



**Newfoundland and Labrador  
Archaeological Society**

**Fieldtrip!**

To the  
**CURIOUS  
STONE FEATURES  
OF  
HANT'S HARBOUR**

**Saturday, August 22, 2015**

FREE for Members/ \$5 for Non-Members

**RSVP with the NLAS**

Let us know if you can drive or need a ride

[nlas@nlarchsociety.ca](mailto:nlas@nlarchsociety.ca)

Carpool Departs Queen's College at 9AM, Returns for 5PM

Image from: [www.facebook.com/trinitystones](http://www.facebook.com/trinitystones)

A Report of the Newfoundland and Labrador Archaeological Society (NLAS) on:  
The "Great Wall" Reconnaissance – Permit # 15.40

Prepared by:  
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August 24, 2015

## **Introduction**

As part of its ongoing efforts to engage our membership and the general public, the NLAS planned and organized its first field trip on Saturday August 22, 2015. The excursion to Hant's Harbour was planned to explore the substantial stone features which had been previously reported by Hull (2013) and Penney (2014), and which continue to be of considerable interest to many local residents and a growing number of visitors. Local resident Grant Tucker has been actively promoting the site through social media and more recently at Trinity Stones <https://www.facebook.com/trinitystones>, and who kindly led us on a tour of the features.

In view of the possibility that additional historic resources might be noted during this visit, the NLAS obtained an archaeological permit that would allow us to legally collect any additional information or objects should opportunity present itself. The permit also provided us with a learning opportunity for those on the field trip regarding the legality of investigating archaeological sites.

## **Observations**

The tour of the site included eight people that came out with the NLAS and the nine that Grant brought with him. In total, the group of 17 enjoyed beautiful weather over the course of a couple of hours in which we undertook a simple foot reconnaissance of the main known features of the site. Though we did not visit any previously unrecorded features, we observed all of the main features between the road and the "Great Wall". His media team was there as well, so we had opportunities to talk to both Grant and his friends about what we saw.

Along the way, Grant suggested that the stone piles were related to pre-contact activities of Aboriginal peoples, which he suggested were, most likely grave sites of Maritime Archaic. The complete lack, however, of any physical evidence of pre-contact occupation in the vicinity to support Grant's claims were noted, and the archaeological and documentary evidence suggests with certainty that these features were the result of historic occupation of some of the earliest Europeans of the area as indicated in Penny's 2014 report.

## **Additional Documentary Evidence**

The recent discovery of an article in a 1940 edition of *The Newfoundland Quarterly*, entitled "First Roads Built in Newfoundland" (Hibbs 1940:29-33) suggests that road construction began in Hant's Harbor as early as 1840 when:

"Samuel Short and Don Hussey of Hant's Harbor sought a sum of money from the Government of Newfoundland for the completion of the road from Hant's Harbour to Seal Cove-this was in 1840" (Hibbs 1940:30).

This passage suggests that road construction began prior to 1840, but does not indicate that it was ever completed. In this respect, the piles of unused stones, and the incomplete

nature of the construction activities which have been noted, suggests that construction of the original “road” remained incomplete.

### **Conclusion**

The observations made by the NLAS during its visit to Hant’s Harbor are generally consistent with the conclusions of Hull and Penney insofar as the origins and date of these stone features. That is they are a result of a variety of early-to-mid 19<sup>th</sup>C construction activities related to gardening, house and wall construction and early attempts at “road” building. The recent finding of an additional documentary source, *The Newfoundland Quarterly* (1940), suggests road construction activity as early as 1840, which is consistent with the observations made.

Further documentary research, particularly with regard to government records relating to 1840 road construction project in Hant’s Harbour, may further shed some light on the earliest construction work.

### **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank Grant Tucker for providing a guided tour for the NLAS membership, and to the membership and interested parties who accompanied us on our visit of these interesting ruins.

### **Bibliography**

Hibbs, R.

1940 First Roads Built in Newfoundland: Lecture Given by Richard Hibbs, J.P., Before Newfoundland Historical Society, April 12, 1940. In *The Newfoundland Quarterly*, p.29-33.

Hull, Stephen

2013 *Hant’s Harbour*, July 25, 2013. Draft Report, Provincial Archaeology Office.

Penney, Gerald

2014 *Hants Harbour Stone Features*, *Historic Resources Assessment*, Archaeological Investigation Permit #13.48.





Figure 1 A large stone feature located along an unfinished cart road north of Hant's Harbour. A box of large boulders that has been in filled with smaller cobbles and boulders. Photo Tim Rast.



Figure 2 Grant Tucker, John Erwin and field trip participants discussing one of the stone pile features located along the unfinished 19th Century cart road north of Hant's Harbour. This feature, like many that we saw, has been cleared of tree cover. Photo Tim Rast.





Figure 3 An exposed section of the cart path that has been leveled and in filled with cobbles. Photo Tim Rast.





Figure 4 A long section of "The Great Wall". Photo Lori White.