

Keywords for Building Relationships in Lenape and Nanticoke Homelands

University of Delaware Anti-Racism Initiative
American Indian and Indigenous Relations Committee

Rationale:

The Keywords project provides transparent and accountable language to support relationship-building among members of University of Delaware and Indigenous peoples. We focus on Lenape and Nanticoke in the Delaware watersheds, those forcibly displaced from this region, and other American Indians dispossessed through the University's land grant history. This document defines a wide array of terms associated with these groups and their colonization, including language used in the committee's Living Land Acknowledgement, Institutional Action Steps, and Land Grant History. Having language in common creates a foundation for dialogue and collective action. Yet our various constituencies do not necessarily share the same vocabulary or meanings for the same words. Our selection of keywords balances current best practices in the academic field of Indigenous Studies with the preferred language of American Indian communities with whom we are in dialogue.

We developed the entries specific to Nanticoke and Lenape through consultation, whenever possible, to support self-representation. In cases when our outreach has not been successful to date, we drew upon each group's public facing documents and other research materials. Our intention is to include all tribal groups on their terms, including federally-recognized, state-recognized, and unrecognized collectives, in order to avoid positioning ourselves as arbiters of identity. However, we have come to understand that there is no neutral position because of significant divisions among federally-recognized, state-recognized, and unrecognized groups. When we have encountered divergent positions, terms, and definitions, we have attempted to make these differences visible.

While the Keywords predominantly utilize English, we have included some Nanticoke and Lenape terms. The erasure of Indigenous languages is an essential tactic of colonization, furthering the eradication and assimilation of the original stewards of North America in order to usurp land. As the Keywords evolve, we aim to cite more Nanticoke and Lenape terms in tandem with language revitalization projects underway in these communities.

Consultation Process:

We have noted those entries that were informed by tribal consultation or communication with an asterisk. We contacted representatives of the following groups by email and/or phone:

Federally recognized (United States):

Delaware Nation in Anadarko, Oklahoma
Delaware Tribe of Indians in Bartlesville, Oklahoma
Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians in Bowler, Wisconsin

Federally recognized (Canada):

Delaware of Six Nations near Brantford, Ontario
Eelūnaapëewii Lahkëewiit: Delaware Nation at Moraviantown near Chatham-Kent, Ontario
Munsee-Delaware Nation near St. Thomas, Ontario

State Recognized (United States):

Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware
Nanticoke Indian Tribe
Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation
Ramapo Munsee Lenape Nation
Powhatan Renape Nation¹

Unrecognized (United States):

Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania²

Cultural Organization:

Lenape Center in New York³

We consulted with representatives of the Ramapo Munsee Lenape Nation, the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware, the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania, and the Nanticoke Indian Tribe. We communicated with the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation, who expressed general approval of the Keywords content. We spoke with the Six Nations of the Grand River; however, they were unable to find a consultant with knowledge of the Delaware of the Six Nations. We spoke with representatives from the Delaware Nation in Anadarko, Oklahoma, the Delaware Tribe of Indians in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, and the Lenape Center in New York; these groups declined formal consultation. The Delaware Nation and Delaware Tribe of Indians declined because they do not acknowledge state-recognized or unrecognized groups and take issue with the inclusion of these groups in our document. In some cases where group-specific entries were neither provided nor approved by representatives of those groups, we drew language from their website, as our footnotes make clear. Our readers should recognize that information coming from a group or a group's website does not necessarily reflect the perspective of all Nanticoke or Lenape. This is a living document and further input from tribal nations is always welcome.

¹ We were unable to find a working phone number or email address for the Powhatan Renape Nation.

² The Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania is registered as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

³ The Lenape Center in New York is a non-profit organization.

* Asterix indicates the entry was partially or fully constructed through tribal consultation or communication

Keywords

Nanticoke and Lenape Terms and Titles:

Cohanzick

A historic gathering place for Nanticoke, Lenape, and other Indigenous communities. The 28-acres defined as Cohanzick today are located in Fairfield Township, New Jersey. It is cared for by the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation; other Lenape consider it to be an integral part of their homeland.⁴

Confederation of Sovereign Nanticoke-Lenape Tribes

An intertribal union formed in 2007 to honor the common history and relations of the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware, the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation, and the Nanticoke Indian Tribe.⁵ Descendants from core families who intermingled to survive European colonization of homelands and now belong to these separate tribes were united through this confederacy. As of 2023 the confederation was inactive. *See entries for the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware, the Nanticoke Indian Tribe, and the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation.*

Eelūnaapèewii Lahkèewiit: Delaware Nation at Moraviantown near Chatham-Kent, Ontario

Eelūnaapèewii Lahkèewiit, also known as The Delaware Nation at Moraviantown, are Lunaapeew (or Lenape; *see entry for Lenape*) located on the southern shores of the Thames River. The Lunaapeew originally lived on land in present-day New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania and Ohio. Early treaties with the Dutch (1600s) and United States (1778) were not honored by the Dutch and Americans, forcing the Lunaapeew to move to Kansas, Texas, Oklahoma and Ontario. The Lunaapeew joined Moravian missionaries for protection from ongoing wars and violence, together building 30 villages known as “Morovian Towns” from 1740 to 1815. However, the Lunaapeew were still persecuted, including the horrific American militia massacre of over 90 Lunaapeew in Gnadenhutten, Ohio. It is believed that this massacre led the Lunaapeew towards Canada, where they petitioned the Canadian government for land in southwest Ontario. Their original settlement, founded in 1792, was located on the north side of the Thames River but was burned down by American soldiers after the war of 1812. The Lunaapeew rebuilt in what is now called

⁴ John R. Norwood, *We Are Still Here! The Tribal Saga of New Jersey's Nanticoke and Lenape Indians* (Moorestown: Native New Jersey Publications, 2007), 33.

⁵ “The Confederation of Sovereign Nentego-Lenape Tribes,” The Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape, 2007, <https://nanticoke-lenape.info/confederation.htm>.

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Moraviantown on the southern shores of the Thames. Today they seek compensation for the loss of thousands of acres of land.⁶

Delaware Nation in Anadarko, Oklahoma*

Delaware Nation is one of multiple federally recognized sovereign tribal nations of Lenape people today, whose homelands encompassed what are now called Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, and parts of New York since time immemorial. Delaware Nation's tribal government now operates out of Anadarko, Oklahoma as a result of longstanding settler colonial violence and broken treaties beginning as early as the 16th and 17th centuries which ultimately forced the Lenape people out of their homelands. In 1778, after being pushed west into Ohio territory, Lenape leaders entered into the first treaty made between a tribal nation and the new United States: the Treaty of Fort Pitt, which helped the Americans to win the Revolutionary War. This promised the Lenape new lands to live on, representation in Congress, and a sovereign state within the new nation, but the United States did not uphold their end of this treaty. Over the next few centuries, the governing bodies of Lenape people were repeatedly fractured and forced further from their homelands along a trail of broken treaties, resulting in the multiple federally recognized Lenape tribal nations which exist today. Delaware Nation's specific removal history follows a land grant they received from the Governor General of Louisiana, which resulted in their splitting from the group of Lenape that would become the Delaware Tribe of Indians (Bartlesville, OK). As a result, Delaware Nation became known as "the Absentee Delaware" and began moving south through Texas before eventually settling on allotments in Anadarko, Oklahoma, renaming themselves as the Delaware Tribe of Western Oklahoma and eventually the Delaware Nation, as they are known today. Despite enduring centuries of forced removals, broken treaties, and persecution as a result of settler colonialism, Delaware Nation maintained their sovereignty and ongoing relationship with their homelands. Today, Delaware Nation operates an extension historic preservation office in Bethlehem, PA in addition to their tribal headquarters in order to facilitate their ongoing management of and consultation in their homeland region.⁷

Delaware Nation has issued official governmental resolutions that they do not acknowledge or work with any non-federally recognized groups claiming Native identity. This is in order to combat increasing incidences of fraudulent claims to

⁶ This paragraph was constructed based on information retrieved from the Delaware Nation at Moraviantown webpage: "About Us" Delaware Nation, accessed April 27, 2023. <http://delawarenation.on.ca/about/>.

⁷ "Historic Preservation Office", Delaware Nation, accessed October 17, 2023. <https://www.delawarenation-nsn.gov/historic-preservation-office/>.

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Lenape identity and nationhood, which disrespect the sovereignty of and appropriate cultural property and other resources from the legitimate federally recognized Lenape peoples. Delaware Nation views the idea of state recognition as an unconstitutional undermining of tribal sovereignty, and does not acknowledge or work with any state groups claiming Lenape identity. For more information, see Delaware Nation’s resolution and extended executive council letter (provided in Appendix A at the end of this document).⁸

Delaware Tribe of Indians in Bartlesville, Oklahoma

The Delaware Tribe of Indians in Bartlesville, Oklahoma are Lenape whose ancestors lived along the Delaware River. In 1737 the sons of William Penn sold 1200 square miles of Lenape-owned land to pay off their creditors by presenting the Lenape people with a fake deed and falsely declaring that Lenape ancestors gave this land to the Penns. After 130 years of trekking westward, and many broken promises from the federal government of a permanent home, these Lenape were finally able to settle in Oklahoma. Much of the Delaware Tribe of Indians' rich knowledge, traditions, and cultural practices were lost along this long trek.⁹ *See entry for The Walking Purchase.*

Delaware of Six Nations near Brantford, Ontario*

As Lenape and Nanticoke were displaced from their homeland and forced to move westward, some settled among the Six Nations of the Grand River.¹⁰

Delaware River*

The Delaware River channels water from the Catskill Mountains to the Atlantic Ocean and holds vital ecological and cultural significance for Lenape and Nanticoke.

displacement of the Lenape and Nanticoke*

European colonization forced many Lenape and Nanticoke to leave their homeland and settle further west and north in what is now the United States and Canada. Both the Lenape and Nanticoke entered into a series of treaties with European settlers in

⁸ This paragraph was constructed by the Delaware Nation in Anadarko, Oklahoma.

⁹ This paragraph was constructed based on information retrieved from the Delaware Tribe of Indians webpage: “The Walking Purchase,” Delaware Tribe of Indians, accessed April 27, 2023.

<https://delawaretribe.org/blog/2013/06/27/the-walking-purchase/>.

“Frequently Asked Questions about the Lenape or Delaware Tribe,” Delaware Tribe of Indians, accessed April 27, 2023. <https://delawaretribe.org/blog/2013/06/26/faqs/>.

“About the Delaware Tribe of Indians,” Delaware Tribe of Indians, accessed April 27, 2023.

<https://delawaretribe.org/home-page/about-the-tribe/>.

¹⁰ “CANR DEI Special Presentation: Karelle Hall,” 2023,

<https://sites.udel.edu/canr-dei/2023/04/05/canr-dei-special-presentation-karelle-hall/>.

We communicated with a member of the Tribal Council of the Six Nations of the Grand River; however, they were unable to locate a spokesperson for this subgroup.

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the 1600s and 1700s. Europeans continued, despite these agreements, to seize Indigenous homelands. Privatization of Nanticoke and Lenape homelands disrupted seasonal hunting patterns and endangered their communities. Many were displaced beginning in the mid 1700s, after a century of violence. Today, state-recognized Lenape and Nanticoke groups in Delaware and New Jersey and a nonprofit organization in Pennsylvania assert their kinship and cultural continuity with Lenape and Nanticoke who stayed behind or returned to the homelands.

Displaced Lenape communities exist in Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Kansas, Ontario, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana and Missouri. The federally recognized Lenape tribal nations are: Delaware Nation (Anadarko Oklahoma); Delaware Tribe of Indians (Bartlesville Oklahoma); and the Stockbridge Munsee Community (Bowler Wisconsin) in the United States; and the Munsee Delaware Nation and the Eelūnaapèewii Lahkèewiit (Delaware Nation at Moraviantown), both in Ontario Canada. Despite enduring centuries of forced removals, broken treaties, and persecution as a result of settler colonialism, the federally recognized nations have maintained their sovereignty and ongoing cultural relationships with their homelands. Though they operate under their own separate governments today, they acknowledge each other as relations and frequently work together on initiatives affecting all Lenape people. Delaware Nation, Delaware Tribe of Indians, and Stockbridge Munsee Community also all have extension historic preservation offices in their homeland region in addition to their tribal headquarters. Several of the Lenape tribal nations have issued official governmental proclamations that they do not acknowledge or work with any non-federally recognized groups or individuals claiming Lenape identity. *See entries for displacement, dispossession, and sovereignty.*

Lenape*

The original and ongoing caretakers of Lenapehoking. Lenape translates as “Original People.” They are known to other Native nations as the “grandfathers” or “ancient ones” of the Algonquin language family of interrelated Indigenous communities.¹¹ Historically, there was not one singular or unified “Lenape Nation;” there were many communities throughout the homeland region, belonging to three language groups: Munsee in the north, Unami in the south, and Unalachtigo in the southern area of

¹¹ John R. Norwood, *We Are Still Here! The Tribal Saga of New Jersey’s Nanticoke and Lenape Indians* (Moorestown: Native New Jersey Publications, 2007), 10.

Many believe that the Algonquin language group is actually a colonial misnomer and that many nations along the Eastern seaboard and into Canada would be better defined as the Lenape language group (Karelle Hall, lecture at Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library, April 13, 2022).

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Pennsylvania and Eastern Delaware.¹² Some use the Munsee spelling of the word Lenape, which is Lunaapeew or Lunaape, while others utilize Delaware, Lenni Lenape, or Lenni-Lenape. Alternate phonetic spellings capture the distinct ways in which words were and continue to be pronounced by various communities. *See entries for Delaware, Lenapehoking, Munsee, Unalachtigo, and Unami.*

Lenape Center in New York

The Lenape Center in New York was established by Lenape elders in Manhattan in 2009. Its mission is to continue Lenapehoking, the Lenape homeland, through community, culture, and the arts. The Lenape Center has created programs, exhibitions, workshops, performances, symposia, land acknowledgements, and ceremonies.¹³

Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware*

State of Delaware–recognized Nation that represents citizens of the Lenape tribal community in and around central Kent County, Delaware. First legally incorporated as a constitutional Tribal Government in March, 2010, the Tribal Government is committed to cultural resurgence, Indigenous sovereignty, and the physical and mental well-being of community members. It is one of three interrelated state-recognized Lenape and Nanticoke groups around Delaware Bay.¹⁴ As of Fall 2023, various competing claims to leadership of this group were ongoing.

Lenapehoking (also spelled Lenapehokink or Lēnapehòkink)*

Ancestral homeland of the Lenape from time immemorial. This area includes the Delaware watershed stretching throughout Delaware, New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, western Connecticut, southern New York and surrounding land. The Munsee language often uses accent marks over vowels and uses the spelling Lēnapehòkink.¹⁵ All three methods of spelling are accepted and used in various contexts. Alternate phonetic spellings capture the distinct ways in which words were and continue to be pronounced by various communities. *See entries for Lenape and Munsee.*

¹² Herbert C. Kraft, *The Lenape or Delaware Indians* (New Jersey: Lenape Lifeways, Inc., 2005), 35, <https://collaborativehistory.gse.upenn.edu/stories/original-people-and-their-land-lenape-pre-history-18th-century>.

¹³ This paragraph was constructed based on information retrieved from the Lenape Center webpage: “Continuing Lenapehoking, the Lenape Homeland,” The Lenape Center, accessed April 27, 2023. <https://thelenapecenter.com/>.

¹⁴ This paragraph was constructed based on consultation and information retrieved from the Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware webpage: “The Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware,” The Lenape Indian Tribe of Delaware, accessed April 27, 2023. <http://www.lenapeindiantribeofdelaware.com/>.

¹⁵ “The Lenape Talking Dictionary,” accessed April 27, 2023. <https://www.talk-lenape.org/results?query=lenapehokink&lang=lenape>.

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Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania*

The Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania (LNPA) is currently a non-recognized nation of descendants of the Lenape people registered as a 501(c)3 non-profit. Their ancestral homelands include all of the Lenapehokink. The LNPA keeps tribal traditions and customs, educates the public about Lenape history and presence, works to revitalize Lenape culture and language, and stewards Lenapehokink through initiatives like the quadrennial Rising Nation River Journey. While many Lenape people who inhabited Delaware, New Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania and Southern New York prior to European colonization were removed and dispersed from their homeland, many Lenape families remained in Pennsylvania and carry on the traditions of their ancestors to this day. Many locations in Pennsylvania are named from the Lenape language, including Manayunk, Conshohocken, and Neshaminy.¹⁶ *See entry for Lenapehoking.*

Munsee

Munsee (or Minsi, “People of the Stone Country”) is a language that originated in communities living in the northern part of Lenapehoking.¹⁷ Munsee has been preserved by Lenape in Ontario and Wisconsin and is now taught through language revitalization programs. The Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians are currently compiling a dictionary and the Delaware Nation at Moraviantown have been working on language restoration. Unami, Unalachtigo and Munsee are distinct but related languages from Lenapehoking. *See entries for Delaware Nation at Moraviantown near Chatham-Kent, Ontario, Lenapehoking, Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians in Bowler, Wisconsin, Unalachtigo, and Unami.*

Munsee-Delaware Nation near St. Thomas, Ontario

The Munsee-Delaware Nation, previously known as the Munsee of the Thames, is a Lenape First Nation with a reserve located near St. Thomas in southwest Ontario. Members of the Munsee branch of the Lenape Nation arrived in this area in the early eighteenth century. They were encouraged by the Lieutenant Governor to settle where the Chippewa were already established. The Munsee and the Chippewa reached an agreement to share the land in 1840, and in 1967 a Munsee portion of the Chippewa of the Thames reserve was established. Today, the Munsee-Delaware Nation reserve is

¹⁶ This paragraph was constructed based on consultation and information retrieved from the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania webpage: “About the Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania,” Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania, accessed April 27, 2023. <https://www.lenape-nation.org/>.

¹⁷ Herbert C. Kraft, *The Lenape or Delaware Indians* (New Jersey: Lenape Lifeways, Inc., 2005), 35, <https://collaborativehistory.gse.upenn.edu/stories/original-people-and-their-land-lenape-pre-history-18th-century>.

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made up of several non-contiguous lots within the Chippewas of the Thames reserve.¹⁸ *See entry for Munsee.*

Nanticoke*

The Nanticoke, also known as the Nentego and Kusarawaoks, are the historic caretakers of the central Delmarva peninsula and along the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay.¹⁹ Nanticoke comes from the Algonquin term Nantaquak, or the “Tidewater People.” While they are a distinct people, Nanticoke share ancestry and linguistic similarities with Lenape. *See entry for Lenape.*

Nanticoke Indian Association*

The group that does the business of the Nanticoke Indian Tribe.

Nanticoke Indian Tribe*

State-recognized tribal association with headquarters in Millsboro, Delaware. It received legal recognition from the Delaware State Assembly in 1881 when the Nanticoke nation founded a Nanticoke school on Nanticoke land. Descendants of smaller Nanticoke communities joined together due to pressures of colonization to form a larger tribal association. The Tribe’s flag bears the words “Halac'quow Ewapaw'gup Allappah'wee” (Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow) to symbolize Nanticoke resilience in the past, in the present, and in the future.²⁰

Nanticoke Leni-Lenape Tribal Nation

Northernmost of three interrelated state-recognized Lenape and Nanticoke groups around Delaware Bay. Descendants of Native families in present-day New Jersey and the Delmarva Peninsula remained in their ancestral homelands when many relations were removed west and north. The Nanticoke and Lenape nations from whom the Tribal Nation descends began consolidating in the 1600s, usually in churches where Methodists and Seventh Day Adventists allowed for self-governance under church

¹⁸ This paragraph was constructed based on information retrieved from the Munsee-Delaware Nation near St. Thomas, Ontario Facebook page: “Munsee Delaware Nation” Facebook, accessed April 28, 2023. https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=241372065892733&paipv=0&eav=AfZtwahfsvfa5UfDdPGI5RfyjtyMhseYZgylZUYKV2Jwtkd4jrOL27Hjht11xCGfWsA&_rdr

¹⁹ For the term “Nentego” and claim that the Leni-Lenape called the Nanticoke “Unechtego”: Norwood, *We Are Still Here! The Tribal Saga of New Jersey’s Nanticoke and Lenape Indians*, 11. Other sources refer to the Nanticoke as the Kuskarawaoks on the website of the Nanticoke Indian Tribe of Delaware - <https://www.nanticokeindians.org/page/history>.

²⁰ This paragraph was constructed based on consultation and information retrieved from the Nanticoke Indian Tribe webpage: “History,” The Nanticoke Indian Tribe, accessed April 28, 2023. <http://www.nanticokeindians.org/>.

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protection. Present-day headquarters are located in Bridgeton, Cumberland County, New Jersey.²¹

Powhatan Renape Nation

A nation whose people descend from an ancient confederation that previously included over thirty nations. Their ancestors were mostly Rappahannocks from Virginia and Nanticokes from Delaware. Many of the Powhatan Confederacy still survive, despite war, disease and cultural disintegration brought on by European settlers. Renape, which translates to “human beings,” refers to the group’s ethnic/language identity, while Powhatan refers to the group’s political identity. The Renape people are not all united as one nation and have governed themselves as independent republics which formed alliances and confederations, such as the Powhatan Confederacy. The Powhatan Renape Nation was recognized by the State of New Jersey in 1876 and holds over 350 acres of land in the town of Westhampton, known as the Rankokus Indian Reservation.²²

Ramapo Munsee Lenape Nation*

Ramapo-Munsee Lenape Nation’s ancestral and ceremonial homelands once stretched from western Connecticut to eastern Pennsylvania and from the northern banks of the Raritan River in New Jersey to Albany, New York. Their ancestors were forced to take refuge in the mountains of what is now known as Mahwah, NJ. As the Revolutionary War began, the Ramapough [Dutch spelling] withdrew from the Iroquois Confederacy to support the revolutionists, and without question, the greatest gift the Ramapough gave was to allow for the stationing of some 5000 French troops in the Ramapo [English spelling] Pass. This tactically assured the success of the American Revolution in the New England colonies. Subsequently, between 1680 and 1722, Sachem Katonah [Catonah] of the Tankiteke Sachemdom was petitioned by the courts to relinquish the remaining land, including the village of Ramapoo, which is now Bedford, Connecticut; as a result, the Ramapoo involuntarily relocated to Mahwah, New Jersey. In 1856, James DeClark named the town of Nanuet, NJ after Nanuwitt, a Ramapo Indian, and by the year 2000, the United States Census Bureau listed the Ramapough homeland as an American Indian statistical area.

Correspondingly, in the most recent chronographic and progressive turn of events, the Ramapo-Munsee have been gifted the return of a 285 year-old land use deed by the Sloat family descendants on June 4th, 2022 followed by the historic transfer of the

²¹ This paragraph was constructed based on information retrieved from the Nanticoke Lenape Tribal Nation webpage: “About Us,” Nanticoke Lenape Tribal Nation, accessed June 24, 2022. <https://nlltribe.com/about-us/>.

²² This paragraph was constructed based on information retrieved from the Powhatan Renape Nation webpage: “Powhatan History,” Native American Embassy, accessed September 20, 2023. https://www.nativeamericanembassy.net/Pocahontas_Myth/http/www.powhatan.org/history/.

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Tahetaweew (Split Rock Mountain) back to the stewardship and ownership of its original caretakers, the Ramapo-Munsee in Lenapehoking on March, 2023. Currently, the Ramapo Munsee Lenape Nation is sustained on a small section of their homeland in the foothills of the Ramapo mountains, also known as the Ramapo Pass. The Ramapo are known as the “Keepers of the Pass.” This nation is state-recognized by New Jersey and by the United States Congress through a resolution sponsored by the New York State delegation.²³ The nation is defined by its continuing relationship to the original homelands of the Munsee people and is welcoming of people from diverse backgrounds throughout the planet. The Ramapough River, known as "Sweetwater," is the historic gateway to the interior of the Continent.²⁴ *See entry for Munsee.*

Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians in Bowler, Wisconsin

The Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians are Mohican and Munsee, both part of the Lenape, whose territory extends across six states including southwest Vermont, the Hudson River Valley of New York, western Massachusetts, northwest Connecticut, and portions of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. The Mohican people, meaning The People of the Waters that Are Never Still, traveled eastward from the north and the south, eventually settling on the Mahicannituck river (also known as the Hudson River). As the Mohican people expanded their territory eastward they became affiliated with the Munsee. Conflict with European traders drove the Mohican people to a village that was later named Stockbridge. Through European missionary teachings, people of the Wappingers, the Niantics, Brothertons, Tuxis, Pequot, Mohawk, Narragansetts and Oneidas came together and became known as the Stockbridge Indians. Eventually land lost through debt, deals, and fraudulent means forced the Stockbridge Indians to move westward, leading to tragic losses of life, land, and culture. They eventually settled in Stockbridge, Wisconsin and became known as Stockbridge-Munsee. A reservation was established under the Act of 1871, which was subject to allotment under the 1887 General Allotment Act. Today, the name Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians is used to acknowledge the people’s history and tribal sovereignty.²⁵ *See entries for allotment, the Dawes Act of 1877, and Munsee.*

Unami*

²³ This process is distinct from federal recognition.

²⁴ This paragraph was constructed based on consultation with the Ramapo Munsee Lenape Nation.

²⁵ This paragraph was constructed based on information retrieved from the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians in Bowler, Wisconsin webpage: “Brief History,” Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians, accessed April 28, 2023. <https://www.mohican.com/brief-history/>.

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Unami (“People Who Live Down-River”) is a Lenape language spoken in central and southern Lenapehoking in the region that became Philadelphia, eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware.²⁶ The Lenape Talking Dictionary,²⁷ an important language revitalization resource that originated with Lenape nations in Oklahoma, is written in what linguists call the “Southern Unami Dialect.” Unami, Unalachtigo and Munsee are distinct but related languages from Lenapehoking. *See entries for Munsee and Unalachtigo.*

Unalachtigo

Unalachtigo (“People Who Live by the Big Water”), or Unami-Ualachtigo, is a Lenape language spoken in central Lenapehoking.²⁸ Unami, Unalachtigo and Munsee are distinct but related languages from Lenapehoking. *See entries for Munsee and Unami.*

wanishi

Lenape and Nanticoke word for “thank you.”²⁹

English Terms:

allotment

Federal policy dividing communally held Native lands into individual plots of private property. Allotment policies enacted in the nineteenth century were used to destroy tribes as distinct political and cultural entities while opening their land for white settlement. *See entry for Dawes Act of 1877.*

American Indian

The United States government uses the term American Indian, sometimes shortened to Indian, to refer to Indigenous peoples who lived within the borders of the continental United States prior to European colonization and persist as distinct

²⁶ Herbert C. Kraft, *The Lenape or Delaware Indians* (New Jersey: Lenape Lifeways, Inc., 2005), 35, <https://collaborativehistory.gse.upenn.edu/stories/original-people-and-their-land-lenape-pre-history-18th-century>.

²⁷ “The Lenape Talking Dictionary,” Delaware Tribe of Indians, accessed June 24, 2022, <https://www.talk-lenape.org/>.

²⁸ “CANR DEI Special Presentation: Karelle Hall,” 2023, <https://sites.udel.edu/canr-dei/2023/04/05/canr-dei-special-presentation-karelle-hall/>.
Herbert C. Kraft, *The Lenape or Delaware Indians* (New Jersey: Lenape Lifeways, Inc., 2005), 35, <https://collaborativehistory.gse.upenn.edu/stories/original-people-and-their-land-lenape-pre-history-18th-century>.

²⁹ “The Lenape Talking Dictionary,” Delaware Tribe of Indians, accessed June 24, 2022, <https://www.talk-lenape.org/>.

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peoples today. United States census categories specify American Indian or Alaska Native as one combined category, and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders as a separate combined category. The terms Native American or Native are often used interchangeably with American Indian and Alaska Native.

bandolier bags

Lenape women began making shoulder bags that reflected their growing participation in global trade networks in the nineteenth century. Known as bandolier bags, these items are based on longstanding Lenape arts made from animal skins and decorated with porcupine quillwork that references the cosmologies and ecologies of Lenapehoking. However, they are distinguished by their incorporation of silk, wool, cotton, ribbons, beads, bells, buttons, and other materials manufactured by Euro-Americans. When worn, these dazzling artworks may shimmer in the light and make a tinkling sound. They express the creativity and resilience of Lenape amid their forced displacement from the eastern seaboard.³⁰

Bureau of Indian Affairs

The federal government established the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in 1824 to manage trade and treaty relationships with American Indians; it was later enshrined in legislation by Congress in 1832. As the federal government removed many American Indian peoples from their homelands, the BIA oversaw programs to assimilate American Indian communities. Some of these initiatives included forcing communities to adopt private property and compelling them to produce commodities for the market economy. As of April 2022, there are 574 federally-recognized nations to whom the BIA provides services directly or through contracts, grants, or compacts.³¹

blood quantum

“Blood quantum” describes the amount of “Native blood” an individual possesses. Measured through genealogy, it has been used to racialize Indigenous people in the United States and Canada since the 1800s. Measurements of “blood quantum” have been used by federal, state, and tribal governments to determine citizenship. There are ongoing debates within and among Indigenous communities about the role of blood

³⁰ Adriana Greci Green and Steven Zucker, “From Quills to Beads: The Bandolier Bag,” Smarthistory, March 6, 2020, <https://smarthistory.org/seeing-america-2/bandolier-bag-sa/>.

³¹ “Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA),” Bureau of Indian Affairs, accessed June 24, 2022. <https://www.bia.gov/bia>.

* Asterix indicates the entry was partially or fully constructed through tribal consultation or communication

quantum because it diverges from kinship structures that are the basis of traditional social, political, and economic systems.³²

capitalism

Economic and political system based on privatization of land and resources in order to generate surplus (wealth).

ceded

Describes land for which Native peoples transferred title to the United States government through the signing of a treaty. Most cessions of Native land were forced by violence or starvation. Native nations often signed treaties with the expectation that they would share the territory covered in the document. *See entries for unceded and treaty.*

cession

Euro-American term for the legal transfer of property from one nation to another.

cultural genocide

The systematic destruction and erasure of one group's language, values, traditions, and beliefs by another group. In short, cultural genocide names the elimination of knowledges and practices that allow a group to continue as a group. In 2016, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Canada concluded that the term "cultural genocide" best defines the operation of residential schools in settler colonial nation states.³³ *See entries for genocide, Indian boarding schools, settler colonialism, and Truth and Reconciliation Commission.*

The Dawes Act of 1887

The Dawes Act served as a legal basis for the United States to appropriate 90 million acres of Native land. This is commonly referred to as land theft. Also known as the "General Allotment Act," the Dawes Act required Native-held land to be broken up among individual members of Native nations. Any "surplus" land was then opened to white settlers, which often included the most productive land in the former reservation. Native people were denied the protections of United States citizenship unless they accepted the division of Native-held lands. The act allowed the federal government to retain title of Native-held land in "trust" because it declared Native

³² James W. Oberly. "The Great Vanishing Act: Blood Quantum and the Future of Native Nations ed. by Kathleen Ratteree and Norbert Hill Jr." *Great Plains Research* 31.1 (2021): 120-121.

Kimberly TallBear. "DNA, blood and racializing the tribe." *'Mixed Race' Studies*. Routledge, 2015. 123-130.

³³ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, 2015.

* Asterix indicates the entry was partially or fully constructed through tribal consultation or communication

allottees “incompetent” to manage their own land.³⁴ Allotment policies led to extreme poverty and hardship for many Native communities. The consequences of these policies, which reduced Native-held land by two thirds overall, continue to affect Native peoples today. *See entries for allotment and settler.*

decolonization

Settler colonialism has led to the widespread occupation of land seized from Native communities as well as sustained attempts to assimilate Native peoples into the cultural, economic, and political systems of the dominant nation. Decolonization names the process of restoring Indigenous peoples’ autonomy from settler colonial governance, including the return of their land and political sovereignty. *See entry for settler colonialism.*

Delaware*

What is now known as the state of Delaware is the traditional home of Lenape and Nanticoke. While the name “Delaware” is now used interchangeably with Lenape, and is used by many of today’s federally recognized Lenape nations, it is actually a European term. The Lenape were collectively referred to as the “Delaware” by European colonists because of their proximity to the Delaware River, which Europeans had named after their first governor of the Province of Virginia: Thomas West, third Baron De La Warr. Although “Delaware” was historically imposed upon the Lenape people by colonists, the federally-recognized nations continue to use it in their official titles to uphold treaties which utilized the same terminology.

Department of the Interior

The executive governmental department that manages the use of land and resources in the public domain. The Bureau of Indian Affairs is located within the Department of the Interior. *See entry for the Bureau of Indian Affairs.*

diaspora*

A term referring to individuals or groups who have dispersed from their original homeland. Federally-recognized tribal nations generally do not use this term. The terms displacement and dispossession more precisely name the experiences of Lenape and Nanticoke who were forced to move westward or northward away from Lenapehoking due to settler colonialism. *See entries for displacement, dispossession, displacement of the Lenape and Nanticoke, Lenapehoking, and settler colonialism.*

displacement

³⁴ “Land Tenure History,” Indian Land Tenure Foundation, accessed June 24, 2022.

<https://iltf.org/land-issues/history/>.

* Asterix indicates the entry was partially or fully constructed through tribal consultation or communication

The forced and often violent removal of Native Americans from their ancestral lands. Displacement has been a key strategy of settler colonialism, first codified as part of United States federal policy under President Andrew Jackson with the Indian Removal Act of 1830. *See entries for dispossession, displacement of the Lenape and Nanticoke, settler, and settler colonialism.*

dispossession

Following the displacement of Native peoples from their land, settler colonial governments used various means to transfer the rights to that land to settlers. Within the United States, Native land either became part of the public domain or was privatized for sale. Dispossession incorporated Native land into the legal and political framework of the United States. *See entries for displacement, displacement of the Lenape and Nanticoke, settler, and settler colonialism.*

Doctrine of Discovery*

The doctrine of discovery refers to an international legal principle that when a nation “discovers” land, it gains the rights to that land regardless of the people already living on it. This principle originated in early modern Europe, when Papal Bulls (decrees issued by the pope of the Catholic Church) were used to justify the conquest and colonization of non-Christian Indigenous peoples in Africa and the Americas.³⁵ In 1823, the Doctrine of Discovery informed Chief Justice John Marshall's Supreme Court decision in *Johnson v. M'Intosh* that “discovery gave title to government...[and] the sole right of acquiring the soil from the natives,” justifying continued dispossession of Indigenous lands in America.³⁶ *See entries for dispossession, settler, and settler colonialism.*

endowment

The assets and funds invested by a college or university to support operating costs in perpetuity. The Morrill Act provided land to endow institutions through sale, rent, or other income generation like mineral rights. Since endowments are used in perpetuity,

³⁵ “Doctrine of discovery,” Cornell Law School, accessed April 27, 2023.

https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/doctrine_of_discovery#:~:text=The%20doctrine%20of%20discovery%20refers,acquires%20rights%20on%20that%20land.

³⁶ On March 30, 2023, The Vatican issued a bulletin in which Pope Francis repudiates the Doctrine of Discovery and reiterates support for the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

“Joint Statement of the Dicasteries for Culture and Education and for Promoting Integral Human Development on the ‘Doctrine of Discovery’, 30.03.2023,” The Vatican Holy See Press Office, accessed October 10, 2023.

<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2023/03/30/230330b.html>.

* Asterix indicates the entry was partially or fully constructed through tribal consultation or communication

funds generated by land grants remain on university ledgers today.³⁷ *See entries for land-grab university, land-grant institution, and The Morrill Act.*

ethnicity

Ethnicity is a social construct referring to a person's social identity, descent, and culture.³⁸ American Indian is a political designation covering many distinct group identities, not a racial or ethnic minority.³⁹ *See entries for American Indian and race.*

federal recognition*

As of April 2022, the United States government recognizes 574 tribal nations as sovereign entities. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Office of Federal Acknowledgement (OFA)⁴⁰ oversees the recognition process. Tribes can gain recognition through the Federal Acknowledgement process, by an act of Congress, or through a decision of a United States court.⁴¹ There are stringent requirements for a petitioning tribe to obtain federal recognition status, including (but not limited to) identification as an American Indian group and a distinct community which has maintained political influence over its members as an autonomous entity from 1900 to the present.⁴² Federally-recognized tribes are eligible to receive funding and services from the US government, including preservation of historic sites and artifacts and housing resources.⁴³ Some federally-recognized tribes view their status not as “bestowed upon them” but rather as confirmed by the United States government, through historic precedence as well as ongoing government-to-government consultation about the management of their homelands and other business. *See entries for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, sovereignty, and state recognition.*

³⁷ Robert Lee and Tristan Ahtone, “Land-Grab Universities,” *High Country News*, March 30, 2020, <https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.4/indigenous-affairs-education-land-grab-universities>.

³⁸ Steve Fenton, *Ethnicity*. (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2010).

³⁹ “The Term ‘American Indian,’ Plus Ethnicity, Sovereignty, and Identity,” ICT, 2018, <https://ictnews.org/archive/the-term-american-indian-plus-ethnicity-sovereignty-and-identity>.

“Tribes are governments, not racial classifications,” Indian Law Resource Center, accessed April 27, 2023. <https://indianlaw.org/story/tribes-are-governments-not-racial-classifications>.

⁴⁰ “Office of Federal Acknowledgment (OFA),” Bureau of Indian Affairs, accessed September 5, 2023. <https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/ofa#:~:text=The%20acknowledgment%20process%20is%20the,to%20member%20of%20Indian%20Tribes>.

⁴¹ “Why Tribes Exist Today in the United States,” Bureau of Indian Affairs, accessed April 27, 2023. <https://www.bia.gov/frequently-asked-questions>.

⁴² “25 CFR § 83.11 - What are the criteria for acknowledgment as a federally recognized Indian tribe?” Cornell Law School, accessed April 27, 2023. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/25/83.11>.

⁴³ “Federally recognized Indian tribes and resources for Native Americans,” USA Gov, accessed April 27, 2023. <https://www.usa.gov/tribes#:~:text=The%20U.S.%20government%20officially%20recognizes,contracts%2C%20grants%2C%20or%20compacts>.

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First Nations

The Canadian constitution recognizes three distinct groups of Indigenous peoples: First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. Lenape are included in some of the 630 groups recognized as First Nations (as of 2023).⁴⁴ *See entries for Eelūnaapèewii Lahkèewiit: Delaware Nation at Moraviantown near Chathan-Kent, Ontario, Delaware of Six Nations near Brantford, Ontario, and Munsee-Delaware Nation near St. Thomas, Ontario.*

genocide

The UN defines genocide as a “crime committed with the intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, in whole or in part.”⁴⁵ The United States, individual states, and other actors have targeted American Indians with mass violence. Other policies and practices that aim to eliminate Indigenous peoples as distinct cultural and political groups are sometimes referred to as cultural genocide.⁴⁶ *See entry for cultural genocide.*

Indigenous peoples

Distinct social, cultural and political groups identify as Indigenous based on shared collective ancestral ties to land where they live or from which they have been forcibly displaced. Indigeneity has emerged as a global category to unite political and cultural groups struggling against colonial oppression, enshrined in the 2006 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.⁴⁷ The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues provides advice, raises awareness, disseminates information, and generally deals with matters of “economic and social development, culture, the environment, education, health and human rights” that pertain to Indigenous peoples.⁴⁸ *See entries for American Indian, First Nations, and settler colonialism.*

⁴⁴ “First Nations,” Government of Canada, accessed April 27, 2023.

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100013791/1535470872302>.

⁴⁵ Matthew Lippman. “The convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide: fifty years later.” *Genocide and Human Rights*. Routledge, 2017. 11-110.

⁴⁶ Jeffrey Ostler, *Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019).

Patrick Wolfe. “Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native.” *Journal of genocide research* 8.4 (2006): 387-409.

⁴⁷ Stephanie Nohelani Teves, Andrea Smith, and Michelle H. Raheja, eds., *Native Studies Keywords* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015), 109.

“United Nations Declaration On The Rights Of Indigenous Peoples,” United Nations, accessed April 27, 2023.

<https://social.desa.un.org/issues/indigenous-peoples/united-nations-declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples>.

⁴⁸ “United Nations Permanent Forum On Indigenous Issues (UNPFII),” United Nations, accessed April 27, 2023. <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/unpfii-sessions-2.html>.

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Indian boarding schools*

In Canada and the United States, as part of federal policies of forced assimilation that began in the nineteenth century, Indigenous children were removed from their communities and sent to schools, where they suffered criminal neglect and abuse. In the United States, the 1819 Indian Civilization Fund Act provided funding for Christian missionaries and federal agents to found schools aimed at “civilizing” children by replacing Indigenous knowledge with Christian knowledge, with the ultimate goal of eliminating military resistance to settlement. School officials punished students for speaking any language other than English and for practicing their Indigenous cultures. In Canada, churches and religious groups funded by the government ran the Residential Schooling System, which taught at least 150,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children. Much like in the United States, these schools were designed to suppress Indigenous cultures, identities, and histories.⁴⁹ In recent years, researchers have begun identifying unmarked graves near many schools in both the United States and Canada.⁵⁰ The Bureau of Indian Affairs determined that Nanticoke and Lenape children would be sent to Haskell boarding school (established in 1884, now Haskell Indian Nations University) in Kansas. Given that the state of Delaware sought to eliminate American Indian identities, some Nanticoke saw this as an opportunity to provide their children with a higher education and reinforce their Indian status. The true abusive conditions at the school were likely not known to the families of the attendees.⁵¹ All federally-funded residential boarding schools were closed in 1978 in the United States and 1997 in Canada. *See entries for cultural genocide, Moor, and Indian Welfare Act, 1978.*

Indian Country

Term used broadly to refer to the ancestral and contemporary homelands of Native nations.

⁴⁹ “Residential schools in Canada,” Government of Canada, accessed April 27, 2023.

<https://parks.canada.ca/culture/designation/pensionnat-residential>.

⁵⁰ Richard Luscombe, “Researchers identify 102 students who died at Native American school in Nebraska,” The Guardian, 2021,

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/nov/15/nebraska-native-american-boarding-school-students-died#:~:text=Researchers%20identify%20102%20students%20who%20died%20at%20Native%20American%20school%20in%20Nebraska,-School%20was%20operated&text=Researchers%20say%20they%20have%20identified,believed%20to%20be%20buried%20continues>.

Anderson Cooper, “Canada's unmarked graves: How residential schools carried out “cultural genocide” against indigenous children,” The Guardian, 2023,

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/canada-residential-schools-unmarked-graves-indigenous-children-60-minutes-2023-02-12/>.

⁵¹ “CANR DEI Special Presentation: Karelle Hall,” 2023,

<https://sites.udel.edu/canr-dei/2023/04/05/canr-dei-special-presentation-karelle-hall/>.

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Indian Welfare Act, 1978

In 1969 and 1974, the Association of American Indian Affairs found that between 25-35% of Native children were being separated from their families through adoption, foster care, and residential boarding schools.⁵² In response to the growing Native self-determination movements in the 1960s and 1970s, The Indian Welfare Act of 1978 closed federal boarding schools, strengthened the rights of Native courts, and set stricter standards for the removal of children from their communities. The Act, despite recognizing the failure of federal and state courts, maintained a paternalistic model that emphasized the role of the United States as a “trustee” with “direct interest” in the welfare of Native children. *See entries for Indian boarding schools and self-determination.*

land

Land is a living entity that grounds Indigenous cosmologies and epistemologies. Conceptions of land are as varied as the environments inhabited by Indigenous communities. In many Indigenous contexts, water is included in the notion of land.⁵³ Indigenous intellectual and spiritual traditions are indivisible from the specific land-based contexts in which they have developed.⁵⁴ Due to widespread colonization, land is at the center of Indigenous struggles around the world today.

land acknowledgement

A land acknowledgement honors ancestral and present Native caretakers of the land where an institution is situated or an event takes place.⁵⁵ Now a widespread practice in the United States and Canada, land acknowledgements have been criticized as empty words that signal an institution’s virtue without necessarily entailing a commitment to justice for Indigenous communities. The American Indian and Indigenous Relations Committee of the University of Delaware has joined other institutions in using the phrase “living land acknowledgement” to emphasize the continual process of building relationships with Indigenous communities.⁵⁶ We have

⁵² Indian Child Welfare Act, Public Law 608, U.S. Statutes at Large 92 (1978): 3069-3078.
<http://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/STATUTE-92/pdf/STATUTE-92-Pg3069.pdf>.

⁵³ Mishuana Goeman, “Land as Life: Unsettling the Logics of Containment,” in Teves, Smith, and Raheja, *Native Studies Keywords*, (2015), 71.

⁵⁴ “Land & Natural Resources,” National Congress of American Indians, accessed September 15, 2023.,
<https://www.ncai.org/policy-issues/land-natural-resources>.

⁵⁵ Kate Beane, Mary Lyons, Rose Whipple, Rhiana Yazzie, and Cantemaza (Neil) McKay, “A Guide to Indigenous Land Acknowledgment,” Native Governance Center, October 22, 2019,
<https://nativegov.org/news/a-guide-to-indigenous-land-acknowledgment/>.

⁵⁶ “Living Land Acknowledgment,” Institute for Innovation in Prosecution, accessed June 24, 2022.
<https://www.prosecution.org/living-land-acknowledgment>.

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also developed Institutional Action Steps that outline the material resources needed to support these groups' sovereignty and well-being.⁵⁷

#LandBack

A decentralized, Indigenous-led campaign that spread across North America after 2018, with the mission of returning land to Indigenous caretakers.⁵⁸

land-grab university

Land-grab universities are universities which received land or scrip under the Morrill Act of 1862. Reporters Robert Lee and Tristan Ahtone defined the term “land-grab university” in 2020 when *High Country News* published an expose detailing how the appropriation of nearly 11 million acres of Indigenous land funded land-grant universities of the United States.⁵⁹ The University of Delaware had been shuttered for several years due to lack of funds and was only able to re-open in 1870 after receiving scrip, which it in turn sold. The term land-grab serves as a critique of the Morrill Act; in contrast to the federally designated term “land-grant institution,” the word “grab” emphasizes that university wealth was built through the dispossession of Indigenous lands, at great cost to Indigenous lives and livelihoods. *See the American Indian and Indigenous Relations Committee’s University of Delaware Land Grant History*⁶⁰ report and the entries for land-grant institution, *The Morrill Act (Land Grant Act) of 1862, and scrip*.

land-grant institution

A land-grant institution is the federal term for a college or university which received public land under the Morrill Act of 1862 to fund its endowments. Under this act, Indigenous land was seized by the federal government and redistributed to states, who in turn redistributed the land to colleges for the purpose of funding educational

“Living Land Acknowledgement,” University of Delaware Anti-Racism Initiative, accessed April 27, 2023.

https://sites.udel.edu/antiracism-initiative/committees/american-indian-and-indigenous-relations/living-land-acknowledgement/#Living_Land_Acknowledgement.

⁵⁷ “Institutional Action Steps” University of Delaware Anti-Racism Initiative, accessed April 27, 2023.

https://sites.udel.edu/antiracism-initiative/committees/american-indian-and-indigenous-relations/living-land-acknowledgement/#Institutional_Action_Steps.

⁵⁸ Nikki A. Pieratos, Sarah S. Manning, and Nick Tilsen. "Land back: A meta narrative to help indigenous people show up as movement leaders." *Leadership* 17.1 (2021): 47-61.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715020976204>.

⁵⁹ Robert Lee and Tristan Ahtone, “Land-Grab Universities,” March 30, 2020,

<https://www.hcn.org/issues/52.4/indigenous-affairs-education-land-grab-universities>.

⁶⁰ “Land Grant History,” University of Delaware, accessed September 5, 2023.

https://sites.udel.edu/antiracism-initiative/committees/american-indian-and-indigenous-relations/living-land-acknowledgement/#Land_Grab_History.

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programs. *See the American Indian and Indigenous Relations Committee's University of Delaware Land Grant History*⁶¹ report and the entries for *land-grab university*, *The Morrill Act (Land Grant Act) of 1862*, and *scrip*.

land seizure

Forcible taking of land and removal of prior residents and caretakers. The seizure of Indigenous lands within the United States and Canada was supported by Euro-American frameworks that define land as private property. *See entries for displacement and dispossession*.

land speculation

Purchasing, holding, and then selling land for a higher price after it has appreciated in value. Land-grab universities practiced land speculation to further profit from Native land they received through the Morrill Act of 1862.⁶² *See entries for land-grant institution, land-grab university, The Morrill Act (Land Grant Act) of 1862, and scrip*.

Manifest Destiny

A term coined in the 1840s describing a belief that a Christian United States was divinely destined to expand across the North American continent.⁶³ This doctrine naturalized the colonization of American Indians, including the forced displacement of Lenape and Nanticoke. *See entries for displacement, dispossession, displacement of the Lenape and Nanticoke, and settler colonialism*.

Moor*

Racial category fabricated by Euro-Americans in the late nineteenth century to refer to Lenape and Nanticoke who survived colonization and remain in Delaware. Although the term Moor was historically used to describe people of North Africa, the state of Delaware used this category in an effort to erase the demographic presence of American Indians.⁶⁴ Delaware's schools were racially segregated. Nanticoke

⁶¹ "Land Grant History," University of Delaware, accessed September 5, 2023.

https://sites.udel.edu/antiracism-initiative/committees/american-indian-and-indigenous-relations/living-land-acknowledgement/#Land_Grab_History.

⁶² For instance, when Cornell University received 500,000 acres of land in northern Wisconsin, the university's founder held the land to allow it to appreciate. In the meantime, he logged the land and generated profit from timber products. Today, even after selling the land, the university continues to profit from mineral rights on that land.

Kurt Jordan, "Cornell: A 'Land-Grab University'?" July 29, 2020,

<https://blogs.cornell.edu/cornelluniversityindigenousdispossession/2020/07/29/cornell-a-land-grab-university/>.

⁶³ Shane Mountjoy, *Manifest Destiny: westward expansion* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009).

⁶⁴ "CANR DEI Special Presentation: Karelle Hall," 2023,

<https://sites.udel.edu/canr-dei/2023/04/05/canr-dei-special-presentation-karelle-hall/>.

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petitioned to establish the Nanticoke Indian School, which was incorporated in 1881. It was legally defined as a segregated institution for “Moor” students but enabled the preservation of Nanticoke songs, artistic practices, and ceremony. Other schools exclusively for “Moor” students were established at Moore’s Corner (west of Cheswold), Cheswold, and Fork Branch. “Moor” was used as a racial marker on drivers’ licenses through the 1970s. *See entry for race.*

The Morrill Act (Land Grant Act) of 1862

In 1862, the same year as the better-known Homestead Act, the federal government passed the Morrill Act. The Act promised to give states between 90,000 and 990,000 acres, determined by the size of their congressional delegation. The sale of the land by a state would fund colleges in that state “for the benefit of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts and a Military Tactics Department.”⁶⁵ States without any public lands in the East, Midwest, and South received scrip for land surveyed in the public domain. Western states chose parcels of land within their own borders. Once territories achieved statehood, they were included in the act. All of the land “granted” to universities was formerly Indigenous land. The federal government dispossessed Indigenous nations through treaties, both ratified and unratified, and outright land seizure. *See entries for land-grab university, land-grant institution, ratified, scrip, and treaty.*

nation*

While the term “nation” has European roots, Indigenous groups practiced similar systems of governance prior to European contact, such as the formation of confederacies and establishing treaties. Many Indigenous groups in the United States have adopted the term “nation” to assert their status as sovereign polities and have adapted the term to their own traditions of governance.⁶⁶ *See entries for sovereignty and treaty.*

the one drop rule*

The one drop rule was a principle that anyone with “one drop” of Black ancestry was considered Black in the United States, codified by laws in southern states in the early 20th century. Among other things, this rule served to erase American Indian identities

⁶⁵ “Morrill Act (1862),” National Archives, August 16, 2021, <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/morrill-act>.

⁶⁶ Twyla Baker, Wizipan Little Elk, Bryan Pollard, and Margaret Yellow Bird, “How to Talk about Native Nations: A Guide,” Native Governance Center, May 27, 2021, <https://nativegov.org/news/how-to-talk-about-native-nations-a-guide/>.

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in state censuses by re-categorizing them as Black if they had any Black ancestry.⁶⁷ The one-drop rule was outlawed by the Supreme Court in 1967. *See entries for The Pocahontas Exception and race.*

The Pocahontas Exception*

The Pocahontas Exception allowed anyone with 1/64th American Indian ancestry, and no Black ancestry, to be considered White. This served as an amendment to the 1924 Racial Integrity Act in Virginia and was later adopted by Delaware and other states. Anyone with one sixteenth or more of Black ancestry would be considered Black and anyone with one sixteenth or more of Indian ancestry would be considered Indian. The Pocahontas Exception was added to address concerns of the many descendants of Pocahontas (also known by the names Amonute and Matoaka) and John Rolfe, who at that point were part of the wealthy land-owning white community of Virginia.⁶⁸ *See entries for the one drop rule and race.*

powwow

Celebration of Native culture and sovereignty where people from diverse nations come together to dance, sing, and honor their ancestors. The term comes from the word Pau Wau (“medicine man”) in Narrtack, a language spoken by Algonquin people in what is now Massachusetts.⁶⁹ Contemporary powwows are held across Indian Country and abroad. *See entries for Indian Country and sovereignty.*

protocol

A protocol is a system that defines appropriate procedures and conduct for a given situation. Protocols vary among different Indigenous communities and often differ from Euro-American behaviors and customs. Learning Indigenous protocols can guide respectful interactions with Indigenous communities in a variety of contexts, from ceremonies to diplomacy.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ “CANR DEI Special Presentation: Karelle Hall,” 2023, <https://sites.udel.edu/canr-dei/2023/04/05/canr-dei-special-presentation-karelle-hall/>.

Winthrop D. Jordan and Paul Spickard. "Historical origins of the one-drop racial rule in the United States." *Journal of Critical Mixed Race Studies* 1.1 (2014): 98-132.

⁶⁸ “CANR DEI Special Presentation: Karelle Hall,” 2023, <https://sites.udel.edu/canr-dei/2023/04/05/canr-dei-special-presentation-karelle-hall/>.

Kevin Noble Maillard. "The Pocahontas exception: The exemption of American Indian ancestry from racial purity law." *Mich. J. Race & L.* 12 (2006): 351.

⁶⁹ “American Indian Powwows: Multiplicity and Authenticity - History,” Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, accessed June 24, 2022.

<https://folklife.si.edu/online-exhibitions/american-indian-powwows/history/smithsonian>.

⁷⁰ “What are Indigenous Protocols?” University of Windsor, accessed April 27, 2023.

<https://www.uwindsor.ca/ctl/550/indigenous-protocols>.

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race*

Tribal citizenship is a political status, not a racial one.⁷¹ Native Nations did not racialize their citizenship prior to European contact, and tribal citizens today often have a diversity of ethnic backgrounds. Since the nineteenth century, the U.S. federal and state governments have racialized Lenape and Nanticoke to eliminate them as sovereign peoples. Race is a construct, or set of ideas, developed to enable and perpetuate Euro-American colonialism and conquest. Enlightenment thinkers posited that race had a biological basis through the study of scientific fictions like phrenology.⁷² Race re-defined who was seen as fully human in Euro-American worldviews based on the physical trait of skin color and other phenotypic characteristics, and therefore who was deserving of dignity and political rights. The academic discourse of Critical Race Studies uses “race” to analyze systems of domination in their historical contexts rather than to refer to an inherent trait of an individual or group. *See entries for blood quantum, Indian boarding school, Moor, and the one drop rule.*

ratified/unratified

In United States law, once a treaty has been signed, the U.S. Senate must approve or ratify that treaty for it to become binding. Many treaties between the United States and Indigenous nations were never ratified. *See entry for treaty.*

scrip

A scrip represents a claim to a 160-acre parcel of public land distributed to states under the Morrill Act of 1862. Each state designated a land-grant university and gifted it scrips, which could be sold to fund the university’s endowments. Land-grant universities could sell the right to scrips, even if they did not directly sell the land itself, as was the case with Delaware College (as the University of Delaware was then called). Some schools used scrips to engage in further land speculation. *See entries for land-grab university, land-grant institution, land speculation, and the Morrill Act of 1862.*

self-determination

Cyndy Baskin. "Storytelling circles: Reflections of Aboriginal protocols in research." *Canadian social work review/revue canadienne de service social* (2005): 171-187.

⁷¹ “Tribes are governments, not racial classifications,” Indian Law Resource Center, accessed April 27, 2023. <https://indianlaw.org/story/tribes-are-governments-not-racial-classifications>.

⁷² “Phrenology,” Britannica, accessed September 5, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/phrenology>.

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The meaning of self-determination varies across different Native nations' use of the term. Broadly, it designates Native nations' right to self-governance, or the ability to direct their communal political, economic, cultural, and environmental relations.

settler

Refers to a non-Indigenous person living in Indigenous homelands occupied by a settler colonial government, such as the United States and Canada. Not all settlers included in this definition have benefited from settler colonialism. Many groups in the United States, such as Black, Asian, Latinx, and others, have suffered exploitation by the same Euro-American colonial systems that have displaced Native nations and profited from their homelands. Some argue that people whose ancestors were forced to migrate through slavery or other exploitative means should not be referred to as settlers.⁷³ *See entry for settler colonialism.*

settler colonialism

Settler colonialism is an ongoing system that disposes Indigenous peoples and erases their cultures. A colonizing power seizes Native land, eliminates (through genocide, assimilation, or displacement) Native people, and replaces them with settlers. Settler colonialism continues today through official policies and unofficial practices that endanger Native people and cultures.⁷⁴ *See entries for displacement, genocide, and settler.*

sovereignty

Sovereignty is a European term that Indigenous peoples have adopted to assert their nationhood, including their rights to both political and cultural self-determination. The U.S. constitution sets forth three sovereigns: the federal government, the states, and Indian Tribes. Tribal sovereignty was first recognized by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832). The federal government formally recognizes some tribal entities as sovereign, while still treating them as domestic dependents subject to many powers of the U.S. government.⁷⁵ Native nations often use the concept of sovereignty in excess of Euro-American jurisprudence.⁷⁶ *See entry for nation.*

⁷³ Ashleigh-Rae Thomas, "Who Is a Settler, According to Indigenous and Black Scholars," accessed May 9, 2023.

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/gyajj4/who-is-a-settler-according-to-indigenous-and-black-scholars>.

⁷⁴ Patrick Wolfe. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of genocide research* 8.4 (2006): 387-409.

⁷⁵ "Tribal Sovereignty," Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians, accessed April 28, 2023.

<https://www.paumatribes.com/government/tribal-sovereignty/#:~:text=In%20defining%20tribal%20sovereign%20powers,powers%20of%20the%20United%20States>.

⁷⁶ Jolene Rickard. "Visualizing sovereignty in the time of biometric sensors." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 110.2 (2011): 465-486. <https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-1162543>.

* Asterix indicates the entry was partially or fully constructed through tribal consultation or communication

state recognition*

States can formally recognize a tribe, usually through legislative action or via an act from a state's Indian Commission. Unlike federal recognition, state recognition does not guarantee federal funding and services (although some federally-recognized tribes are also state-recognized). However, in some cases state recognition qualifies a tribe for federal and state support through agencies such as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Small Business Administration.⁷⁷ *See entries for federal recognition and sovereignty.*

traditional knowledge

Traditional knowledge refers to the collective expertise Native communities have gained from a long-term relationship with their homelands. Oral tradition is the basis of traditional knowledge, which makes Native language integral to the resurgence and continuation of communal culture, government, and spirituality.

treaty

Between 1778 and 1871, the United States negotiated agreements with Native nations to establish territorial boundaries and mutual responsibilities, known as treaties. The first treaty in 1778 was made with Lenape. The United States Senate ratified 370 treaties with tribes, while at least 45 treaties were never ratified. The United States ended treaty negotiations with American Indians in 1871, after which relationships were formalized through Congressional Acts, Executive Orders, and Executive Agreements.⁷⁸ The federal government has repeatedly overturned and transgressed the treaty rights of American Indians, although many treaties remain in effect today. *See entry for ratified/unratified.*

tribe

A tribe is a group of people who share a common ancestry, culture and language, often living together in a common space and composed of numerous families.⁷⁹ In the context of the United States, tribe refers to an organized community of American Indians that may or may not be formally recognized by federal or state governments.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ "State Recognition of American Indian Tribes," National Conference of State Legislatures, accessed April 27, 2023. <https://www.ncsl.org/quad-caucus/state-recognition-of-american-indian-tribes>.

⁷⁸ "Does the United States still make treaties with Indian tribes?" Bureau of Indian Affairs, accessed April 27, 2023. <https://www.bia.gov/faqs/does-united-states-still-make-treaties-indian-tribes>.

⁷⁹ "Tribe" Cambridge Dictionary, accessed April 27, 2023.

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"Tribe," Merriam-Webster, accessed April 27, 2023. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tribe>.

⁸⁰ "Tribal Nations & the United States: An Introduction," National Congress of American Indians, accessed April 27, 2023. <https://www.ncai.org/about-tribes>.

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Some criticize the term tribe as a word that colonizers used to portray notions of 'uncivilized' or "primitive" societies.⁸¹ Some Indigenous groups in North America have incorporated "tribe" into their proper name, while others prefer nation, band, pueblo, community, people, or another term. *See entries for state recognition and federal recognition.*

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Since the 1970s, Truth and Reconciliation commissions have become a global mechanism for transitional justice, used to bring an end to periods of violence that threaten to delegitimize a nation-state. A president/prime minister or legislative branch/parliament can mandate a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the causes and consequences of the mass human rights violations in question, to construct a national truth narrative that acknowledges the past, and to provide a space for reconciliation between the perpetrators and survivors. Canada established a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2007 that facilitates reconciliation for former students, families and communities impacted by Canada's Indian Residential School system, including providing funding and support for those affected to share their story and educate the public.⁸² The United States has yet to mandate a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to address any aspect of the colonization of Native Americans. *See entries for Indian boarding schools and settler colonialism.*

Turtle Island*

North America is known to some Indigenous peoples, including some Lenape and Nanticoke, as Turtle Island, referencing Indigenous stories in which the land that today is known as the North American continent is formed on the back of a turtle.⁸³

The Walking Purchase*

In 1737, Thomas Penn falsely claimed that an agreement (on which the signature was later found to be forged) between his father, William Penn, and a previous Lenape leader stated that the Penns could claim all land that could be covered in a day and a half of walking. The Penns cleared a straight path ahead of time and hired runners to

⁸¹ "Tribe," The Open Encyclopedia of Anthropology, accessed April 27, 2023.

<https://www.anthroencyclopedia.com/entry/tribe>.

⁸² "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada," Government of Canada, accessed April 27, 2023.

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⁸³ Steven Newcomb, "'Canada' and the 'United States' Are in Turtle Island," Indian Country Today, accessed June 24, 2022.

<https://indiancountrytoday.com/archive/canada-and-the-united-states-are-in-turtle-island>.

Eldon Yellowhorn and Kathy Lowinger, *Turtle Island: The Story of North America's First People* (Toronto: Annick Press, 2017).

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complete the “walk.” As a result of this dishonest deed, Lenape were dispossessed from 12,000 square miles of land.⁸⁴ *See entry for dispossession.*

unceded

Territory that Native peoples never legally transferred to the government of the United States. This includes both lands currently under Native jurisdiction (through the reservation system) and lands currently claimed by the United States. *See entry for ceded.*

unrecognized*

Unrecognized Native communities are those which do not currently have federal or state recognition in the United States. There are a variety of reasons why a group may identify as American Indian but not have state or federal recognition, including high costs, political or bureaucratic challenges, and difficulties documenting the community’s historical continuity. These groups may assert their own identity and sovereignty outside of the recognition process. Preferred terminology differs across individuals and communities and includes currently unrecognized and unacknowledged. *See entries for federal recognition, sovereignty, and state recognition.*

Further Reading and Resources:

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⁸⁴ Angus Love. "The Supreme Court, Tribal Land Claims, and the Doctrine of Discovery; Trampling on the Walking Purchase." *Guild Prac.* 65 (2008): 104.

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Appendix A:

In following with the request of the Delaware Nation, we include below a copy of their official governmental resolution that they do not acknowledge or work with any non-federally recognized groups claiming Native identity, as well as their extended executive council letter explaining their stance against these groups.

* Asterix indicates the entry was partially or fully constructed through tribal consultation or communication

Delaware Nation

P.O. Box 825
Anadarko, OK 73005
405 / 247-2448
Fax: 405 / 247-9393

Resolution #2023-114

DENOUNCING FRAUDULENT CLAIMS TO LENAPE NATIONHOOD RESOLUTION

- WHEREAS**, the Delaware Nation is a federally-recognized Indian Tribe that operates in accordance with its Constitution, as ratified on April 21, 1973, as amended from time to time, and recognized by the Secretary of Interior; and
- WHEREAS**, according to Article VI – Powers of the Constitution, “the Executive Committee shall have specific authority...to promulgate and enforce ordinances and codes governing law and order to protect the peace, health, safety, and general welfare of Delaware tribal citizens...”, and generally “shall have full authority to act on behalf of the Nation in all other matters upon which the Nation is empowered to act...”; and
- WHEREAS**, the historical record clearly demonstrates that the sovereign governing bodies of Lenape people include Delaware Nation were removed from their homelands in the Northeastern United States, and that Delaware Nation traveled through 18 states and were relocated to Anadarko, Oklahoma, and Delaware Nation Citizens uphold that **no citizens were left behind**; and
- WHEREAS**, the Delaware Nation Executive Committee acknowledges that an increasing number of various individuals and Corporations posing as Indigenous Nations (CPAIN) claim to be Lenape or of Lenape descent and primarily reside in New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania; and
- WHEREAS**, the group calling itself the “Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania” (hereafter referred to as LNPA) is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization which has no level of recognition, sovereignty, or authority as a Lenape Nation, and members of this organization do not have Lenape tribal citizenship status or status as American Indian peoples, and is thusly a Corporation Posing as an Indigenous Nation; and
- WHEREAS**, the “LNPA” misrepresents itself as a Lenape Nation to their local and state governments, donors, institutions, organizations, students, academics, etc. and they use this fabricated platform to acquire resources, speaking or educational platforms, jobs, grant money, etc. which prevents the federally recognized Lenape Nations who were wrongfully removed from their homelands, and who are the recognized authorities on their history and cultural practices, from being able to re-engage in their homelands; and

WHEREAS, CPAIN are furthermore a threat to the Lenape Nation's sovereignty because their claims to authority on Lenape history, religious practices, ancestral relations, cultural and intellectual property are appropriated from the legitimate Lenape Nations and undermines the sovereign rights of the Lenape Nations and authority of their governments to self-determine their own citizenship requirements, religious leader, histories and cultural narratives; and

WHEREAS, it is the official policy of Delaware Nation that we do not work with or acknowledge non-federally recognized groups claiming Native identity for these reasons; and

WHEREAS, many non-federally recognized groups claiming Lenape identity including the "LNPA" seek out state governmental acknowledgement in attempts to validate their identities in lieu of being able to meet the sovereign self-determined standards of the federally recognized Lenape Nations, and for Delaware Nation who has always been recognized and consulted at the federal level as the Indigenous peoples of PA, NJ, DE and parts of NY for the management of their homeland region, the idea of "LNPA seeking out state recognition is insulting, inappropriate and unconstitutional.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Delaware Nation, a federally recognized tribe, and its governing board, the Delaware Nation Executive Committee, for the reasons stated above do not recognize any fraudulent group or individual claiming Lenape identity or nationhood and do not support state recognition of such. Doing so, would undermine our tribal sovereignty as these groups and individuals are not tribal citizens of a federally recognized tribe and do not have authority to speak for or accept resources as Lenape tribal citizens or nations.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Delaware Nation Executive Committee at a duly called Executive Committee meeting held on April 19, 2023, by a vote of 4 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions, a quorum being present.

ATTEST:

Ann Brower

Ann Brower, Secretary



APPROVED:

Deborah Dotson

Deborah Dotson, President

Delaware Nation

P.O. Box 825
Anadarko, OK 73005
405 / 247-2448
Fax: 405 / 247-9393

To Whom It May Concern,

It has come to the attention of the federally recognized Lenape tribal nations that groups fraudulently claiming Lenape identity have appealed you to support their efforts to become state recognized. This is a serious issue affecting the Lenape people today who have been displaced from their homelands, with real material and legal consequences for all constituents in the state of Pennsylvania. We would like to take this opportunity to educate you on this issue, in case you are unaware of our stance against such groups, and respectfully request that you do NOT support the state recognition of any non-federally recognized groups in Pennsylvania claiming Lenape identity. We are happy to engage in further conversations with your office about this information as needed.

Who are the federally recognized Lenape people today, what are “non-recognized groups claiming Native identity,” and why are they a problem?

Today multiple sovereign federally recognized Lenape tribal nations exist whose governments are based far from their homelands in eastern PA, NJ, DE, and parts of NY and MD as a result of centuries of settler colonial land dispossessions, broken treaties, and violence. They are Delaware Nation (Anadarko OK); the Delaware Tribe of Indians (Bartlesville OK); the Stockbridge Munsee Community (WI); and the Munsee Delaware Nation and the Eelūnaapëewii Lahkëewiit (Delaware Nation at Moraviantown) both in Ontario, Canada. The terms Lenape and Delaware refer to the same Indigenous peoples from the same ancestral homeland region. Delaware is the term European colonists historically imposed upon the Lenape people, and their nations must continue to use this in their official titles to uphold treaties which utilized the same terminology.

Delaware Nation, the Delaware Tribe of Indians, and the Stockbridge Munsee Community are the only legitimate federally recognized Lenape tribal nations within the United States authorized to carry out official government-to-government business with the United States. Multiple of the Lenape tribal nations have issued official governmental proclamations that they do not acknowledge or work with any non-federally recognized groups or individuals claiming Lenape identity. This is in response to the issue of increasing fraudulent claims to Lenape identity and nationhood across Lenape homelands. All federally recognized tribal nations are sovereign nations, which means that they have the right to govern themselves and regulate their own internal affairs and citizenship requirements. This status is confirmed by their longstanding establishment of historic and ongoing treaties—both with European nations prior to the founding of the United States, and after—and their continued nation-to-nation consultations with the United States federal government. The Lenape tribal nations have fought hard to preserve their sovereignty since contact despite centuries of settler colonial efforts of eradication. The illegitimate assertions of political/cultural authority from non-recognized groups claiming

Lenape identity and nationhood undermine the tribal sovereignty of the federally recognized Lenape tribal nations.

Non-recognized groups claiming Native identity and/or nationhood have become an increasing problem in Lenape homelands, stemming from a long harmful history of white colonizers, and often sympathizers, wanting to appropriate and exploit Indigenous peoples, their cultures, and their resources. They often form non-profit or 501(c)(3) organizations which self-identify themselves as Indigenous nations or descendant Native communities to their local/state governments, donors, institutions, students/academics, etc., and they use this fabricated platform to acquire resources, speaking or educational platforms, jobs, grant money, land donations, etc. that should be rightfully going to the federally recognized Indigenous Tribal Nations who were wrongfully and forcibly removed from their homelands.

Over the past few years, many academics have been outed for fraudulent claims to Native identity, including University of Saskatchewan professor Carrie Bourassa; Dartmouth College professor Susan Taffe Reed; and Andrea Smith who has held multiple university positions even after her fraudulent claims to Cherokee identity were exposed. Academic conferences have been held specifically to address this issue (see “Unsettling Genealogies: A Forum on Pseudo Indians, Race Shifting, Pretendians, and Self Indigenization in Media Arts Politics and the Academy” hosted by Michigan State University in March 2022). And academic scholarship such as the publications of Circe Sturm, Daryl Leroux, Kim Tallbear, and Jacqueline Keeler have all exposed these significant issues. Yet rampant ignorance surrounding claims to Native identity persists, especially in Lenape homelands. Our historic preservation offices have found that fraudulent claims to Lenape descendancy and/or nationhood are especially commonplace in Pennsylvania, and are frequently misrepresented by local and state media.

What is the group calling itself the “Lenape Nation of PA”?

Delaware Nation has signed a governmental resolution specifically denouncing the group which calls itself the “Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania,” which has caused significant harm to and erasure of the federally recognized Lenape tribal nations (see attached). We are aware this group has sent letters to various organizations and political officials pleading for their support to get state recognition. We are also aware of the false rhetoric they have promoted about themselves, to which we would offer the following clarifications.

The “Lenape Nation of Pennsylvania” is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, which has NO level of recognition, sovereignty, or authority as a Lenape nation, and members of this organization do NOT have Lenape tribal citizenship status or status as American Indian peoples. Yet the Lenape Nation of PA continues to publicly misrepresent itself as a tribal nation. The LNPA even goes so far as to sign “treaties” with miscellaneous individuals, organizations, and local government officials (see Williams 2022 and Witkowski 2023), which is a perversion of the treaty process and tremendous insult to the federally recognized Lenape tribal nations’ longstanding history of treaty relations with various other sovereign nations since contact.

The Lenape Nation of PA frequently claims that they have made attempts to welcome the federally recognized Lenape back home and work with them as relatives, but the federally recognized Lenape assert this is false. Instead of seeking to act as allies in solidarity with the federally recognized Lenape peoples who they claim to be related to, we have seen repeatedly that the resources these groups consume and the authority they divert have instead actively prevent federally recognized Nations from being able to engage in their homelands. Non-recognized groups like this one have for decades been appropriating traditional knowledge and publicized educational materials from the federally recognized nations, and usurping educational platforms and resources through their claims to Lenape identity. And they use the open sharing and/or sale of their either misrepresentative or stolen “tribal knowledge, language, and cultural productions” with non-Native individuals and organizations in order to entice allies to support their legitimacy in light of their “generosity” to the region. Their sale of any items under the false pretenses of a Native identity is against the Indian Arts and Crafts Act. Yet they have never been persecuted for this identity fraud that has been ongoing for decades, and they continue to actively prevent the federally recognized Lenape from accessing resources they need to return to and engage in their own homelands.

The Lenape Nation of PA frequently claims that all of its members must have legitimate proof of heritage or descendancy from Lenape people who remained in Pennsylvania to enroll. With a quick review of the Lenape Nation of PA’s website you can find a link to their membership application for those “requesting a Nation enrollment card”—which again, mischaracterizes their nonprofit organization as a nation. This form asks applicants to provide information on a potential Lenape ancestor going back as far as eight generations (even allowing additional generations prior if needed), and to trace their lineage back to the current applicant. They simply ask for the presumed ancestor’s birth name, date of birth, place of birth, marriage, and place of death, and a statement of “how you know/found out you are Lenape...in line with our tradition of oral history.” The application page does state that “submitting this form does not guarantee membership in the Lenape Nation of PA.” However, this methodology of mining archival records and family lore to prioritize one potential Native ancestor among thousands of other non-Native ancestors is extremely problematic, as the works of Kim Tallbear, Daryl Leroux and others have pointed out. And, it does NOT entitle you to tribal citizenship.

Many American people living in the United States today have various ancestral heritages from other nations, and potentially also some Native American ancestors. However, a person with one Italian ancestor eight generations ago for example, is not automatically an enrolled Italian citizen today. Nor could they simply band together with other people of distant Italian descent, start a new Italian nation under the banner of a non-profit organization, and begin signing treaties and making claims to political and cultural authority as the nation of Italy. The same is true for Lenape citizenship. This is why many tribal nations have stressed that the issue of non-recognized groups claiming Lenape identity or nationhood is not about race or identity politics or claims to heritage; it is an issue of sovereignty and political status. Allowing these non-profit organizations, which are essentially corporations, to simply determine themselves to be nations sets a dangerous precedent.

The historical record clearly demonstrates that the central sovereign governing bodies of Lenape people were forced out of their homelands and became the five federally recognized Lenape tribal nations we have today—which is precisely why they have federal recognition today. The federally recognized Lenape tribal nations have proved the continuation of their citizenship, culture, and sovereignty throughout centuries of removals and ongoing treaties with the U.S. government. The Lenape Nation of PA argues that their Lenape ancestors historically stayed behind in Lenape homelands during the removal period. But this rhetoric is a common red herring of non-recognized groups, which both Sturm and Leroux have exposed in their scholarship. Again, it problematically equates possible distant and limited ancestry with sovereign tribal citizenship status. It is also used to suggest that they are somehow more “legitimate” because of their living in Pennsylvania and supposedly “refusing government intervention or recognition in their lives”—at least until now, as they appeal for state recognition—as opposed to the displaced federally recognized tribes who were forcibly removed.

The historical reality is that bounties were set by the Pennsylvania government for Lenape scalps during the Seven Years’ War, and numerous massacres of even peaceful Lenape villages are documented in the historic record, emphasizing the danger and unfeasibility of continuing to remain in Lenape homelands during the removal period—at least if you continued to openly practice Lenape culture or sovereign governance. Even if some Lenape descendants potentially chose to stay in Lenape homelands while the sovereign governing bodies of Lenape people were forced out, they ultimately accepted American citizenship and were no longer Lenape citizens. They chose to benefit from the very colonial system oppressing their removed “relations,” buying lands, consuming goods, and paying taxes for generations which funded the federal extermination policies threatening their “relations” in Oklahoma who didn’t receive dual U.S. citizenship until 1924.

This context illuminates the anger and frustration federally recognized Lenape citizens often feel when confronted with non-recognized groups portraying themselves as “fellow victims of settler colonial oppression” and/or as friendly “relations” simply trying to welcome their “Lenape kin” back home. Imagine the hypocrisy of benefitting from U.S. citizenship privileges for generations, suddenly emerging in the late 20th / early 21st century and claiming to be a tribal nation, then condemning your “relations” in Oklahoma (who you’ve ignored for generations) for upholding the federal recognition system forcibly imposed upon them—the same system which also importantly affirmed the Lenape’s legacy of sovereignty?

Why is the status of federal recognition important, and why would federally recognized tribes not support state recognition?

The state of Pennsylvania does not, and should not, recognize any tribal nations at the state level. Nor should any local governments. Article I Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution specifically reserves “the power to regulate Commerce with foreign nations and among the several states, and with the Indian tribes” for Congress, because nation-to-nation negotiations of course occur at the federal level.

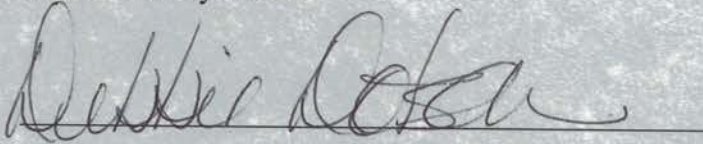
Many non-recognized groups claiming Lenape identity seek out state governmental recognition in attempts to validate their identities, in lieu of being able to meet the citizenship requirements of the federally recognized Lenape nations. The Lenape Nation of PA frequently publicly condemn the fact that the state of Pennsylvania does not officially recognize any tribes to try to advocate for their own legitimacy (see Williams 2022). In addition, the Lenape Nation of PA recently signed a “treaty” with Delaware Township (Pike County) supervisors which supposedly recognizes them as a tribe (see Witkowski 2023). The implication that local township level officials can simply justify who is or is not rightfully claiming Native identity through a farce of a treaty, despite the official governmental proclamations of federally recognized tribal nations, is deeply disturbing and perpetuates the United States’ undermining of tribal sovereignty.

What this rhetoric fails to acknowledge is that the federally recognized Lenape have always been recognized at the federal level as having homelands in Pennsylvania, though their governments are based in different states today as a result of historical forced removals. And they have been always been consulted at the federal level for the management of their broader homeland region (including PA, NJ, DE, and parts of other states). Thus, for the federally recognized Lenape, the idea of seeking out state recognition is insulting, unnecessary, and inappropriate. Multiple tribal nations facing these rampant issues of fraudulent claims to Native identity have argued that the idea of states trying to bestow official recognition or legitimize the tribal nationhood of groups claiming Native identity is unconstitutional (see Keeler 2015).

Federally recognized tribal nations are of course well aware of the problematic settler colonial legacy of the federal recognition process. They are, after all, the ones who lived the realities of these governmental policies. This is one of the reasons why both the Delaware Tribe of Indians and Delaware Nation removed blood quantum from their citizenship requirements in favor of lineal descent. But the reality is that the federally recognized process remains one of the only tools tribal nations have been able to use to fight back against fraudulent claims to their identities and threats to their sovereignty. In attempting to circumvent the governments and citizenship processes of federally recognized Lenape tribal nations, non-recognized groups undermine the tribal sovereignty of the very peoples they are trying to claim relation to.

We appreciate how uncomfortable and confusing this conversation can be for political officials and institutions unfamiliar with the intricacies of tribal nationhood, sovereignty, and citizenship. We also recognize that as tribal nations displaced from our homelands by no fault of our own, we are not currently voting constituents in your region. However, the issue of fraudulent claims to Lenape identity has impacted countless individuals, organizations, academics, and political officials within your constituency. And ultimately this should be a nonpartisan issue, which we hope has a simple solution: conversations about who is or is not a sovereign tribal nation should remain between longstanding federally recognized tribal nations and the United States federal government.

The following federally recognized tribal nations indicate their alignment AGAINST any non-recognized groups claiming Lenape (or other) identity/nationhood seeking recognition by the state of Pennsylvania:



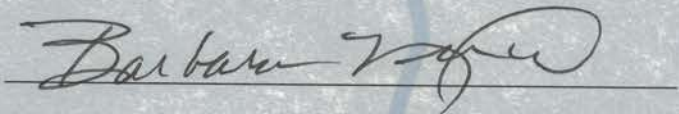
Deborah Dotson, President



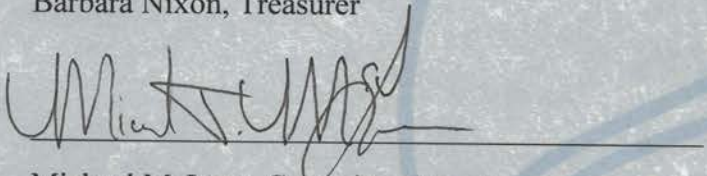
Victoria De La Rosa-Feliciano, Vice President



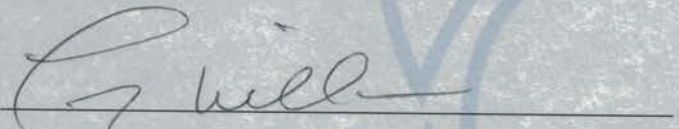
Ann Brower, Secretary



Barbara Nixon, Treasurer



Michael McLane, Committee Member



Terry Williams, Committee Member