

BRIEF HISTORY OF SITE

The Miami have been known to be in this area since the late 1600s. They interacted with the French, later the British, then finally the United States government since that time. The French and British wanted animal pelts, usually beaver fur, to send to Europe to be made into hats in exchange for guns, beads, trade silver cloth, and alcohol.

Not all the interaction between cultures was amicable and several conflicts occurred between the Miami and the American government. Led by Chief Little Turtle, the Miami confederacy had defeated the American Army under Harmar and St. Clair. But, in 1794 General Anthony Wayne led the American troops to a military defeat of the Miami confederacy at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794. The Treaty of Greenville (we have a copy of the portrait) was signed to end this war. This would be the last battle the Miami participated in against the American army.

During the War of 1812 Miami villages were destroyed because of the tribes neutrality to the war. One site was uncovered during the summer of 1995, just west of Forks' property.

Jean Baptiste Richardville became the principal chief of the Miami in 1814. Under his leadership, three treaties were negotiated and signed on the Forks property: 1834, 1838, and 1840. These treaties ceded land to the American government. Other accomplishments of Richardville include the moving of the Miami tribal headquarters from Keionga (Ft Wayne) to the forks in 1831, the adjustment in the Wabash and Erie Canal's path to divert it away from Miami homes, and the attainment of wealth making him one of the richest men in the state and the richest Indian in America.

Chief Richardville died in 1841. His son-in-law became the next civil chief. The several treaties negotiated between Richardville and the American government made way for their removal in 1846 and it was Lafontaine's responsibility to move his people on canal boats to the Kansas Territory.

Descendants of Lafontaine lived in the house until 1941 when the house was sold to Luke Scher. He rented the house to Lafontaine decedents, so we have people living who grew-up in the house. The house was rented until the late 1960s, when the by-pass expansion cut-off water to the house. The house remained vacant until 1977, when Jean Gernand organized a group of high school students to start restoring the house.

In 1982, Jim and Carol Shuttleworth donated the Nuck family home to the Huntington North Junior Historical Society. The house was moved onto the Scher property. The Nucks were a German immigrant family who came to Huntington County in 1841. They worked for Chief Lafontaine until they saved enough money to buy land and start farming. They built their log home in 1847.

By 1986, various groups helped the Huntington North Junior Historical Society with their project. The Ropchan Foundation out of Ft Wayne, agreed to help buy the Chiefs' house from the Scheers on the condition that an adult board would be established. In 1987 Historic Forks of the Wabash,

Inc was established.

Over the past ten years the board has bought the treaty grounds, moved both houses to their present location, purchased the Carroll property, the chimney property, and the point. We have moved a log cabin onto site and made that into the one-room school house and another house from Waterworks Road will become a canal store/trading post.

Today Historic Forks of the Wabash is an important cultural resource in northeast Indiana. We host fourth graders from throughout the region, we host educational classes and special events throughout the summer, and maintain the historic homes and canal for years to come.

TIME LINE OF EVENTS

- 1787 Northwest Ordinance**
- 1800 Act creates Indiana territory**
- 1808 Congress outlaws the slave trade**
- 1811 Cumberland Road (National Road - in Indianapolis is Washington Street) started**
- 1816 Indiana becomes a state**
- 1816 First Indiana Constitution**
- 1825 New Harmony, IN commune established**
- 1826 American Temperance Society formed**
- 1828 First railroad appears**
- 1828 Noah Webster publishes dictionary**
- 1830s McGuffey Readers first published**
- 1840 ten hour day for all federal employees**
- 1840 - 1848 Potato Famine in Ireland**
- 1844 Samuel Morse invents the telegraph**
- 1845 U.S. annexes Texas**
- 1846-1848 Mexican-American War**
- 1848 Seneca Falls Convention - Starts women's fight for the right to vote**
- 1849 California Gold rush**
- 1850 Scarlet Letter published**
- 1851 Moby Dick published**
- 1851 Second Indiana Constitution**

Life expectancy of a White person born in 1850 was 40 years of age

**President Andrew Jackson; 1827 - 1837 his VP - 1829 - 1832 was John C. Calhoun and then
1833 - 1837 was Martin Van Buren**

President Martin Van Buren; 1837 - 1841 VP was Richard Johnson

**President William Henry Harrison (Tippecanoe and Tyler Too Slogan); 1841 VP John Tyler
Harrison died from pneumonia which he caught at his inaugural speech; died four months
into office; He was know as "Tippecanoe" because of a battle he won, against Native
Americans while a army general**

President John Tyler 1841 - 1845 No VP

President John Polk; 1845 - 1849 VP was George Dallas