

Governor's Headquarters
Harrison County
31.1965.3

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Marker Text

Home of Governor William Hendricks 1822-1825 while he was Governor of Indiana. Front room was Governor's Headquarters. Hendricks was also Secretary of Constitutional Convention. House was built 1817 by Davis Floyd, Territorial Auditor and Treasurer and member of Constitutional Convention. Floyd had been convicted 1806 of aiding Aaron Burr. House purchased 1841 by Judge William A. Porter, noted lawyer, judge, and staunch Whig leader who served many terms in State Legislature and was Speaker of House 1849. The home since 1841 of Judge Porter and descendants.

Report

There are several errors on this marker and primary sources have not been located for all of the claims on the marker. More research is needed. The dates given for Hendricks's term as Governor are correct and sources confirm he used the house as office and residency. The December 4, 1822 *Executive Proceedings of the State of Indiana* state "William Hendricks was declared and duly elected Gov." The February 12, 1825 proceedings state that "On this day his Excellency the governor William Hendricks filed in the office of the Secretary of State his resignation of the office of Governor." See Dorothy Riker's *Executive Proceedings of the State of Indiana, 1816-1836* for more information. According to the *Laws of Indiana*, January 11, 1823, when Hendricks became governor in 1822, the Indiana General Assembly passed, "An act to authorize the [acting] Governor to rent such buildings in the town of Corydon, as may be necessary for his accommodation." In an August 12, 2008 email, Rick McCaffry, Site Manager of the Corydon Capitol State Historic Site, most of the information on the house that the museum uses for its interpretation comes from Frederick P. Griffin's *134 Years with Three Generations of Porters and Griffins in the Governor's Headquarters* (1980). The author, who was County Historian at the time of the book's publications, used primary

sources from the Porter/Griffin Collection housed in the Indiana State Library. Griffin also compiled a two-volume *History of Corydon and Harrison County, Indiana: A Scrapbook of Newspaper Clippings* (1991 and 1993). Information about the house as a State Historic Site can be accessed through the Indiana State Museum at www.in.gov/ism/StateHistoricSites/CorydonCapitol/cor_hstsig.aspx. This site states that “The Governor’s Headquarters was one of several brick homes built in Corydon in 1817. William Hendricks, Indiana’s second elected governor, made it his home and office from 1822 to 1824. (Note that Hendricks did not resign until 1825. More research is needed).

No primary sources have yet been located to show whether or not Hendricks used the residence as his office. More research is needed. Two issues of *Outdoor Indiana*, December/January 1978/1979 and October 1979, which is published by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources state the house was used as Hendricks’s official headquarters.

Harrison County land deeds from 1816 confirm the purchase of the land by Davis Floyd. Griffin’s work, *134 Years with Three Generations of Porters and Griffins in the Governor’s Headquarters*, confirms the building of the house by Davis Floyd using land deeds, mortgages, and letter exchanges. Again see the October 1979 issue of *Outdoor Indiana* for more information.

While the marker states that Davis Floyd was convicted in 1806 of aiding Aaron Burr, the correct date should be 1807. According to John D. Barnhart and Dorothy L. Riker’s *Indiana to 1816: The Colonial Period* (1971), Floyd had become involved with Aaron Burr and his plot to establish a colony on Spanish Territory. He was indicted and found guilty by the territorial court at a session held in Clark County in June, 1807...The affair did not prevent him from being elected clerk of the House of Representatives the following month.” For more information see the *Territorial Papers of the United States* (1939).

Letters dated May 3, 1841 and October 12, 1843, as well as a receipt received August 12, 1841 from the Porter-Griffins Papers in the Indiana State Library confirm that

William A. Porter purchased the home in 1841. The marker statements on Porter's roles as lawyer, judge, and Whig leader "who served many terms in State Legislature and was Speaker of the House 1849," can be confirmed by his obituary in the *Corydon Republican* on January 1, 1884. For more information see *A Biographical Directory of the General Assembly, Vol. 1, 1816-1899* and *The Select Committee on the Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly* (1980).

At the time this marker was researched in 1965, the statement that the home was owned by Judge Porter and his descendants since 1841, was correct, according to Griffin's work, *134 Years with Three Generations of Porters and Griffins in the Governor's Headquarters*. However, as described by Griffin in an entire chapter, the home was purchased by the State of Indiana and opened to the public in 1979. Were this marker to be rewritten today, the errors would be corrected, further primary sources would be located, and the text would include the purchase by the state.