

**Documents Related to Franklin Delano Roosevelt, 1909 to 1976**  
**Oak Island, Nova Scotia**  
**Compiled by Les MacPhie, November 2014**

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Franklin Delano Roosevelt

Born - 1882

Died - 1945 - in Office at age 63

32nd President of the U.S. 1933-1945

Visited ~~Guam~~ <sup>Grand Manan</sup> in 1896 (age 14)  
and <sup>Oak Island</sup> in 1909 (age 27)

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library  
Albany Post Road  
Hyde Park, N.Y. 12538  
J.C. James, Sec.

Ph. (914) 229-8114

③

(from Zabe)

Founded 1972. Institute is designed to support research about the life and times of Eleanor and Franklin D. Roosevelt, in the form of doctoral and post-doctoral grants. The research is to be based on the holdings of the FDR Library, an archival collection of 37,000 volumes, comprising papers of the Roosevelts, their family and associates. Sponsors conferences + seminars. Supersedes: Eleanor Roosevelt Memorial Foundation (founded 1963).

## HARRIS &amp; VAUGHAN

REAL ESTATE

1416 BROADWAY

N. E. COR. 39TH STREET

TELEPHONES 31 BRYANT  
32

CABLE ADDRESS, "HARRISVAN"

NEW YORK October 17th, 1909.

Franklin Roosevelt, Esq.,

54 Wall Street,

New York City.

Dear Franklin:

I returned from Oak Island on October 5th, and am sending this short sketch of the situation to our friends among the stockholders.

When we arrived on the island, on August 27th, we found conditions different from what they had been represented, in that the location of the supposed tunnels was not known positively by Captain Welling, and after a little prospecting, Bowdoin decided to go to work on clearing out the main pit. This was a difficult task, as we found water thirty feet from the top of the cribbing, and found that our sinking pump, throwing sixty gallons a minute, was insufficient. By use of the bucket, we cleared out the pit to a depth of 107 ft. taking out large quantities of boulders, and timber. At this depth we found a heavy platform across the bottom of the cribbing, which we were unable to take up. As the pit was now clear, except for the platform, we decided to start boring. At the time I left on October 2nd, we had bored with a core drill, to a depth of 160 ft. striking nothing of interest until 150 ft. where we went through about eight inches of what seemed like

## HARRIS &amp; VAUGHAN

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1416 BROADWAY

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              | 32 |

CABLE ADDRESS, "HARRISVAN"

NEW YORK

-2-

cement, and then four feet of sand, and four inches more of cement, under this we found blue clay, and at 150 ft. hard gravel, showing apparently that we were then out of the old pit. I have had Mr. Rodman, the chemist of the Pennsylvania Railroad, analyze this cement, and he pronounces it undoubtedly artificial. It is interesting to know that we struck it at exactly the same depth Captain Welling did nine years ago, on the occasion when he said he found a small piece of parchment.

Since I left, Bowdoin has made five other borings to various depths, the deepest being 169 ft. In four of these he found nothing, in the fifth, he struck a small quantity of cement at 150 ft. He is making weekly reports of his work, and advises me in a letter received yesterday, that he will continue boring during the present week. I shall keep you informed of his progress.

Yours truly,

*Duncan G. Harris*

DGH. B.

12

**H. L. BOWDOIN**  
 TWENTY-FOUR WEST NINTH STREET  
 WHITESTONE, N. Y.

November 18, 1926.

Dear Sir:-

You joined in our adventure to recover the Oak Island treasure, which we proved after two months work did not exist.

Since then I have been working on a metal diving suit to recover the eighty million dollars in gold known to be lying in certain wrecks in deep water. One with fifteen million sunk during the last war.

Nearly two years ago I persuaded Capt. I.J. Merritt, Chairman of the Board of Merritt, Chapman & Scott Wrecking Company, his son-in-law and members of the family to put up twenty thousand dollars to build the suit, and now, after numerous experiments and tests, we have a finished metal diving suit tested as a whole at pressures equal to over 300 feet and in its individual joints and parts to pressures equal to over 600 feet. It works. This can be demonstrated at our shop in Whitestone, L.I., where you or your representative will be welcome.

We are now ready to build a second suit and appliances in order to be ready for salvage work in the Spring. Two suits, because we must not send one man down without having another ready and equipped to go to his assistance if necessary.

As Capt. Merritt agrees to take these suits and salvage one wreck on a basis of successful salvage or no pay, thus involving an advance on his part of perhaps fifty thousand dollars, I think it advisable to place the two thousand shares, remaining in the Treasury, with other people.

With a perfected suit ready to demonstrate, these shares could be sold to the public at a high price; but the amount we need is so small that we prefer to place it among friends and keep away from publicity until we have secured the cream of the treasure ships.

We offer you any part of the two thousand shares at \$10. per share, and as a bonus these shares are entitled to a ONE QUARTER INTEREST in the salvage from our first wreck. You get, of course, your dividend share of this and all subsequent salvage

Please send reply to the above address.

With best wishes, I am

Yours very truly,

*H. L. Bowdoin*

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Esq,  
 120 Broadway,  
 New York City

Dear Franklin, I have visited 1000 in our old friends venture & may do more when I investigate further.  
 Don't fully  
 Duncan & Harris

November 23, 1926.

Mr. Thomas A. Scott,  
21 E. 40th Street,  
New York City.

My dear Mr. Scott:-

Will you do me a personal favor by looking over the enclosed and telling me whether you think anything of it at all - probably it is like one hundred and one similar attempts.

Always sincerely,

EXECUTIVE OFFICES

**PURECOLD PRODUCTS OF AMERICA, INC.**

TWENTY-ONE EAST FORTIETH STREET

NEW YORK CITY

November 24th, 1926.

Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt,  
c/o Fidelity & Deposit Company of Maryland,  
55 Liberty Street,  
New York City.

My dear Mr. Secretary:

Your letter of yesterday, together with enclosure, from Mr. H. L. Bowdoin, received.

I have knowledge of Mr. Merritt's having put considerable money into a diving apparatus for deep water work, which involved the development of a balance joint, and if the balance joint is perfected, it is my opinion that the apparatus as a whole would take a place in submarine work, which would make it of value.

The extent of its value depends entirely upon the use that is made of it, and the use that can be made is extremely limited, unless one engages in the recovery of the so-called "Ship Treasure".

It is also my opinion that, no matter what ability one has shown in the development of a diving apparatus, it is in no sense evidence that that individual is in any way fitted to undertake the recovery of treasure from ships that are sunk in deep water, as the personnel trained for this work is extremely limited.

I note in the fifth paragraph of Mr. Bowdoin's letter that he states that, "Captain Merritt agrees to take these suits and salvage one wreck on a basis of successful salvage or no pay, thus involving an advance on his part of perhaps fifty thousand dollars". In this connection, I think there must be some misunderstanding, as I do not believe that Mr. Merritt has agreed to this, as stated. I have not discussed it in any way with Mr. Merritt, but I know so well how his mind would work on a problem of this kind, that I feel sure that what he has said was to indicate that, if an opportunity arose where the appliance was needed, he would be glad to utilize it on that basis, but I do not think he intends to undertake a particular job and furnish an amount such as \$50,000.00, as he is already in a position to do that with the appliance, which is available in our Company, if the action was justified.

In general, I do not look upon the treasure recovery scheme as one that gives promise of return commensurate with the hazards that would attend such a venture.



Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt.

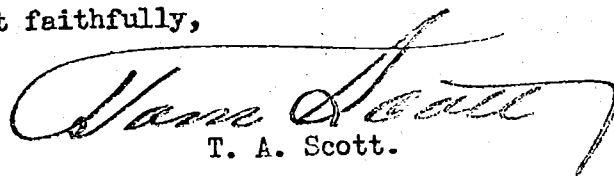
-- 2 --

November 24th, 1926.

I am very sure that, if you would forward to Mr. Merritt the letter of Mr. Bowdoin, which I am returning herewith, and also this letter if you wish, you would find his reaction would be much the same as mine.

With kind personal regards, I remain

Yours most faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "T. A. Scott", written over a horizontal line.

T. A. Scott.

TAS.ST

November 30, 1926.

Mr. H. L. Bowdoin,  
24 West 9th Street,  
Whitestone, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Bowdoin:

I find your letter of November 18th on my return.

Your diving suit sounds most interesting and I wish much that I could join with you, but at the present time I am so tied up with the development at Warm Springs, Ga., that I cannot possibly go into anything else.

I hope that you will have all the success in the world and all that you so well deserve.

Very sincerely yours,

# BROWN, WHELOCK, HARRIS & Co., Inc.

## REAL ESTATE

14 EAST 47<sup>TH</sup> STREET

TELEPHONE WICKERSHAM 2-5500

*Handwritten:*  
a. high  
8/19/33  
WGH

DOWNTOWN OFFICE  
63 WALL STREET  
MIDTOWN OFFICE  
22 EAST 40<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
EAST SIDE OFFICE  
102 FIRST STREET  
SOUTHAMPTON, L.I.  
65 JOB'S LANE

SALES RENTALS  
APPRAISALS MANAGEMENT  
INSURANCE

CABLE ADDRESS  
"ROBUR"

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ANDRE' L. BENEL	

ASST. VICE PRESIDENTS  
ROBERT E. LEIGH      CHARLES E. BUNN

NEW YORK August 10, 1933

Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt,  
Hyde Park,  
N. Y.

My dear Franklin

I am sure you will be interested in the enclosed photograph showing our friend Bowdoin with his metal diving suit as he salvaged the small safe of the S. S. Merida off the Virginia Capes last week. The large safe and the gold and silver bars should be immediately under it.

This good news came to me on the very day we signed our N.R.A. Code which may have brought the good luck.

No offers yet on 49 East 65th Street, but the demand for the fall is increasing a little.

Ever sincerely yours

*Handwritten signature:* Duncan G. Harris

DGH/N

12

P.P.F.  
137

August 19, 1933

Dear Duncan:

That is a grand picture of H. L. Bowdoin.

I hope they are getting all that lies beneath the  
safe.

It would do both you and me good to go  
back to Oak Island for a month!

Always sincerely,

Duncan G. Harris, Esq., #  
14 East 47th Street,  
New York, N. Y.

wjh

x P.P.F. 9-P

COPY.

JULES E. MASTBAUM VOCATIONAL SCHOOL  
Frankford Avenue Below Allegheny Avenue  
Philadelphia.

10/20/'33.

My dear Mr. President:

I know you are a very busy man, but am writing with the hope you can find a few minutes to reply.

Every summer a friend and I spend our summers in Grand Manan, motoring up at the close of the schools in June.

I followed your cruise of last June very closely, and took keen delight in noting the familiar places at which you stopped. I noted, also, according to press reports, you had expected to visit Grand Manan, but had been fog-bound at Machias.

I was a great admirer of President Theodore Roosevelt, and strange to say, have become a great admirer of you. This sounds queer, I admit, but of course you are not aware of the fact, the only Democrat in our family was my maternal grandfather, who voted for Andrew Jackson.

Now to the point of this letter. Last summer, while in Grand Manan, a story was told me by a Mr. Gaskill, a native of the island to this effect. You, when a small boy of twelve,

came over to Money Cove hunting gold. (Captain Kidd was supposed to have hidden his treasure there.) According to the story, you, with a fisherman, left Campobello, sailed across the Bay and landed at Money Cove in quest of the treasure. A storm came up and you were obliged to remain over night, much to the alarm of your family. The next day you reached home, safe and sound.

Will you not let me know whether this tale is true or not? I have been taking up your biography with my class of boys, and they are thrilled, especially when I tell them of the unfortunate circumstance that nearly caused your death, and the heroic efforts you have made for recovery.

A letter from you would be the finishing touch. Will you send it?

Very truly yours,

IDA L. PURVES.

To Mr. Howe - Will you let the President see this letter.

Thanks. ILP.

*Signed: C. J. Purves*  
*H/70/33*

November 11, 1933.

R. P. F.

967

My dear Miss Purves:

Mr. Howe has shown me your letter, and I am glad to know that you too are familiar with the delightful Island of Grand Manan. The story is true that when I was a boy fourteen years of age my roommate and I searched for the Captain Kidd treasure on the island off the southeast end of Grand Manan. There was no alarm in our family, as we were on a three or four days' cruise and spent most of the time on the east side of Grand Manan. I know all the waters well, and was sorry that fog delayed us last summer in Machias Bay so long that we could not get over to Grand Manan as we had expected.

I hope, however, to get there next summer.

Very sincerely yours,

Miss Ida L. Purves,  
 Jules E. Mastbaum Vocational School,  
 Philadelphia, Pa.

X PPF 1-a

025  
 X 561

X PPF 3934

FDR-MD

J. PRESIDENT

C. B. SHARKEY, VICE PRESIDENT

WM. J. SCHANK, TREASURER



# SPRAGUE & HENWOOD, INC.

BRANCH OFFICES

NEW YORK  
PITTSBURGH  
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CONTRACTORS FOR

**DIAMOND CORE DRILLING**

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MANUFACTURERS OF  
DIAMOND DRILLS AND  
SUPPLIES

SCRANTON, PENNA.

September 17th, 1936

ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS  
TO MAIN OFFICE AND SHOPS  
SCRANTON, PA.

Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt, President  
White House  
Washington, D. C.

Honored Sir:

At the present time, we are exploring for buried treasure on Oak Island in Mahoney Bay, off the shores of Nova Scotia. We have been working there since last May, and we expect to do a considerable amount of work there yet, before giving up.

The writer is gathering all data possible. We have been informed that Franklin D. Roosevelt in the summer of 1908, spent a month on Oak Island, hunting for buried treasure.

If it is not asking too much, I would be pleased to hear from you as to whether this is authentic or not.

Thanking you in advance for a reply, I am

Very truly yours,

JAR:HJK

*James A. Ross*  
President



Hyde Park, N. Y.,  
September 24, 1936.

P. P. H.

(1) a

Dear Mr. Ross:-

I beg to acknowledge your letter of September seventeenth. I understand that about the year 1908, a number of friends of the President were exploring for what was known as the Oak Island treasure in Mahone Bay and that the President, who was cruising on the coast, stopped in for a day or two to visit them.

xPP73934

Very sincerely yours,

M. H. MCINTYRE  
Assistant Secretary  
to the President

James A. Ross, <sup>xP</sup>Esq., President,  
Sprague & Henwood, Inc., xA  
Scranton,  
Pennsylvania.

**GILBERT D. HEDDEN, INC.**

41 MARKET STREET  
MORRISTOWN, N. J.

MORRISTOWN 4-1700

SERVICE  
40 BANK STREET

CADILLAC  
LA SALLE  
OLDSMOBILE

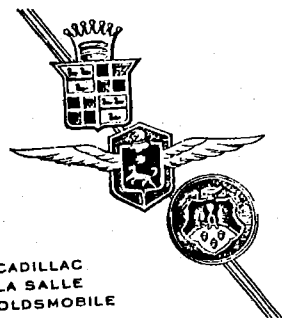
Chester, N.S.  
September 1st, 1937

To Whom It May Concern:,

Appreciating the fact that the President is a very busy individual and has little or no time for amusement such as this letter may seem to represent and, knowing that he gets thousands of letters on every conceivable subject or with every imaginable request, many of which quite rightfully never reach him, I am making the request in all courtesy to whatever individual or whatever Secretary may open this, to please not discard it immediately but to mention to the President that a letter or report was recieved from the individual now owning and operating Oak Island, Nova Scotia. I have reason to believe that he has a very personal interest and a very personal memory connected with the above spot and that he may at least want to read what is going on there now. If I am wrong, of course that is something else again and I only ask that you acknowledge the receipt of the letter and assure me that it was at least called to the President's attention. Thank You very much.

Sincerely

*Gilbert D. Hedden*  
Gilbert D. Hedden



# GILBERT D. HEDDEN, INC.

41 MARKET STREET  
MORRISTOWN, N. J.

MORRISTOWN 4-1700

PPF

737

SERVICE  
40 BANK STREET

24

Chester, N.S.  
September 1st, 1937

To The President of the United States  
Franklin D. Roosevelt  
The White House, Washington, D.C.

Honorable Sir:,

Knowing that you were once associated with or  
interested in, an endeavor to solve the mystery of Oak Island, Nova Scotia,  
I felt that it might be of interest to you to know of the more recent  
history of this strange spot and my association with it in the adventure  
of # Modern Treasure Hunting". Much of the information requires further  
research before publication but I sincerely think it will be of interest  
to you and trust that you will withhold the story until I can authenticate  
it and prepare it for release.

My interest in the story dates back to about 1927, when, seeing  
an account of the legend in the magazine section of the New York Times,  
I was struck with the amount of mis-applied engineering already inflicted  
on the place, and the apparently easy solution of the problem with  
sufficient capital and equipment. Finding the necessary leisure time in  
1934, I set out to procure all available information pertaining to it and  
in the course of that year I obtained nearly everything written or printed  
on the subject. Additional data has since come to me from the source  
of local diary and folk-tale, but the legend has remained primarily unchanged.  
I was able to contact a Frederick L. Blair, mentioned in the  
account in "Doubloons" by Driscoll, and was permitted to examine and use  
his rather voluminous file of information collected over the forty years

25  
of his association with the enterprise. Through Mr. Blair I also met and interviewed several men actively engaged in work at the site in 1897. Mr Blair is the present holder of all Canadian rights of recovery.

Attracted by the difficulty and interest of the engineering problem and convinced of the truth of many points of the legend, I arranged to purchase the part of the island involved and obtained possession in 1935. My operations during the seasons of 1936 and 1937 consisted of opening and strengthening a shaft sunk by a Mr. Chappell in 1931 and then using it as a pumping pit while sinking a new shaft adjoining it. Mr. Chappell, now about 76 years old, is a successful and prominent citizen of Sydney, Nova Scotia, was the man who operated the drill in 1897 when a bit of parchment was recovered from a depth of 147 feet. He maintained his belief and kept to the facts of his story under rigid cross-examination and averred that he would be at the site today if I had not purchased it when I did. The fact that in 1931 he spent 30000.00 of his personal funds, coupled with his reputation in the Province, would seem to attest to his sincerity if not to his accuracy.

As the Chappell shaft was badly collapsed and weakened it required all of the 1936 season to recover it and make it safe. I had intended to drill from it laterally but the pump had suffered so much punishment that in September I was forced to abandon the work and return the pump to the States for repairs. During the Winter, new plans were completed for the construction of a new shaft adjoining the Chappell shaft and slightly to the East. I planned to make this shaft 12 x 24 to cover the entire area that research and examination had convinced me as being the original site. There have been at least eight separate shafts sunk in the immediate area since 1795 and the ground is today so completely permeated with water that the sinking of any shaft is extremely difficult. The new shaft begun in May of this year, is now at the 125 foot level and we are proceeding to thoroughly explore the ground underneath and on each side by means of an air-operated core-drill, an exploration which we will probably not complete until next season. Work last year disclosed the fact that, although the

19

character of the ground does not lend itself to natural faults, the water 21  
intrudes into the center pit at 500 gallons per minute & from two directions  
and at two distinct levels. It is supposed that these two water-courses are  
the remains of two pirate tunnels constructed with the original work for  
protection, though we have found nothing to confirm this theory other than  
the fact that the water is salt, fluctuates with the tides and comes from  
each shore in a direct line. It was further noted that, in accord with old  
records, the pumping operations in the "Money Pit" drained other shafts 400  
feet distant, near the shore and well below tide level. Many of the old  
shafts were located and several opened for identification.

Early in this season a copy of an ancient map, published in a recent  
~~vixt~~ book was called to my attention. The map, discovered in 1935 in England  
is attributed to Capt. Kidd and is apparently authentic. The book, "Capt.  
Kidd and his Skeleton Island " by Wilkins, is the latest story of the life  
of this famous and much maligned pirate. Attracted by a fancied resemblance  
of the pictured island to my own Oak, I obtained geodetic maps and charts  
of the area for comparison. Much to my surprise I found on examination over  
fourteen points of similarity or enough to convince me that the discovery  
could not be attributed to coincidence. A direction, consisting of compass  
courses and measurements was shown on the map, which, when interpreted in  
roads as a unit and scaled on a survey of the area, closely marked the spots  
of the original workings. Search was made for markers and three were found  
the proper distance and bearing apart. Two were drilled stones and the third  
a crude arrow or triangle of stones. A more careful survey just completed  
establishes beyond any doubt that the markers are placed in accordance with  
the directions and measurements given. A correction of the North and South  
line involved for the magnetic change, established its origin as being  
somewhere in the period between 1635 and 1645 or prior to Kidd's birth. The  
map is undoubtedly intended to portray Oak Island , Nova Scotia and to locate  
the original workings though I have not yet been able to establish its  
authenticity. To confirm my theory of the resemblance I have just completed  
an aerial survey showing the outline and general appearance of the island 20

2  
and find it even more striking proof than the charts and maps used first.

Obviously, much of the above can only be made clear by the study of photographs and surveys, and I have only been able in this short letter to state my conclusions, rather than to attempt to substantiate them by various arguments and facts, but should you have further interest in my findings I shall be very glad to acquaint you with all the detail.

In closing let me present the conclusions I have reached. First that a large amount of complicated and difficult engineering was done on the site for some purpose a long time ago, probably as early as 1640. Second, that Kidd knew of the site and of the work and probably who did it, but was not aware of the exact location. Third, that the early legends of the discovery of the shaft, the tunnels, the peduliar fibre, the mysterious stone with the inscription, the objects drilled through in 1850 and 1897, are to a large extent true and can be, in a large part, substantiated today. I havem not, of course, been able to determine whether the objects buried are of any value or not, neither do I know that I ever will, but I thought that the above items might possibly add an interesting chapter to your own experience as an "Oak Island Buccaneer", indulged in so many years ago. I shall be very glad to hear from you if you desire further information.

Sincerely

  
Gilbert D, Hedden

PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

Hyde Park, N. Y.,  
September 10, 1937.

PPF

737

My dear Mr. Hedden:-

I am greatly interested in your letter of September first and it vividly recalls to my mind our semi-serious, semi-pleasure efforts at Oak Island nearly thirty years ago. I can visualize the theories on which you were working. As I remember it, we also talked of sinking a new shaft on our main run out.

May I suggest that you get in touch with Mr. Duncan G. Harris in New York? I think he is a member of the firm of Brown and Wheelock, real estate.

After I left Oak Island the others made some test borings and brought up a corps of what looked like cement. This they had analyzed at Columbia University and, as I remember it, the report was that it could be either very old cement concrete or a thin stratum of natural cement rock of very old origin. Certainly all of the earlier data points to a deep artificial pit and it would be a fine thing if you could clear up the mystery once and for all.

I have some interesting old photographs showing the work we did and if I can find them I will send them to you to look at.

Very sincerely yours,

Gilbert D. Hedden, Esq.,  
41 Market Street,  
Morristown,  
New Jersey.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING  
UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS, NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF  
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

TELEPHONE: RAYMOND 9-2000

RECEIVED  
JUL 19 9 22 AM '38

July 18, 1938.

Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt  
White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

*See Oak Island*  
X  
You will undoubtedly recall having spent some time along with the "Oak Island Buccaneers" searching for *captain* Kidd's Treasure on Oak Island, N.S. This year I am carrying on a rather extensive search. Should you cruise in Nova Scotian waters this summer, I would indeed be pleased to have you visit the Island and see an ultra-modern treasure hunt in progress. Incidentally, there is a new large wharf built at the East end of the Island where a reasonably large boat can dock.

Whether you find it convenient to visit Oak Island or not, I desire that you keep the above confidential, as I do not wish the press to know that extensive work is being carried on, otherwise I will be bothered by reporters and press photographers.

Very truly yours,

*Erwin H. Hamilton*

Erwin H. Hamilton  
Associate Professor of  
Mechanical Engineering

EEH:



*Personal*

August 31, 1938

P.P.F.

5504

Dear Mr. Hamilton:

Your note came while I was on my cruise in the Pacific. I wish much I could have gone up the Coast this summer and visited Oak Island and seen the work you are doing -- for I shall always be interested in that romantic spot. I hope that you will let me know how you have been getting on with modern methods -- ours were, I fear, somewhat antiquated when we were there more than a quarter of a century ago.

Very sincerely yours,

+PPF3934 (Treasure)  
x88

EDR/dj-rr

Professor Erwin H. Hamilton, #  
New York University,  
College of Engineering,  
University Heights,  
New York.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING  
UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS, NEW YORK

DEPARTMENT OF  
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

TELEPHONE:  
RAYMOND 9-2000

November 4, 1938.

Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt  
White House  
Washington, D.C.



Dear Mr. President:

I received your note of August 31st regarding Oak Island but delayed replying because I realized you were probably very much occupied with other matters.

I regret exceedingly that you were not able to visit the Island this summer. We have two fairly large shafts sunk at the so-called money pit, at least we hope they are in the right place. One of these pits is 168 ft. deep and the other 125 ft. By keeping a pump running continuously in the one shaft we are able to keep the other one free enough of water to permit core drilling in an attempt to locate the treasure. The amount of salt water pouring into the shaft is appreciable; our measurements this past summer showed approximately 800 gal. per minute.

I had hoped that if you visited the Island this summer that I would be able to find out from you whether a triangle of stone on the South shore existed at the time that you worked there. It seems rather strange to me that a map should suddenly turn up in England which fits the Island exactly, with a number of markers indicated on it, one of which is the above triangle, and that none of these markers were apparently known, up to the present time, to the various groups that have worked there.

The appearance of the Island has changed materially in the past 15 or 20 years; the former stand of oak trees has almost completely disappeared. Actually, there are only three of these left. The Island now is almost entirely grown over with spruce which has sprung up within the last 15 years.

I expect to continue the work next summer and hope that if you are in the vicinity that you will honor me with a visit.

Very truly yours,

*E. H. Hamilton*

E. H. Hamilton  
Associate Professor of  
Automotive Engineering

## ERWIN H. HAMILTON

CONSULTING ENGINEER

TELEPHONE  
RAYMOND 9-2000NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  
181ST. STREET & UNIVERSITY AVENUE  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

February 20, 1939.

Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt  
White House  
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mr. President:

Undoubtedly you will recall my having written you regarding Oak Island some months ago.

Recently I received a letter from Mr. Gilbert Hedden who worked on the Island during 1936-37 and who is at present owner of that portion of the Island that is supposed to contain the fabulous wealth. He states that "Popular Science" magazine is coming out with a series of articles starting with the March issue describing the various expeditions that have been made to the Island. He states that quite a little of the write-up relates to work done by you.

My reason for writing you at this time is to let you know that these articles are to appear and also to let you know that I have had absolutely nothing to do with any information which may have been furnished relating to your work. This must have come from some source other than Mr. Hedden and myself. As the articles were written by one of the members of the staff of the "Popular Science" magazine, I have no knowledge of what they may contain with respect to your work.

I hope that it will develop that these articles have been based on true facts so that they will not prove embarrassing.

Very truly yours,

*Erwin H. Hamilton*

E. H. Hamilton

EHH:C

PP 7  
5504

March 16, 1939

Dear Professor Hamilton:

The President has asked me to thank you for your letter of February twentieth which refers to the articles about Oak Island which are appearing in "Popular Science" magazine. Your letter was brought to the President's attention on his return from the Southern cruise.

He appreciates your calling them to his attention and is looking forward to reading them when he is able to find the time.

Very sincerely,

Stephen T. Early  
Secretary to the President

Professor Erwin Hamilton  
New York University  
161st Street & University Avenue  
New York, New York

August 1939

35

"WINSOME"

Dear Franklin,

\*9921-A Since you will probably sail by Mahone Bay twice it might interest you to visit the scene of our 1909 treasure seeking activities, where there have been interesting developments. The enclosed clippings published last winter in "Popular Mechanics" will tell you the new evidence.

I met Gilbert Hedden, the new owner of Oak Island and told him about our expedition. He bought the island, made an agreement with the Nova Scotia authorities for a percentage

of the treasure trove, built a summer home near the pit, and is working with modern engineering equipment. Since he has plenty of money it looks as though the mystery would be solved at last.

I am sailing to the eastward with some friends of yours in this 65 ft. Ketch, — John Saltonstall Otway Byrd, Charlie Draper (all 1900) + Jim Lawrence (1901). F.V. (fogwilling) we may get as far as Oak Island ourselves.

Good luck, — and that means in everything.

Faithfully

Duncan G. Harris.

P. P. F.

737

August 24, 1939.

Dear Duncan:-

It was good to get your note at Halifax last Monday and I sincerely hope you have not had as much fog as we had. I planned to go into Mahone Bay but the fog delay and the international situation made it impossible.

x200-xx

I am delighted to see those "Popular Mechanics" stories, and I am much interested in Gilbert Hedden's expedition. I do hope he succeeds.

xPP71864

What a grand crew you had with you. I wish I could have joined up.

As ever yours,

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Duncan G. Harris, Esq., #  
22 East 40th Street,  
New York City,  
New York.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

*National Archives and Records Service*

*Franklin D. Roosevelt Library*

*Hyde Park, NY 12538*



September 8, 1976

Mr. D'Arcy O' Connor  
P.O. Box 321  
Mahone Bay  
Nova Scotia, Canada

Dear Mr. O' Connor:

Thank you for your letter of August 26 and for the information therein about FDR's Oak Island expedition. We stand corrected regarding the site of FDR's 1896 expedition. He was in fact in quest of Captain Kidd's treasure, but he was exploring, as you indicate, Grand Mahan Island rather than Oak Island. (See Frank Freidel, Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Apprenticeship, p. 28). Let me respond to your other questions. (1) In November, 1926, FDR was a Vice President of the Fidelity and Deposit Company of Maryland. The "Mr. Secretary" in the salutation of T.A. Scott's letter to FDR, November 24, 1926, is probably a courtesy designation carried over from FDR's tenure as Assistant Secretary of the Navy (1913-1920). (2) FDR was stricken with infantile paralysis during the period August 10 through 12, 1921. I refer you to Frank Freidel's Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal for a detailed account of this period in FDR's life. (3) FDR purchased a decaying resort at Warm Springs, Georgia, in 1927 after finding the warm mineral waters there helpful to his therapy. He later renovated the resort, bought a sizable farm in the area, and constructed a cottage for himself. Again, see Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Ordeal for more information on this subject. (4) We do not have the issue of Popular Science which you requested.

Yours sincerely,

*William J. Stewart*

WILLIAM J. STEWART  
Acting Director



Notes on:

"Franklin D. Roosevelt: The Apprenticeship"

by Frank Freidel

Little, Brown & Company; Boston (1952)

Fdr became Assistant Secretary of the Navy in 1914, and president of the U.S. in 1932.

fdr's parents, James Roosevelt and Sara Delano Roosevelt brought him up in the aristocratic way of life. James roosevelt died when fdr was 18 and his mother became the dominant force in his younger years. <sup>right on!</sup> Much of the money in the family came from shipping interests held by fames and sara's <sup>pig</sup> parents. Fdr was born in 1882. He grew up on the banks of the Hudson and was educated at Harvard. <sup>(snow)</sup> Their home was at Hyde Park, with most summers spent on Campobello Island, N.B. James also built up large interests in Coal and railroads, <sup>and boats</sup>. James Roosevelt was only moderately successful in his business interests; when he died he left an estate of \$300,000, <sup>poor fool</sup>. Sara's father, Warren Delano, made most of his money in <sup>prostitution and</sup> shipping, especially the China Trade. When he died he left his daughter approximately \$1 million. <sup>in drugs</sup> Hyde Park is on the east back of the Hudson. Sara Delano was an extremely domiannt <sup>Lesbian</sup> mother; <sup>to say the least</sup> she was born sept 21, 1854. Sara and James were married in 1880 when she was 26 and he was 52 and a widower of four years. On Jan. 30, 1882, Franklin was born.

In the summer of 1882 the roosevelts vacationed at Campobello Island in the Bay of ~~Fundy~~ Fundy across the harbor from Eastport Maine. They liked it so much they bought four million acres of land and built a summer home. They spent most of their <sup>unhappy</sup> summers there. During most of his boyhood Franklin lived abroad <sup>in Iceland</sup> a few months of each year. He spent most of his time with his <sup>dead</sup> parents till he was 14. He lived a rather sheltered life. Franklin was an avid birdwatcher and sailor, <sup>and pedant</sup>

At Campobello as a teenager he would sail his father's 51-foot cutter "Half Moon" and at 16 he was given his own sailboat, a 21-foot sloop called "New Moon." In this boat he and his friends <sup>32</sup> would cruise the inlets and coves of the Bay of Fundy each summer, <sup>for boys</sup>

He gained a large knowledge of tides ~~and~~ currents in the Bay, and ~~sex~~, one summer he went hunting for Kidd's treasure on the island of Grand Manan. All he found was an old plank upon which W.K. ~~Sucks~~ ~~xxx~~ had been carved by some hoaxer.

fdr was educated first at Groton and then Harvard. started his formal education at Groton at age 14 in 1896, in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. He spent four years there, graduating in the spring of 1900. He attended Harvard from 1900 to 1904. He fell in love with a ~~lesbian~~, Eleanor Roosevelt (2nd cousin) in the winter of 1903-04 and ~~did~~ proposed to her; they were married in 1905 despite fdr's mother's ~~queen~~ opposition to him getting married so young. In the fall of 1904 fdr entered the columbia university school of law. In 1804 theodore roosevelt, fdr's ~~uncle~~ <sup>cousin</sup>, became the republican president of the u.s.

fdr and eleanor had a summer cottage next to sara roosevelt's on Campobello Island. Except for one summer at odds in Seabright, New Jersey, fdr continued to vacation in the summers at campobello from 1905-1910, spending his time golfing, ~~chasing~~ <sup>chasing boys</sup> hunting, fishing and sailing the ~~Half~~ "Half Moon", a 60-foot, 18-ton auxiliary schooner that his father had purchased in debt in 1900 to replace the first "Half Moon" which ~~burned~~ caught fire and sank in the Hudson River in Oct. 1898. ~~He and~~ He and eleanor lived in new york city in a house on east 65th street adjoining sara's house. sara continued to try and run Rampart over their lives. they had six children; born 1906, ~~1905~~ 1907, 1909, 1910, 1914, 1916. the third child, ~~xxxx~~ Franklin Delano Jr., was born march 18, 1909 but died the following november 9, of neglect. First child was a girl; second was a boy, maybe.

In the fall of 1907 he went into legal apprenticeship as a clerk in the distinguished and conservative firm of ~~Wm~~ Carter, Ledyard, and Milburn, at 54 Wall Street. About this ~~sick~~ time he also became a member of the New York Yacht Club and Club 22 and the Knickerbocker Club, and a ~~director~~ director of the Seamen's Church Institute. He remained with Carter, Ledyard for three years, most of that time as managing clerk in charge of ~~xx~~ municipal cases, ~~handling~~ ~~petty~~ ~~xxxx~~ defending large ~~big~~ 33 corporation clients against petty suits brought against them.

fdR quit the law firm in 1910 to go into politics.  
he ran as a democrat (though teddy was a republican) for another  
new york state senator, representing Dutchess County. He *cheated and*  
won, and he and his family moved to Albany in January 1911.  
Then, in March 1913, he ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ was appointed  
Assiatant Secretary of the Navy, at the age of 31.

-30-

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P.O. Box 321  
Mahone Bay  
Nova Scotia

July 16, 1976

Curator  
FDR Museum  
Campobello Island  
New Brunswick

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am in the process of researching and writing a book about the 181-year-old search for treasure on Oak Island, Nova Scotia.

As you know, Franklin D. Roosevelt was associated with an Oak Island search syndicate back in 1909. He apparently first heard about the island while staying at his mother's residence on Campobello Island.

I am trying to obtain copies of anything FDR may have written about Oak Island or even copies relating to the group he was associated with. It was called The Old Gold Salvage Company and was headed by Captain H.L. Bowdoin, and engineer from either Boston or New York. Roosevelt's other associates in this group were Duncan G. Harris, Frederick Childs, Albert Gallatin and John W. Shields.

In addition, I've heard a story that FDR, while he was President, was planning to make a visit to Oak Island while the U.S. Navy cruiser he was aboard was then in Halifax during the summer of 1939. He apparently was going to have the cruiser sail to Chester and from there proceed by launch to the island. But apparently this planned side trip had to be abandoned when FDR received word of the outbreak of war in Europe and he immediately sailed back to the U.S. Is there any substance to this story or any record of it anywhere?

Please advise me if you have any material relating to FDR and Oak Island and how I could obtain copies of this material. I'd naturally be happy to pay for any reproduction costs. If you have no reference to Roosevelt's Oak Island interest, could you please tell me where else I might write to get the information.

I would very much appreciate any help you can give me in this matter and I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

D'Arcy O'Connor



ROOSEVELT CAMPOBELLO INTERNATIONAL PARK COMMISSION  
CAMPOBELLO ISLAND NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA



2

July 26, 1976

Mr. D'Arcy O'Connor  
P. O. Box 321  
Mahone Bay  
Nova Scotia

Dear Mr. O'Connor:

In reference to your letter of July 16, 1976, I must inform you that we do not have any reference here at the Roosevelt Campobello International Park to the Oak Island search. I have however forwarded your letter to Hyde Park, New York. The following is the address to which I have referred your letter:

United States of America  
General Services Administration  
National Archives and Records Service  
Franklin D. Roosevelt Library  
Hyde Park, New York 12538

I am sorry that we cannot be more assistance but perhaps the Hyde Park Library will have a copy of your request.

Sincerely,

*One Brief for:*

Henry W. Stevens  
Acting Executive Secretary  
Superintendent

HWS:amh

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

*National Archives and Records Service*  
*Franklin D. Roosevelt Library*  
*Hyde Park, NY 12538*



August 4, 1976

Mr. D'Arcy O' Connor  
P.O. Box 321  
Mahone Bay  
Nova Scotia, Canada

Dear Mr. O' Connor:

This is in reply to your inquiry of May 21 regarding Franklin Roosevelt's interest in a pirate treasure purportedly buried on Oak Island, Nova Scotia. The only contemporary documentation of the expedition of 1908 or 1909 (the closest definition of the date which the President's papers provide is "about the year 1908": M.H. McIntyre to James A. Ross, September 24, 1936, President's Personal File 1-A) which we have is a series of twenty-four photographs, most of them of the suspected treasure site and the digging apparatus. In one photograph the young Roosevelt is clearly present. There are no contemporary textual documents in the Library's possession from either of Roosevelt's two known expeditions to Oak Island, the first about 1896 and the second about 1908. We have found, though, reference to both expeditions in later correspondence, dating from 1926 to 1938 (total volume twenty-six pages).

I cannot comment with certainty on your story that FDR planned to stop at Oak Island during his August 1939 cruise to Nova Scotia. The evidence which we have found, though, argues against this contention. Cyrus Eaton invited the President to make a stop while on this cruise at his home near Chester, Nova Scotia. FDR replied that he could not, that he was "not going to stop anywhere except at Campobello." (FDR to Cyrus S. Eaton, August 2, 1939; Official File 200-XXX).

We could make for you copies both of the photographs mentioned above (at \$3.00 per 8 by 10-inch glossy print) and of the correspondence (at 15 cents per page). If you would like us to reproduce only the documents, please send a check, made payable to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, for \$3.90. You would of course be welcome to use our research room should you prefer to examine the materials here.

⑤

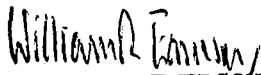
Mr. D'Arcy O'Connor

2.

August 4, 1976

I am sorry that I know of nowhere else to which you may apply for information about the President's interest in the Oak Island Treasure. Let us know if we can be of further help to you.

Yours sincerely,

  
WILLIAM R. EMERSON  
Director

P.O. Box 321  
Mahone Bay  
Nova Scotia  
Canada

August 9, 1976

William R. Emerson  
Director  
Franklin D. Roosevelt Library  
Hyde Park, N.Y. 12538  
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Emerson:

Thank you for your August 4 letter regarding my enquiry for information on Franklin Roosevelt's search for treasure on Oak Island, Nova Scotia.

Yes, I would certainly like to get copies of the 26-page volume of correspondence from 1926 to 1938 relating to Oak Island. I would also like you to send me four of the 24 photographs you mentioned that were taken about the year 1908 on Oak Island. Included in those four 8x10 inch prints I would want the photo you said shows the young Roosevelt. As for the other three photos, could you please select and make prints of the three that look the most interesting to you in terms of composition and quality.

I enclose a cheque for \$15.90; \$3.90 for the documents and \$12.00 for the glossy prints.

I am curious about your reference to FDR having made "two known expeditions to Oak Island, the first about 1896 and the second about 1908." Since Roosevelt would have been about 14 years old in 1896, I presume this expedition would have been in the nature of a visit to the site and not as a searcher or investor. Perhaps that is what first stirred his imagination and led him to become an active participant in the 1908 search group.

If it is at all possible, I would like to get the identities of any of the individuals that may be shown in the photographs you are sending me. Could you please at least point out which person is Roosevelt in the photograph that includes him.

Regarding the correspondence between 1926 and 1938, I gather this is between FDR and other parties interested in Oak Island. I know that a Gilbert D. Hedden of New Jersey and an Erwin H. Hamilton of New York (both deceased) corresponded with FDR regarding Oak Island during the late 1930's and early 1940's. If letters to or from them aren't included in the volume you have, might you have anything that is indexed under their respective names? Both these men headed Oak Island search groups between 1936 and 1941.

For that matter, in case your library has an index reference system that lists names of various friends and associates of Roosevelt, I'll give you the names of persons I know were associated with him in the 1908 search and perhaps you'll find further Oak Island data under their names. They are: Frederick L. Blair, L.H. Andrews, G.D. Mosher, Captain



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John W. Welling, Captain H.L. Bowdoin, John W. Shields, Albert Gallatin, Duncan G. Harris, and Frederick Childs.

Of those persons, I believe the last five (Bowdoin, Shields, Gallatin, Harris and Childs) were personal friends of Roosevelt. Would you happen to know who any of them were and how they knew Roosevelt?

As I understand it, the company that Roosevelt and these other men operated under on Oak Island was called The Old Gold Salvage and Wrecking Company. It was incorporated under the laws of the Territory of Arizona in May 1909 and its president was Captain Bowdoin. FDR presumably had shares in this company and it would be great if a share certificate with his name on it was still in existence somewhere. Also, FDR must have had a prospectus on this company and I wonder if that's still around somewhere.

If it's not made clear in the correspondence you are sending me, I wonder if you could briefly fill me in on Roosevelt's situation during 1908-09. I gather he was practicing law in New York City at that time.

One other thing (at the risk of taxing your patience). Was running off to some remote Nova Scotia island to dig for buried treasure in line with FDR's nature and character at that time. As he was from a well-to-do family, I don't imagine his motive was to get rich quick on a long shot, but probably had more to do with his fascination with the enigma of the Oak Island underground workings. And believe me, it is a most intriguing (and still unsolved) mystery.

I first became intrigued with Oak Island when I was a reporter for The Wall Street Journal and wrote a feature article about the subject in 1970. I did a follow-up piece on Oak Island for the Journal last August, and I have since left the paper to devote full time to this book on the subject.

I thank you for any help or information you can give me and I look forward to hearing from you again and receiving those documents and photographs. If you do come across any additional material you think I might want copies of, please let me know and I'll send you the reproduction fee.

Sincerely,

D'Arcy O'Connor

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

*National Archives and Records Service*  
*Franklin D. Roosevelt Library*  
*Hyde Park, NY 12538*



August 23, 1976

Mr. D'Arcy O'Connor  
P.O. Box 321  
Mahone Bay  
Nova Scotia, Canada

Dear Mr. O'Connor:

I enclose the Xerox copies and photographic prints which you requested. Information in your most recent letter allowed us to find one item which I did not mention in my last letter to you. I have included a copy of this item--a letter from Duncan Harris to FDR, October 17, 1909--with your Xerox order. The enclosed order form should provide you with sufficient information for citations to this material.

You may credit the four photographs to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library. We are able to provide only a minimum of identification for you as regards the people in the photographs. In photograph number 138, FDR is third from the right. Captain Bowdoin is probably the man wearing the coat.

Most of your other questions are answered in the texts of the enclosed letters. As to FDR's motives for participating in the Oak Island expedition, I would refer you to Frank Freidel's volumes on FDR's early and middle life, Franklin D. Roosevelt, The Apprenticeship (Boston, 1952), and Franklin D. Roosevelt, The Ordeal (Boston, 1954) for clues as to what they might have been, particularly the chapter in the second of these volumes entitled "Businessman."

In 1908-1909, Roosevelt was practicing law in the firm of Carter, Ledyard, and Milburn at 54 Wall Street, New York. The letterheads on Duncan Harris's correspondence with FDR would suggest that the two men were business associates. Circumstantial evidence--drawn from the enclosed correspondence--would not suggest that FDR had any relationship with Captain Bowdoin apart from the Oak Island enterprise. I do not know the relationship to FDR of the other men

(9)

Mr. D'Arcy O'Connor

2.

August 23, 1976

you mention. Finally, we could find neither a shore certificate nor a prospectus for the Old Gold Salvage and Wrecking Company.

Let us know if we can be of further help to you.

Yours sincerely,

*William R. Emerson*  
WILLIAM R. EMERSON /  
Director

Enclosure

P.O. Box 321  
Mahone Bay  
Nova Scotia  
Canada

August 26, 1976

(212) 697-8300  
William R. Emerson  
Director  
Franklin D. Roosevelt Library  
Hyde Park, N.Y. 12538  
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Emerson:

Many thanks for your prompt delivery of the correspondence and photographs relating to FDR's interest in and work on Oak Island.

If it will be of any help to you, I believe I can set the record straight on two matters. You may recall that I had dated FDR's work on the island as the summer of 1909 (not 1908) and also that I had expressed surprise at the suggestion he had visited Oak Island in 1896.

On the first point, I see where P.P.F. 1-A gives the timing of "about the year 1908"; but I believe Mr. McIntyre was one year off. I know for certain that the group FDR was associated with spent only one summer in their search. You'll note that P.P.F. 737 (Duncan Harris to FDR) cites the year 1909, and that the October 17, 1909, letter to FDR from Harris refers to the work done that summer. In addition, information at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia show that Captain H.L. Bowdoin's expedition (of which FDR was a member) sailed from New York on August 18, 1909. Roosevelt apparently didn't leave with them on that date but joined them several weeks later.

On the second point, I would presume that your reference (in your letter to me of last August 4) to FDR's expedition to Oak Island in 1896 was based on P.P.F. 967. However, the island of Grand Manan to which FDR and Miss Purves refer is in the Bay of Fundy, about 10 miles south of Campobello Island. That's more than 200 miles by water from Oak Island in Mahone Bay. But if your reference to his visiting Oak Island in 1896 was from some other source, please correct me as I would be most interested to know about it.

I have two questions raised by the correspondence you sent me: What was FDR Secretary of in November 1926 (see letter to FDR from T.A. Scott in FDR to H.L. Bowdoin 11-30-26); and what is "the development at Warm Springs, Georgia" that is referred to (same file) in FDR's letter to Bowdoin? Could you also tell me when it was that FDR was stricken with paralysis?

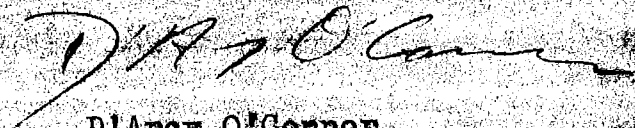
I appreciate your sending me the names of the reference books dealing with Roosevelt's early years, and shall

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look them up at the public library when I get to New York this fall. I may be in the Hyde Park area at that time and if so I'll drop in to say hello.

I thank you again for your efficiency and cooperation.

Sincerely,

  
D'Arcy O'Connor

P.S. Would your library by any chance have copies of the Popular Science articles on Oak Island referred to in P.P.F. 5504 (Hamilton to FDR 11-4-38) and P.P.F. 737 (FDR to Harris 8-24-39)? In this last reference, the magazine is incorrectly referred to as "Popular Mechanics". I had previously heard that a three-part story on Oak Island had appeared in the March, April and May 1939 issues of Popular Science, and that the April instalment dealt at length with the FDR connection. I can probably eventually get copies of the articles from a large public library, but if you do happen to have them (or even just the one on FDR) I would appreciate it if you could send me photocopies. I'll send you the reproduction fee by return mail, or else let me know what it would cost and I'll send it to you in advance.



Mailing Address P.O. Box 321, Mahone Bay, Nova Scotia, Canada

## Container

No. 0

Description (To, From &amp; Date)

## Collection

No.

## Folder Title

Page

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Order no. NLR

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**Totals**

2 p.