

Analysis of Artifacts

Item # 70

Heart Shaped Stone

WHO FOUND	Dan Blankenship
WHEN FOUND	1970
WHERE FOUND	Under Smith's Cove (3 ft. deep) between low and high tide
FIRSTHAND/ SECONDHAND	"F" Dan Blankenship
REFERENCES	D'Arcy O'Connor's, "The Big Dig", pg. 45 & 168 Triton's 1988 "Summary of Operation...." Pg. 3:02b including photo
LOCATION TODAY	Oak Island Museum
ODDITY FACTOR	7
ASSESSMENT OF AUTHENTICITY	6: Judged to be worked by man by the Smithsonian Institution, unable to date or conclusively link to originators.
COMMENTS	Note conflicting location cited in K.Ellard's letter of November 19, 1973 which states location as South Shore

302B.



Bits of wood and red, brick-like material brought up by the Becker drill from an apparent tunnel encountered 35 ft. below bedrock under the money pit. The wood has been carbon-dated at A.D. 1575 \pm 85 years.¹



This heart-shaped stone was found in 1967 buried 3 ft. under the beach at Smith's Cove midway between low and high tide. It was found beneath rocks believed to be part of the original flooding system. The Smithsonian Institution has confirmed that the stone has been worked by tools.²

1. ref: Appendix B-3

2. ref: Appendix B-4

nels led out from the chamber, and numerous smaller tunnels designed to channel underground watercourses into the vault were spaced at regular intervals. The flood tunnels were apparently plugged with clay, and Lochard said he was able to investigate the workings without being hampered by water. One interesting coincidence is that Lochard described a heart-shaped rock which he said he found in one of the tunnels. It was similar to a hand-chiseled rock that Blankenship had discovered (though Lochard didn't know it) under Smith's Cove in 1967.

The problem with Lochard's story is that there appears to be no one around who can verify it. During the 1970s some newspaper articles stated that the Smithsonian Institution had confirmed the existence of the Haitian communal bank. However, Mendel Peterson, the former curator of the Smithsonian's Historical Archaeology division, told me that he has seen no proof that workings similar to Oak Island exist in Haiti or anywhere else in the world. Peterson also expressed doubt that pirates would have gone to such elaborate lengths to bury their plunder.

In addition, several prominent persons who were in Haiti at the time of Lochard's alleged discovery express strong disbelief in the story. Paul Magloire was head of the Haitian army and minister of the interior from 1946 to 1950 and then president of Haiti from 1950 to 1956. (He was ousted by a coup in 1956, shortly before "Papa Doc" Duvalier came to power.) In 1977 Magloire, then living in exile in New York, assured me that he certainly would have known about it had someone fled Haiti in 1951 after finding a hidden treasure.

Max Bissainthe, who was head of Haiti's National Library from 1942 to 1956, also discounts the story as "legend, complete legend." In addition, several journalists who operated out of Haiti's capital, Port-au-Prince, in the late 1940s and 1950s say they never heard so much as a rumor of such a discovery.

If Lochard, who has long since disappeared, actually found underground workings, they probably weren't anywhere as elaborate as he'd led Tobias to believe.

Nevertheless, there *are* documented accounts of treasure

division, and he said the scissors were of a type that was being made 300 years ago or earlier in Mexico. Other artifacts found beneath the beach included an ancient set square, which metallurgists dated to sometime before 1783, and a heart-shaped stone. Peterson, who examined the stone, concluded that it had been chiseled with some sort of tool at an early though undeterminable date.

Those discoveries, along with the startling drill results, convinced the searchers that there was no question that someone had visited this island hundreds of years earlier and had dug a maze of tunnels deep in its interior. But Tobias knew that it would require far more money than even he had to get to the bottom of the mystery. So through his business connections, some twenty new shareholders were brought into the search in April 1969 with the formation of Triton Alliance Ltd. (Considering the island's flood traps, the name Triton—the Greek demigod who was half man and half fish—was well chosen.)

Those early Triton partners, who initially invested about \$500,000 in the project, are, significantly, not the sort of men to be taken in by get-rich-quick schemes. They include heads of large Canadian and U.S. companies, lawyers, and scientists: men like George Jennison, a past president of the Toronto Stock Exchange; Charles Brown III, a wealthy Boston real-estate investor; Donald Webster, a Toronto financier; Bill Sobey, honorary chairman of one of Canada's biggest supermarket chains; and Gordon Coles, Nova Scotia's former deputy attorney-general. Mel Chappell, the island's former owner, was also a major shareholder and member of Triton's board of directors until his death in 1980.

Many of the original participants are still active in the company, contributing additional capital over the years despite the fact that none has yet received a dime of return on his investment. In most cases their allegiance has as much to do with their faith in Tobias and Blankenship as it does with their curiosity about Oak Island.

Bill Sobey, currently a Triton director with a 10 percent equity interest, has spent his entire life in Nova Scotia. As he told me in July 1987, "I remember as a bug-eyed kid fifty