

Appendix 68 (Tract Book of Gibson County, Indiana):

After the lands were made available in the Federal Government, many settlers moved in and squatted on the land, hoping to purchase their preferred site when the area was opened for sale.

During the first 2 decades of government land sales, purchasers had to buy at least 320 acres and pay a minimum price of \$2 an acre. They were allowed 4 years in which to complete payments. Land auctions were held when new areas were opened, and the land was sold to the highest bidder. Any tracts not sold at auction could be purchased at the land office for the minimum price. Many purchasers were forced to forfeit their lands when hard times came and payments could not be made. In 1820, a new law was passed which replaced the minimum price at \$1.25 an acre and allowed purchasers to buy as little as 80 acres. The credit system was abolished in favor of cash payments. At the auction sales, choice land often sold for 3-4 times the minimum price. In the 1830s and 1840s, pre-emption acts were passed by Congress to give the squatter who had settled and improved a piece of land the opportunity to purchase it at minimum price, before the public sale.

By a 26 Mar 1804 act the Vincennes Land District Office opened 27 Apr 1807. The office was discontinued 12 Apr 1840, re-opened on order 20 Apr 1853, and finally closed 21 Dec 1861. The two principal meridians—the 1st at the Ohio-Indiana State Line at approximately 84°49'13" w longitude, the 2nd at approximately 86°27'20" w longitude. All ranges in the Vincennes Land District Office are west of the 2nd Principal Meridian. The base line is located in the southern part of Indiana at approximately 38°28'10" n latitude. Congressional townships are both North and South of the base line.

The fact that a person is listed at an early date as a resident of a certain county, does not necessarily mean that the county concerned is the present county of that name. A resident of a certain county could find oneself residing in another county without having moved. The last county-line changes in the Vincennes Land District Office were not completed until 1868.

Special mention must be made of Knox County, as it was the area originally covering the Vincennes Land District Office. Very little of the county was surveyed in congressional townships; the square covered most of the land, laid-off in 160 lots of 140 acres each. Earlier residents there in 1783, were entitled to the donation lands often called French Grants of 400 acres.

The militia donations were 128 grants of 100 acres each, to men who were enrolled in the militia at Vincennes 1 Aug 1790, and who had done military duty but had not received a donation. Claimants were permitted other locations, irregularly-shaped, of just a few acres to 40; these claims were called locations. For still other claimants, irregularly-shaped surveys were made and allotted, such claims were called surveys.

Appendix 69 (Gibson County boundary legislation):

1813-1814:

In the southern part of Knox County, as settlements increased, there was a move for new county organizations. Gov Harrison had made the critical curtailment of this territory, and in Mar 1813 the large area south of the White R and a line through the center of T1n was divided into 2 counties, Gibson and Warrick.

1814:

On Sep 7 a council bill was signed with 10 townships from Gibson County to newly formed Perry County.

1815:

Most of Orange County came from old Knox County, but several townships were taken from Gibsob County's eastern extremity. Gibson County also lost to Posey County, a small triangular tract upon Wabash R, forming the southeast corner of T2s,R13w.

1816-1817:

Pike County, created at this session, absorbed more than half of Gibson County and a corner from Perry County. This formation, and a further loss of several townships to Posey County, left Gibson County with an awkward appendage of 4 townships separating Warrick and Pike Counties.

1819-1820:

In this session a proposed transfer from Posey County to Gibson County was defeated.

1822-1823:

At this session a proposed transfer from Gibson County to Posey County; this put Posey County in its present form.

1823-1824:

The Gibson-Pike-Warrick Counties' boundaries were re-arranged, the law defining county boundaries assigning to Warrick County the southeastern projection of Gibson County, which dated from Pike County's formation (1816-1817); and Pike and Gibson Counties making an exchange of small areas under s special law. The description of the line between Gibson and Warrick Counties left open to question the intention of the legislature regarding 24 sections in the N1/2,T4s,R9w, and the northeast corner of T4s,R8w. Gibson and Warrick Counties disputed the jurisdiction of this area for years; and attempts of subsequent legislatures to define the line invariably roused objections in on county or the other.

1825:

Gibson-Pike County exchange completed the boundary alterations at this session.

1837-1838:

The question of the Gibson-Warrick County line again demanded consideration. From the text of a committee report it appears that the Assembly was requested to transfer a part of T4s,R9w to Gibson County. Legislation was denied on the ground that 9 sections of the area which included the petitioners-were within the boundaries of Gibson County.

1838-1840:

At this session another bill was defeated providing for alterations or exchanges of territory of Gibson and Warrick Counties.

1842-1843:

Gibson-Warrick County boundaries were so defined to give to Gibson County a disputed area of some 24 section:

Section 90 of the *County Boundary Law* made a general provision intended to remove one source of frequent boundary disputes: when any boundary line of any county is described as running east, west, north, or south, from any point in a range, township, or section line, such boundary shall be defined to run with and along such range, township, or section line, unless the contrary is obviously intended.

1843-1844:

Warrick County was protesting to this General Assembly against her exclusion by the Law of 1843 from the territory which had been in dispute between her and Gibson County. On Dec 9 a bill was introduced in the House repealing the provisions of the 1843 law; and establishing the Gibson-Warrick County line according to the county-boundary act of 10 Feb 1831. This simply re-opened the question of jurisdiction, for the 1831 law repeated the ambiguity of the 1824 law, which had begun the difficulty. The report of the Senate committee on the bill attempted a jurisdiction of the course:

A difference in the construction of the act of 1831, between the counties of Gibson and Warrick, has placed about 26 sections of territory in dispute; over which territory, or the greater part thereof, the county of Warrick has, for the most part of the time, exercised jurisdiction. By the revision of the county boundaries of the last session, the boundary in dispute was clearly defined in such manner as to remove all ambiguity from the whole of the disputed territory. The then and now delegation of Warrick County insist that the law of the last session was passed without their knowledge or that of their constituents, and is a violation of the rights. The delegation of Gibson insist that the law of the last session make no change in the boundary, but only makes clear and certain what before was ambiguous...your committee think, in justice to Warrick county, she should be restored to the condition of a time when the parties interested can be fully and fairly heard.

The bill was tabled; but was again taken up Jan 1844. An amendment reserving to Gibson County jurisdiction over 9 sections in the northwest corner of T4s,R9w, was defeated, and the bill passed in its original form.

1846-1847:

Upon this General Assembly fell the necessity of dealing with several county-boundary squabbles which had vexed preceding legislatures. Among the more robustly waged disputes was the one between Warrick and Gibson Counties. At this session an attempt was made to quiet the contention by a law which divided the disputed territory between the counties, and defined their common boundary precisely.

1851-1852:

A bill was introduced 2 Feb 1852 attaching to Pike County part of Gibson County. The object of the measure was completely reversed when it was referred to a select committee with instructions to divide Pike County, between Gibson, Daviess, Knox, and Dubois Counties. On recommendation of the committee the bill was tabled, Feb 20.

1852-1853:

An alteration revised the Gibson-Warrick County boundary to its present form.

1853:

Gibson County made a strenuous effort to regain the territory lost to Warrick County by a 7 Jun 1852 act. Warrick County countered with a proposal to attach 4 more sections from Gibson County. The House bill to more particularly define the boundary line between the counties of Gibson and Warrick which had been introduced, Jan 24, was at this point referred to a select committee. An amendment was adopted and the bill was engrossed for 3rd reading, but on three successive trials failed to pass.

1855:

Gibson County was not yet content to accept her recent loss of territory to Warrick County, and on Jan 22 a bill was introduced to recover possession of the contested area. Petitions appeared for and against the bill, which remained in committee from Jan 29-Feb 28. A favorable committee report brought about in 1852 had been unintentional, but the House tabled the bill without discussion.

1857:

The Gibson-Warrick County came before the House in a bill to more particularly define their common boundary, but was dismissed with an unfavorable committee report.