

A VISIT TO INDIANA'S FIRST STATE CAPITOL

By Teresa Branson

GRADE LEVEL: Elementary

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Terri Branson
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A TRIP TO CORYDON, INDIANA

Geographically Corydon is no longer the center of our state, therefore it is not feasible for many of us to take our classes there on a field trip. By using our imaginations, however, we can visit the little town known as the "Birthplace" of our state.

I wanted to stimulate interest in Corydon in my students. Hopefully someday soon they will visit our first state capital and appreciate what happened there over 175 years ago. When they do visit they will recognize the historical places we studied, and, hopefully, appreciate them more than the average visitor.

This unit lasted longer than I planned because the students liked it so much. Everyday they would ask, "Are we going to Corydon today?"

OBJECTIVES: Students will learn facts and information about various historical buildings in the town of Corydon, Indiana.

PRESENTATION

DAY ONE: Using an overhead projector I show the students the locations of the towns vying to become the new territorial capital. They then located these towns on their own copies of the state map. We discussed reasons each town might be chosen. Then, folding our state maps in half we decide that Corydon is indeed almost the exact center of the territorial population at this time. We also compare early county lines to present counties.

DAY TWO: Using the overhead projector I show the students a street map of Corydon. With markers we trace sightseeing routes and discuss the different places along the way. I use this time to stress how the town grew to accommodate the influx of government officials and other office holders and their families.

DAY THREE: Again using the transparency of Corydon we discussed the buildings in town and other historical sites. Then, we divided into pairs. Each pair was given a picture of one of the historical sites and a description of it. They were to reconstruct the building using small boxes or cardboard. Another group drew the streets of the town and decided where each site was located using the real map. These were worked on during classtime, and some took theirs home to work on. We spent four (4) days on the buildings and town.

DAY FOUR: While working on the buildings, one group was chosen to produce the play "From Corydon to Indianapolis". This was performed for the parents the next week.

DAYS FIVE THROUGH EIGHT: These days were spent reading the text from "Indiana Yesterday and Today" pages 94 to 108. We were also working on our historic buildings and the play.

DAY NINE: The town was finally completed and the other fourth grade and the third grades were invited to "visit" our town and given "tours".

DAY TEN: The parents and grandparents were invited to the premier presentation of the "Not Yet Ready For Fifth Grade Players" production of "From Corydon to Indianapolis" by Pamela J. Farris. They were also treated to personalized tours of Corydon.

CULMINATING ACTIVITIES: The students were asked to imagine they were a fourth grader living in or beside one of the historical buildings in Corydon during the territorial and state capital days. They were to write about their life and the activities during this time.

HISTORICAL SITE INFORMATION FOR CORYDON, INDIANA

1. SMITH HOUSE AND SPRING: Located outside of the town it was the first home in the area. Edward Smith lived here with his family. It is said that Gov. Harrison often stopped here on his way to the Jeffersonville Land Offices. It was Smith's daughter Jenny who sang to Harrison on these visits. His favorite song was "The Pastoral Elegy" about the death of a young shepherd name Corydon. It is from this song that the town was named.

The house is gone now, but the spring is still there in the southwest corner of the Fair Grounds. It is now the site of the Harrison Co. Fair.

2. THE COURTHOUSE ON THE HILL: In 1811 George F. Pope resigned as Harrison Co. Clerk and Recorder. He offered to sell his unfinished house on Lot 12 in Corydon to the county to use as offices. On June 7th 1811 the Court of Common Pleas ordered the county treasurer (the sheriff) to pay Pope \$300 from the 1811 tax levy and \$200 from the 1812 tax. Then Henry Rice was paid to finish the interior, and William Branham extended the roof of the office to the courthouse and made shutters for the office windows. This building was used as the County Courthouse and Clerks Office as well as the Territorial Capitol until 1816 when the new courthouse was finally ready^{to} use.

3. STATE CAPITOL BUILDING: On August 3, 1814 a contract for building a stone courthouse 40 feet square was let to Dennis Pennington and John Smith. Pennington was to receive \$1,000 for the stonework, to be paid in three yearly installments of \$333.33. From his third installment was to be deducted \$301 salvage value of the "Old Courthouse on the Hill".

Smith was to receive \$1,998.97 for the carpentry work on the stone courthouse. This was to be paid to Smith in three annual installments of \$666.66 each.

4. CONSTITUTION ELM AND SPRING: When the delegates were meeting in June of 1816 to discuss statehood the weather was very hot and humid. The cramped quarters of the courthouse didn't allow for much air circulation around the 43 delegates. They met under the spreading branches of a huge elm tree just two hundred yards west of the capitol building. The elm died in 1925 when it fell victim to the elm beetle. The trunk is incased in a sandstone memorial today.

There was also a cool cave with a spring across from this tree where the towns people stored their meat and eggs for market. It made an excellent place for the delegates to keep their liquid refreshments cold.

The cave is sealed today but my students loved to hear about the time it was used to store a dead body while waiting for the wife to return from visiting her brother in New York.

5. WESTFALL HOUSE: The first house built in the town of Corydon. It is still standing behind the Constitutional Elm.

6. THE LANE HOME: Daniel C. Lane was the first State Treasurer of Indiana. This home stood next to the Westfall House until 1912 when it was torn down.

7. OLD GOVERNOR'S MANSION: Governor Jonathan Jennings was the only governor of Indiana to make Corydon his permanent residence. The mansion was built of brick which were made on the lot where it stood. The interior was finished in hand-carved hardwood and it is said that Mrs. Jennings gave lavish parties there. The house no longer stands.

8. BRANHAM TAVERN: Was built around 1800 on property owned by William Henry Harrison. It may have been built for Harrison by French workmen from Vincennes, Indiana and used by him while on business in the area. In 1808 the log building was sold to William Branham, and on April 4, 1809 he was licensed to keep a tavern at this log cabin.

9. POSEY HOUSE: In 1817 the Posey family built this massive brick house in the shape of a "U". Col. Thomas Posey, the son of Governor Posey, lived in this house. He never married, but raised 14 orphaned children in the house. Today it is open for visitors and maintained by the DAR.

10. HARRISON COUNTY JAIL: Began as a log jail, across from the first State Capitol building, on the same site as the modern jail today.

11. KINTNER HOUSE: Was operated as the towns leading hotel for many years. The original stood at the northwest corner of Capitol Ave. and Beaver Street. Today it is a Bed and Breakfast.

12. FIRST STATE OFFICE BUILDING: Built in 1817 northeast of the Capitol building. Consisted of two large rooms with a narrow hall between. It was leased to the State. The East room was used by the Secretary of State, and the West room by the State Treasurer. The cellar under the west room was the vault where the states money, in silver, was kept in strong wooden boxes.

Today it is a private residence.

13. GOVERNOR HENDRICKS' HEADQUARTERS: Governor Hendricks did not move his family to Corydon from Madison but made this house his headquarters while he was governor from 1822-1825. This house has been restored and is now owned by the state. It is opened to the public.

14. OLD CAPITAL INN: Was built in 1807 by Jacob Conrad who immigrated to Corydon from Pennsylvania. It was two miles east of the Old Capitol Building. It was very popular with the statesmen. There was a fine spring gurgling from a cave close to the back of the building. Also the owner stabled their horses free of charge and allowed them to graze in the bluegrass pastures.

The walls of the building were twenty feet high and eighteen inches thick. Each L is about twenty feet long. It is constructed of hard blue limestone taken from a nearby quarry. The masonry of this building is estimated to weigh 618,790 tons and it contains 3,412 feet of blue ash flooring. The wood work was prepared with the broad-axe and whip-saw.

15. CATTLE PEN AND WHIPPING POST: In the early years of statehood there weren't leash laws. Cattle often wondered into town. For their protection a pen was built on the courthouse square to contain the lost cattle until the owner could be found.

The courthouse square was also the site of the whipping post. Many law breakers were punished at the whipping post.

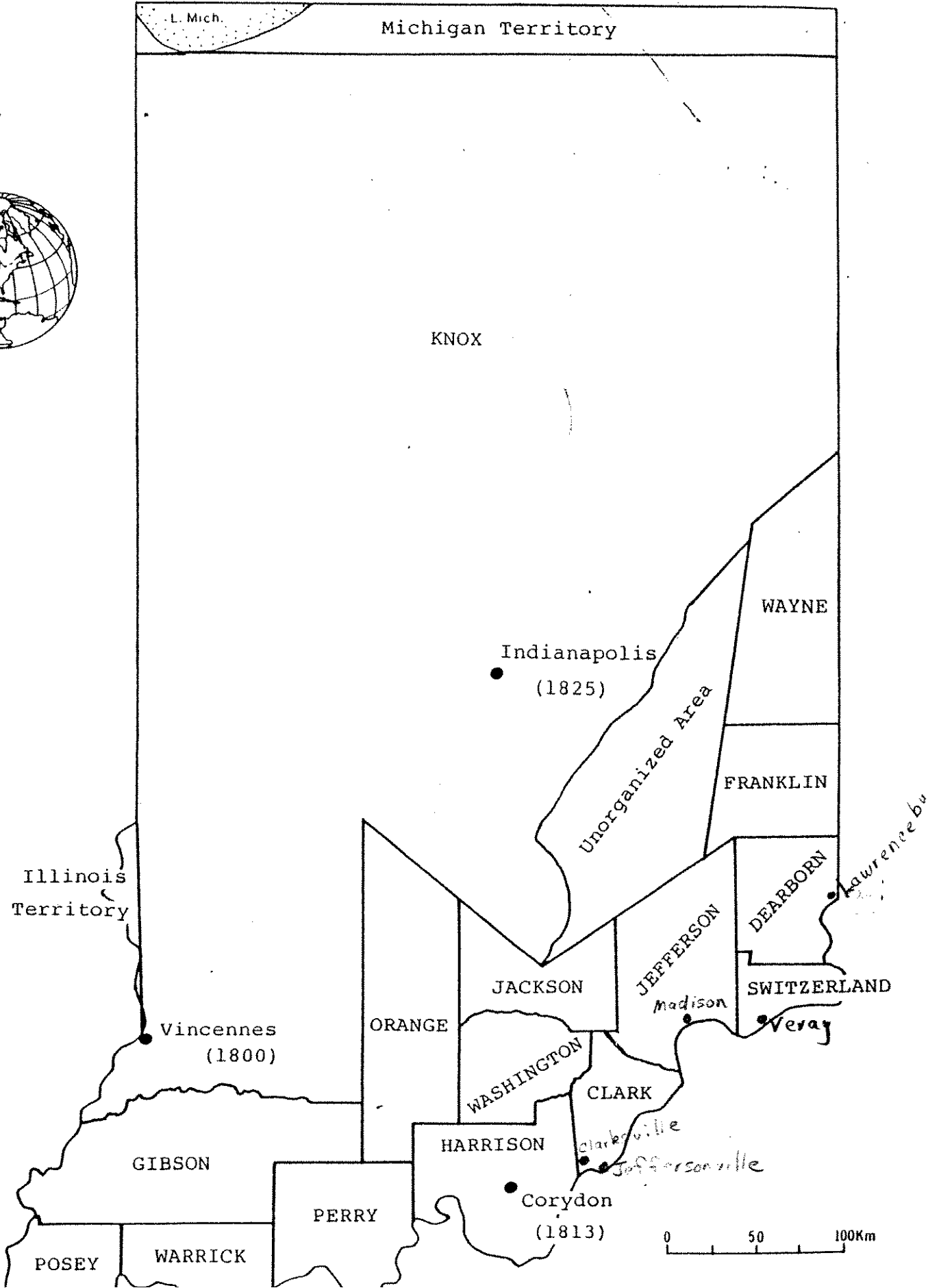
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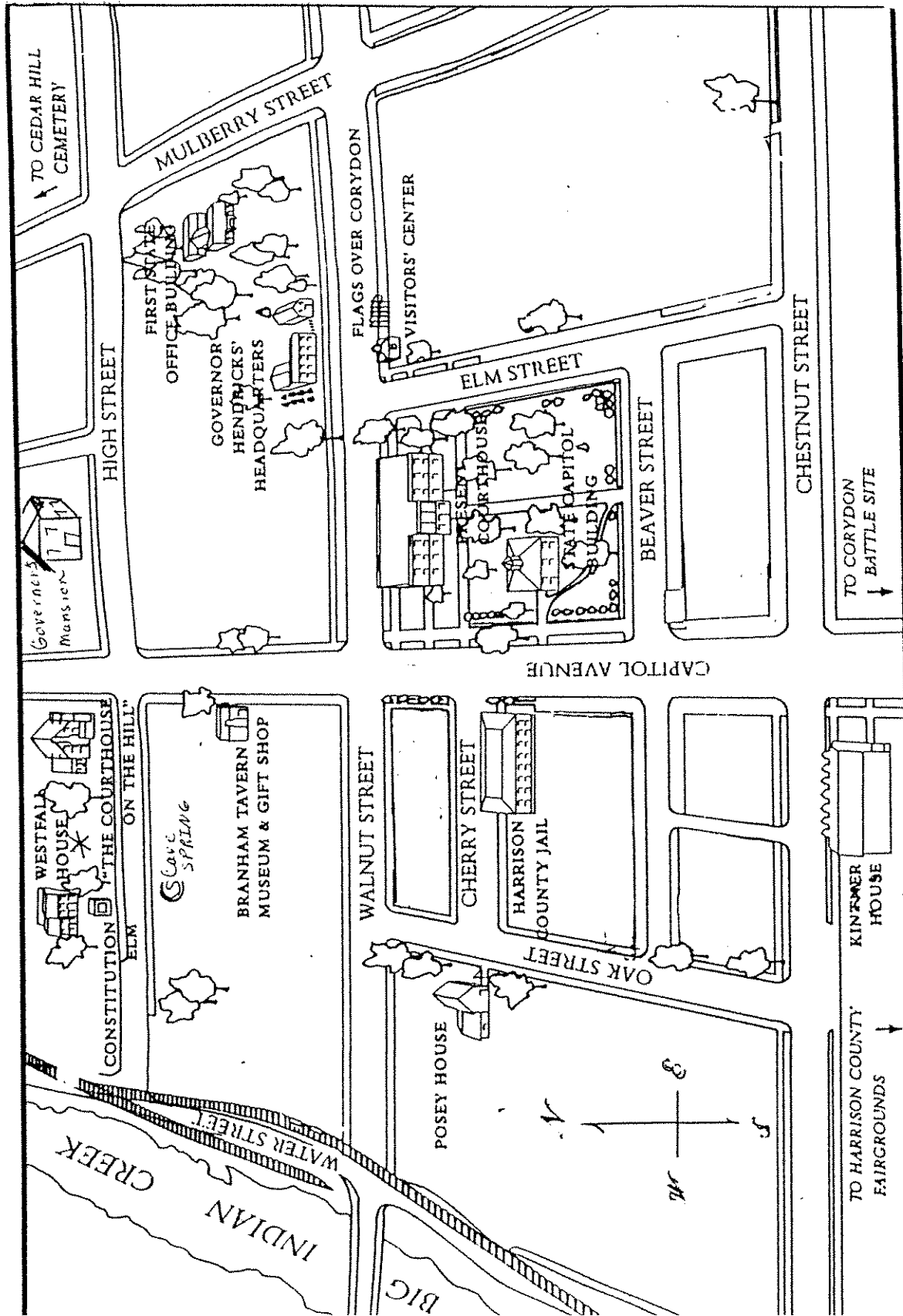
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COUNTIES OF 1816 IN

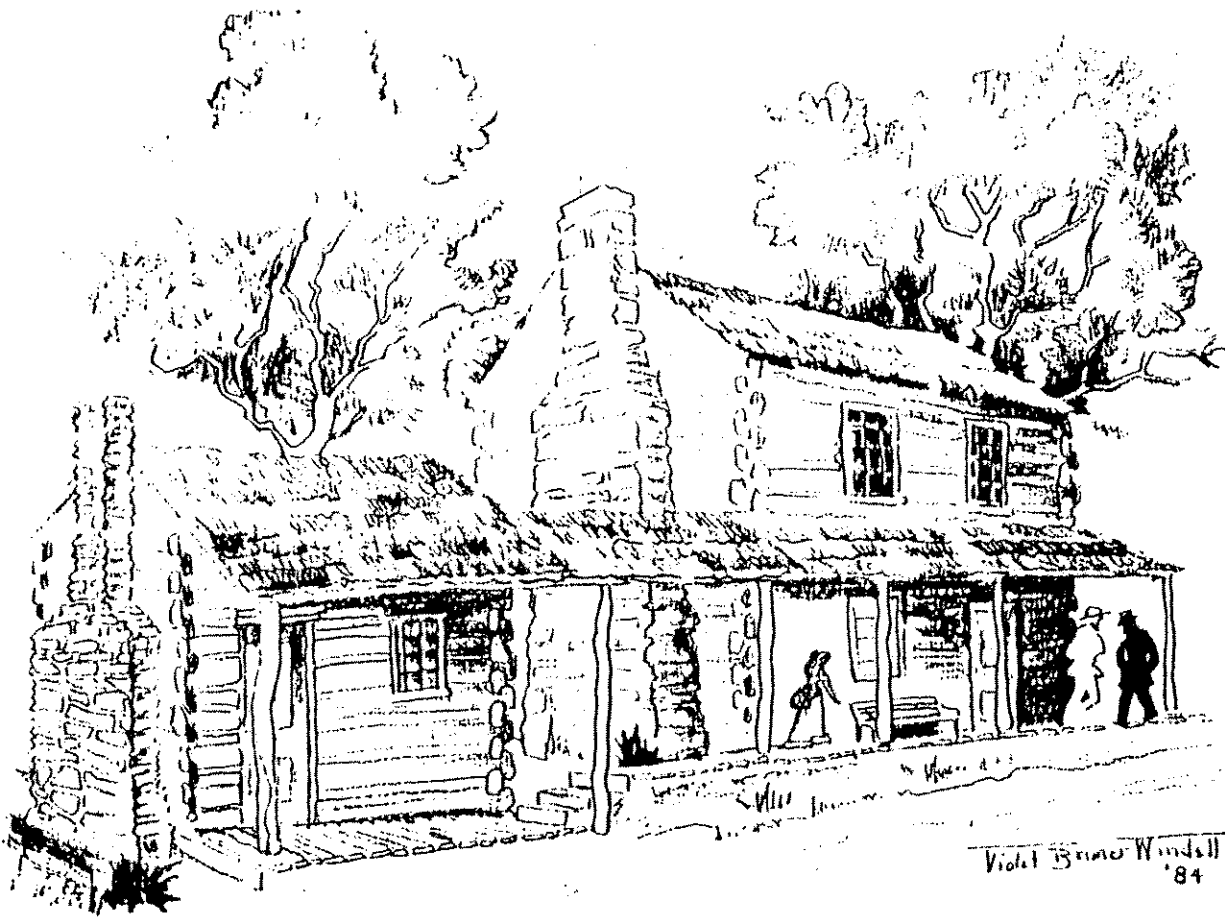
INDIANA

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LITTLE INDIAN CREEK



LOG COURTHOUSE ON THE HILL



OLD STATE CAPITOL

This building which is still well preserved, was the Territorial Capitol building of Indiana from 1813 to 1816, and the State Capitol building from 1816 to 1825. It was the cradle in which Indiana was rocked as an infant.



The Old Capitol Building

THE Old Capitol Building was built by Harrison County for a court house. The contract was let to Dennis Pennington in 1809. He was to receive \$1,500 for his work. The building was not completed until 1812, just a few months before it became the territorial capitol building.

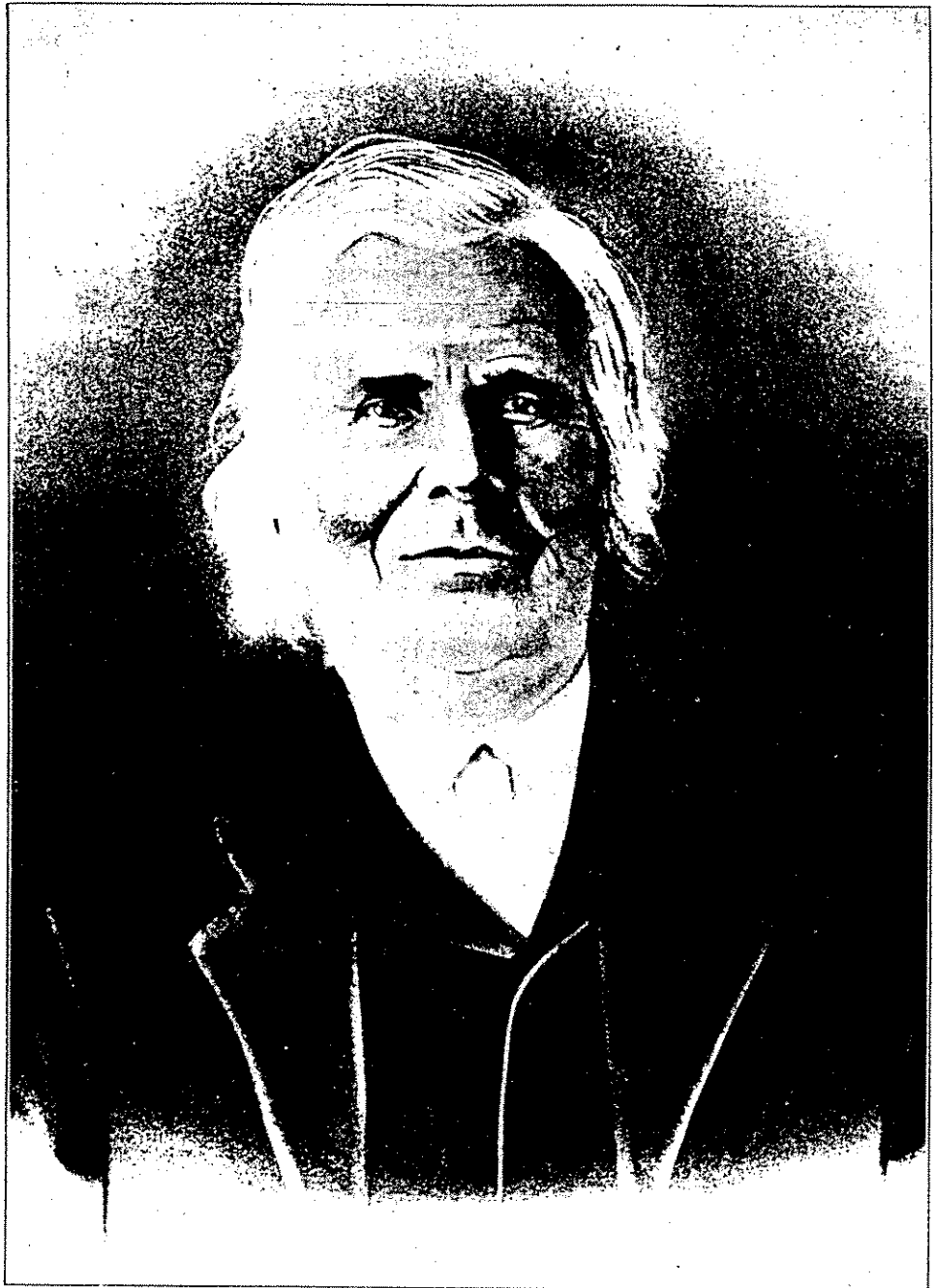
¶ It is built of limestone rock which were easily picked up on the surrounding hills or easily quarried by surface quarrying. The majority of the stones had been exposed to the weather for many years before they were placed in the building and were so hard that after one hundred years the walls are as solid as the day they were built.

¶ The exposed surfaces were not dressed but only those rocks were used on the outside walls that had broken with almost a square surface and since rocks of almost a uniform thickness were used, the walls of the building present an even and neat surface. The building is forty feet square and the walls of the lower story were made two and one-half feet thick with a fifteen-foot ceiling, the walls of the upper story two feet thick with a ten-foot ceiling. On the north and south sides of the building, huge chimneys eight feet long and extending two feet back from the inside walls were erected. These accommodated four spacious fireplaces, two below and two above. The lower floor was made of stone flagging covered with sawdust, with hewn timbers inside the bar rail. The lower story was in one room and was used as the house chamber. The upper story was partitioned so as to make one large room on the south side which was used as the senate chamber and two smaller office rooms on the north side. The clerk of the supreme court occupied these rooms.

¶ The building stands today as it did when used by the first state legislators with the exception of a few minor changes. A floor has been placed in the lower room, the fireplaces closed, a door frame has been placed in the front door to replace the old stone arch, the steps leading to the upper story placed on the outside and the upper story has been partitioned into office rooms.

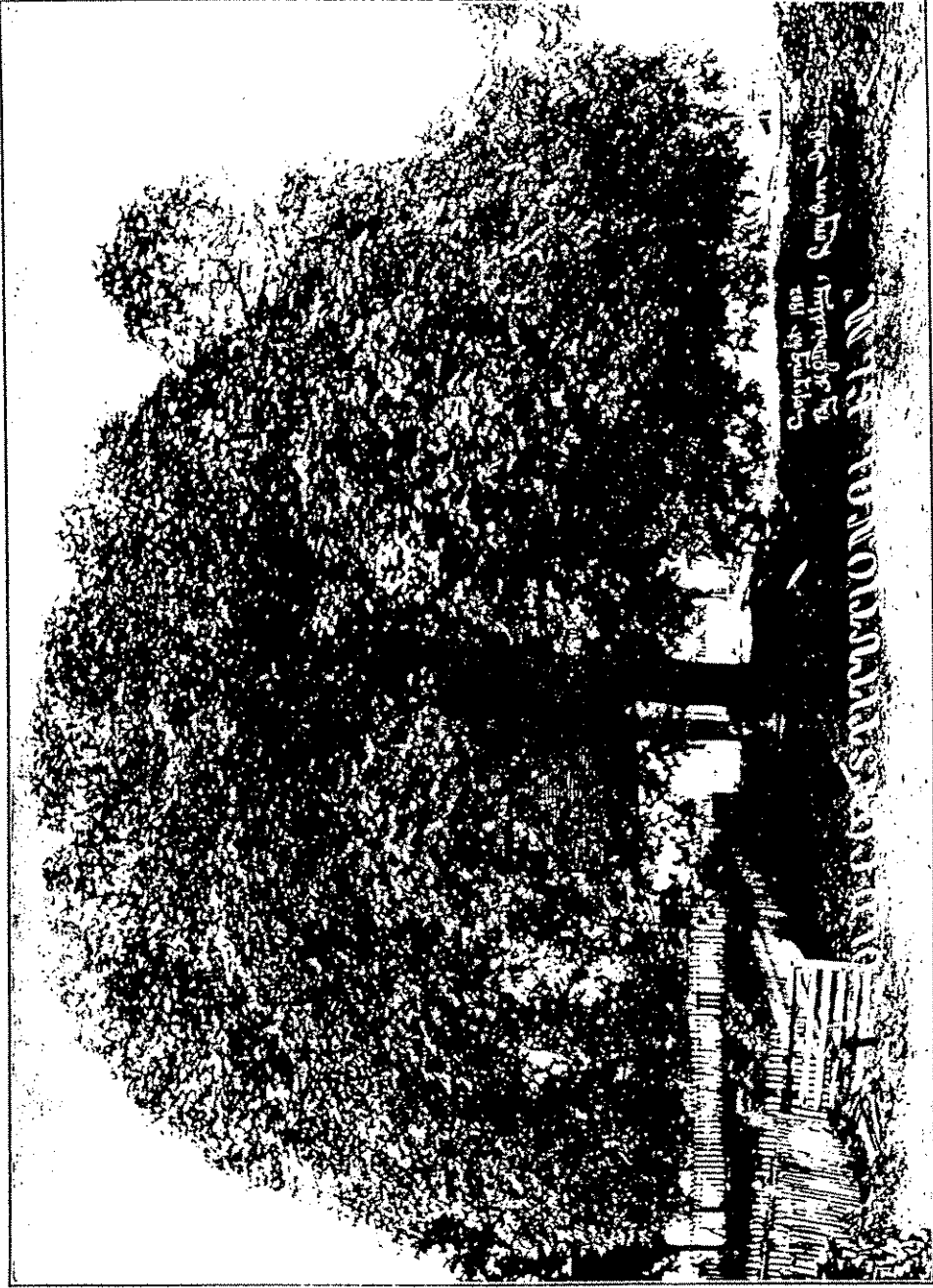
¶ The building being in the public square occupies valuable and badly needed room for modern county buildings and movements have been made at times to tear it away, but so far the patriotic citizens of Corydon have preserved it. One time during Governor Porter's administration arrangements were being made to tear down the old building to give room for more adequate county buildings. Governor Porter heard of it and made a trip from Indianapolis to Corydon and prevailed upon those in authority to preserve the old historic building for posterity. Our pioneer fathers built well and with proper care the Old Capitol Building will stand for centuries as have the old castles of Europe and will ever be a monument to the beginning of our State's history.



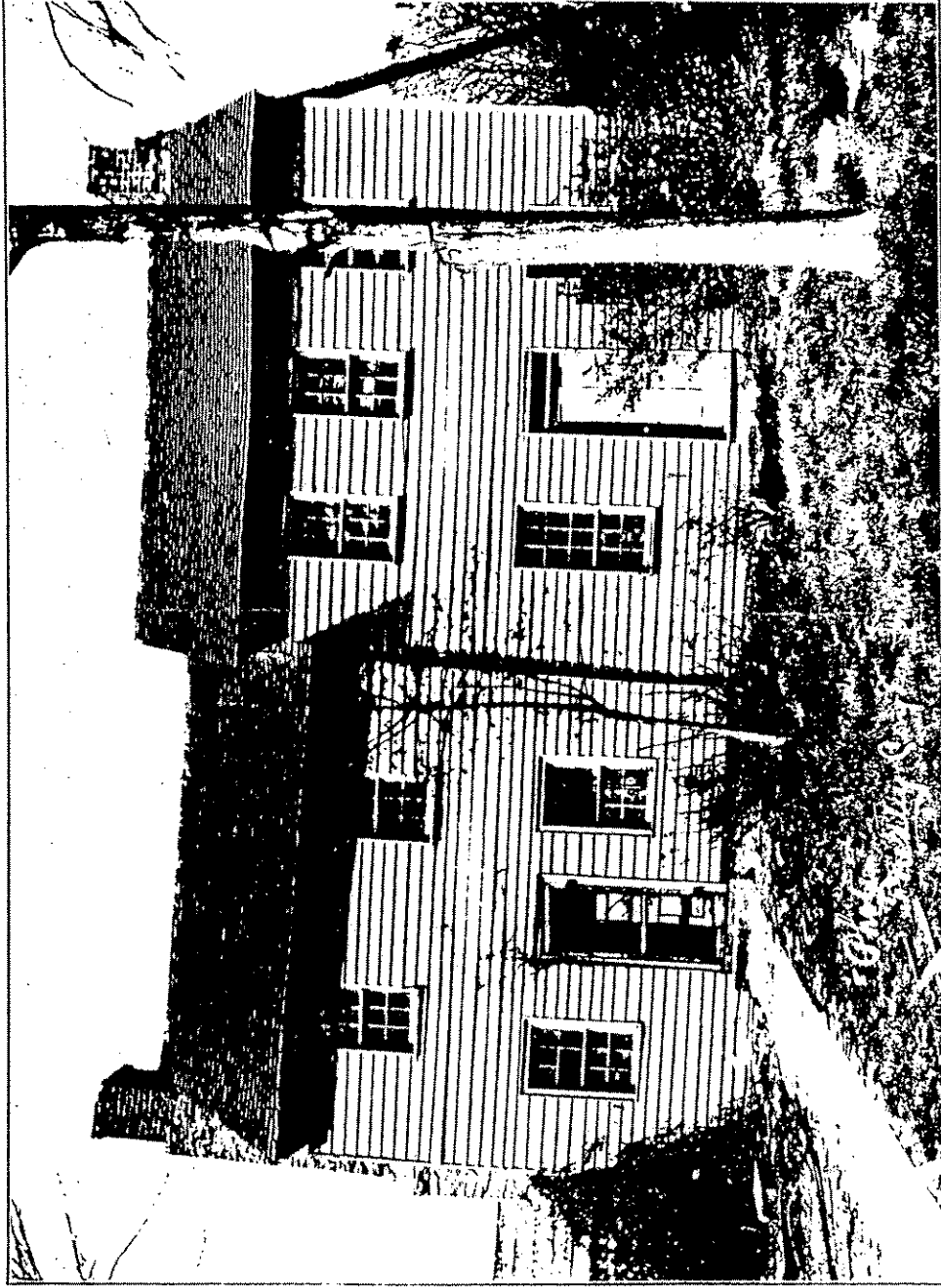


DENNIS PENNINGTON

The contractor who built the Old State House. He emigrated from Virginia to Kentucky on horse-back with Henry Clay 1799. Emigrated to Indiana 1804. He was a Territorial and State Legislator for 29 years; Speaker of the Body in 1816; a member of the Constitutional Convention and a member of the first Senatorial Body.

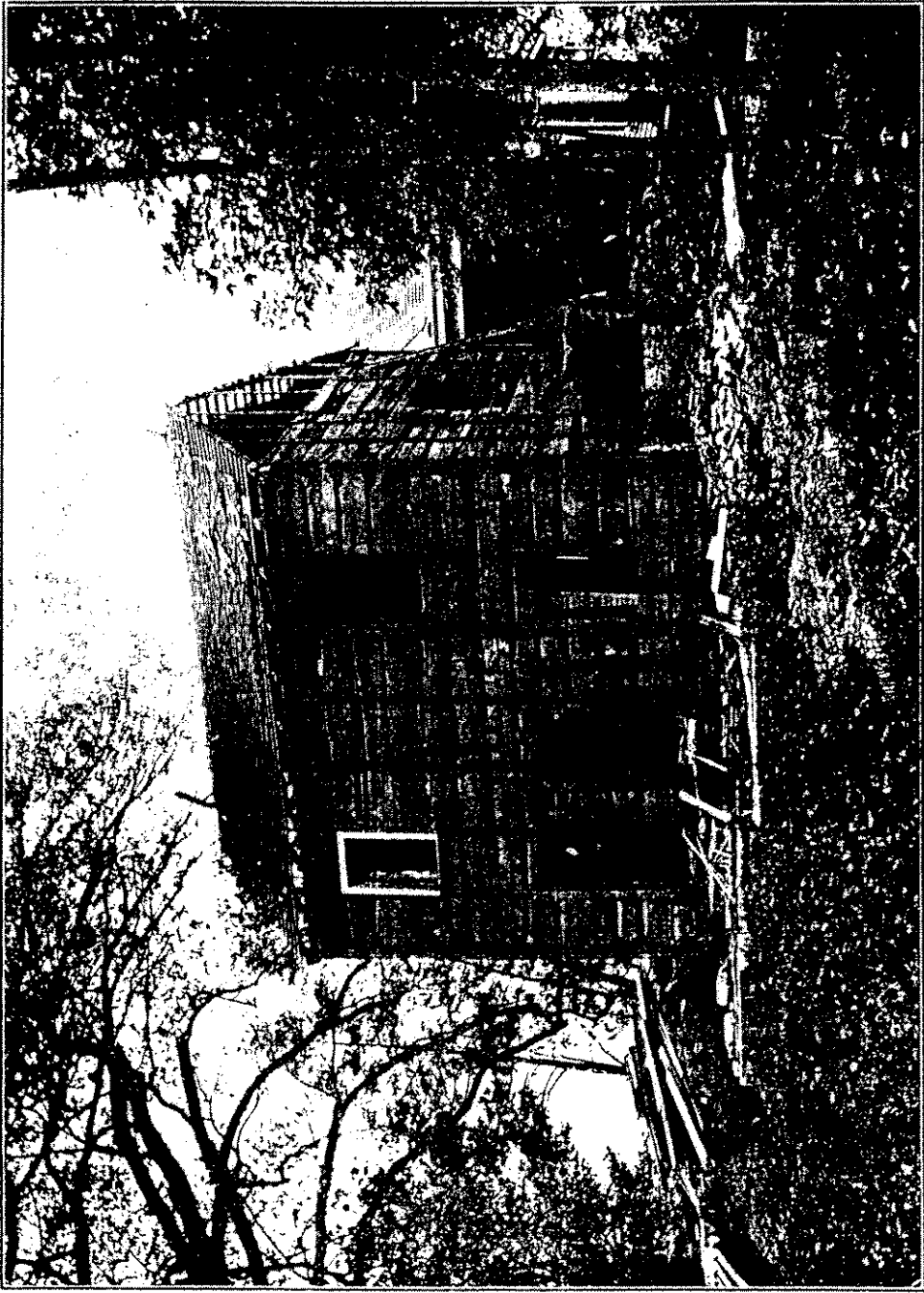


Under this tree the forty-three members of the Constitutional Convention drafted the first Constitution of Indiana. Jonathan Jennings presided over the deliberations and William Hendricks was Secretary. The tree is still in a good state of preservation.



THE WESTFALL HOUSE

This house, which was built in 1807, was the first house built on the town site of Corydon. It is still standing in the shade of Constitutional Elm. It is also the old home of Julia Fried Walker.



STATE TREASURER'S HOME

This was the home of Daniel C. Lane, first Treasurer of State. It stood in the shade of the old Constitutional Elm and was torn down in 1912.



GOVERNOR'S MANSION

This was the home of Governor Jennings during the six years that he resided at the capital. It was torn down about twenty-five years ago.

Branham Tavern
MUSEUM and GIFT SHOP
A HISTORIC LANDMARK
CIRCA 1800



Branham Tavern

PLACED ON THE NATIONAL
REGISTER OF
HISTORIC PLACES IN 1973

What is the Posey House?

The Posey House is owned and maintained by the Hoosier Elm Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, Corydon, Indiana. Built in 1817 for Col. Thomas L. Posey, the son of Indiana's Territorial Governor, Thomas Posey, this house is often cited as an example of the "Federal" architectural style. Col. Posey was prominent in Corydon's early history as merchant; Harrison County Treasurer, Cashier of the Corydon branch of the Bank of Vincennes; State Adjutant General, and active church member. Although never married, he reared 14 orphans in his home, which was then twice its present size.

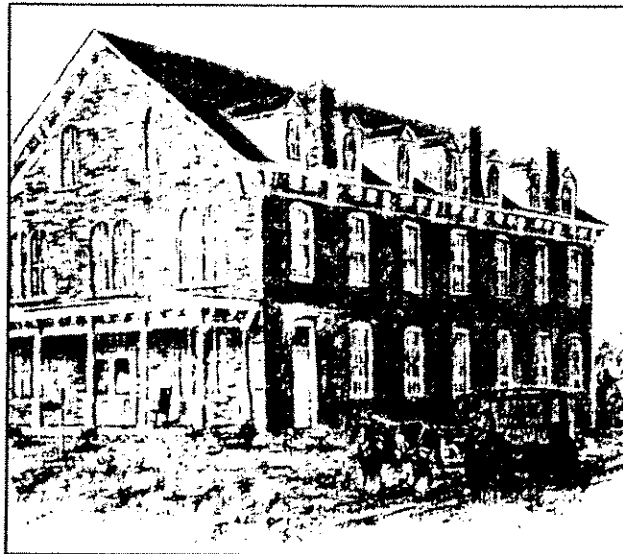


CORYDON
Indiana



Kintner House Inn

Listed On National Register
of Historic Places



Bed and Breakfast
14 Elegant Rooms, Each with a Private Bath
Capitol and Chestnut
Corydon, IN 47112
812-738-2020



FIRST OFFICE BUILDING

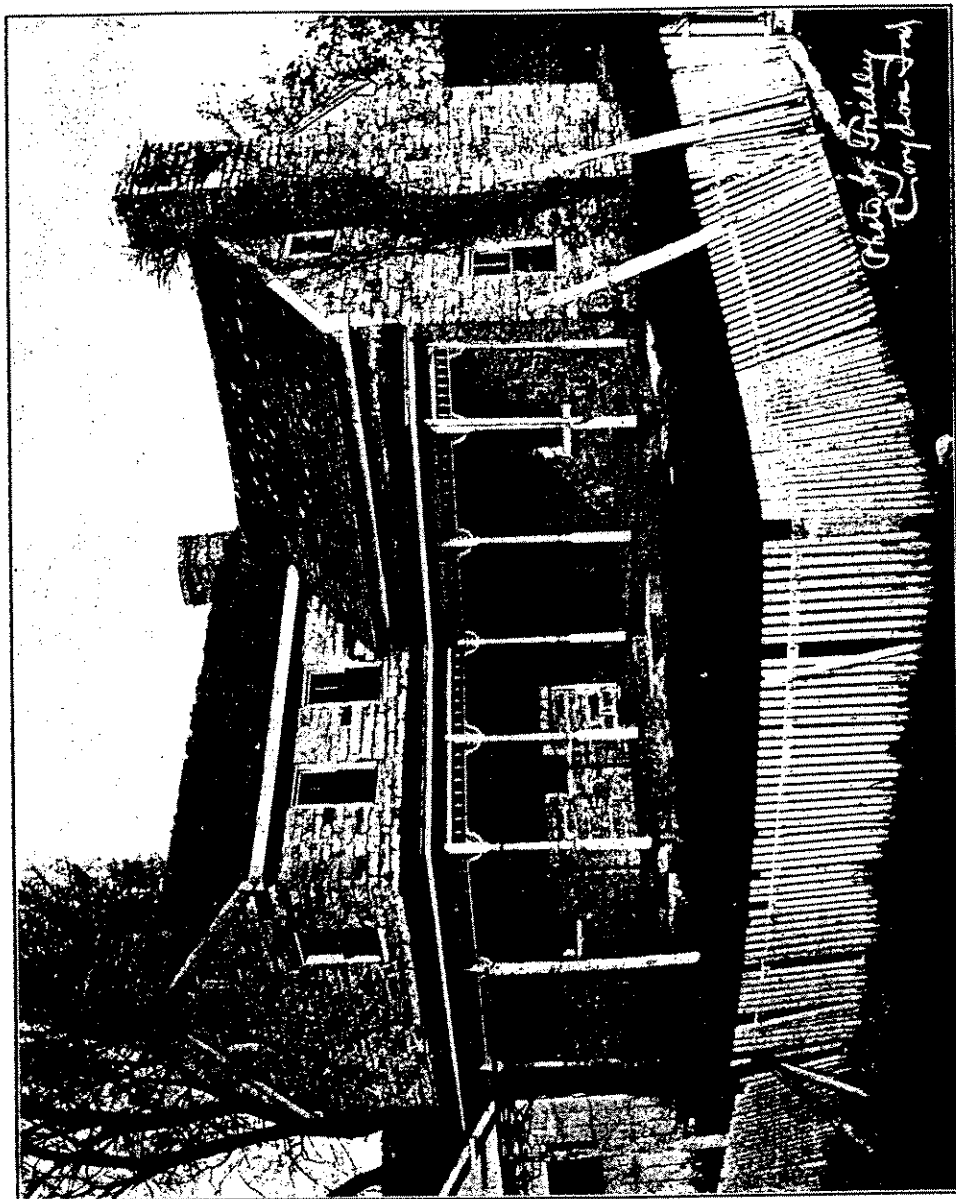
This building was used as an office building by all of the State officers except the Auditor of State. The State funds were kept in the cellar. The above is a recent picture of the building.



Photo by Saml. L. Coffey

GOV. HENDRICK'S HEADQUARTERS

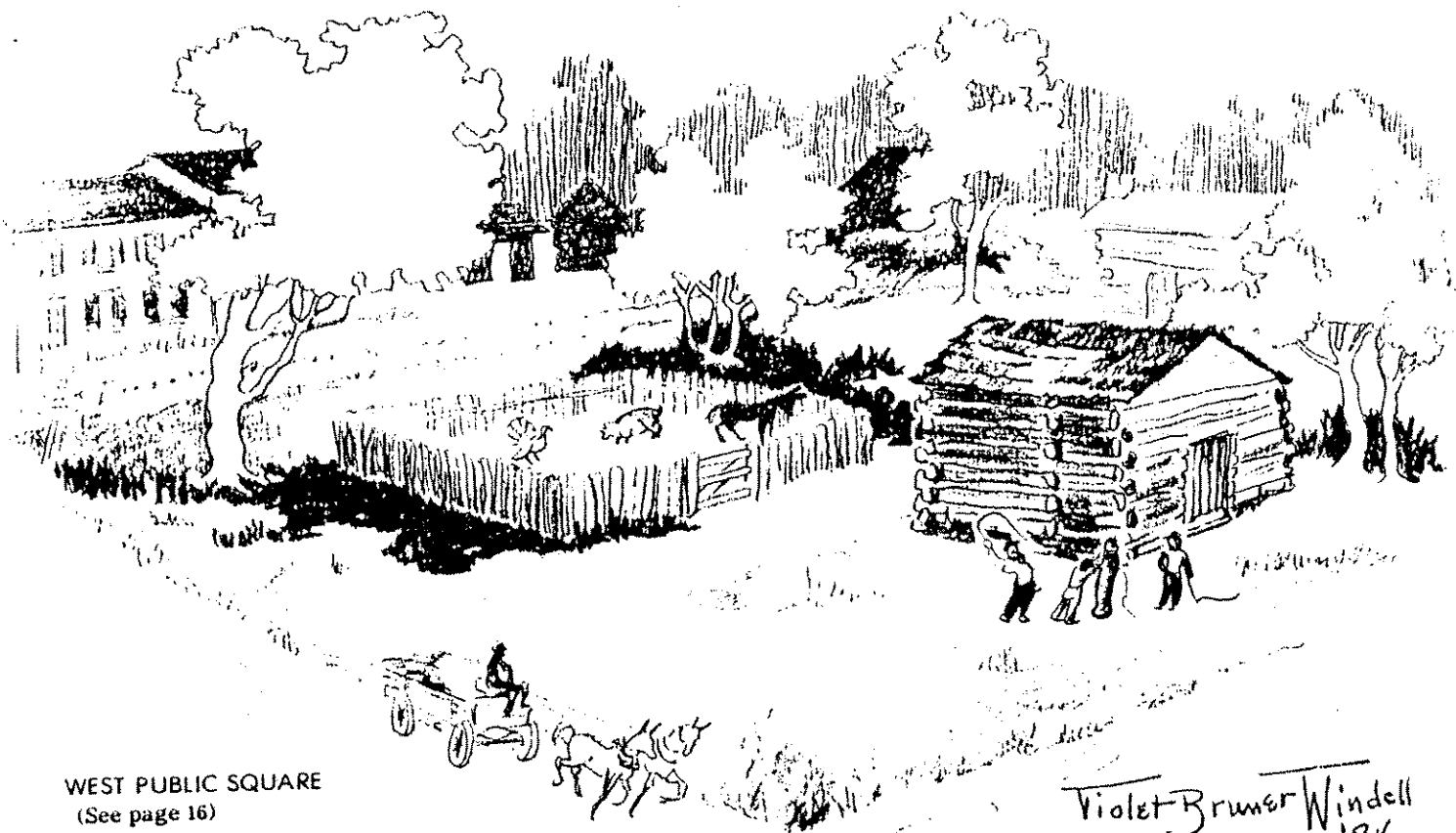
A recent picture of the Griffin home. Gov. Hendricks had rooms in this building while serving in the capacity of Indiana's second Governor.



OLD CAPITOL HOTEL

This hotel was built in 1809. It is still standing in a good state of preservation. It was the favorite hotel of the early statesmen and legislators.

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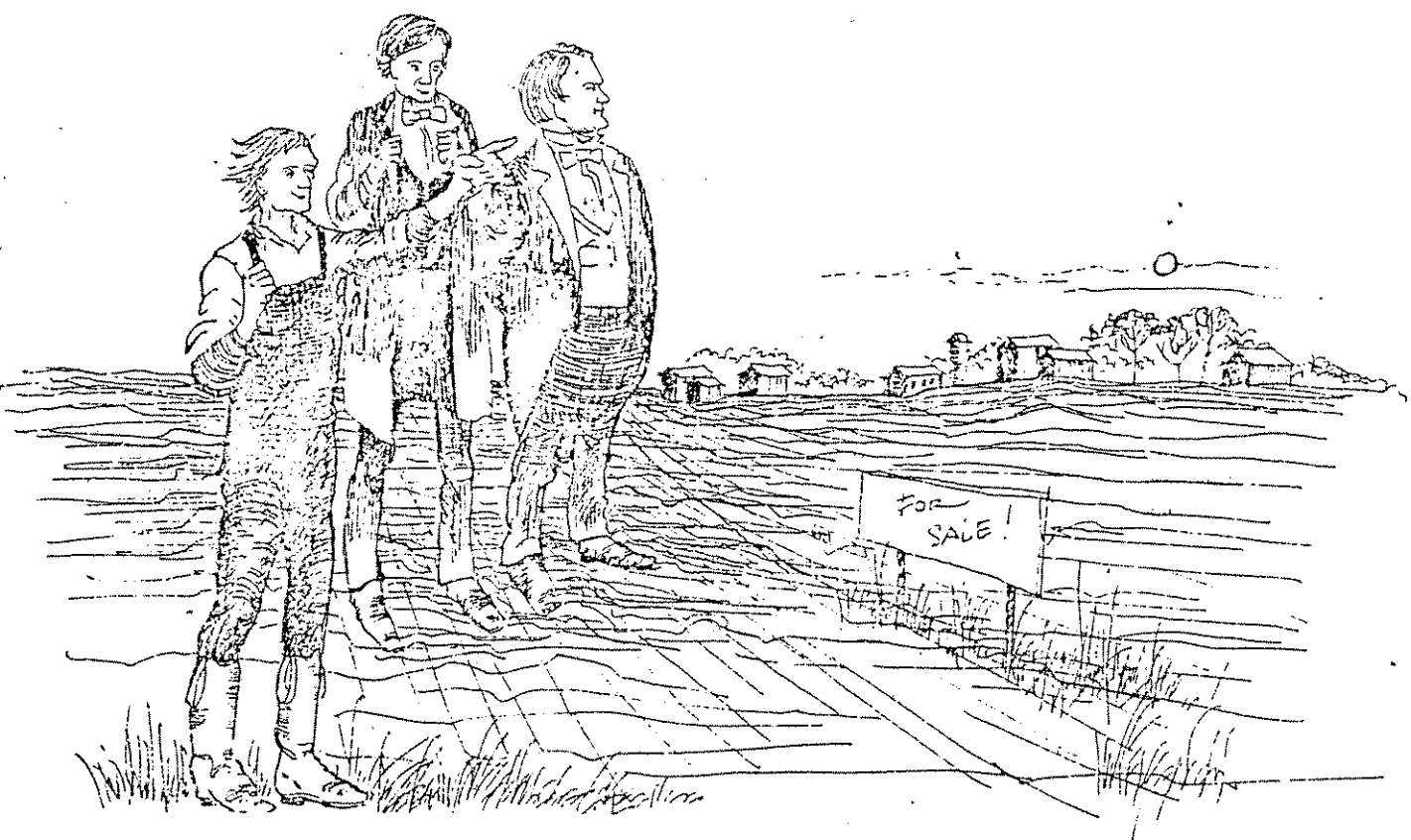


WEST PUBLIC SQUARE
(See page 16)

Violet Bruner Windell
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FROM CORYDON TO INDIANAPOLIS

PAMELA J. FARRIS



Characters

<u>Narrator</u>	First Legislator
Henry	Second Legislator*
Sam	Third Legislator
George	Fourth Legislator*
Hannah*	Surveyor
Bess	Caleb*
Timothy*	Andy
Governor Jennings	

*indicates easy to read

Vocabulary

- citizens
- legislature
- legislator
- capitol
- rumor
- ashamed
- surveyor
- original
- aye
- challenge

ACT I

SCENE I (Henry, Sam, George, Bess, Hannah and Timothy are in the general store.)

Narrator: The year is 1820. Indiana's state legislature voted to send ten men to find a new place to locate the state capitol. The men have just returned to Corydon where the citizens are angry. The people of Corydon don't want the capitol to be moved from their city.

Henry: Well, have you heard the news?

Sam: What news are you talking about?

Henry: Governor Jennings has decided to move the capitol up north.

George: That's just a rumor, Henry.

Henry: It's not either. I talked to one of the men who went with the Governor. He said they're going to build a new town.

Hannah: Why would anyone want to move the capitol in the first place?

Sam: Some folks want people to settle up north. That's why they had the New Purchase.

Henry: Sam's right, ma'am. The Indians had control of

over two thirds of our state a few years ago. The New Purchase enabled new treaties to be made with the Indians. The Indians are leaving Indiana and moving west.

George: We could've run them out instead of talking them out.

Bess: Now, George. You should be ashamed of yourself. Indians haven't done a single thing to hurt you or your family.

George: You're right, Bess. I just think we could have gotten rid of the Indians a lot quicker with gunpowder and lead than with talk.

Timothy: You don't like Indians, George.

Henry: Timothy's right.

Hannah: Is that why they want to move the capitol?
Because of the Indians?

Sam: The state officials think the Indians will go on the warpath and try to take over their old hunting lands.

Henry: That's a good point.

Sam: The Indians won't be as likely to come back if there are several people living throughout the state.

Timothy: Then they wouldn't fight us.

Henry: They'd keep going west most likely.

George: Where are they going to put the capitol?

Henry: It's a place on the west fork of White River at the mouth of Fall Creek. It's almost the exact center of Indiana.

Timothy: Did you make that up?

Henry: No! I'm telling you the truth. That's where they're going to put it.

George: The Ohio River makes the White River look like sweat rolling off the back of a man's neck. I'm not even sure the White River is big enough to be called a river.

Henry: It's a mighty small river all right.

Sam: How will the farmers get their crops to market?

George: Haven't you heard? The geese are each going to carry a grain of corn when they fly south for the winter.

(Everyone laughs.)

Sam: I'll believe they're moving the capitol when I see it.

Hannah: So will I. I'm ready to head for home, George. How about you?

George: I reckon I'm as ready as I'll ever be.

ACT II

SCENE I (Governor Jennings is standing before the legislature.)

Narrator: The state legislature is meeting. Governor Jennings is talking to the legislators about the new location of the state capitol.

Jennings: We need to name the new capitol now that we've picked a site for it.

First Legislator: How about an Indian name?

Jennings: What do you suggest?

First Legislator: What about Tecumseh?

Second Legislator: He fought against us!

Third Legislator: How about naming it New Corydon? That should make a few people happy.

First Legislator: The people are upset enough about the capitol being moved. To name it New Corydon would only rub salt into the wound.

Jennings: The name we chose should be something new and different. That way few people will object to it.

Fourth Legislator: I've got a name for the capitol.

Jennings: What is it?

Fourth Legislator: Indianapolis.

Second Legislator: What does it mean?

Fourth Legislator: City of Indians.

First Legislator: That's a good name!

Third Legislator: I like that. Indianapolis. It rolls off the tongue.

Fourth Legislator: I move that the new capitol be called Indianapolis!

Second Legislator: I second it!

Jennings: All in favor say aye.

(All of the legislators say aye.)

So moved. Indianapolis is our new state capitol.

(The legislators all shout "hooray".)

SCENE II (Governor Jennings, the surveyor, Caleb and Andy are talking.)

Narrator: Governor Jennings met with the committee that would design the new city.

Jennings: The legislature voted to name the capital Indianapolis.

Surveyor: That's an original name. It has a good sound to it. Indianapolis, Indiana. What do you think, Caleb?

Caleb: It sounds good to me.

Andy: How are we going to lay out this town?

Surveyor: I've been studying it.

Andy: North-south streets crossing east-west streets make an orderly town. The roads will be coming in from all directions.

Caleb: That's a fact.

Surveyor: Andy, you've given me an excellent idea!

Andy: What's that?

Surveyor: We'll design Indianapolis to be like our nation's capitol, Washington, D.C.

Caleb: How can you do that?

Surveyor: We'll set up the town like a wheel with spokes going out from the center. And the center will be something very special.

Jennings: What?

Surveyor: A circle.

Jennings: Won't that be difficult to survey?

Surveyor: It'll take a little more time but not much. What do you think, Governor?

Jennings: It'll be a challenge to build a city with your design. When it is finished, it'll be a sight to behold.

narrator:
/
S Lots were sold and settlers moved in. In 1824, all the state papers and records were put in a wagon drawn by 5 horses. The journey took 10 days. Finally in 1825 the Indiana Legislature met for the first time in the new capital city.

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