Minutes of the Board of Trustees for Vincennes University
(April 6, 1812—April 24, 1824)

Edited by Robert Constantine*

Two installments of the minutes of the board of trustees of Vincennes University have previously been published in the Indiana Magazine of History (December, 1958, and September, 1959) and cover meetings held from December, 1806, to December, 1811. Taken together, these two installments of the board's transactions during the five years following the school's incorporation provide a broad view of the problems and policies involved in transplanting a "seed of culture" from the Atlantic seaboard to the Old Northwest at the beginning of the nineteenth century. At the end of five years a three-story brick building stood ready for occupancy and in a sense symbolized both the achievements and frustrations experienced by the board in its efforts to transform a congressional land grant into a "seminary of learning."

Proceeding upon a trial-and-error basis, a distinguished group of men had given time and support to the school's interests: William Henry Harrison, a future president of the United States, served as president of the board and chairman of the committee charged with selling and leasing land; Waller Taylor, one of Indiana's first two United States senators, "managed" an unsuccessful lottery designed to raise $6,000 for the building fund; Jonathan Jennings, who was to be first governor of the state of Indiana, served for a time as clerk of the board; one of Illinois' first two United States senators, Jesse B. Thomas, contracted for materials and labor for the building. A dozen other men nearly as prominent in Indiana's territorial and state history and equally dedicated to the school's success assumed comparable responsibilities as board members.

Perhaps the board's most significant discovery during those early years was the fact that necessary alterations in the physical dimensions of the first building were paralleled

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by similar necessary alterations in the academic and educational “blueprints” which most of the board’s members had carried west with them. For example, it became obvious that before an Eastern-style “university” could prosper on the frontier a reservoir of scholars had first to be created. This realization led to the opening of both a “common English school” and a “Grammar school,” for which an elaborate set of rules was drawn up and adopted by the board in 1811. Considering the number and nature of the problems which the early board faced, the erection of a brick building and the opening of preparatory schools within a period of five years seemed grounds for the optimistic belief that a “Western nursery of statesmen” was taking root in Vincennes on the eve of the War of 1812.

The following installment of the minutes, covering the period from 1812 to 1824, spans a significant era in the history of Vincennes University, whose fortunes were at many points affected by the larger trends and forces of state and national history. Thus, the War of 1812 brought about a dispersal of several of the original and most influential members of the board of trustees. The “Great Migration” of the war and postwar years, on the other hand, carried a large number of easterners to the Vincennes area and several of them, graduates of Princeton and Yale, became members of the board. The “land craze” of the years preceding the Panic of 1819 was reflected in the board’s confidence in its ability to sell for $10 an acre school lands which had brought only $2 or $3 an acre before the war. The board blamed the land policy of the national government for at least part of the school’s financial failure.

Among factors of an “extraneous” nature which affected Vincennes University, the determining one in making these years a “dark age” for the school was the relative decline in importance of Vincennes itself. A very perceptive anonymous writer in the *Western Sun* (February 16, 1822) noted both the origins and effects of the city’s decline. During the French period it had “grown rapidly under the profits of the fur trade.” Later, “under the Americans” Vincennes became “the grand central point of emigration and the seat of government for the Northwest territory,” and as a “frontier town, and a consequent military post, she enjoyed the advantage of large sums expended by the general government.”
Moreover, when the city was “located by the United States as a place for issuing supplies to the Indians, great advantages were reaped from the consequent trade,” and, finally, while Vincennes was “situated on the great leading route of western emigration, she received from this source alone considerable sums of money and a constant increase of inhabitants.” All these favorable conditions, however, were “now [1822] . . . sadly reversed. More than one third of our dwelling houses are destitute of inhabitants, our population has decreased nearly or quite one half. . . . Buildings that a few years ago rented for two or three hundred per annum, can now be rented for 50 or $100—many can be had for occupying.”

Between 1812 and 1824 the university’s early promise was to a comparable degree and for closely related reasons “sadly reversed” also. When Vincennes ceased to be the “grand central point of emigration,” the possibility of leasing university land as a fund-raising measure disappeared and was finally abandoned. The interruption in the “constant increase in inhabitants” undoubtedly helped to deprive the school of a population base large enough and financially able to support it. The transfer of the territorial capital from Vincennes to Corydon reflected the declining influence in Indiana political affairs of the “Vincennes faction,” several of whose members had from its beginning been keen supporters of Vincennes University. It is unlikely that had Vincennes remained the territorial capital the national Congress would have ignored the board’s pleas for permission to resume the sale of the “seminary lands” in Gibson County, or that the state legislature would have transferred the control over and income from the sale of those lands to the projected “state seminary” at Bloomington. One point is clear: the “trouble” with Vincennes University during this period cannot be explained solely in terms of loss of the land in Gibson County to the future Indiana University. To do so is to assign fundamental importance to a development which was actually a symptom of deep-seated historical forces which had been at work on Vincennes and, indirectly, on the university.

During the dozen years covered by the following minutes the board is seen in its various attempts to carry forward the work begun before 1812 and to meet new challenges, only some of which are suggested above. Desperately needed financial resources were sought unsuccessfully in several
petitions to Congress "praying" for permission to sell additional land in Gibson County. Maintenance of the university building (and the "erection of two small houses of convenience for the use of the Scholars, on the University lot") involved protracted negotiations over labor and supplies. Nearly constant attention had to be given the problem of finding students and retaining teachers for the "Grammar school." Changes in curriculum and in tuition rates required board consideration, possibly in response to the large number of "academies" and other private schools which sprang up in Vincennes during the postwar years. These schools, ranging from "female" boarding schools to night schools for apprentices, were conducted by individual schoolmasters (and schoolmistresses), Protestant ministers, and the Catholic clergy and must have cut into the university's grammar school enrollment. Such competition no doubt figured in the board's decision in 1823 to turn over part of the university building to "the Revd. Henry M. Shaw . . . and his successors, Episcopal clergymen" on the condition that they "repair the Edifice . . . [and] attend to the education of youth. . . ." It was Shaw's school which was converted into the Knox County Seminary in 1824.

By 1824, as the minutes and relevant footnotes below will indicate, the status of the board of trustees and the charter provisions of the university itself had been significantly altered as a result of a series of laws passed by the Indiana General Assembly. In 1820 the board's control over rental income from the "seminary lands" in Gibson County was transferred to a state-appointed collector. Two years later, control over the land was vested in a board of commissioners and the proceeds from its sale were reserved for the "benefit of the state Seminary [at Bloomington]." In January, 1824, the "university" was "adopted" as Knox County Seminary and the board of trustees acted for a short time as the governing board for the new institution. The terminal date of this installment (April, 1824), then, may be taken as the close of the first era of the history of Vincennes University. After nearly two decades the school's experience was a case history of both the "respect for learning" which the migrating easterner carried West and the "obstacles to culture" which he found upon his arrival. Needless to say, the ideal of such a university persisted and had sufficient vitality to make Vincennes University a continuing factor in the story of higher education in Indiana.
Monday 6th of April 1812**

This being the semianual meeting of the board of Trustees of the Vincennes University They met agreeable to Law. Members present: John Gibson, Francois Vigo, Peter Jones, Nathaniel Ewing, Robert Buntin, John Johnson, Charles Smith.

There not being a sufficient number of members present to form a quorum. The board adjourned until Monday next the 12th instan.

Monday 12th of April 1812

Members present: John Gibson, Nathaniel Ewing, & Robert Buntin.

There not being a sufficient number of members present to form a quorum. The board adjourned until Saturday next the 18th [of April] 1812.

**In editing these minutes original spelling has been faithfully followed, and, with some exceptions, original punctuation has been retained. Periods have been inserted, however, after abbreviations; they have also been used at the ends of paragraphs and in a few other places where their addition was unmistakably indicated. No commas were added except to separate series of words or phrases. A colon was consistently used following "viz" as well as preceding each list of members present at a meeting. The abbreviations "A.M." and "P.M." were standardized by uniform use of capital letters and periods. Superior letters were brought down to the line. Inconsistent and unusual spacing used in the original minutes sometimes dictated modification of paragraphing for the sake of clarity and uniformity. Space limitations prompted the listing of members present at each board meeting in a series, rather than in the columns which often appear in the original.

This is the third installment of the minutes of the Board of Trustees of Vincennes University to be published in the Indiana Magazine of History. The first installment included minutes from December 6, 1806, through September 12, 1807 (Indiana Magazine of History, LV [December, 1958], 313-364). Minutes from October 16, 1807, through December 11, 1811, were published in the second installment (Indiana Magazine of History, LV [September, 1959], 247-293). The section of the minutes which appears in this issue covers board activities from April 6, 1812, through April 24, 1824. All three sections have been published without deletions and are a complete copy of the minutes of Vincennes University's board of trustees from the time of the board's formation through its meeting of April 24, 1824.

The rules governing quorums, regular and special meetings, filling of vacancies and other procedural matters are explained in Robert Constantine (ed.), "Minutes of the Board of Trustees for Vincennes University (October 16, 1807—December 11, 1811)," Indiana Magazine of History, LV (September, 1959), 249, 256, 257, 267.
Saturday 18th of Aprile 1812

The Board met agreeable to adjournment. Members present: John Gibson, Nathaniel Ewing, Elias McNeme [McNamee], Robert Buntin, Charles Smith, Peter Jones, & John Johnson.

On motion ordered that Gel. John Gibson be appointed president pro. tem.

Resolved that the committee of superintendance examine the seminary building and report at the next meeting the state of the carpenters work thereof—

On motion ordered that the Board adjourn untill Wednesday next 22d ult. at thre[e] O Clock P.M.

Wednesday aprile 22d 1812

The Board met agreeable to adjournment— Members present: Benjamin Park[e], Nathaniel Ewing, Francois Vigo, John Gibson, Charles Smith, Robert Buntin, James Johnson, John Johnson.

The President laid before the board the resignation of Jacob Kuykendal² a member of this board which was accepted— Benjamin Park & James Johnson offered their excuse for not attending the semiannual meeting of the Board on the 6th of aprile 1812 which was accepted.

On motion ordered that the clerk notify the absent members that the board will proceed to elect members to fill up the Vacancies in the board at the next meeting on the 27th ult.

On motion ordered that a committee be appointed to contract with the Reverand Samuel Scott for keeping the scholl² contemplated by the Board and that they report by the next [meeting]. Nathaniel Ewing & Charles Smith were appointed such comt.

On motion ordered that the Board adjourn untill monday next the 27th ult. at two O clock.

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² Jacob Kuykendall had been named a trustee of Vincennes University in its act of incorporation, November 29, 1806. He was re-elected to the board at its meeting of September 21, 1823.

² For background concerning Rev. Samuel Scott and the board’s policies concerning his “scholl,” see Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LV (September, 1959), 277n, 288n.
Monday Aprile 27th 1812

The board met agreeable to adjournment. Members present: Benjamin Park president, Nathaniel Ewing, Francois Vigo, Charles Smith, Robert Buntin, James Johnson, John Gibsonoson [sic], & John Johnson.

The committee appointed to contract with the Revd. Samuel Scott for keeping the school contemplated by the board Reported that Mr. Scott agreed to keep the school agreeable to the requisition of the board.

On motion ordered that the board adjourn untill saturday next at two O clock the 2d day of May.

Saturday may 2d 1812

The board met agreeable to adjournment. Members present: John Gibson, Nathaniel Ewing, Elias McNeme, Robert Buntin, Charles Smith, James Johnson, & John Johnson. On motion ordered that Gel. John Gibson be appointed president protem.

The Revd. Samuel Scott [sic] having engaged to take charge of the school attached to the Vincennes seminary agreeably to the Rules adopted for that purpose It is therefore resolved that Mr. Scott have the privilege of residing in the seminary with his family and have apart of the lot for a garden and that Mr. Scott shall be obliged to keep sufficient & capable assistance to enable him to do justice to the students under his direction.

The students of the latin & greek Languages are not to be incomoded by the english schollars but shall be in a seperate Room. The school to commence on monday the 4th of May.4

On motion ordered that the board adjourn untill Saturday the 16th inst.

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4 For the number and length of school terms as laid down in the "Rules for the Government of the Vincennes University Grammar School," see ibid., 281.
Saturday May 16th 1812

The board met agreeable to adjournment. Members present: John Gibson, Charles Smith, Robert Buntin, Nathaniel Ewing, James Johnson, John Johnson.

There not being a sufficient number of members present to form a quorum the board adjourned without day.

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Saturday August 22d 1812

The board met agreeable to an advertisement set up by the president of the board. Members present: Benjamin Park, Charles Smith, Francois Vigo, Robert Buntin, James Johnson, & John Johnson.

There not being anough of Members present to form a quorum the board then adjourned until Wednesday next the 26th ult. at three of the clock P.M.

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Wednesday August 26th 1812

The board met agreeable to adjournment. Members present: Benjamin Park, John Gibson, Elias McNeme, Peter Jones, Charles Smith, James Johnson, Nathaniel Ewing, & John Johnson.

The president acknowledged the following deeds in open board To wit one to Joseph Woods for S. W. qr. S. 23 in the seminary Township also one to William Harrington S. W. qr. S. 12 in said Township also one other to William Harrington N. E. qr. S. 14 in said Township Also one to Isaac Woods for S. E. qr. S. 21 in said Township.

Samuel Hoge [Hogue] produced to the board a Transfer of his interest in S. E. qr. S. 21 to Isaac Woods which said quarter section of land was purchased in the name of Isaac Woods & Samuel Hoge by agreement bearing date the fifth day of November 1808 which agreement and Transfer are ordered by the consent of the said S. Hoge & I. Woods to be

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Isaac Woods was a member of the numerous Joseph Woods family which migrated from Kentucky to the Gibson County area in 1807. Isaac and a brother, Samuel, took part in the Tippecanoe campaign in 1811. Gil R. Stormont, History of Gibson County, Indiana (Indianapolis, Ind., 1914), 51-52.
filed among the papers of the board. Also the said Samuel Hoge requested that the board would Transfer by Deed his part of said qr. S. to Isaac Woods which was done.

The Board proceeded to elect two members to fill the vacancies occasioned by the resignation of William Henry Harrison & John Badolet [Badollet] Whereupon counting the ballots Willson Lago* & William Jones' were elected.

On motion ordered that the clerk notify Wl. Lago & Wm. Jones of their election.

On motion ordered that the board adjourn without day.

Wednesday November 10th 1812


There not being a sufficient number of Members present to form a quorum the board adjourned untill saturday next at two of the clock.

Saturday November 14th 1812

The board met agreeable to adjournment. Members present: Benjamin Park, Elias McNeme, Robert Buntin, James Johnson, & John Johnson.

* Wilson Lagow was active in Vincennes civic and mercantile affairs at this time. A major in the territorial and state militia, he was commissioned to receive subscriptions to the bank of Vincennes in its act of incorporation (1814) and later served as manager and director of that organization. He was elected a trustee of the borough of Vincennes in 1815. Vincennes Western Sun, January 7, 1815, July 20, 1822. (The Vincennes Western Sun is cited hereafter as Western Sun.) Vincennes Centinel, August 5, 1820.

† William Jones was a brother of Peter Jones, who was named a member of the board of trustees in the school's act of incorporation (1806). The brothers operated the firm of Peter Jones and Company until 1810, when William Jones joined Toussaint Dubois in forming a new firm, "Jones and Dubois," which advertised "Goods . . . from Philadelphia" regularly in the Western Sun. This partnership lasted until 1815, when Jones was named a manager of the Vincennes bank. William Jones remained on the university's board until his death in March, 1819. Gayle Thornbrough and Dorothy Riker (eds.), Journals of the General Assembly of Indiana Territory, 1805-1815 (Indiana Historical Collections, Vol. XXXII; Indianapolis, Ind., 1950), 993-994.
There not being a sufficient number of members present to form a quorum the board adjourned until Wednesday next at a half past three of the clock the 18th Novb. 1812.

January 13th 1813


On motion ordered that a committee of two be appointed to confer with the Revd. Mr. Scott on the best plan to furnish the School with wood and report to the next meeting—John Gibson & Nathaniel Ewing were appointed.

On motion ordered that the board adjourn until Wednesday next the twentieth ult.

Wednesday January 20th 1813


The president acknowledged the following deed in open board to wit To Thomas Emison for section No. twenty Township two south Range eleven West of the seminary Township and the same was countersigned by the Clerk.

On motion Resolved that a committee of three members be appointed to state the seminary accounts, and they are hereby ordered to make out in a proper book according to the rules of bookkeeping the accounts of each individual—And they are further ordered to make the original contracts with said Individuals, The accounts as kept by the Treasurer with the orders recorded on the Journals of the board the data of said accounts and that the committee be authorised to have
access to the books and papers of the clerk and Treasurer to enable them to make out said accounts— And it is hereby ordered that they receive dollars as a compensation for their Trouble & expences incident to the duties required and to report the result to the next meeting of this board. Elias McNeme, James Johnson, & John Johnson were appointed such committee.

On motion ordered that the Board adjourn without day.

Aprile 5th 1813

This being the semiannual meeting of the board of Trustees for the Vincennes University appointed by law— The Board met accordingly. Members present: Benjamin Park (president), Nathaniel Ewing, Francois Vigo, Robert Buntin, James Johnson, Charles Smith, Elias McNeme, & John Johnson.

The President laid before the board the resignation of John Gibson a member of this board which was accepted.

The President acknowledged the following deed in open board To wit, To William Archer for the North East quarters of sections Number one & two in the Seminary Township south of White River.

Resolved that a committee of two be appointed to examine the state of the roof of the seminary building & Report the

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*An account of the dispositions of the board's records, including the minutes books of its meetings and land sale transactions, is in Constantine (ed.), "Minutes of The Board of Trustees for Vincennes University, [December 6, 1806—September 12, 1807]," Indiana Magazine of History, LIV (December, 1958), 318, and Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LV (September, 1959), 260, 261, 262, 264, 270.

*General Gibson had been one of the most active members of the board of trustees since its organizational meeting in December, 1806. At the time of his resignation from the board he had just completed serving nearly a year and a half as acting governor of Indiana Territory. Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LIV (December, 1958), 319n.

*William Archer migrated from South Carolina to the Princeton area in 1807 and took up farming. In the Vincennes Western Sun and General Advertiser, October 9, 1819, he advertised for sale seedlings from "a nursery of . . . upwards of 200,000 . . . apple trees." Archer was one of the founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Princeton (1817). Stormont, History of Gibson County, 40, 53; Robert Archer Woods, "Presbyterianism in Princeton, Indiana, from 1810 to 1930," Indiana Magazine of History, XXVI (June, 1930), 93, 122.
defect thereof to Mr. [Joshua] Bond & request him to complete the same, And also report to the next meeting of the board Nathaniel Ewing & Robert Buntin were appointed such committee.

On motion ordered that the board adjourn untill saturday next the 10th ult. at two O clock.

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Saturday 10th of Aprile 1813


There not being sufficient Members present to form a quaran the board adjourned till Saturday next 17th at 1 of the clock.

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Saturday 17th day of Aprile 1813

The board met agreeably to adjournment. Members present: Benjamin Park president, Toussaint Dubois, James Johnson, Wilson Lago, Robert Buntin, Elias McNeme, Charles Smith, Nathaniel Ewing, & John Johnson.

Mr. Ewing from the committee appointed to examine the state of the seminary building reported that Mr. Bond informed them that he would examine & stop the leaks in the roof & that he would if the board required it proceed to finish the work if the board would give him time to send for a workman to the falls.¹¹

On motion of E. McNeme ordered that the board do now proceed to the election of three members to fill the seats of John Gibson resigned and Luke Decker & George Leach [or Leech] who have forfeited their seats by not attending the semiannual meetings of the board agreeably to law And

¹¹ Presumably to one of the "Falls Cities": Jeffersonville, New Albany, or Louisville.
upon counting the ballots it appeared that Edward Scull, Samuel Scott, & John D. Hay were unanimously elected.

On motion ordered that a committee be appointed to inform the Revd. S. Scott of his being elected a member of the board. Mr. Ewing was appointed such committee.

Mr. Ewing the committee appointed to inform Mr. Scott of his election as a member of the board reported that he had performed that service.

The Reverend S. Scott appeared & took his seat.

On motion ordered that the clerk do inform Edward Scull & John D. Hay of their election.

On motion ordered that the committee appointed on the 6th inst. to examine the state of the seminary building continue as a standing committee to superintend the work of the house & request Mr. Bond to make out a bill of materials wanted, & see if said materials can be procured and that Samuel Scott & Wilson Lago be added to said Committee.

On Motion ordered that the board do adjourn without day.

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12 Dr. Edward Scull, a native of Pennsylvania, served as a surgeon in the Tippecanoe campaign. A duel between him and Parmenas Beckes, Knox County sheriff, in which the latter was killed, was described in the Western Sun, July 10, 1813. Like several easterners who were stationed at Vincennes during the War of 1812, Scull joined the Vincennes Subscription Library Company (June 2, 1811); he remained on the university's board of trustees until April, 1815, and died in November of that year. Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, from Its Organization, September 28, 1789, to March 2, 1903 (2 vols., Washington, D.C., 1905), I, 871. In this and future references to the Vincennes Subscription Library Company and its members, the source is the minutes of the library company, in which the editor has done considerable research. These minutes are in the archives of Vincennes University, Vincennes, Indiana.

13 A brief sketch about Scott and the details of his appointment as "Superintendent" of the "Grammar School" which opened in 1811 are in Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LV (September, 1959), 277, n. 38, 278-283. His resignation as "Teacher in the Vincennes University" was read at the meeting of August 3, 1815, but the minutes for the meeting of April 6, 1818, suggest that he had resumed his teaching assignment for a brief period prior to that time.

14 John D. Hay's "house" and/or tavern were frequently the meeting places for the university's board of trustees and for the Vincennes Subscription Library Company, of which Hay was a charter member. He had served as clerk of the university board, succeeding Jonathan Jennings on November 21, 1808. Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LIV (December, 1958), 345n.
Monday the 4th of October 1813

This being the day appointed by law for the semiannual meeting of the board. The Board met accordingly. Members present: Benjamin Park president, Nathaniel Ewing, Elias McNeme, Peter Jones, Robert Buntin, William Jones, John D. Hay, Wilson Lago, James Johnson, Francis Vigo, & John Johnson.

Resolved that the standing committee appointed on the 5th of April 1813 to superintend the Seminary building be directed to inform Joshua Bond that he must finish the building of the Vincennes University by the first day of December next and that if he does not finish the said building by the said first day of December then and in that case the said committee be authorized to employ some other carpenter to finish the said building.

On motion ordered that the claim of Thomas Emison, To be discharged from the Interest on his payments for the lands purchased by him from the board be laid over for farther consideration until the next meeting.

On motion ordered that the treasurer be directed to furnish the next meeting of the board a statement of the amount of interest paid by different purchasers of land from this board.

On Motion ordered that the board adjourn until Wednesday next two weeks the 21st inst. at 2 O clock P.M.

Wednesday October 21st 1813

The board met agreeable to adjournment. Members present: Benjamin Park president, Francois Vigo, James Johnson, William Jones, Robert Buntin, & Charles Smith.

There not being a sufficient number of members present to form a quorum The board adjourned until Wednesday next 27th inst.

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15 The datelines on the Western Sun, Saturday, October 16, 1813, and Saturday, October 23, 1813, indicate that the twenty-first of the month would have fallen on Thursday, rather than Wednesday.
Wednesday October 27 1813


On motion ordered that the standing committee appointed to superintend the seminary building be authorised to purchase what materials are necessary to finish the seminary building.

On motion Resolved that each subscriber for each schollar he sends to school shall furnish on or before the tenth day of November next one good waggon load or three cart loads of good sound wood, to be deposited in the Enclosure of the University building in such place as the Teacher may direct.

On motion Resolved that if any subscriber shall fail in the above, he shall be liable to pay the amount that may be necessary to purchase the wood he or she ought to have furnished.

On Motion Resolved that the committee hereinafter appointed on any failure as above shall immediately proceed to purchase the wood that ought to have been furnished by such delinquent and at such delinquents costs and charges.

On Motion Resolved that Charles Smith & John D. Hay be a committee to carry the above resolutions into effect.

On motion Resolved that it shall be the duty of the Teacher of the school to keep a fair and accurate account of the wood furnished by subscribers as above.

On motion ordered that the board adjourn untill Wednesday two weeks the 10th of Novbr. 1813 at 2 O clock P. M.

Wednesday November 10th 1813

The board met agreeably to adjournment. Members present: John D. Hay, Elias McNeme, Robert Buntin, & John Johnson.

There not being a sufficient number of members present to form a quaram the board adjourned untill Wednesday two weeks the 24th ist. at 2 O clock P.M.
Saturday February 26th 1814

The board met agreeably to an advertisement of the President. Members present: Benjamin Park President, Charles Smith, Nathaniel Ewing, John D. Hay, Samuel Scott, Robert Buntin, Wm. Jones, Peter Jones, & John Johnson.

On Motion ordered that a committee of three be appointed to examine & report the situation & nature of the purchases of land from the board and how & in what manner interest has been charged by the Treasurer & paid by the purchaser.

The committee Benjamin Park, Nathaniel Ewing, John D. Hay, & John Johnson. ¹⁶

On Motion ordered that a committee be appointed to examine the fence round the seminary building & contract for the repairing the same in such manner as shall be found necessary Committee Samuel Scott & Nathaniel Ewing.

On Motion ordered that the board adjourn until Saturday two weeks 12th of March next.

Saturday March 12th 1814


On Motion Resolved that Benjamin Park & John D. Hay be a Committee for the purpose of making from the books of the Treasurer & other documents a set of books for the sales of the seminary land which have been made under the direction of the board of trustees viz: a journal & ledger¹⁷ wherein each purchaser should be charged with sales of seminary lands for the quantity of acres purchased by him at the price agreed on, an account of forfeitures for such forfeitures as they may have incurred, an interest account for

¹⁶ Although the minutes specify the appointment of a “committee of three,” Parke, as president of the board, was probably an ex officio member of the committee—which would account for the four names listed here.

¹⁷ The board’s decision to set up a “journal and ledger” in which land sales transactions could be recorded was probably related to the fact that on January 21, 1814, the office of the Knox County recorder, John D. Hay, was destroyed by fire. The entries concerning land sales made in the minutes book prior to this time thus took on added significance. Western Sun, January 29, 1814.
the amount of interest which may become due on each pay-
ment—Also a cash account of the amount of cash received
from the several purchasers and an account to be called the
Vincennes Seminary By which all the accounts are to be
closed.

On motion ordered that the Board adjourn untill this day
two weeks it being the 26th instant.

Monday Aprail 4th 1814

This being the semiannual Meeting of the board of
Trusties of the Vincennes University. Members present:
Benjamin Park, president, Peter Jones, Robert Buntin, Elias

There not being sufficient number of Members present to
form a quoram the board adjourned without day.

Saturday May 14th 1814

The board met agreeably to an advertisement by the
president. Members present: Benjamin Park president,
Samuel Scott, Peter Jones, Nathaniel Ewing, Elias McNeme,

Samuel Scott gave in his excuse for not attending the
semiannual Meeting on the 4th of aprile last which was
accepted.

On motion ordered that the board adjourn without day.

Monday October 3d 1814

This being the day appointed by law for the semiannual
meeting of the board of Trusties for the Vincennes Uni-
versity—The board met accordingly. Members present: Na-
thaniel Ewing, Toussaint Dubois, John D. Hay, Samuel T.
Scott, & [John?] Johnson.

There not being a sufficient number of members present
to form a quoram the board adjourned without day.
Monday April 3d 1815

This being the day appointed by law for the semiannual meeting of the board of trustees of the Vincennes University—Members present: Benjamin Park pr., John D. Hay, Elias McNeme, William Jones, Samuel T. Scott, Charles Smith, Touissant Dubois, Nathanial Ewing, Francis Vigo, & Robert Buntin.

On Motion ordered that Benjamin Park, Nathanial Ewing, & John Johnson be appointed a committee to draft a memorial to Congress on the subject of the sale of the seminary land &c & that they report to the next meeting of the board.

On Motion ordered that the board do now proceed to the election of a member in the Room of Edward S[cul?] who has removed from the Territory and on counting the ballots it appeared that Isaac Blackford* was Unanimously elected and on motion ordered that Elias McNeme be appointed a committee to inform Mr. Blackford of his Election.

On motion ordered that the board do adjourn sine die.

Thursday August 3d 1815

The board met agreeably to an advertisement by the president. Members present: Benjamin Park, Nathanial Ewing, Touissant Dubois, Francois Vigo, Peter Jones, Elias McNeme, Robert Buntin, & John Johnson.

The president laid before the board a letter of Resignation of the Revd. Samuel T. Scott as Teacher in the Vincennes University which was accepted.

* Isaac Blackford was a native of New Jersey and graduate of Princeton whose migration to Vincennes (1815) included brief stop-offs at Brookville, Vevay, and Salem. He served as a judge on the state supreme court from 1817 to 1852, and on the United States Court of Claims, in Washington, D.C., from 1855 until his death in 1859. Blackford's efforts to secure an elective office were crowned with singular failure: he was defeated for United States senator by Waller Taylor (1818), William Hendricks (1823), James Noble (1825), and John Tipton (1826); for governor by James Brown Ray (1825); and for state supreme court judge by Samuel Perkins (1826). Dorothy Riker and Gayle Thornbrough (eds.), Indiana Election Returns, 1816-1851 (Indiana Historical Collections, Vol. XI; Indianapolis, Ind., 1960), xix, 127, 129, 139-139; Logan Esarey (ed.), Governors Messages and Letters (3 vols., Indiana Historical Collections, Vols. VII, IX, XII; Indianapolis, Ind., 1922-1924), III, 43-44. Blackford became a member of the Vincennes Subscription Library in December, 1815, was elected as a director in February, 1816, and served as president from February, 1823, to February, 1831.
On motion ordered that the standing committee appointed to superintend the seminary building report by the next meeting the state of the seminary Building and that they examine the contract of Mr. Bond for building the seminary and also report how far the said Bond has complied with his contract.18

John Johnson offered his excuse for not attending the semiannual meeting on the 3d of April 1815, which was accepted by the board.

On motion ordered that a committee be appointed to examine & receive proposals from any person as a Teacher in the seminary and report the character & qualifications of such applicants at the next meeting— Samuel T. Scot & E. McNemee Com.

On motion ordered that the board do now adjourn until Thursday the 17th inst.

Monday September 1t 1815

This being the day appointed for the semiannual meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Vincennes Seminary. Members present: Benjamin Park president, Isaac Blackford, Robert Buntin, Peter Jones, and John Johnson.

There not being a sufficient number of Members present to form a quorum. The board adjourned without day.

Monday November 6th 1815

The Board met agreeably to an advertisement of the president. Members present: Benjamin Park president, Robert Buntin, Francois Vigo, Peter Jones, John D. Hay, William Jones, Touisaint Dubois, Charles Smith, & Nathaniel Ewing.

James Johnson a Member of the board and Treasurer of the same sent to the board his resignation as Member and Treasurer of said Board which was laid before the Board By the presedint and accepted of by the board.²⁰

¹⁹ In a petition submitted to Congress in November, 1815, it was stated that “plastering, and a small portion of the carpenter’s work are yet to be done, to complete the building.” See p. 331, note 23.

²⁰James Johnson was named a trustee of the university in its act of incorporation and, in terms of regular attendance at meetings and service on committees, had been one of the most active members.
The Board on motion proceeded to the election of a Treasurer and on counting the Ballots it appeared that Isaac Blac[k]ford was unanimously elected—

On Motion ordered that the bord do adjourn untill thursday the 16th inst. (Novber).

Thursday November 16th 1815

The Board Met agreeably to adjournment. Members present: Benjamin Park president, Isaac Blackford, Samuel T. Scott, Elias McNeme, Francois Vigo, Touissant Dubois, Charles Smith, Peter Jones, Nathaniel Ewing, Robert Buntin, and John Johnson.

The committe appointed on the 3d of august last to receive proposals from any person for Teaching the school in the Seminary Reported that they had received proposals from Jesse Olds,21 Mr. [or Wm.?] Davis, & Ames Whiting22 which they laid before the Board.

On Motion Resolved that a committee be appointed to examine into the qualifications of Jesse Olds who has made application for admittance as a preceptor in the Vincennes University and that they report to the next meeting.

Samuel T. Scott, Isaac Blackford, Elias McNeme, & Robert Buntin were appointed such Committee.

On Motion ordered that the Standing committee appointed to superintend the Seminary Building be requested to report at this meeting the State of the Seminary Building.

On Motion ordered that the board adjourn untill Saturday next at 2 of the Clock P.M. the 18th inst.

Saturday November 18th 1815

The Board Met agreeably to adjournment. Members present: Benjamin Park president, Nathaniel Ewing, Isaac

21 Olds' employment as "preceptor in the Vincennes University" was agreed upon at the meeting of November 18, 1815. He was described as "professor in the Vincennes University" at the meeting of April 1, 1816, but apparently left the school soon thereafter, since the board at its meeting of December 24, 1816, appointed a committee to negotiate with Samuel T. Scott "to ascertain whether he [would] again undertake the Superintency [sic] of the University. . . ."

22 It has not been possible to identify either Davis or Ames Whiting.

The Committee appointed on 16th instant to examine into the qualifications of Jesse Olds as a preceptor in the Vincennes University having Verbely reported and upon the question being Taken whether he be accepted as a preceptor it was determined in the affirmative.

On motion Resolved that a committee be appointed to assist Jesse Olds as preceptor in the Vincennes University in obtaining Subscribers to the Lattin School.

Nathanial Ewing & Robert Buntin were appointed as such committee.

The Committee appointed to superintend the seminary building Reported, By a letter from Joshua Bond stating that he would commence the finishing the work of the seminary building in ten days and continue untill the same be finished.

On Motion ordered that the board adjourn untill Wednesday next at 2 of the clock P.M. the 22d inst.

Wednesday November 22d 1815


Mr. Park from the Committee appointed to draft a petition to congress22 relative to sale of the Seminary land Reported a petition on that subject which was read and adopted by the board.

22 This petition reviewed the progress made by the board of trustees in financing the school building (“forty four by sixty four feet, three stories (including the basement) high”) and in opening a “grammar school,” but acknowledged that “the school [had not] succeeded as well as could have been wished.” Among factors responsible for the latter condition were “the inconvenience and danger . . . to which the Wabash settlements were exposed . . . the late Indian War,” and the difficulty of raising funds by leasing land to the “emigrants who prefer a purchase at one of the Land offices, or an unauthorized settlement on the public lands.” The solution, concluded the petition, lay in Congress’ authorizing the board of trustees to sell “all the lands granted for the use of a Seminary of learning in the District of Vincennes . . . at the minimum price . . . of five dollars per acre.” The petition was referred to the House Committee on Public Lands on December 11, 1815; the committee’s report (February 15, 1816) declared it “inexpedient to grant . . . the prayer of the memorialists . . .” Clarence Edwin Carter (ed.), The Territorial Papers of the United States, Vol. VIII, The Territory of Indiana, 1810-1816 (Washington, D.C., 1939), 357-360, 388.
On Motion ordered that the clerk make out two copies of said petition & that they be signed by the president and countersigned by the clerk and that one copy be forwarded to our Delegate in Congress & the other to the speaker of the house of Representatives.

On Motion ordered that the Board adjourn without day.

Monday April 1t 1816

This being the day fixed by Law for the semi annuel meeting of the board of Trustees of the Vincennes University The board met accordingly. Members present: Benjamin Park president, William Jones, John D. Hay, Nathaniel Ewing, Charles Smith, Samuel T. Scott, Isaac Blackford, & Peter Jones.

On Motion Resolved that Mr. Jesse Olds heretofore appointed a professor in the Vincennes University; have permission immediately to take possession of the University building and occupy the whole of it except such part as may be necessary for the work men engaged in finishing the building.

On Motion ordered that the board do adjourn until Saturday next at 2 o clock.

Saturday April 6th 1816


On Motion Resolved that Samuel T. Scot be appointed as president pro tem.

On Motion Resolved that Isaac Blackford be appointed as clerk pro tem.

24 The delegate in Congress was Jonathan Jennings, who had served briefly as clerk of the board of trustees (August 27, 1807, to November 21, 1808) and whose "conduct" in that position was investigated by a special committee of the board. See Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LIV (December, 1958), 355n, and Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LV (September, 1959), 258, 263.
On Motion Resolved that the board proceed to the election of three members of the board in the Room of

Whereupon counting the ballots it appeared that Charles Hinkly,26 David Raymond,27 & John Badollet28 were duly elected.

On Motion Resolved that John D. Hay, Peter Jones, & Robert Buntin be appointed a committee to inform those gentlemen of their appointment.

Mr. Thomas Emmison presented an account for plank with a certificate of the committee which was allowed—

On Motion Resolved that Mr. Jesse Olds professor in the Vincennes University have leave to teach twenty English schollars untill the number of his lattin students amount to twelve then Mr. Olds must either employ an assistant to be approved of by the board to Teach the English schollars in a seperate room or dismiss thim.

On motion ordered that the board do adjourn with out day.

April 27, 1816

The Board met agreeably to the notice of the President. Members present: Benjamin Parke, President, Robert Buntin,

25 The three vacancies were created by the board's failure to name successors to Jacob Kuykendall, who resigned April 22, 1812, James Johnson, who resigned November 6, 1815, and Wilson Lagow, who had not attended a meeting since October 4, 1813.

26 Hinkly, or "Hinckley," as the name appears in the records of the Vincennes Library Company (January 6, 1816), apparently did not accept membership on the board of trustees. At the following meeting (April 27, 1816) a list of members of the board was drawn up for the purpose of assigning "Visitors" to the school, and Hinkly's name was not included.

27 At the time of his election to the university board of trustees, Raymond was serving as territorial judge of the First Circuit Court. He was elected by the Indiana General Assembly (December 20, 1816) as judge of the Second Circuit Court, a position he held until his resignation in January, 1818. He was not listed as having attended a single meeting of the board of trustees and was replaced because of "removal" from Vincennes at the board meeting of April 6, 1818. Esarey, Governors Messages and Letters, III, 17; Louis B. Ewbank and Dorothy L. Riker (eds.), The Laws of Indiana Territory, 1809-1816 (Indiana Historical Collections, Vol. XX; Indianapolis, Ind., 1934), 822.

28 John Badollet was named a member of the board of trustees in the school's act of incorporation; his first resignation was read at the meeting of August 2, 1811. See Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LV (December, 1958), 320n, and Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LV (September, 1959), 295. Badollet's second resignation was accepted at the meeting of January 5, 1821.

On motion Resolved that Chas. Smith be appointed Clerk pro Tem.

Charles Smith and Benjamin Parke, a committee heretofore appointed by the Board to investigate and restate the accounts of Thomas and James Emmerson [Emison] for and on account of the purchase of land by them, of the Board, reported as follows Viz: That the Ballance due by James Emmerson is $240.24 & that the Ballance in favor of Thomas Emmerson is 93.84 [93.04?] which will more fully appear by a particular statement of the accounts by said committee, accompanying this report. But as Thomas Emison is considered responsible and has assumed the payment of the whole, there appears to be a balance against him of $93.04.2

Whereupon on motion Resolved that the Board concur in the said report. And the Statements of the said accounts were ordered to be filed.

On Motion Resolved that for the nonattendance of any member of this Board at the hour appointed, he shall be fined at the discretion of the Board unless a reasonable excuse be given. F. Vigo, E. McNamee, & R. Buntin, respectively stated their reasons for their nonattendance on the 1st Monday in April Inst. which were received & allowed by the Board as sufficient—

On Motion Ordered that a Committee of four members be appointed to report the Books classical & scientifical that ought to be read & studied in the Vincennes University— and that Messr. Scott, Badollet, Blackford, McNamee, be a committee for that purpose.

Ordered that the Members of the Board of Trustees be divided into three classes and that it shall be the duty of the first class to visit the school at the University Monthly for the three succeeding Months. The second class to in like manner for the three Months then next succeeding, & the third class to visit in like manner for the three months then next succeeding. That they examine at their discretion the state of the school, the progress of the scholars, the conduct of the Teacher, & generally whatever in their opinion may be

29 The terms of the original purchases of land from the university by Thomas and James Emison are described in Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LIV (December, 1958), 344n.
necessary towards the prosperity of the institution, and should they be of opinion that an amendant to the rules, a change in the course of education or of the conduct of the Teacher be necessary that they report the same specially to the Board—

Ordered That the President arrange the classes, designate the periods for their visits, and notify the Members thereof. The President then arranged the Members of the Board into classes as follows viz:

1st Class 2d Class 3d Class
McNamee Raymond Vigo
Buntin P. Jones Johnson
Wm. Jones & Ewing & Parke
Smith Hay

and that the first class visit the school the first friday in May, June, & July; the second the first friday in each of the three succeeding months, & the third the first friday in the three succeeding months, when the first class, shall again commence their visits, and be succeeded by the others in the Manner before stated.

The Board adjourned.

December 22, 1816

The Board met agreeably to the notice of the President. Members present: Benjamin Parke, President, Robert Buntin, and John Johnson.

There not being a sufficient number of members present to form a quorum, On motion the Board adjourned till tuesday next.

Tuesday 24 December 1816

The Board met agreeably to adjournment. Members present: Benjamin Parke, President, Robert Buntin, John D. Hay, John Johnson, Charles Smith, Elias McNamee, Peter Jones, Nathaniel Ewing, William Jones.
On motion Resolved that a committee be appointed to wait on the Revd. S. T. Scott & ascertain whether he will again undertake the superintency of the University—Whereupon Elias McNamee & Charles Smith were appointed that committee.

On Motion Resolved that the Board adjourn untill Tuesday next at 3 Oclock P.M.

Tuesday 7 January 1817


On Motion Resolved that Charles Smith be appointed Secy. Pro tem.

The Committee appointed to wait on the Revd. S. T. Scott reported that they had not yet performed that duty and were On motion continued to the next meeting.

On Motion Resolved that the committee, appointed & continued to confer with Mr. Scott be charged with the additional duty of enquiring as to the probable number of scholars that may be made up for the school.

On Motion Resolved that this Board will grant no more Leases for the Seminary Land.

On Motion Resolved that John Johnson be appointed the agent of this institution, for the purpose of taking charge of the Seminary Land, and preventing the wast[e] or destruction of the timber, & also to enquire into the state of the leases already given, for quarter Sections of the said land and that he be requested to report from time to time to this Board, and that he be authorised, to appoint such agent or agents under him as he may think proper either to prevent the future destruction on the land or to prosecute those who may have heretofore trespassed thereon.30

The Board adjourned to this day two weeks 2 Oclock P.M.

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30 The various factors which had operated against the board's efforts to lease land are described in the petition to Congress adopted at the meeting of November 15, 1817.
Tuesday 21 January 1817


On Motion Isaac Blackford was appointed Clerk pro tem.

On Motion Resolved that a committee be appointed to examine and restate the accounts of Hugh McGary & Samuel Hogue and report to the next meeting. And Benjamin Parke & Charles Smith were appointed that committee.

The Treasurer having reported that it appeared from the Books of the Board kept by the late Treasurer that Robert Anderson has completed his payments for the N. E. qr. 27, T. 2 R.11W, Wherefore it is ordered that the president of the Board execute a deed of conveyance for the above mention[ed] tract of land and the said conveyance was accordingly duly executed by the President, in presence of the Board &c countersigned by the clerk According to the rules of the Board—

On Motion, Resolved that the committee heretofore appointed to ascertain what number of scholars can be procured for the support of a school in the Vincennes University have time until the next meeting to make their report.

The Board adjourned till next tuesday 2 Oclock P.M.

Tuesday 28 January 1817

The Board met agreeably to adjournment. Present: Benjamin Parke President, Robert Buntin, Charles Smith, Francis Vego, John D. Hay.

There not being a sufficient number of members present to form a quorum, The Board adjourned till Saturday next 2 Oclock P.M.

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81 The "accounts" of Hogue and McGary, both pioneers of the Princeton area, were recorded in the minutes book by the treasurer as payments on their land were received. See Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LV (September, 1959), 264n, 270.
Saturday 1 Feb.y. 1817


The committee heretofore appointed to examine & restate the accounts of Samuel Hogue and Hugh McGary with the Vincennes University, reported that there is a balance due from the said Hogue of $27.56, as appears by the statement of the committee, accompanying the report; whereupon the Board concurred in said report.

On motion Resolved that a committee be appointed to examine & restate the accounts of Isaac Montgomery with the University, and report to the next meeting; and Messrs. Smith, Scott, and Parke were appointed that committee.

On motion Resolved that the Treasurer inform Thomas Emmerson of the true state of his accounts with the University & demand payment of the balance due.

The committee heretofore appointed to confer with the Revd. Samuel T. Scott as to his taking charge of the Vincennes University, & to ascertain the probable number of scholars that could be obtained, were discharged from the further consideration of the subject.

Whereupon the Board adjourned until the 6 day of this month.

6 February 1817


On Motion Resolved That a committee be appointed to procure subscriptions for scholars in the Vincennes seminary, & Smith, Blackford, & McNamee were appointed that committee.

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 Isaac Montgomery’s purchase of land from the university (1807) and a brief sketch of his career are in Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LIV (December, 1958), 333n. He was elected to membership on the board at the meeting of June 20, 1818, but attended only one meeting and was replaced at the meeting of June 26, 1820.
On Motion Resolved that the committee heretofore appointed to superintend the University building, be instructed to call upon Mr. Bond & urge him to finish the work.

The Board adjourned until the 11th Feby. 1817.

Tuesday February 11th 1817

The Board met pursuant to adjournment. Present: Benjamin Parke, President, J. Badollet, Elias McNamee, John D. Hay—

There not being a sufficient number of members present to form a Quorum, the Board adjourned until the 18th Inst.

February 18th 1817


On motion ordered that J. D. Hay be appointed Clerk pro. tem.

On motion, Resolved that hereafter the price of Tuition in the Vincennes University yearly shall be for the Latin & Greek languages & mathematics $25. & for Geography & English grammar $15.00—\textsuperscript{33}

There being no more business, The Board adjourned until the third monday in March next.

Monday the 17th March 1817.

This being the day to which the Board adjourned at their last meeting, the following members were present, viz: Benjamin Parke, President, John D. Hay, Charles Smith, Robert Buntin, Nathl. Ewing, Isc. Blackford, but there not being a sufficient number present to form a Quorum, The meeting was adjourned.

\textsuperscript{33} The original "price of Tuition" for "the Latin and Greek languages & mathematics" was $18 per year. Constantine, \textit{Indiana Magazine of History}, LV (September, 1909), 221.
Monday 7th April 1817.

This being the day appointed by Law for the meeting of the Board, the following members were present, viz: Benjamin Parke, President, John D. Hay, William Jones, Samuel T. Scott, Peter Jones, Nathaniel Ewing, John Badollet, Isc. Blackford—

The President laid before the Board the resignation of Mr. John Johnson, as Clerk of the Board. On motion, Isc. Blackford was appointed Clerk.

On motion, Messrs. Parke, Scott, and Blackford were appointed a committee to examine the vouchers, accounts &c of the late Treasurer, and make report thereon.

On motion, Mr. Scott was appointed a committee to procure the erection of two small houses of convenience for the use of the scholars, on the University lot—also to have the outside fence of the said lot repaired—also to cause a fence of posts & rails to be made across the said lot—and also to have a door made in the partition between the two lower Rooms on the North end of the University building.

On motion, The Committee of Superintendence of the University Building were required to cause the said building to be finished as soon as possible by Mr. Bond, the person with whom the contract for that purpose, was made, or by some other person.

There being no more business the Board adjourned until the in May next.

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Saturday 8th November 1817.

The Board met agreeably to the advertisement of the President. Present: Benjn. Parke, President, Samuel T. Scott, Peter Jones, Charles Smith, Robert Buntin, Isc. Blackford.

There not being a sufficient number of members present to proceed to business, The meeting was adjourned until the 11th Instant.

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Tuesday 11th November 1817.

This being the day to which the meeting of the Board was adjourned, The following members appeared: Benjamin
There not being a sufficient number of members present to form a Quorum to do business, The meeting adjourned until saturday next.

Saturday 15th November 1817.


A memorial to Congress was presented by Mr. Parke for the consideration of the Board, in the following words,

To the honorable the Senate & House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress assembled—

The Petition of the Board of Trustees for the Vincennes University, respectfully sheweth:

That by an act of Congress, making provision for the disposal of the public lands, in the Indiana Territory, passed the 26th day of March 1804, an entire Township, to be located by the Secretary of the Treasury, was reserved for the use of a seminary of learning— Under the authority of that Law, the Secretary of the Treasury, selected Town[ship] 2 south, Range 11 West of the second principal meridian in the district of Vincennes— Believing that they had the necessary authority to dispose of all or any portion of the land, for the purposes contemplated by Congress, the General Assembly of the Indiana Territory, in the year 1806, enacted a Law for establishing a University at Vincennes, appointing Trustees to carry the same into effect & authorizing the sale of 4000 acres, for the purpose of putting the Institution into immediate operation— That a quantity of land has been sold by the Board of Trustees, the title to the

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34 This petition was presented by Senator Waller Taylor and referred to the Senate Committee on Public Lands on December 18, 1817. The committee reported a negative resolution granting “the petitioners leave to withdraw their petition” on January 12, 1818, and the committee's resolution was adopted by the Senate on January 13, 1818. U.S., Annals of the Congress of the United States, 15th Cong., 1st Sess., 1817-1818, I, 62, 94, 109.
purchasers confirmed by an act of Congress passed the 27th day of April 1816, & the amount received on account of the sale, disbursed towards the erection of a spacious building, suitable for the purposes of a public school.— Your Petitioners would further respectfully represent, that with the view of obtaining an active fund for the benefit of the Institution, the Board of Trustees, conformably to the provisions of the act of Incorporation, offered to lease, in quarter sections the remaining part of the Township— The Country however must be settled, & improvements considerably advanced, before any reliance can be placed on a fund derived from that source. Those possessing the means, will purchase; others confiding in the indulgence of the Government, will spread themselves along the frontiers on the public lands; & thousands now prefer the latter, to a lease on liberal terms of the land appropriated for the use of the University. Few leases being taken, & believing the arrangement likely to prove unproductive, at least for many years, the Board have for the present abandoned the measure. Having no other means than the prices of Tuition for the support of Teachers, the Board have been able to open a grammar school only, & many years must elapse, before such a number of schollars will offer, as would justify the employment of Teachers in the various & higher branches of literature & philosophy. Had the Board the ability of procuring a competent library & philosophical apparatus, & of supporting the necessary professors, the Institution might shortly be rendered respectable & advantageous to the country— This desirable object can only be attained by the sale of the Seminary land, from which a fund might be immediately realized, without impairing or hazarding the principal; that would be amply sufficient for all the purposes of a useful & splendid establishment— Your Petitioners would therefore respectfully submit to the wisdom

37 Since 1804 the national government had sold public land in minimum tracts of 160 acres at a minimum price of $2 per acre payable in installments over a four-year period and with “a year of grace” beyond the fourth year before forfeiture. In spite of this “painless payment plan” the number of delinquent public-land purchasers increased alarmingly prior to and during the War of 1812, and, to avoid the human misery and political repercussions of mass forfeitures, the “indulgence of the Government” was displayed in a succession of “stay laws” or relief acts, passed by Congress for the benefit of delinquent public-land purchasers, and in the policy of ignoring the legal provision for using military forces to evict squatters. R. Carlyle Buley, *The Old Northwest: Pioneer Period, 1815-1840* (2 vols., Indianapolis, Ind., 1950), I, 103-107.
of Congress, the propriety of selling the balance of the land in the seminary Township, reserved by the Act of March 1804; vesting the amount in the stock of such Bank or Banks as Congress might select for that purpose; & that the interest accruing from the stock should be vested in the Board of Trustees, for the use of the Vincennes University.—Your Petitioners for the information of Congress, touching the principles upon which the Institution is founded, beg leave to annex the act for incorporating the Vincennes University."—Which Memorial being considered, was approved by the Board; & the President requested to forward a copy thereof to Congress—

The Board then adjourned.

Monday 6th April 1818.

This being the semi-annual meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Vincennes University, the following members appeared, to wit: Benjamin Parke, President, William Jones, Nathaniel Ewing, Samuel T. Scott, John Badollet, Robert Buntin, Francis Vego, & Charles Smith.

The clerk being absent, Charles Smith was appointed clerk pro. Tem.

On motion—Whereas The Revd. Samuel T. Scott, having announced to the Board, that he should not continue in the charge of the grammar school, longer than the period for which he is engaged—

Therefore Resolved, That a Teacher competent to the care and instruction of the said school, be procured with as little delay as possible.

Resolved, That if a sufficiency of scholars to the grammar school, for the decent support of an Instructor cannot be obtained, That the Board will permit of the admission of as many scholars to a common English school, as the teacher can instruct—

Under the authority of its act of incorporation and a special act of the territorial legislature (December 19, 1810), the board had sold only 4,160 of the 23,040 acres included in the congressional land grant of 1804. Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LV (September, 1959), 270n.

For the board's original policy regarding a "common English School," as contrasted with a "Grammar School," see Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LIV (December, 1958), 324n, and Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LV (September, 1959), 279.
Resolved, That should the accomplishment of the object above stated, be facilitated by the employment of a Teacher, able to teach the french language, as well as the other branches of learning now taught at the University, That a french school shall also be opened in conjunction with the grammar school—

Resolved, That should a french school be established, the reception of students to the grammar & french schools, shall be preferred.—

Resolved That the President take immediate measures, to obtain a Teacher conformably to the above resolution.

The death of James Johnson, John Johnson, Peter Jones, & the removal of David Raymond, having occasioned four vacancies; the Board proceeded to the election of four members, when, upon counting the ballots; it appeared that Alexander Wolcott, William C. Lane, Jeremiah Wood, & George Ewing, were duly elected.

At its meeting of January 26, 1811, the board had adopted a committee report which “consider[ed] it unnecessary at present to establish a school for teaching the French language as it is not known that there is any demand for a school for that purpose.” Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LV (September, 1959), 278.

Not the least of the university’s troubles during this period was growing competition from schools conducted by individual masters or sponsored by religious organizations. As noted in the Introduction such schools based their appeal to parents on various grounds. Some were cheap ($4 per quarter for geography, grammar and arithmetic); others had “curriculum flexibility” (plain and ornamental needlework, French, music, drawing and painting); and at least one was “life-oriented” (a “Night School . . . where the most useful and necessary branches of learning” were taught). Western Sun, December 21, 1822, October 18, 1823, November 20, 1824.

Alexander Wolcott was a native of Connecticut who served as a surgeon in the army from March, 1812, to April, 1817. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, I, 1063. An advertisement in the Western Sun, August 2, 1817, stated that “Doctor A. Wolcott, Late Surgeon in the U.S. Army, offers his professional services to the citizens of Vincennes and its vicinity . . . .”

An advertisement in the Western Sun, April 2, 1814, announced that William Carr Lane would be “associated” with Elias McNamee, a physician, in “professional business.” Lane attended no meetings of the board of trustees between his election and his replacement at the meeting of August 22, 1818.

Wood was a merchant whose advertisements of “an assortment of Medicines . . . at the stand of Hale & Wood” appeared occasionally in the Western Sun (March 2, 1816, January 3, 1818). His attendance at the board’s meetings was noted for the last time on January 26, 1821, but there is no reference in the minutes to an election to replace him. The unidentified vacancy which appears in the minutes of the meeting of September 21, 1823, was possibly created by his death or failure to attend the required number of consecutive meetings.

George Ewing was a Vincennes merchant and a director of the bank of Vincennes. He attended only two meetings of the board of trustees. Ewing later played an active part in several Vincennes cultural projects, including the subscription library, the Historical and Antiquarian Society, and the “free school” movement. Western Sun, February 15, 1840, July 11, 1841.
Charles Smith, rendered his excuse, as did also Robert Buntin & Francois Vigo, for being absent from the semi-annual meeting in April last, & which being considered by the Board, was deemed sufficient.

The Board adjourned.

May 30th 1818

Special meeting of the Board of Trustees by Virtue of an advertisement of the President. Members present: Parke, Wood, N. Ewing, Badollett, Scott, Buntin, Smith, McNamee, and Hay.

The Clerk of the Board being absent, ordered that Jeremiah Wood be appointed Clerk pro tempore.

The President informed the Board that the object of this special meeting was to arrest the progress of depredations now committing on the timbers of the Seminary Lands.44

On motion Resolved that a committee of inquiry, consisting of three members of the Board, be appointed to examine the said Lands and report the situation of them on, or before, the 20th of June next.

The President appointed John Badollet, Samuel T. Scott, and Robert Buntin, that committee.

On motion, Resolved that the Board adjourn till Saturday the 13th day of June next.

Saturday June 13th 1818.


The Clerk being again absent, Jeremiah Wood was re-appointed Clerk pro tempore.

The Committee appointed to examine into the State of the seminary Lands reported in part, and obtained further time to complete their Report.

44 For a more detailed description of the nature of the “depradations now committing on the timbers of the Seminary Lands,” see the petition to Congress of December 17, 1818, p. 302.
On motion, Resolved that a committee of three be appointed to wait on M. Jeanjean⁴⁷ to ascertain his views as a teacher in the Seminary and examine his qualifications for discharging that duty, and report at the next meeting.

The President appointed Badollet, Scott, & McNamee that Committee.

On motion, The President was added to the above committee.

Resolved that the Board adjourned to the above committee.

Resolved that the Board adjourn till Saturday the 20th Inst. at 3 O'clock P.M.

Saturday June 20th 1818


The Clerk still being absent, J. Wood was again ordered to act as Clerk pro tem.

On motion, Resolved that the Committee appointed to wait on Mr. Jeanjean, have further time to perform that duty. The Board consented to receive the report next meeting.

Resolved that the committee appointed to examine into the State of the Seminary Lands, have further time to make their report.

On motion, Resolved that, whenever a motion is made, other than for adjournment, it shall be committed to writing.

⁴⁷ The Vincennes Western Sun, August 1, 1818, carried the notice that “The Rev. Jean Jean, Late from France, where he devoted a number of years to the instruction of youth in most of the polite branches of education, offers his services in the same line to the inhabitants of Vincennes.” The school was to be limited to twenty-five pupils “to do justice” to them, and “whereas too great a variety of pursuits would only tend to mar their progress, and to confuse his attention, he [i.e., Rev. Jean Jean] will confine himself to the following branches, viz: Latin & French Grammars, Geography, & History.” No students were to be admitted to the school who were “not sufficiently conversant in Reading and Writing to commence at once the proposed course.” Classes were to be held “3 hours in the morning, viz: from 9 o’clock until 12 and as many in the afternoon, viz: from 2 o’clock until five.” “The anxiety of parents” was to be “gratified by public examinations,” and Saturdays would be “the only holidays in the week.” The “terms per quarter” were “Either French or Latin Grammar, $6.00; Both, $10.00; French language, geography and history, $3.00. Exclusive of every furniture to be paid always in advance.” The Western Sun of September 12, 1818, announced that “next Sunday, the 13th inst. the Rev. Jean Jean, will preach in the Roman chapel at 4 o’clock P.M.”
On motion, Resolved that the Board now proceed to the election of a member to fill the place of Doctor A. Wolcott, who refuses to serve as a member of this Body. Accordingly the Board proceeded to the election, when on counting the votes it appeared that Isaac Montgomery was unanimously elected.

On motion Resolved that the president inform him of his election, as a member of this Board.

Resolved that the Board adjourn till the 6th day of July next.

Monday July 6th 1818

Members convened agreeably to adjournment viz: John Badollet, John D. Hay, & Jeremiah Wood.

There not being a quorum to transact business the meeting was adjourned till monday the 13th Instant.

Monday 13 July 1818.

There not being a sufficient number of members present to form a Board, the meeting adjourned until Wednesday the 29th Inst.

Wednesday 29 July 1818.


Mr. Badollet from the committee heretofore appointed to wait upon Mr. Jean Jean, relative to his taking charge of a french school in the University, Reported very favorably of that gentleman.

Whereupon on motion Resolved, That the Revd. Jean Jean, be and he is hereby appointed Teacher of the french language in the Vincennes University; That he be authorized also to teach any other language, together with such of the
sciences as he may think proper; & that Messrs. Badollet & Blackford be a committee to wait upon that gentleman & inform him of his appointment & also invite him to attend the next meeting of the Board.

On motion Resolved That if any member of this Board be absent at the hour fixed upon for any stated or adjourned meeting, he shall be fined one dollar, unless a satisfactory excuse can be given for such absence; & that such fines be appropriated for defraying the expenses of a room for the meeting of the Board &c.

There being no more business, the Board adjourned until Saturday next at 3 Oclocuk P.M.

Saturday 1 August 1818.

There not being a sufficient number of members present to form a Board, the meeting adjourned, until Saturday the twenty second Instant.

Saturday 22nd August 1818


Messrs. Benjn. Parke, Geo. Ewing, & Chas. Smith were excused for their absence from the last meeting.

On Motion, Resolved that the Treasurer be & he is hereby directed to collect the fines incurred by any of the members, on account of their absence from any meeting of the Board.

The President informed the meeting, that there was a vacancy in the Board of Trustees, occasioned by the removal of William C. Lane. Whereupon, On Motion The Board proceeded to the election of a member to supply such vacancy, & upon counting the ballots, Moses Tabbs was declared duly elected.— The President was requested to inform Mr. Tabbs of his election.

Moses Tabbs was practicing law in Vincennes at the time he was a member of the board of trustees. Western Sun, July 31, 1819, and July 12, 1823. His resignation was read at the meeting of April 2, 1821.
Monday 5th October 1818.

This being the day for the semiannual meeting of the Trustees of the University, the following members of the Board appeared, viz: Nathaniel Ewing, Isaac Montgomery, Charles Smith, Elias McNamee.

There not being a sufficient number of members present to do business, the meeting adjourned \textit{sine die}.

Saturday 12th December 1818.

Agreeably to a public notice of the President, the following members appeared viz: Benjamin Parke Prest., John D. Hay, & Charles Smith.

There not being a sufficient number of members present to transact business, the meeting adjourned until Wednesday next.

Wednesday 15th December 1818.


On motion, Resolved that Mr. Bennet,\footnote{Available records do not indicate the dates of Bennet's appointment or resignation, but beginning with the issue of October 31, 1818, and for several issues thereafter, the \textit{Western Sun} carried an advertisement by "Mr. Bennet," who planned to "open a school for Gentlemen and Ladies... in the Seminary of Vincennes." Bennet promised to give "the strictest attention" to his students' "morals and manners" and to "improve [their] minds in the several branches which they may [sic] pursue." The several branches included reading, spelling, writing, grammar, geography, arithmetic, history, rhetoric, and surveying.} who is at present teaching an English school, in the University building, be permitted to continue the same, during the pleasure of the Board.
On motion, Resolved that a Committee, consisting of three members be appointed by the President to draft a petition to Congress for the sale of the seminary lands & that the Committee report at the next meeting. Whereupon John Badolet, Elias McNamee, and Jeremiah Wood, were appointed that Committee.

An application of the managers of the Theatrical society for leave to fit up a room in the University building, for the use of the society, was read, and rejected.

The Board adjourned until Friday evening next at six O'clock.

Friday 17th December 1818.


The committee appointed to draft a petition to Congress relative to the sale of the seminary lands, Reported as follows Viz:

Vincennes University 17th December 1818.

To the Senate & House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled,

The Memorial of the Trustees of the Vincennes University, respectfully represents—

That by an act of Congress passed on the 26th day of March, Eighteen hundred & four, for the disposal of the public lands in the Indiana Territory, an entire Township of six miles square, was reserved for the use of a Seminary of Learning; That under the authority of that Law, the Secretary of the Treasury, selected Township Number Two, south, in Range Number Eleven West of the second principal meridian

50 A theatrical society had been formed in Vincennes as early as 1814. The Western Sun frequently carried announcements of the meetings of the organization, letters describing its "exhibitions," and advertisements of such presentations as John Bull, or The Freeman's Fireside; 'Tis All a Farce; Speed the Plough; and Fortune's Frolic, The Poor Gentleman. See the Western Sun, November 14, 1818, January 9, 23, May 15, October 23, 1819. During the spring and summer of 1820 a "Company from Kentucky" gave performances of The Adopted Child, or, Milford Castle; The Miser; The Beehive; and The Jew, or a School for Christians. Western Sun, May 27, June 3, 10, 1820.
of the District of Vincennes; That the General Assembly of the Indiana Territory in the year Eighteen hundred & six passed a Law for establishing a University at Vincennes appointing a Board of Trustees to carry the said Law into effect, and authorizing the sale of four Thousand acres of land for the purpose of putting the Institution into immediate Operation.— That quantity of land has been sold, and the proceeds expended in the erection of a large and commodious building for a public school.

Your Memorialists would further respectfully represent that under the authority of the Act of Incorporation, the Board of Trustees have attempted to lease in quarter sections the remaining part of these lands— This attempt has not succeeded according to their wishes, and experience forbids the expectation of deriving any considerable benefit or aid from this source.51

Thus, in brief, the affairs of the seminary stood, when in the Autumn of Eighteen hundred & seventeen, the Board were induced to make application to your honorable Body for authority to sell the remaining part of the aforesaid Township of land, and invest the proceeds of the sale in some active Bank stock, the annual dividends of which might be expended in putting the Institution into immediate and useful operation— And your Memorialists beg the indulgence of your honorable Body, while they thus early renew this application, and while they attempt to state the reasons which have induced them to it— And they are encouraged to this measure from the consideration that all the reasons in favor of such a course at that time, are now increased in a duplicate ratio, & that many reasons are added to those which at that time existed. Our population is rapidly increasing. The youth of our country are becoming numerous. The means of initiating them into the knowledge of the principles of polite literature & the useful sciences, are not within our reach. Few of our Citizens are able to send their Children to other States for an education; and those who do not, must consent to behold their offspring arrive at years of maturity without the advantages of their Eastern brethren.

Your Memorialists feel a lively interest, not only for the present respectability, but also for the future prosperity of this Institution and they would not presume to make this

51 See above, p. 342.
application, did they not feel the strongest conviction that the sale of these lands would, even at this time, create a fund amply sufficient for all the purposes contemplated by Congress, or could they believe that such a measure would impair the seminary funds, or violate the rights of posterity, nearly Twenty Thousand acres of land sold at a minimum price of ten dollars per acre, will produce a sum of not less than Two hundred thousand dollars— To this price your memorialists are willing to be limited, a consideration that does away [with] one of the principal objections urged to the measure by the committee of the Senate to whom this subject was referred at the last session of Congress. Such a precaution will effectually prevent any unwarrantable sacrifice in the price that might have been apprehended by your Honorable Body. It is also observable that this Township of land is situated in the vicinity of the village of Princeton, and that on Two of the quarter sections within it, saw mills have been erected with no other means of supply but from the timber of the seminary lands, & that daily depredations are committed upon the most valuable of this timber. Your Memorialists need hardly suggest the idea that this circumstance will not only prevent an increase of the value of these lands, but must gradually diminish this value—a circumstance which the utmost vigilance of your Memorialists will not be able to prevent. Your Memorialists do not indulge the expectation that they shall be able to force this Institution immediately into a respectability that will vie with older & long established Universities. Their business and their pleasure will be to foster the infant child— Time will be requisite to bring it to maturity. They ask only the privilege of expending so much of the profits of the fund with which the Institution is endowed, in procuring such a library, such a philosophical apparatus, and in employing such teachers as can be useful in the present state of society, while the balance may

52 In basing this calculation of potential income from the sale of land at "a minimum price of ten dollars per acre" the board reflected the trend toward inflation and speculation in land prices which the West experienced prior to the Panic of 1819. The four thousand acres which had been sold between 1806 and 1811 brought only $2 or $3 per acre. See Constantine, Indiana Magazine of History, LIV (December, 1958), 330-331.

53 “One of the principal objections” to the earlier petition was the Senate committee’s belief that the lands previously sold by the board had “not acquired their proper value.” U.S., Congress, American State Papers, Public Lands (8 vols., Washington, D.C., 1832-1861), III, 302.
be added to the original fund, and held in reserve for a more enlarged and general course of education. From these considerations, & under these impressions, Your Memorialists feel it their duty respectfully to pray your honorable Body that the remainder of the aforesaid Township of land be offered for sale at public vendue at such a time & place, and in such a manner as to your honorable body may appear proper, under the superintendence of persons appointed for that purpose, at a price not less than ten dollars per acre; That the proceeds of this sale be laid out in the purchase of stock in the State Bank of Indiana, or in such other Bank as Congress may direct, and that the Dividends be vested in the Trustees of the Vincennes University, to be by them expended for the use of said University.

On motion, Resolved that the said report be concurred in, and that copies thereof be forwarded to our Senators & Representative in Congress.

There being no more business the Board adjourned sine die.

Monday 5th April 1819

This being the day for the semiannual meeting of the Trustees of the University, the following members appeared: Benjamin Parke, President, Samuel T. Scott, Charles Smith, Nathaniel Ewing, John Badollet, Robert Buntin, Elias McNamee, & Isaac Blackford.

Benjamin Parke & Nathaniel Ewing were excused for their absence from the several meetings previous to this time. Samuel T. Scott was excused for absence on the 5th October,

54 Several members of the university's board of trustees at this time were also officers, directors, or stockholders in the State Bank of Indiana. Among them were: John D. Hay, Nathaniel Ewing, Elias McNamee, Robert Buntin, Benjamin Parke, Charles Smith, Wilson Lagow, and William Jones. The bank's original charter powers (1814) were greatly expanded by an act of the state legislature (1817), and the institution was bitterly criticized for dividend policies and extravagant issuance of paper which preceded its bankruptcy and dissolution in 1822. Logan Esarey, State Banking in Indiana, 1814-1873 (Indiana University Studies, No. 15; Bloomington, Ind., 1912), 226, 227, 229, 236, 240.

the 12th & 15th December. Robert Buntin was excused for absence on the 5th October. Isaac Blackford was excused for absence on the 12th, 15th, & 17th December. John Badollet was excused for absence on the 12th & 15th December. Elias McNamee was excused for absence on the 12th December last.

There being no other business, the Board adjourned sine die.

5th October 1819

This being the day for the semiannual meeting of the Trustees of the University there not being a sufficient number of members present to form a Board, the meeting adjourned without day.

1 March 1820

Agreeably to a public notice of the President, the following members appeared viz: Benjamin Parke Prest., John Badollet, Moses Tabbs, Samuel T. Scott, Nathaniel Ewing, John D. Hay, Francis Vego, Robert Buntin, and Charles Smith.

Charles Smith was appointed Clerk pro Tem.

Mr. Parke laid before the Board certain propositions made by Mr. George Brown for leasing the seminary lands; and upon motion of Mr. Badollet a committee were appointed to confer with Mr. Brown on these propositions whose duty should be to investigate their nature, details and various bearings, and report to the next meeting—Whereupon Messrs. Badollet, Tabbs, and Scott were appointed that Committee.

There being no more business, the Board adjourned.

3 April 1820

This being the day for the semiannual meeting of the Trustees of the University the following members appeared: Benjamin Parke Prest., Nathaniel Ewing, Francis Vego, Elias
McNamee, John Badollet, John D. Hay, Moses Tabbs, and Charles Smith.

Mr. Smith was appointed Clerk pro Tem.

The Board proceeded to the election of a member, to supply a vacancy occasioned by death of Mr. Jones, when upon counting the ballots it appeared that George McDonald Esqr. was duly elected.

The Board adjourned until the 6th Inst. at 3 O'clock.

6th April 1820.


Mr. Smith was appointed Clerk pro Tempore.

The Committee appointed to confer with Mr. George Brown on the subject of his proposals in relation to the Seminary, Reported favorably, Whereupon it was Resolved that it is expedient to accede to the proposals of Mr. Browne, and that a Committee be appointed to draw the necessary articles of agreement for that purpose, and George McDonald, Moses Tabbs, & Benjamin Parke were appointed that Committee.

There being no more business the Board adjourned.

26 June 1820.

The Board met pursuant to notice. Present: Benjamin Parke, President, George McDonald, Moses Tabbs, John Badollet, Charles Smith, John D. Hay, Samuel T. Scott, Elias McNamee, and Jeremiah Wood.

Mr. Wood was appointed Clerk pro tempore.

On Motion, Resolved that a Committee of three be appointed to make or effect a final settlement with Jo[s]hua

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66 George McDonald was an attorney in Vincennes (Vincennes Centinel, January 1, 1820). He died soon after his election to the board of trustees, and in an advertisement of the sale of his estate, his law library was described as "the best collection in the state." Western Sun, December 23, 1820.
Bond, who was the original undertaker of the Carpenter’s work of the Seminary or University buildings, and report to the Board at their next meeting. Whereupon Saml. T. Scott, Geo. McDonald, & J. Wood were appointed that Committee.

On Motion, The Board proceeded to the election of one member to supply the place of Isaac Montgomery; when on counting the ballots it appeared that L. S. Shuler was duly elected.

On motion Resolved that the Committee heretofore appointed to view the Seminary Lands and Collect the rents, be instructed and directed immediately to proceed to the discharge of the duties of their appointment and make report to the Board at their next meeting.

The Board adjourned until the first monday in August next.

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Monday 27 November 1820.

Agreeably to an advertisement of the President, the following members met, viz: Benjamin Parke, President, John Baddolet, Elias McNamee, L. S. Shuler, and Robert Buntin. There not being a sufficient number to form a Board, the meeting adjourned ’till saturday next.

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Saturday 2 December 1820.

The following members met pursuant to adjournment: B. Parke, President, John Badollet, and Francis Vigo. There not being a sufficient number present to form a quorum, the meeting adjourned ’till Monday next.

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Lawrence S. Shuler was a native of New York who was practicing medicine in Vincennes at this time. During his residence in Vincennes he was president of the Knox County Medical Society and an active member of the Masonic Order and the Vincennes Library Company. Western Sun, November 27, 1819, August 11, 1821.
Monday 4 December 1820.

The following members met pursuant to adjournment: Benjamin Parke, President, John Badollet, & Jeremiah Wood.

There not being present as many members as are required to form a Board, the meeting adjourned 'till tomorrow morning 10 O’Clock.

Tuesday 5th December 1820.

Pursuant to adjournment, the following members met, viz: Benjamin Parke, President, Jeremiah Wood, John D. Hay, John Badollet, L. S. Shuler, Elias McNamee.

There not being present a sufficient number to form a quorum, the meeting adjourned 'till Thursday next.

Thursday 7 December 1820.

Agreeably to adjournment, the following members appeared, viz: Robert Buntin, Francis Vigo, Elias McNamee, John D. Hay.

A sufficient number of members not appearing for the purpose of forming a Board, the meeting adjourned until Saturday next at two O’Clock.

Saturday 9 December 1820.

Pursuant to adjournment the following members met, viz: Francis Vigo, Robert Buntin, and John D. Hay.

A sufficient number not being present to form a quorum, the meeting adjourned, without day. 58

58 There was some irony and, perhaps, prophesy in the fact that during this extended period of board meetings “adjourned for lack of a quorum,” the Western Sun (September 20, 27, 1820) carried the advertisement of the “State Seminary of Indiana . . . at Bloomington” which announced the “sale of lots . . . in the reserved township in Monroe County . . . of various sizes, consisting of not less than one half acre, nor more than twenty acres each.” Among other claims made for the area being sold were “a salubrious climate—beautiful eminence in full view of the town—fertile country around and excellent springs that never fail.”
Saturday 23 December 1820


Mr. Parke from the Committee appointed to draft a memorial to Congress respecting the leasing of the University lands, Reported the following viz.: 29 December 1820. This being the day to which the Board adjourned, the following members were present, viz: Nathaniel Ewing, John D. Hay, Robert Buntin, L. S. Shuler, Jeremiah Wood.

There not appearing a sufficient number of members to form a Board, the meeting adjourned 'till tuesday next.

Tuesday 2 January 1821


The President of the Board being absent, Mr. Scott was chosen President pro Tempore.

The Clerk laid before the Board a letter from Mr. Parke, resigning his seat as a member.

Mr. Blackford introduced the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted— Whereas we have received from the Hon. Benjamin Parke, President of the Board, a letter tendering his resignation as a member, therefore

Resolved that we have heard of this determination of our President with much regret; of whose usefulness, & zeal we have had so many proofs— That Samuel T. Scott and John D. Hay be appointed a Committee to wait on Mr. Parke and have the opportunity of presenting this resolution to him.

The clerk allowed space in the minutes book for recording this petition but failed to transcribe it. No record has been found of its having been presented in either Senate or House of Representatives.

Parke was named a member of the board of trustees in the act of incorporation, resigned in September, 1807, and was re-elected to membership in November, 1808.
inform him that we would be much gratified, if he would reconsider the subject, and continue a member, and the President of the Board of Trustees.

Jonathan Doty,61 and R. M. Ianson62 were elected members of the Board.

The Board adjourned until Saturday next.

Saturday 6th January 1821.


Robt. Buntin, Isc. Blackford, Samuel T. Scott, Jeremiah Wood, & Elias McNamee; were, for reasons given by each of them, excused for nonattendence at the meetings of the Board when they were respectively absent up to this date.

The Clk. read a communication from Mr. Parke, declining to take his seat at the Board. David Hart63 was elected a member of the Board in the place of Benjamin Parke resigned.

At this meeting Elias McNamee presided as President pro Tempore.

Samuel T. Scott, R. M. Ianson, L. S. Shuler, Elias McNamee, and Isaac Blackford were appointed a Committee to examine into the situation of the business between the Trustees & Mr. George Brown as respects the University, & report to the next meeting.

The Board adjourned until Friday next.

61 A native of New Jersey and graduate of Princeton, Jonathan Doty was judge on the first judicial circuit at the time of his election to the board. His obituary appeared in the Western Sun on March 2, 1822.

62 Richard M. Ianson ran a general merchandise store in Vincennes. His advertisements of “New Goods . . . to be sold for specie or land office money at very reduced prices” and his urgent requests for overdue payments appeared regularly in the Western Sun and General Advertiser, October 30, 1819, December 30, 1820, January 6, 1821, July 27, 1822, September 4, 1824.

63 In Hart’s obituary notices he was described as a native of North Carolina, “educated at the University of his native State,” who migrated to Princeton, Indiana, in 1816. He served as judge on the fourth judicial circuit of Indiana from January 27, 1818, to January 2, 1819, and, following his resignation from that post, practiced law in Princeton and Vincennes until his death in December, 1822. Western Sun, December 28, 1822, January 4, 1823.
Friday [12] January 1821


E. McName presided as president pro tempore.

The Committee appointed at the last meeting to examine into the situation of the business with Mr. Brown Reported as follows

"The proposals of Mr. Brown were acceded to, & a Committee were appointed to draw up an Article of Agreement. Nothing appears to have been done by the Committee.

There is no time fixed upon in the proposals for which the seminary building and lands were to be leased.

A final agreement could only have depended upon the obtaining from Congress authority to sell or lease the lands, which authority has been petitioned for but not procured. Any repairs that have been made by Mr. Brown, were not authorized by the Board; But if upon examination they appear to be substantially beneficial to the Institution, the expence ought to be paid whenever the Board have funds to be disposed of in that way.

There would be no impropriety in appointing a Committee to examine the repairs that have been made, & to confer with Mr. Brown as to any others he may contemplate, and make report to the Board."

In which Report the Board concurred, and a Committee for the purpose mentioned in the report was appointed, consisting of Messrs. Scott, I'anson, Shuler, McNamee, & Blackford.

The resignation of John Badollet as a member of this Board was received and accepted—whereupon Jacob Call was elected to supply the vacancy.

There being no other business, the Board adjourned.

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64 About a year before this meeting was held, the Indiana General Assembly, meeting at Corydon on January 22, 1820, appointed a "superintendent for the Seminary Township in Gibson County." According to the statute this officer was responsible for collecting the rents from the land and for preventing "waste" being committed on it. He was instructed to report annually to the general assembly. Indiana, Laws (1819-1820), 160-161.

65 Following his migration from Kentucky, Call practiced law in Vincennes and Princeton, served as judge of the Knox County Circuit Court in 1817, 1818, and 1822-1824, and was elected to the Eighteenth
26 January 1821.


Mr. Hart acted as Secretary pro tempore.

Moses Tabbs was elected President of the Board. The Committee appointed at the last meeting to examine the repairs made by Mr. Brown, Reported as follows,

The Committee appointed for the purpose, have had the carpenters work of the repairs made by Mr. Brown to the seminary building examined, & a valuation made thereof by two master workmen of this town, one of whom was selected by Mr. Brown, & the other by your Committee. The said examination took place in presence of your Committee and of Mr. Brown. A list of the repairs and a valuation thereof as made & subscribed by the workmen, accompanies this report. The Committee report a bill furnished by Mr. Brown of labor, articles furnished, glazing &c., the particulars of which more fully appears by the bill itself to this report annexed.

Amount of the Bill, for labor, articles furnished &c. is Forty eight dollars & ninety two cents. If to this is added the Carpenter’s repairs amounting to one hundred & forty four dollars & Eighty six cents, we have a total of one hundred and ninety three dollars, & seventy eight cents.

This report was considered and concurred in.

The President pro Tem. laid before the Board a letter from Mr. Brown on the subject of expences incurred by him for repairs &c, & expressing his wish to withdraw from the engagement with the Board. Whereupon it was Resolved That the Board do not consider themselves bound to discharge Mr. Brown’s demands for repairs done to the seminary building until Congress grants permission to lease the seminary lands, inasmuch as Mr. Brown was not authorized to make the repairs; nevertheless the Board agree to pay Mr. Brown whenever they may have funds in their hands not otherwise appropriated, and that agreeable to his request he be discharged from all obligation to the Board. It was further

Congress to fill the vacancy caused by the death of William Prince. He served in the latter position from December, 1824, to March, 1825. Western Sun, June 13, 1818, March 16, 1822, December 2, 1823, November 27, 1824; Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1949 (Washington, D.C., 1950), 937.
Resolved that a Committee of three be appointed to collect any monies that may be due the Trustees for rents, or otherwise, and to pay Mr. Brown the sum of one hundred and ninety three dollars and seventy eight cents, out of the first money collected, and to make report of the same to the Board, together with an account of all the monies collected. Messrs. Scott, Buntin, and Hart were appointed that Committee.

On Motion, Resolved that the Secretary deliver to Mr. Brown a copy of the Resolution releasing him from his agreement, and receive from him the keys of the Seminary.

The Board adjourned sine die.

2 April 1821.

This being the day fixed by Law for the semiannual meeting of the Board, the following members appeared, viz: Lawrence S. Shuler, Samuel T. Scott, Elias McNamee, John D. Hay, Francis Vigo, Jonathan Doty, Jacob Call, Richard M. l’Anson, & David Hart.

Mr. Shuler presided as President pro tempore, & Mr. Hart acted as Secretary pro tem.

The resignation of Mr. Tabbs as a member of the Board was received and accepted.

Elias McNamee was elected President of the Board in the place of Mr. Tabbs resigned. Messrs. John Law & John C. S. Harrison were elected members of the Board to supply the vacancies occasioned by the death of Charles Smith, & the resignation of Mr. Tabbs.

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66 A notice requesting “all those . . . . who have money in their hands belonging to . . . . the Public Seminary” to pay immediately appeared in the Vincennes Centinel, March 31, 1821.

67 John Law was a native of Connecticut and graduate of Yale who came to Vincennes in 1817 and began a career in law and politics which spanned half a century and included, among other positions, membership in the national House of Representatives (March, 1861—March, 1865) and a judgeship on the United States Court of Land Claims (1855 to 1857). Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1949, 1441. In Vincennes, Law was an active member of the subscription library company (1818-1842) and the Historical and Antiquarian Society, member of the general assembly from Knox County (1823), and receiver of public moneys for the Vincennes land office (1838-1842).

68 John Cleves Symmes Harrison was the second son of William Henry Harrison. His appointment as “Receiver of public monies for the District of Vincennes, vice Nathaniel Ewing, dismissed” was announced in the Western Sun, October 16, 1819, which “congratulated[ed] our fellow citizens on the judicious appointment of [Harrison], who
On Motion, Resolved that a Committee of five be appointed to enquire and report to this Board the situation of lands belonging to the Vincennes seminary, how far they are under the control of the Board, & the propriety of proceeding by Law to collect the rents and profits of the same; and the said Committee be instructed to enquire into all claims which the said Board may have upon any, & every species of property whatever. Robert Buntin, Lawrence S. Shuler, Jonathan Doty, Jacob Call, and David Hart were appointed that Committee.

There being no more business, the Board adjourned.

Monday April 1, 1822.*

This being the day for the semiannual meeting of the Trustees of the University, the following members appeared: Elias McNamee, President, John D. Hay, Nathaniel Ewing, Jacob Call, Francois Vigo, Robert Buntin, J. C. S. Harrison, and John Law.

On Motion, The Board proceeded to the election of one member to supply the vacancy occasioned by the death of Jonathan Doty, when on counting the ballots it appeared that Henry Ruble was duly elected.

Combines capability, integrity and industry with an ardent desire for the welfare of his fellow-citizens." This enthusiasm for Harrison as receiver of public money was perhaps dampened by his "alleged defalcation of over twelve thousand dollars due the government" at the time of his death in October, 1830. Dorothy Riker and Gayle Thornbrough (eds.), Messages and Papers relating to the Administration of James Brown Ray, Governor of Indiana, 1825-1831 (Indiana Historical Collections, Vol. XXXIV; Indianapolis, Ind., 1954), 636-637; Dorothy Burne Goebel, William Henry Harrison (Indiana Historical Collections, Vol. XIV; Indianapolis, Ind., 1926), 294.

In the year which had passed since the board's last meeting the Indiana General Assembly had on January 2, 1822, by statute transferred jurisdiction over the "seminary township in Gibson county" to a board of commissioners, who were authorized to sell the land "to the highest bidder" and to allocate the proceeds of sale to "the state Seminary [at Bloomington]." The lapse of a full year without a meeting was probably responsible for Section 7 of this act, which described the "former Board of Trustees of the Vincennes University" as having "expired by the negligence of its members. . . . " Indiana, Laws (1821-1822), 111-114.

Henry Ruble was a Vincennes tailor who was serving at this time as an associate judge of the Knox County Court. Western Sun, January 2, 1819; Dorothy Riker (ed.), Executive Proceedings of the State of Indiana, 1816-1836 (Indiana Historical Collections, Vol. XXIX; Indianapolis, Ind., 1947), 133, 492, 493.
On Motion, Resolved that the Methodist society be permitted to hold their next quarterly meeting in the University building.

The Board adjourned.

Saturday 21 September 1823

The Board met pursuant to the advertisement of the President. Present: Elias McNamee, President, Francois Vigo, Robert Buntin, Samuel T. Scott, Nathaniel Ewing, John Law, Richard M. I'Anson, Ruble, & Blackford.

The account of J. B. [Stropes?] was presented & allowed—amount [not stated].

The account of Gardner & Moore was presented & allowed—amount $35.12.

Propositions were made by the Revd. Henry M. Shaw relative to the Seminary building, upon which a Committee were appointed consisting of Messrs. McNamee, Shuler, & Blackford, who were instructed to confer with Mr. Shaw on the subject of his proposals, & make report to the next semiannual meeting of the Board.

On motion, The Board proceeded to the election of two members to supply the vacancies occasioned by the death of David Hart and when on counting the Ballots it appeared that Jacob Kuykendall & [Henry M. Shaw?] were duly elected.

On motion, Messrs. McNamee, Shuler, & Shaw were appointed a Committee to draw up a memorial to the next

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71 William Forster, a visitor in Vincennes in December, 1821, noted that there was “no place for worship but a Popish chapel; but the Methodists and Presbyterians occasionally use the Court-house for their meetings.” Harlow Lindley (ed.), Indiana As Seen By Early Travelers: A Collection of Reprints from Books of Travel, Letters and Diaries Prior to 1830 (Indiana Historical Collections, [Vol. III]; Indianapolis, Ind., 1916), 257.

72 Henry Moore Shaw was an Episcopal clergyman whose “orations” were highly regarded and much in demand at this time in Vincennes and the surrounding area. He conducted a private school and in October, 1823, was elected by the university’s board of trustees as “President of the Institution,” given a room in the seminary building for religious services, and put in charge of “the education of youth in the seminary....” Western Sun, May 17, June 14, September 6, December 20, 1823, January 9, February 14, April 3, 1824.

73 A blank space appears at this point in the minutes. It is possible that Shaw was the second person elected to the board; while he “resigned his seat as Trustee of this Seminary” at the following meeting of the board, there is no prior record of his having been named to that position. See p. 365.
Legislature respecting the Seminary Lands in Gibson County, & present the same to the next meeting of the Board for consideration.

There being no more business, the Board adjourned.

Monday [no date] October 1823

The Board met pursuant to adjournment. Present: Elias McNamee President; Messrs. Call, Ruble, Ewing, Shaw, Shuler, Law, Buntin, Kuykendall, Blackford.

Mr. Shaw resigned his seat as Trustee of this Seminary—Whereupon the Board proceeded to an election to supply the vacancy, & upon counting the ballots Samuel Judah Esqr. was declared duly elected.

On Motion, The Board proceeded to elect a President of the Institution, & upon Counting the ballots the Revd. Henry Moore Shaw was declared unanimously elected.

The committee appointed at the last meeting to confer with Mr. Shaw &c. Reported as follows, viz:

The Committee have performed the duty assigned them and recommended to the Board for consideration, the following Resolution, viz:

Whereas the Seminary building is in an unfinished state, and the Trustees have not the funds necessary to secure it from the almost immediate ruin to which it is exposed; and whereas it seems perfectly consistent with the future pros-

14 A native of New York and graduate of Rutgers, Samuel Judah was at this time a young lawyer practicing in Vincennes. See Western Sun, January 11, 1823. Eventually recognized as "one of the longest-headed lawyers and politicians in Indiana," Judah was to play an important role in the lengthy litigation and controversy which developed between Vincennes University and the state of Indiana, arising from the sale of the Gibson County "seminary lands" and the transfer of the proceeds thereof to Indiana University. It was Judah who guided the school's case through the general assembly (1838-1846) and from the state supreme court to the United States Supreme Court (1846-1852), where a decision favorable to the university was used as the basis for a "final settlement" of $66,585 between the state and the school (February 13, 1855). As it turned out, this "final settlement," about $26,000 of which was retained by Judah for "fees and expenses," was really an early chapter in the dispute between the state and Vincennes University, the later episodes of which fall into the era of recent history and are appropriate for consideration in a possible subsequent installment of the board of trustees minutes. This phase of Judah's career is well summarized in Jacob Piatt Dunn, Indiana and Indianans (5 vols., Chicago, Ill., 1919), I, 316-321. Like many of the other members of the board of trustees, Judah joined the Vincennes Library Company (March 1, 1824). He served as a director (February 7, 1826, to February 4, 1833) and was president of the organization from 1849 to 1852.
perity of the Institution, and the principles of its establish-
ment that a part of the building not required for the purposes
of Tuition, should be specially appropriated as a Hall for
prayer & for the performance of divine worship.

Therefore Resolved, That the Revd. Henry M. Shaw be
and he is hereby authorized to take possession of the large
South West room on the lower floor & the North room above
stairs, of the Seminary building, and that he the said Mr.
Shaw and his successors, Episcopal Clergymen shall enjoy
the same for the purposes of their church, free from the
control of the Trustees and of all other persons, and without
any charge for rent.

The conditions annexed to this Grant are the following,
viz:

First, Mr. Shaw shall within twelve months at his own
expense so repair the Edifice, that it will be in a state of
security from the weather & other causes of destruction,
similar to that by which other buildings of the same kind in
our Country, are ordinarily protected. The money judiciously
expended for the purpose, not to be less than four hundred
dollars. Subsequent repairs for such preservation to be at
the Cost of the Institution by order of the Trustees.

Secondly—Mr. Shaw, as President of the College, and his
successors episcopal clergymen, shall personally attend to the
education of Youth in the Seminary building, and duly dis-
charge the duties of President of the Institution under the
superintendence of the Trustees, in conformity to the prin-
ciples of the charter. He must depend for his compensation
upon the amount he may receive for Tuition from the Stu-
dents, their parents & guardians.

Thirdly—The large room, intended by Mr. Shaw as a
place for divine worship, shall be subject to the use of the
college for morning and evening prayers, & for public speak-
ing, whenever its possession may not be required for the
services of the church.

Fourthly—If at any time hereafter the Trustees may
deeom it expedient, they shall be at liberty to resume the
possession of the whole seminary building, upon giving to
the Episcopal clergyman resident here at the time, twelve
months notice of their intention, and upon repaying to him
for the benefit of his church here, the principal of the money
expended for repairs of the building, and in fitting up the
rooms for the purposes aforesaid.
On Motion, The above Report was concurred in by the Board, & the Secretary required to furnish Mr. Shaw with a copy of the same.

The Committee appointed to draw up a memorial to the next Legislature, asked & obtained time until the next meeting of the Board, to make their Report.

The Board adjourned until the first monday in November next.

Saturday, 24th April 1824.

The Board met pursuant to notice of the President. Present: Elias McNamee President, Messrs. Scott, Buntin, Kuykendall, Harrison, Shaw, l'Anson, Blackford.

On motion, Resolved, That a Committee be appointed to enquire into and ascertain the amount due for fines assessed for breach of the penal laws in the County of Knox. Kuykendall, Harrison, Judah that Committee.

On motion, Resolved, That the Board do not consider themselves bound by the Report of the Auditor, relative to the claims of Mr. George C. Brown.

The Board adjourned until the first tuesday in June next.

75 In an "Act establishing a County Seminary in the county of Knox," approved by the general assembly, January 2, 1824, Vincennes University was "adopted as the county Seminary of Knox county, under the direction and control of the board of trustees of said University." As prescribed by the Indiana constitution (art. IX, sec. 4) the act further required that "all monies now due or owing from the trustee of the public seminary of Knox county, for and on account of penal fines, . . . shall be paid over to the treasurer of the board of trustees of said University, . . . [for the purpose of] repairing said building, and for the purposes of education." Charles Kettleborough (ed.), Constitution Making in Indiana: A Source Book of Constitutional Documents with Historical Introduction and Critical Notes (3 vols., Indiana Historical Collections, Vols. I, II, XVII; Indianapolis, Ind., 1916-1930), I, 114; Indiana, Special Acts . . . of the General Assembly (1823-1824), 107-108.

76 On February 12, 1825, the general assembly amended the act establishing a "County Seminary in the county of Knox," mentioned in note 75, by withdrawing the power of the university board of trustees to act as trustees of the county seminary and requiring the appointment of one trustee, who was "authorized to receive and collect all moneys now due . . . to the seminary," in accordance with the general law governing county seminaries. This act also required the new trustee to use the first of this money "to pay to Claudius G. Brown . . . the amount justly due the said Brown, under the decision of the auditor, authorized to audit said claim . . . [on] the university, and county seminary aforesaid." Indiana, Laws (1825), 96.