

## Lenape Indian Camp

Lenape Indian Camp is located near the Welcome Center. There will be hands-on opportunities as you explore the history and culture of the Lenape Indians (also known as the Delaware) who lived in Indiana from 1795–1820. The area includes a trading post and a wigwam to explore. As you come into the area, you might greet staff with the Lenape greeting, “Weli kishku” [WAY-lee KEESH-koo] which means “It’s a good day.”

### Background Information

The Lenape (leh-NAH-pay) Indians originally lived in the eastern part of the U.S. in the areas that became western New York, eastern Pennsylvania, northern Maryland and the Delaware River valley. In their own language, Lenni Lenape means “the original people.” Other tribes called them “the grandfathers,” a name of great respect. The Lenape are also known as the “Delaware” Indians. This is the name they were given by the English in the early 1600s. Everything and everyone in the Delaware River valley were named after Thomas West, Lord de la Warr. Today, the tribal seal contains both names.



Between the 1770s and 1795, the expansion of European settlement forced the Lenape to move westward through Pennsylvania and Ohio. In 1795, the Treaty of Greenville (Ohio) forced the Lenape out of Ohio as well. The Miami Indians, who lived in what is now Indiana, invited the Lenape to move west and share their lands along the White River. Tribal members lived in several villages along the river between spots where Muncie and the north side of Indianapolis now stand.

In the winter of 1801-1802, William Conner also came to this area. His purpose was to trade with the Lenape. Conner married into the tribe and lived with them until the Treaty of St. Mary’s (1818) required them to leave Indiana. Conner helped the government to negotiate this treaty with the Lenape. His Lenape wife and six children moved west with the tribe in 1820. Conner stayed behind. The Lenape moved to Missouri after they left Indiana. Eventually, they were relocated to Kansas and Oklahoma, where the tribal headquarters is today. (Please note: This is the main body of the Lenape Tribe. Smaller groups now live in Western Oklahoma, Canada (2 groups) and Wisconsin).

The Lenape are matrilineal, meaning that they trace their bloodlines through the women rather than the men. Historically, positions of power in the tribe would be inherited from the mother’s side of the family. By the mid-1800s, Tribal members were divided into three traditional clans: turtle, wolf, and turkey. When the time came to marry, the spouse was chosen from a different clan. Children were members of the mother’s clan.

Clothing was made from animal furs and skins. Men wore leggings and a breechcloth. Women wore wrap-around skirts. Both sexes wore moccasins. Deerskins were worn like a poncho. In cool weather the skin was worn fur side out. In cold weather, it was worn fur side in. Cloth became available with the arrival of the Europeans in the late 1500s and early 1600s. Shirts as we know them were not worn until then. Cloth shirts available from traders quickly became popular with men and women.

The Lenape got their food from hunting and farming. The men hunted and fished while the women farmed. Most of the diet consisted of corn, beans, squash, melons, tobacco, nuts, and wild fruits. Meats included deer, elk, bear, squirrel and rabbit, as well as assorted fish and shellfish.

The Lenape traded furs with the French, British, and Americans in exchange for goods that they could not produce on their own. The fur traders were interested in pelts. While beaver and otter

were the most valuable as individual skins, the bulk of the furs traded in Indiana were deer and raccoon. In exchange for pelts, the Indians received goods such as metal knives and tools, hatchets, guns, gun powder, sugar and coffee, stroud cloth, and cotton fabric. The traders and Indians developed a symbiotic relationship and heavily depended upon the goods received from the other.

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Indian tribes across the country continued to lose land and be relocated as European settlement moved west. Today, many Indians still live on the reservations that were created prior to 1900. The Indian tribes in Indiana had been moved west by 1845. It should be noted that not all of the Miami tribe moved west, and their descendants continue to live in Indiana.

## **Lenape Indian Camp Vocabulary**

pelt	An animal fur
tipi	A traditional Indian home used on the Great Plains that is cone-shaped and made from poles overlaid with animal skins. The Lenape did not live in tipis.
tomahawk	A light axe used by the Woodland Indians as both a tool and a weapon.
totem poles	A tall pole carved with animals or figures that represent family clans or spirits. Totem poles are only used by tribes in the Pacific Northwest.
trading post	A place where pelts could be traded for cash or finished goods.
wigwam	A traditional Woodland Indian home that is round or oblong in shape and made from poles overlaid with bark or cattail mats. The Lenape lived in this type of structure.

## **Words and Phrases to Avoid**

Our language contains several words and phrases that are insulting to American Indians. When making reference to American Indians, both in historic and modern contexts, please avoid the use of the following: Buck, Brave, Squaw, Savage, Tonto, Injun, Redskin, Indian Princess, Indian Giver, Sit Indian style, On the warpath, Have a pow wow, Chief (*as an address, rather than a title*), How! (*as a greeting*).