

THE PFEIFFER INVESTIGATION

THE BEALE PAPERS

The Complete Master Report

Who · What · When · Where · Why — and Where It Stands

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Statement of Prior Discovery: U.S. Copyright Office — March 23, 2026

Primary sources: Bedford County Chancery Cause 019-1903-057 · Grand Lodge of Virginia archives ·
Louisiana court records · 1820 U.S. Census · Declassified NSA documents

Dedicated to the memory of April Marie Velvet Pfeiffer (1977-2026)
“She pointed the way.”

Executive Summary — Where the Investigation Stands

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This report is the complete record of the Pfeiffer Investigation into the Beale Papers — every finding, every source, every test, every correspondence, every coordinate, and every dead end, compiled from the investigation's full archive: the master research documents of March–June 2026, the Bedford County chancery records, the Grand Lodge of Virginia correspondence, the Louisiana court record, the computational analyses, and the complete conversation and file history of the research program.

The investigation holds itself to one standard throughout: **the distinction between what the documentary record confirms, what it makes plausible, and what testing has ruled out.** A finding that fails is still a finding, and this report records the failures as plainly as the successes. That discipline is what separates this work from 140 years of confident claims and quiet retreats.

THE STATE OF THE INVESTIGATION — JULY 2026

1. THE DOCUMENTARY CASE IS THE INVESTIGATION'S STRONGEST, PROVABLE CONTRIBUTION. The Beale Papers can now be shown, from primary sources, to be an authored narrative assembled in 1880s Lynchburg from real local names bound together by the Otey family marriages and a documented 1806 duel — with the pamphlet's publisher, James B. Ward, carrying a two-generation family grievance against the real Beale name. The chronology of the real Thomas Beale's death forecloses the pamphlet's own deposit dates.

2. THE MASONIC THREAD HAS MOVED FROM LITERARY HYPOTHESIS TO ARCHIVAL DOCUMENT. Through direct correspondence with the Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Virginia, the investigation obtained the 1865 annual return of Dove Lodge No. 51 showing “J.B. Ward” and “Tho. J. Beal” together as Master Masons, and written confirmation that the Bedford principals were members of Liberty Lodge No. 95 with connections to Marshal Lodge No. 39 in the 1820s.

3. THE LOCATION MODELS REMAIN UNPROVEN. The original surveyor-chain location model failed its own controlled statistical test in May 2026 and is reported here as a null result. The revised pole-and-bearing geographic model — the 436 Triangle, the Bufordsville analysis, and the Caldera field target — is the investigation's active working hypothesis. It has produced striking correspondences and one independent convergence, but no physical confirmation. No treasure has been located. No vault has been verified.

In plain terms: the treasure hunt is unproven and the history is opened. What began as a search for gold became something more durable — a primary-source reconstruction of how one of America's most famous mysteries was built, who built it, and why. That contribution stands regardless of whether a single ounce of gold ever existed. The geographic model remains on the table as a testable field

hypothesis, documented here in full with its supporting correspondences and its contradicting evidence side by side.

1. A Note on Method and Evidence Standards

Sources in this report fall into three tiers, and the tier is noted where it matters:

- **Tier 1 — Primary documents:** Bedford County Chancery Cause 019-1903-057 (1875-1903, ~1,061 scanned pages including twenty-one land-survey plats); the 1865 annual return of Dove Lodge No. 51; the 1820 Bedford County census; Louisiana court records (Beale v. Walden, 11 Rob. 67, 1845); the Louisiana Gazette burial notice of September 8, 1820; the NRHP/DHR file for Locust Level (009-0018); declassified NSA documents DOCID 656726 and 656733.
- **Tier 2 — Institutional correspondence:** written and telephone communications with Jack K. Lewis, PGM, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Virginia (March-June 2026), and with Karen O. Rowlett, Deputy Clerk, Bedford County Circuit Court.
- **Tier 3 — Secondary research:** published cipher scholarship (Gilligly 1980; Nickell 1982; Hammer's UNIVAC analyses), genealogical compilations (the 1903 Buford family genealogy), and community research.

Every claim in this report carries one of four status labels: **CONFIRMED** (supported by a named primary source), **PLAUSIBLE — PENDING VERIFICATION** (coherent and sourced but not yet closed), **HYPOTHESIS — ACTIVE** (the investigation's current working model, awaiting field or archival test), and **RULED OUT / NULL** (tested and failed, or contradicted by the record). Claims made confidently in earlier phases of the investigation that did not survive testing are retained in this report and labeled as retracted — because the history of the investigation is itself part of the record, and an investigation that documents its own refutations earns the reader's trust for its convergences.

2. The Backstory — The Legend as Published

2.1 The 1885 Pamphlet

In 1885, a fifty-cent pamphlet titled *The Beale Papers* appeared in Lynchburg, Virginia, published and copyrighted by James B. Ward. It told of a man named Thomas J. Beale who, around 1819–1821, buried an immense fortune in gold, silver, and jewels in Bedford County, Virginia, near a place called Buford's. According to the story, Beale led a party of about thirty Virginia adventurers who struck gold and silver north of Santa Fe (then Spanish territory), transported it east over two expeditions, and sealed it in a stone-lined vault six feet underground. Before vanishing forever, Beale left a locked iron box with Robert Morriss, a Lynchburg innkeeper, containing three cipher documents. Morriss kept the box for over twenty years, opened it, failed to read the ciphers, and passed them to a friend who spent decades more before publishing them through Ward.

Everything in the story flows from that single pamphlet. There is no independent record of Thomas J. Beale or his treasure anywhere before 1885. The pamphlet itself only ever calls him “Thomas Beale”; the middle name “Jefferson” was added by later writers.

2.2 The Three Ciphers

Cipher	Numbers	Claimed content	Status
B1	520	The exact location of the vault	Never convincingly decoded. Subject of the Pfeiffer geographic reinterpretation; also carries the Gillogly anomaly (below).
B2	763	The contents of the vault	Decoded (1885) using the Declaration of Independence: ~2,921 lbs gold, ~5,100 lbs silver, jewels valued ~\$13,000, deposits stated as Nov. 1819 and Dec. 1821. NSA analysis (Hammer) later found 44 corrections had been applied to force the decode.
B3	618	Names and next-of-kin of the thirty men	Never decoded. At ~618 numbers it is far too short to encode thirty names and addresses — itself a quiet argument against authenticity. The Pfeiffer analysis identified a repeating 59-number block inconsistent with a name list.

2.3 The Gillogly Anomaly — Why B1 May Contain No Message

When Cipher B1 is decoded against the Declaration of Independence — the key that solves B2 — it does not produce the uniform gibberish real ciphertext yields. It produces near-alphabetical runs of letters (strings tending toward a-b-c-d-e-f), known in the literature as the Gillogly strings, first analyzed by cryptographer Jim Gillogly in his 1980 paper “A Dissenting Opinion.” Genuine encryption does not behave this way; a fabricated number list, loosely built by a hand picking word positions, can. This remains one of the strongest internal reasons to suspect that B1 carries no recoverable message at all — and any location theory, including this investigation's, must be weighed against it.

2.4 Prior Scholarship the Investigation Builds On — and Extends

- **Gillogly (1980):** statistical demonstration of the alphabetical strings in B1; concluded the cipher is likely artificial.
- **Nickell (1982):** historical and linguistic analysis casting doubt on Beale's existence; identified post-period vocabulary (e.g., “stampeding”); argued the pamphlet is a work of fiction — specifically a Masonic “secret vault” allegory — and that Ward, himself a Mason, was almost certainly the author. The Pfeiffer Investigation's original contribution on this front is to convert Nickell's literary hypothesis into a documentary finding: the actual lodge records tying named principals to specific, identifiable Virginia lodges.
- **NSA declassified record (DOCID 656726, 656733):** the U.S. government formally studied the ciphers. Carl Nelson traced a “Thomas Beall” collecting mail in Franklin, Missouri — the eastern terminus of the Santa Fe Trail — shortly after April 1, 1820, and a “Thomas Beal” with mail held in Fredericksburg, Virginia in March–April 1817: two genuine post-office records matching the pamphlet's route and timing. Carl Hammer's UNIVAC analysis found the 44 corrections in B2 and that B1 “abounds in even numbers” beyond chance (the investigation's own count: 59.2% even).
- **American Cryptogram Association (decades prior):** five B1 numbers (1629, 1701, 1780, 2018, 2160) exceed the Declaration's word count (~1,322), so B1 cannot be a straightforward DOI book cipher. The investigation independently re-derived this.

3. Who — The Complete Cast

3.1 The Historical Figures

Person	Role in the record	Status
Thomas J. Beale (pamphlet)	The treasure-burying protagonist. No record of him in the 1820 Bedford County census, Virginia deed books, or militia rolls for the period.	Existence unverified; absent from the 1820 census
Thomas Beale Sr. (New Orleans)	Real Virginian who shot James Beverly Risque in an 1806 duel over Julia Hancock, fled to New Orleans, became Recorder of Wills for Orleans Parish, led the Beale Riflemen at the Battle of New Orleans (1815). Buried September 8, 1820 (Louisiana Gazette) — fifteen months before the pamphlet's December 1821 deposit.	CONFIRMED — Louisiana court and newspaper record
Thomas Beale Jr.	Natural son of Beale Sr. by Chloe Delancy of Botetourt County (adjacent to Bedford). Received ~\$124,000 in property via an April 27, 1819 “simulated sale” later ruled fraudulent. Died October 22, 1823, New Orleans. Estate litigated in <i>Beale v. Walden</i> (11 Rob. 67, 1845) / <i>Delancy v. Beale</i> .	CONFIRMED — Louisiana Supreme Court record
Robert Morriss	The Lynchburg innkeeper entrusted with the iron box; a real hotel-keeper, by one account an uncle of the publisher Ward.	CONFIRMED as a real person; the box story rests on the pamphlet alone
James B. Ward	The 1885 publisher and copyright holder. Married Harriet Otey. Confirmed Master Mason (1863). Grandson of James Beverly Risque — the man a real Thomas Beale shot in 1806.	CONFIRMED — genealogical and Masonic record
James Beverly Risque	Duel victim of 1806; grandfather of the publisher. The Risque-Ward thread supplies Ward's personal motive for choosing the name “Beale.”	CONFIRMED
Julia Hancock	Subject of the 1806 duel; later married William Clark of the Lewis and Clark expedition. An “F. W. Hancock” appears on the 1865 Dove Lodge return — an echo of the family.	CONFIRMED
Paschal Greenberry Buford (1791-1875)	Bedford County tavern-keeper, planter, surveyor-family patriarch, and one of the county's largest landowners (per Virginia DHR). Built Locust Level c.1822-1824. Married Frances Ann Otey (1820). The “Buford's” of the pamphlet. Identified by the investigation as the probable architect of any real survey layer in the ciphers.	CONFIRMED as historical figure; cipher-architect role is HYPOTHESIS
Frances Ann Otey Buford (1798-1882)	Paschal's wife; her obelisk stands in the Buford family cemetery at Locust Level. The Otey hinge: her family and Ward's wife's family are the same.	CONFIRMED
Mathew Pate	Surveyor; author of Plat 41 (May 8, 1816) — the	CONFIRMED —

Person	Role in the record	Status
	foundational Buford home tract survey containing the water gate rock, graveyard, and white oak stations. The Pates and Bufords intermarried (William Buford m. Annie M. Pate, 1791).	chancery record
Thomas Mead, D.S.	Deputy Surveyor on Buford's line in Plat 68 (Sept. 30, 1824).	Named in plat; biography unresearched — open lead
Stuart Buford	Signs an 1893 plat as Surveyor — third generation of Bufords practicing surveying.	CONFIRMED — chancery record
The Otey family	The hinge of the whole cast: Ward married Harriet Otey; Buford married Frances Ann Otey. The publisher and the tavern-keeper married into the same family — the mechanism by which Ward had ready access to Buford-area names and geography.	CONFIRMED — genealogical record
Edward Calohill Burks (1821-1897)	Married Mildred Elizabeth Buford (Paschal's daughter, 1845); Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia (1877-1882); a revisor of the 1887 Code of Virginia. His son Martin Parks Burks was also a Supreme Court of Appeals Justice (1917-1928) and Dean of Washington & Lee Law.	CONFIRMED
The chancery nine	Surnames on Chancery 019-1903-057: Brugh, Buford, Burks, Draper, Goode, Hall, Kasey, Newman, Withers. At least four families connected by documented intermarriage across three generations.	CONFIRMED — case index and genealogy
The Lynchburg circle	The proposed authorship circle around Ward: Harriet Otey Ward; printer cousin John William Sherman; cousin Ferdinand C. Hutter (possible contributor of the “solved” cipher); Max Guggenheimer (named in the story; sold copies); Charles W. Button of the Lynchburg Virginian (advertised the pamphlet).	PLAUSIBLE — pending primary corroboration
The “thirty men”	The pamphlet's treasure party. The Pfeiffer reinterpretation treats them as narrative architecture; the Buford children (Rowland, Margaret, Ann) professed no knowledge of any Beale or treasure and were never consulted before publication.	Unverified as a group; children's denial CONFIRMED

3.2 The Modern Cast — The Investigation

Person / Institution	Role	Status
Samuel Edward Pfeiffer	Principal Investigator, PinPoint Treasure Research. Independent researcher operating without institutional funding. Filed Statement of Prior	Principal

Person / Institution	Role	Status
	Discovery with the U.S. Copyright Office, March 23, 2026.	
Kelly McEvoy	Co-founder and research partner; conducted the HathiTrust almanac search (Joshua Sharp / Johnson & Warner Virginia Almanac line), May 2026.	Investigation team
April Marie Velvet Pfeiffer (1977–2026)	Sister of the Principal Investigator. The investigation is dedicated to her memory.	“She pointed the way.”
Jack K. Lewis, PGM	Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Virginia. Personally engaged from March 2026; deployed a curator and archival team; located and photographed the 1865 Dove Lodge No. 51 return; confirmed the Liberty Lodge No. 95 / Marshal Lodge No. 39 memberships.	Active correspondent; primary-source provider
Karen O. Rowlett	Deputy Clerk, Bedford County Circuit Court; access channel to Chancery Case 019-1903-057.	Active correspondent
Sam Peppiatt	Independent researcher who in 2013, with no knowledge of this investigation, located the same terrain depression ~1,150 ft SE of Walnut Grove Church by reading USGS topographic maps.	Independent convergence
Carl Nelson & Carl Hammer	Authors of the declassified NSA-era analyses (DOCID 656726, 656733): the Missouri/Fredericksburg mail records and the UNIVAC statistical findings.	Declassified record
Grand Lodge AF&AM of Virginia	Institutional partner; subject of the April 2026 Research Collaboration Agreement (three-tier information classification: Public / Anonymized / Restricted; permanent fraternal confidentiality; Pfeiffer Methodology IP protected).	Institutional partner
Pfeiffer Recovery Partners LLC	Entity formed to govern any recovery operation (Operating Agreement on file as an exhibit).	Legal structure

4. When — The Complete Timeline

4.1 The Historical Timeline (1806-1903)

Date	Event
1806	Thomas Beale shoots James Beverly Risque in a duel — by tradition over Beale's attentions to Julia Hancock. Beale flees to New Orleans. The Beale name enters the future publisher's family history as a wound.
May 8, 1816	Mathew Pate surveys the Buford home tract (Plat 41): "Beginning at a rock near the Buttment of Water gate" — the tract's legal point of beginning. The same traverse names the graveyard and the white oak with measured pole distances.
Mar-Apr 1817	A "Thomas Beal" has mail held in Fredericksburg, Virginia (NSA/Nelson finding) — matching the pamphlet's claimed 1817 departure year.
Nov 1819	First treasure deposit, per decoded Cipher B2 (pamphlet's claim). Same year: Thomas Beale Sr.'s \$124,000 "simulated sale" to Thomas Jr. (April 27, 1819).
Apr 1820	A "Thomas Beall" collects mail in Franklin, Missouri — eastern terminus of the Santa Fe Trail (NSA/Nelson finding).
Sept 8, 1820	Thomas Beale Sr. buried in New Orleans (Louisiana Gazette). The most-advanced real candidate for the protagonist is dead before the story's second act.
Oct 31, 1820	Paschal Buford marries Frances Ann Otey.
Dec 1821	Second treasure deposit, per Cipher B2 — fifteen months after the real Beale's burial. Same month: formation of the Virginia Grand Council of Royal and Select Masters (Cryptic Masons).
1822	The pamphlet's Beale leaves the iron box with Robert Morriss in Lynchburg. Paschal Buford's construction window at Locust Level begins (built c.1822-1824); tradition credits him with building Mt. Zion Church, 1822 (unconfirmed from primary sources — one phone call closes this thread).
Oct 22, 1823	Thomas Beale Jr. dies in New Orleans; estate litigation follows (Delancy v. Beale; Beale v. Walden decided 1845).
1826	William Morgan affair in New York triggers the national anti-Masonic movement — the period context for fraternal concealment and record dispersal.
1845	Beale v. Walden, 11 Rob. 67 (La. Sup. Ct.) — the court record documenting the Beale family, the simulated sale, and the chronology used in this report.
1863	James B. Ward raised a Master Mason (public Masonic record).
1865	Annual return of Dove Lodge No. 51 (Richmond) lists "J.B. Ward" and "Tho. J. Beal" among its Master Masons — the primary document later photographed for this investigation by the Grand Lodge.
1875	Paschal Buford dies. The partition suit James H. Buford et als v. Frances A. Buford et als begins — it will run to 1903 and generate the ~1,061-page chancery file at the center of this investigation.
1885	Ward publishes and copyrights The Beale Papers. The same year, an 1885 survey lays off lots from "land formerly owned by Paschal Buford" — the estate is being subdivided and auctioned in open court in the very window the pamphlet appears. The Buford land was not a guarded secret in 1885.

Date	Event
1893	Berry survey on the South Fork of Goose Creek, signed Stuart Buford, Surveyor — three generations of Buford surveyors.
1903	Chancery cause closes. The most detailed surviving documentation of the exact land at the center of the legend contains no reference to a vault, a treasure, gold, or Thomas Beale.

4.2 The Investigation Timeline (2026)

Date (2026)	Event
Feb 12-13	Intensive founding sessions: the surveyor-measurement reframe of B1 is first developed alongside the PinPoint Treasure research platform (cipher engines, surveyor-chain calculators, GLO/LiDAR tooling).
Mar 23	Statement of Prior Discovery filed with the U.S. Copyright Office: Gunter's-chain reinterpretation, 225° bearing, Paschal Buford as architect, 12-cluster analysis, embedded-signature analysis, Masonic Cryptic Rite framework.
March	Correspondence opens with Jack K. Lewis, Grand Secretary, Grand Lodge of Virginia. Lewis notes personal familiarity with the Beale story from years near Lynchburg; a Grand Lodge curator begins a formal search of period membership records. Parallel spin-off: the surveyor-measurement method applied to the Zodiac Z32 cipher (see Section 10.7).
Apr 8	Lewis in writing: “Thus far we have found Lodge and member records that confirm the Masonic connections you have identified.”
Apr 11	Lewis's confirmation letter: “We did locate records in our vault which are consistent with the individuals named and their association with both Lodges you identified.” The first institutional archival engagement of its kind in the recorded history of Beale research.
April	Research Collaboration Agreement drafted between Samuel Pfeiffer (PinPoint Treasure) and the Grand Lodge of Virginia: three-tier information classification, permanent fraternal confidentiality, IP protection for the Pfeiffer Methodology, media opt-out, lawful-recovery provisions.
May 4	10:00 PM MST — the computational breakthrough session: first computationally derived, geographically constrained framework for B1 under the surveyor model.
May 7	Direct examination of Buford-era plats: the unit correction. Bedford surveys are recorded in POLES (16.5 ft), not Gunter's chains (66 ft) — a factor-of-four correction to every distance interpretation.
May 13	Direct plat access via Bedford County Chancery Case 019-1903-057 (Karen O. Rowlett, Deputy Clerk). Transcription of Plats 40p, 41, 42, 43p, 44p, 68. The water gate rock, graveyard, and white oak documented in one measured traverse.
May 14	Comprehensive computational pass: the 436 Triangle identified in B1; the repeating 59-number block identified in B3; the [225, 401] signature pair analyzed; Statement of Computational Discovery v2 issued.
May 17-26	Master Archive compiled (the May 26 document, on file as an exhibit): the

Date (2026)	Event
	maximal statement of the geographic model, including the Bufordsville-is-Montvale identification, the plat-number-in-cipher matches, and the Caldera convergence analysis.
May 29	THE CONTROLLED TEST: the statistical clustering test of the surveyor-chain model returns a NULL RESULT across all four anchors — every real anchor scores at or below the random-chance baseline. Reported straight. Same session: the Gillogly-string analysis, the poles-not-chains confirmation from the 1885/1893 surveys, and the honest-reassessment pivot.
Jun 2	Lewis transmits photographs (1274.jpg, 1275.jpg) of the 1865 Dove Lodge No. 51 annual return showing J.B. Ward and “Tho. J. Beal” as Master Masons: “Copy of the 1865 return from Dove Lodge No 51 showing both J.B. Ward and Thomas Beal as Master Masons on top of page 2. As you requested.”
Jun 3	Lewis confirms: “The original two you asked about were members of Liberty No 95 in Bedford, and had connections to Marshal 39 in Lynchburg in the 1820's.”
Jun 4	The Documentary Investigation master report compiled — the investigation's own most rigorous document, recording the closure of the chain-model treasure hunt and the opening of the documentary case.
Jun 25	Full-archive sweep session (Drive + Gmail): the complete evidence matrix assembled; Samuel directs the formal abandonment of the Declaration of Independence as a key and states the core reframe — B1 and B3 as pure geography. Computational analysis of both ciphers as raw geographic datasets anchored to Buford's Tavern (37.38833°N, 79.72833°W) begins.
July	Gumroad publication of the research record (teaser prospectus \$9.99; complete investigation file \$79; bundle \$85; full-disclosure engagement offer held off-platform). Master reporting and archive consolidation — this document.

5. Where — The Complete Geography

5.1 Verified Locations (GPS / Primary-Source Confirmed)

Location	Coordinates	Source and significance
Buford's Tavern / Buford's Station (Montvale)	37.38833°N, 79.72833°W	DHR Nomination 009-0018, Footnote 1. The literal “Buford's” of the pamphlet — the anchor everyone measures the “about four miles” from.
Locust Level (the Buford “Home Place”)	37.3865°N, 79.7372°W	NRHP-listed (DHR 009-0018); built c.1822-1824 by Paschal Buford. Only 0.51 miles from the Montvale anchor — it is NOT the four-mile target. Contains a stone-lined cistern and a road-bed depression through the cemetery.
Buford Family Cemetery (Locust Level)	triangulated 37.3784°N, 79.7322°W (±200 ft)	Three surviving obelisks: Paschal G. Buford, Frances A. Buford, Margaret Buford Cobbs. Position triangulated from Glove Creek (GNIS) via the plat distances; field GPS verification remains the definitive step.
Mt. Zion Baptist Church (Montvale)	37.3704°N, 79.6964°W	Tradition: built by Paschal Buford, 1822 — same year as the alleged second deposit. Unconfirmed from primary sources; one call to the church (540-947-5772) closes the thread.
Goose Creek confluence (N + S Fork)	37.3701°N, 79.6997°W	USGS topographic. Creek confluences were the most common “point of beginning” in Virginia metes-and-bounds surveys.
Walnut Grove Church (Pike Rd)	37.4345°N, 79.6829°W	Landmark for the Caldera projection (Section 9).
Beale Trail Road / Otey Farm Rd junction	37.31211°N, 79.70316°W	VDOT Route 741 is officially “Beale Trail Road”; the junction property is recorded in 1885 — the pamphlet's publication year.
The white oak (Plat 41/Lot 18)	37.3792°N, 79.7320°W (computed)	On Glove Creek near Mountain View Church Road; the survey station 18 poles from the graveyard — the starting point of the investigation's walking-directions model.
1816 water gate rock (Plat 41)	~37.3857°N, 79.7356°W (computed)	“Beginning at a rock near the Buttment of Water gate” — the legal point of beginning of the Buford home tract, filed three years before the first alleged deposit. May still be physically present. Field Operations Priority #1.

5.2 Model-Derived Targets (HYPOTHESIS — not verified)

The following coordinates are outputs of the investigation's location models. They are recorded in full because they are part of the history of the work — but none has physical confirmation, and the model that produced the first of them failed its controlled test (Section 8).

Target	Coordinates	Status
"Primary Vault Target" (Phase 1, chain model)	37.395913°N, 79.674087°W	RETRACTED as a vault claim. Product of the original Gunter's-chain / 225° model, described as "88 feet from the Buford Family Cemetery." When properly recomputed the cemetery estimate itself moved ~half a mile; the underlying clustering was shown to be statistical noise.
The 436 Triangle vertices	37.365–37.400°N, 79.718–79.752°W (three legs)	ACTIVE HYPOTHESIS. Three [bearing, 436] pairs in B1 project a triangle with Buford's Tavern near the SE vertex. Awaiting field GPS verification of the cemetery origin.
The [225, 401] signature target	~37.368°N, 79.749°W	ACTIVE HYPOTHESIS. 225 = the documented acreage of the original Buford land grant (NRHP nomination); 401 poles at ~225° lands 1.90 miles from the Tavern.
Four-mile SW search zone	~37.34°N, 79.78°W	ACTIVE HYPOTHESIS. Goose Creek headwaters at the Blue Ridge foot; ~4 sq. miles between Buford's Gap and the escarpment.
The Caldera	37.432°N, 79.680°W	ACTIVE HYPOTHESIS — strongest single field target (Section 9). Bowl-shaped depression ~1,150 ft SE of Walnut Grove Church; independently identified by Sam Peppiatt in 2013; measurable in SRTM data (7–10 m below surrounding mean).

5.3 Bufordsville Is Montvale

Placing Plat 43p — the Bufordsville town plat, with its ~30 half-acre lots, two main streets, railroad depot, and church — beside a modern map shows the settlement Paschal Buford platted in the 1820s is the modern community of Montvale: "Salem Road" is Route 460, "Buchanan Road" is Route 695 (Goose Creek Valley Road), and

the N&W Railroad line matches. The Bufordsville settlement proper sits north of Montvale in the Upper Goose Creek Valley. Status: CONFIRMED by direct plat-to-map comparison.

6. Why — The Motive and the Authorship Case

This is the section the primary record proves. Taken together, the documents assemble a coherent answer to why the Beale Papers exist — and it does not require a buried fortune.

6.1 The Duel and the Publisher's Grievance

James B. Ward was the grandson of James Beverly Risque. In 1806, a man named Thomas Beale shot Risque in a duel — by tradition over Beale's attentions to Risque's niece Julia Hancock, who later married William Clark of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Beale fled to New Orleans; his son's estate litigation (Delancy v. Beale / Beale v. Walden) is preserved in the Louisiana courts. The name “Beale” was a real and bitter name in the publisher's own family history, two generations deep, before he ever published a pamphlet built around it.

6.2 The Otey Hinge

Two marriages tie the cast together: Ward married Harriet Otey; Paschal Buford married Frances Ann Otey. The publisher and the man at whose place the treasure was supposedly buried married into the same family. This is the mechanism by which Ward had ready access to the Buford-area names and geography — not a buried cipher, but a marriage network. It is independently corroborated in the genealogical record and is the strongest structural link in the entire case.

6.3 The Dates That Break the Story

Cipher B2 states the second deposit was made in December 1821. The New Orleans Thomas Beale most often advanced as the protagonist was buried on September 8, 1820 (Louisiana Gazette), and the elder Captain Thomas Beale died around 1818 — both before the treasure was supposedly buried. A dead man cannot bury gold in 1821. The chronology does not merely strain the story; it forecloses the most popular candidate.

6.4 The Census and the Family

In the 1820 Bedford County census, thirteen of the sixteen surnames used in the pamphlet are present — Buford and Morriss among them — but Beale is absent. The names that anchor the story to the county are the names of real neighbors; the one name the story is built around is the one not there. The Buford children — Rowland, Margaret, and Ann — are recorded as professing no knowledge of any Thomas Beale's stay at the tavern or of any treasure, and were never consulted before publication.

6.5 The Open-Court Problem

The Buford estate was being surveyed, subdivided, and auctioned in open court from the mid-1880s onward — the same window in which the pamphlet was published. An 1885 survey lays off lots from “land formerly owned by Paschal Buford.” The land at the center of the legend was not a guarded secret in 1885; it was for sale.

6.6 The Lynchburg Circle

Around Ward sits a consistent authorship circle, identified by researchers and partially corroborated by this investigation: his wife Harriet Otey Ward; his printer cousin John William Sherman, who would have set the pamphlet's type; his cousin Ferdinand C. Hutter, a possible contributor of the “solved” Declaration cipher; his friend Max Guggenheimer, whose name appears in the story and who sold copies; and Charles W. Button of the Lynchburg Virginian, which advertised the pamphlet. Flagged PLAUSIBLE — PENDING VERIFICATION rather than confirmed: it is coherent, local, and motivated, but drawn substantially from secondary and genealogical sources.

Taken together, the why writes itself: a post-war Lynchburg with a market for treasure-romance, a publisher with a family grudge attached to the Beale name, a printer cousin, a friend whose store would sell the copies, and a web of marriages that supplied every other name in the tale.

6.7 The Alternative Why — The Preservation Hypothesis

The investigation also developed, and retains as an open hypothesis, a second motive layer: that the narrative wraps a real fraternal concealment. The 1826 William Morgan affair triggered the anti-Masonic movement, creating documented urgency to disperse and conceal lodge materials; the Cryptic Masons (whose ritual centers on a hidden vault) were organized in Virginia in December 1821 — the same month as the second alleged deposit; and the Grand Lodge's own archival engagement demonstrates a preservation network that survives. Under this reading (“the people are real, the story is false, the treasure is true”), the thirty men were compensated lodge labor and any vault protects records more than gold. Status: HYPOTHESIS — internally coherent, unproven, and in tension with the null location results. It is recorded here honestly as the investigation's most ambitious frame, not as a finding.

7. The Court Records — Chancery Cause 019-1903-057

The largest body of new primary evidence is Bedford County Chancery Cause 019-1903-057, James H. Buford et als v. Frances A. Buford et als (1875-1903) — the suit that partitioned and sold Paschal Buford's estate after his death. The complete cause runs to roughly 1,061 scanned pages: deeds, depositions, commissioners' reports, bonds, leases, and twenty-one land-survey plats, read by eye from photographic images of handwritten records. Approximately sixty pages of the file (images 1001-1057+) and thirty-five key pages (0001-0035) are preserved in this investigation's exhibit archive.

7.1 The Plats Read and Transcribed

Plat	Date	Key finding
Plat 37	c.1820s	Buford family land boundaries in the Montvale corridor.
Plat 40p	Sept 1885	Master estate division: "Balance Home Tract," Dower Lots 1-2, a Buford cemetery marker; traverse beginning "at a Large white oak ... 14½ poles × Glove Creek."
Plat 41	1816	CRITICAL. Mathew Pate's home tract survey: the water gate rock point of beginning; "a Stake & Rock near the grave yard"; the white oak — three monuments in one measured traverse (graveyard 34 poles from Station 4; white oak 18 poles from the graveyard station), forming a triangle of roughly 800 feet per side on the Locust Level property.
Plat 42	c.1820s	Nearly blank: "Rough Draft. See Plat of Bufordsville marked Pt C.S."
Plat 43p	c.1820s	The Bufordsville town plat: 29+ numbered half-acre lots at "Scale 200 poles to an inch," Buford's lot in the center, railroad depot, "B. Church," two main streets, N&W Railroad.
Plat 44p	—	Geographic master map (Plat C): Glove Creek and Goose Creek, Bufordsville lots 14-18, Buchanan Road, Salem Road, Lynchburg Turnpike (Rt. 460), N&W Railroad.
Plat 68	Sept 30, 1824	Leftwich tract survey (Thomas Mead, D.S., for Mathew Pate): documents "Campbell's or Buford's line"; six measured distances — 25, 111, 160, 64, 117, 18 poles. An 1893 entry signed "Stuart Buford, Surveyor."
Tanner survey	1885	"Land formerly owned by Paschal Buford" laid off for Henry Tanner — the very year the pamphlet appeared. Every distance in poles and degree-bearings; a "Church Lot containing eighty-one poles."
Berry survey	Apr 20, 1893	South Fork of Goose Creek, adjoining "Jas. H. Buford" and the Penderlite Stone Quarry; "3 acres 3 roods 23 poles."
Partition plat	—	Commissioners' plat of the whole estate: the "Home Place," the mill, divided tracts in acres-roods-poles; neighbors Hardy,

Plat	Date	Key finding
		Davidson, Dr. Rice; the Fincastle road, the railroad bridge.

7.2 The Three Findings of the Chancery File

- **Finding 1 — The surveys are in poles, not chains.** Every distance in the 1885 and 1893 surveys is given in poles (the rod, 16.5 feet — a quarter-chain) with degree bearings: “N 26½ E 9 poles,” “33 40/100 poles,” “6 po.” The original chain-based location model was reading the wrong unit out of the wrong grammar. The primary documents settle it — and this correction, made May 7, 2026, is material to every distance interpretation.
- **Finding 2 — The estate and its breakup are fully georeferenced.** The partition plat confirms the geography independently established for Locust Level: the South Fork of Goose Creek to the south, the old mill, the railroad bridge, the Fincastle road, the N&W line, and named neighbors.
- **Finding 3 — What the records do not contain.** Across the plats read, there is no reference to a vault, a treasure, gold, or Thomas Beale. The most detailed surviving documentation of the exact land at the center of the legend — generated by the people who owned and divided it — contains nothing of the legend. (Stated as a sampling of the surveys, not a line-by-line transcription of all 1,061 pages.)

7.3 The Plat Numbers Inside the Cipher — A Correspondence to Weigh

The investigation's most striking chancery-cipher correspondence: all six measured distances in Plat 68 (25, 111, 160, 64, 117, 18 poles) appear exactly in Cipher B1. Plat 41 totals “225 10/100 poles to the Beginning” and the NRHP nomination confirms the original Buford grant was 225 acres — while 225 sits at position 51 of B1, followed by 401. The number 18 — the plat distance from the cemetery to the white oak — appears seven times in B1, more than any other small number; 81 (the Tanner “Church Lot”) appears five times. Status: DOCUMENTED CORRESPONDENCE — both sides of each pairing are independently real; whether the pairing is design or coincidence is exactly what the controlled test in Section 8 was built to answer, and readers should weigh it against that result. Small integers recur in any 520-number list; the exact-match set remains the strongest surviving argument for a survey layer.

8. The Tests — What Was Tried, and What the Numbers Said

This section is the investigation's laboratory record. Every hypothesis that could be tested computationally was tested, and the results are reported exactly as they came out — including the one that dismantled the investigation's own founding model.

8.1 Cryptographic Key-Text Tests — All Negative

Cipher B1 (and where applicable B3) was run against every key text a Virginian of the period might plausibly have used, by sequential word-index / first-letter extraction, with Index of Coincidence (IC) screening against the English baseline of ~0.065:

Key text	Result
Declaration of Independence	Solves B2 only (with 44 forced corrections per Hammer). Five B1 numbers exceed its word count — mathematically cannot be the B1 key. Formally abandoned as misdirection, June 25, 2026.
U.S. Constitution; Bill of Rights; Virginia Declaration of Rights; Articles of Confederation; Magna Carta; Patrick Henry's "liberty or death"; Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia; Poe's The Gold-Bug; Shakespeare's Tempest; KJV Genesis & Revelation; Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom; Paine's Common Sense	No coherent plaintext from any.
Webb's Freemason's Monitor (1808) and Cross's True Masonic Chart (1819)	The two period Masonic ritual manuals — the highest-priority Masonic candidates. No coherent plaintext.
Book of Enoch (1917 R.H. Charles translation)	All 520 B1 numbers in range (38,216 words) but no plaintext; IC 0.0832; anachronistic translation for an 1822 cipher. The 1821 Laurence translation remains untested — an open item.
1819 Robert B. Thomas Farmer's Almanack (No. XXVII)	Physical almanac in the investigation's possession; fully photographed and transcribed (7,332 words). FORMALLY ELIMINATED: IC 0.084 (B1) and 0.102 (B3); no readable plaintext.
Reduced alphabets (23-letter Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Roman-numeral schemes)	The 23-letter Latin alphabet gave the best chi-squared fit to English (~24.6) — a statistical lean, not a decryption. No reduced-alphabet scheme yielded readable text.

Result: B2 is read; B1 resisted every key and every alphabet tried; and the Gillogly anomaly suggests B1 may contain no textual message to find. No cryptographic path to a location was opened.

8.2 The Controlled Clustering Test — The Investigation's Most Important Negative Finding

The founding model's strongest-looking evidence had been the cluster of plotted points near the Buford cemetery (the “26 points within 470 feet” claim of the March–April phase). The decisive question: is that cluster real signal, or the inevitable product of plotting 520 small numbers from anywhere? On May 29, 2026, a controlled test was built: B1's numbers were projected from four anchors — the Bufordsville town datum, the Locust Level estate, the Buford's Tavern chimney, and a deliberately chosen random control point — across multiple bearings and units, and the density of points in the tightest 150-foot cell was measured against a 300-trial random baseline.

Anchor	Densest-cell score	Verdict vs. threshold (~40)
Random baseline (300 trials)	mean $\approx$ 24; 95th pct $\approx$ 40; max 47	The bar any real anchor must clear
Bufordsville town datum (225°)	28	Below the random AVERAGE
Locust Level estate (225°)	37	Below threshold
Buford's Tavern chimney	35	Below threshold
Random control point	41	The ONLY score to cross the threshold

THE NULL RESULT — REPORTED STRAIGHT

The cemetery cluster was noise. Five hundred twenty small integers cluster near any anchor you choose, and the real anchors did no better than chance — the only point to beat the significance threshold was the random control. The surveyor-chain location hypothesis failed its own controlled test.

Consequences: the “Primary Vault Target” at 37.395913°N, 79.674087°W and the “88 feet from the cemetery” claim are RETRACTED as findings. The clustering-derived probability claims (“1 in ten trillion”) from the early phase are RETRACTED. The method that replaced this model (Section 9) was built because of this failure, not in spite of it.

8.3 Structural Analyses That Survived

- **B1 statistics:** 520 numbers; maximum 2906 (per the working sequence used computationally; the published max in the exhibit text is 2501 — a transcription-variant issue the archive preserves both of); 59.2% even numbers (matching Hammer's “abounds in even numbers”); five numbers exceed the DOI word count.
- **B3 structure:** dominated by multiples of five; maximum value 975; and — the investigation's most solid original structural finding — a 59-number block that repeats three times at perfectly uniform 74-number spacing (positions 79, 153, 227). A book cipher encoding thirty different names cannot produce three identical 59-number sequences. Whatever B3 is, it is not a name list. Status: COMPUTATIONALLY CONFIRMED (structure); interpretation open.
- **The 436 repetition:** 436 appears three times in B1, each immediately preceded by a valid compass bearing (230, 18, 147) — the signature of three sightings at one distance. Status: DOCUMENTED PATTERN; interpretation is the active hypothesis of Section 9.
- **Jacob Fowler's 1821-22 journal:** tested as corroboration for the western expedition; ruled out — Fowler led the distinct Glenn-Fowler fur-trapping expedition.

9. The Masonic Inquiry — The Grand Lodge Record

9.1 The Correspondence (March-June 2026)

Beginning in March 2026, the investigation opened correspondence with Jack K. Lewis, Past Grand Master and Grand Secretary of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Virginia. Lewis engaged personally, noting his own familiarity with the Beale story from years near Lynchburg, and a Grand Lodge curator began a formal search of period membership records. The written record, in sequence:

Thus far we have found Lodge and member records that confirm the Masonic connections you have identified.

— Jack K. Lewis, PGM, Grand Secretary — April 8, 2026

Mr. Pfeiffer (Sam), Good morning. Thanks for sharing your great news. I certainly look forward to future updates on the results of your hard work and research. We did locate records in our vault which are consistent with the individuals named and their association with both Lodges you identified. I will securely store the executive summary and other correspondence from you in this matter, should there be any future requests from you for assistance. ... Again, my congratulations, and best wishes going forward. Sincerely, Jack.

— Jack K. Lewis — April 11, 2026

Copy of the 1865 return from Dove Lodge No 51 showing both J.B. Ward and Thomas Beal as Master Masons on top of page 2. As you requested. I could photocopy today, as I'm back in Richmond. Jack.

— Jack K. Lewis — June 2, 2026 (transmitting photographs 1274.jpg, 1275.jpg)

The original two you asked about were members of Liberty No 95 in Bedford, and had connections to Marshal 39 in Lynchburg in the 1820's.

— Jack K. Lewis — June 3, 2026

A telephone call with Lewis (recorded in the exhibit archive as `Conversation_with_Jack_the_Mason.m4a`) additionally confirmed: that an individual the investigation had flagged as possibly not a Mason was in fact confirmed as a Mason in Grand Lodge internal records (believed to be Paschal Buford); that many tunnels and vaults existed in period Virginia (“it was just a different time back then”); that multiple archivists were actively searching on every name, date, and lodge reference provided; that Lewis would like to see the mystery solved “before he dies”; and that he acknowledged the 1826 William Morgan case without discouraging the research.

9.2 What the 1865 Dove Lodge Return Is — and Its Honest Weight

Dove Lodge No. 51 is a Richmond lodge, named in 1850 for John Dove, the long-serving Grand Secretary often called the father of Virginia Freemasonry. The 1865 annual return lists the lodge's officers (John P. Little, Master), Past Masters, and three columns of Master Masons; the reverse carries Fellow Crafts, Apprentices, and the year's transactions. Read closely, the right-hand Master Mason column carries, second from the bottom, an entry read as “Tho. J. Beal.” One other roster name is worth noting: F. W. Hancock — an echo of the family at the center of the 1806 duel.

Two cautions keep this from being a finish line. First, Dove Lodge No. 51 is in Richmond, while the publisher Ward and the Beale story belong to the Lynchburg/Bedford world; nothing yet places the pamphlet's Ward in a Richmond lodge, and the “J.B. Ward” of the relayed note was not locatable on the legible front page in the investigation's own reading. Second, “Beal” and “Ward” are common Virginia names. A Beal on a Richmond roster is real and documented — but “a Beal exists” is not yet “this is the Beal of the pamphlet.” Confirming it requires tracing this specific man and pulling Ward's own lodge affiliation — precisely the records the Grand Lodge can settle, and the archival question that remains genuinely open.

9.3 The Precise Status of Each Masonic Claim

Claim	Status
James B. Ward was a Master Mason (1863)	CONFIRMED — public Masonic record.
A “Tho. J. Beal” sat as Master Mason in a Virginia lodge, 1865	CONFIRMED — primary document (Dove Lodge No. 51 return, photographs in hand). Identity link to the pamphlet: OPEN.
The Bedford principals were Liberty Lodge No. 95 members with Marshal Lodge No. 39 connections in the 1820s	CONFIRMED IN WRITING by the Grand Secretary, June 3, 2026 — institutional statement; underlying rolls not yet independently examined by the investigation.
Paschal Buford was himself a Mason	PLAUSIBLE — verbally indicated by Lewis (“believed to be Paschal Buford”); pre-1974 proceedings pull remains the open, answerable archival question. Earlier internal status: “probable but not yet documented.”
“Record of a group traveling out West in the early 1800s” exists in the Virginia Masonic record	CONFIRMED IN WRITING (Lewis) as a category; contents and identity not yet examined.
The pamphlet is structured on Masonic “secret vault” (Cryptic Rite / Royal Arch / Hiram Abiff) symbolism	PLAUSIBLE — Nickell's 1982 hypothesis; the investigation's structural mapping (vault, acacia/locust marker, three documents, Dec. 1821 Cryptic founding) is consistent but interpretive.

Whatever the ciphers turn out to be, this much is now on a documentary footing that did not exist before 2026: the Beale story's principals and publisher sit inside a real, identifiable Virginia Masonic network, and the Grand Lodge's own archive engages the question. To the investigation's knowledge, this is the first institutional archival engagement of its kind in the recorded history of Beale research.

10. The Geographic Model — The Active Hypothesis, With Its Evidence For and Against

After the May 29 null result, the investigation did not simply re-run the failed model; it rebuilt from the primary documents. The revised model rests on four corrections: the unit is poles, not chains (proven from the plats); the anchor is a documented survey monument, not an assumed estate center; bearings are read as explicit [bearing, distance] pairs rather than a single fixed 225° projection; and the cipher is treated as walking directions — a traverse — rather than a point cloud. On June 25, 2026, the Declaration of Independence was formally abandoned as a key, and the working position became: B1 and B3 are pure geography.

10.1 The 436 Triangle

The number 436 appears three times in B1 — more than any other large number — and all three occurrences are immediately preceded by valid compass bearings: [230, 436] at positions 39-40; [18, 436] at 86-87; [147, 436] at 188-189. In a surveyor's field notation this is three sightings at one distance from one instrument position: a reference triangle. At 436 poles (7,194 ft = 1.36 mi) from the triangulated cemetery estimate, the [147, 436] leg lands 0.19-0.28 miles from Buford's Tavern — nearly at the Tavern itself — placing the pamphlet's own anchor at a vertex.

10.2 The [225, 401] Signature Pair

At positions 51-52, B1 contains [225, 401]. The NRHP nomination for Locust Level independently confirms the original Buford family land grant was 225 acres on Wilson Fork of Goose Creek; Plat 41's traverse totals “225 10/100 poles to the Beginning.” Three independent sources — cipher, plat total, land grant — carry the same number. Read as a bearing-distance pair (225° magnetic, 401 poles), the projection lands 1.90 miles from the Tavern, inside the pamphlet's “about four miles” constraint. Status: DOCUMENTED CORRESPONDENCE, interpretive.

10.3 The Cipher-3 Blueprint Reading

With the repeating 59-number block established (Section 8.3), the model reads B3 as three identical construction blocks behind a unique 79-number header — the structure of an architectural or survey table, not a roster. 99% of B3's numbers fall in valid bearing range; a third point east-to-northeast; the number 8 recurs in an identical five-number context, read as a possible depth marker. The maximal version of this reading — thirty vault chambers under the thirty Bufordsville lots — is recorded as the investigation's boldest speculation, not a finding.

10.4 The Caldera — The Field Target

The Caldera is a bowl-shaped terrain depression approximately 1,150 feet southeast of Walnut Grove Church in the Upper Goose Creek Valley, at approximately 37.432°N, 79.680°W. The case for it:

- **The two-leg traverse.** From Buford's Tavern, 1,701 poles at 21° magnetic lands 288 feet from Walnut Grove Church (both numbers in B1; 1701 at position 4). From the church, 70 poles at 136° lands within ~11 feet of the depression center (both numbers in B1; a chancery survey tally on file also contains 70 and 136). These are the two tightest matches in the entire investigation.
- **Bearing consistency.** From every plat-derived station (cemetery, Stations 6–8), the bearing to the Caldera is consistently 39°–41° magnetic; B1 contains 39 (×1) and 40 (×2).
- **Independent convergence.** In 2013, researcher Sam Peppiatt — with no cipher decode and no knowledge of this work — identified the same depression by reading USGS topographic maps. Two methods, thirteen years apart, one coordinate.
- **Terrain reality.** SRTM 30 m elevation data (OpenTopography) shows the depression is real: center 290–295 m against a ~300 m surrounding mean — 7–10 m deep — with a +1.56 m mound candidate 66 m NNW (a possible spoil signature). Local geology is crystalline rock: no natural caves, so a genuine anomalous depression carries more weight than it would in karst.

And the case against, stated with equal force: other landmarks produce forward projections 1,000–2,500 feet from the Caldera; the underlying number-matching approach is the same family of method that failed the controlled clustering test; the Gillogly strings argue B1 was fabricated; and depressions have innocent explanations (springs, sinkform weathering, old excavation for farm use). Status: ACTIVE HYPOTHESIS — the recommended next physical step is non-invasive: ground-penetrating radar and magnetometry at the coordinate, with landowner permission, before any conclusion is drawn.

10.5 Field Operations Priorities (as of the archive record)

#	Operation
1	Field GPS verification of the 1816 water gate rock (Plat 41, Goose/Glove Creek) — sub-meter confirmation of the measurement origin.
2	Field GPS verification of the Buford Family Cemetery — the single input whose ±200 ft uncertainty propagates through every projection.
3	Non-invasive subsurface survey (GPR + magnetometry) at the Caldera; secondary at other projection targets. No digging; landowner written permission first; Virginia property law observed throughout (per the Grand Lodge agreement's recovery provisions).

#	Operation
4	Key-text closure: the 1821 Laurence Book of Enoch remains the one untested period key candidate.
5	Archival closure: pre-1974 Grand Lodge proceedings pull for Paschal Buford and J.B. Ward; trace the 1865 “Tho. J. Beal” through Richmond census and directories; stylometric comparison of the pamphlet against Ward's verified writing.

11. The Rabbit Holes — The Bad, Kept Honestly

An investigation is only as credible as its documented failures. These are the program's dead ends, speculative frames, and retracted claims — in full, because they are part of the record and because each one taught the investigation something.

Rabbit hole / claim	What was pursued	Verdict
The original chain-model “vault coordinate” (37.395913°N, 79.674087°W) and “88 feet from the cemetery”	The March–April founding model: Gunter's chains at 225° from “Locust Hill,” 12 clusters, 26 points in 470 ft, probability claims to 1-in-ten-trillion.	RETRACTED. Failed the May 29 controlled clustering test; the anchor itself was mislocated by ~4.5 miles (Locust Hill vs. Locust Level); the cemetery estimate later moved ~half a mile on recomputation.
“Anchor located,” “thirty members identified,” “Cipher 3 = full Declaration”	Confident assertions from early sessions.	RETRACTED — asserted earlier, then withdrawn; not supported.
BEALE = BAEL / Ba'al coded-name hypothesis	Atbash precedent (Sheshach/Babel in Jeremiah); Masonic Royal Arch name-restoration symbolism.	SPECULATIVE — an interesting symbolic reading with a real Biblical cipher precedent, but it produced no decryption and admits no test. Retained as color, not evidence.
The Templar 23 (10 + 13 = 23; 23-letter Latin alphabet; 23-year gap)	Numerological convergences across Templar history and the cipher's structure.	SPECULATIVE / ELIMINATED as method. The 23-letter alphabet gave a chi-squared lean but no decryption; the investigation's own conclusion on numerological systems: no documented record of such systems solving any historical mystery — when anything is solved, a systematic mechanism does the work.
The Ethiopian Bible / Book of Enoch key	James Bruce's 1773 manuscripts; the 1821 Laurence translation (year of the second deposit); Royal Arch of Enoch tradition.	PARTIALLY TESTED. The 1917 Charles translation: in-range but no plaintext (IC 0.0832) and anachronistic. The 1821 Laurence edition remains the one untested period candidate — an open item, not a finding.
Kabbalistic / gematria systems	Explored as potential cipher frameworks.	ELIMINATED — literature review found no documented case of numerological

Rabbit hole / claim	What was pursued	Verdict
		systems solving comparable ciphers.
Jacob Fowler's 1821-22 journal	Sought as independent corroboration of a Virginia party in the Rockies.	ELIMINATED — the Glenn-Fowler expedition was a distinct fur-trapping party.
The 1819 Farmer's Almanack key	Physical almanac acquired, photographed, fully transcribed (7,332 words), and tested.	FORMALLY ELIMINATED — IC 0.084/0.102; no plaintext.
"Locust Hill" as anchor	The founding anchor point (~37.450°N, 79.620°W).	CORRECTED — the verified Buford home tract is Locust Level at 37.3865°N, 79.7372°W, ~4.5 miles away. The correction invalidated the original cluster geometry.
The hoax-proof framing ("statistically impossible by chance")	Early-phase probability rhetoric.	RETRACTED — the controlled test showed the clustering statistic was chance.
The Zodiac Z32 spin-off	The surveyor-measurement method applied to the Zodiac Killer's Z32 cipher (March 2026): a Mount Diablo anchor decode to 38.109979°N, 122.185120°W; submissions to Vallejo PD, Solano County SO, SFPD, and zodiackiller.com.	SEPARATE PROGRAM — recorded here for completeness as a methodology export; outside this report's evidentiary scope; no agency confirmation received.
Canyon Diablo / Wham Paymaster field work	Parallel PinPoint Treasure field cases in Arizona (1881 Canyon Diablo robbery; 1889 Wham Paymaster robbery), including a field visit that found the AI-generated approach targeting had the descent side wrong.	SEPARATE PROGRAM — noted as methodology context: field verification humbles desk models. The same lesson governs the Beale field plan.

Why publish this table at all? Because the investigation's credibility rests on it. The May 29 null result was the single most important finding of the entire program: it forced the correction from chains to poles, from assumed anchors to documented monuments, and from statistical rhetoric to primary documents. Every strong finding in this report exists because the weak ones were killed in testing.

12. The Findings Ledger — The Complete Status Table

12.1 Confirmed

Item	Basis
1885 pamphlet published and copyrighted by James B. Ward, Lynchburg	The pamphlet itself; Lynchburg imprint.
Cipher B2 decodes via the Declaration of Independence	Established scholarship; describes the contents; 44 corrections per Hammer.
Locust Level = the Buford “Home Place”	NRHP listing, DHR 009-0018; chancery partition plat.
Buford's = Buford's Station = Montvale, 37.38833°N, 79.72833°W	DHR Nomination 009-0018, Footnote 1.
Estate geography and 1880s open-court breakup	Chancery 019-1903-057; the 1885 Tanner and 1893 Berry surveys.
Local surveys are in poles, not chains	Direct reading of the plats.
Risque-Ward kinship; the 1806 Beale duel; Delancy v. Beale / Beale v. Walden	Genealogy; Louisiana court record.
The Otey marriage hinge (Ward-Otey; Buford-Otey)	Genealogical record, independently corroborated.
1820 census: 13 of 16 pamphlet surnames present; Beale absent	Bedford County 1820 census.
New Orleans Beale's burial predates the 1821 deposit	Louisiana Gazette, Sept. 8, 1820.
Buford children professed no knowledge of Beale or treasure	Recorded family statements.
Ward a Master Mason (1863)	Masonic record.
The 1865 Dove Lodge No. 51 return is genuine and carries “Tho. J. Beal”	The document, photographed and relayed by the Grand Secretary, June 2, 2026.
Liberty Lodge No. 95 / Marshal Lodge No. 39 membership of the Bedford principals	Grand Secretary's written statement, June 3, 2026.
NSA formally studied the ciphers; the Missouri/Fredericksburg mail records; B2's 44 corrections; B1's even-number excess	Declassified DOCID 656726, 656733.
B3's repeating 59-number block at uniform 74-number spacing	Computational analysis, May 14, 2026 — reproducible from the published cipher.
The 436 bearing-pair pattern in B1	Computational analysis — reproducible; interpretation open.
The Caldera depression is a real terrain feature (7–10 m)	SRTM 30 m data via OpenTopography; Peppiatt's independent 2013 identification.

Item	Basis
Plat 68's six distances all appear exactly in B1; the 225 triple correspondence; 18 × 7 and 81 × 5 repetitions	Chancery plats + published cipher — correspondence documented; meaning open.
Grand Lodge institutional engagement — first of its kind in Beale research	The correspondence record, March–June 2026.

12.2 Plausible — Pending Verification

Item	What would confirm it
The Lynchburg authorship circle (Sherman, Hutter, Button, Guggenheimer)	Primary corroboration beyond genealogical compilation.
Ward as author/compiler of the narrative	Stylometric comparison against Ward's verified writing (Nickell's stylistic case already points here).
"Tho. J. Beal" of the 1865 return as the pamphlet's name-source	Tracing the man through Richmond census/directories; Ward's own Dove Lodge affiliation.
Paschal Buford's own Masonic membership	Pre-1974 Grand Lodge of Virginia proceedings — the open, answerable archival question, actively engaged.
Masonic structural symbolism in the pamphlet (Cryptic vault allegory)	Structural analysis against York Rite degree work.
Mt. Zion Church built by Buford, 1822	One call to the church; a deed or vestry record.
The preservation hypothesis ("the second matter" — records, not just gold)	Any physical or archival confirmation of a fraternal deposit; currently inference from period context.
The geographic/traverse model as a whole (Sections 10.1–10.4)	Field GPS of the cemetery and water gate rock; then GPR/magnetometry at the Caldera and projection targets.

12.3 Ruled Out / Unsupported

Item	Why
The surveyor-chain location model (chains, 225°, cluster centroid)	Failed the controlled clustering test; the surveys are in poles, not chains.
The specific vault at 37.395913°N, 79.674087°W	Product of the failed model; large error on recomputation. Retracted.
Cipher B1 as a DOI book cipher	Five numbers exceed the DOI's word count; arithmetic, not interpretation.
All tested key texts (Section 8.1)	No coherent plaintext from any.
Cipher B1 as a certainly meaningful message	The Gillogly alphabetical strings; resistance to every key and alphabet. (The geographic reading remains

Item	Why
	a live alternative — but unproven.)
A recovered or documentarily proven treasure	No documentary proof anywhere in 1,061 chancery pages; the Buford children's denial; a century-plus of failed searches. Hoax probability per the broader literature remains substantial.
Fowler journal corroboration; almanac key; Kabbalistic systems; early probability claims	As detailed in Sections 8 and 11.

13. The Legal, IP, and Institutional Record

- **Statement of Prior Discovery — U.S. Copyright Office, March 23, 2026.** Establishes priority for the Pfeiffer Methodology: the measurement reinterpretation, the Buford identification, the signature analyses, and the Masonic framework. Revised as the Statement of Computational Discovery v2, May 14, 2026 (exhibit on file), which itself documents the chains-to-poles correction — the priority record preserves its own error corrections.
- **Research Collaboration Agreement — Pfeiffer / Grand Lodge of Virginia, April 2026 (exhibit on file).** A good-faith working agreement: Samuel's methodology and outputs remain his; the Grand Lodge's records remain the Grand Lodge's; jointly created findings are shared and cannot be commercialized unilaterally. Three-tier information classification (Public / Anonymized / Restricted); permanent fraternal confidentiality surviving termination; media participation entirely at the Grand Lodge's option; no filming or recording of Lodge records without permission; any recovery to comply with Virginia property law, landowner written permission mandatory, recovery split to be negotiated in good faith at that time; two-year term, 60-day exit; explicit no-guarantees clause.
- **Pfeiffer Recovery Partners LLC — Operating Agreement (exhibit on file).** The entity structure prepared to govern any lawful field-recovery operation.
- **Correspondence infrastructure.** Jack K. Lewis, PGM (grandsecretary@grandlodgeofvirginia.org, 804-222-3110); Karen O. Rowlett, Deputy Clerk, Bedford County Circuit Court; submissions channel for the chancery file via the Library of Virginia.
- **Publication record.** The research is published commercially through a tiered Gumroad structure (teaser prospectus \$9.99; complete investigation file \$79; bundle \$85), with a \$20,000 full-disclosure engagement offer held off-platform; a manuscript submission track (Simon & Schuster / WME) is recorded in the operations list; and an investor pitch deck is on file as an exhibit. This master report is the evidentiary backbone for all of them — and its status labels govern: nothing may be marketed as proven that this ledger does not list as confirmed.

14. The Exhibit Inventory — The Complete Archive

The investigation's file archive as consolidated for this report:

Exhibit	Description
June_04_2026_Final_Beale_Papers_Documentary_Investigation.pdf	The Documentary Investigation master report — the investigation's most rigorous internal document; source of the findings-ledger framework.
COMPLETED_05_26_2026 ... MASTER_ARCHIVE (.docx / .pdf)	The May 26 Master Archive — the maximal statement of the geographic model, all 18 parts and appendices A-K, including the full correspondence record and Cipher #1 text.
Statement_of_Computational_Discovery_v2 .md	The May 14 priority document: ten findings with status labels, superseding the May 5 version.
Pfeiffer_Beale_Investigation_Complete (three versions) / _COMPLETE_FINAL.docx; Cracking_the_Beale_Code_COMPLETE_2026.docx; Complete_Beale_Treasure_2.docx; May 13 / May 14 / May 17 working documents	The dossier lineage — successive drafts preserving the investigation's evolution, including claims later corrected or retracted (retained deliberately as the audit trail).
THE_PFEIFFER_INVESTIGATION.pdf	The comprehensive research dossier (Chapters 1-5 volume of the 20-chapter plan).
zip_5_Beale_Treasure.zip	Bedford County Chancery Cause 019-1903-057 — ~60 scanned pages (images 1001-1057+); companion set 0001-0035 includes the Draper affidavit (0022), the survey tally containing 70 and 136 (0025), and the survey plats.
Conversation_with_Jack_the_Mason.m4a	Audio record of the Lewis telephone call (≈12 MB) — the source of the phone-call confirmations in Section 9.1.
Grand Lodge photographs 1274.jpg / 1275.jpg (per June 2 email)	The 1865 Dove Lodge No. 51 annual return, front and reverse.
Simple_revised_agreement.docx	The Research Collaboration Agreement with the Grand Lodge of Virginia (April 2026).
Pfeiffer_Recovery_Partners_LLC_Operating_Agreement.docx	LLC operating agreement.
Pfeiffer_Investigation_Investor_Pitch.pptx	Investor pitch deck.
Deepseek_beale_treasure_data.zip	Cross-platform AI research export (conversations.json, ~3.7 MB) — the parallel-model working record.
gumroadthumbnail.jpeg	Publication artwork: “Beale Vault Site — Archival Evidence & Survey Coordinates.”
Buford_Estate_Georeferencing.docx (prior session)	Master georeferencing of every named tract, acreage, valuation, occupant, and landmark in the

Exhibit	Description
	chancery file.
Z32_FINAL_v3_Complete.docx (prior session)	The Zodiac Z32 methodology-export document (separate program).

The Plates — The Photographic Record

The primary documents themselves, as photographed. Plates I-III are from the Bedford County chancery file; Plates IV-V are the Grand Lodge of Virginia's own photographs of the 1865 Dove Lodge No. 51 annual return.

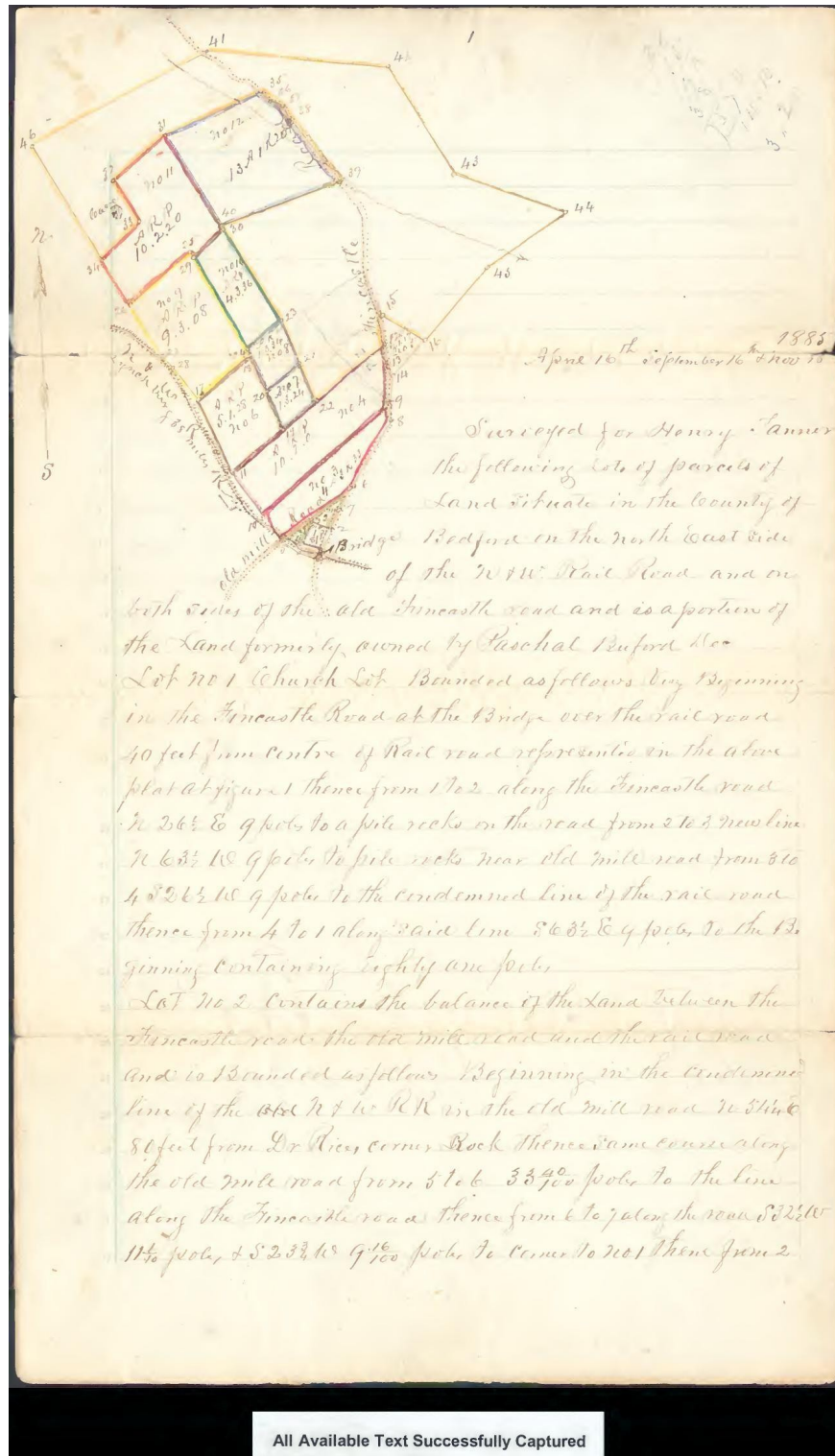


PLATE I — The 1885 Tanner survey. "Land formerly owned by Paschal Buford," laid off for Henry Tanner the same year The Beale Papers appeared. Every distance in poles; bearings in degrees — the finding that removed the foundation under the chain-based location model. (Bedford Co. Chancery 019-1903-057, p. 0037.)

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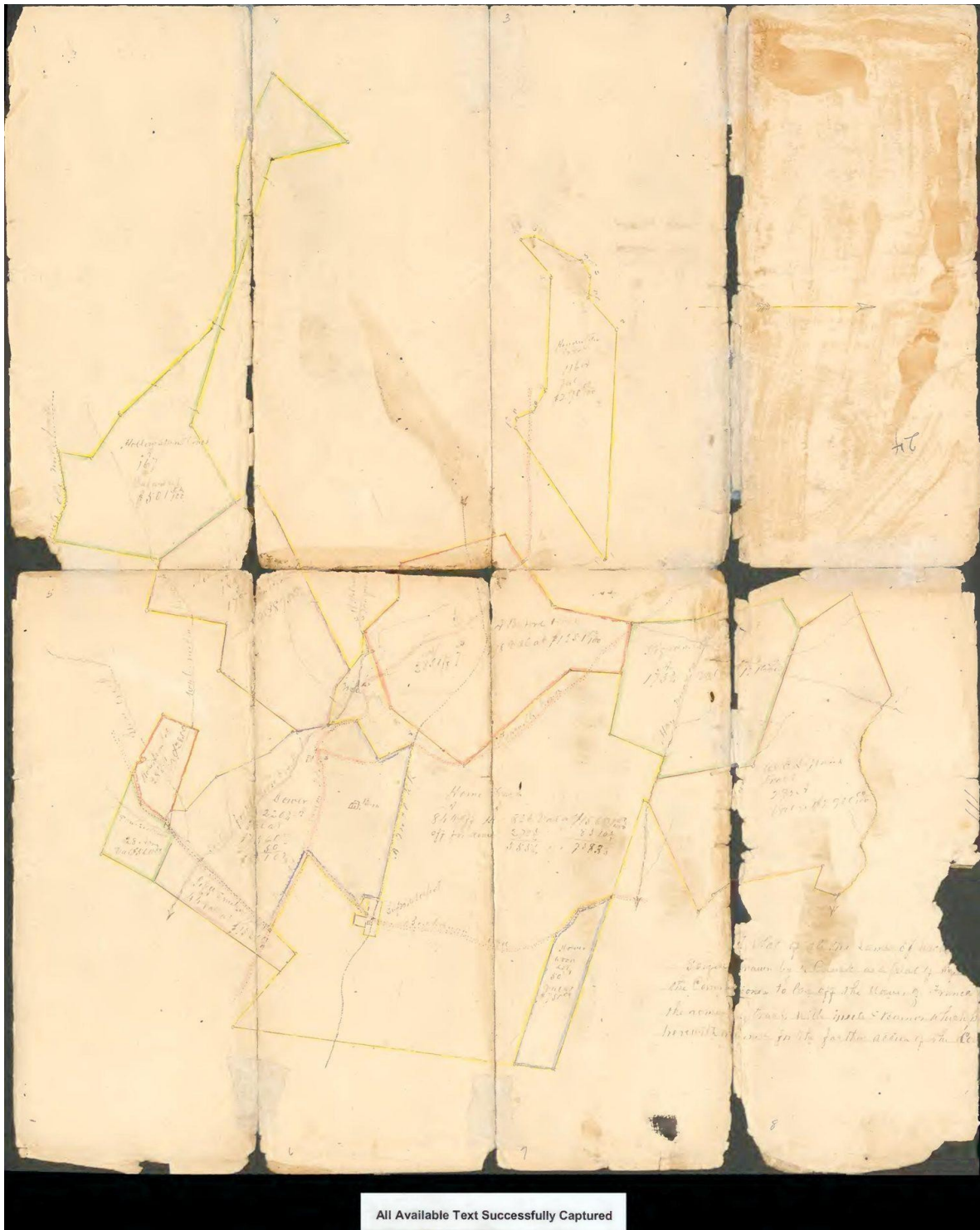


PLATE III — Commissioners' partition plat of the Buford estate (folded sheet, photographed in panels): the "Home Place," the mill, and the divided tracts. The estate being broken up and sold in open court in the same window the pamphlet was published. (Chancery 019-1903-057, p. 0514.)

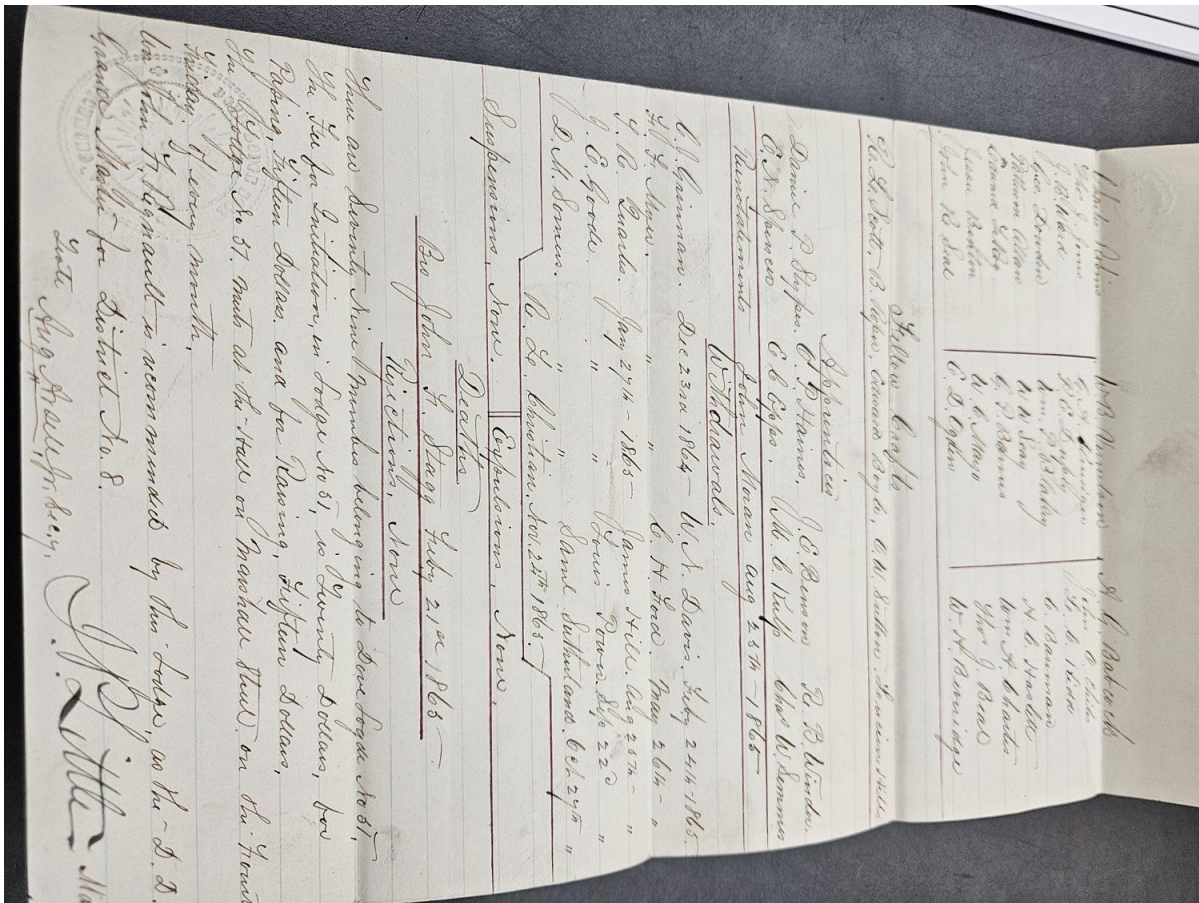


PLATE IV — Return of Dove Lodge No. 51 to the Grand Lodge of Virginia, A.D. 1865: officers, Past Masters, and Master Masons (front page). Photographed for this investigation by the Grand Secretary, transmitted June 2, 2026.

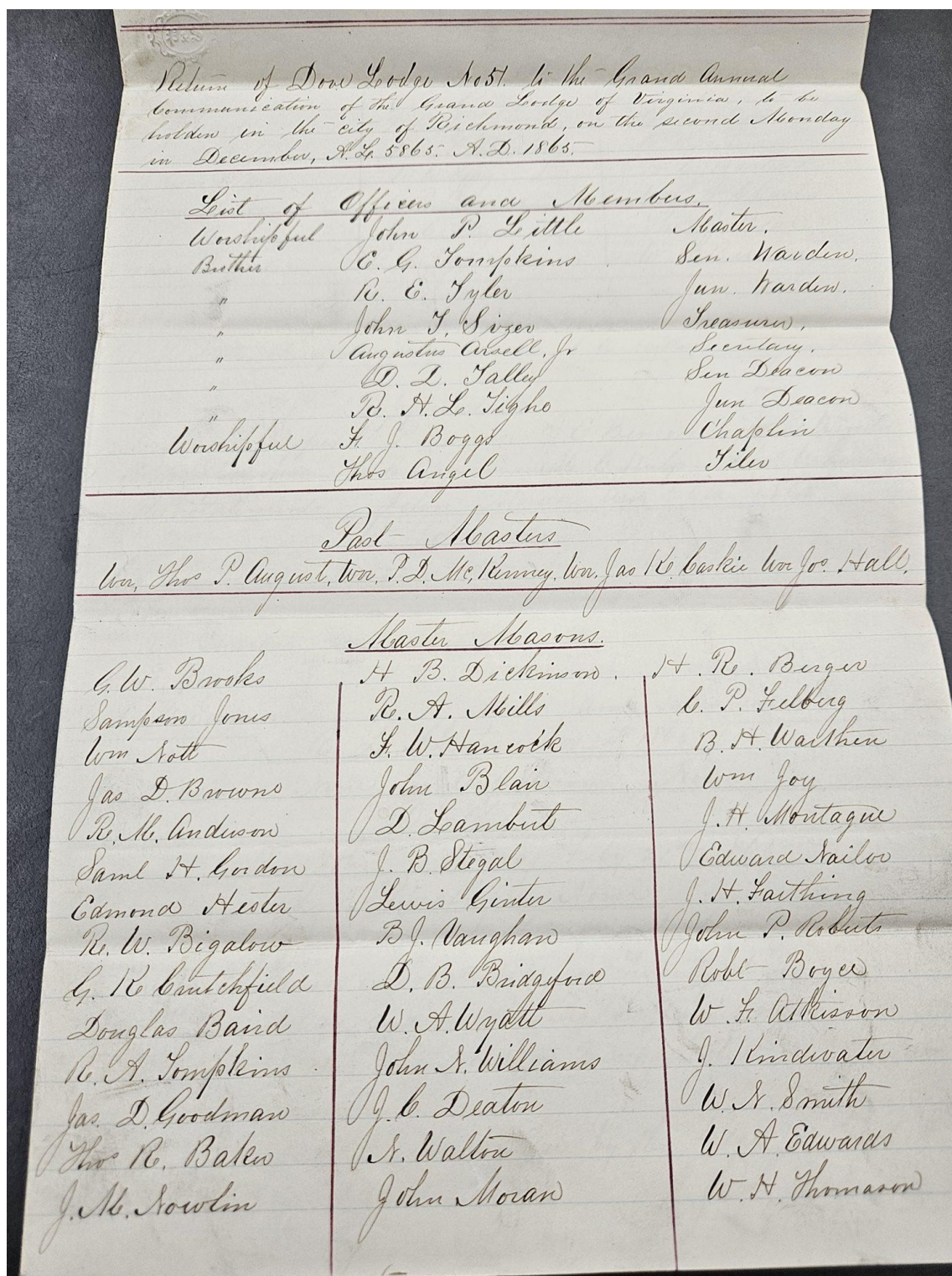


PLATE V — The reverse of the 1865 return: Fellow Crafts, Apprentices, the year's admissions, withdrawals, and a death, with the Master's certification. The entry read as "Tho. J. Beal" sits second from the bottom of the right-hand Master Mason column — beside the roster carrying "J.B. Ward."

15. Where We Are Now — and What Remains

The investigation has done something more durable than find a treasure: it has built a documented, primary-source case that the Beale Papers are a constructed narrative — assembled in 1880s Lynchburg from real local names bound by the Otey marriages and a real family grievance over the Beale name, set on land that was at that very moment being surveyed and sold in open court — and it has moved the Masonic thread from literary hypothesis to lodge-record document through the first institutional engagement of the Grand Lodge of Virginia in the question's 140-year history. That is a genuine contribution, and unlike the treasure, it is provable.

The geographic model stands beside it as the investigation's live wager: a poles-and-bearings reading of B1 and B3, anchored to documented survey monuments, that has produced a small number of strikingly tight correspondences — the 436 triangle, the Walnut Grove two-leg traverse, the Plat 68 exact-match set, and an independent 2013 convergence on the same depression. It has also inherited the burden of the null result that killed its predecessor, and the report presents both without blinking. The model earns or loses its place in the field, not on paper.

The Remaining Steps

- Archival: pull Paschal Buford's and James B. Ward's membership records from the pre-1974 Grand Lodge proceedings — the one open question with a definite answer, actively engaged.
- Archival: trace the 1865 “Tho. J. Beal” through Richmond census and directories; run the stylometric comparison of the pamphlet against Ward's verified writing.
- Field: GPS-verify the Buford Family Cemetery and the 1816 water gate rock — the two inputs every projection depends on.
- Field: with landowner written permission, non-invasive GPR and magnetometry at the Caldera coordinate. No shovel touches the ground before the instruments and the law both say yes.
- Cryptographic closure: test the 1821 Laurence Book of Enoch — the last untested period key — so that the key-text chapter can be closed permanently either way.

That the main object of the writer will be accomplished and that all mystery thrown around the subject will be speedily cleared up, is the most fervent wish of the writer.

— James B. Ward, 1885

Ward wished the mystery cleared. One hundred forty-one years later, the documentary half of it finally is: we can now say, from the record, who stood around

the story, what bound them, and why the tale reads the way it does. Whether the ground at Goose Creek holds anything besides history is the one question the documents cannot answer — and the one this investigation has earned the right to ask properly.

This report stands honest about what could not be found, and strong on what could.

Appendix A — Cipher No. 1, Complete Text (520 numbers, as published 1885)

71, 194, 38, 1701, 89, 76, 11, 83, 1629, 48, 94, 63, 132, 16, 111, 95, 84, 341, 975, 14, 40, 64, 27, 81, 139, 213, 63, 90, 1120, 8, 15, 3, 126, 2018, 40, 74, 758, 485, 604, 230, 436, 664, 582, 150, 251, 284, 308, 231, 124, 211, 486, 225, 401, 370, 11, 101, 305, 139, 189, 17, 33, 88, 208, 193, 145, 1, 94, 73, 416, 918, 263, 28, 500, 538, 356, 117, 136, 219, 27, 176, 130, 10, 460, 25, 485, 18, 436, 65, 84, 200, 283, 118, 320, 138, 36, 416, 280, 15, 71, 224, 961, 44, 16, 401, 39, 88, 61, 304, 12, 21, 24, 283, 134, 92, 63, 246, 486, 682, 7, 219, 184, 360, 780, 18, 64, 463, 474, 131, 160, 79, 73, 440, 95, 18, 64, 581, 34, 69, 128, 367, 460, 17, 81, 12, 103, 820, 62, 116, 97, 103, 862, 70, 60, 1317, 471, 540, 208, 121, 890, 346, 36, 150, 59, 568, 614, 13, 120, 63, 219, 812, 2160, 1780, 99, 35, 18, 21, 136, 872, 15, 28, 170, 88, 4, 30, 44, 112, 18, 147, 436, 195, 320, 37, 122, 113, 6, 140, 8, 120, 305, 42, 58, 461, 44, 106, 301, 13, 408, 680, 93, 86, 116, 530, 82, 568, 9, 102, 38, 416, 89, 71, 216, 728, 965, 818, 2, 38, 121, 195, 14, 326, 148, 234, 18, 55, 131, 234, 361, 824, 5, 81, 623, 48, 961, 19, 26, 33, 10, 1101, 365, 92, 88, 181, 275, 346, 201, 206, 86, 36, 219, 320, 829, 840, 68, 326, 19, 48, 122, 85, 216, 284, 919, 861, 326, 985, 233, 64, 68, 232, 431, 960, 50, 29, 81, 216, 321, 603, 14, 612, 81, 360, 36, 51, 62, 194, 78, 60, 200, 314, 676, 112, 4, 28, 18, 61, 136, 247, 819, 921, 1060, 464, 895, 10, 6, 66, 119, 38, 41, 49, 602, 423, 962, 302, 294, 875, 78, 14, 23, 111, 109, 62, 31, 501, 823, 216, 280, 34, 24, 150, 1000, 162, 286, 19, 21, 17, 340, 19, 242, 31, 86, 234, 140, 607, 115, 33, 191, 67, 104, 86, 52, 88, 16, 80, 121, 67, 95, 122, 216, 548, 96, 11, 201, 77, 364, 218, 65, 667, 890, 236, 154, 211, 10, 98, 34, 119, 56, 216, 119, 71, 218, 1164, 1496, 1817, 51, 39, 210, 36, 3, 19, 540, 232, 22, 141, 617, 84, 290, 80, 46, 207, 411, 150, 29, 38, 46, 172, 85, 194, 36, 261, 543, 897, 624, 18, 212, 416, 127, 931, 19, 4, 63, 96, 12, 101, 418, 16, 140, 230, 460, 538, 19, 27, 88, 612, 1182, 390, 495, 48, 60, 2, 17, 465, 61, 251, 38, 198, 121, 217, 71, 236, 234, 24, 72, 21, 612, 218, 28, 44, 1101, 321, 209, 36, 1270, 150, 41, 64, 301, 58, 18, 460, 495, 41, 1320, 45, 148, 618, 286, 2501, 621, 1, 29, 62, 199, 86, 221, 28, 5, 14, 231, 516, 126, 204, 140, 3, 21, 27, 65, 47, 51, 6, 7, 46, 36, 39, 24, 81, 66, 219, 109, 41, 7, 601, 162, 16, 140, 21, 50, 612, 35, 14, 52, 78, 416, 109, 8, 218, 36, 118, 43, 88, 116, 261, 192, 115, 21, 50, 612, 36, 9, 4, 626, 196, 8, 230, 28, 360, 50, 122, 24, 50, 218

Note: transcription variants of B1 circulate in the literature (e.g., a working maximum of 2906 vs. the 2501 above); the archive preserves the variant used in each computational run.

Appendix B — Cipher No. 2, Decoded Text (1885)

“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, the following articles, belonging jointly to the parties whose names are given in number three herewith: The first deposit consisted of one thousand and fourteen pounds of gold, and three thousand eight hundred and twelve pounds of silver, deposited November, eighteen nineteen. The second was made December, eighteen twenty one, and consisted of nineteen hundred and seven pounds of gold, and twelve hundred and eighty eight pounds of silver; also jewels, obtained in St. Louis in exchange for silver to save transportation, and valued at thirteen thousand dollars. 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.”

Historical text as published in the 1885 pamphlet; reproduced as a primary source. Note the internal contradiction developed in Section 6.3: the December 1821 deposit postdates the real Thomas Beale's September 1820 burial.

Appendix C — The Correspondence Record (Index)

Date (2026)	Item
March	Initial outreach, Pfeiffer → Grand Lodge of Virginia; Lewis engages personally; curator search begins.
Apr 8	Lewis: lodge and member records “confirm the Masonic connections you have identified.”
Apr 11	Lewis confirmation letter (full text in Section 9.1); executive summary securely stored at the Grand Lodge.
April	Research Collaboration Agreement transmitted (exhibit).
May	Lewis phone call (audio exhibit): Mason confirmation; tunnels-and-vaults context; active archival team; “before he dies”; travel assistance not declined; Morgan case acknowledged.
May 14	Pfeiffer → Lewis: the four-mile SW target zone briefing.
May-June	Karen O. Rowlett (Bedford Circuit Court): chancery file access, Plats 40-44p, 68, and page sets 0001-0035 / 1001-1057.
Jun 2	Lewis → Pfeiffer: Dove Lodge No. 51 1865 return photographs (1274.jpg, 1275.jpg).
Jun 3	Lewis → Pfeiffer: Liberty Lodge No. 95 / Marshal Lodge No. 39 confirmation; note that signatures are unlikely to survive in Grand Lodge records.

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Compiled for the Pfeiffer Investigation, July 2026. Primary documents: Bedford County Chancery Cause 019-1903-057 (Library of Virginia); the 1865 return of Dove Lodge No. 51 (Grand Lodge of Virginia); 1820 U.S. Census; Louisiana court records; declassified NSA documents. Institutional correspondence: Grand Lodge of Virginia; Bedford County Circuit Court.