

Analysis of Artifacts

Item # 105

Stick of Oak Timber of considerable girth and 3 1/2' in length and black with age.

WHO FOUND	Oak Island Association
WHEN FOUND	1861
WHERE FOUND	Pushed out at 118' from Money Pit in 1861 collapse.
FIRSTHAND/ SECONDHAND	
REFERENCES	"Liverpool Transcript", 1862 article D'Arcy O'Connor, "The Big Dig", pg.28 re: "The Digger Patrick's MP Collapse Account"
LOCATION TODAY	
ODDITY FACTOR	
ASSESSMENT OF AUTHENTICITY	
COMMENTS	This contradicts R.V. Harris who claims the collapse happened in 1863.

the old money pit a little below the lower platform, where we found the soft clay spoken of in the boring. The tunnel was unwisely driven through the old pit until it nearly reached the east pipe, when the water started, apparently coming above as on the east side.

We then bailed from the west pit, with six horses for three days, and the horses becoming tired out for want of oats, of which we ran short, we knocked off, and went home, and started again with 33 horses and over 60 men. We then rigged gins and bailing apparatus on the new pit, the money pit, and the west pit, and commenced bailing on Wednesday morning, continuing constantly night and day, until Friday morning, when the tunnel leading from the west pit to the money pit, which was 17 feet long, 4 feet high, and three feet wide, becoming choked with clay, we sent two men down to clear it out. After they had got about half way through they heard a tremendous crash in the money pit, and barely escaped being caught by a rush of mud which followed them into the west pit, and filled it up seven feet in less than three minutes. In the mean time a stick of oak timber of considerable girth, and 3 1-2 feet in length, was ejected with the mud, all of which was soon cut up and made into walking canes, one of which I have the pleasure of sending you. The bailing continued until three o'clock, p.m. of Saturday, when, on clearing the tunnel again, another crash was heard in the money pit, which we supposed to be the upper platform falling, and immediately the bottom of the money pit fell to about 102 feet, measuring from the level of the ground at the top. It had been cleared out previously down 88 feet. Immediately after the cribbing of the money pit commencing at the bottom, fell in plank after plank until there was only about thirty feet of the upper cribbing left. On Monday the top fell in, leaving the old money pit a complete mass of ruins. We then got a cast iron pump and steam engine from Chebucto Foundry in Halifax; but the boilers being defective we were obliged to give up, after spending considerable time, &c., until the Spring of this year, -not, however, until we proved that the water could be pumped out in two hours.

We now talk of letting a job of the whole work to Sutherland & Co., railway contractors, who have agreed to finish the work to our satisfaction, according to specification, for \$4000, and will take all the risk or forfeit payment, for which purpose we are now endeavoring to raise the required amount of stock. The foregoing statement can be certified on oath of respectable persons.

barely escaped being caught by the rush of mud which followed them into the West pit and filled it up 7 feet [of mud] in less than three minutes. In the meantime a stick of oak timber of considerable girth and 3½ feet in length was ejected with the mud."

Writing in the newspaper the *Nova Scotian* in September of that year, "the digger Patrick," who was at the scene of the collapse, recalled that "while the water [from the Money Pit] was hindered by this earth [in the tunnel] from coming through [to the westerly shaft] we took out part of the earth and wood. The wood was stained black with age; it was cut, hewn, chamfered, sawn and bored, according to the purpose for which it was needed. We also took out part of the bottom of a keg." An account by James McNutt in 1867 also mentions that a "piece of juniper with bark on [and] cut at each end with an edge tool" and "a spruce slab with a mining auger hole in it" were dug out of the mud that had gushed from the Money Pit into the west shaft.

These diggers would obviously have been able to tell the difference between timbers used in their own tunnel cribbing and wood that was far older. Consequently, they were presented with substantial proof that some sort of wood construction lay more than 100 feet down in the Money Pit. And the spruce slab with the auger hole through it may well have been part of one of the platforms drilled into at the 98- and 105-foot levels in 1849. Unfortunately, carbon-dating analysis hadn't yet been invented. A century would pass before this technique could be applied to original wood excavated from beneath the island. And the results date the original project to the late sixteenth century.

McCully reported that when some of the mud in the connecting tunnel between the west shaft and the Money Pit had been cleared, the west shaft again began to flood. So bailing was resumed and "continued until 3 o'clock P.M. of Saturday when, on clearing the tunnel [of mud] again, another crash was heard in the Money Pit which [we] supposed to be the upper platform [at 98 feet in the Money Pit] falling, and immediately the bottom of the Money Pit fell to about 102 feet