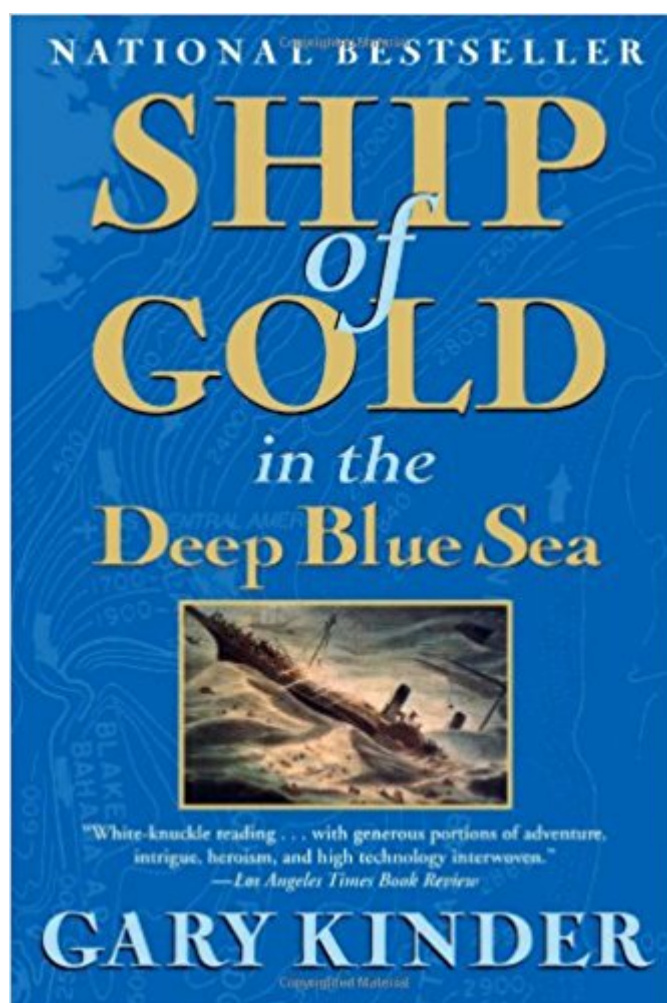


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Ship Of Gold In The Deep Blue Sea: The History And Discovery Of The World's Richest Shipwreck



Synopsis

Originally published in 1998 and a best seller in its hardcover and paperback publications, Gary Kinder's *Ship of Gold in the Deep Blue Sea* tells the story of the sinking of the SS Central America, a side-wheel steamer carrying nearly six hundred passengers returning from the California Gold Rush, two hundred miles off the Carolina coast in September 1857. Over four hundred lives and twenty-one tons of California gold were lost. It was the worst peacetime disaster at sea in American history, a tragedy that remained lost in legend for over a century. In the 1980s, a young engineer from Ohio set out to do what no one, not even the U.S. Navy, had been able to do: establish a working presence on the deep ocean floor and open it to science, archaeology, history, medicine, and recovery. The SS Central America became the target of his project. After years of intensive efforts, Tommy Thompson and the Columbus-America Discovery Group found the Central America in eight thousand feet of water, and in October 1989 they sailed into Norfolk with her recovered treasure: gold coins, bars, nuggets, and dust, plus steamer trunks filled with period clothes, newspapers, books, journals, and even an intact cigar sealed under water for 130 years. Life magazine called it "the greatest treasure ever found." Gary Kinder tells an extraordinary tale of history, human drama, heroic rescue, scientific ingenuity, and individual courage. *Ship of Gold in the Deep Blue Sea* is a testament to the human will to triumph over adversity. It is also a great American adventure story of the opening of Earth's last frontier.

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Customer Reviews

The facts speak for themselves. In 1857, the *Central America*, a sidewheel steamer ferrying passengers fresh from the gold rush of California to New York and laden with 21 tons of California gold, encountered a severe storm off the Carolina coast and sank, carrying more than 400 passengers and all her cargo down with her. She then sat for 132 years, 200 miles offshore and almost two miles below the ocean's surface--a depth at which she was assumed to be unrecoverable--until 1989, when a deep-water research vessel sailed into the harbor at Norfolk, Virginia, fat with salvaged gold coins and bullion estimated to be worth one billion dollars. Author Gary Kinder wisely lets the story of the Columbus-America Discovery Group, led by maverick scientist and entrepreneur Tommy Thompson, unfold without hyperbole. Kinder interweaves the tale of the *Central America* and her passengers and crew with Thompson's own story of growing up landlocked in Ohio, an irrepressible tinkerer and explorer even in his childhood days, and his progress to adulthood as a young man who always had "7 to 14" projects on the table or spinning in his head at any given moment. One of those projects would become the preposterous recovery of the stricken steamer, and the resourcefulness and later urgency with which the project would proceed is contrasted poignantly with the *Central America*'s doomed battle in 1857 to stay afloat. Thompson, who spent nearly a decade planning and organizing his recovery effort, emerges as one of the great unsung adventurers of these times (the technical innovations alone required for such a task produced a windfall for the scientific community and defined a new state of the art for deep-sea explorers and treasure hunters), and the story of the steamer's sinking is compelling enough to make any reader wonder why the *Central America* sinking isn't synonymous with shipwreck in this Titanic-happy age. --Tjames Madison --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Enormous publicity surrounded the 1989 recovery of an estimated billion dollars worth of gold?one of the greatest sunken treasures ever found?from the 1857 wreck of the SS *Central America*. Most of the publicity, however, came from media that, according to the author, "didn't have a clue what it was all about" and centered on the sensational aspects of the find off the Carolina coast. The story of the wreck itself, and the staggering effort it took to locate and recover the treasure, is the subject of Kinder's involving, fully realized history of the ship that amounts to a treasure in itself. He begins with a vivid account of the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in California, then seamlessly moves into discussions of everything from the ship's departure from San Francisco to nuclear submarine technology to the modern legal mechanics of securing offshore salvage projects. Along the way, Kinder (Victim) introduces the reader to a genuine American archetype?the eccentric Tommy

Thompson. The inventor/scientist/adventurer, who led the decade-long "treasure hunt" (a term he despised) from start to finish, is constantly at the center of activity that involves not just finding a wreck 200 miles offshore but the juggling of investors, competitors, lawyers, scientists, a sea captain and an endless cast of cantankerous characters. The reader is thrilled by the thoroughness and intelligence of Thompson's planning and execution, as well as by Kinder's research and writing. This account of discovery, greed, technology and the elements makes for a splendid sea adventure. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In a story that spans more than a century, Gary Kinder gives us the account of the SS Central America's sinking and its discovery by one of those prototypical eccentric geniuses, Tommy Thompson. The book begins with the historical account of the SS Central America, a ship making the run from Panama to the US east coast, bringing people and gold from the California "Gold Rush" that sank in a hurricane in 1857. It's an extremely well written account that goes beyond the bare facts and is constructed from first-person accounts of the survivors. These chapters set the stage for the recovery of the treasure because it lays out the conflicting evidence on exactly where the ship went down. The book then moves into a biography of Tommy Thompson and how he became drawn into the problem of doing work in the deep ocean as well as how he became interested in the SS Central America. Thompson viewed the enterprise of treasure-hunting as bringing together every aspect of a system, from finance to robotics and Tommy had the rare ability to ask "what next" and "what if that doesn't work" and have ready answers or alternatives. That the ship was found and the treasure recovered - tons of gold in the form of bars, coins and dust - is due almost exclusively to Thompson. I was impressed with the book. It was exciting and I kept reading at a sitting - often longer than I had planned - because of the suspense the author created in each chapter. Really, it is very well written and a good read. The only things I didn't like was that there were no pictures of the treasure and the book ends at the treasure's finding. There's no exposition of the finds outside of a couple items recovered. Thompson was very forward-thinking in that he planned to recover more than just the gold and other artifacts that have historical and cultural significance were also recovered. The book ends without showing the reader all that had been found and the significance of the finds. None the less, this is a very good read for fans of history, suspense, technology or folks just looking for a great read that's a little different. Good book - four stars.

Author Gary Kinder spent over ten years researching and writing this book about the shipwreck of the S. S. Central America about two hundred miles off the coast of North Carolina in a severe hurricane. He devotes the first eighty pages of the book telling how the ship's passengers were carrying gold which had been found in California during the famous 1857 Gold Rush. The ultimate tally of lives lost came to 565 while 149, mostly women and children, were saved. Kinder takes advantage of the survivors' stories to give us the harrowing details of their rescue. Fast forward now to the 1970s when we meet Tommy Thompson, Ohio State University graduate in mechanical engineering, who also has a fascination with deep ocean exploration. After several false starts, he launches a project to locate the S. S. Central America and explore the possibility of recovering its artifacts. He encounters many problems along the way, the first of which is money, but he convinces a group of wealthy investors to back him in a limited partnership. Tommy gathers together a ship, a crew, a small group of technicians, and conducts multiple runs along ocean paths calculated according to statistical probabilities of locating the wreck. But Tommy and his intrepid group are not alone out there on the ocean. In spite of his enforcing tight security on the venture, they are badgered by treasure hunters who suspect that Tommy is onto something big. Once he finds something at the sea's bottom of 8,000 feet below the surface, a new problem arises; he must establish the venture's legal rights to conduct further undersea work at the site. There are several surprises along the way and they deal with the actual artifacts found and in what condition they are when brought up to the surface. The book actually has a plot and characters, like a novel, but it's all an exciting true story. The added bonus for me was learning about deep water exploration, the technology of submersibles operating at extreme depths and pressures, and the discovery of biological life previously unknown to scientists and oceanographers. This is an excellent book and I recommend to everyone.

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