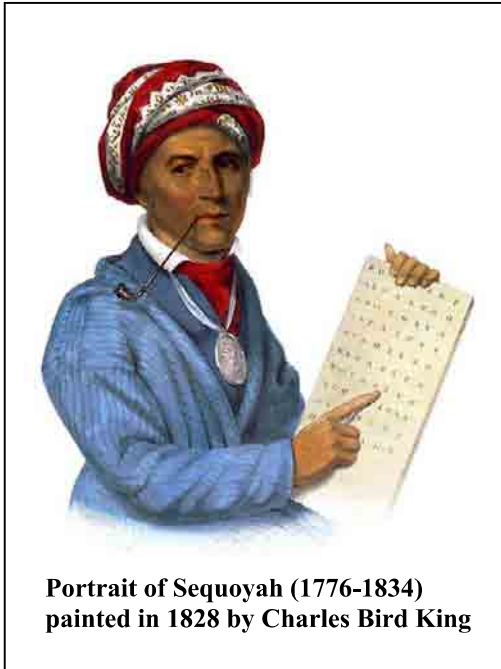


The Origin of the Na Tsi Hi Name

Ohowa Lodge #71 was chartered by Monmouth Council in 1933 and was active until about 1940. Little is known about our original lodge. When the OA flame was rekindled in Monmouth Council in December of 1949, the name chosen for the newly-reorganized lodge #71 was NA TASI HI. This spelling of the name appeared on the lodge's first patch. The name was later changed to the current spelling, NA TSI HI. Lodge tradition holds that the name is the Delaware (Lenape) translation for "in the pines," referring to Camp Housman which was on the northern edge of the New Jersey Pine Barrens.



Portrait of Sequoyah (1776-1834) painted in 1828 by Charles Bird King

For years several questions have persisted: Can Na Tsi Hi be accurately translated as "in the pines," is it Lenape language, what is the correct pronunciation, when and why was the name changed from Na Tasi Hi to Na Tsi Hi? Although no written records or interviews of early lodge members have shed light on these questions, academic research has given us some plausible answers.

D _a	R _e	T _i	o _o	o _u	i _v
S _{ga} O _{ka}	P _{ge}	Y _{gi}	A _{go}	J _{gu}	E _{gv}
h _{ha}	P _{he}	h _{hi}	h _{ho}	h _{hu}	h _{hv}
W _{la}	l _{le}	P _{li}	G _{lo}	M _{lu}	l _{lv}
ma	o _{me}	H _{mi}	mo	y _{mu}	
o _{na} t _{hna} G _{nah}	l _{ne}	h _{ni}	Z _{no}	l _{nu}	o _{nv}
E _{qua}	o _{que}	P _{qui}	o _{quo}	o _{quu}	E _{quv}
U _{sa} o _s	l _{se}	l _{si}	l _{so}	l _{su}	R _{sv}
l _{da} W _{ta}	S _{de} t _{te}	J _{di} J _{ti}	V _{do}	S _{du}	o _{dv}
o _{dla} l _{ila}	l _{tle}	C _{tli}	h _{tlo}	h _{tlu}	P _{tlv}
G _{tsa}	V _{tse}	h _{tsi}	K _{tso}	J _{tsu}	G _{tsv}
G _{wa}	o _{we}	o _{wi}	o _{wo}	o _{wu}	G _{wv}
o _{ya}	B _{ye}	h _{yi}	h _{yo}	G _{yu}	B _{yv}

Sequoyah's complete Cherokee syllabary, 1825

Sequoyah's Cherokee syllabary 1825

James Rementer, a Delaware language scholar, was asked to verify the translation of the lodge name. *His response was that the name could not be Delaware!* However, he suggested that it might be Cherokee.

The *syllabary* (or syllable alphabet) of the Cherokee language was created by Sequoyah. Introduced in 1821, it established Cherokee (or Tsalagi) as the first written Native American language. Some symbols were borrowed from the Latin and Greek alphabets, while others were invented by Sequoyah himself.

o h a

Referring to the Cherokee syllabary, the three syllables *na*, *tsi*, and *hi* do exist in written Cherokee, but *tasi* does not. Two Cherokee language authorities were consulted and they agreed that the phrase *na tsi hi* would translate to "in the pines." The pronunciation would be (phonetically) *nah tche he*.



Tribal council of the Lenape Sand Hill band 1920s

This discovery, while answering one of our questions, makes the choice of a Cherokee phrase all the more puzzling. Since Monmouth Council is in the midst of what had once been Lenape tribal lands, why would our lodge founders use a Cherokee phrase? As it turns out, the only organized Native American group in Monmouth County in the mid-twentieth century was a small, but significant group named the Sand Hill band. This group included descendents of both the Delaware and Cherokee peoples. We can imagine that our lodge founders asked a member of the Sand Hill band to translate *in the pines*, and that the answer was given in Cherokee.

What of Na *Tasi* Hi? We can surmise that a spelling error occurred when the translation was obtained or immediately thereafter, and so the misspelling was used until the error was noticed and corrected. We have determined that Na Tsi Hi was already in use by 1951, although concurrent instances of the incorrect Na Tasi Hi spelling can be found - the 1951 Area 2C Conference program book is a notable example. The earliest known instances of the Na Tsi Hi spelling are on the 1951 lodge charter and in a mimeographed invitation to the March 1951 Ordeal induction.

We turned to Raymond Whritenour, another Delaware language expert, to obtain a Lenape translation for *in the pines*. His answer was: In Lenape, *in the pines* would be "kuwewunk"-pronounced 'coo-way-wung' with stress on the second syllable.



First lodge insignia which pre-dates the common use of pocket flaps

Acknowledgements

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