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MEGALITHIC MYSTERY HILL

by

Robert E. Stone

Situated in North Salem, N.H., a few miles from the Massachusetts border, are the remains of an ancient, massive, stone-constructed complex known as Mystery Hill.

About 12 acres of oddly patterned walls surround an acre of buildings, wells, more walls, carvings, workable drains and many other items, the most famous of which is the highly controversial "Sacrificial Table". This 4½ ton grooved granite slab rests on stone legs and is linked to the inside of the largest structure at the site via a small, stone-lined "Speaking Tube". Its use is believed to have been for an oracle ceremony during a sacrifice, similar to some ancient sites in Europe.

Another item being critically analyzed is the many strategically spaced "Monoliths", standing in the site's outer walls. Their astronomical alignments, similar to "Stonehenge" in England, are quite impressive. Thus far, the winter and summer Solstices for both rising and setting of the sun are very accurate, when viewed from the exact center of the site; the "Sacrificial Table", 500 feet away. Setting of the sun during the Equinox also lines up on a dolmen-like structure built into the outer wall.

The earliest known reference to the site, in Edgar Gilbert's *History of Salem, N.H.* (1907), tells of a family named Pattee living there from 1823 until Mr. Pattee died in 1849. The house, built over some of the structures, burned in 1855. During Pattee's occupancy, many tons of slabs were carted off and believed used for curb stones in nearby Lawrence, Mass. Estimates are that up to 40% of the site was destroyed in this fashion.

No other mention of the site is known until the 1930's, when Mr. William Goodwin bought and started researching it. His theory that Irish Culdee Monks built it around 1000 A.D. met little credence and in fact convinced many scholars that the site was built by Pattee.

Following Goodwin's death in 1950, a few people, still believing that the site was old, worked on it at various times, but it was not until 1964, when the New England Antiquities Research Association (NEARA) was formed, that any continuing work was started. NEARA, now grown to 140 members from 20 states, has conducted excavations and financed radio carbon-14 tests that are proving the site's antiquity.

NEARA is also investigating hundreds of other sites (usually single underground structures) found all over New England, adjoining states and Canada. In 1969 a carbon date of 830 years B.P. was obtained on a so-called "Colonial root-

cellar". The sample location indicated that the site was even older.

Carbon dates thus far conducted on Mystery Hill have not only proved Pattee's non-responsibility for the site's construction but that a new chapter is being opened on American history. Dates of 1690 A.D. and 1550 A.D. have destroyed the Pattee myth but dates of 180 B.C. and 1045 B.C. are indicative that a previously unrecorded megalithic culture was in existence in this hemisphere.

This culture, as I pointed out at the Fall Meeting of The Council, not only included sites like Mystery Hill, but various other stone-constructions that we are documenting, such as dolmens, tunnels, strange non-Colonial walls, unusual wells and many other oddities.

The research and carbon dating performed thus far show that a much more serious effort must be made by scholars and amateurs alike if these sites and their related history are to be saved for posterity.



Fig. 21—Megalithic structure, Mystery Hill.

Robert E. Stone's interest in archaeology dates from 1952. An associate electronic engineer, he is President and Chairman of the Board of the Mystery Hill Corporation, North Salem, N.H., which he founded in 1957, and is President, founder and Executive Board Chairman of the New England Antiquities Research Association founded in 1964.