

# CANAWLERS AT REST

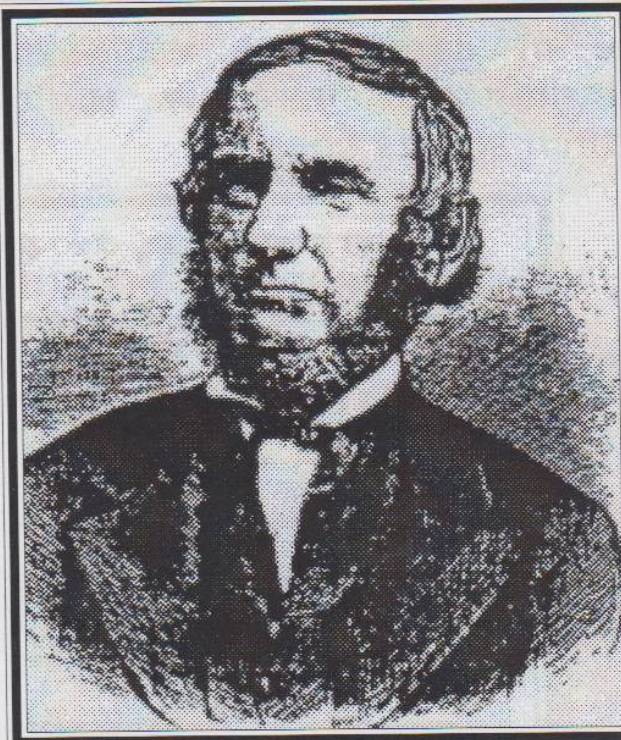
## MARCUS SHERWOOD

**b. May 28, 1803**

**d. Feb. 10, 1880**

**By Carolyn I. Schmidt**

Photo from History of Vanderburgh County, IN.



Marcus Sherwood was born in Munroe, Fairfield county, Connecticut on May 28, 1803, to David Sherwood, a stone-mason and a member of the Connecticut Legislature. While Marcus was growing up he worked for his father during the summer and attended school during the winter. Although his father wanted him to become a blacksmith's apprentice, Marcus chose to go to Indiana after hearing the account of his uncle's visit there.

Marcus and uncle started for his new home. After spending 58 days driving an ox-team to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, they arrived with both man and beast worn out. His uncle went in with a group of friends and purchased a flat-boat. They loaded the boat with all their possessions and floated down the Ohio river to Evansville, Indiana, arriving on June 6, 1819.

When Marcus landed at Evansville, he only had two dollars in his pocket. He took a job as a day laborer and earned both fifty cents a day and the reputation as a "first-class hand." Over time he accumulated enough funds to purchase his own flat-boat. With this boat he made 28 trips to New Orleans, as deck-hand and proprietor. This was a profitable business. He invested the capital earned in Evansville real estate and speculated in pork and produce.

In 1831 original subscriptions were taken from those desiring a Presbyterian Meeting House in Evansville. The brick building was to be 30 x 50 feet with walls 18 feet tall having 8 windows with forty lights in

each of glass 10" x 12", two doors, a jointed floor and a good roof. Marcus pledged \$10 toward the project.

In 1834 Marcus married Prudence Johnson (b. 1808), the eldest daughter of Alexander and Mary Johnson, Esq., pioneers in Evansville. Marcus and Prudence had one child, a son named William B. (b. March 24, 1836), who grew to manhood in Evansville attending its public schools. Prudence died in 1870.

On November 11, 1834, the first board of directors of the Evansville National Bank was held. Marcus was one of ten directors. They elected John Mitchell president and John Douglas cashier.

Marcus was an advocate and a contractor on the Central/Wabash & Erie Canal and the levee. He was given great credit for his excellent work on both. He participated in other public works, such as the poor asylum where in 1838 he served as a commissioner along with John W. Lilliston and John Mitchell in purchasing a farm on which to erect the building.

In 1839 Marcus took a big chance and built a 40 x 100 foot hotel called the Sherwood House. At the time others thought it would not succeed. It was Evansville's leading hotel and advertised being only one block from the steamboat landing on the Ohio river.

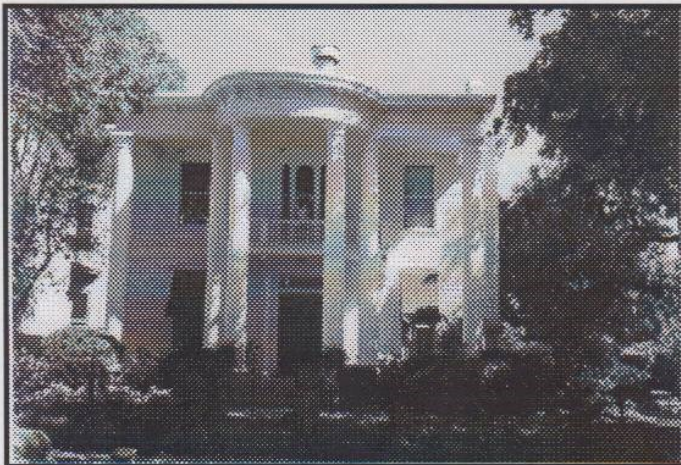
In March 1848, Marcus along with John Mitchell and Moses Ross entered into a contract with the city of Evansville to grade the Ohio river bank and complete a



wharf having frontage on five squares, a length of nearly 2,000 feet. This was considered a great work and an important step forward in the commercial history of the city.

In 1851, the Cumberland Presbyterian Church erected a church at the corner of Second and Chestnut streets in Evansville. Marcus was among those who gave toward the building. A portion of it burned but was rebuilt. The rapid growth of the congregation soon caused the old church to be inadequate.

Marcus became one of Evansville's wealthiest citizens and contributed generously to the Cumberland Church and its colleges. In 1876 they built a new church opposite the old one on Second and Chestnut streets. The modern Gothic style building with its main 61 x 75 foot auditorium, which could seat 700, a pastor's study, parlors, etc. cost \$50,000. Marcus contributed \$12,000 toward it. It was dedicated on September 30, 1877.



The home of Marcus Sherwood still stands in Evansville a few blocks from the Ohio River. Photos by Bob Schmidt

Marcus died on February 10, 1880. He was known as an active, energetic man and had the confidence and respect of the entire community. He was laid to rest in Section 2, Lot 56, Grave 15 at Oak Hill Cemetery in Evansville, Indiana. The Central/Wabash & Erie Canal once ran at the base of the hill along Oak Hill road.

When Marcus died in 1880, his son William took over the proprietorship of the Sherwood House and concerned himself principally with its management and the management of the estate he inherited. William had married Johanna A. Marlett (b. July 23, 1838) on November 24, 1879 prior to Marcus' death. He and Johanna had two children: Burton W. and Marcus M.

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FREE OMNIBUS to and from the Depot.

Above: The Sherwood House offered free omnibus transportation to and from the depot.

Below: The entrance to Oak Hill Cemetery is at the foot of the hill close to where the Central/Wabash & Erie Canal once flowed.



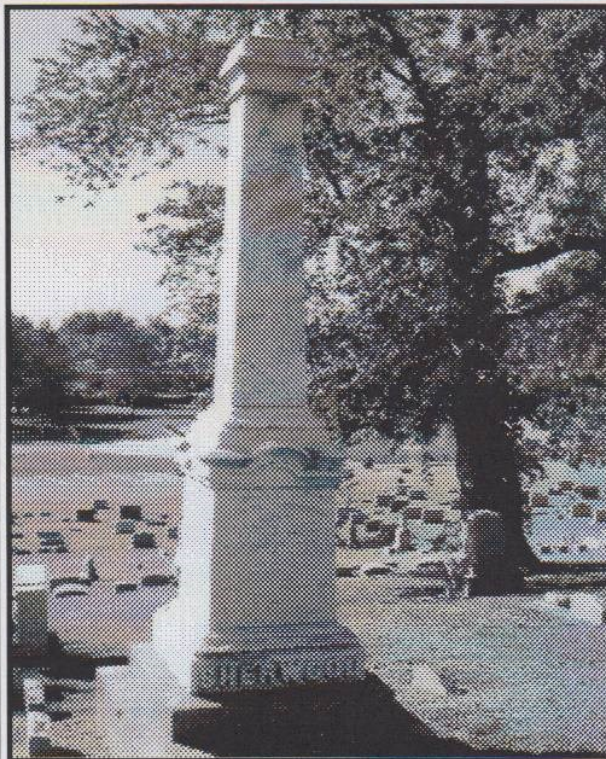
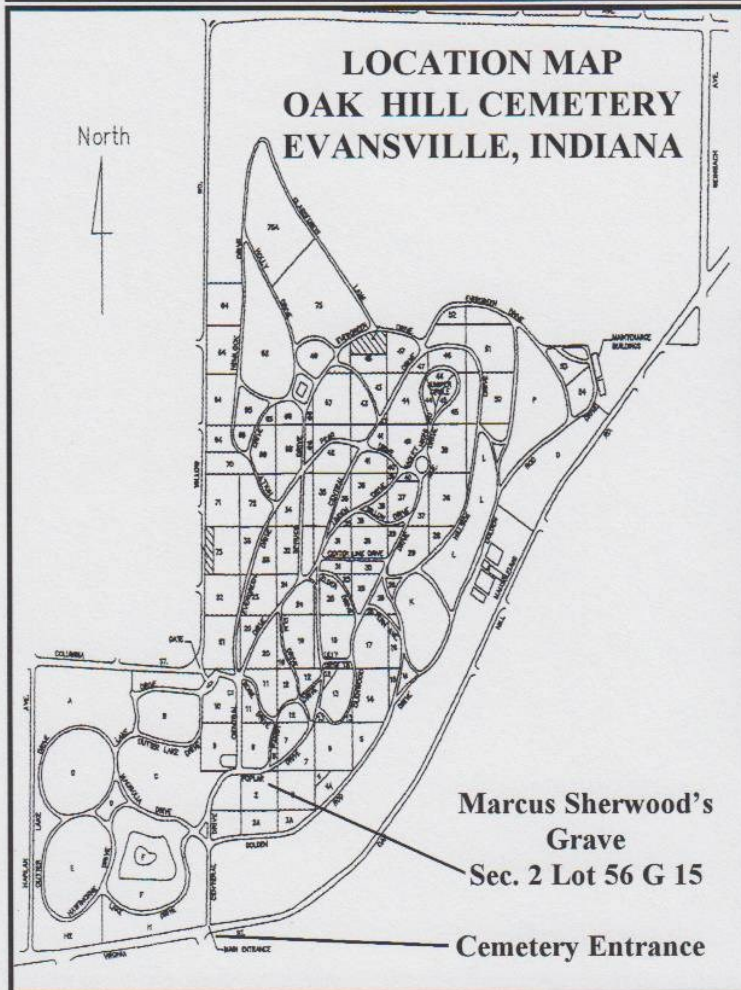
#### SOURCES:

History of Vanderburgh County, Indiana. Brandt & Fuller. 1889.

McCutchan, Kenneth P. At The Bend In The River: The Story Of Evansville. Windsor Publications. 1982.

Peckinpugh, Jane. Superintendent of Cemeteries, City of Evansville, Oak Hill Cemetery, 1400 East Virginia, Evansville, IN 47711.





Above: This stone marks the grave of Marcus Sherwood, his wife and other family members in Oak Hill Cemetery in Evansville, IN. The west side with the information about Marcus is so weathered that it is almost impossible to read.

Photos by Bob Schmidt

### MAUMEE VALLEY HERITAGE CORRIDOR

"Way Down on the Maumee River" was the title of the presentation given by Steve Pollick, Outdoor Editor of the **Toledo Blade**, at the MVHC annual meeting held at Otsego Stone Hall in Grand Rapids, OH, on November 11, 2004. He showed slides of the canoe trip he made 20 years ago down the full length of the Maumee River from its headwaters at the confluence of the St. Joseph and St. Marys Rivers in downtown Fort Wayne to Lake Erie at Toledo. Dick Kudner, president of MVHC, reported on its accomplishments in 2004.

### MVHC

Below: Dick Kudner, Maumee Valley Heritage Corridor president (l), introduced Steve Pollick, Outdoor Editor of the **Toledo Blade** at the annual meeting.

Below left: The MVHC meeting was attended by CSI members from Indiana— Jim & Ruth Ellis, Don & Betty Haack, and Bob & Carolyn Schmidt— and from Ohio—Dick & Martha Kudner.

Photos by Bob Schmidt

