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BULLETIN OF THE MASSACHUSETTS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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EDITOR'S NOTE

This issue is largely dedicated to honoring Russell H. Gardner (Great Moose), Wampanoag Tribal Historian, whose death over a year ago greatly saddened many members of the Society who were fortunate enough to have known him. Tributes are paid him by Native American genealogist Mark Choquet, Kathryn Fairbanks, and Bernard Otto. We publish Russell’s last paper for the M.A.S. Bulletin that he was not able to proof himself, so special thanks are due Kathryn Fairbanks, Pamela Whiting of the Dyer Library, Abington, and Betty Brown of the Middleborough Library, for checking the references, and Joe Freitas for his assistance.

Alan Leveillee reports on the rediscovery of a Narragansett Burial Ground, and continues his exploration of folklore attaching to such sites. The Paleo site of Neponset/Wamsutta (19-NF-70) is described in a new version of a paper formerly published in the Mammoth Trumpet that includes additional pictures of artifacts. John MacIntyre describes mainly Woodland artifacts found at the Blue Heron site in Marshfield, and a fertility symbol from Cuttyhunk Island is reminiscent of Russell Gardner’s paper on that subject.

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JIM CHANDLER is editor of the Mammoth Trumpet, newsmagazine of The Center for the Study of the First Americans, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR, that reports on late Pleistocene research.

MARK CHOQUET is of Abenaquis, Algonquin, and possibly Wampanoag descent, and works as a Native American genealogist. He is very thankful for all that Great Moose has taught him and regards him as one of his greatest teachers.

KATHRYN FAIRBANKS is a retired teacher, and a life member and former trustee of the M.A.S. She has studied archaeology and is currently Assistant Librarian at the Robbins Museum.

The late RUSSELL H. GARDNER (GREAT MOOSE) was Wampanoag Tribal Historian for the past 40 years and wrote extensively on Wampanoag history.

ALAN LEVEILLEE is a Senior Archaeologist at the Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. (PAL), of Pawtucket, RI, and is a frequent contributor to the M.A.S. Bulletin.

JOHN MACINTYRE has been a member of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society since 1978, and was a member of the Massasoit Chapter from 1978-1983. He is presently processing data gathered over the years.

BERNARD A. OTTO, long-time chairman of the Massasoit Chapter of the M.A.S., past and present contributor to the Bulletin, has made a life-long study of the coastal Late Archaic occupational deployment and cultural traditions.

ETHEL TWICHELL is President of the Cuttyhunk Historical Society, and presents material from the Society’s records.
Great Moose [Russell Herbert Gardner] (1925-2000), like his ancestors before him, throughout his 75 years of physical life on Turtle Island, had the greatest reverence for the Earth and the bodies of water cradled within it. As the only child of Herbert Thomas and Marion Gertrude (Look) Gardner, he was taught by both his parents and grandparents the traditional teachings and histories of his Indian ancestors who were Wampanoag from Aquinnah (Martha's Vineyard) (see Genealogy).

Turtle Island (North America), on whose shores European immigrants began to arrive in the early 1600's, was a beautiful land plush with vegetation, rivers, ponds, and lakes. The lands now referred to as New England were inhabited by the “People of the First Light” which in the Algonquian Indian language is translated as Wampanoag. The Wampanoag Indians and the European immigrants had sharp contrasts in their spiritual and cultural practices. Spiritually for the Wampanoag, the Earth was sacred and never thought of as something that could be sold or owned. Nothing more than needed was ever to be taken from it. All forms of life on Earth were considered equal in importance and were to be respected and held in the highest regard, and these values were expressed through the spiritual rituals of sweat lodges, drumming, singing, and dancing. These were the values that Great Moose held dear, and put into practice throughout his life.

It is sometimes said that Indian children who receive most of their teachings from their elders become either spoiled brats or respected and significant community leaders. Great Moose was in every way the latter. His family originally came from Tisbury's Indian Hill on Martha's Vineyard where there was an Indian ceremonial site called the “Dancing Field” (Gardner 1998). As a young child he lived on Winter Street in Whitman, not far from the lost Mamattakeset Indian reservation in Hanson and Pembroke. As a child he learned to fish in the Shumatuscacant River and hunt for fowl and small game to feed the family. In 1951 he moved with his wife and children to Crooker Place in Hanson. At the end of this street was an old Indian trail called Indian Crossway. Here he could still feed his family by hunting and fishing in Great Cedar Swamp and the surrounding ponds.
In 1971 he moved back to Winter Street in Whitman and lastly in 1987 he moved his family to a house on an island (connected to the mainland by a causeway) in Monponsett Pond in the town of Halifax. According to his son George, this was what Great Moose wanted all of his life, to live on the water’s edge where he could easily swim and fish. In almost every way he was a traditional Indian. Never at any time in his life did he want or have a driver’s license. He preferred to walk where he needed to go. After 23 years of marriage, his wife Thelma decided to get her own license and a car. She strongly supported and encouraged her husband’s dedication to Indian research and would often drive him to libraries and repositories to work. When the libraries closed he would often joke with Thelma and ask her if she wanted him to drive. Her response would always be “Yes, let me get out of the car first so I can watch.” They would both laugh.

By his early twenties, Great Moose was well known for his wealth of knowledge about the history and culture of the southeastern Massachusetts Indian communities. He became a popular speaker for both historical societies and schools in his region. He played a crucial role in the identification and confirmation of sacred Indian sites in southeastern Massachusetts. He served on many committees for local and national landmarks. One example is the National Seashore in Cape Cod.

When speaking in schools, Great Moose always brought his son Paul dressed in traditional Indian regalia. His Indian history presentations in the school systems inspired educators to do more.
Genealogy of Great Moose (Russell Herbert Gardner):
Lineage to the Sachem of Sanchekantacket at Martha’s Vineyard

Joseph Daggett = name unknown, sister of Sachem Putuspaquin of Sanchekantacket
(1645-1718) (ca. 1640-1685)

Samuel = Alice = Henry Edward = Esther
Look Daggett Luce Daggett
(1672-1711)

Samuel Look = Ruth Savory
b. 1702

Adam Look = Sarah Freelove
(1726-1795) said to be mixed blood Pocasset Wampanoag

Joseph Look = Susannah Rider
(1776-1857) possible kin to Herring Pond Wampanoag families
of Samuel Sepit and Peter Daniel

Isaac Weston Look = Susannah Bartlett Hawks
(1799-)

Jacob Cline Look = Lydia A. Bishop
(1827-1909)

Herbert Eugene Look = Emma F. Gurney
(1857-1901)

Herbert Thomas Gardner = Marion Gertrude Look
(1898-)

Russell Herbert Gardner = Isabelle Thelma Hicks
(1925-2000)

George Paul Warren June John Russell April

Notes
1. This genealogy shows the Martha’s Vineyard Indian ancestry of Great Moose (Russell Gardner) (1925-2000). Before he died, Great Moose collaborated with Richard Andrew Pierce on his Indian ancestry and made corrections to his earlier work, much of which has already been deposited in various libraries. It is important for these corrections to appear in the literature and this might be a good place to do it. In Bank’s History of Martha’s Vineyard there were errors in some of the Indian genealogies. Recent research in primary sources shows that the mother of Alice/Ellis (Daggett) Look was not Alice (Sissetom) Daggett. Her mother’s name has not been determined, but she is known to be a sister of Sachem Putuspaquin of Sanchekantacket, Martha’s Vineyard Island.

2. Alice Daggett had a child by both Samuel Look and Henry Luce.

3. Adam Look was baptized at the Mattapoisett Church which is probably near the Mattapoisett Indian Reservation at the end of the Mattapoisett River. Perhaps his father lived on the Indian reservation at Mattapoisett.

4. Sarah Freelove was Indian according to Russell. This is likely because the immigrant origins of the Freelove family are not known. They first appear in Freetown (later Fall River) in the early 1700’s and resided adjacent to the Pocasset Indian reservation at Watuppa Pond.
With his encouragement, in the 1970's, Whitman-Hanson Regional High School offered an English class on Native American culture which included the classic “Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee.” The class was taught by Dawn Colwell, a Mohawk Indian woman born in Ontario, Canada. It was titled “Bronze and White” and was very popular with the students.

Respect and admiration for Great Moose’s work came from both the Indian and non-Indian communities. Within the Indian community he held the position of historian on a number of councils. He served on the Wampanoag Indian Council alongside an impressive number of respected Wampanoag leaders including: Earl Mills Sr., Lorenzo Jeffers, Leroy Perry, Charles Harding, and Lewis Webquish. In addition to his status within the Indian community, Great Moose had good relations with many Massachusetts political leaders including Massachusetts Governor John Volpe and representative Edward Kirby of Whitman. He would often contribute to the literary efforts of both Indian and non-Indian historical scholars. He contributed most of the text and layout of the 1978 publication to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the town of Whitman (formerly South Abington). One of the most recent works in which he is acknowledged for his contributions is author Nathaniel Philbrick’s *Abram’s Eyes, The Native American Legacy of Nantucket Island*.

Socially, Great Moose was very active in the Indian community. He was close with Mabel Pocknett Avant, John Peters, Gertrude Haynes Aiken, Lewis Webquish and others. He often hosted Indians in his home for significant periods of time. Abigail Sophie (Hyatt) Ash, a descendant of the royal family of the Mamattakeeset Massachuset tribe lived with his family a number of times when she was in need. Great Moose and his son Paul had been on floats with her in a number of parades in the town of Pembroke. Wampanoag Supreme Sachem Leroy Perry, a descendant of the royal family of the Nemasket Wampanoag tribe at Betty’s Neck in Lakeville also lived with the Gardner family for about 11 months at one time. He was very helpful to people in times of need.

In his later years Great Moose enjoyed the comforts of the fresh waters of Monponsett Pond which surrounded his home. He was an avid swimmer and of course fisherman. In the last few years of his life he became very concerned about the ecological effect of the motor powered vehicles on Monponsett Pond. Their usage was increasing in number every year and he was observing the progressive deterioration of the water quality. He asserted that the carcinogens from the motors and excessive spillage of gas in the water were poisoning the water life in the pond. A number of his neighbors supported his concerns and joined with him to address the ecological issues. Monponsett Pond is a public water supply and some people responded to his concerns stating that the water is always treated and cleaned before being used by humans. The spiritual teachings of his Indian ancestors were still with Great Moose. He wasn’t only concerned for the humans. He was concerned for all forms of life that needed the water in Monponsett Pond to live and survive. He asserted that once those toxins entered the lake they would be too difficult to remove. The pond and all of the life forms in and around it were sacred to him. He worked hard until the day he died to put measures in place to protect it from further ecological harm.

During the wake services for Great Moose, his widow, Thelma Gardner nee Isabelle Thelma Hicks, witnessed a very powerful and symbolic message from her grandson John Gardner Jr. of Whitman. After his grandfather Great Moose died, John Gardner Jr. went to the home of his grandfather at Monponsett Pond in Halifax. He brought with him a very small bottle with a cap.
He went to the waters edge and filled the bottle with pond water and screwed the cap in place to prevent the water from leaking out. At the wake, Thelma saw her grandson approach the casket and place something small inside next to his grandfather. She wasn't sure what he placed inside the casket and approached John Jr. to ask what he did. He responded that what was happening to the Monponsett Pond water was very important to his grandfather. It was very sacred for him and he should have some to take with him on his journey into the spirit world. Great Moose was buried with the gift of Monponsett Pond water from his grandson in a cemetery in Whitman overlooking Hobart Pond which is fed from the Shumatuscancat River that he fished in as a child.

Great Moose also participated at a local level in developments that swept through the American Indian community nationally. Since the beginning of European immigration to Turtle Island in the 17th century, Native Americans have faced seemingly insurmountable challenges due to the great contrasts in the spiritual and cultural traditions of the two ethnic groups. Throughout the centuries, Indian communities have somehow survived and stayed strong in spirit, managing to save for themselves tracts of land with significant bodies of water in the form of rivers, lakes, and ponds, despite attempts of early European spiritual and political leaders, as well as more recent ones, to influence Indians to forsake their lifeways and adopt the teachings of the Euroamericans. By the early 1900’s Indian tribes began to see the need to take action nationally in large numbers to stop these continuous attempts to squash their identity and existence. Pan-Indian political movements were started, and efforts made to educate the non-Indian public about the need to respect and honor Native American tribes and culture.

Public school curriculums, however, still give little acknowledgment to the people and cultures present on Turtle Island before the Europeans began to immigrate in the 17th century, although progress is being made in New England as elsewhere. Laws were recently passed in the state of Maine to ensure that all students in the public school systems are fully educated about the history and culture of the Indian tribes in that state. The commitment and dedication of Russell Herbert Gardner in his lifetime to educate the public about Native American history and culture before it was required in schools by law should be lauded. In the state of Massachusetts he has been a pioneer in that regard.

The Wampanoag elders of Great Moose taught him well how to be a leader and contribute to his community. Throughout his life, he kept an awareness and acknowledgment of Native American tribes alive during a period of time when many political and spiritual leaders were content to assimilate. Many tribes have survived the termination and assimilation policies of the U.S. government. Russell Gardner was an important part of that survival by sending a dignified and always respectful message that "We are still here."

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Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Thelma (Hicks) Gardner, George Gardner, Richard Andrew Pierce, Lauren Francis, Earl Mills, Sr., Ernestine Gray, and Martha Campbell, for their help with information for this article and for their contributions on former projects in collaboration with Great Moose.
A TRIBUTE TO RUSSELL H. GARDNER (GREAT MOOSE)

Kathryn Fairbanks

Russell Herbert Gardner, Tribal Historian of the Wampanoag Nation, and member of the Advisory Council of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society, passed away in the early hours of July 23, 2000. He was 74 years of age.

Son of generations of Wampanoag ancestors, the last fifteen of these documented, Gardner was born in Brockton, Massachusetts. His father, a local farmer, played violin and gave him an interest in music. It was Russell’s grandmother and father who taught him Native lifeways; the young man hunted and fished, collected edible and useful plants and learned Native crafts.

After graduation from Whitman High School Russell worked for a time in the shoe industries. There a co-worker, a descendent of Roger Williams, encouraged him to discover more about his own heritage. Russ began interviewing relatives and friends about their family histories. He collected photographs, reminiscences, stories and legends. He expanded to genealogies throughout the Wampanoag Nation. In the 1960's he became acquainted with W. Sears Nickerson who was in the process of identifying some five hundred Native families on the Lower Cape Cod (Carpenter 1994). Gardner therefore confined his own researches to the Upper Cape as far west as Taunton.

In 1956 began an eventful association with Leroy C. Perry, first Supreme Sachem of the Wampanoag Nation. Recognizing the extent and the devotion of Gardner’s researches into their heritage, Perry appointed him Tribal Historian and taught him the Wampanoag language. It was the Sachem who gave Russell the name of Great Moose. Photos of the time show him as an impressive, tall and powerfully built man, well able to carry the name.

As his collected data reached a kind of critical mass, Russell began to share it. Over the years, he wrote or contributed to eight town histories; he authored dozens of articles for newspapers such as the Quincy Patriot-Ledger, the Brockton Enterprise, and the Rockland Standard. He wrote for Yankee, Mayflower Descendant and other journals. The present issue of the Bulletin of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society carries his seventh article for the Society. Frequently invited to speak at civic events and inaugurations, he sometimes was referred to as “The Great Dedicator.” Often he visited local classrooms to give children an awareness of Native culture; he handcrafted a dugout canoe for the Halifax Museum.
Gardner met members of the Massachusetts Historical Commission early on in his career, and recently credited them with his introduction to other historians, writers, and archaeologists, to their mutual benefit. He became a member of the M.A.S Advisory Council at its inception in 1989.

In private life Russell and his wife Thelma Hicks Gardner raised seven children, later were grandparents to seventeen, and great-grandparents to fifteen more. The family lived on White Island on Monponsett Pond. For thirty-two years Russell served as a security guard at Plymouth County Hospital. During World War II Russell and his father formed a musical combo they called “Gardner’s Entertainers,” playing and singing at USOs, army camps and embarkation stations along the coast. Russell continued this change-of-pace activity for groups and outings for many years.

Interviewed two years ago, Russell said that his life purpose had been “to do what I can” to preserve the Wampanoag legacy. At that point his impaired eyesight put even his own writings out of reach. Now much more than he ever wrote down has gone with him. His own legacy remains: What he gave us and what he was.

Many M.A.S. members will recall ceremonial occasions when, with arms raised to heaven, he offered the Lord’s Prayer in the Massachusetts dialect.

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2000 The Documented Record of Ousemequin’s Year of Death and the Naming of his Sons 61(1): 11
2001 The Many-Storied Danson Stone of Middleborough, Massachusetts 62(2)
REMINISCENCES OF RUSSELL H. GARDNER (GREAT MOOSE)

Bernard A. Otto

For many years Russell would attend the yearly July Pow-wows at Mashpee and wear his traditional outfit. He would indulge in long conversations with Lorenzo Jeffers (Chief Mittark), acting sachem of the Wampanoags. This is how I first met Jeffers and Russell more than 40 years ago. He was also a member of our Massasoit Chapter of the M.A.S. He attended many a meeting of the M.A.S. at the Robbins Museum, and was a Native American advisor. He had more than once been on the Board of Trustees, including recently. In 1970, the first Indian Day of Mourning on Thanksgiving Day, Russell attended the gathering of Native Americans on Coles Hill in Plymouth beneath the statue of Massasoit. This was the start of a yearly event that continues to this day. Russell and Lorenzo Jeffers would just be bystanders because they were not sympathetic to this sometimes unruly activity that they felt was largely fostered by Indians from elsewhere.

Russell’s little house by the shore of Monponsett Lake where he lived with his wife, Thelma, is a museum in itself. He loved to replicate Indian objects out of wood, such as war clubs, peace pipes, models of dugout canoes, etcetera. As a Native American Russell had legal rights to gather a certain amount of herring (alewives) at a fish ladder at a river in Lakeville during the spring run of the herring. He would smoke and pickle them, and this was a yearly activity for him that he enjoyed. One time, one of our Chapter members wanted to know from Russell what groundnuts (desperate fare for hungry Natives) looked like above ground, and what they looked like under ground. They dug up a number of these wild tubers in Russell’s nearby woods, and wanting to know what they tasted like, our curious
member boiled some at his home and said they tasted like and resembled small white potatoes.

As Wampanoag Tribal Historian, Russell's interest in the past was wide-ranging. Over the years he donated a lot of his Indian artifacts to the Little School House Museum in Hansen (or Halifax). On two occasions Russell took one of our members to Ray Seamans's house to see his collection of artifacts, for Seamans was a local collector living in Halifax.

He also was interested in the historic significance of features in the landscape. There are rumored to be three "sacrificial boulders" in the Plymouth area. One of our members showed Russell one of them on old Sandwich Road, and while Russell was taking a photograph of this isolated large boulder, a snake crawled out, curled up, and stared at Russell, all of which he believed was an omen. At one time he showed one of our Chapter members an unfinished milling stone in the woods of Hansen.

Russell was a true conservationist and tried to get Halifax town legislation passed to ban jet skis on Lake Monponsett where Russell lived, not just for noise pollution, but also for aquatic destruction. He also tried to protect known prehistoric sites on town and public lands in Hansen and Halifax from artifact scavengers. He loved to be driven in a car and point out all the historic and prehistoric places in his area, of which he had great knowledge.

Two years ago at one of our Chapter meetings he brought with him a fine old shotgun that belonged to Daniel Webster, a once well-known wealthy resident of Marshfield. He would also give us a history of the great farm and life of Daniel Webster. Around the same time Russell managed to get permission from the Taunton Historical Society to see, handle, and photograph the famous John Thompson gun of Halifax that brought down the Indian on Hand Rock across the Nemasket River. A long piece from the fortified garrison in Middleborough during the King Philip's War, this historic gun is not usually made available for the average person to see.

He lived a very short distance from the stone marker where Wamsutta was taken prisoner at gunpoint by Major Josias Winslow in the year 1662. This location was Wamsutta's hunting and fishing camp, a long way from his Pocanoket homeland. Russell made a study of the Algonquian tongue and would recite the Lord's Prayer in Wampanoag at certain events. About five years ago, as a participant in Archaeology Week, I gave a brief history of the King Philip’s War at the Pratt Farm in Middleborough to a small audience, and
Russell agreed to accompany me in his native garb. He stood up and raised his arms to the sky and gave the Wampanoag Lord’s Prayer in his deep voice. I ended the talk by taking the audience up the hill to Hand Rock, and told of its history, and the John Thompson gun. Russell’s foot was bothering him and he couldn’t make it up the hill, but sat down and waited for our return.

At our annual cookout at our members’ house on Boat Pond, Russell would bring his guitar and entertain us with his singing and yodeling. His yodeling would put an Alpine goat-herder to shame! And he always brought a couple of bushels of sweet corn that was the best ever. He was very proud of his rare stainless steel guitar for which he traded a very fine shotgun. Just a month before he died he parted with it to Buddy Silvia, also a guitarist, who was delighted to have it for he admired it for a long time. (Buddy is one of our Chapter members.) Russell was never on Plymouth’s barrier beach known as Long Beach, and one time Silvia drove him, Terry Byrne, and myself, out to the very tip of the beach. Russell was much impressed with the ocean view all around him.

Russell had a tremendous memory for intricacy, and was a perfectionist with detail that he applied especially to his historical interests. His photographic mind was beyond comprehension. Among other things he conducted extensive research into Wampanoag Massasoit’s family, of whom a well-known 19th century descendant was Zerviah Gould Mitchell.

It is difficult to eulogize Russell Gardner. Once you knew him, he was a man you could never forget. He will always be in my fondest memories.
THE MANY-STORIED DANSON STONE OF MIDDLEBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS

Russell H. Gardner (Great Moose)

Just prior to the King Phillip War, the so-called Tomson Road running from just west of the twelve mile marker on the Plymouth-Bridgewater Road (in present-day Halifax, Massachusetts) north-south to the Nemasket Path (present Route 44), sported just two settlers: John Tomson on the upper section and George Danson on the lower.

The Danson Stone is a most remarkable colonial artifact, a 5 ft. in diameter, unfinished millstone, partially cut from a granite ledge on the lower western side of the only original portion of the Tomson Road between Plympton Street and Route 44 in Middleboro. Also, nearby is a large ledge or outcrop of quartzite, and a drift of this material formerly used by aboriginals for implements, a lithic source of this material.

There exist at least three accounts of the origin of the Danson Stone. First, the traditional account as published in Weston 1906 History of the Town of Middleboro, Massachusetts, and locally recounted (Weston 1906).

In July of 1675, John Tomson was sent to the fort at Middleboro as its commander. As he passed the Danson place on the way, he warned Danson to set out for the fort with his family immediately as his own cabin was even then burning and Danson’s would undoubtedly be next. Danson sent his family to the fort, but lingered to water his horse in the brook, still called Danson Brook, running from a small swamp west of Tomson Road to Bartlett’s Brook below the road. He was later found, so this account declares, lying in the brook, killed by the Indians. John Tomson also had a mill that was also burned by the Indians. It is probable that Danson also planned a mill as he is considered the one who was in the process of creating the millstone.

The second, very romanticized account appeared in the Quincy Patriot Ledger on September 10, 1962, written by the well-known author and storyteller, Edward Rowe Snow, who says that he and a friend, Melvin Shepherd Sr., of Pembroke, Massachusetts, located the stone after a two-hour search in the Middleborough woods (Snow 1962).

The Snow account states that Danson began working on the stone in 1674 and labored many days at his task. In the spring, he participated in the search for the friendly Indian, John Sassamon, who was murdered at Assawompsett Pond. After an alarm at hostile Indians threatening the area, Danson returned to work on his grindstone.

When he did not return as planned his wife and children with Ephraim Tinkham and John Tomson went looking for him. As they approached the site they first saw the barrel of his gun leaning against a tree, then Danson’s body lying across the millstone, his chisel in his left hand and his mallet in his right. An Indian arrow transfixed his skull.

The final and true account shows how at times local traditions of events and later attempts to
enhance them must give way to authentic documentation. How much more interesting are the true facts a given here.

On August 27, 1969, Mrs. Martha Campbell of Abington, Massachusetts, in her column “The Research Reporter” (Campbell 1969), gives us this well documented account of the true fate of George Danson. Mrs. Campbell gives as source the research of Mrs. John Barclay, genealogist of Whitman, Massachusetts, on the Danson family.

George Danson was born in England and was a loaf bread baker by trade. He came to America in 1670 and managed a farm in Barnstable for Nicholas Davis, a Quaker. George Danson removed to Middleboro by 1673, settling on property of John Howland there on Tomson Road just north of Danson Brook. He owned the sixth lot in the Twenty-six Men’s Purchase and three lots in the Sixteen Shilling Purchase in present Lakeville. These last were later sold to Elkanah Leonard.

George Danson was chased by the Indians, but he escaped. On November 25, 1675, he appeared in Boston before the town fathers where he made an affidavit that he would be self-supporting as a loaf bread baker and therefore would not become indigent, also requesting permission to settle in Boston (Boston Commissioners Records 1886). He never returned to his home lot in Middleboro. The house had been burned by the Indians but the land was sold to Thomas Faunce. George Danson, sometimes spelled Dawson, died in Boston in 1692, some 17 years after his purported death at the hands of the Indians. Two years later his widow married Thomas Oakes. George Danson also left a will.

His legacy in Colonial Period stonework remains a one-of-its-kind example of such an artifact. The finished portion of 5ft-diameter and 2 ft depth is amazingly smooth for the stage of completion and reminiscent of the native method of cutting steatite bowls from the base ledge. Also, below the worked portion is a row of four holes, one of which still has embedded in it the bit of the tool used to create it. These were apparently to be used in separating the worked portion of the grindstone from its base. George Danson never finished his stonework, but the Middleboro Historical Commission has set aside his masterpiece in protected woodland near a housing development for the appreciation of future generations. May it remain unvandalized as it has to this date, and as it has for the last three and one-quarter centuries.

Endnote

1. The fort at Middleboro was hardly a true fort, only a "mole" and breastworks which were abandoned after six weeks, the occupants fleeing to Plymouth. Of several forays by hostile Indians to the eastern part of Middleboro, led by Tuspaquin, King Phillip’s brother-in-law, from July of 1675, to May 11th, 1676, certainly the first burned the homes of John Tomson and George Danson. John Tomson returned, George Danson did not.

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DISCOVERY AND REDISCCOVERY OF A REMNANT 17TH CENTURY NARRAGANSETT BURIAL GROUND IN WARWICK, RHODE ISLAND

Alan Leveillee

Abstract

In the Post World War II boom, western Narragansett Bay was transformed from an agrarian and village landscape to a patchwork of suburban residential neighborhoods between commercial centers. Houses seemed to have been built overnight. And as these new neighborhoods became populated one would occasionally hear rumors of Indian graves being exposed and destroyed in their making. The existence of Indian graves throughout Warwick, and the frequency of their destruction "in the old days," was folklore by the time second generation neighborhoods formed in the 1960s and 1970s. Recent monitoring of sewer line construction in the greater Apponaug area of the city gave PAL archaeologists an opportunity to address the issue of this folklore as an exercise in contemporary applied archaeology.

Introduction

In 1958, a young couple bought a small cape in a residential development north of Apponaug, in Warwick Rhode Island. Except for a few very minor details, the house was indistinguishable from those to its sides and across the street from it. As the couple now recalls, when they were in the process of buying the house the realtor noted that some bones had been found when the foundation was being dug. The remark was apparently made in passing and was offered as a note of interest or as curio, more than one of concern. The remark was recalled by the homeowners, however, about 20 years later as they excavated a portion of the yard for a septic system. At that time, workmen exposed a grave containing bones and material goods including copper kettle fragments, copper beads, wampum beads, and a metal spoon. The homeowners contacted the police. A short time later, the police returned the bones to the homeowners, noting that they were too old to represent a crime scene. The homeowners retained some of the grave goods, but re-buried the bones "somewhere in the back yard."

New Sewers for Warwick

Although the homes along Warwick's west bay area had been built upon glacial sandy outwash, their septic systems were failing in increasing numbers as they collectively began passing maturity. By the end of the twentieth century, Warwick committed to constructing a new municipal system. In that federal funds were being utilized, the planned project fell within the purview of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, relative to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc, (PAL) was contracted by the Warwick Sewer Authority, in the fall of 1998, to conduct archaeological assessment surveys along the proposed construction easements. Zones of low, moderate, and high sensitivity were assigned based upon background and site files research and walkover inspections to determine area-specific integrity. In general, those sections of the
easements that had not been previously disturbed by road construction, existing utilities, and development, were targeted for subsurface testing and/or monitoring of initial phases of construction. PAL staff met with construction supervisors and project engineers to brief them on material culture and features they could expect to encounter, and to establish protocols for addressing any discovered sites.

Informant Interview

Most of the new construction north of the center of Apponaug was planned beneath existing streets, in areas where gas, water, and drainage lines had been previously dug. Occasionally however, these roadway lines would be linked by interceptors which would be installed in residential lots, usually at or near property lines between closely spaced houses. Such was the case with one planned interceptor in the Warwick Vets section of the project. The interceptor would cross private property so the homeowner was contacted to secure an easement. At that time the resident homeowners reported that human remains had been encountered on the property on two separate occasions, as noted in the introduction. We met with the homeowners to discuss their recollections of the finds, and to secure their permission to conduct subsurface testing to document soil stratigraphy within the proposed interceptor easement.

Our initial meeting with the homeowners was in the fall of 1999. They relayed the story of bones being encountered during the construction of the house, in 1958, but did not know what had become of those materials. They were more knowledgeable of a grave exposed twenty years later, during septic system construction in the backyard of the house. Here, skeletal remains including recognizable skull fragments, ribs, and long bones, were found along with shell and glass beads, copper fragments, and a metal spoon. The police were called in and temporarily took possession of the remains. A short time later they were returned to the homeowners, who re-buried some of the materials and retained others. As best as they could recall, the re-burial had been in the back yard, in proximity to a utility shed, which was still standing at the time of our interview. The homeowners cautioned however that the same general area had been used for other activities over the years including burial of at least two pets, tree planting, disposal and burning of leaves, and as a play yard by their now-grown children.

When asked what had become of the materials from the grave exposed around 1978, the homeowners produced the materials illustrated in Figures 1 and 2. The assemblage includes glass trade beads, shell beads, a latten spoon, and two fragments of copper plate, an assemblage similar to known 17th
century Native Narragansett graves (Simmons 1970; Robinson et. al 1985) (Figures 1 and 2).

Some of the beads had been re-strung by the homeowner. Smaller fragments of the original twine is present on several of the copper beads. PAL staff stressed the importance of the assemblage from both archaeological and anthropological perspectives. We noted the value of the information available in the materials and communicated that the Narragansett Indian Tribe would be most interested in returning these grave goods back to sacred soil; that from the Native perspective these materials were associated with a spirit and returning the grave goods might help that disturbed spirit rest. Their response was interesting in that they acknowledged a spiritual presence in the house, one that occasionally manifests itself in otherwise unexplained door openings and closings, mechanical failures, and noises. We further noted that laws protecting Native American graves and related materials are now in place and urged them to consider returning the goods to the Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. They chose not to place the materials in our temporary custody at that time, eliminating the opportunity for cataloging. We did however secure permission to excavate a series of shovel test pits along the proposed sewer construction easement across their property.

Subsurface Testing

Subsurface testing was conducted along the proposed sewer interceptor in October, 1999. A series of seven pits was dug on the north side of the single family residence, along the fence line marking the northern extent of the yard. The eastern most pit, number 7, was in immediate proximity to a utility shed in the northeast corner of the property. The area of the 1978 finds was located approximately 50' south, abutting the northeast corner of the house (Figure 3).

Test pit profiles revealed variable landscaping activity from west to east across the yard, but the overall stratigraphic integrity had not been compromised. Several pits showed evidence of buried original surfaces, and intact topsoils and subsoils. The exception was test pit 7, the north wall of which indicated a mottled trench exceeding 90cm below the surface.

While the majority of test pit cultural materials was twentieth century glass, plastic, and metal fragments, two likely Native American associated artifacts were recovered; a glass bead from test pit 6 topsoil, and a quartz flake in the fill of the disturbance in test pit 7. Based upon these finds we recommended that prior to the
construction of the easement, machine-assisted stripping take place to expose, for further consideration, any remnant features in the planned construction area. The homeowners insisted that the topsoil removal take place at, or just before, the actual construction to minimize disturbance to their property.

**Machine Monitoring prior to Construction**

On May 30, 2000, project engineers notified PAL that construction was scheduled to begin at the Warwick Vets sewer interceptor and the machine-scraping/initial monitoring could begin at 7:00 the next morning. Using a Gradall excavator, the topsoil stratum was systematically removed, beginning at the location of a shed platform, moving west. The homeowner was present to observe the process.

**Rediscovery**

Within minutes, as topsoil removal reached a depth of 35cm, two anomalies could be observed at the B/C soil intersection. One (Feature 1) was the pit we first noted in our test pit 7, and the second (Feature 2) was generally square (60cm x 60cm) mottled loam readily observable in the white fine sand matrix C soils. The homeowner thought this second anomaly might be where he had buried a dog and cat years ago. Upon further excavation two cardboard boxes were recovered, both wrapped in black plastic. The homeowner confirmed that these boxes contained deceased pets. They were put aside for later re-burial.
As the exposed surface was cleaned by hand in proximity to the first feature, green metal was exposed on the edge of a pit containing modern debris. On close examination the metal proved to be a fragment of thin copper, approximately 5cm long and 3cm wide, with a rolled rim remnant. Troweling around it revealed a small rib, a tibia fragment, and several other small green-stained bones including a cranial frontal bone fragment. The bones were human, and of a child (estimated age 4-5 years). The homeowner recognized these remains as those he had re-buried 25 years ago. We carefully packed and covered the area with soil, and placed flagging around the feature location.

By this time, an area of approximately 10m (e-w) x 4m (n-s) had been cleared by the machine, which had now stopped as the operator observed feature exposure. Shovel scraping the exposed subsoils resulted in the identification of two additional nearby features (Features 3 and 4), at a deeper level, approximately 75 cm. In color, they were much more subtle than the first two (Features 1 and 2) nearby, being light orange-tan fine sand in a light grey-white fine sand matrix. In shape they were generally rectangular, and they were positioned relative to one another, side by side, parallel, and oriented NE/SW (Figure 4). The eastern-most feature (Feature 3) measured 160cm (N/S) x 70cm (E/W). The western-most feature (Feature 4) measured 150cm (N/S) x 70cm (E/W). Based upon orientation, size, spatial relationship to a reported nearby burial (septic area), and analogy

Figure 4. Sketch map indicating discovered features within the proposed interceptor easement
to other known 17th century Narragansett burials, we concluded these were burial features, and notified State and Narragansett Indian Tribal authorities. We immediately met on-site with construction supervisors and Sewer Authority representatives advising preservation in place, and that construction alternatives should be considered. There was consensus and the features were photographed, mapped, and covered with a layer of clean fill, then topsoil was returned.

Today, the site has been stabilized and the sewer interceptor was redesigned to avoid further impacts to the area. The child's reburial and the two additional suspected burials remain unmarked and are, for the time being, unmolested. The location and nature of the remnant 17th century Narragansett Indian graveyard has been recorded in the State site files.

At this writing, negotiations with the homeowners to secure the grave goods for documentation and repatriation are still ongoing. Until that happens, one wonders if their doors will continue to open and close as though guided by the unseen hand of a child's restless spirit.

Acknowledgments

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ON THE SHORE OF A PLEISTOCENE LAKE: THE WAMSUTTA SITE (19-NF-70)

Jim Chandler

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Unearthing secrets about New England's post-Ice Age inhabitants

As unlikely a spot for an archaeological dig as you can imagine, the Wamsutta site lies within sight of downtown Boston and a stone's throw—literally—from one of the busiest interstate highways in the U.S. (Figure 1). Nonetheless this is where a dedicated team of volunteers, all members of the South Shore/North River chapter of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society, have been digging since 1988. They have amassed an impressive collection of artifacts and are adding to our knowledge of how Paleoamericans coped in a continent breaking free of the Laurentide Ice Sheet.

This is a site with a charmed life, according to excavation director Joe Finneran, a fellow endowed with boundless energy and unflagging enthusiasm. The Wamsutta site owes its existence to a series of serendipitous events, starting with its creation that began 18,000 years ago, when all of New England lay under a glacial cap that was starting to recede. It took 2,000 years for glacial melt to form the Neponset River Valley. In the Paleo period the Neponset River was a major waterway a mile wide. (The Neponset River today is a mere trickle in comparison.) A section of the river swelled into 5-by-3¼-mile glacial Lake Neponset.

It was 14,000 years ago that the lake started to recede, beginning its transformation into a major peat bog. Today the entire valley for 15 miles is peat, a fact that continues to be underscored to residents of the nearby towns of Norwood and Canton whenever a summer lightning storm sets it ablaze. Finneran presumes that these peat deposits hold an enormous quantity of megafaunal remains, unlike the normally acidic soils of the Northeast. He also theorizes that the peat was gathered en masse by Paleoamericans and used to feed fire bundles that were kept continuously burning during their stay at Wamsutta.

The first stroke of luck befell the site
12,000 years ago, when Lake Neponset had shrunk to a great pool only about four feet deep—except for a peninsula that jutted out into the water (Figure 2). There were people who were quick to seize upon it as a seasonal camp ground. "Can't you imagine what the first people felt," says Finneran with his usual exuberance, "when they came around a bend in the Neponset River and saw this gorgeous beach of red sand?" The site had everything going for it. There was plentiful game—the team has found evidence of caribou and a fragment of bone or tusk that is likely mammoth or mastodon—and certainly waterfowl. There was also shelter: a promontory of sandstone 90 feet high, known today as Signal Hill, shields the site from bitter north winds of winter. "This was their Florida" is how Finneran describes Wamsutta. Paleoamericans seeking refuge in winter started coming here from the north about 12,000 years ago, and they returned year after year. Signal Hill, visible for many miles, doubtless served as a navigational aid in their annual journey.

**Tools Tell Us Where They Came From**

One thing the Wamsutta site does not have is a source of tool-stone. Its seasonal residents had to bring it with them. The

![Image](https://example.com/image.png)

**Figure 2.** Plan of the Wamsutta site and glacial lake Neponset with positions of loci A to I (Scale 1 in. = 300 ft. or 91.5 m).
artifacts they left behind and that the Massachusetts Archaeological Society (M.A.S.) team continues to uncover tell us where they came from. Most of the projectile points and tools are made of Mt. Jasper flow-banded rhyolite, the definitive Paleo material that was quarried exclusively in a prehistoric mine near Berlin, New Hampshire. “As soon as you see it,” Finneran declares with the confidence of a man who has seen hundreds of specimens, “you know who left it there.” They also brought with them from Vermont Mt. Independence chert and Colchester jasper. The materials from which they knapped their weapons and tools are their footprints in prehistory.

The artifacts they left tell us how inextricably their life at Wamsutta was bound up with the lacustrine setting. In square 111 Finneran recovered from the Pleistocene beach a bifacially fluted point that had been reworked into a hafted awl, possibly used for making oilskin watercraft similar to Eskimo kayaks or Gaelic curraghs. The awl broke and was discarded by the Paleo craftsman. It has a curious appearance today; knapping patterns are weak and smooth, as if the tool had been polished in a lapidary’s rock tumbler—precisely what you would expect if it had been tossed into shallow water and polished by the action of water and sand. Other aspects of lakeside life, however, frustrate the M.A.S. team’s efforts to unearth clues about how the early residents lived. When Paleo craftsmen knapped tools and projectile points, they were loath to leave razor-sharp shards lying about on the soft sand with consequent damage to footwear, so they customarily threw knappingdebitage into the fire. As a result, about half of all discarded felsite pieces the team has found show fire damage. Wamsutta’s seasonal residents were good housekeepers, unfortunately for today’s archaeologists.

New England was a vastly different place 12,000 years ago, when Paleo peoples made Wamsutta their wintering grounds (Figure 3). The retreating Laurentide Ice Sheet still had so much water locked up that the worldwide sea level was about 90 m (295 ft) lower than present; simultaneously,
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land that had been depressed as much as 1,000 m (3,300 ft) by the immense weight of the Ice Sheet was rebounding. The result was startling differences from the continent we know today. The map, based on research in the early 1970s by Harold W. Borns, Jr. of the Department of Geological Sciences at University of Maine–Orono, shows the shoreline as it existed then (dotted lines), compared with today's familiar coast (solid lines). A large part of Maine was then submerged; on the other hand, Nova Scotia (home of the Debert site) and the Grand Banks were islands. Massachusetts extended much farther into the Atlantic Ocean than it does today; the islands of Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard were part of the mainland, Cape Cod was merely a feature of the terrain, and Wamsutta was well inland. Known Paleo sites in New England shown on this map have two things in common: they were on the mainland 12,000 years ago, and they did not become submerged when the sea level rose in later millennia. We can only guess how many sites, peopled at the same time as Wamsutta, today lie submerged—for example, at the bottom of Boston Harbor.

In the late Pleistocene the sea level rose and the earth, freed of the weight of the ice sheet, continued to rebound; the coastline of eastern Massachusetts began to take on its present contour. Finneran theorizes that as Lake Neponset continued to recede, visitors to Wamsutta traveled the Neponset River from Dorchester Bay and en route discovered a quarry of felsite at nearby Blue Hills. At other sites close to Blue Hills, archaeologists have found points of later traditions—Dalton, Hardaway, and Palmer—but only isolated specimens at Wamsutta. It appears that late-Paleolithic people settled closer to the quarry, in locations as rich in game as Wamsutta, and returned to Wamsutta only on isolated hunting forays.

Other evidence points to the decline in Paleoamerican habitation. Another toolstone found on site is Pinetree Brook felsite that comes from a small quarry in Blue Hills. It was used by Paleoamericans, ignored by native peoples in the Archaic, reappears in the Woodland Period. Moreover, in locus H (Figure 4) where the team is currently digging, the members found a large spread—18 square meters—of quartz toolstone, including valuable pieces like hammerstones, anvil stones, and

Figure 4. Profile of the Wamsutta site. The original slope is shown by the dotted line. Solid line indicates artifact-rich soil from the foot of Signal Hill spread over the site.
hundreds of cores and flakes. "Why would they have left it," Finneran asks, "unless they were moving for good to other camping areas?" Thus Wamsutta experienced intense seasonal habitation 12,000 years ago, when it was a highly desirable hunting and camping site on the shore of glacial Lake Neponset, then fell into disuse with the changing terrain.

Over succeeding millennia Lake Neponset became a wooded marsh that hunters continued to explore. Finneran, who as a child lived about 1 1/2 miles from the spot now known as Fowl Meadow, used to pick up Woodland and Archaic artifacts and Amerind arrowheads. (The land was home to the Massachusetts and to the Wampanoags, whose grand sachem, Massasoit, succored Plymouth Colony in its first years. Wamsutta, a son of Massasoit, gave his name to the sandstone that forms Signal Hill and to today's site.) Fowl Meadow was country 45 years ago, Finneran recalls, impassable in the spring because it reverted to swamp. The Wamsutta site owes its preservation to the marshlike properties of the land. No colonial farmer ever plowed it. It remained untouched until the 1960s.

How the Wamsutta Site Was Discovered

Paradoxically, recovery of the wealth of artifacts from the Wamsutta site was made possible by the construction of Interstate 95, the highway that spans the east coast from Maine to Florida. Engineers building the highway around Boston plotted the course through Fowl Meadow—and knew they had a job ahead of them building up a berm to raise the roadway above the marsh. In 1964 the contractor, needing a flat, level staging area for storing equipment and supplies, bulldozed up to 18 inches of artifact-rich soil from the foot of Signal Hill and spread it over the site (see solid contour in Figure 4). By luck the bulldozer blade was dropped at exactly the level of Paleo artifacts, with the result that excavated material spread at the foot of Signal Hill—and over the Pleistocene beach that had been the hub of activity for its seasonal residents 12,000 calendar years ago—was rich in artifacts.

After I-95 was built, the land in Fowl Meadow off its shoulder lay idle and became heavily overgrown with vegetation. In 1978 a team of avocational archaeologists from the Eastern Massachusetts Archaeological and Geological Research Group (known simply as The Group) investigated the site. They worked there until 1984 and recovered more than 600 tools and projectile points from loci A, B, and C, at the foot of Signal Hill, and E on its north-facing slope (Figure 2).

Volunteers from M.A.S. arrived on site in 1988 and continued the work started by The Group. Utilizing his expertise in transit instrument and pole techniques, Dr. Curtiss Hoffman, then president of M.A.S., was instrumental in surveying and assisting in the initial grid layout of locus H. Dr. Hoffman is now with the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at nearby Bridgewater State College. The M.A.S. team initially dug at locus A in 1988, then explored F and G on the summit of Signal Hill. Since 1997 the team has been digging through the overburden at H in order to reach the Pleistocene beach underneath, and they have recovered an enormous collection of artifacts in situ from the Pleistocene shore. The team is currently finishing work at H and intend to concentrate next on the Bates Rockshelter at locus I (Figures 2,4).
Their work has paid off with a bounty of artifacts discovered in situ that exceeds anything they could possibly have imagined. To date the M.A.S. team has recovered more than 2,000 tools and points dating from the late Ice Age: unifacial tools, side scrapers, end scrapers (some with graver spurs) (Figure 5), prismatic blades, blade cores, limaces, gravers, spokeshaves, burins, sinew stones, abraders, anvil stones, grinding stones, backed knives, awls, bead blanks, bifacial cores, blade cores (Figure 6), pièces esquillées, borers, channel flakes, denticulates, planes, radial fracture tools, whetstones, drills, many hammerstones, a stone pick, a crescent knife, an adze, and much debitage. In addition, both fluted and lanceolate projectile point types were found (Figures 7, 8). After examining one lanceolate point (Figure 7), John Wesley Potter, professional High Plains archaeologist (Mill Iron site, Montana) remarked, "This is more Scottsbluff-like than the Scottsbluffs we find out west." Figure 9 compares a Wamsutta fluted point with ones from two other Massachusetts sites, the Shattuck Farm in Andover (Luedtke 1985), and Wapanucket in Middleboro (Robbins 1980). Along the way Finneran has developed profound respect and a feeling of kinship with the people that crafted these tools. "These were experts at the arts needed to survive," he insists, "at navigation, toolmaking, hunting, making watercraft. They used no toolstone except what they brought with them" (Stanford 1997).

By luck we know when they were at Wamsutta. In 1993 the State put in a sewer line through Fowl Meadows immediately alongside I-95 and adjacent to the area where M.A.S. volunteers were digging. Cultural Resource Management archaeologists unearthed a Paleo fire pit; charcoal from the pit was found to have a radiocarbon age of 10,210±60 B.P.
The field team has prismatic blades struck from such cores (Bonnichsen 1999). Ofer Bar-Yosef of Harvard, at the request of the South Shore/North River chapter of the M.A.S., later calibrated the date to approximately 12,140 B.P. Wamsutta site therefore lies comfortably within the time frame of other known Paleo sites in New England—such as Vail and Adkins in Maine at 10,900 B.P. (R.M. Gramly, personal communication), Thornton’s Ferry in New Hampshire at 10,600 B.P. (Wes Stinson, personal communication)—and the Debert site in Nova Scotia at 11,100 B.P. (David Keenlyside, personal communication).

**Signal Hill: An Archaeological Site in Its Own Right**

This outcropping of Wamsutta sandstone, it turns out, did more than serve as a windbreak for Paleoamerican campers on the beach.

Today its slopes have accumulated sufficient soil to support deciduous trees. On the crest four to five inches of sod overlie sandstone. Until modern times Signal Hill lay undisturbed, visited only by hunters and trappers and occasional surface-collectors of artifacts. During World War II a radio beacon was erected on its peak as a navigational aid for military aircraft; after the war the beacon was dismantled, and only a concrete pier remains today. Recently there were plans to build a communication tower on Signal Hill for cellular phones, but the builder got no further than felling a stand of cedars on the peak before giving up the idea. Power equipment over the years has done no more than scratch the surface.

The view from the summit of Signal Hill is spectacular for us today. The M.A.S. team, reasoning it must have been equally appealing to Paleoamericans, performed a 3-year methodical data recovery on the peak. A 1-m-square pit yielded about 250 pressure flakes of Blue Hills felsite. In all, the team dug 11 pits to verify that this was indeed a Paleo site, then
Wamsutta's inhabitants at first had a cavalier attitude about discarding large, still serviceable pieces of their imported toolstone, but later took greater care in curating these same materials (shown by their tools getting smaller and smaller). The first people on the site initially failed to find at least three nearby felsite dikes that were later found. The only acceptable explanation is that the area was so bound by deep snow and pack-ice that it prevented travel too far afield, and forced them to utilize more carefully what remained of their original supply of lithics. Again, this type of intense cold spell would have been more comfortably dealt with through use of the previously mentioned fire bundles of peat.

The smaller rockshelter close to the peak can accommodate two people comfortably. A larger rockshelter farther down the slope, rigged with branches for rafters and covered with hides, could have protected 30 people. "Just look at those rocks," Finneran says, pointing to massive blocks of sandstone arrayed in an arc before the protecting cliff face. “Can you tell me those stones fell naturally in that formation?” So far the M.A.S. team has only superficially explored the rockshelters, but the larger one is next on their list for painstaking data recovery.

**A Most Curious Find**

Of all the objects the Massachusetts Archaeology Society team has found at the Wamsutta site, an innocent-looking jadelike stone tool turns out to be the most perplexing.
That isn't the answer Finneran was expecting. But when Beale produced cut and polished samples of Connemara marble from Galway in Ireland, Finneran had to agree they indeed resembled the stone his tool was made of.

Next stop, the University of Rhode Island and O. Don Hermes of the Geology Department, considered by many the premier lithics authority in the Northeast. After a microscopic analysis, Dr. Hermes said it appeared to be a burnishing stone that contained epidote veinlets in an unknown host material (Figure 10). The material, he said, was unlike anything he had ever seen. A burnishing stone: that fits in with other tools Paleo craftsmen at Wamsutta used to build watercraft. Stretch a deer or caribou skin tight and work oil into it with the stone, and you

One day last summer Joe Finneran spied it sticking out of the ground, hooked by the blade of a bulldozer, not far from the MWRA wastewater pumping station adjacent to locus H where they were digging. He suspected from its well-worn contours and comfortable feel in his hand that it had served as a tool. But what was the material?

Other M.A.S. members, including those with a good working knowledge of geology, couldn't identify it. Finneran took it to his friend Dick Beale, a Boston lapidary and expert in international lithics. Finneran asked if it was serpentine, the only locally occurring stone he knows of that appears in various guises, sometimes green like his find. Beale studied it under the microscope, then looked up and said, "Joe, if you ask me this looks like Connemara marble."

Figure 10. Burnishing stone, length 5 1/8 in. (13 cm); weight 2 1/2 lbs. (1.14 kg).
have a tough, waterproof covering for a lightweight boat on the lines of a kayak or curragh. But can it be Connemara marble? And if it is, how did it get to Wamsutta?

The answer to the first part of the question may come when Finneran takes his find to Ireland. Robert Joyce, owner of a Connemara marble quarry, has agreed to provide samples from four different locations that match as closely as possible the color variations in the burnishing stone. Hermes will have the material he needs to perform exhaustive tests that will prove or disprove its provenance.

If the results demonstrate with a convincing degree of certainty that the stone for Finneran's tool first saw the light of day on the rocky shores of western Ireland, what then? "Right now," he admits, "any gathering of academics would laugh me out of a lecture hall." If his find turns out to be Connemara marble, then, he says, we'll see.

Where Do They Go from Here?

If the Wamsutta site were a cat, you'd say it has already used up seven or eight of its nine lives. And in fact its future is far from certain.

For the time being the M.A.S. team has a secure site. The only access road is chained and padlocked—twice. A formidable wire-mesh fence protects the site from anyone attempting to get in from I-95. "Besides," team member Betty Tharp declares confidently, "the cops would get your car before you got back to it." Despite its proximity to I-95, the land has the look and feel of pristine wooded marshland. Tame deer abound. There's the occasional copperhead or timber rattlesnake, once a black racer that Joe Finneran swore was longer than the present record-holder. (It was; it measured 7-foot-2, beating the champ by 6 inches.)

The M.A.S. team members consider themselves blessed with a patron whose generosity has made their work possible. The land the Wamsutta site sits on is owned by industrialist George P. Bates, himself a member of M.A.S. who has written articles for the Bulletin. He has given the team protected access to the site since 1988. Bates realizes the importance of the Wamsutta site: of five known Paleo archaeological sites in Massachusetts, Wamsutta is the only one being worked today. The others have either fallen prey to subdividers or have been bought by the State and allowed to lie fallow under questionable conditions. Moreover, the Wamsutta site has yielded the oldest radiocarbon-dated specimen ever found in Massachusetts. Bates knows there is a unique archaeological site on his land.

If Joe Finneran and members of the local chapter of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society could make a wish, they'd wish that an anonymous benefactor with deep pockets would buy the land and set it aside in perpetuity as a working archaeological dig. Its location would be a spectacular spot for a visitors center and museum. Since wishes are free, they'd throw in walking trails to the top of Signal Hill and along the Neponset River. In this real world, however, they'd settle for teams of trained archaeologists to help get the artifacts out of the ground while there's still time.

In fact, there is reason to be optimistic. R. Michael Gramly, an archaeologist who has investigated among other sites the Mt. Jasper rhyolite source in New Hampshire and has assisted and advised over the years at Wamsutta, is a brand-new member of the local
chapter of M.A.S. This summer Dr. Gramly will be a member of the team unearthing artifacts at Wamsutta site. Where will they be working? At locus I, the Bates Rockshelter on Signal Hill.

"Please, Get Our Name Right"

In 12 years the team from the South Shore/North River chapter of the M.A.S. has invested more than 16,000 hours painstakingly retrieving Paleo artifacts. For their hard work, all the members ask is that everyone call the site by its right name, the Wamsutta site, not "Neponset," not "Signal Hill." Curtiss Hoffman, in a 1993 letter to Arthur E. Spiess of the Maine Historical Preservation Commission, implores him, "Please, the site already has enough names—Wamsutta, Signal Hill, etc.—without burdening us with yet another!"

Beyond giving the Wamsutta site the recognition it deserves, the M.A.S. team isn't looking for rewards. The work is reward enough. Joe Finneran will tell you it's hard to match the thrill you get when you uncover an artifact knapped from Mt. Jasper flow-banded rhyolite by a master craftsman, watch it change color from gray to tan before your eyes, and realize you're the first person to see it in 12,000 years. It's the creation of an American artisan—and it's more than twice as old as the Great Pyramid of Egypt.

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THE BLUE HERON SITE, MARSHFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS (19-PL-847)

John MacIntyre

One of the greatest setbacks in the field of archaeology today is the destruction of archaeological sites. Although the reasons may vary, the end results are the same: the loss of valuable information. Over the last few years I have encountered several examples of sites that have been lost due to land development. The Blue Heron Site (19-PL-847) is one such example. My interest in the Marshfield area first began after learning that evidence of Native American occupation had been uncovered here. Judy Griffin and Henry Boudreau, both members of The Massachusetts Archaeological Society's Massasoit Chapter, first advised me of this in August of 1997. The location was on the site of a new residential development where, situated along a tidal marsh, stood nine mostly completed new homes. Access to the properties was restricted to surface hunting three large loam piles (Figure 1: LP1,2,3). Subsequent visits by Judy, Henry, and myself, netted small amounts of lithic debris including fire cracked rocks and three fractured blades. Through further investigation I learned that this was once a part of the Peach Orchard site. This site was first reported to The Massachusetts Archaeological Society by Charles F Sherman in 1941 (M.A.S no. M-37-10). Few other details remain but the site was known for “a heavy concentration of sea plummets” (Sherman 1941; Moody 1991).

By March 1998 little remained to be examined as the loam was finally spread across these lots. On one of the last visits to this area we departed in the opposite direction from which we came and noticed a second new development. Given its close proximity to the Peach Orchard Site we decided to take a quick look. We proceeded to drive on until we reached a cul-de-sac that bordered along a salt marsh. Here we encountered a loam pile some twenty feet tall and stopped to check for evidence (Figure 1: LP4). As it was getting dark and we had found a
small amount of chips, we decided to return the following day for a closer look.

**The Blue Heron Site**

The Blue Heron site is located in the town of Marshfield, Massachusetts, in an area about a quarter of a mile wide that is the base of a peninsula. The peninsula, made up of sand dunes, forms a kind of causeway that stretches south five miles into Plymouth Bay leading to Gurnet Point and Saquish Head (Figure 2). The soil here is coarse and rocky with a primary growth of oak. Also present are cedar and briar, with sumac and birch in lesser amounts. A small freshwater spring and salt marshes on both sides make for an ideal location for a seasonal encampment (Figure 1).

Investigation of this site was limited to surface hunting due to the near completion of this development. The main area of occupation seemed to be centered on four lots, three of which bordered on the salt marsh (Figure 1). This area showed heavy concentrations of chips too numerous to count. Also present were blades both broken and whole that seemed to suggest a predominant Woodland occupation. An examination of these lots was limited to only one day as preparations to hydro-seed were already being made. Next, I focused my attention on the loam pile I encountered the previous evening. I would return to this pile several more times until it was trucked away to be spread on other lots. By August of 1998 no visible traces of this site remained that could be examined.

**Recovered Artifacts**

In all 380 pieces of evidence were gathered by myself at the Blue Heron site, largely the result of a single day spent surface hunting. Other artifacts collected at this site were unavailable to me for use in this report. The recovered examples fall within one general category: objects made from stone. These include blades in various stages of manufacture as well as broken examples.

Projectile points show Late Woodland influences at the Blue Heron site. There are two Levanna points of felsite, the first of special interest as it exhibits side-notching along two edges suggesting a possible use as a reversed scraper (Figure 3: 1,2). There are also a fragment of a Fox Creek point made of gray quartzite (Figure 3: 3); fragments of two leaf points made of felsite (Figure 3: 4,5); and a utilized flake tool also of felsite.
(Figure 3:6). (The typology used is from the Massachusetts Historical Commission Guide, 1984.)

A second group of artifacts includes preforms or "blanks." Two Greene-Like point preforms of felsite and sandstone respectively show a visible cortex (Figure 4: 1, 2). There are in addition a small leaf preform of white quartz (Figure 4:3) and a Large Triangle preform of red jasper (Figure 4:4). Fragments of felsite and quartz with worked edges (Figure 4: 5, 6, 7), and a small hollowed stone (Figure 4: 8) also were found.

Surface finds from the Peach Orchard Site were located in close proximity to the Blue Heron site. The Atlantic-Like base fragments of two knives (Figure 5: 1, 2), typical of the Late Archaic period, and a fragment of a Levanna point made of white quartz (Figure 5: 3) were recovered.

Other Lithics

Chipping debris makes up most of the evidence I was able to gather at the Blue Heron site. However, the recovered examples are only a fraction of what lay exposed on the surface of these four lots. With insufficient time to work I was only able to gather a small amount for sampling purposes. Of the 360 pieces I collected, 42 show a visible cortex on one side suggesting materials of a local origin. Materials represented were quartz, quartzite, felsite, and jasper (Table 1). Later, I was able to locate many examples of these lithics a short distance from this site along the shores of Duxbury beach. One large felsite core, as well as five fire-cracked hearthstones, complete the items gathered under lithics.

Due to the removal of the loam at the Blue Heron site no recognizable features remained that could be examined. However, I was surprised at the lack of any shell midden at this site, "a trait common to many coastal sites of this era" (Willoughby 1973). One possible reason for this may be that this site was utilized exclusively as a work shop area. The relatively small size of the area combined with such a dense amount of lithic debitage would seem to support this.

No doubt the sandy peninsula that forms a causeway linking the Blue Heron site to Gurnet Point, Saquish Head, and Plymouth Bay, played an important role to the Native Americans of this area (Figure 2). On the Gurnet headland where I lived...
Figure 4. Artifacts from the Blue Heron site: Nos. 1, 2 Greene-Like preforms; No. 3, leaf preform; No. 4, Large Triangle preform; Nos. 5, 6, 7 fragments with worked edges; No. 8, hollowed stone.

Figure 5. Artifacts from the Peach Orchard site: Nos. 1, 2 Atlantic-Like base fragments of knives; No. 3, fragment of Levanna point.
Table 1. Lithic materials from the Blue Heron site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Raw</th>
<th>Cortexed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Felsite</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Quartz</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Quartzite</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Argillite</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Chert</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Hornfels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Jasper</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total All</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

for many years, I have uncovered evidence that supports major increases in occupation during these Woodland times. The Blue Heron site would have been the last stop for these early coastal visitors who most likely would have preferred the warmer months to be out on the bay.

Conclusion

The artifacts collected at The Blue Heron Site may now only be taken at face value. We are still left with the problem of how to understand the events of Blue Heron's past. Unfortunately the Blue Heron site will continue to hold most of its secrets. Forever silenced in the wake of the bulldozer, the town of Marshfield, Massachusetts, has lost a valuable piece of its prehistoric past.

All too often during development the state archaeologists cannot always be on the scene. Many times a given site will be completely destroyed without its scientific value ever being realized. This creates a major roadblock for the archaeologist. How are we to get an accurate picture of the past when so many pieces of the puzzle are lost? In closing I should mention that the artifacts included within this report will be donated to the Marshfield Historical Society. It is my sincere hope that in the future more will be done to protect our cultural resources not just from development but from all facets of destruction.

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A FERTILITY SYMBOL FROM CUTTYHUNK ISLAND, MASSACHUSETTS

Ethel Twichell, Cuttyhunk Historical Society

This artifact in the Cuttyhunk Historical Society’s collections is made of sandstone and measures 32.5 cm in height, and 10.5 cm in diameter at the base (Figure 1). According to the Society’s former curator, Jan Bosworth, it was found in 1949 when sand was dug out of an area of the island overlooking Vineyard Sound (South). The woman who found it, or at least to whom it was given by the workmen, was Doris Tilton Bosworth, who was from an old island family and grew up there. She was the first wife of Lloyd Bosworth, also of an old island family, who, after her death, married Jan Bosworth. However, another island person claims the artifact was found on a beach, which Jan Bosworth denies. Previous research by the Society suggested it was made of “European stone,” and perhaps dated from about 950 A.D., but in view of a paper by Russell Gardner, the late Wampanoag Tribal Historian, it seems more likely it is of Native American origin (Gardner 1998).

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