



Indiana Pathways

The first American settlers in Indiana traveled through forests such as this and followed trails made by Indians. The Buffalo Trace, a trail stamped out by generations of buffalo migrating from the area that became Jeffersonville to the one that became Vincennes, might have looked similar to this wide trail in the fall.

2

American Expansion across the Appalachian Mountains

“Old America seems to be breaking up, and moving westward.”

— Morris Birkbeck, English immigrant, 1817

During the late eighteenth century, the population on the East Coast was growing. People were having large families, and more immigrant groups from England, Scotland, Ireland, and Germany were steadily arriving. The people needed more land, and they knew where to find it—the western frontier.

Even before the Americans defeated the British, they had been eyeing with longing the land west of the Appalachian Mountains. Beyond the mountains was a frontier with vast acres of land seemingly ripe for clearing and planting. For many young families who wanted their own farms, the West held out the promise of a better future.

In its Proclamation of 1763, the British government had insisted that the colonists stay east of the Appalachians. This restriction was one of the many grievances that sparked the Americans’ fight for independence. Motivated by victory over the British redcoats during the American Revolution and inspired by George Rogers Clark’s dazzling victory on the Wabash in 1779, the Americans were determined to cross the Appalachians and settle the land all the way to the Mississippi River.

After the Americans won the Revolutionary War the British could no longer hinder American expansion, but settling the West was still not going to be easy. Native Americans considered the land beyond the Appalachians theirs to hunt, fish, and farm. At first, some welcomed newcomers from the East, especially as traders. Enterprising men such as William Conner created homes and prospered among the Indian people. However, as more and more settlers arrived and began to build log cabins and clear woodland for farming, the Native Americans began to regard them as invaders.

Indian resentment toward American settlement led many tribes to turn to the British, who controlled Canada, for help in repelling the invaders. To the natives who joined the British, the ensuing War of 1812 offered the possibility that British and Indians fighting together could stop the Americans’ westward expansion. Indian war parties took up weapons. Armed with British hatchets and rifles, they were a major obstacle to western settlement.

In September 1812 Indian warriors attacked the settlement of Pigeon Roost in present-day Scott



Violence on the Frontier

Peace was not easy for officials of the Indiana Territory to enforce. Violence often broke out between Native Americans and settlers. Each group was responsible for brutality during this period. In these two drawings artist William Vawter depicts atrocities committed by both sides. Although Native American leaders surrendered numerous perpetrators from their tribes to American authorities, American murderers often escaped punishment due to community support for their actions.



County, Indiana, killing twenty-four men, women, and children. Settlers fled to a nearby fort or crossed the Ohio River to escape the violence. Realizing the British were furnishing the Indians with arms and ammunition, many believed, as a woman in Vincennes wrote on October 10, 1811, that the Indians were “deceitful in the extreme.” The Pigeon Roost massacre and the end of the War of 1812 marked the end of serious Indian violence in Indiana, but it did not end violence against Indians.

Nearly twelve years later in spring 1824, five white men attacked and brutally murdered nine Indian men, women, and children who had set up camp near Fall Creek in Madison County. Despite one of the English-speaking Indian woman’s calls for mercy in the name of Jesus, the white men responded by shooting her in the back and clubbing her head.

At this time it seemed unlikely to many that white men would ever be arrested and convicted for killing Indians. Native Americans were largely considered savages, undeserving of American justice. Nevertheless, the accused were brought to trial in a log cabin in Pendleton. Four men were convicted of murder and sentenced to death. Three of these men were hanged

on the banks of Fall Creek in front of a large crowd that included some of the murdered Indians’ relatives. Nearing the last minute, Indiana Governor James B. Ray rode in and pardoned eighteen-year-old John Bridge Jr. because of his youth, even though he had plunged a butcher knife into one of the Indians.

This trial in the fledgling state of Indiana marked the first legal execution of whites for murdering Indians in America. Three judges were involved. Two were locals, elected by their neighbors: attorney Samuel Holliday and a local blacksmith, Adam Winchell, who made the iron shackles for the prisoners. The presiding judge, William Wick, who had been elected by the Indiana state legislature, made a passionate statement as he passed sentence:

By what authority do we hauntingly boast of our being white? What principle of philosophy or of religion establishes the doctrine that a white skin is preferable

in nature or in the sight of God to a red or black one? Who has ordained that men of the white skin shall be at liberty to shoot and hunt down men of the red, or exercise rule and dominion over those of the black?

During much of this period, a government policy of acculturation was in place, which sought to “civilize” the Indians by teaching them to live and farm like white families. Little Turtle and other chiefs asked President Thomas Jefferson for plows, hoes, and livestock to be sent to the Miami and Potawatomi. Jefferson did so in order to encourage American farming methods and to encourage the Indians to abandon their hunter-warrior way of life. This was not only a strategy used by the federal and territorial governments. Some religious missionaries also promoted American-style agriculture, the removal of liquor, and Christianity. For example, Quaker missionary Philip Dennis set up a model farm on the Wabash River where he showed Indian men how to use a plow

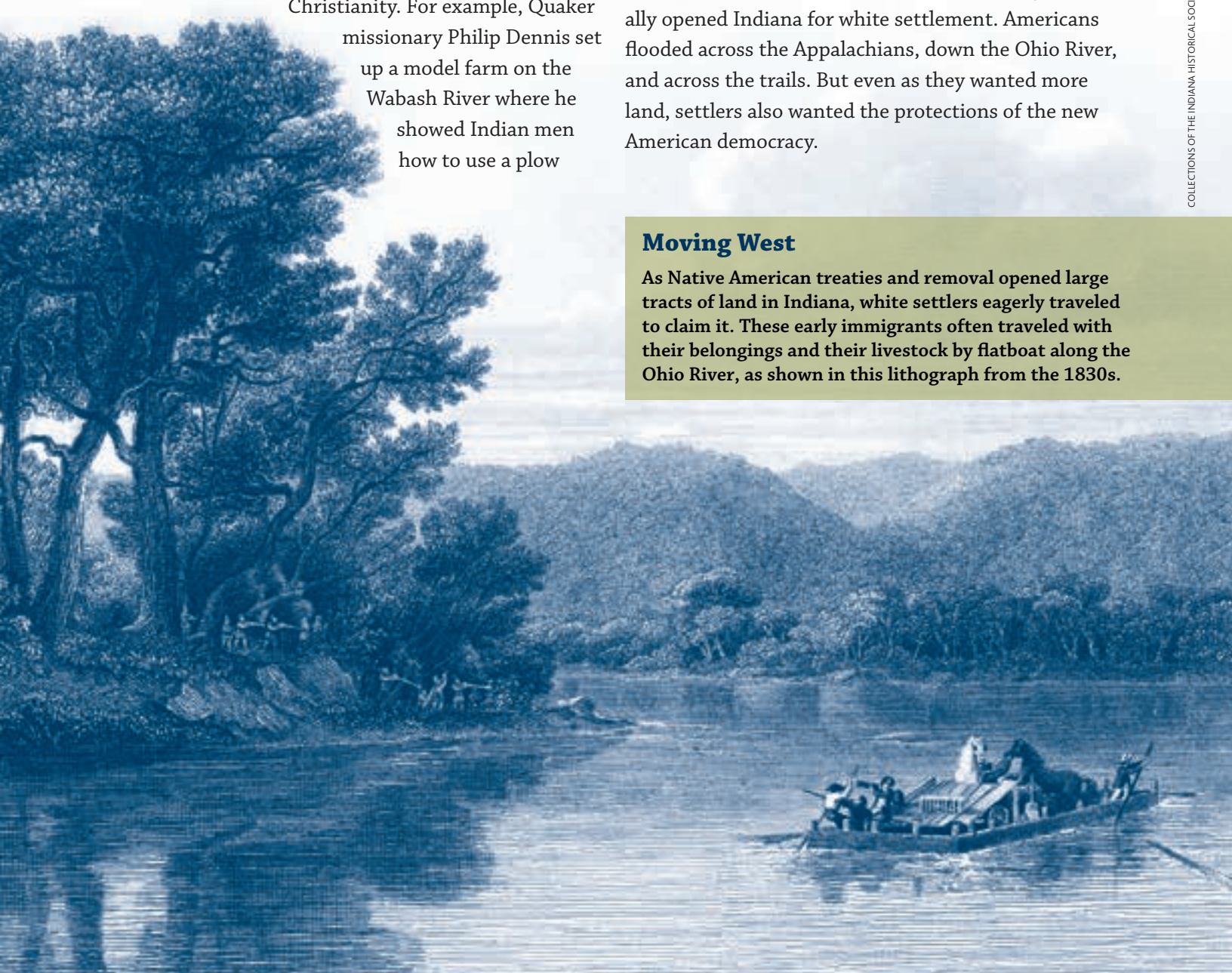
and horse. At the same time he urged women to work inside the home. However, Indian men refused to farm because they considered it women’s work; and Indian women refused to give up farming. Few accepted a Christian God. Thus, attempts at assimilation mostly failed.

Because many Indians refused to adapt to the American way of life, many government officials and Americans concluded that they needed to be removed west of the Mississippi River. By the late 1820s removal became the favored Indian policy, even before President Andrew Jackson officially proclaimed it in 1830. Prior to 1816 Indiana’s Territorial governor, William Henry Harrison was following this policy as he negotiated treaty after treaty with Native American tribes in order to purchase their lands for the United States.

Indian land cession treaties and removal gradually opened Indiana for white settlement. Americans flooded across the Appalachians, down the Ohio River, and across the trails. But even as they wanted more land, settlers also wanted the protections of the new American democracy.

Moving West

As Native American treaties and removal opened large tracts of land in Indiana, white settlers eagerly traveled to claim it. These early immigrants often traveled with their belongings and their livestock by flatboat along the Ohio River, as shown in this lithograph from the 1830s.



Early Americans Move West



Early settlers to North America's western lands were forced to overcome many natural obstructions, including the Appalachian Mountains, marked in blue on this map. Many traveled west along the Wilderness Road that went through the Cumberland Gap in the mountains. By the 1770s much of North America was claimed by Britain, Spain, and the newly created United States. Yearning for more land, Americans encroached upon the British-claimed territory, both with military skirmishes and with settlers who claimed land by squatting on it. George Rogers Clark was instrumental in attaining American territory north of the Ohio River, due to his taking of Fort Sackville (present-day Vincennes, Indiana) in February 1779. This map appeared in *The Indiana Historian* in December 1997.

The American Constitution and Bill of Rights contained the promise of good government for the states. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 and the creation of the Indiana Territorial government in 1800 expanded that promise to the western frontier. Indiana's Constitution of 1816 declared that "all power is inherent in the people." These gradual steps toward stable government, democracy, and rights were essential for settlers in the West to create America's nineteenth state—Indiana.

The democracy was far from perfect. Women and African Americans were denied full rights of citizenship, including the right to vote. Some settlers in the Indiana Territory even wanted to bring their slaves with them—a controversial subject long before the Civil War (1861–65). It would be a long time before

there was a semblance of justice and equality for all.

The men featured in this chapter are celebrated as heroes. George Rogers Clark, Anthony Wayne, William Henry Harrison, and William Conner achieved greatness militarily, politically, and financially. However, remember that it took many ordinary men and women to shape Indiana's history; it could not have been done by a handful of heroes. Some people fought the British during the Revolution or in the War of 1812, while others fought the Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers and at Tippecanoe. Most were farmers who purchased land the federal government sold them cheaply. On sections of 80 or 160 acres they farmed to provide for their large families. Hopeful for a better future, Hoosier pioneers created Indiana together, alongside the heroes of their days.

2.1

George Rogers Clark and the Fall of Vincennes

*[I] Whispered to those near me to [do] as I did—
mediately took some water in my hand [,] poured on
Powder [,] Blacked my face [,] gave the war hoop [,] and
marched into the water without saying a word.*

— George Rogers Clark, from his memoir

Making of a Hero

George Rogers Clark was only twenty-seven years old at the time of his victory at Fort Sackville in present-day Vincennes, Indiana, but he was well on his way to becoming an American hero. The tall, rugged Virginian had already proven himself to be an aggressive warrior. In the year leading up to his triumph at Vincennes, he had captured the British posts of Cahokia and Kaskaskia in the Illinois country along the Mississippi and the Vincennes post near the Ohio on the Wabash. He also had ambitions to take Fort Detroit, Britain's main fort in the West.

The British had essentially ignored Fort Sackville at Vincennes, which they had won from the French in 1763, because they were preoccupied with the rebellious colonies on the East Coast during the American Revolution. Clark's men claimed the fort in August 1778 after a Catholic priest from Kaskaskia persuaded Vincennes' residents, many of whom were French or French-Indian, to sign an oath of allegiance to the Americans. Rumors that France was planning to aid the fledgling American government in its war against Great Britain helped to convince residents in the British-held posts that it was wise to side with the Americans; and the many French and French-Indian residents of the back country were also keen to defeat the British. When news of Fort Sackville reached Lieutenant Governor Henry Hamilton, the top British officer at Fort Detroit, he resolved to take back Vincennes for the British Crown.

Hamilton and the Indians

Hamilton forged powerful alliances with the Indians in the region. In return for supplies and arms, Indians raided white settlements to discourage American expansion—a goal the Indians and the British shared. An Irishman by birth, Hamilton had become skilled at negotiating with the Indians by operating on terms familiar to them. Americans called him the “hair-buyer general,” accusing him of accepting white scalps in trade with the Indians. In his defense, Hamilton claimed that he told the Indians not to harm women and children. But warfare in the western wilderness lacked enforceable rules—the concept “crimes against humanity” had not yet been invented.

Battle of Fort Sackville

Hamilton set off for the Maumee–Wabash route from Detroit with approximately 30 British soldiers,

Crossing the Wabash

The march from Kaskaskia to Fort Sackville in February 1779 was miserable for George Rogers Clark and his men, complete with freezing rain and mud. This portion of Ezra Winter's mural immortalizing the trek idealizes Clark as a hero. The mural hangs in the rotunda of the George Rogers Clark Memorial in Vincennes, Indiana.



Hamilton Surrenders

Frederick C. Yohn's *The Fall of Fort Sackville* depicts the surrender of British-held Fort Sackville by Henry Hamilton to George Rogers Clark just outside the fort's walls. Indiana's schools celebrate George Rogers Clark Day on February 25 to commemorate his victory in 1779.



COURTESY OF THE INDIANA HISTORICAL BUREAU

60 Indian warriors, and 145 mostly French-Canadian militia. The crossing at the portage was difficult, but as the force's forty boats sped down the Wabash River they attracted additional support from Indian tribes in the area. By mid-December, Hamilton's troops had reached Fort Sackville and retaken Vincennes.

When Clark discovered that Hamilton was at Vincennes, he was seriously concerned. His force numbered only 170 men, and he knew that if he waited until spring to attack Fort Sackville, Hamilton's forces would greatly outnumber his own. He decided that his

only hope of victory was a midwinter surprise attack.

As Clark's men drew close to Vincennes in February 1779, they were running out of steam. They had traveled 180 miles, mostly on foot, and their supplies were almost gone. Clark's strategy was to lead by example, and it worked. When his tired and frozen militia balked at plunging into the freezing water of a flooded plain to reach Fort Sackville, Clark was the first man in. To fire up his troops even more, Clark blackened his face with gun powder and let out an ear-splitting war cry.

Hamilton was indeed surprised. Not expecting to fight until spring, he had allowed a large number of his troops to go home for the winter, as was convention in eighteenth-century warfare. When the Americans began to fire on Fort Sackville, Hamilton discovered that the bulk of his Canadian troops as well as the townspeople had deserted him. He was surrounded, outnumbered, and had no choice but to surrender.

Clark showed Hamilton and his followers a gruesome example of what happened to those who crossed him. His men dragged four pro-British Indians to the fort gate where they tomahawked and scalped them and threw their bloody corpses into the Wabash. The

Americans hoisted their flag over the fort and renamed it Fort Patrick Henry after the governor of Virginia who had approved Clark's western expedition against the British and their Indian allies. Clark took Hamilton prisoner and sent him under armed guard to Virginia where he remained in prison for a number of years enduring harsh conditions. Although Clark's plans to capture Fort Detroit failed, his stunning victory at Vincennes, on February 24, 1779, helped secure the Northwest Territory for the United States. It also sent a clear message: The Americans intended to step up their game until all of the land was theirs.

The "Hair-Buyer General"



Henry Hamilton was often called the "Hair-Buyer General" due to rumors that he paid for white scalps from Indians. This 1812 cartoon, created by William Charles, lambasts the practice of British officers paying bounties for American scalps during the War of 1812. On the left an Indian gives a British officer a bloody scalp while holding a rifle with a sign reading "Reward for Sixteen Scalps." On the right, another Indian is in the process of scalping an American soldier. In the background two Native Americans and two British soldiers dance gleefully around a campfire. In reality, scalping was practiced by both sides, but rarely. Americans often used the topic as a form of propaganda to exaggerate the atrocities of their enemies.

Clark's Legacy

Clark looms large in Indiana history. In the early twentieth century, Hoosiers spared no expense honoring his achievements. On Monument Circle in Indianapolis, Clark's statue stands heroically as the "Conqueror of the Country Northwest of the Ohio River from the British." In 1936 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt dedicated the grandest Clark monument of all, a massive Roman-style temple in Vincennes that cost \$2,500,000. There, a twelve-ton, seven-and-a-half-foot bronze statue of the young Clark towers over visitors, a representation of his larger-than-life presence. On the monument's walls there are seven oil murals that depict the story of Clark's expedition. Artist Ezra Winter and six assistants labored on the murals for two and a half years. In 1966 the George Rogers Clark Memorial became part of the National Park Service. Clark's heroic status continued into the late twenti-

eth century. In 1975 the Indiana General Assembly proclaimed February 25 as George Rogers Clark Day to be celebrated each year in schools across the state. In 1979 millions of Hoosiers displayed state license plates on their cars commemorating Clark.

The George Rogers Clark Memorial website includes the statement, "The truly great heroes of history age well and provide guidance for the future." For today's historians, this means considering Clark's achievement in a broader context than people did in the past. It is undeniable that Clark was brave, and to those whose cause he served, heroic. However, he also believed that the only way to fight Indians was "to excel them in barbarity." In today's more balanced consideration of Clark, he becomes more human and less a bronze statue of an eighteenth-century super hero.

2.2

Indiana from the Northwest Ordinance through Statehood

“There shall be neither Slavery nor involuntary Servitude in the said territory.”

— Northwest Ordinance of 1787, Article VI

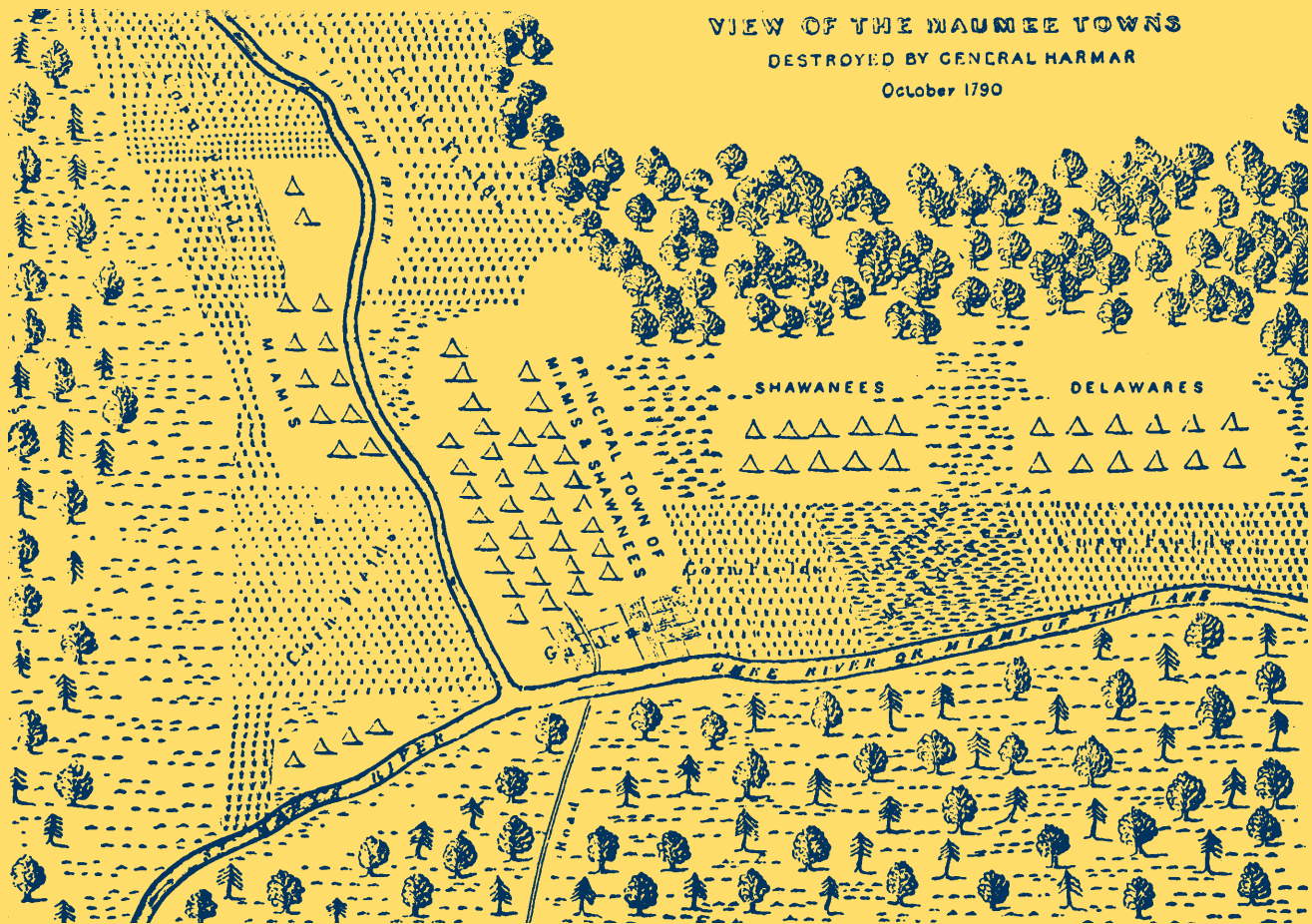
After the Americans freed themselves from British rule with the Treaty of Paris in 1783, they were eager to expand their new nation. However, they confronted

a huge obstacle: the Indians stood firm on the land the Americans wanted. The new federal government was confident that it could solve the Indian problem, so it began to create policies that would make the western land, once settled, part of the new nation. Conquering and opening the West meant access to boundless new resources the young nation needed. Americans felt that the sooner this could happen, the better.

The Battle of Fallen Timbers

By the mid-1780s settlers were slowly but steadily moving north of the Ohio River. The Indians reacted by conducting raids against white settlements in

Kekionga, 1790



Near the end of the eighteenth century the Miami village of Kekionga, near the Maumee–Wabash Portage, was a center of trade and the home for many tribes, including Shawnee and Delaware. This map, drawn by American officer Lieutenant Ebenezer Denny in 1790 after General Josiah Harmar’s forces failed to capture Kekionga, shows how the tribes lived alongside each other and where their corn was planted. After his victory against Kekionga’s warriors at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, General Anthony Wayne established a fort at Kekionga and the area was known thereafter as Fort Wayne. (Bert Joseph Griswold and Mrs. Samuel R. Taylor, *Pictorial History of Fort Wayne* [Chicago: Robert O. Law, 1917])

January 14th 1809

This day John Smith and a Negro man named Jacob Ferrel, aged about Thirty four years, and lately held by said John Smith in the state of ~~Virginia~~ North Carolina as a Slave came before me Clement Nancee Clerk pro Tem. of the Court of Common pleas of the County of Harrison, and it is agreed by and between the said John Smith and the said ^{negro} Jacob Ferrel that he the said Jacob Ferrel is to serve the said John Smith his Heirs &c from the date hereof until the 14th day of January One thousand Eight hundred and Twenty two and as a compensation for such services the said John Smith engages to give unto the said Jacob Ferrel on demand one grey mare four years old named Tib, and a red cow with a white face, as prescribed by a law of this Territory intituled "An act concerning the introduction of Negroes and Mulattoes into this Territory"

Test Clement Nancee

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Indentured Servitude

Although slavery was outlawed in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, Indiana passed an indentured servitude law in 1805, which circumvented rules against slavery by allowing slaves to be brought into Indiana for long periods of time as "indentured servants." Transcribed here is an 1809 document that traded thirteen years of Jacob Ferrel's working life for a horse and a cow. According to the indenture, Ferrel was to gain his freedom in 1822.

January 14th 1809

This day John Smith and a Negro man named Jacob Ferrel, aged about Thirty four years, and lately held by said John Smith in the state of Virginia North Carolina as a Slave came before me Clement [Nanee/Nance], Clerk pro Tem. of the Court of Common pleas of the County of Harrison, and it is agreed by and between the said John Smith and the said negro Jacob Ferrel that he the said Jacob Ferrel is to serve the said John Smith his Heirs &c from the date hereof until the 14th day of January 1822 and as a compensation for such serving the said John Smith engages to give unto the said Jacob Ferrel on demand one grey mare four years old named [Tib], and a red cow with a white face, as prescribed by a law of this territory entitled "An act concerning the introduction of Negroes and Mulattoes into this Territory."

Clement [Nanee/Nance]

present-day Kentucky and on the north side of the Ohio River. Settlers protected themselves the best they could, but they also begged the American government for help.

To solve the Indian problem in Indiana Territory and open it to American settlement, the government realized that it was essential to gain control of the portage between the Wabash and Maumee Rivers. This land break between the two rivers was the location of Kekionga, a meeting ground of the Miami, known

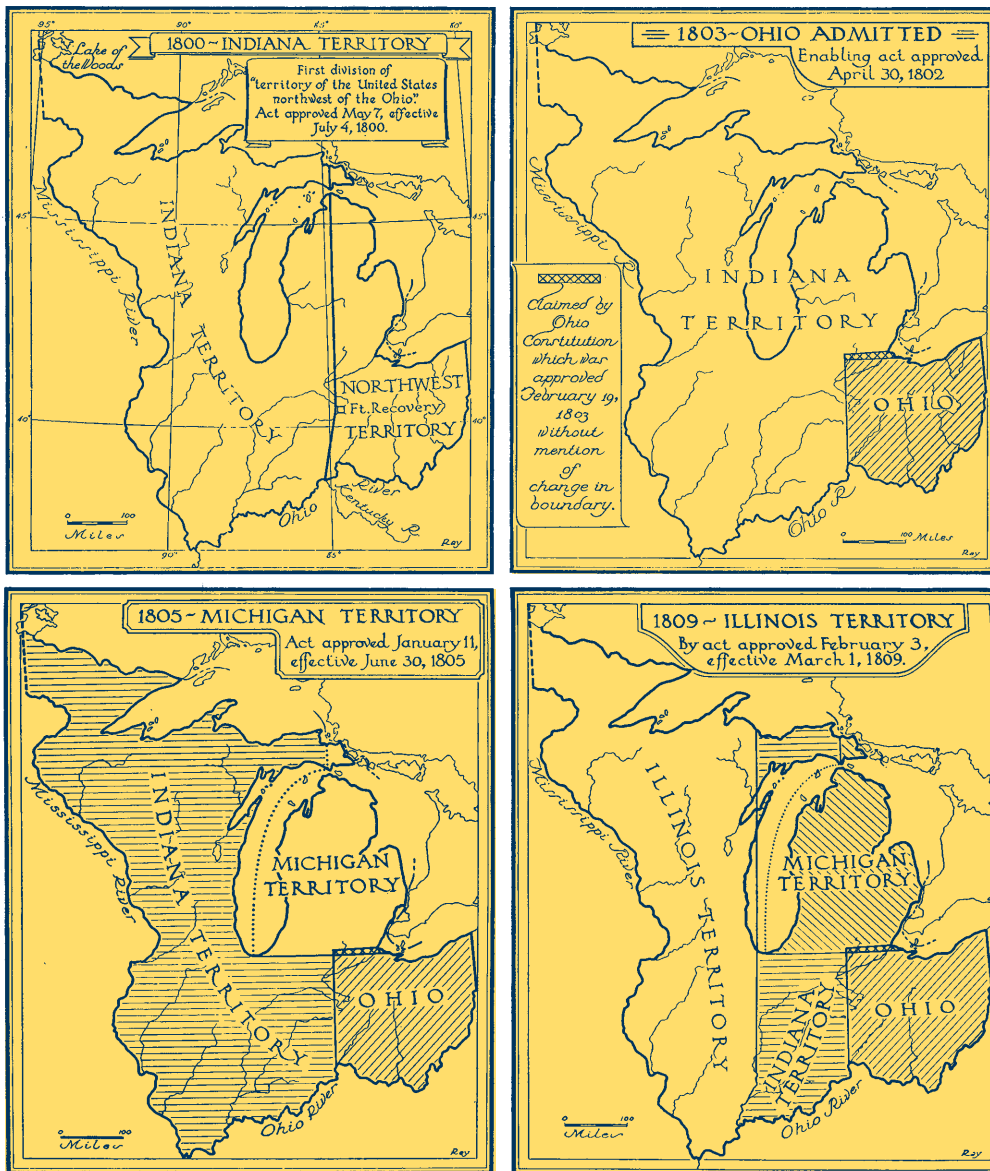
to the Americans as Miamitown. Kekionga served as the base of an Indian confederation, consisting of the Miami and other tribes. The Americans had conducted two major military expeditions against Kekionga, but both had failed. A confederacy of tribes, led by Miami Chief Little Turtle, defeated the Americans in bloody battles near that site in 1790 and 1791.

The tide turned in favor of the Americans in 1794 at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. In a grove of trees felled by a storm near the Maumee River, U.S. General

Anthony Wayne led the third and largest expedition against Kekionga's forces and won a decisive victory. Wayne, whom Little Turtle referred to as "the chief who never sleeps," won the battle in about an hour with fewer than one hundred total fatalities—twenty-six Americans, and about twice that many Indians.

After The Battle of Fallen Timbers, Wayne built a fort on the site of Kekionga and named it after himself. Fort Wayne was evidence of Americans gaining control over the critical Maumee–Wabash Portage. Little Turtle and many other chiefs saw the handwriting on the wall and decided it was in their best interests to accommodate the Americans and maintain peace. Many of them donned white man's clothing, acquired land, and practiced white

Development of the Indiana Territory



This map shows the evolution of the Indiana Territory from 1800 to 1809. (R. Carlyle Buley, *The Old Northwest Pioneer Period, 1815–1840* [Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1950], 62–64)

man's customs; some accepted annuities, or payments, from the U.S. government. Little Turtle even accepted an African American slave as payment for helping negotiate a treaty with Native Americans. Stalwart resisters, such as Tecumseh, however, remained steadfast and fought the American invaders.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787— a Roadmap to Statehood

In order for the American federal government to guarantee that the western lands were settled in an orderly fashion, it needed to devise a workable plan. There were many options, and there was plenty of debate over what that plan would be. In 1787 the American government came up with a policy that would be a win-win for the westerners and the country as a whole.

The Northwest Ordinance, which laid the foundation for government in the West, is considered by today's historians an example of federalism at its most pragmatic and intelligent. The ordinance allowed for the gradual transfer of power from the federal government to a group of western territories until a democratic balance was struck.

At first the ordinance established a single government for the Northwest Territory, which included all land northwest of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi River, but it also provided for eventual division of the territory into three to five smaller territories. There were three stages of government for each territory. In the first the federal government appointed a governor, a secretary, and three judges for the territory. Residents of the territory enjoyed the same rights and privileges as the thirteen original states, including freedom of religion, trial by jury, and other rights of free Americans. In the second stage, the territory was allowed to elect the lower house of the territorial legislature. This stage was reached when five thousand free adult males in the territory owned at least fifty acres of land each. Though the territorial legislature could choose a delegate to Congress to speak on the territory's behalf, the delegate was not allowed to vote. When a territory had sixty thousand inhabitants, it had reached the third stage and could petition for

statehood. In a controversial provision, the ordinance prohibited slavery in the emerging territories.

The Indiana Territory

The Indiana Territory was created in 1800 and lasted sixteen years. Originally, it extended from the Ohio River to the southern border of Canada, west to the Mississippi River and east to the boundary with what would become Ohio. When it was founded, the territory had a total white population of 5,641 which was concentrated around Clark's Grant (eventually Clarksville) on the Ohio River and in Vincennes, the territorial capital. During the thirteen years between legislating for the Northwest Territory and the creation of the Indiana Territory, settlers had often voiced their disgruntlement at being governed by a leader who had been given near total control; they demanded more democratic government at the territorial stage. Thus, when the Indiana Territory was partitioned off the Northwest Territory, the law was changed to allow the second stage of government to occur when the majority of freeholders wanted it—not when five thousand free adult males in the territory owned at least fifty acres of land each.

By 1810 the population of the Indiana Territory had grown to 24,520 residents. However, the territory was smaller in geographical size, due to the splitting off and creation of the Michigan Territory in 1805 and the Illinois Territory in 1809. Because newcomers settled in southeastern Indiana as well as along the Wabash River in southwestern Indiana, Hoosiers moved their capital from Vincennes to the more central location of Corydon in 1813.

The Move to Statehood

From the beginning there was disagreement in the Indiana Territory about the mode of government and it only got worse. Residents were unhappy with the concentration of power that rested with the territorial governor, William Henry Harrison. After some pressure, Harrison agreed to allow a vote for moving to the second, or representative, stage of territorial government in 1804.

In addition to the desire to be more self-governing, many people in the Indiana territory did not want slavery. However, the French settlers at Vincennes had owned slaves as early as the mid-eighteenth century, and despite the prohibition of slavery in the Northwest Ordinance, the institution continued.

Harrison and some wealthy landowners who were pro-slavery passed an indentured servant law in 1805. This law enabled those with slaves to bring them into the Indiana Territory and hold them as “indentured servants” for long periods of time. John Badollet, one of the territory’s most fervent antislavery spokesmen, angered Harrison when he drafted and circulated a petition to the U.S. Congress in 1809 describing slavery as: “A system outraging at once the laws of natural justice, the principles of our institutions, the maxims of sound policy, and the holy religion we profess.”

In 1810 the antislavery forces repealed the 1805 indenture law in the territorial general assembly. At this time, people in the Indiana Territory felt it was time to move toward statehood. The Indiana House first petitioned Congress for statehood in 1811, but the War of 1812 stalled the movement. The push for statehood was revived in 1815, when the Indiana Territory had a population of 63,897, more than the Northwest Ordinance required for statehood.

Statehood!

Jonathan Jennings led the pro-statehood group. He was a critic of Harrison and had been outspoken against slavery. Congress responded positively to the statehood cause. On April 19, 1816, it passed an En-

abling Act that provided for an election of delegates to a convention that could form a state constitution.

The Indiana Constitutional Convention was held in Corydon in June 1816. In summer heat and humidity, the forty-three delegates sometimes met in the shade of a large elm tree. They studied the state constitutions of neighboring Ohio and Kentucky, and they also grappled with issues unique to Indiana. The convention had a share of delegates that were pro-slavery, but a majority of the delegates were anti-slavery and their ideas prevailed.

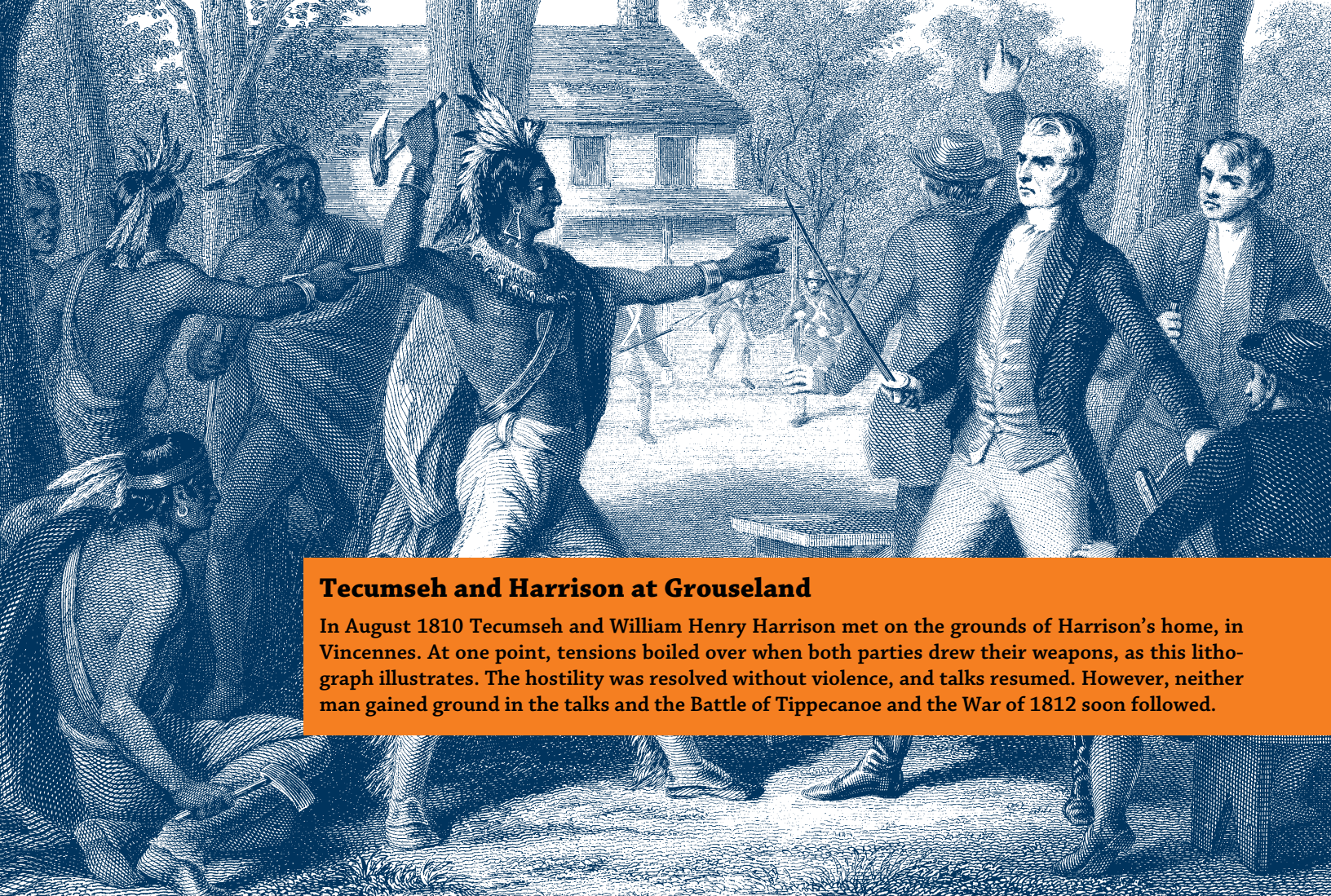
The Constitution of 1816 represents the clearest statement of values and beliefs of early pioneer Indiana. It opened with a bill of rights guaranteeing Hoosiers freedom of worship, press, and speech, and the right to bear arms and to assemble peaceably. Voting was restricted to white male citizens over the age of twenty-one who had lived in the state for at least one year; women and African Americans were not allowed to vote. The constitution also contained the promise of a free education for all citizens—a very progressive inclusion for the era. Mindful of the conflict over slavery, the delegates at Corydon made it a point to declare in the constitution, “There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in this state.”

The new constitution was signed on June 29, 1816, and took effect immediately. In November 1816 Jennings was elected the first governor of the state of Indiana. On December 11, 1816, President James Madison signed the congressional resolution admitting Indiana to the Union as its nineteenth state. It was now up to Hoosiers to define their place in the American nation.

The Constitution Elm

Delegates met in the summer of 1816 in Corydon to write Indiana’s first constitution. Occasionally they moved outside to the shade of this tree, known as the “Constitution Elm.” The tree’s branches were trimmed in 1925 due to disease. The wood and shavings were preserved and made into souvenirs; in 2000, remnants were used in a display case for both of Indiana’s constitutions at the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis. The remaining portion of the trunk is on display in a sandstone monument in Corydon.





Tecumseh and Harrison at Grouseland

In August 1810 Tecumseh and William Henry Harrison met on the grounds of Harrison's home, in Vincennes. At one point, tensions boiled over when both parties drew their weapons, as this lithograph illustrates. The hostility was resolved without violence, and talks resumed. However, neither man gained ground in the talks and the Battle of Tippecanoe and the War of 1812 soon followed.

COLLECTIONS OF THE INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2.3

William Henry Harrison (1773–1841)

“The introduction of Slavery into this territory continues to be the Hobby horse of the influential men here.”

— John Badollet, *Register of the Land Office of Vincennes*, to Albert Gallatin, *Secretary of the U.S. Treasury*, August 31, 1805

Few men had as large an impact on Indiana during the pioneer era as William Henry Harrison. He was a complex individual who possessed many admirable qualities and accomplished a great deal in his adopted state, but he also had a knack for irritating modest, practical Hoosiers. One thing is certain—Harrison's actions in Indiana distinguished him on the national stage when he was a young man. He subsequently built on the accomplishments of his Indiana years to attain the highest office in the land, President of the United States.

Early Life

Harrison was born to a prominent Virginia family on February 9, 1773. One of his paternal ancestors was elected to the governing council in Jamestown in the 1630s. His father Benjamin, who owned a vast plantation, signed the Declaration of Independence. Harrison attended Hampden–Sydney College for three years where he received a classical education, focusing on Greek, Latin, logic, and debate. His parents then sent him to study medicine in Richmond and later in Philadelphia. In spring 1791 Harrison's father died and he discovered that his family was having financial difficulty and could not continue to pay for his education.

Harrison joined the army at the age of eighteen and became knowledgeable about Indians and the state of affairs on the western frontier. In 1794 he served bravely at the Battle of Fallen Timbers as General Anthony Wayne's aide-de-camp. From that point forth, Harrison was on the fast track to success.

In 1795 Harrison met Anna Symmes, the beautiful, twenty-year-old daughter of Colonel John Symmes, a distinguished Revolutionary War colonel. It was love at first sight. Anna and Harrison married soon after, despite Colonel Symmes's disapproval; he did not want his favorite daughter to marry a soldier. Nevertheless, it was a happy marriage and the couple had ten children.

Governor of the Indiana Territory

In 1800 President John Adams appointed twenty-seven-year-old Harrison to be the first governor of the new Indiana Territory. Harrison and his family, which by that point included three young children, moved to Vincennes, a settlement with around one thousand residents, many of whom were of French and/or

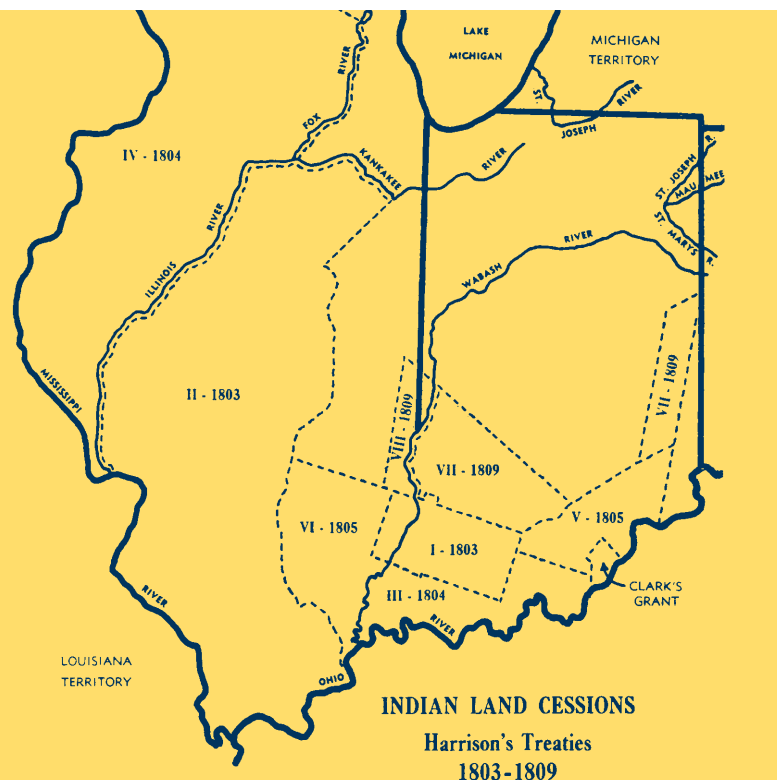
Indian descent. By 1805 they had built an opulent thirteen-room brick mansion, with hand-carved woodwork and a grand staircase. Harrison named his home Grouseland and staffed it with former slaves with whom he had signed indentured servitude contracts. This conspicuous show of wealth would come to haunt Harrison. To the local population it marked him as an elitist and an outsider.

Harrison's pro-slavery stance also made him unpopular with the majority of the population in the Indiana Territory. In 1802 he used his clout to call a territorial convention to consider repealing Article VI of the Northwest Ordinance, which prohibited slavery. Although this attempt failed, in 1805 Harrison and the territorial judges passed a law that allowed slaves to be brought into the Indiana Territory as indentured

servants. In time, however, the anti-slavery movement in Indiana proved to be stronger than Harrison and the pro-slavery forces. In 1810 the general assembly repealed the indentured servitude law; and when the territory gained statehood five years later, slavery and involuntary servitude were banned.

Harrison and the Indians

Even though his East Coast ways and pro-slavery stance alienated many people in the Indiana Territory, Harrison continued to please his superiors in Washington, DC, especially in the area of Indian relations. Between 1803 and 1809 Harrison served President Thomas Jefferson by shrewdly negotiating



- I. June 7, 1803, at Fort Wayne, with the Delawares, Shawnee, Potawatomi, Miami, Eel Rivers, Wea, Kickapoo, Piankashaw, and Kaskaskia.
- II. August 13, 1803, at Vincennes, with the Kaskaskia.
- III. August 18 and 27, 1804, at Vincennes, with the Delawares and Piankashaw.
- IV. November 3, 1804, at St. Louis, with the Sauk and Foxes.
- V. August 21, 1805, at Grouseland, with the Delawares, Potawatomi, Miami, Eel Rivers, and Wea.
- VI. December 30, 1805, at Vincennes, with the Piankashaw.
- VII. September 30, 1809, at Fort Wayne, with the Delawares, Potawatomi, Miami, Eel Rivers, and Wea.
- VIII. December 9, 1809, at Vincennes, with the Kickapoo.

In 1803 U.S. President Thomas Jefferson tasked William Henry Harrison with quickly obtaining land east of the Mississippi River. Harrison proved capable; within six years he had secured most of modern-day Illinois and southern Indiana through treaties with the Native Americans. This map shows the areas obtained through the treaties, the locations where the treaties were negotiated, the dates they were signed, and the tribes who signed them. (John D. Barnhart and Dorothy L. Riker, *Indiana to 1816: The Colonial Period, The History of Indiana 1* [Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society and Indiana Historical Bureau, 1971], 377)

many treaties with Miami, Potawatomi, Delaware, Shawnee, and other tribes, opening millions of acres of land to white settlement in Indiana and Illinois. Harrison was skillful at identifying the most persuadable chiefs and using them to divide and conquer more resistant ones. When necessary, he rewarded chiefs who agreed to cede land on his terms with gifts and bribes. He also reminded them of the invincibility of the Americans.

Harrison's negotiating tactics worked with many Indian chiefs, but not Tecumseh, the powerful Shawnee chief, who defiantly refused any terms Harrison offered. These two men—arguably the most powerful in the West—met several times, including at Harrison's home Grouseland in August 1810. Tensions always ran high at their meetings; at one Tecumseh called Harrison a liar, and Harrison responded by drawing his sword. No blood was shed during that incident, but it soon would be.

In fall 1811 Harrison felt it was urgent to squelch the Indian rebellion fueled by Tecumseh and his brother Tenskwatawa, known as the Prophet. When he knew that Tecumseh was away from Prophetstown recruiting Indians to join his growing anti-American confederation, Harrison decided to make his move. On November 6 Harrison's militia of about a thousand men camped along the Wabash River, planning to strike Prophetstown at daybreak. Instead, the Indians attacked before dawn, ineptly led by the Prophet. Two hours of fierce fighting concluded with an Indian retreat. Although Harrison proclaimed the Battle of Tippecanoe a total victory, it was far from it. Almost one-fifth of his men were dead or wounded. Harrison was unscathed in the battle, except for a bullet hole in his hat.

War of 1812

When the War of 1812 broke out, Harrison resigned his post as Governor of the Indiana Territory and rejoined the army. After a series of swift promotions, he attained the position of brigadier general. In fall 1813 Harrison successfully retook the fort at Detroit, which had been surrendered to the British the previous year. Then he and his army pursued British

troops working in collaboration with Tecumseh in Ontario, Canada. There, at the Battle of the Thames, Tecumseh died, and Harrison emerged a hero. In May 1814 Harrison resigned from the army and left for Ohio, where his family had been living in his absence, but returned to the army to negotiate post-war treaties with the Indians at the request of President James Madison.

Political Career Continues

From his farm and large home on the Ohio River, named North Bend, Harrison earned a reputation as an advocate for veterans, a generous host, and a civic leader. In 1816 he filled the seat of an Indiana congressman who had resigned, marking the launch of a new political career. During his time in Congress, he continued to champion the cause of wounded veterans and widows of men who died in combat. He did not seek reelection in 1819, but that same year he agreed to run for the Ohio State Senate and won. After his stint in the state legislature, he returned to Washington in 1825 as one of Ohio's two U.S. senators.

In 1829 Harrison returned to Ohio after serving as an ambassador to Colombia for a brief time. He threw himself into various business ventures, many of which failed. He constantly felt the financial strain of trying to support a large family and applied for positions that would bring in extra income. In 1831 he ran for the United States Senate and lost, and for a time it looked as if his political career was over. Five years later, though, Harrison was in the thick of national politics.

Presidential Campaign

Harrison's presidential campaign of 1840 was a brilliant public relations model that is still emulated by politicians today. His famous slogan, "Tippecanoe and Tyler, too," was a catchy phrase with very little substance, yet it is still remembered today. Tippecanoe, of course, referred to Harrison's victory in battle against the Indians. The Whig Party, on which ticket Harrison was running, chose John Tyler of Virginia to be Harrison's vice presidential running mate.

The Whigs promoted Harrison's "pioneer virtues" in lavish parades with symbols such as log cabins and

hard cider, knowing that they would appeal to the American populace, which was primarily rural and hard-working. In contrast, his opponent Martin Van Buren was portrayed as a wine-drinking rich man and a Washington insider. A quick glance at today's presidential campaigns shows how enduring this marketing ploy turned out to be. A contemporary biographer of Harrison wrote, "The log cabin image grew to be so popular that it became almost imperative for every Whig politician to find a log cabin in his history."

A Short-Lived Presidency

Finding out who won the 1840 presidential election took several weeks in the era before electronic voting machines. Voting began on October 30 and continued until November 18. When all of the votes were counted, the result was an Electoral College landslide for Harrison, who won 234 votes to Van Buren's 60. The Whigs also gained control of Congress.

Harrison rode his favorite horse Whitey to his inauguration in Washington, DC, on March 4, 1841. Although it was a cold, wet day in the capital, Harrison wore no overcoat and waved his hat at the crowds. At the age of sixty-eight, he would be the oldest president sworn into office until Ronald Reagan in 1980. Another record that Harrison set was the length of his inaugura-

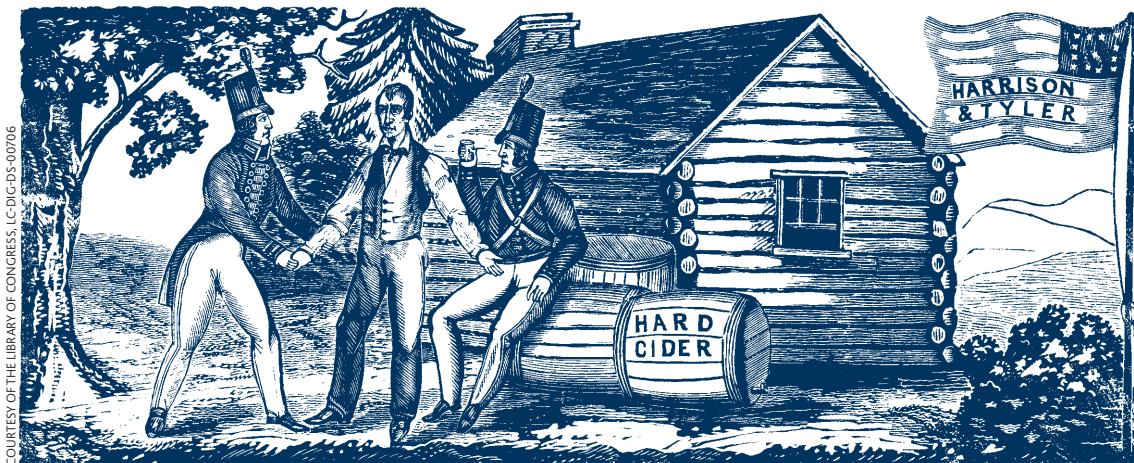
tion speech. It lasted almost two hours—the longest of any President of the United States through at least 2013.

The many hours Harrison spent in the cold and slush on inauguration day took its toll. He soon contracted pneumonia. None of the favored medical methods of the day—bleeding, cupping, opium, castor oil, camphor, wine or brandy—improved his condition. Harrison died on April 4, 1841, exactly one month after he took office. Anna (Symmes) Harrison, who never wanted her husband to run for president, never entered the White House.

Harrison had a grand and dignified funeral, a credit to the American people who had not mourned a sitting president before. His body lay in state in the White House in a glass-topped coffin where thousands of citizens filed past to pay their respects. In the funeral procession, Harrison's horse trotted without a rider to symbolize the fallen leader. At Anna's request, Harrison's final resting place was near her father's grave in North Bend, Ohio.

Harrison's grandson, Benjamin, was elected president in 1888. Benjamin's presidential campaign, organized from his home in Indianapolis, adopted many of the features of his grandfather's 1840 log cabin campaign. As of 2013 Benjamin Harrison was the only grandson of a former president to hold the office.

"Tippecanoe and Tyler, too!"



During the 1840 political campaign for the presidency, Harrison and his political party, the Whigs, branded him as a common "man of the people." This campaign advertisement shows just that: Harrison is standing outside a log cabin, sharing hard cider with soldiers, reminding voters of Harrison's participation in the War of 1812. Supporters flooded voters with similar posters and badges. In reality, the Whigs were misrepresenting Harrison. He was well-educated, from an established Virginia family, and lived in a luxurious house in North Bend, Ohio. The tactic worked, and Harrison won the election.

2.4

William Conner (1777–1855)

“Profit was the one continuity in William Conner’s otherwise eclectic life.”

— John Lauritz Larson and David G. Vanderstel, *Indiana Magazine of History*, 1984

Early life

Born in present-day Ohio, William Conner was the third son of Richard Conner and his wife Margaret. Margaret had been a captive of the Shawnee from childhood, and when Richard ransomed her in order to marry her, he promised the Shawnee their firstborn son. In 1771 James, their firstborn, arrived. The Conners gave him to the Shawnee and ransomed him back a short time later.

The Conner family lived for the most part in Ohio, but they also moved around the Northwest frontier, living among Moravian missionaries and Christian Shawnee and Delaware. Richard supported his family by trading with the Indians and working as an interpreter between the Indians and settlers in the area. During the Revolutionary War, the Conners followed the Moravians to what is now Michigan, where Richard founded Macomb County and the city of Mount Clemens, the county seat.

Richard lived to the advanced age of eighty-nine and was quite successful; he acquired thousands of acres of land and established an important trading post in southeastern Michigan. He left his family very well-off when he died. All of his sons inherited land, but William and his brother John, who was two years older than William, were restless to leave Michigan

and seek their own fortunes. In 1800 they traveled south to the Indiana Territory.

In the Indiana wilderness the Conner brothers became licensed traders who dealt with the Delaware Indians near the west fork of the White River, a convenient location for fur trade and commerce. In 1802 William married Mekinges, the daughter of Delaware chief William Anderson, whose name gives evidence to the prevalence of intermarriage between whites and Indians. The Conners moved about twenty-five miles from Anderson’s village and had six children.

Having an Indian wife earned Conner special status and trust among the Indians, which proved useful in his business ventures. He emulated his father’s lifestyle and became a successful trader and interpreter. For about a decade William and John built a robust business trading with the Indians, taking advantage of the long relationship the Conners had established with them over two generations.

Agent of Removal

By 1811 William Conner was using his connections with the Indians to help the United States government acquire Indian land. Conner aided William Henry Harrison in his mission to get the Indians to cede their land by using his interpretive skills to assist in treaty negotiations that worked to the Americans’ advantage.

People today sometimes wonder what was going through Conner’s mind during this time, because his personal life was full of contradictions and conflict. He was married to an Indian woman and his children were half Indian, yet he enlisted with General Harrison’s troops to fight against the Indians and the British in the War of 1812. He was present at the crucial Battle of the Thames and helped identify the mutilated body of the great Shawnee warrior Tecumseh. After the war was over, Conner resumed his role as an agent of the federal government, serving as interpreter when Americans negotiated treaties with the Indians. In this way, he played an essential role in the process of Indians

William Conner

This portrait of William Conner was painted by Jacob Cox, ca. 1850.

Conner House

Located on two hundred acres in Hamilton County, Indiana, Conner Prairie is a living history museum, occupying the land of William Conner's original home (pictured here). In Conner's time the acreage was surrounded on three sides by the White River, which flooded the grounds early each spring. The floods left a layer of rich soil and kept trees from growing evenly, making the land ideal for planting. Whereas most settlers in Hamilton County had to spend a great deal of time and energy clearing land of forest before they could plant crops, Conner's prairie was ready for agriculture.

In 1934 Eli Lilly, an Indianapolis businessman who was president of the pharmaceutical manufacturer Eli Lilly and Company, discovered that William Conner's home had fallen into disrepair. He bought the Conner homestead and began to finance its restoration. Lilly began producing historic pageants at the site and invited the

public, believing this was an engaging way for Hoosiers to learn about their pioneer heritage.

Lilly lived to see the creation of 1836 Prairietown, a fictitious pioneer community with a blacksmith shop, a pottery shop, a schoolhouse, and more. Prairietown is "populated" by staff in historic costume demonstrating the ways early Hoosier pioneers lived. Visitors to Prairietown are invited to join them in tasks such as chopping wood, throwing pots, and caring for farm animals. When Prairietown was first created in the 1970s, it was a unique approach to learning about history. Since then, many sites around the world have created "living history" experiences modeled on Prairietown.

Conner Prairie Interactive History Park continues to change with the times in order to bring historical experience to life in the twenty-first century. The Smithsonian Institution's only Indiana affiliate, it has received many

awards for its innovation in teaching history, including the National Medal for Museum and Library Service in 2010. In recent years, new hands-on exhibits, such as the 1859 Balloon Voyage and "Civil War Journey: Raid on Indiana," have been added and are enjoyed by thousands of visitors of all ages each year.



ceding, or signing over, their land to the government.

In 1818, two years after Indiana became a state, Conner was present at the signing of the Treaty of Saint Mary's. This document set the terms for the removal of the White River Delaware, which included his wife Mekinges and their children. Rather than leave for Missouri with his family and start his trading business anew, he gave them supplies for their long journey and stayed in Indiana. He left no personal record to explain his decision, so we can only speculate about it. It is possible that Conner chose to stay behind because he

could see the boundless opportunities to make a fortune in Indiana, now that the land was fully available to white enterprise. By contrast, in Missouri he might have to start over as a trader and might never enjoy opportunities such as those available in Indiana. On one 1829 public record—a petition seeking clarification of a title to some of his land—Conner portrayed himself as a neutral or even benevolent bystander to the Indian removal process in Indiana, stating that "he had lived among the Indians, and fed them when they had not the means to do it; and at all times was engaged in preparing their minds for the sale of their land to the United States."

A Frontier Capitalist

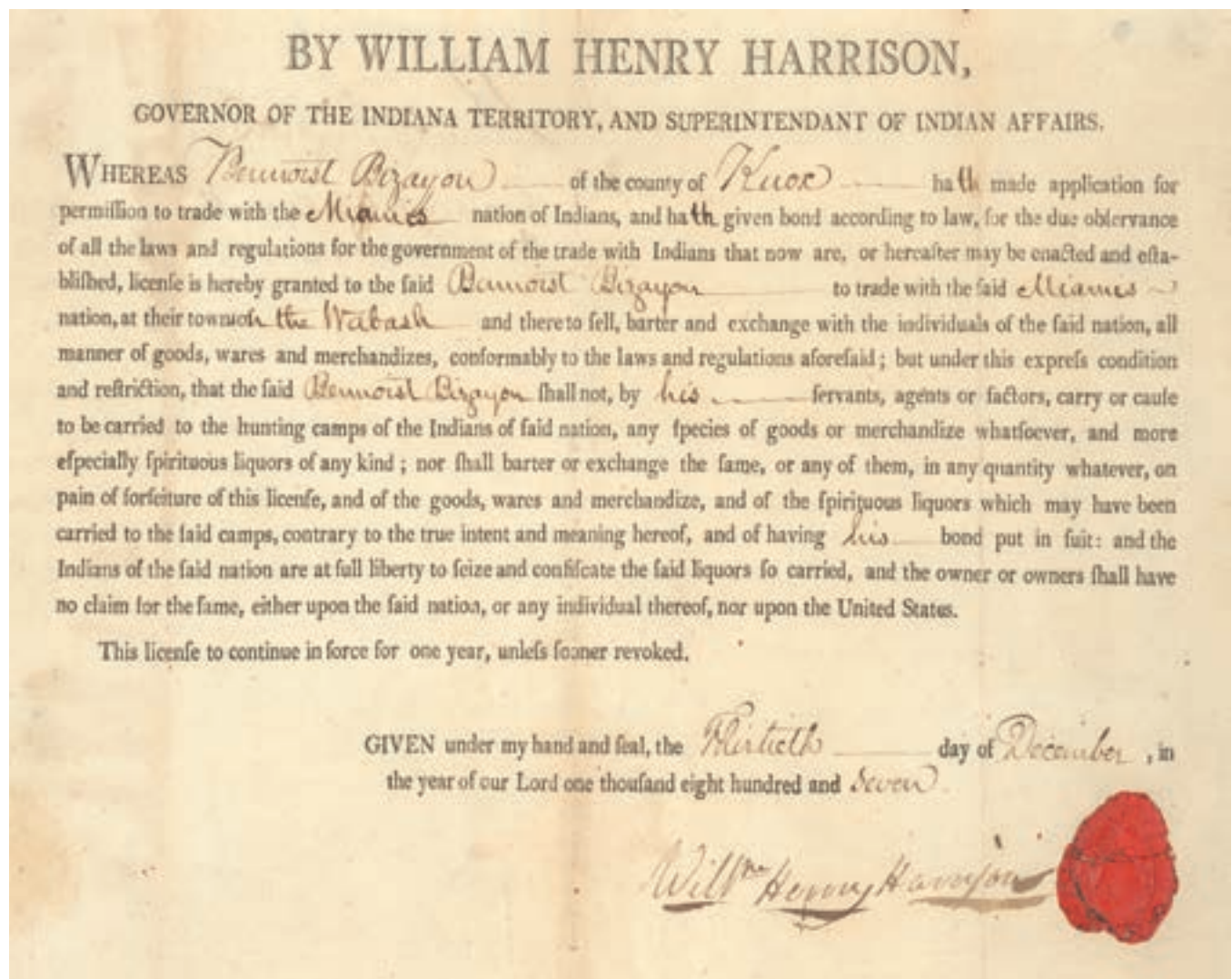
Three months after Mekinges and their children headed west, Conner married Elizabeth Chapman, a seventeen-year-old white woman who was the stepdaughter of a recent settler. At forty-four, William was considerably older than his bride, but he was intent on starting a new life in the growing white community. The couple had ten children.

In 1823 Conner replaced his log cabin on the White River with a large brick house. Conner's home was the grandest and most important building in the region. In 1823, when Hamilton County was founded,

the house served as the seat of its government, a courthouse, and a post office. Conner was the county's first treasurer.

Because he was one of the first white men in the area and played a key role in treaty negotiations with the Indians, Conner was able to acquire a great deal of land. He was fortunate in his business dealings; nearly all his ventures were successful, and eventually he became a very wealthy man. Over the course of his long life Conner continued to expand his empire in many ways. He remained active in Indian affairs; even

License to Trade with Miami Indians



Trade with Native Americans was a lucrative business. William Conner and other traders needed to procure a license such as this one from Indiana Territorial Governor William Henry Harrison before undertaking business.

though most of the Indians had been removed west, there were still land disputes with those who remained behind. For decades, Conner continued to prove useful in negotiations and acquired more and more land. At the time of his death in 1855, he owned more than four thousand acres in Hamilton County. He also engaged in retail trade, manufacturing, town building (he founded Noblesville), and politics. One historian points out that although William served three terms in the state legislature from 1829 to 1837, he was not by nature a political animal. He saw politics as a means to an end—building a road, developing land, and, above all, creating personal profit.

Legacy

William Conner died at the age of seventy-eight and is buried in Crownland Cemetery in Noblesville, near many of his descendants. Toward the end of his life, in addition to being recognized as one of the

wealthiest and most prominent citizens in Indiana, Conner was considered a living historical figure. People often asked him to tell stories about his experiences on the frontier and about his life with the Indians. In old age, Conner was one of the few people alive who had experienced the territory's transition from wilderness to a rapidly developing state—and he was not just a witness to this transformation, he was an agent of it. On the other hand, Conner and other Americans who were among the first to live alongside the Indians, brought American civilization with them, which eventually resulted in the destruction of the Indians' way of life.

In light of William Conner's profound impact on Indiana and Hamilton County in particular, it is appropriate that Conner Prairie, his former home, has become a living history center where Hoosiers can learn more about the man and his times.

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Essential Questions

- 1 How did the British and native groups work together in an attempt to halt the westward movement of Americans?
- 2 How did the Battle of Fallen Timbers mark a turning point in the Americans' pursuit for Indian lands?
- 3 What was the result of the American attempt to Americanize native peoples?
- 4 How did the policy of Indian removal affect the Indiana frontier?
- 5 What roles did the following individuals play in securing Indian lands for settlement:
 - A George Rogers Clark
 - B William Henry Harrison
 - C William Conner
- 6 How did the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 provide a path to statehood for the territories it established?
- 7 Why was slavery a divisive issue during Indiana's territorial period and how was the issue resolved in the 1816 constitution?*

*See student activities related to this question.

Activity 1: The Issue of Slavery in Indiana Territory

Introduction: As Indiana progressed along the path toward statehood mapped out in the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, the issue of whether or not to allow slavery became a divisive one. Slaves were brought to Indiana by French settlers before the Northwest Territory was established. However, in Article VI, the Northwest Ordinance forbade slavery in the territories it established.

Article VI was circumvented by many settlers who owned slaves, including the territorial governor, William Henry Harrison. The pro-slavers urged that this article be removed.

As you have read, Harrison and other pro-slavery advocates were opposed by an anti-slavery contingent including John Badollet. Badollet's reasons for opposing slavery were based on morality. He stated:

[Slavery is] "a system outraging at once the laws of natural justice, the principles of our institutions, the maxims of sound policy, and the holy religion we profess." (Thornbrough, 334)

On the other hand, Harrison and many others in the territory felt that slavery was practical and economically advantageous. Harrison and a delegation of pro-slavers sent a petition (referred to as a "memorial") to a committee of the fourteenth United States Congress led by John Randolph of Virginia. In this memorial, they asked that Congress repeal Article VI of the Northwest Ordinance, thus allowing slavery to exist in the Indiana Territory. Randolph responded to Harrison and the other petitioners with the following statement:

The Committee to whom the memorial of the Indiana Convention, Gov Harrison's Letter, & are referred were referred, reported,

That the rapid population of the State of Ohio sufficiently evinces in the opinion of your Committee that the labour of slaves is not necessary to promote the growth and settlement of Colonies in that region. That this labour, demonstrably the dearest of any, can only be employed to advantage in the cultivation of products more valuable than any known in that quarter of the U. States: That the Committee deem it highly dangerous and inexpedient to impair a provision wisely calculated to promote the happiness and prosperity of the N. Western Country and to give strength and security to that extensive frontier. In the salutary operations of this sagacious and benevolent restraint, it is believed

that the inhabitants of Indiana, will at no very distant period day, find ample remuneration for a temporary privation of labour and of immigration.
(William Henry Harrison Papers)

Glossary

Evinces: Clearly shows; makes evident

Demonstrably: Obviously

Dearest: Most expensive or highest-priced

Inexpedient: Inadvisable; not recommended

Provision: A clause in a legal document

Calculated: Carefully thought out or planned

Salutary: Promoting a beneficial purpose; wholesome or healthful

Sagacious: Wise or intelligent

Benevolent: Intended to benefit or help others

Restraint: The act of controlling; In this case, restraint refers to the prohibition on slavery

Remuneration: Reward as in money

Privation: The act of being deprived of something, hardship

► **After you have had a chance to read both the quotation by John Badollet and the U.S. Congressional Committee's response to the memorial by Harrison and the pro-slavery advocates, take a few moments to put both statements into your own words.**

- 1 Rewrite Badollet's description of slavery (below) in the form of a tweet. Remember that you may only use 140 characters in your tweet! Be persuasive and focus on encouraging your followers to oppose slavery for the same reasons you do.

[Slavery is] a system outraging at once the laws of natural justice, the principles of our institutions, the maxims of sound policy, and the holy religion we profess.

- 2 Consider the following: What answer does the committee give to the request that slavery be allowed in the Indiana territory? What reasons does the committee give for its decision? Using your own words, rewrite as a tweet each of the sentences below from the committee's response to the pro-slavery memorial.
 - A That the rapid population of the State of Ohio sufficiently *evinces* in the opinion of your Committee that the labour of slaves is not necessary to promote the growth and settlement of Colonies in that region.
 - B That this labour, *demonstrably* the *dearest* of any, can only be employed to advantage in the cultivation of products more valuable than any known in that quarter of the U. States.
 - C That the Committee deem it highly dangerous and *inexpedient* to impair a *provision* wisely *calculated* to promote the happiness and prosperity of the N. Western Country and to give strength and security to that extensive frontier.
 - D In the *salutary* operations of this *sagacious* and *benevolent restraint*, it is believed that the inhabitants of Indiana, will at no very distant *period* day, find ample *remuneration* for a temporary *privation* of labour and of immigration.
- 3 Compare Badollet's statement about why slavery should not be allowed to the committee's justification for the prohibition of slavery. Which argument do you believe is more powerful, Badollet's emotional one or the committee's rational one? Which do you think might have been more powerful at the time (1803)?
- 4 What do you predict William Henry Harrison's reaction to these statements was? Imagine that Harrison follows both Badollet's and the committee's Twitter handles. What would he tweet in response to each?

- ▶ Alternately, choose to write a journal entry from the perspective of either John Badollet or William Henry Harrison in response to news of the committee’s decision to continue the ban on slavery in the Indiana territory.

Activity 2: Indentured Servitude

Introduction: Although the U.S. Congressional Committee chose to uphold Article VI and continue the ban on slavery in the Indiana Territory, Governor Harrison and the pro-slavers achieved a victory a few months later. In 1803 Harrison and the three judges who comprised Indiana Territory’s legislative body passed a bill allowing indentured servitude in the territory.

- ▶ On page 41 of chapter two, you may view a scan of an indenture dated 1809 that bound Jacob Ferrel, “a negro man,” to serve John Smith for a period of thirteen years. Read the document and answer the following questions:

- 1 Does indentured servitude differ from slavery in practice or just in name?
- 2 Was this act just a maneuver for Governor Harrison to get around the 1803 ruling of the Congressional Committee?

- ▶ Next, read the Seventh Provision of Article XI of the 1816 Constitution for the State of Indiana, which states:

There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in this state, otherwise than for the punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted. Nor shall any indenture of any negro or mulatto hereafter made, and executed out of the bounds of this state be of any validity within the state.

- ▶ Take a few minutes to write a journal response to this provision, considering the following questions:

- 1 How does it make you feel that the 1816 constitution expressly prohibits slavery?
- 2 Do you think this provision settled the debate once and for all?
- 3 Where could you look to determine if slavery and indentured servitude ended in Indiana with the 1816 constitution?

Activity References

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