

Analysis of Artifacts

Item # 93

Tier of smooth stones from the beach, with figures and letters cut on them

WHO FOUND	The Onslow Company
WHEN FOUND	1804
WHERE FOUND	In Money Pit at the 50' level
FIRSTHAND/ SECONDHAND	
REFERENCES	Rupert Furneaux's, "The Money Pit Mystery", pg. 18 Re; James McNutt's account
LOCATION TODAY	
ODDITY FACTOR	
ASSESSMENT OF AUTHENTICITY	
COMMENTS	

'During the time that had intervened since the leaving off work by the resident diggers, the Pit had caved in and formed the shape of a sugar loaf resting on its apex, and besides, from the action of the rain and weather, a great quantity of mud had settled at the bottom. It gave them some trouble to clear all this out, but when they had done so, they came across the sticks sunk in the mud by the first diggers on the termination of their work. They then felt satisfied that the place had not been interfered with since.

'They had not got far into the work that was new to Vaughan and his former associates, when they struck a second tier of oak logs, corresponding with the first. Ten feet lower down they found a tier of charcoal, and ten feet further a tier of putty.'

A small discrepancy appears to arise; in the account of the 1795 operations it is said that the boys encountered three oaken platforms at ten, twenty and thirty ft. levels, which they hoisted out, whereas by *The Colonist's* account it is implied that they did not reach the second and third tiers until 1804. This is unimportant, but a statement made by Judge Des Brisay, writing in 1870, may be of considerable significance. He says that at the thirty ft. level the 1804 syndicate came upon 'charcoal (and) ten ft. below it, putty'. Another version states that the putty was found at the forty ft. level, spread over a platform of logs and there was so much of it that it served to glaze the windows of more than twenty houses around Mahone Bay. More charcoal and more oak logs were encountered farther down and ten ft. lower, coconut fibre and yet another oaken platform. Local tradition has it that quantities of coconut fibre were removed from the Pit. Hiram Walker, a ship's carpenter of Chester, who was engaged in the operations, told his grand-daughter, Mrs. Cottnam Smith, that he had seen bushels of coconut fibre brought up from the shaft.

James McNutt, who worked on the island in 1863, and who wrote an account of which only a fragment survives, states that: 'At forty feet a tier of charcoal: at fifty feet a tier of smooth stones from the beach, with figures and letters cut on them; at sixty feet a tier of manilla grass and the rind of the coconut; at seventy feet a tier of putty.'

No authority other than McNutt mentions the tier of smooth beach stones with figures and letters cut upon them. They disappeared without trace, which is not perhaps surprising when we consider the