



Avast ye! It sounds like a pirate's fantasy! A 308-year-old treasure ship called the *San Jose* was recently found at the bottom of the ocean near the South American nation of Colombia. Experts believe the ship is carrying gold coins and jewels worth as much as \$17 billion in U.S. **currency**.

A TREASURE TROVE

Juan Manuel Santos, the president of Colombia, tweeted excitedly about the find on December 5. He declared the discovery "Great News!" Mr. Santos then posted an underwater video showing pots, bottles and a cannon. Experts say the **artifacts** prove the ship was the *San Jose*.

An international team of scholars and members of the

Colombian navy made the discovery on November 27. The vessel was found about 305 metres below the surface of the ocean and about 25 kilometres from the walled Colombian port city of Cartagena.

The 18th-century ship, which belonged to Spain's King Philip the Fifth, was an old Spanish galleon. Experts say it is the most important Spanish shipwreck ever to be located.

A BATTLE ENDS BADLY

The story really starts on the hot and moonless night of May 28, 1708. The 600-sailor galleon, armed with 64 guns, was on its way with 16 other ships to France. It was weighed down by some 11 million gold coins and jewels. The wealth was meant to help pay for France and Spain's

ABOUT GALLEONS

Galleons were a class of vessel, with huge sails and many decks, that could weigh over 1,000 tonnes. The *San Jose* was about 46 metres long.

Galleons were used between the 15th and 18th centuries as warships, or for carrying items to trade with other countries.

The *San Jose* is one of about 1,200 galleons and merchant ships lost, over centuries, near the coral reefs that dot Colombia's seabeds.

War of Spanish Succession against the British. The treasure had been **plundered** from **colonies** that the Spanish controlled at the time.

DEFINITIONS

ARTIFACT: a simple object, such as a tool or weapon, that was made by people in the past

COLONY: a place where a group of people come to settle which is under the control of their home country

CURRENCY: the money that a country uses

PLUNDER: to steal things from a place by force



The quiet was pierced when four British warships confronted the *San Jose* and her escorts. After a 90-minute battle, cannon fire exploded the *San Jose* and it sank into the Caribbean Sea. Adventurers have been searching for it ever since.

WHO GETS THE RICHES?

Now, different groups are arguing over who owns the riches. In fact, the ship has been part of a legal battle that began in 1982. That's when Sea Search Armada (SSA), a U.S. company, announced it had found the *San Jose's* resting place. SSA says its investors spent \$10 million to find the ship. That's more than \$24 million in 2016 U.S. dollars.

In 1984, however, Colombia's government slashed SSA's portion to five percent. The company launched a **lawsuit** against Colombia, but in 2011, U.S. courts dismissed the claim. They declared that the galleon belonged to Colombia.

Now, even SSA's five-percent share may be in question. The reason? Colombia claims it found the ship in a different location.

OTHER CLAIMS?

Meanwhile, Spain also says it should get some of the treasure.

THE WAR OF SPANISH SUCCESSION

The War of Spanish Succession was a major conflict of the 18th century. It began after Charles II, King of Spain, died in 1700 without an heir.

In his will, King Charles gave the crown to the French prince Philip of Anjou. Philip's grandfather, King Louis XIV of France, then proclaimed his grandson King of Spain, and declared that France and Spain would be united.

French power was already feared in Europe, so Britain, Holland, Prussia, and Austria declared war on France. They wanted to prevent the alliance and gain control of the huge Spanish empire and its riches.

By 1708, the French had been defeated in several battles, and Louis XIV had spent almost all of his money paying for the war. The situation wasn't looking good for France – but then a change of government in Britain and the death of Emperor Joseph I in Austria convinced the warring nations to end the fighting.

Under the Treaty of Utrecht, signed in 1713, Philip became King of Spain on the condition that Spain and France would never be united. As well, parts of the Spanish Empire and the French colonial empire were divided among the countries that had participated in the war. Spain gave up Gibraltar and the monopoly of the slave trade with Latin America. France gave up Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and the Hudson Bay territories to Britain.

According to Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Garcia-Margallo, international law states that wrecks like the *San Jose* belong to the country that built them.

Of course, the riches onboard the *San Jose* were stolen from several South American nations, including Peru and Bolivia. Will they make a claim for the wealth, too?

RECOVERING THE SHIP

For now, the ship remains at the bottom of the sea. It must be recovered before the dispute over the fortune can be settled. That could take years. Still, after three centuries, just finding the ship is exciting.

"[It's] one of the biggest findings ... of underwater **heritage** in the history of humanity," President Santos said. ★

DEFINITIONS

HERITAGE: the traditions, achievements, beliefs, etc., that are part of the history of a group or nation

LAWSUIT: a process by which a court of law makes a decision to end a disagreement between people or organizations



INTERNATIONAL

WORLD'S RICHEST SHIPWRECK FOUND

ON THE LINES

Answer the following in complete sentences:

1. Explain what a **galleon** is.

2. Name the shipwreck that was recently located and explain where it was found.

3. What cargo was this ship carrying when it sank?

4. List at least three other important facts about this vessel.

5. Where did the treasure on board the San Jose come from?

6. Explain where this cargo was headed and why.

7. Who attacked this vessel on May 28, 1708?

8. What happened to the Spanish ship?

9. Identify the three claims that have been made for the treasure.

**BETWEEN THE LINES**

An *inference* is a conclusion drawn from evidence. A *plausible inference* is supported by evidence in the article and is consistent with known facts outside of the article.

What inference(s) can you draw from the fact that the *San Jose* is just one of about 1,200 galleons and merchant ships lost over the centuries near the coral reefs that dot Colombia's seabeds?

BEYOND THE LINES

Being a treasure hunter sounds exciting, but is it? How are treasures actually found? Learn about the modern techniques and technologies that are used for such work. Is this a job that you would enjoy?

JUST TALK ABOUT IT

1. Fictional treasure-hunter and archeologist Indiana Jones believed that lost and ancient relics should be available for all to see, in museums. The villains, meanwhile, always wanted to sell the items to the highest bidder. What do you think is more important: preserving the past or making money? Give reasons to support your response.
2. Finders keepers? Historical claims vs. laws of the sea? Let's imagine that the value of the treasure is indeed \$17 billion. How would you divide up the wealth? Explain your decisions. (And, no, you and your class can't have any.) How do you predict the wealth will *actually* be divided?
3. *What if...* the *San Jose* had made it to France with its treasure? Explain.

ONLINE

Visit our student website at www.news4youth.com and click on the *What in the World?* tab to:

1. Watch an ABC news story on YouTube called "Colombia Claims to Find Multi-Billion Dollar Shipwreck" about the discovery of the *San Jose* (or visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4GoUnbEocs>).
2. Journey into deep waters with the Discovery Channel documentary "Treasure Hunters - Episode 7: The Gold Fishers (History Documentary)" that shows how ocean treasure-hunting is done in the 21st century (or visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7-xeDWarVQ>).
3. Read more about the *San Jose*'s journey (or visit http://www.treasureexpeditions.com/shipwreck_san_jose_treasure_1.htm).
4. Follow the Sea Search Armada on Facebook (or visit <https://www.facebook.com/Sea-Search-Armada-417887938248660/?ref=ts&fref=ts>). ★