

DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY JOB SEARCH

# Post-Medieval Shipbuilding Adaptations for the Geography, Resources, and Technologies of North America

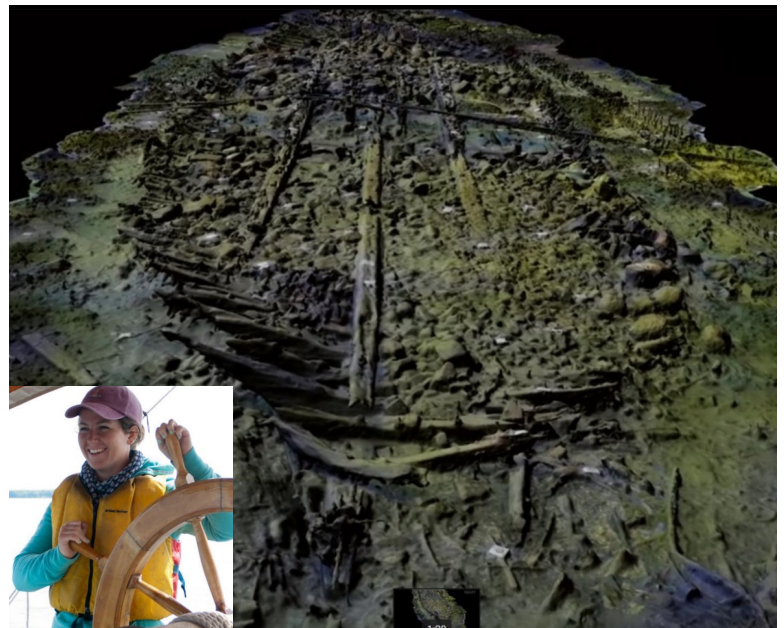
TIME: 4:00 pm

DATE: 19 March, 2024

ROOM: QC-2013 (Queen's College)



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**Abstract:**

During the Age of Discovery, massive advances in nautical design and technology took place in European shipyards. This was both cause-and-effect; these advancements allowed Europeans to explore new areas all over the globe, and in doing so, learn and adapt their ship designs to better take on long-distance voyages. The earliest waves of Europeans visiting northeast North America for fishing and whaling were integral to these developments. The salt cod fishery became the basis of national economies in Europe, with countries devoting enormous resources to successful harvest seasons. Despite their monumental influence on this economy, the actual vessels deployed for transatlantic voyages to cod-rich waters are not well documented. It stands to reason that European shipwrights were employing their most advanced designs and technologies to maximize fishermen's yields, but what were the changes they were implementing? Comparative archaeological studies of 19th-century steamboats and sailing vessels show how North American shipwrights adapted their European-based shipbuilding knowledge to build hulls better suited to North America's geography, technologies, and resources. These archaeological studies also provide evidence that vessel construction experimentation, though not often written down, can be studied through archaeology. The research presented in this talk will discuss the beginning of a long-term research endeavour seeking to examine the changing shipbuilding designs and technologies in 16th-19th century transatlantic fishing vessels by investigating archaeological shipwrecks of the Gulf of the St. Lawrence.