



Citation for this collection:

MSS 179 Robert H. Richards, Jr., Delaware oral history collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware

Transcription:

This transcription was provided by James A. (Jim) Rementer, Director, Lenape Language Project, 2020 August 25. For additional information about Mrs. Dean, see Lenape Talking Dictionary <http://www.talk-lenape.org/>.

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A note about this transcription:

Mrs. Nora Thompson Dean (1907-1984), a Native American of the Delaware Tribe of Dewey, Oklahoma, visited the University of Delaware on July 3 and July 4, 1970, for translation of Lenape spoken language with Arthur R. Dunlap and C. A. (Clinton Albert) Weslager. Jim Rementer was present at the interviews.

This translation session and interview comprises four sections with Mrs. Dean:

Page 3. The Lord's Prayer

Page 5. Bible verse from the Book of John, Chapter 14

Page 7. Lenape folklore (interview with Arthur R. Dunlap)

Page 9. Translation of names (interview with C.A. Weslager)

The 1970 transcription of the audio recording did not include text for the spoken Lenape language.

This full transcription, including the Lenape language, was provided by James A. (Jim) Rementer, Director of the Lenape Language Project, in August 2020.

A note about the original transcription for the Delaware oral history collection:

Of the original 252 audio-recordings in this collection, 212 of these tapes were transcribed around the time of the original recordings (between 1966 and 1978). In 2012, Cabbage Tree Solutions was contracted to create transcriptions for the remaining tapes. Corrections to and clarifications for all transcriptions are welcome, especially for names and places. Please contact Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, for questions. askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu

The Lord's Prayer
By Nora Thompson Dean
For
Arthur Dunlap and C. A. Weslager
at
University of Delaware
July 1970

Our Father who is in heaven,

Wetuxëmienk os'hakame èpit.

Your name is highly regarded.

Maxinkwelëntasu ktëluwènsëwakàn.

Your kingdom is coming.

Pètuxweyu Ksakimëwakàn.

What you think will be done

Ki èliteheyàn lèkèch

on earth as in Heaven.

xkwithakamika alàshi òs'hakame.

Give us our bread every day

Milinèn kwënikishukw ntàponëmëna

And forgive us

òk punelìntàmainèn

our debts, like we

nchànewsèwakànéna aláshi kiluna

we forgive those who do wrong to us.

mpunelìntàmainèn ahachilaemkwenkik

And do not lead us into temptation

òk matàch sahkakwèninèn kèshèwelìntàmèwakànk

but take us away from evil;

shèk palilènémainèn mèthìk:

because you possess your kingdom.

èli ki ksakimèwakàn.

and your great power,

òk xinkwilèsèwakàn,

and your glory forever.

òk kanshilèsèwakàn apchich.

Let it be so.

Na nè lekèch

John 14 in LTD
As told by Nora Thompson Dean
At University of Delaware
July 1970

Let not your heart be troubled:

Matàch lelìntàmu kteh sàkwelìntàmëwakàn hate:

Believe in God and believe in me.

Kulamhìtao Kishelëmùkònk òk ni

In my father's house there are many mansions.

Xaheli ahkanshikaona nux wikit

If it were not so I would have told you.

Mata në lèkèch ta ni enkelu

I am leaving to go and prepare where you will stay, and

May nulixtun weltèk tali ki èpiàn,

if I leave to prepare it for you

òk ènta aan wëlixtaon weltèk tali ki èpiàn,

I will come again, and I fix for you where I am.

Xu làpi ntèki, òk làpìch wètëna ëli ni èpiàn ki xu ktàpi.

You know the way and you know the road.

Ok ni èli a kèpe kuwatun

Thomas said, "We do not know

Thomas tëlao, "Kishelemukonk, ku ta ni nuwatu èli a

Jesus said, "I am the way

Jesus luwe, "Ni ta ni lih a

the truth, and the life.

Òk wèlamhitamweokàn òk lehèlexeokàn.

No person shall come into the presence of my father unless through me."

Ku awèn pèxus'hikao kuxëna kënych ta ni lih."

**Transcription of The Interview with Nora Thompson Dean
by Dr. Arthur Dunlap**

Recorded at the University of Delaware

July 4, 1970

Citation for this collection: MSS 179 Robert H. Richards, Jr., Delaware oral history collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware

AD: Mrs. Dean came to the University of Delaware in July, 1970, to be interviewed by A. R. Dunlap and C. A. Weslager. Although our chief interest was in names, both personal and geographical, we did ask Mrs. Dean to talk about folk-lore and history, when these subjects presented themselves, as in that part of the tape which now follows. The tape concludes with a sample of the interviewing conducted by Mr. Weslager.

ND: This is about the games that the Lenape children played as children. In my childhood we had two games. The one was called Selahtikàn, and they were little sticks with dots and dashes, something like the present day jack straws (1) to be dropped at a certain height. And there was (unclear) where you picked them up without moving the other ones. And each one of these dots and dashes counted a score. And there could be as many as two, four, or six play this one game. And my father used to make these game sticks for me. Then there was another game called Kokolësh. It was a long stick, oh, I would say about 10 inches long (and) attached (was) a buckskin string. And on the string was a loop and a rabbit tail. And this was thrown up (1), and on this loop there were notches to indicate the score points. And that was also one of our games. I don't recall now how these points were counted, but all in all it was a very interesting game. Both of them were.

ND: (Cont'd): This is a little bit of historical information that was given to me through my grandmother's people through her ancestors. When the Lenape Indians were camped along the Opèksipu which mean the White River in Indiana, they engaged in a little war with a tribe of Indians. They called them Catawbas, and she told me --my grandmother-- told me that that was the last time the Delawares did what they called struck the war post. And that was before they went out on this war party they engaged in a little war dance. And all the young men who were willing to go on this war party would have to strike the pole. And she said that was somewhere in the 1820's or 1819. And in our Lenape language we call this Pahkàntama. So that was the last time---I didn't know about it, I was told about it rather--whether the Delaware Indians ever engaged in warfare and used this striking the pole.

AD: What is that term again?

ND: Pahkàntama . That means to strike the pole, showing your willingness to go with the war party.

This is a story that my grandmother told me about the Nanticokes. We, the Delaware Indians, called them Wënètkok. And somewhere along the White River in Indiana they must have joined with the Lënapeyok [Delawares]. And when they watered their horses at some stream, Delawares were always afraid of this Wënètkok tribe of Indians. And there was an old lady watering her horse at the water, stream, and she had a bundle tied on her horse. And someone heard this bundle--there was a voice in this bundle crying like a baby. So they all heard her say, "Chitkwësi, xuniti këmitsi" which means, "Shut up, you will eat shortly." And when they got settled at the camp, the little babies soon began to die.

Well, it must be that they thought she had this in that witch bundle. And when they did get settled, the babies and young children were dying so much that they decided to kill the witches. Anyone who was suspected of practicing witchcraft was immediately sought after and dragged up to a fire. If they didn't give up their witch bundle, they were thrown into the fire. But, if they gave up their witch bundle, then the witch bundle was thrown into the fire. But a lot of the people would rather die and be burnt down rather than give up their witch bundles. So they must have burned several of the witches. So shortly then the earthquakes came. All the things fell down. The earth opened up. It was a huge earthquake.

Well, the people got scared. They thought God was punishing them--the Great Spirit, Kishelëmùkònk so they decided then to have the Xinkwikaon [Big House Church] there. I guess they were so constantly on the go that they just didn't have time to have the Xinkwikaon services --that's the Big House Church. So one old man went out into the woods with his gourd [rattle]; and, on his way through the woods, he met a spirit whose face was half red and half black. And the spirit told him, "This is the way you must do it now and have these church services." So the elders of the Lenape tribe say that that was the origin of the Xinkwikaon Church. And they had the church there for a short while; then they had to move westward on.

This concludes the section by Dr. Dunlap

**Transcription of First Part of Interview with Nora Thompson Dean
Recorded at the University of Delaware**

CW: July 4, 1970. This is C. A. Weslager, and I'm talking with Mrs. Nora Thompson Dean of Dewey, Oklahoma, a Delaware Indian, about personal names of some of her people. Mrs. Dean, would you repeat the sentence where I ask a person, "What is your real name?"

ND: Kèku ktèluwènsi? - What is your name?

CW: (repeated) And then the sentence with the question that would ask, "What is your nickname?"

ND: Kèku ktèlèni ktèluwènsi?

CW: With lèni meaning common or common name?

ND: Yes.

CW: Now, I want to ask you about both real names and nicknames, and I want to start with the ones that you have named and I want to get you to pronounce these for me. First, Michael Jackson's (Nora's step-grandson) name, which is translated as "Running Water." How do you pronounce that?

ND: Pèmpèhèlak

CW: And Thomas Doles. And when you named him ••• Yes?

ND: Oxeapanuxwe

CW: What does that mean?

ND: "The one who Walks Before Daylight."

CW: Would you repeat it again, please?

ND: Oxeapanuxwe

CW: And the name that you gave Elain Joan Fall-Leaf?

ND: Lehèlòkwènataèxkwe

CW: And that translates to?

ND: "The Flower that Blooms in the Evening Woman."

CW: That " -èxkwe" on the end meaning "woman"?

ND: Woman, yes.

CW: Now the name that you gave to Marian Sue Moore?

ND: Sakataèxkwe

CW: And that is translated to what?

ND: "The Flower that is just Opening or Coming up Woman."

CW: Again we have that " -èxkwe" suffix meaning "woman."

ND: Yes.

CW: Now the name for Mrs. Mary Smith Witcher?

ND: Opatae, "White Flower."

CW: Now, in that word, I notice and I think we talked about this yesterday you did not add the suffix " -èxkwe" , but it is there nonetheless, isn't it? It's implicit in that word?

ND: Well, no, not really. No, you can either leave that off or on. It's correct either way.

CW: But a Delaware would know that "Opatae" is a woman's name?

ND: Yes.

CW: And you could have put on it if you wanted to?

ND: Yes.

CW: And that would have merely strengthened it? Why didn't you put it on?

ND: Well, because to simplify it for her.

CW: Uh huh.

ND, I thought she would be more able to say "Opatae" rather than "Opataexkwe"

CW: Right, and Jim Rementer's name that you gave?

ND: Mushhakwinùnt

CW: repeat.

ND: Mushhakwinùnt

CW: And how does that translate?

ND: "He appears as a clear sky."

CW: "He appears as a clear sky."

ND: Yes.

CW: Right. I wanted to get those recorded in your language. Now I want to talk about a few others. I realize your people feel it's better not to name a loved one who is dead so I don't know how we'll repeat these real names of your parents. Maybe we'll get Jim to repeat them. Let's start with your name in Indian.

ND: Weënchipahkihëlxkwe

CW: Which translates to?

ND, "Touching Leaves Woman."

CW: "Touching Leaves Woman." And that has the -ëxkwe again on it. (Wes tries to say her name). I'm getting pretty close to it, ha, ha!

TO BE CONTINUED

**Transcription of Second Part of Interview with Nora Thompson Dean
With C. A. Weslager**

Recorded at the University of Delaware

July 4, 1970

Citation for this collection: MSS 179 Robert H. Richards, Jr., Delaware oral history collection, Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, Newark, Delaware

CW:(Continued) Now, you had two nicknames, and I made note of these out in Oklahoma. And I'm not sure that I got them down right. Let me give them; then you tell me whether they're right or not. I have your first one when you were very small, (Wes garbled the name). And then I have a second one that your parents called you,

ND: Yes, Ntan'tis, my mother called me that.

CW: And that is a very old word, is it not,

ND: Uh huh, I think it stems from the word Daughter." ntantës, my Daughter."

CW: Oh, ntantës

ND: Yes, that from an old dialect of Delaware.

CW: Now, I don't have that first nickname right you what it comes from, but I'll tell from. This is when you dropped your

ND: Oh, yes, they called me Emsitunay because I mispronounced that so I was Emsitunay because I young at the time.

CW: That's the word I (repeat) ** have down here because that sounded right. ?

ND: (repeat) Emsitunay

CW: (repeat) Emsitunay

ND: It should have been emsinutay.

CW: Oh.

ND: That's the word for it.

CW: Let me understand that now. You dropped the purse.

ND: Uh, huh

CW: You cried for the purse in baby language, instead of emsinutay and you said Emsitunay. So that then became a nickname for you and used during your childhood.

ND: Uh huh.

CW: Jim, come on and repeat her father's name; and I'll talk about his nickname so we get it on the tape.

Jim (Rementer): (inaudible)

ND: Ohëlämitakwsi, (repeated)

CW: All right, then, she said it. (repeated). What does that one mean?

ND: That means "someone who can be heard from afar."

CW: Right. And what was his nickname?

ND: Lakwsi.

CW: They took one syllable of his name and changed the N to an L

ND: Yes.

CW: Right, to make a nickname. And then your mother's name, Sarah Wilson Thompson. Say it, Jim.

Jim: Ehëlinaoxkwe.

ND: Ehëlinaoxkwe.

CW: Which translates to what?

ND: "Someone who looks like another person."

CW: And she had a nickname that was . . .

ND: Sòmzkwe

CW: Sòmzkwe, what does that mean?

ND: "A great lady."

CW: "A great lady." Do you think that nickname came about because of her knowledge of medicines and her visions and because she was a gifted person?

ND: That was it. And she was a really good cook in the Indian cooking arts.

CW: Uh huh. And you told me also that she could lay a hand on someone and . . .

ND: Yes, and she was a healer.

CW: A healer. And this "great lady" as this word carried that meaning in it.

ND: Yes. She was known by the tribe as Sòmxcwe.

CW: Sòmxcwe. Did your father call her by that name?

ND: Yes.

CW: He called her by that name, not by her real name.

ND: No. Just Sòmxcwe.

CW: Now your half-brother, James Buffalo.

ND: His name was Nikanapànuxwe.

CW: And how do you translate that?

ND: "The one who walks before daylight."

CW: Before daylight?

ND: Uh huh. Or dawn.

CW: And... Or dawn. And then his nickname?

ND: Napàn.

CW: Napàn Which takes the middle syllable from Nikanapanuxwe and makes a nickname out of it.

ND: Uh huh

CW: Then your full brother, Edward L. Thompson. Would you pronounce his name?

ND: His name was Sasakipahkikàmën.

CW: And how do you translate that?

ND: "The leaves arise when he steps."

CW: This is one of those beautiful Algonquian words where in the synthesis you have elements that are very difficult to translate into English. Sasakipahkikàmën which really means something like "He who causes fallen leaves to turn up with every step." Does that sound about right?

ND. That sounds correct.

CW. Now, Ruth Parks, I'd like you to get her name, Ruth E. Parks' name.

ND: Weètanahkwinao.

CW: And how would that translate?

ND: That's "Boughs or limbs of the tree that touch each other."

CW: Now that's another one of those words that makes me think of your mother as a name-giver, isn't it, this "trees" and "boughs" and so on. You can almost sense her in some of these.

ND: (double voices)

CW: Right. Now Dr. Speck had an informant, Charlie Webber, would you please read his name.

ND: His name was Witapanuxwe.

CW: And that is translated to?

ND: "He walks by daylight or dawn."

CW: Uh huh. And he had a nickname?

ND: Uh huh, Tapàn.

CW: Tapàn. And this is another one of those examples where a syllable in the real name, Tapàn became the nickname. And then George Anderson, have we found a way to pronounce his name yet? Jim, see if you can read George Anderson's name so Mrs. Dean can get these syllables.

Jim: Kwëtipahkikàmën.

ND: Kwëtipahkikàmën. "One leaf that he steps on."

CW: Oh.

Jim: What about leaves"? Kwëchi- ? How would you say "rustling ?

ND: Kwëtipahkikàmën, and that sounds more correct.

CW: Kwëtipahkikàmën.

ND: Kwëti is one." Kwëti is the word.

CW: Kwëti. Those are very beautiful

TO BE CONTINUEDD

**Transcription of Third Part of Interview with Nora Thompson Dean
With C. A. Weslager**

Recorded at the University of Delaware

July 4, 1970

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CW: (continued) In the name-giving ceremony, I want to get recorded the correct pronunciation of some of these words. The word for "pure fire."

ND: Oh,

CW: Oh, (not clear)

ND: Oh, pilsit tëntay.

CW: Pilsit tëntay. (repeated).

ND: Uh huh.

CW: Which means "a pure fire."

ND: Yes, a "pure fire."

CW: Would that . . .

ND: "Holy fire."

CW: "Holy fire." Now that's one made with flint and steel or a bow drill?

ND: Yes.

CW: But not with matches.

ND: No, no.

CW: Would there be as opposed to a name for that, a fire made with a match

ND: I don't think so.

CW: And this word for spiritual purity?

ND: Pilsu

CW: Pilsu. (repeated)

ND: Uh huh.

CW:.. And a pure, clean man, how do we say that?

ND: Pilsit lënu.

CW: Pilsit lënu.** (repeated)

ND: Uh huh.

CW: And a pure clean man would be one that would be eligible for a vision?

ND. Oh, yes.

CW:.. Uh huh. And how about a pure, clean woman?

ND: Pilsit xkwe.

CW: Pilsit xkwe. (repeated

ND: Uh huh

CW:.. Right, that's that female suffix on the end again.

ND: Uh huh.

CW: And then somebody who did not have a vision?

ND: Alàxsu.

CW: Alàxsu (repeated) •

ND: Alàxsu.

CW: How does that translate?

ND: That means "empty."

CW: "Empty." Is it just "empty" or would it mean, "he is empty"?

ND: Alàsuu

CW: Yes, Would you say that again.

ND: Alàsuu

CW: Alàsuu (repeated)

ND: Alàxsit means the empty one.

CW: Alàxsit. Now the word for cedar?

ND: Pëphòkwës.

CW: Pëphòkwës. And tobacco?

ND: Kwshatay.

CW: Now the tobacco when it was used in the naming ceremony was used to drive away evil spirits, is that right?

ND: And then too you give this grandpa a smoke with this tobacco.

CW: As an offering to the grandpa?

ND: Yes.

CW: And how about the cedar then, what was that?

ND: Purification

CW: Purification. And now let's get the grandpa again.

ND: Muxumsa, that's the fire, when we address the fire that's the term we use.

CW: Oh yes, one word we need is for the name-giver.

ND: Wehëwihëlas. .

CW: Wehëwihëlas.

And that translates, and you told me this before I believe, "one who gives names over and over." "One who gives names repeatedly"?

ND: Yes, uh huh.

CW: Right. Okay, I think we have it now.

(END OF INTERVIEW)