

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

Aug. 12, 1977

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Tomaquag Rock Shelters (RI-HP-1)

AND/OR COMMON

same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Burdickville Road

 NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Hopkinton

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

 VICINITY OF 2 -- Rep. Edward Beard

STATE Rhode Island

CODE 44

COUNTY Washington

CODE 009

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION | <input type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL |
| | | | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY |
| | | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Town and Country Homes Company

STREET & NUMBER Tomaquag Road

CITY, TOWN Ashaway

VICINITY OF

STATE

Rhode Island 02804

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Hopkinton Town Hall

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Hopkinton

STATE

Rhode Island

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Rhode Island Archeological Survey

DATE March 14, 1975

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

CITY, TOWN Providence

STATE

Rhode Island

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|---|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Introduction:

The Tomaquag rock shelters are east-facing indentures in a granite ledge in a north-south valley in southwestern Rhode Island. Test excavation revealed two aboriginal occupations of the site: one at approximately 800 B.C. and the other about 800 A.D. The excellent preservation of the site promises to furnish important archeological information about extinct Native American lifestyles.

Relation of the site to the environment:

The Tomaquag rock shelters are located in a fifty foot high outcropping of Potter Granite Gneiss in the Tomaquag Valley in Hopkinton. The steep slope of the ledge contrasts sharply with the gentle slope of the valley. The rockshelters themselves are shallow, natural pockets in the base of the gneiss ranging from 2 to 8 feet in depth and from 3 to 10 feet in ceiling height. There are a total of 28 shelters in a linear half mile area; of the 28, 5 were probably suitable for human habitation.

The rock shelters run in a north-south line and face east over the Tomaquag Valley, a long and glacially-formed broad floodplain draining the Tomaquage Brook. There are numerous springs in the area providing a natural attraction for human habitation. The valley is covered by a secondary oak and birch forest with various shrubs.

Boundaries:

The area of occupation is apparently limited to the sheltered portions under the ledge. There is no surface evidence of pre-historic or later occupation in the marshy floodplain adjacent to the rock shelters.

The soils in the rock shelter area are Gloucester stony fine sandy loam. The surface soil is gray-brown and ranges in depth in the test excavation trench from 30 to 35 centimeters. The subsoils range in color from deep brown to gray. The surface soil contains the only evidence of occupation.

Previous Research:

The site was brought to the attention of archeologists by the owner at that time, Mr. Nathan Kaye, in 1958. No history of the site before that time is known. Mr. Kaye arranged for test excavation of the site by Dr. William Simmons under the direction of Dr. J. Louis

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Giddings, then of the Haffenreffer Museum of the American Indian, and Mrs. Eva Butler, then of the Connecticut State Teachers College at Willimantic. The excavation consisted of one 2 meter by 3 meter trench excavated to a depth of 50 centimeters. Except for this controlled disturbance there has been no modification of the site or environs.

Occupation Evidence:

Two occupation levels were determined from the Simmons excavation. The upper stratum was approximately 5 to 8 centimeters below the surface. The second occupation level was 30 to 35 centimeters below the surface. Both contained similar cultural evidence of chipped stone detritus, bone, and ash and rock areas used as fireplaces.

Material recovered from the top layer included projectile points and knives manufactured from quartz, quartzite, shale, chert, and jasper. The chert and jasper points were probably trade goods; this material does not occur locally and no chips or flakes of jasper were recovered at the site, indicating that the projectile points were made elsewhere. Chips and flakes of quartz and shale were, however, present in profusion, which means that the occupants spent considerable time manufacturing chipped stone implements. Artifact distribution did not extend beyond the moisture rim of the rock shelters, probably indicating that the rock shelters were inhabited primarily during foul weather.

A crude fireplace was also discovered in the upper occupation stratum. It contained unanalyzed charred bone, revealing that the occupants sustained part of their diet from hunting. Wood used in the fires was oak and birch, which points to a prehistoric environment similar to the present one.

A variety of stemmed projectile points indicates that the upper component dates to the Middle Woodland period, which in the Northeast ranges in age from 200 B.C. to 1000 A.D. The upper layer probably dates to the middle of that range. Ceramic remains, frequently used for diagnosis of the Middle Woodland phase, are lacking from the Tomaquag assemblage. Two alternative explanations of this lack are possible: one is that the artifact sample taken was too small; the other is that the occupants were wandering Middle Woodland hunters who could not afford the luxury of transporting excess material.

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The lower component ranges in depth from 30-35 centimeters and is marked by a predominance of Squibnocket-stemmed and small triangular projectile points. All of the points are made from quartz and shale available in various parts of the Rhode Island area. A small fire-place consisting of a circle of unworked rock and also containing charred bone was found toward the mouth of the rock shelter. The lower component typologically dates to the Late Archaic period, which in the Northeast ranges from 2,000 B.C. to 500 B.C. The Tomaquag occupation probably falls in the latter part of this time frame.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | | |

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The most significant quality of the Tomaquag rock shelters is the potential data that the site can yield. This is one of the few documented rock shelter sites in Rhode Island known to contain Native American remains that has not been totally excavated. The limited data already obtained and the excellent preservation of the site hold promise of providing new knowledge on a variety of features of the lifestyle of prehistoric Native American populations. The data obtained previously and inferences from other similar excavations point to occupation of the Tomaquag site by two groups with distinctive lifestyles, the Middle Woodland and the Late Archaic populations.

The Middle Woodland population had a basically settled lifestyle, and inhabited sites on the coastal plain and in valleys of the interior. Their settled life was based primarily on the cultivation of maize and beans but included seasonal forays for hunting and gathering as well. The data from the Tomaquag rock shelters has already revealed that such seasonal forays for food occurred there. Flotation recovery and analysis of floral and faunal remains could fill in the specifics of the favored diet of the hunters. The types of plants and animals that could be identified could provide data on what season of the year Middle Woodland hunters ventured from their settled camps and what type of environment they hunted in, and may even help to answer the questions of why they continued to hunt when a firm cultivation base had already been established.

The chert and jasper projectile points indicate that trade was an established part of their life. Comparison of the Tomaquag material with assemblages from settled sites could indicate the projectile point preferences of the hunters in terms of form, material, and the type of weapons employed. If ceremonial artifacts were recovered they could yield data on the hunters' cosmology.

A similar set of questions could be answered for the Late Archaic occupation of the site. The purpose of the answers would be different because the Late Archaic hunters were totally nomadic in their seasonal existence. The data from Tomaquag could reveal the seasonal preference for Tomaquag and the floral and faunal analysis could, perhaps, indicate why.

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Summary:

The Tomaquag rock shelters have already yielded and promise to yield important data about similar phases of prehistoric Native American lifestyles. The Middle Woodland and Late Archaic occupants both used the granite ledge as shelter while hunting and foraging for food. Future excavation has the potential to yield data on their diet, lifestyle, and possibly belief system.

Tomaquag is the best preserved, documented rock shelter in Rhode Island. As such it should be protected for the future when new excavation techniques can increase the amount of data gathered.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. "A Prehistoric Use of Shelters Uncovered by Archeologists," Westerly Sun, August 28, 1959.
2. Quinn, Alonzo, Bedrock Geology of Rhode Island, Geological Survey Bulletin 1295. Washington, D. C. 1971.
3. Ritchie, William A., The Archeology of Martha's Vineyard. Natural History Press, Garden City, N.Y., 1969.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/4 acre

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------------|--------------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 1,9 | 26,811,0,0 | 4,59,111,0,0 | B | | | |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | | | | D | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The site is located near the junction of the Ashaway-Alton and Burdickville Road, 200 yards south of the Ashaway-Alton Road and 50 yards east of Burdickville Road, in the Diamond Hill section of Hopkinton, northeast of the village of Ashaway.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

John A. Senulis, Senior Survey Specialist

ORGANIZATION

R. I. Historical Preservation Commission

DATE

September, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

150 Benefit Street

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Providence

STATE

Rhode Island

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE _____

LOCAL _____

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Tomaquag Rock Shelters

Hopkinton, Rhode Island

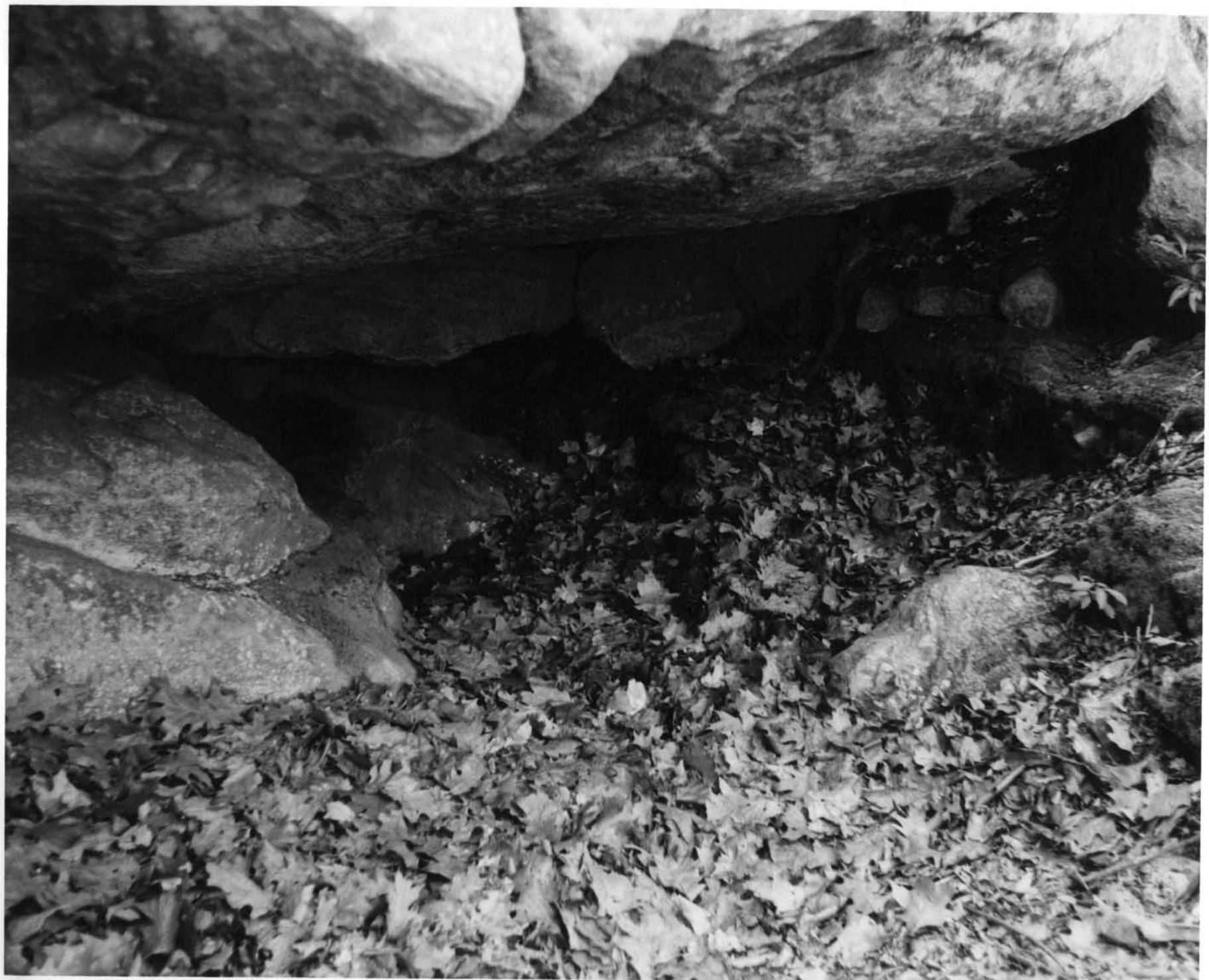
Photographer: John A. Senulis

Date: May, 1976

Negative: Rhode Island Historical
Preservation Commission

General view to the west.

photo # 1



Tomaquag Rock Shelters

Hopkinton, Rhode Island

Photographer: John A. Senulis

Date: May, 1976

Negative: Rhode Island Historical
Preservation Commission

View to the West showing excavation
Rock Shelters. Note exposed soil
profile in center of north edge
of rock shelter.

Photo # 2



Tomaquag Rock Shelters

Hopkinton, Rhode Island

Photographer: John A. Senulis

Date: May, 1976

Negative: Rhode Island Historical
Preservation Commission

View to the north of unexcavated
rock shelter.

photo #3

MBO
WA
ACO
FEL

TOMAGUAG ROCK SHELTERS (RI-HP-1)
HOPKINTON, RHODE ISLAND
19 268100 4591100

