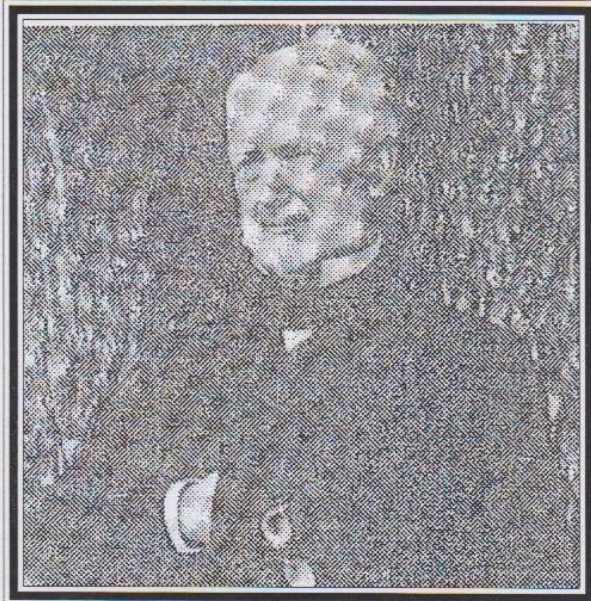


CANAWLERS AT REST

ALFRED PECK EDGERTON

b. January 11, 1813
d. May 14, 1897

By Robert F. and Carolyn I. Schmidt



ALFRED PECK EDGERTON

The early settlers of northern Indiana and north-western Ohio wanted canals to move their agricultural products to eastern markets and to return with manufactured goods and commodities not available locally. The early settlements in this region were very sparse with only a few settlers. Between the small villages there were thousands of acres of land to be sold. With the announcement of the projected canals new settlers began coming. However, even before they arrived there were land speculators. Auctions of land were held by the government. Frequently land speculators purchased vast tracts and then resold the land in smaller packages to the final homesteaders.

Alfred Peck Edgerton was the descendant of Richard Edgerton, original proprietor of Norwich, Connecticut in 1659. Alfred was born in Plattsburgh, New York on January 11, 1813. He was the eldest son of Bela and Phebe (Ketchum) Edgerton, who were married in Plattsburgh in March of 1811. Their other children in

BELA EDGERTON



order of birth were Lycurgus, Joseph, Henry, and Phebe.

Bela Edgerton was born in New London county, Connecticut on September 28, 1787. A graduate of Middlebury college, he became a lawyer. He was part of the 1,500 militia that fought in the battle of Plattsburgh on September 11, 1814, and

who were invading by land along the shores of Lake Champlain in the War of 1812. Due to an American naval victory in the bay at Plattsburgh, the British land forces were forced to retreat back to Canada. Earlier in 1811 Bela had established the Plattsburgh Academy and was its first principal. During the battle for Plattsburgh the academy acted as barracks for the American troops. After the war Bela Edgerton went on to serve Clinton County in the New York State Assembly from 1827-29. His wife, Phebe, was born at Red Hook, New York or March 27, 1790.

Alfred Edgerton's early childhood was spent in Plattsburgh where he was graduated from the Plattsburgh Academy. He went on to spend time with the local Clinton county newspaper. In 1833 he moved to New York where he became engaged as the bookkeeper for Samuel Hicks and Sons.

In Northwest Ohio there was a special geographic situation that hampered development of the land. The Black Swamp, a remnant from the last ice age 12,000-15,000 years ago, left a swampy forest that even the Indians avoided. Defiance County, which extends from the city of Defiance to the Indiana state line, was a portion of this huge wetland. This swampland was slower to be developed but, with the prospect of canals being built through it, land speculators saw an opportunity for gain.

In 1835-36 the Hicks Land Company, a subsidiary of the huge shipping firm, Samuel Hicks and Sons from New York, and the American Land Company, 13,000 British regulars, headed by Charles Butler of later canal fame, purchased

more than 140,000 acres in Defiance & William counties in Ohio. Representatives of this joint venture were: Henry Hicks of Samuel Hicks & Sons; Isaac S. Smith of Smith & Macy Steamboats & Merchants; John A. Bryan, an Ohio state Auditor; and Ephiram Burwell. They selected the sites for future towns with the idea that the towns would enhance the value of the land to be sold for settlement. In May of 1836 Bryan & Burwell sent out a surveyor, Miller Arrowsmith, to layout a town. The selected site was named Hicksville for Henry Hicks. Arrowsmith also plotted a town to be named Bryan after John Bryan. The idea was to sell off timber from the land within five years before any taxes were due, make money on the timber, and then sell the land.

At first Hicksville only had two cabins that had been erected by the land company prior to the area being surveyed. Within the first year after it was platted several new homes were built and one or two small stores opened. In the *History of Northwest Ohio* it says, "There were neither provisions nor money here and nothing but timber and debts everywhere around." Hicksville was not incorporated until 1871.

Ephiram Burwell was a good planner but not a very good swampland salesman. He soon fell into disfavor with the speculators back East. Although he spent \$12,000 in eight months, he brought in no sales revenue. He was relieved of his position but remained in the area for some years..

The survey for Hicksville was completed on September 3rd 1836. Shortly thereafter Smith sold his interests to Henry Hicks. Having fired Ephiram Burwell, Henry needed someone to manage the venture. He chose his young, 24-year-old, up-and-coming book-keeper, Alfred P. Edgerton, to take responsibility for selling the land and lots.

Alfred arrived in Ohio on April 17, 1837, to begin a career that would play a prominent roll in the developmental and political history of both Ohio and Indiana. On his arrival he found four cabins in a wilderness of trees and brush. He stopped by the cabin of Buenos and Sara Ann Ayres where they supplied him with his first meal in town. He soon persuaded the Ayres to become his first customer and sold them 100 acres. They in turn had the first child born in Hicksville that same year.

Throughout the coming months, Alfred continued to make land sales to four others at \$5.00 per acre. The land had been purchased at \$1.25 per acre. Alfred was off to a good start. He also became the land agent for the American Land Company, which had purchased land mostly in Williams county, located north of Defiance county.

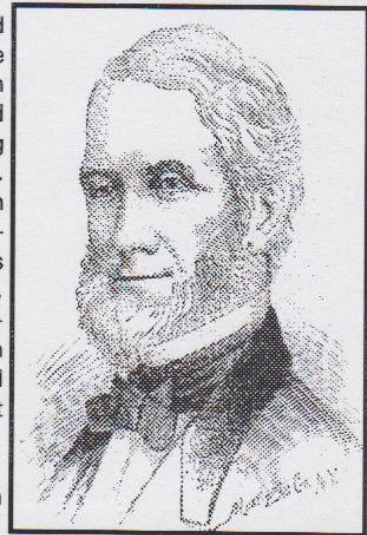
Just after Alfred had a good start, the Panic of 1837 began which eventually ended Indiana's canal building and impacted land sales. Land prices plunged from \$5 to \$1 per acre. Although no land or lots were sold in 1838, Hicksville's first post office was established on September 29, 1838 and Alfred became its first postmaster.

Conditions began to improve in 1839 with Alfred making six sales. The recovery continued into the 1840s. By October 5, 1852, Alfred had sold 140,000 acres from his land office —all to settlers. At that time he became the owner of the company's unsold lands amounting to 40,000 acres of land. In all his sales he gave long credits and did not pursue prompt payment as long as the purchasers improved and continued in possession of the property they had purchased. He eventually sold most of this land to settlers and was one of the first millionaires in the region. Even as he went on to other ventures he still remained committed to the land companies. He continued to act in the widow Hick's interest after Henry W. Hicks passed away on September 24, 1867. He also stayed with the American Land Company until all its property was sold.

In 1839 Alfred's parents, Bela (52) & Phebe (49) joined him in Hicksville. Bela then engaged in farming. On August 24, 1844, Phebe died unexpectedly in Hicksville. Bela continued farming and later moved to Fort Wayne with Alfred. Bela died on September 10, 1874 at the age of 86.

With his increasing prosperity Alfred built some of the first saw mills in the Hicksville area. When faced with devastating fires he did not give up but rebuilt the same mills in 1840 & 41. They were valuable in processing the timber.

As Alfred became successful in his land sales, his business out grew its humble beginnings. In 1840 he built a one-story, square, white, framed office building in the Greek Revival style. Its front featured four square columns with capitals. The windows were surrounded with hand carved trim. The high ceilings and hardwood walls were impressive: a real sales office. A wing was added to the building in the late 1800s. After Alfred's



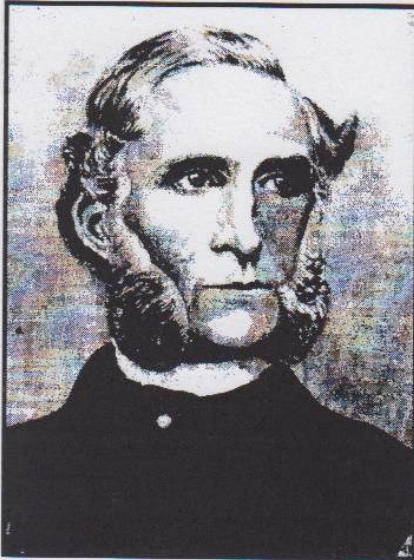
ALFRED PECK EDGERTON

death it was used by a variety of businesses, but the Hicksville Building and Loan used it the longest (1899-1959).

In 1841 Alfred redesigned Hicksville. He rearranged the streets and consolidated some of the blocks. He also established The Antwerp Pike, the first toll road in the Maumee basin.

Alfred married Charlotte Dixon from Columbus, Ohio, on February 9, 1841. She had been born to Charles and Lucy (Sage) Dixon in Portland, Connecticut, on June 1, 1816. Alfred was 28 years old and Charlotte was 24. All of their children from this marriage were born in Hicksville — Henry, Augusta, Frances, Alfred, Charlotte, Anna, Arthur and Dixon.

The Wabash & Erie Canal was opened in 1843 between Toledo, Ohio and Lafayette, Indiana. Commercial activity began to pick up at nearby Antwerp, which was 8 miles south of it. Then in 1845 when the Miami & Erie Canal was connected to it at Junction, Ohio, canal business really increased. Much of the timber being cut from the land was either floated as rafts or put on canal boats and shipped on the canal. After the Antwerp Furnace, located at Antwerp, Ohio, was built on the Maumee River in 1865, and the Paulding Furnace, located at Cecil, Ohio, was built in 1864-65, much of the cut timber was made into charcoal for the iron furnaces. The ore was transported to the furnaces from Toledo by canal boat.



JOSEPH KETCHUM EDGERTON

Alfred's younger brother, Joseph Ketchum Edgerton, a lawyer in New York, visited the region in 1843 when the canal opened to Toledo, liked what he saw and moved to Fort Wayne in 1844 with his wife Hannah Marie (Spies) Edgerton and young family. He soon became a law partner with ex-Governor Samuel Bigger. Unfortunately Bigger died in 1846. Joseph

found a new partner in Charles Case, who was a pro-abolitionist lawyer. Case later was appointed to Congress to fill the un-expired term of Samuel Brenton, served from 1857-1861, and was re-elected for a sec-

ond term. About half of Maumee township (8,000 acres) in Indiana that was swampy forest land was owned by Joseph. In 1865 he laid out the town of Woodburn, a station on the railroad. He erected 2 saw mills to use the timber from his estate.

Alfred was elected an Ohio state senator in 1845 & 46 and represented the counties of northwest Ohio — Allen, Auglaize, Defiance, Henry, Mercer, Paulding, Putnam, Van Wert, Williams and a part of Fulton. He became very vocal regarding the State banking system issues about whether to use metallic or paper money, the public debt, and public credit.

He spoke out against Alfred Kelley, the Senate Whig leader, who had been associated with Ohio's public debt and financial policy since canal construction began. According to the *History of Defiance County* "while this debate between Mr. Kelley and Mr. Edgerton was one of the most noted in the State, the respectful deference always shown by the latter to the former, who was the senior, won for Mr. Edgerton the respect of the entire Whig party of the State, and secured to him ever after the warm friendship and respect of Mr. Kelley, which he often exhibited in kind and valuable ways."

The Ohio Legislature authorized building a toll road from Hicksville to Antwerp in January 1845 after Alfred agitated for it. This was the first such road in the Maumee valley. This toll road was operated initially by the Hicks Land Company, but in 1864 Alfred turned it over to Defiance and Paulding counties on the condition that they would maintain the road.

Alfred began to turn his attention to national politics. He attended the national Democratic convention four times beginning in 1848 and later acted as Chairman of the planning committee for the 1856 Democratic convention. From March 1851-March 1855 he served the 5th District in northwest Ohio as a Democrat in the United States House of Representatives. As an opponent of slavery, he voted against the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which in effect repealed the Missouri Compromise proposed by Henry Clay in 1820. He was always a consistent opponent of slavery arguing against its constitutionality, and, as early as 1852, declared in a speech in congress that "a nation which upholds slavery must pay for it in its own blood."

Alfred also was involved in other business activities. During 1853 he was the financial agent for the state of Ohio in New York City allowing the state to directly control its funds rather than using other New York agents. In 1854 the small village of Edgerton, Ohio, was named for him as a result of his work for the state.

After his terms as representative in Congress,

**A.P. EDGERTON, HUGH McCULLOCH, AND PLINY HOAGLAND,
FOR REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE OF THE
EASTERN DIVISION OF THE WABASH AND ERIE CANAL.**

The Trustees of the Wabash and Erie Canal in the State of Indiana, to provide for the maintenance thereof, and to preserve the same for the use and benefit of the people of said State, as well as to protect the rights and interests of the State of Indiana and her bondholders therein, after the termination of the contract between the Trustees and certain parties under the name and style of the "Wabash and Erie Canal Company," executed the 13th day of May, 1859, and to secure to the parties of the second part to this agreement the right and power to make arrangements and contracts with the lessees of the public works in the State of Ohio, or with other parties, for the increase of business, by the building of boats and otherwise, and for materials for repairs, before the termination of the contract above referred to, and not conflicting therewith, do make this agreement, to wit:

This agreement between the Board of Trustees of the Wabash and Erie Canal in the State of Indiana, of the first part, and Alfred P. Edgerton, Hugh McCulloch, and Pliny Hoagland, partners under the name, style, and firm of "The Wabash and Erie Canal Company," of the State of Indiana, of the second part witnesseth:

That the said Board of Trustees, for the purpose of continuing the preservation of navigation, as far as in their power, of that part of said Canal, from the lower lock in the city of Terre Haute, to the Ohio State line, do hereby set apart and apply for the use of said Wabash and Erie Canal Company, contractors, all the tolls and revenues to be derived, or which may accrue from the above specified part of said Canal, during the term of this agreement, with full power to collect and use the same for the purposes herein states.

In consideration whereof, the said contractors do hereby agree and bind themselves to maintain and preserve the navigation of that part of said Canal herein before specified, from the 1st day of January, 1863, until the 1st day of July, 1873, and to keep and preserve the same in good order for use, with all its structures within the limits specified, including locks, dams, dam abutments, aqueducts, culverts, waste wiers, and embankments, and the bridges where State and county roads cross the Canal (unless relieved by State and county authorities or otherwise from so doing), and all the works appurtenant to said Canal, and which the Board of Trustees are required to keep, maintain and preserve.

The repair and maintenance of the Canal shall include the employment of such boat forces as the contractors shall deem necessary; the cutting and removal of grass from the Canal so as to admit of the passage of water for navigation and hydraulic purposes; the repair and rebuilding of dams and dam abutments, locks, guard gates, aqueducts, waste wiers, culverts, and other necessary structures, as heretofore maintained by the Trustees, and the raising of embankments and other essential improvements by way of precaution, and such other necessary work as shall keep that portion of said Canal in a good state of preservation, having due regard to its present and future permanency; and the parties of the second part hereto shall and will at times during the existence of this contract use their utmost influence for the increase of business and income of the Canal, and to secure the objects contemplated by this agreement in respect to said Canal.

COLLECTORS.

Collectors of tolls shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees, upon the recommendation of the parties of the second part, who shall also determine the number, location, compensation, time and manner of payment of the same.

GENERAL SUPERINTENDENT.

The contractors shall designate one of their number as the General Superintendent, whose compensation shall be fixed by them, and paid as herein stated. His duties shall extend to the general supervision of the Canal, as the representative of the contractors, and to the current contract, the privilege of taking timber from any land owned or controlled by the Trustees.

If, in case of a break in the Canal or other casualty, the Contractors do not immediately proceed to repair the same, or if, in the opinion of the Chief Engineer, they unnecessarily or unreasonably neglect to clean out the Canal, or shall neglect to repair any dam or feeder, or other work necessary to the free and useful navigation of the Canal, or shall permit any neglect so as to defeat the intention of this contract, the Chief Engineer shall certify the fact to the Board of Trustees, furnishing the Contractors with a copy of such certificate; and after hearing of the case after reasonable notice to the Contractors as to time and place, if the object of this contract to be defeated by the neglect or conduct of the Contractors, the Board of Trustees may declare this contract abandoned, and immediately proceed to contract with other parties, or make such other arrangements as, in their judgment may be best for the maintenance of the Canal.

This contract, or any interest in the same, shall not be assigned to any person or persons whomsoever, without the written consent of the Board of Trustees of the Wabash and Erie Canal.

It is expressly understood this contract is made subject to all the provisions and conditions of the acts of the Legislature of the State of Indiana, creating the trust and defining the powers and duties of the said parties of the first part, in respect to the said Canal, which is the subject matter of this contract.

Where "tolls" and "revenues" are mentioned in this contract, it shall not include any Canal lands, or monies due or to grow due for any lands heretofore sold by the Trustees.

In witness whereof the parties above named have hereunto signed their names and affixed their seals and the seal of the Board of Trustees of the Wabash and Erie Canal, at Terre Haute, on this 14th day of December, 1861.

[L.S.]

THOS. DOWLING, Resident Trustee,
for the Board of Trustees of the W. and E. Canal.

ALFRED P. EDGERTON, [seal]
HUGH McCULLOCH, [seal]
PLINY HOAGLAND [seal]

Alfred broadened his endeavors and became associated with business partners in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He moved twenty-sevens miles from Hicksville, Ohio, to Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1857, but still maintained a home and official residence in Ohio until 1862. The state of Ohio appointed him in 1858 as chairman of the committee to investigate fraud allegations on the Ohio treasury.

Although the 1850s were the peak operating years for the Wabash & Erie Canal, by 1859 the trustees were unable to maintain it due to increasing competition from the railroads. The Indiana legislature refused to provide financial relief and canal revenue was insufficient to keep it up. The Canal Trustees felt that the best action they could take to protect the asset was to lease the canal to business groups who had a pecuniary interest in it.

At that time there was a huge disparity of revenue along the route of the canal. The tolls and water rents in 1859 from the Indiana/Ohio state line to Terre Haute were \$89,867 while those from Terre Haute to Evansville were only \$8,411. No group of businessmen would contract for the entire canal. Therefore, it was split into 3 sections and leased.

On May 19, 1859, Alfred Edgerton joined with a consortium of businessmen in forming "The Wabash & Erie Canal Company" to lease the Eastern Division from the Trustees. This section contained 226 miles of the old canal from the lower lock in Terre Haute to the Indiana/Ohio State line. The period of the lease was from April 1, 1859 to January 1, 1863. Alfred was the head of this group of investors:

	Shares	Dollars
Alfred P. Edgerton	50	\$5000
Hugh McCulloch	50	5000
Pliny Hoagland	50	5000
Ochmig Bird	50	5000
R.W. Taylor	50	5000
M.W. Hubbell	10	1000
George L. Little	25	2500
S.S. Comparet	10	1000
D.F. Comparet	10	1000
J.E. Hill	25	2500
A.M. Orbison	25	2500
	355	\$35,500

The *Dawson Daily Times* of Fort Wayne, Indiana on August 13, 1859 tells of an editorial in the *People's Friend* of Covington, Indiana that praises this renewed effort by the Trustees and goes on to say "...the Honorable A.P. Edgerton of Defiance, Ohio, well and favorably known as a late member of Congress from the North-Western District of Ohio, was selected as Superinten-

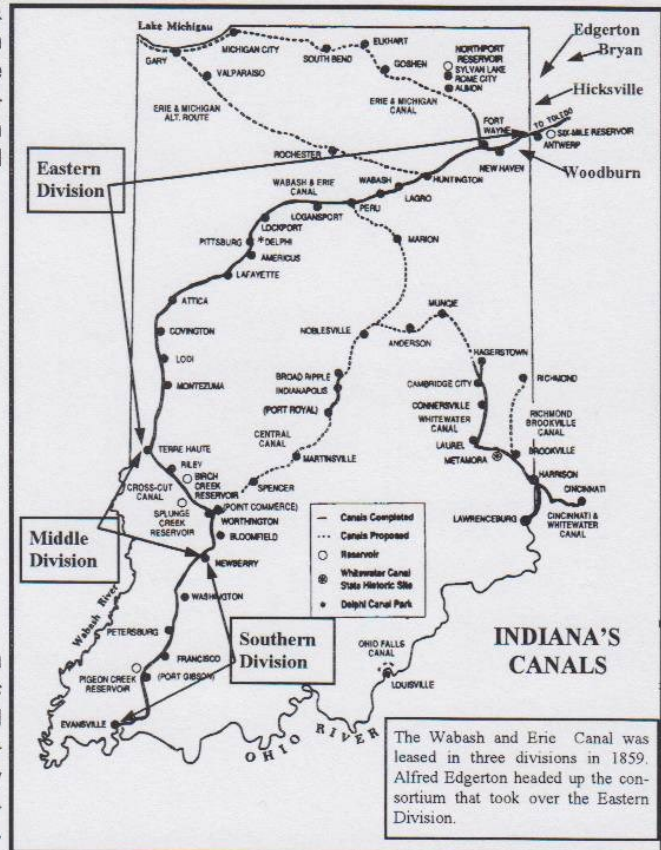
dent of the Canal Mr. Edgerton has already set actively in motion all the elements necessary to an efficient repair of the work, and we learn the Canal is already placed in a healthy state down as far as Attica."



ALFRED PECK EDGERTON

The Middle Division of the W & E Canal was 59-miles-long extending from Terre Haute to the Newberry Dam and was leased to a consortium headed by Chauncey Rose of Terre Haute. This lease was for 2 years from May 1859 - 1861.

The Southern Division consisted of the remaining 95 miles from the Newberry Dam to Evansville and was headed up by Goodlet Morgan and other businessmen from southern Indiana. This lease was for 4 years from March 1859. In 1861 this lease was surrendered and operations south of Worthington ceased.

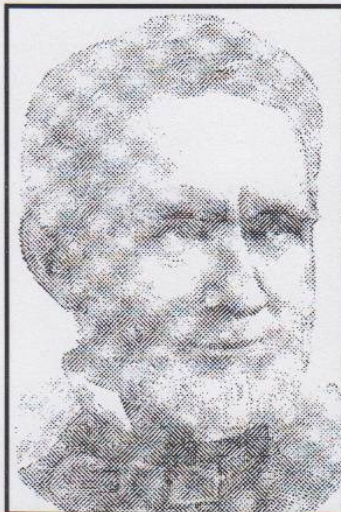


The Wabash and Erie Canal was leased in three divisions in 1859. Alfred Edgerton headed up the consortium that took over the Eastern Division.

The Edgerton Families

	Edgerton	Born	Location	Married	Location	Died	Location	Occupation
Bela	Edgerton	28 Sep 1787	Franklin, CT	24 Mar 1811	NY	10 Sep 1874	L Ft Wayne, IN	Teacher / Lawyer / Farmer
Phebe	Ketchum	27 Mar 1790	Red Hook, NY	" " "	"	24 Aug 1844	H Hicksville, OH	
Family of Bela Edgerton & Phebe Ketchum								
Alfred	Edgerton	11 Jan 1813	Plattsburgh, NY	9 Feb 1841	OH	14 May 1897	L Hicksville, OH	Land Sales / Canal & Railroads
Charlotte E.	Dixon	1 Jun 1816	Portland, CT	" " "	"	21 Jan 1895	L Hicksville, OH	
Lycurgus	Edgerton	28 Oct 1815	Plattsburgh, NY	8 Apr 1840	NY	9 Nov 1878	L Salt Lake, UT	Business with Jay Cook Railroad
Charlotte	Whiting Perkins	9 Oct 1824	Norwich, CT	" " "	"	11 Apr 1885	Paris France	
Joseph	Ketchum	16 Feb 1818	Vergennes, VT	23 Jan 1839	IN	25 Aug 1893	L Boston, MA	Lawyer
Hannah	Marie Spies	22 Dec 1818	New York, NY	" " "	"	15 Nov 1900	L Ft Wayne, IN	
Henry	Ketchum	Jun 1820	Chazy, NY	NA		20 Oct 1821	Chazy, NY	Infant death
Phebe	Elizabeth	17 Jun 1824	Chazy, NY	26 Jul 1841	NY	10-Mar-1903	Schulyer Falls, NY	
Melvin	Allen Barnes	29 Dec 1820	Grand Isle, VT	" " "	"	30 Jul 1889	Schulyer Falls, NY	Physician
Family of Alfred P. Edgerton & Charlotte Dixon								
Henry	Hicks	1 Jan 1842	Hicksville, OH	?		13 Jun 1924	L Defiance, OH	Civil Engineer
Juniata	Patton	6 Aug 1844	E Liberty, PA			9 Apr 1923	H Defiance, OH	
Cornelia	Augusta	4 Feb 1843	Hicksville, OH	NA		13 Aug 1848	L Hicksville, OH	Child death
Frances	Delord	1 Sep 1844	Hicksville, OH	2 Jun 1870	IN	26 Oct 1904	Morristown, NJ	
Alwyn	Alvord	9 Jun 1839	New York, NY	" " "	"	24 May 1875	New York, NY	Lawyer
Alfred	Peck	12 Apr 1847	Hicksville, OH	14 Oct 1869	NJ	16 Feb 1921	Maywood, IL	Salesman
Minnie	Elmira	Jul 1847	CT	" " "	"	30 May 1910	Brooklyn, NY	Divorced
Frances	Key Brackenridge	2 May 1858	Ft Wayne, IN	30 Nov 1876	IN	9 Dec 1909	L Philadelphia, PA	
Charllotte	Edgerton	1 Oct 1847	Hicksville, OH	3 Jun 1869	IN	22 Feb 1910	New York, NY	
Satterlee	Swartwout	30 May 1840	New York, NY	" " "	"	28 Sep 1923	Brookline, MA	Business / Finance
Anna	Elizabeth	4 Jun 1849	Hicksville, OH	9 Feb 1876	IN	6 Feb 1828	Chicago, IL	
George	Manierre	5 Feb 1845	Chicago, IL	" " "	"	29 Jan 1924	Chicago, IL	Lawyer & Real Estate sales
Arthur	Edgerton	7 Feb 1852	Hicksville, OH	NA		23 Mar 1856	L Hicksville, OH	Child death
Dixon	Edgerton	28 Jul 1857	Hicksville, OH	15 Sep 1885	IN	16 May 1920	L Indianapolis, IN	Salesman - Typewriter
Luella	B. Bittinger	29 Oct 1862	Ft Wayne, IN	" " "	"	29 May 1923	L Indianapolis, IN	

L = Burial - Lindenwood Cemetery Ft Wayne, IN
H= Burial Forest Home Cemetery -Hicksville, OH



ALFRED PECK EDGERTON

of 9 years (1859-1868).

Meanwhile Joseph K. Edgerton, Alfred's brother, had gotten heavily involved with the railroads. In 1854 he was a director of the Fort Wayne & Chicago Railroad, became its president in 1855, and in 1856 became a director of the Ohio & Indiana Railroad. He was heavily involved in consolidating the railroads west of Pittsburgh that now comprise the Pennsylvania system. He became the company's vice-president. He was also the president of the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad, one of the region's largest land holders, and had financial interests in many of the leading banking and manufacturing institutions. Joseph was elected to the United States Congress from the Fort Wayne district and served one term from 1863-65.

After Fort Sumter was fired upon on April 12, 1861, Fort Wayne mayor Perry Randall called at meeting on April 15 at Hedekin hall. Vice-chairmen of the meeting were Jesse Lynch Williams, Chief Engineer of Indiana's canals, and Allen Hamilton. A committee composed of Alfred Edgerton, Hugh McCulloch, Pliny Hoagland, Samuel Hanna, Hugh Reed, Joseph Brackenridge and Lott Bayless was appointed to prepare resolutions that declared "in the present crisis of our national affair there should be but one party in the state of Indiana, and that party should stand pledged before the country to uphold and sustain by all the means in its power, the national administration, enforcing obedience to the laws preserving the public property and vindicating the honor of the flag." The gathering said that "Allen county would guarantee to assist the state to provide three times as many men as the first call might require." Volunteers began signing up at the meeting. Later many others enlisted in the canal office and in the offices of Judge Hanna and Withers & Morris.

The lease for the Eastern Division was renewed on December 14, 1861, and signed by Alfred Edgerton, Hugh McCulloch & Pliny Hoagland, along with Thomas Dowling, the Resident Trustee in Terre Haute. This contract extended the lease for 10 years from January 1, 1863-July 1, 1873. The renewal lease continued until all operations ceased in 1874. The canal was sold at auction in 1876. Alfred was the Superintendent of this portion of the old canal for a period

In 1865 Alfred Edgerton was elected to the Fort Wayne City Council and re-elected in 1867. In 1868 he was nominated by the Indiana Democrats for the office of Lieutenant-Governor on the ticket with Thomas A. Hendricks. Both were defeated in an extremely close and contested election by the Republican nominees Conrad Baker of Evansville and William Cumback of Greensburg, Indiana. The vote difference was only 1,362 in favor of William Cumback over Alfred. Alfred carried Allen county, where he was very popular, by over 2500 votes.

In 1872 Alfred was approached to be the Democrat nominee for Governor by the O'Conner branch of the party but refused their support. He did not want to endorse their states rights concepts and their rejection of the regular Democrat party nominee, Horace Greenly, in favor of Charles O'Conner. Nationally, Ulysses S. Grant won a 2nd term quite easily. In fact Horace Greenly died on Nov. 29, 1872, before the electoral college even met. Thomas Hendricks was again the Democrat nominee for Governor of Indiana and this time he was elected serving from 1873 -77. His Lieutenant-Governor was Leonidas Sexton, a Republican of Rush county.

Instead of running for governor in 1872, Alfred Edgerton became the president of the newly formed Fort Wayne Board of Trade. John Bass and G. McNiece were its vice-presidents, F. Shurick its secretary and Charles McCulloch its treasurer. He also began negotiations with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad to divert its line through Hicksville and donated land for its right-of-way through Defiance county, Ohio.

Another financial panic or depression hit the country in 1873. At that time Alfred's assets were between \$800,000 and \$1,000,000. But the panic created a severe impact on another of Alfred Edgerton's brothers, Lycurgus, who had been in the railroad business in New York with Jay Cook. Although Alfred had only given his word as surety behind Lycurgus' ventures, when Lycurgus needed \$250,000 to cover his debts, Alfred paid even though he was not personally liable since there was no signed contract. In order to do so, Alfred had to sell his valuable railroad stocks at depressed prices. Lycurgus died November 19, 1878, in Salt Lake City, Utah, on a train. He had also invested in goldmines against his family's better judgment.

In 1873 Alfred and his wife, Charlotte, donated St. Paul's Episcopal Church and the land on which it was built in Hicksville to the parish free of all encumbrance. The church was consecrated by the Bishop. They also donated land and \$500 cash each to five other churches in Hicksville. This was just one of the many benevolent acts by this family.

When a plot to alter the results of the presidential election in 1875 through the use of fraudulently printed ballots was learned, a mass meeting was called at the court house in Fort Wayne. There Alfred was chosen chairman; Charles Munson, secretary; and thirty other prominent citizens, vice-presidents. Through their watchful eyes, the use of the ballots was prevented.

For many years Alfred was a member of the school board in Fort Wayne resigning when he was appointed a civil service commissioner. He was described as being "a most liberal patron of education, and deeply interested in the common school system." In 1878 he donated land in Hicksville for the Defiance county fairgrounds. From 1881-1886 he served on the Board of Directors of Purdue University in Lafayette, Indiana, and was a trustee of the Agriculture, Mechanical College of Indiana, which was endowed by the General Government. He was also involved with establishing agricultural fairs and exhibits.

On July 2, 1881, only months after becoming President of the United States, James Garfield was shot in the railroad station in Washington D.C. by a disappointed patronage office seeker, Charles J. Guiteau. For two months the president suffered and lingered, but on September 19, 1881, he died of blood poisoning. Immediately there was a public outcry for patronage reform. A senator from Ohio, George Pendleton, sponsored the Pendleton Civil Service Reform Act of 1883, which provided for hiring employees on the merit system and marked the end of the so-called spoils system. The act provided for some government jobs to be filled on the basis of competitive exams.

Grover Cleveland was elected President of the United States in November 1884 along with Thomas A. Hendricks, Indiana's ex-governor, as his Vice-President. Hendricks had been Indiana's favorite son candidate for president that year but had settled for second place on the ticket.

A year later, Alfred Edgerton, now 72, was appointed by President Cleveland to be the Chairman and one of the three commissioners of the United States Civil Service Commission replacing Dorman B. Eaton. Alfred served in this position from November 9, 1885 to February 9, 1889, being succeeded by Theodore Roosevelt. Perhaps it was Hendricks who proposed his good friend Alfred Edgerton for the Civil Service Commission. Hendricks died soon after the election on November 25, 1884.

At age 76 Alfred retired from public service and business in general. However, one of Alfred's interests in railroads ended up as a court case. As reported the case said that on June 9, 1889, a mortgage on the Fort

Wayne, Muncie and Cincinnati Railroad Company was executed to Alfred and Jesse L. Williams as trustees to secure the payment of one million eight hundred thousand dollars, covering all the property of the company. This mortgage was subsequently foreclosed and a sale of the property made upon the decree:

- 1) that the purchasers of the property were bondholders and re-organized the company
- 2) that prior to the re-organization of the company by the purchasers at the foreclosure sale, J. Elliott, the appellant, entered into a contract with the Fort Wayne, Muncie and Cincinnati Railroad Company, and the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Indianapolis Railroad Company for the construction of a joint passenger station at the junction of the two roads at Connersville
- 3) that by the terms of the agreement Elliott was to receive from each of the companies seven hundred and fifty dollars, and Elliott was to pay one thousand dollars toward the construction of the station.

Elliott erected the building and the companies took possession of it on September 1, 1874, without paying any of the money agreed upon. Supposedly a sum of one hundred fifty thousand had been set aside to pay sundry claims, but neither Elliott or any one else's name was given to receive the amount. The written contract stated that the money "shall be retained by the company, which may be used by the board of directors in settlement of the claim of the Liverpool and London and Globe Insurance Company, and for other small claims so far as may be required." The court held:

- 1) that the new company, although it used the station, was not liable to Elliott
- 2) an agreement between the bondholders that a certain sum should be retained for the payment of a specified claim and other small claims, as might be required, the claim of Elliott not being specially designated, created no obligation in his favor
- 3) that even if an obligation was created in favor of Elliott, he would have no right to recover upon it, as it does not appear that the sum was not properly used to pay the claim specified or other claims having rightful precedence of Elliott's claim.

Alfred Peck Edgerton lived several more years, dying in Hicksville at age 84 on May 14, 1897, a poor man. His funeral service, conducted by Rev. A. M. Smith with appropriate remarks from lawyers Coulter and Griffin and Mr. Ainsworth, was held at his residence in Hicksville on Sunday afternoon. He was buried in Fort Wayne's Lindenwood Cemetery with his wife, Charlotte, who preceded him in death at age 78 on January 21,

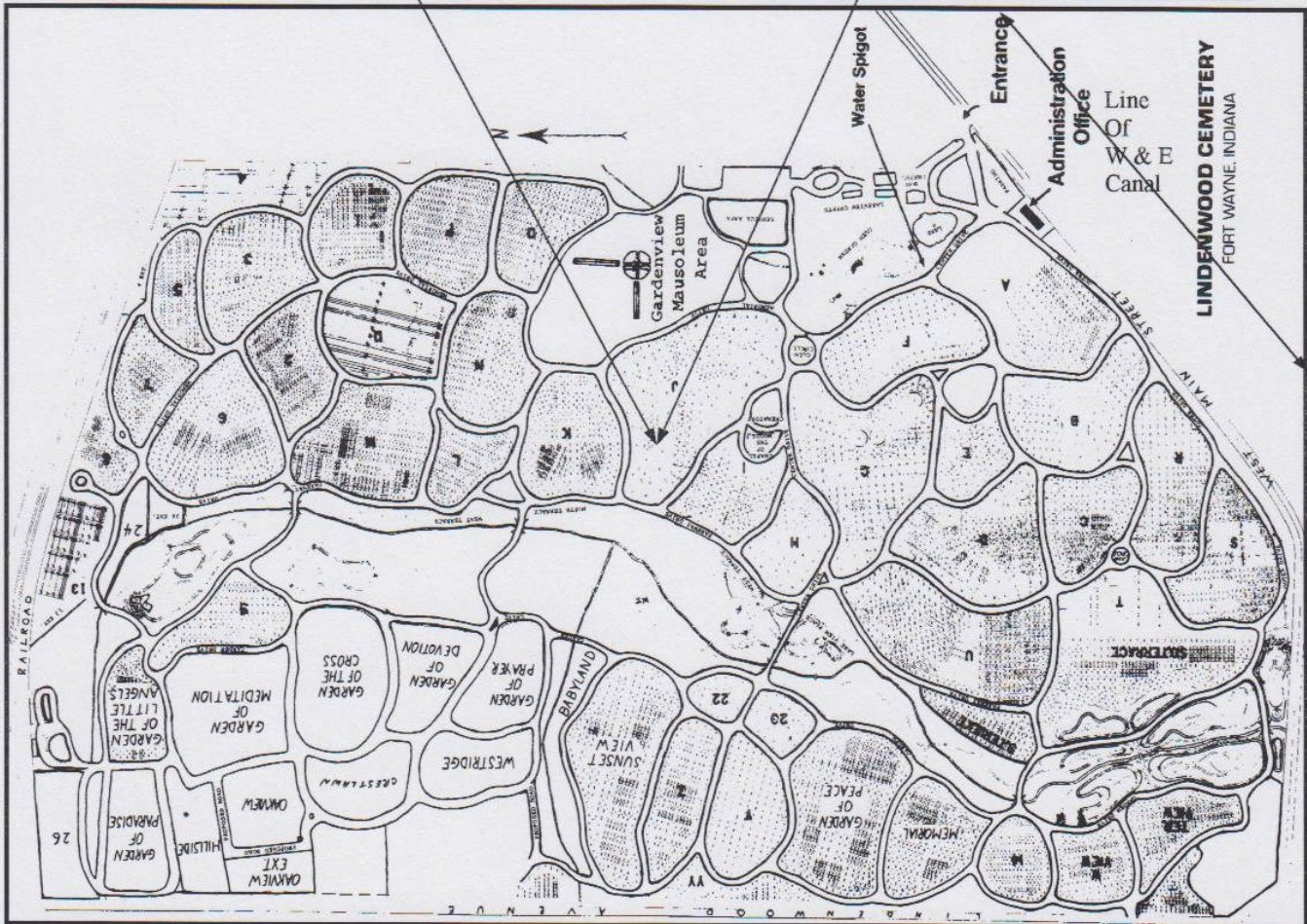
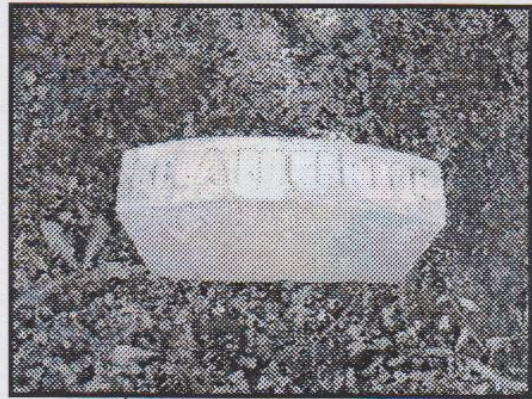
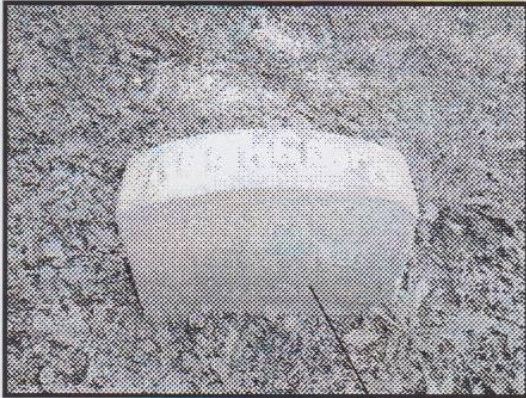
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1895. The family earlier had purchased a huge plot (Plot 82 in Section J) at Lindenwood, but because of his financial situation, the grave stones are very insignificant.

financial reverses of late years he died a comparative poor man.... He was a philanthropist, a benefactor and a statesman. It will be out of the memory of any now living when his name ceases to be spoken of with kindness and love. There is hardly an individual in this community but who has felt his influence and goodness."

One of Alfred's obituaries describes him as follows: "Deceased was a man of letters, many documents and speeches being left for his remembrance. He was always a polished gentleman and commanded the instant respect of all with whom he came in contact. He was, in particular, the friend of the young people, and was revered and loved by them in return. Owing to fi-

Alfred Peck Edgerton's stone (l) in Edgerton family plot with Bela Edgerton's stone (r).



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FROM TIMES PAST

Dawson's Fort Wayne Daily Times
April 13, 1859

CITY HOTEL
FRED. VOLGERT, Proprietor.
FORT WAYNE, IN

East End of Columbia Street, on Canal Basin

The Proprietor is pleased to say to his old customers and to the public that he has returned to this City, and opened

NEW HOUSE,

In the Rail Road Building at the East end of Columbia Street, near Comporet, Hubbell & Co.'s Warehouse, where he hopes to receive a good patronage.

His table will doubtless satisfy his guests, and his beds and rooms are of the best kind.

His STABLE is not excelled in the City, and his Hostler is of the most careful kind, and always provided with a full granary. Charges in suit the times.

Dawson's Fort Wayne Daily Times
August 13, 1859

WABASH AND ERIE CANAL. — An excellent editorial is found in the *People's Friend* of the 6th inst, a paper published at Covington, Ind, which article it may be well for our people to read.

It begins by alluding to the canal as the first of the Internal Improvements of the State — conceived by the wisest of our earliest statesmen — then to the invaluable character of the valley through which it passes — then to the late danger of its then becoming unused and useless from certain causes, and then to the act of the Legislature authorizing private Companies to organize and rescue it from insultation, &c. &c.

The editor then proceeds to say:

"Under this view of the case, a company was organized, and upon certain conditions leased the Canal to the Trustees, from the Ohio State line to Terre Haute on the Wabash; (the terms to us are immaterial,) and upon the organization of the company under such lease, the Hon. A P. Edgerton of Defiance, Ohio, well and favorably known as a late member of Congress from the North-Western District of Ohio, was selected as Superintendent of the Canal between the above named points. Mr. Edgerton has already set actively in motion all the elements necessary to an efficient repair of the work, and we learn the Canal is already placed in a healthy state down as far as Attica. At Shawnee Creek between here and Attica, where the freshets more than a year ago washed out the feeder dam, and greatly injured the feeder embankments, and which was of absolute necessity to the Canal below; but which under the old dispensation had been suffered to go un-repaired to the immense injury of all the Canal below, is now under the

management of Mr. Edgerton, being energetically prosecuted to a complete repair.

We feel confident of seeing this good old work in a prosperous condition, that these men who have ventured so much of their means to sustain a work which has from year to year for the last five or six years been a source of loss to those to whom the State had transferred it, and under whose management (the State being entrusted in the selection of its best wisdom to control it) if "reports" are true, was a leading concern. We hope the present lessees success (this we wished to the lessors) for the most obvious reasons — First, the old ditch is the very vitals of all the country on both sides of the river from Attica to Terre Haute. Without it we would be placed in a worse condition than when our farmers were forced to wagon their surplus to the Southern end of the Canal at Lafayette — then the tolls thence to Toledo were regulated by public legislation, competition in trade and transportation gave to the farmers fair and reasonable prices, and his only complaint was, the inconvenience, labor and toil to get to market. We say to our farmers, our produce men, and to our merchants, that it is a duty to ourselves, to the people in other portions of the State, but especially in the Wabash Valley, to encourage the present undertaking of the lessees of the Canal, for in the event of a failure to sustain the Canal, we all at once become the victims of an unrestrained monopoly in the shape of Railroad Companies for the transportation of all the surplus produce of this fertile Valley. And mark our work, when that time comes, which we hope not to see, we shall all feel the iron heel of the soulless Railroad Companies, crushing our energies by exactions of the most exorbitant character, in the shape of freight.

We say it is our duty to the people of other portions of the State, that we should sustain this work, for this reason: it is now the only work in which the State has even a remote interest, and it has the capacity to transport your surplus cheaper than can be done by Railroads without loss to the roads. Then while we give support to the Canal, we keep the otherwise controlled avarice of Railroads in check. The influence of the Canal while kept up, will exercise a healthful and beneficial influence to the people all over the State, against the combined action of Railroad Companies to extort from their hard earning exorbitant carrying rates."

Dawson's Fort Wayne Daily Times
August 15, 1859

A Success — The patent canal navigating propeller, a model of which was described in the *Commercial* some time since, has proved a success. The propeller is built separate, to fit into the stern of a canal boat, like a wedge, and while urging that one forward, tows several loaded boats. The patent is owned by Mr. Bryant, engineer of the Western Transportation Company. Yesterday the invention was tested, and proved entirely