National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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7. Description

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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The remains of the whaler <u>Stamboul</u> lie partially buried in the bottom sediment of Carquinez Strait at the foot of West 12th Street in Benicia, California. <u>Stamboul</u>'s hulk lies some 226 feet from the shoreline near the site of the former <u>Turner/Robertson</u> shipyard.

STAMBOUL AS BUILT, SAILED, AND MODIFIED INTO A HULK

As built in 1843 Stamboul was 106.5 feet long, with a 25.0-foot beam, and a 14.5-foot depth of hold. Stamboul was registered at 260 44/95 gross and 247 42/95 net tons. The vessel's three masts were bark-rigged. [1] Stamboul was a typical bluff-bowed merchantman of her time, built not for speed but for reliablity and seaworthiness of oak, iron and copper-fastened and copper sheathed. [2] Stamboul was built with two decks, the 'tween deck most probably being opens for her first career in the Boston ice trade.

In 1865 Stamboul was purchased by New Bedford, Massachusetts whaling interests who converted her into a whaler. The 'tween deck was modified, the berths and other accounterments of her ice trade days being removed and a try-works and other whaling arrangements being installed. In whalers, the 'tween deck was one of the primary working spaces for trying and rendering the blubber into whale oil. On the main deck a series of curved wooden davits were built into the bulwarks for the whaleboats.

Stamboul underwent major repairs in 1877 to enable her to continue in service after thirty-four years afloat and continued her career as a whaler until 1896, when she was on the verge of being broken up for her fittings and salvageable timber. Instead, the ship was purchased by Matthew Turner for use as a shear hulk at his Benicia shipyard. A 1901 photograph of the shipyard clearly shows Stamboul in her new career and records the modifications made to her. The cabins were sent ashore for use as yard buildings, the bulwards were cut down, the chainplates removed, and the topmasts and yards sent down. The mizzenmast was also apparently cut down, perhaps removed entirely, with only the main- and foremasts remaining. The vessel was apparently

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scuttled and stabilized by dumping gravel or rock in her hold. A pair of shear poles were erected on her main deck aft. A pier was built from the shore out to <u>Stamboul</u>, with a wide ell forming a platform on the starboard side of the ship. Broadside to the shore, her bow pointing west, <u>Stamboul</u> remained in active use at the yard until the First World War. By that time her hull had become worm-eaten and had settled deeply into the mud. Her upper hull was cut away piecemeal until only the bow remained standing above the water, her name still prominently carved on it. [3] By 1918, though, when the shipyard closed for good, the above water portions of the ship had disappeared.

ARCHEOLOGICAL REMAINS OF STAMBOUL

The remains of Stamboul were discovered during an archeological survey of the shipyard in September 1986. Stamboul lies buried in the sediments of Carquinez Strait in water averaging six feet The vessel lies parallel to shore, her bow still pointing The ship is heeled to starboard approximately 15 degrees. The remains of <u>Stamboul</u> were traced protruding above the bottom sediment in September 1986; the outline of the bow, with the stempost and knightheads intact, was observed. Several frame ends and deck beams were noted as divers moved aft. sternpost was discovered in situ 106 feet aft of the stempost, helping confirm the historical identification of Turner's shear hulk as Stamboul. Portions of decking were discovered buried beneath one to two feet of silt aft; the stubs of what appeared to be the main and foremasts were also encountered by divers during the initial reconnaissance of the wreck. Based on this survey it was determined that the entire lower portion of Stamboul's hull, from the 'tween deck to the keel, had survived and was buried in the sediment. Approximately 70 percent of the hull is present and intact at the site.

An archeological test excavation of two 10 x 10 foot units 20 to 30 feet aft of the stem on the starboard side of the ship was conducted during October 25-26, 1986. Two to three feet of silt had been deposited on the wreck in the month following the archeological survey of the shipyard. Excavation of the silt overburden with a venturi-type hand-held dredge cleared the vessel's 'tween deck and starboard bow to a depth of one to two feet below the surviving frame ends and deck beams. The survival of intact structure below the 'tween deck level was confirmed; ceiling planking, outer hull planking, and frames are in place and fastened. The hull had collapsed in the area of the

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excavation; the knees for the 'tween deck lie on their sides, with the butt ends of the deck beams lying atop them. Fragments of 4 x 4-inch decking are attached to deck beams by iron spikes. A large amount of wire rope lies inside the vessel, tangled around the area of the foremast. The wire rope is either the shrouds of the mast or rigging from the shear poles. Nearby, lying exposed on the bottom, is an iron winch with wire rope running from it into the hull.

The interior of the hull is filled with gravel, mud, and a heavy concentration of shell, perhaps representing a filtering and depositional process when the upper portions of the hull were intact. Outside the hull a loose mud with small amounts of shell surrounds the vessel. Probes continued more than fifteen feet deep into the mud without resistance. Further excavation of the exterior and interior of the hull is required to assess the full condition of the vessel and the presence of any external vessel hardware, furniture, scattered portions of the upper works, or copper sheathing. Sufficient work was accomplished to document the extraordinary hull survival and the high level of structural and archeological integrity of Stamboul.

FOOTNOTES

- Registry #255, July 20, 1848, Port of Boston, Massachusetts. Records of Merchant Vessel Documentation, RG36 and 41, National Archives, Washington, D.C. and Twenty-Sixth Annual List of Merchant Vessels of the United States... (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894) p. 240.
- American Lloyds' Registry of American and Foreign Shipping. (New York: E. & G.W. Blunt, 1862) p. 216, and American Shipmaster's Association, Record of American and Foreign Shipping... (New York: American Shipmaster's Association, 1884) p. 904.
- Interview with Mr. Russell Robertson, age 88, son of the last owner of the shipyard and a shipyard employee, September 9, 1986.

8. Significance

Period prehistoric 1400-1499 1500-1599 1600-1699 1700-1799X 1800-1899 _X 1900-	Areas of Significance—C archeology-prehistoric agriculture architecture art commerce communications	•	landscape architectur law literature military music philosophy politics/government	re religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater x_ transportation other (specify)
Specific dates	1843-1918	Builder/Architect Wat	erman and Ewell	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The 1843 whaler Stamboul, whose 70 percent intact hull lies buried in the mud of Carquinez Strait off the Matthew Turner/James Robertson Shipyard in Benicia, California, is a rare and unique maritime resource of NATIONAL significance. Stamboul is significant under criteria A, C, and D since she A) was actively involved in the important American ice trade of the late 1840s and 1850s. An important aspect of American maritime activity, the Boston ice trade carried New England ice throughout the world, particularly in the heyday of the trade, Stamboul gained prominence in maritime circles in the 1850s when she became the first vessel since ancient times to transport ice to Egypt. Between 1865 and 1895 Stamboul was involveed in American deepwater whaling, operating in Atlantic, Pacific, and finally Arctic waters. American whaling was a major and significant maritime trade, and in the latter half of the 19th century, when Stamboul sailed from San Francisco, she sailed from the most important whaling port in the world. Stamboul is also significant through her association with the Matthew Turner/James Robertson Shipyard. As a shear hulk, she played and important role in the operations of the prolific Turner, who built 228 vessels in his career, more than any other individual shipbuilder in North America, and in the shippard activities of James Robertson. Stamboul is additionally significant since C) her 70-percent intact hull is one of three surviving American whaling ships from the heyday of whaling, the others being the largely rebuilt and restored National Historic Landmark Charles W. Morgan (1840) and the constructionimpacted bow and stern of the 1841 whaler Lydia, a National Register of Historic Places property buried in urban landfill in San Francisco. Finally, Stamboul is of special significance D) since her nearly-intact

9. Major Bibliographical References

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10. Geographi	cal Data		
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11. Form Prep	ared By		
name/title James P. Delga	do, Chief Marit	ime Historian ,	/ City of Benicia Peggy Martin
organization National Park	Service	d	ate March 17, 1987
street & number P.O. Box 3	7127/250 East L	St. te	elephone (202) 343-8163
city or town Washington, D	.C.√.:Beinecta⊹:CA	(94510) s	tate D.C. 20013-7127
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remains comprise a record of mid-19th century New England shipbuilding practice. Shipbuilding was scarcely recorded or documented, and <u>Stamboul</u> provides a physical record that will substantially add to our understanding of American vessel construction practice in New England, center of American shipbuilding, in the last years of an antebellum shipbuilding tradition that would fade in the 1850s and 1860s with the large-scale advent of steam and scientific ship design and construction. The particulars of ice-trade vessels, which were supposedly overbuilt and double-sheathed, have not been documented, and <u>Stamboul</u>'s remains have the potential to provide the first architecturally-specific information on this significant group of American vessels.

The above statement of significance is based on the more detailed statements which follow.

STAMBOUL IN THE ICE TRADE, 1843-1865

The bark Stamboul was built at Medford, Massachusetts, by Waterman and Ewell, Medford shipbuilders, in 1843. Launched in the Autumn of 1843, Stamboul was built for two Boston merchants, Thomas A. Goddard and Joseph Gasigio. [1] Details of her early career are not readily available, but it appears that the ship was involved in the Boston ice-trade. Henry C. Kittredge, in Shipmasters of Cape Cod, noted that "Capt. Seth Kingman, in the Stamboul, took the first ice to Egypt that had ever been seen there." [2] Kittredge undoubtedly meant the first ice to be seen in "modern" times. The ice-trade flourished between 1836 and 1865 in the aftermath of Boston merchant Frederic Tudor's bold step to rejuvenate Boston's East India commerce. Shipping ice cut from Wenham Lake, just north of Boston, to Calcutta, Tudor found an eager market. The ice trade expanded to Southern cotton ports, to the Caribbean, and South America, as well as to middle eastern ports; Stamboul, named with a variation of the Turkish "Istanbul," was an appropriately-christened vessel. According to historian Samuel Eliot Morison, "Mr. Tudor and his ice came just in time to preserve Boston's East-India Commerce from ruin...for a generation after the Civil War, when artificial ice was invented, this export trade increased and prospered. Not Boston alone, but every New England village with a pond near tidewater, was able to turn this Yankee liability into an asset, through the genius of Frederic Tudor." [3] The Boston ice trade vessels loaded ice and packed it in double-sheathed holds filled with sawdust for the long voyages down the coast or across the Atlantic. On the return trip, cargoes like jute, indigo,

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saltpeter, and linseed were brought back. Boston monopolized the trade; in 1857, 96 out of 112 vessels loading for the United States at Calcutta discharged their cargoes in Boston. [4] Ice-cutting became a common sight, extending from Connecticut to Maine. Henry David Thoreau, watching the ice being cut from Walden Pond, wrote, "Thus it appears that the sweltering inhabitants of Charleston and New Orleans of Madras and Bombay and Calcutta, drink at my well." [5]

STAMBOUL IN THE AMERICAN WHALING TRADE, 1866-1895

Stamboul entered a new trade in the aftermath of the American Civil War. On May 14, 1866, in her twenty-third year Stamboul was re-registered after being sold to new owners. A conglomerate of New Bedford, Massachusetts, whaling masters and shipowners headed by Joshua, Charles, and Edward Hitch had purchased and outfitted Stamboul for the whaling trade late in 1865. [6] American whaling was an important aspect of the nation's maritime trade that had gained prominence in the 1830s and 1840s. By 1845, 21 percent of America's merchant marine was engaged in whaling. The whaling industry was a source of American pride and wealth, a "hardy form of perilous industry....an element of national force and strength." [7]

Sailing from New Bedford on May 15, 1866, Stamboul cruised the Atlantic whaling grounds for three years under the command of Capt. Reuben Kelley. The results of the voyage were good; Stamboul sent home or returned to New Bedford with 304 barrels of sperm whale oil, 1,696 barrels of assorted whale oil, and 11,089 tons of whale bone. [8] After returning to New Bedford on June 25, 1869, <u>Stamboul</u> was quickly outfitted for another voyage, sailing on August 31 for the Indian Ocean whaling grounds. A four-year voyage brought the ship's owners 669 barrels of sperm whale oil, 498 barrels of whale oil, and 3,237 tons of whale bone when <u>Stamboul</u> returned to New Bedford on June 1, 1873. [9] ship remained in port for nearly a year, not sailing until May 27, 1874. The regular pattern of American whaling at the time was one of extended deepwater voyages of three or more years and an increasing amount of time in the Pacific whaling grounds. Bedford and many other New England whaling ports were in decline as the Atlantic whaling grounds were "fished out." The discovery of new grounds in the Sea of Cortez and the development of Arctic whaling, as well as the rise of the port of San Francisco, gradually centered American whaling activity in the Pacific, and

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by the last quarter of the 19th century San Francisco was the nation's principal whaling port.

Not surprisingly, Stamboul hunted in the Pacific from 1874 on, though it was not until the end of her fifth voyage in 1882 that her owners, following the lead of many other New England whalers, began to home-port the ship at San Francisco. [10] Like many other whalers, Stamboul had wintered at Honolulu until the 1882 whaling season. Commencing that year Stamboul's pattern of operation changed. Each year she sailed with dozens of other San Francisco-based whalers for the Arctic, whaling for ten or eleven months until returning to San Francisco. The annual sailing of Stamboul is reflected in her eleven whaling voyages made between 1883 and 1893. [11] Departing San Francisco in the early months of the year, Stamboul and her sister whalers made "shake-down" cruises to Honolulu before heading for the Bering Strait, the Chukchi Sea, and the Arctic Ocean. There she would skirt the ice, pursuing the bowhead whale, until the coming winter and the advancing ice drove the whalers back into the Pacific to discharge the year's catch at San Francisco. In November 1883, the impending arrival of the whaling fleet was noted along the San Francisco waterfront. Thirty-nine vessels, Stamboul among them, had hunted in the Arctic that season; 33 of them, including Stamboul, were due to winter in San Francisco. "Formerly nearly the whole fleet wintered at Honolulu, and the Hawaiian government held out splendid inducements for the whalers to do so, as they put money into the pockets of the islanders, but San Francisco now reaps the benefit by holding out more encouragements." [12]

In 1884 <u>Stamboul</u> was sold to James McKenna of San Francisco, who in turn conveyed her to H.C. Wright and his partners. Wright, of Oakland, was the principal in the firm of Wright, Bowne, & Company, a shipping firm which controlled nearly a dozen Arctic whalers. [13] <u>Stamboul</u> thus passed into the hands of one of the most active San Francisco whaling firms. In January 1884, she was noted in port, "consigned to Wright & Browne [sic], Oakland Creek." [14] <u>Stamboul</u> continued whaling for her new owners for another decade, but steam whalers were taking over the trade by the 1890s; <u>Stamboul</u>, busily engaged in one of the last major centers of American deepwater whaling, was one of an increasingly diminishing numberof sailing whalers left in the trade, an outdated relic of the days of Melville when she returned from her last whaling voyage in 1894.

From 1894 to 1896 <u>Stamboul</u> languished in the backwaters of San Francisco Bay, laid-up and awaiting her eventual breaking up. A

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sketch in the San Francisco <u>Call</u>, presumably from this period, shows "The Whaler Stamboul, Waiting to be Broken Up." [15] The breaking up the ship began at California City, off Marin County's shores early in 1895. A notation on <u>Stamboul</u>'s last registry notes that it was surrendered at San Francisco on March 21, 1895; "Vessel broken up at California City, California about March 1, 1895, unfit for service." [16] <u>Stamboul</u> was not broken up, however; she was probably stripped of usable fittings and gear before being sold to Matthew Turner of San Francisco for his shipyard at Benicia.

STAMBOUL AS A SHEAR HULK

Matthew Turner's Shipyard at Benicia was the third location selected by the Ohio-born immigrant for his shipbuilding business. After the California Gold Rush Turner, a mariner, worked in the coastwise trade, extending his operations across the Pacific to the South Seas and Asia. In 1871 Turner commenced building his own ships, ultimately moving his yard to San Francisco, where he operated and built vessels for a number of customers until urbanization forced him to relocate to Benicia in 1883. At Benicia, Turner's yard launched some 165 vessels. [17] Turner built 228 vessels; according to maritime historian John Lyman, Turner's output, "although many were rather small, has probably never been equalled by any other individual shipbuilder in North America; in fact, he probably built more vessels for foreign account than any other American since the Revolution." Turner constructed South Seas trading vessels, pilot boats, yachts, Pacific coast trading vessels, floating dry-docks, most of the United States' Bering Sea pelagic sealing schooners, steam whalers, tugboats, steam schooners, scows, gas auxiliary schooners, barges, barkentines, and barks. His yard was a center of Pacific coast shipbuilding activity and one of the most significant shipyards in the United States in the late 19th-early 20th centuries.

In 1895, during the heyday of Turner's operation of the yard, Stamboul was purchased from the shipbreakers for use as a shear hulk at the yard. Stripped of usable fittings, the vessel was scuttled at the end of the shipyard pier to serve as a permanent work platform. Steam winches, a donkey boiler, and shear poles used to step masts and send yards aloft to vessels just launched at the yard were erected on Stamboul's decks. A 1901 photograph of the yard shows Stamboul hard at work in her new career. All three lower masts are still standing, with the shear poles rising near the mizzen as the rigging of the four-masted barkentine

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Amaranth neared completion. Partially sunk in the mud of Carquinez Strait, <u>Stamboul</u> lasted beyond her normal lifetime for another twenty years.

In 1912 Turner's yard was purchased by San Francisco shipbuilder and marine engineer James Robertson. Robertson, who operated the yard from 1912 to 1918, did not use Stamboul long, since by this time she had begun to deteriorate. Her decks had collapsed into the hull, the transom was gone, and the sides of the ship above the tween deck were being eaten away. Russell Robertson, son of James Robertson, played on the hulk in his youth and recalls digging brass ship's spikes from Stamboul's thick oak planks and selling them to the junkman for a nickel apiece. Robertson clearly remembers the ship's name was then still carved on her bow, which rose above the water, the double-sheathed bow, reinforced to withstand Arctic ice floes, still standing. By 1919, however, the bow had fallen into the mud, and only a few timbers from the ship's upper works protruded from the mud and water at low tide to mark the location of Stamboul's buried hulk.

FOOTNOTES

- Registry #255, July 20, 1848, Port of Boston. Records of Merchant Vessel Documentation, Record Groups 36 and 41, National Archives, Washington, D.C.
- Henry C. Kittredge, <u>Shipmasters of Cape Cod</u> (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1935) p. 283.
- Samuel Eliot Morison, The Maritime History of Massachusetts, 1783-1860 (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1921) pp. 279-284, passim and Robert G. Albion, William A. Baker, and Benjamin W. Labaree, New England and the Sea (Mystic, Connecticut: The Marine Historical Association, Inc., 1972) p. 110.
- Morison, The Maritime History of Massachusetts... p. 284.
- Henry David Thoreau, <u>Walden and Civil Disobedience</u> ed. Owen Thomas (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1966) p. 197.

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John G.B. Hutchins, <u>The American Maritime Industry and Public Policy</u>, <u>1789-1914</u> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941) p. 269, and Sen. William H. Seward, "Survey of Whaling Grounds and Routes of Commerce on the Pacific," 32nd Cong., 1st sess., July 29, 1852, <u>Congressional Globe</u> 24: pt. 3, pp. 1973-1976.

Alexander Starbuck, <u>History of the American Whale Fishery, From Its Earliest Inception to the Year 1876</u> (Reprint Ed., New York: Argosy-Antiquarian, 1964) p. 612. The manuscript log for this voyage is in the collections of the Old Dartmouth Historical Society's Whaling Museum in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

9 Starbuck, p. 632.

William Richard Crawford, "Whalers from the Golden Gate: A History of the San Francisco Whaling Industry, 1822-1908." M.A. Thesis, San Diego State University, 1981. p. 67. Also see John R. Bockstoce, Whales, Ice, and Men: The History of Whaling in the Western Arctic (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986)

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12
San Pedro [California] Shipping Gazette, November 17, 1883.

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- 16 Notation on Registry #31, November 29, 1890, Port of San Francisco, RG36 & 41, National Archives.
- 17
 Obituary of Matthew Turner in the San Francisco Chronicle,
 February 11, 1909. Turner's career is also summarized in John
 Haskell Kemble, San Francisco Bay: A Pictorial Maritime History
 (Cambridge, Maryland: Cornell Maritime Press, 1957) pp. 69-70.
- 18
 John Lyman, "An Old California Shipbuilder," manuscript, n.d.,
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Stamboul, Certificates of Enrollment and Registry, Ports of Boston and New Bedford, Massachusetts, and San Francisco, California. Records of Merchant Vessel Documentation, RG36 and RG41, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<u>Stamboul</u>, Logbooks, Voyages of 1866-1869, 1892, and 1893. Old Dartmouth Historical Society Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts.

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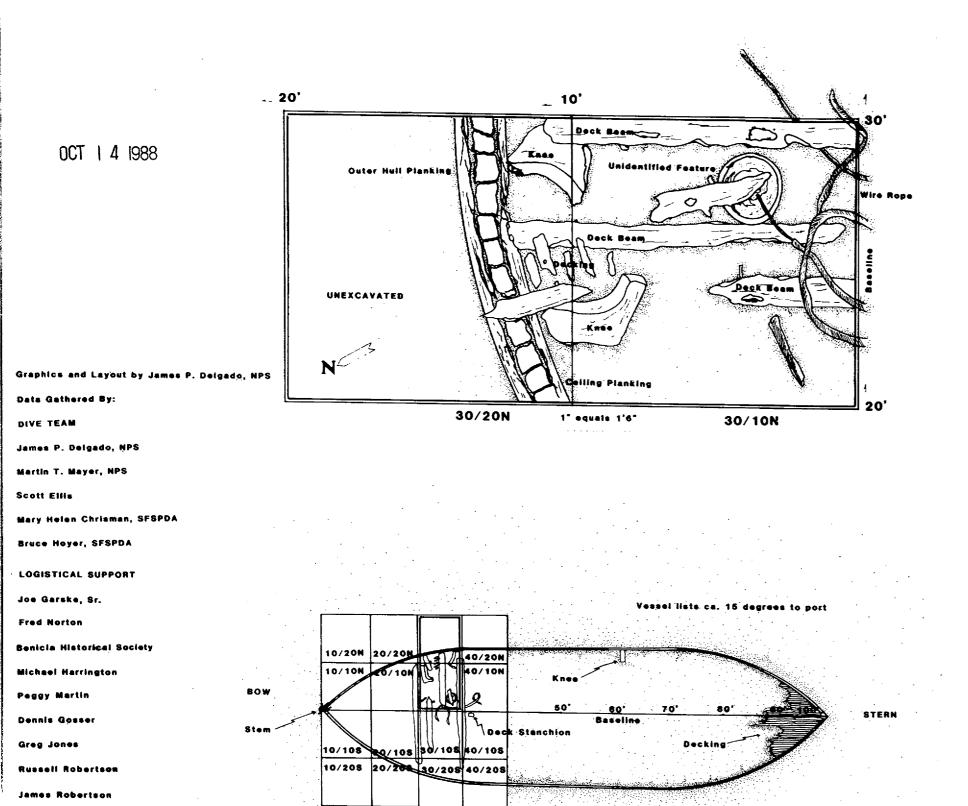
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Seward, Sen. William H., "Survey of Whaling Grounds and Routes of Commerce on the Pacific," 32nd Cong., 1st sess., July 29, 1852, Congressional Globe, 24: pt. 3.

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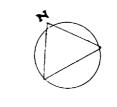


EXCAVATION OF UNITS 30/10N AND 30/20N HULK OF STAMBOUL TURNER/ROBERTSON SHIPYARD

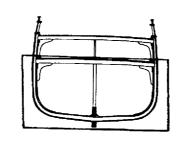
FOOT OF 12TH STREET BENICIA, CALIFORNIA OCTOBER 28-30, 1986

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

S.F. SPORT DIVERS ASSOCIATION
and the
BENICIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY









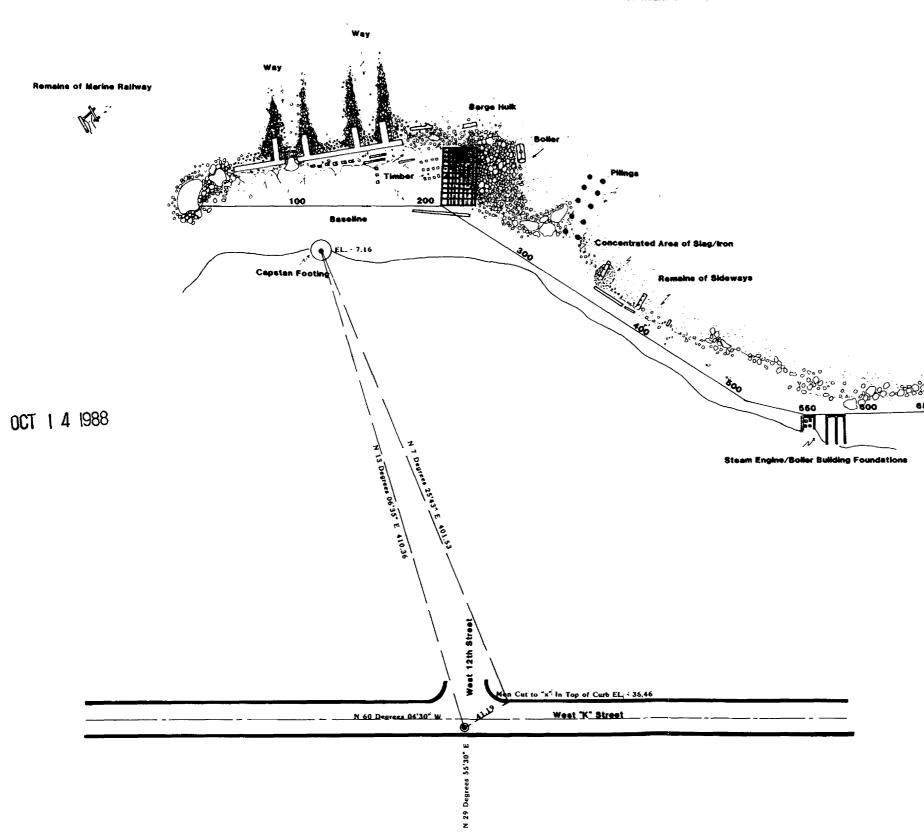


Stamboul at San Francisco, Circa 1890 National Maritime Museum, San Francisco

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California Department of Parks and Recreation





TURNER/ROBERTSON SHIPYARD 1883 - 1918

Foot of 12th Street Benicia, California

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE Golden Gate National Recreation Area S.F. SPORT DIVERS ASSOCIATION and the **BENICIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Scale 1" - 40'



Kathleen Kasper, SFSPDA Scott Ellis

Dirk Fulton

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