


1904

Excerpts of correspondence from William F Ganong, 1904-1936

William F. Ganong

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Wm. F. Ganong, March 21, 1913:

I have been very much interested in the Tarrantines question, am looking up the data since your letter. The earliest known use of the name appears to be that in the account of the Sagadahoc Colony 1607--where they are called tarentynes and identified with the Micmacs-- for while the expedition was off Cape La Have, Nova Scotia, they saw the Indians, and the narration reads, "we take these people to be the tarentyns." Also John Smith uses the name twice and for the Indian tribes East of the Penobscot, who had dealings with the French and were enemies of the Penobscots, and other early records are the same. It was only later that the form Tarrantines etc., (~~not~~ Tarrantynes) came in, and the supposition of some writers that they were the Penobscots. It seems clear that the name was originally used of Indians east of the Penobscot and apparently of different affiliations, hence they could hardly have been the Maliseets or Passamaquoddies and all circumstances would seem to point to the Micmacs. At one time I thought that Tarrantines was probably a bad corruption of Etchemins, but that seems not so. But as to the origin of Tarrantines I am at a loss. The probability is that-- very strong that it was a nickname given them by the New England Indians and adopted by the English of New England. The name Tarentyn bears a considerable resemblance to Abnaki roots for trade--and as the Micmacs very early traded with the European fishermen on one side and with the New England Indians on the other, it is possible that they were called "the traders". The Etchemin word for trade was tlunkwa or tluntwa--replacing the l by r, this would be truntwa which is close to the tarant of tarantyn. But further than this deponent sayeth not. Of course Etchemin is pure good Indian now as

used in the form Skijim, meaning Indian, the name the Indians use of themselves, just as the Micmacs call themselves Ulnook, men. But what the Penobscots called themselves I do not know, of course their name is white man's .

[It is Alnambe (sing), meaning a man]

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Ganong, March 21, 1913:

And another thing you are certain sure right about is this, that the old roots persist in place names long after they have gone out of use among the later Indians. I have a lot of cases of this among waliseets and "Micmacs, perfectly clear cases. It was not necessary to suppose always that they are inherited in toto from a preceding tribe, but simply that they were formerly in good use but have dropped out, superseded by others, as in the evolution of our own language, but of course once embodied in a place name they persist there.

Feb. 7, 1929: The Saponic item was a treasure, thank you for that.

(Tracing Saponic to Chebahnook, "the big opening".)

Oct. 13, 1930: You ask Micmac name of squill. Rand gives it as Sedaasook, which is probably correct as the root Sed means back, or backwards, which is a good characterization.

Kitpoo-k, simply eagle, is all Rand gives. Josselyn's pilhannaw-- pil or pel is good for bald

July 5, 1932: Thank you for note on Sebago. My discovery or mare's nest is rather long to explain but it is in the 4th paper on cartography..... Sebago is the oldest extant recorded place-name (Indian) in Maine, dating back to Gomez, 1525, but maybe it ain't so--can't prove it yet. One trouble with it (or support?) is that Saco goes with it, both Indian of course, but clear back to 1525.... but both are beaten I think by Norumbega, which I am now convinced is genuine Indian but applied to Narraganset Bay, later trans. by Mercator 1541 to

Pemsaet

Prof. Wm. F. Ganong, March 29, 1915:

Dear Mrs. Eckstorm:

Today I was reading again your Atlantic monthly article on Thoreau and the Maine Woods. You seem to have monographed that subject in a way that is final.

You speak incidentally of the mournful cry of the loon. To me it is never mournful, but just the pure quintessence of the wilderness, and this despite the fact that I well know that the Indians think them Glooscap's dogs, turned to birds when he went away in his stone canoe, and still wandering up and down the world calling for their master.

Last summer with my sturdy young farmer friend I was coming out of Central New Brunswick on the trail of Henry Braithwaite, New Brunswick's greatest hunter, and right on the trail met Henry himself, on the way in to his camps to prepare for the autumn hunt. We sat down on roots and rocks and talked of many things, and finally he asked if I was going straight out (we had been over two weeks and our packs were getting light as we had to carry all our provisions except the fish we caught). I said no I was going east to Louis Lake (a wonderful place). "What for?" he said, and I rather apologetically said--"to hear the loons". He nearly jumped from his seat with joy and asked, "Why, do you like them so much, too?" and I said yes, better than almost anything else in the woods. Then he told me how he delighted in the spring to hear them coming back, calling to him up overhead, "hello, hello, how are ye, how are ye"-- which I thought pretty good.

In two of Prichard's books upon Labrador he quotes a northern Indian, who had

over

been told by the priest how beautiful a place heaven is, as saying-- "tell me, father, is it as beautiful as the land of the musk ox, when the lakes are sometimes misty, and the loons call often?"

Which also I think is pretty good. The call of the loons at night is one of the sounds that goes clear in, one of the sounds I can open the way to, and let it go deep.

Very sincerely

W.F.Ganong

[The original of this quotation is in Warburton Pike's "Barren Ground of Canada".]

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Wm.F.Ganong, March 15,1916

Clara neptune is a heretic to call Wagemessuk the devil-- they are the fairies who live in the rocks and play pranks, though they made the beads all right. Lewey Francis last August show showed me the rock in which the Passamaquoddy ones dwell, then boldly declared he didn't believe in them himself though his wife and son do--but later he told me that a week ago he went out past that rock in his canoe in the night and stopped half an hour to try to hear them, but didn't. Like many white folks, he thinks he don't believe but takes steps to be on the safeside.

DIV. 2121

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Wm. F. Ganong, March 15, 1916

About Chesuncook I think the Chi is probably great, as you say, but the name is still a puzzle. Here are some of the uses

earliest

Quesi-sangou-- French map 1686

Kersisangou -- " " 1744

Gesoncook --our friend Chadwick, 1764

Chessebaumoik -- plan of 1786

[This is pure and simple big lake--
che-sebem-ook

big -lake- locative, but seems not to be the same word with the others]

Note that -suncook part is substantially unchanged from the first--for the French practically always omitted the locative, apparently knowing what it was.

The prefix Ques--Kers--Ges has a suggestion of your massobeans. What do you make of it, Watson?

By the way I find your Nicatowis on an Indian map of 1784 as Nictawash, though I don't know that this throws any light on it except that it rather implies that the sh_ is a softened locative rather than a diminutive.

Ganong, April 1, 1917:

It is fine that we came to the same conclusion about the Tarrentines. There is no doubt, I think, that they were Micmacs: all of the evidence agrees. The Lescarbot reference you give is to a long poem-- one of several making up his "Muses de la Nouvelle France"-- giving a detailed account of the war, with a Homeric prodigality in the names of the heroes. This was also mentioned by him in his prose Historie, and is described by Champlain in an independent account, so there is no question about the historicity of the war, and all the data match up perfectly with the idea that the Tarrentynes were Micmacs. The Etchemins seem to have joined them as allies at that time, and hence the name Tarrantynes may have covered both simply because the Micmacs were most prominent. The Handbook of American Indians makes the Tarrantines identical with the Abenakis! [Does it? I thought--well, look it up!--F.H.E.] Father Maurault, whom you mention is just about as reliable an authority as Father Vétromile. Both of these men took the modern forms of the names, matched them up with the modern Indian roots that they happened to remember, and then gave a pronounciamento which they meant to be accepted without question among the infallibilities.

..... I think Father Maurault was talking through his clerical hat when he connected Almouchiquois with country of little dogs. I do not think these Indians called themselves that, but it was the Micmac name for them, as per Champlain and Lescarbot. I do not think any of these Indians had dogs before the whites brought them, as none of the earliest writers mention dogs at all in any of their descriptions of the Indians domestic affairs.

Wm.F. Ganong, Letter, Nov. 18, 1929

About Monhegan-- my notion is that the mon is the root--~~occurring in words~~ signifying- very common root for island: the hegan I think is the root occurring in words signifying cleft or dug out*- found in some names of falls through a gorge

*as if by some instrument
the suffix hegan occurs in Maliseet words for a canal or ditch-- and may be the s ffix in temhegan (the tem cut) tommyhakk

Peskahegan (in Charlotte County) N.B. branch of the Magaguadavic comes into that river through a cleft in the bounding hills and I have always wanted to know whether the Bankahegan doesn't do the same or at least have a gorge along it (Pesk of course equals a branch) So I think the hegan refers to the way the little island Monanis ,or Manana, is cut off from the main island-- Monhegan, the cleft island.

If Mon hegan is the Morathiggan of Samoset (Me. Hist.Colls,V,1857,187) it comes from another root, but misprints are so common in the old copies that I suspect Morathiggan may be only a bad misprint for Monahiggan.

[Later these views were modified by tracing the word to an old Micmac source.)

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Wm. F. Ganong, Letter Nov. 18, 1929

Mskeeticook

Nerlumskeechtcook of Thoreau, p. 325

Mskeechtcook--oftener M'skitticook--
equal ticook, river or stream; msk, I think
is grass or meadow; hence see "meadow
stream"., In Me. or N.B. nerla equals
nala, equals resting--the whole means
deadwater stream, clear enough, as you
say, a complete typical water name;
but as to where applied*) in your case

*and why may this not be Trout
Brook itself--do you know that
this is not a deadwater stream?

From its phusiographic position
on the map looks as if it might be
you know better than I. Your explana-
tion that Polis gave it to Thoreau
for the mountains from the stream near,
in default of name for those mountains
seems to me wholly reasonable--; and
one thing is good and clear, the Indians
themselves never would have used this
name for mountains. There isn't any
trace that I can see of a mountain root
in it. My data show that the Indians
had few names for mountains groups of
mountains anyway--only particular ones
that needed mention, As Lewey Francis,
Passamaquoddy, said to me when I badgere
him for the names of certain islands ~~wh~~
which he claimed had none,-- "Injuns n~~e~~
never had names for any places unless
there was some reason to talk about
them", which seems very reasonable.

Ganong, Feb. 20, 1932: LYNEN

In a great many N.B. and N.S. words
the combination amkiak means "sand
(or gravel) beach", amk-ia-k.

I do not know the root outside of this
combination, but it is not only always
there where no "point" could be
involved, but our Indians know and explain
the combination understandingly as
meaning a "sandbeach". Probably it is the
same with yours.

DIV. 6781

ЕГЕСТНИЦАЪ И ДУМА СЪЛЪГІЕЪ НУДОУАЕЪ СЕДЪЪ ЕТС
ЪГЛІВЕБЪ, СІЕУІЛІЕБЪ, СІІДЕНЪ, СІУІЛЕБЪ,
АННОТАЦІЕ ДІСТІНЦІОНЪ ОЪ

НО СЪСЪ БРОУД СІУЕЛ - СІУСОУ НУІЕ

В. В. ДЛІНІЕ & СО

Tarratines

Letter of Wm. Brooks Cabot, Nov. 4, 1932

I am with you as to the n in Tarratine
It is the identification one of the lot
of three, l, n, r, that interchange from group
to groupnd with various white race contacts
In the upper gulf the l is common--
wapilayo, white partridge; in the lower
gulf, where only Indian is spoken, or little
but, it is wapinago. You get elino, emni
and from the same root Iroquois, The first
missionaries, very early, heard and wrote
the sound as r. At best l and r are
rather indeterminate, are hardly Indian
sounds, merely our attempt at their sounds.
Narra- in Narragansett, was properly Nahi-

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Wm. F. Ganong, Letter Nov. 15, 1932

Now about your Maine Indian Handicrafts Book. First thank you very much for it. Naturally I have been very deeply interested in it, chiefly for its fact material, but partly for its scientific method of treatment. I think you have produced a fine and permanent monograph, which nobody else could have done as well. You had a great preparation with your father. The book contains much that is applicable to our Micmacs and Maliseets (as you show), has a great deal that is new to me and nothing that is untrue so far as my knowledge goes. I am especially interested in your account how the name Tarratines became transferred from the Micmacs, where it surely belongs, to the Penobscots, and it looks clear.

On p. 8 you might well have added to Woodstock, N.B., Tobique, for there is very much the largest settlement of Maliseets on the St. John. The same phenomenon of persisting Etchemin names on Penobscot now occupied by Abnakis is found on the St. John, which to its mouth now belongs to the Maliseets; but substantially all of the many place names from the mouth to the head of tide (90 miles from the sea) are Micmac-- and I think the aboriginal name for Castine is Micmac too. Father Biard gave ~~fas~~ name for ~~Castine~~ Chibouctou--which is pure Micmac for big harbor or bay, identical with Chebucto, the Micmac name for Halifax Harbor. I know you don't believe this. The M came into the word from the old article--found in some Micmac words (it is supposed to be? the article has no meaning, but found not infrequently--) this gave the foundation of Matchibiguaduce and finally Major Bigarduce with a suitable legend. Anyway this is wholly consistent with your (p. 9) account of Micmacs at Penobscot before 1630. It also looks as if there had been a movement of western Indians into our regions in successive waves
Over

Wm. F. Gordon, letter Nov. 15, 1933

Now about your Maine Indian Handicrafts
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in it, chiefly for its fact material, but
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the Maliseets; but substantially all of the

Micmacs first, then Maliseets, then Abnaki
but the relations must have been friendly
to allow them to adopt the names of their
predecessors. Presumably it was a case of the
wave ahead moving into territory previously
unoccupied--thus leaving room for the wave behind

Cheduto, the Micmac name for Maliseet
I know you don't believe that the M came
into the word from the old article--found
in some Micmac words (it is supposed to be)
the article has no meaning, but found not
independently--(this gave the foundation of
Katchitowagouche and finally Major Birdhouse
with a suitable legend. Anyway this is wholly
consistent with your (p. 8) account of Micmac
at Penobscot before 1870. It also looks as
if there had been a movement of western
Indians into our region in successive waves
over

Prof. Wm. F. Ganong, Nov. 15, 1932:

About Norumbega : it is more complicated than you think.

(1) The name first appears in documents in Ramusio's Discorso of 1539 where, in a description of the natives and country which Verrazano found south of Cape Cod it is said definitely that the country was called by the natives Norumbega. It occurs earlier on a Verrazano map (brother of the explorer) as Oranbega, but misplaced farther east, as many of the names on that map are. The Gastaldi map in Ramusio, made to accompany and illustrate the Discorso, shows Verrazano's Port of Refuge (by all students agreed to be Newport Harbor), with others of Verrazano's names in that vicinity, and across the country above them Tierra de Nurumbega. There is no trace of it on or near the Penobscot until Mercator's map of 1541, where it is placed along the Gomez Penobscot as Anonumbega. Mercator's map was published and followed by many others, a large series by eminent cartographers, including his famous one of 1569, and thus the name became fixed there. Reasons why Mercator placed it at Penobscot are given in another of my papers now in type, and of which I shall send you a copy as soon as any reprints are received, which should be any time now. Hence the correspondence of Norumbega with your Penobscot roots is a coincidence, as I think is made clear in a paper of which I once sent you a copy (a good while ago) but of which (by somebody's error) I have no reprints, but I am trying to find one extra copy I had to send you. Of course there is no difficulty about Norumbega being an Indian name (for the Narragansett Bay region) for Verrazano spent several days there in close and very friendly relations with the Indians as you will see in my paper in the Crucial Maps Series No. III, which I sent you. I know how one fails to grasp these things from a profusion of detail until attention is called to them. In Crucial Maps V, now in preparation, I treat the later maps after Gomez and show how the name, after Mercator's transfer to the Penobscot, became fixed there. I write with an author's enthusiasm to discount all you think needful. I just send this statement of facts to shake your complacent idea that the Penobscot Indian name was the origin of Norumbega.

William Brooks Cabot, Oct. 4, 1934

Dear Mrs. Eckstorm:

May I congratulate you on the Rale article. It's splendid & frankly, in grasp, ... resonance, gift(?), I was not prepared for it. Something of this came of there being so many more data than I knew existed. Your setting down Rale as a man is what I have been saying lately-- as compared with Aubery the scholar. Tragic enough, his betraying the Indians, in their minds, to this day. He did, but in another sense. I was told he was not meant to be killed, though it fell he was-- this in Oldtown, at the island. They did not trust him or the story would not be, he and the French were offering talk where the real anxieties of the Indians were concerned. I don't doubt he was faithful to their other-world interests, and to France.

Well, the paper is a landmark to me.

Very sincerely yours,

William B. Cabot

Wm. F. Ganong, Oct. 5, 1934

This is an interlude to say what I think of your Rasles paper in N.E. Quarterly. I have read it with the very deepest interest, and appreciation growing as I went on, and shall obtain a copy to add to my real valuables. I think it an extremely well-reasoned and balanced discussion, in which the scientific spirit is not submerged by the very interesting style and treatment. It is sure to become an important and influential part of the literature of the subject, and it has the merit of "debunking" Rasle in one phase of his character while making him stand out even higher in another. Few of the debunkers can accomplish that. Congratulations.

[Original sent to St. John Museum]

Oct. 10, 1936:

On the Pigwacket and paeson Symmes paper

I cannot see why it is not conclusive on that subject and it should become a foundation for bunkless history of the event and era.

April 13, 1914:

About Maine literature. First, Your Nicasowis articles are one of the very best things I have ever read--just what I had in mind when I asked for things written by folks with their eyes open-- they are great. I ~~had~~ have read them very sympathetically and very carefully, and keep them for another, and have made notes ~~and~~ names, sea-serpents and some other matters that touch my immediate interests of my own and see these were in some measure the matrix of The penobscot Man All of the Nicasowis narrative was very real and I realized how how much real woods experiences are duplicated with those who go into the woods in the same spirit

Have you any comment on this?

Father , auverjat, 1724, residing on Penobscot at seashore, wrote Rasles of the "fall fight at Ke-Ke-penagliesek (Also printed by Baxter Ke-kepanagliesek)

I suggest:

Ke-ke , same as Cici, narrows
Pen , (pem) extended
Nagli , same as -naghi, island(s) in comp.
Es " " sis, a little
EK locative

where do you get this?

"The narrows at the spread out little islands place", probably Fox Islands Thoroughfare in Penobscot Bay.

For facts I know this was a place of resort for Massachusetts fishermen and that Indian fights did occur there

Bust it up if you can.

A fairly early reply appreciated

This new I me. But

Pem - never used, so far as I know, except as a prefix - not in body of a word - hence I think not admissible here.

Nagli - where do you get naghi for island? No doubt you are right, but I do not know it in words.

Ke ke would be good Algonquian for rough - used for broken rapid streams, and also I think for low surfaces - it is a prefix. It occurs as prefix for falls. - Jacquet is Kakon on an old French map. It is = Kakabika of Cro-Vitney for gorge falls I suppose (= from Ci Ci hard c.)

as Nagli, your note suggests that engleli may really = anglais - for English. Rare form Ingris for English = inglis which might = anglais - anglais. The Algonquian calls English Anglais omitting the n though the reference is to a mass of English fishermen, & for your "falls".

as to the p remaining in the word, it might be m but that does not help to explain it - (over)

also in Wenice banek accus in words
meaning a bank, ascending abruptly
from a shore - (the resemblance of the
Miemae & English being a fine coincidence.
I cannot find the plural form, but might be of ē
form - banekul (?) - cannot find the word
in Raska.

pen has 2 meanings as far as I know -

(1) not means opening out very common in
Miemae - (2) as a component of a word meaning
nuts chie abm = ground nuts, ~~and~~

In fact the first part of your word might be =
chie abm = Kic abm ground nuts - if you have
a first case for maghi = island (but then why maghi)
It would be ground nut island, though the construction
would not be the usual.

Sorry I can not offer anything better -
of course if the locality were known it would
help.

RUBBISH

On the Bureau at Washington's explanations to Miss Atkinson of names at Grand Lake Stream:

"but the Bureau's explanations of these names are punk-- they ought to know better, but they had the face to express plenty of doubt."

Ganong, Nov. 13, 1921

"Judge Potter's atrocities."

"I suppose you have noticed my very unfavorable opinion of Father Vetromile. I think his works are about the worst combination of error and assumption of inspiration in these matters that I know of. In fact I have found it rather characteristic of the work of the priests of the Church that they give statements with great positiveness and expect them to be accepted simply on their statement. I suppose it is an echo of the doctrine of papal infallibility."

Ganong, Letter, no date.

"Some of the Maine and New Brunswick literature makes me as mad as Steele does you, I mean some things in the Maine Hist. Coll and Ballard's elaborate paper in the U.S. Coast Survey report -- all an empty cask. Vetromile's Abnakis is little better except in the things that he himself knew himself from experience-- everything else is trash-- or worse, because it looks so accurate ~~xxx~~ accurate and authoritative. "

Ganong, letter July 6, 1914

On Potter's names.

"His paper is in Maine Hist. Colls, IV-1856-p.189, and is one of the most pretentious masses of rubbish on this subject that has appeared, yet it has been one of the most widely copied. He took the modern map forms of names without any suspicion that these were not as the Indians used them and then matched them up with Indian roots, twisting things lots in the process