

Fort Wayne
Oct. 7

Peru
Oct. 6

Defiance

myaamiaki aancihsaaciki

A CULTURAL EXPLORATION OF THE MYAAMIA REMOVAL ROUTE

Indianapolis

Dayton (Sinclair)
Oct. 10

(near) Evansville
Oct. 14



Miami Tribe of Oklahoma

myaamiaki aancihsaaciki

A Cultural Exploration of the Myaamia Removal Route

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A Cultural Exploration of the Myaamia Removal Route

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Myaamia Removal

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For many Myaamia people, we often say that time is like a pond, and events are like stones dropped in water. Emotionally powerful events create big ripples that combine with the smaller ripples of less powerful events in unpredictable ways. In our Myaamia pond, the forced removal of 1846 was more like a boulder, which, once dropped into our lives, created a series of waves that changed everything. The political, economic, and cultural impacts of this forced relocation were immense, and the emotional toll of this experience has trickled downstream in the memories and stories of many Myaamia families. Removal remains an event that is painful for us to remember and discuss, but to choose to forget has never been an option. We know we must continue to remember in order to honor the sacrifices endured by our ancestors who made this terrible journey.



aašipehkwa waawaalici (Seven Pillars): located on the Mississinewa River east of Peru, Indiana, the Pillars are all that remain of limestone caves that were a popular spot to visit for generations of Myaamia people. Today, Seven Pillars remains popular and Myaamia people visit the site regularly. Photo Credit: Andrew Strack



saakiiweeyonkonci...

The Myaamia first emerged as a distinct and different people along the banks of the Saakiiweesiipi (St. Joseph's River near South Bend, Indiana). From this place, the Myaamia built numerous villages upon a landscape they came to call Myaamionki (the place of the Myaamia). The heartland center of Myaamionki was the Wabash River Valley. The Myaamia lived in this location from time immemorial until the arrival of Europeans in North America.

Following the arrival of Europeans, the Myaamiaki were disrupted by successive waves of disease, war, and dislocation. Beginning in 1795, the Myaamiaki were forced to sign treaties relinquishing ever-increasing amounts of their precious homeland to the government of the United States. By the 1830s, the collective shared land base of the Myaamiaki had diminished to 500,000 acres, which was completely surrounded by land controlled by the State of Indiana. But land speculators and settlers deeply desired to own even this diminished homeland.

In 1830, Congress passed the Indian Removal Act. The goal of this act was to force all tribes to move west of the Mississippi. Throughout the 1830s, many tribes suffered their own version of the "Trail of Tears" most commonly associated with the Cherokee Nation's forced removal in 1838. Throughout this period, the Myaamia vehemently resisted the endless calls to give up their reservation in Indiana and remove west. In 1832, Pinšwa summarized this resistance by stating, "Here the Great Spirit has fixed our homes. Here are our cornfields and our cabins. From this soil and these forests we derive our subsistence and here we will live and die. I repeat, we will not sell an inch of our land" (Legacy 94).

Yet, for reasons that are not entirely clear, the Myaamia signed the Treaty of the Forks of the Wabash in 1840. This treaty relinquished their collective reservation in Indiana in exchange for a reservation of the same size – 500,000 acres – west of the Mississippi in what would become the Kansas Territory. The terms of the treaty stipulated that the Tribe would move to these lands within five years of the agreement.

The Myaamia resisted removal for six years after the Treaty of the Forks of the Wabash. With each passing year increasing numbers of families were officially exempted from removal. There is some evidence to indicate that the group was prepared to relinquish the reservation in Indiana, but that they



believed everyone could stay on the individual family allotments that had been created for decades prior to 1840. In 1846, Toohpia (Francis LaFontaine) together with the other headmen of the Tribe argued “several individuals of our tribe were in possession of large tracts of land reserved for them in different treaties, these reserves could answer all the purposes of the inconsiderable remnants of a once powerful tribe; and ill advised, misguided by corrupt and designing white men, we had been persuaded that the government of the United States would consent, without the shadow of difficulty to our remaining in our dear native land.” However, all hope of resistance to removal ended when the private contractors hired to conduct the removal together with representatives of the U.S. government called in the Army to forcibly remove those that had not been exempted.

On October 6th, 1846, hundreds of Myaamia were loaded onto three canal boats in Peru, Indiana – a place they called Iihkipihsinonki (the straight place, so named because of the unusually straight course of the Wabash River in that spot). From Iihkipihsinonki the canal boats were pulled along the Wabash-Erie Canal – the newly completed series of deep trenches and locks – and followed the Wabash north to Ft. Wayne.



Lock on the Miami-Erie Canal near the Johnston Farm and Indian Agency in Piqua, Ohio. This lock helped control the flow of water to the canal that carried the Myaamia removal south to Cincinnati, Ohio. Photo Credit: Andrew Strack.



The forced removal of the Miami as depicted by artist Wilson Berry. Though the accuracy of historic references in this painting are questioned (clothing, site depiction), the scene does invoke the terrible reality suffered by our ancestors of being forced, at gunpoint, to leave home. Luke Scheer Collection, Myaamia Heritage Museum & Archives, Miami, Oklahoma.



Image: The canal boat The General Harrison of Piqua, which is operated by the Johnston Farm and Indian Agency a historic site managed by the Ohio Historical Society and the Friends of the Johnston Farm. Thanks to Andy Hite the site director for providing the photo.



The next day, more Myaamia were forcibly loaded onto two more canal boats, and it was from Ft. Wayne, known to the Myaamia as Kiihkayonki, that the forced exodus began in earnest. Kiihkayonki was the original site of their largest village and was called “that Glorious Gate” by the Myaamia leader Mihšihkinaahkwa. On October 7th, Kiihkayonki became the gateway of the mournful removal of our ancestors from Myaamionki.

From Kiihkayonki, the five canal boats were pulled to the Miami-Erie canal and began a four-day journey south to Cincinnati, OH. On their way south the Myaamia passed numerous sites of great historical and cultural importance. They passed the site of Fort Defiance, the military bastion from which Anthony Wayne launched his final invasion into Myaamionki in 1794. They also passed Pinkwaawilenionki (Pickawillany) a prominent Myaamia village site in the mid-eighteenth century. Much of the Miami-Erie canal followed the course of the Ahsenisiipi (the Great Miami River); a river that originally was a major route of travel to their hunting grounds along the Ohio River and to their relatives who also called that beautiful place home.



Image Credit, pg 5: Cincinnati in 1841. Klauprech & Menzel -- Printer of Plates. This painting shows the canal as it appeared five years before removal. Today, this location lies in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio. Accessed at <http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/id?54780>



On October 11th, they reached the growing metropolis of Cincinnati, Ohio. As they were unloaded from the canal boats, over three hundred people stood where generations of their ancestors crossed the Ohio River on war trails to the south. This same location was to be the launching point of a different, though equally dangerous, kind of journey.

In Cincinnati, the Myaamia were moved to the steamship Colorado, and on October 12th the ship began its journey west on the Kaanseenseepiwi (Ohio River). After eight days of travel on the Colorado, they arrived in St. Louis, Missouri. The Myaamia were unloaded at Bloody Island, which lay in the middle of the Mississippi River. This location placed the group near the traditional village sites of their Inoka (Illinois) relatives and as such it was a place they knew well. However it was also at the western edge of Myaamionki. To the west lay the traditional homelands of groups that had formerly been their enemies; to their parents generation those western lands had been a dangerous place. Yet, the Americans told them these lands in the west were to be their new homes.



Steampacket Colorado. Our ancestors were loaded onto this steamship in Cincinnati, Ohio. It took them west along the Ohio River to Bloody Island across from St. Louis. By permission of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Cincinnati, Ohio.



While on route to the Mississippi an infant passed away and upon arriving at Bloody Island an elderly member of the group also passed. The cause of their deaths is unknown. They were buried on or near the Island according to Myaamia tribal traditions. Today Bloody Island lies on the Illinois side of the Mississippi directly across the river from the St. Louis Gateway Arch. The Arch, which was completed in 1965, stands as an ironic monument to the western migrations of American settlers who by their own choice would swarm across the prairies after the U.S. Civil War.

On October 23rd, the Myaamia were loaded onto the steamship Clermont No. 2 and were taken north on the Mississippi River to its confluence with the Missouri River. From this point, they followed the Missouri River west to Kanza Landing, which today lies on the Missouri side of Kansas City. For the first time in their journey, these forced migrants were outside their traditional homelands. After a month of journeying, these Myaamia had moved from the forested bottomlands of the Wabash River Valley to the edge of the great American prairielands of the west. It was a very different landscape, and winter had set in.

On November 1st, three hundred and twenty five Myaamiaki were unloaded at Kanza Landing. The next day they traveled the final fifty or so miles of their journey to Osage River sub-agency in the Unorganized Territory (Kansas). They arrived at Sugar Creek on Nov. 5th, of 1846 (Hayward 11). It was winter on the plains and the people were forced to sleep in government issued tents and eat government rations until they could build more permanent structures.

After only just arriving in Kansas our people would be forced to pull up the roots of barely planted lives in a land that they thought would be home forever. In 1873, a small group of Myaamia traveled 150 miles south to what is today Miami, Oklahoma completing the final leg of a journey that began back in Indiana twenty seven years earlier. The devastation of each move tore the fabric of the community life of the Miami Nation apart leaving lives and families shattered in their wake. We are still grappling with effects of the history of this forced relocation. Today there are concentrations of Myaamia people living in Indiana, Kansas and Oklahoma who are reminders of the journey that led to our fragmentation and the struggle to help tribal members connect. It is our hope that this project will reach out to our tribal community to help them better understand how the experiences of our ancestors have shaped our lives today as Myaamia people.



Treaty of the Forks of the Wabash November 1840

“Dear to us was that home of our children, still dearer to us were the ashes of our forefathers, and how could we expect to find anywhere else aught that would compensate for such a loss,” Chief LaFontaine in a letter to President Polk in November of 1846 after arrival in Kansas.

The Treaty of the Forks of the Wabash signed in November of 1840 marks the point in time when Myaamia leaders yielded to unrelenting pressure to leave their precious homeland and journey west to land at the Osage River Agency in Kansas.



Treaty With the Miami, 1840

STAT. L VII 582

TREATY WITH THE MIAMI, 1840

Articles of a treaty made and concluded at the Forks of the Wabash, in the State of Indiana, this twenty-eighth day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty, between Samuel Milroy and Allen Hamilton, acting (unofficially) unofficially as commissioners on the part of the United States, and the chiefs, warriors and headmen of the Miami Tribe of Indians.

Article I.

The Miami tribe of Indians, do hereby cede to the United States all that tract of land on the south side of the Wabash river, not heretofore ceded, and commonly known as the “residue of the Big Reserve.” Being all of their remaining lands in Indiana.

The provision below practically reserves from this cession the Me-to-sin-ia tract. Royce Map 258 Indiana.

Article II.

For and in consideration of the cession aforesaid, the United States agree to pay to the Miami tribe of Indians the sum of five hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Three hundred thousand dollars of which sum to be set apart, and applied immediately after the ratification of this treaty and an appropriation is made by Congress to carry its provisions into effect, to the payment of the debts of the tribe, as hereinafter stipulated. And the residue, two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, to be paid in twenty equal yearly installments.

Article III.

The Miamies, being desirous that their just debts shall be fully paid; it is hereby, at their request stipulated, that immediately on the ratification of this treaty, the United States shall appoint a commissioner or commissioners, who shall be authorized to investigate all claims against any and every member of the tribe, which have accrued since the 6th day of November, 1838, or which may accrue before the date of the ratification of this treaty, without regard to distinction of blood in the claimant or claimants. And whose duty it shall be to enquire into the equity and legality of the original cause of indebtedness, whether the same now is, or may than be in the form of judgments, notes, or other evidence of debts, and report for payment out of the money set apart by this treaty for that purpose, such claims only, or parts of claims, as shall be both legal and just. And his or their award when approved by the President of the United States shall be final. Two hundred and fifty thousand dol-



Treaty With the Miami, 1840

lars of the sum set apart in the second article of this treaty shall be applied to the payment of debts contracted before the twenty-eighth day of November, 1840; and the residue of said sum, after such debts are satisfied, being fifty thousand dollars, to the payment of debts contracted between the last named date and the time of the ratification of this treaty by the Senate of the United States; giving preference, in the application of said sum of fifty thousand dollars, to debts contracted for provisions and subsistence.

Article IV.

It is further stipulated that the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars be paid to John B. Richardville. And the sum of fifteen thousand dollars to the acting executor of Francis Godfroy deceased, being the amount of their respective claims against the tribe; out of the money set apart for the payment of their debts by the second article of the treaty.

Article V.

And whereas the late war chief, (Francis Godfroy,) bequeathed to his children a large estate, to remain unsold until the youngest of said children shall arrive at the age of twenty-one years. It is therefore stipulated, that the United States shall pay to the family of said deceased chief of their just proportion of the annuities of said tribe, at Fort Wayne, from and after the time the tribe shall emigrate to the country assigned to them west of the Mississippi.

Article VI.

It is further stipulated, that the sum of two hundred and fifty dollars shall be paid annually by the United States, and accepted by the Miamies in lieu of the labour stipulated to be furnished by the fourth article of the treaty of the 23d of October 1826, for the purpose of preventing the dissatisfaction, occasioned heretofore, in the distribution of said labour amongst the different bands.

Article VII.

It is further stipulated, that the United States convey by patent, to Me-shing-go-me-sia, son on Ma-to-sin-ia, the tract of land reserved by the 2d article of the treaty of the 6th of November 1838, to the band of Ma-to-sin-ia to be held by the said Me-shin-go-me-zia, for his band; and the proceeds thereof, when the same shall be alienated, shall be equitably distributed to said band, under the direction of the President. And the same provision made in favour of John B. Richardville and family, in



Treaty With the Miami, 1840

the 14th article of the treaty of the 6th November 1838, is hereby granted and extended to the above named Me-shing-go-me-sia, and to his brothers.

This tract was partitioned among the members of this band under the provision of an act of Congress approved June 1, 1872. Royce Map 256. 18ETH, PT 2—17.

Article VIII.

It is hereby stipulated, that the Miami tribe of Indians shall remove to the country assigned them west of the Mississippi, within five years from this date; the United States paying every expense attending such removal and to furnish rations to said tribe for twelve months after their arrival at said country. And the United States shall also cause four thousand dollars to be expended to the best advantage in supplying good merchantable pork and flour to said tribe, during the second year of their residence at their new homes. Which sum is to be deducted from their annuity of that year.

The Miami removed to Kansas in accordance with this provision. The tract thus assigned them was partly ceded by them to the U.S. by treaty of June 5, 1854. The remainder was disposed of partly under provisions of the same treaty and partly in accordance with treaty of Feb. 23, 1867, supplemented by act of Congress approved Mar. 3, 1873. Royce Maps 329 and 330 Kansas 2.

Article IX.

It is further stipulated, that should there be an unexpended balance of the “three hundred thousand dollars,” after the payment of the debts of the tribe as provided in the second article of this treaty; such balance to be paid over to the Miamies at the next payment of annuities after the amount of said balance shall have been ascertained.

Article X.

It is stipulated and agreed between the contracting parties, that there shall be, and hereby is granted and reserved to John B. Richardville, principal chief, seven sections of land, from the land ceded in the first article of this treaty; at such point or points as he may select (not less than one section at any one point,) to be conveyed to him by patent from the United States. And also, in like manner, one section of land to Francis LaFontaine, at the rapids of Wildcat, to be surveyed under his direction.

Article XI.



Treaty With the Miami, 1840

Nothing in this treaty shall be so construed as to impair the force of validity of former treaty stipulations, existing between the United States and the Miami tribe of Indians, not altered by nor coming within the purview of any of the provisions of this treaty.

Article XII.

The United States hereby stipulate to set apart and assign to the Miamies, for their occupancy west of the Mississippi, a tract of country bounded on the east by the State of Missouri, on the north by the country of the Weas and Kaskaskias, on the west by the Potawatomies of Indiana, and on the south by the land assigned to the New York Indians, estimated to contain five hundred thousand acres.

Article XIII.

It is hereby stipulated, that the United States provide for the payment of the expense which maybe necessarily incurred in the negotiation of this treaty.

Article XIV.

This treaty shall be binding on the United States, and on the Miami tribe of Indians, from and after the date of its ratification by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate of the United States. But, if the same shall not be so ratified before the 4th day of March next, it shall be of no binding force or validity.

Article XV.

We the chiefs warriors, and headmen of the Miami tribe of Indians, having examined and considered the foregoing articles, after the same had been interpreted and explained to us to our satisfaction, do hereby agree and request, that the said articles shall be taken and held as a treaty between the parties thereto; and when ratified as provided in the last preceding article, be binding on our tribe, and on the United States, as fully to all intents and purposes as thought the same had been officially and formally made on the part of the United States.

In testimony whereof, we, Samuel Milroy, and Allen Hamilton, on behalf of the United States, (as aforesaid,) and the chiefs, warriors, and headmen of the Miami tribe of Indians, have hereunto set our hands.



Treaty With the Miami, 1840

Done at the Forks of the Wabash, in the State of Indiana, this twenty-eighth day of November, one thousand eight hundred and forty.

Samuel Milroy,
Allen Hamilton

John B. Richardville, principal chief, Pe-wan-pe-oh,
Wau-pa-pin-shaw, Me-ze-qua,
O-zan-de-ah, Ma-gou-zah,
Cha-pine, Peshe-a-wauh,
Me-shing-go-me-zia, Po-qua-Godfroy,
Wauka-shing-guah, Na-kun-sah,
To-pe-ah, Ko-es-say,
Te-moo-te-oh, Sin-go-me-zia,
Ma-qua-co-nong, Tuc-ke-mun-gaugh,
Mon-go-sou, Bo-wa-wah.

Signed in the presence of H.B. Milroy, secretary.

David Carrier, Geo. M. Maxwell, Robert H. Milroy.

Peter Andre, interpreter.

We the undersigned chiefs, headmen, and warriors of the Miami tribe of Indians residing the State of Indiana, do hereby give our free and voluntary assent to the amendments made by the Senate of the United States on the 25th day of February last, to the treaty concluded by us with the United States on the 28th day of November 1840; the same having been submitted and fully explained to us by Samuel Milroy and Allen Hamilton, commissioners on the part of the United States for that purpose, in full council assembled at the Forks of the Wabash in the State of Indiana.

In testimony whereof we have hereunto set our hands, and affixed our seals respectively this fifteenth day of May 1841.

Na-wa-lin-guah, Mah-gon-zah,
Pe-she-wah, Con-o-cot-wah,
O-yan-de-ah, Shau-cot-to-wah,
Na-kan-yak, Sha-pen-do-zia,
Shing-go-me-zia, Cant-ah-chin-guah,
Pe-wau-pe-ah, Ma-ze-quah,
Te-moo-te-ah, Cant-au-seep-au,



Treaty With the Miami, 1840

Wau-pe-mun-guah, To-oe0ah,
Sha-pe-do-ziah, Ma-con-zah,
Wan-pe-pin-ce-ah, Maun-go-zah,
Co-i-sey, Ka-lah-ca-mic,
Mah-con-zah, Keel-son-sauh,
Pa-cong-ye-ah, Keel-swah,
Mah-qui-e-cah, Benjamin,
Cau-te-mon-quah, John B. Richardville
Mong-gon-zah, Poqua Godfroy.

Done in the presence of-Samuel Milroy, Allen Hamilton, Commissioners.
H. B. Milroy, secretary to commission.
Peter Andrie, Grigway Boudie, Interpreters.

(To the Indian names are subjoined a mark and seal.)



akima pinšiwa awiiki (home of Chief John Baptiste de Richardville): The house in this picture was built in 1827 for pinšiwa and was his home until his death in 1841. It is located just south of Fort Wayne, Indiana and is awaiting designation as a National Historic Landmark.



Commonly referred to as “the removal letters”, the following pages include correspondence chronicling the forced removal of the Miami and their ultimate arrival in Kansas. The letters include the message from Chief LaFontaine and tribal leaders’ to President Polk, and excerpts from Cincinnati Gazette articles relating to the Miami arrival in Cincinnati prior to departure to St. Louis aboard the Steamboat Colorado.

**These entries appear as originally written with spelling issues, grammar and signatures left uncorrected.*



“The Removal Letters” ...7 October, 1846

Office of Eel River Subagency
Fort Wayne, Indiana 7 Oct. 1846

Sir:

I have the honour to inform you that we have succeeded in getting the Miami Emigration under way peaceably and quietly.

The canal boats in which the Indians are (5 in number) left Peru yesterday and have all passed through this place today on their way to Cincinnattis, where the Indians will go on board a steam boat to be taken to Westport from which place they will proceed by land to their country on the Osage River.

The presence of the Military force has contributed very materially to bring this happy result about and I cannot speak too highly of the conduct of Capt. Lovett and the force under his command. There has been no acts of violence committed by the Indians on each other during the collection and up to this time, nor do I anticipate any thing of the kind during their journey.

The chief will go with his people to their new home, and on their arrival there I shall take him and the principal men of the tribe all through their land, and hope to be able to satisfy them that it is good as it has been represented to them to be: in which case it will not be long before most of those who are permitted to remain here will emigrate of their own free will.

I have advised the Miamis on their arrival west, to united themselves with the Weas and they express a willingness to do so: and if it meets your approbation I should be pleased to effect this reconciliation. The Miamis & Weas are in fact the same people—they separated some years since on account of some supposed partiality in a treaty made with the Wea by General John Tipton and it appears to me that it would be good policy to re-unite them. Will you please inform me, what in your opinion it would be proper to do in this matter.

I shall start tomorrow in the Packet and shall soon overtake the emigrating party and at Cincinnattis will mail to you my reports of which I shall be compelled to make out on the canal boats; I hope the Department will excuse the delay, as it has been out of my power to return home until now, and I have but a few hours to remain here.

Very Respectfully
Your obedient servant
Joseph Sinclair

Col. Wm. Medill
Commissioner of Indian Affairs
Washington, D. C.



“The Removal Letters” ...10 October, 1846

Dayton, Ohio 10, Oct. 1846

Sir:

I have just reached this place (at 11:00 A.M.) with the emigrating party of the Miamis, and shall proceed without any delay to Cincinnati, which place we shall reach some time during the day tomorrow where I will write to you again.

There has no accident happened to any of our company, there are several of the Indians sick, they were so when we started. They are under the care of the Physician and appear to be improving in health.

Col. Wm. Medill
Commissioner of Indian Affairs
Washington, D. C.

Very respectfully,
Your obdt. servant
Joseph Sinclair
Supt. of Miami Emigration



“The Removal Letters” ...12 October, 1846

Cincinnati 12th Oct, 1846

Sir:

I have the honour to report that the Miami Emigrating party arrived here during last night and the Indians are now (at 10:00 A.M.) going on board the steam boat “Colorado” which the contractors have chartered to proceed to St. Louis where another steam boat will be chartered to take them to Westport. The only accident that has happened occurred last night on board one of the canal boats. Two of the Indians were sleeping on the baggage on deck, and in passing under a very low bridge they were considerably, though not at all dangerously hurt.

Several of the creditors of the Indians from debts contracted since the ratification of the Treaty of 1840 are now with the emigrating party, they are going west expecting to make some collections from the Indians at the payment that is expected to take place soon after arrival of the Indians to their new homes. These men have assisted us in looking after the Indians and getting them together, and I have promised them that I would ask of you that every facility consistent with the policy of the Government might be afforded them for making their collection.

Col. Wm. Medill
Commissioner of Indian Affairs
Washington, D. C.

Very respectfully
Your obedient servant
Joseph Sinclair
Sup. of emigration



“The Removal Letters” ...14 October, 1846

On board Steam Boat Colorado
Near Evansville, Ind. Oct. 14, 1846

Sir:

I have the honour to enclose herewith my annual report as sub agent of Miamis.

A statement of persons connected with the Indian Department in the Miami Sub Agency and, the census & statistics organized by your circular of 1st Sept., 1846

All of which I hope will be satisfactory, although I have not been able to pay that attention to my annual report that I could wish.

Col. Wm. Medill
Commissioner of Indian Affairs
Washington, D. C.

Very respectfully
Your obdt. servant
Joseph Sinclair
Sub Agent

Statement of persons employed by or connected with the Indian Department in the Miami Sub Agency, Sept. 30, 1846.

Joseph Sinclair Sub Agent at a salary of \$750 per annum

George Hunt Interpreter at a salary of \$300 per annum

The miller, blacksmith and apprentice blacksmith were discharged June 30, 1846

I certify on honour, that I have no interest in any trade with the Miamis nor has the interpreter to my knowledge.

On board the Steamer Colorado
Oct. 14, 1846

Joseph Sinclair
Sub Agent



“The Removal Letters” ...14 October 1846

On board Steamer Colorado
Near Evansville, Indiana 14, Oct. 1846

Sir:

I have been so busily engaged in collecting the Miamis and getting them this far on their way to their new homes, that it has not been in my power until now to make my annual report. The Miamis have been in a state of perfect confusion for the past year: and very little attention has been by them paid either to farming or the chase. By the Treaty of 1840 this Tribe agreed to remove within five years from the lands they sold in Indiana to the country assigned them west. This time expired in November last, but at their request the period for removal was postponed to April last. At which time I assembled their chiefs, and called upon them to comply with their treaty stipulations with the government and quickly remove.

At that time they gave me no decisive answer, but at a subsequent council in May they asked to be permitted to remain until the first of August, promising that at that time they would take us by the hand and remove to their new homes without asking further delay or giving any further trouble. When the promise was made I thought I could rely upon this but, I soon found that the Indians were acting in bad faith, and that an arrangement had been entered into by a portion of the traders and some unprincipled designing men, with a few of the chiefs, that additional time should be asked, under the pretense of want of preparation for removal, in order the better to enable them to thwart the Government in its policy.

Soon after the council in May, the most extravagant promises were made the Indians by men who they were lead to suppose possessed great influence with the Department; and by divers alliances they were induced to raise a large sum of money, not merely to defray the necessary expenses of a trip to Washington, but also to pay for the tremendous influence which they were promised would be brought to bear upon the Administration; and which they were assured would obtain for them an exchange of country, or permission to remain in Indiana, or in fact almost anything they could desire.

After applications of this character had been made, and promptly decided against by the Department, a copy of the decision was read and explained by me to the Indians: these men however still assured the Indians that no such decision had been sanctioned by the President: on the contrary they declared that they possess assurances from him that if the Indians should refuse to emigrate without it, their applications would be granted. Under these circumstances I found it impossible to persuade the Miamis to keep their faith with the government and reported on the 9th of August last, with the suggestion that if the Department deemed it advisable to order a small force, its presence would induce them to remove peacefully. The force was furnished and the result has been as predicted. A detachment of U. S. Troops under the command of Capt. Lovett arrived at Peru on the 26th of September,



“The Removal Letters” ...14 October 1846, continued.

and the Miamis left that point on the 6th of October. They are now here with me proceeding to their new country contented and cheerful. The Indians if left to act for themselves I think feel disposed to be honest and to do what is right, but when it is to the interest of traders to induce them to act otherwise they too frequently succeed, and I will here report what I have stated in a former communication; that I am clearly of the opinion that it would be an excellent arrangement for the Department to supply the Indians with such goods as they stand in need of, and to prohibit all trade with them.

It is certain that this tribe will be beggared if the cormorants who have been living from their means are no longer permitted to prey on them; notwithstanding the large annuities they receive. Since the treaty of 1840 the Government has paid of their debts \$330,000.00 and assumed the payment out of their annuities of \$2,500.00 more. Larger collections have also been made by the traders from the Indians individually at every payment since, amounting to at least \$35,000.00 each year. Notwithstanding all this, some \$80,000.00 more is claimed and the attempt of the traders to force the Government to assume the payment of this amount, has been the principle cause of all the difficulty that has been encountered in getting the Miamis to remove.

The Miamis have no schools amongst them and with few exceptions seems to care very little about the education of their children; they will I hope feel and act differently in relation to this subject when they are removed from the influences that have heretofore operated upon them.

Col. Wm. Medill
Commissioner of Indian Affairs
Washington, D. C.

Very respectfully
your Obedt Servant
Sub Agt Miamis



“The Removal Letters” ...14 October 1846, continued.

Census Statistics of the Miami Nation of Indians for 1846

No. of Males over 18 years of age	112
“ “ “ under 18 “ “ “	107
“ “ Females over 16 “ “ “	179
“ “ “ under 16 “ “ “	110
“ “ Indians, age & sex unknown	47
Whole Number	555
No. engaged in trade (Chief Lafontaine)	1
Amnt of capital invested \$8,000.	
No. of Indians employed by Govt. (Geo. Hunt)	1
“ “ horses belonging to the tribe about	220
“ “ cows “ “ “ “	70
“ “ other cattle “ “ “ “	150
Amnt of annuitites	\$62,418.
“ “ divided for Capita	72.50
“ “ Tobacco furnished	1,000
“ “ Salt furnished Bushel	100
“ “ Iron furnished	2,000.
“ “ Steel furnished	1,000.
“ “ Iron & Steel for shop to the value of	220.

The Miamis with a very few exceptions are in the habit of getting intoxicated whenever they can obtain liquor, and it is very difficult to get along at our necessary councils or payments without more or less drunkenness. In the Indian Country, it may be in the power of an Agent to prevent the selling of liquor to the Indians, it cannot be done in any other.

Whenever a tribe of Indians become as deeply indebted as the Miami are, no reliance can be placed upon their integrity, the traders will induce them to disregarding their obligations to the government.

Joseph Sinclair
Sub Agt



“The Removal Letters” ...21 October 1846

St. Louis Oct. 21, 1846

Sir:

I have the honour to inform you that I reached this place yesterday with the Miamis. We found the Ohio River very low, and it was with great difficulty the Steam Boat was got over the sand bars that are found between Louisville and its junction with the Mississippi.

The contractors for the migration find it very difficult to procure a Steam Boat to make the trip to Westport, they will make an effort to engage one during the day at some point. Should they be unsuccessful the trip will be made by land.

There has two deaths occurred since I wrote to you on the 14th, an infant on the 18th and the other an aged Indian who had been a long time sick on the 20th. Every attention has been paid to them by the Physician, and the Contractors gave them decent burial, affording the Indians an opportunity of performing their peculiar funeral ceremony.

I have called at the Post Office, but find no commands from the Department. I have also called at the Office of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs here and was informed that no communication had been received there relating to the disposition to be made of the Miamis on their arrival at their new home.

Col. Wm. Medill
Commissioner of Indian Affairs
Washington, D. C.

Very Respectfully
Your Obedt. Servant
Joseph Sinclair
Supt. Miami Emigration



“The Removal Letters” ...1 November, 1846

Kanza Landing Missouri
November 1, 1846

Sir:

I have the honour to inform you that I left the City of St. Louis on the 23rd ultimo with the emigrating party of Miamis, on board the Steamer Clermont No. 2. which boat was chartered by the contractor to proceed to this place. We found the Missouri River very low and have not been able to reach this place until this day.

The Indians have encamped near this town, and will start for their country on the Osage tomorrow.

Since we left St. Louis there has been four deaths, all Miami children; the trip by water has been a long and tedious one, and it has perhaps produce more sickness than would have occurred in making the trip by land. Every possible attention has been paid to the sick by the Physician, and he informed me that the health of the party is improving.

Col. Wm. Medill
Commissioner of Indian Affairs
Washington, D. C.

Very Respectfully
Your Obdt. Servant
Joseph Sinclair
Supt Miami Emigration



“The Removal Letters” ...3 November, 1846

Osage River Sub Agency
on Miami Land Nov. 3rd, 1846

Sir,

The emigrating Miamis left the mouth of the Kansas River on Monday the 2nd inst. and they have been arriving here during yesterday and today. A portion of them rode their ponys, and the residue with the baggage was brought through by the Contractors in waggons.

We had one more death on the 3rd (a boy of about 16) he had been a long time sick and was improving in health until by imprudence he brought about a relapse. This makes in all seven deaths that have occurred during the emigration.

On the 4th I sent an express to Col. Vaughan with a letter from me reporting my arrival here, and soliciting his early attention to the reception of the Miamis, and hopes soon to have the pleasure of making his acquaintance; and of handing over to him the Miamis under my charges in compliance with your directions.

Col. Wm. Medill
Commissioner of Indian Affairs
Washington, D. C.

Very Respectfully
Your obdt. Servant
Joseph Sinclair
Supt. of Miami Emigration



“The Removal Letters” ...7 November, 1846

Osage River Sub Agency, Nov 7, 1846

Sir:

Enclosed please find our account & claim against the Miami Indians, recently emigrated from the State of Indiana, by you, amounting to \$7,621.60 which has accrued in consequence of the failure and refusal on the part of said Indians to move at the time and in the way they had agreed to do in your presence & in full council.

As this delay was made at the urgent request of the Miamis in your presence & to facilitate them, and as they then agreed to pay half of all expenses that would accrue up to the 1st of August (the day fixed by them for their departure) & inasmuch as they subsequently refused to remove at all (all of which you are familiar with). We now respectfully desire to call your attention to the subject and ask that you will cause our claim for outlays thus created to be paid by said Indians.

We relied implicitly upon the pledge & good faith of those people & went on and made all the necessary preparations, purchased teams and engaged men, kept up a camp of rendezvous Vc Vs—all this resulted in serious lapses & disappointment to us, because the Indians violated the agreement they had made & utterly refused to remove. We also desire to call your attention to another fact, this delay was consented to on our part from 20th day of May to 1st of August & solely upon the promise made by the Indians that they would promptly refund to us one half of all the expenses incurred. Our a/c is made up from actual items of expense incurred and cash paid out as kept by the secretary of the emigration, and to which we beg leave to refer you. We are now in need of this money to enable us to purchase and provide the necessary subsistence for the Indians as provided for in our removal contract.

We are exceedingly anxious to gratify the Indians & consult their wishes as far as we could & it was this feeling that induced us to grant the delay they asked for. This as you know was made known to the department and we are pleased to know that our motives, were properly appreciated, & we hope that the government & its offices will see that we are fairly renumerated for the lapses we have thus sustained.

To: Major Joseph Sinclair
Removing agent of the Miamis

Very respectfully
Your abt. servant
A. Coquillard active partner of the
Miami Emigration
Contract by John Grant
Secretary



“The Removal Letters” ...11 November, 1846

Independence, Missouri
November 11, 1846

Sir:

I have the honour to enclose herewith a list of Miami Indians delivered over to Col. A. J. Vaughan Sub Agent, with the statement of Wallace B. White in relation to the subsistence of the Indians on their route, and the statement of Jos. I Comparet of the manner in which the poneys belonging to the emigrating Miamis were cared for during the trip. It is proper for me to state that in getting the poneys started on the route, some of them escaped, the Indians think the number was nineteen—whatever the number may I presume they will easily be found.

It will be seen what the number of Indians on the list as certified so by Col. Vaughan, exceeds by eight the number reported by me as forming the emigrating party, and that as there occurred seven deaths and two births during the emigration, it appears that thirteen Indians had got on board the canal boats at Peru without my knowledge; this might easily occur in the night during the times they were being put on board.

I was with the emigrating party very nearly all the distance from Indiana to their new country, and can certify that the holders of the contract for the removal of the Miamis have faithfully complied with us therewith as far as the emigration is concerned.

I enclose herewith a copy of the list as made out by me at the commencement of the migration with notes of the births and deaths before alluded to.

Col. Wm. Medill
Commissioner of Indian Affairs
Washington, D. C.

Very respectfully
Your Obdt. Servant
Supt. of Miami Emigration



“The Removal Letters” ...11 November, 1846, continued.

Abstract of expenses incurred by the contractors of the Miami Emigration from the 28th of June to the 6th of Oct. 1846.

Interest of 16000\$ pair R. Peebles for the contract	-	341.33	
Interest on \$1845.00 paid for teams and wagons purchased for A. Coquillard	-	38.65	
Do [ditto] on 412.32 paid out for expenses prior to 28th of June	-	8.80	
Do on 69.00 paid to hands prior to 28th	.18	47.63	
Do on \$1149.00 paid for teams & waggons by S. Edsall	-	17.25	
Amt. paid to hands employed from 18 June to 6th Oct.	-	678.00	
Interest on amt. paid them prior to 28	.00		
Salary of A. Coquillard at 100.\$ per month		325.00	
Do of Jos. P. Edsall	50.\$	163.00	
Do of James Grant	50.\$	100.00	
Do of C Dagenet	25.\$	84.00	1430.24
Do of Maj Sinclair	2000	708.32	
Traveling expenses of A. Coquillard \$1 per day	-	100.00	
Do at Maj. Sinclair		117.00	
Jos. P. Edsall \$1.00 per day		100.00	
Jos. Grant \$1.00 per day		100.00	
C. Dagenet \$1.00 per day		100.00	
Boarding of 13 teamsters from 28 June to 6 Oct @ 1.50 per week	-	273.00	1498.32
Traveling expenses for Edsall & Hart to Washington, after refusal to emigrate	-	350.00	
Expenses such as grain, blacksmithing, tac, repairs from 18 June to 6 Oct	-	205.58	
Loss on 1845.01 of horses, and wagons sold upon the change of determination to remove by water instead of by land 25 per ct on amt sold by A Coy	-	461.25	
Loss on 1149\$ of same sole by S. Edsell	-	287.28	48.50 1304.08
			Amt Carried forward 4621.60
Actual cost of expense of emigrating by water, including subsistence from Peru, Indiana to their homes.		2200.00	
Amount for which they could have been brought by land in the wagons, provided by the contractors, subsistence included		1900.00	7621.00



“The Removal Letters” ...26 November, 1846

Miami land Osage River Agency
26th Nov. 1846

The warriors and headmen of the Tribe of Miami Indians

This excellency James K. Polk
President of the United States

Great father

In tardy compliance with the treaty concluded between our tribe and the United States in the year of our lord 1840—we have emigrated to our new homes, and we have pitched our tents on the land set apart for us west of Mississippi. If we have not fulfilled our promises in due time, and if against your best wishes, you have been compelled to send troops to force us to compliance, you will easily account for it, Great father, in consulting your own feelings about the land of your own birth.

Education, it is true, has not developed the natural power of minds, but still we have a heart that can feel so ardently as the heart of my white brothers. Dear to us was that home of our children, still dearer to us were the ashes of our forefathers, and how could we expect to find anywhere else aught that would compensate for such a loss.

What is more, several individuals of our tribe were in possession of large tracts of land reserved for them in different treaties, these reserves could answer all the purposes of the inconsiderable remnants of a once powerful tribe; and ill advised, misguided by corrupt and designing white men, we had been persuaded that the government of the United States would consent, without the shadow of difficulty to our remaining in our dear native land. But as soon as we discovered that we had been mistaken in our fond expectations, as soon as we were convinced we had been shamefully deceived, and that the government expected from us the fulfillment of the treaty, to the letter, then we resolved at once to repair to our new home quietly and peaceably; and in doing so to comply faithfully with our written stipulations. They are fulfilled—our feet have trodden the withered grass of the widespread prairies of the Mississippi and without a shelter we will have to face the rigors of the fast approaching winter. The change of country will necessitate the change of our habits; and if the aged portion of our people cannot do so, it is at least incumbent on us to provide for the growing generation, and to prepare this change by a prompt and well conducted education of youth.

For many years we sent our children to the Choctaw Academy, but in every instance our young men came back from that institution much worse than they were when leaving the paternal wigwam. Experience having therefore clearly demonstrated that the education received in that establishment proved rather injurious than beneficial, we came to the conclusion, we would not send any longer,



“The Removal Letters” ...26 November, 1846, continued.

and though solicited and pressed to try again we clung to our settled policy and not one child belonging to and acknowledged by our tribe has been sent these nine or ten years. Our late agent, though he knew full well our determination, made choice of some children in the neighborhood of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, children not recognized as belonging to our nation, and sent them to said academy but we protest against such a step then, and we protest against it now, and we cannot suffer silently to see our school funds thus consumed for the instruction of young men not connected with our tribe, whilst our own, for want of resources will remain in their native ignorance. Another motive, that prevented us from sending our children to Kentucky was that eight of them could only enjoy the privilege whilst everyone might have received the benefit of education, out of the same resources, if spent in our midst being able with one thousand dollars to support three school teachers who would have resided amongst us and instructed our young men under our eyes—so much for the past, now we are about settling ourselves permanently. We hope, and, as it were to commence a new life we feel too sensibly the want of instruction ourselves to be willing to bequeath to our posterity the same hereditary ignorance. How much better off would not our tribe be at this present time, had not our ancestors neglected to procure for ourselves the same instruction that is received amongst white people, and had not left for subjects to be preyed upon by all the cormorants by which we have been at all times surrounded. We hope therefore Great father, that the one thousand dollars reserved for school purposes in one of the treaties concluded between the United States and our tribe will henceforth, be spent in our midst and for the welfare not of few but all of the children of our nation. We are fully persuaded too Great Father that we cannot be a moral, sober, and well behaved people, without religion and spiritual guides. Our forefathers once belonged to the prayer and were better than we have been ourselves without such restraint. We have therefore determined to obtain religious instruction at the hands of the Catholic priests who reside from the present amongst our friends the Potowatomies of Sugar Creek, we hear them praised by all acquainted with them and their zealous undertakings, whatever by their profession or creed, and we want them and no other; and as our school funds could not be deposited in better hand we beseech you Great father, to order said funds to be paid to them, persuaded that every cent will be profitably used for the education and welfare of our growing education.

Feeling confident that these our wishes will be fulfilled. We remain Great Father your devoted children.

Principal Chief	Toh-peh-ah, alias LaFontaine, his	X mark
	Con-cum-sey	X
	Peh-she-wah	X
	Me-za-quah	X
	Pe-mah-is-to-mah	X
	Anthony Rivarre	X
	Cah-quaw-re-ah	X
	O-zan-diah	X
	Quah-kah-wah	X



“The Removal Letters” ...26 November, 1846, continued.

Cor-ah-she-peh-nah X
 Seek X
 Wah-pee-mung-quah X
 Mon-go-zah X
 Wah-tep-piah X
 Neh-pee-mon-zah X
 Lunkee-cum-cum-wah X
 Rah-rah-mung-quah X
 Wah-cah-con-non X
 Wah-wiani-tah X
 Ni-con-zah X
 Wah-bah-peh-se-nan X
 Poh-kong-quah X
 Ban-deah (the young) X

Signed and sealed in Council, George Hunt, Interpreter.



Miami Tribe leadership, circa 1869. Pictured seated, left to right: David Geboe, Peter Lafalier, John Roubidoux, Thomas Miller, and Louis LaFontaine. Standing, left to right: Unidentified, Thomas Richardville, McKinsey (possibly an Indian Agent), unidentified. Photo from the MHMA collection. Original held in the National Archives, Washington, DC.



“The Removal Letters” ...30 December, 1846

Fort Wayne, Indiana
December 30, 1846

Sir:

I have the honour to state to you, that I accompanied the Miami Indians in their late emigration and had ample opportunity to acquaint myself with Mr. Sinclair’s conduct as their removing agent.

I learn therefore with surprise that charges have been prepared, purporting to proceed from the “Indians in council assembled,” affecting his position as an officer, and his character as a man. Most assuredly no such complaint from any Indian reached my ears during the removal.

What such charges have been made, I attribute solely to the instigation of Chief LaFontaine, and other traders, who accompanied the removal, which inimical feelings to the late sub-agent are notorious, and such as they undisguisedly avow in the most bitter terms. Personal feelings and personal motives, I think, are the sole origin of these complaints.

As one partially acquainted with the difficulties which embarrassed the removing agent, I can cheerfully award to him the credit of untiring diligence, and vigilant attention to the comfort of those under his charge.

If aught of neglect, or needful suffering was experienced by any Indian, such neglect and suffering I should more readily attribute to the gross business incapacity of the acting contractor. Mr. A. Coquilard.

The charge that the attending physician was “unable to attend to his professional duties in consequence of continual intoxication” is an unfounded calumny. This complaint too like its companions is the undoubted offspring of personal feeling.

Dr. Orsinton enjoys the reputation of being a skillful and attentive physician and during the emigration I saw nothing in his conduct inconsistent with such reputation.

Very respectfully
Your Abt. Servant
W. B. White

Hon. Wm. Medill
Commissioner of Indian Affairs



Quotes from the Cincinnati Gazette regarding the removal of the Miami.

Emigrating Indians—Lafontaine, Chief of the Miamis, with his wife and children, and several of the head men of the Tribe and their families, arrived in this city Saturday evening, on their way to their “new home,” on the Osage river. Between three and four hundred of the tribe, we understand, are now en route from the Wabash to this city, for the purpose of embarking on an early St. Louis boat for the above destination. They are to join Lafontaine here, and are expected in to-day or to-morrow. This “removal,” we believe, is under charge of Messrs. Ewing and St. Clair, agents. Lafontaine and his friends are at the Manson House.

-from “Emigrating Indians,” Cincinnati Gazette, October 12, 1846, Page 2

The Miamis—A portion of the remnant of the Miami Indians, alluded to in our notice of the arrival of the Chief Lafontaine, reached here yesterday by the Miami Canal, and marched down Main street, to the river, where they embarked on the steamer Colorado, for St. Louis.

-from “The Miamis,” Cincinnati Gazette, October 13, 1846, Page 2

Daily Receipts.

By the Miami Canal—134 brls Whisky, 218 do Flour, 10 sacks 115 lbs Wool, 43734 do Mdse, 8 brls Varnish, 2 Indian Ponies, Miami Indians 225 over and 78 under 8 years old, 49 perch Stone, 4 Pigs, 1 brl Salt, 9785 lbs Furniture, 13836 Hoop Poles, 200 lbs Extra Baggage, 4 brls Pearl Ashes, 14 kegs Butter, 5569 lbs Saleratus [baking soda], 2 brls Linseed, 103 sacks Flaxseed, 2 brls Apples, 14 cords Wood, 25 bush Potatoes, 30 bush Oats, 60 do Barley, 1660 lbs Marble Dust, 280 do Castings, 1 brl White Fish, 3000 Staves, 6 Wagons

-from “Daily Receipts by the Miami Canal,” Cincinnati Gazette, October 13, 1846, Page 3

Shipments.

TO ST. LOUIS—By the COLORADO: 30 tons Dry Goods, 32 casks Government Stores, [350] Indians, with their Baggage.

-from “Shipments,” Cincinnati Gazette, October 13, 1846, Page 3



Quotes - regarding the removal of the Miami, continued.

REMOVAL OF INDIANS—There was something of a novelty in our streets yesterday, in the way of a large band of Indians, numbering from 320 to 350. They were the remnants of the Miami tribe, who engaged some time since with the Government to remove, but as they did not move fast enough, a company of U. S. troops under Captain Jewett, was sent, who with the firmness and rapidity that has characterized the man and the officer, soon had the tribe in moving order. Without any “accident by flood or field,” they arrived here on Sunday morning and were transferred to the steamer Colorado, which takes them to St. Louis. Their destination is the head-waters of the Arkansas River, or somewhere in the neighborhood. They are in charge of Major Coguellard, who will accompany them on the route. The chief, Lofontaine, is a fine specimen of the Indian, measuring upwards of six feet in height, and weighing three hundred and twenty-five pounds. We saw a number of the women laughing and chatting with great vivacity, seemingly separating from their [homes] without any regret. May their hunting grounds in the Far West be better to their liking than those they have just left.

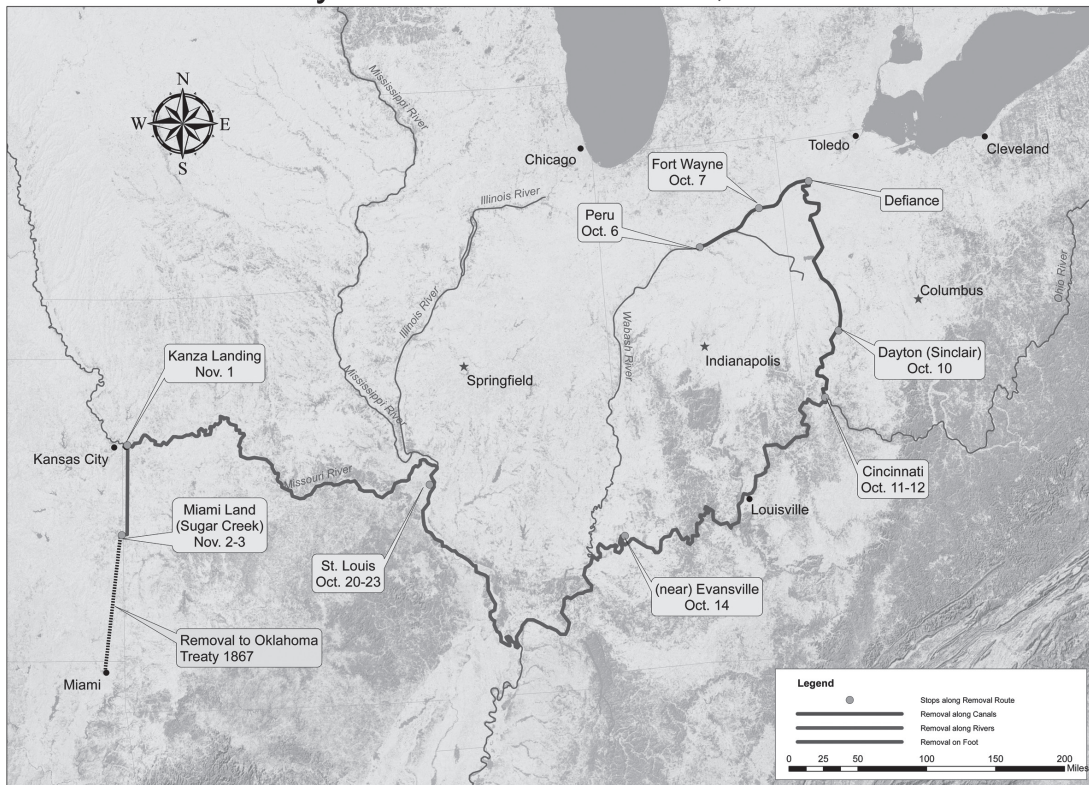
-from “Removal of Indians,” Cincinnati Enquirer, October 13, 1846, Page 3



*“They didn’t want to leave their land...
they just picked up a little handful of dirt
and put it in a tobacco sack and took
that with.”*



Myaamia Removal Route, 1846



This material is based upon work assisted by a grant from the Department of Interior, National Park Service.

The completed removal map indicates the canal boat transportation, beginning in Peru, IN, and ending at Cincinnati. The steamboat transportation is indicated, beginning at Cincinnati on the Ohio River and ending at Kanza Landing on the Missouri River, in present day Kansas City. A line marks the land travel, by wagon and horse, down from Kanza Landing to the Miami Reserve near present day LaCygne, Kansas. The dotted line indicates the final removal passage, by land, of the Miami Tribe to reserve lands in the Indian Territory, present day, Ottawa County, Oklahoma. A 17 x 22 full color version of this map was completed by the NHPF Grant for distribution to all Miami households in 2011.



List of Emigration Participants noted in the Sinclair Letters

Major Joseph Sinclair, Supt. of Miami Emigration/Sub Agent
Col. William Medill, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Washington DC
Capt. Lovett, present at Peru to force Miami people to emigrate
Dr. Orsinton, Emigration Physician
George Hunt, Interpreter
Alexis Coquillard, Emigration contractor
John Grant, Emigration contractor, secretary
Wallace B. White
Joseph I. Comparet, Contractor who moved horses from Indiana to Kansas

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The forced removal of our ancestors during the autumn of 1846 is an event that is painful for us to remember, but to choose to forget has never been an option. We must continue to remember in order to honor the sacrifices endured by our ancestors who made this terrible journey.

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