

Top Site FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

Q1. Did the person who found the wreck get to keep anything?

Yes, the state entered into an agreement with the finder and his associates. They worked with the archaeologists and provided much of the equipment, divers and financial support for the excavation. They received 75 percent of the value of the artifacts. All of the artifacts that were turned over to the finders at the end of the project were thoroughly documented first.

Q2. Where is the state's share of gold and silver that came off the ship?

It is in a bank vault in Baton Rouge.

Q3. How pure were the gold ingots from the ship?

Analysis showed that the gold content was 63.9 percent to 91.5 percent. The gold ingots contain 6.4 percent to 35.9 percent silver, as well as traces of copper and lead.

Q4. What should people do if they find a shipwreck?

They should contact the state archaeologist who can help determine who legally owns the wreck. A person needs a permit to excavate a shipwreck in state or federal waters.

Q5. Did anybody die in the wreck of *El Nuevo Constante*?

No; everybody made it safely off the ship.

Q6. What happened to the wreck of the other ship in the fleet that sunk in the hurricane?

The wreck of the *Corazón de Jesús y Santa Bárbara* has not been positively identified yet.

Q7. Was *El Nuevo Constante* a treasure ship?

It was a treasure to archaeologists who learned details about a merchant ship. *El Nuevo Constante* did not carry a large amount of gold and silver cargo, so it is not called a treasure ship.

Q8. Were pirates a threat to *El Nuevo Constante*?

At that time, most of Europe's gold and silver arrived on Spanish ships from the New World. Pirates, who worked for themselves, and privateers, who worked for other governments, sometimes tried to steal from these ships. Therefore, Spanish ships traveled in groups for safety. Two warships sailed with the New Spain fleet. Those ships had soldiers and officers on board and usually carried the government's gold and silver. Private merchants were responsible for most of the cargo on the other ships, and they paid taxes to cover the cost of this protection.