

NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN LANGUAGE MATERIALS

Survey of Early Holdings by Language

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Introduction

This guide is to original early books which are largely or entirely in an indigenous language of the continental United States, Canada or Greenland. It should be noted that there are in addition numbers of other early works which include brief vocabularies or relevant chapters. These can be found by using standard bibliographies, such as those compiled by JC Pilling. This guide also includes early European linguistic studies about Indian and Inuit languages. For each work cited, the British Library shelfmark is given in square brackets. The arrangement is by language family, and only those families represented in the Library's early holdings are listed.

Timucuan

The Spanish began missionary work in Florida at the beginning of the 17th century. They produced a series of texts in the now extinct language of the **Timucua** people. The British Library holds only one of these works, Francisco Pareja's *Catechismo* (México, 1627) [3505.df.30].

Eastern Algonquian Languages

The Eastern Algonquian languages of southern New England were among the earliest encountered by settlers from Northern Europe, and some thirteen works in 30 different early editions and copies can be found in the Library's collections. These include *A Key into the language of America* by Roger Williams (London, 1643) [G.7450; 236.c.35; E.1159(2)], a **Narragansett** to English phrase book, and Abraham Pierson's *Some Helps for Indians* (Cambridge, Mass., 1658) [C.32.a.21], which is in English and **Quiripi**. Most material however is in **Massachusett** and the Library holds copies of John Eliot's 1661 translation of the *New Testament* [C.51.b.3, G.12160], as well as the complete *Bible* of 1663 [C.10.a.1; G.12176] and 1685 [C.36.d.10]. There are also several other important translations and grammars produced by Eliot.

The oldest **Lenape** (Delaware) item is a translation into the Unami Trade Jargon of the Swedish Lutheran liturgy: *Lutheri Catechismus, öfwersatt på American-Virginise Språket* (Stockholm, 1696) [3506.aa.42; 1018.d.7]. Most Lenape material however is from the early 19th century, and comprises mainly Christian missionary texts.

There are no examples of publishing in **Micmac** in the Library until the *Alphabet Mikmaque* (Québec, 1817) [826.a.32]. The middle of the 19th century saw the publishing of several Biblical texts translated by Silas Tertius Rand (1810-1889). Many of these are especially noteworthy for their use of the Pitman phonetic alphabet for both Micmac and English. Other Eastern Algonquian languages represented in the collections by just a handful of late 18th or 19th century items are **Abenaki**, **Maliseet-Passamaquoddy**, and **Mohegan**.

Central Algonquian Languages

Central Algonquian languages are also well-represented in the Library's collections. There are over 20 early books in or about **Cree** (Nehiyâ'wêwin), mostly from the second half of the 19th century. The earliest item is probably *A Dictionary of the Hudson's-Bay Indian Language* [C.122.h.12]. Unfortunately there is no imprint, but it could date from around 1710. Also of special interest is an early grammar: *A Grammar of the Cree Language, to which is combined an analysis of the Chippeway dialect*, Joseph Howse (London, 1844) [621.e.35; 12907.d.16]. Most of the early texts in Cree are religious in nature, particularly hymnals produced by Christian missions. Many are printed in syllabics.

One of the earliest books printed in the city of Québec was a Catholic prayer book and catechism translated into **Montagnais-Naskapi** by Jean Baptiste de la Brosse (1767) [C.52.b.8; G.20007(48)]. Five other Catholic texts in Montagnais-Naskapi dated 1847 to 1889 are also held.

Some 20 works in or about **Ojibwe** (Anishinaabe, Chippewa) are held, all 19th century and later. The oldest text is a translation of the Gospel of St Matthew by Peter Jones (York, Ont., 1831) [03068.f.1]. The oldest linguistic work held is *Principes de la langue des sauvages appelés Sauteux*, Georges Antoine Belcourt (Québec, 1839) [12910.aa.57]. Other Central Algonquian languages represented in the collections by just a handful of 19th century items are **Alongkin**, **Illinois-Miami**, **Nipissing**, and **Potawatomi**.

Plains Algonquian Languages

The only Plains Algonquian language represented in the Library's early collections is **Blackfoot**, with two Biblical texts and a grammar all from 1890. Several Southern Peigan linguistic texts appear in the 1910s in the publications of the Dutch Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen.

Iroquoian Languages

French explorers and settlers made early contact with **Huron** people, and a short vocabulary of their language appears in Jacques Cartier's *Brief recit & succincte narration... de la nauigation faicte es ysles de Canada* (Paris, 1545) [G.7082]. A much fuller dictionary of Huron, the first ever printed dictionary of a North American language, is given as the 'Dictionnaire de la langue Huronne' in *Le Grand Voyage du Pays des Hurons*, Gabriel Sagard Théodat (Paris, 1632) [C.32.c.18; G.7269]. The Library also holds a copy of the Catholic liturgy in Huron: *Doctrine Chrestienne... traduite en Langage Canadois*, RP Ledesme (Rouen, 1630) [3504.b.37].

The best represented language is **Mohawk**. These begin in the early 18th century with various editions of *The Morning and Evening Prayer* (New York, 1715, etc.) [G.17117, etc.]. Literacy materials are found early on with 1781 and 1786 editions of *A Primer for the use of Mohawk Children* by Daniel Claus [G.16708 & C.33.a.31]. From the first half of the 19th century, the Library holds over 20 Christian religious texts in the language, published mostly in New York. There is also the only early almanac in an Indian language: *Iakentasetatha Kahnawakeha tsini Kahawis nonwa ioserate 1899*, G Forbes (Montréal, 1898) [P.P.2539.w].

Other Northern Iroquoian languages represented in the collections by just a handful of 19th century items are **Oneida**, **Onondaga**, and **Seneca**.

The only Southern Iroquoian language represented in the Library's early collections is **Cherokee**. Most of these items are Biblical texts from the 1830s and 1840s, translated for the most part by Samuel Austin Worcester and Elias Boudinot. Much of the material uses Cherokee syllabics.

Muskogean Languages

Small numbers of works in or about **Creek** (Muscogee) and above all **Choctaw-Chickasaw** are held, mostly from the 19th century. The earliest is the Gospels in Choctaw *Holisso Holitopa* (Utica, 1831) [3070.b.29].

Siouan Languages

The main language from this family represented in the Library's collections is **Sioux** (Dakota, Lakota, Nakota). The earliest held is *The Second Dakota Reading Book*, Samuel W. Pond (Boston, Mass., 1842) [3070.a.25]. Most of the 20 or so books held are from the period 1870-1893. Christian texts predominate, but there are primers and linguistic studies as well. Of special interest is a run of the periodical *Iapi Oaye (The Word Carrier)* is held for 1871-1873 [P.P.908.hb]. All the material held appears to relate to Dakota (generally Santee dialect), with the exception of the *Lakota ABC Wowapi* (New York, 1874) [12907.aa.3].

Other languages are not represented until the late 19th century. These include the Gospels in **Chiwere** (Otoe-Ioway-Missouria) [4807.aaa.4] and grammars of **Dhegiha** [A.S.206(v.6)] and **Hidatsa** [12907.ee.3].

Athapaskan Languages

The earliest books in the Athapaskan languages of north-western Canada all date from the later 19th century: **Beaver** (1886), **Chipewyan** (1872), **Gwich'in** (1874) and **Slavey** (1868). All the material – some 23 volumes – is religious in nature, and includes a complete Bible in Gwich'in: *Ettunetle Rsoitinyoo*, translated by Archdeacon McDonald (London, 1898) [3068.eee.24]. There do not appear to be any early materials in any other Athapaskan language of sub-arctic Canada or Alaska. Nor are there any examples of books in or about Navajo or the California Athapaskan languages before the 20th century.

Languages of the North-West Coast

Less than a dozen languages from the North-West Coast and neighbouring Plateau area are represented in the early collections, and generally in very small numbers and all from the end of the 19th century. Most relate to the Salishan languages, the earliest being *A Few words collected from the languages spoken by the Indians... of the Columbia River and Puget's Sound* (London, 1848) [12902.cc.22.(3)]. There are three Anglican texts in **Nla'kapamux** (Thompson), and one each in **Secwepemc** (Shuswap) and **Okanagon**, all published locally. The **Kalispel-Flathead** language is slightly better represented: Biblical selections, two catechisms, a grammar and a dictionary published between 1861 and 1891. There is some material in the Penutian languages, including selections of prayers in **Nisga'a** and in **Tsimshian**, and a fairly lengthy dictionary of **Klamath** in the series 'Contributions to North American Ethnology' [A.S.206(vol2,pt2)]. The Wakashan languages are represented by four Christian texts and a dictionary in **Kwakwala** (Kwakiutl).

For **Haida**, there are just four New Testament books in translation, all the work of JH Keen in the 1890s.

The Library holds a small number of dictionaries and grammars in the *lingua franca* **Chinook Jargon**, the earliest being George Gibbs' vocabulary of 1863 [12907.h.1]. Several issues of the periodical *Kamloops Wawa* (1891-93) from British Columbia are also held [884.g.15.(5.), etc.].

There was very little publishing in or about the other languages of the Northwest until the 20th century. What little was produced, mainly short vocabularies and linguistic descriptions, appears as articles or chapters in other works. For example there is material in *Contributions to North American ethnology* produced by the US Geological and Geographical Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region (ran from 1877-93) [A.S.206], and in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* [Ac.1883].

Eskimo-Aleut Languages

There are around 100 pre-20th century items in or about the Inuit (Eskimo) languages in the collections of British Library. All appear to use Roman script, rather than syllabics.

The first account of any Inuit language was a list of 106 **Greenlandic** (Kalaallisut) words in the *Relation du voyage de Moscovie, Tartarie et de Perse* by Adam Olearius (Paris, 1656) [567.g.21. & Eve.a.153, different printers]. This is followed by a longer vocabulary published in *Thomæ Bartholini Acta Medica et Philosophica Hafniensia* (vol. 2, 1675) [437.e.6-9]. Printing in Greenlandic gets under way during the latter half of the 18th century. Most material was produced in Denmark, with a few items from Germany. The oldest book in the Library printed in Greenland appears to be *Pok, Kalalek avalangnek* (Nongme [Godthåb], 1857) [10460.c.29]. Most items are Christian in content, including several Biblical translations by Bishop Otto Fabricius (1744-1822) and Peter Kragh (b. 1794), but there are also many dictionaries and grammars. The 1860s produced several items of especial interest, including the periodical *Atuagagdliutit* [P.P.4809.t], a collection of local laws [S.X.2/2], and a medical manual, *Náparsimassugdlit atuartagagssait*, Carl Hagen (Nungme, 1866) [7325.e.13].

Several of the **Inuktitut** languages and dialects of Canada are represented. With the exception of one grammar from 1891 [12975.k.38], all the Labrador Inuktitut material (around 35 items) is Biblical in nature. Many of the translations were produced for the Moravian Missions, the oldest being a version of the Psalms (London, 1809) [3437.e.53]. Others, especially from the 1840s and 1850s, were published in Stuttgart by JF Steinkopf. The more northerly dialects spoken in what is now Nunavut are represented by just a handful of titles, beginning with a brief vocabulary given in *An Interesting account of the ... Esquimaux Indians* (Sheffield, 1825?) [10408.aa.33.(1.)], and a much fuller *Esquimaux and English vocabulary, for use of the Arctic Expedition* (London, 1850) [12901.a.4]. The Inuvialuktun (Western Arctic) variety of Inuktitut is represented in the early collections by a *Vocabulaire français-esquimau, dialecte des Tchigliit ...* (Paris, 1876) [12907.h.9] and a *Western Eskimo primer* (London, 1891) [12910.a.28].

There is very little in any other variety of Inuit before the 20th century. The only exception is an 1889 grammar of **Inupiatun** (Inupiaq), *A Brief grammar and vocabulary of the Eskimo language of North-Western Alaska* by Augustus Schultze (Bethlehem, Pa., 1889) [12910.d.31.(2.)].

Russian influence in southern Alaska resulted in the publication in St Petersburg and Moscow from 1840 onwards of several linguistic and Biblical texts in 'Aleut' [3068.f.29, 12911.ff.26, 12907.cc.9, etc.]. Most, if not all, of this material is in the **Alutiq** language (Pacific Gulf Yupik) as spoken on and around Kodiak Island and the upper part of the Alaska Peninsula. There do not appear to be any pre-20th century works on Unangan Aleut in the Library's collections.