Early Documents Relating to When Ships at the Robinson Terminal South Site Were Buried

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Introduction

General

The question addressed by this paper: What can be learned from an examination of early deeds, leases, newspapers\(^1\), and maps about when the three ships at Robinson Terminal South\(^2\) were buried?

In general, this examination has revealed that there are several limitations to this method of determining the time of burial: relevant leases apparently have not been recorded, there are times between recorded leases and deeds when burial activity could have taken place but there are no deeds or leases recorded that indicate changes in the landscape, and those leases and deeds that are recorded contain imprecise measurements. There also may be a question of whether at the relevant times in Alexandria “wharf” referred to a bulkhead, crib, or other type of wharf that consisted of a wooden framework filled in with wood, stones, or dirt as described in Steve Shephard’s article\(^3\) or that term meant a wooden structure that extended out and above the water like a pier.

As a result, what the examination reveals at best are ranges of dates within which the burial of the ships could have taken place.

It seems likely that dendrochronology of the timbers near at least Ship 1 and Ship 2 will pinpoint their time of burial of these ships more accurately than this examination. Dendrochronology, however, may also be somewhat imprecise because of the possibility that some of the timbers examined were not part of the original banking out structure but part of repairs to that structure.\(^4\) This examination may be a helpful to supplement the dendrochronology.

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\(^1\) The only early newspapers examined were those *Virginia Gazette and Alexandria Advertiser* editions from 1784 to 1790, and those were examined using the books of abstracts in the Archaeology Office. The one exception is the ad in the June 6, 1793 edition cited on page 7. This ad was found by itself in a file.

\(^2\) The former Washington Post-owned warehouse referred to as Robinson Terminal South was demolished for redevelopment of a combined residential and retail complex on the waterfront at South Union Street between Duke and Wolfe Streets.


\(^4\) See Fairfax County Deed Book U, page 120 (the Caverley lease, 1787), pages 125-126: “Joseph Caverley shall and will in the space of three months from the date of these presents repair the breach which hath been lately made in the logs which from the front of the said wharf [stet] by laying other good & substantial logs & securing them in a proper and effectual manner & fill the same in with earth to such an height as to prevent the tide from flowing over it and that he will during the said term [of the lease, 15 years three months] keep the said wharf properly secured in the front with good & sufficient logs and filled in with earth....”
At any rate, to begin this examination in an attempt to determine when the ships were buried, it is helpful to divide the Robinson Terminal South block into three sections: Point Lumley, Fleming’s Wharf, and Lot 85.⁵ (See Figure 1)

Figure 1

Point Lumley (blue-green)

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⁵ I did not examine property to the south of Wolfe Street or property on which Wolfe Street was built. This property may help with questions regarding Ship 3.
Point Lumley Section in a west-east direction begins at a line 56 feet 1 inch east of Union Street (the eastern line of Lot 77) and stretches to the Potomac River. The distance from this beginning line to the river varies as Point Lumley is extended into the river by banking out.

In a north-south direction the section begins at Duke Street and runs south 126 feet 7 inches to the northern border of the Fleming’s Wharf Section.

Ship 1 is located in the Point Lumley Section.

**Fleming’s Wharf (yellow)**

The Fleming’s Wharf Section is a 50-foot wide (north-south) strip of land between the Point Lumley Section and the Lot 85 Section. It begins 126 feet 7 inches south of Duke Street and extends 50 feet further south to the northern line of Lot 85 Section.

The southern 25 feet of this section consists of part of the original Lot 77 plus land made by Thomas Fleming when he extended Lot 77 by filling in the river. The northern 25 feet of this section actually is part of Point Lumley. It is not treated in this paper as part of Point Lumley Section, however, because the deeds and leases for this part of Point Lumley treat it differently. They convey it along with the southern 25 feet as part of one piece of property.

In a west-east direction, this section begins at Union Street and extends east to the river various distances as this section is filled in over time.

Most, and possibly all, of Ship 2 is located in this section as will be discussed further below in the discussion on Ship 2.

**Lot 85 (red-orange)**

Lot 85 Section extends east of Union Street various distances as the lot was banked out and extends north from Wolfe Street 176 feet 7 inches to the Fleming’s Wharf Section.

Ship 3 is located in this section.

**Assumptions:**

The approximate distances of the ships from streets are based on distances estimated by Dr. Benjamin Skolnik, City Archaeologist, on October 25, 2018, based on information furnished by Thunderbird Archaeology.

The approximate sizes of the ships are based on information on the Archaeology website and very rough measurements from the Thunderbird map of feature locations dated 2018-04-11. (Figure 2)
Figure 2

Ship 1:
- Size: 47' long, 14' wide
- Distance from Union Street: 204' (bow), 251' (stern)
- Distance from Duke Street, 105'

Ship 2:
- Size 48' long, 12.3 feet wide
- Distance from Union Street: 296' (bow – south), 312' (stern – north)
- Distance from Duke Street: 135' (stern – north), 183' (bow – south)

Ship 3:
- Size: 85' long, 35' wide
- Distance from Union Street, 241' (bow), 326' (stern)
- Distance from Wolfe Street: part under it

Additional assumption: The 1798 shoreline on “MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY ON THE ALEXANDRIA WATERFRONT,” Dr. Skolnik’s overlaying the 1798 shoreline and ships on a
photo of the Robinson Terminal South site (Figure 3), hereinafter referred to as the “overlay drawing”), probably is inexact. On August 21, 1787, Joseph Caverley subleased property to John Murray & Company. As discussed in more detail under Ship 3 below, the lease on that date was for property that extended eastward beyond the 1798 shoreline drawn on the overlay drawing, implying that the 1798 shoreline was not placed accurately on the drawing. Inexact placement is unsurprising because the size of the original Gilpin map of Alexandria of 1798 (Figure 4) is so small and the scale so large, it is difficult to make an accurate drawing of the 1798 Alexandria shoreline based on that map.

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Figure 3

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6 Fairfax County Deed Book U, page 120.
Figure 4

Burial of the Ships

Ship 1

Ship 1 could not have been buried earlier than 1774. It also seems probable that it was not buried before 1780.

It was buried before 1798 and possibly was buried slightly before or after 1786.
When the location of Ship 1 is platted onto the map in the Alexandria trustee minutes for 9 March 1774 that shows Point Lumley as it existed on that date, it is evident that the Point had not yet been extended to cover the ship. (Figure 5)

![Figure 5](image)

Ship 1 is 14 feet wide and 47 feet long. Its starboard side was located about 105 feet south of Duke Street plus an additional 14 feet to its port side. The bow was about 204 feet east of Union Street with the rest of the ship extending eastward another 47 feet to the stern. In order for Ship 1 to be completely covered by land, the land would have to extend 119 feet south of Duke Street (105 + 14) and 251 feet east of Union Street (204+47).

In 1774 at its closest point to where the ship was located, Point Lumley extended about 200 feet east of Union Street and about 112 feet south of Duke Street. Assuming these measurements are correct, Ship 1 would have been beyond Point Lumley and not have been buried.

The place where the ship was located probably was not filled in before 1780.

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On December 1, 1780, the town leased to Robert Townshend Hooe and Richard Harrison (H&H) all of the original Point Lumley that was east of a line that began 136 feet east of Union Street and ran south from Duke Street to the Flemings’ Wharf Section (see Figure 6). As we have seen, Ship 1 lay just east of the original Point Lumley. Before 1780 someone would have had to extend at least part of Point Lumley about 51 feet eastward and possibly some feet southward to cover ship one. However, it seems probable that such an extension did not happen at that time.

![Figure 6](image)

Figure 6

Earlier, in September 1760, the town had provided that purchasers of riverside lots could extend their lots under their banks into that river. The town apparently allowed lessees of Point Lumley to extend the land they leased the same as private purchasers of river lots, as will be seen below in the discussion of subsequent subleases by H&H.

Thomas Fleming had conducted a ship building operation on Point Lumley soon after Alexandria was established. By 1774, however, Fleming seems to have abandoned his operation. No lease has been discovered from the Town to anyone from 1774 to 1780. It is

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12 In 1764 the trustees agreed to allow Fleming to build a warehouse under the bank of Point Lumley for his own use (*Town Lots*, page 147). When by 1769 he had not built the warehouse, the trustees allowed him to abandon the project. (*Town Lots*, page 161) Around that time Fleming apparently also abandoned any claim he had on Point Lumley and instead concentrated on Lot 77 just west of Point Lumley, which he acquired from George Chapman shortly afterward, in 1770 (Alexandria Deed Book E, pages 420-421). The map of 1774 (Figure 5) contains no indication that Fleming had any claim to Point Lumley other than the 25 foot wide strip he just leased from the town. The 1774 map does
probable that there was none because it was not profitable for anyone to lease that property during those years, the years of the Revolutionary War. Also, if the town did not intend to lease it then, or realized it likely would be unable to lease it then, the town would have had no incentive to extend the property during that period. Thus the ship likely was not buried before 1780.

1785 and 1786

On June 10, 1785, H&H subleased their property on Point Lumley to William Hartshorne.\textsuperscript{13} This lease is helpful in that it shows that the town allowed H&H to extend their leased property by filling in the bay and constructing a wharf as is evident by the description in the lease of the property subleased and by a map drawn in 1788 for the Arell case that shows the extension.\textsuperscript{14} (See Figure 7) It is unhelpful, however, in that the property subleased only extends 22 feet from Duke Street, plus an additional 20 feet left open for an alley south of the subleased property. The fact that the 20 feet were left open, however, implies that there was some ground or construction south of the alley. The existence of ground and wharf located there is supported by an ad that appeared on page one of the October 20, 1785 edition of the \textit{Virginia Journal and Alexandria Advertiser} in which H&H advertised for rent “a piece of ground, within the south side of our wharf.” Yet neither the lease nor the advertisement indicates the dimensions of this “piece of ground.”

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure7.png}
\caption{Figure 7}
\end{figure}

\begin{itemize}
\item indicate Fleming had extended a 25-foot strip of land from his Lot 77 to the river. In 1774 he would not have leased part of the southern part of Point Lumley or built out land from Lot 77 if he had access to the river over the another part of Point Lumley.
\item Alexandria Deed Book B, page 153.
\item Town Lots, page 62; Ruth & Sam Sparacio, eds., \textit{Virginia County Court Records: Abstracts of Land Causes, Prince William County, Virginia, 1789-1790}, page 11).
\end{itemize}
On February 21, 1786, Thomas Fleming leased to H&H certain “land and wharf” belonging to him that was “adjoining the wharf of them the said [H&H].” The only “land and wharf” Thomas Fleming owned or leased at that time near Hartshorne’s warehouse was the 50-foot wide Fleming’s Wharf Section, which included the 25-foot wide strip of Point Lumley that Fleming had leased from the Town of Alexandria as shown on the 1774 map in the Trustee minutes. (See Figure 5) This wording of the 1786 deed indicates that by 1786, H&H had extended their wharf as far south as the Fleming’s Wharf Section, which was the middle of the Robinson Terminal South block. Thus, H&H wharf extended far enough south to cover Ship 1 from that direction. How far east did it extend?

The 1786 lease also indicated that the western line of the leased property was even with the western side of Hartshorne’s warehouse and extended from there east “as far into the said River Potomack as they, the said [H&H], may choose to extend the same.” Thus, in order for the property Fleming leased to adjoin H&H’s wharf, H&H’s wharf had to have existed at least as far east as the western line of Hartshorne’s warehouse.

Where was the western end of Hartshorne’s warehouse in relation to the location of Ship 1? As mentioned, Ship 1 is about 204 feet east of Union Street. It lies with its bow facing Union Street and the rest of its 47 foot length extending east. Thus, for it to be completely buried, the banking out must have extended some 251 feet east of Union Street.

The 1785 sublease from H&H to Hartshorne and the Arell case map indicate that Hartshorne’s warehouse was on the H&H property they had leased from the town in 1780 and that it was east of Hooe’s stone warehouse. Union Street, however, is not mentioned in either of these documents. So the question becomes, how far is the western end of Hartshorne’s warehouse from Union Street?

To answer that question, it is necessary to determine first the distance from Union Street to the eastern line of Lot 77. The determination of that distance is complicated, but the distance is 56 feet one inch.

Added to this 56 feet 1 inch is the 80 feet along Duke Street from Lot 77 to the beginning of the property leased to H&H in 1780, the 44 feet width of Hooe’s stone warehouse built at the western edge of the H&H leased property, and the roughly 40 feet further along Duke Street that the Arell case map indicates led from the eastern edge of Hooe’s stone warehouse to the western

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16 See footnote 11. Also, Fleming advertised in the Virginia Journal and Alexandria Advertiser in October 13, 1785, page 3, that he had for lease three lots “adjoining my wharf.”
18 See the 1780 lease referred to in Alexandria Deed Book B, page 153.
19 For the length of Hooe’s warehouse, see Mutual Assurance Society, Declarations for Assurance, Book 1, 1796-1798, Number 136-A.
end of Hartshorne’s warehouse. Thus, the western edge of Hartshorne’s warehouse was a total of some 220 feet from Union Street.

This distance is insufficient to cover the ship entirely. Therefore, the 1786 lease does not conclusively indicate that Ship 1 was covered when the lease was entered into. Yet, presumably the lease included some land east of the western line of Hartshorne’s warehouse. It would not have taken much more land in that area to cover Ship 1. The lease still is inconclusive, but it seems reasonable to suggest that H&H’s wharf probably was extended to cover Ship 1 shortly before, or maybe shortly after, 1786.

1798

Ship 1 was buried by 1798. Colonel George Gilpin’s map of Alexandria prepared in 1798 shows, among other things, the Alexandria waterfront, including the block between Duke and Wolfe Streets, as it was then. Although the overlay drawing (Figure 3) may not have placed the 1798 shoreline precisely, it likely is close enough to show that Ship 1 was buried by 1798.

Ship 2

Ship 2 probably could not have been buried earlier than June 6, 1793.

It may have been buried before 1798 but must have been buried before 1814.

Location of Ship 2 in Fleming’s Wharf Section

In 1774, Thomas Fleming leased from the Alexandria Trustees part of the southern-most part of Point Lumley that ran north-south 25 feet. He already had extended Lot 77, which he acquired in 1770, to run parallel to the leased Point Lumley part and 25 feet south of it.

It is evident from the overlay drawing and from the deeds, leases, and deeds of trust concerning the Fleming’s Wharf Section that all or most of Ship 2 is in the Fleming’s Wharf Section.

The stern of Ship 2 is located about 135 feet south of Duke Street, and the rest of the ship slopes at an angle south the length of the ship, another 48 feet. That means that the whole ship is located 135 to 183 feet south of Duke, except that with the angle, it likely stretches a little less than 183 feet.

As mentioned above in the description of the Fleming’s Wharf Section, that section is 50 feet wide south to north. It consists of two properties, each 25 feet wide. The northernmost is 25 feet of Point Lumley, and the southern-most is a 25 feet extension of Lot 77. Both are part of the original half block that extended, like all regular half blocks, or half squares, in early

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20 See note 6 and Figure 4.
Alexandria, 176 feet six inches north-south.\textsuperscript{21} Thus, the Flemings’ Wharf Section begins 126 feet 7 inches south of Duke Street. Then the section itself extends about 50 feet further south to the northern line of the Lot 85 Section. Thus the section is located from 126 feet 7 inches to 176 feet 7 inches from Duke Street.

From this examination it is evident that at least most of Ship 2 is located in the Fleming’s Wharf Section.

1793-1794

On January 1, 1794, Robert Townshend Hooe bought from the executor of Thomas Fleming’s estate a piece of ground 25-feet wide (north-south) and the wharf, buildings, alley, and street on the piece of ground.\textsuperscript{22} This piece of ground consisted of ground Fleming had made by extending the southern part of his Lot 77 along the Lot 77/Lot 85 dividing line an unspecified distance into the Potomac River.

A few days later, on January 17, 1794, Hooe assumed the remaining term of a lease that Fleming had entered into with the Alexandria Trustees for a 25-feet wide (north-south) parcel of ground and wharf that was part of Pont Lumley and that adjoined to the north the 25-feet parcel of made ground Hooe had just purchased. According to the lease, plot of ground ran into the Potomac an unspecified distance parallel to that made ground.\textsuperscript{23}

These two parcels together are the Fleming’s Wharf Section.

Although neither document transmitting the property to Hooe specified how far either of the properties ran into the Potomac, each said the unspecified distance began 136 feet eastward from Union Street. (A line drawn this distance from Union Street intersected a line drawn southerly from the west line of Hooe’s warehouse.) Thus, 136 feet from Union Street was the western line of the property conveyed by each document.

How far from that western line the property conveyed ran to the Potomac can be determined from a notice placed in The Virginia Gazette and Alexandria Advertiser on June 6, 1793 and that appeared in the edition of the paper of July 11, 1793 advertising the property for sale. It indicates that the part of Fleming’s wharf proposed to be sold “fronts upon the River Patowmack 55 ½ feet or thereabouts ... and extends back 110 feet or thereabouts.” It further indicates that “Twenty-five feet front of this property, and extending from the river to the back line, is held under a lease, made by the Trustees of Alexandria to the said Thomas Fleming.” [Emphasis added in both quotations.] Moreover, the notice indicates that Fleming’s 25 feet of made ground is part of the 55 ½ feet front of the property that extends back 110 feet.

\textsuperscript{21} Stephenson, Richard W., The Cartography of Northern Virginia: Facsimile Reproductions of Maps Dating From 1608 To 1915, plate 13, page 27; Remarks regarding the size of squares on the Gilpin map of 1798, cited in note 6.

\textsuperscript{22} Alexandria Deed Book E, page 419.

\textsuperscript{23} Alexandria Deed Book F, page 294.
The “back line” in the ad is almost certainly the western line of the property eventually conveyed in January 1794, which extended 136 feet from Union Street. It seems clear that the part of Fleming’s wharf that was to be sold, and was sold, extended east 110 feet from that back line.

Adding 110 feet to the conveying documents’ 136 feet equals 246 feet, about 50 feet short of the location of Ship 2, whose bow was approximately 296 feet from Union Street and stern 312 feet. Thus, on June 6, 1793, the date when the ad was placed, the spot where Ship 2 was found still was covered in water, or perhaps was a mud flat, and was not the location of a buried Ship 2.

1794-1814

In seeking to determine when Ship 2 actually was buried, however, the deeds, leases, and deeds of trust from 1794 through 1827 for the most relevant part of the Fleming’s Wharf Section, the easternmost part, are unhelpful. Uniformly they describe the easternmost part of Fleming’s Wharf as extending eastward from a line 136 feet east of Union Street an indefinite number of feet “into the River Potomac.”

As mentioned earlier, the scale of the 1798 map makes it difficult to plot onto a modern map. Although the overlay map shows the 1798 shoreline falling short of the place where Ship 2 was buried, it may be that the actual 1798 shoreline did cover the ship at that date.

At any rate, a comparison between calculated measurements concerning Ship 2 mentioned earlier and Dr. Skolnik’s 1814 map (Figure 8) indicates that by 1814, the location of the ship was covered. According to the calculations, the stern, the farthest part of Ship 2 from Union Street, lies approximately 312 feet east of Union Street. Thus, the land would need to extend about 312 feet from Union Street to cover the ship.

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24 See also Alexandria Deed Book I, page 470 (description of Nancy Fleming’s property in a partition of Thomas Fleming’s property).
25 Alexandria Deed Book R, page 439 (August 14, 1809); Alexandria Deed Book S, page 379 (March 30, 1810); Alexandria Deed Book S, page 374 (April 23, 1810); Alexandria Deed Book U, page 194 (January 14, 1811); Alexandria Deed Book Q-2, page 170 (May 5, 1827).
26 Alexandria Library Special Collections: Plats, Microfilm Call No. 00288.
On Dr. Skolnik’s 1814 map, Parcel A (outlined in red, marked “A,” and located where part of Fleming’s Wharf Section was located) begins 135.6 feet east of Union Street. From there it extends east 44 feet (the width of Hooe’s stone Warehouse) plus 21 feet (width of The Strand) plus about 94 feet (the length of the parcel marked “Brick Warehouse) for a total of about 163 feet. Adding 135.6 plus 163 means that Parcel A extended east a total of 294.6 feet from Union Street, only 17.4 feet short of covering Ship 2. However, the 1814 map also indicates that the shoreline was even further to the east. Thus, Ship 2 very likely was buried by 1814.

Ship 3

It is difficult to determine the earliest that Ship 3 could have been buried because of the lack of documents or maps for the relevant area after 1763 when the Alexandria Trustees first sold the lot. As indicated below, it could have been buried by 1787. It possibly could have been buried by 1798 and likely was buried by 1803.
1787

Lot 85 was sold by the Alexandria Trustees to Thomas Fleming on May 9, 1763, although a deed conveying the property was not entered into until October 21, 1865. In 1770, Thomas Fleming conveyed lot 85 to James Kirk, who had married Fleming’s daughter Bridget. James Kirk died on or shortly before April 6, 1786. His will, which apparently was not recorded in Alexandria, left lot 85 to his minor son Robert Kirk and made his wife Bridget Robert’s guardian.

In May 1787, Bridget Kirk, in her capacity as guardian of her son Robert, leased to Joseph Caverley an unspecified part of Lot 85 and “the wharf adjoining to and making a part of the said lot of ground which had been begun by the said James Kirk but not finished before his death.”

Sometime before August 21, 1787, Caverley subleased part of that property to William Hartshorne. Then on August 21, 1787, Caverley subleased another part of that property to John Murray & Company. This lease to John Murray & Company (M&C) appears to be the first time since Lot 85 was surveyed and sold in 1763 that a recorded document gives any indication of the dimensions of any changes to Lot 85 after 1763. There appear to have been no deeds or leases recorded, or maps made, regarding the lot between 1763 and 1787.

According to the M&C lease, Bridget Kirk earlier had laid out an alley 21 feet wide on the wharf, and the property leased to M&C was east of that alley. This alley later became The Strand. Thus, the Kirks had built out ground and wharf some distance east of The Strand in the Lot 85 section.

The M&C lease continues saying it is for property that begins on the 21-foot alley 56 feet south of the Fleming Wharf Section. From there the property runs with the alley a further 30 feet south, then runs east toward the river 120 feet parallel to Wolfe Street, thence 30 feet north to “the line of that piece of ground demised ... unto William Hartshorne” [emphasis added], thence with Hartshorne’s line west 120 feet to the beginning. (Figure 9) The lease also indicated that there extended even further east from the property leased to M&C a “space of ground” of indefinite

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31 Fairfax County Deed Book U, page 120.
32 See Fairfax County Deed Book U, page 120 and Fairfax County Deed Book U, page 130. The actual lease seems not to have been recorded in either Alexandria or Fairfax County. Instead it is referenced in the leases cited in this footnote.
33 Both leases cited in the immediately above footnote indicate that the property subject to those leases joined property Caverley already had leased to William Hartshorne.
34 Fairfax County Deed Book U, Page 120.
35 The exact wording of the deed is “fifty six feet from the line which divides the ground of the said James Kirk from the ground late the property of Thomas Fleming also deceased.”
length until it reached the river at the end of the wharf. The lease further stated that M&C can use this “space of ground” to load and unload vessels that dock at the end of the wharf.

In addition, M&C agreed to leave open land just inside the southern border of their newly leased property for an alley six feet wide and 120 feet long. The lessor Caverley also agreed to keep open a six-foot wide, 120 foot long part of his adjoining property to the south so that there would be between M&C and Caverley a 12-foot wide alley.

**Figure 9**
The implication of this lease is that by 1787, the part of Lot 85 that was 86 feet from the Fleming’s Wharf Section (Hartshorne’s “piece of ground” plus the property leased to M&C) extended 321 feet east of Union Street, plus another “space of ground” of indeterminate length. This 321 feet plus the indeterminate length of the “space of ground” would be the location of the shoreline for that property in 1787. (This extensive distance of the shoreline from Union Street in 1787 also means the location of the 1798 shoreline on the overlay drawing is inaccurate because it places the 1798 shoreline only about 250 feet from Union Street as indicated in Figure 3.)

If that same shoreline, 321 feet plus the indeterminate length of the “space of ground east from Union Street, was extended directly south about another 84 feet, Ship 3 (estimated to be at its closest part 241 feet from Union Street plus its length of 85 feet for a total of 326 feet) would have been buried by 1787.

Unfortunately, there is little to indicate that the shoreline was thus extended by 1787. The only indication is that the M&C lease requires Caverley to keep a six-feet-by-120-feet portion of the northern part of his property open for an alley. The implication is that Caverley’s property extended further south than six feet, but how much further south is not specified. (The 1792 sublease of the M&C property by M&C to Thomas Patten simply repeats the property description in the M&C lease.)

1798

The 1798 Gilpin map shows the shoreline at the Robinson Terminal South block as a straight line north from Wolfe to a small further extension into the river that was Hooe’s Wharf. As mentioned earlier, it is difficult to determine from that map where the straight-line shoreline actually was.

If it extended further east than the 1798 shoreline indicated on the overlay drawing, by 1798 the whole shoreline might have extended the 326 feet from Union Street and over Ship 3 and that by 1798 Ship 3 would have been buried.

1803

At any rate, by August 1802, the Caverley lease and subleases under it lapsed. On April 1, 1803, Robert Kirk, who apparently had become of age, leased property to William Hartshorne that ran from Wolfe Street north along The Strand all the way to Kirk’s property line, the southern edge

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36 This length from Union Street assumes that the western edge of the 21-foot alley is aligned with the eastern edge of Hooe’s Stone Warehouse. According to various leases and at least one map, the eastern edge of Hooe’s warehouse is 180 feet from Union Street. 180’ plus 21’ = 201’ distance from Union Street to the eastern edge of the alley/Strand. 201’ plus 120’ = 321’.
38 See Figure 4.
39 Fairfax County Deed Book U, page 120.
of Thomas Fleming’s Wharf Section. It then ran east an unspecified number of feet to the east end of “a range of buildings” near the front of the wharf, plus “all the space lying between the last line [the eastern end of the range of buildings] and the Water.”

This document appears to be Hartshorne renewing his lease for the property he previously subleased from Caverley plus the remainder of the land that stretched south from there along The Strand all the way to Wolfe Street and then east from The Strand to the east end of “a range of buildings.” How far east was the east end of the “range of buildings?”

On March 20, 1803, only a few days before entering into this lease, Hartshorne entered into a “declaration of assurance” for a range of buildings near the front of Kirk’s Wharf. (Figure 10) Because of the closeness of the date of the declaration of assurance to the date of the lease and the general location of the range of buildings in the assurance document, that range appears to be the same “range of buildings” mentioned in the April 1, 1803 lease.

Figure 10

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The range of buildings in the assurance document also appears to be the same group of buildings recently found by Thunderbird archaeologists at Robinson Terminal South as indicated in Thunderbird’s map dated 2018-04-11.\footnote{Features 151, 139-1, and 139-2, on Thunderbird map entitled “Figure 1: Feature Locations,” dated 2018-04-11. Note: The notation on the assurance declaration places Hooe’s Wharf to the south of the range of buildings. This notation is difficult to explain. Perhaps the Assurance Society representative was not an Alexandria resident and made a mistake.} [See Figure 2.] Both this map and the assurance declaration show three buildings, and the features on the Thunderbird map are near the end of a wharf in the general location where the buildings on the assurance declaration are located.

According to Thunderbird’s map, the range of buildings is about 90 feet from the eastern edge of The Strand. This is about 30 feet short of the 120 feet mentioned in the M&C lease. Possibly Hartshorne did not build the buildings on the eastern property line of the earlier lease. Regardless, the distance from Union Street to the eastern edge of The Strand, 201 feet, plus 90 feet equals 291 feet. That length plus “all the space lying between the last line [the eastern end of the range of buildings] and the Water” likely would have covered Ship 3, which was located 326 feet from Union Street.\footnote{See footnote 30 and the earlier discussion under Fleming’s Wharf Section, 1787.}

**Conclusion**

An examination of early deeds, leases, newspapers, and maps yields some somewhat tentative information about when the three ships at Robinson Terminal South were buried.

For Ships 1 and 2, it has yielded dates before which each ship probably could not have been buried and before which each ship probably must have been buried. In between these dates are times when the ship may have been buried.

For Ship 3, this examination provides only a time before which a ship may have been buried and one by which it must have been buried.

As indefinite as the conclusions are, it is hoped that they will be at least somewhat useful in determining when the ships were buried and maybe ultimately in determining more about them.