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The Eastern Algonkian Wabanaki Confederacy

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Source: *American Anthropologist*, New Series, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1915), pp. 492-508

Published by: [Blackwell Publishing](#) on behalf of the [American Anthropological Association](#)

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## THE EASTERN ALGONKIAN WABANAKI CONFEDERACY<sup>1</sup>

By FRANK G. SPECK

THIS paper deals with the confederacy which formerly existed among the tribes of the extreme eastern United States and Canada, known as the northeastern Algonkian; a confederacy which was manifestly the outgrowth of an organizing tendency shared alike by the native founders of the League of the Iroquois, the Creek Confederacy, the Delaware Confederation, and others of less importance. Historical literature of New England deals too meagerly with the organization of the Wabanaki tribes despite the prominent part it played in the Colonial struggles along the northern frontier. Accordingly our main sources of information come from the tribes themselves where memory still preserves the facts concerning their old alliance even though its actual existence ceased years ago. The material which I present comes primarily from Penobscot sources, foremost among whom is Mr Newell Lyon. The village of the Penobscot at Oldtown, Maine, was the capital of the eastern branch of the confederation, where Mr Lyon was in his youth a witness to its procedures.<sup>2</sup>

The Algonkian tribes from Maine eastward to the Atlantic and northward to the St Lawrence comprise what is called the northeastern Algonkian or Wabanaki group. This includes the Penobscot of Penobscot bay and river, the Passamaquoddy of Passamaquoddy bay, the Malecite of St John's river, the Micmac of the coast of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward island, Cape Breton, and Newfoundland, and also the Abenaki of St Francis, Province of Quebec, originally from Maine and embracing several local bands, the Aroosaguntacook, Wawenock, and

<sup>1</sup> Read before the American Anthropological Association at Philadelphia.

<sup>2</sup> My information is based upon general ethnological work among the Penobscot since 1907, and supplemented by occasional investigations among the other tribes of the group in the last few years in the interests of the Geological Survey of Canada.

some others of unsettled identity. Of these divisions, however, the confederacy in historic times took in only the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Malecite, and Micmac.

These four tribes, as we learn from tradition, had from the earliest times suffered more or less from incursions of the Iroquois who were evidently, according to their usual policy, bent upon forcing the Wabanaki tribes to join the League. The eastern Algonkian, however, seem to have felt that Iroquoian hostility was due to innate barbarity. Some Penobscot sources accuse the Mohawk of deliberate cannibalism, while local legends concerning the early Indian wars teem with samples of Mohawk cruelty which, whether they are true or not, tend to keep alive the old feelings of indignation in the minds of the eastern tribes. In a more extensive paper on the ethnology of the Penobscot I have included a number of these anecdotes under the topic of warfare. It is supposed that the Iroquois raided the Wabanaki tribes so long and were defeated so often that the Mohawk asked for arbitration to secure peace. They then started to seek counsel of the Ottawa, who are regarded as the most venerable of the eastern nations. At length their deliberations brought an end to the wars in the foundation of an alliance between the four Wabanaki tribes, headed by the Penobscot, and the Mohawk of Caughnawaga and Oka, together with other neighboring tribes whose fortunes were in different ways linked with those of the principals. From this time onward, still following the general tradition, the confederacy grew in importance; the four Wabanaki tribes forming themselves into an eastern member with their convention headquarters at Oldtown among the Penobscot; and the whole confederated group, embracing the Wabanaki tribes, the Mohawk and the neighboring Algonkian associates with the Ottawa at their head, appointing Caughnawaga as the confederacy capital. Here regular meetings were held among delegates from the allied tribes where their formal relationship was maintained by series of symbolical ceremonies. Incidentally, we can readily see what a profound effect this steady contact with the superior culture of the Iroquois must have had upon the simpler nomadic hunting tribes of the Wabanaki group.

The effect appears clearly in the wampum procedures, the condolence, and the election of chiefs, the sending of delegates, and functions in general which characterized the internal operations of the Wabanaki confederacy, the whole fabric of which was manifestly modeled after the pattern of the Iroquoian League.

Before presenting more detailed matter, let us consider some things bearing upon the possible age of the alliance. While extrinsic evidences are wanting, we can, I think, conservatively estimate the organization of Wabanaki tribes to date back as far as the middle of the eighteenth century. Newell Lyon, our primary informant, wants to claim something over two hundred years for it. Indeed, Caughnawaga, the capital of the Wabanaki confederacy itself, was only founded after 1676 by proselytes to Christianity who had separated from the original League of the Iroquois, with which the Wabanaki alliance had no relations whatsoever. Hence, it becomes apparent that we are dealing with a comparatively recent institution; an alliance among more or less Christianized tribes acting under the constructive political influence of the Mohawk who found themselves recasting in their own way under new conditions the old original principles of the Iroquois League.

Let us now proceed directly to our sources of information. There are, to begin with, two aspects from which to treat the Wabanaki confederacy. Internally, the four eastern constituents had certain proceedings among themselves and a certain national identity as a group, while their actions with the Mohawk and the Algonkian westward form another aspect. As already mentioned the eastern or Wabanaki group proper, *Wabaná'kiak*, "People of the sunrise country," comprised the Penobscot, *Pannawampské-wiak*, "People of where the river widens out;" the Passamaquoddy, *Peskada mó'kantiak*, "People of the pollock fishing grounds;" the Malecite, *Wulástegwiak*, "People of the beautiful river;" and the Micmac, *Mi'kemak* (analysis ?) in their respective order of importance. The western or Mohawk member embraced the Ottawa, *Udá'wak* (meaning ?); the Mohawk, *Mé'gwak*, "Red people (?);" those of Caughnawaga being known as *Ka'nawági'lona*, and those of the Oka band as *Kanas'atágilona*, both terms derived from the

local Iroquois band names; and lastly the Têtes de Boule of St Maurice River, (Province of Quebec), *Ebagatabádjik*, "Flat foreheads." As a whole, the confederacy had several synonyms. The Passamaquoddy, Malecite, and Micmac called it *Búduwágan*, "Convention Council," while the Penobscot used the terms, *Bézegowak*, "Those United into One," and *Gizángowak*, "Completely United." The idea of the confederacy is moreover implied in the group name *Wabaná'ki* as given above.

Since the arrangement seems more logical we will deal with the somewhat broader international phase of the confederacy first, leaving the internal Wabanaki details until later for attention. Incidentally, it should be remembered that unless otherwise specified the native terms used throughout this paper are the Penobscot forms.

#### THE INTERNATIONAL ASPECT OF THE CONFEDERACY

The Ottawa, denoting collectively the Algonquin inhabiting the Ottawa river valley, were held in the highest esteem by the tribes of the confederacy. The Penobscot refer to them as *kewi'táñk'w'sena*, "our (inclusive) father," and regard them as the oldest tribe. They are said to have been very fierce, embarking naked and without provisions upon their war expeditions and depending upon the flesh of their fallen enemies for subsistence. Moreover, among the Penobscot at least, they are thought to have retained the use of bows and arrows until only recently. Besides they enjoy a great reputation as magicians. Because they were called upon to mediate between the Wabanaki and the Mohawk, the Ottawa were looked upon as the head of the confederacy, and presided at the meetings of the members. Their position was interestingly symbolical, in that the Great Chief of the Ottawa was represented as the master of the allied tribes, sitting at his village with a whip in his hand to enforce obedience to the common pact. Above all the Ottawa chief appointed the Mohawk village of Caughnawaga to be the capital of the confederacy and required of the tribes to send delegates to a general council held every three years. He made an order that if a tribe failed at any meeting to send the

required delegate, the next time the delegate arrived his head would be cut off and set upon a pole or flagstaff in front of the confederacy council house, as an example. So much for the part played by the Ottawa.

As for the Mohawk, they were given the important duty of guarding the central council fire of the confederacy at their large village of Caughnawaga which became known as *Ktci'skwídek*, "Great Fireplace." Here in the big council house was the place where the representatives of all the tribes met every three years to bring the pledges of their people, and to participate in the ceremonies of renewing the bonds of union. The rites and festivities are said to have often consumed several weeks. When all was over the representatives and their companions would return home bearing replies and messages to their own chiefs. Each tribe sent at least one delegate accompanied by an interpreter to the confederacy meeting. This regular assembly which marked the life of the organization was symbolized as a great fire kindled by all the members in common for the maintenance of the warmth which was essential to their perpetual friendship. Lest the fire burn too low it had to be fed with symbolical firebrands by the tribal delegates at the regular meetings.

We now come to one of the most interesting phases of confederacy life, the function of wampum. All the transactions of the allies were recorded by means of wampum belts and strings, woven or strung, according to certain conventional designs. They served as mnemonic documents to be kept in the council house at Caughnawaga and read over again at each recurring meeting to refresh the memories of the delegates regarding the details of the organization. Then before his return each of the delegates was provided with a smaller belt with emblematical designs representing the confederacy, and at the same time accompanied by a speech from the council which it would be his duty to memorize when receiving the belt and repeat to his home council, conveying the belt as a testimonial. Again, at the next confederacy meeting the delegate would present a belt from his own tribe containing similar conventional symbols of political adherence. Holding it in his hands he would deliver

the words of his home council and offer the belt to the council of the allies. In the center of the council house a large wooden hoop hung suspended from the ceiling. This in effect symbolized the actual council fire of the confederacy. As the delegates presented their belts these were hung up on the hoop. This part of the ceremony was known as *maugwazéni`ge*, "adding brands to the fire," meaning that the fire of the confederacy was being nourished by having "brands," belts, shoved into it by its keepers. For the fire to burn low symbolically represented the decay of the institution.

In the confederacy council the tribal delegates had assigned places according to the rank of their tribe. The representatives of the four Wabanaki tribes occupied one side of the council, while opposite them across the "fire" sat the representatives of the western members. Political prerogatives seem to have rested with the Penobscot on the one side, and with the Ottawa on the other side of the house. Of the part taken by the Têtes de Boule we hear very little. Although I have visited their country my efforts to strike satisfactory sources have so far been unsuccessful. The Penobscot remember them only as ancient enemies. They are said to have had deformed heads, as their Penobscot name attests.

Finally, now the council fire of the confederacy, to use the old simile, has completely burned out. The western members have almost forgotten it. Several visits to the Mohawk both of Caughnawaga and Oka in quest of confederacy material yielded only the vaguest general reminiscences among the old men of my acquaintance. We may, nevertheless, hope for something more later on when more of the field can be covered. Even the wampum, which had become more or less sacred through its national functions, has been completely lost.

#### THE EASTERN MEMBERS OF THE CONFEDERACY

The eastern or Wabanaki members, however, have on their part been more faithful to the old spirit of the alliance, in memory at least; most of this material having come from the Penobscot, while the Micmac still keep up their solitary part in the ancient program, as we shall see shortly. The Penobscot were the first to dissolve

their associations. We learn that in August, 1862, Attean Orson, having been sent as the Penobscot representative to Caughnawaga, returned to Oldtown and laid the wampum belt which he brought with his speech from the confederacy council upon the table before the Penobscot chief and council. While they were discussing matters one of the councilmen, Nick Sockabesin, suddenly interrupted the proceedings by taking the belt from the table and throwing it out of the door, saying at the same time, *Nodedjá wʔbábi*, "Throw out the cursed wampum." His move, it seems, was actuated by disgust at further imaginary subservience to the Mohawk, as well as by the fact that the delegations entailed considerable expense to the tribe. As the dishonored belt lay in the dust no one moved to "raise it up again," and the council broke up. Thenceforth all connections with the confederacy were severed. This sudden rupture was possibly the outcome of feelings held by some ten or twelve Penobscot families who in 1857 had migrated to Caughnawaga at the invitation of the Mohawk after spending a winter with them and returned in discontent to Oldtown.

The Passamaquoddy, however, maintained their relations with the Mohawk until much later. Somewhere about 1870 they sent their last delegates to Caughnawaga in the persons of Joe Lola and Sapiel Selmore. The Micmac discontinued at about the same time (1872), although we shall have more to say of their home observances which are still in force. So much for the international aspect of the confederacy concerned with the Iroquois and the western allies.

We now come to the subject of the more internal affairs of the four eastern tribes. As I have already indicated, the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Malecite, and Micmac, forming the Wabanaki group, had a certain national identity based, of course, upon their close ethnical relationship. No doubt the political bonds which linked them together existed long before the alliance with the Iroquois and their neighbors. These tribes in common elected each other's chiefs, called upon each other for aid against outside enemies, and held meetings to treat upon matters which affected their common interests. So, apart from their associations with the



confederacy at large, they formed a sort of independent group of allies. As might be expected, too, the documents of their organization consisted of belts and strings of wampum which were held in just as high esteem as among the Iroquois. The essentials of this local eastern Wabanaki institution will now be taken up.

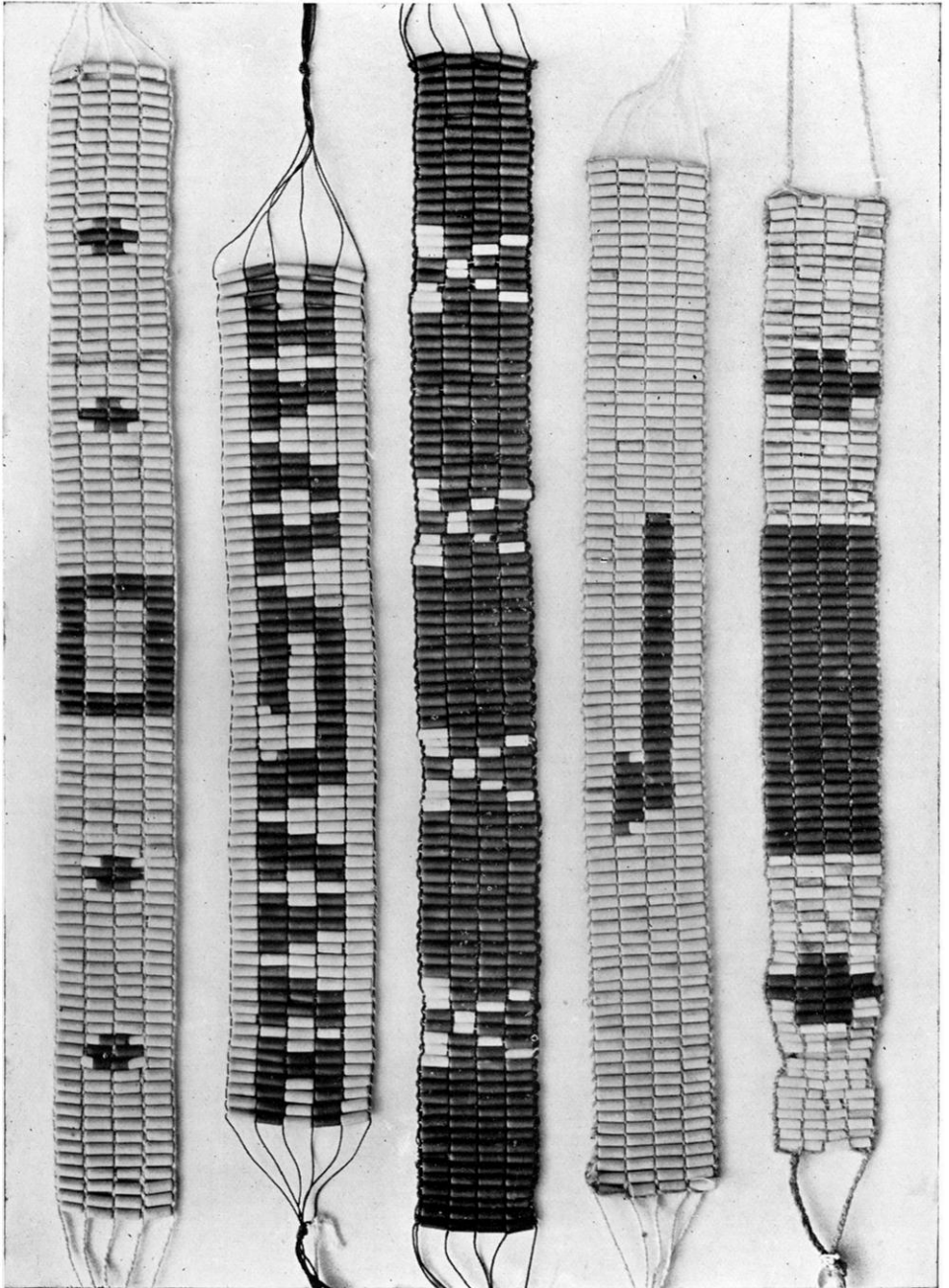
The four tribes, whose native names have been previously given, were graded in the following order. The Penobscot came first and were referred to as *ksés'i zena*, "our elder brothers," the Passamaquoddy, Malecite, and Micmac came next, in the order given, under the appellation of *ndo'kani'mi zena*, "our younger brothers." Their council fire was at Oldtown, a sort of secondary capital where the Penobscot council house was the central fireplace. The old council house which stood in the center of what is now the town square, near the dance hall, was known as the *gwundá'wvn*, "long house." It had a door at each end while in the middle hung the symbol of the "council fire," a large loop of moosehide from which were suspended the belts of wampum to be used variously as occasion required. This wampum, as in the larger phase of the confederation, symbolized the fire itself. It was displayed at every council meeting where the significance and history of the different belts were recited by the chief as part of the council formalities. At these meetings, moreover, it was customary for the speakers to express themselves in figures and similes. Some of the old men, on account of their skill in the art of metaphor, were known as *nebáulinowak*, "riddle men." Each of the other three tribes also had its head village in which the council house was the repository of its own ceremonial wampum. When occasion arose the four tribes would, as we shall see, congregate at one or the other of these. The head village of the Passamaquoddy was at Pleasant point, *Si'báyik*, "At the strait," that of the Malecite was at *Ekpohak*, "Head of the tide," and later at Tobique, *Nagáwi'teguk*, "Junction of two rivers," and the Micmac had theirs at Digby. At the fire of the Wabanaki confederates the representatives of the four tribes sat facing each other, forming a rectangle about the wampum. The delegates of each tribe here had equal influence. From these generalities let us pass to the various ceremonies which

engaged the attention of the eastern allies and kept their organization alive.

The Penobscot, owing to their proximity to the western frontier seem to have been the chief medium of negotiations between the eastern group and the Iroquois. Consequently, from their village at Oldtown was sent the summons to the other tribes to attend councils for war or peace with outsiders. Since practically all the summons and ceremonies of the allies were accompanied by wampum strings or belts our material naturally assumes the form of a discussion of wampum functions. Although none of the original national belts are at this day extant among the Penobscot or their neighbors, with the exception of the Micmac, I succeeded in having a number of Penobscot facsimiles made by an Indian girl. These were based on specifications as to form and design furnished by Newell Lyon who remembered the actual articles himself from having seen them used in his younger days. These reproductions serve a very valuable purpose in providing us with illustrations of objects and ideas which otherwise would be irrevocably lost. We know that the other three tribes also had their sets of ceremonial wampum which were kept in their council houses in the care of their head chiefs respectively.

Our first example shows the type of belt carried by the Penobscot delegate to the council at Caughnawaga. This is about 15 inches long (pl. xxiv, fig. a). The white ground color symbolizes its peaceful mission, the blue rectangle in the center represents the four Wabanaki tribes grouped about their council fire, while the four small crosses ranged at the sides again denote the four tribes. Another somewhat variant interpretation may be given in which the central rectangle represents the council fire of the confederacy at Caughnawaga, to which the four tribes indicated by the crosses owe their allegiance. The method of procedure in handling this belt has already been dealt with.

Next in importance is perhaps the belt representing the union of the four eastern tribes in their local alliance (pl. xxiv, fig. b). This was a somewhat broader belt with a dark background, denoting former or potential hostility among the tribes, lightened on the margins



*a*

*b*

*c*

*d*

*e*

REPRODUCTIONS OF PENOBSCOT CEREMONIAL WAMPUM BELTS

with white borders denoting the bonds of friendship that now surround them. The alternating panels of blue and white at the ends are evidently a convention imitated from the Iroquois. The four white triangles are tribal "wigwams," the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, Malecite, and Micmac. In the center is the pipe which is the symbol of the peace ceremony by which the allies are joined. Such a belt would serve very general purposes in the days of the confederacy. It was a reminder of the confederacy, to be carried by messengers from any council as a testimonial. In going from village to village to deliver the message, whatever it might be, the ordinary method in connection with all the belts, but particularly with this one, was for the messengers to go directly to the council house and there await the coming of the chief and council. When all had assembled the ceremony was opened by lighting a pipe and passing it around the company as a formal pledge of sincerity. Next the head messenger would arise with the belt in his hands before him and deliver his set speech. The presence of the alliance belt was an absolute guarantee of attention. As long as the belt was displayed it commanded respect. The Passamaquoddy and Micmac remember how their councilmen and chiefs would kiss the belt or string that was presented to them. In short the belt had to accompany the message whether it was forwarded by the first carriers or whether it was relayed to the next village. The presentation rite was known as *nimskep'skulé'tame*, "to stop in and light the pipe." When it had gone the rounds of the tribes the belt would be returned to the senders.

In regard to the function of wampum among the eastern tribes as *gelusewáŋgan* "speech," we do not find so much stress laid upon its mnemonic value as upon a certain set symbolism conveyed by the colors and designs of the belts. With almost religious seriousness the messengers who carried the belts on their missions were instructed in the speeches they were to deliver, the symbols on the belts corresponding to the content of the messages. The belts seem to have earned their names more from the fact that they illustrated the import of the speeches. To say that there was any rigid speech formula accompanying the different belts is, I think,

claiming too much for them. It would hardly accord with our notion of native preciseness of mind. We know, moreover, that belts were often cut up to provide strings for minor purposes and even for decorative ornaments, while on the other hand new belts were occasionally made to symbolize some new concept or message in connection with some particular event. In being borrowed from the Iroquois the wampum ceremonials of the Wabanaki tribes seem to have lost some of their explicit documentary qualities and to have gained dignity as national political symbols.

The information I have given is based principally upon Penobscot sources, but we do not lack correlated data from the other tribes of the group. Passamaquoddy material is available, published by Professor Prince.<sup>1</sup> And again regarding the Micmac, first-hand matter is forthcoming from the tribal headquarters which I visited last summer for the purpose of investigating the confederacy.

When any of the Wabanaki allies were menaced with war it was, of course, their right to call upon the other three for support. For this purpose, when occasion arose, the Penobscot had a war belt and a peace belt of which reproductions are shown. Each chief of the other tribes is also said to have had a similar set. The war belt (pl. XXIV, fig. c), about 15 inches long, had a solid blue background with four pairs of crossed tomahawks across it. The dark background stands for war, the four pairs of axes constitute a call to the four nations to join in taking up the tomahawk in the common cause. To use the informant's phraseology, "If any trouble arose in sight of the chief he would send this belt by runners to the chief of the nearest tribe accompanied by his message stating the circumstances." The receiver would then forward it to the chief of the next tribe, and so on, until the belt would ultimately be returned to its starting place. Holding the belt high in front of him the messenger announced the time and place of gathering in his speech. The mate to this belt was the peace belt, one of about the same size, entirely white with the figure of a pipe in blue in the center (pl. XXIV, fig. d). This was to inform the allies that over-

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<sup>1</sup> J. D. Prince, "The Passamaquoddy Wampum Records," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. xxxvi, No. 156, Dec. 1897.

tures of peace had been received from the enemy, and also served as a summons to council to consider the proposals.

The last and most elaborate wampum ceremony that we have to consider among the Penobscot is the series of rites used in the election of a chief. One of the wise provisions of the Wabanaki alliance, which united the tribes by bonds in which each tribe had a share in the making, was the policy of electing each other's head chiefs. Upon the death of the Penobscot chief, and the same is true of the other three tribes, the people went into mourning for a year, after cutting down and burying the flag pole that stood in front of the council house symbolizing the chief's office. At the end of the year of mourning the council of the bereaved tribe would send messengers to the other allies inviting them to come and raise up a new chief to fill the place of the deceased. The whole ceremony was a lengthy and formal one attended by reception rites, dancing and feasting, which have been described in full in my other work. To repeat a few essential details here, the Penobscot, when calling upon the other allies, sent two chiefs as messengers, wearing a black diagonal bar of paint across their faces, and carrying wampum as a sign of mourning and summons. These messengers proceeded by canoe first to the Passamaquoddy, resting at the village near Princeton, then went to the tribal headquarters at Pleasant point. The wampum they carried was either in the form of the Wabanaki alliance belt, the dark one with four white triangles (pl. xxiv, fig. a), or one more specially symbolical. The latter as a mourning belt was smaller than the rest, about twelve inches long, mostly white with a section of blue in the center representing the dead chief, and flanked by two blue crosses denoting the second chiefs or captains in mourning (pl. xxiv, fig. e). An illustration of the style of address delivered with this belt is given by Newell Lyon.

*Noli' nidji' ét' uk' kebédji' gadawo' bemlébena' pí' ldewi' negi' abes' wí' bena*  
 Our good brothers we have come to recently we have become orphans  
 ask your aid

*gítci' alnábemna gi' bí' le ní' kwup ndatcwéldamnena kenádjí*  
 our great man has lain Now we wish you that you come  
 down.

*waná' genemáwí' nena gítci' alnábemna.*  
 to raise up for us our great man.

After delivering the belt and speech to the Passamaquoddy chief the Penobscot messengers, having performed their part, returned home.

The Passamaquoddy chief held the belt as a summons and then sent two messengers to the other two tribes carrying a fourfold string of wampum of which the specimen made by Newell Lyon is an example (fig. 89). The symbolism here is as follows. The four looped lengths represent the four tribes of the confederacy; the four sections of blue and white in each length and the four beads of each section all represent the same. The blue sections represent the mourning of the people for the dead chief and the white stands for the rejoicing which will take place when the new chief is raised. The blue ribbon represents mourning. These two messengers then returned to the chief who sent them out and when all the delegates from the four tribes were ready they assembled at the village of the bereaved tribe, returning to the council there the mourning belt which was sent out as the summons in the first place. Such strings as the specimen illustrated (fig. 89) were mere secondary summons and were returned to the party who sent them out. When delivering the message with which they were entrusted the messengers displayed the strings to their hearers in council and held them in their hands before them, while announcing their mission and giving the summons. The string itself was regarded as a sacred proof that the bearers were the authentic message bearers.

When the delegates had assembled at Oldtown for the election ceremony the mourning belt having fulfilled its function would be given back to the Penobscot council. The great ceremony, known as *Nská'wehadin*, "assembly," is said to have sometimes taken up several weeks. One of the events was the raising of a new flag staff for the new chief. The last performance of this kind was in 1861 when the allies held a condolence and election at Oldtown. The visiting contingents from the allied tribes coming in canoes were received at the village landing with a salute of guns, and conducted to the shore amid songs of welcome and responses in a set order. Passing through files of armed Penobscot the visitors were led to assigned places. The ensuing night was given up to dancing

and house-to-house visiting. The next day was devoted to the formal rite of welcome at the council house. The four tribes ranged facing each other in the form of a rectangle, with an open space in the middle where one after another the visiting chiefs danced a sort of parade and sang the greeting chant, a most solemn thing. After the candidate for the chieftaincy had been agreed upon, the chiefs and captains of the four tribes conducted him up and down the hall before the delegates, singing the election chant, and later followed speeches attesting their fidelity to the confederacy, and above all, to each other. Several old women then led the new chief before the assembly and danced at his side in the center of the hall, thus giving the women's ratification. A barbecue followed, and later the native ball or lacrosse game. This program with varying details was enacted as long as the delegates remained in the village. Finally, the tribal wampum treasures were turned over to the new chief's keeping and the formalities concluded. Practically the same general events were carried out in each of the four allied tribes when a new head chief was inaugurated.

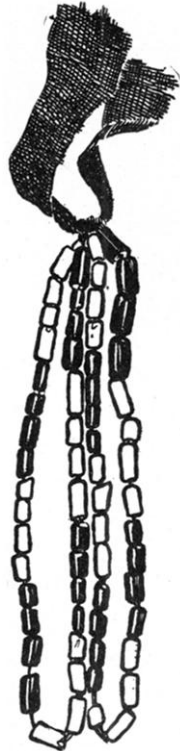


FIG. 89. — Penobscot wampum string; used as summons to inauguration of new chief.

#### THE MICMACS AND THE CONFEDERACY

The Micmac, who were designated in the confederacy as the "younger brothers," owing perhaps to their extreme easterly location and being so widely scattered, seem to have occupied a position somewhat apart from their allies. For this reason I will conclude this brief paper by giving a few notes applying particularly to this tribe.

The Micmac in general seem to have less remembrance of the alliance among the four tribes than either the Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, or the Malecite. They still recognize, however, the force of their confederation with the Mohawk. The interrelation



of the western Micmac of Nova Scotia, where Bear river was the capital, and their Wabanaki neighbors seems to have lapsed before 1840, beyond the memory of the oldest man at the Bear river village. The informant, however, did not remember any more than the mere form of the ceremony by which summons and invitations were conveyed from village to village by means of strings of wampum to command attention and prove the bearer's authenticity. Such strings were kissed by those to whom they were shown. The bearers, it is remembered, would enter the chief's house carrying the wampum in a small birchbark box. Depositing this before the chief he would repeat his message, recalling the different items of his speech by the arrangement of the white and blue beads.

With the dwindling of national life among the western bands of Micmac we find the strength and conservatism of the tribe still maintaining itself in the eastern extreme. In Cape Breton island the old Micmac régime is in complete sway among the Indians. Here resides the Grand Chief John Denys in whose family the life chieftaincy of the tribe is an inheritance. He is the great grandson of Chief Tomah Denys, who fought to aid the French in the battle of Quebec in 1749. After the war he settled in Cape Breton with his band and transferred the capital of the tribe to the Island. The old peace compact with the Mohawk is still a live issue in this interesting band. The wampum documents are religiously preserved by the executive head, and each year are displayed and explained to the people, as all the Wabanaki used to do, at the tribal meetings. An abstract of the information on this head furnished me by Chief John Denys last summer is as follows.

From the earliest times the Mohawk (*Kwé'detck*) had persecuted the Micmac with warfare. Finally, realizing the destruction caused on both sides, the tribes negotiated for a permanent peace. The Mohawk invited the Micmac to send delegates to them at Caughnawaga at stated times in order to renew the agreement. At the conclusion of the first overtures of peace a belt of wampum was sent by the Mohawk to the Micmac chief symbolizing their new relationship. Regularly since that time until 1872 these friendly delegations were sent from *Eskaso'ni*, the headquarters of the chief

in Cape Breton, to Caughnawaga, there to participate in the confederacy peace ceremonies. Upon their return the delegation always brought another belt to be delivered with the message from the confederacy council. At the national reunion of the Micmac on St Ann's day the chief calls the council together and the wampum pledges are exhibited accompanied by the speeches and terms of the treaty. This ceremony requires an entire day. The belts are regarded as sacred and a smoking ceremony precedes the wampum recitations. The belts themselves represent the pledges of the tribe as a body, while a number of single strings of white beads symbolize the wives of the chiefs, the women and the children of the tribes who are also concerned with the alliance, in accordance with the Iroquois notions of suffrage. One of the typical belts is about three feet long with a dark background and a series of light rectangles connected by a line running the entire length of the belt, signifying the tribes joined in the peace alliance. At the ends are beaded figures of the sun denoting perpetuity. On the whole the Micmac seem to have been less intimately united with the other three tribes of the Wabanaki group proper than they were with the Mohawk and the larger aspect of the confederacy.

To conclude this paper with a few general remarks on the wampum which played such an important part in the life of the confederacy, we find that in all the Wabanaki tribes the ceremonial wampum is figuratively termed *gelusewa'ngan*, "speech." The loose ends of the warp strings of the belts symbolize emanating words. Merely ornamental objects of wampum from the region, when woven in the form of strips like belts, usually have their ends braided or tied into one strand. The synonyms for wampum in the different Wabanaki dialects are as follows. Penobscot, *wəbq'bi*, "white string," *ká'ka bes*, "old dark string," denoting the blue sort; Malecite and Passamaquoddy, *wábaʔ*; Micmac of Bear river, Nova Scotia, *wabé'k'*, Micmac of Cape Breton, *el'nápskuk*, "man's pebbles." These are the common generic terms. Among these tribes, with the exception of the Micmac, wampum was also used in the manufacture of woven ornaments such as women's neckbands, collars, and hair bands, or simply strung for necklaces.

As a precious material it ranked as the property of chiefs and also as wealth. It played an important rôle in the formalities of marriage proposal. Frequent interesting allusions to this almost sacred material occur in the mythology of the whole region. The general subject of wampum, however, comes within the broader scope of a special paper which I am preparing.

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