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## Pioneer Politics in Indiana

By LOGAN ESAREY, Indiana University

THE formation of their State government is the most important duty that devolves on a community of people. When the State is running smoothly people frequently look upon the politicians as rather a useless, if not a mischievous body of citizens. It is only when the government, either national or local, gets in a bad way that we get serious about the subject. The great crises of society are pretty nearly all political. Communities prosper and live long very largely in proportion to the quality of their government. The chief differences between American and other people are political. The chief distinction between Hoosiers and their neighbors are political. The State government directs our daily business, controls and operates our schools, protects our churches, guarantees our property and protects our lives. Hoosiers are often taunted with being politicians. The charge can hardly be denied and certainly no Hoosier objects to it. In the civil war Indiana sent more troops to battle than she had voters. Politics and patriotism usually go hand in hand. It is not a reproach but a credit to the State that this is as nearly true in Indiana as in any State in the Union.

Indiana has taken part in twenty-six presidential campaigns. In all but four of these elections the vote of Indiana has gone to the successful candidate. In 1836 Indiana voted for Harrison in preference to Van Buren. Four years later the nation ratified the choice of Indiana. In 1848 the State supported Cass because Taylor in his official report of the Bat-

tle of Buena Vista in the Mexican war had deeply wronged the Indiana troops and had cast a serious reflection on the honor of the Hoosier name. In 1876 the State gave Tilden a plurality of 5,000 and there are those who think a fair election would have vindicated the choice of Indiana. No other State has quite so good a record.

It is no accident that Indiana has thus so accurately interpreted the public opinion of the nation. Her people have always been alert politicians, have always welcomed political speakers from all parts of the country, and have always heard them with open minds. There has never been a time when Indiana could be "conceded" to any party.

Another line of evidence will lead to the same conclusion. In twenty-four presidential campaigns the State has registered its political conviction by popular vote. In 1824, our first national election in which the people voted, the State cast nearly 16,000 votes out of a voting population of 29,000, over fifty per cent. of its voting strength. Massachusetts cast about three-eighths of its voting strength and Virginia with a voting population of over 215,000 cast nearly 1,000 less votes than Indiana. In 1840 the State cast 117,000 votes out of a possible 137,000; Massachusetts cast 126,000 out of 147,000; Virginia cast 86,000 out of 268,000; Ohio 273,000 out of over 300,000; and Kentucky 91,105 out of 160,000. In 1860 Indiana cast over 90 per cent. of its votes. The calculation has not been completed but I have carried it far enough to show that practically all the available voters in the State have always found their way to the polls on election day. The political history of the State is thus doubly interesting because it so nearly parallels that of the nation.

Almost all the voters, when the State was admitted, were believers in the political teachings of Jefferson. They belonged to the old Jeffersonian Republican party. A few Federalists such as Judge Charles Dewey and Samuel Merrill might have been found, but they soon affiliated with the Republicans. When Indiana was admitted there was thus only one party, and very little faction in it. The old issues such as slavery and aristocracy which had divided the people in territorial times had disappeared. Even the Constitutional

Convention was almost without political antagonism, certainly there was no partisanship manifested.

The first political question which stirred the Hoosier pioneers was the fundamental one of Jeffersonian or Jacksonian politics. Those who made the constitution and administered the government under it for twenty years were firm in the Jeffersonian faith. They believed in the masses participating in politics only so far as to vote. The administrators or officers should come from the professional or educated class. This policy would lead to long terms in office, and that to an office-holding class. There being, in a strict sense, no political party in the State the first generation of politicians did not find it necessary to organize in a political way as we have since become accustomed to do. In fact political machinery had not then been developed anywhere.

It is said, with considerable historical evidence to support the statement, that the political affairs of the first ten years of our history were adjusted almost entirely by three men, a kind of Hoosier Triumvirate. These three men were Governor Jonathan Jennings of Clark county, Congressman William Hendricks of Jefferson county and Senator James Noble of Franklin county. Jennings served two terms, the constitutional limit, as governor and then became a congressman, serving until intemperance drove him from his office. Hendricks served six years in Congress, the period during which the State had only one representative, then became governor, changing to the United States Senate at the end of his term. He served in the United States Senate till the political tension between Clay and Jackson forced him to join a party or retire. He chose the latter and retired. Noble served in the United States Senate till his death, February 26, 1831. These men as stated above were Jeffersonian Republicans, but never formally joined either of the new parties. How closely they worked together is largely a matter of speculation though it is certain they never actively opposed each other. They had staunch supporters throughout the State and likewise bitter political enemies.

It seems that Jennings was politically the master mind of the Triumvirate. He was a professional politician, devoting

all his time to that occupation. He was as great a letter writer in comparison as Jefferson whom he imitated. He made long horseback trips over the southern part of the State electioneering, on which journeys he would frequently be away from home for a month at a time. He likewise made good use of the newspapers not only writing articles himself but enlisting the editors to write in his behalf. His electioneering activities had to be disguised as much as possible as the pioneers objected to that manner of soliciting office. Being an officer he naturally "had business" in all parts of the State and when he "dropped in" at a working, militia muster, circuit court, or camp meeting he was invariably "on his way" some place else.

Hendricks made use of the newspapers, the congressional frank, letter writing, and personal attention to matters in Congress. He was a superior man and a good officer though of no great ability as compared with the leaders in Congress. He had the earnest support of a number of newspapers through his tactful distribution of the publication of local United States Laws, a perquisite at that time equal to the present county or State advertising. At the end of each session of Congress he wrote up a lengthy review of the session which he published in practically every newspaper in the State. He furnished the newspapers at the earliest possible moment with copies of the president's message which every paper delighted to publish. Public documents galore were sent not only to the editors but to all other important men in the State. He was a hard worker, giving unstinted attention to all public affairs in which his constituents and the State at large were interested. Especially was this true with regard to pensions for Revolutionary soldiers, pay for the rangers of the war of 1812, the militia that served under Harrison, and appropriations to construct the National Road.

Noble was never a candidate before the people. His eloquence before juries in the circuit court and his participation in the militia musters, in which he was a general and made an imposing appearance on his fine gray horse, kept him prominently before the people.

It was charged by their political opponents that these men

controlled the politics of the State till about 1830 or later. They are said to have held caucuses at the State capital every year to repair their political fences, lay their plans and parcel out the offices for the ensuing year. The statement is doubtless too broad but it just as certainly contains the essential truth of the matter. All three men were lawyers by profession and it was the custom of the State bar to meet at the capital for the November term of the supreme court, just before the annual meeting of the General Assembly of the State and the national Congress. A majority of the members of both bodies were lawyers thus making it an ideal time for such a caucus.

It was considered bad taste for a candidate to announce himself for office. He was supposed to come out in response to the demand of his friends and it was common for him to insist that he was not a candidate until fairly forced to it by his friends. These announcements were usually provided for at this caucus or one held about the close of the session of the legislature. A paper in the Whitewater Valley, for instance, would observe that a certain man was being urged to run for the legislature in Harrison county whereupon the candidate's home paper at Corydon would announce that the man was a candidate. It will be recalled in this connection that it was customary for General Jackson to be mentioned for the presidency by some editor in New Hampshire, by the legislature of Tennessee, or a paper in New Orleans and then the newspapers, say of Ohio, would quote approvingly. It is still a matter of dispute who first nominated General William Henry Harrison.

Such were the methods and practices in pioneer Indiana. Each county was a State in miniature so far as politics were concerned. But the offices were pretty successfully harvested by a small group of men. Sixteen of the forty-two members of the Constitutional Convention returned to the first session of the General Assembly. At least six more accepted important offices under the constitution. All told the members of the Convention sat for a total of 154 terms in the legislature, thus making an average of four years' service in that body for each member of the Convention. Considering thirty-six,

the number of members in the first session, to have remained the size of the Assembly, there would have been an average attendance of seventeen of the ex-members of the Constitutional Convention. These of course controlled the legislature. Add to these the members serving on the bench, in the administrative service of the State, and in the federal government and one can readily sympathize with those who cried out against the "office-holding aristocracy."

There was considerable dissatisfaction with the new constitution. The following quotations from contemporary papers illustrate this.

#### CONVENTION

As few things are better calculated to arouse the attention of the faithful citizen who is jealous of his liberties than an attack upon the charter of his rights, I will, in the first place, present you with "An act to authorize the qualified voters of this State, to vote for or against a convention, for the revision of the constitution of this State, at the next annual election." This bill contemplates, that the voter will express upon his ticket, the word *Convention*, or *no Convention*, as he may decide.

Although the present constitution possesses some inestimable excellencies, upon which it is presumed a subsequent convention would erect a more perfect political edifice, yet it contains a greater number of defects, highly unsuitable to the meridian of Indiana, and the prosperity of her people; which if not expunged, must continue to oppress her citizens with enormous taxation, and keep her treasury poor. Ten thousand dollars are annually spent, in fruitless legislation, and not unfrequently on subjects that might be heard and remedied before the judiciary, with but a comparatively small expense to the government. Such will continue to be the situation of affairs until, by a new constitution the General Assembly is required to convene only once every two years, unless oftener called by the executive in cases of emergency.

Removing all officers by impeachment without distinction, before so numerous a body as the Legislature, at the cost of rising two hundred dollars per day, it is evident at first blush is an unpardonable misconception of policy, and too prodigal an expenditure of public money, for Indiana, with all her other difficulties to tolerate.

The judiciary, which must ever be considered the palladium of our liberties, and the principal check upon the democratical branch of the government, always preserving the vessel of the republic, against the violent waves of popular phrenzy is, it is generally believed, badly calculated to administer equal justice. One of its main appendages, (the Supreme Court), is too remote from the people, which places in the hands of the rich a predominating power over the poor. I might enumerate a

number of other fatal defects in that instrument, but the good sense of my constituents know them already too well by their operation; and with that knowledge will discover the reasons of the proposed alteration.<sup>1</sup>

The publication of this provoked the following answer by the editor, a typical Jeffersonian Republican of the office-holding class. Note his insinuation that Governor Ray favored the introduction of slavery, though he must have known that no man in Indiana had less admiration for the system than Mr. Ray.

#### CONVENTION

Junius, a newspaper writer in favor of a Convention, has attempted to point out some defects, which he wishes amended, for some of which he proposes a remedy, and for others none. He thinks that if the constitution was so amended that the Legislature would meet only biennially, there might be a saving of the expense of an annual session. If an annual session is a grievous defect in our constitution then are the constitutions of chiefly all the States in the Union likewise defective, and it is extremely unfortunate that some of the older States have lived so long in this error without discovering it. The same objection might operate against the constitution of the United States, which authorizes an annual meeting of Congress, and who ever thought a biennial meeting of Congress would be a saving of money. So general is the precedents of annual meetings of Legislatures throughout the history of government that it is not reasonable to expect that a convention, if called, would alter the constitution in that particular. Reference to the States which have biennial sessions produces no flattering argument in favor of it. The General Assembly of the State of Illinois met last winter on the first Monday of December and adjourned about the 20th of February, which was about double the time our Assembly sat. If our's should meet but once in two years, but at the same time, when it does meet, should sit double the length of time, like Illinois, what do we save thereby? Nothing. But if the Legislature might produce the proposed saving without violating the constitution, there is no necessity for calling a convention for the purpose of effecting this change in it. This might be done two ways. First, By apportioning the representation so as to have only half the number of members; the expenses would be reduced one-half; second, if the Legislature, with its present number of representatives, would curtail the session to one-half the time, the pay and expenses would be diminished in like proportion. If either or both of these methods are practicable, at all times, for the Legislature, without contravening any provision of the constitution, there is no reason, on this account, to incur the expense of a Convention to do what the General Assembly might do, if thereto disposed.

<sup>1</sup> Extract from a speech by J. B. Ray, at Brookville, February 12, 1823, in the *Corydon Gazette*, February 26, 1823, p. 3.

The same writer thinks that Associate Judges are only a clog to justice, and might be dispensed with; and goes into a detailed calculation of the expenses of that office to the State generally, and the counties in particular, without proposing any substitute therefor, with or without expense. Abolish the office of Associate Judges, and who then shall attend to the probate business in the several counties? If this be made the duty of the Circuit Judges, it cannot be expected without expense to the counties or State nor can it reasonably be expected that the business will be done as safely for the interest of the orphans, by a person who is a stranger and consequently unacquainted with the circumstances of administrators and their securities. Scarce a session of the Legislature has passed without an effort being made to abolish the office of county commissioners, which is a part of the same system of government, and it could not be done, though there is no constitutional objection. We take this as a clear intimation of the will of the people, that they are satisfied with the system of government and the organization of the Circuit Courts; and if a convention was called, the office of Associate Judges would be retained. If so, it would be folly to call a convention on this account.

Junius also complains of that part of the constitution which constitutes the Senate a court of impeachment, for the trial of petty officers, such as Justices of the Peace, and of the expenses attendant on such trials; yet he proposes no substitute. Any substitute might be without precedent, and therefore exceptionable. Most, if not all, the constitutions of the States, as well as of the United States, contain this provision. Would the people consider the rights of their officers secure, if amenable to any other tribunal? Or should the tenure of even the office of Justice of the Peace be less guarded than that of governor? Both are derived from the people, and both are necessary in the organization of government. What would the people of Indiana think of a high court of impeachment formed of two or more magistrates to try the governor, impeached with some high crime or misdemeanor? Would any court less than the Honorable Senate be acceptable in such a case? Then if not for the trial of a governor, why for the trial of the pettiest commissioned officer under the State government?

As to the expense of this mode of trial, we have little to complain of as yet. During the seven years' existence of the State government, four cases of impeachment have been tried before the Senate. Two were Clerks of the Circuit Court, and two were Justices of the Peace. Only one of the four cases resulted in a conviction. Where is there to be found an example of greater moderation than this? The State would have been fortunate indeed could it have exhibited a similar example of economy in the articles of speechifying, and calling for the Ayes and Noes, on questions of little importance. Nevertheless, the convention mania has never driven its votaries to such excess, as to attempt an embargo on words, though the speech may be nothing better than sound-



ing nonsense, or to curtail the privilege of recording the Ayes or Noes of an honorable servant of the people, though it may be on a question of adjournment.

James B. Ray, a senator from the county of Franklin, in an address to his constituents, objects to the organization of the Judiciary System, under our constitution, particularly the Supreme Court, which is "too remote from the people," and though he proposes no substitute definitely, yet if he means anything, he wishes a Supreme Court to be held in every county within the State, and like Ohio, twice in every year. He, too, is vociferous in the flattering and plausible argument of economy and saving of public money. How it is to be accomplished by his scheme of Supreme Court remains for him to demonstrate. To have two sessions of the Supreme Court annually in each county would require, at least, double the number of judges, and consequently double the amount of salary. And it would require the additional attendance of juries and otherwise, of farmers, merchants, mechanics, etc., to whom the loss of time is the loss of money. This scheme might verily produce some good berths for some attorneys, as additional judges, and for their friends, as clerks of the courts; but how money is to be saved, or the poor benefited thereby, is beyond our humble comprehension.

The only remaining defect, in our constitution, which has hitherto been publicly adverted to, has been noticed by our brethren of the type in the State of Kentucky; which is, that it does not admit of Slavery. A call of a convention, we have no doubt, is quite a popular theme throughout Kentucky, and why? Because they would wish our constitution so amended as to admit the introduction of slavery into our State. It would afford such a fine market for their negroes. And forsooth a great many, with droves of blacks, would become settlers on our fertile lands. Soon would our forests fall by the hand of Africa's sable sons; while the echo of the whip, and the horrid shrieks of suffering humanity would musically greet the ears of freemen. If such practice comports with the principle of justice in government, by the laws of God or man, and if the majority of the freemen of Indiana wish to enrich themselves by this traffic, then they will vote for a convention to expunge from the palladium of our liberty this obnoxious prohibition. It cannot be true that a majority of our citizens would desire the introduction of slavery; though we shrewdly suspect that slavery is the *summum bonum* of the prime movers of a convention; and however secret it may now be kept behind the curtain, if the vote should eventuate in a convention, it would burst forth in an impetuous torrent.

We shall vote against a convention, because we think it impolitic. We admire the wisdom and policy of those sages, who formed our constitution, in prescribing periods of twelve years for the revision of the first principles of our government. It gives reasonable scope to benefit by experience; foils the intrigues of factious demagogues and allays the capricious fervor of the disappointed office hunters, whose only hopes are nurtured by thundering clamor and continual change. The dire effects

of the frequent changes of statutes is almost intolerable on community; but the frequent changes in constitutions or first principles of government is the direct road to anarchy. If the present attempt, by the Legislature should result in a convention, any constitution formed thereby, however perfect it may be, will have its opposition; and we may reasonably calculate, as the precedent is once set, that annual applications will be made to the Legislature for a call of a convention, by the discontented. Thus the convention fervor will be excited from year to year, strange objections started and new principles advocated among the people, until the body politic becomes completely sceptical, and this asylum of liberty be plunged into a sink of iniquity and corruption. We have now, all things considered, a pretty good constitution. But few States in the Union can boast of a better. A convention now might produce one infinitely worse. Our State is growing up with great rapidity, by emigrants from almost every section of the United States, as well as other countries with their various habits, feelings and sentiments, which will require time to amalgamate; therefore we conclude, that good policy should dictate the propriety of waiting the constitutional period for Indiana to revise her constitution.<sup>2</sup>

The *Indiana Farmer* of Salem joined in the argument as quoted below. It was especially fearful of the slavery question.

In order to prepare the public mind on the subject of calling a convention to amend the constitution, we have this day extracted a piece from the *Louisville Public Advertiser*, and shall hereafter embrace every opportunity of giving our readers information on the subject. The editor of that paper seems to congratulate his readers on the prospect of Illinois and Indiana becoming slave holding States, and very humanely, as he supposes, suggests the propriety of such a measure, in order to relieve and ameliorate the condition of the slaves, by spreading them over a greater extent of country. He says this subject "seems to be entirely overlooked by the opponents of conventions." But so far as we are acquainted with the views of the Indiana legislature, in authorizing a vote for a convention, the subject of slavery was not made a question; consequently the doctrine of diffusing slaves would not properly come under discussion. As it respects this subject, when the introduction of slavery is the question, it is never overlooked by the opponents, but viewed with an impartial eye, both as it respects the policy and the justice of the measure. It has often been handled in this State; and but a few years since, when the Missouri question was under discussion, the newspapers, throughout the Union, teemed with arguments, pro and con, on the policy of this diffusion, and the subject was too forcibly illustrated to be obliterated from the public mind in so short a period. The arguments in favor of this dispersion might appear truly logical to minds already biased in

<sup>2</sup> *Corydon Gazette*, April 2 and 9, 1823.

favor of the principles of slavery, but can never be recognized as such by those who view the subject in its proper light.

The question may, in our opinion, be viewed in all its bearings. Indiana is an independent, and in many respects a separate State, and the policy of introducing slavery should embrace the principles in every respect, as much as if she belonged to a separate and distinct nation, with no other country within a thousand miles of her that tolerated the practice; and we make no hesitation in pronouncing him no less a barbarian who would advocate it than the one who first conceived and put the principles into practice.

Humanity forbids, view the question as we may, the introduction of slavery, and let whatever be said about dispersing them, in order to lessen human misery, to the contrary notwithstanding. But for once suppose this State should admit slavery, and in consequence of which, a hundred thousand slaves would be introduced from other States, would it not leave a vacancy for the introduction of as many more, to fill their places? Most unquestionably, and which would be filled by importations, smuggled into our country by a variety of ways. If we enhance their value, we increase the inducements for smuggling them, which will be done as long as it can be made profitable, and the people will connive at it. Such is the disposition of kidnappers and slave-drivers, that the prospect of a profitable trip to Africa, aided and defended by their friends at home, would, and we have no doubt does, induce hundreds of them to run all risks of apprehension from the officers of the government.

Increase the value of slaves and we add to human misery; diminish the value, and we lessen it. Slavery should be confined to as small limits as possible, and the justice and policy of emancipation will be the sooner discovered.<sup>3</sup>

These selections have been quoted at length not only to show the political thoughts prevailing at the time but more especially to show where the new constitution was causing friction.

The settlers of Indiana were intensely democratic. As an evidence of this they had made most of the official terms short and in the two most important, governor and sheriff, had limited the succession to two terms. One can imagine with what feelings they now beheld the offices monopolized by this small group. The Hoosiers are sometimes over-patient with politicians but sooner or later they have always put an end to any political situation that did not suit them. In this early instance they were not slow to challenge the officeholders.

Means of attack were sought and soon found. Someway

<sup>3</sup> Corydon Gazette, April 9, 1823, p. 3., quoting the *Indiana Farmer*.

the common voters must be organized and brought to the polls. The newspapers had a very limited circulation and the editors had a very limited vision of the political field. There were no roads and public meetings were largely neighborhood affairs. Only at rare intervals did a man acquainted with the political situation from a distant part of the State, visit a neighborhood and ten chances to one he was a politician of the office-holding class; if not he was a circuit riding Methodist preacher who paid no attention to politics. The church and the militia organization doubtless offered the solution for the political situation in 1824, the former for a State organization the latter for a local organization.

The situation reached a critical period in Indiana in 1824. There were several important issues dividing the people. Besides the rising discontent against the office-holders, there was the question of the caucus, both local and national, the manner of choosing the presidential electors, (they had been chosen by the General Assembly in 1816 and 1820) and the question of the relation of a representative to his constituents. This latter question was usually called the "right of instruction." This question is still alive; one might say "perniciously" alive in 1912. The Democrats insisted that their representative should vote according to his platform or resign. A number of Democratic members actually resigned their positions rather than vote contrary to the known wishes of their constituents. In the legislative journal are a number of instances in which Democrats explained their votes by saying they were instructed to vote as they did. On the other hand the Whigs as a rule went on the theory that in the election a superior man was chosen but left free to vote as he thought best under the conditions as they arose. A testy Whig in a Whitewater convention said they might as well send an ass to the legislature with instructions tied to his pack saddle as to send an instructed representative. This alternative seems to have been taken in some cases.

It soon came about that those who opposed the caucus, favored electing presidential electors by popular vote, and insisted that all representatives carry out the instructions of their constituents, were supporters of Jackson. They thus

stood for a greater democracy and gradually accepted the name of Jacksonian Democrats in opposition to all those who took the opposite side of these questions and came to be known in Indiana as Clay men, Clay Republicans and finally Whigs.

The following account from *Niles' Register*, February 7, 1824, shows the sentiment of the people on caucuses. Its fate in the General Assembly shows what the office-holders thought of the resolution.

WHEREAS, the encouragement given to caucus nominations for the office of President and Vice-President of the United States excites in us the liveliest apprehensions for the safety of the Union, because we believe it to be a practice tormenting the people in the exercise of their dearest franchise, at war with their feelings and the principles of their political institutions, nourishing the growth of party intrigue, which carries in its train every species of dangerous and degrading corruption; and a practice which if not checked in its progress will ultimately undermine the sacred rights, the prosperity and happiness of the American people, therefore in obedience to our duty to the State we represent, to our fellow citizens of the Union be it

*Resolved*, by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana; that it is the right of the people reserved by them in the constitution to elect the President and the Vice-President of the United States, and that any attempt by congressional nominations, in caucus or otherwise, to exercise this invaluable privilege unless authorized by the constitution, should be regarded by the American people as a dangerous encroachment on their rights, tending to ruin the Republic.

*Resolved* further, that his excellency, the governor, be requested to transmit to our senators and representatives in Congress this plain and matured opinion expressed by the House of Representatives of the people of this State.

This was indefinitely postponed by a vote of 36 to 8.

The commissioned and non-commissioned officers of the State militia in their State meeting in April, 1823, resolved "That we do highly appreciate the valuable services of Henry Clay and do most cordially recommend him as a suitable person to fill the office of chief magistrate of the United States." Previous to this the rank and file of the Harrison county militia, after their usual exercises on muster day formed themselves into one of the first county conventions spoken of in history.

HARRISON COUNTY, IA., June 17, 1820.

At a meeting of the delegates appointed by the different Militia Companies, held at the house of Jacob Conrad, in the Harrison district, for the purpose of nominating fit persons to be supported for the next General Assembly; Mr. Jonathan Wright was unanimously called to the chair, and Mr. Barnabas Baxley appointed secretary; after which the house adopted the following resolutions:

1. *Resolved*, That Patrick Shields be recommended to the voters of this district as a suitable person to be supported at the ensuing election to represent us in the Senate to fill the vacancy occasioned by the resignation of the Hon. Dennis Pennington.

2. *Resolved*, That Jacob Zenor, Jacob Kintner, and Henry Green, be recommended to the voters of this district as suitable persons to be supported at the ensuing election to represent us in the House of Representatives.

3. *Resolved*, That George Bentley be recommended to the voters of Harrison county, as a suitable person to be supported at the ensuing election, to serve us as a county commissioner.

The committee would observe, as it has been a course heretofore not pursued in this State, that in adopting the foregoing resolutions, they do not wish to dictate to the people; but it has been a course pursued by States older than the one of which we have become citizens; and we take this occasion to express the opinions of the different Militia Companies, of which we are the representatives, and would state that in our opinion, the people ought, if they attend to the interests and feelings of the farmers and mechanics of this district, to support the candidates which they have designated in the above resolutions.

The committee would solicit the Militia Companies of the counties generally throughout the State, to hold similar meetings to the one which is now held, to nominate persons to represent us in the different branches of the State government; as it is our wish, not only to provide for ourselves, but for our offspring, against the endeavors of those who wish to misrepresent our feelings and subvert the interests of our country. We explicitly state that we wish to support the farmer and mechanic—they are the mainstay of our country—they are the firm supporters of our republican constitution; and we, as a committee, wish to prevent an evil which has long prevailed, *viz*: of electing persons who do not really feel an interest in the general welfare.

It is recommended by this committee, to the Militia Companies of this district, and to the Militia Companies of the State generally, to appoint, at the ensuing April Muster, two men for each company, to meet at any place and time which may be designated by them, for the purpose of nominating persons calculated to represent their feelings and interests.

The committee to be appointed under the wish expressed in the foregoing paragraph, for the county of Harrison, will meet at the Court House, in Corydon, on the first Saturday of May next, at 11 o'clock, a. m.

The committee respectfully request the Editors of the *Indiana Gazette* of Corydon to publish the foregoing preamble and resolutions, once a week, until the day of election.<sup>4</sup>

JONATHAN WRIGHT, *Chairman*.

*Attest:* BARNABAS BAXLEY, *Secretary*.

This was held at the tavern of Jake Conrad, who had entertained the delegates to the Constitutional Convention in 1816. By the following year the Harrison county voters had developed or imported the idea of a county delegate convention as shown by the following quotation:

#### DELEGATE MEETING

On Saturday next the citizens of the different townships meet to choose delegates to nominate suitable persons to represent the county of Harrison in the next Legislature. This method may answer a very salutary purpose in getting forward modest men of talents whose interests may be identified with the great agricultural and farming interests of the country; and have a tendency of putting down that uncouth and baneful method of a candidate starting up, and to gain a popularity riding all around the country to electioneer for himself, treating at every town or grog shop he comes to as long as he has money or credit. To the dishonor of Harrison county and to the prejudice of the correct principles of morality and the good order of society, was witnessed too much of the baneful effects of this whiskey business at the last annual election. We hope that the future progress of the delegates will be to set their faces against this enormous evil, and leave out of view such as they may discover attempting to gain popularity, either by treating or electioneering round the country for themselves. It is a practice which belongs not to the character of republicans, but to Demagogues, who will sell the rights of their constituents as readily as they would beg their votes with a half pint of whiskey, if opportunity offers. The practice ought to be detested by every moral, good citizen and therefore every effort to put an end to it should be promoted.<sup>4</sup>

The evidence is that nearly all the militia men favored Jackson. Almost at the same time a similar meeting was formed in a similar way at Point Commerce, in Greene county.

#### PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION

At a meeting of a number of the citizens of the upper part of Greene county, in Indiana, on the 6th of June, 1823, in order to make known

<sup>4</sup> Corydon *Gazette*, June 22, 1820, p. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Corydon, *Indiana Gazette*, March 1, 1821, p. 3.

their sentiments concerning the presidential election, being emigrants from the following States, *viz*: Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio, their partialities in favor of any particular men or section of this Union they trust has no influence amongst them; for the public good ought to be the polar star of every freeman and cordiality ought to be nourished by the people on all important measures in a free government. For it is the skill and courage of republicans, aided with a concert that always ought to unite them, like a band of brothers, that makes them strong; for we see them, when numerically weak, often defeating overgrown armies of slaves and mercenaries, and baffling the intrigues of the greatest potentates.

We wish for tried and dauntless patriots, men of deliberation, yet prompt to execution, to be at the helm of our government—Andrew Jackson and De Wit Clinton stood firm during the reign of terror in '99 and 1800. Their exertions at New Orleans and New York show that they acted an ample part in defending our country during the late war [1812]. Believing, therefore, that they are undeviating republicans and statesmen too, by this meeting it is unanimously

*Resolved*, That they recommend Gen. Andrew Jackson, of Tennessee, as a suitable person for the next President; and De Wit Clinton, of New York, for the next Vice-President of the United States.

*Resolved*, That it is the desire of this assemblage to cherish harmony amongst the people of this union; and for good cause made manifest, this meeting will not hesitate to transpose the grades of these two gentlemen, or even recede from this nomination altogether.

*Resolved*, That the people of this republic on this occasion ought to meet not only in cities and towns, but on their farms and in the forests, and express their opinions, and have them published, throughout the United States.

*Resolved*, That although this meeting is in the wilds of Indiana, it entreats the people of every section of this republic to response.

*Resolved*, That these proceedings be transmitted to the editors of the *Indianapolis Gazette*, with a request to publish them in their next paper.<sup>6</sup>

J. STOKELY, *Moderator*.

It became customary to take straw votes at the county musters. These showed a strong majority of the young men favoring Jackson. The lawyers practically all favored Clay or Adams. The business men all supported Clay. Among the churches the Quakers supported Clay while the Baptists usually supported Jackson.

The law providing for the selection of electors on a State ticket, enacted January 14, 1824, was the immediate occasion

<sup>6</sup> *Corydon Gazette*, July 9, 1823, p. 3, quoting the *Indianapolis Gazette*.



for the invention of the political machinery which soon will have been in service in our State a century. The Clay and Adams men in 1824 soon agreed on electoral tickets. These tickets were composed of State officers and hailed direct from caucuses at the capital. There were no Jackson men in office and only one or two of the newspapers of the State favored him. In a short time, however, they had three Jackson electoral tickets in the field. It was clear that this confusion would lead to defeat. As a solution of the matter the editor of the Vincennes *Western Sun*, a personal friend and partisan of Jackson, in the issue of July 31, 1824, outlined a scheme of county and State conventions. He urged all the friends of Jackson to meet in their respective counties sometime in August and appoint one or more delegates to a State convention to be held in Salem, the political capital of early Indiana, on Thursday, after the first Monday in September, to nominate an electoral ticket in favor of Andrew Jackson, issue an address to the people and make such other arrangements for the campaign as seemed necessary. The followers of Jackson met in a large number of counties and formed county and township organizations. The movement was new and popular. The old politicians did not manifest the concern they must have felt. The counties of Fayette, Gibson, Jefferson, Orange, Clark, Lawrence, Shelby, Switzerland, Knox, Ripley and Washington were represented in the convention. It is not necessary to go into all the details of this our first State convention and, it is believed, either the first or second real State convention of which history has any record.

The battle then staged in Indiana was a strange one. There was scarcely a State officer or a man of State-wide reputation then in the Jackson party. Samuel Judah who wrote the first platform, or, as it was called, "an address to the People" was a man of great ability, but then an unknown young lawyer of Vincennes. Samuel Milroy, ancestor of the Milroy family of Indiana, was then an ordinary farmer, living near Salem; David Robb of Princeton was a young Irishman not long from Erin; Dr. Elias McNamee was a physician of Vincennes; John Carr was a farmer of Clarke county, who had served as sheriff and was later to serve in Congress; Jonathan

McCarty, a young man of Franklin county, was just entering on a long official career in the State. These were the first Jackson electors. There were two score of Clay and Adams men in the State better known than the most noted of these. Some of these men had sat in the Constitutional Convention and, in general, the two conventions compare favorably in the mediocrity of their members. Their opponents called the Jackson men "yeomen" or small farmers, peasants. A State Committee of three men was appointed to manage the State campaign; a county Committee of Correspondence, consisting usually of three men was in charge of the county campaign, while a Vigilance Committee looked after the individual voters in each township. With this organization the Jackson men carried the State by a plurality of 2,028 over Clay and 4,250 over Adams.

This contest between Democrats and Whigs continued till 1852 with very little change in the alignment of the principal contestants. The fight seemed most intense in presidential years, but the general situation remained unchanged. The experienced politicians were Whig while the Democrats had a close military organization. Of the fifty-seven delegates to the Whig convention at Indianapolis in 1828 all seem to have been office-holders and nearly all were members of the State government. To all intents and purposes it was a legislative caucus. Forty-one of the fifty-six counties were represented. It seemed that all the State officers were there and such was the case. From 1828 to 1843 the State government was in the hands of the Whigs.

On the other hand a very large proportion of the local, county and township, officers were Democrats. While the "honorable" members of the General Assembly were caucusing for the good of the Whig party the township listers, each in his little field, were taking a poll of the individual voters and passing it on up to the Vigilance Committee for its inspection. The Whigs had the talent and, when they came to use it, the oratory, but the Democrats had the organization and won five of the seven Presidential campaigns from the Whigs.

While this was primarily a struggle for greater democracy there was also another broad distinction between the parties.

The State Whigs gradually became influenced by the national party, supporting the tariff, internal improvements, and the bank. It was a business men's party. During the period from 1828 to 1843, while the State was securely under control of the Whigs, every effort of the State was bent toward aiding the commercial interests of the State, assisting banks, canals and railroads. It can hardly be said that the Democrats made a wholehearted opposition to this commercial policy of the Whigs, but on the other hand it cannot be said that they were directly responsible. As long as this policy was successful the Whigs were invincible in State elections, though as stated above the Democrats carried the national elections. During this period the Whigs established the Second State Bank, built the Michigan Road, opened up the streams to navigation and finally bankrupted the State in the endeavor to build a system of pikes, canals and railroads. The first part of this period from 1826 to 1836 was an era of great prosperity. The Whigs could point to the thousands of flatboats, carrying every year their cargoes of produce to New Orleans; to the stage coaches coming and going between Cincinnati, Richmond, and Indianapolis; to Madison, New Albany, Leavenworth, Terre Haute, Vincennes and Evansville; to Crawfordsville, Lafayette, Logansport, Fort Wayne and Toledo; or by South Bend to Niles and Detroit, Michigan. The State Bank was handling the currency of the State in a satisfactory manner and laying up from its savings a snug endowment for the public schools. It is a most pleasing picture. The people were busy, prosperous, and contented. It was not their fault, the Whigs thought, if a Democratic President, Van Buren, brought on the panic of 1837 and destroyed all this prosperity.

In 1843 the last Whig administration in Indiana came to a close. Three Whig governors had administered the State in succession from 1831. From 1843 three Democrats governed in succession till the Civil War.

The policy of the Democrats was humanitarian rather than commercial. The Whigs investigated the State and found it needed means of commerce, currency and facilities for transportation. The Democrats examined the State and decided its greatest need was more personal attention to the people

themselves. The insane and feeble-minded were then kept in jails with the criminals. The deaf and dumb were uncared for and the blind were left a helpless charge on their friends or placed in the county poorhouses. The growth of illiteracy was startling. In some of the counties one-third of the grown people were unable to read and write. Between 1840 and 1850 the percentage of illiteracy grew from 14 per cent. to 22 per cent. There seemed a bankruptcy of citizenship as well as one of commerce. Here, then, the Democrats felt was the proper field for the State's assistance, rather than with the commercial classes. Under James Whitcomb and Joseph A. Wright, the first two Democratic governors, our present system of educational and benevolent institutions was founded.

Political methods and practices have changed decisively during the century. In the constitution it was provided, by way of experiment, that voting should be by ballot, but if this was not found to be satisfactory the old method of *viva voce* could be again taken up. In the early years voting was all done at the county seat; thereafter for awhile one could vote either at the county seat or in his home township. Still later the voter was required to cast his ballot in his home precinct. From 1828, when the Whig and Democratic parties became well organized, down to the passing of the Australian Ballot Law there was no essential change in the manner of voting. The party organization usually furnished the ballots with the presidential electors' names printed on them. Other candidates from the governor down had to have their ballots printed and see that they were distributed. All kinds of frauds were perpetrated on the voters. Bogus ballots were plentiful. The most common form of the bogus ballot was a straight party ballot except for one name from the opposing party. For instance, a Whig candidate for sheriff would have a Democratic ticket printed complete except for the sheriff and here put his own name. Another common device was the "paster." This was a thin strip of paper on which was the candidate's name, the back of it being adhesive like a postage stamp. This could be used honestly or dishonestly. The candidate's friends found this an easy way honestly to "scratch" in his favor. If the voter was unwilling to "scratch" it was possible to stick

this on his ticket deftly while looking over the ballot, especially if the voter were drunk. The appearance of the "floater" at the polls was a signal to battle. Not infrequently the "floater" was voted by main force by the strongest party after a half dozen fist fights. Usually one party or the other dominated the grounds before the polls had long been open. In a few places public spirited men of both parties joined together and barred all violence. This latter custom has grown slowly but steadily until in nine-tenths of the voting places today there are no longer scenes of violence. But in the early days the voting place was the chosen arena for drunken fights, the exhibition continuing all day long. Very seldom, however, was there any loss of life.

Some contemporary descriptions of scenes at the polls are here given to add details to the picture.

#### ELECTION

This occasion has reflected some degree of credit on the county of Harrison, compared with years that are past. There has been less rioting and drunkenness than heretofore, as a good omen of the increase of correct morals. Whether the candidates have less confidence in whiskey, or whether the voters are rising above the degradation of selling their votes for a dram is difficult to determine; we hope that both have had a salutary influence. Yet there is room to mend, and if all the citizens would reflect on what constitutes the dignity of freemen, few could be found who would barter their votes for whiskey, and candidates who attempt such would be spurned at.

One point is necessary for the consideration of the legislature. The law regulating elections needs amendment. Elections would be conducted with more regularity and order were the voters limited to their own townships, whereas as the law now stands, the great body of the people collect at the county seats, and chiefly those who are fondest of drinking and rioting. This is one great cause of the disorder which prevails. Necessity will soon force an alteration in the law, otherwise the people cannot get their votes, as so many cannot be taken in at one place in one day, and the constitution will not allow more than one day for election.

We have not been able to obtain an official return of the late election, but we are informed that Jennings will have a majority both for the vacancy and the district; William Polke for lieutenant governor, and that Dennis Pennington and Peter Mauk will be the Representatives in the State Legislature.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Corydon, *Indiana Gazette*, August 8, 1822, p. 3.

The following account of early elections is by Noah J. Major. The author was a voter at the Morgan county polls for two-thirds of a century.

By 9 o'clock in the morning Martinsville was buzzing and humming like bees in swarming time. The citizens were obscured and ignored for the time being. The sheriff and constable were supposed to keep order, but they let school keep itself on election day. What could they do with a thousand sons of Columbia, all chock-full of the spirit of '76 and wringing wet with sweat? Nothing at all. Many of these could not do anything with themselves by 4 o'clock p.m., and were pulled into the shade to await the return of their senses. Old King Alcohol paralyzed many a chap on every returning first Monday in August. However, the "blowers and strikers" managed to get these "babes and sucklings" to vote "before or after taking," whichever they could.

The old fathers were strong party men; oftentimes in needy circumstances, not worth buying, as is sometimes said, but an attempt to buy their ballots would have been resented with fiery indignation, supplemented by a kick. Men did not stand around in those days, saying as they do now in a half-jocular, half-earnest way, "We are going to vote for the man who has the money." The only approach to undue influence was in the practice of "treating." This was carried on to a scandalous degree, and led to grewsome disorder. From noon till night fisticuffs were freely indulged, and the fighting was fast and furious, but not to kill. While the rules of the Marquis of Queensbury were not strictly observed, if the "under dog" cried "nough," the top cur was jerked off in a jiffy. Deadly weapons were seldom or never used in these combats. This ruling, which was generally accepted, gave strong men a great advantage over the weaker ones; but the battle is not always to the strong, nor the race to the swift. What was called foul play was often shown when one of the combatants was short of friends. Many of the pending fights were fixed for election day, when the principals could have their seconds hard by. The stray pen was often used as the arena in which the battles were fought.

After having their heads shaven and soaped, the combatants stripped to the waist, tied their suspenders around their bodies and walked into the ring, while the crowd stood around the pen from four to six deep, to see the fight. Sometimes, just at this juncture, the friends of the fighters brought about a reconciliation and averted the battle; after which the belligerents washed off the soap, and put on everything as before, excepting their hair, while the crowd dispersed to reassemble at the courthouse. Here the polling booth resembled the ticket wagon on a show day. Men were poking their tickets under the nose of the inspector, faster than their names could be written. Ever and anon there was a dispute between the challengers, which, however, seldom resulted in violence. By a sort of common consent, no fighting was to be permitted near the polls. Sometimes when the throng was so great that the voters

were hindering rather than helping the election to a finish by 6 p.m., and giving every one a chance to vote, a sham fight would begin. This started the crowd on the run from the courthouse and gave the board time to breathe.

Tickets could be had anywhere for the asking. They were usually printed with the names of the party candidates in full. As there was likely to be more or less scratching, pasters were supplied for the use of the scratcher, or he could scratch the regular candidate and write his name about the erasure. Some men wrote the entire ticket with a pen, and would vote half a sheet of paper. Many will remember the late Robert Townsend, who sometimes voted in this way: Splitting a long stick, inserting the ballot in the split, and hoisting it in the window over the heads of the bystanders. Mr. Townsend was of a family of very early settlers, simon-pure Democrats, warranted neither to "rip, ravel, nor wear out." Parties might change routes, go up or down, but the original Townsend never failed to plump a Democratic ticket in the ballot box on the first Monday in August. There were, in those old times, as there are now, floaters, sometimes called "ciphers," but it is noted that even ciphers count in times of elections if they can be placed on the right side of the right figures. The shrewdest local electioneers were engaged to watch these annual floppers, and turn them over into their respective camps. It was generally seen in the forenoon which party was capturing the largest number of the doubtfuls. But the greatest merriment was late in the day when "the last of the Mamalukes" were running the gauntlet arm in arm with the "buttonholers."

As the respective parties gained a point they hissed and laughed like ganders at a goose fight. Let it not be understood from the foregoing sketch that any considerable number of the old-time voters were drunken or disorderly. Such was not the case. Ten or fifteen rowdies, in the absence of a good police force, can keep an uproar going among a thousand civil men.<sup>8</sup>

Yet one more pen picture from the good old days when freemen walked up before the assembled multitude and boldly expressed their preferences, or at least as the old patriarch said they did.

The price of liberty, eternal vigilance, is well paid in a New Purchase. With us it was watched by all classes, and throughout the year; it was indeed the universal business. Our officers all, from governor down to a deputy constable's deputy and fence-viewer's clerk's first assistant, were in the direct gift of the people. We even elected magistrates, clerks of court, and the judges, presiding and associate! And some who knew better, yet for rabbleroxing purposes, gravely contended that trustees of colleges, and all presidents, professors, and teachers should be elected directly by the people!

<sup>8</sup> Noah J. Major, *Pioneers of Morgan County*, 374 seq.

Our social state, therefore, was forever in ferment, forever was some election, doing, being done, done or going to be done; and each was as bitterly contested as that of President or governor. In all directions candidates were perpetually scouring the country with hats, saddle-bags, and pockets crammed with certificates, defending and accusing, defaming and clearing up, making licentious speeches, treating to corn whiskey, violating the Sabbath, and cursing the existing administration or the administration's wife and wife's father! And everybody expected at some time to be a candidate for something; or that his uncle would be; or his cousin, or his cousin's wife's cousin's friend would be; so that everybody, and everybody's relations, and everybody's relations' friends, were forever electioneering till the state of nasty, pitiful intrigues and licentious slanders and fierce hostility was like a rotten carcass where maggots are, each for himself and against his neighbor, wriggling and worming about!

Men were turned into mutual spies, and watched and treasured and reported and commented upon, looks words and actions, even the most trifling and innocent! And we were divided, house against house! and man against man; and settlements, politically considered, were clannish and filled with animosity. The sovereign people was, indeed, feared by the candidate who truckled today, and most heartily despised when he ruled tomorrow. . . .

We had, of course, in the Purchase a passion for stump-speeching. But recollect, we often mount the stump only figuratively; and very good stump-speeches are delivered from a table, a chair, a whiskey barrel, and the like. Sometimes we make our best stump speeches on horseback. In this case, when the horse is excited by our eloquence, or more commonly by mischievous boys, more action goes with the speech than even Demosthenes inculcated—often it becomes altogether circumambulatory.

Once a candidate stood near the tail of Isam Greenbriar's ox cart at Woodville [Bloomington], when some of his opponents (perhaps some of his own friends, for the joke was tempting), noiselessly drew out the forward pins, when at the most unexpected instant, ay, in the very climax of his most ferocious effervescence, Mr. Rhodomontade was canted into the dirt!

Again, our candidate for fence-viewer, with some half dozen friends, was once hard at work with certificates and speeches in Sam Dreadnought's wagon; when Sam, having several miles to drive before dark, and having already waited two good hours for matters to end, suddenly leaped on his saddle horse, and then, at a word and a crack, away dashed the team loaded with politics, very much to the amusement of the people, but most to the discomfiture of our candidate.

Nothing surpasses the munificent promises and at the same time the external and grovelling humility of a genuine rabblrouser, just before an election. He shakes hands with everybody, friend and foe; he has agents to treat at his expense at every doggery; and in his own person



he deals out whiskey and gingerbread, as we have seen, to a long line of independent voters marching past him with drum and fife to the polls; and he drinks out of any drunken vagabond's bottle, laughing at his beastly jokes, putting his arm round his filthy neck, and allows himself thus to be slobbered upon, while patting the brute on the back and being patted in turn!<sup>9</sup>

As mentioned earlier in this paper, electioneering was not looked upon with favor by the best people, but it may be remarked that it was universally practiced. A typical case is that of General W. Johnson of Vincennes who announced in the paper that he would serve his people in the General Assembly if they wanted him but would not electioneer for the office. A series of handbills followed at frequent intervals explaining his position but still insisting that he would not electioneer. On the eve of the election he came out with the following card in his paper:

CITIZENS OF KNOX

An American, a child of your State, and a friend of your rights now offers his services to represent you in the legislature. His qualifications are so well known they need no comment. His principles both religious and political, have been tested and passed the Rubicon. Such a one now solicits your suffrages and if he becomes the object of your choice, promises that he will serve you faithfully, and render an account of his conduct.

He was a good, capable man but still he refused to electioneer. Dennis Pennington and John Tipton, both of Corydon, declared in the newspapers, they would not electioneer but both were experts at the art and both were high class men.

There was room for ingenuity in electioneering in the early days just as there is at present. In Ripley county Merritt Craig, a young lawyer from Kentucky, was a candidate for the legislature. The prospects for his election were not good. Some bold move must be made. Groceries, as saloons were then called, were odious. He was a big six foot Kentuckian and entirely fearless. The thought struck him and he went to the nearest grocery, threw the owner out of doors, overturned the counter, wrecked the bar, kicked the bung out of the whiskey barrel, said mean things about groceries in gen-

<sup>9</sup> Baynard R. Hall, *The New Purchase*, Vol. 1, 209. (First Edition.)

eral, paid the grocer for all the damage, sent his friends to scatter the news over the county and was triumphantly elected, thus helping to vindicate Jackson.

Sometimes outbursts of eloquence were wasted on the pioneers. Judge John Test and Senator O. H. Smith, then rival candidates for Congress in the Whitewater District had been discussing the tariff for two or three hours when an old grizzly farmer, who had occupied a log in the foreground, arose, shook out his long hair, threw his rifle across his shoulder and started for home, observing to Senator Smith, about the tariff, "I never seen one of 'em but I hearn they are dreadfully hard on sheep."

Sometimes one comes across a gem among these old electioneering cards. Reuben A. Nelson, a New Albany attorney, in announcing his candidacy for Congress in 1817 said:

I shall neither attempt to insult your judgment by eulogizing my own talents nor disgust your feelings by a parade of my integrity.

Of course he was defeated; he was more than a century too early with that line of talk.

Or how is this from a young Democratic orator:

Democracy is a sentiment not to be appalled, corrupted nor compromised. It knows no baseness, cowers at no danger, oppresses no weakness. Fearless, generous, humane, it rebukes the arrogant, cherishes honor and sympathizes with the humble. It asks nothing it will not concede. It concedes nothing it does not demand. Destructive only to despotism, it is the only preserver of liberty, labor and prosperity. It is the sentiment of freedom, equal rights and equal obligations.

A novelty of Governor James B. Ray's candidacy in 1825 was the fact that he publicly announced himself without any solicitation. *Niles' Register* has this comment on him for thus seeking office:

It may be mentioned, I believe, as a thing without precedent among us that Mr. James B. Ray has publicly offered himself as a candidate for the gubernatorial chair, and in a spirited public address solicited the suffrage of the people, a proceeding which we think cannot be approved of whatever be the merits of the individual in other respects.

Senator Oliver H. Smith says of the congressional campaign of 1825: "Stump speaking was just coming into fashion and the people flocked to hear us by thousands. My opponent had

a good knowledge of the issues and I had a powerful voice," and the Senator won out.

As soon as Jackson was installed in office in 1829 he began a wholesale crusade against office holders. Jonathan McCarty became superintendent of the National Road, Samuel Judah became United States district attorney, Henry S. Handy, the Jackson State chairman, became postmaster at Salem, James P. Drake received the land office at Indianapolis, Dr. Israel T. Canby was made land officer at Crawfordsville, and Abel Pepper got the land office at Fort Wayne. Sooner or later every federal office in the State except the judgeship, was turned over to Democrats, even down to country postoffices whose yearly income was less than five dollars. The Democrats were immensely pleased at this because it gave them, in the land offices, a power equal to that which the Whigs held in the State Bank.

The political campaign from 1835 to 1840 was the high tide of politics in Indiana before the Civil War. The Democrats perfected their State organization by selecting a State Central Committee of sixteen men. Congressional Committees of five were appointed in each district to look after the congressman and the usual Press and Finance Committees were appointed. This political organization has been changed but very little since then.

The Whigs opened their campaign with a mass convention of about 1500 men on the Battleground at Tippecanoe. The campaign hardly did more than get under way in 1836. The real contest came in 1840. The Democrats had at last found their voices and opened with not less than thirty-five first class speakers on the stump. Robert Dale Owen spoke for Van Buren at Spencer October 3, Greencastle October 5, Terre Haute October 7, Bowling Green October 8, and Vincennes October 10. Follow this on the map and see what horseback riding it required. These speeches were not less than two hours in length and were often preceded by some local man who spoke for an hour or so. Richard M. Johnson, hero of the Thames, and candidate for vice-president with Van Buren, made a tour of the State speaking at Connersville October 12, Indianapolis October 14, Crawfordsville October 16, Lafayette

October 17, Rockville October 20, Terre Haute October 21, Carlisle October 23, Vincennes October 24, New Harmony October 26, Evansville October 28, Rockport October 29, Troy October 30, and Rome October 31. Johnson was met ten miles north of Vincennes by three hundred horsemen and escorted into the city. This was typical of the enthusiasm of the Democrats but they were almost solemn in comparison with the Whigs.

A part of the itinerary of the Whig candidate for governor, Judge Samuel Bigger, will illustrate the strenuous life of the Whig spellbinders during the campaign. On one of his trips he left Greensburg on horseback, where he had spoken April 6. On April 7 he spoke at Versailles, April 8 at Vevay, April 9 at Madison, April 10 at Charlestown, April 11 at New Albany, April 13 at Corydon, April 15 at Leavenworth, April 16 at Fredonia, April 17 at Rome, April 18 at Troy, April 20 at Rockport, April 21, at Boonville, April 22 at Evansville, April 24 at Mt. Vernon, April 25 at Cynthiana, April 26 at Princeton, April 28 at Petersburg, April 29 at Vincennes, May 1 at Merom, May 2 at Caledonia, May 4 at Terre Haute, May 6 at Bowling Green, May 7 at Greencastle, May 8 at Danville, May 9 at Indianapolis. The trip was made on horseback. Bigger was a stalwart six footer, weighing about 250, but the campaigns killed him.

The Whigs opened their campaign of 1840 with a monster mass meeting at the Battleground, May 29. Delegations came from the nearby States of Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Kentucky and Tennessee. From Michigan City came a procession with a full-rigged ship, named *The Constitution*, at its head. It was drawn by six white horses. On its pennant floating to the breeze from the ship's masthead was inscribed Harrison and Tyler. Indianapolis was the rallying place for parties from the southern part of the State, whence they could go north over the Michigan Road to the Battleground. Despite the three days rain immense throngs made the trip. The women of Indianapolis presented the political army with a fine banner and it departed in squadrons of two hundred. Those on horseback led the column, followed by the carriages and the men on foot. The footmen spludged along barefoot through the black mud carrying their shoes in their hands. The column

was said to extend along the road twenty-five miles. The men slept by the wayside in barns, corn cribs, or around hay and straw stacks, single delegations numbering 1,000 men marching in line.

The scene at the Battleground outdid the descriptive power of the local editors, some of whom estimated the crowd at 40,000. In one spot was a band of survivors of the Revolution, in another stood the heroes of Fort Meigs, in still another the survivors of the battle of Tippecanoe, the Levites of this shrine. Three tables, each 100 yards long, loaded with the feast, were filled again and again by the hungry multitude. The old Baptist patriarch, John Vawter, called the nations together, as he termed it, and then turned the meeting over to General Jonathan McCarty. The veterans then gathered at the Battleground Tavern, formed in order, whereupon Judge William Polke produced the tattered banner under which Captain Spier Spencer's Yellow Jackets had fought and under which the two gallant pioneers Spencer and Warrick had died. Under this banner they marched to the speaker's stand. It was a baptism of patriotism to all present.

Scores of similar meetings were held in all parts of the State. The State was in a delirium of sentiment from which it seemed impossible for the Democratic orators to recall it. The campaign closed in a torchlight parade at Indianapolis. The crowd was to be addressed by James Whitcomb, a Democrat, and O. H. Smith, a Whig. After waiting till midnight for the parading and noise to cease the speakers good humoredly left their stands and the campaign was over.

From 1840 to 1860 the barbecue featured as an important event in political campaigns. It and the joint debates characterized this period.\* In the campaign of 1844 the Whigs selected a State Central Committee of twenty-six members. In addition to these, sixty advocates were selected whose business it was to stump the State. This was the beginning of our present Speaker's Bureau. The Central Committee divided the State into nineteen districts in each of which was held a monster barbecue. To each barbecue from two to five speakers were assigned. The times and dates of these official barbecues were as follows: Evansville September 14, Princeton September 18, Washington September 21, Corydon September

25, Charlestown September 28, Madison October 2, Rockville October 2, Napoleon October 5, Lafayette October 5, Logansport October 8, Shelbyville October 9, Fort Wayne October 12, Cambridge City October 12, Andersontown October 15, Goshen October 16, Bedford October 19, Laporte October 19, Indianapolis October 22, Terre Haute October 28. At each of these from two to ten oxen were berbecued. Each meeting lasted two days, during which two to five speakers, stationed on convenient stumps in the grove, spoke to the multitude. It was not uncommon for a speaker to talk from one stump two hours then go to another stump and speak two hours, making as many as four such speeches in the course of the day at the same meeting. The evidence is unmistakable that the people in general came as much to hear the great speakers as to eat the roasted beef. Many a man listened during eight hours a day to the argument, gnawing meantime at his beef and bread and washing it down with good cider or corn whisky. The following paragraph from a speech by Governor Ray illustrates the eloquence delivered by the spellbinders. One does not have to go beyond our own history to find out why the Hoosiers are universally interested in politics. They have had a marvelous training.

The universal developments of the past year, at home and abroad, on this and the other hemisphere, are calculated to raise the whole human family still higher in the scale of creation, in their own estimation, than anticipation ever reached. Many are the indications that the era has just been ushered in for the complete overthrow of the most hateful errors and deadly enemies of the world, and the triumph and spread of regenerated and reasonable principles, based on the enlightened philosophy of the age and the eternal rights of man. Its great events have given birth to the simultaneous jubilee over half the globe, and planted deep in the thrilling souls of millions a hope of deliverance from long oppressions and the race of kings. The press has succeeded in convincing the governed that they were not made to be ruled *jure divino* but that their rulers belong to them as servants *jure humano*. The genius of liberty, from soaring triumphant with the Eagle and Star Spangled Banner of America, has taken her flight across the Atlantic, to career for awhile with the lilies and tri-colors of France. This celebrated flag, the emblem of popular supremacy and prostrate royalty, now waves unmolested over noble and gallant France.

It is said the governor's voice would carry four hundred yards through the woods.