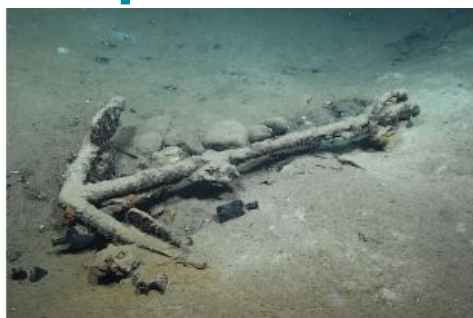


NOAA and partners discover wreck of 207-year-old whaling ship



NOAA and partners have announced the discovery of the wreck of a 207-year-old whaling ship, called *Industry*, found on the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico. The remains of the 20-metre long, two-masted wooden brig open a window into a little-known chapter of American history when descendants of African enslaved people and Native Americans served as essential crew in one of the nation's oldest

industries.

"Black and Native American history is American history, and this critical discovery serves as an important reminder of the vast contributions that Black and Native Americans have made to our country," said U.S. deputy secretary of commerce Don Graves. "This 19th-century whaling ship will help us learn about the lives of the Black and Native American mariners and their communities, as well as the immense challenges they faced on land and at sea."

The role of African Americans and Native Americans in the ocean economy

"Today we celebrate the discovery of a lost ship that will help us better understand the rich story of how people of colour succeeded as captains and crew members in the nascent American whaling industry of the early 1800s," said NOAA administrator Rick Spinrad. "The discovery reflects how African Americans and Native Americans prospered in the ocean economy despite facing discrimination and other injustices. It is also an example of how important partnerships of federal agencies and local communities are to uncovering and documenting our nation's maritime history."

With guidance provided via satellite connection from partner scientists on shore, a team aboard NOAA ship *Okeanos Explorer* piloted a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) to explore the seafloor on 25 February 2022, at a suspected location first spotted by an energy company in 2011 and viewed briefly by an autonomous vehicle in 2017, but never fully examined.

Armed with extensive research on *Industry* and the video from the ROV, the team of shoreside scientists led by James Delgado, senior vice president of SEARCH Inc.; Scott Sorset, marine archaeologist for the U.S. Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM); and Michael Brennan, also of SEARCH, have now confirmed that the wreck is most likely the brig *Industry*.

The whaling brig was built in 1815 in Westport, Massachusetts, and hunted whales across the Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico for 20 years. It was lost when a strong storm snapped its masts and opened its hull to the sea on 26 May 1836. *Industry* was whaling primarily for sperm whales more than 70 miles off the mouth of the Mississippi River. It is the only whaling ship known to have been lost in the Gulf of Mexico out of 214 whaling voyages from the 1780s to the 1870s.

[Read the full story here](#)



This image of an anchor was taken from the 1836 shipwreck site of brig *Industry* in the Gulf of Mexico by the NOAA ROV deployed from NOAA ship *Okeanos Explorer* on 25 February 2022. (Courtesy: NOAA Ocean Exploration)