

Indiana Indians - a History

In the last three decades of the century, Illinois tribes were confined to the waters of the Kaskaskia and Big Muddy rivers. Struggles with Piankashaw, Kickapoo, Potawatomi, and Shawnee ensued, with heavy losses for all tribes. The Kaskaskias ceded their land south of a line drawn eastward from the mouth of the Illinois River, with two small tracts reserved on the Big Muddy. The remnants of the Illinois in the state established their last village in their traditional homeland on one of the tracts.

In 1832, the Peoria (including the Tamaroa, Michigamea, and Cahokia) ceded their land north of the line, and the Kaskaskia ceded their two remaining tracts. The last of the Illinois thus withdrew permanently from the Illinois county.

Miami, Wea, and Piankashaw. The Miami tribes included the Atchatchakangouen, Kilatika, Mengakonkia, and Pepikokia, and sometimes also included the Wea and Piankashaw, although both these groups maintained political independence until the nineteenth century.

After they withdrew from the Wabash-Saint Joseph region in mid-seventeenth century, the main body of the Miami settled in central and southwest Wisconsin. Some went to northwestern Illinois. The Wea and Piankashaw settled in western Wisconsin, and some went into northern Iowa.

In 1679, Green Bay traders aided a group of Atchatchakangouen, Mascouten, and Wea to settle on the Saint Joseph River to prevent La Salle from gaining access to the Illinois on the Illinois River. After attacks from Iroquois, they accepted La Salle's invitation in 1682 to make peace with the Illinois and move near Fort La Salle on the Illinois River. The combined population of villages near the Iroquois River and Fort Saint Louis was about 7,500.

However, the Miami found it difficult to overcome their traditional distrust of the Illinois, and in 1688 they abandoned the area. Some settled on the Mississippi, and some returned to the Saint Joseph River. A few years later, they moved down to the Wabash. The Wea occupied the area of Chicago until 1698, when French trade was restricted. In about 1717, they moved to the Wabash River, where they established the village of Ouiatonon. A French post was also established nearby.

Shortly after 1700, the Miami of the Maramek and Miami in Wisconsin moved to the east side of the Wabash between the Wea and

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Piankashaw. In time, their range extended eastward into Ohio. The Miami established a firm attachment to the British, along with Wea and Piankashaw.

In about 1800, small bands of Miami, Wea, and Piankashaw moved to the western side of the Mississippi. Treaties beginning in 1803 ceded their land to the government. In 1828, the last of the Piankashaw left Illinois. The Wea left Indiana in 1832. The Miami made a last Indiana land cession in 1840.

Sauk and Fox Tribes. After moving from Michigan, the Sauk (Sac) settled on the lower Fox River of Wisconsin, and the Fox (Masquaki) removed to the upper Fox River southeast to the Chicago River.

Loyalty of the Sauk vacillated between the British and the French. Fox warriors defended the French until their tribe was almost destroyed in 1712 at Fort Ponchartrain. The incident began the "Fox War," a retaliatory effort in which Fox were joined by Mascouten and Kickapoo. In 1730, some 300 Fox left the area and moved to New York to join a band that had settled with the Seneca some 20 years previously. They were intercepted in central Illinois and suffered heavy losses. They eventually returned to the Fox River.

In 1733, the French determined to settle the problem with the Fox by destroying them. The Fox sought sanctuary with the Sauk, but eventually both groups were forced to abandon the fort and remove to the banks of the Mississippi. In 1743, the French persuaded some Sauk to return to the Fox River.

The Sauk and Fox continued to vacillate during the French and British conflict. At the conclusion of the war, they promised loyalty to the British, but continued a close contact with French traders who had moved across the Mississippi into Spanish territory. At the outbreak of the American Revolution, the two tribes were again split in their loyalty.

After an American attack on Rock River villages, the tribes turned against the Americans and supported the British through the War of 1812. (A negotiation in 1804 by Governor William H. Harrison of Indiana Territory had already relinquished claims of Sauk and Fox to all land lying east of the Mississippi.) Although the main body of both tribes denounced the treaty, it was ratified by each near the close of the War of 1812.

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By 1829, most Sauk and Fox had moved to the western side of the Mississippi. Black Hawk eventually accepted the treaty of 1804 and moved into Iowa, but he refused to abandon the ancestral burial ground on the Rock River and continued to visit annually. He visited the site in 1832, in defiance of an agreement made in 1831, and General Henry Atkinson defined this as an invasion of the United States. A subsequent military campaign resulted in a defeat of Black Hawk and his followers at Bad Axe Creek, and the Sauk and Fox left Illinois.

Kickapoo and Mascouten. The Kickapoo and Mascouten moved from Michigan with the Sauk and Fox. In 1679, a band of Mascouten joined in the effort to cut off La Salle's approach to the Illinois country. After the failure of the effort, they later reoccupied their old village on the Fox River. Internal conflicts resulted in some Mascouten joining the Miami, while others joined the Fox. The main body joined with the Kickapoo.

In 1702, a band of Mascouten moved to the mouth of the Ohio, but the following year, smallpox decimated this community. Survivors settled on both sides of the Wabash, and were joined by other groups. Eventually they lost their individual identity and were absorbed by their neighbors, especially the Kickapoo.

The Kickapoo were the most conservative tribe in the Illinois region, and thus they maintained a general anti-European position throughout the early historical period. They became attached to Nicolas Perrot, an Indian agent and trader, in 1685. They were a small tribe, and some joined with the Wea during the early 1700s, and some with the Fox. By 1717 they had been reduced about one-third. Internal conflicts within the group were strong until they turned against the Americans who were moving into the Wabash valley. Some of their villages were destroyed. They joined with Tecumseh and in 1811 suffered in the defeat of Tippecanoe, and the following year some of their towns were destroyed on the Sangamon and one at Peoria.

After 1800, small bands began moving to the west of the Mississippi, with an acceleration of emigration after destruction of the Prairie towns. In 1819, two groups in separate treaties ceded their lands in Illinois and Indiana, providing they could still hunt and live on the land. In 1832, the government ordered their removal to Kansas.

Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Chippewa. Potawatomi tribes moved into the Green Bay area from the Straits of Mackinac about 1641. They