

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

MAPLE LEAF

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: MAPLE LEAF

Other Name/Site Number: 8DU8032

2. LOCATION

Street & Number:

Not for publication: X

City/Town:

Vicinity: X

State: FL

County: Duval

Code: 031

Zip Code: N/A

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: ___

Public-Local: ___

Public-State: ___

Public-Federal: X

Category of Property

Building(s): ___

District: ___

Site: X

Structure: ___

Object: ___

Number of Resources within Property Contributing

1

1

Noncontributing

buildings

sites

structures

objects

0 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register _____
- Determined eligible for the National Register _____
- Determined not eligible for the National Register _____
- Removed from the National Register _____
- Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: Transportation

Sub: Water-Related

Current: Transportation

Sub: Water-Related

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: N/A

MATERIALS:

Foundation:

Walls:

Roof:

Other:

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.***Maple Leaf* as Built

Maple Leaf was a typical Great Lakes passenger steamship of the decade preceding the American Civil War. Her Canadian customhouse measurements were 398 tons burthen, 173.2 feet long, 24.7 feet in breadth of hull, and 10.6 feet depth of hull. The carvel-planked hull was described as "a beautiful model... she promises to be a fast-boat." The stempost was vertical with no bowsprit or figurehead and the stern was round with no quarter galleries. The hull had a single deck, with the machinery amidships, and cargo holds fore and aft.¹

The hull structure was supported along each side inboard of the paddles by hogging frames. Hogging frames were massive arches, with the arched upper face and compression members built of iron-fastened wood and tension members of wrought iron rod. They spread the thrust and weight of the engines throughout the length of the hull to prevent the distortion of the hull girder known as hogging.²

A sponson deck extended the breadth of the main deck in a gentle curve from the bow and stern to the outside of the paddleboxes. The sponson deck was surrounded by a heavy timber guard, which was, in turn, protected by six heavy wooden fenders per side, each suspended loosely from the boiler deck above. When the ship was underway, the fenders were pulled up onto the deck edge to keep them from banging against the edge of the deck.³

A wooden and iron windlass is mounted in the eyes of the ship on the main deck. This was the standard form of windlass mounted in merchant vessels of the period. A pair of heavy knees reinforced the forward side of the upright carrick-bitts supporting each end of the windlass. A heavy upright timber called the pawl-bitt stood on the forward side of the center of the windlass.

Superstructure

The main deck was covered by a second deck, the boiler, promenade, or passenger deck, for its entire length. Forward of the paddleboxes, the main deck was completely enclosed by solid vertical sides. Aft of the paddleboxes, the deck was open with the ladies cabin

¹ Gerald T. Girvin, "The Maple Leaf Story Prior to the Civil War," *The Maple Leaf, An Extraordinary American Civil War Shipwreck*, Keith V. Holland, Lee B. Manley, James W. Towart, eds., (Jacksonville, Florida: St. Johns Archaeological Expeditions, Inc., 1993) pp. 68-70.

² From 1856 photograph frontispiece by Edward T. Whitney in collection of Gerald T. Girvin, Rochester, New York, reproduced in Holland, et al., *The Maple Leaf*, p. iv.

³ Edward T. Whiney, 1856 photograph of *Maple Leaf* at Port of Charlotte, from the collection of Gerald T. Girvin, reproduced in *The Maple Leaf*, p. iv; Alan L. Bates, *The Western Rivers Steamboat Compendium*, (Leonia, New Jersey: Hustle Press, 1968) pp. 98-99.

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extending from the rear center of the paddleboxes. Cargo doors were located to port and starboard on the bow. Stanchions around the edge of the main deck supported the passenger deck above.⁴

The passenger deck held a pilothouse forward, and a central saloon 130 feet long, surrounded by passenger staterooms. The saloon table was reported to seat 100 passengers for dinner. The saloon could be cooled by opening windows in the low clerestory roof. Eight staterooms were furnished with French bedsteads and the remaining 32 with two berths each. A reporter described the furnishings:

The saloon and ladies' cabin beneath are richly decorated with white and gold cornices and panelling, the chairs and settees cushioned with crimson plush, and curtains of crimson and gold damask.⁵

The passenger deck was surmounted by a light hurricane deck running from the pilothouse aft. The pilothouse was raised above the level of the remainder of the passenger deck to provide a clear view fore and aft for the pilot and steersman inside. It was roughly octagonal in shape, apparently with windows providing 360 degree visibility.

Machinery

Maple Leaf was powered by a vertical or "walking" beam engine. This type of engine was placed in the center of the ship, concentrating weight and thrust amidships. A single large cylinder forward of the paddle shaft drove the piston connecting rod which pushed and pulled one end of the walking beam up and down like a teeterboard. A second or crank connecting rod ran from the after end of the walking beam down to turn the crank on the paddle shaft.⁶

The walking beam on the wreck today is a replacement for the one broken during an accident in 1853. It differs from the most common form of steamship beam in construction. The beam is a flattened ellipse cast in a single piece with a central web and surrounding flange for strength. Most U.S. built walking beam engines of the period had a diamond-shaped open framework; *Maple Leaf's* design was more common in industrial steam engines than in steamships.⁷

Steam to work the engine was provided by a pair of wood-burning return tube boilers placed side by side in the hold on each side of the engine passing under the paddle shaft. The boilers are about seven feet in diameter and 27.5 feet long. Firemen threw wood into the

⁴ 1856 Edward T. Whitney photograph *op cit*.

⁵ *Toronto Daily Patriot*, October 10, 1851, quoted in Girvin, "The Maple Leaf Story," pp. 71-72.

⁶ Cantelas, *Maple Leaf: The 1993 Field Investigations*, Draft manuscript, pp. 39-54.

⁷ Girvin, "The Maple Leaf Story Prior to the Civil War," p. 76; T.E. Crowley, *Beam Engines*, (Aylesbury, Bucks: Shire Publications, Ltd., 1976) *passim*; Frank J. Cantelas, "Maple Leaf: The 1993 Field Investigations," draft copy of report produced for St. Johns Archaeological Expeditions, Inc., by the Program in Maritime History and Nautical Archaeology, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, pp. 51-53.

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firebox at the forward end of each boiler. Heat and exhaust gasses from the burning wood passed through flues in the boiler to the rear of the boilers, back to the front through tubes, and up large diameter, side by side smokestacks forward of the paddleboxes. Steam for the engines was taken from annular steam chambers around the smokestacks atop the firebox ends of the boilers.⁸

Maple Leaf Today

[REDACTED]

this

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Cargo: Associated Material Culture

At the time of her loss, *Maple Leaf* was carrying most of the baggage of three U.S. Army infantry regiments; the stock of at least two sutlers; a Brigade headquarters; and gear and baggage of several smaller attached units. The military units included: the 112th New York Volunteers; the 169th New York Volunteers; the 13th Indiana Infantry Regiment; and the headquarters of Foster's Brigade of Vogdes Division. The baggage included tents and other equipment of the military units as well as material belonging to individual soldiers.¹⁰

⁸ Cantelas, *Maple Leaf: The 1993 Field Investigation*, draft, pp. 40-47; Walter S. Hutton, *Steam Boiler Construction, A Practical Handbook for Engineers, Boiler-Makers, & Steam Users*, 3rd ed. (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1898) pp. 288-290; [International Textbook Company], *Marine Boilers, Marine Engines, Western River Steamboats*, (Scranton, Pennsylvania: International Textbook Company, 1902) pp. 299-301.

⁹ Frank J. Cantelas, *The 1992 Maple Leaf Field Investigation*, Produced for Saint Johns Archaeological Expeditions, Inc., by the Program In Maritime History and Nautical Archaeology, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, 1993.

¹⁰ Cantelas, *Maple Leaf: The 1993 Field Investigations*, p. 105; Towart and Witt, "The *Maple Leaf* as a Union Army Transport," pp. 14-17; D.K. Ryberg, "Regiments with Baggage Aboard the *Maple Leaf*," in *The Maple Leaf, An Extraordinary American Civil War Shipwreck*, pp. 31-42.

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The army baggage was stowed in two cargo holds located forward and aft of the engine room. Soldier's possessions were stored in wooden boxes, barrels, and trunks usually marked with the names of their owners. Some boxes appear to have contained the property of several soldiers, holding articles marked with the initials of up to four men. Tent poles and other camp gear were stored on board atop and between piles of boxes. As inferred from the sample already recovered, the packing order of the cargo indicates that baggage from each unit was stowed together.¹¹

[REDACTED]

More than 3000 individual artifacts have been recovered and conserved to date in 1994. The recovered artifacts are a strong indication that *Maple Leaf* is the most important known collection of Civil War era material culture known and has a tremendous potential to increase our knowledge of everyday life for soldiers of the Civil War period.¹²

¹¹ Cantelas, *Maple Leaf: The 1993 Field Investigations*, p. 105.

¹² James J. Miller, "The Sociology of a Shipwreck Project," *The Maple Leaf, An Extraordinary American Civil War Shipwreck*, Holland, Manley, Towart, eds. (St. Johns Archaeological Expeditions, Inc., 1993) pp. 125-126.

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The wreck of the Army transport *Maple Leaf* has two principal areas of significance, the maritime history of the Great Lakes and the history of the American Civil War. The significance of the vessel and its incredible state of preservation make this site the most important Civil War archaeological site known.

The preceding statement of significance is based on the more complete statement which follows.

Great Lakes Steamships

Steam propulsion came to the Great Lakes in 1816, when the American-built *Ontario* and the Canadian-built *Frontenac* began operation on Lake Ontario. Using the hull design of existing Great Lakes sailing vessels, early steamers were otherwise quite similar to Eastern river steamships, with side paddle wheels amidships supported by extended sponsons, and large deckhouses for passengers. The first steam vessel completely adapted to the Great Lakes was *Great Britain* of 1830, with a bluff bow, square stern, side-by-side boilers and smokestacks, and a full main deck superstructure surmounted by a canopied promenade deck.¹

Maritime commerce on the Great Lakes increased greatly following the completion of various harbor and channel improvements that allowed deeper draft vessels to trade with more ports. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, followed by other canal systems, also provided a tremendous boost to maritime trade on the Lakes. Cargoes loaded in New York City could travel up the Hudson River through the Erie Canal and to the farthest reaches of Lake Superior. Starting in 1829, vessels could transit the Welland Canal around Niagara Falls between Lakes Erie and Ontario. The final link in the chain was opened in 1848 with the Neauharnois and Lachine canals around the rapids on the St. Lawrence River.²

By 1850, steamships on the Great Lakes included fast sidewheelers carrying passengers, mail, and expensive manufactured goods and slower screw-propeller freighters carrying finished goods and bulk freight. Most bulk cargoes continued to be carried in sailing vessels. These vessels travelled the Great Lakes as part of a complicated maritime transportation network. The network was supported by a specialized infrastructure utilizing dredges to open channels; canals to travel between lakes; docks and piers fitted with

¹ Professor William N. Still, Gordon P. Watts, Bradley Rogers, "The Advent of Steam Navigation in the United States," in Robert Gardiner, ed., *The Advent of Steam: The Merchant Steamship before 1900; Conway's History of the Ship*, (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1993) pp. 68-72; K. Jack Bauer, *A Maritime History of the United States, The Role of America's Seas and Waterways* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1988) pp. 185-187.

² Still, Watts, Rogers, "The Advent of Steam Navigation in the United States." pp. 68-72; Bauer, *A Maritime History of the United States*, pp. 187-191, 202.

warehouses and cargo handling gear; and shipyards, foundries, sail makers, and others to build and maintain the ships.³

Competition with a faster new transportation network—railroads—began with the completion of lines paralleling the Lakes in 1857. The rails provided a challenge that many passenger steamers could not meet. Railroad competition combined with a national economic depression ended the Great Lakes steamship boom. Many steamship lines did not weather the hard times.⁴

The Building of *Maple Leaf*

The sidewheeler passenger and freight steamship *Maple Leaf* was built for service on Lake Ontario during the winter of 1850-1851. George Thurston, "one of the best nautical draftsmen and shipbuilders in Canada," designed and built the sidewheeler in the Marine Railway Shipyard in Kingston, Ontario. The mail and passenger line of Donald Bethune and Company of Toronto ordered the steamer to replace the elderly *Princess Royal*, which had been repeatedly fined for failing to keep up with the demanding schedule required of a government-subsidized mail steamer.⁵

The new steamship was christened *Maple Leaf* at her launching on June 18, 1851. More work followed the launching to complete the machinery, decks, cabin joinery, and painting. The finished vessel was registered in Toronto, on September 15, 1851. The ship was ready but her owner, Donald Bethune, had overextended his shipping line and quickly mortgaged the steamer to John Counter of Kingston, Ontario, to support his operation. The mortgage saved the line for several more years of operation.⁶

Career on the Great Lakes

Maple Leaf worked on several different passenger routes across and along the length of Lake Ontario during her first four years. Then in 1854, with the company in severe financial straits, Donald Bethune left the country, absconding with the company's operating cash. The company stumbled on for a while but in April 1855, the remaining partners sold *Maple Leaf* and the charter on another steamer to a new joint stock company centered in Rochester, New York.⁷

³ Still, Watts, Rogers, "The Advent of Steam Navigation in the United States," pp. 68-72; Bauer, *A Maritime History of the United States*, pp. 184-204; James C. Mills, *Our Inland Seas: Their Shipping and Commerce for Three Centuries* (Cleveland, Ohio: Freshwater Press, 1976, reprint of Chicago: A.C. McClurg & CO., 1910) pp. 103-163.

⁴ Mills, *Our Inland Seas*, pp. 151-163; Gerald T. Girvin, "The *Maple Leaf* Story Prior to the Civil War," *The Maple Leaf, An Extraordinary American Civil War Shipwreck*, Keith V. Holland, Lee B. Manley, James W. Towart, eds., (Jacksonville, Florida: St. Johns Archaeological Expeditions, Inc., 1993) pp. 86-95.

⁵ Girvin, "The *Maple Leaf* Story Prior to the Civil War," pp. 63-67.

⁶ Girvin, "The *Maple Leaf* Story Prior to the Civil War," pp. 67-71.

⁷ Girvin, "The *Maple Leaf* Story Prior to the Civil War," pp. 76-81.

A new U.S./Canadian reciprocity treaty and the extension of a bonded warehouse system to Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River invigorated trade. The new shipping company formed as the Lake Ontario International Steamboat Company and began operation on June 20, 1855. It was set up so that Rochester businessmen owned 60% and businessmen of the Canadian side of the lake owned 40% of the stock.⁸

The International company weathered the first year of the depression of 1857 by adding excursion trips to their regular runs but succumbed to economic pressure in October 1858. The U.S. marshal arrested *Maple Leaf* at her dock in Rochester and the steamer was sold on January 25, 1859, to George J. Whitney, and again a few days later to Canadian investors headed by Captain George Schofield. Railroad competition had also displaced the lake steamers as the primary passenger transportation mode. Accordingly, the new owners limited regular trips across the lake to three a week, which allowed full cargo holds and passenger lists. To make up the rest of the schedule the owners promoted a number of passenger pleasure excursions on the lake.⁹

Maple Leaf Sold to United States Owners

As the American Civil War began, tensions between the United States and Canada increased. *Maple Leaf* was placed in an awkward position by trading between the two neighbors. United States Army recruiters offered bounties to young Canadian men to join the Federal service—many accepted. The sympathies of many other Canadians ran with the Confederacy. On the Fourth of July 1862 a riot broke out when *Maple Leaf* arrived to carry Canadians to the American celebrations. Cheers for Jeff Davis and Beauregard joined with cries that the band booked for the excursion play "Dixie" as well as "Yankee Doodle."¹⁰

The worst business conditions in *Maple Leaf's* career brought an end to her service on the Great Lakes in mid August 1862. Captain Schofield and his partners sold her for \$25,000 to Lang and Delano of Boston, who in turn chartered the steamer to the U.S. Army Quartermaster Department. The way in which *Maple Leaf* entered U.S. registry to serve in the war is uncertain. This sale gave an American company and subsequently, the United States government, control of a vessel still legally registered in Canada.

Maple Leaf steamed out of the lakes and down the St. Lawrence River into the Atlantic to Lubec, Maine. Lubec was a small, out-of-the-way port, where conversion for *Maple Leaf's* new duty would be inexpensive and rapid. Halifax, Nova Scotia, and St. Johns, New Brunswick, were full of blockade runners under repair, while most U.S. ports were fully engaged in building or preparing ships for war.¹¹

⁸ Girvin, "The *Maple Leaf* Story Prior to the Civil War," pp. 79-83.

⁹ Girvin, "The *Maple Leaf* Story Prior to the Civil War," pp. 88-95.

¹⁰ Girvin, "The *Maple Leaf* Story Prior to the Civil War," pp. 100-101.

¹¹ Girvin, "The *Maple Leaf* Story Prior to the Civil War," pp. 102-107.

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The conversion lasted a week followed by a further time on a marine railway in Boston for hull scraping, caulking, and painting. *Maple Leaf* was inspected in Boston, probably for insurance purposes, but was not registered as an American vessel. Like other such charters of Canadian vessels to the Army through American contractors, the transaction violated international law related to neutrality.¹²

Civil War at Sea

The Civil War was not only fought on the well-known battlefields of the nation; it was also fought at sea, on the coasts, and along the rivers. The history of this part of the great struggle has been largely neglected. Only two naval vessels, USS *Monitor* and USS *Tecumseh*, are represented in the National Historic Landmarks Survey. Twenty-eight more vessels associated with the Civil War are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The policies followed by the Union and Confederate naval leaders throughout the Civil War were formed according to several requirements. One prominent naval historian summed up the parameters:

...certain variables have always been at work. At any given time the task of the navy's leaders has been to assess their relative weight when constructing a policy and strategy. The most prominent of the permanently interacting variables—or elements—include the external political and economic environment; the policies of the president and his advisors, whether in peace or in war; the temperament of the Congress as the putative embodiment of the people's will; the state of warship technology, that is, hulls, propulsion systems, and armament; the attitudes and competence of the officer corps; and the prevailing concepts about the nature of naval warfare.¹³

The north employed two primary aspects of naval warfare: power projection and economic warfare. Power projection is the use of military force to achieve domination over an enemy by defeating his forces, or by capturing or immobilizing his forces, territory, or resources. Maritime economic warfare uses two sides of the same coin, blockades and commerce raiding, to damage the enemy economy and force a favorable resolution to a conflict. Power projection has the advantage that it can force a faster resolution than economic warfare, but it is usually more costly in lives and treasure. Economic warfare is less expensive and bloody than power projection, but takes a longer time to have an effect and its effect is harder to measure. Most wars are fought by utilizing combinations of power projection and economic warfare.

¹² Girvin, "The *Maple Leaf* Story Prior to the Civil War," pp. 100-107.

¹³ Kenneth J. Hagen, *This People's Navy: The Making of American Sea Power* (New York: The Free Press, 1991) pp. xii.

Power Projection

The United States had used naval power directly to force a favorable outcome in the conflict with Mexico, where no real naval opposition was encountered. Naval forces blockaded enemy coasts and convoyed troop transports to directly assault enemy territory. These operations provided valuable experience for the next national conflict. During the Civil War, officers used that experience in boldly executed offensive operations to expand the role of seapower in attaining national goals.

Union naval strategy called for a progressive separation and defeat of southern areas in detail. The first act of the Union naval command was to establish blockades off Confederate ports. This was followed by efforts to stop commerce raiders; naval gunfire support of army operations, particularly amphibious operations such as those on the outer banks of North Carolina and at Port Royal, South Carolina; establishment of supply bases close to operating areas; fleet operations against coastal forts; convoy of particularly valuable merchant vessels; operations against enemy naval units; and assaults on major southern seaports.

Larger naval vessels of the Union navy such as the sailing frigate *Cumberland* and the steam sloop of war *Kearsarge* were designed for operations in deep waters against enemy warships. The north discovered early in the war that vessels of these types, which made up the bulk of the navy's fleet, were not well suited to many of the tasks that they would be called on to perform in the coming struggle. These vessels required large crews, deep water, and prodigious amounts of fuel to operate. To win the war the North would have to build new types of warships and convert others from commercial vessels.

Improvised Gunboats and Transports

In order to fill the need for shipping, the Union managed a massive shipbuilding campaign and both the Army and Navy established means to quickly evaluate and charter or purchase suitable merchant vessels. The Navy needed shallow draft gunboats and found acceptable vessels among the tugboats and steam ferries in northern ports. The Army needed transports to move and supply its forces in the field and found them on coastal, canal, and river routes, and, in the case of *Maple Leaf*, on the Great Lakes. The totals of vessels chartered and built for service during the war were tremendous. During the Civil War, the U.S. Army chartered 753 oceangoing steamships, 1,080 sailing vessels, and 847 barges, and built 183 steamships, 43 sailing vessels, and 86 barges. The U.S. Navy purchased 418 vessels and started construction of over 200 more.¹⁴

Chartered to U.S. Army

Maple Leaf was chartered to the Army on September 3, 1862, the day after her purchase. The contract was signed by Charles Spear for the owners and Captain W. W. McKim for the Army. The charter was intended to last only the brief period of time needed to transport

¹⁴ James F. Nagle, *A History of Government Contracting* (Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University, 1992) p. 209; Paul H. Silverstone, *Warships of the Civil War Navies* (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1989) p. ix.

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troops from the north. It was a time charter for \$550 a day, with an option for indefinite extensions. The owners paid all costs except that the Army was responsible for fuel, port charges, and marine and war risks south of Cape Henry, Virginia.

The rate charged for this time charter was very high, assuring that the new owners would earn back their purchase money and costs in less than two months. Such profiteering was common among Civil War government contractors and led to many acrimonious disputes between conscientious quartermaster employees and contractors. Congress had formed a special committee, chaired by Charles H. Van Wyck of New York, to investigate reports of fraud, favoritism, profiteering, and other corruption in government contracts. The committee found many problems and produced a report detailing them.¹⁵

Major General Montgomery C. Meigs, the Quartermaster General, ordered his subsidiaries contracting for ships to annul all charters tainted with fraud. After *Maple Leaf* arrived at Fortress Monroe in Hampton Roads with her first load of troops, Lieutenant Colonel C.W. Thomas accordingly ordered the steamer back to Boston to terminate the contract. But *Maple Leaf* did not go; her captain steamed to Baltimore and, after repairs, made another trip to Fort Monroe. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas forced a renegotiation of the charter price and the steamer continued in Army service at \$250 a day.¹⁶

Work in the South

On June 10, 1863, while off the Virginia coast, underway for Fort Delaware, Confederate officer prisoners of war overpowered the guard and took over the steamer. They guided the steamer to a point below Cape Henry, Virginia, where they landed and set the vessel free. The escaped prisoners made their way to Richmond and the capture placed the steamer *Maple Leaf* in the newspapers.¹⁷

Maple Leaf continued to carry troops from place to place along the Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida coasts, into 1864. One particular center of operations was Port Royal, South Carolina, the Union Army encampment on the barrier islands of South Carolina.

Florida and the Civil War

The city of Jacksonville, Florida, was a Confederate city until March 1862 when a Federal force on an armed reconnaissance of the St. Johns River occupied the city. Retreating

¹⁵ Nagle, *A History of Government Contracting*, pp. 181-209.

¹⁶ Nagle, *A History of Government Contracting*, pp. 207-209; Towart and Witt, "Maple Leaf as a Union Army Transport," pp. 8-10.

¹⁷ A.E. Asbury, "Capture of the Maple Leaf," *Confederate Veteran*, vol. 6, no. 11 (November 1898) p. 529; Capt. John B. Wolf, "Capture of the Maple Leaf," *Confederate Veteran*, vol. 29, no. 10 (October 1921) p. 375; A. E. Asbury, "Capture of the Maple Leaf," *Campfires of the Confederacy*, Ben LaBree, ed., (Louisville, Kentucky: Courier-Journal Job Printing Company, 1899) pp. 352-354; and Naval History Division, Navy Department, *Civil War Naval Chronology, 1861-1865* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971) III-92.

Confederates destroyed industrial establishments, including a foundry, six sawmills, and materials, such as lumber, that might be of use to the enemy. Much of Jacksonville burned to the ground as the Federal force arrived.¹⁸

The Union force occupied and strengthened Jacksonville to protect the inhabitants from further lawlessness. Unionist refugees and other citizens wishing to save their homes and protect their property filled the city. Citizens felt so secure that a prominent group made preparations to elect a Unionist state government. It came as a rude shock to the people of Jacksonville when the new commander of the Union Department of the South ordered the city abandoned. He had taken stock of his new command and finding his forces overextended had ordered the withdrawal from militarily useless Jacksonville. This failure to consider the vital political and humanitarian role of maintaining Union control of Jacksonville had grave consequences for the citizens and the Union cause.

The Union Army occupation of Jacksonville led to the start of guerilla warfare along the St. Johns River—conflict which would endure for the rest of the war. Confederate blockade runners and supply services used the St. Johns River as part of a transportation system bringing Florida cattle and Caribbean cargoes north to the populated regions of the south. Union naval vessels of the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron patrolled the coast and made occasional forays up the river to harass southern economic and supply operations. Confederate cavalry units harassed the navy in turn, firing on passing gunboats and disappearing into the swampy countryside. Southern vigilantes, called regulators, sought Confederate deserters, harassed Union military forces, and burned homes and businesses of known Unionist civilians.¹⁹

One naval historian summed up the peculiar problems of naval operations in Florida.

The blockade of Florida required a different management from that of other parts of the coast. . . . Numberless little affairs thus took place on the station—engagements with small batteries, boarding parties, cutting-out expeditions, raids upon salt works, sudden dashes into remote and unfrequented inlets, on dark nights, through tortuous channels, usually followed by the capture of cotton-laden schooners, or stray boats, or bales of cotton, with the loss of a man or two here and there.²⁰

A second Union occupation of Jacksonville followed a preemptive attack on a strong rebel fort under construction at St. Johns Bluff in September 1863. The fort was taken, the batteries removed or rendered harmless, and Jacksonville occupied for a brief time before the troops and a large number of freedmen or "intelligent contrabands" gathered from the area withdrew.

¹⁸ Daniel Ammen, *The Old Navy and the New* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1891) pp. 362-365.

¹⁹ Daniel Ammen, *The Navy in the Civil War: The Atlantic Coast* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883) pp. 68-71.

²⁰ James Russell Soley, *The Navy In the Civil War: The Blockade and the Cruisers* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1883) p. 124.

The control of Florida became a Union priority again as the 1864 presidential election approached. President Lincoln ordered Major General Quincy A. Gillmore to cooperate with a group of men seeking to reconstruct a loyal state government in Florida. Federal control of a large part of the state would allow the formation of a quasi-state government during the upcoming election improving the outlook for the Republican party remaining in power. Union control would also promote the recruitment of black soldiers from the interior of Florida and Georgia for the rapidly growing African-American part of the army.

On February 5, 1864, General Gillmore ordered Brigadier General Truman Seymour with a division of troops from Hilton Head, South Carolina to Jacksonville, Florida. Admiral Dahlgren sent a squadron of five gunboats to accompany the expedition. General Gillmore reported that the aims of the expedition were to:

First. Procure an outlet for cotton, lumber, timber, etc.; *Second.* to cut off one source of the enemy's commissary stores; *Third.* to obtain recruits for the negro regiments; *Fourth.* to inaugurate measures for the speedy restoration of Florida to her allegiance.²¹

Jacksonville Captured Again

On February 7, 1864, three Union Army transports, *Maple Leaf*, *Hunter*, and *Island City*, escorted by the Navy gunboat *Norwich*, landed troops to occupy the city of Jacksonville. Other gunboats patrolled nearby or waited near the mouth of the St. Johns River. The landing was a success, capturing the city without serious opposition.

After fortifying the city, troops under General Seymour marched inland. A successful campaign would divide Florida into manageable areas that could be reduced at leisure. The Confederate command realized the vulnerability of Florida and reacted to the news of the Union landing by sending a force by rail from Charleston and Savannah to join the meager Confederate forces in Florida. Confederate Brigadier General Joseph Finegan, commander of East Florida, gathered his widely scattered command and gathered his reinforcements at Ocean Pond near the town of Olustee.

On February 20, the two forces met in pine barrens near Ocean Pond. The Union advance into the interior met with disaster at the Battle of Olustee, where 1,861 Union soldiers were killed, wounded, or captured, compared to Confederate casualties of 940. The defeated Union survivors fled back to Jacksonville where three navy gunboats protected the troops as they fortified the city and reinforcements arrived. Only Confederate supply shortages and command blunders prevented a greater slaughter of the fleeing Federals.²²

²¹ Samuel Jones, "The Battle of Olustee, or Ocean Pond, Florida," *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. IV, reprint ed. (Secaucus, New York: Castle, ND) p. 76.

²² George B. Balch to J.A. Dahlgren, February 23 and 29, 1864, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, ser. 1, vol. 15, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902) pp. 285, 289.

Jacksonville Reinforced

The purely Army effort to occupy enough of Florida to form a Union state government had failed. In the aftermath of Olustee, the Federal effort was transformed into an amphibious, combined-warfare campaign. Superior naval firepower would be used to hold population centers, building a Union presence and protecting those refugees and runaway slaves that could enter Union areas. Infantry reinforcements were sent from South Carolina. With greater strength and numbers the Union toehold could be expanded.

The troops sent to reinforce Jacksonville following the rout at Olustee were most of General Robert Foster's Brigade of Vogdes Division, including the 112th New York Volunteers; the 169th New York Volunteers; and the 13th Indiana Infantry Regiment. They traveled aboard *Maple Leaf* and other Army transports.

The 112th Regiment Infantry, also known as the Chatauqua Regiment for the county in which it was formed, was organized at Jamestown, New York, on September 11, 1862. Assigned to a number of brigades and divisions during the war, the regiment served along the Atlantic coast from Suffolk, Virginia, to Palatka, Florida. They defended Jacksonville from February 20 until April 21, 1864.²³

The 169th New York Volunteers, known as the Troy Regiment, were formed at Troy, New York, and New York City, on September 25, 1862. The regiment helped defend Washington, D.C., before being assigned to the Army of Virginia and then to the Department of the South, where they served alongside the 112th New York in Foster's Brigade of Vogdes Division. After serving in Florida, the regiment traveled to fight in the Army of the James at Cold Harbor, and in North Carolina at the second battle of Fort Fisher.²⁴

The 13th Indiana Infantry Regiment was formed at Indianapolis on June 19, 1861. Two commanders of the regiment, Jeremiah C. Sullivan and Robert S. Foster, were promoted to Brigadier General during the war. General Foster commanded the brigade sent from South Carolina to reinforce Jacksonville in March and April 1864. The 13th Indiana occupied Jacksonville from February 23 to April 17, 1864.²⁵

²³ Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1959) vol. 1, p. 195, vol. 3, p. 1449; D. K. Ryberg, "Regiments With Baggage Aboard the Maple Leaf," *The Maple Leaf, An Extraordinary American Civil War Shipwreck*, Keith V. Holland, Lee B. Manley, James W. Towart, eds., (Jacksonville, Florida: St. Johns Archaeological Expeditions, Inc., 1993) pp. 31-39.

²⁴ Dyer, *Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, vol. 1, p. 198; Ryberg, "Regiments With Baggage Aboard the Maple Leaf," pp. 39.

²⁵ Dyer, *Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, vol. 1, p. 134; Ryberg, "Regiments With Baggage Aboard the Maple Leaf," p. 39.

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Palatka Occupied

On March 11th, with Jacksonville secure, a second Union army force occupied Palatka, another 75 miles upstream. Palatka was intended to become the second Union strong point, emulating the method employed by the Union combined forces along the Mississippi. Federal naval and army forces cooperated to reinforce Palatka and capture enemy stores along the river banks. Captured riverboats proved particularly useful for work along the shallow parts of the river.²⁶

The occupation of Palatka at first went well for the Union. Five companies of the 55th Massachusetts and an artillery battery fortified the city for a garrison of 500 men and made plans to secure the area. Then in late March, the Confederates replied with a surprise attack that so alarmed the Federals that they sent immediate reinforcements. The steamer *Maple Leaf*, which had just arrived in Jacksonville, unloaded the deck cargo, infantry soldiers, and passengers and carried 75 officers and men of the Independent Battalion Massachusetts Cavalry with 87 horses to Palatka.

The cavalry carried by *Maple Leaf* and two other transports helped hold Palatka only briefly, however. The use of two rival transportation methods held the two sides roughly equal. The Union used the river for rapid concentration of forces to defeat superior numbers of dispersed Confederates. The rebels used their railroad lines and irregular cavalry to concentrate forces to defeat smaller dispersed Union units. The introduction of a new weapon on the river would shift power away from this war of maneuver along the river. The introduction of submarine torpedoes made the river an uncertain and hazardous route for the Union; Palatka would have to be abandoned once again two weeks later.²⁷

Confederate Torpedo Service

Among the rebel reinforcements sent to Florida was Army Captain E. Pliny Bryan of the Confederate Army Torpedo Bureau. This was a secret organization that developed a system of explosive devices for use in warfare. Although experiments and some field trials of subterranean and submarine torpedoes had produced promising results, no military force had developed a system for their use. The Confederate Torpedo Bureau and the related Submarine Battery Service developed the weapons and their placement which produced a result far out of proportion to the financial cost and numbers of people involved.

On the night of March 30, 1864, Captain Bryan and five soldiers from the Second Florida Battalion planted twelve torpedoes in the St. Johns river channel near Mandarin Point. The torpedoes, called mines today, were buoyant wooden kegs anchored to float out of sight beneath the surface. Each mine held 70 pounds of fine grain gunpowder in a keg detonated

²⁶ George B. Balch to Commodore S.C. Rowan, March 15 and 16, 1864, *ORN*, ser. I, vol. 15, pp. 292-293, 294-295.

²⁷ William H. Nulty, *Confederate Florida, The Road to Olustee* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama, 1990) pp. 187-202.

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by simple contact fuses on the upper surface. Pine wood cones on each end of the keg provided buoyancy.²⁸

Keg torpedoes and other similar mechanisms, called "infernal machines" by the Union, had become the single most deadly weapon against northern seapower. As the Spring 1864 Florida campaign began, two Union ironclads had been sunk and three other warships damaged severely by mines. Before the war ended at least twenty-seven more vessels would be sunk and seven damaged by mines, including three more in the St. Johns. *Maple Leaf* was the second largest Army transport sunk during the war.²⁹

Sinking of *Maple Leaf*

At four a.m. on the morning of April 1, 1864, while returning to Jacksonville from Palatka, *Maple Leaf* struck a Confederate torpedo [REDACTED].³⁰ The torpedo exploded near the bow, ripping up through the deck and into the side. The ship sank quickly, coming to rest upright on the muddy bottom. Five black crew members sleeping on the foredeck above the explosion were instantly killed, but the remaining passengers and crew escaped into boats and were saved.³¹

Searchers found and rendered harmless more torpedoes near the wreck. During the day, Confederates brought up canon and "shelled away the visible part of the wreck." Attempts to salvage the ship's cargo never came to fruition.

Maple Leaf transported the personal belongings and camp equipment for three regiments, the headquarters of General Robert Foster, and considerable sutler stores with her to the bottom. This cargo has great potential to provide information about the ordinary material used and kept by soldiers in the field.

The sinking of *Maple Leaf* immediately led to the beginning of regular patrols of the river by naval gunboats and armed Army transports. Ships kept carefully in the path "swept" by the lead ship. Troop transports were convoyed by gunboats, which could provide covering fire if ambushed. On April 17, after the discovery of another type of torpedo in the river, the Union abandoned Palatka. Despite the patrols, a second Army transport travelling in

²⁸ James W. Towart, and Col. J. V. Witt, "The *Maple Leaf* as a Union Army Transport," and Richard A. Martin, "The Great River War on the St. Johns," in Keith W. Holland, Lee B. Manley and James W. Towart, eds., *The Maple Leaf, An Extraordinary American Civil War Shipwreck* (Jacksonville, Florida: St. Johns Archaeological Expeditions, Inc., 1993) pp. 15-17, 23-26.

²⁹ John Townsend Bucknill, *Submarine Mines and Torpedoes As Applied to Harbor Defence* (London: Offices of Engineering, 1889) pp. 1-4.

³⁰ George B. Balch to S.C. Rowan, April 1, 1864, *ORN*, ser. I, vol. 15, p. 307; Telegram from Patton Anderson to Thomas Jordan, April 1, 1865, *Ibid.*, p. 316; Naval History Division, Navy Department, *Civil War Naval Chronology, 1861-1865* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971) IV-37.

³¹ "The Steamer *Maple Leaf* Blown Up by a Torpedo," *New York Times*, April 13, 1864, p. 1.

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convoy, *General Hunter*, was sunk by a torpedo near the wreck of *Maple Leaf* during the withdrawal on April 17.³²

Dealing with the Wreck

The Civil War left a number of sunken vessels blocking southern rivers and harbors; *Maple Leaf* was but one of hundreds. Those that could be salvaged profitably were sold by the Treasury Department, leaving other more dangerous or less valuable wrecks to be cleared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Treasury Department advertised *Maple Leaf* and two other wrecks for sale on September 20, 1870, but found no buyers.³³

That left the Corps of Engineers the responsibility for clearing waterways of the torpedoes, obstructions, and sunken vessels that prevented safe navigation. On November 17, 1882, the Corps of Engineers contracted with Roderick G. Ross of Fernandina, Florida, to "remove" the wreck to a depth of 18 feet. Wreck removal as practiced by contractors following the Civil War meant clearance of underwater obstructions by any means practicable. Wrecks could be raised and removed completely, blasted flat on the bottom, or any combination of the two.³⁴

Ross apparently removed the portions of the hogging frame above the main deck, protruding parts of the machinery, and the remaining superstructure by February 1, 1883. He was paid \$3,880 for his work over the winter. Ross missed one part of the wreck and was awarded an additional contract in 1883 to remove the offending wreckage. The wreck continued to appear on maps as late as 1911, disappearing from notice thereafter until 1984.³⁵

Relocation of the Wreck

In 1984, a Jacksonville dentist, Keith Holland, and other professional and business people interested in historic shipwrecks located a wreck tentatively identified as *Maple Leaf*. The group matched satellite imagery [REDACTED] historical charts and searched in a small area that they believed held the remains of the Union transport. That year, they formed

³² George B. Balch to S.C. Rowan, April 5, and April 17, 1864; and J.P. Hatch to George B. Balch, April 5, 1864, *ORN*, ser. I, vol. 15, pp. 311, 312, 314; Dyer, *Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, vol. 3, pp. 1266-1267.

³³ *The Florida Times-Union*, September 20, 1870, as quoted in Towart, and Witt, "Maple Leaf as a Union Army Transport," p. 15.

³⁴ Towart, and Witt, "The Maple Leaf as a Union Army Transport," p. 15.

³⁵ *Ibid.*; 1911 U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey chart reproduced in Frank J. Cantelas, "Maple Leaf Future Management and Past Field Investigations," produced for St. Johns Archaeological Expeditions, Inc., (Greenville, North Carolina: Program in maritime History and Nautical Archaeology, East Carolina University, 1992) figure 5, p. 18.

Saint Johns Archaeological Expeditions, Inc., (SJA EI) as a for-profit company, that being the easiest route to forming an organization to secure rights to excavate the wreck.³⁶

Dr. Holland and others in the group contacted experienced professional archaeologists, historians, and conservators in their quest to carefully excavate and conserve the material they had located. SJA EI had difficulty in determining which government agency had jurisdiction over the wreck; they filed suit to claim salvage rights to force resolution of the issue of ownership of the wreck.³⁷

The wreck was found to remain the property of the United States Army and administered by the General Services Administration. The State of Florida was found to have no legal claim to the wreck, but was acknowledged as an interested party in the careful excavation, conservation, and curation of the material that might be collected from the wreck.

The suit resulted in a compromise agreement wherein SJA EI could proceed with excavation, receiving 80% of all material recovered. The United States Army and the State of Florida would each receive 10% of the recovered material. Florida would lend archaeological and conservation expertise to the project. The result of this agreement has been a most extraordinary archaeological project. SJA EI, although a for-profit company entitled to sell 80% of what it recovered, has kept the archaeological material and records together without dispersal. Dr. Holland describes the SJA EI *Maple Leaf* project as a public trust which deserves to remain intact as a collection.³⁸

By 1989, the early guarded expressions of interest from state and Federal historical preservation professionals evolved as well, eventually resulting in substantial grants to the project from the state of Florida and the U.S. Army.³⁹ This funding has been used for excavation, conservation, storage, and publication of results. Lee Manley, a skilled divemaster, was hired to organize the project full time and set up a conservation laboratory in Jacksonville. Another significant step was the initiation of a cooperative agreement between SJA EI and East Carolina University (ECU). ECU provided Frank Cantellas as the

³⁶ The description of the location and excavations of the wreck site are taken from multiple sources including interviews. The primary sources have been: Keith V. Holland, "The Long Successful Search for the *Maple Leaf*," in Holland, Manley, and Towart, *The Maple Leaf, An Extraordinary American Civil War Shipwreck*, pp. 127-138; and Frank J. Cantelas, *Maple Leaf: Future Management and Past Field Investigations*, (Greenville, North Carolina: Program in Maritime History and Nautical Archaeology, East Carolina University, 1992).

³⁷ Miller, "The Sociology of a Shipwreck Project," pp. 121-126.

³⁸ "St. Johns Archaeological Expeditions, Inc., plaintiff, vs. The Unidentified, Wrecked and Abandoned Steam Vessel Believed to be the vessel *Maple Leaf*," and "Stipulation for Compromise Settlement," United States District Court, Middle District of Florida, Case no.: 84-1383-CIV-J-16, as reprinted in Appendix D, Holland, Manley, Towart, *The Maple Leaf, An Extraordinary American Civil War Shipwreck*.

³⁹ Stephen W. Sylvia, "Introduction" to Dr. Francis A. Lord, "Underwater Time Capsule: The Wreck of the *Maple Leaf*," in *North South Trader's Civil War*, (May-June, 1992), p. 30; William E. Marden, "500 get first look at *Maple Leaf* artifacts," *The Florida Times-Union*, (Jacksonville, Florida: October 27, 1988).

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full-time archaeological manager to oversee planning and execution of a succession of three summer field schools carrying out documentation of the shipwreck structure.⁴⁰

Conclusion

The *Maple Leaf* site possesses great potential to add to our knowledge of the past. Florida State Archaeologist James J. Miller calls *Maple Leaf* "a vitally important shipwreck" and says of the archeological project:

No underwater archaeological project in Florida has even come close to the *Maple Leaf* in representing a model for public and private sector cooperation, or for public benefit.⁴¹

⁴⁰ George A. Threewitts, "East Carolina Divers Probe Civil War time Capsule," *Underwater USA*, (December 1991) p. 28.

⁴¹ Miller, "The Sociology of a Shipwreck Project," pp. 125-126.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register.
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office: Florida
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other (Specify Repository):

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: [REDACTED]

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing
[REDACTED]

Verbal Boundary Description:
[REDACTED]

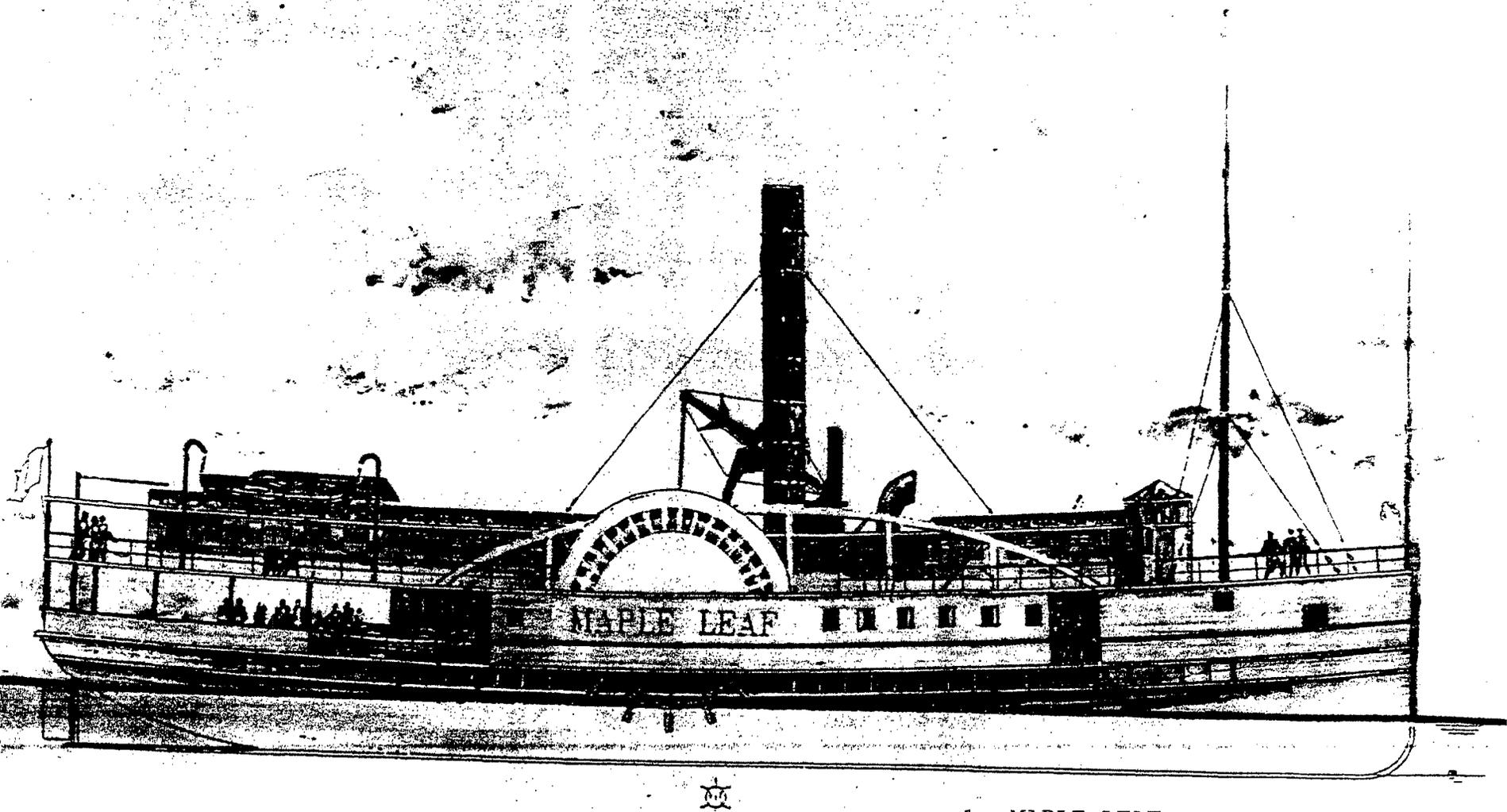
Boundary Justification:
[REDACTED]

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Date: May 26, 1994



1. *MAPLE LEAF*
Duval County, Florida
Painting of *Maple Leaf* based
on historical documentation
Painting: Donald G. Ingram, 1993