

AMERICAN LANGUAGE
REPRINTS

VOL. 6

A
VOCABULARY
OF
TUSCARORA

compiled by
John Lawson



Evolution Publishing
Southampton, Pennsylvania.

Reprinted from:

John Lawson. 1709. *A New Voyage to Carolina*. London.

This edition ©1998 by
Evolution Publishing and Manufacturing,
Southampton, Pennsylvania.

This book was electronically typeset and printed on
archival quality 24 lb. paper.

Manufactured in the
United States of America

ISBN 0-9644234-9-9

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Lawson, John, d. 1712.

[New voyage to Carolina. Selections.]

A vocabulary of Tuscarora / compiled by John Lawson.

p. cm. -- (American language reprints ; vol. 6)

English and Tuscarora.

Originally published in 1709 in the author's *A new voyage to Carolina*.

Includes bibliographical references (p.).

ISBN 0-9644234-9-9

1. Tuscarora language--Dictionaries--English. 2. English
language--Dictionaries--Tuscarora. I. Title. II. Series.

PM2501.Z5L382 1998

497'.55--dc21

98-6752

CIP

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Preface to the 1998 Edition

Tuscarora is an Iroquoian language originally spoken in the coastal plain of what is now eastern North Carolina, centering on an inland area between the Roanoke and Neuse rivers. Despite its southerly geographic position relative to the other Iroquoian languages in the eastern Great Lakes region, Tuscarora is a member of the Northern branch of the Iroquoian linguistic family, within which Tuscarora and the related Nottoway form a distinct sub-group as opposed to the languages of the Five Nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca), Huron and others. The table on page 33 shows the classification of the Iroquoian languages as generally understood today.

In the early historical Carolinas, Tuscarora seems to have served as a kind of lingua franca or common language which linguistically disparate tribes used in communicating with each other. No doubt the political influence of the Tuscaroras contributed to such a prestige, since they were by far the most numerous and powerful tribe of the region, with an estimated 1200 to 2000 fighting men in at least 15 villages.

The Tuscarora words featured in this volume are taken from the 1709 “New Voyage to Carolina” of John Lawson. Lawson was no linguist in the modern sense of the term, but as an English surveyor making expeditions into Indian lands, he had occasion to compile and publish linguistic data which is still immensely valuable to linguists today.

In addition to giving the earliest documentation of Tuscarora, Lawson gives the only known examples of two nearby and unrelated languages: Woccon in the Siouan linguistic family and Pampticoke (Pamlico) in the Algonquian linguistic family. In the study of North Carolina linguistics and antiquities, therefore, Lawson is a very important source; but the information he gathered eventually cost him his life when he was captured and executed by the Tuscarora during an expedition in 1711.

Lawson's original three-language vocabulary appeared in the form of a table, with the English on the left followed by the Tuscarora, Pamlico and Woccon terms in separate columns. The vocabularies are each of uneven length. The Tuscarora column contains the most words with a total of 188, including one word, *tsaure*, which is not listed in the column itself but appears in the text immediately following (as reprinted in the excerpt on page 7 and following). Vocabularies at this early date were not, after all, collected for linguistic interest (such purely scientific curiosity became common in later centuries) but were usually conceived for the more practical aim of aiding communication between settlers and Indians. It follows rather naturally that a person recording such vocabularies would expend most of their efforts toward those languages that were most likely to be used, and also place greater emphasis on those terms which would most likely be needed for treaties and trading.

As stated in the 1709 edition, the vocabulary was not originally "alphabetically digested," but was organized more or less topically. In this new edition, the original arrange-

ment of 1709 has been done away with in favor of two alphabetized lists in both Tuscarora-English and English-Tuscarora sections.

Lawson's method of transcribing Tuscarora follows English spelling conventions, and he does not use any diacritics or invented letters, so the word-forms therefore need no special comment. However, some of the letters of the original printing are occasionally indistinct due to ink bleeds, particularly the italic characters *a*, *e* and *o*. For this edition, such indistinct letters were magnified and carefully analyzed and the proper transcriptions restored. When contrasted with modern Tuscarora vocabularies differences are evident, perhaps due to some extent to the age of the data, but also due in part to Lawson's imperfect knowledge of its phonology. Analyses of Lawson's vocabulary words, seen through the lens of Hewitt's data, can be found among the entries in Rudes (1987).

In their later history, the Tuscaroras, like many other tribes in Eastern North America, had migrated extensively. Their devastating loss to the English and Yamasee Indians in the Tuscarora Wars (1711-1713) ended their political predominance in the Carolina region, and by about 1722 they had moved north to join the Five Nations Iroquois Confederacy, which subsequently became the Six Nations.

Other Tuscarora vocabularies continued to be gathered throughout the 1800's, increasing the available data on the language. Also, since Tuscarora continued to be spoken well into the 1900's, it has been recorded with the benefits of modern linguistic techniques, hence with greater thoroughness and accuracy than we can expect from the earlier

sources. J.N.B. Hewitt (1859-1937), a member of the Tuscarora Reservation in Lewiston, New York, left a vast quantity of well-written texts in the language in both manuscript and published form, which have recently been edited and published (Rudes 1987; Rudes and Crouse, 1987). At the close of the twentieth century there are but a handful of fluent speakers left, but these are all elderly and one expects the language to become extinct sometime in the next century.

— Claudio R. Salvucci, series ed.

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Excerpt from: An Account of the Indians Of North Carolina

The difference of languages, that is found amongst these Heathens, seems altogether strange. For it often appears, that every dozen Miles, you meet with an Indian Town, that is quite different from the others you last parted withal; and what a little supplies this defect is, that the most powerful nation of these Savages scorns to treat or trade with any others (of fewer Numbers and less Power) in any other Tongue but their own, which serves for the *Lingua* of the Country, with which we travel and deal; as for Example, we see that the Tuskeruro's are most numerous in North-Carolina, therefore their Tongue is understood by some in every Town of all the Indians near us. And here I shall insert a small Dictionary of every tongue, though not Alphabetically digested...

To repeat more of this Indian jargon, would be to trouble the Reader, and as an Account how imperfect they are in their Moods and Tenses, has been given by several already, I shall only add, that their Languages or Tongues are so deficient, that you cannot suppose the *Indians* ever could express themselves in such a Flight of Stile, as Authors would have you believe. They are so far from it, that they are but just able to make one another understand readily what they talk about. As for the two Consonants *L* and *F*, I never knew them in any Indian Speech I have met withal; yet I must tell you, that they have such a Way of

abbreviating their Speech, when in their great Councils and Debates, that the young Men do not understand what they treat about, when they hear them argue. It is wonderful, what has occasion'd so many different Speeches as the Savages have. The three Nations I now mention'd, do not live above ten leagues distant, and two of them, *viz.* the *Tuskeruro's* and the *Woccon*, are not two Leagues asunder; yet their Speech differs in every Word thereof, except one, which is *Tsaure*, cockles, which is in both tongues the same, and nothing else. Now this Difference of Speech causes Jealousies and Fears amongst them, which bring Wars, wherein they destroy one another; otherwise the Christians had not (in all Probability) settled *America* so easily, at they have done, had these Tribes of Savages united themselves into one People or general Interest, or were they so but every hundred Miles. In short, they are an odd sort of People under the Circumstances they are at present, and have some such uncouth Ways in their Management and Course of Living, that it seems a Miracle to us, how they bring about their Designs, as they do, when their Ways are commonly quite contrary to ours. I believe, they are (as to this Life) a very happy People, and were it not for the Feuds amongst themselves, they would enjoy the happiest State (in this World) of all Mankind. They met with Enemies when we came amongst them; for they are no nearer Christianity now, than they were at the first Discovery, to all Appearance. They have learned several Vices of the *Europeans*, but not one Vertue, as I know of. Drunkenness was a Stranger, when we found them out, and Swearing their Speech cannot express; yet those that

speaking *English*, learn to swear the first thing they talk of. It's true, they have some Vertues and some Vices; but how the Christians can bring these People into the Bosom of the Church, is a Proposal that ought to be form'd and follow'd by the wisest Heads and best Christians. After I have given one Remark or two farther, of some of their strange Practices and Notions, I will give my Opinion, how I think, in probability, it may be (if possible) effected, and so shall conclude this Treatise of *Carolina*.

John Lawson, 1709.

TUSCARORA — ENGLISH

Acaunque, *snow*.

A hots, *a horse*.

Ahunt wackena, *a river*.

Au-hoohaha, *goose*.

Auhuntwood, *rain*.

Auk-noc, *gun*.

Au-nuka, *axe*.

Auoonau hau, *moss*.

Awoo, *water*.

Cauhauweana, *wildcat-skin*.

Cauna, *shot*.

Cauna, *a reed*.

Caunerex, *panther-skin*.

Caunotka, *brother*.

Caw-hunshe, *black, blue*.

Chac-kauene, *mink*.

Charho, *tobacco*.

Chauh-noc, *seven*.

Chaunoc, *otter*.

Che-chou, *fox-skin*.

Cheecq;, *a louse*.

Cheek-ha, *salt*.

Cheeth, *a dog*.

Cheh-ra, *scissors and tobacco-tongues*.

Che-ra, *a possum*.

Chinqua, *a stick*.

Chu-teche, *peak* [i.e. wampum(peag), —ed.]

Connaugh jost twane, *all the Indians are drunk.*

Connauwox, *I am sick.*

Con-noowa, *woman.*

Coona, *turkey.*

Cosserunte, *mad.*

Cotcheroore, *angry.*

Cotcoo, *dressed skin.*

Cotcoo-rea, *red.*

Cotquerre, *hominy.*

Cotshau, *give it to me.*

Cuhn-na, *an eel.*

Cunshe, *fish.*

Cusquerre, *old woman.*

Ee, *I.*

Eets, *thou.*

Entequos, *a man.*

Heigta, *a pine-tree.*

Heita, *sun or moon.*

Hoonoch, *wind.*

Hothooka, *northwest wind.*

Houeyoc, *six.*

Its warko, *go you.*

Jureha, *tomorrow.*

Ka, *there*.

Kahunk, *now*.

Kakoo, *lightwood*. [i.e. kindling. —ed.]

Kakoowa, *a little while ago*.

Kateocca, *wife*.

Katichei, *a thief or rogue*.

Kawa, *today*.

Kawhitchra, *coat*.

Kihoosocca, *a cubit length*.

Ki you se, *thousand*.

Kooawa, *acorns*.

Merrauka, *I forget it*.

Nauh-houreot, *ronoak* [i.e. wampum(peag) —ed.]

Nauocq;, *a flea*.

Necte, *two*.

Nectec scaukhau, *twelve*.

Nec-kara, *eight*.

Nickreruroh, *Englishman*.

Occoohawa, *old man*.

Ocnock, *a pot*.

Ocques, *buckskin*.

Ohs-sah, *three*.

Ooanoo, *a box*.

Oochehara, *bear-skin*.

Ooethnat, *ears*.

Oohunawa, *a rundlet.*
Oonaha, *corn.*
Oonaquitchra, *a comb.*
Oonaquod, *rum.*
Oona-teste, *belt.*
Oonave, *corn.*
Ooneck, *a cake baked.*
Oon est nonne it quost, *don't lose it.*
Oonutsauka, *I remember it.*
Ooratsa, *a Jew's harp.*
Oorewa, *blankets.*
Oorhast, *a swan.*
Oo-ross-soo, *shoes.*
Oosare, *corn.*
Oose-waure, *awl, needle.*
Oosha, *corn.*
Ooshunnawa, *a canoe.*
Oosnooqua, *feathers.*
Oosocke nauh, *knife.*
Oosottoo, *night.*
Oosquaana, *a tobacco-pipe.*
Oos-skinna, *a fishhook.*
Ootahawa, *raw skin undressed.*
Ootauh-ne, *day.*
Ootaure, *a head.*
Oo-teighne, *smoke.*
Oo-teste, *gun-lock.*
Ootic caught-ne, *a mortar.*

Ootocnare, *bread.*
Ootosne, *fishgig.*
Ootsaure, *fat.*
Oousotto, *yesterday.*
Oowaara, *hair.*
Oowaiana, *a kettle.*
Oowissera, *stockings.*
Ooyaura, *basket.*
Ooyethne, *a mat.*
Ortse, *a bowl.*
Ossa te wartsau, *thirty.*
Ottea, *fawn-skin.*
Ouch-whe, *five.*
Oughquere, *a spoon.*
Ough-tre's, *shirt.*
Oukhaure, *a flap.*
Ou-kn, *gunpowder.*
Oukwockaninniwock, *Englishman is thirsty.*
Ou-negh-ra, *flints.*
Ounouse, *house.*
Ous-sarunt, *a cow.*
Ouswox, *coat.*
Ouyunkgue, *wood.*

Quaunt, *paint.*
Quottis, *young man.*

Roo-ooe, *peaches.*

Roo-sotto, *raccoon-skin.*

Rootau, *hickory nuts.*

Rootau-ooe, *walnuts.*

Rouare cou, *a crab.*

Rusquiane, *a rat.*

Saugh-he, *peas.*

Sooeau, *a duck.*

Sost, *squirrel-skin.*

Squarrena, *wolf.*

Teethha, *a king.*

Tic-caugh-ne, *a pestle.*

Tic-hah, *a button.*

Tnotsaurauweek, *let it alone.*

Trossa, *hat.*

Tsaure, *cockles.*

Unche, *one.*

Unche scauwhau, *eleven.*

Unqua, *Indians.*

Unta hah, *will you go along with me?*

Untateawa, *how far?*

Untoc, *four.*

Untone, *potatoes.*

Untuch, *rain.*

Us-quauh-ne, *a snake.*

Utchaawa, *a gourd or bottle.*

Utchar, *fire.*
Ut chat, *that's all.*
Utquera, *a turd.*
Utquichra, *a cable.*
Utsauwanne, *soft.*
Utsera, *a rope.*
Utsera utquichra, *small ropes.*
Utsererauh, *alligator.*
Utserosta, *infant.*
Utta-ana-wox, *have you got anything to eat?*
Uttaqua, *a bag.*
Uttena, *a fart.*
Uttewiraratse, *a star.*
Ut-tewots, *how many?*

Wackena, *a creek.*
Wahunshe, *breeches.*
Ware-occa, *white.*
Wariaugh, *a boy.*
Wartsau, *ten.*
Wartsau scauhau, *twenty.*
Watsquerre, *swine.*
Wattattoo watse, *a lazy fellow.*
Wauche-wocnoc, *a hoe.*
Waucots ne, *hard or heavy.*
Wauh-hauhne, *a path.*
Wausthanocha, *I will sell you goods very cheap.*
Wauwock-hook, *day.*

Way haushe, *stockings.*

Wearah, *nine.*

Werricauna, *afraid.*

Whaharia, *dead.*

Woccanookne, *a child.*

Youch se, *hundred.*

ENGLISH — TUSCARORA

Acorns, *kooawa*.
Afraid, *werricauna*.
All, that's all, *ut chat*.
Alligator, *utsererauh*.
Angry, *cotcheroore*.
Awl, *oose-waure*.
Axe, *au-nuka*.

Bag, *uttaqua*.
Basket, *ooyaura*.
Bear-skin, *oochehara*.
Belt, *oona-teste*.
Black, *caw-hunshe*.
Blankets, *oorewa*.
Blue, *caw-hunshe*.
Bottle, *utchaawa*.
Bowl, *ortse*.
Box, *ooanoo*.
Boy, *wariaugh*.
Bread, *ootocnare*.
Breeches, *wahunshe*.
Broth, *ook-hoo*.
Brother, *caunotka*.
Buckskin, *ocques*.
Button, *tic-hah*.

Cable, *utquichra*.
Cake, baked, *ooneck*.

Canoe, *ooshunnawa*.

Child, *woccanookne*.

Coat, *ouswox*; *kawhitchra*.

Cockles, *tsaure*.

Comb, *oonaquitchra*.

Corn, *oonaha*; *oonave*; *oosare*; *oosha*.

Cow, *ous-sarunt*.

Crab, *rouare cou*.

Creek, *wackena*.

Cubit length, *kihoosocca*.

Day, *ootauh-ne*; *wauwoc-hook*.

Dead, *whaharia*.

Dog, *cheeth*.

Dressed-skin, *cotcoo*.

Drunk, all the Indians are, *connaugh jost twane*.

Duck, *soeau*.

Ears, *ooethnat*.

Eat, have you got anything to, *utta-ana-wox*.

Eel, *cuhn-na*.

Eight, *nes-kara*.

Eleven, *unche scauw hau*.

Englishman, nickreruroh. Englishman is thirsty,
oukwockaninniwock.

Fart, *uttena*.

Fat, *ootsaure*.

Fawn-skin, *ottea*.

Feathers, *oosnooqua*.

Fire, *utchar*.

Fish, *cunshe*.

Fishgig, *ootosne*.

Fishhook, *oos-skinna*.

Five, *ouch-whe*.

Flap, a, *oukhaure*.

Flea, *nauocq*;

Flints, *ou-negh-ra*.

Forget, I forget it, *merrauka*.

Four, *untoc*.

Fox-skin, *che-chou*.

Give it to me, *cotshau*.

Go, you, its warko. Will you go along with me, *unta hah*.

Goose, *au-hoohaha*.

Gourd, *utchaawa*.

Gun, *auk-noc*.

Gun-lock, *oo-teste*.

Gunpowder, *ou-kn*.

Hair, *oowaara*.

Hard, *waucots ne*.

Hat, *trossa*.

Have you got anything to eat, *utta-ana-wox*.

Head, *ootaure*.

Heavy, *waucots ne*.

Hickory nuts, *rootau*.

Hoe, *wauche-wocnoc*.

Hominy, *cotquerre*.

Horse, *a hots*.

House, *ounouse*.

How far, *untateawa*.

How many, *ut-tewots*.

Hundred, *youch se*.

I, *ee*.

Indians, *unqua*.

Infant, *utserosta*.

Jew's harp, *ooratsa*.

Kettle, *oowaiana*.

Kindling, *kakoo*.

King, *teethha*.

Knife, *oosocke nauh*.

Lazy fellow, *wattattoo watse*.

Let it alone, *tnotsaurauweek*.

Lightwood, *kakoo*.

Lose, don't lose it, *oon est nonne it quost*.

Louse, *cheecq;*.

Mad, *cosserunte*.

Man, *entequos*. **Old man**, *occoohawa*. **Young man**,
quottis.

Mat, *ooyethne*.
Mink, *chac-kauene*.
Moon, *heita*.
Mortar, *ootic caught-ne*.
Moss, *auoona hau*.

Needle, *oose-waure*.
Night, *oosottoo*.
Nine, *wearah*.
Northwest-wind, *hothooka*.
Now, *kahunk*.
Nuts, *hickory, rootau*.

One, *unche*.
Otter, *chaunoc*.

Paint, *quaunt*.
Panther-skin, *caunerex*.
Path, *wauh-hauhne*.
Peaches, *roo-ooe*.
Peak, *chu-teche*.
Peas, *saugh-he*.
Pestle, *tic-caught-ne*.
Pipe, *tobacco, oosquaana*.
Pine-tree, *heigta*.
Possum, *che-ra*.
Pot, *a, ocnock*.
Potatoes, *untone*.

Raccoon-skin, *roo-sotto*.

Rain, *untuch; auhuntwood*.

Rat, *rusquiane*.

Red, *cotcoo-rea*.

Reed, *cauna*.

Remember, I remember it, *oonutsauka*.

River, *ahunt wackena*.

Rogue, *katichhei*.

Ronoak, *nauh-houreot*.

Rope, *utsera*. **Small ropes**, *utsera utquichra*.

Rum, *oonaquod*.

Runlet, *oohunawa*.

Salt, *cheek-ha*.

Scissors, *cheh-ra*.

Sell, I will sell you goods very cheap, *wausthanocha*.

Seven, *chauh-noc*.

Shirt, *ough-tre's*.

Shoes, *oo-ross-soo*.

Shot, *cauna*.

Sick, I am, *connauwox*.

Six, *houeyoc*.

Skin, raw and undressed, *ootahawa*. **Buckskin**, *ocques*.

Dressed skin, *cotcoo*. **Fawn-skin**, *ottea*. **Bear-skin**, *oochehara*. **Fox-skin**, *che-chou*. **Raccoon-skin**, *roo-sotto*. **Squirrel-skin**, *sost*. **Wildcat-skin**, *cauhauweana*.

Panther-skin, *caunerex*.

Smoke, *oo-teighne*.

Snake, *us-quauh-ne*.
Snow, *acaunque*.
Soft, *utsauwanne*.
Spoon, *oughquere*.
Squirrel-skin, *sost*.
Star, *uttewiraratse*.
Stick, *chinqua*.
Stockings, *way haushe; oowissera*.
Sun, *heita*.
Swan, *oorhast*.
Swine, *watsquerre*.

Ten, *wartsauh*.
There, *ka*.
Thief, *katicchhei*.
Thirsty, Englishman is, *oukwockaninniwock*.
Thirty, *ossa te wartsau*.
Thou, *eets*.
Thousand, *ki you se*.
Three, *ohs-sah*.
Tobacco, *charho*.
Tobacco pipe, *oosquaana*.
Tobacco-tongues, *ch eh-ra*.
Today, *kawa*.
Tomorrow, *jureha*.
Turd, *utquera*.
Turkey, *coona*.
Twelve, *nectec scaukhau*.

Twenty, *wartsau scauhau*.

Two, *necte*.

Walnuts, *rootau-ooe*.

Wampum, see **peak** and **ronoak**.

Water, *awoo*.

While, a little while ago, *kakoowa*.

White, *ware-occa*.

Wife, *kateocca*.

Wildcat-skin, *cauhauweana*.

Wind, *hoonoch*. **Northwest-wind**, *hothooka*.

Wolf, *squarrena*.

Woman, *con-noowa*. **Old woman**, *cusquerre*.

Wood, *ouyungue*.

Yesterday, *ousotto*.

You, *eets*.

Numerical Table

1. Unche	9. Wearah
2. Necte	10. Wartsauh
3. Ohs-sah	11. Unche scauwhau
4. Untoc	12. Nectec scaukhau
5. Ouch-whe	20. Wartsau scauhau
6. Houeyoc	30. Ossa te wartsau
7. Chauh-noc	100. Youch se
8. Nes-kara	1000. Ki you se

CLASSIFICATION OF THE IROQUOIAN LANGUAGES

NORTHERN IROQUOIAN

Tuscarora-Nottoway

Tuscarora

Nottoway

Huronian (?)

Huron

Wyandot

Laurentian

Five Nations-Susquehannock

Seneca

Cayuga

Onondaga

Susquehannock

Mohawk

Oneida

SOUTHERN IROQUOIAN

Cherokee

Sources: Lounsbury 1978, Goddard 1996, Foster 1996.