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MEMBER OF THE EASTERN STATES ARCHEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

SALLY ROCK QUARRY

William F. Bowman

INTRODUCTION

On July 30, 1978 the writer, accompanied by John Cotta, Bill Hallaren, and Wayne McCue, decided to examine a geologically known exposure of the Mattapan Volcanics (Skehan 1975:35-36). As this outcrop occurs within the Neponset River Valley, it was our hope that it would prove to be yet another aboriginal lithic source.

Upon arriving at the outcrop we immediately recognized the material there as the white felsite which is common in the lithic debitage from early Middle Archaic sites all along the Neponset and Cochato River valleys. This material was reported at the Cedar Swamp Site (Bowman and Zeoli 1977:43,46).

THE SITE

Known as Sally Rock Quarry, the site can be found on the Boston South Quadrangle. Conveniently located for aboriginal exploitation, the quarry lies about half a mile north of the Neponset River on Stony Brook.

Due to considerable urbanization of this area and to extensive quarrying in the recent past for road material and roofing granules (Weaver 1967:83-93), little now remains in evidence of the once extensive aboriginal stone workings at this location.

LITHOLOGY

The material here is a compact, aphanitic, rhyolitic felsite. The color ranges on a fresh break from white or yellowish to light grey, brown, or greenish. The vast majority of the material weathers with a white to cream colored patina, often with iron oxide staining due to large quantities of minute disseminated phenocrysts of iron pyrites. In the typical material, phenocrysts of quartz and feldspar are not at all common and in this sense Sally Rock felsite is not porphyritic. However, some small areas can be found where the rock takes on a coarser texture and becomes what could be called aplite, or fine-grained granite. In this form, it is reminiscent of the finer phases of the Weymouth-Hingham seamface granite.

ARTIFACTS AND FEATURES

One natural talus slope with prehistoric materials was located and surface collected. We found considerable debitage and signs of prehistoric quarrying at the white felsite outcroppings. Among our recoveries here was a full-grooved axe, made of hornfelsized Braintree slate and presumably used in quarrying. We also found a small number of exotic flakes of Blue Hills aporhyolite and a red banded aporhyolite from another quarry about a mile from Sally Rock.

CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS

From a survey of collections it is apparent that this material was popular during the Middle Archaic, and is especially common for tools of the Neville Complex (Dincauze 1976). Neville points, associated u-based preforms, choppers, scrapers, and even a chipped ulu made of Sally Rock felsite were recorded.

After this early phase of utilization the quarry does not seem to have been exploited much until the Middle Woodland period. Greene points sometimes appear made from this material, and a Fox Creek and a Levanna-like point of this material were also found in the collections (Ritchie 1971).

These later artifacts made of Sally Rock felsite do not have a well-developed white patina and appear much fresher than the Archaic artifacts, often being grey, light brown, or greenish. The degree of patination is therefore a help in distinguishing early Middle Archaic debitage from the later Middle Woodland material.

DISTRIBUTION

The distribution of Sally Rock felsite on archaeological sites is little known. It occurs frequently on Middle Archaic sites along the Neponset and Cochato River valleys. Scattered examples of it are also known from the South Shore river systems such as Back River, Weir River and North River. Sally Rock felsite has been seen in collections from the Taunton River.

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SALVAGE ARCHEOLOGY AT INDIAN ROCK HOUSE

Bernard W. Powell

Long known to hikers and others who use the public Town Forest of Wilton, Connecticut, "Indian Rock House" was systematically first studied by the author in the summer of 1972. His attention was directed to the site by his son, who showed him the spot while on an overnight Scout camping trip.

Permission to excavate was obtained from the town's Parks, Recreation and Conservation Commission (F.C. Herot, Pers. comm., 4/3/72). cursory survey of the site revealed both old and recent "potholing," and local inquiries soon established that the place had been known to generations of Wiltonites who have played and camped in and near the shelter. Some of these people were able to recall finds of artifacts in the past, but fortunately no one had ever guessed the real nature of the site, and no wholesale ex-