

MACONAQUA—FRANCES SLOCUM PART TWO

A CHILD OF TWO WORLDS

WHEN?
1773-1847

WHERE? Begins in
Wilkes-Barre, Pa.; ends
in Indiana.



EVENT
From abduction to revered
life

VOCABULARY
Delaware
Haudenosaunee

This article continues from part one.

In an interview with Frances decades after her capture, she told of her abductors taking her to a place over the mountain. Legend has it that it was a cave in what is now Frances Slocum State Park, but it could have been elsewhere. Nonetheless, the group traveled for several days probably to Chemung, New York, before making their way along the forested trail to what most think was Fort Niagara (Lottick). Tuck Horse, the leader of the group, took care of Frances. He gave her a native dress and beads which Frances liked very much. Frances continues the story, “He (Tuck Horse) took me by the hand and led me down to the riverside to a house where lived an old man and woman of the Delaware nation. They had several children but now they were all gone—either killed in battle or having died very young. I was brought to these old people to have them adopt me if they would....After Tuck Horse had talked with them awhile, they agreed to it, and this was my home” (Lottick). Her name was changed to Sheletawash and the couple raised her as their own and saw her married to a Delaware brave named Little Turtle.

After several years, Little Turtle wanted to move farther west. The Delaware had been continuously displaced for decades by white settlements in southeastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Eventually pushed into the Wyoming Valley many later moved to Ohio. Little Turtle wanted to join them but Sheletawash did not as she wanted to stay and help her elderly parents so the couple split.

Several years later, she met a young brave whom she helped to nurse back to health from his wounds. They later married and she became the wife of this Miami brave, Shepoconah. They later moved to Ohio and farther west to Indiana where she was accepted into the Miami tribe and given the name Maconaqua or Little Bear (Lottick). Shepconah, now a war chief, and Maconaqua had four children—two sons and two daughters. Unfortunately, the two young boys died when they were young. Over the years, Shepoconah suffered from deafness and left his war chief position. He and his family moved a little farther north to what was known as Deaf Man’s Village.

It was while she was living there that her Slocum family, who had never given up hope of finding her, finally did. Colonel George Ewing had met and known Maconaqua for several years and on one of his visits she told him the story of her early life abduction from Pennsylvania. He related her story to the Lancaster newspaper, *The Intelligencer*, and the story eventually caught the attention of her younger brother Jonathan. Her older brother Isaac was the first to visit her home near present day Peru, Indiana, on the Mississineva River. Though he and other members

who visited tried to get her to move back to Pennsylvania, she refused as she did not want to leave the burial grounds of her sons and husband. Her nephew George R. Slocum, however, moved his family to be near her to help resolve some issues that had arisen with white neighbors.



Frances Slocum Park
Luzerne County, PA

Not only is the local Frances Slocum Park named for her, but a town several miles from Wilkes-Barre is as well—Maconaqua. Numerous places near her home in Indiana are also named for her including a school and a park. This brave and honored woman died in 1847 and is buried by her husband in Indiana. The Luzerne

County Historical Society has a pair of her moccasins. As a final description, Lottick writes: “Maconaqua’s remains demonstrated her cross-cultural life. She was buried in a coffin, as dictated by white custom. In the coffin, in accordance with Indian custom, were a gold coin and a pipe full of tobacco, as well as food and water for her journey indicated by a blue plate and bowl, a silver spoon, and a water glass.”

(Note: some spelling is as Maconaquah.)

ONLINE RESOURCES

[Frances Slocum](#)

PRINT RESOURCES

Lottick, Sally Teller. *Bridging Change A Wyoming Valley Sketchbook*. Wilkes-Barre, PA: Wyoming Historical and Geological Society. 1992.

Kashatus, William. *Valley With A Heart*. Luzerne County, PA: Luzerne County Historical Society and Luzerne County Community College. 2012.