

Balance: An Overview of Abenaki and Indigenous Peoples, Burial/Site Protection, Repatriation, and Customs of Respect, Looting, and Site Destruction in the Abenaki Homeland, and Relations between Archeology, Ethnohistory, and Traditional Knowledge

by John Moody

Abstract

There is a surviving ancient indigenous nation, tradition, and culture in northern New England and New York and southern Quebec that has a continuing relationship with thousands of burial grounds, and sacred and traditional sites to the present day. One guiding principal of this quiet tradition is a balance rooted in the understanding and assumption, from a traditional standpoint, of the basic humanity of all the peoples who live here. Since the earliest settlement of Euro-Americans and other immigrants in this region there has been a corresponding awareness in non-Native society of the many aspects of being good guests in this ancient land. Today, human rights conventions affirm that indigenous peoples, regardless of the level of non-Native governmental recognition they enjoy, retain a certain set of basic, endowed human rights, including the 'right of repose,' for their burials to rest in peace, which are universal, inalienable, and eternal. These rights and customs are in jeopardy in this region. To facilitate understanding the scope and scale of this crisis, we provide a brief overview of past and present Native population and the potential for indigenous burials in this section of the northeast since 5,000 BP as well as a brief, historical summary of more ancient occupations. We will outline the current state of affairs, the challenges and the opportunities, while illuminating the best ethic and worst examples of past site protection and destruction, and we will propose a collaborative process and methodology for burial and site protection in the future.

Introduction and Questions Posed

There is a long, quiet history of protecting indigenous peoples and the traditional sites that Native people hold sacred in the northeast (Brink and Obomsawin 1992; Brooks 2008; Brooks et al. 2009; Bruchac J. 1985, 1988, 1992; Goodby 2006b; Hume 1991; Kerber 2006; Lacy and Moody 2006 and 2007; Masta 1934:31-34; Moody,

D. and Moody, J 2007a and 2007b; Moody, J. 1974–Present, 2004, 2007a, 2010; Obomsawin 1991, 1995; Nelson 2004, 2006a; Robtoy et al. 1994:30-31, 32-35; Wolfson 1992). In the last few years that historic relationship and the partnership to sustain that tradition has been challenged by a new paradigm based largely in the realm of archeology and government policy. This policy shift has thrown a substantial number of upland sacred sites in the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) into the path of sanctioned survey looting and desecration.

The West Hill Cairn site studies proposed by the GMNF archeologist and approved by the Stockbridge Munsee Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and the Chief of the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi/St Francis Sokoki Band in 2010 forced a broad coalition of Abenaki elders and leaders along with many concerned archeologists, scholars (Native and non-Native), and members of the public who have cared for these sacred sites into a public effort to preserve this endangered site (Appendix 5).

With the help of the Narragansett Nation Assistant THPO (Tribal Historic Preservation Officer) and the Poach Creek THPO who added their voices to the Abenaki Nation coalitions' affirmation of the sanctity of the site, the GMNF Supervisor was forced to postpone the excavation. To date, no GMNF consultation has occurred with the Abenaki Nation coalition nor has the threat of invasive research on the site ended. Until all concerned Abenaki parties are at the table as full partners with those whose public responsibility requires them to protect any historic site or sacred and traditional place or practice from looting, desecration, or destruction, this crisis in the heart of the Green Mountains will continue (Appendix 5).

This crisis also has a broader scope and implications which is threatening and destroying sacred sites in a wider area of northern New York, New England, southern Quebec and the northeast due, largely, to several large-scale industrial wind energy projects and

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other wilderness development. The western Maine ridgelines, the Coos County and Lempster Mountain ridgelines of central and northern New Hampshire, the Sheffield, Lowell, and other ridgelines of Vermont's Northeast Kingdom, the Georgia Mountain, Grandpa's Knob, and Searsburg/Upper Deerfield River watershed ridgelines of the Champlain and Connecticut River valleys are all facing new or expanded wind projects with all the attendant ridgeline turbine construction, road building, and related threats to sacred and historic sites and sensitive ecologies. An energy consortium has also proposed the 'Northern Pass,' a new transmission corridor for electricity from Hydro Quebec, through northern and central New Hampshire traversing some of the most sensitive upland areas in the region. Cape Wind's proposal to install 400-foot tall ocean wind towers in Nantucket Sound is similarly threatening sacred and traditional sites and ways of life of Wampanoag peoples. These threats to sacred places rival the Green Mountain Parkway proposal of the mid-1930s in Vermont, and the general destruction of the forests of New York, New England, and Quebec in the 17th to 19th centuries in potential impacts.

The long term, quietly maintained custom of respect for sacred and traditional places has been challenged in several waves of development and looting since the late 18th and early 19th centuries by curiosity seekers, treasure hunters, looters, avocational and professional archeologists, and government agencies. At times, this has been simply due to increasing development of the region that saw the 19th century rise of the mineral spring and resort movement, road and railroad corridor building, and urban development in old Native village grounds. Eventually in the mid to late 19th century the rise of burial and site looting and study targeted many known Native American sites. The attics and museums of the region started filling up with Native remains, grave goods, sacred items, and artifacts (Moody, D. R. and Moody, J. 2007a). Northern New England, New York, and southern Quebec saw much less of this kind of looting than southern New England, and the rest of the United States and the nearby St. Lawrence River and Great Lakes sections of Canada, where immigrant populations were larger and various looting and academic traditions developed early. In this region those partisans, both Native and non-Native, of the quietly maintained ethic of respect for Abenaki and other burial grounds and sacred sites found many ways of preserving countless sacred sites and burials grounds before the 1970s (Brink and Obomsawin 1992; Brooks 2008; Brooks et al. 2009; Bruchac, J. 1985, 1988, 1992;

Bruchac, M. 1991–Present; Day 1956-1994; Goodby 2006b; Laurent 1955 and 1956; Moody, J. 2004, 2007a, 2009; Robtoy et al. 1994; Obomsawin 1991, 1995; Parker 1994; Stewart-Smith 1994, 1999; Wolfson 1992). There was considerable hope in the 1970s to 1990s that this ethic, the surviving indigenous understandings, and the clear preservationist intention of the *National Historic Preservation Act* in the US and comparable preservation laws in Canada would institutionalize these remarkable, if hidden, burial and site protection best practices (Hume 1991; Lacy et al. 1993; Lacy and Moody 2006, 2007; VDHP 1989; Appendix 3). Unfortunately, that has not yet come to pass.

Embedded in these dynamics are issues and questions including *Who Owns the Past? What is Sacred? Who Decides What is Sacred? Who is Responsible for Protecting Indigenous Sacred and Traditional Sites? How Ancient are the Abenaki and other Indigenous Peoples in the Northeast? Who Represents the Interests of the Abenaki Nation and other Native Nations? Where are the boundaries of Abenaki and other Nation Homelands?* This paper will briefly address most of these questions in the hopes that a respectful process of dealing with these important matters and protecting historic, sacred, and traditional sites will result.

Caveats and Disclaimers

This paper is a work-in-progress intended as a brief follow-up to the 1982 Vermont Governor's Commission on the Future of Vermont's Heritage (see Appendix 1, pg. 76) and other efforts in the region. We provide documentation of policies in both custom and practice down to present in the hopes that a broad consultation and policy formulation process can be restarted in federal, state, local, and tribal/indigenous community contexts (a) to assure that no burial ground, sacred or traditional site, and any historic, indigenous site is desecrated, compromised, or destroyed for any reason in the future, (b) to begin a careful public and governmental process to understand, outline, and implement new policies and laws to assure these places are protected, (c) to establish a set of best practices and guidelines for any study, investigation, or salvaging of these sites, (d) to outline and implement best practices for the collaborative curation of any indigenous remains, grave goods, sacred items, or artifacts, (e) to outline and implement a full traditional assessment for the purposes of compliance with the US Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and all

other laws and best practice customs regarding burials, grave goods, sacred items, items of cultural patrimony, and artifacts, and (f) to facilitate the repatriation of any remains, grave goods, sacred items, or items of cultural patrimony to the Abenaki and other indigenous nations and peoples.

Numerous sacred and traditional sites and burial grounds are referenced in the text without more specific information to prevent further looting or abuse. Most of these sites are not found in state or federal archeological site files or databases. Even the ones that are in public files will only be referenced in general to avoid increasing the looting of, or undue attention to, these sites.

Finally, the author does not claim to speak for the Abenaki Nation coalition, the Abenaki Nation, any group or extended family in the Abenaki Nation, or any other Native peoples or Nations with this paper. These are the best summaries of the facts and issues to date pending further research, collaboration, and illumination. Many of us who have been working quietly on these issues for a generation or more have been forced by this crisis into having to do much of this next phase of our long-term research and advocacy in a very public way. While this is a less than ideal situation for the protection of sacred sites, unfortunately, there are many sacred sites and burial grounds which are threatened with desecration or imminent destruction which require dramatic legislative action and governmental policy changes. Several of these sites are well known in the archeological and treasure hunting/looting networks and have been subject to various kinds of physical looting and abuse for far too long. Many are still intact and should be protected without exposing them to looting or desecration.

Archeology and Indians: The 21st Century Frontier

Introduction

At the founding of Dartmouth College in the 1760s the motto chosen was *Vox clamatis in deserto* or 'Voice crying in the wilderness.' The mystery, fear, and distance implied in Dartmouth's credo exemplify many aspects of the current federal and state relationships with the Abenaki people, Nation, and their ancient burial grounds, sacred, and historic sites (Robtoy et al. 1994:28 ff). All peoples and nations in the world revere and care for their sacred sites. This land has been the home and homeland of indigenous peoples for thousands of years (Appendix 7). Ethically, morally, legally, and his-

torically we all have an obligation to protect and preserve Abenaki and other indigenous peoples' sacred and traditional sites. The foundation for this obligation is now a recognized part of international law.

In September of 2007, the United Nations passed the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Canada endorsed the declaration in the spring of 2010, and the United States followed suit in December 2010. Six articles of this declaration outline a baseline of universally accepted, best practices concerning burial grounds, sacred and traditional sites, historic sites, repatriation, and curation of indigenous peoples' remains and artifacts as well as the many issues of access to, use, and protection of these places. At the heart of this declaration is the demand that the policies and practices, which resulted in indigenous peoples "cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs" must be stopped and redressed "through effective mechanisms" (*UNDRIP Article 11* (see Appendix 2)). *Article 43* states that the rights outlined in the document "constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world."

Article 11 also guarantees that indigenous peoples

have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect, and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archaeological and historical sites, artifacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature.

Article 12 underscores that indigenous peoples have

the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.

which requires that

States shall seek to enable the access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains in their possession through fair, transparent and effective mechanisms developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned.

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Article 32 further requires that

States shall consult and cooperate in good faith with the indigenous peoples concerned through their own representative institutions in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources.

States shall provide effective mechanisms for just and fair redress for any such activities, and appropriate measures shall be taken to mitigate adverse environmental, economic, social, cultural or spiritual impact.

And finally it is required in Articles 25, 26, and 29 that

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters, coastal seas, and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard (Article 25).

Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired (Article 26).

Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired (Article 29).

States shall give legal recognition and protection to these lands, territories and resources. Such recognition shall be conducted with due respect to the customs, traditions and land tenure systems of the indigenous peoples concerned (Article 29).

Indigenous peoples have the right to the conservation and protection of the environment and the productive capacity of their lands or territories and resources. States shall establish and implement assistance programs for indigenous peoples for such conservation and protection, without discrimination (Article 29).

Many aspects of these basic tenets were part of the best relationship between the newcomers and the Abenaki and other indigenous peoples in northern New York and New England and southern Quebec from the 18th to mid-19th centuries. Hidden though these practices were they helped protect numerous burial grounds, sacred sites, and eventually, whole village and subsistence grounds, unique ecologies, ridgelines, mountains, and mountain ranges. They also protected a substantial, if little known, surviving population of Abenaki and many other indigenous peoples who had sought refuge here from the genocidal Indian wars of the 17th to 19th centuries.

Archeology defined

First and foremost it is crucial to state what every archeologist knows about the deepest irony of an archeological dig: *to dig a site is to destroy a site.*

An archeological site is like a library as long as it is intact. Any disturbance of that site including surface collecting destroys the library. Archeological digs on Native sites should only be undertaken if (a) the site is threatened with destruction, (b) there is agreement between the landowner, developer, local, State and Federal agencies, and the Native families, communities, and Abenaki Nation coalition. Traditional assessment of all sites including sacred and traditional sites, and the resulting collections from archeological sites, must be part of any acquisition and curation plan. Curation and repatriation should be in accordance with Abenaki Nation coalition customs and best practices (Moody, D.R. and Moody, J. 2007a).

In 1966 the *National Historic Preservation Act* was passed by Congress. Sections of this act institutionalize the use of archeological and historic preservation studies to document and protect or ‘mitigate’ the destruction of sites to gain the greatest possible amount of information, determine eligibility for inclusion on the *National Register of Historic Sites*, and ideally increase conscious historic site protection nationwide. The Act had a clear preservationist focus where existing buildings are concerned but in the realm of archeological sites, the built in contradiction is that the very research methods and tools used to document a site also destroy that site.

Archeology is defined as “the scientific study of material remains (as fossils, relics, monuments) of past human life and activities.” (Webster’s *Dictionary*). In recent years it has become very clear that the use of

archeology alone to study indigenous sites, is itself a limited, and potentially destructive, approach. Even if the archeologist is aware of the ecological context, guided by indigenous people, and sensitive to the many intellectual and spiritual traditions, the limitations of the focus on 'material remains' and the necessity to destroy part or all of the site to study it are contradictory in the best of circumstances. More importantly a major issue arises in which competing narratives often add more confusion than clarity to the site documentation and protection process.

Archaeologists tell stories which begin in the excavation phase of a site. Over time, these stories become widely accepted as fact. And, with each succeeding generation, the stories are built upon and expanded. Bruner paraphrases Schafer (1980:30) by stating, "The narrative structures we construct are not secondary narratives about data but primary narratives that establish what is to count as data." (1986:142). It is from this point that we may begin to see the divergent world-views of archaeologists and indigenous peoples and begin to examine the conflicting stories we are told. Is there so much hubris in the discipline that primary sources of information would be passed over in favor of creating a secondary narrative in the hopes that it will be considered irrefutable data? Archaeologists certainly have the right to interpret and, within that interpretation, they have the right to get everything wrong (Moody, D. 2011:6).

Since the early days of the Abenaki and archeologists' work together in the 1970s there has been more hidden, and discarded, than learned. Stone piles and the use of stones which are not explicitly shaped by human hands or by fire have been routinely ignored and discarded by virtually all archeologists in the northeast over the last 100 years. The 'material remains' from many sites have been disrespectfully exhumed, examined, sampled, traded, curated, and misrepresented including human remains and sacred items.

Archeological and Ethnohistorical Approach

The issue at the heart of the present crisis is how to define and study the sacred. It is a given that virtually all indigenous peoples and human beings consider burial grounds to be sacred. There is also a surprising, if poorly understood, legacy of Abenaki and indigenous peoples' influenced thinking in non-Native society that considers springs, waterfalls, caves, ridgelines, mountains, and

many other parts of the natural world as sacred. Many indigenous tradition keepers say 'it is all sacred' whether we are referring to human remains or grave goods, the locations of villages or other living sites, artifacts of all kinds, and the places and spaces within and beyond the ancient communities. There are archeologists who understand these principles and conduct their research and assure curation of any artifacts in a respectful and careful way. Unfortunately they are in the minority and a great deal more attention should be given to these ethical, moral, traditional, and scholarly principles.

In a recent article describing the 100-year struggle to quantify and illuminate the sacred, including stone piles, in New England, cultural anthropologist Alan Leveillee, who works for the *Public Archeology Lab* in Rhode Island stated:

I think that by taking a combined archaeological and applied anthropological approach to our investigations, we're taking a giant leap away from simply excavating a feature, or a stone pile, as though we were conducting an autopsy. To do so in search of a soul, or a spirit, or an idea would be as futile now as it was in 1907 (Leveillee 2011a:7).

In 1993 a study of the sacred and traditional sites in the Green Mountains of Vermont required by the expansion and changing of the Appalachian National Trail corridor did just that (Lacy et al. 1993). It provided an initial survey of Abenaki elders, ethnohistorians, and archeologists with an eye to protecting all historic sites, whatever their sanctity, in the proposed trail corridors. Abenaki people from several groups and family bands joined in the process and a great deal of careful work was done to begin the sacred and traditional site protection effort in the Green Mountain National Forest. That work resulted in the confidential protection of a large number of sacred sites. Principles of that initial study became part of the basic policy of the GMNF and the Abenaki Nation research effort which set clear and unequivocal boundaries around the West Hill Cairn site and numerous other sacred sites with the full cooperation of the GMNF archeologist and administration. The models for these studies were collaborative and interdisciplinary. There have been some other remarkable collaborations between archeologists and the Abenaki on research, protecting sites, repatriation, policy formulation, and even on the difficult tasks of salvaging and repatriating human remains, grave goods, and sacred items over the last thirty years (Goodby 2006a, Nelson 2006b).

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Studying and Illuminating the Sacred with Utmost Care

We are suggesting that by combining the many fields of information available from geology, linguistics, demography, botany, ethology, archeology, ethnohistory, and traditional assessment in a careful, interdisciplinary approach, that a much clearer answer to the questions of Abenaki and Algonquian antiquity and appropriate understanding of Abenaki/indigenous heritage, traditions, and culture which are the foundation of the protection and care of sacred sites in the northeast can be found. This preliminary overview will hopefully encourage the kind of scholarship, which honors the ancient knowledge systems, the remarkable scientific traditions, of the many Native traditions which have flourished here for tens of thousands of years without doing any more violence to the traditions, sacred sites, and burial grounds of the people (Appendix 6; Moody, D.R. and J. 2007b).

Abenaki and Indigenous Antiquity and Demography in the Americas and the Northeast

In order to understand the breadth and depth of the issues before us, we need to take a brief look at the antiquity of indigenous peoples in the Americas and Northeast and the demographic population boundaries in various time periods. This will be a broad and preliminary estimation of the scope of the issues before us.

Antiquity

There are many partisans of the story of human life being very ancient in the Americas. That story begins with the rest of the data from the Monte Verde site in Chile which suggests not only a solid 14,800-13,800 BP date range but also a possible indigenous use of the area back to 33,000 years ago (Dillehay et al. 2008; Thomas, D.H. 2000:157-66). Research in the Amazon has similarly documented very ancient sites. Adovasio's work at the Meadowcroft Rock Shelter below the terminal moraine in Pennsylvania is gaining more acceptance of late (Adovasio et al.1990; Adovasio and Page 2008; Fiedel 1992:53-55) and there are other 18,000 to 15,000 BP sites currently being investigated in the Middle to Southern Atlantic seaboard and other parts of the Americas (Elliot 2001; Fiedel 1992:55).

Regardless of how one feels about this information, it should be obvious that eye witness accounts including representative oral traditions, genesis traditions, of the peoples of South, Central, and North America can shed crucial light on those early days on this continent. The

breach of the 70-year-old 'paleo-Indian'/clovis scholarly boundary of 11,500 years BP for the earliest humans in the Americas is historic but very preliminary. This archeological awakening is just beginning. However, for many generations, well documented, ancient indigenous peoples' origin traditions including those of the Hopi and other Uto-Aztecan peoples' speak of coming to this continent across the Pacific Ocean. Recent archeological data on the historic arrival of chickens from Asia 500 to 600 years ago (Storey et al. 2007) and the complimentary, documented 1,200 year movement of sweet potatoes from South America into central Polynesia (Langdon 2001) should be a wake up call for all of the partisans of very recent human arrival in the Americas. Do we really think the aborigines got to Australia 50,000 to 70,000 years ago by swimming or floating on a log?

Stephen Loring has been suggesting that the 'paleo-Indian' (11,500 to 9,000 BP) period here in the northeast should be renamed the 'paleo-maritime' based on similar models of the later and better known ocean going 'maritime archaic' period peoples (Frink 2004:23; Loring 1980, 2008; Schulz et al. 2011:31). The awareness is growing that these ancient peoples should not be depicted as isolated 'prehistoric' small family bands wandering around the tundra, but as sophisticated long range water travelers living from the fertile lacustrine environments here in the Northeast with resource and trading routes from Labrador down to the northern, central and southern sections of eastern North America. These days there is general, scholarly agreement that there *were* indigenous people here in the 9,000 to 11,000 BP time period. That they are the ancestors of the Abenaki and the vast Algonquian community of Native Nations is widely understood in the hundreds of Algonquian nations in present day North America from the coast of California to the Arctic and Maritimes of Canada. This notion is not found in any archeological studies or even theoretical constructs at present. We would suggest that it is long since time to consider the ancient oral traditions of indigenous peoples as valid *primary* sources for understanding the ancient history of this land.

Bluntly, from a scientific perspective, the sample number of archeological sites examined thus far in the north country, particularly in the upland areas of northern New England, New York, and southern Quebec, is woefully inadequate for anyone to fully appreciate the antiquity and continuity of indigenous traditions in these areas. However, when we look at other lines of evidence, a fuller picture of population demographics and indigenous antiquity begins to

emerge. Understanding this time depth issue and accurate population estimates are essential to appreciate the models we are using for the locations and number of sacred and traditional sites. We will consider other, more complete lines of evidence first and then look briefly at the limited archeological record.

Botany, Ethnobotany, and Abenaki, Algonquian, and Iroquoian Agriculture

Data documenting presumed Iroquoian and Algonquian agriculture stretching back 3,000 to 7,000 years with seamless links to the use and propagation of dozens of wild foods and domesticated plants is now emerging in the region. The eastern portion of North America has been posited by Smith and others to be the “fourth independent and localized center of plant domestication” in the world due to the emergence of squashes (*Cucurbita*), sunflowers (*Helianthus*), the domesticated version of the chenopods (lambsquarters) (*Chenopodium berlandieri*), and marshelder (*Iva annua*) agricultural traditions in the last 7,000 to 2,000 years (Smith 1989). As Hart summarizes in 2008: “Theoretically, there has been a move away from the traditional categories of hunter-gatherer and agriculturist with recognition that such categories hide much of the variation that characterizes human subsistence strategies.” (Hart 2008:4). A squash rind was found in the 1990s in a stratified central Maine site dated to 6,320 BP with a wide variety of tree and plant seeds. (Peterson and Sidell 1996:687). By the time period labeled the woodland period (3,000 to 500 BP) Rossen (1996) and many others (Hart 2008) have identified the expected Three Sisters cultigens corn, beans, and squash along with a wide variety of other plants and tree foods including butternuts and other nuts, hawthorns, blackberries and raspberries, chenopod (lambsquarters), amaranth, knotweed, marsh sedges including bulrushes, and many others which anchor this way of life back in the 3,000 to 7,000 BP archaic period agricultural tradition indigenous to eastern North America.

Place Names, Plants, and Trees. Plant and tree use and propagation in the Abenaki homeland (*K'dakinna*)¹ and identified in early (paleo) sites over 9,000 years ago in New Hampshire, Maine, and northeastern Massachusetts (Boisvert 1999; Ellis et al. 1998:158-59; McWeeney

2007:158-63, 165). By the time labeled the archaic period (9,000 to 3,000 BP) the use of at least 150 plant and tree species has been documented in local and regional archeological sites. In our research, we have found that this use continues down to the contact period and present day in a remarkably clear and ecologically diverse way. Most of the ethnobotanical and medicinal traditions of the Abenaki and their cousins are unknown in the scholarly literature but are highly sophisticated and surviving ways of life. We agree with Terrell and others that “any species or place may be called domesticated whenever another species knows how to harvest it” (Terrell et al. 2003:325).

By our reckoning, Abenaki agriculture has deep roots in the earliest times. The pervasive *bagon kikawôgan* or nut tree agricultural traditions of the Abenakis’ ancestors are one major example of this remarkable tradition. It is empirically obvious to this observer that the rapid reforestation of the northeast after the glaciation was the direct result of one of the first and most continuous examples of conscious tree and plant propagation by the ancestors of the Abenaki and other northeastern indigenous peoples. A practice that Abenaki descendants follow to the present day in three, principal forms: (a) direct planting and transplanting of wild plants and trees, (b) by seed and nut carrying and sowing using the wind and close bird and animal kin to spread out and expand the orchards, (c) by thinning and selecting the best bushes and trees in growing forests. The Contoocook River of central New Hampshire original Abenaki/Penacook spelling is *Bagôntekw*, which means Butternut River (Day 1975). This is also the origin of a substantial Abenaki family name, as it is of family names among many related Northeastern and Eastern Algonquian Nations. This river also drains one of the major upland centers of Abenaki and Penacook emergence which may mark the beginning point of the recovery from the glacial times in Abenaki country (Stewart-Smith 1999). Pollen cores from the Swanzey bog include some sign of walnut family trees (*Juglandaceae*) along with black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*), oak (*Quercus*), and maple (*Acer*) in the 13,500 to 11,000 BP time period (McWeeney 2007:163; Richard et al. 1989). Butternut and other nut tree agriculture is but one of hundreds of examples of ancient, sophisticated, indigenous plant, tree, and ecological knowledge and practice in the region. There is even a term in the Abenaki language, *watsoikikôn*, which means ‘mountain field’ or ‘field consisting of exposed rock,’ which suggests an ancient tradition of upland and tundra plant

¹ *K'dakinna* or “Our Land” is the older, inclusive term for the Abenaki homeland, which has been replaced in recent centuries with *N'dakinna*, also meaning “Our Land” but exclusively so.

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and tree propagation. *Alnôbaiwi*, the Abenaki language, itself suggests a very ancient, fully adapted genesis here since the time of ice and stones.

One Penobscot elder who had lived much of his adult life in New Hampshire once summarized Abenaki (and Penobscot) agriculture this way: He gathered an imaginary clump of sweet grass that was going to seed in his hand and shook the head so the seeds would disperse. “Abenaki agriculture,” he said, “Abenaki agriculture.” He had been discussing the care and propagation of the many plants and trees in the White Mountain region of New Hampshire.

Indigenous Languages. First the basic truth offered by Edward Sapir in the 1920s that “*there are no primitive languages*” must be fully appreciated (Sapir 1921, 1947, and 1949:162). Ancient, indigenous languages are complete in every respect, and describe every aspect of daily and annual life (Day 1978, 1994, 1995). There is no Darwinian tree of the evolution of language with the written languages of the world at the top. Linguists and elders who work with the oral traditions of the indigenous peoples on this continent are finding key insights deeply embedded in both the structure and the descriptive vocabulary of the languages which many of the Indo-European and Asian languages, long subjected to the written word, have lost. As useful as Herodotus, the Rosetta Stone, the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *I Ching*, *Nei Ching*, the *Talamud*, the *Koran*, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and other written records are for understanding the Indo-European and Chinese language development and traditions, as one Abenaki man said in the 1980s, writing and reading “cloud the mind.” Anyone who is familiar with the clair-audio, impeccable memories of many indigenous orators and families, including many in Abenaki country, will understand the wisdom of that comment. Gordon Day and Jane Beck have also documented and opined that the Abenaki and Algonquian oral traditions often have an accuracy and time depth which is unfamiliar to those of us who rely exclusively on the written word (Beck, J. 1972; Day 1956-1994, 1971, 1972, 1976, 1977, 1981, 1987, 1994, 1995). Confirming the reliability of Abenaki and other oral traditions about a full range of temporally sensitive topics has been a key aspect of this research. Despite the statement ascribed to John Wadso in the 19th century that the Abenaki of Odanak had no knowledge of the Hemyard Burial ground at Missisquoi (Perry 1868), local Abenaki have an extraordinarily detailed knowledge of burial grounds and sacred sites in the region with dates from very ancient times to the last five

hundred years (Moody, D.R. and Moody, J. 2007a).

Glottochronology and the Antiquity of the Algonquian Languages. Siebert (1967) posited a 3,200 to 2,900-year-old emergence of all the Algonquian peoples by studying the cognates or shared word roots for several common animals, plants, and trees, between related languages then correlating their known ecological ranges in the past 3,000 years. He and others concluded that an area north of the Great Lakes was the most likely origin point of the Algonquian peoples (Foster 1996:99; Siebert 1967:35). Snow has suggested if one looks at a smaller set of cognates than Siebert chose, then all of the Algonquian languages could have had a genesis point in an expanded area that includes the Maritimes, Quebec and New England (Foster 1996:99; Snow 1976, 1978, 1996). Goddard and Denny are partisans of an emergence west of Lake Superior (Denny 1991; Foster 1996:100). Snow, Goddard, and others agree that Algonquians may have emerged as early as 3,000 to 2,500 years BP somewhere in that expanded territory but no earlier (Goddard 1978a, 1978b:586; Snow 1978:66; Tuck 1978; Foster 1996:99-100). Denny agrees but also tentatively ventured a guess that the Isle La Mott Glacial Kame peoples of 4,600 to 2,800 years ago represented the eastern extent of the ‘Proto-Algonquian’ peoples (Boulanger 2007:16; Denny 1991:103, 117) who gave rise to the largest geographic indigenous language group in North America from California and the High Plains to the Great Lakes, Hudson Bay, and the eastern Seaboard. Haviland and Power similarly ascribed the origin of the Abenaki and other Algonquian peoples to the archaic period some 3,000 to 6,000 years ago (Haviland and Power 1994:84 ff).

These linguistic conclusions are based on tracking the origins of indigenous peoples in North America by applying the Indo-European glottochronology language ‘constant’ developed from the comparative study of Eurasian language change which tracks the branching of languages from available written records. This ‘constant’ of language change was then applied to the Algonquian and other language groups of the Americas as a universal characteristic of languages (Foster 1996:64-65). We reject that ‘constant’ as untested, and untestable, from any secondary source where indigenous languages north of Mexico are concerned. If Europeans had not burned the largest libraries in the world around Tenochtitlan in Mexico during the 16th century it is possible we would have enough written material to compare to the modern *Mixteca* (Aztec) and other Nahuatl languages to test the model. However, we can look at the emergence of these

languages in concert with the post-glacial emergence of the plant, fish, and animal species which they are naming and describing to triangulate the earliest dates of emergence.

Jack Rossen has begun to gather definitive archeological data in close cooperation with the Cayuga Nation and *Haudenosaunee* elders and leadership in New York that confirms the oral traditions of the founding of that famous alliance by the 900 to 1,000 AD time period rather than the early contact period 400 to 500 years ago which most non-Native scholars assume (Rossen 2011; George 1993). In 1996, Michael Foster wrote that, from a linguistic history perspective, the Iroquoian languages origins were much more ancient, perhaps as old as 5,000 to 4,000 years with the split between the *Haudenosaunee*, Wendat, Neutral, and Erie peoples and their southern Cherokee and related cousins at 3,800 to 3,500 years ago (Foster 1996:100, 105, 108). Snow (1978:60 and 1996:791-92) and others do postulate the eastward “intrusion of Iroquoian and Siouan speakers” about 2,500 BP in the Piedmont of North Carolina and Georgia, but Foster and others reject the idea for another perspective. They are partisans of a much greater antiquity for the Iroquoian in the northeast (Foster 1996:108). Given this general understanding from oral traditions, ethnohistorical, and archeological sources that the Iroquoian peoples’ emerged in the Northeast from 5,000 to 4,000 BP, we would then suggest that the much larger Algonquian language speaking homelands and peoples were well established by 5,000 BP in the eastern portion of North America. Most of the oral traditions of the Abenaki, Wabanaki, and other Algonquian language speaking peoples north of New England speak of originating in place in very ancient times (Bruchac, J. 1985, 1988; Joubert 2011; Lacy and Moody 2006, 2007; Moody, D.R. 2007, 2011; Moody, J. 2007a; Robtoy et al. 1994; Wolfsong 1992).

Given the size, geographic breadth, and linguistic diversity of the Algonquian peoples we suggest that the Algonquian languages of the east emerged in place in the 15,000 to 8,000 BP time frame in part by tracing word use and roots (cognates) and common precepts from the many languages involved (Carlson 1983:86; Foster 1996:98). We do not have the space to outline the extensive research being conducted on this topic in this paper. One clear example will have to suffice.

Snow and Siebert suggest that the ancestors of the Abenaki, Wabanaki, and their cousins were clearly linked to the north about 3,000 years ago because the original name for ‘woodland caribou’ in those languages became one name for the more southerly ‘deer’ (Foster

1996:99; Siebert 1967:20, 23-24; Snow 1996). However, we also must consider that the name shift was the result of climate change as the tundra ecology retreated north when caribou began to shift to more northerly migration patterns, and deer and moose arrived in the region from the south and west after the post-glacial climate change (Day 1994:285, Day 199:62). Many other such examples of plant, animal, ‘material’ culture, and ways of life are found in the vast encyclopedias of the Abenaki and other indigenous languages of the region which date the antiquity and geographic scope of these ancient indigenous nations. Philippe Charland’s (2005) remarkable new typonomy (place name) study of Abenaki place names argues persuasively for a genesis in place over many millennia. Thankfully, Abenaki and many other Algonquian and Iroquoian languages still survive and are beginning to enjoy a renaissance of expanded use and study by the people.

Another key to this discussion of Algonquian antiquity is the ultimate relationship between the Muskogean and the Algonquian languages and peoples. This relationship is well known to elders and tradition keepers of the indigenous nations and has barely been studied to date in scholarly circles. The common ancestors of these peoples are said to have lived here in the east very anciently during the ice age/Pleistocene. *Sowanakiak* (Southern Peoples) is the ancient Abenaki name for the Muskogean peoples which reflects their long term emergence in the southern part of the American continent. The *Pebonkiak* (Northern Peoples) or Algonquian proper stayed closer to and emerged in many forms on the eastern seaboard and in the northeast. One center of that emergence, before the final end of the ice age was at *Patawbakw* (Lake Champlain) and in the *Wôbiadenak* or White Mountains. Abenaki and Wampanoag oral traditions agree that some Abenaki moved south for a time to live with their southern cousins due to the cold weather. Abenaki oral traditions describe the Muskogean peoples as their *Sowanakiak* or southern relations to whom they also had an ancient kinship, and recourse, in the time of endless winter. In controversial efforts, Gordon Willey, Roy Carlson, and others have made linguistic stabs at associating the ancient Muskogean and Algonquian languages in the 10,000 to 3,000 BP time period (Carlson 1983:86; Foster 1996:98; Willey 1958). There is little scholarly agreement with these ancient traditions and linguistic theories to date but as Donna Moody said in 2011, “Archaeologists certainly have the right to interpret and, within that interpretation, they have the right to get everything wrong.”

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Scholars from the 19th to late 20th centuries including Frank Siebert and Bruce Bourque would suggest that the 'cold times' of Abenaki oral tradition could only have been the 'Little Ice Age' from the 15th to the 19th centuries, that the eastern Algonquians are truly just 1,000 to 1,500 years old, that the Iroquois emerged from the Plains and left their Caddoan language speaking cousins the Pawnee about 1,500 years ago, and therefore arrived about 1,000 years ago in the northeast and southeast (Bourque 2004:xviii, 19, 55-74, 75ff; Foster 1996:98-100; Siebert 1967). Some of the best known anthropological and archeological scholars of 19th to mid-20th century including Moorehead ascribed to this view (Moorehead 1910, 1913).

Every Algonquian elder and speaker we have ever interviewed or heard oral traditions from reject these limited notions out of hand. In fact, elders of virtually every tradition from the Amazon, Andes, and Mayan Plateau, from the Uto-Aztecan peoples of the southwest and Mexico, from the Plains, the Southeast, and even from the Northwest Coast, the far north, and the *Diné* (Navajo) and Dene peoples of the Southwest and Northwest to Alaska as well as the Inuit, Yupik, and other circumpolar peoples speak clearly about their origins and antiquity. The more recent additions to the Americas including the Athabascans (*Diné*, Dene, and others) and the Inuit are quite clear about their emergence and migrations over the last 3,000 to 6,000 years. Other nations also state clearly that the Bering Land Bridge or Sea Route was just one of *several* ways to travel to and from the Americas. Ocean going traditions of arrival in the Americas and genesis in place before, during, and after the end of the glaciation and times of the mega fauna are also quite common. Can scholars listen, consider, and even hear these stories now?

Clearly, some scholars and government agencies are listening. Linguistic, ecological, genetic, and archeological data have been combined in studies of the High Plateau to make a clear argument, accepted by the NAGPRA Committee, that the Spirit Cave burial dating to over 9,000 years ago was an ancestor of the Paiute/Shoshone peoples who live there today (NAGPRA Committee March 13, 2002:17463). There were similar arguments made to justify the recent repatriation of a 10,300 year old set of remains to the Tlingit of southeast Alaska by the US Forest Service (D'Oro October 19, 2007, October 21, 2007). Despite the success of Douglas Owsley and others in keeping the *Umadilla* remains ('Kennewick Man') from a proper reburial due to legal maneuvering in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, there is unanimity among the coalition of Native Nations in

the Northwest that this ancestor should also be properly reburied (Thomas, D.H. 2000:167-76). Here in the Northeast, several 3,000 to 6,000 year old Abenaki and other Native nations' remains, grave goods, and sacred items have been repatriated and reburied in the last twenty years through the NAGPRA Committee.

Oral traditions of the Ice Age times and the period of endless winter are part of Abenaki life. The ancient Abenaki and Penobscot culture hero made a journey north to bring summertime back after warming up the old man that winter had become (Bruchac, J. 1985, 1988). Abenaki elder and language teacher Joseph Elie Joubert just published this ancient account of Abenaki origins which also begins in the late glacial times:

Ni adoji pkami sogwebasob oji akik, nôwat, nidali pemôwzobanik kottalboak niuna awassak, awahôdosak, sipsak, ta namasak Mziwi yugik awassak aidid pita kwinakwzoak ta wajônemobanik kchi miliksanwôgana. Siboal ta nibesal aidid achi paami nsôzin nôwad. Pajo pizwikal ta abaziak aidid paami kwanakwzoak ta wajônnewobanik kchi medalinôganal.

Translation:

When the ice melted from the land long ago, there lived among us the wild animals, crawling and flying insects, walking and flying birds, and fish. All these creatures were huge and had great powers. The rivers and lakes were also larger and more dangerous long ago. Even the plants and the trees were taller and had great magical powers (Joubert 2011:1-2).

Another Abenaki elder, Donna Roberts Moody, recently summarized the basic use of these two, divergent perspectives:

With the newest geological information, and the discovery of the survival of chipmunks during the Ice Age in what is now Michigan, it is believed that the Ice Age was not all it has been cracked up to be. The Abenaki have ancient stories that place us in northern New England during the era of the Ice Age. Our Wampanoag cousins have corroborating stories. If the *Wôbanaki* people were not in place before the so-called Great Ice Age, we would have no need for these ancient stories. Archaeological theories regarding the peopling of the Americas and the Ice Age landscape are rapidly changing. Our oral tradition remains constant and does not change. With each

new theory, archaeologists are moving closer to our oral tradition. I do believe that eventually they will get it right! (Moody, D. 2011:8).

There are two essential points here. First is that this is certainly a valid area of inquiry. Second is that this is the tip of a very large iceberg of information and awareness that has been overlooked, ignored, and even suppressed from non-Native scholarly studies. In our work with the Abenaki and related languages the number of insights and understandings embedded in the language that link to related ancient languages are astounding.

Geology, Climatology, and Oral Traditions. It is also useful to look at the related fields of geology, climatology, and oral tradition to get at the genesis point of the Abenaki language. The imperfect and still emerging geological and climatological chronology of the northeast looks like this (Becker and Wunsch 2009; Goodby 2006a, 2006b; Frink and Hathaway 2003; Haviland and Power 1994; Schulz et al. 2011; Thomas 1994):

- 26,000-25,000 BP Wisconsin Glacier extended at it's maximum to Long Island and Coastal New England.
- 20,000-17,500 BP glacier retreated north from Cape Cod.
- 16,200 BP glacier still covering Connecticut River Valley to central Massachusetts and had retreated as far north as Arlington in Champlain Valley and well past Nashua and the coast of New Hampshire in the east. Coastal Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine was out on the continental shelf as sea levels were considerably lower.
- 16,000-12,000 BP Lake Hitchcock stretched from the Connecticut River Basin in Vt./N.H. to Connecticut.
- 15,500-13,500 BP glacier retreated from Bellows Falls, Vt., to Northern N.H./Vt.
- 13,400 BP Glacial Lake Winooski floods.
- 11,400 BP Glacial Lake massive flood destroys terminal moraine and opens up Hudson River as well as flooding over Granville Gulf and down the Connecticut River.
- 10,000 BP is rough extinction date for Giant Beavers, Mammoths, Mastodons, and other mega fauna in this region.
- 8000-4000 BP Lake Upham stretched up the Connecticut River Basin from Massachusetts to Vt./N.H.

Abenaki and other indigenous oral traditions have corollaries to these time periods. The first Abenakis were made of stone. So when did the glaciers retreat and the stones become the predominant feature on the land-

scape? 16,000 to 13,500 BP if the current chronology can be trusted. The second set of creation stories speak of the present day Abenakis being created from the ash tree, and speak of the creation and reshaping of the fish, animals, birds, and plant life. So when and how did the biota return to *K'dakinna* after the glacier? 14,500 to 11,000 BP in various phases, again if the data can be trusted (McWeeney 2007:60-63, 65). One could argue that they never left, though clearly this was much more of an Arctic or Alpine environment. The conventional image from the last hundred years of scholarship is of ice 'one mile thick' on top of everything down to the north side of Long Island. We know, however, that the top of Mount Washington was not as glaciated given the location of the glacial cirques (carved ravines) starting one mile below the summit. There is also genetic data of a sub-species of chipmunks that remained in Michigan throughout the Wisconsin glaciation where it was assumed the ice sheet had eliminated all forests and buried the land (Rowe et al. 2004:10355). Deciduous forest 'refugia' have been confirmed there which may have been surrounded by glacial ice. Similar indications of hard wood forests have been found 50 miles below the southerly most reach of the glacier at the Meadowcroft Shelter in Pennsylvania dating to 19,000 to 13,000 BP including nut shells, white tailed deer antler, flying squirrel and passenger pigeon remains (Adovasio et al.1990; Adovasio and Page 2002; Fiedel 1992:53-55). The estimated dates of the glaciers' retreat to the north have generally been increasing by hundreds and thousands of years in the scholarly work of the last fifty years. We also know that glaciers tend to stabilize weather patterns within a few hundred miles of their continued path (Beck, H. 1949; Beck, J. 1972; Bruchac 1985, 1988; Lacy and Moody 2007; Moody, D. R. 2007; Moody, D. 2011; Moody, J. 2007a, 2009; Robtoy et al. 1994).

- Abenaki speak of a time of endless winter which was only balanced in living memory by Odzihozo or Gluscabe (peaked at 26,000 to 25,000 BP).

- Abenaki oral traditions link back to the creation of the mountains and valleys of the *Patawbakw* (Lake Champlain), and all of its rivers, and the adjoining mountains (re-emergence of region 25,000 to 15,000 BP).

- *Alnôbak* (the People) created in *K'dakinna* from the ash tree. By present geology and paleobotanical reckoning, ash trees were likely to be in southern New Hampshire and Seacoast by 13,500 years ago and to the Upper Connecticut River Valley and Champlain Valley

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by 11,000 years ago (Bushnell 2011; Frink 2003; McWeeney 2007:158, 160, 163, 165; Thomas 1994:2).

It certainly is likely, by contemporary scholarly reckoning, that the tundra ecology gave way quickly to a spruce/fir forest in coastal southern and central New England in the 18,000 to 14,000 BP time period which would include southern New Hampshire. Abenaki traditions of tree and bush propagation suggest an active process of helping the food plants and forest return. Ash trees and other deciduous trees return to the north country was assumed to be no earlier than 9,000 BP (Thomas 1994:39) but now there are suggestions that they were probably in parts of the Connecticut River and coastal regions by as early as the 13,500 to 11,000 year period (Frink 2003:104-105; McWeeney 2007:158, 160,163, 165; Richard et al. 1989).

- The Abenaki and others speak of a great flood in this region which, in the Abenaki case, required them to seek shelter at *Gôdagwadso* or Mount Washington Flood events are dated to the 13,400 and 11,400 BP time periods.

- The Abenaki and their cousins speak of giant beavers and large dams on the *Kwanitek* (Connecticut) and other rivers to the south and east (16,000 to 11,400 BP). When that dam was broken and the river returned, Abenaki oral tradition cites the creation of crucial fish species including the anadromous Connecticut River Salmon, Shad, and Trout.

- The Abenaki and their related cousins have a couple of different, related names for an elephant-like animal with a long trunk including *Adebaskedan* (“Lip rolled up”) (to 10,000 BP).

- The Abenaki also speak of giant moose, beaver, and other mega fauna whose natural history is part of the ancient past.

In 1972, Jane Beck wrote that these kinds of oral traditions among the *Wabanaki*, *Wôbanaki*, and related Algonquian peoples took two, distinguishable forms: one being mythological and the other being descriptive (Beck, J. 1972:117-18, 119-21). With the abundant data showing the existence of the now extinct giant beaver, mammoths, and mastodons in this region, she and other folklorists and scholars, suggest we might consider these oral traditions as descriptive, eye witness accounts (Beck, H. 1949; Beck, J. 1972; Speck 1935; Strong 1934). We certainly agree.

Stone Artifacts and Archeology. Consider the *contin-*

uities rather than the *differences* in stone work over the last ten millennia, and the ancient threads appear which weave a tapestry through all of the three, known archeological periods in Vermont: the paleo, archaic, and woodland periods. Consider not just the remarkable flourishing of *different* styles of fluted points which distinguish the ancient (paleo) peoples of 9,000 to 11,500 years ago but also look carefully at the many tools and methods of living from Connecticut to the eastern shores of Lake Winooski and Lake Vermont which are very similar to tool styles and lifestyles being used in the last 1,000 years and even today. These include scrapers, stones used for shaping other stone, and stones for making fire.

Also consider the sources of the tool making materials. Tool making sources that went into creating very different tools that are made from the same or similar materials from related sites not only *distinguish* those tool makers, they *unify* them. Understand the continuity of tool use including spear points, gouges, scrapers, and early arrowheads and realize that the archeological data shows no hard boundaries between the paleo, archaic, or woodland periods and the many minor periods of Native life in the northeast. In fact, there are thousands of stone tools ascribed to older periods from the paleo period on down being incorporated into use in more recent Native camp or village contexts. So it is in all the periods of the early, middle, and later archaic, as well as all the various phases of the woodland period. Archeology in Vermont and the Americas has been lost in the vast woods of details and variations of remarkable stone tool-making skill. Variety is the spice of Native life. It is not the *different* styles of points and tools but the remarkable *continuity* of the use of *mazips* (stone) including the flint from the Champlain Valley, Dalton and Cheshire quartzite, Jasper, Ramah, Munsungun, Kineo, and other local and exotic stone, that weaves a complex tapestry of continuous relations throughout this immediate region and over the entire eastern portion of this continent.

Stones do not speak Indian languages to archeologists. Many archeologists have said over the generations that ascribing ethnicity or identity to the people who crafted and used particular kinds of stone tools is pure speculation. This humility is admirable though hardly characterizes the now discarded speculations of William Ritchie and others who associated particular ethnic identities with particular sites and patterns of stone tool and artifact construction. Kevin McBride, archeologist for the Mashantucket Pequot, did a slide show in the 1980s comparing Onondaga and Pequot artifacts from

similar sites separated by a great linguistic distance and over 200 miles from the early contact period. Most of the basic items were very similar, if not identical, from the pottery to the stone artifacts (McBride 1984, 1993). Cross cultural and geographic sharing is by far the most salient pattern in the Northeast and the indigenous Americas.

The remarkable capacity of indigenous craftspeople and artisans to know the stone and other materials they and their ancestors have worked with for thousands of years may, eventually, be an accepted vehicle for understanding the *who* behind the *what*. Suffice it to say that the ethnographic and linguistic approach to stone and artifact analysis is an exploding field of investigation based in both direct observation and understanding borne of relationships which go back to the first Abenaki creation, transforming, and living stories about the origins of the 'Stone People,' and many other ancient beings. We must consider that the limitations of archeologists may not be so absolute for indigenous people.

Demography and Village Numbers Ancient Times to 1600. From many different sources in the early contact period, the following is our best approximation of the actual Abenaki, Sokwaki, Penacook, Pigwacket/Saco River, and coastal Abenaki population including the Androscoggin River but not the rest of the Kennebec River watershed. Eight large, central villages were found in the Champlain Valley on the eastern shore with three seasonal villages on Otter Creek and out on the Champlain Islands and numerous smaller settlements. The potential number of villages number over sixty. Nine large, central villages were found in the Upper Connecticut River watershed including *Sokwakik* (Northfield, Mass.) and *Koasek* (Newbury, Vt., and Haverhill, N.H.) with many smaller settlements. The potential for large and small villages and gathering grounds in the watershed are over fifty. Thirty large, central villages in the Merrimack, Androscoggin, Saco, and seacoast New Hampshire and southern Maine region with numerous smaller settlements. The potential in this coastal region is well over 100 villages and gathering places (Moody, J. 1974 – Present).

Total estimated populations of 500 to 1000 per village range from 49 villages x 500 equals 24,500 and 49 villages x 1000 per village equals 49,000. So the range is roughly 25,000 to 50,000 at the minimum. Gookin (1674) estimated village sizes of the central and southern New England peoples including the Penacook of New Hampshire as high as 5,000 per village, so

clearly these figures are a conservative baseline pending further research. These numbers correspond to population densities of one to two people per square mile.

1800 to 1850. Up to 2,000 Western Abenaki speakers were known to Peter Paul Osunkhirhine with connections to Odanak who lived from central Quebec, northern New England, to northern and western New York in the mid-19th century. With Missisquoi, *Koasek*, *Sokwakik*, Penacook, Saco/Pigwacket, and seacoast New Hampshire and Maine documented in place plus those in the Adirondacks, at Schaghticoke, Lake George/Saratoga, the Sacandoga, Oswegatchie/ Ogdensburg, Akwesasne, Seneca, and further west and north, the likely population and language speaking baseline is in the 5,000 to 10,000 range from 1800 to 1850.

Present Day. The Odanak Band population was 1,876 in 2010 including those living in the US and the Wolinak Band figure was 225. The Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi population is about 1,200 to 2,300, and the Cowasuck Band of the Penacook/Abenaki People has a population of 1,200. Other known bands south of the border and in Quebec have populations that total about 500. 12,000 is the total Abenaki population cited in the US and Canada in *Wikipedia* in 2011. Each decade since 1970 the number of Abenaki, Penobscot, and other indigenous people listed in the federal census records in the US and Canada increases 70% to 140%. There is no end in sight for that trend where Vermont Indian population in 2010 was 7,255 and New Hampshire was 10,380.

Our best, minimum estimates of Abenaki population today including descendants range from 30,000 to 200,000 though it will be many years before the full numbers are known.

Indigenous Population and Burials in Northern New England Over 5,000 Years. Abenaki/Native burials have been documented in every part of Vermont and New Hampshire from the river valleys to the high ridges of the Green and White Mountains. New Hampshire's total land area is 9,300 square miles. Vermont's area is 9,600 square miles. The ancestors of the Abenaki, Sokwaki, and Penacook have roots that are at least 12,000 years old in New Hampshire and Vermont. For the sake of this study, we use only the most recent 5,000 years of Native occupation for the calculations although it is certain that older burials and burial grounds still exist in the region.

Most experts agree that the population of Abenaki

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people from 1600 back 5,000 years was at least 1 person per square mile. The 1600 AD estimate of 22,000 to 50,000 given earlier translates to 1 to 2 people per square mile density in the two state region (Mathewson 2011; Thornton 2000). Populations of Native peoples on the Atlantic coast have been confirmed to be as high as 60 to 100 people per square mile in the early 1600s by direct observation. We have done the following calculations at one and ten people per square mile estimates to give a conservative range of the number of burials in each town and state (see Table 1). We assume three generations per century as most children in older times, and even today, are born by the time their mother is 33 years old. In the case of old documented village areas there were at least ten in the Merrimack River watershed, nine in the Connecticut River valley on both sides of the river, five in the New Hampshire seacoast region, two in the Lake Memphramagog watershed, and eleven in the Champlain Valley. In these locations, large burial grounds cannot be ruled out which may hold many more burials from the surrounding region. In the Champlain Valley, Merrimack River and seacoast drainages as well as several towns in the Connecticut River Valley, the number of burials and burial grounds disturbed to date suggest that the 10 people per square mile minimum population is the most realistic in the lowland areas and the 1 person per square mile estimates are best applied to the upland areas. The potential for there to be a minimum of 6,000 to 60,000 unmarked Abenaki burials in each town in Vermont, New Hampshire, and the surrounding regions of the northern United States and southern Canada requires us to plan the protection and care of these sacred places in an exhaustive, regional way (Moody, J. 2007b, 2007c).

A History of Looting and Site Protection in Abenaki Country with State, Federal, and Local Policy, Custom, and Law on Indigenous Burial Grounds and Sacred Sites

Overview of Region Down to 1800

The looting, destruction, and excavation of Abenaki, Penacook, Sokwaki, and other Native American graves, sacred sites, and sites in New England and the Americas started as soon as Europeans arrived on the continent and continues to this day. From 1519 to present, large scale looting of Central and South American Native Nations and ancient sites began in earnest with Hernán Cortés's 1519 arrival in Mexico. Silver and gold looted from the Americas was instrumental in creating the trading empires which transformed the European economy and funded the European hegemony of the 17th to 19th

centuries. From 1620 to the 21st century, hundreds of thousands of burials have been looted in the Americas. By 1990, 18,000 indigenous people's remains were held at the Smithsonian, 18,000 at the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, with an estimated minimum of 1,000 Abenaki sets of remains and thousands of grave goods and sacred items stolen or collected in this time period (Echo-Hawk and Echo-Hawk 1994; Mann 2011: 139ff; Moody, D. R. and Moody, J, 2007a; Thomas, D.H. 2000).

Virtually every one of the hundreds of military forays into Abenaki country from the early 1600s to the 1780s had a looting component (Calloway 1990, 1991; Day 1981, 1987, 1998; Gookin 1674; Haviland and Power 1994; Huden 1971; Moody, D.R. and Moody, J. 2007a; Moody, J. 1974 – Present, 2004). From the 1640s to present that also included the search for Abenaki sacred sites ranging from the reported riches in the *Wôbiadenak* (White Mountains) that fueled Darby Field's early climb up Mount Washington, and the many rumored lead, silver, and other 'mines' of the Abenaki, as well as the search for the fabled 'lost treasure of St. Francis' looted by Rogers' Rangers from Odanak in October, 1759 (Ring 2004; Bushnell 2009).

In 1620, the Pilgrims began grave looting by opening up a Cape Cod Wampanoag burial: "We brought sundry of the prettiest things away with us and covered up the corpse again." (Echo-Hawk and Echo-Hawk 1994:12 citing Heath 1886:27-28, Moody, D. 2011:12). When Darby Field, guided by Saco River Abenakis, climbed *Gôdagwadso* (Mount Washington) in 1642, he was searching, in part, for a mineral treasure many had seen 'shining' from out on the ocean when approaching the coast that he would discover was largely sheets of mica. In 1676 at the end of Metacomet's/King Phillip's War, there was a large massacre of Native southern New England refugees and local Sokwakis and Pocumtucs at Turners Falls, Massachusetts, with looting of the village and human remains. In 1692, Hannah Dustin said she murdered 13 Penacook men, women, and children and took their scalps and other items back home to Massachusetts Bay.

In June, 1704 Captain Caleb Lyman's Massachusetts Company went to "Cowasuck" having heard that "enemy Indians had built a fort and planted corn" there. They attacked a group of Abenaki there on June 14th or 15th and reported killing seven, "six of whom we scalpt." They then "took our scalps and plunder, such as guns, skins, etc., and the enemies canoes..." They took the canoes 12 miles south "then thought it prudence to dismiss and break the canoes, knowing there were some

of the enemy betwixt us and home.” (Penhallow 1726 in Wetherell 2002:165-66). On May 9 and 10, 1725, Abenaki leader Paugus was reported killed at Pigwacket and his grave later looted by English colonial militias. Paugus’s powder horn still surfaces in the collectors market with a present value above \$15,000. Also in 1725, Norridgewock was raided and burned by Massachusetts colonial militia, many were killed, Father Sebastien Rasles died, and the Abenaki village was also looted. Rasles’ dictionary of the Kennebec Abenaki language was among the looted materials which ended up at Harvard University.

On October 4, 1759, Robert Rogers and 200 rangers attacked Odanak (called *St Francis* in New England), an Abenaki central refugee village in Quebec. Numerous sacred items from the Odanak mission and Abenaki homes were stolen. Some of these items have become the source for a major ‘lost treasure’ seekers’ mythos down to present day in the Upper Connecticut River Valley of Vermont and New Hampshire (Bushnell 2009; Ring 2004). After this raid there was another, largely undocumented raid by Rogers’ Rangers on the Missisquoi Abenaki village in June 1760. The chief of the Abenaki at Missisquoi was killed and an earthen mound was built with a circle of 16 pine trees was constructed to honor this leader. From 1790 to 1860, the trees were said to have been cut and the mound leveled (Barney and Perry 1882:948-50, 971-73; Moody, J. 1979:59). In 2001, however, an Abenaki burial ground dating to this time period was opened up during house construction. The Abenaki stopped the excavation, the State of Vermont helped to purchase and protect the site, and the burials were reburied (Blom et al. 2006; Moody, J. 2004).

Overview from 1800 to Present

From 1800 to present numerous Abenaki, Penacook, Sokwaki, and other Native burial grounds and sacred sites have been looted and destroyed in New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, and the northeast. Over 1,000 Abenaki sets of remains and thousands of grave goods and sacred items stolen in this time period have not been accounted for or are still in public and private collections in Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, New York, regional, and international museums in the US, Canada, and Europe.

In the 1930s, a private antiquarian group exhumed the remains of an Abenaki family from a marked cemetery with headstones in Effingham, New Hampshire, and turned them over to Harvard’s Peabody Museum. These remains were repatriated and reburied in

a NAPGRA repatriation in 2001. Many burials were exhumed and given to Dartmouth College, the Peabody Museums at Andover and Harvard, the University of Vermont, the University of Massachusetts, Smith and Amherst Colleges, the State University of New York at Albany, the New York State Museum at Albany, Fort Ticonderoga, Franklin Pierce University, the University of New Hampshire, the Maine State Museum, the Heye Foundation, the Smithsonian, and many local historical societies and museums. Many others are still in private collections which periodically surface when these collections change hands.

From 1973 to 1974, the first public Abenaki protest of burial desecration occurred during the University of New Hampshire Seabrook Rocks Road site excavations at the start of the construction of the Seabrook Nuclear Power Plant. Ron Canns, an Abenaki from Vermont led the way in that protest, which was echoed by Madas Sapiel and her son Sammy from Penobscot, Winona LaDuke of the White Earth *Anishnabeg*, and many other Native elders and leaders. The Seabrook remains and sacred items were finally repatriated in the 1990s and 2000s to the Abenaki Nation coalition.

From 1973 to 1985, wide ranging consultations with Abenaki and other indigenous elders, family and community leaders began regarding Abenaki, Sowaki, Penacook, and other burials, burial grounds, sacred items, grave goods, and sites. There was a universal demand that (a) all looting be stopped in the homeland, (b) that all burials, grave goods, and sacred items out of the ground be returned for reburial ‘by sunset,’ (c) that any threatened burial or burial ground still in place be protected or moved locally if absolutely necessary ‘by sunset,’ (d) that reburials should occur as close to the original location as possible, (e) that any remains in museums or other locations should be immediately visited by Abenaki elders and prepared for repatriation with Abenaki people in charge of how they are curated until repatriation occurred (Appendix 3).

Stephen Laurent had already taken the lead on this work in the Abenaki homeland with his 1955 participation in the dedication of a plaque to the first recorded reburial of an Abenaki set of remains in US or Canadian history at Melvin Village on Lake Winnepesaukee in the 1820s. He also presided over the first 20th century reburial in 1978 of Abenaki remains that had been exhumed at Center Harbor in the course of a road project some years before. This repatriation was accomplished in cooperation with the N.H. Archeological Society and the new NH Division for Historic Resources (NHDHR). Remains of over three hundred Abenaki people and

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thousands of grave goods and sacred items were identified from various sources in the homeland and the repatriation process was begun. Research on numerous, older burial grounds noted in local and regional histories, archeological studies, and other sources was also begun and continues to present day.

From 1973 to 1990, the Abenaki Nation sought the return of the seventy plus sets of remains and thousands of grave goods from the Boucher burial ground in Swanton and Highgate, Vermont, along with remains from the ancient Isle La Mott and other Champlain Valley burials exhumed since the 19th century. An Abenaki Nation coalition of elders and leaders from Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, and Quebec worked to return burials and protect sacred sites. From 1979 to present the Abenaki Nation coalition has collaborated to quietly document looting, network to protect sacred sites and burial grounds, and publically facilitated repatriations. From 1980 to 1994 several burials and burial grounds in the Lake Champlain, Connecticut, Merrimack, Saco, and St. Francis River Valleys were protected *in situ* with the beginning of collection evaluations and some repatriations of remains and grave goods. The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP) worked with the Abenaki for a while to develop a repatriation and site evaluation and protection protocol (VDHP 1989).

From the mid-1970s, State and Provincial archeologists were appointed in Abenaki country and the United States and Canada to manage, document, and preserve historic sites. Federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Green Mountain National Forest, and the White Mountain National Forest, also began programs to document and protect archeological sites.

In 1990, Congress passed the Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act law (NAGPRA). The New Hampshire Legislature passed a limited Native burial protection law in 1993, and the Vermont Legislature extended protection to all unmarked burials and burial grounds in 1994. In the 1990s, a more formal Abenaki Nation repatriation and site protection coalition was formed by many elders, family, and community leaders with three groups at the lead: the *Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi*, the *Abenaki Nation of New Hampshire*, and the *Cowasuck Band of Pennacook/Abenaki People*. Several other Abenaki family band leaders from the Lake George/Saratoga area, the Champlain Valley, the Connecticut River Valley, the Merrimack and Saco River Valleys, western Maine, and other parts of the

Abenaki Nation homeland joined with this coalition to protect sites and repatriate sacred items and burials. In 1996, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2008, and 2010 this Abenaki Nation coalition successfully completed the repatriation of over 200 Abenaki burials and hundreds of grave goods and sacred items including six NAGPRA repatriations from Dartmouth, Harvard, the State of New Hampshire, Franklin Pierce University, and the University of New Hampshire. Numerous other NAGPRA, site/burial protection, and evaluation efforts along with environmental assessment projects from New York to western Maine, northern Massachusetts to Quebec have also been initiated.

In 2000, a large 18th and early 19th century Abenaki burial ground was disturbed during house construction at the Bushey Site in northwestern Vermont. The Missisquoi Abenaki and many other Abenaki Nation community and family leaders, elders, and non-Native volunteers including several archeology crews sifted the remains and a large number of grave goods from many dirt piles for reburial. The State of Vermont purchased the site and the exhumed remains and grave goods were reburied.

In 2001, a similar situation developed near Squam Lake in New Hampshire where a substantial Abenaki burial ground was excavated during construction. The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department and NHDHR worked with many Abenaki Nation coalition leaders, elders and volunteers to recover and facilitate reburial of over 30 Abenaki bodies and hundreds of grave goods by the fall of 2001. Though these are two of only a few cases of large Abenaki burial grounds being salvaged in the course of construction in the northeast, it is very likely that there are several individual burials and burial grounds disturbed or destroyed in the course of the spring to fall construction season each year. Both of these burial grounds were found in 2000 and 2001 by Abenaki and other Native people working on the construction projects, or ethnohistorians and archeologists who work with the Abenaki Nation coalition. In both cases, if one or two committed people who work with the coalition had not persevered, followed the law, and done the right thing, then these burial grounds would also have been totally destroyed. Accounts of literally hundreds of burial grounds being disturbed in northern New England, New York, and southern Quebec over the last 250 years also suggest that this is true. The demographic data that between 6,000 and 60,000 unmarked burials are located in every town in the homeland outlines the scale of the issues (Table 1).

In 2003, the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi chief left

the coalition. The Abenaki Nation coalition has completed four more NAGPRA repatriations, numerous other NAGPRA, site and burial protection, and evaluation efforts along with environmental assessment projects in the Abenaki homeland from New York to western Maine, northern Massachusetts to Quebec to present day.

New Hampshire Burial Looting and Site Protection
 New Hampshire has its share of looting stories, but the protection of these historic sites in New Hampshire did not just begin with the passage of a Native burial protection law in the early 1990s. There was a very early, historic effort to rebury and protect an Abenaki grave in the early 1800s in the Lakes Region of New Hampshire. There was clearly a real conflict between

Table 1. Demographic Study of New Hampshire and Vermont Native Population and Burial Distribution.

		<u>New Hampshire</u>		
<u>Population Density</u>	<u>Total Area</u>	<u>100 Years</u>	<u>1000 Years</u>	<u>5000 Years</u>
1 Person per Sq-Mile	9,300 Sq Miles	27,900	279,000	1,354,500
No. per Town in N.H.	236 Towns and Cities	118 per Town or City	1,180 per Town or City	5,900 per Town or City
10 People per Sq-Mile	9,300 Sq Miles	279,000	2,790,000	13,545,000
No. per Town in N.H.	236 Towns and Cities	1,180 per Town or City	11,800 per Town or City	59,000 per Town or City
		<u>Vermont</u>		
<u>Population Density</u>	<u>Total Area</u>	<u>100 Years</u>	<u>1000 Years</u>	<u>5000 Years</u>
1 Person per Sq-Mile	9,600 Sq Miles	28,800	288,000	1,440,000
No. per Town in VT	246 Towns and Cities	117 per Town or City	1,170 per Town or City	5,850 per Town or City
10 People per Sq-Mile	9,600 Sq Miles	288,000	2,880,000	14,440,000
No. per Town in VT	246 Towns and Cities	1,170 per Town or City	11,700/Town or City	58,500 per Town or City

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those who simply wanted to display these remains and those who were determined to honor the Abenaki burial as one would any burial accorded the basic 'right of repose' affirmed in English common law and custom.

In 1809, a very large Abenaki man's remains were found eroding out of the Melvin River in Tuftonboro, New Hampshire. The remains were placed on display for some years in a typical, 19th century 'curiosities' exhibit. A local farmer reburied the remains nearby in apparent frustration over the desecration. In the 1820s the remains were reportedly reburied again near the original burial location. In 1867, John Greenleaf Whittier published the poem honoring "The Grave by the Lake," marking these events in the typical romantic style of the times (Whittier 1892:247-48). On August 25, 1955, local townspeople asked Stephen Laurent, one of the founding members of the *New Hampshire Archeological Society*, and "several descendants of Indians" to help them dedicate a footstone marker acknowledging the repatriation events. This is the first record of a repatriation and reburial of Abenaki remains in New Hampshire history as well as the first monument cast to honor such an event. Stephen Laurent then presided over the first 20th century repatriation and reburial of Abenaki remains on June 25, 1978, at Center Harbor, New Hampshire.

There are many documented cases of Abenaki and Penacook burials and burial grounds being destroyed with the remains and grave goods either looted into local or regional collections or discarded. Many of these burials were sent to Dartmouth College and other colleges, museums, and historical societies from Walpole and to the Seacoast. One of the best known looting sites was at, and near, the Amoskeag Falls in Manchester, New Hampshire. From the 1890s to the 1970s several sites and burials were discovered or purposely dug, including the large Smyth Site in Manchester (Starbuck 2006:43, 45-46). Most of these remains are still unaccounted for although several Smyth Site burials were repatriated from the State of New Hampshire and Franklin Pierce College in the last decade.

Howard Sargent, New Hampshire's 'first archeologist,' looted numerous Native and non-Native burials in New Hampshire and Vermont from the 1930s to the 1970s. He also collected the remains of over fifty Native people from the national trading and looting network. Howard begged the Abenaki Nation coalition repatriation coordinators to help him rebury these remains and his widow carried out his wishes by instructing that the remains should be repatriated to the Abenaki and other Native peoples in the 1990s.

Unfortunately, against the Sargent family wishes, they were taken by the now defunct Sargent Collection Museum and kept from repatriation and reburial. When this museum was closed by the State of New Hampshire in 2005, the State Archaeologist was asked by the Abenaki Nation coalition and the N.H. Attorney General's office to manage the curation and proper repatriation of these remains which include many Native American and non-Native bodies. Thus far these remains have not been repatriated.

In 1982, members of the New Hampshire Antiquarian Society in Hopkinton, N.H., threw an Abenaki burial that had been in their collection since the 1930s in the local landfill. In the 1980s, Dartmouth College and the Dartmouth Medical School incinerated a large collection of human remains including numerous Abenaki, Penacook, and other Native and non-Native burials sent to them in the 19th and 20th centuries. There is some indication that these actions, which pre-dated the Federal NAGPRA and relevant state laws, were taken after the increased publicity about Abenaki and other Native people's anger and deep concerns about the looting and display of their ancestors' remains and sacred items. In 2008 the new staff and board of the N.H. Antiquarian Society, working with the Abenaki Nation coalition and archeologists, documented these events and incorporated the information of this tragic loss of Abenaki remains in the first exhibit on this topic in New Hampshire history.

From 1978 to the 1980s there were in-depth discussions with Stephen Laurent, George Hoff, Nettie Royce Deforge, Joseph Bruchac, Maurice Denis, Homer St. Francis, Blackie Lampman, Bob Wells, Doris Minkler, Ray Robert-Obomsawin, Richard Phillips, and many other Abenaki leaders and elders in the northeast who were emphatic about the repatriation of Abenaki burials and protection of Abenaki burial grounds and sacred sites. In the late 1980s the N.H. State Archeologist began a dialogue with several Abenaki family leaders, elders, and groups to facilitate the repatriation of several sets of remains in various New Hampshire repositories.

In 1993, a Native American burial protection law was passed in the New Hampshire Legislature that set aside a state reburial location in Shelburne, NH, and provided for the protection and eventual repatriation of Native remains. From 1991 to 2000, the Intervale Indian Encampment founded by the Laurent family was protected and conserved in Intervale, New Hampshire with the cooperation of the State Archeologist and local townspeople (Hume 1991; Levillee 2011b). From 1996 to 2010, there have been many Abenaki burials

repatriated through the NAGPRA process in New Hampshire. In 2001, a substantial network of village burials and burial grounds was uncovered in the course of development on Squam Lake. The State Archeologist called in the Abenaki Nation coalition coordinators to rebury one set of remains unearthed in the course of water line construction. Within a few weeks, a substantial number of human remains were found in dirt piles excavated from nearby. The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department and NHDHR worked with many Abenaki Nation coalition leaders, elders, and many Native and non-Native volunteers to recover and facilitate reburial of over 30 Abenaki bodies and hundreds of grave goods by the fall of 2001. An effort to stop further development of the burial ground and sacred site was unsuccessful though the groundwork was laid to protect other burial grounds in the future.

In 2005, the University of New Hampshire and the Abenaki Nation coalition began the first exhaustive, long term collaboration on repatriation for any large archeological collection in the northeast (Goodby 2006b). Several Abenaki sets of remains and numerous grave goods and sacred items have been repatriated to the Abenaki Nation. This work is on-going and represents the first long term Abenaki Nation collaboration with a major institution holding a substantial indigenous archeological collection to model the best collaborative practices for inventory, repatriation, care, and long term curation and research protocols. In 2009, the N.H. Legislature strengthened the Native burial protection law and banned trafficking in Native human remains and grave goods.

Vermont Burial Looting and Site Protection

Vermont's history of looting and site protection is also a mixed one with a solid underground tradition of listening to local Abenakis and even instinctively protecting indigenous sacred sites and burial grounds to some of the worst examples of burial and site looting and destruction in the region. With the arrival of early settlers from the English colonies of the south and the French villages of New France from the north, the late development of Vermont began in the 1760s to early 1800s. Most of the new settlers were already familiar with the Abenaki and other indigenous peoples and many followed customs and ways of life which mirrored the ancient indigenous lifeways (Moody, J. 1982; Robtoy et al. 1994:30-31). The Europeans were traditionally wary of water after hundreds of years of plagues and a legacy of polluted water in their original homelands. In Vermont, where mineral springs

maintained by the Abenaki were very common, there are several examples of local settlers honoring indigenous customs of respect for these sites. In some cases these local practices have continued down to present day.

In one case, a quite famous Abenaki 'common spring,' to which Native people from the entire region frequently visited, was protected. The non-Native title was purchased by a leading local family in order to preserve the spring. No changes were made to this spring nor any attempts to capitalize on this sacred site. There are examples in virtually every town in Vermont and the rest of northern New England and New York of open spring water sources being used in common by all who wish and need to take the water. Even after the waning of the 19th century 'taking the waters' cure-all fad, these local water sources continue to be faithfully used by Native and non-Native families and communities to date.

The common myth about there being 'no Indians' in Vermont notwithstanding there are numerous examples of Abenaki elders being buried in mountain locations or local, non-Native cemeteries with the compassionate support and help of townspeople and local leaders. Two Abenaki elders and family leaders were buried with a great deal of respect in local cemeteries in Bellows Falls and Bristol, Vermont, in the late 1700s and early 1800s. In both cases these local Abenaki elders were depicted as having 'returned' to the land of their ancestors and therefore wanted to be buried in their original home. Several other, less known, examples of Abenaki elders being buried in local cemeteries and in mountain locations are documented in the Abenaki homeland in the late 18th to mid-19th centuries. In one White River community the local Indians not only shared the land, and locally adapted food plants, with the early settlers, they also buried some of their family members with field stone markers in the family burying ground. In the Otter Creek watershed, a local family settled in with the Abenaki and was told to leave a stone cairn alone that the Abenaki had raised. Unfortunately, a descendant of these settlers could not restrain himself from dismantling the cairn in the late 20th century, and, after he died suddenly, the family put the cairn and sacred items back together in hopes of renewing this cooperative relationship.

Looting also arrived early in Vermont. Surveyor General John Johnson found the famous Colchester Jar in a Lamoille River burial ground (Child 1882:61; Huden 1971; Peterson and Toney 2000; Rann 1886: 751ff):

Near the mouth of the Lamoille River, in Colchester,

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also was found the remains of an Indian encampment and burial place, together with a large mound, where the skeletons and bones of the race, buried in their usual sitting position, were exhumed, and numerous arrow heads and other Indian relics found, among which was the famous 'Indian urn' found by Capt. John Johnson in 1825. This urn, which is now in the museum of the University of Vermont, is about eight inches in height, and will hold about four quarts... Its antiquity is attested by the circumstances in which it was found, it being covered with a flat stone, over which a large tree had grown, and had been so long dead as to be nearly all rotten (Child 1882:61).

The remains were apparently discarded but the whole pot remains a central part of the Fleming Museum collection at the University of Vermont despite being a likely grave good. Two other whole ceramic pots were also found near or in Abenaki burial areas in the early to mid-19th century in the Winooski River watershed (Child 1882; Huden 1971; Peterson and Toney 2000:5-6). Many burial grounds were found in the course of house, road, or railroad construction throughout Vermont during the 19th century (Moody, D.R. and Moody, J. 2007a). One of the most famous was the Hemyard Abenaki burial ground which was discovered eroding out of a sandy knoll in Highgate in 1868. John Perry, who wrote the first history of Swanton and also taught at Harvard, wrote the first attempt at an archeological survey of these remains and the large collection of grave goods (Huden 1971:44-46, 60, 62, 72-73, 97; Perry 1868). Most Abenaki remains were reportedly discarded and the grave goods taken to the University of Vermont, the Peabody Museum at Harvard, and the Peabody Museum in Andover. Those at UVM were reportedly traded to the Museum at Uppsala, Sweden, for a collection of folk art from northern Europe. Other grave goods from this burial ground were also said to have been traded around the world. Efforts to find and repatriate these sacred items have been partially successful and the research continues (Moody, D.R. and Moody, J. 2007a).

At Brunswick Springs on the Upper Connecticut River a great struggle played out between those who would loot and exploit an Abenaki sacred site and the quieter, more persistent voices of Native and non-Native people determined to ultimately protect the sacred. From the 1880s to the 1930s there were several attempts to build hotels at Brunswick Springs which all failed due to fires many attribute to the 'curse' of misusing this well

known Abenaki mineral spring. Finally in the 1990s the last non-Native owner of the land deeded the springs back to the Abenaki Nation. After substantial struggles with the town over unpaid taxes a non-profit helped the Abenaki Nation to assure that this site will be protected in perpetuity (Nelson 2006a).

By the 1920s, more thorough and serious looting and archeological excavations of Abenaki sites began in the Otter Creek watershed led, in part, by nationally known archeologists. Remains were exhumed that ended up in a variety of museums and universities including UVM, the Smithsonian, and the Heye Foundation in New York. By the 1930s, Tom Daniels, L.B. Truax, William Ross, Maurice Crandall, and other avocational archeologists were hard at work in the Otter Creek, Winooski, Lamoille, and Missisquoi watersheds, surface collecting and digging Abenaki sites and burials (Huden 1971; McLaughlin 1994; McLaughlin and Thomas 1994; Moody, D.R. and Moody, J. 2007a). Many grave goods and sacred items from these collections are currently housed in the Chimney Point State Historic Site, the Bixby Library in Vergennes, and the Vermont Historical Society. Most of the remains were apparently discarded but about 30 sets of remains were rediscovered in 2003 at UVM and directly repatriated to the Abenaki Nation coalition and reburied by the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi.

One looter was also active in the Connecticut River watershed where he surface collected and dug sites and burials for many years. He exhumed the remains of an Abenaki male in the Springfield, Vermont, area, threw the remains in the river, and kept the grave goods. What remains the family held were voluntarily repatriated through the State of Vermont to the Abenaki Nation in the 1990s, but they kept the Champlain and Connecticut River Valley grave goods in their private collection. As recently as the last five years, these grave goods were still being used in public talks to school groups and historical societies in Vermont. This continued desecration is one example of the blatant disregard for the most basic human rights of indigenous peoples in Vermont, which should be remedied by law.

From 1959 to 1962, the State Archeologist of New York, William Ritchie, led a crew that thoroughly excavated a large burial ground that was eroding out of a glacial kame or mound on Isle La Mott in the Champlain Islands. Famous for being more interested in the grave goods and artifacts than human burials, he handed the head from one burial to the Vermont Medical Examiner, whose daughter repatriated the remains to the Abenaki Nation in the early 1990s. The rest of the

remains were curated at UVM until their repatriation in 1994 although it is suggested that many other remains were scattered around among Ritchie's professional network as well. Some of the grave goods from these burials remain at the New York State Museum at Albany awaiting repatriation to the Abenaki Nation.

In 1973, the substantial Boucher burial ground was unearthed in Swanton, Vermont, during the course of house construction. A team of professional and avocational archeologists from UVM lead by William Haviland and Louise Basa excavated over seventy burials from this large cemetery. Many Abenaki children were taken to the dig as part of local school trips. Abenaki avocational archeologists Mariella Squire Hakey and Dee Dudley Brightstar joined with the UVM team to excavate the site, and the remains and grave goods were moved to the UVM archeology lab. Some looting of the burial ground during the excavations was also reported at the site (William Haviland and Louise Basa personal communication). The excavated remains, grave goods, and dirt were extensively studied by James Peterson and Michael Heckenberger through the early 1990s and finally repatriated in 1994 for reburial to the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi. Unfortunately, samples of the grave goods from these burials were retained by the archeologist in charge of the studies and subsequently used in at least two studies of this ancient cemetery. Those samples have still not been returned to the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi for reburial. Native peoples including the Abenaki expressed outrage about these excavations and ultimately the State of Vermont purchased the house site, removed the house, and supported the return of the Abenaki burials to their original burial place.

From 1974 to 1977 the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi emerged from nearly 150 years of underground survival to protest the loss of their subsistence fishing grounds on the Missisquoi River and to protect the burial grounds and sacred sites of the people. In conversations with Homer St. Francis, Blackie Lampman, Bob Wells, Chekok Vanslette, Wayne Hoague, Ron Canns, Connie Brow, Richard Phillips, Doris Minkler, and many other Abenaki leaders, elders, and tribal members, the author was told that the Boucher burial ground should have been protected in place, and all Native burial grounds in Vermont should be left in peace, with all burials, grave goods, and sacred items returned for proper reburial. In-depth discussions with Stephen Laurent, George Hoff, Nettie Royce Deforge, Jeanne Brink, Joseph Bruchac, Wolfson, Deny Obomsawin, Daniel Nolet, Louis Annance, John

Lawyer, Bea Nelson, Cheryl Heath, Jesse Larocque, Charlie True, Howard Knight, Paul Pouliot, Charley Delaney, and many other Abenaki leaders and elders in the northeast affirmed the same principals of burial and sacred site protection and repatriation. Wide ranging consultations with Abenaki and other indigenous elders, family and community leaders had already begun regarding these issues. There were universal demands to affirm the basic burial and sacred site protection, repatriation, and curation goals (Appendices 3, 6).

Remains of over 200 Abenaki people and thousands of grave goods and sacred items were identified from various sources in Vermont, and the repatriation process was begun. Research on numerous, older burial grounds noted in local and regional histories, archeological studies, and other sources was also begun. Abenaki elders and leaders universally said that this was of the highest priority. As Bob Wells of Missisquoi put it: "how can we be at peace until all of our Old Ones are back safely in the ground?" (Bob Wells personal communication).

The first documented 20th century repatriation in Vermont history occurred November 1980 in the Connecticut River watershed. Charon Asetoyer, a Comanche woman studying at the Experiment in International Living, had noticed a set of 'Indian' remains on display at the Putney Historical Society in Putney, Vermont. Elaine Dixon and Laura Heller from the Society worked closely with the author and the growing Abenaki Nation repatriation network to respectfully take the remains off display and arrange for their reburial. Chief Blackie Lampman from Missisquoi asked Beverly Bolding of Goffstown, New Hampshire, to officiate, and she was joined by several Abenaki and other Native people to facilitate the reburial on November 15, 1980.

In 1976, Giovanna Morselli Neudorfer (Giovanna Peebles) became the first Vermont State Archeologist. The author raised the issues of burial, sacred site, and general site destruction in light of the known extensive, annual looting of sites in Vermont by treasure hunters, avocational archeologists, land owners, and archeologists like William Ritchie. Peebles agreed immediately that 'goodies' archeology and any other unnecessary digging or looting would be stopped because the accepted, contemporary standards for archeological studies required site preservation unless salvage work was necessary. It was also clear that there were a large number of developments and site disturbing projects happening in Vermont which should be evaluated before sites were destroyed. She also agreed that all looting of

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Native burial grounds would be stopped, and repatriation of Native remains and grave goods in State custody would begin immediately (Moody, J. 1974 – Present; VDHP 1989). From 1979 to 1994, VDHP and the Vermont Advisory Council made a firm policy that (a) no digs would be done at Native sites unless threatened, (b) Native burials and burial grounds would be (1) protected *in situ*, (2) never subject to survey or academic study, and (3) if disturbed, dealt with by a team lead by Abenaki Nation representatives and elders (Appendix 3). In 1982, at the Vermont Governor’s Conference on the Future of Vermont’s Heritage, a unanimous resolution was passed which affirmed these principals of burial and site protection while encouraging a general research effort to identify and protect any Abenaki burial ground or sacred site in place in Vermont (see 1982 Resolution #19 in Appendix 1). Resolution #19 spoke broadly to the need for an exhaustive effort to understand Vermont’s Native American peoples and ancient history, and especially to deal with the reality that “places sacred to Native Americans are being desecrated, and people are unearthing historic Indian and precontact Indian burial grounds.” The conference members resolved that:

all museums, historical societies, organizations, or individuals who now own or may encounter either Indian remains or sacred places should (1) recognize by research and protect by choice ancient and contemporary sacred places, especially burial grounds, and sites of major significance to Vermont’s Indians, and (2) avoid...any development or archeological digging in such places, and if a site must be worked or has been worked, and sacred objects or burials exhumed, to arrange with Native American cooperation a proper reburial at a suitable place with suitable protection of the site.

Giovanna Peebles and Eric Gilbertson of the VDHP also agreed that a policy needed to be developed to deal with emergency burial discoveries in Vermont to facilitate their immediate protection, repatriation, and reburial. Finally, they agreed that in cases of Abenaki or Native American remains being in jeopardy that the Abenaki Nation and people would be in charge of the process from the moment that the remains were known to be indigenous. This was the first such protocol developed and implemented with a state or federal agency in northern New England. In the event of burial discovery anywhere in Vermont which included the State Archeologist, the Abenaki would be contacted to facilitate the proper care and immediate reburial of

Native remains in Vermont. In several cases where burials were found eroding out of river banks or otherwise threatened in the Connecticut River and Champlain Valleys from 1980 to 1994 that policy was implemented successfully.

From 1985 to 1994, sacred and traditional site protection protocols were developed and implemented in Vermont with the Abenaki Nation and the VDHP (VDHP 1989). Several large projects including Highgate Hydro, the Champlain Gas Pipeline, several Vermont Gas pipelines, the Sheldon Cogeneration Plant, and the VELCO transmission line upgrades were evaluated. Substantial attention was also given to the limitations of the archeological model used to determine if a location in Vermont had a high or low probability of having indigenous sites.

One immediate result of this State and Abenaki Nation cooperation was the removal of the controversial display of the Abenaki Isle La Mott burial remains at the Vermont Historical Society and the beginning of a twelve year process that resulted in the repatriation of these remains to the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi in 1994. In perhaps the clearest example of the importance of Native people, archeologists, and historians cooperating, a skull that had been separated from the remains when William Ritchie handed it to the Vermont Medical Examiner in 1962 was reunited to the remains (Haviland and Power 1994:75; Moody, J. 1974–Present).

In the 1980s, the Monument to the First Church in Vermont at Highgate and the surrounding old Missisquoi Abenaki village and burial grounds protection effort began with the Nature Conservancy, the VDHP and the State of Vermont, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi. A housing development was threatening the old Missisquoi Abenaki village grounds and a collaborative effort was developed to protect as much of these historic village grounds as possible. When burials were found eroding out of the riverbank, the lot was purchased from the developer and the first reburial of Abenaki remains at Missisquoi was completed with Missisquoi, Odanak, and other Abenaki Nation elders and leaders led by Chief Homer St Francis and Richard Phillips. David Skinas, the NRCS archeologist, facilitated the stabilization of the river bank at the Monument with Monty Provencher, an Otter Creek Abenaki contractor.

In the late 1980s, another key sacred area was threatened at Missisquoi in the Maquam Bay area by a planned housing development. Blackie Lampman’s children and a network of Abenaki and non-Native

supporters managed to convince the NRCS and State of Vermont to preserve this important sacred place at Missisquoi. Several other substantial, undeveloped areas at Missisquoi have been quietly protected over the last three decades.

The Green Mountain National Forest archeologist worked with the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi and Abenaki Nation coalition to establish a collaborative sacred and traditional site, and historic site, evaluation and protection effort in 1989 (Appendices 4, 5). By the mid-1990s that process had brought Abenaki elders and leaders from several parts of the Abenaki homeland and network to evaluate numerous sacred and historic sites in the GMNF (Lacy et al. 1993; Lacy and Moody 2006, 2007). Unfortunately that collaboration was ended by the GMNF archeologist in 2008, which has stopped the GMNF administration from collaboration or cooperation with the many Abenaki leaders and elders in the Abenaki Nation coalition and wider network. This laid the ground work for the mistakes made in the GMNF archeologist planning of an archeological dig at the West Hill Cairns site in 2010 (Appendix 5).

From 1990 to 1992, a quiet effort in the Vermont Legislature to amend the burial laws to protect all burials and burial grounds whether marked or unmarked was achieved with the help of Representative Stephen Webster and the VDHP. Unfortunately from 1992 to 2005 the burial and site protection protocol and cooperation between the Abenaki and the VDHP was severely restricted on orders from the Vermont Attorney General and the Governor. Collaborative best practices which had informed and encouraged the developing cooperation between the Abenaki and State for burial, sacred, and historic site protection were sacrificed to the short term concerns of those who saw the Abenaki as a threat to Vermont's land titles or character.

In 2000, the Bushey burial ground, a large 18th and 19th century Abenaki burial ground at Missisquoi, was severely damaged by a cellar hole excavation. The author, on the urging of the Abenaki Nation repatriation and site protection coordinator and the Chief of the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi, examined the site and found human remains scattered on the dirt piles and construction site. After a monumental struggle with the State, the development was stopped, the land was acquired by the State, and burials and grave goods were retrieved by a team led by the Abenaki at Missisquoi and other Abenaki from the Winooski River, Otter Creek, Connecticut River, the Abenaki Nation of New Hampshire, and other groups from as far away as the Malecite community of Tobique. Several archeological

crews also helped with the work lead by Doug Frink's Archeology Consulting Team, including the UVM Consulting Archeology Program, and the University of Maine Farmington Archeology Research Center. Hundreds of hours were required to retrieve the remains and a large number of grave goods for reburial in early fall (Blom et al. 2006; Moody, D. R. and Moody, J. 2007a; Moody, J. 1974–Present).

The same year remains from a substantial burial ground were also unearthed in the Alburg area. Though elders told the state that this was part of a much larger burial ground the VDHP and Governor's Office were reluctant to repeat the expensive process required in nearby Swanton so they deferred the decisions on this site for nearly six years. The Abenaki Nation coalition leadership had told State and Federal archeologists in 2000 to 2003 that this is a large burial ground and should be protected but they were ignored. When a backhoe excavation was tried at the site and more burials were disturbed in 2008, the State finally stepped in to stop further ground disturbing activity there and helped the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi protect the site. Unfortunately this process exemplifies the lack of an adequate protocol, which had been state policy in the 1980s to protect and care for unmarked burial grounds of any size in Vermont.

From 2005 to 2008, elements of the 1980s policy were reinstated at Missisquoi on Monument Road in Swanton and Highgate and an historic collaboration developed between the two towns, the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi, and the NRCS archeologist. The Vermont State Archeologist and VDHP eventually joined in the process, which was designed to identify burial sites, and determined that a 'burial ground' required 'three or more bodies' in order to be left in place. If fewer remains were found they could be removed and reburied if the land-owner requested it. No provision was made for sacred or traditional sites. In 2008 to 2009, a new home was built in the Boucher burial ground and sacred site area after an archeological dig identified a whole, Abenaki pot and no other artifacts. This is clearly a burial site associated with the nearby 2,000- to 3,000-year-old Abenaki Boucher burial ground as NRCS archeologist David Skinas and April Merrill of the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi stated in the *Vermont Archeological Society Newsletter* (Skinas and Merrill 2009:1):

The absence of habitation remains on the site suggests this isolated vessel was placed on an Abenaki burial and either the bones have completely dissolved in the acidic soils or the vessel contains a

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cremation burial.... Unfortunately, the housing project was allowed to proceed with an approved zoning permit because only one burial was encountered. The Swanton Unmarked Burial zoning that is limited to Monument Road requires that more than three graves must be found within a 1,000 square-foot-area before a project can be stopped.

Deep concerns about the desecration of this large burial ground and sacred site continue with the very narrow, local policy and no VDHP or other state willingness to intervene. Limiting sacred site protection to the discovery of burials will only assure that many more traditional and sacred sites will be destroyed in Vermont. Numerous times from the 1970s the State Archeologist, VDHP staff, and local town governments have been informed by Abenaki people and experts that this area is a much larger sacred site and burial ground that must be protected. There are at least 100 comparably large Abenaki village grounds in the northeast that are similarly threatened at this time. It is time to return to a policy of respect and understanding for the most basic human rights of these ancient peoples.

In the Lake Memphramagog area, Bea Nelson has also guided the VDHP when sensitive Abenaki sites were slated for development. Concerns were raised with the redevelopment of the Newport, Vermont waterfront area in the 1990s that an earlier 19th century construction project had unearthed Abenaki remains. Some pre-contact artifacts were found in the course of the work in this area that the VDHP staff used for a permanent display in the State office building at Newport. Concerns about development of other, sensitive areas in the Northeast Kingdom have been expressed to the VDHP staff in the last fifteen years (Nelson 2006).

From 2006 to 2011, the Intervale village area protection effort was initiated by a Winooski River Abenaki family leader in Burlington, Vermont. Following nearly three generations of development on the very sensitive, old Abenaki Intervale village and subsistence grounds, this local leader and other members and supporters of the Abenaki Nation coalition went to work to document and stop site disturbing activities. Ultimately the effort was successful with the Intervale Compost facility being forced to move their large operation off the site just months before the historic floods of August, 2011. The Abenaki Nation coalition including several elders and leaders were helped in this process by the new Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs.

Sadly, these efforts were undermined by the VDHP

and NRCS archeologists who then decided to repatriate human remains collected over many decades by the State of Vermont Medical Examiner and Department of Health exclusively to Chief of the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi and rebury them in the Intervale in a very controversial process with no consultation with the Abenaki Nation coalition or local Winooski River Abenaki families. The VDHP and NRCS apparently decided, despite extensive consultations over the years with many different Abenaki groups and families, to cherry pick the one Abenaki leader who the Federal and State archeological community chose to deal with. This process laid the groundwork for the present crisis in the Green Mountain National Forest and the rest of Vermont which has brought us full circle to the original topic.

There is one remarkable, positive, fact that has emerged from all of this site excavation, looting, and destruction over the last 250 years in Vermont: the old no man's land myth of Vermont's storied lack of ancient or contemporary Indian history or population has finally been laid to a much deserved rest. There is no argument now that *someone* has been living in Vermont for the last 12,000 years.

Abenaki Sacred Sites, Burial Grounds, and the Ridgelines and Mountains: Keeping the Balance and Protecting the Sacred

There is an old tradition in the Long Trail/Appalachian Trail network through Abenaki country of 'leaving the campsite better than you found it.' Aside from being the polite and considerate thing to do on a warm summer's day, these traditions are anchored in the ancient Abenaki way of life where cached food and supplies could mean the difference between life or death for a hunter or family caught out in the bush or in an upland area in the event of bad weather, sickness, injury, childbirth, elders' last days, or other challenges. There are countless stories in the national literature of both Canada and the US that reflect this ethic including the famous deer slayer novels of James Fennimore Cooper and non-fiction guides to living the good life including the Lakota author Charles Eastman's *Indian Boyhood* and even the *Boy Scout Manual* from which it is adapted. These traditions are rooted in notions of balance and respect for the many gifts and potential challenges that life in the 'wilderness' provides (Bruchac 1992).

In late winter of 1778, Francois Joseph Annance and Hugh Holmes, both Dartmouth students, went moose hunting in the White River watershed. Annance was to become a famous Abenaki leader and elder who lived most of his adult life in western Maine where his

descendants live to present day. Holmes was a Canadian from Montreal whose time in the bush was obviously limited. In no time, Holmes was severely injured, and Francois Annance began an odyssey to save the young white man's life, and leg, by using ancient knowledge and skills in hunting, maple sugaring, medicine gathering, wound healing, and endurance. Even though the motto of Dartmouth, *Vox clamatis in deserto*, invokes the howling wilderness image which terrified and still frightens the newcomers, the *Wôbategw wolhanek* watershed was hardly an alien landscape to Annance. When Annance literally carried Holmes out of the woods to the great relief of all at Dartmouth and Holmes's family, few seemed to understand that this was just the decent, full measure of the ancient, Abenaki way of life. It is what is expected of those who know even if those who don't know are prone to unconscious suicide, foolishness, selfishness, greed, ecological, or site destruction on an unparalleled scale, or ignorance of the extraordinary antiquity and capacity of the Abenaki homeland to teach and endure.

At the headwaters of the Otauquechee and White Rivers and the Otter Creek watershed there is an upland stone site that is well known to Abenaki families and elders from near and far. Several elders from the region retain oral traditions of this place whose name derives from one of the many stories, and ancient purposes, of this place. In the late 1980s this site was being negatively impacted by public access and erosion issues. An interdisciplinary study was conducted on the best course of action. A soil scientist and botanist from the government suggested closing the site, but Abenaki elders, knowing how the youth of many local towns and schools, loved to use this place, suggested a balanced approach of selected trail closure and education. Years later the erosion is beginning to heal and the traditions of respect are starting to return to this special area.

In 1642, Darby Field ascended *Gôdagwadso* (Mount Washington) with Saco River Abenaki guides. Two Saco Abenaki then accompanied him to the top despite Field having said most of the Indians "durst go no further, telling him that no Indian ever dared to go higher" (Waterman and Waterman 1989:3, 7-9 citing Winthrop 1853:80-82). Given the famous Molly Ockett's statements about all of this and her frequent visits to the mountains, perhaps Field misunderstood the Abenaki comment, which may have been that no *young man* would go further without an experienced elder to protect and guide him. Of course these guides may well have been exercising the famous Abenaki restraint about telling another what to do while trying their best to

dissuade Field from his grand explorer and looting expectations. In 1992, at a conference on the White Mountains convened by the Mount Washington Observatory, Jeanne Brink and Deny Obomsawin (1992) stated that the Abenaki are not 'afraid' of the mountains but rather 'respectful.' Abenakis are well known for upland gathering places where annual maple sugaring and other traditional subsistence gatherings were and are maintained (Moody, J. 1982). From the southern Green Mountains and ridgelines of Vermont to southern Quebec there are accounts of Abenaki maple sugaring grounds and other upland sites, which are not only remembered in the oral traditions and local histories but also written right into the landscape of names still found on the land and waters (Brooks et al. 2009; Charland 2005; Day 1975). Abenaki families in the Saratoga/Lake George and upper Connecticut River community networks speak of numerous upland area sites linked to their communities in nearby ridgelines and mountains as well as the Adirondacks and Green Mountains. Similar traditions of upland Abenaki and Penobscot use and lifeways from the White Mountains to Mount Katahdin are known.

On September 23, 1837, Thomas Jackson led one of the first, documented non-Native ascents up Mount Katahdin with a small group of men. They ran into serious trouble with snow, wind, and poor visibility, so a "Penobscot Indian in the party...hastily constructed a series of small cairns during the ascent," which saved the group from getting lost on the mountain (Waterman and Waterman 1989:96). While few non-Native hikers in the Alpine regions of the north country would think to credit the Abenaki or Penobscot with originating the cairning of trails, there is considerable evidence that all of the northeast Algonquian and Iroquoian peoples did extensive stone work of this and many other kinds (Stewart-Smith et al. 2011).

Yet this is not the most significant aspect of this account for our consideration. From a traditional perspective, one can imagine the Penobscot guide scattering the cairns he had raised up as they returned down the mountain. The notion of respect Jeanne Brink and Deny Obomsawin were speaking of would include 'leaving no trace' of one's passage in the sacred places of the world. Taking care to leave what belongs on the mountain in the bush is an important starting point in the discussions about the next phase of mountain and ridgeline development in the north country. Laura and Guy Waterman, who attended that same conference in 1992, took the Abenaki speakers aside at the end of their talk and said, from their perspective, it was time to take

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the Mount Washington Observatory and every communication tower, hotel, access road, and any other sign of modern man off the mountains of the north country. There was quiet agreement from the Abenaki people and others listening to these awakened conservationists. Homer St. Francis helped build and maintain the communication towers on Mount Ascutney in the 1960s but he also stated that all of the mountain construction and blasting should be stopped for traditional reasons. Late in life he used to gaze up at “my mountain” (Jay Peak), to the undeveloped side of the mountain, and affirm this clear thought of caring for the sacred sites and places that have survived. He made similar comments about the blasted ridgeline in West Lebanon, New Hampshire, which is very visible from the VA Hospital in White River Junction, Vermont.

In the early 1770s, about the time Dartmouth was being founded in Hanover, N.H., a crew of Dartmouth staff went for a walk up a local mountain to get a better view. They found, on the way down, a site where ‘the Indians’ had been gathering and had clearly marked their way. Similar gathering places are well known from southern New England and the Appalachian Mountains all the way to Georgia. From the ridgelines of the Adirondacks and Lake George to the uplands of all the major watersheds in northern New England and southern Quebec, there are thousands of these places which require protection. A few of these sites are some of the largest, most complete stone tool and weapon-making places known to the people. Others are gathering, subsistence, and traditional use areas devoted to very specific purposes. Many of these sites are still maintained and protected to the present day by local Abenaki, Penacook, Penobscot, Nipmuc, Mohican, and other elders, leaders, families, and communities.

From the 1930s to the 1980s, a remarkable awakening happened in a portion of the Euro-American leaders and some segments of the non-Native population focused on conservation. In the uplands of central Vermont, a prominent industrialist worked tirelessly to find and protect ridgeline and mountain stone sites. Will Monroe and others worked hard to protect Camel’s Hump and other mountains in Vermont, New Hampshire, western Maine, and the Adirondacks. Abenakis and other Native people have worked as guides, crafts people, and workers in virtually every upland resort and ski area from the 19th century days of grand hotels and spas to the 20th century explosion of ski resorts and have quietly provided guidance to avoid and protect sacred and traditional sites.

In northwestern Vermont, Thomas Stafford, brother

of the former Senator from Vermont, Robert Stafford, was lining out a new road in the 1950s for the Vermont Marble Company to reach the old Barney Marble works limestone and marble quarries after the new Interstate 89 cut off the old access road. An ‘Indian’ met him in the woods and told him that they could *not* build a road through this land because of sacred sites in the area. When the Vermont Gas Systems and the earlier Champlain Pipeline projects were contemplating crossing this same area, several local Missisquoi Abenaki family and community leaders said the same thing. With the cooperative protocols in effect at the time, these projects were rerouted with a minimum disruption to the efforts and limited exposure of the sacred site to looting and misuse. In New Hampshire during the 1950s, a power line that was going to impact a stone site was adjusted quietly by the Abenaki construction crew members to avoid the site without any undue attention. Despite the fact that it was not until 1955 that an Abenaki leader, Stephen Laurent, and others of ‘Indian descent’ were expressly asked to join in the festivities to honor an Abenaki burial repatriated in New Hampshire, there has been a long, quiet tradition of Abenaki, Penacook, and other indigenous peoples protecting these sacred sites with non-Native support. And the truth of the situation in northwestern Vermont is that the ‘Indian’ who was talking to Thomas Stafford was actually speaking to one of his distant relatives whose own Abenaki ancestry was well hidden but deeply felt. The author was raised in the uplands and backwoods ways of living by these men where the love and deep affection for the surviving special places was largely unstated but fully understood.

The curiosity-seeking and looting of stone and earthen villages and sacred sites in the Midwest and South was widely known in the 19th and 20th centuries. With the rare exception of William Ritchie’s destruction of the ancient Abenaki glacial kame burial ground at Isle La Mott and Moorehead’s looting forays in New Hampshire and Maine, few people in the looting networks had a clue that the same potential was part of this region’s past. This came in very handy when the New England Antiquities Research Association (NEARA) was born and fixed their sights on several upland stone sites in southern and central New England and even in Vermont, New Hampshire, and southern Quebec. NEARA is an organization of serious scholars, looters, treasure hunters, and local historians, and the Abenaki Nation coalition has watched with concern as some of their members encouraged solstice ceremonies and other inappropriate uses of these ancient sites. When

Byron Dix and Jim Mavor led a team which extensively excavated one site in the White River watershed, the Abenaki finally demanded that these kinds of looting expeditions stop (Dix and Mavor 1989). Giovanna Peebles (Neudorfer 1980) had published a study suggesting that all of this stonework was colonial or early Vermont 'root cellars' and other recent stone work. It had the effect of putting off the 'gold rush' to excavate and exploit these sites on private land. The National Geographic Society had even briefly funded a dig at one stone chamber in Vermont but quickly withdrew when the data gathered was only suggestive of recent non-Native occupation of the site. In the meantime, some elements of NEARA woke up to the need to protect and quietly document these sites despite the best efforts of others to find the 'lost plates of Joseph Smith' and other loot. To the credit of Dix, Mavor, and many other NEARA members they complied with stopping the physical looting of the sites though several had already come to the attention of the wider world and have been subject to a wide array of intrusive activities and some surface looting. Many members of NEARA are working with the Abenaki Nation coalition and other Native Nations, leaders, and elders, to protect stone sites in New England. The West Hill Cairn site was ostensibly 'discovered' by a NEARA member. Unfortunately, the redirection of non-Native attention to these sacred sites could only last so long given that these places are a pervasive presence in eastern North America from the Gulf Coast to Labrador. Thankfully many of these sites are still protected by a network of families and communities throughout the homelands.

In the 1980s, an archeologist working on Highgate ancient Abenaki sites found many piles of stones associated with this upland base camp and said "we throw them all in the river" (Moody, J. 1974–Present). Stone piles and other non-artifact materials are routinely not noted and are discarded in archeological digs. In 2009, Robert Goodby was researching a major ancient (paleo) site in Keene, New Hampshire, destined to be destroyed by the construction of a new school. The research crew identified a pile of rocks outside the living areas of the site with no obvious human agency involved, but they decided to document and conserve the pile. Later they circulated an inquiry to several colleagues and members of the Abenaki Nation coalition to help them think through the purpose of these stones. We are at the beginning of a new era of research and understanding which can only be fulfilled if we are all at the table discussing the many questions and concerns before us.

In the course of the research on many upland and lowland stone sites in Abenaki country and the northeast the simple truth is, thus far, every single mountain, mountain pass, ridgeline, and boulder field researched has extensive signs of human occupation, sacred, and traditional sites. Five, ten, fifteen, or more thousand years is a very long time, and the archeological models and historic myths that predict very little Native history or use of the upland areas are simply ignorant.

A great deal of anger and sadness has been generated in traditional Abenaki and indigenous community networks in the Abenaki homeland with the blasting of ridgelines for the new wind projects in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Though some state and federal officials are aware of these concerns there has been no concerted effort to include the Abenaki in the process of deciding the fate of these ridgelines and mountains. This crisis in the Green Mountain National Forest, which includes an expansion of the first large scale, industrial wind project in the Deerfield River watershed in southern Vermont, has not yielded even the first communication from those in positions of responsibility to carefully and thoroughly evaluate the destruction of sacred and traditional sites in these areas. This level of development in the mountains of the region is reminiscent of the Green Mountain Parkway New Deal plan of the 1930s and the many mountain top resorts and developments of the 19th and early 20th centuries. It is unconscionable and tragic that the very people who can guide this research and protect the sites are being excluded from the process.

Research Areas and Topics

Oral tradition, language, linguistics, botany, ethnobotany, demography, geology, climatology, ethnohistory, cultural anthropology, archaeology, and indigenous traditional site evaluation methods must all be integrated into a thorough, interdisciplinary approach to the many questions of indigenous antiquity, identity, location, demography, and site protection. In conclusion, then, it is not, nor will it ever be, what is dug up that tells the story, or answers the questions of Abenaki and indigenous antiquity, identity, or sanctity. It is the language and knowledge of those who have survived the horrific genocide of the last 500 years to this time, and it is those children and grandchildren of these ancient traditions, who will ultimately tell, when we are all ready to listen, about the ancient story of this place and this continent. It is particularly in the *wawasiwi* (sacred life) of the *Alnôbak* and the many Native Nations from

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N'dakinna to the 'back door' in *Nunavut* and *Denedah* in Alaska and the Northwest Coast, to the peoples of *Dinédah*, the Navajo and Hopi Nations, to the *Mixteca/Nahautl* (Aztec), Mayan, Quechuan, and many other surviving indigenous peoples and traditions whose ancient knowledge systems, indigenous to this continent, remember much of what has happened, and the antiquity of their own traditions, and the answers to the many questions of human origins and indigenous life in the Americas.

Abenaki agriculture has roots in the Pleistocene before the glaciers retreated north. There are still Abenaki grandmothers and grandfathers who are spreading their nut orchards using the same methods the blue jays, squirrels, and chipmunks have used which probably accounts for the rapid recovery of the hardwood, nut bearing forests after the glaciers receded. Suffice it to say, it is a much more ancient and complex story than any of us in the disciplines of anthropology, linguistics, or archeology ever guessed until very recent years. We are in a new era of investigation. Is it a valid method of inquiry to suppose that the Abenaki, Pocumtuc and other oral traditions of giant beavers or mammoths reflect the antiquity of their linguistic roots in this place? Absolutely. In fact, this author would maintain, this approach is the only way to enliven and illuminate the living past as more than stone, bones, and charcoal. It must be understood that it is not, ultimately, going to be about digging sites! The surviving burial grounds and sites are the living libraries of this knowledge. These places must be protected and conserved in perpetuity to be of any real use to our complete knowledge, total understanding of these issues of antiquity and the origins of human life here. Digging them up only destroys them, continues the genocide, and drives the tradition keepers and those who know away. We must understand that this search for understanding the roots of human life here in the Americas cannot be a digging operation, that this is not a matter of saving anything, or preserving something in specimen jars or on dusty museum shelves. These are living, vibrant knowledge systems which we may have access to only when we learn to respect, and protect, the ancient burial grounds and sites, and to support the survival of the ancient, indigenous languages, and the Native families and communities which transmit this knowledge.

Dale Gephardt, MD, ethnobotanist and student of herbal medicine, and Gordon Day, among many others, asked the author in the mid-1970s if there was anything to be learned from the oral traditions of the surviving Abenaki in the 1970s and 1980s. Gephardt wondered if

there was any surviving herbal medical knowledge, and Day wondered if any linguistically intact oral traditions could be found outside of Odanak. The answer is an unequivocal and overwhelming 'Yes.' The field notes of many ethnohistorians and the growing number of Abenaki scholars are bursting with data which completely rewrites virtually every aspect of Abenaki history. Yet, there is a major problem!

What has been stolen and torn from the ancient Abenaki and other libraries of knowledge is, in truth, a major *impediment* to the trusted expansion of our collective knowledge of the ancient peoples of this continent. It creates a deep mistrust in all aspects of the contemporary methods of learning that concentrate (unnecessarily) knowledge and artifacts in universities and museums where, for instance, as recently as three years ago, the grave good of a 15th-century Abenaki burial was used, again, as the key image of a Vermont museum exhibit. Researchers held back on the repatriation of Abenaki grave goods and remains which were then used in scientific studies without Abenaki permission. These burials and sacred items must be properly taken care of while still in scholarly or museum curator hands, and returned to the Native Nations from which they were stolen. The temporary conservatories of these burials and artifacts must be maintained in an appropriate way with full Native partnership and control of the effort. There are currently many Abenaki burials, thousands of grave goods, and many sacred objects of cultural patrimony awaiting repatriation in New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Quebec, and Washington, D.C.

The entire site protection and repatriation process has consumed our lives in Vermont and indigenous America for a generation now and we have just begun the effort. That and the endless cycle of argument about Abenaki identity in Vermont has consumed a generation of time and effort when illumination of the answers to many, key questions could have been forthcoming. We owe the Abenaki people and the missing burials the same consideration we give our MIAs from any war: a careful and respectful recovery and reburial.

Gordon Day did not 'discover' the western Abenaki language in the 1950s, it had always been here. He was just the first non-Native ethnohistorian to be listening. The ancient, dispersed, familial and tribal, largely oral way of maintaining this knowledge on the ground with the sacred sites, the graves of the ancestors, and the ecology and environment intact is the key to understanding the past in this place. Most of that knowledge is intact either in the ground of *N'dakinna* or in the

kamigwesoak (Abenaki family) knowledge systems to this day.

Furthermore, we now have solid proof regarding the *Alnôbak* or western Abenaki that there were not just 300 or 400 speakers of *Alnôbaiwi* in the 1830 to 1850 period centered at Odanak. There were at least 2,000 fluent speakers living then at Sartigan, Pigwacket, Missisquoi, *Koasek*, Penacook, *Nongunquit*, and *Sokwakik*. Their relations were still living in every town and village in the old homeland. They were living outside *N'dakinna* at Saratoga, Lake George, and Sacandoga, at Seneca, Onondaga, and Akwesasne, in many southern New England enclaves, and countless other places in North America. They survived and continued to teach their children and grandchildren the traditions and ancient knowledge as they still do today.

Blackie Lampman told the author and Joe Bruchac before his death that "We have always been here, and we will always be here." We dedicate this article to the many Native elders knowing that their primary hope is that our wish to understand their culture, and these issues, must be answered *without* further destruction of their ancient traditions and cultures, sites and sacred places which hold the knowledge we seek.

Conclusion

Finally, over 500 years after the beginning of the European onslaught in the Americas, an awareness is growing in Western Civilization that there is something out there which links not only 'all creatures great and small' but also 'gaia': the whole earth. These notions permeate our cultural world and the popular imagination from the 'force' of *Star Wars* to the magical worlds that *Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*, and *Avatar*, Rousseau, Thoreau, and countless other 18th- and 19th-century Euro-American romantics sought with Native guides. John Muir, Theodore Roosevelt, and many others left the Indians out of the picture to begin the mountain and wilderness conservation efforts. Yet from the time of Charles Eastman and the founding of the Boy Scouts down to the iconic image of a tearful, and silent, Iron Eyes Cody on psa's to stop littering in the 1990s, indigenous people have been part of the inspiration for that Euro-American 'discovery' of the wilderness and environment as a gift.

In the realm of the Northern Forest from the Adirondacks to Maine, Will Monroe caught the feeling when he devoted his life to protect and conserve Camel's Hump as did his 19th-century predecessor Joseph Battell, Theodore Roosevelt in the creation of the Adirondack

Park, and many others in the founding of the White Mountain and Green Mountain National Forests, protection of Mount Katahdin, and other early efforts. Today that movement among non-Native peoples has begun to approach an understanding of the proper questions to ask, if not the implications of the answers. The comments in 1992 of Laura and Guy Waterman, the authors of *Forest and Crag: A History of Hiking, Trail Blazing and Adventure in the Northeast Mountains* to Deny Obomsawin, Jeanne Brink, the author, and others to say they thought it was time to take everything off of the sacred mountains of *N'dakinna* are a start. Imagining that Penobscot guide dispersing the stones of the cairns again in 1837: a matter of respect.

This ecological and sacred site awakening is incomplete. This crisis underscores the levels of ignorance, confusion, and lack of communication which permeates the present process in the north country. Can we imagine that the closing of the Green Mountains and much of central and southern Vermont east of the ridgeline in September 2011 held a sacred purpose as well as being a natural catastrophe? Was this a stark warning of the cost of threatening or destroying sacred sites linked to the balance of life? Certainly there are many in Abenaki and other northeastern Native communities who are speaking about the Tropical Storm Irene catastrophe in those terms. Doug Harris of Narragansett has been carrying that message to NEARA and other local, state, and federal agencies over the last period of time: each stone of a cairn, each sacred site, is created with a prayer. Move the stone, desecrate the site, break the prayer, and the balance of life is affected. The ultimate result, he suggested, is exemplified by the mass extinctions of 65 million years ago. There are many such warnings being issued by traditional elders of indigenous people worldwide these days.

It is empirically obvious that something has happened when the head of the Green Mountain National Forest has been forced to issue a closure order for the entire forest after the floods. This is the same person who unilaterally decided who would and would not be invited into the site evaluation process to decide the future of the West Hill Cairn field and other Abenaki sacred sites. The Abenaki have struggled with the issue of closing access to several sacred sites for many years. The irony of greater forces pushing the forest supervisor to shut the forest down begs the question: *Who is in charge? Who owns these ancient places? Who speaks for these sites? Who will be included in the process to protect and conserve these sacred places?*

An Overview of Abenaki and Indigenous Peoples

In 2005, the *Burlington Free Press* editors published a moving preservationist editorial concerning sacred Civil War battlefields in the south which have been threatened by development entitled “The Ghosts will Know” (*Burlington Free Press* 2005). They were quoting Howard Coffin’s comments to the National Park Service about including the proper image of ‘Old Camel’s Hump’ on a monument to fallen Vermont soldiers: “The Vermonters and the ghosts will know”. Regardless of what we newcomers have said or done here in the Americas, we are bound by the best understandings of UNDRIP and all the conventions of law and custom, and especially by our own, clear knowledge and conscience, to know and honor that we live in the very ancient homelands of the Abenaki and other indigenous peoples. The history, the burial grounds, and the sacred and historic sites of the people are everywhere here. This tradition is 99 % of the history and historic sites in this land despite the seeming predominance of we newcomers in the last 200 years. It is critical for us all to respect and care for these places in a focused collaboration with the Abenaki Nation coalition and the Abenaki people.

Fundamentally, though, do we have a choice whether to collaboratively care for these places regardless of how they are described or understood? The Green Mountain Forest Archeologist said at a meeting that they were trying to determine if the West Hill Cairn site was a burial ground deserving of constant protection or just another example of Yankee self-expression. He has been told countless times: it is a sacred site. First and last, from an archeological, historical, conservation, or traditional indigenous perspective: *do no harm!* We are suggesting that a full sacred and traditional site assessment of all indigenous sites in the GMNF be collaboratively and confidentially done in cooperation with all parties in the next period of time. That effort has already been completed in the case of the West Hill Cairns but the current administration of the GMNF has thus far refused to accept the results. In the meantime it is essential to agree that no ground disturbing activity will occur at these sites. Many of us who have been doing this work for decades believe it is inevitable that the newcomers will wake up and cooperate to collectively protect and conserve these ancient sites, the ecologies, and land as well. We certainly hope that now is the time to work together to accomplish this.

(Continued on Page 76)

Appendix 1

**1982 Vermont Governor's Conference on the Future of Vermont's Heritage.
Resolution # 19: Native American Legacy**

Resolution adopted at the Governor's Conference on the Future of Vermont's Heritage
page 4
November 19-20, 1982
Pavillion Building
Montpelier, Vermont

Resolution # 19: Improving the Record of Human Experience in Vermont

6. Native American History and Culture in Vermont

Whereas documentation, preservation, acknowledgement and public awareness of the vast Native American contribution to Vermont's past and present identity and heritage is the least known of the major aspects of Vermont's ancient and modern history; and whereas places sacred to Native Americans are being desecrated, and people are unearthing historic Indian and pre-contact Indian burial grounds:

BE IT RESOLVED that the delegates call upon all agencies, centers, historical societies, museums, academic departments, and individuals engaged in active local and regional research, collection, preservation, public education, and publication in Vermont history and culture, ancient and modern, to take action as follows:

- A. To engage in a bibliographic and preservationist survey of Vermont's Native American history and culture to serve as a baseline for further research as well as an overview of existing collections, data, publications, and resources available in the region.
 - B. To support and integrate information about the existing collections in the region including the Abenaki Identity Project of the Museum of Man, the Abenaki Research Project, the Vermont Folklife Project, the Vermont Historical Society 'Indian' files, the State Survey of Archaeological Sites, the Dartmouth Gordon Day Collection, and UVM Collections.
 - C. To broadly encourage research, collection, cataloging, education, preservation and publication of Native American history and culture in Vermont from the earliest times of inhabitation in all periods down to the present day; and to research, document and acknowledge publically at all levels of education and public life the many Native American contributions to the traditions, identity, science, medicine, technology and lifestyle of Vermont's people as well as their continued presence in the State down to modern times.
 - D. Additionally: All museums, historical societies, academic departments, organizations, or individuals who now own or may encounter either Indian remains or sacred places should
 - 1) recognize through research and protect by choice ancient and contemporary sacred places, especially burial grounds, and sites of major significance to Vermont's Indians;
 - 2) avoid unless absolutely necessary any development or archaeological digging in such places, and if a site must be worked, or has already been worked, and sacred objects or burials exhumed, to arrange with Native American cooperation a proper reburial at a suitable place with suitable preservation of the site.
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Appendices

Appendix 1: 1982 Vermont Governor's Conference on the Future of Vermont's Heritage. Resolution #19: Native American Legacy.

Appendix 2: United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples September, 2007. (<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/GEN/N06/512/07/PDF/N0651207.pdf?OpenElement>).

Appendix 3: Abenaki elders and leaders consensus about burials, sacred and traditional sites, historic sites, repatriation, and curation best practices. (See page 60; available from author.)

Appendix 4: David Lacy and Donna Roberts Moody 2007 Poster *Green Mountain Stewardship: One Landscape, Multiple Legacies*. (Available from author of this article.)

Appendix 5: Abenaki Nation coalition, GMNF, and others on Proposed West Hill Cairns Archaeological Dig in October, 2010. (Available from author.)

Appendix 6: Donna Roberts Moody and John Moody, April 21, 2007, *Sacred and Traditional Site Studies: An Overview*. (Available from author.)

Appendix 7: John Moody 2010 *Abenaki in Northeast Chronology* and 1978 Map of Northeastern Native Homelands @ 1600 from *Handbook of Indians North of Mexico*. (Available from author.)

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