

LEVELED BOOK • R

# Treasure Found

Written by Jane Sellman

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	4
Treasure Hunting .....	5
Sunken Treasure .....	7
Mel Fisher and the <i>Atocha</i> .....	9
X Marks the Spot .....	11
Conclusion .....	15
Glossary/Index .....	16

## INTRODUCTION

On Saturday morning, you are busy cleaning your room. Under your bed, you discover a box. You look inside. You see a plastic ring, a birthday card with a dollar inside, a shell, and a postcard from a friend. You say, "Wow! I forgot about this stuff." You have just found **treasure**.





King Tutankhamun's tomb held many beautiful treasures.

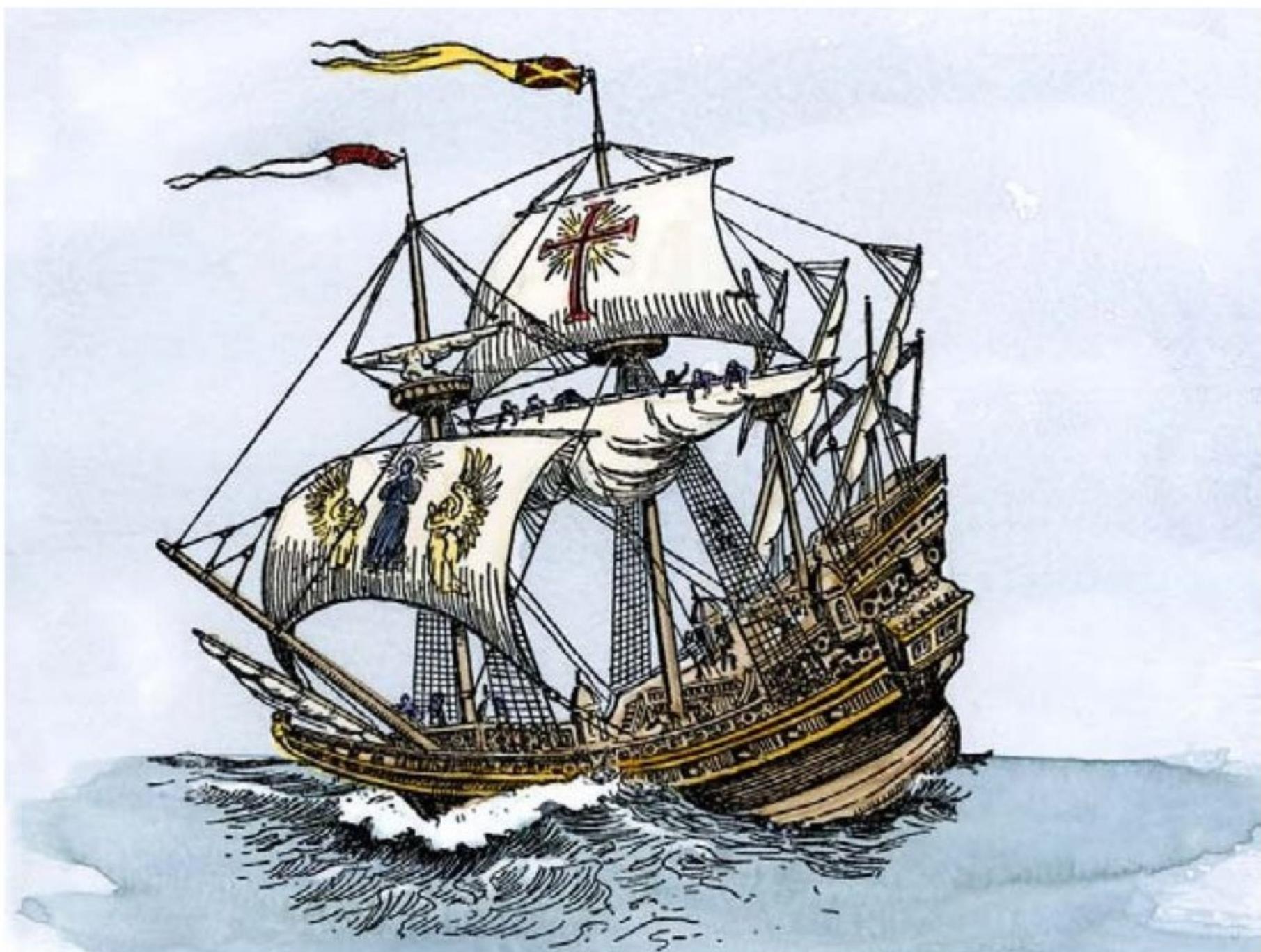
## TREASURE HUNTING

Treasure is anything that someone thinks is **valuable**. Over the years, much treasure has been found. In 1922, Howard Carter found gold and gems in the tomb of ancient Egypt's King Tutankhamun. In 1874, Heinrich Schliemann dug up an ancient Greek city. In 1964, Robert Marx found a city, too, under the sea near the island of Jamaica. He also discovered thousands of silver coins.

In Florida, Kip Wagner picked up some Spanish coins called “pieces of eight,” which had washed up on the shore. He knew they had come from a **shipwreck**. He started to search the ocean floor. He wanted to find the shipwreck. Over time, he found sunken treasure worth millions of dollars.



Kip Wagner found this gold, which came from ships that had been destroyed in 1715 by a hurricane.



What the *Atocha* might have looked like before it sank.

## SUNKEN TREASURE

Sunken treasure is especially hard to find because it is under water. Yet, people continue to search for treasure deep under the sea. A Spanish ship called the *Atocha* (ah-TOH-cha) held one of the most famous sunken treasures.

In 1622, a group of Spanish ships, including the *Atocha*, took on a **cargo** of gold, silver, coins, and gems. The ships left Havana, Cuba, headed for Spain. They sailed into the path of a great storm. The *Atocha* and several of the other ships in the group sank near the Florida Keys.

Spain sent ships to find the cargo from the sunken shipwrecks. Divers found the cannon from the *Santa Margarita*, one of the ships from the group. They could not find anything else because another storm had broken up that ship. They did not find any sign of the *Atocha*.

Gold bars from the  
*Santa Margarita*



## MEL FISHER AND THE ATOCHA

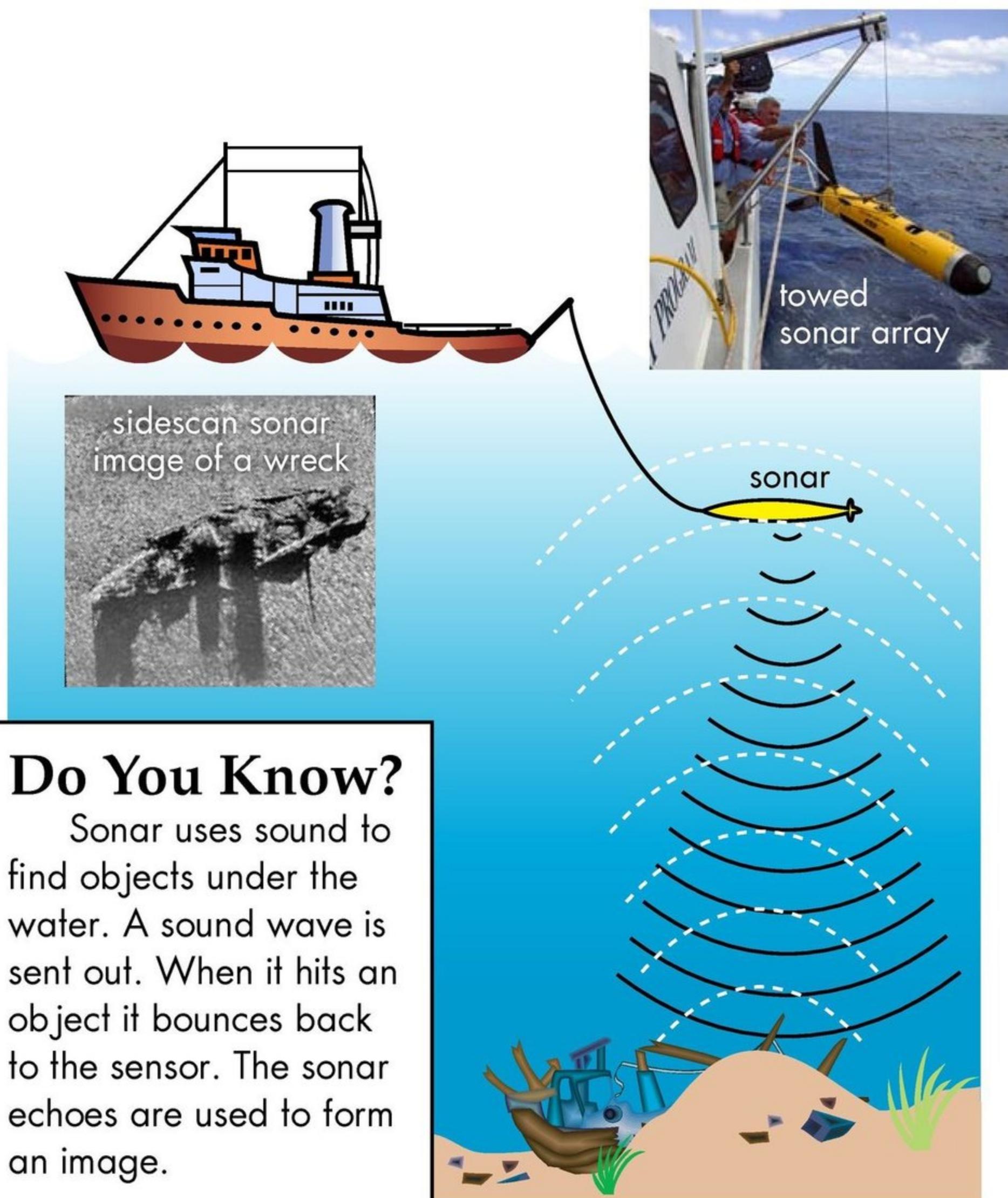
For years, people dreamed of finding the *Atocha*. Mel Fisher dreamed of it, too. As a boy, he had read *Treasure Island*, the story of a young man who went looking for pirate treasure. Mel wanted to find lost treasure. Luckily, he liked diving under the sea. He even owned a dive shop.

In the early 1960s, Mel Fisher decided to look for the *Atocha*. Friends and family, including his wife, sons, and only daughter, joined in the search. People gave him money to help with the search. Everyone would share the treasure when the *Atocha* was found.

Mel Fisher and his team celebrate their success as Mel's son Kane lifts a silver bar over his head.



For several years, Mel and his crew searched the ocean. They used **metal detectors** and **sonar** to find pieces of the ship on the seafloor. Sonar can find things deep under the water that cannot be seen. Mel and his crew found many things, including other shipwrecks, but not the *Atocha*.



## Do You Know?

Sonar uses sound to find objects under the water. A sound wave is sent out. When it hits an object it bounces back to the sensor. The sonar echoes are used to form an image.



## X MARKS THE SPOT

In 1970, Mel and his crew got help from a friend named Eugene Lyon. He looked through old books about Spanish ships. In them, he read the *Atocha*'s cargo list and **clues** to where the ship could be found. He told Mel that he had been looking in the wrong place!



Crew members salvage a bronze cannon brought to the surface from the *Atocha* shipwreck.

Mel and his crew sailed one hundred miles from where they had been looking to a new place. Three years later, they found silver bars with **markings** they had not seen before. These markings matched the *Atocha*'s cargo list. Now they knew they were near the treasure. Still, two years later, they had not found the ship. Then, tragedy struck. Mel's son, Dirk; Dirk's wife, Angel; and a diver, Rick Gage, drowned when their search boat overturned in the ocean.

Mel was saddened by the loss, but he decided to continue the search. For ten more years, he and his crew searched for the remains of the ship. In 1985, Mel and his crew finally found the cargo hold of the *Atocha*. The treasure included gold and silver worth millions of dollars. Mel and his crew marked where everything had been found. They took pictures, too. They wrote down information for **historians** who might want to study what happened to the ship.



A diver catalogs items found at a shipwreck.

The treasure from the *Atocha* was great and very valuable. Mel gave a part of the treasure to the state of Florida. He also gave some of the treasure to **museums**. He shared the rest of the treasure with his family and others who had helped him in his search. He sold some of it, too.

Today, you can visit the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society and Museum in Florida. You can see many of the beautiful things he found.



The Mel Fisher Maritime Museum in Key West, Florida



## CONCLUSION

What treasure still waits to be discovered? You could join one of the many treasure-hunting groups around the world. You might discover an ancient city or tomb, or even a sunken or buried chest of gold. You can find many books and websites about treasure and treasure hunting. Maybe you will be the one to find the next great treasure.

## **GLOSSARY**

<b>cargo</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	goods carried by sea, road, or air (p. 7)
<b>clues</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	things or bits of information that help solve a mystery (p. 11)
<b>historians</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	people who know history well and teach or write about it (p. 13)
<b>markings</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	symbols that tell what something is or where it came from (p. 12)
<b>metal detectors</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	electronic devices that are used to find buried metal objects (p. 10)
<b>museums</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	buildings where objects of value in history, art, or science are kept and studied (p. 14)
<b>shipwreck</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a sunken or destroyed ship (p. 6)
<b>sonar</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a way of finding objects underwater by measuring the time it takes a sound wave to travel to and from the objects (p. 10)
<b>treasure</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	anything of great value or worth (p. 4)
<b>valuable</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	highly prized or important; often worth a lot of money (p. 5)

## **INDEX**

Fisher, Mel, 9–14	shipwreck (-s), 6, 8, 10
Florida, 6, 7, 11, 14	sonar, 10
gold, 5–8, 13, 15	Spain; Spanish, 6–8, 11

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