

## Preface (11-01-11)

In her book on American secondary education published in 2010, authoress Diane Ravitch said:

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**History should be exciting to young people as anything on television, but their textbooks turn it into a listless parade of names, themes, wars, and nations. Among all the subjects tested by the federal government, U. S. history is the one in which American students register the worst performance, even though almost all students are required to take it. To restore excitement and vitality to the subject, teachers and curriculum designers must raise questions, provoke debates, explore controversies, and encourage the use of primary documents, narratives written by master historians, biographies, documentaries, and other visual records of important events and personalities**

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Ravitch, Diane, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System—How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*, Basic Books, A Member of Persues Book Group, New York, New York, 2010, p. 235.

I suspect that her solution for making history interesting, exciting, and accurate for young people is the same solution for making it that way for mature readers. Therefore, this biography on the life of one person who lived two hundred years ago contains a lot of original documents, narratives written by master historians, and visuals. Authors today take selected bits and pieces of history to fit their particular historical agendas and end up writing stories packed with half-truths.

For instance, an exhibit in an African-American heritage museum tells the story of a white man in Indiana almost 200 years ago who sued to recover possession of his former female slave. He won in the local court and then lost in the Indiana Supreme Court. The exhibit noted that "In 1821 the Indiana Supreme Court settled the case, State vs. General Washington Johnston, unanimously freeing Mary Bateman Clark from indentured servitude," but failed to mention several things. First, the white man had some years earlier issued under his name as chairman of a special committee in the Indiana Territorial House of

Representatives a famous anti-slavery report which some say was the greatest document to ever emanate from an Indiana legislative body. Second, while the report was issued under his name, it was actually written by a third party. And third, the Supreme Court decided the case on a legal principle unrelated to any anti-slavery constitutional provision or issue, or any slavery law. It seems that the former female slave had voluntarily indentured herself to the man as a servant and not as a slave, before Indiana became a state when such contracts were supposedly lawful. The Supreme Court then ruled that contracts for personal services regardless of the race of the employee were unenforceable in Indiana, as they are today. The white man could have sued for money damages under the contract for voluntary servitude but there is no evidence he did. And to add a fourth dimension to the story, the white man was the brother-in-law of the subject of this biography, Davis Floyd, who probably influenced the man in the issuance of his anti-slavery report. The exhibit presented half-truths painting General Washington Johnston in a bad light.

The reader of this biography can read the Supreme Court case, the Indiana Constitution, the anti-slavery document, and an obscure, but credible, reference in a letter concerning the document's true authorship, and determine the accuracy of the museum exhibit.

Sometime ago, I spoke with an official with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at the Old State Capitol building in Corydon, Indiana and when I asked her about Davis Floyd, she said "that scoundrel." Floyd was never a scoundrel, but by stating that I fall into the trap into which the DNR official and many authors of history have plunged headfirst. This biography has been written so that the reader can determine whether Floyd was or was not a scoundrel.

The original documents, the narratives written by master historians, and visuals included in this biography were carefully selected by the author and are of critical importance to the storyline. To paraphrase or interpret them, would do an injustice to the entanglements which Floyd encountered, sometimes caused by his conduct and other times by his friends, co-workers, and/or associates.

In 1998 the author read two books that impacted the development of this biography. The first was Stephen Ambrose's book, *Undaunted Courage* written in 1996, and the second was William Floyd Tuley's book, *The Tuley Family Memoirs*, written in 1906. I learned from Ambrose's book that the nucleus of Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery came together at the Falls of the Ohio between Clarksville, Indiana Territory and Louisville, Kentucky in the fall of 1803 and that when Meriwether Lewis and William Clark shook hands on the front porch of the cabin-home of Gen. George Rogers Clark, the conqueror of the Northwest Territory, overlooking the Falls, the Lewis and Clark Expedition began. (See page 117). The other book was a locally published book written by my great uncle. My sister had found the book stored in our step-mother's attic where such books are normally found. While it focused on the Tuley family, there was a section at the back of the book on the Virginia-Kentucky branch of the Floyd family. (See pages 64-73). The Tuley book started me on an even greater learning experience. Here I learned that the county of my birth and residence at different times of my life, Floyd County, Indiana was named for Davis Floyd. As the reader will soon learn the names of many other Floyds have been suggested often as the county's namesake.

I also learned that Davis Floyd's younger brother was Sgt. Charles Floyd and that their blood first cousin was Sgt. Nathaniel Pryor, two of the four sergeants on the famous Lewis and Clark Expedition. Davis was probably present when his brother and their cousin departed Clarksville on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1803 on the first

leg of their incredible journey. Sgt. Floyd would never get to meet Sacagawea on the trail and Davis would never see his brother again.

When the author decided to write this biography he assumed that it would have to be a historical novel since there would not be sufficient, validated facts to support Floyd's life story. That turned out to be a gross misassumption.

There are parts of Floyd's story where he appears to be a scoundrel. But there are other parts where he performed exceedingly well. He was never the governor, the general, the delegate or representative to the U. S. Congress, Supreme Court judge, or the top man. Some people say he could have been. His life operated in a different realm. He was a family man and had multiple interests which may have limited specific accomplishments. He tended to be reckless but what he did, he did well. He almost got himself hung for treason in the Mississippi Territory in 1807. He was later convicted of a lesser crime in connection with his involvement with Aaron Burr.

Some scholars might question the value of a biography on the life of a single person of whom nobody in modern times ever heard. That is a valid question. Many prominent people on the scene in the early days of the Indiana Territory and then the State of Indiana had moments of glory and fame and then disappeared. The ninth U. S. President William Henry Harrison who served as governor of the Territory from 1800 until 1813 and led the American forces in the Indiana Battle at Tippecanoe in 1811, eventually lost favor in Indiana and left, never to return. His strongest supporter, Benjamin Parke, secured his position in Indiana by obtaining a life-time appointment as a federal judge. Otherwise, his tenure may have been short-lived. Other men rose to passing fame and disappeared in the annals of history. Floyd was not one of these men.

Floyd's documented contributions spanned the whole life of the Territory from 1800 until 1816, when Indiana graduated to statehood under the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. They continued for almost seven more years thereafter. In 1823 during the throes of the first depression sustained by the fledgling nation, Floyd and his family moved to St. Augustine in the East Florida Territory.

Floyd was neither gentry nor intelligentsia. But he was a citizen, active in mind and body, who played pivotal roles in the Territories of Indiana and East Florida and in the State of Indiana.

Before reading this biography, the reader should turn to Appendix I and read the Northwest Ordinance of 1779. This document was the governing instrument of the Northwest Territory and the Indiana Territory when it was organized. It provided for three phases of government. During the first phase which lasted from 1800 until 1805 the Indiana Territory was governed by a governor and two judges. They acted collectively as the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. In 1805 by a popular vote of male landowners, an elected House of Representatives was instituted. It met for the first time in Vincennes in the summer of 1805. An appointed upper house called the Legislative Council was also created and met at the same time. This was the beginning of representative democracy in the Territory. The three branches of government then became separate and supposedly independent although Gov. Harrison, as will be seen, continued to run things in an autocratic fashion. As will be seen the Indiana Territory was unique compared with other territories in the Northwest Territory in the implementation of these democratic processes.

The defining issue in the Indiana Territory was the battle over slavery. The Northwest Ordinance expressly provided that slavery and involuntary servitude were outlawed. That meant if some group wanted to change this provision they needed to go to the U. S. Congress to get it repealed or suspended. Beginning

in 1802 numerous attempts were made by Gov. Harrison and his cronies to suspend the provision for ten years. Two times Congressional Committees voted against suspension and three times they voted in favor of suspension. There was a third Congressional Committee recommendation which ignored the slavery issue but the net result of the action by the U. S. Congress on the recommendation was a vote against slavery in the Indiana Territory. Floyd played a key role in these battles.

In 1811 the men who fought each other so hard over slavery joined together in a different kind of battle and won a victory over the Shawnee Indians at the Battle of Tippecanoe, a battle which was defined as a bloody victory for the Americans and a bloody defeat for the Indians. A dispute continues today over who started the hostilities and was the battle necessary? The reader can judge for himself from four eye-witness accounts of the battle and a series of written observations made before, during, and after the battle. There are several first-hand accounts of Floyd's participation in the battle and one can judge his bravery.

In 1816 some of the men who fought against each other over the slavery battle and then on the same side in the Battle of Tippecanoe, came together for a third time to create Indiana's first Constitution at Corydon, Indiana. Slavery was not an issue at this gathering. Gov. Harrison was no where to be found in Indiana but Floyd and other anti-slavery men were and they got their way.

Indiana grew in population between 1815 and 1820 from just over 60,000 to more than 140,000 people. These were boom times in the brand new state. Floyd took full advantage of every opportunity that came his way. He opened a mercantile store, he bought land, he became a bank director, he owned a brick kiln and tinkered with the production of gun powder, and he built a stately home for himself and his family within sight of the State Capitol building in Corydon. Floyd had arrived at a position of affluence but just as he was settling in, the

Panic of 1819 and its subsequent depression occurred. This was America's and Floyd's first encounter with a nation-wide financial crisis which hit Indiana particularly hard.

In 1817 Floyd was appointed president judge of the Second Judicial Circuit which covered the central part of the State from the Ohio River northward. Floyd and his entourage, which included the lawyers who practiced in the circuit's courts of the Second Judicial Circuit, traveled by horseback from county seat to county seat. These men were hard drinkers. In 1819 Floyd County was created out of parts of Clark and Harrison Counties, and Floyd was the first judge to conduct court in the county named for him. His first murder trial at New Albany, the county seat of Floyd County, was conducted in 1821. The defendant was John Dahmen, a German immigrant who fought with Napoleon in his military advances on Moscow in 1812 and against him at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. In his early service he served under Napoleon's brother-in-law, Gen. Joachim Murat, who befriended him even as an enlisted man. Coincidentally, Floyd would practice law later in the Florida Territory with Achille Murat, the general's son and Napoleon's blood nephew. Dahmen fell in love with a female co-passenger on the ship that brought them to America and they eventually married and settled in Kentucky. Dahmen became restless and he and his family moved to a location on the Ohio River below New Albany. He befriended a German baker in New Albany whom he had met on the ship to America. The mutilated, dead body of the baker turned up in the river and Dahmen came under suspicion for murder. *Record Book A* of the Floyd Circuit Court documents the proceedings of the trial but the discovery of a rare book published in Jeffersonville, Indiana in the year of the trial, documents the life and times of John Dahmen, his trial, and a psychoanalysis of Dahmen by one of his lawyers. The reader can judge for himself whether Dahmen was a psychopath or a victim of a ruthless judge and jury. Dahmen left a wife and two children. The reader can find out what happened to them. The author recently watched a 1975 BBC miniseries entitled

*Poldark*. It is a fictional story about an American Revolutionary War soldier who fought for the British and then returned to his home in the Cornwall Peninsula in Southwestern England. He eventually was charged falsely with several crimes involving the pilfering of a shipwrecked boat near his home. His storybook transgressions eventually resulted in a trial held in 1790 in a rural area of England similar to New Albany, Indiana in 1821. The essential components of the indictment in the Poldark trial were very similar to those components in Dahmen's indictment. The entire 45 minute episode, numbered Part 10, is consumed with Poldark's trial. In the author's opinion the interpretation of the trial is extremely accurate and would give those interested in the conduct of the judges, lawyers, litigants, jurors, and spectators, in Dahmen's Indiana trial, an almost exact visual interpretation thereof. Author Ravitch, who is quoted at the beginning of this preface, would approve of this visual as an effective means of teaching the proceedings in the Dahmen trial. A trial should be taught that way. And such a trial would lead students into a multitude of constitutional issues, and especially the English common law that was adopted in young America, and which is still in use today. Modern justice was available to Dahmen in the brand new state. He was allowed to have six immigrants on his twelve-man petit jury since he was one himself.

I have gotten ahead of part of Floyd's story. In 1801 Floyd was appointed the Register of Deeds in Clark County, then the next year as Sheriff for a four-year term, and in 1803 a commissioned pilot at the Falls of the Ohio. In 1801 he became a captain in the Indiana militia and commanded a company of dragoons; later he was promoted to the rank of major. In 1805 he was elected as Clark County's sole representative to the Territory's first House of Representatives. In that year he met a man who would exert considerable influence over his life. The name of that man was Aaron Burr.

Burr left the Vice-Presidency of the United States in the spring of 1805 and set his sights on the Ohio River Valley. In Jeffersonville he met Floyd and used Floyd's connections in the legislature to obtain a law authorizing the building of a canal on the Indiana side of the Falls of the Ohio. In 1806 Burr recruited Floyd in a scheme involving the infamous Gen. James Wilkinson, which started out as one thing, transformed to another thing, and then ended up as still a third thing. Floyd joined Burr and a group of men who never numbered more than one hundred whose goal was to separate the lands west of the Alleghany Mountains from the United States, or to seize Spanish lands in Texas, or to establish a colony on lands west of the Mississippi River known as the Bastrop Colony. As a result of this alliance, Floyd ended up being involved in federal court proceedings in Frankfort, Kentucky, the town of Washington in the Mississippi Territory, Richmond, Virginia, and the town of Jeffersonville in the Indiana Territory. In the spring of 1807 Floyd became the only man who was convicted of a crime in the so-called Aaron Burr Conspiracy. A few days after his conviction in Jeffersonville he was elected Clerk of the Territorial House of Representatives in Vincennes. History now shows that Gen. Wilkinson should have convicted of treason. He, neither Burr nor Floyd, was the real culprit.

Floyd's stance on the slavery issue and his involvement with Aaron Burr did not bode well for him. In 1808 at the hands of Gov. Harrison, he lost his militia commission, his commission as a Falls of the Ohio pilot, and his clerkship. His beloved wife died that year leaving him with four children to raise. He soon remarried but went into anonymity as to his activities. He appeared again in 1811 in the Battle of Tippecanoe.

While Floyd had been beaten down by Gov. Harrison, he picked up the pieces of his life and moved forward. In 1813 he and his family moved to Corydon and he established his law practice there. He served as private secretary for the new acting governor of the Indiana Territory, Thomas Posey, who replaced Gov.

Harrison. Next, he was appointed Territorial Auditor where he served one year and then he was appointed Territorial Treasurer where he served two years. In the meantime he served as Prosecuting Attorney in several outlying counties. In 1816 he was elected as one of Harrison County's representatives to the first Constitutional Convention and in 1817 he became one of the new State's three Circuit Judges. In between he was a candidate for Lieutenant Governor.

The average settler and his family in Indiana were not particularly affected by the 1819 panic and the resulting depression. They had bought their 160 acre homestead for \$40.00 down and the balance in installments when they had the money. They built their own cabins, raised their own crops, hunted or trapped for their meats and furs, and made their own clothes. They were self-sufficient although death was constantly at their cabin's doorstep or elsewhere. The only thing they lost in the depression was any opportunity to sell their surplus crops, meats, and pelts which meant they could not buy luxuries from New Orleans and elsewhere.

Floyd was not as lucky. He lost everything including his stately home. He retained his judgeship but there were probably times the State could not pay him his \$700.00 annual salary. And in 1822 he ran for the U. S. House of Representatives and lost. Floyd had run out of options in the young state. In 1823 Floyd obtained a federal appointment from Pres. James Monroe as the president judge of the East Florida Land Commission. He and his family moved to St. Augustine that year where Floyd served in that office for two and one-half years. The Land Commission was composed of three judges. One of the judges was Judge William Blair from Kentucky. He and Floyd probably knew each other before they left Kentucky and Indiana, respectively. The third judge was Alexander Hamilton, Jr., the son of the man whom Aaron Burr shot and killed in a duel in 1804. In a letter to Pres. Monroe, Hamilton called Floyd "an eternal

psalm singing Methodist,” and Blair “a violent Presbyterian puritan.” The Land Commission’s membership changed after that.

As early as 1808 Floyd attended a meeting of Methodist Church workers in the Silver Creek District in Clark County, Indiana Territory. Minutes of that meeting identified him as a “class leader.” Later, he served as a Methodist lay preacher in Corydon. In all likelihood he served as such in the Florida Territory, especially in light of Hamilton’s name calling. Floyd was probably a member of the Louisville lodge of Freemasons, where he eventually transferred to the Vincennes lodge, and then the Corydon lodge. He served later as a state officer of the Indiana Freemasons. These religious and fraternal organizations probably had the effect of fine-tuning Floyd’s moral compass.

Floyd was born in Virginia in 1774 and in 1779 he, his parents, and some of his father’s siblings and their families moved to Kentucky and settled on the middle fork of Bear Grass Creek five or six miles southeast of the small town of Louisville. At the time Kentucky was an extension of Virginia; it did not become a state until 1792. Kentucky was the Indians’ hunting grounds and it was the western terminus of America’s frontier at the time, a natural combination for conflict. The advance of the settlers into the Indians’ special sanctuary angered them and resulted in hostilities between them and the white intruders. Louisville was the focus of the American frontier at that time, and the rigors of life including constant harassment from the Indians dominated their survival. Floyd’s uncle, Col. and Judge John Floyd, the greatest man in early Kentucky second only to Gen. George Rogers Clark, was killed by Indians in 1783. Floyd learned the skills of frontier life because he had to in order to survive. He also learned the skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic because he could. The latter skills were probably taught to him by a conscientious mother and family members in their home, a station-fort. At the age of 20 he married a family friend, widowed, pregnant, and age 14. Frontier life was neither fair nor easy.

Floyd's life in the Florida Territory is not well documented because certain Territorial records were not preserved. His time in the East Florida Land Commission is documented well but his later service in the Territorial government is not. In 1825 a local newspaper reported that Floyd was elected the First Vice President of the East Florida Bible Society. The purpose of the Society was the distribution of Bibles. The other officers of the Society were a judge and several lawyers. It is known that Floyd and his family moved from St. Augustine to a town near Tallahassee when the latter became the Territorial capitol; that he served as treasurer of the Florida Territory from 1826 until 1831; that he was admitted to the bar on October 1, 1827; that he practiced law throughout the Territory; that he may have served as the treasurer of the City of Tallahassee; and that he served as a founding member and first president of the Florida Education Society in 1831. Floyd may have been involved in the building of the second, permanent capitol building in Tallahassee. He had been a commissioner in the building of the Indiana capitol in Corydon in 1813. There is an early painting of the new Florida Territorial capitol building with Floyd's friend, Gov. William Duval from Kentucky, looking out the first floor window. Floyd could have been painted into another window since in all likelihood the treasurer's office was in this building. According to a letter in the family file in the Corydon Public Library, Floyd died on December 12, 1831. Some of his probate records in Florida indicate that he owned one or more slaves in the Florida Territory. Records in Louisville indicate that he owned one slave there before he moved to the Indiana Territory. Slavery was legal in Kentucky and the Florida Territory and he succumbed to the temptation. He probably justified their ownership on the basis of the goodness that he showed them. There is no reason to believe that Floyd ever mistreated his slaves. He appeared to be sympathetic to the black population in his transactions with them.

The chapters in this biography cover Floyd family history consisting of both facts and myths. The author has tried to separate the two but the reader will have an opportunity to discover the truth for him or herself. The role that the Falls of the Ohio played in the development of the region is explored. The Indiana Territory excelled as a greenhouse for the development of democratic governance under the Northwest Ordinance. It was not landed gentry or the intelligentsia that led the new Territory in the paths of democracy but its progression was steered by settlers and pioneers from all over the nation and overseas, men like Floyd. The results of the battle over slavery prevented Indiana from becoming a slave state and if the slavers had prevailed Illinois would have probably followed and the Civil War might have had a different outcome. Abraham Lincoln's father, who brought his family from Kentucky where slavery was legal to Indiana in 1816 where it was illegal, may have elected to have gone elsewhere had Indiana been a slave state; and if Illinois had become a slave state following Indiana, he and the future President of the United States may have decided not to move there in 1830.

The author engages in some speculation at times. James J. Audubon lived in Louisville with his bride and their child who was born there, from 1808 until 1810. Audubon spent a lot of time at the Falls of the Ohio sketching birds in their natural habitats. In his writings he describes his relationship with the Clark family including William Clark, whom he described as "the great traveler." He and Gen. Clark became good friends and he visited the General at his Clarksville cabin-home on occasion. In one of his writings Audubon described an unidentified duck hunter on his horse in the winter time hunting "the Canada goose" at the Falls of the Ohio. The description is both lyrical and romantic and names the hunter's dog, a retriever, but does not name the hunter. After the hunt the huntsman ascends the Indiana river bank and disappears. The author speculates that this man was Davis Floyd. He lived a short distance from the Falls on the Indiana side, he was as familiar with the Falls as any man alive

having served several years as a Falls pilot, he was or had been a dragoon or cavalry officer for several years, he was proficient with firearms, he would have had to hunt for food for himself and his family, and from his exploits in later years he would have had the physical stamina, expert horsemanship, and shooting ability to accomplish the hunting episode described by Audubon. It is likely that Audubon would have known Floyd because of his relationship with the Clarks. He may have purposely failed to identify Floyd because of the latter's various entanglements. But again the reader can judge for himself.

The author would like to settle one argument in the preface of this biography about Davis Floyd. Historians and others have argued over which Floyd family member, Floyd County, Indiana was named. Some have suggested Davis Floyd, others have suggested Floyd's uncle, Col. and Judge John Floyd of Kentucky. Still others have suggested Floyd's brother, Sgt. Charles Floyd. Although no one has suggested one of Col. Floyd's sons, Col. George Rogers Clark Floyd, he is certainly a possibility. Col. John Floyd came to Kentucky in 1779 on the heels of Gen. Clark's conquering of the Northwest Territory. This Floyd was a Revolutionary War hero and had brought several of his siblings and their families including Davis Floyd to live on Bear Grass Creek near Louisville. He was a judge in Kentucky and had engaged in several Indian battles. However, he was killed by Indians in 1783. Floyd Street in Louisville, Floyd's Fork of Salt River in Jefferson County, Kentucky, and Floyd County, Kentucky, were named for him. When Floyd County, Indiana was organized in 1819, the organizational statute failed to mention for whom it was named. But John Floyd had been deceased for 36 years when Floyd County, Indiana was named, and he had lived in Kentucky, never Indiana. It is unlikely that Floyd County, Indiana was named for John Floyd. While Sgt. Floyd was the first constable of Clarksville Township (non-existent today), carried the U. S. mail between Louisville and Vincennes, and may have lived in Indiana before his departure on the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1803, he had been dead since 1804, fifteen years before the

naming of the county. Sgt. Floyd died from an apparent ruptured appendix near modern day Sioux City, Iowa, where he is buried under the largest monument honoring any expedition member. It is unlikely that Floyd County, Indiana was named for him although he would have been a worthy subject. Col. George Rogers Clark Floyd from Kentucky fought in the Battle of Tippecanoe as commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> U. S. Infantry Regiment. Many counties were named for heroes who fought in this battle but no one has suggested this Floyd except the author and the Floyd County official historian told the author to keep his mouth shut on this one.

The overwhelming preponderance of the evidence leads to the conclusion that Floyd County, Indiana was named for Davis Floyd. He was the county's first Circuit Judge. He was well known throughout the young state. He was an intimate friend of Gov. Jonathan Jennings, Indiana's first state governor. He was a hero of the Battle of Tippecanoe. Author and newspaper editor Tuley who is mentioned at the beginning of this preface claimed in his book on the Tuley and Floyd families, of which he was part, that the county was named for Davis Floyd. Tuley was an accurate reporter of the facts. Tuley was born in the area in 1836, seventeen years after the naming of the county. He would have learned from his family that the county was named for Davis Floyd. During the Civil War Tuley was a pilot on several of the U. S. Navy's gunboats that fought as part of the Mississippi Squadron. The author has original copies of newspaper articles Tuley wrote on his experiences on the Mississippi River during the war. He piloted the gunboat that rammed the famous Confederate gunboat, *Arkansas*, at the Vicksburg's wharf and later ran the blockade there. He served on the U. S. Steamer, *Terror*, and piloted the ironclad gunboats *St. Louis*, *Mound City*, *Essex*, and *Benton*, the latter being the flagship of Admiral David Dixon Porter, who served as commander of the Western Gunboat Flotilla and after the fall of Vicksburg was the commander of the North Atlantic Squadron. A comparison of Tuley's newspaper articles and the U. S. Navy's official reports of the activities of

the Mississippi Squadron report the same facts. Tuley was a good reporter of what actually happened. Recently, New Albany historian and author, Pamela Peters, found an article in a local newspaper published during the early part of the Civil War. It said "Camp Floyd---The camp at the Fair Grounds [in New Albany] has been named "Camp Floyd," not in honor of the ex-Secretary of that name, but after this county, which was named in honor of Davis Floyd, the first Circuit Judge elected after its organization." *New Albany Daily Ledger, July 9, 1861.*

The "ex-Secretary" referred to in the article was the grandson of Col. John Floyd mentioned elsewhere in this preface. Col. Floyd was killed by Indians in the spring of 1783 and one of his sons, a second John Floyd, was born two weeks after the death of his father. A third John Floyd was born to the second John Floyd and both men served as governors of Virginia. The third John Floyd became Pres. James Buchanan's Secretary of War and the reference in the newspaper article to the "ex-Secretary" was to him. Secretary Floyd was replaced when Lincoln became president. The newspaper article was written forty-two years after the organization of the county and there would still be citizens alive at that time who knew the facts of the county's namesake.

There is one part of Floyd's story which is sad, and that is the lack of almost any credible information of the influence on him and their families of his two wives, Susie and Betsy. Edward Eggleston wrote a historical novel identified as *The Circuit Rider*, which was published in 1878. It is a love story about two young people growing up in the early 1800's in Southern Indiana. The hero of the story is Morton and the heroine is Patty. Eggleston wrote the story as a novel but in his preface he said "Whatever is incredible in this story is true," and most of the story was incredible. The young couple and the prospect for realized mutual love were separated by every contrivance a good novelist could conjure. But in the end of the book they are united as true lovers and as husband and wife.

Most of the Eggleston's information about his story came from his own observations as a Methodist circuit rider preacher in Southern Indiana. At the very end of the last paragraph of the book he wrote:

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**There rise before me, as I write these last lines, visions of [Methodist] circuits and stations of which Morton was afterward the preacher-in-charge, and of districts of which he came to be presiding elder. Are not all of these written in the Book of the Minutes of the [Methodist] Conferences? But the silent and unobtrusive heroism of Patty and her brave and life-long sacrifices are recorded nowhere but in the Book of God's Remembrance.**

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Eggleston, Edward, *The Circuit Rider*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, New York, 1890, p. 332.

The heroism and the brave and life-long sacrifices of Floyd's two wives, Susanna Johnston Lewis Floyd and Elizabeth Robards Davis Floyd, were sadly never recorded except in the minds of those who knew them and in the "Book of God's Remembrance." Recently, husband and wife authors in Crown Point, Indiana wrote a story about the husband's mother who was born in Mexico in 1907, married there at the age of fourteen, emigrated to the United States in 1926 with one child to join her husband who had preceded her there by three years, and who then spent the rest of her life in Northwestern Indiana raising ten children. Her life and the lives of Susie and Betsy were separated by over one century but the hardships and challenges they all faced and endured were very similar. My favorite passage in the book is Marie's prospect of having to take confession when she laid terribly sick on one occasion:

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**"Confession!" she snapped. "What do you mean confession? *Dios Mio!* What do you think I could possibly confess, Father? Do you know what my life is? Let me tell you!" She proceeded without pausing.**

**"I have ten children. My life is cooking, washing, cleaning, and taking care of the *ninos* (children) and my husband!" She spat out the words, seething with frustration long suppressed. "Do you really think I got the time to sin?"**

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Marie survived the sickness and lived until the year 2004. As Davis Floyd's biography is read by interested readers, they will need to allow their imaginations to fill in the stories about Susie and Betsy. If I was a novelist maybe I could do it but I am not.

I previously asked you to read Appendix I of this biography which contains the full text of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. I am also going to ask you to read sometime a book published in 1900 written by Maurice Thompson entitled *Alice of Old Vincennes*. It covers the period in Vincennes for the years 1778 and 1779. The book is a novel and a love story. The author claims that the main historical facts in the book are based upon information contained in the histories of several respected authors of that location and period, including William H. English and his son, Capt. William E. English. He further claims that the romantic parts of the story are based on some old letters to which he had access. Be as it may, the story gives a wonderful description of what happened in the important years of 1778 and 1779 in and around Vincennes. And it allows one to envision the important role of females in a man's world.

The purpose of the twenty chapters of this book is to allow you, the reader, to determine whether Davis Floyd was a "character" defined as an odd or eccentric person, or a "man of character" defined as a person of moral strength, self-discipline, and fortitude. Chances are you will conclude that he was some of both. Perhaps you will lean definitely in one direction or another.

Perhaps at this point I should say that all quoted materials are in the original writing or printing. Where there might be confusion I have bracketed the meaning of the ambiguous or vague word or phrase. I believe that the word "sic" adds nothing to the text and should be avoided.

*Ernest W. "Bill" Smith*

*August 1, 2011*