

*Analysis of Artifacts*

**Item # 74**

*Nut (or washer)*

<b>WHO FOUND</b>	D. Blankenship
<b>WHEN FOUND</b>	1966
<b>WHERE FOUND</b>	South Shore Shaft below 60'
<b>FIRSTHAND/ SECONDHAND</b>	"F" Dan Blankenship
<b>REFERENCES</b>	D'Arcy O'Connor's, "The Big Dig", pg. 167
<b>LOCATION TODAY</b>	
<b>ODDITY FACTOR</b>	
<b>ASSESSMENT OF AUTHENTICITY</b>	
<b>COMMENTS</b>	

being worked by man, was also brought up from cavities below bedrock.

One borehole in the Money Pit came to an abrupt halt at 198 feet. Blankenship and the professional driller operating the machine were positive, because of the high-pitched whining sound, that the drill was biting into hard metal. It required twenty-five minutes for the diamond drill to bore through a half inch of the material. But the core sample was lost just before it reached the surface.

Concurrent with the drilling program Blankenship explored other parts of the island. Here too he made some important discoveries. In 1966 he reopened and deepened the shaft that Dunfield had found the year before on the south shore. At about sixty feet Blankenship found an ancient hand-wrought nail and a kind of nut or washer. The hole was dug to about ninety feet, where he encountered a layer of round granite rocks, all about the size of a man's head, lying in a pool of black stagnant water. Blankenship was sure he had intersected a part of the south shore flood tunnel, and he spent several months trying to crib the shaft and evacuate deeper. But even wood and steel casing couldn't hold back the collapsing earth, and the hole was eventually abandoned.

The following year Blankenship dug up parts of the Smith's Cove beach. This yielded more coconut fiber. Tobias recalls that he was present when some of the material was found. "I remember picking it up and thinking maybe it was some sort of seaweed. But we sent a sample off to the National Research Council [in Ottawa], and sure enough, their botanists confirmed that it was coconut fiber. That was the first time I really believed there was coconut fiber under Oak Island."

Blankenship also uncovered the remains of the artificial drainage network under Smith's Cove. Beneath one of the stone drains he found a pair of wrought-iron scissors. These were submitted to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, which found them to be Spanish-American in origin, probably made in Mexico. They were examined by Mendel Peterson, former curator of the Smithsonian's Historical Archaeology