

Reading Comprehension

Read the article "Buried Boats" before answering Numbers 1 through 7.

Buried Boats

When most people think of a shipwreck, they imagine the remains of a huge wooden or metal boat crashed along the bottom of the ocean. Fish swim in and out of the mangled boat's hull, and coral and seaweed cling to its sides. Meanwhile, divers with scuba gear and cameras paddle their way into the depths to explore inside the long-forgotten vessel.

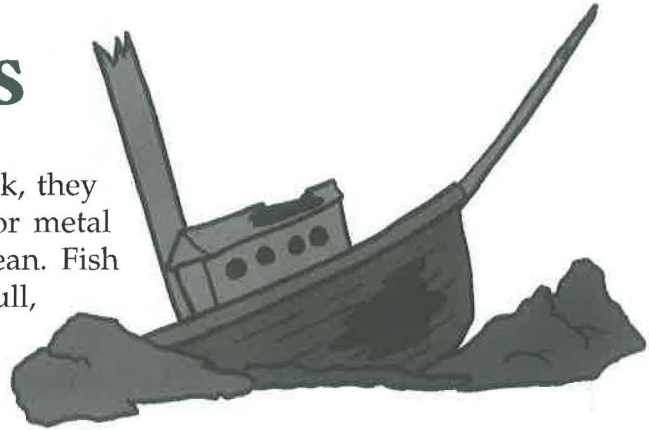
They might find anything from old pottery to rusty cannons to pirate gold, but one thing is certain: the deep, cold water has swallowed up the ship and kept it secret for a very long time.

Surprisingly, though, water is not always a necessary element in shipwreck explorations. Few people realize that many important shipwrecks can be found *on land*. Trading skiffs, warships, and pirate galleons alike have been found buried deep in riverbeds, hilltops, and cornfields throughout the world.

The seemingly unlikely event of a boat being buried is actually fairly common. There are millions of boats in the world, and thousands of bodies of water that can be accessed by boats. That means there are numerous opportunities for ships to sink, and, indeed, ships do sink on a regular basis. Let's say a ship is traveling down a river and it springs a leak, founders, strikes the bottom of the river, and sinks into the mud. Over subsequent years, more mud and sediment build up on top of the shipwreck, partially or wholly concealing it.

The next step in this process is more unlikely but still not uncommon. The river may change its course by covering a new section of land, or beginning to flow in a different direction. Many things can cause a river to change its course, including damming, erosion, and floods. After the river has moved, its old riverbed (where the shipwreck still lies) is uncovered. Former riverbeds have rich, moist soil and make excellent farmlands. If a farmer finds such soil and plants there, the crops will likely grow well. Within a short time, the land will permanently lose any familiarity to a riverbed; a casual observer would not realize that a river ever used to traverse it. An observer would certainly never dream that there might be a shipwreck buried beneath it.

In 1988, brothers David and Greg Hawley found the wreck of a steamboat that sank on September 5, 1856—and they found it buried forty-five feet below the ground in the middle of a farmer's cornfield.



The Hawleys had first learned about the steamboat, named the *Arabia*, while reading an old newspaper. According to the article, the ship sank in a river a mile below a town called Parkville. The brothers were puzzled; they could find Parkville on a modern map, but there was no river anywhere near it. How could there conceivably be a ship there?

David Hawley found an old map of the town, and it was immediately evident to him that a river had once flowed near Parkville. They decided to compare the old and new maps and figure out what land used to be part of the riverbed. After drawing up a new map, they marked off all the land within a mile of Parkville and then visited some local farmers. After obtaining permission, the Hawleys went into some cornfields with metal detectors. They were not hoping to uncover old coins or jewelry but were searching for a shipwreck.

It didn't take long before the brothers' metal detectors located the huge metal boilers and engines of the old steamship. Caught up in the thrill of discovery, the Hawleys and some friends gathered some money and launched into a massive effort to excavate the deep-down artifact. The project was costly and time-consuming, but the diggers were determined to bring this piece of history back to the surface.

It wasn't as easy as scooping up sand with a shovel. To the Hawleys' dismay, they found that the field was solid, but there was plenty of water underneath. As they dug into the sandy soil, they found a miniature river of muddy water coursing beneath. Undeterred, they built twenty irrigation wells and constructed water pumps nearby to drain water from the excavation site. They had to work fast, too; if they didn't find the ship by spring, heavy rains might arrive and wash away all their efforts.

After almost five months of strenuous labor, the brothers and their helpers finally sighted the superstructure of the *Arabia*. Although it was filled with mud, they were eventually able to clean it out and explore inside. They were the first people to set foot in the boat in more than a hundred years, and the items they found had not seen sunlight in just as long.

The *Arabia* was an invaluable time capsule, containing everything from unopened suitcases to jars of blueberry pie filling, all well preserved by the mud. The searchers also found crates of Asian silk, British dishes, South American tobacco, and French perfume. There was no doubt that the *Arabia* was a well-stocked trading ship.

Examining the long-lost ship also exposed clues as to its demise. The Hawleys learned that the *Arabia* was carrying hundreds of tons of freight and passengers when it struck a submerged tree. The tree, like a spear, ripped open the ship and sent it foundering toward the riverbed. Although the passengers escaped unharmed, the freight, and the ship itself, fell quickly into the mud. (The *Arabia* was not the only ship to sink in the area, either; the researchers believe that hundreds of ships went down, and many are still buried in farmers' fields.)

Although the Hawleys had at first hoped to find golden treasures on board the *Arabia*, they quickly realized that all the history they were rescuing was treasure. Their hard work had barely begun; the next steps they had to take were to save the artifacts from deteriorating. The delicate items, like fabrics and foods, had been in cold, watery mud for decades; left out of water, they would quickly rot. Every item from the ship had to be carefully stabilized using many different techniques, including soaking, freezing, and coating with wax.

Next, the Hawleys had to find a place to store the thousands of relics. The team eventually established a museum dedicated to the history of the *Arabia* and its passengers. More than 100,000 people visit the museum each year to catch a unique glimpse of the past—a piece of seafaring history found deep in the dirt.

Answer Numbers 1 through 7. Base your answers on the article “Buried Boats.”

- 1 What is the author’s purpose in writing this article?
 - A. to explain how readers can dig up their own buried boats
 - B. to present the history of the *Arabia* and tell the story of how it sank
 - C. to describe the Hawleys’ experience and offer information on buried boats
 - D. to persuade readers to investigate their local history to see if any buried boats might be nearby
- 2 Which statement is correct, according to the article?
 - F. Former riverbeds are usually turned into commercial property for businesses.
 - G. The *Arabia* had no passengers onboard when it hit a submerged tree.
 - H. David and Greg Hawley found a buried boat in their own backyard.
 - I. Rivers can change course because of erosion, damming, or flooding.
- 3 What would be the *best* way to find out if a river has changed its course?
 - A. Use a metal detector to find any buried boats in the area.
 - B. Find an old map of the area and see where the river used to run.
 - C. Find out if there have been any major floods in the area in the last century.
 - D. Ask a historian if any dams have been built in recent years.
- 4 Which statement best explains the significance of the Hawleys’ discovery?
 - F. “More than 100,000 people visit the museum each year.”
 - G. “The *Arabia* was an invaluable time capsule, containing everything from unopened suitcases to jars of blueberry pie filling, all well preserved by the mud.”
 - H. “The Hawleys learned that the *Arabia* was carrying hundreds of tons of freight and passengers when it struck a submerged tree.”
 - I. “They were the first people to set foot in the boat in more than a hundred years.”

- 5 Buried boats are different from the regular idea of a shipwreck in that they
- A. often remain undiscovered due to changes in topography.
 - B. are easily found through the use of metal detectors.
 - C. are often destroyed by the movement the dirt above them.
 - D. are more common than regular shipwrecks.
- 6 According to the article, why was the Hawleys' discovery of the *Arabia* like finding buried treasure?
- F. They found gold and other valuable items to sell.
 - G. They made money by selling the artifacts to a museum.
 - H. The artifacts they preserved were valuable parts of history.
 - I. The brothers profited from the ticket sales of the museum they established.
- 7 Which statement best describes the author's feelings about buried boats?
- A. Buried boats should stay buried.
 - B. Buried boats are far less interesting than regular shipwrecks.
 - C. Regular shipwrecks contain more valuable treasures.
 - D. Buried boats can offer us insight into the past.