

Jacques Cartier's Second Voyage to the St. Lawrence River and Interior of "Canada," 1535-1536

Gilcrease Museum

*The Second Voyage Undertaken by the
Command and Wish of the Most Christian King
of France, Francis the First of That Name, for
the Completion of the Discovery of the
Western Lands, Lying under the Same
Climate and Parallels as the Territories
and Kingdom of That Prince*

possibly compiled by Jehan Poulllet, a sailor on the
voyage, from his and Cartier's journals [Excerpts]

To the Most Christian King

. . . [T]hrough the present expedition undertaken at
your royal command for the discovery of the lands in
the west formerly unknown to you and to us, lying in
the same climates and parallels as your territories and
kingdom, you will learn and hear of their fertility and
richness, of the immense number of peoples living
there, of their kindness and peacefulness, and likewise
of the richness of the great river [St. Lawrence River],
which flows through and waters the midst of these
lands of yours, which is without comparison the
largest river that is known to have ever been seen.

These things fill those who have seen them with the
sure hope of the future increase of our most holy faith
and of your possessions and most Christian name, as
you may be pleased to see in this present booklet

wherein is fully set forth everything worthy of note that we saw or that happened to us both in the course
of the above voyage and also during our stay in those lands and territories of yours, as well as the routes,
dangers, and situation of those lands.

On Sunday, 16 May, the day and feast of Whitsuntide, in the year 1535, by command of the Captain
[Cartier] and the willing consent of all, each confessed himself and we all received our Creator together in
the Cathedral of St. Malo. . . . And on the Wednesday following, 19 May, the wind came fair and in our
favor and we set sail with three vessels. . . . We sailed on in fine weather until 26 May, when it turned bad
and stormy and continued so for such a long time with incessant headwinds and overcast sky that no ships
that have crossed the ocean ever had more of it; so much so that on 25 June, on account of this bad
weather and lowering sky, we all three became separated and had no news of one another until we
reached Newfoundland, where we had agreed to meet. . . .



Jacques Cartier, drawing by Louis Nicolas, ca. 1675
(over a century after Cartier's death), in *Les Raretés
des Indes (Codex Canadiensis)*, publ. ca. 1700

How We Arrived at the Village [Hochelaga¹] and the Reception We Met With; and How the Captain Gave Them Presents and Other Things the Captain Did, as Will Be Seen in This Chapter

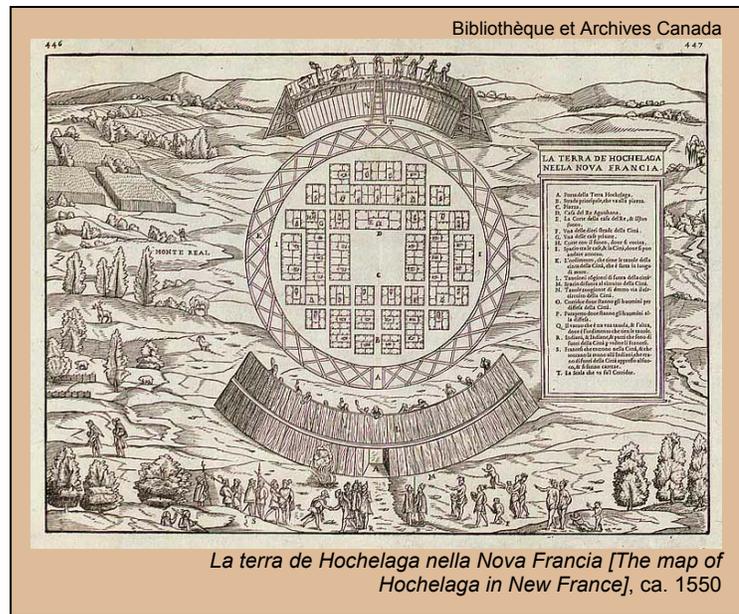
As we drew near to their village, great numbers of the inhabitants came out to meet us and gave us a hearty welcome, according to the custom of the country. And we were led by our guides and those who were conducting us into the middle of the village, where there was an open square between the houses, about a stone's throw or thereabouts in width each way. They signaled to us that we should come to a halt here, which we did. And at once all the girls and women

of the village, some of whom had children in their arms, crowded about us, rubbing our faces, arms, and other parts of the upper portions of our bodies which they could touch, weeping for joy at the sight of us and giving us the best welcome they could. They made signs to us also to be good enough to put our hands upon their babies. After this the men made the women retire, and themselves sat down upon the ground round about us, as if we had been going to perform a miracle play. And at once several of the women came back, each with a four-cornered mat, woven like tapestry, and these they spread upon the ground in the middle of the square, and made us place ourselves upon them. When this had been done, the ruler and chief of this country, whom in their language they call *Agouhanna*, was carried in, seated on a large deer-skin, by nine or ten men, who came and set him down upon the mats near the Captain, making signs to us that this was their ruler and leader. This *Agouhanna*, who was some fifty years of age, was in no way better dressed than the other Indians except that he wore about his head for a crown a sort of red band made of hedgehog's skin. This chief was completely paralyzed and deprived of the use of his limbs. When he had saluted the Captain and all his men, by making signs which clearly meant that they were very welcome, he showed his arms and his legs to the Captain motioning to him to be good enough to touch them, as if he thereby expected to be cured and healed. On this the Captain set about rubbing his arms and legs with his hands. Thereupon this *Agouhanna* took the band of cloth he was wearing as a crown and presented it to the Captain. And at once many sick persons, some blind, others with but one eye, others lame or impotent [of their legs] and others again so extremely old that their eyelids hung down to their cheeks, were brought in and set down or laid out near the Captain, in order that he might lay his hands upon them, so that one would have thought Christ had come down to earth to heal them.

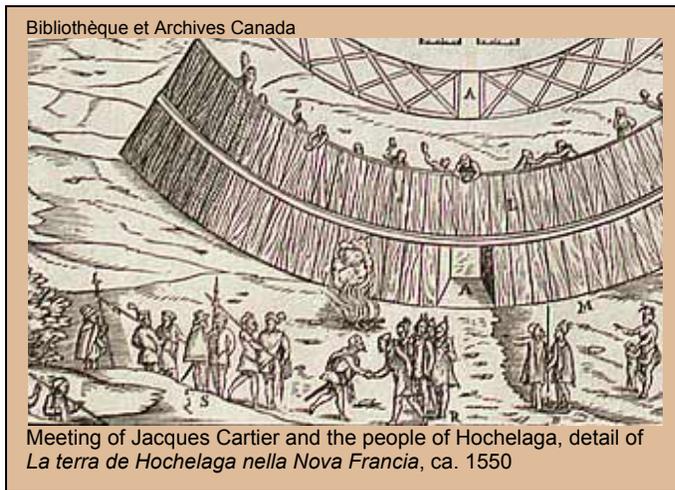
Seeing the suffering of these people and their faith, the Captain read aloud the Gospel of St. John, namely, "In the beginning," etc., making the sign of the cross over the poor sick people, praying God to give them knowledge of our holy faith and of our Savior's passion, and grace to obtain baptism and redemption. Then the Captain took a prayer-book and read out, word for word, the Passion of our Lord, that all who were present could hear it, during which all these poor people maintained great silence and were wonderfully attentive, looking up to heaven and going through the same ceremonies they saw us do. After this the Captain had all the men range themselves on one side, the women on another, and the children on another, and to the headmen he gave hatchets, to the others, knives, and to the women, beads and other small trinkets. He then made the children scramble for little rings and tin *agnus Dei*,² which afforded

¹ Later the site of Montreal.

² *Agnus dei*: small tin replica of a lamb ("Lamb of God").



them great amusement. The Captain next ordered the trumpets and other musical instruments to be sounded, whereat the people were much delighted. We then took leave of them and proceeded to set out upon our return. Seeing this the women placed themselves in our way to prevent us, and brought us some of their provisions, which they had made ready for us, to wit; fish, soups, beans, bread, and other dishes, in the hope of inducing us to partake of some refreshment and to eat with them. But as these provisions were not to our taste and had no savor of salt, we thanked them, making signs that we were in no need of refreshment. . . .



. . . [W]e returned to our longboats, accompanied by a large number of these people, some of whom, when they saw that our people were tired, took them upon their shoulders, as on horseback, and carried them. And on our arrival at the longboats, we at once set sail to return to the bark [sailing

ship], for fear of any misadventure. Such a departure did not fail to cause the people great regret; for so long as they could follow us down the river, they did so. And we made such good headway that we reached our bark on Monday, 4 October. . . .

**How We Arrived at St. Croix Harbor; and the State in Which We Found Our Ships;
and How the Leader of That Region Came to See the Captain, and the Captain
Went to See Him; and of Some of Their Customs in Detail**

. . . As soon as the leader of that region³ was informed of our arrival, he came on the following day, the twelfth of the month, accompanied by Taignoagny, Dom Agaya, and several others, to see the Captain, to whom they gave a hearty welcome, feigning to be much pleased at his return. The latter likewise received them fairly well, notwithstanding that they had not deserved it. Donnacona invited the captain to visit him on the following day at Canada,⁴ and the Captain promised to do so. So on the morrow, the thirteenth of the month, the Captain, accompanied by the gentlemen and with fifty sailors drawn up, in order, went to visit Donnacona and his people at their home called Stadacona, which stood about half a league from the spot where lay our ships. And on drawing near the village, the inhabitants came out to meet us a stone's throw or more from their houses, where they ranged and seated themselves after their manner and custom, the men on one side and their women and girls on the other, standing up and singing and dancing unceasingly. And when all had mutually saluted and welcomed each other, the Captain presented the men with knives and other wares of small value, and had all the women and girls pass before him, to whom he gave each a tin ring, for which they thanked him. He was then conducted by Donnacona and Taignoagny to see their houses which were well stored with the provisions they use in winter. Donnacona showed the Captain the scalps of five men, stretched on hoops like parchment, and told us they were Toudamans from the south, who waged war continually against his people. He informed us also that two years previously these Toudamans had come and attacked them in that very river, on an island which lies opposite to the Saguenay [River], where they were spending the night on their way to Honguedo [Gaspé], being on the war-path against the Toudamans with some two hundred men, women, and children, who were surprised when asleep in a fort they had thrown up, to which the Toudamans set fire round about and slew them all

³ Donnacona, the Iroquoian chief whom Cartier had met on his first voyage the previous year (1534). Cartier had taken as captives the chief's two sons, Taignoagny and Dom Agaya, and returned with them to France, where they learned French to serve as translators on the next expedition. On their return in 1535, Cartier soon realized that the sons' translations might not be accurate, as he had seen distrust among the Indians.

⁴ The name Canada derives from the Iroquoian word for village, "kanata," used by the Indians to designate Donnacona's village. Eventually the name came to designate the entire region led by Donnacona, and later the entirety of New France.

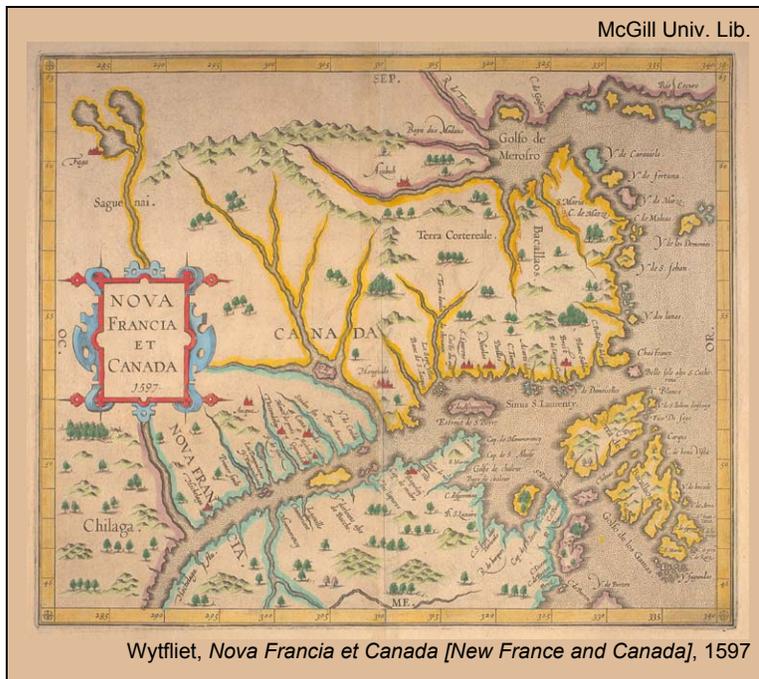
as they rushed out, except five who made their escape. Of this defeat they still continued to complain bitterly, making clear to us that they would have vengeance for the same. After seeing these things, we returned to our ships.

Of the Manner of Life of the People of This Region; and of Some of Their Customs, Beliefs, and Habits

This people has no belief in God that amounts to anything; for they believe in a god they call *Cudouagny*, and maintain that he often holds intercourse with them and tells them what the weather will be like. They also say that when he gets angry with them, he throws dust in their eyes.

They believe furthermore that when they die they go to the stars and descend on the horizon like the stars. Next, that they go off to beautiful green fields covered with fine trees, flowers, and luscious fruits. After they had explained these things to us, we showed them their error and informed them that their *Cudouagny* was a wicked spirit who deceived them; and that there is but one God, Who is in Heaven, Who gives us everything we need and is the Creator of all things and that in Him alone we should believe. Also that one must receive baptism or perish in hell. Several other points concerning our faith were explained to them which they believed without trouble, and proceeded to call their *Cudouagny*, *Agojuda* [the evil one], to such an extent that several times they begged the Captain to cause them to be baptized. And one day the leader [Donnacona], Taignoagny and Dom Agaya came with all the people of their village to receive baptism; but since we did not know their real intention and state of mind, and had no one to explain to them our faith, an excuse was made to them; and Taignoagny and Domagaia were requested to tell them that we should return another voyage and would bring priests and some chrysm, giving them to understand as an excuse, that no one could be baptized without his chrysm.⁵ This they believed, for they had seen several children baptized in Brittany. And at the Captain's promise to return, they were much pleased and thanked him.

These people live with almost everything in common, much like the Brazilians. They go clothed in beasts' skins, and rather miserably. In winter they wear leggings and moccasins made of skins, and in summer they go barefoot. They maintain the order of marriage, except that the men take two or three wives. On the death of their husband the wives never marry again, but wear mourning all their lives by dyeing their faces black with brayed charcoal and grease as thick as the back of a knife-blade; and by this one knows they are widows. They have another very bad custom connected with their daughters, who as soon as they reach the age of puberty are all placed in a brothel open to every one, until the girls have made a match. We saw this with our own eyes; for we discovered houses as full of these girls as is a boys' school with boys in France. And furthermore betting, after their fashion, takes place in these houses in which they stake all they own, even to the covering of their privy parts. They are by no means a laborious people and work the soil with short bits of wood about half a sword in length. With these they hoe their corn which they call *ozisy*, in size as large as a pea. Corn of a similar kind grows in considerable

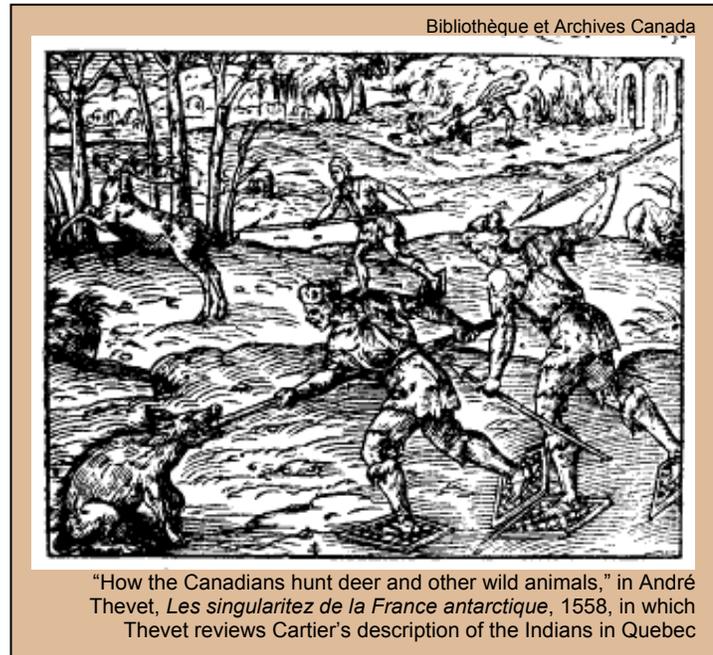


⁵ Chrysm: consecrated oil for sacramental use.

quantities in Brazil. They have also a considerable quantity of melons, cucumbers, pumpkins, pease [peas], and beans of various colors and unlike our own.

Furthermore, they have a plant, of which a large supply is collected in summer for the winter's consumption. They hold it in high esteem, though the men alone make use of it in the following manner.

After drying it in the sun, they carry it about their necks in a small skin pouch in lieu of a bag, together with a hollow bit of stone or wood. Then at frequent intervals they crumble this plant into powder, which they place in one of the openings of the hollow instrument, and, laying a live coal on top, suck at the other end to such an extent that they fill their bodies so full of smoke that it streams out of their mouths and nostrils as from a chimney. They say it keeps them warm and in good health, and never go about without these things. We made a trial of this smoke. When it is in one's mouth, one would think one had taken powdered pepper, it is so hot. The women of this country work beyond comparison more than the men, both at fishing, which is much followed, as well as as tilling the ground and other tasks. Both the men, women, and children are more



indifferent to the cold than beasts; for in the coldest weather we experienced, and it was extraordinary severe, they would come to our ships every day across the ice and snow, the majority of them almost stark naked, which seems incredible unless one has seen them. While the ice and snow last, they catch a great number of wild animals such as fawns, stags, and bears, hares, martens, foxes, otters, and others. Of these they brought us very few; for they are heavy eaters and are niggardly with their provisions. They eat their meat quite raw, merely smoking it, and the same with their fish. From what we have seen and been able to learn of these people, I am of opinion that they could easily be molded in the way one would wish. May God in His holy mercy turn His countenance towards them. Amen. . . .

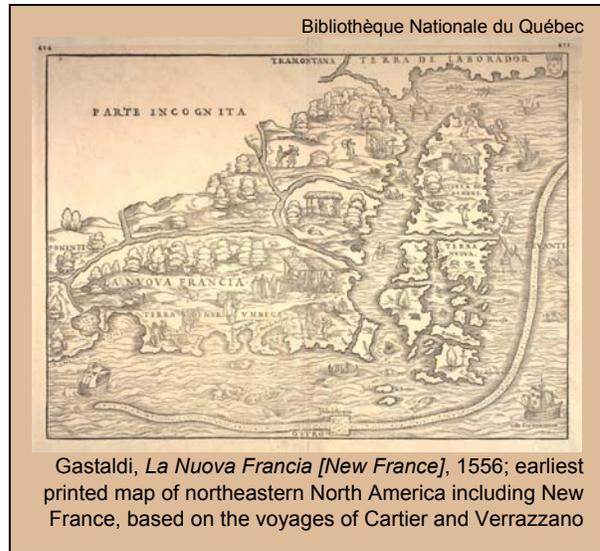
**Of a Great Sickness and Pestilence Which Visited the People of Stadacona,
by Which, for Having Frequented Them, We Were Attacked to Such
an Extent that There Died as Many as Twenty-five of Our Men**

In the month of December we received warning that the pestilence [scurvy] had broken out among the people of Stadacona to such an extent that already, by their own confession, more than fifty persons were dead. Upon this we forbade them to come either to the fort or about us. But notwithstanding we had driven them away, the sickness broke out among us accompanied by most marvelous and extraordinary symptoms; for some lost all their strength, their legs became swollen and inflamed, while the sinews contracted and turned as black as coal. In other cases the legs were found blotched with purple-colored blood. Then the disease would mount to the hips, thighs, shoulders, arms, and neck. And all had their mouths so tainted that the gums rotted away down to the roots of the teeth, which nearly all fell out. The disease spread among the three ships to such an extent that, in the middle of February [1536], of the 110 men forming our company, there were not ten in good health so that no one could aid the other, which was a grievous sight considering the place where we were. . . .

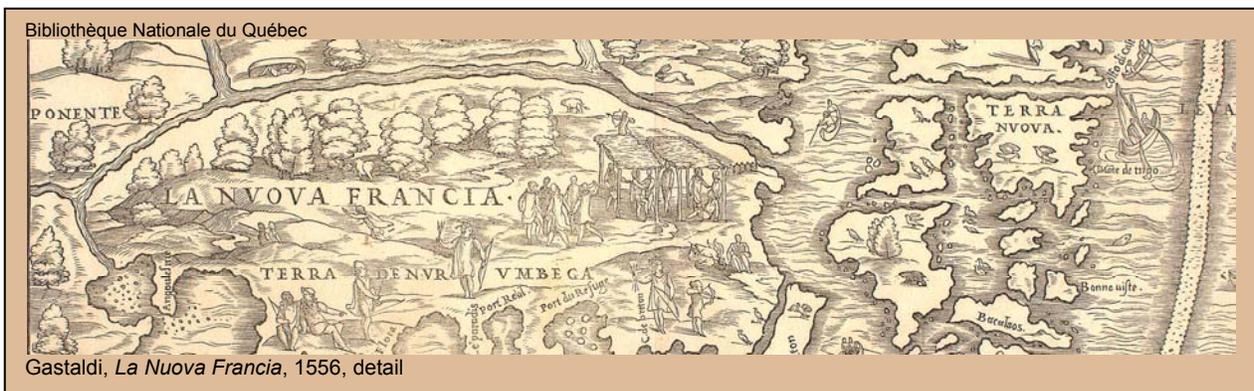
How by God's Grace We Received Knowledge of a Tree Which Cured Us and Gave Back Health to All the Sick; and the Manner of Using It

One day our Captain, seeing the disease so general and his men so stricken down by it, on going outside the fort to walk up and down on the ice, caught sight of a band of people approaching from Stadacona, and among them was Dom Agaya whom he had seen ten or twelve days previous to this, extremely ill with the very disease his own men were suffering from; for one of his legs about the knee had swollen to the size of a two-year-old baby, and the sinews had become contracted. His teeth had gone bad and decayed, and the gums had rotted and become tainted. The Captain, seeing Dom Agaya well and in good health, was delighted, hoping to learn what had healed him in order to cure his own men. And when they had come near the fort, the Captain inquired of him what had cured him of his sickness. Dom Agaya replied that he had been healed by the juice of the leaves of a tree and the dregs of these, and that this was the only way to cure sickness. Upon this the Captain asked him if there was not some of it thereabouts, and to show it to him that he might heal his servant who had caught the disease when staying in Donnacona's house at Canada, being unwilling that he should know how many sailors were ill. Thereupon Dom Agaya sent two women with our Captain to gather some of it; and they brought back nine or ten branches. They showed us how to grind the bark and the leaves and to boil the whole in water. Of this one should drink every two days, and place the dregs on the legs where they were swollen and affected. According to them this tree cured every kind of disease. They call it in their language *Annedda*.⁶

The Captain at once ordered a drink to be prepared for the sick men but none of them would taste it. At length one or two thought they would risk a trial. As soon as they had drunk it they felt better, which must clearly be ascribed to miraculous causes; for after drinking it two or three times they recovered health and strength and were cured of all the diseases they had ever had. And some of the sailors who had been suffering for five or six years from the French pox [syphilis] were by this medicine cured completely. When this became known, there was such a press for the medicine that they almost killed each other to have it first; so that in less than eight days a whole tree as large and as tall as any I ever saw was used up, and produced such a result that had all the doctors of Louvain and Montpellier been there, with all the drugs of Alexandria, they could not have done so much in a year as did this tree in eight days; for it benefited us so much that all who were willing to use it recovered health and strength, thanks be to God.



Gastaldi, *La Nuova Francia* [New France], 1556; earliest printed map of northeastern North America including New France, based on the voyages of Cartier and Verrazzano



Gastaldi, *La Nuova Francia*, 1556, detail

⁶ Mostly likely the Eastern white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*).

**HERE FOLLOWS THE LANGUAGE OF THE COUNTRIES, AND KINGDOMS
OF HOCHELAGA AND CANADA, OTHERWISE CALLED NEW FRANCE***

First Their numerals

<i>Segada</i>	1	<i>Asche</i>	3	<i>Ouyscon</i>	5	<i>Aiaga</i>	7	<i>Wadellon</i>	9
<i>Tigneny</i>	2	<i>Honnacon</i>	4	<i>Judaié</i>	6	<i>Addegué</i>	8	<i>Assem</i>	10

Next the Names of the Different Parts of the Body

head <i>Aggonosy</i>	sides <i>Aissonné</i>
forehead <i>Hetguenyascon</i>	stomach <i>Aggoascon</i>
eyes <i>Hegata</i>	belly <i>Eschehenda</i>
mouth <i>Escahé</i>	thighs <i>Hetnegoadascon</i>
teeth <i>Esgongay</i>	knees <i>Agochinegodascon</i>
tongue <i>Esnache</i>	legs <i>Agouguenehondé</i>
throat <i>Agonhon</i>	feet <i>Ouchidascon</i>
chin <i>Hebbehin</i>	hands <i>Aignoascon</i>
face <i>Hegouascon</i>	fingers <i>Agenoga</i>
hair <i>Aganyscon</i>	nails <i>Agedascon</i>
arms <i>Ayaiascon</i>	phallus <i>Agnascon</i>
armpits <i>Hetnenda</i>	womb <i>Chastaigné</i>

man <i>Aguehan</i>	plums <i>Honnesta</i>	look at me <i>Quatgathoma</i>
woman <i>Aggouetté</i>	grapes <i>Ozaha</i>	silence <i>Aista</i>
boy <i>Addegesta</i>	nuts <i>Quaheya</i>	hatchet <i>Addogué</i>
girl <i>Agnyaquesta</i>	hen <i>Sahonigagoa</i>	bow <i>Ahena</i>
small child <i>Exiasta</i>	salmon <i>Ondaccon</i>	arrow <i>Quahetan</i>
dress <i>Cabata</i>	whale <i>Ajunehonné</i>	feathers <i>Heccon</i>
shoes <i>Atha</i>	squirrel <i>Caiognen</i>	stag <i>Ajonuesta</i>
corn <i>Ozisy</i>	snake <i>Undegnesy</i>	[or <i>Ajonnesta</i>]
bread <i>Carraconny</i>	olives <i>Honocohonda</i>	hare <i>Sonohamda</i>
water <i>Ame</i>	their god <i>Cudonaguy</i>	dog <i>Aggayo</i>
fish <i>Quejon</i>	good day <i>Aigay</i>	Geese <i>Sadeguenda</i>

When they wish to say tomorrow they say *Achidé*
 When they wish to say good-bye to anyone they say *Hedgagnehanyga*

to sing <i>Thegnehooaca</i>	sun <i>Ysnay</i>	mountain <i>Ogacha</i>
to laugh <i>Cahezem</i>	moon <i>Assomaha</i>	ice <i>Honnesca</i>
to cry <i>Agguenda</i>	wind <i>Cahona</i>	snow <i>Canysa</i>
to dance <i>Thegoaca</i>	sea <i>Agougasy</i>	cold <i>Athau</i>
heavens <i>Quemhya</i>	sea waves <i>Coda</i>	hot <i>Odayan</i>

Many thanks <i>Adgnyeusce</i>	Whence come you? <i>Canada undagneny</i>
My friend <i>Aguiase</i>	Where had he gone? <i>Quanehoesnon</i>
The smoke hurts my eyes <i>Quea quanoagné egata</i>	Shut the door <i>Asnodyan</i>
They call a town <i>Canada</i>	Go and fetch someone <i>Achidascoué</i>
When they wish to insult anyone they call him <i>agojuda</i> which means bad and treacherous	When a person is so old that he can no longer walk they call him <i>Agondesta</i>
Walk along <i>Quedaqué</i>	When they wish to make an exclamation they say <i>Aggondée</i>

* Presented here is a selection of the 194 words and phrases in the dictionary.