

*A Magazine Exploring Indiana History*

# The Indiana Historian



*Search for a new capital*



# Focus

The 175th anniversary of the founding of Indiana's capital city is the impetus for a two-part examination of how Indianapolis came to be. Part 2 will be in the June 1996 issue.

Indianapolis was created by law to be the permanent seat of government for the state. The legislative process of locating and establishing the capital city was complex. The documentary evidence of that process—sampled in this issue—provides an example of how government works. It also provides a fascinating picture of life in Indiana in 1820-1821.

On page 3, a quotation and a map provide an interesting overview of the capitals of the area which became Indiana.

Pages 4-6 include materials that provide historical context from the territorial period: a timeline of important events, a map of boundary changes, a discussion of why the capital was moved from Vincennes to Corydon, and the achievement of statehood and title to Indian lands.

The process of selecting the site of Indianapolis begins on page 7 with a law appointing the commissioners. On pages 8-11,

two journals describing the commissioners' activities are excerpted.

The report of the commissioners and the General Assembly's acceptance of that report are the focus of pages 12-13. Included is a summary of the interesting law that moved the process forward to plat and establish Indianapolis.

On page 14, some background of how Indianapolis was named is provided.

As usual, selected resources are provided on page 15.

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**Editor**

Pamela J. Bennett

**Lead Researcher**

Paula A. Bongen

**Designer**

Dani B. Pfaff

**Contributing Editors**

Carole M. Allen, Janine Beckley,

Alan Conant, Dani B. Pfaff,

Virginia Terpening

*The Indiana Historian* provides resources and models for the study of local history to encourage Indiana's citizens of all ages to become engaged with the history of their communities and the state of Indiana.

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## You Be the Historian

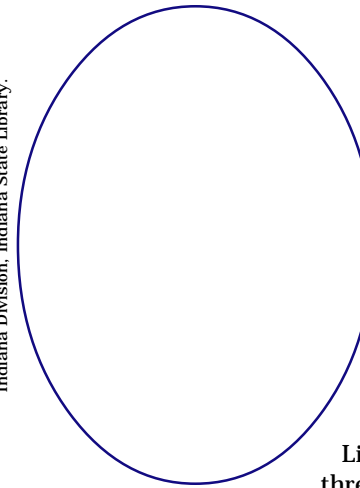
- How and why was your town established? If you live in Indianapolis, you might select another town in Indiana to investigate.
- Explore how and why your town was named. See Baker on p. 15.
- When was your town founded? What evidence is available about the settlers' lives?
- Have your town's major anniversaries been celebrated? How?
- Research the evidence about your town and conduct a founders' day celebration to help others know more about their history. See *The Indiana Junior Historian*, December 1991.

**Cover illustration: Commissioners selecting the site of Indianapolis. The original painting of this image was by English artist, Thomas B. Glessing, circa 1872-1873. No evidence has been located about why Glessing painted this scene of Indianapolis' past. There seem to be no contemporary images of the commissioners working.**

Glessing lived in Indianapolis from 1859 until 1873. The painting was first reproduced in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, September 26, 1874. An engraving was made for the book by Robinson, reproduced here. The paintings reportedly hung in an Indianapolis high school and were eventually destroyed because of significant damage.

From: *Picturesque Indianapolis* (Indianapolis: J.R. Robinson Publishers, 1890).

Indiana Division, Indiana State Library.



### John Tipton

John Tipton was born in Tennessee on August 14, 1786. In 1807 he migrated to Harrison County, Indiana Territory. Until his death in 1839, he was active in Indiana's development.

He was an Indian fighter and agent, negotiating important treaties. He served as surveyor, sheriff, member of the legislature, land speculator, and United States senator.

In 1820, he served as one of the commissioners to choose the permanent site of the state capital.

A large collection of his papers has been preserved in the Indiana Division, Indiana State Library. The Indiana Historical Bureau published a three-volume set of selected Tipton papers.





# Indiana's capitals

Indianapolis was not Indiana's first capital. According to Jacob P. Dunn, an Indiana historian, it is the last in a long line of capitals for the area that we now call Indiana.

... The first seat of government was Paris, France,—shifting to Versailles—with the provincial capital for the northern part of the state at Quebec, and intermediate authority at Detroit; while the southern end of the state had its provincial capital at New Orleans, with intermediate authority at Fort Chartres, in Illinois. ... by the Treaty of Paris, in 1763, the capital became London, and the provincial government was centered at Quebec, with intermediate authority at Detroit. This ... continued until Gen. George Rogers Clark took forcible possession of the region for Virginia, in 1778, and the

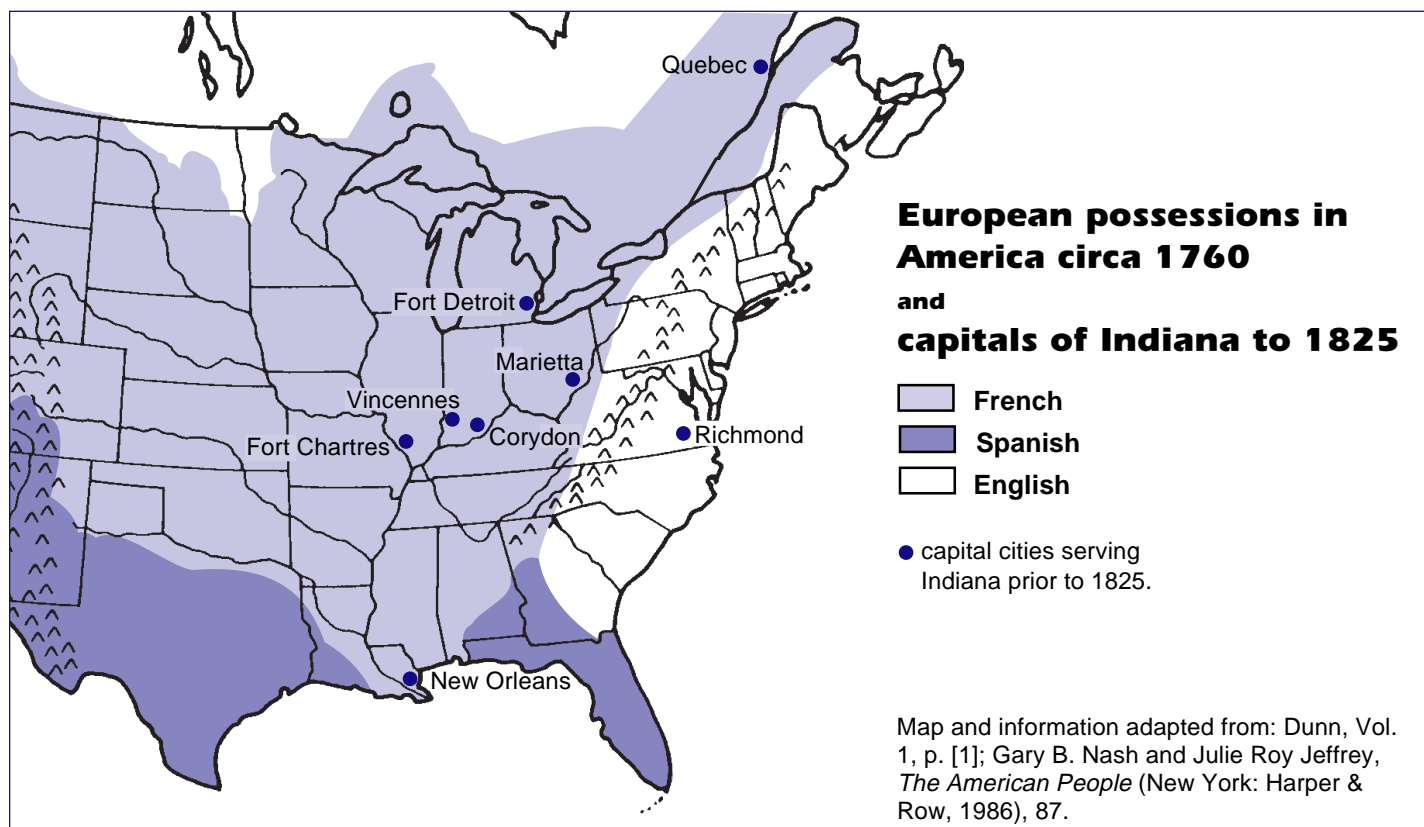
capital came over to Richmond.

... The Virginia rule continued until the organization of the Northwest Territory [1787], when the capital was transferred to Marietta, Ohio. ... on the organization of Indiana Territory [1800], it came to Vincennes. Here it remained until 1813, when it was removed to Corydon.

On the map below, these capitals have been located even though some were established later than the political boundaries existing in 1760. The map shows current state boundaries to provide a geographic sense of place.

## You Be the Historian

- Create a timeline showing the development and capitals of the area that is now Indiana.
- Note the map below. Locate the capitals mentioned in Dunn's work. Which are missing? Use an atlas to locate them.
- Explore the European arrival to, and effect on, the North American continent. The September, October, and November 1992 issues of *The Indiana Junior Historian* provide a good introduction to this topic.





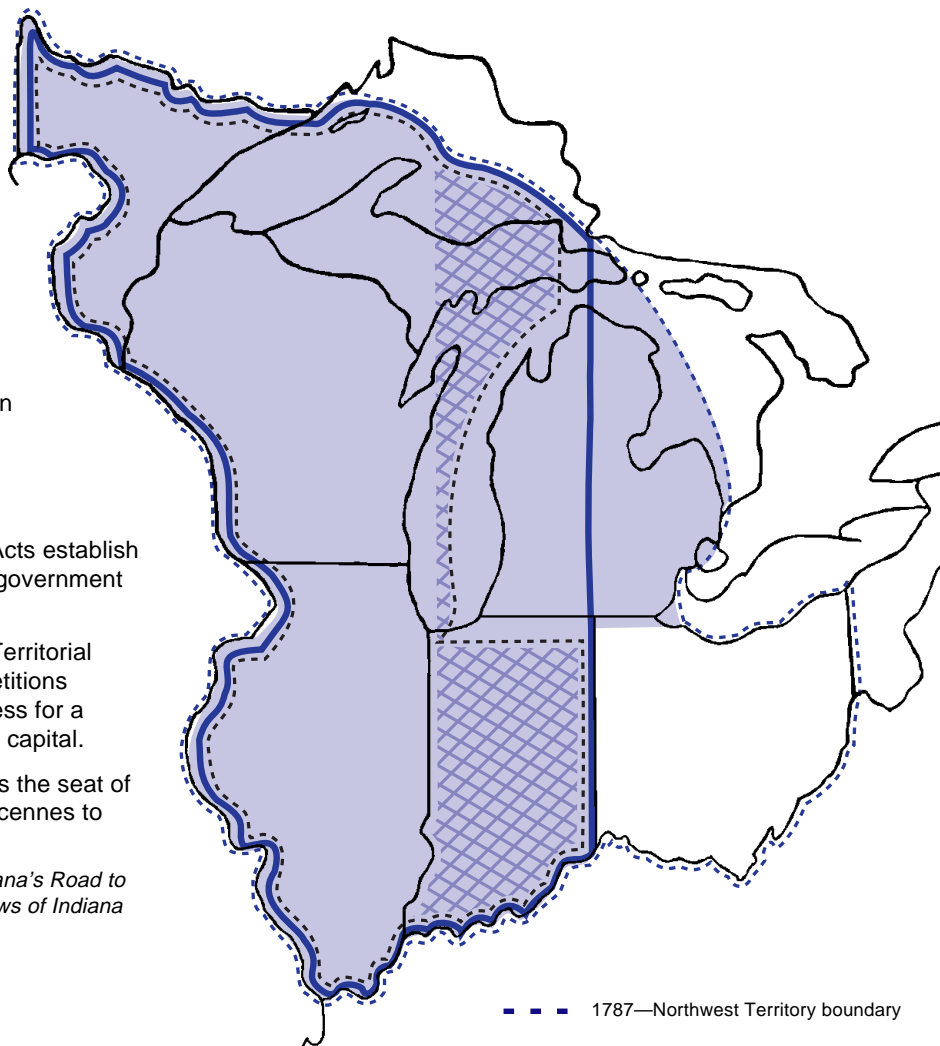


# Territorial milestones

## Changes in Indiana Territory 1800-1816

- 1800** — May 7—Indiana Territory established (including what would become Illinois, Wisconsin, and portions of Michigan and Minnesota) with its capital at Vincennes.
- 1804** — December 5—Territory moves into second stage of government, allowing for election of a General Assembly.
- 1805** — January 11—Michigan Territory formed.
- 1809** — February 3—Illinois Territory formed.
- 1810** — December 17, 19—Acts establish a permanent seat of government for Indiana Territory.
- 1811** — January 7—Indiana Territorial General Assembly petitions United States Congress for a donation of land for a capital.
- 1813** — March 11—Act moves the seat of government from Vincennes to Corydon.

Sources: Hawkins, *Indiana's Road to Statehood*; Ewbank, *Laws of Indiana Territory, 1809-1816*.



- 1787—Northwest Territory boundary
- 1800—Indiana Territory boundary
- 1803—Indiana Territory
- 1805—Indiana Territory boundary
- 1809—Indiana Territory

Based on maps from: Pence and Armstrong, *Indiana Boundaries*, 137, 139, 141, 143, 145.





# Why move the capital?

On May 13, 1800, twenty-seven year old William Henry Harrison was appointed governor of the Indiana Territory by John Adams, President of the United States. Under the provisions of the Northwest Ordinance, Harrison had almost total control of governmental affairs. Naturally, there were controversies with his political opponents about various issues.

As vast regions of the Indiana Territory were carved away to form Illinois and Michigan territories, some of those conflicts revolved around the location of the capital, located on the new western border of Indiana Territory—farther from the rest of the population and closer to hostile Indians.

One major issue in the decision to move the capital to Corydon was fear of Harrison's continuing power and influence. In a September 18, 1811 letter from John Paul to Solomon Manwarring (both territorial legislators), Paul notes Harrison's unsuccessful proposal "to reorganize the Judiciary in which he clothed himself with unlimited power."

In addition, Harrison and his supporters wanted slavery in the territory; his opponents were anti-slavery.

A primary factor cited by the territorial General Assembly was the danger from Indian raids, which had increased since the 1811 Battle of Tippecanoe. As reported in the March 20, 1813 *Vincennes Western Sun*, a resolution to move the capital from

Vincennes was passed by the General Assembly on February 12:

Whereas the hostile disposition of the Indians, and the danger to which the village of Vincennes is thereby subjected, and for the preservation of the public acts and records of the territory in this our perilous situation makes it necessary that the seat of the government of the territory should be removed to a place where the archives of state and the claims of individuals should not be endangered . . .

. . . the seat of government . . . be removed from Vincennes to some convenient place in said territory.

On March 11, an act was passed moving the capital from Vincennes to Corydon.

Sources: Barnhart and Carmony, *Indiana*; Barnhart and Riker, *Indiana to 1816*.

## You Be the Historian

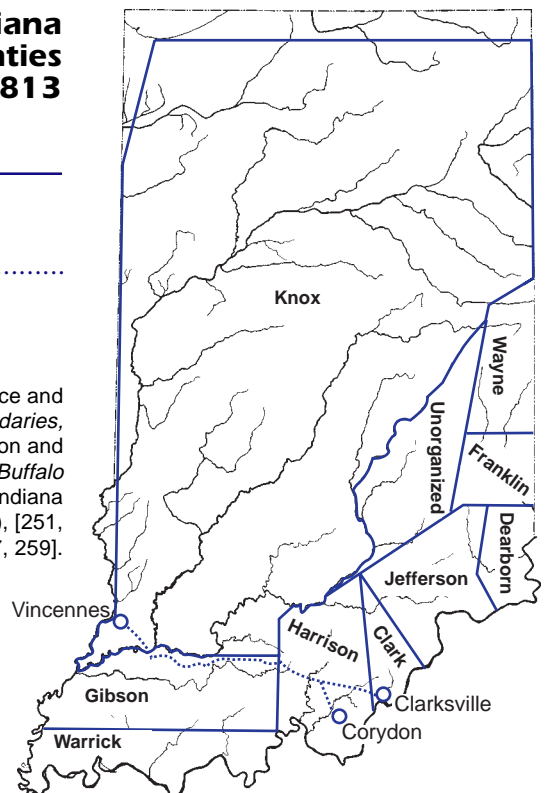
- What factors might result in a change in location of a state capital today?
- What would it take, legally and physically, to move Indiana's state capital today? Would a move be likely?
- Apply these questions to the county seat of your county. Which Indiana county seat has moved in the 1990s?

## Indiana Counties in 1813

Indiana county boundaries, 1813 ———

Main trail between Falls of the Ohio and Vincennes (the Buffalo Trace) ·····

Map based on: Pence and Armstrong, *Indiana Boundaries*, 529; and George R. Wilson and Gayle Thornbrough, *The Buffalo Trace* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1946), [251, 253, 255, 257, 259].





# Planning for the future

## Achieving Statehood

- 1811** — December 11—Territorial Assembly petitions Congress to admit Indiana into the Union.
- 1812** — March 31—Congressional committee recommends admission when the population of Indiana Territory is 35,000.
- 1813** — March 3—Thomas Posey becomes second governor of Indiana Territory. Harrison resigned to pursue a military commission.
- 1814** — August 29—Territorial census authorized in 1815; showed population at 63,897.
- 1815** — December 11—Territorial Assembly again petitions Congress to admit Indiana into the Union.
- 1816** — April 19—President James Madison approves the Enabling Act allowing for the Indiana Constitutional Convention.
- 1816** — August 5—Elections held under new constitution; Jonathan Jennings became first state governor.
- 1816** — December 11—Indiana becomes nineteenth state.


On June 10, 1816, forty-three elected constitutional delegates assembled at Corydon under the provisions of the congressional Enabling Act. With Jonathan Jennings presiding as president, these men wrote Indiana's first constitution.

This document provided for the government of the new state of Indiana, and it provided for a planned transition to statehood.

Delegates also provided for a new capital in Article XI, Section 11, of the constitution, which states, "Corydon, in Harrison County shall be the seat of Government of the state of Indiana, until the year eighteen hundred and twenty-five, and until removed by law."

The 1816 Enabling Act, in its last section, granted land for a state capital "on such lands as may hereafter be acquired by the United States from the Indian tribes within the said Territory."

## Land Acquired from Indians by 1818, by Treaty Date

 Land belonging to Indians in 1818

For more information on treaties with Indians in the Indiana area, see *The Indiana Junior Historian*, November 1992.

Map based on: *The Indiana Junior Historian*, November 1992, p. 3.

On October 2-6, 1818, United States Treaty Commissioners Jonathan Jennings, Lewis Cass, and Benjamin Parke met in St. Mary's, Ohio with leaders of Delaware and Miami tribes located in Indiana. The treaties concluded there brought the middle third of the state—called the "New Purchase"—under United States ownership.

Most settlements at statehood were located in the southern part of the state, although the state's designated territory extended far north. The acquisition of Indian lands in that territory opened a major area for legal settlement. The acquisition also enabled the General Assembly to implement the constitutional provision for a new capital.

Sources: Barnhart and Riker, *Indiana to 1816*; Hawkins, *Indiana's Road to Statehood*; Kettleborough, *Constitution Making*.





# Appointing commissioners

On January 11, 1820, an act of the General Assembly provided for the appointment of ten individuals “to select and locate a site for the permanent seat of government of Indiana.” The article to the right, listing their names and counties, appeared in a Vincennes newspaper, the *Indiana Centinel* on January 29, 1820. William Prince refused to serve.

The act had four main sections with instructions for the commissioners:

- to locate and select a permanent site for the seat of government.
- to meet at William Conner’s house (near present Noblesville) and determine the site “most eligible and advantageous.”
- to appoint a clerk to “keep a fair record of their proceedings” which must be filed with the secretary of state’s office and the General Assembly.
- to receive an allowance of “two dollars each, per day, for their services, and also the sum of two dollars for every twenty-five miles each may travel.”

Source: *Laws of Indiana, 1819-1820.*

The following gentlemen are appointed by the Legislature, Commissioners to locate a scite for the permanent Seat of Government of Indiana. They are to meet at the house of William Conner, on the west fork of White river at such time as may be made known by the proclamation of the Governor.

George Hunt, of Wayne county.  
 John Conner, of Fayette county.  
 Stephen Ludlow, of Dearborn county,  
 John Galleland, of Switzerland county.  
 Joseph Bartholomew, of Clark county.  
 Jesse B. Durham, of Jackson county.  
 John Tipton, of Harrison county.  
 Frederick Rapp, of Posey county.  
 William Prince, of Gibson county.  
 Thomas Emmerson, of Knox county.

Indiana Centinel, January 29, 1820, p. 3.

## You Be the Historian

- Determine the location of each commissioner using a current map. What would be the most likely route and distance for each commissioner using current roads?
- Speculate, using the map on page 9, about routes the commissioners might actually have used. Note Tipton’s route as an example.
- Which commissioners’ counties are not on the map on page 5? When were those counties formed?
- Locate travel accounts from the period to learn more about conditions at that time.

## Travel plans

Commissioners had to travel on their own for the meeting. Correspondence between John Tipton and Joseph Bartholomew reveals concerns travelers in Indiana faced at the time. On January 27, 1820 Bartholomew writes to Tipton:

... I wish you would consult with Governor Jennings as to the most proper time for the commissioners to meet I think it should be about the 15<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of May for it is all important to the state that a proper selection should be made—it is likely about that time the waters will be down if not

down the[y] will be warm the weeds not much up to Injure and plenty of food for horses . . .

On April 17, 1820 Bartholomew again writes to Tipton:

... you inform me you are prepaering a Tent to carry on our rout to white river that is very well and in order that I may not be intirely dependent I will cary the Coffee Kettle. . . . and as for the cooking I know you was formerly a very good cook and if you have forgotten I can learn you. . . .

Source: Blackburn, *Tipton Papers*, 177, 193.





# Search for the new capital

The two journals quoted here belonged to John Tipton. Both provide valuable information about the selection of the site of Indianapolis.

One journal is Tipton's personal account of his experiences from May 17 through June 11, 1820: his travel from Corydon to William Conner's home, his duties as a commissioner, and his travel account returning home. Tipton's journal contains comments about official activities, but he adds commentary about people and places.

The second journal is the official journal, kept by Benjamin I. Blythe, the appointed clerk to the commissioners. It recorded the official meetings of the commissioners from May 22 to June 7, 1820. Each commissioner received a copy of Blythe's journal.

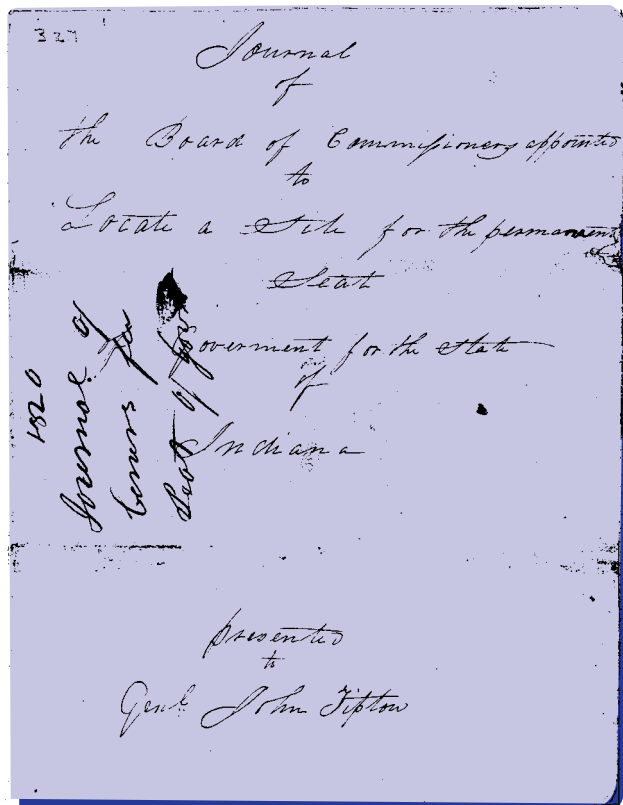
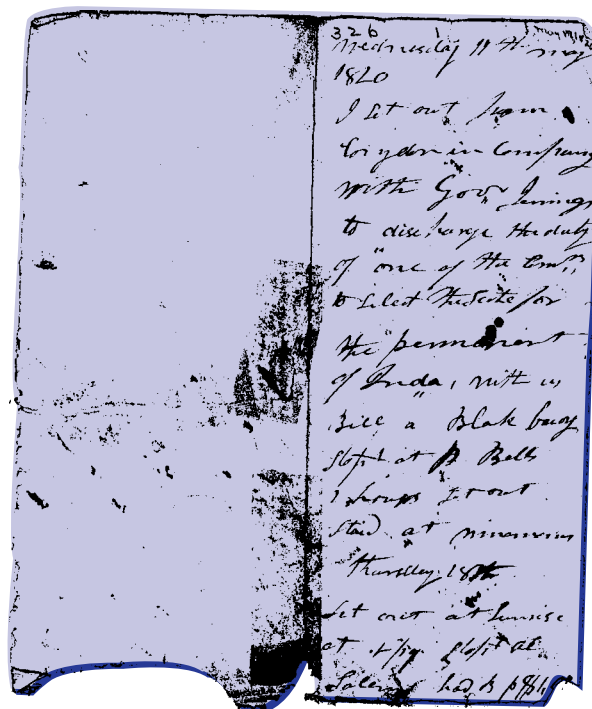
Excerpts from the journals are presented here alternating the official journal's (Roman type) and Tipton's (**bold face type**) entries for a single day. *Italic type* indicates *TIH* editorial entries. These excerpts are a small part of the journals, which are printed in volume one of the *Tipton Papers*, published in 1942 by the Indiana Historical Bureau.

Using the journal entries, the route of Tipton's travel has been indicated approximately on the map on page 9. Tipton refers to some locations using range, township, and section numbers from the land survey. Only one such entry is reproduced here, on May 20, 1820.

The map on page 10 indicates in more detail the area explored by the commissioners.

## What is a journal?

A journal is a daily, or regular, record of events, observations, or transactions. A journal, depending on the purpose or author, may be very detailed or general. A personal journal—or diary—may reveal thoughts and feelings of an individual as well as events. An official journal records activities of a specific group of people. Journals are primary sources that can provide historians with a wealth of information about the past.



The Indiana Division of the Indiana State Library houses the John Tipton Collection. Only a few pages of his handwritten personal journal seem to have survived. The front page of Tipton's personal journal is reproduced above.

Tipton's copy of the handwritten official journal, kept by the clerk, Benjamin I. Blythe, is available in its entirety. The front page of the official journal is reproduced at left.







## Journal excerpts

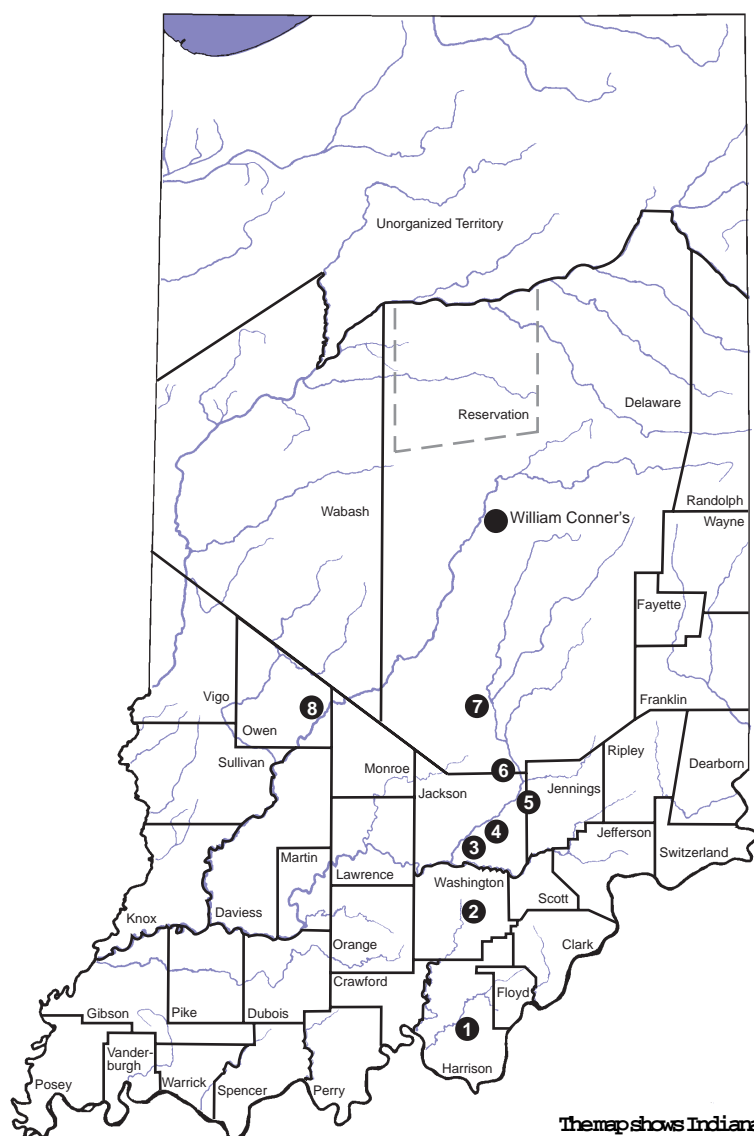
May 17, 1820 (See map, p. 9 ①)

... I set out from Corydon in Company with Govr Jennings ... haveing laid in plenty of Baken coffy &c provided a tent ... at 7 came to Mr Winemans on Blue river Stopt for the k<sup>t</sup>

May 18, 1820 (See map, p. 9, ②③)

... Set out early ... Stopt at Salem had Breckfast ... Set out at 11 crosst muscakituck paid 25 cts and stopt at Co<sup>l</sup> Durhams in Vallonia who was allso a Commissioner here we found Gen<sup>l</sup> Bartholomew ... Gen<sup>l</sup> J Carr & Cap<sup>t</sup> Dueson of Charlestown ...

## Tipton's Route from Corydon to William Conner's House



The map shows Indiana's county boundaries in 1820. The northern third of the state still belonged to various Indian tribes. Notice the large section of the New Purchase set aside as an Indian reservation.

The numbered dots refer to specific locations mentioned in Tipton's journal as he and his companions traveled north. The numbers are keyed to dates in the journal excerpts.

Map based on: Pence and Armstrong, *Indiana Boundaries*; Blackburn, *Tipton Papers*, 1:195-204.

May 19, 1820 (See map, p. 9, ④⑤)

... we set out early Stopt at Brownstown ... at 1 stopt at Capt J Shields after Dinner we set ... after travling about 7 miles ... encampd and stretched our tent near a pond this is the firs time I have stretched or Slep in a tent since 1814

May 20, 1820 (See map, p. 9, ⑥⑦)

... set out before sunrise ... came to John Reddick ... Stopt let our horses graze ... came to John Berry who lives on S 5 T 10 n of R 5 E ...

May 21, 1820

... I killed a deer the first I have killed since 1814 ... we travld fast and at 7 encampd on a small creek having travld about 45 mils

May 22, 1820 (See map, p. 9, William Conner's)

... The following Commissioners met ... George Hunt, John Conner, Stephen Ludlow, Joseph Bartholomew, John Tipton, Thomas Emerson, Jesse B Durham and John Gilleland and were duly sworn as the Law directs—

... the Board adjourned until tomorrow morning 8 oclock—

... we set out at Sunrise ... crosst fall creek at a ripple Stopt to B shave put on clean Clothes ... came to the house of William Conner ... he Lives in a Prairie of about 250 acres of the White R Bottom a number of Indian Huts near his house ... we then met and ware sworn according to law and adjourned untill tomorrow morning

May 23, 1820 (See map, p. 10 hereafter)

... on Motion Joseph Bartholomew John Tipton and Stephen Ludlow were appointed a Committee to draught rules for the Government of the Commissioners ...

... the Board met when Frederick Rapp appeared was sworn and took his seat— M<sup>r</sup> Tipton from the Committee appointed to draught rules ... made the following report ...

... Resolved that the Board of Commissioners explore Township 16 of Range 3 East on their way to the mouth of Fall Creek And the Board adjourned to meet at the Mouth of Fall Creek tomorrow at 12 oclock

... went to shooting after B we met appointed a Committee to Draft rule ... Set out Stopt at the lower [Delaware] Town for the K<sup>t</sup>





*May 24, 1820*

... Resolved that the Commissioners proceed diligently to explore that part of Township 16 of Range 3 East which they have not yet seen together with Townships 15 of Range 3 and 14 & 13 of Range 2 East—And the Board adjourned . . .

... we Set out for the mouth fall creek the Town we are now in is high Dry rich Bottom very large one of the most Beautiful on the river but Timber scarce . . . got to McCormicks who lives on the river quarter of a mile below the mouth of fall creek Last K<sup>t</sup> I Staid in an Indian . . . Town . . . eat at the Table of a Frenchman who has long lived with the Indians and lives like them . . . alterede times Sinc 1813 when I was last here hunting the Indians with whom we now eat Drink and Sleep they have sold thier land for a Trifle and prepareing to leave the Country . . . (in which we are now hunting a site for the Seat of Govn<sup>t</sup> of our State) . . .

*May 25, 1820*

... the Board commenced at the mouth of Fall Creek and proceeded down the River on the west side carefully examining every situation together with the advantages and disadvantages attending them until we arrived at the Bluffs . . . and there camped for the night

... Bartholomew and me went out to look at the land . . . we set out for the Bluffs Distance Down the river about 15 miles the Govr staid here at McCormicks . . . came to the river in a wide bottom that is inundated Staid 1 hour set out very hard rain passed very Bad Swamp one horse cripled . . . the rain fell in Torrents . . . Bartholomew Durham Carr Dueson & me slept in some Indian Camps after geting fire kindld & our clothes Dry we had a pleasant kt

*May 26, 1820*

The Board being convinced there were none other situations lower down the river near the centre of the State we crossed over to the East side of the River and proceeded up examining the situations on the River and the Country back u[n]til we arrived at the mouth of Fall Creek then Crossed to the West of the River and Camped for the night.

the morning clier cool pleasant my horse with 2 more missing I wrote Som letters home . . . Col D found our horses the commissioners that had went to the Bluffs last kt returnd B D and myself went Down to Se the Bluffs . . . we then returnded our camp and Set out to examin the n w side of the river . . . crosst Eagle creek a beautifull creek sufficient to turn a mill at 6 our co became uneasy and . . . we crosst the river to the S E Side and 7 arrive at the mouth of Fall creek . . .

*May 27, 1820*

This day we proceeded to explore the country on both sides of the River above and below the mouth of Fall Creek . . . after due deliberation it was resolved that we send for William B. Laughlin the surveyor appointed by Government to attend the Commissioners and that he proceed to survey Township 15 of Range 3 East—

On Motion Ordered that the Clerk furnish Each Commissioner with a Copy of the Journals—

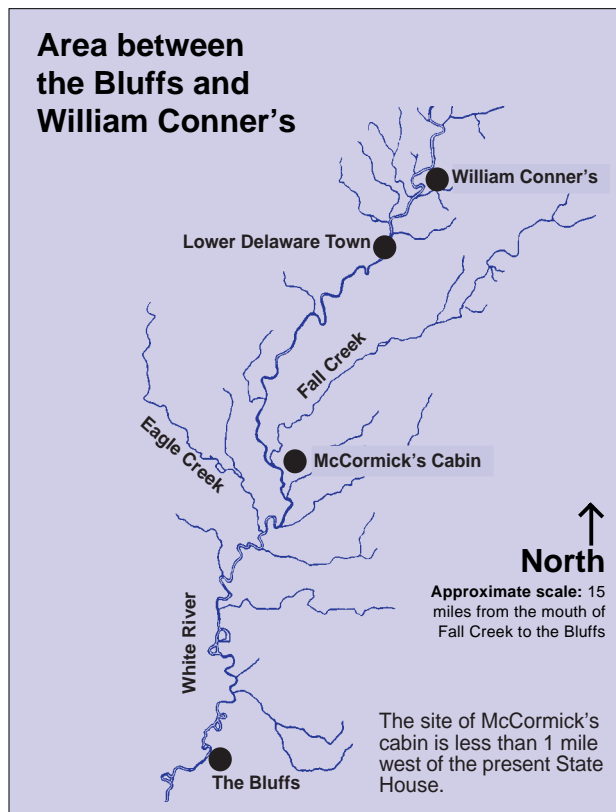
On Motion Resolved that the site for the permanent [sic] seat of Government be located in Township 15 of Range 3 East and the Board adjourned . . .

... at 9 we crosst to the n w Side . . . after some time spent on the n w we crosst to the S E Side the Comrs then met and agreed to Select and locate the site Township 15 north of R 3 E which Township was not divided into sections . . .

*May 28, 1820*

... Laughlin . . . Reported that it would require eight day . . .

... Laughlin came on and stated that it would take 10 day to progress so farr with the surveys as to enable us to progress with our business . . . adjourned . . . we set out for wm conners . . . the land equally good timber mostly sugar Buckeye Hackberry Chery Walnut &c every quarter Section is worth twice the Gover<sup>t</sup> price . . .



Map based on: Blackburn, *Tipton Papers*, 1:195-204.



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May 29, 1820 (See map, p. 9 ③)

... we then set out to look at the country down to the Town of Spencer ... at 7 stopt at some Indian camps had a pleasant K<sup>t</sup> having wood shelter and there Bark to Sleep on

May 30, 1820

... I went out hunting could not kill anything ... I saw som clay that we think would make Brick ... stopt for the K<sup>t</sup> with a mr Harris [in Morgan County]

May 31, 1820

Set out at 5 Travld west ... came to P Harts [in Spencer, Owen County] ... Staid 3 days in this neighbourhood to rest our selves and horses

June 3, 1820

we paid nothing set out ... for the mouth of fall creek ...

June 4, 1820

... we encamped at dark near a good lick

June 5, 1820

... the Surveyor not being ready ... Resolved that the Board appropriate tomorrow to the examination of the lands surveyed ...

... we had a good Breckfast and set out at 7 ... we found the Comrs Govr Jening &c waiting for us went to se the surveyor found his work so much forward as to enable us to finish our business

June 6, 1820

... this day we spent in rideing and walking around the lines of the Sections that we intend to locate ...

June 7, 1820

The Board met pursuant to adjournment when on Motion Resolved that we locate in Township 15 of Range 3 East at Sections 1 & 12 East and West Fractions 2 East Fraction 11 and as much on the East side of West Fraction 3 as by a line Beginning on the South side of said Fraction and running North or parrellel with West line of said Fraction will make 4 Complete Sections in quantity On Motion Ordered that the Clerk make out the report accordingly which was done received and signed and the Board adjourned without day—

... we met at McCormicks and on my motion the Commissioners came to a resolution ... we left our clerk making out his minuts and our report and went to Camp to dine ... at 5 we decamped & went over to McCormicks our [clerk] having his riteing ready the Comrs met and signed thier report and certified the service of there clerk ... the first Boat landed that ever was Seen at the seat of Government it was a small Ferry Flat with a canoe Tied along side boath loaded with the household goods of 2 Families mooving to the mouth of fall creek they came in a keel Boat as farr as they could get it up the river ...

June 8, 1820

... we rose early ... we set out ... for home

June 9, 10, 1820

[traveling home]

June 11, 1820

... got safe home having been absent 27 days the compensation allowed us comrs by the Law beeing \$2.00 for every 25 miles Travling and from the plaice where we met and \$2 for each days service while engaged in the discharge of our duty my pay for the Trip beeing \$58 not half what I could have made in my office a very poor compensation

**Corydon, June 15.**

The Governor and Gen. John Tipton, one of the Commissioners, to locate the scite for the permanent seat of Government, returned to this place on the 11th inst, from whom we have obtained the information that the Commissioners have selected sections, No. 1 and 12, and Fractions No. 2, and 11, and so much of Fraction No. 3, as may require, to make Four entire sections, in Township No. 15, north of Range No. 3 east, of the second principal meridian, situated on the east side of the West Fork of White River, at the mouth of Fall creek, 67 miles from Brookville, 35 miles from Lawrenceburg, 83 miles from Madison, 108 miles from Corydon, 107 miles from Vincennes, and 71 miles from Terre-Haute.

Indiana Centinel, July 8, 1820, p. 2.

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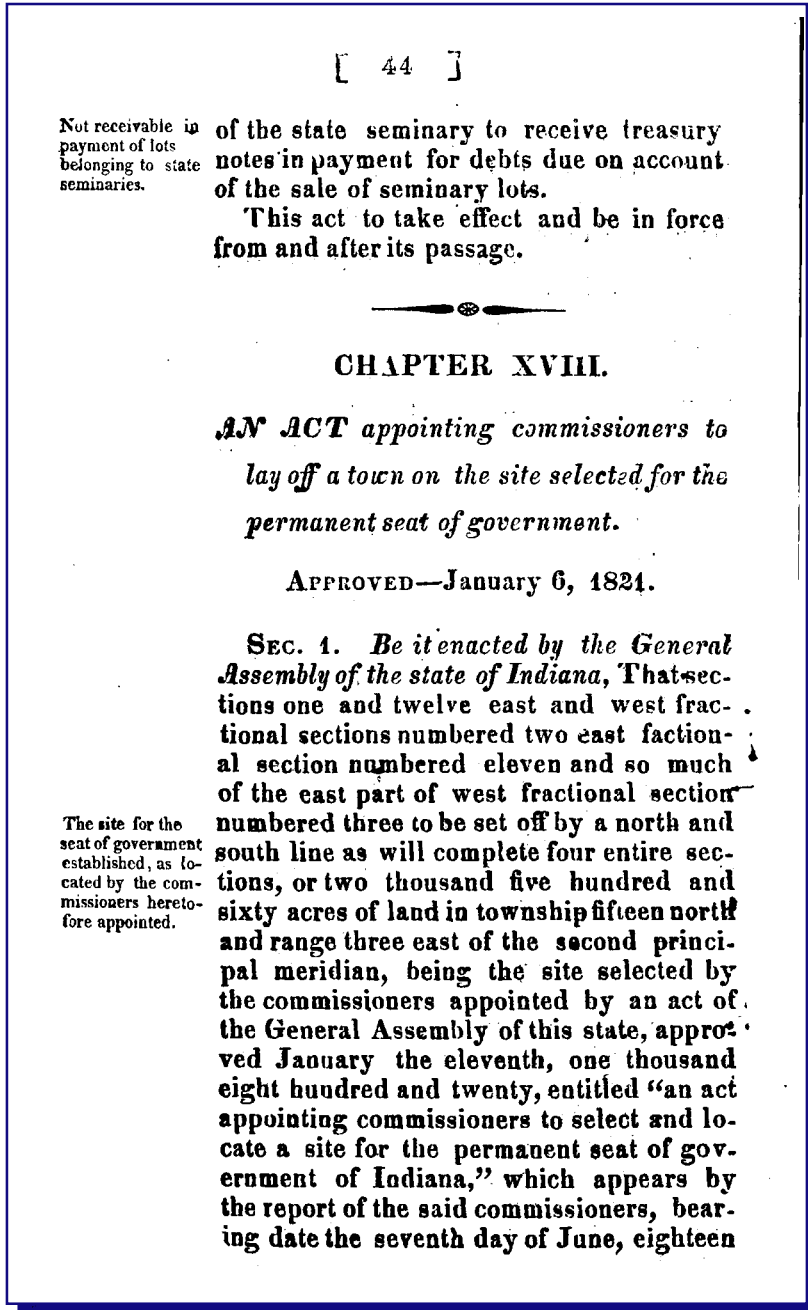
# Acceptance and naming

On November 29, 1820, the commissioners submitted their June 7, 1820 report to the General Assembly, which referred it to a committee. In the report, the commissioners explained their reasons for choosing the site:

In discharging their duty to the state, the undersigned have endeavored to connect with an eligible site the advantages of a navigable stream and fertility of soil, while they have not been unmindful of the geographical situation of the various portions of the state to its political centre, as it regards both the present and future interests of its citizens.

On January 6, 1821, the General Assembly approved the commissioners' choice for the site of a permanent seat of government. Approval was contained in "AN ACT appointing commissioners to lay off a town on the site selected for the permanent seat of government." The act summarized on page 13, contains twenty-four sections in ten pages, laying out a thorough, yet simple plan for creating the new state capital.

Source: *Indiana House Journal*, 1820-21; *Laws of Indiana*, 1820-21.



Not receivable in payment of lots belonging to state seminaries.

of the state seminary to receive treasury notes in payment for debts due on account of the sale of seminary lots.

This act to take effect and be in force from and after its passage.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*AN ACT appointing commissioners to lay off a town on the site selected for the permanent seat of government.*

APPROVED—January 6, 1821.

**SEC. 1.** *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Indiana, That sections one and twelve east and west fractional sections numbered two east fractional section numbered eleven and so much of the east part of west fractional section numbered three to be set off by a north and south line as will complete four entire sections, or two thousand five hundred and sixty acres of land in township fifteen north and range three east of the second principal meridian, being the site selected by the commissioners appointed by an act of the General Assembly of this state, approved January the eleventh, one thousand eight hundred and twenty, entitled "an act appointing commissioners to select and locate a site for the permanent seat of government of Indiana," which appears by the report of the said commissioners, bearing date the seventh day of June, eighteen*

The site for the seat of government established, as located by the commissioners heretofore appointed.

Laws of Indiana, 1820-1821.

The first page of the printed act which is summarized on page 13.

## You Be the Historian

- How does a bill become a law in Indiana? Examine the legislation summarized on page 13.
- In Sec. 5, notification via newspapers is required. Is this still the case today in public business? Why was three months allowed?
- In Secs. 9 and 20, bonds are required. What is the purpose of a bond? Under what circumstances are bonds used today?
- In Sec. 18, why might there be a provision for prosecution for wasting timber?
- In Sec. 24, why might legislation take effect only after publication in a newspaper? How are people today notified about new laws?





## Summary of "An Act appointing commissioners. . ."

**Sec. 1.** The General Assembly approves and describes the site, containing 2,560 acres.

**Sec. 2.** Three new commissioners shall be chosen to lay out the town.

**Sec. 3.** The commissioners shall meet the first Monday of April 1821 and appoint a surveyor and clerk.

**Sec. 4.** Surveyors shall make two plats of the town, one going to the secretary of state and the other to the appointed agent of the town.

**Sec. 5.** Commissioners shall be authorized to sell lots, advertising sales in at least three newspapers, three months previous to the sales.

**Sec. 6.** Purchaser pays one-fifth of the price at purchase; the remainder is paid in four equal annual installments; there will be an eight percent discount for prompt payment.

**Sec. 7.** Commissioners shall report their proceedings (sale of lots) to the secretary of state.

**Sec. 8.** Commissioners receive \$3 per day for work; they arrange a reasonable pay for surveyor chain-carriers; pay comes from proceeds from sales of lots.

**Sec. 9.** An agent shall be appointed to oversee the sale of lots. He shall be required to post a \$20,000 bond.

**Sec. 10.** The agent shall attend the sale of lots, make out certificates, collect money, and provide deeds to those who paid for their lots in full.

**Sec. 11.** The agent shall keep detailed records of all lot purchases.

**Sec. 12.** If anyone fails to pay an installment, three months after the last installment is due, the agent shall take possession of the lot or lots for resale.

**Sec. 13.** The agent shall be required to submit quarterly returns to the auditor of public accounts, stating the amount of money received from each sale, the particular lot or lots sold, and other details necessary to explain the money received.

**Sec. 14.** The agent shall pay the state treasurer all of the money he has received before the first Monday of December. He will receive a receipt to be submitted within three days to the auditor of public accounts. The agent shall then receive a written release of the money owed.

**Sec. 15.** If the agent fails to pay the treasurer, his records will be seized as evidence against him; he will be prosecuted.

**Sec. 16.** The agent shall turn over all of his money and records to a new agent.

**Sec. 17.** If the office of the agent becomes vacant, the

governor shall appoint another agent.

**Sec. 18.** The agent shall take possession of the land described in section 1. He shall prosecute anyone who wastes timber on that land.

**Sec. 19.** The agent shall keep an office in the new town; within nine months of his appointment, he shall live there while he is the agent.

**Sec. 20.** Because he receives all of the money from the sale of lots, the state treasurer shall be required to post a bond of \$20,000. The treasurer shall receive one per cent of all of the money collected from the sale of the lots. The auditor shall receive one-half per cent. The agent shall receive an annual salary of \$600 from the money collected.

**Sec. 21.** The town shall be named Indianapolis.

**Sec. 22.** The secretary of state shall send written notification to the men appointed commissioners.

**Sec. 23.** Money received from the sale of lots shall be used to erect public buildings.

**Sec. 24.** This act shall not take effect until it is published in the *Indiana Gazette*.





# Behind the Scenes

"Behind the Scenes" presents some aspect of how the Bureau staff produces each issue of the magazine. The focus may be, for example, the research process, an interpretation problem, etc. It also enables us to thank our partners and demonstrate that research is a collaboration with often unexpected twists and turns.

When historians are re-searching a particular person, subject, or event, their hope is to locate primary sources that give dates and facts and provide the human motivations and emotions related to those facts.

Research on this issue provided a wealth of such primary sources. One such example involves section twenty-one of the January 6, 1821 act, which declares that the new town is to be called Indianapolis. Behind the simple statement is a fascinating story.

The story of naming the new capital was first published in W.

R. Holloway's 1870 history of the city, *Indianapolis: A Historical and Statistical Sketch of the Railroad City*. Holloway, in his research, asked then governor, Conrad Baker to write to Judge Jeremiah Sullivan, Corydon. Sullivan was credited with originating the name, and Holloway wanted a first-hand account of the proceedings.

On April 29, 1870, forty-nine years after he submitted the name for legislative approval, Sullivan responded to Governor Baker's request. This one reminiscence, an invaluable primary source, tells a delightful, human

story of the legislative process. Finding the actual four-page letter (excerpted below) in the Indiana Historical Society Library was truly exciting.

. . . I have a very distinct recollection of the great diversity of opinion that prevailed as to the name by which the new town should receive legislative baptism. The Bill (if I remember aright) was reported by Judge Polk and was, in the main, very acceptable. A blank . . . was left for the name of the Town . . . and during the two or three days we spent in endeavouring to fill that blank, there was in the debate some sharpness, and much amusement.

. . . proposed "Tecumseh" . . . he suggested other Indian names . . . They also were rejected. . . other names, which I have now forgotten, were proposed—discussed—laughed at, and voted down. . .

[The next day after discussing the matter with other legislators] . . . I moved to fill the blank with "Indianapolis." The name created quite a laugh. . . the name gradually commended itself to the committee and was accepted. The principal reason given in favour of adopting the name proposed, to wit, that its Greek termination would indicate to all the world the locality of the Town, was, I am sure, the reason that overcame opposition to the name. The Town was finally named Indianapolis with but little, if any, opposition.

Not everyone was happy with the choice. The rather emotional January 13, 1821 article from the *Indiana Centinel*, reproduced left, illustrates some opposition opinion.

One of the most ludicrous acts, however, of the sojourners at Corydon, was their naming the new seat of state government. Such a name, kind readers, you would never find by searching from Dan to Beersheba; nor in all the libraries, museums, and patent-offices in the world. It is like nothing in heaven nor on earth, nor in the waters under the earth. It is not a name for man, woman or child; for empire, city, mountain or morass; for bird, beast, fish, nor creeping thing; and nothing mortal or immortal could have thought of it, except the wise men of the East who were congregated at Corydon. It is composed of the following letters:—  
**I-n-d-i-a-n-a-p-o-l-i-s!**  
Pronounce it as you please, gentle readers—you can do it as you wish—there is no danger of violating any system or rule, either in accent, cadence, or emphasis—suit your own convenience, and be thankful you are enabled to do it, by this rare effect of the scholastic genius of the age.

Indiana Centinel, January 13, 1821, p. 3.





A Note Regarding Resources: Items are listed on this page that enhance work with the topic discussed. Some older items, especially, may include dated practices and ideas that are no longer generally accepted. Resources reflecting current practices are noted whenever possible.

# Selected Resources

## Bibliography

- Blackburn, Glen A., comp. *The John Tipton Papers, Vol. 1, 1809-1827*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1942.

Part of a three-volume set, which publishes, in chronological order, papers related to Tipton using primarily the Tipton Collection of the Indiana Division, Indiana State Library.

- Dunn, Jacob Piatt. *Greater Indianapolis: The History, the Industries, the Institutions, and the People of a City of Homes*. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1910.

Although many early histories of Indianapolis exist, Dunn's excellent use of citations makes this a valuable resource.

- Ewbank, Louis B., and Dorothy L. Riker, eds. *The Laws of Indiana Territory, 1809-1816*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1934.

A useful primary source.

- Hawkins, Hubert H., comp. *Indiana's Road to Statehood: A Documentary Record*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1969.

A convenient source for important federal and state documents issued during Indiana's statehood process.

- Kettleborough, Charles. *Constitution Making in Indiana, Vol. 1, 1780-1851*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, reprint 1971.

Part of a four-volume set, this book covers adoption and amendment of the 1816 and 1851 constitutions.

- Pence, George, and Nellie C. Armstrong. *Indiana Boundaries: Territory, State, and County*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1933, reprint 1967.

Invaluable in creating the many maps in this issue. It is considered the standard reference for legal boundaries of Indiana from territorial days to 1933.

## Other Selected Resources

- Baker, Ronald L. *From Needmore to Prosperity*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995.

Presents the folklore and history of the names of over 4,000 populated places in Indiana.

- Barnhart, John D., and Donald F. Carmony. *Indiana: From Frontier to Industrial Commonwealth*. 4 vols., New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1954; 2 vols. reprint, Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1979.

Excellent general resource on Indiana's history.

- Barnhart, John D., and Dorothy L. Riker. *Indiana to 1816: The Colonial Period*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau and Indiana Historical Society, 1971.

A standard resource.

- Bodenhamer, David J., and Robert G. Barrows, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Wonderful reference on Indianapolis history.

- Thornbrough, Gayle, ed. *The Diary of Calvin Fletcher, Vol. 1, 1817-1838*. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1972.

Fletcher, one of the founding fathers of Indianapolis, gives a detailed day-to-day account of life in the city with some of its earliest, and most prominent, citizens.

- Walsh, Justin E. *The Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly, 1816-1978*. Indianapo-

lis: The Select Committee on the Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly in cooperation with the Indiana Historical Bureau, 1987.

Gives a fascinating picture of Indiana's political history. There is also a two volume set of biographical sketches of legislators by the same publishers.

## Selected Student Resources

- Chapman, Gillian, and Pam Robson. *Maps & Mazes: A First Guide to Mapmaking*. Brookfield, CT: The Millbrook Press, 1993.

A visual introduction to the principles of maps and mazes, with activities.

- Ehlert, Willis J. *America's Heritage: Capitols of the United States*. Madison, WI: State House Publishing, 1993.

Brief state histories and architectural details of capitol buildings.

- Feinberg, Barbara Silberdick. *State Governments*. New York: Franklin Watts, 1993.

The duties and responsibilities of state officials are examined in this excellent work for student readers. Part of a series which includes *Local Governments* and *The National Government*.

- *Here Is Your Indiana Government: 1995-96 Edition*. Indianapolis: Indiana Chamber of Commerce, 1995.

State, local, county, township, and city governments are examined in this readable reference.

- Weiss, Harvey. *Maps: Getting From Here To There*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991.

Maps, directions, distances, symbols, longitudes, and latitudes are discussed.





## Indiana Historical Bureau

140 North Senate Avenue ■ Room 408 ■ Indianapolis, Indiana ■ 46204-2296 ■ 317-232-2535 ■ TDD 317-232-7763

Many times during their research, historians will find the same primary source in various forms. For example, at right is a reproduction of the handwritten June 7, 1820 report the commissioners gave to the General Assembly, in which they selected a site for the new capital. This report is located in the Indiana State Archives.

Article III, Section 9 of the 1816 Constitution states that "Each house shall keep a Journal of its proceedings, and publish them." As a result, another version of the commissioners' report, reproduced at far right, can be found in the Indiana House Journal, 1820-1821.

The Indiana State Library has a complete set of Indiana house and senate journals from 1816 to the present.

*The undersigned Commissioners in behalf of the State of Indiana duly appointed in the General Assembly of said State to select and locate a site for the permanent seat of its Government.*

*Report that in conformity to a proclamation of Jonathan Jennings, Governor of said State, he undersigned met at the House of Commons on the 7th day of July 1820 and after having taken the oaths and affirmations respectively required by law proceeded to the execution of the duties assigned them by an act of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana, a rescript entitled "an act appointing Commissioners to select & locate a site for the permanent seat of government of Indiana, approved January 11th 1820."*

*In discharging their duty to the State the undersigned have endeavored to connect with an eligible site the advantages of a navigable stream & fertility of soil, while they have not been unmindful of the geographical situation of the various portions of the State to its political center as it regards both the present & future population of the State as well as the present & future interests of its citizens. The undersigned Commissioners as aforesaid in pursuance of the act of the General Assembly have mentioned in an act of Congress entitled "an act to enable the people of the Indiana Territory to form a Constitution & State Government, & for the admission of such State into the Union upon an equal footing with the original States (for other purposes)" and also an act of Congress entitled "in respect to the location of certain Sections of land to be granted for the seat of government in the State of Indiana" proceeded to select & locate a site for the permanent seat of government in and behalf of said State two thousand five hundred & sixty acres of land equal to four entire sections being sections numbered one & twelve East & west fractional sections numbered two, east fractional section numbered eleven, and as much of the east part of west fractional section numbered three, to be set off by a north and south line, as will complete the quantity of two thousand five hundred & sixty acres of land as aforesaid, in township fifteen, of range*

of Representatives. 25

of said state, to select and locate a site for a permanent seat of government,

REPORT:

That, in conformity to a proclamation of JONATHAN JENNINGS, Governor of said state, the undersigned met at the house of William Conner, on the West fork of White river, and after having taken the oaths or affirmations respectively required by law, proceeded to the execution of the duties assigned them by an act of the General Assembly of the state of Indiana, entitled "an act to locate the permanent seat of government of Indiana," approved January 11th, 1820. In discharging their duty to the state, the undersigned have endeavored to connect with an eligible site the advantages of a navigable stream and fertility of soil, while they have not been unmindful of the geographical situation of the various portions of the state to its political centre, as it regards both the present and future interests of its citizens. The undersigned Commissioners, as aforesaid, in pursuance of the act of the General Assembly above mentioned, and of an act of Congress, entitled "an act to enable the people of the Indiana Territory to form a constitution and state government, and for the admission of such state into the Union upon an equal footing with the other states, and for other purposes," and also an act respecting the location of certain sections of land, to be granted for the seat of government in the state of Indiana, proceeded to select and locate, and have selected and located as a permanent site for the seat of government, for and on behalf of said state, two thousand five hundred and sixty acres of land, equal to four entire sections, being sections numbered one and twelve, east and west fractional sections numbered two, east fractional section numbered eleven, and as much of the east part of west fractional section numbered three, to be set off by a north and south line, as will complete the quantity of two thousand five hundred and sixty acres of land as aforesaid, in township fifteen, of range

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