

VALERIUS ARMITAGE

By Tom Castaldi

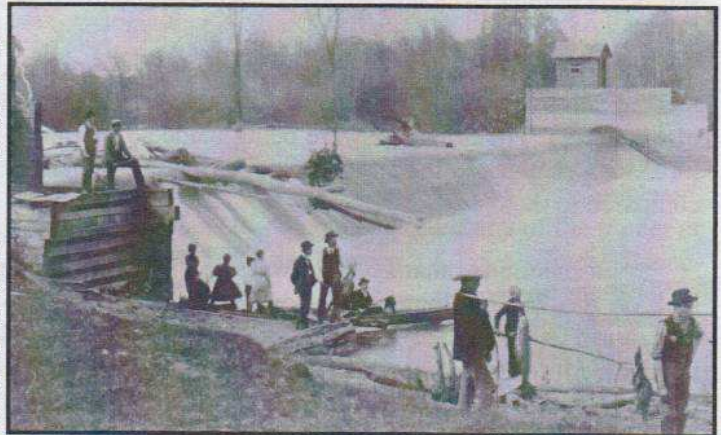
September 9, 1899 *Carroll County Citizen* newspaper story mentioned Valerius Armitage built the feeder dam in Fort Wayne in 1832. It was no ordinary achievement. It is that structure that made it possible to construct the Wabash & Erie Canal. When completed, the dam stretched 230 feet across the St. Joseph River and stood 16½ feet high.

After the feeder was ready for use, the reservoir formed by the dam was reported to have supplied water for both the Six Mile Reservoir located to the east in Paulding County, Ohio, some 33 miles distance, as well as to Lagro in Wabash County, Indiana, 50 miles to the west.

The newspaper states that other canal contracts were held by Armitage in towns such as Huntington and Wabash. Also in 1835, Armitage took a contract to build the locks on the Fitch farm west of Logansport. It is here that in 1836 he moved his family, and the next spring the family moved to Delphi. Valerius Armitage is mentioned in Dora

Thomas Mayhill's *Old Wabash and Erie Canal*. In it she relates that Armitage was a major contractor in the construction of the Wabash Erie Canal who had the contract for the canal from Delphi to the mouth of the Tippecanoe River. When Valerius unexpectedly passed away in 1838, contractor Reed Case took over the completion of any unfinished Armitage contracts.

Feeder dam photo courtesy Ft. Wayne/Allen Co. Historical Museum



VALERIUS ARMITAGE'S FAMILY

(Some histories spell his given name as Valerius and others Valarius)

Caleb Armitage Captain Third Company Seventh Philadelphia County Battalion Pennsylvania Militia

John Armitage

m. Eleanor Siddon

Valerius Armitage*

m 3-30-1820 Salem, Wash. Co., IN d 1838

m. Mary Hewitt

b @ 1795

" " " " " " " " d 1829

Theodore Armitage

b @ 1821

George Armitage

b @ 1822

Mary Jane Armitage

b 4-03-1824

m 5-17-1849

d 1904

m. Robert Huston Milroy**

b 6-11-1816

" " " "

d 3-29-1890 Olympia, WA

Valerius Armitage Milroy

b 8-17-1855 Rensselaer, IN

d 1927

Six other children

John S. Armitage

b 9-19-1825

m. Emma J. Daubney

m 1855

d 1856

Emma W. Armitage

lived 5 months

m. Mrs. J. Burns

Valerius Armitage Jr.

b before 1829

m. Mary R. Caleb

b @ 1823

*Made an initial trip to Indiana in 1830, brought his family from Johnstown, PA to Pittsburgh by canal boat on the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal and from Pittsburgh to Ft. Wayne in 1836. Armitage and Creswell held contract to build Ft. Wayne feeder dam.

** Lawyer, Captain First Indiana Regiment in Mexican War 1846-1848, married Mary Jane Armitage in 1849, Colonel Ninth Indiana Volunteers 1861 in Civil War battles of Grafton, Philippi, Laurel Hill & Garrick's Ford, Appointed Brigadier General in 1862, Took part in the second battle of Bull Run, Made Major General of Second division of Eighth Army Corps and occupied Winchester in June 1863, Attacked by Ewell, Early and Johnson and forced to retire to Harper's Ferry on June 17, 1863, Fought at Murfreesboro, Resigned command July 26, 1865, Appointed trustee of Wabash & Erie Canal Company after war, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in Washington territory 1869-1874, Indian agent in Washington 1875-1885.

Compiled by Carolyn I. Schmidt