

AMERICAN LANGUAGE  
REPRINTS

VOL. 29



EARLY  
FRAGMENTS  
OF  
MINSI  
DELAWARE

by

John Heckewelder, Thomas Jefferson et al.

Evolution Publishing  
Bristol, Pennsylvania

Extracted from:  
Peter Stephen Duponceau. Indian Vocabularies. Manuscript in the  
library of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.  
*and*  
Thomas Jefferson. A Manuscript Vocabulary of Several Indian  
Languages. Manuscript in the library of the American  
Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.

The editor especially acknowledges the American Philosophical  
Society, who granted permission to reprint from its collections.

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Bristol, Pennsylvania.

This book was electronically typeset and printed on  
archival quality 24 lb. paper.

Manufactured in the United States of America

ISBN 1-889758-31-0  
ISSN 1540-34750

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Heckewelder, John Gottlieb Ernestus, 1743-1823.

Early fragments of Minsi Delaware / by John Heckewelder, Thomas  
Jefferson et al.

p. cm. -- (American language reprints ; v. 29)

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 1-889758-31-0 (alk. paper)

1. Munsee language--Glossaries, vocabularies, etc. I. Jefferson, Thomas,  
1743-1826. II. Title. III. Series.

PM1961.Z5 .H43 2002

497'.3--dc21

2002154255

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## Preface to the 2002 edition

Minsi and Munsee are the names for the northern branch of the Delawares, both Anglicizations of Delaware *minsiw*, meaning “person from Minisink”. The Minisink who lived inland along the Upper Delaware River were only one constituent band of what we now call the Minsi, but beginning in the 1660s coastal bands around Manhattan Island sought refuge among them due to difficulties with Dutch and English colonists. As the nucleus of a consolidated band of refugees, the name of the Minisink was thus appropriated to refer broadly to all the groups historically related to them (Goddard 1978). “Minsi” in its broad sense begins to appear in the historical record by the 1750s, and its usage has continued to present.

Delaware is an Eastern Algonquian language which is quite well known. Two dialects—Southern Unami and Minsi—have survived into recent times and have been recorded and studied by modern linguists. Another variety of Unami once called “Mission Delaware” but now referred to as Northern Unami, went extinct in the early 1900s but left behind a fairly extensive literature including dictionaries, grammars and other texts. There is also evidence of a subdialect called Unalachtigo, thought to be a third “Northeastern” variety of Unami formerly spoken northeast of Trenton, New Jersey (Goddard 1975).

Minsi was the northernmost dialect of Delaware, spoken along the Lower Hudson and Upper Delaware river

valleys in a region which roughly corresponds to the New York City metropolitan area. Thanks to close scrutiny of the early sources by Goddard (1971), its boundaries are fairly well established although some problem areas still remain. To the south it is almost certain that the Raritan River was the major boundary between Minsi and Unami speakers. The Rockaway on western Long Island probably spoke Delaware, but the Unquachog at the island's center spoke a dialect of Quiripi, a New England language. Between these were the Matinecock and Massapequa, whose affiliations are unknown. The place-name "Massapequa" shows characteristics of a New England language, but there are also early variants Marospinc and Marsepingh, which show the distinctive Delaware locative suffix -ink. We are told that a sachem of the Massapequa was the brother of a sachem of the Tappan, which suggests, though does not prove, a common language between the two bands. Similarly, family and political connections suggest a link between bands of northeastern New Jersey and those further up the Hudson such as the Esopus, Rechgawawanc, and Wappingers (Goddard 1971).

At the time of contact no single name was devised to encompass all the Minsi-speaking tribes, but "Manhattan" as used by Adriaen van der Donck in 1655 came the closest: "Their various tongues may be classed into four distinct languages, namely, *Manhattan*, *Minquas*, *Savanoos*, and *Wappanoos*. With the *Manhattans*, we include those who live in the neighboring



places along the North River [i.e. the Hudson], on Long Island, and at the Neversink.” (Van der Donck 1968, p. 92). Other than the omission of the Minisink, this is a fairly accurate summation of the extent of Minsi-speaking peoples when they were still largely inhabiting their aboriginal lands.

In discussing the actual remains of the language, it would be proper to consider first the vocabularies from their transplanted and mixed remnants over a century later, since these are the largest early sources of data and also the most linguistically reliable. All these are specifically called Minsi and date from the late 1700s to the early 1800s.

The largest vocabulary of Minsi given here was penned by the Reverend John Heckewelder, a Moravian missionary who served as an assistant to Reverend David Zeisberger beginning in 1765. The Moravians, Zeisberger in particular, distinguished themselves as skilled linguists, not only thoroughly documenting the Northern Unami dialect in which they preached, but also learning and recording other languages such as Onondaga, Chippewa, Mahican and Nanticoke. Heckewelder’s knowledge of Minsi probably dates from 1767, at the founding of the Goschgosching mission to the Munsee on the Allegheny River in Western Pennsylvania. His study no doubt continued at the feet of Zeisberger, who was said to have been “conversant” with the language (Pilling, p. 548) and whose Delaware writings contain scattered Minsi forms (Goddard 1996).

Heckewelder’s study bore tangible fruit in a manu-

script he prepared containing a comparative table of seven Algonquian languages, now kept in the library of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. This same table was later published with, however, some transcription errors (Horsford 1887). The second column named in the table is “Minsi,” and a total of 105 words are listed within it. It may not be possible to fix an exact date to the transcription of these words, but we know the underlying material must go back at least to the mid-1790s since Benjamin Smith Barton was already quoting from it in 1797 (see below).

Daniel Brinton would later observe that Heckewelder “certainly had a fluent, practical knowledge of the Delaware,” but “lacked analytical power in it.” Nevertheless, Heckewelder’s recording of Minsi is arguably the best for its time, partly because he applied to it a German-based spelling system that the Moravians had already devised for Unami. Since German and Delaware both share a velar fricative sound, the German letter combination “ch” used for it was easily transferred over to the dialects of Delaware. In the table, the “Delaware” (i.e. Unami) and Minsi terms ranged next to each other clearly show what Brinton called the “harsher” sound and “greater use of gutturals” in Minsi as opposed to Unami: *wipit* vs. *wichpit*, *mocum* vs. *mochcum* (Brinton 1884).

Heckewelder has left us some additional data in the posthumous 1876 edition of his *History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations*. A footnote on page 231 tells us of Indian “doctors”: “The Minsi or Monsey call them ‘Mědéu,’ which signifies ‘conjuror.’” The words for

1-10, not given at all in the Philosophical Society manuscript, are found in a letter from Heckewelder to Peter Stephen Duponceau of the Society. In another letter Heckewelder mentions that the month of March was called by the Minsi “chwami gischuch”, or “the shad moon”. In this edition these entries have been incorporated into the alphabetization of the manuscript vocabulary, and designated with the abbreviation “H.M.C.”

Next in importance is a collection of 80 words found in a badly damaged manuscript book of Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson had accumulated an extensive amount of linguistic data in the years before 1800, and understandably concerned about its potential loss, set about to organize and publish it. But the duties of the presidency interfered with his plans. As his term finally ended, Jefferson made arrangements to ship his papers back to Virginia, intending to complete his work there. But along the way the shipment was opened and ransacked by thieving boatmen, and his manuscripts were carelessly thrown into the river (Boyd 1982). Though fragments of these were eventually salvaged, it was a great personal blow to the scholar-President and his dreams of publishing an Indian-language compendium were never realized. In 1817, he presented the remnants of his collection to the Philosophical Society library, which retains them to this day.

Chief among these damaged remnants is a 60-page draft organized in three or four columns to a page. Each column is headed first by an English word, then under it

a French translation and the equivalents in 22 Indian languages, grouped by language family. It is probably the same work Jefferson referred to in a letter of 1800: "I propose this summer to arrange my vocabularies for the press, and I wish to place every tongue in the column adjacent to it's kindred tongues" (Boyd 1982, vol. 20 p. 451).

The fifth row in the Jefferson manuscript is labeled "Monsi", and the words which occur there cannot be traced to any other early vocabulary; no doubt they were copied from some original manuscript which was lost in the river. It is possible that Jefferson collected these words himself, though a modern editor has disavowed his personal authorship of any vocabulary besides that of the Unquachogs (ibid, p. 450).

Damage to the manuscript has caused a few of the English definitions to be missing entirely. These, however, can be reconstructed with certainty from the words below it. All reconstructions, including those of damaged and indistinct letters are printed in square brackets []; where no reconstruction was possible these contain underscores [\_]. A number of stress accents in the manuscript are written high above entire syllables, and not any particular letter; for convenience these have been placed over the vowel alone. The significance of the asterisks is unclear; perhaps they indicate a different source for the terms thus cited, but in any case they are included here as is.

The third early source to be specifically ascribed to the Minsi is the *New Views of the Origin of the Tribes and*

*Nations of America* of Benjamin Smith Barton, published first in 1797 and then a year later with considerable additions (Barton 1797, 1798). Typifying the encyclopedic and comparative tendencies of his day, the *New Views* is arranged by English word, under which are listed equivalents in a range of American and Asiatic languages. Barton carefully noted his sources, and he used italic letters to indicate where the terms “are taken from printed books, or have been communicated to me by my friends, in different parts of North America.” One such contributor was his “industrious and amiable friend” John Heckewelder, who sent the author his collection of manuscripts from which all of the italicized “Munsi” words were taken.

But Barton also procured his own linguistic data: “All the words printed in the Roman letter were collected by myself: the greater part of them as they were pronounced by Indians themselves; the remainder as they were pronounced by Indian interpreters, traders, or gentlemen who have been among the Indians.”

The Minsi words in Roman type total 14, which are here selected out of the table and presented as a group. Five of them are found only in the 1798 edition: those for mountain, bone, white, black, and star. *Quishough*, the word for “moon”, has a question mark after it in both editions—presumably Barton extrapolated this definition from that for “sun”.

Less extensive, but noteworthy for their early date are the fragmentary word-lists and single words preserved in

early colonial accounts of New Netherland and New York. Collectively, they contribute little to our actual knowledge of the dialect, but they are important primary evidence for drawing the original boundaries of Minsi speech during the 1600s. Unlike the previous vocabularies, none of these fragments are actually ascribed to the “Minsi”, which to stress again is a later composite term. But that they at least partially pertain to the same idiom is proved by comparing some of the dialectally distinctive forms:

<u>Author</u>	<u>Recorded term</u>	<u>Modern Minsi</u>	<u>Modern Unami</u>
Wolley	<i>um-be-re-mak-qua</i> “needle”	<i>ambiilaméekwaan</i>	<i>é:ška-nš</i>
de Vries	<i>hespanen</i> [raccoon]	<i>éspan</i>	<i>náhanəm</i>
Danckaerts	<i>hespaen</i> [raccoon]	<i>éspan</i>	<i>náhanəm</i>
Danckaerts	<i>Kickerom</i> “Supreme Being”	<i>kíhkay</i> (chief)	<i>sa-k-í-ma</i> (chief)
[Patent]	<i>Saheinsios</i> [young one]	<i>skahúnzuw</i>	<i>pi-laé-é-əč</i>

(Minsi from O’Meara 1996; Unami from Goddard 1971, Blalock et al. 1994)

Yet we also find in these same accounts words that are not traceable to Minsi as we know it, even among authors who had no experience with Unami-speaking Delawares. These ostensibly foreign words may come from a Delaware-based trading jargon used by Dutch settlers along the Lower Delaware River in the late 1620s, brought northward when these settlers were relocated to Manhattan only a few years later. Goddard has argued that the presence of native Minsi terms recorded there came from “casual” observers who wrote what they heard rather than what a jargon speaker would use (1971).

The Delaware spoken around New York City may

also have been closer to Unami than is currently believed. For example, the Unami word *sakima* for “chief” occurs with stubborn consistency in New Netherland, and sometimes in contexts which suggest a native usage. DeRasieres says of Manhattan: “it is inhabited by the old Manhatans...under different chiefs, whom they call *Sackimas*.” And Van der Donck states that “all the native chiefs of the New Netherlands who reside along the rivers and the sea-shore are called *sachems*...” The Minsi form *Kickerom*, cited in the table above, occurs only once, and the *wajauwe* of the Moravian sources not at all. We may need to revise some assumptions about how faithfully modern Minsi, with its presumably Minisink core, continues the dialects of the Manhattan area.

Either way, however, it is undeniable that the Minsi dialect did not go unrecorded in the 17th and early 18th centuries and there is evidence of it throughout the history of Delaware language, albeit not very much and none of it pristine. In this volume these fragmentary bits of evidence are collected and presented as a body to shed more light on Delaware as spoken in the Manhattan area; some brief comments on each source are given below. Uncited documents can all be found in the collection *Narratives of New Netherland* (Jameson 1909).

A letter of Isaac de Rasieres to Samuel Blommaert, dating from about 1628, contains some of the earliest linguistic data from New Netherland: eight terms including a phrase of Delaware jargon, *collatismarrenitten*. De Rasieres lived on Manhattan island as an agent for the East India Company from 1626 to about 1630, after which

he returned to Amsterdam. He admits that the region of the South (i.e., Delaware) River was largely unknown to him, since the Mannhattans were in a “state of constant enmity” with the tribes there, thus excluding the possibility of familiarity with Unami-speaking tribes.

In his *Short Historical and Journal Notes of Various Voyages*, published in 1655, David de Vries recounts his travels in New Netherland and the abortive colonies he helped found there from 1631 to 1644. A merchant by profession, De Vries was well traveled. But most of the seven Delaware items cited in his *Notes* occur in his extended account of the Hackensack, Tappan, and Wiechquaeskeck Indians, who respectively occupied what is now Bergen County in New Jersey, and Rockland and Westchester Counties in New York. The jargon phrase *Rancontyn marinit*, containing the same verb as *collatismarrenitten* above, was spoken to De Vries at Rockaway on Long Island, but the speaker had moved there from the vicinity of Tappan.

About the author of the extensive *Journal of Jasper Danckaerts* (Danckaerts 1867, 1913), not much is known. The *Journal* covers Danckaerts’ stay in New Netherland from 1679-1680 and contains some linguistic items obtained from Hans the Indian of the Hackensacks. Danckaerts and his fellow traveler Peter Sluyter also spent time in other areas of the Atlantic seaboard, including Maryland, Delaware, and Boston. Two of the words in his narrative—*sapaen* and *homma*—are placed within a discussion of Maryland, but these are generic terms not specific to the dialect in use there.



Though he spent much of his time in the upriver colony of Rensselaerwyck, where Albany now stands, Adriaen van der Donck's *Description of the New Netherlands* pertains to the Lower Hudson settlements as well. He arrived in America in 1641, and helped make peace with the Indians against whom Governor William Kieft launched a "foolish and bloody" war in 1643-44; for this service he was rewarded with a huge estate in what is now Yonkers (Van der Donck 1968). The *Description* was completed in the Netherlands but published in 1655 while the author spent his last years in America; it is not linguistically distinctive save two words—*Kintowen* and *quaasiens*—which are not attested elsewhere. Van der Donck's material probably came from the Manhattans.

Charles Wolley was an Anglican minister who spent two years serving the English colonists on Manhattan Island from 1678-1680. In 1701 he had his memories of the colony published in a brief volume of less than a hundred pages (Wolley 1902). He took special interest in the native inhabitants of New York, and devoted most of it to them. Wolley's *Journal* contains some fifteen words, many of which survived into modern English, as well as various personal and place names. Wolley employs his own spelling system for these; his rendering of Delaware actually quite accurate compared to earlier attempts and a few words are based on the actual language rather than its jargon.

Finally, there are a few more fragments of Delaware in old documents from New Netherland. A patent for Staten Island lists a number of native leaders, among

whom is a man called “Sahensios, or the young one.” (O’Callaghan 1853-1887, vol. 13 p. 2). In the Journal of Director Stuyvesant’s visit to the Esopus Indians of New Jersey we find “cacheus, that is crazy, mad or drunk”, as well as an ethnic designation “Swannekus, that is white man or Dutch” (ibid, vol. 13 p. 84). Lastly, Cornelius Melyn testified in the year 1659 concerning the purchase of Staten Island 19 years previous, that the Indians cried “Keene, Keene, Keene orit nietap”, translated as “Thank you, Thank you, Thank you Good friend” (Collections 1913, p. 125). Of these only the first example is Minsi; the rest are directly from the Unami-based pidgin Delaware.

Minsi materials steadily increased throughout the 1800s. A Methodist hymn-book and an Anglican *Book of Common Prayer* in it were published in the 1840s, and Reverend Albert Seqaqkind Anthony made Minsi emendations to an anonymous Northern Unami dictionary edited and published by Daniel Brinton (Pilling 1891).

Today the remnants of the Minsi-speaking Delawares are found mainly in Ontario. Their dialect is no longer spoken at Six Nations Reserve and Munceytown; only in Moraviantown, where Minsi had over time supplanted the Northern Unami of the missionaries, is the dialect still in use. Research with less than a dozen mostly elderly speakers there during the 1980s and 1990s has culminated in an extensive modern dictionary (O’Meara 1996), presently the last word in the study of Minsi Delaware.

—Claudio R. Salvucci, series ed.

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## Excerpt from An Account of the History, Manners and Customs of the Indian Nations

Those of the Delawares who fixed their abode on the shores of the Atlantic divided themselves into three tribes. Two of them, distinguished by the names of the *Turtle* and the *Turkey*, the former calling themselves *Unâmis* and the other *Unalâchtgo*, chose those grounds to settle on, which lay nearest the sea, between the coast and the high mountains...The third tribe, the *Wolf*, commonly called the *Minsi*, which we have corrupted into *Monseys*, had chosen to live back of the two other tribes, and formed a kind of bulwark for their protection, watching the motions of the Mengwe, and being at hand to afford their aid in case of a rupture with them. The Minsi were considered the most warlike and active branch of the Lenape. They extended their settlements, from the *Minisink*, a place named after them, where they had their council seat and fire, quite up the Hudson on the east; and to the west or south west far beyond the Susquehannah: their northern boundaries were supposed originally to be the heads of the great rivers Susquehannah and Delaware, and their southern boundaries that ridge of hills known in New Jersey by the name of *Muskanecun*, and in Pennsylvania, by those of *Lehigh*, *Coghnewago*, &c. Within this boundary were their principal settlements; and even as late as the year 1742, they had a town, with

a large peach orchard, on the tract of land where *Nazareth*, in Pennsylvania, has since been built; another on *Lehigh* (the west branch of the Delaware), and others beyond the blue ridge, besides small family settlements here and there scattered.

—John Heckewelder, 1819



## Excerpt from Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren among the Delaware and Mohegan Indians

Among the numerous visitors which had come to see the new Christian Indian congregation at Lawunakhannek, was a most distinguished character, named *Glikhican*, (in English, the *stud*, or *foremost sight on a gunbarrel*.) This extraordinary man was, by all who knew him, both admired and dreaded, on account of his superior courage as a warrior—his talents in council—and his unequalled manner of delivering himself as a national orator, or speaker: he at that time being first councillor to the chief of the Wolf tribe\*, *Pakanke*, at Cascaski (Cushcushke) on the Big Beaver.—This man, with the approbation of his chief and the council, had undertaken to go purposely to Lawunakhannek, there to dispute with, and confound the missionary Zeisberger, on the doctrine he was preaching to the Indians. Although he had thought himself armed at all points, sufficiently to withstand any white preacher's doctrine, he had the good sense not to begin the contest, but suffer the missionary to preach as usual, until he should be able to detect doctrinal errors. Having attended the preachings of Zeisberger, for that purpose, he was so struck with conviction of the truth what he heard, and feeling the power of the precious word, that he, wherever

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\* i.e. the Minsi, —ed.

he went, and on his return to Cushcushke, reported favourable of the missionary and his converts; which was the reason that, in the year following, they were invited to come and settle in that country.

—John Heckewelder, 1820.

MINSI—ENGLISH  
(Heckewelder)



**Achgi**, *earth*.  
**Achgink**, *low*.  
**Achgook**, *a snake*.  
**Achgumhok**, *a cloud*. [perhaps **aehgumhok** —ed.]  
**Achowaltoagan**, *love*.  
**Achpó**, *at home*.  
**Achsün**, *stone*.  
**Agásku**, *green*.  
**Alank**, *a star*.  
**Alum**, *a dog*.  
**Auwann**, *fog*.  
**Auwēñ**, *who*.  
**Auwéhelle**, *a bird*.  
**Auwéhellesak**, *birds*.  
**Auwossachgame**, *heaven*.

**Chasch**, *eight*. (H.M.C.)  
**Chey**, *skin*.  
**Chwami gischuch**, *March, the 'shad moon.'* (H.M.C.)

**Gawunsch**, *a thorn*.  
**Gechgemötgēt**, *a thief*.  
**Gichthanne**, *the sea*.  
**Gichtoteney**, *a large city*.  
**Gieschku**, *day*.  
**Gischuch**, *sun*.  
**Guhn**, *snow*.  
**Guttasch**, *six*. (H.M.C.)  
**Gutti**, *one*. (H.M.C.)

**Julak**, *there*.

**Kitschimanitto**, *God*.

**Kscháchan**, *wind*.

**Lachksowilenno**, *a war captain*.

**Lénno**, *a man*.

**Leppoewágan**, *knowledge, wisdom*.

**Lowan**, *winter*.

**Machk**, *a bear*.

**Machksen**, *shoes*.

**Machksu**, *red*.

**Machta**, *no, not*.

**Machtándo**, *devil*.

**Machtitsu**, *bad*.

**Machtschi manitto**, *evil being*.

**Machxen**, *shoes*.

**Mannihilleoágan**, *death*.

**Mattassin**, *tobacco pipe*.

**M'bisis**, *a lake*.

**M'by**, *water*.

**Mechtschi**, *already*.

**Mechweu**, *large*.

**Mědéu**, *conjuror, doctor*. (H.M.C.)

**Meecheek**, *large*.

**Metáchan**, *wood*.

**Michtuk**, *a tree*.

**Mochcum**, *blood.*

**Mochquami**, *ice.*

**Nacha**, *three.* (H.M.C.)

**Nalan**, *five.* (H.M.C.)

**Namóés**, *a fish.*

**Neesachissīt**, *black.*

**Nelak**, *there.*

**Nesgeek**, *black.*

**Newa**, *four.* (H.M.C.)

**Ni**, *I.*

**Niepen**, *summer.*

**Nipahump**, *moon.*

**Nischa**, *two.* (H.M.C.)

**Nischoasch**, *seven.* (H.M.C.)

**Nolewi**, *nine.* (H.M.C.)

**Ochquesis**, *a girl.*

**Ochquéu**, *a woman.*

**Ochquoan**, *a hook, pothook.*

**Ojoos**, *flesh, meat.*

**Pachsajeek**, *valley.*

**Pachtamawos**, *God.*

**Pechuwiwi**, *near by.*

**Pommauchsoágan**, *life.*

**Pommi**, *fat, oil, grease.*

**Pschickki**, *pretty.*

**Pung**, *ashes, dust.*

**Quãlchey**, *smoke.*

**Sípu**, *river, stream.*

**Skahansus**, *a boy.*

**Sochkellañ**, *rain.*

**Soopsin**, *naked.*

**Sopsu**, *naked.*

**Téndeú**, *fire.*

**Theu**, *cold.*

**Tpochcu**, *night.*

**Tschabichk**, *a root.*

**Tschankschisu**, *small.*

**Tschichtschant**, *spirit.*

**Tumhican**, *an ax, hatchet.*

**Uténey**, *a city, town.*

**Wachelemat**, *far off.*

**Wachgan**, *a bone.*

**Wachganoll**, *bones.*

**Wachtey**, *belly.*

**Wachtschú**, *mountain.*

**Wackunk**, *high.*

**Wajauwe**, *a chief, king.*

**Wanáchk**, *hand.*



**Wapan**, *morning*.  
**W'dee**, *heart*.  
**W'doon**, *mouth*.  
**Wichgat**, *foot*.  
**Wichkiwon**, *nose*.  
**Wichpit**, *tooth*.  
**Wichquoam**, *a house*.  
**Wichtawak**, *ear*.  
**Wiechéken**, *hair*.  
**Wilánno**, *tongue*.  
**Wilustican**, *the head*.  
**Wimbat**, *ten*. (H.M.C.)  
**Wishamagan**, *fear*.  
**Woathéjeek**, *light*.  
**Wuchtoney**, *beard*.  
**Wullit**, *good*.  
**Wuschginquall**, *eye*.



ENGLISH—MINSI  
(Heckewelder)



**Already**, *mechtschi*.

**Ashes**, *pung*.

**Ax, an**, *tumhican*.

**Bad**, *machtitsu*.

**Bear, a**, *machk*.

**Beard**, *wuchtoney*.

**Belly**, *wachtey*.

**Bird, a**, *auwéhelle*. **Birds**, *auwéhellesak*.

**Black**, *nesgeek*, *neesachissīt*.

**Blood**, *mochcum*.

**Bone, a**, *wachgan*. **Bones**, *wachganoll*.

**Boy, a**, *skahansus*.

**Captain, a war**, *lachsowilenno*.

**Chief, a**, *wajauwe*.

**City, a**, *uténey*. **A large city**, *gichtoteney*.

**Cloud, a**, *achgumhok*. [perhaps *aehgumhok* — ed.]

**Cold**, *theu*.

**Conjuror**, *mědéu*. (H.M.C.)

**Day**, *gieschku*.

**Death**, *mannihilleoágan*.

**Devil**, *machtándo*.

**Doctor**, *mědéu*. (H.M.C.)

**Dog, a**, *alum*.

**Dust**, *pung*.

**Ear**, *wichtawak*.  
**Earth**, *achgi*.  
**Eight**, *chaasch*. (H.M.C.)  
**Evil being**, *machtschi manitto*.  
**Eye**, *wuschginquall*.

**Far off**, *wachelemat*.  
**Fat**, *pommi*.  
**Fear**, *wishamagan*.  
**Fire**, *téndeü*.  
**Fish, a**, *namés*.  
**Five**, *nalan*. (H.M.C.)  
**Flesh**, *ojoos*.  
**Fog**, *auwann*.  
**Foot**, *wichgat*.  
**Four**, *newa*. (H.M.C.)

**Girl, a**, *ochquesis*.  
**God**, *Pachtamawos, Kitschimanitto*.  
**Good**, *wullit*.  
**Grease**, *pommi*.  
**Green**, *agásku*.

**Hair**, *wiechéken*.  
**Hand**, *wanáchk*.  
**Hatchet, an**, *tumhican*.  
**Head, the**, *wilustican*.  
**Heart**, *w'dee*.

**Heaven**, *auwossachgame*.

**High**, *wackunk*.

**Home, at**, *achpó*.

**Hook, a**, *ochquoan*.

**House, a**, *wichquôam*.

**I**, *ni*.

**Ice**, *mochquami*.

**King, a**, *wajauwe*.

**Knowledge**, *leppoewágan*.

**Lake, a**, *m'bisis*.

**Large**, *meecheek, mechweu*.

**Life**, *pommauchsoágan*.

**Light**, *woathéjeek*.

**Love**, *achowaltoagan*.

**Low**, *achgink*.

**Man, a**, *lénno*.

**March**, *chwami gischuch*. (H.M.C.)

**Meat**, *ojoos*.

**Moon**, *nipahump*.

**Morning**, *wapan*.

**Mountain**, *wachtschú*.

**Mouth**, *w'doon*.

**Naked**, *sopsu, soopsin*.

**Near by**, *pechuwiwi*.  
**Night**, *tpochcu*.  
**Nine**, *nolewi*. (H.M.C.)  
**No**, *machta*.  
**Nose**, *wichkiwon*.  
**Not**, *machta*.

**Oil**, *pommi*.  
**One**, *gutti*. (H.M.C.)

**Pipe, tobacco**, *mattassin*.  
**Pothook**, *ochquoan*.  
**Pretty**, *pschickki*.

**Rain**, *sochkellañ*.  
**Red**, *machksu*.  
**River**, *sípu*.  
**Root, a**, *tschabichk*.

**Sea, the**, *gichthanne*.  
**Seven**, *nischoasch*. (H.M.C.)  
**Shad moon, the**, *chwami gischuch*. (H.M.C.)  
**Shoes**, *machxen, machksen*.  
**Six**, *guttasch*. (H.M.C.)  
**Skin**, *chey*.  
**Small**, *tschankschisu*.  
**Smoke**, *quälchey*.  
**Snake, a**, *achgook*.



**Snow**, *guhn*.

**Spirit**, *tschichtschant*.

**Star, a**, *alank*.

**Stone**, *achsün*.

**Stream**, *sípu*.

**Summer**, *niepen*.

**Sun**, *gischuch*.

**Ten**, *wimbat*. (H.M.C.)

**There**, *julak, nelak*.

**Thief, a**, *gechgemötgēt*.

**Thorn, a**, *gawunsch*.

**Three**, *nacha*. (H.M.C.)

**Tongue**, *wilánno*.

**Tooth**, *wichpit*.

**Town, a**, *uténey*.

**Tree, a**, *michtuk*.

**Two**, *nischa*. (H.M.C.)

**Valley**, *pachsajeeek*.

**Water**, *m'by*.

**Who**, *auwēñ*.

**Wind**, *kscháchan*.

**Winter**, *lowan*.

**Wisdom**, *leppoewágan*.

**Woman, a**, *ochquéu*.

**Wood**, *metáchan*.



MINSI—ENGLISH

(Jefferson)



[\_\_]le-schuus, [*bird*]. [beginning of word missing]

Ach-gùuck, *snake*.

Ach-poàn, *bread*.

A-ha-ki, *earth*.

Al-lang-queu, *star*.

Chaasch, *eight*.

Chos-queem, *Indian corn*.

Giisch-quàch-um, *sun*.

Güt-ti, *one*.

Güt-ti-ni-kau, *eleven*.

Guun, *snow*.

Kic-och-queu, *a girl*.

Lèn-no, *a man*.

Lindsch-càn-siit, *toe*.

Lò-wan, *winter*.

Ma-n[\_\_\_], *death*. [rest of word missing]

\*Machtit, *bad*.

Mbih, [*water*].

Mò-cum, *blood*.

Mo-quà-me, *ice*.

Mse-ca-nì-laan, *hail*.

Müch-haand-pos, *owl*.

**Nà-[\_]he**, *three*.  
**Nach-qu**, *hand*.  
**Nà-lan**, *five*.  
**Na-mèes**, [*fish*].  
**Ncheès-mus**, *sister*.  
**Ne-pà-hum**, *moon*.  
**Nè-we**, *four*.  
**Ngee**, *mother*.  
**Ngùt-taasch**, *six*.  
**Nhàc-ky**, *the body*.  
**Niitsch**, *a child*.  
**Niitschaan**, *a child*.  
**Nì-mach-tos**, *brother*.  
**Nì-pen**, *summer*.  
**Nì-scha**, *two*.  
**Nischa-nikau**, *twelve*.  
**Ni-schasch**, *seven*.  
**Nò-leu**, *nine*.  
**Nooch**, *father*.  
**Nsùk-keu**, *black*.

**Òch-que-u**, *a woman*.  
**\*Och-póhquan**, *side*.  
**O-tscheu**, *fly*.

**\*Pachpáchcu**, *pheasant*.  
**Piis-keu**, *night*.  
**Pom-màuch-so**, *life*.

**Sì-quon**, *spring*.

**Ska-hàn-schosch**, *a boy*.

**Sù-ke-laan**, *rain*.

**Tach-quò-a-cu**, *autumn*.

**Tìn-deu**, *fire*.

\***Tóch-pan**, *frost*.

**Tschangévis**, *small*. [possibly **-géuis?**]

\***Tschochqualleu**, *blackbird*.

**Wachu**, *egg*.

**Wàch-ca-meu**, *day*.

\***Wapánge**, *tomorrow*.

**Wa-tỳ**, *belly*.

**Wdaàn-siin**, *daughter*.

**Wè-chi-an**, *husband*.

**We-qui-si-mund**, *son*.

\***Wich-gat**, *leg*.

**Wih-kì-wan**, *the nose*.

**Wìh-ta-wak**, *ear*.

**Wiim-bat**, *ten*.

**Wi-lach**, *the hair*.

**Wi-la-no**, *tongue*.

**Wi-lisch-ti-[ca]n**, [*head*].

**Wi-pit**, *tooth*.

**Wiquoam**, *house*.

**Wit-tò-ny-ac**, *the beard*.

**Wì-wal**, *wife*.

**Wòà-peu**, *white*.

**Wòch-ga[n]**, *bone*.

**Wtoon**, *mouth*.

\***Wullit**, *good*.

**Wus-kin-dguk**, *an eye*.



ENGLISH—MINSI

(Jefferson)



**Autumn**, *tach-quò-a-cu*.

**Bad**, *\*machtit*.

**Beard, the**, *wit-tò-ny-ac*.

**Belly**, *wa-tỳ*.

**[Bird]**, [\_\_\_]*le-schuus*. [beginning of word missing]

**Black**, *nsùk-keu*.

**Blackbird**, *\*tschochqualleu*.

**Blood**, *mò-cum*.

**Body, the**, *nhàc-ky*.

**Bone**, *wòch-ga[n]*.

**Boy, a**, *ska-hàn-schosch*.

**Bread**, *ach-poàn*.

**Brother**, *nì-mach-tos*.

**Child, a**, *niitsch, niitschaan*.

**Corn, Indian**, *chos-queem*.

**Daughter**, *wdaàn-siin*.

**Day**, *wàch-ca-meu*.

**Death**, *ma-n[\_\_\_]*. [rest of word missing]

**Ear**, *wih-ta-wak*.

**Earth**, *a-ha-ki*.

**Egg**, *wachu*.

**Eight**, *chaasch*.

**Eleven**, *gùt-ti-ni-kau*.

**Eye, an**, *wus-kin-dguk*.

**Father**, *nooch*.

**Fire**, *tìn-deu*.

**[Fish]**, *na-mèes*.

**Five**, *nà-lan*.

**Fly**, *o-tscheu*.

**Four**, *nè-we*.

**Frost**, *\*tóch-pan*.

**Girl, a**, *kic-och-queu*.

**Good**, *\*wullit*.

**Hail**, *mse-ca-ni-laan*.

**Hair, the**, *wi-lach*.

**Hand**, *nach-qu*.

**[Head]**, *wi-lisch-ti[ca]n*.

**House**, *wiquoam*.

**Husband**, *wè-chi-an*.

**Ice**, *mo-quà-me*.

**Leg**, *\*wich-gat*.

**Life**, *pom-màuch-so*.

**Man, a**, *lèn-no*.

**Moon**, *ne-pà-hum*.

**Mother**, *ngee*.

**Mouth**, *wtoon*.

**Night**, *piis-keu*.

**Nine**, *nò-leu*.

**Nose, the**, *wih-kì-wan*.

**One**, *gùt-ti*.

**Owl**, *mũch-haand-pos*.

**Pheasant**, *\*pachpáchcu*.

**Rain**, *sù-ke-laan*.

**Seven**, *ni-schasch*.

**Side**, *\*och-póchquan*.

**Sister**, *ncheès-mus*.

**Six**, *ngùt-taasch*.

**Small**, *tschangévis*. [possibly -geuis?]

**Snake**, *ach-gùuck*.

**Snow**, *guun*.

**Son**, *we-qui-si-mund*.

**Spring**, *sì-quon*.

**Star**, *al-lang-queu*.

**Summer**, *nì-pen*.

**Sun**, *giisch-quàch-um*.

**Ten**, *wùm-bat*.

**Three**, *nà-[\_]he*.

**Toe**, *lindsch-càn-siit*.

**Tomorrow**, *\*wapánge*.

**Tongue**, *wi-la-no*.

**Tooth**, *wi-pit*.

**Twelve**, *nischa-nikau*.

**Two**, *nì-scha*.

**[Water]**, *mbih*.

**White**, *wò-a-peu*.

**Wife**, *wì-wal*.

**Winter**, *lò-wan*.

**Woman, a**, *òch-que-u*.

## Excerpts from New Views of the Origin of the Tribes and Nations of America

At the head of the column of Americans, I have uniformly placed the Delawares, or as they call themselves LENNI-LENNAPE. I have followed this arrangement because, I believe, we are better acquainted with the language of this tribe, than with that of any other in North-America; because they are acknowledged to be of more ancient establishment in the country than many others; and because their language appears to have a greater spread than that of any of the numerous nations of this great continent.

The name by which these Indians are best known, that of Delawares, was imposed upon them by the English, because they inhabited the waters of the river Delaware... As far as I have been able to learn any thing on the subject, the Delaware nation consists of three tribes, viz. the Unàmis, or Wanàmi, the Unalàchtigo, or Wunalàchtigo, and the Minsi, or Monsees. It is certain that there had been a fourth tribe, which was small, and has passed away, leaving not a name behind...

The Minsi, or Monsees, called also the Minnisinks, I have already said, formed a part of the Delaware nation. They are now few in number. They are much darker than the greater number of the North-American tribes.

## APPENDIX 2

“The Minsi, or Monsees.” They likewise call themselves Minissi, or or the Peninsula-People, because they inhabited the Minissink. The tradition of these Indians informs us, that they originally dwelt in or under a lake, from whence they have sprung. It is curious that a tradition similar to this prevails among other American tribes.

—Benjamin Smith Barton, 1798

**Allank**, *star*.

**Allum**, *dog*.

**Keeshellomeh**, *the maker of the soul, [God]*.

**Lennowegh**, *man*.

**'Mbi**, *water*.

**Ochtun**, *mouth*.

**Opeh**, *white*.

**Quishough**, *moon*. ?

**Quishough**, *sun*.

**Suckke**, *black*.

**Twendaigh**, *fire*.

**Weighchunk**, *mountain*.

**Weitcook**, *a tree*.

**Wichke**, *nose*.

**Wochkun**, *bone*.



## Numerical Tables (from Heckewelder)

- |            |               |
|------------|---------------|
| 1. gutti.  | 6. guttasch.  |
| 2. nischa. | 7. nischosch. |
| 3. nacha.  | 8. chaasch.   |
| 4. newa.   | 9. nolewi.    |
| 5. nalan.  | 10. wimbat.   |

## (from Jefferson)

- |                 |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. gùt-ti.      | 7. ni-schasch.     |
| 2. nì-scha.     | 8. chaasch.        |
| 3. nà-[_]he.    | 9. nò-leu.         |
| 4. nè-we.       | 10. wìim-bat.      |
| 5. nà-lan.      | 11. gùt-ti-ni-kau. |
| 6. ngùt-taasch. | 12. nischa-nikau.  |



MINOR WORD-LISTS  
FROM  
NEW NETHERLAND



## A Manhattan Word-list

The Hamels-Hoofden being passed, there is about a league width in the river, and also on the west side there is an inlet, where another river runs up about twenty leagues, to the north-northeast, emptying into the Mauritse River in the highlands, thus making the north-west land opposite to the Manhatas an island eighteen leagues long. It is inhabited by the old Manhatans; they are about 200 to 300 strong, women and men, under different chiefs, whom they call *Sackimas*. This island is more mountainous than the other land on the southeast side of the river, which opposite to the Manhatas is about a league and a half in breadth.

—Isaack de Rasieres, 1628.

**Collatismarrenitten**, *she bewails or laments over her virginity.*

**Kintikaen**, *to sing and dance together.*

**Machampe**, *Dutch beads.*

**Poerochque**, *a whore.*

**Sackimas**, *chiefs.*

**Sappaen**, *maize for bread or porridge.*

**Seneca**, *a game played with round rushes.*

**Sewan**, *an oblong bead that they make from cockle-shells.*



## A Word-list of the Hackensack, Tappan and Wiechquaeskeck

As I have related the manner of living, and the appearance, of the savages at Fort Orange, I will state something of the nations about Fort Amsterdam, as the Hackinsack, Tapaen, and Wicquas-geck Indians; and these are located at some two, three, or four leagues from the entrance of the river...

At evening we arrived at Rechqua Akie where we found the chief...During the night, I went out of the house, when there came an Indian to me, as the moon was shining, and told me I must come into his hut. I then went into his hut, and by the light saw he was an Indian, who lived half a league from my farm-house at Vriessendael, with his squaws, who lived there with him, at which I was alarmed. But he assured me, saying, that I was a good chief, and that I came to make *Rancontyn Marinit*; that is, in their language, to make a peace.

—David de Vries, 1655.

**Hesspanen**, *an animal almost as hairy as a wild cat.* [raccoon]

**Mannette**, *the Devil himself.* Also **Mannetoe**.

**Notassen**, *little baskets, sacks.*

**Rancontyn marinit**, *to make a peace.*

**Sackemaker**, *chief.*

**Swannekens**, *the Dutch.*

**Zeewan**, *their money.*





## A Word-List from New Netherland

We warmed ourselves, and ate from what we had brought with us, Hans, the Indian, sharing with us. In the meanwhile, we engaged in conversation with him, and he told us certain things which we had never heard any Indian or European mention, the opinion of the Indians in relation to the Godhead, the creation, and the preservation and government of all things.

We acknowledge, he said, a supreme first power, some cause of all things, which is known by all the Indians of North America, hereabouts, whether Mahatans, Sinnekes, Maquaas, Minquaas, southern or northern Indians, not only by the name of *Sackamacher* or *Sachamor*, (which the Dutch for the sake of convenience will pervert into *Sackemacher*), that is to say, lord, captain or chief, which all persons bear who have any power or authority among them, especially any government or rule over other persons and affairs, and that name, it appeared to him, was used by others to express God, more than by themselves; but the true name by which they call this Supreme Being, the first and great beginning of all things, was *Kickeron* or *Kickerom*, who is the origin of all, who has not only once produced or made all things, but produces every day.

—Jasper Danckaerts, 1680.

**Canticoyed**, *conjured the devil*. [this form in the Dutch is rendered **gekintekayt**. —ed.]

**Marsbancken**, *fish the size of a common carp*.

**Hespaen**, *a wild animal somewhat larger than a cat*.

**Homina**, *grain for different kinds of groats, when it is cooked*. Also **homma**.

**Kickeron**, *Supreme Being*. Also **Kickerom**, **Kicheron**.

**Nitap**, *friend, great friend*. Also **nietap**.

**Nitaps**, *friends*.

**Maneto**, *the devil*.

**Sakemacker**, *king; a supreme first power, some cause of all things; lord, captain or chief, a name which all persons bear who have any power or authority among them*. Also **sackamacher**, **sackemacher**, **sackemaker**, **sakemaker**, **sachamor**.

**Sapaen**, *grain for different kinds of groats, when it is cooked*.

**Zeewant**, *their money*. Also **seewant**.

## A Word-list of Manhattan

Their various tongues may be classed into four distinct languages, namely, *Manhattan*, *Minquas*, *Savanoos*, and *Wappanoos*. With the Mannhattans, we include those who live in the neighbouring places along the North River, on Long Island, and at the Neversink. With the Minquas we include the Senecas, the Maquaas, and other inland tribes. The Savanoos are the southern nations, and the Wappanoos are the eastern nations. Their languages are seldom learned perfectly by any of our people, and those who by long and continued intercourse and conversation with the Indians learn to speak their language are not men of education and are unable to compose grammatical rules for the same and of course are unable to instruct others.

—Adriaen Van der Donck, 1656

**Calis**, *common man*.

**Kintecaw**, *singing and dancing*.

**Kintowen**, *Sunday*.

**Quaasiens**, *a species of vegetable [squash]*.

**Sachems**, *chiefs*.

**Sapaen**, *pap or mush*.

**Wampum**, *the currency which they use*.



## A Word-list of Manhattan

There are several Nations which may be more properly called Tribes of Indians.

*Rockoway* upon the South of *Jamaica* upon *Long-Island*, the first.

*Sea-qua-ta-eg*, to the South of *Huntingdon*, the second.

*Unckah-chau-ge*, *Brooke-haven*, the third.

*Se-tauck*, *Seatauchet* North the fourth.

*Ocqua-baug*, South-hold to the North, the fifth.

*Shin-na-cock*, *Southampton*, the greatest Tribe, the sixth.

*Mun-tauck*, to the eastward of East-Hampton, the seventh.

All of these are Long-Island Indians.

### *The Tribes which are Friends.*

*Top-paun*, the greatest, which consists of an hundred and fifty fighting young Men. It's call'd the greatest because they have the greatest Sachim or Sackamaker, i.e. King, whose name is Maimshee.

The Second is *Ma-nissing*, which lies westward from *Top-paun*, two days Journey; it consists of three hundred fighting Men, the *Sacka-makers* name is called *Taum-mahau-Quauk*.

The Third, *Wee-quoss-cah-chau*. i.e. *Westchester* Indians, which consists of seventy fighting Men, the *Sacka-makers* name is *Wase-sa-kin-now*.

The Fourth, *Na-ussin*, or *Neversinks*, a Tribe of very few, the *Sacka-makers* name is *Onz-zeech*.

May the lover of Souls bring these scattered desert people home to his own Flock.

—Charles Wolley, 1701

**Ka-kin-do-wet**, *minister.*

**Kenah menitto**, *I thank you, Menitto.*

**Kin-tau kauns**, *time of sacrificing.*

**Me-ta-ow**, *doctor.*

**Notas**, *purse, bag, or sack; belly.*

**Sachim**, *king.*

**Sackamaker**, *king.*

**Sacka-makers kakin-do-wet**, *the governor's minister.*

**Sea-want**, *Indian money.*

**Squaws**, *wives.*

**Tom-a-hea-kan**, *a flint.*

**Um-be-re-mak-qua**, *needles of wood.*

**Wampam**, *Indian money.*

**Wigwams**, *houses.*

**Woss-ra-neck**, *a wood for candles and the masts of ships.*

# CLASSIFICATION OF THE EASTERN ALGONQUIAN LANGUAGES

## EASTERN ALGONQUIAN

*Micmac*

Abenakian

*Maliseet-Passamaquoddy*

*Eastern Abenaki*

*Western Abenaki*

*Etchemin*

Southern New England

*Massachusett-Narragansett*

*Loup*

*Mohegan-Pequot*

*Quiripi-Unquachog*

Delawaran

*Mahican*

***Munsee Delaware***

*Unami Delaware*

*Nanticoke-Conoy*

Virginia Algonquian

*Powhatan*

Carolina Algonquian

*Pamlico*

Source: Goddard 1996.





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