

File SPANISH ARTIFACTS 1984

October 26, 1984



Hon. Luther Jones, Mayor
and Council Members
City of Corpus Christi, TX.

Dear Mr. Jones and Council Members:

Following your suggestion during the Town Hall Meeting at Greenwood Center, I am writing in regard to the matter of the Spanish Galleon Artifacts.

It is very disconcerting to find that plans have been laid out to allow the splitting up of the artifact exhibit between Corpus Christi Museum and the Flour Bluff area. There are several reasons why this should never be done.

According to authorities, these artifacts could easily be the most valuable collection of antiquities in the nation today. It is truly a time capsule consisting of multiple and interesting items that sank into the Gulf of Mexico 450 years ago when four galleons left the port city of Veracruz, Mexico on the way back to Spain with their cargo of silver, hides, dyes, etc. from the new world. Of course, there was the usual number of passengers and their belongings. Among the items in this large exhibit are a piece of a wooden keel, an anchor, a cannon, a small rail gun and a navigation instrument called "astrolabe", which was used to find locations in relation to the stars and the sun. Mathematical calculations were figured in conjunction with the use of the instrument. There are also numerous coins and some silver disks.

Obviously, with such a rare and valuable exhibit, we expect many scientists from all over the nation and the world for viewing and study. It would be very awkward for them to be going back and forth from downtown to Flour Bluff. It would also be very inconvenient and wasteful for the museum staff to be constantly on the road in order to provide the support services for proper care of the entire collection by professional personnel.

At present our City has enough problems taking care of the existing museum location without having to worry about a second location.

The bulk of our population has easier access to the existing museum location and we should consider many groups of school children that visit the museum every year and professional guides make their tour a real learning experience by the wealth of information they supply.

In particular, I have a wish that children of Spanish-Mexican descent will derive a sense of pride from this exhibit that speaks of the high degree of accomplishments of our ancestors, demonstrated by this time capsule of the 1500's. Too often, our history books used in the schools relate history in negative terms and fail to bring out the good about the brave Spanish navigators who opened up the Americas for all of us, with the exception of the Indian natives.

The exhibit of the Spanish Galleon artifacts has much more potential than a mere tourist attraction. Please keep it complete at our fine Corpus Christi Museum.

Respectfully,

Catalina Martinez
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