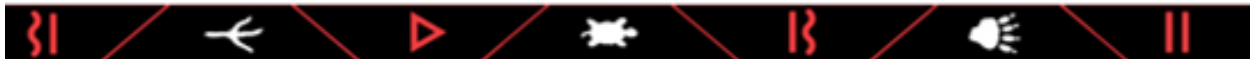
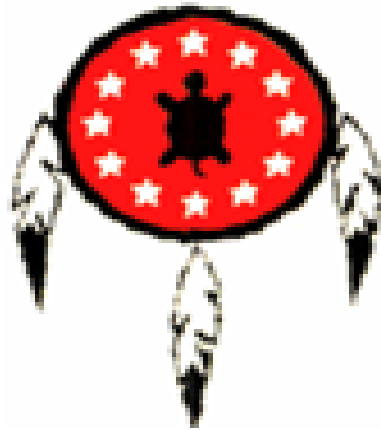


*The Lenape Living In West Vincent Township –  
A Story of Long Ago, Yesterday, and Today*



## ***Dedication***

In Fall 2022, West Vincent Township will open our newest preserved land, Opalanie Park. *West Vincent Township respectfully acknowledges that Opalanie Park is situated on the Lenapehoking, the ancestral and spiritual homeland of the Lenape Unami. We honor and appreciate the Lenape people who are the original Indigenous Caretakers of this land.*

Opalanie is the Lenape word for the bald eagle. The Opalanie, considered sacred and the chief of all birds by the Lenape, is honored, cared for and shown the deepest respect. A symbol of freedom, truth, and wisdom, they signify integrity, loyalty, and devotion to the spiritual world in which we live.

Eagle feathers are believed to carry strong medicines and guide the mind, body and spirit towards courage, strength, and hope. To be fanned or touched by an eagle feather is considered a blessing. Traditionally, the large black and white eagle feathers were given to denote honor and bravery. The feathers are worn with dignity and pride.

Seeing the majestic bald eagle nesting nearby and soaring high over Opalanie Park is a magnificent sight. Much like the descendents of the Lenape, the revered Opalanie have endured challenges over many centuries. They both never left and are still alive and well here in this beautiful environment called West Vincent.

## *Acknowledgements*

When asked if I would like to research the history of the Lenape in West Vincent Township, I didn't hesitate to say *yes!* Little did I think about the fact that the history of the Lenape goes back 12000 years. Four hundred years of documented history of Chester County is very recent versus 12000 years of the little history documented by or about the Lenape— the Indigenous people of the Lenapehoking. So it's taken me longer than I thought to write this history paper. I hope I have captured all the significant details and cultural contributions made to our society and the environment by the Lenape.

A Special *Thank You!* to Adam Waterbear DePaul, Lenape Tribal Council Member and Storykeeper, for his presentations and direction to key information sources which tell the true historical stories of our shared West Vincent heritage.

Thank you to Dawn Marsh, author of *A Lenape Among the Quakers; The Life of Hannah Freeman (2014)*. This book, with numerous specific citations supporting her story, provided a comprehensive historical account of Hannah Freeman (~1720-1802), a Lenape woman and her family living with the colonists near the Brandywine Creek in Chester County during the 1700s. Dawn Marsh conveyed the facts and appreciation for the Lenape culture: a simple existence, adaptive to change, strong resiliency, forever optimistic, with a sincere oneness and respect for the environment and its creatures. Plus values and traditions shared with the Chester County Colonists: spiritualism, reciprocity and search for economic opportunities, and a desire for peaceful solutions.

And appreciation for the in-depth writings of Paul A. Wallace, Estelle Cremers, John R. Norwood, Marshall Becker, Elizabeth Eldridge, Samuel Pennypacker, the staff at the Chester County History Center (CCHC) and Archives, and all the others that have answered my emails documenting tidbits of history through orally told stories handed down through the generations.

*Barbara Quinter*  
*May 2022*

*Prepared for the West Vincent Township Historical Commission and Dedication of Opananie Park*

## ***The Lenape Living In West Vincent Township – A Story of Long Ago, Yesterday, and Today***

*“West Vincent Township was originally a wildly beautiful and rugged area covered with magnificent forests and with countless fast moving streams.”—Elizabeth C. Eldridge*

**Long Ago** before European settlers set foot on this continent, Indigenous people lived on this land we now call West Vincent Township. Numerous archaeological studies over the years have found artifacts which date back to three periods: the Paleo-Indian (~16,000 to 10,000 years before present), the Archaic (~10,000 to 3000 BP), and the Woodland (~3000 BP to European contact in the early 17th century). Throughout this long history, the Indigenous inhabitants were resilient people overcoming life’s obstacles while adapting to environmental and social changes. These original “Keepers of the Land” were sustained by the land and were experts at maintaining a natural balance within their overall universe. Today, The Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania continues to advocate for a harmonious interaction between humans and the natural environment through education and conservation. And by preserving natural lands in West Vincent Township, we share in the idea that when humans, animals, plants, and all nature cooperate it brings about a balanced and harmonious universe. With the opening of West Vincent Township’s Opalanie Park, we offer a new place to appreciate the natural world which the Lenape and all of us are a part of to this day.

### ***The Lenape “Original Persons” – The Original Caretakers of West Vincent***

Following the Ice Age around 10,000 BP, the climate began to warm and the glaciers receded. By 9000 BP a more diverse, deciduous forest emerged supporting a wider variety of animal life, and thus, greater populations of Indigenous peoples. Some archaeologists suggest that the native population of Pennsylvania increased five-fold during this the Archaic Period. The Woodland period (~3000 BP), with a climate much like it is today, evolved with the introduction of new technologies and agricultural development. The Indigenous people transitioned though the climate changes. Villages became larger, more permanent and structured. Life became more centered around a village as opposed to the former nomadic way of life. Extensive trade networks were developed and materials were acquired from all over the North American continent, called “Turtle Island” by the Lenape. New foods including corn, beans, squash, and tobacco were introduced to the area from Mexico and southwest North America. While socially transitioning, evolving technology also emerged. New projectile points for hunting and stone toolkits have been found at archaeological sites throughout Pennsylvania. Pottery types and decorations had distinctive styles suggesting the establishment of group territories. There have been a few archaeological investigations of prehistoric sites in West Vincent Township and surrounding townships confirming habitation by Indigenous people during these three prehistoric periods and into the Colonial Era.

## ***The Pre-Contact/Late Woodland Period (~1000AD to 1600AD) — The Lenape before the Coming of the Europeans***

*“They lived here and did not spoil its natural resources.” —Harry Wilson, PA Archeology*

The Lenape or Delaware (as later named by the English), are the original inhabitants of Northern Delaware, New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania, and Southern New York. The land of the Lenape, “The Lenapehoking”, was a very resource rich, forested environment with good soil for crops and ample wood for housing and fires. It was a complex ecosystem of wildlife and plants for food as well as a network of connecting waterways, rivers and tributaries which led to the Delaware Bay and ultimately on to the Atlantic Ocean. The Lenapehoking provided food, water, and shelter, a solid foundation that ensured survival.

The Lenape of this time were independent people known as peacemakers and mediators as well as fierce warriors when necessary. Settlements were mainly small autonomous communities of 20-30 people with each family tending their individual fields and utilizing their own hunting, fishing and gathering territory. During the summer planting season until harvest, communities were located close to intersections of tributaries and rivers situated on a slope near a spring. Nearby land was cleared for growing crops such as “The Three Sisters”—groupings of maize/corn, beans and squash. For the winter months, they broke into smaller family groups and migrated through the open lands to more densely wooded areas for hunting deer. As Adam Waterbear DePaul of the Lenape Nation of PA explains, “The Native Americans concept is of being one with the land and the environment not owning the land.”

The Lenape traded amongst themselves, grew crops, hunted, fished, crafted tools, and worshipped a single deity, “The Great Spirit”. Egalitarian (deserving of equal rights and opportunities) and democratic, the Lenape society had a matrilineal structure in which women held equal status with men. They had little organized cohesion between communities and no conception of organized labor on a large scale. They lived in villages of many one-family, dome-shaped, bark-houses that were made of a framework of young cut trees with the bases buried in the ground and with the tops bent over and tied together. The frames were then covered with sheets of bark, usually elm or chestnut. Settlements were generally surrounded by wood fencing with gardens nearby. Every ten or so years, when wildlife and soil were depleted, the communities would shift to a new area not far from their original camp allowing the prior location to rejuvenate. Fields were burned to fertilize the soil thus making animal tracking easier and thinning out of invasive plants restored a healthy balance to the ecosystem. The bark-houses were simplistic in design to facilitate migration. The Lenape are respectful of all nature that shares the land. The Lenape had extensive and intimate knowledge of the seasons, weather, soils, and the celestial constellations to determine the time to plant, harvest, hunt, fish and prepare medicines.

Historically, Lenape women were the masters of the land foraging for food and plants, planning and managing the annual growing cycles, and they were the “keepers of the seeds” for the following years. “Seeds and our Indigenous foods are central to our cultures, reminding us of our ancient relationship with the natural world around us.” —*Diane Wilson, The Seed Keeper, (2021)*. A full moon generally signaled the planting season. The celebration began with a family gathering which included a special meal, stories of ancestors and a renewed relationship with ancestors and the land they had known since time before time.

Lenape women harvested fruits, nuts and edible plants as well as medicinal plants and other plant materials. Corn and nuts were ground into meal for bread. Both women and men braided hemp and other plant fibers to make ropes, mats and fishing nets. Hemp and flax fibers were used for spinning thread and yarn for sewing clothing and moccasins. “We wore clothes of animal skins, decorated with shell and bone beads and sometimes with natural pigments.” —*John R Norwood, NJ Nanticoke-Lenape*.

Lenape men, the hunters and fishermen, followed the rule of “pass the first and take the second” leaving the first to preserve the ecosystem that they relied upon. All components of nature’s creatures had a purpose. “We honored The Creator and his appointed guardian spirits by respecting all life and never taking more from nature than we could use. “That respect for life meant that if an animal was taken for food, all of the animal should be used in some way in order to show gratitude for the sacrifice of its life to sustain ours.”—*John R Norwood, NJ Nanticoke-Lenape*. Common animals hunted for meats and furs included deer, bear, water fowl and other small mammals. Animal bones were used as tools and needles. Animal hides and furs were made into clothing and shelter coverings. Seasonal fishing stations were established along local waterways such as the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers as well as the Brandywine, French, Pickering and Perkiomen Creeks. Shad was the most common fish pursued from April to June during the shad spawning season. Fish were dried and smoked for later consumption. Lenape communities east of the Delaware River would travel across New Jersey in search of Atlantic Ocean creatures. “Men were charged with protecting the village while women were charged with care of their homes. The village chief (called “sakima” in Lenape, but commonly referred to as “sachem”) led by example and personal sacrifice, and conferred with a council of respected “great ones” and elders.”—*John R Norwood, NJ Nanticoke-Lenape*.

Across the Lenapehoking many paths connected the fragmented Lenape communities. First pioneered through the forests by wild animals, these remote paths were navigated by the Lenape hunters following animal tracks. With repeated use, these paths became well traveled, marked trails that offered a slow and continuous pathway along dry, level and direct, well drained ridges situated above flood level of waterways below. The Lenapehoking climate encouraged travel through the woods which offered protection from windstorms and moderate rainfall. The forests had openly spaced trees and light underbrush for easy passage. Finding necessary resources, such as jasper, chert, and metarhyolite stones for making tools and steatite for bowls dictated the location of paths.

Walking was the means of choice for travel even though there were many streams and rivers nearby. The local waterways were not consistently conducive to transportation by dugout canoe. Some spots were too shallow, some too rapid, or just too difficult to navigate. Flexible birch bark canoes were better to navigate but flexible birch bark is not indigenous to Pennsylvania woodlands. More common to this area were hardwoods such as poplar, tulip, sycamore, elm, or walnut. These dugout canoes were heavier and more difficult to portage between waterways. Prior to horses, the 18 inch to at most 6 foot wide walking trails were primarily used for seasonal hunting, gathering of food, meetings with friends and family, and enabled tribal diplomatic relationships. As best said by Paul Wallace in his book, *Indian Paths of Pennsylvania (2018)*, “May their moccasins always be dry, their path free from logs and briars and may the sun shine long on their lodges.”

Through the 17<sup>th</sup> century, these paths connected the three clans of the Lenape Tribe. The Minsi (or Munsee, “People of the Stone Country”) inhabited the northern part of Pennsylvania, the Unami (“People Who Live Down River”) inhabited the central region of Pennsylvania, and the Unalachtigo (“People Who Live by the Water/Ocean”) lived to the south near Wilmington DE. The Nanticoke clan was also a branch of the Lenape Tribe living in New Jersey. The Lenape communities in New Jersey and the Delmarva Peninsula were more unified compared to the related Lenape clans west of the Delaware River.

Over time, these indigenous paths crisscrossed what would become Pennsylvania, extending north and south as well as east and west. The path system connected the Lenape to the significantly larger and more politically united Iroquois Five Nations population of northern New York and the Susquehannock/Conestoga Tribes living to the west along the Susquehanna River. These paths ultimately lead to Native American development and westward migration. The Lenape and the resident wildlife can be credited with developing the first roadway infrastructure of West Vincent and surrounding townships.

## ***The Contact Period — Arrival of the Europeans and Coexistence in the 1600s***

*“Wherever a white man put down his foot, he never took it up again” —Old Native American Quote*

Until the arrival of the first European explorers, there was no written history documenting the lives of Lenape ancestors living in the Lenapehoking. We know of these times only by the valuable knowledge transfer of the Lenape through spoken narratives, mythological stories and traditions kept. Petroglyphs, drawings on rocks, along waterways near Safe Harbor, Lancaster County, PA and along the Susquehanna River give some clues to early Native American life as well as numerous archaeological excavations more recently performed across Pennsylvania. Artifacts of Lenape settlements were periodically found when European newcomers tilled their farmland or collectors disrespectfully disrupted sacred Lenape burial grounds in search of valuable remnants of past history.

Historians have estimated, in the year 1600, there may have been upwards of 20,000 Lenape living in decentralized but affiliated towns in the Delaware River Basin when the first Dutch and Swede explorers traveled up the Delaware and Susquehanna Rivers looking to establish permanent trading posts and settlements. Epidemics (small pox, measles, influenza and other pathogens) prior to and after the arrival of Europeans are believed to have decreased the Lenape population significantly during the 17th century. The worst decline in population occurred between 1655 and 1670 when the population was reduced to an estimated 4000 Lenape by the time William Penn arrived in 1682.

In the early 1600s, “the lands which best served the surviving native population contained resources which were attractive to the first colonials; fresh-water, fish, shellfish, migratory birds, communication-transportation routes and water power.”—*Marshall Becker, West Chester University Anthropologist*. Initially after the Dutch and Swedish settlers arrived, the Lenape lifestyle, values and beliefs, remained unchanged. The mixed society they formed was generally cooperative and cordial with few conflicts. The Lenape adapted to the newcomers and recognized the opportunities for trade and cultural exchange. Both groups interacted with the bountiful landscape and reaped the benefits. European fur traders exchanged metal tools and cloth for animal furs and skins provided by the Lenape.

In 1624, the Lenape sold some “right of use” land to the Dutch who established the first trading posts. In 1638, the Swedes also purchased “hunting rights and use of land”. Europeans interpreted these agreements to mean that they “owned” the land which is contrary to the Lenape belief that humans are one with the land without personal ownership. By 1640, the Swedes opened extensive fur trade and the Lenape shifted from a growing and hunting agrarian society to a full barter society with the Dutch, Swedes, and newly arrived English. The original settlers engaged in various trade activities with Native Americans, which later led to the gradual deterioration of Native American material culture. The fur trade put a great demand on native peoples to provide products, reducing the slaughter of animals for subsistence purposes, and taking time away from performing traditional tasks. Dawn Marsh notes in her book, *“A Lenape among the Quakers; The Life of Hannah Freeman (2014)*, “When Europeans made first contact with Lenape people in the Delaware River valley, the Lenape women increased their production of corn and textiles to satisfy the settlers growing demand.” For a time, the Lenape continued to produce and use traditional goods alongside newly introduced European imports. However, European trade items such as glass beads, bottles, copper items, other metal goods, and ornaments shifted a certain degree of attention and interest away from traditional Lenape objects. Copper projectile points were in use by the 1640s, and eventually guns began to replace the bow and arrow for hunting.

Once European settlements began to grow, and colonial farmers began to move farther up into the river valleys, problems developed for the Lenape. At first, Dutch and Swedes outnumbered English but soon with more English arriving they dominated the Lenapehoking. The Dutch wanted to trade and maintain Native American “land ownership” without land encroachment. Whereas the English wanted to “own” the land in the traditional European sense and control the trade channels. Encroachment by the settlers

began limiting Native American living space. By the mid-1600s, conflicts arose over land ownership among the European countries, within the Native American tribes, as well as between the Europeans and the Native Americans.

The Susquehannock (Minquas/Conestoga) of the Susquehanna River valley came east into the Lenapehoking as far as west of the Delaware River, slaughtering, looting and destroying crops as they also wanted to benefit from the lucrative fur trade. From the north, the Iroquois encroached as well leaving the Lenape with little fur trade control. The tribal warring increased with the arrival of more Europeans and the neighboring tribes tried to eliminate the Lenape and monopolize trade with the Europeans. At the same time, the Dutch, Swedes and English all wanted control over trade with Native Americans. As demand and competition for finite resources increased and tensions rose between the Lenape of the Delaware Valley and other tribes, the Lenape began their early migration north and west to the frontier.

As European interest in the New World grew, the English claimed dominance in trade routes to the newly established colonies. Land ownership of the Lenapehoking was assigned by European countries without consideration of the indigenous inhabitants. In 1674 the English acquired previously “owned” Dutch land at the Treaty of Westminster. In 1681, William Penn, an English Quaker with Welsh roots, was given land west of the Delaware River, known as West New Jersey, as a debt payment from the English King, King Charles II. The influx of Dutch and Swedes diminished and the Quaker settlers became the predominant residents in search of religious freedom in the Delaware and Brandywine Valleys.

Soon after William Penn arrived in Pennsylvania in late October 1682, he met with Chief Tamanend of the Lenape Tribe at Shackamaxon (located near Kensington, PA) on the shore of the Delaware River beneath a majestic elm, to sign The Treaty of Shackamaxon. William Penn and Chief Tamanend exchanged promises to live together in perpetual peace and friendship. No treaty exchange has been authenticated by historians, but Penn’s letters to the Lenape and purchases of Native American land are well documented. Thus began William Penn’s pursuit of his “Peaceful Kingdom”. Through the late 1600s, ownership of what became Vincent Township property passed from William Penn’s West New Jersey Society through its members, Robert Thomson, Dr. Daniel Cox, and Sir Matthias Vincent (from whom West Vincent and East Vincent Townships received their name) to Dr. Daniel Cox & Company. –*Estelle Cremers, 30000 Acres Vincent and Pikeland Townships (1989).*

Preceding William Penn’s arrival to the Lenapehoking, he wrote many and frequent letters to the Indigenous and recently immigrated residents. The Albert Cook Myers Historical Collection: *William Penn Papers*, found at the Chester County Historical Society, include Penn’s “Letter to the Inhabitants of Pennsylvania” (April 1681) as well as his “Letter from William Penn to the Kings of the Indians in Pennsylvania” (October 1681). Throughout William Penn’s numerous letters to the Lenape, he confirmed his strong beliefs that the Lenape should be treated fairly. He traveled, with Lenape interpreters and a documented Native American dictionary, to the interior of the colony and befriended tribal chiefs of the Native American tribes. Penn asked the Native Americans to live in harmony with him and the colonists as neighbors and friends. He insisted that the Native Americans be paid a fair price for any land that was purchased from them. However, the Lenape understood the earth as a living entity. People were not separate from it but a part of it. They did not conceive land as commodity to trade or sell and therefore they would not have considered William Penn “owning” the land. If there was a dispute between the Native Americans and the settlers, Penn insisted that a committee of equal number of Native Americans and settlers resolve the dispute. Penn’s influence on relations with the Native Americans lasted until his death in 1718. After which his sons and Quaker associates’ relations with the Lenape were neither as considerate nor fair.



The Lenape and the English settlers both shared interest in improving their access to economic opportunities and material goods made available through increasing trade. Initially fur trade, between the Lenape and the English, was the primary economy of the region. Beaver and deer pelts were the most desired by the English both here among the settlers as well as back in England. Native Americans killed animals for their own food consumption and traded the skins and furs for “items of use” such as European cloth, sugar, metal tools and buckets which ultimately replaced traditional Lenape stone tools, wooden bowls, and baskets. At first, an economic balance was achieved with a stable coexistence. This mutually beneficial trade laid the foundations for the first colonial commercial development in Pennsylvania.

Nearby to Vincent Townships, two French-Canadian fur trappers set up trading posts along the Schuylkill River. In 1686, Lenape guides led Jacques LeTort, and a party of French Huguenots to Canada to acquire furs and skins for Sir Matthias Vincent, our township’s namesake, living in England. During LeTort’s two-year buying trip, his wife, Ann LeTort, reportedly ran their trading post near the intersection of French Creek and the Schuylkill River with courage, a horsewhip and her sharp French tongue. She also spoke the native language of the local Lenape tribe.

Also in the late 1600s, Pierre Bezallion arrived in the Spring City, PA area and traded with the local Lenape. As a result, William Penn called upon Bezallion to act as arbitrator for “Lenape Affairs”. Bezallion used a natural cave near the Schuylkill River to store his furs and to lodge when he was trapping in this area. However, this was not his permanent home. Pierre Bezallion died in 1740 and is buried in Compass, PA (near Coatesville, PA). —*Spring-Ford Area Historical Society*.

Over time, because the English were mainly interested in animal furs and skins, overkill occurred and local wild animal populations were depleted. The search for animal pelts expanded to the north and west where the Susquehannocks and Iroquois began to take over the Lenape fur trade. By 1675, the fur trade industry collapsed due to continued reduction in wild animal populations and changes in European fashion and lifestyles. Along with it, Lenape power and wealth collapsed while their dependency on European trade goods expanded to include imported cloth, glass, pipes, sewan/wampum (shell beads), guns, lead, blankets, iron tools, alcoholic drinks, and food stuffs. “This reliance and first assimilation into the European materialistic society lead to a breakdown of the traditional Lenape social organization, traditional daily tasks and natural resource based skills.” —*Marshall Becker*.

Although the Lenape and the colonists remained separate with different societal frameworks and governance, daily interaction was a normal part of their lives. The Lenape and European settlers associated in ways that changed each group, as they assimilated technology, language, and respect for the each other’s culture including spirituality, politics, diplomacy and economics. The complex Native American path systems from east to west and north and south provided the means for the newly arriving settlers to connect with local Lenape as well as the Susquehannocks to the west and the Iroquois to the north to access much needed natural resources. The inexperienced settlers relied on the Lenape to navigate the complex labyrinth of path systems through the changing seasons and travel conditions. Lenape trail markings, a stripped exposed bark circle around trees marked with red ochre and charcoal, guided the travelers across the wilderness. Sophistication of these first “billboards” evolved to include picture paintings to tell the news of the day, tribal identification such as the Turkey or Turtle clan markings with directional arrows, and Christian scriptures.

These paths enabled travel from the Susquehanna River east to the Atlantic Ocean as well as movement between quickly developing villages north and south within the Lenapehoking around the immigration hub of Philadelphia. By the time of William Penn, established paths around Philadelphia were beginning decline in use by the Lenape. The paths outside the growing city of Philadelphia connected the Lenape extended families living in small groups along the Delaware River, Schuylkill (Manauink) River, Crum, Ridley, Darby and Brandywine Creeks with winter hunting grounds farther north and west along the Schuylkill River, Perkiomen, Pickering, and French (Sankanac) Creeks.

The most populous permanent summer Lenape settlements within the Chester County portion of the Lenapehoking were located along paths crossing the Brandywine, Ridley and Crum Creeks. Mentioned in various historical writings, transient winter settlements in the West Vincent Township area were located along the Conestoga Road (Rt. 401) near the intersection with Dewees Road, near the Lewis-Fussell properties at Kimberton and Flint Roads, Chester Springs, PA and near springheads at Marsh Creek near Glenmoore, PA. Paul Wallace identifies this corridor as the Allegheny Path which ran from the Delaware River at the Philadelphia (Coaquannock) region to the Susquehanna River via Elverson, Morgantown and Harrisburg. At Elverson, the Allegheny Path intersected the Blue Rock Path that followed the Ridge Road (Rt. 23) from Phoenixville west between the Welsh Mountains and Turkey Hill, onward through Lancaster to Millersville and across the Little Conestoga Creek to Washington Borough at the Susquehanna River.

Another trail along the north side of French Creek, the French Creek Path, also connected Phoenixville to the Conestoga/Susquehannock tribal town along the Susquehanna River. The French Huguenot trading posts were conveniently located near a Lenape settlement at the intersection of the Schuylkill River and French Creek. Much of what we know about the Lenape living in the Vincent Townships is derived from the writing of a German immigrant residing in East Vincent Township near French Creek, Frederick Sheeder (1777-1865). He wrote his article, *The History of Vincent Township, Chester Co, PA (1846)*, in response to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania request to collect and preserve local historical information. Sheeder notes a seasonal Lenape village not far from his property along French Creek “in a hollow” near the current covered bridge on Hollow Road, Birchrunville, PA. He writes of interactions of the colonist John Adam Miller’s wife, a midwife during the early 1700s, who assisted in the delivery of Lenape babies and observed their ceremonial birthing practices. He also writes of a local settler, John David Jenkins, who was the township supervisor of the poor during the mid-1700s. Sheeder tells the story of an elderly Lenape living near the Jenkins property, “He went to the neighboring houses to get something to eat and when he was asked why he had not gone with his people he replied that he wished to live as long as he could and that he had known that he could not reach the destiny and that they would to had killed him on the road.” Some years after his death, John David Jenkins was responsible for the burial of the Lenape gentleman nearby.

Around 1725, Garritt Brumback (Gerhart Brownback) of Germany, moved to 1000 acres in Vincent Township and erected numerous buildings. Edward Brumback, Garritt’s great grandson’s story, as recounted by Sheeder, notes an “Indian village about 50-60 perches and 300 souls” adjacent to Garritt Brumback’s property where the Lenape and Brumback met to smoke pipes, sing songs and converse.

Along with Sheeder’s stories, other historical letters, newspaper clippings found at the West Chester Archives, and other documents tell of the peaceful interactions of the Lenape and the early settlers of West Vincent Township. James Everhart, born in the 1750s and who lived at the northwestern end of Flowing Springs road, wrote that as a child he interacted with the Lenape children in playful “wrestling”. It is also suggested that nearby portions of the Horseshoe Trail may have once been Lenape paths.

Elizabeth Eldridge in her book, *The History of West Vincent Township (1977)*, cites a Coventry Township story from the early 1700s near The Blue Path. “It must have been with some amazement that Vincent residents watched the iron industry start after Samuel Nutt cleared the forests of Coventry for his works. As early as 1717 iron makers had explored the Schuylkill River and its tributaries for suitable sites with a supply of ore, an abundance of wood for charcoal fuel, and water power. The story is told that an Indian Chief pointed out an outcropping of ore to Nutt and as a reward the chief’s daughter was presented with an iron pot worth four shillings and six pence.”

An alternate to the French Creek Path and south of the Allegheny Path was the Great Minquas Path, named by Dutch for the Minquas/Susquehannock tribes. Beginning near Chester, south of Philadelphia

and progressing west to the Susquehanna River, this path connected the Susquehannocks to fur trading posts along the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers. Crossing both forks of the Brandywine River, the location with the most permanent summer Lenape settlements in southern Chester County, this path continued west through Strasburg, and Willow Street to intersect with the Susquehanna River's Conestoga settlement at Washington Borough, central hub of activity, situated along the Susquehanna River. The Susquehannock/Minquas brought beaver skins to eastern trading posts via this path. With increased English expansion in the Brandywine area, the head Lenape sachem of the area negotiated with William Penn for a one mile wide stretch of land on either side of the Brandywine Creek from the Delaware Bay north to the west branch and up to the falls. Penn guaranteed that the Lenape would not be removed or molested from generation to generation until their death.

At around the same time, in 1701, Penn acknowledged another land grant of 500 acres that could be considered the only designated "reservation" where the Lenape consolidated their communities at the Okehocking settlement along the east branch of Ridley Creek and Crum Creek in Willistown Township. This parcel of land was eventually bordered and surrounded on all sides by settlers' tracts and from 1703 onward the Okehocking land became encroached upon as well. The Okehocking Path beginning west of Valley Forge led from near the intersections of the Schuylkill River and French Creek and the confluence of Pawling Ford, the Perkiomen Creek, and the Pickering Creek. The path followed the ridge south to Paoli, Whitehorse, and through the Okehocking Lenape village over Ridley Creek to meet the Great Minquas Path which connected to the Delaware River.

Samuel Pennypacker in his book, *Annals of Phoenixville and its Vicinity (1872)*, writes "When the first European settlers came to Manavon (Phoenixville), about the year 1713, an Indian village stood upon the low land near the Schuylkill River, immediately south of the mouth of the Pickering Creek. A trail extended from this seasonal village across the creek below the mill at Moorhall." Pennypacker goes on to say, "They had a dam for fishing in the Schuylkill opposite the farm of James Vanderslice at Perkiomen Junction." And, during excavation for the railroad many years later, Lenape artifacts were found in the area surrounding Phoenixville known as Black Rock. Pennypacker notes that as late as 1773, Lenape lived alongside the colonists until "they moved away". One Lenape, known as "Sky" and his wife and children, remained behind living near the Vanderslice stone quarry near French Creek. His wife grew pears, apples and other fruit trees. After Sky died, his wife and children left to be with her tribe.

The juncture of many walking paths and the numerous intersecting waterways near Phoenixville was a location to portage canoes and continue travel to outlying villages. Sometimes, canoes could not be readily used on many of the waterways in this area so they were "parked" at Canoe Places along the paths. One Canoe Place was along the French Creek at its intersection with the Schuylkill River at Phoenixville. Another Canoe Place parking was at Safe Harbor along the Susquehanna River at the western end of the French Creek Path.

A network of old, well-worn Lenape paths followed waterways north of the Schuylkill River. The Perkiomen Creek Path went from Philadelphia to Reading along the Perkiomen Creek. The Perkiomen Lehigh Path connected Oaks to Greenlane and onward to the jasper quarries at Vera Cruz near Macungie, PA. The Point Pleasant Path passed by Pennypacker Mills in Schwenksville and followed the Indian Creek in Harleysville to Plumstedville and on to Point Pleasant along the Delaware River. The Lenni-Lenape Path extended to the north of Philadelphia to New Hope along the Delaware River and crossed the river into New Jersey at Lambertville. The Minsi Path connected Philadelphia to Bethlehem and continued as far north as Minisink Island, NJ and Kingston, NY. Through the 1700s, the interconnecting paths of the Lenapehoking were extended westward past the Susquehanna River to the expanding frontier continuing the deep connection between the Lenape people with the land and the physical environment and changing civilization.

Once William Penn was granted land in 1681 that included the future Chester County, immigration to his new land of religious freedom and opportunity quickly escalated. Between December 1681 and December 1682, twenty-three ships arrived with passengers and cargo. According to historian Dawn Marsh, “The population of settlers in SE PA increased from fewer than two thousand colonists in 1682 to nine thousand in 1692 and twenty-one thousand by 1700.” These new settlers were predominately English or Welsh Quakers with some Scotch-Irish Episcopalians among them as well. Most were skilled in trades or farming and often came as families. The English did not prepare the Lenape sachems for the rapid changes Penn’s colonial immigration program brought to the Lenapehoking. However, even with the ever-increasing contact between Lenape and the European settlers, both did not reject each other’s cultures but rather shared experiences and adopted aspects each other’s way of life. It was a stable mix of two cultures living side by side with mutual respect, resilience, and changing to overcome life’s obstacles.

Although the New World Quaker society was more defined versus the Lenape more open culture, they both shared similar values. Both were once immigrants and migrated to this new land looking for opportunities, adapting to change which ultimately resulted in a better life for all. Both believed in peaceful solutions to land disputes, diplomatic alliances and economic wellbeing for all. Peace and generosity were honored over violence and selfishness. Fundamental to Lenape morals is “reciprocity” — the practice of exchanging with others for mutual benefit. By sharing resources and knowledge of the land, including farming techniques, navigation of paths and waterways, as well as hunting and fishing locations, the Lenape taught the colonists how to be one with and sustained by the land.

The Lenape taught the settlers land and ecosystem management techniques such as burning of fields to initially clear land for crops and housing while replenishing depleted nutrients. An example of ecosystem management is the Lenape companion planting technique, known as The Three Sisters, still promoted in gardening books today. It’s an ancient method of growing beans, corn, and squash together where the corn provides a natural trellis to support the pole beans, the beans provide nitrogen in the soil for the corn and squash, and the squash shades the ground for the corn and beans providing natural mulch that suppresses weeds and helps hold the moisture in the ground. At first the settlers relied on the Lenape crops for substance but they became self sufficient over time. Gradually the diet of the colonists and Lenape became the same with each preferring their own recipes and their own customs.

The Lenape also conveyed their core beliefs in “only take what's needed” without over deforesting, damming of waterways, limited slaughter, and maintaining a rotational crop system to ensure abundant annual harvests. This philosophy is based on The Seventh Generation Principle originated by the ancient Great Law of Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Five Nation Confederacy that states that the decisions we make today should result in a sustainable world seven generations into the future. The Great Law of Haudenosaunee Confederacy formed the political, ceremonial, and social fabric of the Five Nation Confederacy and is also credited as being a contributing influence for the American Constitution, due to Benjamin Franklin’s great respect for the Haudenosaunee system of government. The Seventh Generation Principle is generally referred today with regards to decisions made about our energy, water, and natural resources and ensuring those decisions are sustainable for seven generations in the future. It can also be applied to relationships as every decision should result in sustainable relationships seven generations in the future as well.

Through reciprocity, a shared economy grew between the Lenape and the local Quaker farmers and merchants with the exchange of Lenape food and crafts such as mats and baskets for Quaker clothing, guns, sewing needles and other “make life easier items”. Lenape women recognized economic development opportunities outside their immediate villages and expanded their trade markets to include towns, ports and cities where global and emerging markets were expanding. Though unfortunately for the Lenape, this economic balance would not last.

During their first decades of cohabitation, the Lenape and English were both in the process of navigating their place in a rapidly changing world. Both the Lenape in the past and more recently the Quakers had traveled great distances encountering adversity, loss, and enemies but remained a collective people. In both cases, places and practices changed, but the people created new ideas and ways of living that in turn became their everyday lifestyles. Both societies were following a spiritually driven path they hoped would result in a better world. The Quakers were more understanding than many of their colonial counterparts in their relationships with the Indigenous peoples. The Quakers recognized they shared a belief that they all possessed an “inner light” or spiritual purpose which had led the Lenape and the Quakers to leave their own ancient homelands in search of a peaceful kingdom without war and where they could have religious freedom. Both believed in a God or Great Spirit who created the sacred universe. The Lenape told celebrated stories of their creator, Kischelemukong, forming the earth out of mud on Grandfather Turtle’s back and bringing life to other sacred entities. The sun and thunder were considered elder brothers, corn as the mother, three of the four navigational directions as grandfathers and the south being grandmother. A spiritual force, Manetuwak, infused all life on Turtle Island—animals, astronomical phenomenon, and even weather. Kischelemukong created the first man and woman from who all Lenape are descendents.

Similar celebrations and mutual compassion were shared in the recently blended society of Chester County. Concerns for family wellness, respect for ancestors and elders and sympathy for human loss were expressed between neighbors. Neither Lenape nor the colonists had clear understanding of the root causes or origins of diseases. Lenape believed in healing arts acquired from the spiritual world that relied on plant based remedies and spiritual powers. Colonists employed bodily bleeding techniques to drain ill humors and correct an inner physical imbalance. Within their communities, they combined efforts to cure sickness using various plants, prayers, rituals, and songs. It is noted that the Brandywine Lenape were highly resilient as they recovered and survived more so than other Native Americans who came in contact with unfamiliar European diseases.

Funeral services were simple events with emphasis on remembrance of the life well lived. Lenape believed in life after death with a ceremonial period ending when the deceased is placed in the grave and a feast concluded the event. It was thought that the ceremony helped kin find the spiritual world. Similarly, Quakers focused on the belief that if God lives in the soul, and the soul never dies, then there is no need for a special place for the soul to go. Local newspaper clippings noted that it was common for Quakers and Lenape to gather together to mourn the loss of their loved ones.

The celebration of marriage was a modest affair within both the Lenape and Quaker communities. Most often in both cultures, families offered approval for the couple to wed. At the ceremony, the couple declared their commitment to each other at a simple service with blessings offered by their communities. Neither ceremony included specific vows. Lenape men did not marry women from their immediate clan. Traditionally, a Lenape elder leader finalized the union by wrapping one long strand of white wampum over their heads and around their necks proclaiming them husband and wife. Quaker weddings were a special type of ritual for which no officiant was needed to marry the two parties. Love stories between the Lenape and Quakers were rare but have been recorded. Marriage between a Lenape and a Quaker was forbidden which left some with broken hearts.

Survival in the New World relied upon all members of the family unit to share responsibilities and contribute to the well being of their community. Power and authority were equally shared between the Lenape men and women with no division between male and female on basis of wealth. The Lenape men were the hunters, fishermen, craftsmen of tools, the diplomats, the warriors, and chiefs. While the women were caretakers of the crops, the elder sage, the children, the ill and the household. Children traditionally followed the mothers’ heritage and belonged to the mother. Quaker men and women fell into the traditional male centric European roles. The Quaker men were the farmers, the craftsmen and the builders. Quaker women managed the domestic chores of preparing food, mothering the children,

sewing and overall maintaining the household supplies. Fabrics were the largest household expense in colonial society. Quaker men found it odd that the Lenape women tended the fields while the Lenape men were off hunting like the elite men back in Europe. Lenape women became laborers on Quaker farms, administered medicines to ailing children, and worked alongside Quaker women weaving, spinning, sewing and cloth from hemp and flax. With William Penn as their leader, the Quakers were committed to establishing a colony that promoted the fair and respectful treatment of the Indigenous inhabitants. It is not surprising that these two very different, once separated by an ocean, though both spiritually enlightened peoples were working together to live harmoniously in their newly assimilated natural world.

Although the Lenape and colonists shared many of the same values and family practices, societal differences ensued. Their very different languages may have caused miscommunication between the groups especially with regard to government structure and the ownership of land. Shelley DePaul, Director of the Language Program at the Lenape Nation of PA notes in her Swarthmore College instructional guide, *Conversations in the Lenape Language (2014)*, that “Only Creator knows precisely how the blood of the ancestors passes through the veins from one generation to the next like a river whispering and carrying all that has happened before.” And she goes on to say, “The language of the Lenape is a living language through which the web of life flows, and it is permeated with the notions of interconnectedness, humility, reverence and a deep sense of where each individual belongs in the scheme of things, from family relationships to relationships with the natural world. A non-Native person may observe a Native who appears to be speaking to the spirit of a tree and walk away with a notion of how “primitive” such a practice is. In his world, and language, trees don't have spirits, and so the trees will ignore him. The very basis of usage depends upon whether an object is living or non-living, in much the same way that some European languages base their structure on the masculine and feminine. Lenape words contain perceptions. The usage of one word or another depends upon and portrays an entire notion surrounding a relationship; the language reveals a wealth of information about the intrinsic values of the people.” Complicating communication further, there are two dialects and many sub-dialects within the Lenape language. Linguists say that more words have been assimilated into the English Language from the Algonquian/Lenape Language, than all of the other Native American languages combined. Throughout the southeastern counties of Pennsylvania we see towns, waterways and streets all bearing Lenape names.

The emerging colonial government was much more structured than the less defined Lenape way of life. The Lenape were a loosely unified society where the village sachem led by example and personal sacrifice, and conferred with a council of respected “great ones” and elders. They lacked the coercive powers of government enjoyed by most European rulers; instead, he had to persuade other clan members to follow his policies, leading to a perhaps a more democratic society. The title of sakima is not attained by hereditary but rather chosen to represent a tribe or group of communities. According to Rev. Dr. John R. Norwood’s book, *We Are Still Here! The Tribal Saga of New Jersey’s Nanticoke and Lenape Indian (2007)*, the Lenape communities in New Jersey and the Delmarva Peninsula were more unified than those living in southeastern Pennsylvania. Living within William Penn’s colonial “Peaceful Kingdom”, religious liberty meant freedom of belief, freedom to worship, no forced tithes, no established church, and no militia. Laws were designed to enforce morality. All who believed in God were welcome, but only Christians could hold political office. Although, there was no effort to convert the Lenapes to Quakerism, the Quakers looked to “civilize” the Lenape through assimilation into Quaker white culture and dispossession of land. Quaker laws applied to European settlers granted citizenship, imposed taxes, and defined land ownership while the Lenape had no legal identification or citizenship, no taxation, no defined land area, and no recognized absolute authority figure Chief or King. The Quakers made no effort to clarify political or legal identity for Indigenous people as they believed they were “not civilized enough” to be part of the expansion and economic growth. Their short term focus was on colonization. The Lenape people would not be given citizenship or the right to vote until well into the 1900s.

***The Turbulent Years. Disruption. Destruction of the Lenape Culture. Dispersion. The Lenape People Going Underground and Hiding.***

Between 1692 and 1700, over twelve thousand more European settlers arrived and were living in the Delaware River Valley. The open lands of the Lenapehoking were becoming fenced and divided along organized property lines by the Europeans. Lenape fishing sites were disappearing as the newcomers began damming local waterways to harness water power for mills. The Lenape knew the land by topographical borders and believed the land was to be shared, not to be given or sold. William Penn declared ownership of land through treaties and purchases not by conquest but the Lenape conceived these early land acquisitions as only agreements to share the use of the lands not the complete loss of control, rights, and access as the English understood it. Soon, the Lenape along the Brandywine and at Okehocking near the Crum and Ridley Creeks found squatters or European neighbors encroaching on their lands while they were away for seasonal absences to their winter hunting grounds and following periodic movement for crop rotation.

In 1705, the Lenape sachem, Checochican, officially registered their objections to the local Commissioners of Property. The Commissioners of Property, failed to uphold Penn's original agreement with the Brandywine Lenapes that stated that the Lenape were granted sole right to their designated lands including the right to be protected on their own lands, the right to live peacefully among the settlers and remain friends with their colonial neighbors in Penn's Peaceful Kingdom. As late as 1725, the sachems continued to file complaints to the Commissioners of Property demanding the removal of illegal squatters and the removal of dams that obstructed the waterways such that the fish did not have a natural course to their usual habitations. Over time, the Commissioners took advantage of the Lenapes' seasonal absences and allowed colonists to occupy and claim lands not legally open to settler occupation. The Lenape living along the Brandywine never broke their agreement to live peacefully among the settlers, but those who inherited William Penn's colony did. At the time of William Penn's death in 1718, the Quakers dominated the ruling assembly in Pennsylvania but their political power and increasing wealth resulted in problems maintaining their religious purity. The Quakers abandoned many of their humanitarian goals in favor of newer material objectives and greater political power. William Penn's sons and agents did not abide by Penn's treaties but they continued to evoke the rhetoric while endorsing irregular land practices. With more settlers surrounding the Lenape designated lands, disputes escalated.

A singular event led to a significant loss of the Lenape homelands and was a pivotal point in the Quaker and Lenape peaceful relationship. In 1736 William Penn's sons, John and Thomas, and other agents sold more land to pay their creditors. In order to convince the Lenape to part with this land, the Penn brothers and their agents falsely represented an old deed from 1686 in which the Lenape promised to sell a tract of land beginning at the junction of the upper Delaware River and the Lehigh River (near Easton, PA) and extending as far west as a man could walk in a day and a half. This agreement later became known as the Walking Purchase or the Walking Treaty of 1737. This document may have been an unsigned, unratified treaty, or even an outright forgery. Thomas Penn, the Proprietor of Pennsylvania at the time, hand-picked the three fastest colonial runners from the colony to run on a prepared trail. They secretly walked the course ahead of time to become familiar with the lay of the land. On the day of the walk, the Lenapes could not keep pace as the colonists ran farther into their best hunting grounds exceeding the 40 miles the Lenape were willing to concede. By means of a false deed, running on a carefully cleared path, and followed by creative surveyor maps, the Penns fraudulently acquired 1200 square miles of Lenape land, an area about the size of Rhode Island. And as a result, the Lenape were forced to vacate north and west to Shamokin and Wyoming, PA, locations that were already crowded with other displaced tribes. Over the years, the Lenape were promised by the government that place after place would be their permanent home only to have to move again. Although a distrust of the government was provoked by the loss of Lenapehoking homeland, the Delaware Valley Basin offered resources and family ties that still made it home for some Lenapes. As European settlement continued to rapidly advance in Pennsylvania, the Lenape living in Chester County and all Native Americans in the Europeans' New World experienced conflicts far removed from the initial

peaceful image of William Penn and the Quakers. The influx of new immigrants during the mid-1700s from Germany, Ireland, and England forced unwanted changes for both the Lenape and the Quakers. In Chester County the shared values that once dominated their peaceful coexistence were shattered by voracious demands of the colonial expansion. Colonial institutions and ideologies eroded the Indigenous economic and social traditions. Disruption and destruction of the Lenape culture was intensifying. The Quakers' wealth and prosperity was built upon the loss and dispossession of their former Lenape friends. Although the Quakers had a "call to consciousness" and voiced concern for the wellbeing of the Lenape, the Quakers were eventually unseated from authority after 1750 and living conditions of the Lenape worsened.

With increased overcrowding and competition for limited resources came violence, heinous crimes and the increasingly poor population struggled to survive. Increased anti-sentiments turned former Lenape homelands into a landscape fraught with potential risks. Those seeking shelter from the unrest in Chester County, both settlers and Lenape, were forced to move north to the Shamokin, PA area near the northern east branch of the Susquehanna River or they moved west beyond the Susquehanna River to the Pennsylvania frontier. Many followed the Great Shamokin Path north to Shamokin which was a hub of commerce and the Iroquois diplomatic headquarters. Others traveled west towards the Allegheny Mountains utilizing ancient Native American pathways through the challenging landscape. Transport of household items and supplies was difficult.

Nevertheless, as European settlement rapidly advanced in Pennsylvania, settlers and the Native Americans shared the paths across the state. Native Americans guided settlers along the well worn hunting paths to portage places along the waterways and to rest stops found every 10-12 miles or so for overnight stays. Hospitality and courtesy was extended to the trail goers with friendly encounters among strangers and the exchange of local news. Native Americans provided frontier travelers with food, such as meats and fruits, as well as lodging in bark wood shelters. Alternatively, they slept on the ground covered with bows of hemlock and balsam or in hammocks. Routinely, food and supplies were left behind for the next passing visitors.

Throughout the 18th century, the westward movement continued. Tradesmen, missionaries, and settlers followed the retreating Native Americans from the Delaware River Valley to the Susquehanna River and onward to their last Pennsylvania refuge in the Ohio Allegheny Valley. Chester County saw a flood of transient people with neither permanent residence nor employment arriving and flowing through the Lenapehoking. Many of this transient population did not share the Quaker and Lenape values and had disregard for the law. Government assemblies were overwhelmed and provided little justice for violent crimes, if even reported, committed against colonial women and Lenape living in Chester County.

During this period of new colony formation, land ownership continued to cause discord among the colonists and between the colonists and the Lenape. In Pennsylvania, tensions escalated between the colonists, the British, the French, and the Spanish as well as with the Native Americans. During the Seven Years' War (called the French and Indian War in the colonies from 1754 to 1763), Pennsylvania saw some of the most horrific interracial violence in early America. According to local historians, Eldridge and Pennypacker, local men joined militias fighting in the French and Indian War. In the summer of 1755, men from Vincent and Pikeland Townships accompanied the British General Braddock on his ill-fated expedition to capture the French's Fort Duquesne (Pittsburgh, PA). Later in 1756, local citizens formed an independent militia in response to the November 1755 fighting between Lenape and frontiersmen in nearby Reading, PA. According to the Tax Rolls of 1753 the local militiamen included Adam Roontour (or Rotter), John Lewis Ache (or Acker), John Beker (or Baker), Jacob Defran (or Defrain), Josh. Everhard (or Eberhard), John Hartman, Philip Lewis and Jacob Thomas under the command of Adam Heylman (captain), John Hart (lieutenant), and Adam Roontow, (ensign). The Pennsylvania Gazette of March 25, 1756 mentioned additional local officers who had received commissions under the new militia law including David Thomas (captain), John Thomas (lieutenant) and Robert Fullerton (ensign) of Vincent, Chester County. It was also noted that George Aston was recognized for assisting when wagons were called on from the various



townships in Chester and neighboring counties to carry supplies to General John Forbes' expedition that successfully recaptured Fort Duquesne from the French in 1758. The French and Indian War ended in 1763 but the problem of land ownership continued to create clashes between the Native Americans and the colonists in Lancaster, the Shamokin area, and the backcountry of Pennsylvania.

Fortunately in this era, no confrontations ever took place between the colonists and Lenape living in Chester County though the Lenapes' safety throughout Pennsylvania was gone. Not even Quaker neighbors with benevolent intentions and political and economic clout could prevent the Lenape from racist vengeance. Clear divisions were recognized by both the colonists and the Native Americans. Both cultures were now preaching doctrines of "separate paths". The governor of Pennsylvania, Robert Hunter Morris, became convinced that the only way to fight Native Americans was to seek out and destroy their towns. In Pennsylvania, it was the frontiersmen who issued the first clear call for a scalp bounty just after devastating conflicts in Lancaster and Berks counties in 1755. In eastern Pennsylvania, far from the frontier, the Quaker Friends protested against scalp bounties but in 1756, in a Declaration of War against the Lenape, Pennsylvania Gov. Robert Hunter Morris declared, "For the scalp of every male Indian enemy above the age of 12 years, produced as evidence of their being killed, the sum of 130 pieces of eight. For the scalp of every Indian woman produced as evidence of their being killed the sum of 50 pieces of eight." The Lenape Tribe was once again threatened.

After the French and Indian War, colonial authorities were more concerned about gaining their independence from England while also ridding themselves of the "Native American problem". Native Americans and Pennsylvania's European peoples were now alienated from each other and Native American nations retained no secure possession of homelands within the colony's borders. It was convenient to declare that the Native Americans had dispersed and moved away. Despite the reputation for peaceful intercultural relations that Pennsylvania had enjoyed since its founding in 1681, the series of conflicts and wars that engulfed its frontiers resulted in the dispossession and rejection of Chester County's native peoples. While some Lenape relocated away from Chester County and joined clans living in New Jersey or the Delmarva Peninsula, many Lenape were driven westward from their Lenapehoking and created communities in Oklahoma, Kansas, Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, and other parts of the United States and Canada. The Lenape once again adapted to their new environments.

Following these turbulent times, colonists declared "the Lenape were gone" when in fact some actually stayed and hid their culture and existence with no talk of their heritage or customs. The Lenape who chose to remain in the Lenapehoking intermarried and slowly assimilated into the larger society of European settlers. They strived to blend in and become more civilized in eyes of the settlers. They talked, acted, dressed, and were recorded as "white" in the local census counts. According to Shelley DePaul, "This afforded them, in many cases, but not all, some degree of social stability and acceptance so long as they, at least outwardly, became part of the status quo. The vast majority of Lenape in Pennsylvania descend from intermarriages between Lenape natives and European, most specifically, German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania. These settlers were, for the most part, farmers, and their connection to the land made them close friends with the Lenape." The Lenape/German connection may have been reinforced given that the German language has much more in common with the Lenape language than it does English." Shelley DePaul continues to explain, "Many of the Lenape in Pennsylvania today are descendants not of just one far removed Lenape ancestor, but of a long carefully woven cloth of many bloodlines. Oral histories relate that not only were the Lenape deliberate in maintaining bloodlines, they were also deeply concerned about passing traditions along from one generation to the next, usually from grandparent to grandchild. It is evident, given the monumental social pressures and prejudices imposed upon these families throughout the 1800s, why some of them were successful in this endeavor and others were not." Many of the Lenape women and settler men can be traced through ancestors that once lived in and around the Shamokin and Pocono areas of Pennsylvania. As of 2009, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission reported more than fifty-thousand Pennsylvanians "with all or some Native American ancestry."

Although the Lenape remaining in Chester County found themselves nearby witnesses to the American Revolution, they did not play a significant role in the founding of our new nation. The Lenape perspective of the Revolutionary War is told by Dawn Marsh in her book detailing the life of Hanna Freeman, a Lenape born in the 1720s. Hannah began her life with her extended family in a cabin, situated along a small tributary of the Brandywine Creek, on the claimed land of William Webb. In September 1777, the Battle of the Brandywine played out in the fields and forests where Hannah lived and worked. Throughout her life, Hannah moved about the Lenapehoking, but on the day of the battle she was working in the area “at the time when the soldiers were about”. The British army of ten thousand soldiers plundered the farmers recent harvest, homes and barns to replenish their supplies. Neither Hannah nor her Quaker neighbors participated directly in the fighting. In 1783, the war ended when the British abandoned all claims to the thirteen colonies and signed the Treaty of Paris with the United States. Hannah’s Quaker friends and neighbors were divested of their identity as British subjects and were acknowledged as citizens of the United States. The Founding Fathers gave little consideration to the Indigenous peoples and excluded them from citizenship or property rights. Following the war, Hannah continued to live on her homestead with her extended family and worked within a thriving and integrated community. By the late 1790s, Hannah’s family members were deceased and with deteriorating health, the fiercely independent Hannah required the support of her Quaker neighbors to survive. Hannah died in 1802 at the then recently built Chester County Alms House in Newlin Township. Upon her death, it was declared that she was “the last living Lenape”, and therefore her death ended any legal claims to the land along the Brandywine once promised to the Lenape for life.

By the 1790s, Quakers in southeastern Pennsylvania participated in the new nation’s political future by asserting themselves in politics in ways more compatible with their Quaker convictions. At the 1795 Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the governing body of Quaker congregations, the Committee for the Improvement and Civilization of the Indian was created. The objectives of the organization were both diplomatic and missionary. Members of the Committee were indispensable to federal agents and officers who sought to acquire new Native American lands from the Appalachians to the Mississippi River. At the same time, Chester County Quakers funded and sent numerous missionaries to the newly acquired territories in western New York, Ohio, Indiana and beyond. The Quakers, like the previous Moravian missionaries, acted on the blind assumption of the superiority of their own way of life and hoped to save the Native Americans from extinction.

The Lewis, Fussell and Thomas families of West Vincent were active in the early Quaker missionary efforts. These family’s farms were located along Kimberton and Flint roads where Frederick Sheeder noted, a Native American village was once located. The story of missionary Jonathan Thomas is recorded in the minutes of the Indiana Quaker Executive Meetings—

*“Jonathan Thomas, in pursuance of his own sense of duty, and on behalf of his Friends, was agent, care taker and teacher at different times among the Indians - the Oneidas near Rochester New York and the Senecas (Allegheny Reservation Indian School) further west, on the head waters of the Alleghany river in the same state. He had much to do with the noted Indians, Red Jacket and Corn Planter. He began these labors in 1796, and among other things taught farming and some mechanical industries, labored in the interest of better living and civilized pursuits, and sought to overcome their superstitions. He spent in all nearly 17 years in these services - 8 1/4 years before marriage, 3 2/3 years after marriage, apart from his family, and 5 years accompanied by his family. He served several years of apprenticeship with John Lewis, of Chester Co., Pa., and married his daughter Ann, 3.18.1806. She was ten years his junior. After they came to Fall Creek, Indiana they were leading characters in their meeting and in their neighborhood. Their daughter Mary Ann married Woolston Swain, and these in their turn became heads of the meeting. Their son Joseph Swain, became president of Swarthmore College.”*

While away from his growing family, in the early 1800s, Jonathan (1766-1839) exchanged spirited letters with his wife Ann Lewis Thomas (1776-1867), sometimes pregnant and raising their young children while

living alone at their Flint Road home (currently restored and the office of Natural Lands Bryn Coed Preserve). In these letters, archived at The Newberry in Chicago, IL, Ann and Jonathan provide insight into the many challenges of life in this era.

As missionaries and teachers, The Quakers played a significant role in the federal government's Native American education programs. Their practices became a model for the Native American boarding school program that disrupted so many Native American families. Thousands of students from as far away as Arizona and Washington attended the first boarding school in Carlisle, PA operating from 1879 to 1918. As missionaries, like Jonathan Thomas, some Quakers set up model farms in distant territories while others returned home with Native American children to educate and influence. Local Quaker families including the Copes, Evans, and Vickers, living throughout Chester County temporarily "adopted" Native American children to work on their farms and in their businesses and homes. Newspaper articles from as early as 1817, found in the West Chester Historical Center archives, acknowledge the boys and girls visiting for six weeks or so from western Pennsylvania and the Carlisle boarding school. After training, the children were returned home to further the cause of "civilization". Or as told in one account, a student from the Carlisle boarding school became the wife of William King, a descendant of the early Vincent Township Konig/King families.

As the United States frontier expanded farther west across North America, the government implemented new laws that were unfavorable to the already displaced Native Americans from the east. Native American lands were officially disposed by The Indian Removal Act, signed into law by President Andrew Jackson on May 28, 1830, which authorized the president to assign unsettled western prairie lands west of the Mississippi to Native Americans in exchange for more fertile and resourceful territories within existing state borders.

The Lewis/Fussell families are most known for their work in the mid-1800s as abolitionists opening their homes along the Underground Railroad to the travel weary escaped slaves. They also supported the Native Americans in principle and financially. A meeting was held at the Chester County Court House in August of 1861 to discuss the appropriate and fair treatment of Native Americans in light of the start of the Civil War. Documented from the meeting notes, Dr Bartholomew Fussell of West Vincent advocated these opinions--

*"Resolved, that while we confess to our brethren that they have been grievously wronged by immigrants and government agents in the past, we in no wise sympathize as a people here.... Resolved that we assure our Indian brethren that it is not part of the plan of our government in the war which is not being waged against rebellious States in South ... protect their rights... Resolved, that we do pledge ourselves that we will use our influence as far as possible to put a stop to the outrages which have therefore been practiced upon them. ... Resolved... through our representatives in Congress... to faithfully fulfill all treaty stipulations made with the Indians and also to pay punctually to them their trust funds as they become due."*

Although the local Quaker leaning government voiced their support, the Native Americans were excluded from the 14th amendment to the United States Constitution which declared all persons born or naturalized in the United States as citizens with equal protection and due process under the law. Native Americans were ineligible because they were considered under the jurisdiction of tribal laws. In 1870 the 15th amendment was ratified, which provided that the right to vote shall not be denied or abridged on the basis of race, color or previous condition of servitude. This superseded state laws that had directly prohibited African Americans from voting but again Native Americans were not included. Time passed and on June 2, 1924, Congress corrected their omission when they enacted the Indian Citizenship Act, which granted citizenship to all Native Americans born within the territorial limits of the United States. However, the right to vote was governed by state law and some states denied Native Americans the right to vote until as late as 1957.

## ***Working Together as Caretakers of the Environment Restoring and Preserving the Land***

*“We care for the whole world and strive to keep it healthy and well. We care for not only humans and other living beings but for the earth itself, its soil, air, and waters and the spirit that imbues them. In turn, the world cares for us, in balance.” —Tiana Williams-Claussen, Yurok Tribe, CA.*

After hiding their heritage for more than two hundred years, the descendants of the Lenape Nation have now come forward to tell their story of survival in their homelands. Although the story of the Lenape was virtually erased from history, the Lenape continue to live in their Lenapehoking and are a part of the heritage of West Vincent Township. It wasn't until the 1950s that Lenape descendants in Pennsylvania organized and appointed an informal chief, and almost another fifty years before the Lenape Nation of PA was officially formed. Lenape values and culture are embedded in today's Delaware Valley society which ultimately began with the original Lenape communities. Traditional Native American values and culture live on in Pennsylvania and West Vincent Township today.

The Lenape contributions to our West Vincent heritage are momentous and numerous. The survival of the early colonists depended on the wisdom shared by the Indigenous people. With their intimate knowledge of the land and resources, the Lenape guided the settlers to food, water and shelter. The Lenape provided essential tools for hunting, necessary household items, and demonstrated agriculture techniques for growing crops and locating naturally occurring medicines. Pennsylvania's first commercial and economic development occurred between the settlers and the Lenape.

As new “keepers of the land”, the colonists were taught respect for the environment and sustainability of its ecosystems. The basic principles conservation were advised— 1) humility and awareness of the environment, 2) the Seven Generation Principle -“what will be left when you are done”, 3) “walk softly on the earth without leaving a footprint”, 4) when hunting “keep first/take second”, and 5) always be respectful of all nature that shares the land.

Many fundamental societal and governing values inherent to the pre-colonists Lenape society, such as leadership by democracy and diplomacy, were influential in the development of our government structure today. From the time when the first settlers set foot on the shores of the Lenapehoking, the Lenape were forced to adapt to change. Much change was facilitated by the infrastructure of paths initially developed by the Indigenous people that connected villages that still bear the familiar Lenape names such as Wissahickon, Conshohocken, Nockamixon, and Manayunk. These paths evolved into the roads that enabled colonial expansion and which unfortunately also aided in the diaspora of the Lenape away from the Lenapehoking.

**Today**, the Lenape people living in Pennsylvania are carrying on their ancestral traditions, culture and spiritual beliefs. They are also engaged in numerous projects to encourage all citizens to respect and protect our homeland and the health, welfare, and future of the next seven generations of our children. With these outreach activities, the Lenape Nation hopes to overcome the toxic perceptions of the Indigenous ‘extinction narrative’ and instead uphold and apply the ideals of the Indigenous peoples to our world today. Through these teachings and reconnection with the Lenape heritage, there is an opportunity for physical, mental, and spiritual healing for all people.

Lenape history in Pennsylvania has been incredibly erased, even more so than many other Native American tribes. Getting to know one of the first colonial contact Nations on the East Coast is encouraged by Adam Waterbear DePaul, Tribal Council Member, Storykeeper and curator and at the Lenape Cultural Center in Easton, PA. The exhibit includes artifacts, educational materials and the University of Pennsylvania Penn Museum hosted exhibit “*Fulfilling a Prophecy: The Past and Present of the Lenape in Pennsylvania*”. A link to the museum is found on the Lenape-Nation.org website. Other

members of the Lenape Nation act as academic liaisons to local K-12 school students. Revitalization of the Lenape language efforts are lead by Shelley DePaul, a linguistics instructor at local colleges and contributor to the online Lenape Talking Dictionary at [www.Talk-Lenape.org](http://www.Talk-Lenape.org). To further increase awareness of the Lenape and enhance mutual understanding, the Lenape conduct traditional ceremonies, festivals and powwows which they share with the public. For example, the Lenape Nation of PA visited Temple University Ambler Campus and the Ambler Arboretum to help the campus and the surrounding communities heal and reconnect with the land that was irrevocably scarred by Hurricane Ida and the EF2 tornado that tore through the region on September 1, 2021.

Another objective of the Lenape Nation is to raise environmental consciousness and promote actions that make us all better stewards of the environment by maintaining spirituality and honoring all living things. The organization's most public endeavor is the Rising Nation River Journey, a once-every-four-years trek down the Delaware River (Lenape Sipu) that culminates in the signing of a "Treaty of Renewed Friendship" between the Lenape Nation of PA and a number of organizations including environmental groups, churches, historical societies, individuals, and political representatives, thus fulfilling the dream envisioned by our founding fathers, William Penn and Chief Tamanend. This three to four week journey passes by sites that are part of the larger landscape of hills, plains, and waterways that are meaningful to the history and present day lives of people who claim Native American descent. The Lenape Nation desires to put the fear, pain and humility of the past behind us, once and for all, and to walk together into the future.

It is hoped that this and other Lenape outreach programs will raise the public consciousness of the Lenape throughout Pennsylvania. While there are established Lenape tribes in New Jersey, Delaware and the Midwest, there has never been a state or federally recognized tribe, Lenape or otherwise, in Pennsylvania. The state of Pennsylvania is one of only a few states in this country that does not recognize its Indigenous people. Advocates for Pennsylvania State Recognition of the Lenape Nation say the designation would be a step toward resolving centuries of long standing inequities in our society. And if state recognition is granted, it would act as a political and legal tool to combat the pervasive idea that there are no Native Americans left in Pennsylvania. The Lenape Nation looks to overcome the past wrongs in American society and wish to live their lives in peace with pride, comfort, and a place of belonging. Such recognition would make it easier to continue ongoing outreach and education programs, continue the stewardship of the land seen as a duty, safeguard a sense of identity for their children, and gain additional public recognition for the Lenape people across the country.

*Lenape heritage is rooted in our beautifully preserved West Vincent environment.  
The Lenape are still here. They never went away.*

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