

Hedden

1980
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Basking Ridge, N.J.
June 28, 1953

Dear Mr. Harris:

I most certainly appreciated your confidence in me in permitting me to examine the rough draft of your proposed book. I found it very interesting and an excellent piece of work. I shall be greatly pleased to see the completed job and comment on it at the time. I have made various comments on the work you sent me and you will find them enclosed with your manuscript.

I might suggest that you bring in the Baconian angle, but perhaps you have in another chapter. I received correspondence from all over the world, concerned over the lost manuscripts of Francis Bacon, for which there has been almost as an extensive search as for Kidd's treasure. Interested at the time I did a bit of research along that line and was amazed to find quite a few items that could be tied in with Oak and its peculiar facts. One that Bacon wrote quite a long article on the preservation and protection of manuscripts. I cannot quote at the moment but the gist was that they be wrapped in cloth, coated with pitch, put into an Oak container, filled with mercury, and that the Oak container be then buried in a vaulted chamber, below sea-level, and the vault flooded with salt water. Of course there is the ever present Baconian-Shakespeare controversy as to who wrote the plays, and there is the almost endless literature of the Baconian society, and the society of thinkers founded by Bacon. It is an interesting angle and could be worth further exploration and inclusion in your book.

I might set you right on my connection with the mystery. I think I was never governed by lust of treasure recovery myself. I was more interested in a solution of the mystery. Did it have some basis of fact? I thought it did. Or was it purely a figment of the imagination and a monstrous hoax? I did not and do not think so. Unfortunately I could not complete my solution either way, though I believe given two years time and sufficient funds I could have cracked it one way or the other. I was never convinced from my research that there was or ever had been any real treasure. I WAS convinced that at some time, for some purpose, somebody had done a highly complicated bit of engineering at the site and I wanted to find out why. In all of my association with the project I have been convinced of only three facts: 1. The truth of the story of the recovery of the parchment; 2 The truth of the story of the work found at the beach; 3 the truth of the cocconut fibre found in quantity at the beach. All the rest is legendary or speculation. However I am convinced that some-one did an enormous amount of work there at a very early date for some unknown purpose.

There are two poems that I have that I think you have not seen and I will add those in on separate sheets. I think your choice of publisher is excellent and I think what I have seen of your book is excellent. I am too close to the subject to determine very ably whether or not it is widely salable, though I am inclined to think it should be. As a last suggestion I think I would add somewhere in the book that the pursuit of the solution of the mystery is not just a hobby, it is a real and an expensive engineering problem that nobody should approach without at least \$50,000.00 capital and three years time available. Anyhow the best of luck and do let me see the rest of the book when you have it ready.

I do not know the name of the author of this poem. I found it on the wall of the Swedish Inn in Chester in 1937, made several alterations to fit my personal interest and have cherished it ever since. I am sure the author was a woman and was I believe from Newfoundland. Anyway here it is. I do not even recall the title, though I believe there was a picture of a little cottage on a hill with it. I called it Oak Island.

I built a gay-roofed little house upon a sunny isle
Where Heaven is very close to Earth and all the world 's a-smile
It took my savings, every cent, although the cost was small
But, Oh, the lovely things I bought and paid for not at all!

The crystal waters that below in sun and shadow lie,
The oaks that sprawl across the point and climb to meet the sky,
Stray wands that sing of other things than those our eyes may see,
Blue whisps of fog and ravelling clouds that, fleeing, beckon me.

White suns of mad~~x~~ glad April, Octobers wine to quaff
On ~~crystal~~ Autumn mornings my hearth stoves crackling laugh,
The silent stars that march at night so close above my head
The sound of rain-drops on the roof, when I am snug in bed

For joist and beam and shingles grey, I spent my savings small
But on the lovely things God gave, He put no price at all.

|| I think really that that is what Oak meant and means to me. I am deeply sorry that I ever lost it.

The following I received from Mr. Hubert Palmer when he wrote me the description of the Kidd Maps. He addressed it from one pirate to another - no title is given

|| Old Kidd, he built a Treasure Chest
of mahogany, three-ply planks
And he buried it deep on an island "loest"
For he never would trust the banks
And the chest was made of the very best wood
And the very best tin-tacks too
The lock, and the key and the nails were good
Not to speak of an excellent screw
But the years rolled by, as the years will do
And the chest began to rot
The planks have vanished to Timbuctoo
The tin-tacks have gone but the screw has not.
So Kidd's old screw of the best quality
A relic of Pirates and Treasure
Has come back to you~~x~~ with a wish for your jollity
And "Chests" flowing over with pleasure

Joyce Glover

Sent to Palmer one Christmas by a little girl admirer with a huge antique screw.

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The Oak Island Mystery By Reginald V. Harris

Comments on manuscript - Gilbert D. Hedden - June 1953

- ✓ 1. Titles - I prefer # 4, or # 7 but think # 7 the best of any
- ✓ 2. No suggestion on chapter headings. All seem good.

3. Page 86

In connection with the Sprague & Henwood venture, the drill reports were still in existence in 1937, in possession of S & H. I was offered them for \$5000.00. Needless to say that I did not avail myself of the opportunity.

I believe some sort of work was done in 1916. At any rate, when the main pit collapsed (according to Blair the area fell about eight feet in an area sixty feet in diameter) Blair had a survey made and recorded on marked stones adjacent to the Pit. You should be able to find the survey record in his papers. I located the marked stones in 1936, Plotted the courses and located the center of the 1916 Pit at a point on the edge of our Pump Housing, in the Chappell Pit.

✓ 4. Page 87

Only comment that occurs to me is that you could elaborate on Chappell Sr. At an interview in 1937 I was very much impressed with his character. He stated to me at that time that he was in charge of the drill when the bit of parchment was recovered. He stated that he firmly believed that he saw traces of gold or yellow metal on the bit, though he had never made that statement public. He said that he had been induced to return in 1931, because of his earlier experiences and because of the enthusiasm of his son. Chappells Ltd. of Sydney are contractors, not manufacturers, I believe.

5 Page 88

No comment. OK

6 Page 89

No comment. OK

✓ 7 Page 90

Miss Stewart has in her possession a bone bosin's whistle found at the shore on Oak. I have a photograph and it is quite ancient. I believe it was found in dirt excavated by Chappell at a center point above theCoffer Dam. According to local gossip, Talbot spent most of Miss Stewarts money on local females and liquor.

✓ 8 Page 91

No comment. OK

Question - Paragraph beginning "Zumbrunn's theory". Do you mean Zumbrunn or Nixon. If Zumbrunn, why introduce him later after relating Nixon's plan

Page 92

According to my records the dye used was green and both Chappell and I thought we found traces of the "green" dye in our respective shafts, on old timbers recovered. I met Nixon and formed a distinct impression that I should disbelieve anything he had to say as to his drilling. Judging from the equipment exhibited I would doubt that any deep holes were ever completed.

✓ Page 92 A

No comment - OK

✓ Page 93

1897 is my birth year

Hedden Iron Construction Co, Hillside, N.J., Fabricators and Erectors of Structural Steel

See no reason for referring to municipal accounting. Suggest you leave that out, stressing the engineer rather than accountant.

✓ Page 94

"summer of that year" - probably you meant to say - Summer of the following year

✓ Page 95

You can mention the price used in my purchase of the land. It was \$5000.00 to some eight or nine heirs, Mrs Sellers having passed on. I think I would prefer a definite amount rather than the description of a "fancy price"

✓ Page 96

No Comment OK

Page 97

I would use the resemblance to putty, only. Some of it was used to putty the windows in my shack. Cannot subscribe to talc or pumice as it had absolutely no resemblance to either substance. In the semi-circular tunnel my recollection is that some of the timber was oak. I would suggest that you indicate that it entered my shaft on one end and went out at the far end to one side. It was collapsed in that the left side and bottom (looking North) had fallen away from the top and right side. Also the small shaft mentioned earlier, terminated in this tunnel. I do not know where you got the exact dimensions of the tunnel. My records indicate it to be about four feet square and I would question the six-foot, four height.

Page 98

All pumping was done from the bottom of the adjoining Chappell shaft. Sorry, I see that you did get the circle in. Rest OK. In the second paragraph I think you mean "until the spring of 1938."

Page 99

No Comment OK

Page 100
No Comment.OK

Page 101
Kidd's offer was "an hundred thousand pounds". I have a photostat of the original letter to the House of Lords. Will include a transcript of it. Sorry I see that you show the letters later on.

Page 102
I found the drilled stone near the Pit, Blair pointed out the one near Smith's Cove, having seen it earlier. We had reason to believe there was a second stone near the Pit. Krupp recalled seeing it. It apparently was lost in the debris of my shaft and we were never able to find it again.

The Triangle was ten feet to the side with a pointer line directed to True North intersecting the base just off center dividing the base line about 4" and 6". There was also a curved line about three feet below the base connecting both base points and the pointer line went through the base line to end at the curved line. I have been told that this forms an ancient symbol for "life" or "eternity". It is very significant that the pointer line was to True North rather than the magnetic North which at this point shows a wide and varying deviation. Whoever laid it out wanted it to remain unchanging. A triangle 7x8x4 fitted into the unclosed ends of the lay-out and the line 8 passed almost directly through the Treasure Pit location as near as we could determine.

Page 103
Wilkins also stated that he had used an old chart of Tierra Del Fuego as a basis for his drawing, not so much for the design or outline, but for method and penmanship.

Page 104
No comment OK

Page 104 A
Do you want the Latitude and Longitude. I think I have them on my original sketch. Why mention them if you do not give them. I do not recall that they were identifiable as Indo China. Incidentally I never saw them on the original but got them from a tracing

You are in error on my conclusion. 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. To my mind the various charts are originals by Kidd or copies by some-one else. I thought the one with the triangle mentioned was the most authentic. I also believe Kidd and his followers searched for the island but failed to locate it.

On my tracing, provided by Wilkins, the Latitude is shown as "Lat 9 16 N" and the Longitude as "Long 130 80 E o W"

Page 104 B
No comment . OK

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Page 105

No comment OK

Page 106

No comment. OK

Page 107

No comment. OK

Page 108

No comment. OK

Page 109

No comment. OK

Page 109A

Is this complete? I see it jumps to 110

Page 110

No comment OK

Page 111

No comment OK. Just recalled in reference to your remarks on compass deviation. The pointer line of the triangle is True North. True North can be determined but it is quite a job to do so though I am informed that any good navigator could do so. It is strange that the pointer line should actually be True North. I had hoped to find it just off North as I had hoped to determine its date of origin by tracing the probable declination at the time.

Page 112

No comment. OK

Page 113

Parangraph 1. Beg to object. I am a good dowser and I do not think I am illiterate. However I agree that in my tests on Oak I found the strangest reactions to be in the somewhat illiterate natives of the area. I believe it to originate in an unknown, possibly electrical or magnetic force. I believe from my experiments that it is caused by water in motion. I had good success with any supple twig, notably, apple, pear, peach - willow was not so good. Pine and spruce are too brittle.

Page 114

No comment. OK

Page 115

No comment. OK

Page 116

No comment. OK

Page 117

No comment. OK

Page 118

No comment. OK

Page 119

I understood from Blair and Chappell that "Wilson" had been interested to the extent of putting one or two thousand of his own money into the Chappell venture. I tried at various times to correspond with Mr Wilson and received some very interesting letters from him. In 1937 and later he warned me that the time was not yet ripe, that he anticipated further disclosures and that I was to wait for a message from him. I was also informed by Blair that many of his messages were in Spanish and other languages, written in a script that Wilson had to have translated.

Page 120

No comment. OK

Page 121

No comment. OK

Page 122

No comment. OK

Page 123

No comment. Yes there is too. I have a photograph of the digging of the original shaft mentioned here, showing a horse operated hoist in operation

Page 124

No comment OK

Page 124

Sorry, I still believe the semi-circular shaft to have been the one described by Fraser in his letter in Blair's files. Hamilton located the Halifax tunnel and followed it to the lower area except for a collapsed part, but I am inclined to believe that the tunnel in my shaft was that described by Fraser. I believe that it was abandoned very hurriedly just as he describes, as we found quite some evidence of abandoned tools and equipment. Hamilton found a push track in the Halifax tunnel but there was no evidence of any such equipment in the one traversing my shaft

Page 125

No comment OK

I do not recall that Hamilton deepened my entire shaft. I believe he put down only one bay, either 6 x 6 or 6 x 12 to the lower depth. Incidentally, when we reached the bottom of the Chappell shaft in the first year of my work, we found the driving shoe still in good condition and pushed the shaft down another five or six feet. We went into and explored the Chappell tunnels at that time but found nothing of interest except a piece of drill pipe below the end of Chappell's digging. That drill pipe was never explained satisfactorily. It was a separate piece about eight feet long and laid on an angle. We found it as we lowered the shaft.

I disagree with Hamilton in that I found fibre at the depth of six feet at Smoth's Cove in fair quantity and had it identified as coconut fibre. Hemlock bark under salt water will deteriorate rather quickly. Coconut fibre will remain intact almost indefinitely or at least for an established period of over 200 years. I am thoroughly convinced that the original fibre used at the beach was coconut

cut in pieces of about five inches. I was also convinced from my interview with Captain Vaughan who was present as a water-boy when the beach was excavated. He stated to me that there were tons of it removed at that time. His recollection was that it was in a layer about two feet thick over most of the area. He of course did not know just what the fibre was. There was no evidence of herlock bark in any I recovered. It was all quite fibrous and I am familiar with cocconut ~~KXXXX~~ fibre having seen it numerous times when in Florida. I never found any evidence of the fibre in the main pits. I am just as familiar with herlock outer bark and can see no resemblance, so add me in as disagreeing with Hamilton.

Page 126

/// Hamilton had a very vivid imagination himself. My main objection to his work was that he never had any definite plan of recovery, preferring to putter around trying to prove the legendary stories.

Page 127

No comment. OK

Page 128

No comment. OK

Page 129

No comment. OK

Page 130

No comment. OK

Page 131

No comment OK