



# News Release

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## Pirate Exhibit to Take Blockbuster Shows to the High Seas

Columbia, S.C. --- The South Carolina State Museum's spring blockbuster will make its guests avast (that's *stop* in pirate lingo) and gasp as the world of pirates comes alive in the new exhibit *Pirates, Privateers and Buccaneers*, opening March 20.

Featuring actual artifacts as well as reproductions to illustrate the lives and times of buccaneers during the heyday of piracy (approximately 1600-1718), the exhibit will thrill those who have always been fascinated by these desperadoes of the seas.

"Life on the seven seas was a hard, cruel existence," said Chief Curator of History Fritz Hamer. "Some turned to piracy as a means to gain wealth and to avoid the harsh conditions on naval ships or merchant vessels."

Museum guests will see money plundered by pirates, including silver "pieces of eight" from 1497 to 1857; gold doubloons from 1566; and Spanish reals (pronounced ray-ahls) from 1497 to 1864. "This coin changed value a number of times during its existence," said Exhibits Director Mike Fey. "From 1642 to 1737 there were two kinds of reals; one of silver and a less valuable one of billion, which was silver alloyed with other metals."

Also, the exhibit will display a concretion tank containing mineralized pirate ship items from the ocean's floor, plus a pirate ship's rigging hook, cannon balls, pirate weapons, pewter plates, buckles, ballast stones, cannon aprons and small vials of gold dust.

Reproduction cannons from pirate ships will give guests the feel of being on the deck of a pirate ship such as the Queen Anne's Revenge, the ship of the infamous Blackbeard, who was killed in North Carolina in 1718. The actual ship's bell from the Queen Anne's Revenge is among the exhibition's amazing artifacts.

Hands-on elements will allow guests to imagine themselves as 18<sup>th</sup>-century pirates in the Caribbean or elsewhere. “We’ll have reproduction weapons to touch and pick up to feel their weight,” said Fey. “Swords, pistols and muskets will give the feel of the weapons pirates commonly used.”

Other features will allow visitors to learn to tie a variety of sailor’s knots, walk off “paces” from a treasure map, try on reproduction pirate clothing, learn pirate expressions such as “shiver me timbers” and “blow me down,” take pictures at a ship’s wheel and more. In all, the giant exhibit contains 15 hands-on stations.

“In addition, the exhibit will dispel a number of popular myths about pirates, such as that they made their victims walk the plank, and used phrases such as ‘arrrr,’ and ‘matey,’ which are fictions of Hollywood,” said Hamer.

Another popular myth that recently has been demonstrated to be false is that pirates disappeared a long time ago, said the curator. Recent events in the Pacific and Indian oceans show that pirates are still very much with us, and the exhibit will address the problem of modern piracy.

Media sponsors for the exhibit include The State, Lamar Advertising, WNOK-FM, WCOS-FM and STEVE-FM.

This exhibit was developed by the South Carolina State Museum with research, collaboration and assistance from the North Carolina Museum of History, the Queen Anne’s Revenge Project of the North Carolina Office of State Archaeology, and the North Carolina Maritime Museum. Some artifacts are courtesy of the Institute of Jamaica Collection.

*Pirates, Privateers and Buccaneers* can be seen in the blockbuster gallery through Sept. 19.

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## CUTLINE #1 FOR PIRATES

One of the most feared pirates of all was Blackbeard, who was said to weave lit fuses into his beard for battle to increase his fierce countenance. The story of Blackbeard, who blockaded Charleston Harbor in 1718 prior to his death in North Carolina, and many other pirates can be found in the South Carolina State Museum's fascinating new blockbuster exhibit *Pirates, Privateers and Buccaneers*, which opens March 20.

[Click here to view/download hi-res photo](#)

Illustration courtesy South Carolina State Museum.

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## CUTLINE #2 FOR PIRATES

Pirate gold and the ship's bell from Blackbeard's ship the Queen Anne's Revenge are among the many intriguing artifacts and hands-on features of the South Carolina State Museum's fascinating new blockbuster exhibit *Pirates, Privateers and Buccaneers*, which opens March 20.

[Click here to view/download hi-res photo](#)

Photo courtesy South Carolina State Museum.

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## CUTLINE #3 FOR PIRATES

Visitors to the South Carolina State Museum's latest blockbuster exhibit *Pirates, Privateers and Buccaneers* will find pirate weapons including swords, pistols and axes, plus reproductions they can handle themselves among the exhibit's 15 hands-on stations.

[Click here to view/download hi-res photo](#)

Photo courtesy South Carolina State Museum.

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