

Miami Indian Cemetery  
Grant County  
27.1972.1

Prepared by the  
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### **Marker Text**

The largest Indian cemetery in Indiana. Few graves are marked. The Indians buried here are largely descendants of Chief Metocinya and include Meshingomesia and his family. The first burial was probably in 1873. Burial was contrary to Indian tradition and reflects Christian influence.

An Indian Baptist Church and an Indian school were located here. Otho Winger taught at the school 1895-1898. This land is part of the last Indian reservation in Indiana. The site of the battle of Mississinewa (1812) may be seen along the Mississinewa River to the southwest.

### **Report**

This marker is wrong. The most egregious error is the statement, "Burial was contrary to Indian tradition." Stewart Rafert, in *The Miami Indians of Indiana: A Persistent People, 1654-1994* (1996), described Miami burial practices during the 1600s, a time of early contact with Europeans and pre-Christian influence.

There are no primary sources available to confirm that this is the largest Indian cemetery in Indiana. According to Rafert, the Meshingomesia cemetery was established at the same time as the Miami Union Baptist Church in the mid-1860s. This would contradict the marker's claim of 1873. The exact years Otho Winger taught at the school also could not be confirmed by IHB researchers.

This subject would strongly benefit from a replacement marker meeting IHB research standards. Were this marker to be rewritten today, IHB would include information on how the Miami were dispossessed of their property, including the Baptist church in the early 1940s. Also of note, the Indiana Miami entered into an agreement with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources to maintain this cemetery in the early 1980s. More research is needed using Rafert's work as a starting point.