

# Place-Names and Dialects: Algonquian

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## I. INTRODUCTORY

**I**N 1925<sup>1</sup> LEONARD BLOOMFIELD reconstructed a hypothetical Algonquian mother tongue. "Having provided himself—partly by his own fieldwork—with descriptions of a number of related languages, he proceeded to what he considered to be the next higher historical 'level of explanation': that is, to reconstruction, by comparison, of a common ancestral language . . ."<sup>2</sup> Proto-Algonquian (PA) was the result. And amongst the ten simple consonants Bloomfield set up for Proto-Algonquian are \*L, \*N, \*T, and \*TH, which appear in modern Algonquian languages as L, N, R, T, TH, and Y. These letters are easily recognized when they occur in Anglo-Algonquian place-names. Their demonstrably rigid and almost unfailing primitive relationships (modern Algonquian L, N, R, T, TH, and Y *reflect* PA \*L, \*N, \*T, and \*TH) identify dialects and have useful etymological implications. For one thing, in cases where clusters of Anglo-Algonquian place-names contain contradictory versions of one or another of these consonants (e.g., \*LASHAWAY, NASHUA; LEHIGH, RAHWAY; WETIPQUIN, WILIPQUIN) the contradictions, otherwise puzzling, are explained by the fact that various Algonquian dialects are evidently involved. Such dialects are thus incidentally illustrated. And there are further benefits. For instance, by observing its connections with Proto-Algonquian (PA), the place-name student can obtain fuller knowledge of the cognate forms and original locality of a name in L, N, R (etc.)—which is often the first, most important step in solving it.

Many decades before the establishment of Proto-Algonquian it was of course known that the Algonquian Indian had numerous distinct dialects.<sup>3</sup> This was particularly apparent in his peculiar treatment of L,

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<sup>1</sup> "On the Sound System of Central Algonquian," *Language*, 1 (1925), 130-156. Later: "Algoquian," in *Linguistic Structures of Native America* (Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, 6: New York, 1946), 85-129.

<sup>2</sup> "The Science of Language," *London Times Literary Supplement*, March 10, 1975, p. 262.

<sup>3</sup> See Hugh Jones, *The Present State of Virginia . . .*, ed. Richard L. Morton (University of North Carolina Press, for Virginia Historical Society, Chapel Hill, 1956).

N, R (less commonly T, TH, Y). Algonquians who spoke an L - dialect could not say R. William R. Gerard<sup>4</sup> points out that the speaker of an N - dialect could not say R or L. Early speakers of Menomini, according to Bloomfield,<sup>5</sup> could not say L, and therefore (e.g.) pronounced French *TheRese* as TaNes. For speakers of Plains Cree, Bloomfield<sup>6</sup> declares: “. . . *l* exists in neighboring dialects, while *r* is quite impossible.” In borrowed European given names, so Chrysostom Verwyst<sup>7</sup> notices, the Ojibwas, having neither L nor R, said MaNi for *MaRie*, MagaNit for *MargaRet*, and Nousis for *Louis*. In borrowed Biblical place-names N - dialect speakers said JeNosaNen for JERUSALEM and NazaNet for NAZARETH. No doubt these consonantal dialects affected all early Algonquian efforts to pronounce European sounds. It was probably an L - dialect (which would make the utterance of R impossible)<sup>8</sup> that caused Thoreau's Penobscot guide (*The Maine Woods*, 1864) to say: “Sometimes I lookum *locks* [i.e., rocks].”

These age-old dialects had already yielded some of their secrets to William R. Gerard in 1904, some 20 years before the conception of Proto-Algonquian, and therefore without any help from it. For it was then that Gerard, studying the “coradicate” place-names \*RAPAHANOCKE and \*TAPAHANOCKE, discovered the T or Tapehanek dialect of Virginia and thereby perceived a linguistic connection between the Powhatan language and Cree.<sup>9</sup> However, Gerard's linguistic perspective was necessarily limited, and it was only with the coming of PA that the occurrence and variability of L, N, R (less commonly T, TH, Y) in Anglo-Algonquian place-names could be studied and classified from the standpoint of a broad matrix. There are numerous instances—more concrete than the few given earlier—of how attention to these consonantal relationships to PA can enlighten the researcher in his quest for better etymologies. For example, the variables

<sup>4</sup> “The Tapehanek Dialect of Virginia,” *American Anthropologist* (n. s.), 6:2 (April-June 1904), 315-16: “An Indian using an N - dialect cannot pronounce . . . *r* or *l*, and there is no reason whatever why he should be able to do so; but one who speaks an R - or L - dialect must necessarily be able to pronounce *n*, since this is the initial of certain particles that are common to all Algonquian dialects.”

<sup>5</sup> *The Menomini Language* (New Haven and London, 1962), 23.

<sup>6</sup> *Plains Cree Texts* (Publications of the American Ethnological Society, 16: New York, 1934), p. 264. Here *Gaspard* is sometimes *kaspwān* and sometimes *kaspwāl*.

<sup>7</sup> *Chippewa Exercises* . . . (Harbor Springs, 1901), p. 3: “Chippewa has u, f, l, r, v, y, z, except in proper names derived from foreign languages; as the Indians cannot, generally speaking, pronounce these letters correctly, they substitute others.”

<sup>8</sup> I assume that the guide was a Penobscot. In his language L reflects PA \*TH. Penobscot has no R. See Eugene Vetromile, *Indian Good Book* . . . , 3rd ed. (New York, 1858), 17.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 313-30. Gerard's article is germinal. He speaks of L, N, and R dialects and (seeing a connection between Powhatan and Cree, suggested by his concept of the “Tapehanek dialect of Virginia”) he calls Cree the “oldest daughter” of “the primitive Algonquian language.”

MISSOULA and MISSOURI suggest that there was an L - dialect in the Illinois language, a fact that clarifies the derivation of both of these names from Illinois *missöri* "canot."<sup>10</sup> Again, the variations and reflections of L and R in Delaware language place-names (LACKAWANNA, LEHIGH, LYCOMING vs. RAHWAY, ROCKAWAY, ROCKAWALKING) not only indicate that there was once an R - dialect in Delaware, but add poignancy to the question of whether LEHIGH, RAHWAY, ROCKAWAY (etc.) contain Delaware *lekau* ("sand, gravel"; PA \**läkawi*-) or Delaware *lechauwaak* ("fork"; PA \**the'thaw*-, \**tha'thaw*-). Gerard was a remarkable pioneer; but without a framework such as PA he was working in the dark. Today's researchers have the advantage of knowing that the seemingly disorderly L's, N's, and R's (etc.) of living Anglo-Algonquian place-names usually hearken back with cogency and precision to primitive Indian speech ways.

However, one may well ask whether the consonants of Anglo-Algonquian place-names have enough phonetic accuracy to support dependable linguistic conclusions. To what extent, indeed, do some of these names merely represent the almost universal phonetic ambiguity of *l*, *n*, and *r*?<sup>11</sup> Gerard, perhaps feeling such doubts, declared that the study of Algonquian place-names was "very unsatisfactory."<sup>12</sup> Admittedly, such place-names—a mixture of Algonquian and English—are beyond the pale of the authentic Algonquian vocabularies. The present pronunciation of the names would certainly shock a native Algonquian, containing as they do fragmented and misconceived elements that only with time have become acceptable English. The adventurers who first heard them recorded them imperfectly. Later they were dismembered by the folk etymologist. ROCKAWALKING (Md.), for example, was certainly mishandled by the folk. Even so, the R here is intact and points reliably to an R - dialect. \*RICKENAW (Va.) and \*NARRACOSSIK (Va.) were no doubt similarly misconceived. Nevertheless, the R's are unmistakable and Frank Speck<sup>13</sup> accepts the two names as proof of a Powhatan R - dialect. When—as sometimes

<sup>10</sup> See Virgil Vogel's discussion in *Indian Place Names in Illinois*, Pamphlet Series no. 4, Illinois State Historical Society (Springfield, 1963), 77-78. Le Boulanger gives *missöri* as Illinois for "canot"; Gatschet's Peoria lexicon gives *missüli*.

<sup>11</sup> Algonquian L, N, R (etc.) characterize various dialects. Boas (*Handbook of American Indian Languages*, BAE Bulletin 40, I, 77) describes R as "on the whole" a rare sound in American languages. However, all Algonquians had to be able to pronounce N.

P.W. Joyce (*Origin and History of Irish Names of Places*, 4th ed., Dublin, 1875, p. 48) comments about L, N, R: "The interchange of these letters is common in most languages. It would be easy, if necessary, to give examples from every language in Europe." Cf. Amsterdam, \*Amsterdam.

<sup>12</sup> In a letter to George McAleer (ca. 1906).

<sup>13</sup> *The Rappahannock Indians of Virginia* (in *Indian Notes and Monographs*, 5:3, ed. F.W. Hodge), New York, 1925, p. 33.

occurs—the L's, N's, and R's in Anglo-Algonquian place-names are *false*, the reason is easily observable. The false R and L's of NEVERSINK (NAVESINK), NORWALK, and SETALKET are obviously owing to folk etymology. The false R in ANDROSCOGGIN appears to have come from Sir Edmond AndRos.<sup>14</sup> ROHOIC RUN (Va.), for example, is not Algonquian at all. It comes (see *Names*, 3:3[September, 1955], 190-91) from the Scotch border name, *Rhodhohowick*. Evidently, such exceptions prove the rule that most Algonquian L's, N's, R's (etc.) are sufficiently authentic to warrant acceptance at face value. It is reasonable to conclude that their linguistic testimony is dependable.

The place-name student has good cause, then, to examine with confidence, and in an organized fashion, the more striking instances of how Anglo-Algonquian place-names in L, N, R (and T, TH, Y) reflect their PA prototypes (PA \*L, \*N, \*T, and \*TH) and thus illustrate the dialectal peculiarities of native Algonquian speakers. To reiterate earlier remarks, the exercise is not merely academic, but promises to improve the quality of further place-name research. Before the reconstruction of Proto-Algonquian—when there were no hypothetical prototypes—such an examination could not have been undertaken. The variability and inconsistencies of L, N, R (etc.) in versions of the same name (e.g., QUILLIPIACK, QUINMIPIACK, QUIRIPIAC) were then explained as “errors of the ear,” “French phonetics,” “permutation,” “substitution,” or (Boas) “alternating apperception.” Today, in the aftermath of such Algonquianists as Bloomfield and Truman Michelson,<sup>15</sup> it is agreed that the apparently inexplicable alternation of L, N, R (etc.) in Anglo-Algonquian place-names really has method and can be fully accounted for as “. . . a matter of different bands of Indians speaking different dialects living in proximity to each other in the places under discussion.”<sup>16</sup> Roger Williams in 1643 (*A Key* . . . §“Of Beasts, etc.”) said of the New England Indians: “. . . the varietie of their Dialects and proper speech within thirtie or forty miles of each other is very

<sup>14</sup> *Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico* (BAE Bulletin 30), I, Washington, 1907, p. 89. S. v. Arosaguntocook.

<sup>15</sup> Michelson's illustrious studies in PA complemented those of Bloomfield. His *Preliminary Report on the Linguistic Classification of Algonquian Tribes* (28th Annual Report, BAE, 1906-07) appeared in 1912. In 1919 he wrote about “Two Proto-Algonquian Phonetic Shifts” (*Journal of the Washington Academy of Sciences*, IX, June). Perhaps his biggest contribution to Algonquian linguistics, apart from numerous constructions of PA archetypes, was his demonstration that the divergent western Algonquian languages (Blackfoot, Cheyenne, and Arapaho) show a satisfactory phonological correspondence with Proto-Algonquian. See his “Phonetic Shifts in Algonquian Languages,” *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 8 (1935), 131-177.

<sup>16</sup> James A. Geary. In *The Roanoke Voyages 1584-1590* . . . , ed. D.B. Quinn (London /Hakluyt Society/, 1955), II, Appendix II, 876.

great. . . .” Little did he realize that it could one day be maintained that the variable occurrence of L, N, R (etc.) in such dialects normally obeys Algonquian phonetic laws and provides improved etymological perspectives. The following comprehensive instances will illustrate this conclusion.

## II. Exemplification

### Place-Name Instances: I (PA \*L)

In certain Anglo-Algonquian place-names, L, N, R, Y, and TH reflect their Proto-Algonquian archetype, \*L. Such names exemplify L - \*L, N - \*L, Y - \*L, and TH - \*L dialects, respectively.

1. *L - \*L Dialect Place-Names* (Modern L reflects PA \*L). Delaware language examples are the following Pennsylvania and New Jersey stream-names that are usually explained as being from Delaware *lekau* (PA \**läkawi*) “sand”): \*LACOMICK CREEK (LYCOMING CREEK, today SANDY CREEK); LYCAMAHONING CREEK (whose source is SANDY LICK CREEK); and LOCKATONG CREEK, which the New Jersey Federal Writers’ Program (1939) defines as “sand hills place.” Other examples of Delaware L reflecting PA \*L are “Lenape” (the Delaware Indians) and the New Jersey places LENNI MILLS, LENAPE, and LAKE LENAPE (2). In these cases the L reflects the \*L of PA \**ileniwa* “man.” One compares the variant “Renape,” which points to a Delaware R - \*L dialect (R reflects PA \*L).

2. *N - \*L Dialect Place-Names* (Modern N reflects PA \*L). An example is MENOMINEE (Michigan river and towns), in which Meno- reflects the PA \*L of PA \**melwi*- “good, pleasant.”<sup>17</sup> An Ojibwa example is ONTONAGON RIVER (Michigan), where the second N reflects the \*L of PA \**ulakani* “dish, bowl.” Here *-onagon* (Baraga *onâgan*) means “dish.” This N - \*L dialect (N reflects PA \*L) occurs also in Fox, Shawnee, Cree, and Natick.

3. *R - \*L Dialect Place-Names* (Modern R reflects PA \*L). PERIBONKA RIVER (Quebec) is a Tete-de-Boule example.<sup>18</sup> *Perib*- appears to be a variant of Plains Cree *payip* “pierce” (Plains Cree Y reflects PA \*L). The meaning of the stem (“pierce”) favors the trans-

<sup>17</sup> Cf. MILWAUKEE “good land,” in which PA \**melwi*- appears with L. In Cree one finds *miyo*-. Fox, Algonkin, and Ojibwa (*menwi*, *mino*, *mino*) have N reflecting PA \*L. Menomini’s *meni* may be from an earlier *meli*-. See Hodge’s *Handbook* (Bulletin 30), I, 863.

<sup>18</sup> See John M. Cooper, “Tete de Boule Cree,” *International Journal of American Linguistics*, 11: 1 (January 1945), 36-44. He concludes that Tete de Boule is an R - dialect of Cree.

lation: "It is dug out in the sand."<sup>19</sup> A Peoria example is perhaps PEORIA (Illinois) itself. Here—if one may reject Gerard's "personal name" etymology (Hodge's *Handbook*, II, 228)—it appears that the meaning is related to "turkey" (R reflects the PA \*L of PA \**pelāwa* "turkey," PA \**pelāhsiwa* "bird").

AROOSTOOK (Maine) is a New England example of R reflecting PA \*L. Joseph Laurent<sup>20</sup> ascribes the name to either *walastegw* "shallow river" or *wlastegw* "good river." The latter interpretation is based on PA \**ul(e)* "well, good, favorable" PLUS PA \**e'tekw* "stream." It bears out John Huden's<sup>21</sup> "beautiful or shining river."

Place-name examples of an R - \*L dialect in the Algonquian languages of Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania are given later in a discussion of Delaware (V). It is enough to mention here that RAMAPO (N.J.), where R reflects PA \*L, perhaps hearkens back to PA \**ilenīwa* "man."

Examples of R from PA \*L in Powhatan and Carolina Algonquian are conjectural.<sup>22</sup> \*CROATOAN—taken as "Town of talk and council"—perhaps contains *kro* (whose R reflects the PA \*L of PA \**kelaw'ick* "tell a lie") PLUS PA \**otāweni* (cf. Delaware *uteney* "town"). ROANOKE—"polished shellbeads or wampum"—probably reflects (R - PA \*L) PA \**lāl-* "to smoothe, rub, polish" (appearing here as *rār-*). Finally, Powhatan \*RIGHKAHAUK—" (at the) sandy ground" (cf. ROCKAWALKING CREEK)—appears to have R from PA *lākawi* "sand." The Powhatan word for "sand" is *racaioh*.

4. Y - \*L and TH - \*L Dialect Place-Names (Modern Y and TH reflect PA \*L). Y reflects PA \*L in Plains Cree. TH reflects PA \*L in northern Cree. I have no place-name examples. However, there are some Cree generic names with PA \**ilenīwa* "man," a stem found often in place-names (e.g., ILLINOIS, LAKE LENAPE). Thus in Plains Cree and eastern Cree the L of PA \**ilenīwa* appears as Y (-*iyiniwok* "men"). And in northern Cree the \*L of PA \**ilenīwa* appears as TH (-*itheniwak* "men"). A name for the Cree is *Ayiniyiniwok* ("being like men").

<sup>19</sup> Ruling out Montagnais—which would have L for R—Professor James A. Geary concluded (personal correspondence): *Perib-* is Tete-de-Boule for what appears in Plains Cree as *payip* "pierce."

<sup>20</sup> Ed. *New Familiar Abenakis and English Dialogues* . . . (St. Francis, 1884), 106.

<sup>21</sup> *Indian Place Names of New England* (New York, 1962), 8.

<sup>22</sup> The first two names given here are discussed in Appendix C, *Commentary on the Map of Raleigh's Virginia (The Roanoke Voyages 1584-1590* . . . , ed. D.B. Quinn, London /Hakluyt Society/, 1955, II, 852-72). The editor remarks (p. 853): "The linguistic notes supplied by Professor James A. Geary provide some information on the character of Indian nomenclature, but the English forms of the names do not lend themselves readily to analysis . . . ."

## Place-Name Instances: II (PA \*N)

In all the Algonquian languages modern N reflects PA \*N (N - \*N dialect). That is, PA \*N itself always appears in the modern languages unchanged. However, in some of the languages modern N also reflects PA \*L and PA \*TH. This means that PA \*L and PA \*TH masquerade as N from PA \*N, and one must resort to analysis to single out the N's that directly reflect PA \*N.

*N - \*N Dialect Place-Names* (Modern N reflects PA \*N). The Pennsylvania creeks, NESHAMINY and NESHANNOCK—though they may seem to contain Natick *nashaue* (whose N is from the \*TH of PA \**tha'thāwi*- “in the middle”)—really derive their N's from PA \*N (PA \**nēcīwaki* “they are two”).<sup>23</sup> Two other cases where modern N reflects original PA \*N (and not PA \*TH or PA \*L) are NIPIGON (Ontario) and LAKE NIPISSING (Ontario). Each of these names represents PA \**nepi* “water.” Another Canadian name, NEMISKAU LAKE (Quebec) reflects PA \**namā'sa* “fish.”

## Place-Name Instances: III (PA \*TH)

In certain Anglo-Algonquian place-names modern L, N, R, and T reflect the original PA archetype \*TH. Such names represent L - \*TH, N - \*TH, R - \*TH, and T - \*TH dialects.

1. *L - \*TH Dialect Place-Names* (Modern L reflects PA \*TH). Delaware examples are New Jersey's ALLAMUCHY POND and LAMINGTON RIVER,<sup>24</sup> which may both—in lieu of a better explanation—be derived from Delaware *allum* “dog” (where L reflects the \*TH of PA \**athemwa* “dog”). If one prefers to explain these two names by Delaware *allami* “within” (PA \**athāmi*- “inside, beneath”), L reflecting PA \*TH is still illustrated.

A comparable name in Connecticut is ALLUM POND. Gannett (*Origin*, 1905, p. 22) writes: “The word signifies ‘dog’ in the local Indian dialect.” Finally, there are two Delaware language examples from Pennsylvania: LOYALHANNA CREEK (*Royal Hannon*, Montcalm 1758), possibly “middle river,” and LOYALSOCK CREEK, “having a midway position.” The initial element of each is

<sup>23</sup> See George P. Donehoo, *A History of the Indian Villages and Place Names in Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg, 1928), 127-28.

<sup>24</sup> These names are discussed unsatisfactorily in Donald Becker's *Indian Place Names in New Jersey* (Cedar Grove, 1964), p. 5, pp. 27-28. His remarks about LAMINGTON do mention *allum*, *allumus* “a dog, or a wolfish dog” (BAE). LAMINGTON is from an earlier \*ALLAMETUNK. Cf. the Carolina Algonquian variants, ALAMANCE CREEK, \*ARAMANCHY RIVER. Here a cognate R - dialect is indicated. The meaning quite likely relates to PA \**aθemwa* “dog.”

perhaps Delaware *lāwi-* “the middle, midst” (L reflects PA \*TH as in PA \**thāwi-* “middle”).<sup>25</sup>

2. N - \*TH Dialect Place-Names (Modern N reflects PA \*TH). A New Hampshire example<sup>26</sup>, NASHUA (“the land between [streams]”) probably reflects PA \*TH as in PA \**tha'thāwi-* “in the middle.” This same PA \**tha'thāwi-* appears to be represented in Maryland by NASSAWADOX and NASSAWANGO CREEK (“between the streams, ground between the streams”).<sup>27</sup> Gerard finds an N - \*TH dialect in Powhatan.<sup>28</sup> But I do not consider PA \*TH to be clearly reflected in \*ONAWMANIENT (Gerard’s example) when it is defined as “he who paints himself.” However, an N - \*TH dialect for Virginia (Powhatan) and Maryland can be seen in \*ONAWMANIENT if one considers the name to contain a reflection of PA \**athāmi-* (modern *anami* in an N - \*TH dialect) “inside, beneath.” Present day vestiges of \*ONAWMANIENT are NOMINY BAY (Virginia) and MONIE BAY / moù náí /, Maryland.<sup>29</sup>

3. R - \*TH Dialect Place-Names (Modern R reflects PA \*TH). A Virginia instance is RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER (“where the current flows back again”), with R reflecting PA \*TH, as in PA \**thāpi-* “again.” A Quebec example is RIMOUSKI, whose probable meaning (“home or retreat of dogs”) makes it likely that the R reflects the \*TH of PA \**athemwa* “dog.” RIMOUSKI, however, is in a Micmac area, and in Micmac PA \*TH is represented by L (*ülumooch* “dog”)<sup>30</sup> instead of R. Abnaki is a neighboring language. The R of RIMOUSKI may therefore have come from Sebastian Rasles’ “old version” of Abnaki, an R - dialect. Montagnais is also a neighboring language; and Lemoine<sup>31</sup> states that the French missionaries added G, J, and R to Montagnais. Therefore it could be urged that the R in RIMOUSKI comes from the French. We know, however, that, as to R and L, the Indians had strong dialectal habits. Hence it seems indeed superflu-

<sup>25</sup> See my “Settling Laurel’s Business,” *Names*, 9:3 (September, 1961), 160-162.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. “Lashaway” (tract, 1665) a Massachusetts L - dialect counterpart of NASHUA. Harry Andrews Wright (ed., *Indian Deeds of Hampden County /Massachusetts/ . . .*, Springfield, 1905, p. 60) translates “midway, between.”

<sup>27</sup> See my *Origin and Meaning of the Indian Place Names of Maryland* (Baltimore, 1961), 98-99.

<sup>28</sup> “The Tapehanek Dialect of Virginia,” *American Anthropologist* (n.s.), 6 (April-June, 1904), 313-330.

<sup>29</sup> *Origin and Meaning of the Indian Place Names of Maryland*, p. 93.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. ALAMOOSOOK (a lake on Orland River) which (v. Fannie Eckstorm, *Indian Place Names of the Penobscot Valley and the Maine Coast . . . Name Bulletin*, XLIV, November, 1941, 187-88) Abbé Marault interpreted as “the country of the little dogs” (from *alemoos* “dog”).

<sup>31</sup> George Lemoine, *Dictionnaire Français-Montagnais* (Boston, 1901), p. 5, 2nd part. Luc Sirois (*Montagnais Sans Maître*, Bersimis /1936/) cites Lemoine to this effect, and adds that “aujourd’hui” R is no longer used and MaRi (MaRie) can be written and pronounced MaLi.



ous to doubt the Algonquian phonetic integrity of such plainly recorded consonants.

4. *T - \*TH Dialect Place-Names* (Modern T reflects PA \*TH). A Powhatan example is TAPPAHANNOCK (Essex Co., Virginia), which (like RAPPAHANNOCK, its counterpart in an R - \*TH dialect) apparently reflects PA \**thāpi-* "again, instead of, back again." A second Powhatan name that seems to illustrate T from PA \*TH is \*UTTAMUSSAC (extinct Powhatan village). This reflection (T reflects PA \*TH) is evident if one relates \*UTTAMUSSAC to the *attamusco* of "attamusco (atamasco) lily," where the first part of the name (*attam-*) may represent PA \**athāmi-* "under" (PLUS "grass").<sup>32</sup> It is also evident (T reflects PA \*TH) if, instead, one relates \*UTTAMUSSAC to Strachey's (Bodleian) *attemous* "dog" (PA \**athemwa*).<sup>33</sup> A final example, from Cree, may be LAKE ITASCA (Minnesota), in whose basin arises the Mississippi River. Here, if one takes the meaning to be "It rushes forth," the initial element *it-* would reflect PA \**ith-* "thus."

Since T can also reflect PA \*T (T - \*T Dialect), not all Anglo-Algonquian place-names in T are in the foregoing category (where T reflects PA \*TH). OTTAWA and TEMISCAMING (Ottawa River, Quebec), for example, look as though they have T from PA \*TH. However, their T's (reflecting PA \*T) come from PA \**atāwā* "trade," sell, barter," and PA \**temi-* "deep," respectively.

### III. Transitional

The foregoing examples give a wide-ranging selection of the L, N, R (T, TH, Y) dialects illustrated by Anglo-Algonquian place-names. However, it was not intended, in setting them forth, to describe the phonology of the Algonquian languages. That, in most instances, has already been done by field work and in a quantity of essays, grammars, and dictionaries. Nevertheless, in certain cases, place-names with L, N, and R *do* sometimes cast light on the standard phonology of an entire Algonquian language. Delaware and the Illinois language are examples. It would appear from the evidence of the place-name ILLINOIS that the

<sup>32</sup> William R. Gerard, "Virginia's Indian Contribution to English," *American Anthropologist* (n. s.), 9: 3 (1907). The name appears (atamasco lily) in Hodge's *Handbook* (Bulletin 30), I, 106. See also Gerard (*American Anthropologist*, n. s., 7, p. 222) on *Uttamussack* as "sharp edge cutting tools."

<sup>33</sup> In John P. Harrington's "The Original Strachey Vocabulary of the Virginia Indian Language" (. . . No. 46 in *Anthropological Papers* . . . 43-46 /Bulletin 157 . . . BAE/, Washington, 1955). Harrington remarks (p. 195): ". . . actually the Virginia Indian language is merely a dialect of Delaware." "There existed, no doubt, dialects in the Virginia Indian language, but the extant material is entirely inadequate for determining the nature and extent of these."

Illinois language had an L; though Kelton,<sup>34</sup> disbelieving this, declared that the L in ILLINOIS comes from a French version of \*ININOWE. And from New Jersey place-name evidence (NARRATICON, PARAMUS, PARSIPPANY, RAHWAY, RAMAPO, RANCOCAS, RARITAN, REPAUPO, ROCKAWAY, WARRINANCO, etc.) it is clear that there were R - \*L and R - \*TH dialects in the Delaware language. Indeed, almost the only living vestiges of some Algonquian languages (e.g., Delaware, Powhatan) are place-names.

Because the presence of an R in the Delaware language has been so much debated and hinges heavily on the evidence of place-names, it appears proper that the rest of this essay address itself to two related subjects: (1) the Delaware R debate generally; and (2) the problem of determining with accuracy which PA archetype (PA \**lakawi* "sand, gravel" or PA \**the'thaw-*, \**tha'thaw-* "fork") is the correct one in such cognate Pennsylvania and New Jersey stream-names as \*LACOMICK (LYCOMING), LACKAWANNA, LACKAWAXEN, LEHIGH, LYCAMAHONING, RAHWAY, LAHAWAY, ROCKAWAY, etc. These names, I suggest, afford a practical opportunity to reassess and perhaps improve the correctness of certain conventional etymologies in the light of a Proto-Algonquian matrix (PA).

#### IV. Delaware: The R Debate

It is reasonable to describe Delaware as an L language with an elusive R dialect (R reflects both PA \*L and PA \*TH). However, the standard Delaware dictionaries depict the language as not having any R's at all. Both Speck<sup>35</sup> and Loskiel<sup>36</sup> regarded Delaware as an L language, and C.F. Voegelin's phonology of Lenape Delaware<sup>37</sup> has no R. As for opinions to the contrary, Heckewelder declares<sup>38</sup> that the Delawares had

<sup>34</sup> Dwight H. Kelton, *Indian Names of Places Near the Great Lakes* (Detroit, 1888), I, 27-28. Kelton was unaware of the fact that both ILLINOIS and \*ININOWE reflect PA \**-ileniwa* "man." In ILLINOIS L reflects PA \*L; in \*ININOWE N reflects PA \*L. For some reason the L - dialect form (ILLINOIS) has prevailed.

<sup>35</sup> *A Study of the Delaware Indian Big House Ceremony*. Publications of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, II (Harrisburg, 1931), 76.

<sup>36</sup> George Henry Loskiel, *History of the Mission of the United Brethren Among the Indians . . .* (London, 1794), 19. He remarks: ". . . *f*, *v*, *ph* and *r* are wanting in their alphabet. They therefore omit them entirely in foreign words, or pronounce them indifferently, for example . . . Petelus for Petrus, Pliscilla for Priscilla."

<sup>37</sup> *Delaware, an Eastern Algonquian Language* (in *Linguistic Structures of Native America*, Viking Fund Publications in Anthropology, 6: New York, 1946), 130-157. There is no *r* in Dr. Voegelin's sounds and phonemes. However, his principal informant was from Dewey, Oklahoma, whose Indians ". . . are said to speak Lenape Delaware as opposed to Munsee Delaware."

<sup>38</sup> Rev. John Heckewelder, *Names Which the Lenni Lanape or Delaware Indians Gave . . .* in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, IV, Art. XI, 1834, p. 354: ". . . It seems that,

an R in the "time of the Swedes." And, according to Brinton,<sup>39</sup> Lewis Morgan found R in a number of "pure Delaware words" in Kansas. Moreover, the case for Delaware R is strengthened by the presence of indubitable R dialects in neighboring Powhatan. The following are perhaps the most tangible indications of a Delaware R: (1) the words with R in the vocabularies of William Penn (1683), Gabriel Thomas (1698), and Thomas Campanius Holm (1702);<sup>40</sup> and (2) the survival today of at least 29 Delaware place-names in R (ten in Pennsylvania, and 19 in New Jersey). The debate is given a somewhat negative bias, however, by Nils G. Holmer<sup>41</sup> who, after suggesting the possible influence of a peculiar Swedish L, concluded (1946) that the Delawares did not differentiate at all between R and L: "This means that either only an l sound or an r sound, or sometimes a sound intermediate between both, is used in Delaware for the liquid consonants." However, it is not at all negative that there are living cognate Delaware language stream-names that still today are clearly spelled and clearly pronounced, some with L and also some with R!

#### V. Delaware: *Lekau* vs. *Lechauwaak*

The Pennsylvania and New Jersey place-names in L and R that mean either "sand(y)" or "fork, branch" still bear the definitions given them decades ago by John Heckewelder and Peter Lindstrom and reiterated in more modern times by such writers as Amandus Johnson, A.F. Chamberlain, George P. Donehoo, the New Jersey Writers' Program (1939), and Domald Becker.<sup>42</sup> Doubt would not arise as to the accuracy of these definitions were it not for two disquieting facts: (1) the two Delaware words involved (*lekau* "sand"; *lechauwaak* "fork, branch") so fully resemble each other that they are entangled indistinguishably in the names they have given rise to; and (2) little effort has ever been made to test the etymological verdicts in the light of geography and local history.

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in the time of the Swedes, the tribes . . . on . . . the Delaware used . . . r instead of l. These tribes were extinct when I came to this country . . . "

<sup>39</sup> Daniel Brinton, *The Lenape and Their Legends* . . . (Philadelphia, 1885), 94.

<sup>40</sup> Holm's *Kort Beskrifning* (tr. by Peter S. DuPonceau, Philadelphia, 1834, as *A Short Description of the Province of New Sweden*), Stockholm /1702/, lists words in the Renapi dialect (*Renáppi* "man").

<sup>41</sup> *John Campanius' Lutheran Catechism in the Delaware Language* (American Institute in the University of Upsala . . . *Essays and Studies on the English Language and Literature* . . . III), Upsala, 1946.

<sup>42</sup> The earliest definitions appear to be in Peter Lindeström's *Geographia Americae with an Account of the Delaware Indians Based on Surveys and Notes Made in 1654-1656* (tr. . . . with an *Appendix of Indian Geographical Names* . . . by Amandus Johnson, Philadelphia, 1925) and such works by John Heckewelder as *Names Which the Lenni Lenape or Delaware Indians Gave* . . . (ed. William C. Reichel, Bethlehem, 1872).

The first fact justifies a new look at the early spellings and at what lies behind the disguises given them by the folk. The second fact, since it implies an estimate of the relative predominance of sand, gravel, and forks, promises not only to sustain some of the early conclusions but to settle certain problem etymologies at once. The names, each with a current commentary, follow.

## NEW YORK

LACKAWACK CREEK. West branch of Rondout Creek, Sullivan County. Beauchamp: a "river fork." Geography corroborates Beauchamp. Delaware *lechauwaak* has become "lackawack"; *ch* becomes /k/.

## PENNSYLVANIA

LACKAWANNA RIVER. Tributary of the Susquehanna. Heckewelder and Donehoo: "fork(s) of a stream." Geography confirms the definition. Delaware *lechauwaak* has become "lackaw . . ." The name ends in *-(h)anna* (PA *\*-aha-*, *\*-ahahw-* "waves, flood," etc.).

LACKAWANNOCK CREEK. Branch of the Shenango River. *Lahawanick* (Howell 1792). It means the same as LACKAWANNA. Geography confirms the definition. *Lechau* . . . seems to have given "laha . . ." "Laha . . ." became (folk?) "lacka . . ."

LACKAWAXEN CREEK. Branch of the Delaware at \*LACKAWAXEN. *Lechawacsein* (Evans 1755). Geography confirms "fork(s)." Mrs. Charlotte Murray, Hawley Library: "The river itself is much too swift to be sandy." The *ch* of *lechauwaak* has become /k/. Evans' *-sein* suggests a German influence.

\*LACOMICK. See LYCOMING.

LEHIGH RIVER. A tributary of the Delaware. *Lechay* (Penn 1701). Col. Rec. Pa. II, 21-22 (1852): ". . . at Lechay, or ye forks of Delaware." Geologist J. Donald Ryan (Lehigh University) writes me: "The river bottom is silty rather than sandy and . . . there are no sandy beaches along the flood plain." Local history and geography confirm "fork(s)." *Lechau* . . . has given "lehigh"; *ch* gives *h*.

LEHIGHTON CREEK. A small tributary of the Delaware, half a mile from LEHIGH RIVER. *Lehieton* (Scull 1759). Geography confirms "fork(s)." Conjecture: the *-ton* (folk) may reflect PA *\*e?tan* "flow, current."

\*LYCAMAHONING CREEK. Allegheny River tributary. *Lycamahoning* (Scull 1770). Today it is REDBANK CREEK, one of whose sources is SANDY LICK CREEK (Howell 1792). Geography confirms "at the sandy lick" (*-mahoni-* "lick"; *-ing* "at"). Delaware *lekau* becomes "Lyca- . . ."; *k* remains /k/.

LYCOMING CREEK. The present SANDY CREEK; earlier \*LACOMICK. Allegheny River tributary. 1755: *Lecamick*. Geography confirms "sandy." *Lekau* has given "Leca-", "Lyca-"; *k* remains /k/.

#### NEW JERSEY

LAHAWAY CREEK / lāwèr, léi wèr, lāhə wèr, lə hál ə wèr /. Also "Laholloway Plantation." It joins Crosswick Creek; Monmouth County. Describing the area as "all sand here," Mrs. Lottie Switlik (Lahaway Plantation) speaks of a swamp, and remarks that from headwaters here local rivers originate. Further details, given to me by David Parris,<sup>43</sup> indicate that, although this stream could be thought of as a small north *fork* of Crosswick Creek, it is more probable that the name was suggested by glauconite, a "conspicuous green *sand*," waste piles of which are still visible near LAHAWAY in the vicinity of Hornerstown. Geography seems to confirm *lekau* "sand(y)." Delaware *k* has become /h/.

LOCKATONG CREEK. / lákətəŋ, lákətəvn /. Delaware River tributary half a mile west of Stockton. Six miles to the northeast is Sand Brook. An informant remarks that locally there are several Sand(y) Hill roads. Geography seems to confirm *lekau* "sand(y)"; *k* has become *ck* /k/. H.G. Schmidt (*Some Hunterdon County Place Names*. Flemington, 1959), mistakenly locating LOCKTOWN village on LOCKATONG CREEK, explains the village name as a corruption of LOCKATONG. However, LOCKTOWN is really on Wickecheoke Creek / wítʃiúki /, two miles from LOCKATONG CREEK. This bolsters the story of Mrs. Ellen Walker (Locktown) that the name arose in 1819 when, on account of a quarrel, one Baptist faction locked another Baptist faction out of the church.

MANTOLOKING. A sandy coastal community in Ocean County. Geography confirms "sand(y)." *Lekau* has become "-lok-"; *k* gives /k/.

\*MONSELAUGHAWAY. Evidently effaced by the Spruce Run Reservoir. Claire Young (Museum, Clinton, N.J.) tells me that the waters of the Reservoir flow forth (in Clinton) as the North Branch of the Raritan. The only evidence of sand is Sand Hill Road, four miles east. The stream is evidently a fork, but is it the \*MONSELAUGHAWAY? Geography seems to confirm "fork(s)." Here *lechauwaak* appears to have become "-laugh-"; *ch* gives *-gh-*. Con-

<sup>43</sup> My information comes from the New Jersey State Museum, Trenton, December, 1975. Thanks to Leah Slosberg, Director, and Margaret Caesar, BAE researcher, Mr. Parris has given this opinion. He is described as "the geologist - paleontologist with our Science Bureau."

jecture: "Minsi Fork of the Raritan."

RAHWAY RIVER. / rʰwèi /. It flows into Arthur Kill, opposite Staten Island. Deed 1687-88: *Raway*. Archives N.J. (XI, 1704-39): *Rahaway*, *Rawway*. Hanson (Rahway Jr. High School): (1) the river has many /small/ forks; (2) it used to be dredged for sand for construction. The Mayor, Rahway (1975): (1) it could be considered a river of forks; (2) it is tidal, ". . . thus could be considered sandy." The banks of the Rahway near its mouth are sandy. The stream could perhaps be thought of as a branch or fork of Arthur Kill. All in all, geography and local history seem to confirm "sand(y)." If this is true, the *k* of *lekau* has become *h*.

ROCKAWAY CREEK. A tributary of the Lamington River. There are two branches, North Rockaway Creek and South Rockaway Creek. Geography seems to confirm "fork(s)." Here the *ch* of Delaware *lechauwaak* becomes /k/.

ROCKAWAY RIVER. A fork of the Passaic River. Archives N.J. (1724): ". . . a branch of Pesayuck River called Rockaway River." Geography seems to confirm "fork(s)." The *ch* of *lechauwaak* has become /k/.

## LONG ISLAND

ROCKAWAY BEACH (INLET, POINT, etc.). Geography confirms "sand(y)." *Lekau* has become "Rocka-"; *k* remains /k/.

## MARYLAND

ROCKAWALKING CREEK. Small Wicomico River tributary (So. Md.). Insignificant as a fork or branch. The region it flows through is plainly sandy. Geography confirms "sand(y)." *Lekau* has given "rockawa-"; *k* remains /k/. Cf. Strachey (Bodleian) *Racaioh* "sand" (Powhatan).

## CONCLUSION

Geography and local history indicate that the standard etymologies of all the Pennsylvania names (see above) are correct. In New Jersey, however, the confirmation of geography is contradictory, as in the case of RAHWAY, and leaves one uneasy as to LAHAWAY, \*MONSELAUGHAWAY, etc. Without indubitable evidence one is almost forced to agree with New Jersey's geologist, Kemble Widmer:<sup>44</sup> ". . . you cannot make an interpretation, since every stream seems to have the

<sup>44</sup> Mr. Widmer writes (September, 1973) from the Bureau of Geology and Topography, P.O. Box 1889, Trenton.

three conditions (sand, gravel, forks) which would thus make a distinction impossible." Even so, there can be no doubt about the beach names MANTOLOKING and ROCKAWAY.

As for the linguistic approach to the etymologies, it must be emphasized that the fact that several of the names are in L and several in R constitutes no contradiction whatever. This simply shows that some of the names are in an L - dialect and some in an R - dialect. Instead, the really important linguistic contradictions are those—all mentioned above—that involve the *k* of *lekau* and the *ch* of *lechauwaak*. The contradictions seem largely owing to German influence and the fantasies of the folk.

The vicissitudes of the *k* in *lekau* have the most regularity: *k* is unchanged in L - dialect \*LYCAMAHONING, LYCOMING, and MANTOLOKING; and it is unchanged in R - dialect ROCKAWAY BEACH and ROCKAWALKING (Md.). However, in four cases the *ch* of *lechauwaak* has also become *k*. The biggest ambiguity amongst all these shifts is that the *k* of *lekau* and the *ch* of *lechauwaak* both give "rock—"—the *k* appearing (as *k*) in ROCKAWAY BEACH and ROCKAWALKING and the *ch* (as *k*) in ROCKAWAY CREEK and ROCKAWAY RIVER. The *k* of *lekau* was evidently readily confused with the Germanic *ch* of *lechauwaak*. Folk etymology, with its lightly contrived "high," "lack," "laugh," "lock," "rock," etc., further muddied the waters. In contrast to the troublesomely identical *lekau* and *lechauwaak* are the two completely distinct PA prototypes they reflect: \**läkawi-* and \**the'thaw-*, \**tha'thaw-*, respectively.

As recently as 1964 a writer on Indian place-names in New Jersey used the word "permutation" to explain the alternation of L and R in some of these names. This is a grievous error. "Permutation" describes no valid Algonquian phonetic principle at all. It cannot be insisted too strongly that L, N, R (etc.) in Anglo-Algonquian place-names—though their vicissitudes may at first seem confusing and inexplicable—do not in any sense "permutate." Mainly, they are Algonquian sounds in their own right and reflect with rigidity their counterparts (\*L, \*N, \*T, and \*TH) in the Proto-Algonquian sound system.

### Annapolis, Maryland

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