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Ann-Eliza Lewis

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Cover Page Footnote

Special thanks to William Francis Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth and Chairman of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, for his support of the Massachusetts Archaeological Curation Center. Many thanks to Leith Smith for his photos of the lawn ball and to him and State Archaeologist Brona Simon who worked on an earlier version of this paper. Ed Bell, Harlley Erickson, and Alicia Paresi, all from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, each made many helpful suggests on drafts of this essay. Thanks are also due to John Dalzell, formerly of the International Bowling Museum in St. Louis, who first recognized the lawn ball as the oldest in the New World and who explained some of the complexities of bowling to me. I also owe thanks to the archaeologists who worked on the Central Artery Archaeology project whose research, reports, and publications provided the archaeological context for the interpretation of this artifact. Any faults or errors in this research note are my own, however.

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Research Note

A Recreation to Great Persons: Bowling in Colonial Boston

Ann-Eliza H. Lewis

In 1994 archaeologists working in downtown Boston, Massachusetts, recovered what turned out to be the oldest lawn bowling ball in the New World. This research note is the result of the unexpected public interest in this artifact. The lawn ball belonged to the household of Katherine Nanny Naylor, a wealthy resident of 17th-century Boston. The lawn ball became a starting point for a small research project on the history of bowling in the New World and Puritan attitudes towards recreation in general and bowling in particular. This note opens a discussion of the tension between the need to relax and recreate oneself and Puritan ideas towards appropriate activity and work.

En 1994 des archéologues travaillant dans le centre-ville de Boston (Massachusetts) ont mis au jour ce qui s'est avéré être la plus vieille boule de "lawn bowling" connue dans le Nouveau Monde. Cette note de recherche est le résultat de l'intérêt inattendu du public en regard de cet artefact. L'objet appartenait à la maisonnée de Katherine Nanny Naylor, une résidente bien nantie de Boston au XVIIe siècle. La boule servie de point de départ pour un petit projet de recherche sur l'histoire du bowling dans le Nouveau Monde et sur les attitudes des Puritains à l'égard du divertissement en général et du bowling en particulier. Cette note ouvre une discussion au sujet de la tension entre la nécessité de se divertir et les idées puritaines quant aux activités et au travail convenable .

Introduction

Sometimes a single artifact begins the most unexpected research project. The recovery of a small, wood ball in 1994 by Central Artery archaeologists in a 17th-century privy in downtown Boston, Massachusetts, passed with little fanfare. The ball (FIG. 1) was identified quickly as a lawn bowling ball (Heck and Balicki 1998: 32–33), commonly called a bowl, and added to the list of curiosities recovered. In 1998, John Dalzell, formerly of the International Museum of Bowling in St. Louis, Missouri, confirmed that the Boston bowl was the oldest known example of a lawn bowl in the New World (Dalzell, personal communication, 1998).

Soon after the bowl's status was confirmed a reporter from a local newspaper came to the Archaeological Curation Center at the Massachusetts Historical Commission to report on the artifacts from the Central Artery Tunnel Project, which had just been transferred to the state's curation facility (Boit 1998: 1). This article, which announced that Boston had the oldest known bowling ball, garnered an unexpected amount of public interest and press coverage. By the evening all of Boston's major news networks had called for an interview; the Associated Press sent a reporter and photographer the next day; and soon more traditional archaeological and historical venues began to call. Confronted with unexpected questions it became clear that the bowl warranted a little more research. This research note is the result.

While the bowl's position as the oldest example may be challenged in the future, its presence in Puritan, colonial Boston will remain significant. This discussion explains briefly the origin of bowling games, their rules and equipment, and the social circumstances of playing at bowls to better understand the Boston bowl. Armed with the ethnographic context of recreation in 17th-century Boston and particularly bowling, we can better understand the bowl's significance. The bowl then

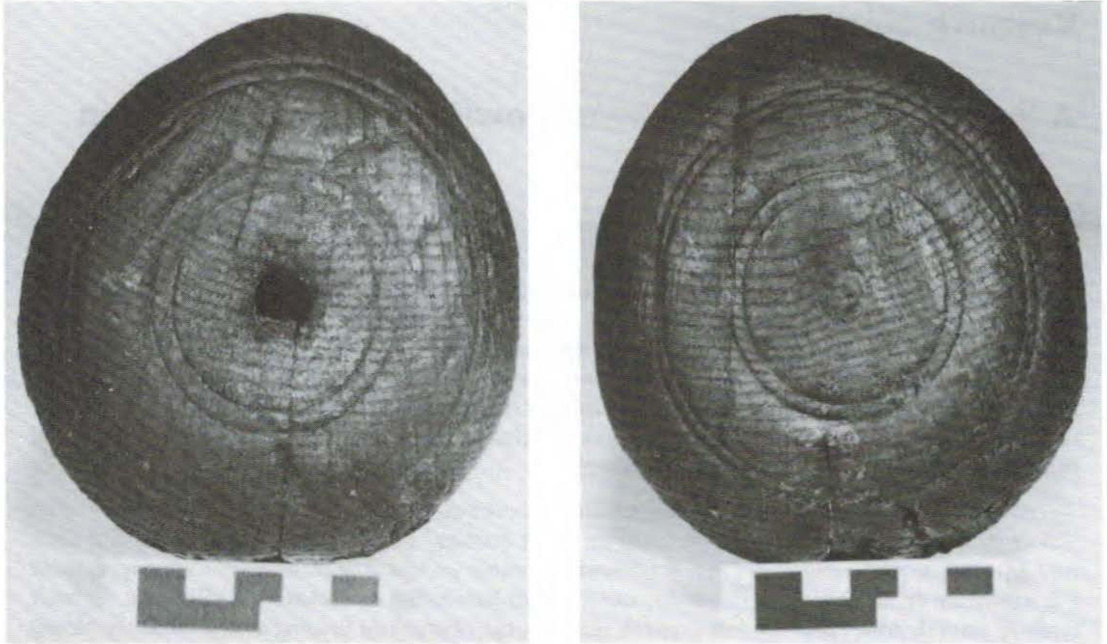

Figure 1. The lawn bowl recovered at the Cross Street Site, Boston, MA. (Photo by Leith Smith. Photo courtesy of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth, Boston).

may open discussions on households, landscapes, recreation, and other historical archaeological issues.

The Cross Street Back Lot Site

The privy in which the bowl was discovered and excavated during the extensive archaeological investigations that preceded Boston's "Big Dig" (Cheek 1998a; Heck and Balicki 1998). Officially known as the Central Artery/Third Harbor Tunnel Project, the goal of this undertaking is to ease Boston's notorious downtown traffic by replacing the outdated elevated expressway with a wider underground expressway and adding a third tunnel across Boston Harbor to Logan International Airport (Bower 1998: 11). The project area includes a narrow strip of land just inland (west) of Boston Harbor that stretches from Charlestown to South Boston (FIG. 2). As one might surmise from its location, the Central Artery project passes through some of Boston's oldest neighborhoods including some located on the Shawmut peninsula.[1] When built in the 1950s, the elevated highway severed downtown Boston from its harbor. Its replacement with an underground roadway will reconnect downtown with its historic harbor district while creating several acres of parkland.

Despite extensive urban development, preliminary documentary research, extensive map research, and test excavations conducted by Boston University's Office of Public Archaeology identified small pockets of land on the edge of Boston's North End neighborhood that contained archaeological deposits dating to the 17th and early 18th centuries

[1] The Shawmut peninsula formed part of Boston's original coastline as encountered by 17th-century European settlers—before the massive landfill projects that created the modern landscape began.

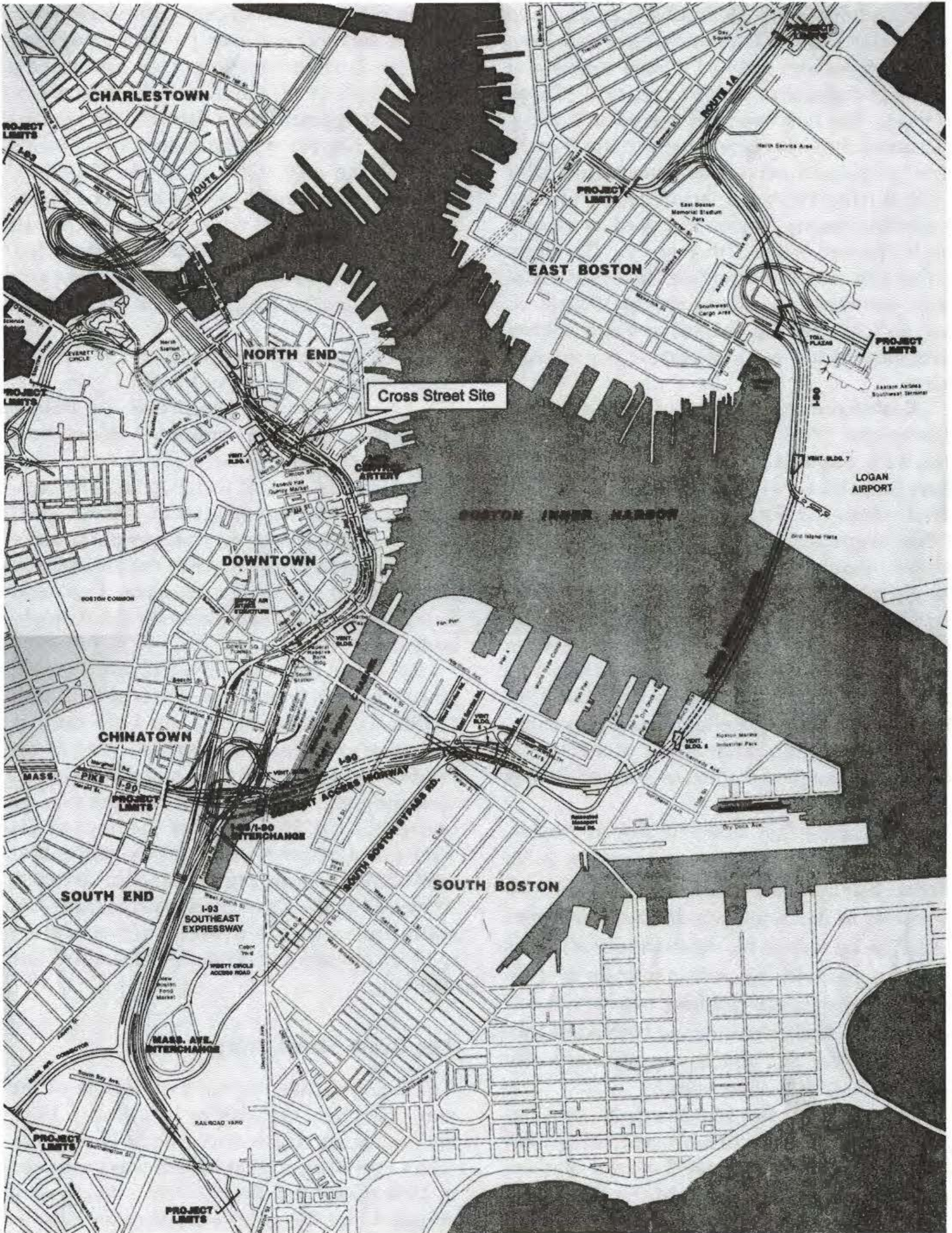

Figure 2. Map of downtown area showing the proposed highway route and the location of the Cross Street Site.

(Elia and Seasholes 1989; Elia, Landon, and Seasholes 1989). Timelines, Inc. and John Milner Associates conducted data recovery at many of these sites in 1992 and 1994 (Cheek 1998a). The bowl was recovered in a privy feature at the Cross Street Backlot Site (FIG. 2). The brick-lined privy was constructed after 1650 during the occupation of the site by Katherine Nanny Naylor and used as a privy up to the end of the 17th century. The Cross Street Site and the privy are discussed more fully elsewhere (Cook and Balicki 1996; Heck and Balicki 1998; Cook 1998) and only a brief summary of the site and feature is provided here.

Katherine Nanny Naylor was born Katherine Wheelwright in Bilsby, Lincolnshire, England in 1630; her father was the Rev. John Wheelwright. Katherine's mother died soon after Katherine's birth and John Wheelwright married Mary Hutchinson, Anne Hutchinson's sister (Cook 1998: 15). The family moved to Boston in 1635. John Wheelwright was considered a supporter of Anne Hutchinson's Antinomian views and like his sister-in-law was banished from Massachusetts (Cook 1998:15–16; Koehler 1980: 222–230). He settled briefly in Exeter, New Hampshire, and later in Wells, Maine, but probably not before his daughter Katherine married Robert Nanny.

Katherine's first husband, Robert Nanny, acquired the Cross Street property in 1650. Robert Nanny was a successful merchant with an estate in Barbados, which he administered from Boston. Upon his death in 1663 all of his property passed to his wife in trust for his children. Of their seven children, two survived to adulthood. Katherine outlived both adult children, however, and all the property eventually reverted back to her ownership.

Not too long after Nanny's death, and certainly before the birth of her next child in 1667, Katherine Nanny married Edward Naylor, another merchant with ties to the Caribbean. This marriage was unhappy and short-lived. In 1671 Katherine Nanny Naylor charged her husband with adultery and abuse and filed for divorce. The accusations against Naylor included kicking his daughter down the stairs, impregnating a household servant with whom he ran off to New Hampshire, propositioning another servant, and even perhaps conspiring with the first servant to poison Katherine's beer (Cook 1998; Cook and Balicki 1996: 56–57). It appears that a divorce was granted and that Naylor was banished to 10 miles beyond the city (Cronin 1928: 224–225). Katherine continued to live at Cross Street until about 1700 when she moved to Charlestown where she remained until her death in 1716. From 1700 to 1715 the property was occupied by tenants (Cook and Balicki 1996: 58).

The Cross Street neighborhood was a heterogeneous one (Cook and Balicki 1996: 202, 231; Cheek 1998b: 7). Merchants like Robert Nanny could combine home and business on a lot that included a wharf as well as a house and which was close to warehouses. The presence of merchants engaged in international trade in turn encouraged craftspeople in shipping-related trades to move to the area as well as retailers to supply the residents. Cook and Balicki (1996: 203) have described the neighborhood as "motley."

By most accounts the Nanny Naylor household was financially comfortable (Cheek 1998b: 4). According to the 1687 tax list Katherine's son Samuel, who was listed as the head of the household, was taxed 6 pence for their property. This was just over the average household tax; 75 percent of the households were taxed below 6 pence (Cook and Balicki 1996: 204). Cheek argues that the artifacts recovered at the Cross Street site confirm that Katherine was the head of a moderately wealthy household (1998b: 5–7; see also Cook 1998: 18).

The Cross Street Privy

During archaeological exploration of the rear portion of the Naylor houselot in 1992, archaeologists discovered a brick-lined privy (Heck and Balicki 1998), which was excavated in 1994 (Cook and Balicki 1996). Excavation revealed that the privy contained an impressive assortment of domestic refuse including the usual fragmented ceramics, glass, and metal objects as well as extraordinarily well-preserved organic material such as fabrics, leather, and foodstuffs. The abundance and

high quality of the material remains were unprecedented in Boston archaeology. The combination of a wet, anaerobic environment caused by the high water table and a clay cap created an ideal environment for the preservation of organic materials including the wooden lawn bowl.

The privy was excavated using the Harris Matrix system and the bowl was recovered in HN100 (HN=Harris Number). The deposits in the privy were grouped into phase numbers that represent different periods in the privy's use. HN100 is the last deposit within phase 1 of the privy and represents the end of the privy's use as a traditional privy ca. 1670. This phase designation is important because it ties the deposit in which the bowl was found to the occupation of Katherine Nanny Naylor rather than to the period in which the site was occupied by tenants. The bowl was found under the collapsed floor of the original outhouse structure and appears to have been purposely discarded in the upper privy fill (see Heck and Balicki 1998 for a detailed discussion of the construction, use, and filling of the privy). Central Artery archaeologists calculated a number of dates for HN100. The Mean Ceramic Date is 1701; *terminus post quem* is 1670; and the pipe stem bore date is 1678 (Cook and Balicki 1996: 170; Heck and Balicki 1998: 26, table 1). The date of the use period of the bowl is essential to understanding the significance of the bowl because the perception of lawn bowling changed radically between the late 17th and early 18th centuries.

The Lawn Bowl

The bowl (FIG. 1) recovered in Katherine Nanny Naylor's privy is a "biased" lawn bowl. Lawn bowls of this period were often weighted (or biased) and were made in a number of shapes and sizes. This bowl is made of lathe-turned oak and is wheel shaped (as opposed to spherical), measuring 12 cm (4.75 in) in diameter and 8 cm (3.25 in) thick. It is decorated on each of the flatter sides with a pair of incised concentric circles. The center of one side contains a drilled or chiseled hole, 8–10 mm (3/8 in) in diameter and 4.3 cm (1.75 in) deep. Such holes contained a lead weight to bias the bowl. The hole was frequently covered with a decorative ivory or mother-of-pearl disc (Dalzell, personal communication, 1998). Although the Boston bowl was in good condition when thrown into the privy, its lead weight and decorative cover were missing, having been lost, removed, or recycled before the bowl was discarded.

History of Bowling

While a single bowl might seem to be little more than a curiosity, a brief review of bowling games and their histories helps to illustrate its significance. Puritan attitudes towards sport and recreation were complex, and this bowl was found in a stratigraphic context that dates to a period of transition in the history of Puritan Boston, a period characterized by increasing leniency in matters of recreation (Struna 1977).

The Basics of the Games

In general, bowling games fall into two categories: traditional bowling as played in most American towns and cities today and lawn bowls or lawn bowling, which, while not particularly popular in the United States, is very competitive elsewhere in the world. Both types of games have obscure origins that may extend quite far back into antiquity (Blanchard and Cheska 1985: 96). Many bowling histories cite evidence of a possible bowling-type game recovered by Sir Flinders Petrie in a child's burial. While ancient connections are difficult to confirm, most sports historians agree that modern lawn bowling and pin-bowling games are unrelated games with different antecedents (Menke 1953: 208, 642; Esch in Menke 1975: 722).

Games that require the player to roll a ball at pins are usually referred to as bowling, and there are a number of historical variations including nine pines, skittles, closh, loggats, and kayles (Strutt 1968: 219–221). The origin of these games is most likely German and stems from a tradition of rolling a stone at a kegle (Menke 1953: 208–209; McMahon and Goodman 1958: 72). A kegle is a club formerly carried by German men for sports and self protection (Pluckhahn in Menke 1975: 228).

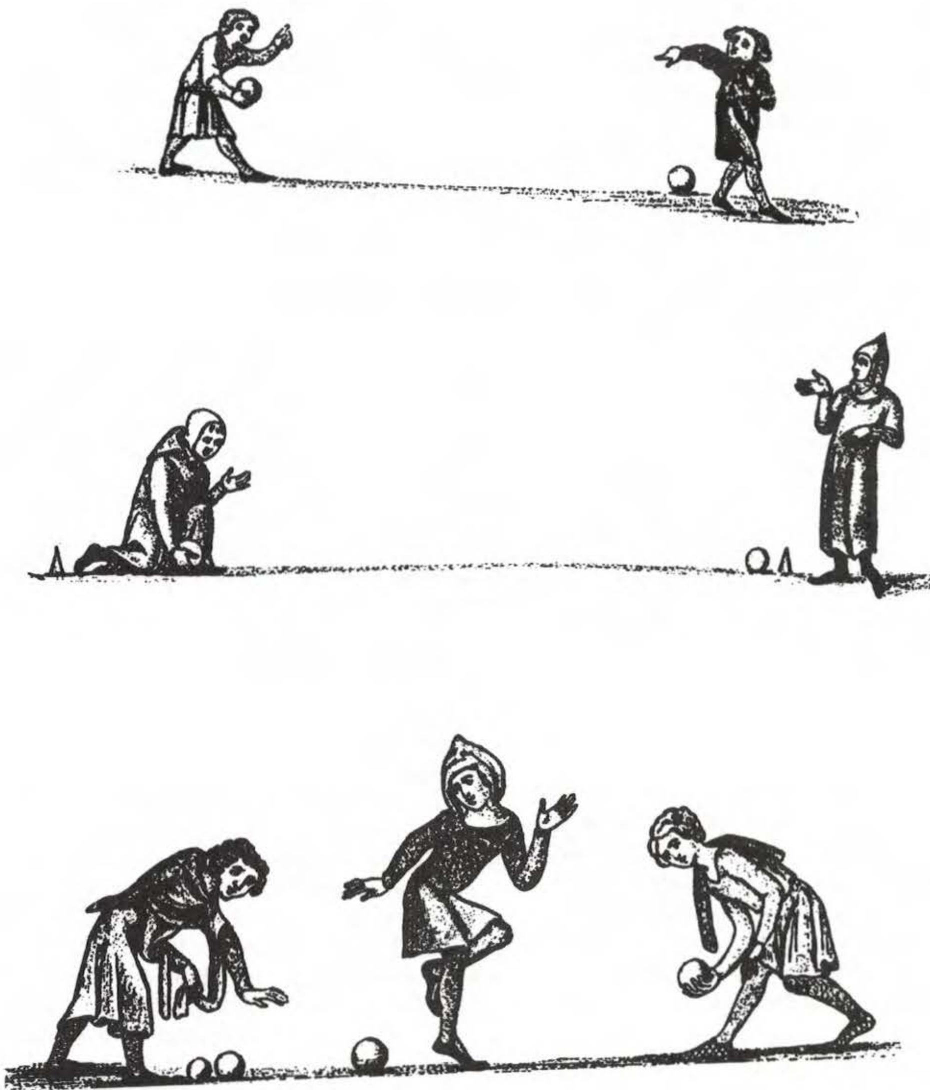

Figure 3. Illustration of 14th-century bowlers (Strutt 1968).

German citizens might be called by the church to prove that they were living an honorable life; to do so the person's kegle was planted in the ground at the end of a runway and the person would be asked to roll a reasonably round stone at the kegle. Hitting the kegle was proof of a chaste life (Menke 1953; McMahon and Goodman 1958: 73). Others suggest that hitting the kegle symbolically cleansed the soul (Pluckhahn in Menke 1975: 228). As time passed this church activity evolved into a game that was played throughout northern Europe.

Lawn bowling's origins are also obscure. The modern game is closely related to the Italian game *bocci,* which Esch takes as evidence of the game having origins in ancient Greece or Rome (1975: 722). Whatever the origin of the game, by 1299 it was a popular English pastime (Menke 1953: 642; Strutt 1968[1801]: 216). Lawn bowls is based on rolling the bowl towards a smaller ball called

the jack. The game has many variations and is often played in teams (Esch in Menke 1975: 732; Menke 1958). In its most basic form, the object of the game is to bowl as close as possible to the jack, which is bowled first. The game is made more complicated and challenging by offensive strategies that block your opponent's access to the jack or even hit the jack away (FIG. 3, bottom).

Modern lawn bowls is played on a standardized court. Menke (1958: 647) provides an illustration of a modern lawn bowling court, which is 44 yards on a side and surrounded by a shallow ditch, which will catch bowls that roll out of bounds. The green is divided into rinks, long alleys 19–21 ft wide and 120 ft long. The modern jack is a small white ball. It weighs 10 ounces and is 2.5 inches in diameter. Bowls range in size from 4 13/16 (12.22 cm) to 5 1/8 (13.01 cm) inches in diameter, weigh 3 pounds 2 ounces to 3 pounds 8 ounces, and they are biased. The bowl recovered in Boston is 12 cm in diameter, within the modern size range. It is more difficult to compare the weight of this bowl to modern bowls because of the water-logged environment in which it was found and the subsequent conservation treatment it has received. The weight of the lead bias that would have been inside it cannot be determined. Before the standardization of the game by professional associations all that players needed were the bowls and a relatively flat open space. In fact the popularity of the game seems in part to have depended on the ease of its rules.

Bowling in England

Lawn bowls is discussed in a number of early texts on recreation. *Country Contentments*, a 17th-century discussion of rural pastimes, describes bowling as a wholesome activity and provides some clues about its playing (Markham 1654). Success in a game of bowls depended on choosing the correct bowl, of which there were three basic types: flat, biased, and round, for the terrain.

> Another Recreation hath been prescribed for a recreation to great Persons, and that is Bowling in which a man shall find great Art in choosing out his ground, & preventing the Winding, Hanging, and many turning advantages of the flame, whether it be in open Wide places, or in close allies; and in this sport the choosing of the bowle is the greatest cunning, your flat bowles being the best for close allies, your round byassed bowls for open Grounds of advantage, and your round bowles like a ball, for green swarths that are plain and level. (Markham 1654: 46)

Charles Cotton copied much of Markham's work in his own book *The Compleat Gamester*, first published in 1674. To the description above he added that "there is no advising by Writing how to Bowl, practice must be your best tutor, which must advise you the Rising, Fallings, and all the several advantages that are to be had in divers Greens, and Bowling Alleys (Cotton 1970 [1674]: 39–41)." The most detailed account of how to bowl is provided by Strutt (1968[1801]: 217), who reproduces a 14th-century illustration of three variations of the game (FIG. 3). These early references suggest the many varieties of the game and suggest that the skill of the game was in the ability to choose the appropriate bowl for the play area, which could be an alley, an open field, or a bowling green.

The playing area was flexible before the creation of leagues. Formal bowling greens were introduced first in England (Strutt 1968[1801]: 218), and alleys may have originated in Germany, but these were later developments. Neither a green nor an alley was necessary to play the game, although incorporating a green into formal gardens was not uncommon (Healy and Holmes 1994: 294; Nichols 1902: 194; Strutt 1968[1801]: 218). Strutt suggests that alleys were covered and afforded a place to play even in inclement weather. Alleys, he says, were attached to opulent homes and provided a place for ladies to act as spectators if they were not playing. These landscape features were later developments that were more likely to convey messages of wealth and leisure than to be integral aspects of the game.

An Illegal Pastime

The simplicity and flexibility of the game made it a popular one, so popular in fact that

it was made illegal for all but the upper classes. English legislation against bowling began during the reign of Henry VIII in 1511 and was strengthened in 1541 (Strutt 1968[1801]: 217–218; Vale 1977: 108). Legislating against popular sport was a common practice in medieval England where kings encouraged only military sports in the form of jousts, tournaments, and mock open-field battles (Daniels 1992: 163–164; Henricks 1982: 21–24, 30). Commoners, who would also form the king's infantry, were encouraged to play at military sports to prepare them for battle. There was no other formal training or preparation for military service (Henricks 1982: 21–22).

Most prohibitory laws applied only to poorer citizens, however. Men who could prove an annual income of at least £100 were free to bowl and did so. Charles I and Charles II were both fond of bowls; Henry VIII added a bowling alley to Whitehall (Strutt 1968 [1801]: 217–218). A number of books on appropriate entertainment and education for a proper gentleman included instructions for bowls (Vale 1977; Markham 1654; Cotton 1970). Other than Strutt, who indicates that women did bowl, no writers consulted for this study mention women as regular bowlers.

Although attitudes towards recreation changed somewhat over time, bowling among poorer classes remained illegal for two centuries. In 1618, James I issued a declaration on sports, later printed as the *Book of Sports*, in which he encouraged his subjects to engage in all manner of lawful recreation on Holy Days after church services. Bowling, however, did not enjoy the King's support. While encouraging recreation in general and particularly on Sundays, the *Book of Sports* expressly mentions bowls as an unlawful activity for the poorer classes. "But withal we do here accompt still as prohibited all unlawful games to be used upon Sundays only, as bear and bull-baitings, interludes, and at all times in the meaner sort of people by law prohibited, bowling" (quoted in Tanner 1930: 56). The address was an important part of James I's crusade against the Sabbatarian movement. Sabbatarian leaders in the English countryside prohibited commoners from doing anything on the Sabbath, a day which they felt should be observed in the same fashion as the Jewish Sabbath. In order to get the word out regarding his very different attitude toward recreation and the Sabbath, James I ordered the *Book of Sports* to be read from the pulpit (Tanner 1930: 49). When Puritans heard the *Book of Sports* read from the pulpit, it was interpreted as an endorsement of sin and it helped to identify sports "with Anglican apostasy and overweening political power" (Daniels 1992: 166). That did not, however, improve bowling's reputation.

Bowling in the New World

Bowling came to the New World with the earliest settlers. The first colonial reference to the game comes from Jamestown, Virginia. Sir Thomas Dale reported that as he came ashore at Jamestown to assume the governorship of the colony he witnessed people playing bowls in the streets (Lucas and Smith 1978: 4–5). Bowling's earliest appearance in New England is in the form of legislation controlling recreation. There has been considerable debate over Puritan views on recreation (Daniels 1995: 4–15). John Winthrop realized that without some sort of moderate exercise he grew melancholy, dull, discontent, and uncomfortable, but was quickly restored to health after some "outward recreation" (Winthrop in Struna 1977: 3–4). The concept of recreation was agreeable to Puritans, but choosing appropriate recreation was a distinct problem (Struna 1977: 2–3). Recreation was recommended as long as the activity did not conflict with Puritan doctrine and was not "ungodly, unlawful, unreasonable, or unproductive" (Daniels 1995: 16). The contradictions inherent in this view are discussed at great length by Daniels in his discussion of "sober mirth" (1995), and it is not necessary to repeat them here, but an example of an acceptable activity is illustrative. The card game whist was a popular and acceptable pastime because it was

> quiet, contemplative, and companionable; it required skills of logic and arithmetic, it could not be readily played in a rowdy atmosphere or under the influence of alcohol, and it needed no betting to make

the competition exciting. (Daniels 1995: 179)

Whist, while recreational in nature, compared favorably with other occupations approved by Puritan leaders who were dedicated to hard work and opposed to idleness in all forms.

Whatever the views on recreation and leisure in general, sports were particularly problematic. Sportive play was essentially frivolous, conflicted with proper observance of the Sabbath, was often brutal and barbarous, constituted a moral danger, and on Sundays was socially and morally damaging (Solberg 1977: 49–51). And while some sports such as fishing and fowling were considered safe (Daniels 1995), ball sports, which includes bowls, were never an acceptable pastime because of their tendency to lead to gambling. There was no way to bowl without putting one's soul at risk.

Bowling was forbidden in the laws of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In 1650 bowling was added to a 1647 law (Shurtleff 1853: 195) that banned shuffleboard in inns and taverns (Shurtleff 1854: 201–202). The original act cited complaints of "great disorder" and continues that "much precious time is spent unfruitfully, and much waste of wine and beer occasioned" in houses of "common entertainment" where shuffleboard was played. The penalty for the owner of the establishment was 20 shillings for every offense plus each individual playing was fined 5 shillings (Shurtleff 1853: 195). The 1650 amendment prohibited bowling with the same penalties as for shuffleboard and further prohibited betting on the game or playing for money.

There was more flexibility at home, but activity there was also regulated. In 1630 all colonists were ordered to dispose of any cards, dice, or tables in their houses before the next court convened. In the case of this law, it is clear that the problem was gambling, not necessarily the games themselves (Lucas and Smith 1978: 7–8). Bowling was not illegal at home, although the scrutiny of the court and fellow colonists may have given pause to those who considered placing a wager on a game. As in England, bowling required little other than the bowls and could be played virtually anywhere; any laws placed against bowls were likely hard to enforce.

Innkeepers were closely watched for several decades. In 1692 Kathryn Nanny Naylor's brother was punished in Wells, Maine (then a part of Massachusetts) for allowing bowling in a tavern he ran (Wheelwright 1894). In 1698 an "Act for the inspecting and suppressing of disorders in licensed houses" was passed that expressly forbade the licensee to allow "any playing at dice, cards, tables, quoits, loggets, bowles, shuffle-board, nine-pin, billyards, or any other unlawful game or games in his house yard, garden, backside, or any of the dependencies thereof" (Commonwealth of Massachusetts 1869: 328). The problem with bowling was not necessarily the playing of the game itself, but in the apparent temptation to bet on the game (Daniels 1992: 177) and the tendency towards loud and boisterous behavior among the players and spectators.

As time passed attitudes towards bowling softened somewhat. Struna (1977) describes a gradual lessening of restrictions on recreation across successive generations of Puritans in New England. By the early 18th century, bowling in taverns was an acceptable enough recreation to be advertised in the papers. An advertisement in the *Boston News-Letter* from 1714 announced that a bowling green had changed hands and now belonged to the owner of the British Coffee House: a place "where all gentlemen, Merchants and others, that have a Mind to Recreate themselves shall be well accommodated" (*Boston News-Letter* April 26–May 3, 1714). What is most likely the same bowling green is clearly visible on the 1722 Bonner Map (FIG. 4), just a few blocks from the Cross Street Site. This is a rapid change in attitude, coming only 16 years after legislation banned bowling in taverns.[2]

[2] A similar pattern of rapidly growing acceptance of bowls may have existed in New York City. While no bowling green appears on the Carwitham Plan and Chart which depicts New York in 1730, a bowling green does appear on the 1735 "Mrs. Buchnerd's Plan" of Lower Manhattan. The Grim Plan of 1742 (drawn in 1813) shows a bowling green just north of Fort George, in an area formerly known as the Parade Ground (this latter bowling green is in the area of Battery Park, which is still known today as Bowling Green). (See Cohen and Augustyn 1997 for maps of NYC.)

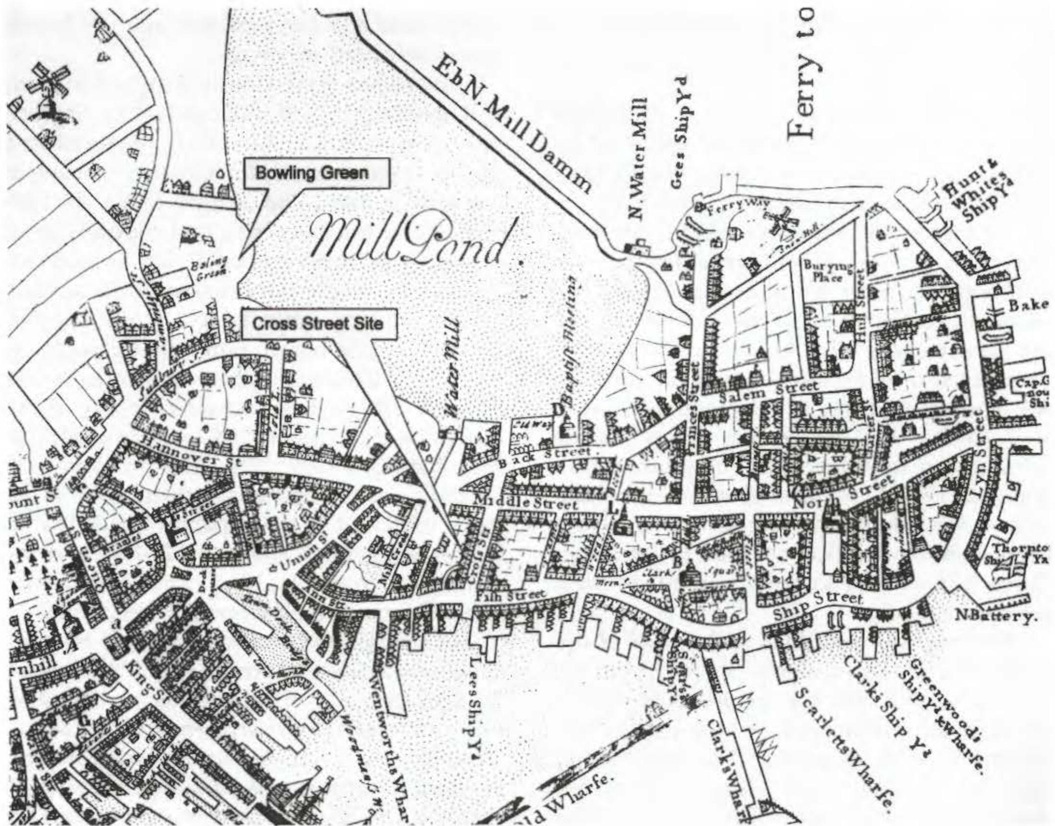

Figure 4. Detail of the 1722 Bonner map of Boston with the bowling green in Bowdoin Square and the Cross Street Site highlighted.

The Boston Bowl

The Cross Street bowl is significant for much more than its status as "the oldest." This type of artifact forces the archaeologist to consider an often overlooked aspect of the houselot—the recreational functions of the yard—and to consider the primary uses and organization of the houselot rather than simply the depositional contexts of artifacts removed from their context of use (Beaudry 1984, 1986). Beaudry recommends creating an ethnographic context that allows the researcher to understand the economic, legal, and social systems that may affect activities in the private home.

The first consideration may be to ask what archaeological features relating to the playing of the game would be expected. The presence of the bowl, however, does not assume the presence of a bowling green. Bowling greens were a later development and tended to be incorporated into the formal landscapes of large estates built later in the 18th century such as the green at George Washington's Mount Vernon estate (Pogue 1996: 55) or that at Mount Clare near Baltimore (Weber et al. 1990).[3] Documentary research at Mount Clare found that a bowling green should, if possible, be at least an acre (Weber et al. 1990: 147). The Cross Street area was a crowded, "motley" neighborhood with little or no space for formal landscapes. Wealthy residents

[3] Archaeologists working at Mount Clare, on the outskirts of Baltimore, MD, searched for archaeological remains of a formal bowling green with little success. Documentary studies however, found that these greens should simply be wide flat plats of lawn, possibly bordered by a hedge (Weber et al. 1990: 147).

desirous of more land would have had to move much farther out into the country and off of the peninsula to have the room for a bowling green. In the 17th and 18th centuries residents would have had to settle for the public green downtown or any flat space in the country.

What is noteworthy about the bowl's presence in the Nanny Naylor privy is what it suggests about the recreational choices of this household. We have established that Puritan Bostonians used legislation to shape the leisure activities of the town's residents according to Puritan ideologies. The reasons for the bowl's disposal in the privy are anyone's guess and not necessarily important to the current discussion. What is significantly more important is that members of Katherine Nanny's household played at bowls, a game that was popular but illegal in certain circumstances both in her former home in England and in her new home in Boston. The Cross Street bowl begins a conversation on the balance between choices made in private home activities and public mores. The privy context spans a period of transition in the New England colonies (1660–1715) in which attitudes toward recreation were in flux (Struna 1977). Were the members of the household led by Katherine Wheelwright Nanny Naylor more progressive than most residents of the neighborhood?

It is important to remember that by bowling at home Katherine's family was not breaking any law as long as no bets were placed on the games. They were engaging, however, in an activity that was clearly frowned upon.[4] Of course in seeking and obtaining a divorce, it is clear that Katherine Nanny was a strong-willed woman who would not idly accept societal strictures. This is in keeping with her upbringing in a family known for religious dissent. After all her father, John Wheelwright, and step aunt, Anne Hutchinson, were each banished from the colony for their beliefs. The bowl might be further evidence of Katherine's liberal opinions or the pervasiveness of her family's disagreement with the politically powerful religious leaders.

Raising the lawn bowl from Katherine's privy to the level of signifier of religious and social liberalism may be a stretch. The bowl's presence, nevertheless, forces a discussion of the private activities of individuals within the well-documented ethnohistorical context of Puritan Boston. The Boston bowl is evidence of a lifestyle that was at odds with a strict interpretation of a proper Puritan lifestyle. While her connection to the Hutchinson family and her relative wealth may make Katherine less typical than most 17th-century Bostonians, her behavior and possessions raise worthy questions about the private lives of the residents of early Boston.

[4] One might compare bowling in the 17th century to smoking in the 20th. Boston recently banned all smoking in restaurants.

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Ann-Eliza Lewis is the Archaeological Collections Manager for the Massachusetts Historical Commission in Boston, MA. She received her Ph.D. from Boston University in 1998 and specializes in the archaeology of ethnicity.

Ann-Eliza Lewis
Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Boston, MA 02125
cp@sec.state.ma.us