

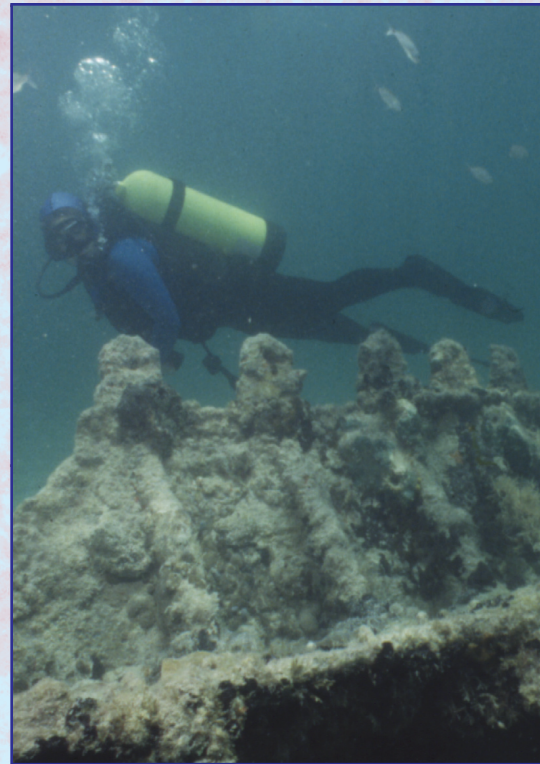
HOW TO FIND

Half Moon

The wreck of *Half Moon* is located just outside Bear Cut at latitude 25° 43.654' N and longitude 80° 08.069' W. Red day marker #2 is near the site and the wreck is marked as an obstruction on nautical charts. Water depth varies with the tide but averages 8 - 10 feet to the sand bottom and only 3 - 4 feet over the wreckage. Care should be taken when motoring near the site; watch for swimmers and divers, and anchor in the sand surrounding the wreck. Swimming and diving are best on a high, slack tide. Remember to display a "divers down" flag when diving or snorkeling. A laminated underwater guide is available from local dive shops to orient divers on a self-guided tour of the preserve.

As with all other historical and archaeological sites on public uplands and submerged bottomlands, *Half Moon* is protected by Florida laws prohibiting unauthorized disturbance, excavation, or removal of artifacts. Please help keep the site intact for others.

"Take only photos and leave only bubbles."



An interpretive display of the history of *Half Moon* can be seen at the following location

**Marjory Stoneman Douglas
Biscayne Nature Center**

Crandon Park
6767 Crandon Blvd., Key Biscayne 33149
305.361.6767

For more information call
850.245.6444
Or visit
museumsinthesea.com



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Division of Historical Resources
Bureau of Archaeological Research
500 South Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Half Moon State Underwater Archaeological Preserve

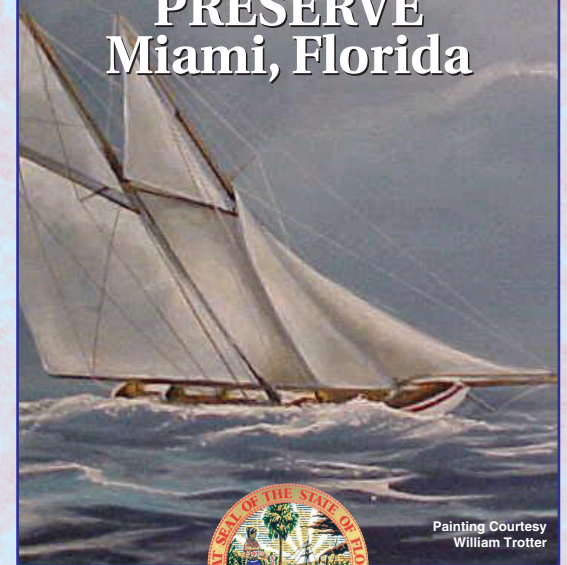
Half Moon came to rest on a shallow, sandy shoal just outside Bear Cut between Key Biscayne and Virginia Key. After grounding, the yacht became buried in sand above the waterline with the hull listing to port. The starboard side, which was higher in the water column than the port side, appears to have been struck by a larger vessel and is broken outward at the midship point. Over the years the once-proud Kaiser Cup racing yacht slowly collapsed and settled into the shoal, becoming entombed over time and home to generations of coral and fish.

The site of *Half Moon* is marked with a bronze plaque designating it an Underwater Archaeological Preserve and Florida Heritage Site. The wreckage provides an ideal haven for a myriad of marine life. Soft corals and sponges thrive on the hull while damsel fish and juvenile reef fishes hide in cavities beneath the deck. Southern stingrays are well camouflaged in the sandy flat between the hull and broken starboard side and enormous pufferfish glide among the frames. A pair of curious gray angelfish inspect all visitors to their home. A number of large drums embedded within the hull may have been placed there during an unsuccessful salvage attempt in the past and now are integrated into the wreck, providing cozy niches for sea anemones.



Half Moon

UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRESERVE Miami, Florida



Painting Courtesy
William Trotter

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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ROSENSTIEL SCHOOL OF MARINE AND
ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCE



MARJORY STONEMAN DOUGLAS BISCAYNE
NATURE CENTER

MIAMI-DADE HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

FRIENDS OF HALF MOON

Half Moon

The 154-foot long, two-masted racing sailboat was built in 1908 by Krupp-Germania-Werft at Kiel, Germany. Originally christened *Germania*, the 366-ton chrome-nickel steel yacht carried 15,000 square feet of canvas and was rigged as a schooner. The vessel was a wedding gift from Bertha Krupp, daughter of the yard owner and namesake of the “Big Bertha” guns of World War I, to her husband, the Count von Bohlen und Halbach. As a racing yacht, *Germania* was among the fastest of her day, winning the German Kaiser’s Cup. She also competed in the annual Cowes Regatta in England, as well as the premier German yacht races at Kiel.

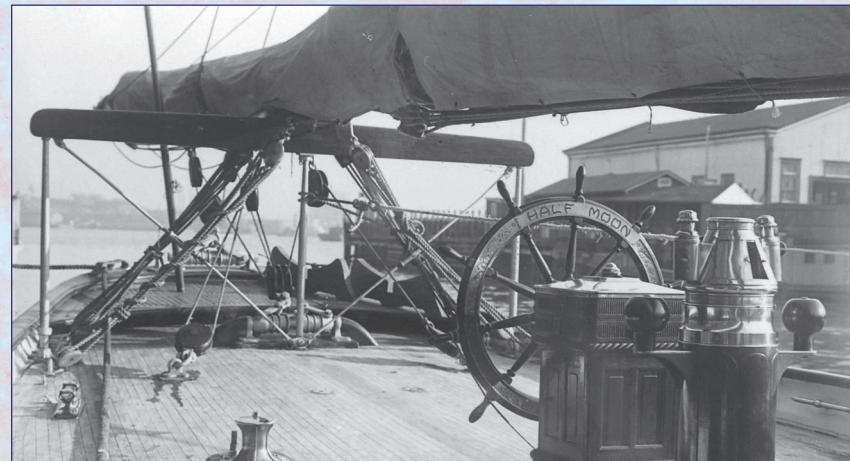
Germania had just arrived in England for the 1914 Cowes races when World War I was declared and her captain was ordered to return the yacht home by the Imperial German Navy. Perhaps not realizing the gravity of the political situation, *Germania*’s captain put into Southampton for water. The yacht immediately was seized as a prize of war by British Customs officials, making *Germania*’s crew among the first German prisoners of World War I.

Despite protest by Count von Bohlen und Halbach, *Germania* was sold in 1917 at auction in London to H. Hannevig. Hannevig transferred ownership to his brother, Christoffer, who renamed the yacht *Exen* and sailed her to New York. Upon Hannevig’s bankruptcy in 1921, his estate sold the yacht to former Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Navy Gordon Woodbury. This new owner re-named the yacht *Half Moon* after the famed ship of 17th-century



explorer Henry Hudson. Woodbury refitted the yacht, sparing no expense upon lavish furnishings, luxurious staterooms, formal dinner seating for ten, and a music salon with piano. Rumors then abounded that the yacht once belonged to Kaiser Wilhelm himself.

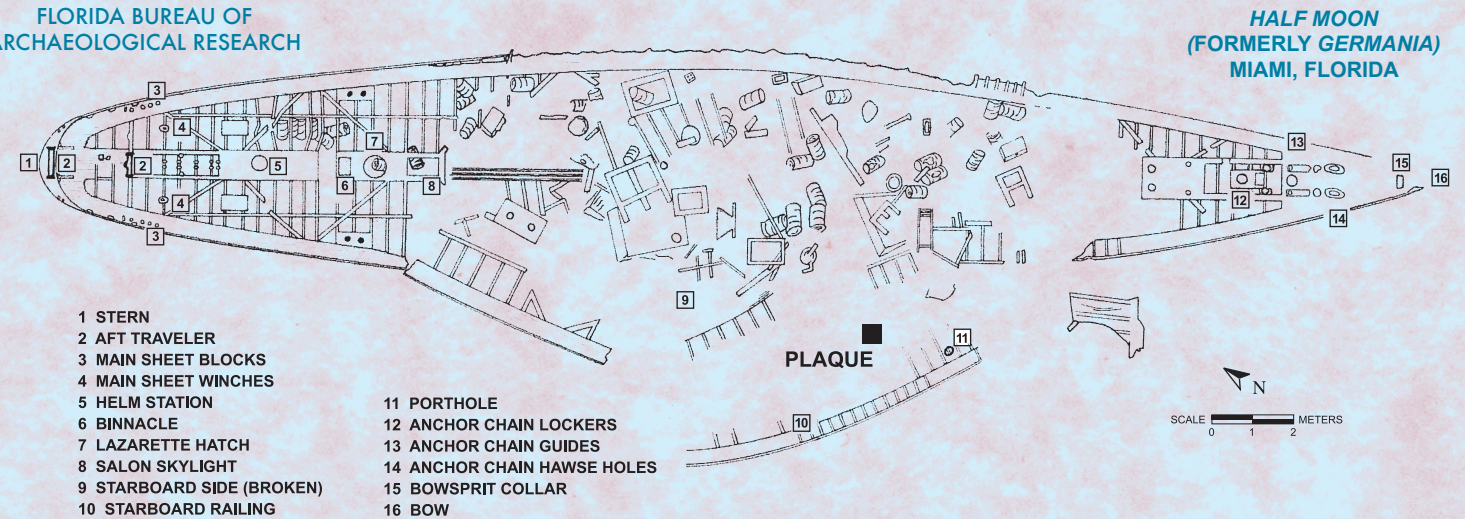
In 1922, at the start of a voyage to the South Seas, *Half Moon* was caught in a violent storm off Cape Charles, Virginia. High seas nearly sank the sailboat



and the quartermaster was washed overboard to his death. Woodbury himself nearly drowned; he later called the incident “the worst experience of my whole life.” The badly damaged *Half Moon* was towed into port for repairs and returned to New York. Woodbury decided to sell the yacht, salvaging the masts and spars.

Charles Vail of New York purchased *Half Moon*, cutting off the lead keel and offering the hull for scrap. H. Fink and A. Topf bought

FLORIDA BUREAU OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH



the hulk, returned its original name of *Germania*, and towed it to Miami to be used as a floating restaurant and dance pavilion. Moored in the Miami River, the vessel endured the hurricane of 1926 but was damaged and sank in the river shortly after. Soon raised, the derelict was acquired by Captain Ernest D. Smiley of Miami, who refitted the hull and called it *Half Moon*. A small tender ferried customers to and from *Half Moon*, which was permanently

moored with heavy chains to an offshore reef and used as a fishing barge and cabaret. Captain Smiley, his wife, and young son took up residence on board the yacht. In 1930 they abandoned ship at night during a severe storm and were rescued. *Half Moon* broke free of her moorings and ran hard aground on a shallow sandy shoal off Key Biscayne at the entrance of Bear Cut.

Half Moon wrecked with such force that raising it proved futile; the vessel deteriorated and disappeared under the blue waters of the Atlantic and her name was forgotten. Research by local Miami divers and amateur historians revealed the yacht’s identity and the wreck was nominated to Florida’s Underwater Archaeological Preserve program. Information contributed by historians in Germany and England added *Half Moon*’s German origins to the documentation and provided architectural data. *Half Moon*, formerly *Germania*, became Florida’s seventh Underwater Archaeological Preserve in November of 2000, and in 2001 was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

