At the Delaware Indian Symposium at Seton Hall, on May 6, 1972, I made the first public presentation of the argument that until recent times the Delaware Indians were organized into more than one tribe, in Service's (1962) sense of the term tribe. This rejects the position, on the one hand, that they were a single tribe and the position, on the other hand, that they were a collection of discrete villages or bands. It was argued that, as early as the mid-eighteenth century, the Delawares were organized into three tribes, referred to in the historical sources as the Turtle, Turkey and Wolf Tribes. It was also pointed out that the source material from the period before the middle of the eighteenth century does not permit such straightforward delineation of tribal boundaries, but that the seventeenth century sources clearly suggest the existence of an unspecified number of tribes in Service's sense (Thurman 1974).

The former confusion of the designations of the three Delaware tribes with clans is analogous to the former conclusion of Huron tribes and clans in the anthropological literature. Among the Hurons there were a number of villages organized into four tribes. Each tribe was divided into eight clans. The clans had no territorial implications. The tribes were political units; not the clans. Each of the Huron clans seems to have been named for an animal, such as Turtle, Bear or Wolf. Little is known of the meaning of tribal names given by the French, such as Attignawantan, but the French often referred to this tribe as "the Nation of the Bear" (Trigger 1969: 13-14). Here we see "Bear" used as a designation for both a Huron tribe and a Huron clan. This is a clear-cut case showing that animal designations alone do not necessarily imply that a given social unit was a clan rather than a tribe.

The assumption that an animal name means that a social group was a clan is the basis for Jay Miller's (1974) attack on my formulations. Miller's position can only be dealt with in relation to Heckewelder's (1876: 51-2) famous statement that:

Those of the Delawares who fixed their abode on the shores of the Atlantic divided themselves into three tribes. Two of them, distinguished by the names of the Turtle and the Turkey, the former calling themselves Unâmìs and the other Unalâchtgo, chose those grounds to settle on which lay nearest to the sea, between the coast and the high mountains.... The third tribe, the Wolf, commonly called the Minsi, which we have corrupted into Monseys, had chosen to live back of the two other tribes....

Miller accepted Heckewelder's names Unâmi, Unalâchtgo and Monsey as tribal designations; he rejected the animal names as tribal designations and applied animal designations only to clans.
Miller (1974) wrote:

Historians say that the Delaware Indian Nation was divided into three tribes: Munsi, Unami, and Unalachtigo. However, each time anthropologists go to the Delawares they fail to find any evidence of the last tribe names... [Then Miller stated that a single Delaware at present uses the term "Winetkok, meaning, "detached from where there are waves," for the Nanticoke Indians.] The modern Delaware use of the term Winetkok for the Nanticoke suggests to me that a tribe called the Winetkok merged with others to form the Nanticoke. The extension of the term Wanetkok for the new tribe suggests that the primary identification with the Winetkok was transferred to the Nanticoke. I also suspect the new tribe may have been referred to descriptively as Unalachtigo because detachment from the waves was a trait all Nanticokes shared.

Miller never specified why he felt compelled to accept three of Heckewelder's tribal designations and reject three others (animal designations) which Heckewelder equated with the first three names.

The "Unalachtigo" example makes it obvious, as it would be obvious from any of Miller's publications, that Miller has little understanding of ethnohistorical methods. Essentially, he argued that the name Unalachtigo can be equated with the Nanticoke (a tribe formed by the amalgamation of Winetoks and other groups). In short, Miller said, anthropologists cannot find any Unalactigo Delawares, because none of the Unalactigos were Delawares. Yet Miller cannot provide a single early historical source to a group called Winetkok. On the other hand, it can be shown that some individuals from New Jersey were referred to as Unalactigos, not as Nantikokes, by missionaries who were familiar with both Nanticokes and Delawares, and who included the Unalactigos as a Delaware tribe (Hunter 1974). Further, as I will show, there are good data showing that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Turtle, Turkey and Wolf tribes were political and territorial units. Miller's historical interpretation is wrong and methodologically unsound. He has tried to escape this dead-end by claiming that his reference to the Unalactigos was never intended to be "historical" (Miller 1976).

I believe that the three Delaware tribes (Turtle, Turkey and Wolf) of Heckewelder's day were formed, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, by the amalgamation of previously differentiated social units, as others have suggested (see Wallace 1949: 10-12), but it does not follow that such amalgamation implies, as Wallace thought, a previous lack of supra-village (tribal) organization. Wallace's argument that there was no supra-village organization prior to amalgamation was based on widely accepted interpretations of family hunting territories drawn from Indian land transactions, interpretations which I have challenged (Thurman 1974: 123-7).

There are two lines of evidence that support the argument of supra-village (tribal) organization of the seventeenth century
Delawares, and no evidence (other than the deed interpretations) to support Wallace's position. The information on Delaware communal hunting and the documentation indicating three levels of chiefs suggest that the seventeenth century Delawares were organized at the tribal level, but the number of tribes cannot be specified (Thurman 1974: 126-7). In contra-distinction to this interpretation, Wallace (1947: 12) has argued that there is a document which indicates that the average size of the Delaware polity was about two hundred people. Wallace's interpretation, however, was based on a flawed reading. William Penn (1912: 235) stated that

Every [Indian] King hath his Council, and that consists of all the old and wise men of his Nation, which perhaps is two hundred people.

This clearly meant that the council, not the "nation" was two hundred people (Thurman 1973: 50), although Wallace interpreted this to mean that the "nation" itself was composed of only two hundred people. Wallace's interpretation is the interpretation at odds with the early literature. In the early eighteenth century, Holm (1832: 133), obviously basing his statement on that given by Penn, wrote

The [Indian] king has his council of about two hundred men, who are the oldest and the most respectable of his people.

Even if all the men of the "nation" were on the council, a situation which would appear to have been highly unlikely, the minimal population of a "nation" with two hundred men would have been about seven hundred people, clearly indicative of tribal organization.

As I am planning a detailed study of the Delaware villages in the Ohio country from before the middle of the eighteenth century, I shall provide information on residence data for only one of the three Delaware tribes on the Ohio in the eighteenth century, and refer the reader to my thesis which provides similar data for the other two Delaware tribes. When more than one chief of a known tribal affiliation can be assigned to a particular village in the Ohio country, those chiefs were invariably of the same tribe. Further, the villages of the three different tribes tended to form discrete clusters (Thurman 1973: 106-114; 55-61). Custaloga and Captain Pipe, listed respectively as "chief" and "chief warrior" in the 1768 Fort Pitt treaty, and Packanke have been identified as Wolf or Munsee Delawares. In 1775 Captain Pipe and Packanke were the two chiefs of Kuskuskies (Croghan 1768; Schönbrunn 1775; Heckewelder 1876: 151). I have six examples of more than one chief in a village and in each case they belong to the same tribe. The implication of the residence data is that the Wolf, Turkey and Turtle tribes were residence (territorial units), hence were not clans. Clans function as sodalities and by definition cannot be territorial units. Were the Wolf, Turkey and Turtle group clans, one would expect to find a more random distribution of chiefly residence.

In addition to the residence patterns, we know that the power of war and peace making belonged to each of the three tribes and the fact clearly is indicative of tribal organization in
Service's sense. In 1765, Croghan gave the following information concerning Custaloga's tribe—the Wolf or Munse Delawares:

In a private conversation with Mr. Murray and me they [about eighty Senecas] informed us, that two tribes of the Delawares, were very averse to making Peace with the English...[;] they called Custaloga an old Woman for agreeing to the terms, he did with Col: Bouquet...Custaloga and his tribe...[are] the only people in that nation, willing to be at Peace with the English (Alvord and Carter 1916: 5-7; Thurman 1974: 128).

There is no doubt that the tribal polities continued to exist among the Delawares until the second third of the nineteenth century. For example, in 1823 Trowbridge (Weslager 1972: 481), who obtained his information from Captain Pipe, recorded that the Delaware

...division into tribes is undoubtedly for the purpose of government, for each tribe has a council and war chief who do not interfere with the other tribes. In the receipt of annuities and of presents they strongly exemplify this distinction, by dividing the articles received into three equal parcels corresponding to the number of tribes, notwithstanding one tribe may contain twice as many souls as another.

After removal to the Kansas reservation, the old tribal organization broke down, and the three formerly independent tribes (Turtle, Turkey and Wolf) became sodalities in an integrated Delaware tribe, under the Turtle chief, who was recognized as the head chief. I have documented this in my dissertation, as well as the eventual disintegration of the Delaware polity in the Cherokee Nation (Thurman 1973: 187-238).

It would seem appropriate, if we are to continue to write on the Delaware Indian, that we study the sources and present some data, rather than unsubstantiated opinions. Social organizations of the past cannot be recalled by people who never lived in them nor should a modern informant's rationalizations be confused with the processes operative in the past.