

The Old Stone Walls of Prospect Hill Park

(A field guide and tour of the remnants of historic stone walls
in Prospect Hill Park, Waltham, Massachusetts)

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for
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and
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Background

To understand the remnants of the stone walls in Prospect Hill Park, one must first understand the roles stone walls played in colonial New England. For farms with tilled fields and pastures, the stone walls were often built as default dumping grounds along the edges of the fields for the stones which appeared on their surfaces. The glaciers left much debris on the region's surface as they retreated at the end of the last ice age. These stones were usually buried under the top soil as forests developed in the region. Once the forests were cleared to accommodate tilled fields and pastures, however, the buried stones worked their way to the surface through frost heave and other natural processes. The easiest place for the farmer to dispose of them was to move them to the edges of the fields and pastures.

In addition, the walls could be used to keep livestock separated from the tilled fields. As early as 1643, Watertown (the parent town from which Waltham later split off) had instituted the official office of fence viewer to inspect the fences in town, primarily to be able to determine responsibility for damage to crops by livestock. Many such fences were of wood to begin with, but eventually were converted to stone as wood became more scarce. This was especially true in the 1700s and early 1800s.

Fences, of course, also served to denote property boundaries. In the case of Prospect Hill, this part of Watertown was referred to as "waste lands" in the colonial records to distinguish it from "meadowland", used for cattle grazing, and arable land (often called "upland") used for raising crops. Prospect Hill was always used primarily as a woodlot for both construction lumber and firewood. Interestingly enough, at the end of the 1800s when the City of Waltham began acquiring the land for Prospect Hill Park, the current owners were more or less happy to sell it since coal had replaced wood as the primary heating fuel by then; the land had long since been logged over; and it was too steep for subdivision development. There were no permanent structures in this part of the City at that time, or any fields or pastures; so that it is probable the stone walls that now exist in the park were constructed primarily as plot boundaries.

The first grants of land on Prospect Hill were made in 1636, just six years after Watertown, along with Boston, were founded. Originally, colonial Watertown consisted of present-day Watertown, much of present-day Belmont, the parts of Waltham north of the Charles River, and Weston. Besides the initial distribution of homesteads in 1630 near the then center of town (along the river between the Cambridge border and present-day Watertown Center), there were five additional allocations of town land to individual townsmen by 1642. These land grants, voted by the town's own freemen, covered pretty much the entire area of the original town. Of these grants, the first and fifth included land now in Prospect Hill Park (see map on page 10). The first grant, made in 1636, was called the "Great Dividends". The second grant, made in 1637 and called the "Beaver Brook Plowlands", consisted mostly of land along Beaver Brook. The third grant was for land in the "Remote or West Pine Meadows" or the "Farmers District", which later became Weston. It was begun in 1637, but not completed until 1642. The fourth land grant, in 1638, was for a small area known as the "Town Plot", which was only 2.5 miles west of the town

center, around the location of present day Lexington Street in Belmont. The fifth land grant, made later in 1638, was called the “Land in Lieu of Township” grant because many of its recipients were townsmen who had been denied land in the Town Plot. These original land grants still have an influence on us, today, as many of our current streets and property lines still follow their lot boundaries from the mid-1600s.

Lots in the Town Plot had been granted only to townsmen who were also members of the town’s church. All townsmen were required to attend church, but only some townsmen had actually been accepted into church membership. The Land in Lieu of Township grants had been made only after the non-church members had complained to the Massachusetts Bay Colony’s government. Even so, the land in the Land in Lieu of Township grants were divided up by the town so that church-members, “freemen”, received 12 acres each, while non-church-members, “inhabitants”, received only six. By 1640, the government of the Massachusetts Bay Colony declared that church membership could not be a factor in allotting land. Furthermore, in 1647 the colony’s government prohibited discriminating against non-church members in town elections. The following year a new board of selectmen was elected in the town, and the lots of the Land in Lieu of Township were redistributed so non-church members could also get 12 acres. However, controversies over land ownership continued in the town, causing the Bay Colony’s government to send a special commission to Watertown in 1654 to straighten it all out. Following this, all the grants were resurveyed by surveyors from other towns, and lots were laid out properly. This went on through the 1660s. By 1670 it appears the lot boundaries were, finally, well established.

The first grants of land on Prospect Hill were part of the “Great Dividends” land grants of 1636 (see maps on pages 10 and 11). These grants consisted of 120 lots divvied out to the 120 “freemen” of Watertown. These “freemen” were not the only male residents of the town, but generally the wealthier men, who were the town’s founders and had been accepted into its church. The lots were divided into four groups of 30 lots, called squadrons, with each group of lots being a strip one-half mile wide and about 5 miles long. Most lots were rectangles one-half mile long (taking up the width of the squadron) and an integral number of rods wide. A rod was a measure of length equal to 16.5 feet, and a rectangle one rod wide by one-half mile long corresponds to an area of one acre. Therefore, the area of a Great Dividend lot in acres was the same as its width in rods. Surveyors of the day carried metal chains, which were one rod long, for measuring such lengths. The lots varied from ten to 100 rods wide and, thus, ten to 100 acres in area. The boundary lines separating the squadrons were called “squadron lines”, and the boundary lines between the lots in a squadron were perpendicular to the squadron lines. The Great Dividend squadrons ran roughly north-west to south-east, parallel to the boundary between Waltham (then part of Watertown) and Lexington (then part of Cambridge), for about five miles from just over the present-day borders with Lincoln and Weston to around Beaver Brook. The border with present-day Lexington was the northern most squadron line. The southern most squadron line was two miles south of this, and intersected Prospect Hill between Big Prospect and Little Prospect peaks. The southern most squadron was called the first squadron, and its southern border was the southern most squadron line. The squadron next north was the second squadron; the next north to that was the third squadron; and the last squadron north, adjacent to the present-day Lexington border, was the fourth squadron. Lots in each squadron were numbered (more or less) sequentially starting from one at the south-east end of each squadron.

The other original land allocation that affected land now inside Prospect Hill Park was the 1638 “Land in Lieu of Township” grants. These grants were located immediately southwest of the Great Dividend grants, and the lots were laid out similarly to those in the Great Dividends (see maps on pages 10 and 11). There were four groups (squadrons) of lots, with each group one-half miles wide and separated from its neighboring group by a squadron line. The southern most squadron line of the Great Dividends formed the northern most squadron line of the Land In Lieu of Township grants, and the other squadron lines were parallel to those of the Great Dividends. The lots of the In Lieu of Township grants were similarly shaped to those of the Great Dividends (i.e. rectangular, with lot lines perpendicular to squadron lines), but mostly much narrower. These lots were only six or 12 acres in extent, so that their widths along the squadron lines were only 6 or 12 rods (about 100 or 200 feet). Thus they were very long (one-half mile between squadron lines), but narrow lots. The In Lieu of Township lots were numbered sequentially throughout all their squadrons starting with one at the north east corner of the grants to 66 at the south west corner. These grants extended north-south from between Big and Little Prospect peaks to the southern most point in Waltham, and east-west from around South Street near Brandeis University to Bear Hill.

Thanks to the efforts of Edmund L. Sanderson, a very active local historian, who did extensive research on the early land grants in the first third of the twentieth century, the locations and first owners of the lots in the Great Dividends grants have been well established. For the lots in the Land in Lieu of Township grants, however, because of the allocation controversies at the time, the names of the original grantees and the dates when the lots were originally acquired are somewhat more questionable. For the purposes of this survey, the grantees determined by Sanderson will be used. It should also be mentioned that Sanderson determined that the name “Prospect Hill” dates from at least 1669.

Even though the lots had gone through many owners and many subdivisions by the time the City acquired the land for Prospect Hill Park, starting in the late 1800s, many of the boundaries of the lots the City acquired were still along the original land grant lines. In addition, many of these boundary lines were along stone walls, as attested to in the deeds of the various parcels to the City. In fact, on a geographic survey map of the park area dated 1899, many more walls are shown than exist today, and the Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners from 1902 makes note of the fact that many of the stone walls within the park’s borders had disappeared since the park was created (see maps on pages 12 and 13).

In addition to stone walls, another ancient man-made feature within the park is the main road through it (called “Prospect Hill Lane” at one time, and now called “Glen Road”). Sections of the road date to as early as 1731. In that year some of the property owners on Prospect Hill petitioned the town government to build a road through the area to give them access to their properties, presumably to make use of the timber resources. In the resulting order issued by the town government, the route of the road is given in detail – often described as along stone walls. Therefore, it seems reasonable to assume the oldest stone walls in the park probably date sometime between 1670, when the lots were definitively surveyed, and 1731, when the walls are documented. This townway, which entered the park area at the park’s current south gate, circled around Little and Big Prospect peaks on the west along the current park road route, and exited

from the park area along present day Prospect Hill Lane and its north-south right of way easement behind the office building along the west side of the park (see map on page 13). Although this road was mostly abandoned in the late 1800s, it was the usual route of the Lancaster Stage in the 1820s and 1830s. There were a number of stagecoach lines in those years that carried passengers and mail from Boston through Cambridge, Waltham, Lancaster, Leominster to Fitchburg. From there, other lines continued on to Albany, NY. In 1845, the first rail road reached Fitchburg from Boston, through Waltham. Therefore, it is possible the road through the park was abandoned by the town after this date. Edmund Sanderson clearly shows this road on his 1935 map of what Waltham looked like in 1738, the year it became a separate town from Watertown (see map on page 11); and Nelson also mentions it in his 1879 history of Waltham. The road is also shown on the 1899 topographical map of the Prospect Hill area, with “old Lancaster Stage Road” hand written on it (see map on page 12). It is interesting to note that the rail road was pushed through to Fitchburg by Alvah Crocker, who owned what, at one time, was the country’s largest paper mill, located in Fitchburg. He later became a representative to the Massachusetts legislature and then a state senator.

During the first half of the 1800s, Prospect Hill was also the destination of nature lovers. This is attested to by a letter of Sarah Alden Bradford Ripley, the wife of Samuel Ripley, the minister of Waltham’s oldest church. She was also a scholar in her own right, who was an expert on lichens and spent many of her Sunday mornings walking from the parsonage on Pleasant Street to Prospect Hill in order to collect them. One of her outings to the hill was described by Joan Goodwin in her biography of Sarah Ripley (*The Remarkable Mrs. Ripley*) in the following words:

One thing Sarah talked about with George as if he were there was her enthusiasm for lichens. The very day he left she had a visit from another amateur botanist, John Lewis Russell, and the next day the two of them set out for Prospect on a gathering expedition. Sarah was delighted when Russell followed her to the top of the hill, his eyes searching the ground for mosses and, suddenly looking up, “without expecting it, saw the extensive view which we used to look at last winter,” and “exclaimed with admiration enough to satisfy any lover of Waltham and its beauties.”

In the later 1800s, when Charles Elliot was inspiring the creation of the Trustees of Reservations and the Metropolitan Park Commissioners to acquire county parks in order to provide quiet retreats from the congestion of urban life, Prospect Hill was one of the sites recommended for inclusion. In 1893, however, Waltham’s city government got the jump on the state and acquired the core area of the park, including the two highest peaks, Big Prospect and Little Prospect. The 1893 acquisitions were lots belonging to the heirs of Nehemiah Warren (19.27 acres), Nathan Warren (10.14 acres), Amos J. Buttrick (1.8 acres), Charles F. Fitz (2.49 acres), and the heirs of N.A. Farwell (49.4 acres). These was followed by further acquisitions in 1894 (from William L. Clark, 18.3 acres), in 1896 (from William A. Richardson, 5.2 acres; Amos J. Buttrick, 4.86 acres; Edward R. Hastings, 0.5 acres; and from Nancy S. Bond, 8.22 acres), in 1897 (more land from Nancy S. Bond, 6.44 acres), in 1904 (from the heirs of Nehemiah Warren, 10.85 acres), in 1913 (from the Benjamin Worcester estate, 38 acres), in 1921 (from Charles G. Whitney, 9.21 acres, and the estate of John T. Maloy, 5.7 acres), in 1927 (from Blanche H. Barnes and other heirs of

Thomas Barnes, 29 acres), in 1932 (from Ella M. Smith, 2.4 acres), and in 1948 (from the heirs of Frederick R. Viles, 12 acres, and Mary F. J. Flynn, 23 acres). These last two acquisitions were for the now abandoned ski area at the north end of the park. Currently, the City is in the process of finalizing the acquisition of the Berry Park area at the extreme south east corner of the park (from the Berry Park Trust, 20.87 acres). Many of the boundary lines for the lands acquired for the park correspond to squadron lines and lot lines from the Great Dividends and Land in Lieu of Township grants of 1636 and 1638, respectively, and are still marked by existing remnants of stone walls (see maps on pages 13 to 15).

In their 1902 annual report, the Park Commissioners made the following statement:

Many of the old boundary walls adjoining the park have been removed in part by parties unauthorized by the commission, and as some of them are parts of the old "Squadron Lines" so called, laid out in the days of the early settlement of Watertown, they should, it seems, be preserved.

It is also the hope of the author of the present report that these stone walls, which are very possibly among the oldest structures built by European settlers in the country still standing, should be celebrated and preserved.

Sources of Information

Trail names and location of features in park:

"Prospect Hill Park Trails" map, Waltham Land Trust, July 20, 2015.

Locations of features in park including stone walls:

Plot plans for park takings by the city – see below

Topographical Map from a survey by E.G. Chamberlain, 1899, in Waltham Public Library archive

Waltham City Atlas (Ward Maps), c. 1910, in E.L. Sanderson Collection of the Waltham Historical Society

Sanderson's study maps of early land grants, c. 1930, in E.L. Sanderson Collection of the Waltham Historical Society

Waltham City Atlas, 1974, Prepared by Raytheon Corporation

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On-line aerial views of Waltham on Waltham City Website and Google Maps

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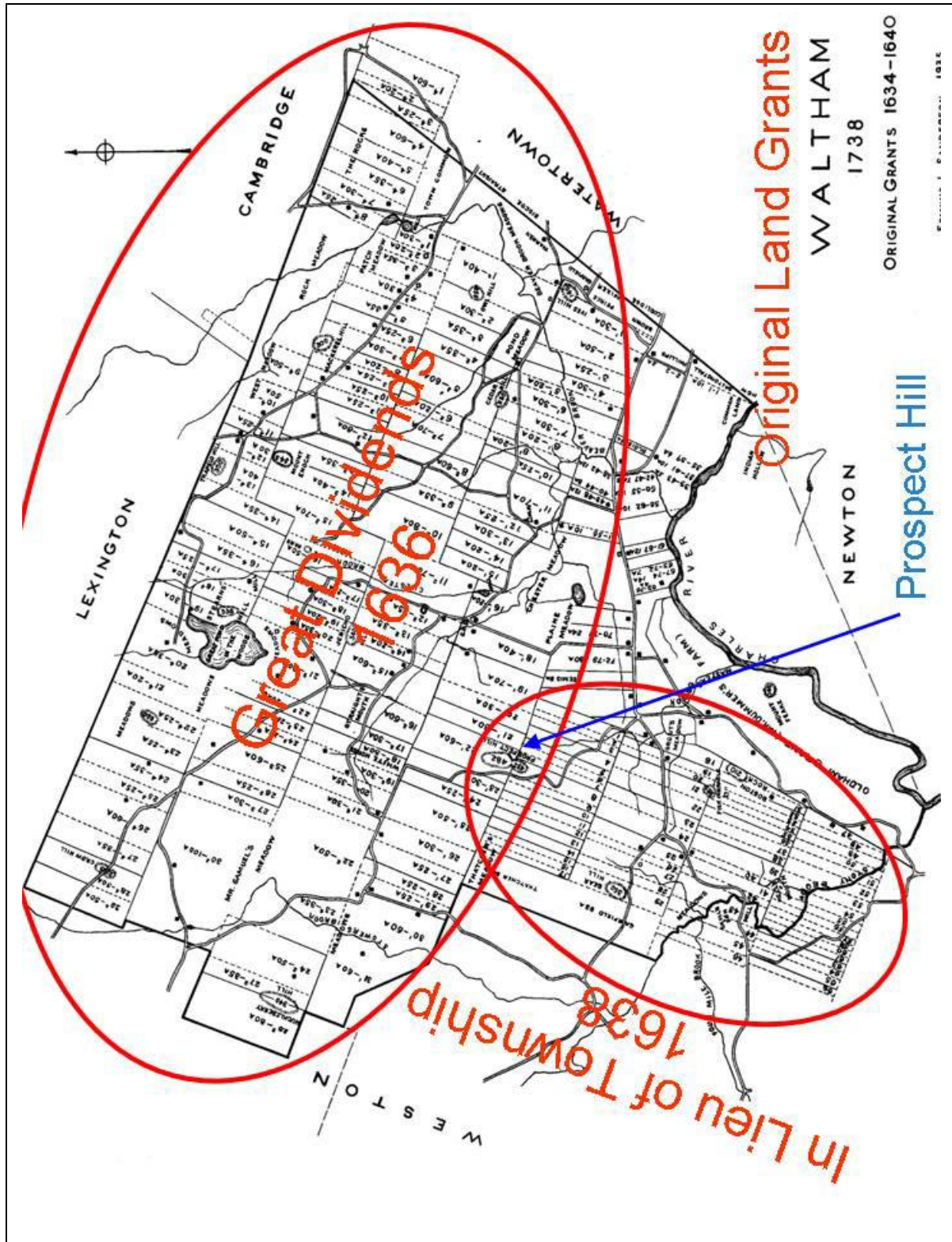
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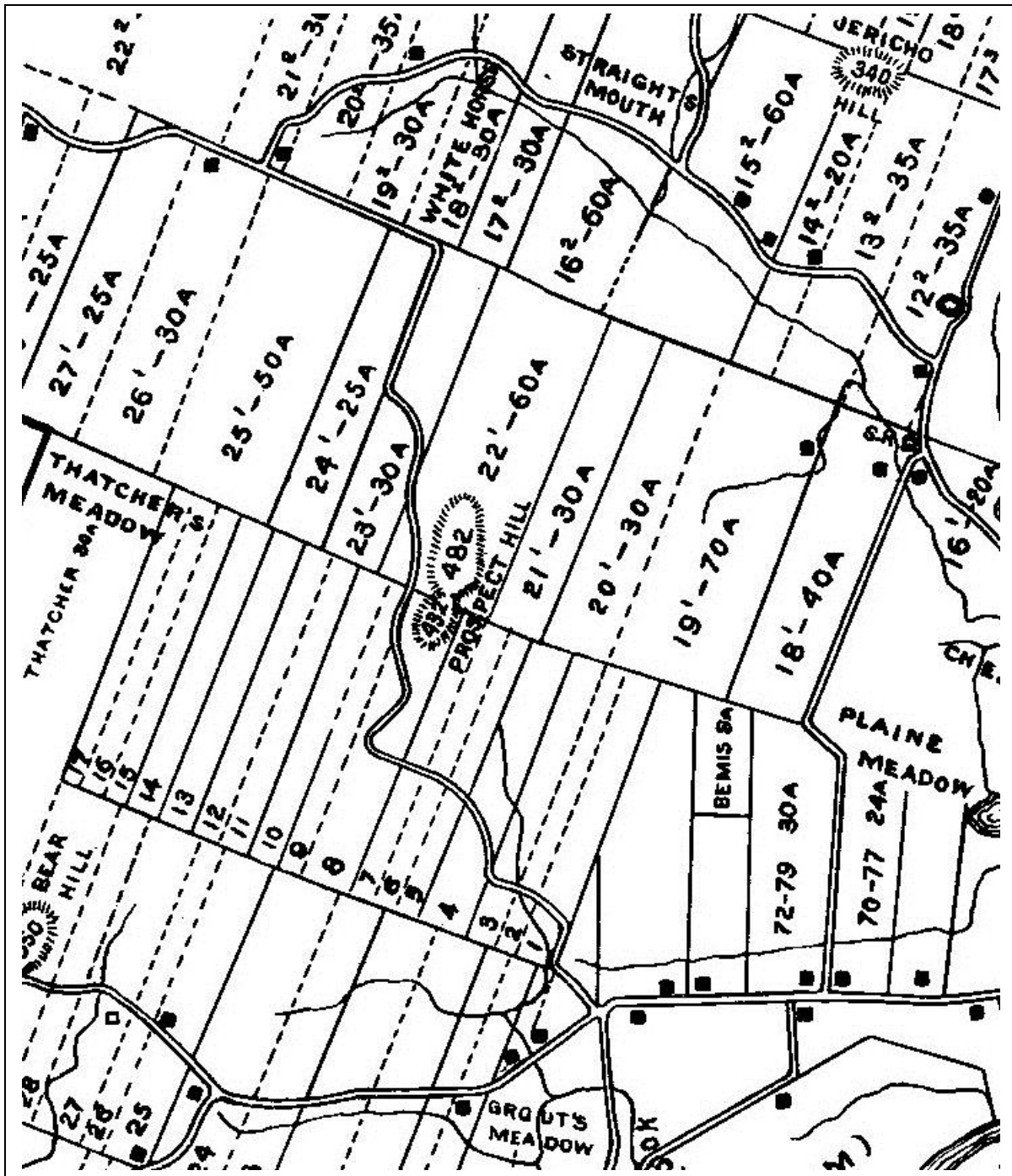
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- Mary E.J. Flynn: 7355-144; 1948 (from Madden: 7042-156)

Acknowledgements

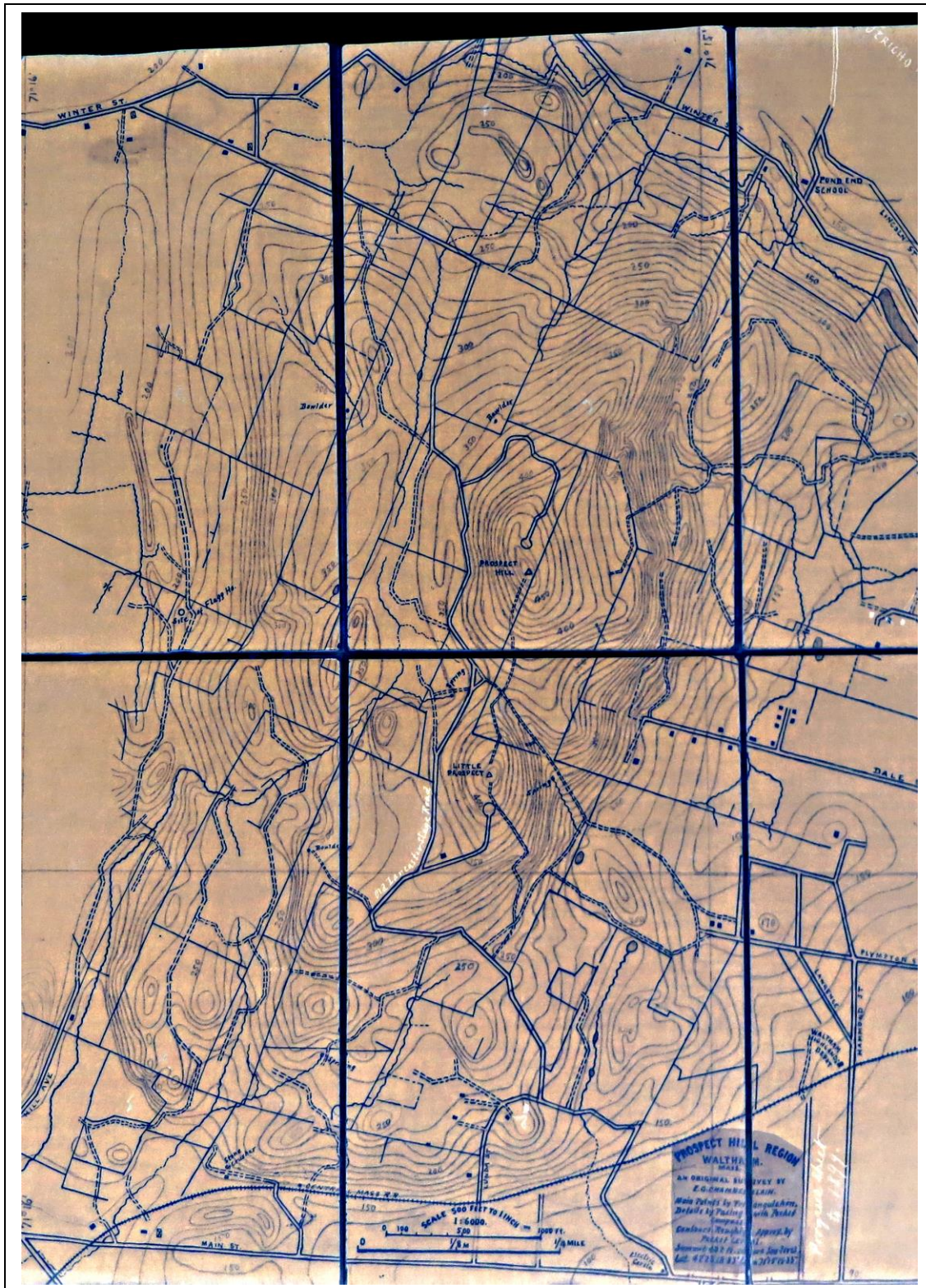
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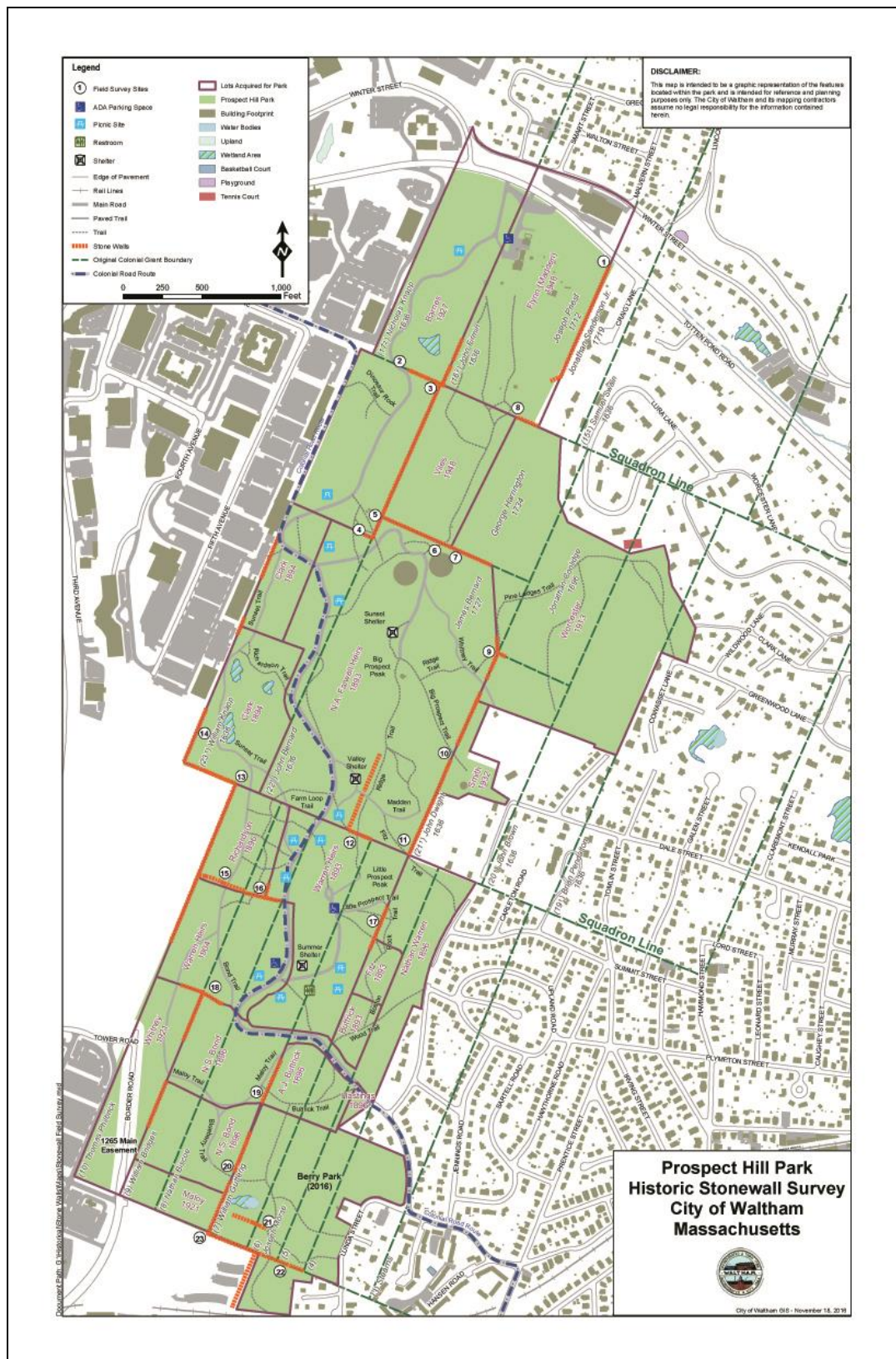
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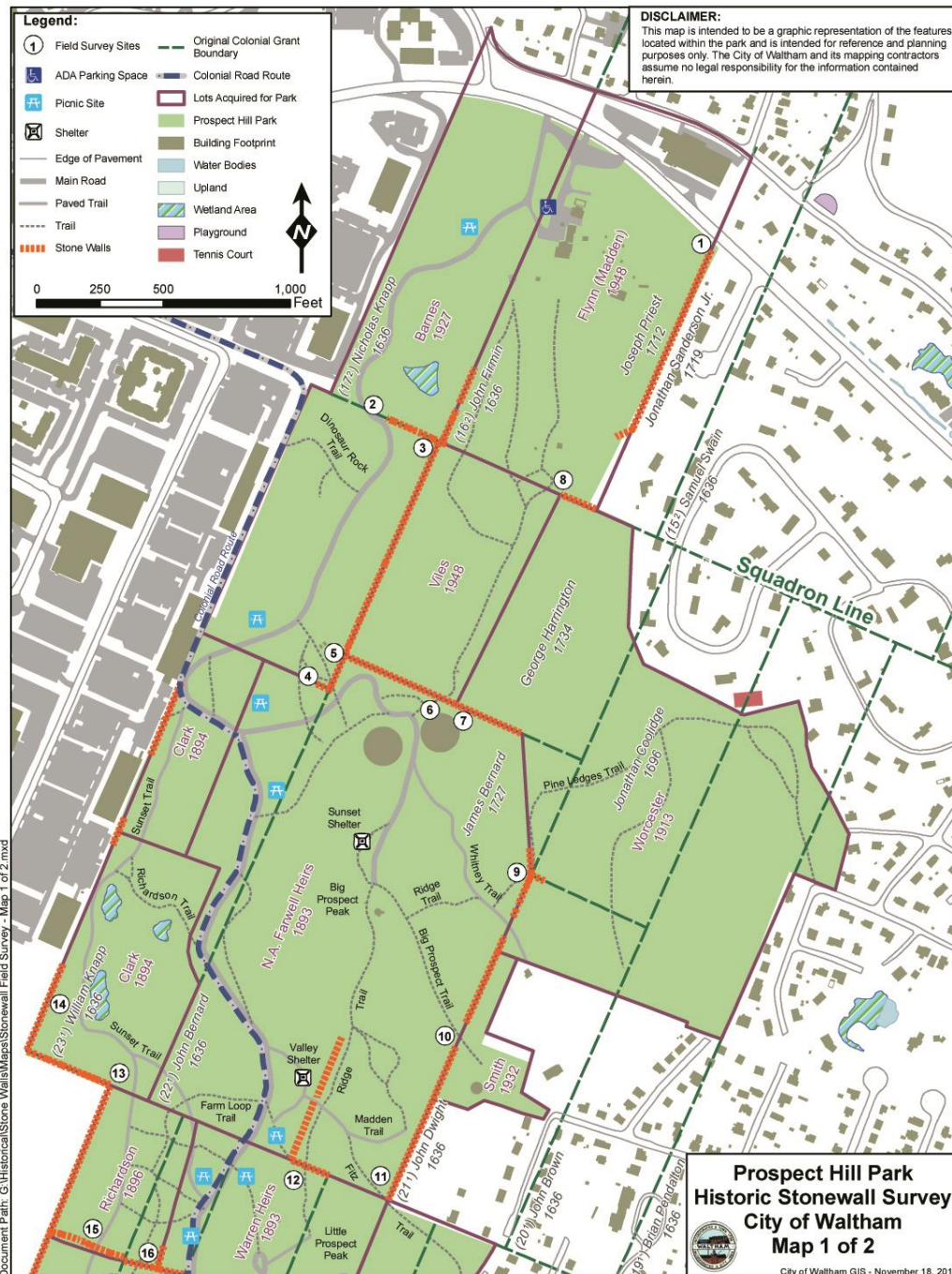
Colonial lot lines from original land grants of 1636 and 1638 in the Prospect Hill area, along with roads as of 1738, from Sanderson, Edmund L., *Waltham As A Precinct of Watertown And As A Town 1630-1884*, Waltham Historical Society, 1936



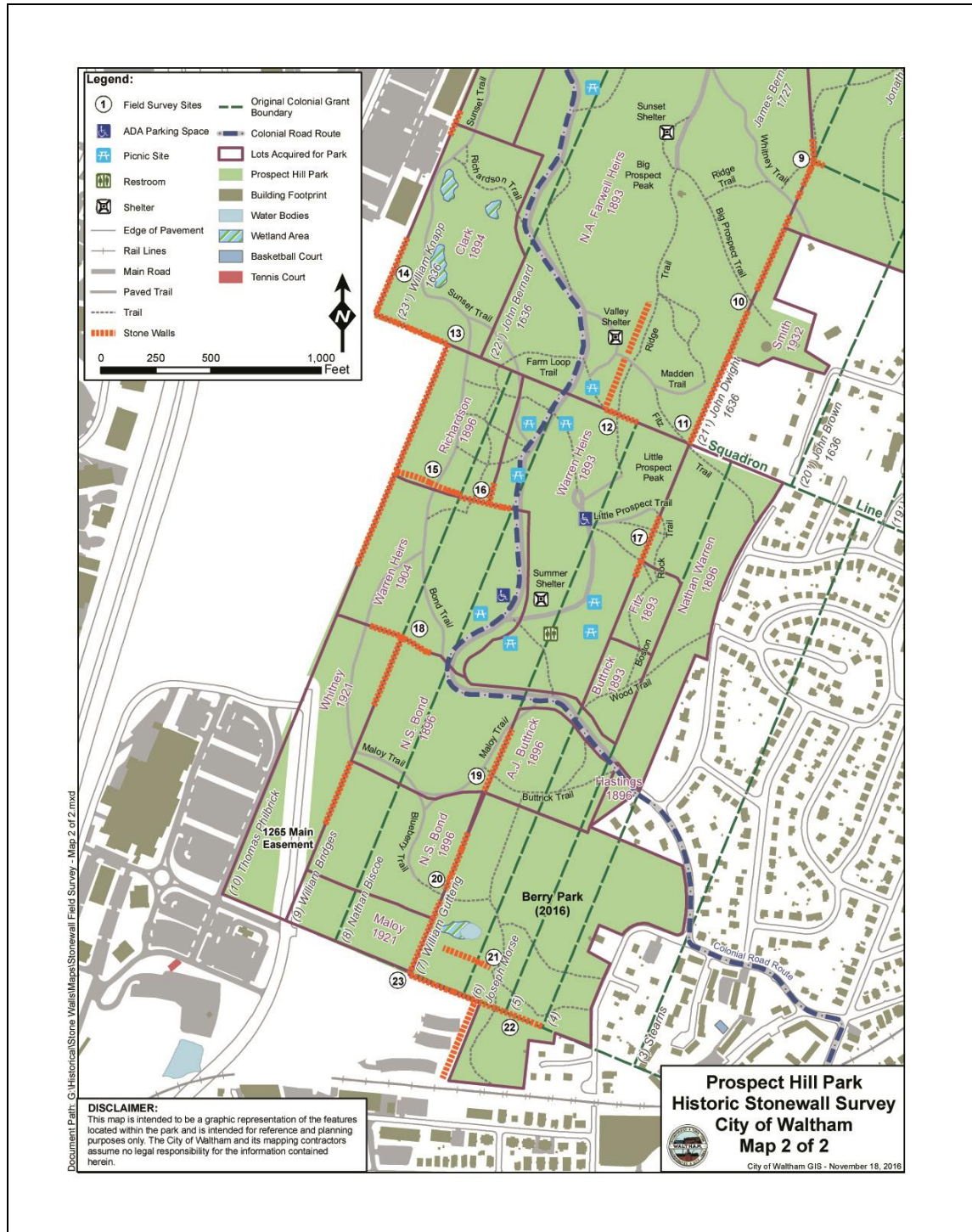
Topographical survey map of Prospect Hill area done in 1899 by E.G. Chamberlain, in Waltham Public Library archives. Stone walls existing at the time are shown as straight lines.



Map of the entire Prospect Hill Park showing numbered tour sites, colonial lot boundaries, lots acquired for park, and existing stone walls.



Map of the northern half of Prospect Hill Park showing numbered tour sites, colonial lot boundaries, lots acquired for the park, and existing stone walls.



Map of the southern half of Prospect Hill Park showing numbered tour sites, colonial lot boundaries, lots acquired for the park, and existing stone walls.

Field Survey and Tour of the Remnants of Historic Stone Walls Still Standing in Prospect Hill Park

For each of the sites listed below, the names of the original land grantees from the 1630s will be given. For the Great Dividend lots, the original grantees of 1636 are quite well established; however, for the Land in Lieu of Township lots, because of the allocation controversy at the time, the names of the original grantees and the dates the lots were originally acquired by them are less well established. Along with the information from the original land grants, the owners of the land at the time the City acquired the lots for inclusion in Prospect Hill Park at the end of the 1800s through the present day will also be given. The tour begins at the north end of the park and works its way south. Numbered site locations can be found on the maps on the previous pages. Note that for ease of understanding the relationship of the stone walls to the historic land grants, the boundary lines and wall alignments on the site map have been drawn as straight and parallel lines, although the actual stone walls on the ground are not quite as straight or well aligned.

Site No. 1: Sanderson-Priest Lot Line, c. 1712

Before entering the body of the park, walk east along Totten Pond Road from the parking lot at the northern end of the park and enter the woods just before the bank on your right begins to get steep. Find and follow to the south the stone wall running along the back yards of the houses along Craig Lane, staying on the west side of the wall.



*Northern End Looking South
past Houses on Craig Lane*



Mid Section Looking South

This stone wall marks an early subdivision of the 16th lot of the 2nd Squadron of the Great Dividends land grants. The entire lot was originally granted to John Firmin in 1636. He soon sold it to Barnabas Farr, who then sold it to Richard Beers in 1653. In 1712, Richard Beers, Jr. and Samuel Beers sold the middle third of the original lot to Joseph Priest. This divided the lot into three equal, long, thin segments running from squadron line to squadron line. Then, in 1719, Richard Beers, Jr. sold the southern half of the eastern third of the original lot to Jonathan Sanderson, Jr. The segment of the stone wall still standing appears to be the dividing line between Priest's lot and Sanderson's lot. It stretches from near Totten Pond Road, running southerly up a steep slope, and ending near the squadron line. At its southern end there is a short segment angled away from the general alignment of the wall that is, so far, unexplained in the historical record. In modern times this wall marked the eastern boundary of the Flynn lot

acquired for the ski area of the park in 1948. The lot had belonged to the Madden family until shortly before its acquisition by the city.



*Southern Section Looking across Wall
at Houses on Lura Lane*



Southern End of Wall Looking North

Site No. 2: 2nd Squadron Line of the Great Dividends Land Grant

Return to the parking lot and proceed south, up the main park road. The second site is found on the left of the main park road going south from the park's main entrance on Totten Pond Road, about 0.3 miles from the entrance, where the road turns left for the second time.



View of Squadron Line East from Road



View of Squadron Line West towards Road

This stretch of the park road was not part of the original road through the park area used by the Lancaster stage, but follows an old private cart track, shown on the 1899 topographical map, which gave access from Winter Street through the Barnes family woodlot at the time of its acquisition in 1927 for the park. Note that this was before Totten Pond Road was built in the 1950s, and the original northern entrance to the park road was from Winter Street. The original, abandoned, entrance still stands, today, marked by two stone pillars next to Winter Street on the north side of Totten Pond Road opposite the current entrance to the park road on the south side of Totten Pond Road. This stretch of the road was improved and the pillars were constructed as F.E.R.A. projects during the Great Depression in 1935.

The skeletal fragment of the wall leading away from the road to the east marks the southern Squadron Line for the Second Squadron of the Great Dividends Land Grants of 1636. This wall segment divided the 17th Lot of the Second Squadron, granted to Nicholas Knapp, on the north, from the 23rd Lot of the First Squadron, granted to William Knapp, on the south.

Site No. 3: Intersection of 2nd Squadron Line of Great Dividends with Lot Lines

Following the wall segment through the brush to the east along the Squadron Line leads to a major wall Junction.



Junction of Squadron Line with Lot Lines in Valley

The wall segment heading north from the junction divided the 17th Lot of the 2nd Squadron (on the west), granted to Nicholas Knapp, from the 16th Lot of the 2nd Squadron (on the east), granted to John Firmin. The wall also divided the Barnes family lot on the west, at the time it was acquired for the park in 1927, from the lot acquired for the park in 1948 from Mary E.J. Flynn on the east. The latter lot had belonged to the Madden family until shortly before this time. Thus, this lot boundary was the same in the 1900s as it was in the 1600s.

The wall segment heading south divided the 23rd Lot of the 1st Squadron (on the west) granted to William Knapp from the 22nd Lot (on the east) granted to John Barnard. This wall also divided the Barnes family lot on the west from the lot owned by the heirs of Frederick R. Viles, at the time of its acquisition for the park in 1948, on the east. The latter lot had belonged to the Stearns family just prior to this time. Both the Flynn lot and the Viles lot were acquired by the City to accommodate a ski area at the north end of the park, which was active from 1949 to 1990.



1st Squadron Lots 22 & 23 Lot Line Looking South



Lot Line in Mid Section Looking North

Site No. 3A: Intersection of 2nd Squadron Line of Great Dividends with Lot Lines

*Continuing east from the wall junction, up the valley side, follow along the wall segment to where it crosses a trail. **Alternately**, this site can be reached by following the western-most trail going south from the bottom of the old ski slope behind the park lodge off Totten Pond Road, and staying right at each trail junction. The trail cuts through the wall segment, which ends at the top of the slope to the east of the trail. The wall segment is most easily spotted as it goes up the slope to the left of the trail just after an old fallen tree on the right side of the trail.*



2nd Squadron Line East of Trail



2nd Squadron Line West of Trail

This wall segment lies along the 2nd Squadron Line of the Great Dividends land grants of 1636. North of the wall was the 16th Lot of the 2nd Squadron, originally granted to John Firmin. South of the wall was the 22nd Lot of the 1st Squadron, originally granted to John Barnard. This wall also marked the boundary between the lots owned by the Viles family (on the south) and Mary E. Flynn (on the north) acquired by the city for a ski area in 1948.

If you started from the base of the ski slope and followed the west-most trail south, you can see a wall segment running roughly parallel to the trail in the valley off on the west (right side) of the trail near its beginning (near where the trail starts to rise steeply). This segment marks the boundary between the 17th Lot of the 2nd Squadron (on the west), originally granted to Nicholas Knapp, from the 16th Lot of the 2nd Squadron (on the east), originally granted to John Firmin. It also marked the boundary between the Barnard family woodlots (on the west) acquired by the city for the park in 1927 from the lot owned by Mary E. Flynn (on the east) acquired by the city for the ski area of the park in 1948. The significance of the wall segment perpendicular to this one at its north end has not yet been determined.



Wall Segment between 2nd Squadron Lots 16 and 17 at Left in Picture

To resume the tour, you can either bushwhack back west along the squadron line to the park road at Site 2, or use the many trails on the former ski slope going east and south to visit sites 8, 7, 6, 5, and 4 in reverse order.

Site No. 4: 22nd and 23rd Lots of 1st Squadron and Barnes-Farwell Lot Line

The wall between the 22nd and 23rd lots of the 1st Squadron of the Great Dividends can be followed a long way to the south; however, the area is very brushy and it is easier to go back to the park road and follow it south to the Boy Scout Trail cut off. Follow the Boy Scout Trail east past the abandoned lean-tos (built by ERA crews during the Great Depression) to where it crosses the trace of an old stone wall.



Along Great Dividends Squadron 1 Lots 22 & 23 Boundary Wall North of Boy Scout Trail

This is the southern end of what remains of the wall between the 22nd and 23rd lots of the 1st Squadron of the Great Dividends.



Southern End of Great Dividends Squadron 1 Lots 22 & 23 Boundary Wall near Lean-tos

There is a small segment of stone wall more or less paralleling the Boy Scout Trail (on the south of the trail) between the lean-tos and the Squadron lot boundary, which meets the Squadron lot wall at a right angle. Although this boundary does not date to the initial land grants, it does mark the southern end of the lot acquired by the City from the Barnes family in 1927 and the northern end of the lot acquired from the N.M. Farwell heirs in 1893 as part of the original core of the park. The cement and stone lean-tos and fire place were built as F.E.R.A. projects during the Great Depression in 1934.



Barnes-Farwell Lots Boundary Wall on Left and 1st Squadron Lots 22 & 23 Wall on Right

Site No. 5: Junction of 22nd and 23rd Lots of 1st Squadron Line and Barnard-Harrington Lot Line

Looking north along the Great Dividends lot wall you can see another wall junction about 100 feet north of the Boy Scout Trail.



Looking North from Near Boy Scout Trail



Looking South towards Boy Scout Trail

Junction of Squadron 1 Lots 22 & 23 Boundary Wall with Barnard & Harrington Boundary Wall

The stone wall heading east probably dates to around 1734. This was the year that George Harrington bought the northern end of the Great Dividends lot originally granted to John Barnard (Lot 22 of the 1st Squadron) from James Barnard, one of John's descendents. This wall also marks the southern boundary of the Viles lot acquired by the City for the ski area in 1948. Before this, the wall formed the northern end of the original park purchases in 1893. The land to the south of it was owned, before the acquisition for the park, by the heirs of N.M. Farwell.



Looking East along Barnard & Harrington Lots Boundary Wall

Sites No. 6: Eastern end of Viles-Farwell Lot Line

The wall between the former Viles and Farwell land (Barnard-Harrington boundary of 1734) can be followed to the east; but to avoid a long walk through the brush, go back to the Boy Scout Trail and follow it south to the paved road, which goes past the water tanks to Big Prospect peak. Follow the road left up to the tanks and go clockwise around the tank on the left.



*Western End
Barnard & Harrington (Viles & Farwell) Lots Boundary Wall*



From Road

The wall segment you come to running off to the west is the eastern end of the wall between former Viles and Farwell land, as well as a continuation of the Barnard-Harrington boundary of 1734.



*Looking West from West of Tank
Barnard & Harrington (Viles & Farwell) Lots Boundary Wall from Near Water Tank*



Looking East past Tank

Site No. 7: Western end of Worcester-Farwell Lot Line

Continuing around the tank clockwise you will come to another wall segment running off to the east, behind some large boulders.



*Looking East from East of Tank
Barnard & Harrington (Worcester & Farwell) Lots Boundary Wall from Near Water Tank*



Looking East from Farther East of Tank

The wall segment running off to the east is the western end of another segment of the wall from the Barnard-Harrington boundary of 1734. This segment of the wall also separated the acquisition of Farwell land in 1893 (on the south) for the original core of Prospect Hill Park, from additional land acquired for the park in 1913 from the Worcester family (on the north).

Site No. 8: 2nd Squadron Line of the Great Dividends Land Grants

Walk north along the trail to the old ski area between Sites Nos. 6 and 7. Just after a small trail branches to the left, the main trail starts curving around in a semicircle to the right. In the middle of the curve, look for a bunch of boulders on the right (eastern) side of the trail. To the east, beyond the boulders, is a wall segment running off to the east.



*West End of Wall Looking East
2nd Squadron Line of Great Dividends with Lot 16 of 2nd Squadron on North*



East End of Wall Looking West

This is another segment of the wall marking the second squadron line of the Great Dividend land grants of 1636, and lines up with the segment seen at Site No. 2. It separated the 16th lot of the 2nd squadron originally granted to John Firmin (on the north) from the 22nd lot of the 1st squadron originally granted to John Barnard (on the south). It was also the boundary between the lot acquired for the park from the heirs of Benjamin Worcester in 1913 from the lot acquired from Mary E.J. Flynn in 1948 for the ski area.

Site No. 9: 21st and 22nd Lot Line of 1st Squadron of the Great Dividends

Return to the paved road to Big Prospect's peak and go south on it towards the peak. Just past the tanks, go east on the Whitney Trail. There may be a sign at the gate for the trail saying "private property do not enter", but this is not true and you can walk down the paved trail. When you reach the sign on a tree on the left saying "Pine Ledges Trail" look to your left for a stone wall.



Squadron 1 Lots 21 & 22 Boundary Wall near Junction of Whitney and Pine Ledges Trails

This wall marks the boundary line for the original 1636 Lot 22 in the 1st Squadron of the Great Dividends on the west (granted to John Barnard) from Lot 21 in the 1st Squadron on the east (granted to John Dwight). It also divided the Farwell land on the west at the time of its acquisition for the park in 1893 from Worcester land on the east at the time of its acquisition for the park in 1913.

Precede a short distance to the north along the wall to an intersection with one wall veering off at a broad angle to the left and another wall leaving at a right angle to the right.



Looking North along Great Dividends Squadron 1 Lots 21 & 22 Boundary Wall to Junction

The wall veering off at a broad angle to the left from the Great Dividend lot line was part of the boundary between Farwell land (on the south) and Worcester land (on the north) in modern times. Its role in colonial land ownership is still under investigation.

The wall leaving the Great Dividend lot line to the right marks an early land division, possibly going back to 1698 between Stephen Palmer and Jonathan Coolidge, but this land division is also still under investigation.

Site No. 10: 21st and 22nd Lot Line of 1st Squadron and Farwell-Smith Lot Line

The wall separating the 1st Squadron Lots 21 and 22 can be followed a long way to the south. Alternatively, return to the Whitney Trail and follow it back up just a short way and then turn off to the left and go up the Ridge Trail. Shortly before reaching the top at Big Prospect peak you will cross the Big Prospect Trail. Take it down to the left. Eventually, just before you come to a water tank, you will again reach the wall dividing the 21st and 22nd Lots of the 1st Squadron of the Great Dividends.



Wall Trace on Right Side of Trail
Intersection of Big Prospect Trail with Wall Marking Great Dividend Lots 21 & 22 Boundary



Looking South along Wall from Trail

The land west of the wall was part of the original 1893 park acquisition from the Farwell heirs. The land farther along the trail to the east of the wall was acquired for the park in 1932 from Ella M. Smith. It is a fairly small sliver of land and connects the rest of the park to the west end of Dale Street. Perhaps it was the City's intention, at the time of the acquisition, to have a major entrance to the park at this location; but it was never developed, and the Big Prospect Trail peters out beyond the wall. The city did build a water tank on the property just below the wall.

Site No. 11: Intersection of 21st and 22nd Lot Line of 1st Squadron with Fitz Trail

You can continue to follow the stone wall marking the boundary between the 21st and 22nd Lots of the 1st Squadron of the Great Dividends farther south to its end, or you can return up the Big Prospect Trail to the top and then go south on the Ridge Trail to its intersection with the Fitz Trail in the valley between Big and Little Prospect. Follow the Fitz Trail east (down) until you see the remnants of the wall going up hill on your left just before you reach the private house on the left.



*Boundary Wall of Great Dividends 1st Squadron Lots 21 & 22 Looking North
between Fitz and Big Prospect Trails*

This is the southern end of the wall marking the boundary between the 21st and 22nd lots of the 1st Squadron of the Great Dividend land grants of 1636. The 21st lot, on the east, was originally granted to John Dwight and the 22nd lot, on the west, was originally granted to John Barnard. The wall also marks the eastern boundary of the park just to the north of this point. The intersection of the wall trace with the Fitz Trail also marks the location of the southernmost Squadron line of the Great Dividends (at right angles to the wall). To your south were the In Lieu of Township Grants. This location was also the south-east corner of the lot acquired by the City from the heirs of N.M. Farwell for Prospect Hill Park in 1893.



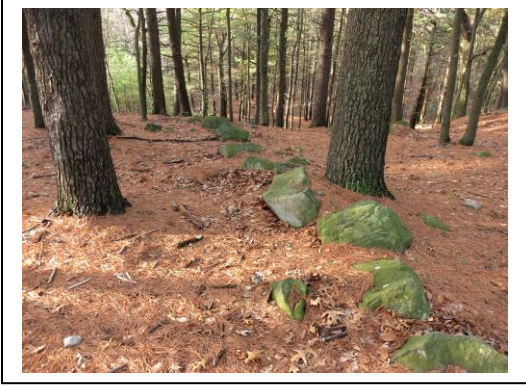
Boundary Wall of Great Dividends 1st Squadron Lots 21 & 22 Looking North from Fitz Trail

Site No. 12: Intersection of 1st Squadron Line of the Great Dividends with Ridge Trail

Go back up the Fitz Trail to the Ridge Trail and follow the Ridge Trail to the south (left). About halfway up the slope to Little Prospect peak the Ridge Trail passes through a break in the trace of a stone wall.



*Intersection of Ridge Trail with Stone Wall Marking 1st Squadron Line of Great Dividends
Looking North down Stairs on Trail*



Wall Looking West to Park Road



Wall Looking East from Ridge Trail

This stone wall marks the southernmost Squadron Line of the Great Dividends land grants of 1636. North of this wall is the 22nd Lot of the 1st squadron of the Great Dividends, originally granted to John Barnard in 1636. The wall also marks the southern boundary of the lot owned by the heirs of N.M. Farwell at the time of its acquisition for the original core of Prospect Hill Park in 1893. This lot contained the highest peak in the park, Big Prospect.

South of this wall is the 8th lot of the Land In Lieu of Township grants of 1638, which was eventually granted to Nathaniel Biscoe. Biscoe, who had originally received only six acres in 1638, was the leader of the non-church segment of the town that petitioned the colony's government in objection to the original grants, which favored church members. After the Bay Colony' government opened up local elections to others than just church members in 1649, Biscoe and other objectors were elected to the Watertown Board of Selectmen, and there followed a redistribution of lots in the Land In Lieu of Township grants. After the redistribution, Biscoe received 12 acres instead of his original six.

The wall also marks the northern boundary of the lot belonging to the heirs of Nehemiah Warren, which was acquired by the City in 1893 as part of the original core of Prospect Hill Park. This lot contained the second highest peak in the park, Little Prospect.

Following the wall to the west leads to a corner with a wall segment heading north, which crosses the Fitz Trail near the gate by the Valley Shelter.



Wall Segment South of Valley Shelter Looking North from Squadron Line Wall

The history of this wall segment is still under investigation.

Site No. 13: Intersection of 1st Squadron Line of Great Dividends with Boundary between 10th and 11th Lots of Land in Lieu of Township Grants

Go back north (down) the Ridge Trail to the valley between Big and Little Prospect and turn left. Go west on the Fitz Trail past the Valley Shelter and, then, out along the entrance road to the shelter on the left to the main park road. Make a small jog to the right on the park road, then cross it and continue west on the Farm Loop Trail. Cross the Sunset Trail and continue westward to the Bond Trail. Turn right (north) on the Bond Trail and look for the stone wall intersection off on the left (west), out in the marshy area.



Junction of 1st Squadron Line of Great Dividends with Boundary Line of Land in Lieu of Township Lots 10 and 11 Looking West from Bond Trail

The wall segment heading west, away from the Bond Trail, is another segment of the southernmost Squadron Line of the Great Dividend land grants from 1636. Near the Bond Trail, this boundary separated the 23rd Lot of the Great Dividends, originally granted to William Knapp in 1636, on the north, from the 10th Lot of the Land in Lieu of Township grants, originally acquired by Thomas Philbrick after 1638, on the south. At the time of the formation of the park, this wall segment also divided the lots acquired from William L. Clark in 1894, on the north, from the land acquired from William A. Richardson in 1896, on the south.

The wall segment heading south from the Squadron Line through the marshy area, and almost parallel to the Bond Trail, marks the lot line between the 10th and 11th Lots of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants, first granted in 1638. The 10th Lot, as it stands now, was originally acquired by Thomas Philbrick, and the 11th Lot was originally acquired by Martin Underwood. This wall also marks the western border of the land acquired for the park from William A. Richardson in 1896, and, today, is the western boundary of the park in this area.

Site No. 14: Intersection of 1st Squadron Line of Great Dividends with 23rd and 24th Lot Line

Proceed farther north along the Bond Trail, and continue north after it joins the Sunset Trail. Turn off the trail to the left and go west overland just before reaching the first office building situated along the park's western border. Look for the wall segment running north-south.



Boundary Wall between Lots 23 and 24 of the Great Dividends

The stone wall segment running north-south marks the western border of the park at this location and the boundary between the 23rd Lot (originally granted to William Knapp) and the 24th Lot (originally granted to Daniel Peirce) of the Great Dividend land grants of 1636. It also marks the western boundary of the Clark lot acquired for Prospect Hill Park in 1894. The wall continues north, behind the office buildings, all the way to Prospect Hill Lane, although how much it has been disturbed by the construction of the office buildings is not clear.

Walk south along the wall trace, through the brush, to an intersection with a wall segment running east. Note that the intersection is somewhat obscured by recent construction clearing.



Southernmost Squadron Line East from Junction Obscured Junction of Squadron and Lot Lines

This segment running east-west is the other end of the segment viewed from the Bond Trail, which marks the southernmost Squadron Line of the Great Dividend land grants of 1636. To its north was the 23rd Lot of the Great Dividends, originally granted to William Knapp. To its south

was the 11th Lot of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants of 1638, originally acquired by Martin Underwood. It also marks the southern end of the Clark lots acquired for the park in 1894.



Looking East along Southernmost Squadron Line Wall of Great Dividends towards Bond Trail

Site No. 15: Richardson Lot Line of 1896

Since the area east of Site 12 becomes marshy, retrace your steps back to the Sunset Trail near the office building and go south on the Sunset Trail. Then veer off the Sunset Trail to the right onto the Bond Trail and continue south on it through the land acquired from Richardson for the park in 1896. Just past the Call Trail, coming in on the left, is a fairly well preserved stone wall crossing the Bond Trail.



Looking West from Bond Trail



Looking East from Bond Trail

Boundary Wall between Richardson and Warren Lots Crossing Bond Trail

The wall running east-west marks the southern boundary of the Richardson Lot acquired for the park in 1896 and the northern boundary of the lot acquired for the park from the heirs of Nehemiah Warren in 1904. This lot boundary was not part of the original land grants of the 1600s, and its history is still under investigation.

Site No. 16: Southeastern Corner of the Richardson Lot of 1896

Following the wall to the east leads to a well-preserved intersection with a wall going north, except for some stones removed to form an illicit fire circle.



Wall Section East of Bond Trail

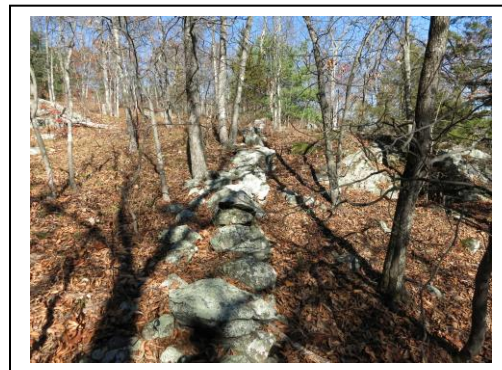


Wall Intersection at Southeast Corner

The stone wall segment going north marks the eastern border of the lot acquired from William A. Richardson for Prospect Hill Park in 1896, and separated it from the lot acquired from the heirs of Nehemiah Warren for the original core of the park in 1893.

Site No. 17: Boundary between 6th and 7th Lots of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants

Go north along the Richardson-Warren boundary wall to reach the Call Trail, then right (east) on the Call Trail to the paved park road. Follow the park road south (to the right) and then continue on it as it curves around to the north, past the Summer House Pavilion, to the parking area for Little Prospect. From here, a paved trail – the Little Prospect Trail – leads off down hill to the east towards a lookout point. Take the unpaved trail that leaves from the paved trail on the right down towards a lower lookout area. About half-way down to the lookout point the unpaved trail crosses the trace of a stone wall. This wall segment stretches north a little way past the paved portion of the Little Prospect Trail, and south a little ways past where the Boston Rock Trail comes up to the paved park road.



*Looking South from Little Prospect Tr. Looking North from South of Boston Rock Tr.
Wall between Lots 6 and 7 of Land in Lieu of Township Grants*

This stone wall marks the boundary between the 6th and 7th Lots of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants, first made in 1638. The 6th Lot (on the east of the wall) was owned by Joseph Morse at the time the boundaries were well established, and the 7th Lot (on the west) was owned by William Gutterig. This wall also marked the boundary between the lot acquired for the park from the Warren heirs in 1893 (on the west) from the lot acquired from Charles F. Fitz, also in 1893.

Site No. 18: Intersection of 9th and 10th Lot Line of Land in Lieu of Township Grants with Warren-Bond Lot Line

Retrace your steps back up the lower Little Prospect lookout trail to the park road and back south on the road past the Summer House Pavilion to where the road splits. Take the branch going south (left), which is now closed off to automobile traffic. This part of the road was part of the Lancaster stage route in the early 1800s. Follow the road south to the start of the Bond Trail. Just south of the intersection of the Bond Trail with the park road there is the trace of a stone wall segment running to the west through the brush.



*Looking West
Wall Marking Boundary between Warren and Bond Lots near Bond Trail Gate*



Looking East back to Gate

To the north of the stone wall segment running west was the lot acquired for the park from the Warren heirs in 1904, while to the south of it was the lot acquired for the park from Nancy S. Bond in 1896.

Continue following the wall trace to the west through the brush to an intersection with a wall segment running south.



Junction of Warren-Bond Wall with Wall Dividing Lots 9 and 10 of In Lieu of Township Grants

The wall heading south marked the boundary between the 9th (on east) and 10th (on west) Lots of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants, first made in 1638. At the time the boundaries of these grants were well established, the 9th Lot belonged to William Bridges and the 10th Lot belonged to Thomas Philbrick. The wall also marked the border between the land belonging to Whitney (on west) and Bond (on east) that was acquired for the park in 1921 and 1896, respectively.



Lots 9 and 10 Line South of Junction

The wall between the 9th and 10th Lots of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants continues south for a ways, and then peters out on the flank of a hill north of the Maloy Trail. There is also a small segment of this wall south of the Maloy Trail, overlooking the parking lot for Marshall's and Market Basket.



End of Lots 9 & 10 Wall North of Maloy Trail Trace of Lots 9 & 10 Wall South of Maloy Trail

Site No. 19: 7th and 8th Lot Line of Land in Lieu of Township Grants

Retrace your steps back east to the beginning of the Bond Trail on the park road. Turn right, and proceed south and east on the park road to the beginning of the Maloy Trail, leaving on the right. Go south on the Maloy Trail until you reach the Buttrick Trail leaving on the left (east). Just a few steps east on the Buttrick Trail there is the trace of an old stone wall crossing the trail.



Trace of Lots 7 & 8 Dividing Wall on Buttrick Trail As Seen from Maloy Trail



*Looking South from Buttrick Trail Looking North from Buttrick Trail
Wall Marking Boundary between Lots 7 & 8 of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants*

This wall segment, running north-south, marked the boundary between the 7th (on east) and 8th (on west) Lots of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants, originally made in 1638. After the lots in the grant were finally distributed, these lots belonged to William Gutterig and Nathaniel Biscoe, respectively. It also marks the boundary between the land acquired for the park in 1896 from Nancy S. Bond, on the west, and Amos J. Buttrick, on the east.

Site No. 20: 7th and 8th Lot Line of Land in Lieu of Township Grants

Retrace the few steps on the Buttrick Trail back to the Maloy Trail and go south on it (left) to the Blueberry Trail. Turn left on the Blueberry Trail and follow it south until just a bit after the trail turns left and stops being paved. There is the trace of a stone wall crossing the trail at this point, but it is quite faint and you need to look carefully.

This is another segment of the wall that marked the boundary between the 7th (on east) and 8th (on west) Lots of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants, originally made in 1638. After the lots in the grant were finally distributed, these lots belonged to William Gutterig and Nathaniel Biscoe, respectively. This wall also marks the eastern boundary of Prospect Hill Park following the land acquisition from Nancy S. Bond in 1897. Beyond this point going east is the Berry Park acquisition, which is just now (in 2016) being added to the park.



Trace of Lots 7 & 8 Dividing Wall Crossing Blueberry Trail Looking East



*Looking North from Blueberry Trail
Wall Marking Boundary between Lots 7 & 8 of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants*



*Looking South from Blueberry Trail
Wall Marking Boundary between Lots 7 & 8 of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants*

Site No. 21: Berry Park Windmill Foundation and Berry-Caswell Lot Line

Continue east on the extension of the Blueberry Trail into Berry Park until you intersect a yet to be named trail running north-south. You will pass on your right, near the intersection of the Blueberry and unnamed trails, a small body of (usually) open water. This is the only semi-permanent pond in the park, although it can dry out and is officially classified as a vernal pond. In the old colonial records it is called “Horse Pond” or “Dead Horse Pond”. The reason for the name is not known. Turn right on the unnamed trail and follow it south past the pond until you see traces of a stone wall on your right and a well preserved rectangular stone foundation on your left.



*Wall on Left and Pond on Right
Dead Horse Pond and Stone Wall from Main North-South Trail in Berry Park*

Berry Park is named for Abraham Hun Berry, whose family owned this new portion of the park from the late 1800s until the mid-1900s. Subsequently it was owned by the Polaroid Corporation, then SPC Main Street LLC, and then the Berry Park Trust. A. Hun Berry was a commissioned officer during the Civil War, and later became the adjutant general of the Massachusetts Militia. He was an MIT trained inventor, who founded a company that manufactured ventilating fans for the textile industry. His interest in Prospect Hill Park led him to serve on the Waltham Park Commission from 1903 until his death in 1915. The properties forming Berry Park were acquired by the Berry family over a period of about 50 years.

The stone wall going off to the west probably marked the boundary between lots owned by Mary H. Berry, wife of A. Hun Berry, and Earl F. Caswell in the early 1900s, before the Caswell lot was sold to Cashman and then obtained by the Berry family. The stone foundation was for a large windmill on the Berry property which burned down in a spectacular fire in the 1930s.



Looking North



Looking South

Windmill Foundation in Berry Park

Site No. 22: Intersection of Squadron Line and 22nd and 23rd Lot Line of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants

Proceed south, past the windmill foundation, turn left, and follow the trail downhill. The trail passes by a number of old foundations and retaining walls and then passes through a fairly well preserved trace of a stone wall running east-west.



Squadron Line South of Windmill Foundation



Retaining Wall South of Windmill Foundation

This stone wall marked the a squadron line of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants. This line was one-half mile south of the squadron line that divided the In Lieu of Township Grants of 1638 from the Great Dividend Grants of 1636. To the north of where the trail passes through the wall was the 6th lot of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants, first owned by Joseph Morse, and to the south of the wall was the 22nd Lot, the original ownership of which is unclear.



Wall Marking 2nd Squadron Line South of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants Looking East

Also, just to the west of where the trail goes through the squadron line wall, there is a junction of the squadron line wall with another stone wall going south from it. This north-south wall can also be seen south of the squadron line wall, and between the west side of the trail and the chain link fence. It is the trace of a stone wall that marked the boundary between the 22nd (on east) and 23rd (on west) Lots of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants. The 23rd Lot, as laid out here, was first owned by Jeremiah Norcross. Also, to the west of this wall, in more recent times, was the old Polaroid property. The wall continues south, down hill, to intersect the old right of way of the abandoned Central Massachusetts Railroad, which marks the southern border of Berry Park and, now, Prospect Hill Park.



Junction Squadron and Lot Lines Looking West Lot Line Looking South to Central Mass RR

Site No. 23: Intersection of a Squadron Line and 7th and 8th Lot Line of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants

Walking west along the squadron line wall through the brush, or retracing your steps to the windmill foundation and then walking west along the stone wall which marked the border between the Berry and Caswell lots – through more open ground – leads to another stone wall running mostly north-south.



Wall Marking Squadron Line Looking East from near Lots 7 & 8 Dividing Line

This wall segment running north-south is the southern end of the stone wall marking the dividing line between the 7th (on east) and 8th (on west) Lots of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants of 1638. The 7th Lot, as laid out here, was originally owned by William Gutterig, and the 8th Lot by Nathaniel Biscoe. At the southern end of this wall segment, it meets the squadron line, with a wall segment of the squadron line running off to the east. To the southwest of the intersection you can see the remains of a quarry used by the City of Waltham for road building materials, acquired from John T. Maloy in 1921. The site was later used by the Polaroid Corporation for manufacturing facilities. To the west of the lot line is the land acquired from Maloy for the park, also in 1921.



Looking North



Looking South towards "Polaroid Property"

Wall Marking Boundary Line between Lots 7 & 8 of the Land in Lieu of Township Grants

To return to the park road, go back to the trail through Berry Park that you followed south and go north on it. Continue past the extension of the Blueberry Trail, on the left – where you came in, until you dead end at the Buttrick Trail. Take the Buttrick Trail to the east (right) back to the park road near the southern entrance to the park.