

Collection #
SC 3266

GENERAL WASHINGTON JOHNSTON RECORD, 1799-1818

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: One folder

COLLECTION
DATES: 1799-1818

PROVENANCE: Frances Vigo Chapter D.A.R. and Helen Kackley, Vincennes,
IN

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NOTES:

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

General Washington Johnston was born in Culpepper County, Virginia on November 10th, 1776. He came to Northwest Territory of what is now Vincennes, Indiana in 1793 when he was 17 years old. He was one of the first to settle in the heavily-wooded area, and is credited with many of the early foundations of the city, as well as the territory that would become Indiana.

Although his given birth name was General, he served as a private in General Harrison's Tippecanoe army. He was also an aid to General Gibson in 1813, when he was recommended to the position of major, though no action was ever taken. Johnston's primary profession was practicing law. It is unknown where he was educated early in life, but he did study law in Louisville. He became the first certified lawyer of Vincennes, a position that provided him with a political career as well. He became a member of the first territorial legislature on April 20th, 1810. He was elected Speaker on behalf of the first legislature to ever propose Indiana statehood. Once a state, he served as a member of state legislature for several terms and was elected Speaker of the House of Representatives. He was the auditor for the Indiana territory and became Treasurer once statehood was achieved. He was also the first Postmaster for Vincennes and served on Vincennes University's first Board of Trustees. He often talked about running for Congress as well as Lieutenant-Governor, but was never elected to such ranks.

In 1808, the territorial legislature was evenly divided between pro- and anti-slavery members. Johnston, who was chairman of the committee to decide whether Indiana would or would not be a free territory, had been considered a pro-slavery man. However, in his final report to the legislature, Johnston supported an anti-slavery territory. The report was unanimously adopted, and Indiana legislature never again saw anything concerning the admittance of slavery to the territory or the state.

Johnston was also credited with bringing Masonry to Indiana. He established Vincennes Lodge No. 1, F. and A. M., the first lodge in Vincennes, in 1809. In 1923, the Masons of Indiana dedicated a monument to Johnston at Greenlawn Cemetery in Vincennes to honor the service and impact Johnston made during his life. General Washington Johnston died on October 26, 1833 as a highly respected man and servant to his community.

Sources:

Wilson, George R. "General Washington Johnston." *Indiana Magazine of History*, volume 20, issue 2, January 1, 1924.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This folder contains a photostat copy of the family record from the bible of General Washington Johnston's Bible in his handwriting.

CONTENTS

Photostat copies of family record from Bible

3 pages, Folder 1 of 1