

CANAWLERS AT REST

MICHAEL HOGAN

Find-A-Grave #36539212

b. March 5, 1842

d. April 1909

By Carolyn I. Schmidt

Michael Hogan was born on March 5, 1842 to John and Bridget Hogan in Lagro township, Wabash county, Indiana. His parents had emigrated from Ireland in 1835 to Lagro. This was at the time the Wabash & Erie Canal was being constructed through the county and it is likely his father came to work on the canal or was occupied in a business related to it.

The Wabash & Erie was opened for general traffic on July 4, 1837 through Lagro. Four cut stone locks were built there with two being in the town itself - Lock #14 James Kerr and Lock #15 James Ditton. These two were about nine hundred yards apart. Wharves and Grain elevators sat between them. Dam #2 was built across the Wabash River to feed water into the canal. The canal office was located in a room on the south side of Washington between Davis and Dover streets at the back of a saloon and a grocery that was later occupied by Rau's meat market. Jesse Barlow was said to be the old paymaster. Elsewhere it is stated that Jirah Barlow was the toll collector.

Lagro was the logical place for collecting tolls as locking through four locks took time. The first boat through this part of the canal was the "Prairie Hen" commanded by Captain Samuel Mahon of Port Mahon.

The opening of the canal brought a number of Irish Catholic families from the east who made Lagro their new home. It also brought a "vast army of transients" who needed a place to eat and sleep. Before long Lagro had three hotels — the Keller House that was on a hill and had a good

reputation as far as New York, the Humboldt House that was in the valley nearer the canal on Washington Street, and the Western House that was three stories tall and was built two years later in 1843 — for a total of about 120 rooms. The rooms were so crowded that one landlord placed pallets on the floor in the halls and another tacked sheeting over the floor so that as many as twelve to fifteen men could sleep in a room.

The many Irish Catholics who had come as early as 1834 to help build the Wabash & Erie Canal had stayed and needed a church. Thomas Fitzgibbon, a superintendent in charge of building the Wabash & Erie Canal, was the prime mover in collecting money to build the first church in Lagro. In 1838, just as the canal opened through town, Thomas donated two lots on which a 30' x 40' frame building was built.

Meanwhile Michael Hogan was growing up. The 1850 U.S. Federal Census shows him living in Lagro with his father John Hogan, age 50, a farmer from Ireland with real estate valued at \$1,000. Tolls collected for the Wabash & Erie Canal that year totaled \$10,618.68.

Michael received a fair education in Wabash county schools. By the time he was 11 years old in 1853 the Wabash & Erie Canal was opened between Toledo, Ohio and Evansville, Indiana and Lagro had become one of the chief shipping ports for wheat, corn and other crops. Lagro was the division headquarters for the canal. It greatly surpassed the towns of Wabash, Peru, Huntington and Warsaw, Indiana when its population reached over 1,200.

The canal boat "Bullion" cleared Lagro. Its cargo and freight rate shows how cheap it was to ship by canal.

1300 bushels	78,000 pounds	Peru to State Line	\$24.96
5 barrels of whiskey	1,800 pounds	Peru to Wabash	.14
12 barrels of whiskey	432 pounds	Peru to Lagro	.45
128 barrels whiskey	45,480 pounds	Peru to Huntington	7.73
11 casks pork	4,550 pounds	Peru to State Line	12.85

The 1860 U.S. Federal Census shows Michael Hogan living with his parents in Lagro, John (age 60) and Bridget (age 46) and siblings Margaret (age 15), Anna (age 12) and John (age 7). John was a farmer, having real estate valued at \$3,000 and a personal estate of \$800.

Michael worked on the farm until he became one of the early volunteers of the Eighth Indiana regiment of the army during the Civil War. He enlisted as a Corporal on September 5, 1861 in Company F, 8th Infantry Regiment

THE HOOSIER PACKET - DECEMBER 2014

Indiana. At that time the 8th Indiana was stationed at St. Louis. He and his company took part in the battle of Pea Ridge in Arkansas. He fought bravely on the first day, but his arm was shot off by a canister round on the second day during the hottest battle. He was taken to a hospital in Springfield, Missouri where he stayed for many weeks until he recovered enough to return to Lagro. He was discharged as a Corporal on March 19, 1863.

In 1865 Michael opened a mercantile business in Lagro in the room later occupied by Rau's meat market. This was either where the canal office was located or next to it. There he carried on a successful business for several years. Much of his merchandise arrived by canal boat. During this time he was the first one to sell fresh oysters. Many people weren't familiar with them. He put them in a huge tub on the sidewalk outside his store where they could be seen by everyone. Some of the local boys would attach one of the oysters to the latch on the store's door and when a customer would close the door the oyster would be smashed and splatter all over them. Although the young lads had lots of fun, this caused Michael much trouble until he could catch and stop them at their game.

On January 7, 1867 Michael was married to Mary Ann Fitzgibbon, the sister of Thomas Fitzgibbon. They were members of St. Patrick's Catholic Church, shared a happy marriage, but apparently had no children. The 1879 U.S. Federal Census lists him as a grocer, living with his wife Mary Ann and T. Fitzgibbon (age 34), a domestic.

By 1873 grain was hauled to the canal at Lagro from as far north as Crown Point, Indiana and as far south

as Muncie, Indiana. But the Wabash & Erie Canal had had its difficulties and railroads had become the transportation mode of choice. The canal was abandoned that year. The last boat on the canal at Lagro was said to have been run by Captain Watkins, who hauled wheat for H. Stevens in 1875. At this time Lagro would begin its slow decline. By 2010 its population was 415.

Michael's later years were spent on the several farms that he owned. He was also a stockman. He accumulated much wealth over the years.

Michael Hogan died in April 1909 and was laid to rest in St. Patrick's Cemetery, Lagro, Wabash county, Indiana. He was reported to have been survived by his widow and an adopted daughter, Margaret H. Drew (1880-??), who the 1900 U.S. Federal Census lists as a teacher and a boarder in his home.

Michael's wife, Mary Ann (Fitzgibbon) Hogan died in August 1922 and was laid to rest beside him. She had been born August 9, 1840 to John Fitzgibbon (1812-1825) and Julie Ann (Lunderman) Fitzgibbon (1815-1891). The 1910 U.S. Federal Census shows Mary Ann as a widow with no living children.

Michael Hogan 1842-1909 and his wife Mary A. Hogan



Photo by VF

Sources:

- Ancestry.com public member tree 42599042
- Find-A-Grave #36539212
- Robertson, Linda. *Wabash County History Bicentennial Edition 1976*. Marceline, MO: Walsworth Publishing Company Inc., 1876.
- Schmidt, Carolyn. *Wabash & Erie Canal: From the Forks to Paradise*. Ft. Wayne, IN: Canal Society of Indiana, 1996.
- U.S. Federal Census: 1850, 1860, 1870, 1900, 1910
- Woodward, Ron *Early Days of Lagro*. Ingenweb.org/inwabash/town-histories/lagro-early.txt

1876 Lagro Business Directory — No. of Businesses

Bakeries	2	Justices	3
Barber Shops	1	Life Insurance Agents	3
Blacksmith Shops	12	Livery Stables	1
Bootmakers	4	Live Stock Brokers	5
Butcher Shops	2	Millinery Shops	3
Cabinet Shops	2	Physicians	10
Carriage Factories	3	Planing Mills	1
Cooper Shops	4	Printing Offices	1
Dressmakers	2	Saddle Factories	1
Dry Goods Stores	10	Saloons	3
Eating Houses	5	Saw Mills	7
Furniture Factories	1	Shoe Shops	11
Grain Houses	6	Stave Factories	4
Grist Mills	3	Tanneries	2
Grocery Stores	7	Tin Shops	2
Hardware Stores	2	Wagon Shops	1
Harness Shops	1	Watchmakers	1
Hotels	3		