

# The Lenape: From Lenapehoking to the West

## **Objectives:**

Engage the audience with the history and culture of the Lenape and facilitate active discussion about the experience of the Lenape and the relationship between settlers and natives

## **Materials Needed:**

- Teacher Handouts
- Student Handouts
- Tri-State Lenape Area Map
- NJ Lenape Area Map
- Wigwam and Longhouse Pictures
- Four Seasons Pictures
- Wampum Belts and Shells
- Trunk containing various items as artifacts and props

## **Opening to Lesson: (approx. 3 minutes)**

### **Objective:**

To greet the audience and give introductions. Gauge the knowledge of the audience by asking questions specific to the Lenape and Native Americans in general.

### **Script:**

*Hello everyone and welcome to our presentation today. My name is \_\_\_\_ [and this is \_\_\_\_ ]and (we are/I am) from Monmouth County Historical Association. We hope that today you all learn something, ask any questions you may have, and most of all have some fun! Before we begin, let's have a pop quiz! Does anyone know who lived in New Jersey before the settlers from Europe came to America? (Native Americans, Indigenous People, Lenape) What was the name of the group of Indians who lived in New Jersey? (Lenape) Did they only live in New Jersey or did they have villages in other areas? (The Lenape were spread out all over New Jersey and parts of eastern Pennsylvania, southeastern New York, northern Delaware, and a portion of southeastern Connecticut) Are all American Indians/Lenape groups the same? (Different Lenape groups share similarities in their culture and religion, but no two groups are exactly alike. Think about it this way, Americans are very different from people from Russia and Germans are very different from Italians. Each American Indian group is unique and have their own way of life depending on their beliefs and where they lived).*

## **Section 1: Who and Where (approx. 5 minutes)**

**To do:** Use the map to talk about the location of the Lenape and the different variations of Lenape groups derived from their location and different dialects.

**To say:**

*Did you know that where you live was once all Lenape territory? Remember that the Lenape were spread out over New Jersey, parts of Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware, and Connecticut. They called this territory “Lenapehoking”, which means “Land of the Lenape”. They also have another name which is “Delaware”. This name was given to them by English settlers because the Lenape lived along the Delaware river. The Lenape were not one unified tribe like that of the Iroquois. Instead, they lived in small groups who acted independently from one another. For example, the Lenape that lived in New Jersey did not have to follow the same rules as the Lenape from New York. New Jersey is special because it was divided into three different groups of Lenape. Can anyone guess why these groups were different from one another? (Location, but more importantly they spoke a different dialect, or form, of their native language – Algonquian).*

**To do:** Display the New Jersey only map

**To say:**

*The Lenape of Northern New Jersey were known as Munsee because they spoke a Munsee form of Algonquian. The word Munsee means “People of the stony country” in Lenape because Northern New Jersey has a lot of rocky, mountainous areas. All the Lenape south of the Raritan river, in Central New Jersey where we live now, were called Unami, or “People from down river”. Southern New Jersey, which has many beaches and sandy soil, was the home of Unalachtigo speakers. If they live by the ocean, can anyone guess what their name might mean? (“People who live by the ocean”). Different dialects still make up the America that we know today. Our New Jersey accents might found funny to someone who lives in Texas who has a different way of speaking than we do.*

## **Family Clans (approx. 3 mins)**

**To say:**

*Does anyone know why there is a wolf, a turtle, and a turkey on the map? These symbols represent the animal totem, or phratry for each Lenape group. Each animal comes from a special myth or legend that relates to the people of each group. For example, those who are from the turtle clan believe that a turtle once*

*saved their people from a great flood. These animal totems were very important to Lenape family groups and their spirituality.*

- 1. Took-seat ('round paw,' 'wolf' ). This clan was primarily meat gatherers because of the rocky terrain in northwestern NJ which made it difficult to farm.*
- 2. Pokekooungo ('crawling,' 'turtle'). The largest clan in the tribe – this group did the most farming because they lived in the valleys and along the river in the Deaware Bay areas inland to the Susquehanna Rivers.*
- 3. Pullaook ('non-chewing,' 'turkey'). This group lived on the sea coast of NJ and did the majority of fishing, oystering, and other shell fishing.*

## **Section 2: Housing (approx. 5-10 minutes)**

**To do:** Explain the differences between wigwams and longhouses, the construction of each, and their various uses for living, sleeping, and food storage. Use pictures to demonstrate each style of home.

*Did the Lenape live in houses like we do today? Of course not! The Lenape were completely dependent on nature for all of their resources and so their houses were made from grass, trees, and saplings. There were two different types of houses that the Lenape lived in. A Wigwam is a smaller home big enough for one family. Longhouses were much larger, often 200 feet long! They were measured by the number of fires that could be built in it. 1 fire per family sort of thing. Now how many people live in your house? A Lenape longhouse usually held at least 25 people from multiple families! Can you imagine trying to sleep in a house with all those people? It may seem inconvenient to us, but to the Lenape it probably was not bad at all. They spent most of their time outdoors and so not everyone was home at the same time. Also, longhouses had partitions to allow for a separation of rooms and some privacy, and loft areas for sleeping. What activities do we do every day in our houses? (Cooking, cleaning, sleeping, eating). Well the Lenape did the same activities, although it may seem a little different from the way we do them now! They slept on grass mats, ate sitting on the floor, built fires for warmth and cooking, and stored food for the winter inside their homes.*

## **Section 3: Matrilineal Society (approx. 5 minutes)**

**To do:** Explain the concept of a matrilineal society. Ask for volunteers – 3 boys and 2 girls. Items to distinguish each role:

- sachem (chief) – drum
- sachem's wife – claw and bead necklace
- sachem's son – nothing

- sachem's sister – shell bracelet
- sachem's sister's son – nothing; will be handed drum

**To say:**

*We are going to make a Lenape family tree. Let's say he is the sachem, or the chief of the village. Here is his wife. They have one son together. Now over here is the chief's sister and her son. Now when the chief can no longer rule, who do you think will take his place? His son or his sister's son? In Lenape society, everything went through the woman's line. This is called a matrilineal society. So even if the chief had 10 children and his sister only had one, her child would be next in line. If a father was from the wolf clan and the mother was from the turtle clan, their children would become members of the turtle clan because it always follows the mother's line. How is this different from our society today or the way kings and queens became next in line to the throne? (Most women take their husbands last name when they are married, Kings and Queens followed a patriarchal line which went through the father).*

**Family Roles:**

**To do:** Ask the volunteers to sit down. Pick a boy and girl from the audience. Use them to show the different roles given to men and women.

- girl – buckskin, grinding stone
- boy – arrow/spear heads, axe head

**To say:**

*Men and women were seen as equal in society. Although they were equal they were each given very different responsibilities and chores based on their gender. It was considered very disrespectful for a man to gather wood for a fire because that was a woman's job. Men and women learned the skills they would need to be successful as adults when they were young boys and girls. A girl learned to take care of children by watching her mother and aunts, know the essential knowledge of what plants and herbs to eat and use for medicine, how to take care of a house and garden, cook, tan hides, make pottery, and perform a variety of chores inside the house. Boys had completely different tasks to learn. They learned how to make nets, set traps and snares, and make their own weapons. Boys would also go on a vision quest where they would fast and travel alone into nature for a few days until they had a vision of their guardian spirit. It seems like girls have to do all the hard work while boys just hunt and fish, but that is not true. Men and women depended on the responsibilities of the other for survival. This created equality and a mutual respect between the two genders.*

## **Section 4: Natural Resources (approx. 10 minutes)**

**To do:** Explain the food getting activities of the Lenape. Touch upon the available means of transportation and the practices of folk medicine.

**To say:**

*The Lenape did not have the luxury of supermarkets or fast-food like we have today. All of their food resources and preparations came from their natural surroundings. They had fires in their wigwams or just outside of the lodging. They used clay pots that they made to cook over and in the fire. They often smoked and dried fish if they lived near the water. Corn was often dried and then ground into a meal to make a type of bread. They had to make sure that they saved enough food for the harsh winters. Many Lenape chose to live by the shores of the ocean or rivers because they provided not only fresh fish, but also a means of transportation. How do we travel now? Before there were trains, planes, and cars – and even horses in America! - an Indian could only travel on foot or by canoe. Lenape used big canoes called dugout canoes because they were made from big trees that had the inside dug out by a process of lighting the wood on fire and digging out the ashes.*

*They lived by the concept that the spirit of every living thing – animals, plants, humans – was sacred. When they had to cut down a sapling to make a new bow, they would honor the sapling’s spirit or life with a brief ceremony or offering. They only hunted or took from nature what they needed, nothing more.*

### **Four Seasons Pictures**

**To say:**

*The Lenape lived their lives according to the seasons. Each season was as important as the next and the productivity of each member of the village all year round is what ensured their survival.*

**To do:** Have four different students help tell the story of the seasons by assigning one season per volunteer. Describe the pictures assigned to each season on the map to the students.

**To say:**

*The **Spring** was the gardening season. All crops were planted at this time to ensure that they would be ready for harvest in the fall. The village gardens grew corn, beans, tobacco, and squash. [The 3 sisters] The men caught fish from rivers and streams that the women smoked over the fire. They also hunted deer, turkeys, geese, raccoons, and squirrels...*

*In the **Summer** some inland groups moved to the shores to harvest shellfish, oysters, clams, eels, and turtles. The men hunted deer and big game birds. Bear grease was worn on the skin as protection from mosquitos. Baskets were made by the women from reeds and nets...*

*In the **Autumn** the women harvested the corn, squash, and beans planted in the spring. The deer hunt continued and hunting parties could be as big as 100 men! The women tanned leather and made clothing, tools, jewelry, and musical instruments. They also stored food for the winter. Religious activities, like the Big House Ceremony, were celebrated to give thanks to the Gods for the harvest...*

*The **Winter** was the time for gathering by the fire for the tradition of storytelling. The Lenape had many legends and the elders were the keeps of such stories. Some families moved inland. Women made clothing and shoes. Furs and hides were worn as protection from the cold...*

### **Section 5: Wampum and Trade (approx. 5 minutes)**

**To do:** Explain wampum as a sacred element to Lenape culture and how it was used over time as a source of currency with European traders. Explain the value and impact of trade on the Lenape lifestyle through this scenario.

**To say:**

*Did the Lenape have paper money like we have today? Did they have gold and silver coins? We know they did not have big supermarkets and stores like we have today so how did they get what they needed from other American Indian groups or settlers? (A system of trading, bartering). The Lenape used beads called wampum. These beads were made from whelk or Quahog shells found along the shore. Beads were either white (from whelk shells) or a blackish purple color based on the different colors found on the shell. The Lenape would use their tools made from rock and flint to make small beads from the shells to use for a variety of different purposes. Wampum was given to the bride's family at marriage and even buried with the dead! Wampum belts were made to present an agreement and only if the agreement was broken could the belt be taken apart and the beads used for other purposes. The Lenape never considered wampum as "money", but the Europeans referred to wampum as "the Indian's money". It essentially became the colonies first currency. The Lenape used wampum to trade with the Europeans for goods they could not get from their natural surroundings like weapons, glass beads, and clothing woven from cloth. Contact with European settlers began to change the Lenape way of life in many big ways. The Lenape had to adjust their lifestyle to*

*keep up with the demands European traders. The Lenape believed in only hunting what was necessary to survive, but with the beaver trade in high demand they had to hunt more than ever before!*

### **Section 6: European Contact and Land Trade (approx. 5 minutes)**

**To do:** Explain briefly the differences between Lenape and European ways of life. Explain how the Lenape had to leave Lenapehoking and move west.

**To say:**

*The explorer Henry Hudson was one of the first to meet with the Lenape in 1609. After that Dutch and English settlers began to live and trade in the area of Lenapehoking. Do you think the Europeans and the Lenape could live peacefully together and share the land? Well the problem was not that the Lenape were too peaceful or that the Europeans were too greedy. They simply had different ways of thinking. The Lenape believed that the land belonged to everyone and could be shared, but the European settlers believed in land ownership and the idea that land could be bought and sold to the highest bidder. In order to make room for new colonies in America the Lenape were forced to move. How would you feel if someone told you that you had to leave your home? Where do you think the Lenape went? They could no longer live by the shore so they had to move west. First they moved to western Pennsylvania, but as the colony grew the Indians had to move even further west to Kansas. Today descendants of the Lenape Indians live in Oklahoma. Many keep the traditions of the Lenape alive and there are many ways you can learn about Indian culture today! You can still learn the traditional language and many aspects of their culture, music, dance, and art! The Lenape no longer live in New Jersey, but we pay our respect by learning about the original inhabitants of our state!*

**Closing Questions:**

**What is the biggest difference between the way the Lenape lived and the way you live today?**

**Why did Europeans need or want to colonize the Americas?**

**How is this story different or similar to others you have heard?**

**Closing to Lesson:**

Answer any final questions. Thank the audience. Hand out educational material to the respective audience members. Mention additional resources where the audience can find out more information on the Lenape, Native American culture, and the historical association.

## Addendum

### **The Name Game: American Indians vs Indians vs Native Americans vs First Nations**

The first people who lives in America – what do we can them? To call them “Indians” is incorrect because they are not from India like Christopher Columbus thought. To call them “Native Americans” is too all-inclusive with those peoples in South and Central America and the rest of North America (Canada and Alaska). To call them “First Nations” is very similar, but is a term used in Canada. As non-Indians, it’s offensive to call them “Indians”, dropping the “American”. “Native American” is often seen as offensive because it suggests to ease white guilt over the past treatment of American Indians.

The term “American Indian” is preferred by 50%, - do not drop the preceeding word “American”! It leads to much confusion of whether the person’s ancestors are orginally from the subcontinent of India or North America. The term “Native American” is preferred by 37%. The best label to call the group is by the tribal affiliation, for example Cherokee, Sioux, Lenape, Delawares, etc.

### **Good Practice in the Classroom**

A few tips of handling the students in the classroom:

**ASK QUESTIONS** - You already know the information that you need to give the audience. Maybe they already know some of it. Ask questions - “Do you know.....?” and they will tell you. They want to be interacting with you.

**READ THE ROOM** – Look at the students and judge their attentiveness. At best, you will only have 80% of the students’ attention at any one time and it will shift during your presentation.

**SPEAK CLEARLY and LOUDLY** – If you speak quietly, the students may get restless and not want to sit still.

**USE HUMOR** – If the class seems to be a bit sluggish or quiet, ask them if they’ve had their coffee or something like that.

**TELL A STORY** – You are there to tell the students a whole bunch of information but it can be a story. Have them help you tell it. Keep them engaged by asking questions, having them come up to help you out, etc.

### **Notes**

The wampum beads became the colonies’ first currency and the system was well established by the time the European settlers came to North America. They were used as a communication tool between tribes, symbolize agreements with Europeans, or as money.

### **A Legend: “The Three Sisters”**

Once upon a time very long ago, there were three sisters who lived together in a field. These sisters were quite different from one another in their size and also in their way of dressing. One of the three was a little sister, so young that she could only crawl at first, and she was dressed in green. The second of the three wore a frock of bright yellow, and she had a way of running off by herself when the sun shone and the soft wind blew in her face. The third was the eldest sister, standing always very straight and tall above the other sisters and trying to guard them. She wore a pale green shawl, and she had long, yellow hair that tossed about her head in the breezes.

There was only one way in which the three sisters were alike. They loved one another very dearly, and they were never separated. They were sure that they would not be able to live apart.

After a while a stranger came to the field of the three sisters, a little Indian boy. He was as straight as an arrow and as fearless as the eagle that circled the sky above his head. He knew the way of talking to the birds and the small brothers of the earth, the shrew, the chipmunk, and the young foxes. And the three sisters, the one who was just able to crawl, the one in the yellow frock, and the one with the flowing hair, were very much interested in the little Indian boy. They watched him fit his arrow in his bow, saw him carve a bowl with his stone knife, and wondered where he went at night.

Late in the summer of the first coming of the Indian boy to their field, one of the three sisters disappeared. This was the youngest sister in green, the sister who could only creep. She was scarcely able to stand alone in the field unless she had a stick to which she clung. Her sisters mourned for her until the fall, but she did not return.

Once more the Indian boy came to the field of the three sisters. He came to gather reeds at the edge of a stream nearby to make arrow shafts. The two sisters who were left watched him and gazed with wonder at the prints of his moccasins in the earth that marked his trail.



That night the second of the sisters left, the one who was dressed in yellow and who always wanted to run away. She left no mark of her going, but it may have been that she set her feet in the moccasin tracks of the little Indian boy.

Now there was but one of the sisters left. Tall and straight she stood in the field not once bowing her head with sorrow, but it seemed to her that she could not live there alone. The days grew shorter and the nights were colder. Her green shawl faded and grew thin and old. Her hair, once long and golden, was tangled by the wind. Day and night she sighed for her sisters to return to her, but they did not hear her. Her voice when she tried to call to them was low and plaintive like the wind.

But one day when it was the season of the harvest, the little Indian boy heard the crying of the third sister who had been left to mourn there in the field. He felt sorry for her, and he took her in his arms and carried her to the lodge of his father and mother.

Oh what a surprise awaited here there! Her two lost sisters were there in the lodge of the little Indian boy, safe and very glad to see her. They had been curious about the Indian boy, and they had gone home with him to see how and where he lived. They had liked his warm cave so well that they had decided now that winter was coming on to stay with him. And they were doing all they could to be useful.

The little sister in green, now quite grown up, was helping to keep the dinner pot full.

The sister in yellow sat on the shelf drying herself, for she planned to fill the dinner pot later. The third sister joined them, ready to grind meal for the Indian boy. And the three were never separated again.