

Encyclopedia of the

NORTH AMERICAN COLONIES

EDITOR IN CHIEF

JACOB ERNEST COOKE, *Lafayette College*

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

W. J. Eccles, *University of Toronto*
Ramón A. Gutiérrez, *University of California, San Diego*
Milton M. Klein, *University of Tennessee*
Gloria Lund Main, *University of Colorado*
Jackson Turner Main, *University of Colorado*
Alden Vaughan, *Columbia University*

SPECIAL CONSULTANTS

Mathé Allain, *University of Southwestern Louisiana*
Carl A. Brasseaux, *University of Southwestern Louisiana*
Charles T. Gehring, *New Netherland Project*
William C. Sturtevant, *Smithsonian Institution*

Volume III

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS / NEW YORK

MAXWELL MACMILLAN CANADA / TORONTO

MAXWELL MACMILLAN INTERNATIONAL / NEW YORK OXFORD SINGAPORE SYDNEY

INDIAN LANGUAGES: IROQUOIAN

- in North America, ca. 1540—ca. 1640." *Anthropological Linguistics* 31 (1989):117–147.
- Eliot, John. *The Indian Grammar Begun*. Cambridge, Mass., 1666. Reprinted as *A Grammar of the Massachusetts Indian Language*, edited by Peter S. Duponceau, in *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections*, series 2, vol. 9 (1822):i–liv, 223–312.
- Goddard, Ives. "Eastern Algonquian Languages." In *Handbook of North American Indians*, edited by William C. Sturtevant, Vol. 15, *Northeast*, edited by Bruce G. Trigger (1978) (abbreviated below as HNAI).
- Goddard, Ives, and Kathleen J. Bragdon. *Native Writings in Massachusetts*. 2 vols. Philadelphia, 1988. An edition of all known documents written by Native speakers of Massachusetts.
- Hanzeli, Victor E. *Missionary Linguistics in New France: A Study of Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Descriptions of American Indian Languages*. The Hague, 1969.
- Pentland, David H., and H. Christoph Wolfart. *Bibliography of Algonquian Linguistics*. Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1982.
- Pilling, James C. *Bibliography of the Algonquian Languages*. Washington, D.C., 1891.
- Rhodes, Richard A., and Evelyn M. Todd. "Subarctic Algonquian Languages." In HNAI, vol. 6, *Subarctic*, edited by June Helm (1981).

SEE ALSO *The First Americans and Literature*, *Native American*; the maps accompanying *The First Americans*.

IROQUOIAN

THE IROQUOIAN LANGUAGE family is centered in northeastern North America. The Southern branch of the family is represented by a single language, Cherokee. At contact, the Cherokee occupied an area ranging over what is now Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama. The language is now spoken by over a thousand people in North Carolina and by about ten thousand in Oklahoma.

The Northern branch is composed of several subbranches. First to separate from the main

branch were the Tuscarora and Nottoway, originally encountered by Europeans in North Carolina and Virginia, respectively. Most Tuscarora moved northward in the early eighteenth century. The language is now spoken by a few individuals in New York State near Niagara Falls and in southern Ontario at Six Nations. Nottoway was last spoken in Virginia in the mid nineteenth century.

A second Northern subbranch is Huron. At contact the Huron occupied a large area in what is now southern Ontario, but in 1649, decimated by disease and war, they scattered. Some moved to Lorette near Quebec City, where the Huron language was spoken into this century. Some settled among other Iroquois groups and the Ottawa. Some joined other defeated Iroquoian groups, the Petun, Erie, Wenro, and Neutral, and moved westward ultimately into Oklahoma. The language of this community, termed Wyandot, was last spoken in the mid twentieth century.

The other principal Northern subbranch is Iroquois proper, consisting essentially of Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, and Mohawk. At contact, these groups, who constituted the Iroquois confederacy, inhabited what is now New York State. The Seneca, traditionally the Keepers of the Western Door, occupy the westernmost portion of the territory. Their language is now spoken by several hundred people primarily in three communities there: Allegany, Cattaraugus, and Tonawanda. To the east of the Seneca were the Cayuga. After the American Revolution, the Cayuga moved to Six Nations, Ontario, and to Oklahoma. Their language is spoken today by over three hundred people in Ontario and by one or two individuals in Oklahoma. Occupying central New York State are the Onondaga. Their language is now spoken by fewer than fifty in New York and at Six Nations, Ontario. To the east of the Onondaga were the Oneida. A few Oneida remain in New York, but most now live near London, Ontario, and Green Bay, Wisconsin. There are perhaps two hundred Oneida-speakers in Ontario and fewer than fifty in Wisconsin. Finally, to the east of the Oneida were the Mohawk, the Keepers of the Eastern Door. Mohawk is spoken by several thousand people in a number of communities: Kahnawà:ke (Caughnawaga) and Kanehsà:ke (Oka), Que-

INDIAN LANGUAGES: IROQUOIAN

bec, near Montreal; Ahkwesáhsne (Saint Regis) straddling the Quebec–New York–Ontario borders; and Deseronto, Six Nations, and Gibson, in Ontario.

Several Northern Iroquoian languages are little known because documentation is sparse. Among these are Meherrin from what is now North Carolina; Petun (Tobacco Nation or Tionontati), Neutral, Wenro, and Erie (Kahkwah) from around Lake Erie; Susquehannock from what is now Pennsylvania; and Laurentian, actually a group of languages from communities along the Saint Lawrence preserved in word lists appended to accounts of Cartier's voyages of 1534 and 1535. When Champlain returned to the region in 1603, the Laurentian had vanished.

The sound systems of the Iroquoian languages are relatively simple, generally containing around 9–11 consonants and 5–7 vowels. Oklahoma Cherokee, Oneida, and Mohawk have developed distinctive tone.

The grammatical structures of the Iroquoian languages differ strikingly from those of more familiar European languages. Words, especially verbs, can be quite long, composed of many meaningful parts. Because of their elaborate structure, verbs can and often do serve as complete sentences in themselves.

All verbs contain minimally a pronominal prefix and a root. The Mohawk verb *shehró:ri* 'tell them!', for example, consists of a pronoun *she-* 'you/them' plus the verb root *-hrori* 'tell.' (Mohawk forms are given in the community orthography.) The pronominal categories differ from those in most European languages. Instead of subjects and objects, Iroquoian pronouns distinguish agents (those who instigate and control events) from patients (those to whom things happen). The Mohawk verb *ktákhe* 'I'm running,' for example, contains the agent pronoun *k-* 'I,' but the verb *wakya'tishónhkhwa* 'I'm trembling' contains the patient pronoun *wak-* 'I.' Singular, dual, and plural number are distinguished, and inclusive (including the hearer) and exclusive first person. There are thus many equivalents of English 'we': *teni-* 'you and I (agent),' *tewa-* 'you all and I (agent),' *iaken-* 'he/she and I (agent),' *iakwa-* 'they and I (agent),' *ionkeni-* 'we two (patient),' and *ionkwa-* 'we all (patient).' Masculine, feminine/indefinite, and neuter/zoic (animal) gender are distinguished, but some female persons are referred to with feminine/indefinite

forms, others with neuter/zoic forms. In all, there are over fifty different pronominal prefixes.

Other verbal prefixes can indicate negation, surprise, simultaneity, direction, repetition, tense, reflexive actions, reciprocity, and middle voice. Suffixes can reverse an action ('untie'), indicate the coming into being of a state ('get rich'), causation ('cause to break'), use of an instrument ('write with'), action for someone else's benefit ('cook for'), action distributed over a time, place, or participants ('go visiting here and there'), and habitual, punctual, or stative aspect. Noun roots may be incorporated into verbs. Words, especially verbs, can thus be quite long. The verb *ionsahatihwistaniión:ten* 'they hung the bell back up there,' for example, contains the following parts: *i-* 'there,' *on-* past tense, *sa-* 'back,' *ha-* masculine agent, *-ti-* plural, *-hwist-* noun root 'metal' ('bell'), and *niíonten* verb root 'hang.'

Perhaps because of their rich structure, verbs serve more functions in Iroquoian languages than in most European languages. The full Mohawk term for 'bell' is actually a verb, *iehwista'ékstha*: *ie-* 'one,' *-hwist-* 'metal,' *-'ék* 'strike,' *-st* instrumental, *-ha* habitual; literally, 'one strikes metal with it.' Verbs have provided an important resource for creating names for introduced items, so that it has seldom been necessary to borrow foreign words. Some names of this type are *akohsá:tens* 'it carries one on the back' = 'horse,' *iontenonhsohare'tákhkwa* 'one cleans one's house with it' = 'mop,' *teitharákhkwa* 'one talks with it' = 'telephone,' and *teiohnekatsikhè:tare* 'liquid has sugar in it' = 'soft drink.'

Iroquoian sentence structure also differs substantially from that of most European languages. The order of words in sentences does not depend on their roles as subjects or predicates, but on their importance to the discussion. More newsworthy information appears early in sentences, followed by less significant material. Both the following sentences are grammatical:

1. *Wahonnesákha'ne iehwista'ékstha*.
2. *Iehwista'ékstha' wahonnesákha*.
'They went to look for the/a bell.'

The verb *wahonnesákha* 'they went to look for' can either precede or follow *iehwista'ékstha* 'bell.' It would precede if the audience were already aware of a lost bell and the search was the most important point of the sentence. It would follow

INDIAN LANGUAGES: MUSKOGEAN

if the bell represented a new idea. Speakers use word order as a stylistic device in every sentence, foregrounding significant information and backgrounding incidental material.

Elaborate word structure and word order are only a sample of the rich repertoires of stylistic devices available to speakers. Such devices are used with great skill among the Iroquois, who have traditionally cultivated and appreciated language and have long been recognized for their eloquence.

Marianne Mithun

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chafe, Wallace. *The Caddoan, Iroquoian, and Siouan Languages*. The Hague, 1976 (revised from *Current Trends in Linguistics*, edited by Thomas A. Sebeok. Vol. 10, *Linguistics in North America*, The Hague, 1973).

Mithun, Marianne. "Iroquoian." In *The Languages of Native America: Historical and Comparative Assessment*, edited by Lyle Campbell and Marianne Mithun, Austin, Tex., 1979.

SEE ALSO *The First Americans and Literature, Native American*; the maps accompanying *The First Americans*.

MUSKOGEAN AND OTHER SOUTHEASTERN FAMILIES

INTRODUCTION

THE MUSKOGEAN LANGUAGE FAMILY is the only North American linguistic family limited to the southeastern United States. Languages of the Algonquian, Siouan, and Caddoan families are found bordering the Muskogean languages, or with a few isolated enclaves in the area. The southeast was an area of great linguistic diversity: besides the Muskogean family, six language isolates or small families survived to be recorded;

many other languages are known only by names in the historical record, and their affiliations are unknown. Among these are the Coree in North Carolina; the Cusabo and Santee in South Carolina; the Guale in Georgia; the Calusa, Tequesta, and Ais in Florida; the Chatot in Alabama; the Koroa and Yazoo in Mississippi; the Washa, Chawasha, and Avoyel in Louisiana; and the Tamahitan in Tennessee.

Although place names all over the Southeast have been borrowed from the Native languages, from Tallahassee in Florida (Creek *talaha:si* 'abandoned town') to Calcasieu in Louisiana (Atakapa *katka siw* 'crying eagle'), other borrowings are relatively uncommon. Two plant names borrowed from Creek into English are the catalpa (*katałpa*) and the wahoo (*aha:hwa*). Borrowings into the colonial Spanish of Florida include *mico* 'chief' (Creek *mi:kko*) and *chicasa* 'abandoned town' (Apalachee *čikasa*). Borrowings from Choctaw (or Mobilian) are more common in Cajun French, due to the persistence of Native Americans in Louisiana. Such items include *chaoi* 'raccoon' (Choctaw *šawi*), *patasa* 'perch' (Choctaw *nani patassa*), and *sac-a-lait* 'white crappie' (Choctaw *sakli* 'trout').

Loans from European languages of the colonial period come primarily from Spanish: *chivato* 'goat,' Creek *čowa:ta*, Seminole *čawa:ta*, Mikasuki *čowa:ti*, Koasati *čowa:ta*, *capitán* 'captain,' Creek *kapitani*, Mikasuki *kapitani*, Koasati *kapitani*, Chickasaw *kapittani?*, *naranja* 'orange,' Creek *yala:ha*, Mikasuki *yala:hi*, Koasati *yilaha*. A few borrowings came from Colonial French: *escalin* 'twelve and a half cents,' Koasati *škali*, Alabama *iskali*, Choctaw *iskali* 'money'; *picaillon* 'half an escalin,' Koasati *pikayo*, Alabama *pikayo*, and Choctaw *pikayo* 'nickel.' Only one word clearly was borrowed from English of the colonial period. That is the place-name *Virginia*, which is interpreted as referring to Englishmen, the 'English language, and later to Americans: Shawnee *yewacena:ki* 'Americans,' Yuchi *wajine* 'white people,' Koasati *wacina* 'English language' or 'Englishman,' Alabama *wa:cina* 'speak English,' Creek *wacina* 'United States' or 'American.'

MUSKOGEAN LANGUAGES

The Muskogean family consists of eight languages: Alabama, Apalachee, Chickasaw, Choctaw,