

Technical Announcement

U. S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region

Date: February 2012

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Shipwreck Research in the New Orleans Notarial Archives

OCS Study BOEMRE 2011-040

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, announces the availability of a new study report, *Shipwreck Research in the New Orleans Notarial Archives*.

Since the 1970's, BOEM-funded archaeological studies and cultural resources surveys required for oil and gas leases in the Gulf of Mexico have resulted in a compiled, in-house shipwreck database containing over 3,000 entries. Many of these studies conducted archival research to access primary and secondary historical sources for identifying shipwrecks in the Gulf of Mexico. Despite this research, historic shipwrecks have been identified in industry surveys on the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) that appear to have no corresponding analog in the BOEM database. It was long believed that these vessels were simply lost to the historical record and the documentation of their loss was no longer available. It now appears, however, that previous research overlooked a potentially rich source of information at the New Orleans Notarial Archives (NONA), which houses the City of New Orleans notary records from 1733 to 1970. Contained within the notary records are sea protests that document vessel-related accidents and wrecking events in inland waterways as well as offshore.

More than 1,000 notaries served in New Orleans between 1733 and 1970. Their records are compiled within many hundreds of bound volumes in French, Spanish, or English. During the 1930's, the Works Progress Administration indexed the volumes of only 84 notaries. This study accessed a small percentage of notary records to identify whether additional information pertaining to shipwrecks was available. During the course of the study, researchers discovered additional ship losses that were not identified during prior BOEM-funded archival research at other repositories.

This report is available only in compact disc format from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, at a charge of \$15.00, by referencing OCS Study BOEMRE 2011-040. The report may be downloaded from the BOEM website through the [Environmental Studies Program Information System \(ESPIS\)](#). You will be able to obtain this report also from the National Technical Information Service in the near future. Here are the addresses. You may also inspect copies at selected Federal Depository Libraries.

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