

OFFICE OF
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Dear Malcolm:

I am sorry I blundered about mailing a copy of Strandwold's book to Mr. Beston, but it will work out all right, I am sure. He will return one of the two copies. If he returns it to me, I will purchase it of you because I am also trying to sell copies for Strandwold.

Now regarding the shrine which we saw - like yourself, when I saw it first I thought it was just the work of the French-Canadian but after thinking it over and thinking about the trees I wrote to Douglas Blizzard and asked him to go over there and do some checking. First, to map the place, which he had already offered to do (he is an engineer), and to measure all the tree trunks at the same height above the ground, standing close to the ruins and/or on top of it. Then he was to find out from the owner who and when the house was built, and if possible when the French-Canadian lived there. We don't care so much about the nurseryman who came into the place after the French-Canadian evidently left it to run down.

I date the house, casually, as in the first quarter of the 19th Century but it may have been changed when it was done over and it will need a further going over. I shall have to go over the inside of it to see whether it is a still earlier house than say 1820-30. Then later we can search the title at Andover, or wherever those titles are, and check the history of the place.

You remember I drew your attention to a house of 1720 at the foot of the hill on the road we came up from Shawsheen Village Square. That house dates itself and is a magnificent example and is not more than a mile and a half away. The place is on the road on the south bank of the Merrimack between Andover and Lowell, which must have been one of the early highways and possibly an Indian trail. An Indian trail wouldn't run along the river; canoes have been used along the river for getting from place to place. But after I came home, despite the fact that there is a new roof on the tunnel and that the north or east end of the tunnel has an opening similar to the one over the entrance to the shrine, I wondered whether the French-Canadian had not found a very large stone ruin there and adapted it for his purposes. It will take a little time to get things all straightened out but I am inclined to believe we found something.

Now in building so large an amount of stone, piled up, broken at one end with iron mawls, for what purpose I don't know, but I think to take stone away from not to build the place, my conclusion is that it ought to be investigated very carefully in the spring. Meanwhile I have asked Blizzard to ask the owner of the place, who has evidently never salvaged his trees from a year ago in September, knocked down by the hurricane, whether he would sell me those trees or allow me at least to cross cut off some of the largest at the roots, say 2 to 4' above the roots - I am talking about down trees, now - then we could count the rings and taking the circumference at the rings we would know the approximate age of any tree in the vicinity.

There is a long wall on the left leading up to the shrine and it slants back, as I drew to your attention, instead of being upright and it is well made and well surfaced, and that should be investigated. Of course that may be only the approach to the very beautiful site on which the shrine stands but in our case we can't afford to leave anything up in the air, if you know what I mean. As soon as I get the size and age of the trees on the top of the mound, which are much younger than the trees in the niches, I will know better the age of the old tree trunk on the Site, as well as the exact age of the pine in the plaza which I take to be 60 to 75 years, but these may be a different type of pine from either of those and from the bark we can tell exactly about that question, but it is all going to be helpful whether the shrine is the original site or not, or whether it was built and greatly changed from a group of stone buildings there when the French-Canadian came.

I remember the round drill holes in the roof of the tunnel and in the sides of some of the other stones, but we can check the age of the west end of the same by the two trees growing on top of it. Then we may find somebody who remembers the French-Canadian, who might be able to tell us what the Frenchman found on the Site. I am struck with one fact and that is that the Site was built not for utility but as a very imposing collection of stone walls, huts and beehives on a rock base. Otherwise, why, for instance, on the site was the level rock space not covered?

I am more positive than ever that I am correct in the site being a special place so with that before us we don't want to make any mistake that we have not found another one. Remember that the little beehive at Danville is on the south slope of a rocky hill just exactly like the Site. Everything fits in. Nothing contradicts, as you will see when you view the stone house at Raymond, when we re-find the little beehive near by against a big rock like the little watchhouse at the Site and what I think is a sweat house at Hopkinton or as in the case of your house at Upton, built against a side hill.

I don't think they are Leif's booths. They wouldn't have had time to do all that work; besides, most of this work is over 20 if not 30 to 40 miles back of the sea and the Greenlanders never went far inland except they could go inland by water.

I am keenly interested in your interview with Mr. Parsons tonight, and I will await all you have to say about a hing which I gave you that Johnson and Byers are not in accord. Of all the men who have controverted us, Byers is the worst and I have him on record for the proper time.

I also want to see the pictures very much.

As to the arrow-like marking, underneath which is a little cross - I think this is the greatest find and I want a picture of it and a slide of it, and I will tell you why. You remember we have never found a cross on the Site nor on any other stone house with this one exception that you found this cross on a cliff. Later I am going to show you why it is of so much interest. I still think the effigy rock at Weston is either that of a man or a man in the form of a cross. Hencken said that what we think is the head on the top should be, if it were Irish, between the cross arms - that is, a crude crucifix. But it is something. There is no denying that and now that you have found the other, I think it is a great step forward. But what I have to tell you is that I take an English magazine called the Sussex County Magazine. I am just renewing it. In the last few numbers - it comes quite regularly - are a series of articles on what are called graffiti, found in the churches in the County of Sussex, and we have now these strange marks re-drawn, not photographed, which occur on the window sills and on the outside porch pillars of these very old churches. Some of them are Saxon and go back before the Conqueror's time. Most of them are Medieval, and these marks are taken to have been made in Medieval times by Pilgrims. No one has ever made a study of it until this man, the Rev. Mr. Adams, has been writing a monthly account of the different churches and villages in Sussex and he has only started to do this work, but the minute I saw them - they are found in the catacombs in Rome in the early Christian era - I began to wonder whether I had not seen such marks on the great stone which I thought might be inscribed and which I carefully photographed.

You remember I planned to have that photograph on a scaffold but other things came up to postpone it and I didn't like to seem to be too strenuous on my theories. Now I think they are graffiti on that rock, and I made a very careful drawing of it and photographed that drawing, all of them taken from the original photograph I made of the rock. But

the minute you enlarge it you lose perspective, but I got some 50 odd designs on that rock some of which look like little figures, and they may or may not mean something but if I can check one or two of these little marks that are like these graffiti marks, they are all quite small, then we may have something.

Naturally I don't wish to perpetuate error or false premise but all of it helps, and you are the most helpful of all those engaged with me in the solution of this problem.

My best to your wife.

Sincerely,

William B. Godwin

WBG/t