

Gustavus Hesselius, 1735

Oil on canvas, 33 x 25"

Gift of Granville Penn

Historical Society of Pennsylvania Collection

Portrait / Native American / Lenape

Granville Penn presented the portrait (and that of Lapowinsa) to the HSP in December, 1834. He brought them from England, where his family had possessed them for some time. Tishcohan was a chief of the Lenape (Delaware) tribe. His name, according to Heckewelder, means "he who never blackens himself," explaining the absence of paint on his body. He was one of the chiefs who were induced to sign a treaty in 1737, known as the "Walking Purchase."

Hesselius was a Swedish immigrant who settled in Philadelphia in the early 18th century. He became the principal portrait painter in the middle colonies. The museum holds a total of six portraits by Gustavus Hesselius including a self-portrait, and three by his son John.