

# CONNECTIONS



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## INTRODUCTORY READING

The people encountered by the Europeans in the 1600s called themselves the Lenape, which loosely translates as either “the common people” or “the ancient people.” They called their homeland Lenapehoking and their communities reached from the Lower Hudson region to the Delaware Bay, including portions of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. To other tribes in the region, they were known as “grandfather” because of their ancient roots in the region.

In the early 1600s, at the time of European contact, their population was around 20,000, divided into roughly twenty **autonomous** groups, closely interconnected through **clan** membership, Turkey, Wolf, or Turtle, which was traced through the mother. The Canarsee and Marechkawieck of the Lenape tribe lived in what is now Brooklyn.

Clan lands and dwellings were “owned,” or held in trust for the clan, by the women as heads of households. The concept of shared land use was fundamental to their society – and utterly foreign to the European system of land ownership and leasing. The rise of the European system in North America would prove devastating to the Lenape, whose communal identity was rooted in a land of fluid natural boundaries.

When the Dutch arrived in the 17th century in what is now New York City, their encounters with the Lenape were, at first, mostly amicable, according to historical records. They shared the land and traded guns, beads and wool for beaver furs. As the myth goes, the Dutch even “purchased” Manahatta island from the Lenape in 1626. The transaction, enforced by the eventual building of wall around New Amsterdam, marked the very beginning of the Lenape’s forced mass **migration** out of their homeland.

The Lenape likely viewed the “sale” of Manhattan as a deal to share the land, but *not* to sell it. The Dutch, however, viewed it as a proper sale, and they wanted the indigenous people to leave what they considered as “their” land. Letters and notes from the time document the Dutch frustration with the indigenous who would not leave the land, including one complaint logged from a New Amsterdam council meeting on May 25, 1660, that “the savages would not remove from the land that they had bought,” to which the indigenous responded that they had only sold the grass on the land, not the land itself.

The wall, which started showing up on maps in the 1660s, was built to keep out the Native Americans and the British. It eventually became Wall Street, and Manahatta became Manhattan, where part of the Lenape trade route, known as Wickquasgeck, became Brede weg, later Broadway. The Lenape helped shape the geography of modern-day New York City, but other traces of their legacy have all but vanished. In one of the most diverse cities in the United States, there are tellingly few native New Yorkers. Some Lenape today, however, are working to bring their heritage back to the city.

In the 200 years that passed since first contact, the Lenape were devastated by **expulsion** from their homeland, diseases, and wars between the Europeans and American colonizers. Skilled warriors, the Lenape sent soldiers to every war in which the United States was engaged. By 1700 their numbers were reduced to about 3,000; diseases imported by Europeans had taken a terrible toll. With the loss of their elders who had been the historians and keepers of tradition, their culture adapted, and, although some traditions are no longer practiced, many ceremonies and beliefs are still strong.

The loss of the homeland, Lenapehoking, was a terrible blow, because their identity as a people had been bound up with the land for thousands of years. The Lenape were forced further and further west by expansionist policies and settlers who were often violent. In their subsequent relocations and various treaties with the U.S. government, the Lenape often were dependent upon the hospitality of other tribes to allow them to settle in their lands. By 1870, most of the surviving Lenape (or Delawares, as they came to be known) had moved from Western Pennsylvania to Ohio, then Missouri, Kansas, and finally Oklahoma.

After having signed more than 70 treaties and agreements with the government (most of which were broken) they purchased a reservation from the Cherokee in Oklahoma. They reside today in the towns of Bartlesville and Anadarko. Three Nations of Lenape who split earlier from the main body are the: Stockbridge-Munsee Community, Band of Mohican Indians in Bowler, Wisconsin; Eelünaapéewi Lahkéewiit, the Delaware Nation at Moraviantown; and the Munsee Delaware Nation, both residing in Ontario, Canada. Smaller bands of Lenape still live in New England and the mid-Atlantic, but most are self-recognized, one exception being the Ramapough Lenape Nation, recognized by the state of New Jersey but not the U.S. government.

**SOURCES:** Adapted by J.E. Molly Seegers from:

McCully, Betsy. "The Lenapes: the First New Yorkers." *New York Nature*, 12 Nov. 2018, [www.newyorknature.us/lenapes/](http://www.newyorknature.us/lenapes/).

and

Connolly, Colleen. "The True Native New Yorkers Can Never Truly Reclaim Their Homeland." *Smithsonian Magazine*. 5 October 2019. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/true-native-new-yorkers-can-never-truly-reclaim-their-homeland-180970472/>



“The Lenape lived in a traditional homeland that stretched from the edge of modern-day Connecticut to Delaware, including nearly all of New Jersey and most of southeastern New York—an area that has since been labeled Lenapehoking. Across this area, the people lived in small bands, moving from place to place with the seasons, following the available food supply. The small bands the Lenape lived in chose their own leaders, with no band owing allegiance to another except what was felt through ties of respect, kinship, and culture.”

Sanderson, Eric W. "The Lenape." *Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City*. New York: Abrams, 2009.



**Document 1** - Bolton, Reginald P. "MAP I." *Indian Paths in the Great Metropolis*. New York: Museum of the American Indian, 1922. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

1. The numbers on this map represent former Lenape camps or planting fields. How many Lenape settlements are shown on **DOCUMENT 1**?

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2. What natural resource are these camps located near? Why do you think the Lenape chose to make their camps there and not further inland?

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3. The bold lines represent old Lenape trails. Can you identify any that overlap with roads, ferries, and/or train lines in New York City today?

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4. How do you think the Lenape traveled from Manhattan to Brooklyn?

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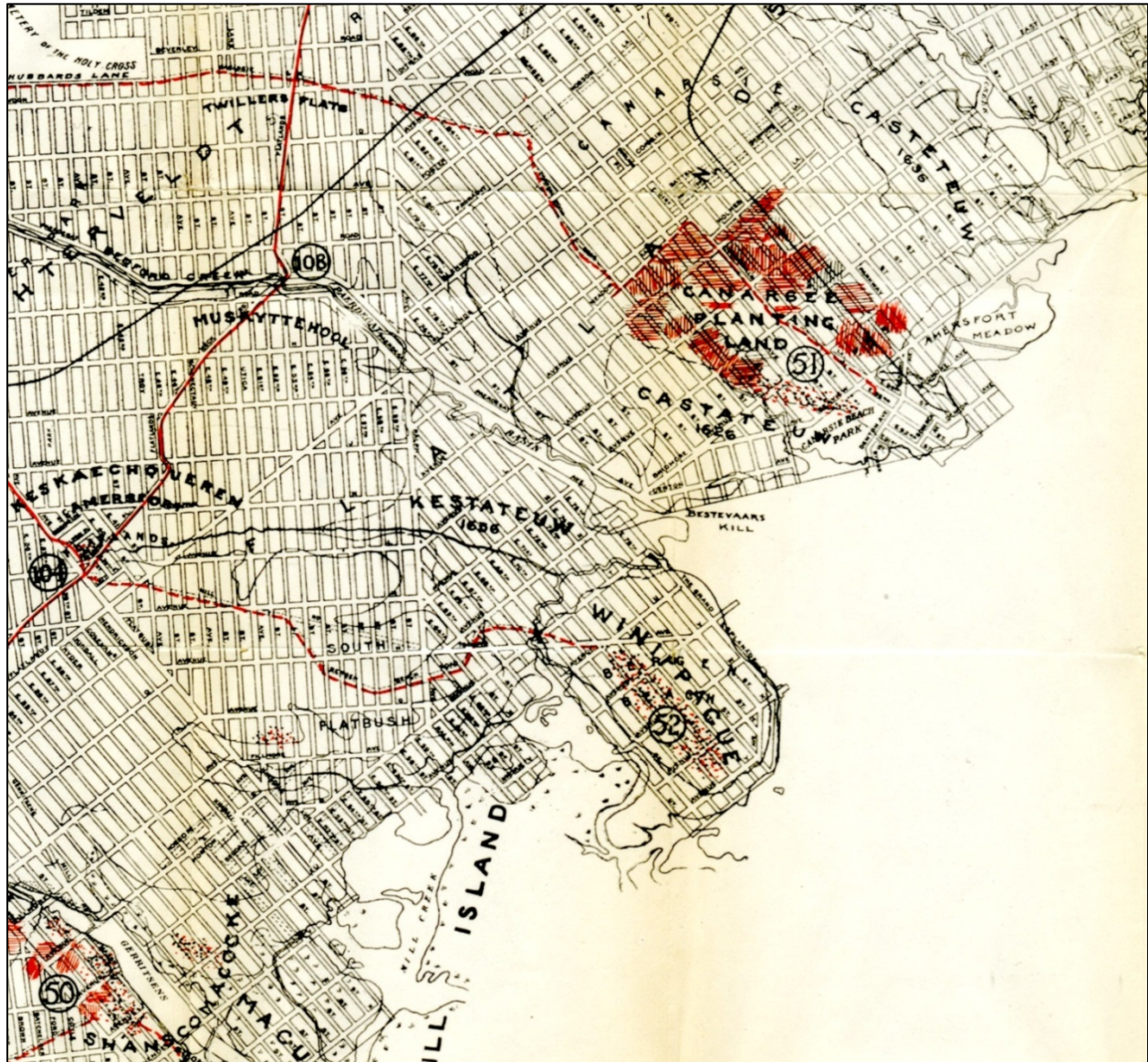
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"The natives occupying the site of the City of New York were divided into a number of **chieftaincies**. Their people settled in a certain locality ... [and selected a leader who] became the Sachem or Chief of that locality. While, therefore, they continued to belong to the Lenape tribe, they came in time to be known by local or territorial names, and sometimes by the name of their Sachem ... Thus within the City we find that Kings County, which is now the Borough of Brooklyn, was inhabited and possessed by the chieftaincy of Canarsee, whose headquarters were at or near Canarsie, a name which still appears upon the City map."

Bolton, Reginald P. "Division and Territories." *Indian Life of Long Ago in the City of New York*. Port Washington, NY: I.J. Friedman, 1971. 9.



**Document 2** - Bolton, Reginald P. "MAP VIII, D." *Indian Paths in the Great Metropolis*. New York: Museum of the American Indian, 1922. Brooklyn Collection, Brooklyn Public Library.

1. According to the text, what was the name of the Lenape chieftaincy in Brooklyn?

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2. Define what a Sachem or Chief is in Lenape culture.

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3. If you were to create a map key or legend for **DOCUMENT 2**, what would the clusters of thin lines around the words “Canarsee Planting Field” symbolize? What might the little clusters of dots on the map symbolize?

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4. How many other native territories were located near the Canarsee headquarters (#51)? What can you infer about how the various tribes interacted?

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This drawing shows a completed wampum belt containing both the light and dark beads. Below it to the left is the shell of the hard shelled clam from the dark part of which the Indians obtained the material for the manufacture of the purple or black beads. To the right is the knobbed whelk from the coiled inner portion of which they made the white beads.

Since the dark part of the hard shelled clam is much harder than the material in the whelk shell, the black or purple beads were much more difficult to make and, therefore, more valuable.

Wampum was considered of far greater value to the Indian than merely as a medium of exchange. In addition to its use as an article of adornment it served as a confirmation of treaties, an atonement for acts of crime and in many other ways.



1. According to **DOCUMENT 3**, what material was used to make wampum beads?

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2. What kind of wampum beads were considered more valuable? Why?

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3. How does wampum differ from our concept of money today? How was it used?

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4. The author refers to the Lenape as “Indians” in this document. What can you infer about the author and their relationship to the Lenape? Does this change how you view the information provided? Why or why not?

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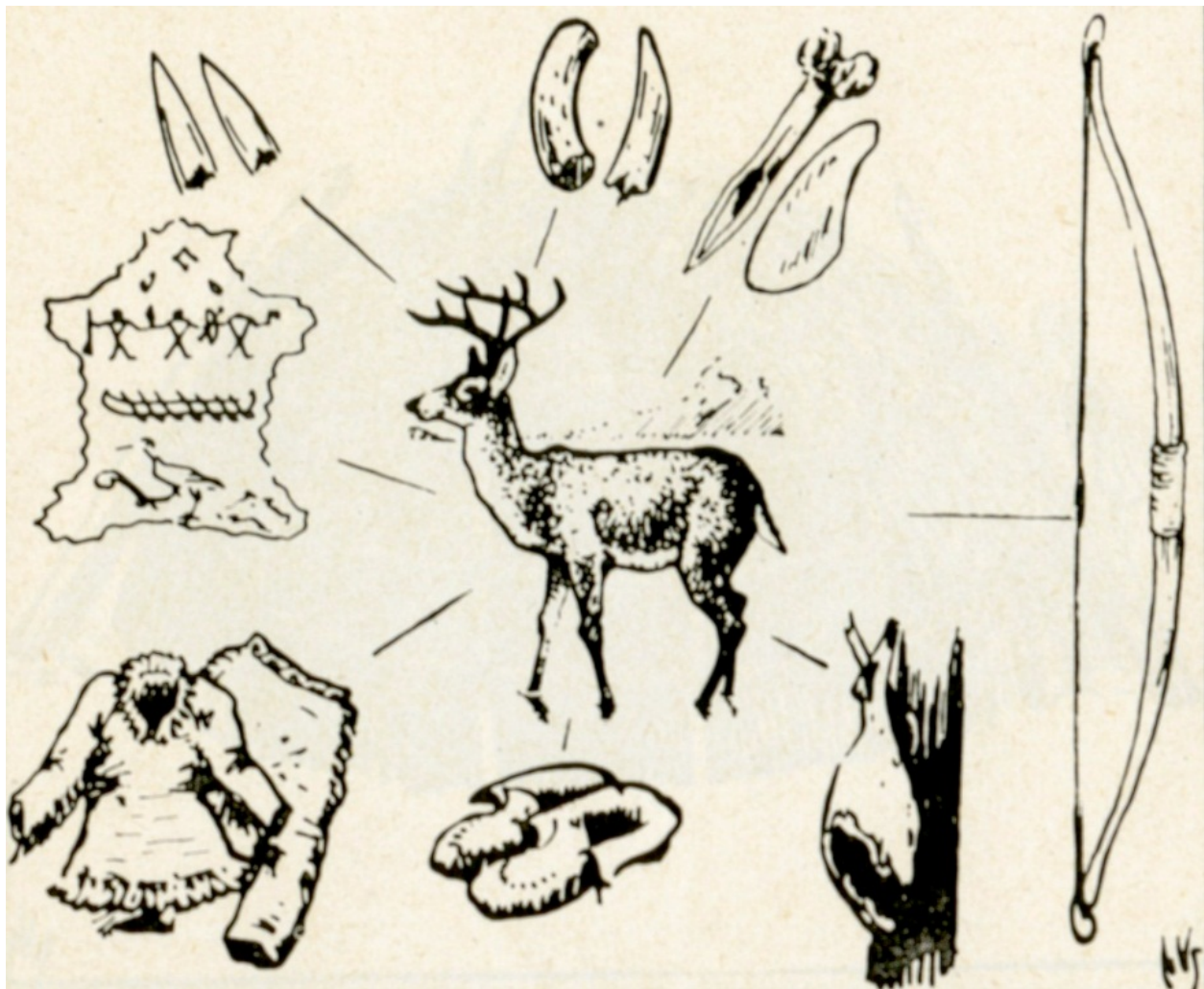
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"No animal of the field or forest was more important to the Lenape than the deer. Not only did these animals provide them with food and clothing, but the antlers were used to make flaking tools for fashioning arrow points and other stone implements. Often the sharp pointed tips of the antlers were themselves used for projectile points.

The bones of the deer were also useful to the Lenape in many ways. Sometimes these were sharpened into awls, for punching holes in leather and in some instances the shoulder bone was fastened to a stick and used as a hoe to till the soil. The bones were often broken open and the marrow removed for food.

Narrow strips of deer skin were frequently used for securing stone implements and weapons to wooden handles or as bow strings and the tendons also served as cord."



**Document 4** - Coles, Robert R. "Importance of the Deer." *The Long Island Indian*. Glen Cove, NY: Little Museum, 1954. 51.



1. Is **DOCUMENT 4** a primary or secondary source? Explain why.

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2. How did the Lenape use the deer's antlers?

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3. If you were a member of the Lenape tribe, what parts of the deer would you need to make a bow for shooting arrows?

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4. Why do you think the Lenape used so many different parts of the deer? What does this tell you about their culture?

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“This form of hut is sometimes described as a “beehive,” which it resembles in form. It was ingeniously formed by a framework of curved trees and planted poles bent over and lashed together. The bracing by diagonal poles exhibits considerable ingenuity. The frame was covered with strips of bark or grass. The center was left open to emit smoke from the fire, which was kindled in a depression in the floor and surrounded with a fence of stones to guard against flying sparks. Stones were placed on the sheets of bark to keep them from flapping open in the wind. This round hut was developed into the “Long House” form, the shape of which was derived from the Iroquois, another tribe located to the north.”



**Document 5** - Bolton, Reginald P. "A Circular Bark-Covered House." *Indian Life of Long Ago in the City of New York*. Port Washington, NY: I.J. Friedman, 1971. 17.



1. Judging by the illustration and description given in **DOCUMENT 5**, what materials did the Lenape use to build their homes?

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2. Why did the Lenape leave a hole in the middle of the roof?

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3. What were some techniques the Lenape used to keep their homes warm and dry during the winter?

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4. Identify the year this document was made and describe any problems this might cause. Where might you look to confirm or discredit this source?

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“There is a careful drawing which was made about 1630, showing some Indians and their boats near New Amsterdam. The boat in the foreground of this picture, which is being propelled by four Indians with a coxswain shouting orders, has peculiar elongated projections at the bow and the stern. Another canoe of less size, with the same kind of projections, is in the middle distance, propelled by two native women. Both boats were made from tree trunks hollowed out by fire. The projections seem to have been made for the purpose of lifting and carrying the boat. Dankers and Sluyter observed in 1676 that the Canarsee natives’ fishing canoes were constructed “without mast or sail, and not a nail in any part of it, though it is sometimes fully forty feet in length.” They used scoops to paddle with, instead of oars.”

Bolton, Reginald P. "Of Canoes." *Indian Life of Long Ago in the City of New York*. Port Washington, NY: I.J. Friedman, 1971. 88-89.



**Document 6** – *New York About 1626-8. The Hartgers View, Amsterdam, 1651, 1651, Eno Collection, Museum of the City of New York.*



1. Is **DOCUMENT 6** a primary or secondary source? Explain why.

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2. What kind of buildings do you observe in the town of New Amsterdam?

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3. According to the passage above, how big were the Lenape's boats?

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4. Based on what you can observe, does this print depict a positive, negative, or neutral relationship between the Lenape and Dutch settlers? Provide evidence.

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“When the Dutch arrived at Lenapehoking in the early 1600s, they came as fur-traders, interested in making a big fortune in this “new world.” When Governor-General William Van Kieft assumed power over New Amsterdam (a city located in what is now Lower Manhattan) in 1638, he began to tax the local Lenape tribes, since the Dutch were not making enough money from fur-trading alone.

When the Lenape refused to pay taxes to the Dutch, Governor-General Van Kieft resorted to violence to drive them off the land, such as with the Pavonia Massacre in 1643 (which took place in present-day New Jersey). This began the genocide of the Lenape people by Europeans and a war that lasted several years and took an estimated 1,600 Lenape lives and several dozen Dutch lives.

The excerpt below is a first-hand account of the Pavonia Massacre by David Pietersz de Vries, a Dutch colonist who acted as a mediator between Van Kieft and the Lenape.”

*I remained that night at the Governor's, sitting up, and I went and sat by the kitchen fire, when about midnight I heard a great shrieking, and I ran to the **ramparts** of the fort, and looked over to Pavonia. Saw nothing but firing, and heard the shrieks of the savages murdered in their sleep. . . When it was day the soldiers returned to the fort, having massacred or murdered eighty Indians, and considering they had done a deed of Roman **valor**, in murdering so many in their sleep; where infants were torn from their mother's breasts, and hacked to pieces in the presence of their parents, and the pieces thrown into the fire and in the water, and other sucklings, being bound to small boards, were cut, stuck and pierced, and miserably massacred in a manner to move a heart of stone.*

*Some were thrown into the river, and when the fathers and mothers endeavored to save them, the soldiers would not let them come on land but made both parents and children drown-- children from five to six years of age, and also some old and **decrepit** persons. Those who fled from this onslaught, and concealed themselves in the neighboring **sedge**, and when it was morning, came out to beg a piece of bread, and to be permitted to warm themselves, were murdered in cold blood and tossed into the fire or the water. Some came to our people in the country with their hands, and some with their legs cut off, and some holding their **entrails** in their arms, and others had such horrible cuts and gashes, that worse than they were could never happen.*

**Document 7** – Kraft, Herbert C. *The Lenape: Archaeology, History, and Ethnography*. Newark: New Jersey Historical Society, 1986. 223-24.

1. According to **DOCUMENT 7**, why did the Dutch massacre the Lenape at Pavonia?

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2. How many Lenape were killed in the Pavonia Massacre?

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3. Genocide is the purposeful killing of an entire group of people because of their ethnicity, race, or nationality. Do you think it is important to learn about these kinds of events in history? Why or why not?

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“No known images of the Lenape from Brooklyn exist today. This portrait by Gustavus Hesselius, from the 1730s, depicts the Lenape Chief Tishcohan from Pennsylvania. It is considered one of the first paintings of Native Americans in the United States. Historians have remarked that, “Hesselius portrayed Tishcohan with an objectivity that distinguishes this painting from many of the portraits painted in the 1730s in the American colonies, in which artists sought to portray their sitters according to current European standards of beauty, grace and elegance.”

Richard H. Saunders and Ellen G. Miles, *American Colonial Portraits, 1700-1776*, Washington, D.C.: National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1987.



**Document 8** – Hesselius, Gustavus. *Tishcohan*. 1730s. Oil on canvas. Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia History Museum. *Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2009. 15.

1. Why is the painting of Lenape Chief Tischohan in **DOCUMENT 8** considered important?

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2. Infer what you think the “European standards of beauty” were. How might they differ from the Lenape standards of beauty, judging by the way Chief Tischohan is dressed?

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3. Why do you think there are no surviving images today of the Lenape who lived in Brooklyn?

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4. Gustavus Hesselius was an American-Swedish artist. How might his portrayal of Chief Tischohan be problematic? (HINT: think about the implications of having someone from one culture interpret and represent another culture.)

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## Native Americans in Brooklyn Primary Source Packet



1. According to **DOCUMENT 9**, who is leaving their mark on Brooklyn's skyline?

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2. Where did the Mohawks live while in Brooklyn? Where are they from originally?

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3. What special skill do these workers bring to Brooklyn? What are they building?

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**Document 10** – "Lenape Club Pow-Wow Saturday," 23 Jun 1960. Bartlesville Area History Museum, Bartlesville Public Library.

1. According to **DOCUMENT 10**, where is this Lenape group holding their Pow-Wow?

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2. The Dewey High School referenced in this article is located in Oklahoma. What can you infer happened to Brooklyn's Lenape people?

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3. Why are they hosting the Pow-Wow? What does it symbolize for the "white man" verses the "Indian?"

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## GLOSSARY

**Autonomous:** self-governing; independent

**Awls:** a small pointed tool used for piercing holes, especially in leather

**Chieftaincies:** a region or a people ruled by a chief

**Clan:** a group of close-knit and interrelated families

**Coxswain:** the person who steers a boat

**Decrepit:** elderly; worn out or ruined because of age

**Depression:** (in this context) a shallow hole in the ground

**Entrails:** a person or animal's intestines or internal organs, especially when removed or exposed

**Epidemic:** a widespread infectious disease that affects an entire community

**Exile:** the state of being barred from one's native country

**Expulsion:** the process of forcing someone to leave a place

**Genocide:** the deliberate killing of a large group of people, especially those of a particular ethnic group or nation

**Hostility:** unfriendliness or opposition

**Indigenous:** (when referring to people) originating in a particular place (e.g. the indigenous people of North America can trace their lineage back thousands of years to this continent)

**Ingenious:** clever, original, inventive

**Implement:** a tool, utensil, or other piece of equipment, especially as used for a particular purpose

**Migration:** movement or resettlement from one area to another

**Objective:** not influenced by personal feelings or opinions in considering and representing facts



**Projectile:** an object designed to be thrown through the air; especially one thrown as a weapon (e.g. an arrowhead)

**Rampart:** a defensive wall of a castle or walled city

**Refugee:** a person who has been forced to leave their land in order to escape war, persecution or a natural disaster

**Sedge:** a green, grasslike plant with triangular stems and small flowers, growing typically in wet ground

**Valor:** great courage in the face of danger, especially in battle