

# A Lenape Family Named Thompson

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## Introduction

About the year 1690, near Cranbury, New Jersey, a young Lenape (Delaware Indian) man named Keposch received the new name Tammekappei. He received this name due to the following noteworthy circumstance:

A certain Delaware chief thrust his wife aside, and Keposch took her for his wife. This annoyed the old chief, and he bewitched him so that after a long sickness he died . . . Keposch was laid out for burial, and four days passed while the Indian chiefs and his friends assembled. Then, on the fourth day, he moved his hand, and removed the covering from his face. Finally revived, he told a story of visiting a white-robed man in the sky, who told him, 'You shall not die but live, and be called after my name Tammekappei' (Indian Missions, Box 313, Folder 1, Item 3).

Many people have an interest in genealogy, especially in tracing their own ancestors. Nora Thompson Dean, a Lenape Indian from Dewey, Oklahoma, had such an interest. She consulted early tribal rolls, but these took her back only to her grandparents' generation. The earliest known roll was made in Kansas in 1842. There supposedly also exists an 1832 Roll, and a census made of the tribe when they left the White River in Indiana in 1820,<sup>1</sup> but the location of both of these rolls is unknown.

In 1967 Dr. William A. Hunter, the Pennsylvania State Historian, and Mrs. Nora Thompson Dean began corresponding. His main interest was in Lenape place and personal names. The account which follows is based mainly on material found in the Moravian Archives at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, sent to Mrs. Dean by Dr. Hunter. It also is based on an oral history of the Thompson family as told by Mrs. Dean. The two parts of the story are woven together by threads of gossamer.

The search began when someone in the late 1960s mentioned that they had seen a reference to a Delaware Indian named John Thompson who lived in the 1700s. Mrs. Dean asked Dr. Hunter about this person. Not only did he locate information on John Thompson, but also on his sister, and grandfather.

Mrs. Dean had heard many family stories in her younger days, but unfortunately certain aspects of her family's history were lost because three of her grandparents died while her parents were still young, so, much of the family history had not been passed down to her. One of the stories she did hear was about the witch burnings which took place in Indiana in 1806. At that time, several Indian prophets were going around accusing various people of "witchcraft" and saying that was the cause of the troubles the Delaware were having. This happened during a very demoralized time for the Delaware Indians,<sup>2</sup> probably their lowest point since leaving the East coast.

One of the stories Mrs. Dean heard was about a woman named Kaltas who was one of the people burned to death. She was said to be a relative of Mrs. Dean's father, James H. Thompson. According to a recent article, one of the

prophets was a woman, and Kaltas "was probably an outspoken critic" of the prophetess, so she accused Kaltas of knowing witchcraft as a way to have her eliminated (Miller 1994:254).

The name Kaltas did not make sense to Mrs. Dean, and, because most Lenape names have a meaning, she assumed that it must have been a nickname. Mrs. Dean mentioned the name Kaltas to Dr. Hunter, and he asked if this name could have been "Caritas," as she was the only woman killed at that terrible event. Mrs. Dean felt that was possible as Lenape has no R-sound, and a Lenape would say "Kalitas" when trying to say "Caritas," and it is also quite possible that the middle vowel in the name got dropped.

That suggests a probable connection between Mrs. Dean's paternal grandfather, Joseph Thompson, and Caritas and her relatives, one of whom was named Gulpikammen (his Lenape name), alias John Thompson, alias Captain Thompson, alias Ludwig (his baptismal name bestowed by the Moravian missionaries). Other Lenape names which Mrs. Dean was able to translate are found in a list at the end of this article.

The story will begin with Tammekappei, called Salomo by the Moravian missionaries; Salomo being the German version of Solomon. His story is told in some detail in an account of some of the early Delaware converts. This account is now found at the Moravian Archives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania (Indian Missions, Box 313, Folder 1, Item 3).

Tammekappei was born in 1672 near Cranbury, New Jersey. His father and mother later lived in Pennington, New Jersey, but he lived mostly on the Raritan River, or at the Forks of Delaware, near Easton, Pennsylvania.

In his youth he was called Keposch by the Delawares, but when he became a man he received the name Tammekappei, that is "step aside, stand off." The circumstance for this name change is given at the opening of the article.

Salomo's wife was Ogehemochqua. She died in December, 1748, at Nazareth, Pennsylvania, and is buried in the cemetery there. The names of Salomo's parents are not given, nor is the name of the old chief who had been Ogehemochqua's previous husband.

Salomo was baptized on January 13, 1749 (old dating, in today's calendar this would be January 24, 1749), and at one point in time he was known as "the Delaware King in the Forks" (i.e., the Forks of the Delaware—present Northampton County, Pennsylvania). Of his family (Table 1) it was written in 1750 that:

He has a brother and a sister living; the brother is older and lives at Cranbury, is baptized and named Abraham. The sister lives near Pennington in the Jerseys, is younger than he, and named Tauinechqua. Of his children, two are living, a son Thomas or Memeniscunt, who lives at Nazareth, and daughter Pnedchaechqua, who lives at Tunkhannock and has no husband (Indian Missions, Box 313, Folder 1, Item 3).

Salomo apparently moved up the Susquehanna at the beginning of the French and Indian War; and the Moravians heard that he died at Tioga (Athens, Pennsylvania) in the spring of 1756.

### Salomo's Grandson—Gulpikammen

John Thompson or Gulpikammen, baptized Ludwig, first appears in the Moravians' records in 1749, when he and his family were living at Meniolagomekah, a Delaware town just north of the Blue Mountain in the southern part of present Monroe County, Pennsylvania.

Those of his immediate family who were baptized by the Moravians were his brother Jonathan (Baptismal register #173), April 18, 1749; Ludwig (#176) himself, on April 27, 1749; his sister Esther (#208), August 22, 1749; his brother Leonhard (#213), September 8, 1749; his sister Caritas (#243), January 5, 1750; and his sister Anna Maria (#327), February 27, 1752. Leonhard and Caritas were baptized at Gnadenhütten (present Lehighon in Carbon County, on the Lehigh River), and others were baptized at Bethlehem. The Moravian missionaries used the same Christian names for different Indian converts, so they were also identified by numbers, as shown in the parentheses.

In the kinship terminology used by the Lenape people there is no separate word for cousin. A cousin is called either a brother or sister. In the same way, there is no separate term for great-aunt or great-uncle, and they are called grandmother or grandfather. Mrs. Dean mentioned this to Dr. Hunter when she wrote:

From what I have read in your letters, the old missionaries had troubles figuring the relationships between people. For example, if Jonathan was the grandson of Salomon's sister, he would call Salomon his 'great-uncle' in English, but in the Delaware way, Salomon would be Jonathan's 'grandfather.' By the same way, Jonathan would be John Thompson's cousin in English, but in Delaware they would be brothers (Dean: Letter to Hunter 12/7/1974).

This often makes it difficult to determine the exact relationships as given in the missionary records. Also, lest one make the false assumption that Lenape has an inadequate kin term system, I should mention that some terms are used in more specific ways than in English. For example, you must use an entirely different word for maternal and paternal uncles. Some of the kin terms use a different word for brother or sister depending on the gender of the speaker.

Ludwig, alias John Thompson, alias Gulpikammen came to Bethlehem on April 25, 1749, with the "captain" of Meniolagomekah, an Indian known as George Rex. He later moved to Nescopeck on the Susquehanna in April 1752. In June, 1753 he is mentioned as a customer at the blacksmith shop at Shamokin, now Sunbury, Pennsylvania. His sister Caritas went to join him at Nescopeck in April, 1754.

On July 17, 1754, Ludwig and his wife Christiana (Baptismal register #184) came from Nescopeck to Gnadenhütten (present Weissport, Pennsylvania). He visited Friedenshütten (present Sheshequin, Bradford County, Pennsylvania) in March, 1767. And, under the name John Thompson, he was living at the Great Island (present Lock Haven, Pennsylvania) in 1769.

In 1772, when the Moravians had a mission named Langunto Utenünk on the Beaver River near present-day Moravia, Beaver County, in western Pennsylvania, they were visited on January 1, by their former convert, bringing a message from Packanke (or Custaloga) near present New Castle, Pennsylvania. By then Ludwig was "an important chief."

On February 10, 1772 Ludwig again visited Langunto Utenünk, and is mentioned as "From Kaskaskunk came Gulpikamen with his wife for a few days' visit. Both have been baptized, he is Ludwig and she is Lucia; he is a chief." When Lucia (#288) was baptized on January 2, 1751, she was actually the wife of Leonhard, Ludwig's brother.

A reference to Captain Thompson is found in a box of the writings of missionary John Heckewelder's materials in the Moravian Archives. It is a list of prominent Indians, and although there is no date on it, it must be from late 1776 or early 1777. The original reference in old German reads, "*Gulpicamen od Capin Thomson ehedem von der Brnn an der Mahony Ludwig getauft, der von Tuscorawas nun nach Schnbrun gezogen.*" Freely translated into English it says: "Gulpicamen or Captain Thompson formerly baptized Ludwig by the [Moravian] Brethren on the Mahoning, who has gone from Tuscarawas to Schönbrunn." The Mahoning mentioned here is the Moravian mission of Gnadenhütten at present Lehighon and Weissport, Carbon County, Pennsylvania. As Ludwig or Gulpikamen, he appears in the Moravian records from 1749 to 1777.

He seems to have settled on the Tuscarawas River, and in 1777 he was reported to be the chief at Schönbrunn, Ohio. He is listed at this time in the Moravian list of chiefs. Gulpikammen does not appear again in the Moravian records.

Coolpeconain or John Thompson was mentioned as one of the Delaware Indians who visited George Washington on May 10, 1779. Coolpeconin is one of the signers of an address to Congress, on May 29, at Philadelphia (Kellogg 1916:353). It was written that:

The Indians were received with distinguished consideration; they visited the home of Colonel [George] Morgan at Princeton, had an interview with Washington at Middlebrook, were formally received by the newly arrived minister from France, and had audiences with the Board of War and with a committee of Congress (Ibid.:39).

Later, the Indian delegation reported their safe arrival at Pittsburgh, June 20, 1779, except that Cullpeckaumin had been delayed by a fall off his horse (Ibid.:367).

Under his Lenape name, here spelled yet another way, Quillpukamen, served in Captain Montour's Company of Delaware Indians in the Revolutionary War from June 16, 1780 until October 31, 1781 (National Archives:146). Captain Thompson is also referred to in two letters, February 4 and 26, 1781, as an Indian who had delivered a speech in Salem (Ohio) (Hunter: Letter to Dean 4/16/1974).

This is the last mention we have of Gulpikammen. Unfortunately, none of the records found to date indicate whether or not he had any children.

### Salomo's Granddaughter—Caritas

Caritas (a Latin word meaning charity), also known as Ann Charity, was baptized at Gnadenhütten (present Lehighon, in Carbon County, Pennsylvania) on Christmas Day, 1749 (old style; January 5, 1750, new style). The register describes her as "a big girl of 14 years, Delaware, Esther's (Zacharia's wife) sister, old Salomon's granddaughter." Unfortunately, her Lenape name was not recorded.

Salomo recommended Caritas so she could live at Gnadenhütten, Pennsylvania with him. Salomo said she was his grandchild, that her mother was dead, and that her father was still living.

There seems to be nothing that tells definitely whether Salomo was Caritas's and John Thompson's maternal or paternal grandfather. However, under the date of November 20 / December 1, 1750, the Moravian Gnadenhütten Diary reports the serious sickness of Caritas's father, "who for several years has lived near here and has often visited in Gnadenhütten." His name is not given, but since he does not seem to be the same as Salomo's son Thomas (Memeniscunt)—the only one living in 1759, he must not have been one of Salomo's children. Therefore, it would seem that Caritas's mother (presumably dead) had been Salomo's daughter. While this is not the clearest evidence, it indicates that Salomo was Caritas's and John Thompson's *maternal* grandfather.

Against the wishes of the Moravians, Caritas left in April, 1754 to join her brother Ludwig (Gulpskammen) at Nescopeck, Pennsylvania. At that time she is referred to as single; but in December of that year she visited Gnadenhütten with her husband, Johan Jacob, Teedyuscung's son.

This marriage evidently did not last, and in May, 1760, she was married to David (#374). His Lenape name was Mamsochalent, and he was baptized March 17, 1754. He was a brother of Newalika, ("Four Steps"). They seemed to have moved to Ohio about 1772. Caritas visited the Ohio Gnadenhütten and David brought his family to live there in 1777. David died in 1797.

Some of the entries in the Mission diaries indicate the daily life of Caritas. On February 18, 1761, and again on March 22, 1762, she and her husband David were cooking [maple] sugar. On October 5, 1761 she is gathering chestnuts, and on the 29th of the same month she is selling baskets (Fliegel 1970:73-74).

Caritas had lived in the Moravian congregation for many years, and in 1801 she expressed her intention to remain with the mission Indians, but evidently she was then taken by her non-Mission relatives to the White River in Indiana "to be out of the way of the murdering gangs of the white people, who had destroyed so many of their relations already"<sup>3</sup> (Gipson 1938:416). Later, during the witch hunting frenzy at that place she was burned alive, as the Moravians learned on March 16, 1806.

Caritas must have had at least one child, as it was written that "an old woman called Caltas, chief among the women" (Draper 1821) was killed, and that "her grandson . . . when found was tied and brought to camp" (Drake 1852:88).

#### Salomo's Other Grandchildren

Some of Gulpskammen's (John Thompson's) brothers and sisters get very little attention in the Moravian records, but should be mentioned to complete the account of the family.

Esther (#208) was baptized on August 22, 1749, at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Her husband was known as Zacharias (#210). She died at Gnadenhütten, Pennsylvania on December 21, 1749. The relatives who came at that time included her sister Caritas.

Anna Maria (#327) was baptized at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania on February 28, 1752. Her husband was Tobias (#326). In October, 1753, she was reported sick on the Musconetcong River, in New Jersey east of Bethlehem. Her sister, Caritas, from Bethlehem, and her brother, Jonathan, and his wife, Verona, from Meniolagomeka, went to see her, and brought her back to Bethlehem where she died on November 2, 1753.

Rosina (#135) and Sophia (#137) are said to have been granddaughters of Salomon, but they are not identified as sisters of Gulpskammen (John Thompson). Rosina died on August 29, 1750, and Sophia on December 21, 1751.

Jonathan (#173) was baptized on April 18, 1749, at Bethlehem and is identified as "Salomons Sister's Grandson von Meniolagom[eka]." His wife, Verona, was baptized on April 27. They had children identified as Juliana, Abraham, Sara (died 1755), Levi, and Maria Elisabeth.

#### Salomo's Possible Descendant—Joseph Thompson

Although the meager information available from the Moravian records, and the family stories told to Mrs. Dean, suggest a connection, it is impossible to determine the exact line between the Thompsons of the 1700s and Nora Thompson Dean's grandfather, Joseph Thompson, who was born in 1824 and died in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma) in 1876.

Joseph Thompson (Figure 1)<sup>4</sup> had three wives, at least two of them at the same time. Polygyny was an old custom among the Lenape, and often the wives were sisters (the term for such a marriage to sisters is sororal polygyny). Joseph had four children. He left a number of descendants, as the accompanying chart (Table 2) shows. In addition to his son James H. Thompson<sup>5</sup> (who was the father of Nora (Mrs. Dean) and Edward Leonard Thompson (Figure 2) who, at ninety years of age, is the ceremonial chief of the Delaware Tribe living in eastern Oklahoma), other descendants include Lewis B. Ketchum (Figures 3 and 4), who served as chief of the tribe from 1983 through 1994; Douglas Donnell (Figure 5), the tribal drumkeeper; and Kala, who is a fashion model in Europe.

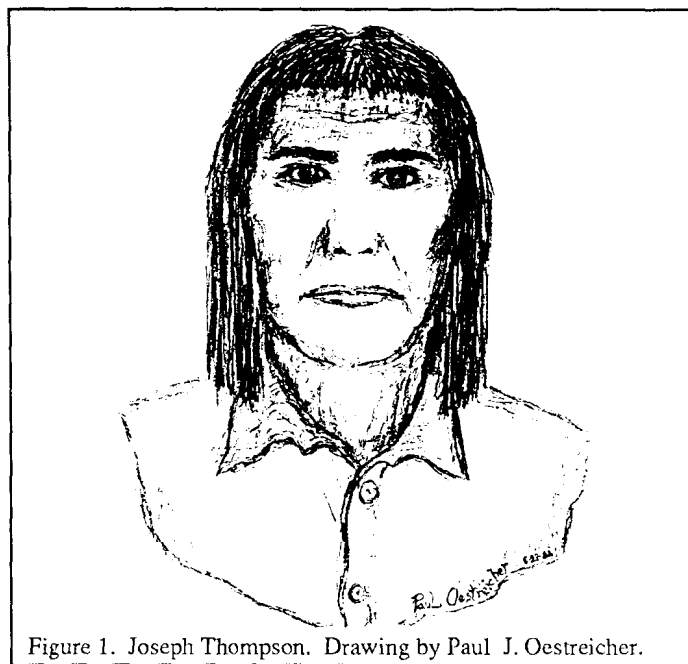


Figure 1. Joseph Thompson. Drawing by Paul J. Oestreich.



Figure 2. Nora Thompson Dean and Edward Leonard Thompson.

### Concluding Comment

Having read this article, the reader should appreciate the difficulty of doing genealogical research on Indian families. Not only do individuals sometimes change their names, but also, after the missionaries arrived, they began bestowing baptismal names if an individual Indian converted to Christianity. Often the records do not even mention the person's true Lenape name.

Frequently, the spelling of names in the records is different at almost each writing. A good example of what can happen when attempting to spell even a simple Lenape

name was demonstrated when Mrs. Dean pronounced a list of fifty Lenape words to college students in 1975. The students were asked to write these as best they could. The list began with single syllable words and progressed to more difficult words, and each was repeated several times.

One of the names used in this test was Owëliungòn which means Pretty-Wings. Some students wrote the name with a fair degree of accuracy, but some other renditions were: Alene-lugun, Aloiuunkun, Olegungun, and Oulelingor. It is debatable whether a Lenape speaker could make sense of the name spelled this way.

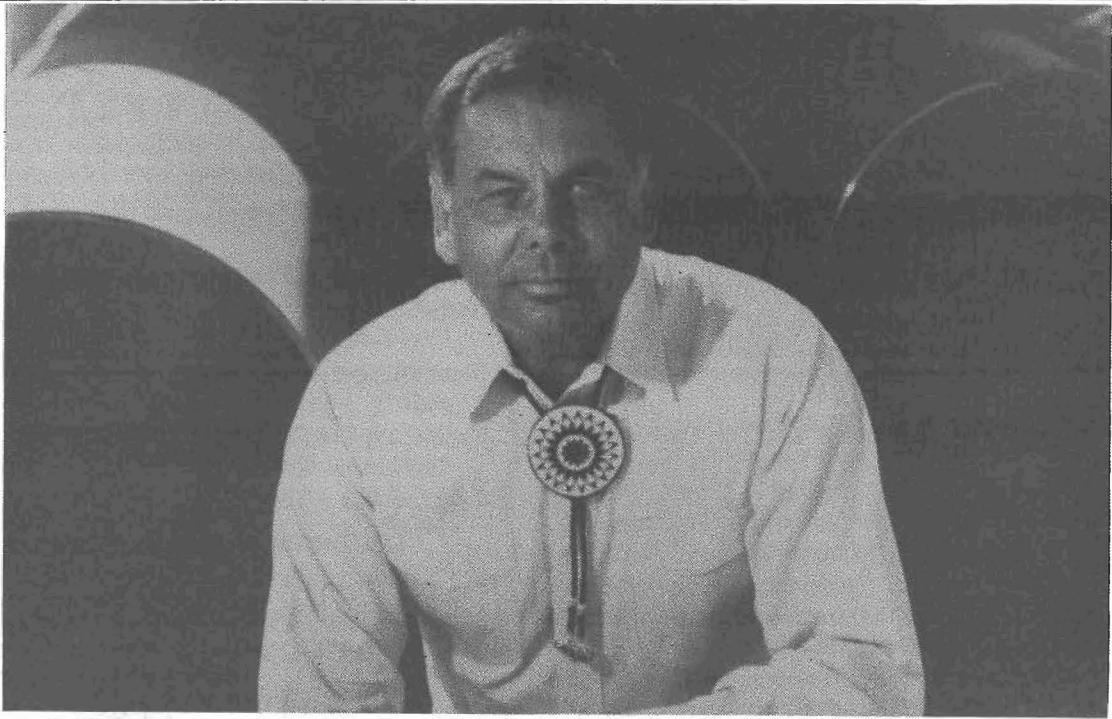


Figure 3. Lewis B. Ketchum.



Figure 4. Lewis B. Ketchum.

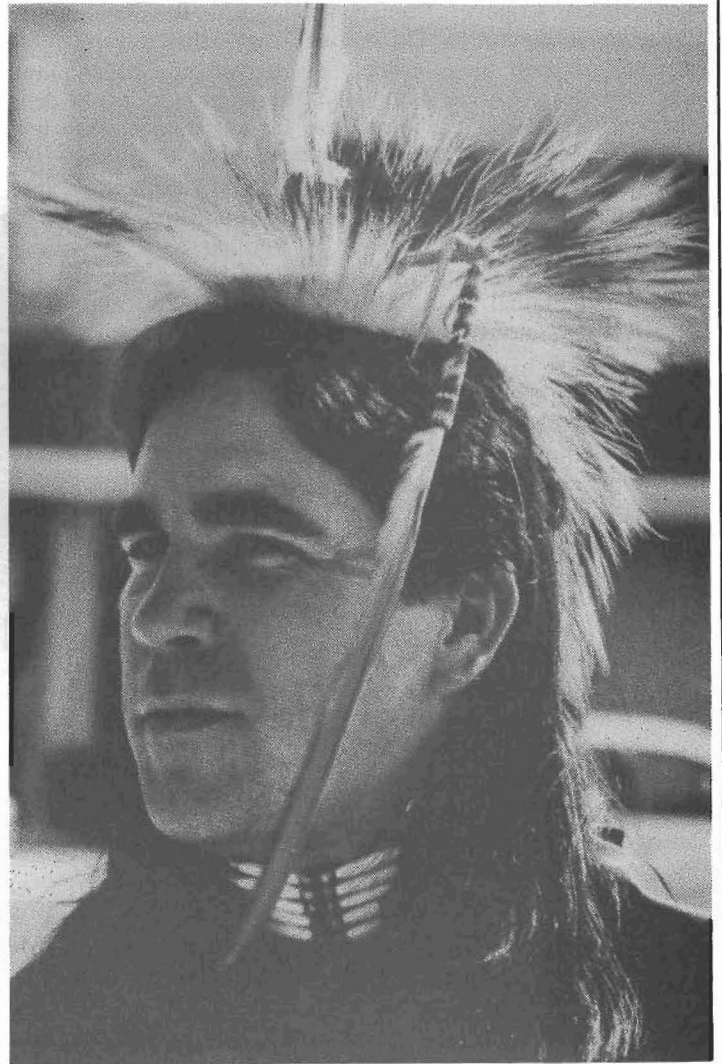


Figure 5. Douglas Donnell.

## Acknowledgments

I am thankful for the correspondence between Mrs. Dean and Dr. William A. Hunter that made this article possible. I would also like to thank the descendants of Joseph Thompson for providing answers to my many questions, and Lucy Parks Blalock for help with translating one of the Lenape names. I am grateful to Paul Larson, Earl Olmstead, Herbert C. Kraft, and Charles A. Bello for their helpful comments and suggestions.

## End Notes

1. These two Rolls are mentioned in a thesis. The author writes as if he had actually seen the 1832 Delaware Roll, but unfortunately no further information has come forth (Ferguson 1972).

2. As in my previous articles, I use the two terms Lenape and Delaware interchangeably. Lenape is the name used by the people who speak the language to refer to themselves. Many of the younger people whose language is English use the term Delaware more frequently.

I also use the term "Indian" with the full understanding that there are some people who prefer the use of the term "Native American" or "First Nation."

3. One of the main reasons Caritas' family wanted her to go with them was the infamous Gnadenhütten, Ohio, massacre. On March 7, 1782, a group of militiamen from Washington County, Pennsylvania, went to the mission town of Gnadenhütten. On the way they killed several Indians and scalped them. Once they arrived at Gnadenhütten they asked the Christian Indians who were working in their fields to come into the town. The Indians thought they had nothing to fear. "They trusted and went, but were all bound, the men being put into one house, the women into another. . . . They began to sing hymns and spoke words of encouragement and consolation to another until they were all slain, and Abraham was the first to be led out, but the others were killed in the house. The sisters also afterwards met the same fate" (Olmstead 1991:55).

According to the Moravian records, March 8 was set as the day of execution—56 adult Indians were killed (29 men, 27 women) and 34 children of various ages—a total of 90 victims. The militiamen returned with 96 scalps—they must have killed six unconverted Indians somewhere along their route (Weslager 1972:316).

4. This drawing of Joseph Thompson was done by Paul Oestreicher. Mrs. Dean had seen a photograph of her grandfather for many years as it hung in the family home. In later years, unfortunately, it was destroyed by vandals. Mrs. Dean worked with Paul until the sketch looked like the photograph she remembered.

5. I was very greatly honored when James H. Thompson adopted me into his family as a grandson in 1963. Mr. Thompson was one of the main people to teach me about the language and ways of the Lenape after I moved to Oklahoma in the Spring of 1962, and he continued to instruct me until shortly before his death in May of 1964 at age 96.

## Lenape Names Used in the Text

Gulpikammen, also spelled Coolpeeconain, Coolpeeconin, Cullpeckaumin, Gulpikamen, Gulpikamen, and Quillpukamen. (He is also known as Captain Thompson, Captain Thomson, John Thompson, and Ludwig) = Kwēlpikāmēn—He turns things around where he steps.

Keposch = Kèpēch—Frisky or Lively Person.

Mamsochalent = Mēmsuxòlēnd—He who is being taken hither and yon.

Nescopeck = Niskēpēk—Dirty Water.

Newalika = Newalike—Four Steps.

Ogehemochqua = Oxehēmukwe—Moonlight Woman.

Packanke = Pakānge—Locust (the cicada or Seven-Year Locust).

Pnedchaechqua = Pēnētxēxkwe—Hanging Ears Woman.

Shamokin (present Sunbury) = Shahēmoking—Place of Crawfish.

Tammekappei = Tēmikapay—He whose standing up has ended.

Tauinechqua = Tainēxkwe—One who appears in the middle or center (translation by Lucy Parks Blalock).

Tunkhannock = Tāngghanēk—Little Creek.

## The Spelling Used in the Lenape Names

a — like the a in English "father"

à — like the u in English "cup"

e — like the a in English "fate"

è — like the e in English "met"

ë — like the a in English "sofa"

i — like the e in English "she"

ì — like the i in English "fit"

o — like the o in English "nose"

ò — like the o in English "north"

u — like the oo in English "fool"

ù — like the u in English "pull"

x — no equivalent sound in English. This is pronounced like the ch in the German word "doch." Most of the other sounds are as in English.

## Table 1 — Descendants of Tammekappei

1	Keposch Tammikappei, Salomo #133 1672 - 1756
.	+Ogehemochqua - 1748
.....	2 Thomas #
.....	2 Pnedchaechqua
.....	3 Capt. or John Thompson Gulpikamen, Ludwig #176 Aft 1700 - Aft 1781
.....	+Christiana #184
.....	*2nd Wife of Gulpikamen:
.....	+Lucia #288
.....	3 Caritas #243 1736 - 1806
.....	+Johan Jacob
.....	*2nd Husband of Caritas #243:
.....	+David # - 1797
.....	4 name unknown
.....	5 son name unknown
.....	3 Leonhard #213 - Aft 1773
.....	+Lucia #288 - Aft 1772
.....	3 Anna Maria #327 - 1753
.....	+Tobias #326 - 1761
.....	3 Jonathan #173 - Aft 1776
.....	+Verona #177 - 1764
.....	4 Juliana
.....	4 Abraham
.....	4 Sara - 1755
.....	4 Levi #291 - 1764
.....	4 Maria Elisabeth
.....	3 Esther #208 - 1749
.....	+Zacharias #210 - 1763
.....	3 Sophia #137 - 1751
.....	3 Rosina #135 - 1750

Table 2 — Descendants of Joseph Thompson

1	Joseph Thompson
.	+We-le-pah-ke-nah-o
.....	2 James Henry Thompson
.....	+Sarah Wilson
.....	3 Jesse Thompson
.....	3 Edward Leonard Thompson
.....	+Martha Alberta Sherer
.....	4 Dorothy Thompson
.....	3 Nora Thompson
.....	+Charley H. Dean
.....	4 Gwendolyn Louise Dean
.....	2 Amanda Thompson
.....	+Henry Falleaf
.....	2 Lizzie Thompson
.....	+Dutch Whiteturkey
*2nd Wife of Joseph Thompson:	
.	+We-sah-e-poh-ke-noh-o
.....	2 Lillie Thompson
.....	+Albert Curleyhead
.....	3 Rosie Curleyhead
.....	+Elmer Goldesberry
.....	4 Elmer Goldesberry
.....	+Louise Orr
.....	5 James E. Goldesberry
.....	+Faye Johnson
.....	6 Elmer Roy Goldesberry
.....	6 Jamie Lyn
.....	5 Doris Goldesberry
.....	+Albert Warnock
.....	3 Kate Curleyhead
.....	+Norton Berry
.....	4 Jack Berry
.....	3 Josie Curleyhead
.....	+Alex Pambago
.....	4 Joanna Pambago
.....	+Dugan Nichol
.....	5 Carol Nichol
.....	6 Miranda
.....	3 Catherine Curleyhead
.....	+Ace Berry
.....	4 Lillian Berry
.....	+Lewis A. Ketchum
.....	5 Lewis B. Ketchum
.....	+Betty Hahn
.....	6 Craig Ketchum
.....	6 Kent Ketchum
.....	6 Kevin Ketchum
.....	6 Bryan Ketchum
.....	5 Dee Wayne Ketchum
.....	+Annette Martin
.....	6 DeAnn Ketchum
.....	+Richard Andrew Sears
.....	7 Jacob Andrew Sears
.....	7 Hannah Kate Sears
.....	7 Clayton Ketchum Sears
.....	6 Kala Ketchum
.....	+Kevin J. Thomas
.....	7 Whitney Irene Thomas
.....	7 Coleton James Thomas
.....	5 Patricia Ketchum
.....	+Walter Donnell
.....	6 Steven Leon Donnell
.....	7 Rebecca Donnell
.....	7 Steven Leon Donnell, Jr.
.....	6 Sandra Donnell
.....	+Ray Tompkins
.....	7 Sean Patrick Tompkins
.....	7 Stewart DeWayne Tompkins
.....	7 Cody Bear Dean Tompkins
.....	6 Douglas Donnell
.....	+Leslie Bolain
.....	7 April Nicole Donnell
.....	7 Spencer Donnell

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