

# Oak Island Times

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## From The Publisher ...

Seems like it was quite a long break in between issues of the *Oak Island Times*. I published July's issue a little early and I am just now squeezing August's issue in on time. There's been a lot going on behind the scenes, plus with it being summer, I knew people would be busy.

I've had over 4,000 hits on my site but there have been just a few people confused on how the password works; I originally included this password thinking I'd make a little game out of it – you couldn't read the issues without the password.

I'm thinking, to keep it simple, I'll just forgo the password and post a link to the magazine wherever I find a willing site.

The same rules apply. **This publication in no way represents or speaks for the Oak Island team, Prometheus Entertainment or the History Channel.** It's just my ramblings after having gotten deeply involved with Oak Island and its possible theories over the last seven years, in hopes that my research won't get lost.

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For this issue I look at pre-Columbian travel across the North Atlantic – its legends and its possibilities.

It is a considerably long article but it takes a few words to describe something that may have taken place over centuries by many different people. Again, it isn't meant to be the definitive story of pre-Columbian travel to America, but simple some research I have uncovered.

I also take a look at GPS and surveying which has played such a role in the exploration of Oak Island.

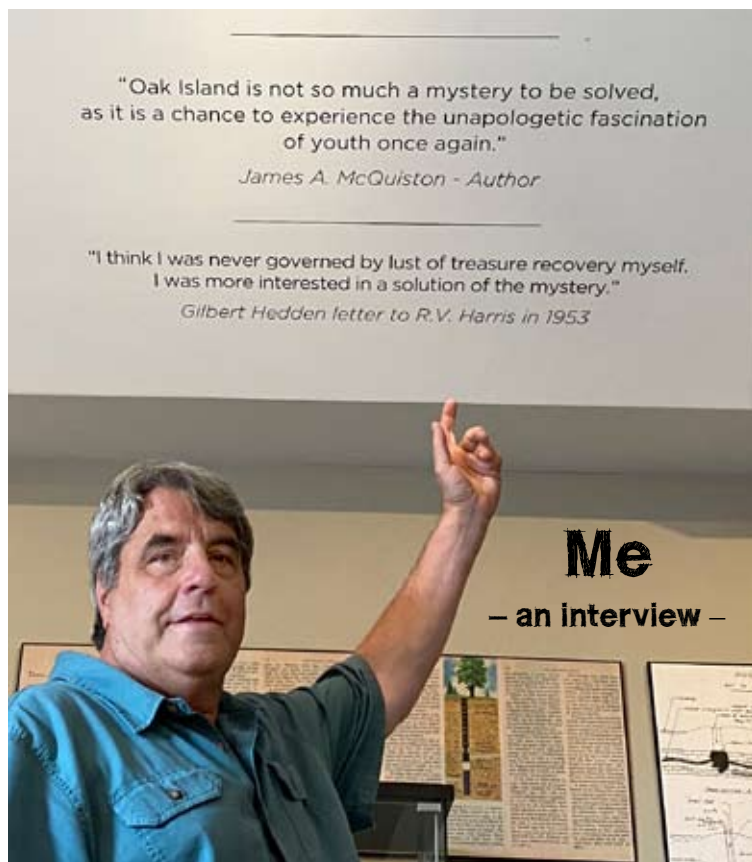
As usual, there's a mixed bag of reading to do with this issue. I try to mix it up!

I am also thinking that I will suspend publication of this magazine during *The Curse of Oak Island* season as, like most of you, I'll be glued to the TV set, and then talking about the latest show with my friends for the rest of the week. I'll start back up in spring if it makes sense. Meanwhile, I hope to have two more issues after this one – September and October.

I enjoy researching, lots of people enjoy my research, and it's all FREE!

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I hoped to have an interview with one of two main OI crew members this month, but their summer dig season has been so busy due to the extra restrictions Covid has put on their activities. So I thought I'd sort of interview myself.

Some will appreciate knowing my credentials and other will probably think I'm blowing my own horn. Either way, hopefully the reader will be more assured that they can at least accept that my research may be reasonably accurate.

In 2018, Rick Lagina asked me for a quote to put on the Oak Island Interpretive Centre wall. After some serious thought, I wrote "Oak Island is not so much a mystery to be solved, as it is a chance to experience the unapologetic fascination of youth once again."

In 2019, I was able to see the actual quote, as shown in the above photo.

Back in 2002, I wrote my first book with a Scottish history bent to it. I continued to write books, magazine articles and web articles until I was noticed by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, in 2014, who honored me with a fellowship.

I built a web of sources in Scotland and made three trips to that beautiful country, as well as to Ireland (North and South), to many other countries and significant historical sites throughout the world, from China to Peru, from Egypt to most of western Europe, and to Canada, from the Yukon to Ontario and Nova Scotia.

In 2016, I approached the Oak Island team with one small bit of history which has turned out to be the crux of my Money Pit theory.

I was invited to the island in 2017, 2018 and 2019, and had a War Zoom meeting in 2020. I continue to work with the team almost weekly.

I've appeared on *The Curse of Oak Island* seven times, and on *The Curse of Oak Island Drilling Deeper* three additional times.

I've also written seven books:

*Oak Island Missing Links*  
*Oak Island 1632*  
*Oak Island Knights*  
*Oak Island The Novel*  
*Oak Island And The Mayflower*  
*Oak Island And New Ross.*

Despite not nailing down an interview this month, I consider myself a friend of many of the people on the Oak Island and Prometheus teams and have had many, many interactions. I always adhere to any NDA I might sign, and I dearly appreciate the chance I've been given.

# IN 1492...



This may come as a shock to a few people but the Earth ain't flat. And despite popular misconceptions to the contrary, nearly all educated Westerners understood that the Earth was spherical, being a theory rooted in antiquity.

By Columbus's time, the technique of celestial navigation, which uses the position of the Sun and the stars in the sky, had long been employed by astronomers and was beginning to be implemented by mariners.

As far back as the 3rd century BC, Eratosthenes, a Greek genius in many fields, had correctly computed the circumference of the Earth by using simple geometry and studying the shadows cast by objects at two remote locations.

In the 1st century BC, Posidonius (you guessed it, another Greek genius) confirmed Eratosthenes's results by comparing stellar observations from two separate locations. These measurements were widely known among scholars.

But the famous mapmaker Ptolemy used the smaller, old-fashioned units of distance leading Christopher Columbus to underestimate the size of the Earth by about a third.

Above is a map thought to be drawn around 1490 in the Lisbon workshop of Bartolomeo and Christopher Columbus.

While there is a definite line denoting the edge of the "known world" to the west of Europe and Africa, there are a scattering of islands and notably a depiction of the Earth with stars revolving around it, showing that Columbus was aware the Earth was round. He just didn't realize how "round."

That scattering of islands may have represented land masses known to exist through the travels of others, from Irish monks to Vikings, from Henry Sinclair to First Nations of North America making the trip in the opposite direction.

Columbus was aware of this possibility before he set sail in 1492.

In my first book *Oak Island Missing Links*, I cut right to the chase, contesting the more ridiculous claims of skeptics, beginning with the idea that the Scots, the Irish, the Vikings or even the Knights Templars did not have the proper ships or were too timid to make the journey to North America before the 1492 voyage of Christopher Columbus. This is often stated as a way to minimize the entire Oak Island story.

As with a lot of ancient history, there are varying opinions as to what constitutes the truth. I guess you could say this holds true even for modern history.

All we can do is go with what we have and count on the phenomenon that, while the details may be cloudy at times, traditions and legends generally have a ring of truth to them, even though we may never be able to substantiate every detail.

This certainly is the case with the story presented here. And, if part of my story is questioned, this doesn't mean the entire story is fictitious, or not worth consideration.

I find it humorous that even writers who are bent on debunking theories deem it acceptable to throw in their own along the way. A prime example of this is in a famous argument against the veracity of the *Zeno Narrative*, published in 1558, by Nicolò Zeno, which is said, by some, to provide evidence that Nicolò's forefathers, Nicolò and Antonio Zeno, sailed to the North Atlantic about 1380, and entered the service of a local prince named Zichmini. While in his service they made voyages to several islands in the North Atlantic, and even reached the New World.

The name Zichmini has been taken to mean Sir Henry Sinclair of the Orkney Islands, who is supposed to have sailed to North America, from Scotland, in 1398.

This was almost a century before the voyage of Columbus.

In explaining that one of the Zenos ran into some trouble and disappeared for four years, during the period of Sinclair's voyage, this author states that Zeno was "probably" in another location in Europe for those four years, and yet offers no proof of this.

It seems that debunking anything is easy, when a quick, sometimes smart-aleck answer and a smirk are thrown in, whereas proving a theory to be true takes endless, nuanced words and hierarchical connections, as well as patience and understanding on the part of the reader.

Another criticism used to discredit this voyage by the Zeno brothers is that the map drawn of their travels includes longitudes not known about in 1380 or 1398.

However, these longitude lines were known about in 1558, when the *Zeno Narrative* was written. It is at least possible to assume that the younger Nicolò Zeno used existing knowledge of longitudes to best depict the early writings of his family.

The Zenos referred to one land during their North Atlantic voyage as "Estotiland," which appears to have possibly represented Nova Scotia.

There have been a few fruitless theories as to what this name means. *Roget's Thesaurus* actually gives Estotiland as a synonym for Arcadia, the oldest-known name for Nova Scotia, which later became Acadia.

One realization that I have recently made is that the word Estotiland could sound remarkably similar to the word Scotland, especially when spoken with a heavy Scottish brogue, while being translated into another language.

There are records of the word "Scots" being spelled "Escottz," in the 1400s.

The French version was *Écossaise*, beginning the word with an “É.” This also translates as “Scotch,” in Italian. It is not much of a stretch to believe that Sinclair was speaking of Scotland or a New Scotland, and the Zenos recorded the name as *Éscotiland* or *Éstotiland*.

I also have a theory on what the Zichmini name might really be meant to represent, which I will explain later. Meanwhile, I am not here to say that this voyage of the Zeno brothers definitely did happen, but only to say that it could have. And if it did, the name Zichmini, and the connection to a voyage by Sir Henry Sinclair, would make complete sense.

The *Zeno Narrative* is known officially as *Dello scoprimento dell' isole Frislanda, Eslanda, Engrouelanda, Estotilanda e Icaria fatto sotto il Polo artico da' due fratelli Zeni, M. Nicolò il K. e M. Antonio*, and has presented an age-old mystery too tough to definitively crack.

However, modern science and new investigative techniques have allowed us to resolve several age-old mysteries in recent years. For instance, there are many cases where family connections have been proven to be true through DNA research. Many a family link has been made through a simple DNA test. Many a crime or false imprisonment has been resolved, as well.

Another great example is that about the only proof we had that the Celts once lived in the Alps was Julius Caesar's contention that he killed about a million and a half of them. That is, until a huge hoard of Celtic weaponry, art, and technology was found buried in a lake outside of Zurich, Switzerland, during the 1900s.

More recently, in 2012, one of the largest hoards of Celtic coins ever unearthed was also found in Switzerland, proving the truth of Celtic travels and origins.

A third example that directly affects our theory is that, for about 1,000 years, stories have been told of trips by Vikings to North America. These began with oral Viking sagas finally written down about 250 years after they had supposedly taken place, and analyzed by experts, many times over.

The Viking sagas had their own share of detractors until 1960-61, when a complete Viking village was unearthed at the tip of Newfoundland. Here were the remains of eight buildings, tools, pottery and other items, which proved conclusively that this hardy race was not only capable of sailing to North America, but that they actually did! They also traveled around quite a bit.

There are additional rune stones and structural ruins, along with aboriginal legends, often attributed to a Viking, Celtic or Templar presence, in other parts of North America. While we shouldn't simply embrace them all, unconditionally, we shouldn't discount them without careful study, either.

The Viking site has been named L'Anse aux Meadows. It is only a few day's sail from this site to Oak Island. Traveling southward from this site, it is very possible that Vikings, or other pre-Columbian explorers made it as far as the Great Lakes, opening up many possibilities, including the potential authenticity of Minnesota's Kensington Runestone.

This stone has had many detractors, and yet it has had some serious supporters, too, including Robert Hall, a noted professor of linguistics at Cornell University, who allowed for its authenticity after careful study. Also, in 1949, when the stone was put on display at the Smithsonian Institution, scholars William Thalbitzer and S. N. Hagen published papers that equally supported its authenticity.

Hagen was a member of the Linguistic Society of America and Thalbitzer was a well-regarded philologist. Philology is the study of language in written historical sources, and is a combination of literary criticism, history and linguistics – in other words, pretty much the study of the writing of human history.

Nothing of much consequence in human history has happened without connections to the discoveries and efforts of earlier people. This especially holds true for ancient explorations, which are usually very hierarchical in nature.

One step at a time, new locations are found and are eventually settled by a mix of people.

Many records of the earliest explorers to any region are lost to history, as they were passed down as oral traditions, written as poems or sagas, or chiseled in stone, and then later contested for their authenticity.

And yet we now have scientific proof that ancient mariners from European countries did make it to the North American coast.

Nova Scotia is a prime example of a hierarchical tale of exploration and settlement. There is some speculative evidence that the Vikings landed here, and it is known that Portuguese, Spanish and French explorers were followed by Scots, and then by the English. Before all of these folks, there are tales of Basque whalers and Irish fishermen in this region of North America.

There are indications coming out of Newfoundland that researchers working with the records from the Basque homeland (located in the Pyrenees on the border between France and Spain, and along the Atlantic coast) have found ship logs that connect that area to Newfoundland, during the 1300s.

And, it has been shown that two ships with clay roof tiles went down in a bay in Newfoundland. They are thought to be ancient Basque whaling ships.

Predating all of these European visitors, of course, were the First Nations Micmac, or Mi'kmaq, who permeated the area mentioned in the 1621 New Scotland charter (named, in Latin, as *Nova Scotia*), and which included all of the lands “between our Colonies of New England and Newfoundland, to be known as New Scotland.”

One of the earliest European legends of exploration to this area comes out of Ireland. Irish folklore and religious records tell of St. Brendan, who is said to have made a voyage to North America long before Columbus (depicted on our August cover). There are over one hundred interpretations of his seven year voyage that appear in old books and newer articles (and on web sites), but the main source is the medieval manuscript, *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis*.

The oldest surviving copy of Brendan's story is from about 900 AD, predating even Viking trips to this region.

Born in 484 AD, this monk is known as St. Brendan the Navigator. He traveled as a missionary around the coast of Ireland, then further afield to Scotland, Wales, and even to Brittany, France. He and his fellow monks are said to have prepared a light vessel, with wooden sides and ribs, like those made in Ireland of that time, and covered it with cow-hide tanned in oak-bark, tarring the joints to make them water resistant. The monks put on board provisions for forty days and headed west.

During his seven-year sail across uncharted waters, there is a belief that St. Brendan and his monks, at some point, landed on the shores of North America.

Our cover photo for August is the illustration, "Saint Brendan and the Whale," taken from a medieval manuscript held by the University of Augsburg, Germany. What is very interesting about this image is that the original shows a red cross on a white sail. A red cross on white is associated with the Knights Templar, with the sails on the ships of Christopher Columbus, on depictions of what Henry Sinclair's sails might have looked like, and even more curiously, with Nova Scotian Mi'kmaq artwork.

Amazingly, Saint Brendan returned to Ireland safely, and died in 578 AD. It is generally not known what happened to his voyaging companions, except for one curious Scottish document I've uncovered.

There is another life story described in a very ancient document called the *Salmanticensian Codex* (preserved in Brussels for many centuries). It concerns St. Fintan, a contemporary monk and fellow traveler of St. Brendan.

There is a curious explanation of a land, which Fintan calls the "Land of Promise."

Before telling another Scottish monk his story, St. Fintan says, "Promise me on thy faith that thou wilt not tell it to anyone during my life."

Once he gets his assurance of secrecy, Fintan tells his fellow monk: "If therefore a temptation come to ye which ye are not able to bear, ye shall set forth to that holy land; and it shall be lawful for ye if there are to ye always twelve new beams with ye (for boat building), and twelve brazen caldrons (brass caldrons to hold food and water) for your journey. Ye shall go to the Hill of Stones (Sliabh Liacc) in the region of the race of Bogen (Tir Bogaine, in the barony of Banagh, County Donegal, Ireland), to the promontory which extends into the sea, and there ye shall begin to sail.

"Kill your oxen and it is lawful for you to eat the flesh of the oxen, for it might chance owing to the hurry of your setting out that ye could not prepare food for your journey, and in the skins of your oxen shall ye prosperously sail to the holy Land of Promise."

In other words, they were to bring boat beams and supplies in caldrons, kill their oxen to have a good meal and then make boats from their hides, and sail from the extreme west of Ireland to this new "Land of Promise," especially if trouble came to them that they could not bear, and if they had to leave town quickly.

Why this matters is that this monk says that St. Brendan (who also apparently sailed to North America in boats of hide stretched over beams of wood) accompanied Fintan, along with two other monks, and that they made this voyage to the Land of Promise, where each staked out a claim. Three of the claims were named Fair Ford, Port Joy and Paradise.

There is Fairford in Manitoba, Canada. There is a Port-la-Joye at Prince Edward Island, and a Paradise, which is a town on the Avalon Peninsula in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada, bordering the city of St. John's. All of these places are mentioned in this very ancient document as land claims made by these monks during their ancient journey.

To make matters even more interesting, the earliest known name for Nova Scotia was Arcadia, which was then shortened to Acadia. Arcadia is similar to Orchadie, the spelling used to describe the Scottish islands of Orkney in a paper on the death of Sir Henry Sinclair, written or at least commissioned by his own grandson, William Sinclair, builder of the famous Rosslyn Chapel.



The name Arcadia has ancient roots in Greece and was meant to represent Paradise. According to Zeno, when Henry Sinclair asked the native population of Nova Scotia what the name of their land was, they replied, "Icaria." The Mi'kmaq word akadie means "land of abundance," and further north from Port Royal was also an early town called Paradise.

Fair Ford, Port Joy, Paradise and Akadie / Arcadia / Acadia – could any of these more modern locations actually have roots as far back as the voyages of St. Brendan and St. Fintan? If looked at from the point of view that everything is connected, then yes they could.

The possibility of St. Brendan's voyage was proven, in 1976-77, when a replica boat covered with cowhides made it from the same point in Ireland, that Brendan was supposed to have left from, to Iceland within three months, and to Newfoundland in another 50 days. This boat was manned by experienced sailors, but not people experienced daily in handling this type of craft. Still, Tim Severin and his crew proved that it could have been done by St. Brendan back in AD 512-530.



*Above is a rare photo of Severin's boat. Between May 1976 and June 1977, Severin and his crew sailed the **Brendan** from Ireland to Newfoundland.*

Severin followed a course that included the Scottish Hebrides, the Faroe Islands and Iceland en route to Newfoundland.

This would likely be a similar route followed by Sir Henry Sinclair, if he did in fact reach North America.

The legend that Sinclair, Earl of the Orkney Islands of Scotland, sailed to America, and possibly to Oak Island, in 1398, also has had many detractors.

Sir Henry, or for that matter, any Scots, Irish, Viking or Templar fleet could have relatively easily and often reached North America and Nova Scotia long before Columbus "discovered" America.

Here's why –

Columbus traveled roughly 3,800 miles across open ocean, with no safe place to land in case he found his fleet in trouble. He actually did this in only five weeks, once he left the Canary Islands, sailing about 105 miles per day. Sailors traveling from Ireland to Newfoundland would only have to travel about 2,000-2,500 miles, almost half the distance. At 105 miles per day, it could take 20 days or less to make this trip. And, at this rate, a trip from the Orkney Islands to Nova Scotia could take as little as 25 days.

Certainly, the trip could take longer in one direction or the other, due to prevailing winds and water currents, but it would not be so long a time period as to dissuade experienced navigators like Henry Sinclair.

It is an absolute fact that Norwegian or Viking sailors were able to sail to Greenland and back a number of times. From the tip of Greenland to Newfoundland is less than 1,000 miles, and Nova Scotia is just around the bend. In addition, the Celts are known to have sailed from the Mediterranean, traveling over 1,500 miles to Scotland during the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods.

Viking sagas and Celtic history show that Vikings sailed from Norway to Ireland many times, over many centuries. The distance from Norway to Ireland is roughly 1,200 miles (depending on the route taken), through some of the roughest ocean in the world. One round trip would equal a one-way trip to Nova Scotia.

Why couldn't Celts, Vikings or Templars make a trip to Nova Scotia in line with distances and sea conditions they had already dealt with many times, over many centuries? There is NO reason why they couldn't have.

There is also evidence of Vikings mixing with First Nations North Americans.

In 2010, a genetic study was published showing that over 350 living Icelanders carried mitochondrial DNA of a unique type that is similar to that found only in Native American and East Asian populations.

Using a well-respected genetics database, it was determined that the DNA entered the Icelandic population no later than 1700 AD, and likely several centuries earlier.

In 1009, it was written in a Norse saga that two children were taken from North America and raised as Vikings in Greenland. In 1420, a Danish geographer said that he personally saw "pygmies" that were taken from their boat by Vikings, when they drifted too close to Greenland. In 1505, a clergyman wrote that he saw two similar boats that had been captured in the 14th Century by the Vikings of Greenland.

It is said that if you throw a small boat in the water at Newfoundland, it will float all the way to Ireland on its own. In Ferdinand Columbus's biography of his father, Christopher, he says that, in 1477, his father witnessed, in Galway, Ireland, two dead bodies which had washed ashore in their boat.

The bodies and boat were of an exotic appearance and have been suggested to have been Inuits from North America, who had drifted off course.

The point is that traffic back and forth, from the British Isles to the northernmost tip of North America, may have been much more common than previously thought.

Some trips may have been accidentally caused by bad weather and others may have been intentional, in a quest for new lands and adventures. The vast majority would have been carried out in boats of a much earlier design than those used by Christopher Columbus or Henry Sinclair and yet it still appears they were successful in making this crossing.

In 1565, MacDonald of the Isles was able to raise 32 galleys, and a total of 180 boats, to attack the English-backed native Irish in Northern Ireland. His galleys were described as having 20-30 oarsmen, a single tall mast and a shorter mast at the bow of the boat patterned after Viking boats, since many MacDonalds have Norwegian DNA.

This is the same type of ship that naysayers claim could not have made it to Nova Scotia, and yet this is the same type of ship that obviously did make it to Greenland, Iceland, the coast of North America and perhaps even further south and west.

The lands of the MacDonald family were considered their "Sea Kingdom" simply because they traveled mostly by boat between their many island holdings and between Scotland, Ireland and Norway. Their motto, in fact, is *Per Mare, Per Terras*, which translated as "By Sea and By Land."

This type of travel, mainly by boat, held true for many other Scottish, Irish and Viking families, who plied these dangerous waters for centuries.

It was not always safe to travel by land and there were limited roads and many mountains standing in the way. This was true as far back as the Picts, who occupied Scotland long before the Celts showed up.

The Wemyss caves are found near the village of East Wemyss on the east coast of Scotland, in the County of Fife. There are quite a lot of caves along this part of the Fife coast and although, over the centuries, many of them have collapsed into the sea due to the fierce North Sea gales, some have survived that contain fascinating ancient carvings within them to give us an idea of how Scotland's first known inhabitants lived.

Mr. Ronald Henderson, a now-departed associate of mine, and fellow historian from Scotland, entered one of these caves several years back and snapped photographs of the rock carvings inside, dated to around 600-700 AD.



Above is a rock carving that Ron photographed, which is quite likely the oldest depiction of a boat in all of Europe. Note the multiple oars used, similar to those used in later Scottish, Irish and Viking galleys.

After nearly 1,000 years, we now have proof that ships similar to the one depicted in the Wemyss caves did make it to North America, thanks to the discoveries made at L'Anse aux Meadows.

Another fallacy that should be addressed is the idea that legends, discoveries and migrations (or just about anything else in the human experience) happens spontaneously, or in a vacuum, unrelated to what came before it. Not true!

For instance, there are no regions in Ireland that can still be considered purely or natively Celtic in their bloodlines. Many of the cities of Ireland carry Viking names, and many Irish families carry a wee bit of Viking blood, not to mention Scots and English blood, or reaching further back in time, Norman and Anglo-Saxon blood.

The same is true for Scotland. Many of the original settlers of the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland were actually Celts from Ireland who mixed with existing Pict tribes, and later Vikings, Normans and Anglo-Saxons. But all of these people ultimately came from somewhere else.

Saying someone is Irish or Scottish or even Norwegian can mean a lot of different things and can entail a lot of different bloodlines.

World history and so-called Celtic or Viking bloodlines are hierarchical, too.

And, while legends and explorations may also seem to stand on their own, they are almost certainly hierarchical as well, because, as the old saying goes, "Nothing happens in a vacuum."

It has been proven not only by historical records and the naming of various regions or cities throughout Europe, East Asia and the Middle East, but also by DNA research, that these people were continually moving to the West.

Once massive immigration from the British Isles to America began, in the 18th century, longer journeys to ports like Boston or Philadelphia took ships about three months or so to complete.

Because of the gulf stream, the return trip often took only about two months.

It is this very gulf stream of the Atlantic that keeps the weather of Ireland, and much of Scotland, warmer than countries on a similar latitude.

I have been in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and on the Isle of Skye, Scotland, during the month of February without seeing a single flake of snow, whereas my hometown in Pennsylvania had a foot or more of snow when I left it each time. The waters around Scotland and Ireland would have been warmer year-round than someone from America's North might imagine, and ocean and wind currents may have made possible many trips to Nova Scotia.

The very first voyage made in relation to the Knights Baronet of Nova Scotia took only six weeks, sailing from the Isle of Man to Newfoundland – and was advertised as taking only 18 days! It would not be out of character for Vikings or Celts to repeatedly sail to Nova Scotia or at least North America, each time relying on lessons learned from earlier voyages. The notion that these hardened sailors, who had spent centuries sailing in rough waters, were too timid to sail on to Nova Scotia defies all logic and historical evidence. They could have, and they most likely did.

Among the families on the Knights Baronet of Nova Scotia list we find many of these seriously-nautical families included.

In fact, a few of the baronetcies were accepted by men who descended directly from Sir Henry Sinclair. Others descended from, or had very close ties with the MacDonald clan, and with the Templars.

Henry Sinclair was the Lord Admiral of Scotland, one of the great offices of State in the kingdom of Scotland, before its union with England.

This office was one of considerable power, including command of the King's ships and sailors, inspection of all sea ports, harbors, and the sea coast, with jurisdiction over all salt and fresh water navigation.

That a man so highly-placed in the Scottish navy, and a member of such a sea-going family as the Sinclairs, would be incapable of sailing five or six weeks to North America just doesn't make any sense.

I'm not saying that he necessarily did, but he could well have done this, more than once, and there is good reason to believe he did. Many other people could have, as well, and they obviously did, before and after Columbus.

Another associate of mine, Crichton Miller, has presented a great deal of evidence showing that the well-known Celtic Cross was not originally just a grave marker or piece of jewelry, but rather a widely used navigational instrument allowing ancient sailors to determine their course, day and night. He explores this theory in his book *The Golden Thread of Time*.

Crichton tells us:

"Our ancestors thought in cycles by observing the stars in their clockwork motion through the night sky. And, the answer to all the questions about how our ancestors kept time is in the Bible under Genesis, verses 14 to 17: 'And God said, let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.' The key is the word 'signs' and its association with stars."

By watching the stars, an ancient mariner could use a simple plumb bob, and a movable wheel affixed to a cross (which forms the basic Celtic Cross) in order to tell his location, and the time of day.



Reading stars the night before, using this simple mechanism, would set the sailing course for the day ahead.



Here is a typical Celtic Cross only this one is marked of with the four stages of the day and the four seasons of the year.



Above is Crichton Miller demonstrating his working Celtic Cross navigational aid.

It is thought by some that the older Celtic Crosses found in cemeteries were meant to show someone who made his living on the sea or perhaps died at sea.

We also have an example of a Portuguese Mariner's Quadrant (quarter of a circle) showing sighting pinholes and a plumb line, working very much like Crichton Miller's example of a Celtic Cross navigational aid.

It is shown in the opposite column and there are many other examples that could be shown along with it.



Samuel de Champlain used a similar, though slightly different astrolabe, when he explored Nova Scotia in the early 1600s.

Then there is the complex Antikythera Mechanism, circa 100 BC, and many other devices in between, which were forerunners of, or companions to the Celtic Cross and the astrolabe, such as the cross staff, circa 1088 AD, and even the Viking's sunstone.

Ancient mariners had the hierarchical knowledge of a land to the west, they had vessels that were more than sufficient to make the trip, and they had navigational instruments to guide the way.

When faced with historical facts, the notion that these early sailors could not make the trip from the British Isles or Norwegian countries to North America simply has to be eliminated entirely from the conversation.

People once refused to accept pre-Columbian travel to North America, and a Middle Eastern origin for the Celtic race, though these have now been scientifically proven as fact. There are too many family legends, too much proof that traditions are often found to be true in substance if not in detail, and too much logical analysis of historical information involved to simply write all of this off as fanciful romanticizing, or some modern-day conspiracy theory.

Saying Columbus was first to discover America is like saying we are the only life form in the Universe.

# How Does That Work?

- GPS & Surveying -



The 1600s appear to have been a period of substantial advancement for the human race, at least in terms of the British Isles.

Queen Elizabeth supported “science” almost as a sideline to the wars she waged on neighbors in Ireland, Spain and other parts of the world.

But once King James VI of Scotland, King James I of England and Ireland, brought the British Isles under one generally accepted monarchy, science blossomed.

Sir Francis Bacon is often considered the main driver of this, and yet there were others, especially William Gilbert.

Gilbert shared the position of physician to the king and queen along with others, particularly Sir Theodore Mayerne, a very close neighbor of William Alexander, at Charing Cross, London.

Mayerne had been put in charge of the illness of King James’s son Prince Henry.

Henry was described as being “of good height and excellently well shaped, as graceful in body as in mind, and in all things the very antithesis of his sire. High spirited, valiant, gracious, and even at this young age a patron of all deserving arts, he was fast becoming the idol of the people, whilst the very flower of the nobility was found surrounding him at St. James’ Palace, where he held his court. Athletic in his pursuits and austere in manners, God-fearing and studious by inclination, he contrived to be dignified and princely beyond his years.”

Henry seemed the polar opposite of Prince Charles, who eventually followed his father to the throne as Charles I.

Henry simply died too soon.

William Alexander was tutor to both Henry and Charles. When Henry became very sick, after perhaps eating some spoiled oysters and contracting typhoid, Theodore Mayerne took over as chief physician.

Some of his treatments were odd, but not uncommon for the day. He recommended such things as:

- “Let a living mole be split down the middle and the viscera, wrapped up in moist tow, be dried in hot ashes and then pulverised. Give the powder in white wine at first warning of an attack.”

- “A bolus compounded of mercury 3vi, Dij, Venice turpentine Div, with eleven sheets of gold leaf. This to be divided into twenty pill masses, involving a dose of 20 grains of mercury in each dose.”

To paraphrase the old saying – with doctors like this, who needs enemies?

William Gilbert had long since shown his distaste for this type of medicine and wrote about it in a 1603 book – a sentiment later echoed by Francis Bacon in his 1605 *Advancement of Learning* – complaining that medicine was “more laboured than advanced.”

This may be why Gilbert decided to look to the stars instead.

He made the first known attempt to map the surface markings on the Moon in the 1590s. His chart, made without the use of a telescope, showed outlines of dark and light patches on the Moon’s face.

Gilbert's primary scientific work was *De Magnete, Magneticisque Corporibus, et de Magno Magnete Tellure* (On the Magnet and Magnetic Bodies, and on the Great Magnet the Earth) published in 1600. In this work, he describes many of his experiments with his model Earth he called the "terrella."

From these experiments, he concluded that the Earth was itself magnetic and that this was the reason compasses pointed north (previously, some believed that it was the pole star {Polaris} or a large magnetic island on the north pole that attracted the compass). Gilbert was the first to argue, correctly, that the centre of the Earth was iron, and he considered an important and related property of magnets was that they could be cut, each forming a new magnet with north and south poles.

Bacon seemed to have mixed feelings about Gilbert, perhaps driven by jealousy. While he commended his work, and even echoed some of it, he also stated, "The Alchemists have made a philosophy out of a few experiments of the furnace and Gilbert our countryman hath made a philosophy out of observations of the lodestone."

Later, Bacon wrote, "Gilbert has himself become a magnet; that is, he has ascribed too many things to that force and built a ship out of a shell."

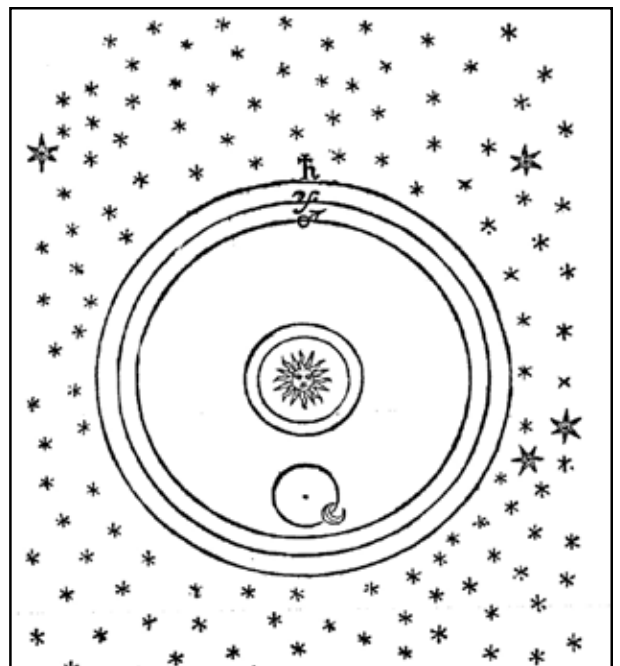
Regardless of what Sir Francis Bacon thought, Gilbert has gone down in history as one of the great natural philosophers. He even had a unit of magnetomotive force, also known as magnetic potential, named the "Gilbert," in his honor.

Gilbert, in his work, *De Magnete* printed in 1600, had only some vague notions that the magnetic virtue of the earth in some way determines the direction of the earth's axis, the rate of its daily rotation, and that of the revolution of the moon about it.

Once humans got past the misconception that the earth was flat, the typical depiction of the solar system, with a motionless earth at its center, was exemplified by a chart produced by Bartolomeu Velho, in 1568, and shown below.



Based on his studies of other scientific writings and his own observations, William Gilbert published the following map of the solar system in another one of his books called *De Mundo*.



This illustration actually came very close to reality, showing two planets orbiting the Sun closer than Earth, showing Earth with the moon orbiting it, and then various other planets outside the orbit of the Earth.

Once Gilbert (and others) established that the Earth had an orbit and that it was a magnetized object, compasses began to make more sense. So did the surveying of land.

In September 2019, for the first time in over 360 years, compasses at Greenwich pointed true north. But what does this mean – and haven't compasses always pointed north?

Most of the time compasses don't actually point precisely towards the North Pole. For true north and magnetic north to come together at this point was a really special occurrence, and hasn't happened for hundreds of years.

So what's the difference?

True north is the direction that points directly towards the geographic North Pole. This is a fixed point on the Earth's globe.

Magnetic north is the direction that a compass needle points to as it aligns with the Earth's magnetic field, and this is what most early surveyors used to plot land.

What is interesting is that the magnetic North Pole shifts and changes over time in response to changes in the Earth's magnetic core. It is not a fixed point.

We don't know exactly where or when the first compass was invented. What we do know is that in Europe they were being used as early as the 12th century, and even earlier in China.

By the 16th century, compasses and charts were standard kits for ships sailing at sea. But even then, navigators and sailors knew there was something a little strange going on with their compasses.

They could see Polaris, but they could also see that their compasses didn't always align with it. Compasses didn't always point north.

Scientists began to question what could be causing this variation, or what is now known as "magnetic declination (or deviation)."

In the 1830s, British scientists initiated what became known as the "Magnetic Crusade."

This was an opportunity for Victorian scientists to travel around the world and measure magnetic deviation. The survey was to be used to aid ships and navigation, but it was also designed to better understand why the Earth's magnetic field changes over time and place.

James Ross first identified the magnetic North Pole on the Boothia Peninsula in Canada's Nunavut territory in 1831, scientists have been carefully measuring its location ever since. In recent years, it's been inching closer and closer to Siberia at a surprisingly rapid pace.

Researchers from U.K. and Denmark say they've uncovered the reason for this mysterious movement: Two writhing lobes of magnetic force are duking it out near Earth's core.

Earth's magnetic field is generated by molten iron in its outer core.

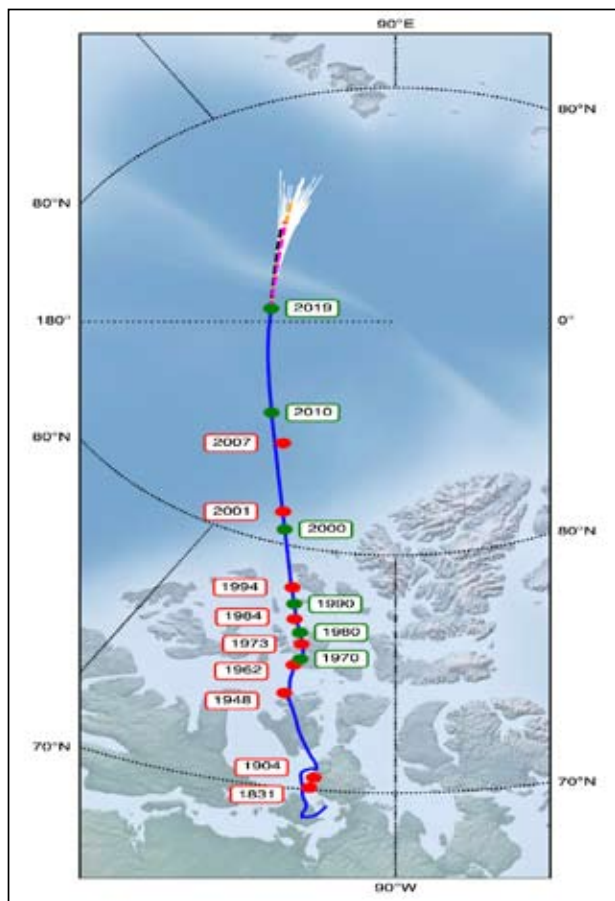
The flow of this liquid iron can influence the location of the planet's magnetic poles. While poles have drifted and even swapped places numerous times over the course of Earth's long history, what's different about this recent shift is how quickly it's happening.

From 1999 to 2005, Earth's magnetic north pole went from shifting 9 miles at most each year to as much as 37 miles per year.



The illustration below is from a 2020 article in *Nature Geoscience* showing the shift across the top of the globe since 1831.

From 1999 to 2005, Earth's magnetic north pole went from shifting nine miles at most, each year, to as much as 37 miles in a year. As can easily be seen, this would (and does) raise havoc with people relying on old compass surveys.



These people include the search team on Oak Island who deal with “haters” complaining that they can’t seem to pinpoint exact locations.

Additional proof of this shift of magnetic north was offered by John Delano, Professor of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences, University at Albany (New York).

Delano came across a number of old stone walls as he walked through New England forests and farmlands.

Delano happened to take a GPS unit along with him one day and found that the direction of the walls seemed to vary from time to time with no logical or apparent reason.

It wasn’t until he compared them to old property maps that he realized the variants in magnetic north were literally cast in stone.

By checking several stone walls against property maps and against magnetic north he was able to provide an independent check on magnetic declination between 1685 and 1910.

Doug Crowell assured me the OI team takes into consideration every idiosyncrasy involved in trying to rebuild old records and maps to fit the new features of the island.

Over the last few years surveyor Steven Guptil has come onboard to help with this task, most often using GPS.

The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a satellite-based navigation system made up of at least 24 satellites meant to help locate exact positions. GPS works in any weather conditions, anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day. The U.S. Department of Defense originally put the satellites into orbit for military use, but they were made available for civilian use in the 1980s and virtually all cell phones and Garmin-type navigating tools rely on this system.

GPS satellites circle the Earth twice a day in a precise orbit. Each satellite transmits a unique signal and orbital parameters that allow GPS devices to decode and compute the precise location of the satellite. GPS receivers use this information and trilateration to calculate a GPS user’s exact location, so that you can measure your driving route, map your property lines, find your way home, or even dig for treasure!

# Who's Who? Sinclair

The Sinclair or St. Clair family is a giant-sized family and no article of a few pages in length could do it justice so I'll stay focused on how this family relates to Nova Scotia and possibly Oak Island, beginning of course with Henry Sinclair.

Glooscap and Zichmini are two names connected to the supposed Sir Henry Sinclair voyage to America that have stumped historians for hundreds of years. I already wrote in detail, last month, about my Glooscap theory. In this issue, and in this story about the Sinclair family, I will address the name Zichmini.

Since we know that Carlo, Antonio, and Nicolò Zeno were, in fact, real people, and were also highly-placed in Italy, a couple of questions need to be asked.

Why would the younger Nicolò make up a wild and very complex story about his ancestor's adventures, when they were already very famous?



A Portuguese ship similar to what Sir Henry Sinclair might have sailed to North America.

And how could he have some reasonably good and new geographical information in it, unless he had some serious notations on which to base his story?

Venetian author Andrea di Robilant, in his 2012 book *Irresistible North*, makes a case for the authenticity of the *Zeno Narrative* far better than I would ever be able to do.

He also inadvertently helps with my Zichmini theory.

Another seed of doubt was planted when one writer said that some legends claim Antonio Zeno sailed back to Orkney, leaving Sinclair behind with only "boats propelled by oars," and that these would not have been sufficient to take him to Massachusetts.

Again, not true. It was boats with oars (and sails) that allowed the Vikings to sail from Norway to North America, 400 years earlier.

Assuming we might now know who Glooscap could have been, we are still left with the question – Where did the name Zichmini, of the *Zeno Narrative*, come from? We need to return to the charter for the Baronets of Nova Scotia for a little clue.

In that charter, in the description of the land just named Nova Scotia for the first time in history, we read, "...the eastern tract of the land between the countries of the Suriqui and Stechemini, commonly called Suriquois and Stechemines, to the river commonly called by the name of Santa Crux..."

The Suriquois were actually the Mi'kmaq tribe, but were called Suriquois by the French. The French called another tribe the Stechemini or, more commonly, the Etchemin. This tribe has since disappeared. In the Latin version of the Baronets of Nova Scotia charter the Stechmini are referred to as the Etchemines.

The name Stechemini was said, by the Natives, to mean “canoe men.” The French explorers seemed to imply that these canoe men were already called Stechemini when the French arrived in Nova Scotia.

Assuming that “min” or “mini” stood for the word “men,” I went on the hunt for the meaning of the word “steche.”

I could find only one reference for this word, and, in that reference, steche meant cache, used in this case to describe a cache or stash of food and supplies.

This was an English reference, not French or any other language, meaning the Stechemini may have originally been given this name by English-speaking explorers.

Could the original steche men, stash men, or cache men be Scots, led by Sinclair, who were burying a cache of treasure and/or supplies in Nova Scotia, perhaps on Oak Island? Could Sir Henry Sinclair be the leader of the steche men, the cache men, the Stechemini, the Zichmini?

Both of the words Cachemini and Zichmini have the “mini” ending. Both words have the middle sound of “ech.” All we are asked to believe is that the “C” sound was mistaken for and/or was written down as a “Z.”

On page 100, of his book, di Robilant, refers to the word “Zenobium” in the Zeno Narrative as “simply the Latin word ‘Cenobium,’ meaning ‘monastery,’ spelled in the venetian manner, with a ‘z’ in lieu of a ‘c.’”

There it is! – the potential proof that the Zeno brothers wrote Stechemini or Cachemini down as Zichmini and that Nicolò Zeno may have associated the name Zichmini with Henry Sinclair.

Perhas it should have been associated with his men instead, who were burying a cache of treasure and/or supplies.

This cache would not necessarily have to be buried on Oak Island. It could have been anywhere in North America, and it was very common for explorers to burying caches for later retrieval or for followers to find, in order to provide the necessities of travel and existence in a frontier area.

Stechemini/Cachemini could have been recorded as Zichmini, and (New) Scotland as Estotiland, in Venice.

Instead of the centuries of doubt all these names have cast on a voyage by Henry Sinclair, in this new light they very strongly support his voyage to North America.

After the great Scottish hero-king, Robert the Bruce, died, his grandson Robert II took over as king. However, towards the end of his reign, and very near the time that Henry Sinclair is said to have made his trip to North America, King Robert II was experiencing what may have been senility, or at least severe depression. His queen tried to hold things together until one of his sons could take the throne.

By 1384, Scots had re-taken nearly all of the lands still occupied by England, but following the commencement of English and French peace talks, Robert was reluctant to commit Scotland to all-out war and included Scotland in the peace treaty.

Robert’s peace strategy was a factor in a virtual coup in 1384, when he lost control of the country, first to his eldest son, John, Earl of Carrick, afterwards King Robert III, and again in 1388 to John’s younger brother, Robert, Earl of Fife, who became the first Duke of Albany, and served as Regent of Scotland. Sir Henry Sinclair is said to have traveled to North America in 1398. Robert II died at Dundonald Castle in 1390. This was just eight years before the supposed Sinclair voyage, which itself took place just ten years after the coup led by the Duke.

In addition, the “Papal Schism” was a split within the Catholic Church which lasted from 1378 to 1417. Three men simultaneously claimed to be the true Pope. Throw into this mix of Scottish and Church turmoil the Hundred Years War between England and France, the Black Death of the 1340s that killed two-thirds of all Europeans, and the Peasant’s Revolt of 1381, and it can easily be seen that educated, worldly Templars or perhaps even just wealthy Scotsmen, might be hungry for a New Scotland less than two months sail from the old one.

The throne of Scotland eventually fell to James I (son of Robert III), who unfortunately had been kidnapped by the English and held for ransom. His uncle, the Duke of Albany, acted as Regent of Scotland, and all indications are that he delayed the ransom payment for James so that he could enjoy the fruits of the kingship. The Sinclair family had been charged with the care of James I, during his minority.

Another associate of mine, and fellow historian, is Cass Wright, of New England. When writing a piece on the Sinclair family, he tells of their connections to the Vikings, especially through well-designed marriages. He writes:

Due to the finesse of one such marriage, the Earldoms of Strathclyde, Caithness and Orkney came into the possession of the Sinclairs, resulting in a son named Henry, who would be named the Prince of Orkney, on his maturity, by Haakon VI of Norway. Emboldened by his conquest of the Faroe Islands in 1391, for Scotland, not for Norway, Henry Sinclair embarked on a most peculiar sea voyage, in a fully manned and provisioned multi-masted sailing ship of his own design,

purportedly to explore the place known as Greenland, which his mother’s relations had spoken of so often. And so he departed, to return the following year and proclaimed that he had indeed explored Greenland, which he declared as having no great promise... but did he go farther, as legend would have us believe?

I have to ask, what was the “promise” Sinclair was looking for? Was it the same promise many noblemen might have been looking for – the promise of a location for a New Scotland – a Nova Scotia?

Believing that all of these prominent families would be lying, that all logic of a migration of Templars from certain torture and death in Europe to relative safety in Scotland is bunk, and that conditions in Scotland and in Europe around the time of the supposed voyage of Henry Sinclair would not tend to make people, with a somewhat comfortable lifestyle to protect, want to find a new and safer place to live, simply seems like a misguided, or at the very least, a close-minded point of view.

Imagine that you, Sir Henry Sinclair, Lord Admiral of Scotland, with access to, and knowledge of all things naval, have many related clan chiefs who share your concern for your mutual well-being, and also your knowledge of the possibility of establishing a New Scotland over the sea.

I can’t tell you exactly what might have happened, but I can tell you why it could have happened.

**Point 1:** The Vikings have absolutely been shown to have made it to Newfoundland, and others, no doubt, had as well. Later, at least one early trip from the British Isles to Newfoundland is recorded as having taken only about a month and a half.



**Point 2:** A kingless Scotland is shown to be suffering under the weight of several catastrophic events at the same time that the 1398 voyage of Henry Sinclair is said to have taken place.

**Point 3:** Many of the families on the Knights Baronet of Nova Scotia list have documented and traditional connections to the Knights Templar. Despite all of the “New World” land controlled by England, these Baronets seem to have had a heightened interest in the specific region surrounding Nova Scotia.

**Point 4:** Very significant Scottish legends have often been proven to be true, even if the specific details are clouded by time, and by the retelling of the tale.

Faced with these facts, it is, therefore, incumbent on us to at least begin with the assumption that the legend of Henry Sinclair and Nova Scotia could be true.

As we surround it with so much detailed evidence, it becomes more and more likely that it is, in fact, true.

When the young James I of Scotland was kidnapped, in 1406, it was Henry Sinclair II, Earl of Orkney, who was by his side as they attempted to make their way to safety in France. However, both were captured by the English and both were imprisoned in the Tower of London.

Sinclair was released the following year, but James I was kept until after the Battle of Red Harlaw, at which Donald MacDonald, Lord of the Isles, fought for the sake of his king.

Henry Sinclair II, stayed in England for most of this period looking after his King. Donald’s son Alexander, and Henry Sinclair II’s son William became fast friends, apparently until a disagreement caused friction between them some time before 1460.

The Auld Alliance between Scotland and France was so well-known that even Shakespeare got in the act with these lines from his play Henry V, Act 1, Scene 2 – “If that you will France win, then with Scotland first begin.”

Yes, Sir Henry Sinclair, and other noblemen who are said to have gone with him, would have had just about every reason in the world to want to secretly establish a New Scotland in a land to the west that he may have heard about through his Viking ancestors’ sagas, or from other mariners, during his many trips sailing out into the North Atlantic to visit nearby islands.

I believe that, if they went at all, they went simply as explorers trying to lay to rest the Viking legends of Vinland, and to see if this new land to the west would be a good place to settle their families. This very settlement was attempted by Sir William Alexander, 230 years later, under the Knights Baronets of Nova Scotia banner.

Several Sinclair men became Knights Baronet of Nova Scotia along with men from related families.

On March 26, 1768, two organizations were founded at Halifax, located about an hour from Oak Island. One was the North British Society (the oldest Scottish heritage society outside of Great Britain). On the same day, many of the same members also formed the Saint Andrew’s Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, at Halifax. The Society even used the Mason’s hall to meet.

The list of membership for the Society reads like a Who’s Who of Knights Baronet families, with surnames like Alexander, Campbell, Forrester, Forbes, Fraser, Gordon, Keith, MacDonald, MacLean, Mackenzie, Murray, Stewart and Strachan, plus many other surnames, including Sinclair.

# SO, WHAT'S NEXT?

I'm closing in on my last two issues of *Oak Island Times* for this year. I will suspend publication during the regular TV season of *The Curse of Oak Island*, because like you, I will be watching every episode with baited breath. If it makes sense, I will pick up again next May with a second summer of issues.

I'm not sure what will be in the next issue as I am working on a few new angles and I don't yet know how refined they'll be by the September 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 newsletter – to keep folks up-to-date, as much as possible, on my research.

A few points I need to make before saying goodbye for this month. **This publication in no way represents the Oak Island Team, Oak Island Tours, Prometheus Entertainment or the History Channel.** However, some of the photos in this e-magazine are often courtesy of the History Channel or Prometheus. They are also well aware of *Oak Island Times*.

I've worked with all of these folks for seven years, but they speak for themselves.

I am just presenting my ramblings for your enjoyment. 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.)

BTW, I am dropping the need for a password. It was just something I did for fun, and a few thousand people used it over the last few months.

*If you haven't read any of my books yet, my new book, **Oak Island And New Ross**, has at least three major discoveries in it that no one else has ever realized. Out of my seven Oak Island books, I recommend you start with this one. Of course, another book is underway and tentatively scheduled for when **The Curse of Oak Island** seasons ends next spring, if not before.*

