

Hedden

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Kidd off course on Oak Island search?

By IVAN SHORTLIFFE
Staff Reporter

OAK ISLAND — A 76-year-old American, who in the mid-1930s spent four years on the Mahone Bay island in search of treasure, has added a new twist to one of the world's most intriguing mysteries.

Since the money pit was first discovered by three young hunters in 1795, many have been led to believe that the treasure, if there is one, is that of the English pirate Capt. William Kidd.

Instead of burying the treasure, as many had been led to believe through the years, Kidd might have been looking for Oak Island himself, having heard of the mysterious underground workings there.

Gilbert D. Hedden, who is now retired, told this newspaper in a telephone interview from his home in Florida, the English pirate had nothing to do with burying the treasure, but that he knew of Oak Island and had made notes about it.

These notes, it is said, might have erroneously branded Kidd as the creator of the maze, pit and intricate flooding system that has played such an important role in safeguarding the secret.

Dan Blankenship, project

manager for Triton Alliance Ltd., a consortium of wealthy Canadians and Americans currently exploring the island, has said repeatedly that he never for one moment thought Capt. Kidd had buried treasure on the mile-long island.

He argues that Kidd did not have the time, know-how or the number of workmen which would have been required to carry out such an undertaking.

Mr. Hedden indicated that while Kidd had sought to pinpoint the location of the isle of mystery, perhaps he had never been successful since Kidd believed it to be somewhere near the state of Maine.

Mr. Blankenship said it was anybody's guess if Kidd had ever set foot on the South Shore island or had tried to retrieve any possible buried treasure.

An article in the Sunday edition of The New York Times, May 8, 1928, had first sparked Mr. Hedden's interest in Oak Island. He was fascinated by the engineering problems encountered by previous expeditions.

After graduating from college he became vice-president and general manager of Hedden Iron Construction Company, New Jersey. After sale of the business in 1932, he entered the life insurance business and later established an automobile business.

He was mayor of Chatham from 1934 to 1938.

It is unlikely, he said, that he would return to the island, while emphasizing the keen interest he maintains in the work being carried on by Triton.

The first official guided tours of the island are set to begin at noon today and continue over the weekend until 6 p.m. each day.

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Shopping plaza to be expanded

BRIDGEWATER — A 13,000 square foot extension to the Bridgewater shopping plaza was approved at a special session of Bridgewater town council.

Local realtor John Marcus, representing owners Gateway Realities, Yarmouth, said a separate building on High Street would house a food specialty shop, mail order, ladies' wear, men's wear, bank and general office space, making a total of 20 tenants for the plaza, with all space already leased.

Town council earlier this week approved a \$2 million shopping mall for the east side of the LaHave River, east of North Street, adjacent to Aberdeen Road, to be constructed by National Lease Holdings Ltd., Saint John, N.B.

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