



BOOK RELEASE

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Peskotomuhkati Wolastoqewi Latuwewakon A Passamaquoddy-Maliseet Dictionary

David A. Francis and Robert M. Leavitt

“A sacred bundle containing ancestral teachings, values, beliefs, and worldviews. . . . A ‘language bank’ complete with savings, investments and assets for present and future generations.” — Imelda and David Perley

This dictionary of Passamaquoddy-Maliseet, an aboriginal language spoken in New Brunswick and Maine, is the result of more than thirty years of collaboration among native speakers, educators, and linguists. The first of its kind in Canada, the volume contains more than 18,000 entries over 1,200 pages, including a comprehensive English index that will guide readers to discover shades of meaning and to better understand pronunciation and grammatical structure.

This unprecedented book is, in many ways, more than a dictionary. An important cultural document, it contains detailed knowledge of the physical, intellectual, social, spiritual, and emotional environments of the Maliseet and Passamaquoddy people. Sample sentences, taken from both oral tradition and contemporary conversation, reveal details of Passamaquoddy-Maliseet thought and culture, personal attitudes, and humour, as well as a linguistic ingenuity.

David A. Francis is fluent in both English and his native Passamaquoddy. After serving in the US Army in World War II, he returned to Sipayik, in eastern Maine, where he served a term as tribal governor and later was Community Action Program director, housing commissioner, and language curator and translator at the tribe’s Waponahki Museum and Resource Center.

Robert M. Leavitt began working with the Passamaquoddy language in the 1970s and first met David A. Francis when he was curriculum developer for the Passamaquoddy bilingual education program at Indian Township. He was a professor at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, where he was director of the Mi’kmaq-Maliseet Institute for fourteen years. He has written extensively about the Passamaquoddy-Maliseet language, culture, and history, often in collaboration with David A. Francis.

— 30 —

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