



# Determination Of The Origins Of Swain Site D.



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## Abstract

The 2008 Biosphere Field Study Team discovered Swain Site D. It is primarily a single stone rock pile of ~310 square meters in the shape of a trapezoid. Throughout the site a large number of 18th and 19th Century artifacts were discovered by the team. The artifacts were organized and often within metal hoops- suggesting these items were placed in wooden barrels.

Some of the stones showed signs that they were quarried. This suggested that Swain Site D. might have been a structure of some kind. In 2009 the Biosphere team continued to excavate the site with special emphasis to discover if Swain D. was a building site.

The evidence, although not completely definitive, suggests that it was not a building site but rather a stone clearing pile.

## Theory 1- Building Site

### EVIDENCE OF THEORY

The large number of artifacts on the site suggests that Swain Site D. was once a storage facility. There is wide range of items with conflicting functionality. For example household goods are found with farm implements as well as shoemaking items.

Several of the stones show clearly they were quarried as opposed to natural stones collected from the field. All of the stones are of the size and quality that would be used to construct buildings and walls.

Perhaps the storage facility was this building's last use. Items from other Swain buildings were put here in storage similar to an attic or cellar.

### CONFLICTS

1. The stones are in a single layer. They are not fit tight enough to be a floor. The even distribution of the stones are not consistent of what would be expected if the stones and placements were the result of a collapsed wall.

2. The shape of the site is inconsistent with known New England 18th and 19th Century construction.

3. Very few nails and other evidence of a wooden structure have been found. If Swain Site D were the result of a collapsed building, iron nails would have been common as well as roofing material.

### CONCLUSIONS

There is little evidence to support Swain D. as a building site.

## Theory 2 & 3

### Clearing Pile

### Dumpsite

There are two theories that collectively explain the findings on Swain Site D. Swain Site D is a stone clearing pile as was later used as a dumpsite.

### STONE CLEARING PILE- EVIDENCE OF THEORY

The quad is located at the edge of the field and towards the corner of it. This is a common place to dump stones removed from fields that could not be put to use in stone walls, drainage ditches, road construction, building foundations, etc. The single layer of boulders is typical of stones being moved and dumped from a "stone boat" which was a heavy-duty wooden sled drag by an oxen team or horse. The stones would be rolled off the stone boat against the boulders there. In contrast, stones dumped from a cart or wagon created a pile similar to the one you get from a truckload of bark mulch being delivered. The odd shape of the quad, we surmise was created from the farmer bringing the stone boat through the opening in the stonewall and swing left in an arc. It would have been difficult to maneuver the team into the actual corner of field and that's why there is absence of stone in the actual corner. The boulders are of decent building quality in terms of size and shape for stonewalls and other projects. The farmer may have been stockpiling these boulders for future projects.

### DUMPSITE-- EVIDENCE OF THEORY

According to historical records of The Key Foundation Archives and The Northwood Historical Society the Swain's sold the farm in 1917. The land passed through several hands over the next 20 years. The Lynn Country Club purchased the land for recreational use in the late 1920s and The Greater Lowell Council, BSA purchased the land in 1936.

This theory concludes that either the Lynn Country Club or the Boy Scouts moved the artifacts from two other locations to Swain Site D. Artifacts found at Swain Site can be attributed to the farmhouse, [Swain Site A.] and/or the shoemaker shop, [Swain Site B.] Both Swain Site A and B are located near the camp entrance. According to historical records the farmhouse was torn down in 1920. The shoemaker shop was the only building standing on the reservation in 1936. Wah-Tut-Ca staff as a "guides lodge to welcome campers" used this building. Either group would find it desirable to remove this material from the entrance to the camp.

The Dumpsite theory suggests that the debris from the farmhouse and material stored in the gatehouse was moved to Swain Site D and placed on top of the stone clearing pile. Wah-Tut-Ca's G. Elbert Bowring Map of 1937 lists this area as "the land of dead things". This is easily understood because of its proximity to the Swain family cemetery, but it is important to note that Bowring used the word "things" which implies more than people are included. Some documented evidence suggests that the camp used this area for a dump in its early years.

## Conclusions

Theory 2 and 3, are plausible explanations for the findings on Swain Site D. Based on the historical evidence as well as archeological examination we conclude that the Swains placed the stones first and then the artifacts were added later.



Swain D. West Wall



Swain D. Looking West



Swain D. Quarried Stones

