



Frances Slocum

Peru, Miami County

March 4, 1773 – March 9, 1847

Frances Slocum was one of ten children born to Jonathan and Ruth Tripp Slocum. On November 2, 1778, Frances Slocum was taken captive at her family farm in Pennsylvania. She was then raised by a childless Miami couple, who named her *Maconaquah*, or Young Bear. Later, the family moved west and settled in Kekionga, present day Fort Wayne, Indiana.

After Maconaquah left her first husband who had beaten her, she found a man named Shepoconah injured from battle. She took him to her parents' home and nursed him back to health. As he regained his strength, he helped run the household. Before her father died, he gave Maconaquah to the man as thanks for his help. Along with Maconaquah's mother, she and her husband returned to live with his people along the banks of the Mississinewa River near Peru, Indiana. There, Maconaquah had four children – two sons who died young and two daughters. Shepoconah later became Chief of the Miami Indians in the area; but, after he lost his hearing, he gave up his duties as Chief. He moved farther up the river and established a trading post nine miles north of Peru, Indiana.

Fifty-seven years after her abduction, Maconaquah revealed to a visitor that she was white by birth. On January 20, 1835, the visitor recounted her story in a letter to the postmaster of Lancaster, Pennsylvania. After two years, the letter was published and asked if anyone had a relative taken by the Indians. After learning about the woman who might be his long lost sister, Isaac Slocum came to Peru, Indiana, in May 1838 and visited Maconaquah's home. Though her brother thought that Frances looked like an Indian, he could prove that she was his sister. Before she had been abducted her brother, Ebenezer, had crushed the forefinger of her left hand with a hammer. When he saw a scar on the woman's left hand, he asked what caused the injury. She responded, "My brother struck it with a hammer a long time ago."

Maconaquah Frances Slocum died at her Indian home on March 9, 1847 at age 74, and was buried next to her husband and two small sons in the cemetery next to her cabin.

For more information about Frances Slocum, go to:

<http://www.womenhistoryblog.com/2012/11/frances-slocum.html>

For more information about *Writing Her Story*, go to: <http://www.in.gov/icw/2440.htm>.

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