

Collection #:  
SC 1692

**BENJAMIN PARKE  
PAPERS, 1816–1818**

[Collection Information](#)

[Biographical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Folder Listing](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

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**COLLECTION INFORMATION**

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 folders

COLLECTION DATES: 1816-1818

PROVENANCE: Richard E. Banta, 16 October 1939

RESTRICTIONS: None

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE FORMATS: None

OTHER FINDING AIDS: None

RELATED HOLDINGS: See card catalog under the following headings: Parke, Benjamin or Johnston, John. See also: Indians of North America--Indiana, Indians of North America--Treaties, or headings for specific tribe names (e.g. Delaware, Miami, etc.)

ACCESSION NUMBERS: 1939.1008

NOTES: The material in this collection was formerly a part of M 0398, Indiana Territory Collection.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Benjamin Parke (1777-1835) was born in New Jersey, moved to Lexington, Ky., in 1797, and studied law in the office of James Brown. In 1799 he moved to Vincennes, Indiana (Knox Co.) and became a supporter of Governor William Henry Harrison. He served as Attorney General of the Indiana Territory from 1804 to 1808, and was territorial delegate to Congress from 1805 to 1808. During the War of 1812 he was on Harrison's staff, achieving the rank of colonel. Parke was a territorial judge from 1808 to 1817, and Judge of the U.S. District Court from 1817 to 1835. In 1818 Parke, along with Jonathan Jennings and Lewis Cass, represented the U.S. when a treaty with the Delaware, Miami, and other Indian tribes was signed at St. Mary's, Ohio. As part of this treaty, the Delaware gave up their occupancy rights to all land in Indiana and the Miami ceded more than seven million acres of land in Ohio and Indiana. Parke was the first president of the Indiana Historical Society. He married Eliza Barton; they had two children, a son and a daughter. He died in Salem, Indiana in 1835.

John Johnston (1775-1861) was born in Ballyshannon, County Donegal, Ireland. He came to America in 1786 where he worked as a government clerk in Philadelphia. Johnston later became associated with the mercantile establishment of Judge John Creigh at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, as his representative in the west. His duties included driving wagons to Pittsburgh in 1792, and he was later attached to Anthony Wayne's army on their journey down the Ohio to Fort Washington (Cincinnati). He spent the winter of 1795 in Kentucky and then returned east where he married Rachel Robinson in 1802. That same year, he was appointed Indian factor at Fort Wayne. His duties included the receiving of supplies for the Fort Wayne garrison as well as gifts and annuities for the Indians. He also acquired pelts and furs from the Indians and sent them east. He apparently also assumed the duties of Indian agent at Fort Wayne after the dismissal of William Wells in 1809. At his own request, Johnston was transferred to Piqua, Ohio, in 1811 where he served as the Indian agent for the next twenty years, although he had the additional duties of part time supervisor of the Fort Wayne Indian agency as well. During the War of 1812 Johnston served as a paymaster and a quartermaster. Politically, he was a supporter of William Henry Harrison and the Whig Party. (See also: SC 0886, John Johnston Papers, and BV 2611, John Johnston Account Book.)

Sources: Collection guide for M 0396, Albert Porter Papers  
Greene, George E. *History of Old Vincennes and Knox County, Indiana*. Vol. 1. p. 281-282.  
Griswold, Bert J. *Fort Wayne, Gateway to the West*. p. 20-22.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of letters from Indiana territorial judge and Indian agent Benjamin Parke to secretaries of war William H. Crawford and John C. Calhoun regarding the proposed purchase of lands along the White River in central Indiana from the Miami, Delaware and other Indian tribes (1816), and regarding the negotiations leading to the Treaty

of St. Mary's, Ohio (1818). Also present is a letter and a document signed by John Johnston concerning a proposed treaty at Greenville, Ohio (1818).

The first letter is from Parke to Michel Brouillet (19 January 1816). In it Parke mentions the illegal sale of whiskey to Indian tribes. A letter dated 31 July 1816 to Crawford discusses a proposal from the Wea tribe for the sale of a one million acres of land in Indiana. Parke also mentions disputes between the Potawatomis and the Miamis. Letters dated September 25 and October 3 continue reports on the proposed land sale.

A letter signed by Parke, Thomas Posey and T.C. Sharpe (27 November 1816) to Crawford discusses plans for the Delaware, Miami and Wea tribes to assemble at Fort Harrison for negotiations and the Delawares' request for "exchange of their claim to the whole of the country on White River for a portion of the land the United States purchased of the Osage Indians in the Missouri Territory."

A document dated 17 January 1818 and signed by John Johnston provides an estimate of expenses for a treaty to be held at Greenville, Ohio. Those tribes listed in the document include the Delaware, Miami, Potawatomis, Kickapoo, Eel River, Wea, Shawanese [Shawnee], and the Seneca [Seneca]. A letter from Johnston to Calhoun (26 January 1818) discusses the treaty further.

Also present is an extract of a letter (17 March 1818) written from Fort Wayne, Indiana, by Dr. William Turner to Michigan territorial governor Lewis Cass discussing the U. S. Senate's refusal to ratify a treaty with the Miami and the Delaware. Turner also mentions a meeting with Jean Baptiste Richardville (1761?-1841), the leader of the Miami. A letter dated 6 October 1818 from Jonathan Jennings, Lewis Cass, and Parke to Calhoun reports of the signing of the Treaty of St. Mary's. The final letter in the collection (7 December 1818), from Parke to Calhoun, also discusses the treaty.

## **FOLDER LISTING**

### **FOLDER**

1 1816

2 1818

## **CATALOGING INFORMATION**

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC 1692).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.