

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



980

1. Name

historic Queen's Fort

and/or common

2. Location NE of Exeter on

street & number Stony Lane not for publication

city, town Exeter vicinity of vic congressional district #2-Rep. Ed. Beard

state Rhode Island code _____ 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"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Rhode Island Historical Society

street & number 52 Power Street

city, town Providence, vicinity of _____ state Rhode Island

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Exeter Town Hall

street & number Victory Highway

city, town Exeter state Rhode Island

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title "Broadbrush Archeological Survey Exeter, R.I." Has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1978 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 type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The legendary Indian fortification known as Queen's Fort is located in the northeast portion of the town of Exeter, Rhode Island. Standing at the crest of a wooded hill, the structure consists of dry-laid stone walls (now in disrepair) set between groups of glacial boulders. The fort is traditionally associated with a Narragansett squaw sachem of the seventeenth century named (Queen) Quaiapen and a Narragansett male known to the English as Stonewall John. Stonewall John's reputation as a talented mason was real, and many writers have suggested that he, aided by Narragansetts loyal to Quaiapen constructed the stone defense early in King Phillip's War.¹ The Fort is also reported to have been the site of the first punitive raids against the Narragansett Indians during King Phillip's War.

Built into the eastern wall of the fort is a bastion (figure 2), while almost mid-way along the western wall lies a flanker. Of stone construction, each of these were common elements in the military technology of Europe of the period.² Located west of the fort is a large cavern formed by groups of boulders known as the Queen's Bed Chamber.

Previous Research and Recent History

Queen's Fort has been represented in the historical literature of Rhode Island since 1835. In both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but especially during the Victorian period, writers have recited the legend of the fort and its builders, often adding new elements and information to the story. Equally telling of the keen interest in Queen's Fort are three maps of the spot, sketched in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³ The environmental conditions which proved so favorable to the establishment of Queen's Fort, namely a massive scatter of boulders over a hilltop, also hampered most opportunities for later use of the site. The property was incorporated into farmsteads and probably timbered in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Modifications to the fort itself are evidenced in the varying number of bastions noted on the early sketch maps. As many as four, and as few as one, bastions are shown at different points in time, indicating either early demolition or later construction of these engineering elements. Since 1931 Queen's Fort has been the property of the Rhode Island Historical Society and managed by the State of Rhode Island's Department of Environmental Management. No danger to the preservation of the site exists.

(See Continuation Sheet #1).

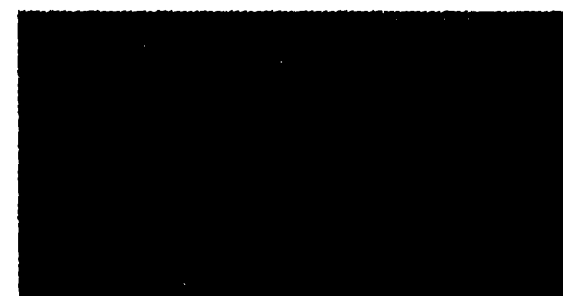
¹Patrick M. Malone, "Changing Military Technology Among the Indians of Southern New England, 1600-1677," American Quarterly, XXV, (1973), p. 60.

²Ibid.

³Rhode Island Historical Society Collections: October 1923, Vol. XVI, No. 4, "Plan of Queen's Fort" by Henry B. Hammond, Nov., 1865. October 1931, Vol. XXIV, No. 4 "Ruins of the Wall of Queen's Fort". April 1932, Vol XXV, No. 2 "Sketch of Queen's Fort" by Willard Kent.

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Relation of Site to Environment

The combination of glacial erratics and dry-laid stone which forms Queen's Fort cover a hill approximately three hundred and fifty feet in height. The Fort's north wall is two hundred and fifty feet in length and composed mostly of laid-up stone as is the west wall which is two hundred and seventy-five feet long. At the south, the fort defense is a sprawl of large boulders which continue along a significant portion of the east wall. The northernmost one hundred feet of the eastern wall is again dry-laid stone.

To the north, the fort now looks out over a town road and pasture land, to its south and east are forest, while toward the west are both forest and light density residential land. Forested land consists of hardwoods, specifically, large numbers of oak and beech trees. The soils which underlie Queen's Fort are glacial till, poorly sorted and unstratified clay, silt, gravel and sand, with little capacity for water retention. Those sources of water closest to the site are each an equal distance from it. An unnamed wetland is two-tenths of a mile north/northwest of the fort and Stony Brook is this distance directly west.

Archeological Evidence

Field testing took place at Queen's Fort in order to confirm its occupation during the seventeenth century by Native Americans in contact with Europeans and their material culture, and to determine the physical integrity of the fort as an archeological site. Twelve pits, each measuring fifty centimeters by fifty centimeters were excavated at Queen's Fort, near the alleged Queen's Bed Chamber, by the interior and exterior of the fort's walls, and in a field across Stony Lane from the fort (figure 2).⁴ A consideration in the placement of pits was the dense cover of large, glacial erratics inside and around the site which left few areas of a size sufficient for testing.

Eleven of the twelve excavation units proved sterile of cultural materials. Test pit five, placed at the interior of the bastion along the fort's east wall, yielded a single artifact: one half of a kaolin pipe bowl in subsoil at a depth of twenty to thirty centimeters. Judging from the apparent small diameter of the pipe bowl and the rouletting impressed along the bowl's exterior, the pipe dates from the mid-seventeenth century.⁵ In the case of all test pits, soils at Queen's Fort proved to be undisturbed.

⁴ Test pits placed at this location in response to Chapin's note of Quaiapen's village in the vicinity of Queen's Fort. Howard M. Chapin, "Queen's Fort," RIHS Collections, XXIV.

⁵ Ivor Noel Hume, A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America, (New York, 1969), p. 301. See pipe types 11 and 12.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Folklore

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

There is no primary document extant which dates from the period of King Phillip's War and notes the existence of Queen's Fort or the association of the squaw sachem Quaiapen with a fortification. The first published account of the history of this property probably appeared in Elisha Potter, Jr's The Early History of Narragansett in 1835.

Further archeological investigations at Queen's Fort would be hampered by the landscape of large, closely-spaced boulders which cover nearly the entire ground surface of the site. Yet, if undertaken, excavations might determine if the site was occupied during the seventeenth century and established its existence from that time as a fortification more firmly than is possible with existing secondary literature sources. The kind and variety of artifacts recovered might indicate if the structure was built or occupied by Native Americans as well as the duration of the occupation.

If, in fact, Narragansetts did construct Queen's Fort, then we possess today what a recent writer has called, "one of the few indigenous architectural treasures of New England."¹ In total, seven seventeenth-century fortifications known to have been constructed by Native Americans exist in the region of Narragansett Bay to Long Island Sound. Rhode Island's only authenticated fortification is Fort Ninigret in coastal Charlestown (entered on the National Register of Historic Places in 1970). Occupied from circa 1620 to 1680, three periods of building occurred at Ninigret, culminating with the construction of a dry-laid stone wall probably surmounted by a wooden superstructure. Should archeological investigations take place at Queen's Fort and prove successful, we would have the opportunity to obtain data on inland, post-contact aboriginal defenses which could be compared with information from Fort Ninigret, excavated by the New York University Field School in 1977.

At present, the greatest significance of Queen's Fort is as the focus and source of a continuing folklore, much of which has found its way into the literary record. Perhaps the most persistent legend is that of the Queen's Bed Chamber. The cavern where Quaiapen is said to have slumbered was variously described in the late nineteenth century as nearly seven feet in height and capable of holding twenty men and as being, "very square and well proportioned."² The location pictured in the article on Queen's Fort issued by the Rhode Island Historical Society in 1931, is not the correct one.

(See Continuation Sheet #2).

¹Stuart D. Goulding, "Deep in the Rhode Island Forest," Yankee, 33, (March, 1969) p. 44.

²Rhode Island Historical Society Collections, (1932) Vol. XXV, No. 2, p. 35.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Chapin, Howard M., "Queen's Fort," Rhode Island Historical Society Collections, XXIV, (1931).

Goulding, Stuart D., "Deep in the Rhode Island Forest, Yankee," 33, (March, 1969). (See Continuation Sheet #4).

10. Geographical Data

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Acreege of nominated property 16 acres (approx.)

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UMT References

A

1	9	2	9	0	0	4	0	4	6	0	7	4	4	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

1	9	2	9	0	0	5	0	4	6	0	7	2	1	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

1	9	2	8	9	6	5	0	4	6	0	7	2	2	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

1	9	2	8	9	7	4	0	4	6	0	7	4	0	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary of Queen's Fort was drawn to include at least 250 feet of land on all sides of the Fort and the Queen's Chamber. The boundary (See Continuation Sheet #5).

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stephen Cole, Archeological Consultant

organization R.I. Historical Preservation Commission date March 1980

street & number 150 Benefit Street telephone 401-277-2678

city or town Providence state Rhode Island

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Frank Williams

title

date 7-10-80 JMS

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In 1882, it was noted in the Narragansett Historical Register that, although well known in the early part of the nineteenth century, the Queen's Chamber had been lost for many years.

James N. Arnold broadened the story of Quaiapen's residence at the Queen's Fort when he wrote to a friend that, "along the Queen's River from its source to its union with the Usquepaug was set aside for the use and support of the squaw sachem, and a guard of twenty-four warriors was detailed for this purpose, to guard and protect her."³ A far different story of the period told of Queen's Fort as a stopping place for the Nipmunk Indians (a central Massachusetts group) and of the chamber as being used by the Indian princess, Queen Bess.⁴ To close this segment of the Queen's Fort saga, we can turn to Goulding's retelling in Yankee of the Rhode Island legend which identifies Stonewall John not only as Quaiapen's lover but as a renegade Englishman who constructed forts in his homeland and in Continental Europe before coming to the New World and laying up the walls of Queen's Fort.⁵

In later centuries, other persons were thought to have inhabited the Exeter fort, including a hermit, and bandits. Arnold noted in his letter of December 2, 1898 describing Queen's Fort that, "There is lots of tradition about sheep stealers that one time made this their rendezvous and also plenty of stories about the insane hermit Reynolds all of which would write up quite a respectable magazine article."⁶ In fact, there are three vague stories concerning bandits inhabiting Queen's Fort after the Narragansetts: one speaks of them as horse thieves, another as the aforementioned sheep stealers and the third as unspecified robbers.⁷ The hermit Reynolds has been called the last resident of Queen's Fort and is thought to have "lived at the northeast corner of the fortress for several years, and until his friends removed him to a better location."⁸ Such is a selection from the three centuries of legend associated with Queen's Fort. It is lore that will be preserved as long as the fort is remembered and protected in Rhode Island.

Finally, as Queen's Fort is owned by the Rhode Island Historical Society, an opportunity exists for the establishment of an interpretive program at the site. RIHS is the organization within the state with the

(See Continuation Sheet #3).

³RIHS Collections, SSV. (1932), No. 2, p. 35.

⁴Narragansett Historical Register, Vol. 1, (1882), p. 9.

⁵Goulding, Yankee, p. 44.

⁶RIHS Collections (1932) Vol. XXV, No. 2, p. 35.

⁷Goulding, Yankee, p. 44.

⁸Chapin, "Queen's Fort," p. 150.

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best resources at hand for interpreting the utilization of a favorable environmental setting which legend says brought Queen's Fort into being. Such a program could also successfully focus upon the considerable folklore which has grown up around Queen's Fort in the last three centuries.

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Hammond, Henry, "Plan of Queen's Fort" Rhode Island Historical Society Collections (1923), Vol. XVI, No. 4.

Hume, Ivor N., A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969.

Malone, Patrick M., "Changing Military Technology Among the Indians of Southern New England, 1610-1677" American Quarterly, XXV, (1973).

Narragansett Historical Register, Vol. 1., Providence: The Narragansett Historical Publishing Co., (1882).

Potter, Elisha R. Jr., "The Early History of Narragansett," Collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society, Vol. III, (Providence: 1835)

Kent, Willard "Sketch of Queen's Fort", Rhode Island Historical Society Collections (1932), Vol. XXV, No. 2.

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Continuation sheet 5

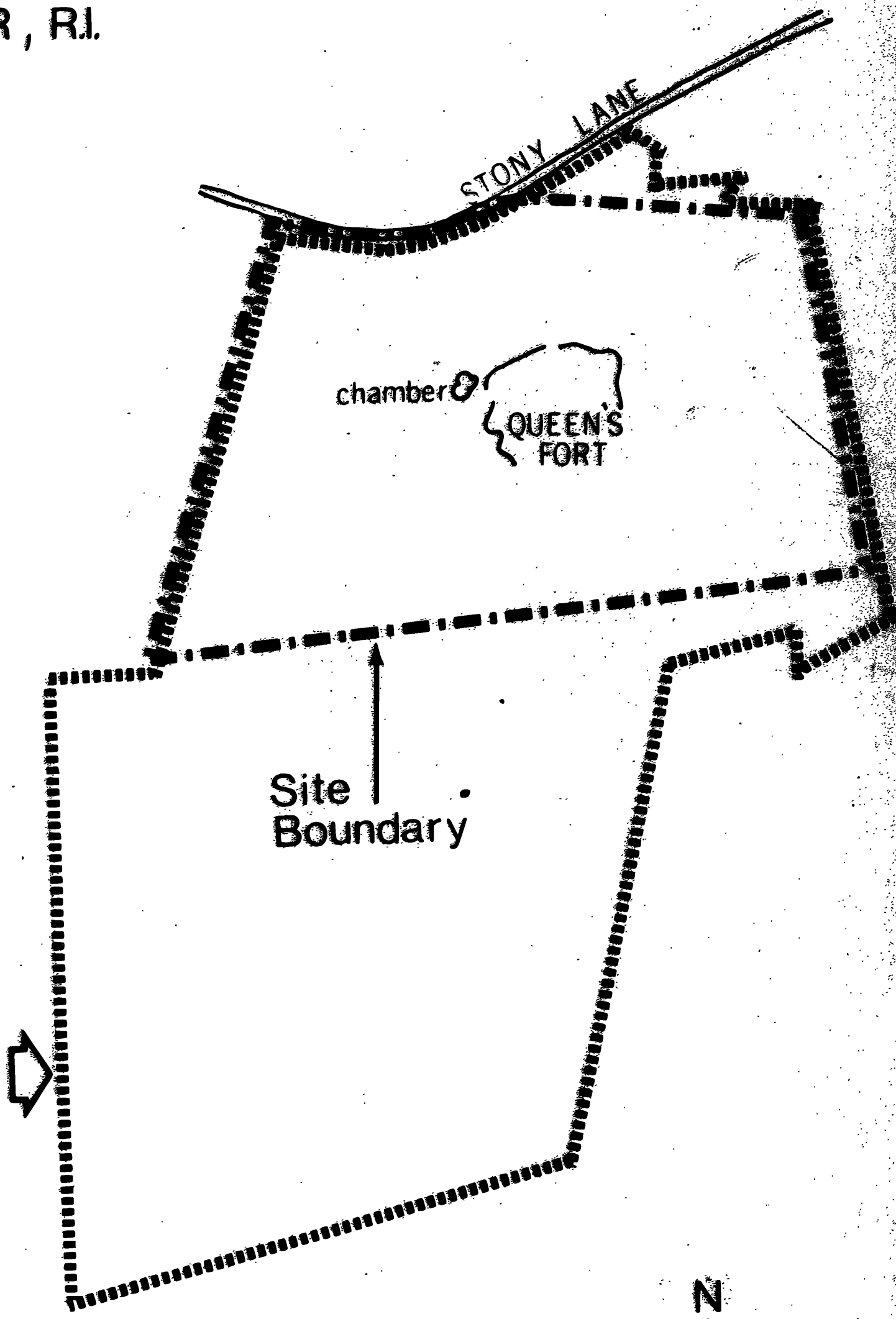
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follows the property lines of the owner, the Rhode Island Historical
- Society, and an arbitrarily-drawn boundary.

At a point on Stony Lane at telephone pole #1469 the Queen's Fort boundary begins, proceeding south-southwest 950 feet along a stone wall, then east 1600 feet, then north-northwest 800 feet, then west 650 feet to a point on Stony Lane, then west 550 feet along Stony Lane to point of origin.

QUEEN'S FORT EXETER, R.I.



R.I. Historical
Society
Property
Bounds

