

American Geologist Has "New Plan" For Oak Island

BY SCOTT BRIGLEY

A young U.S. petroleum geologist, long interested in the tales of Oak Island and the mystery of what is buried there, expects to have the answer to that question by the end of this month.

Robert R. Dunfield, 39, from Canoga Park, California, is confident that his large scale earth moving equipment — a type never used before on the tiny south shore island—will reveal the hidden secret.

Mr. Dunfield purchased the controlling interests in the treasure rights from Mrs. Robert Restall, widow of the 59-year-old former motorcycle acrobat, whose six year search ended in tragedy Aug. 17.

Mr. Restall died of toxic gas poisoning when he fell into a water filled shaft. Three other men on hand also perished in going to his assistance.

RETAIN INTEREST

The Restall family and other parties of that original agreement will still retain interest in the new venture.

Robert Dunfield, who was a backer of the Restall search and has been in the area for the past three months, will, in the next weeks, employ a three yard Link-Belt "digging clam" to start the fresh hunt. The venture will cost \$42,000.

This large piece of equipment resembles a crane-like structure and weighing about 100 tons is capable of digging an excavation over 200 feet deep and 100 feet in diameter.

"The capacity of this machine is such that we should have the answer before the end of October," Mr. Dunfield commented.

"I am of the opinion that there is something buried on the island at different elevations,

but I would not hazard a guess as to the despositor or what is desposited.

The Californian, who owns his own oil geology consulting business, described the project as a problem in excavation and open pit mining but with the added difficulty of seeping water.

"My knowledge of the clay section leads me to believe that we can complete this excavation successfully if we can dig it dry."

WATER PROBLEM

Mr. Dunfield said that the water problem which has foiled

search operations in the past may be solved from two approaches.

"Either we cut the water off at the beach or pump it directly out of the excavation."

Whatever the planned attack it will remain a secret among the Dunfield group, at least for the present.

Alene Dunfield, who flew into Halifax from California on Thursday to join her husband in a short stay, has the same quiet confidence in her husband's ability and judgement as he reflects to the five man team who work at the site.

"Bob has been interested in Oak Island ever since he was old enough to read about it. We are all 100 per cent behind him."

The Dunfields have two children at home, Sharon, 19, and Robert, 7.

Apart from Robert Dunfield's ability as a petroleum geologist, other technical knowledge in the project has come from his father, R. George Dunfield who has spent many years in the mining engineering field.

The senior Dunfield is kept well informed of the progress and plans of the hunt by telephone.

All is in a state of readiness awaiting the arrival of the mechanical digger, now working elsewhere in the Maritimes.

Two bulldozers already on the Chester Bay island have cleared passages for the clam digger in which to operate.

SINCE 1795

Promise of pirate gold or privateer's fortune has kept generations of treasure seekers digging in the tiny island, 45 miles from Halifax, since 1795 when two boys discovered traces of a mine pit and oak platforms under the ground.

Since then subsequent searches have dug to find platforms at 10 foot intervals to a depth of 90 feet. Each staging bearing quantities of charcoal, putty and coconut fibre.

Augers have drilled to depths of 170 feet and have been reported to have struck buried objects. Some shavings from the drill at that reported depth have been proved to be iron—but what lies at that position remains a mystery.

The distance of 170 feet is not inaccessible in ordinary conditions, but at Oak Island time after time the forceful sea streams into the diggings causing cave-ins and retaining the island's secret safe.

The intriguing lure of the possible treasure has already cost several lives and thousands of dollars, but aside of the fact Oak Island may hold a great fortune, Robert Dunfield makes no open comment on the actual hidden prize.

Instead it appears to be more a personal challenge and problem between a man of education in geology and the elements of time and nature.

Perhaps with a new scientific approach and a great deal of good luck, the Dunfield project will prove to be the closing pages of the story of Nova Scotia's legendary treasure island.



Robert R. Dunfield: "answer before end of October."