

Edmund Carpenter

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Hjalmar Holand's *Explorations in America Before Columbus*, 1956, contains this passage:

'Then along the shore of the Gulf of Maine [Thorwald Eriksson] sailed ... born on the shore of a fjord, as were most of his ancestors, [he] felt the need of something different. And he found it! Coasting eastward along the shore, his eyes were pleased to see the mountain tops of Mount Desert Island, rising upwards of 1700 feet above the sea. Here was something that conformed to the images that not only had been built up within him throughout his life, but had also been inherited from his fathers, and when he entered into this dreamland by way of the narrow fjord, his enthusiasm was unbounded. Over the lapse of many centuries we can hear him rapturously exclaiming, "Here it is beautiful! Here I will build my home!" He had found his El Dorado, his Garden of Eden!'¹

One year later, Guy Mellgren, amateur archeologist & coin collector, reported finding a medieval European coin within sight of Thorwald's 'Garden of Eden'.

Am I alone in finding such a coincidence remarkable?

BACKGROUND

In 1956, CBC-Radio broadcast, then re-broadcast at regular intervals, a half-hour talk by me on how Viking settlements in maritime Canada might look today. Listeners were urged to report possible earthworks along the coast. Many responded².

Nordic Americans took pride in the Vinland Saga. A few went so far as to distort evidence (Newport Tower); produce fakes (Kensington Stone); and defend 'planted' Norse specimens (Beardmore). Hjalmar Holand spent forty years supporting these claims. All are now discredited. Nevertheless, his books proved popular³. Minnesota

erected a HUGE monument to the Kensington Stone. In 1948–1953, the Smithsonian exhibited the ‘original’.

Frederick J. Pohl produced six books & endless essays on pre-Columbian visits to America. His *Vikings on Cape Cod* appeared in 1957 – a bumper year for Viking fakes, including the now discredited Vinland map⁴. Runes appeared as far away as Oklahoma⁵.

In 1954, both *National Geographic & Readers’ Digest* ran Viking articles⁶. No credible evidence of Vikings has ever been found in Massachusetts, yet between 1952–1960, the slender *Bulletin* of the Massachusetts Archeological Society (MAS), to which Mellgren subscribed, published over a dozen articles on Vikings. One issue shows Vikings in horned helmets, a long ship pulled up on Cape Cod⁷.

An element of mild lunacy followed. Ancient coins launched mythic fleets. Seeding Indian sites with early coins became a popular prank. Pranksters usually chose fakes, but not always.

EVIDENCE

Mellgren said he found this coin on 8.18.57 in the Goddard Site, an ancient Indian village in Maine⁸. Twenty-two years later, Dr. Kolbjørn Skaare, University of Oslo, identified it as a Norse penny, minted by Olav Kyrre, AD 1065–1080⁹. No one questions that identification.

How it reached Maine is another matter. No Viking coin is known from Greenland, though extensive Viking settlements existed there. In Iceland, few medieval coins have surfaced, none minted by Olav Kyrre. Even in the Faeroe Islands, Viking coins are ‘rare’¹⁰.

Close parallels exist, however, in Norway. A single hoard found in Gresli, 1878, contained over 2200 Norse pennies, 1065–1080. ‘Specimens of this ... group’, writes Skarre, ‘have been on the market now and then since some “duplicates” from the Gresli hoard went to some public and private collections, both in Norway and abroad’¹¹.

Between 1881–1924, the University of Oslo Coin Cabinet sold, traded or donated 942 pennies from the Gresli & other hoards. Of these, 355 went to museums and 587 to private collectors¹². Examples appeared at auction as early as 1885. A 1948 New York auction offered 118 medieval Norse coins, ‘mostly from the Graeslid hoard’¹³. In 2001, I asked a New York coin dealer if he could locate, for sale, a Gresli penny. He did, in 25 minutes.

INTERVIEW

With these doubts in mind, I asked Dr. Richard Gramly, an archeologist resident in Massachusetts, to contact Guy Mellgren's widow, Mrs. Ruth (Mellgren) Macneill. A mutual friend & member of the MAS accompanied him. The interview took place 7.13.01. Mrs. Macneill received them graciously, having previously prepared a box of Mellgren's correspondence & clippings, which she turned over to Dr. Gramly to forward to me¹⁴. She reviewed Guy Mellgren's life. Before retiring in 1971, he ran a nursery & worked part-time for an auction house. From 1938 onward, archeology became a passion.

Following coffee/refreshments, the interview became, in Gramly's words, 'hard-hitting'. Was Guy a coin collector? (Yes. Foreign, U.S. Mrs. Macneill said she sold his collection 'some years ago'.)

Was he of Nordic descent? (Yes. Swedish paternal grandparents.) Did his library contain books by Holand & Pohl? (Here, Gramly said, Mrs. Macneill became less responsive. He didn't press)¹⁵. Mellgren's clipping file, however, reveals keen interest in pre-Columbian European contacts. Ancestry may be irrelevant here, but coin collecting, auction house employment & pre-Columbian European interests are not.

Mrs. Macneill wrote to me, offering additional help. I asked about his library: 'He didn't have an extensive library, mostly just articles and bulletins on archeology and books on many subjects¹⁶.

COIN DISCOVERY

According to Dr. Steven Cox, Maine State Museum (MSM), when Mellgren discovered the coin, he made no entry in his daily journal, though he marked 'C' for its location on his map¹⁷. Actually he marked all copper objects (ultimately 60) with 'C', but recalled in 1974, 17 years later, that one particular 'C' stood for penny¹⁸.

For two decades, Mellgren & Edward Runge dug the Goddard site each summer¹⁹. Offers of help from trained personnel were, I'm told, rebuffed. Visitors were not welcome. Working with short-handled potato hoes (Mellgren lost one arm in an industrial accident), they excavated 24,650 square feet. Their combined collections numbered an estimated 12,000–15,000 lithic artifacts alone²⁰. A three-page account titled 'Goddard's', 'As told to Janet Wilder', in the *Bulletin*, MAS, 1958, was their only publication²¹.

EUROPEAN ARTIFACTS

According to a 1964 newspaper account, 'an old pewter button, a large copper coin and a small silver coin [were found] ... at the Maine site in 1957²². In a 1969 lecture on the Goddard site, Mellgren refers to 'a silver coin minted in the reign of Stephen the First of England who reigned from 1135 to 1154'. He offered three possible explanations: 'lost at Naskeag shortly after being minted, or ... handed down from generation to generation in colonial times, or third (and most likely) had been found in some foreign land and kept as a curio until being lost at Naskeag [Goddard] by its last owner. A large copper coin, obviously an English or American penny, was found in 1958. There are also three metal buttons ... all different, one of which is probably of pewter'²³.

BERT E. FARMER

Bert Farmer of Farmington, Maine, examined the coin collection of the MSM. He was described, in 1977-78, as a student, coin collector & member of the Maine Archeological Society (MeAS). From this involvement came an illustrated article, 'Were the English the First to Discover America [?]'²⁴.

He errs in all five dates cited for the Goddard dig & confuses the American Numismatic Association (ANA) with the American Numismatic Society (ANS). Spelling errors are legion: primitive, acheologists, thorough fares, intermittantly, identifying, Bergan, Borque. It's disturbing to learn he became a nuclear engineer.

He cites Holand: 'Off to the east [of the Goddard Site] Mount Desert Island looms majestically'. He calls Maine runestones a 'heated debate' & gives Rhode Island as the source of anthracite found in Greenland. To explain a medieval English coin in Maine, he quotes how Henry II of England paid mercenaries, some of them Vikings, 'with coin of the realm and dismissed them and sent them abroad'.

Finally, he states: 'a report came back from the American Numismatic Society' identifying the coin as English.

AMERICAN NUMISMATIC SOCIETY

The ANS has no such record. What they have, however, is 15 Norse pennies. Two are identified as, 'Norway, Harald III and sons, 1017-1093', donated in 1921. Thirteen are identified as 'Norway, Harald Hargade of Magnus (son), 1065-1080'. Several specify the Gresli hoard. All 13 were purchased by the ANS on 6.1.48, *as part of* Lot 663 in a mail auction conducted jointly by two New York dealers: Henry Grunthal & Edward Gans. Lot 663 reads:

'NORWAY, 11TH-15TH CENTURY Special collection of 118 Pennies, Deniers and small Bracteats, mostly from the Greslid hoard. All are described according to Schive. Average fine 118 pcs'²⁵.

The ANS acquired lot 663 in toto for \$75, or roughly 64 cents each. According to Dr. Michael Bates, Curator at the ANS: 'The catalogue is meticulous in identifying consignments, but this lot is not so identified, meaning it was the property of one of the two dealers. The auction is very rich in Scandinavian material, suggesting that one of the two had purchased a specialized private collection.

'Some years ago, my colleague Mr. Hoge tried to find the provenance of a coin in the Grunthal -Gans auction, but neither of the two had any archives nor any memory of the piece. Now they are both deceased. There is no trace [at the ANS] of any Grunthal archives from his days as a dealer.'²⁶

If the phrase 'mostly from the Greslid hoard' is taken literally, the ANS should now have at least 59 Gresli pennies. This is not the case. Either 'mostly' was used loosely, or portions of this lot were later sold or traded.

WHO MISIDENTIFIED THIS COIN?

In 1953, Henry Grunthal became Curator of Medieval European Coins at the ANS. He didn't specialize in English or Nordic coins, but he certainly knew the field & co-authored *Carolingian Coinage*, 1967. The ANS Library has a photocopy of Stenersen's illustrated report on the Gresli hoard²⁷. With Grunthal's background, with 15 examples in hand, plus the Stenersen report, surely it wasn't he who misidentified the penny as English.

Just as surely it was Charles F. Nettleship, Jr., coin collector and Cape Cod neighbor of Mellgren. A footnote to the Wilder article acknowledges 'Charles Nettleship, numismatist'²⁸. An unsigned, handwritten note in the MSM reads: 'coin ID by a man named Nettleship, then pres. of ANA'²⁹.

Among the documents Mrs. Macneill sent me is a typed, unsigned, one-page statement titled: 'Information Regarding Coin/Found by Guy Mellgren at Indian Site in Maine/Summer 1957'. It identifies the coin as English on the basis of a short cross voided on the reverse side. The error is understandable: coins of the type known as Gresli imitate English coins of the 11th century³⁰.

Under 'REFERENCES', two books are cited: George C. Brooke, *English Coins ...*, 1932, pls. 16-22; and Gertrude Burford Rawlings, *Story of British Coinage*, 1898, pls. 27, 33. Both illustrate reverse motifs with single-line crosses (the Goddard coin has a double-line cross). The third reference states: 'also C. F. Nettleship, Jr. - life member, New Jersey Numismatic Society'.

A handwritten addition by Ruth Mellgren explains the discrepancy between the weight (24 grains) of such an English coin and the weight (9 1/2 grains) of the Goddard coin: 'which would be partially accounted for by the absence of a portion of the coin'³¹.

I asked her, Who typed this statement? She replied: 'Guy loaned the coin originally to Mr. Nettleship to identify. He was well known and a respected neighbor of ours; and ... a life member of the New Jersey Numismatic Society. It may have been he that wrote the article. He was not a professional'³².

'The coin', she wrote earlier, 'remained with my husband on display with many Indian relics in our home, first in Hingham, Massachusetts, and in 1971 in Centerville, Cape Cod', until acquired by the MSM in 1974.³³

All agree: Guy Mellgren was popular, friendly. Cape Codders knew him affectionately as 'the auctioneer'. For several years, he served as President of the MAS. Many visitors must have seen his displays & shared his archeological, even his numismatic interests. Did no one exclaim, 'A medieval European coin in Maine? Extraordinary!' No one?

BANGOR CONFERENCE

The 1974 Annual Meeting of the Eastern States Archaeological Federation was held in Bangor, Maine, That year it focused on 'pre-Columbian European visitation and Viking influence on the Western Hemisphere'. Speakers included Einar Haugen, Harvard; O. G. Landsverk, Landsverk Foundation; Brigitta Wallace, Carnegie Museum; and others. Mellgren read a paper, 'The Goddard Site Revisited'.

He never mentioned the coin. True, it had been misidentified as English. But *any* medieval European object was relevant to a symposium on 'pre-Columbian visitation'. Five years before this conference, Bruce J. Bourque, archeologist Maine State Museum, and Mellgren examined it to see if it had been perforated. In 1974, Bourque asked Mellgren which 'C' on his map represented the coin. Yet that coin went unmentioned at this Conference.

RILEY SUNDERLAND

Riley Sunderland, a retired military historian & member of the MeAS, wasn't a coin collector, but he knew its literature. His interests concerned pre-Columbian visitors to America³⁴. In 1978, he published 'Philip II Tetradrachm Excavated from Four Feet Down in Montana'³⁵.

The moment he saw Farmer's illustrated article, he realized the penny was Norse. He celebrated with a party at which he displayed a poster-size blow-up

of the coin³⁶. On 4.14.78, he left for a London vacation, taking along photographs for Peter Seaby, a leading coin dealer.

PETER SEABY

Why Seaby? Sunderland knew him personally. He was on Seaby's mailing list. And Farmer had cited Seaby's *Standard Catalogue of British Coins*, 1966, as his primary source.

Seaby tentatively identified the coin as Norse. Sunderland urged Bourke to send Seaby better photographs. Bourke did. Bourke also informed Mellgren of Seaby's Norse identification³⁷. I found no record of Mellgren's response.

Ruth Mellgren later wrote to Edward & Rae Runge, 1.25.79: 'It [the coin] really now seems to be Norse, which Guy did not believe. He died [coronary artery occlusion, 9.30.78] before any of the articles came into print³⁸. Seaby published the penny on the cover of *Coin & Medal Bulletin*, December, 1978³⁹

FLOYD PAINTER

'The finding of a Viking coin in Maine', wrote Floyd Painter, Editor of *The Chesopiean*, 'was not mentioned at the {Bangor} symposium by speakers or members of the audience. One wonders why such a discovery was kept under wraps so long, only to surface in the [1978] bulletin of a London coin dealer'⁴⁰.

GEORGE R. HORNER

The trustees of the MAS asked its President, George R. Horner, to respond to this editorial. Horner explained that Mellgren 'took the coin to Douglas Byers, anthropologist, who told him it was an English coin'⁴¹. How Horner learned this, he didn't say. Byers & Mellgren died in 1978.

Horner said Mellgren discovered the coin in 1962 (actually 1957), and called the coin 'the fourth of its kind in existence ... traded by Indians from Norse settlements in Newfoundland to Indians in Maine'. The L'Anse aux Meadows settlement closed before the coin was minted⁴². No other Viking settlement has, to date, been found in Newfoundland.

'We hope', Horner concluded in his letter to Painter, 'that in a future note in your journal you may clear Guy's name of fraudulent intent'⁴³.

Painter retracted: 'The integrity of Guy Mellgren is beyond question and the chances of his obtaining such a rare coin in any other manner than finding it is untold millions to one. We must accept this find as genuine and give Guy Mellgren the credit he deserves. May he rest in peace'⁴⁴.

MAURICE ROBBINS

Maurice Robbins, Massachusetts State Archeologist & Viking enthusiast, also replied to Painter: 'I noted your bit about the Viking coin in *The Chesopiean*. I know the study [?] well. The coin was found by Guy Mellgren of Centerville, Massachusetts. Guy passed away about a month ago.

'Knowing the coin to be pre-Columbian, either English or Norse, he kept very quiet about the find. The professional world is so opposed to anything Viking in the Northeast that, if an amateur claims to have found something of Viking origin, he is immediately suspect. Charges of fraud immediately arise – I have seen it in many instances. Guy did not wish to have to defend himself and therefore did not mention the find. He left his collection to the Maine State Museum. [They] came across the coin, and hence the recent publicity. You were probably at the Eastern States Archaeological Federation meeting in Bangor – I was – and can recall the immediate and violent opposition to all claims of Viking related finds. The find was known at that time by several of us but to protect Guy we did not bring it up. This sort of thing unfortunately is most harmful but I don't know the answer to the problem'⁴⁵.

MARSHALL McKUSICK

Marshall McKusick, Iowa State Archeologist, published his doubts in *World Coin News*⁴⁶. At least three correspondents rebuked him. George R. Horner echoed his earlier letter to Painter. Thomas E. Lux, Editor of the *Newsletter, MAS*, said 'the coin is so rare that only 3 others like it are known to exist'. He asked McKusick to sign a 243-word retraction Lux prepared⁴⁷. McKusick wrote his own retraction⁴⁸. Lux altered it before printing it⁴⁹.

DEFENDERS

In addition to Skaare's 1979 article, three others on the Goddard coin appeared in *The Norwegian Numismatic Journal*, 1979–1980⁵⁰. Their authors ruminate, speculate, guess, assume, but check nothing. A single paragraph in one article contains eight errors.

AVIAN THEORY

Seaby's announcement in *World Coin News* produced a lively exchange. The last was headlined: 'Avian Theory Advanced for Penobscot Bay Find'. It reviewed Dik Browne's syndicated comic strip *Hagar the Horrible*, 11.28.78. Here the lovable Viking Hagar flips a coin high, only to have it never return. In the last frame, he looks upward & exclaims, '#@!!& SEAGULL!' Obviously, a gull, having

snatched the coin in midair, carries it in its entrails from Norway to Maine, then 'deposits' it on the Goddard Site⁵¹.

MARK HEDDEN

In 1979, the MSM employed Mark Hedden, an experienced archeologist, to organize the Goddard pottery. He described Mellgren's notes as 'hopelessly sketchy'; lacking all photographs of work in progress or specimens *in situ*; 'a mess, almost useless'; and concluded, 'My effort to sort out the pottery was futile, mostly wasted ...'⁵².

The area where Mellgren recalled finding the coin was rich in cord-wrapped, stick-impressed sherds. Since the coin was minted toward the end of this pottery style, circa AD 600–1100, the dates touched⁵³. But, if the coin was simply lost, not thrown out with the potsherds, association means nothing.

DISTANT TRADE

The Viking settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows, circa AD 1000, was brief. No other Viking presence in Newfoundland has been reported. However, there is good evidence of Vikings crossing from Greenland to Baffin land. According to Cox, local traders conceivably carried this coin from Baffinland or Labrador to Maine. He offered three examples of distant trade at the Goddard site.

First: 'more than thirty tools and several hundred flakes of Ramah chert' from a quarry in northern Labrador. Second: 'a Labrador or Newfoundland Dorset-culture burinlike tool that had been reworked into an end scraper'. Third: a 'possible Eskimo (most likely, Dorset) artifact, a small polished jade knife'⁵⁴.

Ramah chert found on the Goddard site came from over 1000 miles to the north & jasper from over 500 miles to the southwest, each as the crow flies. Clearly this site, like most Indian sites, bore evidence of distant trade.

PERFORATED?

Cox described the coin as 'perforated for use as a pendant or as a clothing ornament'⁵⁵. Ruth Mellgren said, 'the edge broke off with the initial handling'⁵⁶. In 1969, Mellgren & Bourke thought this perforation was produced 'by driving a pointed object through the coin from obverse to reverse'⁵⁷. According to Skaare: 'Due to some later damage this piercing can no longer be seen. But the first photographs of the coin seem to show some traces of the hole'⁵⁸.

Among the documents Mrs. Macneill sent me are photographs taken when the coin was larger. I detect no perforation.

KOLBJØRNE SKAARE

Skaare errs in two particulars. He says the ANS has 2 Norse pennies. In fact, they have 15. He reports no 'die-duplicates to the Maine coin among the Gresli specimens'. True for Gresli. But, of the 942 duplicate pennies Oslo sold, not all came from Gresli.

The absence of a Gresli die-duplicate, plus the condition of the Maine penny, suggest a source other than Gresli.

Skaare is more skeptical than those who quote him suggest. He raises the possibility the coin was weathered with acid. 'The Gresli coins are extremely well preserved. They usually look as if recently struck. It is hard to believe that the Maine coins comes from the Gresli hoard. In that case it must have been exposed to some refined and concocted treatment, just to make it look old and detrited. As already mentioned, we have been unable to find die-duplicates to the Maine coin among the Gresli specimens'⁵⁹.

Skaare then adds two curious details. He notes that Mellgren, in his will, asked that his cremated remains be scattered on the Goddard Site. They were. Skaare adds: 'it was arranged that I should have one day for examination and studies before any press conference was held'⁶⁰.

PUBLICITY & FUNDING

Both UPI and API wire services covered that press conference. Newspapers as far away as Oklahoma carried the story. One headline, VIKING BACKERS CASH IN ON COIN, anticipated what followed⁶¹. In February, 1979, a bill was introduced into the Maine legislature for \$46,000 to fund the Goddard dig, plus Federal matching funds. This amount was later reduced to \$24,000 over two years, plus matching funds.

National Geographic & TIME featured stories. *The New York Times Magazine* ran an 8-page article on Vikings in America, prominently illustrating the Goddard coin⁶². BBC, London, sent a film crew to the site. So did local Public-TV.

'Walter Cronkite closed the CBS Evening News one night in the fall of 1979 with the announcement that a silver coin recovered from a prehistoric Indian garbage dump on Maine's coast had been identified as a Norse silver penny, minted between AD 1065 and 1080. For thirty seconds America's attention was focused on the question of Europe's first contact with the New World'⁶³.

In 2000, the Smithsonian mounted a touring exhibition on Vikings, with the coin prominently figured⁶⁴. *Broadside*, MSM's newsletter, quotes William Fitzhugh: "The Norse penny ... is currently the southern-most authentic artifact known in North

America ... I can assure you that ... [it] will be seen by hundreds of thousands of museum visitors'⁶⁵.

Hundreds of thousands of museum visitors, like me, may never know that coin's origin. Surely the fact that Mellgren was an active buyer of foreign coins was known to some archeologists.

Bruce Bourque writes: 'My relationship with the Mellgrens over the years has been too familiar for me to be comfortable asking potentially difficult questions. Mike's [Gramly's] findings confirm some Nordic interests I detected in Mellgren, and add information about his interests in numismatics. I also found among Mellgren's papers, donated to the museum shortly before the time of his death, pictures of long ships. On balance, however, I would still give modest odds that the find is genuine. My reasons for doing so are the same now as when Steve Cox and I set them out in the little preliminary paper on the site published in 1980. But I think our public support of the coin's authenticity, in print and in exhibit labels, has been tempered by the same thoughts Mike, and perhaps you, have been harboring'⁶⁶.

Yet in 2001, Bourque called the Goddard coin evidence 'incontrovertible'⁶⁷. According to press accounts, Bourque's search for Viking relics in Maine dates from at least 1971.

??????????

Archeologists did Mellgren a disservice in failing to check his account. Conceivably he really did find that coin, exactly as he said. He never profited financially from it. He gave all his Goddard material to the MSM⁶⁸. He addressed church groups & ladies' garden clubs. No record known to me hints he was other than he appeared.

If Mellgren planted this coin, he misled even his son. In 1979, Ernest Mellgren was quoted in the local press as saying, 'I remember how excited I was when he came home and told us he had found it at the Indian site he and his partner Edward Runge were digging in Maine'⁶⁹. Ernest exhibited the coin to classmates⁷⁰. Years later, one classmate sent Mellgren's widow a clipping about the coin. At the top, he wrote, 'Is this Ernie Mellgren's "thing"?'⁷¹.

Mellgren may be totally innocent. Yet his silence puzzles⁷². I don't accept for one minute Maurice Robbins' explanation for that silence. Announcement of the coin wasn't met with ridicule, but with uncritical acceptance.

That uncritical acceptance bothers me. Archeologists wanted to believe this story & did. It served not to ask. No one checked. The coin market was well organized long before computers. At the time the coin surfaced, its origin might have been determined. Now we'll never be sure — or about Mellgren.

I asked an archeologist who identified himself as a close friend of Mellgren: Did he know that Mellgren collected coins? He said, No. Did he know that Mellgren worked for an auction house? No. Did he know the coin had minimal market value? No. Finally, I asked, Why, if he knew Mellgren so well, *didn't* he know?

He simply restated his faith in Mellgren. That was never the question. The question was and remains: why did scholars fail to check this story? A medieval coin in Maine? WHAT! We must check. None did.

They went further. They declared the coin 'rare', 'only 3 others like it', 'the fourth of its kind in existence', 'untold millions to one', with a market value 'usually over \$1000'⁷³. In fact, similar coins were then available for less than one dollar. The entire 'back-up' story rested on bias speculation. 'The problem in archeology', writes Glyn Daniel, 'is when to stop laughing'.

PRANK

On September 15, 2001, I asked Mrs. Macneill: could a prankster have planted the coin for Mellgren to find? Runge? A coin collecting friend? A Viking promoter?

She may have found my question offensive or simply preferred not to answer. I received no reply for three months. My question wasn't unreasonable. In the 1950s, Maine & Cape Cod were awash with Viking promoters. Many dabbled in archeology. Surely Mellgren knew some of them. If he really did find that coin as he said, he & his wife must have considered, wondered, discussed: Was it seeded? Surely he knew coin collectors with the means & possibly the motive to do so.

Mrs. Macneill replied 1.13.02: 'No, it never occurred to Guy that anyone "planted" the coin on the site. Mr. Goddard was a very private person and did not allow others on his property unless they were his personal guests. Of course, no one knew it was a Viking coin until Guy died in '78. Neither Guy nor Edward Runge ever mentioned any interest in Vikings to my knowledge. No Nordic enthusiasts ever visited the site. In fact, Guy & Ed had to be sure to get permission before returning each year to the Goddard Site.

'Guy did not have such books or interest in listening to the radio about Vikings. I do not recall knowing about those broadcasts.

'On a few rare occasions my children and I *were* allowed to come visit for a few days on the site when Guy was working alone. We had the use of a cabin'⁷⁴.

NON-EXISTENT HOAX

A press account, attributed by AP to Skaare & by UPI to Bourque, paraphrased one of them as saying 'the chances of the coin being a "hoax" or having been "planted" were almost non-existent because of the extremely rare and valuable nature of the penny

and because its discoverer paid no attention to it since he simply assumed it was an English coin brought to Maine in Colonial times⁷⁵.

For obvious reasons, I never asked Mrs. Macneill: Did Mellgren himself participate in a prank, only to have misgivings after becoming President of the MAS, participating in serious digs elsewhere & enjoying professional acceptance?

BEARDMORE

The Goddard penny reminded me of Beardmore. In the early 1930s, authentic Norse specimens (although not Western Viking specimens) were ‘discovered’ near Beardmore, Ontario⁷⁶. The story began in a bar. Prank became fraud when scholars arrived.

Twenty years later, a Canadian publisher asked me for a manuscript on Ontario prehistory. The Beardmore relics, still taken seriously, were prominently displayed in the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), Toronto. I passed them daily en route to my office there.

The founding Director of the museum had just retired. I asked his secretary, Mary Campbell, for the file. She’d been with the Director forever. I still recall, in precise detail, how she placed the file in front of me, silently. She knew.

Initially, the Director got taken, innocently. Local newspapers, however, soon reported another story. The Director sent his assistant to Beardmore to check. The assistant did, accurately. But the Director silenced him. He went further. When a local historian, a high-school teacher, sent the Director an accurate report on Beardmore, he was told foolishness might cost him his job — a serious threat during the Depression. To his credit, the historian published, though he tempered his account.

The ROM continued to defend Beardmore until 1957. They lowered their colors (not very gracefully) only after the discoverer’s son publicly stated that his father planted those relics. He said it bothered him to read in a textbook an account he knew to be false.

During the twenty-five years between the relics’ ‘discovery’ and the son’s statement, successive ROM directors & staff knew a great deal about those relics. They knew the name of his rightful owner; the collection from which they came; the name of the ship by which they reached Canada; that they served as collateral on a bank loan; where they were stored; and much more.

What linked Beardmore & Goddard was publicity.

FRANKLY...

Dr. Steven Cox writes: ‘Frankly I don’t think we’ll ever know the truth for sure — different people will obviously continue to have different opinions, and that’s all this is

about. I do find it interesting that your draft article was quite reminiscent of the many letters and articles we receive from the pre-Columbian enthusiasts who are convinced we professional archaeologists spend all of our time ignoring and covering up “the Truth”⁷⁷.

I cannot speak for ‘we professional archeologists’, only for myself. I prefer the Scottish verdict: Not proven.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'm indebted to Dr. Richard Gramly, Professor Harald Prins & Dr. Steven Cox.

NOTES

¹ Hjalmar Holand, *Explorations in America Before Columbus*, New York, 1956: 55.

² I turned these letters over to Dr. Jorgen Meldgaard, Danish National Museum, Copenhagen. He was then about to survey the Newfoundland coast for just such sites. Later I gave copies of several letters to Dr. William Fitzhugh, Smithsonian Museum, Washington.

³ At least 56 titles by Hjalmar can be found on the Internet. Several books went through multiple printings & editions.

⁴ A 2002 press release, issued jointly by the Brookhaven Laboratory, University of Arizona & Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education, gives a parchment date of approximately AD 1434 in support of the map's possible authenticity.

⁵ Gloria Farley, 'Evidence Proves It: Columbus Was a Late Comer', *Family Weekly* (Sunday newspaper insert with circulation of about 3 million), 1.29.78. The alleged rune stones in Oklahoma include Heavener 1-3, Poteau & Swanee. At the same moment, alleged rune stones at Sprit Pond, Maine, received wide publicity.

⁶ *National Geographic*, 106: 853-62, 1954; and *Readers' Digest* 65: 132-6, 1954.

⁷ *Bulletin* 19 (2): 33, MAS, 1958. Cape Cod? Connecticut?

⁸ Janet Wilder, 'Goddard's', 'As told to Janet Wilder', by Guy Mellgren & Edward Runge, *Bulletin*, MAS, 19 (3), 1958: 41-43.

⁹ Kolbjørn Skarre, 'The Norwegian penny from the excavation at Naskeag Point' ('An Eleventh Century Norwegian Penny Found on the Coast of Maine'), NNF-NYTT: *Meddeleser fra Norsk Numismatisk Forening*, 2, 1979: 12-17.

¹⁰ Simon V. Argue, 'Vikings in the Faeroe Islands, in William W. Fitzhugh & Elizabeth I. Ward (eds.), *Vikings: The North Atlantic Saga*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, 2000: 163.

¹¹ Skarre, *op. cit.*, 1979: 14. Even before the Gresli hoard was found, coins of this type had been researched & published: C. I. Schive, *Norges mynter I middelalderen*, Christiania [Oslo], 1865.

¹² Hakon Ingvaldsen, Curator of Coins, Museum of Cultural Heritage, University of Oslo, to Edmund Carpenter, 4.26.02. Dr. Ingvaldsen estimates 1400–1500 coins remain in the Gresli hoard, University of Oslo.

¹³ *Mail Bid Sale*, closing date 6.1.48, jointly conducted by Henry Grunthal & Edward Gans (Numismatic Fine Arts), New York.

¹⁴ Most of Mellgren's papers are now in the Archives of the Maine State Museum, Augusta. On 7.13.01 & 8.26.01, Ruth Macneill sent me additional items.

¹⁵ Richard Gramly to Edmund Carpenter, 8.22.01.

¹⁶ Ruth Macneill to Edmund Carpenter, 8.26.01.

¹⁷ Steven Cox, 'A Norse Penny in Maine', in Fitzhugh & Ward (eds.), *op. cit.*, 2000: 206.

¹⁸ Steven Cox to Edmund Carpenter, 12.14.01: 'We have it in a letter from him [Mellgren] that it was his recollection that the "C" on that particular square map was the coin'.

¹⁹ Fitzhugh & Ward (eds.), *op. cit.*, 2000: 206; Steven Cox to Edmund Carpenter, 12.3.01; Bruce J. Bourque & Steven Cox, 'Maine State Museum Investigation of the Goddard Site, 1975', *Man in the Northeast*, 22, 1981: 20.

²⁰ Steven Cox to Edmund Carpenter, 1.29.02.

²¹ Wilder, *op. cit.*, 1958: 41–43.

²² *Patriot Ledger*, Blue Hill, Maine, 10.21.64: 9.

²³ Guy Mellgren, Copy of talk on the Goddard Site, Mellgren file, MSM.

²⁴ Bert E. Farmer, 'Were the English the first to discover America', *Bulletin, Maine Archaeological Society*, 18 (1), 1978: 41–46.

²⁵ *Mail Bid Sale*, *op. cit.*, 1948: 34. In the period following World War 2, refugees to North America brought with them so many coins, stamps, prints, books, etc., prices dropped to minimal. Moreover, the Marshall Plan introduced deep-plowing tractors that exposed new hoards. Much was available at modest price.

²⁶ Michael Bates to Edmund Carpenter, 12.17.02. Henry Grunthal & Edward Gans were Berlin dealers who fled Nazi Germany for New York. UCLA preserves Gans' library & UCB his seal collection, but I have yet to locate records of this auction.

²⁷ L. B. Stenersen, *Myntfundet fra Graeslid i Thydalen*, Christiania, 1881.

²⁸ Wilder, *op. cit.*, 1958: 43.

²⁹ Anonymous, handwritten on 3x5 card, Goddard file, Archives, MSM. Steven Cox to Edmund Carpenter, 1.8.02: '... appears to be by Bruce [Bourke] (his handwriting), although he has no recollection of it'.

Charles F. Nettleship, Jr., though a member of the ANA, never held office. In 1942, he ran unsuccessfully as a Board member. The Nettleship Award, New Jersey Numismatics Society, bears his name.

³⁰ Alan Stahl to Edmund Carpenter, 1.17.02.

³¹ During Olav Kyrre's reign, pennies were struck at half the weight of the English penny.

³² Ruth Macneill to Edmund Carpenter, 1.10.02.

³³ Ruth E. Mellgren, 'Letter to the Editor ...', 5.4.79, *Popular Archaeology*, 7 (2), 1979; same letter, dated 6.15.79 in the *Chesopiean*, 17 (4-5), 1979: 45.

³⁴ Steven Cox to Edmund Carpenter, 12.14.01: 'Riley Sunderland was a pre-Columbian enthusiast ... always enthusiastic about any new "evidence" for pre-Columbian visitors'.

³⁵ Riley Sunderland, 'Philip II Tetradrachm Excavated from Four Feet Down in Montana', *Epigraphic Society Occasional Papers*, 7, article 174, 1978, Barry Fell, editor.

³⁶ Roslyn Strong (interview with Barbara Sunderland, 1.11.02) to Edmund Carpenter, 1.12.02.

³⁷ *Broadside*, Maine State Museum, 1 (3): 1979: 4.

³⁸ Ruth Mellgren to Edward & Rae Runge, 1.25.79, Mellgren file, MSM. Yet we know Guy Mellgren was notified of Seaby's identification.

This letter contains two other relevant items: 1] 'Bruce [Bourque] told me the coin is so valuable and rare that it would not even come up on the "open market" to be sold at any price'; 2] '... and that he [Bruce Bourque] could expect to get your collection if he were given the same "documentation" that Guy received'.

³⁹ Peter Seaby, 'The first datable Norse find from North America?', *Seaby Coin and Medal Bulletin*, December, 1978: 369-370, 377-382 (released 11.27.78). See also *SCMB*, 1979: 8.

⁴⁰ Floyd Painter, 'A Viking Coin in Maine?', *The Chesopiean*, 16 (4-6), 1978: 1; also in *Popular Archaeology*, 7, 1978.

⁴¹ George R. Horner, 'A Letter from Dr. George R. Horner', *The Chesopiean*, 17 (4-5), 1979: 44.

⁴² Birgitta Linderöth Wallace, 'The Viking Settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows', in Fitzhugh & Ward (eds.), *op. cit.*, 2000: 216.

⁴³ Horner, *op. cit.*, 1997: 44.

⁴⁴ Floyd Painter, 'A Summary', *The Chesopiean*, 17 (4-5), 1979: 47; and *Popular Archaeology*, 1979. Also see Thomas H. McGovern, 'The Norse Penny Mystery', *Popular Archaeology*, 1981.

⁴⁵ Maurice Robbins, 'A Letter from Maurice Robbins', *The Chesopiean*, 17 (4-5), 1979: 45-46.

Gloria Farley, *In Plain Sight: Old World Records in Ancient America*, 1994, reports Carthagian coins found in North America, Phoenicians crossing the Atlantic some 2000 years ago, etc., then adds: 'One facet [of the Goddard coin] not generally known is included in a letter from the State Archaeologist of Maine explaining the lapse of twenty-two years from the time the coin was found until it was authenticated. Although the finder knew the coin was pre-Columbian, either English or Norse, he, his friends, and the State Archaeologist of Maine did not report the find because of *immediate and violent opposition of professionals to all claims of Viking-related finds* [italics added]. The coin was not verified as Norse until after the death of the finder'.

⁴⁶ Marshall McKusick, 'Hoaxes plague Norwegian finds', *World Coin News*, 6/10: 1, 18-19, 24, March 6, 1979; with two follow-ups, *World Coin News*, 3.27.79 & 5.22.79.

⁴⁷ Thomas E. Lux to Marshall McKusick, 6.25.79.

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- ⁴⁸ Marshall McKusick to Thomas E. Lux, 6.29.79.
- ⁴⁹ Thomas E. Lux, *Massachusetts Archaeological Society Newsletter*, 5 (1) & 5 (2), 1979.
- ⁵⁰ Michael Dolley, 'The First Authentic Finding of a Norwegian Viking-age Coin in Continental America', *NNF-Nytt*, 1979/2: 22–28; Marshall McKusick, 'Some Historical Implications of the Norse Penny from Maine', *NNF-Nytt*, 1979/3: 20–23; Erik Wahlgren, 'The Norse Coin from Maine: Philology and Navigation', *NNF-Nytt*, 1980/1: 24–30.
- ⁵¹ Donald Gosling, 'Avian Theory Advanced for Penobscot Bay Find', *World Coin News*, 1.9.79: 3.
- ⁵² Mark Hedden to Edmund Carpenter, 2.10.02 & 2.19.02.
- ⁵³ See James B. Petersen & David Sanger, 'An Aboriginal Ceramic Sequence for Maine and the Maritimes', in *Prehistoric Archaeology in the Maritimes: Past & Present Research*, edited by Michael Deal & Susan Blair, 1991: 121–178.
- ⁵⁴ Steven Cox, *op. cit.*, 2000: 207.
- ⁵⁵ Cox, *ibid.*: 207.
- ⁵⁶ Ruth Mellgren, 'Letter To The Editor ...', dated 4.4.79, *Popular Archaeology*, 9.
- ⁵⁷ Bourque & Cox, *op. cit.*, 1981: 22.
- ⁵⁸ Skaare, *op. cit.*, 1979, 12, 13, 16.
- ⁵⁹ Skaare, *ibid.*, 1979: 15. Skaare appears not to have examined at least 13 of the 15 Norse pennies owned by the American Numismatic Society.
- ⁶⁰ Skaare, *ibid.*, 1979: 12.
- ⁶¹ *Standard-Times*, New Bedford, Massachusetts, 12.28.79: 3.
- ⁶² *Time*, 12.11.78: 72; *National Geographic*, 159: 574–601, 1981; *New York Times Magazine*, 9.28.80: 50–53, 74–76.
- ⁶³ Arthur E. Spiess, 'Wild Maine and the Rusticating Scientist: A History of Anthropological Archaeology in Maine', *Man in the Northeast*, 30, 1985: 101–129.
- ⁶⁴ With the possible exception of the Goddard coin, all known Viking evidence for America comes from Canada. The Nordic Council of Ministers offered Canada & the U.S. a grant to mount an exhibit of Vikings in America. The Smithsonian Institution featured the coin & took over the exhibition.
- ⁶⁵ William Fitzhugh, quoted in *Broadside*, Maine State Museum, 22 (2), 1999: 3.
- ⁶⁶ Bruce J. Bourque to Edmund Carpenter, 8.30.01.
- ⁶⁷ Bruce J. Bourque, *Twelve Thousand Years: American Indians in Maine*, University of Nebraska Press, 2001: xviii.
- ⁶⁸ Bruce J. Bourque to Ruth Mellgren, 4.2.79, concerning an appraisal by Dr. David Sanger, Professor of Archeology, University of Maine, Orono, of Mellgren's Goddard collection for tax relief purposes.
- ⁶⁹ *Cape Cod Times*, 2.19.79: 3.
- ⁷⁰ Ruth Macneill to Edmund Carpenter, 1.23.02.
- ⁷¹ *The Gardener News*, 2.12.79.

⁷² Between 1957–1978, Mellgren spoke less & less about this coin.

⁷³ Bruce J. Bourque & Steven Cox, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

⁷⁴ Ruth Macneill to Edmund Carpenter, 1.13.02.

⁷⁵ *South Shore Newsday*, 2.8.79: 1.

⁷⁶ Edmund S. Carpenter, 'Further evidence on the Beardmore relics', *American Anthropologist*, 59: 875–878, 1957; 'Frauds in Ontario archaeology', *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, 31 (2): 113–118, 1961.

⁷⁷ Steven Cox to Edmund Carpenter, 1.8.02.

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