Footprints

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From the executive director

Bad History on Trial

Internet memes - you can't miss them. Grumpy cat, Ermahgerd, dogs go to heaven, and never -ending, often false, political memes have become a part of everyday life.

What do they have to do with history? We'll have to leave that to future generations to decide, as time allows for a more objective evaluation. But memes existed before the internet, and have probably been part of human cultures ever since there have been humans.

Richard Dawkins gets credit for inventing the term, "meme," as a cultural analogy to biological genes. His idea was that memes "carry information, are replicated, are transmitted from one person to another, and they have the ability to evolve." *(Brittanica.com).* My own simpler interpretation of his concept is that memes are ideas that take on a life of their own and persist, for better or worse, independently of both their source and their veracity.

The old story about George Washington and the cherry tree was such an idea. It has been debunked over and over again, and yet the story persists. The ideas that Henry Ford invented the automobile and the assembly line are likewise untrue and persistent, as are most of the famous "Kokomo Firsts." The claim that Kokomo was named by David Foster after "the ornriest old Indian I knew" is yet another example of how memes get baked into historical narratives and how they're used in hurtful ways – to discriminate, denigrate, and assert power over other people.

Memes can become a powerful part of a community's origin story, making them extremely difficult to root out. That, however, is what the historical society and the Early History Learning Center are attempting, and what the program of the society's annual meeting on Oct. 17th was all about.

In this issue of Footprints, you'll read about the annual meeting and the "Trial of Bad History." There's more of Gil Porter's research and writing about the man we know as Kokomo, an article from County Historian Jon Russell, and a peek ahead at "Christmas at the Seiberling." We're also kicking off the annual fall fund-raising campaign in this issue and asking for your financial support as we work to "collect, preserve and share the history of all the diverse peoples of Howard County."

Dave Broman

In this issue:

The case against an 'Ornery Indian'

By Gil Porter

Imagine someone shows up at your door 60 years after your great-grandfather had died, saying they have written a new biography of your family. How would the family react if the author put words in your great-grandfather's mouth that could be viewed by some as less than kind about people your family was associated with?

A reasonable response would be to demand proof, asking that the author produce a record showing where and when your relative said it. Especially if the family has other evidence – primary sources in some cases – that tell a different story about your ancestor.

For Kokomo, a city of 58,000 people in northcentral Indiana, that's about what happened in regards to how it came to be named. Even a simple search about the source for the city's name invariably returns this result: that town founder David Foster claims Kokomo was "the orneriest town I knew so I named it for the orneriest man I knew – called it Kokomo."[i]

The quote, it turns out, is unsourced bad history. Yet variations of that statement have been recast and recycled dozens of times in the latter half of the 20th Century and up to today, becoming one of the standard features of our city's origin story. Not a single published instance has ever cited a document as the source, or even the date Foster supposedly said it. Not one.

"Orneriest town?" It's plausible yet unlikely. In addition to the Miami Indian community along the south side of Wildcat Creek at the time, most sources[ii] say when Kokomo the town was organized it had only about six residents – besides the Foster family and the first lawyer and doctor. The 40 acres Foster deeded for the county seat on the north side of the creek was a dense forest surrounded by swampland. The more heavily populated part of the county was eight to 10 miles to the west, where public land had been for sale since 1842[iii]. The county's first grand jury, which met in November 1844, stayed busy returning indictments "for selling liquor and for betting and for winning and losing" [iv] (perhaps not surprising since the county's first liquor license was issued the next month[v]). Given that Kokomo's downtown on the north side of the Wildcat was still pretty primitive at the time, this grand jury activity may have been more a reflection of life in the county rather than evidence of an "ornery town."

Moreover, Record Book Number One shows it was actually the county's first elected commissioners who named the town[vi]. Richardville County was created on Jan. 15, 1844 (it was renamed in December 1846 for deceased Hoosier politician Tilghman A. Howard). Five state-appointed locating commissioners seeking a site for the seat of justice secured a title bond from David Foster for 40 acres in May 1844. Acknowledging receipt of this report and the bond at their meeting on Aug. 17, our locally elected commissioners 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."[vii] No record is preserved that says Foster influenced the choice.

In fact, practically nothing is recorded about the name – or the Miami Indian namesake -- in the initial decades of the town's existence. The earliest known written history of the county, published in the *Kokomo Journal* in February 1870, cites Foster as its source, noting he "has cheerfully given all the facts that we desired." Though not quoted directly, Foster's timeline is basic and well-known: how he and his wife, Elizabeth, brought their growing family from southern Indiana north to Burlington in 1837, then progres-

sively east into the Miami Indian reserve and to the village at the rapids of the Wildcat Creek by 1842. The origin or "why" of the name Kokomo -- "the most important town in the county," according to the *Journal* writer – is not mentioned. Foster is quoted in-depth in only two sources we can find: the report of the September 1875 meeting of the Old Settlers' Society of Howard County[vii] and the U.S. government's substantial 1872-73 Meshingomesia Testimonials[ix], which established private land ownership for Miami Indian families after the forced removal in 1846-47. One is reliable and the other a primary source, yet in neither does Foster say why the name "Kokomo" was chosen.

Two years after the 1875 Old Settlers meeting, in fact, we do find the first reference to *why* the town was named. The *Combination Atlas Map of Howard County* (1877, Kingman Bros.) stated simply that "the town derived its name from an old Indian chief." A fascination with the man be-

Kokomo: The Man

A family history of a village or band leader named Kokomo, created by the Myaamia Center at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, provides valuable clues about a person with a similar-sounding name in the area in the mid-19th century. A man named Co-come-wah, thought to be Kokomo, was one of the Miami who signed the tribe's Oct. 23, 1834, treaty with the United States government.

Though not entitled to an allotment as part of the Big Miami Reserve, Kokomo and his family were, in fact, related by marriage to the large and influential Meshingomesia and Richardville families of Miami who lived in northcentral Indiana (Howard County, Indiana, was originally Richardville County, with Kokomo as the county seat). While Kokomo's name and much of his life remain a mystery to us today, the family lived on for a time, and there are records of a direct descendant – Pimweeyotamwa (Eli Goodboy) – who served in the Civil War. Sadly, no direct descendants of Kokomo exist among Myaamia people today.

Regarding pictures of Kokomo, previous versions used in publications and displays were historically inaccurate. The clothing in a 1962 painting that was widely used to illustrate "Kokomo" was that of a Western Plains Indian, a representation that matched the "Native Americans" of television and movies. But this 2016 portrayal imagined by artist Marcia Moore – with copper ear spools, shell ornaments, bearskin, and hawk feathers – is a more realistic interpretation of a period Woodlands Indian.

"kokomo neehi eeweemaacihi. A Brief History of Kokomo and His Family." Aacimotaatiiyankwi. A Myaami Community Blog. 2017. aacimotaatiiyankwi.org
"Treaty Between the United States of America and the Miami Tribe of Indians." Concluded October 23, 1834 – Ratified December 22, 1837. Microfilm collection. Genealogy Department. Kokomo-Howard County Public Library.
"Chief Kokomo: Time and place". Footprints. A Publication of the Howard County Historical Society. May 2017.
"The Search for the Real Kokomo: Separating Man from Legend". Footprints. A Publication of the Howard County Historical Society. February 2017.

hind the name soon developed, with an implicit message that the selection indicated a person of stature. Both the 1870 *Journal* account and the much fuller 1877 *Atlas* version mistakenly identify Kokomo as comparable to Miami Indian leaders "Russiaville, La Fontain and Maslinginmaslia" (all sic), or state that he was a brother to "Shock-o-mo, Me-shin-go-me-sia, and Shappan-do-si-a." Yet another version makes him Chief Jean Baptiste Richardville's son[x], wrongly claiming he too was a chief.

Miami tribal rolls refute such reports of lineage and status[xi]. Plus, that Kokomo was a "headman" (a village or band leader) – and not in the higher position as a chief – is confirmed by comparing two existing government records. While the Co-come-wah signature, thought to be Kokomo, appeared with the group of "chiefs, warriors and *head-men* of the Miami tribe" (emphasis added) on the Oct. 23, 1834, treaty,[xii] when just the "chiefs and warriors" signed the amended and ratified version of the treaty on Dec. 22, 1837, the name is missing.[xiii]

Charles Blanchard's comprehensive "*Counties of Howard and Tipton, Indiana*" historical and biographical volume published by F.A. Battey & Co., Chicago, in 1883 repeats the 1877 "*Atlas"* Kokomo-as-one-of-four-chief-brothers error word for word. "*Counties*" further clouds the topic with the curious explanation that the name was chosen "in honor of Kocoman (sic), a celebrated chief of the Miamis, for his many acts of kindness and humanity to the early settlers." Notwithstanding this first-ever favorable description of the man, the bad biography and conflicting accounts really reinforces the need to approach with caution such commercially oriented and profit-intended products like "*Atlas*" and "*Counties.*"

Kokomo, in fact, is referred to as a "chief of the tribe" as early as 1870 in the *Indianapolis Journal.*[xiv] Though commonly applied but definitely overused, this appellation nevertheless could be seen as an attempt to portray the town's namesake positively, indicating at least an anachronistic appreciation for, if not the appropriation of, the Native American heritage in the area.

Elizabeth Foster died on Jan. 29, 1871, while her husband lived until Nov. 27, 1877. Neither obituary offered any thought as to the origin of town of Kokomo's name. For another 30 years or so, the matter seems largely ignored, other than oblique observations that the "town derived its name from an Indian chief, Kokomo." Shortly after the turn of the century, however, an unnamed benefactor put up the money to erect a "handsome monument" if Kokomo's grave could be located.[xv] It was thought his remains had been re-interred in "the old cemetery" at the foot of Carlisle (later Purdum) Street. The present cenotaph at the site was dedicated on "Pioneer Day," Oct. 5, 1911,[xvi] memorializing Howard County war dead and "Kokomo," with the made-up title "War Chief of the Miami, from whom this city gets its name."

Even with the legend now in stone, the positive description pivots dramatically within five years, when a Kokomo Chamber of Commerce-commissioned city and county history titled "A Tale of a Real Town" appears first in the Travelers Protective Association Souvenir publication printed for a convention here in 1916, then at least three times in the *Kokomo Tribune* up to 1919. Written by Ed. M. Souder, an eminent editor of the *Tribune* during those years, the work retains a certain charm 100 years on, with its mix of corny boosterism and period propaganda.

Souder plows familiar ground for the origin story and heads right for Kokomo the man, who by turns is "a chief of the Miamis," noted for "splendid courage, lofty character and becoming habits." In gratitude for "acts of kindness and humanity," he writes, the county seat was named for him.[xvii]

And then, 72 years after the first county commissioners renamed District No. 2 as "Kocomo" township, Souder introduces new, decidedly downbeat, details about a man with that name. Without revealing his sources other than refer-

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The “Ornriest Indian” faces a jury: guilty or not?

At the Howard County Historical Society 2019 annual meeting on Oct. 17, a mock trial was held before Superior Court 1 Judge William Menges. The city of Kokomo was charged with publishing bad history relating to the origin-story statement that town founder David Foster said the town was named for “the orneriest Indian around.” A jury comprising attendees and guests found the city of Kokomo guilty by a vote of 57-11.

(clockwise from top left): Judge William C. Menges, Howard County Superior Court 1, giving instructions to the jury; board member and HCHS Treasurer Chris Wisler is sworn in by Judge Menges, along with others in attendance, as members of the jury; Gil Porter makes the opening statement on behalf of the prosecution; Tom Tolen, acting as attorney for the defense, responds in rebuttal to the prosecution’s claim that the alleged statement by David Foster regarding the “orneriest old Indian” is “bad history” and should be struck from the record. (not shown: Jon Zeck, serving as bailiff)

2019 Annual Meeting and Dinner

A highlight of the Howard County Historical Society's Oct. 17 program at Continental Ballroom was a presentation by Doug Peconge (shown above). Peconge is the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma's Community Programming Manager for the Cultural Resource Extension Office in Fort Wayne. He talked about the history of the Miami in Indiana, their forced removal from the Great Miami Reserve, which led to the founding of Howard County, and his work to preserve Miami heritage and culture in Indiana.

Doug was followed by a mock trial, examining whether or not David Foster, one of the founding father's of the county, named the county seat after the "ornriest old Indian I knew" - a Miami head man named Kokomo (variously Ma-ko-ko-ma, Co-come-wah, and Kocomo). More on the trial is found elsewhere in this issue.

During the annual meeting portion of the evening, chaired by HCHS President Dean Despinoy, the membership reelected Linda Ferries, Mary Ellen Harnish, Peggy Hobson, Cathy Stover and Peter Inman to three year terms on the Board of Trustees, and elected Teresa Fields to her first term as a trustee. Despinoy then introduced Past-President Judy Brown, who presented the M.E. Harnish Distinguished Service Award to Peggy Hobson.

Peggy Hobson honored with Mary Ellen Harnish Distinguished Service Award

Peggy Ragland Hobson's love of historic art and architecture is as much a part of her being as her winning smile, her willingness to volunteer, and her talented imagination. It was only natural that, when she moved to Kokomo in early 1973, she'd be drawn to the historic, artistic, extravagant Seiberling Mansion that had only recently been saved from demolition.

So began what is a 46-years-and-counting relationship between the grand Romanesque Revival mansion, the Howard County Historical Society, and the woman who found her place in Kokomo. In recognition of her years of service to the historical society and the Howard County Museum, Peggy has been honored with the Mary Ellen Harnish Distinguished Service Award.

Judy Brown, immediate past president of the Historical Society, presented the award to Peggy during the 2019 HCHS annual meeting. Past honorees are retired Indiana University Kokomo Professor Allen Safianow (2015) and long-time volunteer Jule Rider (2018).

"Peggy's long-time commitment to the historical society is clearly above-and-beyond," said Dave Broman, executive director of the Howard County Historical Society, who has worked with Peggy since he joined the organization as a volunteer in 1990. "Her career with the Visitors Bureau and her volunteer work have both been a vital part of our success."

Let's take a look at some of the many reasons Peggy is so deserving of the award.
Going back to the 1970s, as the Howard County Museum gradually came to life in the old mansion, her early activities included various "Antiques in Actions," ice cream socials, and holiday parties. After she and then-husband Russ Ragland moved to 401 W. Walnut St. in 1974, they helped found and grow the Old Silk Stocking Neighborhood Association, an organization dedicated to improving the environment around the mansion.

Over the decades, Peggy has attended countless HCHS Board of Trustee meetings, including service as president of the board. Think about some of the milestones over the last four decades – acquisition of the Elliott House and grounds; transformation of both the Seiberling Mansion and Elliott House as Kokomo Decorators' Showhomes; bringing artifact-preserving climate control system to the mansion; a new roof; and celebrating national, state, and local historic milestones.

For Kelly Karickhoff, who served as HCHS executive director from 1991 to 2011, Peggy has

been a creative and dedicated supporter of the museum both personally and professionally – especially during Peggy's years as executive director of the Howard County Convention & Visitors Bureau.

"As executive director of the CVB, Peggy's job was to promote tourism as an economic impact on the community," Kelly said. "For several years, the CVB very successfully used Kokomo as the hub of two- and three-day 'mystery' bus trips from around the nation and the Seiberling Mansion was a focal point."

On each visit, tour buses full of curious guests not knowing what to expect would pull up in front of the mansion. Peggy, dressed as a proper Victorian maid, would greet them on the bus and set the stage; they were going back in time, to 1893, as guests of Monroe and Sarah Seiberling at the wedding of their daughter. At its height, this project, with its wide-ranging cast of volunteer actors, attracted 23 tours in one season, bringing revenue for the historical society as well as the area motels, restaurants, shops, and other attractions.

"She realized that the Seiberling Mansion was the crown jewel of our community and worked diligently to promote it," Kelly said. "Within HCHS, Peggy served on committees, the board … She worked hard to move the historical society into the very professional organization it is today."

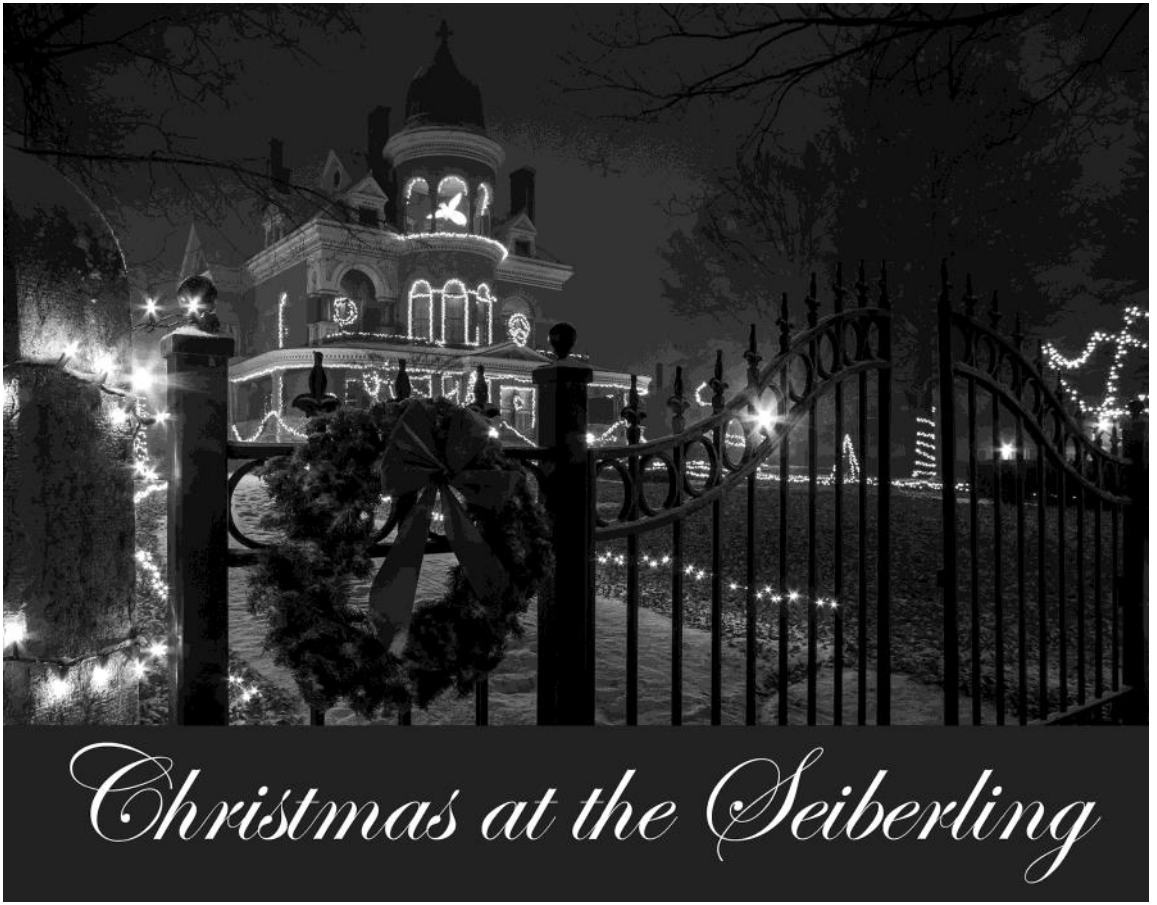
For 18 years before becoming head of the CVB, Peggy owned Ragland Stained Glass in downtown Kokomo, where she put her talents to use in creating works of art in opalescent glass. In her tourism role, she pulled all her interests together and led the statewide creation of the Indiana Glass Trail, an ambitious project that connects museums, churches, public buildings, and artisans in nearly 20 counties and allows trail-goers to experience firsthand the tradition and history of glass arts in Indiana that goes back to the 1880s Gas Boom.

For years, Peggy served as chair of the HCHS events committee, helping to organize dozens of activities and serving as a lead volunteer – from annual meeting programming to guest lecturers to fund-raisers to recognition celebrations and more. Annually, she puts her artistic talents to work running the rock-painting booth at the Koh-Koh-Mah reenactment.

In recent years, the Peggy's name has been synonymous with Christmas at the Seiberling, a month-long holiday celebration that has become one of Kokomo's most enduring traditions. As chair of the project for more than a decade, Peggy has wrangled a growing number of individuals and organizations as volunteer decorators in the mansion.

As chair, Peggy virtually moves into the museum for two weeks in November to guide the three-floor transformation that draws several thousand visitors throughout December. But she's involved year-round, starting the next year's planning each January as soon as the previous year's decorations are packed away. From a 6-foot-tall angel flying in the rotunda to a 6-foot-tall snowman welcoming guests on the porch, she (and husband Mark) have helped in making many families' memories.

As Judy presented the Harnish award, she noted Peggy's many contributions. "As special events chair, Peggy made my three years as president of the Historical Society much easier than they might have been. Christmas at the Seiberling under her guidance has come to be a major event in the community. She is very deserving of this award and I hope to work with her for years to come".



Christmas at the Seiberling

Think Charles Dickens and bowls of wassail and evergreens decked with feathers and bows and strings of cranberries and popcorn. Think warm, cozy fireplace and Father Christmas and carolers on the street corner. It's a Victorian Christmas and it's coming to the Seiberling Mansion for the 2019 holiday season.

Starting Nov. 16, the volunteer decorators will be hard at work turning every nook and cranny of the Seiberling into a Victorian Christmas extravaganza. Come Nov. 30, their handiwork will be unveiled at the annual opening night for the Howard County Historical Society's month-long "Christmas at the Seiberling."

"The mansion has 25 areas or rooms that are being decorated by 20 new or returning individuals or organizations," said Peggy Hobson, chair of the Christmas at the Seiberling project that has become a tradition for many area families. "Everyone is excited to lend their touch to this year's 'Victorian' theme."

Admission during Christmas at the Seiberling will be $10 for adults and $5 for children (free admission is a benefit of HCHS membership) during regular museum hours of 1 to 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays Dec. 3-29 (closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day) and for a special "candlelight" tour set for Saturday, Dec. 21. Local businesses and organizations are sponsoring six special evenings during December when the museum will be open to the public without charge.

Opening night will again by sponsored by The Wyman Group and will include carriage rides and a chance to visit with Santa. Reservations are needed for the carriage rides and usually fill up early. Anyone interested in making a reservation should contact the HCHS office at 765-452-4314.

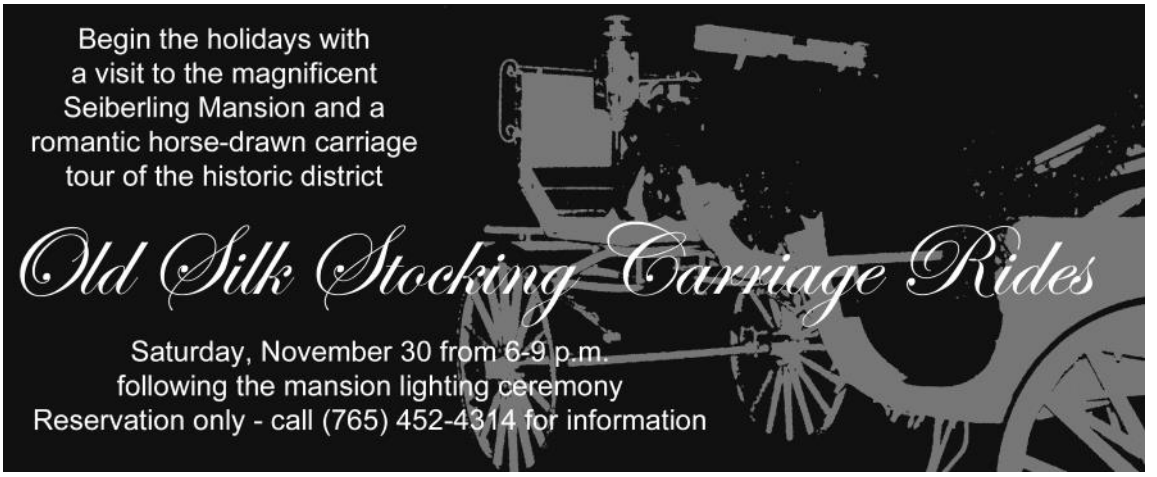
The six special evenings, with free admission courtesy of local businesses and organizations, include:

- Thursday, Dec. 5, sponsored by Community First Bank
- Friday, Dec. 6, sponsored by Ivy Tech Community College Kokomo
- Thursday, Dec. 12, Indiana University Kokomo's Night at the Seiberling
- Friday, Dec. 13, sponsored by Financial Builders Federal Credit Union
- Thursday, Dec. 19, CEO Night, sponsored by Duke Energy
- Friday, Dec. 20, sponsored by Security Federal Savings Bank

On Saturday, Dec. 21 from 6 to 9 p.m., Duke Energy will again be sponsoring a special evening of candlelight tours, offering guests the opportunity to explore the museum in the softer light of the Victorian era.

The celebration wraps up when the museum closes for the season at 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 29.

Note: Seiberling Mansion will be closed to the public beginning Nov. 16 and until opening night on Nov. 30.



Flamekeepers

In ancient times, a flamekeeper was an leading tribal figure who had the important role of keeping the central fire burning. The fires were useful for food preparation, religious observances, and perhaps most important, to ward off dangerous predators. The flamekeeper was protecting an invaluable resource for the future, which is why the society has adopted the term as the name for its fall fundraising effort. It's our role to act as the flamekeeper for Howard County's history, to preserve and share the objects, documents, stories, and lessons of our history for the benefit of the present and future people of the county.

Howard County's long tradition of military service is well-represented in the collections and exhibits of the historical society.

Our collections include the Civil War diary of John Underwood and the Distinguished Service Cross awarded posthumously to Sgt. E.F. Reed for heroism during World War I. Our exhibits include the uniform of Sgt. James Tompkins, who served in France during WWI, and correspondence to a local teacher from students who were serving during WWII. We have interviews with soldiers who served in Korea and formerly top-secret sensors developed by Delco Electronics for use in Vietnam.

You can help keep alive the memory of our soldiers and sailors and their sacrifices. Your donation to the historical society's 2019 Flamekeepers campaign will support our mission to preserve and share Howard County's tradition of service. It will help provide a safe, climate-controlled environment, specialized preservation and exhibition equipment, and professional expertise.

Please clip the donation form below and send it with your gift to: Howard County Historical Society, 1200 W. Sycamore, Kokomo, IN. You can also donate online at hchistory.org.

Flame Keepers
Howard County Historical Society
Annual Campaign

Name _____
(Name to be used for donor recognition)

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please accept my/our tax-deductible contribution of $_____
to support the Howard County Historical Society

Make checks payable to Howard County Historical Society and mail to 1200 W. Sycamore, Kokomo, IN 46901. Call 765-452-4314 for information

Indiana Territory: Statehood

By Jon Russell
Howard County Historian

This rough-n-tumble wilderness reached a population 60,000, and statehood was granted by the signature of President James Madison on Dec. 11, 1816, making Indiana the 19th state admitted to the Union. It was now one of the United States, though much smaller than the Indiana territory had been.

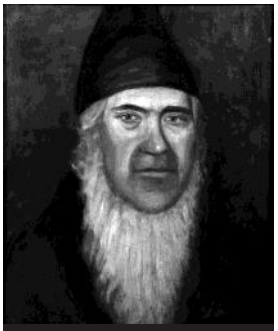
The Indiana Territory of 1800 extended westward to the Mississippi River, and from the Ohio River north to Canada. It was an area covered in vast forests, marshlands, lakes, and rivers. The territory's white population numbered 5,641, with half of them living on the Ohio River in land that was granted to George Rogers Clark, or in Vincennes, where the territorial capital was located. Vincennes had a sizeable French population, though that was changing as newcomers from the South and East arrived. There was one newspaper, the *Indiana Gazette* (founded 1804), and that was located in the capital. Vincennes' dominance changed, however, as the population along the Ohio and the Whitewater Valley in southeastern Indiana grew.

By 1810, Indiana Territory had been greatly reduced as the territories of Michigan and Illinois split away. There were 24,520 white inhabitants within the boundaries. As the population density shifted toward the southeastern region, officials began looking for a new site for their capitol. In 1813, that site would be found and the capitol would be moved from Vincennes to Corydon.

Few Americans had ventured into the central and northern portions of the territory, most clinging to the Ohio and lower Wabash Rivers. The reasons for this "lack of interest" in the interior laid with three barriers: Indian warriors; legal access to the land; and those wild frontiersmen with a desire for a style of "self-government", away from the restrictions imposed by both territorial and national governments. Can you imagine that?

William Henry Harrison had warned Tecumseh, in 1811, that the white men of the "long knife fire" were now as "numerous as the mosquitoes on the shores of the Wabash[1]". Well maybe, or so it may have seemed as the population, and resulting incursion into Indian lands, continued to grow. Harrison's warning would only be an incident in the developing encounters between the Indians and the white settlers. So quickly this time passed, and by the end of the War of 1812, Indian uprisings were no longer considered a major threat.

Those who would be called "Hoosiers" didn't just *wander i*nto the state, as the tourist program now touts. Families came in small groups; I suppose others did come alone, seeking their fortune, or a good place to hide. Some would come to escape the hardships of their old home; the Thomas Lincoln family would be one of those in December, 1816. A chance to own property is always a motivator. His son Abraham, who would become the 16th President, once said that his father moved the family to Indiana, "partly on account of slavery, but chiefly on account of the difficulty of land titles in Kentucky."[1]



Father George Rapp

Many would come in groups, including 800 settlers known as "Rappites," who came to the territory from Pennsylvania in 1814, traveling down the Ohio River by flatboat. Their leader, George Rapp, was set on establishing a utopian religious soci-

[1] *Hoosiers, A New History of Indiana*, James H. Madison, p34, Indiana Univ. Press, 2014.

ety along the Wabash. He founded his town, Harmonie, and within 10 years they had built many fine brick structures, a church, granary and sawmill. They planted fruit trees and raised sheep to support the colony.

The colony lasted until 1825, when Rapp and his followers sold out and moved back to Pennsylvania to found the village of Economy.

Robert Owen purchased the community of 180 buildings and several thousand acres from George Rapp, and together with his son William, and friend Donald McDonald, established his own utopian society - renamed New Harmony.

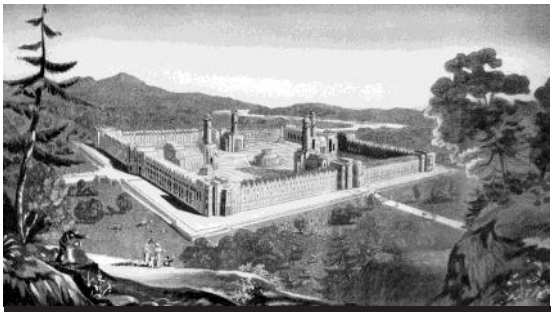
Robert Owen

Owen was a wealthy Welsh immigrant, textile manufacturer, and founder of utopian socialism and the cooperative movement. He envisioned New Harmony as a "superior social, intellectual and physical environment"[2] based on his ideals of social reform. That didn't materialize, and he returned to England in June of 1827. As the French of Vincennes might have uttered over this Anglo's intrepidity, "c'est la vie." So much for intellectual life in the wilderness.

By 1814, the Indian Wars had ended. The Northwest Ordinance (1787) had clearly stated that *slavery was forever outlawed* from the lands of the Northwest Territory. Religious freedom and other civil liberties were guaranteed, the resident Indians were promised decent treatment, and education was provided for. The offer of cheaper land legally was a great incentive for those seeking a better life and opportunity in the northern territories.

Though referred to as the "Quaker Migration," many non-Quaker's also made the journey out of the southern slave-holding states into Indiana Territory looking for this better life. Southwestern Ohio and southeastern Indiana had become a settling point for Quakers wanting personal and religious freedom, especially freedom away from the institution of slavery. By 1807, there were several thousand living in this area.

After William Henry Harrison resigned as Territorial Governor in 1812, John Gibson (1812-1813) and then Thomas Posey (1813-1816) were appointed to fill the position, but it was a young lawyer, Jonathan Jennings, and his opposition party that dominated the affairs of the territory in its latter years. Jennings and his party led the movement wanting statehood.



New Harmony, as envisioned by Robert Owen

The population continued to grow, and pressure for statehood grew with it. By early 1816, it had reached the required number of citizens to file for statehood. In June 1816, a constitutional convention convened and by the 29th of the month a state constitution was adopted.

In August, general elections were held, and the new officers were sworn in in November, with Jonathan Jennings elected the first governor. The territory was dissolved, and the new state was admitted to the Union in December.

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[2] *New Harmony, Indiana* From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Hall of Legends' Class of 2019

(l-r) Douglas Vaughn; Stacey Hann-Ruff, daughter of honoree Dolores Hahn-Rollins; Michael Murphy, Jr., son of honoree Mike Murphy; Beth Brooke-Marciniak; Betty Scott, sister of honoree Yvonne Ferguson Watkins; and Ryan Kitchell.

Indiana University's Bicentennial Year also marks the 75th year of Indiana University Kokomo….

Among the celebration events was the unveiling on September 16 of a historic marker commemorating Indiana University Kokomo's beginnings in the Seiberling Mansion. Indiana University's twenty-year presence on West Sycamore Street added immeasurably to the rich history of the Seiberling Mansion and Elliott House. Beginning after World War II, through its post-war growth under the GI Bill, to the establishment of a new campus, the university has become a valuable asset, bringing opportunity, education, and a better life to the people of north-central Indiana.

Chancellor Susam Sciame-Giesecke unveils the marker and Dr. Herb Miller shares memories.

ring to unnamed "other pioneers," Souder "knocks the luster off the legend" thusly: Kokomo was not a chief, or tribal leader of any kind, but a "common coonhunting, root-digging Indian."[xix]

The man with "splendid courage" suddenly is "shamefully shiftless and atrociously lazy." The Indian formerly known for "kindness and humanity" is nothing but a liquor-loving wife-beater. Souder at least struggles to wriggle free from this unsourced character assassination via a transition to the effect that the "present generation" won't accept an "old skate instead of an Indian chief."[xx] But the words can't be unread. Bizarrely, barely five years earlier the city had erected a monument to the man, so, really, what was the point? And more to the point, when exactly did the "war chief" become "ornery?"

Maybe a clue is in the timing. Indiana celebrated its centennial in October 1916.[xxi] It was a story of progress 100 years in the making, and a gaudy show was made of it. Community fairs, parades, a flag drill with 30,000 schoolchildren, 200 girls singing "The Hymn to Indiana." President Woodrow Wilson was an invited speaker. The Pageant of Indiana, held daily for a fortnight during the jubilee at Riverside Park in Indianapolis, told the history of the Hoosier state.[xxii] From French traders to British officers to the Euro-American settlers, they're all there. Tecumseh and George Rogers Clark and William Henry Harrison.

And the other Native Americans? "The savage red man (sic) gave war whoops, encouraged by the Prophet" and once felled by the soldiers, the Indians simply were removed from the story, as James Joseph Buss describes it in "Winning the West With Words: Language and Conquest in the Lower Great Lakes" (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011).

The Indiana performances – where Indians were typically portrayed by whites – were an example of "a common scene of erasure whereby Native Americans symbolically or physically exited the stage."

But the town that was expressly named for a Miami Indian some 50 miles to the north could hardly erase its namesake. In all fairness, it's important to view Souder as a man of his day. Centennial fever is hanging in the air, radio Westerns are ever popular and a cottage industry of Hollywood "cowboys-and-indians" Saturday matinees are right around the corner. Native Americans were now role players, tourist attractions in the American history drama. It was a story of conquest, progress and dispossession. We didn't just take the land, we took your identity. You're not a man, you're an "ornery" man.

Easing out of the Great Depression, thousands of Kokomo citizens gathered on an overcast, chilly day, Oct. 20, 1937, to dedicate the impressive new Howard County Courthouse. Schools and many business closed for the day, and an open house at the building lasted until 9:30 that evening.[xxiii] Two bronze entrance doors greeted visitors, and were nothing less than sculptures, with the Haynes automobile heritage emblazoned on one and David Foster and an Indians-greeting-the-settlers-by-the-Wildcat-Creek scene on the other. The doors weigh a ton and are really works of art, affixed permanently open now before the east entrance security door.

The equally elegant 98-page "Howard County Court House Memorial Book" included a reworked version of Souder's tale, renamed "History of Howard County" (one of three commentaries he contributed to the book). The publication was actually delayed a few days, to allow for "advertiser's copy" and final proofreading. Once printed, the American Legion hand-delivered a free copy to every address in the county.[xxiv]

Souder's reworked "History" is full of fanciful narrative and lazy inaccuracies (every date is wrong about the county's founding). Before long, he's again exploring why Kokomo has the name that it does. There's our Miami Indian

chief, kind, helpful, so well-regarded the community organizers used his name "to do him enduring honor."[xxv]

And again the sudden pivot, with the Indian chief full of whiskey, digging in the dirt and beating up his wife. But there's more. For the first time in print (that we can find), 93 years after the town is named, 60 years almost to the day that the man who donated 40 acres to start the town died, we get this: "Even David Foster has been quoted as saying that the settlement was the orneriest town on earth and that he named it after the orneriest Indian on earth – named it Kokomo."[xxvi]

Who provided the quote? *Where* was it first published? As of this writing, no document has been recovered that answers those basic questions. Every single subsequent time this is published, no source and no date is ever given. Chief Kokomo and David Foster deserve better.

Sadly, the statement stuck. In May 1944 a popular general-interest periodical called "*Coronet*" sourced Souder's text heavily in an article inharmoniously titled "The Town with a Funny Name," which put the "orneriest Indian" statement in front of a nationwide audience. It shows up a half dozen times through the 1950s. It probably got baked permanently into Kokomo's civic consciousness by none other than Carl Leiter, the highly regarded Kokomo High School social studies teacher whose voluminous commentaries on Howard County history remain the gold standard to this day (his bibliography alone on the subject fills a binder at the Kokomo-Howard County Public Library). In 1957, he featured the "orneriest-Indian" origin story in one of his regular newspaper columns.[xxvii] The phrase has stayed in circulation ever since, becoming our infamous first reference, published as recently as September 2019 in a retrospective article in *The Kokomo Tribune's Heartland Magazine*, which sources it to the City of Kokomo's official website.[xxviii]

And even Carl Leiter couldn't find – or at least didn't reveal -- a named document, a source, or a date as to when and where David Foster supposedly said it.

The City of Kokomo deserves better.

In an effort to replace the legend with documented sources, research for the 175th anniversary of Howard County has revealed a primary source – in the Congressional record, no less – with a much different story about David Foster and the Miami Indians. On Jan. 30, 1846, in Washington, D.C., a petition was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives 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" and "be allowed to purchase and sell land as citizens."[xxix]

The petition was also signed by "101 white men residing on the Great Miami reservation" (about one-fourth of the white male population in the county, according to the 1845 Indiana state census[xxx]). And the two named lead petitioners? Šaapontohsia and David Foster. The document raises more questions than answers; for example, who was Šaapontohsia and what were the white men's motivations. Nevertheless, this should be considered an important new addition to Kokomo's history story.

Furthermore, we have access to a new biography of a man named Kokomo, prepared by the researchers at the Myaamia Center at Miami University of Oxford, Ohio[xxxi]. Working from the best available sources, this family history provides valuable clues about a person with a similar-sounding name in the area around north-central Indiana in the mid-19th century, whose parents were likely a Miami and a Potawatomi Indian. Though not entitled to an allotment as part of the Big Miami Reserve, this Kokomo and his family were in fact related by intermarriage (through his Myaamia wife, Lo-pu-ge-quah) to the two large and influential Meshingomesia and Richardville families.

While Kokomo's name and much of his life remain a mystery to us today, the family lived on for a time, and a direct descendant -- Pimwee-

yotamwa (Eli Goodboy) -- served in the Civil War. Sadly, no direct descendants of this Kokomo exist among Myaamia people today.[xxxii] So don't these documented and dated sources – the Šaapontohsia-Foster petition and the Kokomo biography – combine to make a much better story about the early days of our town? A story that offers a more authentic depiction of the people who brought two cultures together at the rapids of the Wildcat Creek is a story that we all can be proud to share with the world.

Let's put the "orneriest Indian" story in the museum, where it belongs. The Miami Indians and the residents of Kokomo, Indiana, deserve better.

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