

# Essay on new jersey history lenape indians

[Parts of the World](#), [Europe](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The Lenape Indians were a rich and complex people with a very unique take on what constituted ownership of land. This was something that European settlers used to their advantage when colonizing the New World - taking advantage of their loose understanding of land ownership, Europeans managed to occupy and take over the Lenape land in what is now known as New Jersey.

Originally, the Lenape occupied a vast amount of land which encompassed everything between the Hudson River and Delaware Valleys, including New Jersey. Lenape tribes would often use their actual locations to identify themselves. According to the Lenape, specific clans were assigned a certain part of land which they could use for cultivation, fishing and hunting. The idea of individual land ownership was alien to them; as a collective, the clan owned the land while they inhabited it.

The Europeans began to move into the New World in the early to mid 1600s, soon taking ownership of the land and settling for themselves. Making deals with the Lenape Indians in that area, their strategy was to make friends with the Lenape and constantly ask for more and more land. The Europeans at first just "asked only for so much ground for a garden spot," but that area increased over time (Green, p. 6). The Lenape did not believe that they would be forced out of their land by the Europeans, as the land belong to all of them collectively. However, the Europeans thought that the land should be theirs alone; this led them to continually expand.

Their final appeal to the English was in a request by the remaining Delawares which still resided in New Jersey to the new administrators of the state. In

this appeal, they asked that they could sell off their remaining fishing and hunting rights to as-yet undeveloped land in the area, in order to completely sever the ties between themselves and the land. They had been given these rights as a result of the 1758 Treaty of Crosswicks, where the Brotherton reservation was created. In an act of " beneficence, not justice," the Indians were given two thousand dollars for their trouble (Green, p. 97).

In the end, the Lenape Indians were undone by their own communal sense of land ownership. They had a very loose idea that the people collectively owned the land as they inhabited it; they did not seek to exploit it, but to work within it. Furthermore, they were never ready to exclude others from having that land. This made it so much easier for the Europeans settling in that area to take it from them. At first, they ingratiated themselves with the Lenape, and gradually took more and more land under the guise of friendship. Eventually, the Lenape themselves had to beg to sell their hunting and fishing rights to the settlers for a pittance. This fundamental difference in the idea of land ownership would be the Lenape's undoing in New Jersey.

## **Works Cited**

Green, Howard, Words That Make New Jersey History. New Brunswick, Rutgers Univ. Press,

Revised Edition. ISBN: 0-8135-2113-0

Cunningham, John T., New Jersey: A Mirror on America, Afton, 2000. ISBN: 0-89359-

032-0

<https://assignbuster.com/essay-on-new-jersey-history-lenape-indians/>