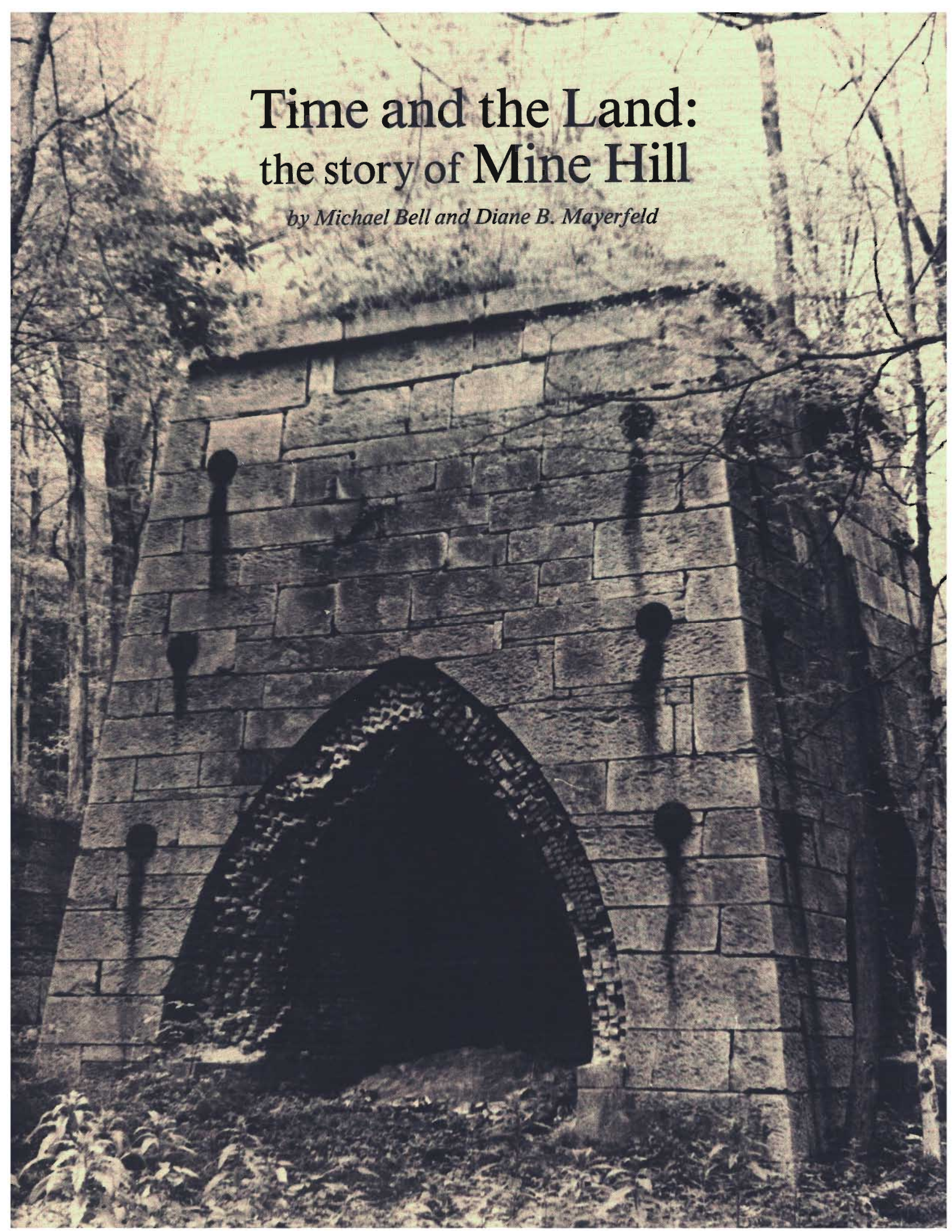


Time and the Land: the story of Mine Hill

by Michael Bell and Diane B. Mayerfeld



This book is dedicated to the memory of Wilbur Shook, former president of the Roxbury Land Trust, friend of Mine Hill and all who knew him.



Many people contributed to the preparation of this report. Dr. Thomas G. Siccama, who decided that this project would be “a winner,” guided us through the bogs of research and helped us slog through the final write-up.

Fred Chesson gave us the benefit of his long acquaintance with Mine Hill and joined us in discovering more about its history.

Greg Yovan and Les Mehrhoff showed us animals and plants that had been under our noses all along, and Larry Kershner spent many long hours printing the photographs used in this publication.

Many other people provided help and information that went into this report. We would especially like to thank Richard Allen, Dave Beglan, Ray Cauchi, Dr. Michael Coe, Dr. Robert Gordon, Al Haberle, Emmaline Hodge, Marion Leonard, Dr. Benjamin Levin, the Matthews family, Maude Ogden, and Frances Sweatt.

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A bibliography for this report is available from the Roxbury Land Trust.

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Michael Bell
and
Diane B. Mayerfeld

wildlife photography by Greg Yovan

Roxbury Land Trust
and
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1982

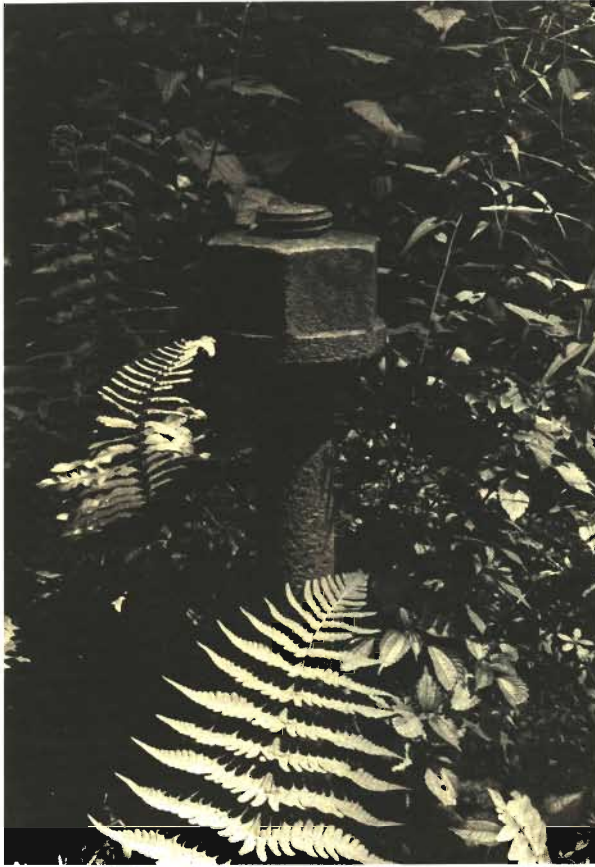


Photo: Greg Yovan



Photo: Greg Yovan

Only within the last one hundred years have we begun to recognize the effect of people on the land. Formerly, urbanization, industrialization, and agriculture were seen only in terms of human needs while their effects on wildlife and plantlife went un lamented or unnoticed. But now that irreversible changes in natural systems threaten the quality of life, the preservation of land and living things is also regarded as a human need. Located in rapidly developing western Connecticut, Mine Hill Preserve can play an important role in the protection of our natural heritage.

Ironically, the beautiful oak and hemlock forests of Mine Hill have grown over remains from an industry that is central to the level of human control over the environment. Over a hundred years ago, an iron mining and steel manufacturing venture scarred the hill and stripped it of its trees. The mine tunnels, the blast furnace, and other traces of that period in the hill's history testify to the need and power of humans to change their environment. Today, however, the forest has reclaimed the land and healed most of the scars, demonstrating that the damage done by our use of the natural world is not necessarily irreparable.

The history of Mine Hill actually begins over 500 million years ago, with the geologic forces that laid the foundations for all the natural processes and human activities that have shaped the hill. Thus, this report begins with the geologic history of the area. The next section of the report concentrates on ecology, and the final part discusses the human history of Mine Hill.

