

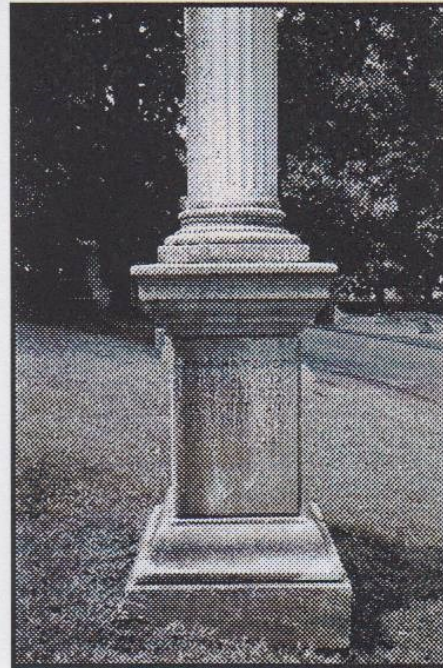
# CANAWLERS AT REST

## BENJAMIN B. TOWER

b. September 20, 1819  
d. September 26, 1872

By Carolyn Schmidt

Photo by Bob Schmidt



Benjamin H. Tower was born on September 20, 1819. He was a native of Michigan. He moved to Fort Wayne, Indiana during the 1830s. He dealt in lumber and manufactured furniture. During the days of the Wabash & Erie Canal he was connected with it for a time as paymaster.

1840-1856: Tower was appointed Ft. Wayne fire chief. He was succeeded by S. C. Freeman.

1849: Pliny Hoagland and Benjamin H. Tower contracted with the Board of Trustees of the Wabash & Erie Canal to rebuild Lock No. 2 located 8 miles East of Fort Wayne, upon the wooden crib plan. This lock is better known as the Gronauer Lock after the locktender Joseph Gronauer. Jesse Lynch Williams, Chief Engineer of all of Indiana's canals, was to be the inspector of the work. The rebuild was to be "fully completed" on or before the tenth day of March, 1850. The contract was signed by P. Hoagland, B. H. Tower, and Tho. H. Blake. The contract included a list of rates or prices:

For square oak timber in cribs including posts, braces, hollow quoins, and the top course of ties per lineal foot, sixteen and a half cents (16½ cts)

For round ties including round timber in cribs per lineal foot nine cents (9 cts)

For jointing and putting on 2 inch oak plank on cribs or floors, per superficial foot, three and a half cents (3½ cts)

For spikes used in planking on cribs or floor per pound, seven cents (7 cts)

For excavation around cribs, including removal of stone in old cribs per cubic yard, twenty eight cents (28 cts)

For embankment around lock including filling cribs, per cubic yard twenty-eight cents (28 cts)

For removing old timber in lock, per lineal foot, four cents (4 cts)

The above prices to cover the cost of removing and replacing old lock gates if this be necessary and also the bailing of water if required.

Specifications for building a crib lock were as follows:

The crib will consist of a front and back wall connected by round ties. The timber for the front walls and also for the cross walls, will be got out Square, and before putting together they must be neatly counter-hewn on three sides; that for the back walls will only require planing hewing on three sides. The top courses of the front walls will be 14 inches wide, and must be neatly counter-hewn; the upper front corner beveled off, and the lower front corner rabbeted, to receive the plank.

The ties will be framed with dove tails at both ends, but the gain for the front end must not be cut entirely through the wall — the top courses of ties will be hewn square. The ties in the chamber cribs should average 9 feet apart from centre to centre in each course. From the crosswalls at the hollow quoins to the cross walls at the upper ends of the recess, one tie to each in each course, will be required. In the cribs below the lower gates, one tie will be put in each course. Each course of timbers will be firmly secured to the one next below it, with tree nails 20 inches long and 1½ inches in diameter, to be put in 10 feet apart throughout the entire length of the walls. As often as 16 or 18 feet a post, 1 foot square, will be set up against the back wall, firmly secured to the foundation timber by a dovetail tenon and key, supported by a brace of similar dimensions, footing into the foundation stick immediately back of the front wall; both ends of the brace will be secured by tenons and pins.

The foundation timbers will be laid on a bed of good puddle 3 inches deep, and will be brought to the proper level by using a heavy commander, or maul, after which it will not do to



raise them without renewing the puddling.

Immediately under each mitre sill a ditch will be cut, three feet deep, sloping on the sides and coming to an edge at the bottom, in the centre of which 2 inch oak plank sheet piling side jointed will be set up, having the edges brought close together, after which the ditch will be filled with puddle, and the two first foundation sticks brought up on each side of the piling. The remaining foundation sticks will be placed on an average of six inches apart. After the foundation timbers are properly levelled, the first course of two inch plank will be placed extending the full width of the foundation, from the lower end of the lock to the upper end of the recess, and of the same width from the upper end of the lock down, 18 feet between these points the 1st course of planking will only be 17 feet wide, extending across the width of the lock, and under the front walls. The second course of plank, will extend from the upper end of the lock down to the lower mitre sill, and will only cover the space within the face walls. Both courses will be of the best white or burr oak plank, and must be closely jointed with a plane. The first course of plank from the upper end of the lock down to the lower mitre sill, will be secured with 6 inch cut spikes, and the second including the first below the lower gates, with wrought spikes having good heads 3/8 inches square and 10 inches long, six of which will be required to each 10 square feet, or for the whole foundation 1100 spikes of this kind will be required. The lower mitre sill will be secure by six spikes 3/4 of an inch square and 18 inches long; the upper mitre sill will require the same number of spikes of the same size and 27 inches long.

The facing of two inch plank on the sides will extend from the ends of the wing walls at the upper end of the lock down to the lower hollow quoins, and must be commenced at the bottom and finished at the top, with narrow plank, so as to break joints completely, throughout the lock. This planking will be secured with six inch cut spikes, eight of which will be required to each ten square feet, for a lock of 8 feet lift 3,136 spikes, or counting eight to the pound, 392 pounds will be required. For other lifts the quantity will be increased or reduced in proportion to the height of the walls.

For the purpose of more effectually preventing the cribs from settling inwards, these will be placed in the embankment longitudinally back of the walls, three courses on each side, or round ties, 16 inches in diameter and in pieces to make 115 feet in length, which will be strongly connected with the back walls with round ties dovetailed at each end. The two lower courses of round ties (one on each side) will be 16 feet long, and the others 12 feet long.

Along with the contract and lock specifications were a bill of iron for the lock gates of 7 feet lift and a bill of timber of lock gates and mitre sills of a lock of 7 feet lift.

Mid-1880s: Benjamin married Kate Paul. Their son Alexander M. Tower was born in Fort Wayne on January 6, 1855. Kate died when Alexander was three years old.

*Hoagland & Tower Contract for rebuilding Lock #2*  
*East of Fort Wayne Final Account*

6186 L. ft. 2" Plank timber	@ 16 1/2	10171.19
364 " " 6 in. course	@ 16 1/2	60.06
2200 " " Round ties	@ 9	198.00
620 " " Back wall ties	@ 7 1/2	46.80
2447 S. " Planking	@ 32	120.64
439 Lbs Wrought Spikes	@ 8 1/2	37.31
228 C. yds Excavation	@ 28	63.84
1027 " " Embankment	@ 28	287.56
14670 L. ft Old timber removed	@ 4	186.80
47 " " for scrubbing posts & head wall	@ 16 1/2	7.75
150 S. " timber for head walls	@ 7	10.50
400 " " old timber to secure back ties	@ 5	20.00
Plant jointed and not used		7.00
Replacing old timber on Bern pole and fitting timber for fresh course		20.00
Extra work on Hollow Quoins & Gates		55.00
Cutting down head walls		4.00
	<i>Total</i>	<i>\$2139.40</i>

Hoagland and Tower final cost \$2,129.40 for rebuilding Lock #2

Alexander attended public schools in Ft. Wayne and apprenticed in machine shops of the P., Ft. W. & C. railroad.

1851: On February 8, Benjamin H. Tower was appointed Ft. Wayne street commissioner along with Morris Cody

1859-1866: Benjamin H. Tower was the alderman from the second ward on the Ft. Wayne City Council serving with the following councilmen:

1861: J. Burt, Morris Cody, John S. Harrington, J. Humphrey, B. H. Kimball, B. D. Miner, Daniel Nestel, C.P. Piepenbrink, Edward Slocum, B. H. Tower

1863: Morris Cody, Dennis Downey, John S. Harrington, B. H. Kimball, Henry Monning, Henry Nierman, C. P. Piepenbrink, A. F. Schele, Edward Slocum, B. H. Tower (Harrington, Nierman, Schele, and Slocum resigned before the completion of their terms and Pliny Hoagland, C. Neireiter, and William Waddington were appointed.)

1865: Morris Cody, Dennis Downey, A. P. Edgerton, Pliny Hoagland, B. H. Kimball, Henry Monning, F. Nirdlinger, B. H. Tower, P. S. Underhill, William Waddington, (Henry Monning resigned and was succeeded by David Hoyt)

1871: John W. Bull, A. H. Carier, Lewis Dessauer, W. B. Fisher, J. S. Goshorn, Samuel T. Hanna, O.



P. Morgan, O. E. Radway, John Shoaff, Jacob Shryock, John Stoll, William Tegtmeyer, Conrad IN

Tremmel, B. H. Tower, P. S. Underhill, William Wad dington, G. H. Wilson



1867: Benjamin H. Tower ran for mayor of Ft. Wayne on the Democratic ticket. He was defeated by a majority of 693 votes for Henry Sharp, who became the first elected Republican mayor of Ft. Wayne. Sharp, a native of Albany, New York, came to Ft. Wayne in 1837 and operated a hat manufacturing business.

Benjamin Tower resided in Ft. Wayne until his death. The Ft. Wayne Daily Sentinel of September 24, 1872, carried his obituary. Today his remains rest in Lindenwood Cemetery in Ft. Wayne, IN.

**Death of Benjamin H. Tower, Esq.**

Benjamin H. Tower, Esq. died at his residence on East Wayne Street last evening. The deceased was well and favorably known by all our citizens. He was Chief Engineer of the Fire Department from 1840-56 and filled the position with credit to himself and his constituents. He was councilman from 1861-1867 and again from 1871-1872 — giving the greatest satisfaction.

**Sources:**

- Fort Wayne Daily Sentinel. September 24, 1872.
- Griswold, Bert J. **The Pictorial History of Fort Wayne, Indiana.** Chicago, IL/Robert O. Law Company, 1917.
- Helm, Thomas. **History of Allen County, Indiana.** Chicago, IL/ Kingman Bros., 1880.
- History of the Upper Maumee Valley.** Madison, WI/Brandt & Fuller, 1889.
- Robertson, Robert S. and Slocum, Charles Elihu. **History of the Maumee River Basin.** Allen County, IN/Bowen & Slocum

**PHAMA M. HUDSON**

Phama M. Hudson died on Saturday November 5, 2005, at the Heritage House in New Castle, Indiana, after a lengthy illness. She was 85 years old.

Phama was born to Alvin and Ethel Ralson on September 16, 1920, in Redkey. She was a graduate of Redkey High School and Ball State Teachers College (now Ball State University) where she studied education. She taught at Jay County High School in Redkey, the Gov. I.P. Gray High School in Dunkirk and in Portland. After moving to Muncie, she taught high school and elementary school at Royerton and Delaware Community Schools. She retired after 40 years of teaching in 1982.

Phama was a charter member of the Canal Society of Indiana where her husband Clarence Hudson (d. 1990) was its first president. She continued to be a strong financial supporter after Clarence died. She also belonged to the Gethsemane United Methodist Church, Delta Kappa Gamma, Halcyon Club, and Delaware County Retired Teachers Association. She was a 4-H leader for 14 years, class sponsor several times, and participated in volunteer activities.

Survivors are son John (Donna) Hudson of New Castle, IN; grandsons Micah (Jennifer) Hudson of Charleston, SC, and David Hudson of New Castle, IN; brother Calvin (Marilyn) Ralston of Bremen, IN; sister-in-law Mary Frances Wiemer of Indianapolis, IN.

Rev. Charles McDonald conducted services on Thursday, November 10, 2005 at 1 p.m. in the Meeks Mortuary and Crematory chapel. She was buried in Hillcrest Cemetery in Redkey. Memorials were to Gideons International, P.O. Box 629 E. Muncie, IN, 47308.

**Maumee Valley Heritage Corridor**

The annual meeting of the Maumee Valley Heritage Corridor was held at the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Museum in Auburn, IN, on November 12, 2005, at 11 a.m. After a short business meeting where guests learned of corridor activities, Dick Kudner, president, reported that the scenic byway designation has been received for a four county portion of highways in the valley and a byway brochure has recently been completed.

