

CANAWLERS AT REST

THE PETER CORNELIUS VANSLYKES

Grandfather
b. April 5, 1766
d. September 25, 1834

Grandson
b. November 27, 1829
d. April 23, 1891

By Carolyn I. Schmidt

Peter Cornelius VanSlyke ran two canal boats according to Greene County history. When following up on this lead I discovered two Peter Cornelius VanSlykes, the one born later having canal connections and being the recipient of his grandfather's huge coin collection. The VanSlykes were of Dutch descent. They interchanged the names Peter and Cornelius placing one before the other alternating throughout the generations. Therefore Peter Cornelius VanSlyke (who we will call "Peter" in this article) named one of his sons Cornelius Peter VanSlyke, who in turn named one of his sons Peter Cornelius VanSlyke, our subject (who we call "Peter C." in this article), and another son Cornelius Peter VanSlyke. Then Peter Cornelius VanSlyke named one of his sons Cornelius Peter VanSlyke. Confusing? Hnnnnnn!

The story begins. Peter Cornelius VanSlyke was born along the Mohawk River in Schenectady County, New York, on April 5, 1766. He was a descendant of Cornelius Mey, who managed a little fur-trading post in 1623 where New York City now stands.

Peter's father Cornelius VanSlyke was captured and held prisoner for four years by the Chippewa and the Potawatomi. He was interviewed by the British Indian superintendent William Johnson in July 1767. He told Johnson that the Potawatomi believed "that the great Number they lost of their People at & returning

from Lake George in 1757, was owing to ye English poisoning the Rum, & giving them the Small Pox, for which they owe them an everlasting ill will." Cornelius went to great lengths trying to convince the natives "that in case they made peace with ye, English, they would soon repent it, as they [the British] would then come into their Villages, & thereby destroy em by poison, Small Pox & ca. Which the Informant says they believe as much as can be."

Peter grew up on a farm in the rich bottom land of the Mohawk River with an upland that was sandy. He was a soldier in the War of 1812.

We do not know when Peter married Margaret Lighthall. They had five children:

James VanSlyke (b. ?, m. 7-26-1827 to Margaret

Burge in Greene County, later to Mary G. Stallcup d. ?) He was the local sheriff for four years.

Andrew VanSlyke (b. ?, m. ?, d. ?)

Cornelius Peter VanSlyke (b. 8-11-1790 Schenectady, NY, d. 9-27, 1834 Green Co., IN, m. 1816 in New York to Anna Edwards (b. 8-17-1795, d. 1887).

Catharine VanSlyke (b. 1793 Schenectady, NY, d.?, m. John VanVorst abt. 1815,)

Sarah "Sallie" VanSlyke (b. 1-?-1799, d. 4-16-1842, Bloomfield, IN, m. Carpus Shaw in Greene Co, IN,)

Peter was described as a handsome man, who stood six feet and four inches tall and weighed about 250 pounds. This description fit that of George Washington and, being from a wealthy family, Peter emulated Washington in his dress.

Moved to Indiana

In 1816 Peter moved temporarily to Washington, Daviess County, Indiana, bringing with him silk knee breeches, silver knee buckles, matching shoe buckles and fine silk stockings that came above his knees. However, he was usually seen in buckskin with fringe down the pant legs and fringed hunting shirts and jackets in the style of the Mohawk Indians.

While at Washington, Peter learned that land was being sold at Vincennes, Indiana, in what was to become Greene County at a later date. He decided to purchase some since it was similar to the Mohawk River farm land.

Peter, his son Cornelius Peter and son-in-law John VanVorst, traveled to Vincennes. The Greene County history says that "The first sale of lands in Greene County took place in 1816 at Vincennes, but only a comparatively few entries were made owing to the remoteness from settled localities. One purchase was made in old Richland Township by Solomon Dixon,

who afterward became one of the most prominent citizens of the county.... Another entry was made by Peter C. Vanslyke (Peter), who had come from "down East" and located at Washington, Daviess County."

Peter's land purchase was considered to be superior land, mostly river bottom, laying north and south along the east side of the White River west of where Bloomfield is located today. He purchased around 800-1000 acres in what was Orange County described as the East fraction Section 27, T.7 R.5. He then went back to Washington, Indiana.

The first settlers on this property were John VanVerse and Daniel Carlin. They were tenants of Peter VanSlyke and arrived on the land late in the autumn of 1817. With Peter's permission, they erected crude log cabins in the southwestern part of what was to become Bloomfield and began clearing land for crops. They lived and worked hard all winter living on bear meat, fat pork and bread brought from Washington, Daviess County, Indiana. In the spring of 1818 they returned to Washington, picked up their families and belongings and moved to the log cabins. They raised small crops of corn and vegetables while continuing to clear land for Peter and themselves.

Remote it was. In November 1818 Peter's family moved to their new land in Richland Township (by then a part of Daviess County) bringing with them a strong wagon pulled by two horses containing all the essentials needed for a wilderness home. They found a wilderness filled with bears, wolves, panthers, deer and other scary creatures. Indians often camped for short periods of time along the streams. The men threw up a rude log cabin that had only a blanket in the door way, no window except for a hole about a foot and a half square on one side of the building and a bare dirt floor. They left Anna Edwards VanSlyke, Cornelius Peter's wife, and the children in the cabin and returned to Washington to get their personal belongings and settle their affairs before returning to the cabin for good.

After the men had been gone for some days Anna was anticipating their return. Shortly after dark one night while she was outside of the cabin she heard what she thought was someone calling "halloo" down on the river bottom land southwest of the cabin. She thought it was the voice of her brother, Lewis B Edwards. She called back as loud as she could and started a fire on the higher land to help guide him to the cabin. She heard the voice call again in closer range and returned the call. This happened several more times, each time with the voice growing louder and nearer. She was better able to hear it as it got closer. It sounded like a long and plaintive wail. Then the voice stopped. She was wondering what had become of him when a

wild alarming scream rent the air sounding half human and half beast. She ran back into the cabin and barricaded the door the best she could. Looking out the little window she saw a large panther bounding across the clearing. It was afraid of the fire and ran into the woods making its horrible cries. She had been deceived by the cries as were many early settlers.

The names of the first families to settle in Richland Township were:

Isaac Anderson	Reuben Hill	Carpus Shaw
Robert Baber	S. C. Hall	John Shryer
Solomon Burcham	David Heaton	Samuel Smith
Daniel Burcham	John Herral	Adam Stropes
Joseph Burcham	Timothy Jessup	John Terrell
Daniel Carlin	John Jones	Benjamin Turley
Alexander Clenny	Jacob Lakely	Charles Turley
E. P. Cushman	Ruel Learned, Oliver	<u>Peter C. VanSlyke</u>
Oliver Cushman	Lockwood Jeremiah	John VanVerse
Simon Dixon	Lockwood	John VanVoorst
Jacob Dobbins	John Mason	James Warnick
Joshua Dobbins	George Milam	John Watson
<u>Lewis B. Edwards</u>	Orange Monroe	William Watson
Eli Faucett	Barney Perry	Ebenezer Welton
Levi Fellows	Norman W. Pierce	William Welton
Kelly Heaton	William Robison	Abraham Workman
John Hill	William Russell	
Peter Hill	William Scott	

Greene County Organized

Greene County, in which Peter's property was located, was organized in 1821. During the April session five townships were created. In the May session the name Burlington was selected for the county seat. The first county road in Greene County was projected in the August session to run from Burlington through Highland Township to the Owen County Line. A second road was projected from Burlington to the south boundary of the county. Those petitioning for the second road were Peter VanSlyke, Cornelius VanSlyke, Orange Monroe, James Brown, John Owen, James Warnick, William Schott, John VanVoorst, Lewis B. Edwards, William D. Lynch, Thomas Warnick and Ephraim Owen, Sr. A third road was ordered viewed from Ingersoll's Ferry via Fellows' mill to intersect the Bloomington road on the west line of Monroe County. All three were built after the county was organized.

In 1821 the first trial by jury was conducted in the Circuit Court of Greene County. It was on a charge of assault and battery on Peter VanSlyke by Daniel Carlin, his tenant. Carlin was found guilty and assessed a fine of \$1.

In 1822 Peter VanSlyke was a Richland Township officer. He held the position of Fence Viewer along with Solomon Dixon and William Welton. Although we are not sure exactly what the duties of "Fence Viewer"

entailed, it seemed to be considered an important job at the time. We assume it had to do with where fences were placed along property lines.

At an early day Peter started a small horse mill and distillery. The mill was designed to grind the corn meal for use in the distillery and was used for little else. The distillery, which produced twenty gallons per day, provided an opportunity for selling the corn grown by the early settlers. The county seat was located two miles north of the distillery. Settlers going to the new county seat or, if coming from the south or southeast en route to the Dixon ferry, passed his stills. At that time almost everyone drank liquor thinking it was a necessity of life. Peter's was of superior quality and many a pioneer stopped to purchase whiskey. It was a profitable venture for several years.

Money Problems

Peter's fortune began to grow and began causing him problems. Since there was no bank at that time, he cut a hole in the floor of his cabin, dug a pit and dropped money into it. This was mainly gold and silver coins. Men carried little paper money because it deteriorated in the almost constant dampness and mold.

Peter had the first \$1000 bill issued from the National Bank of Philadelphia. He hid it under his house where it rotted. He went by foot back to Schenectady, New York, to see the man he had gotten it from. With an affidavit from this man, he went to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and had the bill replaced. Then he walked back presumably to hide it under the house again.

Apparently he learned a valuable lesson from this incident for he later put his money in a chest in the hole. *The Early History of Greene County* says that around 1830 great excitement was created in the settlement. One day, after returning home and having been gone for several hours, Peter found his chest broken open and all his money gone. He kept his money in sacks inside the chest.

Although Peter was very wealthy, this great robbery made all the settlers concerned. They flocked in great numbers to the place where the robbery occurred and volunteered to help pursue the robber. An immediate search began looking for clues. It didn't take long and the money was found about thirty yards from the house covered up with chunks [of earth or wood?]. It seems a joke had been played upon Peter.

A New County Seat

In 1823 an act was passed to locate a county seat and build a courthouse. It was approved on Decem-

ber 17, 1823. Relocating Commissioners met at Burlington in early February, 1824, to review the applications for the new county seat. Although Fairplay, a thriving little town with a good location on the west bank of White River and good water, was probably the most eligible, the residents offered only a few donations. Peter VanSlyke owned land in and around present day Bloomfield. He agreed to donate sixty-two acres there plus some small tracts in the county. These 62 acres included a contract for a 25 acre donation from Samuel Gwathmey that Peter had acquired, 25 acres that Peter himself purchased from Gwathmey at \$4 per acre, and 12 more acres immediately west of the others. The land was above the flood zone and had an every-flowing spring providing an abundant supply of water.

The Commissioners snapped up Peter's offer to the disappointment of the citizens of Fairplay. Dr. Hollet B. Dean, a native of Bloomfield, New York, suggested the name Bloomfield and it was agreed upon.

BLOOMFIELD

This new seat of justice of the county of Greene will be sold on the 22d day of April next, on the premises. The terms of sale will be one tenth of the purchase money in hand, and the residue in five equal semi-annual installments. Town orders to be taken in payment, except the one-tenth part thereof. This town is beautifully situated on the east side of the West Fork of White River, on a rich, dry soil, plentifully watered by good springs, possessing as many natural advantages as any other new town perhaps on the river surrounded with a very flourishing settlement contiguous to mills and mill seats. The attention of merchants, mechanics, and manufacturers will be particularly excited by the extent of surrounding country, the convenience of water works, and healthfulness of situation. From the superior natural advantages possessed by the town, and its centrlicity to the center of the county, it is elevated above the fear of future re-locations.

EPHRIAM OWEN, SR., Agent for Bloomfield
February 2, 1824

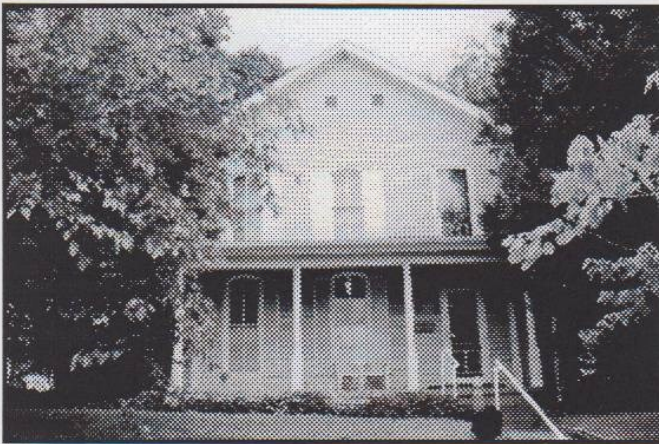
At the end of the month, February 27, 1824, members of the County Board gathered at the location of the new county seat and directed the Town Agent to lay off the donation into lots according to a prepared plan and to advertise the sale of these lots in the *Indianapolis Gazette* and the *Indiana Farmer*, of Salem as follows:

The locating Commissioners then transferred their claims for duties under the legislative enactment to Peter C. VanSlyke, as assignee, who was paid \$75, in full for such claims. The Town Agent, Ephriam Owen, was ordered to begin erection of a hewed-log court house on the public square of the new county seat.

The town of Bloomfield was laid out by surveyors Hansford Stalcup and John O'Neal with 168 lots, a block set aside for a public square and another block re-

served for the county seminary. On April 22, 1824 the first lots were sold. The first buyers were Thomas Bradford, Ruel Learned, George Milan, Augustine Passmore, Peter VanSlyke, and Thomas Warnick. Peter purchased lots #62 and 68 on May 18, 1824, according to an abstract in Deed Book A, Greene County. The following year over fifty lots were purchased. By August 6, 1831, \$1,670.06¼ cash had been received by the sale of these town lots. \$69.93 was still outstanding. Ten per cent of these amounts was for the county library.

The original log cabin of Peter and Margaret was replaced. One was built made of weatherboards just east of where the cabin and distillery stood. On April 21, 1824, Peter occupied the new house at 149 South Washington Street. From its windows they could look in all directions and see VanSlyke property. Over the years it has had many families living in it and has been re-sided.



The home of Peter Cornelius and Margaret VanSlyke
Photo by Bob Schmidt

The first families to live in Bloomfield were Thomas Bradford, Hallet B. Dean, Peter Hill, Otis Hinkley, Augustine Passmore, Peter VanSlyke, and Thomas Warnick. Passmore moved to Bloomfield from Burlington and opened a tavern and a small grocery.

The courthouse for the new seat of justice was to be built on the 276-foot square public lot that overlooked a slope with a fine spring of pure cold water at the bottom of the slope. Nancy Gilliam, Hansford Stalcup and others agreed to donate timber for the courthouse.

During the summer of 1824 the 20 x 26 feet, one and a half story, courthouse was built with hewn logs. It had one door, one window with twelve panes in it, and a good poplar plank floor with one set of joists on the bottom level. The upper level had a tongued and grooved floor, a partition across the upper floor, a win-

dow at each end, and the roof was covered with joint shingles twenty inches long.

After the framework on the courthouse was done, John Hill was appointed by the commissioners to finish it by chinking with short blocks adobed with a mixture of one third lime and two thirds sand on the outside, and clay washed over with lime on the inside. Passmore's tavern did a lively business with the workmen building this courthouse.

By September of 1824, the new Bloomfield courthouse was finished. The County Board met there for the first time.

In 1828 Richland Township was divided and that portion west of the White River became Dixon Township. Officers were appointed or ordered elected to administer the affairs of the township. At that time Peter VanSlyke, Solomon Dixon, and James Warnick were appointed Fence Viewers.

Apparently Peter petitioned the U. S. Committee of Public Lands about a land issue. The Journal of the House of Representatives of the United States, 1829-1830, on Tuesday, December 29, 1829, says:

"Ordered, That the Committee of the Public Lands be discharged from the further consideration of the petition of Peter C. VanSlyke, and that it lie on the table."

Peter was on the Board of Trustees of the County Seminary along with James Warnick, Samuel Simons, John A. Pegg and Elias Crance. In 1833 the County Board "Ordered, That Lots 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, in Bloomfield, be given unto (the Board of Trustees of the County Seminary), and their successors in office for the use of a seminary of learning for the said county of Greene..." Willis D. Lester, agent for the town, was to make a good and sufficient deed for the lots.

The VanSlyke children built their homes along the ridge of Bloomfield. They took an active part in helping to meet the growing demands of operating the town by holding public offices.

As Peter and Margaret VanSlyke grew older and could no longer care for their new home, they moved to the home of their son Cornelius Peter VanSlyke. It was located north of what was then known as the Indian lookout.

Cornelius Peter VanSlyke and Anna Edwards VanSlyke had three children:

Margaret VanSlyke (b. 7-23-1815, d. 3-7-1878, m. 12-

16-1833 to John Inman. They had 2 children.)
 Henry VanSlyke (b. 8-1-1818, d. 2-6-1886 from a self-inflicted revolver wound just above his temple. His note said he was tired of life., m. 1-7-1841 to Harriet Learned, They had 11 children.)

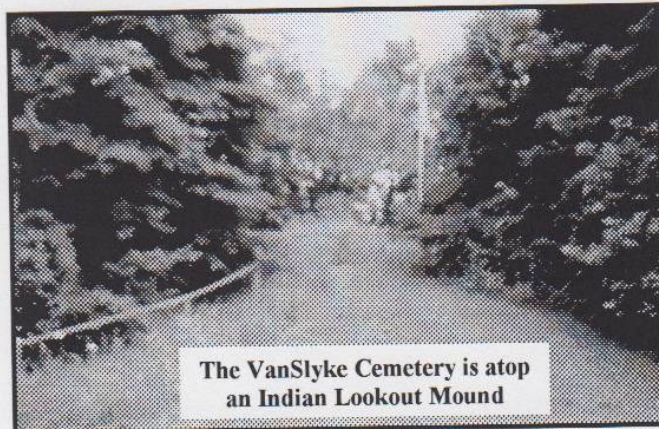
Peter Cornelius VanSlyke (Peter C.) (b. around 1828-1829 in Bloomfield, d. 7-3-1912 in Bloomfield, m. 7-14-1848 to Sarah Jane Boyd in Greene County, They had 8 children.)

Peter C. was the apple of his grandfather Peter's eye being little more than a baby when his grandparents lived in his home. Margaret died in the spring of 1834 and was buried on the crown of the lookout. Peter followed her in death just a few months later on September 25, 1834. Peter C. was only 5 years of age at the time.

When Peter died two cherished relics from his huge coin collection - a twelve and a half cent piece, the first money ever coined by the government, and another silver coin, which had an interesting history - were placed on his eyelids to keep them closed. They were seen on his eyes while he rested in his coffin.

W. D. Ritter states in an 1879 newspaper that Peter was buried next to Margaret Lighthall VanSlyke. The name of their burial ground was changed from "The Lookout" to The VanSlyke Mound." The cemetery is located on the hill on West Main Street behind the former Bloomfield Woolen Mill in the SW ¼ NE¼ 22 7 5.

To reach Peter's grave come into Bloomfield on SR 54 from SR 231 and as you come up the hill into town the old Woolen Mill is on your left. Just past it is Park Street. Turn left on Park and in less than 1/2 of a block there is a mowed path to the VanSlyke Cemetery on your left. Follow the path toward the river and up the mound that has a flagpole on top.



The VanSlyke Cemetery is atop an Indian Lookout Mound

Enter the cemetery gate and in the center of the cemetery you will see a large monument with a log

cabin on top. This is Peter's monument. Six-foot-tall weeds hide other stones around it. The cemetery is centered on the main monument/headstone. It is inscribed on all four sides:

Side 1.

VANSLYKE

Peter Cornelius VanSlyke born on Mohawk River in Schenectady Co. N.Y. Apr. 5, 1766 came to Ind. in 1816. In 1824 he donated to Greene Co. for county seat. The land on which Bloomfield is located. Died Sept. 25, 1834. Was a soldier in War of 1812.

Cornelius P. [Peter] son of Peter C. VanSlyke Born in Schenectady Co. N.Y. Aug. 11, 1790 died Sept. 27, 1834

Side 2.

Harriet VanSlyke Dean Herzog 1856 - 1936
 Wilbert Dean 1876 - 1939
 Dorothy Dean Bushfield 1882 - 1961

Side 3.

Thomas VanBuskirk born near Gosport in Monroe Co. Ind. Feb. 16, 1861 served as Judge of Greene Circuit Court from Nov. 14, 1918 to Jan. 1, 1931. Died Dec. 10, 1937.

Frances VanBuskirk daughter of Henry & Harriet Van Slyke and wife of Thomas Van Buskirk Jun. 5, 1867 - Jan 20, 1936. She was a dedicated wife and mother.

Side 4.

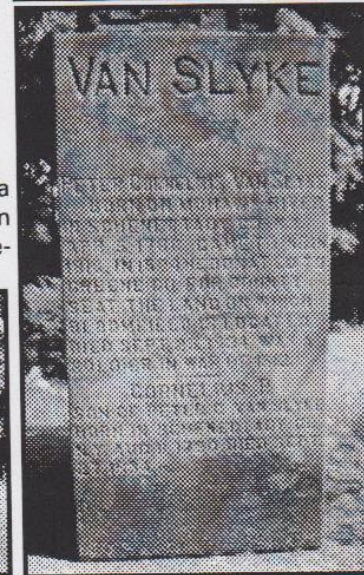
Anna Cravens daughter of Henry & Harriet Van Slyke. Wife of Thomas A. Cravens Jan. 2, 1852 - Oct.15, 1935.

Katharine Hunley Nelson
 Daughter of Mary Van Slyke & John Boudriot Hunley. Wife of John Maurice Nelson July 28, 1877 - Oct. 30, 1962.

At a later date a monument was placed on the mound to mark Pe-



VANSLYKE MONUMENT



ter's grave by the government. This was for his participation in the War of 1812. The broken government monument was replaced by a huge gray stone with a log cabin at its top by Judge VanBuskirk. He was connected to the VanSlykes by marriage and, by his bequest, he was cremated and his ashes strewn around the monument's base.

Peter died leaving thousands of dollars and hundreds of acres of land. All of his huge collection of gold and silver from many nations was left to Peter C. Since young Peter was underage the money was taken to his sister Margaret VanSlyke Inman's home in Bloomfield across from the courthouse for safe keeping until he was old enough. There was so much gold and silver coin that it required several executors to count it. By the time they were finished their hands were black like when handling lead. It was so heavy that it took a wagon to haul it. By the time Peter C. reached the age to retrieve it, the money was gone and there was no accounting for its use. Later, when Peter C. became of age, he sued John Inman for the whole amount that he had not turned over at the proper time. Inman died penniless.

Although Peter C.'s father Cornelius died two days after his grandfather, his mother Anna lived another fifty-three years. It is wondered why Margaret (age 19 at the time) and John Inman were given the money while Peter's mother was still alive. Perhaps it was thought that the widow might be in danger with it in her possession while Margaret had a husband to protect her.

By 1836 Greene County had outgrown the first courthouse built in Bloomfield. While arrangements were being made to erect a new courthouse, the County Board ordered the County Agent of lay out two towns on two small tracts of land of five acres each that had been earlier donated by Peter VanSlyke. The towns were to be called Van Bayou and Newtown. Van Bayou, which was laid out first, was on Lots #4 and 5 of Fractional Section 34, Township 7 north, Range 5 west. Newtown was laid out later that year on Section 27, Township 7 north, Range 5 west. The plan was to sell the lots to raise money for building the second courthouse. However, few lots were sold, few house built, and the "paper towns" were soon abandoned.

Peter C. grew to be a man. In the 1840s he and others ran flatboats down Richland Creek to the White River, then into the Wabash River, down the Ohio River and the Mississippi Rivers to reach southern markets. They were loaded with pork, grain, flour, etc. When these boats reached their destination they were sold for the lumber in them and Peter returned home.

The Wabash & Erie Canal

1848 was a busy time in Greene County. Peter C. VanSlyke (Peter C.) married Sarah Jane Boyd in Bloomfield. That same year the survey for the Wabash & Erie Canal in this area of Indiana was made. Burdan, Hutchinson, Pope and Whittle were the engineers. Jesse Lynch Williams, chief engineer of all of Indiana's canals, and William H. Ball, chief engineer of the Wabash & Erie Canal with headquarters at Terre Haute, Indiana, selected the location for a slackwater dam to be built at what was to become Newberry, Indiana. One of the architects was James Ronquet. Treasurers were Owen and Daniel A. Bynum. John F. Slinkard was the clerk. Contracts were let that year for building the canal through the county. Large crowds gathered at Point Commerce (Worthington) to hear the bidding.

Receiving contracts were Joseph Knight, Hugh Stewart and Alonzo Knight. Their contract was for \$140,000 and included the feeder dam, the guard bank, the locks and five miles of excavation above the dam. They began work in the late 1840s and finished in the early 1850s. There were approximately 150 men working on the canal. A special store for them was operated in Newberry.

Once the canal became a certainty, the town of Newberry was surveyed during the winter of 1848. Lots were sold, merchants and mechanics arrived, carpenters appeared, livery stables and dwellings were built, and the town became a hive of activity.

In the 1850 Federal Census Peter C. is a 21 year old farmer. Living in his household are Sarah J., his 17 year old wife, Peter C., his 1 year old son, William Bridle, a 17 year old laborer, Catherine Bridle, age 14, Benjamin Franklin, an 18 year old laborer, and Margaret Inman, age 34, his sister.

In the early 1850s Hiram Bland murdered William Walker for revenge in broad daylight. Bland was caught but escaped and hid in a corn pen. He was re-captured and given the death penalty. Gallows were erected on land owned by Peter C. VanSlyke and on June 13, 1851, many citizens turned out to witness his execution. Peter C. had made a contract for permitting the gallows to be built on his property. In it was stipulated that the gallows remain on the ground until it disappeared by decay. It was left standing until it rotted down.

In the 1852 April term of the court, the Trustees of the Wabash & Erie Canal were indicted for nuisance by the grand jury. Their erection and maintenance of the dam across the White River at Newberry that backed up water over the lowlands adjoining the river was said to

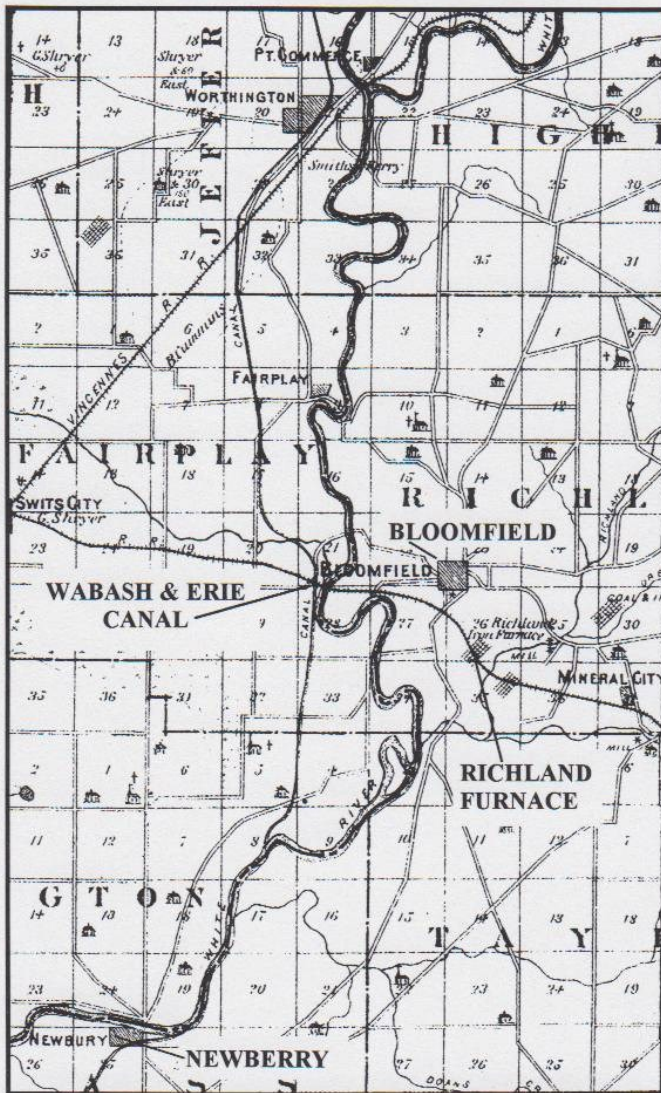
be the nuisance. There was a court trial but the case "rapid sailer." was held under advisement until the next term. That court found the defendants guilty and each of them was assessed a fine of \$10. The case was appealed to the Supreme Court and reversed.

By 1853 the canal was opened all the way to Evansville, Indiana. Bloomfield suffered by not being on the canal and also by Richland Furnace and its iron production being the center of attention.

In Newberry warehouses stored grain and then shipped it by canal when prices were more favorable. B. F. Morse of Newberry shipped \$9,000 worth of produce every spring to New Orleans, the journey taking about six weeks. Andrew Downing from Richland Furnace shipped his iron products to Evansville. Peter C. VanSlyke of Bloomfield shipped grain and other products on his two canal boats named the "John H. Eller" and the "H. T. Ford." The "Ford" was said to be a very

Even though Greene County had six locks to control the water levels on the Wabash & Erie Canal, heavily loaded boats could not use the canal in this area. There simply wasn't enough water available to maintain the proper depth of water to float them. A sufficient amount of business was conducted on the canal until about 1859. From then on it was mainly abandoned. However, from time to time up until 1863 attempts were made to revive it. Since it could not be depended on, it became regarded as an eyesore and a nuisance.

In the 1860 Federal Census Peter C. Vanslyke was 31 years old, born in Indiana about 1829, living in Richland Township, Greene County, Indiana with the post office at Bloomfield. He was a merchant living in the Bland household. In the 1870 Federal Census he was a farmer and had his own household.



1860

- Aaron Bland (46)
- Louisa Bland (46)
- Lerry H Bland (22)
- Peter C. VanSlyke (31)
- Sarah J. VanSlyke (28)
- Cornelius P. VanSlyke (11)
- Henry VanSlyke (10)
- Jane VanSlyke (7)
- Ester VanSlyke (5)
- Stephen VanSlyke (4)
- Margret VanSlyke (2)

1870

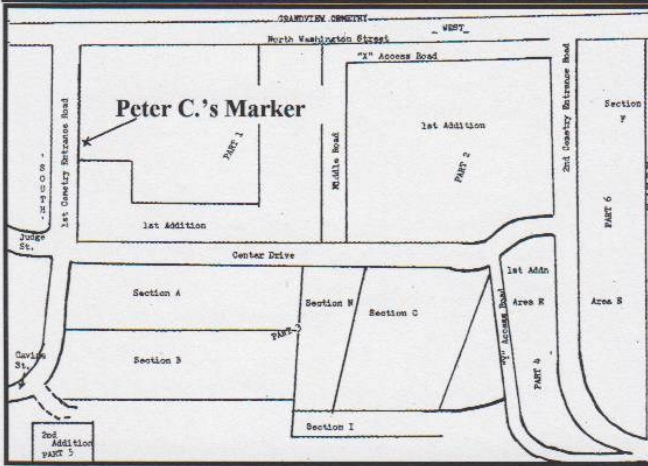
- Peter C. VanSlyke (42)
- Sarah J. VanSlyke (38)
- Jane VanSlyke (16)
- Ettie VanSlyke (14)
- Stephen VanSlyke (12)
- Maggie VanSlyke (10)
- Ida VanSlyke (9)
- Victoria VanSlyke (3/12)

On October 6, 1862, eight men in Richland Township were drafted for the Civil War. Peter C. VanSlyke Provost Marshal, took them to Indianapolis a few days later. During the rest of the year and the next spring hardly any effort was made in Greene County to recruit men.

An 1884 report shows that residents of Greene County and Sullivan County, Indiana, included Cornelius VanSlyke, Eliza VanSlyke, Henry VanSlyke, James VanSlyke, Peter C. VanSlyke (age 55).

Peter C. Dies

Peter C. died on April 23, 1891, and was buried in Section 1, Row 10, Grandview Cemetery in Bloomfield. To reach his grave take SR 54 into town, turn left on North Washington Street, go up the hill and Grandview Cemetery is on the right. Take the first entrance into the cemetery. About half way before you reach Center Drive, Peter C.'s grave is on your left beside the road.



Map courtesy of the Greene County Historical Society

Peter C.'s stone bears these inscriptions:

VANSLYKE

Peter Cornelius VanSlyke

Born November 27, 1829

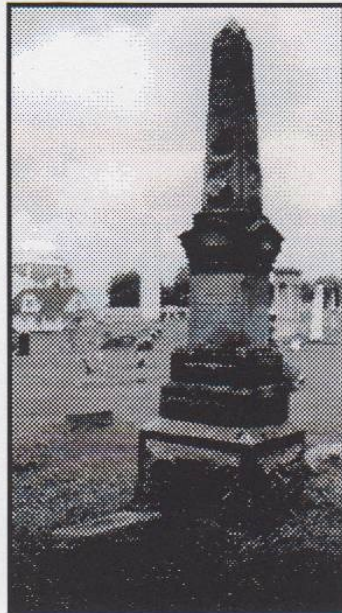
Died April 23, 1891

Sarah J. VanSlyke

Born December 2, 1831

Died July 3, 1912

Photo by Bob Schmidt



When Peter C.'s wife, Sarah J. VanSlyke died, they had trouble burying her. The *Terre Haute Tribune* of July 7, 1912, reports:

HALT BURIAL TO DIG GRAVE

Funeral Party Finds Grave Dug in Wrong Lot
By Special Correspondent.

BLOOMFIELD, Ind. July 6. — The body of Mrs. Sarah J. VanSlyke was brought here today for burial. She was about 85 years of age and lived in Bloomfield many years. Her husband, the late Peter VanSlyke, was one of Bloomfield's pioneer business men. When the funeral party reached the cemetery today it was discovered that the grave had been dug in the wrong lot and the burial was delayed until a new grave was dug.

These two Peter Cornelius VanSlykes played important roles in opening up the frontier to settlers and developing Indiana. During their lifetimes Bloomfield was quite a busy place. Although the Wabash & Erie Canal was several miles away, it provided the area an outlet for its produce. Today it is still the Greene County seat with a population of 2,542 in 2000.

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