

MINOR NOTICES

FORT KNOX

The location of Fort Knox has long been a subject of controversy among the citizens of Vincennes. There are two traditions current, one that it was situated about three miles north of the town on the immediate bank of the Wabash; the other that it was down in the town near where old Fort Sackville stood.

The following evidence has lately come to light. Among the papers of the late Professor Wylie is a map of Illinois drawn by John Mellish in 1818.. This was drawn from the surveys of the General Land Office. On this map fortunately is located Vincennes and about three miles up the Wabash is also located Fort Knox. The map shows every evidence of being reliable.

In J. B. Finley's *Life Among the Indians*, page 188, there is quoted a letter by Captain G. R. Floyd then commanding at Fort Knox, dated August 14, 1810 which says, 'The Shawnee Indians have come; they passed this garrison, which is three miles above Vincennes, on Sunday last in eighty canoes, etc.' Reverent Finley who was well acquainted with the facts repeats the statement in his own language. These two evidences leave little doubt as to the location of the old Fort.

This fort was built in 1787 by Major John F. Hamtramck under orders of General Josiah Harmar who then commanded the United States army in the West. During the Indian wars from 1790 to 1815 it was occupied by strong garrisons, sometimes numbering 1,000 men. Armies of much larger size under Hamtramck, Russell, and Hopkins rendezvoused there at different times. No description of the fort has been found.

CHURCH HISTORY

The Methodist Church in Indiana is devoting considerable attention to historical matters connected with the early church of Indiana. Dr. Sweet, professor of history at DePauw University, is aiding in the work. Dr. Herrick was recently appointed historian by the North Indiana Conference. Dr. John Poucher is doing a similar work for Southern Indiana. Professor Sweet is hopeful that the other two Indiana Conferences will undertake systematic and

thorough surveys. Every church in Indiana and every church organization should be investigated and its record preserved. Nothing can be more interesting or in the end more valuable to the churches themselves than such a study. It was no easy task to found the churches of Indiana and fight their early battles. The men and women who did that work are entitled to have their records preserved. If the present generation is so much engrossed in other ways that it has no interest in such things it should at least rest assured that future generations will appreciate the work of the pioneer preachers and place a proper value on their history.

THE INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

This is one of the oldest organizations in the State, dating from December 11, 1830. Its first president was the distinguished federal judge, Benjamin Parke, who died of cholera, at his home in Salem, July 12, 1835. His death perhaps had much to do in preventing a complete organization of the work the Society had undertaken. At that time the first settlers of the State, and the founders of the government were alive. Had the society succeeded in getting well-organized and providing a substantial home it doubtless would have received all the valuable documents of our early history.

Unfortunately no master hand took hold of the organization and its work has not been accomplished. This does not mean that many able men have not devoted a great deal of time and money to the work. The historian, John B. Dillon, did some valuable work in connection with the society. But the man who did most for it and who took deepest interest in preserving the State's history was the late William H. English. The Society has numbered among its members many of the most distinguished men of the State. It has now a membership of about seventy-five. It has never had funds adequate to its work.

It seems that now would be an opportune time to revive interest in the organization and its work. Many leading men have expressed an interest in it lately. There are men and women in Indiana able to do this work as well as it is being done in any other State. Why not have a mass meeting of all persons in the State interested in the work of the Society as soon as the political campaign of the year is over? This is merely a suggestion. It is believed there are 1,000 persons in Indiana sufficiently interested in the work to join the society.

PRIDE'S FORT

About 1800 a pioneer named Woolsey Pride settled at White Oak Springs in Pike county near the present city of Petersburg. He soon found that he had located near one of the favorite hunting trails of the redmen. They came down White River or down the Wabash and up White River to a point near Pride's fort from which place they crossed over to hunt in Kentucky. As soon as a few white settlers came up they built a fort at the springs. This fort was used as a meeting place for the rangers who patrolled the Vincennes trace from about 1806 to the close of the War of 1812. Parties of rangers also patrolled the road to Yellow Banks down near Rockport on the Ohio, as well as the trace from where Evansville now stands. Pride's fort has stood, or a part of it, up until the present used for all manner of purposes from a church and school house to a barn. Recently its owner has decided to destroy it and it seems that one of the last, if not indeed the last, of the old frontier stockades will soon be gone.

"FIRSTS"

Just at present there are being discovered in this State a large number of "firsts." We read in the papers of "first" roads, "first" mills, "first" cotton fields, "first" associations of various kinds, "oldest" churches and schools. A humorous illustration of this appeared recently in the *Indianapolis News*. A Richmond correspondent of the *News* discovered that the honor of the "first" brewery in the State belonged to Richmond, having been established there in 1827. Mrs. Nora C. Fretagest, librarian of New Harmony raises an objection to this claim in behalf of New Harmony. She is right. Among my notes from the *Western Sun* I find an advertisement as follows:

F. Rapp will always have on hand and for sale the first quality of STRONG BEER by the barrel, at Harmonie, Indiana. April 30, 1819.

Another advertisement from the *Western Sun*, March 21, 1818, reads as follows:

J. and W. L. Coleman announce that they have erected a large brewery and are in the market for 2,000 bushels of barley and wheat, fifty cents per pound will be paid for hops. Draft, Porter, and strong beer furnished by the barrel or half barrel for home use, or in large quantities for export.

The Colemans lived at Vincennes. As a matter of fact inhabitants of Vincennes were not only making but consuming quantities of beer before the settlers of either Richmond or New Harmonie were born.