

Analysis of Artifacts

Item # 83

South Shore cofferdam

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| WHO FOUND | Brian Backmann |
| WHEN FOUND | 1961 |
| WHERE FOUND | Underwater off southeast shore |
| FIRSTHAND/ SECONDHAND | |
| REFERENCES | Furneaux's, "The Money Pit Mystery", pg. 86 |
| LOCATION TODAY | |
| ODDITY FACTOR | |
| ASSESSMENT OF AUTHENTICITY | |
| COMMENTS | Cox drawing TA-Wool from 1988 shows supposed location of South Shore flooding system and cofferdam. What were the sources for this? |

Then a Texan oil drilling syndicate, led by George J. Greene of Corpus Christi, started operations in October 1955. Greene was quoted in the Corpus Christi *Caller* 29 September as saying that he proposed to cut off the water from the Money Pit by sinking steel casing ten ft. in diameter into the hole. If this did not cut off the water, it would at least allow divers to work below without the fear of the sides caving in. His syndicate, announced Greene, was prepared to spend money without limit to prove or disprove the legend of Oak Island. 'Water doesn't bother an oil man', he asserted. The tough part was to find the treasure and if he could find it he would get it out. On the day he retired from the scene, Greene stated, 'someone went to a lot of trouble to bury *something* here. And unless he was the greatest practical joker of all time, it must have been well worth the effort.'

During his four weeks on Oak Island, Greene drilled along a line on the north side of the Chappell shaft (No. 21). The first boring reached to 190 ft., striking various 'voids'. The fourth encountered oak timbers eight in. thick at a hundred ft. then a void, then a cavity of forty-five ft. and finally hard clay. Greene was quoted by the *Caller* on 28 October, by which time he had returned home, as saying, 'We poured 100,000 gallons of water into it and it ran out, but where I don't know.'

The discovery of this extensive cavity, which seems to have been re-located in 1965, was accepted as confirmation of the existence of the sealed water-tight chamber at the bottom of the Money Pit for which so many explorers had been searching. No one considered this void might be no more than a natural cavern, as is found often in limestone formations.

In 1961, Brian Backmann, a public relations consultant who lived at Chester, brought a team of skin divers. They searched around the island for traces of ships which might have anchored there. Close to the south shore they found traces of what appeared to be the foundations of a coffer-dam which Backmann believes was used to hold back the sea while the original depositors constructed an entrance into the Money Pit. They intended, on their return, to rebuild the coffer dam.

About this time, the early 1960s, the local surveyor, F. C. Nolan, who owned property across the neck of the island, made a survey of the eastern part of the island. He put down a line of bench marks.

Two other men became interested in the island. They had no connection with one another but a division of the treasure trove rights