TREASURE AND TRAGEDY MARK TREASURE COAST

Eleven Spanish ships and one French vessel, the Grifon, gathered in the harbor at Havana, Cuba, in 1715, preparing for the voyage across the Atlantic to Cadiz. The ships were divided into the New Spain Fleet under Captain General Juan Esteban Ubilla, and the Squadron de Terre Firme under Captain General Don Antonio de Echeverz y Subiza. The fleets collected treasure from South and Central America, and met in Havana to sail home in convoy for protection against pirates, and English raiders. The fleet sailed July 24. The weather was good in Cuba, but a major hurricane struck the fleet off the Treasure Coast, claiming 1,500 lives, and much of the treasure. Only the Grifon escaped.

REFUERZO

Nuestra Senora de la

Concepcion, also

known as the

Capt. Juan Antonio Lavioes Cargo: 252,171 pesos of silver, hides, ceramics, cochina

Ship type: Supply ship Owned by: Miguel de Lima

Urca de Lima

Commanded by:

Brazilwood, indigo, copper, cocoa, sarsaparilla and other food stuffs.

underwater preserve, and the only vessel of the fleet on which the public may

Wreck site Just off Pepper Park in Fort Pierce. It is a state

Known FLORIDA locations of the 1715 Fleet Here are the reported AREA locations of the Spanish OF Treasure Fleet vessels, their DETAIL commanders, and cargoes, as compiled from numerous sources. Names of ships or in BOLD. New Spain Fleet: Sailed from Mexico **Squadron de Terre Firme:** Sailed from South America and the islands Portions of ships unidentified

CAPITANA Command ship of Capt. Gen. Juan Esteban Übilla. Cargo: 36,000 pesos. Now known as the Cabin Wreck. Cannon Wreck Sebastian **ALMIRANTE** Commanded by Capt. Gen. Don Francisco Salmon. Wabasso Rd. Cargo: 73,327 pesos.





Silver and Gold

Spanish Doubloon

Piece of Eight



The Spanish Doubloon was a gold coin with a value of about four English Pounds, which converts to about \$946 in current U.S. dollars. The silver coins are known as "Real's" or the legendary "Pieces of Eight" of pirate lore, with a value of one U.S. Dollar of the time or \$17 in modern currency. The silver coins were called "pieces of eight" because they were often literally cut into eight parts. Remember the oldcheer: "Two bits, Four Bits, Six bits, a Dollar, everyone stand up and holler!"?

The Urca De Lima goes down during a violent hurricane.

WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?

The remainder of ships in Echeverz' fleet have never been located. One is believed to be offshore from Fernandina, and another off Fort Lauderdale. Many of the vessels shattered into several pieces, so, while there were only 11 ships, there are some 21 treasure sites listed along the Treasure Coast.

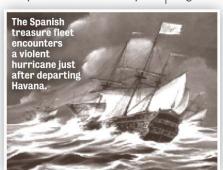


July 24, 1715

Eleven Spanish and one French ship sail from Havana, Cuba, carrying the first gold to be shipped to Spain in 12

July 30, 1715

Hurricane strikes fleet in the Florida Channel between the mainland and the Bahamas Islands. Only the French ship escapes and reaches Europe.



July 31, 1715

Admiral Don Francisco Salmon, the only surviving ranking officer of the fleet, collects the survivors and what supplies he can, creates a salvage camp on the barrier island between Sebastian and Vero Beach and begin salvage operations.

August 5, 1715

Miguel de Lima, owner of the Urca, reports his ship has been salvaged and the goods used to help the salvage operations for the rest of the fleet.

August 6, 1715

Admiral Salmon sends to Havana and St. Augustine

for help.

September 1715 Spanish recover more than half the treasure on their manifests.

September 20, 1715 Admiral Salmon reports salvage progress to the King

of Spain through Havana. **January 1716** English ships raid the

Treasure Camp. 1718

Spanish abandon salvage operations.

1949

Kip Wagner and Capt. Steadman Parker of Wabasso, make an unsuccessful effort to salvage treasure.

1959

Dr. Kip Kelso, a Wagner associate, finds information in the National Archives which starts the treasure search again.

1959

Timeline of events of 1715 Fleet

Regales. Captain not named.

Cargo: 44,8000 in silver plus

Nuestra Senora de la Popa. Capt. Juan Baptista Zalene.

Cargo: General goods and

smuggled gold coins.

PATACHE

smuggled gold.

Libby Walker of Vero Beach, vacationing in Spain, helps get materials on fleet from the General Archives of the Indies. Wagner finds Admiral

Salmon's treasure salvage camp and files with the state for a right to explore for treasure, and founds his company, Real Eight, to do the searching.

1963

Mel Fisher as head of Treasure Salvors, subcontracts with Wagner to search for the fleet.

1964

Fisher and Wagner find 1,033 gold coins on the ocean floor off Fort Pierce.

1990

Fisher opens a treasure museum near Sebastian.

Present:

treasure continues for the Spanish gold, worth seven million pesos in 1715, still in

the ocean offshore.

The search for

REASEARCH: JOE CRANKSHAW

SOURCES: Archival Information on the 1715 Fleet, 24 July 1715, by Jack Hawkins and Bob Marx.; Florida's Golden Galleons, The Search for the 1715 Spanish Treasure Fleet by Robert F. Burgess and Carl J. Clausen;

http://www.treasureexpeditions.com/My steryShip.htm; Pieces of Eight by Kip Wagner, As Told To L.B. Taylor, Jr.; Lowenstein Reference and Genealogical Section of the Vero Beach Public Library; *The 1715 Fleet Disaster*; by John DeBry; former President of HRD, Inc., Compiled from HRDnews letters: Vol. 1, No. 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, Vol. 2, No. 2, 3, and 4

PHOTOS: Images of Doubloon, Piece of Eight courtesy of blindkat.hegewisch.net; image of compass courtesy of

www.maritimeantiques-uk.com; painting of Spanish treasure fleet and painting of Urca de Lima by William L. Trotter courtesy of www.sfdj.com; image of Mel Fisher courtesy of www.melfisher.com

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