

Anchor

On Friday the 13th in July of 1733, a Spanish fleet consisting of three armed galleons and eighteen merchant vessels left Havana, Cuba, bound for Spain. The convoy was carrying a wide variety of goods needed for the economic survival of Spain.

Shortly after entering the Gulf Stream, a hurricane began to brew. The fleet was scattered some 80 miles along the Florida Keys, with all but one vessel destroyed. This lucky ship safely returned to Havana to tell the tale of the storm.

Today, as we swim along with the friendly spadefish across the ballast pile we see what remains of *San Pedro* and her historical tale.

This galleon anchor dates back to the 1733 fleet disaster. Although it is not *San Pedro*'s original anchor, it came from one of her sister ships. Because the anchor was raised by salvors before being returned to the State of Florida for placement on *San Pedro*, archaeologists attached a zinc sacrificial anode to the stock of the anchor in order to help re-stabilize the metal underwater and prevent further corrosion.

Although *San Pedro* was a merchant vessel, she carried cannons for protection. Just beyond the crossing school of fish we see one of seven cement replica cannons placed at *San Pedro* to remind divers of what was originally left behind.

Cannon

Seven cement replica cannons and a contemporary anchor were placed on *San Pedro* to provide visitors with a visual representation of the shipwreck; currently, one cannon is buried in the sand.

The cement cannons were cast from a mold made from a 9-pounder cannon recovered from *San Jose*, one of the larger galleons in the 1733 fleet.

The 287-ton Dutch-built galleon was carrying 1,600 pesos of Mexican silver and numerous crates of Chinese porcelain when she wrecked almost a league from Indian Key. Her discovery in Hawk Channel led to the recovery of small silver coins dated between 1731 and 1733; some of the original cannons were trapped under the ballast stones, but these were also raised in the 1960s by local treasure hunters. These salvors also removed elements of the ship's rigging, hardware, and remnants of her cargo.

Although the ballast is all that remain visible from the original wreck, the value of the site has not diminished. Today, the treasures of *San Pedro* are found in the rich history and immense diversity of marine life that call the 1733 Spanish merchant vessel home.

Plaque

As we swim south, across the ballast mound of *San Pedro*, we come across two of seven replica cannons which were placed on site in 1988 to replace those recovered in the 1960s by local salvors.

These cement cannons provide visitors with a visual representation of how the shipwreck appeared after the 1733 hurricane disaster.

In addition to the cannons, three bronze plaques were placed on site in this cement monument. The top plaque designates *San Pedro* as a state Underwater Archaeological Preserve.

As you can see, portions of the lower plaques are covered due to shifting sands.

The second plaque lists the sponsors of the Preserve: ASAP Marine, Bud 'N Mary's Marina, Florida Rock & Sand, Indiana University, Islamorada Chamber of Commerce, Buddy's Dive Shop, Cheeka Lodge, Holiday Isle, San Pedro Trust, World Down Under, and Professional Association of Diving Instructors.

The third plaque states that these plaques were sponsored by the friends and family in loving memory of Petty Officer William Chapman French Jr., US Navy Seal Team 5, June 4th 1970 to October 3rd, 1992.