

Kiilhsoohkwa

Huntington County

1810 – September 4, 1915

Born in 1810 in what is now Huntington County, Kiilh-sooh-kwa was a member of the Myaamia (Miami) Nation and the granddaughter of Myaamia Chief Little Turtle (Mihsihkinaahkwa). She married twice. Her first husband, John Owl, was son of Chief John Owl. They married in 1826; however, John passed away within the first year or two of their marriage. In 1832 she married Shaw-pe-nom-quah (Anthony Revarre), who was half Native American, half French. Little is known of her young adult life; however, she was described by the Smithsonian Institute in 2013 as an important midwife in Indiana.

In her later years, she lived to Roanoke, Indiana. She spoke only the Miami language throughout her life and her son Anthony Revarre, Jr. acted as her interpreter. She and her son were allowed to stay in Indiana when others were forced to move west because of a resolution passed by Congress in 1850 exempting Miami who held treaty reserves, and their descendants, from removal."

In 105 years of life, she saw unprecedented change. She grew up in a traditional Native woodland culture, then experienced the removal of her people from Indiana in 1846. She also saw the industrialization of America. She was honored with a celebration on her 100th birthday, which an estimated 15,000 people attended to celebrate.

On September 4, 1915, Kiilh-sooh-kwa passed away peacefully after a few weeks of being ill and confined to her death.

References will be published at the end of Women's History Month.

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Photo: Kiilh-sooh-kwa and her son, 1910 by L. M. Huffman. Courtesy of Smithsonian Institution National Museum of the American Indian.