

FRANCOIS MARIE BISSOT, SIEUR DE VINCENNES, FRENCH FOUNDER OF VINCENNES, INDIANA

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GRADE LEVEL: Elementary

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Lesson plans for Francois Marie Bissot, Sieur de Vincennes, French founder of Vincennes, Indiana.

Materials:

Teacher background: Read pages 21-27 in "Indiana, A Handbook for U.S. History Teachers"  
Student information packet  
Activities packet  
Indiana maps

Time: 2-3 class periods

Evaluation: student test

Activities:

1. Teachers' should familiarize themselves with the background material for a more complete understanding of the time period and events.
2. The students may read the information packet as an individual assignment or in group readings.
3. After the students have read and discussed the materials several activities are suggested to go along with the information.
4. Map activity: identify on the map the location of the three French forts in Indiana and the important waterways.
5. Timeline activity: The students will place the events of Vincenne's life on the timeline.
6. Board game activity: In the board game packet are directions for constructing a game to apply the facts of Vincennes' life in Indiana and the importance of the French period in Indiana history.
7. Student evaluation: a true and false test.

Student Objectives: The students will be expected to:

1. Know the French-Canadian connection to the exploration of Indiana.
2. Analyze the geographic features of Indiana that attracted French exploration.
3. Identify the location of the three French forts in Indiana.
4. Create a timeline of the events of Francois Marie Bissot's life and explorations of Indiana.

## French-Canadians Come to the Indiana Territory

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a New World was being explored on the continent of North America. The kings and queens of France, England, and Spain sent brave and daring explorers to the New World to find gold and silver to make their countries rich. They wanted to build empires and have great world-wide power.

French explorers came to present-day Canada. They did not find gold and silver, but they did find the wilderness full of fur-bearing animals. The skins and furs from these animals were wanted by the rich people of Europe and they were willing to spend large amounts of money to have the furs.

At the same time, fur-traders from England wanted to claim the same lands for themselves. As the two countries fought to claim rich, fur-trading territories for themselves, military officers and fur traders explored deeper and deeper into the North American wilderness. Reports began to go back to Canada and England that there were rivers and streams that connected Lake Erie with the Ohio River and on to the Mississippi River. The Mississippi River led to the ocean. This was a fanatastic transportation route to carry valuable furs to the European market by water. In Indiana, the most important rivers were the Maumee and the Wabash.

King Louis of France sent his military men as government agents into the Indiana wilderness to establish forts, make trading treaties with the Indians, and keep the British fur traders out. One important agent was Jean Baptiste Bissot, Sieur de Vincennes. He

was very successful making treaties and trading with the Indians. The Indians were important allies to both the British and the French because they were the trappers of the furs. The Indians brought their furs to the trading posts and exchanged them for goods such as knives, axes, cloth and tobacco. The Indians also protected the fur traders in the wilderness from other hostile Indians.

#### The Vincennes Family in Indiana

Jean Baptiste Bissot, Sieur de Vincennes established the first French fort in Indiana called Ouiatenon on the Wabash River near present-day Lafayette in 1717. He also traveled all across northern Indiana and spent some time in Fort Miami, near present day Fort Wayne. Vincennes was a very influential officer in the wilderness and was very loved and respected by the Indians. When he died in 1719, his young son Francois Marie Bissot became Sieur de Vincennes and he was also a military agent for the king of France.

Francois Marie Bissot had been born in Canada in 1700, so he was only nineteen when he took over for his father. Vincennes was transferred to Ouiatenon from Fort Miami where he had taken over for his father. Vincennes lived and traded with the Indians there until 1727. Young Vincennes was ordered to travel down the Wabash River and establish a post in southern Indiana close to the Ohio River. He took ten soldiers and ten officers with as well as a number of Piankishaw Indians. Vincennes' exploration party traveled south until they came to a bend in the Wabash River.

This is as far as the Indians would go because they feared the raiding parties of the hostile Chickasaw Indians from the south. It took Vincennes several years to build a fort at this spot. In 1731, Vincennes wrote a letter and described the fort he build around his home. It had two blockhouses but no barracks for his men. The French soldiers built homes near the fort. The Piankashaw Indians that had come with him, built a village called Chippecoke, which means scrub brush near the post. The city of Vincennes started with this small band of Frenchmen and Indians living on the Wabash River.

Vincennes was also a famliy man. In 1733, he married Marie Lonpre and they had two daughters, Marie Therese and Catherine. His family lived in the home inside the fort.

Post Vincennes was so far away from Canada, the French government in Louisiana took control of it. However, the government really didn't pay much attention to Sieur de Vincennes and his small group. During the years of 1731 to 1736, Vincennes wrote letters telling about the trouble he was having with hostile Indians. They were raiding this small settlement and interfering with the trading of furs. The government didn't send extra troops or help protect them in any way.

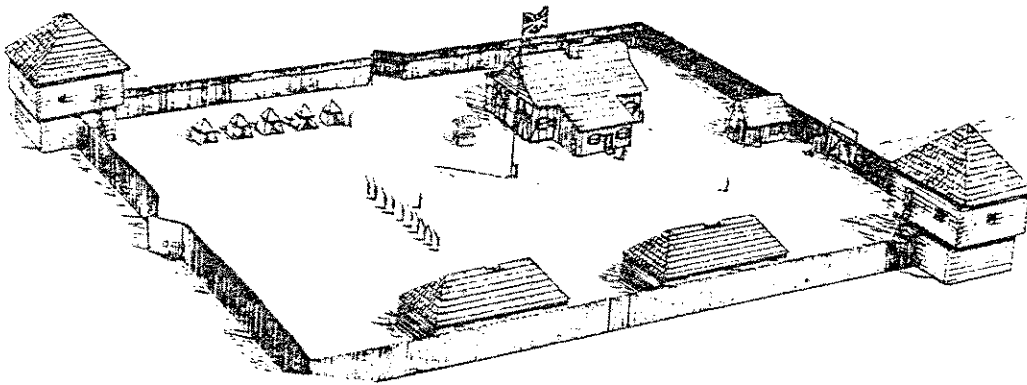
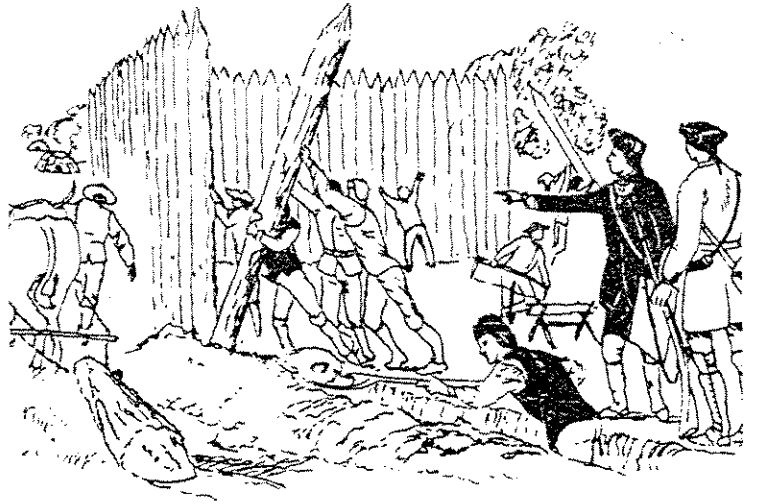
Finally, the French government in Louisiana ordered Vincennes to bring a small army of friendly Indians and French soldiers south to fight the Chickasaw Indians. For the Frenchmen, it was a disaster. The Chickasaw were very prepared for the battle and they massacred the French troops and took Sieur de Vincennes and some of his soldiers prisoners. They were all tortured and burned at the stake.

The small settlement of Vincennes continued to exist after Sieur de Vincennes' death. It became a very important city in Indiana and was the home of the first territorial governor and a president, William Henry Harrison.

The Frenchman, Francois Marie Bissot, Sieur de Vincennes, will long be remembered as a brave loyal frontiersman, important to Indiana history.

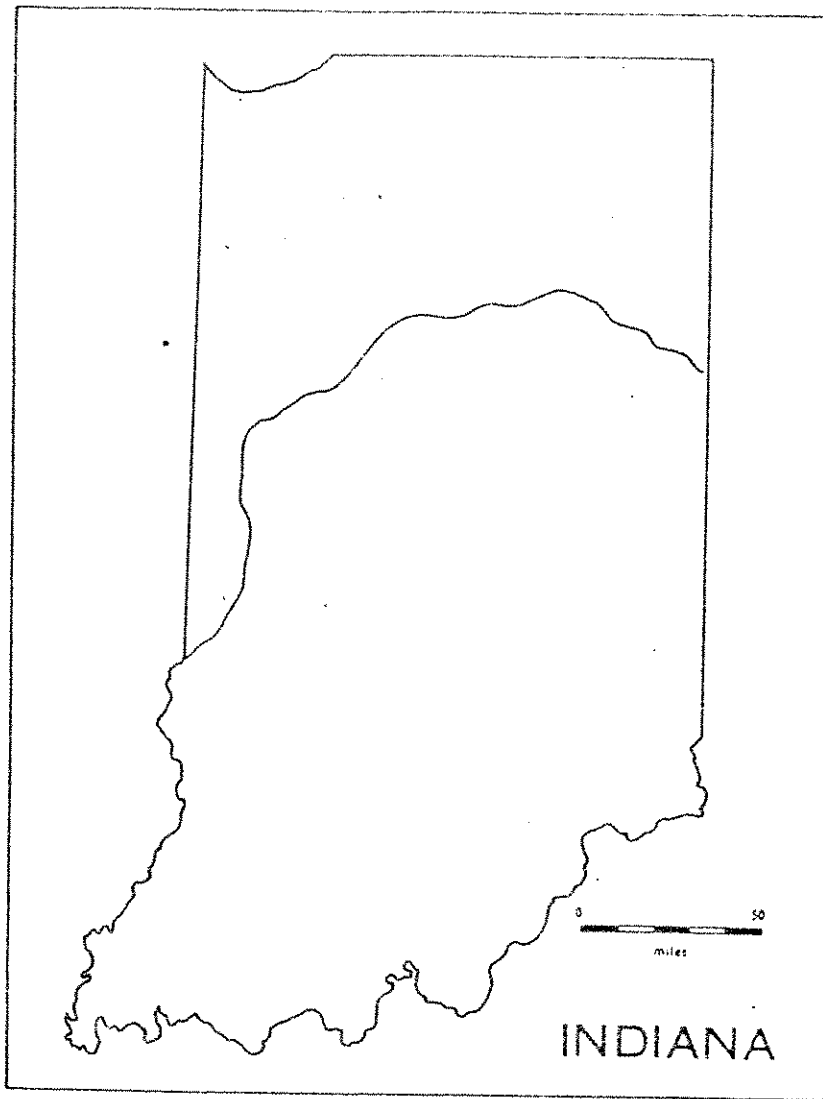
Sieur de Vincennes building his fort

An artist's drawing of what the forts at Vincennes looked like as Sieur de Vincennes was building it and how it might have been made larger and improved by later military officers:



An artist's drawing of Chippecoke, the Piankashaw village built near Post Vincennes in the early 18th century.





The French Forts of Indiana

1. Identify and label on the map the location of Fort Miami.  
(near Fort Wayne)
2. Identify and label on the map the location of Ouiatenon.  
(near Lafayette)
3. Identify and label on the map the location of Post Vincennes.  
(near Vincennes)

The rivers in Indiana important to the early French frontiersmen.

1. One river is on the map for you, identify it and label it.
2. Locate the Maumee River, draw it on the map and label it.
3. Locate the Ohio River, draw it on the map and label it.



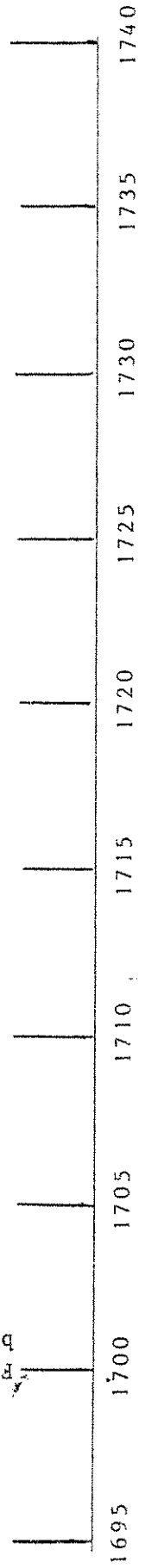
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The Vincennes Family in Indiana timeline Activity (1700-1736)

Directions: Place the following events on the timeline below. The first one had been done for you.

1. Francois Marie Bissot was born in Canada (1700)
2. Vincennes built a fort on the lower Wabash River (1731)
3. Jean Baptiste Bissot establishes a fort called Ouiatenon (1717)
4. Young Vincennes killed in a Chickasaw Indian attack (1736)
5. Older Sieur de Vincennes dies at Fort Miami (1719)
6. Vincennes transferred to Ouiatenon from Fort Miami (1721)
7. Young Sieur de Vincennes marries in the wilderness (1733)
8. Sieur de Vincennes is commandant of Post Vincennes (1734)

born in Canada  
Francois Marie  
Bissot



Directions: A folder game for "The French Forts of Indiana, Fort Miami, Ouiatenon, and Vincennes", for 2-4 players.

Materials:

1. A manila folder for each team (2-4 members to a team)
2. a die for each team
3. squares of paper (approximately 2" x 2") 15-20 per team
4. red markers or crayons
5. small markers for moving on the game board
6. glue or paste for each team
7. students will need their information packet from the lesson
8. a copy of the rules for each team
9. a copy of the directions for making the game for each team
10. a copy of the two page map for the game board for each team

Examples for hazard cards:

Supply boat overturns in the river--go back 2 spaces  
Rapids in the river- portage 6 miles--lose 1 turn  
Hostile Indian raid-go back 1 space  
Men in the party ill-stop to rest-lose 1 turn  
Wild animals eat your food-stop to hunt- go back 3 spaces

Directions for making a folder game:

1. glue the map into the manila folder
2. draw a board game "path" (using circles or squares) on the map connecting the 3 forts, but also winding around the map wherever you wish
3. color 15-20 circles or squares on your game "path" red, these are for the hazard card draw
4. glue the directions on the back of the folder
5. decorate the front of the folder as you desire
6. write "hazards" on 15-20 cards, see the examples and feel free to make up your own ideas. The information packet you have will be helpful.

Rules:

1. Object of the game: Start your Vincennes exploration party at Fort Miami and go to Fort Vincennes. The first party to Vincennes is the winner.
2. Roll the die to decide turns.
3. Roll the die for moves
4. When you land on a red place, draw a hazard card and follow the directions on the card.

Good Luck!!



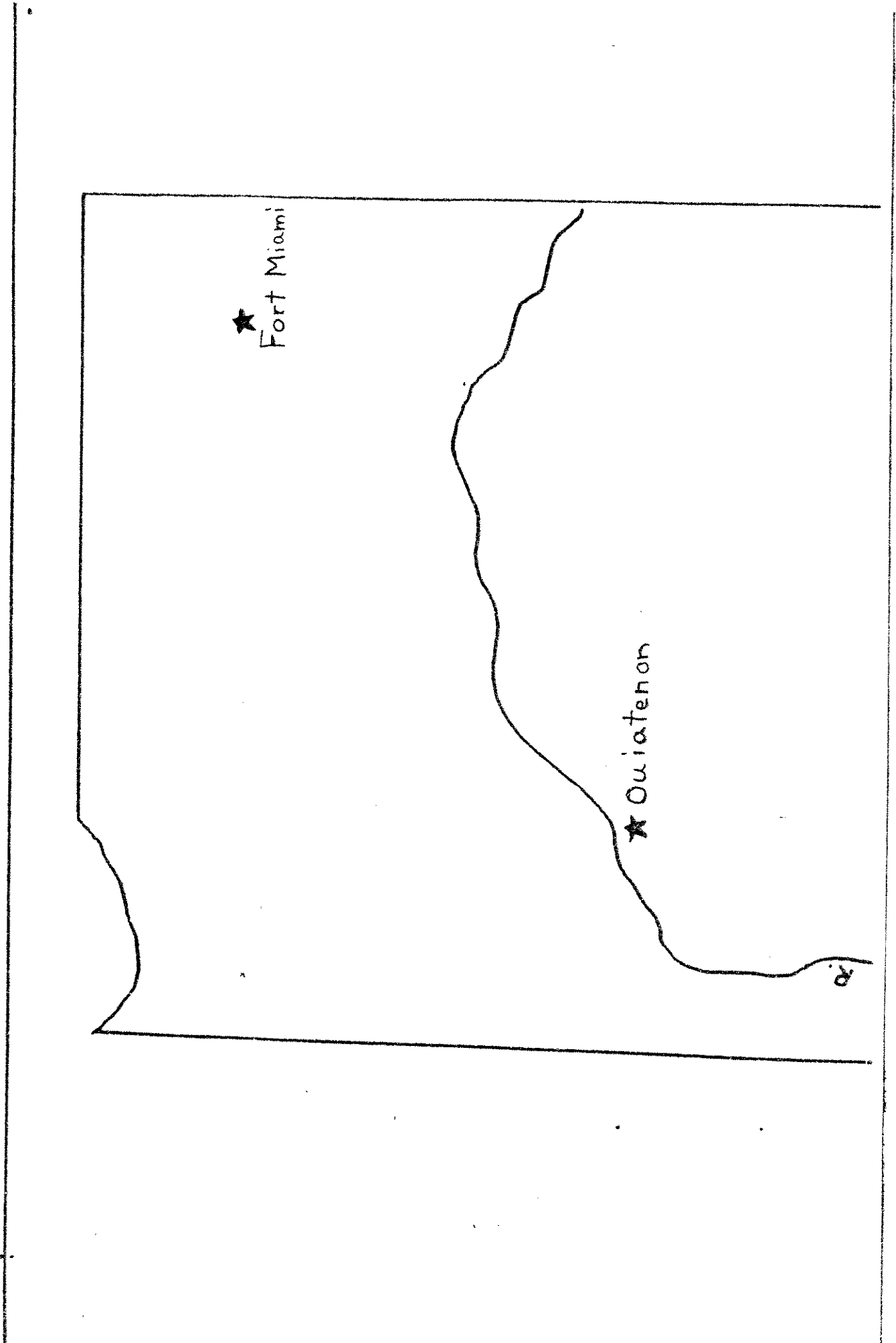
# INDIANA

Wabash

★ Fort Vincennes

0 50

miles



★ Fort Miami

★ Ouatanon

α

Name \_\_\_\_\_

True and False Test

Directions: Read each statement carefully and write the words True or False on the line.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. François Marie Bissot was a French fur trader.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The French found large supplies of gold and silver in the New World in North America.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The Indians were the expert fur trappers in the fur trading business.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The French Canadians explored the Indiana wilderness and found good rivers for transportation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. It was not important to the French to have good relationships with Indians of Indiana.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Young Sieur de Vincennes was a brave and loyal French government military agent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Sieur de Vincennes did not need a strong, safe fort at Vincennes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The Chickasaws built a village named Chippecoke near Fort Vincennes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The post at Vincennes was very large and had many French settlers in 1735.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The Vincennes family was important in the early exploration and establishment of Indiana.

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