

Research Report No. 15



# The 1996 Anguilla Shipwreck Survey

Anguilla, British West Indies, September 1996



Bradley A. Rodgers, Frank Cantelas, Jeff Bowdoin,  
Raymond L. Hayes, Lauren Hermley, and Lyle Lentz

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Program in Maritime Studies  
East Carolina University  
Greenville, North Carolina



*Primary Investigator: Bradley A. Rodgers*

2006



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Cover: ECU diver video documenting the remains of *El Buen Consejo*, 1996 (Program in Maritime Studies).



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# Abstract

In the early hours of July 9, 1772 the sounds of timber grinding on a reef and the shouts of men echoed on the desolate shore near the east end of Anguilla, a small island in the British West Indies. Two ships became victims of the shallows and reefs of Anguilla, the 70 gun man-of-war *El Buen Consejo*, and the 40 gun armed merchant vessel *Jesus, Maria, y Jose* or *Prusiano*. These ships were part of a larger Spanish supply fleet headed for Vera Cruz, and on that night, they made a terrible navigation error as they neared the end of a long trans-Atlantic voyage while making for the Anagada Passage to enter the Caribbean. They had missed a course change that led to an abrupt collision with the island. Anchors were let go when a lookout heard the crashing surf, but by then it was too late; they grounded on the rocky shore.

Fortunately, for the crew and passengers, calm seas allowed everyone to escape with their lives. However, the sudden unexpected influx of nearly one thousand Spaniards overwhelmed the small British island. In addition, *El Buen Consejo* carried a contingent of Franciscan monks on their way to the Pacific. Among their belongings were many brass religious medallions for use in missionary activities. Anguilla is a small arid island with a tiny population, and the additional people strained the inhabitant's meager resources. British troops were called in to keep the peace until the shipwreck survivors were moved off the island in November and taken to Puerto Rico.

The ships, however, did not survive. They settled after grounding in shallow water, allowing the Spaniards to salvage much of the cargo and armament. These supplies probably eased the living conditions of the survivors. Inevitably, as the hurricane season progressed, a storm approached the island, pushing *El Buen Consejo* into deeper water where it broke apart and sank.

Local Anguillians know the story of the shipwrecks well, but only discovered the ships themselves in the 1980s. In 1996, the Anguillian Government invited the Maritime Studies Program at East Carolina University (ECU) to examine the remains of the two vessels and offer suggestions for their future management as cultural resources. ECU completed archaeological documentation of *El Buen Consejo* and a reconnaissance of *Prusiano*. This study discovered evidence of the unfolding historical drama of the crew as they tried to save their ships as they neared the island. Their anchors failed because of the rocky bottom while clusters of iron fasteners concreted on the rocky shore attest to where one of the vessels struck. Other remains illustrate the destructive force of the hurricane that broke the ships apart. A trail of 18 cannon, and mounds of concreted cargo packages show how the process of pulling the vessel from the shore tore apart *El Buen Consejo's* hull. The legacy of the disaster of the Spanish shipwrecks is found in the island's history and is an important component of Anguilla's heritage. This well-known story and its newly added archaeological record is the subject of this report.



# Acknowledgements

This project was made possible through the combined efforts of the Anguillian Parliament (through its Wrecks Committee), East Carolina University's Maritime Studies Program, and the Maritime Archaeological and Historical Society (MAHS) (Project Coordinator Dr. Raymond Hayes). Special thanks go to Anguillian Parliamentary Secretary Reverend John A. Gumbs, for his efforts to coordinate the project, and pave the way for the archaeological teams.

Anguillian Minister of Tourism Allan Gumbs and Fisheries Minister Roland Hodge who supplied vital transportation and accommodation for the MAHS archaeological team ably supported the Parliamentary Secretary. Other members of the Wrecks Committee provided invaluable support for the crew. Queen's Councilman Don Mitchell and wife Maggie generously furnished accommodations and wet stores, while Mr. Robert Conrich supplied transportation and logistical aid.

The Anguillian National Trust provided vital equipment through the efforts of Director Elizabeth Subin and husband John. Freda Haagedom of Anguillian Divers Dive Shop in Island Harbor supplied several days of working scuba air gratis. Leander "Bull" Bryan, who originally found the wreck some ten years before provided the guidance and boating assistance to relocate the site. Thanks also go in the area of guidance to David Berglund and wife Charlotte for pointing out the historical contours of the Anagada Passage and other possible sites on or near the island.

When ECU staff was in need, the MAHS came to our aid with able bodied technicians and a can do attitude. Avocational programs such as this provide the backing for shoe-string archaeological projects and are the future of cooperative professional efforts.

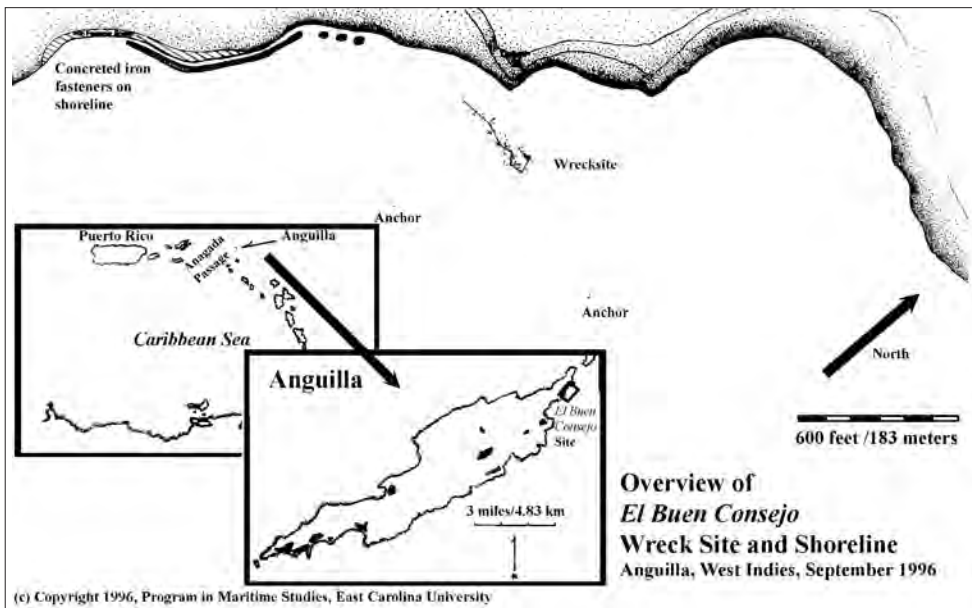
Bemuth Shipping Lines generously contributed transportation for our equipment. When a weather glitch delayed our shipment, however, Mary Kathleen Lawrence of Express Cargo Services came to our rescue authorizing Amerijet International to fly our archaeological supplies out at cost. Thanks goes to Dr. Timothy Runyan, who managed to maneuver his way through these logistical difficulties.

Last, but not least, special thanks goes to those who were instrumental in doing the work. This includes ECU Diving Safety Officer Steve Sellers, Roland Hodge, the Captain of our research vessel, and especially our technicians Deidre O'Regan, Rusty Earl, Virginia Liberman, Joseph Webb, George Montgomery, Jill Montgomery, Bill Utley, and John Herman.



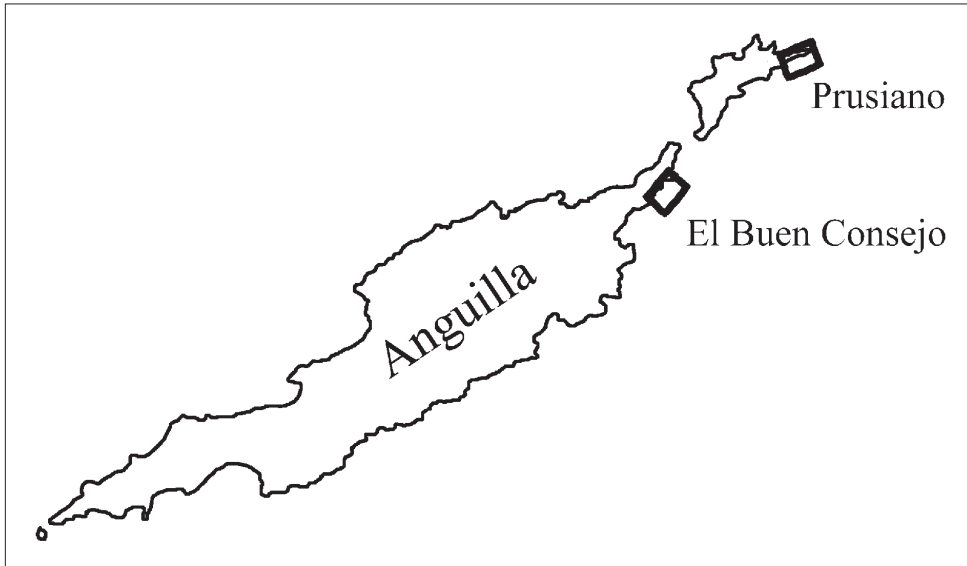
## Introduction

The island of Anguilla guards the southeastern approaches to the Anagada Passage. This historical sea corridor allowed sailing vessels to trek east to west through the Caribbean Sea to the Spanish Main (Mexico) avoiding the many islands and shoals of the West Indies (Figure 1). Typically, Spanish ships of trade and conquest journeyed to the New World through the Caribbean and the Anagada Passage and returned to Spain via a more northerly route taking advantage of the Gulf Stream to propel them eastward. It was here, in the total darkness of the early morning hours of July 9, 1772, near the entrance to the Anagada Passage that two Spanish armed escort vessels ran aground on Anguilla's rugged eastern shore (Figure 2).



**Figure 1.** Overview of *El Buen Consejo* Wreck site and shoreline (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).

The history of this event is fairly well documented, and indeed the wrecks and subsequent incidents are so well ingrained in the Anguillian collective history that it can be said that the shipwrecks were never really lost. Nor was there much mystery as to their identity when finally relocated by Leander Webster in 1986. It is, therefore, beyond the purview of this preliminary report to add to the historical documentation of this fascinating story, but rather give it credence and verification through archaeological examination.



**Figure 2.** Location of the wrecks of *El Buen Consejo* and *Jesus, Maria, y Jose/Prusiano*, Anguilla (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).

According to author David Berglund in his book *Shipwrecks of Anguilla 1628-1995* (1995) the ships were the 990 ton *El Buen Consejo*, and the 673 ton, *Jesus, Maria, y Jose*, also variously known as *Prusiano* or *La Concordia*. The ships originally formed part of a fleet of 16 ships bound for Vera Cruz, but had been separated from the flotilla in a storm. British Public Record Office (PRO) documents of the Colonial Office Records 152/52-54 in the possession of Queen's Councilman Donald Mitchell largely verify Berglund's account.

The PRO records indicate that the *El Buen Consejo* or *The Royal Council* was a Spanish Man of War of 70 guns and the *Jesus, Maria, y Jose* or the *Royal Prussian* was an armed merchant vessel of 40 guns. A navigation error apparently led to the catastrophe as no lives were lost in the wrecking event but "near one thousand" sailors, officers, and passengers were stranded on the island. The shipwrecks also marooned some 50 Franciscan friars on the island. Mr. Roberts, Lieutenant Governor of Anguilla, was hard pressed to aid the uninvited visitors as the island's few inhabitants had sparse resources. Though no details are given in the PRO records, the relationship between the inhabitants and the shipwrecked Spaniards was at first rather rocky. British troops of the 68th Regiment were finally called in from another island to quiet the disturbances. By the time the shipwrecked sailors and friars were transported off the island, however, they were in such good spirits that their report to the governor of Puerto Rico led to the release of all of the English prisoners jailed on that island for "illicit trade."

The PRO records go on to state that the wrecks were given "the finishing stroke" by a hurricane that visited the island on August 31. This gave the Spanish crews 53 days to salvage what they could from the two wrecked vessels. By November 1772, all of the Spaniards had been conveyed to Puerto Rico, and from there continued their interrupted journey.

The history of these two unfortunate ships did not end with the hurricane of August 31, 1772. The relocation of the wrecks in the mid-1980s opened a Pandora's Box of conflicting interests. Various groups began to compete for the salvage rights in proposals to the government that ranged from open plundering of the wrecks for historical artifacts to initiating private underwater preserves. Though little remained of the ships themselves, visiting divers began to recover small artifacts of brass, pewter, glass, and iron. Beyond the threat posed by wholesale salvage, the sites were in danger of disappearing piece by piece.

As a first step in gaining some control over these historical resources, the Parliament of Anguilla formed the Wrecks Committee. This committee consisted of about a dozen leading citizens, interested in historic preservation, and charged with finding a solution to the historical resource dilemma posed by the wreck sites. The Wrecks Committee subsequently called East Carolina University's (ECU) Program in Maritime Studies for consultation. As only one of two graduate level marine archaeological programs in the U.S. and the only one that specializes in North American archaeology, ECU was a logical choice. After preliminary analysis and a visit by the Maritime Studies Program, program archaeologists decided on a plan for a preliminary joint field project to assess the wreck sites, and began a search for other sites on or near Anguilla. This report, represents the completed preliminary survey of the main wreck site on Anguilla, as well as a search for other possible wreck sites, and constitutes a first step in the management of these submerged cultural resources.





## History

Two of the known ships wrecked off the coast of Anguilla, *El Buen Consejo* and *Jesus, Maria, y Jose* are not isolated time capsules, but rather, are part of a complex economic, political, and religious system set up by the Spanish Crown connecting both sides of the Atlantic. In other words, the true contextual history surrounding the two ships extends well beyond the island where they wrecked, for Anguilla was not the intended destination for these vessels. *El Buen Consejo*, and *Jesus, Maria, y Jose* were part of Spain's flota system which supplied the raw resources needed to fund Spain's ever growing empire. Although *El Buen Consejo* and *Jesus, Maria, y Jose* wrecked on the Anguillan coastline, the other vessels of the flota, carrying 7,674.75 tons, reached Veracruz in 1772 (Walker 1979: 223). In order to understand the site formation process, it must be dovetailed into the historical context of *El Buen Consejo* and *Jesus, Maria, y Jose*.

*El Buen Consejo* and *Jesus, Maria, y Jose* were a part of a flota of Spanish ships led by Don Luis de Cordoba. The two ships wrecked making their way from Cadiz to Veracruz. *El Buen Consejo*, a 990 ton Spanish Man of War with 70 cannons, along with two other warships, was sent to protect the flota comprised of 14 merchant ships. *Jesus, Maria, y Jose* was one of these merchant vessels. Since it first began exploiting the resources of the New World, Spain used the flota system to conduct trade from Spain to the Mexican port of Veracruz. Along the way, and particularly in the Caribbean Sea, islands provided shelter for pirates lurking just beyond sight. Additionally, the English, French, and Dutch privateers preyed upon unprotected merchant ships of enemy nations. Spain created the flota system, therefore, to provide protection for the merchants and to assure the Spanish Crown that its silver would arrive safely. Heavily regulated trade between Spain and her colonies led to regularly scheduled departures of large Spanish fleets in an attempt to ensure higher success rates for ships reaching their intended destination.

By the time Don Luis de Cordoba led his ships from the port of Cadiz, the flota was changing. As Spain began to loose grip on her empire, a new doctrine of economic liberalism advanced. Fraud and smuggling plagued the flota system, and the notion of free trade gained in popularity. Trade rose dramatically in 1765 when Royal Proclamation allowed free trade to the Leeward Islands, Santo Domingo, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Margarita, Trinidad, and nine ports in Spain. After the flota that Cordoba commanded reached Veracruz, only one more flota left Spain before the system finally came to an end in 1776 (Walker 1979: 223). While the system lasted, the flotas between Cadiz and Veracruz were able to generate enormous amounts of wealth for the Spanish crown.

During the 16th century, Veracruz became the leading port for Spain's Mexican empire. Settled by Hernan Cortez in 1519, Veracruz was always the first

port of call for the majority of ships in flota. Not only did Veracruz act as the clearinghouse for all the silver that left Mexican shores, but also the region contributed its own goods to the transatlantic market. In particular, nopal, a species of the prickly pear indigenous to Veracruz, held within its leaves the cochineal, a small insect highly valued as a source of purple and scarlet dye. Veracruz also exported profitable Manila goods, and offered taverns, customs and treasury officials, mule trains to the interior, and access to slave labor (Marx 1968: 86). Don Luis de Cordoba's flota of 14 merchant vessels guarded by three warships was attempting to bring European goods to Veracruz to exchange for Mexican silver. Veracruz's demand for manufactured goods created a balance of trade for the desperately needed silver in Spain. As a result, Veracruz became Mexico's major stock house for European manufactured goods during the first half of the eighteenth century, and it remained on the fringe of most economic developments until the 19th century (Booker 1993: 15, 151).

Cadiz, on the other hand, was the major center of trade of Spain during the 18th century. The city's geography featured a perfect harbor for the trade flotas. Connected by roads to Madrid and Sevilla, the port distributed Mexican silver to Spain's interior and attracted manufactured foods from all over Europe (Stein and Stein 2000: 77). Since Cadiz faced the Atlantic and water surrounded it on three sides, the rocky coastline and narrow entry into Cadiz Bay provided protection for the merchant vessels. Cadiz's location and economic activity made it the ideal harbor for Don Luis de Cordoba to launch his flota. Anguilla, however, was not the ideal location to arrive.

Anguilla is the northern most island in the Leeward Islands of the Lesser Antilles. The island is located along the Anagada Passage, a major trade route for flotas on their voyage from Spain to Veracruz. Surrounded by coral and frequented by violent tropical storms, Anguilla is home to many shipwrecks. Its lack of physical relief and small population insured that the low lying, darkened coast could not be seen easily.

*El Buen Consejo* and *Jesus, Maria, y Jose* wrecked July 9, 1772, during a brief window of peace between Spain and Britain. Throughout the 18th century, these countries vied to dominate and control the Atlantic. The two powers fought many wars during this period. Before the wrecking events, and angered by the British presence in the Bay of Honduras, Spain last declared war on Britain in 1761. During times of war, flotas became popular targets of both privateers and pirates. The Treaty of Paris, signed in 1763, however restored Havana and the Bay of Honduras to Spain and initiated a temporary period of peace in the region. As a result of the political climate at this time, everyone from the wrecks of *El Buen Consejo* and *Jesus, Maria, y Jose* were rescued and eventually transported to Puerto Rico safely.

Among the passengers aboard *El Buen Consejo* were 52 Franciscan friars. Franciscans are members of several Roman Catholic religious orders following the rule of St. Francis of Assisi. Within 50 years of St Francis' foundation of the order in 1223, the organization had a strong wing of zealots who advocated absolute poverty. In the 16th century they, along with the Dominicans and Augustinians accompanied the military and political conquest of New Spain. To convert the various Native groups of the New World, these missionaries established missions. New missionaries were, therefore, in constant demand. Even as late as 1772, Christianity had not

become institutionalized in the remote fringes of the New World. Franciscan friars struggled to replace Indian idols with Christian symbols, importing with them numerous brass religious medallions for this purpose. Hundreds of these medallions were discovered on the *El Buen Consejo* site, and have been partially documented and analyzed, revealing the interesting role of missions in colonization of the New World (see Whitfield 2005 for a study of the medallions)



## Methodology

Archaeologists read material remains much as a forensic specialist reads a crime scene. Both disciplines rely heavily on artifacts as clues. Artifacts, however, can be deciphered only if they remain within the context of their original deposition. For instance, a lone cannonball can tell an archaeologist next to nothing if it is found propping a door open in a modern house. That same artifact found lodged in the timbers of a shipwreck tells a much more dramatic and meaningful saga. The analysis of a set of artifacts, however, is not often a simple matter. To help coordinate this "reading" or interpretation of a set of artifacts, an archaeologist will set up a research design or written methodology. Methodologies are simply a plan for gathering data. They typically include the methods, tools, and a timetable that will be employed during a project.

Archaeological methodologies are characteristically set up in three phases with conservation and curatorial phases added depending on the extent of the project. The methodology for the 1996 Anguilla Shipwreck Survey called for Phase 1 documentary research combined with remote sensing (magnetometer and visual sweeps) of indicated areas for possible artifactual remains from the 1772 Spanish wrecks. Since the main sections of these sites had already been located, this phase was limited to sweeping for undiscovered wreckage in the field, while archival researchers located historical documentation to verify the event.

In addition, the 1996 Anguilla Shipwreck Survey called for Phase 2 documentation of the known wreck site near the eastern end of Anguilla. Time and sea conditions precluded the Phase 2 survey of the site located on Scrub Island. This part of the project involved measured sketch mapping, a photographic survey, and video documentation of the eastern Anguilla wreck site. This phase is also known as a pre-disturbance survey and though diagnostic artifacts are recorded (photographed or sketched), none are removed from the site.

The 1996 Anguilla Shipwreck Survey did not involve a Phase 3 full site excavation, as this is very costly, labor intensive, and not usually appropriate for preliminary archaeological projects. It has been demonstrated clearly in recent times that archaeology, like business, is subject to the law of diminishing returns. For expensive projects, particularly Phase 3 excavations, often gather no more useful information than could have been garnered through Phase 1 and 2 works. It is a growing and welcome trend in nautical archaeology to limit full scale excavation.

The 1996 Anguilla Shipwreck Survey began in March with an on-site assessment of the survey area by ECU and MAHS staff. Discussions followed with the Anguilla Wrecks Committee concerning the logistical planning of a field expedition. It was agreed that site documentation of the eastern Anguilla Wreck site, also known as the "Cannon Wreck," would be a priority followed by a survey for other possible

wreck sites around the island. Logistical planning and the procurement of lodging, equipment, and transportation continued throughout the spring and summer of 1996.

Field work began when ECU and MAHS archaeological crews arrived in Anguilla on 13 September. After logistical set up, the eastern Anguilla site was relocated and a methodology was formulated for its Phase 2 documentation. To coordinate efforts on this site, ECU and MAHS personnel formed two archaeological crews. As one crew dove on the site to gather measured sketches and photographs the other crew plotted data and prepared maps. Crews alternated jobs, diving in morning and afternoon shifts. Briefings were held in the evenings to set up the next day's schedule.

Diving operations were conducted from the 38 foot (11.6 m) research vessel *Cobra 2* supplied by the Anguilla Fisheries Ministry. *Cobra 2* was equipped with a global positioning system, VHF, and CB radios. The GPS allowed for the accurate positioning of the boat via orbiting satellite transponders while the radios permitted communications with the shore station. A shore station datum was set up on the rugged shoreline near the wreck site. The datum (an iron reinforcing rod cemented upright in the rock) allowed the archaeological teams to coordinate all offshore activities and orient the entire site from a single point. The datum was located on a rocky point that offered a panoramic view of the entire site. A transit with a laser distance measuring device was set up at the datum permitting the creation of a sophisticated and accurate map of the shoreline and wreck site (Figures 3 and 4). This device is accurate to 0.1 foot at over a one mile distance.



**Figure 3.** Frank Cantelas holds the mirror target for the Electronic Distance Meter to measure the distance from the shore datum to submerged wreck features (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



**Figure 4.** The process of buoying and shooting the site from the shore datum station was not always an easy process, especially in heavy sea conditions (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).

While the shore station was set up, a scaled 500 foot baseline was placed on the wreck site. This baseline is angled to nearby wreckage in the shape of a “Big Dipper.” The scaled baseline was made of steel cable stretched tight over this distance with a tensioning device. The use of steel cable was necessitated by the high-energy sea surge of the area. Once in place, the baseline was buoyed at each angle apex and plotted from the datum point on shore. In this way the entire site was oriented to the datum.

Underwater, the scaled baseline gave archaeologists a reference while at the same time it acted as a tool to coordinate all measured sketches and photographs. Trilateration, or the measurement of a feature from two known places on the baseline allowed technicians to accurately plot any artifact or detail on the site plan. Since all of the drawings orient to the baseline, they were easily put together on the main site map like pieces of a puzzle.

In addition to mapping the eastern Anguilla wreck site, project members conducted a visual survey on 27 September along the northern reef area starting at Road Point moving along the north shore to Flat Cap Point then across the Middle Banks reef to the reef due east of Prickly Pear. From there the survey turned west circling the Prickly Pear Cays. This survey was conducted by towing two spotters wearing mask, fins, and snorkels behind the research vessel. Each spotter was suspended behind the research vessel on a tow board device that allowed the spotter to dive and maneuver while cruising over the reef areas.

Project participants conducted a combination of visual and remote sensing survey on 30 September from Sandy Ground toward West End Village. This survey

combined visual techniques as described above with a proton precession magnetometer. The magnetometer detects magnetic anomalies produced by ferrous metal artifacts and/ or magnetic displacements in the Earth's normal magnetic field. Both anomalies can signal the presence of archaeological sites.

Finally, divers conducted a visual survey on 1 and 2 October, locating the *Jesus, Maria, y Jose* site near the southeastern shore of Scrub Island. As mentioned below, this site is actually two wreck sites, one 18th century and one 19th century. No other historical remains were located during the visual and remote sensing surveys.



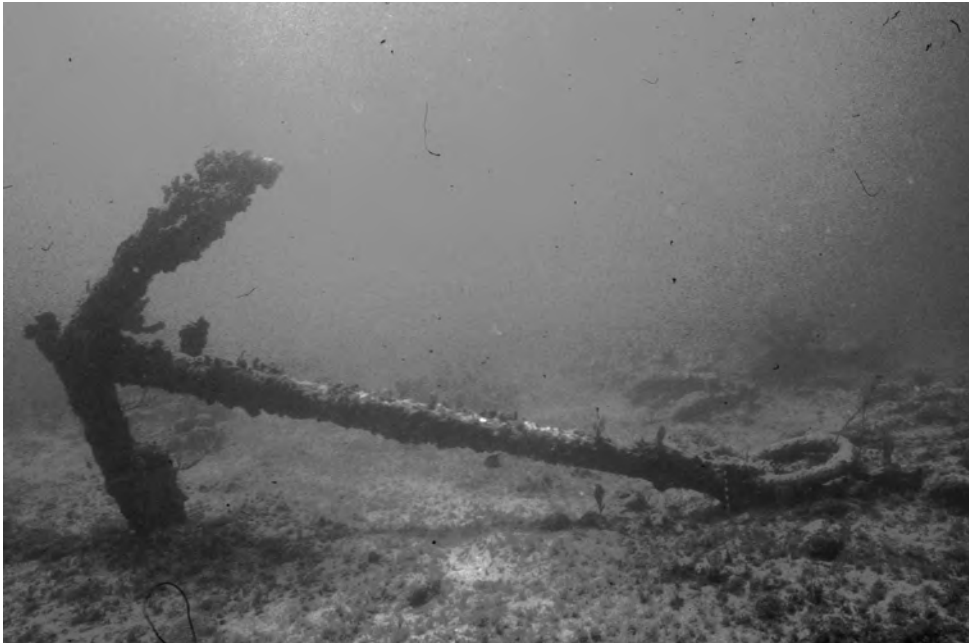
## *El Buen Consejo*

### Site Description

The eastern Anguilla wreck site lies near shore on the eastern extremity of the island (Figure 1). The portions nearest the shore lie in 10 to 12 feet (3.3 to 4 meters) of water while the deepest sections of the wreck are located in about 25 feet (7.6 meters) of water. There are two anchors lying to the south and east of the main wreck scatter (Figures 5 and 6). The off-shore eastern anchor lays in 38 feet (11.58 m) of water and the in-shore, southern most anchor lies in about 30 feet (9.1 meters) of water. Most of the wreck site lies in a high energy environment. Depending on the water depth and the size of the seas crashing against the shore, divers can be thrown five to 10 feet (3 to 3.5 meters) with each sea surge. Coral growth and concretions cover most of the site though only a small percentage is living coral.



**Figure 5.** The first anchor dropped by the crew of *El Buen Consejo* did not catch (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



**Figure 6.** The second anchor of *El Buen Consejo* did catch, but too late to prevent the wrecking of the ship (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).

There is no sign of the wooden hull of this vessel nor are there any wooden scantling pieces lying in the vicinity. It appears likely that the high energy nature of the site combined with the natural biota to eliminate all wooden artifacts. In addition, there are no signs of fasteners or ballast at the site, lending credence to the theory that the vessel tore its bottom elsewhere before being driven to its present location. The main features of the wreck site are 18 large cannon scattered across nearly 400 feet (122 meters) of sea floor (Figure 7). These guns made excellent anchoring points for the baseline. Among the cannon are cannon balls (Figure 8), iron concretions (Figure 9) and, in two locations, small trade goods obviously intended for colonial holdings (Figures 10-12). These trade goods include rolls of brass, pocket knives, thimbles, needles, brass pins, pewter utensils, glass beads, paste jewels as well as numerous brass religious medallions (Figure 13). All of these artifacts appear to be located near two mounds of what must have been packing boxes. Amazingly enough, though the wood of these boxes has disintegrated, it has been replaced with coral which retains the outlines of the original packing boxes. Indeed some of these goods are packed inside the coral boxes just as they would have been in the hold of the ship.

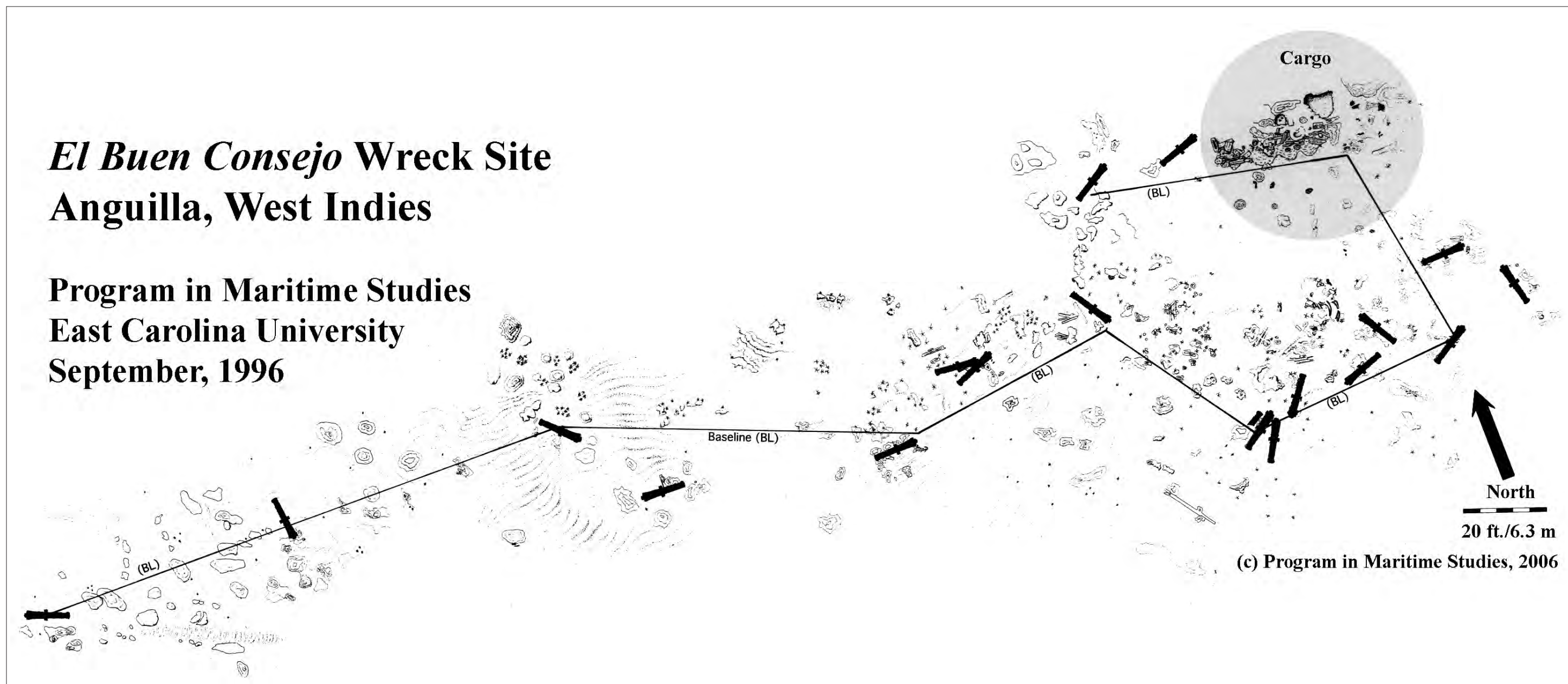
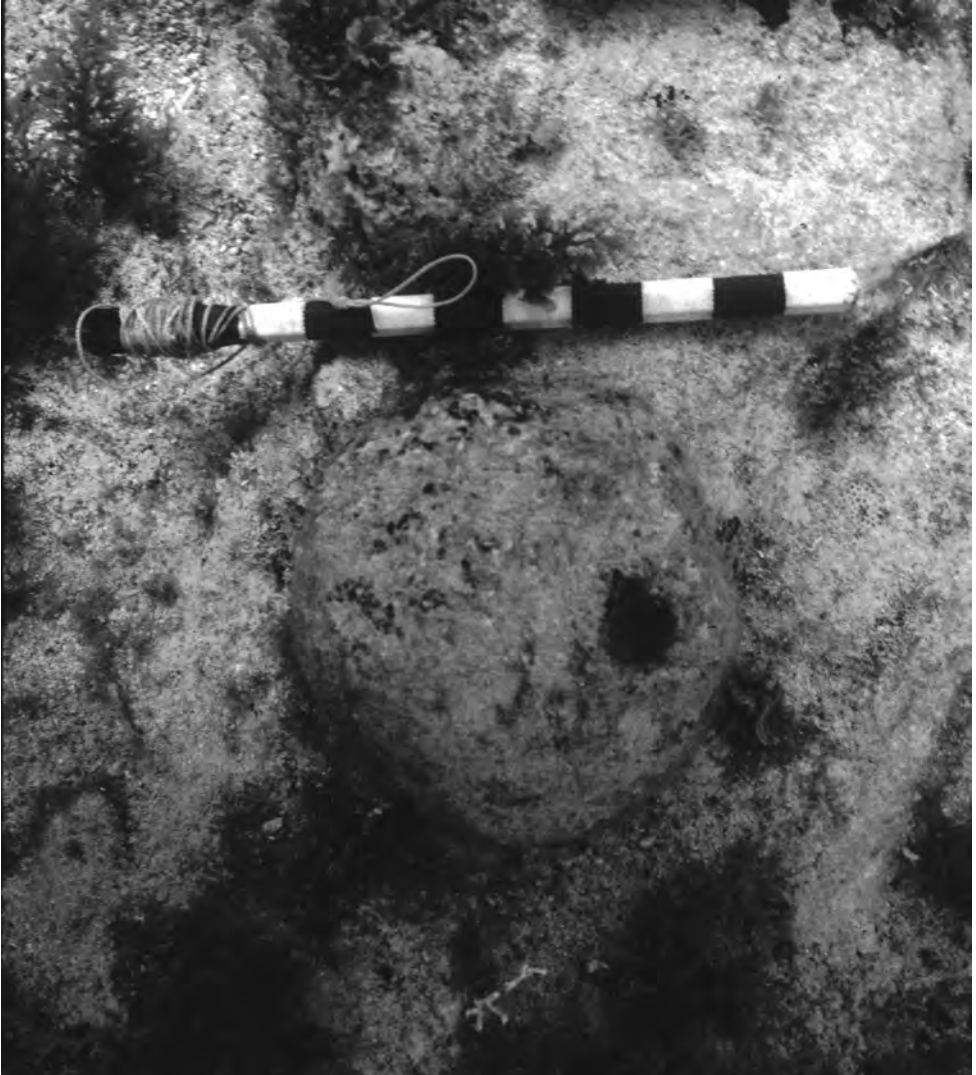


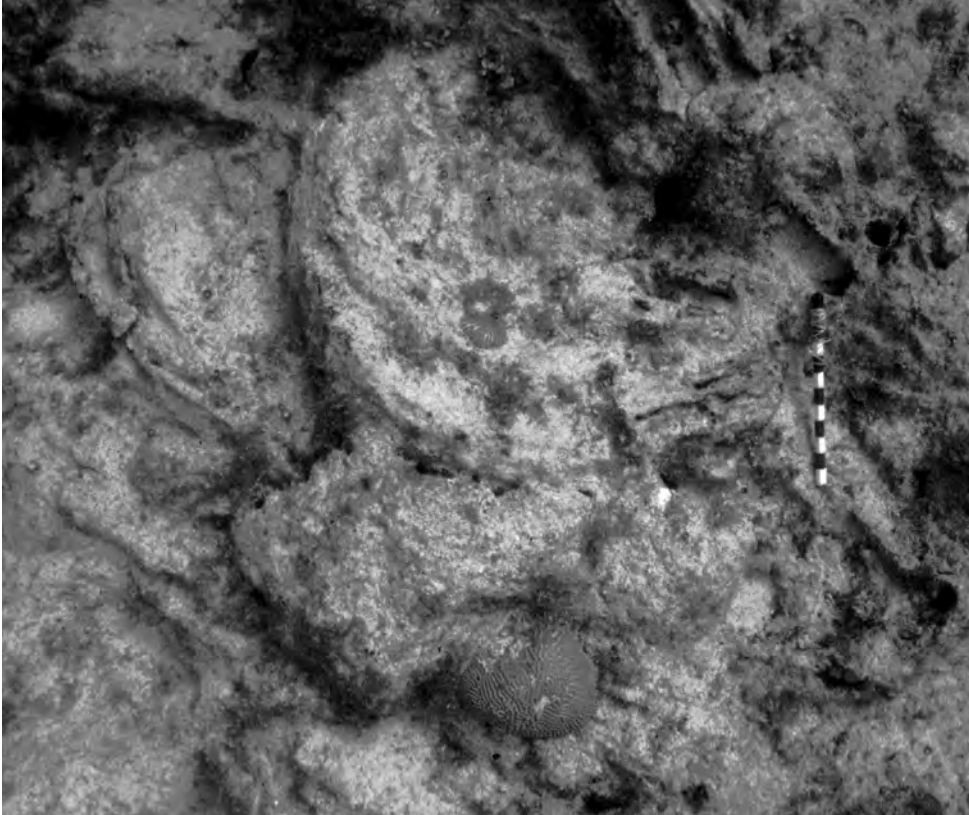
Figure 7. Plan view of the wreck of *El Buen Consejo*, September 1196 (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



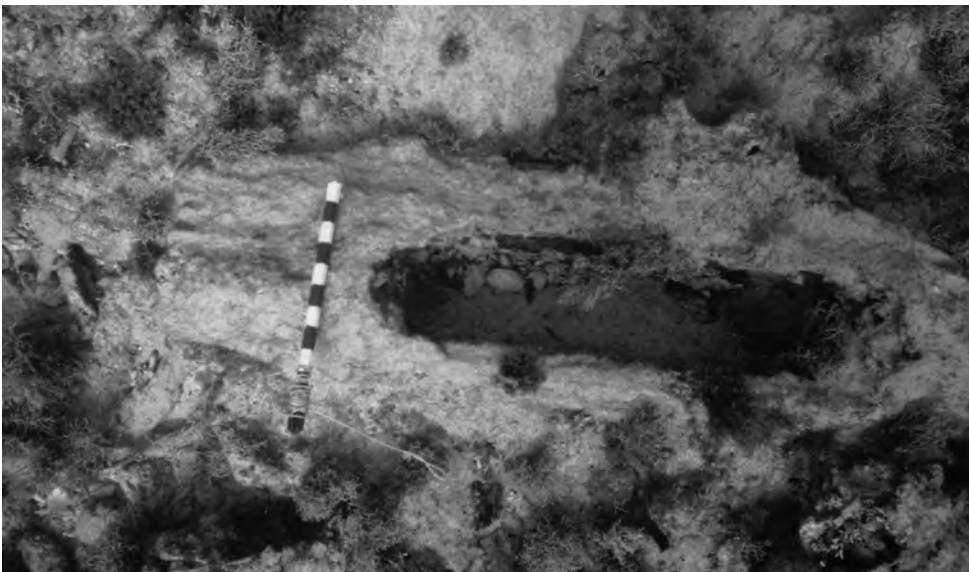


**Figure 8.** A thirty-two pound cannon ball (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).

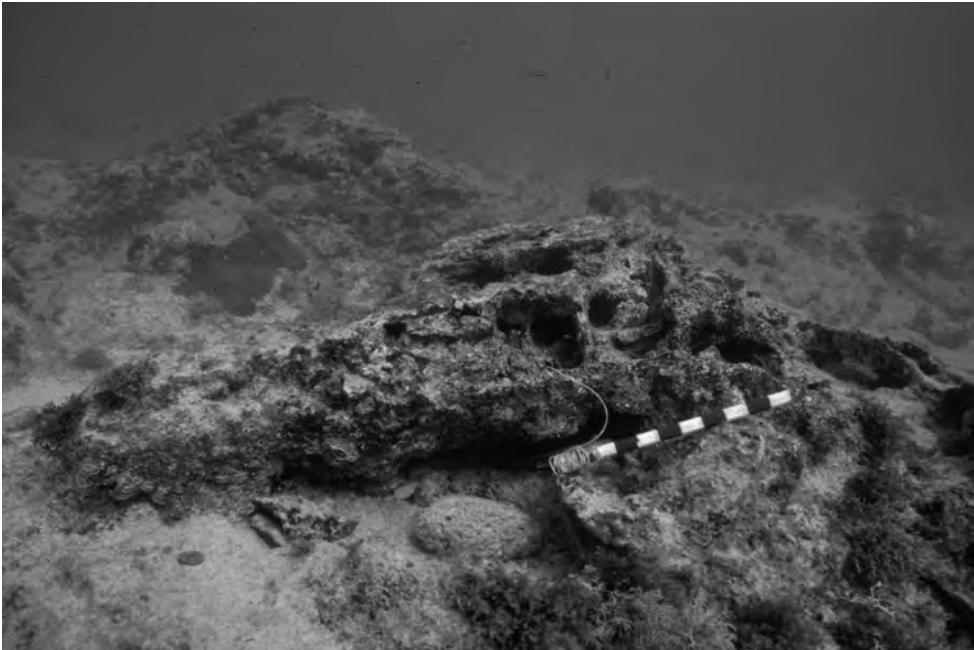




**Figure 9.** Concretions originally formed on wooden containers (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



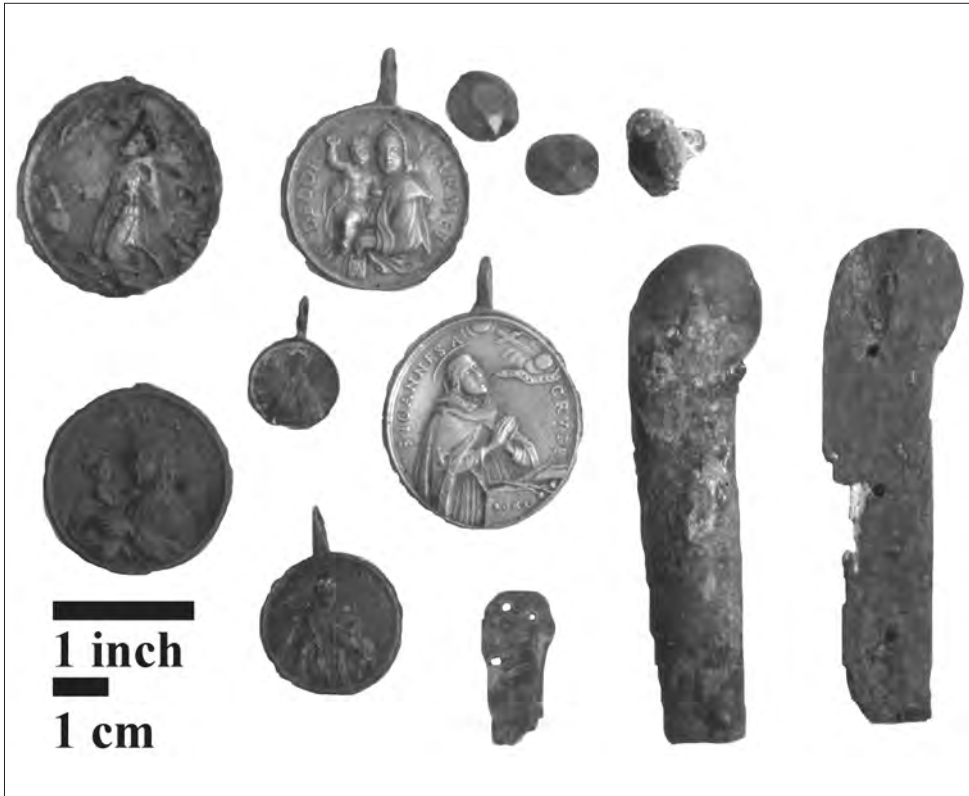
**Figure 10.** Remains of box, originally made of iron or iron strapping over wood. Now lies open on the site, its contents (if there were any) removed (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



**Figure 11.** This small hill of coral was originally made of wooden boxes packed with trade goods. The square shapes of crates are still discernible. Though many of the boxes are empty, some still contain glass, knives, pins, needles, and thimbles (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



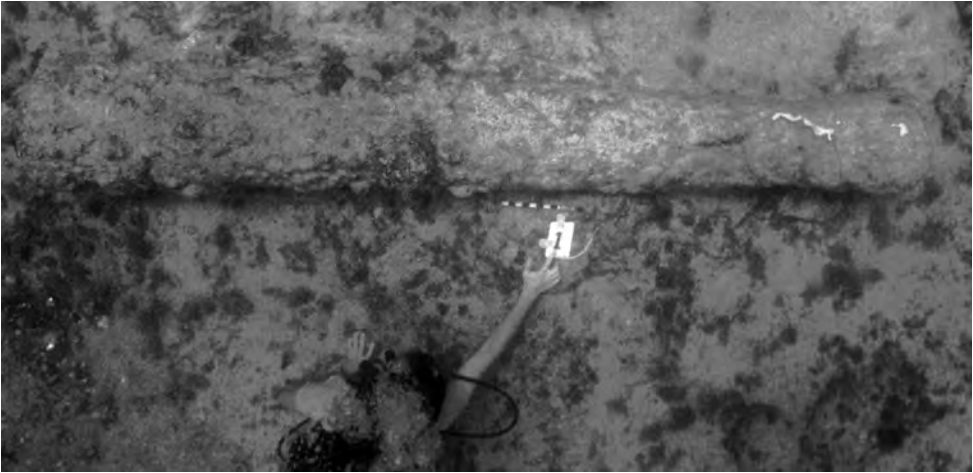
**Figure 12.** Alternative view of Figure 11 (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



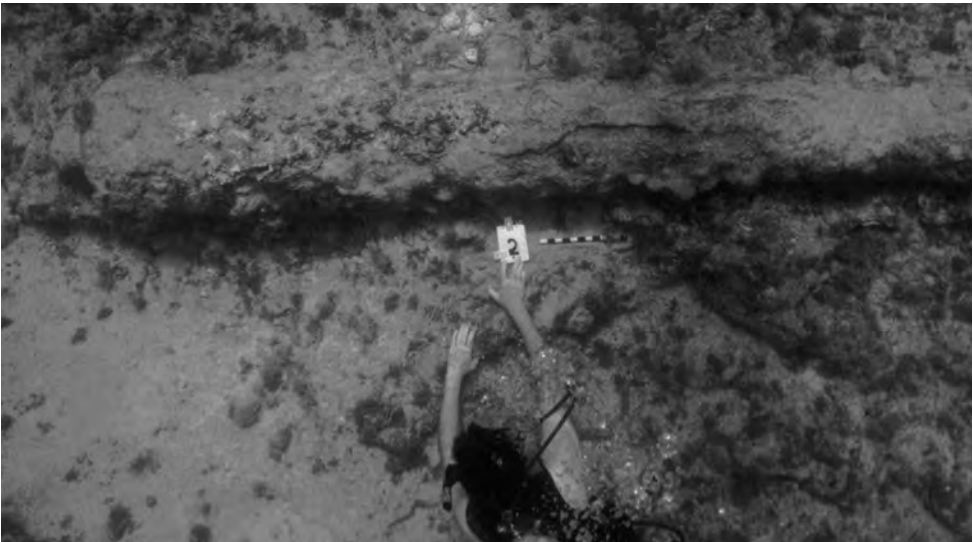
**Figure 13.** Selection of bronze medallions, utensil handles, and paste jewels from the wreck of *El Buen Consejo* (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).

The cannon strewn on the sea floor are nearly identical at 10.5 feet (3.2 meters) long and a bore diameter of nearly 6.5 inches (0.16 meters) (Figures 14-25). Although these are crude measurements (due to the overlying concretion), they indicate that the guns are typical thirty-two pounders. These are very large naval guns for the day and would have fired 32 pound cannonballs. Naval guns of this size are normally found only on the lower gun decks of a battle-ship-of-the-line such as the 3rd rate *El Buen Consejo*. The 18 foot (5.4 meter) long anchors also indicate that this was a large ship, far larger than the other armed vessel wrecked on Scrub Island. These artifacts indicate, therefore, that the ship wrecked on the eastern shore of Anguilla was the *El Buen Consejo* and not the *Jesus, Maria, y Jose* whose remains lie four miles (6.4 km) to the northeast of this site off Scrub Island.





**Figure 14.** Cannon 1 represented the “0” point of the 48-foot baseline (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



**Figure 15.** Cannon 2 (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



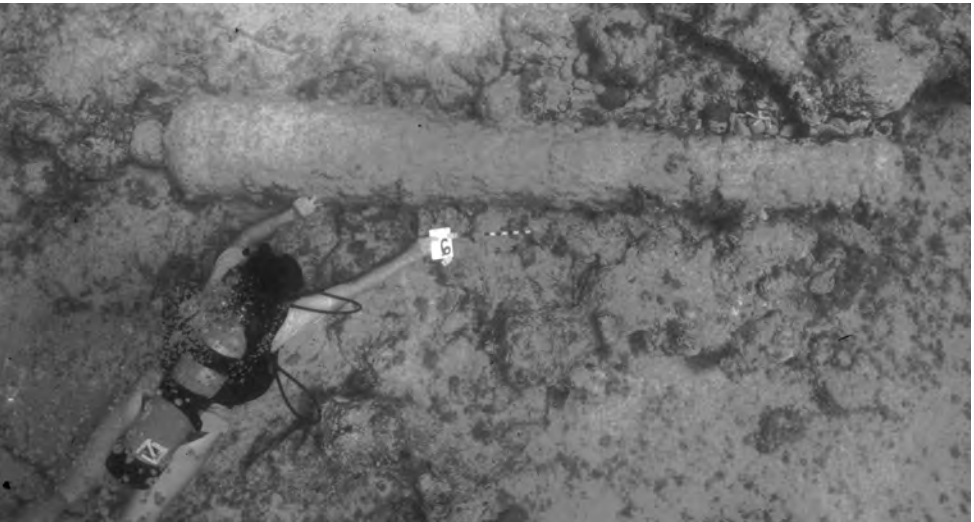
**Figure 16.** Cannon 3 lying on its side (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



**Figure 17.** Cannon 4 (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



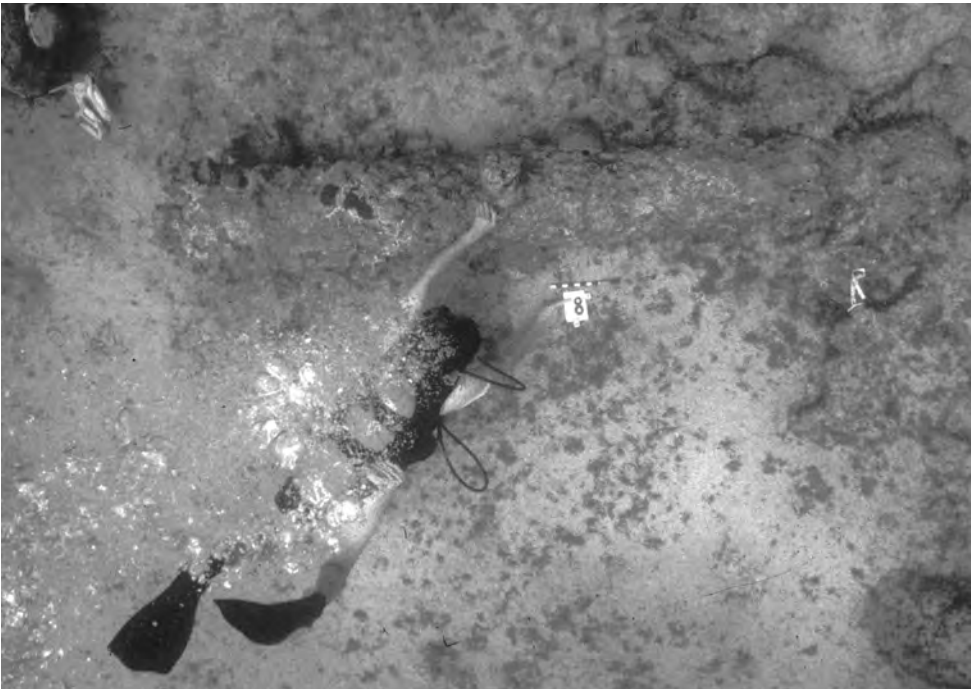
**Figure 18.** Cannon 5 (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



**Figure 19.** Cannon 6 (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



**Figure 20.** Cannon 7 (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).

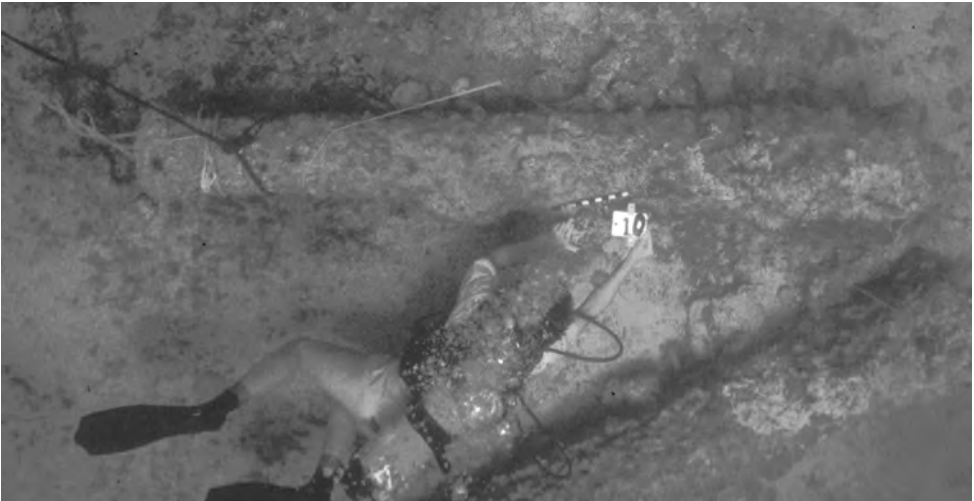


**Figure 21.** Cannon 8 (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).

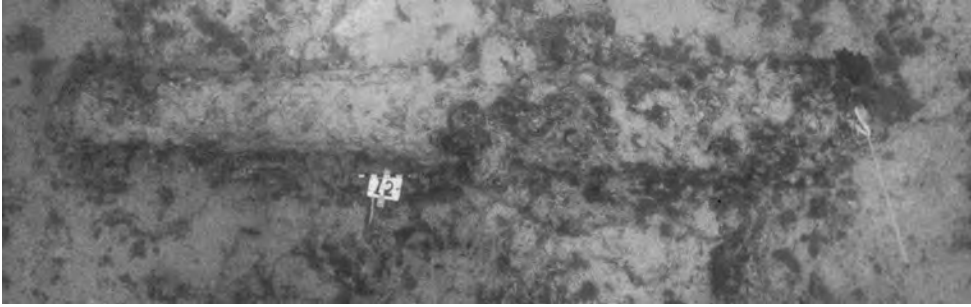




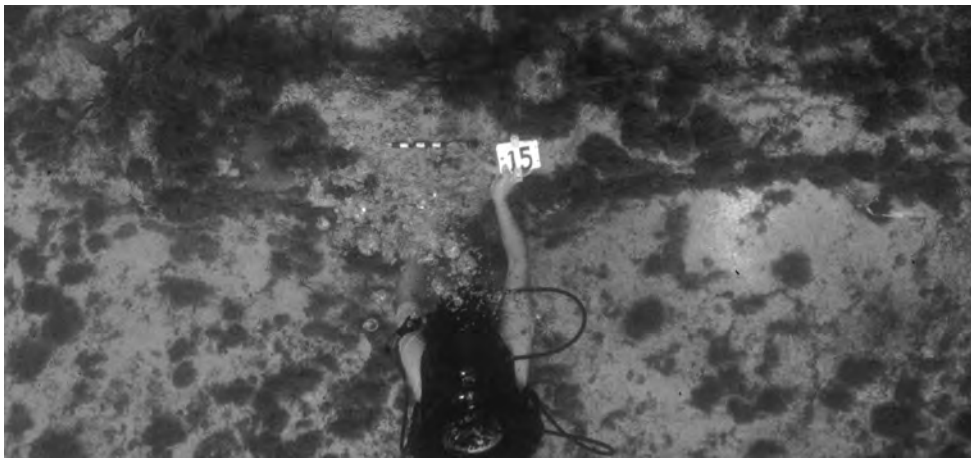
**Figure 22.** Cannon 9 (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



**Figure 23.** Cannon 10 (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



**Figure 24.** Cannon 12 (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



**Figure 25.** Cannon 15 (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).

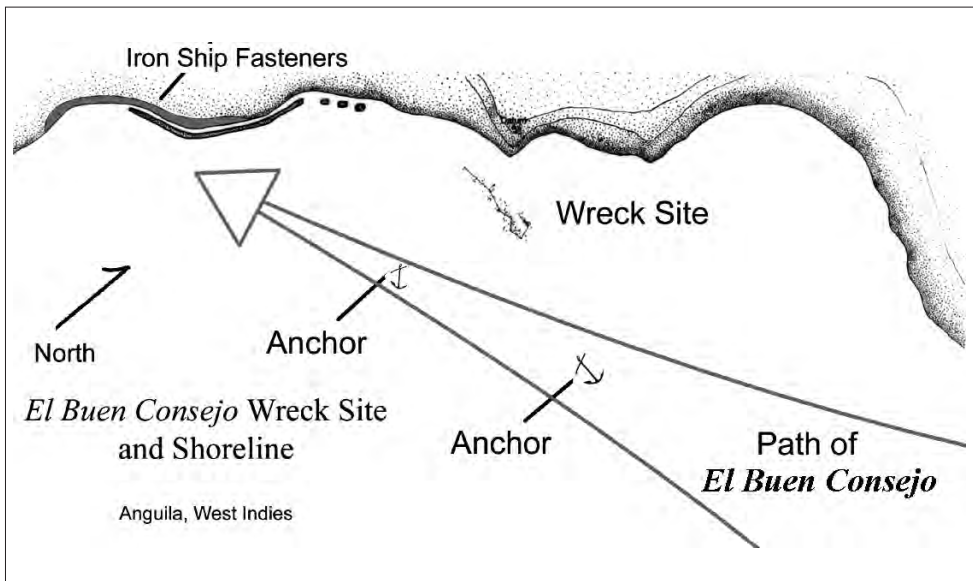
### Site Interpretation

Of the two wreck sites associated with the wrecking events that occurred on Anguilla, July 9, 1772, only the site identified as *El Buen Consejo* was documented well enough for any sort of interpretation. From the current position of the two wreck sites, it can be surmised, however, that the ships were traveling parallel to one another within easy visual range. Though crew members no doubt kept station at night through the use of lanterns, they could not see the low lying islands or reefs in the darkness. It is likely that the sound of surf on the rocky shore was their first warning of impending danger, or that a serious navigation error had occurred.

The fact that there were no fatalities in the wrecking events of July, 1772, suggests that the strandings were the result of navigation error and not a storm. Perforated below the waterline by the hard rocky bottom, the ships resting in the shallows near the shoreline must have remained largely intact. This is the only scenario that can explain how, on such a rugged shore, both crews survived. It also seems likely that the seas were calm enough to allow the men to launch small boats,

get ashore, and eventually salvage most of the items carried on the upper decks of the ship. To calculate the predicament in which *El Buen Consejo* found itself in the early morning of July 9, 1772, it is necessary to examine the placement of the wreckage in relation to the shoreline. This is particularly true of the alignment of the vessel's anchors.

Anchors seldom travel far from their landing place on the sea floor, and therefore can be a particularly good indicator of a ship's course during the emergency that caused them to be deployed. Since neither anchor lies in the debris field of the wreck, both were likely dropped in an attempt to keep the vessel from running aground. In this instance, therefore, a simple line drawn between the two anchors illustrates the path of the doomed ship (Figure 26). The course indicated is west by southwest. This is the course the ships should have taken after by-passing Anguilla and entering Anagada Passage. Clearly a navigation error caused them to steer west by southwest before they had rounded the Anguillian headlands. A malfunction in the ship's chronometer, or an unlucky guess at longitude (a calculation that was not perfected in 1772), harmless by day when the dangers could be seen, might have spelled disaster at night.



**Figure 26.** The likely final path of *El Buen Consejo* (Program in Maritime Studies, 2006).

The placement of the anchors also indicate that the crew of *El Buen Consejo* was aware of their predicament some 2000 feet (609.6 meters) before the vessel grounded. Their early warning may have been precipitated by a close encounter with the rocky promontory of Windward point to starboard. The surf pounding on this rocky outcrop would be easy to hear at a few hundred feet range but as the water is deep at that point they did not ground there. Yet the warning was not enough. Given a reasonable sailing speed of four to five knots, the deck watch had less than five minutes to realize the problem, and save the ship.

Although the ship dropped its first anchor soon after the initial alarm, the device apparently did not slow the vessel. Today, this anchor lies flat on the bottom with its flukes pointing away from the shore (Figure 5). This may indicate that the wooden stock of the anchor broke, or was fouled in the anchor line when it was dropped, as it was dragged uselessly across the hard rock bottom. With the stock broken or fouled, the anchor flukes could not be positioned upright to dig in and stop the ship's headlong rush toward shore.

Within about two minutes, while some of the sailors no doubt frantically fought to reef the sails, the ship traveled nearly half the distance to the island. Here, 900 feet (274.3 meters) from the first anchor, a second was dropped. This anchor dug into the hard coral and limestone bottom and held (Figure 6). By this time, however, it was too late. The draft of a vessel this size would have been 12 to 14 feet (3.6 to 4.2 meters), and it was already too near the shore. The first rending shudder likely tore holes in the bottom of the ship allowing it to settle near the shoreline with at least its main deck above the waterline.

Interestingly, where the alignment of the anchors predict the vessel would ground, there is a great deal of iron fastener scatter and other debris lining the shore. The bottom of the ship likely broke up in this location with the prevailing winds casting the flotsam onto shore. Here the wood pieces rotted and disintegrated while the iron fasteners remained, in time forming concretions that are dispersed and cemented into the nooks and crannies of the hard limestone. The ship's ballast, in the form of stone cobbles or pig iron, would have dropped through the bottom of the ship here.

The main wreck site today is located some 1500 feet (457.2 meters) northeast of where the vessel likely grounded. The movement of the ship after it wrecked was no doubt caused by the hurricane reported in the PRO papers as occurring on August 31, 1772. Apparently, enough of the ship's structure remained intact to carry the lower deck guns and some of its cargo to this new resting place before it sank and completely went to pieces.

Since no section of the original ship's hull remains, archaeological interpretation can add nothing to this ship's description. The warship likely had two gun decks below the main deck for its 70 guns. A ship of 70 guns would have been considered a battleship, not as formidable as a first rate of 100 guns, but certainly a very large and powerful ship of the Spanish Navy. The vessel's loss must have caused a considerable stir in Spain. Of the 70 guns, the largest would have been the thirty-two pounders located on the lower gun deck. As eighteen cannon are all that remain on the site, it can be surmised that the lighter more accessible cannon were salvaged between the wrecking event and the total destruction of the ship. Salvors likely gathered up all other items of value at this time leaving only those items that proved too heavy or inaccessible to carry off.



## *Jesus, Maria, y Jose*

The wreck site in the surf zone (Figure 27) off Scrub Island should actually be categorized as two wreck sites. Mingled with 15 or so eight and twelve pounder guns (that no doubt belonged to the *Jesus, Maria, y Jose*), are fasteners (Figure 28), artifacts, and ship's equipment (Figure 29) belonging to a much later wreck of nineteenth century origin. Nothing remains of the Spanish escort vessel except for its guns. A view of these artifacts reveals why. The environment close to Scrub Island is of such a high energy nature and with strong surge that the cannon are continually rolled around and worn away on the hard rock bottom. Many of the guns look as though they have been placed in a "giant pencil sharpener" and ground down to a fraction of their original size (Figure 30). One gun (Figure 31) is worn through so that the cannon ball with which it was loaded is now exposed. Needless to say, if the environment is this hard on artifacts as massive and indestructible as cannon, very little if anything exists of the original ship unless it was washed up on shore. The artifacts lying near the cannon belong to a later ship, and are themselves fast becoming victims of the high energy environment. This nineteenth-century ship had brass fastenings, two 6 foot (1.8 meter) sliding stock anchors, cross linked anchor chain, portholes, and a sophisticated mechanical pump, all of which indicate a vessel of the mid or possibly late nineteenth century. A small number of timbers exists at this site wedged between rocks. As the timber is associated most closely with the nineteenth century remains it no doubt belongs to this later vessel. Additionally, the size of the anchors suggest that the later vessel was not of great size.



**Figure 27.** High energy conditions at the Scrub Island site shoreline (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



**Figure 28.** Concentration of brass drift pins on the Scrub Island site (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



**Figure 29.** The sliding stock anchor and nearby wreckage belong to a nineteenth century vessel wrecked in the same area as the *Jesus, Maria, y Jose* (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



**Figure 30.** Eroded cannon at Scrub Island site probably from the *Jesus, Maria, y Jose* (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).



**Figure 31.** Eroded Scrub Island cannon with *in situ* cannon ball (Program in Maritime Studies, 1996).

The wreckage off Scrub Island is badly worn, battered, and scattered by the environment. It is unlikely this site can be subjected to meaningful archaeological assessment or interpretation other than to say the wreckage represents two different ships. One of these vessels, the armed one, was likely the *Jesus, Maria, y Jose*. Approximately 100 years later, the other came to grief at the same place.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

The Scrub Island site is interesting in that it represents two different vessels. One is likely the *Jesus, Maria, y Jose* while the other is an unknown wreck of 19th century origin. These wrecks, however, are not only intermingled but also badly degraded due to the high energy environment and their proximity to the shoreline. Mapping these sites would likely only demonstrate how often and how far the wreckage migrates and would give no better understanding of the sites.

On the other hand, the site identified as *El Buen Consejo* represents a truly valuable submerged cultural resource. The artifacts at this site represent physically, events that occurred July 8, 1772. This day was certainly a red letter date for the Spanish Navy in losing a powerful and valuable battle-ship-of-the-line. Conversely, the day is an important moment in Anguillan history when the outside world was literally thrust upon it for good or bad. For the conglomeration of artifacts that make up this wreck site mutely communicate the account of a colonial power determined to supply and protect its New World holdings. At the same time, they relate over 1000 individual stories of waylaid sailors, monks, and islanders hard pressed to offer assistance.

In an ideal world it would be proper to leave the site as it lies, to let our children explore the wreckage as if it were being seen for the first time, to wonder about each of the massive cannons or be amazed by the variety and condition of the small shiny brass buttons, medallions, or paste jewels. The reality is that this may not be possible. Under uncontrolled conditions humans are natural collectors and the more people that visit the site, the fewer artifacts that will remain, until finally there are none left. This has happened repeatedly, and is the reason for passage of many laws around the world whose aim it is to protect archeological sites, even those residing underwater. As an example, the U.S. Abandoned Shipwreck Act of 1987, gave each state the right and responsibility to protect and manage their individual bottom lands and wreck sites. As a result, states in the U.S. have used many different approaches to manage their submerged cultural resources, some more successful than others.

Of the more successful approaches used by states that manage their underwater resources are those that use a three pronged approach; first to educate the public on the value of their submerged heritage, second, to promote professional archaeological surveys to gain knowledge of their resource base, and finally to enlist the aid of most of the parties that have an interest in the resource.

Educating the public concerning the value of submerged resources creates ground swell support for efforts to preserve and study archaeological sites. These efforts run the gamut from lectures by professionals in public meetings, to printing posters that advance the idea that history belongs to everyone. Museums also offer



a good educational alternative for the non-diving public while at the same time they can promote conservation and preservation of the resource base.

Professional archaeological surveys are necessary to government agencies in their effort to get a handle on the extent of the resource base in question. It is difficult, if not impossible to manage an unknown resource. Though archaeological surveys do cost money, cooperative projects such as the 1996 Anguilla Shipwreck Survey helped defray expenses. These cooperative enterprises encourage continued scientific interest in cultural resource management issues. Without these efforts scientists tend to retreat to their "ivory towers," while state officials remain helpless to control site looting and the destruction of public property.

The last of the overall approaches to management of submerged cultural resources employed by successful governmental agencies involves enlisting the aid of the various groups competing for access to the sites. Ironically, though these groups have been known to compete fiercely, their interests are seldom mutually exclusive. Dive shop operators and archaeologists for instance have proven natural allies, as both are interested in preserving underwater sites. Dive shops that do not promote preservation tend to suffer lost revenues over time if they continue to dive stripped or looted underwater sites. Sport divers themselves, encouraged by dive shop operators and professional archaeologists, have created amateur archaeology clubs that aid professionals document and preserve sites. In the process, sport divers get a much better understanding of what it is they have been looking at.

Underwater preserves or parks are a growing trend in submerged resource management. Though these parks promote the responsible use of the resource and attract tourist dollars and service industries, there is no mechanism set up to control diver activity in them. Underwater parks or preserves in the U.S. are a recent development and it remains to be seen what impact the unsupervised visitation of sport divers will have.

Specific recommendations regarding the management of the *El Buen Consejo* wreck site would be to use it as a springboard to begin a comprehensive far reaching plan to promote the public education of Anguilla's underwater heritage, promote additional professional surveys, and bring the competing groups to consensus regarding the long term use of this site as a preserve or park.

Unlike the U.S. trend to create unrestricted preserves, all diving activity on the *El Buen Consejo* site should be closely monitored for three reasons. First, the wreck site lies close to a very unforgiving shoreline, divers forced to the surface could face the danger of being swept into the rocks. In addition, the underwater surge is very powerful at times, as well as being swept into the rocks, novice divers could be pulled off the bottom to face pressure change injury. Secondly, there are a great many small artifacts concreted into the coral in some areas. Unsupervised divers may use tools to pry artifacts loose from concretions. The destruction this activity would have on the site would be irreparable. Finally, the impact of large numbers of visitors cannot be calculated. The clumsy use of scuba gear or even the fin and hand strokes from many divers can have adverse effects on delicate site features and biota. Small controlled groups under close supervision may keep this damage to a minimum.

Finally, it should be reiterated that a more comprehensive on-site archaeo-

logical investigation would give us almost no more archaeological information than we have now concerning the ship *El Buen Consejo* or the wrecking process. The warship has been utterly destroyed.

However, in depth historical research in conjunction with the conservation and subsequent micro excavation of artifacts may reveal much concerning 18th century trade patterns, manufacture and shipping techniques. This may be the only site known that contains large quantities of glass paste jewels or religious trinkets all packed for shipment. Both artifact types reveal a much larger historical picture. Therefore, before this site is considered for public visitation (as an underwater park or preserve), all loose artifacts should be removed and conserved and the artifacts held safe for Anguilla citizens. This process should be undertaken by a responsible professional organization with the resources available to not only conserve the artifacts but research their manufacture, composition, and history. The ground work should also be laid for housing and storing the artifacts into the future. Archaeology and conservation take time, but curation (the display, storage, and continued stabilization) of an artifact lasts virtually forever.

This survey was successful because of its joint nature. It represents a logical and responsible first step in Parliament's management of all of Anguilla's submerged cultural resources. It may be hoped that just as the wrecking tragedies that occurred in July of 1772 turned to diplomacy and humanitarian triumph, so will the controversy surrounding the rediscovery of the wreck sites turn to cooperation and site preservation.





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