

## Notes on Artefacts Roosevelt Inlet Shipwreck

**Author** Jacob B Hak MA  
**Contact** bureauhak@gmx.com  
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### Introduction

In 2019 the cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands commissioned archival research to the Dutch merchant vessel *Maria Johanna*. In 1784 this vessel sank just off the Atlantic shores of the state of Delaware in the United States.

The research included a few distinct artefacts. This memo is a reflection of the quest for more information on these items.

### Artefact: Signet



In August 2017 Faye L. Stocum compiled information on the *Maria Johanna* in a paper titled: *2017 Roosevelt Inlet Shipwreck: What do we know?* The document outlines the present state of knowledge on the vessel, crew and cargo, and the artefacts that were found in situ of the wreck or had been washed ashore. On this particular signet Faye L. Stocum concluded: "... signet has a distinctively Dutch flair. It has a coronet crown atop a stork with a snake in its mouth and a raised foot holding an orb. There are initials on either side of the image. To the left there is an "A." On the right side, the image is not clear. Given the importance of the Stork (it's the Coat of Arms for the City of the Hague), suggests this is from the Netherlands. More research is needed."

### Description

This signet shows a large bird. Above the roundel is the coronet of a Duke. The bird, a crane, heron or stork, is holding an orb. The design looks French. The signet is likely to be made of silver, which is an excellent material to use for signets. There are no markings that refer to year or manufacturer.

### Conclusion

Experts from the Historic Museum, the municipal archive and municipal archaeologists in The Hague have not been able to identify this signet. Based on information from the U.K. one could conclude with a fair amount of certainty that the signet derives from Britain. Further investigation could very well lead to more information on the signet and its history. The research delivered sufficient indications to that effect.

### Artefact: Shoe buckle



#### Description

Most distinct in the buckle are the flags, of which three are clearly visible. These seem to show the British Flag, yet without Scotland's St. Andrew's Cross and a Fleur de Lis (the Kings of England claimed to be also the King of France). The images are stereotypes. Buckles like this consists of a tin lead alloy. It is not likely any iron was used. Patches of rust may derive from other objects in the finds.

#### Conclusion

It is very likely that the buckle be English/British. In that case the head would be that of and English King. In the Dutch Republic such a portrayal would very rarely show the head of the 'Stadhouder' or Prince on a similar maritime piece. It is made in the 17th or 18th century. Without a doubt this shoe buckle belonged to a high-ranking officer.<sup>1</sup>

In her thesis Bridget McVae stated that an object like this buckle were typically not manufactured without being commissioned<sup>2</sup>

The images show British Navy Officers wearing similar shoe buckles, perhaps less ornate.



<sup>1</sup> Sources: Rijksmuseum and Schoenmuseum in The Netherlands.

<sup>2</sup> McVae, B.C., The Roosevelt Inlet Shipwreck: Identification, analysis and historical context, 86, 87.

