



Name of Property: Fort Ouiatenon Archeological District
City, State: Tippecanoe County, Indiana
Significant Dates: 1717-1791
NHL Criteria: 1, 6
Theme: I. Peopling Places
 3. Migration from Outside and Within
 5. Ethnic Homelands
 6. Encounters, Conflicts, and Colonization
V. Developing the American Economy
 1. Extraction and Production
 6. Exchange and Trade
VIII. The Changing Role of the United States in the World Community
 1. International Relations
 3. Expansionism and Imperialism

Previous Recognition: National Register of Historic Places (Fort Ouiatenon site) 1970



National Historic Context:

- I. Cultural Developments: Indigenous American Populations.
 - D. Ethnohistory of Indigenous American Populations.
 - 1. Native Cultural Adaptations at Contact.
 - i. Native Adaptations to Northeastern Environments.
 - 2. Establishing Intercultural Relations
 - e. Defending Native Homelands.
 - i. Trading Relationships.
 - 3. Varieties of Early Conflict, Conquest, or Accommodation.
 - b. Forced and Voluntary Population Movements
 - 2. The Changing Cultural Geography of the Northeast.
 - 3. New Inter- and Intragroup Alliances.
- II. European Colonial Exploration and Settlement.
 - B. French Exploration and Settlement
 - 2. St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes.
 - C. English Exploration and Settlement.
- III. Development of the English Colonies, 1688-1763.
 - A. Physical Development.
 - 2. Territorial Expansion.
 - C. Military Affairs.

NHL Significance:

- Fort Ouiatenon was the first European settlement in what is now the state of Indiana and was one of a chain of several French fur-trading establishments in North America’s mid-continent. Turned over to the British after 1763, the post was later captured in a bloodless coup by native neighbors as part of the so-called Pontiac’s Rebellion. It was here that Indian Agent George Croghan had preliminary discussions with Pontiac to bring a halt to the uprisings. The British abandoned the stockade soon after, and it was later used as a staging ground by natives harassing American settlements as far east as Kentucky. In 1791, a punitive military campaign succeeded in burning down the remnants of the old fort, its associated native villages, and their fields of crops.
- Fort Ouiatenon has already contributed much to our understanding of the past—and particularly the fur-trading frontier of North America, affecting theories and concepts to a major degree, as demonstrated by the numerous doctoral dissertations that have been completed using archeological data derived from the site, and presumably continued research into the site and its vast collections would yield additional data of national significance. The associated village sites, discovered more recently and not yet examined intensively, can be assumed to possess high potential to yield nationally significant archeological data bearing upon ethnicity, processes of acculturation, and culture change.



Integrity:

- Both the site of Fort Ouiatenon and its associated nearby villages possess outstanding archeological integrity despite their situation in fields that had been actively cultivated for decades before being set aside as a preserve, leaving a disturbed plow zone nearly a foot thick. This exceptional integrity owes in part to the fact that periodic floodings of the Wabash River blanketed the fields with a thick layer of alluvium that shielded all but the upper few centimeters of the sites' deposits from the deleterious effects of the plow.

Owners of Property: Tippecanoe County Historical Assn. and The Archaeological Conservancy

Acreage of Property: Approximately 212.5 acres

Origins of Nomination: Originally, NPS Archeologist Vergil E. Noble began work on a new NHL nomination for the archeological site of Fort Ouiatenon alone. During the process, the Archaeological Conservancy acquired adjacent lands containing several contemporary village sites and requested expansion of the nomination to encompass a larger district in order to include those sites as part of the NHL.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: High

Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (as of November 5, 2020):

- Guillaume Lacroix, Consul General of France – 10/23/2020
- Michael Strezewski, University of Southern Indiana – 11/3/2020

National Historic Landmarks Committee Comments:

- There were no National Historic Landmarks Committee comments.

National Historic Landmarks Committee Recommendation:

The Committee recommends that the National Park System Advisory Board recommend to the Secretary of the Interior the designation of the Fort Ouiatenon Archeological District in Tippecanoe County, Indiana, as a National Historic Landmark, with any additions and corrections as noted by the Committee being made prior to the nomination being forwarded to the Secretary of the Interior for action.

Advisory Board Recommendation: