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A NOTE ON THE HASSANAMISCO BAND OF NIPMUC

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Changing emphasis in social conditions environing the small groups of tribal descendants forming ethnic islands in the gross populations of the east and south calls for prompt action in the research field. Whatever remains to be learned must come by word of mouth from older members of these social denominations before they pass into the shades. The unpromising outlook across fields worn out and fallow has been an apology among ethnologists for neglecting to cultivate their possibilities. We are, however, gradually learning to reconsider what there may be of value beneath the surface of scrap heaps. The Nipmuc of central Massachusetts are in particular a case in point. To students of eastern Algonkian dialects and institutions the dearth of existing published knowledge of this group has been a long-standing embarrassment. The recent comparative analysis of eastern cultural traits undertaken with extreme care by Dixon, Michelson, Flannery, Kroeber and others, not to mention some European scholars who have indulged in the task of systematizing American data, have suffered by reason of gaps in available information. As for the Nipmuc, even the extent of the former band territory in precise terms is a matter of question. The political unity of the villages designated as Nipmuc is another. Accordingly, the Nipmuc lack the character of a well defined nation in the expressed opinion of most writers. Their local subdivisions seem to have had vacillating associations with adjacent groups whose hereditary chiefs often assumed authority to sanction their land transactions with the English. We cannot yet state even upon what grounds a distinction may be made between the Nipmuc and the Mohegan, Narragansett, Wampanoag, Massachusetts and Pennacook⁽¹⁾ tribes who were in close proximity to them in the order given - south, east and north. Their western confines are also puzzling. On the whole we know them chiefly as a group speaking an idiom distinguished from those of the tribes just mentioned by possession of an ɫ in certain positions between vowels where the others had N and Y. This suggests affinity with Abenaki forms spoken by populations of New Hampshire and Maine. To add to the perplexity of Nipmuc classification there are few references to them in early narratives which lay down specific data, nor are there conservative bodies of the Nipmuc population surviving in the old habitat to whom we may resort for definitive traditional matter. Subsequent to their defeat and dispersion after King Philip's War in 1678 they deserted the Connecticut valley and fled northward and westward to merge their identity with the Pennacook, the Abenaki, and the Mohican on the upper Hudson.

Facts of any nature whatsoever are therefore highly acceptable pertaining to Nipmuc history, or to the natives who carried the name. In the emergency of grasping at straws we turn to a small group of descendants constituting the still partly intact band known as Hassanamesit

or Hassanamisco Indians. A reservation of four and a half acres is now the remainder of a tract of four square miles which within the past century, as claimed by the surviving elders of the "tribe", has been alienated from their possession. One of the group members, Mrs. Sarah Cisco Sullivan has been for some years the self-appointed historian of the Hassanamisco band of Nipmuc, and through her memory certain data dealing with band history and folklore have become available, forming the substance of this report. We shall revert to her source material shortly.

That the Indian descendants of the Hassanamisco band of Nipmuc are still tenaciously conscious of their identity under the old names, calls for some comment upon their meaning and application. Accepting the given translation of the term Nipmuc as "Fresh water people", it bears testimony to a phase of culture originally possessed by them as determined by their habitat on the inland waterways. The lake region of what is now Worcester and parts of Hampshire and Hampden Counties, embracing on the west, Chicopee, Swift and Ware Rivers, as well as Quinsigamond, Quaboag, Manchaug and Chaubunagungamaug lakes, with Sudbury, Nashua, Squannacook and Concord Rivers flowing north, and French, Quinnebaug and Blackstone Rivers taking a southerly direction, was the territory assigned to the Nipmuc. West of Sudbury River the eastern boundaries of the Nipmuc merge with those we assign to the Massachusetts proper. The area lies spread out southwest of the great bend of the Merrimack. One of the outstanding place names of the region is that of Hassanamesit, which means a "place of small stones" in New England Algonkian etymology, according to Gookin (1674). Here a mission was founded by the religious zealots under John Eliot in 1654. It was the seat of Nipmuc rulers of the "royal line". The Hassanamesit mission station became deserted shortly after King Philip's War (1676-8), its converts becoming fugitives among the then unsubdued Indians westward to the Hudson and northward to the villages of the Pennacook and Abenaki. The few survivors who remained in the home territory stood their ground near the old mission of Hassanamesit and came to be known subsequently as Indians of Hassanamisco. This form of the name bears evidence of the meaning "one belonging to Hassanamesit" hence "he who lives at the place of small stones," or, by interpretation, "he who lives by fishing." The small pond lying between the present reservation and the town of Grafton bore this form of the name. It is Goddards Pond or Lake Ripple now. In the days of Hassanamesit it was only the Quinsigamond River. In later years it was dammed, forming the present lake. It is evidently named from the people or from an individual of the band. We may pass over discussion of further conjectures upon these terms, and upon the constituency of the Hassanamisco Nipmuc of later times. As we shall learn from the assertions of Mrs. Sullivan, the large estate of land guaranteed to the Indians as a reservation some two hundred and fifty years ago, has dwindled to a small block of four and a half acres granted to an early Indian proprietor, Harry Arnold and his heirs. Its boundaries have shrunk through encroachment by surrounding landholders and forced sales. It is not sufficient for the support of the one family of three persons now residing upon it. The

claimants to family rights upon the tract are now dispersed in towns and cities in the adjacent region and in distant parts of the country.

Besides the family of Arnold there were originally six other grantees whose tracts were in Grafton. Legal claimant to one of these was Sarah Boston who continued to reside on the allotted family land. We shall presently have occasion to discuss the family land divisions and their significance in the social structure of the Nipmuc.

Since the descendants of Harry Arnold, through his daughter Sarah M. Cisco, are the only Hassanamisco people who now hold their residence in the "reservation," a paragraph may be devoted to the lineage and family history preserved by Sarah Gismo Sullivan the present holder of the title. She writes,

"The four and a half acres of the reservation belong to no others but the direct descendants of the family represented by Harry Arnold. No other Indians have any claim upon this plot. I have a map of the lands made in 1736. The records given in the history of Grafton state that the last full-blooded Hassanamisco Indian died in 1825. He lived on what is now Brigham Hill, on what is now left of the reservation. To him and his wife, a son Harry Arnold was born in 1825. Some of the whites hoping to get control of the land stated that the last full-blood had died that year. Harry Arnold, the son, being tired of their wrangling with him over the land claim let it go that way, thinking that the people who were Indian knew who they were! At that time, of course, history never concerned him! Colonel Brigham and Mr. Goddard being named trustees of the tribe and agents empowered to conduct its affairs, did however take for themselves several acres of the four square miles reserved for Indians, leaving the Indians in poor condition as the years went by. However, the Hassanamisco Indians being a people who wished for peace, believing in the Great Spirit, felt that God would bring them through. They have always been ready to aid a Brigham or a Goddard if called. This has occurred many times in the case of the Brigham family. God makes all things right."

With this declaration from Sarah Cisco's lips we may close the discussion of land questions and the decline of the tribe in its home. ⁽²⁾

Specific mention of the Nipmuc occurs in 1849 in a Report of the Commissioners Relating to the Condition of the Indians of Massachusetts, by F.W. Bird, W. Griswold and C. Weekes. (Rouse Papers, No.46, Commonwealth of Mass., 1849, pp.42-5). In a brief and candidly unreserved account of the two Nipmuc groups at Dudley and Hassanamisco, the Commissioners give some vital statistics, social observations, and reports on tribal funds. They report the whole number of persons at Dudley as 48, at Hassanamisco 26, comprising five

families at the latter place. After stating that the state was "indebted" to the tribe for the fund which was lost under her management," he observed that the Indians there would "undoubtedly lose their identity and become merged in the general community". A century of time has not entirely fulfilled this prophecy.

The next report upon the condition of Nipmuc of both bands appeared in 1861, from the pen of J. Milton Earle, Massachusetts Senate Papers, No.96, 1861, pp.87, seq. He gives the whole number of families "recognized as descendants of the ancient proprietors" as 20 with a population of 73. The total number of the band was 90. He refers to the seven original families to which land was granted by the state legislature, two or three of which had become extinct. One family, only, remained then on the heritage of its fathers, retaining "less than three acres out of all their former domain." The Dudley band then numbered 94 individuals. Earle's observations follow the general line of the report of the earlier commissioners. In the period between the recordings of the colonial writers and those of Bird, Griswold and Weekes in 1849, and of Earle in 1861, we have a notation by Jeremiah Spofford in The Gazetteer of Massachusetts, Newburyport, 1828. He casually mentions a report of the legislature which lists "a few Indians at Grafton", a half a dozen at Dudley, and four at Mendon. These would all be Nipmuc.

Not to overlook later authorities who estimated the decline of the Massachusetts Indians after the colonial period, we may summarize the findings of James Mooney published in his Aboriginal Population of America North of Mexico, Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, Vol.80, No.7, Wash. 1928, p.4. While his estimates were compiled carefully in a lengthy report, it is amazing at least to see how he listed the Nipmuc as extinct by 1907, from a population of 500 in 1650. One can but conclude in respect to his data for the 1907 period that he did not consult the commissioners' reports quoted here, and that he had no means of getting at the facts of surviving groups through sources available to him. They pertained to a region in which he had neither sojourn nor interest. Mrs. Sarah Cisco (Sullivan) herself estimates the total number of living Nipmuc descendants to be approximately two hundred, residing in various parts of the country.

It is appropriate after these quotations to refer to circumstances that may account for discrepancies in the series of reports printed from early to later times. The enumeration of those classed as Indians in the old accounts is confusing and even misleading. Travelers stopping at a settlement would find the population dispersed through seasonal occupations at points distant from home and make no reckoning of the absentees. So, for instance, we may explain the low number of only five Indians mentioned by Stiles in 1764 for the Hassanamisco village. Later accounts give fourteen persons of mixed Indian and Negro blood for 1830, the last of the "pure Indians" having died about 1825. Discrepancies may be due to the decline of

pure bloods and the failure to recognize those of mixed ancestry as Indians in the strict sense. We do not adhere to this principle of classification now.

The difficulties of distinguishing between Indians and Europeans existed in Josselyn's time as well as now, especially for the casual observer who did not check with closer scrutiny and question people on their extraction. For instance, Josselyn in 1638-63, wrote that the Christian Indians of Massachusetts went clothed like the English (John Josselyn, Voyages, Veazie Edition, Boston, 1865, p. 115). He furthermore observed that they generally were black haired, "both smooth and curl'd", and remarked upon the characteristic of flat noses (n.97). The underlined word in the quotation emphasizes for his time a trait which descendants of these Indians still exhibit, in many cases sufficient to cause question of the Indian ancestry they avow. The flat noses which impressed Josselyn are no longer in evidence. "These writers were only looking at a very few of the Indians, not at them as a lot," observes Sarah Cisco.

The characteristic of curly hair observed in many individuals of Indian descent in New England has caused most recent writers who deal with the historical charm and natural beauty of the region to reproduce the lop-sided rubric of "race classification" and call them "colored;" whence "negro". This will not pass challenge in all cases. Except for cases where deliberate intermarriage with negroes has occurred in a recent generation and the physical traits are beyond question, deduction as to type of mixture should be guarded unless local epithetical terms are to be accepted as definitions of types. In some Indian families, as well as individuals of no more than one-eighth negroid ancestry, the hair is less curly than in others of three-quarters white origin.

This brief resume leaves us at a point where we may turn to consideration of the notes to be offered on memories of events and customs of the Nipmuc people of Hassanamisco. The specific ethnic history of the group unfortunately ends at an early period. We have scarcely more than mention of them in the writings of Roger Williams and Daniel Gookin. What interest the ethnic content of the lost Nipmuc culture may have as a focus of inland fresh-water life among the New England Algonkian must be developed and satisfied by expected findings of archaeology. The ensuing paragraphs compiled from Mrs. Sullivan's recollections are but the beginning. These fragments throw some light on their customs and habits.

That the inland-dwelling Nipmuc life pattern was largely obliterated by first contact with the English in 1654 may be inferred from the records of almost a century later. Living for them could not have been precarious in prehistoric times. Maize and the associated vegetable cultivation of the area was supplemented by abundant fish-food resources from the salmon and shad-producing rivers within reach.⁽³⁾ The rich hunting grounds yielded deer, occasionally moose, while a varied fare of smaller game gave a "balance of complimentary activities" carried on during summer and winter.

To the social economist, to whose generalizations these observations hold more significance than to most others, we may point out that the Nipmuc offer an instance which illustrates the deductions drawn from population figures and density by areas in a recent treatise by Kroeber (A.L. Kroeber, Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America, University of California Publications in American Archaeology and Ethnology, Vol.38, Berkeley, Cal., 1939, pp.133, 140, 143-5). By comparison of population estimates of Indians in coast land and farm land areas he indicates as an outstanding fact that "coastal residence did make for heavier population; agriculture did not by itself necessarily increase density." Using the figures of 1700 for the Nipmuc population at the time of white contact as given by Mooney, he assigns the tribe an areal occupancy of 12500 square kilometers. The density per 100 square kilometers is thus about 14. Compared with the same computation for area and density of the Massachusetts group on the shore line and tidal waters, which is given as 105, the inland Nipmuc were only one-eighth as populous as their coastal congeners. Kroeber concludes his summary of these data (op. cit. pp.145) by the statement that the population density was "twice heavier on the coast than immediately inland thereof" in the farming parts of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico region as a whole. Narrowing the statistical evidence down to the latitude of the Middle Atlantic slope cultural group it would confirm his deduction still more drastically in the Nipmuc-Massachusetts collateral relationship. The investigation of Nipmuc backgrounds so far has a happy issue in enabling us to make one step in advance toward a better understanding of the natural conditioning of native population density laid down as a generalization by Kroeber.

Communal life must have produced many social developments of which we have no intimation at this late date and which were not reported by the explorers and missionaries of the time. We shall never know more of the hints handed down concerning "give away and show-off" feasts in the narratives of captives carried away by the inland Indians in King Philip's War. I might point to another instance where local investigation of one of the remnant groups of the Massachusetts proper in 1921 resulted in the preservation of some fragmentary data of the nature discussed previously. Between Mattapan and Mansfield, all within twenty-five miles of Boston, some half dozen families of descendants of the Punkapog mission, founded by John Eliot about 1674, are known by name and location. An account of their numbers and local tradition was recorded from the lips of Mrs. Mary Chappelle, an educated woman of this tribe, and published in an appendix by the writer (Territorial Subdivisions and Boundaries of the Wampanoag, Massachusetts and Nauset Indians, Indian Notes and Monograph, No.44, Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, N.Y., 1928). Earle in 1861 (op. cit. p. 76) listed 103 survivors of the Punkapog mission. I mention this record as a sample of what needs to be done in a more thorough manner, to be sure, among these holdovers from the early mission period among the Indians of Massachusetts. We have only begun at this late day the combing of possibilities in this field at reconstructive exploration.

Mrs. Sarah Cisco Sullivan, the principal source of the material embodied in this account, is now in her fifty-eighth year. She is the daughter of James L. Cisco, born in 1848, who held the appointed office of chief of the Hassanamisco band until his death a few years ago at an advanced age. James Cisco was an ardent traditionalist. He did much to hold the interest of his scattered people in their past. A feather headdress of the coronet type, feathers of hawk and eagle rigid and upright, with a short trailer reaching to the shoulders, and constructed of heavy broad cloth, was a treasured possession. This he wore when appearing in official capacity on occasions of pageants and conferences which he frequently attended. At his death it passed to his son in Connecticut who lost it. James Cisco was a repository of tribal memory, part of which has passed to his daughter, the remainder having been irrevocably lost through want of a persistent and systematic recorder. Among the other old people from whom Mrs. Cisco Sullivan derived her information was her grandmother Sarah Maria Arnold who died about 1895 at the age of sixty-six years.

A tradition has come down in the Cisco family that a block of land about four square miles was reserved for the Hassanamisco Indians after King Philip's War. It was intended as a refuge for those Nipmuc who did not take part in the war. A ruling was enacted that any Indian found outside a mile limit of Grafton could be shot down as a hostile. This was avowedly to protect the non-participants from being mistaken for enemies and to induce the Christian Indian converts to remain at the mission. Some of them could not be induced to leave Grafton. The divided sentiment of the Nipmuc over the issues of the war caused most of them to join King Philip's band, while others ran off to Connecticut, New Hampshire and the West. Indignation aroused over the taking of their land lay at the bottom of these mass movements of the people. According to the story current in the Cisco family they stayed on through the conflict just inside the mile limit from Grafton. A milestone was the dead line for them. It still stands in a corner of Sarah Cisco's yard. So runs the account. When peace was restored after the death of Philip, the tract of land reserved for the Indians began rapidly to shrink through encroachment and "forced sales".

The neighboring land holdings of earlier generations of the Brigham and Goddard families were held accountable by the Ciscos for encroachments upon the reservation bounds. These neighbors were alleged to have used means to intimidate the Indian folks to an extent that caused "the Indians to talk in low voices in the native tongue when discussing matters pertaining to the land dispute". One act reputed to have been perpetrated by a Col. Brigham, who was, at the time, Indian agent for the band, greatly aroused the indignation of the Ciscos. It was said to be the selling out of most of the four square miles, 7500 acres, of the reservation, "which was the part of the town first supposed to be sold to whites and divided with the Indians as a town". These narratives represent the nuances of discontent under past injustices which run through the memories of Hassanamisco people. The internal dissension characteristic of most small communities in America, both Indian and English, may be held

responsible for certain family troubles "that caused some Nipmuc to move off by themselves and settle at Dudley," according to Sarah Cisco. Further information upon the constituency of this group of Nipmuc is entirely lacking as yet. Sarah Cisco knew little of them herself. She was acquainted only with the Wilson family there.

Earle's findings in respect to the land tenure of the original Hassanamisco Indians show, according to legislative records of the state, that there were seven plots of land reserved for as many native proprietors of the Hassanamisco lands about Grafton. He noted that two or three of the original families had become extinct, and their interest in the tribal funds extinguished in the last century, while the descendants of some of the others could not then be traced. He also found some families living with Hassanamisco who were descendants of other Indian groups, and he mentioned Mohegan, Punkapog and Narragansett in his enumeration. The records authenticating this point in the institutions of land tenure of the Nipmuc should prove important to research. Segregation of holding by families of the large inclusive type would imply to the investigator of social practices that the Nipmuc were subdivided into localized family bands at the time they accepted this kind of land distribution under English legislation. Such a conclusion is in conformity with what should be expected for the pattern of social structure of the southern New England Algonkian. Its patrilineal and patrilocal aspects are likewise in tune. By reading the pattern, as suggested by the Hassanamisco proprietors' rights, into the history of land transactions prior to and after King Philip's War (in which we see the authority of sale vested in the local sachems) an understanding is gained of its prevalence in the native principles governing band formation from Long Island Sound to the Merrimack. The Hassanamisco case is accordingly a fortunate discovery in our search for test material bearing upon social configuration of tribes in this area.

The Hassanamisco families known to have resided on the reservation in the span of Mrs. Sullivan's memory are the following. Those marked with an asterisk are extinct by name. *Misco, *Boston, *Printer, *Muckamaug, *Abraham, *Arnold, are the forebears of still existing families bearing the names Barber, Gigger (Gidger), Hector, Heminway, Hamilton, Scott, Tony, Gimbey, Brown, Moore, Peters, Lewis, Belden, Curliss, Williams and Cisco (Sisco). They reside temporarily, some permanently, in and about Grafton, Worcester, Boston, Gardner and Mendon (Massachusetts); Mystic (Connecticut), and Blackstone (Rhode Island), where they are employed. Some of the names appear in Earle's authorized list of 1861, while occasional reference to others occurs in local histories that mention personages and events of the late 18th century.⁽⁴⁾

Threadbare as the present condition of Nipmuc tribal culture shows itself to be, a review of its possibilities reveals no excuse for ignoring even the infinitesimal contribution they may make to our knowledge of the region and people. If we do not succeed in throwing light upon the past, the record at least goes down for the contemporary period of the people's existence

as sociological relics of the Nipmuc nation. We are learning how significant it is to grasp at straws to further our varied purposes.

The writer was acquainted with James L. Cisco, the aged headman of the Hassanamisco Indians, during the later years of his life. Had it been feasible at the time to subject him to lengthy and systematic questioning concerning his recollections of youth, a source of information on folklore, economic and social topics could undoubtedly have been opened. Having missed such an opportunity the only resort now is to the memory store of his daughter Sarah Cisco, whose tradition of her people comes chiefly through him and her grandmother, Sarah Maria Arnold already mentioned. Mrs. Sullivan also has papers showing that her people were "related to Amy [Ami] the Printer, a descendant of the Indian who labored with John Eliot in printing the Natick Bible, and were good writers".

Industries derived from early native economy survived in modified form through the colonial period, fostered by the demand for those useful to the English as the country became settled, as well as by the regard the people held for their home arts and crafts. These wares included baskets, brooms, gourds, and sundry articles of wood. Beadwork flourished for a while. The handling of iron was an early introduction from the English, for in the narratives we learn of the Indians having captured forges in operation in the Nipmuc country during King Philip's War. Iron working was handed down among them until the time of Chief Cisco's youth, as he told his listeners. Hats made of grass and splints are also referred to in the tradition of crafts. The making of chairs is likewise recalled for the same period. Leather-working went over into the making of shoes, as Sarah Cisco heard her father (James L. Cisco) say that he was one of the first shoemakers in Grafton.

Of these manufactures we have only specific data on the forms and materials of basketry, and something on gourds. Such details as Sarah Cisco could furnish from memory of her father's and grandmother's talk follow: When Sarah Cisco was small gourds were still raised and used by some as dippers for water. Summer squash rinds served the same purpose. Their form was that of the gourd dipper of colonial utility, and is supposed to have been the forerunner of the latter.

The essential rudiments of basketry, as it survived almost until the present century, are more definite. Yet they fall far short of what is desired in view of the circumstance that the Nipmuc were and are in the center of the area where highly varied techniques, forms, and decorative devices were developed. Mrs. Sarah Maria Arnold, who died in 1895 at an advanced age, was an expert basket maker. She used chiefly splints of ash, and sometimes grass material. Osier are also mentioned as a material employed by her. "She designed these things herself, planted and picked her grasses and herbs after her own manner and not after that of the English," Sarah Cisco writes of her. It is in respect to the splint forms and their

decoration that we come into a clearer picture of an art which has high significance in the cultural history of central New England tribes. The splint baskets of Mrs. Arnold's era were of the fine cut variety and were also of the type having the broad ribbon-like side filling. They were round and rectangular bottomed. Being produced as an industry of the Hassanamisco people and sold throughout the countryside it goes without saying that vast numbers of them were distributed through the Worcester county districts to supersede their Indian producers for generations after. From these specimens, glorified as antiques, we derive our knowledge of their constructional features and art embellishments. Happily, it is recalled that "ink berry" dye was used by Mrs. Arnold to color the splints, and that she fastened a cluster of stiff, short-cut cow's hairs in the end of a feather to serve as a home-made brush for marking the designs on the splints. A red dye was also made from the juice of beets. The decorative figures on baskets were painted free-hand according to Sarah Cisco's sources of knowledge. In accounting for the fancy of the people in producing flower like designs she said she had understood that they "sat and looked at something and drew it the way they wanted." These testimonies will have to stand as they are given, and may assume more significance as time passes.

While there is reason to conclude that the Nipmuc followed the practice of decorating baskets with cut-out stamps or blocks of potato dipped in coloring matter and applied as "type markers" to the wide splints on the sides and tops of many forms, Sarah Cisco had no definite points to add from her grandmother's testimony. Old specimens of splint baskets from the region around Worcester, Grafton, Marlboro, Dudley, and other locations in the environs of Hassanamisco, prove the existence of this manner of ornamentation for the people at large. At Mohegan, in a sphere of related cultures not fifty miles away, the stamping techniques survived in strength until about 1870. Here also both the stamped' process and the free-hand painting were employed. The age sequence of these forms cannot be ascertained from existing sources of memory. Here they both declined at about the same era. From material in private and in museum collections we may assign both of them to the Nipmuc as well. Mrs. Arnold's art, as recalled by Sarah Cisco, does not indicate, therefore, a negative picture as concerns the Hassanamisco. Inquiry may bring it to light within living recollection, if pushed far enough back among old people of other families in the group. As for Mrs. Arnold, the inference can be drawn that she told her posterity of her ideological interests in ornamentation rather than those of technical character. Sarah Cisco writes, "You will find some of my grandmother's baskets were of the very best, as I have two or three still in the family."

The close association of the Hassanamisco people with the soil, the woods and waterways of their native territories from which subsistence was gained, was terminated by Earle's time. Most of the families then, in 1961, as he recorded, had begun to leave farmlands and take employment as laborers in the adjoining counties, while an efflux of the men to Worcester and Boston further dispersed the Indian land claimants. We could add that with such change effected in the rural background of the people, the collapse of the framework of

woodland economy would have carried away with it most traces of hunting, fishing and trapping traditions together with the lore of animals and plants. To instance the abandonment of rural life which had taken place by Earle's time, he found only two families (Cisco and Hector) holding land in severalty in the reservation areas out of the twenty families comprising then seventy three individuals recognized as descendants of the original Indian proprietors. At the present there is no able-bodied male living near the reservation lands who is engaged in pursuits which would perpetuate knowledge of trapping or fishing. An informant may later fall our way, as "Samuel Croford Cisoo always has been a great fisherman." Sarah Cisco herself is an amateur in natural history, versed in herbal-lore and animal superstitions as many Indians are by early training.

The mere records of an occasional deer passing through the woods and field, of snipe frequenting the shores of the pond below her home, of the pleasures of hearing the crows on the hillside, of seeing the home-life of rose-breasted grosbeaks, the screech owls about her shed, a white heron several years ago on the swamp, form her observations. She remembers catching a disabled eagle when she was a girl and summoning her father for help. She had heard the old folks speak of killing wild turkeys. Herb medicines are also in her repertoire of lore to be written out later. "At present I cure a lot of people with my herbs that the doctors cannot cure. Although I was only eleven years old when grandmother died I learned her arts," she writes of herself.

A question may well be asked in conclusion. What is the outcome in larger terms of cultural history of such a fragmentary survey as the foregoing? For answer we might offer the following: The Nipmuc represent an inland phase of balanced economy comparable with the coastal phase possessing similar elements. Both are marked by fishing activities holding a primary place in the food quest. Much the same is true of proto-and prehistoric peoples of northern New England as far as the Maritime Provinces. It is the characteristic Algonkian economy of the East and Northeast. Lacustrine environment of inland populations checks with maritime residence among groups in the same area and latitude in most of its essential features. In the food-securing practices, fishing, river-shore gathering and fowling rated high along with maize cultivation and highland hunting. This economic set up would cover the activity program of the Massachusetts proper, the Pennacook and the mainland Wampanoag as far as the islands lying off Buzzard's Bay. Beyond them, the Nauset and the Elizabeth Island Indians, under whatever political control the latter came, are of another cultural phase, even if it be a minor variation, judged by what little we know of their society. There remains much digging in the ground to be done and much gleaning from the memories of old Indians still alive who were reared under an earlier regime. Community groups in their native haunts, even if only partially intact, persist in struggling on amidst the perplexities of a changed environment. It will not be forgotten that Edward Sapir rescued several Californian and Oregon native languages from oblivion through working with Indian-Negro individuals and was able to classify

them as independent stocks. Finally I must add that from John Tooker, an aged negro reared from childhood by an old Indian couple at Mashpee, Mass. Was obtained, in 1903, a vocabulary of that idiom superior to any word list then procurable. It was published by Prof. J. Dyneley Prince under the title *Last Living Echoes of the Natic*, (*American Anthropologist* N.S., Vol.9, No.3, pp.493-8, 1907).

A classic epigram upon the passing of the Indian in Massachusetts was worded by Governor George N. Briggs, at the time the Commissioners of 1848 received the appointment at his hands to undertake their work of investigation.

"These scattered and poor remnants of tribes who were once the numerous and powerful occupants of our hills and valleys, our lakes and rivers, of which advancing civilization has dispossessed them, have the strongest claims upon the government of the Commonwealth to do everything in their power to preserve their existence, protect their rights and improve their condition." (Report of the Commissioners, etc., House Papers of Massachusetts, No.46, 1849, p.3).

The snow will fall on the wooded hills of central Massachusetts for many winters to come before the Nipmuc of Hassanamisco will forget their name and lineage. If history has added the cruel insult of neglect to their record since the time of King Philip's War, they still with obstinate pride proclaim themselves to be Americans of direct Nipmuc Indian ancestry.

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Footnotes

- (1) The Pennacook and their confines present another ethno-geographical terra incognita. The monographic study now in course of preparation by Mr. Frederick Johnson of Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts may be expected to clarify their position among the New England peoples.
- (2) The following notes on the present societal placement of the Nipmuc descendants in contemporary white environment may seem only fit to be ignored by those not interested in the intricate problems of acculturation. I include them, however, in the form of an addendum to the outline of historical change witnessed from the colonial period on to the immediate present. It will not be long before investigators will turn to essays of this dating in expectation of finding observations on record which will by that time be as remote as those put down by the commissioners of 1849 and 1861. Those who carry the name of Nipmuc today are not differentiable in respect to social behavior of tribal customs from the town and rural aggregations about them. Literacy and the educational standards of grammar and high school correspond with those of the locality and time. Some are employed in skilled craft and industry, some in selective occupation, Borne in government offices. There is no evidence of lines of segregation.

If any exists it is through their own choice in setting themselves apart from mulattoes and negroes, and even whites of the underprivileged class. Through experience they are sophisticated in machinations of politics and litigation. They participate in the "sociable" activities of church, contributing service and substance to missions and local improvement groups. Their merging with the mass life of citizens has been completely effected. They patronize the movie houses, chain stores and mail order concerns. They travel for pleasure within their means, attend county fairs, appearing when invited in Indian folk costumes in the foreground of pageantry, and pose for 'the tourists. They collect antiques, read pulp literature, listen, to and attend musical programs, keep up with changing styles of dress and beautification, entertain visitors, aspire to improved homes and associates and fulfill the customary amenities of good society by imitation of aristocratic employers. They celebrate the recurring festivals of the land, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Fourth of July, and the like, and rejoice in the sports scores with the devotion and enthusiasm of their "white" neighbors. They plant flower gardens and know the trade names of popular varieties, knit and crochet for men in the armed forces, follow the news commentators and sport schedules, not neglecting the Society column or scandal page. Of some significance is the impressive degree to which most of them know the genealogical facts relevant to their own families through the entries set down in the treasured family Bible, and the same of the old families of native whites in amazing and often too candid detail. Memories' imprints seldom fail them, the gilt and dross of the oral hand down retained with gusto. Acculturation has accomplished its end, but has not obliterated the pride of the people in the name of Nipmuc. In the national register of "race" elements forming the mass population they teach their children to call themselves Nipmuc, and to a few neighborhood associates they are still Hassanamisco Nipmuc Indians. Remote from home they are not known as such. Group solidarity has vanished at the far end of acculturation, but one must admit that the group, though interfused and obscured, is one consciously apart in name

identity. With the fame, the painted glory of an ancient Utopia tenanted by the people in unspoiled freedom and dignity soothes the frustration and loss of prestige into which they have been pressed by conquerors who "took all" and now ignore them. Under the now obsolete term "race" the ethnologists of the Victorian era of writing (Mooney, Skinner and others) if deigning to refer to them at all, followed the aristocratic habit of denominating them and their like as "mongrels". The term no longer stands well among social anthropologists. It will no doubt persist yet awhile in the vocabularies of classical historians, purists and sentimentalists. And when the "mongrels" begin to write, will they deal more politely with ethnic extractions of the "socialite scientists"? Sarah Cisco herself has written parts of this report and collaborated in the preparation of its data.

- (3) In a suggestive and thoroughly referenced study by Ayres, a historian whose interest lies in records of early Indian life and movements in the Nipmuc country, an inference of this nature is drawn from the frequency of native personal names and toponyms of the region. He lists a series of them derived from the term for "fish" as being associated with the dominance of fishing activities in the subsistence pattern of the Nipmuc of the inland rivers and fresh-water lakes. (Cf. H. Ayres, *The Great Trail of New England*, Boston, 1940, pp.171, fn. 19, 93).
- (4) J.M. Earle, *State of Massachusetts, Senate Papers No. 96, 1861*, a most important resume of social and statistical facts concerning the various bands and plantations of Indians in the state, gives the following family names for Hassanamisco; Brown, Cisco, Gigger, Hazard, Hector, Heminway, Walker, Wheeler, Stebbins, Howard, Murdock, Johnson.

Misky Hill, Mendon, Mass., perpetuates a form of the name Misco, which Ayres regards as a probable "corruption of Hassanamisco", the modern spelling of Hassanamesit. (H. Ayres, *The Great Trail of New England*, Boston, 1940, p.235, fn. 29, quoting, *History of Worcester Co.*, 1879, p.409).

The name Muckamaug may be resolved to syllables meaning "great fish" (Mohegan, mak, great, big, (pi) amag, "fish") with little doubt of its etymology. Another instance of the termination for "fish" occurring in personal names of this people is that of Acquittamaug, a Wabaquasset chief who died in 1725 near Woodstock, Mass., at an age of over 100 years. Ayres has a review of the circumstances of this man's participation in early events and attempts a translation of his name, viz, lithe foremost fisherman" (op. cit. p.171).