

**ZACHARIAH T. BYERS
AND HIS WABASH & ERIE CANAL
CONNECTIONS**
By Charles Davis

Zachariah T. Byers was born in Washington county, Maryland, February 24, 1816 to Joseph and ? Byers. About 1820 his parents moved to Muskingum, Ohio, and while in this county Zachariah served an apprenticeship as a miller at which he worked in various places. He moved to Parke county, Indiana in 1838 after finding work in Howard and Sugar Creek townships. It is possible that he worked in the mills of Salmon Lusk or Uriah Clore, but this can't be proven. Lusk Mills were built in 1827 and Clore's in 1840. In that area he met and married Catherine Jane Rinehart on December 4, 1845.

Prior Wright built Rockport Mills at Devils Den on Sugar Creek in Penn township in 1848. There he and Zachariah joined in the mercantile business. These two men likely knew each other at Lusk Mills for Prior Wright had a store there from 1830 to New Years Day in 1847 when the mills and all the stores were washed away by a freshet.

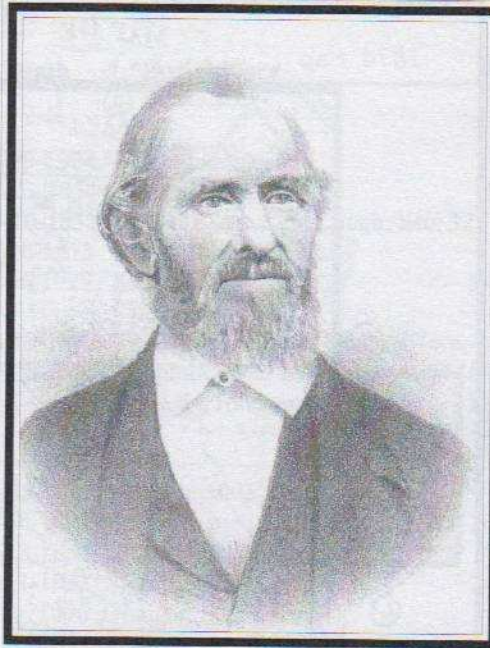
Zachariah was the principle miller at Rockport. At odd times he would make trips to New Orleans on flat boats. On one of these trips he took 1,100 barrels of flour there that he had manufactured at Rockport.

Rockport Mills did a very prosperous business with the Wabash & Erie Canal. The Sugar Creek Feeder Dam and Lock for the Wabash & Erie Canal was about two and a half miles south of Rockport Mills. Canal boats could be loaded with flour, locked into the feeder canal, travel down it to the mainline canal, which was located near the aqueduct, which carried the canal over Sugar Creek.

Before Rockport Mills was built, Zachariah bought a farm near its future location. On November 11, 1847 he purchased 80 acres from J. Pickard for \$1,000 described as the east half of the south east quarter of section 36. Deed Record 10/363 On September 9, 1847 he bought 80 acres from Prior Wright for \$1,000 described as the west half of the north east quarter of section 2. D. R. 10/254. He built his farm in the north east corner of this last purchase.

In 1854 Zachariah's wife Catherine passed away. After waiting for a few years he was married to Elizabeth Brown in 1857.

On September 26, 1860 Zachariah Byers along with Joseph Milligan and Calvin H. Graham bought Rockport Mills with its adjoining 833 acres from Prior Wright for \$12,000. D. R. 20/108. On July 31, 1862 Zachariah

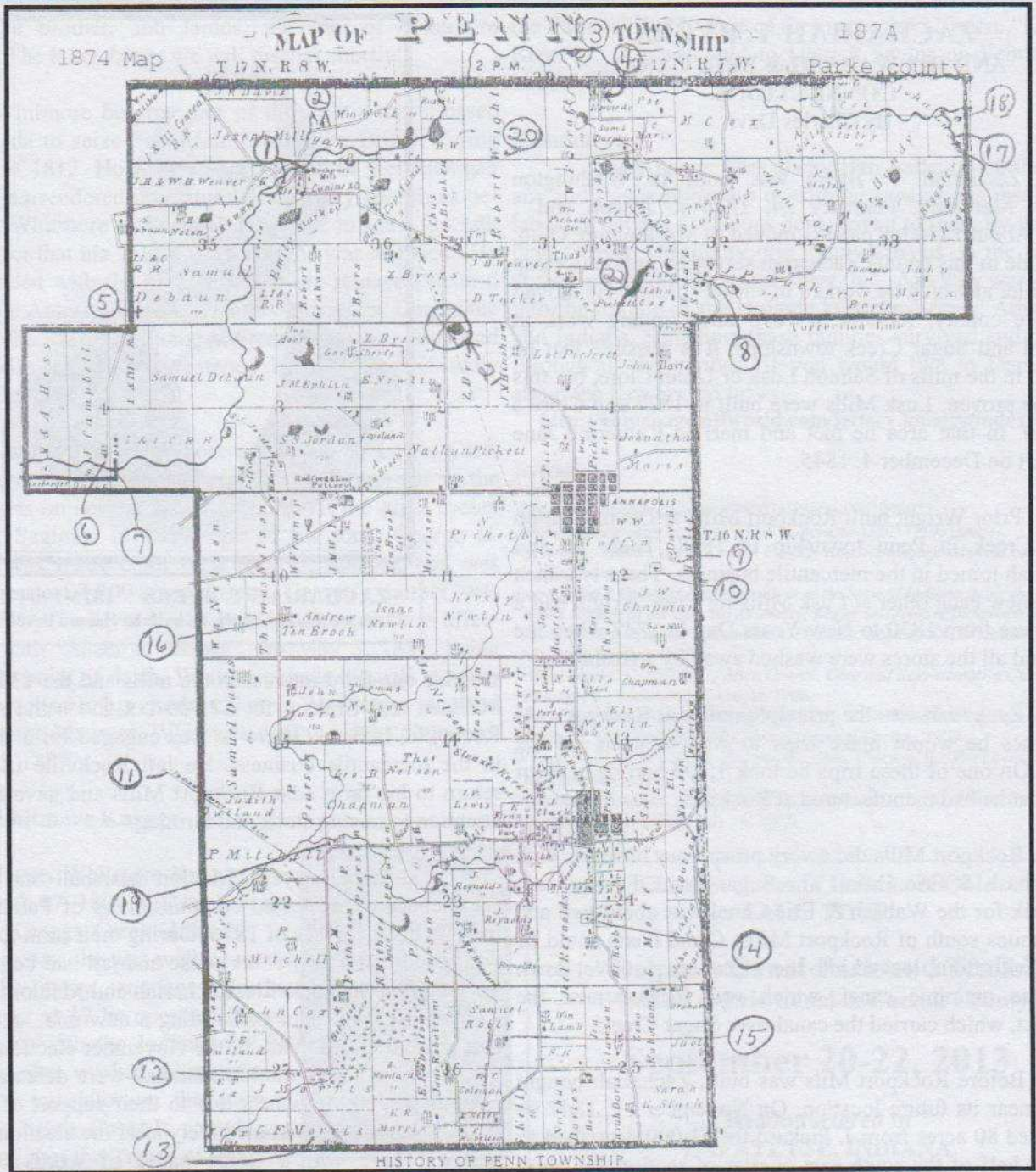


ZACHARIAH T. BYERS 1816-1904
History of Parke County, IN by John Hanson Beadle

sold his one-third interest in the mills and the 833 acres to Milligan and Graham for \$2,500 D.R. 20/330 and moved to Rockville, Indiana. There he was engaged for a short time in the mercantile business. He left Rockville in 1865 to return to his farm near Rockport Mills and gave his entire attention to raising stock and farming.

Zachariah Byers, Mahlon Marshall and William Carmichael were elected commissioners of Parke county, Indiana in November of 1876. During their term in office it was noted that a new court house and jail had been needed for long time in Rockville. Zachariah and Mahlon Marshall were strongly in favor of building a new one. A decision was made to build them. In the November election of 1878 both Zachariah and Mahlon Marshall were defeated for re-election as commissioners due to their support of erecting the new courthouse. Immediately after the election a "war" started. There was a fierce battle of words over this decision between the proponents and opponents. Even though Zachariah and Mahlon had been defeated, the court house was eventually built. The cornerstone was laid on September 11, 1879 and bears the following inscription: "County Commissioners Zachariah Byers, Mahalon Marshall, William Carmichael; John B. Connelly, Auditor; T. J. Tolan and Son, Architects; W. H. Myers, Builder. September 11, 1879." The court house was formally dedicated on February 22, 1882.

Following his term as commissioner he spent the rest of his life on his farm at Rockport Mills. He died in 1904.



PENN TOWNSHIP, PARKE COUNTY, INDIANA

1874 Atlas of Parke County, Indiana

Points of interest added by Charles Davis

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Devils Den/Sugar Creek | 10. Coffin Cemetery | 18. Turkey Run Inn built 1919 |
| 2. Cornstalk Village | 11. Indian Reserve Line | 19. Perley Pearson/Mastadon Teeth |
| 3. Edwards Rock | 12. Coleman Puett/Johnnie Green | 20. Robert Wright helped build Lusk Mills Dam in 1826 |
| 4. Bowsher/DeBaun Cemetery | 13. James McVey | 21. Zachariah Byers farm |
| 6. Josiah Campbell | 14. Bloomingdale, Cemetery | 22. Pinnacle Rock Hollow |
| 7. Feeder Dam/Coke Oven Hollow | 15. Sam. Keley | |
| 8. Union Bridge | 16. Andrew TenBrook | |
| 9. Hadley | 17. Turkey Run Creek | |

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Zachariah T. Byers' Family

Name	Birth	Place	Death	Burial/Place	Marriage
Joseph Byers m. ?					
A. Zacariah T. Byers	2-24-1816	Washington Co. MD	4-29-1904	Bloomingtondale, IN	
1m. Catherine Jane Rinehart Byers	1819		5-23-1854	Poplar Ridge Cem.	12-4-1845
1. Sarah J. Byers	1847		5-10-1853	Poplar Ridge Cem. Lough, Sec. 32	
2. Arthelia Byers	1850		4-28-1873	Poplar Ridge Dem.	
m. Cyrus E. Hunt, M.D.*	8-29-1840		1-06-1929	Sedgwick Co., KS	5-23-1872
a. Elbert Hunt	1873				
3. Joseph A. Byers	1852		8-19-1862	Poplar Ridge Cem. Howard Twp,	
2m. Elizabeth Brown Byers**	10-19-1824		10-25-1898	Bloomingtondale, IN	10-08-1857
1. Thomas Dewitt Byers	1859		1934	Franklin, Johnson Co., IN	Parke Co.
m. Fannie A. Kendall Byers	1876				6-06-1894
a. Lena M. Byers	1896				
2. Franz Seigel Byers	1862		6-05-1941	Bloomingtondale, Cem.	
1m. Loucia Carty Byers***	5-8-1864		2-10-1887	Coffin Cem.	2-21-1883
a. Archie Byers	1883		1-18-1885	Bloomingtondale Cem.	
2m. Belenda Tucker Byers	1871		2-11-1953	Bloomingtondale Cem.	2-21-1893
a. ___ Z. James Byers	1894		1996	Granger, St. Jo. Co. IN	
m. Fern Byers	1898		1991	FindAGrave 95245318	
b. Hobart Byers	1896		7-10-1947	Elmwood Cem. Hammond, IN	
m. Delma E. Byers	1900		1987	Elmwood Cem. Ham., IN FAG#61143737	
1. Linda Byers Morgan	Lansing, MI				
2. David Byers	Lombard, IL				
c. Orthelia Fern Byers	12-10-1884		1-28-1920	Bloomingtondale Cem.	

* After Arthelia died, Cyrus Hunt married Maggie D. Pearson 9-16-1875, Fountain Co., moved to Wichita, KS, Allopath Doctor, Civil War Vet. H Co. 21st Ind. Inf. F.A.G.#26614965

** Elizabeth's parents were Galen & Charlotte Brown

*** Loucia's parents were Uriah & Martha F. Carty