

CORYDON, INDIANA, 1813-1825

By Janet Kluemper

GRADE LEVEL: Elementary

Prepared in partial fulfillment of requirements for
"INDIANA AND THE NEW NATION, 1776-1876"
a project of the Historic Southern Indiana Project
of the University of Southern Indiana
8600 University Boulevard
Evansville, Indiana 47712
(812) 465-7014

FUNDED BY THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT BE DUPLICATED WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM
THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN INDIANA

Corydon, Indiana 1813-1825

by Janet Kluemper

Ireland Elementary School

P.O. Box 95

Ireland, IN 47545

February 24, 1990

Description:

The small historic community of Corydon, Indiana, in Harrison County became the "birthplace of Indiana." In 1813 when Indiana was preparing for statehood the capital of the Indiana Territory was moved from Vincennes to Corydon. Corydon was a more central location for the population of Indiana at that time. The first state constitution was written at Corydon in 1816, and the limestone court house there became "the cradle" that served the legislative sessions for Indiana's very early years as a state. As planned from the beginning, the capital was later moved again--this time to Indianapolis in 1825. This lesson is designed to ideally be used in conjunction with a field trip to Corydon. It is designed for fifth grade but can be adapted.

Objectives:

To gain knowledge about Corydon's history as the capital of the Indiana Territory and later as the first capital of the state of Indiana

To become aware of Indiana's heritage--that Indiana was part of the Northwest Territory, then the Indiana Territory; that the first state capital was Corydon; that the first state constitution was written at Corydon, and early Indiana's history was shaped there in BUILDINGS that are still in existence and by PEOPLE who lived in Corydon at that time

To locate early communities of Indiana on a state map

To become familiar with some of the history of the writing of Indiana's first constitution and with some of the articles of the constitution

To recognize the architectural appearance of the early buildings of Corydon so that students on a field trip to Corydon will be able to relate that experience to previous and/or post learning activities

To identify many of the people connected with the early history of Corydon and, in particular, William Henry Harrison for whom the county, Harrison County, was named

Grade Level: 5

Materials Needed:

Student copies of the enclosed materials

Classroom map of Indiana or road maps

Reference books or materials

Optional: A copy of Indiana's First Constitution, 1816

Pictures or brochures of Corydon, Indiana. These may be obtained by contacting: Curator

Corydon Capitol State Historic Site
202 E. Walnut St.
Corydon, IN 47112
(812) 738-4890

Lesson Plan: one lesson per day

- Lesson 1--William Henry Harrison
- Lesson 2--The Birth of Indiana-1816
- Lesson 3--Indiana as a Territory, 1800-1816
- Lesson 4--Places to Visit in Corydon
- Lesson 5--People in the History of Corydon
- Days 6 to 8?--Field Trip, Evaluation

Evaluation Suggestions:

1. Students can write and perform a skit depicting a scene from one of the lessons. One of the sites to visit can serve as background. Persons from the last lesson can possibly be the characters.
2. Students write a brief report on Corydon, or on one aspect of the materials covered. A photo essay would be recommended or visual aids could be made and included.
3. Students make a picture book for younger children on any one of the topics addressed.
4. More advanced students can hold a class debate on one of the then-disputed issues, e.g., choosing the site that would replace Vincennes as capital; choosing the site of the final capital--Indianapolis; or "We should apply for statehood NOW.(1813)"

Bibliography:

Carmony, Donald F., Indiana. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1941.

Cangemi, JoAnn, editor, Our Regions. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1962.

Funk, Arville L., Our Historic Corydon. Chicago, Ill.: Adams Press, 1966.

Indiana History. Wilksburg, Penn.: Hayes School Publishing Co., 1979.

Madison, James H., The Indiana Way A State History. Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1986.

The Story of Indiana's Constitution Elm. Corydon, Ind.: General Printing Co., 1974.

William Henry Harrison

William Henry Harrison was only 27 years old when he became the governor of the Indiana Territory. He was born in Berkeley, Virginia, on Feb. 9, 1773 and belonged to a family prominent in Revolutionary times. His father was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and was later the governor of Virginia.

Harrison joined the army at an early age and was moved to Ohio. He served with General St. Clair and General Wayne against the Indians. In Ohio he also met and married Anna Symmes, the daughter of Judge John C. Symmes, a wealthy land speculator.

He resigned from the army and served as Secretary of the Northwest Territory under Governor St. Clair in 1797-1798. Harrison had a thorough knowledge of the Indians and could deal skillfully with them either by war or diplomacy.

In early 1801 Governor Harrison arrived at the capital of the Indiana Territory, Vincennes. He built a brick mansion there which became a center of activity for the Indiana Territory. Indiana country at this time was wild, thinly settled, almost wholly without roads of any kind and constantly threatened by attack from the Indians. There was no proper law enforcement.

Governor Harrison had to:

- 1) Establish a government for the Territory.
- 2) Deal with the Indians and secure as much of their land as possible.
- 3) Survey this land and grant titles to it to the white settlers who were now immigrating in large numbers.

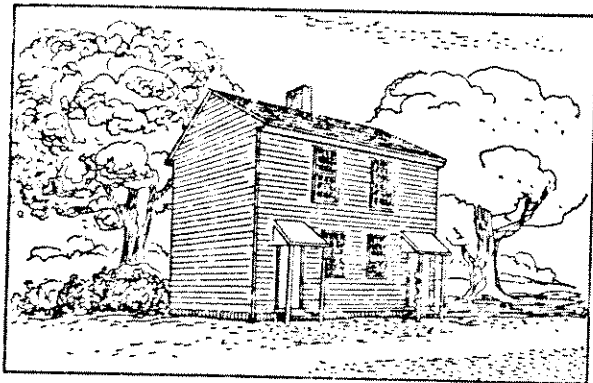
A government was established with Governor Harrison at the head and 3 judges appointed by Congress. Harrison was greatly aided by an old experienced Indian trader named John Gibson, who had been appointed Secretary of the Territory. The capital building was a rudely constructed frame building on the first floor of which were government offices. The second floor was the assembly room and was reached by an outside staircase.

During this time, in 8 treaties Governor Harrison obtained for the U.S. most of southern Indiana. After peaceful means seemed useless in dealing with the Shawnee Tecumseh and his brother the Prophet, Governor Harrison recruited an army of about 900 men. He marched north and east to a place 8 miles north of present day Lafayette. In Tecumseh's absence, the Prophet and the other Indians attacked Harrison and his men early in the morning of Nov. 7, 1811. The Indians were defeated. This was the last major battle between white men and Indians in Indiana. It is known as the battle of Tippecanoe.

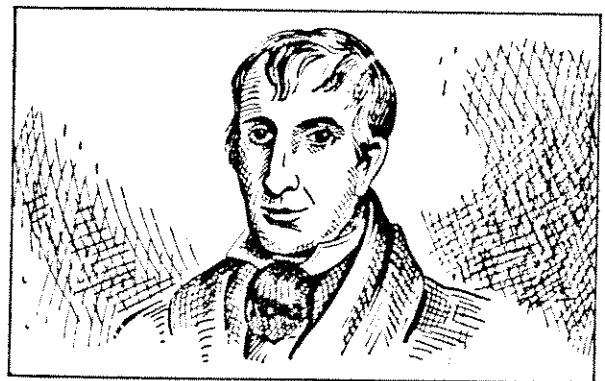
Governor Harrison became very famous for this battle and later received his title "Old Tippecanoe" from his part in this battle. Numerous Indiana counties are named for officers in this battle--Bartholomew, Daviess, Dubois, Owen, Randolph, Wells, to name a few.

Soon after the Battle of Tippecanoe, John Gibson became acting governor because all of Harrison's time was taken by his military duties in connection with the War of 1812, and with his duties as Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Gibson acted as governor from July, 1812, to May 1813. Thomas Posey succeeded Gibson and served as Territorial Governor until Indiana became a state in 1816.

Between 1800 and 1816 many settlers had poured into the Indiana Territory. There was plenty of government land which was sold to the settlers at a very low price, often as little as \$1.25 per acre. Land Offices were set up at different places by the Federal government, the first one being at Vincennes in 1805. People who wanted land could buy it through a land office. According to the Land Ordinance of 1785 this land had to be surveyed and divided into tracts before it could be sold. However, some of the land had already been claimed by persons who had settled on it before the survey (squatters), and the government had to recognize their claims in some way. These problems, together with the question of making further land treaties with the Indians, were ones which Governor Harrison had to solve.



The first capitol building for Indiana Territory was a plain dwelling house in Vincennes.



Wm. Henry Harrison was only 27 years old when he became governor of the Indiana Territory.

P J B G Y O D Q W T T N Q D G Q V U X I Q
 Q A X E N G R U J Q E Z P R O P H E T J Z
 T R E A T I E S I E R S U R V E Y D I P H
 E L G W A B L H O L R M M Z E P Y D O M T
 C Q C C P S A A O Z I G Z T R O S S P C Q
 U J G L U O L R F I T L V I N C E N N E S
 M S M P X N I N S H O Q B P O X D J Z F K
 S Q A T J M V X U Q R E U P R K I C U A D
 E U C D P A N N A S Y M M E S X P A X D C
 H A R R I S O N G G F X B C O N O Z P Q G
 S T E W U H R R O R A J O R A R U G U V C I
 L T S E S A T V N S P E U N I Y F M Z Z X
 A E R P R W H Q R P B V D O C Q I F B A J
 V R T W R N W O N J M X B E U K Y W M S U
 B U O S D E E T Z F B Z R S Y D W I N C O
 L R X F O E S O C W C P T Z Y N N Q O O H
 A F Q D Q N T N O I N E P G Y R I N Y F L

Can you find these words?

TIPPECANOE	ANNASYMMES	TERRITORY
VINCENNES	NORTHWEST	HARRISON
TECUMSEH	TREATIES	SQUATTER
GOVERNOR	PROPHET	SHAWNEE
GIBSON	SURVEY	ACRE

Answer Key for:

. T G
 G E . P R O P H E T . .
 T R E A T I E S . . R S U R V E Y
 E B R E
 C S I . . T R
 U O T . V I N C E N N E S
 M S . . . N O . . P O
 S Q A R . . P R
 E U C . . A N N A S Y M M E S
 H A R R I S O N C
 . T E . . H R A
 . T . . . A T N
 . E . . . W H Q
 . R . . . N W E
 E E
 E S
 T

Indiana as a Territory 1800-1816

The population of the Indiana Territory in 1800 was approximately 6500. The territory consisted of nearly all of Indiana, the western half of Michigan and the present states of Illinois and Wisconsin. It even included part of what is now Minnesota.

There were only 2 counties in Indiana proper at this time--Knox and St. Clair. Nearly all of the people in what is Indiana today lived either at Vincennes or at Clark's grant. Vincennes was the oldest and also the largest settlement. The second largest settlement and the first all-American settlement was at Clarksville. This was on the land that had been granted to General George Rogers Clark and the men in his army for their services in winning the Northwest Territory from the English.

Most of the settlements in the Indiana Territory were on or near water--the Ohio, the Wabash, the Whitewater, and the White Rivers, and the smaller streams which flowed into these rivers. Nearly all the people lived in the southern part of the state, south of a line drawn between the present cities of TerreHaute and Richmond. The Indians were still in possession of the entire state north of that line. Each of the settlements mentioned were little more than a country settlement. Lawrenceburg was established in the extreme southeastern part of the territory. From there the more venturesome families pushed their way up the valley of the Whitewater River.

Vevay and Switzerland County were settled by immigrants whose original home had been Switzerland. Corydon owed its beginning to some pioneers from Kentucky. From Corydon, settlers proceeded northward toward the present towns of Paoli and Salem. Others from Kentucky crossed the Ohio River and founded Madison. Some ventured farther north to the land near the present towns of Vernon and Columbus. Farther southwest, hunters from Kentucky came to the sites of Boonville and Princeton but towns were not laid out there until after 1812. The most traveled road in the whole Territory was from New Albany to Vincennes along the Buffalo Trace.

In 1805 Indiana Territory was advanced to the second stage. A territorial legislature and a governor took the place of the old rule of governor and 3 judges. In the same year, Michigan Territory was separated from Indiana. In 1809 Illinois Territory was separated, and Indiana became the approximate shape of what it is today.

The cost of a state government was too expensive at this time, but with the end of the War of 1812 a flood of immigrants swarmed into Indiana. The population of Indiana jumped from about 25,000 in 1810 to about 64,000 in the spring of 1815.

When the legislature met in 1813, it decided that the capital of Indiana should be moved from Vincennes to a center location. It was decided to move it to Corydon. This was done on May 1, 1813. In December of 1815 the territorial legislature asked Congress for admission as a state.

It was well known that Indiana would enter the Union as a free state and on account of a compromise between the representatives of the slave and the free states in Congress, Indiana could not become a state until there was also a slave state ready for admission. Mississippi was ready to become a state in 1816, so Congress prepared an Enabling Act for Indiana. This authorized the people to "form for themselves a constitution and state government."

Assignment: Locate each of the following early settlements on the map of Indiana. Place a dot in the proper place and then write the name beside the dot.

Vincennes	Vevay	Jeffersonville	Boonville
Lawrenceburg	Princeton	Corydon	Salem
Fort Wayne	Madison	Brookville	New Albany
Paoli	New Harmony	Rockport	Evansville

Locate by writing the names in the proper locations:

White River	Tippecanoe River	Ohio River
Whitewater River	Lake Michigan	Wabash River

The Birth of Indiana--1816

The birth of Indiana began with the passage in Congress of the Enabling Act which was approved by President James Monroe on April 19, 1816. This made it possible for delegates from the Indiana Territory to be chosen for a convention to draw up a constitution.

In May of 1816, thirteen of the fifteen counties in the territory elected delegates to the constitutional convention. Orange and Jackson counties did not elect delegates, but all of the others sent from one to five men. There was a total of forty-three delegates altogether.

The group included 23 lawyers, 5 ministers, several from the Battle of Tippecanoe who were officers in the state militia, and men from other occupations. Many of them, in addition, were farmers. Perhaps this is why they only spent eighteen days writing the constitution. It was necessary for the lawmakers to return to their homes to plant their crops.

Because of his experience, Jonathan Jennings was elected president of the convention. William Hendricks, although not a delegate, was appointed secretary.

It is thought that the group at Corydon probably wore more buckskin or homespun jeans than the fancier clothes that were worn on the East Coast. Tradition says that on those warm days of June they probably did a lot of their writing on the constitution under the shade of a huge elm tree. This tree later became known as the Constitutional Elm. Near the elm was a large spring in which the townspeople stored their meat, eggs, and butter. It was a good place for the delegates to cool their jugs of brandy and other refreshments.

The delegates finished their work and headed for home on June 29th. The constitution they wrote was mostly copied from the United States Constitution and from the constitutions of Ohio, Kentucky, and other nearby states.

It had twelve articles. Article 1 provided for freedom of worship, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press. Article 2 described the three parts of government--legislative, executive, and judicial.

Other articles told how leaders were to be elected and who could vote. Another article promised that the state would set up a system of education in which schools would be free and open to all. It said there would be township schools and a state university.

Article 11 said there could be no slaves in Indiana. This article, written 45 years before the Civil War, expressed a strong feeling against slavery among the early people of Indiana.

The total cost of the 1816 convention and the writing of the new constitution was approximately \$10,000. This money was loaned to the

new state of Indiana by Frederick Rapp. He was a delegate from New Harmony and was the adopted son of George Rapp, the leader of the prosperous Rappite community of New Harmony.

On August 5, 1816, Indiana held its first state elections. Jonathan Jennings was elected the first governor. He later won another election and then served Indiana in the U.S. Congress.

On December 11, 1816, the Congress of the United States formally admitted Indiana as a new state. Thus Indiana became the nineteenth star on the American flag.

It was planned to keep Corydon as the capital of Indiana until settlement of northern Indiana had made further progress. This would be no longer than ten years. At that time a new capital in the center of the state was to be chosen. The place chosen was named Indianapolis, which means "city of Indiana."

In 1825 it took about ten days for the four wagons pulled by horses to move the state's records and supplies from Corydon to Indianapolis. This was only about 125 miles between the two villages. The area surrounding Indianapolis at this time was almost an unbroken wilderness for at least fifty miles in every direction. Wild turkeys were killed in the streets.

Soon Corydon settled down again to being a quiet little community. When we think of Corydon, we should all think of the wise and dedicated group of pioneer statesmen who together laid the foundation for our great state of Indiana!

Assignment: Make up a crossword puzzle or make a game playing board showing the long, difficult move from Corydon to Indianapolis.

Places to Visit in Corydon From This Early Period

Log Courthouse Site

An unfinished log court house was purchased by Harrison County in 1811 to use for county business. When the territorial court house was moved to Corydon in 1813, the territorial officers shared this court house with the Harrison County officials. During the writing of the constitution, 43 delegates from Indiana's 13 counties met in the little "courthouse on the hill." Due to the cramped quarters, it is understandable that the delegation spent many of their sessions under the shade of the giant old elm tree just down the hill.

The log courthouse was torn down and now a large plaque marks the place where it once stood. A home was built on this same location in 1917. It is a private residence.

The Old State Capitol

A beautiful new courthouse was built by the citizens of Harrison County just in time for statehood in late 1816. The courthouse is referred to as "the cradle of Indiana" because the first legislative sessions were held here when Indiana officially had become a state.

The State Capitol was constructed of rough blue limestone which was quarried nearby. It is forty feet square and is two stories tall, with a small cupola on top. The walls are two and one-half feet thick. There is an eight foot chimney on both the north and south walls. It has high ceilings, and the lower floor is of stone flagging.

The first floor was built as one large room for the House of Representatives. The second floor was divided by a narrow hall, with the Senate meeting room on one side and the Supreme Court on the other side.

In 1917 the state legislature approved spending the money to purchase the building, and it has since been restored to its original appearance. Today the First State Capitol Building is part of the Corydon Capitol State Memorial, which also includes the Constitution Elm Monument and Governor Hendrick's Headquarters.

Governor Hendrick's Headquarters

This two-story Federal-style brick house was built by Davis Floyd in 1817. When William Hendricks was serving his term as governor from 1822 until 1825, this was his headquarters from which the official state business was transacted.

The state of Indiana bought the building and opened it to the public in 1975.

First State Office Building

The east room of this building was occupied by the auditor of state, William H. Lilly, and the west room was used by the state treasurer, first Daniel C. Lane and later Samuel Merrill. The state's money was kept in this building in the cellar under the west room.

The Constitutional Elm

As the delegates talked and worked on the state constitution, tradition says that they often retreated to the cool shade of a huge elm tree now known as the Constitutional Elm. This magnificent elm had a trunk 5 feet across and branches 132 feet from tip to tip. It stood 50 feet tall.

In the early 1920's, it showed signs of dying from the elm beetle as did so many elms of southern Indiana. In 1925 a large limb fell, and it was thought best to cut the tree down before someone would be injured.

In August of that year all the limbs were removed. Thirty-four wagon loads were removed and stored. There is a monument built around the stump of the tree, and a plaque tells about it. Souvenirs from the limbs are still being sold today at Corydon.

People in the History of Corydon

Jonathan Jennings is well known as the first governor of Indiana. He was only 32 years old when he was elected. At that time the entire population of Indiana was just about the same as the population of one city today. Most of the people were farmers, and very little money was available in the state. It was difficult to collect taxes to carry on the government. During the first four years that Jennings was governor, the total expenses of the state were about \$13,000 a year, and even this was more than the state's income. Jennings received only \$1000 a year. The judges earned \$700 a year.

Jennings was a member of the Jeffersonian Republican party. He had been chairman of the constitutional convention in 1816. After serving as governor for six years, he ran for the House of Representatives and was elected. His last three months as governor were taken over by the lieutenant governor. Jennings was elected four times to the House of Representatives. Nearly all of his life was spent in public office. He died near Charlestown on July 26, 1834.

Ratliff Boon was the second governor of Indiana, serving the three months that was left in Jennings's term. He was a true pioneer. He had very little education but had a lot of common sense. The population of Indiana increased very rapidly during this time because the War of 1812 was over, the Indians no longer were hostile, and the land was cheap. The population by 1820 had increased to 150,000 people. Evansville, Terre Haute, Bloomington, and Richmond were founded during this period.

The third governor of Indiana was William Hendricks. He was elected in 1822 without opposition, receiving all of the 18,340 votes cast. He had only a common school education, but Hendricks spent much of his spare time studying law. He later revised the state's laws and printed them on his own printing press. While he was governor, the capital was moved from Corydon to Indianapolis.

Squire Boone was the younger brother of Daniel Boone. He was a great hunter, explorer, and a Baptist minister. Squire was his first name. He is credited as being the first white man to settle in Harrison County having first arrived in the 1790's.

Boone first had lived in Kentucky. Sometimes crossing the river he would hunt in Indiana. On one of these trips he discovered a small cave, just north of the Ohio River and south of present-day Corydon. Not far away was a large spring that flowed into the creek. He decided that this would be a good place to live so he brought his family there. He moved to Harrison County about 1806 with his sons, Isaiah, Enoch, Moses and Jonathan, and five nephews. They formed a settlement known as "Boone's settlement." They built a mill for grinding grain and started the first Baptist Church in Indiana.

When he died, he was buried in his cave. Squire Boone enjoyed carving, and the inside of the cave has several carvings of birds and other figures as well as Bible quotations. His grist mill has been rebuilt and is open for visitors.

Edward Smith had been an English soldier who had come to help protect England's interest in the fur trade. He deserted the British army and wandered south and west from his post at Detroit through Indian country. He followed the Wabash to the French town of Vincennes. There he bought some tools and supplies and took off into the wilderness to find a place to settle.

After many days of walking, he came to a pleasant valley surrounded by wooded hills. Two streams flowed around the hills and joined in the valley. He decided this would be a good place for a home. There he built a log cabin and settled down. He married and had three boys and six girls.

Today the spring beside the Smith home is called the Fair Ground Spring. It is located in the southwest corner of the Fair Grounds where the oldest fair in Indiana is still held every year.

William Henry Harrison bought four choice tracts of land in what would become the county named after him, Harrison County. One of the tracts was next to Edward Smith's land. They became good friends, and Harrison often stayed with the Smith family while he was traveling to the government office at Jeffersonville.

Jennie Smith was Harrison's favorite of all the Smith children. She had an excellent voice and was very proud of her "Missouri Harmony" song book.

His favorite song which he never failed to request was a song about the death of a young shepherd named Corydon. When it came time to name the town of Corydon, Harrison lost no time in remembering his favorite song sung by Miss Jennie, "Corydon."

General William Henry Harrison was personally known to everyone in the county. He was liked by everyone, and they all called him "Bill." One of his tracts of land was in the Blue River valley. He had a log cabin built there and might have lived there for a short time. He also had a water-powered mill built on this land and at times operated the mill himself. He had plans to also build a shipyard, but then the War of 1812 came along, and his life changed to a more political one.

After the war he moved to Ohio and held several political offices. He was elected as President of the United States in 1840. He caught a cold on inauguration day in 1841 and lived only thirty days after that. He was the first president to die in office.

Harvey Heth bought some of Harrison's land in 1807. He was a government surveyor and had made several land purchases with Harrison. Heth got permission from Congress to lay out the town of Corydon on his land. There were only three houses in the town at that time. Pioneers had begun to move into Indiana by this town though, and soon many of them had settled on land near Corydon.

These are others among the first people in Harrison County:

The first white child born in the county was Rosannah McMahon, daughter of Richard McMahon and his wife. They had moved to Indiana from Pennsylvania in 1806.

Ephriam Fleshman had arrived in 1807. He was the first white man to die and be buried there.

John Simler moved to Harrison County in 1807. He built wolf traps, tanned the hides of the wolves, and sold the leather to many of the new settlers.

John Frank came from North Carolina in 1808 and brought with him apple, pear, and peach seeds. He had the first orchard in the county.

Spier Spencer moved from Kentucky to Vincennes and from there to Corydon in 1809. He was the county sheriff under Governor Harrison. His two-story log home was one of the first homes in Corydon. Spencer's wife used it as a tavern for many years after the death of her husband. Spencer organized a county militia known as the "Yellow Jackets." They fought with Governor Harrison in the Battle of Tippecanoe. It was there that Spier Spencer was wounded in battle and while being carried from the battlefield was killed by a second shot.

John Tipton moved there in 1807. He became the first sheriff. At the Battle of Tippecanoe, he served with Spencer's "Yellow Jackets," and became their leader after Spencer's death.

David Craig established a tavern on Elm Street in 1816. When President James Monroe and General Andrew Jackson visited Corydon on June 22nd and 23rd, 1819, they stopped at Craig's Tavern.

History has recorded many other persons who were important in the history of Corydon. Find out about them in the historical or genealogical section of your library.