

Oak Island Times

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From The Publisher ...

Here we are with our second issue of *Oak Island Times*. The response has been great, with several hundred readers already, and lots of nice comments.

I've also received a couple of good suggestions, one being to have all stories laid out in two columns for easier reading on iPhones and other smaller reading devices. The other was to talk about what it was like being on the island, especially working with the film crew, which I will try to do along the way.

Since Captain Kidd is the subject of our feature story, maybe here is where I should be inserting some loud piratey expressions like "Ahoy, Matey," or "Avast, ye scoundrel," or the always popular – "Aaaaaarrrrrrggggghh!"

Pirates have captured the imagination of many, especially little children, for years.

But we all know real piracy was no child's play. In fact, some of the most vicious acts of pillage and plunder were carried out by these men (and a few women).

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Sometimes this was in service to their homeland, as privateers, but more often it was in service to themselves and their shipmates, as pirates.

Though the history of piracy goes far back to the earliest sea-going civilizations, we are concerned here with Captain Kidd who is said to have possibly visited Oak Island to bury his treasure.

My main suspects for the Oak Island story are principally the Alexander family of Scotland (and later London, England) and their fellow Nova Scotia adventurer, Al Strachan.

The Alexanders are portrayed by one author as having taken piracy to a new level by engaging in amphibious attacks as well. Sir William Alexander sent at least 17 ships to Nova Scotia. But that's a story for another time.

In the public imagination it is Captain Kidd who garners the most votes for burying a treasure on Oak Island. So I'll take a unique look at him in this issue, with some information you may never have read before.

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Laird Niven

— an interview —

Score two in a row for *Oak Island Times*!

This month I am so glad to feature an interview with archaeologist Laird Niven who has been a key player in the Oak Island search for the last several years, and who I met in person in 2019, on Oak Island.

OIT: Laird, I can't tell you how happy I am to have you here answering some questions for me and for your fans. The first thing I'd like to know is – How did you ever get so lucky to be hooked up with the Oak Island team searching for a possible treasure all summer long (and on an island)?

Laird: I had done some work for both Dan Blankenship and Fred Nolan about 12 or 13 years ago so my name was associated with the island. I got a call from the producers in S3 but they didn't follow up. By S4 they were obliged by the province to have an archaeologist and there I was.

OIT: Does Oak Island present a special challenge not encountered at most sites?

Laird: Now that's a complicated question but the short answer is yes. Because the island is associated with a treasure hunt the archaeology community here, for the most part, has no respect for any archaeologist who is associated with the island, no matter what the nature of the work is. So that makes life difficult. The other complication, obviously, is the show and all of the production around it. I love everyone who works on the show but filming does slow our work down considerably. That being said, we wouldn't be on the island without the show so I'm grateful for their presence. And the whole social media aspect makes life more complicated than it would be on a typical site. I'm on social media answering people's questions (happily, I should add) from six in the morning until midnight.

OIT: Does it seem odd to be working alongside heavy equipment earth movers, drill rigs, and metal detecting, compared to the typically more-focused troweling and tabulating of conventional archaeology that would represent a normal work site?

Laird: Not really. We don't usually work with a metal detector because archaeologists in this province hate them, but we work with heavy equipment all of the time.

OIT: When I visited your office in 2019, I noticed you had a nice computer setup in the Research Centre and you seemed to be entering data. Are you working to build some type of database for the "finds" that are being made, researching them for more clues, or both?

Laird: We do have a huge spreadsheet of all the non-archaeology finds and their locations but I also keep my own database catalogue of everything we find during the archaeology. Hopefully that will lead to more research in the future if there ever is time for it.

OIT: Have you been a Nova Scotian since birth? When did you first become interested in archaeology as a career? And where did you receive your education as an archeologist?

Laird: No, I wasn't born in Nova Scotia; came here when I was seven years old. I took anthropology at Dalhousie University then got a job in a camera store. Not satisfied with that I took an upgrading course in the evening. One of the guest speakers was the archaeologist from Saint Mary's University and once I heard him describe his job I knew that's what I wanted to do.

OIT: What would you say was your career highlight, an award, solving a special archeological puzzle, or making a major find?

Laird: To me the highlight was the work I did on the Black Loyalist settlement in Birchtown, Shelburne County. It literally was ground-breaking work.

OIT: Having seen and inspected so many of the finds made on Oak Island, do you have your own theory of what might have happened there, or are there several time periods where you think something significant took place on Oak Island?

Laird: I think there is little doubt that something significant and unrecorded happened on the island but the time period is a bit of a challenge. I would expect more artifacts given the work that was done but we just aren't finding enough to satisfy an archaeologist.

OIT: You had a lot of company this past season with a handful of additional archaeologists. Was it a relief to not have the weight of the entire 226 year search all on your shoulders as the final say, archaeologically speaking?

Laird: Yes, it's always nice when other archaeologists come out and support the work you're doing - it kind of validates it. But more archaeologists create even more work!

OIT: I know you're on the island (in a normal year) pretty steadily during the dig season. What keeps you busy the rest of the year? In other words, what are your hobbies, or other projects you might be working on?

Laird: My off season this year has been all Oak Island. Normally I'd be working on reports and artifact analysis but we've been thrown a curve ball this year that I can't talk about but it has made my life less than pleasant.

OIT: Is there anything special you'd like your fans to know about you or the Oak Island team before we sign off?

Laird: I think what people should know is that, beyond the show, the search is real and we literally spill blood, sweat and tears in pursuit of answers.

OIT: Thank you for being here, Laird. I think the viewers of *The Curse of Oak Island* feel you are a calming influence and a guiding voice. You've certainly added some clarity with this interview.



*James McQuiston
with Laird Niven
Oak Island Research
Centre 2019*



Captain Kidd

and the Oak Island Treasure

This painting “Captain Kidd in New York Harbor” by Jean Leon Gerome Ferris (ca. 1920) shows William Kidd welcoming a young woman on board his ship. Other men and women crowd the deck as another woman steps aboard.

When you think of pirates, what is the first thought that comes to mind? Pirates of the Caribbean? Really?

Let me ask it a different way. When you think of pirates and Oak Island, who comes to mind?

For most people it’s Captain William Kidd, one of Scotland’s most infamous pirates who is often remembered for his trial and execution for piracy.

William Kidd was born in Dundee, Scotland in 1645. Often traveling to New York to load up on supplies, this Scottish pirate met the bonny Sarah Bradley Cox Oort there.

Sarah was an English woman in her early twenties who had already been twice widowed and was rumored to be one of the wealthiest women in New York. The couple soon wed and had two daughters, Elizabeth and Sarah.

Life on the high-seas came with a price and was by no means an easy way to feed a family. There was no protection from the elements and sometimes there was no wind to move the ship. Sometimes there was an even stronger force on the opposite side wanting to “run you through.”

Despite his well-known reputation as a pirate, some would say Captain Kidd was unsuccessful.

As the story goes, it took Kidd a long time to capture his first ship. Hence his crew was without money while supplies were still needed for the ship to remain afloat.

As it became apparent Captain Kidd's tactics were failing, he became desperate to cover his costs. But once again, he failed to attack several ships when he had ample opportunity. As a result, the ranks started to question his authority to lead them.

The ship's gunner, Mr. William Moore, challenged Captain Kidd's resolve.

Consequently, the man received a bucket to the head and was killed by the fiery captain. While admiralty law gave captains a ton of leeway to use violence against their crew, murder was not a normal thing.

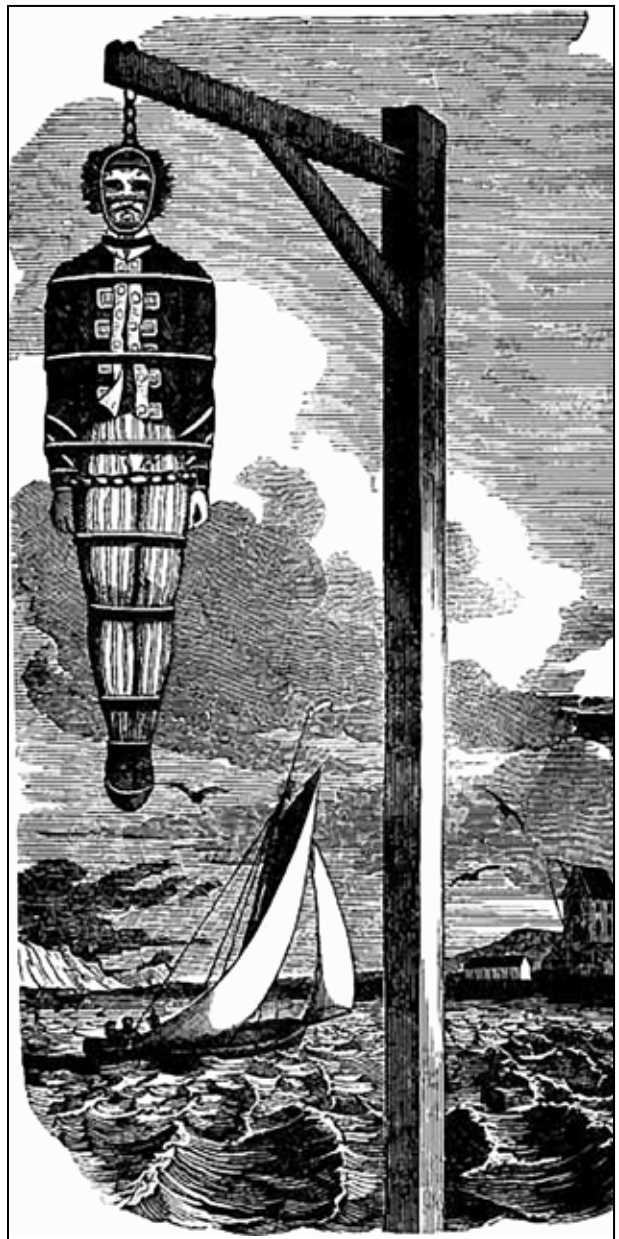
This may be the only man this so-called ferocious pirate ever killed, and yet it seems as though it was an accident.

Prior to returning to New York, Captain Kidd discovered he was a wanted man. Realizing his ship was a marked vessel, he hid his craft in the Caribbean and continued to New York aboard another sloop.

He was eventually captured and he and his wife, Sarah, were both imprisoned. He was found guilty on all charges and was hanged in 1701.

Kidd met his fate on the English docks at a place called Wapping, sometimes referred to as Wapping Old Stairs – the stairs being the ramp and stairway leading up to the higher elevation of the town, away from the dock area.

The little neighborhood above the docks was rife with pubs and inns. It wasn't uncommon for young men to be shanghaied from these pubs after a bit too much to drink. Wapping was also notorious for smuggling, especially the bringing in of outlawed Irish linens and woolens to the English market by way of the Isle of Man.



The displaying of Captain William Kidd

This is likely why Kidd was hung on the Wapping docks to send a message to pirates, smugglers and shanghaiers, all at the same time.

The first attempt to hang Kidd failed, but he was strung up a second time. His body was later displayed in an iron cage over the River Thames for the next three years (shown above) as a warning to all who would break the king's laws.

The belief that Captain Kidd left buried treasure “somewhere” contributed to Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Gold Bug*, Washington Irving’s *The Devil and Tom Walker*, and Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Treasure Island*, just to name a few pieces of literature.

Of course, Kidd has also been a leading contender for the treasure thought to be buried on Oak Island.

In fact, a lot of the earliest reporting about the supposed treasure is that it was a treasure buried by Kidd.

Gilbert Hedden owned the island in the early 1930s and spent a lot of time and money diligently searching and researching Oak Island. In one of his letters to Franklin Delano Roosevelt he mentions that he felt the Money Pit could have been constructed as early as 1635. It pleased me to hear of this date, since I had independently and historically come up with the date of 1632 – a difference of only three years, in a treasure hunt that has lasted for hundreds of years.

I was equally pleased to read another letter from 1967, also written by Hedden, in which he sets 1630 as the approximate date for the Money Pit build.

My 1632 date lands right in between the two dates of 1630 and 1635 as proposed by an owner, researcher and searcher of Oak Island. Hedden also helped to connect the pirate Captain William Kidd to the island.

Hedden wrote: “I am very sure that Captain Kidd had nothing to do with the construction on Oak Island, but I do believe that he learned of it and gambled his life, or offered to, for an attempt to find it.”

Hedden had spent a long time in England chasing down Captain Kidd’s history, and further remarked: “My only conclusion is that Kidd, in his wanderings, learned of a very valuable cache, but he was uncertain as to its exact location or description.”

I couldn’t let this lie, and began looking into whether there was any way Captain Kidd could have known about the Strachan – Alexander treasure involved in my own Oak Island theory.

Yes there is!

Kidd is usually said to have been born in the town of Dundee, Scotland, in 1654. His father was John Kyd, a sailor who was lost at sea.

Dundee is situated almost exactly half-way between Stirling, Scotland, and Aberdeen, Scotland, roughly 60 miles in each direction. This is very significant.

A man named Alexander Kyd held land in Aberdeen in 1492. By 1520, the Kyd family began being recorded in the nearby town of Dundee, and continues to be, up to the current day, as both Kyd and Kidd.

In 1530, an Alexander Kyd, possibly the one mentioned above, was the canon, or high priest, connected to the cathedral at Stirling, Scotland.

William Alexander was Earl of Stirling, and his family had lived near Stirling for a few hundred years before William Kidd was even born. They would have lived there during the time that Alexander Kyd was the special or high priest at the Stirling Cathedral.

I believe that a good part of the treasure hidden on Oak Island was from a treasure stolen by Al Strachan, partner to William Alexander. In October 1622, Al Strachan robbed the Earl Marischal of Scotland, the top law officer, of his fortune – a personal fortune probably unmatched by any other person in Scotland at that time.

As I explained in great detail in my *Oak Island Knights* book, Strachan’s trial was delayed twice, and he eventually received a full pardon from the king. He was to be tried before the Privy Council.

William Alexander was a major leader of the king's Privy Council and proprietor of Nova Scotia from 1621 until 1632, when his settlers were chased out by the French.

Evidence seems to show that Strachan was pardoned in a high level conspiracy leading to him becoming a partner to William Alexander, being named a Knight Baronet, and to him donating at least a share of his ill-gotten plunder to the cause of financing Nova Scotia.

There are many instances showing William Alexander lamenting about not being able to raise enough funds for his venture, and this may have led him to take the drastic action of joining up with a known thief. Strachan was pardoned in 1625, and in that same year Sir William Alexander began the Knights Baronet of Nova Scotia.

Strachan was part of the commission to recruit Baronets, and signed a letter to help finance one of Alexander's ships.

Importantly, the Strachan family lived in Aberdeen all the way up to the time that at least three Strachan brothers moved to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The name is still common in Aberdeen, Scotland, today. It is also common around Halifax, Nova Scotia, today, and the kicker is that a man named John Strachan owned what are now known as the Nolan Cross lots, on Oak Island, from 1841 until 1857, during the time of the Truro Company. This group was helped by John Smith and Anthony Vaughan, two of the original diggers of the Money Pit (back in 1795), who were then in their seventies.

Dundee, while being located only about 60 miles from Strachan's hometown of Aberdeen, is also located only about 40 miles from Benholm Castle, which was mentioned specifically in a list of treasure stolen by Alexander Strachan.

The current owners of Benholm Castle discovered a secret tunnel that led a distance away from the castle, and local lore says it was used by smugglers and possibly involved monks.

Perhaps related to this story, a church in Storrington, England, received pews of wood from Nova Scotia, in commemoration of the role they played in spiriting wealth to Nova Scotia for "safekeeping." This came from an email forwarded to me by the Oak Island team. This church is connected to a specific Knight Baronet of Nova Scotia, and I am still investigating this story.

One scenario could be that the treasure Strachan stole was smuggled out of Benholm Castle through the secret tunnel, and taken to the nearby sea coast. From there it may have been taken by ship to Storrington, where it was hidden by monks until William Alexander's ships sailed to Nova Scotia with it.

Alexander's flagship, the *Eagle*, was anchored in the Thames River, basically just around the corner from Storrington. The records of the fleet's voyage say that, just before the trip began, the ships were anchored at the Dunes, which is a safe harbor along the coast of the English Channel, and not far from Storrington.

All of this needs further research, but does present an enticing answer as to how and where the Strachan stolen treasure made its way to ships bound for Nova Scotia.

One interesting point to be added here is that William Alexander received a "safe passage" letter from the king for his four ships. This letter obviously would do him no good once they left the English coastline, as no French or Spanish ship was going to honor it, and there was no appreciable British presence in Nova Scotia at the time.

But this letter would have been of great value if a stop was made near Storrington to load a secret cargo.

In an area so small to include Aberdeen, Benholm Castle, Dundee, and Stirling, it is likely that just about everyone living nearby would have heard of this major robbery of the Earl Marischal of Scotland, possibly the richest, and certainly one of the most powerful men in all of Scotland.

The fact that his wife, 30 years his junior, was also stolen, makes this an even more scandalous crime.

Imagine that in the region in which you live someone stole a massive treasure and the younger wife of one of the most powerful men around, and got away with it literally "Scot free." It is likely that you, and everyone around you, would know of it, and that the story might be told for generations to come.

If Hedden was correct, it is entirely possible that William Kidd heard of the Strachan treasure, stolen only a generation before his birth, and also of the Nova Scotia adventure, led by William Alexander, the Earl of nearby Stirling, a town where Kidd's ancestor, or at least a forefather, once served as the high priest.

I've said, for a long time, that I think a few families knew a lot about the treasure, and a lot of families knew a little about the treasure.

Hedden is saying, in his 1967 letter, that he thinks William Kidd: ...'learned of it (the treasure) and gambled his life, or offered to, for an attempt to find it."

Hedden further states: "I also believe Kidd and his followers searched for the island but failed to locate it."

All of this evidence notwithstanding there is still a lot of interest in Captain Kidd as pertains to Oak Island.

The original story by early settlers involves a dying sailor from the crew of Captain Kidd who admitted that a treasure worth £2 million had been buried on the island. According to the most widely held discovery story, Daniel McGinnis found a depression in the ground around 1795 while he was looking for a location for a farm. McGinnis, who believed that the depression was consistent with the Captain Kidd story, sought help with digging.

With the assistance of two men identified as John Smith and Anthony Vaughan, Jr., he excavated the depression hoping to find Kidd's treasure!

One author wrote a long newspaper essay in 1929 insisting that Kidd was not even a pirate, but rather a patsy taken down by political enemies.

Charles B. Driscoll writes: "The truth about Captain Kidd has been known to historians and scholars for more than a century. In fact, the truth about the case was known to many of Kidd's contemporaries and was handed down by them to their children."

Driscoll lays out a story of how Kidd was commissioned to capture pirates but instead found himself embroiled in politics and powerful people who set him up for his final demise.

He was first convicted of killing the mutinous sailor, which no one seems to argue he did. But his second conviction of piracy is the one that brought him the death penalty and according to Driscoll: "I have examined the complete record of Captain Kidd's trial. I have it before me as I write. It is a monstrous exhibit of human injustice."

There is a whole new angle to Captain Kidd that I have discovered and it involves Vincent Astor, heir to the fortune of his father, John Jacob Astor VI.

John Jacob Astor, fourth in line of that name, died on the *Titanic*, and his son Vincent is said to have been an investor in the Oak Island search, however there is no actual proof that I know of.

He did correspond with Gilbert Hedden, and D'Arcy O'Connor, in a Reddit post, speculated that those letters between Astor and Hedden might be in Dan Blankenship's basement collection. Perhaps Doug Crowell can find them.

What's particularly interesting about the Astor connection is that Vincent was attending Harvard, in 1912, at the time of his father's death.

Franklin Roosevelt started at Harvard College (the precursor to Harvard University) in 1900. He had only been in school for a few weeks when his father, who had suffered from a heart ailment for the previous decade, also passed away.

FDR, after receiving his undergraduate degree in 1903, returned for a year of graduate work; more important, he became editor of Harvard's student newspaper, the *Crimson*.

Vincent Astor did not begin at Harvard until 1911 and left the following year upon his father's death, when he inherited 75 million dollars.

Both men attended Harvard and both of their fathers died while they were at school. It is not known exactly how they became friends but in the quiet before World War II, Astor sailed his yacht *Nourmahal*, in 1938, to Japan on a secret civilian mission for President Franklin D. Roosevelt to gather intelligence on the Japanese naval operations around the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Ocean. As he had done with his yacht *Noma* in the First World War, he lent his yacht *Nourmahal* to the Coast Guard for service in the Second World War.

In World War II, Astor again served in active duty with the Navy as he had done in WW I. He was called to duty with the rank of commander and given assignment as Area Controller for New York. In this position he coordinated merchant convoys leaving the city and provided informal intelligence work for President Roosevelt.

The fact that Vincent Astor and Franklin Delano Roosevelt were acquaintances, if not close friends, is well established.

Astor is said to have believed that the Ark of the Covenant was buried on Oak Island, whereas Roosevelt seems to have believed it was the French Crown Jewels.

But here's a twist no one would have expected. The first John Jacob Astor became rich through the fur trapping and selling business, or so the story goes.

In an article written and printed privately in 1898, it was revealed that there was the distinct possibility that the original John Jacob Astor made his money not on fur trading but on the treasure of Captain Kidd!

As this story goes, an employee of Astor lived on Deer Isle in Maine. His transactions with Astor were small potatoes, as were Astor's own deposits and sales transactions.

The owner of Deer Isle, the influential Mr. Frederick Law Olmsted (who had created Central Park in NYC) had discovered that Astor's only bank account in the period he was examining was with the Manhattan Company. Fortunately, the books of the bank had been preserved from the very beginning, so Olmsted was able to obtain a complete and incontrovertible history of all of Astor's financial transactions from the opening of his account in 1798.

The business of both Astor and the bank was small in those days.

Astor's total deposits in the beginning did not exceed much beyond \$4,000 a year; and when he shipped furs abroad or made sales to local dealers, the books of the bank showed virtually the whole and complete transaction. For example, entries like these were of frequent occurrence:

- Cr J. J. Astor \$33.00, proceeds drafts sale 40 muskrat, 4 bear, 3 deer and 12 mink skins.

- Cr J. J. Astor \$131, proceeds of draft on London for \$26,10s for sale of 87 otter skins, 46 mink and 30 beaver pelts.

The account of the thrifty furrier showed only the slightest variation during the last three years of the eighteenth century. In 1799, for example, the aggregate of his deposits for the year was no more than \$4,011.

But in 1801, Mr. Astor paid to his employee who lived on Deer Isle, one Jacques Cartier, "in settlement to date" (although the annual dealings between the two men had never previously exceeded five hundred dollars) the unprecedented sum of five thousand dollars.

Astor's own deposits in his Manhattan Company bank account jumped, that same year, to more than half a million dollars (over ten million dollars in today's money).

The Olmstead family did some detective work and found that apparently Cartier had found a strong box on Deer Isle which was riveted shut and which he sold, unopened, to Astor for five thousand dollars.

They actually found the box after a lot of detective work and it had the initials W.K. inscribed on the top of the lid (W.K. assumed to be William Kidd or Captain Kidd).

So their investigation seemed to show that a strong box with "W.K." inscribed on the lid was found on Deer Isle, sold to the original John Jacob Astor, a middle class fur trader, for \$5,000 and when opened, it contained a half million dollars which Astor deposited into his once meager bank account, to become the foundation for his wealthy empire.

Certainly, this legend would have stayed in the Astor family to reach Vincent Astor and may have fed his interest in the Oak Island treasure, especially with all the talk that it was also a treasure once belonging to Captain Kidd.

Roosevelt was also known to sail the Bay of Fundy looking for pirate treasure.

Perhaps the stories of the Ark of the Covenant (Astor's theory) and the Crown Jewels of France (Roosevelt's theory) were simply invented to cover what Astor and Roosevelt thought they were really looking for – Captain Kidd's treasure.

As I point out in my *Oak Island And The Mayflower* book, Roosevelt may also have been more than aware of the William Alexander story, and the Strachan treasure. FDR descended from at least four Plymouth Colony residents including some who signed the **Mayflower Compact**. It was to protect the Plymouth Pilgrims that William Alexander was first given Nova Scotia.

Roosevelt also had as a forefather, Sir Thomas Temple, Knight Baronet, who it is proven owned the area known as Mirligaiche, which I believe I have shown included Mahone Bay and Oak Island.

I have several maps and written records that indicate this, which I have published in my Oak Island books.

The truth may never be known about Kidd and Oak Island but it certainly is entertaining to speculate and investigate.

How Does That Work?

- Archaeology



A typical dictionary defines archaeology as "The study of human history and prehistory through excavation of sites and the analysis of artifacts and other physical remains."

The discovery of items on Oak Island has been far less than conventional. Many items were found by accident, some by various drilling, dynamiting and digging operations, and some by metal detecting.

It has only been recently that true archaeological science has been involved, beginning with the addition of Laird Niven to the Oak Island team.

The archaeological record of Nova Scotia goes back a very long way to the Debert Palaeo-Indian Site, which is located in Colchester County, Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia Museum lists the site as a "Special Place under the Special Places Protection Act." The site, which is about 100 miles (170 km) from Oak Island, is the oldest archaeological site in Nova Scotia!

The Debert site is also significant to North American archaeology because it is the most north-easterly Palaeo-Indian site discovered to date. It also provides evidence of the earliest human settlements in eastern North America, which have been dated to 10,500–11,000 years ago. Additionally, this archaeological site remains one of the few Palaeo-Indian settlements to be identified within the region of North America that was once glaciated (covered with glaciers).

So when we think of people being on Oak Island a long time ago, meaning A.D. 1200 or 1600, we quickly realize that someone could have been there a long, long time before that.

The Debert site was first discovered in August 1948, by E.S. Eaton and his wife who first noticed an abundance of blueberries growing in the area. Wind erosion had exposed a small number of artifacts on the bulldozed surface of the parking lot.

Eaton, who worked at Truro Agricultural College, had also incorporated archaeology in agricultural investigations, and so he collected artifacts from the site for several years.

In 1955, Eaton contacted R.S. MacNeish to inform him about the site in Debert. MacNeish, who then served as the chief archaeologist at the National Museum of Canada, recorded the location of the site for further investigation after examining some of the specimens.

Eaton would later sell his collection of specimens from multiple sites in eastern Canada to a collector from Kentville, Nova Scotia, named W.A. Dennis. This collection was later stored at Mt. St. Vincent University following the death of Dennis, who left the collection to the university in his will. After reading Dennis's note in the *American Antiquity*, Nova Scotia provincial archaeologist J.S. Erksine visited the site with E.S. Eaton to obtain additional material.

The collection was later allocated to the Nova Scotia Museum of Science in Halifax Nova Scotia.

In September 1962, D.S. Byers, the director of the R.S. Peabody Foundation for archaeology in Andover, Massachusetts, conducted a thorough test excavation that revealed undisturbed areas of the deposit.

Following the thorough archaeological testing, Byers developed plans for a full scale excavation project in the summer of 1963 and again in the summer of 1964 with a larger group of excavators. These full scale excavations were directed by George Macdonald from the National Museum of Man. The Debert Paleo-Indian site eventually became listed as a National Historic Site of Canada in 1972.

In late autumn of 1989, employees at the Department of Lands and Forests Tree Breeding Center in Debert noticed that their stumping operations could have been disturbing archaeological remains.

Archaeologists from the Nova Scotia Museum and Saint Mary's University checked the area following the concerns expressed about possible disturbance.

During this check they discovered two new Paleo-Indian sites, which are now named Belmont I and Belmont II.

The majority of artifacts discovered at the Belmont sites were virtually identical to those found at the original Debert site, which suggests that the sites had possibly been occupied during the same time period. Evidence of First Peoples settlement at the Debert Palaeo Indian site has been found through examination of stone tools that are distinctive to Palaeo-Indian tool kits. Radiocarbon dating has determined that these distinctive stone tools existed approximately 10,600 years ago!

Factors that enter into determining a site's relevance to history, its approximate date and the people who inhabited are aided by a number of factors.

One of the best helps available is carbon dating, which we discussed in last month's issue of *Oak Island Times*. Of course, this can only be used on items that once were alive, like trees, animal skin, etc.

Some metals can be dated based on content, especially if smelted over a wood fire versus a coal fire. The amount of additional alloys in the metal can also pinpoint its origin and date.

Other ways to determine what is being found are a not-always-simple comparison to previous found items.

The *in situ* aspect to a find can be very helpful. *In situ* literally means "situated in the original place."

What an item found in this situation can tell the archaeologist is how it relates to other items found in the area, but also how its carbon dating can help date the entire site, and how it might tell the story of the site based on its likely origins.

In one case, Dr. Ian Spooner was able to date a piece of wood stuck under a dirt road to as old as 1619, leading him to announce that major work had taken place in the swamp somewhere around the early 1600s, and in this past season a T-square was found in the swamp that dated to as old as 1632, which is my target date for the Oak Island mystery to begin.

Another date that excited me was for a piece of axe-cut wood found in the Money Pit area "at depth" (many feet underground) that dated to as old as 1626.

There are many dates and many artifacts. Laird Niven and Steve Guptil are recording them and plotting some finds on a map.

I made the suggested a few years ago that every find, old or new, be entered into a database to look for big-picture patterns. This is similar to what they are doing now, but it is a major project, with massive data.

The Oak Island Research Centre has helped a lot. The year they brought that in Rick had earlier told me that they were going to build a huge archive center perhaps costing as much as a million dollars. He said there were items kept by families all over the area that would gladly donate them if there was only a place to house them all.

Then Zena died.

She had a large collection of research which she left to Rick and it had to be moved. Next thing I knew they brought in the “tiny house” type archive building so that records could start being filed away.

The building is not that large and they have other measuring devices located in there along with research computers, so things are a little squeezed in. I think if Covid hadn't hit, they might have expanded that building a little more last year.

I think eventually it will be expanded just out of necessity. There is just so much research plus Dan Blankenship's records, and much more.

Perhaps the most interesting find from Oak Island is the lead cross detected by Gary Drayton in the presence of Rick Lagina. Even though the lead from the cross has been associated with a French mine from around the 1300s, there was a similar cross found in New Brunswick at a location inhabited by some of my principal theory characters. It was dated, based mostly on the history of the area, to the 1600s.

The cross similar to the one found on the beach at Oak Island was discovered at the Fort La Tour archaeological site in New Brunswick. It was dated to the 1600s, at the time of the construction of the fort.

Similar crosses, same people? Perhaps.

I also have a possible explanation for the wide variety of dates on items found in the swamp.

Isaac's Point is what is known as a sand spit. There are a few other islands in Mahone Bay that have the same feature. It is caused by currents carrying sand and beach materials outwards away from the island creating a point.

There is likely one main cause of these currents and that is the tide. Storms could also add to this effect.

Tides in Mahone Bay are generally five to six feet. Depending on the weather, this is certainly enough water to carry items from nearby shipwrecks, over even shipwrecks off the coast. Keep in mind, they have come and gone every day of every year for millennia.

The one difference between Oak Island and most of the other islands that have spits is that it is backed right up against the mainland shore.

Items floating in on the tide or even on a storm can continue by other islands, but in the case of Oak Island, they would likely bounce off the mainland shore and have no place to go except back out into the bay, except that many could have been trapped over the centuries by the swamp, being buried in the muck.

We know there is at least one shipwreck within sight of Oak Island and I was finally given its approximate location last year. There could be many wrecks out in the bay or in the ocean just off the bay (and maybe in the waters just off Oak Island) that have been feeding items into the sieve of Oak Island century after century.

How the nearby shipwreck became known is that Rick had asked me, over the phone, if I would consider a meeting with a life-long sea captain and treasure hunter from Nova Scotia. His name is Robert MacKinnon. I agreed.

Wow, am I glad I did!

MacKinnon was a salty sea dog if ever there was one and we spent two hours talking about his life experiences on the seas around Nova Scotia. Fascinating!

The Captain had not revealed the location of a ship he dove on back in the 1970s because, as he told me, “Treasure hunters don’t tell where the treasure is; otherwise they won’t get it.”

But, during our conversation, he verified the likelihood of my theory and added to it in ways that were very helpful.

In the end I asked him point blank where the sunken ship was. But he wouldn’t budge on the answer. Late last year he sent me an email with its approximate location. I’m sitting on that information out of respect for his concerns.

Overall, archaeological restrictions in Nova Scotia are pretty tough. In a 2014 interview Marty Lagina and Craig Tester helped explain the situation. Marty stated: “It took us years to get what’s called the Treasure Rights. Canada had something called a Treasure Trove Act—which was a thorny mess. We only got that sorted out two years ago.”

Craig added: “The Canadian government actually got rid of the Treasure Trove Act, so we didn’t have any way of getting a license to excavate at first. The government replaced the Treasure Trove Act with what’s called the Oak Island Act. Only after that was enacted could we apply for licenses.”

Marty further explained: “With the Treasure Trove Act, you could apply for licenses to dig anywhere. Now, the only place you can have the rights to treasure—to my knowledge, anyway—is on Oak Island, pursuant to the Oak Island Act.”

From what I’ve been told, even if you were just putting in a garden somewhere in Nova Scotia and you happened to trip

over some artifacts, the rules are you need to report it and will likely be charged for a reasonably expensive archaeological dig in your own backyard.

On one hand, this makes sense since Nova Scotia is so rich in history. On the other hand, you have to wonder how many gardens just got planted over a valuable site to avoid the hassle.

Typically an archaeological adventure will be separated into five basic steps:

- Selecting the Site.
- Conducting Research.
- Excavating the Site.
- Cleaning and Cataloguing Artifacts.
- Reporting the Results.

Sites are chosen through research and when accidental discoveries are made. But before a dig begins land borders, ownership, past dig attempts and area history are all considered.

Once the research and paperwork is in order, the site is usually divided into a grid system, with each area assigned its own unique name. Within the grid, smaller marked off areas are often utilized. In some case, small amounts of samples taken at various levels are run through a sluice sorting process looking for traces of bones, beads, pottery or any other small bits that might tell a story. It is painstaking work!

Typically, larger finds are catalogued, photographed *in situ* and either left in place or sent off to a museum for further study and display.

Care needs to be taken where remnants of the bodies of the deceased may be present. This sometimes restricts further exploration until a determination can be made on whether to proceed.

In all cases, archaeology is extremely detailed work, so patience is a must.

Who's Who? Roosevelt

Perhaps no other name is quite as impressive for an Oak Island treasure hunter as that of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who followed in his own grandfather's footsteps by showing an interest in Oak Island, and who joined with Henry L. Bowdoin in the Old Gold Salvage Company, beginning about 1909.

Franklin's maternal grandfather was Warren Delano Jr., an investor in an earlier Oak Island excavation.

Below is a fairly famous photo taken on Oak Island in 1909. The man in the white shoes with a pipe is Franklin Roosevelt, future President of the United States. Standing just to his left (with the bow tie) is Henry Livingston Bowdoin who often went by the nickname Harry.



Franklin Delano Roosevelt and friends on Oak Island

The use of both Harry and Henry has caused some confusion but, as it turns out, Harry is simply a form or nickname of Henry, especially in Great Britain.

The backgrounds of Roosevelt, Delano and Bowdoin trace back to the Plymouth Colony, and it was this settlement that was meant to be protected under an agreement where Sir William Alexander received the charter to Nova Scotia in 1621, one year after the ship *Mayflower* arrived in New England. Alexander called his new land "New Scotland" which, in Latin, came out as Nova Scotia, a name that has stuck for the last 400 years, as of this writing.

The *Mayflower* landed near Cape Cod 400 years ago, last year (2020), and its male passengers signed a document called the **Mayflower Compact**, which is thought by many to be the first American document.

Aboard the *Mayflower* were several ancestors of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, arguably the most famous Oak Island investor/searcher – John and Elizabeth Howland, Richard and Elizabeth Warren, John and Joan Tilley, Degory Priest and

Francis Cooke.

Cooke's nephew, Phillipe de la Noye, did not sign the compact or come over on the *Mayflower*, because he was originally a passenger on the *Speedwell*, which had to turn back due to a leak, and so he made it to Plymouth the following year. The name de la Noye eventually became Delano, the maternal side of FDR's family.

Many of the ancestors of FDR would have had the opportunity to know of the goings on in Nova Scotia.

Their lives literally depended on William Alexander's success in creating a buffer between the French in Canada and the fledgling community of Plymouth, in New England.

Sir William Alexander was one of the investors and councilmen of the Plymouth Colony and was, at the time, also highly placed in the court of King James. Based on *The Freemasons Repository*, *The Documentary History of the State of Maine*, *Cracroft's Peerage*, and *The Peerage of Scotland*, William Alexander was a member of the Great Council of Plymouth.

I have documents and quotes in a few of my books that show that Nova Scotia was meant to be just such a buffer, and William Alexander was chosen to lead it.

Alexander refers to his first connection with the Nova Scotia scheme, in 1624, when writing: "Being much encouraged hereunto by Sir Ferdinando Gorges (pronounced George) and some others of the undertakers for New England, I showed them that my countrymen would never adventure in such an enterprise, unless it were, as there was a New France, a New Spain and a New England, that they might likewise have a New Scotland."

Alexander sold an area called Mirligaiche to one of the French leaders in an effort to create an alliance.

I was able to determine that Mirligaiche was a Gaelic word actually meaning "part of an alliance."

Why this matters is that I have found a number of maps and written records that more than indicate that Mirligaiche included Mahone Bay and Oak Island.

Doug Crowell and Sylvie Delorme were instrumental in bringing me to this conclusion by provided some initial suggestions and information.

This area was owned by four successive Knights Baronet in a row. The first was William Alexander. The second and third were the men he deeded it to in 1630, Claude de la Tour and his son Charles.

Much later, Charles claimed possession of it and sold it to Thomas Temple.

All four of these men were Knights Baronet of Nova Scotia. King Charles I granted the title to Alexander and the two La Tours. His son Charles II granted the title to Thomas Temple.

What I have just found out, with help from a colleague, Ted Erskin, is that Thomas Temple sent an ore sample of silver back to England in 1659 to be assayed, requesting a certificate of purity.

The fact that a Knight Baronet of Nova Scotia and likely the owner of Oak Island (Thomas Temple) was having silver assayed (which was found at a fort that I believe was built by Charles de la Tour, also a Knight Baronet and one-time owner of Oak Island) seems important since some amount of silver appears to be buried near the Money Pit. The kicker is that Thomas Temple was a forefather to Franklin Roosevelt!

FDR actually descends from an elder Thomas Temple of the same family. The lineage is discussed at length in my book *Oak Island And The Mayflower*.

Roosevelt's family often vacationed at a spot just across the bay from where Alexander's first settlers lived (Port Royal, Nova Scotia). He had spent many days of his youth sailing the Bay of Fundy, sometimes actually looking for pirate loot.

FDR kept in contact with Oak Island searchers all of his life, especially Gilbert Hedden with whom he exchanged letters.

FDR once wrote to Duncan Harris: "It would do both you and me good to go back to Oak Island for a month!" – Amen –

Knights Templar

IN STEPS SCOTLAND!

Part Two



On February 10, 1306, Robert the Bruce and John Comyn, Lord of Badenoch, met at Greyfriars Kirk in Dumfries. There was no love lost between them as each was an heir to the recently-vacated Scottish throne.

Bruce had called the meeting and the two left their swords outside as they entered the church. A fight broke out before the high altar and Bruce stabbed "Red Comyn," as John was commonly known.

When Bruce stepped from the church and told his men what had happened, Roger de Kirkpatrick said "You doubt. I will make sure."

Kirkpatrick walked into the kirk to make sure that the Red Comyn was dead. Comyn's uncle was also slain by Bruce's supporter, Sir Christopher Seton. Keep in mind that the Kirkpatrick and Seton names both appear on the Knights Baronet of Nova Scotia list.

Years later, David Seton would become Grand Prior of the Knights of St. John in Scotland. Also, a Seton knight accompanied Bruce's heart to the Holy Land, along with a Sinclair, a Gordon and other recognizable names. These names also appear on the Knights Baronet of Nova Scotia list.

It is impossible to know what really happened in Greyfriars Kirk that day. Even chroniclers of the time disagreed, and for hundreds of years historians have argued about what really took place.

Had Bruce planned to murder Comyn and seize the throne? Did Red Comyn draw his dagger first?

A letter from the English court to the Pope states, "Bruce rose against King Edward as a traitor, and murdered Sir John Comyn, Lord of Badenoch, in the church of the Friars Minor in the town of Dumfries, at the high altar, because John would not assent to the treason which Bruce planned... to resume war... and make himself King of Scotland."

Regardless of his actual intent, Bruce's murder of John Comyn resulted in his total excommunication from the Catholic Church. The Pope pressured the aristocracy of Scotland to reject Bruce, but when they refused, they too were excommunicated. The Pope then turned to the clergy of Scotland, who also refused, and who also were excommunicated. Finally, he turned to the people of Scotland, a majority of whom still swore allegiance to Bruce. With this final insult, the Pope excommunicated the entire country of Scotland – **the only country this has ever happened to!**

The Pope also turned to rulers in many other countries to join in persecuting the Knights Templar. It is probably not a coincidence that the rise of the Knight, Sir Robert the Bruce, coincided with the dissolution of the Knights Templar.

Many historians feel that a group of Templars escaped to Scotland and propped up Robert the Bruce, while he, in turn, allowed them freedom to roam throughout Scotland, where they blended in with their friends in the stonemason guilds to eventually form the Freemasons.

Old Freemasonry histories tell of the Knights Templar fleeing persecution in France and landing in MacDonald territory, most specifically on the Isle of Mull, home to the Maclean family, but also on nearby Islay and Jura. (Hector Maclean was Oak Island John Smith's uncle. John's mother was a Maclean by birth).

Templars are said to have landed on the Isle of Mull in 1313, having been disbanded by the Pope the previous year. The Battle of Bannockburn, where they apparently fought for Robert the Bruce, happened in 1314. The second day of battle happened on June 24th, the most significant day for the Templars because that is St. John the Baptist's Day, and he was their patron saint. It had been 99 days from the day of the battle when the last Grand Master of the Templar, Jacques de Molay, was executed.

If the Templars did gradually become absorbed into other groups, including stonemason lodges, it is most likely that it was a gradual and organic blending, not a specific event taking place on a certain day.

Throughout Europe, banished Knights Templar were roaming the countryside as they blended in with the local community and with various religious and secular orders. Why couldn't the same have happened in Scotland?

In Alsace-Lorraine, where an ancient Celtic race once held sway, the area had at times changed hands between France and Germany.

At this point in history, this area was in the hands of Germany, and the Duke of Lorraine supported the Knights Templar. A few were tried and quickly set free, just for show.

Most appear to have shaved their beards, donned secular garb and melted into the local population.

In Germany, Templars were found not guilty in court and many were accepted into the Knights of St. John and the Teutonic Knights.

In Spain, they joined other orders, especially the Calatrava, and a new order was established just for former Templars, called the Montessa.

In Portugal, the Knights were also found not guilty and many became Knights of Christ. Ships of this order sailed under the familiar Knights Templar white sail with a red cross.

Christopher Columbus was married to the daughter of a Grand Master of the Knights of Christ, and he sailed to America under the same white sails adorned with the same red cross.

Sir Henry Sinclair's grandson John Drummond moved to Maderia, Portugal. This same location was also home to Christopher Columbus. This particular link is just too hard to resist!

In England, the king was very slow to arrest Templars, and many of those he did convict were let off with light sentences.

On December 14, 1309, more than two years after the first French arrests, King Edward of England wrote to his sheriffs to say that Templars were still "wandering about in secular habits . . ."

The Knights continued to "wander about," and many believe that, in Scotland, their choice of who to blend in with were stonemason guilds.

Skills needed in building great castles and cathedrals were well-kept secrets among the stonemasons. This air of secrecy suited the Templars.

Evidence exists that some Templars may have trained as stonemasons and that, together, the Templar remnants and the stonemason guilds formed the Freemasons and this appears to have happened under the guidance of Sir William Alexander.

Some sites in Scotland have been identified as places that have Templar style gravestones, and these sites were thought to be training grounds for masons.

One place that appears as though it may have been a school for apprentice masons is the famous Rosslyn Chapel, owned and built by the Sinclair family. Some argue that the Sinclairs could not have been involved with the Templars and/or Freemasonry because two Sinclair lawmen testified against the Templars when the Church sent its prosecutors to Scotland.

However, during the trial no evidence was presented that was strong enough to convict the Templars. The testimony of the two Sinclair men was simply that they agreed with all that was said during the trial.

How much more vague can a testimony be, and what better way to protect your government job, and possibly your life, than to be this vague?

Besides, both of the Knights Templar that were questioned were Englishmen, and both were freed, so the idea that the Sinclair family gave testimony that resulted in prosecution or death for a large number of Scottish Templars is just not true.

The variety of symbols, Christian, Pagan, Templar, Masonic, etc. that appear in Rosslyn Chapel lead one to believe that there was no master plan to the carvings.

Also, many designs are referred to as “apprentice carvings,” including the incredible Apprentice Pillar.

The most logical and mundane reason for the variety of unconnected symbols, and for the inclusion of Templar, Masonic, Christian and Pagan sculptures, is that it was a training ground where apprentices could carve whatever they wished, in order to learn their trade. There are, of course, what appear to be Templar graves near Rosslyn as well.

Roughly speaking, the MacDonald Lord of the Isles controlled the western islands off the coast of Scotland and a considerable chunk of the Highlands all the way over to Ross. The Sinclair family controlled the Orkney Islands and eventually the Caithness portion of northeast Scotland. The Stewart monarchy, of course, controlled the rest of the country, as best they could.

Templar graves and lands are found in all three of these territories.

Five Templar graves are found in a small area at the Mull of Kintyre, which, at the time, was controlled by the MacDonalds. At least two, if not three more are found on an island located just off the Isle of Skye, also in control of the Lords of the Isles, and near Castle Uisdean. In fact, the Bishop of the Isles had headquarters near these graves for over 500 years, until 1498. One of Uisdean MacDonald’s relatives was Bishop of the Isles for many years.

That the MacDonald and Sinclair families were often associated is shown in two examples described here.

First, each had a vague claim to be of the “true blood,” whatever that was meant to imply. We can only speculate. Secondly, both were supporters of King James I of Scotland. When James was a lad, the Sinclairs were, for a time, his guardians.

There can be no doubt about Templar presence in Scottish history. There is considerable evidence that they had a relationship with many Scottish families, that they fought at Bannockburn, and that they blended in with the Scottish culture, particularly with the stonemason guilds, and out of this connection was formed Freemasonry.

Below is a surname comparison list for some top Scottish families, who included in their ranks Knights Templars, signers of the Declaration of Arbroath and Knights Baronets of Nova Scotia, plus the number of Baronets for each surname.

In the case of the Maclean Clan, all three men were named Lachlan Maclean.

This list is not meant to be complete, but shows a very impressive connection of these families to substantial episodes in Scottish history, which I believe also demonstrates a continuous, hierarchical advancement in the desire to create a free, prosperous Scotland, and a free, prosperous New Scotland, in Nova Scotia.

All of these names have been represented in Freemasonry multiple times.

The Declaration of Arbroath

The Declaration of Arbroath is the name usually given to a letter, dated April 6, 1320, at Arbroath Abbey, written by Scottish barons and addressed to Pope John XXII. It consisted of King Robert the Bruce's response to his excommunication for disobeying the Pope's demand in 1317 for a truce in the First War of Scottish Independence.

The letter asserted the antiquity of the independence of the Kingdom of Scotland, denouncing English attempts to subjugate it. Attached were the seals of fifty-one magnates and nobles. The letter is the sole survivor of three created at the time. The others were a letter from the King of Scots, Robert I, and a letter from four Scottish bishops which all made similar points. The Declaration was intended to assert Scotland's status as an independent, sovereign state and defend Scotland's right to use military action when unjustly attacked.

Surname	Knights Templar	Arbroath Declaration	Knights Baronet of Nova Scotia
Stewart	X	X	X (11)
Bruce	X	X	X (2)
Sinclair	X	X	X (6)
Maclean	X	X	X (1)
Campbell	X	X	X (7)
Seton	X	X	X (4)
Gordon	X	X	X (9)
Cadell	X		X (1)
Muir	X		X (1)

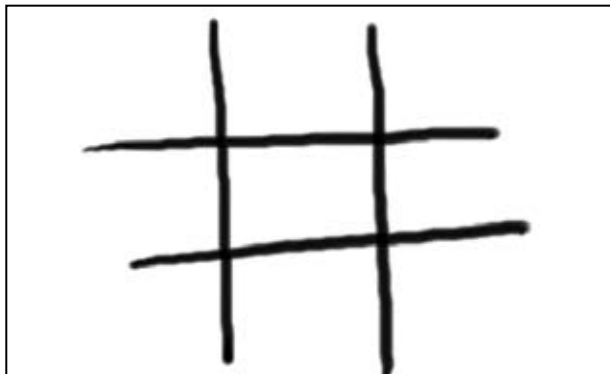
BAG IT, BALE IT, BUNDLE IT, AND SEAL IT!



The thought of Neanderthals playing Tic Tac Toe seems a bit hilarious...but...

Below is a photo of a crosshatch design found in Gorham's Cave, in Gibraltar, and taken by Stewart Finlayson. The cave was explored by Clive and Stewart Finlayson, along with other local historians.

It is of cave art traced to Neanderthal people from around 30,000 years ago. It appears eerily similar to the 3x3 grid of Tic Tac Toe shown just below it.



The Finlaysons are of Scottish descent, but they have been on the "Rock" since the early 19th century. They are not suggesting Neanderthals played Tic Tac Toe.

An associate, Francesco d'Errico, director of research at the French Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, states: "It does not necessarily mean that it is symbolic - in the sense that it represents something else - but it was done on purpose."

The archaeologist estimates that the full engraving would have required 200-300 strokes with a stone cutting tool, taking at least an hour to create.

As Clive Finlayson explained: "One intriguing aspect is that the engraving is at the point in the cave where the cave's orientation changes by 90 degrees."

After examining dozens of Ice Age caves across Europe, another paleoarchaeologist, Genevieve von Petzinger, discovered our ancestors repeatedly used 32 signs.

She tells us: "There was something about them that I found much more interesting than the animals and the people. Those are nice too, but it seemed like there were some patterns going on there, and yet there was not enough information to even delve into it." Von Petzinger set out to document and systematically catalogue the geometric signs that were created tens of thousands of years ago in Europe during the Ice Age.

She started by compiling a database of the geometric signs found at the nearly 370 known rock art sites across the continent. From there, she identified gaps in the inventories at many sites and also explored rarely documented sites.

Paleoanthropologists had long believed that art was invented during a “creative explosion” 40,000 years ago in Europe — the first Homo sapiens are thought to have migrated there from Africa during an Ice Age warm spell roughly 45,000 years ago.

But von Petzinger’s research challenges this conventional wisdom. “I realized that two-thirds of the signs were already in use when humans arrived in Europe,” she says, suggesting the symbols are a continuation of an existing tradition rather than the start of something new, and they stretched back even to the Neanderthals.

Below are the 32 common symbols found in hundreds of prehistoric caves and catalogued by von Petzinger.

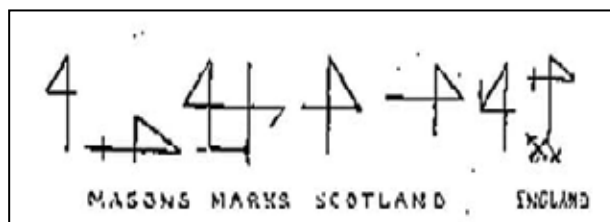


Von Petzinger believes these cave symbols were the very root of alphabetical systems that later developed, and that the symbols were a quick way to explain or identify a thought, person, place or thing.

So we should not, in the least, be surprised that merchants in the British Isles and elsewhere were using symbols, like the one found on the bag or bale seal on Oak Island, to identify their products and companies.

In fact, these kinds of symbols also represented families and individuals. It was a common man’s coat of arms, in a sense.

Masons used these types of marks to sign their stonework for centuries. It was a practical issue for them as they wanted to make sure they got paid for each stone they worked, and they wanted inferior stones to be easily identified by the stonemason’s mark who worked on the bad stone.



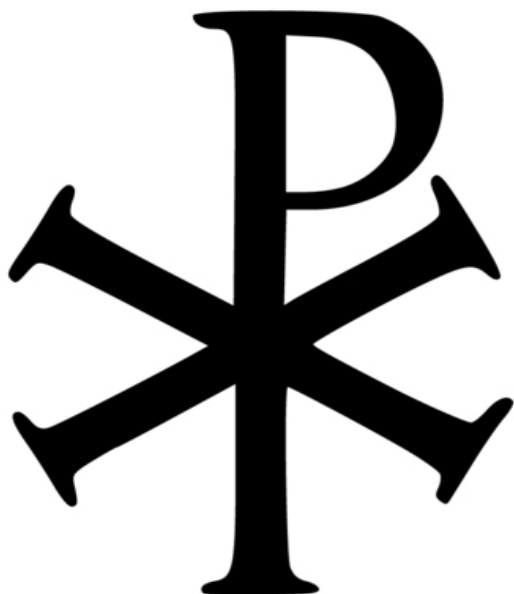
From the same centuries-old book on merchant and mason marks we have the above illustrations. One thing these examples have in common is that they all use what is known as the Mark of Four, or the Sign of Four.

In fact, I’ve found that virtually all merchant adventurers, meaning merchants that were involved with settlements in the New World particularly, used the Mark of Four as it was apparently thought to ward off the devil, since overseas travel and settlement was risky business in the 1600s.

But why this symbol?

There are two theories out there that take a look at the Mark of Four as being a religious symbol.

One is that it is the pattern that some believe represents the sign of the cross some people use while praying. Others believe it might be the mirror image of the early Christian symbol for Christ called the Chi Rho. This so-called “labarum” was a christogram, shown in the illustration below, formed from the first two Greek letters of the word “Christ.”



When the symbol is flipped the P faces left similar to the top of the cross found on Oak Island. It also becomes closer to the Mark of Four symbol.



Above are a number of merchant marks using the Mark of Four design. Number 24 looks identical to the mark found on the bag or bale seal discovered on Oak Island. It has been loosely connected to Norwich, England, where the wool trade was king.

A poet and playwright from the time, Michael Drayton, commented on this. Wool made England rich, and the staple port of Norwich “in her state doth stand with towns of highest regard, the fourth of all the land,” as Drayton noted in 1612.

Michael Drayton was famous for something else as well. He was with William Shakespeare and Ben Johnson when they had a wild drinking party. Shortly afterwards Shakespeare died of a severe fever, probably caused by typhoid.

We know this because of a note written by John Ward, Vicar of Holy Trinity Church, fifty years after Shakespeare's death.

Ward most likely heard the story from Shakespeare's daughter, Judith Quiney, with whom he had planned to meet shortly before he became vicar, and shortly before she passed away.

The good Vicar John Ward wrote that: "Shakespeare, Drayton and Ben Johnson had a 'merry meeting' and its seems drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a fever there contracted."

Historians feel that because Ward put quotes around the words "merry meeting," he most likely heard this phrase from someone else, and that person was most likely Shakespeare's own daughter Judith.

Whatever the case was with Drayton and Shakespeare, it is at least true that we are no more sure that the Oak Island symbol came from Norwich wool, as the description of the #24 symbol is vague at best. However, other similar symbols were found in and around Norwich, not just on lead seals but on wood workings, metal workings and elsewhere.

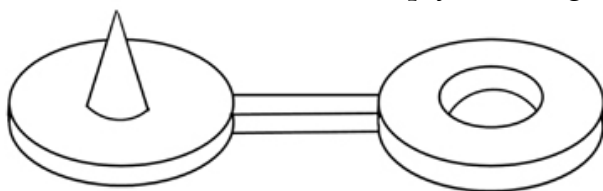
While stonemasons had been making their marks on stones for centuries, others were casting their marks in wax. Title deeds and important documents often had attached seals of those involved. A perfect example is the Declaration of Arbroath mentioned earlier in this issue, the very bottom of which is shown below.



One of the items on the list of treasure stolen by Al Strachan in my own theory of Oak Island was a seal bag that held the deeds to many castles. These bags were made of canvas and waterproofed three times in candle wax, explaining how a small bit of parchment could have been pulled up from a Money Pit that had been flooded for several decades, and not be smeared.

The Strachans had their own seal, that of a Highland Stag, a symbol found on silverware taken from the shipwreck found within sight of Oak Island.

The full-circles and coincidences that surround Oak Island are simply amazing.



The lead bag or bale seals were a simple contraption. The pin on the left side was fed through the fabric so as not to damage it and placed in the hole on the right side of the seal. This was then crimped together in an operation that not only made it seem a once piece flat seal, but also embedded the merchant's trademark into the lead.

The letters on either side of the Mark of Four are said to be either the craftsman who made or dyed the cloth, the inspector of the cloth, or the merchant who sold the cloth. Four dissimilar bale seals were found at one archaeological site lying uniformly next to each other indicating that they were all once attached to the same item, also indicating that perhaps this item had a few seals attached to represent different stages of processing.

I'm sure there are many people, right now, trying to track down the origin of the Oak Island bale seal, including the OI team. Can't wait to hear about it!

SO, WHAT'S NEXT?

Our front cover art for June was painted by Edward Moran, in 1897, and gives us an idea of what must have been the terror struck in the hearts of a captain and his crew on tall ships when they were attacked and burned at sea by pirates like Captain Kidd.

My lead story for July will be about Glooscap. This enigmatic figure has kept the world guessing for a long time. As with most of my writing, I have a unique take on who he might have been. I will present this with all due respect given to the First Nations people of Nova Scotia and surrounding areas. My "Who's Who?" section will feature the Bacon family. For my "How Does That Work?" segment I'll finally get around to GPS and Surveying.

I had intended that subject for this issue, but when I got Laird onboard for an interview, I thought Archaeology would be a more appropriate subject.

I've also been working on a unique method of translating the 90' stone that no one else has ever done or realized as far as anything I have read. I hope to have it completed, or at least part of it, by the July issue. And, believe me, there is so much more going on that I can't talk about, but will eventually be able to include in my e-magazine.

As I stated in my May issue, my research has stretched over seven years and individual discoveries have sometimes taken three or four months to nail down, with even more information coming along later. This is one of the reasons behind this magazine – to keep folks up-to-date, as much as possible, on my research.

Once again – **This publication in no way represents the Oak Island Team, Oak Island Tours, Prometheus Entertainment or the History Channel.**

The response to *Oak Island Times* has already been wonderful. I know I have a specific audience of hundreds of true fans, for which I am very thankful, who were waiting for this issue and will be waiting for the next. I don't intend to let you down.

This publication is free and will continue as long as it makes sense, and as long as I am able to keep it going. And there never seems to be a lack of things to talk about concerning Oak Island. If you wish to have the password to the digital vault where these issues will be stored, simply email me at oakislandtimes@gmail.com

I'll be keeping the number of pages and file size down to allow for easy transmission anywhere in the world although I already had to add five more pages to this month's issue. **See ya next month!**

This photograph is from my first appearance in the war room in 2017. It also happens to be a photo of the very last presentation ever in the old war room by anyone before everything was moved to a new war room up around the corner. I'll tell that story someday.

