

**A DELAWARE INDIAN
LEGEND AND THE STORY
OF THEIR TROUBLES**

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A Delaware Indian legend and the story of their troubles by Richard C. Adams

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BY

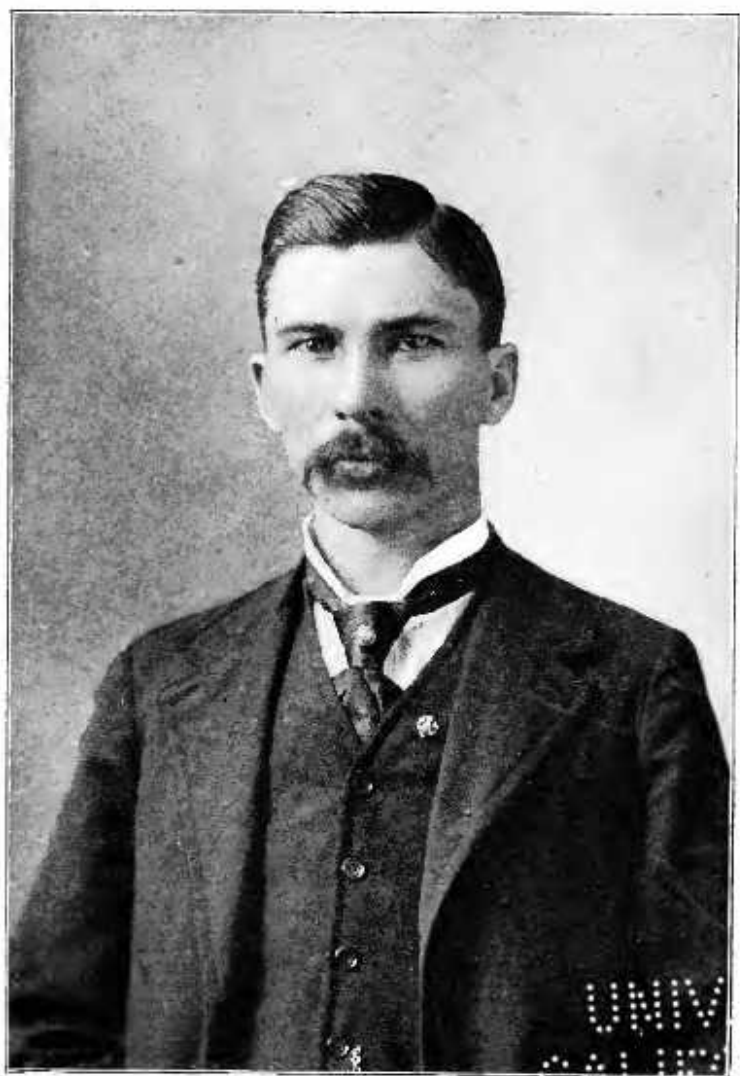
UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

RICHARD C. ADAMS

REPRESENTING THE DELAWARE INDIANS

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1899



*Yours Sincerely
Richard, C. Adams.*

TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

WITH your kind permission, your attention I will claim,
I am only just an Indian, it matters not my name,
But I represent my people, their cause and interest, too ;
And in their name and honor, I present myself to you.
They have your sacred promise, your pledge of friendship warm,
That you would always aid them and protect them from all harm,
And in my humble efforts, as I briefly state their case,
Will you pardon my shortcomings, and my errors all erase ?

I do not come with grandeur, or boast of any fame,
Rank in politics, society, or wealth I cannot claim,
I never went to college, have no title of LL. D.,
As the Great Spirit made me, is all that you may see.
With the forces that oppose me, I certainly should pause,
If I were not depending on the justice of my cause.
I am only just an Indian, who here represents his band ;
With this simple introduction, I extend to you my hand.

A DELAWARE INDIAN LEGEND.

LONG, long ago, my people say, as their traditions tell,
They were a happy, powerful race, loved and respected well.
To them belonged the sacred charge, the synagogue ⁽¹⁾ to keep,
And every Autumn to the tribes, the Manitou's praises speak.
And all things went with them full well, the Manitou was pleased ;
The Indian race was numerous then, countless as the trees ;
The Manitou was kind to them, he filled the woods with game,
And in the rivers and the seas were fish of every name.

And to his children did he give the vast and broad domain ;
Some the mountains and valleys took, while others chose the plain ;
And everything to comfort them did the Manitou provide,
He gave them fish, game, herbs and maize, and other things beside.
He gave them rivers, lakes and bays, o'er which canoes did glide,
Forests dense and mountains high, great plains the other side.
The men were strong and brave and true, to them belonged the chase,
The women loving, kind and good, who filled a simpler place.

And they were taught while here on earth their spirits to prepare,
To join the Manitou himself, in the happy hunting-ground ⁽²⁾ somewhere ;
That they must never lie and steal ; must for each other care ;
That principles are gems that pass us to that country there.
And even though the wars do come with aggressive tribe or band,
No warrior shall strike a fallen foe, or wrong a helpless hand ;
And if your foe shall sue for peace, let not his plea be vain,
Produce the pipe, and smoke with him, smothering the wrathful flame.

And while the smoke ascends above, breathe a prayer together,
That spirits of departed friends make peace beyond the river ;
The Manitou's compassion seek, for he was sorely grieved,
Provide for the widows of the slain, ⁽³⁾ that their needs be relieved.
If a stranger enters in your lodge, give him both food and bed,
E'en if known to be your foe, no harm hangs o'er his head,
For now he is your honored guest, your protection he does claim ;
Whate'er your source of difference be, contest it on the plain.

The voice of the Great Spirit now is heard in every clime,
 The rumblings of the thunder, the whisperings of the pine ;
 The works of the Great Spirit are seen on every hand,
 Flowers, forests, mountains, stars, sun and even man.
 The Lenape (¹) all should gather in the Autumn there to praise
 The wonders of the Manitou, the goodness of his grace ;
 And they to tell the Nations what to them he has unbound,
 And the way for them to reach the happy hunting-ground.

Once many thousand moons ago, in the synagogue there came
 All the tribes and warriors from the forest, hill and plain ;
 And while they were assembled there (²) a young man rose to say,
 The Manitou had shown him in a vision on that day
 From afar a huge canoe with pinions spreading wide,
 Coming o'er the waters from across the sunrise side ;
 And in that huge canoe were people strange of dress,
 All were armed as warriors, though they peacefulness professed.

They told them of their God, " who came and died for men,"
 And they were messengers from Him to save them from their sin,
 But first, they said, they must have land, and thus a home prepare,
 Then they would teach them truth, and heaven with them share.
 The young man to the warriors told his vision further told,
 And prophesied that from that day these tempters would grow bold ;
 That each would have a different creed, to teach a different tribe,
 And when one told another each would think the other lied.

The young man for his people lamented loud and long ;
 He saw the friendship broken that always had been strong,
 Dissension, war, and trouble, their happiness succeed,
 Tribes rise against each other, their warriors die and bleed.
 At last, their faith all shattered, home, game and country gone,
 Dejected, broken-hearted, he saw them westward roam.
 The Manitou was sorrowful that they should faithless (³) be,
 "And now where is the heaven the stranger promised thee ?"

And some of the young warriors did live to see the day,
 When across the sea from sunrise, with pinions flying gay,
 Came great canoes with strangers who soon did boldly land,
 And with a friendly gesture, extended the right hand.
 Forgetful of the warning, they received them all as friends ;
 And made the sacred pledges to share with them their lands.
 The Indians, true and faithful, their promise did fulfill,
 And eager sought the teachings of the white man's God and will.

And this recalls sweet memories of at least one truthful man ;
 He made and kept a promise in treating for our land ;
 His deeds of loving-kindness strength to their teachings lend,
 And sacred in our memory is the name of William Penn.
 But alas ! for faith and trusting, few others like him came,
 The white man's promised friendship, thenceforth we found was vain.
 While noble were his teachings, his practice was deceit, (1)
 And thus the friends we trusted, our fondest hopes defeat.

And now the road is open across the stormy sea,
 The strangers are invaders—our friends no longer be !
 Our Manitou is angry, their God hears not our cry,
 On the bloody field of battle the noble warriors die.
 Again with peace and presents our friendship would be sought, (2)
 Requesting that our vengeance on some other tribe be brought.
 And now for this protection and their proffered friendship-hand,
 The boasted Christian strangers ask to have as much more land. (3)

Now many moons have passed, the Indians are but few ;
 For comments on the prophecy, I'd leave that all to you.
 Is the white man still deceiving ? Is the Indian being robbed ?
 Will he yet share his heaven and the teachings of his God ?
 The Indian was just a savage, but he would not lie and steal,
 The white man's highly civilized, but his conscience could not feel,
 To rob poor, trusting Indians—well, to him it was no sin,
 And to break a solemn treaty was a very clever thing.

And when the Indian to the white man makes complaint about his land,
 He is told with solemn gestures, " Seek the Government—not the man."
 " He will be your good, great father and adopt you as his child,
 He knows better what you need, and will protect you all the while."
 But the father was forgetful (4) of his foster children's care,
 So the Indian thus discouraged, finds relief not anywhere.
 Will a Nation for its actions have to pass the judgment bar,
 Or will God excuse the people, if the deeds the Nation's are ?

He now sees the " Good, Great Father," better known as " Uncle Sam,"
 Offering home, aid and protection to the poor of foreign lands ;
 Sees the foreigners in numbers seek his own beloved shore,
 Where justice, love and liberty reign free forever more.
 Sees the foreigners in Council, aid in making laws most just,
 While he's no voice in legislation and his lands are held in trust.
 Do you know a greater torture, or think his feelings can be guessed
 When he sees such freedom cherished, while his own rights are oppressed ?

When on the day of judgment, their records there to see,
 As God turns o'er the pages, who will the braver be?
 For one is just a savage, his simple faith applies;
 The other one, a white man, very highly civilized.
 And should they be together long enough to treat,
 Do you suppose the white man the Indian there would cheat?
 Or if the chance is given, when the judgment's handed down,
 Would the white man take his heaven or the Indians' Hunting Ground?

Do you think that Missionaries need be sent to foreign land,
 To find fields for Christian duties and neglect the savage man?
 In the land of peace and freedom can bondmen still be found?
 Where every man does loudly boast class-legislation is not known!
 Should neither one sit on the jury without the aid of ex-parte law,
 Were the records brought from heaven, the court hear what the angels saw,
 Have you doubts about the judgment? Would the white man pay the cost?
 Or would the heir by birthright learn that there his case was lost?

In this the Indian's version, can he still be justified,
 Or was it for his poor sake, too, that Christ was crucified?
 Will Christians stand by idly, nor lend a helping hand,
 And by their silence justify the seizure of his land?
 Or will their God from heaven hear the Indian's plea
 And prompt the Christian people to lend him sympathy,
 And through their earnest efforts, not sympathy alone,
 Redeem the Nation's credit before the Judgment Throne?

Let the Indian have some duties, treat him as a worthy man,
 Give him voice in the elections, give him title to his land,
 Give him place of trust and honor, let him feel this yet his home,
 Let him use his mind and muscle, let his actions be his own,
 Pay him what is justly due him, let your Government be his, too,
 He will battle with each problem, just as faithfully as you,
 One who proves himself a warrior and of danger knows no fear,
 Surely can find ways to master each new problem that draws near.

NOTE 1. The Delaware Indians on the full moon of each October have a religious meeting in a large, long building, which lasts twelve days. Here the clans of the Delawares gather and other Indian tribes are invited. The ceremonies are conducted in the way of a dance around a fire built in the centre of the building. At these meetings any brave or chief may tell his experience in hunting or warfare, his dreams or impressions, and give his own interpretation of the same, never claiming any of the honors himself if he has been successful in any event, but thanking the Great Spirit or Manitou