

CANAWLERS AT REST

DAVID GUARD

b. 1788
d. June 22, 1850

By Charles A. Whiting, Jr.

Researching the Whitewater Canal for his master's thesis at Ball State University, Don Burden found that David Guard contracted for Sections 6 and 7 of the canal on May 3, 1837. His research also shows payment to Guard and Company for this work. After reading his paper I, Chuck Whiting, decided to find out more about David Guard.

In 1790, Alexander Guard, his wife Hanna and their four children, whose names were Timothy, David (our subject), Ezra and Bailey, landed at the settlement of North Bend in the Northwest Territory (later Ohio) after emigrating from New Jersey. This was the year after the first settlers arrived there and one and a half years after the settlers arrived at what is now Cincinnati. They stayed a few years and in 1793 moved to Hayes Station at the mouth of the Great Miami River. At the time the area known as the "Big Bottom" was not really safe for families. After a few more years there they moved to Dearborn County, Indiana, in 1796.

Although three of the Guard brothers lived on farms in the Big Bottom, David Guard married Beulah Miller, the daughter of Thomas Miller, who was also an early settler of the valley, and they resided in Lawrenceburg. They were the parents of twelve children. At least two of these children died at young ages. Their sons Silas died on October 11, 1824 at the age of fourteen and David died on March 26, 1834, in his fourth year. The boys are buried in the Guard Family Cemetery.

In 1802 Captain Samuel C. Vance founded the town of Lawrenceburg in Dearborn County. It became the seat of justice in 1803 and is Indiana's fourth oldest city. Lawrenceburg grew rapidly from the year 1812 to 1820. According to an 1885 history David Guard was

one of its principal businessmen in a list of 35.

Guard was also one of thirteen men of enterprise who began the New Orleans trade via river flatboats. "They bought up all the surplus produce, paying for it in silver money, and that too when people needed it the most. Jacob Hays, (one of the thirteen) was a very active and prominent trader on the river (Ohio and Mississippi Rivers) from 1820 to 1848, having from two-five flatboats on the river at any one time." Guard continued in flatboating for twenty-five years.

Besides Guard's interest in the New Orleans trade in 1820, that year he was also a director of the Farmers and Mechanics Bank, the first banking institution of the early village of Lawrenceburg. On January 6, 1820, he opened his home to the ladies of the town for a meeting at which they organized a female Sunday School.

On January 4, 1830, Guard attained the lease for a saline spring in Dearborn County from the State of Indiana. The tenants were allowed to remain on the property. In the papers of Noah Noble this is mentioned as a dispute over ownership with the tenants who were later trying to purchase it from the government.

Guard served in the Indiana State House from 1833-34, lost for State representative in 1834, and was elected again for 1836-37. He was an anti-Jackson Whig.

Guard is mentioned in Calvin Fletcher's Diary as the Dearborn County representative for reorganizing the state bank. On January 9, 1834 he had dinner with Governor Noah Noble and other Indiana legislators concerning state banking. In 1834 the second State Bank of Indiana was chartered with ten branches, one of which was in Lawrenceburgh. He became the director of that branch.

In a letter written to Indiana Senator John Tipton on January 13, 1834, Guard urged the senator to seek federal aid for a canal or railroad in the Whitewater Valley. He stated that if Congress did not react favorably it "surely will not charge us for asking — in as much as all states are in the habit of begging." Previously President Andrew Jackson had vetoed similar legislation (Maysville Road in Kentucky, May 1830) saying that it was of regional versus national interest.

Following his stint in the State House, Guard became a Whitewater Canal contractor. His May 3, 1837 contract included a road bridge and culvert of 8 ft. chord in Section 6 and a waste weir and culvert of 8 ft. chord in Section 7. The latter being the culvert known as Possum Run Culvert along Oberting Road in Green-

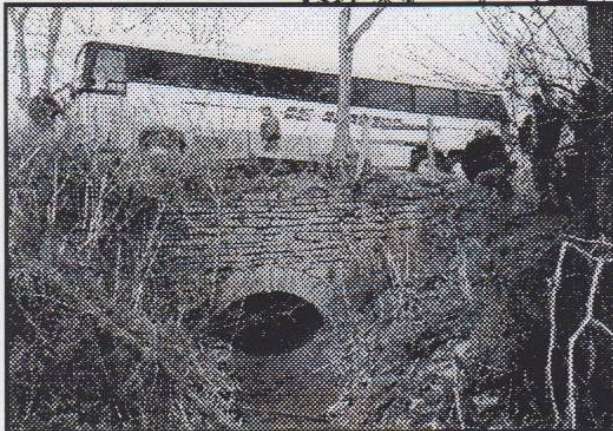
A PORTION OF
DEARBORN COUNTY
INDIANA

1786
Illustrated Historical Atlas by
Baskin, Forster & Co.

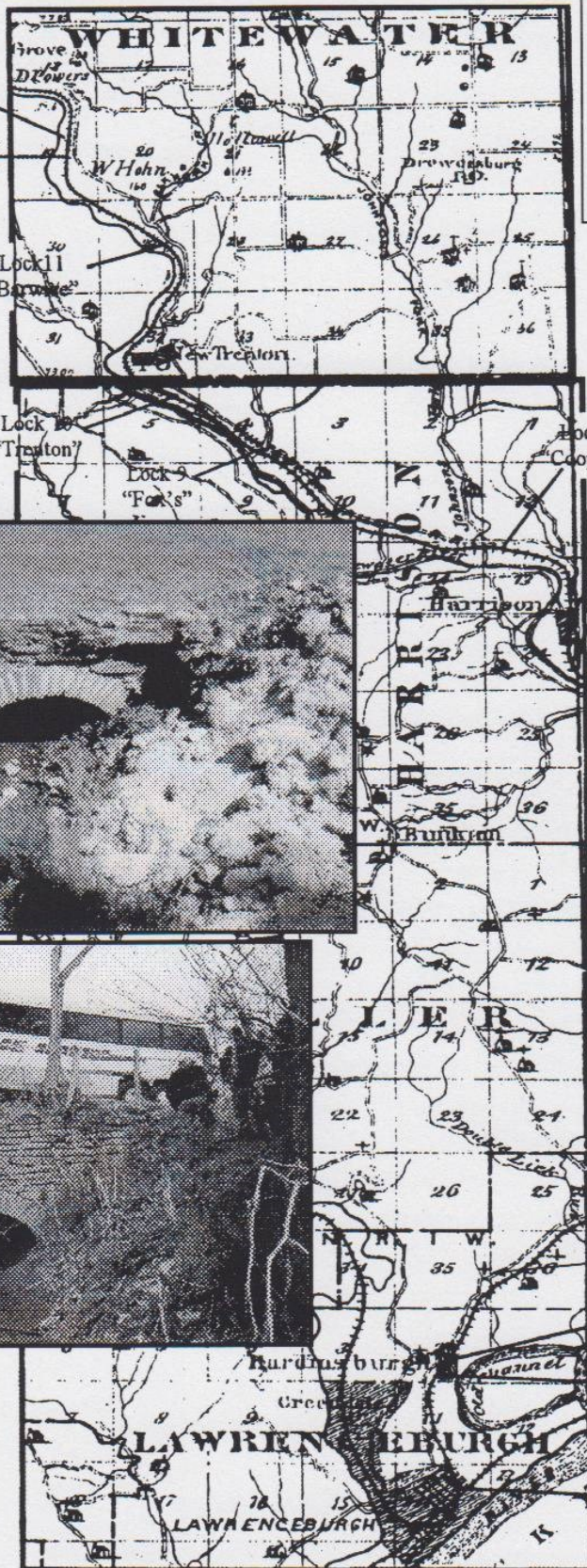
**POSSUM RUN
CULVERT**

Top: Northwest facing
Oberting Road
Bottom: Southeast facing
toward Ohio and
Ohio River

Photos by Bob Schmidt



Map by Bob Schmidt



dale, Indiana. Those attending the "Canal Passages" fall tour in 2006 saw this culvert.

Although Guard was not a church member, he was a Methodist by faith. He also was a merchant and a farmer.

Notice of David Guard's death was in the June 22, 1850 newspaper without additional details. He is probably buried in the Guard Family Cemetery located on Whispering Woods Drive, in Greendale, Indiana, near the section of canal for which he contracted. Many of the stones in the cemetery are down or partially buried. Most likely there are many other stones that are completely lost. We know two of his children are buried there. Burials were made there from 1824 to 1885.

Sources:

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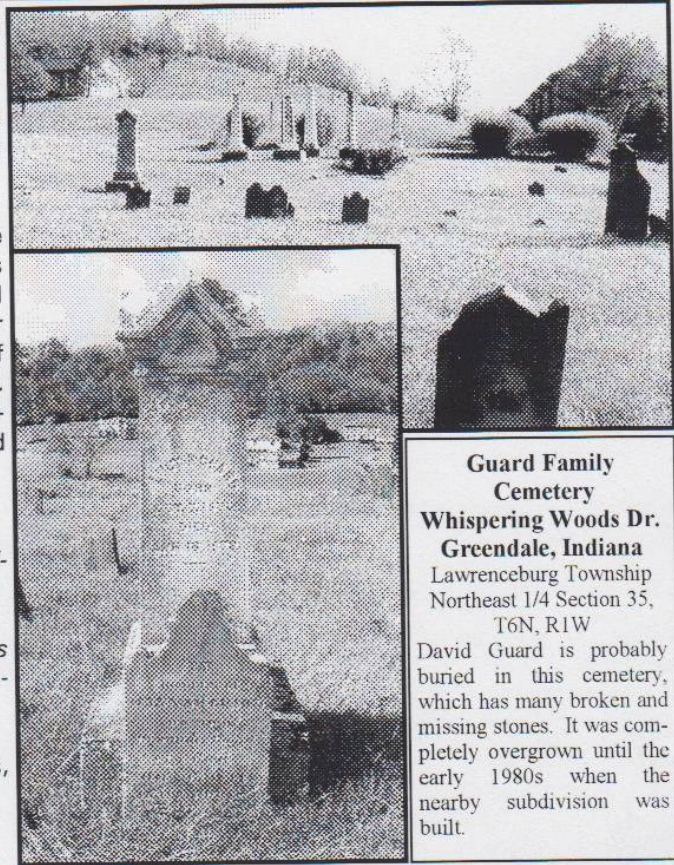
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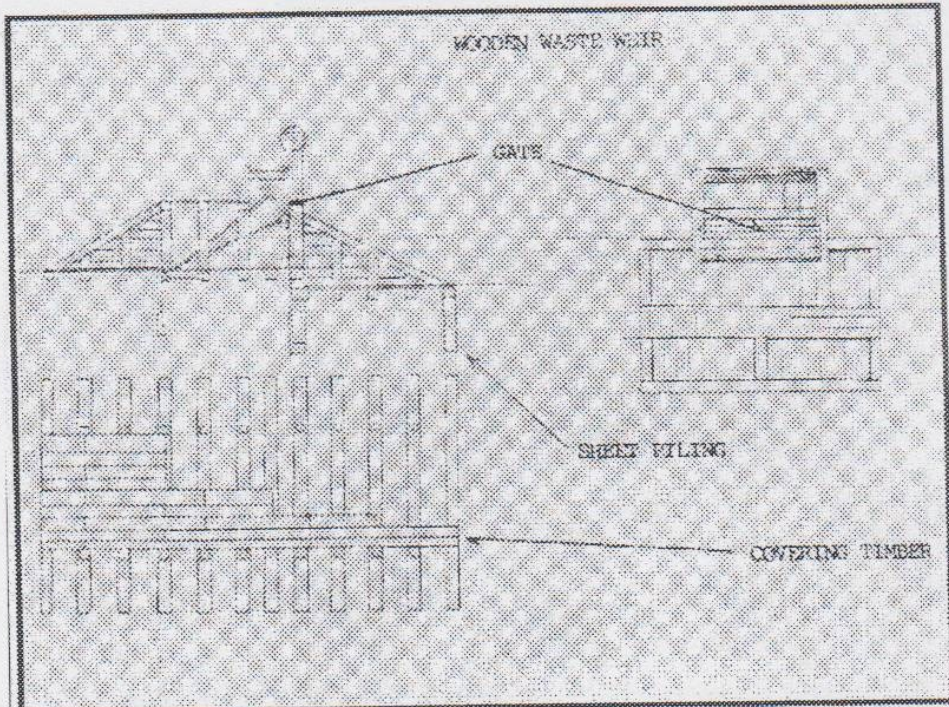
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Guard Family Cemetery
Whispering Woods Dr.
Greendale, Indiana
 Lawrenceburg Township
 Northeast 1/4 Section 35,
 T6N, R1W

David Guard is probably buried in this cemetery, which has many broken and missing stones. It was completely overgrown until the early 1980s when the nearby subdivision was built.



A wooden waste weir was a structure that was built into the canal bank to allow a controlled amount of water out of the canal channel. This device kept the channel at the proper depth. When heavy rains came the canal filled up with water and the extra water pressure could cause breaches in the canal if not released. The gates of the weir could be raised or lowered.

Diagram by Stan Schmitt