

No treasure, just family papers, says county resident

By Bob Mossman

Earl Pentz believes that all of the popular theories about Oak Island are ridiculous.

Earl Pentz, a native and descendant of Pentz, Lunenburg County, stumbled upon what he considers the real Oak Island treasure quite by accident - while researching the ancestry of the Pentz Family.

Seated in an easy chair at his home on a rainy afternoon last week, he outlined a series of

apparent coincidences that eventually led him to believe that the money pit on Oak Island is directly connected to the Pentz Family.

"My aunt used to tell a story over and over again about my great, great grandfather Rudolf Pentz, but as a youngster I never put any weight into the story she told," says Mr. Pentz.

The aunt's story told of an outing by Rudolf and his twin

brother John Heinrich, when they lived in Lunenburg. The brothers, according to the story they told, were off cutting firewood one day, when Rudolf returned to the house to announce that his brother John "had been lost underground."

"You don't get lost underground cutting firewood, and there were no mines around here back in those days," says Mr. Pentz.

The year Mr. Pentz is

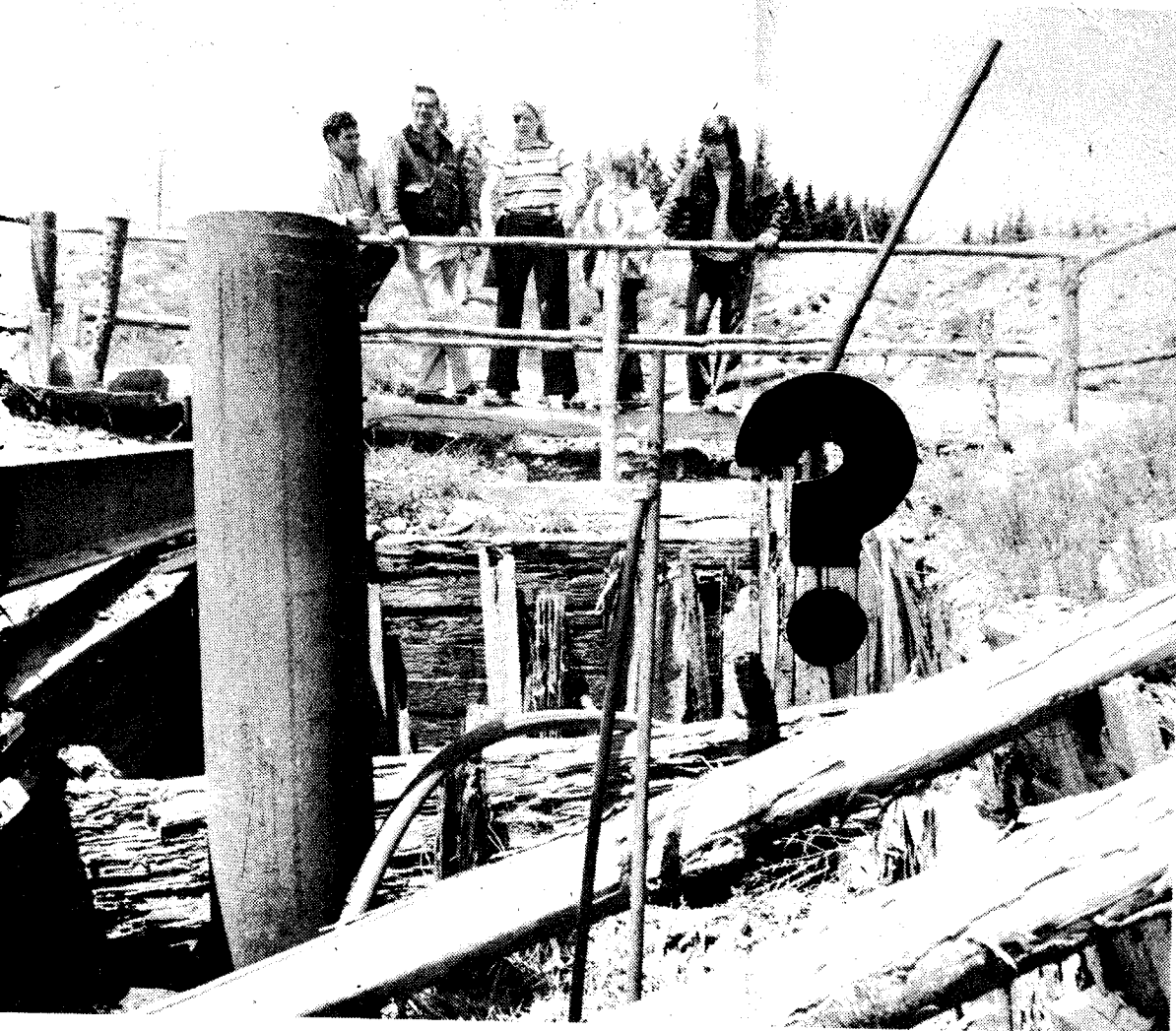
referring to would have been about 1753. At that time Lunenburg was the only real settlement in the area. With Chester being settled later in 1759.

The aunt's ramblings about Earl Pentz's great great uncle being lost underground didn't really cause much of a commotion in his mind until about two years ago. That was three years after he started to do serious research on the Pentz Family, and that research led him to believe that an older brother of Rudolf Pentz's was directly involved in Oak Island.

"Much of what you read about Oak Island does not go back far enough. Actually from 1716 to 1719, Oak Island was taking shape as a well planned community," says Mr. Pentz.

Mr. Pentz believes that the company behind the planning of Oak Island and a number of other islands in the area was the South Sea Company. The older brother of his great great grandfather was involved in the South Sea Company and also actively involved in the Oak Island settlement, he says. The South Sea Company was founded in 1711 to trade mainly in slaves with Spanish America. The company flourished with a great deal of investment until late in 1720 when the company floundered because of an imposed tax on importing slaves and a restriction on the number of shiploads of slaves that could be transported to the Americas.

Earl Pentz believes that Oak Island was being developed between 1716 and 1720 as a supply center and holding depot for slaves bound for the Americas. The actual cave or the "money pit" and adjacent tunnel areas he believes were built as holding caves for slaves.



Money pit contains no treasure, says county resident.

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No treasure, just family papers

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"It makes sense, with a great number of slaves all that you would have to guard would be a small opening," says Mr. Pentz.

Much of the evidence uncovered at Oak Island to date may substantiate Mr. Pentz's theory. A large stone bearing unrecognizable inscription, could have been inscribed by an African slave. Tons of fiber from coconut husks, could have been the remains of the slaves only food supply. The system of cribbed tunnels could have been the holding pens for the slaves, and the old inked parchment could hold a direct key to what in fact Mr. Pentz believes is buried there.

Although Mr. Pentz doesn't know to what extent caves were ever used for holding slaves before the bubble burst on the South Sea Company, he is sure that his great great grandfather's older brother was involved in the slave trade and at some point placed three trunks at some location on the island.

He also believes that the present site of the money pit, is also most probably the site of where the three trunks were placed or buried.

"But there's no Captain Kidd's treasure. There's no Inca gold. It has got nothing to do with U.F.O.'s. All that is in those chests are family papers," he says.

The family papers in the chests says Mr. Pentz, rightfully belonged through inheritance to Rudolf Pentz and his twin brother John Heinrich. Rudolf would have been only a child when his older brother was working with the South Sea Company, and he would have

only been in his mid teens when he and his brother, according to Mr. Pentz, were informed of an inheritance that was coming to them from a "mysterious grandmother."

"The family legend states that when the boys turned up to claim their inheritance, they were told that their older brother had already picked it up, and I think what he picked up ended up on Oak Island," says Mr. Pentz.

The contents of the chest according to Mr. Pentz are of little value, as a treasure find. He believes that they are mostly family papers, but that the papers if they were intact could enlighten the Pentz's further on the family ancestry. According to Mr. Pentz the "mysterious grandmother" was a girl from a noble Austrian Family, who for some reason spent 20 years of her life imprisoned in the Blue Tower of Copenhagen.

He says that the Pentz Family back through the centuries have gone by a number of surnames including vonPentz, Urfeldt, Pentz, and Springauf, and that his great great grandfather Rudolf, actually a vonPentz, would have been born under the name Urfeldt, but later lived in Lunenburg County as both a Pentz and on one occasion may have laid claim to lots of land on Oak Island using the alternate surname Springhauf.

Mr. Pentz says that he realizes that his theory is not as glamorous as the "treasure island" legends that have surrounded Oak Island for almost 200 years, but is so sure that his research is right that he challenges anyone to prove him wrong.