

**Communications to the Historical and
Literary Committee of the American
Philosophical Society, 1816-1821
1816-1821
Mss.970.1.H35c**

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Summary Information

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| Repository | American Philosophical Society |
| Creator | Heckewelder, John Gottlieb Ernestus, 1743-1823 |
| Title | Communications to the Historical and Literary Committee of the American Philosophical Society, 1816-1821 |
| Date [inclusive] | 1816-1821 |
| Call number | Mss.970.1.H35c |
| Extent | 1.0 Volume(s) 1 volume, 187 p. |
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| Location | LH-MV-E-16 |
| Language | English |
| Container | 1 |
| Abstract | This item includes notes, letters, and essays on the history, manners, and languages of the American Indians, sent to the Committee and to members of the American Philosophical Society. Contains answers to queries, historical material, Indian speeches, replies to letters of Peter S. Du Ponceau, references to the Lenni Lenape, Indian writing, translations of English into Indian languages. |

Background note

John Gottlieb Ernestus Heckewelder was a Moravian missionary to the Indians of Ohio.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Presented by John Gottlieb Ernestus Heckewelder and accessioned, 1816-1821 (3434).

Alternative Form Available

This item is also available on microfilm (Film 1287).

Indexing Terms

Corporate Name(s)

- American Philosophical Society. Historical & Literary Committee.

Subject(s)

- Delaware Indians
- Indians of North America--History
- Indians of North America--Languages
- Indians of North America--Social life and customs

Other Descriptive Information

Printed in part in New-York Historical Society *Collections* series 2, 1 (1821): 71-74.

Other Descriptive Information

The John Heckewelder Collection consists of an assortment of documents, almost all of which deal with Native Americans. Heckewelder was a Moravian missionary to Delaware Indians in Pennsylvania who was a prominent figure in nineteenth century intellectual circles. The primary focus of the collection is on his attempt to preserve Native American languages, especially those of the Lenni Lenape (Delaware) in Pennsylvania. His correspondence and one publication also chronicle Native American history, customs, and life. Heckewelder also kept a meteorological journal while on his mission to Gnadenhutten, Pennsylvania from 1802-1814, which is part of the collection. Much of the collection comes from Heckewelder's correspondence with the APS and its prominent member and linguist Stephen Du Ponceau.

Summary of Collection: There are many content rich sources in the collection. Heckewelder's "Communications to the Historical and Literary Committee" is a 187-page bound volume of correspondence that includes responses to queries on Indian history, his own observations of Native culture, and records of Native American oral histories as conveyed to Heckewelder (970.1 H35c). The record provides insight in Native American history, white understanding of Native cultures, and oral traditions in the early nineteenth century. Among the oral histories Heckewelder records is a contact story, the history of the "emigration" of the Lenni Lenape from the west, and origins stories of other Native groups as related by the Delaware.

The collection also contains his extensive correspondence with Peter Du Ponceau on Indian culture and language ([497.3 H35o](#)). The content of these letters add additional details that were not included in his publications or other writings.

Also of significance are his notes on the names that the Lenni Lenape called areas of the Mid-Atlantic that also contain a list of important Indian leaders ([497.3 H35n](#)). These brief biographical sketches are based on details provided by Indians or Heckewelder's own interactions with them.

Finally, remaining portions of the Heckewelder Collection contain detailed meteorological data for Gnadenhutten ([551.5 H352](#)) and other language data.