

Analysis of Artifacts

Item # 71

Pottery flasks, some with mercury residue

WHO FOUND	Gilbert Hedden
WHEN FOUND	1937
WHERE FOUND	Near Joudrey's Cove
FIRSTHAND/ SECONDHAND	"S: - see D'Arcy O'Connor's "The Big Dig
REFERENCES	D'Arcy O'Connor's "The Big Dig", pg. 108 "There does exist an old dump on the island in which are the remains of thousands of broken pottery flasks. That this dump is old is supported by the fact that we found nearby an old coin and an ivory Boatswain's whistle which experts tell us date back to the Elizabethan period." "S" interview by D'Arcy O'Conner with Amos Nauss in 1976 "Amos Nauss, one of Hedden's worker's, told me that a liquid residue discovered in some of the flasks was indeed mercury."
LOCATION TODAY	Under shed on Fred Nolans property?
ODDITY FACTOR	8
ASSESSMENT OF AUTHENTICITY	Letter written by Hedden to Professor Burrell Ruth
COMMENTS	It seems they were pottery flasks not clay which is consistent with how mercury was shipped by the Spanish (and probably others) in the period from 1500 to 1700 or so.

brought up from the Money Pit, Ruth concluded that here was the repository Baconians had spent years searching for.

He immediately wrote Hedden a thirty-page letter outlining his belief that below Oak Island was a vault containing the original manuscripts of works credited to Shakespeare and others, and that they were immersed in tons of mercury to protect them against the ravages of time. Hedden's initial reaction was that the idea was interesting but preposterous. Nevertheless, he was curious about a couple of things mentioned in Ruth's letter. In his reply he stated:

Your prediction that the Money Pit contains mercury is one of the most amazing coincidences I have ever encountered. You can be certain that before sinking nearly a hundred thousand in this venture I explored it from every angle. One of these angles was the folklore, superstitions, and legends that have surrounded the pit since 1800. One of the most widespread and persistent of these legends, and one for which I was never able to find the least basis, was the curious belief that the Money Pit contained mercury. I never gave it any serious thought; it seemed too fantastic. But one point in favor of your theory is that there does exist an old dump on the island in which are the remains of thousands of broken pottery flasks. That this dump is very old is supported by the fact that we found nearby an old coin and an ivory boatswain's whistle which experts tell us date back to the Elizabethan period.

The old dump that Hedden referred to was found in 1937 near Joudrey's Cove on the island's north side while the searchers were looking for other markers that might tie in with the stone triangle and drilled rocks. In a 1976 interview, Amos Nauss, one of Hedden's workers, told me that a liquid residue discovered in some of the flasks was indeed mercury.

Ruth's theory was that Bacon, prior to his death in 1626, left instructions to his closest aides describing how and possibly where to conceal his "Shakespearean" and other original manuscripts. Then, perhaps years later, this group chartered a ship on which they loaded the cases of paper and parchment. They sailed first to Spain, where they purchased thousands of flasks of mercury, which would have been carefully crated and protected against breakage by the use of coconut fiber dunnage. From there they sailed to Nova Scotia and randomly