

Analysis of Artifacts

Item # 57

Spanish "Maradevi" coin dated 1598

WHO FOUND	Phillips Academy Expedition
WHEN FOUND	1965 (August)
WHERE FOUND	On the site of Anthony Graves's house O'Connor claims that this coin was found near Joudrey's Cove
FIRSTHAND/ SECONDHAND	
REFERENCES	R.V. Harris Pg. 178D'Arcy O'Connor's, "The Big Dig", pg. 183
LOCATION TODAY	
ODDITY FACTOR	
ASSESSMENT OF AUTHENTICITY	AUTHENTICITY questioned by O'Connor
COMMENTS	See "Silver Spanish coin dated 1785"

Robinson's Corner, a foreman directing the workmen, who at his own risk took on the task of getting the victims out of the shaft; and Richard Barber and Peter Beamish, campers on the Island, who rendered first aid.

The tragedy shocked and excited the interest of the whole world.

The Beamish Expedition

As a postscript to this chapter, we may record the fact that Mr. Peter Beamish was one of a party of nineteen student-campers from Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, spending several weeks on the Island. With their electromagnetic equipment they surveyed the whole Island and later reported finding over 300 metal objects of archaeological interest, including old irons, axe-heads, files, farm implements; one large axe-head measured nine inches by five inches (badly corroded), and a Spanish coin, 11 Maravedi, dated 1598! A skin-diving expedition turned up an anchor, pieces of china and several iron rings, also a ringbolt in a rock on the south shore not far from the triangle; the third such ringbolt in our story.

It was later learned that the Spanish coin had been found on the site of Anthony Graves' house, where he had lived for thirty years—the same Anthony Graves who, it was said, had bought his groceries and supplies in Chester nearby with Spanish money!

Robert R. Dunfield 1965-1966

Following the failure of the Restall undertaking, Robert R. Dunfield, a petroleum geologist from Canuga Park, California, and a graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles, came into the picture.

An engineer of long experience, in association with three others, he took over the Restall rights to search for the treasure. His associates were Daniel Blankenship of Miami, Florida, Jack Nethercutt of Beverly Hills, and G. R. Le Perle of Bakersfield, both in California.

As already stated, Mr. Dunfield had been on the scene some months before Restall's death, and estimated that with heavy equipment the mystery might be solved. A three-yard link-belt "digging clam," weighing about 100 tons, capable of digging an excavation over 200 feet deep and 100 feet in diameter, and handling over 800 cubic yards an hour under favourable conditions, was the answer. His belief was that "there is *something* buried on the Island, and at different elevations." He described the project as "a problem in open-pit mining but with the added difficulty of seeping water. We can complete the excavation successfully, if we can dig it dry." The pumping equipment required to keep the pit dry at all times was capable of handling 110,000 gallons of water an hour.

search parties, and that they purposely kept quiet about it in order to avoid paying the compulsory royalty to the Nova Scotia government.

One long-standing legend concerns Anthony Graves, who purchased much of the island after John Smith's death in 1857. Graves built his house at Joudrey's Cove and lived there until he died in 1888. Graves is rumored to have occasionally purchased supplies on the mainland with Spanish coins of gold or silver. In 1930 a silver Spanish coin dated 1785 was found near the foundation of his house. Another coin, a Spanish maravedi said to be dated 1598, was supposedly found in 1965 near Joudrey's Cove, though the coin's authenticity is suspect.

The Graves story would seem to be nothing more than gossip, since his own family wasn't aware of it. Graves's granddaughter, Florence Eisenhauer, told Mel Chappell in 1955 that she hadn't heard of any discovery of treasure by her grandfather. But she did say that her aunt, Sophia Sellers (Graves's eldest daughter) "believed that if any treasure were buried on Oak Island, it was carried away, because she remembered a vessel coming into the cove one evening and it disappeared or departed before morning, and there were marks in the sand on the shore like a barrel having been rolled out."

Edward Vaughan of Western Shore is another whose name often comes up in local speculation about who made off with the island's treasure. His father, George (a grandson of Anthony Vaughan), is rumored to have found a chest on the island in the late 1930s. He died in 1941, and some say he left one of his two sons, Edward, an inheritance consisting of several gold ingots. Edward disappeared shortly thereafter, leaving his wife and children behind. He surfaced in Ontario many years later and died in 1968.

If Vaughan or anybody else did find something on the island, Fred Nolan, the current owner of several Oak Island lots, would not be surprised. He is certain no less than eleven separate caches have been carted away "in the past eighty years or so." He bases that claim on his discovery in recent years of several previously dug holes, none of them more than four feet deep, and most of them in the island's swamp area.