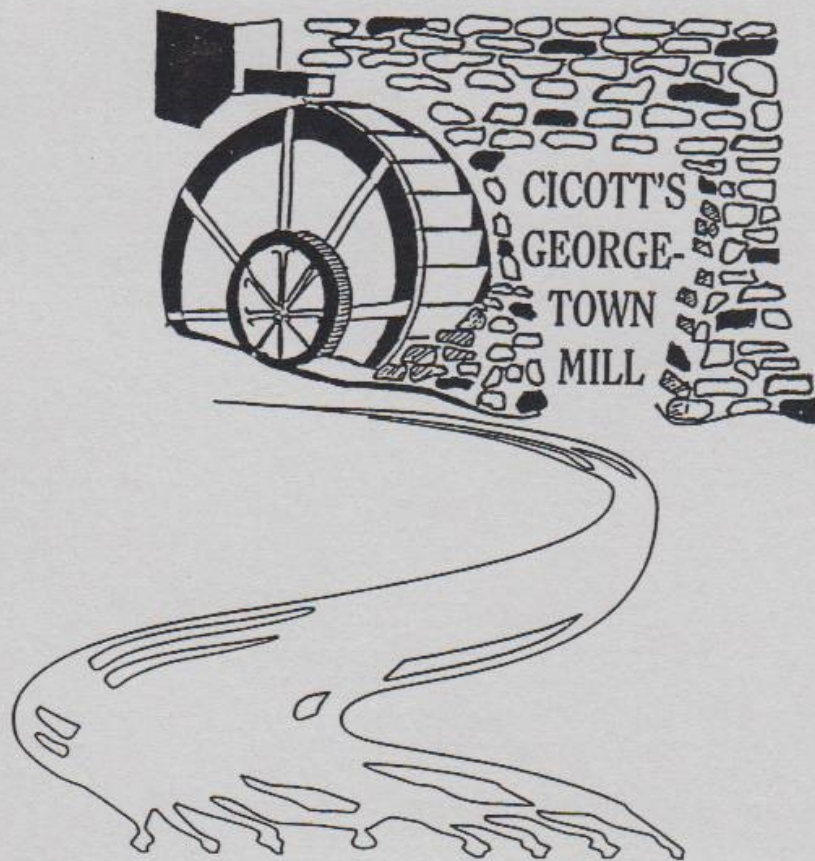


Cicott's Mill on the Upper Wabash

by

Thomas E. Castaldi



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In north central Indiana on the north bank of the upper Wabash River stands a small cabin built upon a foundation of ancient limestone blocks. Viewing it from the Georgetown Road out front to the north, the cabin appears to be just another small structure standing against the picturesque background of the spreading Wabash. The place gets little, if any, attention from people passing by in their cars, out for a bike ride or just hiking along.

Hidden from view beneath the cabin, and inside the old limestone foundation, are the historic remnants of a fascinating past. Still standing in place is an old iron water wheel, which began operating near the turn of the century as a replacement for an even older wooden water wheel. Originally it was installed in 1829 when a mill was built on this site. Known as the old corn cracker, it was built for the Potawatomi of the Wabash Indians when one of their leaders was granted the surrounding land by the U.S. Government at the Paradise Springs Mississinewa Treaty of 1826.

Both the foundation stones and water-handling facilities of the old mill are visible today. With the benefits of traffic from both the Wabash River and later the Wabash & Erie Canal between which the mill was located, business flourished. For over one hundred years the mill served those bringing their grain for grinding or their wood for sawing before it finally outlived its usefulness.

Here a foundation has stood in place for years with no visible evidence of a once thriving mill and few, if any, remembering what it once represented to the industry and development of the upper Wabash River Valley. Today the old foundation underpins a small river cabin blending in with the river valley. It is difficult to dismiss the adage that a good foundation is the success of the structure it supports.

George Cicott built the mill in 1829. Today he is remembered as the namesake for places in Cass County, Indiana, such as for the town of Georgetown, for Lake Cicott and for Cicott Street in nearby Logansport, which for most of its length, serves as Indiana Highway 25. George was born in Detroit, Michigan, on March 23, 1796, to a French Canadian, John Baptist Cicotte and Angela Poupard, who were married there on June 18, 1770. The youngest of seventeen children, two of his brothers, Zachariah and Francis, became prominent citizens of the Wabash region. (1)

In the early 1600s, the *Dictionnaire Genealogique de Familles Canadiennes* records the Cicott name as Chiquot, Cicot and Sicotte. The name is spelled Cicotte in Father Christian Denissen's, *Genealogy of the French Families of the Detroit River Region*. Jean (John) Cicotte was born in 1631 on the island of Oleron, France, the son of Guillaume (William) and Jeanne (Jane) Fafard. They left the parish of Bolu Island of Oleron diocese of LaRochele and came to Montreal, Canada on October 23, 1662.

Jean married Marguerite Maclin, born in 1648, to Nicolas Maclin and Susanne LaRose who was from the parish of Sessanne Brittany, France. Their son John was born March 22, 1666, in Montreal and married Madeleine Lamoureux on March 20, 1697. She was born October 10, 1680, to Louis Lamoureux and Frances Boivin.

Zacharias Cicotte was born to John and Madeleine in 1708. Zacharias married Mary Angelica Godfroy in Detroit, Michigan, on January 8, 1736. Mary Angelica was born there on November 21, 1720, the daughter of James Godfroy de Mauboeuf and Mary Chene. On April 1, 1750, Zacharias received a land grant consisting of 3 X 40 arpents. An arpent is an old French unit of land area which equates to about an 0.85 acre using U.S. standards. He lived in Detroit and was a trader there. In 1755, he served the militia as Aide Major. In 1762, he settled on the farm and remained there until his death on August 11, 1775. Mary Angelica died in Detroit and was buried there on December 28, 1791. Records show that she and Zacharias had ten children, however, eight of them died in their first year.

Of those children who survived, John Baptist Cicotte was born June 20, 1749 in Detroit and was 73 years of age when

he died on November 15, 1822. John Baptist married Angelica Poupard on June 18, 1770. Angelica was born September 12, 1753, the daughter of Joseph Poupard and Agatha Reaume. At the time of John Baptist's marriage to Angelica, he gave his residence as "South West Coast of Detroit". Angelica died on July 3, 1812. Their youngest child was George Cicotte. (1)

Along the line some of the Cicotte family dropped the "e" from their name. George's oldest brother, Zachariah Cicott, took over his father's trading business and raised horses for sale. Meanwhile he became knowledgeable in the ways of the Indians, yet knew the customs of the white men with whom he lived. He opposed Tecumseh who was then recruiting Potawatomis as an agent for the British. Zachariah later served as a scout for General William Harrison at the Battle of Tippecanoe as the nation immersed itself in the War of 1812. Legend has it that Zachariah was responsible for saving Harrison's American army on its march up the Wabash from Vincennes into Indian country. A young Indian woman, who was supposed to be very fond of Cicott, alerted the scout to an ambush planned by the Indians at Big Pine Creek. With this information, Harrison was able to avoid certain annihilation of his advancing troops. Once the Indians learned of the Indian woman's act, they killed her and threw her body into the wilderness. (2)

Later Zachariah married Elizabeth, the daughter of the Potawatomis chief Perig, and they were blessed with three children, Jean Baptista, Emilia and Sophia. Because Zachariah had sided with the Americans, the Potawatomis refused to elect him as one of their chiefs, instead giving the honor to his younger brother George. (3) His brother Francis Cicott married Felicity Peltier and remained in Detroit, Michigan. (4)

George Cicott lived among the Indians, having settled in what today is Jefferson Township in Cass County, Indiana. He married Meshawketoquay, a Potawatomis Indian chief's daughter, (5) and maintained a trading business with the American natives. In the October 16, 1826, treaty signed between the Potawatomis Indians and the U.S. Government at Paradise Springs near the mouth of the Mississinewa on the Wabash River, George Cicott, recognized as a Potawatomis

Indian chief, received a 1,000-acre land grant on the Wabash River for two and one-half miles up the river from the mouth of Crooked Creek. The three commissioners representing the U.S. were Lewis Cass, James Ray and John Tipton. As a matter of interest, Georgetown, Indiana, was platted on a portion of this reserve by Daniel Bell. (6)

Incidentally, Daniel Bell served as a private in Captain Spier Spencer's Indiana Militia Yellow Jackets. This is the same unit which Ensign John Tipton assumed command at the Battle of Tippecanoe when both Spencer and 1st Lieutenant Richard McMahan were killed in action on November 7, 1811. (7) Cicott was also granted one section of land at the falls of Eel River, which he deeded to Chauncy Carter for \$1,000 on January 17, 1829. Here, on the Eel River reserve, Logansport, Indiana, had been laid out by Carter in 1828. More land came to Cicott when his wife Meshawketoquay received two sections of land in the Carey Mission Treaty of 1828. (8)

A place along the river was chosen by Cicott in 1829 as the site to construct the first mill in the township. (9) Crooked Creek flowed parallel to the river a few hundred yards to the northeast and from the stream a race way was channeled to the saw mill. Here the Wabash makes a wide sweeping bend as it rolls along on its southwesterly flow. In later years, a corn cracker was added to the mill to serve Cicott's Indian followers. As the township's first white settler, he made his facility available to the other settlers who were gradually moving into the area.

Early local historians reported the significance of Cicott and his mill. In an 1878 history of the Cass County townships, Graham Taber wrote, "We did not mention the name of Mr. Cicott among the early settlers, as he was a Frenchman, dealing almost exclusively with the Indians. His mill was really built for their accommodation, but was highly prized by the white man, as it afforded them the opportunity of having their corn ground near home." (10) In another history of Cass County written in 1886, Thomas B. Helms recorded, "The first comer of which there is any definite knowledge was George Cicott, a French Canadian who for many years lived and traded with the Potawatomie Indians, who looked upon him as one

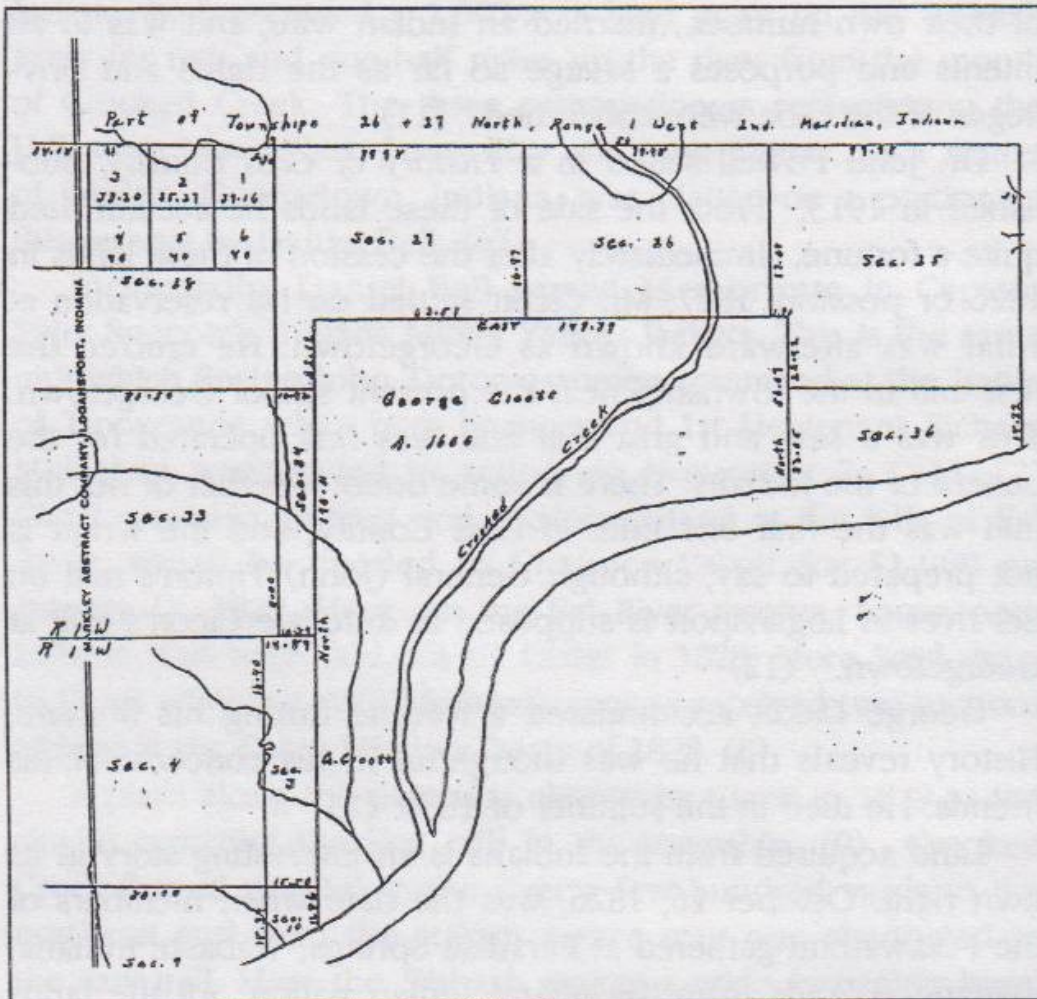
of their own number...married an Indian wife, and was to all intents and purposes a savage so far as the rights and privileges of the tribe were concerned." (11)

Dr. Jehu Powell stated in a *History of Cass County*, published in 1913, "From the sale of these lands he accumulated quite a fortune. Immediately after the cession of these lands in 1826 or possibly 1827, Mr. Cicott settled on his reservation at what was afterward known as Georgetown. He erected the first mill in the township near the present site of Georgetown. This was a saw and grist mill and was first operated for the benefit of the Indians. There is some doubt whether or not this mill was the first one built in Cass County, and the writer is not prepared to say, although General (John) Tipton's mill on Eel river in Logansport is supposed to antedate Cicott's mill at Georgetown." (12)

George Cicott accumulated a fortune during his lifetime. History reveals that he was thoughtful in his concern for his friends. He died in the summer of 1830. (13)

Land acquired from the Indians is an interesting story in its own right. October 16, 1826, was the date when members of the Potawatomi gathered at Paradise Springs, Wabash, Indiana, demanded lands from the Miami Indian nation. All the lands south of the Eel River were transferred to the U. S. Government. It was this treaty which gained for the Americans a strip of north-south land through which the Michigan Road was routed through Indiana. In the agreement, Potawatomi members were to receive \$2,000 each year for twenty-two years, another \$2,000 for education and \$30,000 in goods. "Prominent half-breed families like the Burnetts, Bertrands, Barrons, and Cicotts received many sections of land," according to Winger in a book about the Potawatomi Indians. (14) He also noted that the United States agreed to build a mill on the Tippecanoe River for the Indians and provide them with a miller. No doubt this gave George Cicott reason to think that a mill on the Wabash near Crooked Creek made good sense.

In his book, *The Potawatomis: Keeper of the Fire*, R. David Edmunds points out that the Potawatomi were not anxious to negotiate away their lands. The tribe, led by chiefs Metea and Aubbeenaubbee, had rejected the idea of a move to the west



Plat of the Reservation of George Cicott

and had refused to cede lands to the Americans. They finally gave in at the treaty negotiations because of the gifts and the pressure put upon them by the so called "mixed-bloods". Edmonds states, "Many mixed-bloods and traders attended the proceedings, and although none signed the document, (Lewis) Cass admitted that they 'materially aided us during the negotiations'. In return for their assistance, the mixed-bloods shared in the presents and were awarded small tracts or reserves within the ceded lands. This practice had been initiated at Chicago treaty in 1821, but in 1826 it was amplified and extended. Yet little of the land was ever cultivated by the Potawatomis. It was held until a later date and then sold to white settlers or back to the government." (15)

Paul Fatout wrote about Indiana canals, saying, "In 1828 John Tipton, assisted by General Cass and the customary

distribution of goods and money, negotiated two tribal cessions of over a million acres in northwestern Indiana. His ready cooperation with traders to their profit and his own led him to hasty disposal of fifty-three thousand acres, including eleven thousand acres within the canal grant, which he had no authority to sell.

"In the same year, over protests in Fort Wayne and Washington, Tipton moved the Indian agency down the Wabash to the mouth of Eel River where he founded Cass County and its county seat, Logansport. On both the projected canal and the Michigan Road, the site justified his appraisal of its promising future. As tavern keeper, mill owner, land owner, and dispenser of patronage to traders swindling Indians out of their annuities, he did very well. His two thousand acres in Cass County became his most valuable property, worth \$100,000 ten years later.

"To his friends he was a hero worthy of honor and profit; to his enemies he was a damned scoundrel. Undoubtedly he had both the useful and pernicious qualities implicit in bossism. One of the useful was concern for education that founded Eel River Seminary, of which he was first president. Another unselfish gesture was the purchase of the Tippecanoe Battleground, which he presented as a gift to the state. On the shady side, his dubious dealings with the traders and the high-handed manner of moving the agency induced Fort Wayne citizens to petition the War Department for an investigation of Tipton's conduct. The result was a slap-on-the-wrist reprimand." (16)

Dr. Lewis G. Thompson wrote a letter to president Andrew Jackson on January 28, 1831, charging John Tipton with certain improprieties and asking that an investigation of Tipton's action be undertaken. The spellings are Thompson's as he wrote them:

"Fort Wayne Jany 28th 1831

"To His Excellency Andrew Jackson

President of the United States

"I charge him with fraud & while a comr, on the part of the United States to Treat with the Indians for

Lands within the State of Indiana in the years of 1826-7 & 8.

"In this allowing and aiding in obtaining reservations for Indians & white men unasked for by the Indians but obtained with a view to advance his own private Interest — & that of his friends viz (one Section of Land granted to George Cecott to be Located at the mouth of Eel River with Section of Land was undoubtedly promised by said Cecott to one Hueph B Mc Keen & subsequently Transferred to one Chancey Carter for the use of said McKee & John Tipton.

"...that He the said Tipton did aid in obtaining Reservations at the Treaty of St. Josephs in the year 1828 to the Indian Wives of Anthony Gamlin Charles Miney James Wiman Thos Robb Richar Chabert and others white men — when in fact these men had no Indian wives at that time or at any time previous neither had they any claims upon Indians or Government but were Living in civilized Society in the Towns of Logans Port & Fort Wayne —

"I charge Him with base fraud & corruption & speculation in the Discharge of the trust Reposed in him by the government as Indian agent since the year 1828.

"...that the said Tipton did Locate floating Reservations within five miles of the canal Line (to promote his own Interest and that of his friends to whom said floating reservations had or were to be Transferred) on Lands which had been given by congress to the State of Indiana for the purpose of aiding her in the construction of the Canal, thereby Depriving her of her Just Dues and deserving the President.

"...that the said Tipton Refused to recommend to the President the sale of certain Indian Reservations to certain Individuals and immediately afterwards did recommend the sale of the same reservations (at the prices before offered) to other individuals thus showing a preference to sum not granted to others threw mercenary selfish or malicious designs.

"...that the said Tipton did pro(vide) groceres and a Rolet Table on the payment ground in the Years 1829 & 30 thairby allowing the Indians to be swendeled out of thair money all the within charges & Spesefications air respctfully Submitted to the consideration of His Excelency the President of the United States. - L.G. Thompson." (17)

General Tipton responded to these charges in a letter to Secretary of War John H. Eaton on May 10, 1831. He defended himself, indicating that he had proper receipts for goods sold and that he had conformed strictly to the laws governing Indian reservations as provided for by the General Land Office. He continues with this:

"I regret that the name of the persons making these charges was withheld from me. Some men are entitled to a hearing, others should not be accredited, and if these charges emanated from, or bear the name of L. G. Thompson, I state that he is not entitled to credit against me. He is my personal and political enemy. He applied to me to get the furnishing of these same goods \$15000 worth, in 1828, but I could not give it to him. This offended him and he has been for years urging me to collect his accounts from the Indians for horses and for medicines and medical service, one of his claims was submitted for your decision in February last. Dr. Thompson has another reason for trying to remove or discredit me with the Department, he is endeavouring to defraud the honest purchasor (sic) out of an Indian Reservation, the Deed to which has not yet been laid before the President for his approval. He, 'Thompson' ascertained that a Gentleman who lived on the land wanted it, and after he knew that a deed had been executed by the Indian to another man, Thompson had a Deed to himself prepared and placed in the hand of an Interpreter with a promise of a handsome present, if he would go privately to the Indian and obtain his signature to the deed, assuring the Interpreter that he should not be detected, stating that Genl. M'Carty Receiver of Public monies in the

Land office at Fort Wayne, was well acquainted with the President and would go on to Washington with his deed, and procure the President's approval thereto without letting Cass or Tipton know it. I have seen this deed and will forward you a copy of it in a few days, which I trust will fully explain the motives of those who assail me.

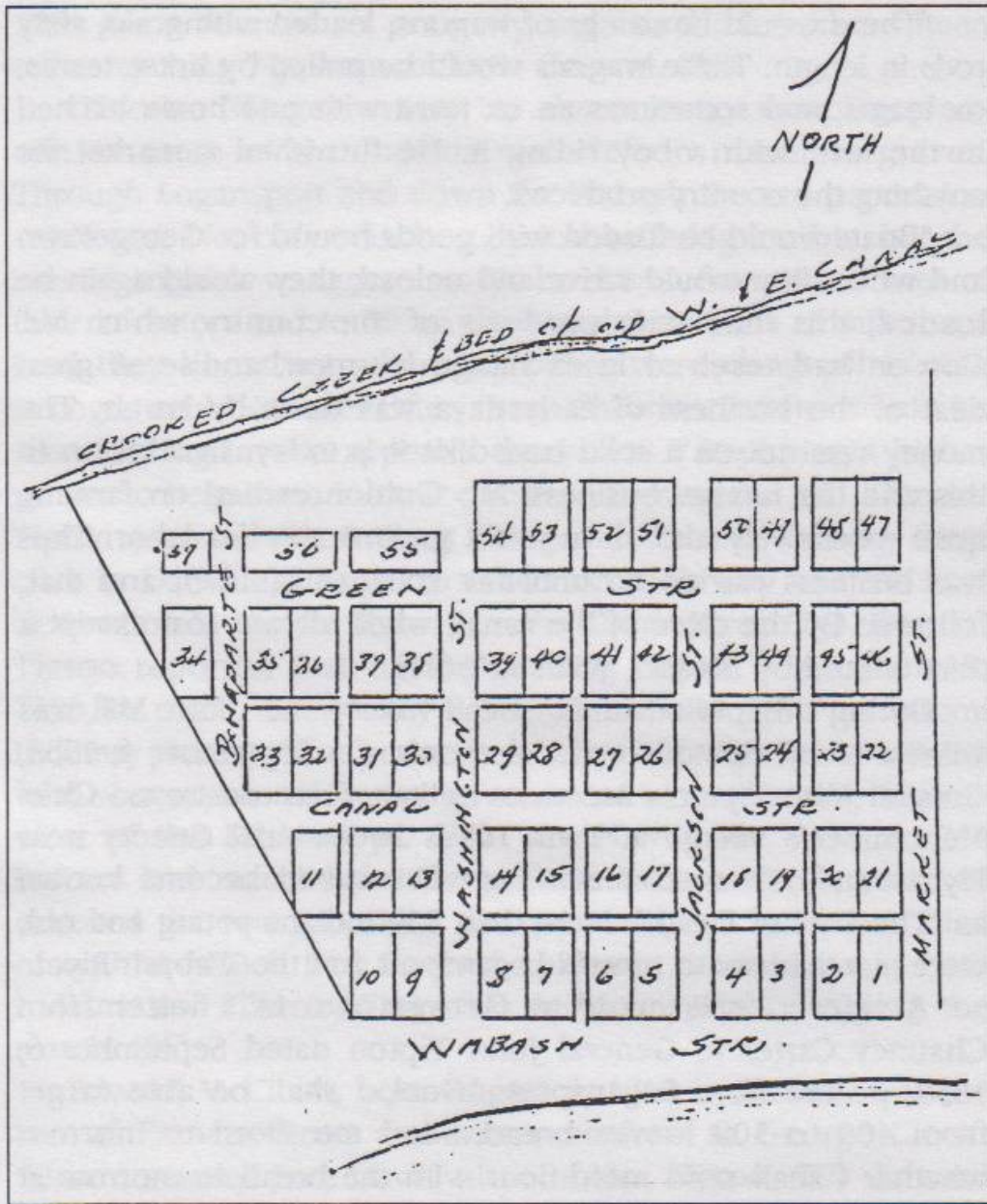
With great respect Yo.Mo.Obt.Servt
John Tipton, Indian Agent." (18)

The first mention of the Cicott Mill at Georgetown appears in the abstract for the property dated April, 1832. In a Cass Circuit Court Judgement for Deed, John Myers vs. Heirs of George Cicott, it seems that Zachariah Cicott, and the other Cicott heirs, had failed to respond to a subpoena for a bill of the complainant involving, "the sum of three hundred and nine dollars," which the complainant paid the court. The court then ordered the defendant to execute within ten days to the complainant a deed of conveyance in fee simple for the land which included the mill.

According to Powell, the mill was operated by different people during the ensuing years. (19) Ben Stuart in his 1924 *History of the Wabash and Valley*, gives an account of some of the persons who owned and operated the mill. One notable gent was Major Daniel Bell, an important figure in the county's history. Among other accomplishments, Major Bell was an assistant in the surveying and locating of the Indiana-Illinois boundary line. (20) Bell married Nancy Spencer, a daughter of Captain Spencer, who lost his life at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811.

Dr. James Gordon became the mill's owner in January of 1843 and did an extensive business. Stuart wrote, "Although he owned five tracts of timber he would not cut any of it but bought all his logs. He had great ox teams; sometimes five or six yoke of cattle could be seen on the roads hauling logs or lumber.

"Dr. Gordon followed his profession until after the opening of the (Wabash & Erie) canal when he turned his attention to business affairs. He was looked upon as a man of superior



TOWN PLAT OF GEORGETOWN
 Recorded July 5, 1835, in Plat Book #1, page 2.
 John Armstrong, Surveyor; Daniel Bell, Proprietor.

foresight and judgement, hence wielded a powerful influence in business affairs and politics. He was considered a man of powerful executive ability in his day." Along with his mill, Gordon built and operated a large warehouse. "His business was known far and wide, from one end of the canal to the other. He drew trade from north of the Tippecanoe River to Frankfort on the south.

"There would be strings of wagons, loaded with grain, sixty rods in length. These wagons would be pulled by horse teams, ox teams, and sometimes an ox team with one horse hitched in the lead with a boy riding it. He furnished a market for anything the country produced.

"Boats would be loaded with goods bound for Georgetown and when they would arrive and unload, they would again be loaded, this time with products of the country which Mr. Gordon had received in exchange for merchandise. A great deal of the business of early days was done by barter. The money was not on a solid basis like it is today. In addition to this and the lumber business, Mr. Gordon carried on farming quite extensively and all meant a great outlay for labor. Thus was business carried on until the collapse of 1873, and that, followed by the close of the canal, when all was lost except a tract of land by his son, William." (21)

During this period of American history the Cicott Mill was witness to momentous national events. On September 4, 1838, General John Tipton's American military force destroyed Chief Menominee's village at Twin Lakes in Marshall County near Plymouth, Indiana, commencing what was to become known as "The Trail of Death". More than 859 Indians young and old, were marched south toward Logansport and the Wabash River.

A reference is made to Georgetown in a letter from Chauncy Carter to General John Tipton dated September 6, 1838, posted from Logansport: "Genl. I shall be able to get from 400 to 500 loaves bread..Send me word to morrow whether I shall send more flour with the bread to morrow at Georgetown. I will meet you at Georgetown tomorrow evening ready to go & will have some bread." (22) Even so, Henry W. Tilley wrote to Commissioner of Indian Affairs Carey A. Harris on September 11, 1838, explaining his difficulty in getting a draft cashed for Tipton's march, "(I) returned to Logansport on the 10th at 12 oclock M. and found the Emigrants under march." This would indicate that the Trail of Death was passing the Cicott Mill on September 10th. On September 12th, Tipton wrote to Harris saying that after he had written yesterday morning, the removal group marched seventeen miles before making camp. On that same date, the

12th, the entourage set out early and marched another fifteen miles reaching Tippecanoe Battle Ground. (23)

Historian Winger writes, "At almost every camping place one or more of the Indians were left in nameless graves. Through Logansport and down the Wabash the sad procession continued. Not only was the physical suffering terrible, but the mental anguish was more so. To be driven from the homes of their ancestors and to be on the march hundreds of miles to a land they knew not where nor what were about all human strength could endure. Often these Christian Indians would be seen looking in vain appeal to heaven as if imploring a higher power to help them in their distress." Passing the Mill, General Tipton escorted the Indians along the Wabash, turning them over in Danville, Illinois, to others on their way to their final destination in eastern Kansas on the Osage River. (24) General Tipton reported that on the evening before September 18, 1838, he reached Sandusky Point, Illinois, with 859 Potawatomi Indians, placing them under the charge of Judge William Polke who was appointed by the government to conduct the Indians west of the Mississippi. (25) On November 4, 1838, 750 Indians had reached the Osage River Subagency. Several had deserted the removal along the trail west, but many had died of typhus, which had reached epidemic proportions in both Indiana and Illinois. Forty-two Indians perished during the march. (26)

Edward V. Cicott, born August 4, 1810 in Detroit, was the son of Francis Cicott and was a nephew to George Cicott. Edward married Jane Davis, niece of Mrs. Tipton. (27) Edward was one of five "gentlemen of high character in the community" appointed by Abel C. Pepper, Superintendent Emigration of Indians, as commissioners to distribute annuity monies to the Indians being removed to the west. This was a necessary action because annuities of \$63,000 due the Wabash Potawatomis were to be paid late in September of 1836 on the Tippecanoe River.

Former commissioners George W. Ewing and Cyrus Taber were also traders and held claims of \$24,000 between the two against the tribe. Other traders led by Alexis Coquillard took exception to Ewing and Taber having control of the money

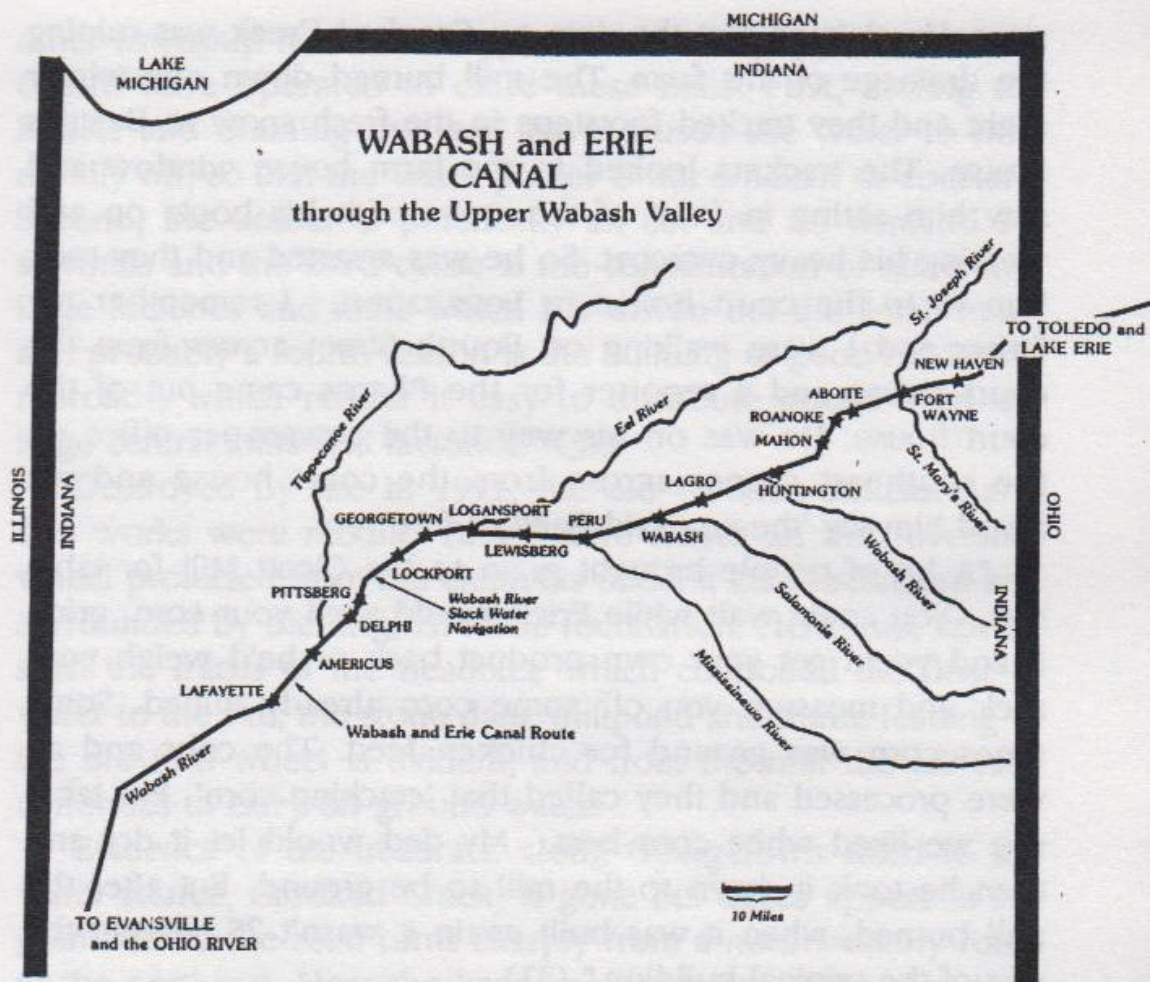
and attacked with guns, climbing up on the roof of the annuity cabin to take the money they felt was due them. Ewing's men made threats to life and limb if Coquillard continued to press the issue. Order was restored and three companies of militia from Logansport arrived to insure the peace. (28)

Edward Cicott, the man who was selected to see that the Indians were paid for their land and to see justice served, was witness to the same people marched forcibly past and beyond the very mill built by his Uncle George to aid the Indians and help them prosper.

Nearby, to the north of the Cicott Mill the longest man-made waterway in America helped commerce flow into the region when the Wabash & Erie canal reached Georgetown in the early 1840s. Ultimately, the canal stretched 540 miles from Lake Erie to the Ohio River at Evansville, Indiana, connecting the waters of the Atlantic Ocean and Montreal on the St. Lawrence River with New Orleans at the Gulf of Mexico. It was the second longest canal in the world to the 1000 mile long Grand Canal of China. Here at Georgetown the canal crossed Crooked Creek over a twenty-eight foot wooden, single span aqueduct which rested on stone abutments. Here too is where engineers located an eight-foot lift, cut-stone canal lock, used to raise and lower barges overcoming the changes in elevation in the terrain. A lock provided the perfect conditions for businesses to locate and prosper at the site. (29)

After thirty-three years of hard work, Dr. Gordon was rendered broke. He died in 1883. The mill was purchased by Nicholas Coble and he with his son built a grist mill in 1878-1879. Ben Stuart recorded that, "It was afterwards owned by Richard Coble, Geo. Peck, Ward, and finally Mr. Frick owned it. It was destroyed by fire in 1911, and the present mill was built about the same time. It (was then) owned by Million Bros. of Lake Cicott and (was) one among the oldest developed water powers in northern Indiana." (30)

Author Ben Stuart credits William A. Barr as one of his sources. Robert W. Barr, now age 89 and living in Cass County, remembered Stuart's calling on his father William while gathering historical facts about the area. Robert Barr recalled visiting Mr. Frick the miller at the Cicott Mill in about



By the mid 1800s, the Wabash and Erie Canal had connected the St. Lawrence Seaway via Lake Erie with trade routes through the agriculturally rich Wabash River Valley.

1908. Barr said that the Cicott Mill was a building which stood two or three stories high. The water to power the wheel came from the Crooked Creek dam to the northeast and the dam was located about where Georgetown Road is today. "I remember when I was a little kid of five or six years. My dad used to load up three or four bags of white corn and go down to the mill to have it ground. I wanted to see what was upstairs, so they took me up and just as we got up there a hot box had started a fire on a big beam. Mr. Frick came up and threw a bucket of water on the fire and put it out. If it wasn't for a kid's curiosity the place may have burned down back in 1908.

"Later in 1911 the mill did catch on fire. A man named Baetty lived upstream on the first farm on the north side of the

river. He claimed that the dam on Crooked Creek was ruining the drainage on his farm. The mill burned down one winter night and they tracked footsteps in the fresh snow to Baetty's house. The trackers looked in the farm house window and saw him sitting in front of the stove with his boots on and wearing his heavy overcoat. So he was arrested and they took him in to the court house in Logansport. I remember my father and I were walking on Fourth Street across from the court house and a reporter for the Pharos came out of the court house. He was on his way to the newspaper office on the southeast corner across from the court house and we heard him say 'the jury said Baetty's free'.

"A lot of people brought grain to the Cicott Mill for table use. You could wait while Frick would shell your corn, grind it and you'd get your own product back or he'd weigh your sack and measure you off some corn already milled. Some times corn was ground for chicken feed. The cobs and all were processed and they called that 'cracking corn'. For table use we liked white corn best. My dad would let it dry and then he took it down to the mill to be ground. But after the mill burned, when it was built again it wasn't .25 percent the size of the original building." (31)

Powell, in the History of Cass county, states, "Enoch Cable built a large grist mill at Georgetown on the site of Cicott's first sawmill; about 1868. In recent years it was supplied with new roller process by Wesley Frick and was doing a good business until it was burned down, February 20, 1911, entailing a loss of over three thousand dollars. The fire was supposed to have been of incendiary origin. There was freshly fallen snow on the ground and tracks in the snow were traced to a certain house in Georgetown, and the man was indicted by the grand jury, tried and acquitted, but many believed him to be guilty. In 1912 Mr. Frick erected a small mill on the site of the ruins of his old mill and (began his business) grinding feed, corn and buckwheat only. This with a small grist mill at Pipe creek are the only water power mills now being operated in Cass county. Jefferson township had better water power facilities than any other township in the county and a greater number of mills have been erected within her boundaries than any

other township in the county, but all have disappeared. Three causes have operated to close these mills. First, cutting the forests and draining the land have caused the water to flow rapidly off, so that the water power is not efficient or constant; Second, the timber is practically all cut and no demand for sawmills and the third cause is the concentration of effort into large factories and mills which has driven out the small mills, and probably a fourth reason is the building of good roads and railroads, which render it easy to distribute goods from the large central mills and factories." (32)

Destroyed by fire in 1911, the old wooden structure and mill works were rebuilt. Today there stands an iron overshot wheel protected from the elements under a cabin structure and surrounded by the original stone foundation. Here, too, can be seen the traces of the headrace which controlled the flow of water to the site; the stone dam, millpond and flume leading to the old iron wheel is evident; and from the mill the tail race continues to carry off ground water.

Evidence of the headrace along Georgetown Road to the water source, Crooked Creek, is gone but traces appear at the point where the road turns sharply from a northwesterly route to the northeast. Here the headrace becomes visible as a ditch which cuts under Georgetown Road and moves directly toward the mill. Along the banks of the water way, a stone wall forms the old mill dam and millpond. The mill's foundation, built on the banks of the Wabash, measures about 46 feet wide by 31 feet long and ranges in depth from four feet at the northwest corner to nearly ten feet at its southeast point. From this place, the tail race flows directly south into the river.

An overshot wheel was usually the preferred water wheel design when the waterhead was ten feet high. Water was moved to the top of the wheel by a trough or flume and directed into "buckets". Formed by boards set at an angle to the wheel, these buckets were set into slots in the rim of the wheel. Power generated by this method depends greatly on the weight of the water striking the buckets just forward of the highest point of the wheel. Of course, the motion of the wheel through a gear mechanism turned a grinding stone or moved a saw blade to provide energy for the work to be done. An

example of such a water wheel still is there, buried in history and under the rubble people have tossed away.

According to longtime area residents, the first wheel at Cicott's Mill was set horizontally. (33) Sometimes called a Greek Mill, the horizontal waterwheel had spoon shaped blades attached to the millstone spindle, which in turn drove a runner stone with no need for gears. In climates where the temperature drops below freezing, as it does in the upper Wabash country, a Norse mill was utilized. Similar to the Greek type, this horizontal design featured straight inclined blades which made ice removal easier. (34) Robert Barr referred to the early wheel simply as a turbine. He speculated that, because it was submerged under the water, it may have survived the 1911 fire and may still be buried under the old place.

Don Kistler's great-great grandfather was Dr. James Gordon. For his entire 70 plus years, Kistler has lived in Georgetown. He tells of the days when the town had a post office known as Amsterdam and a time when the south Wabash River road was the first state highway in Indiana. "It began at the National Road in Terre Haute and went up to the Mississinewa where it empties into the Wabash and then on up to Fort Wayne." Speaking about the mill, he said that Dr. Dill bought the place after the fire and during the early 1930s, using the water wheel, began converting the mill to generate electricity. "He wanted to supply electricity for all of Georgetown, but about that time in 1937, REMC was coming in and the state authorities wouldn't let him. He had that mill lit up like a Christmas tree."

Dale Gaumer, another life-long resident, said that as a youngster, he and his friends used the mill pond as their swimming hole and found the best fishing in the Wabash to be just behind the old mill. He too remembered Dr. Dill and especially the time when Dill was planning to raise frogs for profit. "He dug holes over by Crooked Creek, let 'em fill up with water, then bought some expensive bullfrogs. He put the frogs in the holes he'd dug, but the frogs all hopped away."

Woody Cole bought the place from Dr. Dill's son and made extensive repairs to the old dam, according to Gaumer. He

went on the say that the mill race from Crooked Creek was probably filled in by Dean Landis, who wanted the space it was occupying on his property for farming. Both Kistler and Gaumer remembered that the two large millstones were removed from the mill and placed near the road and remained there for several years. Today they are missing. For historical value if the stones could be located, it would be appropriate for them to be returned once again to the old Cicott Mill site. Gaumer described each stone as about four feet in diameter and 18-inches thick with a square hole cut through the center. (33)

In June 1984, the old mill was threatened by plans to construct a new river bridge at Georgetown. The plans were reported in the news: "New Georgetown Bridge — Historic mill near construction site may have to be moved. It is uncertain whether the historic building would have to be moved for the new bridge scheduled to be built. The engineer's report on preliminary plans for the new bridge states that there are three 'sheds' in the area and one of them, now used as a storage facility, might have to be removed." Area residents reported that the old mill was being used as a storage shed. (35)

Indiana State Senator Thomas Weatherwax was the author of the 1989 Senate Bill 499, which when enacted, provided partial funding for a river bank development popularly known as the Little Turtle Trail. Part of the reasoning for the waterway trail is to enhance recreational development along the Wabash. (36)

The Muncie, Indiana, consulting firm of Ernstberger & Associates, retained by the Little Turtle Waterway Committee, stated that the area west of Logansport has great potential for scenic biking and hiking trails. It could include a fourteen-mile loop from the Logansport Cicott Street Bridge west crossing the river again at Georgetown Bridge creating a loop to include both the south and north river banks. Meanwhile, a state-mandated study of the Wabash River from Cass and Carroll through Tippecanoe and Warren counties, proposes the possible creation of a Wabash River trail from northern Indiana to its mouth at the Ohio River. Cass County's portion of the trail would be a part of the national trail system which

includes the Lewis and Clark Trail. The Wabash Corridor Trail would enhance the historical and educational value of sites such as the Cicott Mill as it tracks along the river bank. (37)

Indiana's Department of Natural Resources, in a prospectus for helping to develop the Wabash River Heritage Corridor, explained that the Wabash River was historically important by offering the most direct route from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico for the Indians, French, British and Americans. The Wabash & Erie Canal opened up the rich Indiana farmlands and helped the development of the Midwestern United States. Today, portions of the canal remain within the Wabash River Heritage Corridor. Further, the Wabash represents one of the nation's largest unencumbered waterways, as well as one of our country's great natural resources for access to abundant flora and fauna species.

One of the first projects funded by the Department of Natural Resources, in 1990, was for a park in Warren County, Indiana. John Henry and Richard Gillespie received \$112,235 to convert an historic Wabash River fur trading post site to a recreational area. Located in modern Independence, Indiana, the post was once operated by Zachariah Cicott. Several broken artifacts have been unearthed by archaeologists from Ball State University. (38)

According to Senator Weatherwax, in 1991, "I had the pleasure of seeing the Wabash River Heritage Corridor become one step closer to becoming reality as sponsor of HB 1381. It establishes a long-range planning commission, with representation from each county the Wabash River crosses, to promote natural, cultural and recreational resources along the river. This commission will serve as a foundation for continuity and development of this river throughout our state.

"The Wabash River has played a major influence on this area from the time the Indians originally navigated it." Weatherwax said. "We owe our very heritage to this great river, and I believe it still is one of our state's greatest natural asset." (39)

In an August 26, 1962, Indianapolis Star Magazine feature, writer Richard S. Simons discovered this area of the state. "Here's a drive where a motorist can safely be lazy on a

summer afternoon, where the mighty Wabash spreads herself out over a broad, grassy bed and winds easily between sycamore-bordered banks. Where you're apt to see the flash of goldfinch or hear the song of meadowlarks around the bend. Most of the way, the North River (Georgetown) Road tops the bank, just an easy coin toss from the water. Perpendicular stone cliffs drop suddenly to roadside at some points. Elsewhere, lush, green fields spread away across the rich, level bottom lands. Heavy forest and thick underbrush obscure the steep valley walls at other points. You'll find the road now at the bottom of the valley, now running along the steep hillsides, but always with a striking panorama. It follows the route of the old Wabash and Erie Canal, once the world's longest artificial waterway — every inch dug by pick and shovel, moistened by the sweat of Irish laborers. It stretched nearly 500 miles from Toledo, Ohio, to Evansville, and a century and a quarter ago it was Indiana's principal trade route. The canal bed, sometimes a dry, shallow depression, sometimes a water-filled trough, parallels the North River road from Logansport nearly to Delphi." (40)

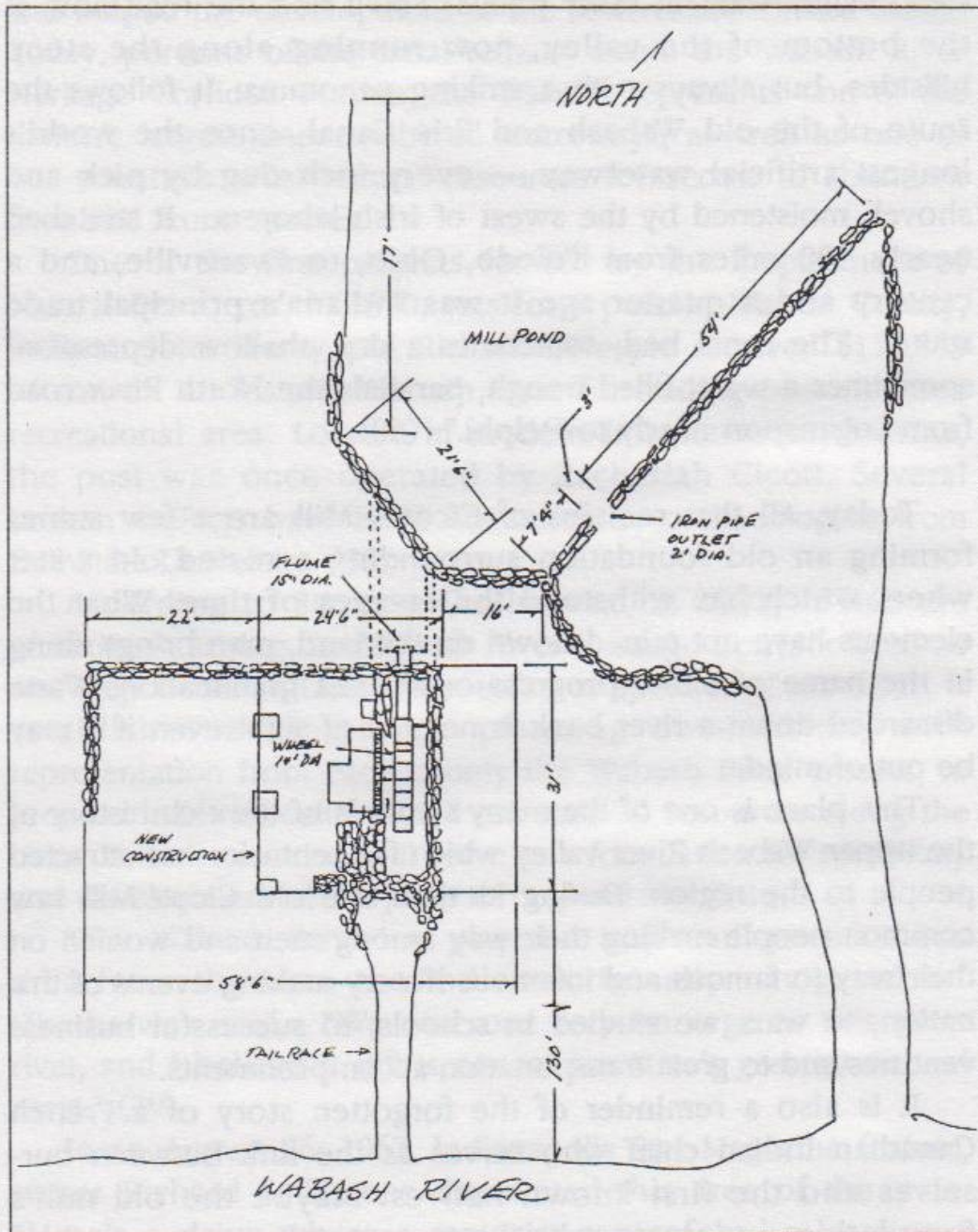
Today, all that remains of Cicott's Mill are a few stones forming an old foundation surrounding a rusted old water wheel which has withstood the ravages of time. What the elements have not rained down on the land, man brings along in the name of either progress or his self gratification. Waste discarded down a river bank is not out of sight even if it may be out of mind.

This place is one of the many symbols of the rich history of the upper Wabash River valley which for centuries has attracted people to the region. During its time, the old Cicott Mill saw common people making their way among men and women on their way to famous and infamous history-making events of this nation, to wars we studied in schools, to successful business ventures and to great transportation accomplishments.

It is also a reminder of the forgotten story of a French Canadian Indian chief who serves as the link between ourselves and the first known natives. Maybe the old mill's foundation and rusty wheel are at work again as silent

reminders of a heritage that we each should nurture for those who follow. If we take the time to understand our heritage, to gaze thoughtfully at the natural grace containing a rich soil divided by meandering waterways, we may gain a greater sense of pride in what we have here.

How often does the likes of old George Cicott come along who puts resources in place for the benefit of others? It's a sound foundation on which each of us can build.



Site Plan for the George Cicott Mill

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