

Canonchet Brook Site 15

Lawton Foster (elder) Farm

Analysis by Mary Gage
Photos by James Gage
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This site is discussed in *Land of a Thousand Cairns* (2017) by Mary Gage and James Gage

Brief Overview

The site is located within the original 120 acre parcel of land purchased by Lawton Foster in 1807. Lawton died in 1843 and is buried in the family cemetery on the property. The site map shows three groupings of cairns. It is unknown if we are looking at three distinctive groups or one continuous single group. The route of the walkover of the property did not allow for a determination of this point.

A section of wide field clearing disposal wall was observed. The 1939 aerial photo indicates on the east of the wall was an open field. This field is current used for a vineyard. The field was suitable for growing crops.

The stone cairns showed a diversity of designs, a characteristic associated with Native American ceremonial sites. The large cairn (#11) had an intentionally made depression feature on top of it. Another cairn #9 had a Manitou. These features reinforce the ceremonial interpretation.

#9 Mound on Top of Boulder with Manitou Stone

Base stone: 1' H x 5' W x 5' L
Cairn size: 1' 6" H x 3' W x 5' L
Stone sizes: Large, medium, small
Manitou stone is roughly diamond shape.
It was placed in upright position on the ground next to the base stone. 1' 3" H x 1' 2" W

Base stone has at least three splits. One split has a stone partially inside of it at one end. It is unclear if this was an intentional placement or a stone that slipped off the mound on top. The second split is empty per se. One support stone that holds up on edge of the mound on top is partially in the split. The third split is a fracture in the rock.

Mound on top exhibits some exterior walling.



#10 Five Stones on Top of Boulder

Stones: 4", 5", 6", 9", 10" (length)



#10A Single Layer on Top of Boulder

*noted in field notes but not documented

No photo

#11 Large Open-End/Closed-End Cairn on Bedrock

Cairn: 6' 4" H x 22' 8" L x 9' 6" W

Bedrock: 2' 6" H (visible on east end)

Depression feature on top: 1' 6" L x 1' 9" W x 1' 6" Deep

Stone sizes: Large, medium, small

This is a large vertical walled cairn with an intentional open end. The ends of the wall at the opening appear to be finished rather than in some stage of collapse. The depression feature on the top is well defined and appears to be intentional (not the result a small tree growing out of the cairn). Stones as small as 1 to 3 inches in length were observed on top of the cairn.



Arrow indicates “open-end” of this large cairn



The end of the walls at the opening have a finished appearance indicating the opening is intentional rather than the result of collapse



Depression feature on top of the cairn



Bedrock base of cairn

#12 Split Wedge Cairn

A single stone is wedged in the split of the boulder. The boulder is due west of the cemetery entrance about 50 to 75 feet away. The alignment of this cairn and the cemetery entrance appears to be intentional.



Foster Cemetery (HP047)

Cemetery has a stone wall around it made of field stones and quarried field stones. The plug and feather method was used to split the boulders. The entrance of the cemetery faces west.

41° 28' 30.0" N
71° 45' 44.4" W



Lawton Foster Cemetery



Arrow points to split wedge cairn (#12)

#13 Open-End/Closed-End Cairn

Cairn: 2' 6" H x 5' 6" W x 7' L
 Stone sizes: large, medium, small

On the open end, large stones were placed around the edges to contain the fill of small stones. Some of the stone inside of the cairns are in the range of 1 to 3 inches in length.



“Closed-End”

“Open-end” is on left of photos. Stones slope down from top of the close-end to the ground. Note the larger stones around bottom edge of open-end



#13A Mound against stone wall (field clearing?)

Field clearing? A wide section of disposal wall from field clearing activity on the east side of the wall is located north of this structure. It is possible this mound may be stones dumped over the wall from the opposite side. Further investigation is needed. All of the other cairns documented in this report exhibit characteristics that indicate they are ceremonial not field clearing. For example the small 1 to 3 inch size stones in #13, and the alignment of #12 with the cemetery entrance.

*noted in field notes but not documented. No photo.

#13B On Top of Boulder Trailing to Ground

*noted in field notes but not documented. No photo.

#14 Open-End/Closed-End Cairn on Boulder

Base stone: 6" H x 7' L x 3'4" W

Cairn: 2'4" H x 7' L x 3'4" W

Stone sizes: Large, medium, small

Note the small stones 4 inches or less in length in cairn (bottom of scale card is in inches)



#14 (continued)

