

Explanation

The following story was published by C. F. Voegelin in 1945. It was told by Willie Longbone in 1939.

The first line (in *italics*) is the story as published. (in Lenape)

The second line (in **bold**) is the same, but written according to the spelling conventions used today. (in Lenape)

The third line separates the various morphemes of the words. (in Lenape)

The fourth line provides morpheme-by-morpheme glosses of each word. (in English)

The fifth line provides a more general translation of each word. (in English)

The final line provides the English sentence translation directly as provided in the original.

In a couple cases, it was not possible to determine the exact translation of a particular word. In these cases, the fifth line (general translation) was given if possible, and the unknown parts were left blank (or have question marks).

In the original Lenape text (first line), the • symbol means that the preceding vowel is long. A capital letter consonant means that that consonant is long (geminate). The accent mark shows the primary stress in a word. MP stands for “a morphophonemic insertion required grammatically but having no meaning.” (<http://www.talk-lenape.org/grammar.php>)

1 = 1st person

2 = 2nd person

3 = 3rd person

1+2 = 1st person plural (inclusive)

AN = animate

CONJ = conjunct form

DIM = diminutive

DIR = direct

EMPH = emphatic

INV = inverse

LOC = locative

OBV = obviative

PAT = local paradigm

pl = plural

PSV = passive

QUES = question word

SUB = subordinative form

Note: This story is copyrighted by C.F. Voegelin (citation below), not me.

Voegelin, C. F. 1945. Delaware Texts. *IJAL* 11. 105-119.

Purpose

The goal of this project is to make a Lenape story more accessible and useful for language learners. The original text is written in “linguistics-ese,” which is not always easy to read and may be a barrier for those without linguistic training. By rewriting the text according to the current spelling conventions, it will be more easily readable. The original text also only gave a general sentence translation, which is useful for understanding the overall meaning, but does not help to learn individual words or constructions. My word-by-word glossing will hopefully be helpful for learning to how structure words and sentences.

wewtənúwe•s “The Mermaid”

1. *mi•mə•ns entá•hpi•t xkwé•čǎč entawəláhala•t né•lə*
mimens entahpit xkwechech entawelahalat nele
 mimens ent-ahpi-t xkwe-chech enta-welahala-t nele
 child when-be-3CONJ woman-DIM who-gives.birth-3CONJ nele
 child he.is.born girl who.gave.birth that
mi•mə́•nsa
mimensa
 mimens-a
 child-OBV
 child

The one who is born [is] a child [and] the one who gave birth to that child [is] a girl.

2. *keku- lahawáni pahsí• namé•s wsúKwənenk tali- namé•s*
keku lahawani pahsi names wsukwenenk tali names
 keku pahsi names names
 thing half fish fish
 thing half fish (this.place) fish
təli•na•kwsí•n nani- mi•mə•ns
telinakwsin nani mimens
 (we)t-elinakw-sin nani mimens
 3-looks.like-?? that child
 the.way.she.looks that child

Behold something, a half of fish, fish-like on her tail, – indeed, that’s the way that child looks.

3. *nani- skí•xkwe moipahkí•la•n ikalili manəPé•Kunk*
nani skixkwe (moipahkilan) ikalili menepekunk
 nani skixkwe w-mai-pahkilan ikalili menepekwnk
 that young.woman 3-go.to-throw.her.out thither lake-LOC
 that young.woman she.went.and.threw.her.out thither in.the.lake

That young woman [the mother] went and threw her out yonder in the lake.

4. *mpink mpi é•te•k nanə təlanihi•n nanə t'ənta*
mpink mpi etek nane telanihin nane tenta
 mpi-nk mpi etek nane telanihin nane
 water-LOC water where.it.it that she.threw.her that
 in.the.water water where.it.is that she.threw.her that there
aləmi•Ki•n
alemikin
 alemi ki-n
 begin grow-SUB
 begin.to.grow

Where there is [deep] water in the [expanse of] water, that one threw her [and] there this one began to grow.

5. *me•či- entamaxaKí•lək na- toləminhi•lkwəné•yo mi•m'ənsak*
mechi (entamaxakilek) na tolemi nhilkweneyo mimensak
 mechi enta-maxakilek na w-t-alemi nhil-kwe-ne-wa(w) mimens-ak
 already when-big then 3-begin kill-??-SUB-3pl child-ANpl
 already when.big then she.begins she.kills.them children

When she had become big, this one began to kill the children.

6. *na- lúwe•n taheča•- ktəli•há•ne•n*
na luwen tahecha ktelihanen
 na eluwe-n(e) ta-hech-a
 that say-3SUB QUES-should
 that she.says how.do should we.do.about.her

That [Delaware woman] says, ‘what should we do about her?’ –

7. *ni•ša- skiNúwak teluwe•né•yo ni•lú•nata nnihilá•wəna*
nisha skinuwak teluweneyo nilunata nnihilawena
 nisha skinu-ak (we)t-eluwe-ne-waw niluna-ta n-hnil-a-w-nan
 two young.man-ANpl 3-say-IN-3pl 3pl-EMPH 1-kill-DIR-3-1pl
 two young.men they.said we.indeed we.kill.her
nani - awe•n
nani awen
 nani awen
 that person
 that person

Two young men said, “We two, we will kill that person.”

8.	<i>kwəTi- skiNu təlá•o</i>		<i>wi•Tí•sa</i>	<i>ní•tanču</i>	<i>nná•Təm</i>
	kweti skinu telao		witisa	nitanchu	nnatem
	kweti skinu w-t-el-a-w-a		w-itis-a	nitanchu	n-natem-(ne)
	one man 3-MP-tell-DIR-3-OBV		3-friend-OBV	my.friend	1-fetch-(IN)
	one man he.tells.him		his.friend	my.friend	I.fetch.it
	<i>təntay li- ki•šú•xunk</i>				
	təntay li kishuxunk				
	təntay li kishux-nk				
	fire li sun-LOC				
	fire to in.the.sun				

One young man told his friend, “My friend, I am going after the fire in that sun.”

9.	<i>entaikaá•t</i>	<i>wí•Kí•t</i>	<i>na-</i>	<i>kí•šú•x</i>
	entaikaat	wikit	na	kishux
	enta-ika-a-t	wik-i-t	na	kishux
	when-there-he.went-3CONJ	dwel-vb-3CONJ	that	sun
	when.he.went.there	where.he.lives	that	sun
	<i>təlá•o</i>	<i>təntay nkaTá•Tam</i>		
	telao	təntay nkatatam		
	w-t-el-a-w-a	təntay n-katatam(-ne)		
	3-MP-tell-dir-3-OBV	fire 1-want.it(-IN)		
	he.told.him	fire I.want.it		

When he went there where he lives, he told that sun, “I want the fire.”

10.	<i>təlá•o</i>	<i>na-</i>	<i>kí•šú•x</i>	<i>taa•káski</i>	<i>we•miá•</i>	<i>nə-</i>
	telao	na	kishux	taakaski	wemia	ne
	w-t-el-a-w-a	na	kishux	taa-kaski	wemi-a	ne
	3-MP-tell-dir-3-OBV	that	sun	not-can(able)	all-OBV	that
	he.tells.him	that	sun	not.possible	all	that
	<i>kəlú•səmən entala•wsíe•kw</i>					
	kelusemen entalawsiekw					
	k-lusem-ne enta-lawsi-ekw					
	2-burn.it-IN where-live-2pl					
	you.burn.it where.you.all.live					

That sun told him, “That would not be possible, -- you would burn all of that [which exists] where you all live.”

11. <i>nanətáko•k</i>	<i>skiNu</i>	<i>təlá•o</i>	<i>ní•tanču</i>	<i>ne•petane•-</i>
nanetakok	skinu	telaο	nitanchu	nepetane
nane-takok	skinu	w-tel-a-w-a	nitanchu	nepe-ta-(ne)
that-other	young.man	3-MP-tell-dir-3-OBV	my.friend	I.too-EMPH
that.other	young.man	he.tells.him	my.friend	I.too
<i>nu•wi•Tí•si</i>	<i>waše•-</i>	<i>pi•ske•wəni•ki•šu•x</i>	<i>mai-</i>	<i>ntuxtáo</i>
nuwitisi	washe	piskewenikishux	mai	ntuxtao
n-itisi	wa-she	piskeweni-kishux	mai	n-natuxt-a-w
1-friend	this.EMPH	night.sun	1.go-to	1-ask-DIR-3
my.friend	this.here	night.sun	I.go.to	I.ask.him
<i>ktəlia•wi•čəməKú•ne•n</i>				
kteliawichemekunen				
k-t-eli-a-wichem-ek-w-nan				
1+2-so-should-help-INV-3-1-pl				
he.should.help.us				

He told that other young man, “my friend, I also have a friend here, the night sun, -- I will go ask him [and] he, indeed, ought to help us.”

12. <i>entaikapá•t</i>		<i>pi•ske•wəni•ki•šu•xunk</i>	<i>təlá•o</i>
entaikapat		piskewenikishuxunk	telaο
enta-ika-w-pa-t		piskeweni-kishux-nk	w-tel-a-w-a
when-there-3-come-3CONJ		night-sun-LOC	3-MP-tell-DIR-3-OBV
when.he.arrived.there		by.the.night.sun	he.tells.him
<i>nkaTá•Tam</i>	<i>tántay</i>		
nkatatam	tentay		
n-katatam(-ne)	tentay		
1-want.it(-IN)	fire		
I.want.it	fire		

When he arrived there by the night sun, he told him, “I want the fire.”

13. <i>təlá•o</i>	<i>na-</i>	<i>pi•ske•wəni•ki•šu•x</i>	<i>ku•káski</i>
telaο	na	piskewenikishux	kukaski
w-tel-a-w-a	na	piskeweni-kishux	ku-kaski
3-MP-tell-dir-3-OBV	that	night-sun	not-can/able
he.tells.him	that	night.sun	not.possible

That night sun told him, “Impossible.”

14. <i>təlá•o</i>	<i>nəše•liná•Ti</i>	<i>ehelipahkí•Tao</i>	<i>púinkw</i>
telao	neshelinati	ehelipahkitao	punkw
w-tel-a-w-a	ne-she-li-nati	eheli-pahkit-a-wa(w)	punkw
3-MP-tell-dir-3-OBV	that-EMPH-??-fetch	??-throw.away-DIR-3pl	ashes
he.tells.him	you.fetch.it	where.I.throw.them.away	ashes

He told him, “Go get the ashes where I throw them away.”

15. <i>našəmə-</i>	<i>kunčiwe•tanəməən</i>	<i>púinkw</i>	<i>txíTí</i>	<i>ktalamúxoxtu•n</i>
nashene	kunchiwetanemen	punkw	txiti	ktalamuxoxstun
		punkw	txiti	kt-alamuxoxstun
		ashes	a.little	2-take.it.along
from.there	you.take.it.out	ashes	a.little	you.take.it.along

“You take out the ashes from there [and] you take a little away.”

16. <i>ika-</i>	<i>pa•á•ne</i>	<i>wəle-</i>	<i>ktəlúxoxtu•n</i>	<i>manəPé•Kunk</i>	<i>ika-</i>
ika	paane	(wele)	kteluxoxstun	menepəkunk	ika
ika	(k-)pa-an-e		kt-eluxoxstun	menepəkwn-k	ika
there	(2-)come-1CONJ-SUBJ		2-take.it.along	lake-LOC	there
there	you.arrive.		you.take.it.along	in.the.lake	there
<i>ktəlanihi•n</i>	<i>nə-</i>	<i>mpínk</i>			
ktelanihin	ne	mpínk			
ktelanihin	ne	mpi-nk			
you.thow.it	that	water-LOC			
you.thow.it	that	in.the.water			

“As you arrive there, you take it there to the lake [and] there you throw it in that water.”

17. <i>entakishikalanihi•t</i>	<i>na-</i>	<i>aləmi•wənte•</i>	<i>nə-</i>	<i>mpí</i>
entakishikalanihit	na	alemiwente	ne	mpi
enta-kishi-kalanihi-t	na	alemi-wente	ne	mpi
when-finish-thow.it-3CONJ	then	start-??	that	water
when.finish.throw.it	then	start.to.boil	that	water

After he had thrown it in, that water began to boil.

18. <i>powečičiči•n</i>	<i>təlku</i>	<i>mé•čita</i>	<i>kənihilihimo</i>
powechikchin	telku	mechita	kenihilihemo
	w-t-el-ke-w	mechi-ta	k-nhil-i-hm-wa
	3-MP-tell-PSV-3	now-EMPH	2-kill-1PAT-MP-2pl
she.came.out	he.was.told	finally	you.all.killed.me

[The mermaid] came out [and the young men] were told, “finally you fellows have killed me.”

19. <i>šúkw xahé•li</i>	<i>nni•čá•nak</i>	<i>we•miú•še•</i>	<i>təlahpi•né•yo</i>
shek xaheli	nnichanak	wemiushe	telahpineyo
shek xaheli	n-nichan-ak	wemi-she	(we)tel-ahpi-ne-wa(w)
but many	1-child-pl.AN	all-EMPH	3-to.be-SUB-3pl
but many	my.children	all.indeed	they.are
<i>e•limpii•k</i>	<i>ši•Puwi•i•ke</i>		
elimpiik	(shipuwiike)		
eli-mpi-ik	sipu-wa-ike		
then-water-place	river-pl.IN-place		
where.there.is.water	where.there.are.rivers		

“However, my many children, indeed, remain all over here-about where there is water, where there are rivers.”