another building boom in the city.

"They're really part of the same narrative of Boston growing as a city," he said.

He said the discovery says a lot about the 386-year-old city.

"To me what it says is that history is everywhere in Boston—sometimes we have to dig a little deeper to find it," he added.

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