INDIAN NAMES OF BOSTON,

AND THEIR MEANING.

BY

EBEN NORTON HORSFORD.

READ BEFORE THE NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY,

NOVEMBER 4, 1885.

CAMBRIDGE:
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PREFACE.

THE following paper has grown out of the study of the Indian names of Eastern Long Island, New York, to which I was led in an investigation of some points of local history pertaining to the early settlement of SYLVESTER MANOR, Shelter Island. Several of these names[1] that have been kept in use there were found to be nearly related to Indian names that have been preserved in the annals of Boston; so that in the study of the one group I became, in a degree, familiar with the other. In this research light has been thrown upon some other names of New England, which were necessarily introduced into my discussion.

To illustrate my paper, I have added a tracing of Winsor's map of ancient and modern Boston;

[1] Agawom, Amagansett, Massapaug, Missepaug, Mashom-uk, Hash-im-om-uk, Montauk, Monchonoc, Man-an-duk, Man-han-sett, Man-han-sac-kah-aquash-oo-om-uk.

also one, somewhat modified, from Des Barres's map of Boston and its neighborhood; together with a copy of Montanus's map, showing some of the Indian names, and their substitutes proposed by Prince Charles; and, lastly, John Smith's map of 1634.

It will be seen that the region of *the Neck* to which Shawmut (Sha-um-ut) applied had its narrowest part between Haymarket Square and North Street, about on a line at right angles to the front of Oak Hall. In the time of Winthrop a canal was cut along what is now Blackstone Street, permitting small craft loaded with wood or other supplies procured on the shores of the Charles or Mystic to pass through for the needs of the dwellers on the east side of the peninsula. The Neck proper extended scarcely a hundred yards along what is now Hanover Street, and comprised with it a strip on either side, a little more than twice the width of the present street, as laid down on Winsor's map. The farthest reach of the water from the east was a point about midway between Union and Blackstone streets, and equally distant from North and Hanover streets.

The late Dr. T. W. Harris, librarian of Harvard College, as I am informed by Mr. Charles Deane,

suggested that the names Boston, Hull, and Cambridge were *transferred* from the sites to which Prince Charles assigned them, and were not original selections by the first settlers, as in regard to Boston Dudley would lead us to believe. The observations presented in the following paper may throw some light on how the unanimity of assent as to the proposed change was promoted. In addition to what is stated in my paper, I may add that Cambridge was a name assigned by Prince Charles to a point near the mouth of the Kennebec, called also Quinnebequi.[1] Kennebec and Quinnebequi differ only dialectically. Both mean *long still water.* If an Indian of the Massachusetts tribe, standing on the bank of *any* river against a stretch of "dead water," were asked what he called the stream, he would reply (that point alone being in his mind), *Quinnebequi* (*Quinne*, "long," and *bequi*, "still water"), or the same word with dialectic modification. So he must have replied to Winthrop and Dudley, or Saltonstall and Philips, if they stood together near Winthrop Square, Old Cambridge, or near the Saltonstall landing against the new Cambridge City Hospital; and when they recalled Smith's map and account, and saw Cambridge

[1] It is also printed Quinobequin and Quinibequy.

on the river called Quinnebequi, they found the Prince had already bestowed a name.

The name Anmoughcawgen, which Smith had placed higher up on the Kennebec (Quinnebequi) of Maine, qualified possibly the Charles and the Kennebec alike. It may mean *Fishing-place weir*, or perhaps *Beaver dam*. In the former case the "Fish weir" in Watertown would have borne the name associated with Cambridge; in the latter, the sources of both streams — the Charles and the Kennebec — were regions in which beaver dams and meadows abounded.

E. N. HORSFORD.

CAMBRIDGE, Dec. 1, 1885.

LIST OF MAPS.

THE

INDIAN NAMES OF BOSTON,

AND

THEIR MEANING.

WHEN WINTHROP came out in 1630, after a brief detention at Salem he moved around to Nantasket. Leaving the vessels there, he came up with the principal men of the Company to Charlestown, the residence of Thomas Walford, who was living within a stockaded enclosure on the slope of Breed's Hill, looking toward Copp's Hill, across the Charles River. The situation did not please Winthrop's Company, mainly because of the want of good water. The spring on which Mr. Walford depended was below high-water mark, and was, of course, available only when the tide was out; and much of this time it yielded a more or less brackish water.

Mr. Winthrop, Mr. Saltonstall, Mr. Dudley, and others set out to find a more desirable spot on which to erect their dwelling-houses. Saltonstall and some others established themselves at Watertown, in the neighborhood of Mt. Auburn, where they found good water. Winthrop and Dudley and others began to build at Cambridge

where, also, they found water. Before Winthrop had proceeded far, Mr. William Blaxton, who had been established for some years on the westerly slope of Beacon Hill, or possibly further north, invited him to settle at *Shaumut*, as there were *good springs there.*

The substance of this interview is in a note in the early records of Charlestown.

The first utterance of the word *Shawmutt* by an Englishman, spelled precisely as if pronounced, as we pronounce it *to-day*, occurred at least as early as 1630.

The inducement mentioned by Blaxton (or Blackstone) and the coincident needs of Winthrop may have given rise to the notion that the meaning of Shawmut was "a spring of water." For this or some other reason the notion has found wide acceptance from that day to this.[1]

[1] "Authority that can be relied upon" (Dr. Shurtleff, p. 25, "Historical Description of Boston") "says: In the mean time, Mr. Blackstone, dwelling on the other side of Charles River, alone, at a place by the Indians called Shawmutt, where he only had a cottage — at, not far off, the place called Blackstone's Point, he came and acquainted the Governor of an excellent spring there, withal inviting him and soliciting him thither. Whereupon after the death of Mr. Johnson and divers others, the Governor with Mr. Wilson and the greater part of the church removed thither; whither also the frame of the Governor's house in preparation in this town [Winthrop's house was begun at what is now Cambridge] was (also to the discontent of some) carried, when people began to build their houses against winter, and this place was called Boston."

Prince says (Mass. Hist. Soc. Coll., iv. p. 155): "The want of good water and other conveniences at Charlestown made several go abroad upon discovery. Some go over to Shawmut, some go without Charlestown Neck and travel up into the main till they come to a place well watered, whither Sir Richard Saltonstall with Mr. Phillips (minister) and several others went, and settled a plantation, and called it Watertown."

In 1817 Charles Shaw, in a very interesting volume entitled "A Topographical and Historical Description of Boston," suggests that the name "Shawmut" means *Peninsula;* and leaves us to infer that it applied to the great block of land connected by the Roxbury Neck with the main-land; although he recognizes that there was the *principal* neck, and a neck *within*, known also as the "chief landing place." Mr. Shaw supported his suggestion by references to Indian names of other localities, which, however, in the light of more recent study, admit of other interpretations. The suggestion was, nevertheless, a very happy one, and came very near to rendering further research unnecessary.

In 1822 Rev. Samuel Deane, of Scituate, in a communication to the Massachusetts Historical Society, finds the origin of *Shawmut* in certain words of somewhat remote relationship, and that the word means *a fountain of living waters.* "Mishawumut" he translated *a great spring.*

Mr. Drake, the author of the "History and Antiquities of Boston," p. 457, remarks, that he thinks Shawmut means "Free Country, free land, or land unclaimed." He does not give his reasons in detail.

The most recent and thoughtful of the various discussions of the meaning of Shawmut is contained in a communication from the eminent Algonquin scholar, Dr. Trumbull, of Hartford, addressed to the late Mr. Folsom, Secretary of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and published in the Proceedings of the Society some twenty years ago.

This paper derives the name from an Indian phrase, which Dr. Trumbull translates, *Where there is going by boat.*

The phrase, including Mushau-womuk as one of its stages of degradation, Mishawumut perhaps as another, and M'Shawmut as a third, became at length, in the utterance of English-speaking people, Shawmut, the meaning of which, in short, was *Ferry*, and referred to "where there was going by boat" to Charlestown.

My studies have led me to another interpretation, and its contrast with this of Dr. Trumbull illustrates the fine spirit of the intimation, in quite another connection, by this accomplished writer, that it is well to regard efforts in this direction as tentative, and our conclusions, at the best, as scarcely more than provisional.

In Wood's "New Englands' Prospect," edited by Mr. Charles Deane, there is, near the close, a short vocabulary of Indian words and a collection of Indian geographical names.

In this latter list one column gives the Indian names, and another the corresponding English names, where known.

Among them occur the following: —

Mishaum,	
Mishaumut,	Charlestowne.
Massachusets,	Boston.

Dr. Trumbull suggested in regard to the column of geographical names, that, through a mistake of the type-setter, the English names had been dropped a line. It

will be seen that there was no error in print requiring this explanation.

In Ogilby's "America" (1671) we have, in a list of the early settlements in New England, against Charlestown, the name *Mashawmut.*

We have, then, three forms of the Indian name of the site of Charlestown: —

Mishaumut,	Wood, 1634.
Mashawmut,	Ogilby, 1671.
Mishawumut,	Rev. Samuel Deane, 1822.

These are not different Indian words, but different results of English efforts to write what the Indian gave as the name of the site of Charlestown.

They are obviously different forms of one word. Wood was several years in the neighborhood. He prepared a vocabulary of Indian words. Neither of the other authorities had this advantage. Wood's form, Mishaumut, commends itself. He spells the name of Charles River, Mishaum.

Let us take his form, Mishaumut, as the Indian name of Charlestown.

Neither Wood nor Ogilby give Shaumut as a name for Boston. The only authority for this name is Blaxton. It differs from the name for Charlestown, in that it lacks the prefix *Mi* or *Mis.*

The meaning of *Mis* we know. It occurs in *Mis*tick, a tidal river sweeping Charlestown on the north and west, and in another tidal river near Stonington, in Connecticut. It occurs in *Mis*souri and in *Mis*sissippi, the

great rivers; in *Mis*tassini, the great lake south of Hudson's Bay. Its signification is well known. It means *great.* Mas is a dialectic equivalent of Mis.

Mistick River is great, as compared with other tidal rivers leading up into the Malden and Medford meadows.

Mis-shaumut, or Mishaumut, differs from Shaumut (whatever that may mean), in that it is something relatively *greater.*

Let us look again at Wood's column of Indian names. They are arranged thus: —

Mishaum,
Mishaumut, Charlestowne,

as if both names might be used for the same locality.[1] They differ from each other in that one has the terminal syllable *ut.*

Thomas Walford's residence was Mishaum*ut.*

Blaxton's residence was Shaum*ut.*

What does this terminal syllable *ut* mean? The answer is happily at hand. Books were printed for the use of the Indians in the two languages; English on one page, and over against it the Indian translation.

On the English titlepage the books were printed at

[1] Dr. Palfrey, vol. i. "Hist. of New England," p. 289, says: "The visitors found at Mishawum an English palisaded and thatched house, wherein lived Thomas Walford, a smith." "Before the winter, an exploring party either began or made preparations for a settlement at Mishawum, now Charlestown." *Everett's Address at Charlestown,* June 28, 1830. Mishaum and Mishaumut were understood by the English as interchangeable or equivalent, as applied to Charlestown.

Boston. On the Indian titlepage they were printed Boston-*ut*. (Trumbull, Winsor's "Boston.")

When Eliot, in attempting to translate the phrase, *showing himself through the lattice* (Solomon's Song, ii. 9), for his Indian Bible, finding the nearest equivalent for *lattice* was the Indian expression for *eel-pot*, decided to transfer the English word unchanged, with the addition only of the syllable *ut*, — making "*lattessut*" do service in defining the position, when "showing himself through the lattice." (Breeches Bible, 1599, has *grates*, Solomon's Song, xi. 9, and *lattesse*, Judges v. 28.)

Ut is a syllable of location, — at, near, against, on this side, on that side, etc.

We cannot be mistaken as to the meaning of the terminal syllable *ut*. Thomas Walford lived *near* Mishaum, and William Blaxton lived *near* Shaum.

The peninsula of Charlestown was *near* Mishaum. The peninsula of Copp's Hill was *near* Shaum.

The unknown part of Mi-shaum-ut is reduced to two syllables. The unknown part of Shaum-ut is less by one syllable. What remains is *Shaum*.

It seems in the Massachusetts dialect that the addition of *um* to a preposition or adverb or adjective converts it into a *noun*, — na-um, wam(p)um, wong-um, shong-um, etc. That is, we may regard *um* (or *wum*, our spelling) as a terminal syllable, without meaning, *except in combination*. It is, for example, like *ness* in English, or *keit* in German. *Ness* converts *upright*, an adjective, into *uprightness*, a noun. *Keit* converts *aufrichtig*, an adverb, into *aufrichtigkeit*, a noun.

So *um* or *wum*, which we find in Shaum(ut) or Shawum(ut), and in (Mis)shaum or (Mis)shawum(ut), when taken away, leaves *Sha* as a possible adverb, or preposition, or adjective, — the remaining syllable, the meaning of which is to be found.

To ascertain the meaning of this syllable, I have collected many Indian words in which it occurs, and sought, by a process of substitution, to find the word or phrase which would fit equally well in all the combinations of the syllable *sha*.

Dr. Trumbull has laid down a rule in regard to Indian geographical names, which has been found to be of almost universal application.[1] It is this: —

"EVERY NAME DESCRIBED THE LOCALITY TO WHICH IT WAS AFFIXED."

Of such names, in which the syllable *sha* occurs, there is Na-sha-un (Naushaun) (un for um), the long, narrow island between Vineyard Sound and Buzzard's Bay; and Na-sha-we-na, another island, between the same two sheets of water.

Na-sha-wi (oue, ue) (Nashaway), a river emptying into the Merrimack, not far from Lowell.

Mi-sha-um (Mis-sha-um), the Charles River.

Mi-sha-um, Charlestown.

Sha-womet is the Indian name of a part of Warwick Neck in Rhode Island. Sha-omet and Mi-sha-womut are also found on Rhode Island maps.

Sha appears in the Indian name Chawum [Shaum]

[1] The Composition of Indian Geographical Names. Coll. Conn. Hist. Soc., vol. ii. p. 4.

of Captain John Smith, and the same name written in the town records of Sandwich is Shaum-e (e silent. Dr. Dwight).

Sha-um, with slight modification, is the name of a neck of land not far from Dighton Rock; of another neck of land near Fall River; of another between Seconnet and New Bedford; another on the peninsula of Cape Cod.

Na-sha-quit-za describes a locality on Nantucket.

In another class of names we have Mi-sha-on.

Mi-sha-on, the trunk of a tree.

Mi-sha-on, or Misho-on, or Misho-an, or Mushau-on, the canoe made from the trunk of a tree.

Na-sha-onk, the throat.

Mi-sha-onk, the trunk of the body, distinct from the head, arms, and legs.

Shah-meek is a Delaware name for eel, still used on Nantucket. The eel is also called Meek-sha, or Neek-sha.

Sha (or Schach) enters into the name of a gun-barrel, and fenced road or highway. [Delaware.]

Na-sha-wi (or ue or we) is the Indian equivalent of *between the walls*, as of a village, for example, in Eliot's Bible.

Nana-sha-wi is employed by Eliot as the Indian equivalent of *in a strait betwixt two. Na* is repeated for emphasis, as "out and out," or "very true."

In looking over this list, which need not be further extended, it will be readily seen that the single phrase suited to all the various uses of the syllable *Sha* is *parallel-sided.*

Let us apply it.

The *gun* barrel is *parallel-sided.*

The *eel* (Sha-meek) is a *parallel-sided* fish; *meek* is Delaware for *fish.*

The *sturgeon* (Keppi-sha-meek) is an *encased, parallel-sided fish.*

Na means, in the middle, half way, between, divide, etc.

Onk means upright.

Na-sha-onk, the throat, is *middle-of-the-parallel-sided upright.*

Mis-sha-onk, the trunk of the human body, is *the great-parallel-sided-upright.*

The trunk of the tree is *the great parallel-sided*, Mis-sha-on (Mishaon); and the canoe made from it is Misha-on, or Misho-on, or Mushauon.

Mi-sha-um is the great *parallel-sided River* Charles.[1] (See Wood's "New Englands' Prospect").

It is also the great *parallel-sided Neck* of Charlestown, near which was Mi-sha-um-*ut*, the residence of Walford.

Sha-um is that which is *parallel-sided*, as the *Neck* at Sandwich.

[1] Charles River had in its different portions different Indian names. Mi-sha-um, the *great-parallel-sided*,—the *eel* river, applied well to the portion between the Watertown Arsenal and the Cottage Farm station on the Boston and Albany Railroad. Quinobequin, given by Morse as a name of Charles River, was probably, as suggested by the late Dr. T. W. Harris, librarian of Harvard College, transferred, with Cambridge, from the region of the Kennebec, where it was placed in Smith's account, to the region of Boston. It was not the name of a river as a *proper* name. *Quinnebequi* applied to *long* stretches of *still water*, as the same name with dialectic modification applied to portions of the Kennebec. Another Indian name, *Norombégue*, is mentioned by Allefonsce, Thevet, and Ogilby, which defined or described

W. 16
W. 1
W. 12
W. 10
W. 9
W. 8
W. 7
W. 6
HARBOR
Charles Street
Arlington St.
Tremont
Washington
Atlantic
Commercial St.
Point
Channel

Sha-um was the *Neck*, upon or near which was the first Indian settlement, between the cove formerly coming in from the northwest to beyond the eastern limit of Haymarket Square, and the bay extending from the east to points west of Dock Square, as shown on Winsor's map of ancient Boston.

As *Shaum* was the *neck*, Shaum-ut seems to have been applied, as already intimated, to the peninsula which was *near* it to the north as well. So Mishaum was the greater neck, and Mishaum-ut was applied to the whole peninsula of Charlestown, which was *near* it on the east, and *greater* than the peninsula north of the present Blackstone Street.

As Sha-um-ut was the residence of Blaxton, *near the* Neck, so Mi-sha-um-ut was the temporary stopping-place of Winthrop, *near the greater* Neck.

So I conceive came the name SHAWMUT.

There was another name of early Boston, of which note was taken by Dr. Trumbull: —

Mushau-womuk.

Indian books were printed at Mushau-womuk, according to the Indian titlepage. They were printed, as the English titlepage showed, at *Boston*. (Trumbull.)

another peculiar feature or portion of the river. Captain John Smith substituted for *Massachusets* — the Indian name of the mouth of the river — the name of Prince *Charles*. On Verrazano's map (Maiollo's) of our coast, 1527, is the name *Anguileme*, which is repeated on the maps of Gastaldi and Ruscelli, and is mentioned by Thevet, and also by Buno in his comment on Cluverius (see Ogilby), as being under the forty-third degree of latitude. It has interest as a possible translation of *Mishaum*, one of the Indian names of Charles River given above.

The business streets or lanes of that period were in the region we now know as Blackstone and Union streets. Mushau-womuk was at the head of the cove, since filled in. It was the place where the canoes coming from Charlestown (Mishaumut) and perhaps Chelsea (Winne-sim-met) made the land. It was the *canoe-landing-place*, which is the meaning of Mushau-womuk. It *described* one side of the neck, — the *Shaum*. It was the name an Indian, *with little conception of a* PROPER *geographical name*, would give, in reply to inquiry. He would thus *describe* the spot to which he conceived his attention had been directed.

From *Mushaum* — *canoe* — the *m* was dropped for ease of utterance; *om* was *enclosure; uk* (ock) was *place; w* (or *oo*) may be euphonic. The place where the canoe was kept — *the ferry landing* — was

MUSHAU-WOMUK.

Another name was recognized by Father Rasles, the Jesuit missionary among the Abnakis. It is given in his Abnaki Dictionary under the head *Noms*, p. 493.

Messatsoosec, BASTON.

Baston was the spelling on Montanus's map; it was the same on La Hontin's map. (On Smith's map, Snodoun is spelled *Snadoun*.)

Wood, in his "New Englands'[1] Prospect," already cited, wrote the name as he understood it: —

Massachusets, BOSTON,
instead of *Messatsoosec*, BASTON.

[1] Wood placed the apostrophe *after* the *s*.


305
306
307
308
309
310
311
EPTEN
Lac St. Piere
Quebec
Ile de Orleans
Canada
Mont Royal
NOVA FRANCIÆ
PARS
Groote Val
Rio St. Laurentius
Rio de Gennes
Rio du Pont
NORUMBEGÆ PARS
doussac
NOVA ANGLIA
IEUW
ofte Ammonoschaugen
Lacus Irocoisi: ensis ofte Meer der Iroroisen
NIEUW ENGE
Kennebeka
Anco cisco
Horikans
LANDT by
d'Inwoonders genaemt
IROCOISIA
ALMOUCHICOSEN
waas
NDT
equins
Mr. Pinsers
Cleyne val
Massachusets
Southampton
Briston
Pasquanack
Vernser
Smits Eylant
Gebroken hoeck
Schoone Haven
Witte Bay
Cape Cod
Witte hoeck
Cape James
Staten hoeck, oock
Point Surliff
Point George
C. Blanco Gallis
Crane Bay
Noort Zee
Morican
Pequatoos
Wapanoos
Horicans
Nahicans
Roode Eyl.
t Groot Riff van Malabarre
C. Malabarra
Vlacke hoeck
Port Fortune
Zuyer Zee
Texel
Adriaen Blocks Eylant
Hendrick Christiaensz Eyl. als. Marthaes Vyneard
Vlielant
Petacknock
Vissers Eylant
Manton
Cromme Gouwe
Sassanows Mont
Snouden hill
Passataquack hull
M A R

If we analyze the name given by Father Rasles, we find familiar forms under dialectic variation.

Mess is the same as mas or mis or mus, *great.*

at-soo is adchu, wadchu, *hill.*

sec is sac, saco, or saugus, *mouth.*

The combination, according to Rasles, was *Great-Hills-Mouth*, referring to the mouth of the Charles River, near Trimountain, and contrasting it with the mouths of Naponsett,[1] Weymouth, and the other lesser streams emptying into Boston Harbor.

The combination, *Massachusetts*, which is said to have been applied, and properly, to the country about the Blue Hills of Milton, was also properly employed in Massachusetts[2] Bay. It is the bay of the *Great-Hills-Mouth*, or the bay at the mouth of the Charles River.

This name was another descriptive appellation of the site, not of the *neck* or *the head of the cove*, but of the *mouth of the river* emptying into the bay, near this point.

But there was still another name. It occurs in Ogilby's "America," and in some respects is the most interesting of all, from its possible immediate connection with the final adoption of the English name Boston.

Ogilby seems not to have heard of Shaumut or Shawmut, or Mushauwomuk or Messatsoosec, as Indian names

[1] Winthrop's map of 1634 gives *Naponsett.*

[2] *Sett* means *surrounding, about, in the neighborhood of.* Wood wrote the name with one *t.* It seems here to be the equivalent of *sec.*

of the region of Boston. He says (edition of 1671, p. 159) the name was "anciently"

Accomonticus.

It is not difficult to analyze this name. It is the same as the Abnaki name, Agamenticus.

Accom (or *Ogkome.* Eliot) means *beyond.*

Mon (or *man*, or *men*, or *min*), means *elevation*, or abrupt *rising* from water or a plain.

tuc (or *tick*) means *tidal river* or *cove.*

es (or *us*) means *little.*

Accomonticus means *Beyond-the-hill-little-cove.*

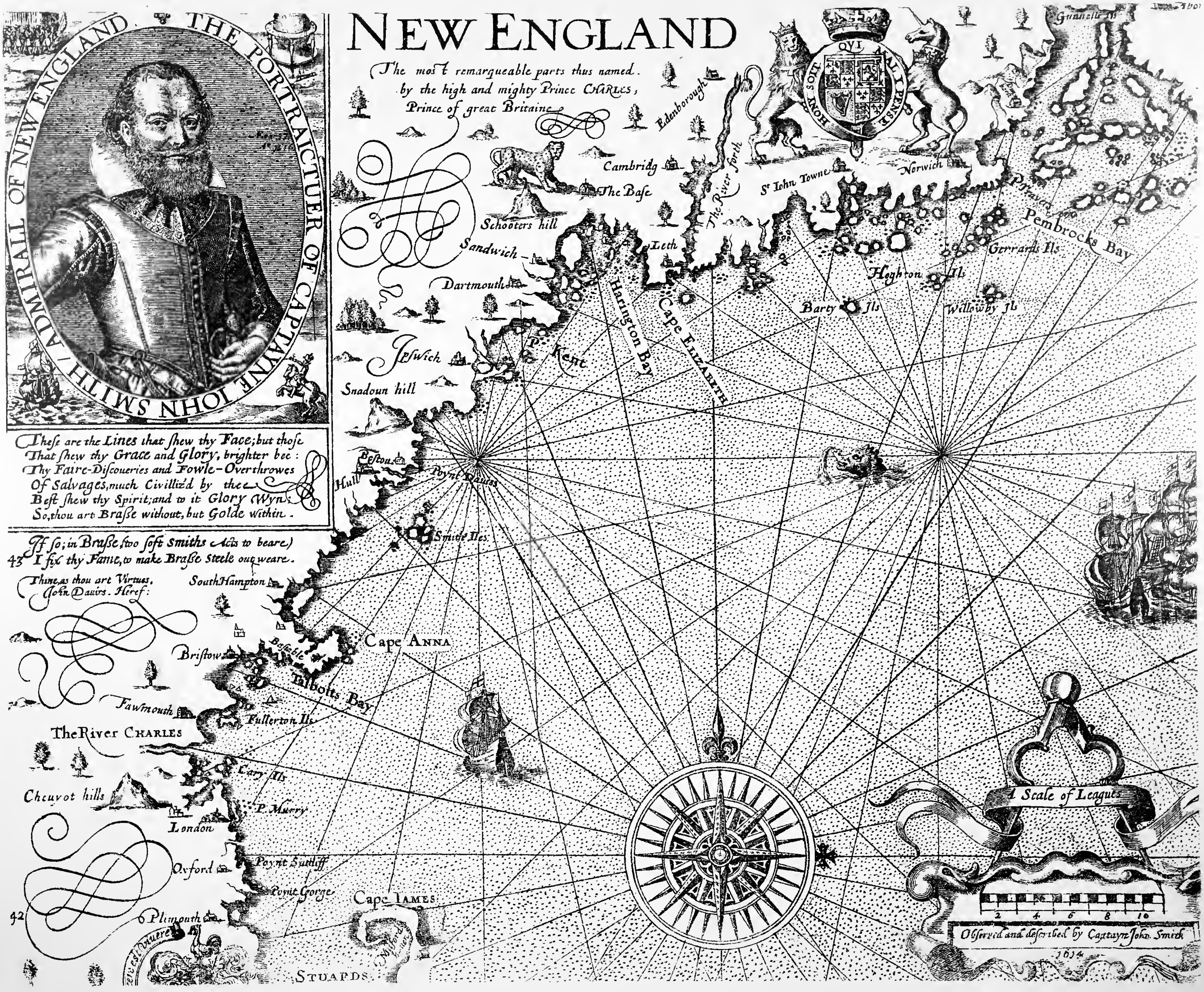
This would be the descriptive term employed by an Indian standing on the site of the Charlestown Navy Yard, and describing the head of the ancient cove reaching up to the east side of the mill-pond of earlier times and of the present Haymarket Square. To him it would be the "Beyond-the-hill-little-cove."

So it would if he stood at old Fort Washington, south of West Boston Bridge, looking across the ridge traversed by Leverett Street.

So it would if he were at Brookline or Roxbury, looking over Beacon Hill, or if he were at South Boston or Dorchester, looking over the ancient Fort Hill.

From all these points the Sha-um or Mushau-womuk would be at or near the *Beyond-the-hill-little-cove.*

I have already intimated that this name is the most interesting of the four early Indian names of Boston, because it seems to be connected with the vote of the authorities in 1630, which determined the present



NEW ENGLAND
The most remarqueable parts thus named. by the high and mighty Prince CHARLES, Prince of great Britaine
THE PORTRAICTUER OF CAPTAYNE JOHN SMITH, ADMIRALL OF NEW ENGLAND
These are the Lines that shew thy Face; but those
That shew thy Grace and Glory, brighter bee:
Thy Faire-Discoueries and Fowle-Overthrowes
Of Salvages, much Civillizd by thee
Best shew thy Spirit; and to it Glory Wyn;
So, thou art Brasse without, but Golde within.
If so; in Brasse, (too soft Smiths Acts to beare)
I fix thy Fame, to make Brasse Steele out weare.
Thine, as thou art Virtues.
John Dauis. Heref:
43
42
HONY SOIT QVI MAL Y PENSE
Edenborough
Cambridg
The Base
Schooters hill
Sandwich
Dartmouth
Ipswich
Snadoun hill
Bestou
Hull
Poynt Dauis
Smiths Iles
South Hampton
Bristow
Fawmouth
The River CHARLES
Cheuyot hills
London
Oxford
Plimouth
The River Forth
Leth
St John Towne
Norwich
Pembrocks Bay
Gerrards Ils
Hoghton Ils
Willowby Ils
Barty Ils
P. Kent
Harington Bay
Cape ELIZABETH
Cape ANNA
Talbotts Bay
Fullerton Ils
Cary Ils
P. Murry
Poynt Suttliff
Poynt Gorge
Cape IAMES
STUARDS
Gunnells Ils
A Scale of Leagues
2 4 6 8 10
Observed and described by Captayn John Smith
1614

English name of the locality which had at first been called *Trimountain.*

You will remember that Captain John Smith, after his return from his services at Jamestown, Virginia, sailed from England, April, 1614, on a voyage to our shores. His first land made was the Island *Monahigan*,[1] off the mouth of the Penobscot. He sent a part of his ship's company to collect fish, and with a boat's crew of eight besides himself he explored the coast as far south as Cape Cod. He obtained the various Indian names by which were known the bays, rivers, capes, etc., of the coast, and to some extent of the interior; and having placed them upon the outline chart he had prepared, solicited the young Prince Charles to substitute for them such other names as might be acceptable to his Royal Highness, that he might so remove the barbarous names, and at the same time give to the future settlers in the *New* England[2] opportunity to say that their places of residence were named by their sovereign. The Prince acquiescing, distributed familiar English and Scotch names up and down the coast. Of all these, Plymouth, Cape Ann (named after his royal mother), and Charles River became permanent.

Among these names were Boston (or Baston, on Ogilby's map, and pronounced Bawston), given to the mouth of the *Little York River* (a few miles north of Portsmouth), called by the Indians *Agamenticus* or *Acominticus* (Montanus), and *Hull*, at the mouth of the Piscataqua.

[1] Manheigin on J. F. W. Des Barres's map, 1776.

[2] Smith seems to have been the first to give the name *New England.*

The name Accomonticus (Ogilby) described the site of the mouth of Little York River to one approaching it from *the north*, as it lay behind the hill called by the Indians Sassanows (the modern Agamenticus). Little York River, a short tidal river, was the *Beyond-the-hill-little-cove.*

For the name Piscataqua, the first river south of the Little York, the Prince wrote "Hull."

The descriptive appellation Accomonticus was encountered — that is, *must* have been, as we have seen — by Winthrop and his exploring parties at numerous points, when inquiry was made of the Indians as to the name of the *head* of the cove, *the canoe place*, and also the *neck.* (See Des Barres's map of Boston and the neighboring country, or the outline submitted herewith.)

Winthrop's Company had Smith's map. They had doubtless Champlain's and others, and recognizing how imperfect they were, and how exaggerated the distances, and how incorrect and even transposed many of the situations of localities, naturally found themselves embarrassed. To them the names were *proper* names; not simply *descriptive appellations*, as they were to the natives, determined mainly by the *position* of the observer.

It is conceivable, therefore, that they came to think the Acominticus of Smith was the Accomonticus at the mouth of the Charles, and that *Boston* was the name *chosen happily by their King* for the settlement at the head of the bay, and was a selection of some fifteen years' standing. Dudley says it was proposed to give this name to their chief town before the company sailed


Hospital
Cambridge
Lechmere pt
Mistic River
Neck
Charlestown
Mishaumut
Noddle's Island
East Boston
Winthrop
Copps Hill
Mushauwomuk
Neck within
[Sha-um]
Boston
Beacon Hill
Fort Hill
Charles River
Neck
Roxbury
Dorchester Neck
Governor's Island
Castle Island
Spectacle Island

from England. If this purpose governed the majority of the council, the aid afforded by the Indians must have contributed to induce the minority to acquiesce in their wish.

The recorded vote is very simple. It was taken September 7, 1630. In a long statement of what was done at that meeting appears the record: "*And that Trimountain be called Boston:*" it is not that *Shawmut*, or *Mushauwomuk*, or *Massachusets*, or *Accomonticus* be changed, but that "*Trimountain*[1] be called Boston."

At the same meeting it was also voted, and all recorded in one paragraph, to change *Mattapan* to Dorchester, and *Pigsgusset* (Pequusset) to Watertown. This summary statement indicates an adequate previous discussion, but what it was is not recorded.

In the history of Hull I have failed to find any note of the origin of the name. The position of the name at the mouth of the Piscataqua (Passataquack on Montanus's map) was the same, relatively, that the modern Hull holds now, — at or near the mouth of the first principal river next entering the ocean going southward; — the roadstead against Nantasket (Hull) might be regarded as the mouth of the Neponset (or Weymouth), the next to the Charles.

The name Hull seems to have been *found* where it is, by the historian of Plymouth County, but *how* it came

[1] The name "Trimountain" was probably first given by Gomez, the Spanish navigator, in 1525, as identifying the archipelago which long bore his name (Dr. Kohl, Coll. Maine Hist. Soc., vol. i. 2d Ser. pp. 310–322), and which seems to have been Boston Harbor.

there I have not had the fortune to find out. In reality, it seems to have been conferred by Prince Charles, when he replaced the Indian names at the request of Smith, and, like Boston, to have been transferred from the Piscataqua to the Charles.

The several Indian names of Boston, and their significations, are as follows: —

Sha-um-ut	(Shawmut),	*Near the Neck.*
Mushau-womuk,		*Canoe-place.*
Messatsoosec	(Massachusetts),	*Great-Hills-Mouth.*
Accomonticus,		*Beyond-the-hill-little-cove.*