

EFB

Gloria Gilchrist

'Port Royal, Jamaica'

Correspondence and cuttings

Aug - Nov 1967 and July 1972

Note for S.P.C. Circular

Nov. 1967.

on the
surface

The Hon. Librarian reports that he has been called into consultation with the London Museum authorities, and a representative of the Jamaica government museum authorities, about a quantity of antique pewterware brought up from the sea off Port Royal, Jamaica, recently. Port Royal, once the main port of this island, slid into the sea during an earthquake in 1692, and all buildings, warehouses and offices were demolished. The port is now of comparatively little importance, but the artifacts now coming to light are of great significance, and show that most of the pewterware in use in that area was brought from Europe, and the large majority of items from England.

Scale drawings ^{of details} of many of the pieces were available for inspection, and include:

- A gallon capacity baluster measure, with "hammerhead" thumbpiece, 11 1/2 ins. high, ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~, marked (?) as Cott. No. 5954, c.1668.
- A quart "hammerhead" baluster measure, with Crowned HR excise seal.
- A 1/2-pint "ball and wedge" t.p. baluster, not of the earliest slim form, but probably transitional, about 1660-70.
- The lid only of a 1/2-pint "bud" baluster
- The lid and handle only of what appears to be a Stuart flat-lid tankard (the drawing a little obscure).
- A good octagonal based Salt, c.1690
- Two bases and one column (separated) of candlesticks of the type shown in Cotterell, Plate XXV(c).c.1690-95.
- A gadrooned Candle Cup (one handle only still extant), similar to Cott. Plate XXXIII(e).
- A porringer of early deep bowl form, as shown in my articles in Apollo, Fig. VIII, (part 2), August, 1949, with "shell" ear, c.1620
- A normal booged porringer, of c.1690-1700, with "Old English" ear
- Several ears only, of porringers, incl. one of "Double Dolphin" pattern.
- A battered Chamber pot, of c.1700 or ~~near~~.
- A large quantity of plates and dishes, incl. early broad-rimmed, narrow-rimmed, etc. between c.1650 and 1700, a few later.
- A large quantity of pewter (and some silver) spoons, incl. two or three unique types of "split ends" with relief-cast decoration.

Pewter

There were many other things, such as old Scale Beams, weights (bronze), silver porringers, pewter bottle tops (? continental), brass candlesticks, incl. "trumpet based", mostly of the pre-1692 period. Many of the items, of pewter and other materials, are of an obviously later period than 1692, and it would appear that, for some time after the earthquake disaster, the area was used as a dumping ground for normal refuse. Excavations are still proceeding, and it is likely that much more will be discovered.



THE LONDON MUSEUM

Kensington Palace, LONDON W.8

01-937 9816/9

6th November, 1967

Ronald F. Michaelis, Esq. ,
Pelham House,
80 Denton Road,
Denton,
Newhaven,
Sussex.

Dear Mr. Michaelis,

It was most interesting and informative to sit in on your discussions with Mrs. Gilchrist on Friday, and I was very glad that you were able to help her, as she is working under considerable difficulties.

I have ordered half-plate prints of the two St. John Willis candlesticks and our 14th century one, and you will receive them in due course. The formula, should you wish to reproduce them, is "By courtesy of the Trustees of the London Museum". I am writing to Mrs. St. John Willis today, although frankly not hoping greatly for a reply.

Yours sincerely,

Philippa Fox-Robinson,
Assistant Curator.

14th. November, 1967

Miss Gloria Gilchrist,
Institute of Jamaica,
East Street, Kingston, Jamaica.

Dear Miss Gilchrist,

My grateful thanks for your letter of the 12th. Nov.,
and copy of Saturday Evening Post, with article on the Port
Royal finds. I found this of absorbing interest.

I am so glad to have had the opportunity of examining
the scale drawings you brought over, and that I was able to
have been of some help. Some of the information I was
able to give was, obviously, somewhat conjectural, based on
too meagre information, but was reliable in the main.

I would welcome the opportunity of being more precise,
particularly in regard to some of the plates and dishes.

Would it be possible for you to let me have good photo-
graphs of some of these, showing details, especially the broad-
rimmed items, and the narrow-rimmed "bowl" type plate, and
also of the brass candlesticks. I am particularly interested
in the latter, from the point of view of a collector, and also
because I am, at the moment (and have been for the past 15 years)
involved in writing a treatise on such things. I am also
keen on old glass bottles and their "seals"; can you let me
have good drawings of the seals, together with details of the
type and shape of bottle upon which they were found?

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

R. J. Michaelis

*P.S. If possible, please return
the 2 copies from the envelopes
(sent out abroad) as I collect
British and find a different
type of paper used for the
other two (in used condition)*

Rm.

SCIENCE MUSEUM
THE INSTITUTE OF JAMAICA,
KINGSTON, JAMAICA, W.I.

20 November, 1967

Dear Mr. Michalek,

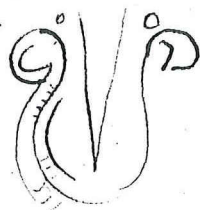
Thank you for your letter of 14th November.

I will do my best to obtain photographs of the items you mention but cannot make any promises as it is quite possible I will be resigning from the Institute at the end of the month. A most curious and unsatisfactory situation exists here and I don't feel inclined to put up with it much longer.

The brass candlesticks shouldn't be any problem since they have already been photographed & it's just a question of getting prints.

All the glass seals were found broken from their bottles so I can give you no further information about them but I will get a photo copy of the drawings.

I have examined the pewter cup and am sure there was never a second handle. I have also had a closer look — under a lens — at the spoons which have the rather elaborate design:—
under the bowl and I am almost certain but not positive that it is in relief rather than incised. If you remember, you asked me to check on this.



I'm afraid I haven't many stamps at the moment as I took a lot to England with me for my nephew, but I will keep any I come across in future for you.

Sincerely,
Gloria Gilchrist

East Street,

Kingston

Jamaica

12. XI. 67

Dear Mr. Michaelis,

I'm afraid this magazine is a bit
the worse for having been thoroughly
read by a lot of people but I hope
you'll find the Post-loyal article
useful.

Thank you for your help
with our penster. I will keep
you informed of any interesting
finds in the future.

Sincerely,

Edwin Gilchrist

DIVING FOR TREASURE IN THE PIRATE CITY

Wealthy, wicked Port Royal vanished beneath the sea nearly 300 years ago. But there is still plenty to find among its drowned ruins, including mint-fresh pieces of eight—and, perhaps, sudden death.

By Harold H. Martin

*Saturday Evening Post
Aug. 12, 1967*

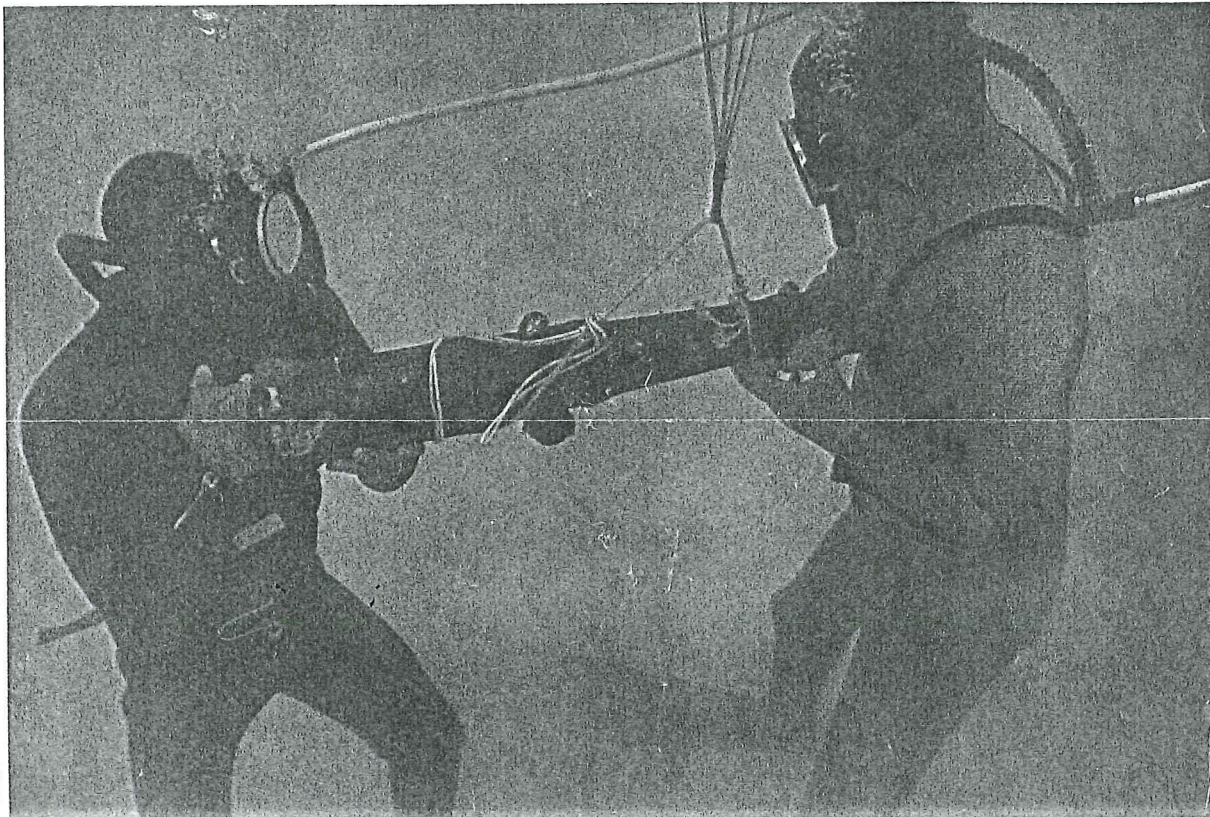
In the brief years of its existence, Port Royal, Jamaica, was the richest, bloodiest and bawdiest seaport the Caribbean has ever known. Its reputation for wealth—built mainly on pirate plunder—was exceeded only by its renown for drunkenness, violence, blasphemy and lewdness. "Everywhere abideth ye lazy strumpets," a minister complained, and clergymen were constantly predicting that for its manifold sins God would destroy the city. One who had so foretold, the Rev. Emanuel Heath, rector of St. Paul's, lived to describe the fate of "this most ungodly and debauched people."

The morning of June 7, 1692, was exceedingly hot and abnormally still. The Reverend Mr. Heath spent the morning reading prayers at his church, and then went to the Merchants' Exchange to join the president of the Port Royal Council, Lt. Gov. John White, who had invited Mr. Heath "to have a glass of wormwood wine with him as a whet before dinner." They

lingered so long over the wine, however, that the rector missed dinner entirely, which was fortunate for him, because the earthquake and tidal wave that destroyed the city struck shortly before noon. The house at which Mr. Heath had intended to dine was one of the first to tumble into the sea.

The terror of that morning can still be felt in Mr. Heath's account: "I found the ground rolling and moving under my feet, upon which I said to Mr. White, 'Lord, Sir, what is that?' He replied, 'It is an earthquake. Be not afraid, it will soon be over.' But it increased, and we heard the church and tower fall, upon which we ran to save ourselves. I . . . saw the earth open and swallow up a multitude of people, and the sea mounting in upon them . . . I then laid aside all thoughts of escaping and resolved to make my way toward my own lodging, and there to meet Death in as good posture as I could. . . ."

For 275 years the ruined structures, the artifacts and, perhaps, much of



Robert Marx (right) and Kenrick Kelly, one of his Jamaican divers, bring up an ancient cannon from the muddy bottom of Kingston Harbour, where it has lain since the days of Henry Morgan.

Port Royal's fabulous wealth have lain submerged within a stone's throw of present-day Port Royal, a drowsy fishing town situated at the tip of the narrow spit of land that all but encloses Kingston Harbour. In all these years the sunken city has titillated the imaginations of historians and treasure hunters, but few people have ever been drawn to it more strongly than an American named Robert Marx, a brooding, deep-eyed man with a fierce moustache, who has been diving on the ruins for more than a year now, under official Jamaican sponsorship.

On days when the work goes well, he is stirred almost to frenzy as he prowls among the fallen walls of this ancient entrepôt and pirate stronghold. Groping blindly in the mud with his bare hands—the water is opaque with silt—he comes up with a coral-encrusted cannon, a sword hilt, an onion-shaped rum bottle, a clay pipe.

Formerly a self-styled pirate, interested only in treasure, Marx now gets as excited when he finds these simple artifacts as he did in earlier days when he brought up gold and silver coins from the wrecks of sunken galleons. His moustache quivers at the discovery of a pewter tankard, and as he pores over the old charts and records, he talks of Port Royal-under-the-sea as if Sir Henry Morgan's buccaneers were still swilling rum in its taverns.

Marx thinks that most of Port Royal's treasure—gold, silver or jewels—was



Marx has long been obsessed by Port Royal.

brought up long ago. For years after the disaster, "fishers and dredgers" dragged heavily weighted nets and grappling hooks over the bottom. Any treasures that remain will be found under fallen walls, Marx believes, for those old-time salvors lacked the kind of equipment needed to break up and raise such heavy structures.

In some respects his own equipment is not all that Marx would wish. It consists mainly of a leaky skiff with a cranky motor, a small homemade barge floating on rusty oil drums, and a wheezing compressor borrowed from the Jamaican Department of Public Works. The compressor powers Marx's air lift, a sort of underwater vacuum cleaner used to suck away the mud and silt that have buried the ruins.

Makeshift equipment has, however, been the least serious of Marx's prob-

lems. Twice in the past year or so, heavy brick walls have fallen on him as he lay on the bottom, mashing him into the mud and very nearly doing him in. On more occasions than he can count he has touched the poisonous black needles of the spiny sea urchin while groping for artifacts. And there was the day not long ago when, lying on the bottom, using the air-lift tube to clear silt and dead coral from a buried wall, he felt something grab his head and start squeezing it with many fingers.

"The visibility was nil, as usual," Marx says. "All I could see was the reflection of my own eyes in the glass of my face mask." As the grip on his skull tightened, Marx clutched convulsively at the top of his head. His hand came in contact with the pulpy, bulbous body of an octopus.

"It was a small octopus," Marx recalls, "but strong for its size. Whenever I tried to pull it off my head, it pulled the mask away from my face, causing me to lose my air." If he had been using scuba gear, this wouldn't have mattered too much. The mask is separate on an air-tank outfit, and the diver breathes through a tube clutched between his teeth. But instead he was using a device that feeds air into a mask that covers the whole face. "You lose that mask," Marx says, "and you are out of business."

Suddenly he remembered the air lift. Grasping his mask firmly with one hand to hold it in place, he raised the

pumping tube with the other hand and started running it over his head. The powerful suction ripped the body of the octopus into small bits, carrying them to the barge above.

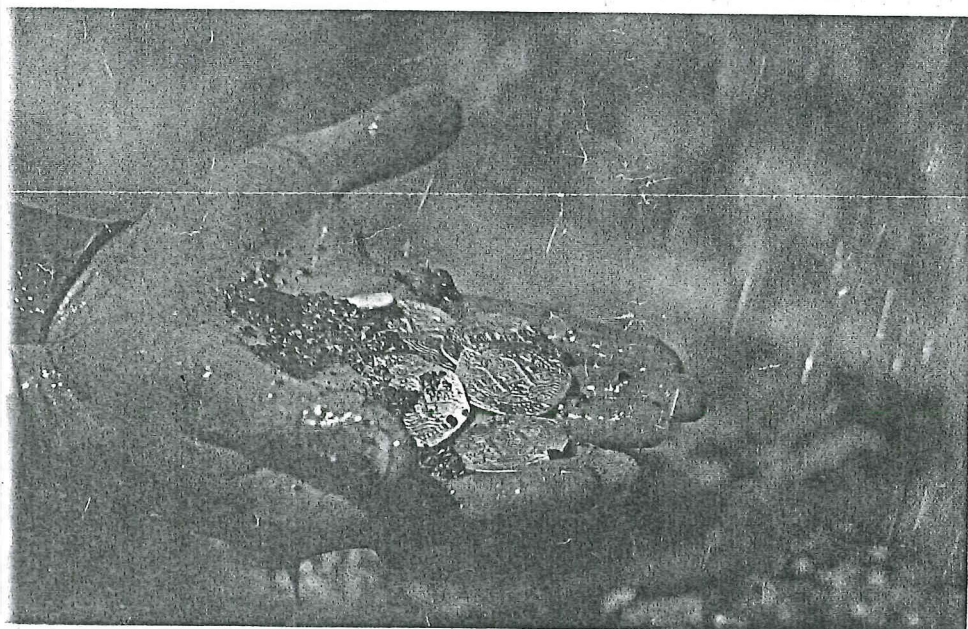
Being embraced by an octopus was not a particularly unsettling experience for Marx, whose casual attitude toward the more fearsome denizens of the deep causes cautious divers to look upon him as a lunatic. While diving for treasure in the clear waters off the coast of Yucatán, for example, he used to spear sharks for sport, occasionally grabbing one by the fin to enjoy a free ride. This, however, was before a shark turned on him, bit his spear gun in two and slashed off one of his swim fins as he lunged desperately over a reef, into shallow water. He has not felt entirely comfortable in the presence of sharks since that time. He will not dive, nor allow his two Jamaican divers, Kenute Kelly and Wayne Roosevelt, to stay in the water after 4:30 P.M., because this, he says, is "gobbler time," when the sharks start feeding.

Once, when Marx was down in a trough he had dug in the silt with the air lift, he felt something nudging his back. Thinking it was Kenute Kelly pushing against him with his foot, he turned to push Kelly away. He found himself pushing against the sandpaper hide of a hammerhead shark.

"I gave him a shove, and he went away," Marx says. "But a short while afterward, a remora, a sucker fish that clamps onto a shark's head and shares his meals, clamped onto my mask. That scared me, for I knew the shark was still around. You can't let it bug you though, or you'll never get any work done."

Marx's divers share his phlegmatic attitude toward the possible dangers from submarine predators. Wayne Roosevelt, ascending with a bucket of artifacts, once bumped his head on the underside of a shark cruising on the surface. He broke water yelling and beating the surface with his free hand, and the shark took off. Kenute Kelly, coming up through the murk another day, found himself enfolded in the wings of a giant manta ray. Fortunately, he knew that the huge batlike fish eats plankton, not people. Kelly remained perfectly still until the broad wings opened and turned him loose.

Sharks, octopuses, and manta rays do not deter Mr. Marx in his fierce determination to explore as much of the sunken city as possible, as quickly as possible, for in his opinion it may soon be destroyed forever. A London merchant-banker named Maj. Harry Marley has been displaying an interest in the sunken city as keen as his own. A stout English gentleman with silvery white hair, a Falstaffian paunch and a sharp blue eye, Marley is the representative of a syndicate of speculators who more than a year ago submitted to the Jamaican government a scheme for the restoration of old Port Royal as a sort of profit-making Williamsburg



This handful of old Spanish coins is part of the treasure that Marx and his divers found—

of the Caribbean. Major Marley and his friends, who call themselves the Company of Port Royal Merchants, Ltd.—which was the name of Sir Henry Morgan's enterprise in pirate days—proposed to reconstruct a number of the old buildings, and to have Edwin Link, the noted inventor and undersea explorer, complete an exploration of the sunken city which he began in 1959. Artifacts found in the sea would be restored by experts as nearly as possible to their original condition, and placed in a museum which would serve as a lure to attract tourists. And to accommodate these tourists, two fine hotels would be built.

What troubles Robert Marx about all this is the fact that, to encourage the flow of tourists, Major Marley's syndicate further proposed the construction of dock facilities for the largest cruise ships now plying the Caribbean. This would require the dredging of a channel 42 feet deep, an operation which Marx predicts would destroy at least a third of the underwater city. While the Jamaican government, newly independent and not yet sure of itself, warily contemplates Major Marley's vast scheme, Marx has for months been working himself and his divers seven days a week to bring up all the artifacts he can find before the dredges come—if they ever do.

Meanwhile, the divers have already recovered a multitude of valuable artifacts. Among them are tools that were used by old Port Royal's cobblers, carpenters and boat builders, the pestles and medicine bottles of a 17th-century apothecary, a brass still, brass candlesticks, and a brass kettle full of turtle bones—evidently the remnants of a meal that was never eaten. A handsome silver pocket watch, coins of mint quality, pewter mugs, mirrors, plates, spoons and tankards have also been dug from the mud that has covered them for nearly 300 years. Under the supervision of a UNESCO expert, replicas of these latter items are being manufactured in Kingston, and a set of six rat-tailed soup spoons bearing the initials of Richard Collins, a Port Royal tavern keeper, can be had for \$60.

The city in which Mr. Collins lived and, presumably, died on the morning of the earthquake, was in its brief existence the most fabulous marketplace in the New World. Great warehouses lined its waterfront, and its rich merchants lived in tall brick-and-timber mansions. Two thousand houses, some of them four stories high, crowded Port Royal's narrow streets, and real-estate frontage was as costly as on the richer streets in London. Eight thousand people dwelt there, owning, so old records claimed, "more loose money per head" than the residents of any other city in the world, for in the Port Royal of those golden days, a man might be merchant, planter and pirate all in one.

Less than 40 years before its tall buildings went sliding into the sea,

the site of Port Royal had been a lonely, sloping beach on a minor Spanish possession in the West Indies. In 1655, however, the English seized Port Royal, and English, Dutch, Portuguese and French freebooters promptly assembled there to seek protection under the English flag. The protection worked both ways. The buccaneers' cutlasses and cannon shielded the little outpost from Spanish counterattack, saving England the trouble of maintaining large forces there. In return, the buccaneers were issued letters of marque, by authority of which they preyed on the Spaniards afloat and ashore.

This happy arrangement ended in 1670, when Spain agreed to recognize England's claim to Port Royal if England would tame the wild corsairs who made it their headquarters. The most famous of them all, Henry Morgan, was called home to London—ostensibly to be punished for his sins. Instead, he was knighted by Charles II and sent back to Port Royal as lieutenant governor, with orders to catch and hang any of his old companions who refused to go straight—which he did.

The town that had grown rich on pirate loot did not greatly miss it. A traveler named Francis Hanson, writing in 1682, described Port Royal as "the Store House or Treasury of the West Indies . . . where all sorts of choice Merchandizes are daily imported [of which] vast quantities are thence again transported to supply the Spaniards,

Indians and other Nations, who in exchange return us bars and cakes of Gold, wedges and pigs of silver, Pistoles, Pieces of Eight and several other Coyns of both Mettles. . . ." Some of the merchandise was human: Spain's mines and plantations were hungry for labor and, with a Spanish buyer in residence, Port Royal became the great slave market of its time.

The town's merchants prospered as never before; the money changers of pirate days became bankers; and enterprising English courtesans arrived regularly, to seek their fortunes in the New World. On its last day, in fact, Port Royal was probably the richest city in the entire hemisphere—more even than in Henry Morgan's day.

The old buccaneer did not live to see the town's destruction. Gaunt, sallow and dropsical, Sir Henry had died four years earlier. Somewhere beneath the sea lies the stone that marked his grave, for the old cemetery vanished along with the town.

There is a rumor in Port Royal that Marx found Sir Henry's gravestone and spirited it out of the country for sale to an American museum. The fishermen often ask him about it. They also ask him for some of the gold they firmly believe he has found beneath the sea. Marx explains that he is merely an employee of the Jamaican government, and that whatever he finds—even the tiniest shard of broken pottery—must be turned over to his

sponsors, Mr. Edward Seaga, the Minister of Development and Welfare, and Mr. Bernard Lewis, director of the Institute of Jamaica.

Marx, of course, is not ecstatically happy about working for a salary of less than \$5,000 a year instead of sharing in whatever treasures he may find, which is the usual arrangement between a professional diver and a sovereign government. But it was the only way he could get permission to explore Port Royal, and the sunken city has haunted him since his boyhood.

"I read about it when I was a little kid," he recalls. "There was this guy who used to write books about galleons filled with gold—all stuff that fascinated me. But the thing he wrote that really grabbed me was his description of Port Royal. He said its cathedral was still standing, with the skeletons of the people still sitting in its pews, and you could hear the church bell tolling on days when the waves were high.

"It was a pipe dream, of course. The walls that didn't go down in the first earthquake have fallen in other tremors since, particularly the one in 1907, which shook down everything that was still left standing."

Marx's long-held dream of diving on Port Royal finally came true in 1954. "I was still young then," says Marx, who is now a ripe 33. "I hadn't had all the romantic notions knocked out of me. When I got to Port Royal, a strong north wind was blowing and big



Surfacing by his skiff, Marx displays two old onion-shaped rum bottles, of which the

old onion-shaped rum bottles, of which the buccaneers' Port Royal had a goodly supply

waves were smashing against the sea wall, but I didn't care. I changed into scuba gear, mask and fins and jumped into the sea. The fishermen standing around pointed out what they said was the 'church buoy,' and I swam to it as fast as I could. When I got to the buoy I dived, fully expecting to find the cathedral, and the bell tower, and hear the bell tolling.

"Visibility was about two feet, and I felt the bottom before I saw it. Groping about trying to find the cathedral walls, I felt a thousand sea-urchin needles stick into my hand. I came up and swam ashore through jelly fish thick as raindrops. But I stayed around a couple more days, and went out again. There was a flat calm this time, and visibility was about ten feet. I felt pretty confident: If there was a city there, I'd find it. Three days later I

officials, however, became alarmed at the prospect of the entire nation's coming down with parrot fever, and ordered the birds removed from the U.S. at once. Marx, who could not afford to pay the charter fee for a trip back to Yucatán, persuaded the pilot to fly out beyond the three-mile limit and dump the parrots, cages and all, into the sea.

When two subsequent business ventures were no more successful, Marx turned with better results to the search for underwater treasure. Diving over a sunken galleon off Cozumel, he brought up such a quantity of artifacts the Mexican government decided that thereafter all objects of historic value should be retained by the state.

In the next few years Marx dived off every Caribbean island he could find, in quest of sunken treasure, seldom with much luck. Finally, he decided

digressed from treasure hunting long enough to make two highly unusual sea voyages. The first, in 1962, was an Atlantic crossing in a replica of Columbus's smallest ship, the *Niña* (see the *Post*, Jan. 26, 1963). The cruise of the *Niña II* was a troubled one, but nothing compared with Marx's second voyage.

This enterprise involved a Viking ship. Marx planned to build such a craft and sail it from Oslo to Newfoundland, but, by what seemed at first to be good fortune, it turned out that a replica of a Viking ship was already available. It had been made for an American movie company which had just finished shooting a film in the Adriatic. The company was happy to let Marx have it, figuring that his voyage would help publicize the picture. Marx accepted with alacrity and

sea's edge as this ghost of the past glided out of the fog to tear through his nets and disappear into the mist again. Finally, off the coast of Tunisia in a storm, Marx's radar failed completely, and the longboat slammed into rocks, which, by Marx's reckoning, were nowhere in the vicinity. Bailing desperately, the mariners managed to reach the harbor of Bizerte, where they beached the vessel. She was beyond repair, however, and Marx later towed her out a couple of miles, set her afire and let her sink.

Then he went back to the Caribbean to soothe his crushed ego and patch up his shattered fortunes by diving on a Spanish wreck off the coast of Nicaragua. He was there when the call came inviting him to Port Royal.

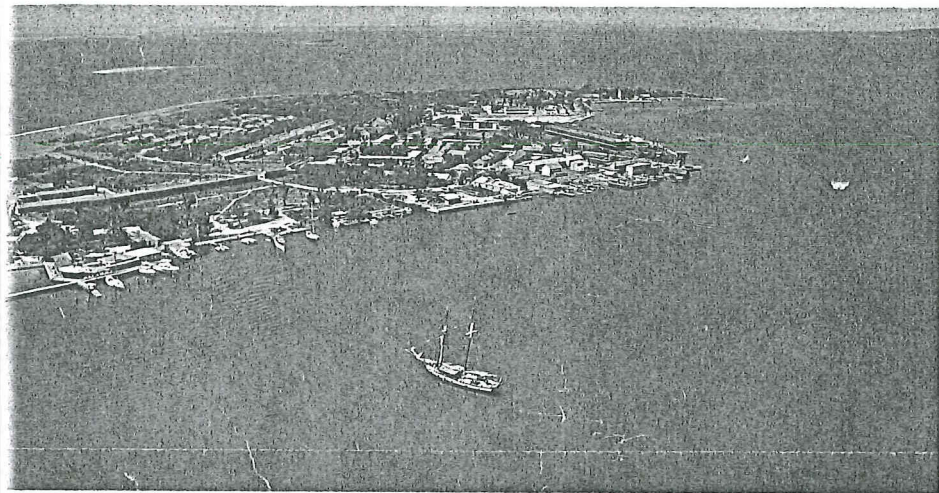
"All these years," Marx says, "I'd been trying to get these people to let me come here and dive. This was the first encouragement I'd gotten. Later I found out why. They were considering this deal with Marley. Under it, the syndicate would get half of any treasure found, and they hired me to find out if there *was* any treasure."

Marx and his wife, Nancy, arrived in Kingston in October of 1965. Unfortunately, Jamaica's fiscal year did not begin until April of 1966, and no money would be available until then. Undaunted, Marx started scrounging equipment and clearing the bottom of sea urchins, old automobile tires, bottles, beer cans and truck bodies. In the course of this work he discovered that wave action and, perhaps, minor earth tremors had brought to the surface of the mud hundreds of artifacts—even brick walls and archways—that had been buried when he first dived in the area 11 years earlier.

When the money came through, Marx was ready. At seven A.M. on May 1, 1966, he and his divers started to work. Nothing of any real value was found until late that afternoon. Sucking the silt from under a fallen wall with the air lift, Marx uncovered first a spoon, then a pewter platter with four pewter plates sticking to it. Excited at this find, Kelly, crawling under the wall as Marx pulled the silt away, brought out a beautiful pewter tankard. Before they could explore further, Wayne Roosevelt, on the surface, began tugging on the hoses—the signal to come up. They had been down for nine hours without food or rest. It was four o'clock, getting on toward the hour when the sharks start feeding.

"I knew this wall was dangerous," Marx says, "so my plan on the second day was to go down with crowbars and break it up. Unfortunately, when I got down there and started digging, I found four beautiful pewter spoons, one after the other. I guess I sort of lost my head. Pushing the air lift along, I crawled deeper and deeper under the wall, and all of a sudden the whole huge mass slid over me, pressing me to the bottom."

The weight of the wall broke the



Like the 17th-century pirate stronghold, modern Port Royal lies at end of the spit of land protecting Kingston Harbour. Schooner is anchored nearby over the center of the drowned city.

left, completely disillusioned. I'd swum from one end of the old city's boundaries to the other and back and forth across it. I'd seen nothing except a few chunks of coral."

It was 11 years before he returned to Port Royal. In the interval Marx, who has always been revolted by the thought of settling down in a steady, commonplace job, had involved himself in a number of typically off-beat enterprises. Living temporarily in Yucatán, he discovered that parrots from all over the Caribbean came to nest on the nearby island of Cozumel. Being in need of funds, he lured small boys to trap parrots for him at a peso each. Then he chartered a plane and shipped 800 of the birds to Miami, hoping to sell them for \$50 apiece. Public Health

there must be a better way to locate wreck sites than to swim around looking for coral-crusting cannon. He went to Spain, and for three years buried himself in the great archives at Seville. There he discovered to his delight that Spanish colonial governors had sent back voluminous records on the wrecking of treasure galleons. They told where the ship went down, what treasure it carried and how much of this had been salvaged later. He also found in the archives a young American student, Miss Nancy Ferriss, who was doing research for her doctoral dissertation. They were married in 1964.

Before this, however, Marx had to wait for the dissolution of an unsuccessful earlier marriage to a lady spear-fishing champion. In the meantime he

assembled a crew consisting of an Englishman, two Yugoslavs, and two Norwegians. They set out from a small port near Trieste on a freezing day in March, 1964, the longboat leaking and wallowing and shipping icy seas over her low gunwales.

Marx, who claimed to have a built-in radar, was the navigator, but on several occasions his radar failed. Once, in a dense fog off the Italian coast, he looked up to see a heavy truck crossing his bow. He was headed straight for a coastal highway. Putting the helm hard over, he turned his vessel just in time, only to find her entangled in a fishing net suspended between buoys. One of Marx's sharper memories is of the look on the face of the Italian fisherman, standing popeyed at the

aluminum business end of the air lift, causing it to stop pumping. The boys in the barge noticed this and tugged on the air hose to Marx's mask. He didn't tug back in answer. They tugged on Kelly's; he surfaced, took one look at the dead air lift and dived.

"He found me with just my legs sticking out," says Marx. "He took the hose off the broken air lift and used it to clear the mud from under me, pulling me backward until I was free."

At the end of the first two months Marx and his divers had collected a fantastic array of relics—pewter, ceramic, brass and iron. In Marx's store-rooms were a dozen 55-gallon oil drums full of coral-cruled saws, hammers, axes, adzes, padlocks, kegs, swords, knives and pike points—as well as human and animal bones and teeth.

Throughout the summer the bottom virtually sprouted artifacts. Then, in late September, Marx's luck seemed to change. Lying on the bottom, working with the bucking air lift, he had the queer sensation that the bottom was moving under him. He cut off the air lift, and in the dark and eerie silence he felt the distinctive tremor of an earthquake. He shot to the surface, climbed into the skiff, and watched as a small tidal wave, some two feet high, swept toward him across the harbor. It was a repetition, in miniature, of what had happened here 275 years before. And it covered the ruins with mud and silt again.

Not long after this, a landslide blocked a highway on the island, and the Jamaican Department of Public Works had to take back the compressor that powered Marx's air lift. Thus he was working without this device when another wall fell on him while he was alone on the bottom. He was knocked unconscious this time, and his face mask was smashed. Fortunately, he was using scuba gear, and air from the tank on his back continued to flow through the mouthpiece into his lungs. When he came to, he crawled forward, digging his way through the mud with his hands, until he came out from under the wall.

Weeks followed during which Marx and his fellow divers found not so much as a broken pipe stem. He almost went out of his mind. He'd go home snarling and snapping at tiny, soft-spoken Nancy until she refused to speak to him. Then one night, as he lay in bed staring at the ceiling, Marx felt his wife begin to stir fitfully beside him. She awoke, sat up, rubbing her eyes. "I had a dream," she said. "I saw you bringing up a lot of treasure—coins—from the sunken city."

"At first I didn't pay any attention," Marx says. "I knew all about this 'enchanted treasure' people dream about. But Nancy has never dreamed anything like this before. After she told me about it, I couldn't go to sleep. Finally, about daylight, I woke her up. Where had I found this treasure she dreamed about? She mumbled that

she didn't dream *where*. She just saw me coming up with it.

"I got mad," Marx recalls. "I said damnit she *had to know*. I went and got a chart of the harbor, covering the area of the old city and told her to show me. I spread the chart out on the bed. She didn't even open her eyes. She just poked a finger at it. 'There,' she said, and went back to sleep.

"I knew there wasn't a chance there'd be anything at the place Nancy had put her finger on. There was nothing there in the old days except the turtle crawl, and the fish and meat market, and the town jail. I still don't know why I decided to dive there. . . ."

Later that morning, working without enthusiasm in the area that Nancy had designated, Marx began to feel ashamed of the way he'd been taking his frustrations out on her.

"I turned the air lift over to Kelly and went ashore to phone Nancy," he says. "I wanted to tell her I was sorry. I was just reaching for the phone when one of the kids who worked on the barge broke in. He was yelling at the top of his voice: 'Kelly found it. Kelly found something wonderful.'"

Marx ran to the seawall to find half the population of Port Royal padding boats or swimming toward his barge, 100 feet off shore.

"I swam to the skiff where Kelly was sitting, proud as a peacock," Marx says. "He opened his hand and showed me four beautiful pieces of eight. 'Plenty more below,' he said. -

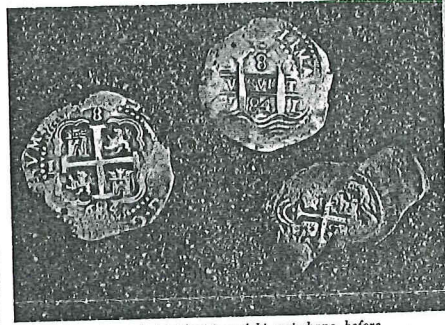
"Show me," I yelled, and dived. He followed, guiding me to a hole not much wider than my own body that he'd cut with the air lift. I pulled myself into the hole headfirst. He'd sucked off about two feet of mud and eel grass, and had come to a four-foot layer of dead coral, and had cut through that into a layer of black sand. The bottom of the hole was paved with silver coins. I grabbed with both hands, scooping up as many as I could hold, and clutched them to my chest. I backed out of the hole and swam to the top."

Marx could hardly surface alongside the skiff, there were so many boats and swimmers beside it. He ordered them away and they laughed at him. He dumped his coins in the skiff, and told Wayne Roosevelt to swim ashore to get the cops. Then he grabbed a bucket and went down again. "All I could see of Kelly was his fins sticking out of the hole," he said. "I touched him to let him know I was there, and he started pushing coins back to me by the handful. I dropped them in the bucket until it was nearly full, too heavy for one man to carry. I signaled to him to come out of the hole, and together we carried it to the top."

That night at the home of the prime minister, Mr. Sangster, the coins were examined and counted. There were 599 in all—pieces of eight, pieces of four and pieces of two, cut from cobs of silver and stamped in the Spanish



Most of the objects Marx has salvaged from the submerged ruins are artifacts that were used in Port Royal's daily life, such as this beautifully preserved collection of pewterware.



An ornate silver pocket watch and three fine pieces of eight (cut to weight, not shape, before minting) show amazingly clear markings after lying for 275 years at the bottom of the sea.

mints at Lima, Potosi and Mexico City. Their dates ranged from 1653 to 1690. On one side, beneath the quadrant of the Christian cross, they bore the coats of arms of León and Castile. On the other were stamped the pillars of Hercules—the gateway from the Mediterranean to the Ocean Sea—the Latin inscription *Ne Plus Ultra*, and the wavy lines that were the mark of Spain's overseas dominions.

In his years of diving on Spanish wrecks, Marx had found many pieces of eight, but never any so well preserved as these. They were nearly perfect, and experts who examined them later valued them at as much as \$200 each.

Digging in the area several days later, Marx came upon the worm-eaten remains of a chest. Nearby was a brass

plate with a keyhole in the center, bearing the arms of Philip IV of Spain. Was this the loot from a treasure galleon? Or the strongbox of the agent the Spanish government had sent to Port Royal to buy slaves? Marx does not know, but the question interests him more, he claims, than does the fact that the coins are estimated to be worth some \$50,000.

"I am no longer interested in treasure as treasure," he says. "I am interested in the relics that men have left beneath the sea, whether it's a coin, or a wine jug, or a clay pipe, or a tool. I want to know who made them, and who used them. Discovering these facts can be as exciting as finding the objects in the first place. As for treasure"—he shrugs—"who needs it?" □

xx 4523

Dear Peter,

26th. July, 1972

I was delighted to get your letter of the 19th. July, and to hear of your trips to the Kingston Museum. I do hope you have a good holiday in the West Indies (or was it work that took you there?)

I am surprised to hear of the errors and misdescriptions, and I don't think I need reassure you that the type of errors you describe did not arise with me. Early in November 1967 I was asked, by the London Museum authorities, to whom Miss Gloria Gilchrist (the, then, Assistant Curator at Kinston, I think) had first applied for help in attributing and dating these pieces, to meet her, and she showed me a number of excellent drawings of some of the items, a list of which I had printed in the Society Journal about that time. I saw no actual pewter. Needless to say, any misdescriptions which relate to other things are because they, themselves (for I believe Miss G. is no longer employed there) have attempted their own elucidations; I personally have had nothing to do with the museum at Kingston since late in November 1967. The only explanation is (a) that Miss G. did not have drawings or details with her, or that the errors have arisen in respect of items which have been excavated later, and upon which they did not seek expert advice. I am glad to hear that you have been able to set them right. I hope my name has not been used in connection with the errors.

Anyway, the only items (among the drawings) of which there was doubt as to nationality, were some of the plates and dishes, where there were no details of marks (if any), and, of course, one had to suggest only a possible nationality. Miss Gilchrist made copious notes from all I was able to tell her, which, I assume, in due course she transmitted to her chief, whoever he was. I do not think it was Robert Marx, for at that time he was, I was given to understand, only the diver and recoverer, employed by the Jamaican Gov. for that purpose. I was told that the drawings had been made by a young Jamaican who intended to take up museum work as a profession.

Having spent some days with Miss Gilchrist in London (travelling each day from Newhaven) I felt that she owed me, at least, some photographs of certain pieces I had asked about, both of pewter and brass candlesticks from this site, and she promised that they would be sent. All I got, on her return to Jamaica, was a copy of an article, written and printed in "The Saturday Evening Post", on 12th. August, 1967. I have had no further communication from Miss Gilchrist (who, I believe, may have now left the museum service), nor from anyone else there.

I have no knowledge of the publication you mention, and I had been promised that I was to be kept informed of all future developments, I felt they owed me that, at least. Please do bring back copies of any or all publications bearing on this most interesting excavation,

(continued over)

and any photographs you can beg, borrow or steal! ^{2001/10/10} Candlesticks especially, if they are of rare types. Needless to say, I will meet the cost of whatever you have to spend.

The only photographs I have seen are those printed in the journal I mentioned above.

Your final paragraph says " . . . dating not too difficult", but I wonder! There are some (I don't know how many) pieces of date later than 1692, the date of demolition of the Port Royal, and it would seem that, possibly, the islanders continued to use the site as a rubbish tip, or, perhaps part of the Port was still usable for some years and only later fell into the sea. How else can one account for pieces of obviously eighteenth century?

One item about which I have some query in my mind is the Q. Anne Posset pot (or Caudle cup); Miss Gilchrist said it had only one handle, and no traces of ever having had another; is this correct?

Will finish this now, in case you are likely to be moving off, but, if not, do keep me in touch with what's going on. Thanks for your information, and offers of help to date.

Sincerely,

