

**UCLA**

**American Indian Culture and Research Journal**

**Title**

Bibliography of Algonquian Linguistics. By David H. Pentland and H. Christoph Wolfart

**Permalink**

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/4x15c8q2>

**Journal**

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 7(4)

**ISSN**

0161-6463

**Author**

Cowan, William

**Publication Date**

1983-09-01

**DOI**

10.17953

**Copyright Information**

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

**Bibliography of Algonquian Linguistics.** By David H. Pentland and H. Christoph Wolfart. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1982. xix + 333 pp. \$14.50 paper.

In 1891, James Pilling published his monumental *Bibliography of the Algonquian Languages*. He not only included bibliographical reference to any book or article he had ever seen or heard about with material on the Algonquian languages but also a large number of biographical sketches and other background material on some of the more luminous figures in the history of Algonquian linguistics. For example, his item on the works of John Eliot, whose Bible translation of 1666 is one of the most famous works in the whole pantheon of Algonquian linguistics, goes on for 58 pages. It includes the entire history of the translation of the Bible, its distribution, what copies were still extant in 1891, and how much the copies went for at book auctions. This kind of collateral information helps fill out the bulk of Pilling's bibliography to its 614 closely printed pages, and makes it the indispensable classic that it is.

The work under review is much more modest in its scope. Pilling included any work in, or about, any Algonquian language published between 1609 and 1891, including missionary tracts, newspaper items, poems, manuscripts and other ephemera of all types. Pentland and Wolfart restrict themselves to legitimately scientific items published since 1891 dealing specifically with any and all Algonquian languages. Even so, the bulk of their work is considerable. The Algonquian languages hold pride of place among the North American Indian languages that have been treated by linguists and others working within the European tradition, and the amount of material far surpasses that in almost any other language family of the New World. The authors do not mention how many entries they have, but with an average of 8 entries for 286 pages, they must have approximately 2250 items. In an appendix they index all their entries under specific languages, and within these categories specify such headings as methodology, morphology and syntax, semantics, kin terms and the like. As an added feature, they annotate a number of the items, giving a short characterization of the title if not self-explanatory, cross-referencing with other items, clearing up details of publishing history and obscurities of reference. An earlier version (Pentland et al. 1974) of some 85 mimeographed pages was

published in 1974 by the Department of Anthropology of the University of Manitoba, with two other co-authors, C.D. Ellis and Carol Simpson, who did not collaborate on the present version.

This is a formidable work. The scholarship is immense and impeccable. The authors carefully explain their bibliographical method in the introduction, and the entries are so arranged that one can be sure to find what one is looking for with a minimum of effort and no confusion. An added bonus is that they include items published before 1891 that somehow escaped Pilling's attention. For example, James McKenzie's 1808 short vocabulary of Montagnais, published in 1890 in Masson's collection about the Northwest Company and also by itself (McKenzie 1890), is included. It is difficult to find an item legitimately dealing with an Algonquian language that is in error or escapes the attention of the authors of the book under review. The only lapse I have been able to find (by Pentland's own admission in private correspondence) concerns "A. Berloin," who in 1908 published a book entitled *La Parole Humaine* in which he finds all the fundamental elements of universal language in his examination of the Cree and Ojibwa vocabulary. "Berloin" was in fact the pseudonym of Antonin Nantel, an abbé who contributed an appendix to Cuoq's Iroquoian dictionary (Cuoq 1882). He is listed as "A. Berloin" here, with no cross-reference to Nantel. With standards such as these, I don't think anyone can go very wrong relying on this bibliography.

William Cowan

Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario

#### REFERENCES

- "Berloin, A." [pseudonym for Antonin Nantel]. 1908. *La parole humaine: études de phologie nouvelle d'après une langue d'Amérique*. Paris: Honoré Champion/Montréal: Librairie Beauchemin.
- Cuoq, Jean-André. 1882. *Lexique de la langue iroquoise*. Montréal: J. Chapleau.
- McKenzie, James. 1890. The King's Posts and journal of a canoe jaunt through the King's domains, 1808. Louis François Rodrigue Masson, ed. *Les bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest* 2:401-451. Québec: A. Coté.
- Pentland, David H., et al. 1974. *A Bibliography of Algonquian Linguistics*. University of Manitoba Anthropology Papers, No. 11. Winnipeg: Department of Anthropology, University of Manitoba.
- Pilling, James C. 1891. *Bibliography of the Algonquian Languages*. Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 13. Washington: Government Printing Office.