Fort Pierce displays relics from the waters

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FORT PIERCE DISPLAYS RELICS FROM THE WATERS

By HAMPTON DUNN

FORT PIERCE --- Look around most any public area in this East Coast community and you'll see some interesting relics salvaged from the ocean waters.

Back in 1929, a total of 16 cannon and four giant anchors were retrieved. They came from wrecked vessels lying on a reef just north of the city. Local folk were pleased with their find, dressed up the coral-encrusted pieces with aluminum paint and put them on display. Some relics decorated the little lawn in front of City Hall, others add interest to other parks (such as the one shown in photo, located on busy U.S. 1 on the southside of town), and before the Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to coral, oyster shells also encrusted the relics, to such extent it has never been fully determined whence they came. It is said that dim mouldings on the cannon indicate that they may have been part of the armament of an early French or Spanish vessel.

The relics may have been part of the equipment on the Spanish treasure ships. There was a convoy of 11 of the Silver Fleet that sank in the Vero Beach-Fort Pierce area in a hurricane in 1715. Recently, professional treasure hunters located the sand covered wrecks of two of these ships and salvaged much valuable artifacts ranging from cannon to pewter plate and silver table wear and jewelry. The rich discovery has been labeled the "Fort Pierce Find."