

PRESS RELEASE

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF INDIANA

Federal Courts in Indiana Celebrate Bicentennial; Documentary Film Coming Soon!

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana (May 2, 2017): Following on the heels of Indiana's statehood bicentennial last year, 2017 marks the bicentennial of the establishment of the United States District Court for the District of Indiana. On March 3, 1817, Congress organized the new state of Indiana as a federal judicial district and authorized one judgeship for the district court. Two days later, and just one day after his inauguration, President James Monroe nominated Benjamin Parke as the District of Indiana's first judge. The Senate confirmed Judge Parke the same day.

The court did not actually convene for another two months, with the first session held at the then-state capital of Corydon on May 5, 1817. The court's original Order Book, which details this first session of court and the proceedings that followed, through 1834, is accessible online through the Indiana Historical Society at

<http://images.indianahistory.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p16797coll2>.

The United States District Court for the District of Indiana remained intact until April 21, 1928, when Congress established separate Northern and Southern Districts for the state. Each court was assigned a single district judge; that arrangement lasted until 1954, when both the Northern and Southern Districts received a second judgeship. Each court has since grown to five full-time district judgeships.

To celebrate the bicentennial, The Historical Society of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Indiana has commissioned a documentary film titled *And Justice for All: Indiana's Federal Courts*. The film covers the general history of Indiana's federal courts while focusing on three specific cases: *Ex parte Milligan*, *U.S. v. Frank Ryan, et al.* (the "dynamite conspiracy case"), and *U.S. v. Board of School Commissioners of the City of Indianapolis*, better known as the Indianapolis Public Schools desegregation case. The film is nearing completion and is expected to air on PBS stations across the state this summer and fall. It will also be made available to teachers and students state-wide and be accompanied by an in-depth teacher's guide, full of lesson plans and learning activities. Funding for the film has been provided by the Historical Society of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana, Inc., a Heritage Support Grant provided by the Indiana Historical Society and made possible by Lilly Endowment, Inc., and the R.B. Annis Educational Foundation.

For more information on the bicentennial or forthcoming film, contact Doria Lynch, Court Historian, at Doria_lynch@insd.uscourts.gov or 317-229-3729.