

Maine Archaeology

The Newsletter of The Maine Archaeological Society

Natalie Dana-Lolar (Passamaquoddy/Penobscot) at Schoodic Peninsula
(Photo Credit: Elliot Higger)

Winter 2022

Hope everyone is enjoying the winter. We have some great articles in this issue, so we are going to dive right in with contributions from **Bonnie Newsom**, **Natalie Dana-Lolar** and **Isaac St. John** - a team of Wabanaki archaeologists revisiting legacy collections in Acadia National Park, **Richard Doyle** on a Munsungun quarry site in northern Maine, and **Arthur Spiess** with some excellent book recommendations to get us through the cold months. Also, if you are looking for something to do when it's below zero check out *Diggin'in*, a series of interviews with archaeologists hosted by the Peabody Institute of Archaeology and the Massachusetts Archaeological Society. See link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgRdZZQrLXTM7eO5iC9SwTw>

Team of Wabanaki Archaeologists Re-visit Legacy Collections in Acadia National Park

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Tomkewey kecciyat, kcahqi-skicin... walkewakonihkul
kcitomitahamqotul naka na nihtol qinoteweyal...yuhtol nit
kansuhsomonnuk wikultihits...pomawsikhukuniya-te sitom naka
ulankeyutomoniya qocom. Yuhtol-oc nit akonutasikil skicin
elapeksits.

Native... archaeological sites are something so special and genuine... these are the sites our ancestors lived on... surviving on the resources of the shore and living in harmony with nature.

These are important parts of Native history.
(Passamaquoddy Speakers: Dick Sockabasin/David A. Francis)

<http://www.pportal.org>

Native American archaeological sites in U.S. and Canadian National Parks represent the unique and fragile heritage of North America's Indigenous peoples; however, Indigenous involvement in research and interpretation of archaeological sites in parks has yet to become routine. An archaeological research team led by Dr. Bonnie Newsom from the University of Maine is working to change that at Acadia National Park by blending conventional archaeological analyses with Indigenous language, perspectives, and community outreach.

Acadia National Park (ANP) is home to 24 known Native American archaeological sites, the majority of which are coastal sites currently



Dentate Pottery from Acadia National Park Legacy Collections
(Photo Credit: Matthew James)

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threatened by climate change induced sea level rise and human impacts (Wright et al. 2004:272). Stewarding these cultural spaces in consultation with Maine's four federally recognized tribes (Maliseet, MicMac, Passamaquoddy, Penobscot) is integral to the Park Service mission.

Shell heaps or middens are the most common type of Indigenous archaeology site in ANP. These sites generally have excellent preservation making them important repositories of past cultural and paleoenvironmental data. Most of the Native American archaeological sites in ANP range between 3,000 and 500 years old, although some archaeological evidence indicates a deeper antiquity of Wabanaki engagement with ANP lands.

Archaeological research in ANP has been intermittent (Moorehead 1922; Sanger 1974; Mack and Clark 2015; Wright et al. 2004) and past archaeological research focused heavily on documenting the location, size, and erosion threats to sites. Some analyses of the site contents have occurred, but the analyses and reporting have been limited and this has inhibited understandings of Wabanaki connections to ANP.

Recently, Dr. Newsom and student researchers embarked upon a project to expand current understandings of Indigenous connections to ANP through an examination of Indigenous archaeological sites and legacy collections at ANP. The research team uses an "Indigenous archaeology" approach which is defined as archaeology "with, for, and by" Indigenous peoples (Nicholas and Andrews 1997).



Isaac St. John (Maliseet) inspecting lithic sources at Acadia National Park
(Photo Credit: Rebecca Cole-Will)

The research team includes two Wabanaki graduate students. Natalie Dana-Lolar (Passamaquoddy) is a PhD student in UMaine's Anthropology and Environmental Policy program, and Isaac St. John (Maliseet) is Master's student in Anthropology studying at the University of New Brunswick. Both students aspire to Indigenize archaeological narratives and practices by blending conventional archaeological science with Wabanaki world views.

The researchers are working with collections from two locations in ANP. One is on the mainland on Schoodic Peninsula and the other is an offshore island site. Collections from these locations have been curated at ANP for decades with no active role in Wabanaki society. At present, the project focuses on lithic and ceramic analyses drawing upon conventional analytical methods, Indigenous language, and Indigenous community engagement. By approaching the analysis in this way, the team seeks to connect past and present peoples and reinforce Indigenous knowledges, particularly with regard to human/materiality and human/environment relationships.

Indigenous language factors heavily into the analytical and interpretive approaches. As part of the analytical process students identify relevant Wabanaki terms to describe and interpret the items their ancestors left behind. For example, the phrase "malsapsqey yut sikuwan" translates to "this arrowhead is made of flint" and the word "pquonessokhikonahkik" translates to "shell midden." The integration of language into the analysis in terms of things like animacy, composition, root words, etc., adds another layer of social meaning to interpreting material culture and helps team members view archaeological materials from the perspective of the makers and users. It also strengthens Indigenous language capacity among the students and can serve as a basis for additional language learning resources for Wabanaki communities.

Wabanaki community outreach and engagement are key components of the project and although this aspect of the project has been limited by pandemic restrictions, the group has communicated routinely with the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers from the four communities on the scope and direction of the research. Additionally, efforts are underway to develop a community webinar series on shell heaps and climate change threats to heritage sites.

The project is one of several current initiatives at the University of Maine designed to give Wabanaki people a greater voice in interpretation and management of their archaeological heritage. This research was funded by a Second Century Stewardship award from Schoodic Institute at Acadia National Park, the National Park Service Cultural Resources Fund, and the University of Maine's Academic Prominence Initiative Grant.

*For a list of cited references please contact the editor.

Recent Archaeological Work in Northern Maine

Richard Doyle

Over the last few years, I have been part of a small crew investigating the archaeology of a recently rediscovered outcrop or quarry site of red and green Munsungun chert. The project is headed by Heather Rockwell, PhD. of Salve Regina University, Newport, Rhode Island, and Nathaniel Kitchel, PhD. of Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire. Last season's survey work centered on a landform about a kilometer from the actual quarry site and took place during the second week of August.



Overview of the first and smallest site identified, likely Paleoindian in age (Photo Credit: Richard Doyle)

The landform ranged from wet, poorly drained areas covered in sedges with adjacent till and thick spruce new growth to well drained open hardwood stands. Areas to be subjected to shovel test pits were determined by careful foot survey and locating lithic

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flaking debris in tree throws, skidder trails, and other ground disturbances.

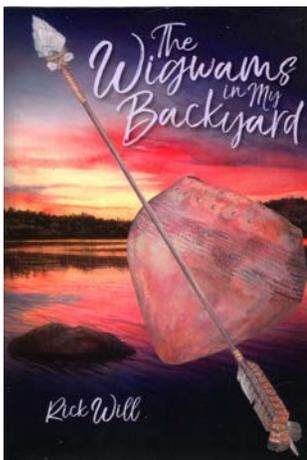
Three sites were found and at least two of them are likely Paleoindian in age as determined by the presence of channel flakes. These two sites are located on smallish, somewhat isolated till deposits. The larger site has a skidder trail through the middle of it and is much larger in extent. Although the larger site was tested to a greater degree than the other two sites its estimated age remains undetermined.

In all twenty-three test pits were excavated and only two were negative. As one would expect with sites related to quarrying activities primary flakes were common as well as secondary thinning flakes. More formal tools were limited to broken bifaces and a few unifacial tools. Other than the distinctive channel flakes, no formal diagnostic tools were located during this survey.

Future work in the area will include a field school by Salve Regina College and additional survey efforts on adjacent landforms will also continue. It's so interesting to see how ancient sites are positioned over the landscape in relation to the area's sources of the much-desired Munsungun toolstone.

Three Good Reads Arthur Spiess

We want to bring three good archaeology books to your attention that provide something for all of us. Archaeologists are sometimes accused of not doing enough public education, not enough to make our work available to the interested public. The MAS does not usually do formal book reviews of professional publications because, well, you can read them yourselves and who really cares what one professional archaeologist says about another one's work. But these books are special, each for its own reasons and each for a targeted audience.

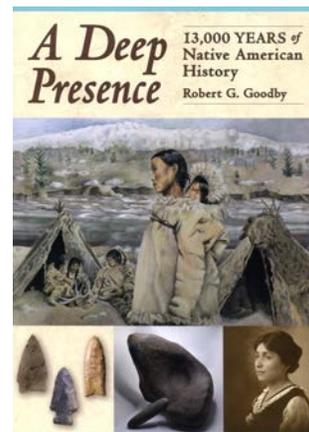


Viewed as a series, *The Wigwams in My Backyard* (Rick Will 2017), *A Deep Presence: 13,000 Years of Native American History* (Robert G. Goodby, 2021) and *The Archaeology of the Atlantic Northeast* (Matthew W. Betts and Gabriel Hrynck 2021) take us from an educational experience and adventure for junior high readers, through a popular and enjoyably readable account of northern New England archaeology, to what will be the textbook and reference for graduate students and those with an advanced interest for the next decades. The theme that runs

through all three books is anthropological archaeology, Indigenous people as human beings, and archaeology as a means of reconstructing and examining human behavior, not just pots and stones. We will provide information on how/where to order these books below.

In *The Wigwams in My Backyard* (178 pages), a young teenage boy from the Ellsworth, Maine, area finds himself waking up in a wigwam in an seasonal village that existed in his back yard on the edge of a lake about 1000 years ago. Not speaking the language, Matt (the teenager) is treated as a odd guest, eventually befriended, realizes he has to learn and contribute as best he can, and moves with the group of families through several seasons. (He eventually makes it back to the 21st century.) Along the way we are treated to

a detailed reconstruction of Maine life at the time, much of it verifiable archaeologically. Rick Will (an experienced Maine archaeologist and a professional potter) fills in details that allow us to envision what we often miss in the archaeological record. His vision is credible, completely engaging, and (we assume) easily read by the target audience (junior high) or easily readable as a family story to younger children. Frankly, there were times when it was hard to put the book down - some adventure involved. And for adult archaeologists, Rick's reconstructions are so good that the book serves as an ethnographic account, making this writer stop and think "well, OK, plausible, and what archaeological evidence should we be looking for" An example is harvesting hazelnuts around a clearing in early fall, and the implication that the hazelnut trees and their environment are tended a bit to encourage them to grow. Not horticulture, but a managed environment. I would recommend college students reading sections of the book as an exercise in thinking about interpretation of the archaeological record.



A Deep Presence: 13,000 Years of Native American History (138 pages) is a masterpiece example of archaeology public education, focused on New Hampshire with some references to Maine. It is a pleasure to read and attractive, with the right amount of anthropology, archaeological data, and how archaeologists do fieldwork (or try to, including perseverance). One of the strengths of the book is how archaeologists do interpretation of their data. Bob Goodby is a professor of anthropology at Franklin Pierce University, and

also runs a contract archaeology business. Plus, our beloved Paleoindians get a starring role, with a lesson in CRM archaeology. It is perfect for undergraduates, avocationalists, and the public interested in New England archaeology. There are 9 chapters, including an introduction to Native People of New England, the time scale, environmental change, and an introduction to the archaeological record of northern New England. Abenaki survival until the present, an Abenaki family's life in Keene, N.H. around the beginning of the 20th century, and recent issues wrap up the book. Four chapters focus on four different archaeological sites; Goodby and his crews' work, results, and interpretation, including a stone fish weir and a site with (burned/calced) rattlesnake bones in multiple occupations. The longest archaeology chapter covers the Paleoindian Tenant Swamp site, construction of a new Keene Middle School and athletic fields, cultural resources management (CRM) issues and successes, public education with an obligatory atlas, and a very accessible summary of Paleoindian archaeology and site interpretation. This book is perfect for the interested public, advanced high school students, and college student in their first archaeology course. In writing style and organization, it is a lesson to those of us who might aspire to interpret archaeology for the public.

The Archaeology of the Atlantic Northeast (383 pages) tackles a professional synthesis of what we know and don't know about the last 13,000 years of environmental change and cultural Indigenous archaeology of a region defined as Maine, a portion of Quebec, and the Atlantic Provinces. The international boundary fades and the authors focus our attention on a geographic region that "hangs together" with a (usually) unified culture history. The shift in geographic focus north, a 68-page bibliography (including material published in 2020) and an index make this the "go to" reference for the next couple of decades for a resurgent focus on archaeology with the Gulf of St. Lawrence as its geographic center.

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The Maine Archaeological Society (TMAS), a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, was founded in 1956 and currently consist of professional and avocational archaeologists, as well as individuals of the general public who are interested in furthering the objectives of the society. The organization's mission is to promote archaeological awareness through education and publication, and encourage archaeological conservation.

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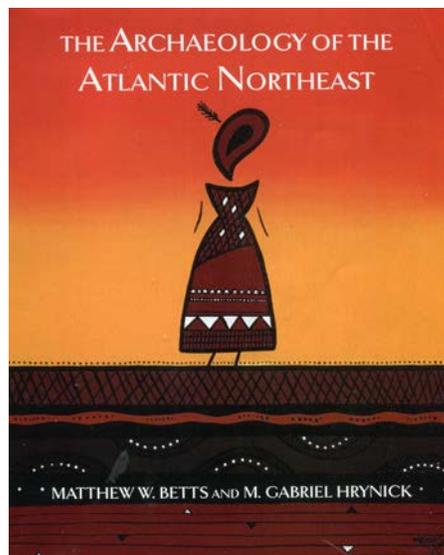
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Three Good Reads continued..... Crammed with archaeological facts, and good black and white photographs and drawings of sites and artifacts, the authors focus on behavior interpretation and questions asked of the archaeological record. Matt Betts (Canadian Museum of Civilization) and M. Gabriel (Gabe) Hrynick (University of New Brunswick, raised in Aroostook County, Maine) know their stuff.

Indigenous people (Forward by Donald Soctomah), their lives, history, behavior, and its archaeological record, are the theme, including the Contact period. There are some big research questions (mobility, coastal-interior relationships, cross-cultural contact, long-distance trade and communication of ideas) and many smaller ones to pursue, as the authors intended (summarized in the Conclusion). I read this book through once for pleasure and to absorb the overall view and am now going back with sharpened pencils (and plenty of space in the margins) thinking about all the research possibilities.

The Wigwams in My Backyard. Rick Will. 2017 first printing. ISBN 13-978-1-978167-7-28. Available through Amazon.com \$8.95 paperback. (Available for Kindle as well.)

A Deep Presence: 13,000 Years of Native American History. Robert G. Goodby. 2021. ISBN 978-1-942155-40-9. Peter E. Randall Publisher, Portsmouth, NH. www.perpublisher.com \$28.00

The Archaeology of the Atlantic Northeast. Matthew W. Betts and M. Gabriel Hrynick. 2021. The University of Toronto Press. ISBN 978-1-4875-8794-9 (paper). Available in cloth and PDF as well. Utorontopress.com \$59.95.

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