

ÉLI LUWEYOK KÌKAYUNKAHKE – SO SAID THE DEPARTED ELDERS

Rolf Cachat-Schilling

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INTRODUCTION

How Native nations of the Northeast traditionally utilized land remains poorly elucidated, especially in terms of ceremonial lands. Study of Native land management continues to suffer from generalization and error. Current understanding of land management is hampered by inaccurate and generalized notions about traditional indigenous practices. An Ojibwe orator expressed the disparity of worldviews thus: “My brother you have come to teach us there is only one way, for all people, to know the Great Spirit . . . My brother, there are many species of trees, and each tree has leaves that are not alike” (Delage et al. 1994:319). The same can be said for ways of knowing. Behind the questions of where and how Northeastern Algonquians of the Late Woodland and contact periods practiced our ways and stewarded our land hide explanations embedded in ethnohistory, documentary records, and archaeological site data. Management of ceremonial lands by Northeastern Algonquian nations is explained through land documents, land use terminology, site distribution, early contact attestations, and other cultural expressions. Indigenous sources give the characterizing and explanatory details that are absent from exogenous narratives. In absence of cultural knowledge, many artifacts are undecipherable. Atalay explained,

A noncritical archaeology that is not based on or informed by the experiences and epistemologies of indigenous people, even if carried out by Native people on Indigenous land, would be, to use Trigger’s terms (1984), a nationalist archaeology—one that seeks to examine a particular indigenous region or cultural group to contribute to nationalist concerns [Habu, Fawcett, and Matsunaga, 2008:30].

Through the synergy of disparate fields of study, composite epistemology yields improved understanding.

Early historic records exist describing funerary practices of nations in Northeast America, and archaeological digs confirm that record. The resting places of the many thousands who fell victim to massacre and epidemic remain largely unrecorded. The matter is complicated by variable practices; for example, Powhatan are recorded at contact as engaging in mound burials, cremation, and direct interment (Gold 2004:31; James 2009[1928]:16), and the Nanticoke were eyewitnessed using secondary burial, probably on a ritual cycle (Heckewelder 2004[1821]:15). Heckewelder’s testament about Nanticoke mortuary practice during early contact is confirmed by Curry’s (2015:7–10) review of practices in the Nanticoke homeland and their neighbors. At the same time, closely related Monsi, Unami, Unalatchgo (Wnalatchgo, “a person follows the waves”; Lënapeuw, or Delaware) and others employed direct interment (Ruttenber 1992a[1872]:23). Cremation, direct interment in a flexed or extended position, bundle burial, and other burial practices are evidenced in the archaeological record across the area of focus (see

Figure 1 and Table 1). Places of worship are neglected, however. Even today, ceremonial sites continue to be demolished without record, indigenous consent, or timely tribal consultation; Sandisfield and Shutesbury, Massachusetts, are two current examples within a small area. The hired academic reviewer for a suspected burial site in Shutesbury, Massachusetts (Figure 1, Location 1) could not account for burials of the late 1600s genocide victims in the area (Johnson 2017). In the Shutesbury case, objections from archaeologists, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), and other indigenous parties were ignored by the local planning board, similar to the outcome of the Sandisfield sacred site case (Doug Harris, personal communication 2017). The issue of destroying history before recovering data plagues preservation of the physical and cultural heritage of Northeast Algonquians.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

The record of burials alone speaks to diversity of practices, diversity of location, plus the relevance of social status, time frame, and cultural status of the deceased in burial location (Lavin and Thomas 2023, Table 3.1, 63-64). At the same time, burials speak to regional cohesion within a suite of practices. Distribution of burials also demonstrates that all water bodies and even areas far from water should not be ignored as potential burial sites (Lavin and Thomas 2023, Table 3.2, 64-65). The consistent correlation pattern of burial locations with segregated stone ceremonial locations gives further cause to rethink how we understand Northeast Algonquian concepts of land use zoning (Cachat-Schilling 2017).

Cemeteries are found fairly frequently by accident, partly due to convergent patterns between indigenous land use and extensive postcolonial land development. Genocide victims were buried of norm, as demonstrated by massacre victims in military campaigns against Native nations, such as Mystic, Turner's Falls, Sand Creek, and Wounded Knee (Wooster 1988:82–83, 126–127, 132, 136–138, 141, 145–148). In fact, Native “women and children regularly comprised a sizable percentage of casualties in ‘Indian-white’ conflicts after 1865” (Wooster 1988:138), clearly defining those conflicts as truly genocide. History records indicate that genocide against Northern Native Americans began more than two centuries earlier, in the 1630s onward, with English and Dutch massacres that killed mostly noncombatants at Mystic, Nipsachuck, Natick, Deer Island, Peskeompscut, Odanak, Weckquesgek, Alipkonck, Nanichiestewak and many other places. Epidemics can also be expected to produce abnormal burial patterns.

Ancient cultural groups have been characterized by Euroamerican archaeologists and defined by arbitrary outsider names; these groups express the majority of known Native burial practices in Northeastern United States and adjacent parts of Canada. Robbins (1940:17–28) compiled an early classification of New York and adjacent cultural groups, partly defined by mortuary practice. Robbins' classes demonstrate a suite of practices that repeat over time through the study region.

Contact period burials along the East Coast from Cape Cod to lower Connecticut are often discovered in the process of construction and are quite often damaged or looted. Relevant data are often lost. Such is the case with George Sheldon's grave-diggery around Pakomtuk

(Pacomtuck, Deerfield, Massachusetts). The same took place, minus burials, at Amiskwônowôkoik (“Beaver tail hill place,” Odanak Nipmuc, South Deerfield [Day 1975:51]), a pattern that repeats across Massachusetts. What we do inherit by way of information casts a varied shadow. Convert Mahicans (Wnahktitukeok) at the Indian Burial Ground in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, were buried like other Christians, but were utterly segregated.

We have, thus far, four types of burials characterized by different methods and location types: Native traditional common-person burial, Christian-convert Native common-person burial, large sachem burial mounds, and post-conversion, nondescript sachem-lineage burials. We must first know a person’s period of life, religion, and social status to understand how and where that person would be buried; much less do we need to know the specific tribe of the subject (Lavin and Thomas 2023, Table 3.2, 63-64).

Aside from the four described classes of burials and types of interment, there is the widespread practice of secondary burial in ossuaries. Contact records for ossuaries, as opposed to charnel house preparations, are elusive in their core area of the Middle Atlantic and points somewhat south. Instead, rich contact period details on ossuaries hail from Huronia in the north (Curry 2015:1– 4), with some detail from Nanticoke country. Curry (2015) stated,

True ossuaries have been found as far south as the Pee Dee River in South Carolina (Rathbun 1989:12; Reed 1998) to as far north as Cape Cod, Massachusetts (McManamon et al. 1986). Ossuaries are also well documented among the historic Huron in the Great Lakes region in Ontario (see Thwaites 1897[X]:279–305; Kidd 1953; Tooker 1964).

Curry further notes that historic reports are confirmed by assessment of Ossossané (Kidd 1953:350– 379).

Burial site location in relation to ceremonially significant azimuths, soil type, terrain position, and water all speak to the time of the burial and the person/people placed. Locational factors manifest the sociological factors named above. Locational, contextual, and composition details for a representative sample of burials across the Delaware-Mahican-Nipmuc-Mohegan dialectic territory (Lavin and Thomas 2023, Tables 3.1-3.3, 63-65). “Site Orient” refers to the reciprocal view between heaven and the departed as available at the site. Data from the described tables demonstrate that no common factor applies uniformly to any quality describing burial places. No simple set of factors can accurately predict whether or not a burial exists at a given location. Each factor shows abundant exceptions; even soil type and proximity to water are not completely reliable.

The lack of predicable burial site pattern was observed by Benjamin Smith as early as 1948 in his survey of 44 Native cemeteries in Maine: “The cemeteries do not appear to have been located in conformance with any particular plan since they occur in twelve instances on lakes, four instances at tidewater, in 26 instances inland on rivers and have been discovered in one instance in open country” (Smith 1948:4). Not mentioned by Smith, the prevalence of researchers looking along rivers as opposed to “open country” has great potential to influence results—a sampling skew issue.

A cremation site sits just above the Taunton River on gravel at Dighton (Rose 1952), and in Carver, Massachusetts, a multi-period cremation ground rested just head high above a small stream near a cranberry bog, where a late phase copper axe was among finds (Sautter 1967), demonstrating unpredictability. Wampanucket 6 cremations yielded radiocarbon dates from 4300 BP (Robbins 1959). In Charleston, Rhode Island, a Late Archaic to Ceramic tradition cremation site also contained an Adena-type “birdstone” artifact (Pit #1; Potter 1959, cited in Sautter 1967:22). Dincauze (1968: passim; 1972:40–61) examined cremation cemeteries and cultural individuation in Massachusetts from the Late Archaic period.

Sautter (1967:23) noted similar cremation patterns reported by Ritchie in New York State, and each reported site also contained tools that appear to have been ritually cremated. Fire as manitou remains prominent as a vehicle of transfer for metaphysical items like prayer but also for physical transfer (Lënapei Kwëtëlétuwakàna; Delaware rules of conduct, Delaware Tribe 2012b). Pagoulatos (2009) noted the elaborate cremation rituals of the Late/Terminal Archaic, and noted that these are poorly understood, while he hypothesized that climactic changes may have brought about simplified funerary practices in a changed food economy, and possibly changed social organization, using a greater diversity of sources.

Adding to the complexity of Algonquian burial paradigms, new research on Esopus band Monsi (Delawarean) people in the west mid-Hudson Valley has indicated individual burials co-located with maize pits and post molds on a perched bench above a secondary waterway in the period between 1200 and 1400 C.E. (Hart et al. 2017:137–151).

At Titicut, Massachusetts (a Titicus also exists in North Salem, southeast New York), the cemetery was recorded as abandoned by 1621 (the estimated period of use was 1500–1620; Robbins 1967:62–76). Among the 26 ancestors were apparent cremations, while most of the deceased lay in flexed position, aligned northeast to southwest, alongside fine grave goods, with apparent funerary feast remains mixed in the backfill. In all those respects, Titicut cemetery resembles the practice found at Minisink in Montague, New Jersey (Figure 1, no. 24; Tables 1 and 2). Minisink and other cemeteries in its area contained precontact and postcontact burials (Heye and Pepper 2008:12–17). The presence of the same suite of practices from Wampanoag (Titicut) land to Narragansett to Monsi (Minisink) evidenced in burials closely predating contact demonstrates a high level of uniformity in cultural tradition between Algonquian relatives of the Northeast, even when separated by distance. The described earlier periods show similar uniformity, but always with exceptions. Also expressing cultural cohesion, a dog burial existed at Titicut, which is described as being the same in method as those of the children present. Fitzgerald (2009) described funerary treatment of dogs as family among Algonquian cousins in Virginia and neighboring areas. That a dog should be treated like a human is of no surprise to the Lënapeuk (Delaware), as tribal rules of conduct admonish us to treat dogs well (Lënapei Kwëtëlétuwakàna; Delaware Tribe 2012b). The modern Lënapeuw word for the dog of one’s child means “animal grandchild” (nuxwisxàm; Thompson 2015, Part 8).

Some burials after 1600 may show cultural response to the sudden trauma of epidemics, whereas some late cremations and bundle burials may represent ritual interventions or revival of former practice. It does not seem that a clear explanation has been formed as to the variability of

late coastal mortuary practices in combination with the more prevalent uniformity seen across the Northeastern Algonquian region within given older periods. A further wrinkle in the record of mortuary practice is the possibility that some burials have been misclassified as trash pits due to the absence of bone. Clark and Cluster (2003: passim) suggest that secondary burial practices of record among Nanticoke (noted above) and associated Lēnapeuk require re-examination of pit articles due to historical evidence of possible ritual character. Thus, some ceremonial sites may be misclassified as economic sites.



Figure 1 – Wisatinoag, a cemetery from Early Archaic through Contact times that was 80% destroyed before private citizens joined to buy and preserve the land. Sitting on a perched sand deposit, it is a classic cemetery in this region, but only one of many forms found here. From this upland resting place, our ancestors keep watch over our villages and crop plots below.

Sacred lands—cemeteries, hunting/collecting grounds, and prayer gathering grounds—occupy consistent location relative to planting and village lands. On the Connecticut River’s west bank in northwest Massachusetts, in the footsteps of the Pakomtuk, continues the story of peri-contact period Native ceremonial land types and their relationships. While postcolonial George Sheldon was grave robbing about his home, nearby Algonquian cousins rested in a cemetery with evidence of both ancient and recent use. Wisatinoag (Wissatinnewag: wissati, “glistening”; noag, “small hill”; Abenaki and Nipmeuw) cemetery in Greenfield, Massachusetts (just north of Figure 1, no. 2), perches high above water in a sand deposit, not far from the historic village of Peskeompscut (Nipmeuw: piske/peske, “twin, pair”; opmsk, locative combining form of qussuk; “rock,” + loc. suffix, ut > “at the twin rocks”) and another village across a small river (Corroheagan, “Indian” Land Deeds for Hampshire County [ILDHC], 1923:folios 84–86). The cemetery sits above the villages (otanak), which sit above the planting lands (kuttinakish), while above them all sits the stone ceremonial site (máunumúet, Nipmeuw; Trumbull 1903:65); this zonal relationship is a template that describes a basic Northeastern Algonquian “zoning practice.” The first Ceremonial Stone Landscape in the Northeast (Figure 1, no. 3) to be declared eligible by the National Register of Historic Places lies a few miles east of Wisatinoag, past Peskeompscut (National Park Service 2008). Just to the northeast of Wisatinoag

is a second, quite unique, burial, possibly involving pauwaûog (priests). Wisatinoag suffered dire illegal destruction before a minor portion of the cemetery was rescued by private caretakers. However, a local avocational archaeologist noted slight mounds, some with small stones around them, previously not visible but exposed by excavation (Nelson 2004:2–4). Here, the ceremonial stone landscape lies to the east, on high ground, near headwaters between two villages, above the sacred cove on the Connecticut called Mantahelas (Barton’s Cove) and in view of several sacred hill groups (National Park Service 2008: supporting documents).

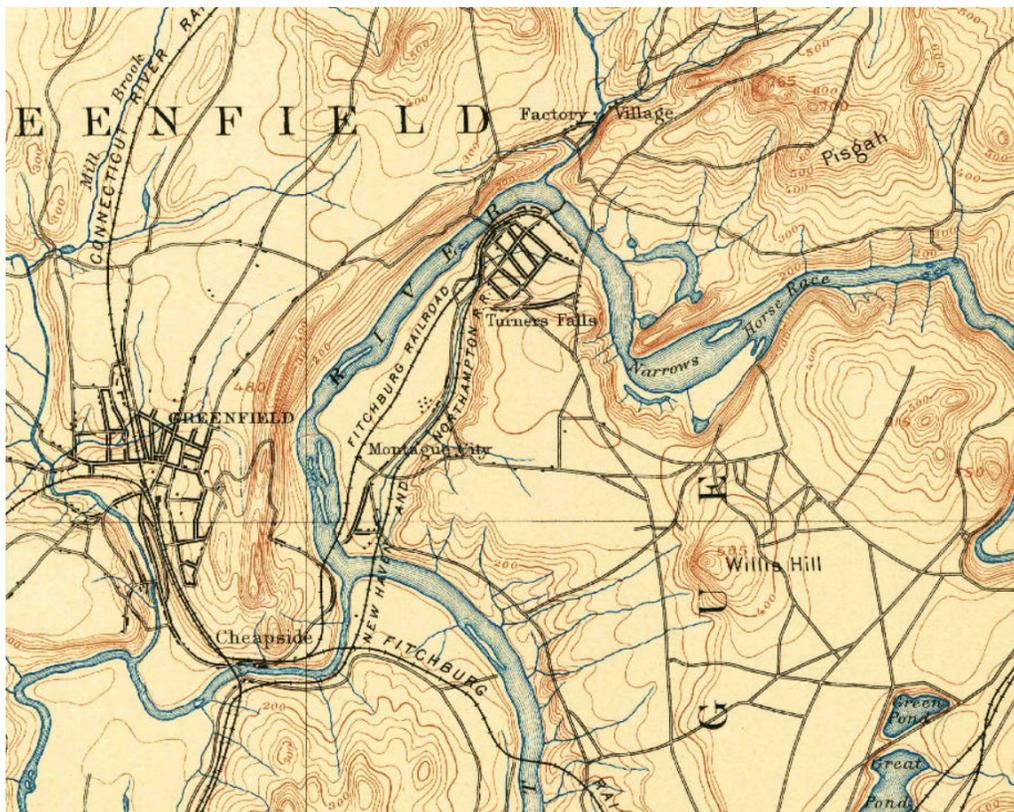


Figure 2 – Site of Peskeompskut, Wisatinoag, the Hanneman Paleo site, Ceremonial Hill stone prayer site, villages and cemeteries through all periods. The living and planting lands are on the lowlands, while the hunting, gathering and ceremonial sites lie mostly in the highlands. This template remains consistent across the region.

At Minisink, in present Montague, New Jersey (Figure 1, no. 24; Tables 1 and 2; “Min-asin-ink, “at the place where stones are gathered” [Heye & Pepper 2008:10]; mawen, “gather,” axsen, “stone,”+ loc. suffix > Mawenassinink > Minisink, Lënapeuw [Zeisberger 2012:97]), a cemetery excavated by a major supporter of the Museum of the American Indian lies several miles north of “Greater Minisink.” Van der Donck’s 1656 map shows Greater Minisink as the “capital” of the Monsi, which contains another cemetery (Ruttenber 1906:220–222). Heye’s excavation followed an initial amateur job, which noted “numerous ‘graves’ in close proximity” as “scarcely distinguishable” low mounds (Heye and Pepper 2008:13). Also observed was that the burial soil differed from its surrounding context, which Heye regarded as having been brought in from the banks of the Bena Kill, a creek at fair

distance, with ceremonial stone groupings in the surrounding hills. Another Monsi cemetery, the Van Etten site—which lies upriver, again on anomalous soil, again a few miles from the nearest village at Mecharienkonck (Heye and Pepper 2008:7; Figure 1, no. 35)—again, is a Late Woodland to postcontact burial site with mixed cultural features about a mile from sacred stone groupings.

The suite of village-cemetery-stone-prayer grouping repeats in modern Westchester and Putnam with the Kitchawank cemetery at Senasqua ([ax/ah]-sen, “stone, boulder,” sasqua/cisqua, Kitchawank, syn. assisku, “muddy, swampy,” Unami Lënapeuw [Zeisberger 2012:17], + loc. suffix, “boulder at the swamp,” < Sensasquaink; Figure 1, no. 43; Tables 1 and 2) that sat low next to a cattail marsh with a large boulder (Ruttenber 1992a[1872]:79). Senasqua lies across a small bay on the Hudson from Ossining (Assenink, “place of great stones”), where a ceremonial stone group once lay atop the ridge nearby Indian Point Nuclear Power Plant, close to Peekskill (Sackhoes, Kitchawank; Figure 1, no. 26). The Senasqua cemetery lies near the fortified village at Navish (Croton Neck, navas, “promontory/peninsula,” Unalatchgo Lënapeuw; see Navasink > Neversink [Go Reading Berks 2010]), just over a mile from the village of Ossining.

A few miles from Keakitis, on the south slope of Indian Hill above Lake Osceola (Yorktown, NY), under rocky soils of what is now Yorktown, New York, rests a cemetery of the Mohansic band Mahhekanneok, while a second lies in gravelly loam at Appamaghapough (Amawalk, New York; Yorktown Historical Society 2017) about a mile from a ceremonial stone landscape (Cachat-Schilling 2016a:37). Bear Swamp Siwanoy burial ground describes itself, while a Siwanoy sachem burial lay atop a rocky mount at Pelham’s Neck (Ruttenber 1992a[1872]:78–79, 81–82). Here, we see a diversity of soils and terrains for burials of varying kinds, while the relationship to water and ceremonial stone groupings is more consistent.

Boundary areas, whether on major or minor waterways, are replete with ceremonial sites. The west bank of the Hudson in the area of Newburgh, New York, is the recorded ceremonial site of Dans Kammer (Newburgh, NY), opposite the east bank of Fishkill Creek, on the bounds between Esopus and Ramapough Monsi Lënapeuk (Ruttenber 1992a[1872]:92–95). Upriver, along the recorded eastern division between “Wappinger,” Nochpeem, and Pachami Mahhekanneok, by the mouth of Sankpenak Creek, is another recorded Dans Kammer, in today’s Linlithgo, New York (Beauchamp 1907:47; Figure 1, no. 46). Linlithgo sits partly on the historic Livingston Manor tract. Both Dans Kammer are described as ceremonial dance grounds and are associated with ceremonial stone landscapes surrounding them. The east Dans Kammer lies just west of the Livingston Manor boundary, “East of Claverack Kill on Sauthier’s map” (Beauchamp 1907:48), where Acawaisic (ah, “giant,” + quassik, “stone” + gen. inflection + loc. suffix, > Ahquassaik, “of the giant stone”) is recorded as “a rock or great stone on the south [elsewhere as southeast] corner of another flat, or low piece of land called Nakawiawick (< Nakaowaewich; both in Beauchamp 1907:46–47). Wawanaquassik (Mahhekanneuw, wawana, “honoring,” + quassik, “stone,” > “offering place, monument” [Ruttenber 1992b[1872]:372], and/or Mawanaguassik, “gathered stones” [Beauchamp 1907:48]; viz. mkhaunmutwaukun, “reverence” [m’xaumutwakan, “honor state of mind” Mahikanneuw, Miles 2015:60, 33]) is recorded “on the north line of the manor, ‘where heapes [sic] of stone lie . . . which the Indians throw upon

another as they pass from an ancient custom among them” (Beauchamp 1907:48), clearly a ceremonial feature. A 1798 map places Wawanaquassik near Nanapanahackin[g] Creek (Beauchamp 1907:48), while a 1743 patent names Mawigenunk or Mawighunk as “place of assembly” (mawewi, “gathering,” (ehenda) mawewink, “gathering place,” + hacki, “land,” + loc. suffix, Unami Lënapeuw [Zeisberger 2012:88], maunauquemeh, “gathering,” Mahhekanneuw [Miles 2015:33]), and locates this about a half mile the east (Beauchamp 1907:48). Here we have recorded four named sacred sites on one tract, three of which are boulders or stone groupings described in documents and/or by their names as ceremonial in nature. The sacred stone and gathering sites lie north, east, southeast, and west of the farmlands granted as Livingston Manor, while a recorded village stood just north, where Claverack is today (called Pattkook; Beauchamp 1907:46–49; Figure 1, no. 47). Nearby, a 1678 woodlands deed is recorded as Paneschenakassick, which document claims, “the name alludes to stones” (Beauchamp 1907:48; penasse, “steep hillside,” + adj. affix + quassick + merged loc. suffix, “at the steep hillside of stones”), and possibly a tract where a ceremonial stone landscape is known by the author to remain. Wachanekassick is a place given as “to come out of stones,” and located in 1683 as “opposite Catskill” on the east Hudson bank, placing this east of today’s Rogers Island and west of old Pattkook (Claverack; Beauchamp 1907:49). Together, these ceremonial sites and stone-named places suggest another ceremonial district.

Up the Sankpenak (Roeliff Jansens Kill, sonkippog, “cool river” [Beauchamp 1907:49]; or sankpenasik, “of/at the difficult slopes,” sanàk> sank, “difficult” + penas(se), “steep slope/downhill,” + gen./loc. suffix), in Milan, rests the ostensible cemetery of the converted Shekomeko Mahhekanneok (Tsexkominkwoak > Checomingo, people “[of/at] place of eels,” 1798 map [Beauchamp 1907:48]; tsaxkaumeg, “eel” [Aupaumut 1824:44]; Lënapeuw, śaxamek, “eel” < śax, “straight,” -amek, combining form of “fish” [Zeisberger 2012:146, 154]; -ama(u)g(w), combining form of “fish,” Nipmeuw [Gustafson 2000:26]) The cemetery is west of Jackson Corners (1932 NRHP marker, County Route 56), about midway between Wawanaquassik and historic Shekomeko (Figure 1, no. 48), which lies on a little creek of the same name that empties into Sankpenak, with a nearby burial ground (Hunting 1897:25) where Pine Plains was founded. Significantly, Sankpenak begins north in Austerlitz (Figure 1, no. 49), flowing south to Copake (Figure 1, no. 50), by Taghkanic spring and sacred stone groups, then Sankpenak turns sharply west until it passes the cemetery at Milan, where it takes a second sharp turn north, distantly parallel to itself in the opposite direction, before finding the Hudson. Reciprocity is a major spiritual theme in Native America, and the reciprocal flow of Sankpenak delineates the entire ceremonial district. Continuity is another major theme, which is reflected in the networking of sacred sites across the land.

Stissing Mountain, formed of two ridges that reach 1,500 ft in elevation, is the source of Wappinger Creek, another boundary water with a suite of site types. Ceremonial stone landscapes are documented at Stissing Mountain, where “the Indian Pulpit” is described in the 1706 Little Nine Partners Crown Grant as a “crude stone altar” with steps (Hunting 1897:12–14). Said grant gives “Teesink” and “Stissinink” as the Mahhekanneuw name (Lënapeuw, sed, “early” + thissu/thèssu “frozen,” + sen, “stone,” + loc. suffix [Sed?]Thissenink > Teesink, [S]tissinink, “[Early?] Frozen Stone Place,” following grammar as per Pearson

1988[1972]:56–57; sun, assun “stone,” t’haso, t’hauthu, “frozen, cold,” Mahhekanneuw [Miles 2015:80]). On the lower slopes of the south mountain are suspected burials (Cachat-Schilling 1982) and a ceremonial platform of cobbles (Dans Kammer?) that views northeast across Thompson Lake and a look-alike island toward the former Mahican burial ground at Pine Plains (p. 14) on a steady tangent toward Copake Mountain. Sankpenak receives a tributary rising near a máunumúet (ceremonial stone landscape) on the west side of Copake Mountain (Figure 1, no. 50; axgōk, “snake” [Zeisberger 2012:3], + paug, “pond” + loc./gen. suffix (A) xkukpaik > Copake, “of/at the snake pond” [Beauchamp 1907:46]; skok, “snake” [Mohegan Tribe 2004:100]; axgòok, “snake,” Mahikanneuw [Miles 2015:77]; skôg, Odanak Nipmeuw [Gustafson 2000:17]). Taghkanick (Tohkomik, “place of the spring,” Mahikanneuw; tohkekom, “spring,” tohkoi-k’ûmû, “it comes cool,” Nipmeuw [Trumbull 1903:163]) “is said to have been the name of a spring on the west side of Copake” (West Copake Mt., with several ponds to its west [Beauchamp 1907:49]). Not far northeast of Copake are the unique and dramatic Bash Bish Falls (Pashpish “bursts forth,” Nipmeuw), quite possibly a place of ritual due to its ceremonial significance (Wittum Manitou 30 Northeast Anthropology No. 85/86, 2018 inhabits upland cascades and caves; Jenny Prentiss, personal communication 1976). These many sites form a landscape from the Hudson into Massachusetts where sacred stone groupings, villages, cemeteries, and planting lands share a watershed, but each is located in separate spaces. This area of concentrated sacred places lies along secondary, even minor, waterways, but also along a border between allies. Similarly, Sacred Hill Ceremonial Site and Wissatinnewag (Montague and Greenfield, MA) also belong to a concentration of sacred sites and lie along the boundary between Paugemtuk (Pakumtuk, Pocomtuck) Mahican, Nashaué Nipmuc, and Sokoki Abenaki divisions. Across the Northeast Algonquian region, villages reach deep inland on minor tributaries, burial grounds can be found in most terrains, and sacred places dot the highlands expressing continuity, reciprocity, and the Algonquian concept of a vertically tiered world.

Yantic Falls (Figure 1, no. 51) lies along the co-named river above its convergence with the Shetucket River, near Norwich, Connecticut. Here, the burial ground of Mohegan sôcumôk (leaders) perches in a ravine on eroded slopes a few miles north of the Mohegan Tribe and historic village sites. As Deputy THPO for the Mohegan Tribe, Elaine Thomas clarifies, “The land chosen to bury the deceased was done with careful reflection by Native peoples. There are examples of common factors found within the landscape that combine the deliberations that were given when deciding on traditional burying grounds” (Thomas 2017). Each of these Native burial choices associates with ceremonial stone landscapes and the natural landscape in a complex spiritual and ritual conversation between our world of land, the heavenly world, and the underworld sources of water in a prayer dynamic that binds these worlds into one experience.

SOCIOPOLITICAL HISTORY

Sociopolitical history reveals where cultural information has been repressed and where we might look to retrieve vital explanations. The non-Native world knows little regarding many of the dominant ceremonies of Northeastern Algonquian region as practiced from the introduction of the maize-beans-squash complex (circa 1200 C.E.) to the introduction of alien epidemic disease (circa 1615 C.E.). In part, a prevailing agenda in Euroamerican history

manifests as a concerted effort to erase the existence of indigenous peoples from the land. Villages were renamed after places in England, as well as mountains, valleys, rivers, lakes, and even streams. Native names that described place and function were replaced with names that evoke Biblical hegemony and its purported genocides: Canaan, Pisgah, Jericho, Zion, Providence, and so on. There are some hints that colonists and their clergy expressed their bias against Native religion by renaming indigenous sacred places with such names as Sodom, Devil's Hopyard, Witches' Meadow, Juggler's Meadow, and Satan's Kingdom (respectively, East Haddam, CT, Salem, CT, Leverett, MA and Northfield, MA). Algonquian conjuring with tools was often referred to as jugglery (Ruttenber 1992b [1872]:317–318). Where mythic hegemony is not invoked through renaming, places are renamed for engineers of the genocide against Native Americans: Columbus, Amherst, Turner, and so on.

Part and parcel of genocide is a process of erasure from the roots. A misinformation campaign led by persons such as Rev. Williams and George Sheldon, at Pocumtuck, Massachusetts, sought to vilify and reduce indigenous nations to a mythologized people unworthy of consideration (Bruchac 2011: passim). A standard piece of that epistemic genocide is to sever education from the continuum of heritage, a practice that continues today. By framing Native nations as unknown and unknowable, past tense, and thus providing essentially nothing in the way of education about Native nations, Natives are effectively made to disappear. Laws banning indigenous religion (beginning as early as 1633; see below), cultural practices, and national status erased indigenous nations in several ways, which persists after 400 years. Recent cases in Mashpee, Sandisfield, and Shutesbury, Massachusetts, as well as Standing Rock, South Dakota, are just a few of countless incidents that demonstrate continued government engagement in religious and cultural oppression across the nation (Peters 2015: passim; Dave Archambault, personal communication 2016; Cachat-Schilling 2016b:1–16).

The indigenous frustration with obstinacy and ignorance of would-be colonial negotiators is expressed in the following complaint from a Pocumtuck sachem:

It is usuall for the English to speake much to us that come though they understand little . . . wee desire that if any Messengers bee sent to us from the English they may bee such as are not lyares and tale carryers, but sober men, and such as we can understand"—Pocumtuck Sachem Onapequin, 1659 [Pulsifer 1859:236–237].

Breakdown in communications manifested partly in poor transfer of information about Algonquian culture, which the colonists dealt with by imposing Eurocentric revision on their neighbors in education and in print media, excluding Native voices.

How the English ingratiated themselves upon the Nipmuc and Pocumtuck is quite telling. From Massachusetts Governor Shirley's August 30, 1742, letter to the Duke of Newcastle comes the following quotation:

The only hold which this Government has had upon 'em, has been to supply 'em with a trade upon cheaper terms than the French can, it has ever been its policy to maintain truck or trading houses in their neighbourhood in order to keep 'em dependent upon us for their

cloathing, corn, rum and other provisions and necessaries [Maine Historical Society, 1908:251].

The first round of deeds produced in these deals, plied with alcohol and threats, were egregious enough (ILDHC 1923: xi) that the Boston General Court ordered a second round of deeds to lend legitimacy (ILDHC 1923: folios 1–2). The same documents were then used to force the remaining survivors from their land and to make of them a marginalized people who literally lived at the fringes of colonial towns (Doug Harris, personal communication 2016; Jenny Prentiss, personal communication 1978).

Even so, much information is provided in deed documents on Nipmuc and Pocumtuck land management methods, land tenure rules, and sacred sites distribution. The legal fiction of indigenous land deals in the United States is burdened by the negating mass of consensus, much affirmed by protests from Native nations and their European observers. Pearson leaves us a deft nutshell for the many official protests on the subject:

Since various kinds of “possession” have been subsumed under the notion of relational in Delaware [Lënapeuw], it is not at all surprising that the Delaware [Lënapeuk] people (and other [Native] groups) found themselves unable to understand the European concept of possessing personal articles and real estate. The European notion of “possession” is one-sided and exclusive while the Delaware and their neighbors tended to view possession as a non-exclusive, reciprocal relation between possessor and possessed [Pearson 1988(1972):31].

Out of erasure comes a void in knowledge of regional Algonquian nations, particularly in regard to ritual practice. A further myth has been sustained that Native religious practices are “dead” and 32 *Northeast Anthropology* No. 85/86, 2018 “mysterious.” Publications of many missionaries contain a great deal of information about Native religion, as do many early contact diaries and reports as well as living Native practitioners. The one source that has been suppressed by Euroamerican society is the indigenous source, something that ethnographers attempted to address around the turn of the twentieth century, with another surge of field work in the 1960s to 1970s.

ETHNOLINGUISTIC HISTORY

The shortest path to answering a question of culture is often language, especially narrative. It is to the Native source that we now go in search of land use customs in regard to places of worship and burial grounds in the Connecticut Valley between early contact, around 1613, to the massacres of King Philip’s War, ending around 1680. In that window, merely 67 years, the majority of the indigenous people in Western Massachusetts were killed and the survivors were mostly scattered in diaspora. Colonial records of that war attest to the foregoing. Native voice tells how sacred stone groupings traditionally relate to hunting grounds, gathering grounds, cemeteries, and to economic areas.

Within the words recorded during early contact with Europeans lie the cosmographic and social frameworks of Northeastern Algonquians. By looking into how terms are derived, applied,

and understood, we can gain insight. Placing this alongside historic and current religious practices develops a demystifying picture.

Regarding Nipmeuw, the tongue of the Nipemaug in Nipnet, historic record comes from two sources: (1) Jean-Claude Mathevet's studies, referred to as Mots Loups, derived from refugee Nipmuc in mixed populations with Pocumtuck, Abenaki, Mahhekanneok, and others; and (2) Nipmuc living in association with Massachuseog in "praying villages," such as Natick, Massachusetts (Gustafson 2000:14). Nipmeuw, as expressed in the two sources, shows enormous dialectic divergence, a fact that remains poorly addressed. Even so, our first clue comes in Nipmeuw. Land documents show that the most freely shared lands are termed cotinakeesh or, alternately, cotinakeel ([kuttinakis/akil] ILDHC 1923: folios 84–86). Kuttinakis derives from the Nipmeuw word kuttahham, given as "he digs (it)/he plants" (Trumbull 1903:84; probably "you and 2nd person plant;" viz. kutkihcámun, "you and I plant" [Mohegan Tribe 2004:56]), and aku, "land." Kuttinakis refers, then, to the planting lands—lands that lie mostly in the main floodplain and in alluvial areas along creeks in the uplands. These kuttinakis the survivors of the genocide readily leased because, tragically, the massacres had left the fields unused. Secondly, keesh occurs as a pejorative ending, so these may be "lesser/poor" planting lands.

The second land type leased rather freely is the village site (otan(ak), "village(s)," otanèmës, "small village" Nipmeuw [Gustafson 2000:28]; viz. otanik, "to the village," Mahhekanneuw [Miles 2015:14], also Odanak/St. Francis, Québec, "at the village," Abenaki, ùtane, "village," Modern Unami Lënapeuw), which places also lay emptied by tragedy (ILDHC 1923: passim). However, upland areas are the subject of restrictions and reserved rights for use by the Nipmuc and Pocumtuck. Reserved rights to hunt, fish, trap, and set up temporary living spaces (as well as to secretly worship) in the upland woods are repeated throughout the land documents for Western Massachusetts. The reasons why follow.

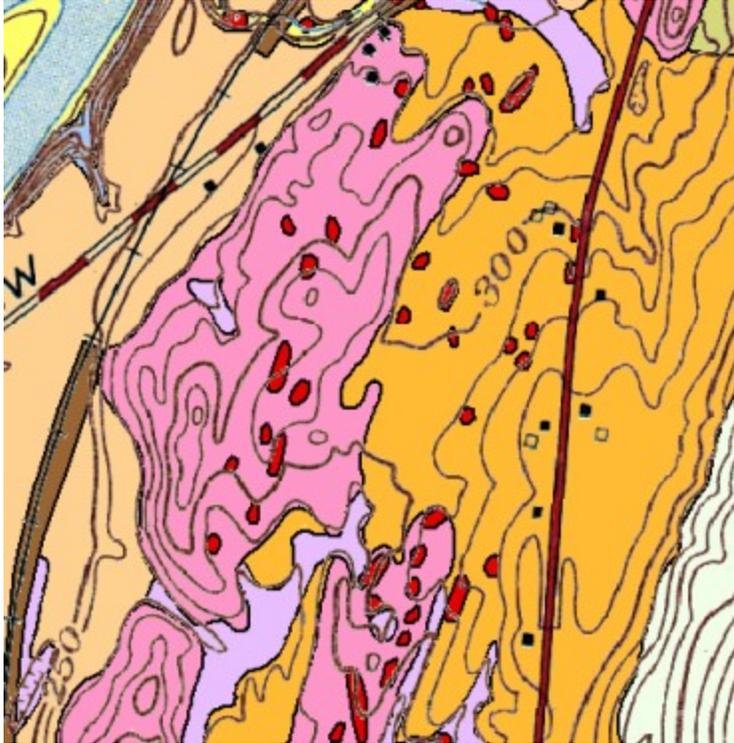


Figure 3 – Soil maps on Kwenitekw (Connecticut River). From left to right: low sandy deposits (tan) hold “kuttinakish,” fossil sand dunes (pink) with areas of bedrock (red) were home to Archaic communities, sandy loam on slightly higher benches (prime agricultural soil, orangish) hold later villages (otanak) and more kuttinakish, while on the right (off-white) begins the uplands of rocky till and ridges that form the “tauohkomuk” - hunting, collecting- and “maunumetash” - ceremonial lands. The author’s 1790s farmstead lies on this map, within a recognized archaeologically sensitive zone, and where artifacts have been encountered. Many archaeological sites are known here and nearby.

Lënapeuw (Delaware), which survives fully intact as a language, enters here as the lens through which we can most clearly document the regime of land use types and what sort of uses were permitted for each land type. Also particularly well documented and intact is Lënape religion (Zeisberger 2012: passim; Harrington 2012[1921]: passim; Jenny Prentiss, personal communications 1976, 1978; Hill 1971:passim; Delaware Tribe 2012b:passim; Speck and Witapanóxwe 1931:passim). The reader should keep in mind that Nipmeuw and Lënapeuw are very closely related languages and cultures. Neighboring Algonquians overall show a high degree of cultural commonality, which is in evidence across the Northeast.

The many aspects of culture among the Algonquians of the Northeast express their close relations and the centrality of religion, while also expressing a strong sense of individual national identity as demonstrated in the particulars of shared cultural elements (Speck 1927:31, 58–76). Commonality with identifying specific national features in a predominantly ceremonial context extends from language to art, supporting the probability of great commonality in religion: “As

has been remarked, the designs of the whole Northeastern region are practically homologous” (Speck 1927:41).

Through the lens of Lënapeuw, we can clearly see Northeastern Algonquian land use policy. The first order of business is specification of spaces and defining their uses. Specifying place and time begins with *enda* (or *énta*, pronounced as previously given). We find from usage that this modifier specifies the time and/or place of a verb (Zeisberger 2012:33), confirmed by Pearson (1988[1972]:3) as specifying a “semantic unit conjunct.” Thus, *enda achimolsink* indicates “when/where in council,” *enda linattilink* means “when/where in battle,” and *enda wulakamike* means “when/where in the lowlands.” The same usages are reconfirmed by Goddard, with other examples: *enta maxkait/maxkaink*, “when he found me/I was found”; *wéntak*, “where he got it”; *entaláwsit*, “where he lives”; and in the obviative mode, *enta wenčikaneilit*, “when he recited his vision in the Big House,” and *enta walhalsilit wtán'sał*, “where her daughter was buried” (Goddard 1979:xiii, 81, 92, 94). *Énda kékalít*, “when he says something to me,” reiterates the mode of specifying from other sources (Pearson 1988[1972]:70, 210). Importantly, the locative suffix is employed in association, regardless of whether the manifest (postsemantic) meaning of *énta/enda* is “when” or “where,” a dynamic echoed in Nipmeuw, Massachuseuw, and others (“where” and “when” are both treated as located points in time/space). *Enta* is preserved in Nipmeuw as the interrogative particle, *ta* (e.g., *ta gôwôman*, “Where do you come from?” *Odanak Nipmeuw*; Gustafson 2000:136), and in the temporal verbal locative suffix, *anta* (and variants according with various verb stem classes; Gustafson 2000:115–118), symbolizing “when, where,” and possibility in the subjunctive. *Ehenda* (*èhènta*) amplifies the specificity of *enda* via the positive affix, *eh(i/a)* (*é* = indeed [Goddard 1979:52]; *e-e*, “yes,” *eh-* as affirmative prefix [Zeisberger 2012:26–27; Delaware Tribe 2012a:Language lessons]; *eli*, *e+li*, affirmative + “toward” > “thus, thither,” *Odanak Nipmeuw* [Gustafson 2000:29], also as “because,” Lënapeuw [Zeisberger 2012:27]). *Ehenda* amplifies the specificity of the named root to mean “a place specifically for,” from “specifically when in,” as demonstrated in application (Zeisberger 2012:29).

Thus, *Ehenda mawikenk* is a place specifically for clustering houses, or an encampment. Another land use type is defined by *Ehenda mawewink*, or “place where we gather,” (both Zeisberger 2012:29–30; *mawewi*, “assembly”; *mawewink*, loc.; *mawéhellan*, “gathering” [Zeisberger 2012:88]; viz. *môwáwi*, “gather [ourselves], congregate, attend a church meeting” [Mohegan Tribe 2004:77]; *mohmoeg* (*sasabath-dayeu*), “they gathered every Sabbath day”, where repeated *sa* indicates habitual tense, Massachusseuw [Eliot 1822(1666):17]). *Ehenda mawewink* was even transferred to European churches by converted Lënapeuk, and came to mean the churchyard, both building and lot (Zeisberger 2012:30). The Nipmeuw equivalent is found in *máunumúet* (akin to *maunnaquemeh*, “a gathering” [+ loc.], *Mahhekanneuw*; Miles 2015:33), deriving from *máunumúonk*, “a gathering,” (and *máunum*, “he gathers”; Trumbull 1903:104.), showing an obvious similarity between Nipmeuw, Lënapeuw, *Mahhekanneuw*, and Mohegan. *Winohke* is Nipmeuw for a grave (*waéen-ohke?* “earth all around”; Trumbull 1903:224), while *posekinitteaonk* is the funeral (*poskinau-nestípsim*, *posekinit* “when he is buried,” *posekinetuáe-ohke*, “burial place” [Trumbull 1903:172]; viz. *poskeniganiko*, “funeral,”

poskenômuk, “burial place” Abenaki [Lolo/Laurent 1884:188, 207]). The vocabulary of ritual is strikingly uniform among various Algonquians.

Ehenda applies to those things that have a specialized function, traditional or adopted. The size of the space is unimportant, but rather of importance is the singularity of its use. Ehenda is used to define other introduced words with peculiar uses of space, such as a jail, a ferry, a bake oven, a gallows, and even ehenda putalaink, “a place specifically for butter” (butter churn, pu:teł, “butter,” Lënapeuw; po:tel, Odanak Nipmeuw; Gustafson 2000:28). Modern Lënapeuw still uses èhènta mawewink and èhènta kawink/kèhkawink for “church” and “bedroom,” respectively (Delaware Tribe 2003:3). The common thread of all of these uses for ehenda is the specialty purpose of their object and its definition as a space, great or small.

The final land use type is Ehenda tauwundín, which means “burial place,” derived from tauwatawík, “uninhabited, wilderness,” tauwunasu, “to bury someone,” tauwundowagan, “a funeral, internment” (Zeisberger 2012:159–160; wakan/(w)agan - a process, state or property; Nipmeuw, wangan; viz. tauwwunnuw, “opening,” Mahhekannew [Miles 2015:61]). A duality of meaning occurs because the wilderness is open, as opposed to closed by allotment to a given clan, while a grave is physically opened ground. Ehenda applies here because non-sacred activity is forbidden.

The Lënapeuw term for special-purpose wilderness land (ehenda tauwundín) is reflected in Nipmeuw by táuohkómuk, “wild lands,” deriving from tauëu-ohke, “not cultivated land” or “deserted place” (Trumbull 1903:204). By examination of the given term in light of the Lënapeuw context, we see that tauëu is neither literally “not cultivated” nor “deserted,” but again sharing the Lënapeuw root /tauwu-, indicating communal status, “open,” as opposed to “allotted or inhabited,” which opposing case describes cultivated and village lands. Táuohkómuk lands are conserved as sacred, and so “conserved lands” or “sacred lands” are also appropriate.

The value of respecting taboo in Lënape society is strong, which can be expected in Algonquian relatives. Traditional restrictions pertain to every activity on every land type, more so in any ceremonial space. Those who follow the right path are píl̄sit, “pure,” and what is forbidden is kwulágan (Speck and Witapanóxwe 1931:51). Welhik, or virtues, are the central focus of Lënape culture. Ten welhik are named that describe the ideal Algonquian person (Speck and Witapanóxwe 1931:21). Being with one’s relatives and respecting Elders are paramount, as indicated by every feature of Lënape culture, including the tendency to speak in the collective and to reference Elders. As repeated from Lënape Elders, two prevalent traditions give us a notion of common life goals: Mushhakung hátew nē tayóxkun, (“In the sky there exists a bridge;” see hatte, /èhatá-, “exist, dwell,” towíyun, towín, “all across of which,” “ford”), and Wèmi weláwsit lënape pēmēskeneyo nē mahtitinehkótēk tēmákan (“All Lënape who live well travel the seldom-seen road”; both also in Pearson 1988[1972]:218, confirmed by Speck and Witapanóxwe 1931:23). The road spoken of is a metaphor: énda laxáok hakéxing opitēmákaning (“Where [or when] there is a fork in the road of the Milky Way”; Pearson 1988[1972]:217), one fork of which leads to the Creator’s home, heaven. A righteous path leading to the Creator’s home is the central focus of Lënape life, which is reconfirmed by all of my other Native acquaintances. It bears mention that dogs are said to guard the sky-path to the Creator, and there

are many admonitions to treat dogs well in Lënapei Kwëtëlëtuwakàna, which cultural ideal seems to recur in the above-mentioned Titicut family-style dog burial. Lënapei Kwëtëlëtuwakàna are traditional cultural imperatives and prohibitions by which Lënapeuk lived and live, and which recount the above, as told by Touching Leaves Woman (Weëntipahkihèlèkwe, Nora Dean Thompson; Delaware Tribe 2012b). Moreover, Lënapei Kwëtëlëtuwakàna are replete with admonitions and prohibitions against acts regarded as provoking the Ancestors, which kwulágana show the culture of respect, even in daily routine. Intense respect for, and sensitivity to, Those Who Went Before is significantly more central and formalized in ritual in Algonquian culture than in European culture at the time of contact. Algonquians are barred by taboo from acting without ancestors' permission, from disturbing graves in any way, neglecting regular honor/thanksgiving rituals, and a host of other ancestor imperatives. Such imperatives on behalf of ancestors do not have parallels in contemporaneous Europe. Algonquian languages apply a separate verbal case, often called "absentative," when speaking of the departed, again without equivalent in European languages. It is considered an offense among Algonquians even to name those who have recently passed unless quite necessary (Eliot 1822[1666]:8; Jenny Prentiss, personal communication 1977).

ANTHROPOLOGICAL NEXUS: CEREMONIAL LANDS

Deputy THPO of the Narragansett nation, and co-author of the 2015 Nipsachuck ceremonial stone site report for Northeast Anthropology (Harris & Robinson, 2015), Doug Harris, explains,

Robert Thrower, the chairman of the Cultural and Heritage Committee of the United South and Eastern Tribes . . . is the THPO for the Poarch Band of Creek Indians and recently they went into an agreement with the U.S. Forest Service to examine ceremonial stone landscapes on Forest Service land . . . at the Talladega National Forest in Alabama at the tail end of the Appalachian 8 range. We found ceremonial stones in many ways like the ones that we have here [Northeast], and in many ways quite different . . . We also know that the Yurok in Northern California had a ceremonial stone tradition . . . [and in] Arkansas in Washoe National Forest there are ceremonial stones. This we believe to be a part of the ancient tradition that was shared from the Atlantic to the Pacific by the ancient tribal people [Harris 2014].

Taboo (kwulágan) against misuse of Ehenda classifications is quite severe in Northeastern Algonquian societies. Rutenber reports the Dutch colonial account of Hans Hansen and his bride, who dared on a lark to trespass on a sacred stone ritual ground (Ehenda mawewink, Lënapeuw; specifically, Dans Kammer, on the Hudson's west bank near Newburgh, NY; Figure 1, no. 32), and paid for it on the spot with their lives (Rutenber 1992b[1872]:383–385). The Hansens' elderly Lënape enslaved servant, whom they called Leshee, had warned them not to trespass on the sacred grounds (Lissi means "Do it!" in Modern Unami Lënapeuw). The Dutch also report of the Weckquaesgek and their Southeast Lënape relatives in what is now Westchester, New York, that they buried their dead "in the woods" by piling up "a low mound of earth with small stones," then erecting a miniature wigwam over the grave. The same sources report that area Native nations regarded transgression of their burial

grounds as “an unpardonable provocation” (Ruttenber 1992a[1872]:23; original source in Documentary History of New York, IV:127, Ruttenber 1992a[1872]:76–77). Both Heye, at Minisink, New Jersey, and George Nelson, at Wissatinnewag, Massachusetts, also reported small stones on/around minimally mounded graves (Heye & Pepper 2008:13; Nelson 1964:1–2).

The undying centrality of sacred spaces in Northeastern Algonquian culture is attested to in the Land Deeds of Hampshire County, in which there is a seeming “willingness” to share mundane use areas made empty by genocide. The practical reality of being unable to use what is yours, as well as being unable to mount a defense, frames a dual duress around what may appear superficially as “willingness.” However, there is an evidenced parallel unwillingness to let go of *táuhkômuk*.



Figure 4 – Mural from Great Falls, Massachusetts, at Unity Park, near the Peskeompskut village and massacre site. Image by author and husband shows stylized typical winter living – a time for traditional narratives in the warmth of the wichiwan (wigwam) on an alluvial bench above a creek, at the foot of hills holding the spaces where many hunting, collecting and ceremonial activities take place and ancestors watch over from their resting places. Above, the constellations, planets and moon keep our cosmic calendar within narratives of the Bear, the Seven Prophets, and many more.

When the Pilgrims landed, they were quickly granted land and shared resources, which is practical in many ways, but there is also a tradition of refuge attested to across lines of traditional enemies among the First Nations. Thus, it became Akwesasne Kanien’keha:ka (St. Regis Mohawk), who later gave refuge to historic competitors, like Nipmuc and Abenaki, who were then in diaspora. This pattern is much repeated over the history of the genocide against Native Americans. On examining which land was granted the Pilgrims for their use, it is village land

that had just been emptied by epidemic (Bradford 1912[1898]:26–27)—empty and quite possibly a place of avoidance (kwulágan) in reaction to that epidemic. Bradford noted that disease had made room for Colonists just before their arrival, which he attributed to God loving his race and caring naught for another. The many victims at Pawtuxet and thereabout were buried outside tradition in this case of epidemic, which was likely to have been repeated in Connecticut Valley epidemics. Irregularity of massacre and epidemic burials makes site prediction most unreliable just at the time frame when the greatest amount of funerary activity happens in concentration.

Up and down the Connecticut River and into the smaller villages on side creeks, Nipmuc, Pocumtuck, and their neighbors consented under duress to share kuttinakish and otán/otanēmès(ak) (large or small village sites; see above) but insisted on restricting the activities of Colonists in the mountains, while reserving rights of access and use there (ILDHC 1923: passim). The foregoing is expressed in adamant restrictions by Mishalisk on lands she shared in the Mattampash “deeds” (ILDHC 1923: folios 84–86). In the Mattampash case, Colonists are allowed to freely use the kuttinakish, but Mishalisk forbids hogs, cows, or habitation on Kunckquatchu (or Kunn'kwaciw, Mt. Toby Massif). At the time of the Mattampash documents, Sonksqua Mishalisk’s son, Wattawchinksin, may have already been murdered by Pynchon’s henchmen (a lynch mob pursued many miles upriver and murdered him over some broken windows). Sonksqua Mishalisk may have been in a truly desperate situation, elderly (as noted in the same deeds), and without even her son to hunt for her or protect her. Even so, she forbade abuse of the sacred uplands. Cows and hogs were famous among Native peoples for their destructive foraging habits and the fouling of water by their excrement. Importantly, Colonists were known to clear forests for cows. Equally important, domestic animals and their meat were and are considered “impure,” not to be eaten by medicine people and participants in sacred ceremony (for example, Gamuing participants must abstain from domestic animal meat for 13 days).

Kunckquatchu also happens to be the sacred home of Wittum Manito, a healing deity who inhabits the waterfalls and grottoes that are abundant on this unique mountain (Jenny Prentiss, personal communication 1977). As such a holy place, and because the massif is the most biodiverse piece of land in Massachusetts, Kunckquatchu is reserved for gathering medicine, ceremonial spaces, and for hunting. To Europeans, hunting may seem like a non-sacred pursuit. Among indigenous nations, however, hunting is circumscribed in a ritual framework, and being thus framed, is a sacred practice (Armitage 1992:7–10; Jenny Prentiss, personal communication 1976; Speck and Witapanóxwe 1931:24, 39–41). Hunting is entirely ceremonial for Algonquian people, and perhaps all Native Americans, the act of which is prefaced by self-purification and prayer. Hunting success depends on a personal sacred relationship with the manitowuk who control various animal types, and from whom spiritual power can be obtained (Armitage 1992:7–10; Speck and Witapanóxwe 1931:24). A range of kwulágana (prohibitions) must be observed during hunting/collecting and on hunting/collecting grounds. It is kwulágan for a hunter to taste even a bite of his first deer kill, which must be given to an elder, and according to Speck (1931:41), the rule is the same for every Algonquian nation. Where and how one hunts are also regulated by kwulágana and prayer. Similarly, páatama, wēliopēlexing, and kwulágana (prayer, ceremony, and taboos) accompany the collection of

medicinal plants (Jenny Prentice, personal communications 1976–1978; Gladys Tantaquidgeon and Touching Leaves Woman, via Hill 1971). Hunting grounds, collecting grounds, and prayer sites are all sacred and co-existing (Jenny Prentiss, personal communication 1976; Armitage 1992:passim; Brown 2016).

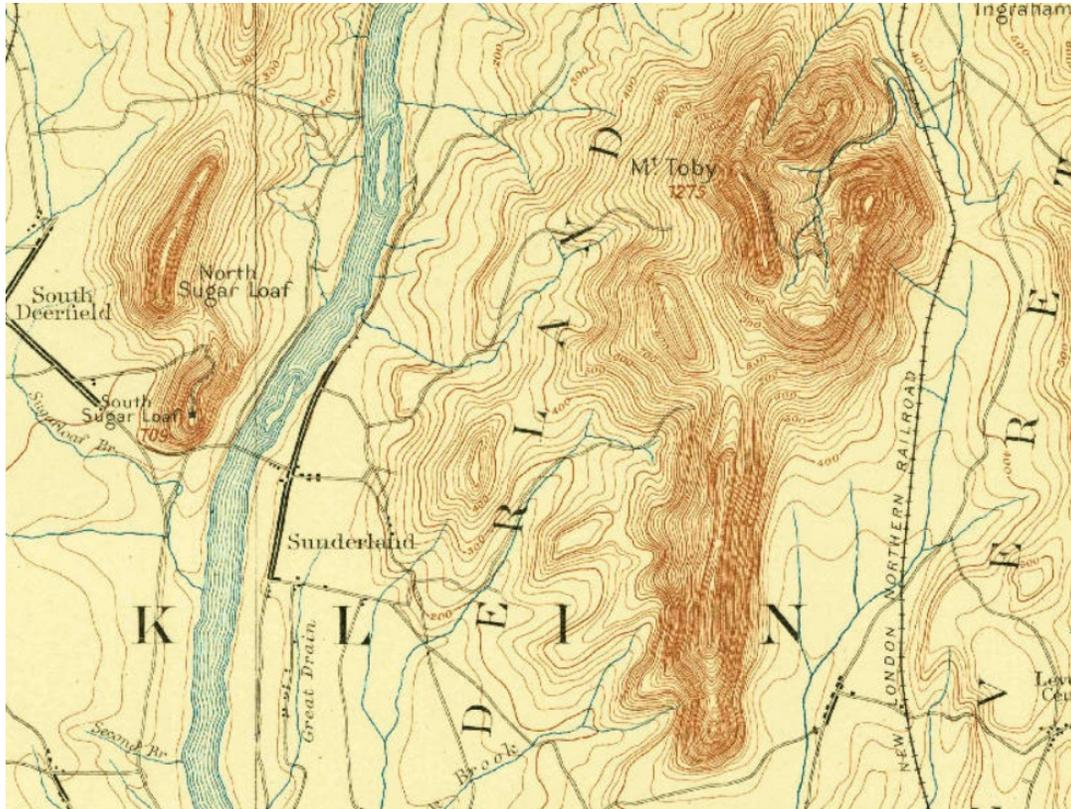


Figure 5 – Kunn’kwaciw (Mt. Toby Massif) – On the right bank lies the massif that Mishalisk Sonksqua refused to compromise even after allowing settlers and farms on the lowlands, and on the eve of the war of removal. Kunn’kwaciw is the most biodiverse landmass in Massachusetts, home to rare plant and animal species, numberless medicinal plants, and uncommon sweetwater springs. Nepesunoag, spelled variously on land documents, means “medicine hill” and is the source of Mohawk Brook, emanating from the center west side of the massif. The massif is traditionally home of Wittum manito, who inhabits the many small caves and waterfalls. Ceremonial stone sites and a sacred waterfall are present. Kunn’kwaciw lies across the river from one of the oldest sites in Massachusetts, near South Sugarloaf. This one place was negotiated *three times*; first with Nolwottog leaders, then Mishalisk Sonksqua from Pacomtuck, and finally, Metawompe, a.k.a. Nattawassawet, of the Nashawe.

Mēsinkw is the spirit who visited the Lēnape “when the earth quaked and stars fell from the sky,” giving the Gamuing ceremony (of elusive etymology [Speck and Witapanóxwe 1931:7]; Mēsinkw [Delaware Tribe 2012b]), a 12-day ceremony designed to preserve the world in balance (Delaware Tribe 2012b; Speck and Witapanóxwe 1931:24), and first recorded in Denton’s 1670 Description of New York formerly New Netherlands (Speck and Witapanóxwe 1931:7). The carved Mēsinkwok on the center post and sides of the Gamuing house are

representations of “Supreme Power” (Speck and Witapanóxwe 1931:22; these number eight, alike the manitowuk of the eight directions). Pùkuwàнку (Turtle clan [Brown and Rementer 2003:43]; Pokuwángu [Heckewelder 2004(1821):51–53, 250]) was the Unalatchgo (coastal) Lënapeuk tribal totem and a prominent clan in most regional nations. Tùkwsit (Wolf clan, “round foot”; Brown and Rementer 2003:47) is tribal totem of Monsi and Mahikanneok, while both Nipmuc and Pocumtuck were known as Loup, after their national totem. Pële is the Turkey clan (Brown and Rementer 2003:42), another clan common to the region, whose feathers feature everywhere in Eastern Algonquian ceremonial tools and regalia. The above cultural pieces stand as examples of inter-Algonquian commonality in terms of language, culture, and religion. Versions of Gamuing are found among the Nanticoke, Mahikanneok, Mohegan, Šawanoki Lenawee (Shawnee), Powhatan and Carolina coastal Algonquians (Speck and Witapanóxwe 1931:8).

Algonquian and other Native religions are often characterized as primitive, with few particulars and often a great deal of speculation. Direct observations by ethnographers contrast in richness of ritual detail, nuance of spiritual expression, and complexity of perception. Personal contact with Native religious persons is replete with specifics of protocol and nuance of philosophy, not often reflected in outside interpretations. Indigenous friends note multiple types or levels of spiritual practice, types of “medicine,” types of ritual, and types of priests/priestesses. Specialized religious roles suggest an organized religion, unlike the nebulous animism ascribed to Native Americans by Euroamerican lore.

Other than the Creator, foci central to Algonquian religion are mostly shared, like Manitowuk (“makers,” Lënapeuw) of the eight winds, or directions, who are intermediaries for the Creator. Also prominent are: Pèthakhuweyok, or thunder beings (as in Lënuwa Kiikamáok Pèthakhuweyok [Delaware Tribe 2012b]; Padtohqoohhâuk, Nipmeuw [Trumbull 1903:114]), Hobomoc, spirit of the underworld and bringer of water from the earth; Yotáanit (fire manito, Nahigganeuk/Narragansett [O’Brien 2010:2]; tëntai, “fire,” Moxomsëna tëntai, fire manito, Lënapeuw); Kesuckquand and Nanepaûsha(d)se (sun and moon; Nipmuc Tribe 2006:Nipmuc Prayer; O’Brien 2010:2), as well as a host of animal and place spirits.

Ruttenber, from early Dutch records, notes that the Monsi and their relatives had “high priests,” called Kitchi Naehka (kitchinikak, “great leaders”; Ruttenber 1992a[1872]:27), retained today in Gamuing ritual leaders (Nikani; Speck & Witanapóxwe 1931:114). Manítóiwuk, plural of manito, are the forces that make things as they are (n'manítun, “I made it,” Lënapeuw; Jenny Prentiss, personal communication 1976). Tisquanto (“goodness of the Creator”; Waabu; O’Brien 2016:1) was a pniese (peniyesi; peneeyesee, Abishnaabem), a special officer-priest who serves as counselor and spiritual protector of the sachem. Many have heard of pauwau(-ûog) (Nipmeuw, powwáw/waûog, Nahigganeuw; both Trumbull 1903:120), who is (are) properly a priest(s), but today this word associates with intertribal gatherings. A woman priest is pauwusq(uog). There are also taupauwaûog (Nipmeuw, táupowwaw(-waûog); Trumbull 1903:160), which includes both priests and esteemed elders. Kósukquom, translated as “witch,” is a shaman associated with cures, protections and associated spirit work (Trumbull 1903:40). Strictly speaking, Algonquian languages are all genderless until specified. Aside from tribal ceremony and esoteric activity of

pauwauog, a mamontan (“[he/she is] a wizard”) performs mamontumóonk(-uongash) (“enchantment(s)”; Trumbull 1903:48), while a monêtu performs monetuonk(-ongash) (“divination(s)” < moneaü, “he observes”; Trumbull 1903:64), possibly related to Lënapeuw, medeu(- deyok) and Abenaki, mdawleno(ak) (“medicine person (s)”; see below). Cotton (1829:13) gives quoshodtumwaen for “prophet.” Spiritual practice tends to combine divination, curing, protections, and seeking spirit help, all which require m’tasima (ritual kitbag) tools, usually including roots, bones, small stones, and other items. Colonial sources refer to conjuring with tools as “jugglery,” after the physical ritual that often accompanies prayer and divination (Ruttenber 1992b[1872]:317). Mohegan gives us also môyilow(ak), “medicine man, shaman” (Mohegan Tribe 2004:77). Given the elaboration of ritual culture in rituals, spiritual intermediaries, and terms, it should not be surprising to find similar complexity and variety in ritual spaces and structures. An elaborated belief system at this level needs a structured ritual space, and this feature is largely absent from current regional archaeological reports.

Early Colonists recorded in Mohegan the sentence, “Ni sun totay piyôk 'witches' mut apaw nitay” (Mohegan Tribe 2004:102). That sentence tells us three critical things, for it means “That stone at which ‘witches’ gathered no longer rests there”: (1) ceremonial stones were being removed often enough during missionary incursions to warrant such a record; (2) the use of “witches,” whom Colonists executed by law, indicates that Native religion was under attack at the time of this record, and that Natives substituted their own word for Native practitioner with a hate moniker; and (3) Native practitioners gathered at certain stones. The third point is confirmed in explicit detail in Këmoxomsëna Pëpxokwus ok Nekik Niśaś Apoplendwak, Red Cedar and the Seven Prophets, a Lënape oral tradition (as taught to me, and in Speck 1931:171–173; Hill 1971:7). Attack on Native religion came quickly after colonials arrived; as early as 1633, law forbade pauwaûog (priests) to perform their duties (Whitmore 1995[1889]:163). Hence, one need not ask why Natives here did not speak of their sacred stone places or reveal their rituals.

Use of stones for spiritual and ceremonial purpose features diversely in Northeast America, crossing Algonquian-Haudenosaunee cultural lines. A white crystal was placed in the mouth of an apparently adopted “Scandinavian,” buried in complete Lënape fashion among the Native citizens in the contact period (Heye & Pepper 2008:18). Family teachings say that a white crystal in the mouth is an honorific act signifying a person who spoke exceptionally pure of heart, perhaps in a diplomatic context (Jenny Prentiss, personal communication 1978). Kanien'ke (Mohawk mother town) is named for the “place of white crystals,” also called Herkimer diamonds, which my grandmother explained are imbued with spiritual power. White quartz and other crystals are offered at certain times to tûnuppasuonk kodtonquag, stone turtle effigies (Nipmeuw), and can be found associated with these ritual stone features (Cachat-Schilling 2017:10; Jenny Prentice, personal communication 1976). Witapanóxwe’s explanation, “The turtle is the earth, is life,” serves well here (with Speck 1931:41). Detailed below, Ruttenber’s history of Hudson Valley nations cites the offering of stones at Wawanaquassik (“place of the honoring stone”).

Henry Lorne Masta, former High Chief of the Abenaki at Odanak, recorded in living memory of Mdawlennoak (Native priests) transforming themselves into rocks having sacred

symbolism, and from there into other creatures (Masta 1932:31–34, 42–44), which is echoed in the mentioned Lënapeuk achimëwakàn of the Seven Prophets, that records self-transformation into sacred stone groups, plus both the practice praying to spirit-inhabited stones and making pilgrimage to spirit stones (Jenny Prentice, personal communication 1976; Speck and Witapanóxwe 1931:171–73; Hill 1971:7). The same oral tradition explains the origin of Pleiades as the Seven Prophets placed by the Creator in heavenly protection as Ansísk'tayésak (“bunched-up ones”; Speck and Witapanóxwe 1931:48), whose Nipmeuw equivalent is Ansiquttâuaog (Trumbull 1903:16; Shwishcuttowwáuog, Narragansett [Williams 1990(1643):80]). There were seven visible stars in Ansiquttâuaog until 2357 BC, when the Greeks recorded the loss of “Μεροπη,” also recorded by the Chinese, leaving only six readily distinguishable stars, which fact suggests the Algonquian tradition is at least that old.

Naskapi Elder Piyâschichâaw records eyewitness transformation of a ceremonial tent into stone, and into a tent again, conjuring by “jugglery” with various objects, including stones (Peastitute 2014:31–32, 75–76, 136–137), and the routine help of Mistapâw (spirit allies, singular used for plural) in dealing with Âchân (conjured cannibal giant; Peastitute 2015:140–149). Both Masta and Piyâschichâaw's accounts are presented as tipâchimunâ, which are eyewitness accounts, as opposed to âtiyuhkinch (achimëwakàna, Lënapeuw; Delaware Tribe 2012b), a term that indicates oral tradition.

The value and sanctity of máunumúetash are evidenced in the “Indian” Land Deeds for Hampshire County, Massachusetts (including later Franklin, Hampden, and Berkshire). In the midst of northern winter, the leaders of Norwottuck were induced to sign documents in a language they could not read on Christmas Day of 1658 (ILDHC 1923: folios 33–39). Aside from failure to disclose terms and laws surrounding their concept of deeds, Colonists also ignored the limited authority of sanchemanuog (leaders), and the fact that no person among the First Nations possessed authority to sell or permanently trade lands off-limits to allotment in the first place (táuhkômuk, sacred lands). Máunumúetash, places of utmost sanctity, are often locations of intertribal gatherings, as recorded at Great Falls (Montague, Massachusetts), Dans Kammer, and other locations (Albertini 2009; NPS 2008; Rutenber 1992a[1872]:27–29, 94, 151; Rutenber 1992b[1872]:382). That places of worship are sometimes places of shared ceremonial gathering attests to the cross-tribal commonality of ceremony. Even after two waves of genocide had much reduced the Pocumtuck and the Nipmuc, which was followed by missionary conversion and land-grabs by squatting Colonists, the leaders of these nations still stood fast against turning over ceremonial spaces. The foregoing is evidenced in the same records by the fact that these lands bore special restrictions and reserved rights when village and plantation spaces did not.

Hence, even in the cold of Christmas Day, the First Nations peoples refused to turn over certain grounds. These same grounds form the upland conserved space, the ehenda mawewink and ehenda tauwundín, or máunumúetash within ne táuhkômuk, where ceremonial stone landscapes remain today. Separated out from the body of the leases for Shutesbury and neighboring towns, we find this reserved land:

Only ye Indians aforementioned & in Particuler Quonquont Doth reserve & keep one corne field about twelve, sixteene or twenty acres of Ground a little above Mattabaget by ye Brook called Wunnaqueckset lyeing on ye south side of ye sd Brook & Compasped in by a swamp from that Brook to ye greate River, And alsoe they reserve libertie to Hunt Deare, fowle &c And to take fish, Beaver or Otter &c . . . In Witness hereof wee ye sd Indians Doe Subscribe our markes this Present twentie five day of Decembr 1658 [ILDHC 1923: folios 33–39].

In another section, which appears after and separate from the main document, there is again a covenant guaranteeing access by indigenous persons to temporarily settle, take forest materials, and, unstated, to engage in their increasingly secretive ceremonial practices. As to why the third motive is not named, we should bear in mind the mentioned 1633 ban on Native religion, and that the First Nations were aware of the vehement hatred for their religion held fast for 400 years by Colonists and ministers, as borne out by castigations of colonial missionaries and widening cultural prohibitions.

Not long after the signing of the discussed documents, a law was passed that any group of more than seven “Indians” constitutes a “war party” and can be attacked without notice (Plymouth Colony Archives 2008). This law effectively banned being a family, a village, a worshipping group, and thus banned religious practice and all cultural continuity, a law that remained in effect long after the genocide. Everything Indigenous people did together now had to be secret, and since the nature of máunumúetash was gathering, they had to be secret. As suggested by the Mohegan sentence noted earlier, sacred stone places were also being demolished, and that continues today.

The second, very broad reserve clause shows the desire to retain access to táuhkômuk: “The Indians desired they might set their Wiggwoms at sometimes wth in ye tract of ground they sold withoute offence & that the English would be kinde & neighborlie to ym in not Prohibiting ym, which was promised ym” (ILDHC 1923: folio 39). These documents were not “assigned” by Pynchon until October of 1663, five years later, and were assigned in total absence of the native signatories, without any evidence the other party was ever informed of such intentions. Finally, the documents were not “entered” into official records for twenty years, until December 6, 1678, in the midst of the genocidal war against the first nations called “King Philip’s War.” At the point of deed registry, the ostensible signers had been killed or driven into refuge west and north. Thus, no one was present to attest to or to challenge the validity of these documents. Similar reserved access covenants and restricted use clauses appear in a number of documents throughout the deed archives. Nipmuc and Pocumtuck wanted to hold onto certain lands even in the face of holocaust. The last cultural reservations on paper are rights to hunt, to collect from the forest, and to stay there at certain times (and, secretly, to pray). Hunting, collecting, and worshipping in the stone prayer places are the three activities specific to Ehenda tauwundín, or táuohkômuk, the sacred spaces, the central post of culture to which Northeastern Algonquians fast through 400 years of persecution.

CONCLUSIONS

As a pauwau enters stones through prayer to access other worlds and to see what is unseen, the question of where and how land stewardship was applied by those who went before on this land, and where they gathered for sacred ritual, are questions that are effectively entered through the window of indigenous ritual cosmography. Lack of familiarity with cosmography has hampered identification of sacred lands, few of which have been officially recognized and preserved. Standard investigation to date has failed to make clear descriptions of land use types or their boundaries. The imperative of Indigenous consultation regarding sacred lands is reaffirmed in recommendations and reports (2014–2016) by the United Nations High Council on Human Rights and by the Special Rapporteur on Rights of Indigenous Peoples (United Nations High Council on Human Rights 2014, 2015). But there is a parallel ecological and climate resilience imperative dependent on the history of land stewardship that makes this issue central to all the cultures that share this space.

Through the terms applied by First Nations to their land use types, through terms that apply to ceremonial activity, and through clues imbedded in land documents, we can gain insight into specialized land uses, restrictions, and management through designations that Indigenous peoples applied to this land. Place names, land type, and land use terminology, along with distribution of known ritual stone complexes, burial grounds, and villages, all confirm a consistent segregated and classified land use regime under Northeastern Algonquian tradition. What the language of ritual tells us, what the language of sacred sites tells us, and what the restrictions and covenants of land leases tell us, is that hunting, collecting, and worshipping lands are co-located and sacred beyond lands of habitation and planting use. Distribution patterns tell us that sacred lands lie primarily in the uplands. Colonial incidents and records confirm the gravity of desecration to the Algonquian peoples. We now know that regional Algonquians practiced land zoning in a strict sense, applying a range of restrictions on activities within those zones, particularly in the upland zone of tauohkomuk, where all actions are circumscribed by ritual mandates and prohibitions. In the tauohkomuk, the footprint of Indigenous people is hard to find by intention. The oft-spoken theme of “tread lightly” is in full force within the tauohkomuk, terrains managed by our relatives beaver, bear, deer, moose and porcupine.

Indigenous Northeastern stewardship of lands considers land types and land zones, while practices are compartmentalized according to land zone type. All land is sacred, and prohibitions are in effect everywhere, but level of restraint rises as one climbs the shoulders of Our Mother. Where we take from the land, we give back. Collected plants and animals receive offerings first and receive stewarding attention afterward. Our allies in the landscape include beaver, who are major managers of landscapes, along with browsers like deer, moose, bear and porcupine. Currently, land stewardship policy generalizes and inflates historic Indigenous practices, misinterpreting culture, misapplying practices to unintended landscapes, and over-applying practices that have been historically applied at a much lower level. Mistakes in comprehending the practices under which this landscape evolved over the past 14,000 years places current land management policy at odds with the evolutionary course of this region. Climate resiliency is a lesson best learned from closely observing the footprint of those who walked before, those who succeeded on this landscape with sustainability for fourteen millennia.

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