

Lovejoy Gravel Pits near Conway, N.H. – in What town are they located?

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On the mindat.org website, within the worldwide Locality listings, under Carroll County, New Hampshire (USA), Lovejoy Gravel Pits has been listed as in Albany, N.H. The entry has also included the following note: “This site is often erroneously cited as being in either Conway or North Conway.” Where did this confusion about its town, in which it is located, originate?

This location has been mentioned several times in the literature. Sampster, in 1945 and 1947, twice mentioned it very briefly, and Marble (1954) mentioned it in the column World News on Mineral Occurrences: Marble spoke of topaz and smoky quartz at “Passaconaway” but he must have meant the Lovejoy Pits near Conway, north of Passaconaway Road, as evidenced by the road distances which are scalable on a topographic map of the area. There have been other mentions, usually small ones, in the same column cited (World News on Mineral Occurrences) in *Rocks and Minerals* magazine. Often the Lovejoy Pits are mentioned in these brief references as being “near Conway” as indeed they are, if one takes Conway to mean the village rather than the township boundaries.

The next reference was by Meyers and Stewart (1956), in which is recorded (on page 58 under the Topaz entry): “According to Leggett and Weeks (personal communication) recent excavations at Conway in the Lovejoy “gravel pits” – weathered Conway granite, locally called “rottenstone” – have encountered “pockets” containing excellent crystals of topaz associated with smoky quartz and microcline (amazonite) crystals.”

I find that in my copy, which I got many years ago, sometime after having been at least partly influenced by a local club, and before I started to research things before writing in references, has a handwritten note “Albany” instead of Conway, apparently that the location belonged in Albany instead. I may have heard this from some rockhound and at the time tried to ‘correct’ Meyers and Stewart’s book (now I tend to withhold such ‘corrections’ – or if I am certain I use pencil in the margin, so that it may be erased if later found to be incorrect). This was definitely after Buckley’s article of 1974, but whether I got the idea from that or not I do not recall.

Shaub in 1955 wrote up a lengthy article (see in References) which included a location map, to scale, based on the U.S.G.S. topographic series, and this definitely shows Lovejoy Pits on the Conway side of the Albany/Conway town line.

I suspect that Shaub had located it correctly. However, as is common with many, he may have greatly overestimated the area of the pits, as “about 150 acres” seems incredible, but the typist may have added a zero; 15 acres would have been ample and may have been meant. Another possibility is that the entire land parcel which Mr. Lovejoy had purchased may have been about 150 acres in size; only a small part of which may have been used as pits.

Morrill (1958) listed it as in Conway, but its maps do not quite include that area. Morrill (1960) also listed it as in Conway, although his coordinates “(Ossipee Lake 2-2-1-2-6)” may have been in error, they may have actually been 2-1-3-2-6 (see Morong, 2011) which is close to the location as shown on the map by Shaub, but both sets of coordinates are still within the bounds of the township of Conway, although the latter is close to the Albany town line. Holman (1962) said

near the start of his article that he had lived near Lovejoy Gravel Pit for nine years, and near the end of the article he mentioned it as its being in Conway.

Buckley (1974) wrote an article on the minerals of both the Lovejoy pits and the Government Pits, the latter of which are within the town of Albany. This may be a source of the idea of the Lovejoy Pits as also being in Albany: "Those concentrated on in this article are found at the Lovejoy Quarry and the Government pits, both of which are actually in Albany, New Hampshire." Actually, Lovejoy site is not a quarry, and is on the Conway side of the town line. This article also contained a diagrammatic 'map' with no town line shown, and its caption said "Lovejoy entrance a little under 2 mi. from junction of Still Rd. and Quint Rd. beside small house." This is in error – the distance is actually one mile. However, if the location were based upon the incorrect "2 mi." distance, then that would have ended within the bounds of Albany. Another way the error could have occurred was as a misprint for "1" or, as it is just about 2 miles from the stoplight at Conway village, it might have come from a jumbled roadlog – or, as sometimes happens, even from faulty memory, with no checking of a topo map.

It is notable that Buckley, in the bibliography to his article, included several good references, but did not include any previous article in *Rocks and Minerals* (the magazine in which his article was published), not even that of Shaub in 1955. Had he known of Shaub's article with its map, he might have realized that the area of Lovejoy pits was actually within the town limits of Conway (although close to the Albany line). I suspect that other collectors picked up on the idea of Lovejoy pits being in Albany (as I had evidently done, having entered that 'correction' into a reference), but never having referred to earlier references, did not realize the error. Smith (2005) apparently never picked up on this impression, as he listed it as in Conway.

I finally thought to check old topographic maps, both paper and online. I found that the NW section of the Ossipee Lake 15' U.S.G.S. topographic map, 1958 edition, shows the area, with a cleared area (white on map; the green-shade on map is for areas grown up in trees) just west of a woods road, and east of the town line (on the Conway side of it), and about ¼ mile north of Passaconaway Road. This must be the site, for Lovejoy pits was being actively worked during the time the map was made.

I was also curious to see whether the pits (no longer worked for minerals) might show up on an aerial photo on internet, although the original area might be grown up by now. I found the area and switched to satellite images. I could see Passaconaway Road, Red Eagle Pond, and what may have been Government Pits (there were several of such areas). Zooming in on the Lovejoy area, where the 1958 topo map had shown the site, was grown over and just to its north a cleared area perhaps about 500 x 700 feet in size. Although these maps don't show the town lines in this area, I was able to get coordinates and translate them to a topographic map. This also, although close to the town line, is on the Conway side, within that town's boundaries. The site as indicated on the map by Shaub (1955) seems to fall within these adjoining areas.

It seems safe to say that the Lovejoy pits, often noted as near to the town (village) of Conway, N.H., although close to the Albany line, are also within the limits of the town of Conway. This, of course, assumes that the town line as drawn upon the topographic maps (both the 15' series and the newer 7½' series) is correct, and that the lines have not been changed over the years.

References:

- Buckley, Bruce W. (1974) Mirolitic Cavities of the Conway Granite. *Rocks and Minerals*, March 1974, v.49, p. 164-166.
- Holman, Winfield (1962) Success at Lovejoy Gravel Pit. *Oxford County Mineral and Gem Association, Yearbook #15*, p. 8-9.
- Marble, C. F. (1954) in World News on Mineral Occurrences. *Rocks and Minerals*, November-December 1954, v.29, p. 583.
- Meyers, T. R. and Stewart, Glenn W. (1956) *The Geology of New Hampshire, Part III: Minerals and Mines*. New Hampshire State Planning and Development Commission, Concord, N.H.
- Mindat.org (as of 8-8-2015) within the locality listings, under Albany, Carroll County.
- Morong, D. (2011) "Morrill Coordinates and Errors" in website *New Hampshire Mineral Species* at www.mindatnh.org under "Articles on NH Mineral Collecting".
- Morrill, Philip (1958) *New Hampshire Mines and Mineral Locations* (64 p., with maps, Dillingham Natural History Museum; this was a 2nd printing of the one that came out in 1956).
- Morrill, Philip (1960) *New Hampshire Mines and Mineral Localities*. 2nd Edition. Dartmouth College Museum, Hanover, N.H.
- Sampter, E. L. (1945) "Another Mineralogical Vacation in Maine" *Rocks and Minerals*, December 1945, v.20, p. 594-595 (mentioned on p.595).
- Sampter, E. Lawrence (1947) Our Report for the Summer of 1947. *Rocks and Minerals*, December 1947, v.22, p. 1103-1106 (mentioned on p.1104).
- Shaub, B. M. (1955) A New Discovery of Topaz Crystals Near Conway, New Hampshire. *Rocks and Minerals*, May-June 1955, v.30, p. 227-235 (includes location map, to scale, based on the U.S.G.S. topographic series, and shows Lovejoy Pits on the Conway side of the town line).
- Smith, Arthur E. (2005) New Hampshire Mineral Locality Index. *Rocks & Minerals*, July-August 2005, v.80, p. 242-261.
- Topographic Maps, U.S.G.S. 15' series, at *Historic USGS Maps of New England & NY*. online at <http://docs.unh.edu/nhtopos/nhtopos.htm> (Ossipee Lake quadrangle).