CANAWLERS AT REST

MINOR **MEEKER**

b. July 5, 1795 d. May 10, 1865

By Carolyn I. Schmidt

Orange County, New York, was the birthplace of orably discharged after only 3 months of service.

Following the war Meeker went to Steuben could be seen within two years. County, New York, and learned the tanning business from Allen Boardman. After he completed his apprentime he covered the 150 miles in three days.

with Minor Thomas and a number of families from other finally begins after ground was broken on September New England States started for the frontier. Minor 13, 1836. Meeker and Minor Thomas were ministers in the Regular Baptist Church and were called Elder Meeker and Elder Thomas. They went from Olean on the Allegany the White Water River was built at Connersville in Fay-River, then down the Ohio River by flatboat until they ette County. Minor Meeker, H. B. Woodcock and James reached a point about five miles above Cincinnati. They Veatch were its builders. It stood until 1887. stayed there until July. Meeker was the pilot on the nine day voyage. Then they went overland under the leaderfor Mr. Rees in the tanning trade for which he had stud- 1847 the Hagerstown Canal Company completes the

ied.

According to the Indiana State Library Genealogy Database, Rachel Thomas, the daughter of Elder Thomas, married Elder Minor Meeker on January 9, 1820. Rachel was born in Tompkins County, New York, on April 21, 1799. The couple lived on the farm of Elder Thomas. They had two children. Marcella was born on October 23, 1823. Chester C. was born on July 27,

Meeker bought an 80 acre farm on Big Williams Creek in Harrison Township near a saw mill. He built a log cabin on his newly acquired land and moved into it before it was finished. He then began clearing the land and farmed it. He also had a tan-yard on it around 1835. He tanned leather during the summer and during the slower months of winter made shoes and boots from the leather. He later owned the saw mill. He also was a distiller.

Meeker was always interested in public improve-Minor Meeker. He was born on July 5, 1795. When he ments such as the Whitewater Canal. Resolutions and was only two years old he was orphaned. At the age of proposals for internal improvements for Indiana were 10 he went to Seneca County, New York. He was brought before the general assembly of 1825-26. The drafted into the United States service at age 18 to fight lawmakers incorporated the Whitewater Canal Company with a regiment from New York in the War of 1812, at the request of southeastern residents. There were Shouldering his gun in the fall of 1813 he marched to forty thousand shares of capital stock at twenty-five Niagara under the command of Colonel Swift, who had dollars each. The company could sell the stock and rebeen an officer in the Revolutionary War. He was hon- ceive land or money from the United States or any other state. It was to be overseen by seven directors. The incorporation would be nullified if no work or progress

In 1834 the Indiana General Assembly ordered a ticeship, he took a job as a boat pilot for the lumber in- survey for the Whitewater Canal from Nettle Creek to dustry traveling 150 miles between Elmira, N. Y., and Lawrenceburg. The survey shows the canal needs to go Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Back then boats only went around the hills in southeastern Indiana thus extending downstream so he had to walk on the return trip. One into Ohio. In 1835 the General Assembly requests permission to construct part of the Whitewater Canal in Ohio. Ohio passes a law in 1836 agreeing to the re-In 1819 at the age of 24 Minor Meeker along quest. In 1836 construction of the Whitewater Canal

Between 1838 and 1842 the first bridge over

By 1839 the Whitewater Canal was completed ship of Minor Thomas to the "New Purchase" located in from Brookville to Lawrenceburg, but a stop order on the western part of Harrison Township in the newly most internal improvement projects was issued by Indicreated Fayette County (January 1, 1819) out of Frank- ana. Work did not resume on the canal until 1842. It lin and Wayne Counties They called their settlement was completed to Laurel by 1843, to Connersville in Yankeetown. Meeker settled in Connersville and worked June 1845, and to Cambridge City in October 1845. In

THE HOOSIER PACKET - APRIL 2007

Cambridge City to Hagerstown. That same year serious was prominent in actively shaping legislation. damage was done to the canal by floods. The repair bill that year was \$100,000 and another in 1848 from floods was \$80,000. In 1865 the White Water Valley the Whitewater Canal was built as did many other Canal Company property was sold to the president of atowns in the Whitewater Valley for about 25 years. the Indianapolis and Cincinnati Railroad, and the canal Slaughtering and packing pork became the principal intowpath later becomes the rail-bed for the White Water dustry in Connersville. In 1856 a farmer was paid \$6 a Railroad Company.

Seeking public office, Meeker had established a several of these large pork firms. good record and was so popular in Fayette County that he was never defeated in any election. He was elected by the county to the Indiana House of Representatives 1853, its stock holders included Minor Meeker, Newton in 1841 and served in the twenty-sixth and twenty- Claypool. L. D. Allen Henry Goodlander, Josiah Mullikin, seventh sessions. He was elected again in 1845 and Henry Simpson and Meredith Helm. The bank was loserved in the thirtieth and thirty-first sessions.

When the State of Indiana chartered the White Water Canal Company, which oversaw the completion of the canal to Cambridge City from Lawrenceburg in nersville in 1852. It was quite a success. Later at the 1845, Minor Meeker was one of its directors. The third annual fair in 1854 Minor Meeker, along with Alex Hagerstown Extension was completed by 1847. The ca- Heron and many other men, acted as a judge. nal provided residents of the Whitewater Valley an easy way to get their produce and goods to the Ohio River.

Meeker was elected to the Indiana Senate in at the time of his death. 1852 to represent Harrison and Union Counties and served in the thirty-seventh and thirty-eighth sessions Some of Minor Meeker's land purchases:

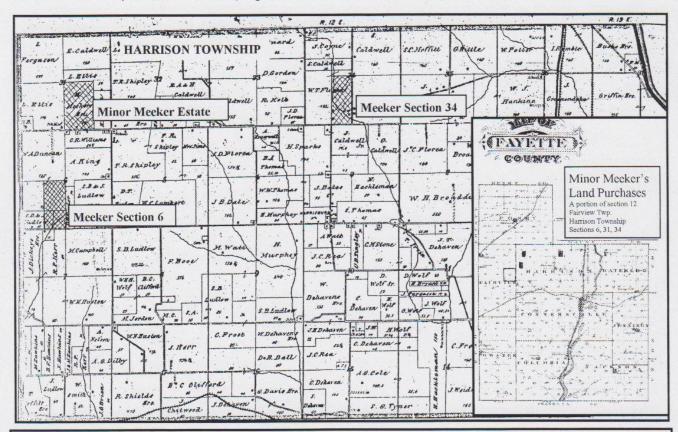
Hagerstown extension of the Whitewater Canal from (1853-1857). In both the Indiana House and Senate he

Connersville did a large business in pork once hundred. Along with all his other concerns, Meeker was in the pork trade and had extensive connections with

When the Fayette County Bank was opened in cated on the southeast corner of Central Avenue and Fourth Street in Connersville.

The first Fayette County Fair was held in Con-

Meeker acquired extensive land during his lifetime. He was one of the township's largest landowners



www.Indcanal.org

Page 4

Indcanal@aol.com

THE HOOSIER PACKET - APRIL 2007

March 20, 1821

Section 6 Harrison Township described as the east half of the southwest quarter of Section 6 along with William Brick, John I. Johnson, Hugh Dickey, David Anderson, and Ira Starr

Between 1820-1832

Section 12 of Fairview Township 4 North Range 11 East Was purchased by Minor Meeker along with James Smith, John Darter, Daniel Campbell, David Scott, Philip Bilby and Samuel Davis.

Between 1821-1822

Section 31 of Harrison Township 15 North Range 12 East along with William and Hugh Dickey, John Dailey and Ebenezer W. Finey and Collen Smith in 1822.

Prior to 1835

sawmill

purchase. Rachel died March 1, 1881.

1851. She died in 1852. He then married Ann J. John- house looks like it could have been a lodge building as son in 1856. Chester and Ann had six children.

Paulette Hays at the Connersville library found in Old Cemeteries Of Fayette County that Minor Meeker after Minor's death in May. Later when Geise's purwas buried at what is now Williams/Shortridge Ceme- chased Chester's house, they tore down Minor's old tery. At one time there was a Second Regular Baptist house as well as a barn on each side of the road. Ches-Williams Creek, but the building was disassembled, miles south and 1/2 mile east. moved to Tennessee and a substation built on its site. The cemetery is west of the substation through a field Sources: and into the woods and is in the NW corner of the Special thanks to Jerry and Phyllis Mattheis, CSI members from Cam-Moffitt farm, on a hill overlooking Williams Creek. Yan- bridge City, Indiana, for contacting Paulette Hays and the Greises to keetown used to be nearby at the crossroads at 400 get information on Minor's burial place and where he once lived. North and had a school.

Malcom and Thelma Geise, who have lived near the cemetery for 70 years, recorded what they could tries and Institutions. Indianapolis, IN: B. F. Bowen & Company, Inc. 1917. read on 13 stones that were left on March 19, 1973. They found that the iron fence that once surrounded the Indianapolis, IN: Wm. B. Burford, Contractor for State Printing and Binding. graveyard has been stolen over the years and most of 1902. the stones are in the ground covered with dirt. The Esarey, Logan. History of Indiana From Its Exploration To 1922. Cayton, OH: stones give the following information:

Minor Meeker was 69y, 10m, 5 days.

Minor's daughter Marsella, who died April 18, 1850 was 26y, 5m. 25 days.

vember 2, 1852 was 26 y 7 m l day.

Mary Johnston charter member of the church

David and Phebe Thomas charter members of the



Chester Meeker's home on 400 N west of 450 W in Fayette Photo by Phyllis Mattheis county is now occupied the Geises.

church.

The Geises live in a house that was built by Mi-Section 34 Harrison Township, 80 acres of land near nor's son, Chester, after 1852 when he bought his father's farm. While it was being built he lived in Minor's old home across the road. Chester's home was most un-Minor Meeker died May 10, 1865, had lived in usual with double pillars on each side of the foyer en-Fayette county for 46 years and on his farm since its trance door and other single pillars on the front, two doors, a side porch with pillars, and a ballroom upstairs. Inside the walnut front entrance has a walnut banister Chester C. Meeker married Susan A. Budd in and newel post on a self-supported winding stairs. The the stairs ascend to the large room upstairs.

Chester sold his house on November 13, 1865 Church on CR 450 West, north of CR 300 North, near ter Kerr, one of Minor's great grandchildren, lives two

An Illustrated Historical Atlas of Fayette County, Indiana. Chicago, IL: Higgins Belden & Company, 1875.

Barrows, Frederic Irving. History of Fayette County, Indiana: Her People, Indus-

Biennial Report of Union B. Hunt, Secretary of State of the State of Indiana.

Dayton Historical Publishing Co. 1922.

Fatout, Paul. Indiana Canals. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press. 1972.

Fayette Co. IN Marriages 1819-1845. http://www.rootsquest.com/%7Eindiana/ fayette/marriage/1819gr-m.html

Minor's son Chester's first wife Susan, who died No- History of Fayette County, Indiana. Chicago, IL: Warner, Beers & Company.

Marriages Through 1850. Indiana State Library Genealogy Database. $http://199.8.200.229/db/marriages_display.asp?ID = 182903$

Indcanal@aol.com Page 5 www.Indcanal.org