



Dying American Speech—Echoes from Connecticut

Author(s): J. Dyneley Prince

Source: *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 42, No. 174 (May - Dec., 1903), pp. 346-352

Published by: [American Philosophical Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/983717>

Accessed: 23/03/2011 04:24

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=amps>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



American Philosophical Society is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

necticut," by Prof. J. Dyneley Prince and Frank G. Speck, was read.

The Amendments to the Laws recommended by the Officers and Council, and duly proposed at the meeting of May 1, were adopted.

DYING AMERICAN SPEECH-ECHOES FROM CONNECTICUT.

BY J. DYNELEY PRINCE, PH.D., AND FRANK G. SPECK.

(Read November 6, 1903.)

It was my good fortune last summer to light upon a small and little-known reservation on the west bank of the Housatonic river, about two miles south of Kent, Litchfield County, Conn., occupied by sixteen Skaghticoke Indians. There are, however, about one hundred and twenty-five individuals not on the Reserve who claim tribal rights and relationship with this clan. The present Indians on the Reservation are mixed with a very appreciable percentage of negro and white blood and, according to their own account, came originally from various Connecticut tribes. The clan is said to have been founded in 1728 by one Gideon Mawehu (the modern family name Mawee, evidently a corruption of English Mayhew) who was either a Pequot or a Wampanoag. The ranks of the Skaghticoke settlement were swelled by refugees and stragglers from other tribes, until in 1731 they reckoned one hundred and fifty warriors. DeForest mentions among these foreign elements Potatucks from Newtown and Woodbury, Paugussets from the upper Housatonic territory, Salisbury and Sharon Indians originally from Windsor, besides Pequots, Narragansetts and Wampanoags. This mixture of race is evidenced in the various loan-words of New England origin pointed out below by Professor Prince.

From one man, James Harris, who claims to be a full-blood and whose skin certainly shows the dark red hue characteristic of the eastern Algonic races, I was able to obtain in the old language twenty-three words and three connected sentences which Professor

Prince has analyzed below. Harris has only a vague and disconnected idea of the language. What little he knows he learned in early youth from his grandmother, one of the Mawee family, who, according to his statement, had a connected speaking knowledge of the ancient idiom. The present Skaghticokes are Indians more by tradition than fact, and with the single exception of Harris have little of interest to impart to Americanists.

The name Skaghticoke was originally pronounced *p'ska'tikuk*, *i. e.*, "at the forked river," from the same stem as Abenaki *p'skaot'kwen* "branch" + the ending *-tukw*, which always means "river" in composition. The river-names Piscataquis (Maine) and Piscataqua (New Hampshire) are undoubtedly corruptions of the same word and have an identical meaning (see Prince, *American Folklore Journal*, 1900, pp. 125 ff.).

FRANK G. SPECK.

Thanks to the efforts of Mr. Speck, who is a student in my department in Columbia University, a modern form of the ancient Pequot-Mohegan dialect has been discovered in its last throes (see Prince and Speck, *American Anthropologist*, V, pp. 193-212). Mr. Speck has now found the still more scanty remains of another Connecticut language, that of the Skaghticokes, which, as will appear from the following exposition, is probably the last surviving remnant of the Delaware-Mohican idiom formerly used at Stockbridge, Mass., which was expounded by J. Edwards, Jr., and J. Sergeant (see Pilling, *Bibliography of the Algonquian Languages*, *s. v.* these authors). This Skaghticoke language is distinctly not a New England product, but came from the Hudson river region with that branch of the Lenni Lenape called Mohicans who settled at quite an early date on the site of Stockbridge, Mass. This *Mohican* idiom is only indirectly connected with the *Mohegan*¹-Pequot language just mentioned, found by Speck at Mohegan, near Norwich, Conn. Perhaps the longest specimen of the Stockbridge Mohican tongue has been preserved in J. Quinney's *Assembly Catechism*, printed at Stockbridge in 1795. For the modern dialect of the Delaware Lenape, see Prince, *American Journal of Philology*, XXI, pp. 295-302.

¹ Note that *Mohican* and *Mohegan*, although both forms of the same word, are now used purely arbitrarily, the first to indicate the Hudson River Lenapian Mohican clan, and the second to denote the Pequot mixed race at Mohegan, near Norwich, Conn.

The name Mohican=*Muhiganiuk* means "those dwelling on the tide-water" from Del. *makhaak* "great" and *hican* "tide" (so Zeisberger) and plainly shows the geographical origin of the tribe. How this name came to be applied to the Pequot-speaking Mohegans of Mohegan, Conn., has been explained at length by us (*Anthropologist*, V, pp. 194 ff.). The Skaghticokes apparently do not know the name Mohican as applied to themselves.

It is curious and characteristic of human nature that a number of obscene words and phrases have survived with some accuracy in the mouth of Harris, Mr. Speck's informant. Such words would naturally live longer than others in the speech of the uncultivated, no doubt owing to their desire to speak of such subjects with secrecy.

It is quite plain that Harris has only a very imperfect knowledge of his grandmother's language, as he does not know the exact meaning of two out of the three sentences which he gave to Mr. Speck. His three connected sentences are as follows:—(1) *Wichowān tāpāsūk sūkāgītīnōn*, "hurry up to the hotel and get a drink." This seems to me to mean "come along, my friends, and we will have a drink." See *Glossary*, s. v. *kāgītīnōn*, *tāpāsūk* and *wichowān*. (2) *Gūkwī dīā n'pūmīās* "go sleep in the barn." This should be translated "you sleep there for the night." See *Glossary*, s. v. *gūkwī* and *n'pūmīās*. (3) *Nūnū'pā mānūk* "lift up your clothes," said with obscene intention to a woman. This translation is correct, as will appear s. v. *nūnū'pa* and *mānūk*. Finally, in this connection, it should be noted that Harris gives the incorrect forms *māmitūkkū* for *mānitūkkū* "devil"; *niskāhikiān* for *miskāhikiān* "cider," *n'pūmīās* for *n'pūwīās* "at night" and *tāpāsūk* for *nitāpēsūk* "my friends" (see *Glossary*, s. v. these words).

The following words of the vocabulary are all Delaware Mohican: *gūkwī* "thou sleepest"; *kwōn* "yes"; *māmitūkkū* for *mānitūkkū* "devil"; *niskāhikiān* for *miskāhikiān* "cider"; *n'pūmīās* for *n'pūwīās* "at night"; *sāmūt* "tripe"; *škūk* in *škūkārīš* "snake"; *tāpāsūk* for *nitāpēsūk* "my friends"; *tūlipās* "tortoise"; *wichowān* "come along." On the other hand, the following are probably New England loanwords from native Connecticut dialects akin to the Natick:—*chākūs* "negro"; *kānūkwōk*, pl. of *kīnkāi* "private parts"; *mānūk* "coat," "petticoat"; *rūūig* "crushed corn"; *skwā* "woman"; *sūkkūtāš* "succotash"; *tīpi* "devil"; and *wānūx* "white man." These loanwords are, of course, not surprising in

a language spoken in such an environment. The words *kwôn* (=Del. *gohan*, but Natick *ôô*; Peq. *nux*=yes, so Stiles² in his vocabulary) and *špúti* "anus"=Del. *soputti*, would alone be sufficient proof of the Lenâpian character of the Skaghticoke idiom.

The Skaghticoke actually preserves the *r*-sound, so rare in modern Algic, in the words *rútig* "crushed corn" and *škúkariš* "snake." This is, so far as I am aware, the only modern instance of *r* in Algic, except in one dialect of the northern Cree. The *r* undoubtedly existed in Lenâpe at the time of the Old Swedish occupation of New Jersey and Pennsylvania (see Brinton, *The Lenâpe and their Legends*, p. 96 and, below, *s. v. rútig*). As was the case among the Abenakis, this *r* changed to *l* at a very early date. In Rasles' dictionary of the ancient Abenaki, it is the regular rule to find *r* for modern *l*, but no living Abenaki pronounces *r* in the modern language. A most interesting parallel case is found in the Iroquois idiom spoken at the St. Regis Falls Reservation, where the Indians, instead of the *r* so common in Iroquois speech, now pronounce a thick medial consonant between *r* and *l*. Only the old people retain the primitive *r*-sound. My Iroquois informant tells me that a pure *l* will probably be pronounced by the next generation.

I must regard it as most fortunate for students of Algic philology that Mr. Speck has been able to collect these scanty and incorrectly preserved relics of a lost Algonquian language.

GLOSSARY OF SKAGHTICOKE WORDS.

Châkûs "negro" is undoubtedly cognitive with Stiles's Pequot *auchugyeze* "blackbird" which must stand for *chokêsu*; cf. RW.³ *sukêsu* "he is black" from *sucki* "black." The Del. *sukachqualles* "negro" is evidently a more distant cognate. I believe that *châkûs* was a New England loanword among these Skaghticoke Indians. The Aben. *mkazawigit* "negro" is perhaps cognitive with Natick *mûi*, the regular word for "black" in that language.⁴

² President Stiles was the author of a Pequot vocabulary, the MS. of which is now in Yale University Library. This glossary is extensively quoted in J. Trumbull's *Natick Dictionary*, Washington, 1903.

³ RW denotes Roger Williams in his *Key into the Language of America*, which is a treatise on the Narragansett idiom.

⁴ In indicating the pronunciation of the Skaghticoke words in this article, I have used the Italian vowel values, except *û*=*u* in "but," and '=*a* short inde-

Gükwí díá "you sleep there," from $k=2$ p. + *kawi* "sleep" (=Del. *gauwin*, Aben. *káwi*); *díá*=*talli* "there." Cf. Peq. *dái*=*dali*, Aben. *tali*; *dali* after a vowel.

Kágítinôn "get a drink" (so Harris); I think the full form is *k'súkágítinôn* "we (incl.) shall drink," see below *s. v. wíchōwân*. *Kági* is the same stem seen in Peq. *gékíwü* "he is drunk" (Prince and Speck, *Anthrop.*, V, p. 206), but it also occurs in Del. *kí kákiwus* "thou art drunk."

Kānúkwók "private parts," a plural of *kínkáí* (*q. v.*), is probably a N. E. loanword from the same stem as Natick *kinukkinum* "he mixes, mingles"; cf. Nat. *kenugke* "among." In modern Peq. *kānúki* "privates."

Kínkáí, given by Harris as "anus," undoubtedly means either "membrum virile" or "pudendum feminae," *i. e.* "the mixer." It seems to be the singular of *kānúkwók*, *q. v.*

Kwōn "yes" is undoubtedly identical with Del. *gohan* "yes" (Brinton, *Lenápe Dict.*, p. 45, 2).

Māmitúkkū "devil" is a corruption of *mānitúkkū* "he is the (evil) spirit." Note in Natick *mattanitoog* "devils." In Del. *manito* is the regular word for "spirit, God"; cf. Aben. *madahōdo* "devil"; Peq. *muwundo* "God."

Mānuk is a very interesting survival of a New England loanword, *i. e.*, from Nat. *monak* "an English coat, a petticoat"; cf. RW. *maunek* "a European garment" (see *Natick Dict.*, p. 266).

Nískāhíkíān must stand for *mískāhíkíān* "ciđer" which is a derivative from Del. *masgichten* "May apple" (*Len. Dict.*, p. 74, 19).

N'pūmíās is translated by Harris "barn," but is clearly a form of Del. *nibahwi*, *i. e.* = *n'pūwíās* "during the night"; cf. the Del. *nibahwi* and Aben. *nibōwi* "in the night-time."

Nūnú'pā "lift up" must be a reduplicated form of Del. *nipachton* "raise up." I think the guttural breathing should have been on the third syllable, *i. e.*, *nūnúpā'*

Rútig "crushed corn"; Peq. *yókég*; Nat. *nuhkik*, lit. "some-

terminate vowel similar to a short *ē*. The consonants have the same values as in English, except *š*=*sh* and *'*, which is a soft rough breathing like the Arabic medial *h*. In the Abenaki the *ō* is a nasal as in French *on* in *mon*. The Natick and Narragansett words are quoted in the English system which was followed by Eliot and Roger Williams, while the Delaware material is given in the German notation, following the usage of Brinton's Lenápe Dictionary.

thing softened," according to Eliot, "flour." This word appears as *rucat* in the old New Jersey Lenâpe trading idiom. Cf. Aben. *nokhigan* "flour"; Del. *loken*, from the stem *lokenummen* "smash up, crush." Note that *r*, *y* and *n* interchange in the N. E. Algic dialects; cf. Nat. *nût*, Quiripi *rût* and Peq. *yût* (Stiles *yewt*) "fire" (see *s. v.* *škûkârîš*).

Šâmût "tripe" is evidently the same stem as Del. *schameu* "greasy," *Len. Dict.*, p. 126, 9.

Škûkârîš "snake" is a curious formation. It must of course be from *škûk* "snake"; Aben. *skog*; Nat. *askûk*; RW. *askug*; Morton N. E. Canaan *ascowke*; Peq. *scoogs* (with diminutive *-s*); Del. *achguk*. The *-rîš* ending is difficult. It probably stands for *-niš*, *i. e.* *škûkânîš* "a little snake," as distinct from "a serpent," with intercalated *n*. For interchange of *n* and *r* see *s. v.* *rûtig*.

Špûti, given by Harris as "buttocks," really means "anus." This is the same word as Del. *saputti* (Zeisberger), *Len. Dict.*, p. 124, 16.

Skwâ "woman"; Nat. *squaas*; RW. *squaw*; Del. *ochqueu*, *okhqueh*; the original stem meant "prepuce." This is a well-known Eastern word, but appears only as an ending in Abenaki, as in *kinjames-iskwa* "queen," from *kinjames* "king" (=King James).

Sû seems to me to be a particle in the possible combination *k'sûkâgîtnôn* "we (incl.) shall drink." It may have a cohortative force.

Sûkkûtâš "succotash" is a well-known N. E. word. Cf. RW. *m'sickquatash* "something beaten up," from *m'sukquttahash* "the things (inan. pl.) beaten to pieces." *Sukquttaham* "he beats it to pieces." *Sûkkûtâš* is plainly a loanword in the Skaghticoke dialect.

Tâpâsûk, given by Harris as "hotel," probably stands for *nîtâpêsûk* "my friends" (dim. *-s*). Cf. Aben. *nîdôba*, Penobscot *nîdâbe*, Pass. *nîtâp* "my friend."

Tîpi "devil" is probably a Pequot loanword from Peq. *dîbî* "devil," cf. Prince and Speck, *Anthrop.*, V, 203. The Del. word for "spirit" is *tšhipey*, cf. Aben. *chibai*. *Tîpi* in Skaghticoke may, however, stand for Del. *tšhipi* "strange," the same stem as *tšhipey* "spirit."

Tûlipâs "turtle" is evidently a diminutive (*-s*) from *tûlipâ*;

cf. Del. *tulpe*, Aben. *tolba* "turtle"; Nat. *tunuppasog* "tortoises."

Wânux "white man," cognitive with Aben. *awanoch*, now used for "Canadian Frenchman"; Pas. *wenoch* "white man." Cf. Peq. Stiles *waunuxuk* "white men"; Nat. *awaunagesuck*, *Natick Dict.*, p. 253. The word is a derivative from the indefinite pronoun seen in Del. *awwen*, Aben. *awani*, Penobscot *aweni*, Munsee *awaun*, Pass. *wen*, "who, someone."

Wichôwân "come along" and not "hurry up," as Harris gives it. Cf. Del. *witschewan*, Aben. *wijowi* "come along with me," etc. See *s.v.* *tâpâsûk* and *kâgitiñôn*.

J. DYNELEY PRINCE.

Stated Meeting, November 20, 1903.

President SMITH in the Chair.

The following papers were read:

"The Testimony of the Huacos (Mummy-grave) Potteries of Old Peru," by Albert S. Ashmead. (See page 378.)

"On a Geological Tour to Labrador," by Prof. Amos P. Brown.

Stated Meeting, December 4, 1903.

President SMITH in the Chair.

The decease of the following members was announced:

Dr. Charles Schäffer, at Philadelphia, on November 23, æt. 66 years.

Prof. Alphonse François Rénard, at Brussels, on July 9, æt. 61 years.

Mr. Henry Carey Baird made some remarks on "The Alaska Frontier."

Prof. Percival Lowell read a paper on "The Cartouches of Mars," which was discussed by Prof. Haupt, Prof. Conklin, Mr. Goodwin, Prof. Doolittle, Prof. Ernest W. Brown and Prof. Heilprin.