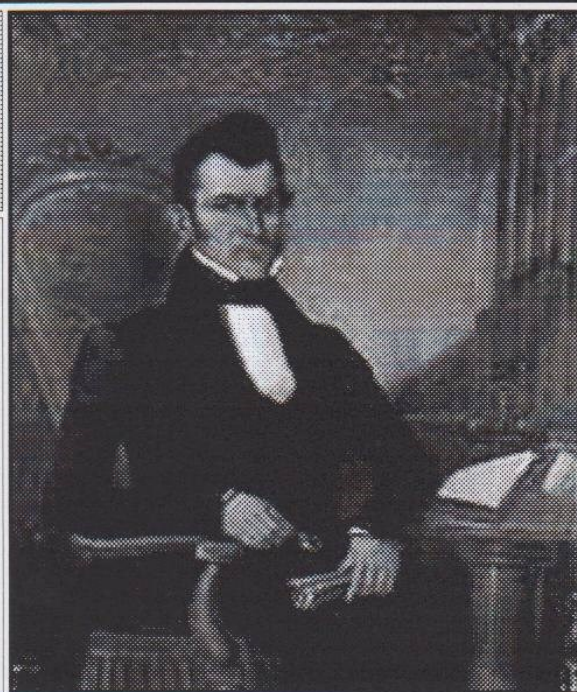


CANAWLERS AT REST

BRIGADIER GENERAL JOHN TIPTON

b. August 14, 1786
d. April 5, 1839

By Cynthia Powers
Portrait by George Winter



The town of Logansport was laid out by John Tipton, a veteran of the Battle of Tippecanoe, Indian Agent, and U. S. Senator. As Indian Agent, he was present at the 1826 Treaty of Paradise Springs, by which the Miami and Potawatomi gave up the land needed for the Wabash and Erie Canal. The Canal Society of Indiana (CSI) visited the site of this treaty in Wabash, on our 1996 "From the Forks to Paradise" tour.

Still in his role as Indian Agent, Tipton became infamous for removing the Potawatomi in 1838 to reservations in Kansas: the trip later known as the "Trail of Death." James Madison in his history *The Indiana Way* says that "carelessness in organizing the march brought sickness and hardship and contributed to the deaths of 42 Indians, most of them children."

So much depends on who's telling the story! Some whites actually argued that removal was really best for the Indians, because it would remove them from the corrupting influences of white culture, mainly whiskey. And *The Cass County History*, written in 1913, says Tipton performed this duty "promptly but kindly,.....satisfactory to all parties." One of our speakers on the 2003 tour, Dr. Charles Gish, contended that the death rate of 42 out of 859 was no higher than normal for the time. Indeed, some early estimates overestimated the deaths, because they didn't realize that some of the Indians had escaped. Nevertheless, today we would call it ethnic cleansing.

Most of the Potawatomi were Catholics or Baptists and were led by their Chief Menominee. They had given up the last of their lands at the Treaty of Tippecanoe

in 1832, which Chief Menominee did not sign, and had agreed to leave in two years. In September, 1838 there was no more time for stalling. General Tipton's troops placed Chief Menominee and three others in a jail wagon and marched the tribe west at gunpoint. At the Illinois line they were joined by Father Benjamin Petit, who had pleaded with his bishop to be allowed to accompany his parishioners to Kansas. He persuaded Tipton to free the chiefs from the jail wagon so they could march the 660 miles on foot.

The two month long forced march took its toll on 42 of the 859 Potawatomi. Typhoid fever was the main killer. Another problem was that the doctor who went along was usually drunk. Even Father Petit, who was only 27 years old, died at St. Louis while coming home. His diary is a main source of information about the forced removal. Tipton himself did not make the whole trip, but turned the command over to Wm. Polke somewhere in Illinois.

John Tipton's attitude toward Indians was no doubt set in stone at age 7 when his father was killed by Cherokees near their home in East Tennessee. In 1807 John (age 21), his mother, two sisters, and a half brother moved to Indiana Territory. John split rails for fifty cents a hundred, with which money he purchased 50 acres for his mother. In 1809 he enlisted in a militia company called the "Yellow Jackets" commanded by Capt. Spier Spencer. This company was called into action and ended up at the Battle of Tippecanoe IN 1811. After Capt. Spencer and two lieutenants were killed, General Harrison promoted Ensign Tipton to Captain. Later he advanced to Brigadier General. Much later, in

1829, he acquired the battleground site and gave it to the state of Indiana for a memorial. He was the sheriff of Harrison County, IN from 1816-1819.

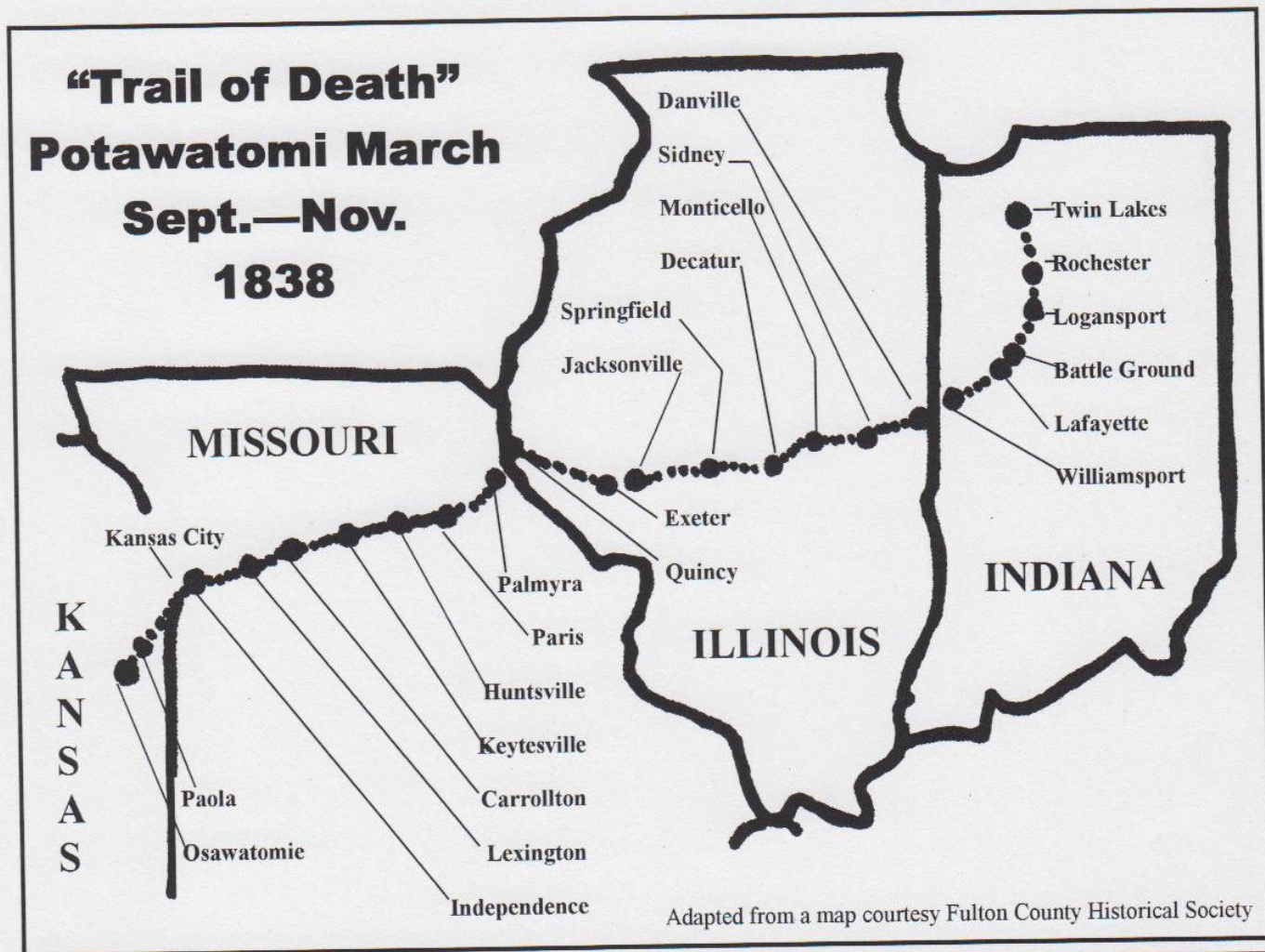
time (1913) the Cass County History was written, three of George's children were still living in the Logansport area.

According to the History of Cass County by Powell, "General Tipton was of medium height, rather long face but round head, low wrinkled forehead, sunken gray eyes, stern countenance, large chest, stiff, sandy hair, standing erect from his forehead." He was married about 1818 to Martha (Jenny?) Shields, who the history says was his cousin. She was the daughter of John Shields, who served as gunsmith on the Lewis and Clark Expedition (and was the only man who was married before joining). He was one of the "Nine Young Men from Kentucky" we learned about on our CSI tour of Clarksville, Ind. ("Overcoming Obstacles" in 2004). Martha apparently died after two years, having given birth to a son, Spier, and a daughter, Matilda.

Mr. Tipton was one of the commissioners responsible for choosing the location for the new state capital of Indianapolis. He served in the State House of Representatives from 1819-1923. In 1823 he was appointed Indian Agent for the Miami and Potawatomi, headquartered in Fort Wayne. He did attempt to prevent their being exploited by dishonest traders, which may have been a losing battle. In 1828 he suggested moving the Indian Agency to Logansport, where he spent the rest of his life. He helped lay out the original town and four additions, and gave a lot on which was built the first school in Cass Co. called the "Old Eel River Seminary." According to James Madison in his book *The Indiana Way*, Tipton "made large land purchases that soon produced handsome profits. Tipton also attended to his political reputation by carefully dispensing patronage and favors from the Indian Agency."

In 1825 John married Matilda, the daughter of his old commander Capt. Spier Spencer. They had three children: Harriet, John, and George. Matilda died in 1839, just a few weeks before her husband. At the

When the Wabash & Erie Canal was being built



John didn't want the canal to cross his land, because he knew his valuable timber would be taken. Another canal connection with Tipton is that he and his son Spier commanded one of the militia companies called to quell the famous Lagro "Canal War" in 1835 between the "Fardowns" and "Corkonians." Somehow he was able to do this despite being in the middle of his term as a U. S. Senator! He served as chairman of a the committee on roads and canals as well as on Indian affairs from 1837-1839.

When asked to run for the U. S. Senate, John thought someone else would do a better job. He replied in a letter on July 23, 1830, to Hon. George L. Kinnard, member of Congress from the Indianapolis district as follows:

"DEAR SIR, Your note of yesterday has been received, and in reply I have to inform you that I would greatly prefer remaining in the situation I now hold, as Indian Agent, to any other that could be given me. I have many letters on this same subject, and am of opinion we should weigh well this matter before we act. If, after the election, it is found best to use a name, and mine is best (strongest), I will go with my friends for the cause and for our country; but believe me, that I am not seeking office, and will esteem it a sacrifice of peace and property to do this. My talent is not of the kind that I wish to see in the United States Senate."

Then, in 1831, John Tipton was elected U. S. Senator to fill the term of James Noble, who had died in office. He was a Jacksonian (later Democrat). At the following election he was elected for a full 6 year term. However, he declined to run again in 1838 due to ill health. That was the year he led/drove/escorted the Potawatomi to Kansas, and apparently the trip took a toll on him as well as on Father Petit and the Indians, because he died in April 1839 one month after his term expired. He was given a Masonic funeral and is buried in Mount Hope Cemetery. He did not live to see the canal reach Logansport (1840) or to see some of his best timber used to build bridges along the route.

As you might expect, Tipton County and the town of Tipton, Indiana are named for John Tipton. And there is a tall monument on the Lake Michigan shoreline, in the extreme northwest corner of Indiana, marking the Indiana-Illinois line that Tipton helped establish.

Noted artist George Winter was in the area completing paintings and sketches of Potawatomi and Miami Indians in the 1830s-40s. The morning after Tipton's death, Winter made a small watercolor sketch of him. Later the Logansport Masonic Lodge #33, of which Tipton was a charter member in 1828, Worthy Master and

THE TRAIL OF DEATH

By Cecil Davis (Preface to "The Tattler" 1929)

Where the Wabash joins the Eel,
 Stood an Indian village,
 A village of a thousand teepees,
 The village of the Pottowattomies,
 The bravest of the tribes,
 Peaceful and courageous.
 When the rising smoke of campfires
 Curled and blended,
 The Red Man smoked a peace pipe
 With his new friend,
 His white brother;
 Welcomed, helped, and gave him gifts
 Of food and land;
 But the White Man wanted more;
 So the mighty white chief, Tipton
 And his fearless warriors
 Burned the village,
 A thousand teepees;
 Drove the Red Man, these their brothers;
 Down the Trail of Death.
 The Red Man dare not fight;
 He was brave yet yielding.
 Leaving home in flames and ruin,
 Marching toward an arid future,
 He dreamed of his dry and virgin forest,
 His clear and shallow rivers,
 His thousand painted teepees.
 Thus the Red Man, sad, despondent,
 Traveled on that Trail of Death.

Where once the thousand teepees
 Sent their smoke up to the sky,
 There the White Man's city stands.
 Where once the peaceful Red Man
 Had his fertile crops of maize,
 The White Man's work shops rear
 Their chimneys to the clouds.
 The Red Man has gone.
 He is a tradition.
 But the White Man called his city
 After the Red Man's Chief,
 Logan, friend of all white men—
 A chief, brave, fearless, patient.
 The White Man called his city,
 Logansport.

Grand Master of the state, commissioned Winter to paint Tipton's portrait. His unsigned 50" x 40" oil on canvas portrait of Tipton hung in the lodge, which took Tipton's name after his death, until 1996. At that time the lodge had a same size color photo made of the portrait and put the original up for auction to raise money for a new facility. The canvas was purchased by Dennis Longmire, the great-great-great-grandson of John Tipton, for \$46,000.

In 1988, a caravan of Potawatomi commemorated the 150th anniversary of the Trail of Death by retracing its route, carrying Father Petit's silver chalice. Several descendants of Chief Menominee went along. As a result of the interest generated by that effort, there are now 74 markers along the route. We saw one of them on our tour of Logansport "Crossing Waters" in 2003. I wonder if any descendants of John Tipton wanted to go! (See page 20 for Tipton's grave marker photos)

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NEWS FROM DELPHI

MAMMOTH INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS ACT

Often we forget what good the Mammoth Internal Improvements Act actually accomplished for the State of Indiana. After reading Andrea Neal's article about it in the *Lafayette Journal and Courier*, Mark Smith wrote a letter to her pointing out the good things that came from the act.

Dear Ms. Neal:

I am a regular reader of the *Lafayette Journal and Courier*, a publication which recently carried your column concerning the Mammoth Internal Improvements Act of 1836. May I direct you to some positive effects of that legislative feat, which included my home county of Carroll, County Seat, Delphi, Indiana. In 1838-9, engineer Reed Case, who had already supervised the construction of the Wabash-Erie Canal from Peru to Delphi, and Lafayette banker James Spears constructed a timber crib dam across the Wabash (River) at Delphi, although it was closer to Pittsburg, Indiana. That dam provided a slack-water for water power to the town of Pittsburg as well as a pool for canal boats to travel in to the thriving burg of Carrollton, where they would lock into the canal again from travel on the Wabash River. At Carrollton, there were two sets of locks, an inn (the Mentzer Tavern), and a warehouse managed by Jacob, John, and Peter Speece.

In 1842, Reed Case supervised the construction (privately) of a side slip up to the foot of Main Street to connect the Canal to the city of Delphi, and on the southeast side of the slip he constructed a packinghouse to ship Delphi Canvas Hams all over the Midwest. On the northwest side, there was a grain warehouse which provided a means for the farmers to sell their grain to points as far away as Toledo, Ohio and thus secure an open market for their produce. This was the very first grain elevator in Delphi, Indiana.

Further along chronologically, in 1857, the burning of lime was started by a firm known as Harley Lime. This produce was shipped on the Canal, and was utilized for whitewash, mortar, and plaster. Other canal industries included two rag paper making mills, which turned out a product which was sent to Lafayette, Kokomo, and Frankfort, Indiana for newsprint.

There were also six merchants who shipped and received goods from Toledo, Ohio. Those goods were stored in warehouses all around the city.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The following have joined the Canal Society of Indiana at the membership rate of \$25 unless otherwise noted:

- Donald & Cynthia French - Ft. Wayne, IN
- A. Malcolm Sturm - Dana, IN
- Tom Wood - Ruidoso, NM \$30