Early Eastern Algonquian Language Books in the British Library

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Dispersed across the early printed book collections of the British Library, there are many important works relevant to the study of the indigenous languages of North America. This article considers materials in or about the Eastern Algonquian group of languages. These include the languages of New England first encountered by Puritan settlers from Britain in the mid-seventeenth century. The aim is to survey what can be found in the Library, and to place these items in a linguistic and historical context. Any survey has to have its limits, and this study considers only volumes printed before the middle of the nineteenth century. This limit means that the first examples of printing in each of the published Eastern Algonquian languages are included; it also reflects the pragmatic view taken in the British Library reading rooms that ‘early’ means before the mid-nineteenth century. The study includes all letterpress books and pamphlets, irrespective of whether they were issued in Europe or North America. ‘A’ reference numbers in square brackets, e.g. [A1], relate to entries in the Chronological Check-list given as an appendix, where current British Library shelfmarks are quoted for all early imprints.

Fig. 1. Map showing the habitations of speakers of the Algonquian language family.
The Algonquian language family as a whole is one of the largest and most extensive linguistic groupings in North America.\textsuperscript{1} The family comprises numerous languages and dialects historically spoken right across the continent, from subarctic Canada to the Great Plains, and from New England to northern California. The majority of speakers however were traditionally located around the Great Lakes, the north-eastern coast of the United States, and Atlantic Canada, the zone broadly classified as the North-eastern Woodland Culture Area.\textsuperscript{2} The Algonquian (often Algonkian) language family was named after the Algonquins (or Algonkins), just one of the peoples speaking this type of language. The two terms Algonquian and Algonquin have sometimes erroneously been used interchangeably, and to make matters more confusing during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Algonquin was even used on occasions to describe what must have been South-East Ojibwa (Chippewa), spoken hundreds of miles to the west.\textsuperscript{3}

Linguists have determined that the Algonquian languages spoken along the Atlantic coast from Canada’s Maritime Provinces down through New England to coastal Virginia and North Carolina all exhibit similar enough characteristics for them to be taken together as the Eastern Algonquian group. In some places there was a speech continuum whereby neighbours could fairly easily understand one another, but would have experienced difficulty in understanding people from further away.

Many of the early Dutch, Swedish, English and French colonies were established within the territories of the Eastern Algonquian speakers. These Europeans attempted to record the names of the Indian nations they encountered. However, there was rarely a complete understanding on the part of the colonists of how different Indian groups related to one another. The \textit{Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico} describes the situation thus:

\begin{quote}
the data are in fact so meager in many instances as to leave it doubtful whether certain bodies were confederacies, tribes, bands, or clans, especially bodies which have become extinct or cannot be identified, since early writers have frequently designated settlements or bands of the same tribe as distinct tribes.\textsuperscript{4}
\end{quote}

Any classification of the Eastern Algonquian peoples and their languages is therefore open to discussion. As few of the languages will be familiar to a general British readership, it seems worthwhile to try to provide a listing based on what appears to be a consensus in the published literature, and this is given as Table 1. Languages are listed north to south with their general locations at the time of initial European contact.

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\textsuperscript{1} Discussions of the language families of North America and their potential inter-relationships can be found in numerous reference works. Of particular note is William C. Sturtevant (ed.), \textit{Handbook of the North American Indians}, vol. xvii: Languages (Washington, 1996).

\textsuperscript{2} Again there are numerous works in this field, but a good scholarly introduction is William C. Sturtevant (ed.), \textit{Handbook of the North American Indians}, vol. xv: Northeast (Washington, 1978).


Table 1. The Eastern Algonquian Languages

1. Micmac
   New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Québec
   (Gaspé Peninsula)
2. Maliseet-Passamaquoddy
   New Brunswick, Maine
3. Eastern Abenaki (including Penobscot)
   Maine
4. Western Abenaki
   Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont
5. Massachusett (including Pokanoket/Wampanoag)
   Massachusetts
6. Narragansett
   Rhode Island
7. Pequot-Mohegan (including Shinnecock and Montauk)
   Connecticut, New York (Long Island)
8. Quiripi (including Unkechaug)
   Connecticut, New York (Long Island)
9. Mahican (or Mohican, ‘Stockbridge’)
   New York, Massachusetts
10. Munsee Delaware
    New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania
11. Unami Delaware (including Unalachtigo and Unami Jargon)
    New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware
12. Nanticoke-Conoy
    Maryland, Delaware
13. Virginia Algonquian (including ‘Powhatan’, Rappahannock, Pamunkey, Mattaponi, etc.)
    Virginia
14. Carolina Algonquian (including Roanoke)
    North Carolina

There are other names associated with this family, which could be further languages now lost, such as ‘Etchemin’ and ‘Loup’.

Many speakers of the Eastern Algonquian languages are still located along the Atlantic coast. Others have become scattered across the United States and Canada, sometimes forming new alliances and identifying themselves under new ethnic names. The Brotherton Nation of Wisconsin for example comprises descendants of various Eastern Algonquian-speaking groups, including Pequot, Mohegan, Montauk and Unami Delaware. Only Micmac and Maliseet-Passamaquoddy are still spoken to any significant degree today, with the Penobscot variety of Eastern Abenaki and the Delaware languages being regularly used by much smaller numbers.

Printing in these languages extends back to the mid-seventeenth century, but they were not the first indigenous North American languages to appear in print. A brief vocabulary of the Iroquoian language of the Huron people appeared in 1545 in Jacques Cartier’s report of his travels up the St Lawrence River, and there was a much fuller dictionary of Huron
printed in 1632. Also at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Spanish missionaries produced a series of texts in the now extinct Timucua language of Florida. But, largely because the British colonization of southern New England was so extensive and permanent, an especially varied range of publications was produced early on in the Algonquian languages of the Atlantic coast.

Survey of Eastern Algonquian Books in the British Library

The geographical spread of printing in the Eastern Algonquian languages follows initially the settlement patterns of the European colonists who crossed the Atlantic in the seventeenth century to start new lives on the eastern coast of North America. We first see examples of Massachusett, Narragansett and Quiripi, resulting from the interaction between English or Welsh settlers and the native peoples of southern New England. In the eighteenth century, missionaries develop writing systems for the Delaware and Mahican languages to the west and south-west. And finally, with the dawn of the nineteenth century, examples of the more northerly languages begin to appear in print.

The following survey is not exhaustive in as much as there are numerous further publications which reproduce extracts taken from pre-existing works (most frequently the Lord’s Prayer), numbers, or months of the year. These can be identified by using the language indexes included within Pilling’s authoritative Bibliography of the Algonquian Languages. The arrangement of the survey follows this broad-brush pattern of contact and publishing as seen through the collections of the British Library: first Massachusett, then Narragansett, Quiripi, Delaware, Mahican, Micmac, Abenaki, and finally Maliseet-Passamaquoddy.

Massachusett

Massachusett (Massachuset) was the generic name given to the variety of Eastern Algonquian spoken primarily in what is now eastern Massachusetts, including the area around Boston, Cape Cod, Martha’s Vineyard, Nantucket, and the Elizabeth Islands. There were probably several different groups which spoke variants of this language without necessarily identifying as a single people. Because of location, the language was regularly printed in the early years of English colonization, and seems to have flourished particularly from the 1660s to the 1750s. It fell into decline as native populations dwindled or became assimilated, and the last speakers are reported to have disappeared some time in the late nineteenth century.

The first appearance in print of Massachusett words is in an appendix to William Wood’s New England’s Prospect [A1]. It comprises a brief Indian and English vocabulary, described as a ‘Nomenclator’. It begins with an alphabetical listing of general terms, and then gives some short classified vocabularies relating to numbers, days, months, river names, and so on. Only one copy of the first edition can be found in the British Library, but there are four copies of the 1635 edition [A2]: one each formerly owned by King George III and Sir Joseph Banks, and two copies acquired for the general collections. Furthermore, a copy of the 1639 edition [A3] was received with the library of Thomas Grenville.

5 James Constantine Pilling, Bibliography of the Algonquian Languages (Washington, 1891).
6 For a more detailed presentation on Massachusett, see Ives Goddard & Kathleen J. Bragdon, Native Writings in Massachusetts (Philadelphia, 1988).
7 One of these copies, the volume at shelfmark 1061.a.21.(1.), has not been consulted as it has long been absent from the Library’s shelves.
Significant printing in the Massachusetts language, or indeed in any Eastern Algonquian language, begins with the translations of John Eliot (1604-90). Eliot was an English clergyman born in Widford, Hertfordshire, who emigrated to the American colonies in 1631. He settled initially at Boston but by the end of 1632 had moved to the nearby town of Roxbury where he became pastor. Eliot devoted his life to converting the local population to Christianity, and by 1646 he had learned Massachusetts well enough to be able to preach. He gathered his converts into new Christian settlements. One of these was named Natick (place of hills), and the written form of the Massachusetts language is also sometimes known by this name. Interestingly, Eliot had originally learned his Indian language from a young man from Long Island who must have spoken a language more akin to Pequot-Mohegan or Quiripi, suggestive of the degree to which a language continuum existed along the coast of Southern New England. In the course of some thirty-seven years, Eliot wrote or translated a series of important religious and linguistic works, developing orthographical conventions and establishing the mainland dialect he heard around him as the standard. All his works were printed locally at Cambridge by Marmaduke Johnson, often in partnership with Samuel Green. It should be noted that Eliot was not only associated with Indian language works; he was also one of the editors of the influential 1640 \textit{Whole Book of Psalms} (or ‘Bay Psalm Book’) and published several other religious tracts and reports in English.

No copies are thought to survive of Eliot’s first translation into Massachusetts, a Christian catechism issued in 1653. The earliest of his works found in the British Library is his translation of the New Testament [A7], issued in 1661 in time for the restoration of the monarchy back in England. With the exception of the main title-page and the dedication to King Charles II, the work is entirely in Massachusetts. Two copies are held: one purchased and the other received with the library of Thomas Grenville. More than one printed state of the 1661 New Testament is known to exist, but both these copies are the same, having English and Massachusetts title-pages. In 1663 Eliot’s translation of the Old Testament was ready for publication; it was issued together with the existing New Testament and a catechism as \textit{The Holy Bible}, and constitutes both the first Bible printed in the Americas and the first Bible produced in any native American language. Again, more than one printed state of this work is known to exist. The British Library holds a copy of the type which contains the English-language title-page [A8], and the one with only a Massachusetts title-page [A9]. The former was received with the library of King George III, and contains his royal arms as a printed frontispiece. At some point, the arms have been coloured. The latter copy was part of the library of Thomas Grenville. It appears to have been given to him by Edward Everett, and a letter to this effect dated 5 August 1844 has been inserted: Pilling points out in his \textit{Bibliography} that Everett was at this time Minister of the United States to Great Britain. The New Testament was issued again in 1680, but this version is not held. It was however included in a second edition of the complete Bible which appeared in 1685, a copy of which was purchased by the British Museum in 1889 [A12].

1666 saw the printing of Eliot’s systematic description of the Indian language which he had learned in \textit{The Indian Grammar Begun} [A10]. The work appears to have been written for a European audience, rather than for the Indian population. There are sections on pronunciation, pronouns, nouns, ‘adnouns’ (i.e. adjectives), verbs, adverbs, conjunctions and interjections, and the final forty-one pages comprise nothing but verb tables. Besides this original Cambridge edition, the British Museum acquired second-hand a copy of the

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\textsuperscript{9} W. Eames, \textit{Bibliographical Notes on Eliot’s Indian Bible and on his other Translations and Works in the Indian Language of Massachusetts} (Washington, 1890).

\textsuperscript{10} Pilling, op. cit., p. 148.
1822 edition issued under the title *A Grammar of the Massachusetts Indian Language* [A31]. Eliot next worked on two primers for use with children in the Praying Indian towns. Unfortunately the British Library does not hold any original copies of the first of these, *The Indian Primer; or, The Way of Training up of our Indian Youth*. The second of Eliot’s primers is held however. It was issued in 1672 with the title *The Logick Primer* [A11], and is a small format book (sextodecimo), for the most part comprising Massachusett text with an interlinear English translation. Sadly the Library’s copy, indeed the only copy recorded in the *English Short Title Catalogue*, is no longer in a good physical state. Eliot also produced an abridged translation of Bishop Baylys’s *Practice of Piety* (Manitowopae pomantamoonek) in 1665, but only the second edition of 1685 is held [A13]. There are no copies of Eliot’s other major translations: Richard Baxter’s *Call to the Unconverted* (1663 and 1685 editions) and Thomas Shepard’s *Sincere Convert* (1689). Nor do there appear to be any single-sheet items, such as the *A Christian Covenanting Confession* (Christiane Oonoowae Sampoowaonk).

Not all early printed Massachusett texts in the British Library are connected with John Eliot. The earliest of the non-Eliot items is Grindal Rawson’s bilingual *Wunnamptamoe Sampooaonk Wussampooontaman Nashpe moeuweho-munganash ut New-England*, a ‘confession of faith’ undertaken by Church Elders at the Boston Assembly of 1680, although not printed until 1699 [A15]. The library stamp suggests a purchase date of 1864. There followed in the early eighteenth century the second edition of *An Epistle to the Christian Indians* (Wussukwhonk En Christianeue asuh preantamwae Indianog) by Cotton Mather (1662-1728) [A17]. This work comprises guidance, bilingual throughout, on how to live in order to be happy. The Library’s copy appears to have been purchased in 1866.

The beginning of the eighteenth century saw the publication in 1709 of *The Massachusetts Psalter* (Massachusee Psalter) [A18], a work consisting of the Psalms of David and the Gospel of St John in parallel Massachusett and English text. Two copies are held, both seemingly acquired in the nineteenth century. A further primer was printed in 1720 under the title *The Indian Primer or The First Book by which Children May Know Truely to Read the Indian Language* [A19]. The work is anonymous and Pilling points out that it is ‘sometimes wrongly ascribed to Eliot’. The text is facing English and Massachusett, but the Indian dialect is not the usual mainland variety. Pilling identifies it as the Nope dialect spoken on the island of Martha’s Vineyard. The work itself comprises an exposition of the Lord’s Prayer, the larger catechism and John Cotton’s ‘Spiritual Milk for Babes’, originally published separately in 1691. Sadly the copy which was added to the Library’s general collections is now in a poor state. It contains the book-plate of a previous owner, ‘Geo. Chalmers Esq. FRSSA’, perhaps the Scottish antiquary, 1742-1825, who spent some time working in the American colonies. A second copy, which is in a better physical condition, is from the Grenville library. A small amount of what appears to be Massachusett also appears in another of the British Museum’s early acquisitions: Cotton Mather’s *India Christiana* [A20]. Specifically, there is an Algonquian and English vocabulary in the section entitled ‘The Religion, which All Good Men are united in’ (pp. 52-5).

Massachusett began to decline as a written language during the eighteenth century. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that the last item in scope for this survey is the publication in the *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* for 1830 of an already historic manuscript, Josiah Cotton’s ‘Vocabulary of the Massachusett (or Natick) Indian Language’ [A33]. Besides the English to Massachusett vocabulary, the study contains guidance on syllabic division, and provides translations of the Lord’s Prayer and the Ten

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11 There is however a much later reprint based on the 1669 edition held at Edinburgh University Library: John Eliot, *The Indian Primer*, ed. John Small (Edinburgh, 1877).
13 Pilling, op. cit., p. 130.
14 Pilling, op. cit., p. 252.
The original data had been gathered by Cotton, a resident of Plymouth in Massachusetts, at some point before 1756.

**Narragansett**

Since the time of initial European contact, the Narragansett (Narraganset) people have lived in what is now the State of Rhode Island. There is only one early printed work about Narragansett, but it is a key work because it is the earliest published description of any Algonquian language written for an English-speaking audience. Indeed, as W. S. Simmons points out, it is also the 'first English-language ethnography of an American Indian people'. The work is Roger Williams’s *A Key into the Language of America* [A4], and is in effect a phrase book (fig. 2). Its arrangement is much like that of a phrase book today, with headings such as ‘Of Salutation’, ‘Of Eating and Entertainment’ and ‘Of Sleepe and Lodging’. The volume is designed for use by settlers from Britain and each section is therefore preceded by a brief explanation of Indian customs. Concerning the language, the author writes (f. A8r):

> [The work] is framed chiefly after the Narroganset Dialect, because most spoken in the Countrey, and yet (with attending to the variation of peoples and Dialects) it will be of great use in all parts of the Countrey.

Roger Williams (1606?-83) was a Welshman who had been exiled from the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1635 because of his views on Puritanism. He established the town of Providence, after acquiring land from the Narragansett Indians. *A Key into the Language of America* was printed whilst he was back in London in 1643 seeking recognition of the Rhode Island Colony. There are three copies of the book in the British Library: one each from the collections of George Thomason, Thomas Grenville, and King George III. Each one contains manuscript annotations. Thomason’s copy has the simple addition of ‘Sept: 7th’ on the title-page next to the year of printing; it is not clear whether this is the date that Thomason acquired his copy, or the date on which Thomason believed it to have been published (but given his collecting habits, both dates may in fact be the same). Grenville’s copy contains a letter addressed to him dated 7 April 1842 from the antiquary Philip Bliss (1787-1857) and discusses how the work was already rare and collectable, especially in the United States. The fly-leaves (front and back) of George III’s copy are covered in annotations, mostly in a single hand and for the most part listing other works on similar topics. The annotator appears to be M. Lort, possibly the antiquary Michael Lort (1725-90), but there is also the inscription ‘Anne Ferneley The Gift of Tho. James’.

In 1827 the Rhode Island Historical Society published a facsimile edition of the work with a ‘Sketch of the life of Roger Williams’, and a copy was purchased for the British Museum Library [A32]. It was also reprinted in the *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* for 1798, although the Library only has an 1835 reprint of this volume [A37].

**Quiripi**

Quiripi is the name most often used for the language spoken in and around the New Haven Colony on the coast of Connecticut, although the form Quinnipiac and its variants are also found. The speech appears to have been essentially the same as that used on part of Long Island by peoples such as the Unkechaug (Unquechog). Other names associated with this

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language and its speakers are Wampano and Mattabesic. The first piece of Indian language printing written specifically for an Indian audience was in Quiripi. This was the bilingual Christian catechism which appeared as Some Helps for the Indians in 1658 [A5]. The translator was Abraham Pierson (often Peirson) (c. 1608-78), and the work was produced whilst he was pastor at Branford, some five miles south-east of New Haven. The variety of language used in the translation was an issue of debate; rather than Pierson’s Quiripi, the Commissioners of the United Colonies had hoped for something in a language such as Pequot or Narragansett, which they felt would be more comprehensible to a wider audience. The British Library’s copy of this octavo volume has unfortunately been cropped along the fore-edge. It appears to have been acquired for the general collections (the library stamp is of a type used until the 1830s), and the annotations suggest that it had earlier been bound with other tracts into a larger volume. There is more than one printed state of this work: the British Library’s copy is of the type printed for Samuel Green (rather than by him), has Captain John Scot as its ‘examiner’, and gives the spelling ‘Cambridge’ for its place of printing. The following year a London edition was issued, published as part of A Further Accompt of the Progresse of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New-England [A6]. The Library’s copy of this edition credits Thomas Stanton as examiner. (J. Hammond Trumbull’s edition of 1873 is well outside the scope of this study.) By the end of 1667

Fig. 2. Roger Williams, *A Key into the language of America: or, An help to the Language of the Natives in that part of America, called New-England* (London, 1643), pp. 110-11. BL, G.7450. [Check-list A4].

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16 The main source for this information is the introductory material to Abraham Pierson, *Some Helps for the Indians: a Catechism in the Language of the Quiripi Indians of New Haven Colony*, ed. J. Hammond Trumbull (Hartford, Conn., 1873).
Pierson had left Connecticut for New Jersey, and there do not appear to be any further early works printed in Quiripi or its related dialects in the Library’s collections.

**Delaware**

Whilst settlers from Britain were making their mark in southern New England, Swedes and Finns were attempting to establish ‘New Sweden’ further down the coast in the territories of the Unami-speaking Delaware or Lenape people. In the 1640s the minister Johannes Campanius (1601-83), a Stockholmer and therefore surnamed ‘Holmiensis’, was involved in the first Lutheran missionary work outside Europe. To this end, he studied both the local Delaware language and the unrelated Iroquoian language spoken by the nearby Susquehannock (Anadaste, Minqua) people. He began work on a translation of the Lutheran shorter catechism, but by 1655 New Sweden had failed and Campanius returned to Scandinavia where he died in 1683. His bilingual Delaware and Swedish catechism however was published posthumously in 1696 in Stockholm under the title *Lutheri Catechismus, Öfwersatt på American-Virginiske Språket* [A14] (fig. 3). It is the last printed work of the seventeenth century in an Eastern Algonquian language. The type of Delaware used is not the Unami spoken every day by its intended audience, but a simplified version lacking the full range of grammatical inflections. It is usually called Unami Jargon, and is a trade language that had developed in order to ease communication between Indians and Europeans. The catechism has two interesting appendices: the ‘Vocabularium Barbaro-Virgineorum’ which is a short Unami Jargon to Swedish vocabulary, and a brief listing of words in Susquehannock. Of the two copies of the *Lutheri Catechismus* which are now in the British Library, one was acquired some time before 1836 (the copy at 1018.d.7), and the other (3506.aa.42) was purchased in 1862. Unfortunately the latter copy lacks the engraved title-page.17

1702 saw the publication also in Stockholm of the *Kort Beskrifning om Provincien Nya Sverige uti America* [A16]. This was issued under the name of Thomas Campanius Holm (c. 1670-1702), but was in fact based on notes made by Johannes Campanius, who was his grandfather. The fourth part of the work comprises linguistic material, including a Delaware (i.e. Unami Jargon) to Swedish vocabulary (pp. 153-79). The British Museum acquired a copy at some point before 1836, but in 1986 the British Library added a second copy, which was received with the Törgrim Hannås bequest. The latter copy lacks the engraved frontispiece and all the plates, but at some point someone has coloured the armorial device on the title-page and selected initials elsewhere in the volume. An English-language edition was produced for the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in 1834. It appeared in two printed states: one as a paper within the Society’s *Memoirs* [A35] under the title ‘A Short Description of the Province of New Sweden’, and again as a separate publication [A36] entitled *Description of the Province of New Sweden*. With the exception of the titles, the printing is otherwise identical.

The other well-known name in the field of Delaware language missionary work is that of David Zeisberger (1721-1808).18 He was a German Moravian (United Brethren) missionary who worked among both the Delaware and Onondaga peoples. He was based initially in eastern Pennsylvania, but followed the displaced Indian population as it moved westwards and northwards. The form of language he used is the ‘Forks of the Delaware River’ dialect of northern Unami, and the orthography shows the influence of the missionaries’ own native

17 A facsimile edition of this work is also held: Johannes Campanius, *Lutheri Catechismus*, ed. Isak Collijn (Uppsala, 1937). The ‘Vocabularium Barbaro-Virgineorum’ has also been recently re-edited and re-published with English replacing Swedish as *A Vocabulary of the Unami Jargon* (Southampton, Penn., 1997).

Fig. 3. Johannes Campanius Holm, *Lutheri Catechismi Öfwersatt på American-Virginiske Språket* (Stockholm, 1696), p. 135. BL, 1018.d.7. [Check-list A14].
language, German. The first of Zeisberger’s works to be printed was the *Delaware Indian and English Spelling Book*, written for use in the mission schools. No copy of the first edition (1776) has made its way to the British Library, but the second edition of 1806 is held [A27]. The volume is essentially a dictionary of words and phrases, with verb tables and some longer texts with English translations. The British Library copy has an interesting provenance in that it bears the ownership mark of Peter Stephen Duponceau (1760-1844), editor of the English translation of the *Kort Beskrifning* discussed above. There are several annotations, especially on the fly-leaves, which may be his. The volume appears to have been purchased by the British Museum in 1846, and is sadly not in a particularly good physical state.

Zeisberger’s second published work, *A Collection of Hymns*, is not held and the Library’s copy of the third, *Sermons to Children* [A26], was destroyed during the bombing of the British Museum building in 1941. This lost volume also contained his translation of August Gottlieb Spangenberg’s *Something of Bodily Care for Children*. Finally there is Zeisberger’s translation of Samuel Lieberkühn’s *The History of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (Elekup Nihillalquatwoak Permauchsohalquonk Jesus Christ)*, published in New York in 1821 [A30]. With the exception of Zeisberger’s preface, the text, an adaptation of the Gospels, is entirely in Unami. The publication of this translation seems to have been long in the planning, as the preface is dated fifteen years earlier. It is not clear why the British Museum purchased two copies, one in 1844 (at 1410.k.3) and the other in 1846 (3205.aaaa.47). The former does however have the marks of a previous owner: it appears to have been presented to T. H. Horne in 1825. This is likely to be the biblical scholar Thomas Hartwell Horne (1780-1862), who was working as a senior assistant librarian in the British Museum at that time.

The only other early Delaware language work which can be tracked down in the Library’s collections is Christian Frederick Dencke’s bilingual edition of *The Three Epistles of the Apostle John*, printed for the American Bible Society in 1818 [A29]. Dencke (1775-1838) had worked closely with Zeisberger, and probably learned the Delaware language with his help. No fewer than four copies of this duodecimo volume are now in the collections, three purchased in the mid-nineteenth century (1842, 1847 and 1855). Curiously, one of the copies (1110.d.42) states on the title-page that it was ‘Presented to the American Antiquarian Society by the American Bible Society 1826’.

**Mahican**

At the time of European contact, the Mahicans were settled along the upper reaches of the Hudson River in New York State, their territories extending into parts of Vermont, Massachusetts and Connecticut. The names Mahican and Mohican are both used, as is Muhhekunneuw; the name Mohegan is also occasionally found, leading to confusion with the Connecticut-based people located further to the east. During the eighteenth century, many Mahicans moved first to Stockbridge in Massachusetts, then to New Stockbridge in upstate New York, and finally on to Wisconsin via Indiana.

The Library’s earliest printed book about the Mahican language is a linguistic study by Jonathan Edwards Jr (1745-1801), who was raised at the original Stockbridge Community. His *Observations on the Language of the Muhhekaneew Indians* [A21] was written as a paper for the Connecticut Society of Arts and Science, and was published in New Haven in 1788.

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21 The copy at shelfmark 3070.a.10 has not been consulted as it has been in the Conservation Studios throughout the period in which this research was undertaken.
This short tract (seventeen pages) outlines Mahican grammar and compares its vocabulary to that of other languages such as Ojibwe and Mohawk. The Library's copy of this first edition was purchased in 1875 and is bound with other unrelated linguistic tracts. Edwards's study was soon re-published on this side of the Atlantic in London in 1788 [A22] (British Museum Library copy purchased in 1860). The following year, the work was again printed in London, this time as part of the *Sermon at the Execution of Moses Paul, an Indian ... Also Observations on the Language of the Muhhekaneew Indians* [A23]. The volume contains a second dated title-page which precedes the *Observations*. The style of library stamp suggests that the British Museum Library's copy of this was purchased at some point between 1837 and 1929. The main title-page bears the ownership mark of W. Musgrave, probably the antiquary William Musgrave (1655?-1721) who was known to have had a particular interest in languages. It may have been the printer's intention also to issue the *Observations* separately: the Library's other copy of the 1789 edition [A24], housed within the pamphlet collection of King George III, does not include the *Sermon* but is in all other respects identical. Given the lack of firm evidence, the two 1789 items have been treated separately in the accompanying Check-list.

**Micmac**

Micmac was and is still spoken over an extensive territory including much of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, the Ristigouche River valley in Quebec, and since the early nineteenth century also in Newfoundland. Many European travellers in the seventeenth century used the name Souriquois for the variety of Micmac which they encountered, although this appears to relate to the name of a sub-group based in Nova Scotia.

A few examples of Micmac words compared to their Montagnais-Naskapi equivalents appear in the *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* for 1799 [A25], but the earliest substantial piece of printed Micmac that can be traced in the British Library, albeit a volume of just thirty-nine pages, is the *Alphabet Mikmaque* of 1817 [A28] (fig. 4). This anonymous work printed in the city of Québec is in Micmac only, and seems to have been produced as an aid in teaching literacy skills. The volume, purchased in 1848, bears a few unclear manuscript annotations. The high point of printing in the Micmac language however is yet to come: the latter part of the nineteenth century will see the publication of numerous Biblical texts and some interesting experiments in using hieroglyphs.

**Abenaki**

The Eastern and Western Abenaki languages were spoken across a large area comprising most of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and neighbouring part of Massachusetts. Many Abenakis still live in this territory, but many have relocated to Québec. Seemingly the only early example of printed Abenaki in the British Library is the publishing in 1833 of a manuscript Abenaki and French dictionary dating from the 1690s. The original manuscript was compiled by the French Catholic missionary Father Sebastian Rasles (sometimes Râles), who gathered his material at Norridgewock in the Kennebec River valley, which suggests that the language is likely to be of the Eastern variety. It was transcribed and edited by John Pickering, and published in the *Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* for 1833 [A34]. The copy of this volume now in the British Library was presented to the British Museum by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences shortly after publication.

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Maliseet-Passamaquoddy

The Maliseet (Malecite) people are located predominantly in New Brunswick, with smaller numbers in neighbouring parts of Maine and the Province of Québec. The Passamaquoddy, based in Maine’s Washington County, speak a variety of the same language. The earliest printed item in the Library’s collections which declares itself to be in Maliseet dates from 1863, and is therefore outside the scope of this article. However, inside The Indian of New-England and the North-Eastern Provinces of 1851 there are several wildlife vocabularies and a grammar which the writer, Joseph Barratt, states were learned from an ‘Etchemin’ informant by the name of Nicola Tenesles. Although Etchemin might have referred to a separate or transitional language in the early seventeenth century, by the nineteenth century it normally seems to have been applied to Maliseet-Passamaquoddy. The British Library’s copy was purchased new in 1855, and is bound with other short studies under the heading ‘American Topography tracts 1851-69’.

Other Eastern Algonquian Languages

It has not been possible to locate any examples of early printing in the language of the Pequot and Mohegan peoples, nor in any of the Eastern Algonquian languages spoken to the south of the Unami Delaware (Nanticoke-Conoy, Virginia Algonquian, and Carolina Algonquian).

Provenances and Shelfmarks

For the period to 1851, this survey identified the existence of thirty-eight printed editions in the British Library that have text in or about the Eastern Algonquian languages. A quick scan of the pages of Pilling’s Bibliography suggests that there were in fact just over 100 such editions published from 1634 to 1851; the Library therefore could be said to have a coverage of a little over a third. Of the thirty-eight editions, twenty-six were printed in the United States (Boston, Cambridge, Philadelphia, New York, Middletown, New Haven, Providence), one in Quebec City, eight in London (although nothing after 1789), and two in Stockholm. The number of editions can in turn be reduced to just twenty-four basic texts relevant to the study of nine languages: Eastern Abenaki, ‘Etchemin’ (probably Maliseet-Passamaquoddy in this case), Mahican, Massachusett, Micmac, Narragansett, Quiripi, and Unami Delaware (including its simplified trade language, Unami Jargon).

The number of volumes identified was larger, fifty-two in all, owing to the existence of numerous duplicates. Many of these volumes deserve a thorough investigation into their provenance on a case by case basis, something outside the scope of a general survey such as this. Nevertheless some basic information can be gleaned by looking at just the library stamps applied by the Museum, and at the shelfmark sequences to which the items were allocated. It was possible to examine the stamps used in the forty-eight of the fifty-two volumes (two items were unavailable and one was unstamped). An initial analysis indicates that seventeen items were acquired before 1837 (the year when a new style of library stamp was introduced), thirty were probably acquired between 1837 and 1929 (when the library stamps were again re-designed), and one item was clearly acquired in 1984.25 It might therefore be concluded that the British Museum actively acquired Eastern Algonquian materials in its first 150 years, but ceased to do so probably at some point in or before the early twentieth century. This might reflect changing acquisitions policies, but is more likely to be a statement of how rarely this type of material has been offered for sale through the book trade during the last one hundred years.

Besides being able to identify broad patterns relating to when the volumes were received, it is also sometimes possible to determine how they were acquired. The colour, shape and cut of the library stamp, together with occasional annotations in pencil added by Museum staff (references to acquisitions registers), suggest that the majority of the volumes were individually purchased. Twelve items however were received with the donation or purchase of major collections, and these were allocated shelfmarks which reflect this type of provenance. One item each was received with the collections of the bookseller George Thomason (d. 1666),26 the explorer and botanist Sir Joseph Banks (1743-1820),27 and the twentieth-century book dealer Torgrim Hannås.28 Four were received in 1823 with the

25 Documentation provided at staff talks by P. R. Harris, the historian of the British Museum Library, has proved invaluable in this area of investigation.
26 Copy of A4 at shelfmark E.1159.(2.).
27 Copy of A2 at shelfmark B.671.(7.).
28 Copy of A16 at shelfmark Han.51/1.
donation of the King’s Library of George III,\(^{29}\) and five in 1846 with the private collection of the politician and British Museum trustee Thomas Grenville (1755–1846).\(^{30}\)

As with many older books, several of the volumes now in the British Library contain the manuscript notes and bookplates of earlier owners. As identified in the survey above, there are for example volumes which appear to have been previously owned by the English antiquaries Michael Lort and William Musgrave, and a copy of Zeisberger’s Delaware spelling book annotated by the Franco-American linguist Peter Stephen Duponceau.

Books that were received as part of a larger private collection often have dedicated shelfmarks which make their provenance evident:\(^{31}\) shelfmarks beginning ‘G.’ indicate Thomas Grenville, ‘B.’ is used for Sir Joseph Banks’s tract collection, and ‘Han.’ for books collected by Torgrim Hannås. Volumes from the library of King George III can in fact also be identified from their shelfmarks, as the ranges 1.a.1 to 304.k.23 and C.1.a.1 to C.16.i.16 were reserved for the King’s Library. The C. or ‘case’ sequence as a whole was reserved for particularly valuable books, and systematic placing of new acquisitions in these cases seems to have begun in around 1860. Many of the volumes found in C. shelfmarks in this survey were acquired before the mid-nineteenth century, and they must therefore have been moved there from other locations as staff gained an awareness of their increasing collectability. Indeed, at least seven of these volumes contain a previous non-case shelfmark written inside.

For example, the copy of Eliot’s 1661 Massachusetts translation of the New Testament at C.38.a.42, a case location reserved for Bibles and liturgies, was clearly once at the general shelfmark 466.a.21, which was only used for Bibles. Seven of the volumes dated from 1799 to 1835 have shelfmarks in the Ac. sequence. This range was created some time between 1860 and 1870, and was reserved for publications issued by academic institutions, for example the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society. There are two subsets within the Ac. range: a topographical numeration, within which Ac.1730 falls, and a subject numeration, which accounts for the remaining six examples, all classified as ‘History’\(^{32}\). The remaining volumes were given shelfmarks in the general numerical sequences of the British Museum. Because the notations represent fixed shelf locations, they can in fact suggest where the books were initially housed within the Museum building. Not surprisingly books in or about Eastern Algonquian languages appear to have been widely dispersed from the outset. The sequences do however include elements of a subject arrangement, and many of the books where shelved in categories such as ‘Bibles’, ‘topography and travels’, ‘religious history’ or simply ‘miscellaneous tracts’.

Conclusions

The fifty-two volumes identified are not easily tracked down. Older catalogue records do not contain subject indexing, nor do their computerized versions include any coding to indicate language. The catalogue records themselves can often be brief, and consequently do not always mention for example the existence of an interesting vocabulary given as an appendix to a more general work. Where the language is mentioned in the catalogue heading, it may be misleading: the ‘Vocabularium’ at the end of Campanius’s translation of the Lutheran

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\(^{29}\) Copy of A2 at shelfmark C.13.a.9.(5.); copy of A4 at 236.c.35; copy of A8 at C.10.a.1; and copy of A24 at 113.f.20. Many King’s Library volumes were destroyed during the Second World War and in a few instances copies from the general collections moved across to take their place. In these cases, the bindings and library stamps suggest that all four copies were genuinely from the library of George III.

\(^{30}\) Copy of A3 at shelfmark G.7144; copy of A4 at G.7450; copy of A7 at G.12160; copy of A9 at G.12176; and copy of A19 at G.19528.


\(^{32}\) Hill, op. cit., pp. 41, 67-68
catechism is described as ‘Virginian’, rather than Unami Jargon; Pierson’s *Some Helps for Indians* is described as ‘Delaware-Natick’, rather than Quiripi or some other term which would locate it as the language spoken around New Haven in Connecticut.

In summarizing the different formats of material that can be found for each language (vocabularies, grammars, primers, Biblical texts, etc.), the period when each text or wordlist was initially recorded is of great importance. Many of the items identified are later reprints, but even some first editions are in fact the first publishing of manuscripts drafted years or even centuries earlier: Sebastian Rasles’s Abenaki vocabulary for example was collected in the seventeenth century but not published until 1833. Bearing this in mind, the largest number and widest range of editions relate to material initially written down in the seventeenth century. The best represented language for this period is Massachusett, which has a vocabulary [A1, etc.], a grammar [A10], a school primer [A11], a translation of the Bible [A8, etc.], and translations of two other important English religious texts of the day [A13, A15]. Other languages are represented by a phrase book in Narragansett [A4], Christian catechisms in Quiripi (Anglican) [A5] and Unami Jargon (Lutheran) [A14], and the Abenaki vocabulary mentioned above [A33]. The eighteenth century also sees the recording of a range of materials in Massachusett, including a primer [A19], a psalter [A18], and a contemporary religious text translated from English [A17]. Mahican makes its appearance with a grammar [A21, etc.], and Micmac with a short comparative vocabulary [A25]. By the early nineteenth century, Unami Delaware comes to the fore with a primer [A27], a Biblical text [A29], and the translation of a contemporary religious work from the German [A30]. Again there is Micmac, this time literacy material [A28], and there is also a vocabulary described as ‘Etchemin’, probably Maliseet-Passamaquoddy [A38]. All the texts identified appear to have been drafted or transcribed by non-native writers, although anonymous Indians must have been involved in producing some of the works. With the involvement of so many non-native speakers, one is left wondering how well some of the texts genuinely reflect the way in which these languages were spoken.

Nevertheless, the Library’s selection of early books in or about the Eastern Algonquian languages is significant. Given the number of texts printed, it is a numerically large collection, representing over a third of all recorded publications in the field. It is also a broad collection, with examples of various types of material, in or about nine languages. Of course there are the treasures, Eliot’s Massachusett Bible for example is a key work in the wider history of American printing, but equally important to many linguists will be the more ephemeral texts, such as the primers designed to help teach Massachusett, Delaware and Micmac people to read and write. At a general level, much of the material can prove difficult to identify in the catalogues. It is hoped that this study will go some way to help researchers identify Eastern Algonquian language resources in the British Library, and to place both the books and their contents into a cultural and historical context.
CHRONOLOGICAL CHECK-LIST OF WORKS HELD IN THE BRITISH LIBRARY IN OR ABOUT THE EASTERN ALGONQUIAN LANGUAGES, 1643–1851

Where appropriate, Evans,33 STC,34 and Wing35 reference numbers are cited.

The Seventeenth Century


A4. [Narragansett]. Roger Williams, A Key into the language of America: or, An help to the Language of the Natives in that part of America, called New-England (London, 1643). Wing W2766. Shelfmarks: G.7450; 236.c.35; E.1159.(2.).


The Eighteenth Century


A19. [Massachusett]. *The Indian Primer or The First Book by which children may know truly to read the Indian language* (Indiane Primer Asuh Negoomeukh) (Boston, 1720). Evans 2124. Shelfmarks: C.40.a.52; G.19528.


Fig. 5. Johannes Campanius Holm, Lutheri Catechismi Öfversatt på American-Virginiske Språket (Stockholm, 1696), Map of the Delaware River, facing fol. A1. BL, 1018.d.7. (Check-list A14).
The Nineteenth Century (to 1851)