



Mahone Bay Historical Anomaly

Possibilities for Archaeological Research & Cultural Tourism



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A CURIOUS CASE OF UNREMARKED LIMESTONE¹

Was 'Mahone Bay limestone' a 'trade secret' before the 1750s?
 Are 16th-18th century industrial archaeology artifacts hidden at Mahone Bay?
 Is this evidence of a smuggler's *entrepôt* during the Ancien Régime?

An entrepreneur/investor/citizen-historian's hypothesis
 about a historical anomaly² in Colonial Acadia/Nova Scotia³



Cultural treasure.

- Submerged 16th-18th century kiln works?
- Mi'kmaq ancestral graves within mainland coastal caves?
- Cultural roots of the American Revolution?

Hypothesis: The "treasure" of Oak Island is Mahone Bay limestone.

Lime mortar is scarce, taxed & controlled. A high demand staple. A higher demand luxury item conveying status.

Hypothesis: Mahone Bay has 16th-18th century lime kiln works. Mi'kmaq, dry fishery, and Acadian partners burnt the lime. Influential intermediaries smuggled untaxed lime into New England as a luxury product until 1697; and then continued smuggling it as a private staple tradable in every *private* customer's *triangle trade*. With all this private trade, circumventing French and English Lords Proprietors and Royal tax collectors, did colonial *tax-independence-mindedness* get rooted in the diked marshlands of Port Royal, and Beaubassin, and Grand Pré? Did the seeds of *American revolutionary thinking* get planted during the cultural and intellectual exchange between New Englander and Acadian traders?

Problem: In pre-modern times, limestone found use as the best quality mortar, wall-sealant, insulation, fertilizer (acidic soil 'sweetener'), disinfectant, food preservative, and cook-fire fireproofing on land and at sea. During the 17th century, New Englanders traded stone-lime and other goods into Newfoundland whilst removing England's West Country competitors from the trade, but had no local supply until 1697. Yet Boston's upper class offered lime in contract, and got their buildings plastered, whitewashed, and painted despite the legal and religious dangers of the Puritan era (1628–1691). Where did they get their lime? Mahone Bay possesses the only limestone supply on Nova Scotia's Atlantic shore, south of Ile Royale (Cape Breton Island). My research thus far suggests that deposits were never officially reported. Did New England smugglers deliver the goods from hidden suppliers in Acadia? Was Mahone Bay a *smuggler's entrepôt* during the Ancien Régime?

Enterprising intermediaries will trade scarce, taxed goods as an untaxed high status luxury item. And will charge a higher price when they can easily avoid paying tax but their customers can't. Nearby Cap de La Hève was the common first landfall of the North Atlantic passage, and fishermen visited the Bay long before Champlain's 1604 La Hève arrival. He reconnoitered the Bay and Denys did 30 years later. The Mi'kmaq met Hudson's ship, the *VOC Halve Maen* (1609) in their own small French-style sail boats, speaking a French patois. And explorers had legal, fealty, and financial incentive to report mineral discoveries and communicated this to Mi'kmaq traders who brought mineral samples to trade. But the deposits were never reported, *despite Merligueche (Lunenburg) sitting beside a peninsula of limestone; the north shore of the modern harbour's backwater bay*. In an era when export from Massachusetts is forbidden, stone-lime is specifically recorded for tax and gets double taxed whether or not goods are scarce. In an era where Acadia and Boston's nearest legal supplier (Ile Royale) charges royalty. When lime is a necessity, preferred over cheap substitutes. Here - in remote "wild-west" colonies at the far distant ends of imperial supply chains drawn tight by imperial governments fighting civil wars at home - suffering revenue cuts, even as senior imperial officials skim millions of livres, and sterling, and ducats, and pieces-of-eight; where tax enforcement is scanty; where every official of every rank has incentive to trade private, pilfered, stolen, and untaxed goods - or simply look the other way for a piece of the action - *here, there is smugglers' opportunity*.

¹ 'Unorthodox thinking' consultant, entrepreneur, investor, citizen-historian, and member of the BC Speleological Society; researching for reproducible evidence of caves and karst landscape by combining historical reports, mining claims, charts, colonial surveys, and maps spread across digital surveys around the world. In Nov 2016, I reported independent discovery of [two missing early Horne Lake \(British Columbia\) maps](#).

² This project began in Mar 2017, during a search for something new to investigate for intellectual fun. Oak Island, NS is the alleged Treasure Island of Captain Kidd, executed for piracy in 1700. My interest got piqued by the sinkhole reports when looking for karst.

³ Image 1: NS Department of Natural Resources. Image 2: [Stanislaw Skowron](#). 6 October 2006: All Rights Released.