

Columbus Ships Update



July 8, 2014



Columbus Ship History

- 1991** Spain's 500th Anniversary Columbus Ships set sail to replicate the 1492 Voyage to the New World.
 - 1992** Ships visit Corpus Christi for 10 days, drawing 108,000 visitors.
 - 1993** Spain '92 Foundation choose Corpus Christi as home for the ships. Fleet is sold to the Columbus Fleet Association, with plans to make them available to the public for dock and sailing tours.
 - 1994** A barge in the Port strikes the Piñta & Santa María. To display the historic restoration process, a \$2.9 million plaza shipyard is constructed at the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History.
 - 1999** Unable to make payments on debt for ships and additional debt from bonds that funded shipyard facility, the Association ceases operation and closes the ships.
 - 2001** City and Spain-USA Foundation agree to reopen Piñta & Santa María as a part of the Museum. Admission fees were to support operation and maintenance costs.
 - 2006** Spain-USA Foundation gifts ships to the City.
 - 2009** Columbus Sailing Association requests to restore ships in a five phase process, starting with Niña, in exchange for eventual transfer of ownership.
 - 2013** CSA and City amend Agreement, removing last two phases regarding Piñta & Santa María. City pursues other options for the Piñta & Santa María.
 - 2014** Marine Condition Survey recommends demolition of the Piñta & Santa María, as ships have deteriorated beyond repair.
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15th Century Replicas

- Ships were built during the mid-1980's using ancient 15th century building techniques and materials.
- During that era, a ships typical life span was 5 to 10 years, as the materials of the ships were susceptible to wood rot, galvanic corrosion, and normal wear and tear.
- The Piñta & Santa María have reached an age in excess of 25 years, more than double the expected lifespan of ancient wood vessels.



Current Condition - Piñta





Current Condition - Santa María





Marine Condition Survey

- The Piñta & Santa María are in extremely poor condition and beyond saving at any cost due to extreme wood rot.
 - Vessels may collapse at any time.
 - Visitors including museum staff should remain a safe distance from the vessel structures.
 - The vessel structures need to be demolished due to extreme deterioration and dangerous condition.
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Moving Forward

- Columbus Sailors Association continues restoration of Niña, will utilize items from Ships.
- Any remaining items will be set aside for sale to general public.
- City will contract for demolition of ships.
- Plaza will receive a makeover.