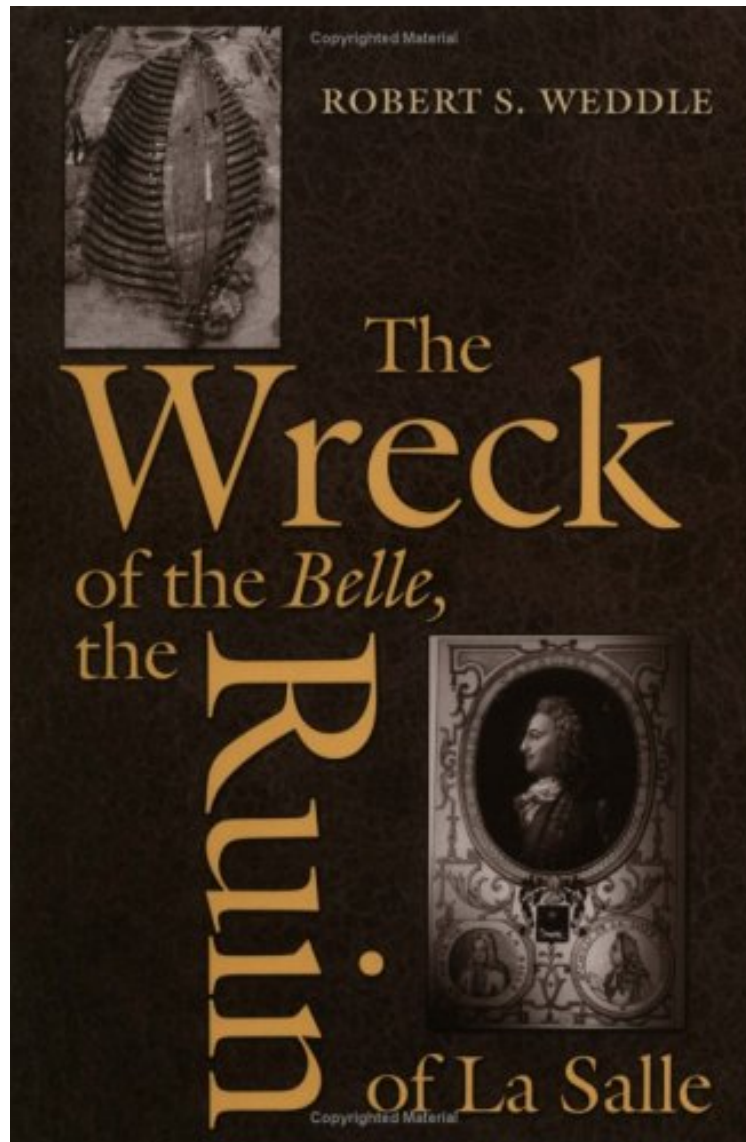


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The Wreck of the Belle, the Ruin of La Salle (Number 48: Centennial Series of the Association of Former Students, Texas AM University)

Robert S. Weddle

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Robert S. Weddle : The Wreck of the Belle, the Ruin of La Salle (Number 48: Centennial Series of the Association of Former Students, Texas AM University) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it

would be worth my time, and all praised *The Wreck of the Belle, the Ruin of La Salle* (Number 48: Centennial Series of the Association of Former Students, Texas AM University):

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0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent reference book for Texas history research
By Gary1836
Another major source of research that was used to help in the research to locate the remains of the La Belle which is being installed in the Texas State History Museum (the Bullock Texas History Museum) in Austin starting in October 2014. Excellent reference book for Texas history research.
7 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Disappointing
By Charles Schamenek
I live in Texas and have read in the news about the discovery of the Belle, and LaSalle's adventures. I have also visited France many times, and I was looking for a good book to send to my French friends. Not this book. I've only read half of it, and then I gave up. It is a very hard read. Sometimes it reads like a history book or narrative, sometimes it reads like a commentary on history, and sometimes it reads like an editorial, with comments made on other historians. To the extent that it is a history book, it does not always appear to discuss events chronologically. It's hard to tell sometimes because it is such a hard read - hard to follow. It appears that the author skips around a lot, and there is not a good flow to the writing. Also, there was very little in this book on the recent discovery of the Belle.

Robert Cavelier de La Salle: daring explorer, empire builder, shaper of history and shameless schemer who abused his followers and deceived his king. In *The Wreck of the Belle, the Ruin of La Salle*, acclaimed historian Robert S. Weddle reveals how La Salle and his closest associates spun a web of secrecy and falsehood about their travels, dissembled their objectives, and put their own spin on his exploits by suppressing other would-be diarists. Weddle's study represents a major revision of the story of La Salle and his times as they have been traditionally understood, with few of the major characters in the epic tale emerging unscathed. Even his death was misreported by survivors of the French colony in Spanish-claimed territory as they sought to save themselves. This book had its genesis in the Texas Historical Commissions 1995 discovery in Matagorda Bay, along the Texas coast, of the wreck of La Belle, the last of four vessels that La Salle brought to America on his final mission. Artifacts salvaged from the ship shed new light on the efforts of La Salle and his two hundred colonists to establish the first European settlement between Florida and Mexico, a settlement that has been erroneously labeled Fort-Saint-Louis. As history provided the clues that led to this archaeological discovery, so archaeology now fills in the blanks of history, raising a host of new questions about the ill-starred colony. Weddle marshals the evidence to answer those questions, reframing the old picture of one of France's premier American explorers in the light of new discovery and setting the record straight. Weddle's exhaustive research has resulted in a work not limited to La Salle's final misadventures in Texas. Rather, he chronicles the explorer's activities throughout his travels in North America, drawing on several unpublished sources to provide a more accurate picture of La Salle, both as private individual and as legendary explorer.

From Booklist
Weddle, author of two other tracts on La Salle's adventures, makes use of evidence from the recent (1995) discovery of the wreck of the Belle, one of four vessels brought to America in La Salle's last, ill-fated venture. La Salle, who would have made a great "spin-meister" in our times, never quite got things right, despite his single-minded quests and his self-adulation (his final landing spot was considerably west--in Texas, actually--of where he thought he was). That single-mindedness was what enraged many of his more mortal cohorts and eventually caused one of them to plot and carry out his murder. Likewise, while acknowledging La Salle's bravery and stamina in navigating the Mississippi for the first time from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, the author is scathing in his final judgment of the celebrated explorer, stating that "he failed on all counts: as fur trader, explorer, military leader, and colonizer. Most of all . . . as a human being." Numerous illustrations of the artifacts salvaged from the Belle round out this instructive volume. Allen Weakland
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About the Author
Robert S. Weddle, a Fellow of the Texas Historical Association, is widely regarded as the dean of Texas colonial historians. Author of *La Salle, the Mississippi, and the Gulf: Three Primary Documents and Wilderness Manhunt: The Spanish Search for La Salle*, also published by Texas AM University Press, he is an independent historian with a background in journalism and publishing.