PROJECT SCROLL RESEARCH NOTE 2026-38

How Mishawaka got a princess: Littlejohn's "Mishawaha" of 1875, the Tribune's bride of 1907 and the naming story of 1909

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SUMMARY

Mishawaka, Indiana, is often said to be named for Princess Mishawaka, daughter of the Shawnee chief Elkhart, rescued by a white hunter called Dead Shot. Every element of that plot is in F. J. Littlejohn's *Legends of Michigan and the Old North West* (Allegan, 1875). But read in full, Littlejohn's tale does not say what the legend says. His heroine is "Mishawaha," "the beautiful young daughter of Elkhart." "Mishawakee" is a separate village that already exists "near what is termed 'the South Bend' of the St. Joseph River." The book never says the Indiana town was named for her. The earliest local tie of a woman named Mishawaka to the town's name yet found is a *South Bend Tribune* item of 26 January 1907, quoted in Howard's county history, in which she is Elkhart's "bride, Mishawaka, after whom this city was named." In 1909 the *Witwer Genealogy of America*, printed at South Bend, set out Littlejohn's plot as a local tradition "unearthed" by "Mr. E. A. Journegan." It adds that "in his honor" (Dead Shot's) the falls were named Mishawaka, and the town after them. A 1909 Mishawaka text reprinted in the *Rushville Daily Republican* says outright that "Mishawaka was named after the Indian princess." "Journegan" is a misprint for Edward A. Jernegan (1846–1922), editor of the *Mishawaka Enterprise* from 1872 and father of the lawyer Ralph H. Jernegan. The county's centennial pageant of 1916, with Mishawaka scenes staged by Mishawaka High School, has no princess; its program glosses the name, on Alexis Coquillard's word, as "rapid water between wooded banks." In 1919 *Michigan History Magazine* judged Littlejohn's tales "strongly tinctured with the author's imagination."

THE RECORD

1. **F. J. Littlejohn, *Legends of Michigan and the Old North West* (Allegan, 1875), "The Shawnee and Pottowatomie War"**

   > *"At that hour, Mishawaha, the beautiful young daughter of Elkhart, and the favorite princess of the nation, was standing by the couch of her sorely wounded father." … "the village of Mishawakee, near what is termed 'the South Bend' of the St. Joseph River in the State of Indiana."*

   Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/legendsofmichiga00litt)

2. **Timothy Edward Howard, *A History of St. Joseph County, Indiana*, vol. 1 (Chicago, 1907), quoting the *South Bend Tribune*, 26 January 1907**

   > *"Tradition says that here the Indian chief, Elkhart, and his bride, Mishawaka, after whom this city was named, are buried."*

   Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/historyofstjosep01howa)

3. **George Witwer and A. C. Witwer, *Witwer Genealogy of America* (South Bend, 1909), "Legend of Mishawaka," pp. 142–143**

   > *"Mr. E. A. Journegan, engaged in writing a sketch of early pioneer days, unearthed an interesting tradition of still earlier times." … "In his honor they named the falls in the river "Mishawaka," and in later years, the town that grew about it they gave the name of Mishawaka."*

   Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/witwergenealogy00unkngoog)

4. ***Rushville Daily Republican* (Rushville, Ind.), 10 August 1909**

   > *"Mishawaka was named after the Indian princess by that name … The Indians, in honor of their friend, named the falls, near which he lived, "Mishawaka Falls," meaning 'Swift Running Water.'"*

   Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/rushville-daily-republican-1909-08-10)

5. **Howard, *A History of St. Joseph County*, vol. 1 (1907), pp. 505–506 and 525–526**

> *Edward A. Jernegan "was born in Laporte, Indiana, on the 27th of January, 1846 ... In 1872 he came to Mishawaka and purchased the Enterprise." Ralph H. Jernegan: "his parents being Ed A. and Nannie C. (Sherman) Jernegan."*

Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/historyofstjosep01howa)

6. ***South Bend News-Times*, 6 January 1924, p. 12**

> *"Mr. Jernegan died March 2, 1922."*

Library of Congress, Chronicling America · See the record (https://www.loc.gov/resource/sn87055779/1924-01-06/ed-1/?sp=12)

7. **Helene Rose Lamport, comp., *The Historic Pageant of St. Joseph County, Oct. 3-4-5, 1916* (South Bend, 1916)**

> *Scenes "staged by Mishawaka High School"; "It was said by Alexis Coquillard that the name Mishawaka, meant "rapid water between wooded banks.""*

Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/historicpageanto00lamp)

8. **"Notes and Comment," *Michigan History Magazine* 3 (October 1919), pp. 508–509**

> *The tales "were not written originally for publication"... "Unquestionably much of the narrative is strongly tinctured with the author's imagination."*

Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/michiganhistory02socigoog)

WHAT IT CHANGES

Published accounts take the princess story as an old Potawatomi or Shawnee tradition and Mishawaka as named for her. Here the story's source is read in full and the naming claim is dated. Littlejohn's 1875 heroine is Mishawaha, and he never ties the town's name to her. The earliest local tie yet found is of 1907, with the woman as Elkhart's bride. The full naming story arrives in 1909, credited to a named Mishawaka

newspaperman, Edward A. Jernegan, whose identity is established here. The county's own centennial pageant of 1916 still left her out.

LIMITS

Earliest dates here are the earliest yet found in the sources searched. The Witwer book says only that Jernegan "unearthed" the tradition, not that he wrote it. Its credit to "E. A. Journegan" is identified with Edward A. Jernegan by name, initials and town. The 1909 text in the *Rushville Daily Republican* is unsigned. It is quoted here as printed. The Tribune item of 1907 is known from Howard's quotation.

WHAT WE SEARCHED BEFORE CALLING IT NEW

Littlejohn (1875) read in full; Chapman (1880); Howard (1907); the 1875 atlas; Goodspeed (1893); the Internet Archive's full text for Mishawaha, Princess Mishawaka, Journegan and Jernegan; Chronicling America, 1900–1932; McPherson, *Indian Names in Indiana* (1993); The History Museum, South Bend; De Kever's city history; Wikipedia.

Our standard for calling a finding new is set out in How we research (projectscroll.com/how-we-research/), and how we weigh each kind of record in Scrollsigns (projectscroll.com/scrollsigns/).

"New" means new to print as far as we can tell. If you know of an earlier publication, tell us and we will credit it here and raise the note's version.

WORKS CITED

Earlier work, catalogues and databases named in this note, besides the records quoted above.

1. Michael Urbanski, “The princess who never was,” *Project Scroll* (2026). https://projectscroll.com/news/the-princess-who-never-was/
2. Alan McPherson, *Indian Names in Indiana* (1993). https://archive.org/details/indiannamesinind00mcph

THE FULL STORY

The finding is set out in context, with the rest of its sources, in Princess Mishawaka: the princess who never was (projectscroll.com/news/the-princess-who-never-was/). In the discoveries register:

- `mish-littlejohn-text` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#mish-littlejohn-text)
- `mish-1907-bride` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#mish-1907-bride)
- `mish-1909-transplant` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#mish-1909-transplant)
- `mish-jernegan` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#mish-jernegan)
- `mish-pageant-1916` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#mish-pageant-1916)
- `mish-1919-imagination` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#mish-1919-imagination)

HOW TO CITE THIS NOTE

Michael Urbanski, “How Mishawaka got a princess: Littlejohn’s ‘Mishawaha’ of 1875, the Tribune’s bride of 1907 and the naming story of 1909,” Project Scroll Research Note 2026-38, version 1 (5 November 2026), https://projectscroll.com/discoveries/notes/2026-38/. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23968709.

BibTeX

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  orcid       = {0009-0006-8183-5828},
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``Mishawaha'' of 1875, the Tribune's bride of 1907 and the naming story
of 1909}},
  institution = {Project Scroll},
  type        = {Project Scroll Research Note},
  number      = {2026-38},
  year        = {2026},
  month       = {nov},
  url         = {https://projectscroll.com/discoveries/notes/2026-38/},
  doi         = {10.5281/zenodo.23968709},
  note        = {Version 1}
}
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