

THE INDIANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

VOL. IX

DECEMBER, 1913

No. 4

LOCAL LIFE AND COLOR IN THE NEW PURCHASE

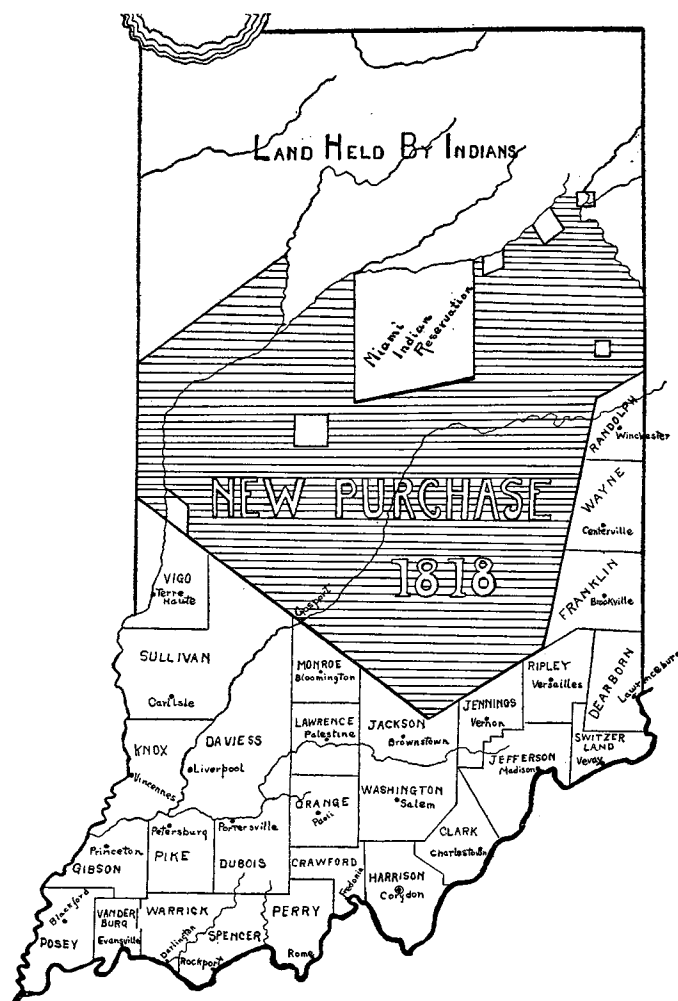
By JAMES ALBERT WOODBURN, Professor of American History and
Politics, Indiana University

[This paper was prepared for the History Society of Wabash College and was read before that organization on the evening of June 9, 1913. It was also read before the Teachers' Institutes of Jennings and Miami counties, and before the Monroe County Historical Society.]

I N 1818 the United States Government obtained by treaty with several tribes of Indians what is known in Indiana history as the "New Purchase." The land came from the Pottawatomies, the Miamis, the Delawares, and a few other tribes, and a lump sum of \$13,000 and perpetual annuities in silver money of over \$8,000 were offered in return. No doubt this silver came in handy to the traders at Indian posts who afterwards had gewgaws, dry goods and wet goods to offer to the Indian braves and their squaws, who, though most of their people were passing beyond the "Father of Waters," were still lingering in the favorite hunting grounds and around the graves of their warriors and chieftains in this Hoosier country. This "New Purchase" was a tract of land bounded on the north and west by the Wabash river; on the southwest by what is known as the "eleven o'clock line," a line going in the direction a shadow would fall at eleven o'clock forenoon, and running from the center of Jackson county to a point on the Wabash near Clinton. Thirty-seven counties have since been made, in whole or in part, from the lands embraced in this purchase. When the Indian titles were extinguished and the new lands were opened to settlement the immigrant tide of humanity began to pour in. The Government land was offered at \$2.00 an acre. It was lowered to \$1.25 after 1820 and thus was followed the wise policy of encouraging settlement. The credit system had been put into operation in 1801, by which a settler who could not pay cash for his land might enter it and pay for

it by installments after he had settled upon and begun to work it. The homestead policy instituted later was even more liberal to the homeseeker, but the fact that one could preempt land and have a chance finally to own it in fee simple brought many enterprising and hopeful men to a region which was looked upon as an Eldorado, if not of gold and silver, at least of rich and productive lands. Some shiftless and "onery movers" came who, it seems, expected the land to support them without much work. Some had not yet got a start in worldly goods; others after starting had been set back in the contraction and hard times following the War of 1812. They had risked their capital during the War in the manufactures of that era and when peace came and English imports again poured in they were ruined. The tragic and woful panic of 1819 sent jobless workmen and landless and bankrupt debtors to the West in droves and the New Purchase received its share of the hardy and worthy pioneers who were coming to the West to seek out new fortunes and to grow up with the country. These people were mostly poor; many of them were ignorant; but most of them were men and women of the fundamental virtues,—courage, honesty, hospitality, and a sense of honor; and many of them were hard headed and far seeing enough, as they began to take up government land, to follow the suggestion of Mandy Means to her old man,—to "git a plenty while you are gittin'." So this purchase opened up to settlement on easy terms a large strip of virgin soil. Indiana was then only two years old as a State. It contained a population of about 70,000, practically all of whom were below the old National Road.

Two years later, in 1820, the Legislature at Corydon created what was named in the act as "The Indiana Seminary," which in 1828 became the "Indiana College," and in 1838 the "Indiana University," by legal title. The creative act of 1820 was saved in the State Senate only by the casting vote of the Lieutenant Governor, Ratliff Boon, and it was signed by the first Governor of the State, Jonathan Jennings. Six trustees were appointed and they selected a site for the Seminary, a quarter of a mile due south of Bloomington on a beautiful eminence and convenient to an excellent spring of water. It seems that springs of living water were in those days essential features to a settlement, and the settlers and movers kept moving until they found one. Log cabins, whether of hewed logs or round, could be put up in short order by the pioneers in those days, but it took three years to erect the two small brick



INDIANA IN 1818, INCLUDING THE NEW PURCHASE.
PREPARED BY DR. E. V. SHOCKLEY.

buildings with which the Seminary began,—one a house for a professor at a cost of \$891, the other the Seminary building itself 60x30 feet at the elaborate cost of \$2,400.

The old State Seminary opened its doors for students in 1824. In the fall of 1823, as the buildings were nearing completion, the first professor was elected. He was a young man who had appeared in Indiana, like a star out of the East, a short time before and he was now placed in charge of the young Hoosier hopefuls who were seeking to qualify for the college benches in this rustic school in the wilderness. The young man was Baynard R. Hall, a Presbyterian clergyman, a graduate of Union College, and of Princeton Theological Seminary. He had been living for about a year with his brother-in-law and other friends on White River near Gosport, and there he had entered with spirit and sympathy into all the life of the backwoods. He had become a skilled marksman with the rifle; he learned the art of rolling logs; he had become a skilled and practiced hand at the wood choppings; he learned the manners of the quilting parties; he had become an interested spectator but never a participant at the pioneer camp-meetings; he clerked in a country store, ground bark in a tannery, driving "Old Dick" on the tread-mill; he preached some; and, according to his own testimony he was "the very first man since the creation of the world that read Greek in the New Purchase,"—which, of course, is doubtful, as some Jesuit Fathers had been in this region, and other Protestant ministers versed in the classics had set foot in these parts. But Hall, no doubt, was an excellent classical scholar, and as Professor Wylie says, "a persuasive and sometimes eloquent preacher." He now accepted a teacher's place in the new Seminary at the munificent salary of \$250 a year,—the year consisting of two terms of five months each,—the fees to the students being five dollars a term. This scholar had accepted the appointment, not for the paltry salary attached, but wholly because he longed to be in the romantic West and among its earliest literary pioneers. His labors showed forth his enthusiasm and his missionary zeal. Five and six hours a day were usually spent in the recitation room. He always preached twice on Sunday and usually several times during the week and his ministrations to the sick and the dying were additional burdens to the flesh.

This young man of college culture—of "book larnin," as his neighbors would say,—lived in our new country almost a decade of years and after he had gone back to his home in the East he

wrote about what he had seen and heard, a book which is well known to those who have studied early Indiana history. It is called *The New Purchase, or Seven and a Half Years in the Far West*,¹ the author appearing under the pseudonym of Robert Carlton. I feel that I am justified in calling this an immortal book to Indianians, and an enduring memorial to the name of its author. I say this not because of its literary excellence, nor because of the human interest attaching to its stories, as some of them may be more or less fictitious and exaggerated; nor do I say so because this is a book well known to fame. Comparatively few people know anything of it. But I call it an immortal book because it contains valuable history of this Hoosier land in its early beginnings; because it relates in graphic and racy style personal adventures, western scenes and character, college jealousies and dissensions, the state of popular culture, or lack of culture, and various incidents in the life of this new country in early days. It will, therefore, live as long as interest in early Indiana history lives and we certainly believe this interest will prove immortal.

Here was a young man, a transient dweller in the land, who had eyes to see, with a social and cultured background, with a power to discriminate and to distinguish the significant; and above all he had the virtue of intent and industry (for which Heaven be praised!) to write down what he saw and understood, to preserve it for us, for history, and for posterity. I have had a copy of that book for twenty years,—of the first and valuable edition, published by the Appletons in 1843.² And while I have repeatedly looked into it and have known something of its contents, it was only a few weeks ago that I read it with care,—since the recent revival of interest in Indiana history. It is not my purpose to review its contents, nor to estimate its merits; but rather to draw from it and from a few other sources some account of local scenes and color in Hoosierdom of nearly 100 years ago.

Hall says that weary of a prosaic life in the East he came west to find a life of poetry and romance amid the rangers of the woods. He found poetry here, as well as a mission. In his day-dreams he heard the call of the wild, and felt the resistless invitation to an enchanting land in what was then known as the "Far West." He confesses to the ambition to be numbered among the literary pio-

¹ Published by D. Appleton & Co., New York, and George S. Appleton, Philadelphia, 2 vols., 1843.

² A second edition was published by John R. Nunemacher, of New Albany, in cooperation with D. Appleton & Co. and J. B. Lippincott & Co., in 1855.

neers of this Hoosier land. That ambition he has realized. One wonders whether he had an Abrahamic vision and promise of a literary progeny that was to be, as we have seen, like the sands of the sea for the multitude.

Hall had suffered deep domestic affliction in the loss of children, and he had encountered sore disappointment in the utter crushing of his high hopes and purposes. So the new West was to be a new life to him. He affirms that he came influenced by disinterested motives, fired with enthusiasm for advancing solid learning, desirous of seeing western institutions rival those of the East, willing to live and die in the new country, to sacrifice eastern tastes and prejudices, and to become in every proper way a western man. College jealousies and quarrels were destined to cut short these hopes and expectations—which may serve to remind us again that there is a great deal of human nature in men, and even among college professors in their missionary labors. So Mr. and Mrs. Hall, lured partly by the spirit of romance and adventure, were persuaded to exchange the tasteless and crowded solitude of Philadelphia for the entrancing and real loneliness of the wilds,—the promenade of dead brick for the living carpet of the natural meadow.

From Philadelphia to Pittsburgh was a journey of several days. But the Halls would not travel on the Sabbath. So it was arranged that they should start early Monday morning at 3 o'clock. But the porter of the stage office aroused them at 1 o'clock, and at this wee small hour of the morning they followed their man to the stage coach office, the man trundling their luggage in an antiquated wheelbarrow. Such were the conveniences and pleasures of travel in the days before the rail.

The traveler describes the stage coach of his day,—a lumbering thing, with its rack, its cramming, and jamming, and bumping, its lurches and its plunges,—a crazy, rattling, rickety old machine, swaying and jolting until its passengers were bruised and mellowed into a quaking lump of silent sullen victims. The winged horses moved nearly three miles per hour. They stopped at watering places, letting-out places, letting-in places, grog stations and post offices,—all stops giving them the flavor of the stable with the smell of gin and apple whiskey, with the fragrance of cigars that were bought six for a penny. There were the fumes of peppermint, too, and of spicy ginger bread and unctious cold sausage.

From Pittsburgh the Halls came down the Ohio to Louisville.

They started overland from the Ohio on a two-horse Yankee cart, with what was called their "plunder," to find the seat of learning on the edge of the New Purchase about 120 miles from the river. Here was their first lesson of forest travelling,—in "butter-milk land," "spouty land," "marshland," "rooty and snaggy land," of mudholes, and "corduroys," of single and double twill, through the fords of streams with, and without, bottoms. It was in early spring when concealed rivulets bubbled up where none were supposed to lurk; when creeks were turned into rivers and rivers into lakes and lakes into larger ones. Travelling by land became travelling by water; that is, by mud and water. So if one were to avoid drowning he had to follow the blazed road. That is, he had to *tack*, to find, not a road, but a place where there was no road, untouched mud thick enough to bear, or that had some bottom to it. The "good roads movement" is a modern development and you may be sure that our fathers in their attempts at travel put up with a good deal in the way of discomforts and inconveniences. To make a State from primitive conditions is no small enterprise.

On the second day by incessant driving the Halls made *twenty miles* by sunset, or a mile and a half an hour, and then found that it was still three miles to the next tavern by way of the blaze, but by a "most powerfulest road," as an old settler told them. Instead of pressing on by dark they staid for the night at the cabin at which they had stopped to inquire,—a veritable cabin in the forest amid the deafening clangor of innumerable rude frogs in the mires, and the whirl and hum and buzz of strange savage insects and reptiles; amid chilly and damp and foetid vapours, the only open field being the *clearing* filled with trunks of deadened trees and great stumps blackened by the fires.

Hall describes the cabin as "a barbarous rectangle of unhewed and unbarked logs," bound together by gigantic dovetailing called notching. The roof was of rickety shingles, called *clapboards*, which when *clapped* on were held down by longitudinal poles kept apart by shorter pieces placed between them perpendicularly. The interstices of the log wall were "chinked," the chinking being large chips and small slabs dipping like strata of geologic rock, and then on the chinking was the daubing,—a yellow clay ferociously splashed in soft by the hand of the architect and then left to harden at leisure. Rain and frost had here, however, caused the daubing to disappear so that from without could clearly be discerned the light of fire and

candle, and from within the light of sun, moon, and stars, a very fair and harmless tit for tat.³

The cabin had one room, a loft above, but with no visible ascent. The room contained beds chiefly, a table, "stick chairs," and some stools with two or three legs apiece. Over the mantle were the rifles and the powder horns. About the fireplace was the iron ware,—the kettle, the pot, the skillet, and the Dutch oven. One of these primitive log cabins might have been erected for ten dollars. The labor counted for nothing; no one was paid,—except by exchange of labor at house raisings. The cabin enclosed a space perhaps 20 feet square. Neither nail nor spike entered into the structure. The door,—no real cabin had more than one,—had been hung, not with iron, but with broad hinges of tough bacon skin. These the dogs of the place, and they were always numerous, smelled and gnawed clear off. Then came half-tanned leather for hinges; then wooden hinges. It was not an iron age, nor a region of imported manufactured goods. The problem of transportation had yet to be solved.

There were several kinds of log cabins. First, the *scotched* order. In this the logs were hacked longitudinally, a slice being taken from one side, the primitive bark being left on the other sides. Second, the *hewed* order, in which the logs were dressed on four sides. Third, the rough *stick-out-corner* order,—the logs being unhewn and unscotched, with the ends projecting at the corners. On these ends were hung horse collars, gears, dish towels and bedding and other appurtenances of the household.

As for a window, a log was omitted on one side and through this longitudinal aperture came light and wind, the space being closed at times, at first with a blanket and later with a clapboard shutter.

For rooms and partitions in the cabin what more was needed than a carpet hung from a stout pole running from side to side of the enclosed space? The spaces could be subdivided by other carpets and by buffalo robes. There could be a bed in each space with 12 inches to spare for fixing and unfixing,—affording much ampler space than a lower berth in a modern Pullman. All trunks, boxes and the like went under the beds. Pegs were on the wall for hanging clothes. There was a trundle bed for the children, while the help slept in the outhouse, or the "lean-to." So there was plenty of well ventilated sleeping and breathing room for all,—and what more was wanted by our primitive Hoosier?

³ Volume I, p. 61.

The landlady at this early Indiana cabin looked upon her guests with some little reverence as "great folks," and it was generally regarded as in harmony with democratic simplicity and true republicanism to bear some manner of envy or enmity toward the cultivated "big bugs" from down East. The common folks had come as "movers" from the South,—Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, or the Carolinas.

"Our wooden country's mighty tough for some folks, I allow," said the cabin hostess. "Right hard to git gals here, marm. Folks has to be their own niggers." Such was the talk while supper was preparing as the hostess bid her flaxen haired Nan "to sort a turn them thare chickens."

On another night the Halls stayed at the home of a travelling preacher—Rev. William Parsons—one of those early itinerant missionaries who received almost literally nothing for their pastoral services. Mrs. Parsons incidentally remarked that for seven entire years she had never seen together as much as ten dollars either in notes or silver. Here the Halls could give no pay for their lodging. "Pass on the service to another" was the spirit of the pioneer preacher. On the other hand it was rare indeed that any one in the far West, however poor, would ask or take a cent from any man known to be a preacher. A tavern keeper, a ferryman, a blacksmith, a physician,—no matter by whom the service might be rendered,—all would have scouted the thought of accepting pay from a preacher,—which of course, was quite right since they thought the preacher should not expect even the smallest salary. Once a clerical friend of Hall's traveled nearly a thousand miles in woods and prairies and brought back in his pocket the identical money he had started out with,—viz. *fifty cents*. What he thought would be enough had proved too much.

Preachers were sometimes paid a little cash but not much, never enough to make them purse-proud. But the preacher got his living. He entered some land, raised a little produce and then by barter he got his sugar, tea, coffee, and paper, and if he wished to see and own a few silver dollars he must sell a cow or a calf or a horse.

On the fourth day's journey from the Ohio the Halls came to Bloomington, a village set in a clearing, the clearing being about a mile long and a half-mile wide, that had been hewed and hacked out of the woods, fresh, rough, and green. This village in the forest he calls the capital of the New Purchase,—then a town about four years old. Into this village of Woodville, as the young classicist

called Bloomington, the Halls came fresh from the East, and found themselves the objects of strange curiosity. Mr. Hall was clean shaven and that placed him in a particular class. The village was already divided into two classes, the *superior* and the *inferior*. The former shaved once a week, the latter once in two weeks, or thereabouts.

Mrs. Hall was stranger still for she wore no cap, a head covering that was worn in Bloomington by all wives, old and young. The caps in vogue were made of dark, coarse, knotted twine, like a cabbage net, and were worn, as the wives themselves admitted, "to save slickin' up and to hide dirt."

This little primitive village of 500 people was already supplied with *ten* religious sects. The sects were active and disputatious. With so many sects every householder could have a meeting of his own, at his own home. Mr. Hall thought the community was altogether too religious, or rather too superstitious. Their meetings were held chiefly to glorify themselves and to revile others. One neighbor, when he went to pray in private, did so, not by entering his closet and shutting the door, but by opening his doors and windows and praying so awfully loud that he could be distinctly heard half a furlong away. Some steeple saints climbed upon the court house steeple to pray, and Mr. Hall thought it a pity that they came to earth again, for many of them so fell from grace that they died without sign of repentance.

The speech of the people was noticed. They used *nor* for *than*, and mispronounced big words in an amusing way. "Yes, sir, Mr. Speaker," said a legislator, "I'd a powerful sight sooner go into retiracy among the red wild Abō'rreji'nes of our wooden country nor consent to that bill."

Into the new country, Hall came early enough to find the original race of "squatters." In a settlement are found those who have located. They have a habitation and a home, with liberty under some recognition of law. But a "squatter" did not locate. He was a roving wanderer. To him a settlement was odious. As time brought on a legal invasion of their domain, the squatters, indignant and disgusted, "absquatulated,"—i.e. they went and squatted in another place, like roving forerunners of the frontier. They had contempt for the uses and trammels of civilization. A settlement usually took its name from the first settler, or from the man who owned the largest number of acres; or from the person who established a ferry, or a smithy, a mill, a tannery, or, above all, a store. Our early local

geography is full of evidence of this. Occasionally some supposedly wiser progenitor would bestow some flowery or euphonious name upon a place, and all historic and personal significance and connection would be destroyed.

There were not many people in the new land, but the forests were thickly inhabited,—deer, wolves, blue foxes, gray foxes, black foxes, squirrels of like shades, ground hogs, wild-turkeys, wild ducks, wild cats, opossums, snakes, with rattles and without rattles, of all colors and sizes—and the domestic hogs, so wild and fierce that when hog-killing time arrived they had to be hunted and shot like other independent beasts. These porkers were not fed at the corn crib or the swill tub, they were mast fed,—that is they foraged for themselves and found their own provender, under the primeval trees of oak, hickory, walnut and beech. The nuts afforded both good fattening and good flavor. In this wild country the yokes were on the horses to prevent their jumping not *out* of enclosures but *into* them. The fences were to protect your own from the common wilderness.

The rifle was one of the indispensable implements of the new civilization. It procured for the people in certain seasons the only meat they had to eat. It brought down the wild turkey or the wild duck. It defended the home from wild animals; it saved the corn from squirrels, the hen roost from foxes, opossums, owls and other “varmints.” With it they killed their beeves and hogs and cut off the heads of their fowls. The wood-man carried his rifle everywhere,—to town, to the tannery, the store, to the neighbor’s house. A good rifleman could cut off the head of a bird at 50 yards, split a bullet upon an axe’s edge, hit a ten-penny nail on the head or plant bullet after bullet into the same auger hole.

The New Purchase contained a rifle-maker unexcelled for 200 miles in the country round. Hall pays a remarkable tribute to this gunsmith, his friend Austin Seward, whom he called Vulcanus Allheart,—“by birth a Virginian, by trade a blacksmith, by nature a gentleman, and by grace a christian; if more need be said he was a genius.” “Not one in a million could make an axe as Allheart made it; and hence in a wooden country where life, civilization, and christianity itself, are so dependent on the axe, my blacksmith was truly a jewel of a man.” An axe of Seward’s, even where silver was hoarded as a miser’s gold, brought in real cash one dollar above any patent flashy affair from New England. No other man in the Union could temper steel as Allheart tempered it; and workmen from Birmingham and Sheffield who sometimes wandered to us from the

world beyond the seas, were amazed to find a man in the Purchase that knew and practiced their own secrets." His skill was equally great at rifle making and Hall was ready to stake a Seward rifle against any he had ever seen or known.

The religious meetings were the great events of the community life. They were the one approved diversion from the routine of life for people of all classes. They were the best opportunity for social concourse. Everybody came, men, women and children, in rain or shine, in all weathers and seasons,—on horse-back carrying single, double, double and a half, or treble. They drove through miry clay and swam their horses over swollen streams. The meeting-goers were inspired by a variety of motives. Some came for news, some to see their neighbors, some to electioneer, some to advertise "strays," some to scoff, though they may have remained to pray. After the meeting had been called to order some settler might arise to announce an advertisement for a stray animal as follows: "Neighbor Bushwhack, livin' down the lower end of Sugar Holler, would like to heer if anybody in this here settlement has heern or seed a stray critter of hissin, as his hoss-beast, a 3-year old black geldin', come next spring, with a switch tail, but his ear a kind a eat off by his other colt, slipt his bridle on Hickiry Ridge last big meetin', and he aint heern or seen nothin' of him sense."

The big meeting was a great sparking time for the boys. It was held in the beautiful autumn, after the hard work was over, and the young men went free and gay expecting to find "a most powerful heap of gals." Sunbonnets and calico frocks were there in abundance. A group of young people would steal away to the spring, where they would contrive accidentally to have a meeting of their own, when the notes of their voices would mingle strangely with the notes of psalmody and prayer.

Politics had its early phases and phenomena in Indiana. All offices were elective, within the direct gift of the people, from governor down to the fence viewer's clerk's first assistant. And for rabble-rousing purposes there were those who gravely contended that trustees of the college, presidents, professors and teachers should be elected directly by the people. So the people were constantly electing somebody, and candidates were scouring the country with hats, saddle bags and pockets crammed with certificates, defending, accusing, defaming, and clearing up, making licentious speeches, treating to corn whiskey, violating the Sabbath, and abusing the administration and the administration's wife.

Everybody expected to be a candidate for something some time; so that everybody and everybody's friends were always electioneering till the state of intrigues, slanders, and fierce hostility were a weariness to the flesh to any gentleman or woman. Boys voted fraudulently, standing either *over* the number 21 pasted in a shoe, or *between* the number 21 in the hat and the number 22 in the shoe. They would sometimes deliberately swear, when challenged as to age, that they were *over* 21 or *between* 21 and 22.

Stump-speaking was a passion,—and veritable stumps were used for platforms, though often good stump speeches were made from a table, a chair, a whisky barrel or the tail end of an ox-cart. But when the ox-cart was used the speaker had to watch that some of his opponents did not pull out the forward pin; for in that case in an unexpected moment and at the climax of his oratory the speaker might be hurled suddenly in the dirt. Or the driver too long detained might whip up with a shout and a crack and the ox team would start off loaded with politics, to the amusement of the people and the discomfiture of the candidate. There were political "jokers" in those days outside of legislative bills.

As to the rabble-rouser, his groveling humanity and his fine promises just before the election were unsurpassed. One manly candidate who refused to make absurd and wicked promises, after his defeat said he would run again and this time he would promise to use his utmost efforts to force the legislature to abolish the fever and ague and to pass a bill to find a gold mine on every poor man's quarter section. The candidate's handshaking was an art, which went on with friend and foe. His agents treated at the doggery. He dealt out whiskey and gingerbread to the voters as they marched past him with fife and drum to the polls. The voting was in the open, and the man who would treat the most lavishly and entertain the most amusingly would be the more likely to win the favor of the voters. The world is better that it used to be, but in nothing quite so much as in its politics.

The log-rolling was a common event and it has been often described to us. Again everybody came, this time not for spiritual but for bodily service,—men, women, boys, girls, horses, oxen, and dogs. The dogs were as busy as the men barking and running and hunting but catching nothing the whole blessed day, except three dozen snakes, four skunks, two opossums, and a score or two of field rats and mice and ground squirrels. The men were dressed in tow trousers, cow-hide boots, unbleached hemp-linen shirt, without coat

or vest, and with shirt sleeves rolled above the elbow,—in which latter aspect of human attire we find history repeating itself in modern college society.

In those virtuous and happy days of old the mail came regularly once a month, till a public spirited legislator exerted himself in behalf of his constituents and then it came irregularly once in two weeks. The nearest post office to Mr. Hall while he lived at Gosport was at Spencer, nine miles away. The mail came in a dirty, scrawny, flapping little pair of saddle bags. Sometimes the mail would fail altogether, and this came about from the action of a clerk in the Bloomington office, who noticing that there were no letters for the Spencer office retained the papers for private use to be forwarded by next mail. Sometimes the mail failed because of high waters. Think of going through nine long miles of such roads for the mail and finding none, and then driving back all that wet, long, tangled way to wait four more weary weeks for the letter that did not come.

It was not an easy matter to get hold of any of the circulating medium. A man was generally unwilling to part with cash, and he might remain six hours in a store with only six cents to spend. In Hall's time rarely indeed could two cash dollars be seen circulating together; and having then no banks and being suspicious of all foreign paper the people carried on their operations exclusively by trade. For goods store keepers received their pay in produce which was converted into cash at Louisville, Cincinnati, or more frequently at New Orleans. The house of Young & Hall paid for all things in leather. When a wood chopper must have shoes and had no money and no produce with which to pay he offered to pay in chopping. The firm not needing that article but being indebted to several neighbors who did, sent the man and his axe as the circulating medium then in demand among its own creditors to chop out the bills against the store.

The men of the New Purchase attributed the scarcity of cash to the non-existence of banks, while in the old Purchase that scarcity was attributed to their existence. The good hard money of ultimate payment was well taken care of by those who controlled the currency. People dealt in silver fippenny bits. A fippenny bit was $6\frac{1}{4}$ c. Sam, a woodman of the settlement, brought in some tow linen for which he hoped to buy four panes of glass 8×10 , $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of store coffee, $\frac{1}{8}$ lb. of store tea, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of gun powder, 1 lb. of lead, a string of button moles and a needle. The trade was found against

him by $9\frac{1}{4}$ c. Sam had two fippenny bits ($12\frac{1}{2}$ cents) in his pocket, but he was not willing to part with them. The store keeper offered to take one of the bits, $6\frac{1}{4}$ cents, and call it even, but Sam regarded this as downright Jewish usury and the storekeeper was obliged to book the $9\frac{1}{4}$ cents to be paid in "sang." Was Sam's conduct surprising? Hardly, when you remember that for \$1.25 could then be bought a whole acre of good bottom land, trees, spice-bush, pawpaws, and all. So to pay out $6\frac{1}{4}$ cents was to take off quite a good slice from an acre. No wonder Sam was indignant at the storekeeper's attempt to inveigle him out of his "fippenny bit."

The trustees of the new Seminary announced their desire to find men qualified to fill the chairs of the professorships. A large and sudden crop of candidates sprang up, even in and around Woodville, who, if not qualified, expected to "qualify" by the time school began. One schoolmaster offered to find his own chair, which, of course, would be quite a saving to the State. One candidate entered the plea of poverty, that something ought to be done for a poor fellow who had been "born in a cane-brake and rocked in a sugar trough." Another thought he could learn one of the *dead* languages in three weeks. The election, of course, excited the hostility of the dozen or more disappointed candidates toward the school, the professor-elect, the trustees, and toward "every puss-proud aristocrat, big bug, and darned blasted Yankee, in the New Purchase."

Governor Whitcomb is described as the most sagacious man the author had ever seen in making political somersaults. He turned so adroitly and so noiselessly as to cheat the eyes of the beholders, and make it doubtful whether he was on his head or on his feet. He never turned with the tide, but watching the ebb and flow, he always managed to turn a little before the tide. Thus he was always a people-loving leader of the right party, i.e., the successful one.

Whitcomb was a Methodist, but was fond of the violin, and was a good player on that worthy instrument. But the Methodist preacher in the Purchase could not stand for the violin, nor the fantastic toe likely to be engendered thereby. Preachers were in the habit in those days of praying *for* people by name in public and *at* people by description. Whitcomb told with some relish this petition of a preacher which was directed *at* him. "Oh, Lord, oh, I beseech thee; have marsy on all them there poor sinners what plays on that instrument, whose sounds is like the dying screech of that there animal out of whose intrils its strings is made."

Time will not permit me to go into the descriptions of the various

aspects of frontier life that Hall witnessed and described,—the barbecues, the rifle matches, the stump speeches, the college exhibitions, the court trials, the charivari, the pigeon shooting. There is amusement or interest in each of these. But I cannot forego the camp-meeting. When this event came on Woodville was in a ferment. All the crack preachers within a circuit of 300 miles were to be present. Hall had not been favorable to these manifestations of religious zeal. The shouting Christian was not to his mind the highest type, and that kind, in his opinion, stood in no need of encouragement. He had constantly refused to attend these meetings and thus had become a suspected character. He was recognized as an honest sort of man, but it was thought he ought to go to camp-meeting and "git religion." So to one of the big meetings he finally went.

For the camp-meeting, which might come twice a year, whole families broke up housekeeping for two weeks; domestic altars were deserted; regular churches were shut up; the children were taken away from school; the people went to the woods to live in tents, with peril to health and, very often, with loss of life to feeble persons. Hall was unable to see why folks should do these things under a belief that the Christian God is a God of the woods and not of the towns, of the tents and not of the churches, of the same people in a large and disorderly crowd, and not in one hundred separate and orderly congregations. Now at last he had decided to go and see for himself.

The camp was eight miles from Bloomington,—the scene of many a spiritual drama, and there many a harvest of glory had been reaped in battling with the devil and his legions. It seemed wonderful to our doubting professor why his Satanic Majesty never became shy of the place where he was said always to have the worst of the fight. At this particular meeting Satan was challenged to come out and do his prettiest. It was allowed by certain discerning prophets that some powerful fights would be seen and that the old fellow would "agin git the worst of it."

The author admitted the poetry and romance of a western camp-meeting,—the wilderness, the gloom, the grandeur of the forests, the gleaming sunlight by day, the clear blue sky, like a dome over the tents,—that dome at night radiant with golden stars; the tents formed like booths at the Feast of Tabernacles,—a community having all things in common, dead to the world and just ready to enter heaven, in a fervor of zeal. The zealots would march around

the camp like Joshua and his army around the walls of Jericho, shouting and singing. Heat, flame, and smoke were the constituent elements of a good meeting. Novelties and new excitements had continually to be introduced, or the meeting would grow stale.

But though he was no decided friend to camp meetings, morally, spiritually and theologically considered, yet Hall cordially admitted that at a western camp-meeting, as at a barbecue, were to be found the very heart and soul of hospitality and kindness. There these virtues were wide open and fully poured forth.

He describes in full the scenes, the camp fixtures, the program of exercises, and the sermons he heard, the shouting, the roaring, the groaning, the hissing, the clapping and stamping, the laughing and crying and whining; how the backsliders and the thoughtless sinners that came for fun were instantly knocked over where they lay before the altar, some seized with violent jerking and writhings of the body, and some uttering the most piercing and dismaying shrieks and groans. At this particular meeting there was a sudden rush toward the professor where he stood mounted on a stump. The rush was occasioned by a desire to see a battle royal with the devil. A stout fellow was lying on the straw, groaning and praying, yet kicking and pummeling away as if scuffling with a sturdy antagonist. Near him were several men and women at prayer, and one or more whispering into his ear; while on the stump above stood a parson superintending the contest, so as to insure victory to the right party. The prostrate man, like a spirited tom-cat, seemed to fight best on his back. He was the celebrated bully of the Purchase,—“Rowdy Bill.” When it became known through the camp that Bill was engaged in a hand-to-hand tussle with the devil the rush had occurred, because this was a fight worth seeing. The spectators were hugging one another, standing on tip toes, with necks stretched out, to get a view of the field, or the ring,—to use the proper sporting language. The superintendent shouted: “Let him alone, brothers! let him alone, sisters!—keep on praying,—it’s a hard fight;—the devil’s got a tight grip yet. He don’t want to lose poor Bill, but he’ll let go soon;—Bill’s getting the better of him fast. Pray away!”

Now, “Rowdy Bill” was a famous gouger, and so expert was he in his anti-optical vocation that in a few moments he usually bored out his antagonist’s eyes, or made him cry “enough.” If Bill could only get the devil by the head he would soon cause him to let go entirely his metaphorical grip. So, at least, thought his devoted

wife. Bill was a man after his wife's own heart, and she often said that "with fair play she sentimentally allowed her Bill could lick any man in the varsal world, and his weight in wild-cats to boot." Hence, hearing that Bill was actually fighting with the devil, she came pressing in to see that he had fair play, and hearing that Bill was actually down on his back and apparently undermost and that the fiend had a tight grip on the poor fellow, she screamed out her common exhortation to Bill, which when heeded heretofore had always brought victory, "*Gouge him, Billy! gouge him, Billy! gouge him!*" Bill apparently acted upon the suggestion, rose to his knees, smothered and routed his foe, and announced that he had "got religion"; and then his friends and spiritual guides united in prayers and shouts of thanksgiving.

This scene lingered in the author's memory for many a night and day, and that of the 200 converts as they paraded and marched around the camp-meeting grounds under the appellation of "virgins following the lamb," or as "trophies snatched from Satan." And he concluded that "a camp-meeting, all things considered, was the very best contrivance and means for making the largest number of converts in the shortest possible time; and also for "enlarging most speedily the bounds of a Church Visible and Militant."

We may smile at these extravagant ways, exceptional no doubt, even for those primitive days. But as we recall the oddities and crudities of these early settlers in the woods we should not in any way forget nor disparage their virtues. Here was a hardy, hard-headed, and in the main, a worthy people. In many ways they were untutored, but they were accomplishing a great work, as with courage, endurance, and sacrifice they were subduing the forest, building homes, establishing the State, and advancing civilization. We who now live here under immeasurably better surroundings and in the enjoyment of opportunities which the most sanguine vision of their imaginations could never portray will forever be their debtors. They were our progenitors, and among them were some of the best and noblest of the race. There were among them some who came, as Mr. Meredith Nicholson says, to bring the light into the darkness. The Owens were at Harmony; the Morrisons and Mays and Hobbses at Salem; Hall and the Wylies were at Bloomington; the Merrills and Nicholsons and Julians and many others were in other parts of the State; and the immortal work of Caleb Mills at Wabash is known to all intelligent sons of Indiana. No one knew better than Mills how the benighted and the indifferent stood ready

to reject the light and to permit their lives and that of their community to go down into oblivion. But let us remember that among the rank and file of struggling Hoosiers in the new commonwealth there were others who hailed the prophecy and the promise of a better day; who gave of their toil and meagre substance to truth, to religion, to learning and education, and who were ready to dedicate to the upbuilding and higher intelligence of their State, their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honors. Wabash College and this History Society are but the products of a spirit like that; and it will be your privilege, as I am sure it will be your pleasure, as far as in you lies, to discover, to reveal, and to lead your several communities to appreciate the worthy story of our past and its significant bearing upon the possibilities of the future.

I have but touched the fringes of a great subject,—the story of the life of early Indiana. Some of it is in modern print and is easily accessible. Much of it in sources that are fugitive and undiscovered. Much of it, alas! has been destroyed and has gone from the earth forever, interred, as it were, with the bones of those who have lived and wrought and passed off the stage of action, but who, not knowing their own history, unconscious of the significance of their own being, have left no record for the edification or enlightenment of posterity. For your purposes and mine as students of history their names, their residence and their memories are with annihilation. Let us see to it that we do not make our abode with such as these. Let us appreciate our past and our passing lives, and let us recognize our obligation to our children and our children's children to recover, preserve, and hand down to posterity what we can of our own history. What we learn and see and hear of interest and importance in our day will be of ten times greater interest to men and women a century hence. And if we remember how immeasurably better off we are than they were in the days of the fathers when men were laying the foundations of our State, we shall not forget the debt of gratitude to those who labored not for themselves alone, but that we, their children and their grandchildren, might enter into the fruits of their labor. One of the uses of history is to remind us not only of our unpaid obligation to the past, but of our never ending obligation to the future. Young men, the future is yours; but it is yours not only to enjoy, but to magnify and redeem.