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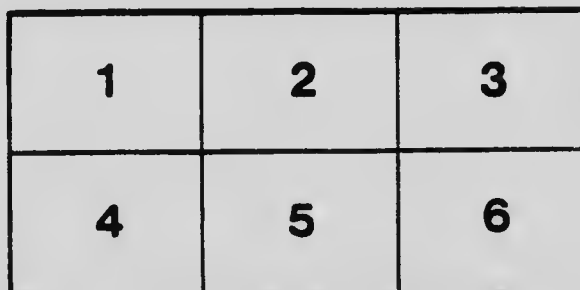
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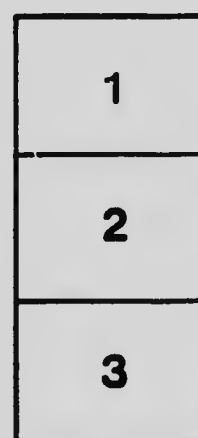
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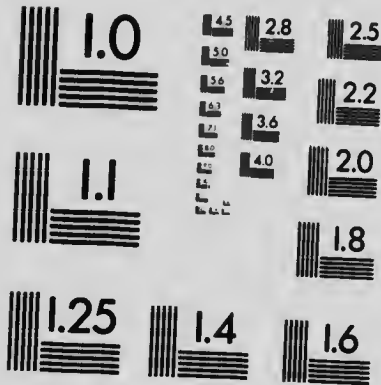
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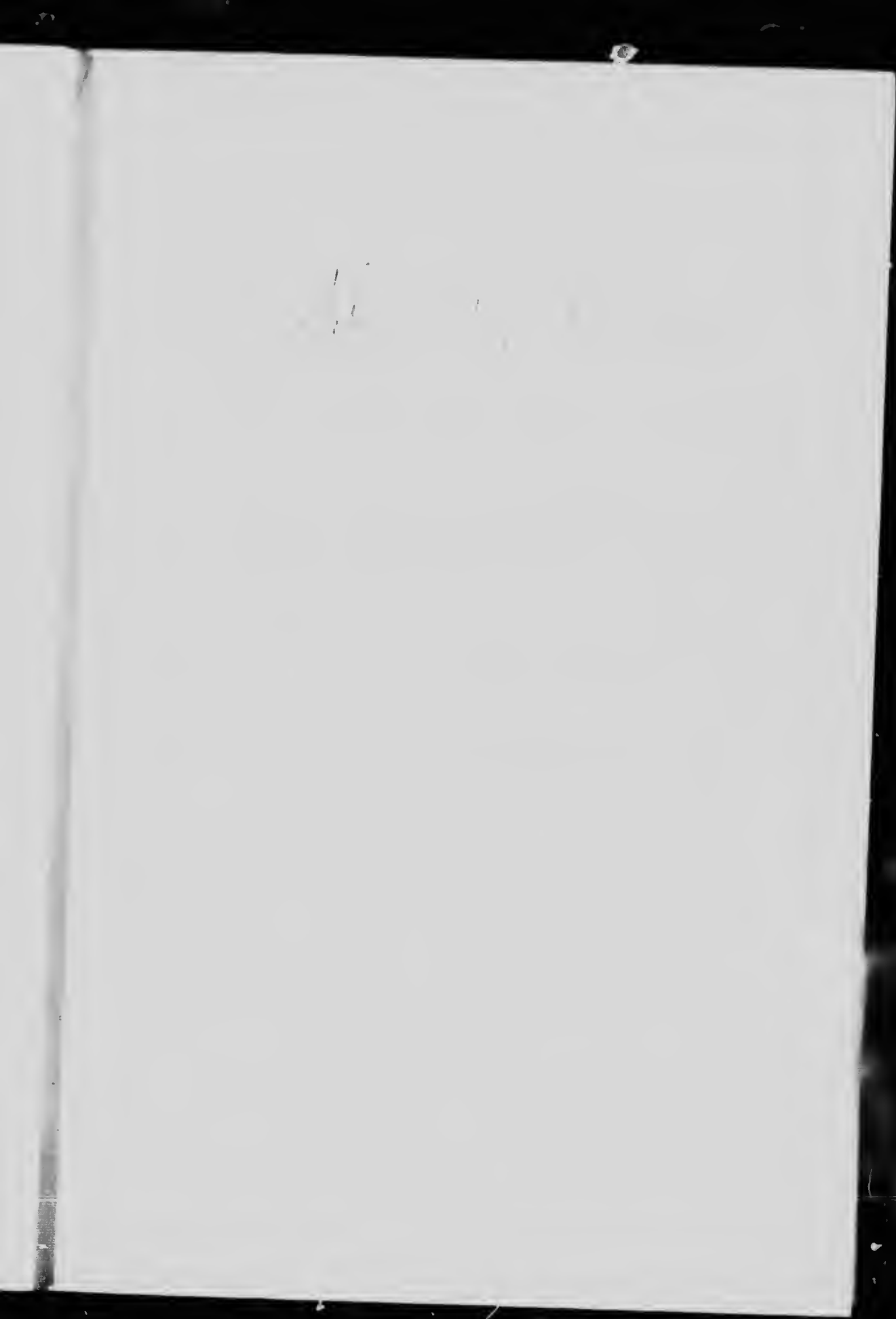
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Yours Very truly,  
Geo. W. Alker.



A STUDY  
IN THE  
ETYMOLOGY OF THE INDIAN  
PLACE NAME

With the Compliments of

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Geo. W. Allen". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the text "With the Compliments of".

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1906



A STUDY  
IN THE  
ETYMOLOGY OF THE INDIAN  
PLACE NAME

MISSISQUOI

BY  
GEORGE McALEER, M.D.

*Honorary Member of the Missisquoi  
Historical Society*



THE BLANCHARD PRESS  
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## DEDICATION

TO A KIND FATHER WHOM PERSECUTION  
DROVE FROM HIS NATIVE LAND TO FIND AN EARLY GRAVE,  
WORN OUT WITH TOIL AND HARDSHIPS IN THE  
WILDERNESS; TO A LOVING AND DEVOTED MOTHER,  
WHO, LEFT WITH THE BURDEN OF A LARGE FAMILY, EVER  
STROVE BRAVELY ON, WHOM NO TRIAL DAUNTED  
NOR VICISSITUDE DISCOURAGED; TO THE SISTER AND BROTHERS  
WITH WHOM THE CARES AND JOYS OF THE SPRINGTIME  
OF LIFE WERE SHARED; TO FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS, TRIED  
AND TRUE—PEOPLE FROM MANY CLIMES WHOM A  
COMMON LOT AND A COMMON DESTINY MADE TOLERANT AND  
MUTUALLY HELPFUL—MOST OF WHOM WERE THE  
HARDY AND ADVENTUROUS PIONEERS OR THEIR  
IMMEDIATE DESCENDANTS, MANY OF WHOM  
NOW SLEEP THE LAST SLEEP IN THE SOIL OF THE  
COUNTY THAT THEY RECLAIMED FROM THE PRIMEVAL  
FOREST BY THEIR ENTERPRISE, INDOMITABLE  
ENERGY AND PERSEVERANCE, THE  
ETYMOLOGY OF THE NAME OF WHICH, MISSISQUOI,  
IT HAS BEEN THE WRITER'S EFFORTS TO ELUCIDATE,—  
THIS STUDY IS DEDICATED.

*Author.*





## MISSISQUOI



"LANGUAGE is  
a solemn thing; it  
— grows out of life,—out  
of its agonies and ecsta-  
sies, its wants and weariness.

Every language is a temple in  
which the soul of those who speak is enshrined."

So wrote the author of "The Autocrat at the Breakfast Table," one of the great lights in American literature, and applied to the American Indian—the Amerind of modern anthropologists—the beauty of sentiment and diction embodied therein have added significance and value because of their literal truth and pathos.

As a people they perished before the cupidity, oppression and injustice of the British colonists, even as perish travellers in the mephitic atmosphere of the simoons of the desert; and the names that grew out of their lives alone remain as enduring monuments to tell coming generations of their prehistoric presence here and ownership of the soil.

No resurgent day will ever dawn to bring them into their own again, and niggardly indeed would be the

pen that would deny them their proper place in history, although it be envenomed and darkened by the curtain of so-called civilization, and the narrative saddened by their sufferings or distorted by malice.

As they were a nomadic people and principally concerned in procuring sustenance and clothing for the body, many of these names, as might be expected, indicated where fish and game abounded; their different species and varieties; the characteristics of mountains, lakes and rivers; and some had onom. topœic and other origin.

Even these, like the people who bestowed them and to whom they meant so much, have not escaped the iconoclastic frenzy of those who drove them from their homes and lands and who extinguished the fires of their wigwams forever. Meaningless names of some worthless son of royalty or degraded nobility, of some human butcher clothed with military authority, of some unprincipled vampire in official station, and of conscienceless scoundrels in other walks of life, have been substituted for the aboriginal names of great euphony, significance and appropriateness.

It is not to be expected that a people having no fixed place of abode, and composed of numerous tribes having different languages and dialects, but without written rules or fixed laws, would always have the same name for the same place or thing when many names would be equally appropriate. This may be easily illustrated by supposing a forest-covered hill or mountain beside a lake that abounds in fish, the shore

of which is composed of cliffs and boulders, and into which a river flows a few miles away, along the shores and at the mouth of which are extensive marshes—a not inapt description of the country in the vicinity of Philipsburg, on the shore of Missisquoi Bay, in the County of Missisquoi, Province of Quebec, and of that portion of Vermont through which the Missisquoi River flows, before the coming of the pale-face.

The water-ways being then the highways of travel, and fish and game being in abundance thereabouts, it is fair to presume that this portion of the country must have been a place of very general resort. To one tribe it might have been known as “the great hunting place,” because of the abundance of deer, moose, bear and other game in the forests; to another as the “great fishing place,”—“big fishing place,”—because of the abundance of fish in the lake; to another as a place of “much water-fowl,”—as records prove their abundance in these waters before the country was settled; to another as “the place of the big or great marsh or marches,”—“much miry place,”—“the place of much grass or willows;” to another as a place of many and big rocks and boulders; and others may have bestowed names founded upon some fancied resemblance discovered in the shore line of the lake, in the topography of the country, or in the contour of some rocky bluff, as is distinctly traced in “The Old Man of the Mountain” in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

These various explanations are given to show how the same place might have been differently named by

different tribes who may have visited this locality when on the war-path, in the pursuit of food or adventure, or in their periodical migrations; and while all the names may have differed, all would clearly describe some recognizable feature of the place which renders any one or all of them appropriate and in harmony with aboriginal custom.

That such was the fact will not seem improbable when I enter more fully upon the discussion of my investigations and efforts to discover the etymology of the name of the river in northern Vermont, and the bay and county in the Province of Quebec now spelled Missisquoi, but which has undergone many changes in orthography. Authorities also differ as to the derivation and signification of the word, as will more fully appear.

Having been born and reared in Missisquoi County, I was interested in this subject from my earliest recollection, and during the years of my school-life I sought in vain to learn when my native county was established, who established it, who named it, why it was so named, from whence came the name, what it signifies, etc. As the teachers did not know nor seemingly care, and as there was no library that I could consult, nor publications available to supply this light unto my path, I had to submit in this, as in many other things, with such grace as I could command, to the oft-repeated rebuff: "What good is it?"—another form of the *cui bono* of the avowed utilitarian—as if the pursuit of material things alone was the only end of existence.

Judging from my more recent experiences along these same lines, I am reluctantly forced to believe that this culpable indifference and inertia, that depress and seel, still continue, not only in the more humble walks in rural life, but also among too many of those seated in high places in the intellectual and educational offices of the Provincial Government, where they are supposed to render information to seekers thereof, and for which they are rewarded with fat salaries.

Taking leave of the old homestead and the land of my nativity on reaching man's estate, I journeyed to the land of the stranger, but now the stranger no longer, where for more years than span a generation I have since made my home, but ever and anon, in the hurry and bustle of a fairly active life, my mind unconsciously and unbidden harks back to the old hearthstone and to the living memories of the long ago.

And now comes the information that the people of Missisquoi County are arousing themselves from the sleep of a century, that an Historical Society has been organized to gather up and treasure the little that has not been already swept into the lethal stream of oblivion, coupled with the request to prepare a paper on the very subject which proved such a stumbling-block to me in the days of my youth.

Being only too glad to lend a helping hand in this good work, I cheerfully acquiesced, and while the results are not all that I could wish, they are submitted to my colleagues in the society and interested readers in the hope that they may stimulate others to engage in the task and prosecute it to more successful issue.

I lay no claims to ethnological or philological lore, or to having made my investigations along original lines. I have but followed in the pathway blazed by others, and the data and information thus obtained I have supplemented with the pronouncements of the highest living authorities whom I consulted; and to all who have rendered valuable aid I acknowledge my indebtedness and gratitude.

Failing in my efforts to establish positively the etymology of the Indian place name Missisquoi, and finding the authorities of the past and present in such seemingly hopeless opposition as to render an agreement improbable, if not impossible, I deemed it best, at the risk of the charge of prolixity and tediousness, to record in detail the various steps taken, the methods pursued, and the results obtained, that my readers may know the scope of my work and the authorities consulted, should any of them feel inclined to continue the quest.

At the outset, I visited the archives of the American Antiquarian Society, a society which was organized more than one hundred years ago, whose extensive library and collection of Americana is located in the city of Worcester, Massachusetts, and which is known to the scholars and savants of the world to be without a rival, where I was privileged to examine the prized Indian dictionaries and grammars so industriously compiled and arranged by the sainted Roman Catholic missionaries of the long ago, when Christianity and civilization prompted, and not the cruel injustice, oppression and extermination of later times.

Here I also consulted the monumental works of Bishop Baraga, Eliot, Trumbull, and others deeply learned in ethnology and philology, particularly in the American Indian and the Indian languages and their many dialects.

Starting with the prefix *Misi* as the qualifying adjective, which, as a part of the name of a river, our old geographies informed us meant much, great, or big, which explanation was confirmed by the authorities consulted, I added the radical, or root word, *squois*, making *Misisquois*, and then sought the meaning thereof. The terminal of the names of many of the Indian tribes *ois* and *quois* (*Illin-ois*, *Abena-quois*, *Sonro-quois*, *Iro-quois*) led me to think that *ois*, *quois* or *squois* was the proper ending or terminal of *Missisquois*, and this prompted investigation along these lines.

As I advanced in my work, I found that *ois*, *quois* and *squois* were of French origin, and were used to soften the Indian terminal *ook* or *wok*,—thus *Illinois* is pronounced by the Ojibways (Chippewas anglicized, and *Octípwē* modernized) *Illinook*, and by the Algonquins *Illinwok*—the terminal meaning men, people,—but this root word being of too modern origin could not be accepted, and must, therefore, be barred out.

Pushing my investigations further along other lines, I found Bishop Baraga and others authority for the statement that *Missisquoi* is of Cree origin,—*Misi*, great, big, much,—and *ikwew*, *iskew*, *isquaw* or *isk-*

*waw*, all being equivalent, and all meaning woman, and that, therefore, Missisquoi means "great, big, much, or many women." Here, at last, thought I, is my quest rewarded; here, at last, is the etymology of the word authoritatively determined.

I next sought for an explanation for the bestowal of this name upon the river in northern Vermont that flows across the State from east to west and disembogues into Lake Champlain, near the boundary line between the United States and Canada, and upon that portion of the lake that extends into Canada and known as Missisquoi Bay, believing that the country thereabouts was so well known by this name when the county was surveyed and established that its bestowal thereon was but a natural consequence.

No authority that I consulted furnished any explanation, and, thrown upon my own resources, I then endeavored to recall, but without avail, some conformation of the bluffs, or outline of shore or water, that would suggest the female form and justify the name. Next it occurred to me that the name might mean much or many women—a place where the warriors, when going away for a long time on their annual hunts, on predatory expeditions, or on warfare, might have assembled their squaws and left them, as in a place of safety, until their return. But this, being contrary to Indian custom, had to be abandoned also.

Whether there ever existed some woman of large proportions or transcendent ability to justify the name of "big" or "great" woman; whether any Joan



of Arc ever successfully led her admiring and valiant warriors against a cruel and blood-thirsty foe; whether any Diana ever ranged the woods and led in the chase; whether any dusky Venus, fair and frail, played a leading part in a conquest of love; or perchance in a tragedy that caused rivers of blood to flow, and so bequeathed the name to coming generations,—it is now perhaps idle to consider, and the quest may well be abandoned to future investigation or individual conjecture.

This search for information quickly taught me that I had something more to do than to consult lexicons,—that I had to deal with numerous complexities and problems that required patient investigation along many and diverse lines, which to be prized at their real value must be thoroughly investigated, compared and contrasted.

No obstacle has deterred nor has expense been spared to obtain exhaustive and accurate information. Following along these lines the work has extended and expanded beyond all my expectations at the outset.

A little later, it occurred to me that while the Indians were doubtless of the same origin racially, they were not linguistically kindred, and that the language and dialects of the different tribes of Indians varied very much. As the Crees were very remote from the tribes occupying the territory of northern New England and the eastern part of Canada, and as their language was very different from the language of the

latter tribes, I became credulous as to the etymology of the word as given by Bishop Baraga, and sought confirmation or denial at the seat of government in Quebec and Ottawa.

Although inclosing postage and offering to make compensation for the service rendered, I received no information, much less the courtesy of a reply, from officials who occupy distinguished positions in the intellectual and educational departments of the government in Quebec, which may aid in explaining why many things are as they are in this Province, and why so many of her sons seek more congenial surroundings and methods elsewhere.

From Ottawa came promptly the following reply to my inquiry:

DOMINION OF CANADA.

STATISTICAL BRANCH, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

OTTAWA, April 9, 1904.

GEORGE McALEER, M.D.,

WORCESTER, MASS., U.S.A.

*Dear Sir:* In re yours of the 28th instant, I beg to give you the following notes:

Missisquoi,—from *Mishi*, big; *Ishkew*, woman,— big woman, in Cree language.

\* \* \* \* \*

Yours very truly,

GEORGE JOHNSON,  
Statistician.

This explanation is clear, explicit, unqualified, and in harmony with that given by the good Bishop.

Here apparently was

"Confirmation strong  
As proof of Holy Writ."

And yet I was not entirely satisfied. Knowing the great interest taken by the people of all portions of the United States in everything pertaining to their early history, and their very complete records, I next had recourse to the archives of the State of Vermont. In Thompson's History of Vermont, Burlington, 1842, Part III, it is recorded of the name "Missisquoi," in note at the bottom of page 117:

This name is doubtless derived from the Indians, but there is not perfect agreement with regard to its signification. Some consider it as coming from *Mse*, signifying much, and *miskeco*, grass,—abounding in grass; and others from *Missi*, much, and *kisco*, water-fowl. Both these names are descriptive, as there are here extensive tracts of wild grass, and both the bay and lower part of the river are favorite resorts of water-fowl. The name is usually pronounced *Missisco*, and my reason for spelling it *Missisco*, besides its near conformity to the original, is the unsettled orthography of the word, which may be seen by the following spellings, all of which are copied from printed books or periodicals:

Missis co,  
Missis coe,  
Missis coui,  
Mich is coui,  
Michis couie,  
Missis qua,  
Missis quay,

Missis que,  
Missis qui,  
Missis quei,  
Missis quoi,  
Michis qui,  
Masis ka,

Missis kay,  
Missis ki,  
Missis koui,  
Missis kow,  
Missis koy,  
Missis koue."

During my subsequent investigations and researches I encountered many others, some of which are: Messesco, Missesco, Michiscouy, Missiskuos, Missiskoug, Missishoug, Missickoui, Missichoiu, Messescoui, Missiscouie, Miskouaha, Michikoui.

And in Part I, page 6, of the same work, occurs the following: "There is a considerable tract of swampy land at the south end of Memphremagog Lake, and another in Highgate about the mouth of Missisco River."

This seems to lend color to, if it does not prove the correctness of the etymology of the word, as given above, and that it signifies "a place of much grass," "a miry place," "a marsh," however much at variance this may be with that given by Bishop Baraga and other authorities.

The variations in the spelling of the name need excite no surprise. What wonder if the untutored savages did not agree in their intonation, accentuation, or in their pronunciation of words? Having no written language excepting a very limited ideography and pictography, nearly everything depended upon the phonetic. They were a people without a literature, and therefore without fixed or accepted forms and laws of speech; and, being dependent upon the ear, the uttered sound was their chief dependence for communicating with each other.

Those who have travelled much at home or abroad, where language and pronunciation are based upon definite rules, realize how varied are the intonation and

speech in different parts of the same country,—so much so as to render it difficult for strangers to understand each other at first,—and how great would be the task to clearly render, by any combination of letters, the sounds of the uttered words as they fell upon the ears of the hearer. How much greater and more difficult the task can be readily imagined when the language is not understood by the hearer, when the modifications in speech of different tribes in different parts of the country are considered, and the many variations in the sound that different individuals in the same tribe would give to the same word.

An unlettered people, whether from the same or different parts of the country, would not be likely to utter the same word, especially if of onomatopœic origin, as were many of their words, so as to fall upon the ears of the listener exactly alike; and probably most of them would vary so much that a careful individual would not use the same combination of letters to express the sound, and therefore the correct meaning of the word. How much greater would be the divergence when these different sounds fell upon different ears,—cultivated and unlettered alike,—and especially when people of different nationalities, the letters of whose languages had different tonal values, attempted to bind these differing sounds in a rigid framework of letters and words to be transmitted to coming generations.

Judged by this standard, little difficulty will be found in the varied spellings of Missisquoi, especially when

they produce substantially the same sound,—a fact which seems to prove their common origin and meaning.

Confronted with these different etymologies of the word, as given by different authorities, only intensified my interest in the subject, and prompted me to push my investigations further,—to establish, if possible, the correct origin and signification of the word.

Continuing my researches, I addressed an inquiry to Rev. Matthew Henry Buckham, D.D., LL. D., president of the University of Vermont, who for a time resided in the village of Bedford, Missisquoi County, P. Q., Canada, some fifty years ago, and received the following reply:

BURLINGTON, VERMONT, Nov. 20, 1899.

DR. GEORGE MCALEER,  
WORCESTER, MASS.

*Dear Sir:* President Buckham has sent to me your inquiry of the 16th ult. The name Missisquoi, Messisco, etc. (nineteen spellings are given in Thompson's Gazetteer of Vermont) is by some thought to be from Indian *Mse* (much) and *Mskeco* (grass)—abounding in grass. Others regard it as from *Missi* (much) and *Kisco* (water-fowl). The lower portions of the river are a favorite resort of the wild duck, etc. But the other derivation may be correct, as the extensive marshes here are covered with wild grass. I prefer the former, partly because the Lamoille River is said to have been named (French) *La Mouette* (the gull), from the great numbers of these birds seen near the mouth of this stream. As the engraver of the map

did not cross his t's, La Mouette became Lamouelle and then Lamoille.

You can consult Thompson's Gazetteer of Vermont, 1842, under Lamoille and Missisquoi. In the very earliest maps no name is given to the Missisquoi.

Yours very truly,

J. E. GOODRICH.

This letter from Professor Goodrich only confirmed my earlier investigations and prompted further efforts.

As the State of New York borders upon the western shore of Lake Champlain, I next had recourse to the archives of the State, to the Documentary History of New York, Albany, 1850, and especially to O'Callaghan's monumental work, "Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York," Albany, 1856—.

While I found nothing therein bearing directly on the object of my quest, I discovered several items relating to the place and its inhabitants, which as they will doubtless possess interest for the people now living in the same section of country to which this name is applied, and as they are amongst the earliest recorded references to these parts that I have found, and, especially, as they are not easily accessible, I deemed it best to insert them here.

In Vol. X, page 546, it is recorded in the report made by Chevalier de Levis to M. de Paulmy: "Paul Louis Dazemard, Sieur de Lusignan, son of Captain de Lusignan, was born in Canada in 1691, and in 1722

was an ensign in a company of the troops of the Marine. In 1733 he commanded at the River Saint Joseph, in Illinois in 1735, whence he returned to Canada in 1739. He commanded at Isle Aux Noix in 1759, and in 1760 at St. John."

In Vol. X, page 102, is given in the "Journal of Occurrences in Canada, 1746, 1747," among other things relating to other times and places: "The Mohawks struck another blow at the same time at the Little Rapid, a league below Chambly, where they have killed a child, and taken two men, women and four children.

"Lieutenant de Vassant, commanding a guard at St. Thérèse, immediately sent a detachment to the River Aux Sables to intersect (intercept?) the passage of the enemy; but I returned without having discovered any trail; this led to the suspicion that the enemy are encamped above Chateaugüe. M. de Beaucourt, in consequence, detached Lieutenant St. Pierre with eighty voyagers and citizens by the Cascades to Lake St. Francis, so as to surprise them, and return by Chateaugüe. Eight Abenakis of Missiskouog have followed this officer; word has been sent to those of the Lake to go and meet him at the Cedars; it was not thought proper to invite the Iroquois of the Saut, as 'twas feared at Montreal that they are treacherous and favor the Mohawks in their incursions on our settlements; they are even suspected of giving the enemy notice when we are in pursuit of them by firing three shots when the detachments are approaching their camps."



Tecanancoassin, Chief of the Indians of the Sault St. Louis, on his return to Montreal from Orange, Oct. 19, 1744, reported to M. de Beaujours, as recorded in Vol. IX, page 1110, in the "Abstract of the different movements at Montreal, on occasion of the war, from the month of December, 1745, to the month of August, 1746," that "An Abenakis of Missiskoui had seen in the Grand Marais\* of the Little Falls, three Indians who had been sent from Orange to examine whether any persons were hunting, as should he not discover any, it would be a proof that all the natives would be under arms to wage war against them; that the Abenaki told them to go themselves and find those who were hunting, which induced them to return."

And in Vol. X, page 32, in the report of the doings during the same period it is recorded: "A party of twenty Abenakis of Missiskoug, set out towards Boston and brought in some prisoners and scalps;" and at another time, on page 33 of the same volume, "A party of eight Abenakis of Missiskoug has been fitted out who have been in the direction of Corlard (Corläer?) and have returned with some prisoners and scalps;" and again on the same page, another item, "A party of Abenakis of Missiskoug struck a blow near Orange and Corlard, and brought in some prisoners and scalps."

These, among many other similar expeditions, complete the report for the time specified. Many of the

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\*Now called the Twelve-Mile Marsh, which extends from Whitehall north, half way to Ticonderoga.

expeditions "struck a blow towards Boston,"—the others upon the settlements along the eastern border of the State of New York.

The report of Governor H. Moore to the Earl of Shelbourne appears in Vol. VII, page 875, in part as follows :

FORT GEORGE, NEW YORK, Nov. 8, 1766.

I have now the honor to inform your Lordship that the line of Division between this Province and Quebec is fixed in the River Sorrell about two miles and a half below Windmill Point,\* so that no part of Lake Champlain is included in the Province of Quebec except a small portion of Missiconi Bay; whilst we were employed in this service, many French gentlemen from Quebec came to us at Windmill Point and demanded from me a confirmation of those Grants which had been made to them from the French Crown which not only extend along Lake Champlain and cover both sides of it but reach beyond the carrying place at Ticonderoga.

\* \* \* \* \*

Since the Peace very large tracts on both sides of the Lake have been granted by Lieutenant Governor Colden to the reduced officers and disbanded soldiers in consequence of his Majesty's Proclamation, and the French claims now made have caused no small uneasiness to the Possessors of these Lands, who, having laid out all their substance in making settlements, are under the greatest distress at the thoughts of being dispossessed, as such a proceeding would be followed by inevitable ruin to them and their families.

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\*In 1731 a windmill was built in Alburgh at a place then called Pointe aux Algonquians, and since known as Windmill Point.

In the Appendix of Thompson's Gazetteer of Vermont, 1853, Part 3, page 100, it is recorded of the River Lamoille: "It is not quite so large as the Winoo-ski and Missisco. It is said to have been discovered by Champlain in 1609 and called by him La Monette, the French for mew or gull, a species of water-fowl which were very numerous about the mouth of the stream. In Charlevoix's map of the discoveries of North America, published in 1774, it is called *la riviere a la Mouelle*, probably a mistake of the engraver in not crossing the t's. Thus, to the mere carelessness of a French engraver, we are indebted for the smooth, melodious sounding name, Lamoille."

And in the same volume, page 117, we read: "Missisco Bay is a large area of Lake Champlain, which extends into Canada between Swanton and Highgate on the east, and Alburgh on the west, on Canada line, is about five miles, and it extends four or five miles into Canada. This bay covers an area of about thirty-five square miles."

"Missisco River rises in Lowell, and pursuing a northeasterly course through a part of Westfield and Troy, crosses the north line of the State into Potton in Canada, where it receives a large stream from the northeast,—and falls into Missisco Bay near Canada line. Length, about 75 miles, and it drains about 582 square miles in Vermont."

In reference to the various names by which Lake Champlain has been known, it is recorded in the Vermont Historical Gazetteer by Hemenway, Vol. I:

"The Abenakees called the Lake '*Pe-ton-bonque*,' that is, 'The waters which lie between,' viz.: them and the Iroquois, and by others *Patawabouke*, which signifies an alternation of water and earth. The Iroquois called it '*Cania-deri-guarunte*,'\* that is, 'The lake that is the gate or door of the country.' The Dutch and English called it *Corläer*, after a Dutchman from Schenectady who went down the lake in 1665, and was drowned near Fort Cassin."

"A tract of land six leagues in length, along the Missisquoi River and Lake Champlain, by three leagues in width from north to south was granted by Gallisoniere, Governor, and Bigot, Intendant, to Sieur Laressene in 1748, and ratified by the King in 1749."

"Foucault Seigniery on Chambly River, from boundary line to Seigniory of Noyan, two leagues along river and lake to Missisquoi Bay, was granted in 1733."

In Vol. IX, page 887, the habits and customs of the Algonquians are described at length, and among these it is recorded: "Four or five young men sing and beat time with the drum and sisiquoi,† and the women keep time and do not lose a step; it is very entertaining, and lasts almost the entire night." And "they lodge partly under Apaquois, which are made of mat

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\*From *Kanyatare*, the Mohawk word for lake, and *Kanhoharonde*, a door.

†Pronounced sēsēēquah, a rattle generally made from a gourd. The Missisquoi River contains numerous water-falls of very considerable height, the sound of which may have reminded the aborigines of the sound of their sisiquois, and prompted the bestowal of that name upon the river.

grass." In a note at the bottom of the page the following explanation is given: "Apaquois—matting made from flag or rushes—from *Apee*, a leaf, and *Wigquoiam*, a hut."

Joining the radical or terminal *quois* to the qualifying adjective *Misis* completes the name Misisquois, and, with the explanation given of *quois*, seems to confirm the explanation of the word as given in the Gazetteer of Vermont as a place of "much grass," i. e., cat-tail flag (*Typha latifolia*) and bullrushes (*Scirpus lacustris*)—"a miry place," a bog or marsh.

In White's "Early History of New England," Concord, N. H., 1841, considerable space is devoted to the various incursions of the Abenakis Indians into New England, their depredations and captives. On page 167 is recorded their attack on Vernon, in the State of Vermont, in 1755, and the experiences of some of their prisoners in captivity. Among these taken to Canada were a Mrs. Howe and several of her children—one an infant in her arms. After relating their toils, deprivations and hardships before reaching Montreal, the narrative continues: "Speedily after, the Indians commenced their winter hunting." Mrs. Howe was then ordered to return her child to the captors. The babe clung to her bosom, and she was obliged to force it away. She continues: "They carried it to a place called 'Messiskow,' on the borders of the river Missiscoui, near the north end of Lake Champlain, upon the eastern shore."

The place here called "Messiskow," to which these

captives were taken, was doubtless Swanton Falls, where a very considerable number of these Indians lived for many years, and where they erected a stone church, in the belfry of which was the first bell that ever summoned people to the house of worship in Vermont. The Jesuit fathers here, as in Canada, brought Christianity to the children of the forest and ministered to their spiritual wants and were the last to abandon this church and settlement at the close of the American Revolution.

The present village of Troy, in the northern part of the State of Vermont, was long a place of rendezvous for the Abenakis Indians, and from earliest times it was known by the name of Missisquoi until A. D. 1803, when a frenzy for changing aboriginal to classic names became epidemic throughout the country, and it was changed to the name it now bears after the ancient city of Troy.

Finding such radically different meanings given to the word Missisquoi in the records of the past, I decided to consult the leading authorities of the present time on the Indian language and dialects.

I then addressed an inquiry to the well-known Algonquian scholar, William Wallace Tooker, author of the "Algonquian Series," comprising ten volumes relating to the language, antiquities and history of the Algonquians of the United States and Canada, asking him for an explanation of the origin and signification of the word Missisquoi.

Under date of Jan. 16, 1905, he wrote as follows:

CARTE DU LAC  
CHAMPLAIN

avec les Rivières, depuis le Fort dans la Nouvelle France, jusqu'à la Nouvelle Angleterre, d'après les mémoires. — (Circa 1731.)

Original now in the archives of the Ministère de la Marine et des Colonies.

Reproduced in part  
for the  
ETYMOLOGY  
MISSISQUO

Original now in the archives of the "Ministère de la Marine et des Colonies," Paris.

## ETYMOLOGY OF MISSISQUOI

BY GEORGE MCALEER, M.D.





## ON THE NAME MISSISQUOI.

DR. GEORGE MCALEER,  
WORCESTER, MASS.

*Dear Sir:* After the English forces from Fort Richmond, under Captain Johnson Harmon, attacked the Abnaki Indians of Maine, at Norridgewock on the Kennebec River, Aug. 12, 1724, burnt their fort and village, and slew Rev. Father Rasles, the French missionary there, the survivors migrated west to the head of Lake Champlain, then under control of the French Colonists of Canada. Sieur Auger, the King's surveyor, made a draft of this section for the French in 1732, whereon he locates the "River Michiscouy," in the State of Vermont, then in the Seigniory of de Beauvois. In the grant of 1733, to Lafontaine, the adjoining waters are called "Bay of Missiskouy." In 1746 is mentioned the Abenaki of Missiskoui. In the operations of the French in New England and New York in 1746, we find in the record that "twenty Abenakis of Missiskoui set out toward Boston and brought in some prisoners and scalps." In the English records of 1767 a petition was filed for lands "to be laid out on the south of Missickoui Bay." Again in 1770, a grant was made for "2000 acres of land in the bay of Missichoiu on the east side of Lake Champlain." On Santhier's map of 1779 is laid down the "Bay," "River" and "Island of Missiskoui." On the island are marked the words "Indian Castle," which may indicate, possibly, where the Abenakis lived.

On the same map, round about the bay, are indicated several extensive marshes or swamps, with the largest one at the head of the bay. It was to these swamps or marshes I believe the name was originally applied, and from thence transferred by the French and Eng-

lish to the bay and river without regard for its significance, as was often the case with Indian names.

The persistence of the form shows this derivation to be quite evident. Therefore, I translate the name as a "great miry place," "great muddy place."

Miss-iskouy—Abenaki *mach-esk-ak*, Del. *Mach-assisco*, Mass. *missi-assquo-ayeu*,—great, miry place." The termination *oui* is the French form, and frequently occurs in Indian names in the French notation.

Yours very truly,

WILLIAM WALLACE TOOKER.

To this I made answer that I was very familiar with the Maine wilderness, that I had many times followed the old Indian trails through the woods and over mountains from that State into Canada and back again, that I had been over the route from Norridgewock by way of the Dead River over the "height of land," which is the summit of the Boundary Mountains, thence by Lake Megantic and the Chaudiere River to Quebec, the route travelled by the missionaries of the olden time, by Benedict Arnold and his detachment of Continental soldiers to attack Quebec, and by the Indians from earliest times in their periodical migrations; and that as they, like others, operated along the line of least resistance, they would be much more likely to reach Lake Champlain by this route and the St. Lawrence, Richelieu, St. Francis or other rivers, than by journeying through dense and almost impenetrable forests and over mountains, morasses and lakes to reach the head waters of the river Missisquoi, following which

in their canoes to its mouth would bring them to Lake Champlain.

I also mentioned the fact that in the science of Ichthyology, there is a variety of the species *Salmo* known as *Sisco*, *Siscowet* (pronounced Siscoway), and inquired if this, in conjunction with the adjectival prefix *Missi*, as indicating a place of much fish, might not be the origin of the word, and if so would it not prove the key to its meaning. I also informed him that there was no marsh—"much miry place"—along the shores of the bay, but that it was coarse gravel, boulders and rocks, which would seem to indicate that the name with this meaning, as given, was a misfit.

To this I received the following reply:

SAG HARBOR, N. Y., Jan. 21, 1905.

GEORGE McALEER, M. D.

*My dear Sir:* Yours of the 19th came to hand in due season, and contents duly noted. You evidently know more about the topography of the Maine wilderness and Lake Champlain than I do. It must have been very interesting to travel over those old trails and roads, when the historical events connected with them are carried in one's mind.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now as to Missisquoi, I still adhere to my translation, for the name belonged to a "great miry place," somewhere thereabout, and perhaps to some part of the river, as that stream first bears the name in the records of the white man. Sauthier's map (Documentary History of New York, Vol. I) shows swamps at the head of the bay.

Now the Indians were very literal in the use of words, and the use of *misi* or *michi*, meaning great, large, extensive, was not permitted in the sense of plenty as in your translation. While it could be used to denote a "great fish," or a "great water-fowl," it must not apply to a place. To denote a great fishing place another term would be used. Sometimes the prefix denotes the species of the fish taken. Again I do not know *sisco*, or *siscowet*, as a generic term for fish. In all place names in which the name for fish occurs as a terminal or prefix, it is *namecs*. This is the generic name without designating the species, and when the species is named the terminal indicates a "fishing place," or "where fish are plenty." I can give several other reasons why your translation is not acceptable. The same name occurs on Long Island, applied to a marsh, as "*Assasquog*," which, as you will notice, does not have the prefix, or else has lost it, but *M'assasquog* cognates Missisquoi.

The only other possible etymology is *Miss-askguog*, "the great grass place," or a place "where the great rushes grow."

Both names were applied to swamps or marshes where rushes or reeds were got for making baskets. Here on Long Island we have the name *Manowtasquot*, i. e., "a place of the basket rush,"—*Manowt*, "a basket."

Yours very truly,

WILLIAM WALLACE TOOKER.

To this I made reply, when I took opportunity to mention the etymology of the word as given by Bishop Baraga and others, coupled with suggestions and inquiries, to which I received the following reply:

SAG HARBOR, N. Y., Jan. 30, 1905.

Dear Dr. McAleer: Your long letter and pamphlets were very interesting.

I suppose you are familiar with the accounts of the fight at Narantsouak from French sources in the Colonial History of New York, Vol. IX, as there is much about the Abenakis in that volume. They could reach Canada in a few days (page 940). They were at Missisquoi in 1725 (page 939). They were there in 1736 (page 1052). One hundred and fifty went to Canada in 1725 in a deplorable condition (page 938). After the fight one hundred and fifty got together (Charlevoix, Vol. V, page 279, Shea's Edition). This is my authority.

In regard to Missisquoi, this termination is a plural form. \**8benakis*, *Abenakis*, *Abenakis* are simply the English and French plural terminations. *8ben-waben*, "the East,"—*aki*, "land." So with *Abenakis* or *Abenakis*, "the East landers," the people of the East. The Abenaki at the place Missiskoui might be called by the French the Missisquois. This is all there is to that.

"Big Squaw" is foolish.

The earliest form of the name is that on a map of 1731 (Col. Hist. N. Y., Vol. IX, p. 1022), when it is applied to the river in northern Vermont now known by this name.

It never belonged to the bay into which the river empties. It described most probably some portion of the river, and possibly the grassy valley through which the river flows. The word could be translated

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\*The character 8 is pronounced nearly the same as the French *ui*. In old *Abenakis* it represented consonantal *w*,—*w'* followed by the short vowel and *u*—producing a sound midway between *oui* and *waw*.  
—Author.

the great valley or place of great grass. Are you familiar with the river? The earliest form is Michiscouy. The word for grass and marsh is so near alike that it is almost impossible to distinguish between them.

Your etymologies are all contrary to Algonquian nomenclature, and are all unacceptable from my standpoint, and are unlikely from the savages' standpoint.

You must get your mind off of the bay and put it on the river, where it was bestowed in 1731, 1732, 1733, etc. Can you give an earlier date? There is a place called Missisquoi Valley, through which a railroad runs. Was this a grassy valley?

Yours very truly,

WILLIAM WALLACE TOOKER.

Seeking further information for or against the various explanations given, I next addressed an inquiry to the well-known Indian scholar, William Jones, of the American Museum of Natural History in the city of New York, to which I received the following reply:

77TH STREET AND EIGHTH AVENUE,  
NEW YORK, Feb. 8, 1905.

DR. GEORGE MCALEER,  
WORCESTER, MASS.

*My dear Sir:* I have your letter asking for the etymology and meaning of the Indian word Missisquoi, or Missisco. My work in Algonquian has been confined to dialects of the Great Lake region, and I cannot locate the word from that place.

At any rate *Misi* looks as if it might be the same as an initial stem *Mes*, *Mis* or *Mch*, which conveys ideas

like big, large, whole, total. I cannot offer anything definite for the rest of the word. It is difficult to render an Algonquian word as it stands alone without showing the situation in which it is used.

I regret not being able to be any further help. If the word happened to have belonged to a New England Algonquian dialect, you might be able to run it down by using Trumbull's Natick Dictionary. The volume was published by the Bureau of Ethnology at Washington. Furthermore, Professor Prince of Columbia University might be of help. He has done a good deal of work with New England Algonquian dialects.

Yours very truly,

WILLIAM JONES.

Acting upon the suggestion of Mr. Jones, I wrote the following letter to Professor Prince:

WORCESTER, Feb. 15, 1905.

PROF. J. DYNELEY PRINCE,  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY,  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

*Dear Sir:* I am very anxious to learn the origin and signification of the Indian word Missisquoi, or Missesco as formerly spelled, a name given to a river in the northern part of Vermont, and later to that portion of Lake Champlain which extends into Canada and known as Missisquoi Bay.

Authorities of the past on the Indian language and dialects, as well as Indian scholars now living who hold prominent government stations at Ottawa, Ontario, under the Government of the Dominion of Canada, agree that the word is of Cree origin, and is com-

posed of *Misi*, much, great, big, many, and *ikew-iskew*—*isquew*, *iskwaw*, women.

This etymology does not commend itself to me, not being in harmony with Indian custom, besides being far-fetched,—forcing a word of Cree origin upon the language of the Abenakis, a more eastern and distant people who had at least a different dialect if not a different language, and who would doubtless use a different word from that used by the Crees to express the same meaning.

Some New England authorities, probably basing their information upon the explanation given by earlier writers who may have been mistaken, claim that the name signifies a bog, a marsh, a miry place, a place of much reeds or grass, and the like, but as such places were abundant elsewhere in the territory inhabited by the eastern Indians, and as it was the common practice of the Indians to give the same name to like conditions wherever found without reference to the number of times it was bestowed, and as this name does not occur elsewhere, it would seem to be too radical a departure from their usual custom to be accepted on less than very conclusive evidence.

Moreover, there are no extensive marshes along the shore of Missisquoi Bay, and as such morasses were called Muskegs and Pókelókens by the Algonquian Indians, this meaning given to the word would also seem *mal-a-propos*.

The river Missisquoi in early times was famous for the large quantities of trout and other edible fish taken from its waters, and may not the aboriginal name *cisco* or *siscoet* (pronounced siscoway), at the present time limited to a variety of the *Salmo* family, and now found elsewhere, then have had a broader and more



comprehensive signification? Or may not the variety of trout, to which this name is now restricted, then have abounded in these waters and since have been exterminated?

Certain it is that the radical *sisco* or *siscowet* joined to the qualifying adjective *Misi*, making Missisco or Missiscoway, constitutes the phonetic word, and would more probably be the true origin of the word, and also in harmony with the usual custom of the Indians when bestowing place names, viz.: a much, great, or big fishing place, a place where fish abound. This latter explanation I have never seen hinted at, but as it seems more in harmony with aboriginal methods, and as the other explanations seem vague if not improbable guesses, made in early times and handed down from generation to generation by subsequent writers, I venture to offer the suggestion for your consideration as one deeply schooled in the language and dialects of the Abenaki.

Craving your indulgence for this trespass upon your valuable time, and soliciting your criticism and comments upon the subject matter of this letter, and thanking you in advance for your consideration and the courtesy of a reply, I am

Yours most respectfully,

GEORGE MCALEER.

To this I received the following reply:

15 LEXINGTON AVE.,  
NEW YORK, N. Y., Feb. 20, 1905.

*Dear Dr. McAleer:* I have read your letter relating to the name Missisquoi, a river in the northern part of Vermont, and after taking several days to let it sink

in, I have come to the following conclusions, which I submit to you herewith:

First, you are undoubtedly right in rejecting the translation "big woman," and chiefly for the reason that the element *iskwa*, or *skwa*, is purely a female in modern Abenaki, and would not be used to denote "woman" with an adjective. The Abenaki call a big woman *kchi pehauu* always. The adjectival element *misi* is, however, never used independently, but always connected with what follows: thus, *Misisibo* could mean big river and *misi-iskwa* might mean "big woman," only NOT in Abenaki.

Of course you are right in your *Sprachgefühl* in saying that this is contrary to Indian customs. So we eliminate that supposition.

Secondly, I do not believe the name has anything to do with trout, the word for which in Abenaki, so far as I know the dialect, is not *sisco*, but *sko tam*, "red trout;" and *namagw*, generally used of "grey trout;" c. f. *msanamagw*, "salmon," i. e., "big trout."

Now there is a form *Mishquskou* given as meaning "trout" in Trumbull's Natick Dictionary, but this is far away from our form, and I cannot establish it elsewhere. Big red trout would be in Abenaki *msi-sko-tam*, which is too far away for us.

I believe that the form *Missesco* is from Abenaki *msa-skog* and means "big snake." The form *Missisquoi*, with ending *noi*, suggested to me at once *msi-sisi-kwa*, "big rattlesnake." *Sisikwa* (pronounced *sée-séekwah*) means "rattler" and never anything else. It is quite possible that the territory, or part of it, through which the Missisquoi River ran, was at one time infested with snakes or rattlesnakes. If it is marshy, as you suggest in one part of your letter, this

is all the more likely. I regard Missisquoi and Missesco as two distinct forms.

It is extremely difficult to judge of the meaning of modernized Indian names in white man's form. This you know, of course. I will give you a most amusing example. Dr. Seward Webb has named his place in the Adirondacks, Nehasne, which he says means "beaver on a log" in Iroquois. I doubted this, and wrote to my friend, Father Forbes at Caughnawaga, who is past master in this language. He wrote me that *nehasne* simply means "le voila," "there he is"—and is a common expression.

He accounts for Dr. Webb's meaning by supposing that someone in early days heard an Indian say "Nehasne"—"there he is," at the moment a beaver was seen before jumping into the water, when the white man immediately concluded that this was the word for beaver! I firmly believe that this is the way Dr. Webb got his word. I know of similar instances in other dialects, although I am no Iroquoian myself.

I would be glad to hear from you again in this matter, as I am very much interested in all Americana, to which, however, I can only give such time as is not taken up by my work in *Semitica*.

Yours sincerely,

J. DYNELEY PRINCE.

P. S.—If the Abenakis had wished to say "big trout river" they would say *misi-sko tam-tukw*. I am sending a little pamphlet on Indian place names in the Adirondacks.

J. D. P.

And later, in answer to some further objections and suggestions, Professor Prince wrote again as follows:

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY,

NEW YORK CITY, Feb. 24, 1905.

DR. GEORGE McALEER,  
WORCESTER, MASS.

*Dear Sir:* I cannot refrain from saying another friendly word about Missisquoi. I note from your letter that you still cling to the idea that the element *sesco* or *sisco* has something to do with fish. I assure you as one who has a good colloquial knowledge of Abenaki that this element cannot mean fish of any kind.

Fish in all eastern Algie dialects is *namas* or *names* or *namech*, and trout is *sko-tam*, pronounced *skohtam*, with a quitted h. As to the variety of the spellings of the name, they really signify little, and are probably nothing more than a number of methods of spelling introduced by unlettered whites in their efforts to reproduce the Indian pronunciation. If you will say Missisquoi, which was originally pronounced Missis-kwa with the French *oi* sound, to any Abenaki Indian, he will tell you either that it means "big rattlesnake" or "big snake." The word is quite evidently a French attempt to write the Abenaki *maaskog*, "big snake," the *g* nearly silent, or *msa-sisik-wa*, "big rattlesnake," both of which terms may have been applied to the region.

Above all do not write any paper for publication without saying the name to an intelligent Abenaki Indian or you will be terribly attacked by some one like Gerard who has made a specialty of the eastern Algie.

Personally I could talk Abenaki nearly as fast as English once, but have lost my conversational fluency of late years.

Yours very truly,

J. DYNELEY PRINCE.

This positive piscatorial pronouncement of Professor Prince prompted further investigation along these lines. In a contribution to the pages of the "Journal of American Folk-Lore," page 240 *et seq.*, from the pen of Dr. Alexander F. Chamberlain, Fellow of Clark University, Worcester, Mass., entitled "*Algonkian Words in American English: a Study in the Contact of the White Man and the Indian*," occurs the following:

*Cisco* (Sisco), a name applied to certain species of fish found in the Great Lakes and adjoining waters: (1) The Lake "moon eye" (*Coregonus hoyi*); (2) The Lake herring (*Coregonus artedi*). The word is probably derived from one of the Algonkian dialects of this region.

*Ciscoette*. A name of the Lake herring, apparently derivative, with French diminutive suffix, from *Cisco*, but rather a corruption of *Siskowit*.

*Siscowit*. The name, which has also the forms *siscowet*, *siscoette*, *siskowit*, etc., is applied both to a variety of the Great Lake trout, "Mackinaw trout" (*Salmo-namaycush*), and to a Lake herring (*Sisco*), is by some writers referred to as "an Ojibwa *Siskawit*."

And in the History of the Missisco Valley, by Samuel Sumner, M. A., published under the auspices of the Orleans County (Vt.) Historical Society, 1860, it is recorded on page 6: "Four people in one day about the year 1800 caught more than 500 pounds of trout in a pond near the foot of Bald Mountain in Westmore in the northern part of the county."

And in "Lake Champlain and its Shores," by Rev. W. H. H. Murray, Boston, 1890, it is stated on page 190: "The Winooski River is not only a very beautiful stream, but to a peculiar degree historic. The Abenakis Indians originally occupied the east side of the lake from opposite Mohawk Rock to the northern end of Missisquoi Bay, and the Winooski River was, because of its multitudes of salmon and the beauty of its banks, a favorite resort of theirs. It was along this river also that the old Indian trail ran which led over to the Connecticut, and was much used by all the northern tribes in friendship with the Abenakis in their annual migrations to and from the sea coast."

While Dr. Chamberlain authenticates my contention for the name and identity of the fish, and the History of Missisco Valley and the Rev. W. H. H. Murray testify to the former very great abundance of trout in the Missisquoi River and near-by waters, and Trumbull's Natick Dictionary gives *Mishquskoo* as the Algonquian word for trout, it is not contended that this proves the etymology of the word under consideration; but it is urged that as a working hypothesis it has as many elements of probability to recommend it as many others that are offered and warmly advocated.\*

As my investigations proceeded, confusion seemed more confounded, but this only stimulated renewed endeavor. I next addressed the following letter to

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\*Since the above was written I have discovered that this identical variety of the species *Salmo*—*Salmo-namaycush*—formerly abounded in vast numbers in all the tributaries of Lake Champlain.

Hon. Desire Girouard, D.C.L., Q.C., M.P., Judge of the Supreme Court of the Dominion of Canada, Ottawa, and author of "Lake St. Louis Old and New, and Cavalier de la Salle":

WORCESTER, MASS, U.S.A., May 18, 1905.

HON. DESIRE GIROUARD,  
JUDGE SUPREME COURT OF CANADA,  
OTTAWA, ONTARIO.

*Dear Sir:* I am very anxious to learn the etymology of the Indian place name formerly spelled Missesco, Missescoui, and various other ways until officially decided in its present form, Missisquoi, some fifty or more years ago; a name of a river in northern Vermont, of a bay on the northern end of Lake Champlain, and of a county bordering thereon in the Province of Quebec. I desire to learn if the various spellings have a common origin and signification, or if they are different words having different meanings, and if so, what they are. I appealed to Dr. Alexander F. Chamberlain of Clark University, who has given much attention to the language and dialects of western Indians and who has written monographs and articles for publication in ethnological journals thereon, but being less familiar with the language of the eastern Indians he referred me to you with authority to use his name in this connection. Will you not kindly come to my aid and oblige me by supplying the information sought? By so doing you will confer a great favor, and thanking you in advance therefor, I am,

Yours most respectfully,

GEORGE MCALEER.

To which came the following prompt reply:

## ETYMOLOGY OF MISSISQUOI.

THE SUPREME COURT OF CANADA.

OTTAWA, ONTARIO, 21st May, 1905.

*Dear Doctor:* Your letter of the 18th received. I am making inquiry into the subject and expect to be able to report in a few days. Yours very truly,

D. GIROUARD.

And later:

THE SUPREME COURT OF CANADA.

OTTAWA, 24th June, 1905.

*Dear Sir:* After a good many inquiries, I am able at last to give you the etymology of the name "Missisquoi," spelled "Missiskouy" in a grant from the French Crown in 1733, "Missisque" in another official document of 1783, and "Missisqui" by Bouchette in 1815. It means the same thing, no matter how spelled. Its origin is Abenakis, and a missionary of a tribe of these Indians informs me that it is well known among them. It means a place where boulders are to be found, and more especially "Boulder Point;" "*l'origine du mot Missisquoi,*" he says, "*est Masiki-koik, mot qui signifie endroit où il y a du caillou et plus spécialement encore Pointe de Cailloux.*"

This interpretation differs very much from the one generally accepted,—“much water-fowl.” I am writing an article on the subject for "*Le Bulletin des Recherches Historiques*," a monthly periodical published in Levis, P. Q. It will probably appear in the August number. As I am leaving for Europe for some months, I will not be able to send it to you, but you may get it from the publishers.

Hoping you may be pleased with the information sent, I remain,

Yours very truly,

D. GIROUARD.

DR. GEORGE McALEER.



In pursuit of further information, I sent the following letter:

WORCESTER, MASS., May 29, 1905.

MR. W. H. HOLMES,  
CHIEF OF BUREAU AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY,  
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

*Dear Sir:* I am very anxious to learn the derivation and meaning of the Indian place name now spelled Missisquoi—a name of a river in northern Vermont, and of a bay on the northern end of Lake Champlain, in the Province of Quebec. This name has undergone many changes in spelling, some of which I subjoin, together with some of the different explanations that have been given of their origin and signification.

The qualifying adjective, *Mch, Mich, Michi, Mse, Mis* and *Missi*, is present in nearly all, but the radical or root word appears in many forms, some of which are *sesco, sisco, siscoe, siscoo, siscoue, siskoiu, siscouie, siskuoy, skoui, sisquio, siskoue, isqua, isquay, isquoi, isqui, ishoug*, etc., etc.

And some of the meanings given are:

Mes sisco—a place of much fish or trout.

Mis sisiquoi—a place of much, many or large gourds, such as the Indians used for rattles or drums, and to beat time with.

Mis sesikew—much, many, or great rattlesnakes.

Mse kiskeco—a place of much grass; a miry place; a place where many willows grow; a place where cat-tail flag abounds (which was largely used by Indians for making mats).

Mse kisco—much or many water-fowl.

Mis ikew, or iskwew—big or great woman.

These derivations and meanings are furnished by

some of the leading authorities of the past, and by Indian scholars of the present time, and each is positive of the correctness of his rendering, and equally positive that the others have no substantial basis to rest upon. I desire, also, to learn if all these forms have a common origin and signification; or, if they, or some of them, may not have a different origin, and therefore a different meaning.

The courtesy of your consideration and aid will be highly appreciated by, my dear sir,

Yours most respectfully,

GEORGE MCALEER.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.

BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY.

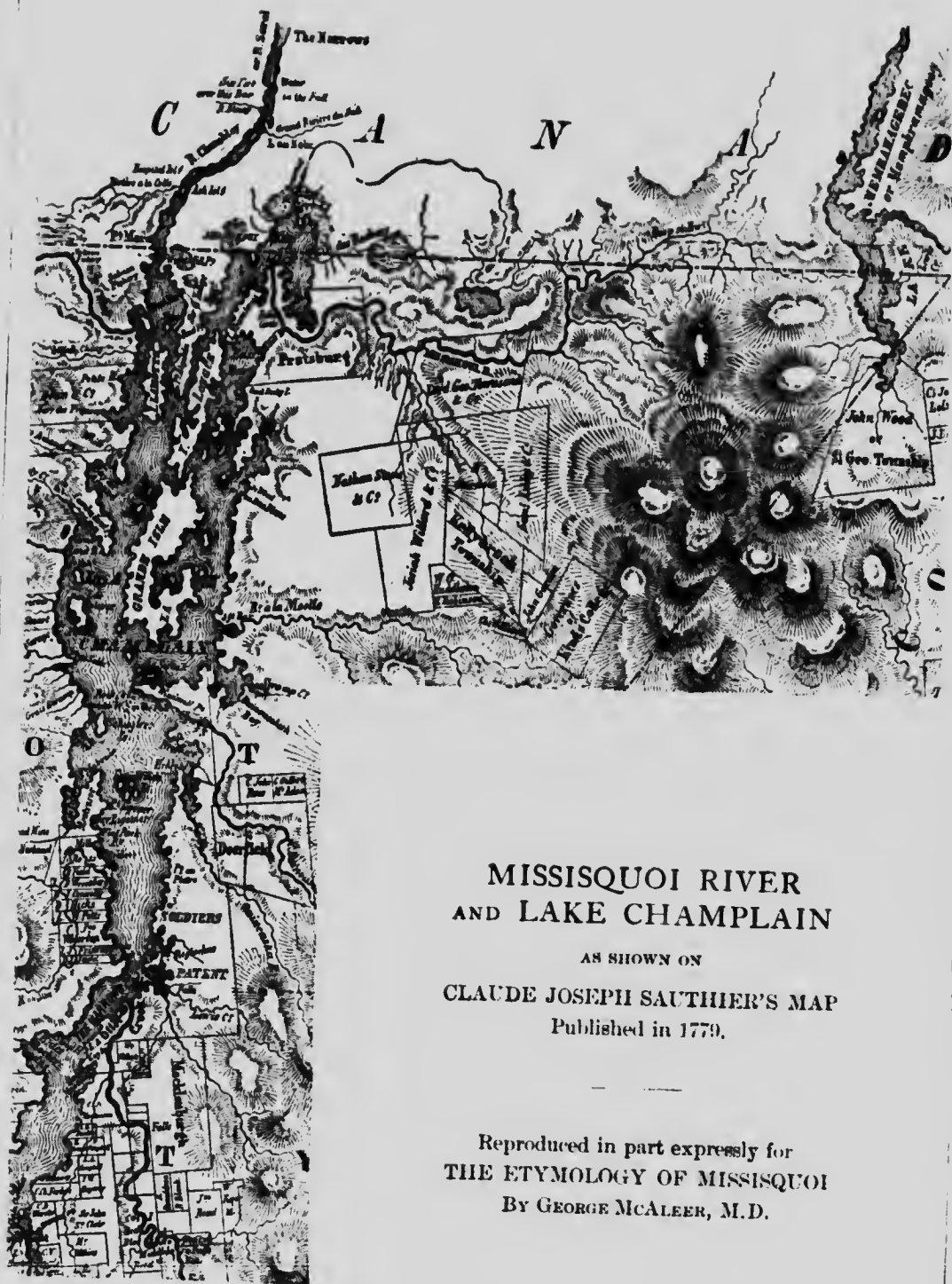
WASHINGTON, D. C., June 5, 1905.

*Dear Sir:* Your letter of May 29 asking the meaning of the word *Missisquoi* is at hand, and I beg to give you the statement furnished by Mr. Hewitt, who is our best expert in the languages of the East: *Missisquoi* is seemingly either from *Missi*, great, large, and *ikwew* or *iskwew*, a woman, and thus signifies a large woman; or *Missi*, great, large, and *assisquois*, mud or clay, which would make it signify large or great clay place. You will see, therefore, that is related to our words Mississippi and Missouri. Before the absolute meaning of the word can be given, however, as used in New England, the entire history of its use must be known.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) W. H. HOLMES,  
Chief.

DR. GEORGE MCALEER,  
WORCESTER, MASS.



## MISSISQUOI RIVER AND LAKE CHAMPLAIN

AS SHOWN ON  
CLAUDE JOSEPH SAUTHIER'S MAP  
Published in 1779.

Reproduced in part expressly for  
THE ETYMOLOGY OF MISSISQUOI  
By GEORGE MCALEER, M.D.



To this letter of Mr. Holmes I made the following reply:

WORCESTER, MASS., June 12, 1905.

MR. W. H. HOLMES,  
CHIEF BUREAU AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY,  
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

*Dear Sir:* I have your favor of June 5th, in reference to the Indian place name Missisquoi, now before me. You state that "before the absolute meaning of the word can be given, however, as used in New England, the entire history of its use must be known."

The only place on this continent ever known by this name is the river in northern Vermont, from which it was given to that portion of Lake Champlain near by which extends into Canada and now known as Missisquoi Bay, and later (about 1800) it was given to the county bordering thereon in Canada.

The name of the river was originally spelled Messesco, as was also the village of Troy, Vermont, when first named, and it was so called until October 26, 1803, about the time that the wave for changing the aboriginal to classic names swept over the country, when it was given its present name. In its orthography this name has undergone many changes. It is spelled on a map made by Sieur Auger in 1732, *Michiscouy*, and later in 1779, it is spelled on Souther's map *Missis koui*. Various other modifications, some of which were mentioned in my previous letter, have occurred in the spelling, until it became fixed in the present form some time after the county bordering upon the bay of this name was established.

You mention *Missi iskew* as a probable origin of the word. Indian scholars pronounce this inadmissi-

ble as being of Cree origin, a language differing from the Iroquois and Abenakis, the latter of whom occupied the territory in question, and the former were their nearest neighbors on the opposite side of the lake; one of which tribes doubtless bestowed the name, with the probabilities in favor of the latter.

I am very anxious to probe this matter to the bottom and to get the exact etymology of the word so that it will be accepted as authoritative, and sincerely trust you will not deem me too importunate when I crave your further valuable aid.

Yours very truly,

GEORGE McALEER.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.

BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY.

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 13, 1905.

*Dear Sir:* I have your letter of June 12 regarding the signification of *Missisquoi*, and will refer it to such members of the bureau as may be able to throw further light upon its meaning. As all of our people are extremely busy in completing work to be submitted at the close of the fiscal year, June 30, it is not likely that they can give any time to the inquiry for the present, but I will see that it is attended to at the earliest possible date.

Very truly yours,

W. H. HOLMES,  
Chief.

DR. GEORGE McALEER,  
WORCESTER, MASS.

I next sought the desired information from a missionary of the Abenakis at Pierreville, P. Q., Canada.

WORCESTER, MASS., U.S.A., July 5th, 1905.

REV. JOSEPH DE GONZAGUE,

ST. THOMAS DE PIERREVILLE, P. Q.

*Reverend and Dear Sir:* Your correspondent desires to learn the etymology of the Indian place name now spelled Missisquoi, but which in earlier times was spelled in various other ways, some of which are Michiscoui, Missisco, Missiskoui, etc.

At first, this name was confined to a river that flows across the northern part of the State of Vermont and disembogues into Lake Champlain near the boundary line between the United States and Canada. Later it was given to that portion of the lake that extends into Canada and is now known as Missisquoi Bay; and when the land was first surveyed, about one hundred years ago, it was bestowed upon the county bordering thereon in the Province of Quebec.

The examination of the works of those who have written upon Indian philology and kindred topics, reveals a very great discrepancy in the conclusions arrived at in reference to the origin and signification of this word, and living students and scholars whom I have consulted are no less discordant and unharmonious.

I very much desire to learn the etymology of this word, and to settle for all time its true origin and signification.

The waters and territory to which it is now applied were mainly, since the dawn of history at least, under the sway of the Abenakis, which would lend color to the supposition that it is of Abenaki origin; but as the section of the country known by this name was upon the border line separating them from their fierce and implacable enemies, the Iroquois, it would be doing no violence to probability to suppose that the

word may have had an Iroquoian origin, particularly as the terminals *koui*, *koue* and *coui* (*Catara-coui*) are frequently met with in that language.

I rejoice that it is my good fortune to be in correspondence with one of that band of devoted missionaries who for centuries have evinced the zeal of the Master and the heroism of the martyrs in Christianizing and uplifting the lowly creatures of a common Creator, whose devotion and triumphs are a credit to humanity and civilization, and which are in such marked contrast with the sword of persecution and extermination so industriously and so fatally wielded by others.

I rejoice, moreover, in the knowledge that he to whom I appeal for aid "is now spending himself and being spent" in behalf of the remnant of that once famous tribe of Indians of which alone, among all others, the fierce and warlike Iroquois stood in dread, and upon whose territory they did not presume to encroach; the tribe whose headquarters were near the height of land whence flow the Yamaska, St. Francis, Chaudiere, Kennebec, Androscoggin, Connecticut and Missisquoi rivers to all points of the compass, and whose memory is now mainly recalled to the masses of the people who live in this territory by the names they gave to rivers, lakes and mountains, and to this an otherwise insignificant river!

Living as you do, reverend sir, among the descendants of these people, whose tongue and traditions you have made your own, in addition to your many other accomplishments and advantages, I am very confident that you can and will oblige me by supplying the information sought, whether the name be Abenakis, Iroquoian, or of other origin; whether the various



spellings have a common origin and signification, or, if different, what are the different meanings, etc., etc.

The offering which I enclose herewith comes from a not plethoric purse—I wish I could send you more—and I beg you to accept in the same kind spirit that prompts it, not as compensation, but as a testimony of my earnestness and appreciation of your anticipated courtesy and valuable aid.

Very sincerely yours,

GEORGE MCALEER.

To this letter I received prompt reply, of which the following is a translation, and which because of its interest and value as a picture of the home life at the beginning of the twentieth century of the remnant of a powerful and extensive Indian tribe, now rapidly nearing the sunset of their existence, I give in full:

ABENAKIS MISSION.

ST. THOMAS DE PIERREVILLE, P. Q., July 11, 1905.

*My dear Sir:* Your interesting letter and its contents have been received. I must say to you that the noble sentiments which you have expressed to me deserve to be preserved in the archives of the tribe. I thank you very cordially for the offering which you have made to me. I shall use it to advantage for my church which has so much need of it.

As to the etymology of the word Missisquoi, which is the subject of your inquiry to-day, it is difficult to trace it. It is Algonquian. The dictionaries of Father Aubery do not mention the word. I must request you to wait a little while. Chief Laurent, an old Abenakis, well informed and still a student, a man who

knows the language very well, having compiled and published an Indian dictionary, resides at this mission, but is now with other members of the tribe in the United States, whither they have gone to dispose of the products of their handiwork. This man, then, ought to be able to inform us of the origin and signification of the word. When he returns I will have him trace this word, and I doubt not but that he will find "the thread that ties up the skein."

I thank you again for your words of appreciation of my work among the Abenakis. I have been a missionary here for ten years. The Abenakis here number one thousand souls. They have occupied this mission since it was established in A. D. 1680. They speak French, English and Abenakis fluently, the last being the language in general use.

They are all in very moderate circumstances financially, and for the most part secure their means of livelihood by the sale of the products of their handiwork, such as canoes, snow-shoes, moccasins, baskets, etc.

Many have intermarried with the Canadians. They are intelligent, have an extraordinary ear for languages, have learned to play musical instruments, and are generally good singers. They are gentle, hospitable and sympathetic. They are not economical. They are inconstant and have incessant need of direction, of being pushed, rather. This mission is located in the most beautiful spot in the country, and they live happily in the midst of their poverty.

I have written to you in French, hoping that you understand this language. I have great difficulty in expressing myself in English. When next you write let me know if you understand me or if you prefer to have me write in English.

Will you accept, sir, the expression of my sincere gratitude, and believe me,

Most devotedly yours,

JOS. DE GONZAGUE,  
Missionary Priest.

Failing to get any information from those charged with the administration of the educational affairs of the Province of Quebec, or from others prominent in official station, in relation to the etymology of the name of one of the counties of the Province, or even the courtesy of a reply to my inquiries, I opened the following correspondence with the head of the Provincial Treasury Department, and for whose kindly interest and aid, so timely and exceptional, I take this opportunity to specially thank.

WORCESTER, MASS., February 10, 1905.

HON. J. C. McCORKILL,  
PROVINCIAL TREASURER,  
QUEBEC, P. Q.

*Dear Mr. McCorkill:* A native of old Missisquoi County, I am proud that one of her sons has at last attained to the proud distinction of head of the Financial Department of the Province, and this through the Liberal party to which my people have ever been devotedly loyal! *Ad multos Annos!* I recall with pleasure a dinner at which I met you some years ago in Bedford, but a little thing like that is not supposed to be much of an event in such a strenuous life as you are living, and so I suppose what is now a very pleasant memory with me has long since become a blank to you;

another proof, if one were wanting, that "things are only great by comparison."

Like other members of my family, I seek not selfish ends—nor ever have—but all the same, you can do me a great favor, and I trust you will not deem me presumptuous when I explain matters and relate the difficulties encountered.

For more years than span the life of a generation I have tried to stir up a little interest in matters historical in my native county; but alas! what a mountain of indifference and inertia have I encountered! At last a promising ray breaks upon the horizon; an evidence of life is given to prove that Missisquoi at last is awakening from the slumber of one hundred years and will yet claim her place historically among her sister counties of the Province. I am asked, as a contributor thereto, to prepare a paper on the name of the county,—its origin and signification.

To help matters to a successful issue, I am only too willing to spend time and money, but here, again, another alas! and alas!!—after spending both only to find other forbidding and disheartening obstacles lying athwart my path in the land of my nativity, and this where interest and co-operation should be manifested, and which serve in a measure to keep Quebec where she is in the race of enlightenment and progress.

To make a long story short, I have appealed to the authorities at Ottawa and met with ready response, but they are more familiar with the language and dialects of the western Indians than with those of the East, and, therefore, their information is not as definite and conclusive as it should be to cover the information sought.

The States of Vermont and New York have promptly

put their archives at my disposal. The Bureau of Ethnology and Philology at Washington gives prompt attention to my inquiries, busy college professors and individuals who have attained more than national celebrity, accord me every courtesy; but from the scholars and savants of Quebec, where doubtless the real information and data are lodged, never a word! Try as I may, my every effort is effectually blocked by culpable indifference and a deadly inertia. You will appreciate my dilemma all the more when I inform you, probably what you already know, that nearly every Indian tribe had a dialect of its own, and the word to express a meaning in one section would not be understood, or might have a different meaning, in another.

At Ottawa they have very full vocabularies of the Mississaugas, Cree, Ojibway and other more remote western tribes, of which, to some extent at least, they have made a specialty, doubtless owing to the fact that a large number of Indians still reside in the great northwest, and to their dealings and intercourse with them. The eastern Indians being to them a back number, so to speak, and rapidly vanishing, do not appeal to them with the force of personal interest as the western Indians do; consequently, as might be expected, their records in relation to the eastern tribes are not so full and complete. The Indians inhabiting the valley of the St. Lawrence and tributaries, especially on the southern side, were principally of the St. Francis and Abenakis tribes, who had a common dialect, which must be of record in the archives of Quebec, and I now make appeal to you to put me in the way of securing a key by means of which to effect an entrance thereto; or, what would please me much better, if I am not asking too much, is for you to get the

information for me, as I am sure you have an *entree* where I would only encounter the repelling sign, "No admission."

What I desire is to learn the etymology of the word Missisquoi in the Abenakis dialect of the Algonquian language. This I would like to get authoritatively, and surely some one in Quebec must be able to furnish it. If you cannot find time to secure it for me, will you kindly put me in the way of getting it for the benefit of the people of your old constituency who know so little of their own history, and thus greatly oblige,

Yours very respectfully,

GEORGE McALEER.

QUEBEC, P. Q., February 13th, 1905.

GEORGE McALEER, Esq., M.D.,

WORCESTER, MASS.

*My dear Dr. McAleer:* I received your letter of the 10th inst. yesterday. You are very complimentary indeed, but at the same time I am human enough to appreciate a kind word from an old Missisquoi boy after the ups and downs of political life which I have experienced since 1866.

I quite agree with you that our good people of Missisquoi do not appreciate the value of a history of the county. We have a historical society, but thus far it has not done much practical work. I understand that the present officers of the society are trying to get the people of the county to take a more lively interest in its history, but whether they will succeed or not, I do not know.

I forwarded the last page of your letter to Mr. Dionne, Librarian of Parliament, with a request to give me the information asked for with reference to

the word Missisquoi. He informed my secretary that he had received a letter from you, and was looking up the matter, and would write you shortly on the subject. Have you written to Dr. A. G. Doughty, Dominion Archivist, Ottawa? If not, please do so. He is the author of valuable Canadian historical works, and perhaps he will be able to assist in procuring the information which you ask for. I myself will drop him a line and ask him to interest himself in the etymology of the name of my native county.

If I can assist you in any other way in your researches and literary work, please do not hesitate to write me. Believe me, Yours faithfully,  
J. C. McCORKILL.

Acting upon the suggestion of Mr. McCorkill, I addressed the following letter to Dr. A. G. Doughty, Dominion Archivist, Ottawo, Ontario:

WORCESTER, MASS., U.S.A., Feb. 17, 1905.  
DR. A. G. DOUGHTY,  
DOMINION ARCHIVIST,  
OTTAWA, ONTARIO.

*My dear Sir:* I am very desirous to learn the etymology of the Indian place name Missisquoi, a bay at the northern end of Lake Champlain and of a county bordering thereon in the Province of Quebec. A native of this county, I am asked to prepare a paper setting forth the origin and signification of this word, and when and by whom it was bestowed upon the county.

This work I am glad to undertake, and I should like to be accurate in my statements and conclusions.

I applied for assistance to another native of Mis-

sisquoi, Hon. J. C. McCorkill, now treasurer of the Province of Quebec, and he suggested your name as one who would be likely to render valuable aid. I shall esteem it a very great favor if you will kindly furnish me with an explanation of the origin and signification of this word, and thanking you in anticipation therefor, I beg you to believe me,

Yours most respectfully,

GEORGE McALEER.

To this I received the following reply:

OFFICE OF THE ARCHIVIST.

OTTAWA, ONT., February 27, 1905.

GEORGE McALEER, M.D.,  
WORCESTER, MASS.

*Dear Sir:* I have made many inquiries concerning the etymology of the word "Missisquoi," but I have been unable to get anything very definite, either from books or from correspondents.

The word is no doubt of Algonquian origin, and it is evidently derived from *Misqui* or *Misqua*, the former meaning blood and the latter red.

Whether the term was applied to the water, meaning "the bloody river," or on account of a battle, or not, I am unable to say; or whether there may have been any peculiarity in the color of the water to suggest the term, is simply speculation. However, I think there is no question about the origin of the word.

I will keep the matter before me, and if I find out anything further I will let you know.

Yours faithfully,

*Arthur* ALFRED G. DOUGHTY.

P. S.—The reduplication of "is" is common, such as Miss is ippi, sipi being water, river.



I then replied to the letter of the Hon. J. C. McCorkill as follows:

WORCESTER, MASS., Feb. 27, 1905.

HON. J. C. McCORKILL,  
PROVINCIAL TREASURER.

*My dear Mr. McCorkill:* Your favor of February 13th came duly at hand, and should have had earlier answer, but I have been waiting to hear from Mr. Dionne, Librarian of Parliament. I had written to him some time before writing to you, and his reply has just come to hand. He is unable to help me very definitely in the matter of the etymology of the Indian word Missisquoi, and strange enough he does not suggest where this information may be obtained. Certainly there must be in the archives of Quebec, or in the records of some archæological, ethnological, philological, antiquarian or historical society of the Province, definite data bearing upon this subject, and it would seem that a man in Mr. Dionne's position, if he could not furnish the information sought, would refer me to the source whence it could be obtained. But so it is, and has been!

When the name was adopted for the bay and county there must have been consideration given to the matter, the whys and wherefores discussed, and reasons assigned, and of this doubtless record was made. Again, the Indian tongue is yet a living language at Lorette and other missionary stations where it would seem information might be obtained as to the origin and signification of this word, but, personally, I do not know any one there to whom to apply.

I hope you will not deem me importunate if I again appeal to you for aid.

The Missisquoi Historical Society shows evidence of life, and I feel it my duty, as a son of old Missisquoi, to render every possible aid in a work already too long delayed. Whatever I do I desire to have authentic, and hence this must be my excuse for again troubling you. I have written Mr. Doughty at Ottawa, but have not heard from him yet.

Bespeaking your kindly interest and aid, and thanking you in advance therefor, I am,

Very sincerely yours,

GEORGE McALEER.

QUEBEC, P. Q., March 2d, 1905.

GEORGE McALEER, Esq., M.D.,  
WORCESTER, MASS.

*My dear Sir:* I am in receipt of your letter of the 27th ulto. I will see what I can do to procure you the information which you seek about the word Missisquoi. The House is opening to-day, and it may be a few days before I can give the matter personal attention.

Yours truly,

J. C. McCORKILL.

WORCESTER, MASS., July 3, 1905.

HON. J. C. McCORKILL,  
WEST FARNHAM, P. Q.

*Dear Sir:* *In re* Missisquoi. In your last letter, which I received several months ago you informed me that I might expect to hear soon hereafter from you in reference to the etymology of this Indian place name, but I suppose your duties are so numerous and exacting that the matter has passed out of your mind. Supposing that now you have a little respite from the

duties of your office of Treasurer of the Province, I beg to again bring the matter to your attention. This name at first was variously spelled—some forty different ways being in evidence in various publications—but soon after it was given to the county bordering upon the bay of the same name, the spelling thereof became fixed in the present form; and it is a fair presumption that reasons for so doing were debated, considered and weighed, so that the orthography adopted might be as nearly correct as possible, and that they doubtless appeared in the official publications and documents of the time, and if so, they must be available in the archives of Quebec. As these surveys were made under the direction of the Crown Lands Department, it is very probable that some record of this will be found in that department. Then there are the ethnological, antiquarian, archaeological, historical and other societies whose records should furnish the information sought. Moreover, as the Abenakis is still a living language, and as linguists contend that the word is of Abenakis origin, it would seem that its derivation and meaning might be furnished by many who use this tongue could access to or communication be had with them.

As all these sources of information are too remote to be available by me, and as I am very anxious to get at the bottom facts in the case, I again venture to trespass upon your valuable time in the hope that I may secure your co-operation and aid to set at rest for all time the origin and signification of the name of our county, to which we owe loving allegiance and of which in many things we are so justly proud.

Craving your indulgence for this additional trespass

upon your valuable time and forbearance, and thanking you in advance for the courtesy of your consideration and assistance, I beg you to believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

GEORGE McALEER.

QUEBEC, July 11th, 1905.

GEORGE McALEER, M.D.,

WORCESTER, MASS., U.S.A.

*Dear Sir:* The Hon. Mr. McCorkill received communication of your favor of the 3d inst. last Thursday, but was too busy to give it his personal attention, so handed it to me to reply to.

Since then I have been endeavoring to get at the true etymology of the word "Missisquoi," and am furthering my inquiries by writing to-day to some Indian missionaries to obtain their opinions on the subject. When I have completed my research I will write you again giving you all the information I have been able to obtain.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

G. ALFRED MORRIS,  
Private Secretary.

WORCESTER, MASS., July 13, 1905.

G. ALFRED MORRIS, Esq., Private Secretary,  
QUEBEC, P. Q.

*Dear Sir:* I have your favor of July 11th, and note contents. I fear that in view of the many changes in the Indian languages and dialects, as well as in the orthography of the words and place names, the missionaries of to-day will not be able to throw much

light upon the etymology of the word Missisquoi as now spelled. Back in 1736, this word was spelled *Michi-koui*, and *koui* was the radical or root word of many Iroquoian names—*Hiro-koui*, *Catara-coui*, etc.—and it seems as if this same *koui* was the original terminal or root word of Missisquoi, as it so appears on old maps and in early publications, and it would very naturally have a different meaning from the *sisquoi* of the present form.

Various spellings were in vogue down to the time when Missisquoi County was surveyed, about A. D. 1800, and for some time afterward until it was officially established in the present form. Doubtless at that time reasons pro and con were given for this, and it seems as if the records thereof should be in the Crown Lands Department, in some of the publications of the time, or in the records of the Quebec Historical or other society.

Yours very truly,

GEORGE McALEER.

TREASURER'S OFFICE. TREASURY DEPARTMENT.  
PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

QUEBEC, July 22d, 1905.

GEORGE McALEER, Esq., M.D.,  
WORCESTER, MASS., U.S.A.

*Dear Sir:* I regret to say that up to the present time all our researches have failed to result in definite or official information as to the etymology of the word "Missisquoi." Enclosed I beg to hand you the record of our correspondence *re* this matter. From it you will gather that the consensus of opinion gives the meaning of the word as being "big woman." One

gentleman of our Public Works Department here upheld this opinion, and another gentleman of the Department of Lands, Mines and Fisheries, who has made considerable researches among the Indian names of the Province, also maintained that the word meant "big woman," and was of Cree origin, stating as his authorities Father Lacombe and Mgr. Lafleche, both Indian missionaries. The only reasonable objection that I can see against accepting this meaning as being the correct one is the well-known fact that the Indians invariably named rivers, lakes, mountains, etc., in a manner descriptive of the objects themselves, and it is hardly possible that Missisquoi Bay would have reminded them of a big woman.

As to the spelling of the word, different writers have apparently pleased themselves, but as far back as 1771-77 it was spelled in its present form by John Collins in his official map of the boundary line between the Province of Quebec and the State of New York.

I might just mention that the gentleman in the Department of Lands, Mines and Fisheries, of whom I made mention just now, told me that the only names of Abenakis origin are to be found in the St. Francis district, such as Magog, Memphremagog, Coaticook, etc.

As far as I can find, there are no records in the Department of Crown Lands setting forth the reasons for naming the county as at present styled.

Regretting our inability to secure for you any definite information on this subject, and trusting you will find the record of use, I have the honor to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

G. ALFRED MORRIS,  
Private Secretary.

The following letters addressed to Mr. G. Alfred Morris were transmitted to me by him with the foregoing letter:

THE MISSISQUOI COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

COWANSVILLE, QUE., 13th March, 1905.

G. ALFRED MORRIS, Esq., Secretary,  
QUEBEC.

*Dear Sir:* I have been hunting among my treasures for my historical scrap-book to give you the information required, but it has gone astray for the moment. I have written William Mead Pattison, Esq., of Clarenceville who wrote something about it in the *Star* a few years ago, to forward the meaning to Mr. McCorkill.

I remember that one meaning I had of Missisquoi was that it was an Indian word meaning "much water-fowl." I have also heard that it was an Indian word meaning "damn the Dutch," in allusion to alleged early settlers. This can scarcely be, because I think it had that name before the Dutch came. I incline to the opinion that "much water-fowl" is the true meaning, but if Mr. Pattison gives another I should be disposed to accept it, for he has given much time to local research.

It has been spelled various ways, even in early acts of Parliament. The present form of spelling is quite modern. It has been spelled Missiskouie, Missiskoui, Missisque, Missisko, and lastly Missisquoi. The first form, "Missiskouie," was employed by the late Leon Lalanne, the first notary public in this district, and who practiced here from 1799 to 1845.

Yours truly,

JNO. P. NOYES.

CLARENCEVILLE, P. Q., March 15, 1905.

*My dear Mr. McCorkill:* J. P. Noyes, P.S.C., our energetic President of the Missisquoi Historical Society, writes me to give you what I know of the origin of the name Missisquoi. Some years since I replied to an inquiry in the *Montreal Daily Star*, and my conclusions were that Missisquoi and Mississippi took their names from the Mississauga tribe of friendly Indians. I find in the report of Archives of Canada for the year 1899, page 45, that in the transactions for 1704, a council was held at Fort Pontchartrain, in which the Hurons, Miamis and four other tribes are named with the Mississaugas.

If I remember right, Fort Pontchartrain was near the mouth of the Mississippi. The tribe in question may have been nomadic. I find frequent reference to them along the borders of Vermont, as well as in this Province. In the former, we have Missisquoi River in Franklin County, Vermont.

This has always been the only conclusion I could come to, and it seems reasonable. As you know, the origin of our cities, towns and counties is first from the French, as the Hundred Associates awarded seigniorial grants to numbers of DeCalliere's regiment, Indians and English.

I am very glad to have the question raised, for it is time it was settled. I will write to the Secretary of the Vermont Historical Society, who has hitherto sent me any information or papers asked for. I will keep to work on the question till something more definite is arrived at, and will be pleased to advise you of the progress made. The Vermont Historical Society has over one thousand bound books in their library at Montpelier, and I wish our Missisquoi Society could



make a start in this direction. Would not the Quebec government give us a starter?

If we had "Parkman's History of Canada," I think likely the derivation of Missisquoi could be established. "Parkman's History of Canada" should be in the Parliamentary Library at Quebec, and should you find time to search for the origin of our county name and meet with success, I trust you will give our Historical Society the benefit of your research.

I wish a joint meeting of the Brome and Missisquoi societies could be held sometime during the summer at Cowansville or Sweetsburg. I would be glad to lend a helping hand. Am suggesting to our President and Secretary a meeting at *Isle-aux-noix*, and if it materializes, I will let you know the date and how to reach there.

With assurance of my high regards, I am,

Yours very truly,

WM. MEAD PATTISON.

HON. J. C. McCORKILL.

CLARENCEVILLE, P. Q., March 16, 1905.

*My dear Mr. McCorkill:* Since my letter of yesterday, I have been reading Sir J. G. Bourinot's work, "The Story of Canada," published by the Copp-Clarke Co., Limited, Toronto. Chapter VIII, "The Canadian Indians and the Iroquois," page 123, probably the Allegeni who gave their names to the Alleganies, etc., seems to strengthen my view that the Mississagnas may have left Missisquoi in our county, and the river and valley of that name in northern Vermont. The idea that Mississippi came from the same source is preposterous, as that name translated into English is mighty river or father of waters: Missouri, great muddy river.

As Missisquoi is evidently of Indian origin, the question comes up as to its meaning. The name must have been adopted in 1797, as it then appears in the "Act for Dividing the Province of Lower Canada into Counties." (Given in historical notes in the News of Feb. 24.)

What we want to get at is the derivation of Missisquoi—which is clearly a name of Indian origin. The people of northern Vermont should be as inquisitive on this point as we are, and I will write to-day to the secretary of the Vermont Historical Society, also a professor in the University of Vermont, Burlington, Vt. Am bound to stick to it, and with your and Mr. Noyes' co-operation, I think I will strike bed pan in time. If you could find in some public library, T. H. Morgan's book, "The League of the Iroquois and Braves, and Home Life of the Aborigines," possibly some information could be got out of it.

I have a book, viz., "History of the Indians," but as I cannot find it in my library, conclude it is lent! Will be spending some time in Montreal early in the summer, and will hunt up some work on the aborigines in Redpath, lot 22. or at Frazier Institute. If I make any progress in the matter will let you know.

Yours very truly,

WILLIAM MEAD PATTISON.

HON. J. C. McCORKILL.

QUEBEC, P. Q., March 18, 1905.

WILLIAM MEAD PATTISON, Esq.,

CLARENCEVILLE, P. Q.

*Dear Sir:*—I beg to acknowledge receipt of your favors of the 15th and 16th insts. relating to the origin

of the name Missisquoi. Please accept my sincere thanks for the trouble you have given yourself, and the information contained in your letters. Any further information you can give me will be highly appreciated.

Yours very truly,

J. C. McCORKILL.

QUEBEC, March 20, 1905.

THE LIBRARIAN OF  
THE MCGILL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY,  
MONTREAL, P. Q.

*Dear Sir:*—I am desirous of obtaining for my Minister, the Hon. Mr. McCorkill, Provincial Treasurer, the etymology of the word "Missisquoi," the name of one of the counties comprising the Eastern Townships. Any information you can give me will be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you in anticipation, on behalf of the Minister, I am,

Yours sincerely,

G. ALFRED MORRIS,  
*Private Secretary.*

OFFICE OF THE ARCHIVIST,

OTTAWA, ONT., March 21, 1905.

*My dear Minister:* About the same time that I received your inquiry *re* "Missisquoi," I received a letter from Dr. McAleer of Worcester, Mass., on this same subject.

I made my inquiries at the time, and wrote to several priests whom I thought would know something about the origin of the word, but without success. I then looked up all the Indian dictionaries, and from this

the word appears to be Algonquin, and I gave Dr. McAleer the result of my investigation.

In Algonquin *Miskwaw* means red, and *Miskwi*, blood. I find that syllables such as "is" are often duplicated in words, and by this process Mis (is) kwi gives the word. I know nothing about the application of the word to the district or to the river, possibly it may have been given to commemorate some bloody engagement.

The Abenakis were a branch of the Algonquins, and inhabited St. Francis District in quite early times.

I have looked up everything we have here, but there is no further light to be thrown on the question. The spelling varies: Missisquoi, Missiskwi, Misisskwa, etc., in the early records.

Pardon me for not writing before.

Yours faithfully,

A. G. DOUGHTY.

ONTARIO LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY.

TORONTO, ONT., March 22, 1905.

G. ALFRED MORRIS, Esq.,

QUEBEC, P. Q.

*Dear Sir:* In reply to your letter, I am not a deep Indian language scholar, but I think the etymology of "Missisquoi" is clear. In all the Algonquin languages, "missi" means great, much, big, many. The last syllable I take to be a French or English attempt to render "ikwew" a woman, usually a "squaw." The whole word would mean "the great woman."

I write this subject to correction at the hands of anybody.

Yours faithfully,

AVERN PARDOE.

MCGILL UNIVERSITY LIBRARY.

MONTREAL, P. Q., March 28th, 1905.

*Dear Sir:* I duly received a note from your private secretary, dated March 20th, asking if I could obtain for you the etymology of the word *Missisquoi*. It has taken some time to get any information about it, the dictionaries of Indian languages which we have being apparently insufficient for the purpose. I have, however, corresponded with the Rev. Ernest M. Taylor, Secretary of the Brome County Historical Society, and also with Dr. David Boyle of the Provincial Museum, Toronto. From them I obtained the following information: Dr. Boyle and Mr. Ambrey White, a friend of his, think that the word is of Cree origin, although they cannot understand how Cree dialect should have been used as far east as Missisquoi. If the word is of Cree origin, its etymology would be as follows: *Mishi*—big, and *Ishkeew*—woman; so that the word would mean *big woman*. This, however, seems neither an appropriate nor a probable derivation, and the following seems to me greatly to be preferred, namely, treating the word as of Abenakis origin, which would give it the meaning of much water-fowl. This latter derivation is what Mr. Taylor gives. He says the name has been given to both the north and south branches of the river. The first starts from a small lake or pond at Eastman village, and the south branch comes in from Vermont. These join at Mansonville Station, in Potton, P. Q., and the bay on Lake Champlain, into which the river empties, also bears the name of Missisquoi. The representatives of the earliest families state that the wild ducks and wild geese were very abundant. The word has been spelled Missisco and Missiskoui. Do you not think that this latter

derivation is at least a probable one? I have been able to obtain nothing further in connection with the word.

I remain, dear sir,

Faithfully yours,

C. H. GOULD,

University Librarian.

THE HONORABLE

THE PROVINCIAL TREASURER,

QUEBEC, P. Q.

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.

BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY.

WASHINGTON, D. C., April 15, 1905.

*Dear Sir:* Your letter of April 13, making inquiries regarding the Indian term Missisquoi, is at hand. Without knowing the history of the term, it is impossible to give a full and satisfactory definition; but it is an Algonquin word, and, as it stands, would seem to be made up of the two elements, *missi*, "great, large, much," and *assisku*, "mud, soft clay." The first part of the word corresponds to the first syllables in our two words, Mississippi and Missouri. The second part corresponds more closely to the second part of the word Missouri, which signifies turbid; the second part of the word Missisquoi signifying, however, simply soft clay or mud.

Very truly yours,

W. H. HOLMES,

Chief.

MR. G. ALFRED MORRIS,

TREASURER'S OFFICE,

QUEBEC, CANADA.

QUEBEC, P. Q., April 18th, 1905.

*Dear Sir:* I beg to acknowledge receipt of your esteemed favor of the 15th inst. giving me your definition of the Indian word "Missisquoi," and to heartily thank you on behalf of the Hon. Mr. McCorkill for your courteous and prompt attention to my request for information on this subject.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

G. ALFRED MORRIS,  
Private Secretary.

W. H. HOLMES, Esq.,  
SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION,  
BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY,  
WASHINGTON, D. C., U.S.A.

QUEBEC, July 11th, 1905.

REV. L. S. GRANGER, S. J.,  
CAUGHNAWAGA, P. Q.

*Rev. and dear Sir:* I have received your name indirectly through Mr. Tancred Rinfret of Quebec, as being one who would likely be able to give me some information on the subject of the etymology of the word "Missisquoi," the name of one of the counties comprising the Eastern Townships. Any information you can give me will be greatly appreciated.

Thanking you in anticipation of a reply, on behalf of my Minister, the Hon. Mr. McCorkill, Provincial Treasurer, I have the honor to be, reverend and dear sir,

Your obedient servant,

G. ALFRED MORRIS,  
Private Secretary.

KANAWAKE, P. Q., July 13, 1905.

MR. ALFRED MORRIS,  
SECRETARY OF THE BUREAU OF THE  
PROVINCIAL TREASURER.

*Sir:* I regret very much not to be able to give you any definite information in regard to the word Missisquoi. As yet, I have studied only the Iroquois language, and, judging by the spelling, this word does not seem to be Iroquois. That is all that I can say.

In changing the manner of writing Indian words to their way, the whites have caused much difficulty. To cite only one example: In the word "Caughnawaga," how now to recognize the Iroquois word "Kauawake," which means "by the rapids."

The Parliament at Ottawa have decided to print on the new cards "Kanawake" instead of Caughnawaga, a word coined by the Bostonians.

Hoping that this example will illustrate, please accept my respectful salutations.

Your most devoted servant,

L. S. GRANGER, S. J.

CAUGHNAWAGA, July 15, 1905.

G. ALFRED MORRIS, Secretary.

*Dear Sir:* I received your favor of the 11th current. As it stands, "Missisquoi" is not an Iroquoian word, but an old Indian, to whom I mentioned it, said that it is an Algonquin word—"Tsisquoi"—stop. When I was among the Crees, I used to say often: "Tsisquoi! tsisquoi!" "Stop! stop!" he said.

The Iroquois have no "m" in their language, but Algonquins have it. So "Missisquoi" may be of their



tongue. I confess that I am not competent to judge of that.

Respectfully yours,

ART. MELANÇON, S. J.

Hoping at last to get information that would tend to harmonize the many conflicting interpretations and explanations given, and which seemed to multiply and mystify as my investigations proceeded, I next addressed the following letter to the editor of the *American Anthropologist*:

WORCESTER, MASS., July 24, 1905.

EDITOR AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

*Dear Sir:* I am very desirous to learn the origin and signification of the Indian place name now spelled Missisquoi, but which has undergone many orthographical changes, some of the earlier forms being Michisconi, Missisknoos, Missiskone, Missesco, etc. This is the name of a river in northern Vermont, and of a bay on the northern end of Lake Champlain which extends into the Province of Quebec.

Authorities, living and dead, differ much as to its origin and signification. I am very anxious to have the matter authoritatively and definitely determined, and I appeal to you for assistance. Will you not kindly render me this service or put me in communication with some one who will? I will gladly make compensation for such service.

Craving pardon for this trespass upon your valuable time, and thanking you in advance for the courtesy of your consideration and aid, I am,

Very respectfully yours,

GEORGE McALEER.

To which I received the following reply:

NEW YORK, N. Y., July 26, 1905.

*Dear Sir:* Your favor directed to Washington and kindly remailed to me by the editor of the *American Anthropologist*, is just received. I have never taken any interest in the study of Indian onomatology, since it is very unsatisfactory.

The Jesuit missionaries say that the word *Missisquoi* is a corruption of Cree *Mis iskew* (pronounced Miss-is-kway-oo), "big woman," but I have seen no reason given for its application.

The spelling *Missisquoi* is French, and formerly in that language *oi* was pronounced like the present French close *é*, and perhaps may be so still in Canada. If the above explanation is correct, the word would be from *Mis*, "large," "big," "great," and *Iskewe*, "woman."

Very truly yours,

W. R. GERARD.

DR. GEORGE MCALEER.

I next addressed the following letter to the Statistical Department of the Government of the Dominion of Canada:

WORCESTER, MASS., August 28, 1905.

MR. GEORGE JOHNSON, Statistician,  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,  
OTTAWA, ONT.

*Dear Sir:* If the following information can be supplied by your office, I shall esteem it a very great favor to be put in possession of the same.

In what year was the County of *Missisquoi*, one of the counties constituting the Eastern Township, so

called, in the Province of Quebec, surveyed and established as a county?

What event or events led up to its survey and establishment? i. e., was it surveyed and established by the government with a view to its disposal as farms to colonists and settlers, as a whole to an association or corporation of land speculators, or as a benefaction or benefactions for military service? Who bestowed the name Missisquoi thereon? Why was this name selected? Who or what body of men officially sanctioned its use?

Craving your indulgence for this trespass upon your valuable time, and thanking you in advance for the courtesy of your consideration and aid, I am,

Yours most respectfully,

GEORGE MCALEER.

To which I received the following reply:

DOMINION OF CANADA.  
STATISTICAL BRANCH,  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

OTTAWA, 30th August, 1905.

GEORGE MCALEER, Esq., M.D.,  
WORCESTER, MASS.

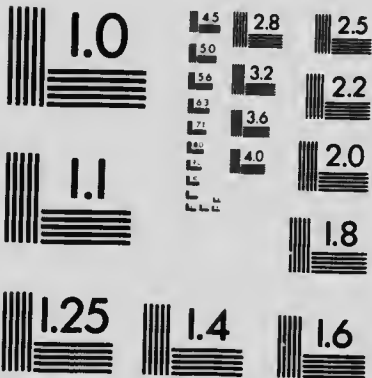
*Dear Sir:* In answer to yours of the 28th inst., I have to say: 1st. The County of Missisquoi appears first in the census of 1827. It does not appear in that of 1825. In this last mentioned census (1825) Bedford is given with a population of 29,735. In the census of 1827, Bedford disappears and Missisquoi appears with a population of 7,766.

There was evidently a redistribution of that part of



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the Eastern Townships about 1826, for census and other purposes.

By Chap. 73, 9 George IV (1828-'29), the boundaries of electoral divisions were set forth and Missisquoi (spelled Missiskoui), it was then decreed, "should consist of the township of Sutton, the Seigniorie of St. Armand, and the townships of Dunham and Stanbridge."

2d. I have the following note on the second point mentioned in your letter. At the epoch of the cession of Canada to the English Sovereign, the greater part of the region now called the "Eastern Townships" was the property of the Crown, the grants made by the French King, having been limited, for the most part to the seigniories along the river St. Lawrence and the principal tributaries.

The British administration undertook, at the beginning of its régime, the colonization of the wild lands. Its attention was early directed to the solitudes, which, cleared and settled, now form the Province of Ontario, where the virgin forests were surveyed and divided into regular portions under the name of townships after the mode adopted in the neighboring states.

Later on, the same surveyors were directed to the "Bois Franc" country, and by 1792 the first official surveys were completed in the wilds situated between the seigniories on the river bank and the boundary line, and called "townships in the east," as the first were "townships in the west." The first grant was made by Lord Dorchester in 1796, that of 40,895 acres in Dunham township, to Thomas Dunn.

Thomas Dunn was a speculator and he and others secured large areas which, later on, led to much dispute, the causes of which you will find set forth in

appendix No. 2, W. to K. K., Journals of Canada, Vol. X, 1851.

3d. Who bestowed the name Missisquoi, or as spelled in the Statute of IX, George IV, Missiskoui?

There has been considerable controversy over this. I am assured by competent authorities that it is neither an Algonquin, a Huron nor an Iroquois word.

If that is so, then it must be an Abenakis word, like Megantic, Memphremagog and one or two others. If Abenakis, it must have been given by one of the Abenakis tribe of savages pushed back from the Atlantic shore by the English settlements of Massachusetts, etc., and forced by the policy of the New Englanders to form alliance with the French.

An Abenakis word, compounded, would, like the other Indian tribal place-names, have *Missi*, to mean "big," "large," but big what? In the case of Missisquoi, my friend, Rev. E. Taylor of Knowlton, writing to me only a week or ten days ago, thinks *quoi* comes from *quequecum*, which means duck, so Missisquoi would mean "much duck."

Others think they see in *quoi*, or rather *squoi*, a resemblance to the Indian word from which we take the word squaw. Hence that Missisquoi means "big woman."

My own view is that the Abenakis first found lodgment along the banks of the river, which being full of large rocks or boulders, they called Missisquoi because of the number and size of the rocks in the river bed. The name was later on transferred to the bay, and thence naturally to the county when it was created.

Trusting that the above will be of service, I am,

Yours very truly,

GEORGE JOHNSON,  
Statistician.

Judge Girouard's article was next received and is herewith reproduced:

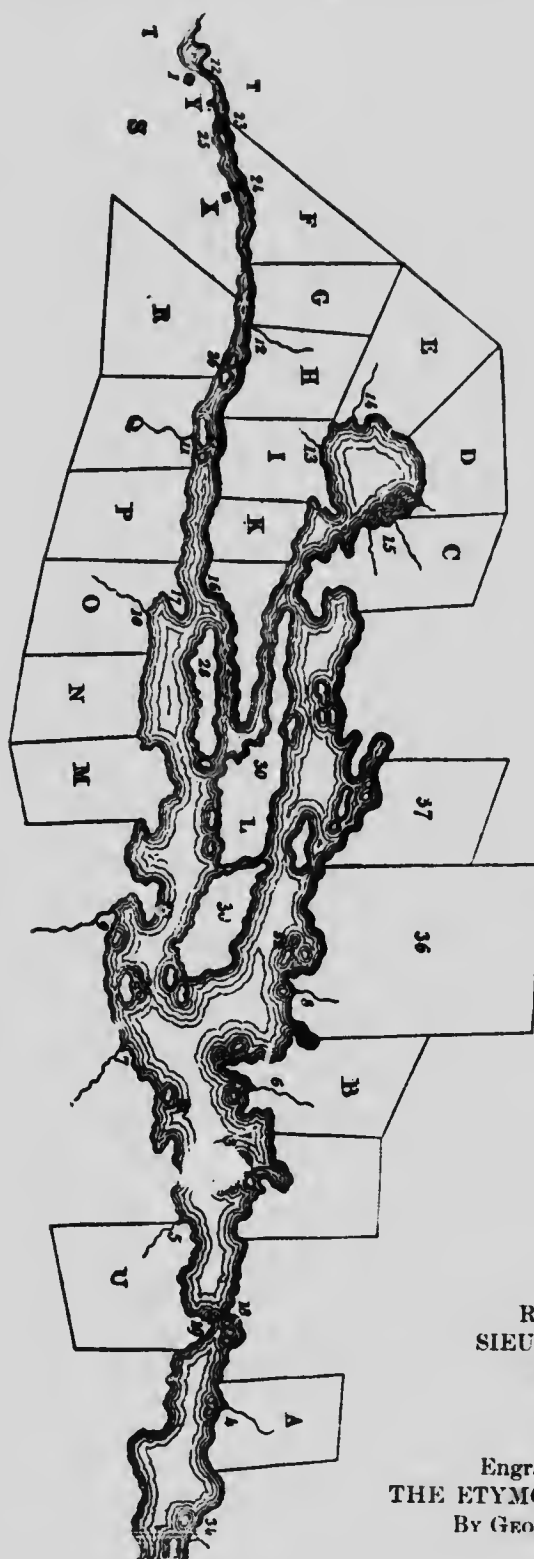
#### THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD MISSISQUOI.

(Translated from "Le Bulletin des Recherches Historiques.")

When in 1903 I announced in the preface of my "Supplement to Lake St. Louis" that I was withdrawing from the field of historical research—and I may explain here that it was in order to devote myself exclusively to the preparation of my ever-increasing judicial work—I was far from foreseeing that I would so soon return to it, in an attempt to discover the origin of an Indian name, practically insignificant, but which seems, however, to have excited the interest of the antiquaries on the other side of the frontier for many months. I could not resist the pleasure of rendering a service to an enquirer of Worcester, Mass., who asked me the etymology of the word Missisquoi, a name given to a little river in the northern part of the State of Vermont, to a bay of Lake Champlain, and to a county in the Province of Quebec. Everyone knows that it is Indian, like the origin of the names, which have been preserved, of many rivers, lakes and localities, for there is no doubt but that the indigenous races had a geography of their own, in fact, it is probable that each nation had its own, going back to an antiquity more or less remote. Now that the languages of the Indian tribes are dying out, slowly, it is true, but nevertheless surely—the Hurons being a striking example, as we shall soon see—the unpublished dictionaries (French-Indian and vice-versa) of the old missionaries, among others that of Father Aubéri, S. J., missionary of the Abenakis of Saint



# FRENCH GRANTS OF LAND ON LAKE CHAMPLAIN



- A Contrecour
- B de la Periere
- C de Beauvois
- D Lusignan
- E Daine
- F Bleury
- G Sabervois
- H de Noyan
- I Focault
- K Lafontaine
- L Contrecour
- M St. Vincent
- N I. Jauchetiere
- O P.
- P Beaujeu
- Q La Ronde
- R de Lery
- S Longueil
- T Mrs. Hertelle
- U Robert
- X Fort St. Jean
- Y Fort St. Therèse

## RIVERS

- 4 Aux Loutres
- 5 Boquette
- 6 Cuinousqui
- 7 Au Sable
- 8 a la Mouelle
- 9 St. Amant
- 10 Chazy
- 11 a la Cole
- 12 du Sud
- 13 Brochette
- 14 du Rocher
- 15 Michiscouy
- 16 Point a l'Algonquin

Reproduced from  
SIEUR AUGER'S MAP  
Made in 1732.

Engraved expressly for  
THE ETYMOLOGY OF MISSISQUOI  
By GEORGE MCALEER, M.D.



François du Lac from 1708 to 1755, and other similar ones of the missionaries of different tribes, are of great value from an historical point of view, and before long they will be indispensable. The Canadian public has always been so indifferent with regard to the aborigines of this country, that Father Burtin, the missionary of Sault Saint Louis, an expert in Indian languages, could not find a printer for his history of the Indians of his mission—a mission so closely connected with that of Montreal; he has told me of this himself. The Department of Archives really should buy these precious manuscripts.

From what nation does the name Missisquoi come? To what dialect does it belong?

In order to facilitate the solution of the problem, I first searched for the different authentic spellings of the name. The archives and the old maps reproduced by Justin Winsor and Faillon,—among others a map of 1660 (3 Faillon, 124) which shows plainly Lake Champlain, and its actual name,—make no mention of Missisquoi Bay, although it is clearly traced thereon. The oldest document that speaks of it is the concession made on the 6th of April, 1733, to the Sieur de Lusignan of a seigniory at Missiskouy Bay (la Baie de Missiskouy), (Titres Seigneuriaux, t. Ier, p. 164). The name, however, must have been known by the French long before this. Another official document, written in the English language, reproduced verbatim by Mr. John P. Noyes, K. C., president of the Historical Society of the County of Missisquoi, in his interesting study on the "Early Settlers in the District of Bedford," pages 15 and 16, mentions Missisquie Bay. In 1815, Bouchette, in the "Topographical Description of Lower Canada," pages 185 to 190, spells it Missis-

qui Bay. This was the English pronunciation of the old name Missiskouy. Furthermore, in the old Revised Statutes of Lower Canada, of 1845, there may be found a law fixing the limits of the electoral divisions of Lower Canada, passed in 1828 (9 Geo. IV, c. 73), where the County of Missiskoui is described. Finally, in 1853, at the time of the division of Lower Canada into districts, it may be observed that the orthography was changed, and the Legislature, for the first time, I think, adopted the spelling which has been invariably used since, namely, Missisquoi. This is sanctioned by the Consolidated Statutes of Lower Canada of 1860, the British North America Act, 1867, and all the dictionaries, maps and books of modern geography. Evidently they adopted a French spelling, which agrees perhaps better with the euphony of the word.

But what is the meaning of the name? Being a stranger to Indian dialects, I made inquiries of the missionaries of the different tribes of the Province, and of the antiquaries of the district, and it will be seen that it was not an easy task to reach a satisfactory solution. I asked of them all the origin of the name Missisquoi or Missiskouy. My first reply was from Mr. John P. Noyes of Cowansville. It is dated the 23d of May, 1905. I will quote it word for word:

"I am unable to give an absolutely definite answer to your query as to the origin and meaning of 'Missisquoi.' I have been trying for some time to run it to earth, and have pretty well satisfied myself, but in such matters one must have an open mind. When one has to rely largely on tradition, there is always an element of doubt, even in the best considered theory.

"The definitions given allege Indian origin, but Indian is an indefinite term. One wants to know the

particular dialect and tribal peculiarities. The locality of Missisquoi Bay, from which the county is named, was frequented by the Iroquois and Algonquins, and possibly by the Hurons, and must have been christened something by them. I am told that the first syllable of Mississippi and Missouri rivers—Indian names—means water, and if true helps my belief as to the name of Missisquoi.

"The definitions, so far as I know, are two—at least those advocated in print: 1. An Indian name meaning 'much water-fowl.' 2. An Indian name meaning 'old squaw.' I accept the first, 'much water-fowl.'

"Missisquoi Bay, from the earliest days, was, and is, famous for the large quantity and variety of its water-fowl, being on the highway of the migratory fowls between our north and their southern winter home. Its sheltered waters make a safe, natural resting place. Indian names are largely adopted from their habits as to eating and war. Missisquoi Bay was a place to which they resorted to hunt and fish, according to tradition. It seems quite natural, and according to Indian traits, that the name 'much water-fowl' should have been given to a place where game was so abundant. The early settlers relate that the flocks of fowl at certain seasons near the bay were so large and dense that the sun would be obscured during their flight as though darkened by a cloud. There were no natural marks about the bay of such distinctive character as to suggest a name. In addition to the foregoing, a very old man of the county wrote in a local paper some years ago that he was taught some sixty years before that 'Missisquoi' was an Indian name meaning 'much water-fowl.'" Thus we have tradition, presumptions and Indian traits in accord.

"To the definition 'old squaw,' I attach no importance. I can find neither tradition nor circumstance for its support. It may have been inferred from a broad pronunciation, Misses-Squaw —misses being the ordinary country name for mistress or madam, and therefore presumed old. It could just as well mean miss or young squaw. But the spelling of to-day is not that of the old time. Three-quarters of a century ago, and before, and even for some time after, it was spelled 'Missiskoni.' Papers in the Dominion archives show that in 1785 it was spelled 'Missisquie.' It is only about half a century since the present name received a statutory endorsement. I have no access to the archives, nor anything else, to show what Missisquoi Bay was called during the French régime. Being on the war route between the St. Lawrence and the New England settlements, it must have had a distinctive name.

"I have hoped many times that a query like yours would be sent to that excellent publication, the 'Bulletin des Recherches Historiques.' I did not dare to put my feeble French on record in a periodical submitted to so many scholarly eyes."

And recently, in the *News*, published in St. John, P. Q., of the 23d of June, 1905, Mr. Noyes, under the pen name of "Wayside Warbler," adds:

"There is an old text-book recently placed in my hands which tells a story of its own. It was printed in the Eastern Townships, in its youthful days, as a text-book for the English schools of the Province, and its cover bears the title, 'Geography and History of Lower Canada, Designed for the Use of Schools, by Zadok Thompson, A.M., late Preceptor of Charleston

(Hatley) Academy, Stanstead and Sherbrooke, L. C., Published by Walton & Gaylord, 1835.' . . . In that geography the County of Missisquoi is called Missisko, as to which I find the following footnote touching upon a still debatable matter: 'The orthography of this word is very unsettled. It has been written Missisquoi, Missisqui, Missique, Missiskoni and Missisco; but it is, I believe, pretty uniformly pronounced as if written Missiseo, and this I consider the preferable way of spelling it, because it is most easily pronounced, is shorter and most conformable to the original, if, as has been said, the name is derived from the two Indian words, Missi—much, and Kisko—water-fowl. The name Missiskisko is said to have been given by the natives to the bay and river on account of the abundance of water-fowl in and about there, and Missiskisko was at length shortened to Missiseo. It afterwards became the name of a county.' The meaning of the name, add. Mr. Noyes, given by him is also borne out by the traditions of the inhabitants."

Next, Mr. Ernest Racicot, K. C., of Sweetsburg, another enthusiastic delver into the past, wrote to me the same day:

"From what I have often heard, the word Missisquoi means 'much water-fowl.' Even to-day the wild geese and ducks—while migrating from south to north in the spring, and from north to south in the autumn—make a stop at Missisquoi Bay, where hunters gather to wait for them. Formerly when the surroundings of the bay were wooded, and were only frequented now and again by Indians, these birds must have gone there, and stayed there during their voyage, in much greater numbers. I have reason to believe that 'mis'

or 'missis' means 'water,' as in Mississippi and Missouri. The syllable 'quoi' (which has been written in many ways, as 'koi,' 'kow,' 'quoi,' etc.) resembles 'quoi' of the name Iroquois. All this is Indian. It is probable that before the arrival of the French at the beginning of the seventeenth century, all the lake (now Champlain), south of the bay, must have had an Indian name, probably Missisquoi, or some name like it. The name of this country must come from the old name of the bay."

On the other hand, an old missionary of Sault Saint Louis, who is familiar with the Iroquois tongue, has written me that the name is not of Iroquois origin, and that he believes it to be Algonquin.

Another missionary who has been with the Algonquians of Oka for a great number of years, replied to me that Missisquoi ('read it,' he remarked, 'Missiskaw,' by reason of its etymology') is not Algonquin.

"In Algonquin," he said, "the root word 'Mis' means big, great, enormous. Mis-abe, a big man, a giant; Mis-abos, a big hare, an ass, because of its ears; Misisipi, big river, Mississippi (Chateaubriand writes it 'Meschacébè' and translates 'Father of the Waters,' wherein he is mistaken). The Indians inhabiting the banks of the Ottawa used to call it 'Kissisipi,' the Grand River, one which receives many tributaries. Not far from Ottawa we find the little 'Missisipins,' as we find 'La Belle Rivière,' Ohio, in Iroquois.

"What does the second syllable of Missi-skaw mean? Should one see the word squaw, woman, preserved there in English, and draw conclusions that there was at some time some extraordinary woman at Missisquoi? Who will tell us? I dare not pause at this hypothesis."



I then turned to the missionary of the Hurons of Lorette, near Quebec, who quickly informed me that his Hurons had completely forgotten their language and only spoke French, but he referred me to a priest, born a Huron, who lived at Mastii, near Quebec. This latter answered that the word was not Huron. Without losing courage, I then sought information from Father de Gonzague, missionary of the Abenakis at St. Thomas de Pierreville. Their village is not very far from the bay in question. Here is what he wrote:

“The origin of the word Missisquoi is ‘Masipskoik,’ a word that means a place where there are boulders, more especially *Pointe de cailloux*’ (‘Boulders Point’).

“We have enquired among our old Abenakis, and they all agree upon this interpretation as a thing known among them for a long time.”

Mr. Noyes, to whom I communicated this interpretation, is not at all convinced that it is correct, and he prefers the one which he has adopted—“much water-fowl.” “Still,” says he, “I have an open mind.” He adds that there are no boulders about the bay, but that quarries, which were worked for construction purposes in Montreal, are to be found up to the water’s edge. Finally, however, he admits that the Missisquoi River is full of boulders, rapids and falls.

This fact seems to me to settle the question. It is the river which has given its name to the bay and to the county. So one more tradition is exploded, like so many others, for example, the one that stated that La Salle had built a stone fort at Lachine, whose ruins could yet be seen. Moreover, the tradition of seventy-five years, maintained by Mr. Noyes, is far from being

an ancient one, and, therefore, quite insufficient to explain a name that goes back nearly two centuries. Finally it is disposed of by reason of what we know of the Indian languages.

D. GIROUARD.

#### ETYMOLOGY OF THE NAME MISSISQUOI.

##### (*Second Article.*)

(Translated from "Le Bulletin des Recherches Historiques.")

Since my first article was published in *Le Bulletin*, I have received a long and interesting letter in French from Mr. Joseph Laurent, a former chief of the Abenakis of St. François, near St. Thomas de Pierreville, from which I take the following passage, which I believe is sufficient for the purpose:

"I regret exceedingly that your letter of June 14th last, in reference to the name 'Missisquoi,' has been so long unanswered, but it is due to my absence in the White Mountains, N. H., for nearly five months. But, as we generally say, 'better late than never.'

"In giving you the meaning asked of the name 'Missisquoi,' I fear you will not be more satisfied than I am myself about a word spelt in so many different ways, 'Missiquoi' and 'Missiquoy,' according to your letter<sup>1</sup>, and 'Messisco,' 'Messisquoi' and 'Missisquoy' and 'Missiscoug' according to Dr. George McAleer's<sup>2</sup> letter from Worcester, dated 25th September last.

"In fact, this makes six different ways of spelling, adding my own way, 'Messipskoik'—as that name was

<sup>1</sup> My letter said *k* and not *q*, in the last word.

<sup>2</sup> The American enquirer referred to in my first article.

used over sixty years ago, and whose syllables were 'Mes-sips-ko-ik'—all distinctly pronounced, the first *s* in *Mes* like all the others, for in our language all the letters are sounded, that is, none are used without a reason.

"According to the modern language of the Abenakis, we call that place Mas-sips-ko-ik, Massipskoik, which we pronounce Mas-seps-ko-wik, meaning *where flint is to be found* (Mr. Laurent using the English language).

"I have never been there, but I am told that flint is always to be found at the said place."

On the 14th December, instant, Chief Laurent writes me again what he calls his last word. He points out what he stated in his previous letter, that the Abenakis language has undergone so many modifications within the last century that it is almost impossible to give the meaning of names now known to be of Abenakis origin. He concludes by stating that the word "Mas-sipskouik," meaning where flint is to be found, is very much like "Massapskouik," "Massapskouikak," meaning where boulders or big stones, *de grandes pierres*, exist, thus leaving the origin and meaning in doubt.

Finally, on the 19th December, I received from Mr. Laurent a little vocabulary composed and published by him in 1884 (printed by Brousseau of Quebec), the title being "New Familiar Abenakis and English Dialogues." No special reference or mark is made, but on perusing it, I found at page 216, under the heading of "Etymology of Indian Names by which are designated certain tribes, towns, rivers, lakes," etc., the following illustration: "Missisquoi comes from Masips-koik (Abenakis), where there is flint."

<sup>1</sup> I am informed by Dr. McAleer that no flint exists at that place.

Chief Laurent agrees with Father de Gonzague that the etymology of the word "Missisquoi" is Abenakis. This result is not surprising when it is remembered that all the Indians of the New England provinces<sup>1</sup>, now nearly extinct, spoke the Abenakis idiom, which was common to all, except the Micmacs<sup>2</sup>. The Indians gave names to a large number of localities, rivers, lakes, mountains, villages, lands, settlements and countries, which are indicated partly by him and have been preserved to the present day, although in most instances more or less disfigured. The word Missisquoi is one of them, although, according to Chief Laurent in his first letter, it means nothing in Abenakis, probably for the reason that it is Frenchified and that the "q" is unknown in that idiom and is always replaced by "k," says Abbé Maurault, page 11. In the grant made to Mr. de Lusignan in 1733, Missisquoi is spelled with a "k" and not a "q." In the ratification of the same by the King in 1735, it is likewise spelled (Can. Ar., 1904, p. 218). We are told by both Mr. de Gonzague and Mr. Laurent that the bay in question is now known to the Abenakis Indians by the name of "Massipskoik," and some sixty years ago by that of "Messipskoik," which means "where flint (*pierre à fusil*) is to be found," and possibly at one time "Massapskouik" or "Massapskuikak," where boulders or large stones exist. The meaning of the word sixty years ago varies a little from that of Father de Gonzague;

<sup>1</sup> An old map of Canada, published by P. de Rochemonteix, S. J., in Vol. I of *Les Jesuites en la Nouvelle France*, shows a vast country, situated to the southeast of Lake Champlain, as being that of the Abenakis.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. des Abenakis*, 1866, by Abbé Maurault, one of their missionaries for over thirty years, at pages 6, 9, 10.

but it is admitted by both that it refers to some kind of stone and not to "water-fowl," and that possibly it meant boulders or large stones. Mr. de Gonzague, in reply to a query from me, has just answered that in his former letter published, he merely expressed the opinion of the most competent Indians then in the village. Mr. de Gonzague admits that he does not consider himself as being acquainted with their language, although it is known that he has been their missionary for many years and is Abenakis by birth. At the time of Mr. Maurault, 1840-1871, the religious service and instruction were conducted in the Indian tongue. For that reason many old Indians are living who well understand the dialect. Mr. Laurent remarks in his last letter that the Indian tongue is yet the prevailing language of the tribe, although familiar with both French and English. Mr. de Gonzague adds that he has no doubt that the spelling and interpretation given by Mr. Laurent are correct. He looks upon him as a reliable authority, familiar with the dialect and its history, and judging from his letters and book he knows what he is talking about. It is evident, however, that he has a predilection for the definition in his book. Taking the conclusion arrived at by the old chief, the French, naturally struck by the sound of the word "Messipskoik" or "Massapskouik," soon made "Missiskouy," "Missiskoui" and finally "Missisquoi," probably not troubling themselves about its meaning<sup>1</sup>. It was natural that they should take the name from these Indians who, under various names,

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<sup>1</sup>As early as in 1739, the President of the French Navy Board writes "Missisquoi" River, where the Abenakis were then thinking of moving to.—Can. Ar., 1904, p. 260.

were to be found dispersed here and there throughout the New England colonies as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century, and after long years of wars with the English, and being very much reduced in numbers, ultimately took refuge in Canada, first at Sillery and St. François de la Rivière Chaudière near Quebec, and finally, about 1680, at Bécancourt and St. François near Lake St. Peter and Pierreville of today. *Les Jésuites en la Nouvelle France*, Vol. III, p. 377, and following by Rochemonteix: *Relation par lettres*, id. p. 211; Maurault, p. 287<sup>1</sup>.

It may not be without interest to note that the learned Abbé Manrault asserts that Coaticook, Memphrémagog and Mégantic, situated in close proximity to Missisquoi Bay, are also of Abenakis origin, derived from the words "Koakitek," river of the land of pines, "Mamhrobagak," large expanse of water, and "Namesokanjik," where fishes stay. Mr. Laurent, in his letter and his book, does not spell these Indian names like Abbé Maurault, but both—and Mr. de Gonzague agrees with them—tell us that the Abenakis spoken at the time of Father Aubéry, S. J., 1712, had undergone numerous alterations and modifications borrowed from the English and French languages and other sources. Abbé Maurault adds that he finds only the three above names on the map of Canada as being of Abenakis etymology. Mr. Laurent, in his book, quotes six or seven others. It seems to me clear that our ancestors, both French and Eng-

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<sup>1</sup> The Abenakis of St. François number 374 souls, and those of Bécancourt 49. Two small bands of 19 and 23 souls are also to be found in the counties of Quebec and Charlevoix.—Bulletin, VII, pp. 135, 136, 138. In 1700, Bécancourt and St. François had a population of 1500.—Rochemonteix, *Relation*, p. 211.

lish, must have felt little difficulty in making "Missiskouy," "Missisque" and "Missisquoi" out of the Abenakis word "Messipskoik," "Massapskonik" or "Masipskoik."

The admission of Chief Laurent that possibly the Abenakis word meaning where boulders, or *de grandes pierres*, are to be found, is the true origin of the name Missisquoi, and the fact that there is no flint, but a large quantity of boulders and stone quarries in the locality, seems to me to be conclusive that that word and that meaning is the true one, as contended in my first article.

D. GIROUARD.

OTTAWA, 30th December, 1905.

Hoping to get further information on new matter which I discovered in my investigations, and which I think has a bearing upon the subject under consideration, I sent the following letter:

WORCESTER, MASS., December 18, 1905.

CHIEF JOSEPH LAURENT,  
PIERREVILLE, P. Q.

*My dear Chief:* I hasten to express my appreciation and thanks for your letter of December 13th, which came duly to hand. The same mail also brought me a letter from Judge Girouard, on the same subject, containing data obtained from Father Gonzagne and yourself.

It is so long since the name now spelled Missisquoi was bestowed upon the river in Vermont and the bay on the northern end of Lake Champlain in Canada, and the Abenakis dialect has meanwhile become so modified by amalgamation with the French and Eng-

lish languages, that at this distant day the attempt to discover the correct etymology of the word may prove a fruitless task. Nevertheless, the information contained in your letter encourages the belief that something more definite and reasonable—more conclusive because more in harmony with Indian custom—may yet be brought to light than anything so far discovered or offered in explanation of the origin and meaning of the word.

Pursuing my investigations since writing to you, I have found in the Documentary History of New York, published by the State, Albany, 1850, data relating to your ancestors and possibly to the subject now under consideration, extracts from which I transcribe and transmit herewith for your consideration and comments thereon.

In Vol. I, page 18, it is recorded:

“In the enumeration of the Indian tribes connected with the Government of Canada; the warriors and armorial bearings of each nation, A. D. 1736. Paris, Document VIII:

The Abenakis, one village called Pana8amsket,	
toward the mouth of said river—warriors,	200
The 8benakis at the head of said river, one village	
called Narentch8an—warriors,	150
Becancour, the Abenakis, one vill: ge—warriors,	60
The 8benakis at St. Francis Village—warriors,	180
Including those of Michikoui and those who	
migrate.	

At the Lake of the Two Mountains—The Messissin-gues.

A part of this tribe is incorporated with the Iroquois. The remainder has its village at the lake of the same name. There are here fifty men



bearing arms. The armorial bearings of this nation are the Heron for the *Achague*, or Heron tribe; the Beaver for the Amekoves; the Birch for the Birch tribe (*la famille de l'Ecorce*); Blood for the Miskouaha or the bloody people."

Now, it is well known that in the bestowal of place names the Indians were a very matter-of-fact people, the vainglorious, the hap-hazard, the whimsical, or the ideal never being factors, and you will notice in the above extract that the Indians then at the lake of the Two Mountains had the heron—*kesco*—for their totem. May not *kesco*, combined with the adjectival prefix *Mse*, *Misi*, *Mich*, or *Michi*, be the true origin of the word, as herons—cranes of the present day, colloquially—have always abounded in large numbers in the sedge and marshes at the mouth of Missisquoi River and along the shores of the bay?

Another portion of these people were designated the "Miskouaha," or the "bloody people." Does this *Miskouaha* furnish us with a key to the origin and signification of the word? You will observe that these words were used in A. D. 1736, in the earliest records touching these people, and long before the language was modified as it now is by contact with the whites. May not these Miskouaha—"bloody people"—have been a body of warriors specially selected for their bravery and prowess to contend with their inveterate enemies, the Maquas, and may not their headquarters on the river near the border line dividing them from their foes be of sufficient reason for bestowing this name on the river and thus be quite in harmony with aboriginal custom?

I note what you say in reference to *Mas-seps-ko-wik* meaning "where flint is to be found," and also that

Missisiscoung means "big serpent," "not the ordinary big serpent, but the species named 'boa serpent.' " It is true that big rocks or boulders abound in the territory about the bay in question, but there is no flint in the vicinity of the bay or river, nor are there any large "boa" or other venomous serpents thereabouts, nor could there have been any in a latitude so far north. While these words might signify flint, and "big," "large" or "boa" serpents, they would not apply to anything true of the place upon which this name was bestowed, and they are, therefore, as it seems to me, inadmissible as explaining the etymology of the word, because they are not in harmony with Indian custom.

There are numerous rapids and falls in the Missisquoi River, the largest being near the village of Swanton, Vermont, which was formerly the site of the headquarters of the Abenakis, and the noise of these falls, I have been told, reminded them of their *Sisiquois* — pronounced See-se-kwah — their rattles or drums, and that calling it the big or great rattle by prefixing *Mis* completes the word and furnishes an explanation of its meaning. What do you think of this?

Have you access to the manuscript dictionary compiled by Père Aubéry, S. J.? Perhaps by going back to the ancient orthography his work may throw some light upon the origin and signification of this and other words that are claimed to have given the river its name, and thus aid in solving the perplexing riddle and establishing the etymology of the word authoritatively.

The earliest form of spelling that I have encountered in my research is that on Sieur Auger's map, made in 1732, where it is spelled Michiscouy, and the

next is in a grant of land to Lafontaine in 1733, wherein it is spelled Missiskony, both being practically the same in spelling and sound. To me it seems well to keep the sound made by these spellings constantly in mind and not be led astray by the many later modifications.

Craving your indulgence and again asking your early consideration, valuable aid and early reply, and wishing you the compliments of the Christmas season, believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

GEORGE MCALEER.

Under date of February 10, 1906, I received a very lengthy and interesting letter from Chief Laurent in reply, much of which is of the same import as that supplied to Judge Gironard and published in the "*Bulletin des Recherches Historiques*," a translation of which appears in these pages.

The Chief says in addition:

"I have consulted Père Aubéry's Abenakis and French and the French and English dictionary, and I have been unable to find anything at all to help me out. I went all through both books, even to see if *q* was used in old times and also to see if *c* was used instead of *k*, in some instances at least, as we use it in both French and English in the name Canada, and I am in position to affirm positively that *q* was not in use at all by Indian scholars and writers, but that it was *k* that always performed the function of *c* in other languages. I also remark that *r* as used in old times is now, and has been for many years back, replaced by *l*. As an illustration: my ancestors would have said *Arnanba*, an Indian, but now say *Alnōba*.

"You see, therefore, by the change that the language has undergone, that it is very difficult to find out the meaning of old words, especially when corrupted by the many misspellings of the whites.

"If Masipskoik or Massapskoik, both of which mean where there are many big rocks or boulders, was not the original meaning, Messimskikoik, where there is an abundance of tall grass or hay, could possibly be the aboriginal name.

"I wish I could give you the undoubted etymology of Missisquoi, but my knowledge and all my searches in books do not lead me to any other conclusion but this idea: That it means the great grassy place or valley, considering the fact, as you say, of abundance of all kinds of tall grass and shrubs, which in general we call Mskiko-al, grass or hay—no matter what kind it is—what we call in French, *foin*.

"In order not to mislead you by the words Mskiko and Miskiko-al, I will say that the former is the singular and the latter the plural of the same word. In the Abenakis language all the vowels must be distinctly sounded, and, therefore, Messepskoi should be pronounced as if it was spelled Messeps-ko-wi, the last syllable as if it was spelled we. The more I study and consider the various spellings that have been submitted to me, the more I am inclined to believe that Missisquoi is derived from Messepskoi, which, presumably, the whites, omitting the *p* and not being aware that the Abenakis do not use the letter *q*, they used that letter instead of *k* and thus produced the transformation in the orthography of the word."

That difficulties have always been encountered by the whites in their attempts to master the aboriginal

languages and idioms, and to bring linguistic order out of chaos, is abundantly proven by the works of many writers on Indian philology. Reverend Jonas Michaëlius, from New Amsterdam (New York), under date of August 11, 1628, wrote to Dom Adrianus Simontius of Amsterdam, Holland, on this subject, as follows:

Their language, which is the first thing to be employed with them, methinks is entirely peculiar. Many of our common people call it an easy language, which is soon learned, but I am of a contrary opinion.

For those who can understand their words to some extent and repeat them, fail greatly in the pronunciation and speak a broken language, like the language of Ashdod. For these people have difficult aspirates and many guttural letters which are formed more in the throat than by the mouth, teeth and lips, which our people, not being accustomed to, guess at by means of their signs, and then imagine that they have accomplished something wonderful. It is true, one can learn as much as is sufficient for the purposes of trading, but this becomes almost as much by signs with the thumb and fingers as by speaking. \* \* \* It also seems to us that they rather design to conceal their language from us than to properly communicate it, except in things which happen in daily trade; saying that it is sufficient for us to understand them in those; and then they speak only half their reasons, with shortened words, and frequently call a dozen things, and even more, by one name; and all things which have only a rude resemblance to each other they frequently call by the same name.

In truth, it is a made-up, childish language; so that even those who can best of all speak with the Indians and get along well in trade, are, nevertheless, wholly in the dark and bewildered when they hear the Indians speaking with each other by themselves.

From the dim and distant past of nearly three hundred years ago, and passing over unnumbered authorities who give similar testimony, we cross the intervening centuries to an authority of our own day. Chief Joseph Laurent of Pierreville, P. Q., Canada, who in explaining the etymology of Indian names by which are designated certain tribes, towns, rivers, lakes, etc., in his "Abenakis and English Dialogues," says:

It would perhaps be well to mention that all these names, either in Abenakis, Cree or other tribal languages, which now designate so many localities, mountains, rivers, etc., have been so much disfigured by the whites, who, not understanding the meaning of these words, pronounced them in the best way they could and spelled them accordingly, but in most cases, with such incorrectness that they have rendered many of them altogether incomprehensible, and thereby impossible to discover their true signification.

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Briefly summing up the work in hand, it seems fair to conclude from the evidence adduced and that derived from publications during my investigations:

That the Indians were very literal in the bestowal of names, and that it is along the line of some striking

peculiarity or physical condition that the reason for the bestowal of this name must be sought;

That the Indian place name that has come down to us as Missisquoi was first bestowed upon the river of this name in northern Vermont, because of some peculiar condition existing along its course or at its mouth, or striking characteristic of the people in the settlement upon its banks;

That it was long years afterwards before it was bestowed upon the bay and county now known by this name, and that in consequence these must be excluded from consideration when seeking the reason for the bestowal of this name;

That the C'rees were remote from the Abenakis, and that several tribes whose language was very different, lived in the country that separated them;

That there is no evidence whatever to prove the adoption of the words of one tribe by another in primitive times, and it is against probability;

That the word for great, big or many women in Abenakis is entirely unlike the word of similar meaning in the Cree language;

That Indian women were never honored in the way implied by "big woman," "great woman," and the like;

That no flint existed or was to be obtained in the country beside or near the river;

That while rocks, boulders and cliffs abound on the shore of the bay, they are not in striking evidence along the river;

That while a few small rattlesnakes existed in early

times in the territory now known as Vermont, they were neither so large nor so abundant as to justify the use of the adjectives "great" or "many"—and their habitat was in the rocky ledges of the hills and mountains and not in the lowlands, valleys and marshes;

That the Indians had no word to signify the grouping or aggregation of different varieties of the same species, as, for instance, a single word for the species *cervidæ*—the deer, caribou, elk and moose, nor for the *anatidæ*—the ducks, geese, brant and swan—as is implied in the term "water-fowl," nor was it their custom so to do; and

That very extensive marshes covered with a rank growth of willows, whortleberry bushes (now called high-bush blueberries), cat-tail flag, bullrushes and coarse grass, exist at and in the vicinity of the mouth of the river, and extensive beaver meadows were formerly in abundant evidence throughout its whole course.

Looking at the question from this standpoint, does not the evidence submitted warrant the conclusion that the word Missisquoi is of Abenakis origin, that it was bestowed in accordance with Indian custom, and signifies "a great grassy place," "a sticky place,"—a great marshy place?

This study was undertaken with a receptive and an unbiased mind and it is ended without any predilection.

Should a more exhaustive investigation bring forth new facts to warrant a different conclusion, the writer will give them glad welcome.



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