



IN HISTORY: IMMIGRATION AND ETHNIC HERITAGE

Time Line

From Indiana Territory to Statehood

The first Europeans to traverse this region were French explorers and fur traders. Among them was Robert Cavalier, Sieur de LaSalle, who traveled south from Canada in the 1670s determined to find a route to the Orient through North America. Eventually, LaSalle claimed the entire Mississippi watershed in the name of France. In 1671 Simon Daumont de Saint-Lusson declared the lands of the western interior of America for France, including the area that later became Indiana. By 1725 French colonists had established permanent communities near the Ohio and Wabash rivers, including Vincennes in Knox County. Vincennes was originally built on a Native American settlement. Named in honor of a local military commander, Vincennes was one of a chain of French fortresses that extended from Quebec to New Orleans. Lands claimed by the French were ceded in 1763 to Great Britain, which in turn transferred control to the United States at the end of the American Revolution.

In 1787 the new American Congress of the Confederation enacted the Northwest Ordinance, a plan for governing the territory north and west of the Ohio River. This legislation established a means and precedence by which the United States could expand westward. Freedom of religion, right to trial by jury, and public education were

asserted as rights of the people, and slavery was banned. Eventually, the Northwest territories would become the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. A wave of settlers soon arrived, primarily from the eastern seaboard through Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia, and later through Pennsylvania and Ohio. By 1800 Indiana Territory had been established, and in 1816 Indiana became a state.

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