

MARTIN LAKE & 1812



The Mississinewa Battlefield Society, founded in 1988 by a small group of local businessmen lead by Martin Lake, has become one of Grant County's leading arts organizations. One of the Battlefield Society's greatest contributions to Grant County is its annual living history event, Mississinewa 1812. The event brings national acclaim to our community, and brings tens of thousands of visitors through Marion each year.

When looking back over the past 22 years, Lake acknowledges that "we kinda lost control of the event." Originally viewed as a commemoration of the War of 1812 battle of the Mississinewa, Lake relates that as years passed more effort went into being a showcase for the arts and culture of the early 1800's. Mississinewa 1812 fills its Rivertown village with artists, musicians, storytellers, magicians, and tavern singers. The event also provides a venue for film producers to recreate the era. Mississinewa 1812 has hosted production companies for full length documentaries, educational programs and feature length films.

In addition to bringing a world renowned event to town each year, the Mississinewa Battlefield Society plays a role in developing a permanent legacy in the visual and literary arts. The Mississinewa Battlefield Memorial sculpture on the Mississinewa Riverwalk, sponsored by the Society and designed by Martin Lake, is a magnificent example of public art. Additionally, the Society underwrote the publication cost of *The Native Americans*, the second volume of the Indiana Historical Society's Peopling Indiana series.

Lake sees himself as an unlikely leader of an arts organization. "Nothing in my professional background prepared me to be this involved in the cultural arts." A native of Grant County, Lake grew up working in his family's small town newspaper and printing business. His early career included stints as weekly newspaper editor; sports writer and U.S. Army officer. He also served in the Indiana House of Representatives and as Grant County prosecuting attorney. He has run a private law practice for 36 years and served over two decades as a public defender in juvenile court.

Lake's diverse community involvement also includes service on the Board of Trustees of the Indiana Historical Society and as member numerous local civic, cultural, and youth organizations.

With their children grown, Martin and his wife, Ginnie, along with their dog, Aly, now spend part of their time in Kentucky overseeing their recently established Spencer Hill Farm thoroughbred horse breeding operation near Lexington.

