

Analysis of Artifacts

Item # 91

Three links of gold chain

WHO FOUND	Jotham B. McCully
WHEN FOUND	1849
WHERE FOUND	From 2nd drill hole into Money Pit at about 100'
FIRSTHAND/ SECONDHAND	
REFERENCES	D'Arcy O'Connor's, "The Big Dig", pg. 18 & 178
LOCATION TODAY	
ODDITY FACTOR	
ASSESSMENT OF AUTHENTICITY	See D'Arcy O'Connor's mention on pg. 178
COMMENTS	McCully first thought these links resembled "an ancient watch chain" and then later he says they "had apparently been forced from an epaulette", but in any case, "They were gold."

at a depth of thirty feet, just above water level, and the inch-and-a-half diameter drill pipe lowered to the bottom of the shaft. The work involved screwing a chisel-tipped auger into the earth and then removing cores of drilled material.

The drilling program, which was to yield some interesting results, was recorded separately by McCully and another member of the Truro Company, and both versions generally corroborate one another. McCully, in a letter to a friend on June 2, 1862, and later in a report to another search syndicate says:

We bored five holes, in the first of which we lost the only valve slugger we had. The second hole we bored struck the platform which the old [Onslow Company] diggers told us about—precisely at the depth they had told us they had struck it with a crowbar, 98 feet. After going through this platform, which was five inches thick and proved to be spruce, the auger dropped 12 inches and then went through four inches of oak; then it went through five inches of metal in pieces, but the auger failed to take any of it in except three links, resembling an ancient watch chain. It then went through eight inches of oak, which was thought to be the bottom of the first box and the top of the next; then 22 inches of [loose] metal, the same as before; then four inches of oak and six inches of spruce; then into clay seven feet without striking anything else. In the next [third] boring the platform was struck as before at 98 feet; passing through this the auger fell about 18 inches and came in contact with, as supposed, the side of a cask. On withdrawing the auger, several splinters of oak, such as might come from the side of an oak stave, and a small quantity of a brown fibrous substance, closely resembling the husk of a coconut, were brought up. The distance between the upper and lower platforms was found to be six feet.

McCully described the chain that was brought up on the drill as "three small links which had apparently been forced from an epaulette. They were gold."

This was the first piece of tangible evidence that something of value was down in the Money Pit. Unfortunately, as McCully noted, the auger couldn't pick up any of the loose metal struck at two distinct levels. The final two holes were drilled near the inside walls of the pit. These only brought up further evidence of the platforms and loose earth without striking the metal, although James McNutt in his 1867 account

aboard, part of which was recovered by divers in 1965.

Another suggestion links Oak Island to the ill-fated armada of the Duc d'Anville. In June of 1746 the French Crown, mortified by the fall of Louisbourg to the English the year before, assembled at Brest a fleet of sixty-five ships, and 3,150 troops to sail across the Atlantic and retake the fortress as well as the rest of the province. The fleet, under the command of the Duc d'Anville, was plagued with bad luck all the way to the New World. Even before reaching Nova Scotian waters, several vessels were lost in storms, and pestilence had broken out on many others. Then off the dreaded shoals of Sable Island (known as "the graveyard of the Atlantic") the armada ran into a violent tempest that claimed more ships and lives. On September 25 D'Anville's flagship and a few other vessels managed to make it to Chibucto Harbor (now Halifax Harbor), but most of the troops and sailors were dying of scurvy and other diseases. Two days later D'Anville himself died, reportedly of apoplexy, though it was rumored he had ended his problems with poison. The intended attack on Louisbourg was never carried out, for the armada had lost most of its ships and about 2,000 of its soldiers.

Theories have been advanced to the effect that one or more of the ships presumed lost in the storm off Sable Island may have actually escaped and sailed two hundred miles west into Mahone Bay. There is no record indicating that any of the ships in the fleet were carrying specie or bullion, but possibly some were. Had such a ship sought refuge in Mahone Bay, Oak Island may have been used as a temporary hiding place for this treasure.

This and other theories establishing a French connection to Oak Island, as either an official or unofficial deposit, conform with the necessary ingredient of secrecy. Until Halifax was settled and made the British headquarters in 1749, the southern coast of mainland Nova Scotia was virtually uninhabited. The principal settlement until then was at Port Royal on the northern side of the province, and most of the lesser settlements were in that same area. And prior to 1750 even the Micmacs appear to have made only sporadic visits to Mahone Bay. However, had the workings been secretly executed under

