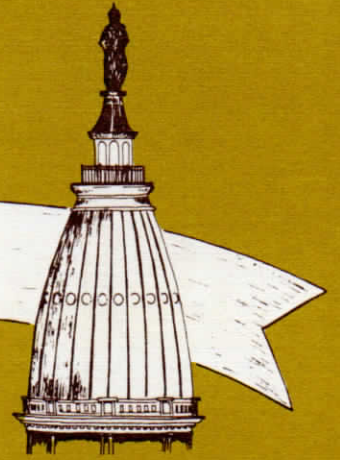




Tippecanoe

Tales



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**LAND
LACED
WITH
TRAILS
Indians
in
Tippecanoe
County**

BY JACK O. WADDELL

Tippecanoe County is literally “laced” together by the trails over which Indians of many tribes once traveled to and from important locations. All that remains to hint of this once active network, however, are a few place names that incorporate names of tribes that once occupied the middle Wabash valley — names such as Post Ouiatenon, Wea Creek, Kickapoo Falls, Potawatomi Springs, Wyandotte Road, and Shawnee Mound.

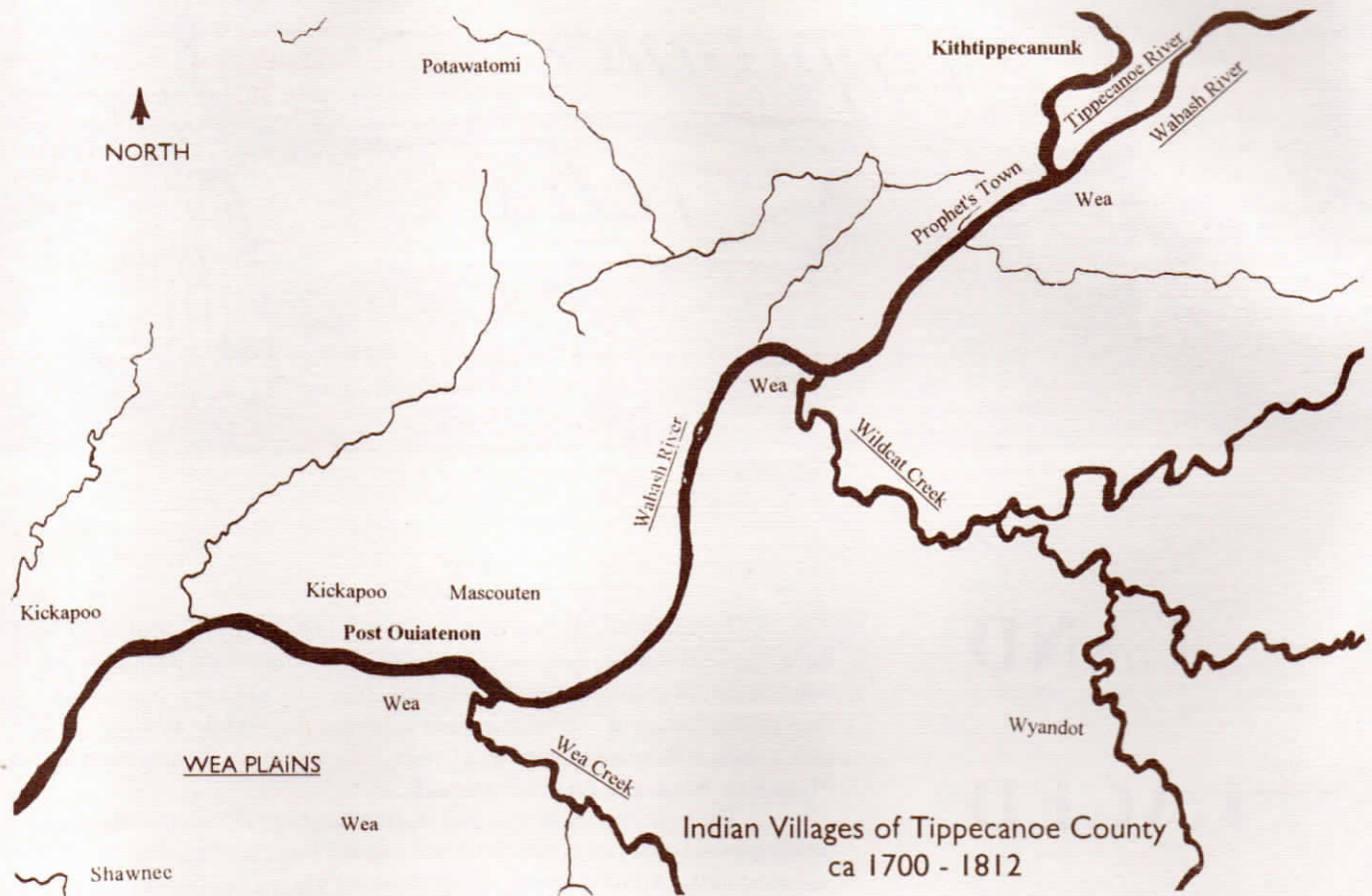
The vast woodland area east of the Mississippi River, extending northward past the Great Lakes into the whole eastern portion of present-day Canada, eastward to the Atlantic Ocean, and southward toward the Gulf of Mexico, was occupied by many different native populations speaking one or another dialect of the Algonquian stock. Scattered throughout this extensive Algonquian area were other native peoples who spoke languages totally unrelated to the Algonquians. Among them were the Iroquois of upstate New York, the once powerful Hurons or Wyandots of the eastern Great Lakes, the familiar Cherokees of the Appalachian region, the Quapaws from south of the Ohio River, and the Winnebagos of central Wisconsin whose languages were all of the Siouan stock. Representatives of both major linguistic groups are a part of the history of Tippecanoe County.

Renewed archaeological activity within Tippecanoe County and neighboring counties during the last decades of the 20th century is beginning to provide fuller understanding of the forms of prehistoric social life in this area. Documentary researchers also continue to expand our understanding of the native peoples as seen through the eyes of 17th and 18th century French and English observers and interpreted in the light of ethnological and historical insights.

The extension of French economic and spiritual colonialism, contesting with British economic and sedentary colonialism, precipitated a series of political events that greatly affected a large number of native societies over a vast expanse of eastern North America during this period. Coupled with a growing Iroquois militarism, this colonial contest provoked many movements of the Algonquian and Siouan speaking native populations. The Wabash River was one of the most significant connections between French interests in Quebec and those in New Orleans; and as a result, our local area became a 17th and 18th century staging ground in this contest. The Wabash was a critical part of a vital “middle border” refuge area that became the habitat for a variety of Algonquian and Siouan populations.

It was here that many communities of Miamis, Weas, Piankeshaws, Kickapoos, Mascoutens, Potawatomis, Shawnees, Wyandots, Delawares, Munsees, Winnebago, etc. put forth their last efforts at maintaining their aboriginal ways of life, relatively free of European influence and political domination.

During the 18th century, we find a number of Algonquian- and Siouan-speaking tribes occupying the portion of Indiana which includes what is now Tippecanoe County. It is these people we now look at in greater detail.



Indian Villages of Tippecanoe County
ca 1700 - 1812

Weas (Ouiatenon)

The Wea — who are called Ouauiatanouk, Oua, Ouachtenons, Ouias, and other variations thereof in early documents — were one of several bands or local groups of Indians that are considered under the general name of Miami. The nature of these various bands and their relationships with each other are not well understood since the pre-19th century historical record is very fragmentary. Material from the better recorded Illinois people to the west has been used to more fully understand these related populations.

The term Miami is probably derived from the Chippewa word Oumamik or Oumaumeg, referring to the "People of the Peninsula." Various Oumamik bands lived in the vicinities of the Fox River-Wisconsin portage, south of Green Bay on Lake Michigan, in southwestern Wisconsin, in northeastern Illinois, and in northwestern Indiana. It was not until the first part of the 18th century that the Wea are recorded as living along the middle Wabash in what is now Tippecanoe County.

Population estimates for the Oumamik (Miami) range from 4,000 to 5,000 people. There seem to have been at least six bands or local groups of the Oumamik. Each band was a politically separate cluster of villages that occupied a local territory or moved from one location to another. These distinct groups sometimes intermarried, joined together for offensive action or defensive strategies against common enemies, and shared common hunting areas for seasonal periods.

The six original Miami bands and their respective totemic or symbolic identifications were the Atchatcha-

kangouen (Twightees or Cranes), the Kilatika (Hind or Female Red Deer), Pepicokia (Acorn), Mengakonkia (Bear), Piankeshaw (Deer), and Ougatonous or Wea (Serpent). Only the Cranes - the Miamis proper - along the Eel River and upper Wabash and the Piankeshaws and the Weas along the middle Wabash remained as distinctive groups in the 18th century. The Kilatika, Pepicokia and Mengakonkia appear to have been absorbed into the other three bands or to have joined other closely related Algonquian groups adjacent to the Miamis.



Prior to 1700, the Wea band appears to have been distributed in a variety of locations near the Fox-Wisconsin portage, on the north bank of the Illinois River opposite Fort St. Louis at Starved Rock (Illinois), and on the southwest shore of Lake Michigan near present-day Chicago. One early account has the Weas on the middle Wabash as early as 1695, and we know that by 1710 they were settled on the southeastern bank at the verge of the Wabash or St. Jerome River in present Tippecanoe County.

The most critical route between French Canada and French Louisiana was by river. To strengthen the St. Joseph-Kankakee and the Wabash-Maumee trade routes for access to the fur country of the Illinois and the Ohio and the middle Mississippi valleys, the French encouraged the Miamis to settle on the upper Wabash, the Weas on the Wabash from the Tippecanoe River to the Vermillion River, and the Piankeshaws on the lower Wabash from the Vermillion to the Vincennes area. While having some military-defensive functions, the French posts at the Miami-Maumee junction (Post Miami at Fort Wayne), on the middle Wabash (Post Ouiatenon at Lafayette), and on the lower Wabash (Post Vincennes at Vincennes) were primarily of economic importance. The French wanted furs and the Indians wanted trade items including food, weapons, ammunition, other utilitarian things, and body adornments. At the posts the traders, priests, and soldiers could also work to maintain the Indians' allegiance to the French.

We will never know how many Wea villages were in the Ouiatenon area. In 1718 perhaps as many as 1,000 Weas, Piankeshaws, and Pepicokias occupied five villages on the middle Wabash. The names of four of these villages are mentioned: "Ouyatinons," "Peangnichas," "Peticotias," and "Les Gros."

The first three of these clearly reflect the band names of the Wea, Piankeshaw, and Pepicokia, respectively. All of these villages were within a few miles of each other, spreading out along the southern and eastern banks of the Wabash, especially along the Wea Plains below the mouth of the Tippecanoe River.

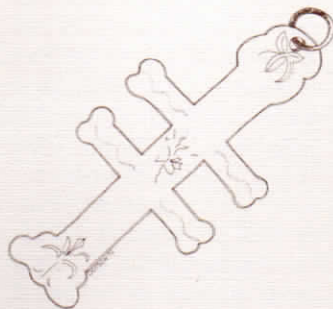
As late as 1790, when Antoine Gamelin of Vincennes visited all of the Wabash villages to determine the loyalties of the natives, it was reported that Ouiatenons at "Ouitepiconnae," the Wea settlement at the mouth of the Tippecanoe, would not declare their loyalties until being advised by the Miami of the Maumee.

This river junction was strategic because it led to the prairies to the west which were occupied by the Kickapoos, Mascoutens, and Sauks and Foxes peoples, and to the trapping and hunting area of the southward-moving Potawatomis, who had been settling north of the Eel River and along the upper reaches of the Tippecanoe River.

The Wea village on the southeast bank of the Wabash was opposite the site of Post Ouiatenon. Due to its proximity to the post, this village is the one most frequently described in historical documents. In fact there were probably

several small Wea settlements scattered about the Wea Plains, especially during the planting and harvesting seasons when family units were tending their fields of corn, pumpkins, and melons. Their hunting area was a much larger expanse of land, extending several miles in all directions. A shifting pattern of subsistence altered the size of the Wea villages from season to season and year to year, but when the French post was built in 1717 and trading activity increased, it undoubtedly encouraged a more stable nucleus of Wea about the post.

The main Wea village, across the Wabash from Post Ouiatenon, may have been there as early as 1695, certainly by 1717 when the post was established. Decades later, after the British gained control of the area from the French, General Hamilton, the British Commandant at Detroit, reported about ninety cabins of Weas and perhaps as many as 900 people at the Wea village in 1778. But by 1795, after the American punitive expeditions against the Wabash villages in 1791, the Weas were reported to have moved to adjacent locations. There were some pro-British Weas eighteen miles north at the mouth of the Tippecanoe River, but neutral or pro-American Weas agreed with the Americans to move southward toward Vincennes. Some Weas and Piankeshaws began migrating westward to join other cognate groups such as the Peoria, an Illinois people. With the sale of the last remaining lands of the Weas near the mouth of Sugar and Raccoon Creeks in Parke County, this Miami band, so important to the history of Tippecanoe County, was dissolved. Today a few Wea descendants live among the remaining Peorias in Oklahoma.



*Trade silver cross found at
Ouiatenon*

Kickapoo (Kiikaapoa)

Like the Oumamiks (Miamis), the Kickapoos were located in a palisaded village at the portage of the Fox-Wisconsin Rivers in the 1670s. The Kickapoo moved about so frequently that they never could be associated with any particular area, but before European contact probably lived near the Sauks, Foxes, and Mascoutens in southeastern Michigan. These groups were pushed westward by the Iroquois menace and the Europeans contesting for empire. As the Iroquois extension into Illinois country began to wane toward the end of the 17th century, the Kickapoos began moving southward into central Illinois. Some of the Kickapoo bands moved into western Indiana, settling on the banks of the Vermillion and Wabash Rivers.

In 1726 Sieur de Bienville (Jean Baptiste le Moyne) reported only Weas near Ouiatenon but by the 1740s there are reports of some Kickapoos and Mascoutens living at Ouiatenon. The Kickapoo allied with Wea around the post in the mid-1730s. Memoirs written between 1754 and 1758 mention the Kickapoos and Mascoutens trading at Post Ouiatenon. At the height of Pontiac's rebellion in 1763, the British Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Sir William Johnson, reported that the Mascoutens, Kickapoos, Weas, and Piankeshaws at Ouiatenon were all of some concern to the British administration.

George Croghan, Johnson's deputy agent, reported three villages at Ouiatenon in 1765 — the Wea village on the south side of the Wabash, and the Kickapoo and Mascouten villages on the north side near the fort. These Indians were

being influenced by the French at Ft. Chartres near Kaskaskia and the British were trying to counteract this influence.

Some Kickapoos were reported in the vicinity of the post during the American Revolution but by the mid-1790s only a few Kickapoos remained at Post Ouiatenon. Most of the Weas were moving south toward Vincennes. In 1791 Charles Scott, an American general, carried out a punitive expedition against the Weas and Kickapoos. Because of the anti-American postures of the Weas and Kickapoos, Scott's forces destroyed their villages in June. Colonel James Wilkinson's follow-up raid in August reported the Kickapoo village to be seven or eight miles west of Ouiatenon. Wilkinson's contingent destroyed thirty Kickapoo houses and adjacent cornfields; then his men returned to Ouiatenon and destroyed 430 acres of corn along with the Wea homes. In 1795, an army team on its way to newly established Fort Wayne met Kickapoos near the Vermillion River. The Kickapoos were on their way to the Wea Plains. The Kickapoos were very much influenced by the Shawnee Prophet Tenskwatawa and some expressed their anti-American sentiments by joining in the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811.

The last of the Kickapoo lands in the Vermillion-Wabash junction area were ceded to the United States in 1809 and most of the people moved westward beyond the Mississippi River. A small segment of them even went beyond American territory and to this day maintain a Kickapoo community in Mexico.

Mascoutens and Potawatomis (Maskoutensak and Potewatami)

When they were first described by Europeans the Mascoutens were occupying southern Michigan, southeastern Wisconsin, and northern Indiana and Illinois. Their range of movement seems to have corresponded with movements of the Kickapoos, with whom they seem to have fused by 1800. By the latter part of the 17th century, at least a small number of them, along with some Kickapoos, lived adjacent to Miami bands on the upper and middle Wabash, probably under the influence of the French at these locations. The Iroquois presence may have forced some of these Mascoutens into their movements while those on the Upper Mississippi may have similarly been pressured eastward by the Sioux.

The Potawatomis, a distinct cultural entity, were first reported occupying the southern portion of Michigan and distributed themselves geographically around the southern arc of Lake Michigan, extending northward to the Door Peninsula near Green Bay, Wisconsin. These distributions were clearly related to the economic and political situations affecting other cognate groups, especially the threats of the Iroquois and Sioux as well as the French-British rivalry. For these very reasons, there was significant and intense activity in northern and central Indiana — including the middle Wabash and Ouiatenon — involving the Potawatomis, Kickapoos, Mascoutens, and various Miami bands. These groups found themselves allied with the Foxes and the Illinois while receiving overtures by both the French and the British, which often created tensions between and among bands. Some of the tensions were resolved by loose alliances and associations as well as amalgamations while others drove further apart groups that were once aligned. During the 18th

century, while the Miamis and affiliated bands settled along the banks of the Wabash and its tributaries, the Potawatomis intensified their occupation of northern Indiana.

By the mid-1740s, segments of Kickapoo and Mascouten bands were living in the vicinity of the Wea and Piankeshaw settlements along the middle Wabash near the French post of Ouiatenon. The Potawatomi penetrations into central Indiana seemed to stop at the Wabash-Eel River perimeter. Nonetheless, a very important series of Potawatomi trails led to the various places through the Northwest where the Potawatomis came to establish important relationships. One important trail extended south from Chicago along the eastern Illinois border, all the way to the important French post at Vincennes. Two important branches of the trail through Potawatomi country forked eastward, one branch going toward Ouiatenon and the other to what is now known as Potawatomi Springs at Independence, Indiana, near Attica. The whole portion of Indiana north and west of the Wabash River was occupied by Potawatomi, Mascoutens, and Kickapoos.

In the 1740s there is a report of eight cabins of Mascoutens at Ouiatenon and of Kickapoos arriving in the area after living among the Miami of the upper Wabash. In the 1750s numerous reports mention that Mascoutens traded at Post Ouiatenon and could produce a number of warriors that would be loyal to the French. When British control was established in the 1760s, the Mascoutens appear to have joined the Weas and Kickapoos under Pontiac in their uprising against the British at Ouiatenon.

In 1763 British Superintendent Johnson reported that the "Wawaightones" (Weas) had 100 men, "Piankashaw" 100, "Mascoutens" 90, and Kickapoos 180 in the neighborhood of Post "Wawiaghta." Two years later Croghan reported a Mascouten village on the north side of the Wabash near the post. During the Revolutionary War, the British reported difficulty in being able to supply sufficient troops and trade goods to the western posts. The British feared the Wabash tribes would support the colonies or at least retain the anti-British sentiments stirred up during Pontiac's rebellion.

There is no mention of Mascouten settlements being included in the devastation caused by the punitive expeditions against the Ouiatenon villages led by Generals Scott and Wilkinson in 1791, but some pro-British Mascoutens were living in Kithtepicanuk, the town at the mouth of Tippecanoe which the troops devastated. It should be kept in mind that the Tippecanoe River, with the exception of that portion at the junction with the Wabash, was a Potawatomi occupied river. The name of the river itself, Ketpikonong, "Place of the Buffalo Fish," is Potawatomi.



Shortly after the 1791 punitive expeditions, Weas and Potawatomis renewed their anti-American opposition, a sentiment reflected in the strong support they later gave to Tecumseh and to the Prophet at Battle Ground in 1811. United States military travelers along the Wabash in 1795 still reported seeing Potawatomi and Kickapoo hunting parties between the Vermillion and Tippecanoe Rivers. No references to the Mascoutens at Ouiatenon are found, suggesting that they moved about south of the former post or more likely merged with the Kickapoos. There seems to have been a Potawatomi village: "About a day's walk" below the Wea villages near Ouiatenon. This was probably Potawatomi Springs or some place near where the Pine Creek flows into the Wabash near Attica.

Although the Potawatomis along the Eel and upper Tippecanoe Rivers continued to play a prominent part in northern Indiana history, the Mascoutens are not mentioned by name as being in Tippecanoe County after 1800. Descendants of the Potawatomi groups are now found in Kansas, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, and southern Michigan.

Shawnee (Chaouanons)

The Shawnees, while they may have had an earlier Great Lakes origin, occupied an area east and south of the groups previously discussed. They were the latest of the eastern arrivals in the Ohio River valley and Indiana Territory. They were wandering about in the eastern Piedmont at the time of European arrival. When the Weas, Kickapoos, and Mascoutens were still located in southern Wisconsin in the latter part of the 17th century, some 3,000 Shawnees were settled in dispersed areas from the Carolinas to Tennessee with a large portion of them settled along the Savannah River. Throughout most of the 18th century, they wandered about, partly stimulated by European settlement as well as their own migratory habits.

It should be remembered that the great Shawnee leader Tecumseh was probably from the southern group of Shawnees as he was the son of a Shawnee father and a Creek mother. His mother was probably from a Creek community in eastern Alabama. Tecumseh was visiting among the Creek communities to enlist support for his resistance movement when his brother Tenskwatawa, The Prophet, led supporters into battle against General William Harrison at the Battle of Tippecanoe.

About 1730 a major group of Shawnees worked its way westward into Pennsylvania and moved into the upper Ohio Valley to escape the increasing number of European settlers. The powerful Iroquois had actually laid claim to western Pennsylvania and had encouraged a number of subjugated native groups, including the Shawnees, to settle in this area to serve as a buffer between the Iroquois lands and those of the British settlers. By 1745, as the settlement from the east increased, the southern and northern groups of Shawnees began to converge in southern Indiana in the upper Ohio Valley. In 1741, having been encouraged by the French to help counterbalance the hostility being expressed by various Illinois tribes to the west, Shawnees were living among the Weas in the middle Wabash country. There was a large Shawnee village located just to the south of the present village of Odell in southwestern Tippecanoe County. This

may have been one of the very early settlements of Shawnees among the Weas. These settlements were being encouraged by the French because the Shawnees, having been allied with the Iroquois, were an awesome presence to those Illinois tribes that were causing trouble for the French.

Prior to 1787 there were important Shawnee towns on the Scioto River in Ohio, the birthplace of Tecumseh. By 1788 some Shawnees were living east of the Miami on the Maumee River while other bands were roaming south of Vincennes at the junction of the White and Wabash Rivers. It was at a Shawnee settlement along the White River in south central Indiana that Lau-lewasikal, Tecumseh's heretofore depraved and drunken brother, had his vision and came to be known as Tenskwatawa. In 1808 the famous Shawnee built Prophetstown on the northwest bank of the Wabash east of Battle Ground and inspired resistance to the increasing white migration. After the battle of 1811, the Prophet and his band left Indiana and settled in Canada near Detroit. In the first quarter of the 19th century, the Shawnee settlements in Wabash country, those on the Maumee and in Ohio and those on the Mississinewa and White Rivers farther southward, moved from Indiana across the Mississippi. The majority of the Shawnees ended up in Oklahoma where they currently reside among Miamis and other eastern groups.

Wyandot (Tionontati-Petun)

The remaining native groups that were significant in early county history are of a completely different language stock — the great Siouan stock. A Wyandot village existed in the eastern part of the county in what is now Sheffield township just south of Dayton.

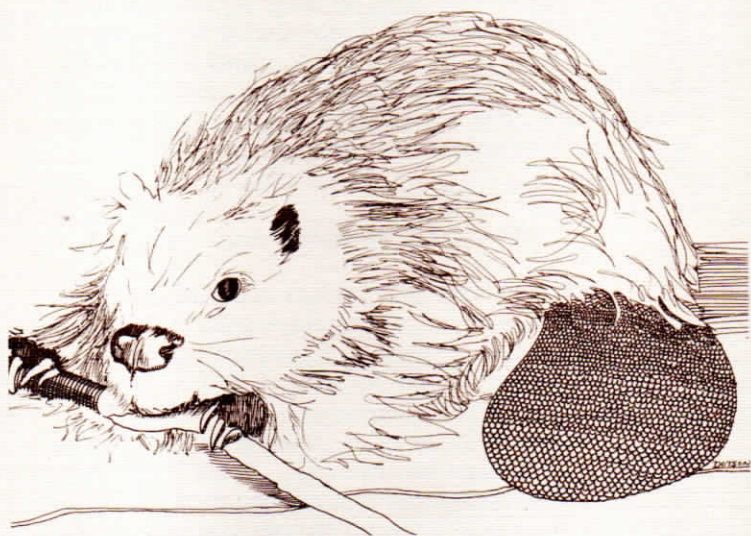
Wendat or Wyandot was a name carried by some groups of Huron, more specifically the Tionontati or Petun. These Iroquoian-speaking people had fled the scene of the Iroquois destruction of Huronia in the mid-17th century. The term Wyandot appears to have been employed by the English and came to be the standard name used for referring to any of those of Huron origin. (Huron was a French word meaning bristly-haired.)

The Huron settlements were on the eastern peninsula of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. Here the Huron became the powerful middlemen of the fur trade traffic until they were destroyed by the Iroquois. After their political destruction, some of the Wyandots were among the tribes, including the Shawnees and Delawares, that were encouraged by the Iroquois to settle at the southern borders of Iroquoia. In turn the Wyandots gave the Shawnees permission to settle among them on the upper Ohio. Other Wyandots settled in southern Michigan, particularly in the vicinity of Detroit and in the vicinity of Sandusky in northwestern Ohio, close to the Miami villages on the Maumee.

Some Wyandots lived among the Miamis as early as 1731. The French sought permission of Miami and Wea bands as well as the Wyandots to allow scattered Shawnee groups to settle in the Wabash Valley. In 1734, when the Weas attacked the Ouiatenon post, some Wyandots joined the French force assembled at Detroit to subdue the Wea hostility. By the 1750s Wyandots were listed, along with the Shawnee, Delaware, Ottawa, and Miami bands, as being friendly to the French, thus putting the French in a favorable

position for securing the Wabash route. On the other hand, by 1763, the Wyandots were having a strong pro-British influence on the Maumee and upper Wabash Miamis and were encouraging anti-Pontiac feelings.

Most tribes along the Wabash were divided in their loyalties to the French, British, and Americans and were aligned with different groups at different times throughout the latter part of the 18th and early 19th centuries. The Wyandots were no exception. There were Wyandots in Tecumseh's resistance movement who were inspired by the Prophet's inflammatory, anti-white religious message and gathered at Prophetstown on the Wabash. Other Wyandots, chiefly those along the Mississinewa and Wabash Rivers, joined Potawatomis and Miamis in their opposition to Tecumseh and his brother, the Prophet, Teskwatawa. After the defeat of the Prophet at the Battle of Tippecanoe, the Wyandots, like many of the other groups, left the area and moved across the Mississippi into Indian territory.



Winnebago (Winpyeko)

The Winnebagos were the easternmost group of the Plains and Prairies Siouan tribes. Their earliest identifiable location was on Green Bay. During the early history of their contact with Europeans their general distribution was throughout south central Wisconsin. In spite of their small numbers they are significant in the history of Tippecanoe County because of the role they played in the political intrigue of the Prophet. According to the oral tradition of the Winnebagos of Wisconsin, some Winnebagos joined the Prophet's assorted collection of sympathizers and played a role in the Battle of Tippecanoe. Other Winnebagos joined with the Miamis, Potawatomis, and Wyandots in opposing Tecumseh and supporting the Americans.

The Winnebagos seem to have left little in the Tippecanoe-Ouiatenon area to remind us of their presence. Some probably returned to Wisconsin; others probably joined the migration of Winnebagos to Nebraska.

Indian Life Around Post Ouiatenon

The presence of the French at Post Ouiatenon early in the 18th century undoubtedly had a profound effect on

native life. The Weas were the most numerous natives near the post, but little has been recorded of their social life there. However, a composite picture may be drawn from what we know of the central Algonquian groups in the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley areas.

The most important social grouping for the Weas was the local band. A band consisted of several families that established their homes in several settlement clusters or villages scattered over a more extensive territory that they all claimed in common. This Wea band territory extended for several miles along the south bank of the Wabash, where the channel curved southwestward. Besides the village located near the mouth of Wea Creek across the river from the post, there also was a Wea village near the present Granville bridge where a number of Piankeshaws had also settled. There was another settlement higher up on the Wea Plain just to the northwest of present-day High Gap. There probably was a Wea settlement at the mouth of the Wildcat Creek and another one farther up the Wabash at the mouth of the Tippecanoe. The actual number of village sites and their locations varied from time to time and season to season.

Each village was comprised of families belonging to a number of different clans common to all the Miami bands. Clanship in human societies is probably established as a way for dispersed and fluid populations to maintain a social sense of kinship in times of residential instability and dislocation. These clans, not always in the same number nor all present in the same combinations at all the villages, were dispersed throughout the settlements over the entire band territory. Individuals inherited their clan affiliations through the paternal line, and when marriage arrangements were made within the village or with other Miami bands people from the same clan were not allowed to marry each other. Clan associations also assumed different ceremonial responsibilities, engaged in deliberation at council, and served as teams for competitive games such as lacrosse. Each clan had its own sacred bundle that was passed on through the clan line to one of several worthy candidates in the clan. The most important political decisions were most likely made at the band and more specifically village levels, where segments of several clans were represented.

The number of clans ranged from less than a dozen to perhaps as many as two dozen at different time periods, and each clan had a totem name. Most of these names were animal or bird names, but one clan symbol was that of a small acorn. Over a period of time some new clans were established while others died out or split off and moved away.

As with other Great Lakes tribes, in the earliest aboriginal period clan membership may have signified the person's acknowledgement of an ancestral affinity with the animal species after which the clan was named. This principle seems to have been lost among a number of historically known



Signet, fur bale seal, found at Ouiatenon

central Algonquian, such as the Potawatomis, and this may have been true of the Miamis also.

The day-by-day domestic units of most importance at Ouiatenon were the villages. While the record for the Weas is not clear, they probably shared similar patterns of life with other horticultural people in the woodlands region, such as the people in the lower Mississippi area. The families representing two or more possible clans in a village cultivated lands adjacent to their settlements. This local village and its horticultural activities comprised the essential day-by-day residential community. On important ceremonial or competitive game days, frequently associated with the ceremonial calendar, clans or groups of clans assembled in the home villages of the clan leaders. Thus, because of the presence of important clan leaders and clan bundles or fetishes, certain villages were more important than others.

There seems to have been enough cultivable land in which horticulture was carried out during the summer season. The common hunting ground of the entire band was a much larger territory included within an even larger area open to other bands of friendly neighboring tribes. Early reports indicate that hunting groups traveled from 20 to 50 miles southward and eastward from the fort. The prairies to the west had sizable herds of bison, but until just before the 18th century when the horse became significant in the area, bison were only one alternative quarry of the hunt rather than the primary meat source they were for the equestrian tribes farther west. Certain local streams were probably open to any band member to trap, and there were areas open to all for collecting berries, etc. However, when the full thrust of the fur trade came to the area some of the Weas may have begun to travel over larger areas in pursuit of furs to trade at the post.

Among the many ways the several village units of the Wea band were brought cohesively together are the following:

1. The several clans cut across the various villages to unite people of different villages with common social identities. Hence the settlements were also aligned with each other.

2. Since one could not marry a member of one's own clan, whether in the home village or a neighboring village, villages provided each other with spouses belonging to different clans. This spouse exchange provided an important economic and social bond.

3. In addition to clan and marriage ties, there were various clubs, such as the warrior and policing societies, that united adult males from different villages in fraternities based upon various war exploits.

4. Clans, with their sacred bundles, tied clansmen in different villages together in a religious sense so that people from different villages were drawn toward the same sacred symbols.

5. The medicine or curing societies also cut across the local villages to unite members in several villages, especially during the mid-winter medicine ceremony.

6. There were common hunting lands to defend and common enemies to raid or retaliate against, thus providing a more pervasive political unity among the several settlements.

Hence we see the solidarity among villages that provided the corporate show of force for such events as the Wea take-overs of Post Ouiatenon in 1734 and again, briefly,

in 1763.

Another form of social organization with the central Algonquian tribes - the *moitie* - may have been present among the Weas. The band may have been divided into two halves (*moities*). All individuals, adult males and females as well as children belonged to either a senior or a junior division. Those who were first, third, fifth, in order of birth in the particular families were assigned to the senior side, while those second, fourth, sixth, etc. in birth-order were assigned to the junior division. These units - or *moities* - seem to have operated in organizing responsibilities for ceremonies and competitive games.



The size and location of the houses in a village changed according to the season. During the summers the villages were larger, with more families living near the fields and food preparing areas. Several kinds of structures, many of them large enough to accommodate multiple families and larger gatherings, would likely be found during the summer season.

During the winter season the people dispersed to smaller settlements and lived in smaller homes, the reed-matted domed wigwams being the most common. This was the time when more austere conditions called for smaller social units. Such units survived on the winter trapping and hunting that supplemented the dried foods prepared during the more abundant summer months.

With European contact, of course, the log cabin, similar to those built by the Frenchmen among them, became a popular structure and increased in both size and permanence. This trend may have already begun early in French contact.

It is of interest to note that, while the Weas probably used dugout canoes, they did not have the reputation of being canoe people like their relatives of the northern Great Lakes region. Nevertheless, Weas were probably among those natives who traveled with or as a part of canoe brigades up and down the Wabash at the height of the fur trade. The main involvement of the Weas, however, seems to have been as middlemen in the dispensing of furs and as potential allies to

ensure safe passage along the waterways. Since Ouatonen was more significant as a trade center than as a military establishment, the Wea were probably influenced by European goods and ideas during the several decades of French predominance. The Weas continued to play a vital role in the politics of the Wabash, and competing European and American groups were constantly concerned with wooing the alliance and support of the Weas. But with the destruction campaigns against the Wea villages in 1791 and their

enticement southward toward Vincennes after that time, the Wea era on the middle Wabash in Tippecanoe County came to a close.

The moccasin-clad feet which once wove the fabric of our county's earliest history as they walked now-hidden trails are hushed forever. But our sensitivity to their historic presence will lace our trails to theirs; and we will be woven together in a pattern for future historians to ponder.

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