Kokomo: The History and Meaning of a Remarkable and Elusive Place Name

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"Kokomo", the name of a small city in central Indiana, was originally a personal name of a historical Miami Indian man. Although the correct translation of the man's name was published in the 1800s, it was soon forgotten. Ever since then the name has defied interpretation because it was garbled to opacity. On the way to explaining the name's form and meaning, based on early historical spellings, this article will describe the impressive trajectory that the life of "Kokomo" has taken for approximately two centuries, from an Algonquian language personal name to American slang.

KEYWORDS Kokomo, Indiana, Miami-Illinois language, American Indian place names, Indiana place names, early American spelling practices, folk etymology.

Place names can pull up roots and go traveling, in different ways and for different reasons. In the early sixteenth century, great numbers of them set sail from England, France, Holland, Portugal, and Spain to colonize various parts of the New World. The United States was itself populated by an untold number of place names of European origin: Boston, (New) York, (New) London, Harlem (*sic*), Scotland, Darlington, Paris, (New) Orleans, Versailles, Vevay (*sic*), (New) Madrid, Albuquerque (*sic*), Warsaw (*sic*), among many others.

Also found far from their original homes are names that in fact originated in the western hemisphere. For example, "Montezuma", a Nahuatl personal name,[1] was brought by Americans all the way from the Valley of Mexico to be the name of towns in Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, North Carolina, New Mexico, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, and Virginia. From the Atlantic seaboard, "Manhattan", a Munsee language place name (Goddard 2010), was taken by Americans across the continent in all directions to become a town name in California, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, and Pennsylvania in either its simplex form or the seaward "Manhattan Beach". "Kokomo", the name of American Indian origin for the county seat of Howard County, Indiana, due north of Indianapolis with a population of some 50,000, has also been moved to a few

distant places: Arkansas, Mississippi, and Texas. However, "Kokomo" has done some unusual traveling of its own, beyond just becoming a far-flung toponym.

One thing that sets little "Kokomo" apart into a distinctive class of town and city names in North America is that it has traveled to the stage and the silver screen – and has done so on several occasions. The name appears to have first taken the stage in 1908 in the play *The Man from Home*, in which an Indiana lawyer goes to Europe but returns to his hometown Kokomo for the story's happy ending. (Tarkington, Wilson, and Lilly 1934). That play was then made into a movie in 1922, directed by none other than the founding father of US cinema, Cecil B. DeMille.[2] Next, from 1939 came *The Kid from Kokomo*, a film about an orphan from Kokomo recruited to be a boxer while hard on the trail to find his real mother.[3] The central Indiana community was also the site of the 1953 musical *Sweethearts on Parade*,[4] and Kokomo is where the famous TV "Rifleman" Chuck Conners played the chief of police in the 1988 Hollywood movie *Terror Squad*, which was filmed on location in Kokomo with the help of the city's finest racing around in their police cars chasing Libyan terrorists, and with resident Kokomoans playing various extras.[5]

Beyond these many trips towards stardom, the name "Kokomo" inhabits yet a rarer atmosphere, one beyond drama, one that in fact includes the most illustrious, nay, *romantic* place names on the planet. Just as we have "I love Paris (in the springtime…)", "Autumn in New York", and "I left my heart in San Francisco", "Kokomo" has been elevated in *song*: Paris, New York, San Francisco, … Kokomo! Indeed, the name "Kokomo" thrives in song, and it got its start in the blues.

The popular musical birth of "Kokomo" appears to have occurred in 1928. In that year it was as if the American blues artist Francis "Scrapper" Blackwell tossed a magical stone called "Kokomo Blues" into the deep blue sea of song and in so doing created waves that have stretched far beyond – into American popular and movie music, into boogie-woogie, and into rock.[6] Jabo Williams, another blues artist, recorded his own version of this song four years later, dubbing it "Ko Ko Mo Blues".[7] In 1934, James Arnold, also an American blues musician, released the same song, this time titled "Old Original Kokomo Blues", and simultaneously adopted catchy "Kokomo" as his nickname: *"Kokomo" Arnold*.[8] In 1969, "Kokomo Me Baby", a song by the blues great "Mississippi" Fred McDowell, which is now in Bonnie Raitt's rich repertoire thanks to McDowell's personal touch, again told the story of going back to Kokomo.[9] Then, not to be outdone, none other than the famous seminal blues guitarist and vocalist Robert Johnson picked up Blackwell's original "Kokomo Blues" and turned it into the blues standard "Sweet Home Chicago".[10]

However, this impressive run by "Kokomo" in the world of song did not end up in Chicago. "Kokomo, Indiana", written by Josef Myrow and Mack Gordon, was sung by Betty Grable and Dan Dailey in the 1947 movie "Mother Wore Tights",[11] and from 1961 came a most unusual release titled "Kokomo", Jimmy Wisner's version of Edvard Grieg's 1868 "Piano Concerto in A minor" *played in boogie-woogie style*.[12]

Wisner's song seems to represent the opening of the "Kokomo" floodgates, so to speak, for next came the extremely popular "Ko Ko Mo (I Love You So)" by Forest Gene Wilson and Eunice Levy.[13] Arguably one of the most famous tunes of the 1950s, this 1954 release was covered by 17 different musicians in the first few months of that year alone and by

innumerable artists after that. Those who made it part of their repertoire include Louis Armstrong, Perry Como, and, in a satirical fashion, Andy Griffith.[14]

At the same time, for many today the most recognizable appearance in song of the place name "Kokomo" is in the famous Beach Boy's 1988 eponymous paean dedicated to a sexy seaside hideaway somewhere in the Caribbean of the mind: "We'll be falling in love to the rhythm of a steel drum band down in Kokomo."[15]

Even with these no mean accomplishments, there is yet something else that not only sets "Kokomo" apart as a place name, but in fact launches it into what one might call the onomastic stratosphere, something that distinguishes "Kokomo" even more from place names that just travel, or move to Hollywood or New York, or have songs sung about them. "Kokomo" resides in that rarest class of place names that includes the likes of "The North Pole", "Shanghai", and "Timbuktu".

In the phrase "from here to Timbuktu", the toponym "Timbuktu" does not, of course, refer to a town in the West African nation of Mali; it has a figurative meaning – an extremely remote place. "To be shanghaied" does not mean to be dropped off at the great metropolis on the east coast of China; this expression, too, has a figurative meaning – to be kidnapped or coerced into doing something. And "the North Pole" has its own classic singular imaginative meaning – the place where Santa and Mrs Claus live and manage their elf-staffed workshop.

In like manner, exhibiting both alliteration and assonance with its two successive k's and three o's, "Kokomo" was born not just to ramble, or to be lauded in film and song, or to have a single metaphorical meaning applied to it. It was destined to be a shape-shifter in terms of semantics, that is, it was fated *to change meanings* – and it appears in that regard to be a gold-medal Olympian among toponyms.

Perhaps one of the most recognizable uses of "Kokomo" with a new and different meaning, one that has been around for a while, is "Joe Blow from Kokomo". This phrase does not refer to a Mr Joseph Blow who lives in Kokomo, Indiana; it means "the average guy", "the man on the street". "Joe Blow from Kokomo" then came to be "Kokomo Joe", the name of an alcoholic drink.[16] Owing to the fact that the first two syllables in the town's name, "Koko-", are pronounced like the word "coca", "Kokomo" also came to refer to the drug cocaine that is derived from the coca plant.[17] In the early mid-1900s the terms "Kokomo Joe" and "a Kokomo" were synonymous with "drug addict" (Spears 1986, 306) and even today "Kokomo" can still mean crack cocaine. However, that is just the tip of the iceberg, no pun intended.

In 1964, the great rock and roll guitar player Chuck Berry used "Kokomo" to mean something quite other than the town north of Indianapolis. When Berry sings "No particular place to go, so we parked way out on the kokomo", his "kokomo" seems to have an odonymic meaning, something like a lover's lane, or else perhaps a grand beach or salt flat.[18] When, in 1992, Robert Hunter, the lyricist for Jerry Garcia and the Grateful Dead, set "kokomo", like Berry, as a *noun* into his poem "So Many Roads", he seems to have intended something like a boardwalk: "Down where the sun don't shine, underneath the kokomo."[19]

Finally, as noted above, it was Fred McDowell who turned "Kokomo" into a *verb* with his song "Kokomo Me Baby", and it is not entirely clear what he means in every case that he uses it. However, in verbing the noun "Kokomo", McDowell might have opened the door that Little Feat singer, guitarist, and song writer Lowell George came

strutting through, and proceeded to go all the way. In his own tune titled "Kokomo", released in 1979, George certainly used "Kokomo" as a verb to mean the act of making love: "Kokomo with me, Kokomo with me tonight."[20]

Clearly, then, "Kokomo" has been around the semantic block, tallying up some 10 different meanings, and what it has accomplished as a place name is impressive given the relatively small size of the eponymous Indiana city. Yet, what adds to the mystique of "Kokomo" is that *the name as written is of the purest jabberwocky*. In other words, "Kokomo" has no meaning in the language it comes from. This is not to say, however, that explanations for what the spelling "Kokomo" represents have not been proffered. In fact, in what is again a simple twist of the name's fate, the correct translation of "Kokomo" was published in the nineteenth century but, as we shall see, it was, understandably, forgotten.

The original bearer of "Kokomo" in its original American Indian language form – before it became the nonsensical name of a town – was a Miami Indian man who lived in the early 1800s in what is now the Kokomo, Indiana, area. The *Meshingomesia Testimonials*, from 1873, a primary source document belonging to the Miami that describes various land transactions, wills, and treaties involving the Miami nation, mention a grandchild of this Miami Indian man therein named « Kokomo », the latter by that time deceased, when the grandchild was trying to obtain some land. In these same documents, the deceased's name was also recorded as « Ma-ko-ko-ma », which is from David Foster, the founder of Kokomo, Indiana.[21] An early history of Howard County states that Foster, who arrived in 1842 at what is now Kokomo, and who bought the Lafontaine Miami Indian reserve on which today sits the city of Kokomo, knew the Miami man personally. Foster knew him since the former had been trading with the Miami people since 1835 at Burlington on the Michigan Road, which ran north out of Indianapolis through the Lafontaine reserve. When Howard County (originally known as Richardville County) was created in 1844, Foster arranged for the county seat to be located on the former reserve, and in that same year he dubbed the town "Kokomo" (Blanchard 1883, 324). What is important to understand is that in Foster's time, the name was already garbled to the form "Kokomo". In fact, Foster himself was probably the one who invented the spelling "Kokomo", for at the same time he was also stating that the town was named after « Ma-ko-ko-ma », he called the town "Kokomo". In shortening the name from « Ma-ko-ko-ma » to "Kokomo", the city's founder transformed it into a vocable which from that point on was indecipherable, unintelligible.

"Kokomo" comes originally from the Miami language, an Algonquian tongue spoken by the people who lived on the land occupied by present-day Kokomo.[22] Jacob Piatt Dunn, an Indiana historian, librarian, lawyer, and important recorder of native speakers of the Miami in the late 1800s and early 1900s, included a brief write-up of the name "Kokomo" in his book *True Indian Storie*s. He even mentioned the actual meaning of the name but dismissed it. Dunn (1908, 271–72) wrote,

> Kokomo- … Said to have been the name of a Miami chief of the Thorntown band, but there is no such name signed on any treaty unless it be "Co-come-wah," which appears in the treaty of 1834. It has been translated "Black Walnut," "Bear Chief," and "Young Grandmother," for none of which is there any basis. Both Godfroy and Kilsokwa say there was a Thorntown Indian named Kŏ-kah'-mah, and that the name refers to him. Godfroy says

this name means "He Goes Under," as in diving; and that it may be translated "Something Diving," or "The Diver".

That having been said, Godfroy's analysis is a folk etymology. It is impossible for "Kŏ-kah'-mah" to mean "he goes under", as in diving. The verb stem for "dive" is *kookii-*, and the Miami-Illinois verb form meaning "he dives" is *kookiiwa*. Indeed, there are no terms in Miami that look anything like "Kokomo".

As noted above, the first problem in dealing with the name "Kokomo" is that it is a garbled transcription of the original name. Not only that. It is in fact a prime example of the oversimplification of American Indian terms on the part of American settlers in Indiana in the early nineteenth century. "Kokomo", for instance, suffered the same fate as the Miami name for Eel River of northern Indiana, an important tributary of the upper Wabash River that played a major role in the history of the Miami people. In the Miami language, this waterway is known as *kineepikomeekwa siipiiwi*, "Eel River". However, as evidenced in an early treatment of the river and its history, the Miami hydronym was transmogrified by American settlers and their descendants to the gibberish name "Kenapocomoco" (Winger 1935, 6–7ff.), which is unrecognizable as a Miami term. If one imagines "Indianapolis" twisted to "Indionopolos" by some foreign invaders, one can get a sense of what happened to the Miami name for the Eel River in the hands of people who did not know Miami.

This oversimplification which was produced by using the letter "o" for the three original, distinctively different vowels *i*, *ee*, and *a* of *kineepikomeekwa* is what happened to the original form of "Kokomo" when it was run through the English language mill of the American pioneer David Foster and others in the area.[23] The writing of this Miami personal name in the form "Kokomo" with three o's represents the same odd "regularization" seen in "Kenapocomoco", where with a quill and ink people carelessly sowed their wild o's.

It is in the "Day Book for 1838" kept by Chief Francis Godfroy's Mount Pleasant trading post storekeepers Carl Mohler, Henry Meinhardt, and Solomon Sparks that we find additional primary source recordings of the name "Kokomo". On the occasion of his coming to the store on 12 December 1831, where he "Bought a Hat – $5.00", the Miami man's name was recorded in the form « Co Ka maw ». A payment made for goods by the same Miami man was recorded at the same trading post in May 1832, this time specifically by storekeeper Meinhardt, where the name is spelled « Ko Ke maw ».[24] It is the analysis of these, the earliest spellings of this man's name, which will serve as a guide to an understanding of the original native language form and meaning of the name that came to be written "Kokomo".

The first syllable of both « Co Ka maw » and « Ko Ke maw » is a revealing piece of evidence, as the vowel in each case is spelled « -o- ». Commonly, historic English speakers, as evidenced by their recordings, correctly heard the Miami short vowel *o* and the Miami long vowel *oo*, which are approximately the vowel sounds in English "coat" and "coal," respectively. Thus, in light of the fact that the recordings noted above both evince « -o- », phonemic *ko-* or *koo-* should be correct for this syllable of the name in question.

The last syllable of the name of this Miami man was twice recorded at different times in the form « -maw ». The digraph "aw" was commonly used by early historical English-speaking recorders of Indian terms to represent phonemic *a* and *aa*.[25] Thus, the last syllable of « Co ka maw » and « Ko Ke maw », respectively, should be *-ma* or

-*maa*. This conclusion is of course supported by the final syllable of David Foster's own recording « Ma-ko-ko-ma ».

Note that in the recording « Co Ka maw », the second syllable is not written « -aw- », as is the final syllable of that spelling. Therefore, the vowel in the syllable « -Ka- » likely does not rhyme with the vowel of the last syllable of that recording, which, as noted above, is either *a* or *aa*.

The orthographic « -a- » in the second syllable « -Ka- » of « Co Ka maw » would be what I have termed elsewhere "Alphabet A" (McCafferty 2008, 78–79).[26] To wit, local English speakers in the late 1700s and early 1800s, confronted with what to them were wildly exotic native languages, often reverted to the simple sound-symbol correspondences of the recited ABC's when composing written recordings of American Indian words. Thus, the letter "a" was often used to represent the sound of "A" in the recited English alphabet, as in the English word "bake". At the same time, this English sound, written e^I in the International Phonetic Alphabet, which is a diphthong with the off-glide ^{I}, was *often* heard by the untrained ear for Miami *i*, which approximates the vowel sound in English "eat". In other words, English speakers sometimes mistook the Miami high front vowel *i* for the mid-high front English vowel e^I. For example, my analysis of « Kekionga », the name of the famous Miami town located at present-day Fort Wayne, Indiana, which was recorded by a historic English speaker, evinces an excellent example of this phenomenon. In « Kekionga », the final vowel of the toponym was written « -a », yet that letter stands for the Miami vowel *i*, for « Kekionga » is Miami phonetic [kiikayoŋgi] (McCafferty 2008, 78–80).

The recording « Ko Ke maw » from May 1832 is the confirmation itself of the sound of the vowel in the second syllable of the name. The « -e- » here is what I have termed "Alphabet E" (McCafferty 2008, 78–79).[27] Again, this is a very common symbol used by historic English speakers recording American Indian language terms when attempting to represent the sounds written *i* and *ii* in American Phonetic Notation and in standard Algonquian linguistics, which is essentially the sound in the recited English alphabet of the letter "E", as in English "beet". As shown above, the first -e- of « Kekionga » represents precisely this phenomenon known as "Alphabet E". In this light, the second vowel of this Miami man's name was either Miami short *i* or long *ii*.

Finally, the average untrained historical English-speaking recorders often did not correctly hear the first syllables of certain Miami terms. This is not to say that the "Ko-" of "Kokomo" was misheard. We have established that that syllable was correctly heard and properly recorded. The point is that there was in fact a syllable in front of "Ko-" that was not heard and thus not recorded.

In modern Miami-Illinois, the word-initial sequence of the sound *m* plus a short vowel, hereinafter written *mV*, when preceding a pre-aspirated consonant is commonly deleted, and by the 1800s this rule had pretty much raked through the language.[28] For instance, whereas in older Miami one would hear, for example, *mihtehkoopa* for "bow", as in bow and arrow, one could hear *htehkoopa* in the modern language. Other examples include older Miami *mahsakahkwa* "badger", which later could be pronounced *hsákahkwa*; earlier *mihšiimina* "apple", which later could be pronounced *hšiimina*; and *mihšipakwa* "leaf", which later could be pronounced *hšipakwa*.[29]

Since initial syllables that begin with *mV* were unstressed and preceded pre-aspirated consonants, the vowels were usually voiceless and sometimes the *m* was devoiced

as well. In fact, it is not impossible that these initial voiceless *mV* sequences could be deleted in quick casual speech even in earlier times. But later, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, when the language was used by fewer people, some speakers and semi-speakers were probably not exposed to the language enough to know that the devoiced vowels were even there, and thus they no longer retained *mV* initial syllables.[30] However, while Godfroy's storekeepers, as we have seen above, did not hear and thus did not record the *mV* initial syllable in the case of the name in question, David Foster did in fact hear it, and he recorded it when he wrote « Ma-ko-ko-ma ».

In the case of "Kokomo", the first part of the original native Miami personal name was *mahkwá* "black bear" (*Ursus americanus*). A non-native speaker of Miami could have difficulty hearing the "whispered" voiceless word-initial *mV* and distinguishing it as a meaningful unit of speech. Although among native speakers of Miami the noun *mahkwá* "bear" did not lose the initial syllable *ma-*, there is evidence that it was not always heard by untrained ears, as a recording of one of the descendants of the native speakers of that language shows the complete loss of the first syllable: "hkwai".[31]

The second part of "Kokomo", represented by the historic spelling fragment « -o Ke Maw » represents *akima* "leader, chief". When joined together to make a new word, *mahkwá* plus *akima* produces *mahkokima* "bear chief, chief of bears, the leader of bears". The *-ko-* of *mahkokima* results from the contraction of the *-kwa* sequence of *mahkwá* with the initial *a-* of *akima*, i.e. the rounding of the lips to form the *-w-* also rounds the following sound *a* into *o*. In fact, in the case of *akima*, the *a-*, diachronically speaking, comes from earlier **o-*,[32] which implies that the contraction of *mahkwá* and *akima* to *mahkokima* is expected, just as it is, for example, in *mahkohpina* "bear potato", one of the Miami words for the wild sweet potato vine (*Ipomoea pandurata*), which is a contraction of *mahkwá* "bear" and *ahpena* "potato".

As noted above, this explanation of the meaning of "Kokomo" was known in the nineteenth century to the author of the "History of Center Township", an entry in a history book of Howard County. Therein we read: "The name Kokomo is an Indian one, and signifies 'chief of bears…' Kingman Brothers 1877, 20).[33]

Acknowledgements

Notes

[1.] From the Nahuatl *mote·kʷso·ma* "he frowns like a lord". In this paper I use standard Americanist linguistic notation: phonemic spellings are italic; words appearing between [and] are phonetic spellings; both a raised dot after a vowel or the germination of a vowel indicates a long vowel, i.e. a vowel pronounced with longer duration. Words appearing between « and » are historic documented spellings or parts thereof. English definitions that follow American Indian terms have double quotation marks.

[2.] See http://memory.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.mbrs.sfdb. 2018/default.html. Accessed January 4, 2017.

[3.] Written by Dalton Trumbo and directed by Lewis Seiler. See http://www.afi.com/members/catalog/DetailView. aspx?s=&Movie=6643. Accessed January 4, 2017.

4. Written by Allan Dwan. See http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0046386/. Accessed January 4, 2017.

5. Story by Mark Verheiden. Directed by Peter Maris. See http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0094125/. Accessed January 4, 2017.

6. Francis Brown. 1929. "Kokomo Blues." http://www.allaboutbluesmusic.com/scrapper-blackwell/. Accessed January 5, 2017.

7. Jabo Williams. 1932. "Ko Ko Mo Blues." https://www.wirz.de/music/wiljafrm.htm/. Accessed January 5, 2017.

8. James Arnold. 1934. "Old Original Kokomo Blues." https://www.discogs.com/artist/307277-Kokomo-Arnold/. Accessed January 6, 2017.

9. Fred McDowell. 1969. "Kokomo Me Baby." https://www.merchbar.com/vinyl-records/fred-mcdowell/fred-mcdowell-do-not-play-no-rock-n-roll-ogv/. Accessed February 23, 2017; Bonnie Raitt. 1995. "The Kokomo Medley." http://www.bonnieraitt.com/album/road-tested-cd/. Accessed February 23, 2017.

10. Robert Johnson. 1936. "Sweet Home Chicago." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweet_Home_Chicago/. Accessed February 9, 2017.

11. Josef Myrow and Mack Gordon. 1947. "Kokomo, Indiana." http://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/mmb-vp-copyright/4854/. Accessed January 4, 2017.

12. Jimmy Wisner. 1960. "Kokomo" ("Piano Concerto in A minor" by Edvard Grieg). http://www.waybackattack.com/kokomo.html/. Accessed December 24, 2016.

13. Forest Gene Wilson and Eunice Levey. 1954. "Ko Ko Mo (I Love You So)." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2vHQAdldiA/. Accessed January 11, 2017; http://www.allmusic.com/album/go-on-ko-ko-mo-mw0000590997/. Accessed January 11, 2017.

14. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ko_Ko_Mo_(I_Love_You_So). Accessed January 23, 2017.

15. Scott McKenzie, Mike Love, and Terry Melcher. 1988. http://www.songfacts.com/detail.php?id=505. Accessed February 24, 2017.

16. http://www.drinksmixer.com/drink9519.html/. Accessed January 14, 2017.

17. http://www.noslang.com/drugs/dictionary/k/. Accessed January 14, 2017.

18. Chuck Berry. 1964. "No Particular Place to Go." http://www.crlf.de/ChuckBerry/chessupto1966.html/. Accessed January 27, 2017.

19. Robert Hunter, lyricist; Jerry Garcia, composer. 1992. "So Many Roads." http://www.deaddisc.com/songs/So_Many_Roads.htm/. Accessed February 25, 2017.

20. Lowell George. 1979. "Kokomo." https://www.discogs.com/artist/258557-Little-Feat/. Accessed February 25, 2017.

21. *Meshingomesia Testimonials*. National Anthropological Archives, Washington, DC. Kokomo's wife's name is given as "Lo-pu-ge-quah," and "Kokomo" was half-Potawatomi. Further, it is commonly claimed that "Kokomo" was a son of Jean-Baptiste Richardville. He was not. Richardville's sons' names are well known: John Baptiste Richardville, also known as John B. Richardville Jr. *aka* "the Difficult One"; Joseph Richardville, whose Miami name was *waapimaankwa*, and Louis Richardville *aka* "Snap" and "the Blind One", whose Miami name was *maayaahkwia*. George Ironstrack, personal communication, January 19, 2017. The spelling « Ma-ko-ko-ma » by Foster was confirmed by Ironstrack. George Ironstrack, personal communication, March 8, 2017.

22. The Miami language, an Algonquian tongue, was spoken throughout the 1700s, 1800s, and into the early 1900s in Indiana. It is one of the best historically documented and recorded Algonquian languages, and is the subject today of an intense revitalization program, spearheaded by the Myaamia Center at the Miami University of Ohio, in which this author is taking part. While it is perhaps surprising that few towns and cities in Indiana bear names created by the historic Miami, there is a good chance that, if you live or travel in Indiana or the Midwest, you will see a Miami word every day – on license plates: "Missouri", "Illinois", and "Wisconsin", and in the names of a great city, a famous river, and an old and famous wetland: "Chicago", "Wabash", and "Kankakee", all places that historic Miami-speaking populations called home. For analyses and discussions of these names, see Costa (2007) and McCafferty (2000, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2004, 2005, 2012, 2014).

23. *i* is approximately the sound of the vowel of English "eat"; *ee* corresponds more or less to the vowel sound in English "mail".

24. These early recordings of the name come from the files of Mr Carl Leiter (1954), who copied them around the time he was writing his thesis for his master's degree in history. Sometime after Mr Leiter copied them, they disappeared. "Realizing these were primary sources that I may never see again and living in a time before copy machines, I spent many hours I could hardly spare, typing from them. These have been saved to this day and translate into about 575 records in my personal database." Carl Leiter, personal communication, December 4, 2002.

25. Miami has an inventory of eight vowel phonemes: *a*, *aa*, *e*, *ee*, *i*, *ii*, *o*, *oo*. Short vowels contrast with long vowels, the latter being pronounced with a longer duration. For example, *nipi* means "water", but *niipi* means "my arrow".

26. For historical examples of "Alphabet A", see McCafferty (2008, 19, 34, 65, 95, 96, 107, 139, 143, 145, 151, 159, 160, 171, 229n., and 240n.).

27. For historical examples of "Alphabet E", see McCafferty (2008, 18, 19, 106, 114, 117, 136, and 170). The letter "o" in English is more "flexible" than one might think. It not only represents rounded back vowels as in the pronunciation of "bowl" and "pool", but also mid-high front vowels as in the pronunciation of the first vowel of "women", where the -o- represents

the sound *I* as in "sit". This understanding of the letter "o" relates to all documented spellings of "Kokomo" that have -o- as the second syllable.

[28.] For *mV* deletion, see Costa (2003). Miami has seven pre-aspirated consonants, consonants whose onset of articulation is preceded by *h*. These contrast with non-pre-aspirated consonants. For example, *kaawiaki* means "thorns", whereas, *kaawiahki* means "field of thorns".

[29.] The phonetic symbol *š* represents the sound in English represented by the digraph "sh", as in English "she".

[30.] "This happens in other Algonquian languages too: compare Ottawa *mtigmizh* "pin oak" versus Potawatomi *təgməš* "oak tree". Loyal Band Shawnee speakers no longer preserve the initial *m* in *mkiθe* "shoe", and consider the pronunciation with the *m* to be wrong. And in Passamaquoddy, old word-initial *mV* sequences before preaspirates obligatorily become *p* for modern speakers: note Passamaquoddy *pkəsən* shoe." David J. Costa, personal communication, February 14, 2017.

[31.] Recorded from Louis Myers, Peoria, by David J. Costa. Unpublished files.

[32.] Ives Goddard, personal communication, February 13, 2017. The *o* comes from earlier *w-e*. See Goddard (2001). Like many other tribes, the Miami suffered precipitous population decline after European contact in the late 1600s, owing primarily to deadly small pox and measles epidemics. With great population losses also go personal names, especially if those names are used within certain families, clans, or subtribes that also disappeared or were absorbed by greater tribal entities. The Illinois and other sources point to a great deal of creativity and variation in personal naming. The fact that this particular name, *mahkokima*, does not appear elsewhere in the records of Miami personal names does not imply that it was not a bona fide Miami name. Its morphology and grammar are proper for a personal name, and the name's association with an animal also finds correspondence in Miami traditional naming practice.

[33.] The translation "chief of bears" appears in the section titled "History of the Townships of Howard County" under sub-topic "Center Township," (Kingman Brothers 1877, 20, column 1). This book can be viewed online here: http://indiamond6.ulib.iupui.edu/cdm/ref/collection/HistAtlas/id/2813/. Accessed January 3, 2017). The writing bears the style of Milton Garrigus, a lawyer in Kokomo, who had originally arrived as a teenager with his parents in 1847. Carl Leiter, personal communication, March 7, 2002. Finally, no evidence exists indicating that "Kokomo" was a chief of his clan or tribe. His name appears on no treaties, and his chieftainship is local mythology. However, it is now clear where this notion of calling him "chief" came from: *akima* "chief" was not his title; it was an element of his given name.

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