

Document title: YB-2741A=3
Manuscript title: <ka o ma na . me sga ki . ka ka nwi ka de wa ni . e se ki e ti tti .> (“Well now, here is (a story about) a Meskwaki and a grizzly bear who frightened each other”)
Manuscript date: 1911-1938
Manuscript location: National Anthropological Archives, Truman Michelson ms. #2741A.3
Written by: Young Bear
Written for: Truman Michelson
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Edited by: Lucy Thomason
Translated by: Lucy Thomason
Help with translation provided to Ives Goddard by: Adeline Wanatee (1994)

Abbreviations: YB = Young Bear. LT = Lucy Thomason.

The original manuscript of this text is in the Smithsonian Institution’s National Anthropological Archives. It consists of 8 pages of Meskwaki syllabary (“papepipo”). It was written by Young Bear sometime between the years of 1910 and 1938. There is no contemporary translation.

As of late 2011, the time of this writing, the Smithsonian Institution’s National Anthropological Archives is housed in Suitland, Maryland, a suburb of Washington, D.C. Consult the website <http://www.nmnh.si.edu/naa/> for information about how to arrange a visit to the National Anthropological Archives.

There are phonemically eight vowels in Meskwaki: i, i·, e, e·, a, a·, o, o·.

There are phonemically eleven consonants in Meskwaki: p, t, č, k, s, š, h, m, n, w, y.

There are phonemically 29 consonant clusters in Meskwaki: hp, ht, hč, hk, šk, hm, hn, hw, hy, pw, tw, kw, sw, šw, mw, nw, py, ty, čy, ky, šy, my, ny, hpw, htw, hkw, šk, hpy, hky.

Meskwaki papepipo is adapted to be wonderfully easy to write. It is much harder to read. Papepipo omits vowel length, the consonant “h”, and nearly all punctuation. This means that spoken Meskwaki has eight distinct vowels, but papepipo writes only four vowels; spoken Meskwaki has eleven distinct consonants, but papepipo writes only ten consonants; spoken Meskwaki has 29 distinct consonant clusters, but papepipo writes only 16 consonant clusters. As a result, there is a great deal of educated guesswork involved in transcribing papepipo into fully phonemicized words, phrases, and sentences. The edited and translated text of “A Meskwaki and a grizzly bear who frightened each other” should be taken provisionally and read critically: there may be mistakes or infelicities in YB’s original papepipo, in LT’s reading of the papepipo, in LT’s choices regarding phonemicization, word breaks, and sentence breaks, and in LT’s choices regarding Meskwaki-to-English translation. Translation in particular is at the best of times an imperfect art, and in interpreting Meskwaki stories into English there is a constant struggle between the wish to give a painfully literal translation of each word and the wish to try to translate the (imagined) intended poetic and rhetorical effect of the Meskwaki language on Meskwaki ears into a similar poetic and rhetorical effect of English on English ears.

The Meskwaki of YB’s manuscript is now archaic, which makes it even more challenging to read than modern papepipo.

Some notes about fundamental features of the Meskwaki language which translate poorly into English: Meskwaki, like other members of the Algonquian language family, has animate versus inanimate gender where English has masculine versus feminine versus inanimate gender. Meskwaki distinguishes between a “proximate” (nearest/most interesting/most important/most sympathetic) third person and various “obviative” (more peripheral/less interesting/less important/less sympathetic) third persons. In Meskwaki it is obligatory to indicate the source of one’s information (direct evidence? indirect evidence? supposition? common knowledge? hearsay?) whereas in English this is optional. Complex, multi-faceted, multipartite verb stems predominate in Meskwaki to an extent

unknown in English. (Cf. Edward Sapir's famous observation that "single Algonkin words are like tiny imagist poems.")

In the following text, the numbers in the left margin reflect the manuscript pages. Capital letters followed by a parenthesis mark the lines proposed by LT. A space between Meskwaki words reflects a word divider in the manuscript. Underscore (_) marks a word boundary where there was no word divider in the manuscript. Pipe (|) marks a place where the end of a word is not marked by a word divider in the manuscript but does coincide with the edge of the page in the manuscript. Double pipe (||) marks the end of a page. Plain hyphen (-) marks a preverb boundary marked by a word divider in the manuscript. Underscored hyphen (_) marks a preverb boundary not marked by a word divider in the manuscript. Square brackets ([]) enclose comments on the text and translation, including indications of where YB's manuscript differs from LT's redaction.

These editions and translations are works in progress and minor changes can be expected in the future.

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- 1 A) kaho' _mana meškawahki·h ka·ka·nwikaše·wani e·h=se·kiheti·či. | [written as title]
A) Well now, here is (a story about) a Meskwakih and a grizzly bear who frightened each other.
- B) e·h=takwa·kiki,
B) It was fall,
- C) mehtose·neniwaki e·h=ki·w_a·mi·wa·či, |
C) and the people were moving camp from place to place,
- D) e·h=ki·wi·menamena·škonowa·či.
D) having meal after meal of meat in place after place.
- E) e·h=ma·ne·wa·či | e·h=anemi·a·miha·mi·wa·či.
E) There were lots of them as they moved camp again and again.
- F) meše·='nah=meko kapo·twe peno·či e·h=pya·wa·či,
F) At some point or other they arrived at a place far away,
- G) e·hkwi_takoniči owiye·hahi.
G) at the far limit of where there were large animals.
- H) meše·='nah=nekotenwi e·h=a·mi·wa·či,
H) One time when they moved camp,
- I) nekoti pašito·he·ha, "o' _kehčine=koh=wi·na ki·h=po·ni·pena," e·h=iyoweči.
I) a certain poor old man was told, "Well, we will camp right near here."
- J) "nahi', ni·h=anemi_mehtose·hi," e·h=iči _pašito·ka,
J) "All right! I'll keep on walking a bit," the old man said,
- K) e·h=we·pose·niči a·mi·ničihi. | [we·pose: <wetose|>]
K) and those moving camp set out.
- L) ahkowi=meko ki·ši_ča·ki·niči,
L) Last of all, after they had all set out,
- M) ahkowi_e·h=we·pose·či,

- M) he set out last,
- N) e·h=na·kataki mye·wi.
N) following the path.
- O) e·h=anematahoko·hiči omi·ša·me·hi. [<ta||oko>]
O) He was carrying his personal sacred pack on his back as he went.
- 2 A) šī·ši·kwa·hi e·h=akwa·hkwapite·hiniki omi·ša·meki.
A) And a little rattle was tied to his sacred bundle.
- B) i·ya·h=nekotahi e·h=anemehka·či,
B) As he was proceeding on his way somewhere over there,
- C) e·h=mamakwahkiwe·hiniki.
C) there were large hills.
- D) kapo·twe e·h=pya·či. [kapo·twe: <.kato|twe.>]
D) At some point he reached them.
- E) meše·=’nah=kapo·twe e·h=a·kwapiči. [a·kwapi: <pi> written over erased syllable, in YB’s hand]
E) And at some point or other he sat down to rest.
- F) kapo·twe e·h=ka·škehtawa·či owiye·hani_pye·čiha·či.
F) Suddenly he heard someone behind him on the path he had taken.
- G) kapo·twe e·h=se·kite·he·či.
G) Suddenly he felt scared.
- H) “we·ne·h=ye·toke,” e·h=išite·he·či.
H) “Who could it be?” he wondered.
- I) kapo·twe_pe·hki_e·h=nenohtawa·či| we·wiye·hiničini, [kapo·twe: <.katotwe>; we·wiye·hiničini:
<.wewiyeiniči.>]
I) At some point he really understood what kind of creature it was,
- J) e·šišimoniči me·me·čiki.
J) being sure what kind of voice it had.
- K) pe·hki_e·h=mi·na·wi_peseše·či.
K) He really listened closely.
- L) e·h=ka·škehtawa·či=na·hka e·h=kwa·koho·taminiči.
L) Again he heard (the creature) roar.
- M) kaši’,_maneto·wani=či·hi ka·ka·nwikāše·wani. [<wa||ni>]
M) Why, it was a monster, a grizzly bear!
- 3 A) “šehehye·’, we·nahi, nena·kaneko·toke,” e·h=išite·he·či,
A) “Uh-oh! So that’s it: it’s following me,” he thought,
- B) e·h=we·pipaho·hiči. [paho: <pa> written over erased syllable, in YB’s hand]
B) and he broke into a trot.

- C) 'še=meko.
C) That was all.
- D) meči='h=we=ke·h| aškikiwa wi·h=aniwisa·či.
D) Obviously he wasn't young, that he could run fast.
- E) ke·keya·h=meko=ke·htena kehčine e·h=pye·či|-ka·škehtawa·či.
E) Eventually, sure enough, he heard it drawing near.
- F) pe·hki=meko·='ni e·h=mami·kwa·soči,
F) Then he really exerted himself to the utmost,
- G) e·h=pa·kwi·či.
G) and went fast.
- H) ke·keya·h=meko _peteki_e·na·piči,
H) Eventually, when he looked backward,
- I) e·h=te·pa·pama·či.
I) he could see it in the distance.
- J) e·h=pa·wi_='yo=ke·h=meko ke·ko·h -kekesiči| a·hkwato·hiniki. [e·h=pa·wi: <.apawi>]
J) By the way, he didn't have any kind of a weapon.
- K) mehteno·h=meko ota·pataho·ni| ota·hkwatomi.
K) His cane was his only weapon.
- L) 'še=meko·='na nano·škwe e·h=kehčipenoči,
L) He merely ran blindly, at top speed.
- M) e·h=papahkwiwane·sa·hiči omi·ša·me·hi.||
M) He ran with his little sacred pack hanging loose a bit.
- 4 A) ke·keya·h=meko ayo·nina·h=kehčine e·h=pye·hpahoniči.
A) Eventually it came running right up to him, very close.
- B) kapo·twe e·h=kokwi_nakisa·niči,
B) Suddenly it screeched to a stop,
- C) e·h=wa·pawa·pamekoči.
C) staring at him.
- D) wi·na=ke·h e·h=pemipahoči=meko.
D) For his part, he ran on.
- E) peno·či·me·h=pye·hpahoči na·hka,
E) When he got a fair distance away again,
- F) e·h=mawinanekoči.
F) it came after him.
- G) kehčine=meko=na·hka pye·hpahoniči,
G) When it came running near again,

- H) e·h=nakisa·niči,
H) it screeched to a stop,
- I) e·h=wa·pawa·pamekoči.
I) staring at him.
- J) wi·na=ke·h e·h=pemipaho·hiči=meko.
J) For his part, he trotted on.
- K) “kaši=ni·hka_ išawiwa,” e·h=išite·he·či.
K) “What’s the matter with him?” he wondered.
- L) na·hka_ peno·či·me·h=pye·hpahoči, [crossed-out syllable between <o> and <či.>]
L) When he got a fair distance away again,
- M) e·h=mawinanekoči.
M) it came after him.
- N) kehčine=meko e·h=pye·či·nakisa·niči,|
N) Right near him it screeched to a stop
- O) e·h=kehta·pamekoči. |
O) and stared fixedly at him.
- P) e·h=kehke·nema·či.
P) (And then) he realized about it.
- Q) “ši·’,|| mani=me·kwe·h ši·ši·kwani| e·h=anwe·we·seniki kohtamwa,” e·h=išite·he·či. [ši·’,|| mani:
<.šima||mani>]
Q) “Say, I believe it’s afraid of the sound of this rattle here!” he thought.
- 5 A) nye·wo·nameki pye·či·matanekoči, [wo·: <o|>]
A) When it overtook him for the fourth time,
- B) e·h=nakisa·niči. |
B) it screeched to a stop.
- C) wi·na=ke·hi·=’ni e·h=nakisa·či,
C) Then for his part he also screeched to a stop,
- D) e·h=anwe·we·sahtawa·či oši·ši·kwani,
D) and shook his rattle at it,
- E) e·h=nemi·htawa·či.
E) lunging at it.
- F) kaši’_ke·htena=či·h e·h=pemi_kohkisa·niči. [kohkisa·: <kokasa|>]
F) Why, sure enough, it turned tail at top speed.
- G) kaho·ni=pe·hki e·h=a·piškwišahto·či,
G) And then he really untied (the rattle) hurriedly,
- H) e·h=nakisa·niči,
H) and when (the bear) stopped,

- I) e·h=mawinana·či=pe·hki.
I) he went after it for real.
- J) pe·hki=meko| wi·na=’na ka·ka·nwikaše·wa e·h=kwe·hta·na·moči.
J) For his part, that grizzly bear really fled in terror.
- K) “yohohwa’,” e·h=iči_pășito·ha,
K) “Whew!” said the old man,
- L) e·h=ne·ya·papito·hiči oși·și·kwani.|
L) and he tied up his rattle again.
- M) o·ni=pe·hki_e·h=tepa·taki| omi·ša·mi,
M) And then he really held his sacred pack dear,
- N) e·h=mese·netaki. [<ne||ta>]
N) having greatly benefited from it.

- 6 A) i·ya·h=pye·ya·či e·h=po·ni·hete·niki, [niki: <neki.>]
A) When he arrived over there where the camp was,
- B) e·h=a·čimoči.
B) he told his story.
- C) wa·pa·niki,
C) The next day,
- D) e·h=anohka·na·či oșisemahi wi·h=și·ša·niči,
D) he deputized his mother’s brothers to hunt,
- E) e·h=nehtamawoči pene·wahi na·hka_e·sepa·hahi. [wo: <|o>]
E) and turkeys and raccoons were killed for him.
- F) e·h=mama·totaki omi·ša·mi.
F) He offered prayers to his sacred pack.
- G) nahkaniki·șekwe e·h=nakanakamoči.
G) All day long he sang song after song.
- H) a·yahpi·hčina·h=meko e·h=ni·miwahaki,|
H) Every little while he sang a dancing song,
- I) e·h=na·ni·miha·či e·tame·hahi.
I) making the smokers dance time and time again.
- J) e·h=kehči_wa·wi·seniwa·či neniwaki.|
J) The men ate heaps of food.
- K) e·hpi·hči_menwe·netaki| e·h=mese·netaki.
K) He benefited greatly from how much he liked his sacred pack.
- L) oșisemahi=na·hka e·h=wi·șikima·či wi·h=tepa·taminiči,
L) And he urged his mother’s brothers to cherish it,

M) po·ni-mehtose·neniwite. ||
M) if he should cease to live.

- 7 A) i·ni_e·šawiči meškawahki·hi-pašito·h,
A) That's what that Meskwaki old man did
- B) e·h=katawi|-nesekoči ka·ka·nwikaše·wani.
B) when a grizzly bear nearly killed him.
- C) na·hka=wi·na| e·h=a·šakači-se·kiha·či.|
C) Completely unexpectedly, he frightened it after it frightened him.
- D) a·šitami wi·na_e·h=peminehkawa·či.
D) And he in his turn chased it.
- E) wi·na=wi·na| pa·wi_pematahokotehe omi·ša·mi,
E) But if he hadn't carried his sacred pack with him,
- F) na·hka='ni pa·wi_-'nahi ši·ši·kwa·hi -akwa·hkwapite·nikehe,
F) or if that little rattle hadn't been tied to it,
- G) nesekosa=meko.
G) (the grizzly bear) would have killed him dead.
- H) i·ni_e·hpi·hči|-mi·škawa·niki neno·te·waki te·pa·tamowa·čini.
H) That is how powerful those things are that the Indians cherish.
- I) pe·hki=ke·hi='niki ka·ka·nwikaše·waki mi·škawesiwaki.
I) See, grizzly bears are really powerful.
- J) ki·hpene=meko| e·h=mawinana·wa·či_owiye·hani,
J) If they attack anyone,
- K) ma·mahka·či=meko nese·waki,
K) without fail they kill (that person),
- L) ki·hpene=meko e·h=kwa·koho·ma·wa·či| nye·wenwi. [<pene||meko.>]
L) if they roar at him four times.
- 8 A) nye·wenwi=ke·hi='pi=meko ota·nakwe·waki,
A) Their dens face in four directions, it's said,
- B) we·ta·paniki, we·či|-na·wahkwe·niki, we·či_pakišimoniki, we·či_kesi·ya·niki.
B) to the east, to the south, to the west, and to the north.
- C) ča·kenwi='pi=meko pemi_tai·kwa·koho·tamo·ki.
C) They roar in every direction, one after the other, it's said.
- D) ki·ši_-'ni -išawiwa·čini,
D) After they do that,
- E) ača·hmeko e·h=mawinana·wa·či.
E) only then do they attack (their victims).

- F) a·yahpi·hčina·h e·h=pemi-ka·škehta·kosiwa·či.
F) They can be heard at intervals.
- G) na·hina·h=meko e·h=matana·wa·či,|
G) At the time when they overtake (their victims),
- H) e·h=tata·twisaha·wa·či. |
H) they rip them apart.
- I) i·ni_e·na·čime·weniwiwa·či,
I) That is as much as is said about them,
- J) ki·hpene e·h=mawinana·wa·či owiye·hani.
J) if they attack anyone.
- K) i·ni_e·ši_na·no·ta·ke·ya·ni, |
K) That is what I heard time and time again,
- L) e·na·čime·weniwiwa·či. ||
L) as much as is said about them.