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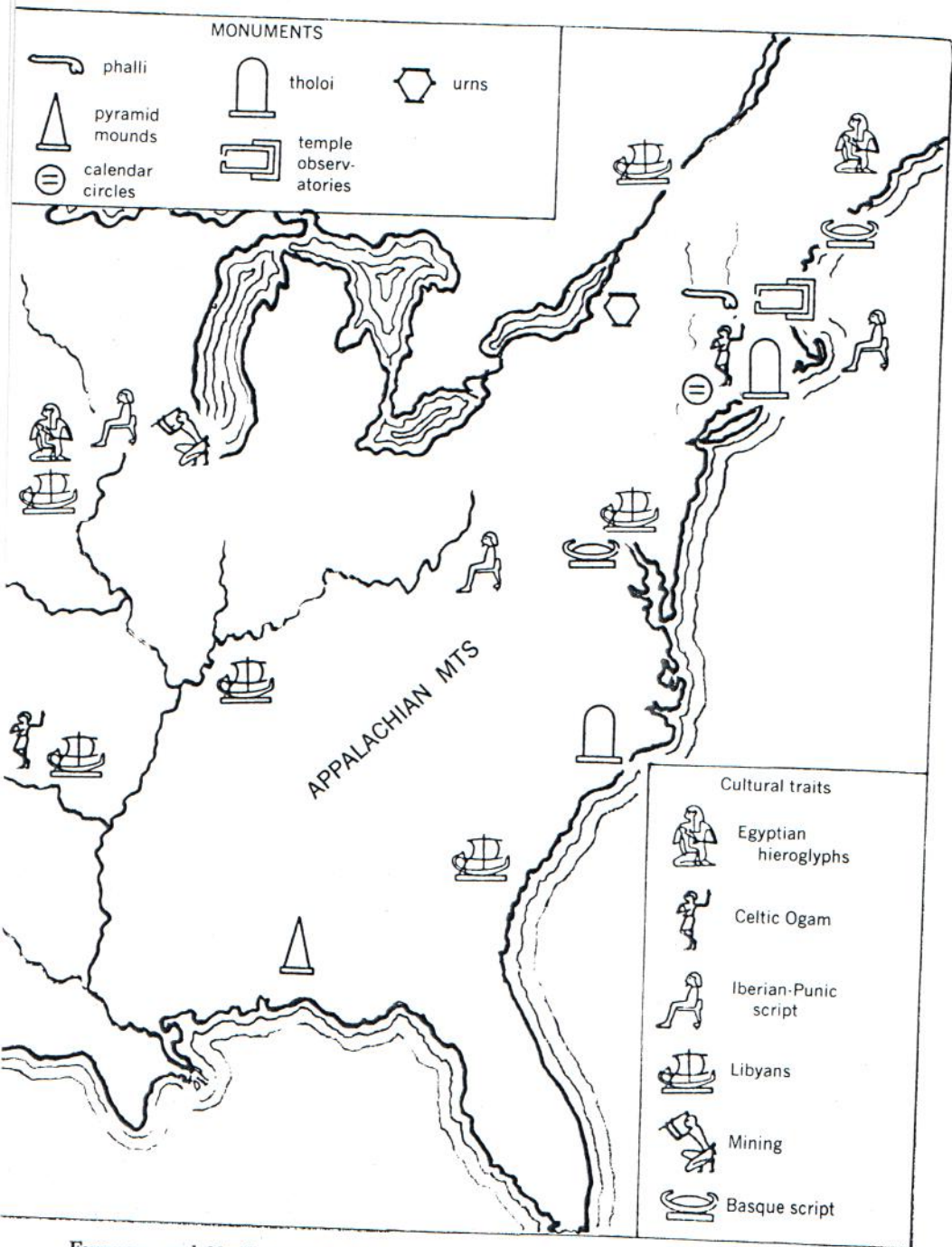
An American Enigma and Its Solution

TWO centuries of independence, two hundred years of national awareness, these are the underlying themes of countless festivities now in progress or planned throughout fifty American states. The world at large pauses a moment to reflect upon the prodigy that grew from the thirteen rebellious colonies when George III lost his American domains.

But wait a bit. There is more to America's past than appears upon the surface. A strange unrest is apparent among many of the younger historians and archeologists of the colleges and universities, a sense that somehow a very large slice of America's past has mysteriously vanished from our public records. For how else can we explain the ever-swelling tally of puzzling ancient inscriptions now being reported from nearly all parts of the United States, Canada, and Latin America?

The inscriptions are written in various European and Mediterranean languages in alphabets that date from 2,500 years ago, and they speak not only of visits by ancient ships, but also of permanent colonies of Celts, Basques, Libyans, and even Egyptians. They occur on buried temples, on tablets and on gravestones and on cliff faces. From some of them we infer that the colonists intermarried with the Amerindians, and so their descendants still live here today.

There was once a time when such finds were attributed to the misguided folly of uprooted colonists from Europe, to forgers or cranks fabricating tradition for a society that has none. But skepticism changed to bewilderment when it was discovered that American inscriptions, some of them known for a century or more, turn out to have been written in



European and North African cultural interfaces and colonies, circa 800 B.C. For sailing routes, see map on pages 106-107.

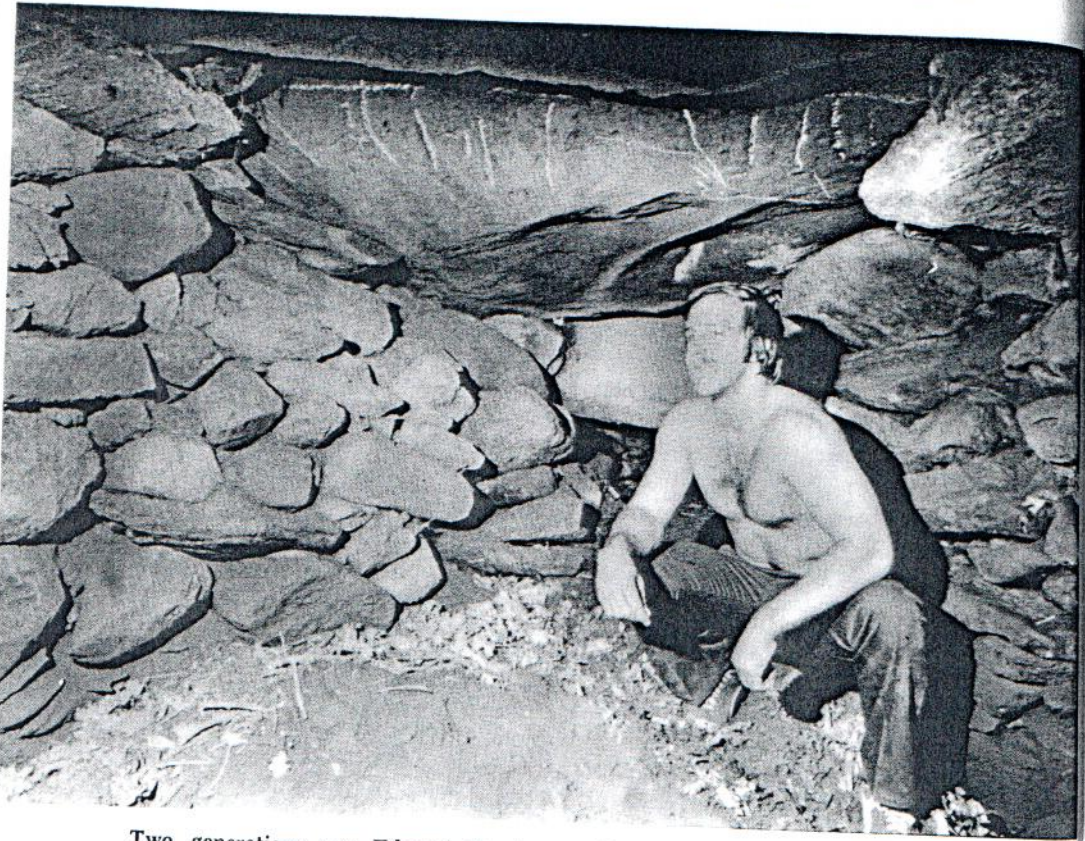
ancient scripts of a type only recently deciphered in Europe or North Africa. Thus the truth has slowly come to light, ancient history is inscribed upon the bedrock and buried stone buildings of America, and the only hands that could have inscribed it were those of ancient people. America, as we now realize, is a treasure house of records of man's achievement upon the high seas in bygone ages. Even more so are our inscribed rocks and tablets a heritage from a forgotten era of colonization. They tell us of settlers who came from the Old World and who remained to become founding fathers of some of the Amerindian nations.

These ancient writings can easily be classified into some half dozen styles, each now known to be associated with one or other of several ancient peoples whose languages have been in part recovered. New inscriptions are being discovered almost every day, from localities thousands of miles apart, usually under circumstances that preclude any possibility of fraud.

This book gives the plain facts about the inscribed stones together with an explanation of how the messages are being deciphered, and what they tell us about the people who wrote them and how they came to be in America some two thousand to three thousand years ago. But it is also my hope that something more than just the plain facts of the research may find its way into these pages. Something of the simple joys of shared discoveries (for what use is there in finding something new if there is no one to tell about it?); something of the good companionship of the men and women who contribute so much of their time and knowledge to exploring our back-country hills or searching the cliffs of offshore islets for long-forgotten carvings made by ancient mariners; and something, too, of our occasional disappointments, for it has not been an easy road all the way and sometimes it has demanded more than the usual modicum of good humor to temper patience with tenacity.

These remarkable and hitherto unsuspected facts have come to light this past summer (of 1975) in the course of an archeological survey of New Hampshire and Vermont. The hundreds of inscriptions among the ruins attest the vitality of Celtic civilization in pagan times, and tell a wonderful story of how Europeans lived in the Bronze Age. Our first season's work has yielded only hints of the fate of the Celtic kingdoms, but this book relates what we have been able to find out of the first thousand years or so of their settlements in North America.

About three thousand years ago bands of roving Celtic mariners crossed the North Atlantic to discover, and then to colonize, North America. They came from Spain and Portugal, by way of the Canary Islands, sailing the trade winds as Columbus also was to do long afterward. The advantage of this route is that the winds favor a crossing from east to



Two generations ago Edward Read was plowing his property near White River, Vermont, when the earth gave way beneath him, and he discovered an underground passage leading into this chamber. Here John Williams examines the interior. Deeply inscribed letters on a buried lintel later disclosed that the chamber is a small temple dedicated to the sun god Bel. *Peter J. Garfall*

west, but for Celts accustomed to a temperate climate it had the one drawback that it led them to the tropical West Indies, no place for northerners. So although their landfall lay in the Caribbean, it was on the rocky coasts and mountainous hinterlands of New England that most of these wanderers finally landed, there to establish a new European kingdom which they called *Iargalon*, "Land Beyond the Sunset." They built villages and temples, raised Druids' circles and buried their dead in marked graves. They were still there in the time of Julius Caesar, as is attested by an inscribed monolith on which the date of celebration of the great Celtic festival of Beltane (Mayday) is given in Roman numerals appropriate to the reformed Julian calendar introduced in 46 B.C.

In the wake of the Celtic pioneers came the Phoenician traders of Spain, men from Cadiz who spoke the Punic tongue, but wrote it in the peculiar style of lettering known as Iberian script. Although some of these traders seem to have settled only on the coast, and then only temporarily, leaving a few engraved stones to mark their visits or record their claims of territorial annexation, other Phoenicians remained here and, together with Egyptian miners, became part of the Wabanaki tribe of New England. Further south, Basque sailors came to Pennsylvania and established a temporary settlement there, leaving however no substantial monuments other than grave markers bearing their names. Further south still, Libyan and Egyptian mariners entered the Mississippi from the Gulf of Mexico, penetrating inland to Iowa and the Dakotas, and westward along the Arkansas and Cimarron Rivers, to leave behind inscribed records of their presence. Norse and Basque visitors reached the Gulf of St. Lawrence, introducing various mariners' terms into the language of the northern Algonquian Indians. Descendants of these visitors are also to be found apparently among the Amerindian tribes, several of which employ dialects derived in part from the ancient tongues of Phoenicia and North Africa.

The Celts seem first to have settled near the mouths of rivers of New England, as at North Salem on a branch of the Merrimac River in southern New Hampshire. At some time they ascended the Connecticut River, sailing as far north as Quechee, Vermont, where a western branch of the river joins the main stream through a precipitous gorge. Attracted doubtless by the seclusion of the uplands beyond the gorge, the Celts turned westward and colonized the hanging valleys of the Green Mountains. Quechee, incidentally, perpetuates the ancient Gaulish pronunciation of the Celtic word *quithe*, meaning chasm or pit, and the river that flows through the gorge, the Ottauquechee, similarly is an Amerindian rendering of the Celtic name meaning Waters-of-the-Chasm.

In the secluded valleys and on the hilltops, the priests (or Druids) erected the temples and circles of standing stones required by their religious beliefs, using, like their European cousins, the great stone boulders left upon the land by the retreating glaciers at the end of the ice age. On these stones they cut their inscriptions, using the ancient Celtic alphabet called *Ogam*.

In Europe the Celts doubtless did the same, but when Christianity came to the Celts the priests caused all the ancient pagan inscriptions to be erased, replaced by Christian Ogam, or left blank, while all the offending fertility paraphernalia were totally destroyed.

Not so in America. Here Christianity never came to the Celts, their old pagan inscriptions remain intact, and a host of giant stone phalluses char-



acterize the places of worship. Here we may yet see and read the ancient inscriptions of the rite of initiation to manhood, and see the sites of ritual worship of the powers of fertility in nature. In short, we have preserved in North America the oldest phases of religious thought and action of European man, of which only the merest traces have survived in Europe itself.

The consequences of these discoveries for archeology and history are, of course, immeasurable. As one historian, Professor Norman Totten, has pointed out, it means that 2,500 years of American prehistory must now be transferred to history; for history begins when writing begins, and we now have the oldest written documents of our nation, and the names of the men who wrote them. For archeology a whole new view is called for. During the past hundred years the belief that no European settled America before Leif Eriksson or Columbus has grown from an hypothesis into a firmly rooted dogma.

For European archeology, where more liberal views as to the antiquity of the Celts have been developing in recent years, the new discoveries in America may be expected to bring a flow of information on such topics as the dates of construction of megalithic buildings, as well as on the purposes for which they were used, and the gods whose rites were once performed within their precincts. For in as much as no Christian priests came to expunge the pagan inscriptions from the megalithic monuments of New England, America's surviving records may well supply the key to discovering who built the corresponding structures in Europe, where no trace remains of inscriptions made before the coming of Christianity.

When we reflect upon the events of the past two centuries of America's nationhood, we perceive that the course of British and American history is shaped like the letter Y. The lower upright of the Y represents the common stream of Europe's cultural heritage, reading upward until we reach the fork of the Y, which represents 1776. Thereafter America and Britain part company, each to pursue a separate path toward whatever destiny may lie in store.

Now it is an indisputable fact that not only has the history of the two

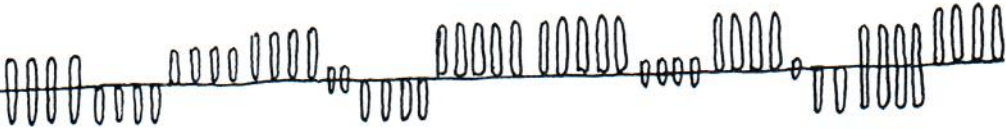
Early colonists in eastern America, as they saw themselves. Above, right, a Celtic portrait from Stark County, Ohio. This sculpture represents Bel, the sun god, and his Afro hairstyle symbolizes radiant energy. Right, a maritime Celt as depicted by a sculptor of ancient time; this stolid portrait still stands in the open air in Vannes, Brittany, and a similar head, excavated in New England, is now in the Peabody Museum, Salem, Mass. Left, an olive-skinned Libyan, as seen by a mosaic artist of Roman Tunisia. The Libyans were the ancient world's most brilliant navigators and explorers. The Zuni people of the southwest descend in part from ancient Libyan sailors, whose language they have preserved in a modified form to this day. *Dr. Clyde Keeler, Joseph D. Germano*

English-speaking nations bifurcated like the arms of the Y, but also the *teaching of history* in the schools and colleges of the two nations has followed a similar divergence. British children continue to learn the history of Britain from the remotest stone-age era, through the Celts, the Roman invaders, the Saxon invasions, the Norman invasion, and so on through the middle ages into the present era. American children, on the other hand, use history books which (to judge by the examples that teachers have given me) begin with an account of the benighted state of Europe in 1492 and lead directly, as you turn the first page, to a portrait of Christopher Columbus, followed by an account of his daring exploits and discoveries.

Here you have in a nutshell the difference in approach to history as presented in the schools that most people attend on either side of the Atlantic. For the European, history begins in vague, remote, and romantic mists of antiquity and slowly emerges into the brighter illumination of more recent time. For the American, history begins with the crash of cymbals as great and famous men stride onto the stage, fully documented or so nearly so that one might be pardoned for thinking that their birth certificates and social security cards are stored in the national archives in Washington. Two English humorists, in the book *1066 and All That*, suggested some years ago that there are only two dates in history that British people can remember—55 B.C., when Julius Caesar landed in Britain, and 1066, when William the Conqueror conquered. It is their mock-serious thesis that since the common man in Britain remembers no other event well enough to date it, no other events exist in British history! I suspect that an analogous satire on American history would have discovered essentially the same thing, except that the two dates every American remembers are 1492 and 1776. Hence there can be no American history prior to 1492, *quod erat demonstrandum*.

Of course the argument is false, but it does contrive to point out, in a blundering way, the nature of certain profound differences in the view of history as seen from the two sides of the Atlantic. Now let me restate the matter, this time with chapter and verse, and this time in earnest.

The year is 1712. Queen Anne rules in England, by remote control also in New England. Learned savants of the kingdom are at work studying ancient monuments and reporting their finds to the Royal Society in London. From Ireland a famous Welsh antiquary named Edward Lhyd (pronounced Lloyd) reports to the Society that he has just discovered a previously unknown kind of writing engraved on a stone at Trabeg, near Dingle, in County Kerry. Lhyd has no idea as to what the inscription might mean, or what language it is written in, but he takes care to make a copy of it to send to the Royal Society. Hopefully, he reasons, sometime



Edward Lhyd's transcription of the Ogam he found inscribed on a rock near Dingle, County Kerry, Ireland, about the year 1702. The copy, which contains numerous errors, was found in 1808 in a notebook which came into the possession of Peter Roberts, a friend of Vallancey's. When the writing was identified as Ogam, the stone was found to be a memorial to a person named Brusce.

someone may discover a key to the writing system, and then perhaps the Trabeg inscription may turn out to be important. Here, for the time being, action ceases on this particular problem.

Meantime, across the seas in New England, a Puritan clergyman named Cotton Mather has discovered some strange writing on a rock at Dighton, Massachusetts. He, too, writes to inform the Royal Society in London of his find, and the Society duly records his letter in the *Transactions* of the Society for 1712.

No further advance in epigraphy was made for two generations, during which time span America became a separate nation, with her own learned societies publishing their own records of research and philosophical inquiry. One unfortunate result was that whereas Lhyd's inscription in Ireland continued to exercise the minds of savants in Britain, Cotton Mather's report from New England now ceased to have any direct interest for British investigators and (since it was recorded in a British journal) it was simply forgotten in America. This was the parting of the ways of British and American antiquaries, as is well illustrated by the subsequent fate of the two reports that had been made in 1712. In contrast to the oblivion that now enveloped Cotton Mather's letter, the corresponding letter from Lhyd was to generate both a controversy and eventual enlightenment.

More than seventy years later, on June 24, 1784, a letter was received by the Society of Antiquaries in London from a certain Colonel Charles Vallancey, in Ireland, informing the Society that he had discovered an ancient Irish tombstone on Mount Callan, County Clare. He had been able to decipher the writing on it, so he reported, and found that it marked the grave of an ancient Irish chieftain named Conan Colgac. This startling information was accompanied by an explanation of how the decipherment had been carried out, and how he had recognized the writing as a script called Ogam, identical with the unknown script that Lhyd had reported three generations earlier.

In a later chapter you will find the explanation of Charles Vallancey's brilliant achievement. He was the first of a long line of linguists who have been responsible for virtually every major decipherment in archeology. Most of them have not been professional linguists teaching in a university department of languages, but rather men whose occupation requires them

to deal with mathematical probability theory, or algebra, or some other activity involving the solution of mutually dependent variables.

My own interest in languages stems from high-school days, when I first began to collect miscellaneous Etruscan words quoted by Latin authors whose works we read. Later I followed the work of Michael Ventris, a London architect who solved the writing called Linear B found on ancient tablets of Crete. Like others at that time, I rejoiced in his final success but mourned when his last paper arrived accompanied by a letter from the Hellenic Society reporting his death in a street accident. Apart from an early interest in ancient languages for their own sake, my work as a marine biologist led me to investigate ancient Libyan inscriptions found on remote islands in the Pacific, for these seemed likely to throw light on how man's dispersal across the earth may be influenced by winds and ocean currents.

But the point I wish to make as I close this chapter is that the parting of the ways of American and British savants following the revolution meant that Vallancey's discovery passed unnoticed in New England. The whole documentation of the oldest known literate Celtic society in the world—here in New England—even its very existence, was doomed to lie in limbo for two more centuries. Eight generations of American youth went to school, learned to think of the United States as a nation without historical roots in the soil of the new world, and without any traditions into the remote past save the undocumented speculations of those who looked toward the Bering Straits as the one and only portal of entry for pre-Columbian man. All Amerindian languages were classed together as supposed indigenous products of the New World, and the massive Phoenician, Libyan, and other old-world elements of their vocabularies passed undetected. Scripts that have been deciphered and well documented in Europe have, when discovered in American contexts, generally been dismissed as "marks made by plowshares or the action of the roots of trees," leading to the ridiculous inference that the same must also be true in Europe. When I surreptitiously introduced a well-authenticated Phoenician inscription from Sardinia into an exhibit of my American inscriptions and showed it at a lecture I gave in a department of archeology at a well-known university, no one seemed to notice any difference between the Susquehanna or Pennsylvania stones and the Mediterranean intruder!

Indeed, there was a time when I found it hard to get any archeology professor to examine inscribed stones, and when they did, as often as not the inscriptions were held upside down or sideways. The plain truth is that ancient languages are not usually studied by archeologists in America. So the arbiters of such research here really had little or no knowledge of the ancient scripts which they so readily dismissed as fortuitous markings made by the roots of trees or by plowshares. Happily, these obstacles to

our work have now diminished, and many university teachers are now interested in this developing field.

To the matter of plowshares and the marks they make I have paid special attention, watching farmers at work in the fields around me on my expeditions, and discussing with them what happens when a plow strikes a stone. In point of fact all that results is a dent, for either the stone flies out of the ground when it is struck, or the plow itself bounces off it if the stone doesn't move. The one device that farmers use capable of cutting grooves in stones is the chain with which they drag a large stone out of the ground; but such grooves are long and curving and bear not the slightest resemblance to any script known to me. Given such facts as these, it is not surprising that the theorists who seemed to attribute the invention of writing to the plow have never explained how it is that plows in Pennsylvania usually write in Basque or Iberian Punic, whereas those of New England are apt to ascend the walls of stone buildings to write Celtic Ogam upside down on the ceiling.

Perhaps the most pressing reform needed in courses in archeology in America today is to introduce the study of epigraphy, by which is meant the art of reading ancient inscriptions engraved or otherwise imprinted on stone or other durable materials. The need for courses in epigraphy was brought home to me in no uncertain terms after the news media began to report some of these finds. Each week now brings me letters from many parts of the country enclosing photographs or drawings or rubbings of inscriptions people have found on their own properties or elsewhere, and requesting an explanation. Many of these inscriptions are the work of later Amerindians and are not writing in the strict sense; many others are more or less illiterate but genuine records cut by the modern colonists and explorers, often recording the death of a comrade on the trail or the visit of a survey party; a few are patent forgeries of which the finder becomes the innocent purveyor. But many others are genuine ancient records and hence part of the cultural heritage of America.

It is saddening to see that many cliff-cut mementos of a visit by an ancient voyager have been overlaid by the recent scrawls of thoughtless vandals or shattered by the bullets fired at them by persons who think it incumbent to destroy otherwise enduring records cut into rock, high above the normally destructive processes of flood or fire. All too often an ancient inscription has survived two thousand years in the reverent custody of Amerindian tribes only to be ruined by the ignorant sharpshooter of modern times. If we are to stop the destruction of these national archives we must make it our business to inform young people as to what these inscriptions represent. School teachers can do much in this regard, and I am sure they will respond to the appeal.