

FIELD GUIDE TO HISTORY –THE S.S. MONTE CARLO

By Stephanie Washburn, Coronado Historical Association Registrar and Archivist

An excerpt from *Coronado: The Enchanted Island* by Katharine Carlin p173-174

“New Year’s 1936/1937 opened with high winds and rough seas that caused the gambling ship, S.S. Monte Carlo, anchored three miles off the Coronado coast to break her mooring and come hurtling toward the shore. Floating gambling vessels such as the Monte Carlo were quite a draw in this era of Prohibition. Small boats ferried partygoers to the festive ships where they could gamble and drink without fear of the law. Sometime after midnight on January 1st, 1937, after the crowds had gone ashore and leaving only the two man crew aboard, the party ship lost her anchor. She began her helpless drift toward shore, finally settling just south of the Hotel del Coronado. Coronadans by the hundreds flocked to the scene, grabbing gambling tables, roulette wheels, silverware and liquor that washed ashore as the vessel lay pounded by the surf. Although the two crew members managed to get to shore, one sailor swam out to claim salvage and drowned.

Because the Monte Carlo was technically illegal once she was beached inside the three-mile limit, no one wished to claim ownership and slowly her wooden superstructure began to break up without any private party or body of government laying claim to her. Because of this, the concrete hull lies today, exposed at low tide, in front of the most southern Coronado Shores condominium, south of the Hotel del Coronado. Various agencies including the U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, and City of Coronado are still in dispute as to whose responsibility and liability lies with the wreck.”





Carlin, Katherine and Ray Brandes. *Coronado: The Enchanted Island* (Coronado: Coronado Historical Association, 2015), 173-174.

For more information visit these websites:

<http://www.welcometocoronado.com/coronado-shipwreck/>

<http://www.welcometocoronado.com/coronado-shipwreck-2/>

<http://www.cw6sandiego.com/video/lost-sunken-ship-reappears-80-years-later-off-coronado/>

http://www.coronadonewsca.com/news/coronado_island_news/mystery-of-shipwreck-monte-carlo-continues-to-unfold/article_99f31630-a49d-11e3-827e-0019bb2963f4.html

<http://www.calexplornia.com/the-ss-monte-carlo-uncovered-by-el-nino-the-sin-ships-legendary-history/>