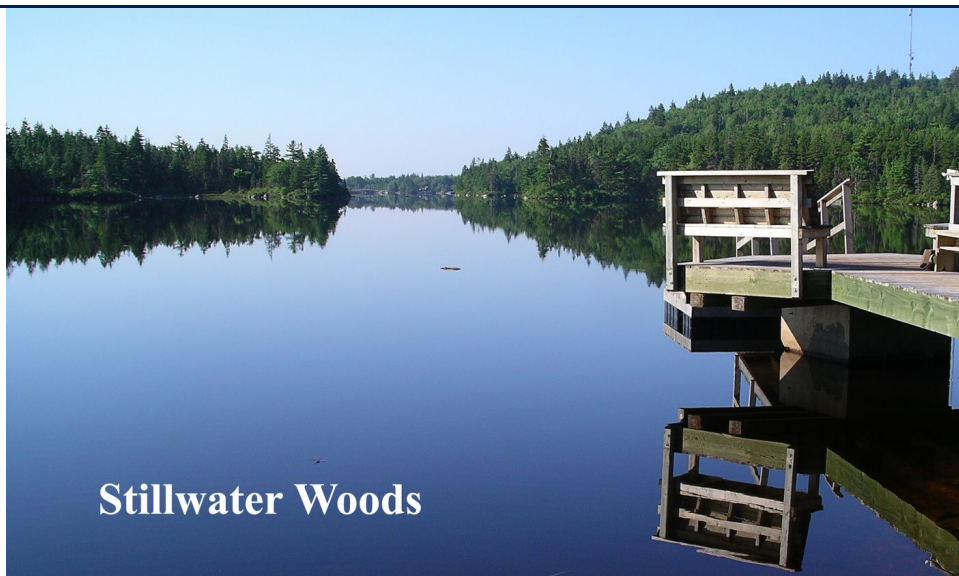


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Stillwater Woods

Tuesday, 6 December 2011

Suwannee Treasure Hunt

*Going through the emails from Alan Schenker this was found. It is not by Hyatt Verrill nor does it tell us much about him but rather it furthers a chapter from his autobiography, *Never a Dull Moment, 'More Treasure Seekers'.*/drf*

Suwannee Treasure Hunt

By John Maloney

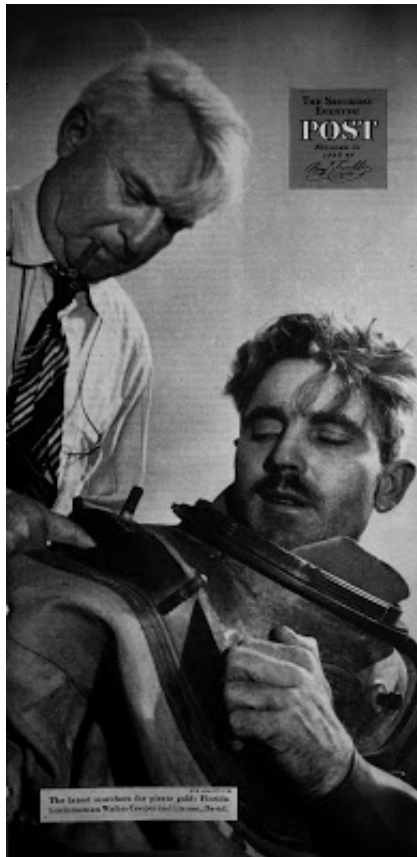
The Saturday Evening Post, June 2, 1945, researched by Alan Schenker, digitized by Doug Frizzle, Dec. 2011.

The buried loot of the buccaneers has always been coupled with mystery, blood and tragedy —and this Florida hoard is no exception.

THERE'S a hole way down on the banks of the Suwannee River—fifteen miles above where it flows out of thick Florida swamps into the Gulf—down which men with treasure fever in their blood have poured more than \$200,000 over a period of sixty years, always hoping for fabulous riches in return. Many persons have gambled everything they had in the search, and lost. Failure drove one man to suicide. Possession of the cache, when it seemed within reach, inspired attempted murders by poisonings, dynamiting, gun and knife fights. But through the

years, quicksand has been victor in this more than half-century battle.

No one knows for a certainty who buried the treasure there, but evidence points to the pirate Jean Lafitte above all others. Old Navy and Treasury Department records confirm the fact that Fowler's Bluff, site of the hunt, was a popular hangout for freebooters when piracy was a lucrative and important New World business. Gasparilla hanged one of his mutinous followers there. Dreaded Black Caesar and Billy (Bowlegs) Rogers brought their ships to the Bluff



to be careened, scraped and recalced while hiding from American and British patrol vessels. As to there being substantial treasure here, men who have studied every shred of evidence accumulated through three quarters of a century swear that anywhere from \$1,000,000 to \$15,000,000 in coins, gold bars, silverware and altar accouterments are held by these tenacious quicksands.

There is more than circumstantial evidence that a sizable fortune already has been removed from the pit. I recently have talked with old men who told me that, fifty years ago, they helped dig "something" out of a twenty-foot hole there under the live oak. That "something" ostensibly was later used to establish a Gainesville, Florida, bank, stock a large hardware store, build an office building and start a backwoods sawmill owner well toward being a millionaire in a surprisingly short time. But, to keep dates, testimony and events of many years straight, let's go back to 1888.

In March of that year, an elderly man who spoke with a Scandinavian or German accent appeared in the little village of Hardee Town—now Chiefland, Levy County, Florida—and made arrangements to rent a wagon and team of mules by the week. The day he acquired the wagon, a second man, dark and

uncommunicative, joined the first. They bought picks and shovels, and drove off toward the river on the Fowler's Bluff road, a sandy trail through palmetto and blackjack scrub. A couple of months later, two Hardee Town boys passed by Fowler's Bluff while hunting, and raced back to town to tell how, when they came upon the two strangers digging in a deep pit, the dark one had vaulted over an accumulation of dirt, grabbed a rifle standing against a big live-oak tree, and ordered them away from the vicinity and to keep what they had seen to themselves.

Town loafers sat for a week debating about going out to the Bluff and discovering, by force if necessary, what the two strangers were doing. But before they talked themselves into action, the stranger who had first appeared drove into the settlement, bringing his companion, wrapped in a dirty old blanket and delirious with what was known locally as "swamp fever," an earlier name for malaria. The sick man died that night, and the other stranger could not or would not give a name to be scratched on the unpainted pine board that became the dead man's headstone.

The remaining old man seemed to have become unbalanced over the loss of his pardner. He went around muttering something about an old map, dated 1823, which he possessed and which was very valuable. But Hardee Town folk were busy carving farm and cattle land out of heavily timbered forests, and had no time to listen to an old eccentric. No one in the town noticed when he left the region. Eighty-three-year-old Joe Curry, who remembered this incident well and who is a vital link in this whole strange story, described it to me in typical cracker language: "We paid him no mind, and the first thing we knowed, he wuz gone."

Nine years later, in 1897, an old man walked into a sawmill operated by Emmett Baird just across the Florida line in Georgia. He obviously was ill, and Orie Freeman, Baird's foreman, offered him a bed of shavings in a corner of the mill shed. The old man—who possessed a heavy accent—became more ill the next day and, without a doctor within call, mill hands diagnosed his sickness as pneumonia. It was on the evening before he died that, true to that affinity between deathbeds and buried treasure, the stranger gave a map and some detailed directions to Baird and Freeman in return for

what they had done for him.

The old man, of course, was the eccentric who had been digging on Fowler's Bluff back in '88. No one living knows what he told Baird and Freeman, but, at any rate, it was enough to make them desert the sawmill and hasten to the Bluff. There they hired Joe Curry, who was living in the vicinity, along with George Higginbotham, to work for them, and swore them both to secrecy in the operation. Curry's wife was to rent sleeping quarters to Baird and Freeman and to serve meals to them and others who worked for them. Within a few days, because they were digging almost in his front yard, Curry was offered a share of whatever they found, in return for his work and for guarding the place day and night.

Curry, despite his eighty-three years, is still keeping a country store within a few miles of the Bluff, and his memory of what took place is still vivid, as is that of his wife. He handled the map frequently, and recalls that it seemed to be made of thick, handmade, oiled paper, that it clearly was a map of this particular bend in the Suwannee, and that three large live oaks shown on the map obviously marked the spot where Baird ordered digging begun. He also recalls that inked directions on the back of the map stated that the treasure, whatever it was, was buried in three separate spots immediately surrounding the three oaks.

From the start, Uncle Joe remembers, Baird was highly suspicious of anyone who came near the place and openly frightened by strangers who came close. Three steamboats made regular trips to upriver plantations and lumber camps. When they passed up the channel, which ran near the shore at this point, Baird made everyone keep out of sight and threw brush over sand removed from the pit to disguise it.

The place evidently wasn't healthy for Freeman. Mrs. Curry says he was in bed with swamp fever much of the three months they were digging. Meanwhile, a hole twelve feet deep had been opened up in the loose sand. They were just getting to quicksand when one of the men struck a hard object with his pick. The others were called out while Baird himself went down and, standing on a plank shelf that had been constructed to keep workers out of the quicksand, began prying around the object they had struck.

The Pirate's Curse

AS Baird pried, the object seemed to sink deeper and deeper into the almost fluid sand. Fearful that it would get beyond reach, he called Joe Curry to come down and help him estimate how large and heavy it was. Joe says that he was able to feel all around it, and to determine that it was encased in something like rough cement, and was about three feet, six inches long, two feet wide and one and one half feet thick.

There was high excitement on the Bluff at this discovery. When it was decided that the object could not be raised without additional tools, Baird had the men stand guard while he rushed back to Hardee Town—by that time called Chiefland—where a blacksmith fashioned a set of grappling tongs to hook around the box. A scaffold was erected over the excavation and Curry went down into the liquid sand with a rope tied around his middle and hooked the jaws of the grapple around the object. Then, with two mules hitched to the hoisting rope, Curry stood on top of it to keep it steady and gave the signal to hoist away. Slowly, the sand began yielding its hold with a sucking sound. All concerned, even Mrs. Curry, were standing on the brink waiting to see what they felt must be millions spilled before their eyes. Suddenly, however, the hoisting rope parted and Joe Curry and the treasure were both dropped with a splash into the pit. Joe barely managed to cling to the rough plank platform to avoid being sucked under by the quicksands. The box sank from sight.

Baird and Freeman were filled with almost frantic despair on losing what they visualized as certain wealth just when it seemed within their grasp. Curry had been thoroughly frightened by his experience, and, though not a man generally susceptible to local superstitions, he admits now that he thought some curse, pirate or otherwise, was protecting whatever was buried there. All this happened during the third week after Baird arrived at the Bluff, and Curry was anxious to drop his part of the partnership and get back to a paying job. At this point, Baird offered him ten dollars for his share of whatever was found, and the privilege of working on a daily basis, while Mrs. Curry was to continue boarding them. The offer was accepted on the spot.

A large crowbar revealed that the chest had sunk down to a fifteen-foot level and was at least temporarily resting there. Everyone set to work building a crude cofferdam around the

hole, going down below the chest's level. Without adequate equipment for such a job, they had their difficulties. It was six more weeks before they had the cofferdam completed and had dipped up watery sand until the chest was less than two feet below sand-and-water level. Both Baird and Freeman were at a high state of excitement again. Freeman would get out of bed, wrapped in one of Mrs. Curry's quilts, and watch the operation from its brink. They would allow no one but Curry and old Bob, an elderly Negro Baird had brought with him, to approach the hole. Baird gave orders that no one was to wear light-colored shirts, because they could be spotted too easily by boats passing on the river.

About this time, Baird ordered Curry to cut a limestone block about the size of the chest they were after, and carve figures or letters on it which he had forgotten after fifty years. "Baird told me if we got the chest out, I was to throw the stone in and tell anyone who might come along later that it was what he found," he says now.

Finally, near the end of the eleventh week since they had started, Baird would allow only old Bob and Freeman, who had partially recovered from his fever, near the pit. One night they worked until after one o'clock, and when Baird came in, he dropped the remark in a casual way that he was going to quit. Then he went into Freeman's room where the two men talked for more than an hour in a low tone. At daylight, Baird had his wagon hitched, and before the sun was up he, Freeman and old Bob drove off with nothing but a most perfunctory leave. Shovels, picks, the grapple and all other equipment were left there. Curry says no one saw them drive through Chiefland on their way out, as they would have had to do, and now expresses his opinion that they waited somewhere in a near-by swamp until dark that night and drove out then to avoid questions.

Just what Baird got out of that hole there by the Suwannee probably will never be known, unless he left records that his descendants will not reveal or discuss today. But that he did get something—and something substantial, at that—most persons in North Florida believe firmly, and every evidence points to that conclusion. Exhibit No. 1 is the fact that a few days after Baird left the spot, Curry found, near the hole, part of an old lock and thin pieces of something that looked like concrete which plainly revealed impressions of hinges and

metal bindings.

As Curry points out today, both Baird and Freeman—the latter seems to have faded out of the picture completely when he drove away from the Bluff with Baird—were anything but well-to-do, certainly not wealthy even by local standards; yet, just a short time later, Baird was able to establish a bank, stock the largest hardware store in Central Florida, and put up a large office building in Gainesville, seat of the state university, where his descendants still live. None of them today will discuss anything about buried treasure, and some of them have been pretty brusque with persons who did want to delve into the matter including the present owner of the site, who is fully aware that under Florida laws finders are keepers, and who has no desire for anything but information from them.

There is a persistent rumor in Chiefland and Gainesville that Baird brought the box—whatever it contained to a Gainesville bank, where his findings temporarily were stored in vaults. Dr. A. Hyatt Verrill, historian and author of half a dozen books on buried treasure, pirates and privateers, and who is presently to figure in a new Fowler's Bluff search, says he knows persons who have seen old coins still preserved by members of the family as souvenirs of Baird's find. I talked to half a dozen lawyers and businessmen in Gainesville who were all convinced that Baird struck it rich there on the edge of that swamp.



Seventy-five years of legend and evidence say that this spot in a Florida swamp, 15 miles from the Gulf, holds a buried treasure worth from \$1,000,000 to \$15,000,000.

Curry moved away from the Bluff soon after Baird left. Occasional hunters and fishermen were its only visitors until 1902, when another stranger, who local persons think was a

New Zealander, became a squatter on the site. He remodeled Curry's old house with pieces of driftwood, seemed to live mostly on game but meanwhile was digging all over the place. On occasional visits to Chiefland he used old twenty-dollar gold pieces to pay for shotgun shells and food. Naturally, that was enough to start local speculation about treasure again. Several Chiefland men admit today that as boys they hid in palmetto thickets and spied on his digging, but never saw him strike anything. However, local belief that he had unearthed something was so strong that after the old man was found dead in bed—from obviously natural causes—his hut was taken down and searched plank by plank and the ground underneath was dug up, but nothing was found.

Treasure-hunting fever was heightened when fishermen digging worms for bait near the site came on what they believed a nest of petrified turtle eggs. One of the party idly had skipped all but one of the round pellets across the swiftly-flowing river when he accidentally dropped it. The "egg" cracked, to reveal a one-carat diamond in its center. Authorities on pirate and treasure lore pointed out that it frequently was the custom for ill-gotten jewels to be encased in mud and buried for future recovery. An Orlando lady today is wearing this only diamond that the flabbergasted fisherman did not throw away.

Belief that some spell hangs over the Bluff has been voiced from time to time. This was heightened in 1910 when a group of local treasure hunters dug into a spot thickly strewn with skeletons, all buried face down, with a covering of what had been Spanish moss more than a foot deep. The "spell" was not discredited when old-timers recalled that, long before Emmett Baird's search, a lumber camp had occupied the bank at this spot and that most of its workers had been wiped out by a smallpox epidemic. It was remembered then that, according to old custom, plague victims were always buried back up. But the finding of human bones put a stop to further local diggings.

Panthers, whose screams frequently echo through the Suwannee's thick swamps, wildcats and bald eagles, both found here in large numbers, held solitary sway over this wild region for the next thirteen years. Strangely enough, a hunt for gold and family heirlooms supposedly buried about ten miles away, not by pirates, but to keep them from Yankee marauders during Civil War days, indirectly led back to "Lafitte's hoard" and

resulted in tens of thousands of dollars and thousands of man-hours being expended on Fowler's Bluff—an expenditure and a hunt that have been carried out, with only brief interludes, from 1923 to this day.

Practically every family down in the Suwannee country hid something from the Federals—even if it was only grandpap's good corn whisky that the Yankees liked so well. One of these Florida families in 1923 was trying to settle an estate, and some of its members declared they would not part with the land until great-grandpappy's gold and silver plate was found. Robert Mahon, possessor of a metal locator, was brought up from South Florida to have a stab at finding the cache. He found nothing for them, but stories of Baird's find and what might be left intrigued him. He went to the Bluff, walked around the site, and got vigorous and decisive indications that he was walking over metal in two spots about thirty feet apart—exactly as Joe Curry remembered the original map had indicated.

The Quicksands' Secret

HERBERT L. NELSON, a large property owner and real-estate broker at near-by Cedar Keys, had studied every available detail concerning previous searches and was virtually certain that whatever Baird found was only part of the original cache. Mahon's instrument wiped out any remaining doubt. He and his wife sold land and prepared to determine, once and for all, just what those quicksands were guarding so jealously. Mahon also put up a small amount of cash and took command of digging operations.

The map originally showed the deposits at least thirty feet inland from high-tide mark. Swamps at the Suwannee's headwaters in Georgia had been drained in later years and more streams were diverted into the river. This resulted in a larger stream that had washed away at the Bluff until the stumps of the old oaks were now touched by high tides. Recovery of anything buried there was thus made more difficult, since seepage through a narrow wall of sand had to be combated at each dip of the spades.

The first step in attempting to reach the object attracting Mahon's instrument was to sink a rough wooden cofferdam about the area to be excavated. Although the result was not entirely watertight, it did hold back the watery sand until they

could go down at least five feet below water level before they had to halt operations for pumping and bailing. At this depth—which was thirteen feet from the top of the hole, since the Bluff was only eight feet high at this point—a Negro workman's shovel struck something solid and he let out an exultant yell. Nelson was so sure he had the treasure that he sent a messenger to Cedar Keys for his wife to assist in counting their new-found wealth. Before she arrived, the object started sinking, huge bubbles arising as it went deeper and deeper into the quicksands.

In desperation, Nelson hurried to Chiefland and bought from a well driller several dozen twenty-foot lengths of one-and-one-half-inch piping. With these they attempted to form a sort of basket under the box by driving the piping in at a slanting angle from all sides. They were too late to prevent the sinking. As near as they could tell, the box finally came to rest on a brittle limestone layer twelve to fourteen feet under the top stratum of quicksand.

Nelson went to the United States Army Engineers' district office at Jacksonville with rough diagrams of the sand, water and rock strata that seemed to be defeating him, and asked their advice. One of the engineers became so interested that he obtained leave from the Army and went back to the Bluff to take charge of the engineering. His immediate decision was to construct a still larger cofferdam, install pumps of more capacity than heretofore used to overcome sand and water seepage. For nine weeks, using crews brought down from Jacksonville, they worked in twelve-hour shifts to get boilers and pumps installed around the box's known location. Then, just a few days before they were ready to start the pumps and suck the cofferdam dry, the river started rising from upriver cloudbursts and did not stop until the entire Bluff was covered with water for the first time in known history. When the waters receded, the equipment that was left was silt-covered to a depth of several feet. The curse seemed to be at work again.

Nelson's money was gone. His determination to get that treasure, however, was not washed away by the swamp water. Many of his friends in Florida had become interested in the project and he formed a twelve-man company to carry on. Flood damage was repaired, new machinery installed, and divers were hired to supervise cleaning out the cofferdam that

had been completed just before the high water arrived. Another engineer from the Army joined the first, and when the dam was practically freed of loose sand and muck, a diver went down. The box, he reported, was resting just about level with the dam's base.

This time, Nelson and his associates wanted to take no chances on losing the treasure for the third time. The Merritt-Stevens Shipyard at Jacksonville sent salvage experts to look the situation over, then went back to design and build a special grapple of a type that bit harder into whatever it was holding as pressure from above was exerted. Engineers advised locking the jaws around the object, then putting all steam pressure possible to work at once. This was done. The donkey engine groaned, the cable became tight as a bowstring, then slowly the muck and sand began yielding up the box they had coveted so many years. Gradually, a corner of the box came into view. Spectators could see that it, like Baird's find, was probably about three and a half by two by one and a half feet in size.

A full third of the box had been raised above the quicksand when individual strands of the steel cable began to pop like tortured piano wires. Engineers later said this should have been a signal to ease pressure until a new cable could be substituted, but excited workmen did not think of this in time. The cable parted, and box and grapple sank back into the boiling sand. Water slowly seeped into the cofferdam as a result of the bottom sands being agitated. By nightfall, the pit had filled, and once more Nelson was without funds with which to continue his effort. ,

The operation had carried over into 1924. Bob Mahon, like Joe Curry years before, gave up and went back to more certain breadwinning. But Nelson, though broke a second time, was not licked. A year later, he found more friends who would come to his rescue—this time a group composed mainly of Daytona Beach and Orlando businessmen. While funds available were more limited than on previous attempts, he felt so sure of his goal that he started clearing away the site once more, and by the summer of 1926 had hired divers to work down to the box while water was pumped into the dam to liquidate the quicksand and allow them to move through the black muck.

Just as the divers were getting ready to raise the old

grapple, the elements turned against Nelson once more. One of the most destructive hurricanes of the century struck, driving the waters of the Gulf back to mingle with those of the Suwannee. Again Nelson's equipment was ruined, the cofferdam filled with water hyacinths and muck, and he gave up for good.

But the fever to recover the treasure had spread widely over the country. Nelson had hardly cleared out before another group, full of optimism and surefire methods, was ready to take up the tug of war with the quicksands.

This time, the project was largely financed by Ernest Buckley, a Springfield, Massachusetts, businessman. The group was made up of at least twenty-one persons, who put finances in according to their ability and interest. Included were Maj. William C. Willams, ex-Army officer; Robert Reynolds, Harry Eastwood and Lincoln Barnes, all of Orlando; and Jack Harold, an adventurer who turned up with a little money and unbounded enthusiasm. A few businessmen from Ithaca, New York, were also included. As Dr. A. Hyatt Verrill, historian and authority on buried treasure, who was later called in as technical adviser, now says, "We had the makings of a first-class mess, and before the business was over, we had it."

The Suwannee, after the flood that first covered Nelson's operation, never receded to its old banks. By the time this group took over, the steel cofferdam that Nelson had started was partly washed by swift-flowing water. The dam itself had buckled when first installed and had never been completely watertight. It was this later group's intention to sink a second shaft inside the first, like a sock in a boot, pump water out of this, and work downward from it.

But first, they reasoned, Nelson had not driven his steel cofferdam plates deeply enough. At least four feet was still sticking up above water level on one side. Drop hammers were brought in, the plates were driven deeper until they were level on all sides, then they prepared the inner section and lowered it until divers could go down and attend to sealing leaks around the bottom. When they went down, they found that the irregular top level had been necessary because bedrock sharply slanted at this spot. In forcing the plates deeper, they had cracked the thin stratum of rock on which the chest then had been resting. The tilting floor then left the chest free to sink still lower, and to slip

out from under the area covered by the dam. It was on the loose again.

Two more divers were hired to attempt to locate the chest. One of them nearly lost his life when still more of the old shaft collapsed, fouling his air line until only enough oxygen was getting through to maintain life for an hour while rescuers above removed timbers and got his lines untangled. He declared he'd had enough treasure hunting, and left.

The other diver continued exploring the bottom of the cofferdam, to find that a deep gully existed across its bottom, and that the chest evidently had slipped through this crevice. He worked under constant danger of the cofferdam's collapsing and burying him under tons of sand and water, and had a dangerously narrow escape when a ledge on which he was working about twenty feet under water gave way, sending sand and rocks down on him and causing another large leak in the cofferdam.

Doctor Verrill determined to stop leaks in the cofferdam once and for all. Cement, Spanish moss, sandbags and even sawdust were packed down around its outer surface. It failed to work. A sort of steel bathtub was lowered over the crevice, so that the diver could work with less danger of being jammed between sliding rocks. Even this collapsed after two days of use, pinning the diver there until he deflated his suit and was hauled, barely alive, to the surface. That curse again.

An arrangement was made with H. C. Nutting Company, of Cincinnati, to make test borings for determining the exact location of the chest. The first drilling struck something containing metal. It proved to be a wooden block thickly studded with old handmade spikes. But the second boring, made just outside Nelson's steel cofferdam, brought unmistakable gold smears. Again and again the drill was sunk



Credit: Ben Clevy, whose recollections of the treasure diggers go as far back as 1881. (left) Walter Cooper, who he knows about the ancient secret map of the chest.
David Cooper and his wife beside an old logging platform at the Foster's Mill site, where he and his father will be to raise the chest treasure chest with modern machinery.



at this spot, and each time streaks of gold appeared. The entire company assembled. There were loud and heated arguments as to how best to recover the treasure. It was thirty-two feet under water, rock and quicksand. The diver declared he could do nothing more under existing conditions, although he was sure they had struck the real thing. The jinx or curse seemed to have been standing by, laughing.

That it had something definitely amusing to laugh at is apparent to anyone trying today to get an exact chronology of subsequent events. There were twenty-one interested parties to this search, and fully that number of versions of what happened next or why the group did not succeed. Buried treasure traditionally has been the source of fights, murders and bad blood generally, and the hoard at Fowler's Bluff was no exception. First came fist fights. The twenty-one interested persons split into smaller partisan groups. Each set a watch over the others. Those who wanted to continue the recovery without delay were opposed by others who did not agree with methods proposed.

"Captain Jack," as Jack Harold was known, came home from Chiefland one night and by accident noticed some wires leading under the shack he had erected for himself. On investigation, he found fourteen sticks of dynamite in excellent position to blow him higher than the surrounding cypress trees. One of the group distributed a box of candy among the others. Those who ate it were moaning in agony a short time later. Chemical analysis revealed signs of arsenic, but, luckily, not enough to kill. That partner cleared out before the analysis came back.

The Trimmings of Fiction

One group accused another of plans to hijack the treasure when it was recovered. One man got so nervous that he built a shack up in the spreading branches of a water-oak tree and pulled his ladder up behind him when he retired each night. There were open threats of murder, and someone took a pot shot at Doctor Verrill from the edge of a near-by swamp. The crowning incident, at least so far as Captain Jack was concerned, was when he returned from a trip to Chiefland to find his house a glowing bed of coals. He gave up and left, but was believed to have spied on subsequent operations from surrounding swamps. Later, a decomposed body which several

members of the operation believed his was found floating down the Suwannee toward the Gulf.

One of the partners—if such they could be called—committed suicide when he saw all his funds going into the sinkhole with nothing coming back in return. Gradually the company dwindled. One of them confided to me that fear of outright murder on the spot, even if the gold could be recovered and divided equitably, led him to quit the undertaking and charge his lost cash to interesting experience.

Finally, Doctor Verrill, still convinced that great riches or at least very interesting historical matter lay almost within grasp, was left with his wife and one or two others to carry on alone. They had no money to keep the operation going. Attempts to do the work themselves proved impossible. Reluctantly, but still convinced the treasure would be brought to light someday, they rolled up the canvas tents that had sheltered them and left the eagles and panthers in possession.

"The curse got us," he laughingly admits today.

The Mysterious Stranger

But the curse and the sands may not be victors, after all. Four years ago, shortly after Doctor Verrill left, a large tract of land that included Fowler's Bluff was purchased by Walter L. Cooper, Sanford investment and real-estate broker, primarily for logging purposes. Former owners of the Bluff retained right to a percentage of whatever was found of the treasure. That inspired Cooper to carry out the greatest research yet completed concerning the cache and its possible source. Today he is convinced, as are many of his friends, state officials and qualified engineers who have studied the evidence and inspected the site, that there is wealth of some kind buried there, and that it can be recovered with proper modern machinery.

At the time the original map was dated, the site was occupied by friendly Creek Indians, ancestors of present-day Seminoles. Government records confirm the fact that Gasparilla, Billy (Bowlegs) Rogers, Lafitte and others of their fraternity used the estuary of the Suwannee as a meeting place where they traded loot—Lafitte was actually more a pirate fence than an outright buccaneer—and made plans for raids. Billy Bowlegs lived until 1888, when he died at the age of ninety-five.

The stranger who appeared in Hardee Town shortly after Billy's death, some authorities reason, might well have come into possession of the map just prior to or following his death, and could well have been a cabin boy with Lafitte, since several of his men retired from piracy and joined Billy when he settled near Tallahassee.

As this is written, plans are under way to move large dredges over to Fowler's Bluff from Mobile. A New York engineering firm, using the latest instruments developed by Westinghouse, is to supervise the dredging of a small harborlike basin which will take in all the territory where the treasure, according to the old map, might be buried. Every scoop of sand will be filtered, on the possibility that chests of coins might have been damaged.

The War Department has granted permission for the navigable channel in the river to be changed, as this dredging operation will necessitate. Divers have been engaged to keep an underwater watch as each scoop is lifted from the bottom. With ample funds to carry the operation to completion, Cooper is convinced that secrets the "curse" has been guarding so many years soon will be wrested from the Suwannee's treacherous and tenacious sands by modern mechanical force.

Further to this on checking through the web, a couple more links tells us that today the story is still not resolved.

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?i...50512&dq=spanish-gold&hl=en>

and follow up:

<http://news.google.com/newspapers?i...dq=gold+doubloons+florida&hl=en>

and later

<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2007/03/070315-pirate-treasure.html>

Posted by [Doug Frizzle](#) at [17:44](#) 

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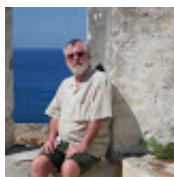
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 - [My Funny Pets](#)
 - [Béche and the Stranger](#)
 - [The Gull That Ate the Whale](#)
 - [A Boys Museum 4](#)
 - [The People Who Eat Alone](#)
 - [Suwannee Treasure Hunt](#)
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 - [Naked Molluscs](#)
 - ▶ [November](#) (18)
 - ▶ [October](#) (27)
 - ▶ [September](#) (8)
 - ▶ [August](#) (14)
 - ▶ [July](#) (4)
 - ▶ [June](#) (3)
 - ▶ [May](#) (6)
 - ▶ [April](#) (4)
 - ▶ [March](#) (1)
 - ▶ [February](#) (1)
 - ▶ [January](#) (7)
- ▶ [2010](#) (43)
- ▶ [2009](#) (40)
- ▶ [2008](#) (48)
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Countries we have visited



[visited country maptravel guide](#)

About Me



[Doug Frizzle](#)

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As an armed forces brat, we lived in Rockcliff (Ottawa), Namao (Edmonton), Southport (Portage La Prairie), Manitoba, and Dad retired to St. Margaret's Bay, NS.

Working with the Federal Government for 25 years, Canadian Hydrographic Service, mostly. Now married to Gail Kelly, with two grown children, Luke and Denyse. Retired to my woodlot at Stillwater Lake, NS, on the rainy days I study the life and work of A. Hyatt Verrill 1871-1954.

[View my complete profile](#)

**frizzle(at)hfx.ea
stlink.ca**

. . . the email for Doug
Frizzle and Gail Kelly

Doug's Bookstore

You should see this.

- [Verrill Master List](#)
- [Our Next House](#)
- [The Tent Dwellers - 1908 - Kedge/Paine](#)
- [Seaweed and Fish Fertilizers](#)
- [Bookstore for Verrill and more](#)
- [KIVA Microloans - Team Nova Scotia](#)
- [Chezzetcook Images - Roger Belanger](#)
- [Droste Cocoa, History and Manufacture](#)
- [Never A Dull Moment - Verrill Autobiography Book](#)
- [Scientifiction 5 - New Book](#)
- [Laing House - Halifax](#)
- [Nicaragua - Building New Hope](#)
- [Karen Human Rights](#)

- [Group - Burma 2008](#)
- [Chacara of Ngobe Women by Pam de Luco](#)

Great Tunes

[Baby Did A Bad Bad Thing](#) by [Chris Isaak](#)
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- [Projects of J.R. Frizzle](#)
- [Motoring Through Porto Rico](#)
- [Frizzle Genealogy](#)
- [Musk-Ox Hunting](#)
- [Some Common Bees 1897](#)
- [Hunting the Quetzal 1904](#)
- [Americas Tropical Trees - Verrill](#)
- [About Birds - Verrill](#)
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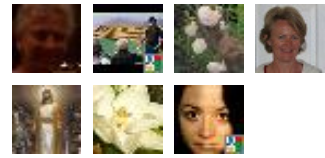
- [New photos here! \(It appears that I filled up my Flickr photo site.\)](#)

Followers

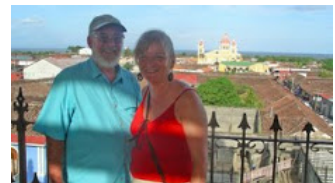
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Central America 2008



Doug Frizzle and Gail Kelly

IF YOU WANT TO PRINT A STORY

Printing from this blog appears to be challenging.

I recommend that you click and drag (select) all the text that you want. 'Ctrl' + 'C' to copy. Then open an empty WORD document on your computer and 'Ctrl' + 'V' to paste.

You should then print with page previews...

This suggestion may save a few trees - blog articles tend to run on and not be space efficient.

Personal Links

- [Cacao \(Chocolate\)](#)

- [Tree - 1928 Barrett](#)
- [Panoramio for our Google Earth Photos](#)
- [Doug's PDF Site](#)
- [Our New Photo Site](#)
- [Payant - History of NS](#)
- [Payzant Family History](#)
- [Mexican Tom and The Kid](#)
- [Our Next House](#)
- [2008 Review](#)
- [About Doug Frizzle](#)
- [St. Nicholas Magazine](#)
- [2007 Review](#)
- [Our Pictures](#)
- [Trees of Stillwater Lake](#)
- [Stillwater Woods Subdivision](#)

Outboard Boys - 1933 - Roger Garis

Roger (Carroll) Garis and the Outboard Boys Series. The Boys, Terry, Martin and Warren, were created by Roger Garis and appeared in the four-book series published in 1933 and 1934. The Boys used their powerful outboard motors to solve mysteries and have adventures, etc.

1 [The Outboard Boys at Mystery Island](#) or Solving the secret of the Hidden Cove

2 [The Outboard Boys at Shadow Lake](#) or Solving the Secret of the Strange Monster

3 [The Outboard Boys at Pirate Beach](#) or Solving the Secret of the Houseboat
4 [The Outboard Boys at Shark River](#) or Solving the Secret of Mystery Tower

Verrill Bookcase



almost organized

A. Hyatt Verrill 1929



From Thirty Years in the Jungle

Hyatt Verrill
Links are now all
in the Master

List

- [Verrill master list](#)

Laurie York Erskine links

- [The Husky - Hero of the Arctic](#)
- [He Makes People Proud of Their Jobs](#)
- [The Great Gray Wolf](#)
- [The Curing of Linky McShane](#)
- [The Man in the Shack](#)
- [Cruise of the Jackdaw](#)
- [Wiki on Erskine](#)