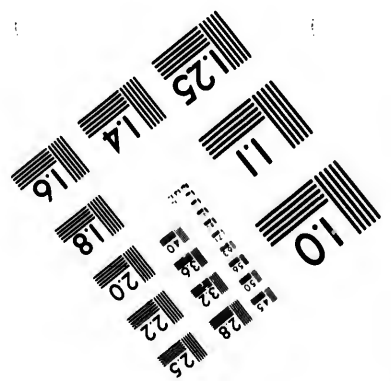
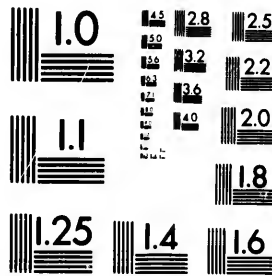


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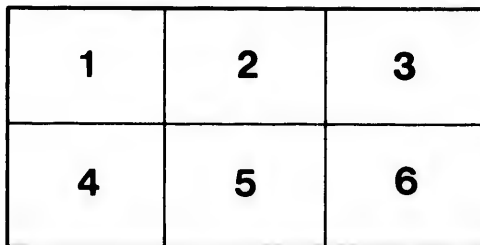
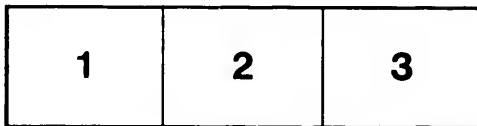
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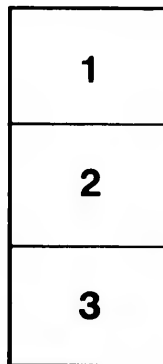
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VII.—*The Philology of the Ouananiche. A plea for the Recognition of Priority of Nomenclature.*

By E. T. D. CHAMBERS.

Author of the "Ouananiche and its Canadian Environment."

(Communicated by Dr. Geo. Stewart, F.R.G.S., and read May 19, 1895.)

The introduction, in recent years, of large numbers of English-speaking anglers to the fresh-water salmon of Lake St. John and other Labrador waters has produced variations most confusing in its nomenclature. The following are some of the many forms of spelling the name of the great game fish of northeastern Canada that have perplexed the readers of modern angling and other literature: Sananiche, ouananiche, ouinaniche, oumaniche, ouananish, winminisch, winnonish, winanish, wininisch, winimish, wininisch, winnoniche, winnouiche, wananish, wananishe, wannanish, wannanische, wananish, awenanish, ouininnish, ouininiche, ouaniche, winanis, wannoniche, owaminach, ouenanesh and ouinenish. Memory recalls some other remarkable attempts to reduce to writing the French and Indian pronunciation of this fish's name, but I confine myself in this paper to the mention of the forms for the use of which at present writing I can furnish authorities.

Ouinaniche was employed in March, 1894, in a review of a new book in the columns of *L'Événement* newspaper of Quebec and the Rev. Duncan Anderson uses it in "A Dominion Day Idyll." It also appears in the literature of the N. Y., N. H. and Hudson River RR., and is used incidentally, as a synonym, by Mr. J. G. Aylwin Creighton. It is one of the many forms of the name indiscriminately employed by Mr. J. M. Lemoine, F.R.S.C., who at page 263 of his *Chasse et pêche au Canada*, uses also the plural form "ouinaniches." At page 242 of the same work Mr. Lemoine writes it "ouinaniche," for which spelling, however, I have found no other authority, and in the appendix he gives us "winnouiche," employing still another form in a later work, as will be seen as we proceed. Mr. J. Edmund Roy, F.R.S.C., in his *Voyage au pays de Tadoussac*, uses "ouaganish." "Winninisch" is employed by C. M. Palmer of Minneapolis at page 71 of *Favorite Flies* by Mary Orvis Marbury: "winnonish" is the spelling found on a board nailed to a tree on the shore of Lake Tschotagama, over fifty miles up the Grand Peribonea River, and containing the record of a fishing experience there in July, 1891, by Messrs. E. J. Myers and A. W. Kœhler of New York; though in justice to Mr. Myers, it must be said that he invariably uses "ouananiche" in his interesting contributions to the literature of the fish

and of the sport that it affords. "Winanishé" is the orthography employed by one of the earliest students and closest observers of the fish—Mr. J. G. A. Creighton—throughout his article in *Scribner's Magazine* for May, 1889, while "wananishé" is that which the same author adopts, not only in the title of his monograph in Shield's *American Game Fishes*, but generally throughout that carefully prepared paper. In *Outing* for August, 1890, Mr. Geo. R. Mosle writes "wininish," and the spelling "wimoniche" is that adopted in Lovell's *Gazetteer of British North America*. Mr. James Mackenzie of the old Northwest Company visited "The Kings Posts" of the Saguenay and the Labrador coast in 1808, and in the journal of his canoe jaunt which has been printed by the Hon. L. R. Masson, he speaks of a fish resembling salmon, a foot and a half long, found in Lake St. John, and called by the Indians "winanis." Mr. C. H. Farnham, in the course of his admirable story of the Canadian *voyageurs* in *Harper's Magazine* for March, 1888, employs the name "wamoniche." The Marquis of Lorne has invented "ouaniche,"—if his printer does him no injustice. This spelling appears at page 88 of *Canadian Pictures*, published by the Religious Tract Society. Both Mr. W. H. Murray and Mr. J. M. Lemoine—the former in his description of the Lake St. John region (Quebec edition, 1888) and the latter in his *Historical and Sporting Notes on Quebec* (edition of 1889)—employ the form "wananish." So does Mr. Arthur Buies in his work on the Saguenay. The English pronunciation of this orthography resembles somewhat closely that of the Indian name of the fish but not so nearly as does the spelling already given from Mr. Creighton's article in *American Game Fishes*. A still closer approach to the proper sound is found in the English pronunciation of "wannanishé" which appears upon the permits to fish in his private waters in *la grande décharge* by Mr. W. A. Griffiths, one of the earliest English-speaking frequenters of these waters. Kit Clarke has adopted the name "wininnish," which is to be found both in *The Practical Angler* and in *Where the Trout Hide*, as well as in the many charming contributions of their author to the columns of contemporary periodical literature. "Wannanish" appeared above the signature of Mr. S. Webber in *Forest and Stream* on March 17th, 1894. "Wenanishé" is found in a report of a government exploratory survey of the Saguenay, prepared by Mr. Nixon of the 66th Regiment, about the year 1829, and Bouchette, in his *Topographical Dictionary of Canada* calls the fish "awenanish," declaring that "the awenanish is said to be the most delicious fresh water fish in the world." Rogers, in his *Stadacona Depicta*, follows the spelling of Bouchette. In his *Sportsman's Gazetteer* Mr. Charles Hallack gives us "onininish," and in the *Canadian Sportsman*, of July 11th, 1890, I find "oniniche," while exactly a week later the same paper spells it "owaninach." Quebec dealers in the fish have employed the names "ouenaneshe" and "ouinenish." One of the

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many forms of the word that can claim to have been used by authorities of respectability is "wiminish," which appears at page 445 of Dr. Goode's *American Fishes* and in the scientific paper upon the *Fishes of Ontario* by Dr. Ramsay Wright, F.R.S.C., professor in the University of Toronto, published in 1892, with the report of the Ontario Fish and Game Commission. Of more importance still to orthographers is the fact that "winninish" is the spelling adopted in *Webster's Dictionary*, where the name of the fish first figured in the edition of 1892, and also in the *Century*. One, at least, of the proprietors of the first-mentioned of these two eminent philological authorities—Mr. A. G. Merriam of Springfield—is an accomplished angler who has cultivated the acquaintance of the ouananiche in *la grande décharge* of Lake St. John. Webster gives the definition of "winninish" as follows: "The land-locked variety of the common salmon (Canada)." It may appear presumptuous to criticise the professional work of so justly recognized an authority upon his favourite branch of science as Professor Addison E. Verrill of Yale University, who conducted the revision of the zoölogical terms in the 1892 edition of *Webster*; but I have no hesitation in declaring that neither the orthography "wiminish" nor his definition of the name is the best obtainable. Nor yet is either of the other forms for whose use I have thus far cited authorities. The fish to which these various names have been applied is not a "land-locked salmon" at all.

A brief consideration of the ouananiche itself and of its habits is necessary to a correct appreciation of the definition of its name in *Webster's*, and this, it is hoped, will not be considered foreign to the subject matter of the present paper. First then, a few words as to the identity of the fish whose philology is under consideration. Professor Samuel Garman of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, Cambridge, Mass., to whom I sent specimens for examination in September, 1893, wrote in reply: "I see nothing by which to distinguish the fish of Lake St. John from *Salmo salar* as represented by specimens from New Brunswick and Maine, or other New England States. It may prevent misunderstanding if it is explained that I take the fresh water individuals, including of course those truly land-locked as commonly designated, to be the better representatives of the species *S. salar*." He further states, that the fact that some individuals leave fresh water, where propagation occurs, for a time, being somewhat modified by so doing, neither gives rise to a different species *nor even a different variety*. The italics are mine and show the result of Professor Garman's examination of the fish to be in conflict with Professor Verrill's definition of its name. Not only is the ouananiche not a distinct variety from the salmon that goes out to sea but it is not land-locked either. In all waters tributary to Lake St. John it has free access to the sea. Of this opportunity it is probable that it seldom avails itself, but individuals have been caught at the

mouth of the Marguerite in the lower Saguenay and also near Tadoussac. Thousands too, may annually be seen in the vicinity of Chicoutimi below all the rapids and falls of the river, but from the fact that many are found all winter in Lake St. John and that the usual colour of the flesh is not so red as that of the salmon that is known to visit the sea, due to the difference in the food supplies, it may safely be assumed that few if any of them regularly migrate to salt water. This is no more evidence however, that they are land-locked, than were similar habits on the part of the salmon formerly so plentiful in Lake Ontario, or that the alewives introduced into the same lake in 1873, according to Dr. Bean, are equally land-locked because of the prevailing impression amongst the fishermen that they are now permanent inhabitants of the lake. If they are so, it is from choice rather than necessity, there being no more obstruction to their descent to the sea than there is to that of the ouananiche from Lake St. John. The mistake of calling the latter a "land-locked" salmon is a common one and nearly as old as the literature of the subject. And the supposition that if they do descend the Saguenay, the ouananiche are unable to overcome the natural obstacles to their ascent of the discharge of Lake St. John is also erroneous, though recorded as a fact by Mr. McCarthy in "The Leaping Ouananiche." The fact is that the fish overcomes greater obstacles in its ascent to its spawning grounds in some of the wild tributary waters of Lake St. John than any encountered by it in *la grande décharge*, and in the fall of the year may be seen in large numbers successfully leaping up the fifth fall of the Mistassini, the Salmon river *chute* of the Ashuapmouchouan and parts of the *chute au diable* and other cataracts of the Peribonca, often after the failure of many previous efforts. Webster's is therefore untrue to biological science in defining the fish whose name it spells "winninich" to be "the land-locked variety of the common salmon (Canada)." And the erroneous statement occurring in the definition of the word stamps the blunder a philological as well as a biological one. "The fresh water salmon of Canada" would have been a more correct definition of the name, though not likely to be nearly comprehensive enough for the wider range to be covered in the near future by the original form of the word "ouananiche." Of Canadian origin, there is promise of its general adoption, ere long, as the name of the fresh water salmon of the United States as well as for that of the Canadian fish. The two fish, though differing slightly in their habits, owing to the difference in the temperature of the water of their respective habitats are known to be identical in family classification; and American writers on ichthyological subjects are coming to see that there is no necessity for a different name in the United States for the ouananiche when it occurs in American waters, and the more so that the name "land-locked salmon" by which it has hitherto been known is as inappropriate and misleading, considering the condition of its habitat, as

when applied to the Canadian fish. One of the leading American authorities on the subject, Mr. A. N. Cheney of Glen Falls, N.Y., State Fish Culturist of New York, expresses his intention of hereafter writing of the fresh-water salmon as the ouananiche, no matter in what water it may be found. And it will be observed that he does not employ the form of the word given in *Webster's*.

To Dr. Elliott Coues—a most eminent authority—was entrusted the supervision of the zoological terms in the *Century*, and he was assisted in ichthyology by the very capable Professor Theodore N. Gill. Yet in their use of the word “wiminish” there would seem to be no justification for either the orthography or their definition of it. They term the “win-ninish”—“the Schoodic trout,” and upon turning up the word “trout” with its various qualifying terms, the Schoodic trout is declared, by the same authorities, to be identical with “the great lake trout.” Now the great lake trout differs widely from the ouananiche, and is not a salmon of any kind, either land-locked or otherwise. It is *subvelinus namaycush* or *amethystus*—the Mackinaw trout of the great lakes,—the *queue fourchée* of French Canada,—the togne and salmon trout of certain parts of the Northern States,—the *kokomesh* of the Montagnais Indians and the *toulali* of the country of the Micmacs and Abenakis.

There are many reasons for preferring “ouananiche” to all the other forms of the fish's name. It is true that its orthography is French, but French was the original spelling of the written word. The name of the fish is Indian, but the various sounds of the spoken language of the Montagnais and Nascapée tribes were unrepresented in writing until the arrival of the French missionaries in Canada. These latter employed written characters for the use of their Indian converts and also reduced the spoken language of the Indians to writing, using for the purpose their own French alphabet and system of orthography. They transferred to paper their etymology of the sound of this fish's name, and their pictorial representation of the spoken Indian word remains to this day a perfect philological reflex of the musical vibrations produced by its pronunciation. English observers would probably have depicted the sound on paper by writing “whananishe” or “wannahnishe.” The French having no “w” employ “ou” to represent the sound, as in *oui*. For the sake of brevity and simplicity, the early French missionaries in Canada used the numeral “8” to represent not only *huit* or *eight*, but also the Indian sound ordinarily represented by the French *oui* or *ou*, no matter in what part of a word it occurred. Hence the origin of “Sananiche,”—the first of the many forms of the word given in the commencement of the present paper. No English spelling represents the sound of the Indian name as well as does the original French form “ouananiche” or “Sananiche.” It stands, too, the test of priority, being found printed in the oldest existing book of the Montagnais mission, which, according to

Rev. Father Lacasse, O. M. I., is from the pen of the Rev. Father Massé, the eminent Jesuit missionary, who accompanied Champlain on his return to Canada in 1663, and died in 1646, after labouring earnestly amongst the aborigines and translating the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, &c., into the Montagnais dialect.

"Ouananiche" is the orthography employed by the present French and Indian guides of Lake St. John. It is found in the best literature produced in the province of Quebec where the name originated, whether English or French, as well as in the official reports of the Crown Lands Department of the Provincial Government, in the officially promulgated game laws of the province, and in the voluminous mass of literature pertaining to the sporting resorts of this northern country, issued by the Quebec and Lake St. John Railway Company. Vandal linguists who have attempted to anglicize the appropriate and original orthography of the Indian sound, have only succeeded in creating confusion, as we have already seen, by erecting a Babel composed of a score or more of different spellings of the same word. Uniformity in the matter may never be looked for upon the basis of any one of the many anglicized forms of the name. In French-Canadian literature, as well as in the Provincial Government reports, "ouananiche" it is and "ouananiche" it will remain. The same is true of much of the best literary work done in recent years by those English-speaking sportsmen who have devoted any considerable attention to the fish and to the sport which it affords the angler; as for instance of the article in the May, 1893, *Blackwood*, by Lt.-Col. Andrew C. P. Haggard, D. S. O., brother of the well-known novelist, of that in *Outing* for October, 1893, by Eugene McCarthy of Syracuse, and of the same author's *Leaping Ouananiche*, of papers in *Shooting and Fishing*, in the *American Field* and in *Forest and Stream*, by E. J. Myers of New York, and of frequent contributions by Dr. George Stewart, F.R.S.C., F.R.G.S., and others to recent periodical literature.

The form of spelling adopted in *Webster's Dictionary* and the *Century*, has nothing whatever to recommend it beyond the fact that in recent years it has been occasionally used by writers upon ichthyological subjects, just as a number of others have been. Neither the English nor the French pronunciation of "winnish" conveys anything like the sound of the Indian name, as all will readily testify who have heard the melodious "wha-nā'-nish" glide like a note of nature's music from the lips of a Montagnais hunter. Of all the anglicized forms of the word "wannaniche" comes nearest in pronunciation to the Indian sound, and yet I have never met with it but once. And even were it possible to secure for its use uniformity, there is certainly no warrant for substituting it for the original "ouananiche" and nothing to be gained by the change.

The popular translation of the Montagnais "ouananiche" is "little salmon." It is true that *iche* or *ishe* is a Montagnais diminutive, but the

Montagnais name for salmon—the salmon of the sea—is not *ouanan* at all but *ouchachonmac* or *ou-sha-shu mak*, and this name is still often applied by the Indians to particularly dark-coloured and extra large specimens of the ouananche found in certain northern lakes. To their ordinary fresh water salmon they applied a specific name, calling it “ouanans” or the abbreviated “unans”—each pronounced “wannan” or “whonnan.”

Originally, “ouanans,” oddly enough, signified locality, especially the place where fish are found, according to some authorities. According to others it is a corruption of *ouen-a?* (pronounced “when-na”)—a Montagnais interrogative. Used in the sense of “What is that?” it is not difficult to imagine how *ouen-a?* or *ouan-a?* uttered by Montagnais fishermen as they pointed to large fish seen feeding upon the flies on the scum-covered pools, came in time to be employed for the name of that particular variety which, more than any other in the territory in which it is found, is fond of disporting itself upon the surface of the water. The Rev. Père Arnaud, the missionary to the Montagnais, suggests further to me that the particular locality known as “ouanans” or “unans,” to the Montagnais, is the eddying water in the pools at the foot of rapid currents. In just such water as this the ouananche are often seen sailing around with their dorsal fins protruding above their native element. It requires no stretch of imagination on the part of those acquainted with the Indians and their manners and the evolutions of their language, to admit the possibility of either *ouanans* or *unans* having been the original root of ouananche.

Either is much more probable than the suggestion of Mr. Creighton at page 82 of Shield's *American Game Fishes*, that the name of the fish “is probably derived from the Cree root ‘wan,’ to lose or mistake, applied either to the fish having lost itself or being taken for a salmon.”

The diminutive form of the word “ouanans” is now almost universally employed in speaking of the fish, perhaps because the latter offers no exception to the angler's general experiences that the big fish are few and far between. Or can it be that there is an element of truth in the Indian reports of the deterioration in size of their fresh-water salmon, and that in former ages these fish were so much larger, that all their descendants of the present day must be classed as little *ouanans*? French-Canadian fishermen, settlers and guides in the land of the ouananche call it *le saumon* (the salmon) perhaps oftener than they employ the Indian name, and from their *petit saumon* (little salmon), and the knowledge that the Montagnais affix *iche* is a diminutive, may have originated the fashionable error of jumping to the conclusion that “ouananche” is an Indian equivalent for “little salmon.” Were it indeed so, the constructors of the word would simply have builded better than they knew.

And now that the original form, after an existence in French-Canadian literature of over two and a half centuries, has obtained such

widespread acceptance in English letters, does it not savour of literary barbarism to seek for a phonetic English spelling, by substituting for a poetically constructed word, a mongrel orthography, such as is found inclosed between parentheses in the pronouncing dictionaries? And the absurdity of the seeking is found in the variety of the grotesque results already indicated. As well, it seems to me, might we object to the French form of our English word "champagne," and insist upon writing it "shampain" or "shampane," as to persist in the anglicization of *ouananiche*.

The lake trout,—forked tail,—lunge or *touladi* is fortunate in the almost universal maintenance for the name of its variety, of the original French orthographical illustration of the Indian sound represented by the pronunciation of *namaycush*. But in the case of another North America fish,—*esox nobilior*,—whose popular title in its original form, like that of the ouananiche and namaycush, comes down to us, as correctly claimed by Mr. Fred. Mather, from its Indian nomenclature, an apparent desire to get away from French orthography has produced a somewhat similar confusion of language to that already described in the case of the ouananiche. The original spelling of the Indian name was undoubtedly "maskinongé," and such it is still called in the Statutes of Canada. According to Mgr. Lafleche, "maskinongé" is derived from *maskh* deformed, and *kinongé*, a pike, and was applied to the *esox nobilior* by the Indians because it appeared to them a deformed or different kind of pike from that to which they had been accustomed. The river of the same name that flows into Lake St. Peter, which name was subsequently extended to the town since built at its mouth and to the county of which it is the *chef lieu*, was doubtless so called from the number of these fish taken in or near its estuary, and after their Indian name. And it is a singular corroboration of the absolute correctness of the French orthography "maskinongé," that no less an authority than Dr. James A. Henshall, the author of the paper on this fish in *American Game Fishes*, following the nomenclature of Dr. Mitchil, and of DeKay in *Fishes of New York*, substitutes for *nobilior*, as the scientific name of this particular species,—*masquinongy*,—which is about as near as it is possible for English orthography to go in representing the correct pronunciation of "maskinongé." Yet Dr. Henshall claims that by common consent and custom the name is "mascalonge" amongst the majority of anglers and that mascalonge it will be for generations to come! Nor does this mongrel name, which Dr. Henshall himself employs for the title of his monograph on the fish, represent the "full extent of the departure from the original name. He gives us himself amongst the various other forms,—muscalonge, muskellunge and muskallonge,—the second of which is the name employed to designate the species by Dr. C. Brown Goode in his *American Fishes*, and which is

almost as far removed from the original name as *winnish* is from *ouaniche*.

The revered author of *The Complete Angler* claims our admiration and respect by the purity of his language no less than by his intimacy with fish and fishing; and from the refining influences of the gentle art and even from the refinement of nature that inspires the love of it, I am persuaded that one has only to point out to the angling community and to those who contribute to its literature, the claims of the original name—*ouaniche*,—to ensure, at the hands of so cultured a constituency, a due recognition of what Dr. Henshall so admirably terms, in discussing a cognate subject,—“the inflexible law of priority.”

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