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DENNY'S VOCABULARY OF DELAWARE

Recorded by Major Ebenezer Denny



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Preface to the 1999 Edition

At the beginning of the American Revolution, the tribe known today as the Delaware or Lenape, which formerly inhabited the Atlantic Coast, had moved past the Appalachian mountains into the interior of the continent. Having relinquished their original homelands along the Delaware river throughout the late 1600's and early 1700's, they found themselves moving westward through Pennsylvania towards Ohio, which had been unoccupied since the Beaver Wars of the 1600's.

In 1775 the Delawares and the newly rebelling American colonies signed the Treaty of Pittsburgh, its terms being that the Delawares would remain neutral in the war and that no American settlements would be built beyond the Ohio River. But squatters continued to settle illegally west of the boundary, the British encouraged Indian raids on the frontier, and chief White Eyes' death in 1778 was blamed on the Americans; all with the effect that the Delawares joined the British cause (Goddard 1978a). It was an expected but unfortunate decision, for when the revolution ended, the Delawares found themselves on the losing side. Their British allies promptly left them to fend for themselves and the Six Nations Iroquois who had also joined the cause had already surrendered at Fort Stanwix in 1784. The old alliances of the Revolution thus dissipated, the Delaware and Wyandot were left alone to negotiate with the new American government.

By January of 1785, representatives of the United States (including the Revolutionary War hero George Rogers Clark), and the Delaware, Wyandot, Ottawa, and Chippewa tribes convened for treaty at Fort McIntosh, which stood at the junction of the Beaver and Ohio Rivers, northwest of Fort Pitt (now Pittsburgh). The tribal delegates were told in no uncertain terms that because of their alliance with the British, they would be considered defeated parties, and thus were not entitled to any privileges beyond those which the victors wished to grant them. Against this undisguised assertion of the spoils of war, the Delawares could do little but accept under protest. Not surprisingly, even after these post-war issues had seemingly been settled, tensions were strained between the Delawares and Americans, with occasional hostilities flaring up until the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794 and the treaty of Greenville which was signed a year later (Kraft 1986).

Major Ebenezer Denny served in the Revolutionary Army from 1781 to 1795, during most of these first U.S.—Indian conflicts; he then held various political offices in the state of Pennsylvania until becoming the first mayor of Pittsburgh in 1816. In 1860 his *Military Journal* was published posthumously by his son William at the behest of the Pennsylvania Historical Society. Included in the appendices were a vocabulary of over 230 words of Delaware from Fort McIntosh, and a vocabulary of Shawnee collected a year later at Fort Finney; both written by Denny himself. A note tells us that a woman known as the Grenadier Squaw provided the Shawnee terms for Denny, but the name of the person(s) who provided the Delaware terms is not given.

The Delaware language is well described today: and two dialects of it—Munsee and Southern Unami—have even had native speakers up through the last quarter of the 20th century. A slightly different dialect than the latter, Northern Unami, has been extinct for about a hundred years now, but a large part of it has been preserved thanks to Moravian missionaries who documented it fairly extensively.

Our first recordings of Delaware, which date from the 1600's, document not the actual language but rather a pidgin version of it, with an essentially Unami vocabulary but a radically simplified grammar. Pidgin Delaware, or Delaware Jargon as it is also called, was not the native language of any Delaware group, but it was extensively used as a traders' language between European colonists (Dutch, Swedish, and later English) and Munsee-speaking as well as Unami-speaking Delawares. Settlers who used the jargon generally had little idea they were not speaking true Delaware; though a few astute observers such as Jonas Michaëlius in 1628 were aware of the fact that it was a "made up, childish language."

It was not until the mid 1700's that any progress was made recording the language as it was actually spoken by Delawares. In this regard, Ebenezer Denny's vocabulary is historically significant, in that it is both the first substantially Southern Unami vocabulary ever to be recorded, and simultaneously the last vocabulary to have some vestigial Pidgin Delaware features—somewhat surprisingly considering its late date. One of the first linguists to comment on the vocabulary noted of it: "A comparison shows many of

them [the Delaware words] to be in a corrupt form, owing either to the ignorance of the Shawnee authority, or to the inaccuracy of Major Denny in catching the sounds." (Brinton 1884, p. 87). The "Shawnee authority" here mentioned is a confusion with the Shawnee portion of Denny's vocabulary.

More recently Sarah Grey Thomason (1980) and Ives Goddard (1996a) have noted in Denny's list such typically Pidgin features as the use of the negative particle *matta*, and the inanimate *willet* for "good." They also point out other cases, though, where the sentence has a Pidgin construction, but a Pidgin word has been replaced by pure Delaware. Note how Southern Unami $t\acute{a}$ $k\acute{o}$, takes the place of Pidgin *matta* in *keyhtacoo-willet* = "you not good."

Both researchers have, however, drawn different conclusions from this data. Whereas Thomason considers Denny's data "somewhat simplified but *not* the old Traders' Jargon," Goddard prefers to see it as basically Pidgin but with Southern Unami features grafted back on, *i.e.* relexified. Each of these viewpoints has different implications for the history of the Jargon, as well as the kinds of Delaware which were in use during the 1780's. But what is indisputable is that Pidgin Delaware survived in at least some form throughout the 18th century.

The Unami Delaware who came to treaty at Fort McIntosh continued to move westward in subsequent years, through Indiana, Missouri, Kansas, Texas, and finally Oklahoma. Their descendants live today in two main settlements: one near Bartlesville and the other near Anadarko,

Oklahoma. Although first-language fluency in Delaware is at present confined to only a handful of elderly speakers, a number of research and educational initiatives are helping to ensure their linguistic traditions continue well into the 21st century.

- Claudio R. Salvucci, series ed.

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Excerpt from the Military Journal of Major Ebenezer Denny

1784.—The States made the appointments in the first instance, which were confirmed by Congress. The officers were all from those who had been in service. Colonel Harmar was in France: had been sent with the ratification of the treaty. The command of the new regiment was reserved for him, and indeed the Pennsylvania appointments not made until his return. Governor Mifflin at this time was President of Congress, and very popular in Pennsylvania, and Harmar's great friend; but the Colonel's character as a military man stood high; the regiment he brought from the southward eclipsed every thing. I was nominated by Harmar one of his ensign; the appointment reached me at Carlisle. As soon as they had a knowledge of my acceptance, recruiting instructions were sent me. Marched about a dozen men down to Philadelphia; joined the camp on west side of Schuylkill. The four companies nearly full. Some time spent in equipping and exercising the recruits.

September.—Marched through Lancaster by Carlisle, &c., to Pittsburgh. Waited for the arrival of commissioners appointed to hold a treaty with the Indians. Treaty expected to be holden at Cuyahoga. Commissioners late getting out, season advanced, plan changed, and Indians invited to attend at Fort M'Intosh, about thirty miles below Fort Pitt, on bank of Ohio; to which place we repaired, and found exceeding good quarters.

January, 1785.—About four hundred of the Senecas, Delawares and Wyandots come in. After considerable difficulty, a treaty is agreed to, but with much reluctance on the part of the savages. Amongst the Indians are a number of women and children. The whole a very motley crew—an ugly set of devils all—very few handsome men or women. Colonel Harmar did not join us until we reached Fort Pitt, at which place I was appointed to do the duty of adjutant; this had always been favorite duty of mine.

FORT M'INTOSH, 1785.—Winter passed away—no orders for marching; did expect, as soon as the season would permit, to march for Detroit. April and May delightful season—frequent excursions into the country—fishing and hunting. Officers visit Fort Pitt, where we left a lieutenant and thirty men. Fort Pitt and Fort M'Intosh both handsome places. Fort Pitt erected by the British long before the late war-an elegant work, regular pentagon; vast labor and money expended here. Ditch and parapet with pickets and fencing, and every thing in the most complete order. Very considerable quantity of military stores at this place. Indians come in to trade, will get drunk—a white man killed by a drunken Indian at Pittsburgh—people rise and attempt to put the Indian to death. Express sent to Colonel Harmar at M'Intosh. I was ordered to Pitt with certain instructions to Lieutenant Ashton, who commanded there. The Indian guarded to county jail. Pittsburgh in Westmoreland county. Hannahstown, about thirty miles east, the seat of justice. Complanter, chief of the Senecas arrived at Pitt. He had signed the treaty of M'Intosh; was dissatisfied—his people reflected on him; came to revoke.

Colonel Harmar was informed of this, and invited up to Pitt—I accompanied him. Meeting appointed in the King's Orchard. Speeches on both sides taken down. Complanter dismissed with assurances, &c., but no revoking.

-Ebenezer Denny, 1784-1785

Notes

The foregoing glossary was made by Major Denny at Fort M'Intosh, when the Delawares were there at treaty.

Indian Vocabulary.

The original of the glossary here given is in the handwriting of Major Denny, and was got from the Indians assembled at the treaties—probably the Delaware dialect at Fort M'Intosh, and the Shawanee at Fort Finney. An interesting acquisition at the time was the Delaware Indian spelling book sent to General Harmar by David Zeisberger, Missionary of the Moravian Indians, from his residence on the river Huron.

—William Denny, 1860.

DELAWARE — ENGLISH

Acuntpepey, handkerchief.

Ahaylemoosete, great.

Ahootong, churl.

Ahpeeinah, bed.

Alaapi, to-morrow.

Allemohakeoky, begone.

Allmeisseegoan, sun setting.

Alluquep, hat.

Alunze, lead.

Anechkomman, brotch. [brooch?]

Auchbone, bread.

Auchqueon, blanket.

Auhsson, stone.

Beegh, water,

Behauseck, grog.

Bome, thighs.

Caaweele, sleep.

Cahauck, goose.

Cahsheehieck, clean.

Calaman beeson, belt.

Canechelapyehara, we are free.

Capengoat, blend.

Casheita, warm.

Cataamecoomel, advice.

Cauhjeck, coarse.

Cechhanoe, how many.

Ceilaheekan, trap.

Cepechhaw, you are foolish.

Cheechanqwe, looking glass.

Cheetoneck, hard.

Chickaanum,turkey.

Chingy hotch, when will you?

Chingy, when.

Chippoucko, moccasin.

Cochittee, little.

Cogeinggwahela, sun rising.

Cokellicaneckey, have you cellicaneck.

Colacquunhomane, good night.

Colameelewayen, I agree with you.

Colamheetole, believe.

Congomallneemot tally mesko, farewell brother.

Connumoch, otter.

Coodequishoche, one moon.

Coohan, yes.

Cosshatymay, have you tobacco?

Cottchee, don't.

Coulhotoonhots, have you got.

Daaheehook, affront,

Dallie, hunt.

Doone, mouth.

Doughogay, I love.

Echawessech, thimble.

Ellenopey, Delaware.

Gaaitatam, will you sleep with me.

Gaatatamen, I want.

Gadapewee, I am hungry.

Gadusomembech, I want a drink of water.

Gaughquecheywel, I'll go with you.

Gutdosh, six.

Guttee, one.

Hauchgaske, snake.

Haush, eight.

Hchamenseet, bold.

Heetock, tree.

Helaames, binding.

Hempsee notich, bag.

Hengue, big.

Hhealea, great deal.

Hindaleepwinke, table.

Hleilpeil, will you.

Hleilpeil-moneeto, will you make .

Hobocan, pipe.

Hoose, kettle.

Hooteeneyg, town.

Hoqruongg, above.

Hoqueong, high.

Kaakune, leggings.

Kanenoale, I know you.

Kaycoo, what.

Keekukatatum, what do you want.

Keneehnateena, acquaintance.

Keygh, you.

Keyhtacoo-willet, you not good.

Keyhtaholal, I love you.

Keyshoo, new.

Kooshaatie, tobacco.

Laabhalteen, adopt.

Laback, cry.

Lalamatahpee, sit down.

Lalamatahpee nee mot, sit down, brother.

Lapeechoceelahtoo, begin.

Leahelleahy, alive.

Lehailamatahpenk, stool.

Lennew, man.

Leppoati, sober.

Longseet lenew, active.

Loosse, you.

Maanumksee, angry,

Machelesso, very bad.

Magyktallinohway, away.

Magy napy nagay, army.

Mamhaylachhky, abuse.

Meat heek, not good.

Meebil, give me.

Meemendat, child.

Mesqwin, quill.

Metehick, bad,

Meynell, you drink.

Mhoak, blood.

Mochguee, bear.

Moneeto, make.

Moocooelhasey, bleed.

Mouch, I will.

Musquem, corn.

Myckhanee, dog.

Naahoanum, raccoon.

Nahaaniungas, horse.

Nahoohaunee, alone by myself.

Nahopanee, alone.

Naoindayt, carry.

Nauhcoomel, answer.

Nechshaa, two.

Nee, me.

Neelum, sister.

Neemat, brother.

Neepen, warm weather.

Nee taacoo menunksee keigh willet lenew, me no angry,

you good men.

Neetes, comrade.

Negataa, legs.

Negeeon, nose.

Nehnochqehelachemo, brag.

Nemeelauch, hair.

Nemowhahelyhent, cruel.

Nepetauch, teeth.

Neshaush, seven.

Netaamket, ear.

Nevaa, four.

Nishking, eyes.

Nochhaa. three.

Noeeqehella, fatigued.

Nolelindum, I'm glad.

Nonsheto, doe.

Nopone, smoke.

Nouche, father.

Nunguee, powder.

Oahtengk, behind.

Ocanque, gorget.

Ochqwe, woman.

Ockshamways, cow.

Ohhtengue, after,

Oqwes, fox.

Paadamoecaan, church.

Paaleenough, five.

Paluppy, buck.

Peahho, by and by.

Pecheek, to-night.

Peechkung, nine.

Peehhocoomelunn, I'll give you.

Peeiskea, night.

Peetat neemot nopone, let me brother smoke.

Poocanee keesho, moon rising.

Poosheis, cat.

Quanacetch, I don't care.

Quanaleinaneenolama, allow,

Quebemell, I must sleep with you.

Quinoxetheitock, tall tree.

Rechgalundom, bridle.

Sapalake, bite.

Sawmeihheilto, too much.

Seakcay, black.

Seekhockhock, bottle.

Seekki, salt.

Sepoo, river.

Serelea, buffalo.

Setaughqwe, pipe stem.

Shapulenguhun, ring.

Shauchuqueon, coat.

Shealonday, hot sun.

Sheekcon, knife.

Shemmoo, powder-horn.

Sugelane, rain.

Taakoo maanunhsee shekee lenew, *I am not angry*, *you are a good man*.

Taakoo woolasee lenew maanuncaksee, you are no good man, I am angry.

Taanee. where.

Taayh, cold.

Tackalonne, bullet.

Tackatane, I don't know.

Tackoo, no.

Tackoopendy, I can't understand.

Tacoo-willet, bad.

Tahatchkey, where is your.

Tahowsing, civil.

Tallymesko, I'll go.

Tatumwaick, Jew's harp.

Tauchhan, wood.

Tayheekk, cold weather.

Tchamaheil, run.

Tcheeamookan, comb.

Tchewaung, hill.

Tcholenze, bird.

Teannhoolan, I'll pay you.

Tellen, ten.

Temmeheck, tomahawk.

Tenday poonk, ashes.

Tenndaa, fire.

Theyh moneeto, you make.

Theyhlonee, you and me.

Theykell, get well.

Thomaagru, beaver.

Thomusqwes, muskrat.

Tomaughcon, road.

Tompsey, maybe.

Toopayh, spring.

Tummaa, wolf.

Tutattabaala, rifle.

Uuneind, this is.

Veeney, snow.

Venengus, mink.

Veuse, meet.

Wayheenowayt, beggar.

Weamay, all,

Weekhail, build.

Weekhaten, camps.

Weeshaso, afraid.

Wejaywee, go with me.

Wellett, good.

Wenoussee, did you see him.

Wessking, moon.

Wigwam, hut.

Willesso, pretty.

Wissacone, bitter.

Zeetla, feet.

ENGLISH — DELAWARE

Above, hogruongg.

Abuse, mamhaylachhky.

Acquaintance, keneehnateena.

Active, longseet lenew.

Adopt, laabhalteen.

Advice, cataamecoomel.

Affront, daaheehook.

Afraid, weeshaso.

After, ohhtengue.

Agree, I agree with you, colameellewayen.

Alive, leahelleahy.

All, weamay.

Allow, quanaleinaneenolama.

Alone, nahopanee.

Angry, maanumksee.

Answer, nauhcoomel.

Army, magy napy nagay.

Ashes, tenday poonk.

Away, magyktallinohway.

Bad, tacoo-willet, metehick.

Bag, hempsee notich.

Bear, mochguee.

Beaver, thomaagru.

Bed, ahpeeinah.

Beggar, wayheenowayt.

Begin, lapeechoceelahtoo.

Begone, allemohakeoky.

Behind, oahtengk.

Believe, colamheetole.

Belt, calaman beeson.

Big, hengue.

Binding, helaames.

Bird, tcholenze.

Bite, sapalake.

Bitter, wissacone.

Black, seakcay.

Blanket, auchqueon.

Bleed, moocooelhasey.

Blend, capengoat.

Blood, mhoak.

Bold, hchamenseet.

Bottle, seekhockhock.

Brag, nehnochqehelachemo.

Bread, auchbone.

Bridle, rechgalundom.

Brotch, anechkomman. [brooch?]

Brother, neemat.

Buck, paluppy.

Buffalo, serelea.

Build, weekhail.

Bullet, tackalonne.

By and by, peahho.

Camps, weekhaten.

Care, I don't, quanacetch.

Carry, naoindayt.

Cat, poosheis.

Child, meemendat.

Church, paadamoecaan.

Churl, ahootong.

Civil, tahowsing.

Clean, cahsheehieck.

Coarse, cauhjeck.

Coat, shauchuqueon.

Cold, taayh.

Cold weather, tayheekk.

Comb, tcheeamookan.

Comrade, neetes.

Corn, musquem.

Cow, ockshamways.

Cruel, nemowhahelyhent.

Cry, laback.

Delaware, ellenopey.

Doe, nonsheto.

Dog, myckhanee.

Don't, cottchee.

Drink, you, meynell.

Ear, netaamket.

Eight, haush.

Eyes, nishking.

Farewell brother, congomallneemot tally mesko.

Father, nouche.

Fatigued, noeeqehella.

Feet, zeetla.

Fire, tenndaa.

Five, paaleenough.

Foolish, you are, cepechhaw.

Four, nevaa.

Fox, oqwes.

Get well, theykell.

Give me, meebil. I'll give you, peehhocoomelunn.

Glad, I'm, nolelindum.

Go, I'll, tallymesko. I'll go with you, gaughquecheywel.

Go with me, we jaywee.

Good, wellett.

Good night, colacquunhomane.

Goose, cahauck.

Gorget, ocanque.

Great, ahaylemoosete.

Great deal, hhealea.

Grog, behauseck.

Hair, nemeelauch.

Handkerchief, acuntpepey.

Hard, cheetoneck.

Hat, alluquep.

Have you got, coulhotoonhots. Have you cellecaneck, cokellicanchy. Have you tobacco, cosshatymay.

High, hoqueong.

Hill, tchewaung.

Horse, nahaaniungas.

Hot sun, shealonday.

How many, cechhanoe.

Hungry, I am, gadapewee.

Hunt, dallie.

Hut, wigwam.

Jew's harp, tatumwaick.

Kettle, hoose.

Knife, sheekcon.

Know, I know you, kanenoale. I don't know, tackatane.

Lead, alunze.

Leggings, kaakune.

Legs, negataa.

Little, cochittee.

Looking glass, cheechanqwe.

Love, I, doughogay. I love you, keyhtaholal.

Make, moneeto. You make, they moneeto.

Man, lennew.

Maybe, tompsey.

Me, nee.

Meet, veuse.

Mink, venengus.

Moccasin, chippoucko.

Moon rising, poocanee keesho.

Moon, wessking.

Mouth, doone.

Muskrat, thomusqwes.

New, keyshoo.

Night, peeiskea.

Nine, peechkung.

No, tackoo.

Nose, negeeon.

Not good, meat heek.

One, guttee.

One moon, coodequishoche.

Otter, connumoch.

Pay, I'll pay you, teannhoolan.

Pipe stem, setaughqwe.

Pipe, hobocan.

Powder, nunguee.

Powder-horn, shemmoo.

Pretty, willesso.

Quill, mesqwin.

Raccoon, naahoanum.

Rain, sugelane.

Rifle, tutattabaala.

Ring, shapulenguhun

River, sepoo.

Road, tomaughcon.

Run, tchamaheil.

Salt, seekki.

Seven, neshaush.

Sister, neelum.

Sit down, lalamatahpee.

Six, gutdosh.

Sleep, caaweele. I must sleep with you, quebemell.

Smoke, nopone.

Snake, hauchgaske.

Snow, veeney.

Sober, leppoati.

Spring, toopayh.

Stone, auhsson.

Stool, lehailamatahpenk.

Sun rising, cogeinggwahela.

Sun setting, allmeisseegoan.

Table, hindaleepwinke.

Tall tree, quinoxetheitock.

Teeth, nepetauch.

Ten, tellen.

Thighs, bome.

Thimble, echawessech.

This is, uuneind.

Three, nochhaa.

Tobacco, kooshaatie.

Tomahawk, temmeheck.

Tomorrow, alaapi.

Too much, sawmeihheilto.

Tonight, pecheek.

Town, hooteeneyg.

Trap, ceilaheekan.

Tree. heetock

Turkey, chickaanum.

Two, nechshaa.

Understand, I can't, tackoopendy.

Very bad, machelesso.

Want, I, gaatatamen. I want a drink of water, gadusomembech. What do you want, keekukatatum.

Warm, casheita. Warm weather, neepen.

Water, beegh.

What, kaycoo. What do you want, keekukatatum.

When, chingy.

When will you, chingy hotch.

Where, taanee.

Where is your, tahatchkey.

Will, I, mouch.

Will you, hleilpeil. Will you make, hleilpeil-moneeto.

Wolf, tummaa.

Woman, ochqwe.

Wood, tauchhan.

Yes, coohan.

You, keygh, loosse.

You and me, theyhlonee.

You not good, keyhtacoo-willet.

Phrases

I am not angry, you are a good man, taakoo maanunhsee shekee lenew.

You are no good man, I am angry, taakoo woolasee lenew maanuncaksee.

Let me brother smoke, peetat neemot nopone.

Sit down, brother, lalamatahpee nee mot.

Will you sleep with me?, gaaitatam.

Did you see him, wenoussee.

Alone by myself, nahoohaunee.

Have you tobacco, cosshatymay.

Have you cellicaneck, cokellicaneckey.

I know you, kanenoale.

I agree with you, colameelewayen.

We are free, canechelapyehara.

Me no angry, you good men, nee taacoo menunksee keigh willet lenew.

Numerical Table

- 1. Guutee 6. Gutdosh.
- Nechshaa.
 Neshaush.
- 3. Nochhaa. 8. Haush.
- 4. Nevaa. 9. Peechkung.
- 5. Paaleenough. 10. Tellen.

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

Source: Goddard 1996.