

**Newport Tower**  
**Unsettled History**



**B. Lynn Brant**  
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## Unsettled History



The purpose of these pages, is to present the evidence and logic for why the Newport Tower cannot possibly have been built from the ground, as a colonial windmill in 1675. The claim that Benedict Arnold (grandfather of the revolutionary period traitor), who was the new head of the fledgling pioneer community of Newport, built the tower as a windmill has been under dispute for over 200 years. The adherents to this theory are known as the “Arnoldists.” They hold sway in the popular culture of the moment, but have not in the past, and may not in the future. The foundation argument of the Arnoldists, since at least the early 19th century when the tower had already long been in ruins, has been that the Indians could not have built it, and there was no-one here before 1635, so Arnold must have built it in 1675. There are three bits of evidence the Arnoldists use to support their theory, none of which can withstand examination. Each of them will be detailed in later sections. Meanwhile, there is a wealth of evidence that the tower stood long before the colonials arrived, that it could never have functioned well as a windmill, and that its architecture is entirely consistent with a much older structure.

What we will offer the reader is a guided tour through the history of the dispute - through the archeology, the architecture and finally, the logic of whether or not this structure could have, and would have, been built by 17th century colonials. We are not unbiased and we will not pretend to be. There has been so much bias brought to bear in favor of the colonial theory over the last 150 years that the only way to provide the present day inquirer with any measure of balance is to unabashedly present the case against a colonial origin for the tower. We trust that the reader will draw his own conclusions.

This section will include the tower's basic description and an overview of major studies done so far. "Archeology" will examine in depth the various digs done over the years and the carbon dating of materials. "Architecture" will cover how the tower was built, what it took to build it, comparable structures around the world, and its suitability to function as a windmill. "Colonial Theory" will discuss the social and economic reality of Newport in 1675, documentary and cartographic evidence regarding the tower, and the lack of evidence that it was successfully used as a windmill. "Conclusions" will invite the reader to consider the totality of what must be accepted as fact, in order to believe that the Newport Tower was built by colonials.

## **Location and Physical Description**

Newport is located at the mouth of Narragansett Bay, about 60 miles southwest of Cape Cod. The Newport Tower is in a small city park. It stands about 26 feet tall and its outer diameter is about 23 feet. The tower is not perfectly round, and this is an important point which will be discussed later. Eight round pillars support the tower with arches between them. The outside of each pillar extends nearly a foot beyond the outside wall. Inside there are post holes that held beams to support a floor. There are also three windows and several peepholes. A fireplace is built in at the upper level with two flues.

The entire structure is a rough rubble stone construction that, if found in Europe, would immediately be assumed to be of medieval construction. But being on the New England coast, it required an alternative, and imaginative, explanation. The tower was once covered in white stucco, both in and out. It also had a top of some sort, and a recent dig shows evidence of post holes about 8 feet from the outer wall that may have supported an ambulatory, or covered walkway, around the tower. Such an ambulatory would have been common on a medieval round church in northern Europe.

A number of digs have been done which uncovered some tools from the colonial period, but nothing earlier. This is embraced by the colonial camp as evidence that the tower was built by colonials, because, they say, if it had been built earlier something would have been left behind. This is a fair principle in archeology, that settlements will leave residue that will be found. However, for the entire period in which there has been anything like scientific archeology, the area around the tower, more than a few dozen yards distant, has been covered by city streets and buildings. And, many sites are archeologically "sterile." Especially, sacred sites were cleansed by their builders of any rubble. Finally, there is much evidence to suggest that the colonial tools were left behind when Arnold attempted to support the existing tower to withstand the stresses of a windmill. The digs and their implications are covered in the next section.

## Archeology

The archeological study of the Newport Tower has been going on since 1848. But by then, there was almost as much bias against the possibility of any pre-colonial exploration of North America as there once was against a heliocentric solar system. Over the years that bias became even more deeply seated as a result of many archeological hoaxes. Today we have a whole class of anti-diffusionists, ready to declare that the tower is colonial because that is the “status-quo assessment” and any claim to the contrary is subject to a burden of proof never met by the colonial theory. That is a key point. When the status quo assessment of history is the product of folk-legend, and has never been substantiated, then we have unsettled history. Such is the case with the claim that the Newport Tower was built by early colonials to be a windmill.

### Early Archeology

As early as 1848, the attempt was on to demonstrate a colonial origin for the tower using what passed as scientific analysis. A Rev. Dr. Jackson of Newport, collected mortar from the tower and from several old homes in Newport dating to the Arnold period. He pronounced that because all the mortar was of the same composition, that he had proven the tower was built at the same time as those homes. This, of course, defies logic on several levels. First, the way mortar was made hadn't changed for centuries. One would expect, and in fact could verify, that mortar from the 14th century would be essentially the same as mortar from the 17th century. And additionally, there is no way of knowing where the mortar samples were taken from within the tower. We know that during the Arnold period, patching and support work were done to the tower using then contemporary mortar. But if nothing else, this folly demonstrates how early a passionate and biased effort was underway to discredit any evidence of pre-Columbian contact.

Fast forward a century to 1948, and we find a dig being conducted by William Godfrey as his doctoral dissertation. Any hopes that he might be less biased, and display a modicum of scientific detachment is dispelled by his title, “Digging a Tower and Laying a Ghost,” and in his first chapter when he remarkably states, “some period before 1677, Arnold built the old stone mill.” He then takes dead aim on his own foot when three lines later he says, “Indeed, the only contemporary reference that connects Arnold to the mill is his own will.” The majority of the report is then devoted not to his objective findings, but to attacks on those who disagree with him. He calls them crackpots, zealots and the lunatic fringe. And still today, we find the Arnoldist camp flailing wildly in all directions and using the same juvenile name-calling in an apparent effort to express themselves forcefully.

What little of Godfrey's report that was not devoted to invective, still produced nothing to shed any light on the tower's origin. The few artifacts he excavated would date to 1750-1800. Yet he claims that, “Our excavations set the date of the tower's construction definitely between the dates of the founding of Newport in 1639, and 1677 when it is first mentioned historically.” But he produced zero evidence, archeological or otherwise, of this claim and one is left with the

doubtless conclusion that he began his work firmly committed to that conclusion. In his final paragraph he says, "This study has strayed far from pure archeology." At least there is that point on which we can agree with Mr. Godfrey, unreservedly.

Only four years after Godfrey's work, his dig was revisited by structural engineer Arlington Mallory and two City of Newport engineers, Gardner Easton and John Howieson. We quote Mallory on his primary finding:

***We also dug plaster from under the bottom stones of the foundation and found that every joint and opening in the foundation was carefully and thoroughly caulked with refill clay containing particles or fragments of plaster to prevent water seepage. Since all that plaster, except possibly a few fragments, had to come from the superstructure of the tower, it could not have been placed inside the joints and crevices of the present foundation unless the foundation had been installed as underpinning after the tower was built. The tower was probably underpinned in 1675. The quantity of plaster fragments in the excavation indicates that the plaster stucco had so far disintegrated that the tower must have been more than 300 years old when it was underpinned.***

We remind the reader here, that the tower was covered in a white plaster stucco. There is no dispute on this point by any of the camps. The key point is that the stucco was, of course, applied after the foundation was in place and the tower was built. So for it to be found "under" the foundations of the pillars is conclusive that there was digging under the foundations after the tower was complete, and after the stucco was applied. This digging can be dated to Arnold's time, and further, the deterioration of the plaster stucco indicates that it was hundreds of years old when the colonial digging beneath the foundations was done. This is Mallory's conclusion and we have seen virtually no refutation of it. It is singularly sufficient for the reasonable person to conclude that the Newport Tower was not built from the ground by the colonials, but rather, they found it, fancied that it might be converted to a windmill, and attempted to strengthen its foundations for that purpose.

## **Carbon Dating**

Everything about the Newport Tower has stirred controversy and debate for generations, but the carbon dating done in recent years, has been the source of dispute as much as anything. What we've learned is that carbon dating of mortar is fraught with error. As one would expect, the proponents of the colonial theory made much of the first report which claimed that the testing verified a build date for the tower in the Arnold period. Since then, the methodology and findings have been shredded by a series of highly qualified scientists coming forth to debunk the work and its conclusions.

A Scandinavian team took mortar samples from the tower in 1992. Core samples were taken from all eight pillars, but for reasons not explained in the report, only samples from pillars 6 and 7 were subjected to testing (as far as we know). Surface samples were taken from other locations and tested. Overall, the samples yielded dates ranging from 1410 to the 1930s. The simplest of logic would suggest, that when a small number of samples are taken from only two of eight pillars, and produce dates varying by 500 years, that there is something seriously wrong with the

technique being used to date mortar, if not with the scientific rigor of the study itself. Nevertheless, The Arnoldists heralded this study as proving that the tower was of colonial construction.

In recent years, probably more has been written about the carbon dating controversy than any other aspect of tower research. And, it is the most technical and difficult for the lay person to understand. What follows is a summary of the conclusions of four scientists who have debunked the above study, with links and citations for the reader who wishes to delve more deeply into it.

Analytic chemist James L. Guthrie said the following:

*The plaster dating results of Heinemeir and Junger are not to be taken seriously because the small number of samples tested, the poor precision of the methods revealed by the only test run in duplicate, and by the unwarranted assumption that all of the mortar and plaster is of the same age. Plaster and mortar applied over hundreds of years during known episodes of repair and reinforcement complicate the analysis, and the reported results suggest to me that the samples were mixtures of carbonates of different ages. The possibility that any of the specimens was a pure sample of the original mortar seems remote. Other things bother me, such as a preference for the more recent dates obtained from the first fraction of the evolved carbon dioxide, the apparent belief that a single ambiguous result from a nearby 17th century house is an adequate control, and the use of a calibration that may not be appropriate for the New England coast. The plaster samples seem to be a mix of older and newer plaster, and there is no evidence any is from the date of construction. Errors, especially the adsorption of modern carbon dioxide would tend to date samples closer to the present than to the date of mixing.*

Dr. Alan Watchman, a geological dating expert at Data-Roche Watchman, Inc. wrote:

*The data in table 1 of the article can be used to suggest an age of about 550 radio-carbon years might be obtained from measuring the more acid resistant carbon in the mortar - taking into consideration possible diffusion, particle size, crystallisation and fractionation effects. If my hypothesis is correct, then the calibrated age for the mortar would be about 1400 AD.*

Professor Andre J. de Bethune, Professor of Chemistry at Boston College, in a 1998 article appearing in Journal of the Newport Historical Society, made a strong argument (backed up by some painstaking physical chemistry calculations) that the penetration of air CO<sub>2</sub> over time into the mortar, even several inches into the mortar was likely, and that the quantitative contribution of that “fresh” <sup>14</sup>C renewal by ion exchange (error no. 5) would have to be significant, and in fact the most important. He was willing to assume that for particles as fine as .0005 inch, there was little chance of poor furnace work and that Heinemeier and Jungner’s sample preparation lowered the remaining errors to relative negligibility. The particles in the sample that would be least apt to be affected by carbon exchange error would be the largest particles which would be represented in the second CO<sub>2</sub> fraction collected. Basically, he said that atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> would penetrate the larger diameter particles less completely, and so their dates would be closer to actual (but still not correct). **His final conclusion: Tower was already standing 1440-1480.**

In an article published in the Midwest Epigraphic Journal, J. Huston McCulloch cited the same methodological problems and concluded the following:

*Although HJ conclude from their results that the Newport Tower could not have been built before 1635, I regard this as inconclusive evidence against an earlier date for construction, for several reasons:*

*1. Two of the dates used were from a surface sample that may have represented a colonial or even later repair to an earlier structure.*

*2. The other samples used may have been biased by slow reaction and/or substitution from rainwater. The inappropriately excluded post-1945 date on one of the samples tested demonstrates that rainwater substitution is an important factor.*

*3. The Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House does nothing to demonstrate that the slow reaction and substitution biases are not a problem, because of the flatness of the dendrocalibration curve since 1665AD on the one hand, and the fact that its sample was not exposed to the weather on the other hand.*

*4. The two Finnish churches do little to verify the Tower date, since the true dates of these churches are unknown, and since the samples were taken from the interior of the churches, where they were not exposed to the weather and potential carbonate substitution. Indeed, the fact that a few of the samples taken from them were still alkaline indicates that slow reaction may be a serious problem of mortar dating in general.*

*5. There are several inconsistencies in the results and unanswered questions that remain to be addressed. To be sure, none of these considerations proves that the Newport Tower is any older than 1635. I am merely returning a provisional "Scotch verdict" of "not proven colonial."*

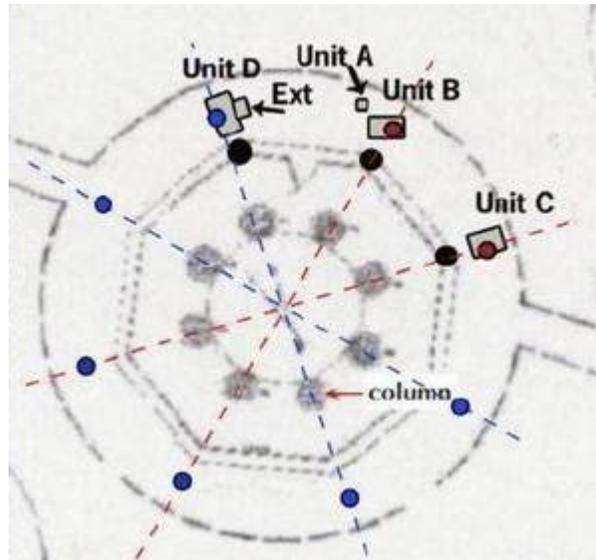
The preponderance of evidence shows, that the carbon dating fails to do what has been attributed to it - prove that the Newport Tower was not built before 1635. Further, a number of experts conclude that the study provides stronger evidence that it was built around 1400. Either way, more dating is needed by investigators with no up front bias. This may not be possible with current technology since a large section of the wall might have to be removed to get reliable samples. We disagree with McCulloch that the tower is simply "not proven colonial." The conclusion of a colonial build is more than unproven, it is implausible, if not impossible as we will show in our conclusions.

### **The Most Recent Dig - Chronognostic**

Jan Barstad and Chronognostic conducted a study over the last few years, with digs in several areas around the tower. They did not find pre-colonial artifacts but did discover the remains of two large post holes. No documentary evidence from colonial times indicates that there were any structures in the vicinity of the tower. In fact they indicate the opposite. More interesting, these two posts were positioned directly out from two of the pillars. The team was not permitted to dig around all eight pillars, the one area was available because the sidewalk was being removed for repair anyway. But the assumption is that these large posts were symmetrically placed around the tower in alignment with the pillars and as support for an ambulatory as seen on many round churches in northern Europe. The ambulatory would have been a wooden roof extending from

the top of the pillars and extending around the tower. This may also explain why the pillars extend about a foot from the wall on the outside. There is no reason to do this for a windmill and in fact it would have been counterproductive to support and handling the stresses of a windmill.

The diagram below shows the tower and pillars in relation to the two post holes. The location of the post holes is shown in red. Note their alignment with the pillars, and their location outside the modern fence. The blue dots show the projected locations of the remaining post holes.



## Summary

Archeology has shown itself to be a discipline with much bias built in. The efforts of archeologists over the years, to arrive at the conclusions with which they entered their tower study, has been well exposed. After 150 years, the light shed on the Newport Tower by archeology is as follows:

1. No pre-colonial artifacts have been found. This is consistent with an archeologically sterile site which, because it had sacred significance, was cleansed of any residue by its builders and subsequent users. If activity and even a temporary settlement had been kept back 100 yards, it was long covered by the streets and houses of Newport before anyone had a clue what to look for.
2. Plaster from the originally white walls found under the pillar foundations was already 300 years old in colonial times. Digging under the foundation was done in colonial times.
3. Colonial tools were found around the foundations. This is consistent with #2 above and further evidence that colonials attempted to strengthen the tower's foundation, perhaps to make it better able to withstand the stresses of a windmill.

4. Carbon dating not only fails to support the contention that the tower could not have been built prior to 1635, but several experts interpret the dating to show a build date of around 1400.

5. Two large post holes were found when colonial records indicate there was no structure near the tower. These posts are in alignment with two pillars and appropriate distance to have been supports for an ambulatory.

There is, therefore, nothing in the archeological record to date, to warrant the contention that the tower was built by colonials, or that it was ever used as a windmill (although we stipulate that it was, temporarily and unsuccessfully). In fact, there is nothing in the archeological record to warrant “any” conclusion about when the tower was built, or by whom. Many, myself included, are perfectly happy to leave it at that until more evidence emerges. Not so others, who are using bad science and blatant misrepresentation to advance the colonial theory.

## Architecture



As mentioned earlier, if found in Europe the Newport Tower would be designated as a medieval structure without second thought. But on the east coast of North America, it is an enigma that flies in the face of centuries of socially and scientifically ingrained dogma. That is, “it can’t be pre-colonial because there was no-one here capable of building it.” Never mind that so many aspects of the tower’s architecture are clearly so similar to forms found in Europe from 1000 - 1500 AD. And never mind that the tower was demonstrably designed with an intelligence that would have been entirely superfluous in a utilitarian building for grinding Indian corn.

For those seeking a dispassionate conclusion as to whether the tower could be of colonial origin, its architecture provides the most illumination. Again, it will not be our purpose to draw a conclusion or even make a case for any of the several viable theories of the tower’s origin. We will point out similarities between the tower and other forms, but only for the purpose of showing that the colonial theory is NOT viable.

We will explore the skill sets and materials needed to construct the tower. We will look at its design and construction and question whether the builder of a windmill would consider using them. We will look at the units of measure, or lack thereof, in the tower and ask what English

builder would have been so haphazard. We will ask whether indeed, some of the key features of the tower would have rendered it unfeasible as a windmill.

Finally, we will look at the many certain and possible astronomical alignments carefully built into the tower and ask why a struggling colonial settlement would have needed such a structure, and why they would invest so much to create it. And, we will look at a few other features within the tower whose apparent function was symbolic and ritualistic, or at least, unrelated to a windmill.

Every architect that has commented on the Newport Tower has described it as medieval in appearance and, regardless of its original purpose, pre-Columbian in design. Historical architect Sue Carlson said, "To all trained architects and architectural historians, the style of the tower is unquestionably medieval, as indicated by the quality of the rough stone masonry with its round stone columns supporting stone arches awkwardly making a transition to the superstructure above." And since the mid 19th century, other architects have agreed. Why the disconnect between the disciplines of archeology and historical architecture? Perhaps it is explained by the bias of archeology as they seek to find what fits with preconceived notions while architects more objectively seek similarity between design, style and construction methods.

## **Comparative Architecture**

Two researchers have made such a dominant contribution to knowledge of the architecture of the Newport Tower that the reader is best served if we simply review the work of each of them here and quote from them extensively. The two are James P. Whittal, and Sue Carlson.

### ***The Architecture of the Newport Stone Tower by James P. Whittal, 1997***

***The Newport Stone Tower in Touro Park in Newport, Rhode Island was constructed in the style of Norman-Romanesque architecture, inspired by the architecture of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem brought back to Europe by returning Crusaders. In its own unique style, the tower was further influenced by a combination of the architecture of temples of the Templars, the round churches of Scandinavia, and local architectural traditions from whence the builders came. Architectural features found within the construction of the tower would date it within the broad range of 1150 to 1400 A.D. However, some specific features limit it to a period in the late 1300s. In the course of six years of research I have found the best parallels in the tower's architectural features exist in the Northern Isles of Scotland which were under Norse control during the time frame mentioned.***

**The following are some of my conclusions to date:**

- 1. The architecture of the tower was pre planned. The concept was not conceived on site and built in haste.**
- 2. The architecture is completely involved with sacred geometry.**
- 3. The masons were completely familiar with the materials on hand with which to construct the tower.**

- 4. The tower was aligned to east and each pillar (8) was placed on a cardinal point in the manner after the Templars. It was not constructed using a magnetic compass. Today designated pillar 1 is 3 degrees west of the North Pole star**
- 5. The tool marks created in the dressing out of the stone can directly be related to tools manufactured before 1400. These marks are unique and unknown when compared to tool marks noted in colonial stonework.**
- 6. After extensive comparison with ancient units of measurement, we have found that the unit of measurement for the construction of the tower is best suited to the Scottish Ell or the Norwegian short Men. A photogrammetric survey made in 1991 showed that the unit of measurement for the tower was 23.35 cm, which supports the idea that either the Scottish Ell or the Alen was used in constructing the tower. The English foot wasn't used.**
- 7. The single and double splay windows have prototypes in Medieval Europe and the Northern Isles of Scotland in the 1300s in churches and the Bishop's Palace in Orkney.**
- 8. The arch and lintel design noted in the tower is to be found in Orkney, Shetland, and Scandinavia round church architecture before 1400.**
- 9. I have found in extensive research, that the triangle keystone feature of the arches in the tower only seemed to have been found in the buildings in Orkney, Shetland, Greenland (1 example), and to a very limited degree in other buildings in the Scottish Isles (3) and in Ireland (2).**
- 10. Built-in niches in the tower have parallel examples in Medieval construction in Orkney and Shetland. It is basically unknown in New England architecture except in some post 1700 stone chambers.**
- 11. The plinth, pillar, capital, arch architecture of the tower has no prototype in New England colonial architecture, yet is found in Kirkwall Cathedral in Orkney.**
- 12. The design of the fireplace with its double flues dates to the 1300s and was out of fashion by the 1400s. There are prototypes of this design in Scotland. Research has indicated the probability that the fireplace and its relationship to the west facing window was used as a lighthouse and probably signal station. The same can be said for the windows on the third level.**
- 13. The walls were covered with a plaster stucco finish both interior and exterior. Stucco finishing started in the 1200s and is a feature known in Orkney and Shetland.**
- 14. The probable layout and design of the floor joists with corbels has parallels in medieval Scotland.**
- 15. Probably first floor entry by ladder through the window/entry 3. A trait found in the round churches of Scandinavia.**
- 16. Some architectural features in the tower have been organised to utilise astronomical alignments as a calendar event. Some of the alignments fall on Holy days of the Norse and Knights Templar. There are prototypes in Northern Europe.**

**17. Probability of an ambulatory around the tower (planned for but not necessarily built). Examples in Templar construction and round churches.**

**18. The tower is located approximately the same latitude as Rome. This would make it an ideal reference point for exploration and mapping.**

**19. There is no architectural parallel in Colonial New England for the Newport Tower and its specific architectural features.**

**20. I suggest that the tower was built as a church, observatory, lighthouse, a datum zero point for future exploration in The new World.**

### **Units of Measure**

James Whittall also took some painstaking measurements of various tower dimensions. They are:

1. The diameter of the pillars = 3 feet, 1 inch
2. The width of the wall at the first arch keystone = 3 feet, 1 inch
3. The interior diameter of the tower, pillar to pillar = 18 feet, 6 inches
4. The exterior diameter of the tower at pillars = 24 feet, 8 inches
5. The width of the wall at arch keystones 2-8 = 2 feet, 3 3/4 inches
6. The distance from the south side of the fireplace to the first niche = 1 foot, 6 1/2 inches
7. The distance across the inside of the capital = 3 feet, 10 1/4 inches
8. The distance across the outside of the capital = 2 feet, 3 3/4 inches

These dimensions presented a serious problem for the supporters of the colonial theory, since a colonial builder would have used the English foot. They have tried in vain to find other units of measure that would fit and make sense but none do. Except for one - the medieval Scottish "el" which is 37 inches. When applying the el to the above dimensions one sees the round numbers for each as follows:

1. pillar diameter = 1 Scottish el (SE)
2. width of wall at first keystone = 1 SE
3. interior pillar to pillar diameter = 6 SE
4. exterior diameter at pillars = 8 SE
5. width of wall at keystones 2-8 = 3/4 SE
6. distance from south side of fireplace to first niche = 1/2 SE
7. distance across inside of capital = 1 1/4 SE
8. distance across outside of capital = 3/4 SE

This uniformity with the Scottish el cannot be an accident. It is self evident not only that the foot was not used, as any colonial builder, without doubt, would have done, but also that the Scottish el “was” used. This is one of many findings that in itself is devastating to the viability of the colonial theory.

### **Suzanne Carlson**

In addition to Jim Whittal, architect/historian Suzanne Carlson has made a great contribution to our understanding of the architecture of the Newport Tower. Her article, “Loose Threads in a Tapestry of Stone: Architecture of The Newport Tower” is a must read for anyone wishing to delve deeper into the study of the tower than this website’s overview. The article in its entirety is available online. A summary is offered here:

As an historian/architect, Sue approached the tower recognizing that it had similarities with structures around Europe, but there was no clear prototype that embodied all, or even most, of the characteristics of the Newport Tower. These tantalizing leads are frustrating for those seeking to answer when the tower was built and by whom. While they provide many clues, it falls short of being conclusive. Fortunately our mission here is not to conclude who did, but who didn’t, build the tower. And Sue’s study in comparative architecture does much to help us conclude that the colonials did not build the Newport Tower.

All that remains of the early Norse round church at Ophir in the Orkney Islands of present-day Scotland is the rough stone apse which is about 20 feet in diameter. Carlson says about this church, “My firsthand study of the construction techniques still visible in Ophir, and masonry techniques of other Orkney buildings of the period, show a remarkable similarity to the methods of our Newport masons. This suggests to me a common construction tradition derived from North Atlantic Medieval standards.”



Norse round church in Orkney Islands

Ritual cleansing was part of the daily life for the Cistercian religious order that was founded in the 12th century. The water sources for these cleansings were regarded as sacred and enclosed by

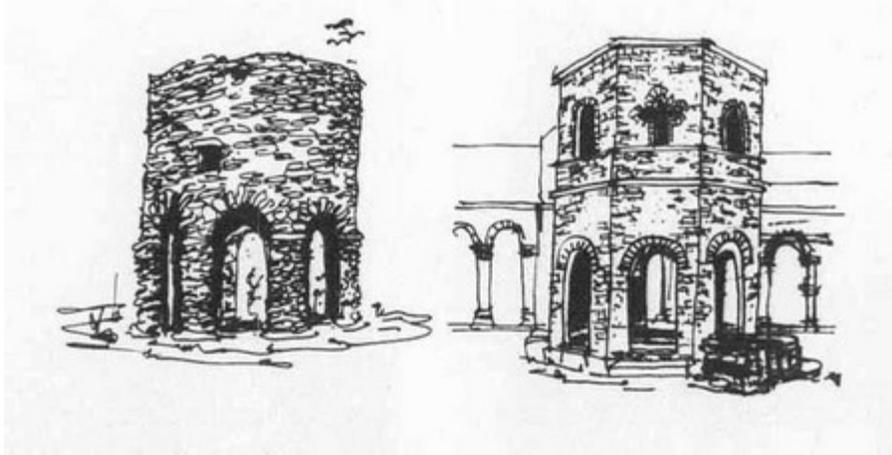
a small, open-arcaded structure either round or octagonal. These lavabos were usually two floors. The similarity to the Newport Tower is striking, and without suggesting that the tower was built as a Cistercian Lavabo, we find it hard to believe the style was copied by a colonial stonemason for a mill to grind corn.



Newport Tower Compared to the Mellifont and Valmagne Lavabos

**The Tower of the Monastery of Saint Bavo, Ghent, Belgium** (we quote Sue Carlson directly)

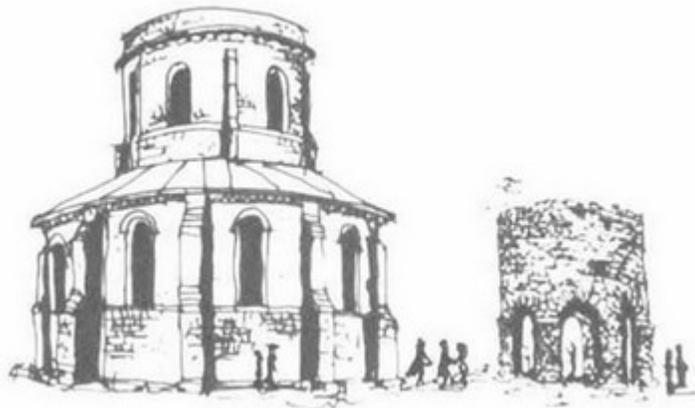
“This austere octagon rises unceremoniously from the cloister yard, each face pierced by a simple unornamented arched opening, with sills approximately 18 inches above ground. An interior stone trench follows the outside wall, presumably filled with water and used for ritual ablutions. There are no capitals on the exterior of the piers, but the rib brackets on the inside have primitive Romanesque floral and grotesque carvings. The ceiling is a ribbed vault. Access to the second story is by an attached stair tower constructed partially of brick and of a much later design. The wood door set in masonry infill in one of the arches is obviously a later addition, leaving us to ponder the original means of access to the upper story. Each face of the second story has a central round arched window with stained glass sash. The front face window has a trefoil shaped upper sash. Only roof flashing is visible today, and again the original roof configuration remains a matter for speculation. A deep well, which fed water into the trough, sits in front and to the right of the entrance in the cloister yard. We can only muse about possible astronomical significance of the upper floor at this point in the study. The construction in its geometric features offers a viable prototype for Newport Tower.”



Newport Tower compared to St. Bavo's Tower

### Templar Round Churches

The Newport Tower is often compared to the small round churches built across Europe by the Knights Templar. Most famous is London Temple Church shown compared to the Newport Tower below. The inner cylinder or apse, is 41 feet in diameter (no Scottish Els here) and again, supported by eight pillars. It is therefore larger than the tower, but of the same scale and proportion. Note again that in the picture below you are seeing the entire church as modified in more recent times. The part that compares well is the center of which you see only the top.



London Temple Church and Newport Tower

The Templar round church that is most compelling by comparison is the one at Lanleff in France. It is also larger than the Newport Tower, but has the same scale and proportions. Most interesting are its oddly placed windows and its many obvious astronomical alignments. It is

unknown who built this church, but there are many candidates with the Templars a prime possibility.



Templar Church at Lanleff

### **The Skill Sets and Materials Needed to Build the Newport Tower**

What did it actually take to build the Newport Tower? This is another area where we owe much insight to Sue Carlson who made an in-depth study of what materials and skills and manpower were needed to build the tower. Briefly, it took about 450 tons of stone and six tons of clamshells for mortar. And another 45 tons of sand. The builders also needed a couple thousand gallons of good water and a number of strong oaks for lumber. A master mason and an apprentice would have been needed and a couple skilled carpenters as well. Other tasks like mortar making could have been overseen by the mason but taught and done by general laborers.

The materials were readily available around Newport, whenever the tower was built. But the master masons were not. There were no stone structures anywhere in the area during Arnold's time that would have required the masonry skills. They would have to have been imported from some distance and brought in - for a windmill to grind corn. In order to believe that Gov. Arnold built the tower from the ground as a windmill you have to accept all the following:

1. That he was willing to incur at least ten times the cost of a wooden mill
2. That he imported a master mason who was willing to build a stone windmill on eight pedestals
3. That this same master mason designed the pillars to be offset to the outside and failed to make the tower perfectly round

We will delve further into the illogic of this in another section. For now the point is simply that building the tower was a major undertaking that dwarfed the job of building an ordinary wooden windmill. And if one did want to build a stone windmill one would make it solid to the ground to withstand the stresses and strains of a windmill. And one would make it round since, as we will discuss later, it could not possibly function as a windmill being as out of round as it is. And

finally, since almanacs were readily available at the time, one would not have bothered to build in astronomical alignments.

## **Astronomical Alignments**

It has long been recognized that the eight pillars of the Newport Tower are aligned with the cardinal points of the compass. This alone suggests a builder other than a colonial, who would have had no motive for such an orientation in a windmill. But that's just the beginning. The tower clearly contains a host of astronomical alignments and perhaps others are still waiting to be discovered. It is important to note, however, that claims in recent years about Venus alignments and illuminations of certain stones claimed to have some esoteric significance, are unfounded and attempts at sensationalism which ultimately hinder the search for the truth.



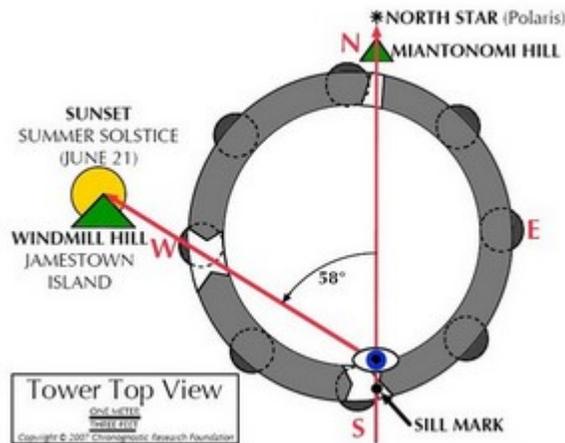
These photos show two of the alignments, the lunar minor standstill on the left and the winter solstice sunrise, right.

In thinking about the alignments remember that the tower stands on a hill that was open pasture and with a clear view of Jamestown Island to the west, and Miantonomi Hill to the precise due north. One can sight the alignment from the south window of the tower through the small north window, and see the top of Miantonomi Hill, and directly above it the north star. The highest point on Jamestown Island is (ironically enough) Windmill Hill. And on one day a year, the summer solstice, one can sight from the south window of the tower through the west window which at that angle is a narrow slit and see the sun set directly above Windmill Hill.

Obviously the builders used these two sightings from the summer solstice setting sun and the north star over two points on the earth to determine the tower's location. And it is equally clear they then designed the windows to be able to observe and mark the solstice. Yet, some would still claim this is due to coincidence.

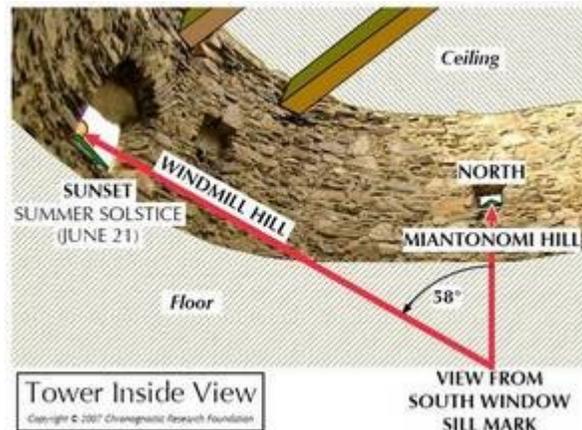


The above diagram is from Chronognostic.org who did the research at the tower in 2006 and 2007. The odds of a structure being built by coincidence at the intersection of those two lines is very small and the design of the tower and the detail of its windows, niches and splays can only have been done, and with great effort, to create a functionality as an observatory. This evidence alone seems entirely sufficient to dismiss the colonial theory. We know of no colonial advocate who argues that the alignments were designed by colonial builders.



The above diagram, again from Chronognostic, shows the window design and location and how precise the sighting had to be. This was how the location for the tower was chosen. Once this was accomplished other sorts of alignments could be built in as well. Why would “any” builder bother to do this? Because in an age before almanacs, one needed to be able to make these sightings to know when to plant and harvest, and when certain days of religious significance would fall. The colonial founders of Newport had no need for such an ability since they had almanacs for over a hundred years. In fact, there is no evidence of any building in the area in colonial times having such a range of astronomical alignments. It is difficult to believe that Gov.

Arnold opted for it in a windmill that was already costing him ten times more than a typical wooden one.



Another graphic from Chronognostic illustrates the view from inside the tower of both the northern alignment and the solstice sunset. Think for a minute how the builder had to have approached this. He would have started with Polaris, only visible at night. Then he would need a landmark for daytime location of due north which was the crest of Miantonomi Hill. Those two points define a north/south line, and the builder's next task was to bisect that line with an east/west line which allows him to identify the vernal and autumnal equinox because on those two days the sun rises and sets due east and west. Next, our builder needs another set of celestial and land points to establish the solstice line. The point at which that line crosses the north/south line is the location for his tower. He begins with the location of the setting sun on the summer solstice. He aligns it with the highest peak to the west, the crest of what is now Windmill Hill. The point at which he can stand on his north/south line and see the setting sun on the summer solstice over the crest of Windmill Hill is the location of the tower. Now he "merely" has to build the tower and carefully locate the windows and the exact angles of their splays so that through the tiny north window he sees the north star directly over Miantonomi Hill and through the narrow west window he sees the setting solstice sun directly over the peak of Windmill Hill.

This intelligence and effort was not put into a windmill for grinding corn, and obviously it is virtually impossible for it to have happened by accident. While it is not our mission to speculate who built the Newport Tower or why, we are compelled to conclude that one of the reasons was for celestial observation. Other reasons may have included service as a church and as a lighthouse for ships entering the bay, but the enormity of effort that went into the tower makes clear the astronomical alignments were a major goal.

But wait, there's more! Astronomer William Penhallow, who has done extensive research on the tower's alignments, commented that they aren't as tight today as in the past, because stars and the earth move slightly in relation to other other long periods of time. Penhallow said the alignments were most precise between 1200 and 1600 AD. When Chronognostic did their work they noted that they used the sun's location at that time and it aligned directly over the old windmill on Windmill Hill. But, that windmill is off by 200 feet from the exact highpoint of the

hill. When they used the astronomy software Starry Night, the alignment was perfect over the crest of the hill - in 1125 AD! What are the implications of this? Even if one wanted to give some credence to the possibility that colonial builders incorporated the alignments, the dates are all wrong. Had they built the tower and created the alignments in the 1670s, not only would they have had more modern instruments, we would today be able to see a best fit date of 1675 rather than much earlier as is the case. Even more evidence that a colonial build is not a viable explanation for the Newport Tower.

## Colonial Theory



Before we nail the coffin tightly, it behooves us to briefly state what we mean by Colonial Theory or Arnold Theory. Colonial Governor of Rhode Island, Benedict Arnold came to America with his parents as a teenager in 1635. He moved to the still new settlement of Newport as a young man and became a leading citizen and land owner, eventually be appointed as governor, although village leader would have been a more descriptive title.

We must remember that at that time, the interior just beyond the coast was a wilderness of heavy timber occupied by Indians, often unfriendly. The area that became Newport, when first settled by a few farmers producing small crops, had no need for a wind or water mill to grind corn. The ancient hand grinding methods were adequate to produce the bread for the pioneer's own tables.

But Newport grew and by 1663, there were enough residents growing enough corn that transporting over some distance to be milled was a serious inconvenience remedied by Peter Easton, who built a windmill for himself and for the use of his neighbors, (for a fee no doubt). In 1675, a wind storm destroyed the Easton mill and Newport once again had a problem. Easton had built his mill when his father was governor, and now looked to the new governor, Benedict Arnold, for a solution, and both sides of the dispute agree, he found one.

That is, of course, where the agreement ends. While we all agree that Arnold stepped up and provided Newport with a windmill, the hallmark of the Colonial Theory is that he built the Newport Tower, jaw-droppingly out of place as it would have been, from the ground up as a windmill. In the sections to follow we will dig into that and its implications further, but for now let's look at the other dimensions of the Arnold Theory. Its critics ask what could have possessed the governor to build in stone when almost all other buildings in New England at the time were of wood? And what of the strange architecture with the building being above ground supported by eight pillars and arches? Nothing even remotely similar to this had existed in the new world before. The Arnold Theory's answer is to point to a structure in England now known as the Chesterton Mill.

So the story goes, the refined piece of Renaissance architecture was the inspiration for the Newport Tower windmill. Recall that this story is being born in the mid-1800s, when the controversy over the origin of the tower heated up. In those days, both sides of the dispute hurled distortions and even lies back and forth regularly. It was flatly stated and widely believed that Benedict Arnold had grown up quite near to the Chesterton building and saw it often. When he decided to build a windmill he remembered it, and THAT is the Arnoldist alleged origin of the baffling architecture of the Newport Tower.

The other piece of the theory is that in his will written in 1677, when Arnold mentioned his “stone built windmill,” it meant he built the structure from the ground up for the purpose of being a windmill. Those three points, similarity to the Chesterton Mill, Arnold’s supposed exposure to the Chesterton Mill and his mention of his stone built windmill in his will, comprise the total of the Colonial Theory and, they say, constitute conclusive evidence that there was no Newport Tower before 1675.

The controversy has been going on for so long one can look back and see periods in history when the Colonial Theory or a medieval build theory held sway. We sense that having been in an Arnoldist period in recent years, new findings are now propelling us to where the Colonial Theory is about to be dismissed entirely.

Considering the weakness of the several premises on which the Arnold Theory is based, it is a wonder it grew to prominence in the first place. To understand how that happened we have to keep in mind that this controversy has been going on for well over 150 years. The first speculations about the origin of the Newport Tower were from people from New York, who had seen the tower and doubted it was built by early colonials merely to grind corn. It was too elaborate and stylized for a little backwater settlement like Newport to have raised. The people of Newport took great umbrage at this. Not only “could” Benedict Arnold have built the Newport Tower, they retorted angrily, but by God he did and that’s that!

The Arnoldist legend tells us that Benedict Arnold was born and raised near Leamington and Chesterton in Warwickshire. It goes on to presume that, since he lived nearby, as a lad he had seen, and perhaps had even observed or helped with, the construction of what is now known as the Chesterton Mill. This myth was pulled from the air but still persists even as the legend’s age approaches 200 years. In truth, Benedict grew up near Ilchester and Limington which are in Somerset. Benedict Arnold likely never saw, or even heard of, the structure at Chesterton.

In 1635, the Arnold family along with a number of relatives boarded a ship at Dartmouth, Devonshire, and sailed for Massachusetts. It is interesting to note that all of them were from within 5 miles of Ilchester. Travel was rare for all but the wealthy, and to assume that a young boy had traveled from Ilchester to Chesterton is a huge stretch. In all the documents and records of the Arnold family, there is not one mention of Warwickshire or, for that matter, any other part of England except Somerset which was home, and Dartmouth the port of departure. The distortion was then amplified by another of what we will generously call errors rather than lies. That being that Arnold’s farm in Newport was named Leamington Farm after Leamington, the village near the Chesterton Mill. But the record clearly shows that Arnold’s Newport estate was Limington Farm, after the village of Limington near Ilchester where he in fact grew up.

So in this way the story of Arnold's familiarity with the Chesterton Mill became one of the two legs on which the colonial theory stood for over 150 years (the other being the "supposed" similarity between the Chesterton Mill and the Newport Tower).



### **The Real Chesterton Mill**

The structure at Chesterton was built in 1632, probably by famous architect Inigo Jones for the estate owner, Edward Peyto. He was also commissioned at the same time to build a watermill and stone bridge nearby. It is generally thought that the structure known as the Chesterton Mill was designed and built as an observatory, fashionable then on the estates of the wealthy, and much later converted to a windmill. There are claims to the contrary, that it was built as a windmill, but we have been unable to find any documentation of that.

There are, however, several bits of evidence constituting a strong argument that it was NOT built as a windmill. First, as we have said, Inigo Jones was hired to build a watermill at the same time as the Chesterton "mill." Even the wealthy have no need for both a windmill and a watermill. There was no logical reason for Peyto to pour huge amounts of money into building both. Logically, at some later date, in a time of drought, the watermill could not function and the observatory was converted to wind power.

The second and perhaps most powerful argument is that if the Chesterton Mill had been built as such, it would have been a tower windmill. Tower windmills were stone or brick towers with a revolving top to turn the sails into the wind. The problem is, there is scant evidence of any tower windmills in the English speaking world until around 1700, and the Chesterton structure was

built in 1632. There were 17th century tower windmills in France that early, but few or none in England. English windmills were entirely wood and of three styles. More on that later. A third reason, is that the Chesterton Mill looks top heavy and cumbersome as a windmill. It does not fit the pattern of Inigo Jones' architecture. But without the sails it is a model of his work.

But why is any of this even significant? Remember that the cornerstone of the colonial theory is that Benedict Arnold saw the Chesterton Mill as a windmill in the first couple years after it was built. Even though Arnold almost certainly never saw the Chesterton, if it was built as an observatory, he could not possibly have seen it as a windmill. We would argue though, that it still doesn't matter for the purpose of evaluating the colonial theory. Even "if" the Chesterton was built as a windmill, which it logically was not, and even "if" Arnold had seen it as a youth, which he certainly did not, it still adds no weight to the argument that the Newport Tower was built by Arnold from the ground.

Let's look at some differences between the structures. The Chesterton Mill is a highly refined work of Renaissance architecture. The masonry is very sophisticated with each stone cut to perfection. The Newport Tower is crudely built from rubble stone that is hardly cut or shaped at all, save for a few chips to help pieces fit into place. It is argued that these differences merely reflect building in England as opposed to the backward colonies. True, the colonials were less concerned with beauty but they were concerned with function and utility.

Even ignoring the stonework and the fact that the Chesterton has six pillars and arches instead of eight, there are other differences. The pillars of the Chesterton are directly under the upper structure. That, combined with the finely fit and mortared stone, gives it the structural strength to withstand the stresses of a windmill. The Newport Tower could not possibly withstand such stresses since its pillars are set to the outside. No-one, even an unrefined colonial mason, would be foolish enough to build such a feature into a windmill knowing that it would weaken it far too much to hold up under windmill strain for long. We will return to these points but for now trust that the Chesterton was not a model in Arnold's mind for a windmill and the Newport Tower could not have functioned long as such.

## **Newport in 1675**

Now that we've established some factual background for Benedict Arnold and the Chesterton Mill, let's take a closer look at the reality of Newport in 1675. We covered on the Architecture page what a massive undertaking building the Newport Tower would have been, and how unreasonable its concept would have been. Now let's look closer at what day to day life was like in Newport in 1675.

In the spring of that year there was a major Indian uprising throughout southern New England. It became known as King Phillip's (nickname of the Indian leader) War. Thousands of lives were lost on both sides and even though fighting did not reach Newport, there was a constant threat. Massachusetts and Rhode Island were in turmoil. The remote settlements like Newport that were not attacked, lived in fear and with most of their men gone, were deeply concerned about defense. For over a year Newport was populated mainly by women, old men and children.

Resources were scarce and although Newport had a hard time feeding itself, there was a need for extra grain to send forward to the fighting men.

To make matters worse, only a few months into King Phillip's War, the Easton windmill was destroyed leaving Newport without a mill and with hardly any skilled men to build one. It is against this backdrop that we are to believe that Benedict Arnold produced, from his own imagination, the concept of a stone tower windmill, unknown in the English world, and decided to build this monumental folly even though he surely did not have access to the stone masons, the carpenters or even the laborers to do the work. A handful of men could have built a common and simple scaffold windmill (more on that later) but no, Arnold would not only build in stone, he would perch his structure on eight pillars with Romanesque arches. This would mean the ground level could not house the millstones because of wind blowing through.

The millstones would have to be on the second floor where Arnold, we are told, decided it would be a good idea to have a fireplace. Suffice it to say the dust from milling is quite flammable and a fireplace in the millstone room is akin to screendoors on a submarine. Not only did Arnold decide to put a fireplace in the worst possible place, according to this theory he also decided to run the flues through the walls, unknown in any other area building, instead of using a chimney and venting the flues where the sails would not have fanned sparks into flames.

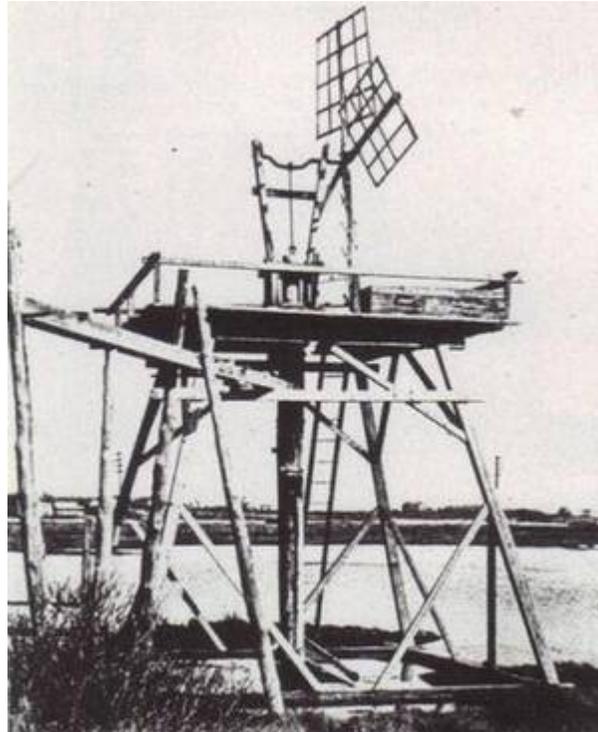
But wait, there's more! According to this legend Arnold also decided to build in the elaborate astronomical alignments we have covered. And while he would put in windows on the bayside of his tower, he would put none on the mainland side, from where an Indian attack would come, and where the tower might have some defensive function. And we can only guess what possessed him to build the outset caps of the pillars making the tower unable to long withstand the stresses of a windmill. And he did all this in the midst of a devastating war with shortages of materials, manpower, food and one would think, money. Governor Arnold was not a stupid man. The notion that he made such decisions borders on the absurd.

### **What Kind of Windmill "Would" Have Made Sense?**



There were three types of windmills in use in England in the 17th century. All were wooden. First is the Post Mill seen above at right. Keep in mind that the sails or blades of a windmill had

to be moveable so they could be directed into the prevailing wind. The post mill accomplished this by having the entire structure sit upon a huge central post. It could then be rotated on that axis into the wind. Second is the Smock Mill, above left. This is what most of us think of as a Dutch Windmill. They too were wooden, and in a tower shape so that they are sometimes referred to as tower mills. This is a misnomer because a true tower windmill is made of brick or stone. The smock mill accomplishes turning its sails into the wind by use of a rotating top. Both mills above are much newer than 17th century, but their general style was in use at that time.



The third and most simple type of windmill is called a scaffold mill. The one pictured illustrates the crude simplicity of the design. Literally a simple scaffold to raise the mechanism with a central post that could be turned to face the sails into the wind. This is no doubt what the Easton mill that was destroyed by the storm looked like. Arnold and a handful of the older men left in Newport could have built something like this from the ruins of the Easton mill. It begs the question, “why didn’t he?” In a sense, he may have.

We can easily imagine Benedict Arnold being hard pressed to get a mill operating and, looking at the old stone tower that he had never found a use for on his property, thinking there must be a way he could put it to use. We know for certain there was an attempt to use the Newport Tower as a windmill because excavation has shown that efforts were made to strengthen the underpinnings of the pillars, and there is that 1677 mention of “my stone build windmill.”

We believe the idea that the tower was built from the ground as a windmill has been fairly laid to rest and that logically the tower was used as the base for some kind of new mill. Some have speculated that it was used to support a revolving top and therefore became, inadvertently, the

English speaking world's first tower mill. We find this unlikely though because, if you recall, the Newport Tower is not round. A revolving top, built on an out of round base would have presented some serious engineering problems and magnified the issues of stress on the old tower.

There are a few documents dating to the 1830s, in which then old men recalled that in their youth, the Newport Tower was a windmill, and the revolving top had to be turned with a yoke of oxen. While that is possible, the memory of men in their 80s about events in their youth, are very suspect. Perhaps they were confusing another mill, at Providence or elsewhere. Or, as we are more inclined to believe, they recall a scaffold mill built atop the Newport Tower.

That would have been the fastest, easiest and least costly way for Arnold to have gotten a mill operating. And, it would have been on his property, and it would have been his "stone build windmill." Unfortunately, Arnold probably did not have anyone in Newport capable of foreseeing that this type of mill, on top of the tower, would create still dangerous levels of stress on the old walls and pillars below. But those problems would have come to light quickly. The contraption may have gotten them through the hard times of King Phillip's War, but not long after it must have developed structural issues, hence the effort to dig, and shore up the foundations. And, recall the Gilbert Stuart painting below from 1775, that shows the tower in complete ruin and in use as a haymow. If it had been used as a windmill at anytime near 1775, there would be evidence of "windmill" ruin in the picture, but there is nothing to indicate that. There are also several other even earlier paintings showing the tower in ruins, but not one showing it as a windmill. Just as it is not our mission to speculate about who built the Newport Tower and when, it is not our mission to speculate how it was converted to a windmill or with what success. Indeed, there is no real evidence that it was ever used as a windmill, be we stipulate that it was. We believe it never functioned well and efforts, long after Arnold's death in 1677, to fix it probably failed and it was abandoned by 1700.



**Colonial Theory - Coup de Grace**

If there is a reader out there who still believes the Newport Tower was built from the ground to be a windmill, we would like to hear from you. It's been a good contest for over 150 years, but the colonial theory has been put to bed by recent discoveries, if not long before. There are a few other points we need to make before moving to conclusions. First is the lack of any mention of the actual building of the Newport Tower by Arnold. There are multiple documents that mention both the building and the destruction of the Easton Mill. And it was just a common, ugly scaffold mill. Why then didn't trumpets blare all over Newport at the construction of this fantastic stone structure with its elegant architecture?

Why indeed did not Arnold himself mention it in any documents or letters save for his will? And on the subject of his will, if he had built the tower, why would he not have referred to it with more pride, even bragging perhaps, that he had designed its novel architecture, and built it for the people of Newport? On the other hand, if he merely used it to plant a scaffold mill atop, how else would he refer to it in his will except as a stone build windmill? He would hardly say, even though true, "The old stone tower on my property that I converted to a windmill." And speaking of the word "old," it had been used to describe the tower soon after it was supposedly built. How odd if it were truly new, but perfectly understandable if the colonials had found it there when they arrived.

Additionally, there are at least eight documents and maps from before 1620, that mention a structure of some sort in or near the location of the Newport Tower. These are much in dispute as to the location each refers to and to what kind of anomaly is being described. Surely none of them says it is a stone tower built on eight pillars and arches. It would be a diversion from our purpose to go into each of these in detail since we are not attempting to answer the question of when or by whom the Newport Tower was built. But these sources are further evidence that the tower existed long before Newport existed if not before 1492. To those who claim these documents and maps refer to some other location and some other building we ask - what other building and what other location? If they are not referring to the Newport Tower, is there another candidate structure anywhere in New England to which they are referring? The answer is no.

We close this section with a quote from Phillip Means who published a book, "The Newport Tower" in 1941:

***"In wordly matters at least, the Puritans of New England were intensely practical; we may assume that their windmills had the same rough practicalness that their palisades, blockhouses, and other constructions had. The Puritan windmill, of whatever type, almost certainly was built in the simplest manner possible, without any fuss and nonsense that might seem ungodly or uselessly expensive."***

## Conclusions

If you have read this far, you can see that it is a difficult proposition indeed, to argue that the Newport Tower was built, from the ground up, by colonial Puritans as a windmill to grind their Indian corn. And if it was not built by them, it was built by Europeans from a much earlier date, making it the oldest building in the western hemisphere. Can it be conclusively proven that it was NOT built by colonials? We suppose that depends on your threshold for conclusive proof.

So, as our conclusion, we list the key elements of what one must accept as true, in order to subscribe to the colonial theory. In order to accept the colonial windmill explanation, you must find ALL of the following to be true, not just a few. In other words, any one of them alone is sufficient to be fatal to the colonial theory.

1. That in the midst of a devastating Indian war, and after the destruction of Peter Easton's simple scaffold mill by a storm, Governor Benedict Arnold determined to replace it, not with another simple and prudent Puritan scaffold mill, but with a fantastic bit of architecture, unlike anything in New England.
2. That he got the idea for this architecture over 40 years earlier in his youth, from having seen the Chesterton Mill, which at the time was not a windmill, which was nowhere near his home, and which he most probably never saw or heard of.
3. That he had access to the stonemasons, carpenters and funds for a building project ten times greater than to replace the Easton mill, and that he chose to use those resources in such an "un-Puritan" way.
4. That he chose to build an open, arcaded ground level structure, the characteristics of which served no function whatsoever, and were great impediments to any structure intended for use as a windmill.
5. That he chose not to put the pillars directly under the structure for vastly more stability, but instead, offset to the outside, again an impediment to function as a windmill.
6. That he built a fireplace into the second story where the millstones would have been (the ground level being rendered unsuitable due to its openness to the wind) and where a single spark could set the milldust ablaze.
7. That he ran the flues from this fireplace through the walls and exiting behind the sails where a spark could be fanned to flame.
8. That he built-in double-splayed windows and a series of niches with no apparent purpose in a windmill, and not even facing inland where an Indian attack would come from.
9. That he further painstakingly aligned these windows and niches to produce perfect astronomical alignments with which to determine the solstices, even though almanacks had been in existence for some time, and such observations had been unnecessary for well over a century.

10. That he oriented the structure to true north rather than magnetic north, even though they had the compass and all English builders of the time were using magnetic north.

11. That he made the structure decidedly out of round, even though doing so made it nearly impossible to have the rotating top needed for a windmill.

12. That he never made any mention of building the tower in his own documents from the time, even though it would have been a marvel and the only stone building in Newport. Also, there are no paintings from any period showing the tower as a windmill, but several showing it as it is now.

13. That no-one else in Newport took notice of the construction or mentioned its raising in any documents or letters of the time, even though the building of the Easton mill received multiple accounts.

14. That all of the eight documentary and cartographical references to the tower from pre-colonial times are inaccurate, even though no other structure in New England existed that could have been their reference.

15. That the post holes found by Chronognostic equidistant from the pillars are not the foundations of an ambulatory (common on medieval round churches) even though they are precisely where such supports would have been, and that there is no other explanation for them even though it is well known there has not been any other structure that close to the tower.

16. That English builders did not use the foot as English builders invariably did, but somehow used the obsolete Scottish El.

17. That so many of the architectural features (arches, keystones, fireplace) that have parallels in northern Scotland and elsewhere in northern Europe dating from the 12th to 14th centuries (but no parallels in colonial America or even 17th century England), were conceived and employed by Arnold's builders in 1675.

We could go on, there are more. Are each of the above believable? Because any one of them is sufficient to punch a fatal hole in the colonial theory. Of course, the Arnoldists of today (yes, there are still some out there!) have their little retorts for each of the above, usually something like "could have been" or "prove it wasn't."

But we have nothing to prove since we make no assertion as to the tower's origin. As to the Arnoldists, we invite you to join us in challenging "them" to prove the Newport Tower was built in 1675. They can't even prove that it was ever used as a windmill, although we agree that it briefly and unsuccessfully was.

Indeed, the colonial theory is among the many fringe theories on who built the Newport Tower. And it rests on less supporting evidence than most of them. We believe the Newport Tower is worthy of much more public awareness and attention than it has received. It can no longer be dismissed as a mere old windmill. And, as a pre-Columbian and probably medieval artifact, it begs for more research into who really built it, when and why. If the colonials did not build this tower, then it raises some huge questions and shakes the foundations of American history and archeology. Where that trail might lead if followed with open minds will surely boggle those minds.

## **The Next Steps For The Tower**

It has taken 150 years, but we have gotten the monkey of a colonial windmill off the back of the tower, and it's now time to care enough, care about our own history, to look with open eyes and open minds and see what America's oldest building has to tell us. It's within our grasp to see at least the broad outlines of who "did" build the tower, and when and perhaps why. But this is going to take a sense of purpose, a sense of purpose that goes beyond just Newport or just New England. This is not merely a local curiosity anymore. It is a window into the earliest history of the continent.

There are organizations and individuals out there who care deeply about our history. The tower has something to tell us if we will listen. Listening means putting our ear to the ground, or in this case, below the ground. The first step is some limited and targeted excavation. Not in or under the structure, but 16 feet out where two post holes were recently found. If there are more post holes, also aligned with the pillars and equal distance from them, it is a watershed finding. This could be accomplished with a modest budget. But neither the city of Newport nor the state of Rhode Island can, or should, be expected to bear the burden. It should be noted though, that both the city and the state will reap the rewards when the tower becomes one of the most compelling historical sites in the US.

p.s. - The claim is sometimes seen that the Chesterton Mill is now "known" to have been built as a windmill because of found documents. We have twice written to the authority at Chesterton asking for such documentation, but have gotten nothing in return. Two things are equally true: 1) that we doubt the Chesterton Mill was built as a windmill; and 2) that it is of no great significance either way because it has very little in common architecturally with the Newport Tower, beyond the superficial, and because there is no logical reason to think Benedict Arnold or anyone else in 1670s Newport ever saw it.

## **Updates**

September, 2011 - We still have been unable to locate the alleged documentation that the Chesterton Mill was built as a windmill. We challenge anyone to produce it. Until then, the best evidence is that the structure at Chesterton, the structure Benedict Arnold never saw, was built as an observatory and later converted to a windmill. In that small sense it does have something in common with the Newport Tower. Both were built as astronomical observatories.

November, 2011 - A colonial theory supporter is claiming to have seen "documentation" that the Chesterton Mill was indeed built as a windmill. But unfortunately, it appears to be an unfounded (so far) claim. Until we see evidence to the contrary, we will continue to report that the Chesterton Mill was built as an observatory and is in no way an antecedent for the Newport Tower. There are now at least three paintings that depict the Newport Tower, done within 100 years of its alleged building as a windmill in 1675, and all of them show it with no windmill sails, and in a state of great decay.

Spring, 2013 - We have still heard nothing from those claiming that the Chesterton Mill was built as a windmill.

Contact me at [www.LynnBrant.com](http://www.LynnBrant.com)