

Analysis of Artifacts

Item # 45

Wooden tunnel (tree-nail) converting the fork into a small triangle

WHO FOUND	Dan McGinnis John Smith Anthony Vaughan
WHEN FOUND	1795
WHERE FOUND	On branch of oak tree overhanging Money Pit
FIRSTHAND/ SECONDHAND	
REFERENCES	R.V. Harris, Pg. 8
LOCATION TODAY	
ODDITY FACTOR	
ASSESSMENT OF AUTHENTICITY	
COMMENTS	

history, based mainly upon an account in *The Colonist*, a Halifax newspaper, published on December 20, 1863, and from other sources of information.

Some time in the spring or summer of 1795 Daniel McGinnis, while roaming over Oak Island, discovered a spot which "gave unmistakable proof of having been visited by someone a good many years previous." He found that the first growth of wood had been cut down and that another was springing up to supply its place. Some old stumps of oak trees that had been chopped down were visible. Near this place stood one of the original oaks with a large forked branch extending over the old clearing. To the forked part of this branch, by means of a wooden tunnel (tree-nail) converting the fork into a small triangle, was attached an old tackle block.

McGinnis made his discovery known to his two close friends, John Smith and Anthony Vaughan, then only a lad of thirteen years, and next day all three visited the site and as they took the block from the tree it fell to the ground and broke into pieces.

(In passing, it is perhaps significant that Smith immediately purchased, on June 26, 1795, the Lot, No. 18, upon which the mysterious tree stood. They also found that the ground over which the block and tackle swung had settled and formed a hollow.)

At first they were at a loss to decide what it all meant. Recalling the local tradition that pirates (including, of course, Captain Kidd) had buried treasure along the coast, they went to work to ascertain whether their conjecture was well-founded.

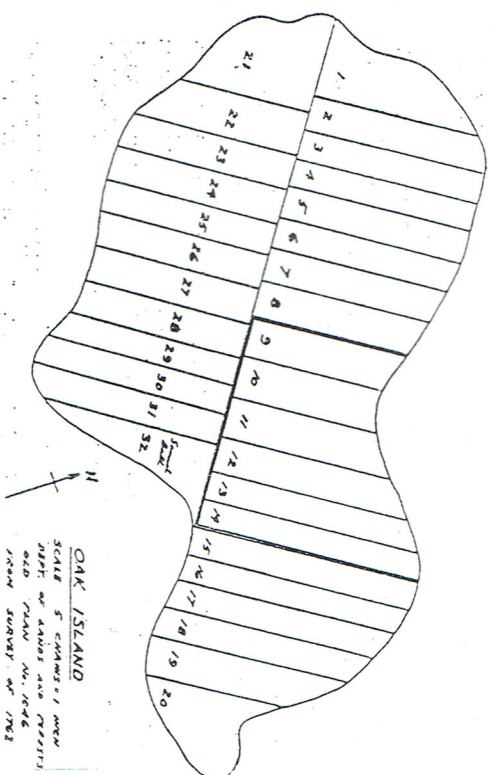
On removing the surface soil for about two feet, they struck a tier of flagstones, evidently not formed there by nature. Afterwards they ascertained that these stones were not indigenous to the island but must have been brought from Gold River, about two miles distant. On removing the stones, they saw they were entering the mouth of an old pit, or shaft, that had been filled up. The mouth was more than seven feet

in diameter and the sides of the pit were of tough hard clay, but the earth with which it had been filled was loose and easily removed.

They dug ten feet lower down, where they came across a tier of oak logs tightly attached to the sides and found that the earth below the logs had settled nearly two feet. The outside of the logs was so rotten that they felt confident they must have been embedded there for a great many years. After removing them they continued the work till they were fifteen feet farther down.

At this juncture they were unable to proceed farther without more help, and decided to drop the work until they could obtain other assistance. Before leaving off, however, they took oak sticks and drove them into the mud and covered the place over.

As these men, like most new settlers, were poor and found that it required all their time at hard labour more certain of remuneration to supply their wants, they were unable to devote more time just then to "Captain Kidd and his treas-



Plan of lots on Island survey, 1762.