



Indiana Wilderness

Landscapes such as this limestone cliff in western Indiana would have been familiar to the original inhabitants of Indiana—the Indians and the prehistoric people before them. Many such cliffs can be seen today in Turkey Run State Park in Parke County, Indiana.

1

Native Americans in American History

“These knives will be more useful to you in killing Beavers and in cutting your meat than are the pieces of stone that you use.”

— Claude Charles Le Roy, in first record of trade between the Miami People and French explorer Nicolas Perrot, 1665–66

Indiana’s First Humans

Scientists believe that the first humans to settle in North America probably migrated across a land bridge from the area currently called Siberia along the Bering Strait to the land known today as Alaska. This migration occurred near the end of the Ice Age, between 30,000 and 15,000 years ago. Generations later, some descendants of these first North American immigrants settled in what became Indiana, a land that provided abundant animal life, including mastodons, lush forests, and rivers teeming with fish. Eventually the early people grew crops. The rich soil and long, hot summers were ideal for growing corn, which became a staple of their diet. Even today, vast cornfields checker the Indiana landscape.

Like the first white settlers in Indiana who followed centuries later, the early people were *river-centric*—they lived and traveled along rivers. The Wabash River was one of the most important rivers to these early inhabitants. The Wabash begins in western Ohio and flows west and southwest through Indiana. As the native peoples paddled their canoes from the south to the northeast on the Wabash toward Lake Erie, they had to stop and carry their canoes approximately



Mastodons

Mastodons, along with other large mammals, such as mammoths, saber-toothed cats, and dire wolves, roamed Indiana during the ice age between 1.8 million to 10,000 years ago. This mastodon skeleton is more than 13,000 years old and was discovered on a farm near Fort Wayne, Indiana. It is on display at the Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis, where it has been named Fred.

COLLECTIONS OF THE INDIANA STATE MUSEUM AND HISTORIC SITES

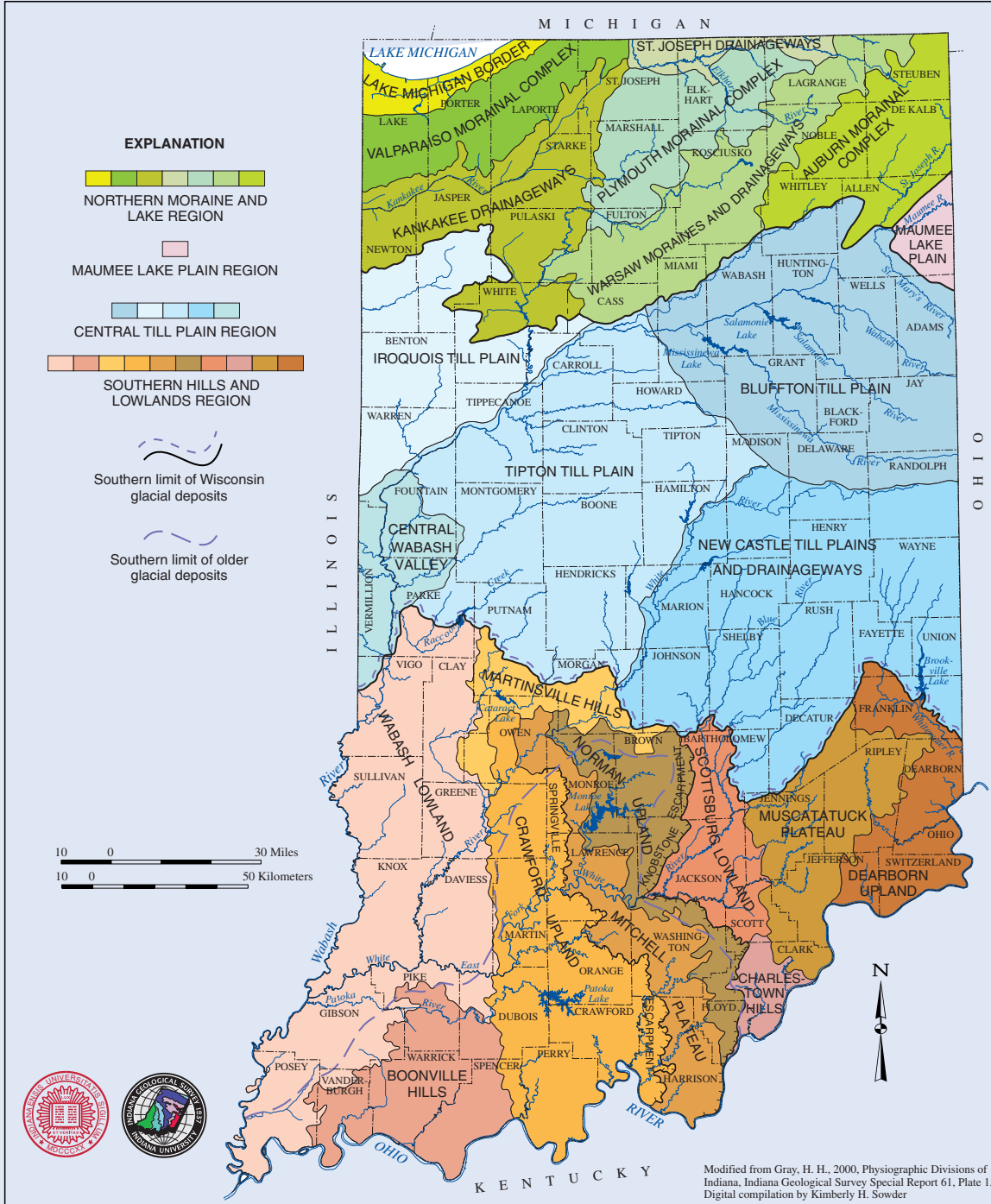
nine miles over swampland in order to connect with the Saint Mary’s River, which connected to the Maumee River. The Maumee, which begins in present-day Fort Wayne, flows east/northeast into Lake Erie. The nine-mile stretch between the Wabash and the Saint Mary’s was known as the Wabash–Maumee Portage, a portage being a land passage connecting two bodies of water. This portage became one of the most important locations in early Indiana. It was here that the largest Miami Indian village of Kekionga was located, a site that Americans would capture and rename Fort Wayne. The Wabash also carried Native Americans south to

Physiographic Map of Indiana

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
INDIANA GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

JOHN C. STEINMETZ, STATE GEOLOGIST

MISCELLANEOUS MAP 69



MAP OF INDIANA SHOWING PHYSIOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS
By Henry H. Gray
2001

Indiana's physical geography is a testament to the legacy of glaciers, which eroded and shaped the land during the ice age. The blue areas of the map indicate a till plain, which is characterized by a flat or gently rolling landscape that was flattened as glaciers melted. This region is well-suited for agriculture because glacial sediment enhanced the soil. The green areas of the map illustrate that some of the melting ice sheets created lakes and also left behind masses of rocks and sediments in ridge-like formations, called moraines, at the edges of the glacial lakes. The last glacier did not reach the bottom third of Indiana, leaving the southern region's steep hills and valleys intact.

the Ohio River, which in turn connected to the Mississippi River and ran all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. In northwest Indiana another important river, the Saint Joseph, provided access to Lake Michigan through land that is now in southwestern Michigan.

Using this early transportation network, early inhabitants established settlements along the river banks. One of the largest settlements was Angel Mounds on the Ohio River near present-day Evansville. Angel Mounds consisted of a village and several large mounds used for ceremonial purposes, surrounded by a log stockade fence. In the twentieth century archaeologists began to study pottery, tools, and other artifacts found at the site.

Another important early settlement that also featured mounds was on the White River near present-day Anderson. Today, visitors to Mounds State Park can see ten prehistoric earthworks constructed between 200 BC and 200 AD by two distinct cultures of people, named the Adena and Hopewell by modern-day archaeologists. Many of the region's mounds were destroyed when the land was cleared for agriculture. The mounds in today's park were preserved by the Bronnenberg family, who settled the land in the 1800s. The restored Bronnenberg house is in the park and open to visitors.

The Europeans Arrive

Although the Spanish had been exploring the North American continent in the early 1500s, it was nearly two hundred years later that the first Europeans arrived in what would become Indiana. These Europeans were French. Some were Catholic missionaries, hoping to convert the Indians to Christianity, but

most of the French were interested in trading with the Indians. Among the first Frenchmen in Indiana was René-Robert Cavelier de La Salle, who entered Indiana in 1679 on the Saint Joseph River near present-day South Bend. During the ensuing century, Indians trapped animals and gathered furs to exchange with French traders for European-made metal axes, hoes, guns, glass beads, and cloth. The French sent large quantities of furs across the Atlantic Ocean to European customers. Wabash Valley beaver and fox furs became the height of fashion on the streets of Paris.

The Indians, too, benefited from this trade. Native Americans replaced their stone, bone, or wood tools for more durable ones made of metal; they added cloth to the materials, such as leather and fur, that they used for clothing; they also traded for metal pots to replace their less durable clay or bark containers. But there were huge costs to trading with the French. The Indians were unaccustomed to the alcohol Europeans introduced, so drunkenness became a problem. Diseases such as smallpox and measles were also unintended consequences of the trade. These diseases proved deadly to the Indians who had not before experienced them and so had not acquired the immunities to recover from them.

The French and Indian cultures were different, but the two peoples found ways to live together to their mutual advantage. Because the French were in the territory for trade and not to colonize Indian land, there were far fewer French than Indians. The French had little choice but to negotiate and live peacefully among the Indians. Inter-marriage among the French male traders and Indian women became quite common. The offspring of these marriages were called *métis*, meaning

Angel Mounds

Near present-day Evansville, Indiana, is the site of one of the largest settlements of prehistoric Indians, who lived in Indiana from approximately 1000 to 1450 AD. Archaeologists have been excavating Angel Mounds since 1939, and have found a multitude of artifacts, including stone tools, pottery, and a carved stone figurine.





Copper Trade Kettle

European traders exchanged many items with Native Americans including cloth, rifles, glass beads, metal-edged tools, and metal containers for animal furs. Metal pots such as the one shown here were more durable than pottery and easily replaced it for cooking. This copper pot was used by Miami Indians near Kekionga (Fort Wayne, Indiana) from about 1780 to 1810.

COLLECTIONS OF THE ALLEN COUNTY-FORT WAYNE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

mixed blood. The *métis* became important because they had a foot in both cultures and spoke both the French and Indian languages. Not surprising, then, some *métis* negotiated trade agreements and became important leaders in the region.

In order to protect their trade interests from other Europeans and to establish control of the Wabash River, the French built three forts: Fort Miami (at Kekionga, present-day Fort Wayne), Fort Ouiatanon (near present-day Lafayette), and Fort Vincennes (on the Wabash River in southern Indiana). Vincennes would become the most important French settlement. However, while the French were building their empire in the Great Lakes region, the British were settling the East Coast. By the mid-1700s, British colonials were moving west, crossing the Appalachian Mountains, and encroaching on land claimed by the Indians and their French allies. Clashes erupted. Rather than seeing the French forts as intimidating defense positions, the British redcoats saw them as prizes to be taken.

The French and Indian War, also called the Seven Years' War, began in 1754. Ultimately, the British and their colonial allies (including a youthful George Washington) defeated the French and their Indian allies. When the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1763, all lands east of the Mississippi River, including the Wabash

Valley, became part of the British Empire. The French left and so did the relatively harmonious relationship the Indians had enjoyed with the white man for more than one hundred years.

The New Americans and the Native Americans

The Indians soon realized that the British were less interested in the fur trade and more interested in acquiring land. With the French out of the way, three groups struggled for control: Native Americans, British, and American colonists. After the American Revolution, the fledgling United States was intent on expanding its boundaries. In order for that to happen, the Indians had to relinquish their land, and they refused to do so willingly. A series of military battles between the United States government and the Indians ensued; hostilities continued into the nineteenth century. The policies of the new U.S. government would prove increasingly harmful to tribes of the Northwest Territory, the land north of the Ohio River, east of the Mississippi, and west of the former British colonies, which included the land that would become Indiana. As a result, by the end of the first decade of the 1800s, Indians were no longer the majority population in Indiana, "the Land of the Indians."

1.1

Major Native American Groups in Indiana, 1700s–1830s

“This place is situated on the edge of a great plain, at the extremity of which on the western side is a village of Miamis, Mascontens and Oiatinon gathered together.”

— Father Louis Hennepin, on LaSalle’s expedition, 1679

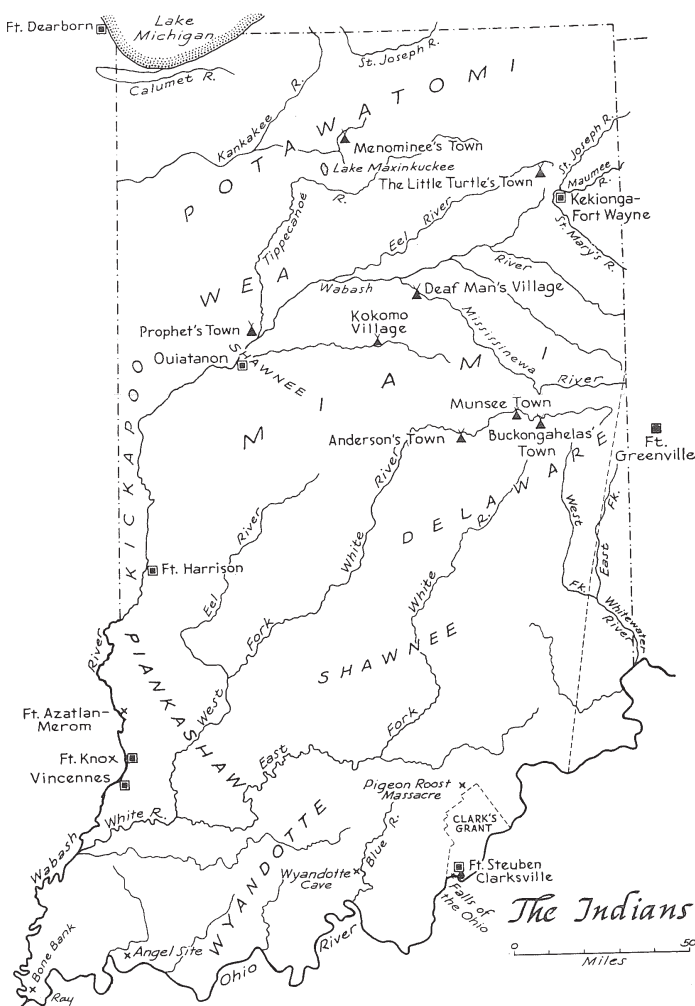
Centuries before statehood, Indiana was the “Crossroads of America,” as many tribes of native people passed through the land to destinations elsewhere. However, in the 1600s tribes living in the area were driven north and west by Iroquois raiding parties from the East. When it was safe once more, after one hundred years of warfare, some Indian groups moved south and east into lands that would become Indiana. The southern shores of Lake Michigan, the Ohio River, and the area around the Wabash–Maumee Portage, where the Maumee, Saint Mary’s, and other rivers came together, were the busiest regions. Just as their ancestors, native people in Indiana at this time lived along rivers. They were also *preliterate*; that is, although they had distinct and complex cultures, they did not record their customs or history in their own languages. Most of what we know about them is from archaeological evidence and early accounts written by European traders and settlers. As a result, historians are aware of the likelihood of cultural bias, or interpretations from only one perspective—the American perspective—in written accounts. Therefore, to better understand early Indiana history, ask yourself as you read if the information is presented from an Indian or American point of view.

The Miami and Potawatomi

In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, most of the inhabitants of the North American continent were Indians. During this time, many Potawatomi and Miami Indians moved into the territory that would become Indiana, becoming its most prominent

residents. Other tribes also migrated into the area, including the Shawnee and Kickapoo; and some natives passed through for only short periods, such as the Delaware. The Potawatomi concentrated north of the Wabash River and along Lake Michigan. The Wea band of the Miami located their villages on the banks of the middle Wabash, between the Tippecanoe and Vermilion Rivers, near what would become Lafayette. A band of Miami that had been living in what would become Detroit, Michigan, migrated to the portage between the Maumee and Wabash Rivers. This location, named Kekionga, is where the Americans later built Fort Wayne. Kekionga was the most important Miami village, a center for trade with the French and English

The Indians in Indiana



This map of “The Indians in Indiana,” drawn by Clark Ray, shows the approximate location of Native American tribes and villages at the beginning of Indiana’s territorial period, ca. 1800.

DWIGHT W. HOOVER, A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF INDIANA (BLOOMINGTON: INDIANA UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1980), 44.

and the meeting ground for the Miami tribal council. This Miami base would become the center for a combination of northwest tribes, often called the Miami Confederacy. Eventually it would also be the objective of several American military expeditions.

Life in Rhythm with the Seasons

The Miami and Potawatomi lived in sync with the seasons. There were times of planting, harvest, abundance, and scarcity. The tribes grew many crops, including melons, squash, pumpkins, beans, and corn. Corn, or maize, was a staple of their diet as well as an item of reverence used in ceremonies. Both groups traded corn to the French and other Native Americans. They also gathered berries, nuts, and roots, and collected maple syrup. They fished the streams and lakes and hunted deer, bison, bear, and small game.

Work was divided along gender lines. Men hunted, trapped, and traded, while women planted and tended crops, cooked, made clothing, and cared for the children. Boys and girls quickly learned their roles through daily chores and play. Boys learned the role of a warrior. Some Miami men, however, dressed as women and took on female roles—a cultural behavior that astonished French observers.

Native men and women decorated their bodies with ornaments and tattoos. Their religions included elaborate rituals, belief in life after death, and a world of good and evil, along with a stoic acceptance of hardship. The tribes had many social activities. Sports were popular, including lacrosse, which the Potawatomi played with great skill. Harvest festivals and other celebrations included dance and music.

The Miami and Potawatomi lived in villages of houses, called wigwams. Wigwams were built of poles covered with bark or mats woven from cattail. Individuals lived with their extended families, several generations forming a single unit. Each of these units, a group of related nuclear families, formed a clan.

When the French arrived they found it difficult to determine which leader in a tribe had the most authority, because the authority of a chief depended more on personal influence than on specific position. The Potawatomi's power structure was relatively relaxed.

For example, in times of war a prominent chief often led several villages, but seldom could one chief speak for all Potawatomi. By contrast, the Miami had a fairly structured leadership system, which included a principal chief and a grand council of village, band, and clan chiefs who met at Kekionga.

The Delaware and Shawnee Tribes

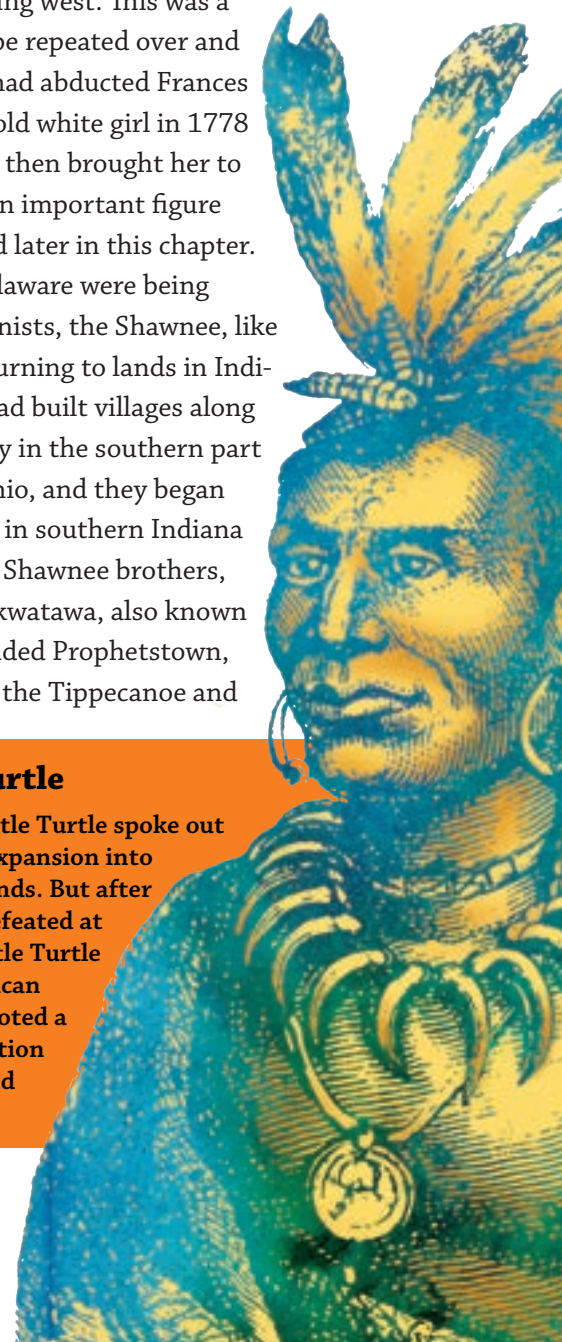
Also significant were the Delaware and Shawnee Indians, who arrived in Indiana after the Miami and Potawatomi. The Delaware came from northwest Pennsylvania and what would become southeastern Ohio and settled in the central part of the Indiana Territory, along the White River, by 1810. They had been displaced in Ohio by an increasing number of white colonists who were moving west. This was a pattern that would be repeated over and over. The Delaware had abducted Frances Slocum, a five-year-old white girl in 1778 in Pennsylvania and then brought her to Indiana. Slocum is an important figure and will be discussed later in this chapter.

Whereas the Delaware were being pushed west by colonists, the Shawnee, like the Miami, were returning to lands in Indiana by 1760. They had built villages along the Ohio River Valley in the southern part of what would be Ohio, and they began establishing villages in southern Indiana as well. In 1808 two Shawnee brothers, Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa, also known as the Prophet, founded Prophetstown, near the junction of the Tippecanoe and

Chief Little Turtle

Miami war chief Little Turtle spoke out against American expansion into Native American lands. But after the Indians were defeated at Fallen Timbers, Little Turtle submitted to American demands and promoted a strategy of cooperation between Indians and Americans.

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Potawatomi Camp Scene

In August 1837 artist George Winter visited an encampment of Potawatomi by Crooked Creek, eleven miles west of Logansport, Indiana. While there, he drew two sketches of his observations that this painting is based on. However, the sketches include a tent (since it was a camp), whereas the painting features a pole house such as the ones Potawatomi and Miami Indians built in their villages at that time.

Wabash Rivers. Like Frances Slocum, the Shawnee brothers were important figures in history, and their stories will be explored later in this chapter.

Similar to the Miami and Potawatomi, the Delaware and Shawnee grew crops and hunted and gathered food. They lived in large, bark, multi-family summer dwellings in the summer, and in single-family dome wigwams in the winter.

Indian Resistance to American Expansion

Before the French lost the French and Indian War, also known as the Seven Years' War, to the British and their colonists in 1763, North American Indians had lived side-by-side and traded with the French on relatively peaceful terms. They had no reason to expect life to be dramatically different under the British. Big changes were coming, however. Within twenty years, the lands east of the Mississippi River, wrested from the French by the British, would be taken from the British by rebellious American colonists in the American Revolution. American settlers wanted free or cheap land to farm and to build towns and roads, connecting the newly won "West" to the East, where the original colonies were now American states.

The Indians did not share the British–American concept of land

ownership. As far as they were concerned, the land was still theirs to hunt and farm. Therefore, they did not acknowledge that the Northwest Territory, in which Indiana's lands resided, became part of the new nation after the American Revolution. Because they were not part of its negotiation, the Indians ignored the Treaty of 1783, which established borders for the new country. The Indians and Americans were immediately at cross-purposes.

The Miami, Potawatomi, Delaware, Shawnee, and other natives soon learned that the Americans' intentions were different than those of the French. The Americans or "long knives," as the Indians called them because of the bayonets at the end of their rifles, were not interested in compromise. They wanted land and to impose an American way of life in the land they claimed. Years of bloody conflict ensued. Both sides won and lost significant battles. In 1790 and 1791, Miami war chief Little Turtle led a confederation of natives, including Miami and Shawnee, in victorious battles against American forces in Ohio country. The latter battle, known as Saint Clair's Defeat, was one of the worst defeats ever sustained by the U.S. military in conflicts with Native Americans.

In 1794 American General Anthony Wayne defeated the Miami in a bloody and decisive battle. Fought in a grove of fallen trees near the Maumee River, the Battle of Fallen Timbers and the resulting Treaty of Greenville marked the turning point in favor of the Americans. The treaty stipulated that the Indians sign over to the United States a vast territory that included two-thirds of Ohio, a narrow strip of southeastern

Indiana, the Wabash–Maumee Portage, and the villages of Ouiatanon and Vincennes. In return for these lands, the United States presented the Indians with goods valued at \$20,000 and promised annual payments ranging from \$500 to \$1,000 to the various tribes. The system of providing goods and money to the tribes was intended to make the Indians dependent on the Americans in order to reduce tribal power. The strategy was largely effective. Chief Little Turtle stated that the treaty would “insure the permanent happiness of the Indians, and their Father, the Americans.” Little Turtle was realistic as well as optimistic. He knew that the Americans were calling the shots now, but he believed that if the Indians stopped fighting with them, conditions for his people would gradually improve. He resigned himself to adopt American ways and encouraged his people to do the same.

However, numerous Native Americans did not accept the Americans’ terms or way of life. One historian described the decade following the Treaty of Greenville as “simply disastrous for the Indians on the Wabash.” Smallpox and flu epidemics as well as increasing use of alcohol took their toll. The Americans held the real power, and the Indians grew increasingly dependent on a people who in reality did very little for them and cared for them even less. All aspects of Indian culture suffered—from hunting to religious rituals.

Out of this upheaval, in which the Native Americans experienced demoralizing military defeat and the ravages of disease and alcohol, a powerful Shawnee spiritual leader, Tenskwatawa, or the Prophet, arose. Together with his warrior brother, Tecumseh, who had fought alongside Little Turtle, they spearheaded a formidable challenge to the Americans governing Indiana.

1.2

The Prophet and Tecumseh

The Prophet (1775–1836)

“You must not dress like the White Man or wear hats like them. . . . When you are clothed, it must be in skins or leather of your own Dressing.”

— Tenskwatawa, 1805

Early life

The Shawnee born Lalawethika was an unlikely leader. As a boy with heroic older brothers, Lalawethika stood out because he failed at almost everything he attempted. He even wounded his right eye with his own arrow. Although he fought at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, he was nowhere near as brave as his brother, the great warrior Tecumseh. Lalawethika turned to alcohol as a young man, which only increased his problems and diminished his self-esteem.

When he was in his late twenties, Lalawethika decided to become a medicine man and apprenticed himself to a tribal healer who later died. When his tribe was stricken with a serious disease, Lalawethika tried everything he had learned to save his people, but much of his medicine did not work. Depressed and humiliated, Lalawethika drank so much alcohol that he lost consciousness. His tribe believed him to be dead. However, while his body was being prepared for burial, Lalawethika woke up and told how he had taken a journey to the spirit world where he had a powerful vision. He said the vision showed two worlds—one was a world of blessings for those who lived as the Master of Life intended, and the other was a world of pain and suffering for those who sinned and defied the old ways. From that day forth, Lalawethika’s lips did



Tenskwatawa, the Prophet

The Prophet’s portrait was painted by James Otto Lewis for Governor Lewis Cass of the Michigan Territory in 1832. Lewis later went on to paint portraits of several prominent Indian chiefs, tribal meetings, and landscapes, which were published in *The Aboriginal Port Folio* in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, ca. 1836.

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not touch alcohol. He changed his name to Tenskwatawa, which means “Open Door,” and vowed to lead his people to the land of many blessings by reclaiming the old traditions.

The Prophet’s Teachings

Tenskwatawa, commonly known as the Prophet, began his crusade in the summer of 1805 and soon gained a following as he told and retold the story of his vision. Although Tenskwatawa would always have

Prophetstown

In 1808 Tenskwatawa (the Prophet) and Tecumseh founded a village along the Tippecanoe River just north of present-day Lafayette, Indiana. Named Prophetstown after the visionary Shawnee leader, the settlement was a base for the Prophet's religious movement, which attracted Indians who were resisting American settlement. As Prophetstown was open to followers from all tribal backgrounds, an estimated fourteen tribes were represented in its confederation. However, most came from the Shawnee, Delaware, and Potawatomi tribes. The Indian town existed only four years before it was burned down following the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811. Prophetstown State Park, pictured here, is located near the confluence of the Wabash and Tippecanoe Rivers, approximately a mile from where the battle occurred. The structure for a recreated wigwam appears in the foreground.

COURTESY OF IDNR/OUTDOOR INDIANA MAGAZINE



skeptics, an incident the following summer sealed his reputation as a prophet. He predicted an eclipse. When the eclipse occurred, blocking out the sunlight, his followers believed he had made the sun go black. This action quickly removed many natives' doubts and the Prophet's following grew.

Living on the banks of White River, the Prophet sparked a spiritual revival among his followers. His new religion transcended traditional rivalries and

united Indians from many tribes and villages. He convinced many Shawnee, Miami, and Delaware to turn from the bad habits of the white man and return to Indian traditions. He preached abstention from alcohol, no marriages between Indians and whites, and a return to traditional gender roles with women as farmers and men as hunters and warriors.

The Prophet taught that the Americans were evil, untrustworthy, and the source of hardship for the In-

dians. He scorned American leaders such as President Thomas Jefferson and William Henry Harrison, governor of the Indiana Territory. He also rejected “wicked chiefs,” such as Little Turtle, who the Prophet thought had sold out to the Americans. He was suspicious of Indians of mixed blood who he perceived as playing both sides of the fence.

Some of the Prophet’s teachings were extreme, and he dealt brutally with those who fell into his disfavor. He warned his followers to beware of those who practiced witchcraft. Anyone closely associated with the Americans or opposed to the Prophet’s teachings was suspected of witchcraft and targeted for elimination. Indians who had converted to Christianity were frequently accused. Joshua, a Moravian Christian Indian, was one such victim. Joshua had held onto his Christian faith despite his daughters having been murdered in a massacre. In 1806 he was living in a Moravian village in eastern Indiana when he was seized by some of the Prophet’s followers. The Prophet himself arrived at the village and declared Joshua guilty. Joshua was tomahawked twice before being burned at the stake.

Another victim of the Prophet’s witch hunts was an elderly Wyandot chief called Leatherlips. He was accused of being a witch because he did not support the Prophet and was a friend of the Americans. In June 1810 the Prophet sent six warriors to execute the old man. Leatherlips was charged with causing sickness among members of his tribe. After a brief mockery of a trial, Leatherlips was tomahawked and quickly buried. The Prophet used his religious doctrine to strengthen his political power; only those he perceived as his enemies were accused of witchcraft and executed.

For more than three years Governor Harrison watched with concern the growing number of Indians in Prophetstown, the village the Prophet founded with his brother Tecumseh. As a result, in fall 1811 tensions reached a boiling point. Harrison led an army of about one thousand troops near Prophetstown and prepared to fight. Unlike Tecumseh, the Prophet was not a great military leader, and Tecumseh was away at the time. The Prophet made the first move by attacking Harrison’s army before dawn. But, the Indians were outnumbered and were short on ammunition. In the

battle, which would be known as the Battle of Tippecanoe, Harrison’s troops forced the Indians to retreat and then burned Prophetstown to the ground. After that, the Prophet lost most of his influence. When Tecumseh returned, he led the Indian resistance through military rather than religious methods. The Prophet fled to Canada during the War of 1812 in which Tecumseh was killed. In 1824 the Prophet returned to the United States and went west with Shawnees who were removed to Kansas. He died twelve years later.

Tecumseh (ca. 1768–1813)

“Brothers—If you do not unite with us, they will first destroy us, and then you will fall an easy prey to them. They have destroyed many nations of red men because they were not united, because they were not friends to each other.”

— Tecumseh to the Osage, 1811

Early Life

Tecumseh, or “Shooting Star,” stood in sharp contrast to his younger brother Tenskwatawa. He was a natural born warrior who fought in his first battle as a youth. He was born to a Shawnee family that had moved from Virginia to land that would become Ohio, pushed by British colonists who would soon rebel and claim America as their own. Tecumseh’s father died in battle against the Americans along the Ohio River in 1774. As the Revolution was fought in the backwoods in ensuing years, Tecumseh’s mother and a sister moved west to Missouri with many other Shawnee people. Tecumseh and his other siblings stayed behind to be raised by their oldest sister and her husband. Tecumseh yearned to become a great warrior like his father and brother Chiksika. Growing up, he played war games, and Chiksika taught him how to hunt and become a warrior.

Warrior and Spokesman

By the time he was fifteen, Tecumseh had found his purpose—to stop the white man’s invasion of Indian land. He traveled extensively and fought many battles before founding Prophetstown with his brother Tenskwatawa, the Prophet. While the Prophet preached, Tecumseh traveled vast distances to different

tribes, encouraging them to join the confederation he was building to resist the Americans.

Tall with regal bearing, Tecumseh could hold his own with any white leader. He was intelligent and an excellent orator. William Henry Harrison, governor of the Indiana Territory, had great respect for Tecumseh, even though they were on opposing sides of the land ownership issue. Harrison's job was to acquire as much Indian land for white settlement as he could as quickly as possible. Tecumseh insisted that the land was given to the Indians by the Great Spirit. The land, he stated, belonged to all tribes and not to individual Americans. Harrison considered Tecumseh an "uncommon genius" who had been dealt a bad hand by fate. Recognizing his adversary's many gifts, Harrison said that given different circumstances Tecumseh "would perhaps be the founder of an empire that would rival in glory that of Mexico or Peru."

An experienced mediator, Harrison negotiated a number of treaties with Indian leaders, always to the Americans' advantage. However, bargaining with Tecumseh proved to be more difficult than negotiating with other tribal leaders. The two men met face-to-face three times before the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811. Each meeting was more heated than the one before.

In August 1810 Tecumseh, wearing traditional deerskin clothing, met with Harrison at Grouseland, the governor's mansion in Vincennes. He brought a large band of warriors with him to intimidate Harrison and the other whites. When Tecumseh was offered a chair, he refused to sit on it. Instead he sat on the ground stating that Indians belonged with "the bosom of their mother." The talks were tense and nothing was accomplished. At one point Tecumseh lost his temper. Although he later apologized, it was clear that hostilities would continue between the Indians and Americans.

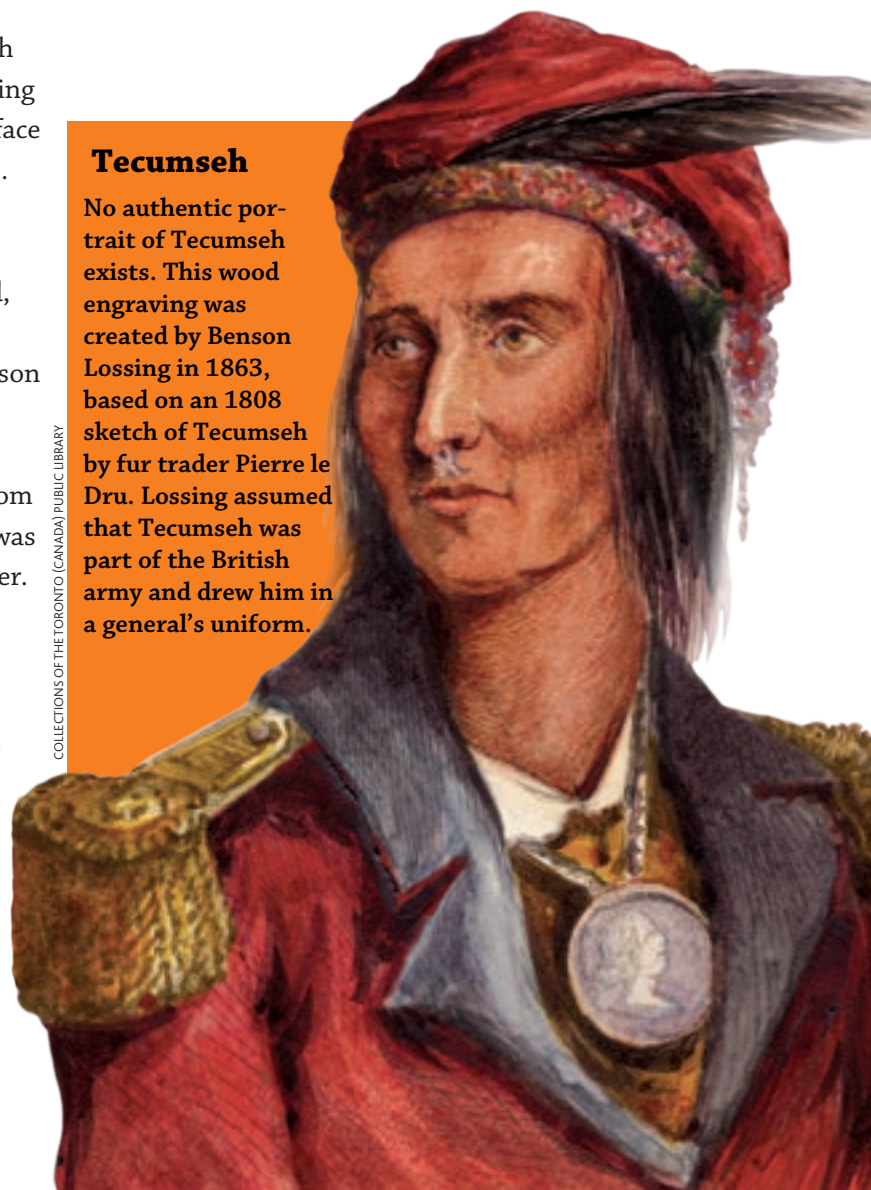
Tecumseh and Harrison met for the last time in the summer of 1811. Again, they reached no agreement. After the meeting, Tecumseh left Indiana to encourage southern tribes to join his confederacy. On November 6, 1811, Harrison, knowing Tecumseh was gone, moved his army of around one thousand men near Prophetstown and prepared

for a fight. Without the benefit of Tecumseh's military leadership, the Indians had to retreat, and Harrison set fire to Prophetstown.

The Battle of Tippecanoe, as it came to be called, did not break Native American resistance as Harrison had hoped. Instead, even more warriors joined Tecumseh's cause. As Americans had raided their villages in the past, Indians now raided frontier settlements. When the War of 1812 erupted between the United States and Great Britain, the latter wanting to win back its colonies, Tecumseh and most of the allied Indians joined the British to fight the Americans. On October 5, 1813, Tecumseh died at the Battle of the Thames near present-day Chatham, Ontario. Indian resistance to American expansion to the Mississippi River died with Tecumseh. After the war ended favorably for the United States, the Indians east of the Mississippi were eventually forced to sign over most of their remaining land to the Americans.

Tecumseh

No authentic portrait of Tecumseh exists. This wood engraving was created by Benson Lossing in 1863, based on an 1808 sketch of Tecumseh by fur trader Pierre le Dru. Lossing assumed that Tecumseh was part of the British army and drew him in a general's uniform.



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1.3

Frances Slocum/Maconaquah (1773–1847)

Though bearing some resemblance to her family—yet her cheek bones seemed to have the Indian characteristics . . . face broad, nose somewhat bulby, mouth indicating some degree of severity.

— George Winter, from his journal, 1839

The Slocum Family

Jonathan and Ruth Slocum were Quakers who originally lived in Rhode Island. In 1777 their large family, which included a daughter named Frances and eight other children, braved rugged terrain and the danger of Indian attack in a covered wagon to settle in the Wyoming Valley near present-day Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. As Quakers and therefore pacifists, the Slocums had hoped to distance themselves from the violence of the Revolutionary War in the more settled areas of the East Coast. Around the same time, Americans had forced Delaware Indians from the Wyoming Valley, and the Delaware frequently attacked white settlers. Instead of fleeing like many other settlers, Jonathan Slocum decided to stay because he thought the Indians would recognize him as a peaceful man and leave his family alone.

Frances Taken Captive

Frances Slocum was around five years old in November 1778 when Delaware raiders attacked her family's cabin. Jonathan was not present when the attack occurred, but Ruth and all but two of her children managed to flee to the nearby woods. Frances and one of her brothers, who was handicapped, did not make it out of the cabin. The Indians found them. Leaving Frances's brother behind, the Indians threw Frances over one of their horses and rode off. For the rest of her life, Ruth was haunted by the sight of her little red-haired daughter helplessly reaching out for her. A few months later, Indians returned and killed Jonathan and Ruth's father.



COLLECTIONS OF THE TIPPECANOE COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, LAFAYETTE, IN

Frances Slocum/Maconaquah

In fall 1839 artist George Winter traveled to Deaf Man's Village on the Mississinewa River in Indiana to paint the portrait of Frances Slocum (Maconaquah), which her brother, Joseph Slocum of Pennsylvania, had commissioned. The portrait, "Lost Sister of Wyoming," is probably one of Winter's best known works.

Ruth never lost hope that Frances was alive. On her deathbed, twenty-eight years after her daughter's abduction, Ruth made her children promise that they would never abandon the search for their lost sister. For almost another three decades, they wrote letters, offered rewards, spoke with traders and agents, and traveled as far as Ohio and Michigan to pursue every possible lead. The trail to Frances remained cold.

Frances Found

In 1835, fifty-seven years after Frances was taken captive, Colonel George Ewing, a well-known trader in the Wabash Valley, was traveling on horseback from Fort Wayne to Logansport. He decided to stop for the night at an Indian settlement known as Deaf



COLLECTIONS OF THE TIPPECANOE COUNTY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, LAFAYETTE, IN

Deaf Man's Village

This watercolor of Frances Slocum/Maconaquah's home along the Mississinewa, known as Deaf Man's Village, was painted by George Winter after his visit there in 1839. The village was named for Maconaquah's husband, Shapoconah, who lost his hearing during the War of 1812.

Man's Village on the Mississinewa River, just south of Peru and the Wabash. Ewing took shelter at a large log cabin, which had been the home of Miami chief, Shapoconah, before his death. Ewing spoke the Miami language and had been a long-time friend of Shapoconah.

One night Shapoconah's widow, Maconaquah, told Ewing the fascinating story of her early life. Ewing's suspicion that Maconaquah was not really an Indian was confirmed. She revealed that she was in fact white and had been taken from her family by Indians when she was very young. She told Ewing that she remembered that her family's name was Slocum and that they had lived somewhere along the Susquehanna River.

Ewing wrote letters to newspapers and postmasters in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, hoping to locate

Maconaquah's white family. Eventually, a newspaper story attracted the attention of a minister in the Wyoming Valley who knew of the Slocum family's search for Frances. He contacted Joseph Slocum, Frances's brother. Joseph wrote to another sister and brother who were living in Ohio to tell them the news. The Slocum siblings, now all quite elderly, traveled to Indiana, hoping against hope that this woman might be their lost sister.

When Maconaquah encountered her siblings, she was understandably cautious. She had lived among Indians for more than a half century, and she knew that the white man often wanted to remove Indians from their homes. Eventually, her brothers and sister convinced her that she could trust them and that they were, indeed, part of her long-lost family.

"The Deaf Man's Village."

a successful result, as indicated by the quick recognition of it by the man who saw it. It was among the most valued of my original sketches of the aboriginal people of the Watah valley.

Frances looked upon her likeness with complacency. Kick-ke-se-quah eyed it approvingly yet suspiciously—it was a mystery. The widowed daughter, O-shaw-se-quah, would not look at it, but turned away from it abruptly when I presented it to her for her inspection, as though some evil surrounded it.

I could but feel as by intuition, that my absence would be hailed as a joyous relief to the family. There had been a surrender of a superstitious idea to the wishes of the brother Joseph Slocum, a something, that boded me good! to them.

Excerpt from George Winter's Journal

This excerpt from the journal George Winter kept during his journey to Deaf Man's Village in 1839 states in part:

Frances looked upon her likeness [portrait] with complacency. Kick-ke-se-quah eyed it approvingly, yet suspiciously—it was a mystery. The widowed daughter, O-shaw-se-quah would not look at it, but turned away from it abruptly when I presented it to her for her inspection, and thought some evil surrounded it.

I could but feel as by intuition, that my absence would be hailed as a joyous relief to the family. There had been a surrender of a superstitious idea to the wishes of the brother Joseph Slocum, a something that boded no good! to them.

Maconaquah's siblings positively identified her by her left forefinger, which had been smashed by a hammer when she was very young and had no fingernail. They communicated with Maconaquah through an interpreter because she knew only the Miami language, having forgotten virtually all English.

Maconaquah's Life among the Delaware and Miami

After almost six decades of separation, the Slocum siblings had a lot of catching up to do. Maconaquah told them about her life after she had been whisked away from them so many years ago. They learned that the Delaware warriors who seized her had later traded her to a childless Delaware chief and his wife who gave her the name Sheletawash, after their deceased daughter. She said that the couple always treated her like a daughter since their own daughter had died. Maconaquah's first marriage to a Delaware brave named Tuck Horse was brief because he did not treat her well, and she returned to her Delaware parents. Subsequently, she was presented as a wife to a Miami brave named Shepoconah, who later became a chief. When Frances joined the Miami people, she took the name Maconaquah, meaning Little Bear Woman. She had four children with Shapoconah—two sons who died when they were very young and two girls who were young women when the Slocums met them. The daughters, Kekenakushwa and Ozahshinquah, had children of their own. Maconaquah was a grandmother.

Maconaquah's siblings tried to convince her to return to the Slocum homestead in Pennsylvania, but she refused. She said that she had always lived with the Indians and she wanted to live out her life with them. However, she agreed to sit to have her portrait painted so they could take it back to Pennsylvania with them.

Maconaquah through an Artist's Eyes

George Winter was an Englishman who came to the United States in 1830. After studying art in New York, Winter moved to Ohio and opened a portrait studio. An adventurer at heart, Winter headed west in 1837 to document the removal of the Potawatomi and ended up near Logansport, Indiana. His detailed

sketches of the daily lives of the Indians and of their removal provide a rare glimpse into this little-documented time in Indiana history. Today, Winter is best known for the portrait he painted of Maconaquah in 1839, which had been commissioned by Maconaquah's siblings soon after they reunited with her. Winter communicated with Maconaquah through an African American interpreter who lived with the Miami and knew their language. In his journal Winter writes that she was short in stature and finely dressed. In fact, Winter states that he could tell that Maconaquah's family was quite well off based on their housing and amount of livestock. He also notes that she was a "patient sitter, and wholly abandoned herself to my professional requirements." Winter reported that Maconaquah and her family politely tolerated his presence: "I could but feel as by intuition, that my absence would be hailed as a joyous relief to the family."

Maconaquah's Legacy

In 1840 the U.S. government signed a treaty that required the Miami to leave the Wabash River area by 1845. Maconaquah's family petitioned Congress, requesting that she and her immediate Miami family and their descendants be exempt from removal. Congress granted the request in 1845. Two years later, Maconaquah, often referred to as the "White Rose of the Miamis," died at the advanced age of seventy-four.

Maconaquah is an important figure in Indiana history because she was a rare individual who fully assimilated into Indian culture and was accepted as one of them. She essentially became a Miami, and yet she agreed to meet with her siblings and to sit for her portrait. Winter's paintings and drawings of Maconaquah and her daughters as well as those of Deaf Man's Village where they lived, together with the notes he and her siblings wrote regarding Maconaquah constitute a rare glimpse into the lives and perspectives of the Miami.

Today, Hoosiers can visit Maconaquah's grave in Wabash County in a cemetery that bears her name. In addition, there is a thirty-mile-long Frances Slocum Trail that runs from Peru to Marion, Indiana, and a state recreation area near Peru named for her.

1.4

The Potawatomi Trail of Death

“Your fire has gone out. Your wigwams are cold. . . . You cannot live in a country where white men multiply as rapidly as black birds, and as numerous as pigeons.”

— Indian Agent Abel C. Pepper to the Potawatomi, 1837

Indian Removal Policy

Indian claims to land were the biggest obstacles to American expansion. After the War of 1812 the U.S. government was determined to remove that obstacle. Initially, the government’s policy leaned toward assimilation of Indians, that is, absorbing them into American culture so that they gradually let go of their own ways, particularly in terms of religion and individual rather than tribal ownership. In time, however, Indian removal became the preferred method of expansion. Indian tribes that had been living in the Old Northwest, including present-day Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin, were to be moved west of the Mississippi River. White men were not yet settling those faraway lands.

In the *Emigrant’s Guide to the Western and Southwestern States and Territories*, published in 1818, author William Darby praises the richness of Indiana’s soil and notes that nearly “two-thirds of its territorial surface is yet in the hands of the Indians, a temporary evil, that a short time will remedy.” Hoosiers wanted their government to take action to remove the Indians so they could go about the business of settling it themselves. After the War of 1812, the Native Americans could offer little resistance.

When Indiana became a state in 1816, the Miami and the Potawatomi were the most numerous remaining tribes. Hoosier settlers had to depend on the federal government to make the decisions regarding Indian policy because it was considered a federal issue not a state issue. The Bureau of Indian Affairs, a department under the Secretary of War, had agents in regional offices to enforce federal policy. In Indiana the

federal Indian agent was initially located at Fort Wayne and then Logansport.

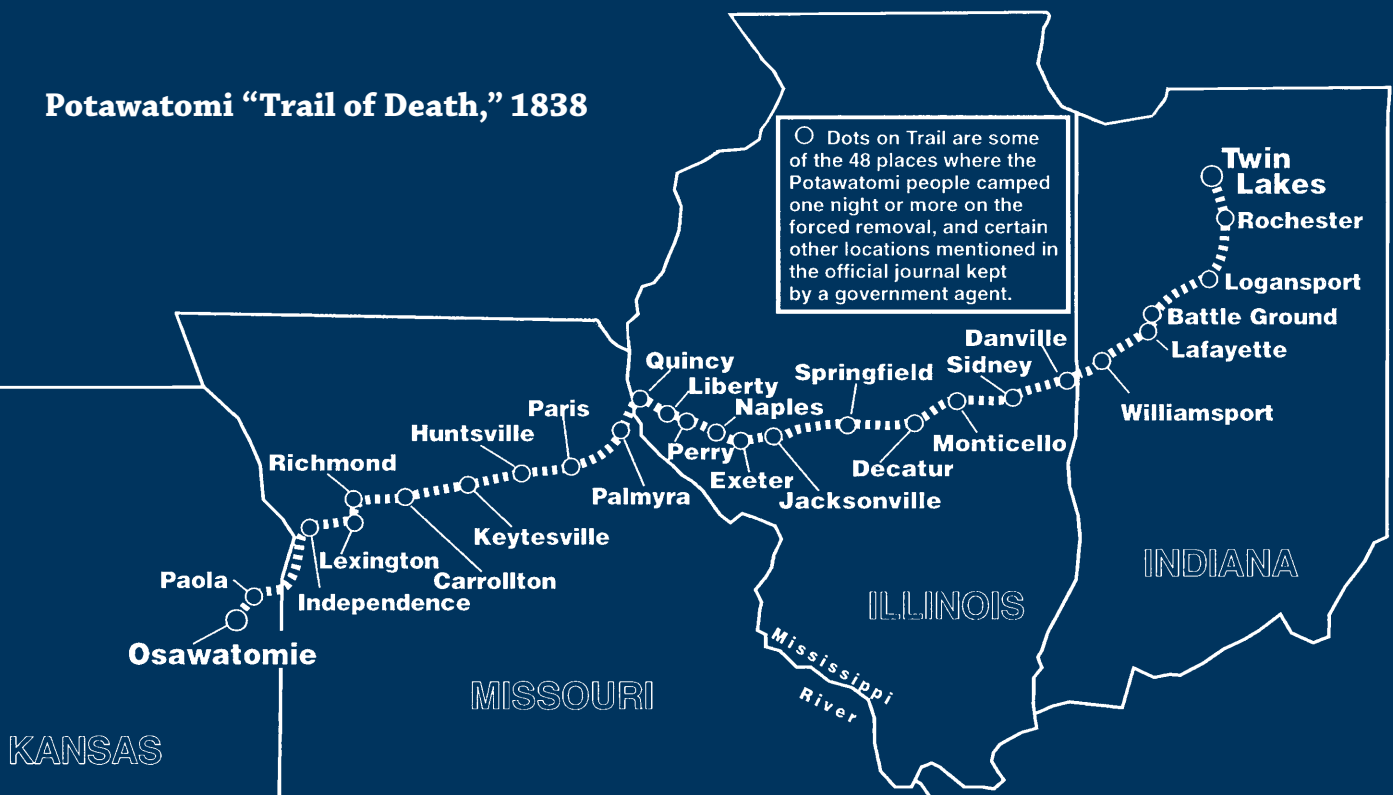
At first, the government’s strategy urged Indians to go into debt so they would be forced to cede their land to pay off their debts. Indian traders were skeptical of the strategy because their primary income came from trading goods with the Indians. Eventually, however, the traders came around to the idea of Indian removal and eagerly helped the process along. Playing both sides of the fence, many of these individuals took advantage of their long-standing relationships with the Indians and their government connections to be first to obtain Indian land once it was available. Then some of these same individuals assisted in Indian removal to the West. A number of these men amassed fortunes buying and selling large tracts of Indian land and became some of the state’s most influential citizens. Some of these traders are still well-known today: William Conner, who will be extensively discussed in the next chapter, was an Indian trader and became an integral part of negotiations between Indians and Americans; George Ewing, who “discovered” Frances Slocum; and General John Tipton, a veteran of the Battle of Tippecanoe who became one of Indiana’s early U.S. senators.

In 1830 Congress sealed the fate of Native Americans by passing the Indian Removal Act, giving President Andrew Jackson the green light to forcibly move Indians westward. Many Hoosiers were glad that Jackson wasted no time in getting the job done, because they were eager to develop their new state without the obstacle the Indians presented. Jackson and others rationalized that removal would be good for the Indians, because it would remove them from the negative effects of white culture, mostly alcohol, and allow them to adapt to American culture at their own speed. However, there was one big problem—the Indians did not want to leave their land.

The Plight of the Potawatomi

The Indiana Potawatomi signed nine treaties in 1836, ceding their remaining reservations in Indiana to the United States. The U.S. government paid them

Potawatomi “Trail of Death,” 1838



On September 4, 1838, more than 850 Potawatomi were gathered at gunpoint by mounted Indiana militia and forcibly marched more than 600 miles—from their northern Indiana homes to Osawatomie, Kansas. Around forty people, mostly children, died on this two-month march. This map shows campsites on their journey west, as recorded by official U.S. government agents. (This map was adapted from resources compiled by the Fulton County Historical Society and the Potawatomi Trail of Death Association, Rochester, Indiana, including map by Potawatomi Tom Hamilton, “Potawatomi ‘Trail of Death’ March: Sept.–Nov. 1838,” 2004.)

one dollar an acre for their land and gave them two years from the signing of the treaty to move west of the Mississippi. The Treaty of the Yellow River, concluded on August 5, 1836, was by far the most controversial treaty. Three of the chiefs that signed it gave up most of the land on the parcel that included Chief Menominee’s reservation a few miles north of Rochester, Indiana. Conspicuously, Menominee’s signature is absent from the treaty.

When he learned about these treaties, Menominee was enraged. He called the treaties frauds and refused to move. Menominee told the agents charged with removing his people: “[The President] does not know that you made my young chiefs drunk and got their consent and pretended to get mine. He does not know that I have refused to sell my land, and still refuse. He would not drive me from my home and the graves of

my tribe, and my children, who have gone to the Great Spirit, nor allow you to tell me your braves will take me, tied like a dog.” With the support of Catholic missionaries in the region, Menominee, who had converted to Catholicism, petitioned the government to let his people stay on their land. The government refused.

The Potawatomi Trail of Death Begins

August 5, 1838, was the deadline for the Potawatomi to vacate their land. Some Potawatomi had already left the area, but Menominee and others had not. Anticipating the Indians’ departure, white squatters started to arrive at Menominee’s village and violence erupted. Indiana Governor David Wallace ordered General John Tipton, the former Indian agent, and an armed state militia to move in and arrest Menominee and a few other leaders and begin Potawatomi removal.

After forcing evacuation of the village, Tipton and his men set fire to it to discourage the Potawatomi from returning.

Menominee and two other rebellious chiefs were confined to the village's log church while the Potawatomi were rounded up for the march. On September 4, 1838, the exodus to Kansas, which came to be known as the Potawatomi Trail of Death, began with more than 850 Potawatomi under armed guard. The rebellious chiefs were confined to a cage-like wagon with bars. Father Benjamin Petit, a Jesuit priest who accompanied the Potawatomi, described the order in which they marched:

The United States flag, carried by a dragoon; then one of the principal officers, next the staff baggage carts, then the carriage, which during the whole trip was kept for the use of the Indian chiefs; then one or two chiefs on horseback led a line of 250 or 300 horses ridden by men, women, children in single file, after the manner of savages. On the flanks of the line at equal distance from each other were the dragoons and volunteers [soldiers], hastening the stragglers, often with severe gestures and bitter words. After this cavalry came a file of forty baggage wagons filled with luggage and Indians. The sick were lying in them, rudely jolted, under a canvas which, far from protecting them from the dust and heat, only deprived them of air, for they were as if buried under this burning canopy—several died thus.

Although the government had wanted the Potawatomi out of Indiana for a long time, they put very little thought into how the journey should be conducted. The weather was hot and dry, there was not enough fresh water, and food was scarce. A baby died on the second day—the first of many deaths to follow.

Witnesses to the Removal

Two European witnesses left detailed accounts that provide a glimpse of Potawatomi life prior to removal and insight into the Trail of Death. English artist George Winter, who later painted Frances Slocum's portrait, arrived in the Wabash Valley just as

removal plans were forming in 1837. His sketches and paintings show the Potawatomi going about their daily lives. From his diary we learn that several individuals were left behind at Twin Lakes as the evacuation began because they were too sick or elderly to undertake the journey. Winter also sketched the Potawatomi at a religious service at their second encampment near Logansport, Indiana, and sketched them leaving this place in single file as well. In his journal Winter wrote that the Potawatomi were driven “out of the land at the point of the bayonet! It was truly a melancholy spectacle, that awoke a deep feeling of sympathy for their unhappy fate.”

Father Petit was born in France and had left a promising law career to become a Jesuit missionary in Indiana. He arrived at Menominee's reservation a year before the removal and was full of enthusiasm. He came to regard the Potawatomi as his children; as the threat of removal became more imminent, Petit was determined to accompany them when they were forced to go. He wrote that he would not allow “these Christians souls” to die far from their homes “without the aid of the sacraments of which they partook with such love.” In a letter to General Tipton, Petit expressed his outrage, “[I]t is impossible for me, and for many, to conceive how such events may take place in this country of liberty.”

Chief Menominee

Chief Menominee was a principal chief of the Indiana Potawatomi when the tribe was forcibly removed from its lands in 1838. He died less than three years after reaching Kansas. In 1909 the State of Indiana erected this statue in memory of the chief at the point where the Potawatomi “Trail of Death” began in Twin Lakes, Indiana.

COLLECTIONS OF THE INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Father Benjamin Petit's Journal, 1837

Father Benjamin Marie Petit was a Catholic missionary stationed in Indiana in 1837. As he accompanied the Potawami on the Trail of Death in 1838, he kept a journal and wrote frequent letters. Below is an excerpt from Petit's journal, which he used as both an account book and as a way to track his activities. (Journal translation quoted from Irving McKee, *The Trail of Death: Letters of Benjamin Marie Petit* [Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1941], 128)

Dates	Liens	Receette	Depense	Actions et renvois aux explications
- 5 aout	chichipe Outipe		0.50	en voyage. - j'ai fait 14 baptêmes, 2 mariages, confessions très nombreuses, beaucoup de malades. moi un peu sur les dents. - les agents de l'émigration me harassent, m'accusent, me flattent; menacent les indiens; - pour éviter les troupes et la force armée à la prise de possession de la réserve; je réponds que les indiens ne feront pas de résistance - le gouvernement prend la possession de mon église et de ma maison préemptés. le 4 j'y dis encore la messe, on défait l'autel, et dans l'église déjouillée au milieu des sanglots des indiens, et de mes pleurs à moi même je fais mes adieux; nous prions encore ensemble pour le succès des missions, nous chantons: je mets ma confiance... je part. †

COLLECTIONS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF INDIANAPOLIS

Dates	Places	Receipts	Expenditures	Activities and reference Notes
August 5	chichié outipé		.50	traveling.—I performed 14 baptisms, 2 marriages, very numerous confessions, many sick. I am a little tired out.—the emigration agents harass, accuse, flatter me; threaten the Indians; —to avoid the troops and armed forces at the seizure of the reserve, I reply that the Indians will not offer resistance. —On the 5 th the government takes possession of my pre-empted church and house. —On the 4 th I say Mass there again, the alter is dismantled, and the church's interior stripped amidst the Indians' sobs and my own tears. I bid farewell; we pray together once more for the success of missions, we sing: In thy protection do we trust . . . I depart.

The End of the Trail

Nearly two weeks after the journey began, Tipton and his men left the caravan at Danville, Illinois, and returned to Indiana. Judge William Polke, a prominent Indiana civil servant and politician who was federally appointed to conduct the removal, took charge of leading the Potawatomi the rest of the way to Kansas. Polke's enrolling agent, Jesse C. Douglas, who recorded the names of the Potawatomi on the journey, also provided a journal of the trip, commonly known as Polke's journal.

As they passed through central Illinois, the Indians received a lot of attention from the locals. One observer noted that the Indians wore their finest clothing and carried themselves with great dignity. The town of Jacksonville, Illinois, added to "the entertaining spectacle" by having a band play as the Indians passed through. Douglas wrote, "[T]he sight of an emigration or body of Indians is as great a rarity [for the citizens of Jacksonville] as a traveling Caravan of wild animals."

On October 10 the Potawatomi crossed the Mississippi on steam ferry boats and entered Missouri. It took the Potawatomi almost a month to traverse Missouri, which required crossing the Missouri River. The Indians touched Kansas soil on November 2 and reached their final destination of Osawatomie, Kansas, on November 4, 1838. They had traveled around 660 miles in two months.

The harsh journey took its toll. Of the more than 850 Potawatomi who set out from Indiana, around forty of them died—most of them children. Several days after arriving in Kansas, one of the chiefs insisted on making a statement to Polke. According to Polke, the chief said, "They had now arrived at their journey's end—that the government must now be satisfied. They had been taken from homes affording them plenty and brought to a desert—a wilderness—and were now to be scattered and left as the husbandman scatters his seed."

Menominee died less than three years after arriving in Kansas and is buried there. Almost seventy years later, Indiana acknowledged that the Potawatomi chief had a legitimate claim to the land. In September 1909 the state erected a life-size statue of Menominee at Twin Lakes, southeast of Plymouth, Indiana, near the site of Menominee's vanished village.

Stricken with typhoid fever, Father Petit died while returning to Indiana from Kansas and was buried in Saint Louis, Missouri. He was just twenty-eight years old. In 1856 his body was moved to Indiana and his remains rest under the Log Chapel at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend.

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Essential Questions

- 1 What groups, tribes, or native peoples lived on the land that would become Indiana during the 1700s to 1830s?
- 2 In general, what were some major differences between native cultures and European cultures?
- 3 What was the nature of French–Indian relations? What factors contributed to their relationship?
- 4 How and why did native interactions with the British and later the Americans differ significantly from native interactions with the French?
- 5 In what ways did the cultures of native groups in Indiana change as a result of contact with the Europeans and Americans?
- 6 How did different individuals and/or tribes respond to the increasing threats to their culture and lands posed by American settlers?*
- 7 What strategies did the Americans use to address what they viewed as the Indian menace and to secure land for settlement? What were the effects of these strategies on the native population?*

*See student activities related to this question.

Activity 1: Little Turtle and Tecumseh

Introduction: In this chapter, you read about how contact with French, British, and Americans resulted in profound changes to native life. However, it is important to remember that Indiana’s native people responded in multiple ways; different tribes and even different individuals within tribes responded to threats to their lands, lives, and cultures in different ways. Little Turtle and Tecumseh provide examples of the different courses of action native people followed in an attempt to protect and preserve the lives and customs of their people. Though having previously enjoyed some significant victories over the American forces, the Miami people, led by Little Turtle, suffered

a major defeat by American General Anthony Wayne in 1794 at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. Little Turtle urged other Indian chiefs to sign the resulting Treaty of Greenville; he was convinced that the Americans would leave the Indians alone after they signed over territory that included two-thirds of Ohio and a narrow strip of southeastern Indiana. According to an excerpted speech in an early biography of Little Turtle, he told his people:

We have beaten the enemy twice under separate Commanders. We cannot expect the same good fortune always to attend us. The Americans are now led by a Chief who never sleeps; the night and the day are alike to him and during all the time that he has been marching upon our village notwithstanding the watchfulness of our young men we have never been able to surprise him. Think well of it. There is something whispers to me, it would be prudent to listen to his offers of peace.
(Young, 84)

Many Indians disagreed with Little Turtle’s words, but some followed his plea and signed the Treaty of Greenville.

Little Turtle urged his people to make peace with the Americans; however, the Shawnee warrior Tecumseh, and his brother Tenskwatawa, the Prophet, tried to convince Indians of various tribes to join a confederation that would take up arms against the Americans. They saw that the Treaty of Greenville had been disastrous for native peoples, causing them to become more and more dependent on Americans who sought to destroy native culture. They responded to the devastation they saw in native life and the American deception they perceived by joining with British forces and fighting against the Americans during the War of 1812. In a speech to British Major General Henry Proctor during that war, Tecumseh urged an attack on the Americans, noting:

The Americans have not yet defeated us by land; neither are we sure that they have done so by water; we therefore wish to remain here and fight our enemy, should they make their appearance. If they defeat us, we will

then retreat with our father [Proctor]. . . . Father, you have got the arms and ammunition which our great father [the British king, George III] sent for his red children. If you have an idea of going away, give them to us, and you may go and welcome, for us. Our lives are in the hands of the Great Spirit. We are determined to defend our lands, and if it be his will, we wish to leave our bones upon them. (Drake, 189)

Tecumseh believed his people could only be saved by taking up arms.

► **Consider the excerpt of Little Turtle’s speech:**

- 1 What reasons does Little Turtle give for thinking the Miami should sign the Treaty of Greenville?
- 2 Based upon what you have read about the situation in which the Miami found themselves in 1794 following the Battle of Fallen Timbers, do you agree with Little Turtle’s conclusions or not? Would you advise signing the treaty?
- 3 Review the section of chapter text about Little Turtle, the Treaty of Greenville, and its effects. In retrospect do you think that Little Turtle and others should have signed the treaty or not?

► **Consider Tecumseh’s remarks to Major General Proctor:**

- 1 How does Tecumseh justify his/the confederation’s continued armed resistance against the Americans?
- 2 Based upon what you have read about the state of relations between Tecumseh and the Prophet’s followers and the Americans in the early 1800s, do you agree with the choice to keep fighting? Why or why not?

- 3 Tecumseh died on October 5, 1813, at the Battle of the Thames near present-day Chatham, Ontario, in Canada. For all intents and purposes, Indian resistance east of the Mississippi River ended with Tecumseh’s death. Would you say that native groups fared better under Little Turtle’s approach or under Tecumseh’s approach?

► **Imagine a conversation between Little Turtle and Tecumseh. How would each justify his response to the American threat? What would each hope to save or gain using his approach—land, the lives of his people, the peoples’ culture or way of life? Record your imagined conversation in writing or work with a partner, each expressing one side of the debate. Be sure to base your conversation on what you have learned about Little Turtle, the Miami, and Tecumseh, the Prophet, and their coalition. Try to make an emotional plea about how you think you are helping your people by leading them in this direction.**

Activity 2: The Trail of Death

Introduction: As pointed out in the chapter introduction, an important consideration for historians studying this era is that the vast majority of written accounts are from the European or American perspective rather than from the native perspective. Documents relating to the removal of the Potawatomi from Indiana to Kansas reflect this absence of the native voice. We have to look to the writings of white observers for a firsthand account of the Trail of Death. Father Benjamin Marie Petit, a French Catholic missionary to the Potawatomi, accompanied the tribe on its journey to reservation lands in Kansas. In letters he wrote to Bishop Simon Bruté we get a sense of the hardships endured by the Potawatomi. In one letter, addressed to Bruté and marked “Osage River, Indian Country, November 13, 1838,” Petit writes:

The United States flag, carried by a dragoon; then one of the principal officers, next the staff baggage carts, then the carriage, which during the whole trip was kept for the use of the Indian chiefs; then one or two chiefs on horseback led a line of 250 or 300 horses ridden by men, women, children in single file, after the manner of savages. On the flanks of the line at equal distance from each other were the dragoons and volunteers [soldiers], hastening the stragglers, often with severe gestures and bitter words. After this cavalry came a file of forty baggage wagons filled with luggage and Indians. The sick were lying in them, rudely jolted, under a canvas which, far from protecting them from the dust and heat, only deprived them of air, for they were as if buried under this burning canopy—several died thus. (McKee, 99)

Although clearly still biased (note the use of the word “savages”), Petit provides a sympathetic account of the Potawatomi’s ordeal.

- ▶ **Re-read this excerpt from Petit’s letter and pay special attention to his description of the plight of the stragglers and the sick. Compose a Haiku poem (see instructions below) written from the perspective of a Potawatomi being marched to Kansas.**

Haiku Instructions: Haiku is a traditional Japanese form of poetry that distills a subject down to its essence. Haiku poems are three lines long and adhere to the following syllable count: The first line contains five syllables; the second contains seven syllables; and the third contains five syllables.

- ▶ **Compile a class anthology of your poems or hold a poetry reading session in which you can share your poems if you wish.**

Activity References

- Drake, Benjamin. *Life of Tecumseh and of His Brother, the Prophet, with a Historical Sketch of the Shawanoe Indians*. Cincinnati: Anderson, Gates, and Wright, 1858.
- McKee, Irving. *The Trail of Death: Letters of Benjamin Marie Petit*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1941.
- Young, Calvin M. *Little Turtle, the Great Chief of the Miami Indian Nation: Being a Sketch of His Life Together with that of Wm. Wells and Some Noted Descendents*. Indianapolis: Sentinel Printing, 1917.