

Half Moon
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Half Moon, originally christened *Germania*, was built in 1908 by Krupp-Germania Werft at Kiel, Germany. The 366-ton chrome-nickel steel sailing yacht was a wedding gift from Bertha Krupp, daughter of the yard owner to her groom, the Count von Bohlen und Halbach. As a racing schooner, *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 One was declared and her captain was ordered to return home. Perhaps not realizing the severity of the situation, *Germania's* captain put into Southampton for water. The yacht was immediately seized as a prize of war by British Customs officials, making *Germania's* crew among the first German prisoners of World War One..

Sold at a London auction in 1917 to H. Hannevig, who transferred ownership to his brother Christoffer, the yacht was renamed *Exen*, and sailed to New York. Upon the Norwegian's bankruptcy in 1921, his estate sold the yacht to the former Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Navy, Gordon Woodbury, who renamed the vessel *Half Moon* after the famed ship of 17th century explorer Henry Hudson. Woodbury's dream was to sail the South Seas, and he spared no expense in refurbishing the yacht. He outfitted *Half Moon* with a galley that contained an ice box and double ovens, which were important because the yacht's formal dining room had seating for ten. The dining room was also equipped with a stained glass skylight over a chandelier. After dinner, guests aboard *Half Moon* could retire to the main salon and enjoy their brandy by the full-size fireplace, while being entertained by music being played on the upright piano. Rumors abounded that the yacht had once belonged to Kaiser Wilhelm himself.

Unfortunately, Woodbury made it no farther south than Cape Charles, Virginia. In 1922 *Half Moon* was badly damaged in a violent storm. This tragic event took the quartermaster's life when he was washed overboard, and after the storm, Woodbury called the incident "the worst experience of my whole life".

Half Moon was sold to Charles Vail of New York, who cut off the lead keel and offered the hull for scrap. H. Fink and A. Toplitz bought the hulk, returned its original name *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 thereafter. Soon raised, the derelict was acquired by Captain Ernest Smiley of Miami, who moored it with heavy chains to an offshore reef as a fishing barge and floating cabaret. In 1930 Captain Smiley and family abandoned the vessel in the middle of the night due to threatening seas. *Half Moon* broke free of her moorings and ran hard aground on the sandy, shallow shoal at

the entrance of Bear Cut, off Key Biscayne. She struck with such force that a second attempt to raise her proved fruitless. The many steel drums now integrated into the wreck site are possible evidence of an unsuccessful salvage effort.

Half Moon, formerly *Germania*, became Florida's seventh Underwater Archaeological Preserve in 2000, and in 2001 was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Today the remains of *Half Moon* can be found both underwater and on land. Two conserved artifacts, the ship's bell and an ivory box with the Krupp's *Germania* Shipyard crest depicted on the lid are on the display at the Marine Museum and Discovery Laboratory at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Nature Center on Key Biscayne.