

## Indians of Indiana

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Indiana, like Ohio and Kentucky, is rich in archaeological remains which indicate that in prehistoric times the Ohio Valley region supported a large native population. What then happened to virtually clear the Ohio Valley drainage of this population prior to the advent of the whites? Attempts to explain this usually suffer for lack of a chronological roster of all tribes directly or indirectly known to have occupied the area in question. The aim of the present paper is to supply such a chronological roster for the state of Indiana.

(1). **Siouan groups.** Indirect evidence indicates that certain Siouan groups formed part of the population of the Ohio region, and more particularly of Indiana, during late prehistoric and protohistoric times.

One of these Siouan groups was the Quapaw. In Father Gravier's account of his trip down the Mississippi in 1700 it is stated that the Illinois and Miami called the Wabash and lower Ohio the river of the Akansa (Quapaw), because the Akansa formerly dwelt on it. The Quapaw occupancy of Indiana terminated prior to 1540, however, since at that date De Soto found this tribe situated on the west bank of the Mississippi, north of the mouth of the Arkansas river.

Toward the end of the seventeenth century a tribe (recently identified by John R. Swanton as the Ofo or Ofogoula) was reported as having formerly lived along the Ohio in what was later southern Indiana or southern Ohio. This group is referred to in early French sources as the Monsoupelea (Mosopelea, Mansopelea, etc.), which was probably the Shawnee designation for the Ofo, since the Shawnee name for the Ohio river is Msipelewa or Big Turkey river, and streams were often referred to by the name of the people living on them. Linguistic research has recently shown that the speech of the Biloxi, a tribe in Mississippi, the Ofo, and the Tutelo, a Virginia group, constitutes a subdivision of the Siouan stock; it seems probable that the point of dispersal for these three tribes was the Ohio valley region, and that at least one of them, the Mosopelea or Ofo, continued to occupy the region almost until historic times. But like the Quapaw, the Mosopelea removed from the Ohio southward down the Mississippi before the Ohio region was actually explored by the whites. During the last quarter of the seventeenth century the Mosopelea are referred to as living at various locations on the Mississippi, south of the Ohio; in the early eighteenth century, under the name Ofogoula, they were situated on the Yazoo river in Mississippi.

(2). **Earliest Shawnee.** Two other tribes, the Algonquian-speaking Shawnee and Miami, have often been mentioned as early inhabitants of Indiana. The most explicit reference to the Shawnee on the Ohio river in the seventeenth century is to be found in the *Relation* by Abbe Gallinée. Gallinée states that, in 1668, some Seneca told La Salle that the Ohio

river "had its source at three days' journey from Sonnontouan [near Naples, Ontario county, western New York] and that after a month's travel he would reach the Honniasontkeronons [Andaste?] and the Chiouanons [Shawnee], and that after having passed these and a great waterfall which there was in the river [the rapids or Falls of the Ohio?] he would find the Outagame [Fox?] and the country of the Iskousogos." Marquette also refers to the "Chaouanons" or Shawnee in the account of his trip down the Mississippi with Joliet in 1673. He remarks that the Waboukigou, which was a name often given to the Ohio below its confluence with the Wabash, "flows from the lands of the East, where dwell the people called Chaouanons in so great numbers that in one district there are as many as twenty-three villages, and fifteen in another, quite near one another." On Joliet's sketch maps the Shawnee appear close to the eastern bank of the Mississippi and also south of the Wabash-Ohio.

However, neither La Salle nor Marquette nor Joliet nor Tonti nor Gravier, to mention only a few of the early French explorers, penetrated inland far enough east of the Mississippi to encounter the Shawnee *in situ*, and all statements made by these authorities are based on hearsay evidence. On the other hand, traders and settlers made definite contacts with various Shawnee groups east of the Allegheny region prior to the close of the seventeenth century and in the early eighteenth century, which would seem to indicate that the Shawnee were probably situated farther east and south than Gallinée and Marquette put them. The evidence for the Shawnee as one of the early historic groups of southern Indiana is therefore questionable.

(3). **Earliest Miami.** The claims of the Miami to aboriginal occupancy of Indiana are most clearly set forth in a statement made by Little Turtle, a Miami leader, in 1795. Little Turtle said:—"My fathers kindled the first fire at Detroit; thence they extended their lines to the headwaters of the Scioto; thence to its mouth; thence down the Ohio to the mouth of the Wabash, and thence to Chicago over Lake Michigan." However, despite this positive claim, the title of the Miami to Indiana and western Ohio is by no means clear, for two reasons. Little Turtle was not by blood a Miami, although he was raised among this tribe and served as a war leader. In an account of the Miami compiled and written at Fort Wayne thirteen years after Little Turtle's death, C. C. Trowbridge states on the authority of Miami informants that "The Little Turtle is not considered a Miami;" he was, it seems, the offspring of a Mahican man and an Ioway girl who "settled among the Miamies & had a great many children, of whom the eldest was Little Turtle." A second and more serious reason for not accepting the Miami as the aboriginal proprietors of Indiana lies in the fact that in 1658 some of the Miami, at least, were reported by Gabriel Druillettes as living at the mouth of Green Bay, Wisconsin. In 1670 Nicholas Perrot actually visited a Miami village at the headwaters of the Fox river, in Wisconsin. Within a decade these Miami had moved south from Fox river and had formed settlements at Chicago and on the St. Joseph river of Lake Michigan. It is here, in 1680, that their history as Indiana Indians would appear to begin.

(4). **Historic tribes.** Despite the fact that Indiana presents difficult problems in the identification of its early occupants, this region was by no means devoid of an Indian population immediately preceding and during the early period of white penetration. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries both Indiana and Ohio became refuge areas for a large number of Indian tribes or segments of tribal groups. In Indiana alone a dozen historically intrusive groups lived within the borders of the state during the last two centuries. Some of these, such as the Mahican, Nanticoke, Mohegan, Delaware, Munsee, and Shawnee, were originally from the eastern seaboard region and had been pushed westward by the press of white settlement. Others, such as the Kickapoo, Potawatomi, Miami, Piankeshaw, Wea, and Huron, were from the Great Lakes area. With one exception all groups who migrated to Indiana spoke Algonquian languages; the exception was the Huron, whose speech belongs to the Iroquois family.

(5). **Miami.** Of the historic tribes which moved into Indiana, the Miami and two closely related groups, the Wea and the Piankeshaw, occupy a foremost place. The early locations and movements of this unit will therefore be given first consideration.

As has been noted, in 1680 the Miami were located on the St. Joseph river of Lake Michigan, in the extreme northwestern part of Indiana, and also in the vicinity of Chicago. During the early decades of the eighteenth century the Miami proper occupied the country north and northwest of the upper Wabash. The Wea and Piankeshaw were located farther down on the same river, around Ouiatenon and at the mouth of the Vermillion river near Vincennes, respectively.

From their location northwest of the Wabash the Miami gradually moved east in Indiana. Kekionga (now Fort Wayne), at the junction of the Maumee and St. Joseph rivers, became their principal town. During the middle part of the eighteenth century the Miami removed even farther eastward and established towns in northwestern Ohio, but after 1763 they abandoned these Ohio settlements and moved back into northeastern Indiana, where they remained until many of them sold their lands and removed west of the Mississippi, around 1827. One band occupied a reservation in Wabash county, Indiana, until 1872, when the land was divided among the 300 members. The Wea and Piankeshaw removed to the west from their villages near the Wabash at intervals between 1800 and 1832; in 1820 the Wea sold their last lands in Indiana, at the mouth of Raccoon creek, in Park county.

The Miami, Wea, and Piankeshaw were tribal and dialect units: all three spoke one mutually intelligible language. In 1825 C. C. Trowbridge was told by a Miami informant that the Miami could understand perfectly the speech of the Wea and Piankeshaw, as well as that of two neighboring Illinois groups, the Kaskaskia and Peoria.

(6). **Mahican.** In 1721 a band of Mahican, originally from the upper Hudson river valley of New York, established a village on the banks of the Kankakee river in Indiana. Other members of this tribe also lived in Indiana, on the banks of the White river, around the close of the

eighteenth century. One mixed Mahican group known as the Stockbridges removed from New York to Indiana under their chief, Austin E. Quinney, in the early nineteenth century, but in 1822 this group bought land near Green Bay, Wisconsin and moved north.

(7). **Huron.** The band of 119 Huron warriors and their families who lived in Indiana for a few months in 1748 was under the leadership of Orontony, or Nicholas, a Huron chief who had proposed that the Ohio Valley-Great Lakes tribes league together to destroy the French posts, but whose plan became known to the French and failed of execution. In April, 1748, Orontony destroyed his village on Sandusky Bay and removed with his people to the White river. During the summer or fall of the same year he and his group left Indiana for the Illinois country, where Orontony died that same fall.

(8). **Delaware.** Around 1770 the Delaware and the closely related Munsee received permission from the Miami and Piankeshaw to occupy the country between the Ohio and White rivers. There were a few Delaware towns in southern Indiana after 1770 also, but the main settlements of the Delaware and Munsee were on the upper course of the west fork of the White river in Hamilton, Madison and Delaware counties. A "Delaware Town" is also mapped four miles from Fort Wayne by Thomas Ridout (1788) and is mentioned by Henry Hay (1789); the latter states that this was the winter camp of George Girty, a Pennsylvanian who spent his life among the Delaware and Shawnee Indians.

The majority of the Delaware in Indiana left the state in 1818, after releasing their lands on White river. At the time of their removal the White River Delaware numbered about 800 persons.

(9). **Kickapoo.** Almost coincidental with the entry of the Delaware and Munsee into Indiana from the east was the Kickapoo entry from the west. After the destruction of the Illinois confederacy in 1765 the Kickapoo moved south from Wisconsin to Illinois. There the tribe split, one part gradually moving westward while the other part moved eastward into Indiana. Despite Miami and Piankeshaw opposition the new entrants settled on the Vermillion and Wabash rivers and became known as the Vermillion band of Kickapoo. Trowbridge comments upon the fact that these Indiana Kickapoo had intermarried with the Miami and had greatly assimilated to the latter in language and culture. The Kickapoo were also strongly influenced by the Shawnee Prophet when he lived in Indiana during the first part of the nineteenth century. In 1809 the Kickapoo ceded their lands on the Wabash and Vermillion rivers and moved west of the Mississippi.

(10). **Nanticoke and Mohegan.** Originally from Maryland, the Nanticoke entered Indiana about 1784 (presumably with some Connecticut Mohegan), and lived on the White river a short distance west of the Delaware. After 1818 the Nanticoke removed west of the Mississippi with the White River Delaware group and the Mohegan who had come west with them. The combined number of Nanticoke and Mohegan who left Indiana in 1818 is estimated at 200.

(11). **Shawnee.** By 1788 some Shawnee were living in northeastern Indiana, while others were beginning to roam through southern Indiana. Kakinathucca's band, probably belonging to the Pekowi division of the Shawnee tribe, was in April, 1788 hunting and making sugar at a winter camp in the extreme southeastern part of the state. Thomas Ridout, an English captive with this band, states that southeastern Indiana was a hunting place for this group of "Shawanese Indians" who, up to 1787 had been living on the Scioto river. After they had finished their sugar-making in the spring of 1788 members of the band removed westward across the southern part of the state to a location below Vincennes, near the junction of the Wabash and White rivers, where the women planted their crops. From that spot Kakinathucca and his people continued their trek north along the Wabash to Fort Miami (Fort Wayne). Ridout mentions two Shawnee chiefs, Blue Jacket, a white captive who spent his life with the Shawnee, and the Great Snake, as living a mile or two distant from Fort Miami. Henry Hay, who was at Miamitown (Fort Wayne) a year later, also refers to Blue Jacket, the Great Snake, and a "Chilicothé Village" of Shawnee, of which "Black Bairde" was chief. In the closing decade of the eighteenth century then, part of the Shawnee had removed from northeastern Ohio to villages in the vicinity of Fort Wayne, while other Shawnee were in southern Indiana, and still others in east-central Indiana. Of these latter we know that there were some on the White river, where they had moved from Ohio in 1798 by invitation of the Delaware, and another group, totalling 500 persons, which in 1816 was living 40 miles north of the White river, in a town on the Mississinewa, a branch of the Wabash.

It was in a White river settlement that the Shawnee Prophet had the vision which caused him to begin preaching among the central woodland tribes for a return to their native mode of life and the espousal of his brother's, Tecumseh's, cause. The Prophet gained many followers, but few of the Shawnee were won over to his cause. In 1808 he moved to the Wabash after a brief stay in Greenville, Ohio, and established a town near the mouth of Tippecanoe creek. The Kickapoo and Potawatomi were then in western Indiana, and many of them became converts to the Prophet's cause. After the battle of Tippecanoe in 1811 the Prophet and his band left Indiana and lived for several years at Fort Malden, at the mouth of Detroit river on the Ontario side.

The Shawnee at Fort Wayne and those on the White and Mississinewa rivers moved from Indiana, westward across the Mississippi, during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. In 1832-33 Shawnee from Wapakoneta and Lewistown, Ohio, journeyed across Indiana on their way west to join their fellow tribesmen in Kansas.

(12). **Potawatomi.** After 1765 the Potawatomi gradually spread south into southern Michigan and in 1795 they notified the Miami that they intended to move farther south into Indiana. This they did in spite of Miami protests. Around the close of the century numerous bands of Potawatomi had established villages in the northern part of the state, from the Kankakee river region eastward. Other groups of Potawatomi settled in Illinois. The bands in Indiana around the headwaters of

Tippecanoe river were known as the "Potawatomi of the Wabash." These bands sold their reserves in Indiana in 1836 and agreed to remove west across the Mississippi within two years. Many of the Potawatomi in Indiana refused, however, to leave their homes until they were driven out by military force in 1838.

With the Potawatomi ended the migration of Indian groups to Indiana, for at the same time the Potawatomi were moving into the state white settlers were beginning to cut down the forests and establish homes in the region. Within two decades after the entrance of the Potawatomi the issue as to which group, Indian or white, would possess the state had been settled. By 1838, the year the last Potawatomi group was forcibly removed, Indiana was virtually cleared of its Indian population save for a few Miami, the most persistent of the Indiana tribes.