

## Lapowinsa, 1735

Gustavius Hesselius (b. 1682, Sweden; d. 1785, Philadelphia); oil on canvas. Historical Society of Pennsylvania Collection at the Philadelphia History Museum, gift of Granville Penn, 1835.

## Tishcohan, 1735

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Tishcohan and Lapowinsa were chiefs of the Lenape Tribe. They were signers of the Walking Purchase Treaty of 1735/37 in which William Penn's sons, John and Thomas, acquired a vast tract of land in Pennsylvania. The Penns claimed that they had a deed dating to the 1680s in which the Lenape Tribe had promised to sell a tract of land beginning between the junction of the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers (near Wrightstown, Pennsylvania) "as far west as a man could walk in a day and a half." Chiefs Lapowinsa, Tishcohan and other leaders of the Lenape tribe believed that the treaty was genuine and also assumed that about 40 miles was the most a man could walk through the wilderness in a day and a half. James Logan hired the three fastest runners in Pennsylvania (Edward Marshall, Solomon Jennings and James Yeates) to run out the purchase on a pre-surveyed trail. The three runners covered almost 70 miles and the Penns acquired 1,200,000 acres of land, an area roughly equivalent to the state of Rhode Island. The Lenape tried unsuccessfully for almost 20 years to have the agreement overturned; they were forced to vacate the land and move to the Shamokin and Wyoming valleys.

Swedish-born painter Gustavius Hesselius came to Delaware in 1711 and settled in Philadelphia the following year. He is considered America's first notable portraitist and his *Last Supper* (1721-22) for the St. Barnabus Church in Prince Georges County, Maryland was the first public art commission in the United States. His son John Hesselius (1728-1778) was also a successful portraitist and one of Charles Willson Peale's teachers. PHM's collection contains six portraits by Hesselius.

Hesselius' portraits of Tishcohan and Lapowinsa are considered the first important paintings of Native Americans in the United States. Richard H. Saunders and Ellen G. Miles observe of the Tishcohan portrait, "Hesselius portrayed Tishcohan with an objectivity that distinguishes this painting from many of the portraits painted in the 1730s in the American colonies, in which artists sought to portray their sitters according to current European standards of beauty, grace and elegance."

Tishcohan is shown at nearly half length, standing with his body to the front and his head facing slightly to the left. He wears a blue blanket over his shoulder and a necklace of blue beads and a pouch around his neck. The canvas measures 33 by 25 inches and is inscribed in the upper left, "Tishcohan." The name translates "he who never blackens himself" and he is shown without body paint or tattoos.

Lapowinsa is shown at nearly half length, with his body facing to the front and his head facing slightly to the left. He wears a blue blanket over his shoulder and a necklace of blue beads and a pouch around his neck. The canvas measures 33 by 25 inches and is inscribed in the upper left, "Lapowinsa." The name translates "going away to gather food."

Source: Richard H. Saunders and Ellen G. Miles, *American Colonial Portraits, 1700-1776*, Washington, D.C.: National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1987.

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