

Analysis of Artifacts

Item # 15

Hydraulic lock

WHO FOUND	The Onslow Company The Oak Island Association (J.B. McCully)
WHEN FOUND	1803 1861
WHERE FOUND	Between 104' and 114' in original Money Pit
FIRSTHAND/ SECONDHAND	"S"
REFERENCES	"Liverpool Transcript" article in 1862 by J.B. McCully
LOCATION TODAY	Obliterated in 1861 Money Pit collapse
ODDITY FACTOR	7
ASSESSMENT OF AUTHENTICITY	7: Never actually seen but conjectured to be a plug of puddled clay over backfilled earth on top of a platform below 118'
COMMENTS	

*FILED No. 5
Faint Blue Mark*

THE LIVERPOOL TRANSCRIPT edition of October 16, 1862.
Exact copy including typographical errors and excessive
punctuation.

THE OAK ISLAND DIGGINGS.

We understand that a large steam boiler and pumps have recently been landed at Oak Island. They are to be used in conquering the water in the pits at that place. A most resolute attempt is now being made to bring to light the hidden treasure supposed to have been buried by the notorious pirate Kidd. We ent from an exchange, some time ago, a letter, written by an interested party to a gentleman in Halifax and as it contains about the best account we have ever seen of the "diggings," we give it entire to our readers, some of whom, probably, may have read it before. Here it is:-

Truro, June 2, 1862.

Having been ridiculed both by the press and the unfernied portion of the public for embarking in so foolish an enterprise as the "Oak Island Diggings," we propose giving to the public something in the shape of a reason for our great faith in that enterprise.

When the first settlers from the United States came to Chester, they brought with them a story that an old sailor, while on his death bed, stated that he belonged to Captain Kidd's crew, and that he helped to bury on an Island, somewhere in that neighborhood, about two millions pound value of treasure, but that he had never dared to avail himself of the secret for fear of the "law" taking hold of him as a Pirate.

Sometime after the arrival of these persons a Mr. McGinnis went to Oak Island to make a farm, when he discovered the spot in question for its being sunken, and from the position of three oak trees, which stood in a triangular form round the pit. The bark had letters cut into it with a knife on each tree facing the pit, and one of the trees being so directly over the pit that two large branches forming a crotch, were exactly perpendicular to the centre, and had a hole bored through, and an oak tree-nail driven in, on which hung a tackle block. He was induced from the appearance to suppose that it might be the place referred to by the sailor. He then acquainted two men, Smith and Vaughn of the circumstance, and they commenced digging. After going down ten feet they found a layer of oak timber, at twenty the

same, and thirty the same. By this time the work became too heavy for them to carry on alone, and they tried to get the inhabitants to join them; but they refused from a kind of superstitious dread. About seven years afterwards, Simeon Lynds, of Onslow, went down to Chester, and happening to stop with Mr. Vaughn, he was informed of what had taken place. He then agreed to get up a company, which he did, of about 25 or 30 men, and they commenced where the first left off, and sunk the pit 93 feet, finding a mark every ten feet. Some of them were charcoal, some putty, and one at 80 feet was a stone cut square, two feet long and about a foot thick, with several characters cut on it.

All the way down they were confined to a diameter of 16 feet, by the softness of the ground within that limit. The pick marks could be distinctly seen all around the sides of the pit. After they got down 93 feet, they forced a crowbar down and struck wood at five which appeared to be a platform from its being level making in all to the supposed platform 98 feet. They quit the work until morning, when on commencing again they found the pit filled with water, as high as the tide level. They then tried bailing, and afterwards tried pumping, which was all to no purpose. After which they sank a new pit in order to tunnel under the treasure which was unsuccessful. Matters stood so until 1849, when a few persons in Truro, hearing Lynds tell the story, got up a company. They got down 86 feet, when the water drove them out. They then bored. This part of the work I can speak of with more certainty than any previous, as I took part in it personally, and worked on the auger. We bored five holes, in the first of which we lost the only valve sludger we had. It was a long pod with a valve at the bottom to prevent the contents from dropping out. This we always used after the chisel, it was lost by being a little too rash, and thereby twisting it off at the shank. Having lost it we had only one left, which had, instead of a valve, a ball inside with a pin across the bottom to keep the ball from dropping out. That one would not admit of coin passing into it. It would seem strange that we should not have got another valve sludger, but people who are penny wise and pound foolish sometimes do strange things. I wanted the persons in charge to send for two or three, but could not prevail on them to do so. The second hole we bored struck the platform which the old diggers told us about-precisely at the depth they told us they had struck it with the crowbar, 98 feet. It proved to be spruce, six inches thick. After the auger went through it, dropped one foot and struck wood again, which was oak, four inches thick, then twenty inches

of metal in small pieces which we knew from the sound and from the fact that the auger would go through by simply turning it, then eight inches oak, then 20 inches metal, then four inches oak, six inches spruce, and then seven feet worked clay, then hard clay which had never been disturbed, another of the five holes struck the platform at the same depth, 98 feet; after going through the auger dropped a little more than it did in the first hole, and struck a cask which was evident from our bringing up a piece of an oak stave, and some pieces of birch hoops. We also brought three small links which had apparently been forced from an epulette. They were gold. After that another gang bored; but the results were known only to the persons who conducted the boring, which he managed to keep to himself. But a short time after he made such disclosures to Mr. Charles D. Archibald, who was then concerned in the Londonderry Iron Mines, that he, Mr. A., went to the Government and got a license to dig. But from our having applied for a license before, they could only get permission to dig on unoccupied ground, which kept them from doing anything while our lease held good. One of the parties dying in the mean time and Mr. A. being in Europe, they did not avail themselves of the license. Our company worked at it four years, during which time they found a drain, or tunnel, leading from the sea to the pit. By digging a pit about 20 feet from the old pit and 94 feet deep, also near the shores at the same level, which would make it appear that the water came into the old pit about the top of the upper platform. Work was evidently done by hands in both pits, and also at the beach, where we found flag stones made in the form of drains and covered with a kind of grass, not the growth of this country, and the outer rind of the cocoanut. When the drain was struck in the pits, in both cases, the water burst in with such force as to drive us out. We drove piles into the one at the shore to stop the course of the water, which slackened the flow of water in the old money pit, but did not stop it altogether, thereby inducing us to believe that there might be another drain. We afterwards dug two other pits near the old money pit, and found that there was no difficulty from the water at 109 and 112 feet until we attempted to work into the old pit by tunnelling, when it would invariably rise to a level with the tide. That company also gave up, and last summer we formed another, and commenced digging a new pit 120 feet deep about 25 feet from the old money pit. Our object was to intercept the water but to no purpose. We then tunnelled from one of the old pits on the west side, in order to enter the money pit, between the upper and lower platform, but from a misunderstanding about the starting point, the tunnel entered

the old money pit a little below the lower platform, where we found the soft clay spoken of in the boring. The tunnel was unwisely driven through the old pit until it nearly reached the east pipe, when the water started, apparently coming above as on the east side.

We then bailed from the west pit, with six horses for three days, and the horses becoming tired out for want of oats, of which we ran short, we knocked off, and went home, and started again with 33 horses and over 60 men. We then rigged gins and bailing apparatus on the new pit, the money pit, and the west pit, and commenced bailing on Wednesday morning, continuing constantly night and day, until Friday morning, when the tunnel leading from the west pit to the money pit, which was 17 feet long, 4 feet high, and three feet wide, becoming choked with clay, we sent two men down to clear it out. After they had got about half way through they heard a tremendous crash in the money pit, and barely escaped being caught by a rush of mud which followed them into the west pit, and filled it up seven feet in less than three minutes. In the mean time a stick of oak timber of considerable girth, and 3 1-2 feet in length, was ejected with the mud, all of which was soon cut up and made into walking canes, one of which I have the pleasure of sending you. The bailing continued until three o'clock, p.m. of Saturday, when, on clearing the tunnel again, another crash was heard in the money pit, which we supposed to be the upper platform falling, and immediately the bottom of the money pit fell to about 102 feet, measuring from the level of the ground at the top. It had been cleared out previously down 88 feet. Immediately after the cribbing of the money pit commencing at the bottom, fell in plank after plank until there was only about thirty feet of the upper cribbing left. On Monday the top fell in, leaving the old money pit a complete mass of ruins. We then got a cast iron pump and steam engine from Chebucto Foundry in Halifax; but the boilers being defective we were obliged to give up, after spending considerable time, &c., until the Spring of this year, -not, however, until we proved that the water could be pumped out in two hours.

We now talk of letting a job of the whole work to Sutherland & Co., railway contractors, who have agreed to finish the work to our satisfaction, according to specification, for \$4000, and will take all the risk or forfeit payment, for which purpose we are now endeavoring to raise the required amount of stock. The foregoing statement can be certified on oath of respectable persons.

Now, I leave the matter to a discerning public, to say whether we are the fools some people take us to be, in endeavouring to set the question for ever at rest. But I suppose the public will judge of it by the success we meet with. Should we be successful in getting a large amount of treasure we will be considered a very sensible lot of fellows; and if we should fail in finishing the work we will be set down as a set of phantom-following fools, fit for nothing but to be held up to public ridicule.

But facts are stubborn things. We have proved that the old "money pit," so called was dug, and that the water must have been let into it after it was filled up. The filling of it, leaving the ten feet marks, shows that the water did not flow into it until after it was filled; also, that the tunnel must have been made before it was filled, and that probably the last thing they did was to tear away a dam and let on the water. By the way the remains of an old dam was seen outside of the place where we found the drain and tunnel at the shore.

Yours. &c.,

J. B. McCully.