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ALGONQUIAN SERIES

BY WILLIAM WALLACE TOOKER



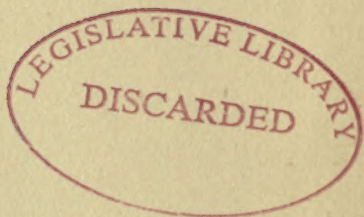
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THE ALGONQUIAN SERIES

Indian Names of Places in the  
Borough of Brooklyn

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INDIAN NAMES OF PLACES

IN THE

BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN

N. A. Indians.  
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*With Historical and Ethnological Notes*

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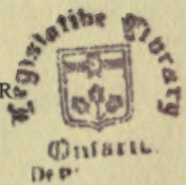
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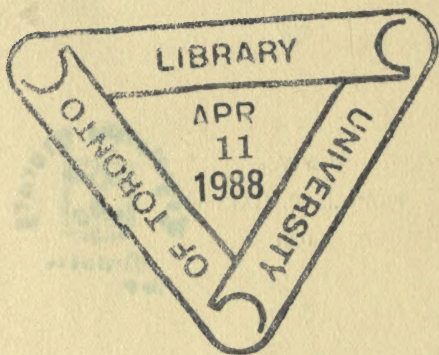
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1901



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INDIAN NAMES OF PLACES IN  
THE BOROUGH OF BROOK-  
LYN, N. Y.\*

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**T**HE Dutch on the Island of Manhattan two hundred and fifty years ago looked with longing eyes across the turbulent waters of the East River, at the fertile fields environing the Indian village of *Merechkawikingh*, near Red Hook, in what is now the

\*From Brooklyn Eagle Almanac for 1893, with corrections and additions.

Twelfth Ward of the City of Brooklyn. The maize lands or cornfields, so frequently mentioned in the early records, were found already cleared, broken up, and cultivated by the rude clam-shell hoes of the squaws and well fertilized by the fish that were scattered annually over the ground by the same hands. These attributes, at the very beginning of settlement, saved the thrifty Dutch farmers untold labor. Indian cornfields and planting lands, when located in convenient and accessible places, were eagerly sought after by all the colonial settlers, and those who began the City of Churches were no exception in desiring the

same conditions. A few years after passing into their possession *Merech-kawikingh* ceased to exist. Fire, decay, and turmoil of war had done its worst, and the primitive red men, who had sold their birthrights for a few gaudy trifles, soon departed from the scene forever. But the name of their place of refuge, handed down by the recording pen of those who succeeded to their domain, has escaped the obliterating hand of time, and now partly relates its story of the past.

We have no knowledge as to the age of the village at the time of which we write. It may have looked upon the passage of Henry Hudson



in the *Half Moon*. In and around its walls echoed the sounds of the "Kinte Kinte" \* in both peace and war. Its first appearance on the threshold of history is dated July 16, 1637, † when "Two Indians called Seyseys ‡ and Numers, both chiefs of *Marychkenwikingh*, appeared before the Director and Council and declared that voluntarily and advisedly, by special orders of the rulers and with consent of the community there, for certain goods which they

\* "To sing and to dance."

† Col. Hist. N. Y., vol. xvi, p. 5.

‡ *Narr.* "The rattlesnake." *Mass.* "The adder" or "viper." This name is onomatopoeic. Compare Eliot (Is. x. 14), *Sesekoo*, "he peeped" [like a bird].

acknowledge to have received, have transferred to Wouter Van Twiller, Director General of New Netherland, the two islands in the Hellegat of which the larger is called *Tenkenas*\* and the smaller *Minnahannock*,† lying to the west of the larger," etc. On May 27, 1640,‡ "Governor Kieft grants a patent to Frederick Lubbersen for a

\* Ward's Island, *Tenkenas*, Delaware *Tékene*, "the woods," literally, "wild-land," "a forest," "full of bushes," "an uninhabited tract."

† Blackwell's Island, *Minnahannock*, "Island-place" or "on the island."

Governor's Island was known as the "Nut-island," or *Pagganck* by the natives, Delaware *Pachgan-ack*, "Walnut place."

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. xiv. p. 31.

piece of land upon the Long Island near *Merechkawikingh*, about *Werpos*,\* reaching in breadth from the Kil and valley that comes from *Gouwanes* . . . to the Red Hook, under the express condition, that if the savages shall voluntarily give up the maize land in the aforesaid piece Frederick Lubbersen shall be allowed to enter upon it." Some of the variations are, *Marechkawick*, 1643; *Merechkawick*, 1645; Breukelen formerly called *Marechkawick*, 1647; *Merrakwick*, 1648, sometimes found abbreviated to *Reckenwick*

\* "The thicket," Delaware *Wipochk*, "bush." B. Fernow, the historian, locates this place in the Tenth Ward of Brooklyn.

and *Reckewick*, and the tribe designated as the *Reckgawanacs*. Where the name is referred to in the local histories and elsewhere the meaning is often given as "the sandy place." Stiles' History of Kings County, among others, gives its etymology as *me*—the, *reckwa*—sand, *ick*—place; by some supposed to have been originally applied to the sandy beach.

Dr. J. Hammond Trumbull has shown that the definite article—unknown to Eliot, Zeisberger, and others—does not exist in the Algonkin language, and that *me*, *mo*, or *m*, as prefixed to certain classes of Algonquian nouns, is not a definite

article, as supposed, but a mistake and mistranslation by the late Mr. Duponceau, reiterated by other grammarians. And furthermore, analysis of the name, tested by various vocabularies of the same language, proves this derivation to be an error, entirely contrary to its early forms, and it should not be perpetuated longer by the careful student of history. Now as regards the third letter in this name, many of the Indians of Long Island never sounded the *r* as heard by the English ear; neither did the *Massachusetts*, *Narragansetts*, or *Delawares*. Where it occurs on Long Island it is either an error of the ear, or else due to the



refugees from Connecticut after the Pequot war; but the letter *r* was frequently interchangeable with *n* in some Algonkin dialects. Eliot in his grammar stated that the consonants *l*, *n*, *r* have a natural coincidence that is an eminent variation of the language. Roger Williams in his *Key to the Language in America* says: "Although some pronounce no L, no R, yet it is the most proper dialect of other places contrary to many reports." Baraga says of the Otchipwe in Canada: "They pronounce *l* and *r* like *n*,—so for instance when they are asked to pronounce the French word *farine* (flour) they will say *panin*."



Dr. Trumbull has shown that the Indians of New Haven, as far as the west bounds of the colony, preferred liquid sounds, and that *r* sometimes took the place of *n*. Pickering, in his notes to Father Rasles' Dictionary of the Abnaki, says: "An attention to these established differences is indispensable to a just comparison of the various dialects, and the useful application of such comparison to the purposes of philology; and it will enable us to detect affinities where at first view there may be little or no appearance of any resemblance." Secretary Cornelis Van Tienhoven, who understood the Indian language,

the interpreter and recorder of New Netherlands at this period, was no doubt aware of this peculiarity ; and in writing the name used the *r* in the place of *n*. He did the same in writing *Mirrachtauhacky* (*Montauk*), which is of the same derivation. Numerous instances can be quoted where this was done by the Dutch, which the limits of this paper will not admit, but enough has been shown to prove the fact.

*Merechkawikingh* is composed of two elements which Dr. Trumbull distinguishes as adjectival and substantival ; with or without a local suffix or post position. He uses the terms adjectival and substantival be-

cause no true adjectives and substantives enter into the composition of Algonquian names. The adjectival may be an adverb or preposition ; the substantival element is often a verbal, which serves in composition as a generic name, but which cannot be used as an independent word ; the synthesis always retains a verbal form.

Therefore, the adjectival *Merechka* is the equivalent of the Delaware (Zeisberger) *Menachkha*, Mass. (Cotton and Eliot) *Menehket*—“fortified,” “fenced,” “palisadoed”; primarily “to make strong with trees.” The substantival *wik* (= Del. *wik*, Mass. *wek*, or *week*, “house,” “home,” and from it

comes wigwam) is the conditional third person singular, of the verb—"when (or where) he is at home" (Trumbull), which with the locative suffix makes the Del. *wik-ink*, Mass. *weekit*, "at or in his house." Thus giving us in the Delaware, to which dialect our name is closely allied, *Men'achkha-wik-ink*, "at his fenced or fortified house." Referring no doubt to its being the residence of the Sachems. This again being similar to the Del. (Zeisberger) *Mechmau-wikink*, "a camp," literally "a great gathering in his house." *Merechka-wick* has simply dropped the locative termination, as *Reekewick* has also its initial consonant.

The Indians of the village were inclined to be peaceful and were always friends of the neighboring settlers, but still there were some who wished to attack and drive them from their planting lands. This the Director and Council would not allow, as stated in 1645: "We cannot at present resolve to attack the Indians at *Marechkawick* as they have not given us any provocation." How magnanimous! They never did give any, if history is truthful. But being crowded, pushed, and most cruelly treated by the growing colony, the remnant of the tribe shortly afterward sold out what land remained to them, moved

to Staten Island, and erected another fort, which they called *Manacknong*.

Several of the historians of this period have left us descriptions of these Indian strongholds which will no doubt apply to *Merechkawikingh*. Woods' N. E. Prospect, 1634, says: "These Forts be some fortie or fifty foote square erected of young timber trees, ten or twelve foot high rammed into the ground with undermining within, the earth being cast up for their shelter against the dischargements of their enemies, having loope-holes to send out their winged messengers." Captain John Underhill, who was afterward

allotted land at *Merechkawikingh*, describes the Pequot Fort on the hills of Mystic, Conn., which he helped to destroy in 1637: "This Fort or Palizado was well-nie an Aker of ground which was surrounded with trees and halfe trees set into the ground, three foot deepe, and fastned close one to another."\* His illustration shows a circular inclosure containing ninety-eight wigwams, and it is said to have held five hundred of the red men. The Indian Fort at Fort Hill, Montauk, was "still standing" in 1661, the outlines of which are yet visible, and as measured

\*Newes from America, 1638, p. 37.



by the writer, are one hundred and eighty feet square.\*

The Navy Yard, where the Marine Hospital stands, and thereabouts, was known at a very early period as Rinnegackonck. According to traditions supposed to have been the locality where began the first settlement of Long Island—but in the light of recent investigation it must yield that honor to Flatlands. The Indian deed is dated July 16, 1637, † when: “Kakapoteyno ‡ and Pe-

\* Obliterated in 1898, by Camp Wikoff. The detention camp occupied a portion of this hill.

† Col. Hist. N. Y., vol. xiv. p. 4.

‡ “The Crow,” this name is onomatopoeic.

wichaas\* as owners of this district by special order of the rulers and with consent of the community . . . conveyed to George Rapalje a certain piece of land called Rinnegackonck, situate upon Long Island, south of the island of the Manahatas † . . . reaching from a kil to the woods, south and east to a certain copse where the water runs over the stones, etc." The records give us: "The plantation of George Rapalje (called *Rinnegackonck*), 1638; *Rinnegaconck*, 1640; *Renegakonck*,

\* Penawitz = "The Stranger," sachem of Massapeague.

† Manahan,—Munoh-atin,— "the island of hills." Any other interpretation for this name is inadmissible.



*Rinneakonc* and *Rinnegconck*, 1641; *Runnegackonck*, 1647. Have rented a certain bowery (farm) called in Indian *Rinnegackonck*," 1651. Stiles' History Kings County gives it as *Rennegackonck*, with the statement that it was sometimes spelled with an *i* or *u* in the first syllable. It will be noticed that the name belonged entirely to the plantation of George Rapalje, and not to a creek as supposed by some. It was probably bestowed upon that fertile and well-watered farm by the Indians after Rapalje had entered upon the land and improved it, for the Indian titles were almost invariably obtained after the land had been



taken possession of by the settlers.

The name gives us an instance occasionally occurring where the *r* is used in place of *w* as it should be, according to the English notation. Although the Dutch *w* has not the same primary sound or derivation as the English, Heckewelder wrote: "There are in the Delaware language no such consonants as the German *w* or the English *v*, *f*, *r*. Where the *w* in this language is placed before a vowel, it sounds as in English: before a consonant it represents a whistled sound." Eliot found the same difficulty in the Natick dialect, for he says in his

grammar, "we call *w wēe*, because our name giveth no power of its sound." Many Indian names in the townships west of Southampton, L. I., show how difficult it was for our early pioneers to catch the true sound of the Indian names of persons and places; as Heckewelder has said, they had not acquired an Indian ear. For instance, we find *Rioncom* for *Weoncombone*, *Ratiocan* or *Raseokan* for *Ashawoken*, *Ra* or *Ronkonkumake* for *Wonkonkamaug* and many others. Beside we find some of the familiar Indian names of the eastern townships so effectually disguised under the softening influence of the Dutch language as

to render it difficult to believe they are the same. But in giving them the Dutch values in pronunciation we discover their identity. Again, in the short vocabulary taken down by Thomas Jefferson in 1794, from the lips of an old squaw at *Puss-pa'tok*, in the town of Brookhaven, we find the *r* appearing in many words, showing by comparison that she or her kindred, by marriage or otherwise, were originally from the tribes of western Connecticut. All of which open up very interesting historical questions regarding Indian migrations that we at present cannot dwell upon.

With these facts before us, we

must regard *Rinne* or *Runneg* as the parallel of the Mass. and Long Island *winne*, varied by both Cotton and Eliot, as *wunne* and *wunne-gen*, and found in local dialects as *wirri*, *wauri*, *willi* or *we'e*; Montauk *weegan*, Secatogue *wingan*, denoting something that is good, fine, or pleasant. We find it in the *Pusspa'tok* as *woreecan*, similarly in the Mohegan as *Wauregan*, perpetuated by Dr. Elisha Tracy's epitaph on Sam Uncas in the Mohegan burying-ground in Norwich, Conn., viz.:

“ For courage bold, for things wauregan  
He was the glory of Moheagon.”

The Delaware equivalent is *wulik*

or *wulit*, also varied as *wingan*, which Heckewelder says signifies good; and in the various derivations which flow from it means almost everything that is good, just, decent, pleasant, or agreeable. The second syllable or substantival *-ack*. (= Del. *hacki*, Mass. *ohke*, Narr. *auke*) signifies "land," "country," "place," or "fields," primarily "the producer" (passive inanimate), Trumbull. The terminal *-onck* = (Del. *-unk*, or *-onk*) "at," or "on," makes the name (w)*inneg-ack-onck*, "on the pleasant land," or in the form of the third person singular as Eliot writes it (Hosea ix. 6), *onneg-ack-onk* "at his pleas-



ant place." Cotton's Vocabulary of the Mass. gives: *Wunnegen ayeuonk*, "a delightful place" (Eliot, Is. xvi. 6); *wunnegen ohkeit*, "pleasant places." At Huntington, L. I., we have under various forms *winnekomuk* "a pleasant inclosed place," now contracted to Comac. Chelsea, Mass., was known as "Winnisimet; a very sweet place for situation," says Wood, 1634. Gowanus has survived the lapse of centuries, and is still retained as a local name. Here, as near as we can learn from documentary evidence, began the first settlement of the city of Brooklyn. The first purchase from the Indians having been made in 1636,

the deed of which has been lost, Gowanus is not mentioned in existing records until May 27, 1639, when: "Thos. Bescher sells Cornelis Lampertsen Cool a plantation formerly occupied by Jan of Rotterdam and afterward by him Thomas Bescher on Long Island near *Gowanus* stretching southward to a certain kil or little low bushes," etc. Variations are: "Kil and valley that comes from *Gowanes*," 1640. *Gouwunes*, 1641; a certain piece of land called *Gouwanes*, 1642. *Gouvanes*, 1642. *Gowanis*, 1652. *Gauwanes*, 1653. *Cowanoes*, Map, 1666. Stiles' Hist. Kings County from other records gives *Goujanes*, *Coujanes*, *Cojanes*,

and *Cujanes*.\* The spelling in Bescher's conveyance to Cool is probably an error of the translator or compositor, for that is now its modern form.

The only signification found suggested for this name appears in Jones' Indian Bulletin for 1867 as: "the shallows," "flowing down." Nothing in the name warrants this interpretation; besides, it would not apply to a tract of land. From the mark of the possessive case the land

\* I have received several suggestions that this form *Cujanes* indicates a Spanish derivation, but that would not alter my suggestion if it was really the Spanish sound of an Indian name, *i. e.*, a personal one.

probably takes its name from an Indian who lived and planted there, *Gauwane's* plantation. His name may be translated as "the sleeper," or "He rests," related to the Delaware *gauwihan* "sleep," *gauwin* "to sleep," *n' gauwineep*, "I slept." This word seems to have had a primary meaning of lying down and resting. Heckewelder translates *gauwa'hening* as "a place of falling timbers," and perhaps erroneously, for Trumbull has proven in many instances how mistaken Heckewelder has been in his etymologies, and, knowing this, we would suggest "a place of rest."

*Canarsie*, the name of one of the Long Island tribes, was not, previous

to the influx of settlers, a tribal designation, nor descriptive of their place of abode. Their village, according to conveyances of land from 1636 to 1642, was known as *Keshaechquereren* or *Keskaechqueren*,\* or, as more often termed, "the community," † *Ca-*

\* Col. Hist. N. Y., vol. xiv. pp. 2, 6, 14, 36.

† *Keskaechqueren* is probably related to the Narragansett (R. Williams' Key, Chap. 28): "*Keesagunnamun*, a kind of solemn, publicke meeting wherein they lie under the trees, in a kinde of Religious observation, and have a mixture of Religion and sports: But their Chiefest Idoll of all for sport and games is (if their land be at peace) toward Harvest, when they set up a long house called *Qunnekamuck*, which signifies Long House, sometimes a hundred, sometimes two hundred foot long, upon a plaine neere the Court (which they call *Kitteickaïick*), where many thousands, men and women meet," etc.



*narsie* being the descriptive appellation of a portion of their possessions, which afterwards by common use and acceptance became the tribal name. Some of the most marked variations, such as *Canarysen*, *Canarissea*, *Kanarsingh*, and *Kanasing*, are from the Dutch records, while *Conorasset*, *Conarise* and *Conorie See*, are from the English. By colloquial use, and the desire to get rid of harsh and unwonted sounds, the settlers abandoned the prefix originally appertaining to the term, for the above forms undoubtedly show their parallel to the *Naragansett Wau-Kaunósint*; *Massachusetts Won-Kónous-es-et*; *Abnaki*

*Wa'Kañr ∞zen*; Micmac *Wökáloo-sán'*, "a fence," "hedge," "fort," "palisade." The missing prefix attached to any of the variations, such as *Won-Conorasset*, or *Wa'-Kanar-singh*, shows the identity, indicating "a fenced place," or "at or about the fenced place."

It is now generally admitted that the first efforts toward the settlement of Long Island were begun in the town of Flatlands. At a very early period (some say in 1624) the farmers residing here leased land from the Indians on Flatlands Neck, until there were twelve to twenty cultivated portions all inclosed in fence. This arrangement seems to

have been satisfactory to all concerned for many years, and is reiterated in the Nicoll patent of the township dated 1667,\* viz.—“As also all those lands and *Canarise*, part of which y<sup>e</sup> Indian proprietors did heretofore commit and give their consent that y<sup>e</sup> inhabitants of y<sup>e</sup> towne of Flatlands should manure and plant and since have for a valuable consideration sould y<sup>e</sup> same unto them with its appurtenances as by deed bearing date y<sup>e</sup> 16th day of April 1665.” This deed reads: † “*Wametappack* Sachem of *Canaryssen* (others also named) lawful owners

\* Thompson, Hist. L. I., vol. ii. p. 184.

† Stiles' Hist. King's Co., vol. i. p. 71.



of *Canaryssen*, and the appendages thereunto appertaining have agreed and sold . . . a parcel of land . . . with the conditions that the purchasers once for always a fence shall set at *Canaryssen*, for the protection of Indian cultivation, land which becomes inclosed in fence shall by the Indian owners all their lives be used." "*Conorise* Indian field," with this fence and others displayed, appears on a map of 1666.\* A stronger historical corroboration of my derivation and etymology of the name could not be found than this clew from the records; and there can be no doubt whatever that the

\*Col. Hist. N. Y., vol. xiv.

two expressions, *appurtenances* and *appendages*, in these two documents, legally referred to the fences which inclosed the tracts leased from the Indians. They having sold all the land under fence, it became necessary that their own tract still remaining should be so inclosed, hence the conditions at the end of the deed.\*

\* The name *Canarisse* appears elsewhere, where sales made by the Indians were bounded by fences (probably "live hedges," *i. e.* "lopped trees,") to indicate the line. This is the case with, and on the Delaware River terminating at *Canarisse* or *Boomtjes hook* (now Bombay Hook) sold by the Sachem of the country to Peter Stuyvesant in 1655 (Col. Hist. N. Y., vol. i. p. 599). It also appears as the northwest boundary of the Livingston patent of 1684, for land in

*Maspeth* was early called *Mespaechtes* (1638), *Mespatchis* (1642), *Mespachtes* (1646), *Mespat* (1649), *Mespacht* (1654), *Mispat* (1656), and designated the "kill" or "creek," now known as Newtown Creek. The stream and its tributaries had their rise in wooded swamps, flaggy pools, fed by flowing springs, all of which opened out in a broad expanse of lowlands, consisting of extensive marshes, muddy flats, and bogs. On every tide these marshy tracts and adjacent lowlands were flooded—a condition caused mainly by the

Columbia County, in the Mohegan form of *Wakankasick* (Doct. Hist. N. Y., vol. iii. p. 834. See map).

backing up of the two tides from the west and east, which met at Hell Gate. Even to-day, under the changed conditions, the lands are frequently drowned out, and the swamps at its sources are almost always inundated during the winter months and in wet seasons. These conditions were enough, when a wilderness, to establish it in an Indian's mind, and for him to designate the place as *Mespat*, "an overflowing tidal stream"; the parallel of the Micmac *Mespaak*, "overflowed by the tide." The Micmac spoken in New Brunswick is radically the same as that spoken on Long Island. This fact is true of all dialects of the

family, whether spoken in the forests of Canada to-day or that formerly spoken on the shores of the Carolinas in the days of Sir Walter Raleigh.\*

\* On the coast of Maine, west of Machias, is a point and locality called *Misspeck*—a name which General Hubbard, in his *Woods and Lakes of Maine*, gives the same origin and meaning. In the province of New Brunswick, the home of the Micmac Indians, appears *Mispec* Point, a name of numerous variations among which occurs *Mishepasque* (1686). Prof. Ganong, in his *Place Names in New Brunswick*, derives it from same source. Finally in the town of Islip, L. I., as mentioned in a deed of 1703, *Mispatuck*, or *Mispatuc*, occurs as the Indian name of Udall's brook, which flows through swamps and marshes until it empties into the Great South Bay. As it bears the same form and probably has the same origin topographically, it may be interpreted

Indian personal names were frequently given to localities where they lived and *vice versa*. This can be proven abundantly from those existing on Long Island; among them one recorded in 1642, when "Governor Kieft granted to Jan

the same as "an overflowing tidal stream." In the Brooklyn Eagle Almanac for 1889 and 1890 I translated the name as a "bad-water-place" *Macht-pe-es-it*, which in sound and appearance conforms quite closely to the Dutch notation of *Mespaechtes*. "A bad-water-place" would also apply descriptively to its natural features and muddy characteristics, which existed in the early days and made it a place unfavorable for the passage of canoes or trails. To an Indian figuratively speaking, both the foregoing derivation and the one given would indicate in some respects "a bad-water-place."

Manje a piece of land—towards *Sassian's* maize land—long as the limits of the said maize land fifty rods," etc. *Sassian's* cornfields were near *Merechkawikingh* and not far from *Gowanus*. *Sassian* signifies "the planter" or "sower," a squaw probably. Denton, in his Brief Description of New York, 1670, says: "Their names are not proper set names as amongst Christians, but everyone invents a name to himself which he likes best, some calling themselves Rattlesnake, Skunk, Buckshorn or the like."

At or near *Gowanus* was another locality which had a name that we find duplicated on the opposite

side of the East River on the Island of Manhattan. A record of November 28, 1639, is as follows : \* “ We have granted to Thos. Bescher tobacco planter a certain peice of land situate upon the Long Island on the strand of the North River Bay near *Saphorakan* stretching in width along the strand from the cane-brake three hundred paces,” etc. This is the only mention of the Long Island name that I have been able to discover. The Manhattan occurs in the same year as : “ Piece of land near *Sapokanikan* bounded on the north by the strand road.” Again in 1639: “ Tobacco

\* Col. Hist. N. Y., vol. xiv. p. 27.



plantation near *Sapohanican* with palisades around it." In 1640: "His present plantation situate against the reed-valley beyond *Sappokanican* on the Island Manhate." B. Fernow\* suggests that the latter was an Indian village near Gansevoort St., N. Y. Stiles' Hist. of Kings Co. locates the former at Gowanus without a hint as to what was referred to. According to the record, it was the tobacco plantation that was palisaded, if that was what gave rise to Fernow's suggestion of an Indian village.

This name probably denotes a "Tobacco plantation," one planted

\* Col. Hist. N. Y., vol. xiv. p. 19.



either by the Dutch or Indians; *hakihakan*, "a field, plantation, land broken up for cultivation." *Sappo* = Powhatan *uppo*, "tobacco." Josselyn says "the Indians use a small round-leaved tobacco called by them or the Fishermen *Poke*." Probably *Nicotiana rustica*, well known to have been long in cultivation among the American savages (Trumbull, R. Williams' Key).

*Ihpetonga* is said to have been the name applied by the Indians to the Brooklyn Heights. Careful search among the records and elsewhere fails to reveal the fact that it was so bestowed. It seems rather to have been given to the locality

gratuitously by the late Henry R. Schoolcraft, who in his report on the aboriginal names and geographical terminology of the State of New York, made to the New York Historical Society in 1844,\* made the following remarks: "The vocabulary of the Mohegans affords, however, a few other terms the application of which may well be assured from their etymology. The heights of Brooklyn are graphically described in the term *Ihpe-tonga*, that is high sandy banks." Schoolcraft in his day found that a very few Indian names of places had been retained or remembered, con-

\* Proc. for 1844, p. 98.

sequently bestowed aboriginal names on a number of places in this vicinity. The records at that time had not been translated or published—even Merechkawikigh was unknown to him as it was to Furman, Thompson, and other historians. But he was perfectly familiar with the Chippeway, however, and took this name bodily from that dialect, and not from the Mohegan, as stated, the Mohegan term being *Aspetong*, Mass. (Eliot) *Ashpohtag*, “a height.” The Chippeway *Ihpetonga* having its parallel in the Del. *Achwowangeu*, “high sandy banks,” which we find, varied slightly, as part of the Indian name of Staten Island

in *Aquehonga* (English notation), *Eghquaons* (Dutch notation). Therefore the appellation, as far as the Heights are concerned, is not yet fifty years old. Besides, if I am correctly informed, the heights were rocky instead of being sandy.

In the Indian deed of 1652 \* for the land called *Nayeck* (= *Nai-ack*), "a point of land" (duplicated in Southampton township as *Noyack*), the line is stated to "run across the hills to *Mechawanienc*." This name signifies "to the old path," Delaware *Mechowi*, "ancient," *i. e.*, "old in use," *-anink*, "on, or to, the path or trail." Coney Island in

\* Col. Hist. N. Y., vol. xiv. p. 190.

1649\* was known as *Mannahanning*, "on the island," and a neck of land thereon, belonging to an Indian named *Guttaquoh*, was called *Narriock*, which is a variation of *Nayeck*. Sometimes I find these two names misapplied; that is, the name for the neck given to the island, which is an error. In a deed of 1684, for land at Gravesend † *Moeung* (= Mass. *Moé*, "black," *-ung*, locative affix) described "a black or muddy place," on the meadows at the mouth of Garettsen's Creek. A place on the same tract, probably the upland, was called *Makeopaca* (= *Mache-pa-*

\* Stiles' Hist. Kings Co., vol. i. p. 187.

† *Ibid.*, p. 162.



*quauk*), "the great cleared place." Barren Island in 1664 was called *Equendito*, and by the English Broken lands.\* The English name in this instance is a translation of the Indian, viz., (*p*) *equan-tah-ohke*, "land broken up," *i. e.*, for cultivation. The islands and meadows adjoining "by the ocean sea wholly inclosed" were called *Hoopaninak* (= *Aup-anhan-ak*), "flooded island place," *Shanscomacocke* (= *T'schans-komuk*), "the stepping place," *i. e.*, "landing-place on the beach," and *Macutteris* (= *Moskituash*), "grass or meadow land." Some tracts of level land, naturally clear, called "flats" by the

\* Stiles' Hist. Kings Co., vol. i. p. 77.



Dutch,\* were variously called *Kestateuw* or *Castateeuw* (= *kesk-asketu*), signifying "where grass is cut," localities greatly desired by our early settlers.

A place on Flatlands Neck, according to the deed of April 6, 1665,† given by the Sachem of Canaryssen, was named *Muskytte hool*. This is not "Musqueto hole," as some suppose, but *Musquetaug* hole, *i. e.*, "a pool of water where rushes grow," such as were used for making mats, baskets, and for covering the wigwam.

These are the principal aboriginal

\* Col. Hist. N. Y., vol. xiv. pp. 2-3.

† Stiles' Hist. Kings Co., vol. i. p. 71.



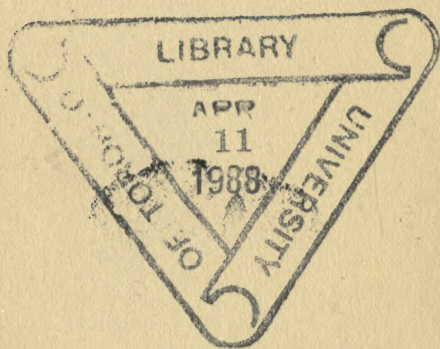
names that have come down to us as far as the records and deeds bear witness. No doubt at the beginning of settlement in intercourse with the natives, there were many more in colloquial use, but these were gradually dropped from alien speech, and in time passed from the mind and memory of the newcomer.











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