

Analysis of Artifacts

Item # 53

A bulkhead composed of oak and cement 14" thick was drilled through at 136 ' The drill then dropped 33 ' to 169 ', clear of everything, then entered mud and bits of oak in a state of decay to 176 ' where it struck a solid substance.

WHO FOUND	Canadian Oak Island Treasure Co. (Thomas Nixon)
WHEN FOUND	1933
WHERE FOUND	Borehole #13 from 136 to 169' (approximately 126 to 159' today)
FIRSTHAND/ SECONDHAND	
REFERENCES	R.V. Harris Pg. 119 to 120 Re: Holes # 13 &14 Furneaux's, "The Money Pit Mystery", pg. 78 D'Arcy O'Connor's, "The Big Dig", Pg 72
LOCATION TODAY	Presumed to be approximately 10' to 20 ' north and west of Chappell and Hedden Shafts respectively.
ODDITY FACTOR	5
ASSESSMENT OF AUTHENTICITY	4: Possibility that Nixon may have drilled on a slant into 1931 Chappell Shaft
COMMENTS	Compare with Dunfield's and Greene's experiences.

and then in some manner broke the pipe about fifty feet from the surface. He then abandoned further work, owing to existing financial conditions.

The Canadian Oak Island Treasure Company Ltd.

On September 16, 1933, Thomas M. Nixon of Victoria, British Columbia, made an agreement with Mr. Blair under which he secured the right to carry on operations to recover the treasure. Nixon shortly afterwards assigned his rights to the Canadian Oak Island Treasure Company, which had been incorporated under the Dominion Companies Act, with an authorized capital of \$225,000 "to locate, seek for and extricate from or under, or in the vicinity of Oak Island . . . buried or hidden treasure money (gold, silver, copper), minerals, metals, coins, bullion, precious stones, jewels, trinkets, ornaments or any other useful or valuable objects." The prospectus quoted the greater portion of the history of the operations over the past 140 years, as written by Mr. Blair, along with affidavits and corroborative letters, and outlined the plans of the new company. An issue of one-half of the stock was made to the public, \$112,500; but the company found difficulty in disposing of it.

On October 15, 1933, an article appeared in a New York newspaper referring to the Nixon interests as "equipped with the latest engineering apparatus According to a legend, a tribe of Incas fled from Mexico [Peru?] hundreds of years ago, carrying jewels and precious metals. The legend says the Indians landed on Oak Island and buried their riches in a deep tunnel, running from the Atlantic Ocean to the centre of the Island and then vanished."

It is believed that the basis of this legend was derived from "spirit rapping" and further reference will be made to this sort of evidence in a later chapter.

Nixon's theory derived undoubtedly from the history of previous efforts, was that the principal treasure had been deposited at the bottom of the Pit and sealed. Above it there was left a considerable empty space, roofed over with a platform

of oak logs on which were placed several ironbound oak chests. This upper deposit of a small portion of the treasure was made to throw any possible discoverer off the scent, and persuade him that he had found all the treasure. The original pit, he believed, had been filled in with planking every ten feet up, in order to keep the weight off the vault below. In order to admit the sea and guard the treasure from intruders there had originally been gates in the tunnels, so arranged as to shut off the sea water and to permit entrance through the tunnels to the treasure chamber.

Nixon's plan was to drive down a circle of interlocking steel piling to include the Money Pit and with a diameter of from fifty to seventy-five feet. The next step would be to excavate the entire contents of the huge caisson as far down as necessary to recover the treasure. Associated with him was Norman J. Zumburn, an engineer of Toledo, Ohio. Instead of carrying out the above plan, Nixon spent the whole summer in boring fourteen holes in the neighbourhood of the Money Pit and did no digging whatever.

The first hole went to a depth of 170 feet, through blue clay and beach gravel. At fifty-eight feet a seam of pink sand was encountered, possibly the remains of red dye put into the Money Pit in 1899. From 132 to 146 feet mud mixed with clay and gravel was found, all indicating that the hole was in a portion of the Money Pit.

Hole No. 2 was six feet eleven inches due north of the Chappell shaft; at 58 feet the seam of pink sand was again encountered, indicating that the Chappell shaft had not included the Money Pit.

Hole No. 8 was fourteen feet from the Chappell shaft and in this hole, bits of old oak were brought up below 110 feet and also bits of china, blue and gold, below 123 feet. Much wood was encountered, believed to be old cribbing.

No. 10 was near No. 9 and in it timbers were struck at sixty-four feet.

In No. 13 a bulkhead, composed of oak and cement (fourteen inches thick) was drilled through at 136 feet. The drill

then dropped thirty-three feet to 169 feet, clear of everything; then entered mud and bits of oak in a state of decay to 176 feet, where it struck a solid substance.

No. 14 was put down a few feet away bringing the same results.

Mr. Blair was somewhat skeptical respecting these discoveries in Nos. 13 and 14. Zumbrunn, the engineer, had then withdrawn, having, it was believed, fallen out with Nixon.

As his agreement with Mr. Blair expired on November 1, 1934, and as his funds were exhausted, and for other reasons, Mr. Blair terminated relations with him.

Mr. Blair later expressed the belief that the exact location of the Pit had been lost because of the many shafts sunk near it, the labyrinth of tunnels made from it in all directions in earlier days and the several collapses of the workings, notably in 1804 and in 1850.

Conclusions

While the progress made in the twenty-five years, 1909-1934, was not great, considerable confirmation of previous theories was obtained, principally from the operations of William Chappell and his associates.

The enlarged shaft opened to a greater depth had confirmed previous explorations and the finding of various articles at deeper levels than previously excavated supported in Mr. Blair's view, his theory that they had dropped, along with the treasure chamber and its contents, from higher levels. It was also his belief that the enlarged shaft included only a portion of the original Money Pit.

Mr. Blair made renewed efforts to interest others in Oak Island, and although the First World War and the subsequent economic depression greatly increased his difficulties they never shook his faith in ultimate success.

Gilbert D. Hedden 1934-1938

The jinx which had frustrated the efforts of treasure seekers for more than 140 years seemed likely to be scattered and dissipated when Mr. Gilbert D. Hedden of Chatham, New Jersey, entered into an agreement with Mr. Blair, on March 1, 1935, and though unsuccessful in solving the great mystery he achieved most remarkable progress towards its solution.

Mr. Hedden was born in 1897 and, after graduating from Newark (N.J.) Academy and a two-year course at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, became in 1919 Vice-President and General Manager of the Hedden Iron Construction Company, Hillside, New Jersey, fabricators and erectors of structural steel. On the sale in 1931 of this business to the Bethlehem Steel Company, he became plant manager of the "Hedden" works.

Leaving the business in 1932, he entered the life insurance field and two years later organized a large, high-class automobile business in Morristown, New Jersey. In public life he served as Mayor of Chatham from 1934 to 1938 and acquired a wide knowledge of municipal affairs.

Mr. Hedden's interest in solving the riddle began when he read an article on Oak Island in the Sunday magazine section of the *New York Times* on May 8, 1928. The engineering problems presented fascinated him. He determined to try his

Half that amount of stock was offered to the public, who, however, failed to respond to the enticing bait. Nixon believed that the treasure had been deposited on Oak Island by 'a tribe of Incas who had fled from Mexico' (the Incas lived in Peru), hundreds of years ago, carrying jewels and precious metals. They had buried their riches in a deep tunnel, running from the Atlantic ocean to the centre of the island, and had then vanished. Nixon advanced his theory that 'the principal treasure had been deposited at the bottom of the Pit and sealed. Another deposit, formed of several oak, iron-bound chests, had been made above it, to throw any possible discoverer off the scent and persuade him he had found all the treasure.' Gates had been placed in the flood tunnels to shut off the sea water and permit entrance to the treasure chamber.

Nixon intended to drive down a circle of interlocking steel pilings, forming a huge caisson to enclose the Money Pit to the depth necessary to recover the treasure. But instead of undertaking this costly operation, he spent the summer of 1934 in boring fourteen holes around the Money Pit and reported these results to Blair :

No. 1 to the depth of 170 ft. :	At 58 ft. seam of pink sand (which Blair believed to be possibly the result of the red dye put down in 1899) From 132 to 146 feet, mud mixed with clay and gravel
No. 2 6 feet 11 inches from Chappell shaft :	At 58 feet seam of pink sand
No. 8 14 feet from Chappell shaft :	Below 110 feet bits of old oak Below 123 feet bits of old china
Nos. 13 and 14 to 136 feet :	Struck what was deemed to be a <u>bulkhead made of oak and cement</u> <u>14 inches thick. Drill dropped 33 feet</u> <u>to 169 feet and then entered bits</u> <u>of decayed oak to 176 feet where</u> <u>it struck solid matter</u>

Nixon's agreement with Blair lapsed in November 1934 and he returned home like his predecessors, to count his losses. Blair was not unduly disturbed as another determined treasure seeker stood on the threshold, awaiting his permission to start work on the island.

arrived, Nixon wrote Blair asking for a month's extension, but he didn't arrive on Oak Island until early June. He spent the summer boring fourteen holes in the Money Pit area.

On September 28 Nixon wrote Blair:

Drilled [hole] No. 13 and, on reaching a depth of 136 feet, drilled through what appeared to be a bulkhead, composed of oak and cement mixture about fourteen inches thick. On breaking through this, the tool dropped to 169 feet without touching anything; then I got mud and bits of old oak, which was in such a state of decay that you could rub the same into a powder in your fingers. This continued to 176 feet, where I struck a solid substance. I abandoned the hole and put another one, No. 14, down within a few feet of it and encountered the same as in No. 13, so undoubtedly that is the location of the Money Pit.

These holes presumably were somewhere north of the Chappell shaft. The report was accompanied by Nixon's promise that he would begin his planned excavation early the following year, and he therefore expected Blair to extend the agreement for another twelve months.

Nixon's drilling results were vaguely suggestive of the cement and wood-lined chamber that had been drilled into in 1897. But Blair was skeptical of Nixon's report, and on October 30 he informed him that their contract was terminated. Nixon threatened legal action to force an extension, but Blair held his ground and the matter was closed.

Apart from his annoyance over Nixon's lack of progress, Blair had another reason to sever the relationship. Waiting in the wings that autumn was Gilbert Hedden of Chatham, New Jersey—a man with the money and determination to take over the project and perhaps see it to its conclusion. His was to prove one of the more significant contributions to the Oak Island search.