

Chronological History of Oak Island – A historical investigation into the people and events which shaped the island’s history. By Paul Wroclawski.

Preface

The story of Oak Island is more than just a treasure hunt. One cannot reasonably understand the history of the island without understanding or incorporating the history of Chester.

Evidence gained from treasure hunting clearly shows two separate time periods of underground activity not associated with treasure hunting. This paper details the second time period of activity.

Building a picture of the community requires the greatest of investigations, which includes the most minor of details. This body of work will identify people, places, and periods which the casual observer may not immediately connect to Oak Island; however, the details add to build a complete picture of what happened.

The below information is established facts with a document to substantiate each entry.

1751		Memorial of Jonathan Prescott of Halifax –Distiller Petitions Council to shut down a competitor because their still was unsafe and may cause the town (made of wooden houses) to burn down ¹ .
1753	23 Dec	Island 28 was granted in December 1753 to a Mr. John Gifford and a Mr. Richard Smith from New York for the purpose of fishing and farming. ²
1754		Gifford and Smith were also representing the “twenty wealthiest citizens of the Province of New York”. Smith offered recommendations to Governor Lawrence for the best place to establish a settlement by the citizens from New York. This settlement did not happen as Governor Lawrence could not guarantee protection from hostile natives. Richard Gifford sought permission for a distillery in Halifax.
1756	9 May	Payzant Island Massacre ³ One of the surviving children, Phillip Payzant would become the first owner of lot #6 Oak Island ⁴ .
1759		Shoreham Grant ⁵ Below are those listed in the Reverend John Seccombe diary. They are grouped together, based upon departure location. Thomas Armstrong - wife & 4 children - <i>Casco-Bay</i> Nicholas Corney - singleman - <i>Casco-Bay</i> Israel Lovet - singleman - <i>Casco-Bay</i>

¹ PANS RG1 Vol 211 p25.

² PANS Allotment Book page 137 microfiche reel

³ The Journal of John Payzant, Acadia Divinity College and Baptist Historical Committee Lancelot Press, p15.

⁴ Chester Township Book

⁵ PANS

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		<p>Simon Floyd - singleman - <i>Halifax</i> Thomas Floyd - singleman – <i>Halifax</i> George Collicutt - wife and 1 child – <i>Halifax</i> Jonathan Prescott - son of Cap. John. Prescott - <i>Halifax</i></p> <p>John Mason - singleman - <i>Lexington</i> Abraham Bradshaw - wife & 5 children - <i>Lexington</i></p> <p>John Crook - wife & 2 children - <i>Lunenburg</i> Philip Knaut - wife & 3 children – <i>Lunenburg</i> John Lonus – <i>Lunenburg</i> Adolph Wiederholt - son Francis (8 yrs old) – <i>Lunenburg</i></p> <p>Jeremiah Rogers - wife & 7 children – <i>Hannover</i> Thomas Rogers - singleman – <i>Hannover</i></p> <p>John Records - wife & 4 children - <i>Pembroke</i> Eleazer Hamlen - wife & 3 children - <i>Pembroke</i></p> <p>Timothy Houghton - wife & 3 children. - <i>Bolton</i> Samuel Jenison - wife and one child - <i>Littleton</i> Benjamin Lary - a bachelor - <i>Piscataqua</i> Robert Melven - 4 children - <i>Concord</i> David Millar - singleman - <i>Middleberry</i> Isaiah Thomas - wife & 5 children – <i>Kingtown</i> Joseph Turner - singleman – <i>Lancaster</i> Joseph Whitemore - wife & 2 children – <i>Shrewsbury</i></p> <p>Ralph Nesham - wife & one child. Patrick Sutherland Esq'r Samuel Waters - wife & one child. Nathan Woodbury - wife and 3 children. Benjamin Bridge - wife & 3 children. Cap. John Atwood - wife & one or 2 children Bruin Romkes Comengo - wife & 2 children.</p>
		<p>“Islands of Mahone Bay” ⁶document of an unknown date; however, the document is post 1759 and transcends the Shoreham Grant period as Seccombe’s and Prescott’s name are also identified. Names on the document, and those which are missing (not yet granted) I date the ‘Islands of Mahone Bay’ document to between 1759 and 1761.</p> <p>The Shoreham grant held on microfiche at PANS, clearly shows the words ‘and island’ underlined. While it is uncertain when the words were underlined, it could indicate confirmation or clarification for the islands against other claims,</p>

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		such as the Gifford and Smith grant.
1760	14 Jul	Jonathan Prescott petitions the Council in Halifax for his bounty on 2033 Quinta of cod fish. He says he is operating a fishing fleet ⁷ .
	5 Dec	Council at Halifax – “Resolved the following persons should be licensed to keep Public Houses of Entertainment” ⁸ John Gifford’s name is at the top of a list containing 41 names. This author speculates this may have been the end of John Gifford’s association with Oak Island. There can be no doubts of Jonathan Prescott’s connection to John Gifford either through Oak Island or through supplying his entertainment house with spirits.
1762		Captain Charles Morris ⁹ delineated Mahone Bay in 1762 ¹⁰ . The island is shown as Smith’s Island after Richard Smith of New York. Gifford’s Island is also shown and still retains the same name today.
1764		John, Daniel, and Anthony Vaughn move to the Chester area. ¹¹ Josiah Marshall ¹² submitted the first plan and division of Oak Island (and others) to the proprietors on 24 Oct 1764 ¹³ . Oak Island was not yet fully drawn (meaning lottery) and notes his division line. The first map
1766	17 Jun	John Seccombe Junior drew lot #7 ^{14 15}
	9 Aug	Moses Holt drew lot #29 ¹⁶
	20 Aug	Edward Smith, the town clerk ¹⁷ , draws the first Oak Island lots, number 2 and 19 ¹⁸ .

⁷ PANS RG1 Vol 211 p107

⁸ PANS RG 1 Vol 211 p 138

⁹ This Charles Morris was the son of Charles Morris, Surveyor General of NS. Capt Morris would also become Surveyor General, and so would his son. There were three generations of Charles Morris, father son and grandson, all to become surveyor General of NS in succession.

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¹¹ Vaughan, Harold Stearns. *History and Genealogy of Vaughan Family: History and Genealogy of the Descendants of John, Daniel, and Anthony Vaughan, who emigrated to Nova Scotia 1764, 1768: and the descendants of Daniel Vaughan who moved to New Brunswick in 1796.* [Irvington-on-Hudson, NY: s.n.] n.d.

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¹³ Chester Township Papers PANS

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	20 Aug	Phillip Payzant drew for lot 6 ¹⁹ .
	24 Aug	Thomas Young drew lot 31 ²⁰
1767	17 Nov	Robert Melvin bought lot #7 from John Seccombe, paid 2 pounds
1768	22 Jun	Robert Melvin bequeaths lot #6 from Phillip Payzant ²¹ . The deed specifically states, “my good friend Robert Melvin”. This friendship was no doubt established when the 4 th Mass Militia assisted in the defense of Lunenburg from hostile natives during the Seven Years war.
1770		A great fire consumes the mainland between Chester and Lunenburg ²² .
1775	18-19 Apr	<p>Dr. Samuel Prescott completes the famous ride of Paul Revere and is the only rider of three to arrive in Lexington to warn Samuel Adams and John Hancock that British troops were marching to arrest them.</p> <p>Dr. Samuel Prescott was a FIRST cousin of our Dr. Jonathan Prescott.</p> <p>Prescott later became a surgeon in the Continental Army and joined the crew of a New England privateer. He was captured by the Royal Navy and died between November 23, 1776, and December 26 (1777?) while a prisoner in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Prescott was a descendant of the nonconformist minister the Rev. Peter Bulkeley (see Odell, Bedfordshire). His sister, Lucy Prescott, married Jonathan Fay, Jr., and via their descendant Harriet Fay and her husband James Bush, through their eldest son, Samuel Prescott Bush, they became ancestors of two United States presidents, George H. W. Bush and George W. Bush²³.</p> <p>Dr. Jonathan Prescott, b 5 Apr 1677 Concord MA²⁴, has many children, two of which are:</p> <p>Jonathan Prescott, b. 3 Jun 1702 Concord MA, and;</p> <p>Able Prescott, b 7 Apr 1718 Concord MA.</p> <p>Jonathan (1702) is the father of our Dr. Jonathan Prescott (of Chester) b. 24 May 1725, and;</p> <p>Able is the father of Our Dr. Samuel Prescott b. 19 Aug 1751.</p> <p>This makes our Jonathan Prescott of Chester as first cousin to Samuel Prescott.</p>
1775	20 Aug	John Smith is born in Boston. Son of Duncan Smith and Margaret (McLean) ²⁵ .

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²¹ Lunenburg County Book of deeds Vol p.

²² The History of Lunenburg County, Judge Des Brisay 1870, page

²³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Prescott

²⁴ <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~corbaumgen/Baumann/gp410.htm#head1>

²⁵ PANS MG 100 Vol 230 #1-42 Smith Genealogy Records

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1778	10 Apr	John Ellis purchase Oak Island lot #29 from Jeremiah Rogers, paid 5 pounds ²⁶
1783	1 Nov	Corporal Donald McInnis is discharged from the 76 th Regiment at Shelburne NS ²⁷
1784	Feb 28	Samuel Ball was listed in muster roll of 2nd battalion of King's Royal Regiment in New York.
1784	20 May	Duncan Smith of the 74 th Regiment appears in Roll of the Disbanded Men, Women and Children of the 74th Regiment present at St. Andrews, Passamaquoddy Bay Nova Scotia. ²⁸ Duncan Smith subsequently appears in Muster Roll of New Settlers at Chester, applying for and receiving His Majesty's Bounty of Provisions under the description of Loyalists, by order of the Board appointed by Major General Campbell to examine the claims of Loyalists to His Majesty's Bounty ²⁹ .
1784	18 Jun	Neil McMullen appears in the Muster Roll of Disbanded Officers, Discharged and Disbanded Soldiers and Loyalists taken in the County of Annapolis betwixt the 18th and 24th of June 1784. ³⁰
		Duncan Smith acquires Oak Island lot #24 at some point during this year. His name is listed on the deed of sale ³¹ .
1784	8 Oct	Hector McLean, biological uncle to John Smith purchases Oak Island lot #23 from William Bowie. Buildings are specifically mentioned in the deed ³² .
1785		Duncan Smith, father of John Smith dies ³³ .
1786		Martin Marshall self identifies as a Millwright in the Shelburne Tax Collection; however, annotated in red as “privately removed” ³⁴ .
1786	24 Feb	Alexander McNeil purchase Oak Island lot # 4 from John Kinghorn, paid 18 pounds (with town lot #174)
1788	3 Mar	Donald McGinnis purchases Oak Island lot #27 from James Sharpe, paid 7 pounds 15.
	10 Nov	Samuel Ball purchases Oak Island lot #26 from James Anderson, paid 8 pounds ³⁵
	1 Dec	Martin Marshall and Anne Vaughan were Legally joined in Marriage in Chester ³⁶ .
	21 Dec	Martin Marshall gains lots #9 and #10 from Anthony Vaughn Sr. via marriage to Ann Vaughn ³⁷ (niece of Anthony Vaughn Sr.)
1789		Neil McMullen marries Margaret Smith, mother of John Smith ³⁸ . From the record, “After the death of Duncan, his widow married Neal McMullen and moved to

²⁶ Lunenburg County Book of Deeds, PANS microfiche #18361

²⁷ Ward Chipman Papers MG 23 D1, Series 1 Vol 24, p 308 held at Library and Archives Canada

²⁸ Ward Chipman Papers MG 23 D1, Series 1 Vol 24, p 162 held at Library and Archives Canada

²⁹ Ward Chipman Papers MG 23 D1, Series 1 Vol 24, p 224 held at Library and Archives Canada

³⁰ Ward Chipman Papers MG 23 D1, Series 1 Vol 24, p 28 held at Library and Archives Canada

³¹ Lunenburg County Book of Deeds, PANS microfiche #18362

³² Lunenburg County Book of Deeds, PANS microfiche #18362

³³ PANS MG 100 Vol 230 #1-42 Smith Genealogy Records

³⁴ NSARM Gideon White collection MG 1 Vol. 957 No. 1517 page 23.

³⁵ Lunenburg County Book of Deeds, PANS microfiche #18362

³⁶ . Chester Township Book

³⁷ Lunenburg County Book of Deeds Vol. 2, PANS microfiche 18361

³⁸ PANS MG 100 Vol 230 #1-42 Smith Genealogy Records

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		<p>Oak Island. They had no children and their property on the island fell into the hands of Neal Smith”.</p> <p>John Smith’s first child was born on OI in 1800 and he was named Neal McMullen Smith³⁹.</p>															
1791		<p>To deal with the provincial debt the legislature passed poll tax acts in 1791, 1792 and 1793 which levied a capitation tax on all adult males, 21 years of age and older. The amount of tax was based on a person's employment and their ownership of cattle or sheep and was collected until the legislation was repealed in 1796. The legislation grouped occupations into classes and named a sum to be paid by persons falling into that class⁴⁰.</p> <p>One must keep in mind the tax man travelled the land to collect these taxes. The 1791 Chester return shows the two tax collectors travelling first to Frog Island, then to Oak Island where they record the following:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Ball, Samuel</td> <td>Farmer</td> <td>Oak Island</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marshall, Martin</td> <td>Wheelwright</td> <td>Oak Island</td> </tr> <tr> <td>McGinnes, Donald</td> <td>Farmer</td> <td>Oak Island</td> </tr> <tr> <td>McMillan, Neil</td> <td>Farmer</td> <td>Oak Island</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Munro, John</td> <td>Farmer</td> <td>Oak Island</td> </tr> </table> <p>The 1791 Poll Tax is a critical document for numerous reasons. First it shows these people were living on Oak Island in 1791 and older than 21 years of age, the names it indicates can be further cross referenced with marriage and birth records to reasonably indicate other males under 21 and females who were living on the island.</p> <p>From the Chester Township records we know Samuel Ball was still single, Martin Marshall was married to Ann (Vaughn, cousin to Anthony Vaughn Jr.), Donald McGinnis was still single, Neil McMillian and Margaret (Smith) who is the mother of a 15/16-year-old and single John Smith. His age and marital status reasonable indicate that he still lived with his mother. John Munro was married to Mary Munro, and they had one son Samuel born 8 March 1777, there are no Munro death records.</p> <p>The various records clearly indicate 5 adult males over 21 years of age, three adult females; and two teenage boys, one 15 or 16 and the other 13 or 14 depending on which date the assessment occurred.</p>	Ball, Samuel	Farmer	Oak Island	Marshall, Martin	Wheelwright	Oak Island	McGinnes, Donald	Farmer	Oak Island	McMillan, Neil	Farmer	Oak Island	Munro, John	Farmer	Oak Island
Ball, Samuel	Farmer	Oak Island															
Marshall, Martin	Wheelwright	Oak Island															
McGinnes, Donald	Farmer	Oak Island															
McMillan, Neil	Farmer	Oak Island															
Munro, John	Farmer	Oak Island															
1792	6 Nov	<p>Martin and Ann Marshall have their first daughter, Sarah. All records indicate they still live on Oak Island.</p>															

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⁴⁰ British Colonial Office CO 221. The relevant statutes are: Chapter 12, 1791; Chapter 2, 1792; Chapter 2, 1793; and Chapter 1, 1796.

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1793	17 Jun	Neal McMullen purchased lots 9 and 10 from Martin Marshall, paid 22 pounds, lot improvements mentioned and stands to reason as Martin Marshall was living on Oak Island. ⁴¹
1794	9 Sep	Donald McGinnis purchase lot #1 from Alexander Pattillio, paid 6 pound and identified on the deed as FARMER ⁴² .
1795		John Smith purchases lot #18 from Caper Wollenhaupt, 6 June 1795 paid 7 pounds 15 ⁴³ .
1798	5 Nov	Lydia Lynds, their second daughter, was born March 11th, 1778. She was married to Nathaniel Marsters Esq., November 5th, 1798. Nathaniel Marsters was the very chap who petitioned the Nova Scotia Government to set the price of gold coinage in 1806.
1799	2 May	John Smith, and Anne Floyd, were Legally joined in Marriage ⁴⁴
1804		<p>In 1804, Simeon Lynds of Onslow formed a treasure hunting company called the Onslow Syndicate. The Syndicate comprised of some thirty businessmen from Halifax, Colchester, and Pictou Counties. Although there are a few stories of how Mr. Lynds discovered the story of the Money Pit, it is widely believed that Mr. Lynds was a relative of the Vaughn family and learned of the previous workings while on a visit to the area.</p> <p>There were only three other individuals specifically in the Onslow Syndicate. They were Colonel Robert Archibald, Captain David Archibald, and Sheriff Thomas Harris of Pictou. These three men were well respected in their communities. It is interesting that all three were surveyors, and each received government monies for the commissioning of roads. Colonel Archibald laid out the township of Onslow in 1780 while being appointed Town Clerk and Justice of the Peace in the Counties of Pictou and Colchester, and he also surveyed major parts of the Meagher Grant. Sheriff Thomas Harris conducted much of the surveying in Pictou and Colchester Counties prior to becoming Sheriff for twenty years.</p> <p>Then operations started in 1804, McGinnis, Smith, and Vaughn, landowners and original discoverers, were present to show them the location of the original pit and join the syndicate in the treasure hunting operation. The aspect of their work during this period is speculation due to the different accounts about what was found and when. The most common facts concerning the digging describe the Onslow Syndicate finding the spot where the three boys stopped digging years before and then finding a layer of logs every ten feet to the 90 foot level. However, DesBrisay stated they found charcoal and putty at the thirty-foot and forty-foot level. Reports also say that bushels of coconut fiber were brought up from the Money Pit. James McNutt describes that at the fifty-foot level there was a level of smooth stones (beach stones) with figures and letters chiseled on them.</p> <p>Despite the different accounts, they reached the 90-foot level and found a large flat stone in the middle of the pit. Vaughn suggested it was found at 90-feet and was about three-foot long and sixteen-inches wide. The DesBrisay account said that the stone had rudely cut letters and figures on it and was found with the engraved side down (See the inscription stone flag for more details).</p> <p>After removing the stone and continued digging, they noticed that the center of the Money Pit was becoming soft. Digging became difficult as water was seeping into the</p>

⁴¹ Lunenburg County Book of Deeds, PANS microfiche #18362

⁴² Lunenburg County Book of Deeds, PANS microfiche #18362

⁴³ Lunenburg County Book of Deeds, PANS microfiche #18362

⁴⁴ Chester Township Book

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		<p>pit at a slow rate. The workers were removing two buckets of earth into one bucket of water. When it became late in the evening and night closing in, they probed the ground at the bottom of the pit with a crowbar as they usually did before ending work for the day. At 98-feet, a mere 5-feet below their current level, they struck a hard surface and bounded by the sides of the pit. The workmen were unsure what the material was, but some suggested it was wood or possibly a chest. The men left for the night only to return to find the pit filled with water to the 30-foot mark. After several bailing attempts with buckets, they were unable to reduce the amount of water in the pit. Robert Archibald suggested that the men tend to their farms and return in the fall to resume work on the pit.</p> <p>The syndicate purchased a pump from a Mr. Mosher of Newport during the break in work. When the men returned in the fall, Mr. Mosher setup the pump sent it to the bottom of the pit (90-feet). However, the pump burst almost immediately, and it was agreed that work would be stopped until the following year.</p> <p>Inscribed Stone Found at 90 feet. <u>Inscribed Stone Moved to John Smith's Fireplace</u></p>
1805		<p>In 1805, the Onslow Syndicate decided to dig a new shaft adjacent to the Money Pit. The new shaft was approximately 14-feet due east of the pit to a depth of 110-feet. It was the syndicate’s goal to dig a lateral tunnel under the trap and collect the treasure from underneath. The new shaft was successful to 110-feet with no water encountered, but when the lateral tunnel was dug toward the pit to the 12-foot mark, a rush of water entered the lateral tunnel and the workers barely escaped before becoming trapped by the water and debris. With all of their financial backing exhausted, the Onslow Syndicate ended their treasure-hunting venture.</p>
1814		<p>In 1814, Mr. Archibald and others of Onslow presented a bill to establish the current value of Doubloons.</p>
1821	22 Dec	<p>“And not like the Chester folks; who once dug for money, and at last got so deep that they arrived in the other world; and falling in with the devil, were glad to get away with the loss of their tools”.</p> <p>The Mephibosheth Stepsure Letters comprises a series of fictional epistles. On 22 Dec 1821, the first of twenty-five linked letters appeared in the Acadian Recorder of Halifax and concluded on 29 Mar 1823. Wrote by the Presbyterian Minister Doctor Thomas McCulloch of Pictou Nova Scotia; he would have known the Pictou members of the 1805 Onslow Company which included Sheriff Thomas Harris.</p> <p>” They are light satiric sketches of rural life at the time, and in regard to its follies, so held the mirror up to nature, that we know no work from which we can obtain a better idea of the state of society in Nova Scotia at that period.”</p> <p>The above quote is the first known reference found in a public record, which indicates treasure-hunting activity on Oak Island. The above quote is from letter six.</p>
1845	14 Dec	<p>Samuel Ball dies at age 81 - owned lots 6, 7, 8, 24, 25, 26, 30, 31, 32</p>
1849		<p>In 1849, another treasure hunting company was formed. The four main men involved in the venture were John Gammell of Upper Stewiacke, Jotham B. McCully of Truro (appointed manager of operation), James Pitblado (mining engineer and foreman), and a Dr. David Barns Lynds. Sheriff Thomas Harris was still involved by owning stock in the venture. The other two stockholders in the company were Adams A. Tupper, nephew</p>

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	<p>of John Gammell, and Robert Creelman of Upper Stewiacke. At this time only two of the original discoverers were alive. Anthony Vaughn, age 67, and John Smith gave the treasure hunters a considerable amount of information concerning the two previous treasure-hunting attempts.</p> <p>When the company arrived in the summer of 1849, Vaughn and Smith were able to show them the site of the original excavation of the Money Pit. They dug six feet and found the top of a large pump that was used in the 1804 excavation and it took the company twelve days to dig to 86-feet. At this point, there was no doubt in the minds of the company that what Simeon Lynds described was true concerning the pit.</p> <p>After working the last night, the Saturday night before Sabbath, they agreed to postpone all work until the next Monday. Sunday morning, they checked the pit and there was very little water, no more than usual. When they returned at 2:00pm, the water had risen to the same level as the bay. They bailed for a short time but found it useless.</p> <p>Having failed reaching the lower depths of the Money Pit by digging the company chose to probe the ground below 98-feet by the use of a pod auger. The pod auger was assembled on a platform just above the water line in the pit. Under the guidance of McCully and Pitblado, the company drilled five holes to approximately 106-feet, from the top of the pit. The first two westerly holes found nothing of significance; however, the last three holes found some extraordinary results.</p> <p>According to McCully, the auger hit the old platform with the next three holes. He describes the obstruction as the old platform in which the old diggers had hit with the crowbar. The boring of the first of three holes struck the platform at the 98-foot level that was five inches thick and comprised of spruce. The auger then dropped 12-inches, hit four inches of oak, and then 22-inches of loose metal pieces. The auger then hit 8-inches of oak, 22-inches of loose metal pieces, and 6-inches of spruce. After the auger traveled through the spruce it continued to dig through 7-feet of clay without hitting any rocks or debris. When the auger was brought up and the bit examined, it contained three links of an ancient watch chain. Today, the watch chain links are gone and no real proof exists that they were pulled up from the Money Pit.</p> <p>The boring of the second hole (4th hole out of 5) hit the platform at the same depth (98-feet). After passing through the spruce, it dropped 18-inches and then the bit became very jerky. It is believed that the auger came in contact with the side of an oak cask or barrel. The evidence for this was the several splinters of oak, a piece of hoop comprised of birch, and coconut fiber brought up by the auger.</p> <p>The last boring was dug in the presents of Pitblado, foreman; Dr. Lynds; John Gammell, a major stockholder; and others. According to Gammell, when the bit was retrieved the last time, Gammell saw Pitblado remove something from the auger when he thought no one was looking and put it in his pocket. Gammell confronted Pitblado, but he refused to show Gammell. Pitblado’s only response was that he would show the artifact at the next meeting of the company. Unfortunately, he never attended another meeting, but he did confide in Charles Dickens Archibald and John Pitblado, his brother, concerning the artifact and convinced them to attempt to gain ownership of the land surrounding the Money Pit for a treasure-hunting venture. Their plan was to oust the Truro Company, the treasure-hunting company at the time, by applying for permission through the government. In a strange turn of events, they were granted permission to dig for treasure, but only on “ungranted or unoccupied land”. This part of the letter, which is attached, clearly rules out the land around the Money Pit. It is still a mystery today what Pitblado pulled from the auger that evening.</p> <p>As for what else was pulled from the pit after the last boring, James McNutt said that</p>
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		<p>some copper wire, a piece of stave, some white putty, and more coconut fiber had been removed.</p> <p>Overall, the boring results proved to the company that just below the 98-foot level there were 2-3 oak casks and possibly 2 chests. This sparked great interest for the next year’s operations.</p> <p>Harris, R.V. (1967). "The Oak Island Mystery", Toronto: The Ryerson Press, pg. 23-33.</p>
1849	1 Aug	John <u>Pitbladdo</u> and Charles D. Archibald apply for a license to dig for treasure on Oak Island.
1854		<p>At this point, the Truro Company decided to dig another shaft just south of the Money Pit. The shaft was dug to 118-feet and the deepest so far. As before, the plan was to dig a lateral tunnel toward the Money Pit and allow water to enter. This shaft would be used as another facility to pump water out of the pit. The lateral tunnel was a length of 18-feet.</p> <p>When the workmen had stopped work and been having dinner, they heard a loud crash at the Money Pit. They returned to the pit to find that all the material from the Money Pit had fallen into the new shaft, along with 12 feet of mud. The bottom had fallen out of the Money Pit! Water had been reported as “bubbling like a volcano”.</p> <p>Frank Burrows wrote one account of the collapse in a letter in November 26, 1899, in which he says he met a Mr. Publicover, which was the last person out of shaft after the collapse. Supposedly, Mr. Publicover grabbed the bottom of a cask/keg that landed at his feet while trying to escape the rushing water. He said it had been painted yellow. They believe it to be from the treasure chamber.</p> <p>In another account by S. C. Fraser in a letter to A. S. Lowden on June 15, 1895, states that he was told to descend into the Money Pit to clear it out. However, after examining the condition of the pit, he refused due to its condition. Apparently, they dropped a line to check its depth and determined it to be open to 113-feet. He reported that the 10,000 board feet of cribbing was gone along with everything else in the pit.</p> <p>The collapse of the Money Pit was the last straw for the Truro Company and ended their operations due to a lack of funds in 1854.</p>
1854	26 Jun	Smith Letter-John Smith to cousin
1857	8 Aug	Liverpool Transcript article
1857	15 Aug	Liverpool Transcript article
1861	16 Sep	<p>Mr. Editor</p> <p>As he wise editor of the Witness, and the wiser correspondent of the Liverpool Transcript, have been meddling with business not their own, on Oak Island, please permit one who is acquainted with the facts of the case to state a few of them.</p> <p>The ground on the part of the island where search is made for the treasure is formed of compact clay, mixed with round lumps of stone to the depth of 110 feet, perfectly dry, excepting in one pit where the water comes in at 98 feet from the surface. Over 50 years ago, a company from Onslow took the earth from this pit, and found it was dug at some former period, and carefully filled in with earth, in which they found wood, charcoal, putty, &c. At 93 feet from the surface they probed with a crowbar, and struck a platform of wood 5</p>

	<p>feet beneath them; after which the water came in, and neither they nor any company that followed them, ever again sent a shaft so far down.</p> <p>About ten years ago a company, of which the writer was one, bored into this place with mining augers, and at 98 feet passed through wood. The following is a memorandum of one of several holes bored through this platform at 98 feet.</p> <p>1st. Six inches, spruce wood. 2nd. A space of 12 inches, through which the auger fell 3rd. Four inches, oak wood 4th. Twenty inches of a material, which by its action upon, and the sound conveyed along the auger, resembled boring through small pieces of metal -- coin, if you will — through which the auger passed by its own weight, in one turn. 5th. Eight inches, oak wood. 6th. Twenty inches, similar to the twenty above. 7th. Four inches, oak wood ; and then through spruce wood, into the clay below.</p> <p>It is asked "what did you get up out of the twenty inches which you twice went through?" Answer — nothing. The valve sledge that would bring up coin was broken in the first platform, and that used would bring up no coin, even if bored through. Samples of the earth, and specimens of the wood, it brought up without fail, but of the material within these twenty inches, it brought up nothing.</p> <p>The part of the pit occupied by this wood, &c, is deluged with water. Four shafts have been dug north, south, east, and west of the old pit, from six to ten feet deeper than we wish to go in it; none of them distant from it more than twenty, and some of them not more than ten feet, and yet no water. This season we have gone directly underneath both platforms and water, within two or three feet of them, and yet dry.</p> <p>Now, we are "deluded" enough to believe that the water comes from the sea through a tunnel cut by the art of man, because we saw the end of it at the shore, and by sinking shafts struck it twice between the money pit and the shore. At the shore there were drains laid most skillfully, and underneath, the sand covered with a kind of grass, which one of the best Botanists of the province informed us grew nowhere in the British North American Provinces. This same grass was bored up from about the platforms in the old pit; it was also found in these drains--showing the two works to be connected.</p> <p>This season two pits were prepared for bailing the water, by sinking them a few feet below the depth we wished to go in the old pit, and tunneling in at the proper height for the water, when with five gins we found we could conquer the water, and intended to go down in the old pit 98 feet; but having undermined the water and wood, before a way could be made for the water to come down to our tunnel leading to the west pit, the treasure and platforms came down with a crash, driving wood and clay before them through 17 feet</p>
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		<p>of a tunnel 4 feet by 8 feet in size, and raised this earth and wood 6 feet in what we call the west pit.</p> <p>While the water was hindered by this earth from coming through, we took out part of the earth and wood. The wood was stained black with age; it was cut, hewn, champered, sawn, and bored, according to the purpose for which it was needed. We also took out part of the bottom of a keg, but in digging down we again made way for the water, and as this pit by its position was the deepest, all the bailing of water came upon one pit, and not being able to apply enough power at this point, we could clear out no more of what fell.</p> <p>The association is now preparing a steam engine and pumps. Over one hundred shares of £5 each are issued, and the money is coming in again. Hear it, O Witness, and thou, Liverpool scribe.</p> <p>I remain, the digger.</p> <p>Patrick</p> <p>Truro, Sept. 16th, 1861</p>
1861		Unknown man dies from scalding when a boiler burst
1861	3 Apr	Oak Island Association minutes
1861	29 Aug	Oak Island Folly article
1865		Inscribed Stone moved to Halifax
1866	2 Sep	<p>NEW YORK HERALD, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1866 (Page 8, cols 1 and 2.) A REMARKABLE STORY "THE TOILERS OF THE ISLE" A Century's Search for Captain Kidd's Treasure Operations at Oak Island, Nova Scotia SINGULAR SECRET OF AN OLD SAILOR Subterranean Tunnels and Relics of the Past FOOTPRINTS OF THE SEA ROVER Discovery of Vaults of Masonry, Oak Chests, Barrels and Mysterious Chambers One Hundred Thousand Dollars Already Spent in the Search Four Million Dollars Said to be the Prize &c, &c</p>
1909		<p>In 1909, nine years after the Oak Island Treasure Company, Fred Blair finally found an interested party to resume searching for the treasure under Oak Island. Henry L. Bowdoin, an American adventurer and engineer, formed the Old Gold Salvage and Wrecking Co. in April 1909, headquarters in New York City, and planned on selling \$250,000 in shares at \$1 per share. Henry had boasted that “a \$10,000,000 treasure” was at the bottom of the Money Pit and it would be removed very easily with modern methods and machinery. One very important investor in the company was Franklin D. Roosevelt, who made several trips to the island to help search for the treasure.</p> <p>Bowdoin arrived on the island on August 27, 1909, and named his main building on the island “Camp Kidd”. Bowdoin first attempted to locate the entrance to the flood tunnel at Smith’s Cove. Interesting enough, he was unable to find it, so he moved his concentration to the Money Pit.</p>

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		<p>The pit was filled with water, so he sent a diver down to investigate the condition of the cribbing and locate the bottom. The bottom of the pit was 113-feet and the twisted cribbing was in poor shape. He decided to place a drill over the pit and attempt to locate the cement box that was discovered by earlier treasure hunters. Prior to drilling, he dropped several large charges of dynamite into the pit and then cleared out all of the broken cribbing and debris with a large steam-powered bucket.</p> <p>In the fall, he had a total of 28 drill holes bored between 155-171 feet from the top of the shaft. He recorded that between 113-130 feet the drill hit coarse gravel and sand. He then hit a 16-foot layer of blue clay, small stones, and sand. He had also found 6-10 inches of cement at 146-149 feet. Bowdoin’s finances ran out, so he and the crew headed back to New York on November 4th to sell more shares for his next attempt the following year. However, he was unable to recruit any investors. Bowdoin wanted Chappell to renew his contract, but Chappell would only sign if he proved he had adequate funds to support another year’s attempt.</p> <p>Rather than except failure, Bowdoin threatened to write a report stating that Oak Island was a hoax and ruin any further ventures on the island. Chappell refused to give in to Bowdoin, so on August 19, 1911, Bowdoin submitted an article to Collier’s Magazine entitled “Solving the Mystery of Oak Island”. In the article, Bowdoin says that his experience leads him to believe that there is not, and never was, a treasure on Oak Island. As history shows, this article did little to deter people from searching for treasure on Oak Island.</p>
1933	16 Sep	<p>On September 16,1933, William Blair found another venture to search for the treasure. Thomas Nixon from Victoria, BC signed a 1-yr agreement with Blair and formed the Canadian Oak Island Treasure Company. Although the company was authorized for \$225,000 through the Dominion Companies Act, only half, \$112,500, of the stock was made to the public. Nixon had a very difficult time selling even that amount for funds to work on the island. However, despite the lack of major funds for the venture, he started that autumn.</p> <p>Nixon’s intended plan, if adequate funds were generated, was to build a 50-75 foot circle of interlocking steel piling around the Money Pit area; therefore, blocking the water and allowing easy retrieval of the treasure. However, the plans never came close to execution. Instead, they decided to drill 14 holes around the Money Pit with some success.</p> <p>The first of 14 holes was at a depth of 170-feet. It was actually a good first shot at hitting the Money Pit and locating some interesting layers of different types of soil. At 58-feet the drill hit pink sand. They thought maybe it was remnants of red dye that was placed in the Money Pit in 1899 and mixed with sand, which makes sense. They went through blue clay, beach gravel, and from 132 to 146 feet, they found mud mixed with the clay and gravel that gave a good indication they hit the original pit.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Here is a list of other significant holes drilled by Nixon:</u></p>

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	<p>Hole 2 - 6’11” north of the Chappell shaft - At 58-ft they hit the pink sand again.</p> <p>Hole 8 - 14-ft from the Chappell shaft – below 110-ft they brought up old pieces of Oak and bits of blue and gold china below 123-ft. A large amount of wood from old cribbing was also brought up.</p> <p>Hole 10 - location unknown - hit timbers at 64-ft.</p> <p>Hole 13 - location unknown – “a bulkhead” composed of wood and cement was drilled through at 136-ft then dropped 33-ft to the 169-ft level, which consisted of mud and bits of oak “in the state of decay”. The drill hit a solid substance at the 176-ft level.</p> <p>Hole 14 – near hole 13 – same results as hole 13.</p> <p>Despite his success, his discoveries are questionable due to the fact that he was provided with information concerning the cement vault encountered in earlier ventures from the 1800’s by Blair before he started drilling. He was in desperate need of capital, which was achieved by selling stock publicly to interested investors. These are two major red flags concerning the results.</p>
1935	<p>Although Erwin Hamilton was eager to seek the buried treasure under Oak Island in 1935, Blair informed him that Gilbert Hedden currently owned the land around the Money Pit and he had the exclusive rights to dig for the treasure under his Treasure Trove License. However, Hamilton got his chance in 1938 when Hedden ended his attempt to solve the mystery. Hedden jumped at the chance to have Hamilton take over the recovery. The problem was that there were now three parties involved. Hedden owned the land, Blair had the Treasure Trove License, and Hamilton had the funds to continue the search. Eventually, an agreement was reached between the parties that allowed Blair to receive 40% of any recovered treasure, and Hamilton and Hedden receive 30%.</p> <p>In the summer of 1938, Hamilton started by drilling 58 holes into the side of the Hedden shaft at different levels. At the 119-foot level the drilling discovered decayed oak just North of the Chappell shaft. Hamilton determined that the oak they encountered was from cribbing used by treasure hunters in the 1800’s. This evidence assured Hamilton that they had found the original pit. At this time Hamilton ended his search until the following summer.</p>
1938	<p>In 1938, Edwin Hamilton took over operations from Gilbert Hedden. Through negotiation, since Blair owned the Treasure Trove License and Hedden owned the land around the Money Pit, the split for any treasure found was Blair collecting 40%, while Hedden and Hamilton would receive 30%. When the haggling was complete, Hamilton got to work in the summer of 1938.</p> <p>Hamilton started by drilling 58 holes into the side of the Hedden shaft, which is the northeastern side of the Money Pit. The holes were drilled at different depths and at 119-foot several of the probes found decayed oak wood just north of the Chappell shaft, which on the opposite side of the Money Pit.</p>
1955	<p>George Greene started work on the island in the fall of 1955 after signing a one-year lease agreement with Mel Chappell. Greene represented a group of oilmen from Texas that had heard about the mystery. Greene attempted to find the treasure/cement vault by</p>

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	drilling several holes around the Money Pit area. Over a 3-week period, he sank several 4-inch holes at various depths and at 140-feet he struck a limestone cavity above bedrock. He discovered that the cavity was approximately 40-feet high. He attempted to pour 100,000 gallons of water into the hole, but he had no idea where it went after it entered the cavity. He had planned to return the next May and finish the job, but he was unable to leave an oil-drilling contract in Louisiana and never returned to the island.
1957	In 1957, Mel Chappell was looking for a new company to take over the treasure-hunting venture and he found it with William and Victor Harman, two brothers from northern Ontario. The Harman brothers had some experience in gold prospecting; however, they lacked the funds for a large venture. That year they organized the Oak Island Exploration Co. Ltd. that proposed to issue one million shares at \$.25 each. The Harman brothers signed a one-year agreement with Mel Chappell and started work on the island in May 1958.
1958	When they arrived, they brought drilling equipment and a professional driller. They drilled several holes in the vicinity of the Money Pit to various depths with the deepest at 212-feet. By June, they reported finding coconut fiber, ship’s putty, and spruce and oak at the depth of 150-feet. When the contract was due for renewal, the Ontario Securities Commission refused to allow the company to publicly seek stock unless they were able to obtain a guaranteed five-year lease from Mel Chappell. It would have been a huge gamble for Chappell to allow a company to lease for longer than a year because of the unsure nature of the company recruiting enough investors and capital. So, without the funds necessary to continue their search, the Harman brothers ended their work on the island.
1972	P. J. Mallon discovered the Mallon triangle in 1972 while visiting the island from Belfast, Northern Ireland. The triangle consists of 4 stones and is dissimilar to the other stone triangle discovered in 1897 by Captain Welling. It was located 480 ft southeast of the Money Pit. However, there is a discrepancy about the direction in which it pointed. Some say it pointed toward the cave-in pit and others to a point more west. Harris, G. & McPhie, L. (2005) Oak Island and its lost treasure. Formac Publishing Company, p. 127