



## Indiana Historical Bureau

140 North Senate Avenue  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2296  
TELEPHONE 317-232-2535  
FAX 317-232-3728  
INTERNET [www.IN.gov/history](http://www.IN.gov/history)

# News

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## Contact:

Jeremy Hackerd, 317-232-2537  
[jhackerd@history.IN.gov](mailto:jhackerd@history.IN.gov)

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### **“Mary Clark” Indiana State Historical Marker Will Be Dedicated in Vincennes**

A public dedication ceremony for an Indiana state historical marker is scheduled for Saturday, June 27, 2009. The state historical marker that commemorates Mary Clark and her landmark court case will be dedicated at the Knox County Courthouse grounds in Vincennes. The ceremony will begin at 11:00 A.M. Eastern Daylight Savings Time.

The text follows for the state marker entitled “Mary Clark”:

Born circa 1801, Clark, a slave, was purchased in Kentucky in 1814 by B. J. Harrison, brought to Vincennes in 1815, and indentured as his servant. In 1816, G.W. Johnston purchased her indenture for 20 years. In 1821, Clark and attorney Amory Kinney petitioned Knox County Circuit Court to terminate her indenture because she was held illegally “as a slave.” Circuit Court ruled Clark “freely” entered into her indenture and had to complete it. Upon appeal, Indiana Supreme Court ruled in November 1821 that Clark’s suit proved her service was involuntary, violating Indiana’s 1816 Constitution. Court discharged her from service. Ruling contributed to end of indentured servitude in Indiana. Clark died in 1840.

The public is invited to attend the dedication ceremony for this state historical marker that commemorates Clark’s successful efforts to end her servitude. The Indiana Supreme Court’s ruling in this case also contributed to the end of indentured servitude in this state, a practice many used to retain ownership of their slaves in Indiana, a free state.

State historical markers commemorate significant individuals, organizations, places, and events in Indiana history. These markers help communities throughout the state promote, preserve, and present their history for the education and enjoyment of residents and tourists of all ages. For more than 90 years the Indiana Historical Bureau, an agency of the State of Indiana, has been marking Indiana history. Since 1947, the marker format has been the large roadside marker, which has the familiar dark blue background with gold lettering and the outline of the state of Indiana at the top. There are approximately 500 of these markers across the state.

For more information about this marker, the state Historical Marker Program, and other resources about Indiana, visit the Indiana Historical Bureau’s website at [www.IN.gov/history](http://www.IN.gov/history) or call 317-232-2537.

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