

## European Personal Names given to the Eastern Indians

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IN A PAPER PUBLISHED IN 1944, I cited documents from the Maryland archives to indicate that, starting in 1704, and perhaps earlier, individual members of a band of Algonkian-speaking Choptank Indians began to be known by English personal names. An individual's former Algonkian name was used as a surname to which an English given name was affixed, e.g., Betty *Caco*, George *Attowcase*, William *Ahconepatokack*, Old Tom *Tisehouse*, James *Cohonk*, Bonny *Clabbo*, John *Quash*, etc. In some instances the Algonkian name was dropped entirely and the Indian was known by a single European given name, e.g., Dick, Little John, Presillah, Nancy, Abram, Six Pence, etc. As time went on, the Indian names were completely changed, and by 1799 individual Choptanks possessed both given names and surnames of European origin, e.g., Henry Mulberry, Mary Mulberry, Henry Sixpence, John Pike, Sarah Bishop, Tom Bishop, Thomas Owen, etc.<sup>1</sup>

There has come to my attention evidence of a parallel naming process found in the 17th century records of the Dutch settlement at and near present Albany, N.Y.<sup>2</sup> In 1678, a Catskill Indian whose native name was *Manueenta* and was "by the Christians called

<sup>1</sup> C. A. Weslager, "Wynicaco — A Choptank Indian Chief," *Proceedings American Philosophical Society* 87: 5, 1944, pp. 398—402. The names quoted above by no means exhaust those that could be found by a thorough search of the historical records. For example, on the Delmarva Peninsula in 1742 Indians from various tribes gathered together to plan an attack on the whites. Among the conspirators were John Wittonguis, Jeremy Peake, George Pokahaum, Robin Hood, Hopping Sam, and Bastobello, C. A. Weslager, *Delaware's Forgotten Folk*, U. of Penna. Press, Phila. 1943, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> *Early Records of the City and County of Albany and Colony of Rensselaerswyck*, N.Y. State Library, History Bulletins, trans. Jonathan Pearson, revised and edited A. J. F. van Laer, Albany 1916, 5 vs.

Shermerhooren" sold a plot of land to white buyers.<sup>3</sup> In July of the same year, twenty Catskill and Mahikan Indians entered into a land sale to white buyers, and among these native vendors were, "Tamongwes alias Volkert . . . . Papawachketik alias Evert . . . . Mamaetcheek alias Joris . . . . Kachketowaa alias Cobus . . . . and . . . . Unekeek by the Christians named Jan de Backer."<sup>4</sup>

A deed dated 1684 also includes the names, both Algonkian and the Dutch given names, of the latter Indian referring to him as "onekeek, commonly called Jan de Backer."<sup>5</sup>

In 1682 one of several Esopus Indians selling land to a Dutch buyer was "Usawaneek alias Sheele [cross-eyed] Jacob."<sup>6</sup>

In 1685 a deed drawn up between whites and Indians included the names of "Tataemshatt, and Michiel his Brother by ye Indians called Amesett."<sup>7</sup>

An Esopus Indian during the same period was known as "Capt. Jan Bachter."<sup>8</sup> He may have been the same person as Jan de Backer although this is uncertain. The use of military titles, as pointed out in my 1944 paper, was also a practice among the Maryland Indians following white contact. Doubtless the whites applied the titles to chiefs or men of rank in the tribe.<sup>9</sup> It is unlikely that the Algonkian Indians used any titles except "sachem" and its equivalent.

Another Indian, whose Algonkian name was *Waspacheek*, is cited in the Albany records under his Dutch name, Speck or Spek.<sup>10</sup> The Indian "*Kashekan* alias Calkoen" was a co-seller with Speck.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 2: 20. On p. 222 the same Indian is referred to as being "named Maweyntay and commonly Shermerhoorn." <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 2: 219.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 2: 222. <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 2: 161. <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 2: 281, 303. <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 3: 549.

<sup>9</sup> A certain Indian widow of "the late chief — who was called Colonel" was Mrs. Mulberry. She also bore the title of "queen." *Weslager, 1944*. Panquas, a chieftain of the Nanticoke tribe was known to the English as "Captain General and Commander in Chief." Another Nanticoke chief was called "Captain John," and the great chief of the Nanticoke was known to the English as an "emperor" a title that was also given to Powhatan in Virginia, see C. A. Weslager, *The Nanticoke Indians*, Harrisburg, 1948 (Penna. Historical Commission).

<sup>10</sup> *Early Recs. Albany, ibid.* 2: 84, 3: 556. A Delaware Indian living in the Philadelphia environs was also called Speck. His name was cited in 1644: *The Instruction for Johan Printz*, trans. Amandus Johnson, Phila. 1930, p. 246 and again in 1654: Peter Lindeström, *Geographia Americae* trans. Amandus Johnson, Phila. 1925, p. 128. The late Dr. Frank G. Speck, Professor of Anthropology, at the U. of Penna. used to speak facetiously of the Algonkian Speck as an "illustrious ancestor."

A New York chieftain was known by a Dutch name which appears among the signers of a peace treaty in 1645: "Willem, Chief of Tappaans."<sup>11</sup>

Many questions could be raised about these name changes, resulting from the impact of a more complex, invading civilization from Europe. The acculturation of the American Indian has been the subject of intensive study by the cultural anthropologist, but the literature is silent regarding the changes in personal names.<sup>12</sup> The examples I have cited show that the Indians borrowed, or were given, names by the Europeans with whom they had direct contact: the Algonkian names of the Maryland Indians started in 1704, and perhaps earlier, to give way to English names; in 1678 Dutch names in New York were beginning to replace Algonkian forms. Thus, it would appear that even before they gave up the use of their native language, the eastern Indians started to lose their personal names in favor of "given" names of European origin.

<sup>11</sup> *Colls. of the N.Y. Hist. Soc.* 2nd series, 1:275, N.Y. 1841.

<sup>12</sup> Typical of the anthropological treatment is William W. Newcomb Jr., *The Culture And Acculturation Of The Delaware Indians*, Museum of Anthropology, U. of Mich., 1956. Although an excellent treatise of the non-linguistic aspects of acculturation, Newcomb devotes less than two pages to linguistic assimilation and less than two pages to naming processes in aboriginal context. In the latter discussion (pp. 32-34) he makes no mention of the adoption of European names by the Delawares. Vernon Kinietz, *Delaware Culture Chronology*, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, 1946 devotes less than two pages (pp. 44-45) to name-giving among the Delawares, and the reader remains uninformed so far as aboriginal name-giving processes are concerned. Kinietz says nothing about the adoption of European names by the Delawares although he cites such informants as Captain Pipe, Captain Chipps, and Willie Longbone.

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The eighth annual meeting of the Society will be held on December 29, 1959 at Chicago. The president has appointed Mamie J. Meredith to be chairman of the program committee. Members who wish to read papers should communicate with Miss Meredith, at 2340 Sumner St. Lincoln 2, Neb.