

McLarty Treasure Museum
at
Sebastian Inlet State Park

The property for the museum was donated to the State by Mr. Robert McLarty, a retired Atlanta attorney who lived in Vero Beach. McLarty Treasure Museum

*is open 7 days a week—
10 AM—4:00 PM.*

(last video shows at 3PM)

Admission fee is \$2 per person.

Children under six years old admitted free.

Special interpretive programs are provided to groups with reservation.

IMPORTANT: Check with museum personnel for rules concerning archaeology, salvaging, and metal detecting.

For further information, write or phone:
Friends of Sebastian Inlet State Park, Inc.
c/o McLarty Treasure Museum
13180 North A1A, Vero Beach, Florida
32963, USA

www.friendsofsebastianinlet.org
Telephone (772) 589-2147

Located at Sebastian Inlet State Park between Melbourne Beach and Vero Beach, Florida. (use exit #156 off I-95 in Indian River County, museum is 5 miles north of intersection of CR 510 and A.I.A.; use exit #180 off I-95 in Brevard County, museum is 20 miles south of intersection of US Highway 192 and A.I.A.)



The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is an equal opportunity agency offering all persons the benefits of participating in each of its programs and competing in all areas of employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, handicap, or other non-merit factors.

McLarty Treasure Museum

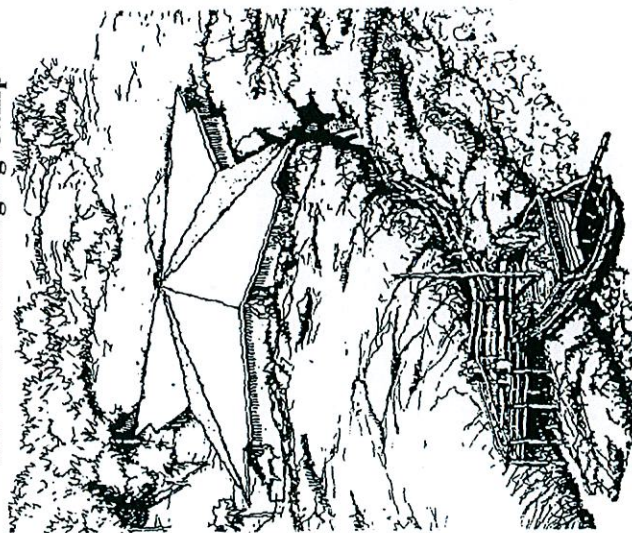
located on a
National Historic

Landmark

Site of the

1715 Spanish Plate Fleet

Survivors' & Salvaging Camp



Part of the
Sebastian Inlet State Park
East Coast of Florida, USA



www.FloridaStateParks.org



Wherever gold glitters or silver beckons, man will move mountains to get to it.

Spanish Treasure

In the 1500's, 1600's, and 1700's, Spain dug vast quantities of silver, and smaller amounts of gold out of the mountains of Mexico and South America. Smelted into ingots and coins, the silver and gold crossed the Atlantic in wooden sailing vessels.

Every summer, Spanish ships carrying a year's worth of diggings from throughout the New World met in Cuba. They also bore Oriental rarities that had been shipped across the Pacific to Mexico. From Cuba, the fleet made a perilous journey northward along Florida's east coast, on the way back to Europe.

Spain used warships and forts to protect the treasure ships from pirates. But she could not protect them from hurricanes.

Shipwreck

In 1715, a storm sank that year's fleet on the shoals between Sebastian and Fort Pierce. Some 1500 survivors struggled to shore. The gleaming cargo lay on the floor of the ocean.

The beach in August was a harsh refuge. The survivors improvised shelters and gathered what they could for food, but many died of exposure and exhaustion.

Ais Indians

They also feared Indians, for the natives of this region—the Ais—had a reputation for hostility. However, they apparently treated these shipwreck victims well, providing some food and other aid.

Unlike most other Florida Indians of the time, the Ais were not farmers. They gathered wild plants, hunted deer and bear, and took birds, fish, turtles, shellfish, and manatees from the rivers and the sea. Their midden piles of clam and oyster shells are still evident along the coast.

Salvage

Within weeks, help came from Spanish headquarters at St. Augustine, and salvagers arrived from Havana. Over the next four years, official Spanish salvors, Indian divers, English pirates, and privateers and river pirates of various nationalities flocked to the area to retrieve—or steal from each other—as much treasure as they could.

But less than half the material originally listed on the ships' manifest reached the Spanish treasury. The rest, so recently pried from the mountains, now lay buried in sand and silt of the shore.

Rediscovery

Not until 1928 was a wreck from the 1715 fleet rediscovered, the *Urca de Lima*, off Fort Pierce. The next clues

appeared on the land, not in the water. In the early 1940's Spanish colonial artifacts were uncovered at a site south of Sebastian Inlet.

In the mid-1950's a hurricane completely changed the face of the shore. Kip Wagner discovered a second archeological spot located where the McLarty Museum now stands. It was the site of a Spanish salvors' encampment, indicating that treasure ships had gone down nearby.

Modern Treasure Hunters

Wagner soon located *El Capitana*. By the mid 1960's he had brought up silver pieces of eight, gold doubloons, bars and plates of both metals, pearls, jewelry, rare Chinese porcelains, and countless examples of everyday items used by seamen and passengers traveling in 1715.

Wagner's finds opened the way for other searchers. With SCUBA gear and modern dredging equipment, they coax from the seabed what 18th century divers left behind.

Major new discoveries are still being made along the Treasure Coast. Wherever gold glitters and silver beckons...

