

'Oak Island Mystery' Author Says Shaft Of Pirate Origin

In 1795 three young boys discovered the long and platformed shaft of Oak Island. And ever since, men have been fascinated to find out what, if anything, lies at the bottom of the carefully contrived shaft.

Speaking to a meeting of the Rotary Club of Halifax yesterday, Dr. R. V. Harris, QC, author of "Oak Island Mystery", admitted that he's spent "30 odd years" studying the mystery, and "I still can't tell you who dunit."

"But," he added, "it's my belief that the shaft is of pirate origin."

HISTORY OUTLINED

After outlining the basic history of the various expeditions which tried to uncover the shaft's secret, he gave evidence to show that pirates may have dug the shaft.

During the siege of the "Mary Gallant" in the West Indies in 1691, the English were assisted by 19 pirate ships, led by Captain Kidd. But the British were betrayed and two ships went to Nova Scotia with booty. "Those ships ended up in Annapolis Royal," he said. Then they raided in Saint John and sailed back around Nova Scotia

and past Halifax. And he suggested that the men of these ships, part of Capt. Kidd's crew, could have sunk the shaft.

To build the shaft, he went on, must have "taken an army of workers some time." This work could be done secretly because the hundreds of islands in Mahone Bay would have provided "a perfect screen."

"There is overwhelming evidence that pirates knew the way to Nova Scotia," he said, pointing out that piracy flourished around the coast from about 1635 to 1735. "You can find Capt. Kidd's name at the mouth of Gaspereau Brook, the boundary line between Halifax and Hants Counties," he said.

"So I can't tell you who dunit," he finished, adding significantly, "But there's plenty of evidence that pirates knew the way."

Dr. Harris has decided to donate half the money from sales of his book in Halifax during the next four weeks to the Gyro radio auction.