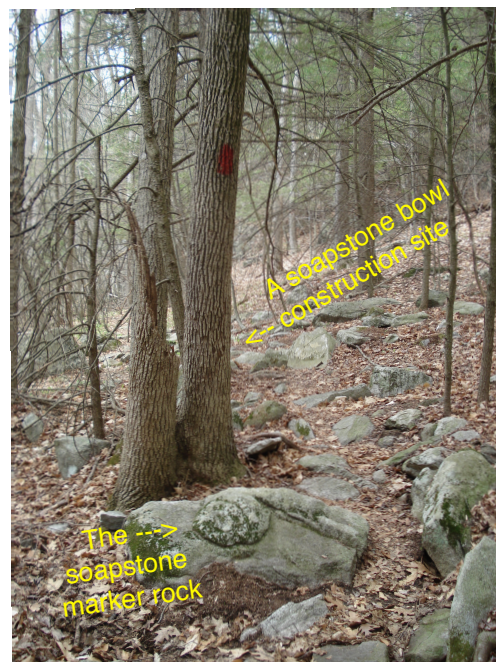




Indian Cave & Soapstone Quarry
“out & back”
1.1 miles
420 vertical feet
0.8 hours



The Indian Cave & Soapstone Quarry “out & back” hike takes you to a Connecticut State Archaeological Preserve. Parking for 6 cars is at the Elliot Bronson Trailhead on Park Road (41°55' 30" N 72°58' 31" W), 50 yards north of the rt. 181 junction. Follow the Elliot Bronson Trail, marked by a blue blaze with a red dot (B/R). At 0.3 turn left at the junction with the Walt Landgraf Trail, marked by a red blaze (R). At 0.4, the trail ascends a steep section, followed by a more gradual ascent. Look for a large tree marked by a red blaze with a large stone in front of it that seems to have an upside down bowl carved into the top surface (note photo). This rock, which is not soapstone, marks the location of a soapstone carving from 800 BCE. 30 feet after this tree, there is a large rock on the left. Directly behind this rock is a flatter soapstone rock with a bowl under construction (note photo) Before the age of clay pottery, soapstone bowls were in great demand for cooking. Soapstone was not that common, so this small area in Barkhamsted was a very valuable location. These early American Indians would carve a mushroom shape structure out of the soft soapstone, then break it off, & carve out the inside to create a bowl. To finish the bowl, they moved to a shelter area away from the quarry. Continue on this trail to the Indian Cave at 0.5. The cave is a very wide rock overhang from a large ledge. It provided some shelter & a good location for workers to complete their bowls. Evidence of stone tools & soapstone chips have been found there. All of this was being done before the Greeks built the Parthenon !!! In 1620, the Pilgrims discovered a culture that had a 2,400 year history living in New England. Retrace your steps back to your car. You have just completed a 1.1 mile hike, climbed over 420 vertical feet, walked 2,800 years back in time, and all in less than an hour !! This is a good use of time.

Click on the following Information link:

<http://www.courant.com/opinion/op-ed/hc-op-leff-ancient-place-contemporary-message-1119-20151118-story.html>

Periodically there are hikes to the Quarry led by an archaeologist. Check the Facebook page for the Friends of American Legion and Peoples State Forest. <https://www.facebook.com/ctfalps/>

Alan M. Perrie 6 - 12 - 18

Mileage summary: Ascend B/R > at 0.3 turn left onto R > 0.4 soapstone site > 0.5 Indian Cave > 1.1 return to car