

THE  
INDIANA CENTENNIAL

1916

BY

JAMES ALBERT WOODBURN

PROFESSOR OF AMERICAN HISTORY AND POLITICS  
INDIANA UNIVERSITY



BLOOMINGTON  
1912

87377

F526  
W85

YTI293VIBU ANAKIM  
YHAGBLI

## / THE INDIANA CENTENNIAL, 1916 /

[This paper was prepared for the Indianapolis Literary Club and was read before that body January 8, 1912. It was read later before the Society of the Colonial Dames for Indiana, and before the History Club of Indiana University, and published in the March, 1912, number of The Indiana Magazine of History, Indianapolis.]

IN a little over four years Indiana will be celebrating the hundredth anniversary of her birth. The birthday of the State is December 11, 1816. It was then that Indiana passed from her territorial condition into the sisterhood of States. She became the nineteenth State of the Union, and the sixth to be admitted after the adoption of the Constitution. When Indiana comes to set her house in order for the celebration of her one hundredth natal anniversary, she will, without much doubt, have a population of three millions,—about the population of the thirteen United Colonies, when they declared that they were, “and of a right ought to be, free and independent states.” A hundred years ago, by the census of 1810, Indiana had a population of about 24,000. At the time of her admission in 1816 her population had risen, according to estimate, to 65,000, and four years later, by the census of 1820, she had a population of 147,000 souls. In another ten years that population had more than doubled. It was doubled again in another ten years, and in the two decades following 1840 the population of the State was again doubled, standing at the opening of the Civil War at 1,360,000 persons,—approximately at one half of what our population is to-day.

The coming of that population to Indiana as a part of the great movement toward the West is one of the most significant chapters in American history. It was the upbuilding of commonwealths from the wilderness. The men who lived in Indiana for forty years prior to the Civil War witnessed a wonderful transformation. The pen of the historian has not yet adequately pictured it. It has been pictured in parts, as in Judge Howe's

notable sketch of the establishment of this capital in the wilderness, and the State and local historical societies have done something to preserve the historical materials of that day. The opening pages of Mr. Holliday's "Indianapolis in the Civil War" present to us some most interesting glimpses of the primitive days of nearly one hundred years ago in Indiana, and especially of this community, when Coe and Blake and Ray and Fletcher, and others, were, in their diligent and public-spirited way, establishing the new city of Indiana, when the sale of town lots within the mile square laid off from what was called "the donation" furnished the revenue for building your Court House and the State House. Can the imagination really recall the little pioneer settlement of five hundred persons here in 1824?

It is doubtful if posterity can ever be made to visualize, or in any true sense vividly to comprehend the wondrous change that was wrought within our Hoosier habitation in that fresh and productive generation. The men living here just before the sixties whose memories easily spanned these first forty years of Statehood, found it difficult then to impress upon the rising generation the change that their eyes had witnessed and which their own hands had helped to bring to pass. They were youthful grandfathers who had hardly reached their three score years, yet their tales of the past would seem like flights of the imagination from old men who were seeing visions, did we not know how hard and recent were the facts of their pioneer life which they revealed. Nathaniel Bolton, Mr. Brown's predecessor in the State Library of sixty years ago, thought it a marvelous thing in 1853 that a man might start from Lafayette early in the morning, stop two hours for dinner at Indianapolis and still be in Cincinnati the same evening in reasonable time for supper and bed. Bolton himself, speaking at a time when he was still a young man of forty-eight, recalled his experience of passing over the ground where Columbus, Ohio, now stands when there was but a single solitary log cabin on the banks of the Scioto at that place. The Indianapolis Gazette, of which Bolton was the early editor and publisher, brought out President Monroe's message in what was then deemed quick time; he had made an enterprising western

"scoop" by bringing out the President's message in February only *two months* after it was submitted to Congress in December. That was but a few years after the cabins of Pogue and the McCormicks had been erected on Pogue's run and Fall creek. Bolton had witnessed the location of this capital city in the "New Purchase," when in 1820 Hunt, Connor, Tipton, Emerson, Durham, and others, selected the site of this primitive settlement on land so lately acquired from the Indians. That was six years before a circuit court was held in Marion county, in the days when grand juries sat on a log to hold their inquisitions; when Anderson-town, lately the seat of government of the Delaware nation, was a deserted Indian village; when the nearest post office was Connersville, sixty miles away; when William Conner, the Indian trader, four miles south of Noblesville, first learned what it meant to have a government mail brought into his neighborhood; when, as in 1822, a United States mail was first established in this settlement, and when such rapid progress followed that in a short time, as Bolton tells it, "we had a mail from the East every two weeks unless high water prevented." These things were told by a man just entering upon middle life, while looking back over a brief period of about thirty years. He spoke at a time when Indiana had risen from a newly civilized wilderness to be the fourth State in the Union, while ten years later the commonwealth was able to furnish more than 200,000 fighting men in the war for the defense of the Union. Does it not sound like a grandfather's tale of impossible or exaggerated things? Yet we know it to be only what has become commonplace narration of the growth of one of these western States. I use Bolton and his narrative of sixty years ago only as an illustration to remind us of a fading, if not a faded, past.

Within the midst of this rising tide of new and expanding life toward the West, which seemed so recent to Bolton's eyes but is so remote to ours, came the applications of steam and electricity to modern life; and one needs but little reflection to enable him to recall the great domestic, commercial and industrial revolution wrought in the progress and life of the people by these powerful agencies. Cheap lands were bringing their thousands,



but these discoveries and advances were destined to bring their tens of thousands. Our young State was then virgin soil, and while our good mother may continue for ages to come to bear children and to receive them hospitably from foreign parts to her firesides and her homes, it is quite certain that it can never happen again that her progeny will increase with such giant strides and in such proportions as was witnessed in those wonderful forty years prior to the Civil War.

The Indianians who were but little past middle age in 1860, could recall not only these strange and curious beginnings, but also the denials, the hardships and sufferings, not to say the tragedies, of life, in the pioneer Indiana settlements. Just one hundred years ago this year occurred the massacre in Pigeon Roost Settlement, not far from the early home of the Englishes in Scott county. When Bingham and Doughty of this city published John B. Dillon's well-known History of Indiana in 1859, Zebulun Collings, a survivor of the massacre, was still alive, from whose lips the historian had some account of the conditions in the country at the time of the tragedy. I cannot here recount the story of these trials. I merely refer to them to indicate by what hardships the soldiers of civilization were founding our young comonwealth, and how recent these events must have seemed to the older men when the "boys of '61" were entering upon their struggle for the Union.

It is hard for those to realize whose memories go back so easily to the days of Sumter and Shiloh that we are standing to-day farther removed by a lustrum of years from the beginning of that great civil conflict than were the founders of the commonwealth who sat in 1816 with Jennings, Holman, McCarty, Noble, Maxwell and others, in our first Constitutional Convention under the historic elm at Corydon. But it is so. That stretch of years when the State was in the making seems so large a part of our State growth and life that these later years, within the memory of so many men now living, seem hardly yet to be a fit subject for the treatment of history. But we have only to think for a moment to realize that the Indiana of 1912 is as greatly different from that of 1860, as was the Indiana of Morton and

Lane from that of Governor Jennings or the elder Harrison. True, our population has not increased with such proportionate strides since then; but impelled by the inventive and industrial progress of the world of which we are a part, the progress and change in Indiana within these fifty years have been more marked, more in contrast with the past, than any that men had witnessed in all the years that had gone before. This age of electricity, the growth of our cities, the trolley car and the traction lines, the telephone and the automobile—these would have been as startling anticipations to the mind and eye of Joseph A. Wright or Robert Dale Owen, as a single day's railway journey from Chicago to Cincinnati to the expectation of the men of 1816. In material wealth, in industry, in comforts and modes of living, in travel, in conveniences of life whether in city or country, in methods of business, in education, literature, or art—in everything that goes to make up civilized life, the progress of the last half century has been much more remarkable than that of the half century before. Within this period, as is obvious on a moment's reflection, are other chapters of the State's unwritten history. Put these two half centuries of the State's life together and have we not a story of a State and of a people, of their times, their customs, their homes, their activities, their progress, and their changes, well worthy of a centennial celebration? /

It is not my purpose to outline this history in the least, or to eulogize it, or to attempt to portray it in any way. It is rather my purpose to make a brief plea for its recognition; to recall to mind the duty that the State owes to its history, and to suggest that those who can in any way reach the public mind should do what they can to lead the people of Indiana to lay upon the altar of the State a centennial memorial worthy of her historic past.

We respect the past of Indiana, and we should teach our children to know and respect it. If we cannot do that, there is in store for us but little of hope for the future. It was Burke who said that the people "who never look backward to their ancestry will never look forward to their posterity." A century of Indiana will soon be told, and the State now faces the decision as to how the first hundred years of its life shall be celebrated. How can

Indiana best recall to the mind of her people these hundred years? How can her people pay a proper tribute to their past? What suitable memorial can the people erect that will proclaim to the present and tell to posterity what they choose to do in honor of the State?

In the first place, let us insist that when we celebrate our centennial we shall do it in a spirit of becoming modesty. We need no national exposition with aid from the national treasury. While we may wish to welcome anybody in the wide world, especially any former child of Indiana, who may wish to come for his entertainment or edification to what we may have to offer, let us make our celebration a home affair, that is to say, a domestic and family concern. It is for Indiana that we wish to celebrate. And when we come to pay our tribute to Indiana, to celebrate her virtues or sound her praises, let it be done without cultivating or encouraging the spirit of boastful jingoism. Whatever our fathers may have been—and perhaps distance lends enchantment to their ways and works—we are only, after all, plain and common folks—very much like our neighbors on all sides of us. The Hoosier in these recent years is in danger of becoming much puffed up with foolish vanity and conceit. He is frequently hearing, and I fear he is too much indulging himself in saying, too many complimentary things about this fair Indiana land and its people. The good old Quaker woman was truly pious when she said that she had no religion to boast of. If Indiana has made meritorious attainments, let them be set forth in due modesty and without pretense. They will speak for themselves. And let us recognize that we, at least, have done all too little for our worthy State; and that in what we have and are in Indiana we are but the products and the beneficiaries of the past. It is this record of the past, not anything in ourselves that we are to celebrate. Who is there in the State who would not wish to see this history better known and worthily commemorated?

This, we may be sure, can be well done without any lavish or extravagant expenditure and display. We may spend thousands on buildings for show, in which to make an exhibition of our



growth and prosperity in material wealth,—to set forth to the world the products and possibilities of Indiana in her fields, her mines, her workshops, her factories, and her advances in the arts and sciences. But the buildings erected for this purpose one year would likely be demolished the next, and the work and money expended would bring us in tangible form only that which is transient and evanescent. It would, however, certainly be fitting and proper that in 1916 Indiana should offer to her people and to all who wish to come and see, an exposition of her resources, as evidence of her progress and attainment,—a Great State Fair extended, that would set forth fully the developed life and energies and products of the State. We might well invite our people and their friends to come to a great holiday *fest*,—a harvest time of ingathering and rejoicing, in which the sons of the State, from city and country, may come bringing their sheaves of labor, of production and conquest, in friendly and generous rivalry for beautiful display and exposition. We might have a great State *Olympic*, with entertainments, games, sports, athletic contests in which the high schools and colleges and the baseball leagues and athletic clubs of the State could participate and compete. That year will not be merely a solemn time for memory and for tears. It should be a gala day for gladness and joy. But after it is over, what shall we leave behind to remind posterity of our appreciation of our natal day of exultation and cheer? Certainly with such an exposition and celebration the State should erect a permanent and enduring memorial,—a monument that will not only commemorate the century that has gone, but one that will stand for the centuries to come. That monument may express not only the idealism of the State, not only the honor and love that we bear toward those who have labored and have made it possible for us to enter into the fruits of their labor, but it may represent also a creditable utilitarian sense and give to the coming children of the State an offering that will prove to them of incalculable use and value.

At the last meeting of the General Assembly of the State a Centennial Commission was created. The members of this commission have been appointed, and, as I understand, they have had

two meetings with the Park Board of Indianapolis with a view to finding a common basis for cooperative action in the purchase of ground for public purposes, having in mind a suitable centennial memorial for 1916. The commission is instructed to inquire into the cost of a suitable site for a memorial building, approve plans, and report to the next General Assembly. It is understood that the commission is ready to recommend, what had already been proposed, the erection by the State of a beautiful and commodious State Library and Historical Building, which may be used, in part, also, for a museum and for educational purposes. It may be that out of these proposals and beginnings there may also be realized the ambitious Plaza scheme, by the generous cooperation of city and State. Such a plan for civic beauty and adornment would not be merely for selfish gain nor local advantage, but for the worthy adornment of the capital and for the honor of the State. Millions are spent by the nation on the beautification of Washington, and the time will come when that "city of magnificent distances" will be one of the finest capitals in the world. No American will begrudge the large expenditures at the national capital for the proposed Lincoln Memorial, and the throngs of visitors to Washington are constantly made to rejoice when they see what is being made out of a city which, to the eyes of Abigail Adams, the first lady of the White House, was but a crude settlement of country taverns in the woods of Maryland by the swamps of the Potomac.

I think it was Emerson who said, referring to the acquisition of Texas, that an enterprise may seem right or wrong according to whether one looks at it by the years or by the centuries. If we look upon these centennial proposals from the point of view only of the next few years, and consider chiefly the effect they may have on the pocket nerve or the tax rate, we may not be disposed readily to accede to large plans and obligations. But if we think rather of what this State is destined to be in the generations to come; if we think of our children and of what they will think of us and our enterprise, of our ideals and visions a century, or two centuries, after we are dead and gone, then the merit of a centennial proposal assumes another aspect. We ought

not to be deterred by the criticisms of the ungenerous, the suspicions of the envious, or the petty fears and objections of the pusillanimous. The people of Indiana are not a mean and impecunious people, and they will wish to do what will most reflect honor upon the State, without waste, without jealousy, and without local exploitation.

But whether this more ambitious and expensive scheme can be realized or not, there is one simple, useful and noble memorial that the State may easily prepare to dedicate in honor of her hundredth anniversary in 1916. That is the State Library and Historical Building, which the commission will recommend. Everything is to be said in favor of this enterprise, and, so far as I know, nothing is to be said against it; and the commission deserves to have behind it in its report and proposal to this end the public sentiment in every part of the State for this public-spirited endeavor.

It may not be very gracious to say that a part of this memorial endeavor will be nothing more than a response to a public necessity, the satisfying of a legitimate demand that has been known for years, and which every passing year makes more and more insistent. But it will by no means detract from the fine quality of the memorial act to know that something useful is being done and that a real need of the State is being satisfied. I refer to the insistent needs of the State Library. One has but to visit the cramped and crowded quarters where Mr. Brown and Mr. Lapp and their co-laborers are doing their important work for Indiana, to realize the real call that exists for the action of the State. When one thinks of the commodious quarters which a large and growing library may reasonably expect, and when one sees the provision that has been made for their libraries and related institutions by other States, he has forced upon him the utter inadequacy of the provision that Indiana has made. The State House has no room for a library. Here is a competent and zealous force working under almost impossible conditions,—certainly impossible if they are ever to accomplish what they see is imperative for library protection, library use and library growth. There is no reading room worthy of the name, to which the public can resort.

The cataloguing department has overflowed from its retired quarters into the reading room spaces, where it is constantly subject to the interruptions of the public. The Legislative Librarian and his staff, whose growing work is so vital to the welfare of the State, are crowded in a little corner of the stacks less than twenty feet by fifteen, where working desk room—veritable elbow room—is at a growing premium. The stacks themselves have reached their limit. There is no further room for general books and no further room for State documents. There is no room for newspapers, and these records of the world's transient life are being literally piled in disorder and en masse in the basement, inaccessible, unattainable and unusable. Valuable archives are scattered in the basement in the same way, uncared for and unarranged. Here are valuable historical materials,—maps, land records, reports of State commissions and State boards, court papers, committee reports, Governors' letters and other State papers,—all in a condition about as useful as if they were not in existence, except for the possibilities within them if the State will but come to the rescue of its own. What will it mean for the preservation of such material if the State will provide for it an ample fireproof building, with proper provision for maintenance and future expansion? There are opportunities for the State to receive in its library for permanent preservation and for the easy use of those who will care for and appreciate them, assignments, bequests, gifts and deposits of letters, papers, documents and valuable savings that are constantly becoming more and more valuable as the years go by. But if we have no house in which we may properly store such things, no shelves and alcoves in which they may be arranged and made accessible, there can be but little inducement for the public-spirited citizen to consign to the custody of the State the literary and historical inheritances and savings of his family. The library has, indeed, from its meager resources, acquired some valuable collections, which it has been able to do sometimes by appeals to local and patriotic pride, sometimes by diplomacy, sometimes by cultivated silence and well-directed stealth, from fear that higher and more affluent bidders from other States will hear of the valuable "finds" and

come with an offer that will enable them to carry them off to other parts. We know exactly how such things have occurred in the past. I confess from personal experience that it brings to an Indianian a feeling of deep chagrin when he sees in the State Historical Library in Wisconsin so much more Indiana material than can be found anywhere in Indiana itself, all sent out of the State, and much to other places as well, because we have not known enough, or cared enough for our history, or have not been willing to pay enough, to have and to hold our own and to provide decently for it.

Very recently, in the year just past, a file of the Madison Courier covering a period of more than sixty years, from 1837 to 1900, whose value to the history of the State cannot be estimated in money, all but escaped us, and if Governor Marshall had not helped out from his emergency fund the librarian would not have had sufficient money at hand to save this valuable collection to the State. It would have gone to Wisconsin, or Chicago, or Illinois, where they have libraries well supplied with funds and where they have a care for such things, and have vigilant collectors on the lookout for them. Fortunately, we are now conserving these historical sources much better than in the past. We have a public sentiment that demands it, and officers and agents whose deep concern it is. Our people are not now ready as once it seemed they were, to die as the mule dieth, "without pride of ancestry or hope of posterity." Years ago I heard the historian of Indiana, Mr. J. P. Dunn, tell the story of that awful catastrophe, of that inestimable loss and destruction which came from what seems unforgivable neglect and stupidity. I refer to the irreparable injury that was perpetrated when the State moved from its old home into the new, and when the janitor of the old State House carted off the old records, and reports and papers, of such precious value to history, and sold them for junk at a few cents a pound! It seems an unspeakable, an unbelievable tragedy. It appears that there was no provision for their keeping, no one in charge with intelligence enough to care, no librarian, or Secretary of State, or archivist, or custodian of precious papers,—no one at hand to come to the rescue of that which was so valua-



ble to the history of the State. We cannot fairly be held to answer for that fatal folly, but is it not high time that the children of this generation shall make what amends they can for the errors of the past?

And this all reminds us of another reason for the State's Centennial Memorial Building,—that the State Historical Society may have a suitable home. Its natural home is in a house of the State,—in a worthy building erected by the commonwealth, with quarters adapted to historical savings, historical workers, historical purposes and uses. The society has done much for the State, more, I fear, than the great body of her citizens will ever readily appreciate or understand. But the State has left the society absolutely without a place to lay its head, without even a shelter from the elements. It has not even a storeroom where its members may place for safety the historical materials which they may have collected or produced. Look again at Wisconsin! What is the greatest thing in that vigorous and progressive State? I answer without hesitation that, next to her university, it is her noble library building given to her State Historical Society. It cost much less than a million,—a little over \$600,000, not counting its expansions, and that was given, not for its university, not for its State library, but for its State Historical Society, and that too by a State not so rich by far either in history or in money as this good State of Indiana,—for Indiana was more than thirty years old when Wisconsin was born, and there has not been a decade since a census was taken when her wealth has not outrun that of her sister State.

Is there, then, any finer thing that Indiana can do to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of her birth, anything that would redound more to her lasting honor, than to have erected by 1916 a beautiful and worthy monument in the shape of a useful building, ample for years to come, to be dedicated to her library, to her learning and to her history? There she could collect and preserve the worthy leavings of her past,—in science, in art, in literature, in invention, in biography,—in whatever tends to make the State historic and immortal.

It is a patriotic service and a patriotic duty. This Indiana land

is ours, not to fight for, except in rarest and direst need, but to build for and to perpetuate. Governor Jennings said ninety-five years ago this month, at the second session of the Legislature in 1817: "The commencement of a State Library forms a subject of too much interest not to meet your attention . . . I recommend to your consideration the propriety of requiring by law a percent. on the proceeds of the sale of town lots to be paid for the support of schools and the establishment of libraries therein." Take the people of Indiana, up one side and down the other, consider men of all occupations, of all races, ages, parties and creeds, there is nothing they believe in more profoundly, no cause they will give themselves to more devotedly and unsparingly than the cause of education. No other appeal strikes quite so near their homes and their hearts. The most efficient and abiding instrument of education is the library. Without the book and the treasured learning of the past the teacher and the school will grope in darkness. These libraries, as Jennings had in mind, should be in every community in the State. But there is need, too, for a strong, central, directing library, lending its aid and its materials to all the others, encouraging new centers, inciting to growth, with its arms and branches reaching to the remotest hamlet and village in the State. Is there any nobler cause than this State-wide public education to which our monument can be dedicated? In the structure itself, in the spirit of love and beauty which it will represent, in the cause of light and learning to which it will be devoted, the monument will be exactly the kind above all others in which the citizenship of the State will find the most satisfaction, the greatest pride, the keenest delight.

When one visits Washington City, he sees a city of monuments,—monuments varying in size from that towering shaft of stone dedicated to the Father of his Country, to the colossal or life-size busts that stand in the motley, unseemly and heterogeneous collection in Statuary Hall. That capital city is still to be beautified, let us hope, by greater and richer collections and creations. But to my mind the noblest monument that stands in that city to-day, or that is likely to stand in the years to come, is the Library of Congress. Indiana, through Senator Voorhees, bore

no mean part in its upbuilding. It is the most beautiful, the loveliest to behold of all the public buildings in that worthy capital. It will not only be a thing of beauty and a joy forever to those merely who behold its physical beauty inside and out, but to those who are privileged to use it (as many shall who may never be permitted to look upon its form), that joy will be increased, with some thirty, with some sixty, with some a hundred fold. No American need ever be ashamed, as I was reminded by a scholar in Oxford, to take his foreign visitor to that great library, if he can truthfully say that within the walls of that noble building and beneath its dome, the American has expressed his deep veneration and respect for the ideals and aspirations which he wishes his country to represent.

Can we not erect here in Indiana a similar monument? It need not be on such an extensive or expensive scale, but it should conform to such generous plans and ideals as will make it, like that at Washington to the nation, an everlasting honor to the State and such as will bring to us the thanks and approval of the generations that are to come.

Patriotism has its inception largely in reverence for historic achievements and beginnings,—in respect for the progress of the past. As the fathers did for our sakes, so may we do for others. The people who are not moved by that impulse, with a desire to promote the "everlasting better" in the life of the State, are not worthy of its name or the ægis of its care and protection. May the generations that come after us profit by our example, and to that end let us see to it that the Pilgrim Fathers and Mothers of the West, men and women of the spirit of venture and conquest, who came to this western world nearly a century ago, may have at our hands an honorable recognition and memorial.