http://geology.19thcenturyscience.org/books/1893-Dawson/README.htm

different metals may be contemporaneous, provided that they can be obtained in a native state. At the time of the discovery of America the Esquimaux were using native iron, which, though rare in most parts of the world, is not uncommon in some rocks of Greenland. The people of the region of the great lakes, and of the valleys of the Mississippi and Ohio, were using native copper from Lake Superior for similar purposes. Gold was apparently the only metal among the natives of Central America. The people of Peru had invented bronze, or had brought the knowledge of it with them from beyond the sea. Thus the Peruvians were in the bronze age, the Mexicans and Mound builders in the copper age, and the Esquimaux in the iron age, while at the same time the greater part of the aboriginal tribes were at one and the same time in the ages of chipped and polished stone and in these ages what have been called palæolithic and neolothic weapons were contemporaneous, the former being most usually unfinished examples of the latter, or extemporized tools roughly made in emergencies.[1] How long this had lasted, or how long it would have continued, had not Europeans introduced from abroad an iron age, we do not know. It was probably the same in other parts of the world, in pre-historic times. In any case, the discovery of native metals must have occurred very early. Men searching in the beds of streams for suitable pebbles to form hammers and other implements, would find nuggets of gold and copper, and the properties of these, so different from those of other pebbles, would at once attract attention, and lead to useful applications. Native iron is of rarer occurrence, but in certain localities would also be found.[2] It must have been

[1] "Fossil Men," by the Author. W. H. Holmes, "American Anthropologist," 1890.

[2] The rarity of native iron, whether meteoric or telluric, and its rapid decay by rusting, sufficiently account for its absence in deposits where implements of stone and bone have been preserved.