



1931

The Life of Joseph A. Wright

Mary F. Thornton

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THE LIFE OF JOSEPH A. WRIGHT

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the	
requirements for the degree of	
MASTER OF ARTS	

Department of History

BUTLER UNIVERSITY

Mary Frances Thornton
Indianapolis

1931

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

I speak in the annals of Indiana history, the circles were most full of those things of the Indiana Division of the State Library, to members of the History Department of Butler University, for everyone, ample land for cultivation, a state of especially to Dr. Paul L. Haworth and Prof. A. Dale Beeler. I also acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. J. Albert Wright, son of the Governor, who resides in that period, offering innumerable rewards to the ever active and persevering. It was the land of pure necessity.

Mary Frances Thornton

during this golden age, practically every necessity of life was provided for directly in Indiana. There were sheep for clothing; cows for milk, butter and cheese; geese or ducks for leather bags; chickens for eggs and table use; garden vegetables for the table; cabbage for sauerkraut; potatoes; apples for applesauce, apple butter; corn for feeding and for making

THE LIFE OF PREFACE A. WRIGHT

This work has been designed to give a short but accurate sketch of the life of Joseph Albert Wright, who presided over the State of Indiana from 1849-1857. I have endeavored to give an unbiased appraisal of his character as is reflected through his efforts and achievements.

I am indebted to the courtesy and cooperation of the Indiana Division of the State Library, to members of the History Department of Butler University, especially to Dr. Paul L. Haworth and Prof. A. Dale Beeler. I also acknowledge my indebtedness to Mr. J. Albert Wright, son of the Governor, who resides in Sparta, Oregon.

Mary Frances Thornton

During this golden age, practically every necessity of life was provided for directly in Indiana. There were sheep for clothing; cows for milk, butter and cheese; geese or ducks for feather beds; chickens for eggs and table use; garden vegetables for the table; cabbage for sauerkraut; potatoes; apples for cider, apple butter; corn for feeding and for making

See History of Indiana, 1895.
Indiana Tri-Weekly Journal, May 2, 1895.

THE LIFE OF JOSEPH A. WRIGHT

Chapter I

Indiana in The Early Fifties

During the years (1849-1857) that cover the governorship of Joseph Albert Wright, tenth governor of the State of Indiana, Indiana was enjoying an era of hitherto unprecedented prosperity.

Perhaps of all epochs in the annals of Indiana history, the fifties were most full of those things that go to make up a happy life. There was work aplenty for everyone, ample land for cultivation, a state of material security and illimitable opportunity for advancement. Indiana was a part of the vast new West of that Period, offering innumerable rewards to the energetic and persevering. It was the land of pure democracy.

During this golden age, practically every necessity of life was provided for directly in Indiana. There were sheep for clothing; cows for milk, butter and cheese; geese or ducks for feather beds; chickens for eggs and table use; garden vegetables for the table; cabbage for sauerkraut; potatoes; apples for cider, apple butter; corn for feeding and for making

(1) Bealey, "A History of Indiana," II, 576

(2) Indiana Tri-Weekly Journal, May 2, 1850.

(1)

whiskey, and wheat for bread.

The following statistics from the census are a fair index of the prosperity that prevailed in Indiana in 1850.

Number of houses	186,182
Number of families	187,618
Population	990,258
Value of farms	\$128,325,552
Value of farm implements	\$6,648,799
Capital invested in manufactures..	\$7,235,220
Value of mfg'd goods	\$19,199,681
Number of Colleges	83
Students	5,290
Number of Common Schools	5,899
Value of Real Estate Owned	\$170,000,000

During the fifties Indiana was definitely recuperating from the bitter economic strain and depression of the ruinous nation-wide panic of 1837. Indiana's hard times had been accentuated by the head-long program of internal improvement carried on by the State in the forties. She had been engrossed in building roads, bridges

(1) Esarey, A History of Indiana, II, 576

(2) Indiana Tri-Weekly Journal, May 2, 1850.

together with the canal lands granted by the government, and other rights and franchises were transferred in discharge of one half of the State's indebtedness, and new bonds, at a lower rate of interest, issued for the remaining half. With this settlement, confidence was restored, and the panic having spent its force, prosperity began gradually to return. (4)

The Whigs had, perhaps, not favored the policy of internal improvement any more than the Democrats, but the Whigs were in power. Their opponents had found a vulnerable spot, consequently the Whigs were given complete credit for the unfortunate episode.

As a result, in 1843 James Whitcomb succeeded Samuel Bigger in the governor's office. Whitcomb was the first governor to be elected by the Democrats of Indiana. He was re-elected in 1846. He resigned in 1848 to accept the election to the United States Senate. Lieutenant-governor Paris C. Dunning became acting governor, serving out the unexpired term. (3)

It was during Governor Whitcomb's administration that the compromise with the State's creditors was arrived at, whereby the Wabash and Erie Canal,

(3) Moore, A Century of Indiana. p. 135

Chapter III
 together with the canal lands granted by the govern-
 ment, and other rights and franchises were trans-
 ferred in discharge of one half of the States in-
 debtedness, and new bonds, at a lower rate of interest,
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 confidence was restored, and the panic having spent
 its force, prosperity began gradually to return. (4)

(4) Moore, Op.cit., p.135
 had they migrated to
 Indiana settling near Bloomington, in Monroe County.
 In 1823 his father died, leaving him and his brother,
 George Grover Wright, to depend on their own re-
 sources for a living as of an energetic little

Governor Wright, in later years, was wont to
 relate how he carried brick for twenty-five cents
 per day. He believed "where there is a will there

is a way" and he proved the maxim by obtaining an
 excellent education at Indiana University, in spite
 of the handicaps of poverty, by doing odd janitorial
 chores. Evidence of this appears on the records of
 Indiana University today. Two extracts from the
 records are given below: the minutes were kept till
 and the proceeds expended in 1851 Friday

" Ordered, That Joseph A. Wright Be Allowed
 \$100.00
 \$100.00
 \$100.00

for ringing Chapter II the bell, making fires, etc.,
The Early Life of Joseph A. Wright session of
the persons who had received so much as described
the College Seminary, the sum of \$16.25; also, for
Joseph Albert Wright, Indiana's tenth gover-
a lock, bell-rope and brooms, the sum of \$1.37
nor, was born in Washington, Pennsylvania, April
and was the treasurer of the State Seminary, say
17, 1810. His early life in Pennsylvania is very
obscure. Little or no information regarding this
early period is known, except that his parents were
very poor, and when he was a lad they migrated to
Indiana settling near Bloomington, in Monroe County.
In 1823 his father died, leaving him and his brother,
George Grover Wright, to depend on their own re-
sources for a living. use of an energetic little

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of the handicaps of poverty, by doing odd janitor
chores. Evidence of this appears on the records of
Indiana University today. Two extracts from the
records are given below: he walnuts were kept till
winter, and sold by him to the wealthy students,
and the proceeds expended in the "Friday May 6, 1828.

" Ordered, That Joseph A. Wright Be allowed

(5) Woolian, Biographical and Historical Sketches
of Early Indiana, pp. 94f.

for ringing the college bell, making fires, etc.,
and applied to the support of his widowed mother,
in the college building during the last session of
the persons who had recognized Jo, who is describ-
the College Seminary, the sum of \$16.25; also, for
marked,

a lock, bell-rope and brooms, the sum of \$1.37¹ (6)

and that the treasurer of the State Seminary pay
the same!"

in completing two years at the November 18, 1828.

Bloomington" Joseph A. Wright is allowed for repairing
arches in the small seminary building and kitchen
(5)

the sum of \$1.25." (7)

Bloomington. In 1829 he stood his examination

During this period, he gained the name of
and obtained his license to practice law. Soon after
"Walnut-huller" because of an energetic little
this he removed to Rockville, Parke County, where he
practice that he had of selling walnuts for his
settled in the practice of his profession, meeting
support and maintenance. The Indiana State Sentinel,
with year success from the start, and later
while speaking favorably of his campaign for govern-
in November 1831, he married Miss Laura Cook,
or gives this little life sketch.

Daughter of William Cook, a prominent Parke County

" During his contest for Congress, in the
seventh district, we heard an anecdote of Jo, which
exhibits some of his true traits of character. Whilst
attending college, it was customary during the day,
of the fall muster, to dispense with college exer-
cises. On the day of the regimental muster in the
fall of 1826, Jo was engaged in hauling walnuts, a
few miles below Bloomington, and was observed by
some of the passersby; the walnuts were kept till
winter, and sold by him to the wealthy students,
and the proceeds expended in the purchase of books,

Wagon, and many were friends throughout the State. Con-

(5) Woollen, Biographical and Historical Sketches
of Early Indiana, Pp. 94f.

(7) Rowland, Sketches of Prominent Citizens, p. 467.

(6) 1818, p. 438. may be the Seminary, he

And applied to the support of his widowed mother. It so happened in the fall of 1827, that one of the persons who had recognized Jo, who is described as having delivered an address on 'Man'; re-marked, (6)

' For my part I like the Walnut-huller best.' "

By such sacrifice and hard work, but with an unfailing brave heart and cheerfulness, he succeeded in completing two years at the State University at Bloomington. the State of Indiana more than ten million

After having received a fair education, he studied law in the office of Judge Hester, of Bloomington. (7) In 1829 he stood his examination and obtained his license to practice law. Soon after this he removed to Rockville, Parke County, where he settled in the practice of his profession, meeting with fair success from the start. (8)

In November 1831, he married Miss Laura Cook, daughter of William Cook, a prominent Parke County farmer. This union was one of the most fortunate events of his life; he not only needed a wife, but one who would exert an influence on him and develop and bring out the sterling qualities of his mind and heart. Mrs. Wright was an intelligent as well as staunch Christian woman. (8)

(6) Indiana State Sentinel, Jan. 18, 1849.

(7) Nowland, Sketches of Prominent Citizens. p.457.

(8) Ibid. p. 458.

(9) Indiana State Sentinel, January 25, 1849.

In 1833 he was elected to represent Parke County in the lower branch of the State Legislature. While a member of this body he introduced and ably advocated a bill for classifying the public works in Indiana, upon which he delivered an able speech. Had that bill then passed, it is claimed, it would have saved the State of Indiana more than ten million dollars. (9) but with a provision in her constitution, forever prohibiting the Legislature of the State. In 1837 he connected himself with the Methodist church of which he was a sincere and consistent supporter. In 1836 he was elected prosecuting attorney for the district in which he lived. In 1839 he was elected to the State Senate.

He was associated with General Tighlman A. Howard in the practice of law from 1840-1844. (10)

In 1843 he was elected to represent the seventh congressional district which had given General Harrison, in 1840 a majority of 2,500 votes. During the time he served in Congress he was justly called "the working man." His active support of, and the zeal he manifested for the donation of lands by Congress to Indiana, secured for him many warm friends throughout the State. Concerning the slavery question, during the twenty-eighth Congress, on the direct question of prohibiting the introduction of slavery in the Oregon territory, he

(9) Indiana State Sentinel, January 25, 1849.

voted in the affirmative, and uniformly voted
against the admission of slavery into that terr-
(11)
tory. In 1849 the Democratic party of Indiana paid
the The Indiana State Journal, May 21, 1849, en-
deavored to point out an inconsistency in Mr.
Wright's policy regarding slavery by citing:

"When a member of the 28th Congress, he
voted for the admission of Florida not only as a
Slave State, but with a provision in her constitu-
tion, forever prohibiting the Legislature of the
State to pass laws emancipating their slaves."
As heretofore stated, the Democrats swept
the State in the election of 1843. James Whitcomb
succeeded Samuel Bigger in the governor's office.
He was the first governor elected by the Democrats
of Indiana. namely, industry, energy, perseverance
and prudence."

Such men as Robert Dale Owen, Joseph A.
Wright, Andrew Kennedy, James Whitcomb and John
W. Davis, preaching the new Democracy, were more
than a match for the old Whigs. They pleaded for
human rights, individual liberty, private ini-
tiative, that it was more the duty of the State to
care for the unfortunate, the feeble, educate
the children and foster individual development

(11) Indiana State Sentinel, January 25, 1849.

(14) Esarey, Op.cit., p547.

Judge Elisha Embree of Princeton having declined to concern itself entirely with aiding bankers, manufacturers and transportation companies. (12)

In 1849 the Democratic party of Indiana paid the highest signal honor to Joseph A. Wright by nominating him for governor.

The Indiana State Sentinel carried the following article:

"The nomination of Jo Wright of Parke, for governor of Indiana, was made on the 8th inst., with great unanimity and much good feeling, and enthusiasm was exhibited during the entire proceedings of the convention.

"Jo is a Hoosier, raised in Indiana, and is emphatically one of Indiana's sons. In all the positions he has occupied he has exhibited those leading traits of character so necessary in him upon whom shall fall the responsibility of discharging the duties of the highest executive of the state, namely, industry, energy, perseverance and prudence." (13)

The Democratic convention met at Indianapolis, January 8. There were three candidates for governor -- Joseph A. Wright of Parke County, James H. Lane of Lawrenceburg and E.M. Chamberlain of Goshen. An agreement was reached among the supporters of the first named candidates by which Wright was nominated for governor and Lane for Lieutenant Governor. (14)

(12) Esarey, A History of Indiana, I, 531.

(13) Indiana State Sentinel, January 25, 1849.

(14) Esarey, Op.cit., p547.

Judge Elisha Embree of Princeton having declined the Whig nomination for governorship, at a call meeting of the State Central Committee May 3, John A. Matson of Brookville was placed on the ticket.

The unique feature of the campaign was the State wide speech canvass made by Mr. Wright. On these tours he invited Mr. Matson to debate with him on the important matters of the day. Wright's speeches were lively, spell-binding. They often covered a space of time of two hours, and people would travel many miles to be among the audience. The Sentinel of 1849 carried the complete itinerary, and stated that Wright would visit all counties but eleven. (15)

During this contest over the governorship, Mr. Wright spoke in favor of free public schools. He stressed the necessity of holding a constitutional convention, and for the election of all officers by the people.

With regards to his national policy, Wright declared himself an unwavering Democrat. He was opposed to monopolies - opposed to the high tariff policy. On the subject of slavery, Mr Wright denounced the introduction of slavery into any territory then free;

(15) Indiana State Sentinel, Apr. 12, 1849.

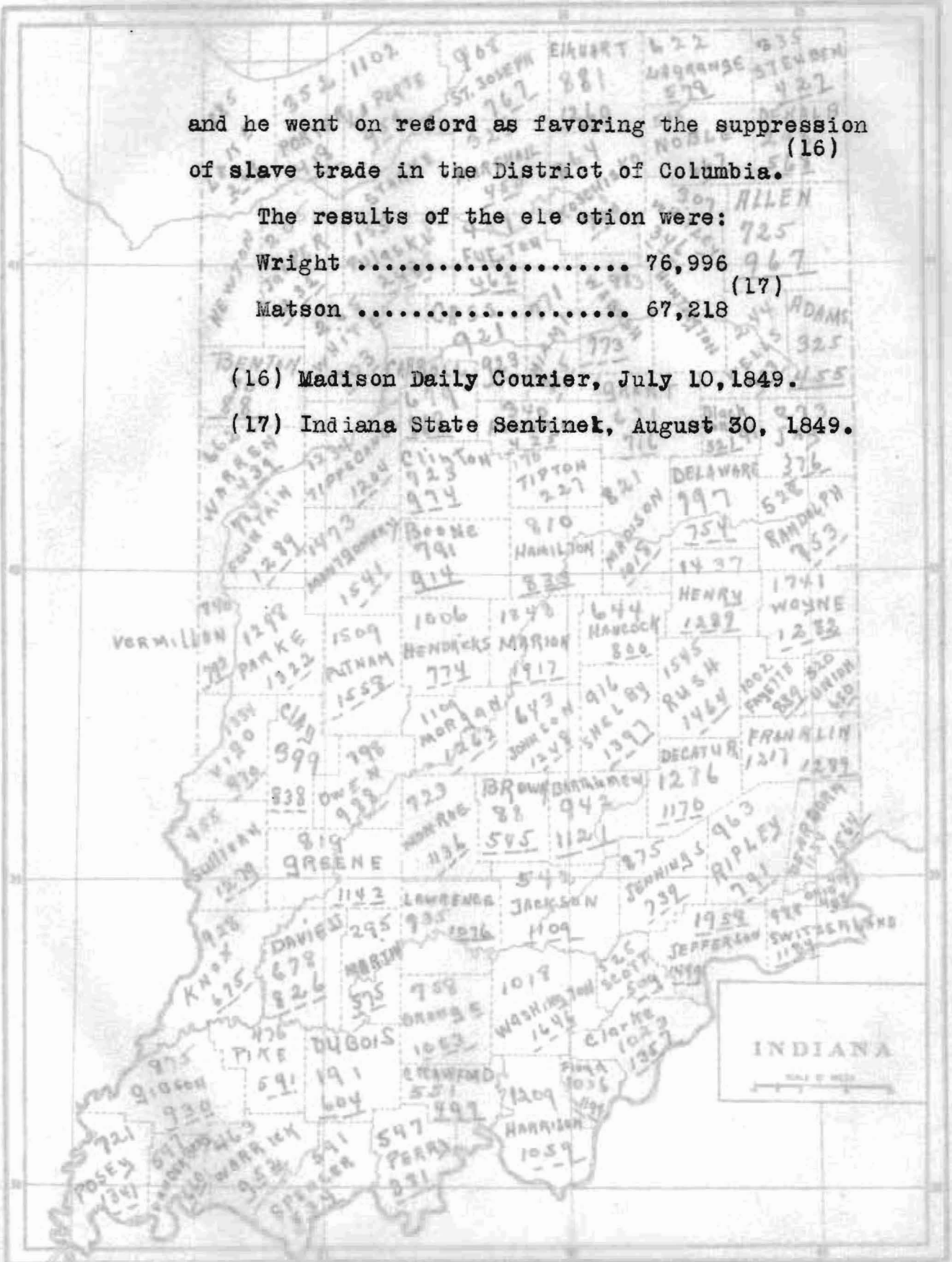
and he went on record as favoring the suppression of slave trade in the District of Columbia. (16)

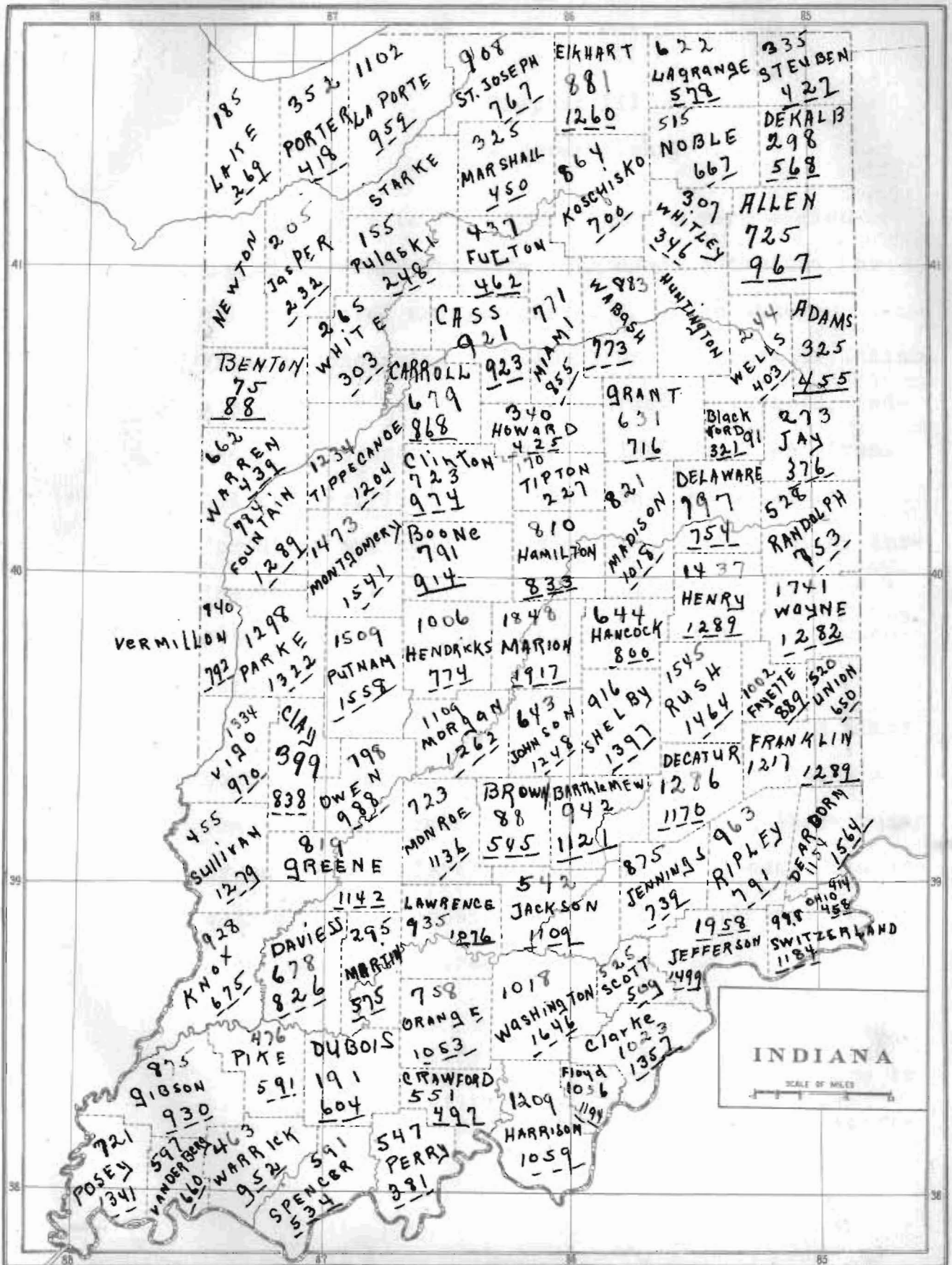
The results of the election were:

Wright 76,996 (17)
Matson 67,218

(16) Madison Daily Courier, July 10, 1849.

(17) Indiana State Sentinel, August 30, 1849.





INDIANA
SCALE OF MILES
0 25 50

Result of governorship race 1849 -- Watson (green)

Chapter III

The Governorship

In order to show that from the very beginning of Governor Wright's long administration, he was farsighted and interested in those things vitally concerning the people of the State of Indiana, a portion of his inaugural address, delivered, Wednesday afternoon, December 5, 1849, will be given.

And further, it will be shown that he straightforwardly and consistently supported this policy during^{ing} incumbency, and gained for himself the name of "A Friend of the People." Their interests were his interests.

He did not have one of those stereotyped minds common to many of our public men, who fear that a change in the order of things may disrupt their party or machine. He favored profitable progress. This accounts for his adherence to a constitutional convention, and in his inaugural address he said concerning this:

" It is gratifying that our State during the past year, by a decisive vote has shown a desire to favor the constitutional reforms of the age. Time has not only proved the correctness of the re-

(19) Ibid.

"We are now in the prosecution of a new republican principles contained in the constitution, but it has had a tendency to show that they be much further extended, and more effectually applied. In order to guard against improper appointments to office and against such as may be made with selfish motives, without reference to the welfare of the public in general, or the will of the people, the elective power may safely be substituted for appointive power." (18)

Governor Wright realized the tremendous importance of the public schools, and in the same message he made the following statement:

"Men of intelligence can best and most safely exercise the sovereign prerogative of the elective franchise; and to secure general intelligence among men, they must begin to learn while they are children. It seems to me therefore, that we should concentrate every legitimate effort to accomplish this end, bestowing all the means at our command to the promotion of this common good in the most expansive form, - that we should first endeavor to extend common schools in every neighborhood, so far as may be done without the infliction of burdensome taxes upon the people, while we leave the County Seminaries and higher institutions of learning to individual or associate enterprise, by which it is believed they will best be sustained." (19)

He was not blind to the disastrous plight of the State under the unbridled public improvement policy of the forties, and with reference to internal improvements, he made the following timely observation:

(18) Indiana State Journal, December 10, 1849.

(18) Indiana Journal, December 10, 1849.

(19) Ibid.

" We are now in the prosecution of a new system of internal improvements much preferable to the past, because it is founded upon individual capital and enterprise and will consequently be conducted with economy and prudence. That which demands the aid of the State treasury or the revenues of the cities and counties in its prosecution is a policy of doubtful expediency. It will be found that by leaving the enterprise and capital of our people free to seek investment aid by liberal legislation in the grants of charters, we shall be able to commence and finish those public works that will repay the capital invested, and will in their prosecution be characterized with economy and in due time greatly increase the resources of the State." (20)

On the burning sectional questions that were tearing at the very heart of the National Government, Governor Wright advocated a policy of strict non-interference on the part of local Legislatures.

" While the right to express the sentiments of the people of States through their representatives on questions of a national character will not be controverted, yet as citizens and representatives of the people, we shall find most of our time well employed if we will carefully and watchfully attend to the growing interest of the State. We can most profitably employ ourselves in devising means to develop her resources -- to make her municipal regulation firm, uniform and stable and to avoid special and partial legislation. By such means we may be able gradually to reduce the principal and interest of our public debt and give an education to every child of the State. When we shall have attended to these things we shall have but little time to

the same policy of prudence and construction.

(20) Indiana State Journal, December 10, 1849.

He saw that the burden of taxation rested heavily upon the working man, and in his message, 1850,

said:

(21) Indiana State Journal, Dec. 10, 1849.

spend in bitter party debates. We should at least endeavor to maintain in all our discussions and intercourse with one another, a spirit of harmony, concession and compromise."(21)

These utterances made on the occasion of Governor Wright's inauguration show conclusively a man of good common sense and sound judgment. They indicate a policy of constructiveness and sane moderation. And to his credit it can be truthfully stated that he held consistently to these principles, deviating from his course only when he was thoroughly convinced that a change in the times justified it.

Consistency is a great virtue and doubly so when possessed and exercised by public officials. It is this trait that stands forth admirably in the life of Governor Wright. In his inaugural address he had favored and advocated economy in public expenditures, common school education, constitutional reformation and compromise in the slavery question. One year later in his annual message he is continuing the same policy of prudence and construction.

He saw that the burden of taxation rested heavily upon the working man, and in his message, 1850, said:

(21) Indiana State Journal, Dec. 10, 1849.

" While the property of the man of moderate means, the farmer, the mechanic and the day laborer, is, from its very character exposed to the eye of the assessor, and is such as to enable him to estimate its value with accuracy, it cannot be doubted that a large amount of invisible property consisting of corporation stocks, moneys and credits, entirely escapes taxation. Property and wealth are the true bases of taxation, and the public burden should rest on them."(22)

Governor Wright was many decades ahead of his time in his views on prison reform when he advocated that a prison should be a place of reformation and social adjustment, rather than a place of harsh punishment. Accordingly in his message, 1850, he said:

" I am gratified in being able to say that the prison was in an excellent condition; entirely cleansed, and the physician and all others connected with the prison nobly discharging their duties.

By the kindness of Miss Dorothy Dix, that devoted friend of prisoners, prison discipline and suffering humanity, I selected and purchase at the East, for the use of the prisoners, two hundred volumes of Religious, Historical, Agricultural and Biographical works, which cost the sum of one hundred and thirty-eight dollars and eighty-eight cents, which are kept neatly in a closed book case; let out to the convicts regularly, who are charged with them; and when returned, another is taken in its place. It is with pleasure I learn that a large portion of the convicts read with interest this excellent selection.

Wisdom and humanity demand that an appropria-

(22) Indiana Senate Journal, Dec. 31, 1850.

(23) Indiana Senate Journal, Dec. 31, 1850.

tion of fifty dollars be made annually for the purpose of keeping up the library." (23)

Relative to the subject of free Negro Colonization, which he believed to be a panacea for the exciting question of the day, which has threatened existing evils of slavery in the United States, he said: "Our southern brethren are making rapid movement towards abridging the privileges of this class, even to banishment. We in the north are adopting extraordinary means of removing them by prohibiting them from holding property, excluding them from the protection of the laws, and denying them any rights whatsoever."

"In the midst of all this excitement, and confusion, the light breaks in upon us, which points conclusively to colonization as the only remedy. The infant colony of Liberia, recognized as one among the nations of the earth, begins now to attract the renewed attention of all men, who desire to see an entire separation of the two races. In this great struggle for the separation of the black man from the white let Indiana take her stand; put her agent into the field. Her citizens are ready."

He added along this same strain: "In pursuance to a Joint Reslution of the last session of the Legislature, a block of marble, native of the State, was procured and forwarded to Washington, to be placed in the monument now in progress of erection there, to the memory of the father of this country. The General Assmby did not authorize any senti-

(24) Indiana Senate Journal, Dec. 31, 1850.

(23) Indiana Senate Journal, Dec. 31, 1850.

ment to be placed on the block: I took the liberty of having inscribed the following:

' Indiana knows no North, no South but the Union.'

"Indiana, a central State has always maintained a high, conservative position, especially on that exciting question of the day, which has threatened more seriously than any other, the integrity of our confederacy of States. She is indeed convinced, that she has wisely selected her own domestic policy. She is satisfied with the degree of prosperity which under that free policy she has attained. Our State was the 19th admitted to the Union. In wealth, in agriculture, and commercial importance she is now fifth, if indeed she is not fourth. Of the 18 States which composed the Union when we were admitted, four, at most are now in our advance; and not one of those since admitted has come with sight of us.

"Above all, Indiana recognizes that the imperative duty, by every good citizen, of obedience to the laws of the land. There is no safety for property, for liberty, nor for life except in the absolute supremacy of the Law.

" Indiana takes her stand in the ranks, not of Southern destiny, nor yet of Northern destiny. She plants herself on the basis of the Constitution; and takes her stand in the ranks of AMERICAN DESTINY"(24)

Another exceedingly timely and worthwhile recommendation pertained to the State Library.

" The subject of a small appropriation annually to the State Library, sufficient to pay for one or more of the newspapers published in each county of this State to be regularly filed and bound, is worthy of your attention. In this way, we shall, for an inconsiderable sum, obtain a history of our State that will be of great advantage in after times. How highly would we prize full files of papers which have been published in our state since the year 1804 - since 1820? By this means you would preserve the religious, moral and political history of our

State, from year to year; and although you would have vast variety, much of but little value; yet it is from this alone, in after times, that our history is to be written. To this the historian must go, to do justice to the men and to the age of which he writes."

He also pointed out the wisdom of the policy of individual initiative in the matter of internal improvements by showing the progress that had been made.

" We are progressing rapidly with works of public improvement. In the past season, we have completed 400 miles of plank roads, which have cost from \$12 -- \$2,500 per mile. There are some 1200 miles additional surveyed and in progress. We have 212 miles of railroad in successful operation, of which one hundred and twenty four were completed the past year. There are more than 1,000 miles of railroad survey and in a state of progress.

" So long as we confine our operations and expenditures upon railroads and works of a similar character, to individual enterprise and capital, we have the surest guarantee that the investment will be made upon works of such a character as will be liberally for the cost of their construction.

" Sound policy dictates that no municipal department, however wealthy, should become associated with private companies for any purpose whatsoever. The appropriation of the revenues of cities and counties to such purposes, is wholly foreign to the object for which municipal corporations are organized, and for which the power of taxation is granted and will lead to local embarrassments and difficulties similar to those (25) in which the State became involved a few years ago".

(25) Esarey, A History of Indiana, II, Pp. 823 f.

(25) Indiana Senate Journal, Dec., 31, 1850.

Among the many interests which claimed the attention of Governor Wright, agriculture was his favorite. He was not a farmer, in fact he knew little about it, from a practical or scientific point of view; but he was intensely interested in the men that carried on the business. His immediate purpose seems to have been to dignify their work in their own minds.

The life of the farmer was hard at best, long hours, hard drudgery, and so often, little reward. Into this dull routine of tedious labor Governor Wright wished to inject some purpose, some vision, not only to alleviate its dullness but finally to increase the crops. (26) In his annual message, 1850, he definitely pointed out the primary importance of agriculture and outlined a positive scheme of legislation whereby the farmers would be benefitted. His recommendations were of this nature:

" The cultivation and improvement of the soil is that branch upon which the other branches of business rely for support, and the true source of all wealth. The system that adds to the stock of

by the General Assembly, February 14, 1851. He was

(26) Esarey, A History of Indiana, II, Pp.823 f.

(27) Indiana Senate Journal, Dec. 31, 1850.

(28) Daily State Journal, Jan. 9, 1851.

information in agriculture would be calculated to bring into existence in the several counties of the State, County Societies, that would be auxiliaries to the State Association.

" We are an agricultural people, our climate, soil and situation make us so; and the adoption of a system that will bring our people together annually at some point in the State, where we can present the most valuable specimen of science and art, especially the useful inventions of labor saving implements of husbandry; endorsing the character of the improvements; awarding premiums, either of money, diplomas or medals; exhibiting the stock, grains and productions of our State, would no doubt create a spirit of emulation in our people, and be well adapted to further the interest of our growing State.

" We are not aware of the amount annually expended by our people for stock, implements and productions of other states, that can be saved in a few years by the proper organization of such County and State Agricultural Societies.

" To Aid in this enterprise, it is suggested, that the tax collected upon travelling circuses, menageries and public shows, in this State, be paid to the County Treasuries, thence into the State Treasury, to be set apart expressly as a fund at the disposal of the State Board of Agriculture, to pay premiums at the annual fairs.

" It is believed that you can safely appropriate one thousand dollars to this purpose in anticipation of the receipts from this source the coming year." (27)

These suggestions were acted upon and a bill embodying the Governor's principal ideas was passed by the General Assembly, February 14, 1851. He was

(27) Indiana Senate Journal, Dec. 31, 1850.

Daily State Journal, Jan. 3, 1851.

had barely ten thousand inhabitants. My earliest
the first president of the State Agricultural
memories of Indianapolis cluster around a (28)st brick
Society and held the office several years.

In an editorial reviewing Governor Wright's
the rather misleading name of the Governor's Man-
message, the Journal said:

" It is a fair expose of the affairs of the
State, and shows that the writer has industriously
devoted himself to the discharge of his official
duties.

" The Message has a merit of frankness - it
contains no non-committalism."

In order to give a brief picture of Indianap-
olis in the fifties, a summary written in 1911 by
Governor Wright's eldest son, John C. Wright, will
be given:

" The Governor's mansion, a land mark which has
long since passed away, was situated at the north-
west corner of Illinois and Market Streets, and
Governor Wright was the second to live there, its
first occupant being Governor Whitcomb.
" When we first came here to live, the town

(28) See Appendix p.58, (A)

(29) Daily State Journal, Jan. 3, 1851.

had barely ten thousand inhabitants. My earliest memories of Indianapolis cluster around a modest brick building of eight or ten rooms which was known by the rather misleading name of the Governor's Mansion. The premises occupied a space of about 200 feet square on the identical site of the present Traction Terminal Building. A citizen, Dr. Saunders (son-in-law) of the Famous Dr. Richard Gatling, inventor of the Gatling gun, had built the house and it was one of the few brick residences in Indianapolis at that time. Lesky, who was a member of the bar. " There was a lively tempest over the sale of this property of the State because the price paid by the Legislature - \$10,000 - was regarded as almost scandalously high. " The Governor's mansion was the social rendezvous of the city. Receptions or levees were given every week, and they were largely attended by the people belonging to both political parties. There was nothing stiff or formal about the receptions. The refreshments served were plain and simple

him to the Methodist church, and I saw the Meth-
(30) Pulasky, White Oak Black, II, p. 112.
(31) Wm. W. W. and Indianapolis, I, 204.
(32) Indianapolis Star, November 5, 1911.

- tea and cake or something like that.

" During the seven years, we had visitors almost constantly. They came from all over the United States and some from foreign lands would make our house a stopping place on their tours of this city. I recall one of the ladies in waiting of Queen Victoria stayed about a week with us." (30)

To give a better picture of the times during Governor Wright's administration, and to illustrate his own personal traits a portion of the memoirs of Mme. Theresa Pulszky, who was a member of Kossuth's party when the latter toured the United States in behalf of Hungary, will be given. In describing Governor Wright she wrote:

" Governor Wright is a type of the Hoosiers and justly proud to be one of them. I asked him where his people had got this name. He told me that " Hoosa " is the Indian name for maize, the principal produce of the state. The Governor is plain, cordial and practical, like a farmer with a great religious tinge. Yesterday we went with him to the Methodist church, and I saw the Meth-

(30) Indianapolis Star, November 5, 1911.

odism is the form of Protestantism, that best suits the people of the West.

She further stated:

" Mrs. Wright has a strongly marked puritanical countenance. It seems as if a smile had hardly ever moved her lips." (31)

Another well known visitor in Indianapolis made this comment of Governor Wright:

" Governor Wright did not think it a degradation to carry a basket when I accompanied him to the market this morning, and his whole demeanor is that of a consistent Republican." (32)

During the governorship, Wright was a moderate Democrat, and held to the policy of compromise, although by 1850 he seems to have shifted somewhat from the Free Soil attitude that was apparent in his pre-election speeches made during 1849.

This change of attitude on the question of slavery should not be

attributed to an inconsistency on his part, but rather to a change of mind throughout

(31) Pulszky, White Red Black, II, Pp.11f.

(32) Dunn, Indiana and Indianans, I, 504.

the country in favor of popular sovereignty.

In 1850 the Journal carried the following article which gave his view of the situation.

" I would vote for any fair proposition to compromise the question, and if any such compromise is passed at this session, the men who vote against it will go down in Indiana. I am aware that many of my friends think differently; but I am firm in the opinion that any settlement will be sustained in Indiana that does not affirmatively establish slavery. If the South are expecting a compromise that in any part establishes slavery, they will be disappointed; but any compromise that leaves the question to be settled by the people of the territory, will in my opinion, be fully sustained even if it were to divide the present boundary of California, and admit her into the Union with her boundaries north of 36 30 ; leaving the people south of this line to come into the Union free or slave, as they determine."⁽³³⁾

With the view of improving feelings between

(33) Indiana State Journal, Apr. 6, 1850.

Governor Wright had a profound interest in the States on the great sectional question, Governor Wright invited the Whig leader, John J. Crittenden, one of Kentucky's most famous governors, to Indiana to take part in a Union meeting. The invitation was heartily welcomed and Governor Crittenden arrived in Indianapolis, May 28, 1850. The Journal in recording the incident said:

" At two o'clock on Wednesday afternoon a procession was formed in front of the Washington Hall and proceeded to the State House Square, where Governor Wright in very appropriate terms welcomed Governor Crittenden."⁽³⁴⁾

The governor of Kentucky and the Governor of Indiana stood with arms locked and hands entwined, Governor Wright solemnly declared that he " knew no North, no South, nothing but the common brotherhood of all working for the common good."⁽³⁵⁾

The press far and wide, alluded to this noble example of the two western governors of different party beliefs, as one which showed the general sentiments.

(34) Indiana State Journal, June 1, 1850.

(35) Beeler, Dale. "The Election of 52," Indiana Magazine of History, XI (1916), 302

Governor Wright had a profound interest in the development of education. In his annual address to the Assembly in 1851, he spoke of the amazing progress of Indiana University under the late Rev. Andrew Wylie. Reviewing the situation he stated:

" The other institutions of the State, under the charge of different denominations, are alike prosperous. No State in the Union of our population and age has as many flourishing male and female colleges, Medical and Law Schools, and other Seminaries of Learning. According to the 1850 census, we have eighty-three in number and 5,290 pupils in attendance." (36)

He was not overly optimistic about the school situation for he had thoroughly analyzed the condition and found that the public education of the masses had been neglected. Concerning this matter he added:

" The same census shows, that we have 75,017 over the age of twenty that cannot read or write.

" In our zeal to advance the cause of sound learning, we have neglected to throw our energy and means in the right direction. Whilst we have been building up Colleges and Academies, have we not forgotten and neglected the great schools of learning, Common, District and Union Schools?

"There is a diversity of sentiment on this subject, - yet it seems to me that your duty is a plain one. It is made your solemn duty, by the Constitution, adopted with such unanimity:

" To encourage, by all suitable means, moral, intellectual, scientific and agricultural improvement; and to provide by law, for a General System of Common Schools where intuition shall be without charge and equally free to all."

" It becomes your duty to husband this fund in such a manner, and so diffuse its benefits as to provide for the education of the youth of every year." Your officers of State have taken great pains to ascertain the condition of the School Fund of the State which can be properly devoted to the support of common schools. From the Circulars to the County Auditors, returns and other information received, the School Fund is believed to be as follows, to wit:

Estimated Value of County Seminaries and Seminary Funds	\$100,000.00
Congressional township Funds, reported and estimated	\$1,514,853.43
Surplus Revenue Fund	\$552,529.92
Bank Tax Fund on Loan from State Treasury.....	\$10,059.85
Bank Tax Fund on Hand in State Treasury	\$4,274.61
Bank Tax Fund distributed in Counties	\$42,634.58
Saline Fund on Loan	\$22,469.11
Saline Fund on Hand	\$1,744.87
Saline Fund Distributed to Counties .	\$37,056.07
Common School Fund in State Treasury from Bank Profits exclusive of interest	\$706,784.62
Sinking Fund on Mortgage to 11-4-1851	\$421,872.28
Estimated value of school lands unsold	\$250,000.00
Estimated Value of 1,225,000 acres of swamp land	\$1,000,000.00
Total	<u>\$4,664,279.36</u>

" It becomes your duty to husband this fund in such a manner, and so diffuse its benefits as to provide for the education of the youth of every county, township and district." (37)

In this message, he was more insistent on the need of the geological survey of the State and recommended liberal appropriation to the State Board of Agriculture.

With reference to the 13th Article of the Constitution of Indiana he said:

" Since the Constitution prohibits Negroes and Mulattoes from coming into or settling within the State, was adopted, it is your positive duty to pass efficient and prompt laws to carry out this provision of the Constitution. This measure, adopted with such unanimity, was called for, independent of other considerations by the policy pursued by some of our Sister States.

" In connection with this question, you are again earnestly invited to the subject of colonizing the blacks now among us..... The cause of colonization is advancing, and it is incumbent upon Indiana to extend to it the influence and contributions however limited the means at her disposal." (38)

Governor Wright had a deep devotion to the Union, and in his message, 1851 we see an evidence of his patriotism. " Indiana holds him an enemy to the well being of this Republic who pursues any course tending to widen the breach between the North and

(37) Indiana Senate Journal, Dec. 2, 1851.

(38) Ibid.

and the South. Minor questions sink into insignificance compared to the great paramount duty of every American citizen - the preservation of the Union Indiana desires to see the Compromise made under under the Constitution remain undisturbed."(39)

In this message he also related his trip to Cannelton, May 10, 1851, having been cordially invited by the citizens of that city to make an address there.

Industry in Indiana was ⁱⁿ an infant, if not embryonic state. In the course of his address in Cannelton, he encouragingly declared his adherence to the principle laid down by Thomas Jefferson - " We must place the manufacturer by the side of the agriculturist."

The message of 1851 contains the following statement concerning conditions in Cannelton.

" I paid a visit to the lower Ohio and spent a day in examination of the large Cotton Mill at Cannelton, in the County of Perry. This factory contains 10,800 spindles, and 370 looms, and is pronounced what to my unpracticed eye it seems to be, a most perfect establishment. The concern has been erected at a cost of near \$400,000 and employs near to 400 hands. It

(39) Indiana Senate Journal, Dec. 2, 1851.

(40) Indiana Senate Journal, December 2, 1851.

(41) Haarey, A History of Indiana, I p.550.

(42) Indiana State Journal, February 25, 1852.

is the first movement made in Indiana toward manufacturing on a large scale, and deserves the encouragement and good will of the entire State." (40)

The election of 1852 was the first under the new Constitution. For the third time in the State history a gubernatorial and presidential campaign had fallen on the same year. (41)

The Democratic State Convention met in the Masonic Hall, Indianapolis, February 24, 1852. There being a great many aspirants for the various offices their respective friends assembled in great number. It was a very boisterous assemblage, and there was so much heckling during the addresses that it was almost impossible for speeches to be made. Judge Smith of the Supreme Court was chosen president. On the motion of Robert Dale Owen, Joseph A Wright was nominated for re-election, by acclamation. (42)

Governor Wright made a fervent address climaxing it by declaring that he had rather fall with his political friends than rise with the aid of his political opponents.

(40) Indiana Senate Journal, December 2, 1851.

(41) Esarey, A History of Indiana, I p.550.

(42) Indiana State Journal, February 25, 1852.

The result of the election held, October 12, 1852. He had made enemies in his own party. For example when Mr. Dufour of Floyd County proposed a resolution endorsing the administration of Governor Wright, Jesse Bright objected and the resolution was withdrawn. (43) Definite reasons for his actions were not given, but it was suggested that the objection was of a personal nature. On the other hand he had gained friends in the Whig party by fearlessly opposing the free banks (46) and the liquor interests.

Heading the Democratic ticket were, Joseph A. Wright, for governor, and Ashbel P. Willard, for lieutenant governor. Nicholas McCarty and William Williams headed the Whig ticket.

Governor Wright entered the campaign early in April. He usually spoke on some phase of State finances, occasionally changing to the tariff and the sub-treasury system when he wished to speak on national issues. He claimed for the Democrats the credit for the redemption of the State from Whig indebtedness.* (44)

(43) Indiana Senate Journal, 1853, p. 52.

(44) Indiana State Journal, May 5, 1851.

(44) Beeler, "The Election of 52", Indiana Magazine of History, XII, (1916), 37.

The result of the election held, October 12, 1852 was:

Joseph A Wright	92,576	votes
Nicholas McCarty	73,641	"
Ashbel Willard	90,239	"
William Williams ;.....	75,094	" (45)

It was during this gubernatorial contest that Mrs. Wright, wife of the governor, died. Her death occurred May 21, 1852. Mrs. Wright was active in social reform and for many years had been president of the Widows and Orphans Society at Indianapolis. (46)

From his message of 1853, it was evident that Governor Wright was still faithful to the cause of common school education throughout the State. He said:

" We must have a general uniform and universal common school education. We must place the children of every class of society upon the same level, using the same books, having the same facilities for acquiring the first rudiments of thought, knowledge and information. We cannot preserve our free institutions short of a universal system of education.

" I also recommend that the proceeds of the late grant of congress be set aside for the endowment of a distinct professorship for the express purpose of qualifying male and female teachers to go (47) forth in the work of teaching in our common schools."

(45) Indiana Senate Journal, 1853, p. 52.
 (46) Madison Daily Courier, May 25, 1852.
 (47) Indiana Senate Journal, January 7, 1853.

interested
in The Governor in a clear cut fashion openly *which*
are springing up under the operation of the present
gave his reasons for his antipathy for free banks *not*
corrected, the people at large, sooner or later will
in the same message: *adoption of a summary remedy,*
and the whole system of banking by law will be swept

" The object of the law passed ~~that~~ the last session to authorize and regulate the business of general banking, was to furnish the people of the State a sound circulatory medium in sufficient quantity. The want of additional banking capital at various commercial points had been sensibly felt, and it was hoped that by throwing the business of banking open, under proper restrictions, to all who might choose to engage in it, increased facilities would be afforded to those engaged in commerce, and that the public interest would thereby be promoted. The experience of the past year has however, already shown that the restrictions provided by the law now in force, are insufficient to prevent the abuse of privileges therein granted.

" The character of our State abroad, and its financial prosperity at home, must depend greatly upon the soundness or unsoundness of the system of banking which is established under our laws.

" An unnatural expansion of the currency by the issue of enormous quantities of bank notes is always dangerous, and liable to result suddenly and unexpectedly in disastrous losses to the community; and this change must be greatly increased when the notes are put into circulation at points remote from the place of their redemption.

" If you must have a paper currency, it is the duty of those making the laws to regulate same, to require by every principle they can adopt, the circulation of that currency, as near as possible, where it is at all times convertible into ready money. A departure from this principle will inevitably lead to expansion of the currency, not called for by the legitimate business of any community.

" Those companies that are engaged in legitimate banking under the old or new system, are as much in-

[45] Indiana Senate Journal, Jan. 7, 1858.

[49] Ibid.

terested

in adopting some measures to check the abuses which are springing up under the operation of the present law, as any other persons. If these abuses are not corrected, the people at large, sooner or later will be provoked into the adoption of a summary remedy, and the whole system of banking by law will be swept away." (48)

Enumerating the advancements toward progress made by the Agricultural Society, Governor Wright pointed out:

"The Agricultural, Mechanical and Manufacturing interests of the State are in a condition of growing prosperity. Forty-five county agricultural societies have been established under the act of February 14, 1851, for the encouragement of agriculture; and in twenty of these, county fairs have been held in the course of the last year.

"The first State Fair was held at Indianapolis, October 1852. There was shown at that time a very interesting and large exhibition of fine stock, agricultural products, domestic manufactures, farming implements and mechanical skill. It was estimated that not less than 30,000 persons, many of whom were from out of town were in attendance." (49)

On the question of temperance, Governor Wright lost many Democratic friends, yet he stood out boldly for his convictions. The message of 1853 contains this passage:

"Though the existence of a necessity for the enactment of some law regulating the vending of intoxicating liquors may be conceded to exist, the details of that law will prove embarrassing subjects

(48) Indiana Senate Journal, Jan. 7, 1853.

(49) Ibid.

of legislation. It will be well to remember at the outset, that extreme measures, however praiseworthy the motives dictating them are not apt to realize the anticipations of their advocates. The tastes, habits, and prejudices of the people, are, to some extent to be consulted. If they are disregarded, the law, especially if of a sumptuary character will become in truth, "a dead letter." Legislation should progress, it is true, but cautiously; so that the law will command the respect of the people, and at the same time keep pace with sound public opinion. It is conceded that more good is to be anticipated from the certainty of the enforcement, than the severity of the laws.

" Those we already have in restraint of intemperance, it is to be feared, are not rigidly enforced; and the opinion is entertained by many, that the error in the past has been more in the administration, than in the laws themselves. The vice to say the least is not on the decline. Its haggard victims meet us everywhere.

"It is respectfully suggested that drunkenness be made an offense punishable by law, a disqualification for the making of contracts, or the management of property. By that means the vice might be rendered more odious and the examples set, by those addicted to it, less pernicious to the community, while the drunkards would be prevented from dissipating his property and leaving his family destitute - thereby defeating the designs of the cunning and the cruel."(50)

There is nothing of particular note in his inaugural address of 1853. Wright stated that there was a tendency of the times toward the extension of the powers of the general government at the expense of those of the State governments. He said in part:

(50) Indiana Senate Journal, Jan. 7, 1853.

" The great fault is that we have not enough of State Pride, and State Ambition; and that we do not fully appreciate our position as members of a confederated union of sovereign States, rather than as the people of a single consolidated Union. We should look more to the immediate government at home for advantages to be derived from our social compact, and less to the powers of the General Government, which were delegated chiefly to preserve unity in our intercourse with foreign nations." (51)

That he was greatly interested in agriculture and farmers is evidenced by the time and energy which he devoted to this field of endeavor. He was ever ready to travel and to make talks in the interests of the farmer. In 1855 he travelled to Elmira, N.Y., to deliver an address before the State Agricultural Society of New York.

Commenting on his address, the following stories from Eastern newspapers appeared in the Indianapolis Daily Journal:

" Intending at first only to make an extract from this production, we have, on careful examination concluded to present it entire to our readers. It was delivered at the State Society, on the 5th of October, by invitation. Taken in the whole, this ad-

(51) Indiana Senate Journal, Jan. 10, 1853.

(52) Indiana Governor's Messages, I, p. 483.

The later period of the Governorship was spent

(53) Indianapolis Daily Sentinel, Nov. 26, 1855.

in more or less of a turmoil because of Wright's dress is one of the most complete summaries of bitter but futile opposition to free banks. His the duties, responsibilities, and, we may add, reasons for this opposition have been stated early the social importance of the farmer and his profession, in its social, commercial and political aspect, to be found, or, in fact, in the more ephemeral productions of orators and journalist, and even an approximation to it is more rarely to be found in any other country than the U.S..

.....

" Governor Wright is one of the most distinguished statesmen and orators of the West. He has been, we may say identified with the Democratic party in that State for something like, a quarter of a century, and certainly enjoys the popular confidence in a degree that unmistakably indicates ability and intrinsic soundness of character.

" His reputation as a speaker is very high throughout the Western States, and his style reminds us much of Henry Clay, - fluent, prompt and earnest and showing a remarkable off hand finish, for which the great Kentucky orator was so highly celebrated."

Spirit of '76, Philadelphia. (52)

(53) Indiana Governor's Messages. I, p 483.

The later period of the Governorship was spent

(52) Indianapolis Daily Sentinel, Nov.26, 1855.

in more or less of a turmoil because of Wright's bitter but futile opposition to free banks. His reasons for this opposition have been stated earlier.

During these years Wright seems to have definitely aligned himself with the Douglas division of the Democracy and he became a staunch supporter of the doctrine of "squatter sovereignty". Evidence of his sympathy with this creed is found in a speech before the General Assembly in 1855. He said:

"Whatever views may be entertained by others, it is my deliberate opinion that, at this day, the people of no state are more national in their political sympathies than are the citizens of Indiana. Enjoying the privileges of making our own laws, in our own way, on all subjects not prohibited by the Constitution of the United States, we acknowledge the existence of a similar right in the people of every other State and territory in the Union. I know no other principle but this, upon which we can stand with safety and honor. It is the chief corner stone on which under God, the security and perpetuity of the Union rests."(53)

By the close of Governor Wright's second term, the Democracy of Indiana was divided. One section - the moderates was led by Wright and the other - the ultras - was led by Jesse D. Bright. The situation

(53) Indiana Governor's Messages. I, p 483.

Chapter IV

His Civil War Career

became strained, having two powerful antagonists within the same party. The state of affairs was relieved however, when Wright was induced to accept an appointment from President Buchanan, as minister to Prussia.

He became an intimate friend of the famous Baron Alexander Von Humboldt. He returned from Europe and found the country in a great Civil War, and he returned with a strong determination to stand by the Union Cause.

Commenting on his return, The Journal carried the following article: "The highest notion of State obligation is to his National Government. It is this Governor Wright returned to this country August 1861. He made a strong and earnest Union speech at a reception given him by the city authorities of New York. His ability, earnestness, singleness of purpose and devoted patriotism will do more than any other influence to crush treason of such men as John G. Davis, and the Central clique, who are now following the lead of Peace D. Bright.

"In regard to the attitude of the Prussian government, where he had served as minister he said:

"The heart in every pulsation throbbeth in unison with the cause of government here."

"Before his departure, he received 500 letters from gentlemen desiring to come to the United States and enlist in our cause. He concluded his speech:

"Let the Government be sustained, let the laws be supreme. Pray God, let it be a permanent peace, established upon principle - never let it be at the sacrifice of a single particle of prin-

(18) 1861, September 9, 1861.

Chapter IV

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Mr. Wright returned to this country August 1861, after having served creditably for four years as minister to the court of Prussia, where he became an intimate friend of the famous Baron Alexander Von Humbolt. He returned from Europe and found the country in a great Civil War, and he returned with a strong determination to stand by the Union Cause.

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(54)
ciple.'"
it will then be time enough to enquire as to who
and who shall have the country and a government for our
greeted at a public reception in his honor, Sep-
tember 7, 1861. (55)
At the reception Governor
Oliver P. Morton and Mayor Maxwell were present; C
Col. Dumont presided. Wright in response to the
welcome given him made a masterful address. His
experience abroad had increased his respect and
devotion for the National Government. He said:

" It seems that one of the great errors of
the present day is a mistaken notion of State
Rights. The first and highest obligation of the
citizen is to his National Government. It is this
which gives him the name - an American citizen-
which protects him abroad.....
Much as I love the people of Indiana- whenever
you shall set at naught the principles upon which
our government is founded, deny the right of Unit-
ed States' troops to pass through the State, and
shall claim to exercise any of the powers special-
ly delegated to the General Government, then I
shall obey my National and not my State govern-
ment.

" In this contest for the the supremacy of
the of the law, I ignore all party issues and
party platforms. They are not worth the paper on
which they are written in comparison with the Con-
stitution of the Union, and the supremacy of law
and order. Take for your motto the language of the
dying Douglas:

' When we shall have rescued the government
and country from its perils and see its flag float-

(54) Indianapolis Daily Journal, Aug. 10, 1861.

(55) Ibid., September 9, 1861.

ing, in triumph over every inch of American soil, it will then be time enough to enquire as to who and what has brought these troubles upon us. When we shall have a country and a government for our children to live in peace and happiness, it shall be time for each one of us to return to our party banners according to our convictions of right and duty. Let him be marked as no true patriot who will not abandon all such issues in times like this.'"

For the next several months, he spent his time making spirited talks throughout the State in behalf of the Union. March 3, 1862, after Senator Jesse D. Bright had been expelled from the United States Senate for treasonable correspondence with Jefferson Davis, Governor Morton appointed Wright to fill the vacancy, and he served until David Turpie was elected by the legislature in 1863.

That Wright was a loyal supporter of the Lincoln administration is evidenced from the following extract taken from a speech made from the floor of the Senate:

"I am willing to trust these affairs to the President, and when necessary to aid in the passage of a resolution calling on him to report to this body the facts, if he does not deem such a course inconsistent with the public interest. The President is

(56) see Appendix, p.59 (B)

(57) Biographical Directory of The American Congress, p. 268.

(58) See Appendix p.58, (C)

(59) Daily Journal, August 7, 1862.

the representative of the Unity, the power and strength of this Republic.

" The President is our pilot and at the helm of our vessel. He is the head of our country; and now when the life of the nation is at stake, I can trust him in the execution of its laws." (58)

Lincoln in turn, appreciated the unselfish loyalty of Wright and believed him to be the strongest Union power in Indiana. (59)

During the summer of 62, Wright toured throughout Indiana and Illinois making Union talks. Quoting from one of these talks made at the Governors Circle, August 2, 1862, he said:

" Let me remind you, as an humble citizen of the State of Indiana that the Government is looking to you for help in its hour of darkness and distress. May you forget the past and be united for the peace of the Union, of your State and Country demand that you stand up as one man for the laws and Constitution." (60)

During this same address he made some allusions to the unpatriotic attitude of Jesse Bright in the following words:

" if there is any man upon God's earth for whom I have not the least particle of respect, it is a certain public man in Indiana, who for the last 15 months, during which the country has been

(51) Indianapolis Daily Journal, Sept. 4, 1862.

(58) Daily Journal December 18, 1862.

(59) See Appendix p. 58, (C)

(60) Daily Journal, August 7, 1862.

involved in war, has had no opinion whatever upon the subject. He wants to see how the thing is going to end first, and then, if the country goes to the devil - "Ha, ha! I told you so", if it is saved - "I am the best fellow in the lot."

To illustrate the esteem with which he was held throughout the country for his patriotic devotion to the Union cause two press reports will be given.

"The philosophy of Senator Wright is that in the vigorous prosecution of the war we must conquer party prejudices. His whole-hearted hostility to traitors and to the rebellion is what the government most needs in this trying hour." (61)
Tioga Banner (Pennsylvania)

Shortly before the expiration of his term in the "There is no purer patriot than Governor Wright. If he forgot his duty as a Democrat, he was true to his country. In the Senate as well as at home, his speeches have been put forth to sustain the president in his work of suppressing rebellion." (62)
St. Louis Democrat.

Wright seems to have anticipated the policy executed by Sherman in his march through Georgia. That is to say, Wright believed that the South should be made to know the actual evils of civil war. In his speech in the Senate, January 6, 1863,

(61) Indianapolis Daily Journal, Sept. 4, 1862.

(62) Ibid., January 20, 1863.

(63) Congressional Globe, January 6, 1863.

(64) Ibid., January 19, 1863.

he said: (65)

" I want to strike the heart of the rebellion. I want to get around its throat; and when you do that and not before will you see daylight. I want to see five hundred thousand bristling bayonets directed against the heart of the rebellion. Then I want to see another thing done in the South; I want to see no disloyal man left behind our armies as they advance, gentlemen may talk about conciliation; they may talk about this policy and the other but you must come to it sooner or later. This may be a war of extermination; but this country has to be saved, cost what it may. If the army had cut off the railroads in the South when it had possession of them; if the fire, and the sword and the fagot, if necessary, had been used to take the means of the rebels out of their possessions, you would have been nearer peace today than you are." (63)

Shortly before the expiration of his term in the Senate, Wright made the following impassioned appeal:

" I would say, let us bury the past, let us forget all party affiliations, all party names and distinctions, and then, upon the altar of our country, swear by the eternal God this Government shall be one; it cannot be two; it cannot be three; it cannot be four; it must be one, or it is nothing." (64)

During the summer of 1863, President Lincoln appointed Wright to represent the United States at the Exposition held in Hamburg. Governor Wright

(63) Congressional Globe, January 6, 1863.

(64) Ibid., January 19, 1863.

sent back the following report concerning the Ex-
position: (65)

Sentinel, the chief Democratic organ, had a hos-

Hamburg July 15, '63.

the attitude towards Wright.
Second anniversary of the Great Exhibition.
the largest show of stock of modern times; 4,000
entries; Campbell of Vermont takes three prem-
iums on sheep. McCormick thrashes all the nations
and walks off with the gold medal. May our glorious
army be as successful in thrashing the rebels as
Campbell and McCormick and other Americans are in
competition here assembled. I regret that our people
have taken so little interest in this exhibition.
Never was there such an opportunity for American
skill and industry. We have not a thousand articles
on exhibition and but one stock.

Joseph A. Wright,
U.S. Commissioner. (66)

Governor Wright and President Lincoln remain-
ed sincere friends until the latter's death. Com-
menting on the death of Lincoln, Wright said that
he had first met the President in September 1861, and
that he had attentively watched his career ever since.
He further stated that Lincoln was one of the most
remarkable men that ever lived - remarkable for his
patience, calm deliberations and almost intuitive
knowledge of men and things. (67)

(65) Indianapolis Daily Journal, July 29, '63.

(66) See Appendix, p.61 (D).

(67) Indianapolis Daily Journal, April 16, '65.

Chapter V

Throughout this period The Indianapolis Sentinel, the chief Democratic organ, had a hostile attitude towards Wright.

Governor Wright was a personal friend of Andrew Johnson. The following incident relative to their friendship is supplied by the Governor's son, John C. Wright, in an article appearing February 1, 1926, in the Indianapolis Star.

" In 1864, Mr. Johnson then running for vice-president on the ticket with Lincoln, came to Indianapolis and was my guest at my house which was at the southeast corner of Meridian and New York Sts., on what is now the northwest corner of the Federal Building grounds. My father who was then a widower was living with me. In the presence of my father and my self, Mr. Johnson said that he was under more obligation to my father more than any other man, for bringing him forward for the vice-presidency."

" Having joined as usual with his wife in morning worship on Saturday, he remarked, as he called his servant to dress him, that he had not felt so well for a week, and would spend a part of the day on the balcony. Then suddenly exclaiming,

Chapter V

His Final Years

President Johnson appointed Wright, Minister to Prussia, where he was received by the King at the Court Sept. 3, 1865. This was his second term in Prussia and he served with distinction until his death, May 11, 1867.

The following details concerning the illness and death of Governor Wright were supplied by the Berlin correspondent of the Indianapolis Journal:

"Last August Mr. Wright visited the baths of Hombourg and Wiesbaden, hoping relief from an undefinable ailment. He presided with wonted dignity, but with not to be concealed weariness at the Thanksgiving dinner in November, but by New Years Day, he had become so feeble that the honors of his table were done by his estimable lady alone. The physician now admitted that dropsy was ensuing

" Having joined as usual with his wife in morning worship on Saturday, he remarked, as he called his servant to dress him, that he had not felt so well for a week, and would spend a part of the day on the balcony. Then suddenly exclaiming,

' It is very warm here; open the window, dear, I am faint ' he dropped into the arms darted forward to break his fall. The purple blackness which had suffused his face gave way to habitual pallor. The water had broken in upon his heart.

" Master Albert and Miss Hettie, the two youngest children were at school, beyond the reach of telegraph, but were expected back on Sunday evening at 8 o'clock. Ten o'clock came, but not the expected children; and Mr. John C. Wright, who had been sitting with his watch in his hand, consented to the closing of the coffin. Before it was completed the little ones came and were able to take that last look we prize so dearly. His death occurred May 11, 1867. (Saturday)

" Mr. Wright's body was returned to the United States in a double metal casket and from deference to the superstitions of the mariners, labelled as rare Statuary.

"The people of Indiana will be disappointed when they learn that the remains of the Governor are to be buried in Greenwood cemetery, New York, in-

stead of the boundaries of his State. These arrangements were made by the special request of Mrs. Wright whose home was in New York. (68)

" While in Berlin an intimate attachment existed between Mr. Wright and Count Bismarck. Governor Wright having sustain this friendly relation with Count Bismarck justifies us in attributing to it his partial success in reference to the military question. a like zeal and interest for (69)

"It was well known that Prussia claims and exercises the right of impressing into her armies every man born within her territory. Hence it follows that every Prussian who has emigrated to America and who has been adopted as a citizen of the United States is at once seized and put into the Prussian Army whenever he returns, regardless of all pass ports or naturalization papers. It was this arbitrary and unjust law that Minister Wright combatted, claiming that a citizen of the United States adopted as well as native should be protected from impressment into military service

(68) Accurate information concerning the later marriage of Gov. Wright could not be ascertained.

APPENDIX

(A)

of any foreign nation whatsoever.

" Thus Governor Wright, during his ministry convinced the cabinet at Berlin of the injustice as well as the unlawfulness of such a principle, and the fruits of his labors for the welfare of our German adopted citizens will doubtlessly be reaped by his successor at the Court of Prussia, if he but manifest a like zeal and interest for the well being of his countrymen." (69)

According to Woollen, Governor Wright was tall and raw-boned. He had a large head and an unusually high forehead. His hair was light and thin upon his head, his eyes blue and kind. He was an effective speaker, mainly on account of his earnestness and simplicity. (70)

He was sincere/ in purpose and interested in bringing about the best conditions for his fellow man. He had a profound respect for law. His life was one of unselfish service.

(69) Indianapolis Daily Journal, June 1, 1867.

(70) Woollen, Historical Sketches of Early Indiana, p. 103.

APPENDIX

(A)

The First Indiana State Fair Washington, March 1, '61.

Indiana's first fair was held in Indianapolis

October 19-23, 1852, on the old military reservation,

west of West St., now known as Military Park. It was

largely through the efforts and influence of Joseph

A. Wright that the institution was brought into be-

ing.

The original intention, out of deference to the other leading towns of the State, was to shift the fair

from place to place, giving Indianapolis every third

year. In accordance with this idea Lafayette had it in

1853, and Madison in 1854, but this plan proved finan-

cially disastrous, and it was finally decided to hold

it permanently in Indianapolis.

(Indiana Magazine of History, III, pp 144f.)

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

(B)

Washington, March 1, '61.

(C)

My Dear Sir:

Washington City
July 25, 1862

Allow me to introduce to your acquaintance my friend, Thomas B. Lincoln, of Texas. He visits your capital, mainly to dispose of what he regards a great improvement in fire-arms. I recommend him to your favorable consideration as a gentleman of the first respectability, and reliable in every respect.

Very truly yours,

Jesse D. Bright.

To his Excellency Jefferson Davis, Smith or to my President of the Confederation of States.

(Indianapolis Journal, August 20, 1861.)

friend to show that there will be no danger of an influx of that population among us. Enclosed is a scrip showing the language of the act -- The colonization is to be done with the rebels money..... The request by Wright for immediate action will have a great influence, as the President believes him the most potent man in the State at this time.....

Truly yours,
J.P. Usher.

(Usher, J.P. Washington City, to Thompson, July

APPENDIX

(C)

Washington City
July 25, 1862.

R.W. Thompson, Esq.

Dear Sir: I did not leave Indianapolis till Tuesday evening and arrived here Thursday morning. - I have just returned from seeing the president, and he says he has not had time to examine the Chiriqui matter. I think you had better come here as soon as you can and that you had better see Governor Wright and get him to write a note to Mr. Smith or to myself urging the making an immediate arrangement for colonization of the blacks as that will enable our friend to show that there will be no danger of an influx of that population among us. Enclosed is a scrip showing the language of the act -- The colonization is to be done with the rebels money..... The request by Wright for immediate action will have a great influence, as the President believes him the most potent man in the State at this time.....

Truly yours,
J.P. Usher.

(Usher, J.P. Washington City, to Thompson, July

APPENDIX

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