

JONATHAN JENNINGS: INDIANA'S FIRST GOVERNOR

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GRADE LEVEL: Elementary

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"INDIANA AND THE NEW NATION, 1776-1876"  
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Lesson Plans for a Teaching Unit entitled:

JONATHAN JENNINGS

Indiana's First Governor

By Sheila A. Reed

Grade Level: 4 - 12

Time: 3-5 Class periods

This unit should be presented after students have studied  
the life of Jonathan Jennings

Teacher: for a detailed biography of Jonathan Jennings see  
Dorothy L. Riker's "Jonathan Jennings" in Indiana  
Magazine of History

Activities:

1. Teachers should familiarize themselves with the background material and the information in the students' packet prior to leading a class discussion of the time period and events.
2. Students should read the Jennings biography packet. This can be

3. Teacher-led discussion of information in the packet to ensure students understand events and activities in Jennings's life.

4. Several activities are included to reinforce main facts about Jennings. These can be done using the biography packet to locate answers, or without the packet, to act as a preliminary evaluation activity.

1. Timeline Activity
2. Crossword Puzzle
3. Sentence Completion
4. Map Activity

5. Evaluation of students' knowledge is measured by an essay.

JONATHAN JENNINGS

Indiana's First

Governor

Jonathan Jennings was born in 1784, probably in Hunterdon County, New Jersey.

His father, Jacob Jennings, was a

Church. His mother, Mary Kennedy Jennings, was the daughter of a doctor who was also a Presbyterian minister. She was well-educated for a woman of the time. Jonathan was the sixth child. He had four older brothers, one younger brother and two sisters.

In 1791, the Jennings family moved to Dunlap's Creek in western Pennsylvania, and soon Mrs. Jennings died. Jonathan attended elementary school at home and grammar school at Cannonsburg, Pennsylvania. One of his classmates was William Hendricks, who became Jennings's friend in Indiana and went on to become our second governor.

Jennings studied law with John Simpson, a

By late 1808, he had left Vincennes because he was not able to get that importance. He moved eastward to south central Indiana.

Jennings's active political career began in the election of the territorial delegate to Congress in 1809. The election was the first one in which the

of Indiana Territory directly chose their delegate. In a representative

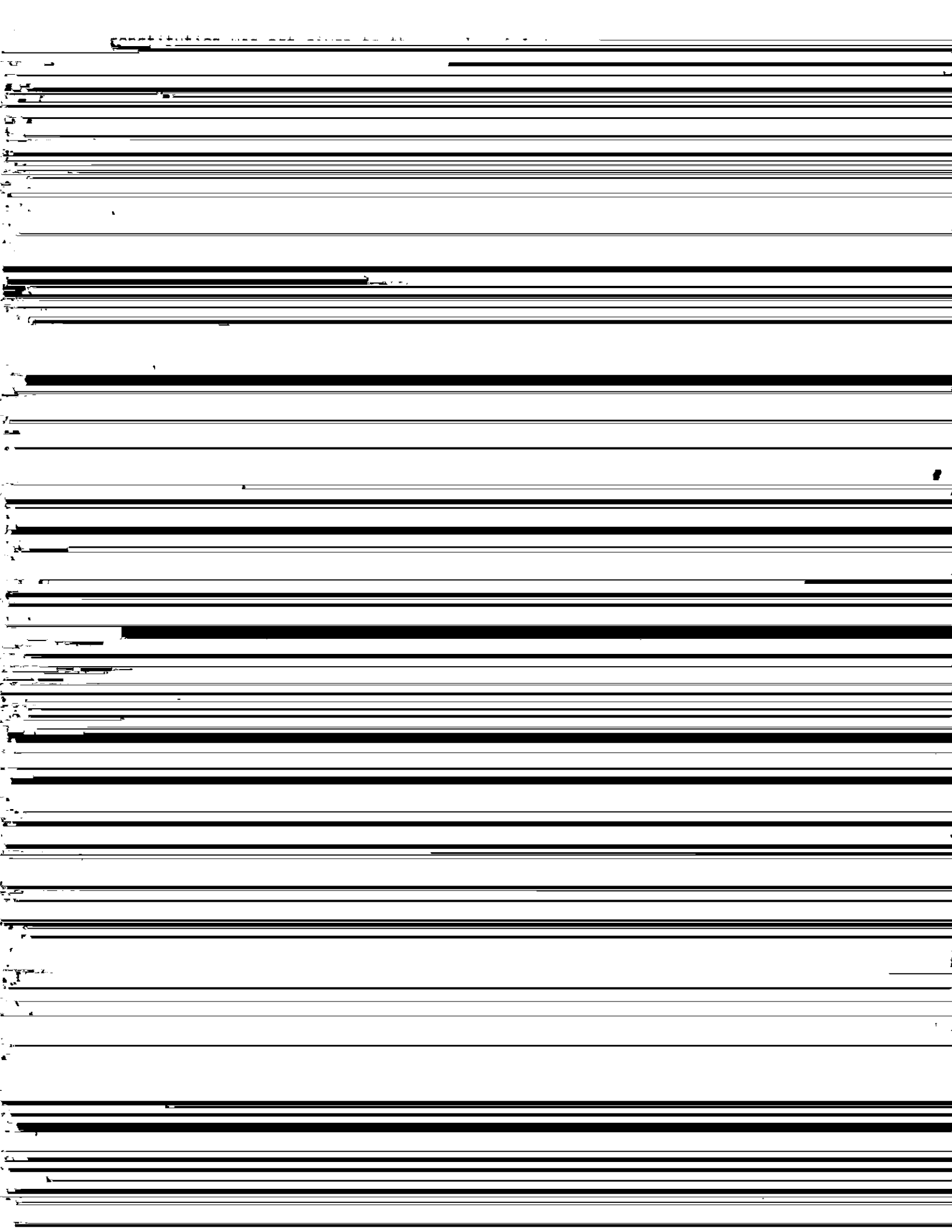
reported favorably on January 5, 1816. The House passed the bill on March 16 by a vote of 108 to 3 and sent it to the Senate on March 30. The bill was sent to

President James Madison

Territory now had the United States government's permission to organize a state government.

The original bill reported by the Jennings's committee in January set the boundaries of the state at an east/west line through the southernmost tip of Lake Michigan. In the final act signed on April 19, this line had been changed to run ten miles north of the original one. We don't know why the boundaries of Indiana were changed but it is likely that Jennings was involved in enlarging Indiana to include portage on Lake Michigan and the present day major industrial areas of Gary, Hammond, Michigan City, South Bend, Mishawaka and Elkhart.

The Enabling Act set May 13 as the day for the election of delegates to a constitutional convention. If a majority of the delegates agreed to statehood, a constitution was to be written that excluded slavery.



popular with the people, the House voted 15-13 to recognize him as the rightful governor. Harrison resigned his office in protest of the House's failure to support him. Jennings must have felt some pleasure at this.

was still strong enough to withstand this attack

candidate. In this race, his chief opponent was his former lieutenant governor, Christopher Harrison. Jennings won by over 9000 votes.



Jennings returned to Charlestown and his farm. He was in debt and poor and only the efforts of his friends saved his home. He died on the 21st of \_\_\_\_\_

18

buried in a plain pine coffin in an unmarked grave overlooking Charlestown. The legislature, some years later, caused a marker to be erected on the grave of

Jonathan Jennings was just fifty years old when he died. He was \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Beside each date, fill in the correct event from Jonathan Jennings's life.

JONATHAN JENNINGS

Indiana's First Governor

Timeline

1784 \_\_\_\_\_

1791 \_\_\_\_\_

1806 \_\_\_\_\_

1807 \_\_\_\_\_

1809 \_\_\_\_\_

1815 \_\_\_\_\_

1816 June \_\_\_\_\_

1816 August \_\_\_\_\_

1816 December \_\_\_\_\_

1818 \_\_\_\_\_

1819 \_\_\_\_\_

1820 \_\_\_\_\_

Use these events to fill in the timeline.

Re-elected as governor

Introduced Indiana's request for statehood to Congress

Studied law in Ohio

Helped buy central Indiana from Indians with the New Purchase Treaty

Born in New Jersey

Defeated for re-election and retired to Charlestown

Moved to western Pennsylvania

Elected President of the Constitutional Convention in Corydon

Moved to Vincennes

Indiana becomes the 19th state

Selected committee to locate land for the new state capital

Died in Charlestown

Met with Miami & Potawatami Indians at Tippecanoe

Elected Indiana's first

JONATHAN JENNINGS  
Timeline

1784 Jonathan Jennings born in New Jersey

1791 Moved to western Pennsylvania, attended school and his father's business

1806 Studied law in Ohio

1807 Moved to Vincennes, capital of the Indiana Territory

1809 Elected Indiana's Territorial Delegate to the United States Congress

1815 Introduced Indiana's request for statehood to Congress

1816 June - Elected President of the Constitutional Convention in Corydon

1816

1816 December - Indiana becomes the 19th state to join the Union

Jonathan Jennings  
Map Activity

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Follow the directions on the map below.

1. Locate and label these cities: Vincennes, Corydon, and Indianapolis.
2. Draw label and color these.



WORD LIST: JONATHAN JENNINGS

CHARLESTOWN

INDIANAPOLIS

Indiana History Worksheet

Jonathan Jennings

Name \_\_\_\_\_

DIRECTIONS: Use the biography of Jonathan Jennings to find the word or words that will complete the following sentences.

1. Jonathan Jennings was the first \_\_\_\_\_ of Indiana.
2. He was very much against \_\_\_\_\_.
3. He was born in the year \_\_\_\_\_ and died in \_\_\_\_\_.

city of \_\_\_\_\_.

5. Most of his first jobs when he came to Indiana Territory were as a



14. In 1822, Jennings resigned the governorship to be elected as a representative to \_\_\_\_\_.

15. Jennings knew how to win elections. He was a good \_\_\_\_\_.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
2. slavery

4. Vincennes  
5. clerk  
6. territorial delegate (or similar answer)  
7. Constitution

9. in any order: Gary, Hammond, Michigan City, South Bend,  
Mishawaka, Elkhart  
10. James Madison  
11. December 11, 1816  
12. two  
13. New Purchase  
14. Congress  
15. politician

Choose one of the following statements and write a paragraph about it.

letters and periods. Begin with a topic sentence. Write at least FIVE good sentences.

You are a newspaper reporter for the Western Sun newspaper. It is 1834. Write a newspaper article telling about the death of Jonathan Jennings. Be sure to include why he was "famous."