



ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

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ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION ANNOUNCES MOBILE RIVER SHIPWRECK PROJECT

The Alabama Historical Commission will begin a project to inventory shipwrecks and other cultural resources in submerged portions of the Mobile River, Mobile, County, Alabama. This project will ultimately result in a National Register Maritime Historic District and the possible discovery of the Clotilda.

In March 2018 the Alabama Historical Commission (AHC), in coordination with the National Park Service (NPS), the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, (NMAAHC), and SEARCH, completed the investigation of the shipwreck remains discovered in January 2018 in Baldwin County, Alabama. After thorough testing of the wreck's architectural and construction features and using minimally invasive research methods, it was concluded that the [vessel was not the Clotilda](#).

As the Alabama Historical Commission, it is our agency's duty to uphold the state law that manages and protects shipwrecks and archaeological sites in Alabama waters. Part of that duty involves identifying cultural resources such as shipwrecks.

Currently, the Historical Commission has contracted SEARCH to complete the Phase I remote-sensing survey to locate significant submerged cultural resources. Advanced maritime remote sensing equipment, including a marine magnetometer, side-scan sonar, and sub-bottom profiler will be employed.

Upon completion of the Phase I, SEARCH will conduct an archaeological analysis of the acquired data. In addition, a description of the area's prehistoric and historic context will be included in the final report as well as a shipwreck inventory. After all cultural resources in the project area are inventoried, any that have characteristics matching the Clotilda, the last known slave ship to bring captives from Africa to the United States, will be investigated further in subsequent phases of the investigation.

"We were powerfully struck by the story of the Mobile River," said James P. Delgado, PhD, Senior Vice President, SEARCH, Inc. "The river, particularly the area to be surveyed, has a number of potential stories to tell. Clotilda is one of those important stories."

Alabama State Senator Vivian Davis Figures is supporting the research, as well. “I am thrilled and honored to help advance the next phase of exploration,” Figures said. “Our children need to know and understand our history to understand better who they are. There are important emotional and intellectual connections to be made as a result of this research.”

In conjunction with local and state partners, the archaeological process will occur in phases with Phase I beginning as early as June. During this intense and focused archaeological survey, we respectfully ask the general public and media not to visit the site. Any disruptions during this process could result in a significant loss of information and time.

Updates will be available on the AHC website at <http://ahc.alabama.gov/updates.aspx> and on AHC social media.

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About the Alabama Historical Commission

Located in historic downtown Montgomery at 468 S. Perry Street, the Alabama Historical Commission is the state historic preservation agency for Alabama. The agency was created by an act of the state legislature in 1966 with a mission to protect, preserve and interpret Alabama's historic places. AHC works to accomplish its mission through two fields of endeavor: Preservation and promotion of state-owned historic sites as public attractions; and, statewide programs to assist people, groups, towns, and cities with local preservation activities. For a complete list of programs and properties owned and operated by the AHC, hours of operation, and admission fees please visit ahc.alabama.gov