

September 14, 1999

Dr. Nicholas Bellantoni, State Archaeologist
University of Connecticut U214
3107 Horsebarn Hill Road
Storrs, Ct. 06269-4214

Subject: Gravestone in basement of 555 Nova Scotia Hill Rd., Watertown, Ct.

Dear Dr. Bellantoni

On Friday August 27th, 1999 I visited the property owned by Mr. and Mrs. Francisco upon your invitation to inspect a gravestone that was found the basement of their recently purchased property. Also in attendance was the town historian Florence Crowell with probate papers and census listings she had brought in reference to one Mr. Levi Peck, who's name was inscribed on this stone.

I could not see any evidence of erosion on this marble gravestone that would seem to have been caused from any outdoor exposure and weathering. It did indeed show evidence of it's long time existence in a damp below ground cellar and the effects of having been implanted in concrete and cement. The marble stone itself was indeed a gravestone for one Mr. Levi Peck, 1802, however after gathering all the available facts (which I will site following), it is my belief that this particular stone was discarded and replaced by a more correct edition and done so within a reasonable period around the time of his death.

1) Other pieces of marble stone, obviously in the beginning stages of being made into a gravemarker but uninscribed were found on the property. It was common in earlier days to make use of these reject pieces for steps, fireplace mantels, chimney caps and the likes.

2) The lettering on this stone was still in very good condition, quite clear and edges still sharp. Which would again show that it had not suffered from any exposure to outside environmental elements and typical weathering .

3) Florence's records showed : a) Mr. Peck to have been born in June of 1748 and died in May of 1802 so he would have been 53 years old at death and this stone was inscribed "55 years".

b) Florence did verify for me that there was a stone cutting business in operation at that time, about 3 miles up the road in Thomaston owned by the Parks.

c) Also that Mrs. Anna Peck had signed the probate papers in Jan. of 1803, which cleared up any mystery as to the stone being for her.

In conclusion and along with results of your testing I would feel confident to say that assuredly this was a discarded and rejected stone that simply became a part of the farm. I would surmise that a property owner in the early 1900's upon not knowing whether or not an actual gravesite existed, chose to complete his renovations to the cellar with respect to the suspected grave space by marking it with the surrounding brick wall and placing the gravestone in the cement.

Lastly having the Historical Society take custody of the gravestone until such time that Mr. Peck's real gravesite may yet be found, is a respectable place for it to reside now that it has become a bit of history for the town to enjoy.

Best Regards,



Ruth Shapleigh-Brown
Exec. Director, Connecticut Gravestone Network

cc: Mr. & Mrs. Cristina Francisco
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Florence Crowell
Town Historian
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