UNIVERS STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
PERCHED ROCK NATIONAL PARK

FILE NO. 0-35
PART 1

PROPOSED MONUMENTS
PERCHED ROCK

LAST DATE ON TOP

IMPORTANT

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ARNO B. CAMMERER,
Director.
The American
Scenic and Historic Preservation Society

Hamilton Grange
Home of Alexander Hamilton, built 1802
287 Convent Avenue, Near 141st Street, New York

Mr Arno B. Cammerer,
Director, National Park Service,
Department of the Interior,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Cammerer:

Mr. Chester D. Pugsley, of Peekskill, N.Y., a Trustee of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, who is interested in the protection of scenery, and of historic and other interesting places in the Hudson Valley, has asked me to lay before you a matter of a rather unusual character. We have come upon it in the course of our studies of the middle Hudson Valley counties for the erection of historical roadside markers, supplied by the Archives and History Division, New York State Education Department, of which we have proposed and secured approval for more than 100 in the past two years and, with the cordial approval of the Department, and of the D.A.R., we are to propose many others. You are no doubt familiar with these markers in Virginia. New York is now marking its roadsides in the same manner.

The subject in which Mr. Pugsley and I are interested is of a scientific rather than a historic character. It is a large boulder, weighing about fifty tons, lying upon five smaller boulders. It is on the property of Mrs. Mary A. Quick, on Titicus Road, in the Town of North Salem, in the northeastern corner of Westchester County.

This boulder is the best example of what may be called "propped rocks," that I have ever seen. I know of two others of smaller size, with two or three "legs" in the Harriman section of the Interstate Park, and one very large one, weighing 200 tons, but with only one "leg" in the Black Rock Forest, a private preserve northwest of West Point. But this boulder in North Salem has five "legs" each a boulder weighing several hundred ponds, on which the large boulder is neatly and firmly set. The larger boulder is described, in postcards, a sample of which is inclosed, as of "New Hampshire granite," while the "legs" are of the limestone commonly found along the Harlem Valley in Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess Counties.
The group of boulders is one of the most striking examples of the operation of chance, in the melting downward of debris in the continental ice sheet over the northeastern part of North America, in the last Glacial Period. The "legs" were evidently wrangled by the ice, in its southward creep, from somewhere along the New York-Connecticut border, where the limestone occurs, anywhere from a few miles to 75 or 100 miles northward. The origin of the granite boulder is open to speculation. I doubt if it really came from New Hampshire, as the direction of the ice creep, from its center in Labrador, was toward the southeast and south, and not southwest, until farther to the westward, over New York and Pennsylvania. I am more inclined to think it came from the Berkshires or Vermont, which would be in the line of the north-south movement of the ice, parallel with the Hudson Valley.

Now, Mr Pugsley's thought is that he would be willing to purchase the quarter acre of land, necessary to display and protect this boulder, from the owner, if it could be placed in suitable care. One of his ideas in this respect is that it might be made a national monument, such as you have in the West, in great number, protecting similar scientific curiosities, but few, as I recall, in the east. His thought is that this is one of the most striking examples of the effect of the continental ice sheets, and that if preserved and marked, it would be highly educational for students and tourists. Of course glacial boulders, in curious positions, on ledges, as balanced rocks, etc, are not rare, but these "propped Rocks," are not only rare, but are examples of the operations of chance in the dropping of the larger boulders on the smaller "legs," during the final melting of the ice sheet. And this boulder in North Salem is the second largest I know of, and has the largest number of "legs" and is within 30 feet of a well travelled highway. The other big boulder in the Black Rock Forest, is in a place known only to hikers, in the top of a mountain 1400 feet high and far from roads.

Mr Pugsley asks if it lies within the province of the National Park Service, as custodian of national monuments, to accept the custody of a small tract enclosing this boulder, to preserve it for scientific and educational purposes.

Another evidence of glacial action, a small pothole, close to the Seven Lakes Drive, in the Harriman Section of the Interstate Park, has just been marked by Major Welch, at my suggestion, with a sign telling its story and is an object of interest to visitors, whose attention had not been called to it previously and to whom its story had not been told. But this North Salem boulder is such a striking example of glacial forces that Mr Pugsley thought it might merit your consideration. If there are any conditions under which your department would accept ownership and custody of such a scientific object, Mr Pugsley and I would be glad to hear from you and you may write me, if you please, about it, at your convenience.

Sincerely yours,

Raymond H. Torrey
New Hampshire Granite Boulder,
Estimated Weight 60 Tons, North Salem, N.Y.
The Carmel Country
CARMEL, NEW YORK

9 October 1934,

Dear Mr. Albright:

I address you for the reason that I am now personally acquainted with your successor as the Director of the National Park Service, and also in view of the fact that you are now a resident of Westchester County.

At North Salem, in the northern part of the county, there is on the road between Ossining and North Salem a very large, roughly rounded granite boulder or five sedimentary rocks as you may discern from the enclosed photograph if you have not seen it. It is located on the property of Mrs. J. Quick, there I have discussed the purchase of the rock with her, together with a plot of ground surrounding it, extending from the highway to the Tappan River, for presentation by me to the National Park Service for a national monument.

I should appreciate it if you would bring the matter to the present Director as I believe a national monument so near New York would be an asset as they are so few in the eastern part of the
United States a remarkable object in the science of the facial period.

Sincerely,

Chester A. Eysley
Hicksville, N.Y.

To: Horace M. Albright Esq.

Rye Neck Gardens,
New Rochelle, N.Y.

I am Raymond H. Turing, Secretary of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society.

To wish me yesterday, He stated it was the finest example of a propped rock he had seen.

R.H.T.
October 12, 1934.

My dear Mr. Pugsley:

I have your very interesting letter of October 9th in reference to the granite boulder which stands on five sedimentary rocks between Cross River and North Salem.

The policy of the National Park Service in reference to consideration of proposed new monuments is to send an agent of the Service to inspect the area, photograph the principal features and write a report. On the basis of this report and supporting documents which should include geological data, descriptive articles, etc., a decision is made as to whether the features are of such importance to the Nation as to justify their protection in a national monument.

The officer who usually makes these studies is Supt. R. W. Toll, of Yellowstone National Park who works on this detail during the winter months.

I am forwarding your letter to my successor, Director Cammerer, and I am asked him to get directly in touch with you.

I think of you often, and think that some day I will call on you at Peekskill, but since I have moved to Westchester County I think I have passed through Peekskill only twice, and then on hurried trips to Newburgh and Bear Mountain.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Hon. Chester D. Pugsley,
Peekskill, New York.

Note for Mr. Cammerer:

Mr. Pugsley is a wealthy, public spirited man whom you may know. Please, follow up as you may. Mr. Pugsley is the donor of the Pugsley medal for public service.
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

October 13, 1934.

Mr. Raymond H. Torrey,
The American Scene and Historic
Preservation Society,
387 Convent Avenue, near 141st Street,
New York, New York.

Dear Torrey:

You have presented an interesting problem in connection
with the "perched" boulder near North Salem described in your
letter of October 9, 1934. I am not sure that your society
should so carefully distinguish between historic and scientific
exhibits. If you can successfully care for one type why can’t
you care for the other? Your name would justify it!

On receipt of your letter we consulted the glaciologist
of the United States Geological Survey to determine how sig-
nificant such a perched rock (not propped rock) really is.
It was their decision as well as ours that it does not have
sufficient national interest or sufficient superlative qualities
to justify it as a national monument. On the other hand it would
appear to have unusual local value and should be preserved as a
state or county park or monument. Being located so close to a
highway could it not be maintained as part of the Westchester
Parkway System?

We stand ready to help you find a way of preserving this
geological exhibit through some local organization but we are
unable to accept it as a national monument.

Very truly yours,

(SGD.) ARNO B. CAMMERER

CC Mr. Trager.

Arno B. Cammerer,
Director.
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON

October 23, 1934.

Memorandum to: Dr. Bryant

Attached is a letter forwarded by Mr. Albright from Hon. Chester D. Pugsley, Peekskill, New York, calling attention to a gneiss boulder which is propped on five sedimentary rocks between Cross River and North Salem, New York. Mr. Pugsley offers to purchase the site and donate it to the National Park Service for a national monument.

Considered by itself this phenomenon, presumably the result of glacial action, may not be of sufficient importance to justify establishment as a national monument. I wonder if it might not be advisable to study the matter and possibly schedule an investigation in order to determine the significance of glacial action in the vicinity, having in mind this propped boulder as a means of demonstrating the general movement of the glacier through the vicinity. I would like to have your comments.

Conrad L. Wirth
Assistant Director.

Encl. 445198
October 25, 1934.

Hon. Chester D. Pugaley,
Peekskill, New York.

My dear Mr. Pugaley:

Your letter of October 9 to Mr. Albright regarding the gneiss rock located between Cross River and North Salem, N. Y., has been forwarded to this Service with his personal request that we give it consideration.

The National Park Service greatly appreciates your cooperative spirit in making this offer. The site is now under study to determine the advisability of placing it on our schedule for investigation. You will be notified immediately as soon as this preliminary decision is made. In the meantime, if you have information regarding the nature of glacial action in the vicinity, we shall be glad to receive it.

For the Director:

Sincerely yours,

(SGD) CONRAD L. WIRTH

Conrad L. Wirth,
Assistant Director.

JLM-fnd
CC: Mr. Horace M. Albright
Dear Mr. Brown:

Your letter of 25 October has been received. I had luncheon in Washington on Monday with Hon. Louis H. Lochner, 712 Jackson Place, Washington, D.C., sometime Solicitor of the State Department. He was formerly a geologist with the United States Geological Survey, and he informs me that there is at Chazy Landing, N.Y., a shaft of sedimentary rock which gives a history of all the geological periods as well as a remarkable paleontology.

If the National Park Service would and could acquire the same for a National Monument, I should be glad to give it two hundred dollars for this purpose.

Booley advises me that the glacialists of the United States Geological Survey is fully informed about it although it antedates the glacial period. I assume he could also give you the information you indicate might be helpful regarding the nature of glacial action in the vicinity.

Yours very truly,

[Signature]

[Address]
30 October 1934.

Dear Mr. Wirth:

Your letter of 25 October has been received. I had luncheon in Washington on Monday with Hon. Lester H. Woolsey of 712 Jackson Place, Washington, D. C., sometime solicitor of the State Department. He was formerly a geologist with the United States Geological Survey, and he informs me that there is at Chazy Landing, Clinton County, N. Y., a shaft of sedimentary rock which gives the history of all the geological periods as well as a record of paleontology.

If the National Park Service would and could acquire the same for a national monument I should be glad to give it two hundred dollars for this purpose.

Woolsey advises me that the glacialist of the United States Geological Survey is fully informed about it although it antedates the glacial period. I assume he could also give you the information you indicate might be helpful regarding the nature of glacial action in the vicinity of North Salem, N. Y.

Yours very truly,

(SCD.) CHESTER D. GUGSLEY.
 Peekskill, N. Y.

To Conrad L. Wirth, Esq.,
Assistant Director, National Park Service,
United States Department of the Interior,
Washington, D. C.
Memorandum for
MR. WIRTH:

Please note my letter of October 13 to R. H. Torrey regarding this same perched boulder. I am ashamed to discov­er that this letter did not receive your signature before mailing as it had to do with a proposed site. The letter con­tains my viewpoint on the matter. It is typical of the sort of thing that should be cared for by the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, Westchester Parks, or by a state park commission. I have been assured by the glacialo­g­ist of the U. S. Geological Survey that it is not of sufficient interest to constitute a national monument.

As long as Mr. Toll is close at hand it might be well to send him up to investigate the project. In that it is so strictly a geological feature it might be well to have Mr. Trager go along.

H. C. Bryant,
Assistant Director.

Enclosure 508833

CC Mr. Trager
The American
Scenic and Historic Preservation Society
Hamilton Grange
Home of Alexander Hamilton, Built 1802
287 Convent Avenue, Near 141st Street, New York

Telephone: Audubon 3-0500

Nov. 1, 1934

Mr Conrad L. Wirth,
Assistant Director,
National Park Service,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr Wirth,

At the request of Mr Chester D. Pugsley, of Peekskill, N.Y., whom you have heard from on the subject, I inclose a carbon copy of a letter addressed on Oct. 9, to Mr Cammerer, on the subject of a propped glacial boulder, which Mr Pugsley desired to have protected as a national monument, in North Salem, Westchester County, N.Y. Mr Cammerer replied to me, and I communicated that reply, which was adverse to the suggestion, to Mr Pugsley. But Mr Pugsley has written you and sent me a copy of your reply to him, saying that he will study the matter.

My personal opinion is that while this boulder is the most extraordinary example of its kind I know of, and tells an interesting story of glacial action, such things ought to be in the custody of some kind of a bureau of scientific and historic places, under some New York State Department. The New York State Museum used to have power to hold such things, and did hold a number, but the Board of Regents, which controls the Museum, allowed them to be transferred to the Conservation Department, which does not exploit them educationally. However, since there is no prospect that the State will provide means to preserve such things, if any national agency took over the boulder, it might be a stimulus to the State to preserve others. Our Society could care for such things if it had private or public funds for the purpose.

Mr Cammerer, in his letter to me, called this a "perched" boulder, but my understanding of a "perched" boulder is that it is a single boulder, resting on a ledge, while this is a huge boulder, resting on five smaller ones as "legs," so it seems to me the name "propped rock," is more descriptive and as I wrote Mr Cammerer, hikers call similar rocks in the Palisades Interstate Park "propped rocks," whether with one, two or three "legs." This North Salem boulder, with five "legs," has the record for "legs" as far as I know.

Very truly yours,

Raymond N. Torrey
November 2, 1934.

Hon. Chester D. Pugsley,

 Peekskill, New York.

My dear Mr. Pugsley:

This is in reference to our letter of October 25 concerning the propped rock in Westchester County, New York. We are enclosing a copy of a letter recently written to Mr. Raymond H. Torrey of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, which is self-explanatory.

We wish to point out that the National Park Service is deeply appreciative of your generous offer. Our suggestion was not intended to discourage your efforts to preserve this site, but to direct you toward a more probable means of obtaining satisfactory results.

We hope you will always feel free to send us your suggestions concerning this or any other area which you consider worthy of preservation.

For the Director:

Sincerely yours,

Conrad L. Wirth.
Assistant Director.

Engl. 577195
JLB-fmd
Mr. Raymond H. Torrey,
Secretary, The American Scenic
and Historic Preservation Society,
287 Convent Ave., near 141st St.,
New York City, N. Y.

My dear Mr. Torrey:

We have received your letter of November 1 in which you suggest that the administration of the "perched" or "propped" boulder located in Westchester County by a national agency would serve as a stimulus to similar projects by the state.

It is true that the National Park Service is definitely encouraging interest in state and local parks, and it is hoped that the establishment of national parks and reservations will have a stimulating effect on local conservation agencies. However, no area can be considered for establishment as a national park unless it is of great interest to the entire American public. As you say, this site might properly be administered by a state agency if local interest could be aroused.

We will be glad to cooperate with your Society by receiving information regarding this or similar areas and giving our recommendations.

For the Director:

Sincerely yours,

(SGD) CONRAD L. WIRTH

Conrad L. Wirth.
Assistant Director.
Memorandum to Dr. Bryant

Attached is another letter from Hon. Chester D. Pugsley, this time offering to purchase the site of a shaft of sedimentary rock located at Chazy Landing, in Clinton County, New York, near the shore of Lake Champlain.

Mr. Pugsley evidently wishes to be of service in any way he can. In view of possible future preservation of geological phenomena in New England and New York by Park Service or local administration, I suggest that his cooperation be fostered. With this in mind, I have made acknowledgments to him as encouraging as possible.

Perhaps you will want to secure the opinion of the Geological Survey regarding the sedimentary rock to which Mr. Pugsley refers. In the meantime I am acknowledging his letter of October 30.

A letter has just come in from Mr. Raymond H. Torrey in which he concurs in the contention that a state or local organization should administer the "perched" or "propped" rock site in Westchester County.

Wirth
Hon. Chester D. Pugsley,

Peekskill, New York.

My dear Mr. Pugsley:

We have received your letter of October 30 in which you call attention to a shaft of sedimentary rock located at Chazy Landing, New York, which is reported to give a record of glacial periods and paleontology. After the matter has been studied here in the office, we will give you the reaction of the Service to it.

In another letter to you we suggested local administration of the "perched" or "propped" rock located in Westchester County. I have just now received a letter from Mr. Raymond H. Torrey of the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, in which he expresses interest in the preservation of such phenomena by state agencies, but suggests that the preservation of this "perched" rock site by the National Park Service would serve as a stimulus to the state to preserve other phenomena.

This Service is definitely encouraging development of parks by states and local organizations. It would, of course, be fortunate if the establishment of a national monument could be made to stimulate local interest. However, there can be considered for administration by the National Park Service only those areas of distinctly national interest. If a site could be found which tells the major portion of the story of glacial or other geological action in the northeastern states in such a manner as to be of national interest, it might well be made a national monument with the idea that other related phenomena could come under local administration.

If the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society has information concerning areas of this character, we will be glad to cooperate by giving it our serious consideration.

For the Director:

Sincerely yours,

Conrad L. Wirth,
Assistant Director.
Mr Conrad L. Wirth,
Assistant Director,
National Park Service,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Wirth:

In response to the suggestion in your letter of Nov. 5, to Mr. Chester D. Pugsley, in the last paragraph, another subject, of a historical rather than scientific character, may merit your attention and Mr. Pugsley, with whom I saw it on Sunday, suggests that I write to you about it.

We refer to the seven old stone houses, close together on one street, built about 1720-1750, in New Paltz, Ulster County, N.Y., by the Huguenot settlers of the town. These pioneers, after being exiled by France by Louis XIV, wandered through Germany, Switzerland, Holland and England, before coming to America about 1700. They obtained land grants in the Wallkill Valley and built their homes there. They had a curious form of government, known as the "Dozen," or "Dusine," being the heads of the families of the Twelve original patentees, Dubois, Devoe, Frese, Bevier, to recall some of the names.

Every house still stands, with original furniture, some occupied by descendants of their builders. One is used as a museum. They are cared for by the Huguenot Memorial, Patriotic and Monumental Association, which is handicapped by lack of funds, and there is danger that some houses may fall into other hands and be erased. We shall obtain a number of roadside historical markers, from the State Education Department, for them. But since this ancient village street is comparable to Williamsburgh and some of the other historical buildings in Virginia which the National Park Service is preserving, with private and public funds, Mr. Pugsley thought that it might come within the scope of your interest. If so, we will be glad to supply more particulars. I do not recall where there exist so many old houses, in their original locations together, and so suggestive of a valuable stock among our ancestry, as here.

Sincerely yours.

Raymond H. Torrey