

A History of the Paul B. Follansbee Rockery (a/k/a “Turtle Mound”), Andover, Massachusetts

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Introduction

The “Turtle Mound” in Andover, Massachusetts is an irregularly shaped stone mound. (see Map) It is composed of glacial field boulders piled up in a seemly haphazard manner. The size of the boulders ranges from a few hundred pounds to well over a ton in weight. A number of the boulders have drill marks from steel tools indicating they were either blasted apart or split using the plug and feather method of quarrying. Smaller stones were used as fill to level the top of the mound. The space between the boulders was filled with soil. Integrated into the mound are two stone roofed grottos (i.e. chambers), a fifteen foot long tunnel, stone steps leading to the top, standing stones, and other features. It is located about 850 feet southwest of Haggetts Pond. It has maximum dimensions of 106 feet long by 61 feet wide by 7 feet high.

It was formerly located on the grounds of the 19th century nurse and estate of Paul B. Follansbee. Today, it is tucked into the middle of a suburban neighborhood. In 2015, the Andover Village Improvement Society (A.V.I.S.), a non-profit land trust, acquired the site. It is now open to the public. It is located between #5 and #7 Lakeside Circle. A paved parking area can accommodate two cars and a crushed stone path leads to the site. The historic Follansbee’s house (private residence) is located at 459 Lowell Street and is about 450 feet south of the mound. It is hidden from view by trees.

Recently discovered historic documents have come to light which clarify the history of this structure. It was constructed between 1860 and 1880 by Paul B. Follansbee and his son John as an elaborate Victorian era landscaping feature called a “Rockery” better known today as a “rock garden.” It was one of a number “attractions” on the estate used to bring in customers to their nursery business which sold domestic as well as imported species of trees, shrubs, and plants.

What are the characteristics of a “rockery”? The following is an 1890 description, “This is an uneven mound, bank or slope in which projecting stones, tree stumps or like material are appropriately used to produce an ornamental effect, as well as to afford a happy home for the choicer gems among hardy plants. Sometimes a Rockery is a regular feature in landscape gardening, in which case it is constructed in bold style ...”¹ This stone mound meets the 19th century definition of a rockery.

William Goodwin, Malcom Pearson and D. G. Blizzard investigated the mound in 1939. By this point it had passed out of the Follansbee family and the estate was no longer maintained as a nursery. Although informed by local residents about the Follansbee family’s involvement with the mound, Goodwin was convinced it was the work of 11th century Irish Christian missionaries and published this theory in his 1946 book *The Ruins of Great Ireland in New England*. He renamed it “Turtle Mound” a name which has since come to be associated with the structure. Archaeologist Frank Glynn conducted archaeological excavations in 1951 and concluded the mound was a Native American burial mound. This served to heighten the mystery and mythology surrounding it which still persists today.

Description

Construction Details

This irregularly shaped mound has a level top area which is significantly smaller than the overall size of the mound. Although the mound has some vertical walling in places, the majority of the perimeter of the mound has wide slopes leading to the top. The slope seems to be the product of two

¹ “A Rockery” *Portland Daily Press* [Maine] May 10, 1890 (page 6)

factors: (a) the need to create landscaping surface for plantings, and (b) the limitation of the available equipment and the builder's skills to move and position large boulders. In an 1890 interview (see below), Paul Follansbee stated he used a homemade capstan (i.e. winch) cranked by a long lever and an inclined plane (i.e. ramp) to construct the Rockery.

Field boulders too large to be moved by the equipment Follansbee had available to him were blasted apart, a fact mentioned in the interview. This process involved drilling a single 1½ inch diameter hole into the center of the boulder, filling it partially with gunpowder, a fuse, and a tamping material like stone dust, clay or sand. Examples of these blast holes are seen throughout the mound. The large diameter deep blast drill holes seen in the boulders date to after 1800.² (Fig.1)

The stone arch entrance to the south grotto and the tunnel were constructed of quarried blocks of stone split using the plug and feather method. The blocks and roof slabs were quarried from field boulders and a few pieces may have been quarried from exposed ledge. Blocks of plug and feather split stone were found embedded in the interior walls of both features indicating they were part of original construction not later modifications. The plug and feather method dates from 1820 and later.³

The mound was likely constructed in multiple phases over a number of years. The construction appears to have begun on the east side and worked its way westward. The quality of workmanship on the westerly end is far superior, something one would expect as the Follansbees gained experience.

Geologically Interesting Rocks

Paul Follansbee was an amateur geologist and had a collection of both small and large geologically interesting specimens. A number of large boulders in his "collection" were integrated into and displayed on the Rockery. Several visually interesting examples of differentially weathered boulders were used. These are boulders in which the soft minerals have eroded away leaving raised ridges of hard quartz veins showing. Some of these examples have a sculptured and artist quality. (Fig.2)

Inside the northeast grotto a wide range of different colored stones were used to create the interior wall. These include white stones (quartz or feldspar), dark gray stones, rust colored stones (iron oxide or manganese), and one stone near the top which has dark speckles. (Fig.3)

One visitor to the Rockery reported that Follansbee had several effigy stones, "Every stone in the rockery that has a suggestive outline has been utilized and improved by placing and paint, and a very suggestive outline of a human face, a front view of a bullfrog and the head of a hog are pointed [painted] and easily discerned."⁴

Standing Stones

Four standings are still present on the top of the mound (fig.4) and a fifth stone with a "cross" (fig.2) formed by differentially weathered quartz veins is located on the southern slope of the mound. There may have been more which have since fallen over or tumbled down the side. Goodwin, Blizzard and Pearson only show two on their map of the mound.

² Gage & Gage 2005, 25

³ Gage & Gage 2005, Editor's note – Revised Dating added to copies print form 2015 or later. Also available online at <http://www.stonestructures.org/html/stone-splitting-revised-dating.html>

⁴ "An Interesting Place in Andover" *Andover Townsman* on May 31, 1890 (page 2)

Building

A 1939 map drawn by D. G. Blizzard of the mound shows a small hexagonal (six sided) building on top of the mound near the southeast end.⁵ If it is drawn to scale then it was between 5 to 6 feet in diameter. It is labeled “summer house.” Frank Glynn in his 1951 report (published in 1969) referred to it as a “tea house.” The building was likely built after Follansbee’s death in 1900. It is not mentioned in any of the contemporary descriptions of the Rockery during Follansbee’s ownership.

Ironwork

Four iron eye bolts were anchored to large boulders on the easterly end of the mound in the area of the former building. Two of them have damaged (broken & twisted) iron rods attached to them. The eye bolts are blacksmith forged from round rod stock. They were likely used to secure the building and prevent it from being toppled by high winds. They may have been installed in response to the 1938 hurricane. (figs.5&6)

Stairs

A series of rustic stone steps winds its way to the top of the mound near the southeast end of the mound. These are original to the mound’s construction. They are mentioned in the interview with Follansbee. (fig.7)

Northeast Grotto

This grotto or chamber is walk-in height and measures 4 feet wide at the entrance and 5 feet wide in the interior. It is 7 ½ feet deep (entrance to back). The side walls are straight and the rear wall has a half circle shape. The entrance is constructed of large boulders arranged in what resembles a basic arch. The south grotto with its much better developed arch shows that Follansbee had a command of the basic principles of arch construction. The overall intent of this grotto seems to have been to create or mimic a “natural cave.” The construction of the roof made use of the corbelling technique to reduce the distance that the roof stone needed to span. It was capped by a single capstone. This gives the grotto a semi-beehive shape to the ceiling. (fig.8)

South Grotto

The stone arch entrance of this grotto is the signature feature of the whole structure. (fig.9) Plug and feather split granite blocks were trimmed to provide the curvature for the arch. Behind the arch is a quarried granite lintel stone followed by four stone slabs forming the roof of this 11 foot long chamber. The grotto is walk-in height and about 5 feet wide. The upper third of both side walls are corbelled. Half way along the left side wall a piece of plug and feather quarried stone was used. This indicates the quarried stone was original to its construction not a later addition.

Corbelling was a masonry technique used by Euro-Americans throughout the past 400 year history of New England. Examples of it are quite common but mostly go completely unnoticed. Figure 10 is a typical New England brick chimney. The top of it has corbelled brickwork. It is not surprising that Follansbee was familiar with the technique and made good use of it constructing the grotto.

⁵ Published in Goodwin 1946, 105

According to local oral history from 1930s, John Arnois, a Roman-Catholic who owned the property between 1920 and 1924, turned the grotto into a shrine to the Virgin Mary.⁶ Arnois sealed off the rear section of the grotto with a wall made from stones laid in mortar. A statute of the virgin was placed in front of the new wall. William Goodwin reported breaking through this newer wall in 1939.⁷ Remnants of it are still evident. One source reports that Arnois held vesper services at the shrine.⁸

The interior walls of the grotto are the only place that mortar was used on the whole structure. No mortar was used in the granite arch. Where the mortar has partially fallen a way, it shows that the mortar only extends about a 1/3 of way into the stonework suggesting it was added later to “repoint” the masonry possibly to address a moisture problem in the shrine. (fig.11)

Tunnel

The tunnel bisects the westerly end of the mound and is 15 feet long by 5 feet high by 2 ½ feet wide. The passageway is oriented in a southwesterly/northeasterly direction. It is covered by long flat stone slabs quarried with the plug and feather method. Some of the slabs may have been quarried from local surface ledge. The interior walls have several stone blocks with plug and feather drill marks that are showing. A short length of walling extends outward from the southwest entrance and creates the southwest alcove. One of the stones in this wall was selected for its geologically interesting surface. The northeast tunnel entrance has two short extension walls. There is also a pile of fallen boulders in front of the entrance. This is the result of vandalism in the 1960s when some teenagers pushed rocks off the top of the mound above the tunnel. (Figs.12-13)

Southwest Alcove

This is a small enclosed space defined by the short wall extending from the southwest tunnel entrance on one side and the angled standing stones feature on the other side. Most of the space is currently occupied by a large white pine tree which is shown on the 1939 map. It is unclear if this was intended as a specific feature of the Rockery or not. It could have housed an ornamental tree or shrub. (fig.14)

Northwest Alcove

Located on the west side of the mound this long alcove was an intentionally constructed feature. It has a flattened oval shape and is about 15 feet long. Two large white pines are growing in it. Both trees are shown on the 1939 map. (fig.15)

Jagged Standing Stone Cluster

On the southwest side of the mound a roughly rectangular shape arm extends outward from the mound. It has two vertical standing stones on top, at least eight pointy stones projecting outward at odd angles, and one geologically interesting stone. It appears to be constructed largely of blasted pieces of angular rock. Follansbee likely intended it to be representational. Suggestions have been made that it looks like the quills of a porcupine or a dinosaur or the needles on a fir / spruce tree. (figs.16-17)

⁶ Unpublished report attributed to William Goodwin circa 1944 (NEARA Library site files). Note: Goodwin refers to him as Harnois but the name was actually spelled Arnois. Goodwin lists the wrong dates for his ownership of the property. For ownership see Northern Essex County Registry of Deeds Book 415 Page 58 (1920) & Book 502 Page 89 (1924).

⁷ Goodwin 1946, 100-101

⁸ Andover Historic Preservation n.d., “459 Lowell Street”

History

Follansbee Family

Paul Follansbee was born February 22, 1811 in West Newbury, Massachusetts, the son of John Follansbee and Judith Bailey.⁹ He married Eliza Ann Chase of Andover in 1834.¹⁰ They initially lived in West Newbury. In 1835, he identified himself as being of that town when he purchased a 62 acre farm on the southwest side of Haggetts Pond in Andover from Dudley Trow and his son Dudley Jr. for \$1700.¹¹ The farm had a house which they moved into. Paul and Eliza had nine children, eight daughters and one son. Their son John H. was born May 28, 1845. In 1850, he sold the existing farm house (36 Haggetts Road) to the Boston & Lowell Railroad and built a new house (459 Lowell Street).¹²

Mr. Follansbee established a successful nursery business selling trees, shrubs, and plants. His son John joined him in the business. His son married and lived next door.¹³ Mr. Follansbee had a deep interest in geology and Native American artifacts. Visitors and customers were treated to a tour of his extensive Native American tool collection and geological specimens. Follansbee also walked them around his arboretum, greenhouse, and extensively landscaped grounds. Highlights including exploring the “Rockery” and climbing his observation tower for views of nearby Haggetts Pond. At one point the attractions included a “full rigged miniature ship.”

The Rockery had been completed by 1880. It was mentioned in a short newspaper article in that year. It was built by both Paul and his son John who was born in 1845. The construction of the Rockery was a physically demanding job, therefore it is reasonable to assume John had to have been at least in his teens (if not older) before the project was started. John turned 15 in 1860, this is likely the earliest possible date. The Rockery’s construction can be narrowed down to a twenty period from 1860 to 1880.

When Paul died on May 8, 1900 at the age 89 the business and property passed to his son John. Sadly, John died eight months later on January 20, 1901 of a combination of typhoid fever, pneumonia, and an embolism.¹⁴ Paul Follansbee’s will stipulated that the estate would pass to his daughter Emma Winnifred Spaulding in the event of John’s death.¹⁵ Emma (who preferred her middle name Winnifred), her husband Charles Spaulding and their children moved into the Follansbee house in 1901.¹⁶ Charles took over running the Follansbee’s nurse business. The 1910 census listed Charles occupation as “manager nurse.” Emma died on March 20, 1912. The estate went to her husband Charles, her son Roy and daughter Laura. All three had an undivided 1/3 interest. How long the nurse business continued after 1910 is unknown. Charles and his unmarried daughter continued to live in Andover. Roy and his wife lived in Manchester, NH. In 1917 there is an odd exchange of deeds between family members.¹⁷ Then in 1919 the estate was sold by the family.

⁹ His birth was not recorded in West Newbury vital records. The information comes from "Massachusetts Deaths, 1841-1915," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-DZRQ-PMN?cc=1463156&wc=MJCX-N38%3A1043045101> : 20 May 2014), image 476 of 762; State Archives, Boston.

¹⁰ Marriage intention was recorded in both the West Newbury and Andover vital records on August 8, 1834. It is unclear if the marriage took place in West Newbury or Andover.

¹¹ Northern Essex County Registry of Deeds [Salem, MA] Book 285 Page 179

¹² Andover Historic Preservation “459 Lowell Street” & “36 Haggetts Pond Road”; Poore 1917, 54.

¹³ “J.F. Follansbee” is listed next to P.B. Follansbee” on 1884 map of Andover (Atlas of Essex County)

¹⁴ "Massachusetts Deaths, 1841-1915," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-XX8D-69?cc=1463156&wc=MJZM-4WG%3A1043046501> : 20 May 2014), image 431 of 1028; State Archives, Boston.

¹⁵ Northern Essex County Registry of Deeds Book 381 Page 542 (1917) for discussion of heritance.

¹⁶ Andover Historic Preservation n.d., “459 Lowell Street”

¹⁷ 10/1/1917 Roy to his father Charles North Essex Registry of Deeds Book 381 page 541; 10/3/1917, Charles (Emma’s husband) & Laura (her daughter) to Roy (her son) North Essex Registry of Deeds Book 381 page 542

Subsequent Ownership

Charles Spaulding and his daughter Laura sold the estate to Elof Erickson in February of 1919.¹⁸ Elof was a Swedish immigrant who became a naturalized U.S. citizen. He listed his occupation as a stone cutter.¹⁹ Fourteen months later, he sold it to John Arnois and Armand Vohl.²⁰ John Arnois was a French-Canadian and belonged to the Roman Catholic faith.²¹ He modified the south grotto and installed a statue of the Virgin Mary and may have held vesper services at the shrine. Four years later, John Arnois and Armand Vohl sold the property to Thomas and Annie Bradbury in July 1924.²² The Bradbury's were the current owners when William Goodwin investigated the structure.

Goodwin Investigation (1939)

William Goodwin was an insurance executive from Hartford, CT with a fascination for archaeology and pre-Columbian Irish history. In 1938, he began investigating with others a stone complex on Mystery Hill in Salem, NH known today as America's Stonehenge. Based upon broad similarities with archeological ruins in Ireland, he was convinced that Irish Christian missionaries sailed to North America in the 11th century to spread the Christian faith. He envisioned the missionaries traveling up the Merrimack River, establishing outposts along the way until they reached Mystery Hill. Beginning in 1939, Goodwin, Douglas Blizzard, and Malcolm Pearson explored the Merrimack River corridor looking for potential archaeological sites which fit Goodwin's hypothesis. The Andover area, which is near the Merrimack River, attracted their attention due to reports of Native American earthworks. Exactly how Goodwin and Pearson stumbled upon the "turtle mound" was not recorded but it quickly became the center of their focus.

In a November 1939 letter to Malcolm Pearson found in the NEARA site files, Goodwin described his observations and initial impressions of the structure. He was aware of the quarried stone slabs forming the roof of the tunnel and that the same drill marks appear in the arch over the south grotto. He noted the single drill holes in some of the boulders. He concluded that the tunnel has been re-roofed by a recent owner of the property. He saw the drill marks in the boulders as evidence of past owners robbing the mound of its rock. A more developed version of this explanation for the quarry marks was included in his book. During their initial investigation, they must have talked to neighbors or other locals. He mentions the "French-Canadian" and the "nurseryman" as past owners, Goodwin asked Douglas Blizzard to do a drawing of the mound and investigation its ownership.

Blizzard reported back to Goodwin in a December 1939 letter also in the NEARA site files. He informed Goodwin that, "I have located a Mr. Burt, descendent of Jedidiah Burt who was the owner of the adjacent property. When he was a young man, Mr. Burt knew Paul Follansbee and stated that Follansbee claimed he built the mounds. He was a Scotch Protestant and, so it is claimed, was not at all a religious man. Mr. Burt also states that Mr. Follansbee found many Indian implements on his land ..."²³

¹⁸ North Essex County Registry of Deeds Book 395 page 280 (1919)

¹⁹ "United States Passport Applications, 1795-1925," database with images, *FamilySearch*

(<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L965-DWCC?cc=2185145&wc=3XZM-3T5%3A1056306501%2C1056491701> : 22 December 2014), image 249 of 793; citing NARA microfilm publications M1490

and M1372 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.)

²⁰ North Essex County Registry of Deeds Book 415 Page 58 (1920)

²¹ Blizzard 1939

²² Northern Essex County Registry of Deed Book 502 Page 89 (1924)

²³ Blizzard 1939

A circa 1944 report attributed to Goodwin, provides additional details about Mr. Follansbee which suggest other interviews were conducted. The report offers the following information, “This man, named Follansbee, is described as a little man barely 5’-2” tall. ... Associated with this Scotchman was another Scotchman (name unknown) who was by contrast to Follansbee a giant, being 6’-8” in height. The giant is said to have been a sea-faring man who had been over the Seven Seas. Between them they built this huge pile of rocks as a copy of a Scottish cairn. As far as is known the giant man married but Follansbee devised the place to his daughter who had married a man by the name of John Spaulding.” The report seems to have confused the name Paul Follansbee’s son, John, with his son-in-law Charles Spaulding. John helped his father built the Rockery and may be the tall man. Paul Follansbee did import foreign plantings. How he acquired them is not recorded but he may have had a seafaring agent purchasing them for him.

The bulk of Goodwin’s report is a series of arguments trying to discredit the local oral history of the site. He begins his analysis with the statement, “We start with the presumption that Follansbee, whether Scotch or English born, did not conceive all of what in the way of a mound, certainly an effigy mound, we see today.” Goodwin rejected the notion that Follansbee was a nurseryman citing the lack of trees and shrubs associated with a nursery amongst other things. This argument is contradicted by Frank Glynn who wrote 1951, “The presence today of such rare plants as the heather and mayflower rather confirm the story that the site was highly developed as an arboretum ...”²⁴ No effort was made to check the local business directories to verify or refute the presence of the nursery.

The idea of the Rockery as a “turtle effigy” seems to date to about 1944. Goodwin is the only one who sees the “turtle” shape. He noted that Douglas Blizzard who mapped the site didn’t even notice the fact it was an effigy. Even today, it is difficult to conceive how Goodwin came to such a conclusion. Notwithstanding this difficulty, the name became associated with the structure.

Frank Glynn Excavations (1951)

Frank Glynn, an avocational archaeologist, excavated at eight different locations in and around the structure in 1951. He wrote a report which was published posthumously in 1969. Glynn interpreted the stone mound as a cairn covering a human burial. He felt that the stone mound had been built shortly after the interment. However, he never offered a clear cultural identification for who built the stone mound nor for the burial. In his discussion of artifacts he recovered, he made a number of comparisons to artifacts excavated by archaeologist Ripley Bullen at Native American sites.²⁵

Glynn like Goodwin was skeptical about the local oral history writing “There are various neighborhood legends concerning the Nineteenth Century exploitation of the cairn in connection with a ‘Coney Island’ at the pond. The most exasperating of these relates a small wooden shed was erected to house ‘curios’ from the site, with a separate admission charged.” Follansbee in fact did have two small museum rooms but never charged admission. At the time Glynn and Goodwin had investigated the structure Follansbee’s artifact collection had gone missing and this served to undermine the creditability of the local stories.

Glynn also thought the mound was pre-contact and had been impacted by the 19th century activities including robbing the mound of stone and modifications to the passage (i.e. tunnel) and northeast chamber (he probably meant the arch at the south grotto.) It is clear from the report Glynn was not familiar with 19th century stone quarry methods. He notes, “Stone-quarrying techniques evident are splitting and a rude dressing of protrusions. Implements comparable to those found in pre-historic steatite quarries were excavated.” Some of stones show evidence of being dressed with a stone mason’s hammer and this may the evidence he thought represented Native American quarrying activity.

²⁴ Glynn 1969, 75

²⁵ Glynn 1969

A total of eight different locations were excavated. A control unit #1 was excavated outside of the immediate area of the structure and reported to be an “undisturbed soil profile.” Unit #2 was located approximately 10 feet northeast of the northeast grotto. He found an occupation layer which was black, greasy and contained fire damaged rocks. Unit #3 was dug into the inside of the northwest alcove. Charcoal and two felsite flakes were recovered from “ash-carbon black earth layer that ran under the base of the unfired foundation stones and in immediate contact with them.”

Unit #4 was a complete excavation of the floor inside of the northeast grotto. It revealed an oval shape feature defined by eight cobbles along its perimeter. Evidence of intense fire was noted. Five cores, 169 flakes, along with other “artifacts of ground slate, felsite, traprock and other materials” were found. Many of the artifacts were fire damaged. This archaeological layer extended underneath the structure. Glynn interpreted this feature as a burial.²⁶ Based upon the fact the Rockery stones sat directly on top of the feature, he concluded the stone mound was built shortly after the burial fire. Today, we know soil formation dynamics are complex and other factors like farming activity and erosion and can affect soil profiles. At some archaeological sites, the vertical difference in the soil profile between deposits separated by hundreds if not a thousand years or more can only be an inch or two because of soil compaction. Although Glynn’s argument about the short duration between the burial and construction of the mound sounds logical, it is not correct. The mound’s construction can be dated to between 1860 and 1880 A.D.

Units #5 through #8 are noted on Glynn’s map of the site but no further information was provided about them. A list of artifacts was provided but no photographs.

Descriptions of the Rockery

Three descriptions of Follansbee’s estate and business were published in local newspapers between 1880 and 1899. The three articles were discovered by an anonymous researcher who compiled a history of the Paul Follansbee house. However, this researcher did not make the connection between the Rockery described in the articles and the archaeological site known as the “Turtle Mound.” The first was a short news article in the *Lawrence American & Andover Advertiser* on July 2, 1880:

“No person should visit Haggetts Pond, without calling at Follinsbee [sic] & Son, a few rods west of the depot. They have an extensive nursery, choice fruits, green house and great variety of flowers, a rockery, a full rigged miniature ship, a large collection of Indian relics found upon the farm together with many other objects of interest. There is not probably another place in town which presents so many attractions, and visitors are always received with courtesy.”²⁷

A far more detailed article on Mr. Follansbee appeared in the *Andover Townsman* on May 31, 1890 (page 2) under the title “An Interesting Place in Andover.” It was reprinted from the *Lowell Mail*. It is quoted in its entirety because it provides insight into the character of Mr. Follansbee and excellent description of his estate.

“Just before reaching Haggett's pond in going from this direction, a house stands a little way in from the road which, although a good looking structure of modern build would

²⁶ It is difficult to assess Glynn’s interpretation. Rather than reporting the factual details of this excavation unit, he instead offered a “reconstruction” in his report. Notwithstanding the fact he did not recover any human remains, he offered a rather detailed interpretation of the body’s position in the grave. One is left with the impression the Glynn may have overstated his conclusions about this feature.

²⁷ [no title] *Lawrence American & Andover Advertiser* July 2, 1880, page 2, far right column

not attract attention as being anything remarkable. It is surrounded by a considerable estate, including many trees, a feature which is noticed by passers by. The estate is owned and occupied by Paul B. Follansbee, a widower, who has lived on the place since 1835, and resides alone. A visit to the premises and a walk through the estate with the venerable and unpretentious proprietor as guide, will furnish two or three hours of solid and instructive entertainment to an intelligent person. A *Mail* reporter visited Mr. Follansbee's domain yesterday in company with a well-known citizen who had been there before, and from his experience can testify to the value of the entertainment received in this unpretentious estate from the intelligent and obliging proprietor.

Mr. Follansbee's principal business is that of nurseryman and florist, that is, these are the sources from which he derives a living. He is assisted in his labors by his son, who, however is married and resides elsewhere. The elder Follansbee is 80 years of age, but still hale and hearty. A ramble over his domain indicates that his life has been one of labor in which intelligence and study have been the mainspring. The first important feature inspected was the "rockery," in which the old gentleman takes particular pride. This, as its name indicates, is a collection of rocks gathered from his land, consisting of boulders and blasted stones, some of which are twice as large as a barrel, built up into a pile at least eight feet high and covering at the base twenty feet square or thereabouts. In the sides of the mass are recesses, arched over of sufficient height to stand in and large enough to hold six or eight persons, and running to the centre is an archway large enough to pass through. A flight of rude stone steps leads to the top, and the interstices of the rocks are green with running vines, that will be soon in bloom. The peculiarity of this pile of rocks is that it was erected by Mr. Follansbee and son with such rude appliances and tools as they happened to have, and without the use of a derrick. The large rocks on the top, some of which must weigh a ton were pulled up an inclined plane by means of a rude capstan of home manufacture, worked with a long pole as a lever. It astonishes the spectator to be told that the work could be done by such means. The arches are all made solid with [without (?)] mortar and the work will apparently stand until THE CRACK OF DOOM.

Around its base grow shrubs not generally seen in this vicinity, such as the Irish juniper, the English primrose, rare spruces, and small evergreens from Japan and other distant lands. Every stone in the rockery that has a suggestive outline has been utilized and improved by placing and paint, and a very suggestive outline of a human face, a front view of a bullfrog and the head of a hog are pointed [painted?] and easily discerned. The nursery is thriving with young trees, many of which were raised from the seed, and all kinds of flowering shrubs, the Latin name of which the aged nurseryman is as familiar as with his own. Located in different points about the place are stones of peculiar and suggestive shapes, indicating that the taste of the owner has a geological turn. On the way back to the house, a tall observation tower erected on a sightly prominence was visited, and from its summit a fine view of the surrounding country can be had. Beneath the tower is a reservoir six feet wide and two or three times as deep, with a double wall of stone. This is supplied with water from a well thirty feet distant, on a lower level. The water from the reservoir supplies a greenhouse and hen-coop, and furnishes a running stream at the kitchen sink a hundred feet away. All this was constructed by Mr. Follansbee and his son. In the lower apartment of the tower hundreds of geological specimens are ranged on shelves, all of which are valuable in the eyes of the owner. On the ground in the chicken coop, and located at convenient intervals around the place are

stone drinking troughs adapted for the use of hens and chickens, there being two sizes. These troughs are made by chiselling out a concave basin on the surface off a round boulder of proper size, and each one represents hours of patient labor.

We will now step into the house where the venerable geologist has a perfect museum of natural curiosities. This is in one of the front rooms of the house. On the floor and shelves, on boxes and cabinets, and piled up loosely in the corners of the room and small stones, many of which would not particularly attract the attention of a casual observer. But each stone is valuable to the owner, not especially as a geological specimen but as a rude tool of a prehistoric race. Spear heads, axes, gouges, chisels, cleavers, implements of warfare and domestic use as utilized by the Indians before the advent of civilized man are shown in bewildering quantities, and the use of each is intelligently explained. The most of these Indian relics were unearthed on Mr. Follansbee's estate, which, from its proximity to Haggetts Pond, must have been the dwelling place of a numerous tribe. Among the many curious relics shown is a brick taken from an old chimney in Andover, erected more than 150 years ago, in which there are two well defined imprints of the feet of a dog which must have been made by some fleeting canine before the brick was baked; another is a petrified heart of some large animal, probably a moose, which was dug up on the estate. A slice has been cut off from one side, doubtless to supply a repast for some aboriginal red man. The veins are plainly visible and in cut portions, they were hacked off by some blunt instrument, doubtless a stone cleaver, as any sharp steel instrument would have made a cleaner cut. Another curiosity is a flat stone as large as a man's hand, which has been split into halves, and on each of the split surfaces is the unmistakable imprint of a fern beautifully defined. Mr. Follansbee's explanation is that the fern must have fallen into soft mud which in the lapse of centuries hardened into stone around it, and then it was imprisoned, until the fern decayed and left nothing but the impression to title its existence.

But Indian relics are accounted as much by Mr. Follansbee. The relics that he prizes the highest are what he calls the pre-glacial specimens. These he claims are evidence of the existence of man before the glacial epoch, at least 50,000 years ago. He believes that the world has entirely changed in character since that period, and that previously our latitude was in the tropics. The implements in use at the time were much ruder than those of a later period. Spear heads, of which he has many, are so made that he believes they were used by sticking them in the ends of long bamboo spears. He has a theory to account for these things, which he explains intelligently and with interest, but which could not be properly demonstrated in the limits of this account.

Mr. Follansbee is a man of more than ordinary information, and he takes pleasure in exhibiting to visitors the fruits of his tireless industry and research. His collection has been examined by several professors in the state, and his ability is acknowledged by them. There is something about his place to interest everybody, and those that desire rare plants and shrubs to adorn their grounds can combine business and pleasure by paying him a visit.—*Lowell Mail.*”

The last article about the Rockery appeared in the July 21, 1899 issue of the *Andover Townsman*. It was written less than a year before Paul Follansbee's passing. It offers a few new details and confirms others reported in the previous articles.

“TEN MILES AWHEEL

Some Things That May Be Seen on an Andover Bicycle Trip.

No. 2

Awheel to Haggetts Pond and Paul B. Follansbee Nursey, Museum and Arboretum.

... Arriving at the Follansbee estate we passed up the long winding drive from the road and found Mr. Follansbee sitting in his front doorway engaged in reading the New York and Boston papers and he at once made us welcome as he is always glad to receive callers. After a preliminary chat, during which time he told us that nearly all the trees in the front of his place had been planted by him, particularly pointing out one large elm which he had carried in 1845 on his shoulder for 75 to 80 rods before planting it, and telling of the squirrels which inhabited the different trees – for our host is truly a child of nature in his love for all pertaining to it – he invited us in to inspect his museum. It would take volume to enumerate a quarter of the peculiar and valuable things to be found in this room. Suffice it to say that Mr. Follansbee has made a study and collection of stone implements, belonging to the prehistoric man and to the Indians who later inhabited this continent and has hundreds upon hundreds of different kinds of stone implements, arrow heads and other curios which he is always willing to show to visitors. He has an organ which would pass for an old fashion bookcase or cabinet. What is apparently the drawer, opens down, displaying the keys and connecting them with pipes while the wind is derived from a lever projecting from the base at an angle.

Mr. Follansbee is well along in the eighties but, after having his picture successfully taken sitting in his front door as we found him on our arrival, he accompanied us in a tour of his premises. Probably there is not a place in this vicinity, and very likely not in America, similar to this of our host. A pretty path starts from a corner of his greenhouse, giving no hint until you have traversed it some little way, of the beauties that await one. On every side, however, as we proceed, growing things seemingly of every known variety, shrubs, trees, climbing and running plants bestrew the path on either side, in apparently endless profusion. Here are whole groves of young maples – for Mr. Follansbee raises many trees for the market – here rare foreign growths, and so on.

Finally we come upon a rustic well at the side of the path with an old fashioned well sweep. Then we come upon the “rockery” artificially constructed but looking natural with its caves and nooks. This was all blasted out of the ledge at this spot and placed with considerable labor in its present position. Near here also is the observatory reached by a winding path through the shrubbery and affording from its point of advantage a charming view of Haggetts pond and the West Parish, through rifts in the trees.

While one could linger here for many hours, constantly discovering something new, something strange and always interesting, we found that the noon hour was fast approaching and that we must not remain longer in this enchanted nook. After a short inspection of the greenhouse we thanked Mr. Follansbee for his kindness and took our leave, retracing our course to the square. The distance to Mr. Follansbee’s we found to be fourth and fourth-fifths miles, making the entire ride just about nine miles, one easily within the powers of almost any bicycle rider.”

Conclusion

The Follansbee family operated the Nursery business until 1910 if not slightly later. They continued to own the property until 1919. A mere twenty years later, in 1939, the “reinterpretation” about this historic Victorian era structure began with Goodwin’s obsession with finding evidence of 11th century Irish Christian missionaries in New England. Glynn inadvertently contributed to the problem by the posthumous publication of his archaeological report. He established the presence of a Native American site underneath the mound but erroneously argued it was a burial mound. Later writers have perpetuated Goodwin’s and Glynn’s theories or simply presented as a mystery.

The true history of the Rockery was still in the memory of neighbors and local residents who shared it with Goodwin and others. Period newspaper articles fully support the accuracy of the oral histories Goodwin received. The 19th century plug and feather method tool marks and blast holes in the boulders which made up the Rockery are an independent check on the dating of the structure to the 1800s. Both Goodwin and Glynn dismissed the oral history and tried to explain the modern quarry tool marks away. This is a cautionary tale about how well meaning researchers created a mythology for an archaeology site. It has taken eighty years to undo it.

Identifying a Rockery

19th century rockeries were largely confined to estates and nursery businesses. Unlike today, landscaping was not a popular activity of the working class in that period. Location therefore is an important clue. Being a landscaping feature, one would also anticipate its close association with a house, greenhouse or formal gardens. In addition, tool marks are useful for dating the structure. Local histories and newspapers may also prove helpful.

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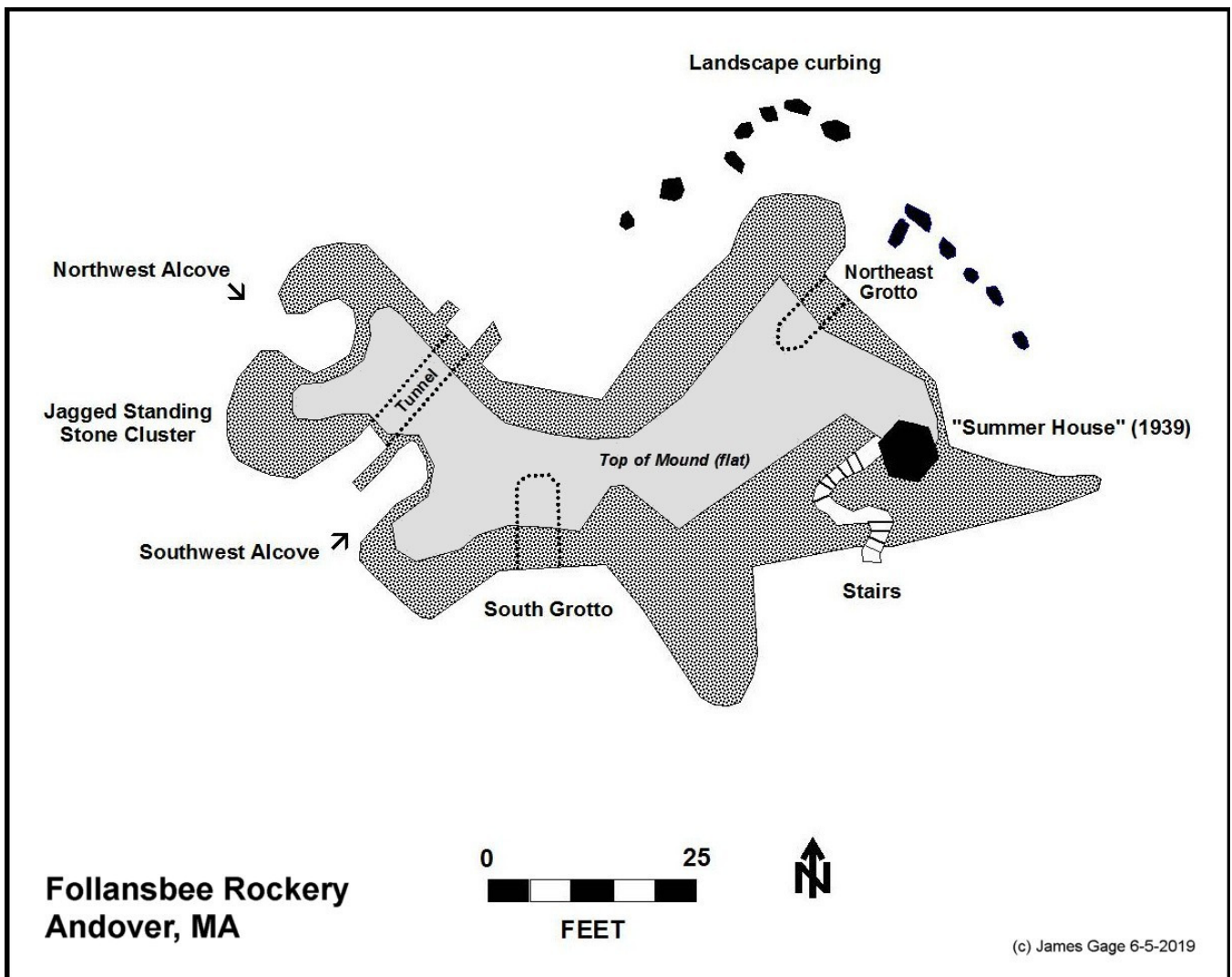
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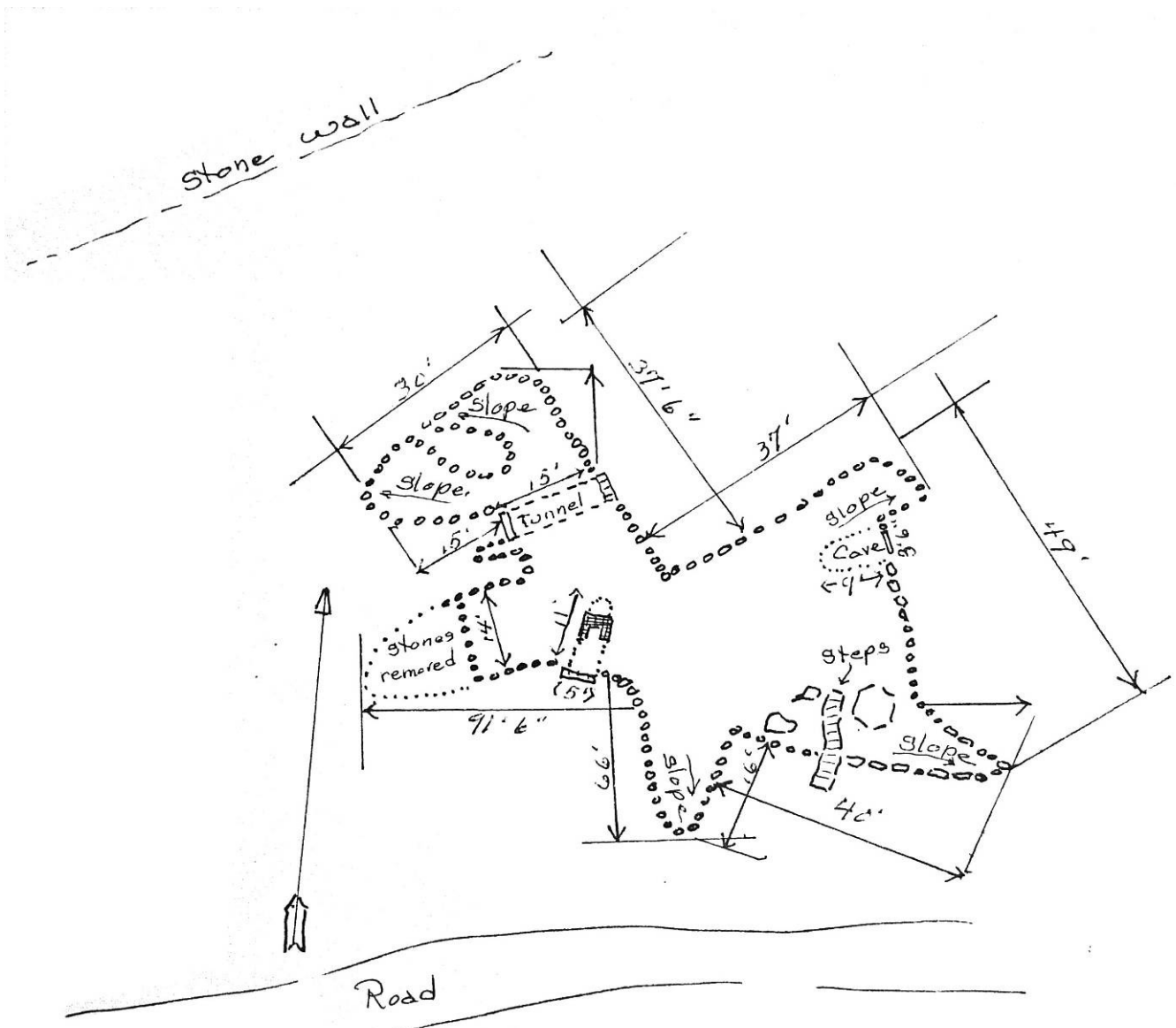
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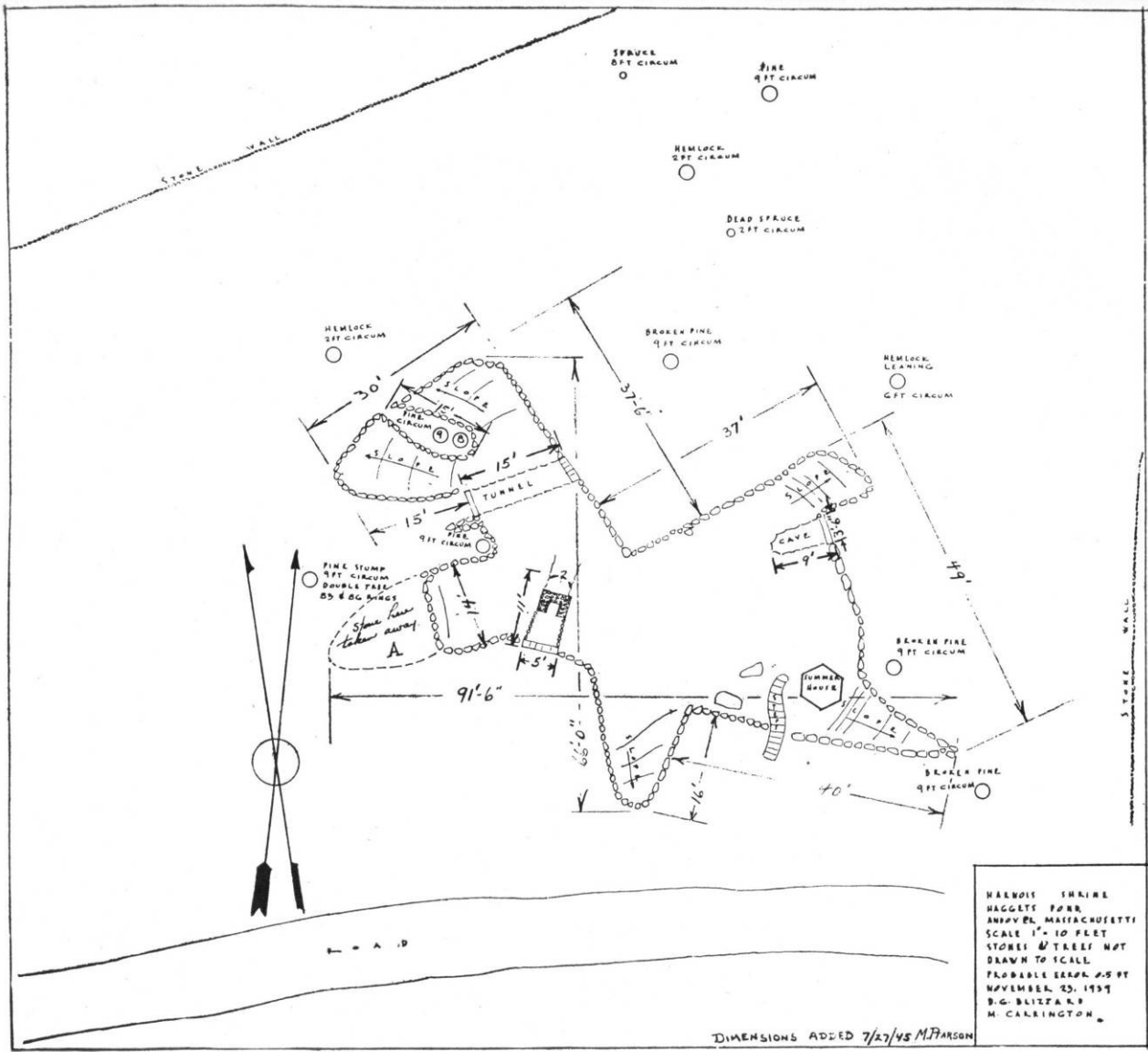
Map 1 – Map of the “Rockery” indicating major features. The light gray area in the middle indicates the flat area on top of the mound. The textured area indicates the rocky base and side slopes of the mound. This is composite map based upon the 1939 map by D. G. Blizzard published in Goodwin’s book, 2015 professional survey (Plan 17608), and Matt Adams drone photograph.



Turtle Mound - Haggets Pond.
 Rt. 133. Andover - Mass.

by D.G. Blizzard
 11/23/39

Map 2 - The original map made by Douglas G. Blizzard dated 11/23/1939 (NEARA Site Files)

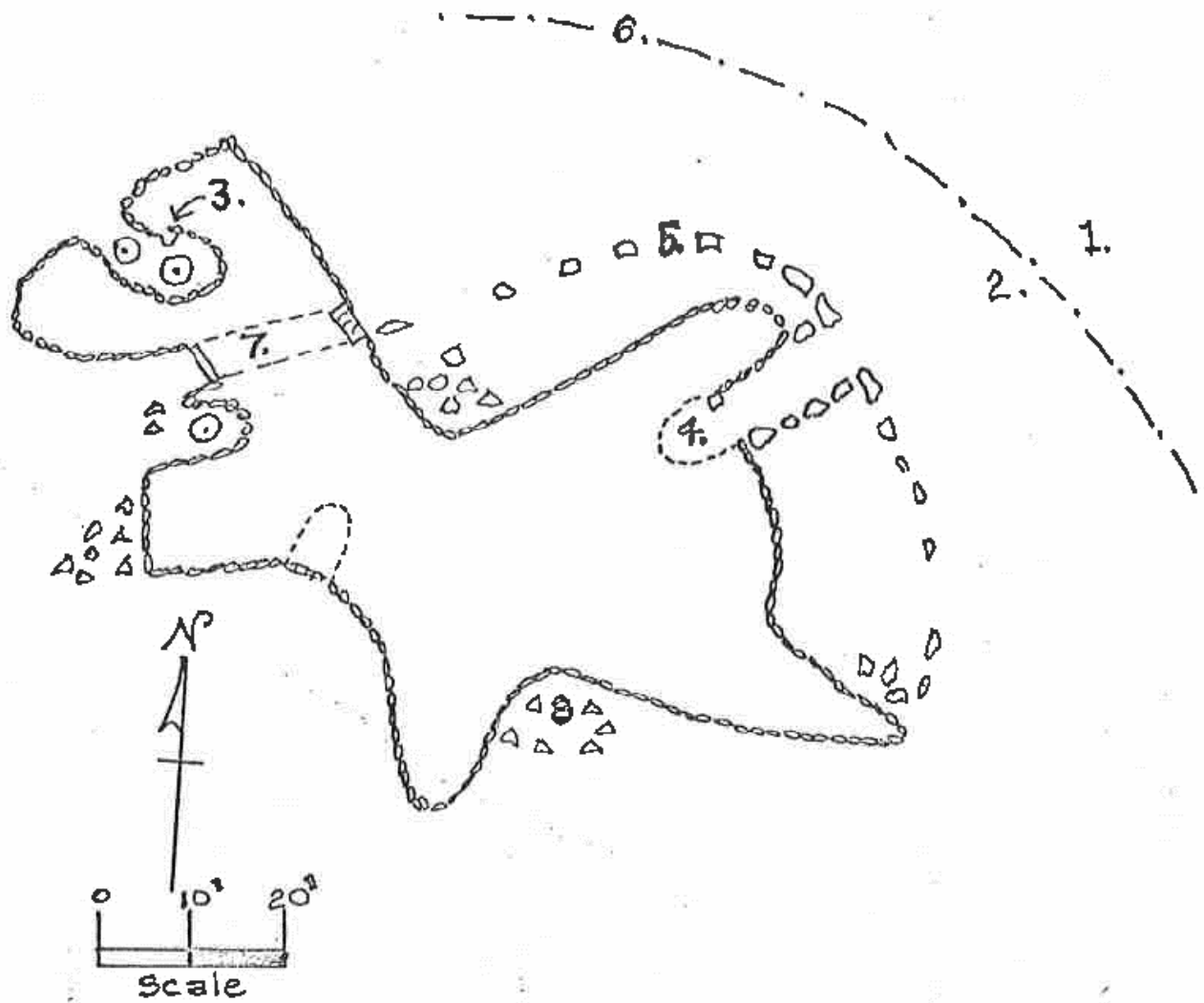


HALWOIT SHIRRE
 HAGGETT FORR
 ANTONY DR. MASSACHUSETTS
 SCALE 1" = 10 FEET
 STORES & TREES NOT
 DRAWN TO SCALE
 PROBABLE ERROR .25 FT
 NOVEMBER 25, 1939
 D.G. BLIZZARD
 M. CARLINGTON

DIMENSIONS ADDED 7/27/45 M. PARSON

Plan of West Andover Turtle Mound.

Map 3 – The final version of the 1939 Blizzard map has published in *Ruins of Great Ireland in New England* (1946). It has been redrawn along with the addition of the location and diameters of various pine trees around it.



Map 4 – The Frank Glynn 1951 map. The numbers indicate the location of excavation units. Glynn added the line of landscape curbing stones on the east and northeast sides of the mound.



Figure 1 – Example of a 1 ½ inch diameter x 18 inch deep hole drilled into a field boulder to blow it apart with gun powder.



Figure 2 – Stone with unusual and geologically interesting characteristics were integrated into the mound to enhance its esthetic qualities.



Figure 3 – A stone with rust colored bands and another stone with black speckles were intentionally used in the northeast grottos interior walls.



Figure 4 – Three of the four standing stones on top of the mound.



Figure 5 – Blacksmith forged eyebolt.



Figure 6 – Metal rods attached to the eyebolts use to secure the “summer house” a small building on the mound in the 1930s.



Figure 7 – Rustic stone steps leading to the top of the mound.



Figure 8 – Northeast grotto with its rustic stone arch entrance. Note the stone with the sculpture appearance over the top left of the entrance.



Figure 9 – Plug and feather method quarried granite arch entrance of the south grotto. Another one of the sculpted (differentially weathered) stones is seen to the left of the entrance.

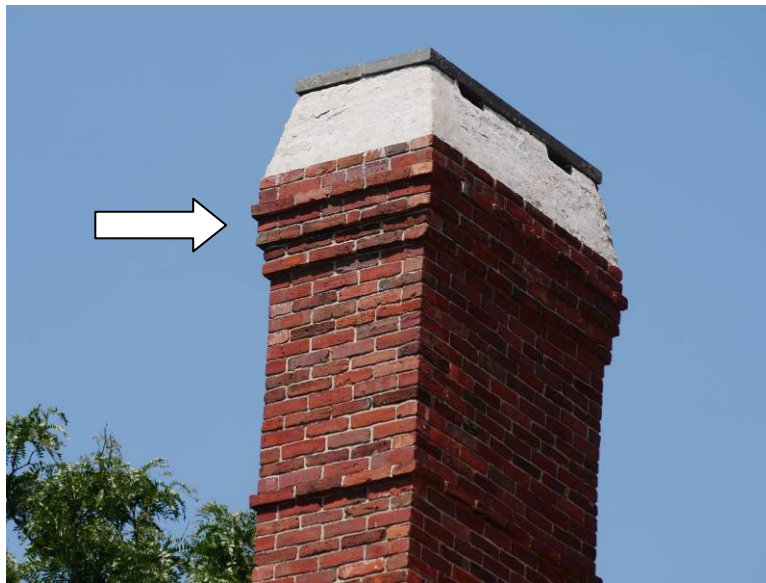


Figure 10 – Common example of corbelling used in American architecture.



Figure 11 – Interior walls were pointed with mortar between 1920 and 1924 when it was used as a shrine to the Virgin Mary. Arrows indicate corbelling.



Figure 12 – Southwest entrance to the tunnel.



Figure 12a – Interior of the tunnel



Figure 13 – Plug & feather half round drill marks.



Figure 14 – Southwest alcove as viewed from on top of the mound.



Figure 15 – Northwest alcove as viewed from on top of the mound.



Figure 16 – (1) Northwest alcove, (2) southwest tunnel entrance, (3) southwest alcove, and (4) jagged standing stone cluster



Figure 17 – Close-up of the jagged standing stone cluster



Figure 18 – Flower growing out of the arch stonework of the south grotto.



Figure 19 – Drone aerial photo of the Follansbee Rockery by Matt Adams, 2017. Used with permission.