

New England Antiquities Research Association



Tripod Rock, Summer Solstice Sunset, Pyramid Mt. Photo Tour

Text & Photos by Edward Bochnak

Site Visit: June 22, 2003

● Pyramid Mountain Natural Historical Area



Tripod Rock is located in the Pyramid Mountain Natural Historical Area in the borough of Kinnelon and Montville Townships in New Jersey. There are more than 1000 acres, including trails, fields, forests, rock outcroppings and wetlands, providing a wide range of geological and ecological experience.

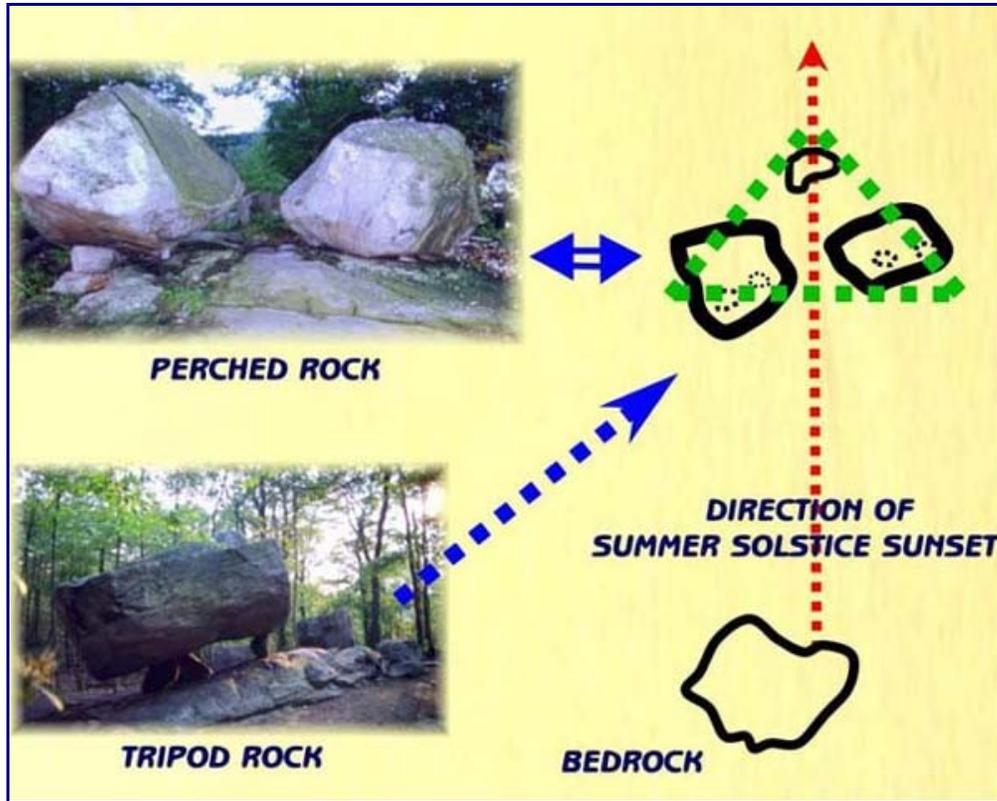
This wilderness land was used as a hunting, fishing, and gathering site or over 10,000 years by Native Americans, including the Lenape Indians, who were encountered by the first European settlers over three hundreds years ago. Many of these first explorers, traders, and settlers who discovered this special corner of old Pequannock were of Dutch extraction. Surveyor's stones and enduring stone walls still mark the homestead farms and woodlot boundaries.

The white trail leads to a special point of interest. On the top of a 960 foot hill is a unique glacial erratic, known as Tripod Rock or Three Pillar Rock.

This famous multi-ton boulder is balanced on three smaller boulders. It is 15 feet long, 12 feet wide, and 8 feet high. There is a peculiar triangular crest running the length of its top. The entire boulder is balanced two feet above the bedrock on three smaller stones. The point of contact between the main boulder and its support stones formed an approximate 3-4-5 triangle.

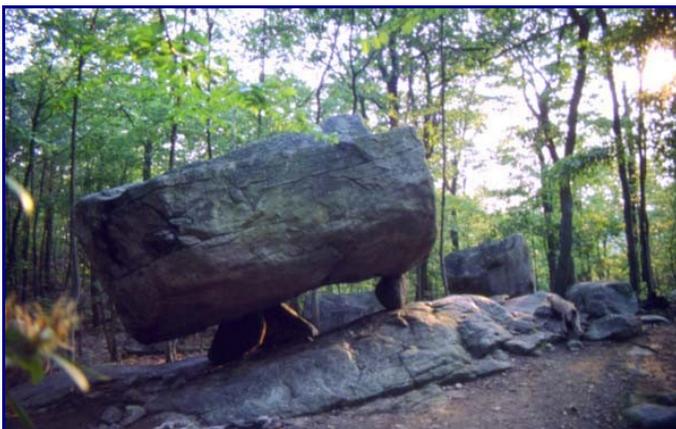
About 30 feet away from Tripod Rock stands a boulder arrangement which appears to form a triangle. Two large boulders balanced partially on two smaller stones for the base. The apex is about 15 feet away and in the form of a smaller rock. The apex of the triangular configuration points to a hill forming the horizon. Intriguingly, it has been observed that this sightline forms the setting point of the sun on the summer solstice.

● **Layout of Tripod Rock, Triangular Area, and Solstice Sunset Sightline**



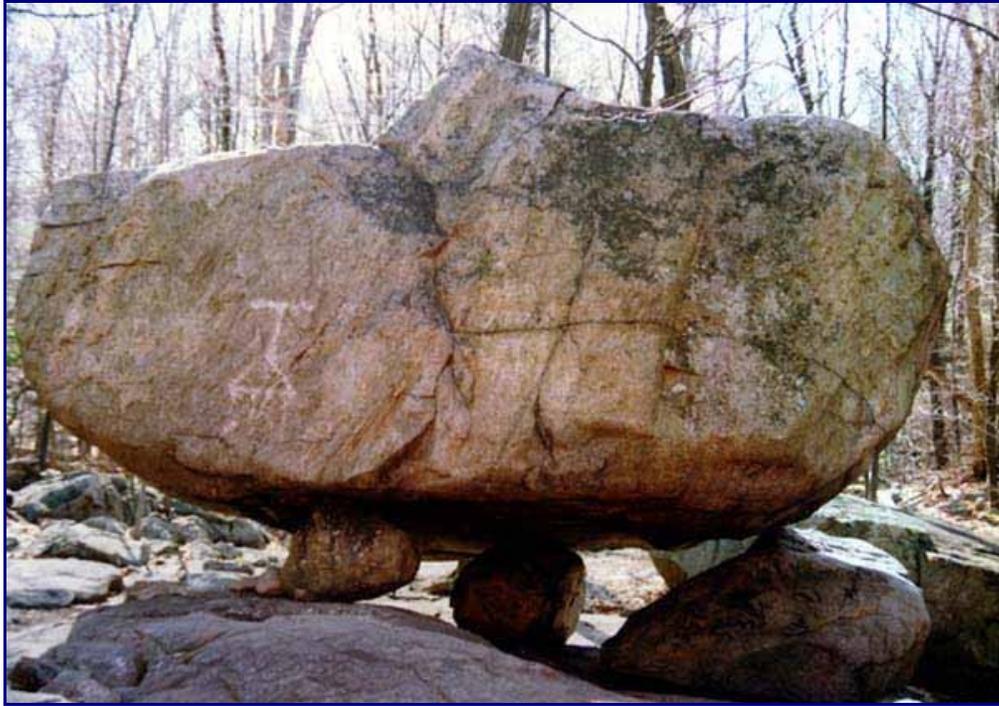
Arrangement of the boulders and sightline at Tripod Rock on Pyramid Mountain

● **Tripod Rock**



Two Late Afternoon Views of Tripod Rock

notice the crest running horizontally the length of the top



Tripod Rock

notice the triangular end of the crest

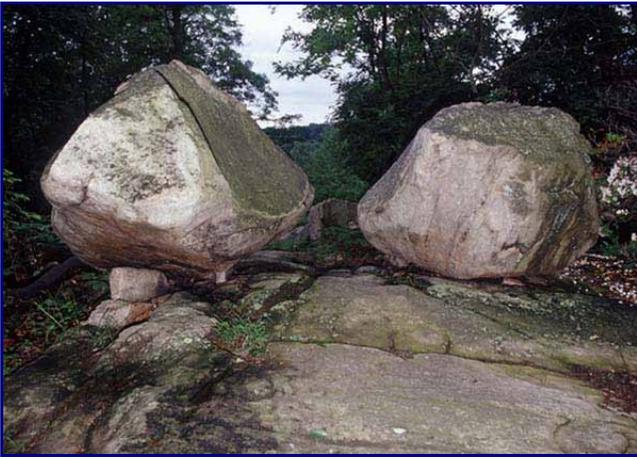


Close up of Supporting Stones

these are said to make an approximate 3-4-5 triangle

● Stones in a Triangular Arrangement



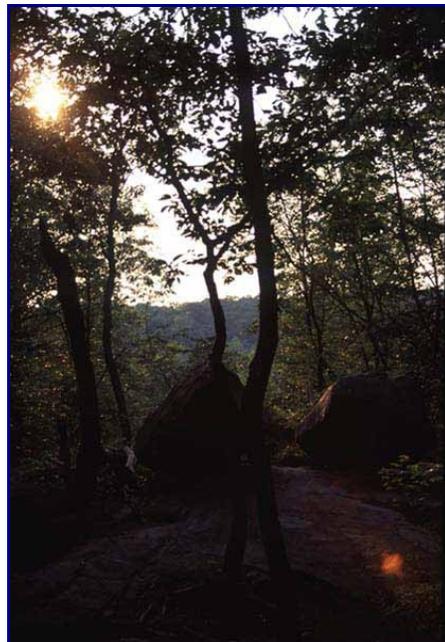


Triangular Area

Picture 1: Apex stone in foreground, man standing between the base stones.

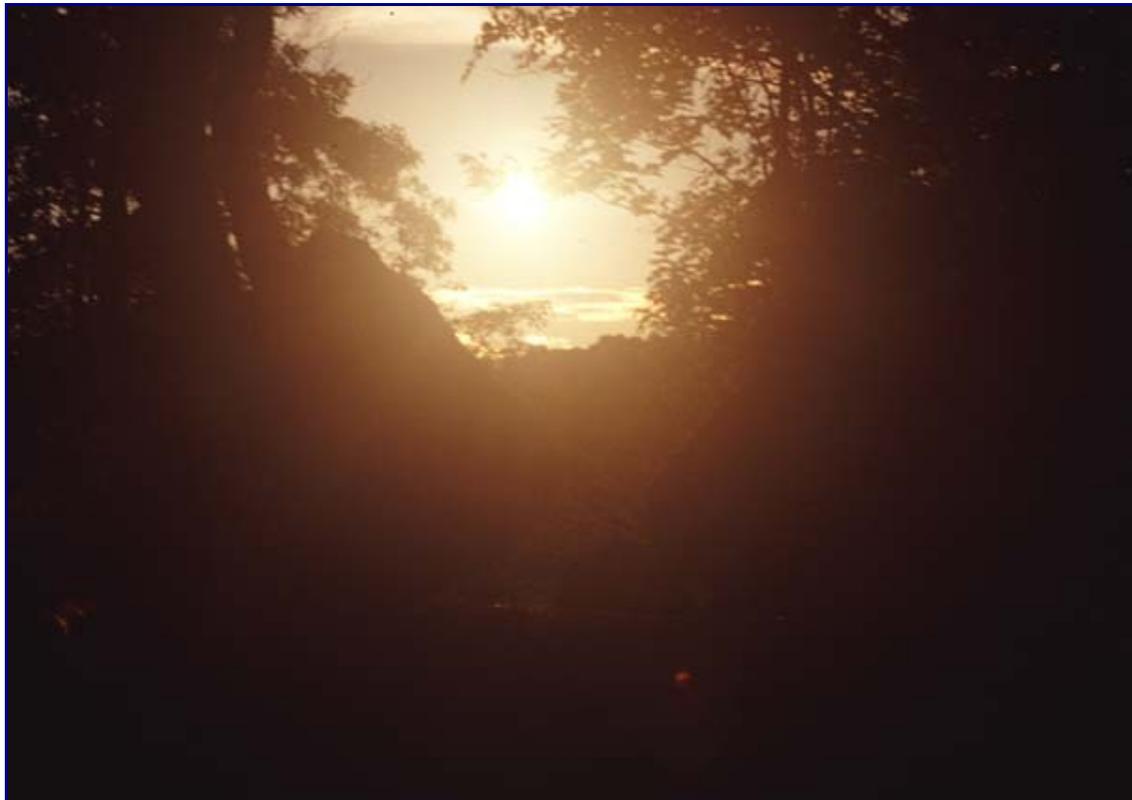
Picture 2: Horizon and base stones. Apex stone can be seen in between and beyond the base stones.

● Summer Solstice Sunset at Triangle Stones





Late Afternoon ~ Summer Solstice Sunset, June 22, 2003



Sun Framed by the Base Stones



Sun Sets Exactly Over the Apex Rock as Viewed from Between the Base Stones

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