

Collection #
P 0882

**SLOCUM DESCENDANTS' REUNION PHOTOGRAPH,
15 AUGUST 1916**

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 1 panoramic photograph in a Flat File folder

COLLECTION DATES: 15 August 1916

PROVENANCE: Gift from Mary J. Lewis of Hawaii, July 2021

RESTRICTIONS: None

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ACCESSION NUMBER: 2021.0119

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

A reunion of descendants of Frances Slocum was held on 15 August 1916 in Peru, Indiana, as part of Miami County's celebration of Indiana's statehood centennial. Events were held all week in that county, with Tuesday, the 15th, being designated as Frances Slocum Day. Nearly one hundred members of the Slocum family attended, coming from various parts of the country. Features of that day included a reception at the courthouse and memorial ceremonies at the Frances Slocum monument nine miles east of Peru.

Mayor William A. Hammond and Reverend Harry Nyce gave speeches to welcome the Slocum visitors. At the Bundy cemetery in Monument Springs, the site of Frances Slocum's burial, Judson Bundy presented another address of welcome, as did Mrs. Mabel Bundy Sausman, a Slocum great-granddaughter. R. Nelson Bennett of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, a Slocum great-grandson, also spoke.

Claude Y. Andrews, the Miami County Centennial chairman, wrote a play for the occasion, which depicted the story of Frances Slocum, from her abduction from Pennsylvania in 1778 by members of the Delaware tribe, to her subsequent life with the Miami tribe in Indiana, leading up to the founding of Peru in 1834. The play was presented on Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday nights in a natural amphitheater with a seating capacity of 8000.

Frances Slocum was born in Rhode Island on 4 March 1773, the seventh of ten children of Jonathan Slocum and Ruth Tripp Slocum. When Frances was little, her Quaker family moved to northeast Pennsylvania. On 2 November 1778, Frances was captured by members of the Delaware tribe. She became a member of the family of a Delaware chief near Niagara Falls, New York, given the name We-let-a-wash, and assimilated into tribal life. The family moved to the area of what became known as Fort Wayne, Indiana. Eventually she married a Miami chief named She-po-co-nah. As Frances was adopted into the Miami tribe, she became known as Ma-con-a-quah, meaning "Little Bear Woman." She and her husband had two sons who died young, and two daughters. Her new family later moved near what is now Peru.

For years, her Slocum family had searched for her but could not find her. In 1835, a trader visited where Frances, then widowed, was living. She told him that she was of European descent and had been captured as a child. She remembered that her family's name was Slocum and that they lived along the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania. This led eventually, in 1837, to two of Frances's brothers and one sister traveling to Peru to meet her. They needed an interpreter, as Frances no longer spoke or understood English. Frances and her visitors were able to confirm that they were all siblings. Her siblings offered to take her home with them to care for her in her old age, but she chose to remain among the people she knew – her Miami family. Other relatives would later make the trip to Indiana to visit Frances. In the fall of 1846, her nephew, George Slocum, moved his family to Indiana to be near her. She passed away on 8 March 1847, with George by her side.

On 17 May 1900, a monument was dedicated to Frances / Ma-con-a-quah in the cemetery where she was buried. In 1965, the graves of Frances, her husband, their children, and others were disinterred and moved to higher ground about two miles to the east in Wabash County, above the Mississinewa River, in advance of the flooding that would occur with the construction of the Mississinewa Reservoir.

Sources:

“Celebration Opens: Miami County Churches Observe Day With Special Services.” *The Indianapolis News*, 14 August 1916, p. 8.

“Peru Observes Centennial Day with Pageant.” *The Richmond Palladium and Sun-Telegram*, 15 August 1916, p. 2.

“Reunion of Slocum Family at The Miami County Celebration.” *Logansport Daily Tribune*, 13 August 1916, p. 2.

Slocum, Charles Elihu. *History of Frances Slocum: The Captive*. Published by the author, Defiance, Ohio, 1908. General Collection: E87 .S62 1908

“Slocum Reunion is Held: Feature of Miami County Centennial Celebration Attracts Crowd.” *The Indianapolis News*, 16 August 1916, p. 5.

“The March of Pageantry in Indiana.” *The Ferdinand News*, 25 August 1916, p. 3.

Thompson, Micheal L. *Little Bear Woman: The Story of Frances Slocum As Told by Her 5th Great Grandson*. [Self-published], 2008. General Collection: E87 .S615 T5 2008

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of one panoramic photograph that is a group portrait of descendants of Frances Slocum taken on 15 August 1916 outside the courthouse in Peru, Indiana, as part of Miami County's celebration of Indiana's statehood centennial. In a week-long series of events, August 15th was designated as Frances Slocum Day. The photo shows nearly one hundred men, women, and children, some in Native American dress with painted faces. No individuals are identified.

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Panoramic photo (approx. 10 x 32.5 inches) shows nearly one hundred men, women, and children posed outside the Miami County Courthouse in Peru, Indiana. Some appear in Native American dress with painted faces. Written on back: "Pictures of Slocums. Taken Aug. 15, 1916, in front of Miami Co. Court house, Peru, Miami Co., Indiana. Many of the descendants of Frances Slocum. Also, some of the Pale face Slocums and some neighbors and friends."

CONTAINER

Flat File 8-h,
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