Indiana and Her History*

By JAMES ALBERT WOODBURN

Our country's history has witnessed a conflict of loyalties. When the Civil War began, in 1861, General Winfield T. Scott and General George H. Thomas, two distinguished Virginians, retained their loyalty to the Union of the States, to a unified Republic. General Robert E. Lee and General "Stonewall" Jackson, deeming it impossible to draw their swords against their native state, maintained their state allegiance and cast their lots with the Southern Confederacy.

John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky, Vice-President of the United States up to the outbreak of the war, denying his allegiance both to his state and the nation, went into the Confederate army. He went the way his sympathies led him toward a slave-holding Confederacy. Kentuckians were pretty evenly divided in their army enlistments.

The Union men in forty counties in Western Virginia seceded from the "Old Dominion," created a new commonwealth, and although old Virginia could not fairly be said to have been divided by her own consent, the new state was admitted, as a war measure, into the Union. Those were days of conflicting loyalties in which men had to choose, as they may never have to choose again.

Behind this old state loyalty, there was a natural and historical background. For two hundred years Virginia had been either a self-governing colony of the British Empire or a commonwealth of the American Union. In her colonial days she was as independent of the other colonies on the Atlantic seaboard as she was of Canada or Barbados. She had been built up by common sacrifices of her citizens, through common trials and tribulations. She had a history in which her people had come to have great satisfaction and pride. "When I speak of my country" said John Randolph of Roanoke, "I mean the Commonwealth of Virginia." Whenever that patriotic Virginia signed a hotel registry in Europe, it was always as "John Randolph of Roanoke, Virginia." The United States never came into his affections, hardly into his vision or recognition, certainly not into his first political allegiance. To the South

---

* This Paper was read at the Centennial Meeting of the Indiana Historical Society, December 12, 1930, Claypool Hotel, Indianapolis.
of Virginia, Calhoun and Hayne were Carolinians before they were Americans.

It was the same with Massachusetts. "Massachusetts, There She Stands"—a slogan well worthy of a noble state loyalty—recalls Webster's proud reply to Hayne: "I shall enter upon no encomium upon Massachusetts. She needs none. There she stands. Behold her and judge for yourselves. There is Lexington, Concord, and Bunker Hill, and there they will remain forever." In a period of two hundred years, a tie had arisen binding her people together. It was the possession of a common history, a common past, a common tradition. There were memories of sufferings endured and victories achieved. Personalities and names had arisen which expressed the character and ideals of the state, and there were sacred places, where the memories of the state were enshrined.

California and Texas had origins and experiences peculiar to themselves, like most of the original thirteen states. They were children of adventure, of original enterprise in the founding of commonwealths. In a sense they were self-originated, and there is reason why their history should excite special state patriotism.

Can such a loyalty be induced among a people toward one of the new states in the Old Northwest, let us say, like Indiana, which had, more or less, an artificial origin? She was carved out of what has been called the national domain. The western states having a national origin naturally developed a national loyalty. They were beneficiaries of the Federal Government. That Government created them as states, or granted them power to become states. On the other hand the original states created the Federal Government. As far as governing their people was concerned, that Government was to the old thirteen a subordinate affair, a mere adjunct in their political lives. They had a long way to go before there was much attachment to it or affection for it. To them, at first, the Federal Government was but a convenience to provide for a few common interests—to care for foreign affairs, Indian affairs and inter-state affairs; to provide a common money and a possible common defense against some common enemy. But the new states in the West looked to the Federal Government as their mainstay. From it they received benefits and largesses—grants of land, internal improvements, defense against the
Indians. They looked to the Union and to the states whence they came as the source of their lives. It was these experiences and benefits that kept the states of the Northwest faithful to the Union in the days of 1861. They had more interest in and knowledge of the national government than they had in their local state government.

Yet after the lapse of a hundred years, we find Indiana inspiring a loyalty of the old kind. She has a land worthy of the love of her native sons; she now realizes that she has a history worthy of regard and preservation; she has a people of common interests, trials, and achievements, with marked characteristics that observing visitors have noticed and praised; she has a spirit that has brought these people into a unity of life; and she has a name that has been growing in favor among the sisterhood of states as our state has grown in wealth, prosperity, and accomplishments. Here are the elements of statehood, the factors that inspire patriotism.

Indiana has promoted education, has encouraged religion, has advanced the arts and sciences, has developed her natural resources, and has always borne her fair share in meeting all national burdens and emergencies. Why should loyalty to such a state not be encouraged and emulated?

Loyalty to the smaller groups in our lives is always commendable. There are no inconsistencies in these loyalties, no antagonism of one against another. Loyalty to a local group need not lead one into provincialism or narrowness. Local loyalty is a fine asset to the commonwealth and to the nation; the more wedded one is to his own, the more useful he is likely to be to the larger loyalties of his life. One may rightly love himself, but he should love his family more than himself, and he should strive his best to build a happy and prosperous home. If by any fault of his own, he allows the home to be disrupted and broken up, such a citizen cannot be so good a patriot in the service of his country.

One should be loyal to his neighborhood, his local community, and he should strive to make it orderly and progressive—a community in which he would desire to bring up his children or other people's children.

One should be loyal to his city and strive to make it a "City Beautiful," clean, orderly, law-abiding. He should strive to have in it a good educational system, a good health system,
a good recreational system, a good street system, a just system of taxation, a good administration for the protection of life and property. He should be always looking toward progressive improvement. I need not say how such local loyalties and such achievements will re-act on his state and nation. On such local patriotism and sense of duty the nation depends.

Then, of course, a man should be loyal to his state. Here is where he is governed. In all affairs that touch his civic life the state is more important to the citizen than the nation. Mr. James Bryce, a generation ago, called attention to the fact that an American "may through a long life never be reminded of the Federal Government except when he votes at presidential or congressional elections, buys a package of tobacco bearing the Government stamp, lodges a complaint against the post office, or opens his trunk for a customs house officer on a pier in New York when he returns from a tour in Europe," and I may add, for these later days, when he pays his income tax. Millions of Americans, the great majority, are not concerned in these things, except in the act of voting.

On the other hand, the citizen finds that the state, or a local authority constituted by the state, registers a child's birth, appoints his guardian, pays for his schooling, safeguards his inheritance, licenses him for a trade, marries him, divorces him, collects his gasoline tax and builds his highways, and may declare him a bankrupt, convict him of crime, or hang him for murder. The police that guard his house, local authorities that look after the poor, impose water rates, enforce health laws, and manage schools—all these derive their legal powers from the State alone.

Certainly there are enough political and civil reasons for loyalty to the state. These call for civic devotion and interest that will demand good management and good government. Everything in the life of the citizen seems at stake in the conduct of the state.

Above his loyalty to his state, or accompanying it, comes a man's loyalty to the nation. He will strive for the integrity of his nation, that it may be one and indivisible—an indivisible union of indestructible states; that the nation may be saved from internal strife or foreign wars; that it may be truly great—an effective instrument for the service of mankind, great in
its leadership among the nations for the prevention of war and the promotion of peace among men.

Even above loyalty to the nation one may be called upon to recognize an allegiance to all mankind. "Above all nations, humanity." "My country is the world, my countrymen are all mankind." If we are to obey God rather than man, this test of loyalty may come to the citizen of any country.

All these loyalties may abide together. True faithfulness to one of them helps all the others. So long as one does not stop with his local loyalty, its cultivation and nourishment promotes his deeper and broader patriotism, and his devotion to humanity will do nothing to lessen his devotion to those aspects of his life which he especially calls his own.

My special plea is for the good state of Indiana and her history. I call for a willingness in Indiana to support that history, to save it and promote it, to have it written, placed on record, and its sources made available. When we come to reveal the history of Indiana we need no vain boasting, nor concealment, nor false pride, nor jingoistic patriotism, nor pretense that the story of the past is better than it is. The story has its blotches, but if helpful lessons are to be learned from our shortcomings, or our errors and our wrongs, then we should be ready to face the whole truth and set forth "a plain, unvarnished tale." I am sure we shall find much more for gratification than regret in the story of Indiana.

There are innumerable topics in our state history worthy of attention. Many of them have already been considered, and very worthy studies have been made upon them, published in newspapers, essays, magazines, as separate volumes, or in the publications of the Indiana Historical Society. A few fields may be cited for further study.

The field of state biography is inviting. We need biographical sketches of prominent men and women, not only of our Senators, Governors, Presidents and Vice-presidents, but sketches of our educational leaders, merchants, manufacturers, men of affairs, leaders at the bar, in medicine, and in the church, inventors, explorers, and pioneers in various lines of endeavor. There are many names worthy of recognition and record.

We need more of the educational history of the state, accounts of the outstanding educational leaders, the pioneer
teachers and torch-bearers of learning, the origin and growth of our common school system, the history of our colleges and universities, the story of their endowments, their faculties, changes in their curricula, and the eminent names and achievements of their graduates. What has been done in this line by Professor Richard G. Boone and others may well be enlarged upon. Such papers, or volumes, may need a subsidy or subvention, but, only those names should be considered whose merits and achievements make them worthy of insertion, without money, and without price.

The literary history of the State is an attractive field. It has been neglected, though at times it has been over-drawn and acclaimed without due knowledge. There have been many men and women of Indiana whose work and worth should be still further recorded, evaluated, and made known. I need not attempt here even a tentative list of these writers. This is a field in which literary taste and discriminating criticism are needed.

State publications, or official reports, are very naturally looked upon as the most valuable source of our state history. They should be collected, arranged, published in order, indexed, and made accessible to students and writers on Indiana history. Here is a field for valuable editing and support by the Indiana Legislature.

The civil and constitutional history of the state should be further pursued. Topics such as the following should be covered: the constitutional convention of 1816 and its leading men; the convention of 1851, its problems and its leaders; further constitution-making in Indiana; the efforts to amend our present constitution and why it is inadequate to present conditions. The monumental work of Dr. Charles Kettleborough in this direction is recognised. He has supplied the material for much further study and writing.

The tax problem in Indiana should be historically considered, and other phases of the economic life of the state need treatment.

The religious life of the state should be studied and made known, the church organizations, their origins, their progress, and their activities. H. A. Edson's Presbyterian Church in Indiana, published a generation ago, and Rev. Commodore Cauble's History of the Church of the Disciples in Indiana are
fine illustrations in point. Prof. William W. Sweet's work in this field is notable.

The industrial history of the state, its transportation systems, its railways, its soil, its products, its stone industry, its automobile industry, the improvement of its highways, its markets, the growth of its cities, its agriculture, its industrial and agricultural exhibits—all these are valuable fields for the historical student and his projects in historical writing. I need not impose upon your time and patience by mentioning others.

I wish, however, to emphasize especially the social history of the State. Where did the people of Indiana come from? Who were the first comers and what prompted them to come? What variety of settlements were there; what kind of people were they; how did they trade and ship their surplus products; what kind of homes had they and how did they live; how did they bring up their children, what kind of schooling did they have, and what kind of religious leaders and religious teachers? What did they do for amusement? In short what was the life of the people and what manner of men and women were they? Here is a fertile field for the further study of Indiana history.

A few years ago I had occasion to speak of the social character of the early population of southern Indiana. A false, or partial, impression of these people has been gathered from a consideration of such books as Edward Eggleston's *Hoosier Schoolmaster*, Baynard R. Hall's *New Purchase* and the late Albert J. Beveridge's representation of the conditions surrounding Lincoln's life in southern Indiana. From these and similar sources, the impression became widespread that southern Indiana in pioneer days was settled by an inferior people, an outlandish folk, steeped in ignorance, illiteracy, boorishness, immorality, degradation, and crime. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Such a conclusion could result only from taking one aspect of life for the whole of it.

We need not care to deny that social conditions, raw and crude, were actually here in early days. We have seen them ourselves, or survivals of them, poor specimens of humanity that were like the left-overs of a fading past. Here were found the depravity, the grog-shops, the drinking, the swearing, the tobacco chewing and spitting, the carousels, the rowdymism, the brawls, the fighting, the rip-roaring drunkenness of
the countrymen as they galloped out of town on Saturday afternoons. We know that within the memory of men still living, even children of recent memory, Indiana has suffered the disgrace of lynchings and mobs, of White Caps and Ku Klux Klans. But who would take these as representing the whole life, or the real life of Indiana, or, as even being typical of that life?

Intelligent persons will understand that these accounts of crude conditions in earlier times only tell a part of the story; they reveal only one phase of Indiana life. No one who cares for a balanced historical judgment will take such things as a revelation of the whole truth, or the whole life of the people. The early writers and travelers were not describing all of what they saw, but only the odd, the unusual, the exceptional aspects of life. These were the topics that would attract attention and give raciness to their narratives.

The truth is that there were at least two distinct skeins, or kinds, in the population of Indiana in pioneer days. They lived side by side in their various communities, yet were easily distinguishable. One composed the backwash in the tide of migration, the inert, the do-less, the ne'er-do-wells, the "onery", the illiterate, the moronic type, the immoral and the immoral. These were not all incapable of improvement, and some of them have improved, others have only perpetuated their kind, while others have died out and been forgotten. Some of these may have been the survivals of the pauper and jail-bird types that were shipped to America in colonial times, and through Virginia and the Carolinas later came to the West.

Yet, seemingly, out of this very element, out of conditions in the backwoods as poor and bare as one could anywhere find, possibilities of growth were found in the progeny of these people. Poverty and hard conditions had submerged them, and their immediate environment gave them but little chance to rise in the social scale. The common schools reached their neighborhoods in time. Some good teacher, or some good influence excited in some of their youths a thirst for knowledge, aroused their aspirations and stirred their ambition. There was some character or some quality there to which appeal could be made.

President William Lowe Bryan, in The Spirit of Indiana, tells how from one of these families in the backwoods came a
boy to the University. He worked his way through college. After graduation and more teaching, he was able to study abroad for two years. Returning as a trained scientist, he was called to one of the great universities of the West. He became associated with the leading scientists of the country, and, at his untimely death, he had demonstrated the possible services to society that could be rendered by this backwoods boy who had been born and bred in such untoward circumstances.

His life revealed the other skein, or stock in this population, living in the same hard conditions, struggling, not against pauperism to which they never submitted, but against self-respecting poverty, and toward a betterment and uplift for their children. Here was a people made up, as a rule, of as sturdy and worthy a body of pioneer settlers as ever founded a state. They came from different sources. They were not all alike; they were of different creeds and stocks. Few of them were affluent; more often they were poor. Many of them were unlearned, but they were not illiterate, nor worthless, nor degraded, nor criminal. They were the kind that brought civilization into the Indiana wilderness, there establishing freedom, manhood and homes. They had their professional classes and their capable leaders, graduates of universities, able lawyers at the bar, like John Law and Isaac Blackford, James Scott and Charles Dewey, who were among the founders of this Society. Their teachers and preachers, like James G. May and John I. Morrison, Andrew Wylie and Baynard R. Hall, Isaac Reed and Samuel T. Scott and William W. Martin, Caleb Mills and Francis Asbury and Matthew Simpson, were constantly spreading the influence of light and learning. My own father and grandfather were pioneer country teachers in southern Indiana, and, though poor in this world's goods, they never condoned, nor compromised with, nor ceased to combat, the ignorance and evils in their community.

These worthy folks were living alongside the criminals and the toughs, the “hill-billies” and the “roughnecks,” who were often drinking and gambling by day and jayhawking by night. The worthy ones constituted the mass of the better people who were going about their business, earning an honest living, establishing their homes, raising their families, cultivating good
neighborliness, building up their churches and their schools, fearing God and obeying the law. Theirs was the common, every day life, furnishing no news nor themes for journalistic writers of fiction.

This population was varied. There were French-Swiss settlements at Vevay, English settlements near Evansville, the Owen settlement at New Harmony, German Moravians at Hope, Bartholomew county—all of enterprising, enlightened, progressive people. There were Scotch and Scotch-Irish settlements at Bloomington, Princeton, Madison, Hanover, Crawfordsville, Greensburg, Richland, Rush county, and Kingston, Decatur county as well as in other parts of the state. In the middle of the century, Germans and Irish came, settling in various parts of Indiana, exiles from famine and oppression as much as ever were the Puritans of New England, and they added strength to the common stock.

Two years ago in one of the Indianapolis newspapers, I called attention to a few of the later descendants of these early Indiana pioneers, as children who had given a good account of themselves in the world. I confined myself, for the most part, to those south of the National Road. I beg to repeat some personal citations here as concrete examples of what this Indiana stock was responsible for—for the sake of a more permanent and a more accessible record.

William Lowe Bryan, the president of our University, and his brother, Enoch Albert Bryan, long time president of Washington State College, were born and brought up in Monroe county, sons of a United Presbyterian minister. Ernest O. Holland, now president of Washington State College, hails from pioneer stock in Switzerland county. Ernest H. Lindley, Chancellor of the University of Kansas, with Quaker blood in his veins, is a product of Orange county, as are also ex-president Millis of Hanover College, and his distinguished brother, Professor Millis, the economist of the University of Chicago. President Robert J. Aley, of Butler, came out of Owen county, as did the eminent artist, Theodore C. Steele.

Lotus Coffman, president of the University of Minnesota, was born and reared in Washington county, as was also Jesse Newlin, now of Columbia University, lately president of the National Educational Association. In that county, too, was born John Hay, the eminent author, diplomat, and Secretary of
State, and there lived also John I. Morrison, the DePauws, the Mays, the Mitchells, the Tuckers, and there Dr. Martin ministered for many years at Lavonia, and from there came Dr. W. A. P. Martin, President of the Imperial University of Pekin, and for fifty years one of the builders of modern China. There lived and now lie buried in Salem, two of the worthy founders of this Society, Benjamin Parke and John Hay Farnham.

Frank Aydelotte, president of Swarthmore College, came out of Sullivan county. Robert C. Brooks, the well known political scientist of Swarthmore, came from Wayne county, a scion of early Indiana, as did Clark Wissler, of the American Museum of Natural History and Professor in Yale University. Professor Jesse S. Reeves, of Michigan University with a national reputation in international law, is by birth a Hoosier of pioneer stock from Wayne county. William P. Rogers, formerly professor of law in Indiana University, afterwards Dean of the University of Cincinnati Law School came out of Brown county; and the present Dean of the Indiana University law school, recently national commander of the American Legion, Paul C. McNutt, is a product of Johnson and Morgan counties. Judge David Demaree Banta, Dean of the Indiana University Law School, had his upbringing and early years in Johnson county. Banta was one of our best local historians and he produced what is generally regarded as the best County History in the state. (A History of Johnson County.)

Henry Lester Smith, dean of our school of education, is a product of Monroe county, of pioneer Scotch-Irish stock. The two Coulters, John Merle and Stanley, both distinguished in science, may be ascribed to Jefferson county, and in this same county, in early days, lived the well known Cravens family, the Hollidays, the Wileys (two of the boys distinguished in law and science, born back in the forties). Here also lived the early Hendricks and Dunn families. All of these families have served the state in important ways.

Judge Walter Q. Gresham came out of Harrison county. Daniel Wait Howe and Jacob P. Dunn, Indiana historians, whose names will always be remembered in the state, were born in southeastern Indiana, the one in Switzerland county and the other in Dearborn. Two other Howes, Tom and Will,
both well known and successful in the field of business and education, came out of Clark county.

Amos W. Butler, whose name is known wherever charities, penology, defectives, and mental hygiene are studied, came from Franklin county; and there is the whole cultural beehive of the Brookville settlement, most worthy of honor. From there, also, (or, if not, from Wayne county not far away) came the Tarkingtons, the Merediths (if not the Nicholsons), the Claypools, the Julians, and the Hoovers, the last kin of our worthy President.

Professor Frederick A. Ogg, of the University of Wisconsin, one of the distinguished political scientists of America, and his uncle Robert A. Ogg, the well known veteran teacher and agriculturist of Indiana, came from Solsberry, Green county, or the family did. James B. Eads, the great engineer, famed for the Mississippi jetties, was born in Lawrenceburg.

What shall I say more? Time would fail me to tell of the Hatfields, the Feslers, the Wheelers, the Ingles, the Flowers, the Boltons, the Cochrans, the Hardings, the Fletchers, the Hornbrooks, the Hillyards, the Heltons, the Ketchams, the Parrets, the Welborns, the Penningtons, the Pfrimmers, the Hoveys, the Englishes, the News, the Stewarts, the Moffets, the Hickams, the Stouts, the Wylies, the Craigs, the Swans, the Harbisons, the Houghtons, the Givens, the McCurdys, the Sanders, the Blairs, the Malotts, the Orchards, the Niblacks, the Maxwells, the Lanes, the O'Bannons, the Wilsons, the Lanniers, the Scribners, the Simpsons, the Sims, the Lockwoods, the Fretageots, the Donalds, the McFaddens, the Hutchinsons, the Lynns, the Wamplers, the Deckards, the Stormonts, the Chapmans, the Morgans, the Clarks, the Polks, the Seward, the Fosters, the McCallas, and scores of other families that had a worthy place in our southern Indiana pioneer life. They were a highly respectable people, of character and standing. These names are taken from impromptu memory of some of the people I have known without the use of our Pioneer Society's list or without consulting any catalogue of family names. I am well aware that the number of worthy names omitted is far in excess of the number that I have included.

Did these men and women come from a people that were steeped in ignorance, boorishness, immorality and crime? They did not. These children are the progeny of their own
kind and of their ancestral soil. A number of them have won
some fame, but these are not different from the common run
of their kin. Every son of them is ready to acknowledge his
lineage. "Like father like sons." Their children have advan-
tages the fathers did not know, but in the fundamental virtues
of life they can hardly establish a claim to superiority over
their pioneer forbears. The virtues and qualities were there
of old.

These pioneer ancestors were children of the crucible, in
the sense that they underwent trial and hardship, tribulation
and deprivation, while they were making their homes, building
the State, and establishing law and order in this wilderness
world. It took a hardy and virtuous people to do that, and
such a people were the rank and file of Indiana pioneers.

Faith, we are told, is the substance of things hoped for, the
conviction of things unseen. These men of early Indiana must
have had some faith in themselves and their progeny. We
shall do well to nourish the conviction that they were worthy
of our honor and emulation.