

Reflections of Passamaquoddy Shamanism in a Nineteenth-Century Text

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Abstract. Albert S. Gatschet of the Bureau of American Ethnology made three field trips to Passamaquoddy country in Washington Co., Maine, in the last decades of the nineteenth century. This contribution presents a retranscription and analysis of a text that Gatschet took down by dictation on his third visit, in 1897. His consultant was Peter J. Newell, a respected member of the Passamaquoddy community who served two terms as tribal representative to the Maine State Legislature. The text describes the exploits of two Passamaquoddy *m̄tew̄əl̄n̄w̄ək* or ‘shamans’ as they vie for control of a hunting territory. It provides a window on Passamaquoddy beliefs about shamanism at the end of the nineteenth century.

1. Introduction

Albert S. Gatschet of the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) made field trips to Passamaquoddy territory in Washington Co., Maine, in 1889, 1896, and 1897. One of his consultants during his third visit was Peter J. Newell, a respected member of the Passamaquoddy community at Peter Dana Point, in Indian Township, who was living in Calais when Gatschet worked with him (Gatschet 1889–1897:153). The text discussed here was dictated by Newell, apparently in August of 1897 (Gatschet 1897:329). It recounts the exploits of two individuals who could wield power exceeding that controlled by ordinary persons. Passamaquoddy speakers call men or women with such power *m̄tew̄əl̄n̄w̄ək* (sg. *m̄tew̄əl̄n̄*); anthropologists call them

shamans. Here I present an edition of Newell's text and provide information about its historical and cultural setting.

The *mātewālnāwāk* in Newell's tale vie for control of a hunting territory. One uses his power to injure the other's friend; the other must in turn use his power to cure this friend of the injury. A battle between the two shamans follows that takes place in the waters of a lake, with both shamans assuming the form of giant serpents.

Any Passamaquoddy speaker listening to this story in 1897 would have found the events that it recounts entirely natural. This is because they would have understood the tale in terms of a system of assumptions that all members of the community shared. Two areas of nineteenth-century Passamaquoddy life in particular are involved. The first is the practice of assigning defined hunting territories to specific extended family groups. The second is the traditional Passamaquoddy view of the powers and social roles of shamans.

Speck (1915, 1940) and Speck and Hadlock (1946) document a system of land tenure among the Penobscot, the neighbors of the Passamaquoddy to the south and west, and the Maliseet, their neighbors to the north and east, according to which hunting territories were associated with particular extended family groups. Comparable documentation of family hunting territories is lacking for the Passamaquoddy, but a general similarity of customs among the three groups makes it likely that a similar system of land tenure obtained in Passamaquoddy country as well. The social arrangements in question remained in force until roughly 1870.

Speck (1918, 1919, 1935) also documents Penobscot shamanism in some detail. Notably, he comments on the role of Penobscot shamans in defending hunting territories against trespass (Speck 1919:244). Newell's text corroborates this role of *mātewālnāwāk* among the Passamaquoddy.

2. The linguist and the speaker

Albert S. Gatschet was already a highly experienced field linguist by the time he undertook his Passamaquoddy work, and his transcriptions are accordingly much more reliable than the records made by most other students of the language in the nineteenth century. In Peter J. Newell, he found an able collaborator, someone who could not only inform him about place names and other matters of vocabulary that he was keen to investigate, but could also tell him stories. He was one of the few consultants from whom Gatschet secured textual material.

2.1 Albert S. Gatschet

James Mooney's obituary of Gatschet in the *American Anthropologist* (1907) provides a good summary of relevant aspects of the latter's life and career. He was born in Saint Beatenberg, Switzerland on October 3, 1832, and died at his residence in Washington, DC, on March 16, 1907. For a period of six years beginning in 1852, Gatschet studied Greek and other languages, history, art, and theology, first at the University of Bern and then at the University of Berlin. Returning to Switzerland, he began an investigation of the origins of Swiss place names, which led to the publication of a major etymological work in 1867. In 1868 he emigrated to the United States, where he took up residence in New York City. There he taught languages and contributed articles "on scientific subjects" to various European and American journals (Mooney 1907:561).

Gatschet's work with a set of vocabularies collected in the American Southwest by the Geographical Survey West of the 100th Meridian brought him to the attention of Major John Wesley Powell, who was then in charge of the Geographical and Geological Survey of the Rocky Mountain Region. Powell hired Gatschet on as an ethnologist in March, 1877. He would

henceforth make his home in Washington, DC, when he was not in the field. When Powell organized the Bureau of Ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution (later the Bureau of American Ethnology) in 1879, Gatschet was an original member. He continued his association with the organization until his retirement in 1905. In the course of his career, he conducted field research on more than a hundred languages.

The first assignment that Gatschet undertook for Powell involved gathering census information concerning the tribes of the State of Oregon and Washington Territory for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (Hinsley 1981:178). In the process of carrying out this work, he made his first foray into the study of the Klamath Indians and their language. This subject would occupy his attention off and on, between other projects, for more than a decade. His major work in this area, *The Klamath Indians of Southwestern Oregon*, was published in 1890. Mooney describes the volume as “an exhaustive study of an American language,” adding that “it stands almost alone and may fairly be said to mark an epoch in the science of linguistics” (1907:564).

The phonetics of Passamaquoddy are considerably less challenging than those of many languages of the Pacific Northwest. Gatschet was generally successful in noting the phonologically distinctive properties of Passamaquoddy words in his transcriptions. His marking of stress is sufficiently accurate to be quite useful, although he did not take note of the distinctive pitch patterns of the language. He recorded most, though not all, preconsonantal occurrences of *h*, usually writing this segment as ⟨'⟩, ⟨'h⟩, or ⟨χ⟩. Other early recorders of the language typically missed such preaspiration.

2.2 Peter J. Newell

US Census records provide conflicting information about the year of Peter J. Newell's birth. On the sheet from June 15, 1880, his age is given as 28, which would mean that he was born in 1852. But the record from June 5, 1900 indicates that he was born in May, 1848.¹ A notation from April 23, 1910 suggests yet another date. His age is given there as 63, pointing to 1847 as his year of birth. However, Gatschet recorded his consultant's age as 48 in August of 1897, apparently going by information he obtained from another Passamaquoddy speaker with whom he worked extensively, Lewis (or Louis) Mitchell (Gatschet 1897:334). This figure suggests that Newell was born in 1849. Whatever the exact year of his birth, it appears that Newell was in his late 40s during the period when he worked with Gatschet.

Newell lived most of his life at Peter Dana Point (*Mətahkə̃mikòk*), a village located on the point of land that separates Long Lake from Big Lake in Indian Township, ME, one of the two Passamaquoddy reservations in the state. The second reservation, at Pleasant Point (*Sipayik*), is located about 40 miles by road from Indian Township, on the shore of Passamaquoddy Bay. Peter Dana Point is about three miles by road from the town of Princeton, although trips to town were often made by canoe in the nineteenth century, since the water route is shorter. Newell was clearly a respected member of the Indian Township community. He was elected twice to be the tribal representative to the Maine State Legislature, first in 1889 and again in 1913. The tribal representative is a non-voting member of the legislature. In the nineteenth century, the term was one year; today it is four. The position rotates between the two Passamaquoddy reservations.²

Mitchell recommended Newell to Gatschet as a consultant in March of 1897 (Gatschet 1889–1897:153), indicating that he was one of “[t]he best of the Peter D[ana] Point Indians for language.” He informed Gatschet that Newell was then living in Calais, where there were “8

families” of “guides, deerhunters, basketmakers, canoemen.” Newell’s occupation is listed as “guide” and “guiding” on the 1880 and the 1910 census.

Calais, located about halfway between the two reservations, was the site of a small off-reservation Passamaquoddy community well into the twentieth century.³ Although Gatschet appears to have carried out the majority of his field work at Pleasant Point, it seems likely that he met with Newell in Calais. The census records for both 1900 and 1910 confirm that Newell could speak English, a skill that many members of the Passamaquoddy community did not control well in 1897. At the same time, Newell was clearly an expert Passamaquoddy speaker and one who was well versed in the tribe’s oral traditions. Gatschet would have found him an excellent assistant for his linguistic work.

4. Newell’s tale

The tale that concerns us here, to which Peter J. Newell gave the title *Nkani—wskicìn wihk^wéhtăwân ’k^wətonkákə̀n*, or ‘An old Indian’s hunting territory is taken away from him’, is given below in 4.1. A few points concerning the language of the text are discussed in 4.2.

Section 4.3 explores some implications of the structure of the narrative, notably issues that arise in interpreting the dialogue that it includes.

4.1 The text

The text of ‘An old Indian’s hunting territory’ occupies slightly more than three pages, each measuring 6.5 by 8.5 inches, in Gatschet’s third Passamaquoddy field notebook, dated 1897. Each page is divided into several numbered lines of text, but these lines do not correspond to sentences or other significant divisions of the material, and I have not reproduced them below.

I have instead divided the text into numbered sections of my own, which are intended to correspond to textual units (generally sentences, which may contain extended quotations). In each of these, I give Gatschet's transcription in angled brackets in (a), followed by his glosses. Line breaks in the manuscript are indicated by slashes (/). (Note that Gatschet's glosses sometimes occupy more than one line in the manuscript.) I then give a new transcription and glosses in (b), together with a new translation, the latter in single quotes (but note that actual quoted speech is indicated by double quotes).

Cross-outs in Gatschet's text are given as in the manuscript. For the most part, I also follow the manuscript in the arrangement of material in his text and his glosses.

Title: a. ⟨NKani|uskē'dshin wiḡkwātu'an / kûdûntka'gën⟩

from the old man (wizard) the taking away of his hunting ground.

b. Nkani—wskicìn wiḡk^wéhtǎw-â-n 'k^wətonkákən.

old—Indian take.from-DIR-N (3)-hunting.territory

'An old Indian's hunting territory is taken away from him.'

1. a. ⟨Ní'swuk skinu'ksĕk kûdûntka'nia / madsheḡka-ude'nia;⟩

Two young men were hunting / they started out

b. Nísǎw-ək skinóhs-ək 'k^wətonká-nǎ-ya. Mace-hkawǎtí-nǎ-ya.

two-PROX.PL young.man-PROX.PL (3)-hunt-N-PROX.PL (3)-start-dual.walk-N-PROX.PL

'Two young men went hunting. They set out on foot.'

2. a. ⟨petka-udi'tit tli'tu'nia / wi'gwa⟩

when they got there encamping / (the camp)

b. Pet-kawǎtí-hti-t ’t-əliht-ó-nǎ-ya w-ík-ǎwa.
 arrive-dual.walk-PROX.PL-3AN 3-make-TH-N-PROX.PL 3-house-3PL

‘When they reached their destination, they built their camp.’

3. a. ⟨u’hti’an: “ni’dap, kě’luwut kedû’ntkăwa’gĕn; / ⟩

(he) said my friend, there is a good hunting-ground

⟨winpasí’ne kĕduntka’ne⟩

hastily they were hunting /

we have to hurry up for hunting

⟨ka’dĕp kĕtchîdshi- / hu’găpĕn;⟩

and, then they would not / know

(the old man’s folks) (if we hurry the matter up)

⟨kĕtchidshihugo’-in kta’kumus⟩

hĕ (old man) would not know it the old man

b. Wt-íh-a-n, “N-itàp, kálǎwət kətonkew-ákən.

3-tell-DIR-N 1-friend be.useful-(3) hunt-NOM

‘One of them said to the other, “My friend, this is a good hunting place.

“Winpasí-ne, kətonká-ne.

be.busy-1PL.IMP hunt-1PL.IMP

“Let’s get busy; let’s hunt.

“Kăt=əp k-kəcicih-oke-h-pĕn, k-kəcicih-oko-wi-n ktak^{wh}hémohs.”

not=COND 2-know-UNSPEC-NEG-1PL 2-know-INV-NEG-1PL old.man

“We won’t be known; the old man won’t know about us.”

4. a. ⟨mětchî'gu ktchi' mte'-ulën.⟩

bad (as a wizard) great sorcerer

⟨Ktaskwasi'bën / me'-etchimi'-u⟩

(they two) were waiting / all the time

⟨dä'mëñû wäwîa'bën / wewiha'bën⟩

by & by / ~~after~~ whether he found out,

⟨ta'n ädudshi / wäwîha'-ik mět wä'yu.⟩

when / they know, found out that bad (he)

⟨mëli'hki'gëñä⟩

and strong (old man, he)

b. “Mäcîko kci—mtewälën.

be.bad-(3) old—shaman

“The old *mätewälën* is evil.

“Kt-askowasi-pën mecimîw.

2-wait-1PL always

“We must always be on our guard.

“Temñò k-wewihà-pën.

later 2-be.known-1PL

“After a while we will be found out.

“Tàn etoci—wewihá-yək^w, mätöwéyo.

such at.point—be.known-1PL.INC go.badly-(3)

“Once we are found out, things will go badly.

“Mǎlihkiǰǎne.”

be.strong-(3)

“‘He is strong.’”

5. a. ⟨Widshukǎmsiʼbĕn Kiʼsa wǎwihaʼbĕn;⟩
 they help themselves Then he knew, found it out (see[n] by t[he] old man)

- b. “‘K-wicohkem-si-pĕn; kisa k-wewihǎ-pĕn.’”

2-help-REFLEX-1PL already 2-be.known-1PL

“‘We had better help ourselves (while we can); we have already been found out.’”

6. a. ⟨spǎsuwiʼ-u madshǎχka-udeʼnia nǎʼdshi / nǎpahaʼwal mǔʼsul.⟩
 in the morning they started in order to / kill a moose.

before sunrise

⟨Kisi nǎpahaʼtit niʼtä / sukskitahaʼnia⟩

After killing (two) then / they cut it up

(a moose)

- b. Spasǎwiw mace-hkawǎti-nǎ-ya, naci—nehpah-ǎ-wa-l

in.morning (3)-start-dual.walk-N-PROX.PL (3)-go—kill-DIR-PROX.PL-OBV.SG

mǎsǎwǎl. Kisi—nehpah-ǎ-hti-t, nit=te

moose-OBV.SG past—kill-DIR-PROX.PL-3AN then=EMPH

ʼsǎk^wskihtah-ǎ-nǎ-ya.

(3)-chop.up-DIR-N-PROX.PL

‘In the morning they set out to go and kill a moose. When they had killed one, they cut it up.’

7. a. ⟨madsheptu'nia wi'kwak wi'u'hs /⟩

lugged it off to the camp the meat /

⟨mäsk'nä'mat pedshuχsätiku' mēskwädshi'na /⟩

before they got there they reached the camp stepped (the limb) /

⟨mkwa'dēk kawátuk pskätkun Madshe'p'han wi'kwak /⟩

into his foot (a spruce-limb.) He lugged him to his home /

(one of the two boys)

⟨nämat pe'dship'hat ksi=nû'χka,⟩

when they he got to the camp he was sick (very) /

(the wounded one)

b. Macept-ó-nă-ya w-ík-ăwa-k wíyohs.

(3)-carry.away-TH-N-PROX.PL 3-house-3PL-LOC meat

'They carried the meat away to their camp.'

Mēsk^w nemàht pec-ohsé-hti-h-k^w, mās-kowecín-ən

Before at.destination arrive-walk-PROX.PL-NEG-3AN.NEG (3)-pierce.foot-N

'k^wátək kawatăk^{wi}—pskétk^wən.

(3)-foot-LOC spruce—stub

'Before they reached their destination, one of them jabbed the stub of a spruce

branch into his foot.

Macéph-a-n w-ík-ăwa-k.

(3)-carry.away-DIR-N 3-house-3PL-LOC

'(His friend) carried him back to their camp.'

Nemàht peciph-à-t, ksinóhka.
 at.destination carry.there-DIR-3AN-(PERF) be.sick-(3)

‘By the time (his friend) had carried him there, he was very sick.’

8. a. ⟨u’hti’han: / “ni’dap widshuχkā’ mēl,⟩

he told him my friend I will help you

b. Wt-íh-a-n “N-itàp, k-wicohkém-əl.”

3-tell-DIR-N 1-friend 2-help-1/2

‘He told (the sick man), “My friend, I will help you.”’

9. a. ⟨nitä petko’bin / tēdli’ntun,⟩

then kneel down / and sing!

b. Nit=te ’petkópi-n, ’tətəl-ínto-n.

then=EMPH (3)-kneel-N (3)-location-sing-N

‘Then he knelt down and sang.’

10. a. ⟨nitä wiχkula’min⟩ /

then ~~stop singing~~

he sucked the breath in, made

a long inspiration

b. Nit=te wihk^w-ǎlámi-n.

then=EMPH (3)-pull-breathe-N

‘Then he inhaled sharply.’

11. a. ⟨Ma’kiä’-us uněmi’hto’nia pskätkun / sak’hami’k,⟩

a little after that they saw (two) the limb / sticking out

b. Mahkǎyew-àss w-nəmiht-ó-nǎ-ya pskétk^won sakhómi-k.

shortly-DIM 3-see-TH-N-PROX.PL stub stick.out-3IN

‘In just a little while, they saw the stub sticking out (of the sick man’s foot).’

12. a. ⟨nitä mēnä’twan⟩

then he pulled it out

b. Nít=te mənéhht-ǎw-a-n.

then=EMPH (3)-take.out-TA-DIR-N

‘Then (his friend) pulled it out of him.’

13. a. ⟨u’hti’han / spasuwiu ’tluχsāběn guspä’měk,⟩

and he said / before sunrise we are going to the lake

⟨na’dschix= /peně’s widshuχkā’mín,⟩

in order to / fight to help him

⟨ta’n ädodshi kēně- / miχtunsh pkû’m⟩

whenever I want / to see you the ice

you see the ice splitting up⁴ /

⟨kmi’tunsh paske’ssu / häbaχsî’û⟩

you will see breaking, opening in the middle

⟨kēněmihā’tch at’hu’sēs / sak’ha’bit⟩

you will see ~~him~~ the snake (big) / sticking out (its head) /

(when the snake sticks its head out of the ice) / ~~looking out~~

⟨nite’ssna nila⟩

I will be ready for ~~se~~ him,

⟨nite'ssəna / madnědi'nia at'husəswuk. / ⟩
 he'll be ready / ~~to they fought~~ the snakes (two snakes in this story /
 (two) both, to fight fighting one another)

b. Wt-íh-a-n, “Spasəwìw kt-əl-ohsè-pən k^wəspémok.

3-tell-DIR-N in.morning 2-there-walk-1PL lake-LOC

‘He told him, “In the morning, we will walk to the lake.

“Naci-hpə̀nəs. K-wicohkém-i-n.

(1)-go-fight 2-help-2/1-N

“I am going there to fight. You will help me.

“Tàn etoci—nòmíhtəw-ən=c pə̀əm, k-nəmíht-o-n=c paskéssə epahsiw.

such at.point—see-2SG=FUT ice 2-see-TH-N=FUT break.up-(3) in.middle

“When you see the ice, you will see it breaking up out in the middle (of the lake).

“K-nəmíh-a=hc athosə̀ss sakh-ápi-t.

2-see-DIR=FUT snake emerge-look-3AN

“You will see a snake sticking its head out and looking around.

“Nìt=te=hc=ə̀na níla.

that=EMPH=FUT=also me

“And that will be me.

“Nìt=te=hc=ə̀na matə̀n-ətí-nə-ya athusə̀ssəw-ək.”

then=EMPH=FUT=also (3)-fight-RECIP-N-PROX.PL snake-PROX.PL

“And then (two) snakes will fight one another.””

14. a. ⟨Ne'gum pe'dshiha'lit saptahan / tęgə̀ti'gə̀n⟩

while he passes along (the fighters) ~~the spear~~ / spear

he strikes / ~~sticking into him~~

(changed into the snake)

b. Nekəm pecihá-li-t 'saptáh-a-n təkǎ́tikon.

he come-OBV-3AN (3)-stab-DIR-N spear

‘As the other (snake) came toward him, he stabbed him with a spear.’

15. a. ⟨mā'lěmdä nāpaha'wal⟩

Then they ~~with~~ killed him

(or her)

b. Maləm=ǎte nehpah-á-wa-l.

finally=EMPH (3)-kill-DIR-PROX.PL-OBV.SG

‘Eventually they killed him.’

16. a. ⟨nite'na /kwīpatchkima'nia na'ga suχskitaha'nia⟩ /

ready / hauling him (on the land) and cut him all up /

then

b. Nit=te=na 'k^wəppack^wim-á-nǎ-ya naka 'sək^wskihtah-á-nǎ-ya.

then=EMPH=also (3)-drag.ashore-DIR-N-PROX.PL and (3)-chop.up-DIR-N-PROX.PL

‘And then they dragged him up on the shore and cut him up.’

17. a. ⟨nitāna madshäχka-ude'nia wi'gwak,⟩ /

then they started out to the wigwam (of the

two young men)

b. Nit=te=na mace-hkawǎ́tí-nǎ-ya w-ík-ǎwa-k.

then=EMPH=also (3)-start-dual.walk-N-PROX.PL 3-house-3PL-LOC

‘And then they set out for their camp.’

18. a. ⟨suksakuse'nia na'ga 'mka'nia;⟩
 they cooked meal and then they
 danced
- b. 'Soksahk^wəsi-nǎ-ya naka 'pəmká-nǎ-ya.
 (3)-cook.for.self-N-PROX.PL and (3)-dance-N-PROX.PL
 'They cooked their meal, and then they danced.'
19. a. ⟨kiska'tit / na'ga m̩ hūmitsi'nia.⟩
 after the dance / then they ate him up
- b. Kis-ká-hti-t, naka w-mitsí-nǎ-ya⁵.
 past-dance-PROX.PL-3AN and 3-eat-N-PROX.PL
 'They finished dancing, and then they ate him.'

4.2 Some linguistic features of the text

In contemporary Maliseet and Passamaquoddy, *n* and *k* are often dropped before a consonant in the prefixes *n-* ~ *n(t)-* 'first person' and *k-* ~ *k(t)-* 'second person', except in careful speech. (The alternates with *t* are used before vowels, except in dependent nouns, i.e., those that occur only in possessed form.) The same treatment of these prefixes is reflected in Newell's speech by forms like ⟨Widshukämsi'bĕn⟩ *k-wicohkem-si-pən* (2-help-REFLEX-1PL) 'we (dual inc.) help ourselves' in line 5 and ⟨'tluɣsábĕn⟩ *kt-əl-ohsè-pən* (2-there-walk-1PL) 'we (will) walk (there)' in 13. Compare ⟨Ktaskwasi'bĕn⟩ *kt-askowasi-pən* (2-wait-1PL) 'we must be on our guard' (literally, 'we must await') in 4, with *k* in the prefix maintained. In cases of this type, I restore dropped consonants in the phonemic transcription.

The third-person prefix *w(t)-* was subject to phonetic treatments in nineteenth century Maliseet and Passamaquoddy that differ from what is usually heard today.⁶ In the contemporary language, underlying /w/ is almost always deleted before a sonorant consonant at the beginning of a word. Before an obstruent, /w/ in this position is generally realized as phonemic *h*. This *h* induces a tense (more clearly voiceless) pronunciation of the following obstruent. The *h* itself is optionally realized as [h] when it can be syllabified with the final vowel in a preceding word. Otherwise it is realized as aspiration of the following obstruent, except when this is *s*. In the latter case, the presence of *h* is reflected only by tenseness of the *s*. This complex of phonetic effects is indicated in contemporary Maliseet and Passamaquoddy practical orthographies by writing an apostrophe (') for word-initial *h* before an obstruent consonant. I have adopted this notational convention here.

Treatments of underlying /w/ in the third-person prefix *w(t)-* like those just outlined appear at several points in Newell's text. For example, the prefix *w-* is elided before a sonorant consonant in ⟨madshäχka-ude'nia⟩ *mace-hkawǎti-nǎ-ya* ((3)-start-dual.walk-N-PROX.PL) 'they (dual) set out on foot' in 17. In ⟨petko'bin⟩ *'petkópi-n* ((3)-kneel-N) 'he kneels down' in 9, *w-* was reduced to *h* before the obstruent *p* and realized as (unnotated) aspiration of this stop (as indicated in the revised transcription by the apostrophe). Alongside these examples that show essentially the same treatment of *w(t)-* as that in the contemporary language, we find others in which the *w* of the prefix is retained. Gatschet's transcriptions suggest that this segment was sometimes vocalized to [u] before a sonorant and sometimes realized as a voiceless [w̥] or [w̥] before an obstruent. The first of these treatments is seen in ⟨uněmi'hto'nia⟩ *w-nəmiht-ó-nǎ-ya* (3-see-TH-N-PROX.PL) 'they see it' in 11. The second appears in ⟨u'hti'an⟩ *wt-ih-a-n* (3-tell-DIR-N)

‘he (prox.) says to him (obv.) in 3. Pronunciations of these types are no longer current, although they could occasionally be heard from elderly speakers as recently as the 1980s.

The third-person prefix induced rounding in a stem-initial *k* in Newell’s speech, another feature of the nineteenth-century language that would gradually disappear over the course of the next century (LeSourd 1993:241).⁷ The application of this rounding process is reflected several times in our text, for example in the form ⟨kûdûntka’gĕn⟩ ’k^wətonkákən ((3)-hunting.territory) ‘his hunting territory’ in the title, where the prefix *w-*, indicating a third-person possessor, has been added to the stem *kətonkakən-*; compare *kətonke* ‘he hunts’, with no prefix, which Gatschet recorded as ⟨kedúntke⟩ in a note written next to the title of the present text. An example with the root /kəpp-/ ‘up from the shore’ occurs in 16: ⟨kwĭpatchkima’nia⟩ ’k^wəpp-ack^wim-á-nă-ya ((3)-ashore-drag-DIR-N-PROX.PL) ‘they dragged him up onto the shore’; compare contemporary *n-kəpp-ĭ* (1-ashore-go) ‘I go uphill from the shore’. That prefix-induced rounding was optional, even in Newell’s time, is shown by the fact that Gatschet wrote ⟨ĕ⟩, his notation for schwa, under ⟨û⟩ in the first syllable of ⟨kûdûntka’gĕn⟩ in his notes to our text. Evidently Newell pronounced this word differently on different repetitions.

One additional archaism of note in Newell’s speech is the persistence of *h* after *i* in all environments. By a sound change that took place in both Maliseet and Passamaquoddy early in the twentieth century, *h* was replaced by *y* after *i* before a vowel other than a second occurrence of *i*. This has resulted in alternations such as *kt-ih-i* ‘you (sg.) say to me’ vs. *kt-iy-a* ‘you (sg.) say to him’; older *ih-* has been replaced by *iy-* in the latter.⁸ In the text under consideration, we find several cases of retained *h* in *ihV* sequences, against the contemporary pattern. Examples include ⟨wăwiha’bĕn⟩ *k-wewihà-pən* (2-be.known-1PL) ‘we have been found out’ in 5, ⟨u’hti’han⟩ *wt-ih-a-n* (3-tell-DIR-N) ‘he tells him (obv.)’ in 8, ⟨pe’dshiha’lit⟩ *pecihá-li-t* (come-OBV-3AN) ‘as he

(obv.) arrives’ in 14, and ⟨kěčhîdshi- hu’gäpĕn⟩ *k-kəcicih-oke-h-pən* (2-know-UNSPEC-NEG-1PL) ‘we (inc.) are not known’ in 3. Compare contemporary *k-wewiyà-pən* ‘we have been found out’, *t-iy-a-n* ‘he (prox.) says to him (obv.)’, *peciyá-li-t* ‘as he (obv.) arrives’, and *k-kəciciy-oke-h-pən* ‘we (inc.) are not known’. On the other hand, Gatschet’s rendering of *wt-ih-a-n* ‘he tells him (obv.)’ as ⟨u’hti’an⟩ in line 3, without expected *h* in *ihV*, might be seen as evidence that the weakening of *h* was already underway in this environment in the 1890s.

4.3 Interpreting dialogue

As the story begins, we learn that two young men have set out to go hunting, and when they reach their destination, they build a camp (lines 1–2). One of them speaks, commenting that the territory they have entered has good hunting. But he tells his partner that they had better get to work. While the ‘old man’, evidently the person who has rights to game in the area they have entered, doesn’t yet know about them, they will soon be found out (line 3). It seems that the two young men are trespassing.

Line 4 calls the old man a *kci—mtewǎlən*, a ‘great shaman’, and notes that he is ‘evil’. (The form *mtewǎlən* is a phonological variant of *mätewǎlən*.) While this line might be interpreted as a continuation of the first speaker’s utterance, it seems better to assign it to his addressee, since the quotation continues, ‘We must always be on our guard. After a while we will be found out. Once we are discovered, things will go badly. He is strong.’ This must be a response to the first young man’s statement that the ‘old man’ does not yet know about the trespassers.

This interpretation of the dialogue is confirmed by the next line of the text (5), ‘We had better help ourselves (while we can); we have already been discovered.’ This is clearly a response by the first speaker to the second speaker’s suggestion that there is still time before

their trespass is discovered; this speaker has become aware that the old shaman is already on to them after all. (We soon learn that the first speaker has shamanic powers himself; his realization of the actual situation at this point is a reflection of his power of foreknowledge.) All further quotations in the story represent the speech of the first speaker.

All of this dialogue is handled without any explicit indication of who is speaking at any given point. However, there are several occurrences of the quotative verb *wiḥan* ‘he (prox.) says to him (obv.)’. (The inflection is in the subordinative mode, marked by the suffix *-n*, which is commonly used in describing sequences of connected events.) The first occurrence of this form introduces the first statement by the member of the pair of trespassers who is later revealed to have shamanic powers. He is the leading figure in the narrative, the one who eventually defeats the ‘great shaman’ (in the fight between serpents in the lake) and secures control of the hunting territory. The verb form used here to introduce his speech is therefore appropriate: it designates the speaker as the proximate or primary referent at this point in the narrative, as befits his leading status overall. The verb’s obviative argument references the lead character’s companion, who plays a secondary role in the narrative. Correspondingly, the more prominent member of the pair addresses his partner as *nitàp* ‘my friend, my companion’. The less prominent character is the ‘companion’.

Two other segments of the dialogue are similarly introduced with *wiḥan* ‘he (prox.) says to him (obv.)’ at lines 8 and 13. In both cases the speaker is again the young man with shamanic power, and thus the proximate referent. At line 8, this character again addresses his partner as *nitàp* ‘my companion’. In the end, then, the structure of the text makes the identity of the speaker at each point clear, through a combination of lexical and grammatical devices. Dialogue that may appear haphazard in the English translation is in fact clearly and effectively organized.

5. The cultural background

Shamanic abilities play two kinds of roles in the text under consideration. First, two men in the story use their special powers in a battle of wills that leads to a physical confrontation. Second, one uses his power to bring injury upon one of his enemies, while the other uses his power to heal his friend. The competition between the two men plays out against the backdrop of a system governing the right to take game within a particular hunting territory. This is the institution of the family hunting territory, which has been documented among the Penobscot and Maliseet tribes, immediate neighbors of the Passamaquoddy, in the work of Speck (1915, 1940) and Speck and Hadlock (1946).

5.1 Family hunting territories

The contemporary Penobscot, Passamaquoddy, and Maliseet peoples are identified with three river drainages in Maine and New Brunswick: the Penobscot River, the St. Croix River, and the Saint John River, respectively. Speck (1915) saw these riverine associations as a reflection of the aboriginal condition of the tribes, a position also adopted by Snow (1968, 1976). Bourque (1989), on the other hand, has presented extensive documentary evidence that the tribal geography of Maine and New Brunswick in the early historical period was substantially more complex than Speck and Snow have supposed. The early post-contact period, he argues, was one of great instability. More groups than those now extant were in play, and shifts took place over time both in their location and in their composition. The riverine orientation of the emerging tribal groupings appears to reflect the parameters of the trade in furs that grew up with Europeans, both French and English, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Speck documented a system of land tenure among the Penobscot of Maine under which “secondary family unit[s] of loose structure comprising persons related by blood or marriage... own[ed] hunting and fishing rights in certain lineally transmitted districts marked by traditional bounds known geographically to the groups” (1940:203). This system of “family hunting territories” served to regulate hunting and trapping by the “active hunters of the family” (p. 203), typically the patriarch (if still of an age to hunt) and his sons, nephews, and sons-in-law, who left their wives and children behind in the settlements as they hunted from fall until spring.

Speck (1940:203) observed that hunting territories “were generally determined by groups of lakes or by river systems in the interior, and by bays or rivers and estuaries on the coast.” A man referred to his own family’s territory as ⟨nzi·‘bum⟩ *nəsipom* ‘my river’,⁹ a fact which Speck took as evidence that these divisions of the country were determined “from the point of view of its waterways” (p. 206). Speck’s consultants reported that some 22 such tracts spanned the Penobscot Valley. Hunting and trapping efforts continued in these districts until about 1870, even though the tribe by this point held title only to Indian Island, in the Penobscot River near Old Town, and to various islands farther up the river.

Speck obtained his information about family hunting territories among the Penobscot around 1910, and the reports that he collected reflected his consultants’ knowledge of conditions in the nineteenth century (1940:203). He nonetheless saw the land tenure system his consultants described as dating back to the pre-contact era. He considered the drainage-based organization of the hunting territories to reflect what he took to be the aboriginal riverine orientation of the tribes throughout the Maritime peninsula.

Bourque’s arguments, already noted, cast doubt on Speck’s position. Moreover, Leacock (1954) has presented extensive historical and ethnographic evidence concerning the origins of

family hunting territories among the Montagnais (Innu) in Labrador that further undermines Speck's position. She demonstrates in detail that the system of land tenure found there, which has many similarities to that which formerly obtained in Penobscot country, arose at a recent date under the impetus of the fur trade in the region:

My hypothesis is, first, that such private ownership of specific resources as exists [among the Montagnais] has developed in response to the introduction of sale and exchange into Indian economy which accompanied the fur trade and, second, that it was these private rights—specifically to fur-bearing animals—which laid the basis for individually inherited rights to land. (Leacock 1954:2)

Leacock reasons that once individual families can acquire “storable, transportable, and individually acquired supplies” such as flour and lard from the traders, they become self-sufficient, so that living in larger groups becomes “not only superfluous... but a positive hindrance to the personal acquisition of furs” (1954:7). As a result, “[t]he family group begins to resent intrusions that threaten to limit its take of furs and develops a sense of proprietorship over a certain area, to which it returns year after year for the sake of greater efficiency” (p. 7). These social dynamics, Leacock suggests, acted as a force leading to the development of family hunting territories in Labrador, a process that she could still track at the time of her work in historical records and in the memories of her consultants.

It is easy to imagine that a similar process took place in the early years of the fur trade in Penobscot territory. Thus, there is little reason to follow Speck in assuming that the system of family hunting territories that his consultants reported for the nineteenth century dated to pre-

contact times. This does not, however, diminish the significance of this system for the period in which the tale that Gatschet recorded from Newell is set.

For the Maliseet of New Brunswick, Speck and Hadlock (1946) document a system of family hunting territories that corresponds in most particulars with what Speck reports for the Penobscot. They identify 14 families with defined territories, noting that some of these districts were sites of hunting and trapping activity by the adult male members of the families well into the 1870s.

The presence of a family hunting territory system among the Passamaquoddy is not as well documented. Speck never prepared a complete study of the question and tells us simply that “my material, as yet incomplete, only permits me to state that the economic phenomena resemble those of the Penobscot” (1915:302). Of possible significance in this connection, however, is the fact that Speck and Hadlock (1946:373) identify two Maliseet families who were associated with hunting territories that were actually located in Passamaquoddy territory: the Tomah and Sapiel families. They go on to point out that Tomah and Sapiel are common family names among both the Maliseet and the Passamaquoddy and that there is extensive intermarriage across tribal lines in these two families. Thus, at least two Passamaquoddy families must have been directly or indirectly associated with family hunting districts.

Linguistic evidence also points to the former presence of the hunting territory system among the Passamaquoddy. The Penobscot term *nə̀sípom* ‘my river’, used to designate the family hunting territory, has a cognate in Passamaquoddy. This is *nsípom* ~ *ntəsípom*, again literally ‘my river’, which is used with the sense ‘my secret spot, my place’ to refer to a secret fishing hole, a personal berry-picking place, or the like (Francis and Leavitt 2008:389). The contemporary meaning of this word must reflect a shift in denotation from an earlier use as ‘my

proprietary hunting territory' under a system of land tenure in which the boundaries of such territories were defined by waterways.

It is precisely such a system of land tenure that Newell's little tale presupposes. It should be noted, however, that Newell uses the term *'k^wətonkákəŋ* for 'his hunting territory' (in his title), rather than a version of the term for 'his river'. Newell's form is a derivative of *kətonke-* 'hunt', following an old pattern of nominalization. For Maliseet, Speck and Hadlock give a term that follows the currently productive pattern: ⟨nkədon'kewágəŋ⟩ *nkətonkewákəŋ* 'my hunting territory' (1946:362). The expression *kətonkewákəŋ* also occurs in Newell's text (in line 3), but with the more general sense 'hunting place'. This is the sense of the word in contemporary Passamaquoddy.

5.2 Shamanism in Newell's tale

Speck (1940) observes that family hunting territories among the Penobscot were subject to strict prohibitions against trespass in the nineteenth century. Moreover, these restrictions were enforced through shamanism.

The territory of each family group was regarded as inalienable property by the proprietors, to whom the hunting and fishing rights were restricted. It was even customary for cruising parties to secure permission to travel through the districts of another family group, while, in addition, it was emphatically wrong to hunt or trap outside one's own territory. Trespass was prevented by the exercise of magic power on the part of shamans in the family groups to conjure against intruders. (Speck 1940:206)

Passamaquoddy listeners to Newell's tale in 1897 would have been mindful of such traditions, even though the institution of the family hunting territory had already waned by this time. It was part of the usual lore concerning *m̄at̄ew̄ǎl̄ǎn̄w̄ǎk* that such individuals could "foresee the approach of strangers" (Speck 1919:256). Thus, it comes as no surprise that the 'old man' whose hunting territory the protagonists of the story have invaded knows that they are coming. Once we learn that one of the two trespassers can sense that the old man is aware of their arrival, we realize that he, too, has shamanic power.

Shamans were held to be able to bring injury upon an enemy solely through the exercise of their power. For example, Maliseet elder Alexander Sacobie of Oromocto, New Brunswick, told the story in 1963 of a man's mother-in-law who used her power as a *m̄at̄ew̄ǎl̄ǎn̄* to make a huge birch tree he was felling for its bark crash down upon him and pin him (LeSourd 2007:29–33). Listeners to Newell's story would accordingly have understood that the injury that befalls one of the trespassers is not an accident. He has impaled his foot on the stub of a spruce branch because the 'great shaman' they have angered has wished this calamity upon them.

To heal the injury to his friend that has been wrought by shamanism, the principal member of the pair of trespassers must employ his own power as a *m̄at̄ew̄ǎl̄ǎn̄*. The cure he undertakes involves kneeling down and singing (line 9) and then inhaling sharply (line 10). After just a little while, the stub that has impaled the injured man sticks out of his foot and is removed (line 11). Although we are not told that curing in this case involved blowing on the injured man's foot, the whole procedure described here is highly reminiscent of a "blowing cure" that Nicolas Denys witnessed in seventeenth-century Acadia:

If they were ill and dying of old age, or by some accident happening through trees or other object falling upon them, or where there was no apparent cause, there were old men who claimed to speak to the *manitou*, that is to say, the Devil... They were men who had some cunning more than the others... and passed for their physicians. These fellows came there to see the sick man, and asked of him where his ill was. After being well informed in all, they promised health, by blowing on him. For this purpose they set themselves a dancing, and speaking to their *manitou*. They danced with such fury that they emitted foam as big as the fists on both sides of the mouth. During this performance they approached the patient from time to time, and at the place where he had declared he felt the most pain, they placed the mouth upon it, and blew there with all their might for some time, and then commenced again to dance... Then they said it was the *manitou* which had possession of him, and... finally they made a pretence of drawing something from his body by dexterously showing it, saying – “There, there, he has gone out; now he is cured.” (Denys 1908[1672]:417–418)

Newell’s text suggests that a conception of shamanic healing like that reported by Denys from early in the French regime in Acadia was still extant in Passamaquoddy country in the nineteenth century.

As Speck (1915:249) notes, “[e]very magician had his helper which seems to have been an animal’s body into which he could transfer his state of being at will.” This helper is known in Penobscot as a *páwəhikan* (Siebert 1996:353) and in Passamaquoddy as a *powhikən*. The root of the Passamaquoddy form appears to be *pow-* ‘dream’; compare *’powiyal* ‘he dreams about him’, *powyákən* ‘dream’. If this is correct, then a *powhikən* is etymologically a ‘dreamed entity’.

Sometimes a *m̄tewǎl̄n* is described as sending out the *powhik̄n* to carry out his work; sometimes the *m̄tewǎl̄n* transforms himself into the *powhik̄n*. Both of the shamans in Newell's story follow the second procedure. What is unusual in this tale is that the two shamans take the same animal form: they both appear as giant serpents and proceed to do battle in a lake.

The motif of a battle between *m̄tewǎl̄nǎwāk* in the waters of a lake is attested elsewhere. One widely told story tells how two shamans fought in Boyden Lake, a small body of water about four miles from Pleasant Point, Me. A Passamaquoddy version reported by Prince (1899:184) explains that one of the shamans took the form of a giant turtle, while the other assumed the shape of a great snake. The turtle was victorious; his opponent was killed. The lake was thereafter called *Nehs̄yik* 'roiled up' for the persistent turbidity resulting from the battle (LeSourd 2000). Speck (1919:282–283) gives a Penobscot version of the same tale, with different protagonists assuming different animal shapes.

An injury to the *powhik̄n* constitutes an injury to the shaman. Thus, when the companion stabs the *powhik̄n* of the *kci—m̄tewǎl̄n* 'great shaman' with a spear at line 14, he has struck a mortal blow both to the shaman's animal form and to the shaman himself. The trespassers finish off the old man's *powhik̄n*, drag the snake's carcass ashore, cut it up, cook it, and eat it. This final event comes close to realizing the kind of cannibalism that is ordinarily denounced in Passamaquoddy tales: only certain evil giants are usually said to be guilty of such horrible acts. Leland (1884:123) tells the story of a family of such wicked creatures whom the culture hero *K̄alok̄ap* must kill, even though he had been their friend when they were young. Newell's text appears to be an exception in countenancing this kind of aberrant behavior.

6. Conclusions

Peter J. Newell's account of trespass and murder in a Passamaquoddy hunting territory is brief, but it nonetheless presents considerable information of ethnographic interest. First, it provides evidence that the Passamaquoddy of the nineteenth century followed—or remembered—customs regarding hunting territories that resembled those of their neighbors, the Penobscot and the Maliseet. While Newell does not tell us that the 'great shaman' in his story is seeking to protect the hunting and trapping rights of his family, the comparative evidence provides a basis for this assumption.

Speck (1940:206) noted that the Penobscot held that it was “emphatically wrong to hunt or trap outside one's own territory.” The two young men in Newell's tale willfully violate this prohibition. Speck also tells us that trespassers were subject to retaliation via conjuring by a shaman in the aggrieved family group. This is exactly what happens in Newell's story.

More generally, Newell's tale documents a suite of Passamaquoddy beliefs about the abilities and practices of shamans. We learn that shamans can sense the approach of a stranger from afar. They can cause injury to a rival by the force of their power. But they can also heal an injury that another shaman has worked. Moreover, Newell appears to describe a blowing cure not unlike that documented by Denys in the seventeenth century. Shamans can transform themselves into an animal form: the *powhikən*. Both shamans in Newell's tale have a serpent as their *powhikən*, an unusual feature of stories of shamans' contests, which usually feature *mətewələnəwək* with different animal helpers. Finally, the death of the *powhikən* results in the death of the shaman.

Newell's tale presupposes all of these features of shamanic lore. In doing so, his story provides a window on Passamaquoddy beliefs about shamanism in the last years of the nineteenth century.

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Notes

Acknowledgements. I am deeply indebted to members of the Passamaquoddy community who have shared their knowledge of their language with me over the years, particularly to the late Anna Harnois, to Estelle Neptune, and to Wayne A. Newell. I owe an especially great debt to the late David A. Francis, who worked through the text analyzed here with me in detail.

Transcription and notation. Passamaquoddy has the five vowel phonemes *i e a o ə* and the eleven nonsyllabics *p t c [= ɕ] k kʷ s h m n w y*. The location and associated pitch of the rightmost stressed syllable in a word are distinctive. An acute accent marks the distinctively stressed syllable when it is associated with high pitch (*á*); the grave accent marks the distinctively stressed syllable when it is associated with low pitch (*à*). In addition, certain word-final unstressed syllables that bear a distinctively low pitch are marked with a circumflex (*â*). Some occurrences of *ə* are metrically “weak” in the sense that they are skipped over in assigning (primary or secondary) stress; these are marked with a breve (*ə̆*). Preverbs and prenouns (prior members in verbal and nominal compounds, respectively) are joined to the base they modify by a dash (—). Angled brackets *<...>* enclose material in the spellings of the sources; line breaks within such material are indicated by /.

Abbreviations. The following abbreviations are used in glosses: 1 first person; 2 second person; 3 third person; 1/2, etc., first-person subject with second-person object, etc.; AN animate; COND conditional; DIM diminutive; DIR direct; EMPH emphatic; FUT future; IN inanimate; IMP imperative; INC, inc. inclusive; INV inverse; LOC locative; N suffix *-(ə)n(e)-*, with several functions; NEG negative; NOM nominalizer; OBV, obv. obviative; PL plural; PERF perfective; PROX,

prox. proximate; REFLEX reflexive; SG, sg. singular; TH thematic suffix of transitive verb with inanimate object; UNSPEC unspecified subject. Glosses are given in parentheses for morphemes that have no surface segmental shape.

¹ Census data is not available from 1890, since most of the records from that year were destroyed in a fire at the Commerce Department Building in Washington, DC, in 1921 (Blake 1996).

² Information on the system of tribal representatives in Maine is available at <https://legislature.maine.gov/lawlibrary/history-of-tribal-representation-in-maine/9261>. The tribal members who have served in this position are listed at <https://legislature.maine.gov/lawlibrary/tribal-representatives-to-the-maine-legislature-1823/9257/>.

³ Passamaquoddy elder David A. Francis (1917–2016) informed me that this Passamaquoddy settlement was forcibly dispersed by the white citizens of Calais early in the twentieth century.

⁴ This line appears in the manuscript above the material that it serves to gloss.

⁵ I interpret the *wmitsínǎya* ‘they ate him’ as an AI+O (transitivized animate intransitive) form in the present context, taking a null object that refers to the snake that the trespassers have cut up and cooked: this is the reading indicated by Gatschet’s gloss ‘they ate him up’. The stem *mitsi-* ‘eat’ is otherwise attested in my materials only as AI, but other AI verbs of eating and drinking also have AI+O uses. Compare *’kətowápǎwan káhpe* ‘he wants to drink coffee’ (Francis and Leavitt 2008:213), with AI and AI+O *kətowapǎwe-* ‘want to consume hot liquid (coffee, soup, stew, etc.)’.

⁶ See LeSourd (1993: 228–241) for a more detailed analysis of the phonological treatment of word-initial preconsonantal /w/ in Passamaquoddy.

⁷ Modern forms like *ma=te w-k^wis-ih^{tó}-w-ən* (not=EMPH 3-past-make-NEG-N) ‘he did not make it’, with *kis-* ‘past’, show that the prefix induces rounding of a following *k* rather than undergoing metathesis with it: *w* in the prefix can co-occur with the rounding that it induces in *k*.

⁸ This pattern of alternation has now been disturbed by analogy, resulting in variation between *ihⁱ* and *iyⁱ* in forms like *kt-ih-i ~ kt-iy-i* ‘you (sg.) tell me’.

⁹ The phonemicization given here follows Siebert (1996:482), although he notes only the literal meaning of this term.