

Boston. October 6. 1930

Dear Mrs Eckstorm

I am vastly intrigued by your forcible expression of faith in Bemaguid. I have never been there, but I look upon it as an old friend from much reading about it. Then too, I have always been an amateur student of the Indian tongue as a part of my flair for philology. I may have exposed my kindergarten views on some of our Maine words to you in the past. I have ^{always} been in somewhat extended correspondence with so-called experts - the late Tom Wallace Fooker particularly of Southboro N.Y. (deceased) and Prof. Ganong. It is a dangerous plaything for an amateur. But one thing I am convinced that it is futile for any "expert" to fasten a scientific definition on a place name without personal knowledge of the terrain. I hate to criticize Algonkologists (?) who have made study of the construction of the Indian tongue a specialty, but I am often amazed at their definitions. If the Indian could do no better than they report his descriptive power in bestowing place names, I wonder the Indians ever knew where they were at.

For example - Machigonne the name of Portland. My translation was given me - "the great ridge place" - that is, like an animal's back. It is admitted that in the various dialects, the syllables following Mach - mean variously, ridge and camp. But how would any Indian know when he had arrived at the great ridge place? Portland has two hills at each end of