The Life and Legacy of Moses Tunda Tatamy, c.1695 - c.1761: An Indigenous Response to Colonialism in Eighteenth Century Pennsylvania; An Annotated Bibliography

Senior Project

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Acknowledgements

I would like to first dedicate this project to the Delaware Nation. It is my hope that this research will be used by others to improve interpretations of colonial history in Pennsylvania. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Kerry Holton, former President of the Delaware Nation, for being supportive of my efforts to make this story known. I would also like to thank my academic advisor and mentor, Dr. Jane Haladay, for her excellent guidance and patience in overseeing this project to completion. I would also like to thank Dr. Teagan Decker and the Esther G. Maynor Honors College for giving me the opportunity to complete this project.

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Abstract

The first time I encountered the name Moses Tunda Tatamy was while conducting research on William Penn’s early relationship with the Delaware Indians in the late seventeenth century. I stumbled upon one of Tatamy’s original letters addressed to Israel Pemberton, Jr. and was intrigued. As I began to find bits and pieces of Tatamy’s story, I questioned why such an influential Delaware man in Pennsylvania’s history remains relatively unknown. Despite having an entire town named after him and a state historical marker, Tatamy’s story remains relatively incomplete and underappreciated in Pennsylvania’s public memory. In fact, Indigenous people are underrepresented in Pennsylvania’s public memory in general.

This annotated bibliography was created to delineate a number of primary and secondary sources relating to the life and legacy of Moses Tunda Tatamy. Not only do these sources help recreate the story of Tatamy’s life, but they show an Indigenous response to colonialism in eighteenth century Pennsylvania. The unique way in which Tatamy responded to a host of colonial pressures demonstrates the power of agency amongst historically oppressed people advocating for justice. This annotated bibliography will provide the framework for future research and discussion. It is my hope that this research will encourage people to use the story of Moses Tatamy to spark conversations about the Delaware experience in colonial Pennsylvania and how it can be better represented and taught throughout the state.
Methodology

For the purposes of this annotated bibliography, it was my intent to identity and locate any primary or secondary source that explicitly mentioned the name of Moses Tatamy, or was written by Moses Tatamy himself. To do this, I first located books relating to Delaware and early Pennsylvania history. Any book that mentioned Tatamy was included in this annotated bibliography. I then used these secondary sources as a guide to finding relevant primary source materials. Because I was limited in my abilities to travel to Pennsylvania during the semester, I was not able to include all of the primary sources I know exist relating to Tatamy. For example, I know land records relating to Tatamy are located in the Pennsylvania State Archives in Harrisburg, PA, but I did not get a chance to look at them.

However, I did have time to visit Haverford College’s Quaker and Special Collections library, which is where most of the primary sources in this annotated bibliography were found. While I did use secondary sources to help me locate some primary sources, I did stumble across primary source documents relating to Tatamy just by looking through a number of boxes of material in the Native American collections. I will note that locating these types of primary sources is tedious and difficult, as many of the documents are not labeled or transcribed. I also note that some of the sources in this document may contradict one another, which is not uncommon. It is also to be noted that most of the sources about the Delaware were written by colonial figures, and it is important to account for the potential biases of the authors of these documents. Despite these considerations, each of these sources adds valuable information and context to recreate the story of Moses Tatamy and the world he lived in.
Note on Language

Before reading into the different sources and their annotations, it is important to clarify a few details on language and my selected use of terms. The first is the use of the name of the Lenape or Delaware. The term “Lenape” refers to the indigenous people historically living along the Delaware River and its watershed from the present day states of New York to Delaware. The word “Lenape” was used by the Native people in this region and translates loosely to “the people.” The name “Delaware” is not Indigenous, but is rather the name colonists used to describe the Lenape living along the Delaware River. The name Delaware comes from the name of Thomas West, 3rd Baron De La Warr, an English politician. In this paper, I use the names “Lenape” and “Delaware” interchangeably.

The second detail to clarify is the different spellings of Moses Tatamy’s name. Throughout my research, I have encountered a host of possible spellings, the two most popular being, “Tatamy” and “Tetamie.” For the purposes of this paper, I have decided to use the most popular and most common modern spelling of Tatamy. As far as pronunciation, my research points to the popular notion that Tatamy is pronounced with a long, “a” in the first syllable, which explains why it is also commonly spelled with an, “e.” I will also clarify that Moses was not Tunda Tatamy’s original name, but was given to him after working with missionary David Brainerd to symbolize the leadership of the Biblical Moses.
The Life and Legacy of Moses Tunda Tatamy, c.1695 - c.1761:

An Indigenous Response to Colonialism in Eighteenth Century Pennsylvania;

An Annotated Bibliography

Primary Sources:

Manuscript Collections:

Tetamie’s Account of the Indian Complaints (vol. 1, 65A-65H), Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Records, Haverford College Special Collections, Haverford, PA.

In this document, Tatamy gives an account of Indian complaints and concerns after removing his family from his plot along the Forks of the Delaware to New Jersey for their safety following violent French and Indian War tensions. In this account, Tatamy notes that he found it no longer safe to live at his place in the Forks, so he crossed to the other side of the river and lived with Colonel John Anderson for some time. Tatamy also notes leaving Anderson’s to attend the Treaty at Crosswicks on January 8-9, 1756. He later states that he settled for some time at Maidenhead, currently Lawrenceville, New Jersey, from where he removed to Pennsburry (note Tatamy was present at the Pennsburry Treaty in 1735). It is during this time that Tatamy becomes increasingly involved with provincial officials, serving as a translator.

Pemberton’s Letter from Moses Tetamie, 1756-06-06 (vol. 1, 351A-351B), Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Records, Haverford College Special Collections, Haverford, PA.

This letter is addressed to Israel Pemberton from Moses Tatamy. Tatamy mentions that he has been at Bethlehem and Easton discussing affairs of the
Indians and thanks Pemberton for his support. He signs the document as Pemberton’s “humble servant.”

Pemberton’s Letter from Moses Tetamie, 1758-03-08 (vol. 1, 427A-427D), Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Records, Haverford College Special Collections, Haverford, PA.

In this letter, Moses Tatamy requests the help of Israel Pemberton in searching for records relating to the New Jersey Indians who granted power of attorney to Thomas Store, Moses Tatamy, Stephen Calvin, Issac Still, and John Pumpshire to carry out their further business relating to the selling of their lands. All five of these individuals were members of David Brainerd’s congregation.

Tetamie’s Account of the Walking Purchase, 1757 (vol. 1, 407A-407D), Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Records, Haverford College Special Collections, Haverford, PA.

In this document, Tatamy gives a traditional Delaware account of the Walking Pruchase of 1737. This account of the Walking Purchased was used at the meetings at Easton. In his account, Tatamy is able to recount a representation of Delaware history and provide clear evidence against the proprietors. Parts of the digital format of this document are illegible and need to be revisited.

Pemberton’s Letter from Moses Tetamie, 1760-11-24 (vol. 4, 055A-055B), Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Records, Haverford College Special Collections, Haverford, PA.

This letter is addressed to Israel Pemberton from Moses Tatamy. The cover of the letter reads, “expecting to die soon.” Tatamy writes from Maidenhead and notes
that he is staying with Edmund Bainbridge and is expected to die any day.

Tatamy discloses he has made a will and has appointed Pemberton and Bainbridge as executors.


This document is addressed to Governor William Denny and to John Forbes, Brigadier from Christian Frederick Post and Charles Thompson, who were appointed to go to the northern frontiers of the province to attend a meeting between Indians. On the way, they met Moses Tatamy and Isaac Still who were to accompany them. While traveling, Post and Thompson received news that an enemy party of Indians were spotted, which discouraged Tatamy and Still. Tatamy and Still were persuaded to keep going after discussion of the importance and necessity of the trip.

Minutes of a Conference between the Indians and the Governor of Pennsylvania, 1758-08-05 (vol. 2, 175A-175D), Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Records, Haverford College Special Collections, Haverford, PA.

These minutes are from a conference with the Indians at Philadelphia on August 5, 1758. In attendance were Governor Richard Peters, Joseph Turner, and several city inhabitants. Also attending were Seneca Indians, Eyindeegen (John Hudson), Sokanguepee (Samuel), and Tandaghkees. The Delawares in attendance were
Benjamin, Walaopees, and Moses Tetamy, the interpreter. At this conference, the Seneca spokesperson raises concerns about Teedyuscung and his business at the conference. The spokesperson then presented a wampum belt and expressed desire to meet again at Easton.

Minutes of a Conference held at Easton between the Governor of Pennsylvania and the Delaware Indians, 1756-11 (vol. 5, 165-186), Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Records, Haverford College Special Collections, Haverford, PA.

This document contains the minutes of the conferences held at Easton in the Forks of Delaware in November 1756 between the Governor of Pennsylvania and the Delaware Indians. Attendees included Governor William Denny, William Logan, Richard Peters, Benjamin Franklin, William Masters, Joseph Fox, John Hughes, as well as a number of Quakers and Indians, including Teedyuscung. The intention of the conference was to secure peace during French and Indian War tensions.

Published Primary Sources:

David Brainerd was an American missionary known for his work amongst the Delaware Indians of New Jersey. Moses Tatamy served as an interpreter for David Brainerd and worked for him until he left to work elsewhere. Brainerd left a detailed description of Tatamy and his experience working with him in his diary. Brainerd hired Tatamy in the summer of 1744 because he was familiar
with the Delaware and English languages and customs, even though he was not fond of the Christian religion. He also notes that Tatamy was a heavy drinker, had no concern regarding his soul, but was a hard worker.

This source is unique in that Brainerd writes about Tatamy’s personality and conversion experience to Christianity. Brainerd notes that Tatamy fell into a “weak and languishing state of body” and began to have constant growing concerns for his soul and eternal salvation. Tatamy’s spiritual concerns kept him from sleep. Tatamy noted that he felt as if there was an impassable mountain preventing him from gaining salvation through his own works. He expressed to Brainerd that he felt miserable and knew that no matter what he did in his life, he had never really done one good thing with a right view.

On July 21, 1745, Tunda Tatamy and his wife were the first Indians baptized by Brainerd. Tatamy worked alongside Brainerd and began preaching to his people until September, 1745 when he left to take care of business elsewhere. Though Brainerd questioned whether or not Tatamy had a change of heart, he later wrote,

His heart echoes to the soul-humbling doctrines of grace, and he never appears better pleased than when he hears of the absolute sovereignty of God, and the salvation of sinners in a way of mere free grace. He has likewise of late had more satisfaction respecting, his own state, has been much enlivened and assisted in his work, so that he has been a great comfort to me . . . I have reason to hope that he is created anew in Christ Jesus to good works. His name is Moses Tinda Tautamy; he is about fifty
years of age, and is pretty well acquainted with the pagan notions and
customs of his countrymen, and so is the better able now to expose them.
He has, I am persuaded, already been, and I trust will yet be, a blessing to
the other Indians (279).
Secondary Sources:

Brinton, Daniel G. *The Lenape and Their Legends; With the Complete Text and Symbols of the Walam Olum, a New Translation, and an Inquiry into its Authenticity.*

Philadelphia: D.G. Brinton, 1885.

Daniel Brinton was an early archaeologist and ethnologist from Pennsylvania who studied Native American religions and folklore. Though Brinton’s book mainly focuses on Lenape legends, it does contain a chapter dedicated to the Walking Purchase and its legacy on Lenape communities and individuals. Brinton briefly mentions that a number of Christian Indians petitioned the provincial council to remain on their lands after the purchase. This is mainly because some of these lands were direct personal gifts to those Indians from the Proprietaries. Brinton notes that their request to stay on their lands was refused, but Moses Tatamy remained on his land and was, “shot down like a dog, in the road, by a white man” (128).

I have not been able to find any historical evidence that supports the claim that Moses Tatamy was shot, but rather that he died of natural causes. There may have been confusion because Tatamy’s son, William, was indeed shot and killed. Because this book is from the nineteenth century, some of its claims may not be accurate based on the information and evidence available today. When discussing Tatamy, Brinton cites the Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania, a useful primary source for further research.

This book provides an overview of the history behind Indian place names in Pennsylvania. One of the towns listed is the town of Tatamy, located in Northampton County, Pennsylvania. According to Donehoo, the town is named in honor of Moses Fonda Tatemy, a famous Delaware chief who often acted as messenger and interpreter for the province. He claims that Tatamy was born near Cranberry, New Jersey in the late 1600s and notes that he was given a three hundred acre tract of land, near Stockertown, Forks Township, Pennsylvania for his services to the province. Tatamy was living on this same tract of land in 1742, when the Moravian Count Zinzendorf and his associates visited him. Tatamy’s name was also used for a number of years as the name of the creek near his plot of land. Before it was called Tatamy’s Creek, it was formerly known as Lehietan, and also Lefevre’s Creek. In 1752, William Parsons mentions this creek in his writing and calls it Tatamy’s Creek. Today, Tatamy’s Creek is called Bush Kill Creek.

Donehoo finds Tatamy in the historical record when the Iroquois ordered the Delaware to leave the Forks area. It is noted that Tatamy asked to be permitted to stay on his tract of land given to him by the province. The province approved Tatamy’s request, so long as the Iroquois made no objections. The Iroquois did not object and Tatamy continued to live on his land near Stockertown until his death. Tatamy was the first Indian baptized by David Brainerd on July 21, 1746. This was when Tatamy was given the name Moses, to symbolize
leadership amongst his people. Tatemy’s son, William, was killed by an Irish boy while he was on his way to the Council at Easton in 1757 and died shortly after. Donehoo notes that it is a common error to see historians confuse the death of William Tatamy with Moses Tatamy. Finally, he notes that Tatamy’s name does not appear in the historical record after 1761.


This book seeks to provide a comprehensive history of the Munsee Indians. A large section of this book discusses the Walking Purchase, the infamous sham that took one million acres from the Munsee Indians, nearly all the land they had left in Pennsylvania. After the Walking Purchase occurred, Nutimus, one of the Munsee leaders, and others returned to their homes and tried to prevent settlers from moving in. Initially, the early land purchasers, including William Allen, privately compensated Indians before allowing anyone to occupy lands sold in Lehigh Valley. Some of the first Walking purchase land buyers included Nicholas Depui, George Whitefield, and Moravians Nickolaus Ludwig and Count von Zinzendorf. The Moravians bought 5,000 acres and established the city of Bethlehem in 1740.

The Penns later allowed Moses Tunda Tatamy to keep a small three hundred-acre tract of land at present day Stockertown, Pennsylvania because he had previously purchased it directly from Allen in 1741. Most of Allen’s buyers wanted to see all Indians leave the area as fast as possible, and threats of violence
on both sides were made. The Six Nations agreed to come to Philadelphia to discuss the ongoing tensions regarding the aftermath of the Walking Purchase. They met in Philadelphia during the last week of June 1742. Onondaga spokesperson, Canasatego, directly addressed his first speech to Nutimus and called the Delaware “women,” with no rights to land, and called them selfish children for not sharing goods received for land that had “gone through their guts.” Canasatego ordered Nutimus and his people to move immediately to the lands the Six Nations set aside to keep an eye on them at Wyoming, Pennsylvania.

Most Indians quickly left the Forks after 1742. Some Delaware tried to openly defy the Penn eviction notice and stayed in the Lehigh Valley, while others joined the Moravian mission communities at Bethlehem and Nazareth. A few, like Moses Tunda Tatamy, associated themselves with David Brainerd. According to Grumet, only a small number of Delaware Indians permanently converted to Christianity. Teedyuscung, another prominent Delaware leader, is said to have been inspired by the conversion of Moses Tatamy. Tatamy’s conversion played a major role in helping him keep his small plot of land at the Forks after other Indians were evicted. Fervent Christian Indian believers moved permanently to religious communities built by missionaries during this time. Moses Tatamy and his brethren in New Jersey, and most of the Indians scattered across western Long Island, stayed in their own settlements, where they could travel to hear preaching.

A series of meetings was held between Teedyuscung, Tatamy, Weiser, George Croghan, and Christian Frederick Post, bringing Indians and colonial
governmental officials together. The Delaware and Shawnee made peace with the British at Onondaga in the summer of 1756. Nutimus and Paxinosa (Shawnee) were wary of dealing with colonists. However, the Six Nations helped change their minds by reversing their previous insult of calling the Delaware “women” by ceremonially “removing the petticoat” from the Delaware and Shawnee after both leaders pledged to join the fight against the French. However, most Delaware remained hostile and unreconciled. Through diplomatic efforts, Teedyuscung took leadership to try to bring peace between colonists and Indians stemming from Walking Purchase tensions, but his influence over people was unsteady. He managed to get Indians from the Susquehanna Valley to attend the Treaty of Easton from July 25 to August 7, 1757. Moses Tatamy was in attendance.


This book’s primary focus is the role the Walking Purchase played as the central cause for geographical and ethnic displacement of the Delaware people. This book also focuses on the early relationship between the Delaware and William Penn, and how the integrity of their peaceful negotiations relied on how each party conceived of the landscape. Harper argues that it was Penn’s notions of land that led to tensions between Penn and the Delaware, and to Pennsylvania’s confusing legacy on Native American relations. It is noted that a number of Delawares adapted Moravian Christianity, including Tishcohan, later known as
Captain John. Harper also notes that Tunda Tatamy and his family became Presbyterians.

In May 1735, there was a meeting at Pennsbury, where an alleged draft of a 1686 treaty was produced claiming it would give the proprietors claim to as much land a man could walk in a day and a half. It is no coincidence that this document was produced because Delaware sachems refused to sell this land to Thomas Penn. Tunda Tatamy was present at the meeting at Pennsbury and left a detailed account on the discussions of the interpretation of the alleged 1686 document. Tatamy later wrote an account of the Walking Purchase, claiming that the Delaware leaders Manawkeyhicon, Nutimus, and several other Forks Indians were persuaded to sign a document giving the proprietors as much land as a man could walk in a day and a half. Tatamy notes that the proprietors had the land surveyed and cleared before the walk, and that the walk was more of a run. He also claims that the walkers did not walk along the Delaware River as originally planned, but used a compass to walk a straight line, allowing them to cover far more ground than thought possible.

Harper also mentions Tatamy as he discusses changes in Delaware cultural identities because of the Walking Purchase. He notes that a few Delawares chose to remain in the Forks and chose to adopt European customs. Tunda Tatamy chose to adopt some European customs well before the Walking Purchase. Harper notes that Tatamy became a Presbyterian and was also the first Indian to own land in Pennsylvania under colonial law. Tatamy also worked for missionary David
Brainerd. Harper attributes this cultural change to a strategy in which Delaware
were able to adapt to and survive colonization.

Tunda Tatamy applied for a three-hundred-acre parcel of land along the
Forks of the Delaware in 1733. The Bucks County Deputy Surveyor, John
Chapman, was told to make a formal survey by the General James Steel on March
24, 1733 with caution and consent of the Indians. Tatamy was approved for this
land because of his services as an interpreter and messenger and received patent
on April 28, 1738. Tatamy’s land patent was complicated by the events of the
Walking Purchase, but in 1742, all restrictions on Tatamy’s patent were removed,
granting him full ownership. In 1769, the Pennsylvania Assembly approved the
request of Moses Tatamy’s son, Nicholas, for two hundred acres in perpetuity for
the services of his father. Nicholas can be traced in the 1790 and 1800 censuses,
listing him and his family as white. Moses Tatamy’s daughter, Jemima, received
a financed education by the Friendly Association Quakers, but then fades from the
historical record.

Hunter, William A. “Moses (Tunda) Tatamy, Delaware Indian Diplomat.” In
Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996. eBook Collection
(EBSCOhost), EBSCOhost (accessed October 29, 2017).

This article written by Hunter is the only piece of scholarship I found completely
dedicated to Tatamy. According to this source, Tatamy was born in New Jersey
around the year 1695. Tatamy first appears in the historical record when he
applied for a land grant on March 24, 1733. Tatamy’s request was granted and he appears to be the first Indian landowner under colonial law. Tatamy’s requested land was warranted for survey on December 30, 1736 and patented by the proprietors on April 28, 1738. Tatamy’s request was endorsed by the prominent Jeremiah Langhorne and William Allen, and he was granted the land because of his services to Pennsylvania. Tatamy’s request and acquisition of his land coincided with the Walking Purchase of 1737, which he played a minor role in negotiating. Tatamy was also granted a new patent for his plot in fee simple, establishing his permanent and absolute tenure to this land.

In response to the Walking Purchase, tensions grew between Indians as new proprietary land grants were given to new settlers. These tensions led to threats of violence and eventually led to the confrontation between the province, the Delaware, and the Iroquois in Philadelphia. During this confrontation, Tatamy and Captain John (the half-brother of Teedyuscung) petitioned to be allowed to remain on their lands on the basis of professing to be Christians. The governor rejected their petitions after being dissatisfied with their understanding of Christian doctrine and left the decision up to the approval of the Iroquois. It is noted that it was not uncommon for Indians to falsely identify as Christian in order to gain status. It is noted that a number of Indians granted power of attorney to Tatamy and Captain John, entrusting them to sell off their lands in New Jersey in January of 1744.

In June 1744, Tatamy was hired by Presbyterian missionary David Brainerd as a translator because he was well accustomed to both Delaware and
English cultures and languages. Tatamy and his wife were the first among the Indians to be baptized by Brainerd on July 21, 1745. Tatamy is also the only Indian mentioned by name in his surviving writings. It is also written that Tatamy was married to a Delaware woman and had two sons, William and Nicholas, and a daughter, Jemima. Tatamy served as Brainerd’s interpreter until 1746. Tatamy accompanied Brainerd on four major missionary journeys to Pennsylvania’s interior, visiting the towns of Wapwallopen, Shamokin, and Great Island. Though Tatamy did not formally join the Moravians, he kept friendly relations with them, and his son William frequently worked with Moravian missionary Bernhard Grube.

In 1755, the heat of the French and Indian War started to create panic amongst whites and Indians in Pennsylvania, especially following French-encouraged Indian raids on white settlements and the Gnadenhütten massacre of Moravian Delaware Indians. Tatamy decided to move his family from his plot of land at the Forks to New Jersey, where he later gave a formal account on Indian affairs to Benjamin Franklin, who published it in the Pennsylvania Gazette. As tensions increased, Indians became divided into those who responded to threats with violence, and those who remained nonviolent. The proprietary government of Pennsylvania, dominated by Quakers, made it a priority to keep friendly relations with as many Indians as possible. During this time, Israel Pemberton led a Quaker committee on Indian affairs to address the unfair treatment of Indians initiated by William Penn’s sons, who were not Quakers.
Moses Tatamy would work alongside Israel Pemberton, encouraging Indians to reject violence against the colonists. The main concern was that the Delaware who lost their land via the Walking Purchase would retaliate by siding with the French in the French and Indian War. The Treaty of Easton sought to relieve these tensions and assure that these Indians would not side with the French. Tatamy was in attendance as an interpreter at the treaty negotiations(?). Tatamy also gave a traditional Delaware account of the Walking Purchase and advocated the Delaware be given a large tract of land along the Susquehanna River. It was at the Treaty of Easton that Tatamy also cautioned others when listening to Teedyuscung, claiming that Teedyuscung had little influence over his own people, never mind other nations. As far as Tatamy’s relationship with Teedyuscung, it is recorded that Tatamy took precaution in their dealings with one another. Tatamy attended a meeting with Teedyuscung in Wyoming, PA prior to 1757 to discuss Walking Purchase land issues.

Tatamy was employed by the governor to help settle issues with the Minisink and Pompton Indians in northern New Jersey. Tatamy traveled to Aghsinsing to deliver a message to the Munsee chief. On his journey, Tatamy wrote a narrative of his experience including an ethnohistorical report of the Indians along the Chemung River. On September 12, 1757 Tatamy and others signed a treaty selling their claims to land in New Jersey for 1600 pounds of sterling silver. They then purchased three thousand acres of land in Buffington County, which was held until 1801.
After the French and Indian War, a series of meetings was held between Indians in Sandusky, Ohio to reestablish peace among the different tribes after the war. It is believed that Teedyuscung publicized these meetings to reestablish his reputation, and the governor of Pennsylvania sent Moses Tatamy, along with Christian Frederick Post and Isaac Still, as interpreters. At this point, Tatamy was sixty-five years old and agreed to go under the request that his daughter would be taken in and given an education. After arriving in Ohio, they were told by a Seneca leader that the white men were not welcomed. Tatamy expressed to Teedyuscung his concerns that the meeting would not turn out well. Teedyuscung replied to Tatamy’s concerns by telling him he ought to go home, too. As Tatamy was returning home, he decided to turn back, as he was the only person the governor could trust for information on the meeting. It is not clear whether or not Teedyuscung and Tatamy made it to Sandusky, but there is record of them stopping in Pittsburgh to request provisions from George Croghan. Evidence suggests that Teedyuscung and Tatamy never made it to Sandusky, but had their own meeting at the Delaware village of Salk Lick Town, inviting delegates to Philadelphia under the governor’s request. Teedyuscung attended Croghan’s treaty at Pittsburgh, but had no business to be there. It is noted that he behaved badly and got drunk afterwards. Tatamy translated the Indian speeches and took them to Philadelphia.

Israel Pemberton sent a friend to meet Teedyuscung and Tatamy on their way back, and it is noted that Tatamy had “flux,” also known as dysentary. Tatamy’s daughter met the returning party in Philadelphia. A meeting was held
between Teedyuscung’s party and the Pennsylvania Council, which was probably frustrating and embarrassing, concluding that Teedyuscung’s invitation was a farce. Tatamy wrote a letter to Israel Pemberton dated November 24 stating that he was very sick and expecting to die, and that he was staying with Edmund Bainbridge. Tatamy appointed Pemberton and Bainbridge executors of his will.


This book discusses the major sources of Indian conflict throughout the history of Pennsylvania. In discussing the Walking Purchase, Sipe notes the role of Captain John and Tatamy, two Delaware leaders who had a history of being friendly with whites. Sipe mentions the petition submitted to Thomas Penn in November 1742 requesting permission to remain on their lands because they were Christians. Tatamy was granted three hundred acres of land and claimed to want to live the rest of his life peacefully on his farm. The petition was declined by the proprietaries, who allowed the Iroquois to make the decision. The Six Nations approved, and according to this source, Tatamy was able to live on his land until his death. Sipe mentions Tatemy again briefly later in the book. He notes that Tatemy was the first Indian baptized by David Brainerd on July 21, 1746 and was given the name Moses. He also notes that Tatemy worked with Teedyuscung in trying to encourage friendly relations between the Delaware and the province. Tatamy also served as an interpreter at the councils at Easton and on missions with Isaac Still.
Sipe also discusses the death of Tatamy’s son, William. He notes that Teedyuscung and two hundred Indians were on the way to the Easton Council when a fifteen-year-old Irish boy shot William, who was some distance away from the rest of the party. It was greatly feared that the murder of Tatamy’s son would disturb peace negotiations and cause the Delaware to react violently as Teedyuscung demanded revenge. William Tatamy was taken to a doctor named John Matthew Otto but died shortly after. The funeral held at Bethlehem was attended by over two hundred Indians and was conducted by Rev. Jacob Rogers.


Though this book doesn’t explicitly mention Tatamy, it does provide general context information on the Walking Purchase of 1737 and how it has been neglected in American history because of the shameful doings of William Penn’s sons. A day-and-a-half walk on September 19-20, 1737 was performed by three trained athletes added 500-750,000 acres of Indian land to the Penn Proprietors’ holdings along the Delaware River. The Walking Purchase created a lot of ill feelings and became a contributing factor to the bloody French and Indian War. Before the Walking Purchase, the Lenape were divided into different groups. The Minsi lived in the mountains of Delaware Water Gap, the Unami lived on both sides of Delaware river in the Delaware Valley, and the Unalachtigos lived around Wilmington, Delaware. Conrad Weiser, an Indian agent from New York, was responsible for the Philadelphia Conferences of 1732 and 1736, where he
won the support of Iroquois to the interests of the Penn brothers. It is important to understand the context of the Walking Purchase in order to understand the role that Tatamy played in the aftermath.


This book discusses missionary encounters with various Indians from 1600 to 1850. Vaughan discusses the missionary David Brainerd and how he became increasingly reliant on his interpreter, Moses Tatamy, and other Natives to reshape his preaching and his own dependence on saving grace. Brainerd’s efforts demonstrate the expansion of the Protestant missionary movement and the complexity of English-Indian religious encounters. Indians had an impact on Brainerd’s life both emotionally and spiritually. Most early missionaries, including Jonathan Edwards, failed to see the significance of Indians and considered them irrelevant. However, Brainerd’s unique relationships to the Delaware lead to his real historical significance.

It is most likely that Brainerd did not have any sympathy or interests in Indians, and his negative views were probably inspired by other missionaries of the time, including those of John Elliot. While David Brainerd did not originally intend to work amongst Indians, he did so as a last resort, having no other career options after being expelled from Yale. In November 1742, Brainerd was invited to New York City by Presbyterian minister Ebenezer Pemberton and was offered a job as a missionary to the Indians by the Society in Scotland for Propagating
Christian Knowledge. Brainerd struggled with anxiety, feeling as though he were not educated or fit for this type of work. One of the distinguishing qualities of David Brainerd is that his work did not inflate his ego, but was rather a source of self loathing stemming from the realization of his own cultural biases and racist sentiments.

Brainerd became increasingly reliant on his translator, Moses Tatamy, whom he hired shortly after arriving in the Forks. Brainerd notes that he would not be able to do his job without the help of Tatamy, though early on Brainerd expressed concerns regarding Tatamy’s spiritual condition. Their relationship intensified when Tatamy experienced a “new birth.” Tatamy and his wife were the first Indians baptized by Brainerd. Brainerd and Tatamy went on four evangelistic trips together. In his diary, Brainerd describes Tatamy as a great comfort and instrument of promoting this good work among the Indians. Vaughan concludes that the relationship between Brainerd and Tatamy demonstrates how Native Americans were actors in history and not just acted upon.


This book seeks to provide a comprehensive history on the life of Teedyuscung, but also includes valuable information on Tatamy and the relationship between the two. The Tatamy family moved to the Forks of the Delaware from northern New Jersey, where he began farming on a three-hundred-acre plot of land.
Teedyuscung’s half-brother, Welagameka, known as Captain John, also had a small farm in at the Forks. John and Tatamy both protested to the Penn brothers to be able to remain on their lands after the Walking Purchase on the basis that they were Christian. The petition was declined by the proprietaries, who allowed the Iroquois to make the decision. The Six Nations approved.

In June, 1742, the Moravians led by Count Zinzendorf stated their intent to build the new Christian settlement of Nazareth on Captain John’s property. While surveying the land, the Count and his party passed through Tatamy’s land and spent some time there. Tatamy and Captain John protested the location of the proposed Moravian settlement, but lost on the basis that John did not own his land. While John was evicted from his land, Tatamy was able to stay because he obtained clear ownership of his land from the proprietors.

This book also discusses Tatamy’s thoughts of Teedyuscung. Teedyuscung was known for for public drunkenness, which affected his reputation amongst Indians and whites. Tatamy was cautious when dealing with Teedyuscung. Tatamy noted that Teedyuscung did not have much influence or authority over his own people but did desire to work for the benefit of Indians and the province. This book also discusses the attempted trip made by Teedyuscung and Tatamy to Sandusky, Ohio for a treaty in which Teedyuscung ruined his reputation.

In this report, local historian, Richard Walling discusses the legacy of Moses Tatamy in Pennsylvania place names, but questions why Tatamy is forgotten in New Jersey’s public memory. Walling identifies the land known as “Tatamy’s Swamp” in present day West Windsor Township, Mercer County, New Jersey. Tatamy’s land in New Jersey was purchased by two Dutch farmers, divided, and sold to smaller farmers. Walling uses historic maps and modern maps to identify the exact location of Tatamy’s Swamp. Walling seems to suggest some sort of marker should exist to remember Tatamy in this place.


This book provides a historical overview of the Delaware from their homelands in Lenapehoking and through their migration to Oklahoma. Tatamy is mentioned on three occasions. Welsager cites an account made by Moses Tatamy dealing with native landownership. In this account, Tatamy defines Unami as people who lived down river and Unalimi, as people who live up river. This means that the Unami and Unalimi did not refer to tribes, but rather to geographical areas in which politically autonomous groups lived.

The author mentions Moses Tatamy again when discussing displaced Indian families from New Jersey who made new homes in villages across the
Delaware in Pennsylvania. The Tatamy family and others from Minisink land settled in the Forks. According to colonial authorities, Nutimus was regarded as head of the Forks Indians. It should also be noted that these different groups of Delaware considered themselves as separate political entities.

Weslager’s third mention of Moses Tatamy is in the context of the meeting that took place at Crosswicks on February 20, 1758 between the Delaware and commissioners and residents of New Jersey. At this meeting, the Delaware provided New Jersey with a list of lands that were being occupied by settlers, but never paid for. The Indians decided to hire five Delaware, including Moses Tatamy, to be responsible for all future business relating to land disputes.