

WEST UNION AND ITS WABASH & ERIE CANAL CONNECTIONS

By Charles Davis

Before Reserve township was established, General Samuel Hopkins with his soldiers passed through and laid out the first military road in Parke county, Indiana. It was called State Road Terre Haute to Lafayette. This road runs through West Union.

The first settler in northern Reserve township was John Linebarger. Next came John Beard, Samuel Brown and his "Yankee Town," etc.

While living in Vermillion county, Indiana, Salmon Lusk entered land in this township on November 28, 1820 described as the west fraction of the southeast quarter of section six. Deed Record 107/57-58 His father-in-law, John Beard, came to this spot in 1822 and built the first grist mill in this township on Sugar Creek. It was called a corn cracker, grinding three bushels an hour. It was made of logs and used toe head burrs for grinding.

Charles and Clary Reed built a water powered sash saw mill at the mouth of Rush Creek just east of Beards Mill. Robert Manwarring Sr. bought the saw mill from Mr. Reed in April 22, 1826 for \$1000. Relief Record 558-559

At this point flat-boats were built. Supplies were largely brought to Parke county by steamboats on the Wabash River. In the spring of 1826, the waters were very high and communication by land was difficult. That year a good sized steamboat, the "American" from Cincinnati, came up the Wabash River, ran up Sugar Creek on the backwater, passed over Beards Mill Dam and tied up at the still-house where it discharged goods and took on whiskey. There was a mill, store, distillery and two dwellings at this site. The Commissioners Record Vol. 1 page 3 states that John M. Chatsey received a license to keep a grocery store at Beards Mills for one year in September 1832, for a fee of \$10. Demas Deming of Terre Haute came into possession of Beards Mill and sold it to William Parent and Robert Manwaring Sr. on December 28, 1833 for \$3,200. D.R. 1/546 Manwaring bought Parent's half on May 8, 1834 for \$1,600. D.R. 1/546 Manwaring replaced Beards Mill with a two story structure. He and his son, Robert Jr., carried on a large business there with John Beard's son, Zachariah III, as miller until the mill was destroyed in 1866 by a tornado. In 1833 John Beard went to Grundy county, Illinois. See John Beard and His Illinois and Michigan Canal Connections, Hoosier Packet, May 2007 by Charles Davis.

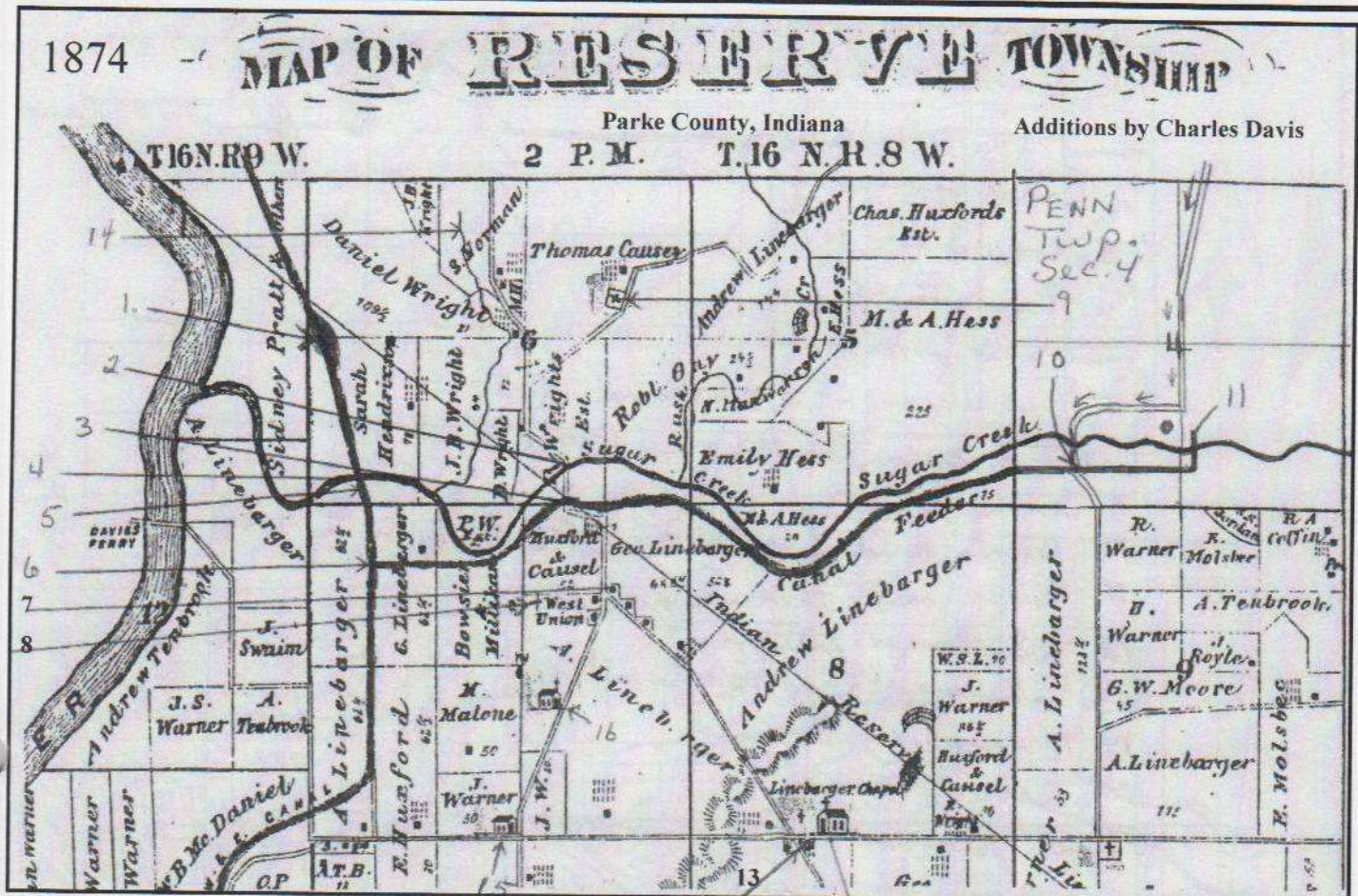
Jonathan Hougham (b. 1783, d. 8-23-1855) and his wife, Martha, hired local surveyor Jeremich H. Siler to plat the town of West Union and recorded it on February 18, 1837. D. R. 3/301 The Sugar Creek Canal Feeder would be located about a mile north of the town proper.

On August 13, 1846 Robert Manwarring Sr. purchased a ten acre tract of land from Peter Warner for \$40. D.R. 10/12 This land is on both sides of the Wabash and Erie Canal where West Union or Manwaring Basin was located. With this purchase, he had a monopoly on trade, transportation in this area, a mill, store, distillery, saw mill and the canal basin. When the canal opened up through Parke county in 1848, Robert Sr. and his wife passed away and were buried in the Causey cemetery northeast of the mill. In probate, sons Robert Jr. received the grist mill, Claborn the saw mill, John the land and home place and William the canal basin.



**Mary Eleanor Manwaring
1837-1911
Daughter of
Robert Manwaring Sr.
Wife of
Zimri D. Maris**

John Maris (b. 1778, d. 1850) and his family came to Parke county in 1826 from North Carolina and settled near the extinct town of Cincinnati. His son, William Maris Jr., went to Annapolis the same year where he married Abigail Hunt, the daughter of Zimri and Mary Hunt, also from North Carolina. Esquire Harger performed the ceremony. William started a store in Annapolis that sold merchandise, groceries and liquor. He expanded when the canal was being built and had stores in the canal towns of Montezuma, Westport and West Union during its operation. His first vendors license for Annapolis and West Union was from June 8, 1847 to June 8-1848. He then got vendors licenses to vend liquor for Montezuma for March 6, 1848 to March 6, 1849; West Union for December 3, 1849 to December 3, 1850; West Union November 24, 1851 to November 10, 1852; West Union December 14, 1852 to November 10, 1853; and finally for West Union April 4, 1854 to April 4, 1855. William Jr. did very well. From the above dates it can



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| 1. Manwaring Basin .4 mile north of Aqueduct on W&E Canal | 9. Causey Cemetery |
| 2. Beard's Mill, Manwaring Mill, Star Mills, Ferry, two Harrison Bridges— West Union Bridge | 10. Blues Bridge across canal (est. road by county 1849) |
| 3. Canal feeder road bridge | 11. Sugar Creek Feeder Dam |
| 4. Aqueduct #11 | 12. Linebarger settlement |
| 5. Lock #38 | 13. Linebarger Church and Cemetery |
| 6. Canal feeder head into main canal | 14. Thompson's Branch |
| 7. West Union, Lot 8, Maris store | 15. School |
| 8. West Union Cemetery, 1838 church | 16. 2nd Reserve Baptist Church |

be seen that he concentrated his business at West Union where he and his family resided.

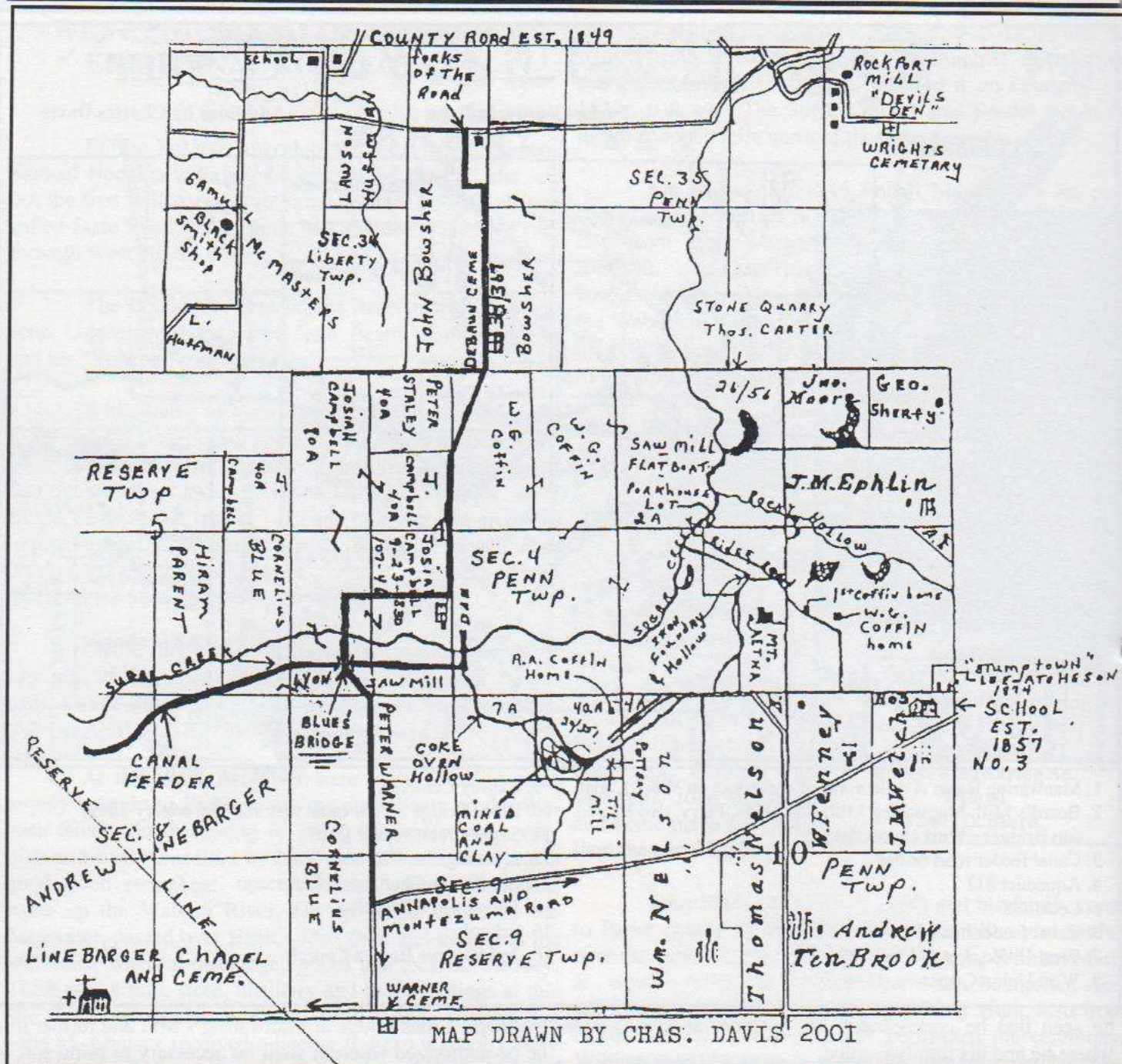
The 1851 Tax list shows that William Maris Jr. owned Lot #8 in West Union. Its total value was \$3,305. This store got its start from David Hougham, who sold it in 1847 to Canal Trustee Austin M. Puett, Alexander Puett and Mathew Noel, all politicians. They in turn sold it to William Maris.

The Commissioners Record December Session 1849, Vol. 3, 1844-1850 page 499 states: "Ordered that Robert Manwaring (Jr.) be and he is authorized to collect the subscriptions made for the building and completion of

the Sugar Creek bridge at Manwaring's Mill and further that he be authorized where it shall be necessary to bring suit in the name of the board of Commissioners to collect the same and make to this board when required and as soon as collections are made."

The Chief Engineers Report for Indiana's canals made in 1847 states: "There are two road bridges on the Sugar Creek Feeder," One was Blues Bridge a few rods west of the Sugar Creek Feeder Dam for the Wabash & Erie Canal. The other was on State Road Terre Haute to Lafayette leading to Manwaring's Mill.

On May 12, 1854, a destructive flood hit Parke

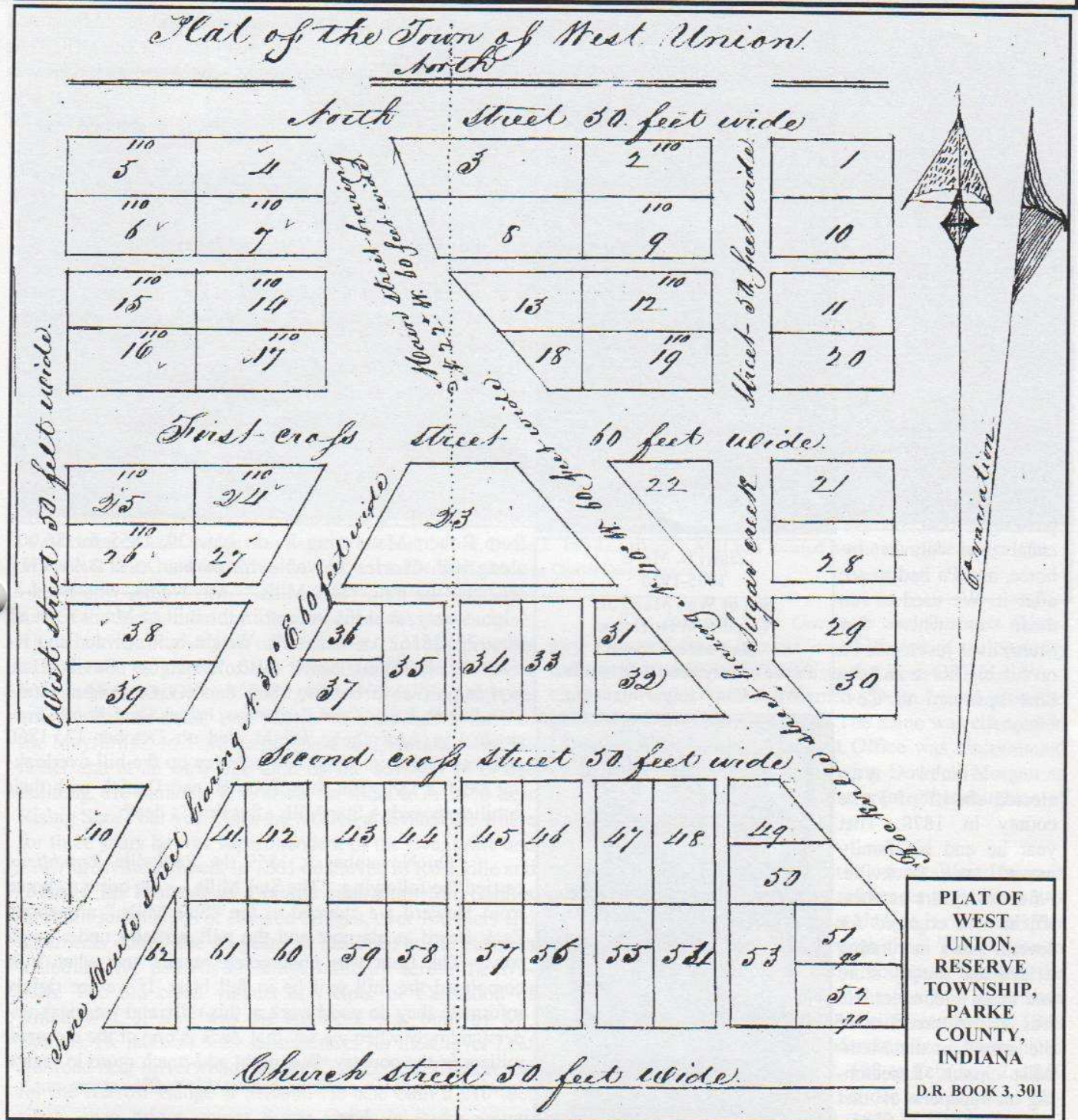


RESERVE TOWNSHIP, PARKE COUNTY, INDIANA

county The canal aqueduct across Sugar Creek, which cost \$20,000, was swept away and the feeder canal was broken in several places. A temporary aqueduct was being built in June 1854. They figured it wouldn't be ready for long past July. Complaints were that the original had been long known by the Superintendent and the boatmen to be inadequate and would not stand. *Parke County Whig* May 19, 1854, June 30, 1854.

Samuel Chew Madden, in his eye witness account states: "The first Ground Hog Treshing Machine that I ever saw was at Robert Manwaring's farm on the hill just above his mill. They were running straw off over the hill into the mill pond in order to tighten the dam."

On October 3, 1856, William Maris Jr. died suddenly of colic at West Union leaving his son Zimri D. Maris as the mainstay of his mother and the young chil-



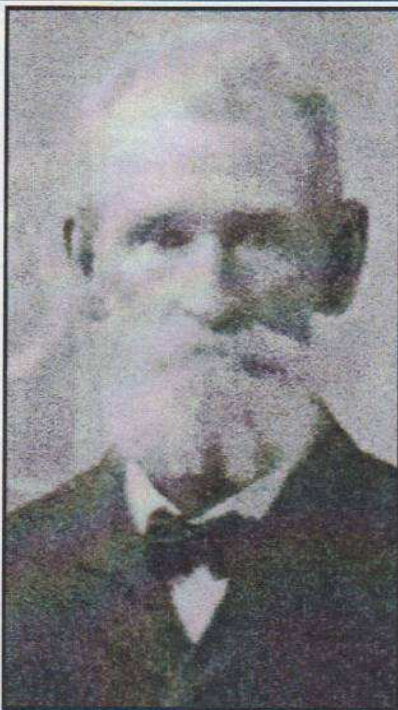
dren. While living at West Union Zimri married Mary Eleanor Manwaring, the daughter of Robert Manwaring, on November 1, 1855. All of their children were born at West Union. There, Zimri was the overseer of the Wabash and Erie Canal until the canal was closed down in 1875 in Parke county. His mother sold out all her holdings in 1858 and

moved to Tuscola, Illinois, where she remained until her death in 1886.

Lucinda Catherine "Kate" Maris Aydelotte, the daughter of Zimri D. Maris, later wrote a letter to the Montezuma Pictorial Press that was published on June 26, 1958

in which she said: "Understand that people who had built homes on the tow path of the old Wabash and Erie Canal had to move out. Along about 1872 the canal was in operation my father Zimri D. Maris was Superintendent of the canal from Montezuma to Attica or Covington. He had a big, fine, fast-stepping horse which he rode every day from Montezuma on the tow path to Covington, I believe. We lived in West Union. He made the trip on schedule. A passenger boat on the canal was drawn by horse, and Pa had to see after it. We used to run down to where Joe Sturm lives just to see Pa on his big horse and the boat upstream to Covington."

Zimri was elected sheriff of Parke county in 1878. That year he and his family moved to Rockville. After two years as sheriff, he was engaged for several years in running a feed and supply store and as an auctioneer. He was also a preacher of the gospel in the Methodist church. Researching newspapers of that era shows Zimri marrying or conducting numerous burial services. He died in 1920. *Rockville Republican* October 27, 1920 and January 1886, the latter with the obituary of Abigail Maris.



Zimri D. Maris
1835-1920
Son of Wm. Maris Jr.
Lived in West Union
Had a store there
Parke county sheriff 1878-1882
W&E Canal Superintendent



**Kate Maris Aydelotte &
Tom Aydelotte with
granddaughter Katherine
Aydelotte Speering (1916)**

On June 11, 1858, a severe flood hit Indiana and was said at that time to have been the worst since 1828. At Lodi, in Parke county, the Coal Creek guard lock dam was breached and the Wabash & Erie Canal was broken in several places. Water was so high it was up to the first floor of Patterson's Mill at Armiseburg. At Montezuma the water totally submerged the canal and the river extended from hill to hill. By June 30, repairs were already commenced and it was predicted that canal traffic would resume by late July. *Rockville Republican* June 17, 1858 and July 8, m 1858.

The Jones and Thompson families, land owners around the canal and Lodi Guard Lock Dam, blamed the breaks in the canal for the destruction of their crops even though the flood caused the damage. They sued the Canal trustees Richard Raleigh, State Trustee and Thomas Dowling, Resident Trustee. The land owners were conveyed \$1.00 for damages on October 14, 1861. D. R. 21/23-24

Prier Wright owned several thousand acres in seven townships of Parke county. He bought Manwaring Mills from Robert Manwaring Jr. on June 29, 1855 for \$6,000 along with Charles T. Noble, his partner. D. R. 15/649 They renamed the mill, "Star Mills." Mr. Noble, who lived in Vigo county, sold his interest in the mill to Mr. Wright on May 22, 1856. D.R. 16/260 Mr. Wright built, owned and resided at Rockport Mills (also known as Devils Den, Wrights Mills) in 1848 to 1860. See Devils Den/Wright's Mill and Their Wabash & Erie Canal Connections, *Indiana Canal Journal*, Summer 2001 by Charles Davis) Wright died on October 12, 1860 and was buried in Wright's Cemetery on the hill overlooking Devil's Den. His sons, John B. and Daniel, with their families moved to Star Mills after Prier's death.

On November 2, 1859 the *Rockville Republican* carried the following: "The Star Mills — On our way home from Howard we stopped at the "Star Mills," and found Zack Beard at his post and the mill partially under headway.—The Dam was undergoing repairs and when it is completed the mill will be in full blast. If we are rightly informed, they do good work at this mill, and we speak understandingly when we say that Zack is one of the cleverest millers in the country. We might add much more in regard to what we saw on our tour, but let this suffice at present."

In 1861 Parke county commissioners contracted with the famous covered bridge builder Joseph John Daniels to build covered bridges at Star Mills and Wrights Mill. Both bridges were finished in December of that year. The one at Star Mills was named the Harrison Bridge after General William Henry Harrison. Wrights Mill bridge was



West Union covered Bridge over Sugar Creek built by J. J. Daniels. In 1822 Beard's Mill was located just south of the bridge. The Wabash & Erie Canal feeder was located next to the bluff. Photo by Charles Davis, August 2003

named the Jackson Bridge after President Andrew Jackson. The Rockville *Republican* of December 25, 1904 provides a condensed biography of J. J. Daniels as follows: "He was born in Marietta, Ohio, May 22, 1826 of New England parentage, Puritan stock, one branch of it extending back to the Mayflower. In 1843 he removed to Cincinnati with his father and at an early age took up the business of bridge building. He built his first bridge in Indiana in 1850 near Rising Sun. Four years later he located at Evansville where for three years he was superintendent of the Evansville and Crawfordsville railroad. In 1861 he moved to Rockville and resumed his business as a bridge contractor. Mr. Daniles has built seven miles of covered bridges, over 100 piers and abutments during the 55 years he has been at the business including five patterns of bridge masonry across the Wabash. The old canal viaduct at Delphi or Carrollton of which Wm. J. Ball was the engineer, was built by Mr. Daniels. He has also built substructures for the Clover Leaf Railroad near Silverwood; for the C. & E. T. at Clinton and for the Narrow Gauge at Merom. He also built a 210 foot single span bridge across Sugar Creek in Parke county (Jackson) soon after he moved to Rockville. Of course these are only a few of the bridges Mr. Daniels has built. On nearly ever important road in Parke county one may cross his bridges and all are standing the test of time, and are monuments of his ability as a bridge builder."

The *Indiana State Gazetteer and Business Directory Index of Cities, Towns and Villages of the State of Indiana for 1858 and 1859* lists the Post Office at West Union as "Delta." It was named "Delta," until after the railroad was built through there. The name was changed in 1886 to "West Union." The Post Office was discontinued in 1932 with Mary Ellen Manwaring Dowdell Morgan as its last postmistress. She was the great granddaughter of Robert Manwaring Senior.

In all the histories of Parke county West Union is only briefly mentioned. In early references to this area it is called Linebarger settlement. West Unnion is rich in history although much has been lost through time. The license to Vend Merchandize book of Parke county is missing the first half of the alphabet. One of the few M's other than William Maris Jr. is: "T. A. Madison, December 29, 1848 to December 29, 1849 to Vend Merchandize. Others listed are: Anthony Pilchey February 2, 188 to February 2, 1849 to Vend Merchandize. William Snyder and Brothers December 7, 1848 to November 18, 1849 to Vend Merchandize. Aaron C. Snyder September 3, 1849 to September 9, 1850.

The church at West Union was called the Reserve Church. This Old Baptist School denomination held its services for many years in a log house that was located near



the West Union Cemetery that was donated by David and Jonathan Hougham on December 22, 1838. D.R. 5/243 A new building was built a half mile south of the first site. When the railroad came through, it removed the church and built a depot on the site around 1887 when the railroad was finished.

In March 1866 a tornado hit the West Union area and destroyed Star Mills and the Harrison covered bridge. This was witnessed by Daniel Wright. He said, "...about 40 hogs were sleeping in the bridge but only about a half dozen were lost. One was killed 150 feet on the bluff above, where a bunch was sleeping in the leaves along a fence, a sharp scantling from the bridge, carried aloft by the fierce wind, piercing the hogs side." That summer Mr. Joseph John Daniels built the second Harrison bridge. *Rockville Republican* August 27, 1913 interview with Daniel Wright.

Edward Fisher of Wabash township lost his life on March 15, 1866 while riding on horseback on the canal towpath near Armiesburg. He was traveling at an unusual speed when his horse stepped into a Muskrat hole and

along with Mr. Fisher was thrown headlong to the earth. In the horse's struggle to arise, Mr. Fisher received an injury to his side which terminated his life in a few brief hours. "Truly, in the midst of life we are in death," *Rockville Republican* March 21, 1866.

In the summer of 1875 a flood hit Parke county, the Harrison bridge was lifted from its abutments and was swept away down Sugar Creek. It ended up one-half mile further down in the bed of the creek from its original location. The *Rockville Republican* and the *Indiana Patriot* August 5, 1875 p.4. J. J. Daniels got the contract to build the third bridge at this site. In December 1875 he was instructed to widen and repair the existing abutments. The two span, 306 feet, Burr Truss structure was completed in September 1876 at the cost of \$16,125. Parke County Commissioners Records, 1874-1879m page 406. In my, Charles Davis, personal opinion I think Mr. Daniels used stone from the north side of Armiesburg Aqueduct #12 for the repairs on the West Union bridge abutments. He and Josephus Collett bought the canal's "bank, margins, tow paths, side cuts, feeder basin, right-of-way, locks, dams, water ponds, and structures on March 23, 1876

THE HOOSIER PACKET - NOVEMBER 2014

for \$1,900. D. R. 35/355-356 The stone could not have come from Aqueduct #11 for it was still in place in 1893 when it caused an ice gorge that year flooding the bottoms for five miles in length. *Rockville Tribune* February 15, 1893 The north side of Aqueduct #12 is missing. If one looks at the north abutment of West Union bridge, it has a different stone cut than the original. It could be that the damage from the 1875 flood is what closed the canal down. Around \$50,000 was spent from Parke county northward to put the Wabash and Erie canal in order for shipping produce and coal in 1873. *Rockville Republican* March 26, 1873 "The Canal" *Indianapolis Journal* 1875 - the last boat to ship north out of Parke county was by Andrew Scott Russell from Armiesburg Mill to Toledo."

Rockville Tribune March 11, 1926 the obituary of Andrew Scott Russell.

On February 5, 1837, John M. Chadsey bought seven and three-quarter acres from James and Mary Chezem for \$100. D. R. 5/420 This body of land lies east of Sugar Creek, west of the State Road, and section six line is its southern border. The deed states it goes to the center of Sugar Creek, and to the center of the State Road. The *Parke County Commissioners Report*, Vol. 1, page 107 shows Mr. Chadsey was granted a license to operate a Ferry at this site. D.R. 8/151 In February 1843 Mr. Chadsey was residing in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. The Ferry was located on the west side of the Mill. Mr. Chadsey lost the above tract by order of the Indiana Supreme Court on an indictment of some nature. Stephen Chezam bought it at the sheriff's sale for \$46 on July 13, 1849 as recorded March 15, 1851. D. R. 13/131 William Maris Jr. bought it but he didn't record it. His estate in Probate shows a petition to sell and lists it and the land description survey on July 10, 1858. I, Charles Davis, don't know how long the ferry operated since William never applied for a license to do so during the time he owned it.

The school near West Union was deeded to the Reserve township trustee on August 14, 1858 by William Tenbrook. D.R. 17/582 This was the 4th school built in the township, The town of West Union built its school on lot 23 and took in lots 32 through 37. Andrew Linebarger deeded the lots to trustee Samuel Skeeters on June 23, 1897. D.R. 80/48 The school has long been raised. John Woods was its janitor and had a store just north of it in a small triangle in the middle of the Y in the roads. He had a sign there that read, "If I don't have it, you don't need it." Max Causey, lifetime resident

On October 7, 1898 James Warner sold one acre that bordered the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad for \$200 to Lucinda Fussell. D.R. 62/192 At that time they built

the West Union Grain Elevator that bought the local farmers' grain and shipped it by rail. They hired Eli Cummins of Noblesville to come and manage the elevator for fifteen years. His daughter, Lillian, was a grandmother of Lynn Lee, a librarian in the Rockville library, on her mother's side. Mr. Cummins (1866-1919 buried in West Union Cemetery) was a friend of J. S. Holloway, the president of the Montezuma Milling Company. Lynn Lee; *Rockville Tribune* December 26, 1900; *Tribune* April 1, 1919 obituary of Eli Cummins; and deed records, Rockville courthouse.

Clarence Norman told me that a road once came down the hill west of the covered bridge, then went underneath it and followed east along Sugar Creek to Rush Creek. The road was used to get to the old Hess home that stood east of that creek. All evidence of a road has been washed away by Sugar Creek.

In the field overlooking the aqueduct site was the headquarters village once used by Miami Chief Stone Eater. He participated in the battle of Fort Harrison, north of Terre Haute. Several Indian graves were found there when farmers were digging gravel. *Rockville Republican* October 15, 1919 and *Pioneers and Indians of Parke County*, 2006 by Charles Davis. The Hendrixson home was at this location. The *Tribune* of August 2, 1899 states: "the old well near the West Union Aqueduct has water at seven degrees F. and at times 36 degrees F." At the mouth of Sugar Creek on the south side stood the Marshall Club House. During prohibition it was raided by Constable William Peacock. Wm. Robinson was in charge of the place. Two cases of pint bottles of beer were found. *Republican* July 13, 1913. According to the late Max Causey there was a man killed there in the 1930s. The Causey cemetery was deeded to the township by Daniel Shup for a burial ground on April 21, 1837. D. R. 4/283

West Union declined when the Chicago and Eastern Railroad ceased to operate on September 15, 1943. A letter dated December 30, 1948 to the late Clarence Norman from C.W. Breeden of Louisville, Kentucky, says Breeden was on the last train through the town. Mr. Norman was born and reared in West Union and, as a child, lived in a railroad car that can be seen in a picture.

Nothing is known about Jonathan Houghman, who platted the town. His grave lies silently in the West Union Cemetery.

There are only a few homes left in this once busy town, but the country view of the covered bridge and historic Sugar Creek are worth seeing.

and groceries and shipping to New Orleans. He bought land for his place on August 30, 1842 the NE quarter of NW quarter Section 18, 39.73 acres. (Deed Record 8/4) His next purchase was on August 20, 1844 the Pt. W half of the NE quarter of Sec. 18 and SE quarter of Section 7, 260 acres. They sold out March 11, 1847 and moved to Sec. 2 and Sec. 11 on a farm west of Rockville in Adams township. Their children were James W. Beadle (b. 7-8-1844, d. ?), Catherine A., Mary E., Laura V., Wm. H. H., John H. Fred R., Edward T., and Sara E. In 1848 James W. Sr. was elected sheriff of Parke county and served two terms. Upon his death in 1879 he was buried in Rockville Cemetery. (Beckwith. Biography: History of Parke and Vigo Counties. 1880. and Straus, Isaac. Parke County Combined Atlas 1874-1908-1916. p. 112)

Elizabeth Bright Beadle

(b. March 12, 1805,
d. March 30, 1890)

"The Twin Sisters, Nancy and Elizabeth Bright, daughters of Capt. John Bright, were born near Leonardstown, St. Mary County, MD on the 12th of March, 1805. They were the fourth of a family of three sons and nine daughters there being another set of twins. In 1812 the schooner their father owned and ran on the bay was anchored to stay. Their recollections of the next few years dealt only in extreme poverty. The British army came and their camp enclosed the home. One night the children were awakened to look north and west to see their country's capitol was in flames. They were 9 years old, and their next memories were of the return of their father, of dire poverty and a final departure for

the West. The family located near Beargrass creek in Kentucky, and there June 2, 1831, Elizabeth married James Ward Beadle, a native of that section. A few weeks later Nancy married George Hazzard of Scott county, Ind. Both soon moved across the Ohio to Clark County, Ind. In 1835 the Hazzards moved to Parke county, locating finally on Wabash Mill Creek, and in 1837 the Beadles followed and located in the same vicinity. In no long time Captain Bright and the rest of the family followed, and long constituted a large relationship in Liberty township. Capt. John Bright died early in 1861, a few days short of 95 years, and ten years later his wife died nearly the same age. They lived husband and wife sixty-seven years. In 1848 George Hazzard died and Nancy lived a widow for 42 years rearing her children, working the farm living independent and self reliant. She was a Christian, living chiefly with her son-in-law, Joseph Swaim of Sylvania after her children grew to maturity. She died Feb. 17, 1890. When Elizabeth heard of her death, she merely said, 'Nancy was just worn out, and I soon will be.' Elizabeth breathed her last March 30, 1890 just at sun rise of Sunday. Her twin Nancy died at sunset and thus each sister died at the hour she was born. The funeral of Elizabeth was assisted by Rev. Zimri Maris." (Rockville Tribune. April 3, 1890)

Reverend Zimri D. Maris

(b. December 13, 1835,
d. October 19, 1920)

The Rev. Zimri D. Maris was a long time canal superintendent in Parke county. He was the son of pioneer William and Abbie Hunt

Maris, was born at Annapolis, Parke county, IN and died at the home of his daughter, Abbe Linebarger, near Crowley, LA. During the building of the canal his father moved to West Union to take advantage of such opportunities and engaged in business then died suddenly there, leaving Zimri as the mainstay of his mother and the young children. While living at West Union he was married to Ellen Manwarring on November 1, 1855. (See "Manwarring Basin." Canal Society of Indiana Newsletter . August 1997) "Children of this union were Abbe Linebarger, Ella Rice, Kate Aydelotte, Mary Evans, Annie Wilson, Lina and Charley Maris, all born at West Union. Of that place is where he was overseer of the Wabash & Erie Canal at West Union until he was elected sheriff of Parke county in 1878, that year he and his family moved to Rockville. After serving two terms as sheriff he was engaged for several years in running a feed and supply store or as an auctioneer. He was also a preacher of the gospel of the Methodist church." Researching the newspapers of that era shows Zimri marrying or giving services for burials so numerous it would be hard to count them. (Rockville Republican. October 27, 1920)

Another eye witness description of Howard-Westport appeared in **The Rockville Republican** in the early 1900s date unknown. It was however written by Samuel Chew Madden in the late 1800s and titled "My Early Recollection of Westport."

Howard is located in Liberty Township 17 Sections 18 and 13 N Range 8 W, Parke County, Indiana.