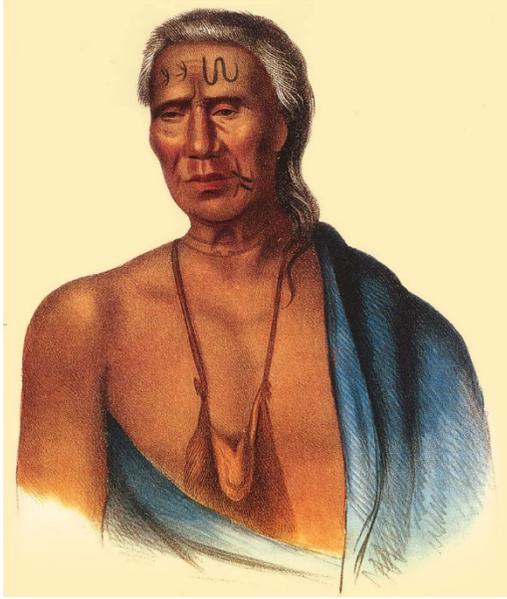


David Cochran, 1 min.

## 2. Before the Dutch Arrived

Updated: Sep 3, 2018



*Lapowinsa, Chief of the Lenape, [Lappawinsoe](#) painted by [Gustavus Hesselius](#) in 1735.  
*Wikipedia**

When we think about the settlement of Montgomery Township, we usually think of the Dutch and English settlers, but these European immigrants arrived long after its original Native American inhabitants. We know little about who lived here before the Native Americans, but there were probably early humans who roamed with mammoths for thousands of years before a tribe known as the Lenni Lenape settled in this area. There is evidence in neighboring Hillsborough of early human tools and mammoths, so I'm sure Montgomery had earlier settlers than current history reveals. The Lenni Lenape lived here for 500 to 1,000 years before groups of European settlers arrived. Think about that. They lived here longer than any group of immigrants has to this day. These people were members of the Algonquin Nation, and they were organized into sub-tribes. The primary sub-tribe in Central Jersey was known as the Unami or "people down the river."

When the Europeans arrived, they wanted to own land and use it for farming and other purposes. That was what they were used to in the Netherlands and Great Britain. This stood in contrast to the practices of the Lenni Lenape, who lived communally in settlements and viewed the land as belonging to the whole tribe. The primary sub-tribe in Central Jersey was known as the Unami or "people down the river. The Unami liked to travel seasonally, seeking food and cool water near the ocean in the summertime. Sound familiar? I wonder if they said they were going "down the shore" when they travelled east in the summer? The Europeans also brought diseases, guns, and alcohol to their new land. The interaction of the Dutch and the Lenni Lenape wasn't good. While they traded



MAP 1 Locations of Lenni Lenape in the Northeast

guns and other goods in exchange for animal pelts to send back to the royalty of Europe, the Dutch treated them poorly and wanted to enslave them. This led to the many conflicts which lasted until the Lenni Lenape were defeated. By 1700, there were as few as a quarter of the original population of Lenni Lenape left in New Jersey. They were driven west and survivors established communities in Oklahoma, Wisconsin, and Ontario. Learn more about the plight of the Lenni Lenape, including a timeline of their interaction with the European immigrants, at this [Lenni Lenape](#) site or in *New Jersey's Sourland Mountain* by T. J. Luce.

While we think of Blawenburg as being settled by the Dutch, it was really the Lenni Lenape who were here first. It wasn't until 1702 that Montgomery Township was organized with Blawenburg becoming a village more than a century later.

**Blawenburg Fact:** In 1832, the Lenni Lenape accepted \$2,000 to relinquish their hunting and fishing rights in Somerset County.

**Looking Ahead:** The Settlers of Blawenburg

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