

SPECIAL ISSUE Howard County's 175th Anniversary

Volume 8, Issue 2, May 2019

Footprints

A publication of the Howard County Historical Society

Village on the Wildcat

A new story for Kokomo

From the executive director

Do you recall this famous movie quote from *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* — "When the legend becomes fact, print the legend"?

It's a nearly unforgettable, and occasionally harmful, batch of baloney. The quote is particularly poignant today as people sling public accusations around about "fake news" and "alternative facts." "Print the legend" and the attitude it represents may sell newspapers and internet articles and attract radio and television viewers. Unfortunately, it perpetuates falsehoods in the interest of making money.

Historians face real challenges sorting out the legends that have been printed from the actual facts, by which I mean demonstrable facts of the non-alternative variety. One challenge is recognizing and compensating for their own bias. Another is the tendency of all people to live in social bubbles and see the world through the same rose-colored glasses as their bubble-mates. If you suspect that I'm suggesting we live in a Howard County bubble of sorts, you are correct.

The founding of Howard County can provide good examples of "print the legend" reporting, with stories that have grown and morphed through the years. In this issue of Footprints, as we observe the county's 175th birthday, we hope to alter the trajectory of some of the legends, to open the windows and let in some Indiana sunshine. Gil Porter's research, right down to primary sources, provides a more nuanced understanding of what was happening in the Great Miami Reserve in the 1840s, and Howard County Historian Jon Russell puts those years into a larger context.

As we've done in the past with the image and legends of the Miami chief Kokomo and some of the Kokomo "firsts," we're trying to set the record straight. We're sharing the factual history, which is every bit as fascinating as the legend.

Dave Broman
HCHS Executive Director

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In this issue:

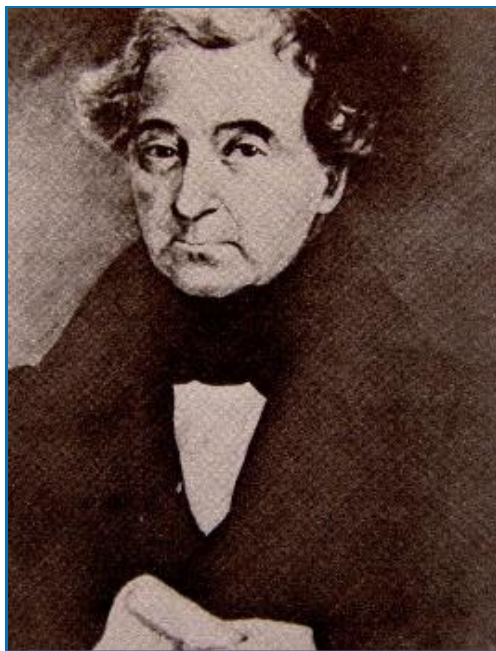
- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2 From the executive director | 16 County almost named for a governor |
| 3 Long road to forming Howard County | 17 The unexpected treaty |
| 6 Feature: Village on the Wildcat | 18 References |
| 14 The 'Kokomo' name | 19 Membership |
| 15 The Miami people today | |

The long road to the forming of Indiana's last county: Howard

By Jon Russell
Howard County Historian

Howard County bears the unique distinction of being the only county that was completely a part of the Big Miami Reserve — and also the only county to have had its name changed.

Originally named for Miami Civil Chief Jean Baptiste de Richardville, aka Peshewa or “Wildcat,” “Richardville County” would be renamed a few years after its founding to “Howard County.” Now named for Tilghman Ashurst Howard, a former U.S. Representative from Indiana and chargé d'affaires to the Republic of Texas, some claimed it was easier for the settlers to pronounce. The name



Howard County was originally named for Miami Chief Jean Baptiste de Richardville.

“Richardville” was pronounced the French way — sort of “Ree-sharr (rolled “r” sound)-vel-ah”. (So, okay, “Howard” has it.)

Part 1

Long before the state we call “Indiana” existed, before any man of any nation stepped foot within its boundaries, there was the land, and it was ever changing.

The last of the great glaciers, named the Wisconsin Glacier, covered the northern two-thirds of the state, leaving sediment that geologists call “till.” The most important area is found in the central part of the state, referred to as the Tipton Till Plain. The land within this area is considered some of the most fertile in the world. It is blessed with an abundance of water and sunshine, of flat lands and gently rolling terrain. Vegetation flourishes; it would become the most desired farming area of the state.

The southern third of the state was not covered by the glacier. Though the southeastern and southwestern areas are flatter and have better farmland, the central triangle that ranges from Morgan County south to the Ohio River is hilly and lacks the rich soils. Though it did have some appeal to the early pioneers, its commercial and agricultural value grew less important as the 19th century advanced.

Along with soil and terrain, the rivers and lakes also were important to both Native Americans and early Europeans as they traveled the area. Left by the receding glaciers, these waterways, in particular the St. Joseph, Kankakee, Maumee and Wabash rivers, along with Lake Michigan, were the “highways” of the territory. These would link exploration and trade routes to the Ohio and Mississippi, then to the Gulf of Mexico, and from there the colonies on the eastern shore and Europe.

The land now known as Indiana contained more than 36,000 square miles, most of which were covered with dense forest, so dense that

early explorers remarked that "... a bird cannot fly ..." through its dense foliage. It is estimated that 2.2 billion trees grew thick and tall, but by the end of the Civil War, Hoosiers had cut down two-thirds of those trees. One such tree, a sycamore, had a circumference of more than 50 feet. It was cut down in 1916, its stump preserved at Highland Park. And, as mentioned in a previous article, for logs 29 feet long and 24 inches wide to have been milled, the tree would have had to have been at least 100 feet tall. In addition to sycamore, there were also black walnut, buckeye, oak, beech, sugar maple, tulip poplar and cypress. There were marshes and prairies of grasses and wildflowers. All that changed with the arrival of humans, even though it was the land, plants and waterways that determined how men would live.

It is believed that the earliest humans traveled across a land bridge from northern Asia into North America near the end of the last Ice Age. These were diverse peoples that settled this area prior to the 1600s and the Euro-American introduction. These early settlers were hunter-gatherers. Not much is known about these people nor their culture specifically. Archeologists label them "pre-historic" because they left no written history or language. We only have the evidence of their existence from physical artifacts, burial remains and manmade changes to the landscape.

Pre-historic people are studied within the terms of four cultural stages: Paleo-Indian Tradition (to circa 7500 BC); Archaic Tradition (about 8000 to 700 BC); Woodland Tradition (1000 BC to 1200 AD); and Mississippian Tradition (about AD 1000 to 1650). The most complex of these eras is the Mississippian, and the most important site in Indiana is Angel Mounds near Evansville. Far too much information exists beyond this to continue with these stages of Indiana history except to note that the link between the pre-historic cultures and historic Indians has not been determined.

The indigenous people that eventually came into contact with Europeans were of the Algonquian Language Family (Algic). Throughout the 17th and early 18th centuries, many different

tribes lived within the area of the Great Lakes and the Ohio River. The most predominant of these were the Miami and the Potawatomi, who had migrated into the area from the north and east to settle near the Wabash, Maumee and Miami rivers. They generally avoided the hilly land in the south that was unaffected by the glaciers. Most were engaged in agriculture, corn being their staple diet, which they traded with other tribes and eventually the French. Later, the Delaware and Shawnee settled in the area, resulting in a more complex ethnic mix, sometimes leading to conflict.

Politically, tribal government was decentralized with the authority of the village chief more determined by personal influence than position within the community. The Miami had more structure in their leadership than the Potawatomi. The system included a principal chief and a grand council of village, band and clan chiefs who would meet periodically in Kekionga (now Fort Wayne), though no one had complete leadership over all the Indians. The white traders and negotiators found this perplexing, often frustrating.

The French were historically the first Europeans to explore this region, trading both goods and culture with the Indians. The French farmed according to the European practice of cooperative and communal land use, producing enough crops to take care of their own needs and shipping a large surplus down river to New Orleans.

After the French came the British, and by the 18th century, the Anglo-American, in particular the "Scotch-Irish," who ventured across the Appalachian Mountains, first challenging the French and British ties with the Indians and then the Indians themselves for the use of the land.

The Americans found the French customs radically different from their own and often believed the French were lazy. The French, on the other hand, viewed Americans as ruffians who were prone to drunkenness and fighting. They particularly found the American penchant for eye gouging to be revolting. But the French communities were small and not able to compete with the Americans, and their influence

continued to fade away into the 19th century, leaving only a few names in place: Versailles, Dubois, Terre Haute — all with distinctly non-French pronunciation.

The British had already been a major source of anxiety for the French, and their quest for empire and dominance brought the two nations into conflict. Between 1689 and 1763, they were often at war. The culmination of this struggle would be known in Europe as the Seven Years War, and in North America as the French and Indian War. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 effectively removed France from North America, leaving the British in control of Canada and the upper mid-west. Spain would take over the administration of Louisiana from 1763 until 1801, when it was retroceded to France (who proceeded to sell it to the Americans in order to continue fighting wars with Britain, and others). The British now had dominance over the Great Lakes area — so it seemed. Their methods of dealing with the Indians was much less favorable when compared to the French, and the Americans were becoming much more interested in the territory west of the Appalachians. They also looked upon British domination in that region as undesirable.

The Proclamation of 1763 not only made no provision for French to remain settled within the area, but the Proclamation Line of 1763, attempted to restrain speculation and settlement by Americans. However, this would have little effect in keeping them out. By the 1770s, they had moved out of Pennsylvania and the South, down the Ohio and up through the southern mountains into British territory. And to make matters worse for the British (and the Indians), many of these settlers were Scots-Irish, men with little use for the English king's regulations. The divide between the British Empire and the American colonies grew.

The tribes of the Wabash valley had not yet felt the pressure of this rift, but had heard tales from other Indians of their displacement by the new Americans. Though the Quebec Act of 1774 continued to discourage the colonists by incorporating the area into the province of Quebec, it only angered them further, creating the

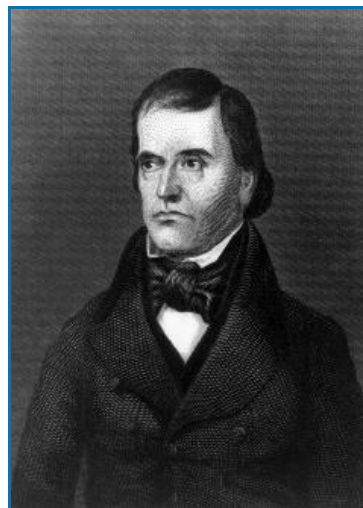
belief that their exclusion was part of a greater conspiracy by the Crown to deny their rights and freedoms.

By 1777, the colonies were in revolution against the British Crown. At the most important post in the newly proclaimed "Province" land, Detroit, Lieutenant Governor Henry Hamilton convened a

meeting of the tribal leaders, including those of the Miami and Potawatomi, urging them to take up arms as allies of the British. This would begin a series of Indian attacks on American settlements in Kentucky. Hatred, atrocity and bloodshed became the pattern that would continue even after the American Revolution ended. As the settlers huddled in their forts, one of them, a 25-year-old surveyor and militia major, decided that the "best defense would be a daring offense." The settlers hated the Indians, but even more they believed that the British under Hamilton, the "hair buyer general" (from a belief, not conclusive, that Hamilton paid for scalps), were behind it all.

The opportunity for anyone wanting to stem the tide of Americans into the territory basically ended when, in the depths of winter of 1779, that young major, George Rogers Clark, led the surprise attack that would defeat the British at Fort Sackville (Vincennes). The expansion into the "Territory Northwest of the River Ohio" quickened.

The next column will continue our look at the road into the Old Northwest Territory, the establishment of "Indiana Territory," statehood and the development of the counties.



Tilghman Howard, for whom the county was later named.

Village on the Wildcat

A new story for Kokomo

By Gil Porter
HCHS Publications Committee Member

Part 1: Place of the Miami

To the Miami Indians, time is like a pond, and “events are like stones dropped in water.”

For hundreds of years, they have measured the history of their lives by gauging the effects of the ripples. Life is always oriented to waterways. Since at least the 17th century, the Miami have built their homes in the area they call *Myaamionki*, or “Place of the Miami.” *Waapaahšiki Siipionki*, the valley of the Wabash River in northcentral Indiana, is the heart of *Myaamionki*.

Over time, the stones became boulders in the water. Beginning with the Indian Removal Act of 1830, federal policy supported “extinguishing” Indian title to land, i.e. eliminating the right of self-determination for the Indians. The U.S. government and the Miami signed a series of treaties beginning in 1795 that culminated in 1840 when Miami tribal government was forced to “move west” to Kansas. Moreover, the term “removal” for the Miami tribe in Indiana is somewhat misleading because, by treaty and legislation, many were permitted to stay, and some who left later returned.

This effort to erase tribal government was met with resolute resistance. In 1832, the Miami expressed their opposition to the “endless calls” to give up their reservation in no uncertain terms: “Here the Great Spirit has fixed our homes. Here are our cornfields and our cabins. From this soil and these forests we derive our subsistence and here we will live and die. I repeat, we will not sell an inch of our land.”

The source of the quote was in the prime of

his life, the principal akima, or civil chief, for the Miami, fluent in commerce and politics, an affluent landowner through inheritance and treaty allotments. When Indiana was created in 1816, he was probably the richest individual in the state, and possibly the richest Indian in America.

He had grown up in a mixed society of tribal tradition and Christian catechism, part Miami, part French. His father, Antoine Joseph Drouet de Richardville, was a fur trader at *Kiihkayonki* (Fort Wayne). His mother, *Tahkamwah*, sister of the Miami village chief, was an “active business woman” who, after a messy divorce from de Richardville, assumed control of the pivotal – and very profitable -- Maumee-Wabash longportage site. Her son inherited the portage and her other substantial holdings when she died around 1790. His Myaamia kin knew him as *Pinšiwā*. In French and later English, he was Jean Baptiste Richardville.

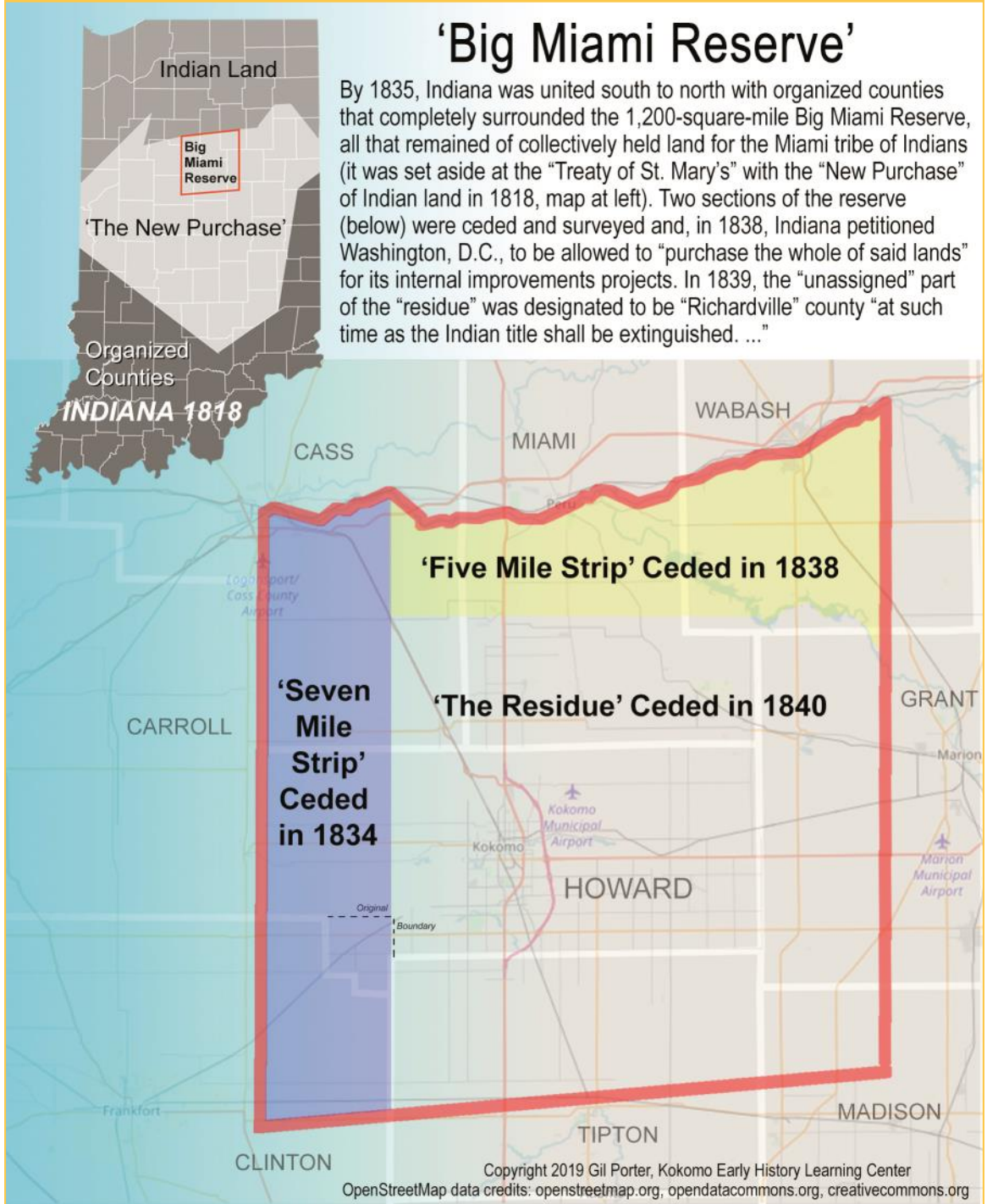
Part 2: At the rapids of the Wildcat

The “Treaty with the Miami, 1840” (“Forks of the Wabash” Nov. 28, 1840) was a devastating boulder dropped on that Miami pond of history, causing waves that are still felt today. Not only had the tribe ceded the last of their lands (except for individual and family reserves), but Article 8 of the treaty defined their future grimly: to “remove to the country assigned them west of the Mississippi, within five years of this date.”

Article 10 of the 1840 treaty set aside seven sections of land (including one in Howard County) for Richardville, and one – “at the rapids of Wildcat”* – to Richardville’s son-in-law and successor as principal chief, Francis Lafontaine.

'Big Miami Reserve'

By 1835, Indiana was united south to north with organized counties that completely surrounded the 1,200-square-mile Big Miami Reserve, all that remained of collectively held land for the Miami tribe of Indians (it was set aside at the "Treaty of St. Mary's" with the "New Purchase" of Indian land in 1818, map at left). Two sections of the reserve (below) were ceded and surveyed and, in 1838, Indiana petitioned Washington, D.C., to be allowed to "purchase the whole of said lands" for its internal improvements projects. In 1839, the "unassigned" part of the "residue" was designated to be "Richardville" county "at such time as the Indian title shall be extinguished. ..."



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(* “Wildcat Creek” was thought to have been named for Richardville, whose Miami-Illinois name was Pinšīwa, or “wildcat.” In “Native American Place-Names of Indiana,” (2008) Indiana University linguist Michael McCafferty says the name refers to a geological feature of the mouth of the Wildcat Creek called pinšīwa-amootayi, literally “belly of the bobcat.” Thus Pinšīwaamootayi siipīwi in English was “Wildcat Paunch Creek,” eventually shortened to “Wildcat Creek.” Documented 18th-century sources for these names predate the Miami chief.)

Neither Lafontaine nor Richardville ever lived on their reserves in Howard County, and the section Lafontaine “surveyed under his direction” sometime in 1841 was transferred by “indenture” deed that October to Allen Hamilton. A Fort Wayne banker, merchant, Indian agent and one-term state senator, Hamilton operated “the most powerful trading-house” on the Upper Wabash and had been not only Chief Richardville’s “business advisor,” but his “confidential friend.” When Richardville died in 1841, most of his land holdings transferred to Hamilton. Hamilton and Lafontaine also jointly maintained an extensive portfolio of properties throughout *Myaamionki* in the Wabash Valley.

Hamilton held onto the “Lafontaine Reserve No. 6” for two years and two months, transferring the title by “deed of conveyance” on Jan. 17, 1844, to a 36-year-old cabinet-maker from Virginia who two years earlier had tramped through the woods with his 29-year-old wife and six children, ages 10 down to an infant. Their home was a combination cabin/trading post in a clearing about a hundred yards north of the “rapids of Wildcat” right in the heart of the reserve section they now owned. His name was David Foster.

Part 3: Residue of the Reserve

As the northern area of Indiana took shape with the arrival of Euro-Americans and the removal of the Indian tribes by treaties, Indiana’s state legislature in 1835 named 14 new “paper” counties for organization, thus effec-

tively uniting the entire state of Indiana from south to north. These entities completely surrounded the 1,200-square-mile Big Miami Reserve, the largest territory in the state not incorporated into an existing county and all that remained of collectively held land for the Miami tribe of Indians.

Two sections of the reserve – the western Seven Mile Strip in 1834 and the northern Five Mile Strip in 1838 -- had been siphoned to help subsidize the Wabash & Erie Canal and were the first areas surveyed and sold to settlers. In March 1838, the Indiana General Assembly informed Congress in Washington, D.C., that the remaining reserve land will “in a few years, become very valuable” and formally requested that the state be allowed to “purchase the whole of said lands” to “aid in the prosecution” of “public works” for its new citizens. On Feb. 16, 1839, the Indiana legislature then “temporarily” assigned “the untouched central area” of the reserve to adjoining counties for judicial purposes and this “residue” was designated to be “Richardville” county “at such time as the Indian title shall be extinguished. ...” The Forks of the Wabash treaty in Huntington in November 1840 was all but a *fait accompli*.

For five years, settlers poured in ahead of the public land survey, much of the Miami population prepared for a wrenching removal, and the legislature in Indianapolis more than once heard from the “citizens of Richardville county” who were “praying for its organization.” On Jan. 10, 1844, debate began on the bill in the General Assembly that would finally organize the last two named counties in Indiana. Tipton was actually introduced with the name “Cicero” (the Tipton name had been considered for other counties as early as 1840 and on its own in 1843). The name “Richardville” was challenged when an amendment sought to “strike the word Richardville and replace it with Whitcomb” (James Whitcomb was Indiana’s governor).

This name change was defeated, the bill was approved, and on Jan. 15, 1844, the new counties of Tipton and Richardville were born, at least on paper.

Part 4: Almost to Heaven

To get to the Big Miami Reserve in 1844 from the south, the easiest route would have been to use the Michigan Road, which connected Indianapolis with Logansport and passed directly along the west side of the reserve. Built north of the Wabash River on land conveyed by the Potawatomi Indians in the Treaty of 1826 and to the south by federal land grant, it was conceived as a "public highway" from Lake Michigan to the Ohio River.

David and Elizabeth Foster used it to get to Burlington from Morgan County, arriving on May 13, 1837. In 1840, they moved to the eastern edge of the Seven Mile Strip. Their home/store sat about a half-mile north of Wildcat Creek on the original boundary line between Ervin and Clay townships (now County Road 600 West). From there, the family moved in 1842 to the north side of the "rapids of Wildcat." On high ground about a quarter of a mile south of the creek, as their daughter Amanda Foster Welsh later recalled, was Kokomo's Indian village.

Contemporaneous accounts provide more clues about the people and the land, like a November 1845 "Sketch of the Late Miami Reservation in Indiana" in the *Indiana State Sentinel*.

After arriving from Indianapolis, the writer notes the lands are not yet surveyed, but settlers are "flocking in" and "making claims in all directions." Topographically, the land is level and covered with heavy timber, but apparently "too wet for cultivation" in many places. The people are "hardy" and "enterprising," indicating they "deserve the highest praise for their industry and perseverance."

Of particular interest were the women the writer encountered. One "young married lady," who had been in the reserve for "two or three years," was every bit as "polished" as other ladies in the state. When asked how she endured the "want of society" that she experienced living remotely, she replied that "she took her gun and ranged the forest for recreation."

She later treated the writer to a dinner of venison, "with other dainties," that made the mouth water. The young woman and her family, the writer reports, "had a delightful situation, near a small stream, with a spring gushing forth near their residence."

Upon reaching Wildcat Creek, our guide was

generous with admiration describing the scene. "Along this stream, and for miles on either side, is the finest timbered country I have ever seen in the West, and land which has proved to be almost unsurpassed in fertility." Tall poplars reached "almost to heaven," some six to eight feet in diameter. The writer estimated they could easily produce "six to eight saw logs twelve feet in length."

Furthermore, many of the forest "giants" he saw seemed "capable of furnishing lumber for a respectable building from a single tree." He reported seeing "thousands" of these trees "for miles" in the county, interspersed with the finest "sugar orchards." Contemporary Myaamia research shows this magnificence reflected Indian presence, the direct result of generations of cultivation and fire management practiced by the Miami, and other tribes, in the area.

So this may be what the land looked like and how the people lived – including generations of Miami — as seen by another select group of visitors when they arrived in the newly named county. These travelers probably also came north from Indianapolis along the Michigan Road. It was springtime, and five locating commissioners had been dispatched by the General Assembly to establish the courts and hold elections, with their mandate "of fixing the permanent seat of justice in the said county of Richardville." Per the Jan. 15 act, the legislature directed the commissioners to "meet at the house of John Harrison" on the "second Monday in May." As the record doesn't indicate otherwise, they arrived in the Seven Mile Strip on May 13, 1844.

Part 5: A Claim against the Tribe

In 1840, about 700 Miami Indians may have been in Indiana, and about 200 in what is now Howard County. The largest Indian village in the county, according to the 1846-1847 land survey, was at Cassville on the banks of Deer Creek's South Fork. The surveyor's record shows this as "an Old Indian Clearing." Indian "wigwams" on the north bank of the Wildcat are also marked on the 1838 survey plat at today's County Road 750 West (the New London road). Another village was located south of what is now Greentown, on "a bluff on the north bank of Wildcat Creek." And there was Kokomo's village, on the south side of the creek.

This Indian presence indicates “permanence and persistence” and provides a picture of a true “cultural mosaic” in northcentral Indiana. Historian R. David Edmunds, quoted in James Joseph Buss’ “Winning the West with Words: Language and Conquest in the Lower Great Lakes,” notes that the Potawatomi and Miami people were “remarkably adaptive” societies that combined “traditional tribal values with many new ideas offered to them by Europeans.”

Mahkoonsahkwa’s (Francis Slocum [Maconaquah]) home southeast of Peru, for example, provides further evidence of a settled, self-determining society in the Wabash Valley before the governments changed. Writer Otho Winger (1936) relates that a visitor in the 1830s describes “a large spring from which flowed a large stream of water the year around,” and that near her house were “other buildings” where animals were kept as “well as corn and hay to feed.” What’s more, Mahkoonsahkwa and her family “had many Indian ponies, many hogs and some cattle.” Corn was harvested, along with pumpkins, squashes, and beans. They raised chickens and geese.

Corn and pumpkins were ripening in the field, and the writer describes “a ridge of low hills covered with trees,” and how the early frost had caused the leaves “to turn brown and golden already,” an altogether beautiful scene from the vantage of the Mississinewa River, which “flowed right in front of their door.” The bounty of *Nimacihsinwi Siipiiwi* (the Mississinewa) provided sustenance, as the Miami drew from the water fish, crawfish and fresh water mussels, and along its banks hunted or trapped deer, opossum, raccoon, skunk, squirrel, rabbit and beaver. The reserve’s southern area featured *ahsenaamishahka* (sugarbush) areas; *iihkisaminki* -- maple sugar – the sap was an important resource the Miami annually extracted during the spring thaw.

Indeed, *Mahkoonsahkwa* was quoted as saying that if she had to leave “she would be like an old tree that would die if you removed it to another place.”

Scholarship further shows that the “wide array of habitats” within the Miami reservation allowed the tribe to “practice a range of lifestyles.” Fixed villages with an assortment of home types featured everything from log cabins to wood-framed and brick houses. The May 1839 land survey of the Five Mile Strip described the “Indian Village”

on Pipe Creek as containing “10 houses.” Some Miami men were longtime traders themselves; others raised cattle and hogs. The Miami practiced agriculture well before contact with Europeans. Women tended the crops. Small groups hunted along the Wildcat and Pipe creeks. In sum, the reserve supported a “diverse tribal population in multiple local and regional economies for their livelihood.”

David Foster seemed to have an affinity for this society. For five years, his merchandise became so tailored to the tribe that one historian says he carried nothing “the white people wanted.” Moving closer and closer to their territory, he and Elizabeth finally removed the entire family – three girls and three boys, all under the age of 12 by 1844 – from the settler-friendly Seven Mile Strip right into the reserve at the rapids of Wildcat. They were squatters on unceded land. We know little about how this combined culture co-existed for some two years, other than an important document they left that plays a crucial role in our story.

New research reveals Foster’s connection with the Miami included a claim for debts and satisfying this claim may have been part of the sequence of events leading to the location of the Richardville County seat.

Article 3 of the 1840 Forks of the Wabash treaty created a commission to examine debt claims before removal; it stipulated that the debt must have been accrued “since” the Nov. 6, 1838, treaty and before the “ratification” of the 1840 treaty (which occurred in June 1841). Government records from 1842 show Foster and a John N. Miller were owed \$2,130.90, so the debt was either from when Foster was in Burlington (1837-1840) or when he was on the Seven Mile Strip boundary line at what is now County Road 600 West (1840-1842).

Let’s look at some dates: Indiana petitions the U.S. Congress for the rest of the reserve in 1838, “Richardville” County is designated in 1839, Foster’s debt dates to around 1840, and the 640-acre Reserve No. 6 “at the rapids of Wildcat” is granted to Lafontaine at the 1840 treaty. Is it possible that Allen Hamilton, as one of the “unofficial” U.S. commissioners at the treaty (see “1840: The ‘Unexpected’ Treaty,” page 17), wanted to put that parcel in the hands of Lafontaine with the expectation it would be the prime location for the county seat “once the Indian title is extinguished?” As of this writing, no correspondence

has been found between Hamilton and Foster, but we know Foster was well-acquainted with Lafontaine. Orchestrating a transfer that ensures clear title for land deemed valuable and that would result in the “prestige and commercial advantages” of a county seat could be seen as a vital part of the reserve’s ultimate transformation. That the Foster family is in place on the Wildcat well ahead of the public land survey may have been fortuitous. But Foster having the property in his possession on Jan. 17, 1844, two days after Richardville County is created by an act of the Indiana legislature, can hardly be called coincidence. Yet it may be Foster had something else in mind, which we will see shortly.

What is certain is the five locating commissioners arrived in the reserve on Monday, May 13, 1844. Seeking a suitable site for the seat of justice, they were bound by both the Jan. 15, 1844, act creating Richardville County and the Jan. 14, 1824, act regarding “Seats of Justice in New Counties,” which states county seats should be in a position “central and permanent.” Foster had clear title to property in the middle of the reserve (perchance arranged by Hamilton?), so they really had no choice.

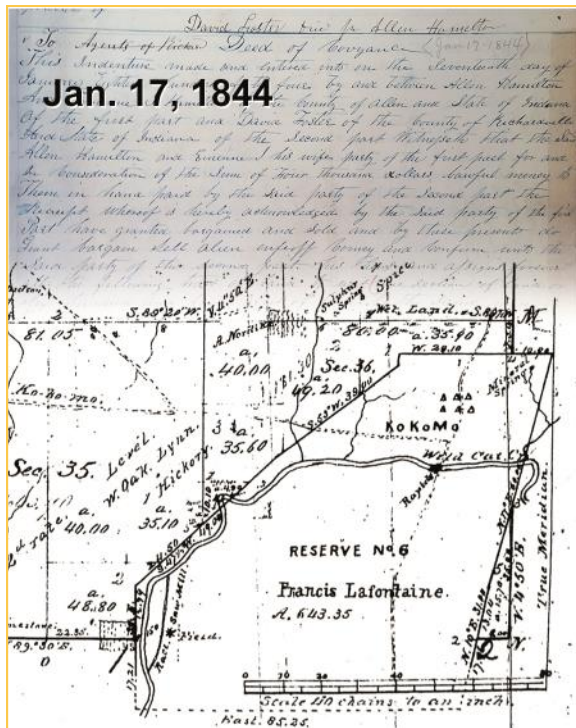
They also weren’t here very long. On Wednesday, May 15, just two days after arrival, they had a signed title bond (with a consideration of \$5,000 from Foster), specifying the exact location of the boundary marker “at the north west corner of said section at a stone marked (D)” and included the dimensional description for 40 acres on the north side of the creek. In exchange for a warranty deed to the property, the locating commissioners would locate the new county’s seat of justice “on lands belonging to said David Foster.”

All that was needed was a name for “the site of a town.” The first county elections were held 12 days later. When the newly elected county commissioners acknowledged receipt of the locating commissioners’ report and Foster’s title bond at their meeting in August 1844, they immediately renamed the county’s three original districts: “Monroe” in the west, “Green Township” in the east, and, for the unincorporated county seat in the center, “Kocomo.”

Part 6: The Congressional Record

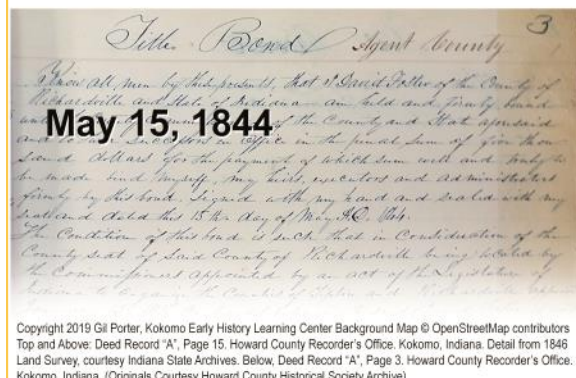
Sarah Tumpkin, an 86-year-old widow in Zionsville, contacted the Howard County clerk at one time, to obtain a copy of her marriage

Jan. 17, 1844



FROM LAFONTAINE TO FOSTER ... Miami chief Francis Lafontaine surveyed and transferred his 643 35/100th acres (above) to Fort Wayne's Allen Hamilton in October 1841. Hamilton transferred the title to David Foster on Jan. 17, 1844 (top). Foster's title bond signed with the state's locating commissioners on May 15, 1844 (below), included his donation of 40 acres to establish the county seat and is the legal start of Richardville County.

May 15, 1844



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Top and Above: Deed Record "A", Page 15. Howard County Recorder's Office, Kokomo, Indiana. Detail from 1848
Land Survey, courtesy Indiana State Archives. Below: Deed Record "A", Page 3. Howard County Recorder's Office,
Kokomo, Indiana. (Originals Courtesy Howard County Historical Society Archive)

license.

As the *Kokomo Tribune* reported on Jan. 26, 1914, Tumpkin, who married George W. Tumpkin on Christmas Day 1847 (the license was retrieved), was a daughter of John Harrison, the county's first elected sheriff (misidentified in that 1914 *Tribune* article as "Eli" Harrison). Also attributed to Mrs. Tumpkin were details of her parents' home "on the Wildcat creek about three miles north of New London," that she was "thirteen when the family moved to Howard County" in 1841, and in particular her knowledge of "the proceedings" around the choice for the county seat and her father having an active part in them.

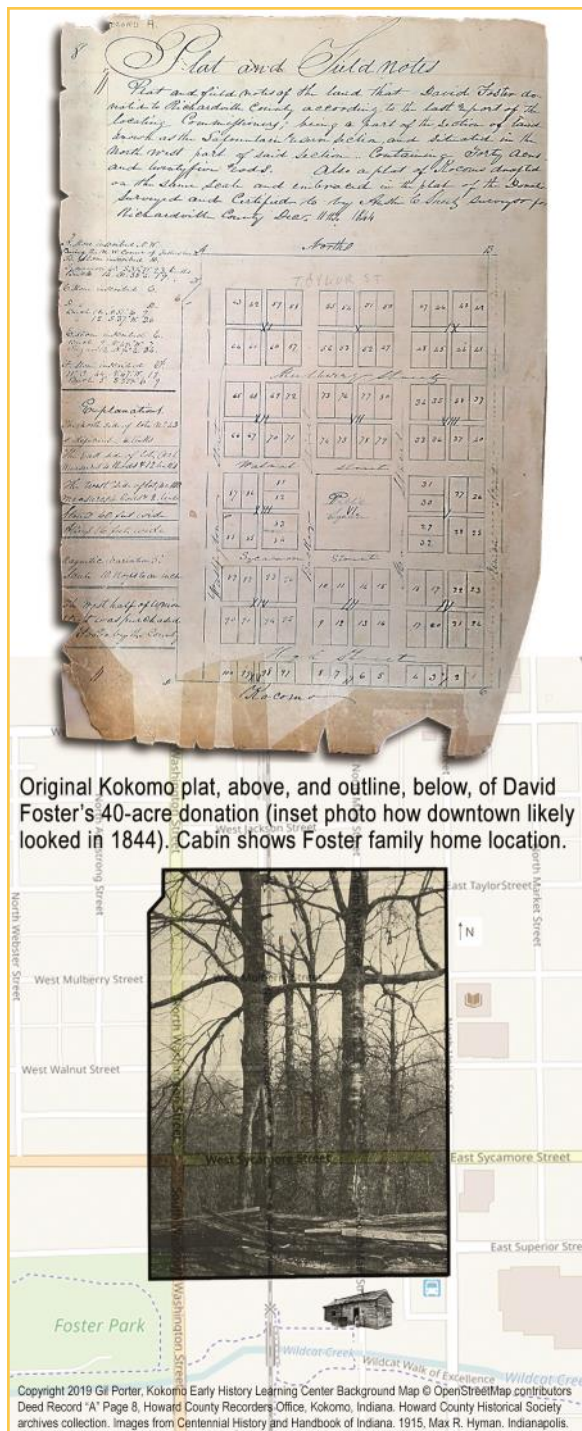
She remembers David Foster, the newspaper reported, and knew the city when the "only house on it was Foster's cabin." The county, she said, was still covered with timber and was "an Indian reserve." Mrs. Tumpkin also remembered that when her parents first settled in the county, their home was about two miles from an Indian village called *Shapendocia* (emphasis added; in Miami: *Saapontohsia*).

Harrison's farm was just east of the first reserve in the county granted to an Indian – the Peter Longlois reserve from the Treaty of 1834 (which today is the Green Acres subdivision), too close to be the Indian village Mrs. Tumpkin referenced. However, her recollection does correlate to the location for a village described by Miami leader Wapamungwah (Thomas F. Richardville), a great-grandson of Pinšiwā (Jean Baptiste Richardville) -- a Miami village known by the name *Saapontohsia*.

This name appears again, as part of the Congressional Record for the United States of America.

On Jan. 30, 1846, in Washington, D.C., John Pettit, a member of the House of Representatives for the state of Indiana at the 29th U.S. Congress, offered four petitions on behalf of constituents: two about paying chaplains from treasury funds, a third concerning a post-road from Lafayette to Marion and a fourth that perhaps provides new perspective for us today about the people living in the "Village on the Wildcat."

To wit: A petition from 10 Miami Indians and their families, "praying" that they "may be allowed to remain in the county, instead of moving west of the Mississippi."



Original Kokomo plat, above, and outline, below, of David Foster's 40-acre donation (inset photo how downtown likely looked in 1844). Cabin shows Foster family home location.

Putting their support emphatically on the record, the petition was also signed by 101 “white men residing on the Great Miami reservation.” Howard County population figures were not reported until the 1850 federal census. However, the Indiana *state* census in 1845 recorded “444” white males in Richardville County (“274” had “voted” in the 1844 election). So, an estimated one-fourth of the “white males” in Richardville County were standing with their Indian neighbors, calling for continuity in their community. Their application additionally included an unprecedented and potentially narrative-changing request: not only to have the Indians stay, but that they “be allowed to purchase and sell land as citizens.”

Two individuals are identified as the petitioners, a white man, David Foster, and a Miami Indian, *Šaapontohsia*, perhaps the primary-source representatives of two cultures striving to be one community. An old record from the past, and a new story for our town.

Afterward: The river is the narrative

As a result of removals and private land distribution, the Miami Indians eventually evolved into two units. Today, the Miami Indians of Indiana maintain non-profit status as a local history resource that manages Myaamia lands in and around Peru, Indiana. The Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, headquartered in Miami, Oklahoma, is the U.S. federally recognized nation where tribal members can apply for citizenship. Geographically separate and organizationally distinct, these relatives nonetheless share a common history and a passionate commitment to cultural and linguistic re-vitalization, education and community outreach. For history researchers, their joint contribution is invaluable.

Today, with the Wildcat as its nucleus, a new non-profit organization – the Kokomo Early History Learning Center – has started to share knowledge and promote education about Kokomo up to 1865. Conceived and founded by a descendant of David Foster, the center works closely with local history groups, Native tribes, and educational institutions as part of its mission. There are plans for a new greenspace near *Pinšywaamootayi šiipiwi* in Kokomo, where modern inhabitants can tend today's gardens in the an-

cient soil. It will reflect Miami culture. There will be persimmon and paw paw, blackberries and raspberries, sassafras and squash, melons and milkweed, the latter having had dual purpose in Miami culture: as a waypoint for monarch butterfly migration and as a food source for the people in springtime.

So much as changed in 175 years. Downtown Kokomo's progression is self-evident. Though still proud of its agricultural and industrial heritage, today you'll find comfortable restaurants with locally sourced menus, interesting storefronts and a municipal summer-league baseball stadium doubling as a skating rink in winter. Something continues to draw humans to this place.

Maybe the blueprint can be found in the archives. In September 1844, the first newspaper advertisements appeared in Indianapolis, extolling a brand-new town near the “Wild Cat, a stream not excelled for water power.” The first 32 lots of land were to be sold on Oct. 18, essentially an invitation for new residents to come and join the community at “Kokomotown, the County Seat of Richardville County.” The new arrivals, and the Indians whose community they joined, left us a record of transition, a fascinating, chaotic attempt to connect cultures. Only now are we beginning to understand more about the efforts of those people along the Wildcat in 1844, the triumphs they celebrated, the progress they initiated, and the suffering so many experienced.

And what about the 1846 petition from *Šaapontohsia* requesting that the Miami and their families be allowed to stay in the community? It was referred to the House Committee on Indian Affairs, which, on March 27, 1846, made an “adverse report” on the petition, “which reports were laid upon the table.” The petition was denied, but the name *Šaapontohsia* is found on the lists published later of those exempted from removal, so the community effort may ultimately have been successful for some.

To the Miami, “the river is the narrative.” The stream of history is unceasing. Like the Wildcat, it ebbs and flows, and where cultures are combined, like in Kokomotown, overlaps. The research helps us see clues in the currents, and each discovery – like the *Šaapontohsia*-Foster petition -- only creates new questions. It's like the beauty of the flowing river, how it stays the same yet is forever changed.

The 'Kokomo' name

By Gil Porter

It was the day after Christmas, the year 1844, and in the Indiana House, Mr. Blakemore had the floor.

Rep. George Blakemore offered on behalf of the citizens of Cass County a petition for a state road to originate from Logansport. Its named destination that December in the Indiana General Assembly records actually is an early primary-source reference to "Kokomo" with that spelling.

The first-ever primary-source reference is found in "Record Number One" of the Richardville County commissioners' record books. On Aug. 17, 1844, the county commissioners named the township for the unincorporated seat of justice "*Kocomo*."

Interestingly, the spelling outside of Richardville County seemed to favor the "second-K" format, e.g. "32 lots for sale" in "Kokomotown" in the *Indianapolis State Sentinel* (Sept. 18, 1844), two references to "Kokomo" in Noblesville's *The Little Western* newspaper (Dec. 7, 1844) and the aforementioned House petition.

County commissioners used "Kocomo" in the early records of their proceedings. Approval of the first plat in October 1844 was recorded formally as the "survey of lots in the town of Kocomo, in Richardville County, the state of Indiana and that block No. Six shall be the publick square." Also, "Kocomo town" was frequently applied as late as December 1844, particularly in relation to "lots surveyed" or "lots for sale." Within six months, the "second-K" version was becoming standard -- the commissioners' record shows "Kokomo" in the June 2, 1845, accounting of the previous October's sale of lots.

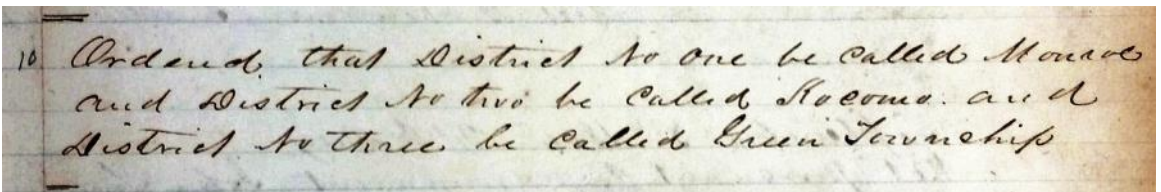
Yet another variant shows up in an official government publication issued in 1846 in Washington D.C. Don't look for our town under "K" in the "Table of Post Offices in the United States on the First Day of October 1846." Adam Clark is listed as the postmaster for Richardsville (sic) County's post office in "Cocomo."

Finally, in December 1855, when township citizens voted on whether to incorporate (62 "yes," three "no"), it was official that, "said town be incorporated under the name and Style of the 'Corporation of the Town of Kokomo'."

But whence the name?

David Foster was an on-the-record interviewee for the U.S. government's substantial Meshingomesia Testimonials in 1872-1873, which established land ownership rights after the forced removal of Miami Indians from Indiana in 1846-1847. As George Ironstrack, the assistant director of the Myaamia Center at Miami (Ohio) University, told *Footprints* in 2017 (see "Discovering Kokomo", May 2017), Foster doesn't provide much detail about the person Kokomo, although he calls him "Ma-ko-ka-ma" once and a variation of "Kokomo" several other times. Other interviewees in the testimonials -- Miami Indians and other settlers -- are "recorded as using some variation of 'Kokomo' in their testimony."

A man named "Co-come-wah," thought to be Kokomo, was one of the Miami who signed the Oct. 23, 1834, treaty. Transcribers at treaties and testimonials often failed to accurately record the sounds of Miami names. Thus an anglicized form of "Kokomo" (its exact meaning is also not found against any known Miami words) may just be a distortion of sounds from the Miami language.



First-ever reference to Kokomo. Richardville County originally was divided into three districts from west to east: districts One, Two and Three. After acknowledging receipt of David Foster's donation for the county seat, on Aug. 17, 1844, the county commissioners renamed the districts.

Aatotankiki myaamiaki (What the Miamis are talking about)

By Gil Porter

So much of the story has focused on the history of the Miami Indians as it relates to the founding of Richardville County in Indiana in the 19th century. But the Miami people are very much part of today's story as well; they are a "people with a past," firmly planted in the present, facing forward for the future. Theirs is a story of resistance and courage.

For a better understanding of Miami culture, several online resources offer an abundance of material for either the casually interested or the serious scholar, all of it presented in their own unique, vibrant voice.

Due to the circumstances of forced removal and dislocation, the Miami Indian population became fragmented into three main population centers: northeastern Oklahoma, eastern Kansas and north-central Indiana. Today, the federally recognized Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, headquartered in Miami, Okla., represents the ongoing sovereign responsibilities of the nation. It cares for its 5,400 citizens, of which, 670 live in the state of Indiana.

Since 1846, Miami people created a multitude of organizations to represent the needs of the many Myaamia families living in the state. The Miami Tribe has a Cultural Resource Extension Office (CREO) in Fort Wayne with two full-time staff. This office works to provide educational programming for tribal citizens living in the area and to work to assist in educating the broader public, where possible. A well-known non-profit group, the Miami Indians of Indiana, Inc. is also located in Peru.

Here are the places to start learning about Myaamia ...

CULTURE AND HISTORY

Aacimotaatiiyankwi. A Myaami Community Blog
aacimotaatiiyankwi.org

History and ecology blog. Designed by and for Myaamia to talk about community, places, ecological observations, shared pasts and educational opportunities. Updated regularly by the staff at the Myaamia Center at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. Ideal site to learn about Miami history, culture or language. Fun feature is the weekly weather report for Oxford in the Miami language -- "taaniši

kiişikatwi niiyaaha apiyani?" (What's the weather like where you're at?).

kiiloona myaamiaki. The Miami Tribe of Oklahoma
miamination.com

The federally recognized Miami Indian nation. The site has links that introduce the elected leaders of the nation and outline many of their sovereign responsibilities. It is also a virtual community for connectivity and education. "kiiloona myaamiaki, we are myaamiaki!"

Miami Nation Of Indians Of The State Of Indiana
miamiindians.org

Learn more about the non-profit Miami Indians of Indiana. Ideal site for news about tribal gatherings and events, culture, and ongoing projects in and around Myaamia lands in northcentral Indiana.

EDUCATION RESOURCES

(Developed by the Myaamia Center at Miami University in Ohio, an initiative of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma)

The Miami-Illinois Digital Archive (MIDA)
ilaatawaakani.org

This developing site will feature many early language sources into one location to facilitate academic research and analysis of the Miami-Illinois language. For the average learner, see the Myaamia Online Dictionary (below).

Myaamia Online Dictionary
myaamiadictionary.org

Comprehensive and easy-to-use online tool for exploring the Myaamia language. Features audio sample files for all words and phrases.

Telling our Story: The Living History of the Myaamia
teachmyaamiahistory.org

Well-designed online curriculum about Myaamia history for teachers and home schooling families, grades 3-12. Includes primary sources, images, videos, and lesson plans. All resources are linked to relevant grade-level content standards for Ohio, Indiana and Oklahoma.

County almost renamed for another governor

An act to change the name of Richardville County.

Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Indiana: That, the name of the County of Richardville, be, and the same is hereby changed to Howard.

By Gil Porter

History has yet to reveal who actually proposed the name “Richardville” for the new county.

A possible inference can be made from the Indiana General Assembly records, which show that in January 1839, the chairman of the committee in the House of Representatives that designated and named the new county was Samuel Milroy. Then representative for Carroll County, he was the same “Gen. Milroy” who named and platted Delphi, Ind., in 1828.

Milroy was later appointed Indian sub-agent for the Miami and was “unofficial” commissioner with Allen Hamilton at the November 1840 “Forks of the Wabash” treaty negotiations in Huntington. Perhaps back in 1838, with some persuasion from Hamilton, Milroy was looking for an opportunity to honor Miami Chief Jean Baptiste Richardville for his role in treaty negotiations going back to 1795.

The circumstances for renaming the county “Howard” are somewhat clearer.

“Richardville” was consistently misspelled in legislative proceedings, for example, an 1842 citizens’ petition “... for the organization of Richardsville (sic) county as a separate county. ...” etc. As the *Kokomo Daily Tribune* described it in 1914, the original county name was “difficult to remember, difficult to write and difficult to pronounce.”

Interestingly, in December 1846, when the bill to rename the county was introduced, several other petitions were presented in the House that same week that sought to form “a new county” out of parts of Carroll, Cass, Clinton and Richardville counties. A House judiciary committee recommended no “further consideration of the subject,” since the state consti-

tution stipulates existing counties cannot be reduced to an area less than 400 square miles if a part is used to form a new county (only Clinton had barely enough surplus space to spare).

It’s possible this churn in the legislature over the northcentral counties may have allowed an opening to finally address the “difficulties” with the name “Richardville.” The act to change the name of Richardville county was introduced during the afternoon session on Dec. 17, 1846, with the proposal to rename the county in memory of Hoosier politician Tilghman A. Howard.

Howard was a prominent individual and well-known in the state. Born in South Carolina, he studied law and was a state legislator in Tennessee before moving to Indiana in 1830. He made his home in Rockville, Parke County. He was U.S. district attorney for seven years and a law partner separately with two future governors, James Whitcomb and Joseph A. Wright. Elected to Congress in 1839, Howard resigned in 1840 to run as Democratic candidate for governor, losing to Whig candidate Samuel Bigger, followed by an unsuccessful U.S. Senate bid in 1843. Howard died Aug. 16, 1844, while on a diplomatic mission in Texas.

But before the vote on the renaming bill could be taken that Dec. 17, a motion was made to strike out the name “Howard” and replace it with “Bigger,” the reasoning being it was “usual to call counties after those who had filled the Executive Chair.” Another motion went to an even more basic question – to ascertain whether the people of the county desired the change. Both motions were withdrawn, and the bill was passed. The act was signed into law by Gov. James Whitcomb, Howard’s former law partner, on Dec. 28, 1846.

1840: The unexpected treaty

By Gil Porter

The removal of Miami tribal government in Indiana was the priority for the United States after the 1838 Forks of the Wabash Treaty, and by 1840 a need for new negotiations to hasten removal led to a “treaty” that was concluded even before Congress had authorized the negotiations.

Correspondence between T. Hartley Crawford, the commissioner of Indian Affairs, and Secretary of War J.R. Poinsett shows that the U.S. government – up to President Martin Van Buren – actively supported the efforts of Samuel Milroy and Allen Hamilton to “unofficially” negotiate with the Miami for “the residue of their lands” in Indiana, even though, as Crawford later reported, this effort had “unexpectedly” produced a new treaty – The “1840” Forks of the Wabash.

Congress had “rejected an application” to fund another treaty negotiation in 1840, and the War Department could not negotiate the “purchase of Indian lands” without Congressional authorization. Correspondence between Crawford, Milroy and Hamilton shows they concluded that the best way to approach the Miami leaders would be “to conduct the business informally at the annuity payment” in November, the designated time for the government payments to tribal members based on earlier agreements.

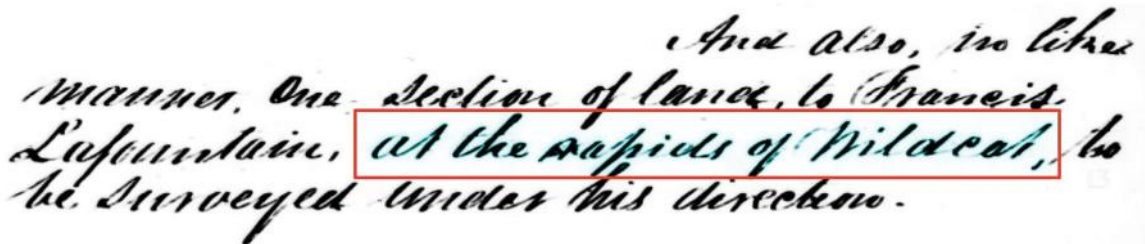
As Crawford wrote in his letter to Poinsett, the urgency of acquiring the land – stemming from Chief Jean Baptiste Richardville’s declining health, the “great anxiety” of the citizens of Indiana for acquiring the land for internal improvements, and concern that

the Miami would change their minds — apparently allowed the Bureau of Indian Affairs to seek an “exception to the general rule” in regards to Indian treaties since the “Miami lands were very valuable” (in 1838 Indiana had petitioned the U.S. government that it be allowed to “procure” all of the Miami reservation in the state).

Crawford confirmed to Poinsett that at the annuity payment on Nov. 28, 1840, the government’s desire for the land “was communicated to the Miami Indians in full council.” The agreement, Crawford wrote, was put into “treaty form” by the two commissioners at the Forks after full consideration of the subject and with an understanding that the “proposition” and “terms” were subject to governmental approval and ratification.

And so, “considering the great importance” of the negotiations, Crawford urged Poinsett that adoption of the compact – “however irregularly made” – and approval by the Senate should be requested. Congress ratified the treaty with six amendments in February 1841, the Miami tribal chiefs assented to the terms in May, and the document was signed by President John Tyler on June 7, 1841.

Milroy and Hamilton indicated the treaty terms were the best terms the Miami leaders would agree to. This was in contrast to the Miami view as expressed in a letter to President James K. Polk (Nov. 26, 1846) that at the 1840 negotiation, the tribal council was “ill advised, misguided by corrupt and designing white men,” and “we had been persuaded that the government of the United States would consent, without the shadow of difficulty to our remaining in our dear native land.”



And also, in like manner, One Section of land, to Francis Lafontaine, at the rapids of Wildcat, to be surveyed under his direction.

Portion of Article 10, “Treaty With the Miami, 1840”. Although “irregularly made,” the treaty included this one-section reserve for Francis Lafontaine that eventually became Kokomo.

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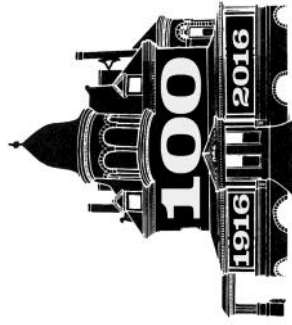
Thanks to all who joined or renewed their memberships from February through April

Ann Abel
Joni Andreas
Andrew & Mary Baker
Milton Beach
Henry & Phoebe Carter
Kirk & Wendy Daniels
Mr. & Mrs. Dean Despinoy
Mike Freed
Todd Picton & Deanna Gifford
Mona & Charles Graham
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Cathy Stover
David & Carla Summers
Elizabeth Titus
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