

Blair

R. V. Harris
Collector

2055
MGI Vol. 283



The following letter was brought to my attention in
Chester, N. S., in the summer of 1916, but unfortunately, while
I copied it I do not remember at this date - February 28, 1927 -
from whom I received it, or whether it was copied from a personal
letter or newspaper. I would assume the latter, as the name
of an addressee is omitted from the copy. It is certain that
the party who showed the original to me, placed some value on it
otherwise I would have retained it.

*This letter was
published in the Boston
Traveler and the clipping is in
the scrapbook used by Tupper in his accounts
of the island in 1894 B (BLAIR)*

W. Blair

Halifax, N. S.,
December 26, ~~1916~~ 1898 5

On reading a very interesting article in the Halifax
Mail, credited to the Boston Traveler, about a company having been
formed to renew the search for Kidd's supposed hidden treasure at
Oak Island, in ~~the county of Lunenburg~~ this county, it brought to
my mind a curious story that was told me a few years ago in refer-
ence to this subject.

I do not wish to convey the idea that the information
will be of any value to this new company of fortune hunters, but
may prove of interest just at this time. I, like the majority
of Nova Scotians, have heard more or less of Oak Island at Chester
as being the repository of that notable pirate's wealth, and possi-
bly know more than a good many, for, when a boy, my early recollec-
tions were associated with Oak Island, pirates, Captain Kidd's gold
etc., as I had an uncle who was a shareholder in one of the early
companies formed and who was imbued with all the enthusiasm that
mystery engenders and that accompanies the search for hidden gold.
He had not only to bear the gibes of unbelievers as well as friends,
particularly when unexpected calls were made, but had to contend
against disappointments and unforeseen obstacles at the works, and
though his golden dreams were not realized he never lost faith in
the belief but what the gold was there all the same. The next
time I heard about Oak Island was on the Australian gold fields
about thirty years ago from a Mr. Tupper Flemming of Stewiacke,
N. S., who had worked there a season.

(See J.E. Wilson File)

2224- P. 1. *DIED APRIL 1/51* Papers

MGI Vol. 983

FRED L. BLAIR DIES SUDDENLY IN HOSPITAL

The death of Frederick Leander Blair, one of Amherst's oldest active citizens occurred in the Victoria General Hospital, Halifax, on Sunday morning. Mr. Blair was in his 84th year and had been ill for nearly a month. He was taken to Halifax on March 21 after being a patient at Highland View Hospital for approximately one week.

Mr. Blair was well known in the Maritimes and in Canada and the United States through his connection with the world famous Oak Island, believed to be the hiding place of Captain Kidd's treasure. Mr. Blair had been interested in the search for the pirate loot for the past 60 years and held the lease for the treasure being buried on the Island.

He was born at Thomson Station in 1867, son of the late William and Susan Blair. He lived in Amherst in his earlier years moving to Calgary in 1912, where he carried on an insurance business.

He returned to Amherst in 1931 where he continued his insurance business until appointed registrar of probate in 1939.

He was a past master of Alexandra Lodge A.F. and A.M. and attended the First Baptist Church.

He is survived by one son, Gordon of Saint John, one sister, Mrs. Reina Quinn of Bayside, L.I. and one granddaughter, Marie, Mrs. Clayton Smith of Patterson, N. J. His wife and a son Colin predeceased him in 1943.

The remains are resting at Campbell's Funeral Home until Tuesday night when they will be taken to Colonial Hall from where the funeral will be held Wednesday afternoon at 3 o'clock.

THE LATE F. L. BLAIR

Mention of the name of the late Fred Blair inevitably brings up remembrance of the Oak Island treasure and his interest in what was supposed to have been left on this South Shore Island by the old time navigator and pirate Captain William Kidd. Mr. Blair was deeply impressed with the possibilities of this search and was actively associated in it for many years and had the almost exclusive right to operate the property. All the prospecting and shaft-sinking that was ever done on this Island failed to disclose the fabulous treasure, but once in a while something out of the ordinary was revealed and this led to renewed interest in the search. Mr. Blair never lost some glimmer of hope in this rewarding possibility.

But this was not his whole life. He lived in Amherst many years and worked for others in his younger days after coming here from Thomson Station where he was born, and after some time spent in the West where he conducted an insurance business returned to Amherst and developed the same kind of business here. Some twelve years ago he was appointed Registrar of Probate in Amherst and, though not a lawyer, made himself intimately acquainted with all the responsibilities of that important position and fulfilled them to the better. It is our impression that he was an exceptionally capable official and that he worked many long hours to keep abreast of the much business that was constantly coming to that office. His moments of relaxation in recent years were very few.

He was a good community man and active-

He was a good community man and actively interested in the work of First Baptist Church, and his many and varied experiences and excellent memory made him an interesting conversationalist. The number of our citizens who can talk authoratively of the Amherst of sixty years ago are now very few. His tall spare figure was very familiar on our streets and now that he has gone on the long last treasure trove there will be renewed thought of that romantic island that engaged his thought and dreams for so many years.

With the departing day now past may the sun rise brightly for him on the other shore.

*Amherst Daily News
April 2, 1951*



*Editorial - Halifax Chronicle
Herald April 4/51
April 4/51*

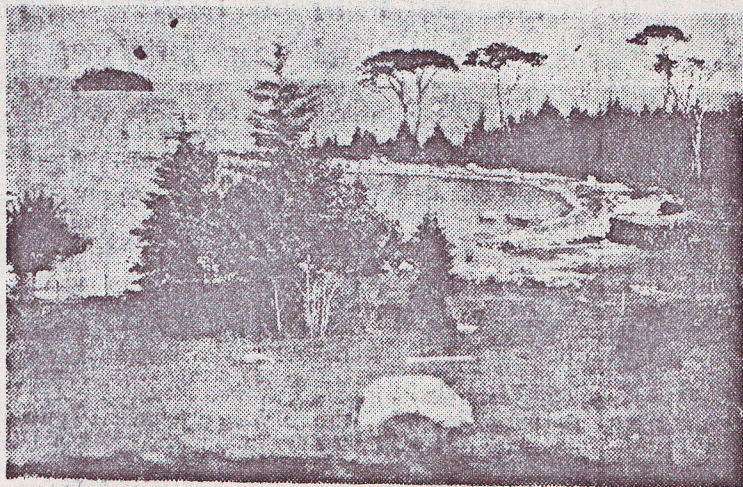
Public Archives of Nova Scotia
HALIFAX, N. S.

1951 ✓

BLAIR

Nova Scotian's Dream Of Solving Oak Island's Riddle Ended By Death

The dream lasted him a lifetime, and hundreds of others who read the accounts of the fabulous fortune, or who have actually—like the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt—turned a spade in Oak Island's clay, will keep the riddle, and the dream, alive.



RETAINS SECRET — Oak Island, pictured above, is still the scene of a half century hunt for Captain Kidd's treasure, and the dream of a Nova Scotian, Judge Frederick L. Blair of Amherst, of seeing the riddle solved was denied by death on Sunday. Judge Blair, who took part in the first treasure hunt on the little island in 1895, died in Halifax on Sunday at the age of 83.

By **TED SHIELDS**

British United Press Staff Correspondent

APRIL 1/51

HALIFAX, April 3—(BUP)— Judge Frederick L. Blair died in Halifax Sunday at the age of 83, without realizing his life-long dream of solving the riddle of Oak Island.

But even as Blair, judge of the Probate Court in Amherst, Nova Scotia for the past 15 years, was dying, a new attempt to raise Captain Kidd's legendary treasure was starting.

Fifty-Five Years Of Watching

Fifty-five years of watching one try after another end in failure never dimmed Blair's belief that Kidd, or some other pirate, had hidden sea-chests full of golden doubloons in the mysterious network of underground pits and passages in the flint-hard clay of Oak Island, on Nova Scotia's south coast.

Blair, a native of Amherst, spent part of his youth in Massachusetts but returned to Nova Scotia in 1895 just in time to take part in his first treasure hunt. It was almost one century then since two curious youths had discovered the opening of the now famous "Treasure Pit" on the island.

And the result of the searches, a century apart, was just about the same—the pit was cleared out, the searchers found some parchment, bits of crude ironwork, coco-matting . . . but no golden treasure.

Blair never gave up hope. When he grew too old to take part in the treasure hunts himself, he sub-let his treasure trove rights—which he had leased from the Provincial Government at the turn of the century—to carefully chosen candidates from the hundreds who asked his per-

Knowing the thousands of dollars the treasure-seeker needed to pour into the pit to hold back the waters of Mahone Bay and prevent the treasure, if any, sinking even deeper in the silt, Blair always confined the treasure seeking rights to those with sufficient money and engineering ability to make a worthwhile try . . . and take the loss.

He knew, as many of the eager hunters found, the greatest fortune on Oak Island was the money poured into the series of vain searches.

Treasure Trove Right Leased

Last year, Judge Blair and G. D. Redden of Newark, New Jersey—co-owners of the Island—sold three-quarters of the land to New York mining engineer John Whitney Lewis, who spent last Summer surveying his new island and indicated recently actual treasure-digging

operations might start early this year.

Blair was too ill at the time to comment on Lewis' plans. The last full-scale assault on the Oak Island was in 1947, when Edward Reichert of New York dug and found nothing.

Nearly a century ago, some treasure-seekers actually sighted an old wooden sea chest in the pit. But before it could be raised, sea water poured into the excavation from a hidden tunnel and the men barely escaped with their lives. When the pit was pumped dry, the sea chest had sunk again in the ooze, and has not been sighted since.

At other times, links of iron chain and other iron work, coc-fibre matting, paper and bits of tropical woods have been raised and even a few gold coins were once found.

Such finds were enough to maintain the faith of Blair in the legend-

2417- R.V. Harris Papers
MGI Vol. 384

Public Archives of Nova Scotia
HALIFAX, N.S.

2409 - R.V. Harris Papers

MG-1 Vol. 384

BLAIR

Finds Oak Island's Boss Much Alive

AMHERST, April 24 — Seeking more information in regard to Oak Island and its supposed treasure, Edward R. Snow of Boston has been here conferring with Fred L. Blair, who has been lessee of this famous island for several decades.

Mr. Snow also wanted to see Mr. Blair for another reason. He had stated in a broadcast on Oak Island a short time ago that Mr. Blair had not been able to find the treasure and had died of a broken heart.

It happened that Mr. Blair was listening to the broadcast and immediately wrote Mr. Snow that he was still very much alive.

He has been Registrar of Probate in Amherst for many years. This brought the broadcaster to Amherst after coming by plane from Boston to Oak Island and from there to Dartmouth and to Amherst.

Mr. Snow secured a number of photographs of Treasure Island and expressed himself as greatly interested in the wealth of historic lore in this province and particularly in Cumberland County. He plans to return to Nova Scotia in the Summer.

Halifax Herald
April 25/47

FINDS TREASURE ISLAND LESSEE VERY MUCH ALIVE

AMHERST, April 24—Some weeks ago Edward R. Snow, Boston author and authority on New England coastal history, in a broadcast about Oak Island treasure pit in Chester Basin, stated that Fred L. Blair, Amherst lessee of the island, had died of a broken heart because of failure to locate the alleged pirate hoards.

Mr. Blair, who happened to be listening at the time, sent Mr. Snow a letter assuring him that the lessee is very much alive.

Yesterday Mr. Snow arrived here by plane with Borden Price of Amherst, and called on Mr. Blair with an apology for his inadvertence.

Then they flew off to Oak Island to get some pictures, came back later en route to Boston where Mr. Snow will write a book about the famous treasure hunts on the South Shore. He plans to return later to spend the summer in Cumberland.

Halifax Chronicle
April 25/47

^{HFX}
(N.B. ^{HFX}Chronicle & Herald
were separate newspapers
till about 1950)

BLAIR**AIRMAIL***American Commodities*

Laws St. 1708 P. O. Drawer 6201
 Telephones: Riverside 8778. Central 3632
 (Nite) Justin 8-8896
 Cable "Amerco"

Dallas 2, Texas, U. S. A.

Comodidades Americana

Exportes "Camfer" S. A.
 Tonalá 75 Apart. Post 7432
 Telephone Ericsson 14-57-27
 "Camfer" Cable

Mexico, D. F. Mex.

26 de Julio de 1947.

Sr. Fred L. Blair
 Reg. Probate
 Amherst Nov. Scotia.

RE: "Kidd" Chache & Shaft
 Oak Isl. Mahone Bay. N. S.

Dear Mr. Blair:

The writer just happened to read a late account of activity on the above project which you have participated in and due to the fact you are credited with Crown Rites on Oak Island am just wondering if that part of the article is fact or fiction. Am also wondering if mention of Edw. Reichart and a syndicate with plans for activity on Oak Isl. at present is also true and if so what progress has been made along what lines of procedure.

The reason I am writing you is due to the writer haveing had considerable experience in Mexico in the past in recovering various caches and also in taking over and reopening ancient mines in various parts of the country where old shafts, drifts and crosscuts are not recorded, mapped or reported in the archives and any search for values or producing ore bodies is strictly prospecting of a nature requiring a development of instinct and sharp perception and deduction of each project as found. However, a general scheme of eliminating certain possible methods, not applicable to some project at hand, is the result of my experience and in reading over the facts of the above mentioned prospect I have been inclined to believe that since nonexperienced searching has resulted in continuous failures in the past, it could be that on all past instances a prime factor has not been considered which is the general method that has always been employed by the old experienced pirates in cacheing underground with access by shaft or tunnel.

The account of your activity in the above project mentions that you began operations at a depth below permanent waterline of approximately 100 feet and before your starting, other searchers seemed to have found battons of devious materials every ten feet in depth from the top of the shaft of some 13 ft. dia., at regular intervals down to waterline. Since you are familiar with the shaft, am just wondering if the diamater of shaft gradually reduces at each ten foot stage where planking of various materials was removed. If such is the case, please advise me. Also advise me if you found the shaft shored with any timber or other materials or lagged in any way by the original parties sinking same, or

American Commodities

Laws St. 1708 P. O. Drawer 6201
 Telephones: Riverside 8778. Central 3632
 (Nite) Justin 8-8896
 Cable "Amerco"

Dallas 2, Texas, U. S. A.

Comodidades Americana

Exportes "Camfer" S. A.
 Tonalá 75 Apart. Post 7432
 Telephone Ericsson 14-57-27
 "Camfer" Cable

Mexico, D. F. Mex.



#2 F. L. Blair, 7-26-'47
 Amherst N. S.

if shored by prospectors as reinforcing of walls against caving. The condition of the shaft is the only positive means of deducting its original purpose when sunk by extinct individuals and since you have spent considerable time and effort on going on down below the waterline, I presume you know if you were following an old shaft at this lower depth, or if you might have been sinking a shaft from your starting point in the old one.

Since the article mentions that you still have the rites on the island, I presume you are still interested in the project, and if you are, actively or not I may be able to be of some help to your associates as I happened to have talked to some successful treasure archeologists who mentioned their solutions of the problems of a project similar to the shaft in question, and it could be that yours is not hopeless.

Any communication you are in position to forward me will be appreciated and, if at your earliest convenience, please direct it to my residence address below.

Sincerely,

L. Albert Smith

3703 Hawthorne Ave.
 Highland Park,
 Dallas Texas, U. S. A.

les-j
 Personal Corresp.
 via. Air Mail

?
Haiti?

www.oakisland.com