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*THE ORIGIN OF THE MALISEETS.**

The tribe of Indians to which the name of Maliseet is at present restricted reside chiefly on the banks of the St. John River, in New Brunswick. At one time the local authorities supposed that these people were of Huron-Iroquois stock, but later investigation has shown that they are of the Algonquian family, as are all the tribes who are their immediate neighbors. We now know also that these St. John Indians were members, of that nation or group of cognate tribes to whom the name Wapanaki† was applied—tribes that at the time they were discovered by the Europeans were in possession of the country between the St. John and the Connecticut—through Maine, New Hampshire and western Massachusetts, and whose warriors for more than a century kept the border settlements in constant terror.

The Wapanaki nation was originally composed of seven tribes, viz: Nipmuks, Sokokis, Assagunticooks, Wawanocks, Kenebeks, Penobscots, and Maliseets.

That the Micmacs were not Wapanakis has been clearly established by comparison of the languages and the traditions, though the tribes lived on intimate friendly terms and Micmac braves were sometimes found among Wapanaki war parties. Dr. Williamson, in his History of Maine, quotes a Penobscot Indian's statement that "all the Indians between the St. John and the Saco Rivers are brothers; the eldest lives on the Saco, and each tribe is younger as we pass eastward. Always I could understand these brothers very well when they speak, but when the Micmacs talk, I can't tell what they say."

*Spelled also Melicite and Amelicite.

†Spelled also Wabananchi, Abnaki and Abenaqui.

It is probable that the Wapanaki nation was founded by a band of Ojibwas who separated from the main tribe, travelled eastward and settled on the western slopes of the Adirondacks, from which they were driven by the Iroquois when those fierce and valorous warriors immigrated thither from the southwest. The Ojibwas retired eastward and the Connecticut river was fixed as the western limit of their territory.

This band of Ojibwas were the progenitors of the large and powerful tribe which the Europeans found in control of the country between the Connecticut and the Piscataquis, including both banks of both rivers. This tribe was known to the early writers as the Nipmuks, though they are sometimes called Pennacooks, from the name of their principal encampment, Pennacook, which was situated where Manchester, N. H., now stands and where resided their head chief Passaconnoway. The Mohegans or Mohicans were of the Wapanaki race, but whether they are recognized as a separate tribe or were under Nipmuk government is not definitely known, though the weight of evidence favor the latter conclusion.

The other tribes originated thus. First a band wandered off from the Nipmuk country and settled on the Saco, where they eventually organized an independent tribe—the Sakoki. Latter a detachment from the Saco established a separate tribe on the banks of the Androscoggin, and from them sprang directly both the Wawenocks and the Kenebeks. The later in turn provided the nucleus for the Penobscot tribe, and from the Penobscot camp went the braves who set up their wigwams on the banks of the St. John and became the founders of the people whom we now know as the Maliseets.

Just when this separation took place is not known, but it must have been some time before they were

discovered by the Europeans, for Champlain, Lescarbot, Captain John Smith and Cadillac, who visited the river during the first decade of the seventeenth century, found large encampments at Meductik and Hekpahak, (Spring Hill), and the early writers mention that the Maliseets took a leading part in the affairs of the nation.

At whatever time the Maliseets entered New Brunswick, they were confronted on their entrance by the Micmacs. The tribe had come from the southwest—so their tradition states—and finding the Atlantic Shore, which they coveted, in possession of the Iroquois—called Kwedecks in some of the Micmac legends—drove these toward the St. Lawrence, and established the Restigouche as the northern boundary of the Micmac territory.

The Micmacs seem to have permitted the Maliseets to secure the St. John without opposition, reserving one village site at the mouth of the river. According to the traditions of both tribes, their people have maintained friendly relations ever since, though the Micmacs were inclined to be aggressively combative and had several misunderstandings with the more western of the Wapanaki tribes which, according to the custom of their times, was referred to the arbitrament of the tomahawk.

In some of the earlier histories there are slight and indefinite references to battles during the period between 1605 and 1615, in which Micmacs and Penobscots seem to have been at war with the Maliseets, but these rumors lack confirmation, and it is more than probable that some other tribes were engaged in these conflicts.

The Passamaquoddy Indians were not organized as an independent tribe at the time of the European occupation, and that is the reason why we do not find any reference to them, as a tribe, in the pages of early

history. The tribe is a mixture of Maliseet and Penobscot, and originated thus: A Maliseet man, so the tradition runs, married a woman of the Penobscots and built a wigwam at the mouth of the St. Croix. The pair were joined by other Maliseets and by parties of Penobscots from Machias, Mattawamkeag and the Penobscot river. The band thus formed continued to hold allegiance to the Maliseet tribe until sometime after the advent of the whites. It was not until the Penobscots finally deserted Machias and most of the families moved to St. Croix that the band, thus augmented, elected a chief of its own and set up a tribal establishment. The inaugural of this chief was conducted by leading men of the Maliseet, Penobscot and St. Francis tribes.

Of these tribes, numbering according to the estimate made by Williamson and others, at some 36,000 at the time of the European invasion, there are at the present time but small bands, numbering in all something less than 2,000 people. They are scattered thus: The Passamaquoddies still occupy Sipayik or Pleasant Point, as it is better known, but the tribe has been separated; for a few years ago, the band living at Lewy's Island, on the upper waters of the St. Croix, quarrelled with the Sipayiks over the election of a chief, and now there are two divisions on the St. Croix. The Penobscot chief still holds his council at Old Town, and the Maliseet villages are scattered along the St. John. A branch of the Maliseet is settled at Cacouna on the south side of the St. Lawrence, near Rivière du Loup. This tribe was founded in 1828 by some thirty families who moved from the upper St. John. They are written down Amalecites in the Report of the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs.

Other branches of the Wapanaki are settled at St. Francis and Becancour, near Quebec. These are the

remnants of the large tribes whom the first settlers found in possession of the New England frontier, and who were driven from their homes through the ill treatment of the British Colonists.

While for convenience sake the term Nation has been used when referring to the Wapanaki tribes collectively, that term should be understood as applicable only in its widest sense. These people were related through descent from a common ancestry, but the tribes were not confederated. They were avowed friends, and this term means vastly more when applied to these sons of the forest than to any other race, but they were not held together by any such compact as that, for example, which bound the Iroquois League. The Wapanaki tribes had no legislative union, nor permanent general council, nor head chief. When a convention or council was to be held, the delegates from each tribe were chosen for the occasion, and when assembled they elected their own president.

In the treaty that was signed at Portsmouth in 1713, the Indians participating are described as those living on the "Plantations lying between the rivers St. John and Merrimak." Attached to this treaty are the signatures of the several delegates—two or more from each tribe.

The last time at which representatives of the Wapanaki nation met the white man in convention was in 1775, when General Washington invited the tribes to send delegates to Watertown to discuss with the Massachusetts council the relations of the Indians to the contending parties in the war of the revolution. At that convention the spokesman for the Indians was Ambrose Var, the Maliseet Sakum.

MONTAGUE CHAMBERLAIN.

The ter-centenary of St. John will be in 1904.