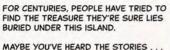
THE MYSTERY OF OAK ISLAND

WRITTEN BY NANCY PAYNE ILLUSTRATED BY NICKIA MCIVOR













































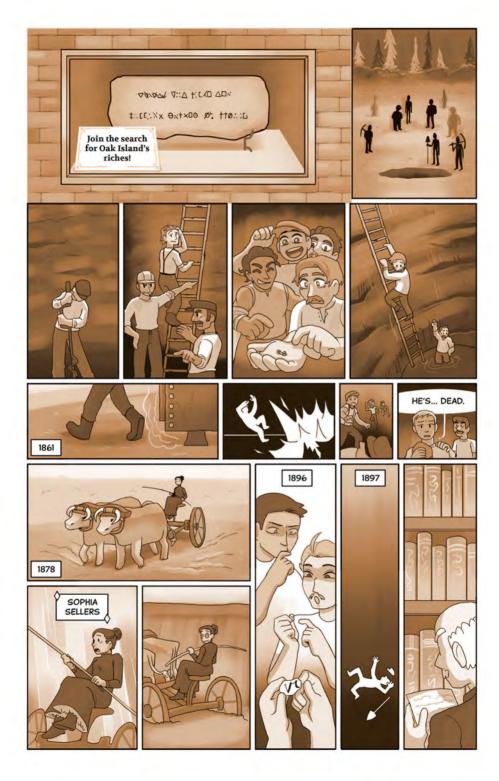




































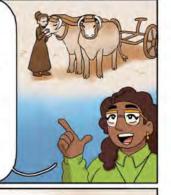








THE STONE THE ISLAND IS MADE OF IS A KIND THAT OFTEN SINKS AND SHIFTS, CREATING NATURAL HOLES LIKE THE ONE SOPHIA SELLERS AND HER OXEN FELL UP WITH EARTH, STONES AND FALLEN TREES.



THE FIRST STORY OF DANIEL MCGINNIS'S DIG IS PUBLISHED 1857. IT DOESN'T MENTION THE NAMES OF THE OTHER TWO MEN.



(THEY WERE PROBABLY ALL IN THEIR 30S, NOT TEENAGERS.)

THE FIRST DESCRIPTION
OF THE DIG SAID THERE
WERE "MARKS" AT
DIFFERENT LEVELS,
WHICH WERE LATER
SAID TO BE PLATFORMS
OF LOGS OR PLANKS,
OR FLAT STONES. IT'S NOT
UNUSUAL TO FIND
COCONUT FIBRE ALONG
THE EAST COAST,
SINCE IT WAS COMMON
ON SHIPS AS PACKING
MATERIAL OR ROPE.





ITEMS SUPPOSEDLY FOUND IN THE MAIN DIG, KNOWN AS THE MONEY PIT, HAVEN'T SURVIVED: NO GOLD CHAIN, NO ANCIENT COINS, NO TINY BIT OF PARCHMENT. THE ODDS AND ENDS THAT HAVE TURNED UP MIGHT HAVE BEEN PLANTED BY PEOPLE WANTING TO PROVE THERE WAS TREASURE.



MAYBE THEY WERE JUST DROPPED BY OTHER EXPLORERS OR THE FARMERS WHO LIVED ON THE ISLAND. THE SITE WAS OPEN TO PRETTY MUCH ANYONE FOR CENTURIES, SO THERE'S A LOT OF JUNK AROUND.



THE AMERICAN WOODS HOLE OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTION DID A RARE SCIENTIFIC STUDY ON THE SITE IN 1995.

IT FOUND NATURAL CAUSES, NOT BOOBY TRAPS, WERE BEHIND THE FLOODING OF THE DIGS.



THAT HASN'T STOPPED PEOPLE FROM COMING UP WITH COMPLICATED IDEAS ABOUT WHAT MIGHT BE THERE. SOME INSIST IT'S PIRATE TREASURE, FRENCH WEALTH FROM THE FORTRESS OF LOUISBOURG OR THE LONG-LOST JEWELS OF FORMER FRENCH QUEEN MARIE ANTOINETTE.



OTHERS VOW THERE ARE MANUSCRIPTS IN THE PIT THAT PROVE SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS WERE WRITTEN BY SOMEONE ELSE. LESS EXCITING THEORIES SAY THE PIT WAS A PLACE TO MAKE SALT OR TAR.



SIX PEOPLE HAVE DIED IN THE SEARCH FOR SOMETHING ON OAK ISLAND. THE MOST UNPLEASANT LEGEND PREDICTS THAT THE TREASURE WILL BE UNEARTHED AFTER A SEVENTH DEATH.







