

# CANAWLERS AT REST

## HENRY FREDERICK DROVER, SR.

b. January 21, 1815

d. February 24, 1880

By Robert F. Schmidt  
Carolyn I. Schmidt



HENRY FREDERICK DROVER, SR.

Henry Frederick Drover was born in Sternberg Amt county, province of Lippe-Deudold, Protectorate of Prussia on January 21, 1815 to wealthy landowners Henry William and Henrietta (Meyer) Drover. His siblings were Henry William, Frederick William, Henrietta, August, and Fredrika. On reaching their majority each of the sons was given a tract of land.

Henry was reared in Sternberg. As a young boy he received a little education there in German. When he grew up he wanted to join the thousands who emigrated from Germany in the mid-1800s protesting the ruthless military policies of the rising Prussian Government under Bismark. He sold his tract of land and used the proceeds to move to America and establish a home. At age 25 he sailed from the port of Bremen, Germany, on May 1, 1840 with his mother, brother and sister. [Some records say 2 brothers and 2 sisters] They landed at Baltimore, Maryland on June 1, 1840 and went to live in Auglaize County near Minster, Ohio. There his mother, brother and sister died in 1841. The expenses from their deaths and those of his emigration left him with little funds and hard times were ahead.

In 1842 he moved 5 miles east of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, to farm. While there he boarded with John McIntosh, a Protestant Irishman. At the end of the day when their work was done they would take turns reading their Bibles to each other with McIntosh reading in English and Drover reading in German. It was in this way that Henry learned to speak English and McIntosh learned some German words.

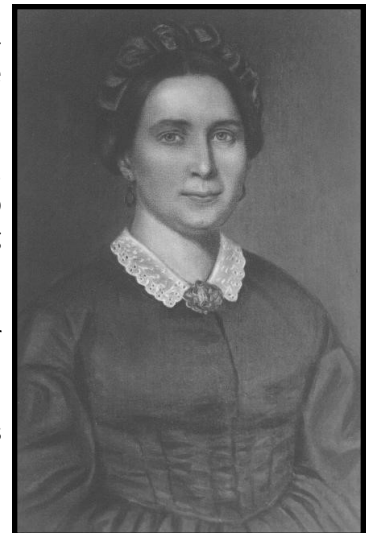
Henry chopped cord wood and delivered it to the Wabash & Erie Canal five and a half miles away in Ft. Wayne for eighty cents a cord. On one delivery he came across a black bear blocking the roadway. It frightened his horses. One year he had

60 hogs ready to take to market the next day. When he arose on the following cold morning he found them all huddled in a heap and dead. He wasn't sure if they froze to death or died from eating some kind of poisonous plant.

Not too long after beginning to farm, he found clay outside the town and started making crockery. This had been his trade in Prussia.

On November 14, 1845 Henry married Fredericke Augusta Block. She was the daughter of Johann "Frederick"

Wilhelm Block and Marie Luise "Dorothea" Schroder, the widow of "Dietrich" Kirchoff. Fredericke was born in Ilvese, Prussia on January 23, 1827. Her father brought the family from Bremen, Germany to New York in September 1844. There Fredricke stopped with friends until she secured a position doing housework. The other family members went to Cleveland, passed the winter, and moved to Fort Wayne in the spring. Fredericke joined them the following summer. They all lived together until 1845 when she married Henry.



Fredericke Augusta Block  
Drover

Moved Into Fort Wayne

In 1846 Henry moved from the land which he had farmed for 5 years into Ft. Wayne and also purchased land in Huntington, Indiana. He settled well into the life of the community, and in 1847 joined the Presbyterian Church.

Henry would go to Huntington to attend to his business affairs there either by canal boat or by foot if no boat was running. He then purchased part ownership in a canal boat and became a canal boat captain plying the waters of the Wabash & Erie Canal for two seasons. The name of his boat was the "Henry Drover."

In Huntington he and his partner, John Henry Pohler, operated a stone and lime business. Before long he had a line of canal boats. They shipped their stone and lime on this line. One of these boats was captained by Frederick Brase on which Homeyer was a deck hand. It ran between Fort Wayne and Huntington. As is the case of many freight boats, it carried spare draft animals to relieve the ones on the towpath. Henry and John Pohler dissolved their partnership in 1856.

The 1850 Federal Census lists Henry as a boat captain (age 31 but he was about 35). Also living in his household along with his wife Fredrica (22), son Henry (2), and daughter Frederica (2/12) were Wm. Harmman (23), Christopher Baker (23), Heindrick Hermeir (25), Wm. Hansen (26) and Wm. Nemire (20), all canal boatmen. The value of his real estate was \$1,000.

In the winter Henry would take the sleigh and travel with some of his children down the canal on the ice to Huntington. On one occasion the horse was frightened and Henry had to hold tightly to the reins to control it. Looking back they saw a black bear near the canal.

While living in Ft. Wayne, Henry served several terms as an alderman or councilman of the Fort Wayne City Council (1853-?). He was the president of the Fort Wayne's German Fire Company from 1853-1856.

## Moved To Huntington

In 1856, at age 41, Henry and his family moved to Huntington, Indiana, and lived on Matilda street (Park Ave.). He was elected Mayor of Huntington in 1857 and served two months before resigning his one year term.

In August 22, 1857, he purchased 160 acres of the heavily wooded area south of the Little River and there laid out Drovertown on August 22, 1857. The streets of Drovertown were named for his sons and daughters. The town and later additions became the Third Ward. He then built a house on Henry Street in Drovertown for his family. At the time it was in the woods. Canal boat hands would bring mules and horses over to Henry's stable to be fed while boats were loaded and unloaded. His son William remembered being put on a horse at Charles street and riding to the stable. When entering the building the

horses had to step over a high sill. William fell off and was badly frightened.

An Indiana State Format Marker stands one block north of Etna Avenue & Henry Street on the property of St. Peter's Church in Huntington, Indiana, that reads:

"Drover Town, the first addition south of Little River was platted Aug. 22, 1857 by Henry Drover. It included about 20 of his 160 acres of woodland. Family first names were given to the streets. Additional subdivisions followed. Huntington's efforts to annex the prosperous settlement were an emotional issue for several years. The resolution to annex came in January 1874. Henry Drover (1815-1880) founder, an emigrant from Prussia, was an outstanding citizen and leader in the community."



When Henry and other German immigrants came to Drovertown they worshipped with those of the Lutheran faith until 1854. At that time a movement was begun to start a Reformed Church. On September 21, 1856, a provisional organization was formed. Henry attended meetings on January 11 and 18, 1857, to organize a German Reformed Church and the group joined the synod of the German Reformed Church in Ohio. He was chosen as an officiating member and voted onto the Constitution committee on January 18. This committee reported on March 7, 1857, a few changes were made and the Constitution accepted. Henry and his wife were first on the list of members as of January 1857. Their son Frederick Simon Konrad was the first baptism on January 1, 1857. The group worshipped in the chapel of the Christian denomination for two years. In May 1857, Henry either donated or sold land where Etna Avenue meets Charles & Henry Streets for St. Peter's Reformed Church. He became an active member and later served as a church trustee and elder.

Whistling or singing while he worked alone, Henry cleared the land along the river at Drovertown. He also acquired additional property in the area in the coming years:

- May 23, 1859 Parts of Sections 15 and 22
- Apr. 14, 1863 Subdivided 160 acres lying west of his other additions into out lots
- June 3, 1878 Fourth addition in part of Section 15
- Sept. 29, 1883 Fifth addition south of his other
- Oct., 1886 Sixth addition south of his other

He also purchased a tract of land east of town in the quarry district.

Beginning in 1858 Henry served as township trustee. He held this position until 1878. During his time of service were the depression years. People came to Henry for help and he dug deep into his own pockets to provide food, clothing and even

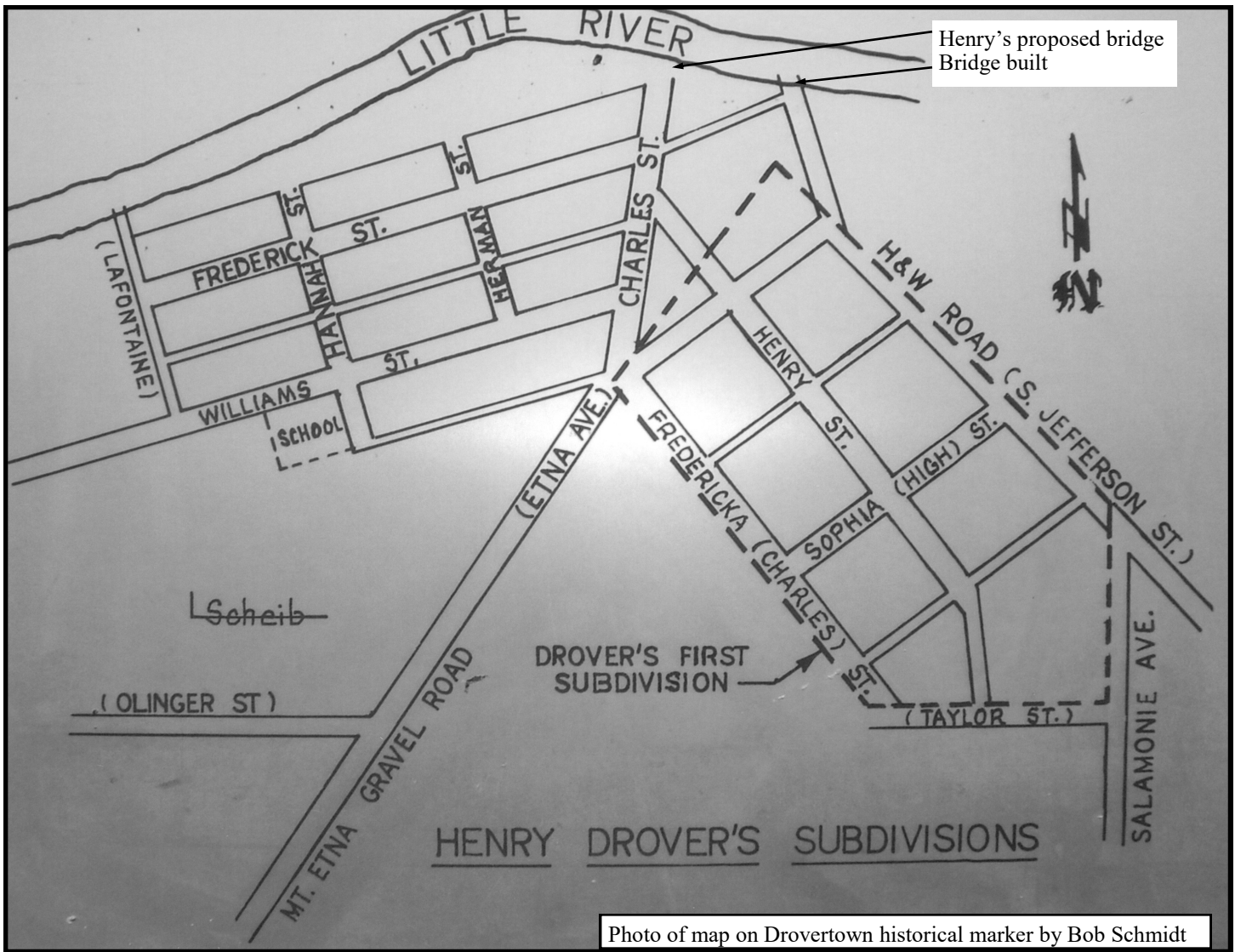


Photo of map on Drovertown historical marker by Bob Schmidt

### HENRY SR. AND FREDRICKE AUGUSTA (BLOCK) DROVER'S FAMILY

NAME	BORN	DIED	MARRIED	NAME	BORN	DIED
Henry Frederick	1-21-1815	2-24-1880	11-14-1845	Fredricke A. Block (alternate spellings: Frederica, Frederka, Fredrichah)	1-23-1827	5-18-1899
Children						
Caroline Fredricka	6-22-1846	9-6-1846				
Henry Frederick William	1-25-1848	9-14-1889	4-1-1875	Theresa Hegener		
Fredrika Augusta	3-2-1850	alive 5-18-1899	10-22-1871	George W Fennemann		
Sophia Catherine	4-7-1851	6-23-1916	10-31-1869	John J. Young		
William Frederick Henry	4-3-1853	9-4-1931	7-4-1878	Amalia “Emma” Hoffman		
Wilhelmina Catherine Elizabeth	6-16-1854	5-10-1892	10-15-1874	Robert Emanuel Brommer		
Frederick Simon Conrad	10-27-1856	alive 1899		Ida Thiebe		
Maria Caroline	2-11-1858	2-15-1941	7-2-1878	Wm. F. Lehmeyer	11-18-1851	11-21-1935
Hannah Dorothea	3-2-1860	?-?-1944	2-1-1883	Martin B. Schaefer		12-23-1912
John Coffroth	twins 3-2-1860	3-15-1862 (fell into scalding water and died)				
Henry Carl	3-6-1863	3-18-1863				
Herman Henry	3-27-1864	before 1925	6-21-1889	Hattie Calonkey (Herman was killed by escaping prisoners)		
Elizabeth Matilda	7-13-1866	?-?-1934	12-25-1889	John Wallace Hayden		
Amelia	6-9-1868	2-22-1912	8-4-1892	John Wiley Provines		

As recorded on a FAMILY SHEET by Barbara Brommer Freshwater in the Indiana Room of the Huntington City/Township Library.

transportation back to Ireland in one case. He was said to have worn a plug hat when he was all dressed up and taking care of business.

The year 1859 was an important one for Henry and his activities. That year he started building a "palatial mansion" for his family at 325 Etna Avenue. He did not rush the work because he was busy helping build the German Reformed Church and also wanted to first see the house that Samuel H. Purviance, his friendly rival, was building. He and Purviance were always in competition and were the first to have carriages in Huntington. His carriage cost \$800.00.

Henry's beautiful mansion was built in the style of an Italianate villa and sat on a spacious lot facing Charles Street hill and the bridge across the river. It had black walnut woodwork throughout, cast iron fretwork outside, and was the showplace of Drovertown. Henry purchased a whole car of wooden shingles for its roof. After his death his wife replaced the wooden shingles with slate shingles. His house was completed in 1860.

The house had an observatory where the children would look over the town when they heard the fire alarm. This house was truly home to Henry and his family. He would place two buffalo robes on the floor and play with his children. It was especially a happy place at Christmas. The children would "romp down the front stairs to view the tree and gifts on an individual chair. No gifts were touched until the Christmas service of cards and Bible verses were observed. At the close the father offered prayer and all rushed for the gifts. The big Christmas dinner was followed by preparations for afternoon calls by relatives, friends and neighbors. In the evening members of the German Reformed Sunday School were invited into the home for an entertainment of carols, recitations and social time climaxed with the distribution of candy from a large bucket passed by the father." *Huntington Herald Press 1961*

In 1919 Henry's mansion became the home of the Ditzler family. They lived there until 1949. It then had several uses. It was made into apartments. Then a service station was built in front of the mansion. His home was torn down shortly after December 17, 1961, by Pelz Construction Company of Ft. Wayne to make way for a new, modern service station. It later became the Farm Bureau Credit Union.

Ground was finally broken for the German Reformed Church in 1859 with the cornerstone being laid in May 1859. Henry rose at three in the morning, mixed mortar enough for the masons to use that day on his house, and then, after breakfast, helped on the church. The building was soon erected with his help and dedicated on December 26, 1859. It cost \$4,700 and had 75 members. A school house and parsonage were added in 1869 for \$3,000. The original church bell still hangs in the bell tower of St. Peter's Community Church at 206 Etna Ave. Early services were conducted in German. At the beginning of World War I the decision was made to have them conducted in English. The old church was replaced after 43 years. The last ser-

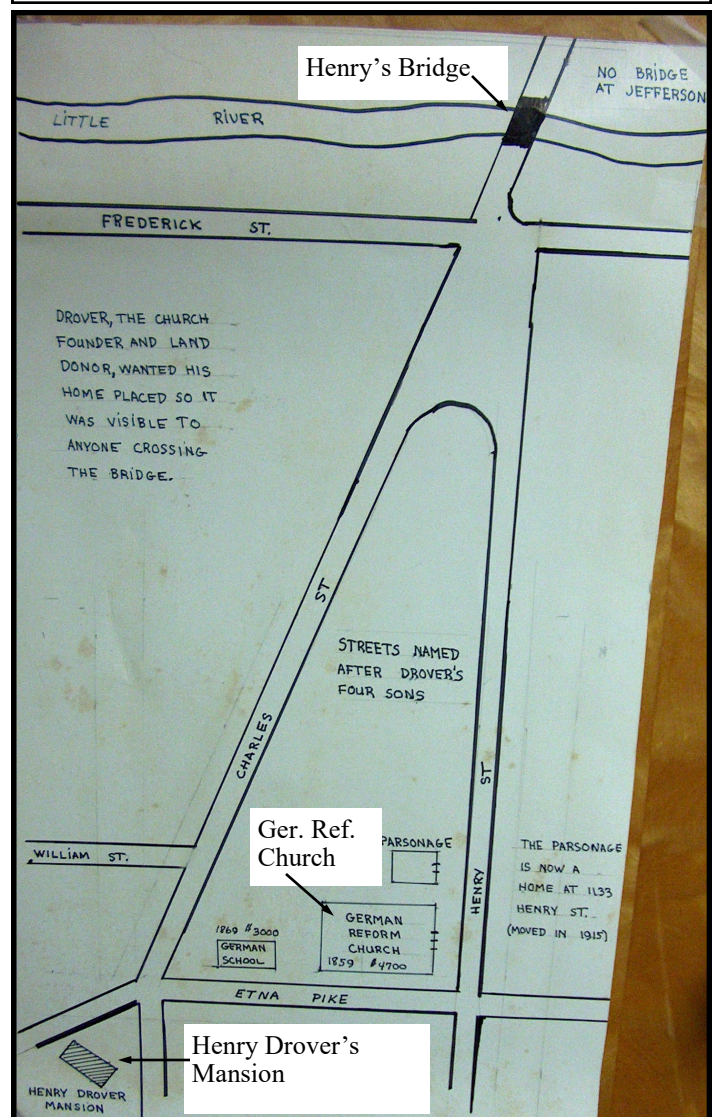
vice was held on February 1, 1903.

Henry donated land bordering the Wabash & Erie Canal on West Park St. and Thomas St. for St. Peter's Cemetery about 1859. He also gave the township a piece of marshy land on William St. for an elementary school. The original school burned in a fire in May 1895, but its brick replacement, Horace Mann School, still stands today, although no longer a school.

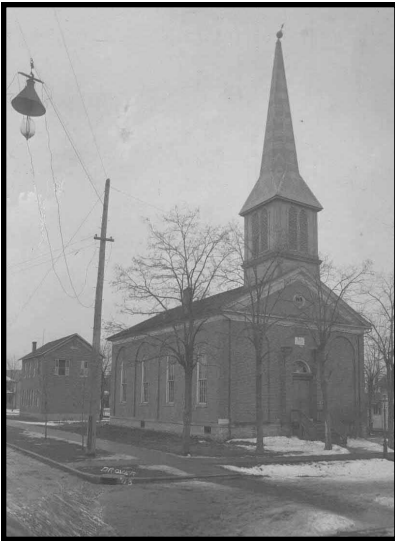
In 1859 he opened a quarry on the land he had previously purchased and built a lime kiln near Drovertown. Meanwhile in Fort Wayne he purchased the Canal House, which still remains today as Arts United, from stone cutter John Brown. The Canal House served as a distribution point for his businesses in the city.

In 1858 a new bridge was proposed to cross the Little River at Jefferson Street by Sam Moore. Henry wanted to just replace his bridge that was located on Charles Street a block

Hand drawn map showing location of Drover's mansion, the church, the bridge now on door of current church.







Right: The first Reformed church, which Henry Drover Sr. helped build  
Center: St. Peter's First Community Church built in 1904 stands today

Photos courtesy of Bonnie Ho-sler, St. Peter's Historian

not sign any of the paintings and his identification is unknown.

In 1866 Henry went into a partnership with William Bickel and Adam Beck, Sr. Their com-

away. It was a rickety trestle type bridge that had been built in 1843.

By 1861, just prior to the Civil War, annexing Drovertown was becoming a hot issue and the new bridge was seen as a way to help accomplish it. The *Huntington Herald* reported:

"The people on this side of the river are determined to annex Drover's subdivision. It ought to be annexed. Give the town of Huntington room to expand, regardless of the opinions and threats of narrow-minded bigots, and the business of the town will be increased, its population augmented, property enhanced in value, and the town, in a short time, will rank in size with Logansport and Peru. Keep it within its present limits, and every town on the Wabash will outgrow us.

"We are bound to annex Drovertown.

"If that cannot be accomplished, the people on the Brewery side of the Canal, will secede. One or 'tother is going to be did.

"P.S. - We have just learned that every man in Drovertown is armed to the teeth, and some of them have mounted cockades.

"Later still - 11 p.m. Rumors are rife that an attack on Huntington is planned. Fourteen men, 3 poodle dogs and a black bottle are in private session."

Henry Drover was defeated by Lamdin P. Milligan of Civil War fame in the bridge issue. This destroyed Henry's image as "king of the hill." Milligan had property on both sides of Jefferson Street and this new route heightened its commercial value. Twin covered bridges were built and lasted until 1891 when they were replaced with iron bridges. Drover's old bridge was torn down and its lumber was used to build a dock for Sam Buchanan's warehouse on the canal.

A traveling artist came to Huntington in 1863. He painted the two oil portraits of Henry and Fredericke Drover seen on the first page of this article. At the same time he also painted Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Purviance and Mr. and Mrs. Betts. He did

pany was known as Drover, Bickel and Beck (later Henry Drover & Company) and operated in a two-story brick building on the south side of the Little River. It employed twenty workers making 5,000 wagon spokes a year, bent wood, and wagons. They built wagons from the raw material, did the blacksmithing and painted them ready for sale. In 1869 Wilson Smith bought out Bickel's interest in the company and in 1870 Bals Eisenhauer bought out Smith's interest. Meanwhile Henry bought out Beck's interest and then purchased the remaining stock in 1873 making him the sole owner and manager. In 1874 his son, Will H. Drover, and son-in-law, John J. Young, took over its operation. The business venture was highly profitable from its beginning. Its sales reached \$70,000 a year.

One incident is recorded about a German inspector culling the spokes that Henry had on his canal boat at Roanoke. The inspector kept throwing some aside in a pile and Henry couldn't understand why. He picked out a straight three-cornered spoke, which he considered a fine specimen, and handed it to the German, who replied, "Ve toad't use no dree-co'ner'd spuck."

Henry was engaged in a variety of businesses over time. He built a planing mill and then converted it into a wool carding mill in 1870. That year he also opened a drug store on South Jefferson Street at Market Street. It later carried books and stationary and had a circulating library. His son, Henry F. Drover Jr., operated it for some years until his death on September 14, 1889 when Martin B. Schaefer, who had married Hannah Drover, Henry Sr's. daughter, took over. The drug store operated continuously at that location until about 1990.

The issue of annexation continued. By 1872 citizens of Drovertown proposed forming their own incorporated town of Riverside rather than be annexed. Henry even purchased land along the river to act as a buffer. However, after two years of discussions, the legislature voted in favor of Huntington annexing Drovertown. It was formalized on January 1, 1874. Drovertown disappeared into south Huntington and the residents' taxes increased.

In the fall of 1878 Henry gave up his position as township trustee and was elected as Democratic representative from Huntington County to the Indiana House and served one term during 1879. In 1880 he was elected to the school board and was elected its president.

Henry was said to be a man who: "took life as a sober reality, was a man of resolute purpose, patient and earnest. His career was full of good works and furnishes an example most worthy of emulation. He was a man of strong and marked personality who could not be turned from a course which he believed to be right, and though winning great prosperity in business his record is untarnished by shadow of wrong or suspicion of evil."

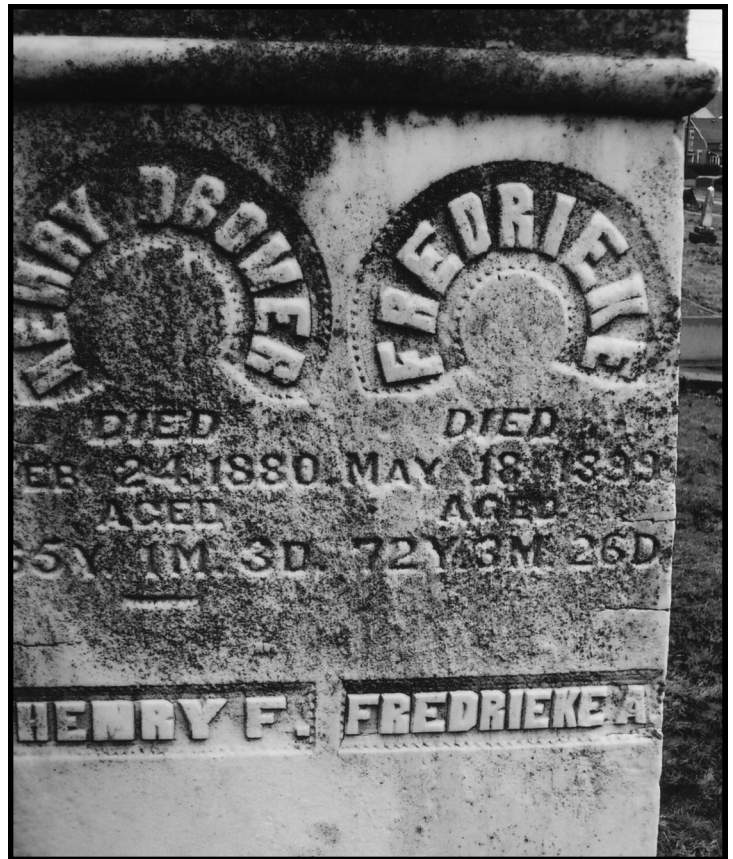
On February 24, 1880, Henry F. Drover, Sr., died at age 65, in an accidental fall from the loft of his barn headfirst onto the floor of the building. He was discovered by his wife, Fredericke, when he didn't show up for his noon lunch. The details of this accident were described in detail in the *Huntington Democrat* on March 4, 1880, as seen on the following page. He is buried at St. Peter's Cemetery at the top of the hill. Fredericke lived until May 18, 1899, and at age 72 was buried next to her husband.

## THE DROVERS IN THEIR LATER YEARS



**HENRY FREDERICK DROVER SR. and  
FREDERICKE AUGUSTA BLOCK DROVER his wife.**

Photo courtesy of Bonnie Hosler, St. Peter's Historian



## THE DROVER MONUMENT

Henry F. Drover  
Died Feb. 24, 1880  
Aged 65Y, 1M, 3D

Fredricke A. Drover  
Died May 18, 1899  
Aged 72Y, 3M, 26D

Photo by Bob Schmidt

**TERRIBLE ACCIDENT.**

**Hon. Henry Drover Falls from a Hay Mow,  
and Meets a Sudden Death.**

**Full Particulars of the Distressing Occurrence.**

From THE DEMOCRAT of last week.

**THE ACCIDENT**

Shortly after noon last Tuesday our citizens were startled and amazed by the announcement that Hon. Henry Drover had been found dead in his barn, located on his premises in the Third ward, and it was but a few moments thereafter until a large number of people had gathered at the place of the disaster. The particulars of the sad affair are about as follows: Mr. Drover was working around his house on the morning of the accident, and about nine o'clock went out to the barn to look after his chores as was his custom, the other male members of the family being all actively engaged in the several branches of business with which Mr. Drover was identified. He was not again seen alive by any member of the family. The dinner hour arrived and he was absent, but nothing was thought of his non-appearance, until it was ascertained that he had been seen nowhere in his accustomed places during the morning. Thinking he might be at the barn, Mrs. Drover called his name, but obtaining no response, she went to the building in order to satisfy herself whether or not he was there, when she was horror-stricken to see before her the lifeless remains of her husband.

The body was lying upon its right side, with one arm thrown over the head, and a heavy bruise high upon the forehead was noticeable. The supposition is that the unfortunate man had ascended to the hay mow, and in trying to descend fell headforemost. In the fall the neck was broken at the junction of the spinal cord with the base of the brain, and under the circumstances death must have resulted instantaneously. The annexed diagram will show the arrangement of the barn, the location of the body when found, and will give a clear understanding of the scene of the accident:

**LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICES OF THE DECEASED**

(The article goes on to relate much about Henry's  
life already reported in this biography)

**THE FAMILY TIES**

The deceased was married to Miss Fredericka Block, a native of Prussia, in 1845, who still survives, The result of the union, and who still survive the deceased, is four sons and seven daughters. Henry F. Drover, the oldest son, is proprietor of the Central Drug and Book Store in this city [Huntington]. W. H. Drover, the second son, is a partner of the firm of Young & Col, in the hub, spoke and bending factory, located in the Third ward. Fred. S., the third son, is the senior member of the firm of Drover & Brommer, manufacturers and dealers in boots and shoes. Harmon H., the fourth son, and also the three youngest daughters, Hannah, Lizzie and Emily, are under the parental roof. The oldest daughter, Fredericka, wife of Geo. W. Fennemann, resides in the city of Indianapolis; Sophia, wife of J. J. Young; Wilhelmina, wife of Robert Brommer, and Caroline, wife of W. H. Lahmyer, live in this city.

**FINALE**

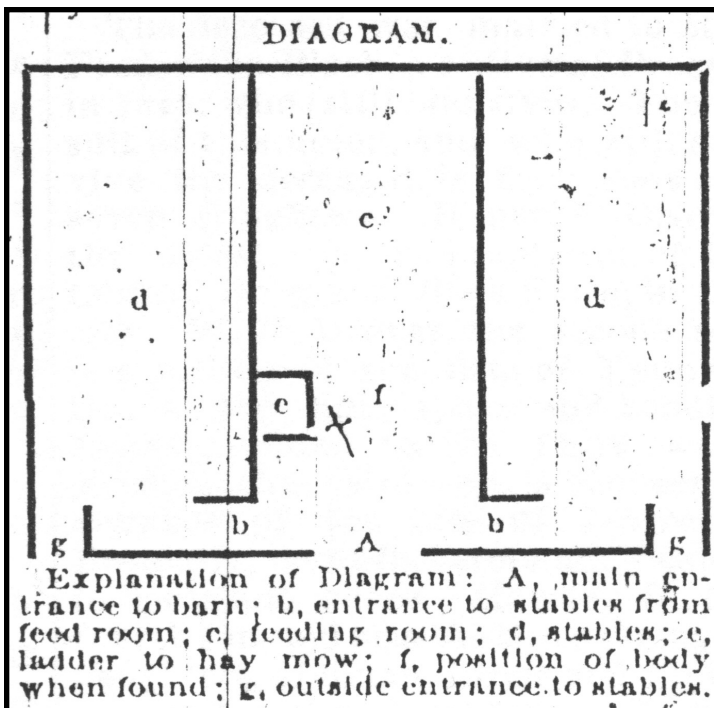
"The bed of death brings every human being to his pure individuality," and in contemplating the solemn relations that exist between man and his Creator, we are lost to all external things and are made to realize how utterly helpless is humanity in the hour and presence of death. Honor and fame, human affection and devoted love cannot avail, and we turn aside to take consolation in sweet remembrances of the virtues that adorned the life of departed ones.

"Who does the best his circumstances allow,  
Does well, acts nobly: angels could no more."

The deceased leaves behind many evidences of a well-spent life, and wherever we turn we see the monuments of enterprise and industry that characterized the humane and good citizen. The loss falls heavily upon our town and county, but more especially upon the family whose head has been removed without a moment's warning, and in their deep affliction all hearts go out in sympathy in this time of sorrow and bereavement.

**THE FUNERAL**

The funeral services of the deceased took place last Friday. Early in the morning the friends of our late townsman, from city and county, began congregating at this late residence in the Third ward, and by eight o'clock hundreds were on the ground to pay the last tribute of respect to an honored citizen. At half past eight the vast concourse of people were admitted to the corridor of the family residence in which the remains lay in state, and for one hour and a half the procession passed by to take the last look at the departed one. A beautiful and touching scene of the hour was the floral offering of the school children of the Third ward, which consisted of a cross made of flowers and sprigs of evergreen which were placed on the casket containing the remains of him who for nearly ten years had watched over the educational interests of Huntington township and had discharged the duties of township trustee so well and so faithfully. At a few minutes after ten the Rev. C. F. Kriete, of Fort Wayne, offered prayer, after which the procession was formed to accompany the remains to the cemetery. The Mayor, officers of the council of the city, and officers of the county, in carriages, headed the procession, followed by carriages containing the pall bearers and ministers, and these by the hearse containing the remains, with the relatives next, followed by the friends in carriages and buggies forming a procession, more than a mile in length. At the grave the Rev. C. Schaaf, of Ft. Wayne, delivered a short address, after which the friends returned to the German Reform church in the Third ward, where the Rev. P. H. Dipple, of that church, preached the funeral discourse, assisted by the Rev. George Kline, of the Baptist church, and the Rev. H. L. Nave, of the Presbyterian church, both of this city. The entire business interests of the city were suspended during the obsequies in honor of the memory of the deceased, who, after a long and useful life, had been called from his labors

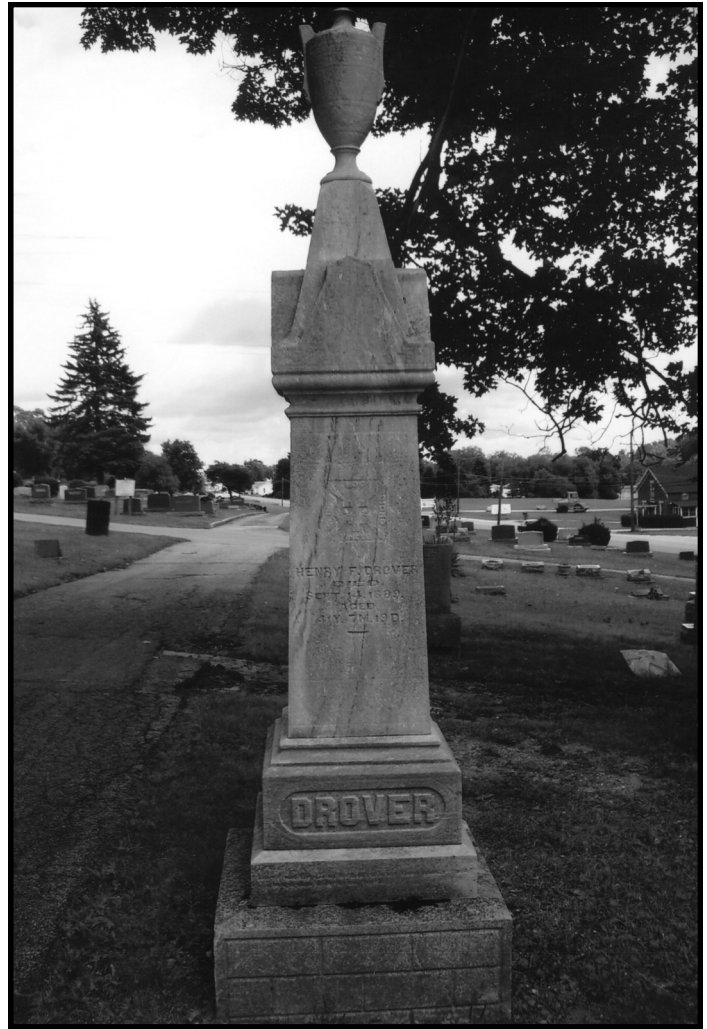




to rewards.

Thus has passed away one of our most enterprising business men, a friend to the poor a kind and devoted husband and father, leaving a void that cannot be filled. Let him rest in peace.

*Huntington Democrat*  
Thursday March 4, 1880  
page 3 columns 6-7



The steps leading up to the Drover monument in St. Peter's Cemetery on W. Park in Huntington, say DROVER.

Henry F. Drover Jr.  
Died Sept. 14, 1899  
Aged 41Y. 7 M. 19D.  
Photo by Bob Schmidt



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Julie Theobald, Librarian, Indiana Room of the Huntington City Township Library