

Blue Hills History – Who Stole Babel Rock? (And what did they do with it?)

OK, before we get to the Blue Hills and ‘our’ Babel Rock... Let’s see what Wikipedia has to say about another Babel Rock:

Babel Rock

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Babel Rock ([63°53′S](#) [61°24′W](#)) is the northernmost of a small group of rocks lying north of Intercurrence Island, in the Palmer Archipelago. Two of the rocks lying off the north end of Intercurrence Island were first charted and named **Penguin Islands** by James Hoseason, First Mate of the sealer Sprightly, in 1824. Since the name has not been used in recent years, it has been rejected to avoid confusion with the many other "Penguin" names. Babel Rock, the largest and most conspicuous of the rocks, is the site of a penguin rookery and the name arises from the ceaseless noise.

OK, we now understand how ‘that’ Babel Rock got its name. Alas there are no penguins at the Blue Hills, so our rock’s naming, at this time, less clear.

And now back to the Blue Hills....

You would think that a boulder that is 56’ in circumference and 8 feet high would be hard to lose... But apparently that is what has happened at the Blue Hills. Let’s start at the beginning. In the Thomas Crane Public Library, “Parker Collection”, there is a photo of “Babel Rock. Blue Hills”, taken by Warren S. Parker. C. 1870-1930.

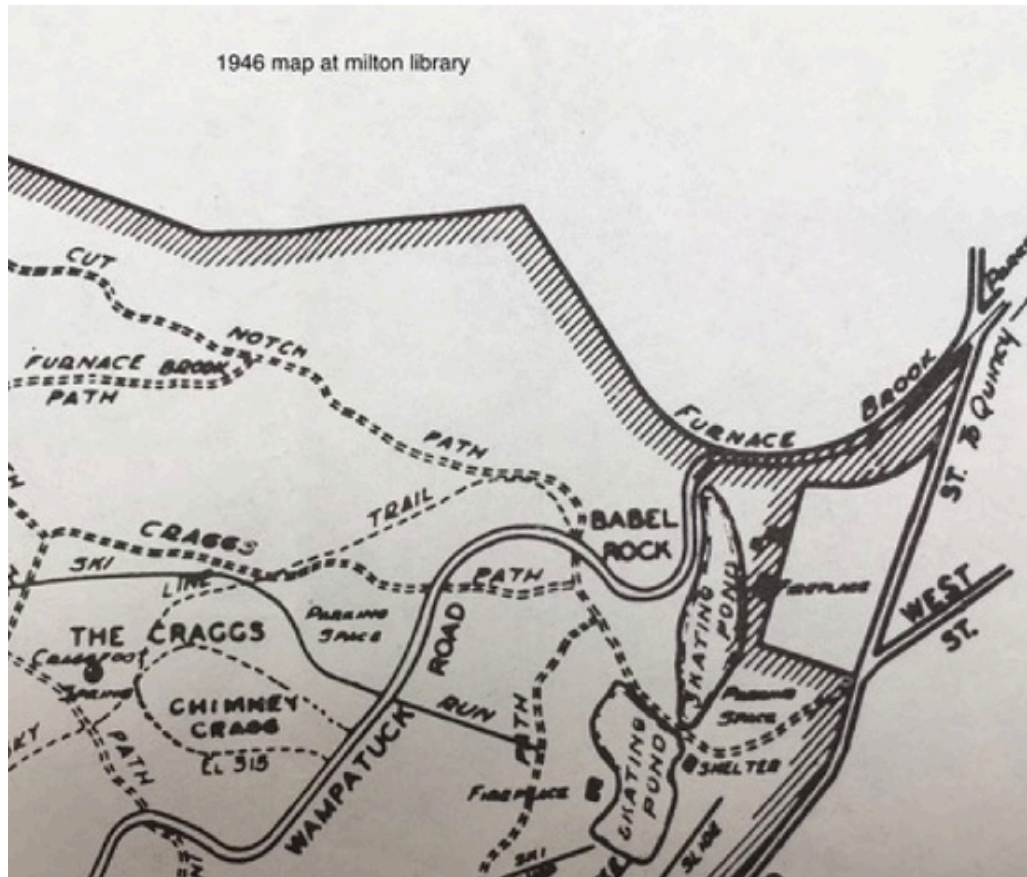


Other references to Babel rock include:

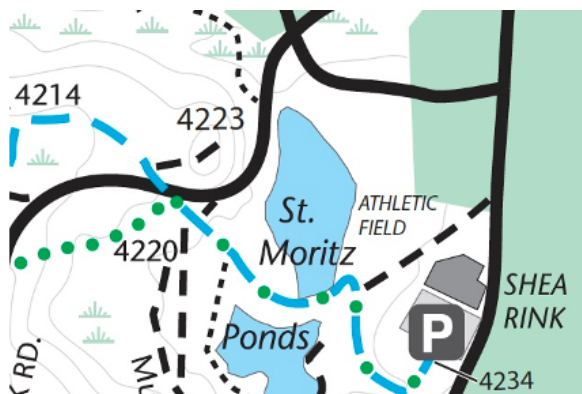
Given its size, one would think a boulder like that would stand out... However, when you look, there are a lot of rocks in the Blue Hills, especially near the old granite quarries. And, because of the changing landscape, because of all that quarrying... things don't look like they once did. The landscape has changed, and even the local roads have changed as well.

So, you might say, let's just look it up or something...

(And the can of worms is opened...)



This 1946 map of the Blue Hills at the Milton Library shows Babel Rock in that curve in Wampatuck Road.



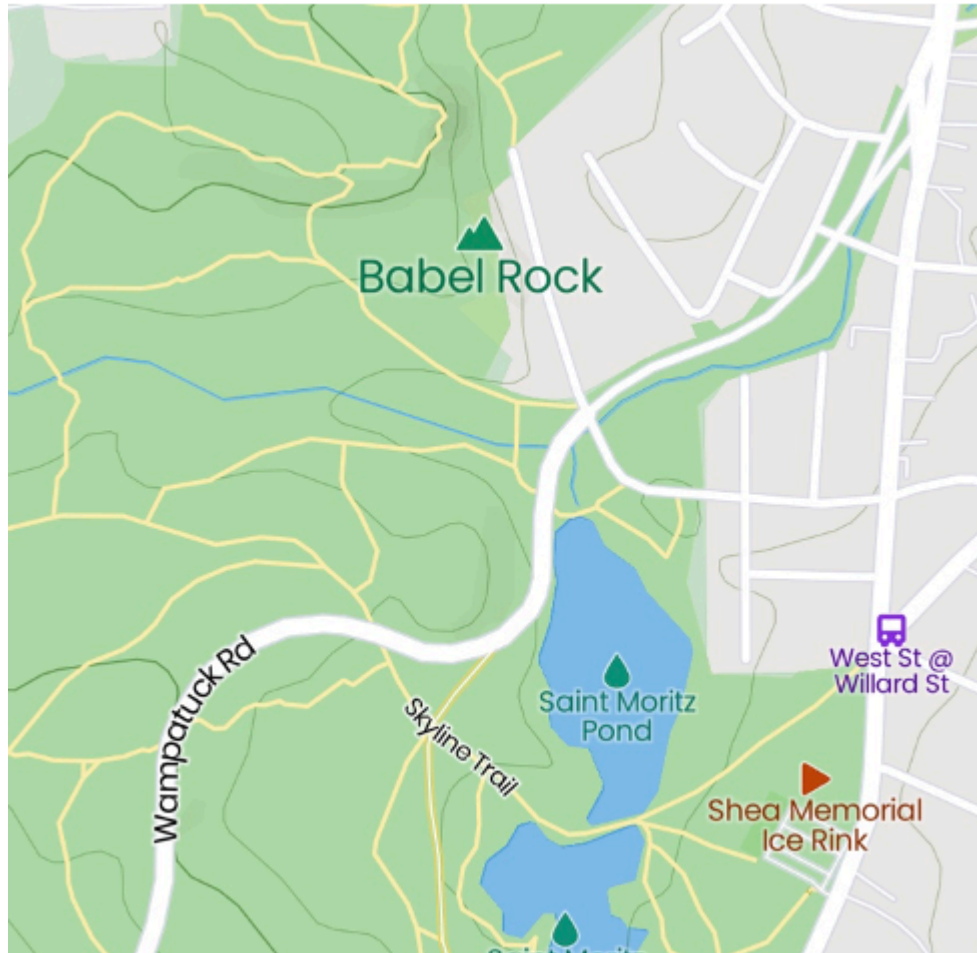
The 2016 DCR Map:

First of all, don't be confused by the '4223' label. That applies to trail junction with the road above and to the right of the number.

However, that trail below the 4223 number, that is just 2 black dashes... *appears* to lead to Babel Rock.

There can't be any doubt... Or can there be?

Well, for the competing 'theory' for where to find Babel rock...



If you look at Mapcarta.com (<https://mapcarta.com/22204712>) you will find Babel rock 'further north', just west of Bunker Hill Lane.

And they are not alone.



If you go to:

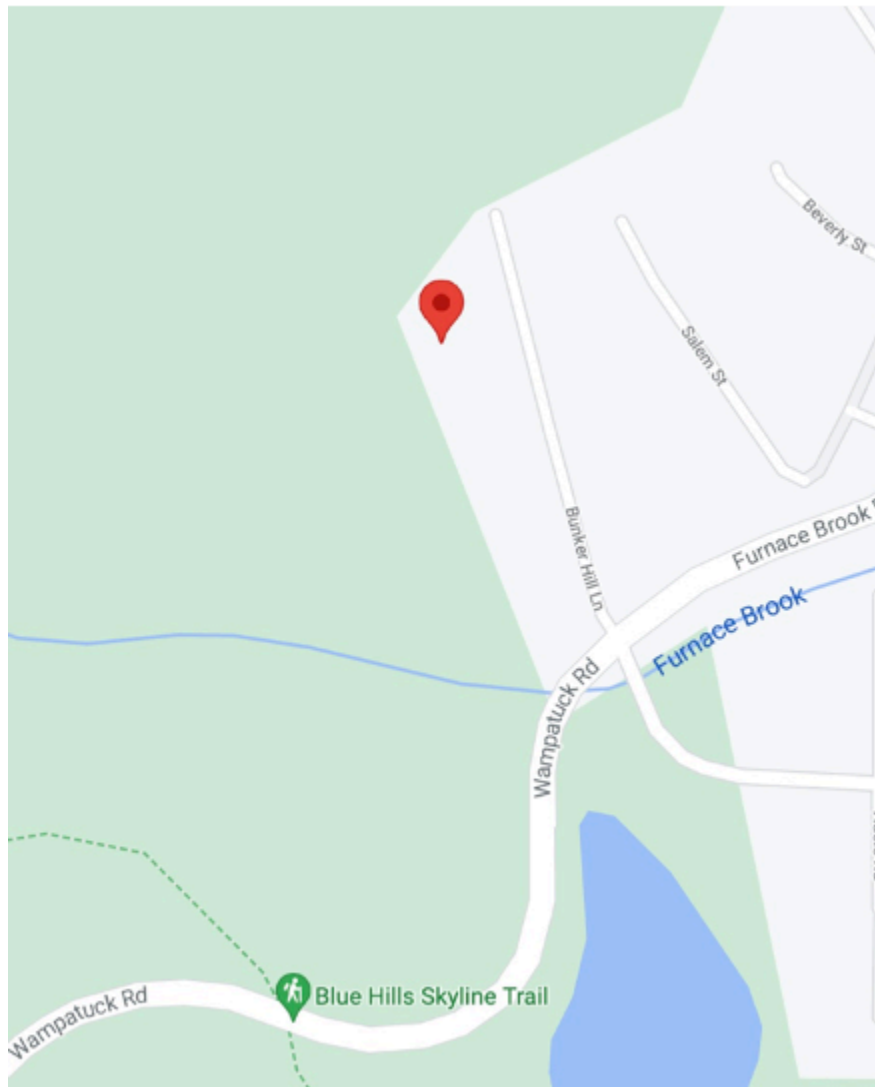
(That USGS, as in: United States Geological Survey)

You would think THEY would know the right answer, wouldn't you?

And type in Babel Rock, it gives the GPS coordinates.

42.2389882, -71.0328266

If you load these coordinates into Google maps, you get this map.



Which, again, shows Babel rock further north, and a slight bit east. And outside the Blue Hills boundary.

Clearly there are at least two locations being used for Babel Rock.

Who is “Right”? Well, all I can say is that several of us went hunting. And, at the top of the hill in that crook in Wampatuck Road, up that (now abandoned by DCR) trail... we found a rock that is about the right size to match the one in the top photo.

So, in closing I'll leave you one more piece of data: map of the city of Quincy, Norfolk County, Massachusetts, 1907



Again, Babel rock, right in that loop on Wampatuck Road.

If I had to bet *my* money, that's what I'd bet on, no matter what the US Geological Survey says...

But, the next time you cross Wampatuck Road on the Skyline Trail, take a 5-minute break, and follow that now abandoned (by DCR) trail up that little hill. You walk around the rock and compare it to the c.1900 photo. Walk the circumference and estimate the size. I think you'll agree it seems to be the rock in the photo, right where 'many' people say it belongs.

Note the caption in the reference on page 2 says the boulder "rests upon the summit of Babel Rock". So "Babel Rock" is apparently the large granite outcropping, not the boulder.

Bob Vogel