

Lenape Names of Metals

These are names and photographs of metals known to the Lenape or Delaware Indians. In the first column there are links in blue that can be clicked to take you to the Lenape Talking Dictionary (www.talk-lenape.org) where you can hear the Lenape name. The middle column contains a photo of the item. In the third column enclosed in " " is the literal translation of the Lenape name.

Metal was a trade item from the Europeans and in July 1655 there were 12 kettles, and 12 bars of lead traded to the Lenape as well as metal tools. In July 1682, 40 copper boxes, and 40 kettles, 4 of them being large.

sëkabsën

<https://www.talk-lenape.org/detail?id=9179>

sëkabsëni

<https://www.talk-lenape.org/detail?id=12783>



This is a cast iron kettle with three legs. The Delawares used these for cooking but would also remove the bail and ears to use them to make what is called a water drum, shown here:






The piece of deer antler which is stuck under the ropes on the drum is called a drum peg. It is used to push the rope away from the metal base when tying the drum. It is not left there while using the drum.




iron

"black stone"

of iron

This is also a general term for electronic things having wire, e.g., telephone, radio, television, telegraph, tape recorder.

<p>wisaw-ahsën https://www.talk-lenape.org/detail?id=18236</p> <p>wisaw-ahsëni https://www.talk-lenape.org/detail?id=18237</p>	 <p>This is a brass kettle with three legs. The Delawares used these for cooking but would also remove the bail and ears to use them to make what is called a water drum.</p>	<p>brass</p> <p>"yellow stone"</p>
<p>màxkahsën https://www.talk-lenape.org/detail?id=4403</p> <p>màxkahsëni https://www.talk-lenape.org/detail?id=18238</p>	 <p>Copper buckets were used as trade items.</p>	<p>copper</p> <p>"red stone"</p> <p>of copper</p> <p>This literally means "red stone" and is also used for a red stone, and a brick.</p>
<p>lehëlutèk https://www.talk-lenape.org/detail?id=3824</p>	 <p>Lead was used for bullets and these round ones were used in the old muzzle loader type guns.</p>	<p>lead</p> <p>perhaps this word was also used for pewter</p>

<p>pëpuhwès https://www.talk-lenape.org/detail?id=8598</p> <p>pëpuhwèsi https://www.talk-lenape.org/detail?id=8600</p>	 <p>This is a lantern made of tin with holes to let the light out.</p>	<p>tin</p> <p>of tin</p>
<p>sìlpël https://www.talk-lenape.org/detail?id=9615</p>	 <p>These are called ball and cone earrings and they were made for trade to the Indians. Originally they were made of silver but usually now made of what is called German silver.</p>	<p>silver</p>
<p>nkul https://www.talk-lenape.org/detail?id=18235</p> <p>nkuli https://www.talk-lenape.org/detail?id=12776</p>	 <p>Mixtec Indian Gold Pendant made about 1200 AD.</p>	<p>gold</p> <p>of gold</p>

compiled by
Jim Rementer, director
Lenape Language Project