

# CANAWLERS AT REST

## LOTT S. BAYLESS

b. 1802  
d. 1880's

By Carolyn I. Schmidt

Lott S. Bayless came to Fort Wayne, Indiana, in May of 1832 at age 30 hoping to secure a contract to build a portion of the Wabash & Erie Canal. His activities were covered by Bert Griswold in his *Pictorial History of Fort Wayne Indiana* and are quoted in this article.

"Among the prominent men who came to Fort Wayne in 1832, were Reuben J. Dawson (born in Dearborn county in 1811), who became Allen county's first surveyor, and rose to a place of distinction as judge of the circuit court; Lucien P. Ferry, an attorney of marked ability; Joseph Morgan, from Lawrenceburg, Indiana, who served as Fort Wayne's second mayor; Oliver P. Morgan, son of Joseph Morgan, a leading hardware merchant, city recorder and school trustee; Lott S. Bayless, prominent in many lines of activity; Philo Rumsey, merchant, and later landlord of the Rockhill house; and John M. Wilt, from Cumberland county, Pennsylvania, who entered the land office under Colonel John Spencer and served as county surveyor and engineer." (Griswold)

In 1833 Jesse Vermilyea and his family from Delaware county and a colony of thirty settlers from Maryland arrived in the area, which was to become Aboite township west of Fort Wayne and where an aqueduct was built across Aboite Creek for the Wabash & Erie Canal around the same time. Then in 1834 these people were joined by Lott S. Bayless and Benjamin Rogers, who settled in Aboite township with their families.

"Of Benjamin Rogers and Lott S. Bayless, who came at about the same time (to Aboite township), in 1834, Mr. Rogers, a thorough-going settler of fine character, passed the whole of his subsequent life in Aboite. Mr Bayless, of an active, stirring, positive temperament,

first cleared his farm and settled it, and then turned his attention to mill building. In 1846 (another source says 1848) he built the first sawmill in the township. It was located on Aboite river, from which it received its power. After making a habit of pioneering, he went west and located in Dakota, then a territory. Comparatively early as he left the township, Mr. Bayless' influence in the community scarcely failed for his absence. The settlers of the first two decades owe more, it is said, to Lott S. Bayless than to any other one man. There were times in those difficult early days when many of them would have suffered for the necessities of life if it had not been for his benevolence. His influence outside the township or in the county at large is a part of the broader history of Fort Wayne, where he was as well known as in his home township. William Hamilton, who came in 1835, was the second mill-builder of Aboite, the Hamilton mill dating five years later than the Bayless." (Griswold)

"In 1839 the following (Allen) county officers were elected: Auditor, Allen Hamilton; treasurer, Samuel Hanna; sheriff, Joseph Berkey; clerk Philip G. Jones; recorder, Robert E. Fleming; surveyor, S. M. Black; commissioners, David Archer, L. (Lott) S. Bayless, Horace B. Taylor." (Griswold)

In 1841 "The prevalence of criminals, especially horse thieves, incendiaries and counterfeiters brought into existence an organization whose object was the detection and punishment of the offenders. Lott S. Bayless acted as chairman of the organization meeting, with B. B. Stevens as secretary. The committee on by-laws was composed of Joseph Morgan, Hugh McCulloch, G. W. Wood, Samuel Hanna and Joseph Berkey." (Griswold)

Lott's wife was named Nancy. We do not know if Marcus was Lott's son, brother or other relative. We assume the other four boys were his sons. Oser Bayless probably was his mother. The 1850 Census lists the following people living in the Bayless home:

Aboite Township, Allen County, Indiana							
Person	Age	Sex	Occupation	Real Estate Value	Born In	Attended School Yr.	Other
Lott S. Bayless	48	M	Farmer	1,700	N. Jersey		
Nancy "	41	F			Ohio		
Marcus W. "	26	M	Laborer		"		
Alexander H. "	12	M			Indiana	1	
Samuel L. "	11	M			"	1	
James "	9	M			"	1	
George H. "	6	M			"	1	
Alexander Holmes	44	M	Laborer	5,000	Ohio		
Catherine Crany	24	F			Indiana	1	
Oser Bayless	75	F			N. Jersey		blind

We know from 1850 Census Agriculture Records from the Allen County Genealogical Society that Lott had 175 acres of improved land and 675 acres of unimproved land. The cash value of his farm was \$12,000 and of his implements \$300. He had 7 horses, 5 milk cows, 4 oxen, 20 other cattle, 12 swine for a total value of live stock at \$850. As of June 1850 he had



grown 440 bushels of wheat, 800 bushels of corn, 300 bushels of oats, 200 bushels of Irish potatoes, 100 bushels of sweet potatoes, 250 lbs. of butter, 50 tons of hay and 1,000 pounds of honey. He had received \$130 from animal slaughtering.

"The year 1853 found Allen county enjoying its first county fair. The affair was given at and about Rockhill's brick tavern' (the present St. Joseph hospital grounds), in the west end of the city, and a speech by Samuel Brenton and a plowing match were features of the event. R. D. Turner was the secretary of the society. At the annual election, Lott S. Bayless was chosen president, Tyler secretary, and O. W. Jefferds treasurer." (Griswold)

shows the following concerning Lott S. Bayless:

April 16, 1872 - Tuesday  
To The Senate of the United States  
I nominate Lott S. Bayless to be assessor of internal revenue for the collection district of Dakota, vice George W. Kingsbury, removed.  
U S Grant

April 30, 1872  
To The Senate of the United States  
I hereby withdraw the nomination, sent to the Senate on the 15th instant, of Lott S. Bayless to be assessor of internal revenue for the Territory of Dakota.  
U S Grant

In the 1860 Census the Bayless household had a few changes:

			Real Estate	Personal	Born	In School
Lott S. Bayless	58	M	Farmer	26,000	1,000 N.	Jersey
Nancy "	50	F				Ohio
Marcus W. "	36	M				"
Alex "	23	M	Farmer			Indiana
Samuel "	20	M	"			" 1
James "	18	M				" 1
George "	18	M				" 1
Ann M. Kelley	20	F	House Help			"
John Snider	45	M	Drover		2,000	Switzerland
Alex Holmes	52	M	Farmer	1,200	150	Ohio

May 15, 1872 - Washington City  
To The Senate of the United States  
I nominate Lott S. Bayless, of Dakota Territory, to be receiver of public moneys for the district of lands subject to sale at Yankton, Dakota Territory.  
U S Grant

The 1860 Census Agricultural Record shows he had 300 acres of improved land and 580 acres of unimproved land in Aboite township. The cash value of the farm had doubled to \$26,000 and the value of his implements decreased to \$200. He had 12 horses, 1 mule, 5 milk cows, 4 oxen, 7 other cattle, 220 sheep and 5 swine for a live stock value of \$1,700. By Jan. 1, 1860 he had produced 500 bushels of wheat, 2,000 bushels of corn, 100 bushels of oats, 75 bushels of Irish potatoes, 5 bushels of sweet potatoes, and had sold \$100 of fruit from his orchard and \$20 from his garden. He had made 1,000 pounds of butter, had 100 tons of hay, and had received \$300 for animal slaughtering.

May 22, 1872 - Washington City  
The messages were read.  
Ordered, That the nomination of Charles Adams be referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs.  
Ordered, That the nominations of George O. Tiffany, Alfred James, William H. Kelly, Benjamin T. Smith, Lott S. Bayless, and George H. Hand be referred to the Committee on Public Lands.

Although not the first school in Aboite, the Bayless School was built on Liberty Mills Road toward the west township line. We are assuming it was named in honor of Lott S. Bayless. Hiram Porter once was a teacher in the building. Schoolhouses often served as churches. The Methodists and those from similar denominations met in the Bayless School whenever a preacher could be found, but they never built a church.

Apparently Lott had the attention of Ulysses S. Grant, who thought him worthy of a territorial office. Why he withdrew his name only to nominate him for another office we do not know. We do know he was put in charge as receiver from the following newspaper interview:

In 1861 the United States Legislature officially created and established the Dakota Territory including the present states of South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota and most of Wyoming. President James Buchanan officially signed the document. William Jayne of Illinois was the first territorial governor. At some time Lott S. Bayless moved to the territory.

November 26, 1879  
*The Sentinel*  
(a Fort Wayne weekly paper)

"Hon. Lott S. Bayless, one of the earliest settlers of Fort Wayne, but at present receiver in the United States Land Office at Yankton, D. T. (Dakota Territory), is in the city again after a continued absence of five years. Thinking that an interview with so old and prominent a citizen, might be of some interest to the people, a SENTINEL reporter last evening called upon Mr. Bayless at the residence of his son, Alex. Bayless, on West Jefferson Street, and spent an hour and a half listening to pleasant

The United States Senate Executive Journal

REMINISCENCES OF EARLY DAYS  
in Fort Wayne. Mr. Bayless came to Fort Wayne in the month of March 1832, to attend the first letting of the Wabash & Erie Canal contract. He was then living at



Miamisburg, O., and traveled the whole distance on horseback, and while coming from St. Marys, O., to this point he was obliged to swim his horse five times over swollen streams, while the average depth of mud was almost to the horse's knees. This latter feature is a characteristic which Mr. Bayless thinks the country has never lost. At that time Mr. Bayless found a little cluster of houses on Columbia Street, and the total population of the city was not over two hundred inhabitants all told. There was very little trading done here, and what little Indian trade there was then was soon taken to Logansport. On the old 'Wayne Trace' the nearest house to Fort Wayne was that of George Ayres, an old English soldier who had settled there and built

**A FEW LOG CABINS**

for the accommodation of an occasional traveler. Besides being a landlord, Ayres had the reputation of being the most accomplished 'swearer' in the state. He could concentrate more oaths and incorporate more profanity into one sentence than any man that ever lived.

"The first house west of Fort Wayne was about four miles west of where Huntington now stands and was occupied by Capt. Elias Murray, termed one of the best men that ever lived in this country.

"At the time of the first letting of the Wabash and Erie canal, Mr. Bayless secured the contract for constructing 4½ miles of the canal, part of which he sub-let and traded, so that his contract was only for about 2½ miles, which portion he completed within the specified time. Mr. Bayless returned to Miamisburg after the letting, and removed his family to Fort Wayne, in August of the same year. An old rickety court house and a log jail were all there was of county offices and

**PUBLIC BUILDINGS.**

"Joe Sweeney was sheriff of the county and Allen Hamilton was clerk of the court. When the county seat was located at this point (John) Barr and (John) McCorkle donated to the city forty-five lots situated in the vicinity of the court house, which lots were to be sold for the purpose of raising funds to erect county buildings. These lots were shortly after sold, but no large sum was realized from the sale, the whole forty-five lots being purchased for \$918 payable to county orders at 50 cents on the dollar.

"Judge (Samuel) Hanna secured three lots on the corner of Berry and Barr streets, for \$75. Chas. Ewing bought two lots on the corner of Calhoun and Main streets, for \$45, and similar prices were received for other lots. The conundrum now presented itself, how were they commissioners to erect a court house on \$918 in county orders worth 50 cents on the dollar. However

**THE CONTRACT WAS LET**

**Notice.**



**Canal Letting.**

**SEALED PROPOSALS** for the construction of **EIGHTEEN to TWENTY Miles of the WABASH & ERIE CANAL**

Will be received at Miamisport, Miami county, Indiana, on the 28th day of July next.

The work to be let extends from the town of Wabash, westward to a point about 15 miles above Logansport, and embraces

**Five or Six LOCKS, a number of CULVERTS, and a DAM across the Wabash, below the mouth of the Mississinewa, 8 feet high, and near 500 feet long.**

Plans and Specifications of the work will be exhibited for four or five days previous to the letting and all necessary explanations in relation to the work will be given by the Engineer superintending the same.

Bidders not personally known to the Commissioners or Engineer will be expected to produce satisfactory testimonials of character and qualifications as Contractors.

D. BURR, } Commissioners  
SAML. LEWIS, } of the Wabash  
JAS. B. JOHNSON } & Erie Canal.

**TREATY GROUNDS, 24th May, 1834. 42**

This notice was in the Fort Wayne *Sentinel* of June 14, 1834, probably the oldest copy since others were destroyed.

and the work was commenced, and the building was erected, but not completed, and it remained a mere skeleton until 1836 or 1837, when the people began clamoring for its completion.

"The commissioners, of whom Mr. Bayless was one, met in May, and the grand jury met at the same time and a scheme was put on foot to

**HAVE THE COMMISSIONERS INDICTED** for not completing the court house. The indictment was returned and the commissioners informed of the fact.

"They demanded an immediate trial and it was granted. The commissioners retained the Hon. Wm. H. Coombs as their attorney and instructed him what to say. A jury was impaneled and by previous arrangement it consisted of the heaviest taxpayers. The trial was proceeded with and the prosecution was very elaborate in its charges and exposition of the law and added that if they were found guilty they would at once be obliged to



levy a tax and they would complete the court house even if it cost the county \$10,000. That settled the jury and  
 ber from the old fort. We do not know if a cane was sent to him.

A VERDICT OF 'NOT GUILTY'

was returned. The court house, which was a poorly constructed concern from the beginning, was torn down and the brick sold to Henry Rudisill for \$200, who used them to build the woolen mill.

"From the time that the canal was first commenced the town began building up rapidly, but never took any decided 'boom' until after its completion, which occurred on the 4th of July, 1843. (This was the date of the Grand Celebration and dedication of the opening of the canal from Lafayette to Toledo. The "Albert S. White" under Captain Cyrus Belden had covered this entire distance earlier on May 8 of that year.) All the provisions, etc., for the laborers had to be transported here from Dayton, Ohio, a distance of 120 miles, at a cost of about \$1.50 per 100 pounds.

"On the 4th of July, 1835, this division of the canal (from Ft. Wayne to Huntington, IN) was finished and

A GRAND JOLLIFICATION

was had. Captain (Asa) Fairfield built the first boat ever put on the canal, and it was launched on that day amid great enthusiasm. At the conclusion of the contract Mr. Bayless found himself without any money and \$500 in debt. He then went out into Aboite township and entered forty acres of land and began work with a will and his perseverance was rewarded as he did not leave there until he owned 400 acres of cleared land. The contract proved equally disastrous to the other contractors as they all failed, and Mr. Bayless is probably the only one who ever recovered from the blow.

"No class of people ever worked under so many hardships as did the first settlers of this part of Indiana, and it was only their most commendable perseverance that has made this county what it is."

Lott S. Bayless was in Yankton, Dakota Territory in 1880 according to the census of that year. He also had a new wife named Leonora B. The word wife was actually written on the document. He was 78 years old and was the Receiver at the U. S. Land Office. Leonora was 36 (?56), was from New York and was keeping house.

On the list of old settlers attending the Old Settlers' Celebration on July 4, 1880 held at the Rockhill House, the name of Lott S. Bayless has an asterisk by it. To qualify as an Old Settler you had to have settled in Fort Wayne or within 100 miles around it before 1840. The asterisk was for absent members. Those members present each received a cane carved from tim-

ber from the old fort. We do not know if a cane was sent to him.  
 On March 3, 1882 Lott wrote a three-page letter to Mr. & Mrs. Andrew Jackson Faulk. Abraham Lincoln had appointed Faulk post-trader to the Yankton Indian Agency in Dakota Territory. President Andrew Johnson appointed Faulk Governor of Dakota Territory in 1866 and he served until 1869 when President U. S. Grant replaced him with John A. Burbank. Faulk lived in Yankton, South Dakota, until his death. We do not know what the letter concerned, but it shows Lott was alive in 1882. He was not found in the 1890 Census.

Questions remain as to when and why Lott went to Dakota Territory. Was it for the "Gold Rush" in the Black Hills? Was he a part of the group of entrepreneurs who wanted to open the Black Hills to white settlement? How did he gain the attention of U. S. Grant? When did he die and where is he buried? No records could be found in Yankton or in Indiana. Why did he remarry?

We do know that his son Alexander H. Bayless, born April 1837 in Indiana, married Matilda Jennie Shoaff (b. Dec. 1843 in Allen Co. Indiana) in February 1862. They had four children, Wilson W., Lillian, and George Willis.

Sources:

Beinecke Library -- Beinecke Guide (Western) Faulk Papers <http://www.library.yale.edu/beinecke/blgwa.htm>

Griswold, Bert J. *The Pictorial History of Fort Wayne Indiana*. Chicago, IL: Robert O. Law Company, 1917.

Senate Executive Journal 1789-1875 April-May 1872 [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/...aw:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(ej02079\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/...aw:@field(DOCID+@lit(ej02079)))  
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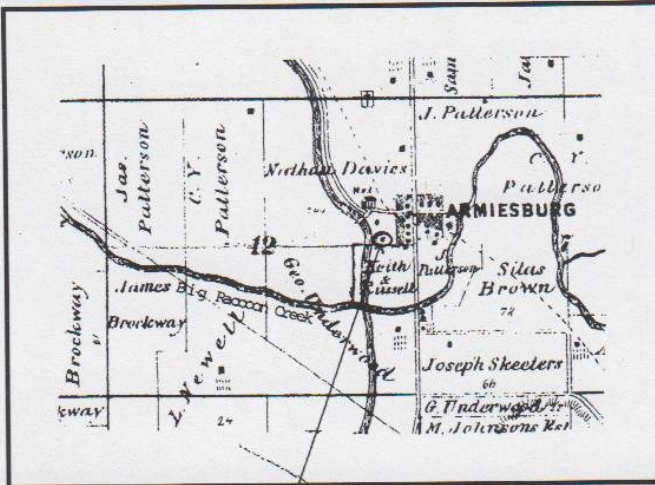
*The Sentinel. Fort Wayne, IN.* November 26, 1879

Allen County Genealogical Society of Indiana. *1850 Census and 1860 Census Agriculture Schedules*.

*1850 and 1860 United States Federal Census Aboite Township Allen County Indiana.* Ancestry.com

*1880 United States Federal Census Dakota Territory, Yankton, Yankton.* Heritage Quest Online





The above map shows the location of the Widewaters Warehouse on the Wabash & Erie Canal near Armiesburg, in Wabash Township, Parke County, Indiana.

I also found that Rufus married Minerva J. Nichols (1828 -?) on November 2, 1849 in Parke County, Indiana. Their son Edward S. Harris was born in Armiesburg in 1853. On December 6, 1860, after mourning Rufus for several years, Minerva married James J. McAfee on December 6, 1860.

From all the above information we see that the Widewaters Warehouse was controlled by R. K. Harris and was probably started by him. By the end of the canal era it was in the hands of James W. Russell. And in 1906 it was purchased for its lumber by Frank Presslor. This is another interesting chapter about Parke County and its Wabash & Erie Canal connections.



Recently for sale on E-Bay, this vintage post card from Winona Lake, Indiana, postmarked 1907 shows a very nice view of a channel built to allow private boats access to Winona Lake. It calls the channel a canal. Winona Lake is located in Kosciusko County across the lake from Warsaw, Indiana.

### Canawlers At Rest: Lott S. Bayless (continued from last month)

Following publication of the article on Lott S. Bayless in the October 2006 issue of "The Hoosier Packet" this article, which helped answer questions about where Lott moved after living in Yankton, Dakota Territory and where he might be buried, was found in the Fort Wayne *Daily Gazette* of May 22, 1887:

#### LOTT S. BAYLESS.

The Distinguished Indianian Dying From An Ulcer.  
— BloodPoison Threatened.

"Yesterday afternoon Mr. S. G. Bayless of this city received word from Benton Harbor, Michigan, that his uncle Hon. Lott S. Bayless continues to grow weaker and his family thought that he cannot survive but a few hours.

"He is suffering very much from an ulcer or carbuncle under his left arm pit. It extends down his side to near the region of his heart. His physicians had fears that blood poison had set in last Monday. In the event of his death his remains will be brought to Fort Wayne for interment, where all the members of a large family rest but the father and two sons — A. H. and Samuel L Bayless.

"Hon. Lott S. Bayless was one of Allen county's oldest and most respected citizens, was a brother of Sol. D. Bayless and was active in assisting in building up Fort Wayne.

"At the outbreak of the rebellion he lent great influence in the organization and mustering of volunteers throughout northern Indiana, and in shaping the policy of the state.

"He was for a long time the quartermaster of old Camp Allen and assisted in clothing and equipping many of the regiments which rendezvoused here. His many friends here will be sorry to learn of his serious illness and will hope for his speedy recovery."

The article mentioned Benton Harbor, Michigan, but it did not say Lott was living there. It said he would be returned to Ft. Wayne after his death. With this information a call was made to Lindenwood Cemetery in Ft. Wayne. Their records showed that Lott was buried in Section B Lot 76. The records listed his last residence as Benton Harbor and that he died on August 4, 1887 at the age of 86. Luckily the date of his death was in their records for a trip to the cemetery to photograph his grave stone found a stone that only said Lott S. Bayless 1801-1887.



In the previous "Canawlers At Rest" article I had determined his birth date to be in 1802 from census records. Therefore, he was probably born in the last months of 1801. His tombstone is very badly worn and difficult to read. It is small and is in a row of stones that read left to right: Lott S., Nancy, a child's stone that is almost unreadable, George, Randel(?), Henrietta, James. These stones are very small in comparison to those of his brother Solomon Bayless found nearby.

Further research found that after Lott was at Yankton, he moved to Benton Harbor, Michigan, operated a large fruit farm nearby, and died there. Also found was that on March 15, 1837, he purchased land in Whitley County, Indiana, in Township 31-N, Range 9-E near Columbia City, Indiana. He also purchased more land in that same township and range on August 1, 1837 and August 20, 1838. This led to a search of Whitley County obituaries, which found that:

"SNYDER, John was born on May 13, 1815, in Lancaster Co., Pa; died in Jefferson Twp., Whitley Co., Ind. on June 28, 1888. He moved early in life with his parents to Ohio. He moved to Fort Wayne, Ind. over 50 years ago. He made his home with Lott S. Bayless and managed a milling business for Mr. Bayless. Burial was in Lindenwood Cemetery, Fort Wayne."

Lott's saw mill stood on the left bank of Aboite River, was equipped with an upright saw, and had a track and car for conveying logs. It was powered by a

large over-shot wheel but was replaced by a smaller wheel when it was found to be too large for the available water supply. A small stone grinder was added to the mill to grind corn and oats for livestock feed. The dam that backed up the water supply was 300 feet long and five feet high. The mill was destroyed by fire on June 1, 1860 and rebuilt with Alexander Holmes, Bayless' brother-in-law, taking over. When a spring freshet washed out the dam in 1865-66, milling ceased. This mill was mentioned in the October "Hoosier Packet" and is referenced in the 1850 Manufacturing Census Index.

One last item was found on the internet. In a Bayless FAQ it said that "Mrs. McGarity of Floyd Co., Georgia, had an interest in family Bibles. She owned at least one Bayless Bible, that of Lott Southard Bayless. She owned a Bell family Bible that included Bayless family members who were also members of the Lott Southard Bayless family...." If this is our Lott S. Bayless, then his middle name is Southard.

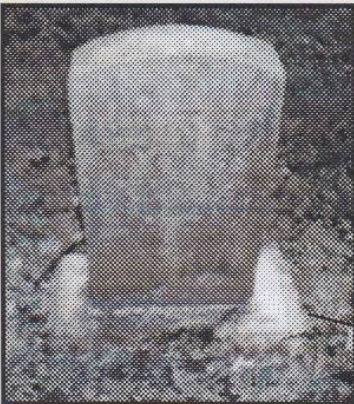
**Sources:**

A Bayless FAQ [www.bribling.net/bayfaq.htm](http://www.bribling.net/bayfaq.htm)  
 1850 Manufacturing Census Index, Allen County, Indiana.  
 "Lott S. Bayless -The Distinguished Indianian Dying From An Ulcer - Blood Poison Threatened," *Fort Wayne Daily Gazette*, May 22, 1887.

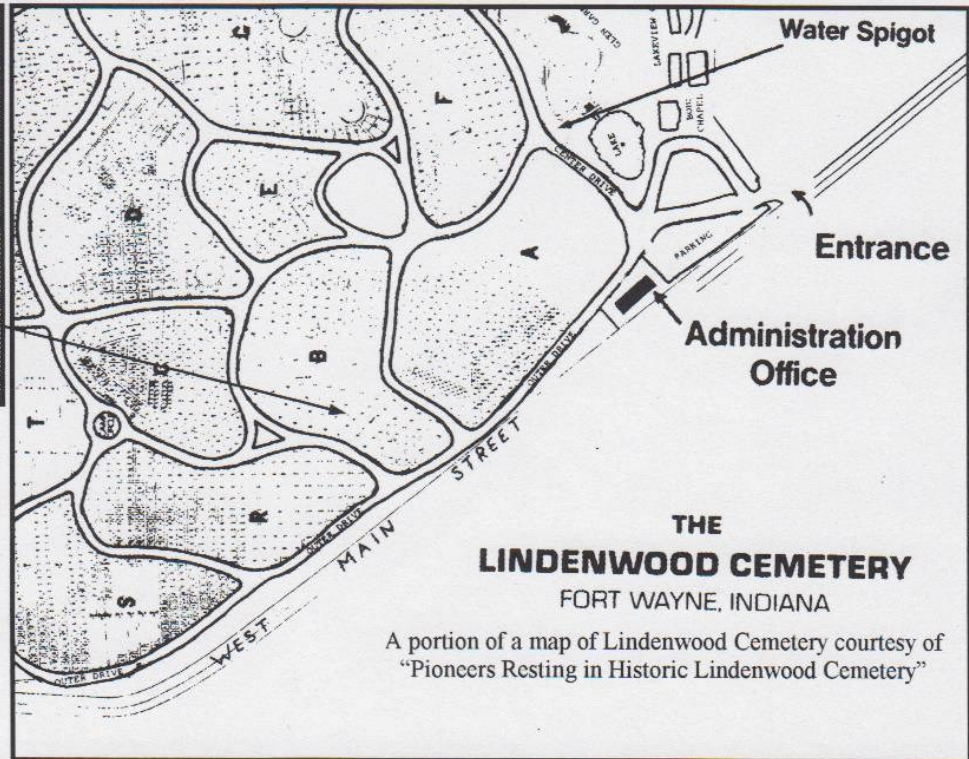
Whitley County, Indiana: Genealogy & History. Whitley County Obituaries. [www.kneller.com/WhitleyIN/obituaries/sn.htm](http://www.kneller.com/WhitleyIN/obituaries/sn.htm)

"The Water-Powered Mills of Allen County, Indiana." *Old Fort News*. Ft. Wayne, IN: Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society. 2-1942.

With special thanks to the staff at Lindenwood Cemetery for their finding the burial records.



To find Lott's grave in Lindenwood Cemetery enter through the main gate on Main Street, turn left on Outer Drive, pass the drive between Section A and B and turn right on the drive between Sections R and B. See map for grave site.



THE  
**LINDENWOOD CEMETERY**  
 FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

A portion of a map of Lindenwood Cemetery courtesy of "Pioneers Resting in Historic Lindenwood Cemetery"