Mind Prints, Arrowheads, the Indians & Thoreau

Duncan Caldwell

This essay corresponds to the culminating lecture of a symposium entitled "Uses and Abuses of Thoreau at 200" held at the Department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion of the University of Gothenburg, in Sweden, on May 4, 2018[1]

This presentation will move from an examination of Thoreau's relationship with prehistoric artifacts to a demonstration of the ways that collecting them affected his relationship with the natural world, time, and Native Americans. I hope to show that artifact hunting – or "arrowheading" as Thoreau called it - changed his thinking so radically that he moved from seeing the "American Race" as being doomed to seeing it as enduring. More importantly, this essay will show that he died with a cry against the persecution of Native Americans on his lips. Those words would have taken the form of a book in one-to-three volumes that he was planning to write about "arrowheading," but which would have been as limited to the subject of artifacts as Walden was to describing a pond. Luckily, he left enough journal entries and other texts to reconstruct both the ways arrowheading altered his thinking and the scope of the book, which would have become a monument that would have changed how Thoreau is perceived today.

I – The why and how of Thoreau's arrowheading

In the beginning, when Henry and his older brother, John, were growing up, artifact collecting was just another pastime. Here's an example of him being playful as a puppy, actually scampering around and sniffing a box full of prehistoric artifacts sent by John, as he pretended that there was something so "fishy" about it that it must contain herrings: "Taunton herrings Just nose it sir. …we went down on our knees and commenced smelling in good earnest… Taunton herring would not be smelled… The relics [of Pandora's box] have been arranged numerically on a table" (Concord, March 17, 1838). For all his highjinks, Henry's first inclination upon unwrapping the gifts was to put them in order, taking a step towards understanding them. His study of arrowheads had begun.

One evening in September 1837, after hunting for artifacts all day with John, Henry was so inspired by their finds and the notion that the two of them might be watching the sunset from the same vantage point as the artifacts' makers that he launched into a panegyric about their predecessors that typified arrowheading's role for him when it was still part of "playing Indian" and horsing around. He described the incident a month later:

> "'Here,' I exclaimed, 'stood Tahatawan; and there, (to complete the period), is Tahatawan's arrowhead.'… and I, to carry out the joke, to lay bare an ordinary stone, which my whim had selected, when lo! The first I laid hands on, the grubbing stone that was to be, proved a most perfect arrowhead, as sharp as if just from the hands of the Indian fabricator!!!" (10/22/37, J1, pp. 8-9).[2]

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[1] The lecture was requested and vetted by Henrik Otterberg, who organized the international by-invitation symposium of Thoreau scholars. Kristen Case (Univerisity of Maine), Rochelle Johnson (University of Idaho) and Mr. Otterberg were also kind enough to read the essay afterwards and write a joint review.

[2] Here is a longer version of the quote : "'There on Nawshawtuct,' said I, 'was their lodge, the rendezvous of the tribe, and yonder, on Clamshell hill their feasting ground. This was no doubt a favorite haunt; here on this brow [overlooking the river] was an eligible look-out post. How often have they stood on this very spot at this very hour, when the sun was… gilding with his last rays the waters of the Musketaquid, and pondered the day's success and the morrow's prospects, or communed with the spirits of their fathers gone

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With three exclamation marks to emphasize the point, he'd made contact.

The improbability of laying his hands on a real arrowhead – let alone a fine one - after his prediction made Thoreau feel like he'd both cast and fallen under a spell - a spell he would strive to maintain for the rest of his life. Although he'd just been playing around, he suddenly felt that a Native American had planted hard proof of his reality not only in his palm, but his mind. That unknown person – *those unknown people* – were suddenly Thoreau's correspondents across time.

From then on, that realization made it increasingly difficult for him to see Native Americans as playthings, stereotypes, or abstractions from the past. Their artifacts became one of the keys that kept opening the material world's doors for Thoreau, inspiring riffs of cascading perceptions into the fractal implications of sights and incidents that others took for granted. In its own way, finding that arrowhead presented him with as hard and lithic a fact as scaling Mount Katahdin, where he would be thunderstruck with a sense of his shared materiality with a universe that transcended humanity's timescales and conceits of order (Hoag, 1982). These were his two Promethean moments.

Companionship amidst solitude:
One reason Thoreau became so passionate about looking for more artifacts after that was because they were a reminder that the landscape had been peopled by others – including his arrowheading companion, John, who suddenly died of tetanus. As this moment of serendipitous or preternatural contact had taught Henry, those who had vanished had been just as vivid and substantial in their time as he was in his. The artifacts seeded around him were like time warps that provided him with a sense of companionship when he seemed most solitary. He repeatedly expresses his delight in knowing that beings have preceded him, musing, for example, that "I tread in the tracks of the Indian… In planting my corn in the same furrow" (3/19/42), and "I have found an arrowhead or two" in partridge dust baths and am "pleased to find that I have been preceded by any creature" (7/21/56). I love the fact that he found both signs of another's presence in the same place - a human's arrowhead in a bird's dust bath.

Although the vicarious presence of past inhabitants might seem like thin consolation, it meant that Thoreau had companions whose existence he had to divine just as hard as when he grieved. This divining commingled with grief was one of the forces behind his increasingly passionate quest to deepen this contact both with his artifacts' makers and their living descendants.

Entering the native mindset by reading landscapes:
Thoreau did everything he could to expand on his moment of contact. One way was by deducing how ancient Americans had interacted with the landscape, which in turn improved his ability to find more artifacts. He concluded that the narrow meandering shelves around "all our ponds" were paths "worn by the feet of Indian hunters" (11/9/52, J5, 393-394), and realized he could find more artifacts on sandy mounds, rather than surrounding flood plains, and among pitch pines, but not among swamp maples or in hilly oak forests (11/26/60). As he learned how to read landscapes

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before them to the land of shades!-- 'Here,' I exclaimed, 'stood Tahatawan; and there, (to complete the period), is Tahatawan's arrowhead.'… and I, to carry out the joke, to lay bare an ordinary stone, which my whim had selected, when lo! The first I laid hands on, the grubbing stone that was to be, proved a most perfect arrowhead, as sharp as if just from the hands of the Indian fabricator!!!" (10/22/37, J1, pp. 8-9).

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backwards and from a different economic and cultural perspective, he not only became a more efficient artifact hunter, but also realized how a "vanished" people had lived in equilibrium with their surroundings in the way he aspired to.

Becoming clairvoyant:
As Thoreau honed his ability to find artifacts, his sense of becoming preternaturally connected with America's natives increased as well. At the beginning of the 1840s, he recorded that "We had pitched our camp upon the very spot which a few summers before had been oc[c]upied by a roving party of Penobscots – as if we had been led by an Indian instinct" (1842-1844: J2 pp. 56-57). By 1851, he had become so good at finding ancient sites that he said, "I have frequently distinguished these localities [from] half a mile [away] – gone forward & picked up arrowheads" (2/13/1851, J3, p. 191). A decade later, he was so sure that his success was due to more than analysis and serendipity that he felt he had become clairvoyant: "I had expected to find as much as this – & in this very spot too before I reached it…. Indeed I never find a remarkable Ind[ian] relic, and I find a good many, but I have first divined its existence, & planned the discovery of it" (8/22/60). In other words, he'd managed to sustain the spell he had fallen under when he'd found Tahatawan's arrowhead and broken through time.

The voluptuous landscape:
After finding that point, Thoreau threw himself with such passion into the search for more artifacts and for anyone - including their makers' descendants - who might help him grasp their significance that his reasons for "arrowheading" expanded in tandem with a growing awareness of the artifacts' implications. As a person who has sought them as long as Thoreau did, I can attest to the fact that an ardent prospector tends to remember the exact spot where an artifact was found for years - constellating seemingly featureless expanses with invisible landmarks that only the finder can identify, often for the rest of his life. Even before Thoreau became a surveyor, all the places where he'd discovered artifacts were "peopled" with his finds' former homes. He could revisit the locations where he'd found old friends – here a serrated point perched on an earthen pedestal by rain, and, there, a stone gouge, which he'd drawn from the soil like a blade - in the midst of seeming nowhere. As a consequence of finding more and more artifacts, especially after he became better at "divining" where they were, the land gained so many historic, cultural, and personal associations that it became as sensual to him as a lover's body. The very ground beneath his feet became pregnant with both memories and possibilities.

This makes some of his descriptions of arrowheading sound like love letters. The water rising "with swelling lip," for example, "kisses … Indian isles & promontories" (3/23/59) while "Myriads of arrow points lie sleeping in the skin of the revolving earth… the mind print of the oldest men" (3/28/59). When Thoreau speaks of places that have become so familiar to him because of his perpetual search for artifacts, his language falls into patterns that amount to a caress. Again and again, he speaks, for example, of the earth and its artifacts in terms of a polarity between "russet" and "green".

- "Now is the season to look for Indian relics… the *greenish* hill … the *green* pines … the same barren *russet*" (3/12/1854, J8, p. 40)
- "… the *russet* earth! … cleansed surfaces… Now look for an early crop of arrowheads – for they will shine…." (2/21/55)
- "I begin to dream of a *russet* fairy-land & elysium. How dark & terrene must be *green* – but this smooth *russet* surface reflects almost all the light…. It's fine *russet*

> sward – firm & soft as velvet – … all the undulations of the earth its nerves & muscles…. Dry land for the Indian's wig wam… & still strewn with his arrowheads…. At this season when the *russet* colors prevail--the contrast of water & land is more agreeable to behold-- … What an inexpressibly soft curving line is the shore…. If I imagine the fairest earth I can it is still *russet*" (3/23/59).

Behind Thoreau's *russet* caress is a sense that he is a temporal explorer with his eye acting as a prism splitting the present constantly into its two components as if he were balanced between the world's past and future – or, as he would have it, its *russet* history and *green* destiny. "Nature," he muses, "has her *russet* hues as well as *green*. Indeed our eye splits on every object… If I consider its history it is old – if its destiny it is new" (3/19/42).[3]

More words linked with arrowheads:
Thoreau's positive associations with arrowheading come through in other repetitions as well. For example, he describes artifacts repeatedly in terms of purity, radiance, and crops.

- "Indian relics *shining* [again my italics] on them" – referring to fields around Concord (4/2/1852, J4, p. 422)
- "… arrowheads … washed *bright* in the rain" (4/19/1852, J4, p. 471)
- "No disgusting mummy – but a *clean* stone – the best symbol or letter that could have been transmitted to me – The Red Man – his mark!" (3/28/59)

In 1859, Thoreau wrote, "I spend many hours every spring gathering the *crop*" of arrowheads "sown like a grain that is slow to germinate… Like the dragons teeth which bore a *crop* of soldiers – these bear *crops* of philosophers & facts – & the same seed is just as good to plant again. It is stone fruit. Each one yields a thought. I come nearer to the maker of it than if I found his bones… It is humanity inscribed on the face of the earth" (3/28/59). Speaking of the Gold Rush (and his decision not to join it), Thoreau compared his artifacts with the shiny nuggets luring men from New England, and then suggested that his beloved arrowheads are just as wonderful: "I am the first to gather a *crop* [of artifacts]…. Somewhat as gold is washed in a dish" (3/28/59). "I feel no desire to go to California or Pikes Peak – but I often think at night with inexpressible satisfaction & yearning – of the arrowheadiferous sands of Concord. …This is the gold which our sands yield" (5/2/59) – even, it should be pointed out, on the edge of sleep.

The links in his mind between the bright crop of artifacts in fields rinsed by rain takes on added significance when we consider how Thoreau might have been imprinted by arrowheading - as I was - during his childhood. I have moments of *déjà vu* when the sun glints off rain-washed stones that bring back an instant when I was searching for flints at six and suddenly awoke to the world. I was surrounded by shiny gifts that held secret stories. If Thoreau was imprinted in the same way, each new find would have been just as effective as Proust's cookie in reconnecting him with the thrill of awakening.

The way that "poring over the earth" affected Thoreau's seeing:
As Thoreau fleshed out landscapes by reading them backwards and filling them with associations, the artifact hunting that he almost certainly associated with some of his first moments of awe made him feel rejuvenated. His journals are full of passages that amount to an arrowheader's manifesto. "Indian relics … are evidence of the vital energy" of their makers, he wrote at the beginning of the 1840s (1842-1844: J2, p. 3), and they would revitalize him for the rest of his life. "I go in search of arrowheads," he

[3] Variant: Three Ales vs. Three Greens (4/2/1852, J4, p. 416)

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declared towards the end of it, "So I help myself to live worthily – & loving my life as I should – It is a good collyrium to look on the bare earth – to pore over it so much – getting strength to all your senses" (3/28/59). No matter how many artifacts Thoreau found – and he probably found more than the 990 catalogued at Fruitlands and Harvard's Peabody Museum – "the last one," he wrote in 1859, "gives me about the same delight that the first one did" (3/28/59).

The way Thoreau "pored over the earth" in search of artifacts became such a tonic and habit of mind that it probably informed the way he looked at the rest of the world too. He spent so much time perfecting his ability to find them that he must have developed a highly efficient "scan pattern." This means he had to unite two types of seeing in a sort of yogic balance – looking simultaneously for the predictable and unpredictable. The first came in the form of clues (like the conchoidal fractures made by knapping and preferred rock types of prehistoric tool makers), which he had to pick out from thousands of random details when they were partially buried, and the second came in the form of anomalies, since they often lead to greater finds (eg. 6/22/60). One might ask if developing such a balance between concentration and open-mindedness from childhood onward inadvertently influenced the way Thoreau came to view the rest of the world. Here is how his friend, William Ellery Channing, described his gaze on the river for example: "Even in the boat he had a wary, transitory air, his eyes on the outlook…." – his eyes constantly shifting and re-focusing, sifting through the world's novelties and clues in a dance of consciousness.

Durability and the trail of mind:
Although we've looked at several of Thoreau's reasons for "arrowheading," we haven't looked at the one which made "Tahatawan's" point such a compelling fact in his hand: its sheer concreteness and durability. Thoreau treasured his finds because they could outlast almost everything else. As he wrote, "…the arrowhead shall perhaps never cease to wing its way through the ages to eternity" (3/28/59). His reading of Charles Lyell's Principles of Geology in 1840 and his intuition that some arrowheads were incredibly old would ultimately make Thoreau so receptive to the notion of time stretching millions of years beyond the Bible's time scale that he mentioned Darwin's ideas in Walden[4] and became one of the first readers of The Origin of Species in America (Fuller 2017).

The sheer durability of American arrowheads also allowed him to insist upon the equivalency or even primacy of his surroundings over the cultural and temporal claims of the Old World. Here we see the American intellectual pioneer defiantly staking a foundational claim for self-respect. "When… the British Museum &…winged bulls of Nineveh shall have lost most if not all their features – the arrowheads which the museum contains will perhaps find themselves at home again in familiar dust & resume their" – and I underline the next word, because we have seen it before in relationship to arrowheads – "shining…. These are our antiquities" – *our antiquities, New England's antiquities, America's antiquities* – "& they are cleaner" – there's that word too – "to think of than the rubbish of the Tower of London" (all 3/28/59).

America's prehistoric artifacts were so durable that they even "equal(ed) or excel(ed)" "Classical" antiquities, which were often held up as proof that European cultures were built on the most sophisticated civilizations of the ancient world, and therefore were more advanced. "Such are our antiquities," Thoreau asserted in what amounts to an archaeologist's declaration of American equality and independence. "Why then make so

[4] Pages 11 & 227 in the Aug. 1854 edition.

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great ado about the Roman & the Greek & neglect the Indian?... Here is a point still more significant at our doors… probably more ancient than any other - &… it has not been decyphered" (10/22/57). Here Thoreau asserts another reason why prehistoric artifacts fascinated him more than historic ones: they're story nuggets, which resist telling their tales.

What a challenge! "Every arrowhead was "a mind print [that is] … altogether illegible," he wrote. Mulling over their mysteries like prayer beads forced him to wrap his mind around dimensions and cultures that stretched his capacities further than any Mediterranean antiquity. "Time will soon destroy the works of famous painters & sculptors," he wrote, "but the Indian arrow head will balk his efforts…. They are… fossil thoughts – forever reminding me of the mind that shaped them…. I am on the trail of mind" (3/28/59). The enigmas implied by the almost imperishable signs of ancient people would lead Thoreau into undertaking one of the first systematic efforts to untangle their significance, both humbling him and making him one of America's most precocious multi-disciplinary anthropologists.

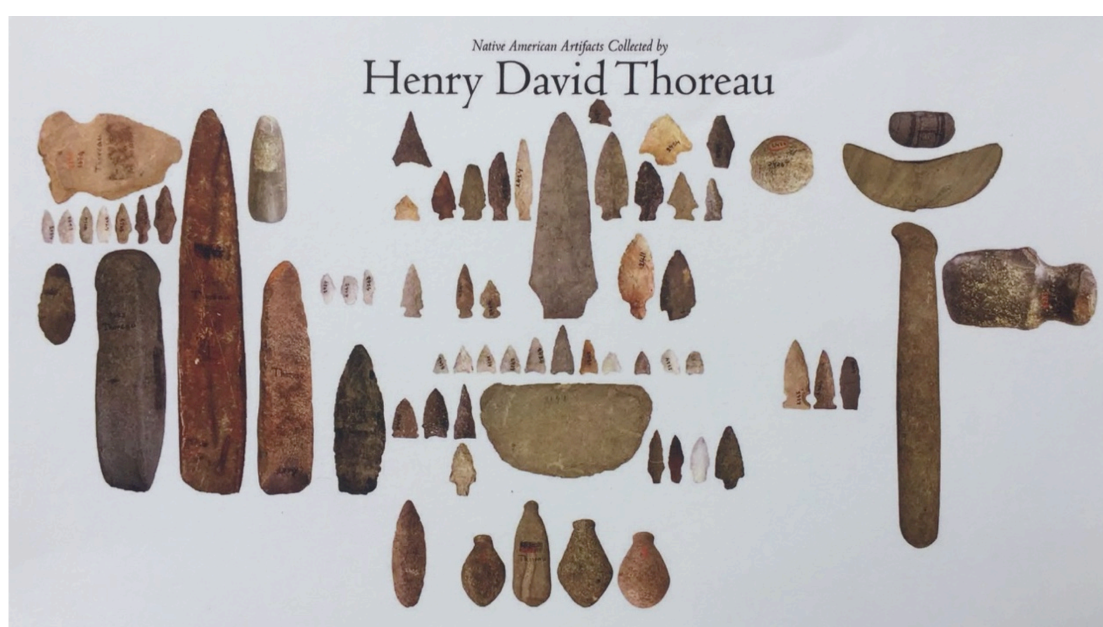

Fig. 1 - *The prehistoric artifacts in this illustration of pieces from Thoreau's collection are shown in the same scale. The dark grey point between the three long gouges at left and three small points to the right of the Archaic bannerstone, which forms a half circle, is a late Paleolithic lanceolate point and is probably the oldest artifact in the collection. This beautiful plate was created by the late Jeff Boudreau and is shown here courtesy of his widow, Elaine Courtney.*

II - The artifacts themselves

Before we trace Thoreau's changing attitudes concerning Native Americans, we must look at the artifacts that inspired his quest to amass as much information about their makers as he could. As we saw, Thoreau's first inclination upon opening the box of relics was to put them in numerical order. One of the reasons prehistorians can make distinctive contributions to understanding him is that he tried to make sense of such vestiges with all the means at his disposal, from applying science's methodology to seeking out living witnesses. Even his definition of prehistory still holds: "An era which

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can never have its history – which is older than the invention of history" (1842-1844: J2, pp. 58-60).

Thoreau applied himself to understanding New England's indigenous people and their past with the same empiricism *and* poetry that he brought to everything from recording the flowering times of plants to the behavior of animals. We've already seen how his analyses of prehistoric phenomena included the relationship between artifact locations and contours, elevations, flood levels, soil types, and weathering, but they extended to discussions of patination (7/24/1857), the conchoidal fractures left by knapping (1842-1844: J2, pp. 58-60 & 7/24/1857), and even the way some ancient sites were exposed by soil deflation.[5]

He was so dedicated to finding prehistoric sites that he discovered at least 19 just around Concord. Wouldn't it be wonderful if they were turned into a new way of retracing his footsteps? The itinerary would lead you to Dennis's Hill (10/8/1851, J4, pp. 132-134), the desert, the Ravine (8/22/60), Sawmill Brook, Peter's Path (8/12/56), an island up the Assabet (4/14/56), Charles Hubbard's farm (5/28/1853, J6, p. 156; 9/3/56), and sandy patches in the northeast part of the Great Fields by Beck Stow's Swamp (3/13/1853, J6, pp. 8-9; 3/13/59; 3/24/60; 6/22/60; 7/7/60).[6] It would also take you one fifth of a mile above Sherman's Bridge, to the brook beyond Daniel Clark Jr's house (1/31/1851, J6, pp. 8-9), to John Farmer's sand and Simon Brown's land (4/1/59), to the south edge of Holden Wood (4/30/59) and Tarbell's field near Ball's Hill (2/13/60), over to Conant's Indian rye-field and Clam Shell Hill by Fair Haven Bay (11/9/1853, J7, p. 152; 5/25/56; 7/5/57; 3/18/60), up to an elevated sandy point above Pole Brook, near the cliff by Lees Road (3/20/58), and then beyond Concord to a hill between that town and Billerac (12/2/1852, J5, p. 402), and even to Samuel Pierce's farm in Lincoln, Massachusetts (6/7/1852, J5, p. 81).

The richness of Thoreau's notes on his find locations also extends far beyond his hometown to places like Cape Cod and Mount Kineo in Maine, which he determined was the source of the stone used to make some of the arrowheads he'd found around his birthplace – a rhyolite he called Mount Kineo "hornstone" (7/24/1857). He also found

- A spherical grooved stone near Hooksett pinnacle on the Merrimack River (1842-1844, J2, pp. 58-60),
- A deeply grooved beach cobble one mile east of High Head and an arrowhead on the high bank in Truro on Cape Cod (J3, p. 34, between 10/15 & 10/28/1849),
- Arrowheads beside Sassa-Cowens Pond on the Taunton road in northern New Bedford (9/30/55),
- And shards and arrowheads on Old Fort Hill (Seminary Hill), 3 miles above Bangor, Maine (8/7/57).

If you ever wondered what Thoreau was doing while he was sauntering around New England, here is a large part of the answer: he was searching for the artifacts that gave him such solace, companionship, and food for thought.

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[5] "…the wind began to blow away the soil… until it was blown away to the depth of several feet… and the ground appeared strewed with the remains of an Indian village…" (1842-1844: J2, pp. 58-60).

[6] I'm afraid the latter part of the itinerary would require the installation of walkways to cross land that is now permanently flooded.

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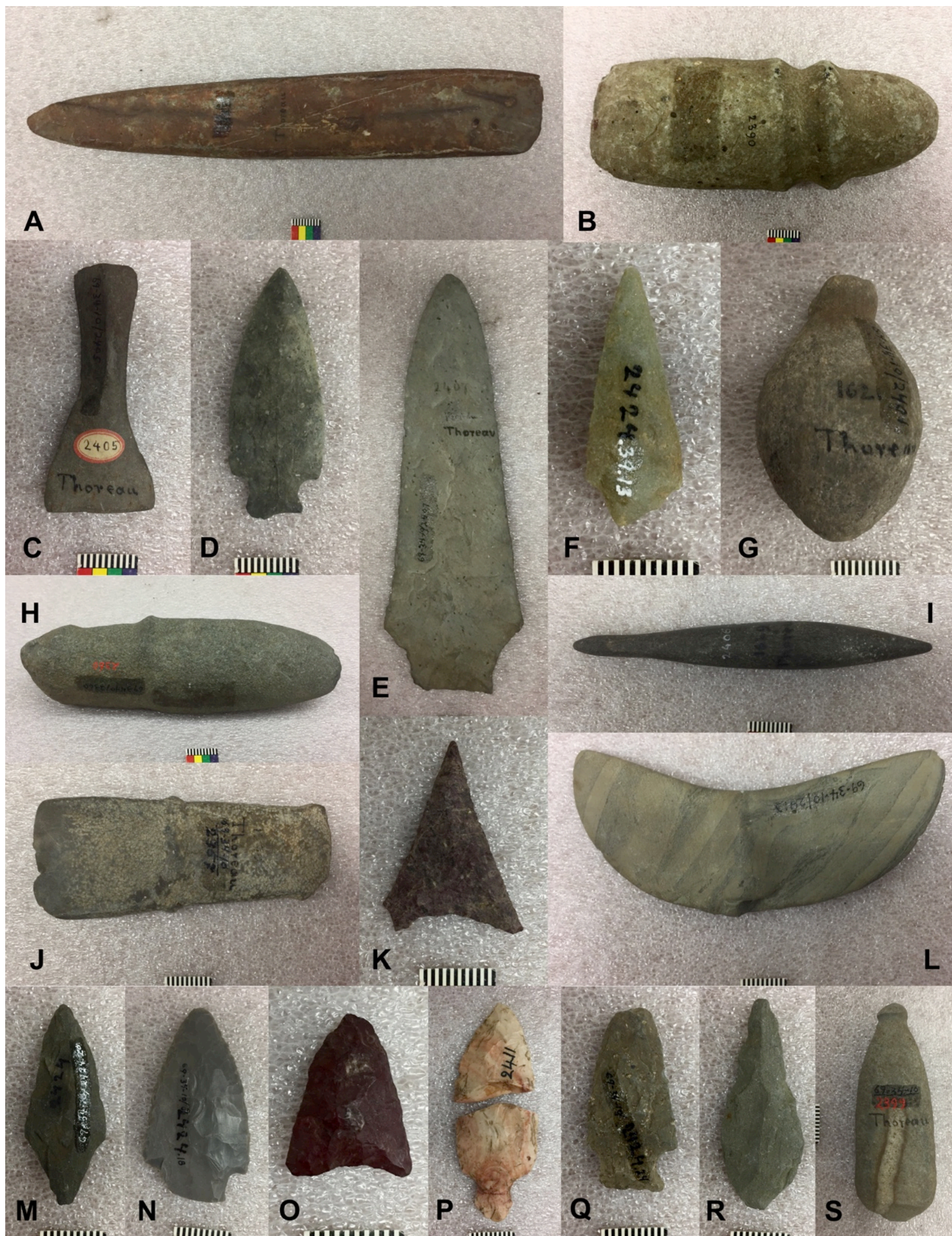

Fig. 2 - *A sampling from the 990 known prehistoric artifacts that Thoreau found with a 1 cm scale. All are in the Henry David Thoreau collection, at Harvard's Peabody Museum.*
A) A huge gouge. HDT coll. 69-34-10 ("69" stands for the acquisition year, 1869. "34" stands for the 34th acquisition of the year, which included the Thoreau collection. "10" stands for North America.), item 2353.
B) A grooved axe, Concord, Middlesex County, Mass. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2390
C) A slate tool that Thoreau called a "clam-shell opener" from the Ravine, Concord. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2405.
D) A projectile point made of Wakefield rhyolite. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2420.1.
E) A huge grey bifacial Mansion Inn blade-knife. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2407.
F) A green projectile point. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2424.39.13.
G) A grey plummet. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2401.

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H) A large gouge. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2360.
I) A fine elongated plummet. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2406.
J) A gouge. HDT coll. 69-34-10-2357, item 2357,
K) A Levanna projectile point made of local volcanic felsite. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2424.12
L) A whaletail bannerstone, which probably served as an atlatl counter weight. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2413.
M) A projectile point made of Barrington Argillite. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2424.20
N) A projectile point made of a Hudson Valley chert, probably Onandaga Chert. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2424.18.
O) A small reddish projectile point, apparently made of Munsungun chert. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2424.
P) A broken Harrison Turkeytail projectile point. The exotic flint was probably heat-treated. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2411.
Q) A Vosberg projectile point made of Wakefield rhyolite. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2424.24
R) A projectile point made of Barrington Argillite. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2424.22.
S) A green plummet. HDT coll. 69-34-10, item 2399 (All photos by the author)

The ages, materials, and oddities among Thoreau's finds:
Thoreau's finds (Figs. 1, 2) range from artifacts made by some of the first humans in New England to ones created around the time of European settlement. A late Paleolithic lanceolate point, which is about 10,000 to 10,500 years old, might be the oldest he collected (Fig. 1). Thoreau's other finds cover both the following period, the Archaic (from 9,000 to 3,000 years before present [BP]), and the Woodland Period (from 3,000 BP until European settlement).

The Archaic period is especially well represented in Thoreau's collection, suggesting that Concord and its surroundings were particularly rich (before they became suburban) in sites from that period. In rough chronological order, his finds from that time span include:
- A 9,000-8,000 BP, Taunton River Bifurcate,
- Several 8,000-5,000 BP bannerstones or atlatl weights (Figs. 1, 2L),
- A 5,200–4,500 BP Vosberg point (Fig. 2Q),
- A 4,150–3,650 BP re-worked Atlantic point,
- Several 5,000-3,000 BP gouges (Fig. 2A, H, J),
- And a 4,000-2,500 BP, Harrison Turkeytail projectile point related to the late Archaic-to-early Woodland Adena Cultural Complex (Fig. 2P).

Some of the highlights of Thoreau's younger finds are:
- A 6,000-2,000 BP middle-Archaic-to-early-Woodland Poplar Island point,
- A magnificent 3,700-2,700 BP late-Archaic-to-early-Woodland Mansion Inn blade (Fig. 2E),
- And a 1,300-600 BP late-Woodland-to-Mississippian Levanna point (Fig. 2K).

Thoreau's artifacts also cover a wide range of materials, including local volcanic felsite (Fig. 2K), Wakefield rhyolite (Fig. 2Q), Barrington argillite (Fig. 2 M, R), and Munsungun (Fig. 2O) and Hudson Valley cherts (Fig. 2N). Some of the finest artifacts in the collection, which are often traceable to specific spots, are made of more unusual stones. One is a slate tool Thoreau found at the Ravine in Concord (8/22/60) (Fig. 2C) and the other is the collection's shocker – a partial steatite (soapstone) bowl (Fig. 3), which Thoreau probably found on Simon Brown's land.

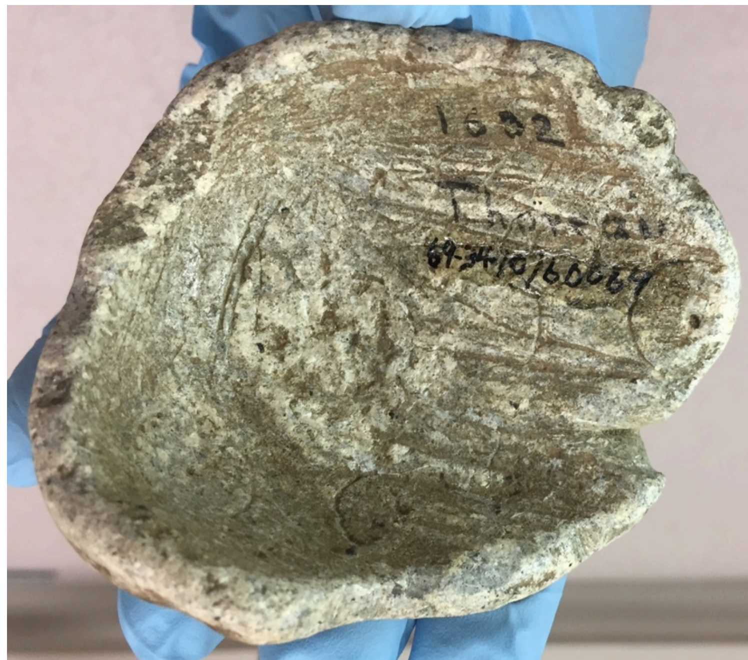

Fig. 3 - *A partial steatite (soapstone) bowl with circles around a central pit both inside and out. Each of these "motifs" was probably made with a compass or wood augur. It is likely that the person who made the markings with a metal tool was an early colonist, since they are identical to circular hex marks in early colonial buildings. It is also possible that they were made by Thoreau or a post-contact Native American, although such bowls are typical of the Late Archaic Period. (Photo by the author)*

The reason the bowl is so surprising is the dates for its markings and the bowl itself apparently don't match. Such steatite receptacles are ascribed to the Late Archaic Period of 2,500 to 3,500 years ago. Although the Adena culture of the middle Ohio watershed used nucleated circles to make the ball joints of fused avian and anthropomorphic beings double as eyes around 2,000 years ago (Caldwell 2015), the comparable graphic units on the bowl aren't found on any of the pre-contact steatite receptacles I've seen and don't serve a larger pattern. The strangest thing of all is that the identical radiuses and perfection of the circles suggest that they were made with a metal wood augur, or else a carefully manipulated compass or pair of scissors. If they were made with any of these instruments, they must have been made either intentionally (for decorative or symbolic reasons) or unintentionally (during the manufacturing process, which might have included the use of a bit to "hog out" stone) after Europeans introduced metallurgy.

Which begs the question: who could have made them after such technology was introduced? Or, rather, who had access to both the bowl and a modern carpenter's or surveyor's tools? Although a post-contact Native American might have made an anachronistic bowl or decorated an ancient one he'd found, the most likely possibility is that the circles were incised by an early European colonist or Thoreau. The reason I think a white settler made the circular motifs on an Archaic bowl, which had cropped up while he was plowing, is based on two observations. The first is that European farmers often thought that polished artifacts, which turned up in fields, had been formed by lightning (Gaudant 2007), leading them to bury polished stone axes, for example, under hearths and thresholds because of the belief that they would protect buildings from

being struck by bolts (and, by extension, other malignant forces) because lightning supposedly never struck the same place twice.[7]

The second one is that identical circles occur on the walls of such early colonial homes as the Fairbanks House in Dedham, which was built in 1637 (Fig. 4). Those single and double concentric circles with a central pit are typical of English apotropaic marks that formed a prophylactic "evil eye", which could guard against diabolical agents. It was one thing, though, for a 17th or early 18th century colonist to scratch anti-witching marks on a mantlepiece or doorjamb, where they are found in the Old World (and the Fairbanks House) and could intercept intruding witches, and another for him to scratch them on a field find.

Fig. 4 - *Examples of circular hex marks on the walls of the Fairbanks House in Dedham, which was built in 1637. People of European origin made such prophylactic "evil eyes" and other anti-witching marks for about a century after Contact. (Photo by the author)*

Their appearance here suggests that the Old World belief that polished stone tools were created by a malevolent force - lightning[8] - mutated in the New World, since European settlers actually saw people using such objects (Gaudant 2007). Although one might have

[7] They also dropped celts into wells in the belief that doing so would keep the water from becoming foul. This might have been based on the observation that stagnant water sometimes became drinkable after being hit by a bolt. It is noteworthy that the fouling of wells, with their attendant miasmas and contagion, was often ascribed to witchcraft in France at least until the 1970s (Favret-Saada, 1980), and that dropping prehistoric axes into such pits was meant both to harnass a dangerous power and deter the evil associated with the stench found in polluted wells.

[8] It is interesting in this regard to recall these lines from Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*:
"Fear no more the lightning flash, / Nor the all-dreaded thunder stone; /…No exorciser harm thee! / Nor no witchcraft charm thee! / Ghost unlaid forbear thee! / Nothing ill come near thee! / Quiet consummation have; / And renownèd be thy grave!"

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thought this would have made the immigrants realize that such devices weren't associated with demonic misfortune, since they were just tools, the hex marks on this and other polished artifacts from Massachusetts (Fig. 5) suggest that at least some colonists began to associate such tools with a new malevolent force - their makers, who had shown over and over again that they could take the colonists just as much by surprise as lightning.

In her book, In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692, Mary Beth Norton (2002) shows how the accusers at the Salem witch trials, who were often young female refugees from Indian attacks in Maine, used the same language, when describing supposed witches, as ministers and officials were using when demonizing Native American guerrillas to the north. Some colonist almost certainly recognized the pot that had cropped up while he was farming as the work of one of those native "warlocks" and "witches," and used the time-honored hex marks of his medieval Catholic ancestors back in Europe to neutralize the crucible, which he may have associated with magical potions.

I'm also intrigued by the fact that field finds with such motifs (Fig. 5) seem to be relatively common in the eastern half of Massachusetts and are almost always on fragments of polished tools, suggesting that colonists might have intentionally broken such implements in order to rob them of their power, before adding hex marks to each shard, and then tossing the magically appropriated fragments back in their fields to ward off the tools' supposedly malevolent makers – thereby putting a spell over the land they had taken by fiat and force.

Fig. 5 - *Circular decorations on polished field finds from eastern Massachusetts. These examples, which Robert Trotta found while "arrowheading" in Plymouth and Pembroke, suggest that early colonists "killed" some of the polished stone artifacts they unearthed and seeded their fields with fragments marked with prophylactic "evil eyes" to keep away Native Americans, who were sometimes portrayed as native agents of the devil. If they did so, they were literally using European anti-witching magic to reinforce their appropriation of the land. (Photo courtesy of Robert Trotta)*

Regardless of whether they did, the bowl was probably a palimpsest by the time Thoreau found it. What's so extraordinary is that this cup marked with the apparent signs of colonial fear, bigotry, superstition and appropriation fell into the hands of a man who was looking for artifacts precisely because he was one of the first European Americans to

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devote years to studying and revising his opinions about the continent's natives.[9] Although he probably never suspected that the circles could be hex marks made to ward off diabolized Indians, he ended up being a trailblazer who gradually uncovered the flaws in both his ancestors' and his white contemporaries' distorted thinking about Native Americans and replaced their prejudices with admiration and respect.

Whether or not Thoreau or a colonist inscribed the steatite cup, he would have certainly recognized the circles' similarity to the ones he drew as a surveyor (Fig. 6). Furthermore, I imagine that his romantic empiricism would have led him to test his find by drinking from it as he stood on Walden's shore, gazing over the pool in his hands at the larger body of water. The dimpled circles in his own miniature pond would have mimicked the holes gouged by fishermen through Walden's ice, and the suns, moons, and momentary craters left by raindrops in its waters, and even his own pupils and irises as he bowed his face to sip from his grail.

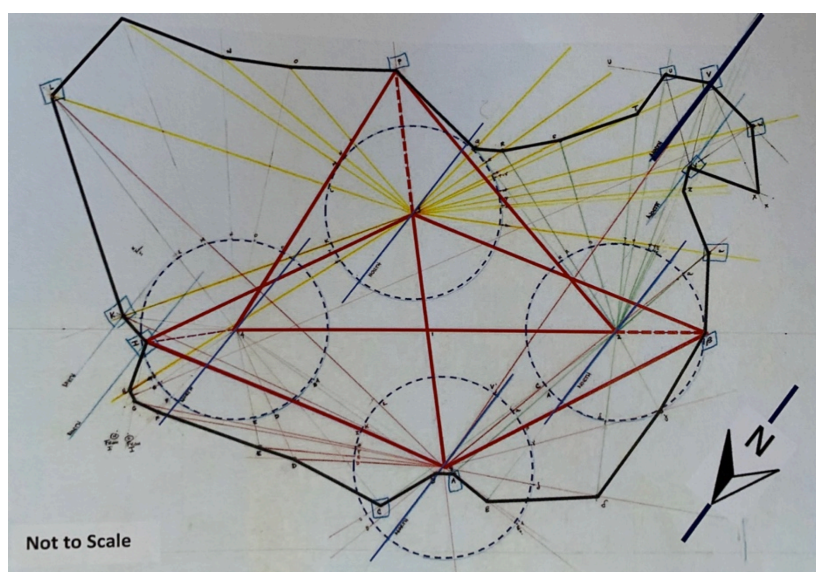

Fig. 6 - *The circles that Thoreau drew as a surveyor recall those on the steatite cup. Although the published versions of his map of Walden Pond don't show compass-drawn circles, since they focus on depths and distances, Kimberly A. Buchheit's analysis his field notes shows how the maps were constructed with such circles. (Photo by the author, courtesy of Kimberly A. Buchheit, PSM)*

Circles within circles, Thoreau with his russets and greens was America's own Green Man drinking from his cup of time as he pondered the arrival of a silent spring, before the rest of his countrymen could begin to understand. The ways people have thought about this vessel – starting with its maker; followed, in all probability, by a settler; then Thoreau; and finally me – make it stand for all the change it has witnessed since it was made, and especially after Contact.

[9] Although Joshua David Bellin (2008) has denied that Thoreau ever expressed indignation concerning the mistreatment of Native Americans and portrays him as a committed proponent of 19th century ethnologic racism, Robert F. Sayre (1977), Philip F. Gura, (1977), and D.M. Murray (1975) have argued, as I do here and in a subsequent companion-piece (Caldwell 2019), that Thoreau expressed demonstable outrage over their treatment and the ways that the racist ethnologists and historians of the period had presented them.

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III – The intellectual journey sparked by artifacts

Thoreau has come under attack because of an apparent "Indian Problem," including, most recently, in John Kucich's Symposium lecture and subsequent essay (Presentation May 3, 2018. In print 2021). Although such vehement critics of Thoreau's relationships with Native Americans as Joshua David Bellin (2008) acknowledge that he was part of the Underground Railroad and was a fervent supporter of African American rights, several of them have criticized Thoreau for residual racism towards blacks and insisted that he had a particular blind spot when it came to the persecution and dispossession of Native Americans. To which I can think of three quick retorts: first, that the evidence of Thoreau's occasional rudeness and insensitivity to interlocutors is hardly limited to Native Americans, whom he would sometimes accost although they had no wish to be interrogated by a white enthusiast; second, that he was equally quick to question anyone from a Quebecois farmer to a railroad worker who he thought might be informative or interesting; and, third, that there is more to the story of Thoreau and Native Americans, especially when it is examined chronologically and comprehensively, rather than through anachronistically arranged presentist sound bites (Caldwell 2019).

The rest of this essay will follow Thoreau's quest, after finding "Tahatawan's arrowhead," to better understand Native Americans. That pursuit is memorialized in the nearly 3000 pages of his twelve "Indian notebooks," which he filled - in preparation for his book about "arrowheading" - between 1849 and shortly before his death in 1862. The scope of Thoreau's writings on the subject not only in the notebooks but elsewhere defies reduction to the kind of presentist, subjective, and heavily ideological criticism promulgated by those who would skew the interpretation of Thoreau's complex oeuvre by ignoring evidence of his defense of Native Americans and dismissing the ways his thinking about them evolved.

Some of these criticisms, such as the contention that Thoreau never defended Native Americans, are simply false. One of the reasons Thoreau refused to show support for the government by paying the poll tax, for example, was that the government had wronged Native Americans. "It is there," he writes, "in her prisons," "that the fugitive slave, and the Mexican prisoner on parole, *and the Indian come to plead the wrongs of his race* should find" the "freer and less desponding spirits" of Massachusetts (my italics; Civil Disobedience, 1849).[10]

[10] Contra John Kucich. Here are Kucich's words from his lecture (May 3, 2018) and essay (In print 2021), "Thoreau's Indian Problem: Savagism, Indigeneity and the Politics of Place": "he [Thoreau] *was not moved*, as he was with slavery, *to call his nation and his neighbors to account for their role in Indian dispossession* [my italics]. Thoreau wrote Resistance to Civil Government to explain his act of civil disobedience against slavery, but *he did not spend a night in jail rather than pay taxes to a government that waged war against Native people, violated treaties and uprooted tribes*. His journal documents several occasions when he helped fugitive slaves to freedom, *but he did not risk arrest or worse by helping individual Indians escape an unjust law*.".
And here is the full passage from Civil Disobedience (also entitled Resistance to Civil Government), which disproves Kucich's claim:
"Under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also in prison; The proper place today, the only place which Massachusetts has provided for her freer and less desponding spirits, is in her prisons, to be put out and locked out of the State by her own act, as they have already put themselves out by their principles. It is there that the fugitive slave and the Mexican prisoner on parole, ***and the Indian come to plead the wrongs of his race*** [my italics] should find them; on that separate, but more free and honorable, ground, where the State places those who are not with her, but against her- the only house in a slave State in which a free man can abide with honor."

From "vanished" and "vanishing" to "enduring":
What some of Thoreau's recent critics have also missed is how much his views of Native Americans evolved as artifacts led him to a series of profound recognitions. In his twenties, he spoke of "the earth…strewn with the relics of a race, which has vanished as completely as if trodden in with the earth" (1842-1844: J2, pp. 38-40). But "vanished" gradually shifted to "vanishing" and finally to the conclusion that their descendants would probably survive and prosper. Once Thoreau came to see a man like Tahatawan as his correspondent across time, the distance between Native Americans and Thoreau himself began to shrink, leading him to recognize similarities like the one between their council houses and New England's deliberative assemblies: "Instead of the council-house is the legislature" (3/19/42). Such insights brought him to the realization that history as he'd learned it had been corrupted by biases.

By the closing years of his life, Thoreau recognized that the problem with most white histories about Native Americans wasn't simply their lacunae or perspectives. "[S]hallow trained & bigoted" historians had actually helped create stereotypes, which at the very least gave comfort to racists and sometimes even incited people to murder. One historian, he wrote, "tells you with more contempt than pity that the Indian had no religion…. Pray how much more religion has the historian?" (2/3/59). "It frequently happens," Thoreau went on indignantly, "that the historian… [has] spoken slightly of the Indian… using only the terms – miserable – wretched – pitiful… they have hastily disposed of this refuse of humanity (as they might have called it)…. But even the indigenous animals are inexhaustibly interesting to us. How much more then the indigenous man of America!… We wish to know particularly what manner of men (the Indians) were – how they lived here – their relation to nature – their arts & their customs – their fancies & reflections" (5/3/59).

There was only one way to correct such widespread failings in his view: for Native American historians and poets to write their own works – something Thoreau knew he could never presume to do for them. Although he was all too aware that "For Indian deeds there must be an Indian memory - the white man will remember his own only" (1842-1844: 6 J2, pp. 58-60), he still felt he had a duty as a human being to do his best to close the gap in his understanding by recording as much as he could about Native Americans, especially from their own perspectives. As such, Thoreau's encyclopedic and relentless efforts to come to an approximate understanding of Native Americans in the voluminous Indian Notebooks represent one of the earliest and most extended attempts by a person of European descent to overcome his limitations of perception and see life from another group's point of view.

Thoreau's quest for knowledge about the "American race":
As Thoreau's fascination for America's own artifacts and their makers grew, he tried to learn more about them in every way he could. The most obvious way was examining prehistoric "relics" in institutions like the Plymouth Museum (7/31/1851), the Essex Institute (9/21/58), and P.T. Barnum's American Museum in New York (11/22/54). Another way was visiting collectors such as Arthur Ricketson, who showed Thoreau an ancient mortar and soapstone pot (9/30/55 & 10/1/55), and Joseph Hosmer, who showed him a figural "pestle" (11/29/1853, J7, p. 180) like one in Thoreau's own collection, which made him realize that the region's past and present inhabitants shared an essential similarity: "It is a great step to find a pestle... whose handle is ornamented with a bird's head knob – It brings the maker still nearer to the races which ornament their umbrella & cane handles…. Men… had fancies to be pleased… and added some pure beauty to that of pure utility" (11/29/1853, J7, p. 180). Imagine how delighted

Thoreau would have been had he known that the so-called pestle was probably a musical instrument (Fig. 7), which confirmed that he was right about humans being inspired to produce comparable art across the millennia! After showing that similar rods, which are identical except for their lack of heads, can still produce fossil notes and seem to have been used as lithophones in the early-to-mid-Archaic of New England (Caldwell 2013), I've studied figural ones just like Thoreau's, which appear to be cousins of today's decorated instruments.

Fig. 7 - *Collections Manager Laura Costello playing a probable figural lithophone with a bird or phallic head, Peabody Museum, Harvard. Thoreau found a similar stone rod, which is shown on the right side of figure 1. Although he thought it was a zoomorphic pestle, it is likely that such figural rods were often used as portable lithophones. Artifact (18)67-10-10(N Am)-item 224, Merrimac River, Essex County, MA, ex A. Crocker. (Photo by the author)*

In his zeal to learn still more about his finds, Thoreau also consulted experts such as geologists (J2, pp. 58-60) and the makers' descendants, whom he sought out as long as he could. He started a conversation, for example, with a communicative old man in Oldtown, Maine in 1838 (5 8/38); showed a native man his artifacts in the early forties (1842-1844: J2, pp. 58-60); interviewed Penobscots camped by the river near Concord in 1850 (11/28/50, J3, 155); and questioned another man in Sandwich in the late fifties (6/6/57). When Thoreau realized he could extend his uncanny contact from "vanished" to living people, he also sought out Native American guides in Maine, despite being warned against hiring them in racist terms: "I was warned not to employ an Indian on account of their obstinacy & the difficulty of understanding one another & on ac. Of their dirty habits in cooking &c…. But I was bent on having an Indian at any rate" (July 20 – Aug. 7, last Maine trip). The men his host, George Thatcher, employed - Joseph Aitteon[11] in 1853 and Joe Polis in 1857 - reveal a fascinating convergence - both in Thoreau's mind and in fact - between two of the groups who he felt were likely to produce particularly "noble" people - workers and Native Americans - since they were both "lumbermen" who had adapted to the new economy by mastering marketable skills. Their integration of the best of both worlds in Thoreau's mind convinced him that they

[11] There are two more spellings: Attien and Attean. www.penobscotculture.com; Eckstorm, Fannie Pearson Hardy. The Penobscot Man, 1970, Books for Libraries Press, Freeport, Maine. Reprint of the original edition: Boston and New York, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1904. pp. 65–102; Dietz, Lew. Allagash: The history of a wilderness river in Maine. 1968. North Country Press, Thorndike, Maine. p. 250.

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were exceptionally adaptable and that their company was "much more agreeable & even refined … than the [white] lumberers" (2nd Maine trip, Journal 7, 9/13/53-9/27/53).

The Natives' powers of observation and the heroes of yore:
Meeting Aitteon and Polis was transformative for two more reasons: first, because they were even more attuned to and at home in nature than Thoreau, and, second, because they brought home the reality and individuality of all Native Americans by being so incontestably present and individualized themselves.

Let's start by looking at the first reason. "Before we landed," he says in amazement, "he had seen a drop of blood on the bank – when it was 2 or 3 rods distant" (Journal 7, 9/13/53-9/27/53). Thoreau became increasingly dumbstruck as he realized just how alert his guides were to signs he couldn't see, making him idolize Polis in particular. He finally was faced with proof of the assertion, which he had recorded years before, that some Native Americans were particularly at home in the natural world: The Indian "still remembered that he was a sojourner in nature. When he was refreshed with food and sleep he contemplated his journey again. He dwelt in a tent in this world" (161, 7/16/45; reprised in Walden).

As Thoreau moved from his youthful stance of "playing Indian" to seeing some Native Americans as his exemplars because of their intimacy with nature, he began comparing them to the ancient Greeks, who themselves "were not above this humane intercourse with nature…. They took note of and delight in such trifling events like Indians" (233, 4/17/46). He too wanted to remain constantly attuned to those "trifling" things that surrounded him, since they were the signs leading into the interconnected web, which included his own existence. It was like attending to one's larger self, and nothing could be more "noble" in his mind than doing that. The intimacy with nature that had been perfected over millennia as the First Americans developed harmonious ecological relationships with their environments[12] made them the continent's own classical heroes and lent every Native American a certain stature in Thoreau's eyes. These associations are epitomized by his description of a Native American woman, whom he saw as "A daughter of the soil – one of the nobility of the land – the white man an imported weed burdock & mullein which displace the ground nut" (between 7/16/50 & 7/29/50, J3, 93).

As he picked up arrowheads around his hoe, he thought of himself as a kind of thought warrior walking in the footsteps of the heroes of both traditions. "I too sit here on the shore of my Ithaca, a fellow wanderer and survivor of Ulysses," he crowed (J2, pp. 156-157: 7/7/45). "My hoe began to tinkle against the stones… and vibrated some chord of nature… I disturbed the ashes of unrecorded nations… their small implements of war and hunting and perhaps more ancient hoes…" (1845-1846: J2, p. 130). As he prepared to write his opus on "arrowheading," his ideas about the three groups, which he thought were most likely to produce heroes – workers, Native Americans, and the Old World's ancients – began to wrap around each other and form one cord. He, after all, worked just as hard with his hands as with his mind, tried to live and think like Native Americans, and was steeped in classical literature from Greece to India. Thoreau was vibrating with sympathetic resonances as he finally prepared to bring his thoughts about "arrowheading" together in one work.

[12] After killing off most of the mega-fauna across all climate zones from the Arctic Ocean to Tierra del Fuego at the end of the Pleistocene.

Real people:
The second reason why meeting his guides was so transformative was his encounter with their nuanced and complex reality. The following passage about a conversation between Thoreau's guides during his second trip to Maine catches his mind in the act of realizing experientially, rather than abstractly, that Native Americans couldn't be reduced to anyone's stereotypes since they were just as human and individualized as he was: "…the Indians were *not* the invention of poets…. I sat & heard Penobscots gossip & laugh & jest…." (10/26/1853). Thoreau's guide during his next trip to Maine, Joe Polis, expanded upon this realization by leaving him awestruck by his versatility and accomplishments. Here was a man who was just as stoic as any Greek, who had witnessed wonders the greatest scientists had never seen, and was so familiar with the wilderness that he never got turned around. To top it off, he was also a person who read the daily paper, negotiated on behalf of his people with state and federal authorities, and bought back land the Penobscots had lost.

Returning to Cambridge and Concord, Thoreau buttonholed Emerson, Alcott[13] and others to tell them they were wrong about Native Americans being doomed to disappear (Caldwell 2019). He'd seen living proof, he insisted, that Native Americans were actually coping well with change. If anything, the Indians he'd just met had demonstrated superior intelligence and adaptability, and were as masterful as anyone he'd ever known. Just watch, he began to insist, they will and *must* endure.

How proximity + fascination with technology brought further empathy:
Thoreau also tried to learn as much as he could about his finds by attending a lecture "on Indians" given by a Dr. Harris (2/9/53, J5, 464-465) and a presentation by a Mississauga Ojibwe named Maungwudaus (Fig. 8), whose name Thoreau bowdlerized to Dr. Mung (who may have called himself by this abbreviated name, while also using another name for his people, the Chippewa) (3/5/58). Thoreau's reaction to "Dr. Mung" is particularly illuminating since it's so detailed. His vivid description of the "Chippeway's" props covers a cradleboard, blowgun, otter-skin pouch, birch-bark trays ornamented with moose hair, and a buffalo-hide blanket with quillwork. Maungwudaus had ridden an international wave of interest in "Indians" by leading Ojibwe/Chippewa performers through Europe,[14] so he was an experienced presenter, who knew how to go beyond stereotypes by responding to

- a growing western passion for collecting information and objects, which allowed an expansion of consciousness by accumulating and refining knowledge,
- and a fascination, born of the industrial revolution, for such practical solutions and innovations as the ones Maungwudaus demonstrated.

Thoreau's later journals teem with examples of the interest in Native American inventions that was focusing the increasingly respectful attention of many white Americans and Europeans[15] on their makers. These include meticulous descriptions of indigenous ways of erecting shelters, smoking meat (Second Maine trip, Journal 7, 9/13/53-9/27/53), designing fish traps (3/20/58), and canoe-making, which Thoreau

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[13] The Journals of Amos Bronson Alcott. Ed. Odell Shepard. Little Brown, Boston. 1938. p. 325

[14] Maungwudaus (or George Henry, as he was also known) published a pamphlet entitled, *An Account of the Chippewa Indians, who have been travelling among the Whites, in the United States, England, Ireland, Scotland, France and Belgium* (1848).

[15] While Gustave Flaubert put on Indian airs, George Sand wrote a series of reports about George Catlin's "Wild West" show and her meetings with such Ioway performers as a young woman named Okeeweeme, who was dying of tuberculosis. Sand's reports record her shock upon meeting people who shattered European stereotypes about "Indians" because of their humor and accomplishments and became an appeal to save Native Americans from persecution.

thought "deserves to be minutely described as much at least as most of the white man's arts…" (2nd Maine trip, journal 7, 9/13/53-9/27/53). Once Thoreau and other white intellectuals had begun to fully recognize and appreciate the accomplishments of Native American master-builders, it became easier to position them as innovative counterparts worth emulating.

Fig. 8 - *The Mississauga Ojibwe/Chippewa lecturer and chief, George Henry or Maungwudaus. 1846. (Maun-gua-daus Collection / Library and Archives Canada / PA-125840).*

But presentations like the one given by Maungwudaus are often criticized as serving the appetite of a hegemonic culture for diversion and "exoticism." It is worth pausing here, because the Romantic movement's interest in remote places and people, and thus its penchant toward "exoticism," which provided relief from the increasingly managed and crowded environments produced by industrialization, is often associated, not without reason, with racist cultural appropriation, making Thoreau's attendance at the lecture problematic from that critical perspective.

I would argue, though, that his response to Maungwudaus's presentation goes beyond a Romantic's for three reasons, starting with the fact that Thoreau empathizes with Maungwudaus as a fellow-lecturer and performer. After making his living in part by giving public performances despite his social inhibitions, Thoreau both admired the work of a colleague on the same lecture circuit and was annoyed when some white spectators mocked the speaker's speech patterns. Here was a fellow professional, who managed to continue imparting knowledge and enthusiasm with patience, wit and dignity in the face of scoffers, making Thoreau admire him as a particularly dedicated and effective teacher.

The second reason that Thoreau's response to such presentations went beyond (or even subverted) exoticism, is that Thoreau didn't go to them seeking the titillation of the strange and exotic so much as the experience of mentors who had known the land he loved even longer and more intimately than he had. Instead of the outward focus of exoticism, his focus was more inward.

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But the main reason why Maungwudaus's lecture capped Thoreau's quest to understand Native Americans was because the herbal medicine "doctor" struck him as being as distinct, accomplished, and admirable as Polis. We see Thoreau moving here beyond his passion for the past and its artifacts to paying close empathic attention to an individual. What could be more compelling to a man like Thoreau - who used to carry the Emersons' children piggyback – than seeing a self-assured and well-traveled colleague, who had just demonstrated so many innovations with acumen and expertise, putting on a cradleboard to show how it was used? Talk about creating a connection.

The power of alien words:
When Thoreau finally realized that he could extend the youthful (and later) contact he'd made with "Indians" via arrowheads to people he respected and even identified with as much as Polis and Maungwudaus, he then encountered the most ephemeral of their artifacts – their words. Listening to an American tongue was just a pastime when Thoreau first heard one spoken at length during his trip with Aitteon: "We lay on our backs talking with the Indians till midnight – They were very sociable and when they did not talk with us kept up a steady stream of talk in their own language…. I amused myself," he wrote, "…with trying [to] guess at their subject" (Journal 7, 9/13/53-9/27/53).

It took a while for those words to sink in. Hearing them again during his next trip to Maine, when Polis indulged him by explaining some Penobscot terms, made Thoreau realize that this language added new dimensions to things he thought he knew. The insight shocked him, because it meant that the most accurate terminology for natural phenomena he had learned so far - scientific nomenclature with its inevitable allure – had lulled him into complacency and was so limited it could be devitalizing. Polis's definitions had revealed a bias within the encyclopedic approach itself. "It was a new light," Thoreau recorded, "when my guide gave me Indian names for things, for which I had only scientific ones before…. We are ready to skin the animals alive to come at them. Our scientific names convey a (very) partial information only… there are other names for most of these objects given by a people who stand between me & them – who had better senses than our race. How little I know of that arbor vitae – when I have learned only what science can tell me" (3/5/58).

Why was this? In part, because biologists were still coming to grips with the diversity of organisms by having them skinned, bottled, pressed, and shipped to labs by people like Thoreau. All the same, he had identified a problem, which has only gotten worse as many scientists have become specialists working in ethical silos, as they help our species monopolize the world's resources.

"I let science slide," Thoreau concluded, when he realized that the native terms were giving him a richer appreciation of nature than he had had when his main conceptual tools were based on the scientific method and such European aesthetic traditions as Romanticism. "Science with its retorts would have put me to sleep… I have much to learn of the Indian, nothing of the missionary –" (9/30/57). The power of alien words was giving him a deep sense of humility both towards the things they named and towards the people who named them.

Although that passage might make it seem like Thoreau dropped science once he realized that its descriptions were deadening or incomplete, he actually did something far bolder - embracing a new definition of what it took to make a good scientist. "The true man of

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science will have rare Indian wisdom," he wrote. "He will smell, taste, see, hear, feel, better than other men. His will be a deeper and finer experience. We do not learn by inference and deduction… but by direct intercourse…. We cannot know truth by method and contrivance…. The most scientific should be the healthiest man" (187, 10/11/40). That's a rather different definition of the consummate scientist than the current one, with its emphasis on specialization. It's so holistic that it shows Thoreau realizing that the only way to become fully sentient is to treat the various branches of experimentation and investigation in a fluid interdisciplinary way. And so we witness Thoreau applying scientific methodology even more rigorously after he came to recognize its limits, since he had learned from his Native-American teachers that a full appreciation of the natural world had to grow from intimately and complexly apprehended facts. The journey inspired by arrowheads had led Thoreau to the revolutionary insight that the true scientific observer had to be both meticulous and wide-awake.

Extinctions:
As Thoreau's perspective on science changed, he realized that the growth of European populations was causing extinctions since market economies fueled by powerful scientific tools allowed them to exploit resources more systematically. "The wildest & noblest quadrupeds – even the largest fresh water fishes… the wildest and noblest birds – & the fairest flowers – have receded as <u>we</u> advanced – & we have but the most distant knowledge of them – a rumor…." (3/5/58). As he got closer to Native Americans and learned more about the wildlife around Concord when European settlers first arrived, he realized how much had been lost: "When I consider that the nobler animals have been exterminated here… I cannot but feel as if I lived in a tamed &, as it were, emasculated country…. Is it not a maimed & imperfect nature that I am conversant with?... I am reminded that this my life in Nature… is lamentably incomplete…. The whole civilized country is to some extent turned into a city" (3/23/56). And the worst of it was, as he saw, exterminations were sweeping the planet.

Just as deer had been wiped out around Concord before he'd even been born, the world's diverse life forms were being sucked into corporate meat grinders that churned out money. "What a pitiful business is the fur trade," he cried, just as we might decry the ravages of the oil industry, "pursued… by famous companies – which enjoy a profitable monopoly & control a large portion of the earths surface - unweariedly pursuing… small animals…. The Indian led a more respectable life [than the Astors], who are only so many partners more or less in the same sort of business with thousands of just such loafing men & boys in their service to abet them" (4/8/59). Imagine how furious Thoreau would have been if he'd seen how much of the world has been plundered and buried under cement and asphalt. Or, as Joni Mitchell put it, "we've paved Paradise and put up a parking lot."

The plight of Native Americans also made Thoreau realize that extinction can happen to anyone – including everybody of European descent. The equivalencies that he'd begun to find between one ethnic group and another through his study of artifacts now extended to the peril they all confronted – the threat of "vanishing." He asks: "Is not the world forever beginning & coming to an end both to men and races? Suppose we were to foresee that the Saxon race to which we belong would become extinct the present winter – disappear from the face of the earth" (12/29/53, J7, 209). Just as Maungwudaus had reminded Thoreau of their common humanity while demonstrating the cradleboard, Thoreau's intimations of everyone's mortality brought home for him the old truism that

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all people are equal before death. He'd gone from recognizing equivalencies to seeing how we are all vulnerable.

Biases, slippery words, and the trial of civilization:
Despite Thoreau's respect for some Native Americans because of their intimacy with nature and realization that his own ethnic group might be just as ephemeral as others, he would occasionally slip into the damaging glibness of many of his contemporaries when it came to "Indians." Some of his glib moments reflect facile 19th- century notions of cultural progression (which, it is to be noted, he attacked insistently after coming back from his trip with Polis).

Here's an early example, inspired by the prevailing notion of Manifest Destiny: "the savage retreats and the white man advances" (1842-1844: J2, pp. 58-60). And here's another: "civilization is going on among brutes" - read "animals" - "as well as men – Foxes are Indian dogs…. Striving to be a dog – struggling for light" (after 12/23/45). The next example is even more grotesque, since it places some of the blame for the plight of Native Americans on the victims. Thoreau posited that, by creating art like the figural lithophone or pestle he had seen, the Indian "was leaving off to be savage - enough of this would have saved him from extermination" (11/29/1853, J7, p. 180).

The suggestion that Native Americans could have saved themselves by trying harder makes modern readers cringe so badly that we tend to forget how much we've learned from advances in historical and anthropological analyses that Thoreau could not have foreseen. It's easy to realize how biased and absurd his reading is in hindsight because we've all absorbed the lessons of such books as Guns, Germs and Steel.

But this is exactly where literary scholars like Kucich and, before him, Bellin, would find their textual evidence to argue for a dismissive, reductive and presentist reading of the vast expanse of Thoreau's writings as being steeped in racism at the expense of a more textured and accurate reading, which would show that Thoreau's views of Native Americans shifted as he refined his thinking in a deliberate moral quest.

For example: Although Thoreau never shed such attitudes completely, one also has to be careful in determining what constitutes bias, since Thoreau often deliberately turned words such as "savages", "civilized", and "brutes" on their heads. "Savages" becomes an especially slippery word in Thoreau's lexicon. While using the word as a placeholder, he insists that "savages" are actually no worse than his white contemporaries, and are even more dignified and exemplary in some of their conduct. "Behold him in the council chamber…" Thoreau told himself, "conducting with such perfect dignity & decorum betraying such a sense of justness – These savages" – and here one can hear his irony – "are equal to us civilized men in their treaties – & I fear not essentially worse in their wars" (12/30/56). "It is the spirit of humanity," he wrote the day his father died, "that which animates both *so called* savages & civilized nations… That interests us most. The thought of a *so called* savage tribe is generally far more just than that of a single civilized man" (2/3/59). The repetition of "so called" here goes to the heart of what Thoreau was doing, which was nothing less than the deconstruction and subversion of that old paradigm contrasting "civilisation" and "savagery," thereby laying the basis for modern anthropology's deconstructionist approach to knowledge and more equitable view of cultures.

For Thoreau, European – and, by extension, white American - "civilization" did not come out of such comparisons unscathed. As early as 1841, Thoreau felt that "The charm of the Indian… is that he stands free and unconstrained in nature – is her

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inhabitant – and not her guest – and wears her easily and gracefully. But the civilized man" – notice once again how Thoreau twists such words as "civilized" satirically - "has the habits of a house. His house is a prison…. It is rare that he overcomes the house, and learns to sit at home in it – and roof and floor – and walls support themselves – as the sky – and trees – and earth" (304, 4/26/41).

A few years afterwards, he insisted that "We should do [the Indian] more justice and understand better why he will not exchange his savageness for civilization" (23, 1842-1844), and asked, "Who are the Inhabitants of London and New York, but savages who have built cities…. Who are the Blackfeet and the Tartars but citizens roaming the plains" (487, 11/9/43)? "Why is [it] that we look upon the Indian as the man of the woods? There are races half civilized and barbarous even that dwelt in towns" (2nd Maine trip, journal 7, 9/13/53-9/27/53).

One of the reasons Thoreau criticized white "civilization" so severely was that he equated the cost of anything with the amount of work spent in obtaining it. By this measure, western civilization was a failure by comparison to the Native American model, since the latter didn't bury people in debt, which forced them to work for years. "According to… the first settlers of Boston," he noted, "an Indian wigwam was as comfortable as an English house…. Such a lodge was… erected in a day or two and every family had one…. Thus (to try our civilization by a fair test)… every [Indian] family owns a shelter as good as the best…. The cost of a thing… is the amount of life it requires to be exchanged for it. An average house… will require from 15 to 20 years of the day-laborer's life… so that he must spend half his life before a wigwam can be earned…. Would the savage have been wise to exchange his wigwam for a palace on these terms" – which, mathematically, would have made a settler's house 5,475 times more expensive than a Native Americans? (after 12/6/45; reprised in Walden with caveats on pp. 28-33).

Although Thoreau sometimes fell into the trap of seeing Native Americans through the lens of 19th century European stereotypes about "vanishing versus advancing races," he fell into it less often as he aged, and almost escaped it entirely once he met Polis and Maungwudaus and realized that Native Americans were actively adapting and doing their best to endure. Here is an early example of his respect for that endurance: "The Indian" making an axe or pestle "said in the face of the constant flux of things – I at least will live an enduring life" (4/1/38). And here he sees that some Abenakis, for example, were planning for the future: "I noticed some new houses… as if the tribe had a design to live" (284-285, Fall 1846).

Toward the end of his life, Thoreau actually used an arrowhead to express his realization that Native Americans would not only endure, but would probably outlast almost everything but their own creations: "Perhaps some red man *that is to come* will fit me," Thoreau imagines his arrowhead saying, "to a shaft & make me do his bidding…" (3/28/59). In other words, contact with prehistoric artifacts and their makers' descendants had gradually persuaded Thoreau that Native Americans would survive into the far future.

Defending Native Americans:

But the only way of making sure any group survives – especially one as beleaguered as Native Americans were in the 19th century - is to protect it, even when its members are doing everything possible to cope with revolutionary change. Although Thoreau had

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already spoken in defense of Native Americans in Civil Disobedience (1849),[16] his anger at their persecution came to a boil as his indignation over the oppression of African Americans spread to that of America's natives, and he gathered his notes for writing the appeal he was preparing when he died.[17] Here's an example of his rising awareness of their plight: "In California & Oregon, if not nearer home, it is common to treat [Native American] men exactly like deer which are hunted, and I read from time to time in Christian newspapers" – one can almost hear the word "Christian" dripping with sarcasm – "how many 'bucks' that is Indian men – their sportsmen have killed" (10/21/59). *Sportsmen indeed!*[18]

That, by the way, was from a journal entry about a conversation with John Brown, in which Thoreau also supported violence in what he thought of as a just cause – Abolitionism. "For once the Sharpes rifle & the revolver were employed in a righteous cause.… I know that the mass of my neighbors think that the only righteous use that can be made of them is to fight duels… when we are insulted by other nations – or hunt Indians, or shoot fugitive slaves with them" (10/21/59). Thoreau went on to note that Brown "had to skulk in the swamps of Kansas… befriended only by Indians & few White-men" (10/21/59). Thoreau's recognition that Brown's main allies during his fight to free African Americans were members of another persecuted group is important since it shows how his sympathy embraced both groups as he prepared to write his final appeal.

The apex of Thoreau's journey to make contact with Native Americans occurred during a trip to the Mississippi, which he took in the hope of meeting Indians and the vain hope of beating his illness. On June 20, 1861, he and his consumptive young companion, Horace Mann Jr., went out of their way to attend a gathering of 5,000 Sioux/Dakota, who had assembled in Redwood, Minnesota to receive annuity payments in return for their having given up the southern half of the new state. Characteristically, Thoreau saw

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[16] Contra John Kucich, as presented 2018 ; in print 2021. See the first footnote on Kucich's comments regarding the supposed disconnect between the dispossession of Native Americans and Thoreau's reasons for going to jail as an act of civil disobedience.

[17] Again contra Kucich's presentation (and eventual print essay), in which he stated:
"And finally, it's important to keep in mind that while Thoreau was deeply interested in Indians, they were never his primary interest, even in the years when he gathered the Indian Notebooks. … **it may be a mark of virtue that Thoreau closed his Indian Notebooks rather than writing a summa of the savagist notions they contained**" (Kucich. In press 2021).
To which I will counter with three considerations. One, that Native Americans may not have been Thoreau's primary focus (although they certainly were in the Notebooks), but they were *intrinsic* to his overall vision. Two, that the Notebooks contained hundreds of transcriptions of texts, covering much of what Thoreau could find written about or by Native Americans. Given that many of his contemporaries wrote about them in prejudiced terms, some of his entries contain "savagist" passages, which Thoreau often criticizes upon reflection, for example in his own journal, rather than in the Indian Notebooks, which amount to a pile of research notes. And, three, that Thoreau did not abandon his plan to write about Native Americans because he realized it was either wrong-headed or because "Thoreau had learned too much from Joe Polis to rely solely on books," – as if he ever had – "and so abandoned whatever writing project had sparked the Indian Notebooks", as Kucich said, but because Thoreau was dying. Although Thoreau didn't add to his Indian Notebooks per se after April 1861, when he was already terribly ill, his indignant description elsewhere of the injustices suffered by the Sioux in June of 1861 shows that the Native American plight continued to hold his attention almost to (and perhaps even to) the end.

[18] Again contra Kucich, who made the following claim in his lecture and essay: "He (Thoreau) criticized his countrymen for seeking gold in California in 'Life without Principle' (1863), **but not for the appalling string of massacres of California Indians;…**" (Kucich, in press 2021). The only way one can support Kucich's claim is if one disregards Thoreau's sarcasm and outrage in the passage I've quoted from his journal (10/21/59) about the reports in "Christian newspapers" concerning "sportsmen" killing "Indian men" - specifically in California - as if they were deer. Once again, Thoreau's own words prove that Kucich's allegation is unfounded.

through the double-speak of such officials as the Federal "Indian agent," Thomas Galbraith, who promised to take care of the Dakota "as a father should for his children," and the state Governor, Alexander Ramsey, who said that a new fort, Fort Ridgely, had actually been built to protect them from aggressive whites. After hearing the Dakotas' spokesman, Red Owl, forcefully list all the promises the government had broken, including its failure to pay the annuities on time, Thoreau noted that they "probably have reason to be" angry and that they had "the advantage in point of truth and earnestness, and therefore of eloquence."[19] All that remained was for him to add his own words to Red Owl's in a world-embracing cry against persecution and murder, which he now knew extended to much of life on Earth.

Thoreau's unfinished business:
Thoreau died with those words on his lips. Here he is trying to make up his mind about whether to compress the book he was going to write about "arrowheading," into one volume: "I have not decided whether I had better publish my experience in searching for arrowheads in 3 volumes with plates & an index or to try to compress it into one" (3/28/59). The reason the publication would have been so long was because those seeds for thought had inspired thousands of pages and revelations with implications for civilizations and for the planet. Their ramifications stretched from realizations about the treatment of other beings and the relative cost of housing to the persecution of Native Americans and the precocious contemplation of huge spans of time by one of the continent's first prehistorians. Given the way hard facts sent reflections rippling across his mind, Thoreau's narrative about the arrowheads that had ripped through time and put him into contact with Native Americans would have become everything from a celebration of their artistry to an outraged appeal for their protection.

But it would have been much more, since it would have embedded those themes in a *savage* trial of industrialized "civilization" and a reverberating study of how the First Americans had shown how it was possible to live with and protect our world. It would have also been so controversial that it is hard to imagine how it could even have been published unless Thoreau or his friends had picked up the cost, but the fact is he never got the chance to speak those words of reverence and indignation in one place.

We must *not* leave them unspoken - or censor him now.

"Moose … Indian"

Those may have been Thoreau's actual last words.[20] But he had many more which would have fully articulated his metamorphosis and his insight that Native Americans had shown to his satisfaction how one can live in this world with intimacy and honor.

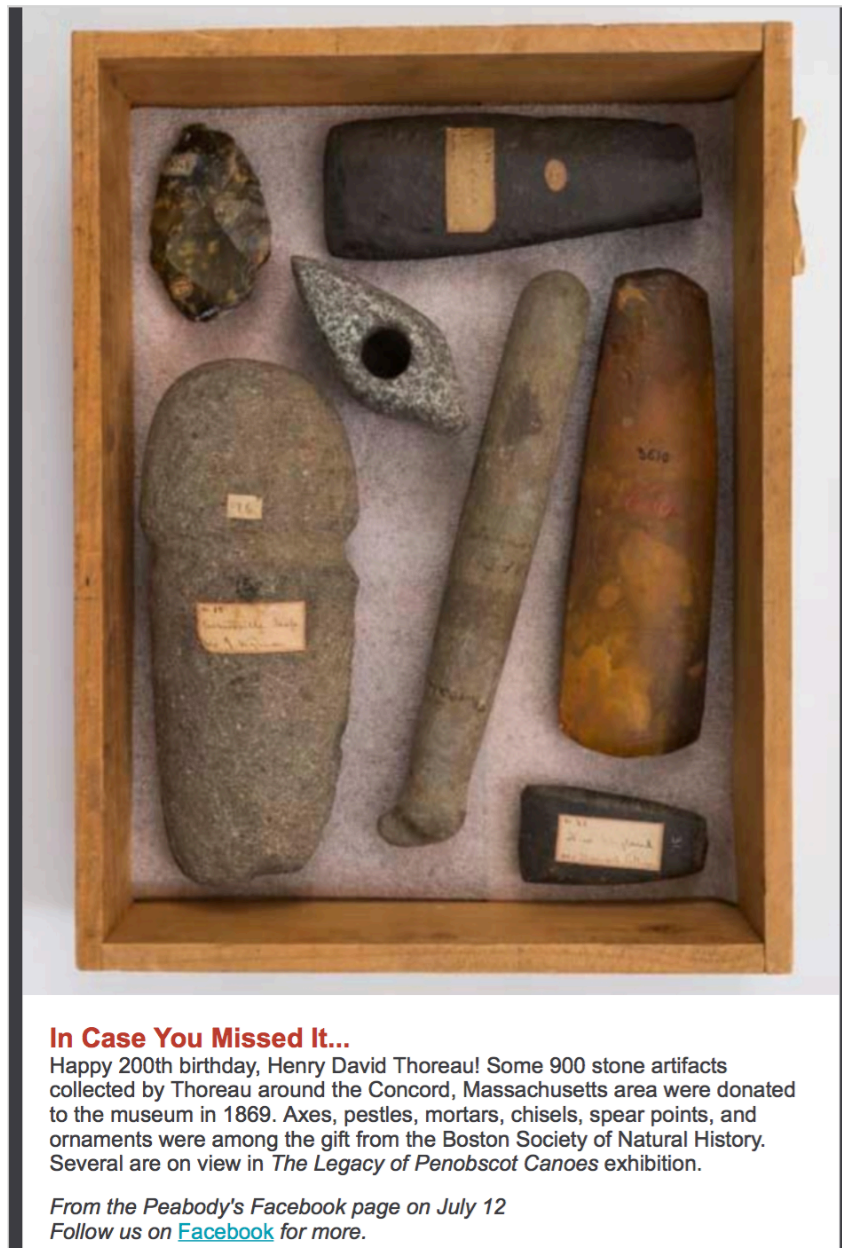
Speak them.

[19] The Correspondence of Henry David Thoreau. Ed. Walter Harding & Carl Bode. New York University Press, New York. 1968. p. 621

[20] Dietz, Lew. The Allagash: The history of a wilderness river in Maine. North Country Press, Thorndike, Maine. 1968. p. 151 / Willsky-Ciollo, Lydia. Apostles of Wilderness: American Indians and Thoreau's Theology of the Wild. *The New England Quarterly*. Dec. 2018, vol. XCI, no. 4. / Channing, William Ellery. Thoreau, The Poet-Naturalist: With Memorial Verses, new ed. Charles E. Goodspeed, Boston. 1902. p. 20. / Walls, Laura Dassow. Henry David Thoreau: A Life. University of Chicago Press. 2017. p. 498.

Dedication:

This is dedicated to Alan Klein, who loved Walden Pond, and my beloved wife, Nancy, who encouraged me to pursue this, although she knew she was dying.



In Case You Missed It...

Happy 200th birthday, Henry David Thoreau! Some 900 stone artifacts collected by Thoreau around the Concord, Massachusetts area were donated to the museum in 1869. Axes, pestles, mortars, chisels, spear points, and ornaments were among the gift from the Boston Society of Natural History. Several are on view in *The Legacy of Penobscot Canoes* exhibition.

From the Peabody's Facebook page on July 12
Follow us on Facebook for more.

Fig. 9 - *The inspiration for this essay came in the form of this supposed sampling of Thoreau's prehistoric artifact collection, which the Peabody Museum at Harvard*

- *posted on its Facebook page on July 12, 2017 and*
- *sent as page 3 of its Aug. 5, 2017 newsletter to friends of the museum.*

I was dumbfounded when I saw the invitation to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Thoreau's birth by coming to see his collection, because the following three artifacts in the photograph were clearly European:

- *the Acheulean hand-axe from northern France at the top left;*
- *the drilled Bronze Age axe head from the southern Baltic;*
- *and the long, orange, Danish, Neolithic celt on the right.*

Finding such artifacts in an early American collection – let alone Thoreau's – was stupefying since they indicated that Thoreau must have had a supply chain from Europe, which could have influenced him profoundly. The existence of European artifacts in his collection promised to shatter any remaining

preconceptions about him being provincial and enshrine Thoreau as an intellectual who was part of a trans-Atlantic exchange system for both objects and ideas.

Once I realized that Henry must have had links to foreign artifact suppliers, I called the convener of the symposium "Uses and Abuses of Thoreau at 200" (Department of Literature, History of Ideas, and Religion at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. May 3-4, 2018), Henrik Otterberg, who had been encouraging me to cast fresh light on the writer by examining his prehistoric finds. I had been reluctant to undertake the task until I realized I might be able to reveal something new about Thoreau himself, rather than just about his artifacts, which I thought would bore literary scholars without adding much to archaeological knowledge. But the presence of the European artifacts was a game-changer. I contacted the Peabody and asked the curators to show me all of Thoreau's artifacts, including the ones in the photo.

Then a strange thing happened: I was told it wouldn't be possible. When I insisted that I had a right to see the artifacts since the museum was inviting the whole world to come see them – not just researchers – I was eventually told the reason I couldn't see the foreign artifacts was because Thoreau had never owned them. It turned out that someone in the PR department had "sexed up" the advertisement by adding them to a box filled with Thoreau's real possessions, which all came from New England. In other words, the museum had created a false fact, which ended up polluting scholarship when such fine scholars as John Kucich took the museum's bait and showed the photo as an accurate illustration of Thoreau's finds in his presentation in Gothenberg.

I almost abandoned examining Thoreau once I realized I didn't have the scoop I'd been counting on. But the convener insisted I should persevere, since he was sure I'd find other novelties if I searched through Thoreau's finds with the metaphorical equivalent of the slanting beams prehistorians use to detect engravings in the dark. This paper is my effort to satisfy both Henrik's and Nancy's faith that I'd find something worthwhile, although she knew she wouldn't live to see what I'd found. (The screenshot of the online invitation from the Peabody Museum at Harvard to view Thoreau's prehistoric artifacts was taken by the author on Aug. 5, 2017.)

Acknowledgements:
This essay, which was inspired by the misleading advertisement above (Fig. 9), is based on a lecture with the same title at the University of Gothenburg on May 4, 2018. I am deeply indebted to

- Elizabeth H. Witherell for compiling the data base of passages in Thoreau's journals that mention Native Americans and their artifacts,
- William Moody and Bob Trotta for photos of their finds, including the ones of shards with apparent apotropaic marks shown in figure 5,
- Sheila Fisher of Trinity College for her unflagging encouragement and meticulous editing,
- The president of the Dedham Historical Society & Museum, Andrea Madsen Gilmore, for arranging visits to the historical society and the Fairbanks House,
- The Fairbanks House Museum curator, Daniel Neff, who shared his knowledge of hex marks there,
- Kimberly A. Buchheit for permission to use her reconstruction of the way Thoreau surveyed Walden Pond (Fig. 6),
- Elaine Courtney, who kindly allowed me to use her late husband's – my friend Jeff Boudreau's – beautiful illustration of highlights from Thoreau's artifact collection (Fig. 1),
- and Henrik Otterberg of the University of Gothenberg for having enough faith in my ability to cast light on the ways that artifact collecting might have influenced Thoreau to commission the lecture on which this essay is based.

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Its sequel, "In the Company of Presentists", also owes its existence to Dr. Otterberg, because he felt my presentation had staked out a position concerning Thoreau's relationship with Native Americans that was different enough from the one which Joshua Bellin had defined in his paper, "In the Company of Savagists", that it would be interesting to clarify those differences by commenting on his text.
I am also deeply indebted to Kristen Case (University of Maine), Rochelle Johnson (University of Idaho) and Dr. Otterberg again both for encouraging me "to engage with" John Kucich's essay, "Thoreau's Indian Problem", which they kindly sent me and told me I could quote once it was "in print", and for encouraging me to publish this analysis in the following words:

"We all felt that your work contributed a vital piece to that memorable occasion's deep and rich conversation about Thoreau's legacy. …Thank you so much for your fascinating and important essay on Thoreau's artifact-finding. We are thrilled by your impressive, detailed reconstruction of this important aspect of Thoreau's life and work, which we believe makes a unique and important addition to our picture of Thoreau's relationship to indigenous people and knowledge of indigenous history. …The essay is clearly written and engaging, and it makes terrific use of the Journals, providing a sort of compendium of many of the relevant passages on the subject, as well as a comprehensive inventory of the artifacts found by Thoreau. …In closing, we want to reiterate that we think this essay stands to make a substantial contribution to Thoreau studies,…. Thank you again for your excellent work, Duncan."

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Finally, I'm extremely grateful to the poet, Catherine Staples, and other readers for their responses. Here, with her permission, are Ms Staples' kind words:
I am re-reading your marvelous article on Arrowheading, I love it, it's full of marvels and beautifully written, not unlike the arrowheads themselves.

So much of this article feels essential to me as a poet, sometimes the universe seems synched. I can't tell you how thrilled I am to be reading your work! Wait until I send you the trace Triassic dinosaur print poem and the maker of arrowhead poem which was meant to be read last in my reading. I wish I had another five days in Concord to speak with you about these things.

But first let me tell you some of the things I loved: the notion that as he walked Henry was scanning not just for flora, fauna but for arrowheads AND the idea that the artifacts were like time warps that provided him with a sense of companionship when he seemed most solitary, exactly! Yes. And in looking at the artifacts and in holding them tangibly in hand they're like Wordsworth's spots of time, they retrieve and renew. They recharge the imagination and they bring back his days with his brother, and they connect him with like-minded souls & culture of another time period. They are indeed companionship. In my current manuscript, which is one part elegy/ celebration of my brother, I have tried to make landscapes I shared with him function as spots of time or artifacts or icons, they are good company in his absence. It seems you, too, have faced perhaps an even greater loss, my heartfelt sympathy.

Duncan, I also loved your prospecting connections with Thoreau, identifying with the same sort of accurate "mapping of finds" and growing mastery in reading the landscape. I first came upon the reading of landscape as a rider, some of it was pure necessity. The ponies then horses we were riding were often easily spooked so you studied and scanned so as to anticipate the events that might unseat you! Then, too, there was the navigation of wandering out and trying to make your way home, left at the lady slippers, right at the place where the black snake slithered off!

Catherine Staples
Honors Program, Villanova University

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The Rattling Window
www.catherinestaples.com