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First in Lewis & Clark travel too

Shields family was first in Fulton

The Shields family was the first to come to Fulton County, before it was a county, arriving in 1827 to work as government employees for the grist mill at Lake Manitou. They are not counted as the first settlers because land was not for sale until William Polke came to survey it in 1830. Elizabeth Shields Lindsey was the first white woman to die in Fulton County in 1832. Her baby, Nathan, was the first white child to be born in Fulton County in 1831. Fulton County was created in 1835. Elizabeth's aunt, Janet Shields Tipton, was the mother of General John Tipton, who rounded up the Potawatomi Indians and marched them across Indiana on their way to Kansas in 1838. Elizabeth's uncle, John Shields, was the first to cross the western states as he walked ahead as a scout with Lewis & Clark Expedition 1803-06.

Most of the Shieldses had big families and were strong and healthy. Robert Shields and his wife, Nancy Stockton Shields, had one daughter and ten sons. Their fourth son, William and wife Margaret Wilson Shields, had nine children. Among them were several who came to live at Lake Manitou before Fulton County was created: William, born 1792; Elizabeth, 1796; Nancy, 1798; and Rhoda, 1802; all born in Sevier County, Tennessee (famous today as Dolly Parton's home).

Elizabeth, the eldest daughter, was married to John Lindsey on June 14, 1814. In 1827, Lindsey was one of 22 white men hired by Samuel Milroy to help build the dam and corn grinding mill at Lake Manitou to supply bread for the



BROKEN Elizabeth Lindsey's tombstone, above, which is broken in half and rests in front of Fulton County Museum by the Trail of Death Father Petit memorial. The stone was moved when the Rochester Pathway was built. At right, the memorial to Lindsey, first white woman to die in Fulton County, is near the east end of the Pathway, north of the Flagpole.



Potawatomi Indians, per terms of the 1826 treaty. Lindsey became the blacksmith, beginning July 2, 1827. In August of 1829, Lindsey moved his family (wife Elizabeth and six children, the baby, Tipton Shields, being only three months old) to Fulton County near the lake. Coming with them were Elizabeth's brother, William Shields, her sister and husband, James and Nancy (Shields) Elliott, another sister Rhoda (Shields) and husband Nathan Rose, a half-brother 10-year-old Jesse Shields, and a

cousin Joshua Shields. This cousin was probably the same Joshua Shields who went on the Trail of Death and was paid \$87 for serving as one of the assistant conductors. He got sick and left the emigration

at Long Point (now named Niantic) west of Monticello, Ill., on Sept. 27 and came back home, according to the official Trail of Death diary.

Lindsey built the house for the miller, James Wyman. When Wyman died in 1831, Nathan Rose (Lindsey's brother-in-law) became the miller.

While living at Lake Manitou, John and Elizabeth Lindsey had seven children: William, Joshua, John, Mark, Elizabeth, Tipton, and Nathan, born Oct. 4, 1831, the first white child born in Fulton County. Nathan was just 1 year old when his mother died and was buried near Race Street, back of the present Jack Utter house. Early settler William Ward described it this way, according to the News-Sentinel: At that time there were trails but no roads. A trail crossed Mill Creek at a point a few rods from the place where Elizabeth Lindsey was buried. The creek was something like a river, quite deep, the only ford being near Eliza-

beth's grave, which is located due east of the present courthouse, perhaps 200 feet north of Race Street. On the day of her funeral her remains were lifted into a conestoga wagon and with a few friends, was conveyed to the spot near the ford, in a little clearing, where a grave was dug, and her form deposited in it, her husband, children, white settler associates and friendly Indians witnessing the sad rite for the first white person to die in Fulton County. Later John Lindsey placed a marble marker at the grave of his wife, a slab 16x20 and two inches thick, oval top, on which was carved: "Elizabeth wife of John Lindsey, died March 26, 1832, aged 36 years, 2 months, 3 days."

Tipton Lindsey wrote in his autobiography that he was born May 21, 1829, near Delphi. "My mother and her children were alone, my father having been appointed gunsmith and miller to the Potawatomi nation at Lake Manitou, in territory that later



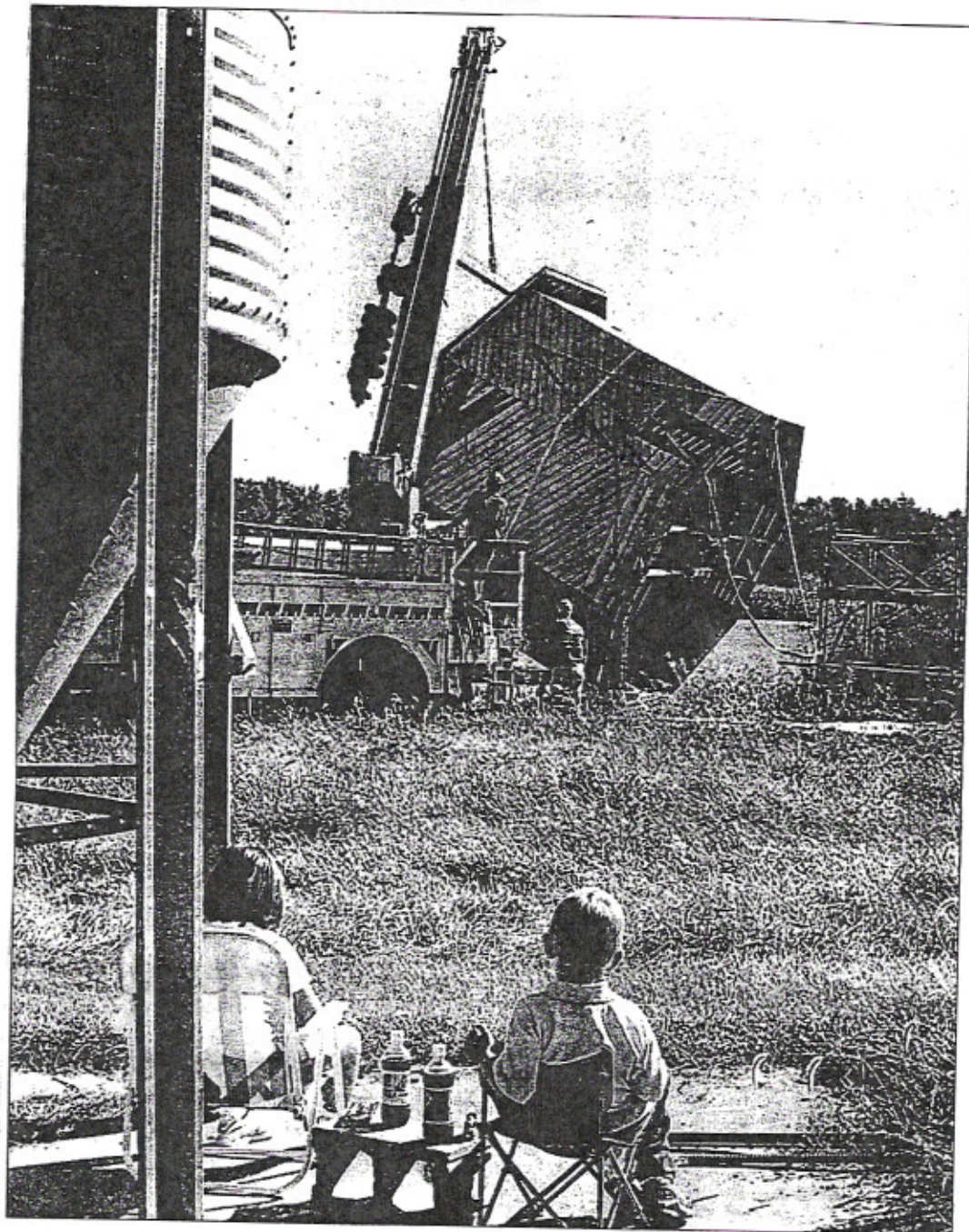
SHIRLEY WILLARD
FULTON COUNTY
HISTORIAN

County

became Fulton County. This office he had for seven years until the office was abolished. Three months after I was born, my mother, with her children, was taken to my father, who had prepared a residence for her in the midst of a war-like tribe of Indians, 23 miles from a white settlement. My father and family resided here during the Black Hawk War of 1833, but only a part of the Potawatomi took a hand in that war. At the close of my father's term in office, he moved unto a piece of land (with his family) adjoining what afterwards became the Town of Rochester, and a few years later moved to Starke County." The Potawatomi gathered at the mill each year to receive annuity payments, so the Lindsey children must have witnessed this. Tipton Lindsey went on to narrate how he walked to California to take part in the Gold Rush in 1849. He did not mention his mother dying when he was only three years old, probably before he could remember. A year after his mother's death, his father, John Lindsey, married Nancy Shields in 1833 and had five more children. This Nancy must have been a cousin to Elizabeth. It was certainly not her sister Nancy. James and Nancy Shields Elliott are credited with being the first to build a house in what became Rochester.

The Shields name has disappeared from the Rochester phone book but their history lives on in Fulton County. A historical marker on the Rochester Pathway recalls Elizabeth Shields Lindsey, the first white woman to die in Fulton County, and Elizabeth Street, formerly First Street at Lake Manitou, honors her. The original tombstone broke in half and is now located in front of the Fulton County Museum by the Father Petit Trail of Death memorial.

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MOVING DAY John Cash, CINERGY, operated the truck to lift the octagonal corn crib which Bill Willard, right, prepared for the move to the Fulton County Museum. The structure was built by Oren Leedy in 1961 and has Leedy's own invention for circulating air to dry the corn inside. It was donated by farmer Roger Rose who bought the Leedy farm. Rose's two children, front, Emily, left and David, ate a snack and watched. The corn crib was moved to the Fulton County Historical Society grounds and placed beside the round barn, which was built in 1924 by Oren Leedy's uncle, Bert Leedy. The project was made possible with a donation by Susan Westerling in memory of her father Dave Striggle.

Photo by Shirley Willard