

**Matthew H. Thompson THE BOHEMIAN GIRL PROJECT: A STEAM LAUNCH STUDY  
(Under the direction of Dr. Lawrence Babits) Department of History, April 2010.**

The objective of this thesis is to research Lake Waccamaw's maritime activity from 1880 to 1910. Similar research projects concerning remote lakes, like Lake Waccamaw, were conducted in areas only accessible after the development of steamboats and railroads. Like many of those bodies of water, Lake Waccamaw was connected to other parts of North Carolina by railroad. Unlike other lakes and waterways, Lake Waccamaw only had one steamboat, named the *Bohemian Girl*, built and operated by Samuel Potts. This steam launch was photographed giving tours to Lake Waccamaw visitors. The *Bohemian Girl*'s role was never documented. If no records were kept concerning the steam launch, then how can the *Bohemian Girl*'s function and significance be determined? This thesis examines the *Bohemian Girl*'s purpose and the manner in which the steam launch reflected its owner and period society.

A secondary objective of this research is to determine how many other vessels named *Bohemian Girl* were constructed. Given the vessel's lack of documentation, what research methods and data could answer this question? This thesis draws upon archaeological, photographic, and oral history data to examine conflicting reports that at least two different launches were named *Bohemian Girl*. If proven more than one existed, the thesis' primary objective of ascertaining the vessel's significance could assist in determining why Captain Potts named his subsequent vessel(s) *Bohemian Girl* as well. Both primary and secondary objectives are complimentary and will provide a thorough overview of Lake Waccamaw's maritime icon.

The *Bohemian Girl* Project: A Steam Launch Study

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Master of Arts in Maritime Studies

By

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