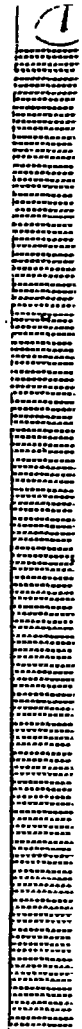


22 Sept 1970



Beale Treasure - Fact or Fiction?

Editor's Note - This article on the Beale Code and the history surrounding Mr. Beale is submitted by Victor Thayer. Vic has spent many hours and months in research on this subject - one of his favorites - and believes that he is very close to the solution of the cyphers. That the Beale affair of such interest to so many, is the reason that we are very happy to submit Vic's very complete research in the Matter.

By Victor I. Thayer

Competition is getting heavy in the valley, and the Beale Treasure may soon be evacuated from its original resting place where it was deposited nearly 150 years ago. TH'ers are going all out to find this lost hoard that was buried by Thomas Jefferson Beale & party in 1819, the first burial, and the last in 1821.

In November, 1819, the chill shroud of early winter blanketed the hills and hollows of Bedford County, Virginia. The whistling wind blew through the trees and over the Blue Ridge Mountains and valleys. The creek and river beds were frozen with a thick coating of ice.

Seven "Prairie Schooners" were leaving deep, rutted tracks in the roadbeds. These "overland barges" were hauling the first portion of gold, and silver. A handsome man with dark hair and dark eyes was leading the convoy, Thomas Jefferson Beale. "We'll stay at Buford's Tavern tonight, and pull out early in the morning." He said to his expediteurs. "We can bury it up Goose Creek."

"I'll be glad when it's buried safely, seven wagons of gold is too much to haul around the country." Said James Bird, who was one of Beale's close companions.

After resting at the Virginia tavern overnight, the caravan continued to its final destination, up a trail that bordered Goose Creek. This trail led through a "gap" in the Blue Ridge foothills, near the "Peak of the Otters."

The men were rugged and cradled cocked rifles and muzzle loaders in their arms. This wagon train was a rather strange sight to the area of Virginia. These men had brought their prairie schooners with the gold all the way from Santa Fe.

Finalley Beale raised his hand and halted the convoy. "Let's bury it on this hill," he commanded. The busy men hurriedly dug a hole deep in the earth. He ordered them to line the BEIDE enormous hole with flat stones. Gold and silver bars were lowered into the pit, along with brimming kettles filled to the rims with gold dust. Beale then ordered the men to cover the pit with the treasure in it. The hole was filled and covered with leaves, as Beale cut a mark, to identify the location, on a nearby oak tree.

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They were already talking about returning to Santa Fe for another load as they sipped their coffee in a camp not far from the burial. Concealing the treasure was stimulating their happiness and they had foiled many alleged holdup bandits.

Thomas Beale had gathered a band of restless, rugged Virginians who were willing to explore the plains and after encountering wild buffalo herds and grizzly bears, this hillbilly band of buffalo hunters and adventurers were several months later picking up gold nuggets from a ravine. Each man was to receive an equal share of the gold and silver. Beale suggested they all work like partners. A man was chosen to cook, and some to guard the treasure. They would receive equal shares also, Beale said.

Their mining equipment was packed in from Santa Fe, which was then part of Old Mexico. The men worked the ravine and mine for two years, uncovering an abundance of wealth. He knew they could lose their lives as well as the gold. He was designated to transport the first wagon-train back to Virginia and bury it in a safe location. It was not safe in the west due to hostile Indians and outlaws thus it could be safely buried in Virginia by Beale and 10 of the 32 Virginians accompanied by him. They would act as drivers and guards. The others stayed at the mine. A second journey was made to Virginia with the seven schooners in December, 1821

A man named Robert Morriss operated a tavern in Lynchburg, Va., and Beale had known of Morriss' honesty and integrity for many years. The last time Morriss heard from Beale & party was in May of 1822, after the buffalo hunter had left the metal box with the tavern owner, for safekeeping.

Beale wrote: "With regards to the black metal box left in your charge, I have a few words to say, and, if you will permit me, give you some instructions concerning it. It contains papers vitally affecting the fortunes of myself and many others engaged in business with means, in the event of my death its loss might be irreparable. You will, therefore, see the necessity of guarding it with vigilance and care to prevent so great a catastrophe. It also contains some letters addressed to yourself and which will be necessary to enlighten you concerning the business in which we are engaged. Should none of us ever return, you will preserve carefully, the box for a period of 10 years from the date of this letter, and if I, or none with authority from me during that time demands its restoration, you will open it, which can be done by removing the lock. You will find in addition to the papers addressed to you, other papers which will be unintelligible without the aid of a "key" to assist you. Such a key I have left in the hands of a friend in this place, sealed, addressed to yourself and endorsed: NOT TO BE DELIVERED UNTIL JUNE 1832! By means of this you will understand fully all you are required to do; Signed: Your Sincere Friend, T.J. Beale."

It was believed Beale and party might have been killed by renegade Indians. He never returned.

This is an alleged treasure burial of gold, silver, and jewels near Goose Creek, Bedford County, Virginia, four miles from the village of Montvale, (formerly Buford) by Beale.

According to the deciphered code left by Beale in the "black box" to Morriss, the deciphered code number 2 is translated as follows:

"I have deposited in the county of Bedford about four miles from Buford's in an excavation or vault six feet below the surface of the ground in the following articles belonging jointly to the parties whose names are given in number three herewith.

The first deposit consisted of 1014 pounds of gold and 3812 pounds of silver deposited Nov 1819. The second was made Dec 1821 and consisted of 1907 pounds of gold, and 1288 pounds of silver, also jewels obtained in St. Louis in exchange to save transportation and valued at \$13,000.00. The above is securely packed in iron pots with iron covers. The vault is roughly lined with stone and the vessels rest on solid stone and are covered with others. Paper number one describes the exact locality of the vault so that no difficulty will be had in finding it."

A map of 1820-1830 of Montvale (Buford) is needed and can be purchased from the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C. The library sells detailed maps of 1818 and 1826 which will help.

Recently a TH'er from Baltimore wrote me: "I have located metal, probably just an old roof 3.7 miles from the Tavern (Buford-Tavern). I had to come back to Baltimore last week to get legal papers and proper gun guns, gear, and shovels. It will probably be a "wild goose chase." As you know, my method is old maps together with common horse sense hiding places. The metal I located was 10 by six feet approximately from signal. I won't know until I excavate tomorrow. It can't be a septic tank, I know."

A woman is searching two to three miles South of the Hart Bros. diggings, off the road that connects Number 617 and Route Number 693. Others are operating on the East rim of Taylor's Mountain in this majestic wilderness. I believe the treasure does indeed exist, and others that visit the valley will feel the same. The United States Dept. of Interior sells the Peaks of Otter quadrangle map of Virginia. The Maryland man recently said: "Just returned from Virginia, no good, I'm disgusted now, will write more later. He may have stumbled onto a valuable clue here though from what he says.

History tells us that there was a Thomas Jefferson Beall, and also a Thomas Jeremiah Beall once living in El Paso. I wrote to an attorney related to this Jeremiah Beall, and his mother who is still living, at 85, remembers he always remarked he was the only Thomas J. anything in the South that wasn't Thomas Jefferson. Obviously neither of these men was the famed T.J. Beale of Virginia. 2

Beale was indeed an ingenious and enterprising man, unfortunately though, at an unspecified date Thomas Beale fought a "duel" with a Lynchburg man named James B. Risque. The cause of this duel was a lady named Miss Judy Hancock, Risque was shot in the stomach, but recovered. Shortly thereafter Thomas Beale left Virginia. We know that he went to New Orleans and married a lady of that city named Celeste Grand Pierre.

This information I have acquired from "Lynchburg and Its Neighbors" by Rosa F. Yancy (Richmond, 1935). Beale's father and mother, Colonel Tavenor Beale, Jr. and his wife Betty Hite Beale were married in 1764 and had seven children. The third was named Thomas. This proves beyond the shadow of doubt that Beale existed. Beale was a very common name in the State of Virginia.

Buffords Gap is a place where many TH'ers look for one of the burials. The treasure must be removed secretly or the government will claim 90 per cent and after the Courts take action the finders could end up with nothing!

Tulane University Library in New Orleans indicates that Beale (Capt. Thomas Beale) commanded his own company of New Orleans Riflemen from Dec. 16, 1814 - Mar. 14, 1815.

There were not enough buffalo in Virginia by 1818-1822 to justify any hunt. Man had about exterminated them and a report indicates that the severe winter of 1790 killed all game in Kentucky and Virginia, thus, this probably triggered the Beale expedition to get underway for their hunger to seek the Western prairies and the Great Plains.

Duplicate copies of the "Beale Papers" are obtainable through the Public Library in Roanoke, \$16.95 plus postage. The Jones library in Lynchburg has a collection of writings on this treasure. Steve Price wrote a nice article on Beale in the August 20 "Lynchburg News" in 1967. From my last correspondence with Steve, he was headed for 'devil's Mountain' in Venezuela to do a little gold mining. The library sells his story for 30¢.

The Washington Hotel located on Church Street, Lynchburg, is the former hotel owned by Morriss. A total of 10 years passed, and the box remained on the shelf in the hotel. It was 23 years before Morriss pried open the box and found its puzzling contents that would remain a mystery for the rest of his life. He tried in vain to locate the treasure without success, he was unable to decipher any part of the ciphered codes.

The Roanoke Beale Papers contain about 67 pages. If economy is in your midst, write: "Capital Service #305 Wilber Ave., Columbus, Ohio" for a boiled down 17 page version. This is well worth the money, #2.50 per copy, and this is a good outfit to purchase from.

I wrote to "The American Cryptogram Association" of Greenfield, Mass., and they advised me that one of their former employees, and ex-editor, R. A. Hammell, #198 Richey Ave., West Collingwood, N. J. #08107 was working on a revision and new material on this subject, but he never got around to publishing it. Then, he was voted out of office, and last I knew he planned to publish it on his own, without any connection with the organization. They told me: "I might suggest that you write to him directly; but if he doesn't answer, don't be surprised". I did write him, but he has not given me a reply to date. One of the members claims he deciphered the complete 150 year old mystery, while others claim it is an unfortunate hoax. He refused to divulge his findings.

Hammell was evidently removed from office because he apparently put more effort into his proposed publication: "Beale Thing" than he put into editing. He believes the "Beale Thing" is a true story right down the line. The whole thing is far too complex to have been a hoax.

The outfit did issue a story of this treasure back in 1954, in their bi-monthly magazine, "The Cryptogram", but these issues have long since been exhausted, and there are no plans for a reprint. *CK used*

The Missouri Intelligencer was published between 1819 and 1835 in Franklin, Fayette, and Columbia, Missouri. A list of names appears in an 1822 edition of the newspaper, and clearly states: "A company of about 50 persons, principally from St. Louis and its vicinity are in town, on their way to Santa Fe. Their purpose is to hunt and obtain furs. We wish them greater success than has fallen to the lot of these mentioned above."

Another Missouri Intelligencer clearly states: "List of Letters" "remaining in the Post Office at Franklin, Missouri, on the 11st day of March, 1820, which if not taken out within three months, will be sent to the General Post Office as dead letters. Among this long list of names is that of the Yrt Virginian, Thomas Beale.

Did Beale and party deliver for the U. S. Army, the provisions that were shipped to Council Bluffs? Listed in the article was: 600 barrels of pork, 1250 barrels fine flour, 2000 gal. whiskey, 550 bushels good beans, 8300 pounds good hard soap, 4300 pounds hard tallow candy, cotton wicks, and so on through the list. The U. S. Army was at this time looking for men with means of delivering this huge cargo.

Franklin was a small town in Howard County, Missouri on the river. Suddenly the mighty Missouri angered and changed its course around 1835 and covered the town of Franklin. The present town of New Franklin is near the site of the old town of Franklin. The dead letter office in Washington could not locate the lost letter for me on this. It must have either been picked up by Beale, or one of his exploiters, or destroyed by the Dead Letter Office long ago.

Trails that were marked out across Missouri to Santa Fe and other areas were mostly through Indian lands. The party might have traveled through the Kansas Territory extensively. This territory was from 1800-1854. Evidence has it that the U. S. Government would not have allowed "buffalo hunts" here as it was Indian Territory. There were many hostile Indians and holdup bandits throughout the West at this time.

Old Climax, and Collier's Magazines carry stories of the Beale affair. I believe it was June 1958 issue in Climax and a 1919 and also 1929 edition of Collier's.

The treasure can't be too far from the roads, two roads at the time. What it boils down to is three acres each approximately four land miles out, due East, due West, and due North, this is what many TH'ers say. The Beale papers give the basic facts, four miles from Bufords. Here you have to reason with yourself. Before the tavern, or after. An 1820 map of Montvale, Va., could help.

I asked Tulane University about what codes were used in Capt. T. J. Beale's Co. of Orleans Riflemen and they replied: "Alarm guns (3 cannon) gave the signal of the British landing at Villere's Canal:....So you can see that cannon and other weapon shots were probably one means of signaling."

The mysterious ciphers left by Beale, Pravett, in his book "Secret & Urgent" says simple substitution with suppression of frequencies was the method used. David Kahn, in his book of 1967, "The Codebreakers" on page 772 says: "Dr. Carl Farmer of Washington, D. C. used a Univac #1107 to determine the cryptogram's properties and got no where." He tried everything he could think of. Myself, I previously thought that "The Dialogues of Plato"; ancient writings of the Greek Philosopher, might have been used. Thomas Jefferson was the father of American Cryptography, and perhaps this enlightened Beale to follow suit, being named after the President must have intrigued him therefore he decided to develop his own code.

Several TH'ers claim they have broken the "Beale Code". Last August TH'ers found 13 of the 15 original landmarks! These men claimed to have cracked the code by using an ancient Spanish Folk Lore; and believe the treasure is not six feet deep, but perhaps around eight feet underground. There were four in their party and they figure that finding the treasure by happenstance without deciphering codes #1 and #3 is practically impossible.

A woman has hired a crew of five men to dig about four and one-half miles North on Goose Creek. Somebody is going to turn up something! These prospectors are all using metal/mineral detectors to locate this hoard worth \$2-34 million.

Beale was selected as Captain by the others, although there was no Military connection in their midst. Beale was admired by the women for his good looks, he was also envied by most men. Morriss said he appeared to be highly educated, and he wished he had asked Beale more about himself when Beale had visited him on several occasions.

The Librarian in Roanoke said: "We've made over \$3,000 on the Beale Papers and pamphlet in the past three years." Members of the Library in Roanoke have been made to feel that the treasure still exists where originally placed and they receive inquiries and calls from all over the United States, France, and even South Africa.

The prairie schooners must have traveled up the old Santa Fe Trail. The treasure was mined 250-300 miles North of Santa Fe. The old mine has never been located in the west.

It is a known fact that Beale and party had intended first to bury the treasure in a cave, but decided against it because they had become acquainted with farmers in the area, and they fortunately found out that the cave was used to store corn and other crops. The Hart Brothers diggings are nearby and many TH'ers start here. Don't forget the old "Curtiss Shaft" is located in a cave or mine in Virginia where gold is removed.

James B. Ward broke code #2 in 1862, using the "Declaration of Independence" as a key. He was unable to break codes in cipher #1 and #3. Ward is now deceased. Another man, Clayton I. Hart, in collaboration with his brother, worked on the ciphers from 1898-1912, seperately and jointly, turned to the Constitution, Shakespears, "The Declaration of Independence" and numerous other books and documents that they thought might have been in the Washington Hotel in Lynchburg during Beale's sojourn there.

Ward started by using the word "When" and he counted allegedly 115 words and used the first letter of the word inalienable that is spelled with a "U" by Thomas Jefferson.

I have found an error in the Beale papers, and I have deciphered parts of Cipher #1 and #3 but it is not yet complete. I have been asked to conceal my findings by other TH'ers that speculate we can get together and find the treasure. They didn't even want me to write this story, but I would like to see it found while I am in my prime, and prove to the world that said treasure does exist and people will realize this was all within the realm of reason, and not a fabrication of the Edgar Allen Poe period.

There were three burials by these expeditors, one is not far from the city of Lynchburg. Hiely & Tate Farms are mentioned in the mystic ciphers. Beale's expedition was secretly arranged in such a manner and precautions were so well taken, that the treasure was moved unnoticed due to the fact that "buffalo furs" covered the metal. Their own buffalo meat was "heavily salted", as a preservative.

Clayton Hart's brother, George, lives in Washington, D. C. George said he worked the ciphers until 1919. Clayton's records are in the possession of his sister in Roanoke. He must be close to 100 now and probably has passed on.

Beale was staying at the "old" Planter's Hotel while in St. Louis when he wrote Morriss. In Nov. 1817, Evarist Maury announced to the public that the hotel was operational. He owned it. It was on Second Street. In 1964 P. B. Innis ~~xxx~~ wrote on "Beale" in the August edition, of Argosy magazine.

Gold, silver, and jewels were buried. The jewels were of a sacrosanct origin, purchased from an old mission in Old Mexico, in return for gold and silver bullion that was melted into sacrosanct idols. Mr. Beale and his men stayed at this mission for safety while on the journey returning to the East.

A woman hunting the treasure in Virginia wants to use dynamite. She believes she has located one of the burials. Some TEs believe an old English folklore was used to make the ciphered code.

Part of this 150 year old mystery rests with "The Missouri Compromise" (1819-1821) Beale must have developed much of the code while still mining gold and silver and encountering the American bison.

It would have been much too dangerous to have sent letters to indicate the exact burial spots. It all had to be written in this manner and handled this way, using ciphers.

Ward cut the codes according to their length. The numbers range from 1 to 49602. Clayton Hart remained in Roanoke and searched for the treasure until his death in 1949. Ward cracked code 2 in 1862. Some versions of the code use 49, and 602, etc. This is not the error I previously mentioned.

Beale's crew had picked their favorite place in Franklin, Mo. to eat, it was at a rathskeller that served hearty dishes such as cornmeal mush and hot soups that tasted so good to the group after a chilly day or night of traveling from one destination to the other. They spend considerable time in Franklin, the rathskeller had an abundance of wines and other drinks. Some TEs believe there is one Beale burial in Bedford, Pa., however, I feel that this is very misleading and highly erroneous.

This is about all that I can tell you at the present time. I promised to others that I'd withhold and conceal my findings for a few more months. I plan to publish a pamphlet on this treasure and the "Beale Code" in the very near future.

I wish you all good hunting. I will gladly welcome comments from anyone on this. I have spent a lot of time on this subject, working out every conceivable angle that was within concatenation.

Some TH'ers travel to Taylor's Mountain every week-end to search for this hoard, as they seem to feel that a huge rock has something to do with one of the treasure burials. Not far from this immediate area is ~~Sxxx~~ Suck Mountain where Beale and party spent considerable time.