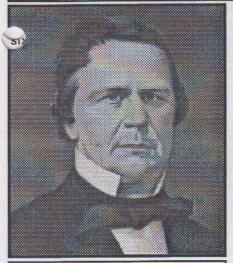
THE HOOSIER PACKET - November 2002



Calvin Fletcher as he appeared to Jacob Cox, a portrait painter in 1833, two years before this event.

Courtesy Indiana Historical Society

Calvin
Fletcher
Attends
Opening of
the Wabash &
Erie Canal
on July 4,
1835

from Fletcher's Diary, edited for explanations by Carl Leiter

Calvin Fletcher [1798-1866] was born in Ludlow, Vermont, February 4, 1798, and headed west in 1817 to establish his career. He studied law in Urbana, Ohio, and after his admission to the bar in 1821, removed to 'ndianapolis then in its first year, before the first land rales. He and his new bride lived in a log cabin off Washington Street two blocks west of the State House when they arrived in Indianapolis, and Indianapolis became their permanent residence.

While Calvin Fletcher was not a great public figure, he did participate in public affairs from the start, serving as prosecuting attorney of the Fifth Judicial Circuit in 1822-23 and 1825-26; and as a state senator from 1826 to 1833 representing Marion, Hendricks, Hamilton and Madison counties with as many as ten central Indiana cities at the time.

The Fletchers arrived in Indianapolis "virtually penniless" in 1821, according to one biographer, and in 1865, the year before his death, he was the highest income taxpayer in the city. Not only was he a member of one of the leading law firms in the state with his partners Simon Yandes and Ovid Butler (founder of Butler University), but he bought land to farm and for speculation to the point that his farming and banking interests led his law practice later in his life. His diary, published by the Indiana Historical Society in 1972 in nine volumes, recounts his keen interests in nature, travel, education, religion and the public welfare.

Fletcher traveled extensively in connection with his land speculations throughout Indiana and his private banking business and family visits to New England

carried him outside the state as well. He is said to have traveled "...on foot, on horseback, by canoe and skiff, by stagecoach and canal boat, and finally by rail." His diary provides us with information on the conveyances he used, the conditions and hazards he encountered, and the accommodations travelers could expect in Indiana's pioneer period through the Civil War. The following account reviews his trip from Indianapolis to Fort Wayne in July, 1835, to participate in the opening of the Wabash and Erie Canal. It is copied verbatim from The Diary of Calvin Fletcher, Volume I, 1817-1838, pp. 260-263, and my explanatory comments were obtained from documentation in Volume I and other sources. These are enclosed in brackets, i.e. [].

(June) 29 Monday. Pleasant. Preparing to go with Messrs. Hand & Stansbury to Ft. Wayne to celebrate 4th of July. [Charles J. Hand with Fletcher and Nicholas McCarty had purchased about a thousand acres of W & E Canal lands in Allen, Huntington & Wabash counties that summer; and Col. Howard Stansbury was an engineer of the U.S. Topographical Bureau who headed the survey for the W & E Canal and other internal improvement projects].

30 June. Mrs. F[letcher] taken very unwell. Doubt the propriety of my leaving home. She has a fever. Send for Dr. Coe who says he thinks I best go. Mr. Hand calls & says he cant leave with us - must attend to other buseness. Write to Messrs. Joe(?) & Drake & prepare to leave with (...). At 9 o clock called on Col. Stansbery who boards at Mr. Hendersons. He is the chief of the Engineer corpse in this State detailed by the W(ar) dep(artment) to run several routes for Railroads, a gent. about 30 formerly imploid as a surveyor with Messrs. Moore & Shriver [both Asa Moore and James Shriver were assigned by Congress to survey the W & E canal route and both came down with Malaria) in the survey of the Wabash & E. canal. We left at 10. Mrs. F. desires me to go but I apprehended she is liable to a severe attack. Very cool. Waters getting down. Corn about waist high in my lot. Garden corn tassling & tasseled. We proceede after an agreeable ride to Pendleton. Very cold - I fear frost. Had a fire made up for us. Called on by Messrs. Silver (who had a hay making at his farm where we passed) Shanklin Mershon & Noble [all four of these men - Thomas Silver, Andrew Shanklin, William H. Mershon and D.S. Noble, were early settlers of Madison County].

July 1st. Some frost. Very cold but no injury to vegetation. Left P[endleton] at sunrise. Rode with a (...) to Andersontown. Breakfasted at A. with Andrew Jackson [a local sheriff who was later a state senator and a farmer and miller of Madison County]. Great complaint of the people of A. that the feeder to W(hite)

R(iver) passed north of the town on the other side of the residing at H. I Breakfasted at Helveys [Joel and River. Left A. at 9 o proceeded up Kill buck 10 miles on Champion Helvey were brothers who were the first the road direct to Marion. Over took Surveyors of Canal settlers at the site of Huntington, Indiana. Their double route. Passed on to Palmers on the summit level & log cabin named the Flint Springs Hotel was a favorite

Cool but pleasant. No flies. Arrived at Lagro about 2 P. glided along. It was with inexpressible delight to all the M. Found Mr. Findly of Richmond candidate for Congress company (among whom were all the engineers Col. Burr [John Finley was running in the Fifth Congressional &c) to glide along upon the Waters that by nature were District, then made up of Allen, Delaware, Fayette, & had been by the Great Architect from the beginning Grant, Henry, Huntington, La Grange, Randolph, Union, designed & used to run into the St. Lawrence now by art Wabash and Wayne counties. Finley was defeated by & science made subservient to the purposes of Jonathan McCarty in the election]. Messrs. Burr & Hugh commerce in the great valley of the Wabash making their Hanner also arrived here. [Hugh Hanna came to Fort way to the Mississippi. Wayne in 1824 and in 1834, with David Burr, platted the town of Wabash and lived there until his death in 1869. His brother Samuel Hanna, 1797-1866, was an Indiana Vermillias 10 ms. from



Samuel Hanna By Morris R. Perry courtesy of Pioneers Resting in Historic Lindenwood

state legislator in the Ft. 32; and 1840-41) and County in the Indiana Senate 1832-35. 1820s and was a farmer He was a delegate to the and Indian trader. Wayne, Indiana]. Here about fourteen we dined & fed & at 3 southwest Stansbery.

July 3d. We left & proceeded with Genl. Tipton who made canal surveys along the canal line to Huntington at the locks East of in Ohio as a young man that place. [John Tipton, 1786-1839, was born in and Tennessee in 1786 and served under William Henry engineer for the Wabash Harrison at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811. He was a & Erie Canal in 1835. He public figure in Indiana, serving as a Democrat in the became chief engineer Indiana H. of Reps. and was Indian Agent of the Miami for all canals of Indiana Indians at the agency in Fort Wayne which he led in projected in the internal moving to the town he helped found, Logansport, in improvement program, 1828. Tipton was elected U.S. Senator of Indiana and and in 1837 all roads and served 1832-39. He died in 1839 and is buried in Mt. railroads were put under Hope Cemetery, Logansport, Indiana. Tipton County is his direction as well.] among those sites named for him.] The canal is finished Arrived within 5 or 6 miles of the place of destination &

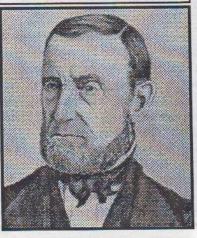
arrived at Marion about Sundown. There found a Dr. tavern of 1835.] At 10 we left the lock accompanied by Trask from Vt. & staid with him over night [Dr. Ezra 2 boats beside the one we were in one loaded to the very Stiles Trask who came to Marion two years earlier and top with Deer & fur skins. About 50 ladies & 100 was Grant County's third physician]. Could not procure gentlemen. Saml. Hanner Esq. on the part of a grain for horses. Dr. had a pleasant family. Breakfasted. committee of arrangements at Ft. W. was present & accompanied us. At first the boat grounded inasmuch as 2d July. & proceeded to Lagro on the Wabash. the water had not been let in from above --- but we soon

> dined Wayne. House (1826-27, 1831- Vermilyea came to Allen Republican National Con- was a director of the Fort vention from Indiana in Wayne branch of the 1856, was a Presby- State Bank and ran the terian and a Freemason Vermilyea House which who is buried in Linden- was a hotel on the wood Cemetery in Fort Wabash & Erie Canal miles Fort oclock left for Hunting- Wayne.] Left V.'s & soon don where we staid met J. Williams principal Pioneers overnight. Mrs. Burr & Enginear who had been Hanner with their childrin up for 2 nights to watch came up. Slep with Col. the embankments of the canal. [This was Jesse L. Williams, 1807- 1886,



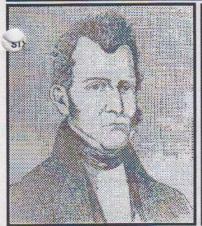
Jesse Vermilvea Drawings by Morris R. Perry courtesy of Resting in Lindenwood Cemetery.

Jesse Lynch Williams



to Ft. W(ayne) 25 Ms. Here we Breakfasted. Met with met several companies of Gents. from Ft. W. and within a millitary company commanded by Capt. Fate a Dr. a 1/2 m. a company of melish (militia) who marched us

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Jean Baptiste de Richardville John Tipton Pictures courtesy Bert J. Griswald The Pictorial History of Fort Wayne Indiana.

Francis LaFontaine

into town the canal not being compleated with ½ m. I Tipton's real estate agent in Huntington where he settled was invited by Mr. A. Hamilton with Genl. Tipton to in 1830. He served three terms in the Indiana legislature, spend our time with him as we were all (...) out among was a member of the Constitutional Convention of Indian the neighbors. [Allen Hamilton was a Fort Wayne in 1850 and was also superintendent of Indian Affairs for merchant and Indian trader who invested in Indian lands Wisconsin and Minnesota.] and later became a banker. He was Commissioner of the Miami Treaty of 1840 in which the Miami Nation gave up their remaining tribal lands in Indiana except arrived at Col. [...] at Miamis town [opposite Peru,

Meshingomesia's Reserve on the Mississinewa River near Indianal at Sundown. Marion. It was in this "Treaty of the Forks" the Miamis areed to go west of the Mississippi within five years. Lafountain's Reserve #6 where Kokomo now is was set Breakfasted & went to Logansport. Done some business aside for Francis Lafountain, son-in-law of Chief J.B. & left there at 3 P.M. and came to Stipps or rather Richardville in the Miami Treaty of 1840, and Allen Stocktons at Wild cat. [David Stipp platted Burlington Hamilton acquired it, holding title to it from 21 October due south of Logansport on Wildcat Creek in 1828, and 1841 to 17 January 1844 when he sold it to David opened a tavern he built there in 1833.] Foster, doubling his investment. David Foster platted and named the town Kokomo for a local Miami chief

McCafferty,

<mmccaffe@indiana.edu>.]

Michael

by salutes. At 9 the companies of milish & all interested rode home with me where we arrived at about dark. formed & marched to the canal where 5 boats were ----prepared to carry the company up to the St. Joseph feeder 6 miles accompanied with music. Cols. Spencer This concludes Calvin Fletcher's adventure from gave a toast &c & the boats were turned back at 12 & home. we arrived at Ft. W. at 2. Went to the court house. Mr. -----McCullock delivered a good oration. After which a dinner Carl Leiter, CSI member from Kokomo, prepared this December 1808 and as a young lawyer in 1835 became Packet. cashier of the State Bank, Fort Wayne branch. He (ventually became president of the Bank of the State of Indiana, chartered in 1855, and President Lincoln appointed him as U.S. Comptroller of Currency. He served as Secretary of the Treasury under President

Andrew Johnson. McCulloch died 24 May 1895 and was buried in Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, D.C.]

July 5 Sunday morning. Left in canal boat with company that came up from Huntington & arrived at H. at 9 o clock P. M. Genl. Tipton & myself staid at Capt. Murrys. [Elias Murray was

July 6. Left Huntington at 9 & with Genl. T.

July 7th. Arrived at Genl. T. at 9 o c(lock). A.M.

8 July, Left Stocktons & came to Mich(i)gan named Mahkokima (Bear Chief) as analyzed in 2002 by town. Breakfasted at Mrs. Johnson. Arrived at Miami linguist: e-mail: McQuedys [Hiram McQuiddy/McQuitty was an early settler of Union Township in Boone County and a merchant in the village of Northfield] at 2 P.M. where (July 4). The morning of the 4th was ushered in there was a show. Met 200 people. Mr. Quarles who

& Bourie were the officers of the day. At the feeder dam Indianapolis to Fort Wayne to attend the July 4, 1835 all debarked. Col. Burr made a speech & Genl. Tipton opening of the Wabash and Erie Canal and his return

was had and after that toasts. [Hugh McCulloch was story for the history series on the Kokomo Library only 26 years of age at the time. He was born 7 website and made it available for use in The Hoosier

