

INDIANA GEOGRAPHICAL NOMENCLATURE.

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WHEN I was preparing my "True Indian Stories," I made a special study of all Indiana geographical names supposed to be of Indian origin, and found most of them much corrupted and commonly misunderstood. The only possible way to get at their real form and meaning was to go to the Indians for the Indian names. In the interest of accurate information, I offer the following corrections of the origin of some of the Indiana names, given by Gannett, and published in your last number:

Amo: The word for "honey-bee" in the Ojibwa and Potawatomi languages is, ah-mo. The Miami form of the word is ah-mah-wi-ah (literally "the gatherer"). It is historically certain that the name of our Indiana town did not come from this source. It was laid out in 1850 by Joseph Morris, and was originally called Morrisville. Half a dozen years later it had been made a postoffice; and Isaac Larrance was postmaster. In those days there were no rubber stamps or dating machines, and the postmaster had to write the name of the postoffice and date of mailing on each piece of mail. Larrance decided that a shorter name would be an improvement; and his daughter, who was studying Latin, suggested Amo ("I love") as both short and sweet. Larrance recommended the change to the department, and it was adopted.

Calumet: This is a corruption of the Indian name of the stream, which appears on old maps as Cal-la-mick, Kil-la-mick, Ken-no-mick, Ken-nou-mic, or, in the locative form, Ken-no-mo-konk. All of these are dialect variations of the same word, used by the several Algonquian tribes who have, or lack, the sound of "l" in their languages. The name varies from Ge-kele-muk in the Delaware to Ken-nom-kyah in the Potawatomi, but in all cases it means a long body of deep, still water.

Daviess: The gallant colonel's name was Daveiss, and he always wrote it that way. We have inverted the "e" and "i," and altered the pronunciation.

Dishmaugh: The idea that this name means "Lake of the Monks" is due to a false assumption that the French called it Lac des Moines. The lake is at the head of Trail creek, which the French called Riviere du Chemin; and they called the lake Lac du Chemin. Dishmaugh is an American corruption of du chemin. The American public usually make wild work of "chemin." For example, the "Smackover river," in Arkansas, is the popular reproduction of chemin couvert, or "covered road." Both the French and American names of our creek are translations of the Potawatomi name, Me-eh-way-se-be-weh, and the name was given because the old Potawatomi trail from Chicago to Niles, Michigan, ran along Trail creek to its source.

Eel River: There are two Eel rivers in Indiana. The Miami name of the one that empties into the Wabash at Logansport is Ke-na-pe-kwo-ma-kwah, which is their word for eel—literally "snake-fish." In Chamberlain's Gazetteer (1850) the name of this stream is given as Sho-a-maque, but this is probably a confusion with the Eel river that is tributary to White river. This was in the Delaware country, and the Delaware word for "eel" is schach-a-mack, or "slippery fish." The Indian names on Hough's map, in the Indiana Geological Report for 1882, are fairly accurate, but the appended notes by Judge Beckwith are chiefly absurd attempts to construct Miami words from Ojibwa stems.

Indiana: The name was originally constructed to designate a tract of land in Pennsylvania ceded by the Indians at the treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768; and still exists at the place of its origin in the name of Indiana county. It was merely transferred to our State.

Iroquois: There have been various surmises as to this name, but the Iroquois authorities of the Bureau of Ethnology have settled on its derivation from irinakhoiw, meaning "real adders" or serpents. (Hand-book of American Indians, title Iroquois.)

Kokomo: Neither the translation "young grandmother," nor those of "black walnut" and "bear chief," which have also been given for the word, have any foundation in fact. It is a Miami name, and the Miami for "young grandmother" is Kwe-sa-ko-ko

men. There is no Miami word approximating Kokomo as we pronounce it, but if you put the accent on the middle syllable, make the first "o" long, as in "cold," and the second and third "o"s short, as in "hot," you have the original; for the Indians say it was named for a Thorntown Miami whose name was "Ko-kah-mah." His name appears in the treaty at the Forks of the Wabash, in 1834, as "Co-come-wah." The name may be translated "the diver," i. e., something animate that goes under the water.

Logansport: It is stated that Captain Logan was the son of a sister of Tecumthe. He was a Shawnee boy who was captured in the expedition against the towns on Mad river, in 1786, and was adopted and brought up by General Logan of Kentucky, whose name he took. He was a faithful friend of the whites, and lost his life in their service in 1812. His Indian name—written variously from Spamagelabe to Spemica Lawba—means "the high horn."

Metea: Our town was named for the Potawatomi chief Me-te-ah ("kiss me"), whom McCoy, in his History of Baptist Missions, calls "Meteor." His village, on the St. Joseph, some nine miles above Ft. Wayne, at the mouth of Cedar creek, was called Mus-kwah-wah-se-pe-o-tan, or Cedar Creek Town.

Miami: This is the French form of the name of our principal Indian tribe, and as pronounced in French—me-ah-me—is the proper Indian name. We have adopted the French spelling, but Anglicized the pronunciation to My-am-my. Maumee is an attempt at the reproduction of the same word in English orthography. The name is certainly not the Miami for "mother" (nin-gi-ah, my mother; ki-ki-ah, your mother) nor their word for the wild pigeon, which is me-me-ah. The Miamis themselves cannot give any meaning for it, which is pretty conclusive evidence that it is not from their language. The earliest French explorers and missionaries wrote the name Oumiamiak, varied to Miamiaouek, Miamiak, etc. The first syllable "ou" is one of the uncertainties in pioneer French orthography. It may represent the sound of "oo" in "boot," or of "o" in "cold," or of "w," which is not included in the French alphabet. The last use is very common, as,

for example, in Ouabache (Wabash), or in Miamiouek. The name is most probably the Delaware We-mi-a-mik, by which the Miamis are designated in the Walum Olum. It means literally "all beavers," figuratively "all friends"; and very accurately expresses the relations of the Miamis to the Delawares.

Mishawaka: This is the Potawatomi m'sheh-wah-keek, a contraction of m'sheh-wah-kee-ki, which means "country of dead trees." The Indians say there was at this place a tract of dead timber, probably caused by fire, which gave rise to the name.

Mississinewa: This is plainly a corruption of the Miami name of the stream, which is Na-mah-chis-sin-wi. This means literally "it slants," or as the Indians say, it means "much fall in the river."

Modoc: This name is said by the best authorities to have been given this tribe by the hostile tribe of Shastecas; and means "enemies."

Muncie: This is the name of the Wolf clan of the Delaware nation, written variously Munsee, Monsey, Monthee, etc., but more properly Min-si or Min-thi-u. It means "people of the stony country"—they lived back from the coast, in the mountains. They did not come to Indiana permanently until about 1750. The name of their town, at the site of Muncie, which is written variously, from Wa-pi-ka-mi-kunk to Wa-pi-com-i-koke, means White River Town. Some local histories say the original town was a little higher up the river, and that it was called "Ou-tain-ink." This arises from a misunderstanding of the Delaware word u-ten-ink, which means site of the town, or place where the town was.

Muscatatuck: There is no excuse for this spelling, which was not used while the Delawares were in the State, as is seen in the following: "Muscaketuck," Laws of 1815, p. 4; "Muscaketuck," John Melish's map, 1817; "Muskakituck," Tanner's American Atlas, 1819; "Muscackituck," Laws of 1820, p. 51; "Muscakituck," Laws of 1821, p. 68. In his Gazetteer, Chamberlain, who makes it Muscackituck at p. 329, and Muscakituk at pages 208 and 215, says: "In Indian Mesh-caque-tuck, or Pond river, from many

stagnant places in low water." There is nothing in the word to indicate this meaning. Indeed, the opposite is implied in the ending "hit-tuk," which is applied to small rivers, or large creeks, and usually to rapid ones. There are no ponds or stagnant pools in the Muscackituck now,—much less before the forests were cut off. The name is Delaware, compounded of "mosch-ach-geu," which means "clear," "not turbid," and "hit-tuk," i. e., Mosch-ach-hit-tuk (ch as in German) or Clear river.

Redwood: Algonquian words that mean literally "red wood" all refer to cedar trees. The Miami word for what we call the red-bud, or Judas tree, is i-on-za-wi-kish.

Tippecanoe: The Potawatomi name of this stream is Ke-tap-e-kon, and the Miami name Ke-tap-kwa-na, both of which are the names of the buffalo fish, which was always plentiful in the stream. Our word, "Tippecanoe," is corruption of the name of the town at its mouth, which was Ke-tap-e-kon-nong, or as usually written by Americans Keth-tip-pe-can-nunk, i. e., the terminal locative added to the name of the stream. "Canoe" is not a word of any Indian tribe in North America.

Vermillion: The county (properly Vermillion, because it was so named by the law creating it) was named from the tributary of the Wabash at that point, which the French called "Vermillon Jaune," i. e., red-yellow. Colonel Croghan says in his journal that the stream was "so called from a fine red earth found there by the Indians, with which they paint themselves." On Hough's map the Indian name is given as "O-san-a-mon." This is the old Algonquian word for vermilion paint, which Schoolcraft derives from o-sa-wa, "yellow," and u-ni-mun, the name of a plant from which the Indians made a red dye. (Memoirs, p. 158.) The French name is an exact translation of this, and a very good description of the color.

Wabash: This is plainly an abbreviated corruption of the Miami name of the stream, which is Wah-bah-shik-ki (or Wah-pah-shik-ki, the sounds of "b" and "p" being convertible in the Miami, as in most of the Algonquian languages). The stem wah-bah means "white," and the declensional ending, shik-ki, implies

that the object qualified is pure or bright in color, inanimate, and natural—as distinguished from artificial. It could not be applied, for example, to paper, or cloth, the proper form for them being wah-pah-kin-gi. But it is applied properly to white stones, shells, etc., and the name was given to the river on account of the limestone bed in its upper part. The delusion that it means “a cloud driven forward by an equinoctial wind” arose from mistaking an illustration for a definition. Somebody has asked an Indian for the meaning of Wabash, and he, looking about for something inanimate, natural, and pure white, has pointed to a cloud, and said: “That’s wabash.” It was in the spring or fall, and the wind was blowing, so the seeker for information put on the poetry “a cloud driven forward by the equinoctial wind,” and entirely missed the Indian’s meaning. I was once discussing the word with some Miamis, when old She-kwi-ah (William Godfroy) picked up a flat piece of limestone, pointed to a fossil shell which stood out clear white against the gray of the stone, and said: “That’s wah-pah-shik-ki.” If I had not been on my guard I might have recorded that, “wah-pah-shik-ki is a fossil shell, of the genus spirifer, imbedded in Niagara limestone”; but all that he meant was that it was pure white, inanimate and natural.

White River: The Miami name of the stream is Wah-pi-ka-me-ki, or White Waters. The Delawares at first used the same name (varied to O-pe-ka-me-ki in the Unami dialect), but later used Wah-pi-han-ni, or White river. The French name Riviere Blanche is an exact translation of this.

Winamac: This word, written variously “We-ne-mec,” “We-na-meck,” “Win-ni-meg,” “Wi-ne-mack,” “Wy-ne-mac,” etc., is the Potawatomi name of the catfish, compounded of wee-nud, meaning “turbid,” or “muddy,” and mak, “a fish.” It is used quite commonly by the Potawatomis as a personal name, and the person for whom our town is named was a Potawatomi chief who was rather prominent in 1812, and who died in 1821. A sketch of him will be found in Thatcher’s “Indian Biographies,” p. 214.