

Wyandotte Language 101 - Barbeau's phonetic chart

Marius Barbeau used what he called "*Phonetic signs*" to record on paper the various sounds he heard spoken while interviewing Wyandotte speakers of 1911-1912. His chart of Phonetic symbols is useful to recreate the actual *sound* of the language. His records are probably the most reliable collection of the language we have. I think it might be important to add that there is no evidence to suggest Barbeau had intentions of designing a written language for Wyandottes to use. The language "*wandat*", as he heard it was dying, being replaced by English in Michigan, Oklahoma and Kansas. Accurate historical preservation seemed to be his main concern. Though it has been noted that he was more anthropologist than linguist, he *was* a perfectionist, and noted everything he heard, every sound, every inflection, and recorded it all to the best of his ability.

The following charts are taken from his own handwritten dictionary page 485 (i'm leaving out the upside down letters seldom seen or used).

Barbeau's Phonetic Signs

vowels

	<u>as in French</u>	<u>as in English</u>
<i>a</i>	<i>parade</i>	<i>mat</i> (American English version - <i>latte</i>)
<i>e</i>	<i>é</i>	<i>cave</i>
<i>ε</i>	<i>è</i>	<i>pet</i>
<i>i</i>	<i>i</i>	<i>fit</i>
<i>o</i>	<i>vos</i>	<i>owe</i>

nasalized vowels

<i>ə̃</i>	<i>marchand</i>	<u><i>jaunt</i></u> (underlined words here are my examples)
<i>ε̃</i>	<i>vin</i>	<u><i>tent</i></u> and even <u><i>paint</i></u>
<i>ɨ</i>	(no example given)	
<i>ɔ̃</i>	<i>bon</i>	<u><i>song</i></u>
<i>ʉ</i>		<i>loom</i>

semivowels

<i>w</i>	<i>wine</i>
<i>y</i>	<i>yes</i>

continuation of Barbeaus Phonetic signs:

Consonants

	<u>as in French</u>	<u>as in English</u>	<u>we now use</u>
<i>c</i>	<i>chat</i>	<i>she</i>	š
<i>j</i>	<i>jamais</i>		ž
<i>s</i>		<i>sit</i>	
<i>t</i>	<i>followed by a slight aspiration t'</i>		
<i>d</i>	<i>followed by a slight aspiration d' often preceded by a weak n ("nd")</i>		
<i>k</i>		<i>key</i>	
<i>g</i>	<i>g followed by a y often preceded by a weak n</i>		gy
<i>ḳ</i>	<i>k followed by a y</i>		ky
<i>ḍ</i>	<i>d followed by a y</i>		
<i>m</i>	<i>same as english and french</i>		
<i>n</i>	<i>same as english and french</i>		
<i>ñ</i>	<i>same as in Spanish</i>		ny
<i>r</i>			
<i>ɾ</i>	<i>deep palatal r</i>		
<i>h</i>	<i>aspiration followed by a vowel</i>	<i>hat</i>	
<i>ž</i>	<i>for dz</i>		
<i>ǰ</i>	<i>for dj</i>		

superior (smaller) letters indicate very brief and unvoiced consonants and vowels, or whispered syllables, fairly common in Cayuga and occasionally Onandaga.

a ạ e ẹ ξ i o u n n̄ ε ọ ε̣ η ñ w y s ʼ

example: *n̄dātráʼ, ạskwǐjùʼ, undiʼ*

diacritical marks

- ʼ glottal stop as in *n̄gáʼ, ạwic* (because of the echo vowel here i call this a glottal catch)
- ˘ breathing after a vowel or consonant (or before a consonant) (we now use the "h") as in *ạc̣ε̣ḳ*
- ˊ over a vowel shows the main stress or accent. It usually coincides with a rising pitch
- ˋ minor or weaker accent (we don't use except for reference)
- an inverted period after a vowel indicates that it is long as *d'ǐyó·tε'*
- ˘ over a vowel makes it brief as in *těhat*
unmarked vowels are of medium length