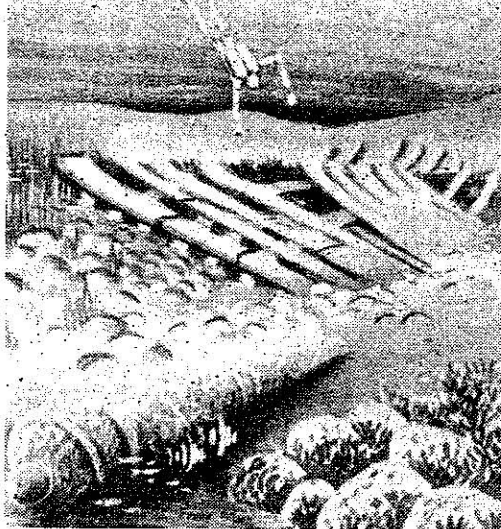


Urca De Lima

Underwater Archaeological Preserve Off Ft. Pierce, Florida



The Spanish Plate Fleet

Urca de Lima was part of the Spanish merchant convoy commanded by Capitan General Don Juan de Ubilla. *Urcas* were flat-bottomed, round-bellied storeships originally designed to ply the shallow waters off the Flemish coast. Due to their cargo carrying capacity, they soon were adopted for the Spanish-American trade between Europe and the New World.

Loaded with the products of Mexico and Manila, Ubilla's flota of ships rendezvoused in the summer of 1715 with the South American squadron of Antonio de Echeverz at Havana to begin the long voyage back to Spain. The combined fleet of eleven vessels set sail from Cuba on the 24th of July, but they were never to reach their destination.

Shipwreck and Salvage

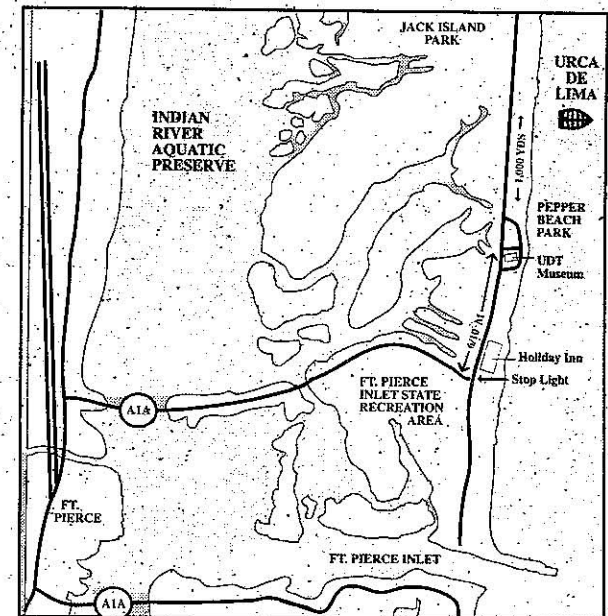
Only a few days out, the *flota* was struck by a fierce hurricane off the coast of Florida. *Urca de Lima* was grounded by the storm but left relatively intact. *Lima* had been heavily laden with general cargo, which included hundreds of uncured cowhides, packets of chocolate, vanilla, sassafras, incense, and other exotic products which brought high prices in Europe. Unlike other ships in the stricken flota, she carried no royal treasure, only private silver in sacks and chests. It was probably her stout hull that had saved much of her contents from being dashed away in the storm. She was the first of the fleet wrecks to be salvaged by Spanish crews from Havana. However, she was then burned to the waterline to conceal her position from English freebooters, who also began to arrive at the scene. Although many precious goods were recovered from the wreck sites shortly after the disaster, salvage attempts soon ended as turbid sand engulfed the remnants of the lost ships and what remained of their cargo.

How to Find Urca de Lima

By Land: Follow Highway A1A north from the Ft. Pierce Inlet to Pepper Park. Walk northward along the beach approximately 1,000 yards from the park boundary. The wrecksite lies on the first offshore reef in 10-15 feet of water, some 200 yards from shore.

By Sea: Proceed north from the Ft. Pierce Inlet parallel to shore. Look for a white marker buoy in 10-15 feet of water at 27°30.18'N and 80°17.90'W. Please tie up to one of the floating mooring bouys to avoid disturbing the remains of the shipwreck, and remember to display a "divers down" flag. No spear fishing is allowed within 100 feet of the site.

Web Address: <http://www.dos.state.fl.us/dhr/bar/uap/>



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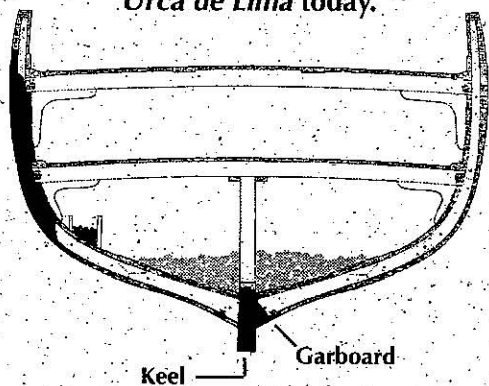


Urca De Lima

UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRESERVE

The *Urca de Lima* park, at the site of one of the fabled Spanish treasure *flota* (fleet) wrecks that sank during a hurricane in 1715 off present-day Ft. Pierce, was opened as Florida's first Underwater Archaeological Preserve in 1987.

Cross section of hull.
The darkend areas are present on
Urca de Lima today.



Idealized cross section
of hull remains shortly after
Urca broke up



Cross section of the *Urca*'s
remains today



■ Ballast Stone Scatter

■ Encrusted Object

■ Wood Structure

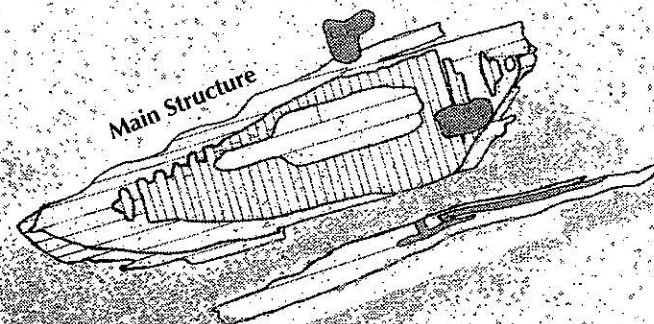


Northwest
Mooring



Marker Bouy
Urca de Lima
Bronze Plaque

N



Keel Trench

Cannon Spill

Southeast Mooring

Southwest Mooring

50 feet

