


# Treasure Island: The Untold Story

*By John Amrhein, Jr.*

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**Treasure Island: The Untold Story** By John Amrhein, Jr.

IT HAPPENED! In 1750, fifty-two chests of silver pieces of eight were stolen from a Spanish galleon at Ocracoke, North Carolina, and carried to the West Indies where most of it was buried on Norman Island, a deserted key in the British Virgin Islands. In 1883, Robert Louis Stevenson, published a fictional tale of adventure about an expedition to an unnamed Caribbean island to recover a treasure that had been buried there in 1750. On August 18, 1750, the *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* had left Havana, Cuba, for Cadiz, Spain, with a cargo valued at nearly a million pieces of eight. She had come from Veracruz, Mexico, where she had loaded her precious treasures. The Guadalupe had just completed another historic journey: she had delivered twenty Franciscan priests from Spain, one of which was the legendary Father Junipero Serra, who, through a miracle, saved the ship, her passengers, and her crew from certain doom on the feast day of St. Barbara. Father Serra went on to build nine mission churches in Southern California, leaving us with San Diego, San Juan Capistrano, and San Francisco, among others today. Without this miracle, no treasure would have been buried on a deserted Caribbean island in 1750 and there would have been no Treasure Island. After departing Havana, the Guadalupe was driven over five hundred miles from her intended course that would have taken her across the Atlantic to Spain. Instead, in early September 1750, she was delivered to Teach s Hole at Ocracoke Inlet, North Carolina, for her historic rendezvous with destiny. Just after the hurricane, Owen and John Lloyd, two respected merchant captains from Hampton Roads, Virginia, had departed for St. Kitts unaware of the detour their lives were about to take. Their sloop sprung a leak and diverted to the safety of Ocracoke Inlet where they encountered the disabled galleon. By an extraordinary chain of events, the Lloyd brothers found themselves entrusted to the rescue of over eight tons of silver pieces of eight and other riches by the bungling and arrogant galleon captain, Juan Manuel Bonilla. It was at this same location that the notorious Blackbeard had been killed thirty-two years before. But Blackbeard had to take a back seat to what was about to take place: the two brothers, who had been ravaged at the hands of the Spaniards in the recently ended King George s War, exacted their revenge on the galleon and sailed away with the treasure a haul that outdid the legendary pirate. Now, after nine years of investigation by an international team of researchers, Treasure Island: The Untold Story takes us back to Treasure Island just as Stevenson did in 1883. Only this time, it s not doubloons and pieces of eight that are uncovered but rather an incredible tale that up until now has remained buried in the dust of time.

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## Editorial Review

Review
John Amrhein's *Treasure Island: The Untold Story* is a superlative example of historical fact being well balanced through the use of fictional narrative in order to create a dialogue animating the truth behind Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. Above and beyond the intensive research that Amrhein conducted to develop the entire story, as well as his uncanny ability to connect events and people through time, this work is also a genuine contribution to the scholarly field of knowledge about maritime history during the 18th century. Ultimately, Amhrein's work serves as a compendium of historical fact and events surrounding a story that has captured the imaginations of both young and old for nearly a century and a half. --James Perry Archivist & Historian, Monterey County Historical Society

What an adventure! The author's thorough research and meticulous attention to detail is skillfully woven with humanizing snippets of information that bring his historical characters to life. The reader, with any interest in harsh maritime life on the high seas on the Caribbean and Atlantic seaboards in the mid 18th century, gets a tantalizing glimpse into how challenging it must have been. The real joy to any St. Christophile is, of course, the fascinating behind the scenes tour of the making of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*. The links to the Caines Plantation, Dieppe Bay and downtown Basseterre all bring Mr. Stevenson's story to life in a way not imagined by the author but much appreciated by anyone with an interest in the history of the island. --Daisy Mottram, Honorary Secretary, St. Christopher (St. Kitts) National Trust

Anyone interested in piracy and Stevenson's *Treasure Island* will enjoy it and find new material and a fresh perspective. --Dr. Patrick Scott, Director, Irvin Department of Rare Books & Special Collections (includes the Robert Louis Stevenson Collection) and Distinguished Professor of English, Emeritus, University of South Carolina

About the Author
**JOHN AMRHEIN** is the leading authority on the 1750 Spanish fleet. He was introduced to maritime historical research by his interest in SCUBA diving. In 1983, he discovered the shipwreck of *La Galga*, the escort warship of the fleet. In 2007, he published *The Hidden Galleon; The true story of a lost Spanish ship and the wild ponies of Assateague Island*, his first installment on the 1750 Spanish fleet. He is a graduate of the University of South Carolina and currently is a real estate broker on the Outer Banks of North Carolina where he resides with his family and enjoys fishing and sailing.

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**Mary Varnum:**

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