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R. V. Harris

WRITTEN IN
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BY F. BLAIR

WITH REFERENCE TO ATTEMPTS MADE AT VARIOUS
TIMES TO RECOVER A TREASURE SUPPOSED TO BE
BURIED ON OAK ISLAND, NOVA SCOTIA.

There is a full, complete and authentic story of this work in typewritten form, prepared by F. L. Blair, who has been connected with the project for thirty seven years. The following is a synopsis of that story.

There is no map, no mythical story, no dream, nothing handed down from a sailor, or any other person, indicating the burial of anything on Oak Island, at any location.

The discovery of the pit was accidental. The general conditions and one spot in particular, so strongly indicated the burial of something, that the discoverers secretly opened the ground and found themselves in a well defined pit.

The story of that discovery has been handed down from one generation to another. George Vaughan of Gold River, N. S., a grandson of Anthony Vaughan, one of the three discoverers, told F. L. Blair in 1922, that his grandfather had told him that a tree, on a limb of which was attached a ship's block, attracted their attention, and they dug under the block. The pit was circular in form and twelve feet in diameter, the digging was easy inside and very hard outside, it therefore, being easy to tell when the wall of the pit was reached. At 25 feet they came to a layer of charcoal, putty and beach stones, there was also a soft spot at this point, on the west side. Mr. Vaughan also stated that his father, David Vaughan, worked at the pit when the original boring was done. He was told by his father, that he was present when a man (doubtless Pitblado) took something from the borings, rubbed it on his pants leg, and after examination, put it in his pocket and left the Island that night.

The discoverers abandoned work at thirty feet, because it became too heavy for them. The matter rested for seven years until Simeon Lynds of Onslow, N. S., happened to call at the house of Mr. Vaughan, and there heard the story. At that time it was an easy matter to investigate, and ascertain the facts, which doubtless was done, as Lynds organized a company, and financed it in and around Truro, N. S., and with the assistance of others in Halifax and Pictou counties.

The soil of the Island at this location, is a very hard, firm clay, and it must be borne in mind that no man would dig in such soil, and imagine that it had been disturbed previously, if such were not the case. Three men went to thirty feet, and subsequently, a company of men went to 95 feet, all fully aware of the fact that the pit in which they worked had previously been opened and refilled.

Another company was organized and went to work in 1849. Vaughan and Lynds, were still living and endorsed the work. Operations were conducted by various companies in 1849, 1850 - 51 - 54 - 1861 - 63 and 1866, each having the benefit of information furnished by previous workers.

The numerous companies, their rapid succession, and the persistency of the men of those years, when every opportunity was available to prove the story, indicates a firm conviction in the existence of something of value in that pit.

Work was again commenced in 1894, and a number of men were still living who had worked on the Island, and one at least, Adams A. Tupper, had worked there in 1850, 1851 and 1863. A copy of an affidavit made by Tupper is attached. This affidavit covers the story to 1865.

There is also attached, a statement made by J. W. Andrews, who when a boy, watched operations in 1849. This boy subsequently became an engineer, and his statement was made when in business in Brooklyn, N. Y., as a consulting engineer.

In addition to this, there is the story written by Judge Mather B. DesBrisay, and published in his "History of Lunenburg County." The judge says that his story of the Island is either first, or second hand, and he knew it to be true. He brings the story up to 1850.

The work done in the nineties is comparatively recent, and additional proof that something was buried in the pit, was produced. A record was kept, and there is no doubt whatever regarding the developments, and the story of the operations conducted in that period.

It is certain that a vast amount of work was done to bury something. The artificial conditions were there to be seen, and were exposed at both the pit and the shore. Coconut husks, or fibre, were brought up from the pit, and dug up at the shore. One man writes that tons and tons of it were discovered on the works. It can be dug up at Smith's Cove today.

The repeated failures to recover this treasure were due to the fact that no company of searchers could be convinced that such an elaborate piece of work had been done originally, and none of them were prepared to conduct the operations on the scale necessary to overcome the artificial conditions.

The question of the value of the treasure is often asked. This cannot, in the nature of things, be definitely answered. But the fact is known that, in previous operations, a total of 66 inches of loose metal has been drilled through. It is known that the pit, when originally opened, was 12 or 13 feet in diameter. By computing the superficial area and multiplying this by 66 inches -- five and one half feet of metal -- cubical contents can be determined which will indicate five million dollars as a very conservative appraisal. One of the most reasonable explanations of the treasure is that it is royal and church plate and valuables, known to have been removed from England and hidden during the Protectorate of Cromwell, after the execution of Charles I. This treasure simply vanished from the face of the earth and has never been recovered. Very probably it now lies buried on Oak Island. If so, its value will far exceed, for archaeological and historical purposes, anything in the way of bullion or mere precious metal. Such values, as historical relics or objets d'art, are above computation as museum material.

It will be understood that any estimate is wholly problematical; but the statement is well grounded that at Oak Island, a very great reward awaits those who successfully complete the recovery of this most mysterious and stupendous of known buried treasures.

Charles I was beheaded
on Jan 30, 1649

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AFFIDAVIT OF ADAMS A. TUPPER.

I, Adams A. Tupper, of South Framingham, Mass., having in the summers of 1850 - 51, also 1863, worked for the company then operating on Oak Island, and being familiar with the various reports and traditions concerning the work done there before my own personal knowledge, hereby make oath that the foregoing statement regarding the same is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, absolutely true.

(Signed)

Adams A. Tupper.

Middlesex, S S

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
November 23, 1893.

Then personally appeared the above named Adams A. Tupper, and made oath that the foregoing statement by him subscribed is true, before me, Clerk of the First District Court of Southern Middlesex, a Court of Record in said County and State.
Witness my hand and ~~mark~~ the seal of said Court.

(Signed)

Jos. H. Ladd, Clerk.

STATEMENT OF J. W. ANDREWS, C. E. M. E. CONSULTING ENGINEER.

The principal facts in your history are fresh in my memory, and many of the minor ones were revived on reading them. I had previously jotted down those incidents that I learned in early days, which went to confirm the belief that a treasure was buried on Oak Island; the principal value of these remembrances is in the fact that they are related by one still living who retains a clear recollection of them as they occurred at the time.

Some of the principal facts which I remember having heard from time to time since 1849 (at which time I was nine years old) when a search was being made for the treasure at Oak Island.

These were so strongly impressed on my youthful mind, and were so all absorbing in interest to the primitive people of those days, that I could never forget them, and the minor details were clearly recalled by reading the present pamphlet history of Oak Island.

First, the story as told by Messrs Smith, Vaughan and McGinnis of their discovery of the oak tree with block and tackle and chain in its crotch, and the circular cavity with grass grown over it differing from the surrounding growth, was known to be a fact and firmly corroborated.

Next, the digging a pit in this circular space which showed evidence of a previous excavation.

Again, the sinking of the pit to a depth of (as memory serves) about 90 to 110 feet when water to the depth of 30 feet was found in this pit one morning when the workmen came to resume work.

Then the efforts to bail out the water with barrels and windlass - proving ineffectual, work stopped. It was noted that the water rose and fell with the tide in the bay, but no suspicion of a tunnel was entertained or thought of.

At one period of the boring, a common pod auger was resorted to, and foreign articles were brought to the surface. The auger went through a depth of coins, as supposed from the nature of the borings, and the existence of a piece of gold with the auger.

A covering of fibre over one of the plank platforms said to be be coconut fibre - later said to be a vegetable growth from Japan or Mexico. I have a sample of it that I have had for many years, which I obtained directly at the works.

These facts were profoundly impressed on my memory at that time, and are clearly remembered and recalled today on reading the history.

The subsequent workings had always a keen interest for me. They are now matters of record and tend to confirm the belief in the existence of a treasure in Oak Island.

(Signed)

J. W. Andrews,
C. E. M. E.

1458 East Third St.,
Brooklyn, New York.
October 1st., 1916.

(Andrews was 76 yrs old in 1916)