

# Nathaniel Adams' Two Houses at Gungywamp

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## Introduction

The Gungywamp Complex in Groton, Connecticut is an archaeological site that consists of stone chambers, standing stones, niches, stone walls, building foundations, enclosures and other features. The cultural affiliation, purpose and age of many of these archaeological features is a hotly debated subject. However, there is general agreement that there are several colonial homesteads within and on the peripheral edges of the site.

A house foundation found nestled amongst a group of four stone chambers was identified in 1981 by Nancy F. Jackson and George A. Jackson as the 18<sup>th</sup> century home of Nathaniel Adams. The Jacksons published their findings in the *Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Connecticut* (1981). They established through their deed research that this was the second house Nathaniel Adams had built on his farm. This small but critical detail has largely been forgotten or ignored by subsequent researchers. This is due in part to the fact the site of Nathaniel's first house with a barn and privy lies outside of the generally accepted boundaries for the Gungywamp Complex.

During his lifetime, Nathaniel Adams' farm was divided into two halves, the "east part of the farm" and the "west part of the farm" each with its own house. The western half is dominated by rocky soils covering ridges and ravines with exposed bedrock outcrops. There are only a few acres of tillable land. It was marginal land in terms of its agricultural potential. Given the poor quality of the land, a perception has emerged of Nathaniel Adams as a poor subsistence farmer just barely eking out a living trying to support his wife and ten children. What this "story" fails to explain is Nathaniel and his family lived the first thirty years on the east part of the farm (from 1743 to at least 1772 and possibly as late as 1779.) The east part was productive farmland with an orchard, crop land and cranberry bog that allowed the Adams family to become middle-class farmers. This article explores his two houses and what they reveal.

The following questions & objectives were posed for the study:

What do the deeds reveal about where Nathaniel Adams lived on his farm?

What do the deeds reveal about the land's usage?

Was this a subsistence farm or something else?

What went on with the well shaft (east side house) – it was built of different stone than the house foundation.

Why was a substantial bridge built for a road accessing a single house?

What can stonewalls used as part of the west side house's walls reveal about its architectural style?

What does Samuel Adams probate reveal about the west side house?

Do the west side house remains agreed or disagree with the probate?

Why is the cow lane the only feature with stonewalls in close proximity to the house and barn on the east side?

Did Colonial European farmers deviate from standard European construction and build strange odd stone structures out of character with their cultural norms?

## Nathaniel Adams

What is known about Nathaniel Adams?<sup>1</sup> Early on he appears to have aspired to own something more than a subsistence farm. He was not content to just inherit part of his parents' farm in Charleston, Rhode Island (formerly part of Westerly). He had his sights on living in Groton. In fact, Nathaniel and Hannah's first child was born in Groton, Connecticut in 1733. They held off baptizing their children until they took up permanent residence in Groton in 1738. In the intervening four years, they lived on Nathaniel's parent's farm in Rhode Island (1734-1738). While there, Nathaniel's father deeded over 46 acres, his inheritance, to him in 1736. Nathaniel sold it two years later for £100.

He reinvested £95 of those proceeds to finance the purchase of 40 acres of woodlands in North Groton (now part of Ledyard). At this point he and his wife had a young growing family of three children. The Adams homesteaded this land for four years making significant improvements to it. Looking for a better opportunity, Nathaniel sold the 40 acre homestead for £195 in 1743. All of the improvements are reflected in the sale price which was double what Nathaniel originally paid for it. By this point, his family had expanded to six children. In the same year, Nathaniel reinvested the money by purchasing 67½ acres of land which included much of what is today known as the South Gungywamp Complex. This appears to be what he was after, a piece of land suitable to develop long term as he made this his permanent residence. Once again, the Adams family had to start over from scratch to create a new farm.

Nathaniel officially took possession of the Gungywamp property in August 1743 but there is a good possibility he was living there as of 1742. The wording in a January 1743 deed for the parcel on the southside of the future Adams farm is intriguing: "Reserving the privilege of a pent highway through this land **to the families that do** or may live Northerly of this land **and living** on the land formerly belonging to Mr. Richard Christophers Dec.'d and part of this tract."<sup>2</sup> (emphasis added) The use of the present tense indicates one or more families were already living there. It is unclear if these families were leasing land from the Christophers or getting a head start on homesteading the parcels they anticipated purchasing from the Christophers estate.

The western half of the Gungywamp parcel was rocky, uneven terrain of limited value for farming except as wood lot, pasture and a few acres of plowland. Wisely, the Adams built their farm on the eastern half of the farm along North Gungywamp Road (a road which did not exist during the Adams' ownership). As will become apparent, the east part of the farm was far better suited to farming.

In 1761 Nathaniel received a monetary inheritance of £212 from his brother James estate. This was a substantial amount of money. As part of the legal paperwork he had to sign the paper. The first name of the signature has tight neat cursive lettering whereas the last name has different lettering evidence of being written by the clerk who wrote up the document. This is an original document showing Nathaniel had learned to write. It also shows he was not financially destitute.

In 1763, Nathaniel deeded the east part of the farm (31¼ acres) to his son Elijah for £50, a fraction of its real value. The £212 inheritance likely gave him the financial security needed to do this. Having himself sold off his own inheritance decades earlier, Nathaniel must have been conscious of the risk that his own son would do likewise. There is no mention nor record of Nathaniel obtaining a life tenancy agreement from Elijah allowing him to continue living on the east part of the farm. However, we know he did

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<sup>1</sup> Information in this section comes from research James Gage did on deeds, probate records, and other historical documents. Citations are given under the section titled "Land Use Narrative."

<sup>2</sup> Book 5 Folio 3 (January 26, 1743)

continue living there from 1763 to at least 1772 and possibly as late 1779. The 1763 deed states Nathaniel is living on the east part he sold to his son. Two years later Elijah sells the east half of the farm to his brother James. That deed states Nathaniel is still living there. In a third land transfer in 1772 James sells the property back to Elijah. This deed once again listed Nathaniel as still living there.

There was likely some sort of verbal agreement or understanding that Nathaniel and his wife would continue to live there. Notwithstanding, Nathaniel seems to have had the foresight to develop a contingency plan. He held onto the west part of the farm along with one acre of cranberry bog. The bog would have provided some income. He never deeded this over to any of his other sons.

In 1779 Elijah sells the land out of the family for £600. By this point Nathaniel is no longer living there. Nathaniel's original purchase price was £159 for 67 ½ acres (£80 a piece for each half of the farm). The sale price of £600 is seven and half times the original £80 price a phenomenal investment gain.

In each of his land transactions Nathaniel Adams was successful in making investment gains. How did he do it? In the 1779 deed for the east part of the farm it lists, "Buildings & Fruit trees" indicating Nathaniel had built a house, barn, well, etc. and planted a range of different fruit trees in an orchard. This part of the farm also contained about four acres of cranberry meadow. The fruit and cranberries were commercial agricultural products that made this a productive farm. A heavy duty private road from the house to a public "pentway" highway shows the Adams were actively shipping goods off the farm to market.

After the east part was sold Nathaniel moved to the west part that he still owned and where he built a second house. The west part of the farm contained pasture, swamp, timber, a few acres of plowland and about one acre of cranberry meadow. Nathaniel and his wife would have moved their furniture, personal items like clothing, kitchen wares, and farming tools from the old house to the new house. Some of these items may have dated back to the 1740s and would eventually become part of the archaeological assemblage recovered during excavations of the west house site.

In addition to the plowland, pasturage, orchard and cranberry bog, the farm likely had another valuable resource: timber. The genealogical book titled *George Kerr and Sarah Lavina Adams* (1975) states, "The forests of Groton supplied lumber which constructed many ships in Norwich or New London ... This lumber came from the evergreen swamps ..." <sup>3</sup> The west part of the farm was subsequently acquired in several pieces by the Latham family who are documented as having logged it the second half of the 1800s and into the early 1900s. The 1854 and 1868 maps show a saw mill less than mile southeast on Gungywamp Road.

There was something special about this farm that kept Nathaniel on it. In 1783 at age 75 he bequeathed the west half of the farm to his grandson, Samuel and thus kept the property in the family after his death. This time Nathaniel obtained a life tenancy agreement and a bond from Samuel that both himself and his wife Hannah would be taken care of. The west part of the farm contained the majority of the South Gungywamp Complex.

A picture emerges of Nathaniel Adams and his wife Hannah as hardworking and ambitious. They were willing to start over twice to improve their situation in life. Nathaniel Adams turned a profit on all three farms he owned making him a successful businessman. He produced commercial farm products making him a successful farmer. He signed his own name. He was an intelligent man who attained his goal in

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<sup>3</sup> Arnold 1975: 42

life of owning a productive farm. Although portrayed as a poor subsistence farmer just barely eking out a living on marginal lands, he was in fact a middle-class farmer. The key to understanding this is the east part of the farm where he spent the majority of life working.

## PART I: ARCHITECTURE

*By Mary Gage*

### *Colonial European Method*

Basic criteria for the Colonial European method of architecture are straight lengths and square corners with flat surfaces. Rooms resemble boxes with flat surfaces: ceilings, floors, and walls. Roofs have flat angled surfaces. The need for straight and square construction is based on straight lengths of wooden boards used to construct the house. Straight and square is the hallmark of European architecture that was brought over from Europe. Well shafts deviate in that they are circular from top to bottom. The book *Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut* has a photograph of the “Norton house in the town of Guilford (circa 1690)” exhibiting the basic Colonial European style.<sup>4</sup> (figure 1)



Figure 1 - Norton House in Guilford, CT (New York Public Library Digital Collections)

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<sup>4</sup> Kelly 1963: 7

## **East Part of Farm**

The east part of the farm is thirty-one and a quarter acres of land east of a stream and ditch through a swamp (formerly a cranberry bog) dividing the farm into east and west parts. It contains the remains of a tight group of Colonial Euro-American style structures. The group of structures is currently located alongside North Gungywamp Road and a short road leading over to the old pentway (highway) through the west part of the farm.

### *House Cellar/Foundation*

Below ground

Interior 13'6" wide by 22'6" long, rectangular shape

Dry laid stonewall 1' to 1½' wide

Half of west wall intact; south wall intact; half of east wall partially intact and the other half stones are missing

Very little loose stone is inside the cellar suggesting many of the stones were removed from the site and repurposed

Construction style is based on the intact west wall. Thin layered flat slabs were used in conjunction with small, medium and large sized natural stone blocks. A stack of five flat slabs (center) created a seam showing a non-professional built the foundation. (figure 4 - south wall) A professional stone mason would have used the one over two method to avoid seams. Large blocks were used in the top layer which the wooden beams rested on. The smaller stone blocks below mixed in with the flat slabs indicates obtaining a consistent type of building stone was difficult. The chimney base what shows of it through the leaves appears to have the same type of construction style.

### *Cellar Entry*

Narrow exterior passageway slopes down to cellar

9'6" long by 3' wide

Walk-in height

Corner of entry has large stone blocks where it meets the foundation wall used to form a strong, re-enforced corner

Three handmade bricks found on top

Located on east side off center

(Figures 3, 7, 8, 9)

### *Chimney Block*

Location: In the center of the west side of the cellar, collapsed

Size: 8'6" north to south by 8'9" east to west, built on top of ground surface abutting edge of cellar wall

Base constructed of short, flat stone slabs (common in area)

Bricks (handmade) were found on top front edge of collapsed chimney

(Figures 5 & 6)

### *House Size & Layout*

The archaeological remains of the house indicate it was a one room end chimney design common in 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Connecticut. The big question is whether the chimney was on the inside or outside of the house. The answer to this question impacts determining the overall size and interior room layout. Generally, the chimney was in the interior of the house. For example, the Norton house in Guilford, CT

and Adams second house on the west part of the farm.<sup>5</sup> The problem is no sill wall was found extending out from the cellar to the outside of chimney to confirm this layout. It is possible the sill wall is buried. To find out would require an archaeological excavation. The chimney protruding out from the exterior of the house is not common but does exist. For example in Guilford, CT the Whitfield house's chimney projected "some three feet from the end of the house ..."<sup>6</sup>

The following arrangement of the interior layout is based on the probability the house extended out to the back of the chimney. (Figure 2) A one-room house with two small rooms that were not counted in their time. Hall (main room) over cellar with chimney opening into it. Two small rooms one on each side of chimney (north & south).

Main/Hall Room 15' wide by 23' long  
Small Rooms 9' wide by 9' long

#### *Well*

Stone-lined shaft covered with two large stone slabs  
Construction: dry laid uniform thin flat slabs with rough, uneven ends  
Exceptional stone masonry shows well was built by a professional stone mason  
Location: 8' west of southwest corner of house and 5' east of barn.  
(Figures 10 & 11)

#### *Privy*

Rectangular depression down slope and southwest of house  
6' wide by 7' long

#### *Barn*

A retaining wall oriented north-south with a short extension jutting out to the west on its south end are all that remain of the barn. The top of retaining wall is level with the well and the house suggesting it represents the top level of the barn. Below is open indicating an open lower level, a common feature in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century barns. Large posts would have been used to support the floor of the barn. The lower level of the barn opened up to a small flat area bordered by a stream a short distance to the west.

Location: 15' west of house  
Size: 36' long by 16' wide (length of side wall)

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<sup>5</sup> Kelly 1963: Plate I

<sup>6</sup> Isham & Brown 1900: 191

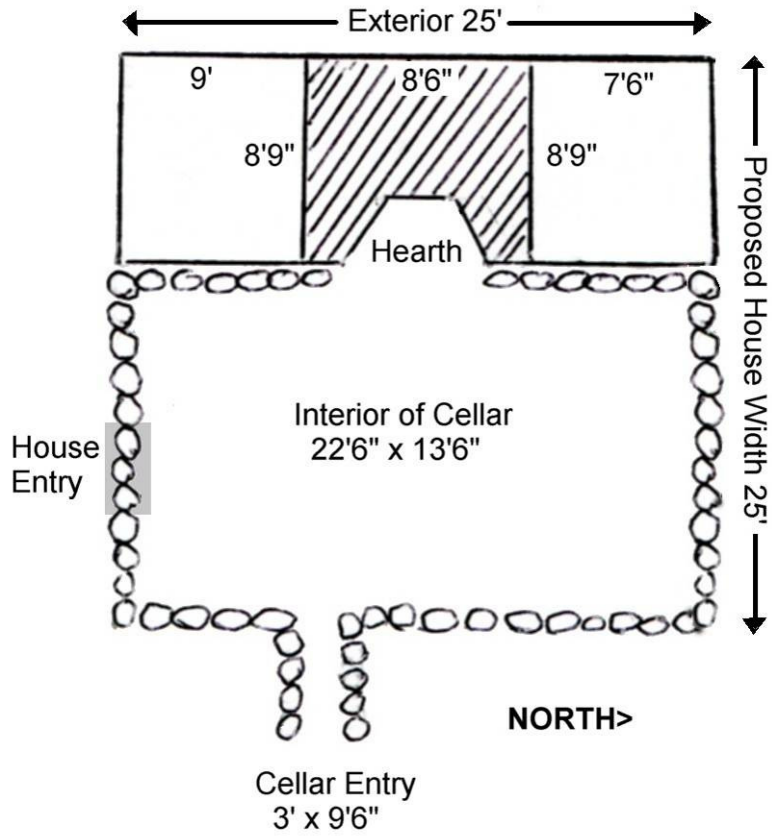


Figure 2 – Proposed layout of the first floor of Nathaniel Adams East Side House (not to scale)



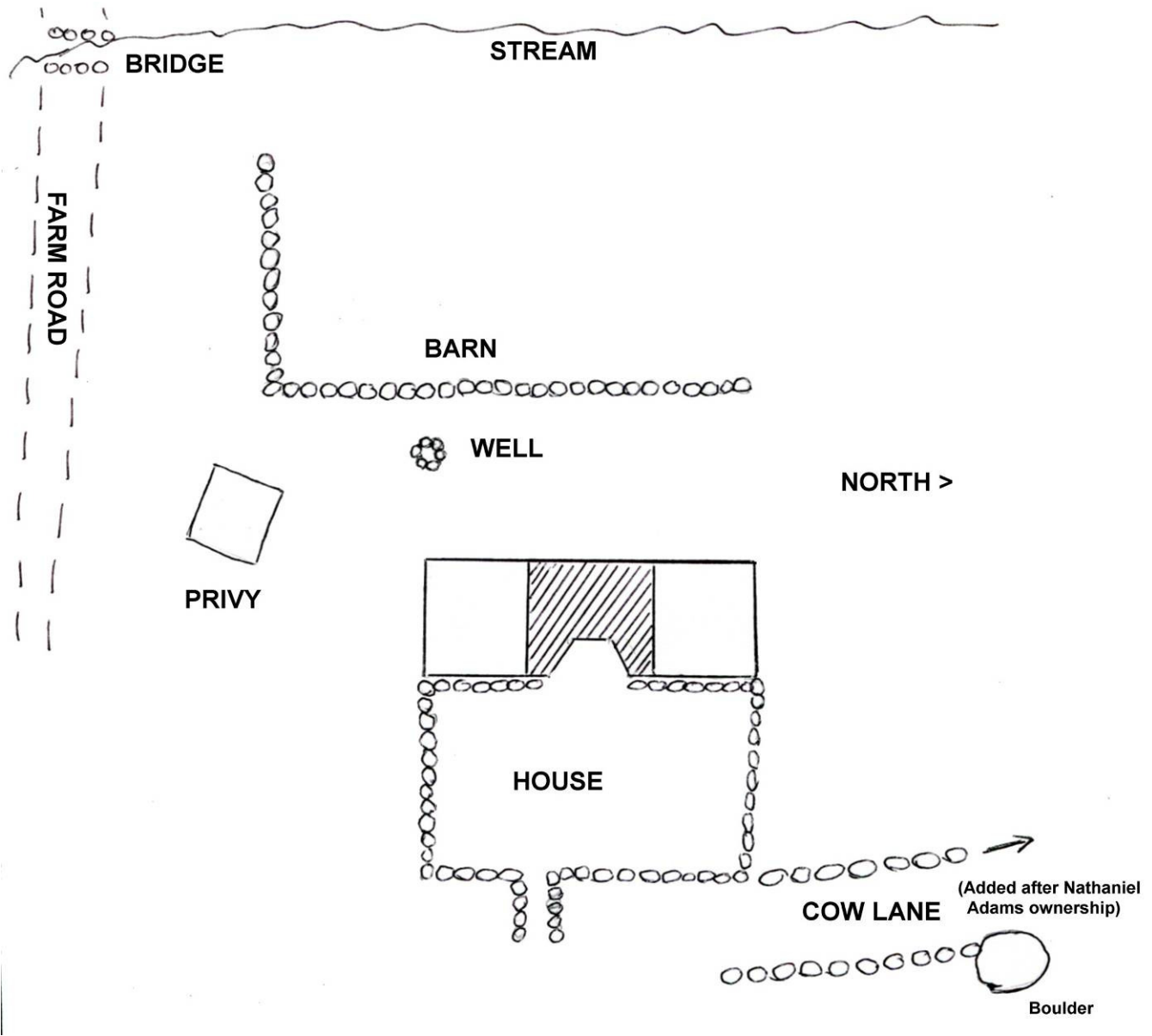
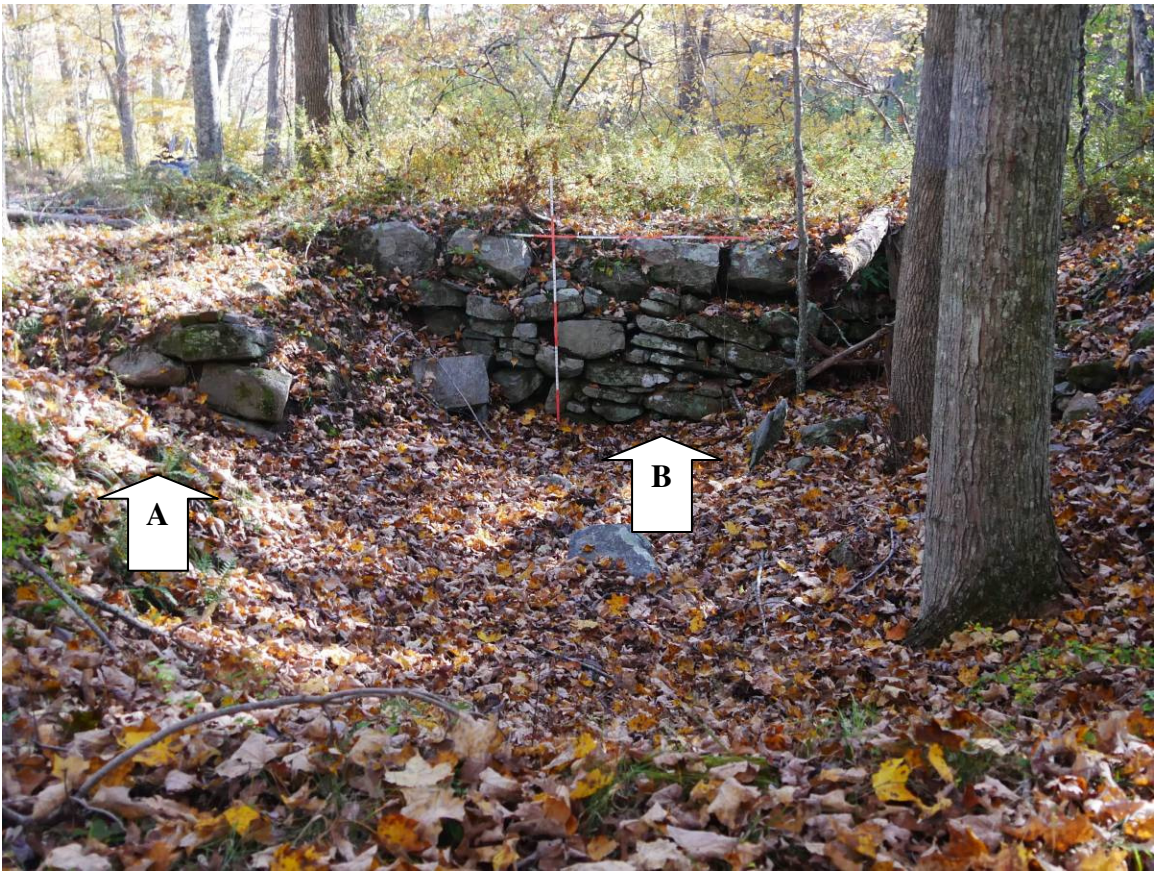
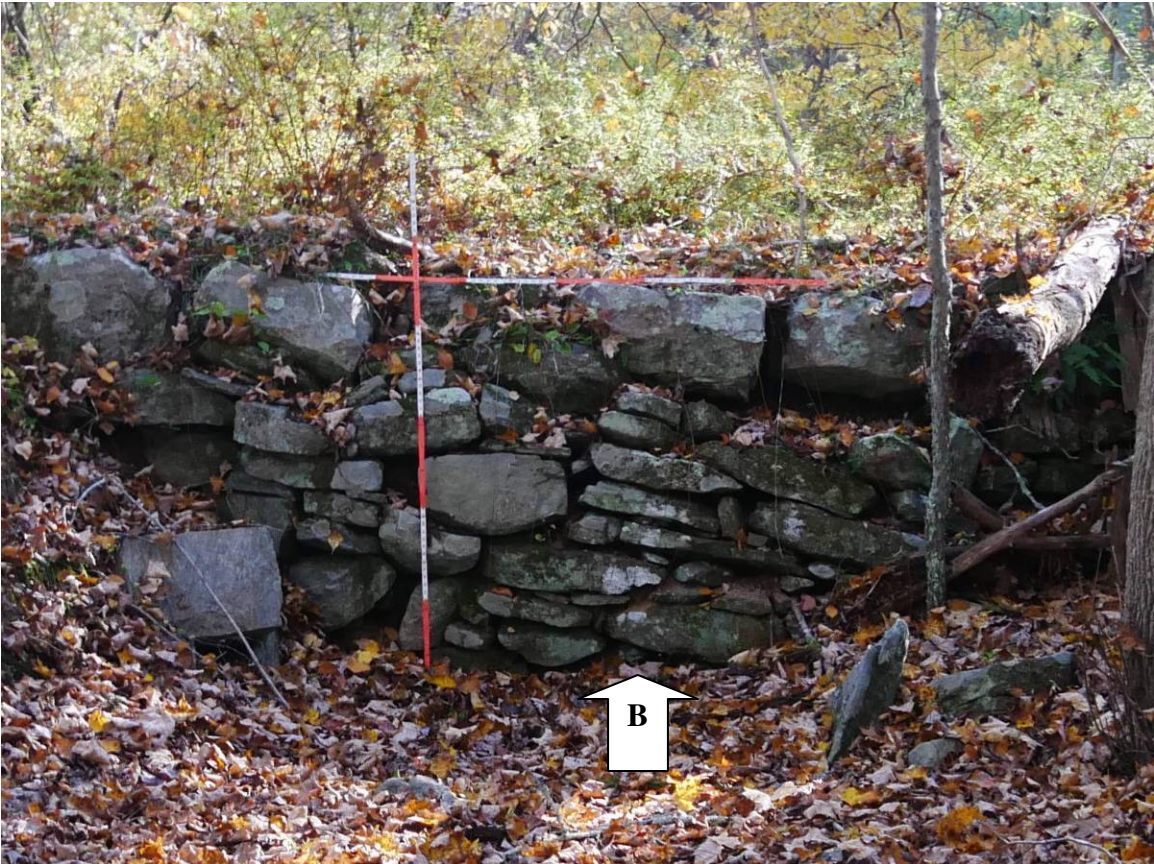


Figure 2A – Layout of east side farm complex



Figures 3 & 4 - View showing south wall of cellar (A) cellar entry (b) vertical stacking



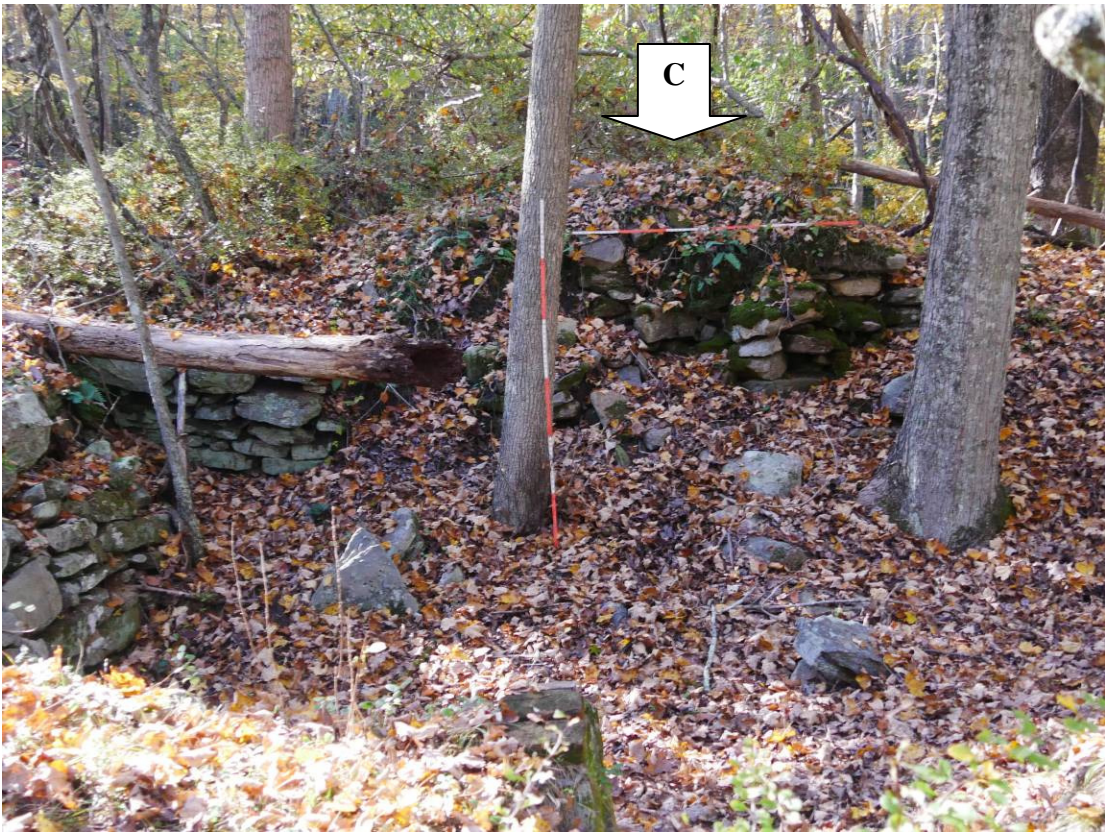


Figure 5 – View showing west wall and chimney block of cellar (c) chimney block



Figure 6 - Bricks on chimney block

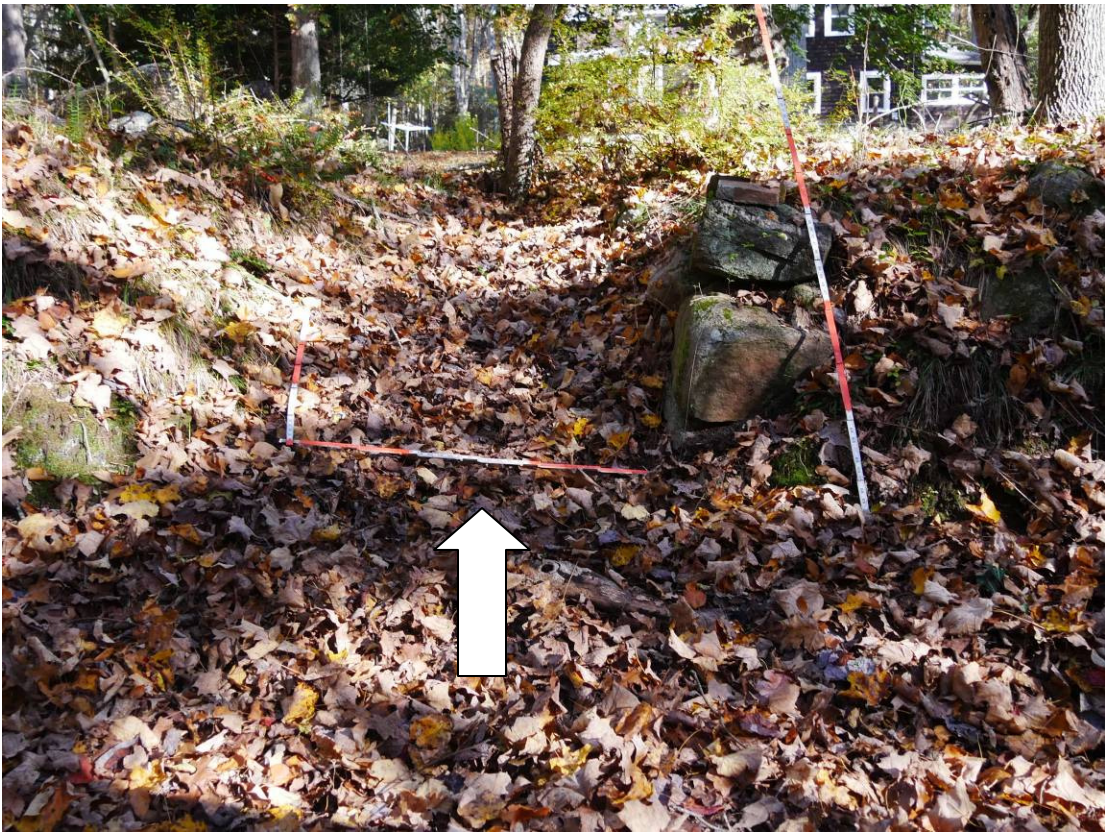


Figure 7 - Cellar entry (looking east)



Figure 8 - Bricks placed on top of the wall of the cellar entry (top down view)



Figure 9 - Bricks placed on top of the wall of the cellar entry (side view)



Figure 10 - Interior of well



Figure 11 - Two flat stone slabs covering the well

### *Bridge Abutment & Farm Road & Pentway*

A short distance west of the house and barn is an active stream which later became the boundary line between the east and west parts of the farm when it was divided up in 1763. A pair of short parallel abutment walls were built into the sides of the stream to create a simple bridge covered with thick timbers. Today the east-west road goes between North Gungywamp Road on the east side of the stream and the north-south running “pentway” on the west side of stream. The pentway is the dirt road through the Gungywamp Complex that visitors walk along. It goes past the rows of standing stones and chambers #3 & #4 before heading southward to Gungywamp Road.

A pentway is defined as “a road on privately-owned property that provides public passage and access to public roads but has not been given to or accepted by a government entity.”<sup>7</sup> The pentway through the Adams farm was first referenced in the October 1742 Christophers probate distribution as a right-of-way.<sup>8</sup> The pentway started its existence as a private access road to the cranberry bogs from Gungywamp Road. It was either built by Mr. Blimman, the first owner after which the bogs were named “Blinnmans Meadow” or the Christophers family likely sometime in the 1720s. This idea that the pentway began as a support road for the cranberry bog harvest is hinted at in a memorandum in the probate distribution that provided “free liberty to pass & repass with men & teams”.<sup>9</sup> “Men” refers to hired employees. “Teams” is a reference to livestock usually oxen or horses used to pull heavy loads generally in a wagon or cart. Since cranberries were packed in barrels, they required transportation by wagon. This privilege gave the new owners the ability to continue the cranberry harvest along with potentially selling timber and hauling supplies to start a new homestead over the sections of the pentway on their neighbors property. The breakup of the cranberry meadows into four individual lots with different owners necessitated a legal change in the road’s status from a private road to that of a “pentway”.

The pentway is mentioned in both versions of the deed from John Christophers to Nathaniel Adams in 1743 & 1744.<sup>10</sup> It was also mentioned in a January 1743 deed for the parcel on the south side of the future Adams farm.<sup>11</sup> The road was still actively being used into the early 1800s. It was referenced in deeds in 1799, 1805, and 1814.<sup>12</sup> In the 1934 aerial photo, the southerly section of the pentway was being maintained as a logging road and the northerly section as a farm road to access an outlying field.

The Pentway was one of two north-south roads less than 300 yards (three football fields) apart starting on Gungywamp Road that went through Nathaniel Adams farm and the Gungywamp area. It is unknown if both were in use simultaneously or at separate times. It does not make logical sense to have had a pair of parallel roads less than 2/10ths of a mile apart back in the mid-1700s servicing the same areas. One is the current North Gungywamp Road with modern houses. The other is the old pent highway that passes by the two rows of standing stones that at an unknown date fell into disuse. The east side Adams house

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<sup>7</sup> Ledyard Town Ordinance #300-028 (2019)

<sup>8</sup> At the end of the distribution paper is the following - “Memorandum: It is to be understood that the afores’d Christopher Christophers, John Christophers, John Prentis & Edward Palmer, their heirs & assigns are to have free liberty to pass & repass with men & teams across each others afores’d lots at Cranbery meadow to get to sd highway.”

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> GLR Book 4 Folio 164 (1743) – “Reserving the privilege of a highway through sd land for Jasper Latham Christopher Christophers and John Prentis their heirs and assigns forever.” GLR Book 5 Folio 16 (1744) – revised deed – “with the privilege of a way as is allowed in sd Division through the other lands to the Common Road or Highway [Gungywamp Road] and also reserving in the granted premises the privilege through this land of a way through this land for the other legates”

<sup>11</sup> Book 5 Folio 3 (January 26, 1743)

<sup>12</sup> GLR Book 13 Folio 134 (1799); GLR Book 14 Folio 223 (1805); GLR Book 15 Folio 76 (1805); GLR Book 16 Folio 118 (1814)

is directly on North Gungywamp Road. Had it existed in 1779 when the property was sold out of the family it should have been mentioned in the deed. It was not. (It was not mentioned in subsequent deeds from 1799 through 1861 either. This suggests the construction of North Gungywamp Road post-dates 1861.)<sup>13</sup> That shows North Gungywamp Road post dates 1779 and Adams family ownership including Elijah Adams. In turn, it shows the road with the bridge next to the house on the east side of the farm was a private farm road built by Nathaniel Adams or his predecessor. A noticeable borrow pit is in the side of the hill beside the farm road that was used to obtain gravel and earth for its construction. The borrow pit shows the road was built up to create a substantial road.<sup>14</sup> This fits with the stone bridge abutments made to carry heavy wagon loads over it.

The bridge and road next to Adams east side house and barn may have been built prior to his ownership as it gave the previous landowners access to their cranberry bog in that area. The bog's four acres were included in the parcel of land sold to Nathaniel Adams in 1743. Having a working cranberry bog with an annual cash crop was likely part of the reason Nathaniel Adams was willing to relocate and build yet a third farm from scratch.

### *Cow Lane*

Starting at the northeast corner of the house foundation are parallel stonewalls heading northward. The east side stonewall goes out to a tall glacial boulder with another length of stonewall associated with it. The west side stonewall goes out approximately 500 feet further to a gated opening in the wall. The cow lane contains the only stonewalls associated with livestock associated with the east side house. In fact no stonewalls were observed associated with the barn. The cow lane's walls are better built than other walls on the farm and contain finished-off ends at the gate opening something not found on the west side. This was a different builder than the outlying stone walls.

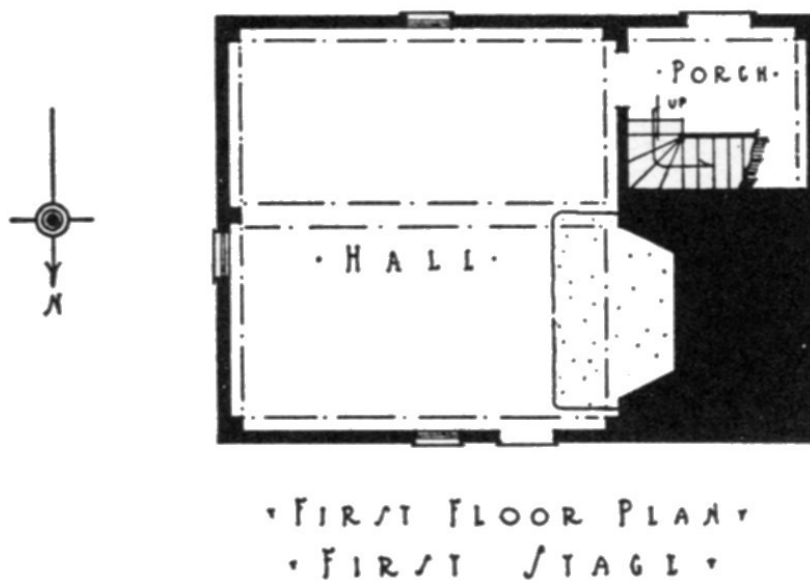


Figure 12 - First floor plan for the first stage (1664) of the Lee House, Lyme, CT.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> GLR Book 8 Folio 225 (1779); GLR Book 13 Folio 130 (1799); GLR Book 14 Folio 17 (1804); GLR 26 Folio 332 (1861)

<sup>14</sup> On the 1934 aerial photo, this borrow pit shows up as a light-colored area suggesting it continued to be used to repair the road during the logging operations.

<sup>15</sup> Reproduced from Kelly 1963: 6. Note the copyright on this book expired in 1991.



## Discussion

The house cellar on the east side of farm has European style construction with square corners, straight lengths (vertical and horizontal). The fire box served the large hall as it was in the center indicating the first floor was what was called a “one-room plan, a story and a half or two stories in height, with the chimney stack at one end.”<sup>16</sup> The example in the architecture book shows an offset chimney taking up two-thirds of the house end with a small extension for a porch adjacent to a hall. (Figure 12) The Adams house cellar has a slightly different configuration yet is based on the one-room type. The chimney block takes up a third of the length of the west side and is centered in the middle with the walls extending out equally on the north and south ends. That shows the hall/main room went the length of the entire house. Of the two short sections next to the chimney one was likely utilized as a porch, a small room with stairs to a second story. The other small room may have contained a bee-hive oven based on the bricks though this is not confirmed. No ground level stone sill was located to indicate a double-sided chimney with a second hall on the first floor. The cellar’s entry was originally walk-in height and located on the east side one-third of the way along its length. Based on the location of the well and privy a short distance south and southwest of the house, along with the chimney on the west side and cellar entry on east side it is surmised the house’s entry was on the south end the same as the two examples in the architecture book. (Figures 1 & 12)

No excavation has taken place at the house area which would establish its date range. However, property deeds place Nathaniel Adams in this east side house as of 1763 through 1772 strongly indicating this was his original place of residence beginning in 1743 and continuing through circa 1779 when the property was sold out of the family and it was noted on the deed he was no longer living there. (See “Land Use Narrative”)

The circa 1743 date seems late for the one-room end chimney style house. The *Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut* says by this period chimney’s were in the center of the house with two and three fireboxes serving multiple rooms.<sup>17</sup> Adams second house on the west part of farm built circa 1778/9 is similar to the east side house in that it was also one-room with an end chimney showing the style remained in use very late in rural areas. It makes sense Nathaniel would build a similar version of his original house.

Across the Thames River in New London there are two stone houses built in the 1750s. Captain Nathaniel Shaw’s house (1756) and Joshua Hempstead’s house (1759) both have a pair of end chimneys.<sup>18</sup> Shaw’s was a large mansion house with a center entry. Its size indicates the house had two “halls” or main rooms each served by an end chimney. These examples show the end-chimney style house continued to be built into the 1750s.

Of interest to this study is a variant of the end chimney one room house that was found in Hopkinton, Rhode Island (southwest part of state). This is the 1818 Jonathan Foster house which adhered to the newer style central chimney but retained the one-room distinction by being a duplex.<sup>19</sup> Its duplex status was established by the fact it had two separate cellars (one on each side of the chimney base) each with its own exterior entry. His son, Lawton, the younger bought half a house (1855) down the road from his

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<sup>16</sup> Kelly 1963: 6

<sup>17</sup> Kelly 1963: 8

<sup>18</sup> Authors visit to both historic houses. Images available online: (Shaw) <https://www.nlchs.org/about/shaw-mansion/> (Hempstead) <https://historicbuildingsct.com/the-nathaniel-hempsted-house-1759/>

<sup>19</sup> Gage 2020: 87-88

father confirming duplexes were part of the local culture.<sup>20</sup> The center chimney of the newer period style served as the dividing wall between the two houses. In the older period the same chimney served as the end wall.

Whereas the Connecticut architecture book limited its research to extant examples of houses, foundations (i.e. cellars) are another source of information. Adams east side house has an unusual full cellar going the length and nearly the width of the house. This is the same as seen in Foster's house in Rhode Island. The full foundation/cellar at 13'6" wide by 22'6" long is extra large for a house when most had half-cellars. Its size and easy access for carrying in crops for winter storage made it the ideal root cellar.

Construction of the east side house's foundation walls show a mix of stone types and non-professional masonry indicating Nathaniel Adams built it himself. The type of stone in the foundation is found throughout the area/farm. In comparison, the well shaft has a different type of stone not found in the house foundation and expert stone masonry showing it was built by a professional stone mason.

Joshua Hempstead of New London, Connecticut in his diary (1711-1756) had entries from time to time showing he hired people with specific skills. For example in 1751 he recorded "Stubbins will make me (40 Rod of) Stonewall yt I will pay him the Sd Powers 20s for Each Rod he makes (before the first of April next) & find him a team to draw ye Stones"<sup>21</sup> and in 1754 "Mr Swan who hath agreed with me to make Stonewall for 20s a Rod I to Draw Stones, about 25 rods."<sup>22</sup> On another occasion in 1757 he hired a man to blast a boulder: "I finished the wheel & mended the Cart &c. adam pickt up Stones & put into the holes where the Rocks were Blown up & Carryed away to Jonathan Truemans Celler. I gave him all the Rocks & the Carting, for his blowing them to pieces &c."<sup>23</sup> In this entry several things are expressed. In exchange for blasting the boulders, Jonathan Trueman received the large blocks of blasted stone for the building of his cellar. Blasted stone yields large blocks of stone with flat faces suitable for building stone as well as small pieces of unusable stone. The large blocks were carted to Trueman's farm by Hempstead's slave "adam" often spelled with a lower case first letter "a". Adam also filled in the hole left by the blasted boulder with the small pieces of blasted stone.

Nathaniel Adams' well shaft has specialized stones. A Massachusetts 1790's stone dealer's advertisement read, "The subscriber begs leave to inform the Publick and his Customers in particular, That he has for sale, all kinds of STONE, SLATE, CLAY and GRAVEL, at the lowest rate; cellar and well Stones, from 3s.6d. [\$0.94] to 9 shillings [\$2.25] per Perch."<sup>24</sup> Note "well Stones" are listed as a specific type of stone. This fits with the well stones being different from the cellar stones and suggests they were purchased. Nathaniel Adams hiring a stone mason to build his well shaft with stone purchased from a stone dealer in 1743 fits the same time period Joshua Hempstead was hiring people to build his stonewalls and blast stones on his farm. This appears to be have been a common practice to hire people with specific skills. At the time the well was built Nathaniel had an extra £36 due to selling his North Groton farm at £195 and purchasing his Groton farm for £159.

On the Shaw Mansion property in New London is a stone-lined well shaft constructed of uniform, thin, flat slabs the same as used in Adams well shaft. The only difference is Shaw's well shaft has several upper layers of stone with flat faces below which the stone ends are rough and uneven same as seen in

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<sup>20</sup> Gage & Gage 2020: 40

<sup>21</sup> Hempstead 1901: 574

<sup>22</sup> Ibid: 626

<sup>23</sup> Hempstead 1901: 686

<sup>24</sup> *Massachusetts Centinel* May 5, 1790

Adams well shaft. This indicates the same stone mason who built Shaw's well shaft also built Adams well shaft about thirteen years earlier.



Figure 13 & 14 - Well on the Shaw Mansion house property in New London, CT. Compare to the Adams well (figure 10), they are the work of the same builder.

Adams' barn has a long straight length and a square corner. Its lower level would have been open for animals to use as shelter, a common feature in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century barns. The barn's upper level would have been used for hay storage, threshing, storing farm equipment, etc.

What is of interest is what is missing. The only stonewalls on the east part of farm in the vicinity of the house and barn are the parallel walls enclosing the cow lane that is a late addition. The lack of stonewalls shows Nathaniel Adams during his occupation enclosed his pastures with wooden fences. The farm's wood (trees) supplied the material for wooden fencing negating the need for stonewalls. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the former west part of Adams farm was bought up piece meal by the Latham family. There is evidence suggesting the Lathams allowed it to reforest and used it for commercial logging.

The bridge had sturdy retaining wall abutments and bridged a shallow stream that could have been forded. In addition the road was built up as evidenced by the burrow pit. Yet this bridge and road only served the farm it was not a public pentway. That raises the question why was a substantial bridge and road built to carry heavy wagon/truck loads? Hempstead in his diary (1719) "I was about home al day Making Trucks for Stone Cart."<sup>25</sup> (1732) "In morn I went to Madm Winthrops to fitt my Axletree to her Stone Cart Trucks."<sup>26</sup> The references to "Stone Cart" and "Stone Cart Trucks" shows some carts were made heavier to be able to carry heavy loads of stone. Reading through Hempstead's diary it is clear stone was being carted beyond the boundaries of the farm. (1730) "Adm Carted 1 L[oa]d Stones to ye fort."<sup>27</sup> (1731) "Adm Carted Stones to the fort 11 Ld From Town Wharf."<sup>28</sup> The bridge and farm road next to Nathaniel Adams' east side house was likely used to cart heavy loads of apples to a local cider mill and cranberries as he had both an orchard and cranberry meadow on the east side of the farm. It is also possible he was trucking logs to a sawmill.

In the 1760s in Gloucester, Massachusetts, on Cape Ann north of Boston Jesse Saville operated a tannery in a swamp behind his house. Access to the swamp was down a steep grade over which he built a road with a hairpin turn to navigate the hill. The portion of road going down the steepest section had a retaining wall to keep it from being destroyed by the wagons carrying heavy loads of raw hides. The road started next to his house at the top of the hill and went down to swamp where it ended.<sup>29</sup>

In Hopkinton, Rhode Island Jonathan Foster built a sawmill on his property. The stream and mill pond were located on the lower part of his farm not far from the public road. To service his mill Foster built a private road in from the public road and a bridge/culvert over the stream as the mill was on the oft side. Retaining walls were constructed below the mill outlet of which a short section was utilized for the bridge. Long quarried granite bars were laid across the top spanning the stream. Plug n' feather quarry marks on the bars date the mill and bridge to post 1820 based on the introduction of the quarry method.<sup>30</sup> This was a private road extending from the public road to the mill. Granite bars created a bridge capable of handling heavy loads of logs similar to the bridge over the stream on Nathaniel Adams farm in Groton, CT.

The archaeological/historical evidence shows farmers in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut engineered private roads and bridges to facilitate industrial and commercial use of their properties.

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<sup>25</sup> Hempstead 1901: 93

<sup>26</sup> Ibid 250; **Axletree** "a cross-bar or rod supporting a vehicle such as a cart" *American Heritage Dictionary* 5<sup>th</sup> ed.

<sup>27</sup> Hempstead 1901: 226

<sup>28</sup> Ibid 237

<sup>29</sup> Gage, Mary and James Gage, Saville Farm and Native American Ceremonial Site, Gloucester, Massachusetts" (Site Report, 2021) <http://www.stonestructures.org/Saville-Site-Report-Gloucester-MA.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Gage & Gage 2020, 96-97

## West Part of Farm

The west part of the farm is the thirty-six and a quarter acres located west of the stream and ditch through a meadow. This part of the farm contains the remains of two Colonial Euro-American style buildings and numerous other stone structures including chambers, modified rock shelters, stonewalls, double circle of stones, two rows of standing stones, niches, etc. The house remains is in the general area of the stone chambers and in sight of an unfinished Colonial structure.

### *House Remains*

The house remains on the west part of the farm closely resemble the one-room, end chimney house described as a mid 1600s period style house in Connecticut but demonstrated to have been continued to be built as late as the 1740s with Adams first house on the east part of the farm and this later Adams house built post 1772. Measurements were derived from J. P. Whittall's illustration<sup>31</sup> and the author's on site documentation.

Wall Height: Front wall 1'10" high  
Side walls 2'3" high  
Interior wall 3' high (in line with chimney)  
Back wall 4'7"  
Wall Width: 2'3"

Exterior 25' by 25' (Includes back room)  
25' by 18'6" (Without back room)  
Interior 21' (measured across intact west side)  
Main Room (Hall) 12' x 14'  
Small Room (southwest corner) 6 ½' x 8'  
Back/rear Room on north side 6' x 21' (approximate)  
Chimney block 10' x 10'  
Firebox 4' x 8'

The front of the house is on flat ground. The back of house is up against a knoll/outcrop. (Figure 17) The interior layout has three rooms: (1) Small room in the southwest corner abuts south side of chimney and is adjacent to the main hall. It has two short exterior stonewalls. (2) Rear/back room abuts north side of chimney and extends the full width of the house. A retaining wall four feet high holds back the knoll and forms the exterior rear/back stonewall. Part of this wall is either collapsed or unfinished. A short wide wall forms the west end. East end is buried under debris that has not been excavated. (3) Main hall is enclosed by an exterior stonewall on its south and east sides, chimney and anteroom on its west side and an interior stonewall on its north side that is in-line with the north side of the chimney. The interior wall is three feet high by two feet wide similar to the exterior walls which are two feet high by two feet wide. The stonewalls form the bottom part of the house wall above ground. The chimney is on the west side with its back flush with the house's stonewalls. Its firebox opens into the main hall. Its length takes up one-half of the house's length (anteroom 6' wide – chimney 10' wide – rear/back room 6' wide).

There is a threshold (large flat square stone slab) in the front entrance and a second one in the entrance into small anteroom on northwest corner. No threshold was found between elongated backroom and the

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<sup>31</sup> Barron & Mason 1994: 18

main room. “A rare token, marked **1783**, discovered beneath the inner lip of the stone threshold of the front door. A copper ‘ha’ [half] penny, dated **1742**, was discovered near the fireplace hearth.”<sup>32</sup> The 1783 token was the *Georgius Triumpho Token*, a commemorative token of George Washington minted in England, some of which circulated in America as currency due to the shortage of coinage.

Exterior sides of chimney block are flat (vertically and horizontally). The flat exterior wall of the chimney block forms the interior wall of the anteroom. In the backroom a secondary wall was built up against the chimney block that appears to have a seam between it and chimney block. The seam indicates the secondary wall was an add-on feature. In Whittall’s illustration he wrote “Beehive Oven”.<sup>33</sup> Currently (2023) there is no evidence of the oven.

A circa 1995 photograph taken by the Gungywamp Society shows the firebox floor after the collapsed stones had been removed.<sup>34</sup> It has an extra large flat stone surface with a ragged front edge indicating it is surface bedrock. How far the bedrock extends into the house is unknown but it may be the reason there is no cellar.

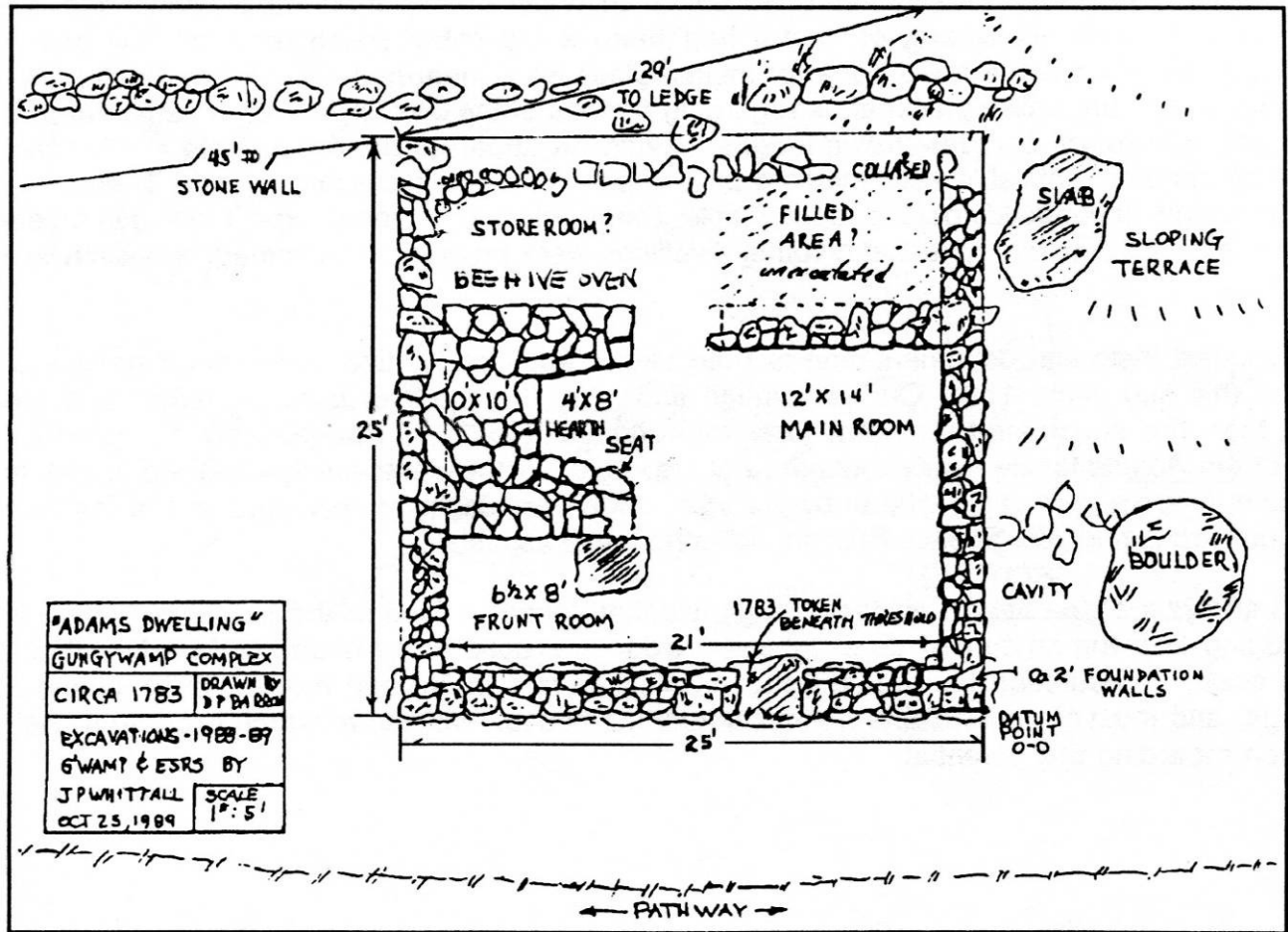


Figure 15 – David Barron’s drawing of the Adams west side house based upon James Whittall’s excavations.

<sup>32</sup> Barron & Mason 1994: 17

<sup>33</sup> 1988-89 Excavations see Barron & Mason 1994: 18

<sup>34</sup> McBride 2023: Figure 11

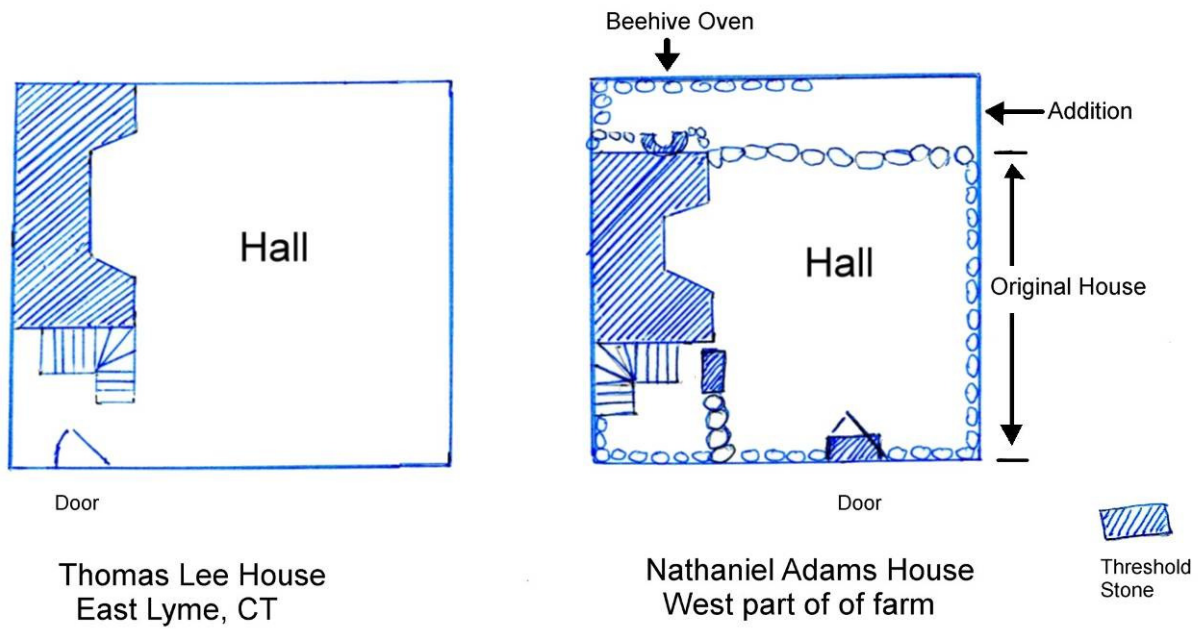


Figure 16 - Floor plan of Lee house in Lyme, CT (first stage) compared to the Adams foundation.



Figure 17 - View of Adams house foundation on west side of farm looking north. Arrow points to threshold stone for entry.



Figure 18 - Threshold stone in south wall of foundation for entry into the house





Figure 19 - View of Adams house foundation on west side of farm looking west. Arrow points to fire box and chimney block.



Figure 20 - View of firebox and chimney block.



Figures 21 & 22 - The scale ruler marks a physical seam between the north side of the chimney block and the room added on the north side of the house. The shelf like stone work addition may have been part of the brick oven reportedly excavated at this location.

## Discussion

The original layout of the Adams house minus the backroom, a later addition, matches the first stage (1664) of the Thomas Lee house in East Lyme.<sup>35</sup> (Figure 16) The Lee house's first stage consisted of "one-room" with an anteroom called the "porch" and "a great stone chimney" on its end.<sup>36</sup>

James P. Whittall who was the chief archaeologist for the Gungywamp Society during the excavation of the Adams house said it was "a common English 'Half-House of the eighteenth Century.'" <sup>37</sup> It is likely Whittall was trying to express what the architecture house book *The American Farmer* called a "Half-Timber House". The Adams house is a modified version as the first floor's stonewall is only partial at two feet high whereas the true "Half-Timber House" has the entire first floor constructed of a stonewall with the second story constructed of wood. An example is seen in a photograph of a "Deserted half-timber farmhouse near Wakefield, Pennsylvania."<sup>38</sup> The photograph shows a one-room house two stories high with a great stone chimney on the end. The bottom half of the house is a free-standing stonewall the full height of the first story. According to *The American Farmhouse* "... this style was common in Europe from England to Bavaria, few such houses were built in America."<sup>39</sup> That makes Adams house on the west part of the farm a very rare example of this style of house in New England.



Nathaniel Adams House  
West part of farm  
before leanto addition



Two Story Half Timber House  
Wakefield, PA  
Drawing based upon photo in  
"The American Farmer"  
(Kauffman 1975: 69)

Figure 23 – Comparison of Nathaniel Adams house to a half timber house in Wakefield, Pennsylvania

<sup>35</sup> Kelly 1963: Fig. 1A, pp.6 & 7

<sup>36</sup> Ibid 7

<sup>37</sup> Barron & Mason 1994: 18

<sup>38</sup> Kauffman 1975: 69

<sup>39</sup> Ibid

Another factor indicating it was a one-room house and not two rooms as it appears today is an interior three foot high by two foot wide stone wall extending in from the east side with a short opening between its west end and chimney block. The width and height are similar to the exterior walls on the other three sides suggesting what is an interior wall today was originally an exterior wall. The interior wall has a finished off end likely due to being reconstructed by the Gungywamp Society. Another reason for questioning the finished end with its opening is the lack of a threshold stone between the main hall and back/rear room. There is a threshold stone in the main entrance from exterior to interior. There is another threshold stone between the main hall and anteroom from one interior room to the other interior room. Therefore there should be a threshold stone between the main hall and back/rear room, yet there is not. This is the first factor in determining if the back/rear room was an addition to the existing house.

The back/rear addition is a narrow (6' wide), elongated (21' long) room extending the entire length of the house. The exterior wall is a retaining wall built into the knoll behind the house. It is a foot higher than the other walls with the knoll governing the room's width. The room extending the full length of the house suggests a lean-to was being added on creating a salt-box style. Part of the retaining wall has either collapsed or was never completed. On the slope adjacent to the northeast corner is a pile of stones without soil which may have been a stockpile for building. No excavation was conducted in the northeast corner of the house remains so it is unclear if the room is unfinished or finished. Whittall's excavation of the northwest corner discovered a brick-bake oven he labeled beehive oven adjacent to the chimney block.<sup>40</sup> The chimney block on its north side is flat like its opposite south side face. Adjacent to the chimney block is a secondary stone wall 3 to 4 feet high. The corner has since refilled in with debris so its height is being estimated. The top of the wall is flat, ledge like suggesting the oven was located on top of it. (figures 21 & 22) Removing leaves from the top revealed a potential seam between the secondary wall and chimney block indicating it is a late addition. Sadly, no bricks were found indicating the oven was exposed and thus likely dismantled and removed after 1988-89 by vandals.

This added a beehive oven on the exterior north side of the chimney away from the direction the firebox faced. An example of this arrangement was found in an illustration of a c.1770-1780 New England house (location not given) in the book *The Forgotten Art of Building and Using a Brick Bake Oven*.<sup>41</sup> According to R. M. Bacon who wrote the book these ovens were commonly called beehive ovens and went through several changes of location in regards to the chimney. The ovens start out inside the firebox without interior vents as the smoke was drawn up the main chimney flue. Later they were relocated to the front-side of the fireplace outside the firebox. These later ovens had their own built in flues that generally connected to the chimney's flue or were vented directly outside. One variation of this later location has the oven on the external side of the chimney. This is the same location as in Adams house.

In the Adams house the small room in the southwestern corner contained "vast amounts of thick shell and lime plaster".<sup>42</sup> Since the plaster was only found in this small room, it suggests it was being stored there as a construction material rather than plaster that fell off the walls. Samuel Adams probate inventory did not include lime plaster thus it shows the house was occupied after his death. The question is by who? Samuel's 1804 inventory did not contain household items related to occupation and did not list livestock that he had previously kept according the 1789 Groton Direct Tax record (3 cows). That shows the house was unoccupied for an undetermined time period while it continued to be owned by the Adams.

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<sup>40</sup> Barron & Mason 1994: 18

<sup>41</sup> Bacon 1977: 51, fig. 13

<sup>42</sup> Barron & Mason 1994: 24.

A comparison was made between the probate record and artifacts recovered during excavations. Artifact list was compiled from 1994 edition of “*The Greater Gungywamp*” North Groton, CT: A Guidebook (hereafter “*Guidebook*”) and State Register nomination (2023).

### Excavation Artifacts

#### *Kitchen Implements:*

- Knife handles and blades
- Ceramics, utilitarian
  - Crocks
  - Dishware
- Ceramics, refined
  - Teapot
  - Cups
  - Saucers
  - Pitcher \*post 1804 Horatio Nelson pitcher and cup
- Kettle (Iron)
- Glass Bottles
- Grinding mortar

#### *Personal Items:*

- Pewter & Ivory buttons
- Clay pipe fragments
- Buckles
- Jewelry
- Ink wells
- Folding jackknife

### Probate Record

#### *Household:*

- 2 old chears [chairs]
- 1 Chest [Trunk? £0-09-0]
- Pr tongs & fire Flice [sic]
- 4 ½ pounds old pewter [scrap metal?]
- 1 Small Stand [table]
- 1 Old Trunk [£0-01-0]
- 1 small chest

#### *Personal Item:*

- Silver Watch [£2-08-0]

#### *Light Industrial:* [“*Other*” - see write up]

- 1 old chain [light watch, jewelry or work related?] (£0-01-6 is a low value)
- 1 old cro[w] bar

#### *Clothing:*

- 1 Hat (mayt hat)
- 6 Jackets (Velvet £ 0-09-0, white £ 0-10-0, old Bleu Jacket thick coat £ 0-01-0)
- 1 Coat (£1-04-0)
- 4 Shirts

9 Breeches & Trousers  
2 pairs of Socks  
1 pair of Shoes

The State Register nomination grouped artifacts into categories. One was called “light industrial” containing “chain links, grinding mortar, shears”.<sup>43</sup> Historically shears ranged from small cloth cutting shears to leather shears to large sheep shears. Without a size and description no interpretation can be made as to what type they were used for and therefore they cannot be placed in a specific category. Chain links were listed and again no description of size, weight and strength was stated so the chain’s usage cannot be independently verified or placed in a specific category without the pertinent information. The grinding mortar is associated with food preparation thus household usage not industrial/farm usage. What is missing under “light industrial” as in farming activity are items such as ox shoes, horseshoes, harness pieces, hoes, scythes, plow, etc. There are no obvious farm related artifacts. Also, the probate did not list any farm related items though it did contain a single item, a crowbar that could be categorized as light industrial. As for farming activity, the Groton Direct Tax for the year 1789 only listed three cows. This confirmed that some limited farming was being conducted. Although the 1789 tax records did not list any improved land for him, he had to have been cultivating some plow land to feed his family. What happened to the farm implements, they are not listed in the inventory? And why were none recovered in the excavations of the artifacts?

The list of artifacts contains all the necessary kitchen items for occupancy. Excavation turned up grinding mortar representing food preparation, crocks – food storage, dishware, knife handles and blades – eating utensils, bottles – liquids, iron kettle – cooking, teapot, cups & saucers, pitcher – entertaining guests. The probate’s one kitchen item amounted to 4 ½ pounds old pewter. The only other household items listed in the probate record were one small stand possibly a writing table judging from the ink wells found among the excavated artifacts. Two old chairs, one chest, one small chest and one old trunk plus a pair of fire tongs and “Flice” (?). None of these items correspond with the numerous household ceramic artifacts recovered during excavations that clearly prove occupancy prior to Samuel’s death.

The “chest” likely contained Samuel’s clothing which was extensive. One coat, six jackets, nine pants and four shirts plus shoes and socks. The numerous jackets correspond to the pewter buttons. The shoes correspond to the buckles. The clothing ensemble was finished off with a hat. The silver watch fits with the fancy white and velvet jackets as do the ivory buttons. Samuel Adams was a well dressed gentleman.

There is a huge disparity between the household items and personal clothing listed on the probate record. A total of eleven household items were listed of which five were labeled “old”. A total of twenty-two clothing items and 1 personal item (silver watch) were listed of which two were labeled “old”. Whereas half of the household items were old only a tiny fraction of the clothes were old. The same disparity is seen between the artifacts and probate record. The artifact list is extensive regarding kitchen related items. It contained the following ceramic types: creamware plain, creamware transfer print; delftware blue & white, plain; jackfield; pearleware early hand painted polychrome, blue & white, shell edged; slipware slip trailed redware; stoneware English brown salt-glazed, Nottingham, Rhenish blue & grey, white salt-glazed.<sup>44</sup> In comparison the probate did not list a single ceramic item. The evidence points to the house being empty, unoccupied at the time of Samuel’s death in 1803.

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<sup>43</sup> McBride 2023: PDF Page 7

<sup>44</sup> McBride 2023: PDF 19-20

The lime plaster missing on the probate indicates the house was being renovated after Samuel's death. The later unknown occupants account for the post 1804 Horatio Nelson pitcher and cup, and a set of hand painted pearlware (tea/coffee pot with cups and saucers) dated to 1795-1820. These expensive items explain why the new occupants had the financial means to upgrade and modernize the house by adding a rear room to accommodate a brick bake oven (beehive oven) and begin building a new structure on the farm. The unfinished structure within sight of the house is the foundation of a barn on top of the exposed bedrock called Enclosure A. (see *Unfinished Structure*)

Before moving on there is one last thing to explore the two coins: 1783 token and 1742 Ha penny. The token was "discovered beneath the inner lip of the stone threshold of the front door."<sup>45</sup> Its location suggest it was placed there long after the stone had been set in place. The date on the token corresponds with the year Samuel inherited the house. "A copper 'ha' [half] penny, dated **1742**, was discovered near the fireplace hearth."<sup>46</sup> 1742 is one year before Nathaniel Adams purchased the farm in 1743. The two date's closeness do not appear to be a coincidence. Like the token the ha penny was recovered inside the house.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries some people marked the reign of ownership of their houses. These marks were very individualistic. William Clark's house in Boston, built prior to 1755 is one example. "The floors were of mahogany with the Clark coat of arms inlaid in the center of one of the parlors."<sup>47</sup> Another example in Newbury, Massachusetts shows the succession of owners within the Dummer family were marked. The first generation, Richard Dummer Sr. had two doorstones carved with the dates 1636 and 1640. Although Richard had obtained his land grant in 1635, he didn't settle in Newbury until a year later in 1636. The 1640 date represents when he built his house on the land grant. The third generation, grandson John Dummer, had two stones carved for his parents, and one doorstone carved and dated for himself. (See *appendix for more information*).

The two coins at Nathaniel Adams house on the west side of his farm have strong parallels to Dummer's doorstones. Nathaniel's grandson, Samuel marked his reign by placing a coin dated with the year he inherited the house, 1783. Samuel like John Dummer went on to mark a previous generations' ownership, his grandfather's reign by placing a second coin dated 1742. These two men were the only two Adams family owners of the west part of the farm. But 1742 does not match the year Nathaniel purchased the farm that was one year later in 1743. Like the Dummer farm there are other dates. The Christophers did not settle the division of their property that included the Gungywamp property until the fall of 1742. So there is a high probability John Christophers and Nathaniel Adams made a gentlemen's agreement in 1742 in which Adams was given time to sell his two properties in the north part of Groton to be able to purchase the Gungywamp property in Groton. That would account for the one year discrepancy between the coin and purchase date. There is circumstantial evidence that suggests Nathaniel was homesteading the property as early 1742.

### *Indigenous Wigwam and 1916 Token*

The house on the west part of the farm was not the only structure with a coin at its entrance within the Gungywamp area. In the North Gungywamp Complex (located north of the South Gungywamp Complex containing the west part of the farm) is the remains of a wigwam that also had a coin at its entrance. The remains consisted of low, narrow earthen berms with burnt wooden stakes in a rectangular shape with an open end. "A Shoreline railroad (trolley) token, dated 1916, was found near the front

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<sup>45</sup> Barron & Mason 199: 17

<sup>46</sup> Ibid 17

<sup>47</sup> Quoted in Gage & Gage 2003, 109



entry.” Furthermore, “A woodland quartz projectile point was unearthed in the southeastern corner of the dig.”<sup>48</sup> The placement of an old item and new item is the same as occurred at the west side house with the older coin (ha penny) and newer coin (token). Interestingly both the wigwam and house had a “token” type coin at the front entrance.

The wigwam appears to have “burned to the ground at least twice, judging from the replacement of many of the wooden stakes used in its construction.”<sup>49</sup> When the wigwam was originally built is unknown. The 1916 token attests to its continued use into the early 1900s. “It is well known that, even today [1990s] a few American Indians do make annual visits to this general area, following footpaths through the woods from the northeast and Lantern Hill.”<sup>50</sup> These visits may account for the “modern artifacts” and “many odd cast-off items”. The excavation only recovered modern items with the exception of the quartz projectile point proving this was not a habitation lodge. The wigwam lodge is located on the edge of a field of cairns of which one was documented with three standing stones on top. It is well known Indigenous people make sacred offering using everyday objects that appear to be “cast-offs”. The evidence indicates the Indigenous people built a ceremonial lodge where they held an annual ceremony.

How is it both Nathaniel Adams’ house on the west part of farm and the Indigenous ceremonial lodge both had a “token” at their entrances and an older item (projectile point and half penny) inside their respective structures? The odds are too great to be coincidental.

### *Unfinished Structure*

Measurements come from Barron’s illustration in the *Guidebook* and James Gage in 2023.

Overall structure: 21’8” wide (exterior, intact west side)  
38’ long (exterior, partially intact north side)

Height of walls (intact sections): 4’3” H (south, interior room)  
3’9” H (middle of the west wall)  
2’ H (north side)

Width of walls (intact sections): 2’3” (south, exterior wall of interior room)  
1’9” (west, exterior wall of interior room)  
1’8” (interior wall of interior room)  
2’9” (north side wall)

Interior Room: 5’ wide (exterior) by 5’9” long (interior)  
4’3” high on south side and 3’9” high on north side

Boulders: 1 embedded in west wall  
1 embedded in south wall

Stone types: Slab-like blocks & cobblestones (size varies)

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<sup>48</sup> Barron & Mason 1994: 40

<sup>49</sup> Ibid 40

<sup>50</sup> Ibid 41

## Discussion

According to Barron's illustration in the *Guidebook* the Gungywamp Society reconstructed the south wall starting at the junction with the interior room's southeast corner and went out to the east end of the structure. That shows the interior room, west end and most of the north walls were in situ. The east wall was left in its scattered state. There is no evidence the east wall was ever constructed. Barron labeled the width of several of the large stones: 1'10", 2', 2'4", 2'6", 2'8". The stones' widths in the intact sections of wall show the wall's width. In general, the width of the walls were two feet wide. The width of the unfinished structure's walls is the same as the house's walls.

The unfinished structure was built on down sloping exposed bedrock. To compensate for the differences in elevation the walls were built of varying heights. On the highest north side the wall was two feet high. Midway on the west side that slopes downward the wall was three feet nine inches and on the lowest point the wall was built up to a height of four feet three inches. That created a level height across the intact west end showing this was a building foundation. This is cross-checked by the two foot wide walls with ample thickness to support a large building.<sup>51</sup>

The overall size of the foundation is 21'8" x 38'.<sup>52</sup> The barn foundation wall on the east side of the property is 16' x 36'. The sizes are very close to each other. The 36' and 38' lengths far exceed the 25' length of the two houses (east & west sides of property). The size of the unfinished foundation indicates it was intended to be a barn.

Barron noted a thick flat stone at floor level in the low east side wall of the interior room. He called it a threshold stone. There are two problems with this hypothesis. One, thick flat stones were used throughout the foundation so it cannot be confirmed as being a threshold stone. Second, the interior room could not be entered from the underside of the barn. The three foot nine inch wall height of the north side of the room shows the underside of the barn was too low for a person to walk upright. In turn, it shows the interior room had to be entered from the barn floor via a trap door. The low east side wall of the interior room is unfinished.

On the interior wall of the interior room is a strange large flat stone one and half inches thick. Its face is flush with the wall forming a disk like feature juxtaposing it against the horizontally laid thick flat slab-like stones making it a façade stone. The flat stone stands out as it is the only one found in any of the four foundations (two houses and two barns).

Another anomaly are the two large boulders (3' high) integrated into the unfinished barn foundation. The two house foundations and barn foundation (east side of property) did not contain boulders in their stone walls. This indicates the unfinished barn foundation was built by someone other than the Adams.

The unfinished barn foundation was in sight of the house though about 200' distant. It was likely being built by the later occupants of the house on the west part of property. Who were they?

Nathaniel's two houses, one barn and second barn built by a later person conform to the Colonial European style. They have straight lengths of walls with square corners. The walls that are intact have

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<sup>51</sup> There has been a long-standing misperception that walls of this structure were not thick enough to support a wooden structure. This is not factually accurate especially given the west side house foundation has walls of similar width.

<sup>52</sup> Barron's illustration of the structure in the *Guidebook* labels the east wall was being 24' 10" wide in comparison to the west wall which was labeled as 21' 8". The 2' 2" discrepancy between the two ends was likely the result of it being unclear where to measure to on the east end due all of the fallen stones.

flat vertical faces with flat top surfaces. The two foundations on the west side each have a two foot thick wall suitable for the base of a wooden building. Each house had an associated barn though one was unfinished. Again, the two houses and two barns conformed to the Colonial European format of farm layouts. What is out of character are the four small stone roofed structures (i.e. chambers #1 to #4) in the same area as the house on the west side of the farm. If a farm opted to use a separate root cellar rather than using the barn or house cellar for this purpose, there would only be a single small roofed structure (i.e. root cellar).



Figure 24 – View of unfinished structure looking westerly



Figure 25 – View of unfinished structure looking southeasterly



Figure 26 – The wall of the structure averages two feet wide, sufficient to support a wooden structure



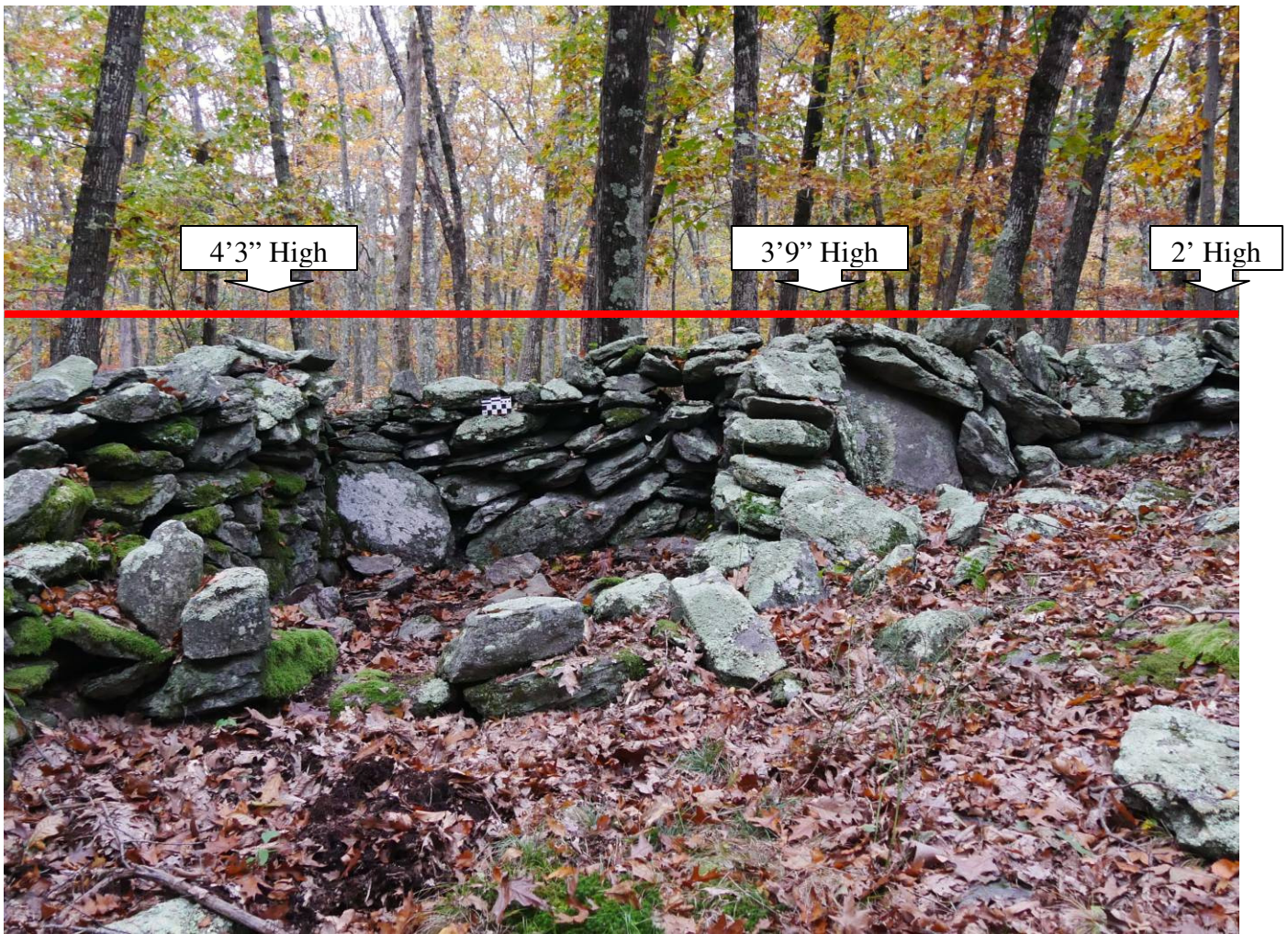
Figure 27 & 28 – Boulders embedded in wall of the structure (top) south wall (bottom) west wall



Figure 29 – Vertical stone in north wall



Figures 30 – View of small room inside of the structure.



Figures 31 – View of small room inside of the structure. This photo also shows the heights of the west wall. Although built on sloping bedrock, the height of the wall was adjusted to create a level top for the foundation of a barn.



Figure 32 – A flat stone (behind scale card) misinterpreted as a threshold stone. Note bottom flat stone on right is much longer than the misinterpreted threshold stone showing this was not an entry.





Figure 33 – Thin vertical stone in west wall of small room (not a structural feature)



Figure 34 Thin slab is two inches thick (top down view)

## Did Nathaniel Adams Build a Tan Bark Mill?

About 200 feet west of the unfinished barn foundation is double circle of stones. The circle consists of shaped stones with a convex outside edge and concave inner edge forming an inner and outer circle with a channel in between the two circles. It resembles Euro-American tan bark mills of the Adams era with one caveat. In an early pre-restoration photograph by the Gunywamp Society<sup>53</sup> and noted by John Dodge in his 1965 field notes and illustration is a narrow stone set perpendicular to the inner circle stones.<sup>54</sup> Held tightly in place by the circle stones, the narrow stone juts out about half ways into the channel. This inconspicuous stone created a blocking mechanism that prevented a crushing wheel from circling the channel. The in situ stone jutting out into the channel proves this structure was never used as any type of crushing mill and therefore was not a utilitarian farm structure.

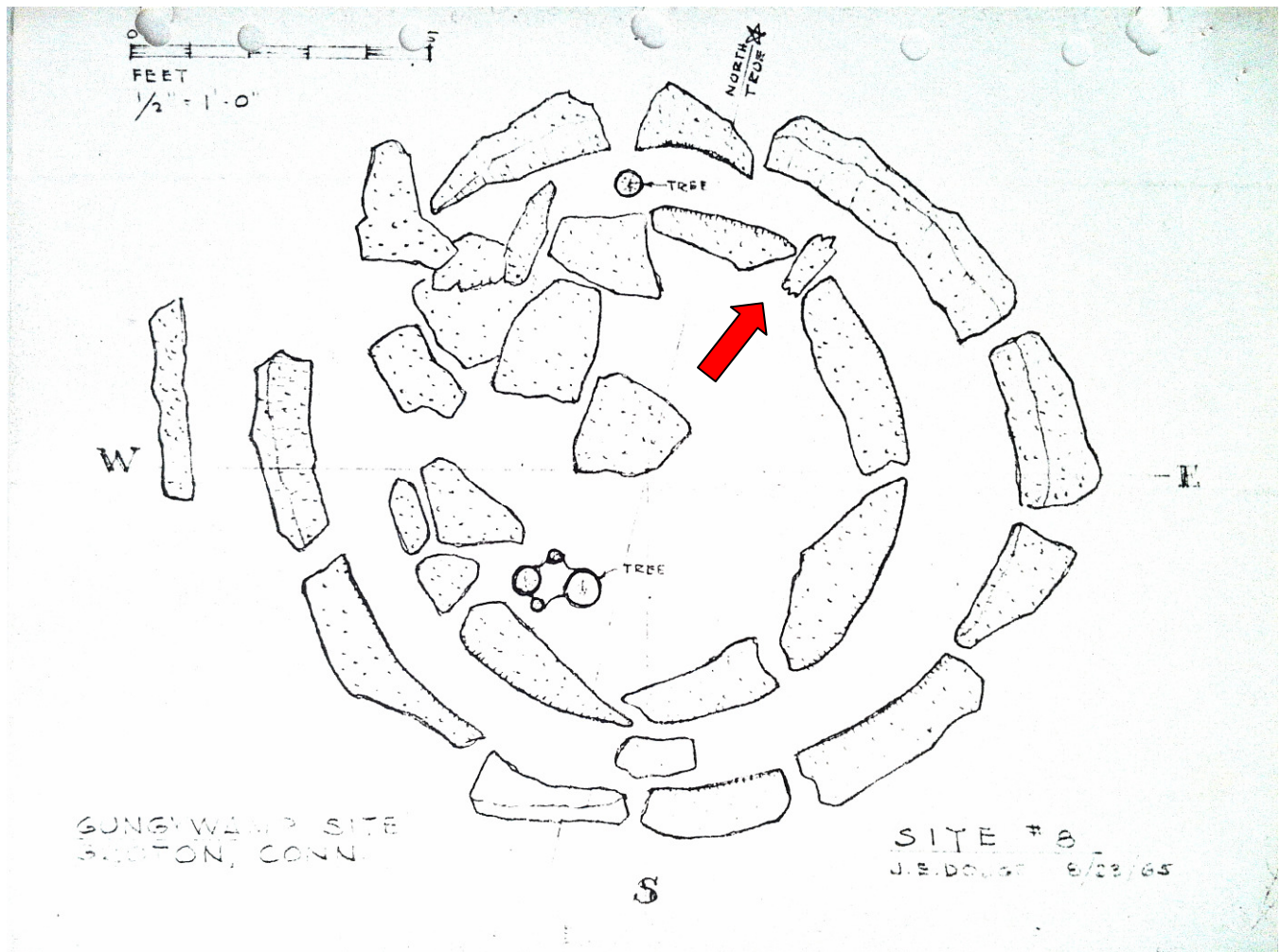


Figure 34 – John Dodge’s 1965 field notes show a stone that jutted into the channel and thus prevented a crushing stone from running around it. (NEARA Library and Archives)

<sup>53</sup> Barron and Mason 1994: 14

<sup>54</sup> John Dodge was the first person to systematically explore and document the complex in the 1960s. In his unpublished report (1965) he wrote “The small stone projecting into the groove in the northeast quadrant is puzzling.”

## **A Comparison of Architectural Traits: Chambers versus Houses**

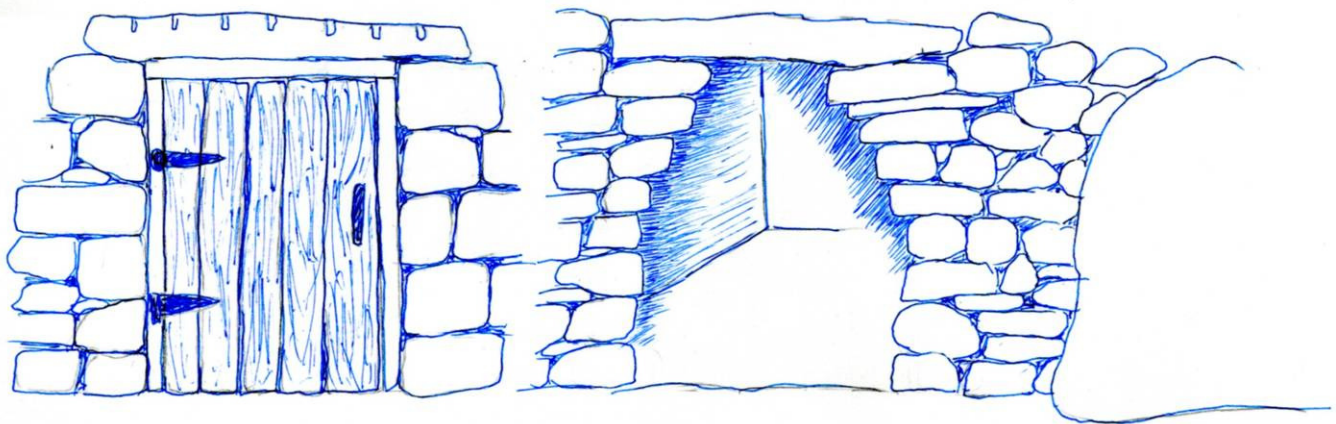
With the chambers co-existing on the same site as the house on the west part of the farm there was a need to do a comparison. This is an abbreviated comparison focused on architectural traits. Do the chamber's traits reflective those of the houses?

All four chambers have one thing in common an integrated glacial boulder or outcrop. Otherwise no two are alike, each has its own architecture. Number 3 has a half-circle wall attached to a boulder creating a "D" shape. Number 2 has a trapezoid interior shape as the width 7' 10" at the entrance is wider than the 6'3" width at the rear. Chamber 1 has two rooms a large rectangular room and a small anteroom. Chamber #4 is a little different in that a wide elongated split in an outcrop served as its bottom half. This chamber has straight, flat vertical walls by default. With chambers #1 (anteroom), #2, and #3 the glacial boulder dictated their location, length and height. With chamber #4 the location, width and length were dictated by the split in the bedrock but not the height as stones were placed on top of the outcrop to raise its walls.

In comparison, the two houses were not integrated with a glacial boulder and therefore their locations were not dictated by a boulder. And their sizes were not regulated by a glacial boulder. Both houses had square/rectangular layouts. Neither had a trapezoid or "D" shaped room.

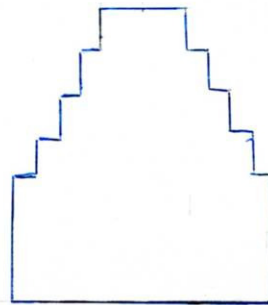
The east side house cellar had a walk-in height entry. That is in common with chamber #1 with its walk-in height entry. So why does the chamber's anteroom have a 2' high entry? In addition Whittall's illustration in the Gungywamp *Guidebook* shows the anteroom's height is 4' (not tall enough to stand up in). The low entry is not consistent with the house cellar or chamber entry.

The east side house cellar entry had a rectangular shape with straight vertical sides to accommodate a rectangular door. Whereas chamber #1 has corbelled walls starting half ways up creating a straight sided bottom with a stepped pyramid shaped top entry that does not accommodate a rectangular door.



**CT ROOT CELLAR**

**CHAMBER #1**



Rectangular opening  
accommodates door

Corbel opening  
cannot be  
fitted with a door

Figure 35 – Comparison of a typical stone root cellar entrance in Connecticut with the entry into Chamber #1.

The evidence shows the chambers had completely different architectural traits than the two houses. And had different location requirements. In general, the two types of structures had nothing in common with each other.

As seen in the analysis of the two houses they had the same specific traits that showed up in both of them. That linked them to Nathaniel Adams and his Colonial European heritage. The chambers likewise had a specific trait, a glacial boulder or outcrop integrated into each of them. This was not found with the houses nor is it a traditional Colonial European trait indicating someone else built the chambers.

There is another peculiarity with chamber #1's it has a "vent hole" that funnels a perfect narrow beam of light across the wall ending precisely at the entrance to the small interior chamber. This only occurs on the equinox sunset indicating it was set up intentionally. There are no known root cellars built by farmers with solar alignments.



Figure 36 – Chamber #1's 4  $\frac{3}{4}$  foot entry with large anchor boulder



Figure 37 – 2 foot high entry into interior room (crawl-in only!)



Figure 37 – Non-rectangular entrance of Chamber #1. Not suitable for a colonial doorway



Figure 38 – Chamber #2



Figures 39 – Interior views of Chamber #2 with large anchor boulder



Figure 40 – Chamber #3 (roof stones can be found nearby)

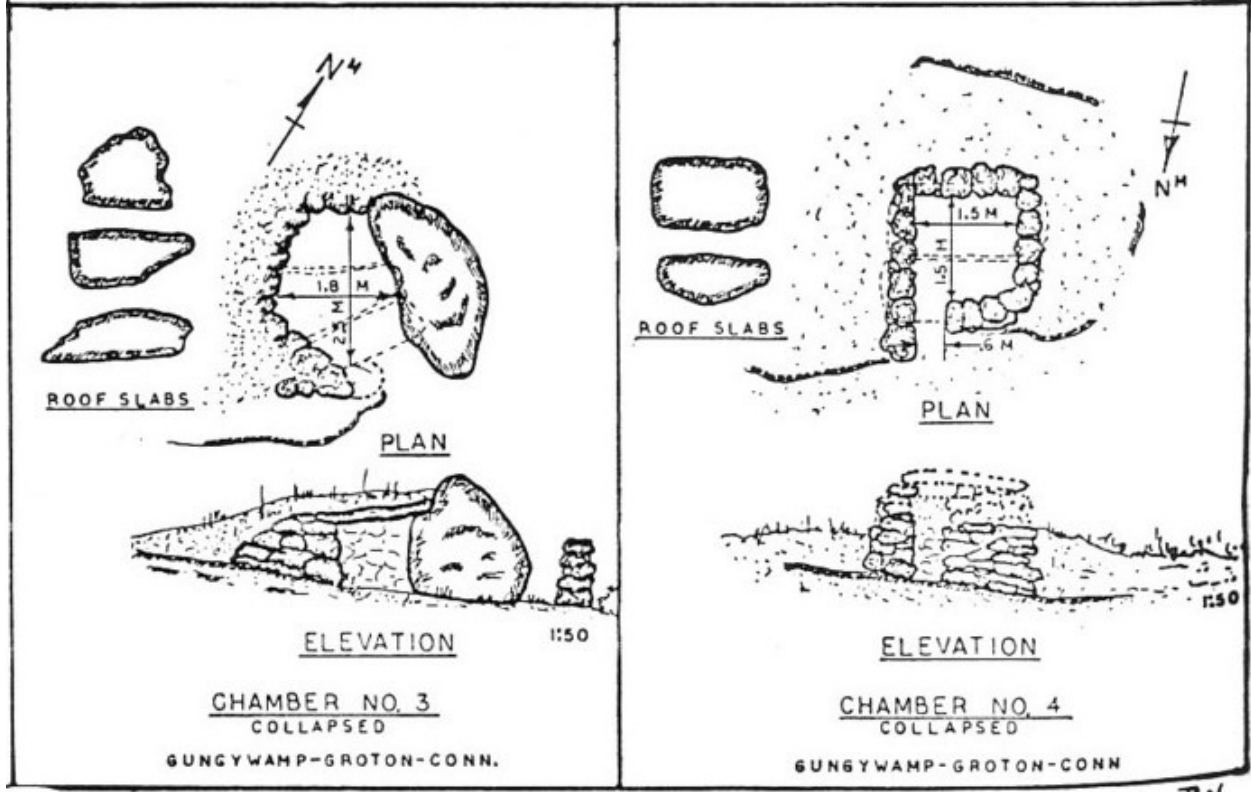


Figure 41 - Chamber #3 & #4 (see below for #4 photo) Drawing by James Whittall.





Figure 42 – Views of the entry into Chamber #4. Arrows indicates bedrock outcrop.

## *Conclusion*

The deeds in conjunction with the remains of Nathaniel Adams two houses confirm he farmed the land. The house foundations reveal he adhered to the European construction methods. In an unusual situation he continued to live in his house on the east part of the farm ten or more years after he sold it to his son.

Through the deeds it is revealed the land was productive, especially the east half, with cranberry meadows and a fruit orchard producing cash crops. In addition, there appears to have been limited farming judging by the barn and cellar under the house large enough to store a winter season's worth of vegetables.

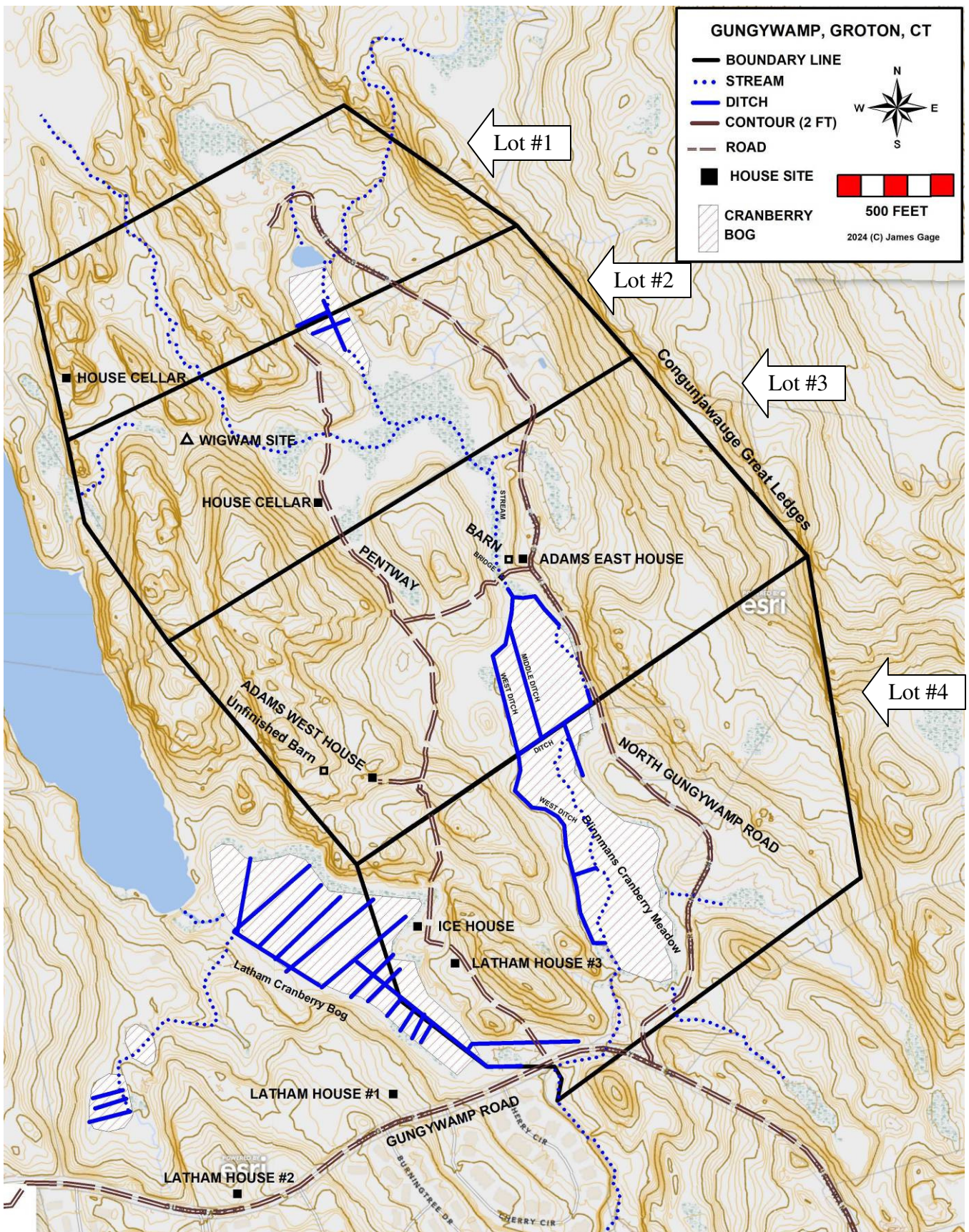
The foundations reveal the 1600s style one-room house with end chimney remained in vogue through much of the 1700s.

What the historical records can not tell us is why the farm was so important to Nathaniel with its strange stone chambers one with a unique solar alignment inside, and a double circle of stones with a stone jutting out into its channel proving it was not a European style crushing mill. He went to some effort in finding a family member who would continue to keep the west part of the farm with its strange stone structures in the Adams family. Yet these structures were not his creations as they do not conform to the European construction method.

The remains of an Indigenous wigwam lodge excavated in the North Gungywamp Complex to the north of the Adams farm hints at the builders of the strange stone chambers and other non-European style stone structures. The lodge like the house on the west part of the farm had a coin at its entrance: 1783 token at house and 1916 trolley token at wigwam. Is this a coincidence or not?

Nathaniel's farm in the north part of Groton bordered on the Mashantucket-Pequot reservation. Was it coincidence or intentional? His Groton farm at Gungywamp had strange stone chambers, a non-utilitarian double circle of stones and two rows of standing stones of which one had an unmistakable natural bird image suggesting an Indigenous Ceremonial Stone Landscape site. Was it coincidence or intentional? Some mysteries may never be solved like why Nathaniel Adams protected the west part of his farm with the strange stone structures after his death.

This article started out as a straight forward research project to grasp an understanding of how and why a person would farm what appears to be poor land. Its goal was to explore the house architecture to see what could be learned. And to see if it was possible Nathaniel Adams built the strangely constructed chambers and other stone structures. It answered the questions posed and in turn raised a question that remains unanswered.



Map 1 – 1743 Boundaries

## **Map 1 (previous page) explanation**

Christopher Christophers of New London acquired “Blinmans Meadow” a/k/a “Cranberry Meadow” some time between 1719 and 1729. The main feature was about 14 acres of cranberry bogs. The overall lot is estimated at 205 acres. Its eastern boundary was “Congunjawauge Great Ledges”. The western boundary line was a series of earlier land grants. This is a reconstruction of the lots boundaries based upon various sources including deeds, stone walls, and clues in the Christopher Christophers probate distribution. The overall lot was subdivided in 1742-43 amongst four heirs. The boundaries of Lot #3, the Nathaniel Adams farm, are the most thoroughly researched and the most accurate. Lot #2 was sold to James Starr who subsequently broke it up and sold it off over several decades. Detailed survey data and/or distances in those deeds have allowed for a reasonable accurate reconstruction. Lot #1 is the most conjectural and based primarily on the description in the probate division report which is not the most accurate. Lot #4 was sold to the Latham family and was reconstructed based upon one later deed, and clues in the probate division description.

Solid dark blue lines indicate man-made ditches used as part of the drainage system for a number of cranberry bogs. The Lathams are known to have operated their bogs into the late 1800s and into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. At least one of their bogs was also used as an ice pond for a commercial ice harvesting business.

Lot #1 – Given to Sarah [Christophers] Prentiss

Lot #2 – Given to Christopher Christophers Jr. sold to James Starr

Lot #3 – Given to John Christophers sold to Nathaniel Adams

Lot #4 – Given to Lucretia [Christophers] Palmer sold to Jasper Latham

## PART II: Land Use Narrative

### Land Use Narrative

*By James Gage*

Little information has been published about the historic ownership of the Gungywamp archaeological site in Groton, Connecticut. A concise synopsis of the deed history was published by Nancy and George Jackson in 1981. Jack Rojette conducted deed research in the early 2000s but never published his findings. His research notes are now housed at UCONN. The latest research effort was by Professor Kevin McBride (2023) as part of his work on the Connecticut State Register of Historic Places nomination form for the site. Information on the Adams family, the principal owners of the property in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, can only be found in obscure genealogical works and primary source documents.

The purpose of this section was to pull together all of this information in a single published source readily available to other researchers and the public. It is accompanied by digital appendices (available online) covering transcripts of the relevant documents and a technical discussion regarding locating the property boundaries on the ground. Although the subject had been previously researched, a decision was made to approach it fresh as an independent and new evaluation of the evidence in an effort to avoid preconceived conclusions.

#### *Ownership History – “Cranbery Meadow” Lot*

On April 16, 1719 the inhabitants of Groton voted to divided and distribute the remaining common lands in town. Qualifying residents received a grant or share in the first and second divisions. Some of these land grants were not surveyed and laid out until the early 1730s.<sup>55</sup> Between 1719 and 1729, a large tract of land which included the Gungywamp complex site was granted to a Mr. Blinman.<sup>56</sup> Christopher Christophers of New London, Connecticut subsequently acquired it. (New London was across the Thames River from Groton). No record of the grant nor the sale to Christophers has been found. However, there are occasional references to this early history in later records.

#### Christophers

Christopher Christophers, Esquire (c.1682-1729), like his father Richard, was a merchant, a judge with the county and probate courts, held various public offices, and was a member of New London’s wealthy elite.<sup>57</sup> He died on February 4<sup>th</sup> 1729 at age 45 leaving an estate worth £4468.<sup>58</sup> Amongst his real estate holdings was a lot in Groton described as “his medo [meadow] called cranbery medo with his upland a joyning.” It was appraised in August 1729 at £200 by Jonathan Starr and Nicholas Street, both of Groton. No acreage was given.<sup>59</sup>

The appraisers placed an emphasis on the cranberry meadow/bog and the uplands were considered secondary. The economic value of the lot was clearly with the harvest potential for the cranberries.

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<sup>55</sup> GLR Book 3 Folio 135 (c.1730) - This deed to the heirs of Richard Christophers provides some of the relevant details of the distribution process for the common lands.

<sup>56</sup> GLR Book 4 Folio 186 (1743) - "original west line of Mr. Blinmans Grant of Land"

<sup>57</sup> Schaefer 2009, 2009a

<sup>58</sup> Hempstead 1901

<sup>59</sup> New London Probate Court, 1729, Christopher Christophers Case #1202. Digital scans of original documents available through Ancestry.com

Christopher likely acquired the lot for this express purpose. The cranberries would have been an important resource for the land's previous owners, the indigenous peoples. A network of ditches to control water levels in the cranberry bog had been dug prior to 1763 when one of the ditches is first mentioned in a deed.<sup>60</sup> The Latham family, who lived just to the south of the Gungywamp complex, continued to operate cranberry bogs in the general area as late as the 1930s.<sup>61</sup>

For unknown reasons, it took thirteen years to settle the estate. In October 1742, the real estate of Christopher Christophers lying in Groton and New London was divided and distributed between his surviving children: Christopher Jr., John, Sarah (wife of John Prentiss), and Lucretia (wife of Edward Palmer.) The probate court assigned the task to Jonathan Starr, Humphrey Avery, and Jeremiah Chapman Jr. There was clearly some disagreement and friction over the division process. The three men informed the court at the end of the division report that "Att the Special Ins[is]tance and request of Mrs. Sarah Christophers Widow and relic to ye Testator and Executrix to the Last Will and Testament of Christopher Esq. Deceas'd we have at this time Suspended the dividing and setting out her part of the Estate both real and personal."

Although difficult to spot, there is something amiss with the division report. All of the surveyor's compass bearings are written as being "East xx degrees [south or west]" or "West xx degrees [south or west]" The standard surveyor's compass provided bearings either "North xx degrees [east or west]" or "South xx degrees [east or west]" This notation system is still used today. Even assuming this was a local oddity, subsequent investigation found many of these bearings were not close to being correct.

The cranberry meadow lot was subdivided into four sections. In an apparent effort to conserve paper and reduce the amount of handwriting involved, the bounds of each section were described with only partial information. Some distances and bearings were omitted. The description of each section referred to the lot as "Blinman's Meadow." However, at the end of the probate division report, a memorandum was appended noting that all of the heirs had a right of way through the other sections of the "cranberry meadow" lot. It was apparently known by two different names. This right of way is called a "pentway" in the deeds

Three of the heirs, all living across the Thames River in New London, had no interest in developing this real estate and moved quickly to sell off their inheritance. Although only valued in the 1729 appraisal at £200 total<sup>62</sup>, three of the four subdivisions sold for a total of £514 in 1743:

- John Christophers to Nathaniel Adams for £159 in 1743 (67 ¼ acres listed as 53 acres)
- Lucretia Palmer to Jasper Latham for £175 in 1743 (63 acres listed as 58 ½ acres)
- Christopher Christophers to James Starr for £180 in 1743 (45 1/3 acres listed as 32 acres)
- Sarah Prentiss – no record of a sale (32 acres)

The heirs seems to have been aware of the problems with the legal bounds of their respective parts of the cranberry meadow lot. Christopher Jr. opted to write a generalized description of the parcel rather than repeat the description in the probate division report. He qualified the description by stating "and

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<sup>60</sup> GLR Book 7 Folio 4(1763)

<sup>61</sup> GLR Map Book 47 Page 58 (1931); "Groton – Clarence Latham finds a ready sale for his great crop of cranberries at \$10.50 per bbl. He supplies the principal cities in this state and occasionally sends a cargo to New York." (p.490) – *American Agriculturist* December 22, 1894 v.54 no.17; "Clarence Latham has 600 bu of cranberries on hand which he is selling in small lots to different cities in this state. He went to Danbury last week to make a sale for some." - *Ibid* January 11, 1896 v.57 no.2

<sup>62</sup> This may have been an auction valuation versus a valuation for a private sale.

however otherwise bounded and Described in the Division of the Estate of Christopher Christophers Esq.”<sup>63</sup> This is legal language added to deeds when the legal bounds are unclear. The Palmers issued a deed to Jasper Latham that changed one distance and added another from what was written in the probate division.<sup>64</sup> The Palmers issued a second deed to Jasper Latham for the same parcel seven months later. This second deed was apparently not recorded but an original copy showed up on an online auction site.<sup>65</sup> The new deed reverted back to the information from the probate division report. John Christophers issued a deed to Nathaniel Adams which Nathaniel subsequently “sold” back to John and a new deed issued with a different boundary description.<sup>66</sup> It is evident that boundary descriptions from the probate division and the deeds based in part on them should be treated with a great deal of caution.

### Nathaniel Adams

Nathaniel Adams was born in Westerly, Rhode Island on March 25, 1708 the sixth child of James Adams and Honor Hall. His parents farm was on a piece of property later setoff as part of Charleston, Rhode Island.<sup>67</sup> His father was illiterate and signed various legal documents with an "X". Nathaniel learned to sign his first name confidently.<sup>68</sup> At age 24, he married Hannah Wheeler in the adjacent town of Groton, Connecticut on January 23, 1731/32. They had ten children:

James b. February 6, 1732/3 in Groton, RI	bp. March 18, 1733 in Groton, CT
Elijah b. August 8, 1734 in Westerly, RI	bp. April 30, 1738 in Groton, CT
David b. September 20, 1737 in Westerly, RI	bp. April 30, 1738 in Groton, CT
Nathaniel Jr. b. June 8, 1739 in Groton, CT	bp. October 7, 1739 in Groton, CT
William b. November 22, 1740 in Groton, CT	bp. May 3, 1741 in Groton, CT
Simeon b. January 23, 1742/3 in Groton, CT	bp. April 1743 in Groton, CT
Hannah b. September 3, 1744 in Groton, CT	bp. October 28, 1744 in Groton, CT
Joseph b. August 20, 1747 in Groton, CT*	
Mary b. August 20, 1747 in Groton, CT*	bp. (adult) June 24, 1764
Sarah b. November 20, 1756 in Groton, CT	

\*fraternal twins

Hannah and Nathaniel initially lived in Groton either with her parents or in a rented house. Their first child James was born there in 1733. (There is no record of them purchasing or receiving property in Groton prior to 1739.) By the summer of 1734, they are living in Westerly, Rhode Island likely on Nathaniel’s parents’ farm. On February 17, 1736, Nathaniel’s father deeded him 46 acres of land at the junction of the White Brook and Pawcatuck River for the "Consideration of the love Good will & affection Which I have and Do Bear To my well Beloved Son Nath'II".<sup>69</sup> Two of Nathaniel’s brothers

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<sup>63</sup> GLR Book 4 Folio 186 (1743)

<sup>64</sup> GLR Book5 Folio 3 (1743)

<sup>65</sup> Dated August 17, 1743 - online image of deed <https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/1743-american-connecticut-land-404010686>

<sup>66</sup> GLR Book 4 Folio 164 (1743); Book 5 Folio 16 (1744) - two deeds.

<sup>67</sup> Arnold 1975: 39

<sup>68</sup> A copy of his actual signature can be found on a 1761 probate document reproduced in Arnold 1975, 41. There is a clear difference in the handwriting of the first and last names indicating another person added his last name on his behalf. Two deeds, one in 1738 in Westerly (WLR Book 4 Folio 121) and another in 1765 in Groton (GLR Book 7 Folio 28) seem to indicate he signed his whole name. Both are copies entered into the town land records by the town clerk and therefore not actual signatures from Nathaniel Adams. It is possible the respective town clerks missed the differences in penmanship between the first and last names on the original documents. Note: Hannah signed the 1738 deed with the initials "H A".

<sup>69</sup> Westerly, RI - Land Records Book 6 Folio 370 (1736)

also received their share of the farm at this time.<sup>70</sup> Two years to the day later (1738), Nathaniel sold his inheritance to David Nichols of Stonington, Connecticut for £100.<sup>71</sup> At the time he was still living in Westerly. Within two months, we find them back in Groton. The First Congregational Church of Groton recorded the baptism of Nathaniel and Hannah's children, David and Elijah, on April 30, 1738. Nathaniel himself received adult baptism in October 1739 and full communion in March 1742.<sup>72</sup> The Adams had put down roots in Groton and planned on staying there long term.

Nathaniel used the proceeds from the Westerly land sale to purchase land in Connecticut. Fourteen months later (April 1739), Nathaniel purchased for £50 a 20 acre lot abutting the east side of the Mashantucket Indian Reservation from William Wood.<sup>73</sup> A little over a year and half after that (December 1740) Nathaniel persuaded Joseph Gardiner to sell him for £45 his 20 acre wood lot that abutted on the north side of the previous 20 acres he had bought.<sup>74</sup> The forty acres was partially on what was known as North Hill and partially on South Hill in what is today the town of Ledyard. Nathaniel homesteaded the 40 acres until June 1743 when he sold it William Williams for £195.<sup>75</sup> During Nathaniel's four year ownership the value of the property doubled reflecting all of the improvements he made to the farm. Although, no house is mentioned in the deed (not uncommon for the period), it is clear from the dramatic increase in value he was homesteading it.

Two months later, in August 1743, Nathaniel used some of the proceeds from the sale in Ledyard to purchase for £159 what he was told was a 50 acre lot on the west side of Gungywamp Ledges from John Christophers. The deed was defective and subsequently rescinded and a new deed issued.<sup>76</sup> On the ground, the parcel was 67 1/2 acres. Where the Adams lived after selling the Ledyard homestead and while building a new homestead at Gungywamp is unknown.

It seems odd that Nathaniel would sell his existing farm in Ledyard in the middle of the agricultural season (i.e. June - crops in the field, hay just about ready for first cutting, etc.) without assurances of having another farm or homestead in full agricultural production lined up to move into. One must remember, there were no grocery stores, these families lived off what they produced on the farm especially during the winter months. There is circumstantial evidence that homesteading was already occurring on the Christophers "Cranbery Meadow" property prior to 1743. When the lot to the south of the one purchased by Nathaniel was sold on January 16, 1743, a provision of the deed read "Reserving the privilege of a pent highway through this land **to the families that do** or may live Northerly of this land **and living** on the land formerly belonging to Mr. Richard Christophers Dec'd and part of this tract."<sup>77</sup> (emphasis added) The Adams may have been among the families "that do ... live" on the land. Interestingly, the deed from which the above quote came from was issued four months before the probate court approved the division of the Christophers estate lands in Groton amongst the heirs. What legal arrangement these families had with the Christophers is unknown. They may have been leasing their homesteads with the understanding they had an option to purchase when the opportunity arose.

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<sup>70</sup> Holman 1928: 22.

<sup>71</sup> Westerly, RI - Land Records Book 4 Folio 121 (1738)

<sup>72</sup> Connecticut, U.S. Church Record Abstracts, 1630-1920 - Ancestry.com

<sup>73</sup> GLR Book 4 Folio 91 (1739)

<sup>74</sup> GLR Book 4 Folio 107 (1740)

<sup>75</sup> GLR Book 4 Folio 159 (1743)

<sup>76</sup> Original deed - GLR Book 4 Folio 164 (1743); The original deed was sold back to John Christophers and a new deed issued on the same day - Book 5 Folio 16 (1744) - two deeds.

<sup>77</sup> GLR Book 5 Folio 3 (1743)



The hypothesis that Nathaniel Adams was homesteading the property as early as 1742 is supported by another unusual piece of evidence. Excavation of the west side house foundation recovered only two coins/tokens. A token dated 1783 was intentionally placed under the threshold stone of the house and represents the year Nathaniel's grandson Samuel took possession of the west part of the farm. A 1742 half penny was found near the hearth. The 1742 date didn't make sense, one would have expected a 1743 coin to reflect the year he bought the land. However, it does make complete sense if he was homesteading the land a year earlier in 1742.

### East Side of the Farm

Within the 67 1/2 acre lot are the remains of two house sites. Along North Gungywamp Road is a house cellar with an exterior entry, barn foundation, well and privy. This is part of what became known as the "east part of the farm" and contained 31 ¼ acres. Another house foundation and an unfinished barn foundation are found within the mist of the stone chambers on what was called the "west part of the farm" that had 35 ½ acres. The east side house had a farm road that connected it to a *pentway* that ran south to north from Gungywamp Road. The pentway ran through the middle of the Gungywamp complex site. The pentway is the main trail still used today for tours of the site. North Gungywamp Road was built after the Adams ownership of the farm, it is not mentioned in any of the deeds for the east part of farm.

In 1763, twenty-one years after purchasing the property, Nathaniel deeded over to his son Elijah "*the East part of the Farm I now live on*" for £50 (well below fair market value).<sup>78</sup> This placed the original homestead on North Gungywamp Road outside of the Gungywamp Complex. Two years later (1765), Elijah sold to his brother James his part of the farm for £70. Elijah changed the wording in the deed to "*being the East part of the Farm Nathaniel Adams of said Groton now lives on*".<sup>79</sup> (One would have expected the wording to be changed to "... I, Elijah Adams of said Groton now lives on" but he didn't). Nathaniel continued to live in the same house. In 1772, James sold this part of the farm back to his brother Elijah who was living in Norwich at the time for £70. The language of the deed was once again updated and reads "*being the East part of the Farm, Nathaniel Adams of said Groton now lives on and is same pi[e]ce of land the said James Adams purchased of the said Elijah Adams*".<sup>80</sup> Again, indicating Nathaniel was still living in the house. Elijah moved back to Groton possibly to assist his aging parents with the day-to-day operations of the farm but he did not live in the same house with them. The day after taking the east part of his father's farm back, Elijah bought 35 acres with half a house from his brother David.<sup>81</sup> The property was located at Long Cove Bridge within a mile or so of his parents.

In April 1779, Elijah accepted an offer from Edward Latham of £600 for the east part of the farm, a substantial sum of money. The deed for this sale was the first in sixteen years to show Nathaniel was no longer living on the North Gungywamp Road house: "*being the East part of the Farme Nathaniel Adams formerly sold to Elijah Adams*".<sup>82</sup> The sale included "the Buildings & Fruit trees thereon standing." the orchard must have been large enough to warrant being mentioned. (Note: North Gungywamp Road is not mentioned in the deed.) Nathaniel Adams built a new house on the west part of the farm, within the Gungywamp Complex between 1772 and 1779.

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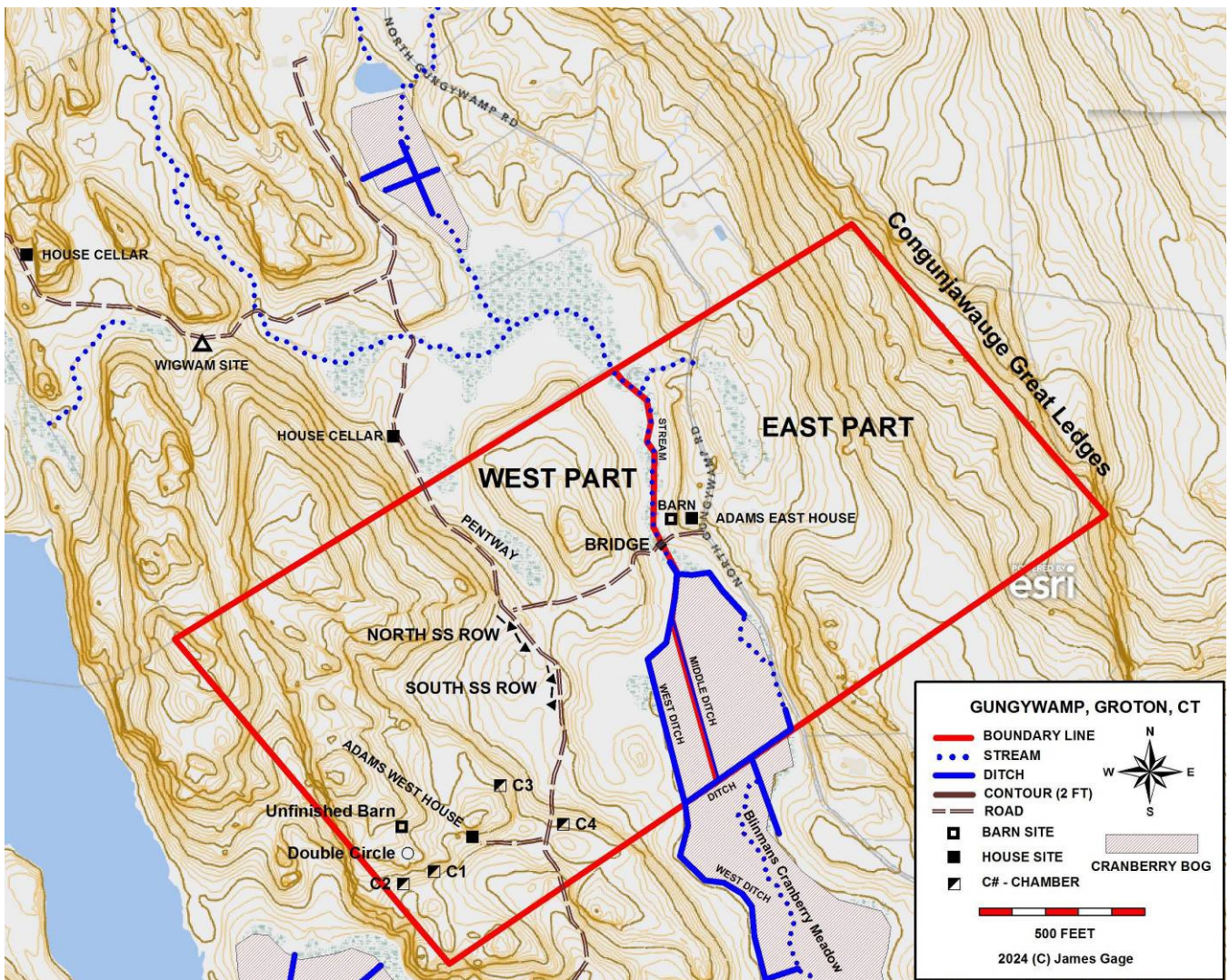
<sup>78</sup> GLR Book 7 Folio 2 (1763)

<sup>79</sup> GLR Book 7 Folio 4 (1765)

<sup>80</sup> GLR Book 7 Folio 163 (1772) note: right side of page

<sup>81</sup> GLR Book 7 Folio 163 (1772) note: left side of page

<sup>82</sup> GLR Book 8 Folio 225 (1779)



**Map 2 – The Nathaniel Adams Farm in 1763**

In the 1763, the farm was divided into two parts: East and West. The dividing line was the middle ditch and a stream. The original Nathaniel Adams house (c.1743) was on the east part of the farm along what is today North Gungywamp Road. The road didn't exist at the time. Access to the house was via a farm road with a bridge from the Pentway. Nathaniel continued to live and farm the east part even after he deeded it over to his son Elijah. Nathaniel Adams built a second house on the west part of the farm between 1772 and 1779. It was located near the double stone circle and four stone chambers (C1 through C4). The east part of the farm was sold out of the family in 1779.

Edward Latham held onto the east part of the farm for twenty years. He eventually sold it to Robert Latham in the fall of 1799 for \$500.<sup>83</sup> Robert Latham, in turn, sold it to Samuel Moxley in 1804 for \$450.<sup>84</sup> Samuel Moxley expanded it to 73 acres with the acquisition of additional parcels. Samuel Moxley [Jr. son of Samuel] sold it to Charles Moxley in 1861 for \$300.<sup>85</sup> The sale made no mention of any buildings or orchard. The 1854 and 1868 maps do not show the farm either. Although the acreage had been doubled the value of the property had decreased. The evidence all points to the farm buildings either being torn down or destroyed by fire in or prior to 1854.

\*Samuel supposedly died March 10, 1861 about a month prior to the April 1861 sale suggesting this was his son.

### Samuel Adams and the West Part of the Farm

Samuel Adams made his first appearance in the records when Nathaniel Adams deeded the western part of the farm to him in 1783. In the deed Nathaniel described the western part of the farm as 50 acres but in reality it was only about 35 ½ acres. Nathaniel seemed unclear as to the precise boundaries and the following legal clause was added to the deed “or however otherwise Bounded on the Records of Groton Reference thereunto being had”. The land transfer was subject to a life tenancy lease for Nathaniel and his wife. In addition, Samuel provided a bond he would care for them. The deed also had the following reservation:

^ one room

Only reserving a privilege in my now dwelling for my Daughter Hannah to make it her home so long as she remains single.

The phrase “one room” appeared in the margin of the transcribed copy on file with the town clerk.<sup>86</sup> Where the phrase should be inserted into the sentence is not clear. The Jacksons (1981) pointed out that Hannah was married and explored an alternative explanation including the idea that Nathaniel meant his unmarried daughter Sarah instead. Nathaniel signed the deed with an “X” rather than his signature as he had done on past documents. He had either sustained an injury or his health was in decline as of 1783.

We know from the 1783 deed that Samuel was his grandson but it remains unclear as to which of Nathaniel's sons he was born to. Local vital records are fragmentary. There is an entry in the town vital records for a Samuel Adams born January 23, 1756 but no parents were listed.<sup>87</sup> This is likely his birth record.

Samuel lived on the farm from 1783 till at least 1790. From 1793 through 1803, Samuel's whereabouts is less certain. In the 1789 Groton Direct Tax List, Samuel was taxed as head of household and for three cows. He continued living on the farm in 1790.<sup>88</sup> The 1790 census is a combined list for all of New London County and is not broken down by individual towns. However, judging by the names (Culver, Perkins, Woodmansee, Avery, Starr, Buddington, Latham) before and after Samuel's in the list, Samuel

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<sup>83</sup> GLR Book 13 Folio 130 (1799)

<sup>84</sup> GLR Book 14 Folio 17 (1804)

<sup>85</sup> GLR Book 22 Folio 332 (1861)

<sup>86</sup> GLR Book 10 Folio 148 (1783)

<sup>87</sup> Barbour Collection 1918: p.0 - Groton Vital Records.

<sup>88</sup> McBride 2023: PDF page 11

was living on the west part of the farm at this date.<sup>89</sup> These family names all appear in neighboring deeds. The census listed two free white males 16 years or older and two free females in the household. (One of the woman was likely his aunt that his grandfather had reserved a life tenancy for. The other was likely Samuel's wife. One of the men would have been Samuel, the identity of the other male is unknown.)

Samuel married Prudence Latham (1758-1842), daughter of Cary Latham and Mary Packer of Groton, prior to 1793.<sup>90</sup> According to an Adams family bible, there were two children: John Calvin Adams born May 1, 1793 and Harriet Ann Adams born September 19, 1796.<sup>91</sup> Unfortunately no town was listed for

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<sup>89</sup> Another Samuel Adams is listed for New London County in 1790 as well. None of the family names before or after are familiar, suggesting this Samuel Adams lived in a different town or neighborhood.

<sup>90</sup> There are three major sources of information on Samuel Adams and Prudence Latham genealogy:

(I) Dolliver, Louise P. (ed.)

1907 *Lineage Book: National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution*. v.XXIV, (1898). Washington, D.C.

"Mrs. Carrie Adams Pooley

born in Collins, New York.

Wife of Charles A. Pooley.

Descendent of Cary Latham, of Connecticut.

Granddaughter of John Calvin Adams and Hepsebah Chadwick, his wife.

Gr.granddaughter of Samuel Adams and Prudence Latham, his wife.

Gr.-gr.-granddaughter of Cary Latham and Mary Packer, his wife.

Cary Latham (1733-80), served as a private for the defense of the harbor of New London, 1776. He was born in Groton, where he died." pp.167-168

(II) Whittemore, Henry

1893 *History of the Adams family : with biographical sketches of distinguished descendants of the several American ancestors, including collateral branches*. New York. NY: W. McDonald & Co.

"SAMUEL CARY ADAMS, of *Buffalo, N. Y.*, was born in Chatham, N. Y., Dec. 22, 1820. His line of descent from *Henry*, of Braintree, is through "VII. Joseph," of Braintree, Capt. John, of Boston, Samuel, of Boston, *Joseph* (who was the brother of *Samuel* Adams, signer of the Declaration of Independence), Adams, and John Calvin Adams who married Hepzibah Chadwick, born at Lyme, Conn., daughter of Ezra Chadwick. The mother of John Calvin Adams was Prudence Latham, a descendant of Cary Latham, one of the first settlers of New London, Conn. Samuel Cary, the second son of John Calvin Adams, obtained his knowledge of the rudimentary branches in the country school, and afterwards pursued a systematic course of self-instruction. He taught school seven winter terms, was superintendant of schools of town six years, having twenty schools in charge. He went from home at the age of sixteen and learned the carpenter's trade He was afterwards a country merchant for one year, and was long active in public and political affairs. He was supervisor of the town for two years, clerk of the Board of Supervisors two years, member of the State Assembly one year, deputy county clerk six years, deputy collector of customs two years; was supervisor of his ward in Buffalo for one year. He studied law and was admitted to the Bar in 1865, and has since continued in the practice of his profession at Buffalo, where he has resided since Jan. 1, 1859. He is an active director of the Children's Aid Society, of Buffalo, and of the Queen City Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. He married in 1842 Miss Harriet White, daughter of Isaac White, of Vermont. The issue of Mr. Adams and wife are, John C. Adams, of Buffalo, a merchant and manufacturer; Hannah M., wife of Albert Rowland, of Kalamazoo county, Mich.; Harriet A., single, residing with her father, and Carrie, wife of Charles A. Pooley, a lawyer of Buffalo." pages 41-42

(III) Records of Standing Rock Cemetery, Kent OH for the Adams family posted on

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/117131657/john-calvin-adams>

These records include a transcription of a letter written by Prudence Latham now in the possession of descendents of John Calvin Adams (Samuel's son). A digital scan of the of the original transcription available on Ancestry.com – see next footnote for more details.

<sup>91</sup> Samuel Adams and Prudence Adams - Family Archival Records submitted by Diane Laizure (2011) on Ancestry.com listed under "Adams Prudence" - Entry from family bible. The archical records also include other materials on the Adams family. Note: Another user submitted genealogy has suggested Harriet Ann Adams married Almon Russell (1796-1888) circa

their place of birth. A third child, Phebe, is mentioned in the probate records for Samuel's estate in 1805 "p<sup>d</sup>. for Suit Mourning for Daugr. Phebe 9.00."<sup>92</sup>

Samuel Adams was not listed in the 1800 census for Groton. Although, we do find a Mary Adams in the same neighborhood listed as head of household. There is 1 white male under 10 years old, 1 white female 10-15 years old, 1 white female 26-44 years old, and 1 white female 45 years or older in the household. Mary Adams was likely a relative living in or renting the house and farm. One possibility is it was his grandfather's (Nathaniel Adams) daughter (Samuel's aunt) Mary (1747-?).

The August 10, 1803 issue of the *Connecticut Gazette*, published in New London, reported, "Died, In this city, Mr. Samuel Adams, of a fever contracted in N. York." On May 13, 1804 the probate court appointed David Adams as executor of Samuel's estate. David's relationship with Samuel was not stated. There was some confusion over the legal residence of Samuel at the time of his death. Some probate records listed Samuel as "late of New London" and others as "late of Groton". Samuel's wife is not mentioned in any of the probate records. It is known she remarried a Waltrous but no further details are available. The estate's debts, funeral costs, and probate expenses amounted to \$274.89. This far exceeded the value of his personal estate valued at £152-19. The court authorized the sale of 17.9 acres of the farm to raise the sum of \$176.56 in April of 1805 at public auction. The sale did not include the house. Samuel Moxley purchased the land for the above stated amount.

The remainder of the estate listed as 20 acres but about 18 ¼ acres with the house was retained by Samuel's surviving children from 1805 through 1817. In 1814, Samuel's son, John C. sold for \$100 all his rights in this remaining parcel to George Latham who had the farm just to the south of the property.<sup>93</sup> Samuel's daughter Harriet Ann sold her interest in the property for \$60 to George Latham in 1817.<sup>94</sup> This gave George Latham full ownership of the 18 ¼ acre parcel at a total cost of \$160. There is no mention of the house in the deeds.

In the 1814 deed, John C. Adams was listed as living in West Springfield, MA. In the 1817 deed, he was living in Chatham, NY and representing his sister Harriet Ann also of Chatham as heirs of the estate.<sup>95</sup> John was still living in Chatham, NY as of the 1820 federal census where three members of the household are listed as engaged in manufacturing. We next find John C. in the 1840 census for Franklin, Portage County, OH. His mother Prudence Adams Waltrous, age 78 year, is likely the female 70-80 years old living in the household. Prudence died on March 2, 1842 and is buried in Kent, Portage County, OH.<sup>96</sup> Phebe apparently passed away prior to 1814/1817. Her name does not appear on either of the two deeds selling off the remainder of the estate by the heirs.

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1820 in New York State. She died in 1867 in Grand Rapids, MI and was buried in Oak Hill cemetery. - <https://www.familysearch.org/tree/person/details/L4Q6-V5G> viewed 11/1/2023

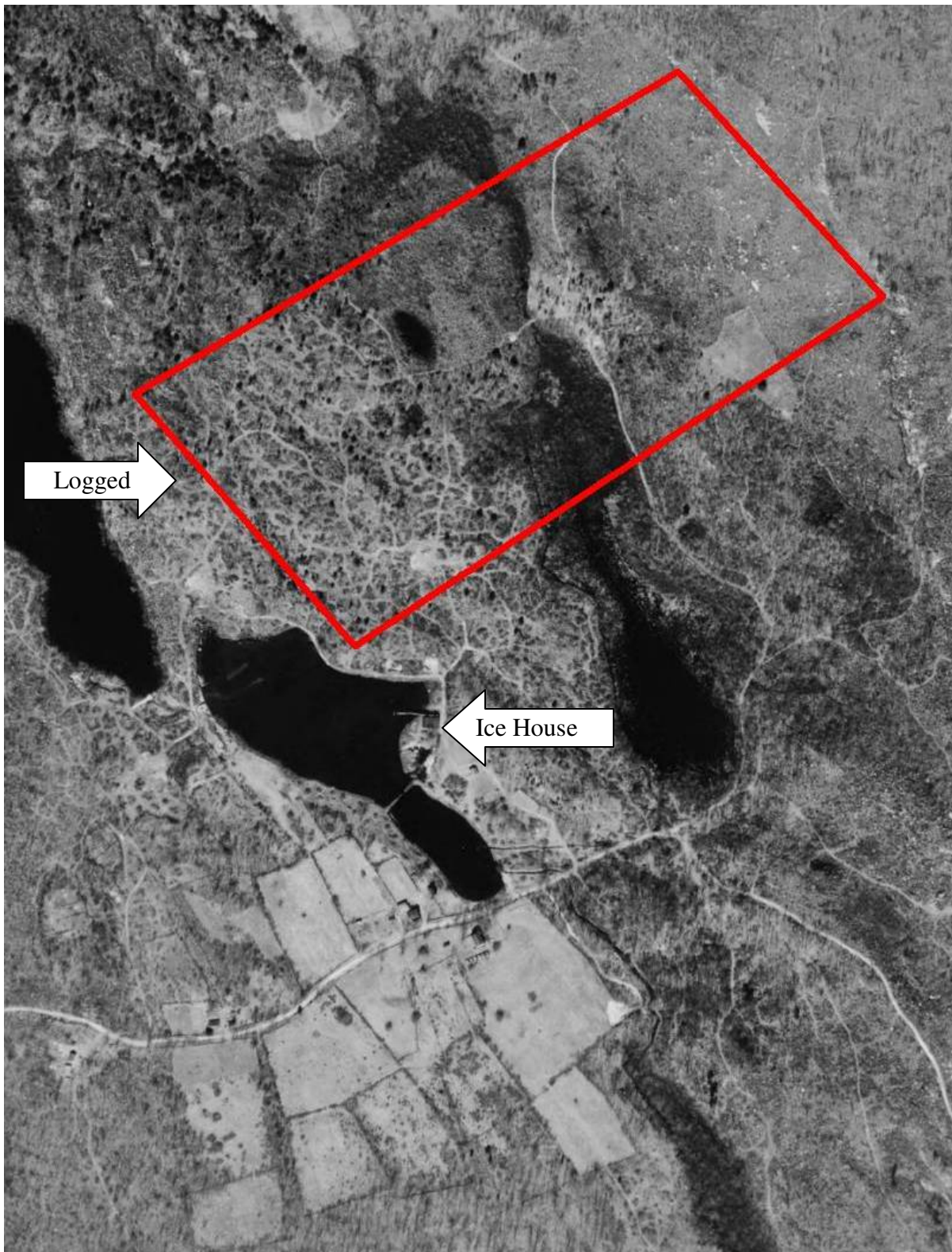
<sup>92</sup> Samuel Adams Probate Record (New London Probate District, 1804 #17 – Ancestry.com)

<sup>93</sup> GLR Book 16 Folio 261 (1814)

<sup>94</sup> GLR Book 17 Folio 50 (1817)

<sup>95</sup> GLR Book 16 Folio 261; GLR Book 17 Folio 50

<sup>96</sup> Records of Standing Rock Cemetery, Kent OH for the Adams family posted on <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/117131657/john-calvin-adams>



**Map #3 – Boundary of Nathaniel Adams farm overlaid on 1934 aerial photo**

The Latham family owned hundreds of acres of land including the former Adams farm. They farmed (open fields), harvested timber commercially, and had a commercial ice harvesting operation. The western half of the former Adams farm was covered with a network of logging roads.

## Subsequent History of the West Part of the Farm

Samuel Moxley had purchased the 17.9 acre subdivision of the Samuel Adams estate in April 1805. Five months later in September, he sold a 4 ¾ acre piece of this lot to Jonathan Moxley for \$46.43.<sup>97</sup> It abutted 22 acres of land on the south side of the former Adams farm that Jonathan had purchased from George Latham in 1799 for \$333.33.<sup>98</sup> In 1814, Jonathan Moxley sold the 4¾ acre and 22 acre parcels to George Latham for \$650.<sup>99</sup> (Prior to 1845, a house was built on the 22 acre lot. The \$270 increase in value suggests Jonathan may have built it. This is Latham House #3 on the map.)

In 1845, five years before his death, George Latham (1769-1849) split his extensive landholdings in Groton between his sons George Jr. and Jasper. George Sr. was living in Ledyard at the time. George Jr. received the western half of the land lying north of Gungywamp Road about 75 acres and Jasper the eastern half.<sup>100</sup> The eastern half of the Latham farm contained the original west part of Nathaniel Adams farm. The two brothers also received 120 acre woodlot on Mill Road in Groton which they owned in common. A woodlot of 120 acres was well beyond what was needed to supply annual wood needs for a farm and suggests George Latham Sr. may have been in the timber harvesting business. According to an entry in the *Genealogical and Biographical Record* (1905), “Jasper Latham died Jan. 13, 1892. His life was mainly passed as a farmer and large wood dealer, cutting the timber from his extensive property.” (p.890) Jasper passed his estate onto his son Clarence Latham. Clarence also acquired the western half and thus reunited the farm. Clarence subsequently transferred the property which included the entirety of the South Gungywamp Complex to the YMCA in 1937.<sup>101</sup> The 1938 aerial photo shows the western half of the former Adams farm had been extensively logged. Logging skidder roads cross-cross the entire area.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Clarence Latham continued to operate the family cranberry bogs to the southwest of the former Adams farm. Taking advantage of new business opportunities, Clarence modified one of the bogs so that it could be flooded to a sufficient height in wintertime to allow for commercial ice harvesting. A commercial style ice house is noted on the 1931 property survey<sup>102</sup> and visible in the 1934 aerial photo.

## **Soils**

The Gungywamp Complex and Adams farm soils can be grouped into three broad categories:

**Plowable Land:** The USDA soil survey<sup>103</sup> listed three soil types that were within this category on the farm. The first was *Merrimack fine sandy loam* - The soil survey classified this soil type as “2s.” Class 2 soils are described as “suited for cultivation over a long period of time, but they have some hazards and limitations such as gentle slope, slight erosion, or moderate wetness that reduce the choice of plants or require moderate conservation practices that are easy to apply.”<sup>104</sup> Subclass “s” indicates the soils capacity is limited by its stony characteristic.

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<sup>97</sup> GLR Book 15 Folio 76 (1805)

<sup>98</sup> GLR Book 13 Folio 134 (1799)

<sup>99</sup> GLR Book 16 Folio 118 (1814)

<sup>100</sup> GLR Book 22 Folio 301 & 302 (1845)

<sup>101</sup> Jackson et al 1981: 22

<sup>102</sup> GLR Stack V47 Map 58

<sup>103</sup> <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/> clicke on WSS button to access the online survey mapping tool.

<sup>104</sup> [http://www.landjudging.com/land\\_capability.htm](http://www.landjudging.com/land_capability.htm)

Archaeological testing within this soil type found evidence of a plow zone in five test pits in four different “enclosures” (field areas) located north and west of the bog/swamp.<sup>105</sup>

The second was *Agawam fine sandy loam* – It has similar characteristics to the Merrimac soil series described above.

The third was *Hinckley loamy sand* – The soil survey described this soil as “Farmland of statewide importance.” It is classified as “4e.” Class 4 soils “can be cultivated, but they have very severe limitations that restrict the choice of plants, require very careful management, special conservation, or both. They are sloping, moderately eroded soils with poor characteristics. Cultivated areas should be strip tilled, terraced, and farmed on the contour. They are best suited for pasture and hay meadows.”<sup>106</sup> Subclass “e” indicates this soil type is prone to erosion unless properly managed. The Adams would have needed hay fields to support their livestock through the winter. This is one potential location for them. Many hay fields were plowed and seeded with English grass species.

*Merrimack fine sandy loam* and *Agawam fine sandy loam* are found in the middle of the Adams farm along a flat terrace on the north side of the cranberry bog. This soil stretches from the area of North Gungywamp Road westward to the pentway and beyond it. The original Adams house on the east side of the farm was situated within this soil type. This allowed the cultivated fields and the kitchen garden to be within view of the house, all the easier to look out for stray livestock breaking through fences.

Cranberry Bog Meadows: As discussed above, what are today overgrown swampy boggy areas were historically cranberry bogs with a ditch system to control water levels. The Adams farm had about four acres of cranberry bog. The soil survey identified the soils within these former meadows as *Catden & Freetown Soils*. They are described as muck composed of decomposing organic matter.

The 1913 Soil Survey for New London County described the muck soils as being suitable (if drained) “for onions, celery, cabbage, potatoes, corn and hay”. It also stated “In many places it offers ideal conditions for growing cranberries, the areas lying in a peculiarly favorable position for both drainage and irrigation.”<sup>107</sup>

Pasture and Woodlot: Much of the west part of the Adams farm is characterized by hills, ridges and ravines with extremely rocky soils interspersed with exposed outcrops. A large percentage of the South Gungywamp Complex structures are within this zone. The area is dominated by Narragansett-Hollis Complex and Hollis-Chatfield Rock Outcrop Complex soils. These have a soil classification of “6s”. Class 6 are described as having “severe limitations such as steep slopes, severe erosion, shallowness, and rockiness that make them generally unsuited for cultivation and limits their use to pasture or range, woodland, or wildlife food and cover.”<sup>108</sup>

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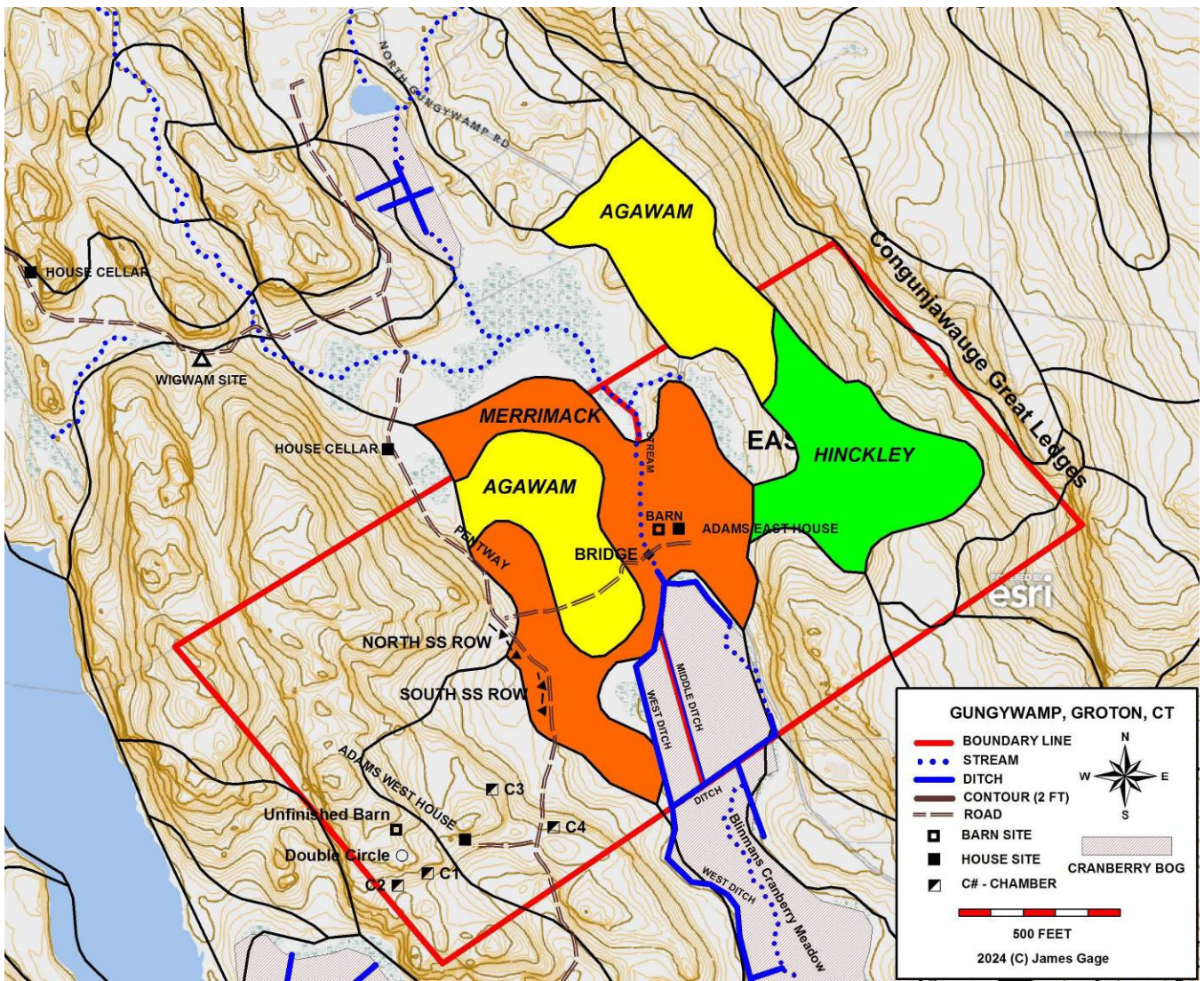
<sup>105</sup> McBride 2023: See enclosures 10, 20, 23, & 27. The exact location of these “enclosures” and test pits not given.

<sup>106</sup> [http://www.landjudging.com/land\\_capability.htm](http://www.landjudging.com/land_capability.htm)

<sup>107</sup> McLendon1913, 25

<sup>108</sup> [http://www.landjudging.com/land\\_capability.htm](http://www.landjudging.com/land_capability.htm)





**Map 4 – Soils**

The best soils in terms of plowing and hay production were located in the center and eastern half of the farm. The east side Adams house was strategically located in the center of these farmable soils. In contrast the west side house was located well outside of the good soils. Between the cranberry bogs and the good soils, the central & eastern part of the farm was productive. Unfortunately most people are unaware that the farm extended this far eastward and tend to judge the quality of the land based upon the rocky poor soils and hilly terrain surround the Adams west house.

## Summary

Visitors to the Gungywamp site today encounter the rocky and hilly terrain of the western part of the former Adams farm. The rocky soils are thin and the land interspersed with exposed outcrops. The “cranberry meadow” is now an impenetrable swamp with dense vegetation. The network of ditches through the meadow is no longer visible on the ground and can only be seen in aerial photos. The overall impression is a farm on highly marginalized lands which could only support a few farm animals and limited agriculture. Or in other words, it has all the appearances of a poor man’s subsistence farm. However, the historical records paint a far different picture, that of a successful middle class farm.

Although only mentioned in Christopher Christophers probate records, the “cranberry meadow” would have provided cash income from its annual harvest. The close proximity to the wharfs in Groton and New London meant it could be exported to Europe and American colonies as far south as Virginia. In colonial times, cranberries were used for medicinal purposes, cooking and as a preventive for scurvy on ocean voyages.<sup>109</sup>

Archaeologically speaking, the only surviving evidence of the cranberry bog is a network of substantial ditches. These ditches cross property boundary lines and indicate mutual cooperation to control water levels amongst the various landowners who had bogs on their respective farms. At least one of these ditches (and likely more) was in place prior to 1763. It is unclear if the Christophers family constructed them or later owners like Nathaniel Adams and his neighbor to the south Jasper Latham (or some combination of the two). Nathaniel Adams had approximately 4 acres of bog. When he transferred the eastern part of the farm to his son Elijah in 1763, it included 3 acres of the bog.

In modern cranberry bogs in Massachusetts the average yield is 109 barrels per acre. A barrel is about 100 pounds.<sup>110</sup> Given the Adams farm cranberry bogs were managed (i.e. ditches for water level control), they may have had a similar yield: 400 barrels (4,000 pounds) for the four acres. Even if the yield estimate was reduced by 75%, it comes to 100 barrels. This was a major cash crop.

When the east part of the farm was sold out of the Adams family in 1779, the deed expressly mentioned the farm came “with the Buildings & Fruit trees thereon standing.” Fruit trees means the orchard contained more than just the typical apple trees. It may have included peaches, plums, cherries and quince trees along with grapes.<sup>111</sup> The fact it was referenced in the deed suggests it was a substantial orchard. The £600 sale price for the 31 ¼ farms speaks for itself as to the overall value of the farm operation.

Although difficult to quantify, the timber resources of the property would have been valuable especially for supplying the ship building yards in Groton and New London.

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<sup>109</sup> "Bogged Down in Cranberries", 2006, Mary M. Theobald, *Colonial Williamsburg Journal*, available online

<https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/Foundation/journal/Holiday06/cran.cfm>

<sup>110</sup> *Cranberry Production: A Guide for Massachusetts*, 2008, Hilary Sandler & Carolyn DeMoranville (eds.), University of Massachusetts - Amherst, College of Natural Resources and the Environment. Page 2. Available online

<https://www.umass.edu/cranberry/downloads/CP-08.pdf>

<sup>111</sup> "Orchard History: Fruit Introduction and Colonization, 1600-1800" National Park Service

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/historic-context-orchards-1600-to-1800.htm>; A Fruit orchard with a list of types was described in a deed for the 18th & early 19th century Saville Farm in Gloucester, Massachusetts - Essex County Register of Deeds Book 220 Page 216 (1819) "and a number of large apple trees a number of small apple trees lochust [locust?] and Peach trees quince trees and grapevines chiefly bearing all which is in inclosed with Stone wall".

The east side of the Adams farm has long been overlooked, yet, it holds the key to an accurate understanding of the farm operation and its financial value. It is also important to look beyond the classic New England farm model based upon livestock and crops. The Adams adapted their farming approach to best accommodate what the land would support.

Nathaniel Adams owned the east side of the farm for twenty years (1743-1763) when he sold it to his son Elijah. He continued to live on the east side for the next ten or more years as stated in the deeds. Nathaniel not Elijah was the man who developed the east part of the farm with its fruit trees and cranberry bog.

## Appendix A – Dummer Doorstones of Newbury, Massachusetts

Richard Dummer, Sr. who built his house circa 1640 marked it with two doorstep stones.<sup>112</sup> One has the year 1636 marking the year he moved to Newbury which was one year later than he acquired the property in 1635. The second stone has the year 1640 the year he was allowed to move out the five miles from town where the farm was located after several years of Indian hostilities.<sup>113</sup> This shows what Dummer considered important in establishing the Dummer Family in the new country. Prior to his move to Newbury he lived in Roxbury on the south side of Boston where he built a mill. From 1636 to 1640 he had to live within half a mile of Newbury's center where he purchased another farm to live on prior to moving out to his 300 acre land grant where he had built a sawmill. There is a need to understand what was important to these people and not impose our modern ideas. The 300 acre farm was Dummer's chosen place of permanent residence and hence he marked it with dates of importance to him.

In 1673, Richard Dummer Sr. deeded to his son, Richard Jr., the family mansion house and 150 acres of the land with the understanding that Richard Jr. would marry Elizabeth Appleton and live on the farm. Richard Jr. her husband died ten years later in 1689 leaving his wife, Elizabeth, with six children all under the age of fifteen. Prior to his death Richard Jr. made out a will in which John, his eldest son, inherited the part of the farm that included the mansion house, land and a tenant farm. John turned fourteen the following year in 1690 the same date as carved on a third doorstep stone. Age fourteen had some kind of significance to him. His mother Elizabeth did not remarry thereby protected the farm for her children as seen in another document. Another part of the original farm was owned by Jeremiah Dummer the silversmith who lived in Boston. Around the time John came of age to take over the mansion house and his part of the farm Jeremiah gave his land to his nephew Richard III one of John's younger brothers. That took place in 1695 but since Richard III was not of age it was entrusted to Elizabeth giving her an income to support her younger children. Here we see Elizabeth's skill at successfully operating a farm. The last document she shows up on is the 1701 petition to establish the Byfield Parish where the Dummer farm is located.<sup>114</sup>

John Dummer became enamored with carved stones. With the arrival of a rural gravestone carver in his area he had decorations carved into the top of his doorstep stone. And he had a milestone carved with decorations and mileage which was erected on the grounds of his uncle Lt. Governor William Dummer's house located on the Bay Road (another part of the original 300 acre farm).

Two other carved stones were discovered on the farm one with a woman's head and a second with the full height of a man. These two stones have decorations that showed up on the four previous carved stones thus linking them to the Dummer family but they lacked dates. The author dated them to the year 1723 from clues found in the local burying grounds left by the rural gravestone carver who made them. This gravestone carver replaced the first rural gravestone carver who had carved the decoration on John's doorstep stone. The clues established the Dummer carved portraits (per se) involved a man named John, mother and son, husband and wife, and military officer. John's father was a captain in the Newbury militia. The husband and wife were his mother, Elizabeth and father Richard Jr. Mother and son were John and his mother. John was the man who had the two stones commissioned. In doing so, he marked his father's reign on the farm and his mother's reign on the farm though she never owned it she protected it for her children. Had she remarried the farm would have become the property of her new husband. Elizabeth was a formidable woman whose business savvy for operating the farm, kindness

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<sup>112</sup> Information on the Dummings and their carved stones comes from Gage & Gage 2003

<sup>113</sup> Ibid: 108-114

<sup>114</sup> Ibid: 28-29, 38, 41-42

towards her family seen through the guardianship of her mother in-law, and mother to six children whose land she protected. In commissioning the Mother's and Father's stones John marked both of his parents reign on the farm after their deaths. Placed at the door the Mother's stone publicly acknowledged a woman which was highly unusual for the time.

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