

**USI BOARD AUTHORIZES
BOND ISSUE FOR NEW
CLASSROOM BUILDING**

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An \$8.9-million bond issue was authorized Thursday by the University of Southern Indiana Board of Trustees to cover the cost of the new classroom building under construction at the University.

The student fee bonds, which have a maturity date of October 1, 2009, will finance the project -- including renovation of areas being vacated with the move to the new building -- and cover the cost of the bond issue. Interim financing was used to start construction of the classroom building last summer. It is expected to be ready for occupancy by the fall of 1989.

In other business at the November Board meeting, the trustees accepted the Joseph Neef House in New Harmony as a gift from Kenneth Dale Owen.

The house was built in 1822 and is considered worthy of preservation as a historic building. Located at the corner of Church and West streets, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It was the home of Neef, a teacher from the Pestalozzian system, and of his daughter, Mrs. Oliver (Louisa) Evans, Jr., during the Owenite era in New Harmony. It also is

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believed to have been the home of Thomas Say, the "Father of American Zoology," and Charles Alexandre Lesueur, a French naturalist and artist.

The brick Rappite house is one of the truest of Harmonist architecture -- a floor plan that included an upper and lower stair hall, a common room, kitchen, two sleeping chambers, an attic, and a root cellar. The Neef House also has the traditional side door, which is an entry from the garden. Sun-baked bricks insulate outside walls, keeping the house warm in winter, cool in summer, and providing a sound barrier. Ceilings on the first and second floors were insulated with "Dutch biscuits," a board wrapped with mud and straw, then dried in the sun. Harmonists had no gutters but provided for runoff with a protruding ledge -- built a few inches above the ground to cause rain to splash away from the wall -- such as is found at the Neef House.

Newspaper accounts in the Workingmen's Institute report that footprints of men and children can be found in the plaster beneath the floor of the living room, believed made at a time when the material was in a plastic stage. Some of the prints are from children shod in stout, hob-nailed shoes; one is a man's footprint, with large hob-nail indentations.