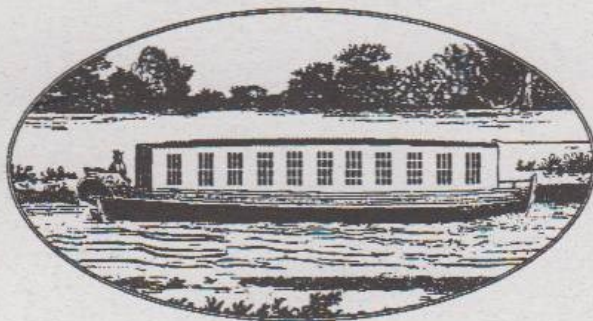


WABASH & ERIE CANAL

N O T E B O O K I

ALLEN AND HUNTINGTON COUNTIES



SECOND REVISED EDITION

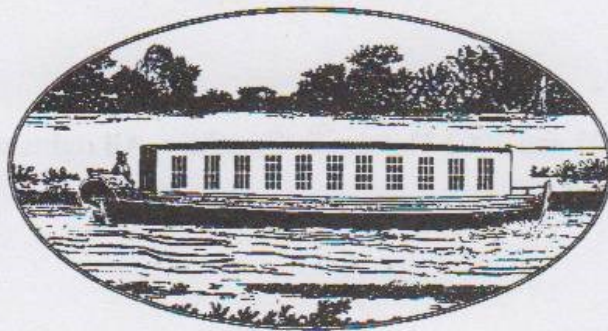
THOMAS E. CASTALDI



Jesse L. Williams
Chief Engineer, Wabash and Erie Canal

WABASH & ERIE CANAL

N O T E B O O K



THOMAS E. CASTALDI

Also by Tom Castaldi
Wabash & Erie Canal Notebook II
Cass, Carroll and Tippecanoe Counties
Wabash & Erie Canal Notebook III
Wabash and Miami Counties

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Canal Society of Indiana is a not for profit corporation established to bring together those who share a common interest in Indiana's historic canals. It helps focus attention on the early interstate waterways through a variety of programs. Its aim is to provide interpretation of the era, to preserve canal bed and structural remains, and to support restoration of historic canal related sites.

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PREFACE

The Wabash & Erie Canal fulfilled George Washington's dream of connecting the St. Lawrence basin with the Mississippi valley by creating a waterway across the only land barrier that lie between the St. Mary's River in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and the Forks of the Wabash at Huntington, Indiana, on the Wabash River. In Fort Wayne ground was broken for the project on February 22, 1832, and a grand opening was celebrated on July 4, 1843. Originally, the project was to extend east from the Indiana-Ohio state line to the head of steamboat navigation on the Wabash near Lafayette, Indiana. It was 1853 before the project was finished and the canal operated until 1876 when the railroads forced its closing. By the time it was completed the canal extended 468 miles from Toledo, Ohio, on Lake Erie to Evansville, Indiana, on the Ohio River, and was the longest canal in the Western Hemisphere.

Wabash & Erie Canal Notebook describes and locates the great Indiana canal project on a county-by-county basis. Its task is to collect the available information about the canal in counties it passed from the state line through Lafayette. Although this edition discusses the entire canal project, it concentrates on the mechanical structures of two of the several counties. Included are the reports of canal officials; contracts for mechanical structures; diaries; recollections recorded and retold; local histories; state and county history periodicals; newspaper accounts of the day or as remembered in later years; archaeological findings; topographical maps; field observations; and historical markers.

The series focuses on where the canal line was located as well as what can be observed today. Extant sites include remnants of mechanical structures; the channel and towpath levees that made the project possible; economic development influences; and how the canal affects the lives of people to the present day.

Tom Castaldi
Fort Wayne, Indiana

WABASH & ERIE CANAL

in

Allen County, Indiana

General Lewis Cass on July 4, 1843, at the celebration of Opening the canal from Toledo, Ohio to Lafayette, Indiana, said, "Centuries hence, we may hope the river you have made will flow both east and west, bearing upon its bosom the riches of the prosperous people, and that our descendants will come to keep the day which we have come to mark; and that as it returns they will remember the exertions of their ancestors while they gather the harvest."¹

Nearly two centuries have passed and General Cass' prophecy seems to have faded away. Gone is the waterway once relegated to the remote areas of the towns and counties in which it breathed economic life. Although it triggered commercial development and population expansion, virtually no one today celebrates July 4th with thoughts of commemorating that long ago canal opening.

Excellent accounts have been written about the planning and financing of the project and why its failure caused the state of Indiana to rewrite its constitution in 1851, prohibiting it to establish debt through bonds or by deficit spending. It was, when completed, America's longest man-made waterway, exceeded in the world by only the Grand Canal of China, hardly an improvement to go unnoticed. It opened the Wabash Valley country for development and passenger travel to the West. Shortly after it opened, Fort Wayne grew from an Indian trading post to a thriving community.

¹Published originally in the *Old Fort News* 55 (1992), pp. 5-27. Republished here courtesy of the Allen County Fort Wayne Historical Society.

In 1828 there were about 500 people in Fort Wayne and by 1849 the population was approximately 1,200.² Tons from harvests in the rich Wabash Valley moved to market by a mule or a horse tugging easily on the end of a tow line up and down the canal.

The idea of a water passage connecting Lake Erie through the short portage between the Maumee and Wabash Rivers was a suggestion of none other than George Washington himself. It is believed that Washington was considering such a project as early as 1784 when he urged Congress to explore the rivers "as far westwardly as the miamies, running into the Ohio and Lake Erie ...to see how the waters of these communicate with the River St. Joseph ... and with the Wabash."³ A water route connection between these rivers received renewed interest in 1823 when Fort Wayne pioneer Samuel Hanna and David Burr of Jackson County began petitioning the Indiana Legislature for a canal.⁴ On a visit to Fort Wayne in November 1819, surveyor Captain James Riley, speaking of General Anthony Wayne's tactics said, "By occupying Fort Wayne, the communication between Lake Erie and the Ohio, through the channels of the Maumee and the Wabash (which is the shortest and most direct water route from Buffalo to the Mississippi River), was cut off or completely commanded."⁵ And, as for the notion of a canal across the St. Mary's to the Little Wabash River portage he said, "Through a part of the above-mentioned surveys, which is very extensive, a canal might very easily be cut, 6 miles long, uniting the Wabash to the St. Mary's a little above its junction, and, from what I saw and learned from others, it is my opinion that the survey might afford water sufficient for purposes of canal navigation."⁶

In 1824, the legislature approved the first surveys to be conducted, and by 1827 the U.S. government had granted Indiana alternate sections of land five miles on either side of the proposed route. Indiana was to receive the proceeds from the sale of these lands encompassing nearly 527,271 acres along the 160 mile route. With the revenue, the state planned to fund the cost of the construction of the canal.⁷ All of this took place in the 1830s

during a time when the internal improvement movement was popular in this country and it had a direct affect in the development of much of Indiana's economy.⁸

Generally, the canal followed the old portage route; railroads and interurban lines followed the canal, and later, roads and highways were built along the line. A rule of thumb used for tracing the Wabash & Erie suggests following U.S. Highway 24 west from the Indiana and Ohio line to Logansport. The route continues on the north side of the Wabash through Cass and Carroll Counties entering the Wabash River at Carrollton for three miles. The canal then turned into the south side of the river near Delphi and continued on to Lafayette and Terre Haute. When completed by 1853, the canal extended from Toledo to Evansville, 468 miles. At Evansville the canal terminated short of the Ohio River and cargo was hauled by wagon a few blocks to river barges.

A diary was written by a member of the original survey party and relates activities that took place when the preliminary study was being made to determine the route for the Wabash & Erie Canal. In his journal, John Peter Paul recounted conditions on the proposed canal line between May 23, 1827 through October 22, 1827. On September 29th this entry appears: "Friday, arrived [back to Fort Wayne] at encampment No. 1 on Maumee. Found the Colonel [Asa Moore] and several others quite sick and from this time onward have had so much sickness that no progress has been made in the surveys as yet and the prospect for further operations seem altogether unfavorable from the extreme unhealthiness of the Brigade at this time,"⁹

Boats were towed by mules that walked on a towpath alongside the waterway. Albeit much slower than modern transportation means, the canal provided farmers and businesses of the mid 1800s with a method to transport their products just as our interstate highway system does today. As a transportation technology the canal gave way to the railroads, and later, trucking made dramatic inroads carrying goods of all sorts to places where canal boats and train cars

could not reach. Today U. S. 24 is a descendant of the Wabash & Erie Canal and offers a more efficient way for farmers and business people to deliver their goods to market.¹⁰

For its time, the canal was an ideal transportation method, handling the enormous farm harvest produced in the Indiana heartland. Once trading centers could be established and people were attracted to live and work the land, counties and towns developed along the way. People settled where the locks were constructed and these communities influenced where roads and rails would eventually be located.

In his December 6, 1833 report to the Board of Commissioners of the Wabash Canal, Chief Engineer Jesse Williams wrote: "Agreeably to a decision heretofore made by your board, the canal, when completed, will be 40 feet wide at the surface, and 4 feet deep, and the locks will be 90 feet long and 15 feet wide in the chamber."¹¹

Lift locks were constructed in the canal channel to raise or lower boats as changes in elevation required. Arches, culverts and aqueducts were constructed to cross streams and rivers which intersected the canal route. Today some of these structures remain and continue to be appreciated by persons wanting to learn about their heritage. Most of the canal structures built in Allen County have disappeared because of removal by developers, and others simply have rotted away due to their timber construction. Timber was abundant in Allen County and so became the material utilized. In 1836, the canal commissioners reported: "It is greatly to be regretted that the Wabash Valley, abounding as it does with cliffs and quarries of lime stone, would afford so little [building stone] that will answer for the important mechanical structures appertaining to the canal."¹²

Development of lock design was not as advanced as other construction techniques along the canal line, however, locks were expected to be completed by expiration terms of the contracts. In

the *Indiana House Journal* 1834 "Report to the Principal Engineer," Indiana Division State Library, the Engineer reported that a combination of stone and timber was to be used with walls of stone and the gates to be made of wood. As stated above, a finished lock was to be 90 feet in length and 15 feet wide within the lock chamber. Canal channel specifications called for a width of 40 feet at the surface and to be four feet in depth. Where possible, and when it could be accomplished at no additional cost, the channel was to be made deeper and wider. As a result, some portions were made as wide as 60 feet and its depth could be as much as six feet. During construction, a difficulty to be overcome was to prevent bank leakage and washouts. Low areas had to be filled and hills avoided or cut through. These fill-in places were made when necessary, however, they may not have settled at the same rate along the cut of the channel and required re-leveling. If it were to rain, while a fill was being made, a washout was likely and once started was difficult to manage. Also, it was difficult to obtain proper building materials. Stone was preferred because of its permanency, however, due to its bulk and weight delivering it to the site where it was needed could be a problem. Somewhere along the route of the canal, usable stone could be found and loaded on a boat making transportation an easy chore. It would be less costly to wait until the canal was completed near a quarry than to haul stone overland. Engineers opted to keep completion dates on schedule building wooden structures from the abundant timberland. They were aware that eventually these same projects should be replaced and built of stone.¹³

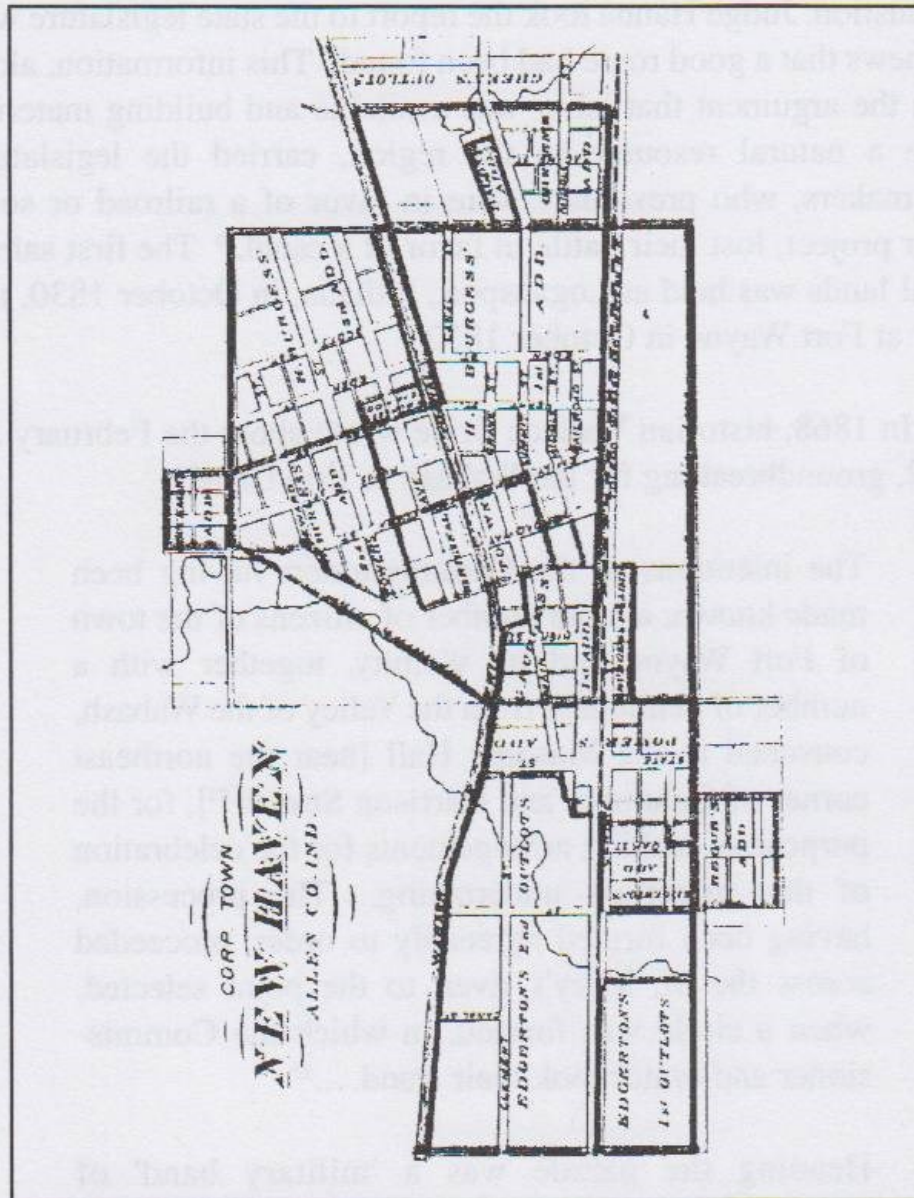
As early as 1833, Chief Engineer Williams report to the canal commissioners stated that "Where stone suitable for building perfect cut stone locks, can be procured, that plan is preferred, from a conviction that it not only forms the most complete lock, but is also the most economical plan, if reference be had to the cost of future repairs. Careful examinations were therefore made, and several quarries partially opened, with the hope of finding stone that would answer for cut masonry, but without success. Stone sufficiently large and firm for building strong undressed walls, are

found very convenient to the point where most of the locks are located. Under the circumstances, a plan of building with stone and wood combined has been recommended." The chief engineer reported in 1847 that durable stone was at last obtainable from the "Quarry west of Logansport at Georgetown."¹⁴ After Georgetown was reached in 1837, stone could be transported and improvements made as necessary.¹⁵ More than a century and a half has passed since it opened, and the Wabash & Eire Canal slowly but surely fades away into the land.

GETTING STARTED ON A HIGH POINT

In 1828 a Board of Canal Commissioners was established, comprised of David Burr, Samuel Hanna and Robert John.¹⁶ In that same year, Judge Samuel Hanna traveled to New York to purchase necessary tools, "being without level or any instrument to work with, and having no engineer, and the \$500 of appropriation being insufficient for any practical purpose." Hanna traveled on horseback to Detroit then on to New York in an unusually short period of time for the day.¹⁷

Civil engineers were difficult to find in those days in this part of the country, however, one was found named John Smythe. He was hired to find a route from the high point of the project on the St. Joseph River on which to build a dam, which would provide an adequate level of water to the summit level of the main channel in Fort Wayne. Two days into the project Smythe came down with fever and died. So David Burr, as the rod man, and Judge Hanna, as the axe man, combined their energies to complete the survey. The route extended from a point near present-day Rumsey and Wheeler streets, where a rail line now passes, to a place on the St. Joseph River across from Riverbend Golf Course north of Shoaff Park.¹⁸ With the surveying equipment in hand, work began on September 10, 1828, and for thirteen days Judge Hanna and Colonel Burr searched the St. Joseph River area to locate a suitable site.



From *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Indiana*
 Baskin, Forster & Co., 1876

They found a place to build a dam on the St. Joseph roughly six miles north of Fort Wayne. Using the work of Colonel Asa Moore, who had previously surveyed up and down the Wabash and Maumee rivers, a feeder route was laid out to the "Summit". This is the highest elevation of the canal and the connecting point where the feeder would meet the Wabash & Erie Canal main line.¹⁹ Burr was so worn down from the effort that he suffered a case of mental

exhaustion. Judge Hanna took the report to the state legislature with the news that a good route had been found. This information, along with the argument that labor was available and building materials were a natural resource in the region, carried the legislature. Lawmakers, who previously were in favor of a railroad or some other project, lost their battle in favor of a canal.²⁰ The first sale of canal lands was held at Logansport, Indiana, in October 1830, and later at Fort Wayne in October 1832.²¹

In 1868, historian Wallace Brice wrote about the February 22, 1832, groundbreaking for the Wabash & Erie Canal.

The intentions of the Commissioners having been made known, a large number of citizens of the town of Fort Wayne and its vicinity, together with a number of gentlemen from the Valley of the Wabash, convened at the Masonic Hall [near the northeast corner of Columbia and Harrison Streets ²²], for the purpose of making arrangements for the celebration of this important undertaking....The procession, having been formed agreeably to order, proceeded across the St. Mary's river, to the point selected, when a circle was formed, in which the Commissioner and orator took their stand....²³

Heading the parade was a 'military band' of two members, followed by the members of the canal commission, and the president and secretary of the meeting. Next came the bearer of the national colors, the members of the committee on arrangements, 'visitors and strangers,' and citizens generally.

The site chosen was the point where the feeder canal would join the main line. Griswold said in his history that this spot is "now marked by the crossing of the Nickel Plate and the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern railway, near the Wayne Knitting Mills."²⁴

On the west end of Main Street at the intersection of Growth Street, an Indiana Historical Bureau marker commemorates the event.

WABASH AND ERIE CANAL

GROUNDBREAKING

On February 22, 1832, ground was broken two blocks north for the canal, which would link

Lake Erie at Toledo with the Ohio River at Evansville. Jordan Vigus, Canal Commissioner, Charles W. Ewing, Samuel Hanna and Elias Murray participated in the ceremony.

Charles W. Ewing addressed the crowd. Jordan Vigus, a commissioner, also spoke about the problems which had to be overcome before the canal could become a reality. He concluded his remarks by digging the first spade full of dirt. Judge Hanna and Captain Elias Murray also took shovels full of ceremonious ground-breaking soil. At this, the crowd marched back to town for a celebration.²⁵

In 1832, Jesse Lynch Williams was appointed chief engineer by the Board of Commissioners of the Wabash & Erie Canal and in 1837 as engineer of all Indiana's transportation. He was born in Stokes County, North Carolina, on May 6, 1807. Jesse came to Fort Wayne in 1832 with his wife Susan Creighton. After Williams successful experience with laying out and building the canal, President Lincoln named him a director of the Union Pacific Railroad. He was the man who engineered the eastern connection of the first transcontinental railroad at Ogden, Utah. Later Williams was instrumental in bringing the railroad to Fort Wayne. He died in 1886 and his gravestone can be found in Fort Wayne's Lindenwood Cemetery.²⁶

In his 1847 Chief Engineer's Report to the Indiana State Legislature, Williams stated that the six miles and thirty-four chains long canal feeder was moving water from the St. Joseph River to

the summit level of the Wabash & Erie. Because this was the highest point [the summit] of the project, a special supply of water was necessary at Fort Wayne. Williams reported that the supply provided water for both the Six Mile Reservoir located to the east in Paulding County, Ohio, as well as the Forks of the Wabash to the west. As a matter of fact, in very dry conditions, the St. Joseph Feeder sent water 12 miles beyond the Forks. This feeder provided the water to float boats over this high-level portion to the southwest of Fort Wayne, 181 feet above the mouth of the Maumee River.²⁷

Chief Engineer Williams' report described the St. Joseph River dam as being 230 feet long and 16-1/2 feet high from low water conditions. Felled trees and brush formed a foundation on which cribs were fashioned and filled with stone. The felled trees were laid lengthwise with their tops facing the flow of water in the riverbed so as to trap the sand and sediment to fill in the dam and hold back the water. Williams wrote in his 1847 report: "The guard lock at the head of the feeder is built of timber. The abutments at the lower end with the lower gates are in good condition, having been rebuilt last summer. The upper abutments and upper gates are entirely decayed, and must be rebuilt before the fall floods."²⁸

Today, near Riverbend Golf Course, the stones used in the dam's construction on either bank still can be seen. From these boulders, looking up the banks, the earthen works are visible as is the dike-like hill of earth on the west bank leading up stream to the feeder channel. Extending west several hundred yards, this channel is very visible until it is cut off by Beckett's Run Creek.

In 1847 the chief engineer wrote that proceeding up the feeder the first "mechanical structure Culvert No. 1 over Beckett's run – [is] a cut stone arch of 13 1/2 feet chord. It is new and in excellent condition." Construction engineers refer to a horizontal member in a rigid frame as a "chord". If you were to visit the spot where this culvert once crossed Beckett's Run, you would see large cement abutments with a contractor's logo impressed in the concrete. It reads "Moellering Construction 1905." Of the same vintage, here

too once stood a cement arch spanning Beckett's Run. These, however, are ruins left over from the days after the canal was no longer in use and a trolley track bed had been placed on the tow path of the feeder canal. From Fort Wayne the trolley carried people to and from Robison Park, an amusement park located about six miles northeast of Fort Wane on the St. Joseph River. It was developed in 1896 and closed in 1920.²⁹ Now the area is partially built over with homes in the North Pointe Woods addition.

At Beckett's Run, the feeder turned south and followed the west bank of the St. Joseph River. Presently, American Electric Power's (AEP) power lines follow the route with its towers anchored in the old canal bed channel and can be seen at the east edge of the Jacob's Run subdivision. At St. Joe Center Road, along Martin Luther Drive behind Concordia Theological Seminary, the canal depression is quite visible.

Indiana University – Purdue University at Fort Wayne campus was expanded to the west when it purchased the approximately 150 acres known as the McKay farm during the late 1990s. University Chancellor Michael A. Wartell presided over an October 5, 1999 ceremony officially dedicating and naming the facility “Hefner Soccer Fields”. Separating soccer fields from parking areas, the St. Joseph Feeder tracks through the farm on a north-south line. The university agreed that identifying the remnants of the canal feeder as a historical interpretative feature was consistent with their educational mission. As such, four historical markers were prepared and placed at the four crossover bridges that connect the playing fields with the parking area.

BUILDING THE WABASH-ERIE CANAL

ST. JOSEPH FEEDER

In 1828, Sam Hanna, David Burr and John Smyth located a site for a feeder across the St. Joseph River to conduct river water through this channel into the summit level of the Wabash-Erie Canal located 6 miles below the dam. Working in a harsh

wilderness, Burr became ill suffering mental exhaustion and Smyth died of fever, however, Hanna completed a survey in time for the Indiana legislature's approval.

WABASH-ERIE CANAL ST. JOSEPH

FEEDER: OPENING

Water from the St. Joseph River 3 miles to the north, flowed past this point to the Wabash-Erie Canal, a commercial waterway, linking Toledo, Ohio, on Lake Erie with Evansville, Indiana, on the Ohio River a distance of 468 miles.

The Wabash-Erie Canal's grand opening between Lafayette, Indiana and Toledo was celebrated July 4, 1843. Once completed in 1853 the Wabash-Erie was the longest canal in the Western Hemisphere, but was closed by 1874.

WABASH-ERIE CANAL

ST. JOSEPH FEEDER: SUMMIT

Groundbreaking for the Wabash-Erie Canal took place on February 22, 1832. Work on this feeder began that summer and was opened on July 4, 1834. F. P. Tinkham built a craft, put it on the feeder canal and took a group of friends past this place to the feeder dam site at the Saint Joseph River. The dam was located at the highest level of the canal later giving rise to Ft Wayne's nickname "Summit City" which is 198 feet above Lake Erie.

WABASH-ERIE CANAL

ST. JOSEPH FEEDER

This navigable feeder conveyed water from a dam on the St. Joseph River to the north to join the Wabash-Erie Canal at Fort Wayne. It maintained

the same depth as the Wabash-Erie allowing canal boats to operate successfully. The Wabash-Erie first opened to Huntington, Indiana, on July 4, 1835. In 1896, the Ft. Wayne Consolidated Railway Co. placed trolley rails on the feeder's towpath to connect Ft. Wayne with Robison Amusement Park. Today power lines trace the feeder's route.³⁰

In the 1847 Chief Engineer's Report, a spot near here was designated Road Bridge No. 1. Farther south, at a point on California Road behind the Red Cross facility, Culvert No. 3 was located. The engineer's report states that the culvert "is a wooden arch of 8-feet chord. It cannot be submerged, and must require rebuilding within one or two years. It should be built of cut stone."³¹

Across Coliseum Boulevard the feeder line passed west of Memorial baseball stadium previously known as Carrington Field. At Johnny Appleseed Park, where John Chapman is buried, Culvert No. 4 was built. When the trolley line replaced the feeder, the traction company used the same towpath bridge footings and timbers. Because the substructure was strong enough to bear the requirements of the new bridge with its tracks and electric car weight, there was no need to replace the pilings.³²

Today the line of electrical power towers are easily spotted through the park, and beyond, alongside Spy Run Extended. The route of the old feeder makes an excellent roadway for automobile traffic today, but more than a century and a half ago, it took back-breaking labor to prepare the original path. At the time the canal was being dug by Irish immigrants, this section was part of a bluff that had to be leveled by hand.³³

Today, there are no visible remains of the aqueduct over Spy Run Creek. Originally it was a 28-foot span made of wood resting on stone abutments. The feeder proceeded southwest and Jesse Williams concluded his report of the feeder canal with this entry: "Road bridge No. 3, at the Goshen Road [this may be the same

location as present Wells Street] should be rebuilt next year [1848]. There to the junction of the main line, there are no mechanical structures."³⁴

Nothing remains of the feeder canal that crossed in a southwest direction through both present day Bloomingdale and Nebraska neighborhoods. Very roughly the route was on a line plotted by these points: Wells at Sixth Street; Short at Fifth Street; south of Most Precious Blood Church where Barthold intersects Fourth Street; Sherman just north of Third Street; Oakland at High; on St. Mary's midway between Sinclair and High Streets; Franklin at High; Degroff half a block between Polk and High; mid block on Polk between Osage and Degroff streets; across the property that lies in the southwest quadrant at the intersection of Osage and Richardson and then to the southern tip of Rumsey Street. The actual place where the feeder intersected the Summit Level of the main channel is covered over by railroad tracks.

Stories have been related through family members who lived in the neighborhood. Richard Bade, was 75 years of age in 1995 when he said that his grandmother Louise recalled standing in front of her house at 823 Sherman, saying she, "could look north and see the canal feeder and across the feeder is where the Irish lived." Further, she remembered that there was a foot bridge at St. Mary's Avenue. In the years that followed, 3rd Street was extended to the St. Mary's bridge that crossed the canal and may explain why there is an offset in the road at that intersection today. The feeder is probably the cause for similar offsets in Sherman at Spring streets as well.³⁵

Water first poured into the Wabash & Erie Canal in June of 1834 from the St. Joseph Feeder.³⁶ On July 4, 1834, F. P. Tinkham built a craft, put it on the feeder canal and took a group of friends out to the dam ³⁷ and no doubt the first boat to ply the waters of the Wabash & Erie Canal. Forty years later, in 1874, the canal mainline waterway was abandoned.³⁸

THE MAIN LINE

Entering from Ohio the canal route is now approximately where modern U.S. Highway 24 has been built. Allen County was the entry point for the canal into Indiana from 18-1/2 miles east of Junction City, Ohio, where the Wabash & Erie linked with the Miami-Erie Canal. This stretch, known as the Junction State Line Section, was opened for navigation on May 8, 1843. Because Northwestern Ohio was not greatly populated, the state did not move quickly to complete the Junction City to State Line Section of the canal.

An impatient Indiana Legislature on January 22, 1840, issued a joint resolution "that it shall be the duty of the Chief Engineer to proceed immediately to the seat of government of the State of Ohio, and in a respectful manner to urge upon the consideration of the members of the Legislature of that state the necessity of speedy completion of the Wabash & Erie Canal from the Indiana State Line to the Maumee Bay, in compliance with the compacts heretofore made between the two States in relation thereto." The resolution was delivered January 31, 1840, and on May 8, 1843, the canal was opened from Toledo through Fort Wayne.³⁹

This represents an eight year separation from the first construction contract for the 15 mile section let in June 1832, and boat traffic from Fort Wayne to Huntington, Indiana, commencing July 4, 1835.⁴⁰ The Fort Wayne-Huntington section, extended the main line through Huntington County.⁴¹ By 1840, the canal had been completed from the state line to Georgetown, Indiana, eight miles west of Logansport, and three years before the state of Ohio finished its part of the work connecting the Wabash & Erie with the Miami-Erie Canal at Junction City, Ohio.

On July 4, 1843, the Wabash & Erie was officially opened between Toledo to Lafayette and its dedication became known as The Great Canal Celebration. "At 11 o'clock an immense procession was formed on the public square, and marched to a beautiful

shady grove on the farm of Colonel Swinney [the present Swinney Park], where the exercises of the day were performed. The procession was nearly a mile in length and was enlivened by several bands of music."⁴² It was at this event that General Cass gave his key address. Charles Poinsette wrote, "The celebration began at sunrise fittingly, with a twenty-six gun salute from the old fort...the procession moved out of the city to Swinney's grove."⁴³

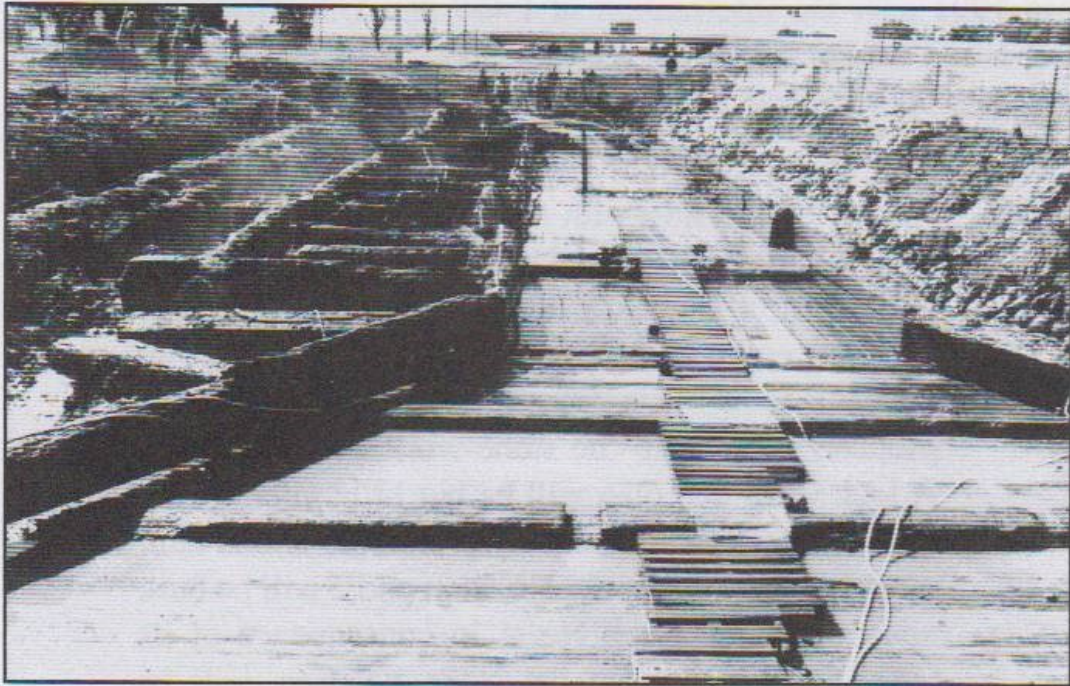
The old channel can be seen in places within Allen County, and what remains of its structures provide special interest for people who both appreciate and enjoy history. Knowing where to look is important since much of the canal's more obvious remains have seemingly disappeared. A survey of the canal remnants, locks, aqueduct, culverts and towpaths, however, conjure images of the life style of those who came before us.

The stories of the Wabash & Erie Canal help make the canal one of Indiana's most valuable archeological assets and a unique national treasure. In its July 1991 newsletter, The Canal Society of Indiana, presented both a review of the Wabash & Erie Canal historic traces and the case for saving discoveries such as the Gronauer Lock. In his remarks, Bob Schmidt, the society's president, pointed out that little remains of the old canal. In Allen County alone, Lock No. 3 is buried under the railroad bed east of Anthony Boulevard near Glasgow Avenue and the St. Mary's aqueduct is destroyed. The St. Joseph feeder dam and feeder canal are gone. Not far from the Allen – Whitley county line, the Aboite River aqueduct has but a few timbers remaining in the bed of the stream. The transportation system that was responsible for much of the early success of New Haven, Fort Wayne and of towns all along its route has been obliterated. In Fort Wayne, most of the canal route lies in the proximity of the elevated railroad tracks.

TAKING STOCK OF LOCKS

Of the seventy-three locks on the Wabash & Erie, only a few were made of stone that could weather the ravages of time. Timber-built locks, although not a desirable building material for the structures, are all that canal revenues would allow. Bob Schmidt wrote that locks were important because of their function. "A canal is composed of levels of water maintaining a constant depth of about four feet. As terrain elevation changes occur, a new level must be interconnected by using locks which raises or lowers the canal boat between the levels." He expanded upon the importance of wooden locks: "The engineering of the timber lock, with its four timber walls, is much different than one of stone." Uncovering structures and finding them preserved for such study is a rare experience.

Because of a delicate combination of soil types, moisture levels, temperatures and the like, the timbers of the Gronauer Lock were spared.⁴⁴



R.L. Sheets

Gronauer Lock looking west - Fall 1992



R.L. Sheets

Gronauer Lock, view to the east. Fall 1992

With the uncovering of the Gronauer Lock, or Lock No, 2, in 1991 near the intersection of I-469 and U.S. Highway 24, the question arises, if there is a Lock No. 2 what about Lock No. 1? In the Chief Engineer's Report of 1833, this entry appears:

A plan of building with stone and wood combined has been recommended. Upon this plan the walls are to be built of uncut stone laid so as to give the necessary strength and stability to the lock; the face of the walls to be made water tight by a lining of plank properly secured to the stone-work with iron rods. A lock upon this plan will be but little inferior to a cut stone lock, and decidedly preferable to one built entirely of wood. Locks No. 2, 3, and 4 will be built upon this plan. Lock No. 1 in consequence of its remote situation from the stone quarries, will be constructed entirely of timber.⁴⁵

Later, in his 1847 report, Chief Engineer Williams described Lock No. 1: "situated at Saylor's house, near one-half mile west of the state line. This lock is 7 feet lift, and built of timber upon what is called the frame plan."⁴⁶ Little is known about the details of the frame lock. In his Report of Chief Engineer, 1852, W.J. Ball wrote of the frame plan as:

...consisting of a double set of bents, one resting upon the top of the other, and secured by iron rods 1 1/8 inches diameter, placed immediately back of the front posts, and extending first from the foundation timber to the cap of lower bent, and then from said cap to the cross tie, connecting the front and back coping timbers of the lock. The foundation consists of timbers from 37 to 47 feet long, 12 inches thick, placed about six inches apart, covered with two courses of 2 inch plank. The posts of the lower bents are framed into the foundation timbers.⁴⁷

In 1837, Ulrich Saylor, Sr. settled on a piece of land that straddled the Indiana and Ohio state line. He then set about building a house, half of which he erected in Indiana and the other in Ohio. In 1847 Saylor moved to another house on the canal near Lock No. 1, which afterward became known as "Saylor's Lock." Here he located a general store, which featured typical merchandise in demand for its day, and conducted a successful business. Saylor later opened a post office here that failed financially.⁴⁸ Ulrich Saylor died in 1860 and is buried in nearby Saylor's Cemetery.⁴⁹

Beginning at the Indiana-Ohio state line on U.S. 24, heading west of where Saylor's Lock once lifted and lowered canal boats; several towns were built along the canal before the 1840s. A few of these towns "perished with the paper on which they were constructed" according to historian Griswold.⁵⁰ Joseph Sinclair and Thomas Tigar platted the town of Bengal. All traces of this town have disappeared, yet traveling along U.S. 24 a section of the canal bed itself is preserved at Indiana State Highway 101. In 1871, the

hamlet of Edwardsburg was platted by Edward D. Ashley at a point on the Maumee River near Bull Rapids and north of the canal's main line. For a time a post office was established here, however, the town did not prosper and it faded away.⁵¹ Farther west is a roadside park set aside to celebrate the importance of the Maumee River to the early settlers, the Wabash & Eire Canal and the development of the region. Maumee Gateway Park was dedicated July 26, 1940. On west of the park, at U.S. 24 and Webster Road, the town of Summerset was platted back on December 9, 1834. Five miles from the Indiana-Ohio state line once stood the town of Fairport, a canal stop that served the trade floating to and from markets. Today little of anything is there to remind us of what must have been a busy but pleasant port.⁵²

Back in 1847, between Saylor's Lock and the next lock, 11 miles from Fort Wayne, Culvert Number 8, crossed Gar creek. It featured three separate openings each of which were 12 feet wide by 3 feet high. It was made of wood, all of which was submerged under water and "therefore free from decay."⁵³ Portions of the culvert can be seen today where the former canal line crosses Gar Creek.⁵⁴ Because stone was not readily available as a building material, most canal structures in this area of the state were dependent upon timber construction. Unless submerged under water or buried in the earth under the right conditions, the wood parts rotted away.

The Gronauer Lock is a 7-foot lift lock designed on the Timber Frame Plan and rebuilt in 1849 on the Crib Plan and rebuilt in 1849 on the Crib Plan. The more we can learn of this frame system, the greater our knowledge will be of this now forgotten construction technique. In June of 1991, the old Gronauer Lock was unexpectedly unearthed while the State Department of Transportation was building a highway ramp connecting I-469 by-pass with U.S. Highway 24 east of New Haven. In an undated handwritten document entitled, "Specification for rebuilding the Wooden Locks East of Fort Wayne," refurbishing is explained for both Saylor and Gronauer locks. Here is an excerpt: "In rebuilding Locks No. 1 and 2, the new crib will probably be about 4 in. narrower than the

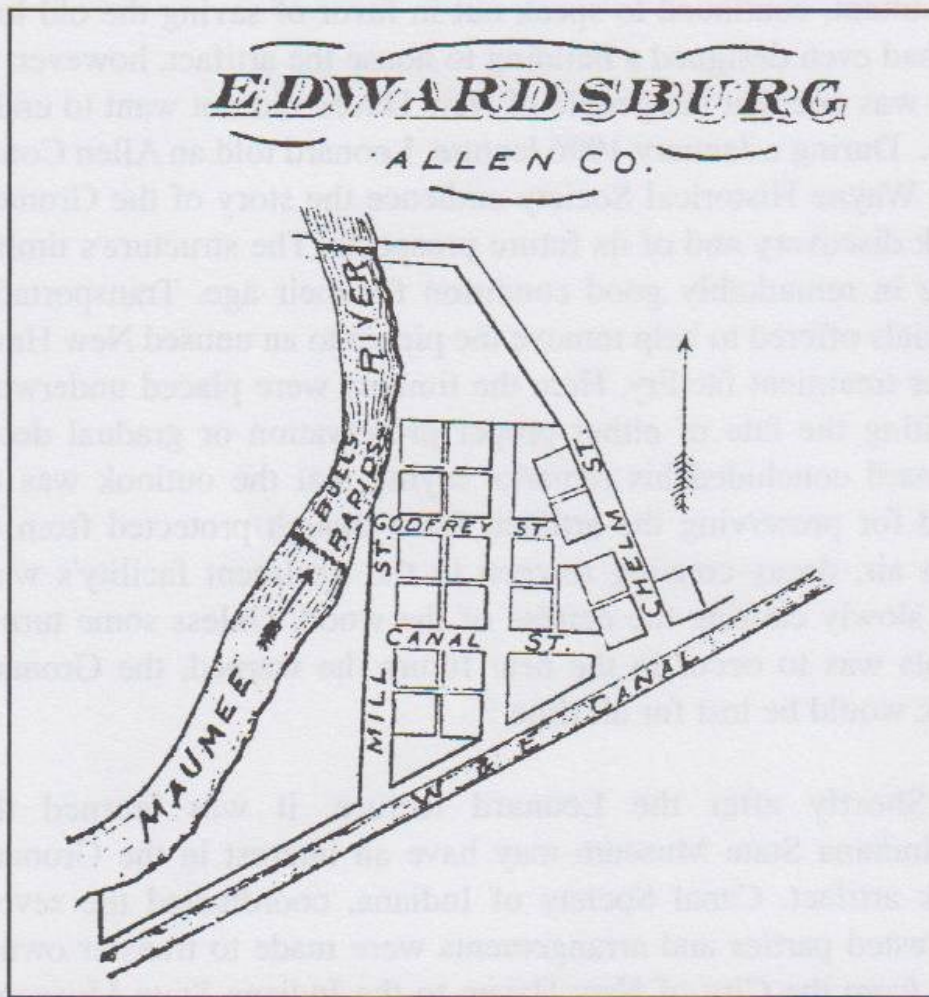
old base. This will cause the back wall of new cribs to project over the base. A shoulder should be cut in the upright post so that the whole weight of the back wall will rest on the post to hold it from raising.”⁵⁵

Today, all but the north side of the Gronauer Lock has been removed to make way for the northbound ramp. On November 9, 1992, the last timbers were removed to await treatment to save them. A New Haven Advisory Board for the Gronauer Lock was appointed by Mayor Lynn Shaw to develop plans for preservation.⁵⁶ Meanwhile, Craig Leonard, the project's historic preservation consultant, continued to speak out in favor of saving the old lock. He had even designed a building to house the artifact, however, the cost was one that the people of New Haven did not want to undertake. During a January 1996 lecture, Leonard told an Allen County Fort Wayne Historical Society audience the story of the Gronauer Lock discovery and of its future prospects. The structure's timbers were in remarkably good condition for their age. Transportation officials offered to help remove the pieces to an unused New Haven water treatment facility. Here the timbers were placed underwater awaiting the fate of either proper preservation or gradual decay. Leonard concluded his remarks saying that the outlook was not good for preserving the artifact. Even though protected from the open air, decay-creating oxygen in the treatment facility's water was slowly causing the demise of the wood. Unless some turn of events was to occur in the near future, he warned, the Gronauer Lock would be lost for all time.⁵⁷

Shortly after the Leonard lecture, it was learned that the Indiana State Museum may have an interest in the Gronauer Lock artifact. Canal Society of Indiana, coordinated the several interested parties and arrangements were made to transfer ownership from the City of New Haven to the Indiana State Museum.⁵⁸ By 1998, timbers to be preserved were shipped by truck to the South Carolina Institute of Archeology and Anthropology in Charleston. A portion of this preserved Wabash & Erie lock in

the new museum adds to the interpretation and story of the state's character and development.

Just west of the Gronauer Lock site at the I-469 and U.S. 24 exchange, the old canal channel can be seen as a deep depression along the south side of U.S. 24. At Seven Mile Creek a two-span culvert (Number 12) was built of wood. Road Bridge Number 1 accommodated the state road serving New Haven. Culvert Number 14 over Six Mile Creek was built of wood. It was six spans long, 12 feet wide and 3 feet high.⁵⁹



From *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Indiana*,
Baskin, Forster & co., 1876

An Allen County - Fort Wayne Historical Society historical marker in New Haven's downtown district near Broadway and Bell Street states:

WABASH & ERIE CANAL

Past this point flowed the Wabash & Erie Canal begun in 1832, and dedicated July 4, 1843 at Fort Wayne.

In its final phase the Canal extended 459 miles from Maumee Bay at Toledo, through New Haven southwestward to Lafayette, and thence to the Ohio river at Evansville.

It was abandoned in 1874 and the last boat was seen on the canal in 1882.

In 1842 the Wabash & Erie Canal was adopted as the Post Office's official mail route. Henry Burgess opened the first store in New Haven on the north side of the canal. Burgess, it was said, was a visionary who saw the success the small canal town was to enjoy.⁶⁰ Today, Canal Park celebrates the importance of this early transportation project that people such as Burgess could foresee.

FORT WAYNE AND A MOOT POINT

Moots Lock No. 3 was the first lock east of the canal summit at Fort Wayne. Buried under the railroad tracks, its location is approximately one block west of Glasgow Avenue in east Fort Wayne. In fact, if Grant Street were extended north from U.S. 24 to the Maumee River, it would intersect with the lock site. Back in 1847, Moots was described as being situated one mile east of the town and was: "6 1/2 feet lift and built of cut stone – the stone seem to have withstood the action of the frost very well, much better than most other stone locks on the canal. It may be considered," Jesse Williams reported, "a good and permanent lock for some years to come." Williams noted in this portion of his document that lock No. 3 "is the first lock east of the summit and terminates the summit level in that direction."⁶¹

Clay Street in Fort Wayne intersected the canal and a bridge was built for the convenience of the citizens.⁶² An entry in Williams' 1847 report notes, "Road bridge No. 5, for the state road crossing the Maumee at the junction of the St. Joseph's and St. Mary's rivers, and just at the site of Wayne's first fort. This bridge will need rebuilding in 1848."⁶³ At a site near Barr Street where it crosses under the railroad viaduct, rail tracks now have been laid on the canal right-of-way. Today, the rails make the old route easy to follow through the Summit City. In the early days of the canal, the town of Fort Wayne maintained a bridge over the canal. "Culvert No. 24, at Barr street," Williams wrote in 1847, "in the town of Fort Wayne. This bridge has recently been rebuilt by the town authorities and citizens and will probably last for 8 years, without much further cost. One new floor will be required within that time."⁶⁴ In December of 1860, the bridge needed repair and contractor James M. Bratton received \$180.00 for the required lumber to complete the work.⁶⁵ An historical marker placed there by the Allen County – Fort Wayne Historical Society reads nearly the same as the one in New Haven:

WABASH & ERIE CANAL

Past this point flowed the Wabash & Erie Canal begun at Fort Wayne, in 1832, and dedicated at Fort Wayne on July 4, 1843. In its final phase the canal ran from Maumee Bay and southwestward to Lafayette and thence to the Ohio River. It was abandoned in 1874, sold in 1877 and its path through Fort Wayne sold in 1881 to the Nickel Plate Railroad for its railroad.

The last boat was seen on the canal in 1882.

"The next structure is Culvert No. 25, at Clinton street, 4 feet by 18 inches, of wood – submerged," according to Williams' 1847 document.⁶⁶ In 1842, no bridge is indicated at this location on the city of Fort Wayne map.⁶⁷ In the first days of November 2000, construction workers, digging the foundation for the new Allen County Criminal Justice Center on the northwest corner of Superior

and Clinton streets in Fort Wayne, uncovered portions of Culvert No. 25. Several oil tanks had been removed and contaminated soil abatement had begun. Below these tanks the excavation crew discovered a wooden structure.

Angie Quinn, Executive Director of ARCH, worked with Creager Smith, Preservation Planner for the City of Fort Wayne, to document the structure before it was removed. Quinn states: "The structure, located approximately fourteen feet below street level, was in the form of a covered culvert. Maximum dimensions were 10 1/2 feet wide by about 3 1/2 feet deep. The visible portions of the object extended about thirty feet into the building site, and appeared to continue southeast under Superior to the canal site. All portions of the structure were penetrated with a petroleum substance. At the northern end of the structure, excavation crews found evidence of a naturally occurring stream, continuing north several feet, and then taking a sharp 90° turn to the east.

"Jesse Williams recorded Culvert #25 near this location which took the Duck Creek under the canal. However, Williams' description of the culvert's dimensions do not correspond with the found structure. Williams noted a much smaller culvert, approximately 4 feet wide and 18 inches deep. Early descriptions of Fort Wayne manufacturing mention that in 1841 Jesse Williams and Allen Hamilton constructed City Mill at this location, powered by canal water, with an overshoot emptying into the Duck Creek Culvert. This easily doubled the volume of water through the culvert, and may explain its enlarged dimensions."⁶⁸

Because the railroad line replaced the canal so thoroughly, structures from that earlier era still in existence are uncommon in Fort Wayne, however, one building of note has been preserved. An old stone warehouse remains in place at 114 East Superior Street with its rear wall in just the right place to have served the boats on the canal. Originally this land was owned by Sam Hanna, who sold it to a family of merchants by the name of Townley. In 1852,

Townley sold the land to John Brown, a stone mason who that same year built the 22 by 55-foot structure. Brown, along with a partner, James Humphrey, supplied stone for canal improvement projects. Because Brown was a stone mason, he used stone materials for this building. Brown's time came after the period during which so many of the canal's structures in this region were made of wood. Good building stone was not available until the canal extended to areas such as the Georgetown Quarry. John E. Loveland who researched the structure in 1977, said it is highly probable that Brown and Humphrey, "were called on to lay much of the stonework that went into locks and buildings along the length of the canal as it progressed westward."⁶⁹



T. Castaldi

Canal House on Superior Street, 1992

The Canal House was used to store building materials as well as coal until 1862. It was sold then to Henry Drover who warehoused spokes he manufactured. As the canal's operations came to a close the upstairs of the building was used as the house of Minnie Homeyer whose father William Homeyer worked on the canal boat captained by his Uncle Fred Brase.⁷⁰ Minnie Homeyer married and became Minnie Stemmler. Relating her experiences while riding the canal boat with her father between Fort Wayne and Huntington,

Homeyer said that mules walked along the towpath beside the canal pulling the boat and that an extra mule was always carried aboard the boat in case one got tired. Her father, who served as town marshal had a famous friend and she also remembered Wild Bill Hicock visiting her home one evening.⁷¹

Referring to a Fort Wayne city map of 1842, as well as Chief Engineer Williams' 1847 report, a bridge crossed the canal at Calhoun Street. "Road bridge No. 7, at Calhoun street. Rebuilt in 1846 at the expense of the citizens. Permanent for 8 years, with the expense of one new floor within that time."⁷²

On Columbia Street in the block between Calhoun and Clinton was a building with a stairway leading up to the second floor where both canal superintendent and collector had their office.⁷³ Fort Wayne's Landing was between Calhoun and Harrison and here a great deal of Fort Wayne's past is buried in history. It is a place, however, not forgotten and has been refurbished to reflect time not to be forgotten. A historical marker describes it best:

For nearly a century, the principal business street of Fort Wayne named for Dana Columbia, hotel and canal boat operator. Here was the terminal for passengers and freight arriving and departing via stagecoach and canal. Ground broken for Wabash & Erie Canal 1832. Dedicated 1843. Canal right-of-way sold 1880 and now occupied by elevated railroad. Rear of buildings on north side faced the canal and docks. Two canal basins located on street. 'Orbison Basin' at Harrison St. 'Comparet Basin' at Lafayette St. Government land sale occurred 1823 in Washington Hall (Ewing Tavern) at Barr Street. From this sale came the original plot of Fort Wayne. Here Allen County and Wayne Township organized 1824. Also, meeting place of county commissioners and circuit court. Many Fort Wayne firsts appeared on this street:
Post Office 1820, Hotel 1823, Newspaper 1833,
Theater 1851, Railway Station 1853.

This marker which ends with the statement "erected in honor of Roy Bates, Allen County Historian 1965," suggest another canal feature important to the growth of Fort Wayne. Although the marker refers to two, there were three basins where boats could be turned around or tied up to be loaded or unloaded.

The first, Comparet Basin, took its name from Francis Comparet who came to Fort Wayne in 1820 from Detroit. He was born in 1798 in Monroe, Michigan but ultimately made Fort Wayne his permanent home. He first opened an Indian trading post and was active in forming manufacturing industries along with other ventures of the day. For example, he was involved as a Fort Wayne to Chicago Erie & Michigan Canal contractor who helped build a canal reservoir now known as Lake Sylvan at Rome City, Indiana. The American Fur Company catered to the basic Fort Wayne industry of the day which was trade with the Indian tribes for furs and pelts. Francis Comparet was one of the company's representatives and [along with Benjamin B. Kercheval and Alexis Coguillard] established a branch station in Fort Wayne.⁷⁴ East of the basin stood the Comparet mansion, which was built near Anthony Wayne's fort and the canal itself.⁷⁵

The Orbison Basin used to load, unload and turnaround boats extended into what today are parking lots on either side of Harrison Street where it meets Columbia Street. Alexander M. Orbison⁷⁶ owned a building on the north side at about 133 West Columbia Street. In 1842, no bridge is shown at Harrison Street over the canal and Williams does not mention one in his 1847 audit of structures. By the time the 1880 map was published a bridge is indicated. On the south side of the basin stood a large building that once was a granary before it was made over to the Grand Hotel in 1870. Later it became the Randall Hotel. An organization of fun-loving young people calling themselves the IKZs used a trap door in an upper floor of the building to initiate candidates for membership. Blindfolded, a prospective member was securely fastened with a rope and dropped unceremoniously into the canal water.⁷⁷ Williams does relate the condition of "Culvert No. 26, for the passage of a

run in the town of Fort Wayne, 12 feet by 3, of wood – submerged. This culvert is under a basin and is twice the usual length."⁷⁸

Chief Engineer Williams noted that the, "Road bridge at Ewing Street, No. 8, will last some 4 or 5 years, say till 1851. Culvert No. 27, near Ewing's warehouse, a stone arch of 6 feet chord in good condition." Old No. 27 now resides under a modern bridge.⁷⁹

A third basin was located on the west side of the St. Mary's River. Here the canal channel was widened as the line neared the mouth of the St. Joseph Feeder.⁸⁰

In the days of the old waterway, the McCulloch mansion faced the canal and presently stands on the south side of the street at 616 West Superior. The St. Mary's River formed the north border to the rear of the property and the canal crossed the front or south side of McCulloch's home site. Secretary of the Treasury of the United State, Judge Hugh McCulloch came to Fort Wayne in June of 1833. He became known as the father of the national banking system of the United States, serving presidents Lincoln, Johnson and Arthur.⁸¹

It was to the west of the Saint Mary's River that the original idea of a canal first developed and where Surveyor Captain James Riley wrote so complimentarily of Anthony Wayne's strategy to occupy Fort Wayne and control communications through the then gateway to the West. Here too, Captain Riley observed the possibility of a waterway over the portage between the St. Mary's River and the Forks of the Wabash.

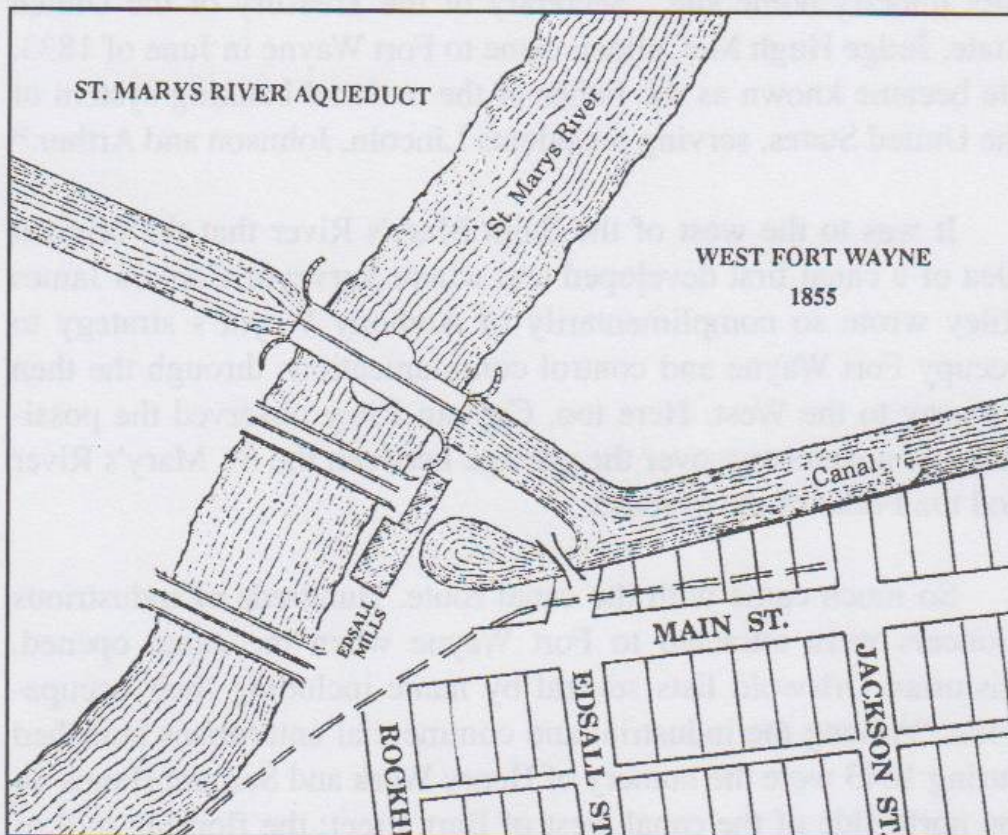
So much came with the canal route. Hundreds of industrious pioneers were attracted to Fort Wayne when the canal opened. Historian Griswold lists several by name including their occupations: "Among the industrial and commercial enterprises launched during 1843 were the tannery of Henry Work and Samuel Hanna on the north side of the canal west of Barr street; the flouring mill of Hamilton and Wines, on the canal; the linseed oil mill of Henry Rudisill and Henry Wolke; the large flouring and grist mill of

Samuel Edsall, on the Mary's river and the canal, known also as the Empire or 'Stone Mill,' and later as the Orff mill."⁸²

The old Stone Mill's overshot wheel was operated by water-power furnished by the canal. Finally, John Orff became the owner of the Edsall Stone Mill that stood on the east bank of the St. Mary's River a few yards north of the Main Street Bridge.⁸³

On the St. Mary's River a few yards north of the Main Street Bridge, the cut-limestone abutment work of the canal builders is still visible. The River Greenway walking trail passes inches away from the west bank abutment. The aqueduct is described in the 1847 Chief Engineer's Report to the State Legislature.

The next structure is aqueduct No. 1 over the St. Mary's River, of two spans, each 80 feet in the clear. The truck is of timber 17 feet wide, suspended by means of iron rods



E.P. Abbot, 1855

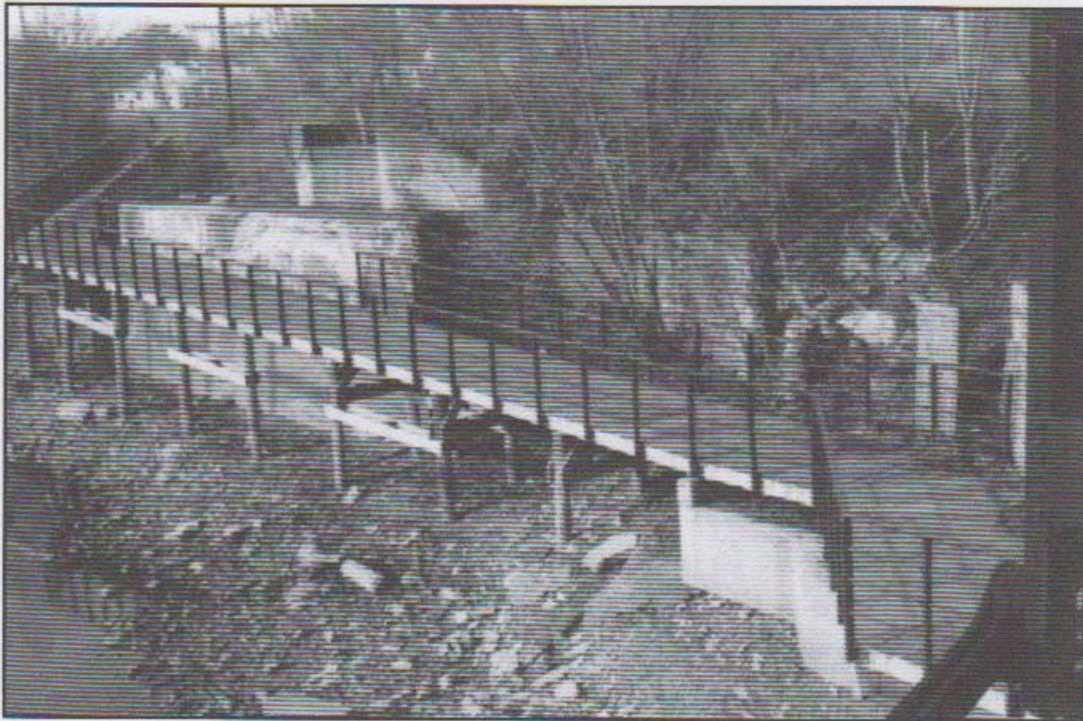
From map of the City of Fort Wayne & Vacinity

to the arches and truss frame. The weight of the truck, is sustained by arches made of two-inch oak plank footing on a chord of similar construction. The arches and chords are attached to, and firmly connected with a strong truss frame of oak timber. The chords rest on the coping, at a height of six feet above the canal bottom, so that every part of the structure, excepting merely the trunk, is quite above the water in the canal, and by being roofed and weather boarded is secured against decay. The piers and abutments are of cut stone masonry. The abutments, though strongly built, were imperfectly grouted and puddled, and from this cause are liable to leakage. Constant watchfulness will be required for a time to guard against a breach around the abutments, which might be caused by this imperfection. Some additional protection of stone is required around the foundations, to guard against undermining by floods. Owing to a sudden curve in the canal at the west end of the aqueduct, cribs of timber filled with stone must be erected to prevent injury from the concussion of boats. Besides these small expenditures there is reason to anticipate but little expense at this point for ten years to come. The whole structure was newly erected in 1845-46.⁸⁴

A River Greenway historical marker that once stood in place at this point gave more of the aqueduct's history:

WESTERN ABUTMENT WABASH & ERIE CANAL AQUEDUCT NO. 1.

The St. Mary's Aqueduct was originally built in 1835 and rebuilt in 1871. It consisted of two 80-foot oak timbers which rested on stone piers and abutments. The aqueduct carried the Wabash & Erie Canal across the St. Mary's until 1882. The curved stone wall on this [west] side of the river is all that is normally visible of the aqueduct. At extreme low water the foundation of the original

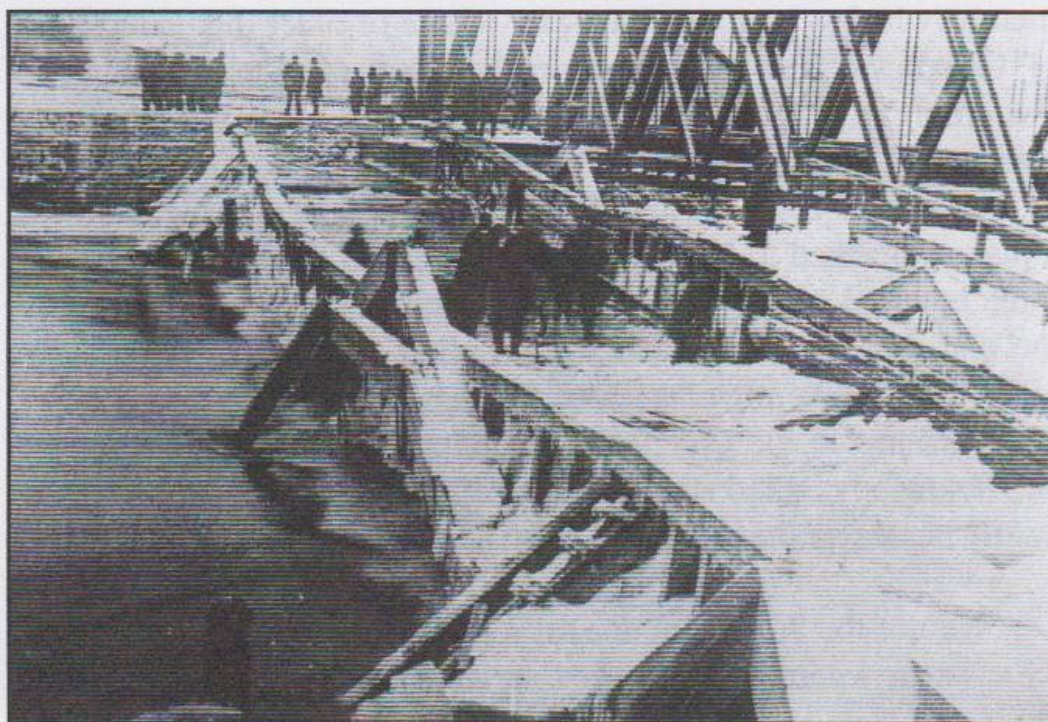


T. Castaldi

River Greenway Trail - West Aqueduct Abutment

central pier can sometimes be glimpsed, as well as the western pier which was built in 1871, lying where it fell in 1882. On this [west] side of the river, usually underwater, can be seen some of the timber foundation of the 1871 pier. Nothing is visible on the east bank. The building of the canal and the trade it stimulated was the main industry of early Fort Wayne. The canal was the longest man-made waterway in the history of the world

It should be noted that the Wabash & Erie Canal was exceeded in length by the Grand Canal of China. The aqueduct was designed by Jesse Lynch Williams and was built by Henry Lotz. Fort Wayne elected Lotz in 1843 as its third mayor after Mayor Joseph Morgan resigned. Reelected in 1844, Lotz was reputed to be a prominent contractor.⁸⁵ The St. Mary's aqueduct was built to carry the canal water over the St. Mary's River. The water was at a depth of between four or five feet with its water moving at a rate of five miles per hour through the aqueduct placing the weight of the



Saint Mary's Aqueduct, marked 1880, as it appeared before it was removed. A new railroad bridge can be viewed in the upper right of this Allen County Fort Wayne History Center photo.

structure at over 450 tons. A roof was erected over the channel for protection against the weather.⁸⁶

Jesse Williams wrote in 1876 that, "an axe mark made at the highest stage of the [1828] flood on a walnut sapling standing near the pickets of the old fort ... served as a guide in determining the necessary heights of banks and bridges. The bed of the St. Mary's aqueduct was fixed by it."⁸⁷

The old aqueduct was so much a Fort Wayne favorite that a monument relating to it stands in Orff Park, the triangle formed by the intersections of Main and Rockhill streets. It commemorates the Old Aqueduct Club formed November 29, 1912, in memory of the local boys who made the canal their swimming hole. Frank Perry, Fred Kimball and Tom Coombs thought of the idea and formed an organization of west end kids who used the old canal for a place to go swimming. They established rules for the club stating that

members had to be forty-five years of age or older; had lived west of Calhoun Street forty years earlier and, of course, had gone swimming in the Old Aqueduct. In 1927, Marshall S. Mahurin, a member of the Old Aqueduct Club, was appointed to oversee the monument project. On July 16, 1927, the statue was dedicated with a plaque attached to the face of the monument listing the names of three hundred and twenty-seven west end boys. During the 1930s the club boasted more than five hundred members, however, by 1955 only eleven members were on hand at the club's forty-third annual dinner at the Chamber of Commerce. Today, the statues of two young boys stand atop the Orff Park structure which has carved boldly across its base, "Let's Go Swimmin".⁸⁸

West of the St. Mary's, the railroad right-of-way has replaced a wide basin where boats docked or were turned around. Now all evidence that another transportation system ever existed has disappeared. According to the 1847 Chief Engineer's Report, the feeder from the St. Joseph River is received by the canal's main line, "about one half mile west of the St. Mary's aqueduct". Today, the place that marked the summit of America's longest man-made waterway is buried beneath a railroad line. Its inauspicious resting place is where Rumsey and Wheeler streets would intersect if each were extended. It is close to the center of the Nebraska Neighborhood, a few yards north of a large manufacturing plant's water tower. The company occupies the old Wayne Knitting Mills' structure.

During the canal era, a merchant by the name of A.C. Hutzell opened a store on the country road that later became West Main Street. It was so far west of the St. Mary's River that the locals quipped that Hutzell had moved out west to Nebraska. Hutzell decided to name his business "The Nebraska Store" and the name spread over the entire neighborhood that grew up along the canal basin later known as Basin Street.⁸⁹

At the intersection of the St. Joseph feeder, the main line turned to the southwest on the same course as present-day West

Main Street, past Lindenwood Cemetery. Over the State Line-Fort Wayne Section, a distance of some 20 miles, three lift locks were necessary to overcome the elevation up to the eastern summit where the feeder met the main line. Saylor's Lock stood 745 feet above sea level, Gronauer was at 753 feet, and Moots Lock was constructed at 761 feet. The summit crossed over at an elevation of 770 feet above sea level.⁹⁰

In the 1847 Chief Engineer's Report, no more Allen County Locks are mentioned. Not until Lock No. 4, or Dicke Lock at Roanoke, did a notation appear: "15 miles west of Fort Wayne. This is the first lock west of the summit, and terminates the summit level." The major structures west of the feeder intersection are described in the document:

Near the mouth of this feeder is a bridge (No. 9) used for the purpose of crossing the towing-path, which here changes from the north to the south side. This bridge is nearly new, and will need re-building probably not before 1854.

Bridge No. 10, for crossing of Yellow River road, should be rebuilt during the ensuing year.

The safety of the summit level during floods, required that a set of waste gates be erected during the ensuing winter at a point one half mile west of the mouth of the feeder.

Culvert No. 28, one and a half mile west of Fort Wayne, built of wood, 6 feet by 18 inches – submerged.

Culvert No. 29, near east end of wet prairie, of wood, spans each 10 feet by 18 inches. The bed of the stream below this culvert requires rising 6 inches, at a cost of about \$10, for the purpose of

submerging the timber and rendering it durable. Five miles west of Fort Wayne, the canal crosses Marais Du Perches,⁹¹ by means of a towing path bridge, with a waste-weir and sliding gates for the passing of its floods. This structure is much decayed and must be rebuilt, or a different structure submitted for it within the next year.⁹²

In the 1835 Engineer's Report to the Board of Canal Commissioners, this entry appears: "The Waste weir at Marais Du Perches is so constructed that only the frame work will decay – the foundation being below water. This structure is 150 feet long and has ten sliding gates 3 1/2 feet square, which are hoisted in time of floods. It is designed principally for the passages of the stream near which it is located, but will also answer a valuable purpose in discharging the surplus water of the summit level which may collect from other sources."⁹³

Continuing, here is the Engineer's report of the structures that were in place west to the Allen-Huntington county line:

Culvert No. 30, 7 miles west of Fort Wayne, 10 feet by 18 inches – of timber – submerged.

Culvert No. 31, of wood, 2 spans, each 10 feet by 18 inches submerged.

Road bridge No. 11, at Mrs. Vermilya's [sic] nearly new, may last 7 years.

The next structure is aqueduct No. 2, over the river Aboite of four spans, each 28 feet clear. The trunk is of wood resting on two abutments and 3 piers, all of good cut stone masonry. This structure is entirely new, having been rebuilt in 1846, and will probably require but little expense for 8 or 10 years to come. Not far below the aqueduct is road bridge No. 12, nearly new. It may last 8 years.⁹⁴

Documents such as the 1847 Report to the Indiana General Assembly made by the chief engineer, details each canal structure: lock, culvert, road bridge, aqueduct, feeder and etc. An inventory was conducted after Governor Whitcomb turned over its control to the Board of Trustees on July 31, 1847. This change in management took place in an effort to rescue the Wabash & Erie project from financial stresses brought on by the Internal Improvements Act of 1836. In short, this legislation was an ambitious attempt to satisfy the demands for canals, roads, and railroads throughout the state in one sweeping effort, the cost of which, exceeded Indiana's ability to pay. Meanwhile, Congress had authorized another land grant to complete the canal from Terre Haute, Indiana, to Evansville on the Ohio River. It was too much to turn down. In a law passed by the Indiana legislature based on what is known as the "Butler Bill", the project was continued under the direction of a Board of Trustees. It consisted of a resident appointee and investors or bondholder representation. They chose Jesse L. Williams to continue on as chief engineer and William J. Ball of Terre Haute to be resident engineer, southern division.⁹⁵

A group of canal historians believe that the Engineer's Report of 1847 stands as fact because it is documented evidence of what structures actually existed. At Dickey Lock in Roanoke, the elevation is 735 feet above sea level or 35 feet below the Summit. Some historians believe, however, that there were additional structures that were removed before the 1847 report was issued. They maintain that there were at least three locks between the mouth of the feeder and the Huntington-Allen county line to handle the difference in elevation, and that the three locks were replaced in the early or mid 1840s because they were not needed.⁹⁶ Sources, say these supporters, are from research made by respected past historians based on interviews and news accounts of the day. The notion that additional canal structures existed may eventually be supported by documented evidence. While these historians have a good beginning to support their position, it must remain conjecture until documented evidence surfaces.

Chief Engineer Jesse Williams in his 1835 report to the Board of Canal Commissioners wrote that he, “deems it proper to present a description, somewhat in detail of the various mechanical structures which have been erected...” He specifically spoke of the portion from the head of the St. Joseph's feeder to a point near the mouth of the Little Wabash River. “The mechanical structures on this line, consist of the St. Joseph Dam, one Guard Lock at the head of the Feeder, which serves at once to regulate the flow of water and to connect the navigation of the St. Joseph with the canal, four Lift Locks, overcoming a total ascent of 35 feet; five small Aqueducts; nineteen Culverts; one framed Waste Weir, and six Road Bridges.”⁹⁷ In his 1847 report, Williams writes, “Lock No. 4, 15 miles west of Fort Wayne. This is the first lock west of the summit, and terminates the summit level.”⁹⁸

Support for the chief engineer's report appears in a biographical piece written about John Stopher who was born in 1833. His father was employed to help build the lock at Roanoke, Indiana, and when John Stopher was about one year old his family moved to Roanoke. In an interview he made the following remarks:

At that time the old Wabash & Erie Canal was being dug and the locks were then in the process of construction. The one at Roanoke was called Dickey's Lock. From that place to Fort Wayne, a distance of 16 miles, was called the Sixteen Mile Level and was the longest level on the entire canal. This was also called the Summit Level. The lock at Fort Wayne was called 'East Lock' and was near the end of what is now Walton Ave. (now Anthony Blvd. – 1933). A feeder emptied near this place; another feeder situated where Robinson (sic) Park used to stand emptied into the canal in the West end of Fort Wayne. From the outlet of this feeder the water ran both ways; thus it was called the 'Summit Level.'⁹⁹

WEST OF THE SUMMIT

Some of the old canal at the beginning of the second millennium may be seen if you know where to look and how to recognize the clues. In Rockhill Park for example the long ridge of knolls across the park have been described as the towpath or a levee where the canal digging laborers piled the earth as they dug their way along the line. In 1980, the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department and the Fort Wayne BMX Club built a bicycle track on the site. Two years later they agreed to restore a section of the canal bank that had been removed for the track.¹⁰⁰

A new BMX Club facility opened in Franke Park eliminating the need for a bike run in Rockhill Park. In 2000, the Parks Department authorized BMX officials to remove the BMX track. As a part of the project, the previously removed portions of the towpath were put back to their original condition. During the 1960s an historical marker explained the unusual towpath remnant in the park. Now, along with the refurbished canal levee, two new historical markers were approved to interpret the feature:

HISTORIC WABASH & ERIE CANAL

Ground was broken on February 22, 1832, and by July 4, 1843, the Wabash and Erie Canal linked Toledo, Ohio with Lafayette, Indiana. On July 3, 1835, Captain Asa Fairfield piloted his canal boat the *Indiana* signaling the opening of the first section of the canal connecting Fort Wayne with Huntington. Completed to Evansville on the Ohio River in 1853, the 468-mile long Wabash & Erie became the longest canal in the Western Hemisphere. Abandoned in 1874, the canal was sold in 1877, and its path through Fort Wayne purchased by the Nickel Plate Railroad in 1881 for its roadbed. The last boat was seen on the canal in 1882.

WABASH & ERIE CANAL LEVEE

From 1835 to 1874, this long embankment stretching across Rockhill Park served as both levee and towpath for the Wabash & Erie Canal.

Horses or mules walking on the towpath were attached by long towing ropes to canal boats. As a levee it protected the canal water from St. Mary's River flood damage. Fort Wayne was the high point on the man-made water route and soon was nicknamed "Summit City". Irish and German immigrants came to clear the forests and to dig the channel that opened the west to early settlement. This provided ease of travel while opening the way for products in and out of the Indiana wilderness.

On the west side of Rockhill Park, Portage Avenue is where the canal channel once carried traffic, and under what is now Taylor Street in front of Portage Middle School. At the point where Taylor Street makes a turn to the northwest, Country Club Lane follows the old towpath to the west. Beside it, to the north, the channel is evident where water continues to accumulate during wet seasons.¹⁰¹ If Country Club Road were extended, it would trace the canal crossing Covington Road, skirt across the south side of the Fort Wayne Country Club and at Smith Road become Glendale Road. At the Covington Road crossing there is a noticeable flattening of the road as it descends from the bluff traveling east to west. It is passed over by hundreds of cars each day. That flat space in the road is the prism top formed when the canal was abandoned, refilled and paved. To identify the route, look for the AEP utility poles placed on the easement line of the interurban trolley that later was constructed on the canal towpath. This stretch west to Smith Road is not developed and the area is covered with trees and brush. If Glendale Road were extended west, the canal line would border the south edge of the Country Club Gardens housing addition, and intersect Engle Road extended four-tenths of a mile south of U.S. 24.

The Wabash & Erie path crossed west of Engle Road Extended and can be traced once again by following the line of AEP poles and a utility service road that passes behind Midwestern Office Park, GTE Telephone Operations and Olde Canal Place. Next it intersects what is now Interstate I-69 where the canal cut into the old glacier trough. "In geological times," wrote Rex M. Potterf, "a mighty river ... arising from the huge pile of ice at the west end of what is now Lake Erie, scoured a deep valley. Time and geologic changes have formed surface features which we now know as the two valleys, viz. that of the Maumee River and that of the Wabash River. This depression geologists call the Maumee Trough." It is this trough, that wide flat trace, which forms the headwaters for the Wabash River Valley. Nearly a mile wide in some places, the valley nestles in between bluffs on either side. These formed the banks of the glacier-fed river as it headed southwest. The canal channel is often found at the very base of the bluffs. Potterf continues, "It not only furnished easy access for the Wabash and Erie Canal but also for two steam railroads and later a short-lived electric railway."¹⁰²

From Ellison Road the canal line made its way immediately south of Manor Woods and The Hamlets of Woodland Ridge housing developments, however, no road is available here to follow along. Incidentally, less than a half mile from the canal crossing at Ellison Road, is thought to be an important point on the long portage.¹⁰³

On west, a small stream crosses U.S. 24 at the place Redding Road makes its eastern terminus some two miles east of the Aboite River. Following the creek south for a distance of two blocks or so through a wooded lot, the stream crosses both the canal and inter urban lines. Here the builders installed Culvert No. 31 which was described in the 1835 Journal to the canal commissioners as a submerged culvert constructed of timbers 10 feet by 18 inches square.¹⁰⁴ Presently several of the culvert timbers lie perpendicular to the flow of water, stretching from bank to bank, creating a miniature waterfall in the stream. There are five of these great members, used for the base of the culvert, plus one timber which

has been relocated well up on the west bank of the creek. Below the surface of the water, these large wooden members have survived the years. Once exposed to the elements, it is a matter of time before wood rots away. From the center of the canal bed, the utility pole lines stand about 30 feet south following the way of both the towpath and interurban.

VERMILYEA AT THE ABOITE

On to the west along the south side of Redding Road, the old channel is visible past houses that are being erected. Unfortunately in places, the channel has been filled in and lost. Farther west, at the Vermilyea House on Redding Road, a marker once was in place recounting: “The groundbreaking for the Wabash & Erie Canal was at Fort Wayne, In. on February 22, 1832. The first phase of this project, between Fort Wayne, In. and Huntington, In., was opened to travel on July 4, 1835. This was a day of great celebration, pomp, and ceremony.”¹⁰⁵

Frank S. Bash interviewed Daniel W. Simmers in a 1930 edition of the Huntington, Indiana *Herald Press*, entitled, “Old Vermilyea House Above Roanoke Rich in Pioneer History.” Simmers owned the Jesse Vermilyea place at that time. “In the canal just below the house the channel widened out into a spacious basin in which the boats could be turned or docked for loading and unloading. Vermilyea built a warehouse there for the benefit of the entire neighborhood. Sometimes it was known down the line by ‘Ruffner's Basin’ for after the days of Vermilyea the Ruffners occupied the place [for] some years. The basin was clearly outlined until the traction line was built, at which time it was filled.”¹⁰⁶

A short distance to the west the canal crossed over the Aboite River. Here Aqueduct No. 2 was constructed. Jesse L. Williams, serving as Principal Engineer, reported in 1833: “The aqueduct trunks are all formed of timber. The abutments for the Bull Creek and Flint Creek aqueducts [both in Huntington county], are of

hammer dressed masonry. Those at Aboite, Spy Run and Becket's run, are built of timber. Flint creek aqueduct rests on a solid rock bottom. All the other aqueducts are built on sand or gravel bottom, but are made secure by a platform of hewn timber extending over the whole space between the abutments as well as under them."¹⁰⁷

A report of the General Superintendent of the Wabash & Erie to the General Assembly of 1844 states that the next task would be, "the building of the stone work for a new aqueduct across the river Aboit [sic], ten miles west of Fort Wayne." The stone here was to be taken from Lagro or Georgetown quarries.

In this extreme southwestern part of Aboite Township on U.S. 24 turn south on to Redding Road at the Aboite River highway bridge and here stand the abutments of Aqueduct No. 2. Also at this location are the cement remnants of an interurban trolley bridge, stones left over from the old Huntington State Road, a trace of the old Highway 24 bridge and, of course, the two U.S. highway bridges in use today. All of this construction is crowded into a very narrow stretch along the stream. Several courses of limestone



T. Castaldi

Aboite River Aqueduct Site – December, 1991

blocks stand on either side of the river bank and in the bed of the stream large timbers are visible at low water. At least twenty-five long wooden structural members survive despite all the other building activity that took place here over the years.

Thomas Meek and Clarence Hudson did extensive research at this site in 1985. Their report states, "The most prominent feature of the ruins, and the one which first catches the eye, is the large platform of huge timbers, some of them 18 inches square, which lie in the creek bed. This is what remains of the timber foundation platform that once extended beneath the entire structure, providing a stable foundation for the stonework. This timber foundation was built below water level to prevent decay of the wood. Where thus protected the wood is just as sound as when it was laid down 150 years ago."¹⁰⁸

THE REMOVAL

Near the site of Allen County Road and U.S. 24, stood the native American village of White Raccoon. The area served as a landing for the canal before it was deserted in 1882. For untold years it was on the portage between the St. Mary's River and the place on the Wabash River known as the Forks of the Wabash.

A story is told of an old Miami named Chapine. Watching as Wabash & Erie Canal workmen were busy removing his house from the path of the channel, the great Miami orator Chapine was overheard muttering, "You people are crazy, the Great Spirit made the rivers. It won't rain enough to fill this canal of yours." Of course the engineers were aware of the annual dry seasons of summer and the old Miami's observation. Unexpected droughts also occurred and served as another reason why the longest man-made waterway in the western world was such a wondrous feat.

Water losses would come from natural seepage into the earth; vandals breaking away towpath levees for all sorts of private

concerns; destruction by burrowing animals; channels dug to draw away water to power mills or to float boats back into the river, and all relied upon rain for the water that is the basic ingredient of a canal. Chief Engineer Jesse Williams in the 1840s had said that too many trees had been cut away from the surrounding forests. Interrupting this natural moisture-holding regulator, a gradual seepage of water no longer provided a dependable year-round water source. Engineers knew there would be water hazards and that the Saint Joseph's River dam was not intended to support the entire project. Between Fort Wayne and Lafayette alone, feeder dams were constructed on the Wabash at Huntington, Lagro, Peru and Pittsburg as well as in side streams along the way. The importance of collecting river water for their great project was dependent upon rain and Chapine had simply provided a reminder that the source of the water was dependent upon the Great Spirit.

North of White Raccoon Village on County Line Road is the Blee Manse built in the 1840s by the brothers Lathan, James, John and Thomas Blee. James Blee joined With Charley Stephele in shipping timber, logs, hoop poles, grain and similar cargo by canal boat to ports such as Toledo and Cincinnati. Their boat *Plow Boy* hauled whiskey exclusively and was known up and down the line. For a time, the Blee Manse served as a church where Mass was celebrated for Catholics in the area by Rev. Father Benoit of Fort Wayne. Father Benoit is said to have been loved and admired greatly by the Indians of White Raccoon Village. When the Miami were removed to lands in Kansas in 1847, Benoit traveled with them offering comfort and consolation to them during their evacuation.¹⁰⁹

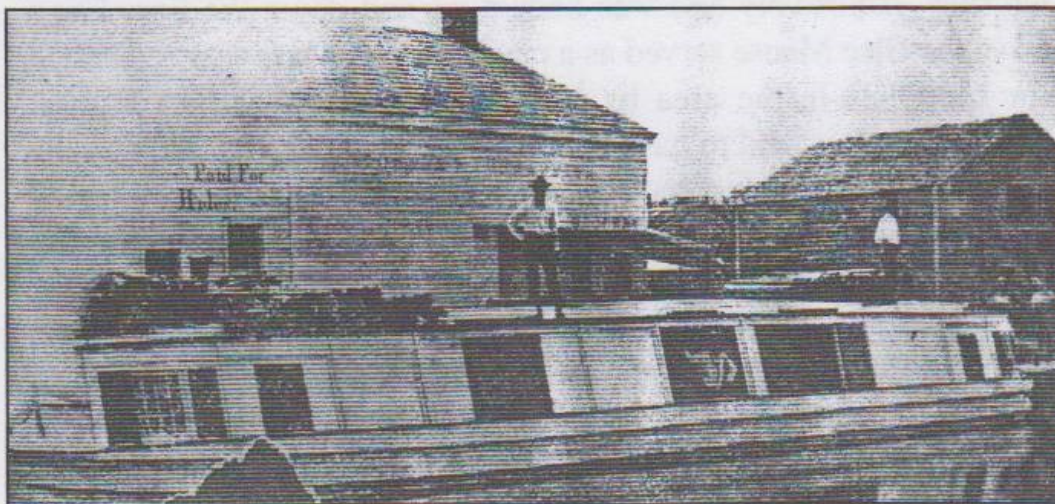
On October 6, 1846, three canal boats departed from Peru, Indiana, with a party of Indians and officials heading northeast to the Miami and Erie Canal and on the Cincinnati. Here they were transferred to a steamer which steered down the Ohio River and finally to Kansas Landing.¹¹⁰ As the procession of boats passed through Fort Wayne an eyewitness reported the sadness of the scene. Many he reported carried with them handfuls of the earth taken from the graves of their loved ones pressed to their breasts

while others prayed that they be struck dead rather than be torn from the land they loved.¹¹¹

From Aboite River west a few hundred yards; over one-half mile through the southeast edge of Whitley County and on to Huntington, Indiana, the path of the canal disappears under U.S. 24. Occasionally a reminder of the old channel can be seen. One such trace is at Huntington County Road 1000 North, across Calf Creek. For a distance of three-tenths of a mile, the canal is visible. Gradually it bends back into the route of U.S. 24. Recently the last timbers of box Culvert No. 34, which enabled the canal to cross over that stream, were removed by uninformed persons.

PROPHETIC CASS

On July 4, 1835, a section of the canal was completed between Huntington and Fort Wayne and the citizens of the two small towns staged a celebration of their own. According to Charles Poinsette, “Some five hundred people were taken by boat to the feeder dam” and later returned to the town to hear Hugh



Allen County - Fort Wayne History Center

Captain William H. Ward and his boat the *Etma* plied the waters of the Wabash & Erie's "Summit Level" - circa 1857.

McCulloch make a speech deploring slavery in America.¹¹² However, the official dedication for the canal took place once it reached the navigable waters of the Wabash at Lafayette on July 4, 1843. "For all that the Wabash & Erie did to pave the way for internal improvement, the canal itself did not enjoy a long nor prosperous life. The Wabash & Erie Canal was completed to Evansville in 1856 [1853], however, it remained open to navigation from end to end for only four [seven] years."¹¹³

"General Cass, the guest of honor and chief speaker on the occasion of the celebration of the completion of the main section of the Wabash and Erie canal was," wrote historian Griswold, "influential largely in the development of the middle west." Born in Exeter, N. H., in 1782, he served in the war of 1812, was governor of Michigan territory; secretary of war; minister to France; United States senator; presidential candidate; secretary of state. He died in Detroit in 1866. General Cass explored a large portion of the middle west by means of canoes and the use of horses, and concluded valuable treaties with the Indians by which vast areas of Indiana and Michigan lands were secured by the government. The state of Indiana remembered him on December 18, 1828, by naming Cass County in the General's honor

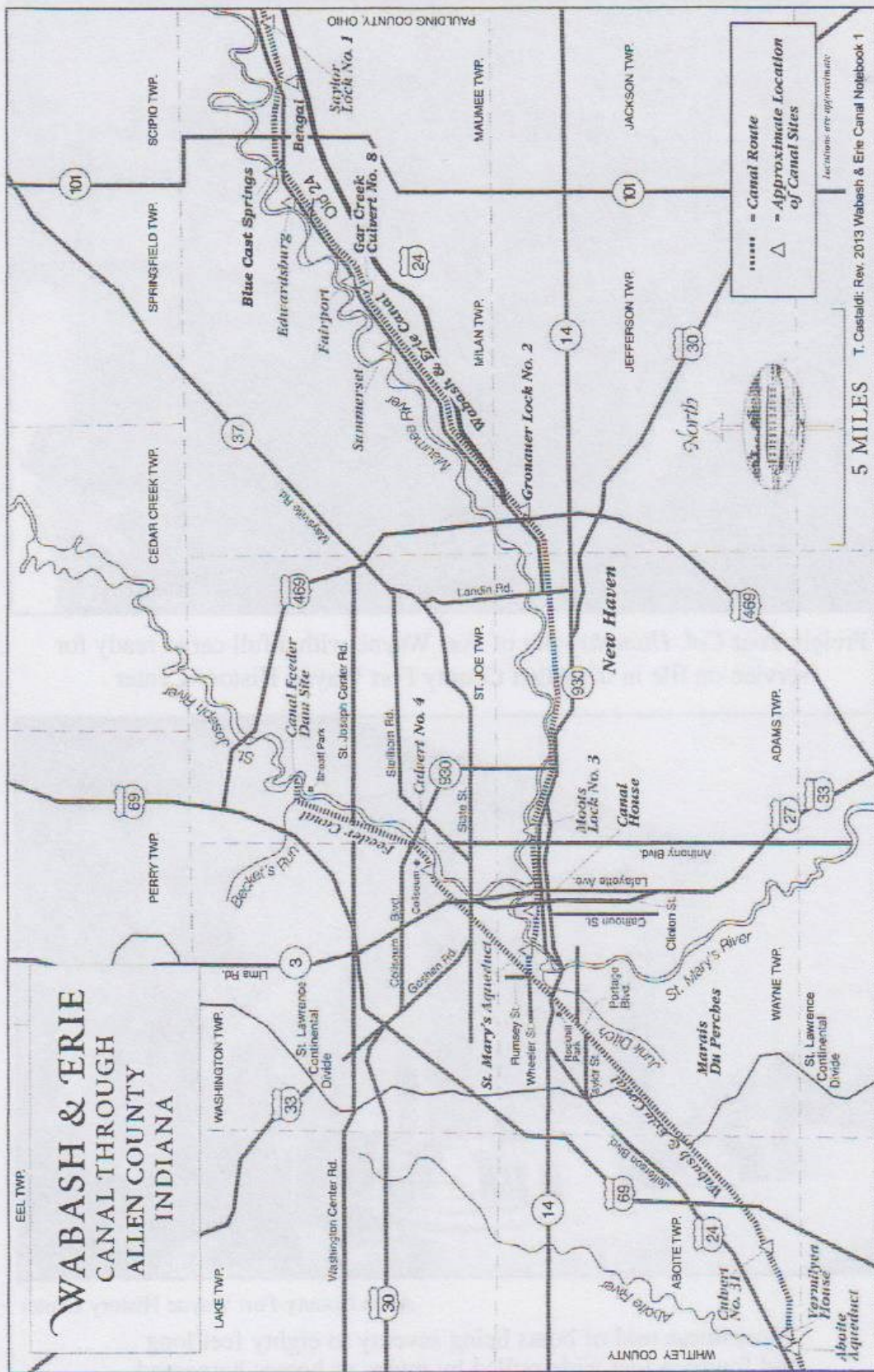
"General Cass was large and ponderous, and, if I may use a colloquialism of today, something of a 'stuffed shirt,'" wrote Rex Potterf. "People looked forward to seeing him and hearing him speak. When the boat docked Senator Cass rose from his seat and advanced to the gangplank; expecting in three or four more steps to be on the dock; unfortunately, the great man misjudged his distance and fell into the muddy and stagnant waters of the Wabash and Erie Canal."¹¹⁴ Could the fate of the Wabash & Erie canal have been sealed then and there symbolized by its unplanned christening on that Independence Day in 1843?

Interestingly, research has disputed the accuracy of this colorful incident.¹¹⁵ Having Lewis Cass, a presidential candidate of 1848, tumbling into the drink on such an auspicious canal occasion

conjures up visions of chagrin. It fits neatly within the popular sentiment of bemoaning the canal's shortcomings, its limitations and its financial failure. Much the opposite was true before the canal was constructed when reports were glowing with virtues of such a project. The Wabash & Erie in large part opened the Wabash Valley's rich resources, connecting the West to the world. To this day, the economic prosperity of the region once served by the canal seems dependent upon good transportation facilities.

Perhaps the Cass scenario is Allen County's contribution to the perception chroniclers have created as rails and roads diminished the old canal's once prominent position. More importantly, however, the General's prophecy may have been forgotten, considering that presently on one, however prosperous a people we may be, comes each year to mark the canal building exertions of our ancestors for the harvest we have gathered. He also said that day in 1843: "There is a power of association given to man, which binds together the past and the present, and connects both with the future." It is an awesome power if we but take the time to put it to use."¹¹⁶





**WABASH & ERIE
CANAL THROUGH
ALLEN COUNTY
INDIANA**

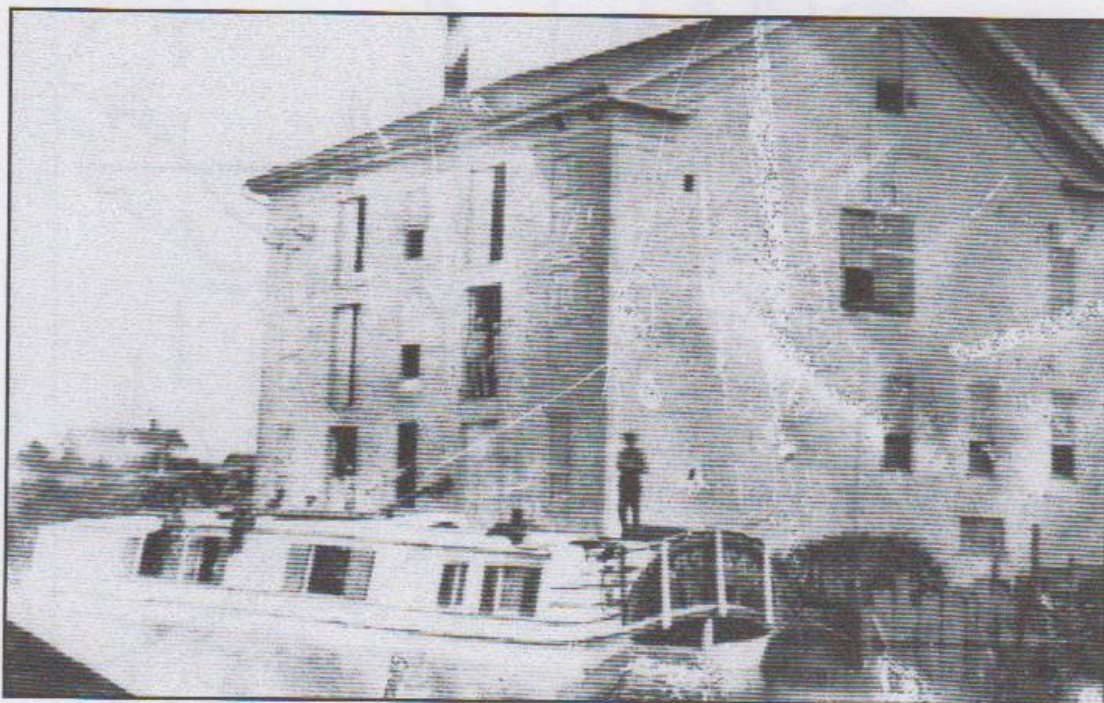
..... = Canal Route
 Δ = Approximate Location
 of Canal Sites

Locations are approximate

5 MILES T. Castaldi: Rev. 2013 Wabash & Erie Canal Notebook 1

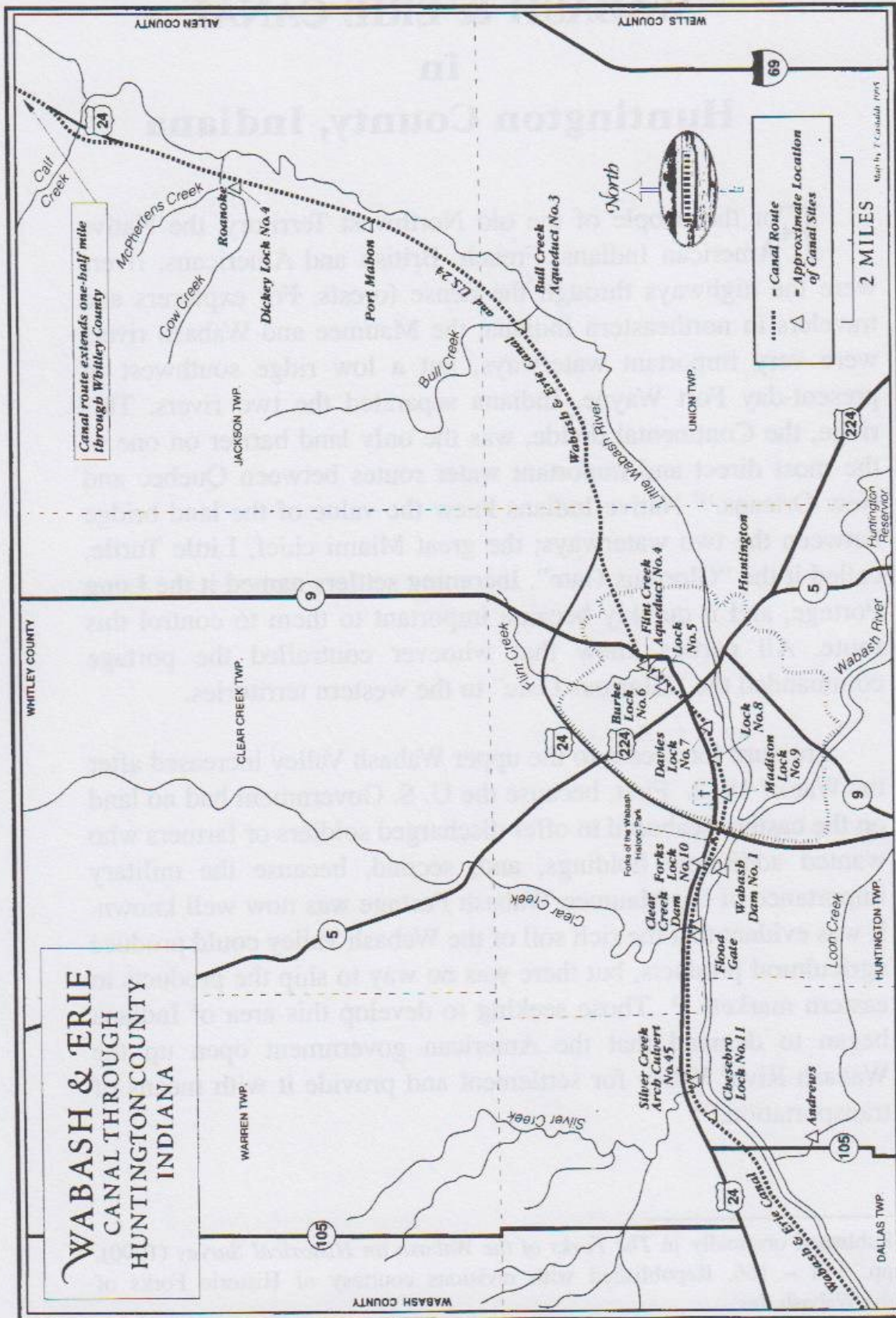


Freight boat *Col. Humphry* out of Fort Wayne with a full cargo ready for service on file in the Allen County Fort Wayne History Center



Allen County-Fort Wayne History Center

Eyewitness told of boats being seventy to eighty feet long and fourteen feet wide pulled by mules or horses harnessed to a rope about two-hundred feet ahead of the boat.



WABASH & ERIE CANAL in Huntington County, Indiana

For the people of the old Northwest Territory, the Native American Indians, French, British and Americans, rivers were the highways through the dense forests. For explorers and travelers in northeastern Indiana, the Maumee and Wabash rivers were very important waterways, but a low ridge southwest of present-day Fort Wayne, Indiana separated the two rivers. This ridge, the Continental divide, was the only land barrier on one of the most direct and important water routes between Quebec and New Orleans.¹¹⁷ Native Indians knew the value of the land bridge between the two waterways; the great Miami chief, Little Turtle, called it the “Glorious Gate”. Incoming settlers named it the Long Portage, and it quickly became important to them to control this route. All parties knew that whoever controlled the portage commanded the “Glorious Gate” to the western territories.

Pressure for access to the upper Wabash Valley increased after the War of 1812. First, because the U. S. Government had no land on the eastern seaboard to offer discharged soldiers or farmers who wanted additional holdings, and, second, because the military importance of the Maumee-Wabash Portage was now well known. It was evident that the rich soil of the Wabash Valley could produce agricultural products, but there was no way to ship the products to eastern markets.¹¹⁸ Those seeking to develop this area of Indiana began to demand that the American government open up the Wabash River Valley for settlement and provide it with means of transportation.¹¹⁹

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As Europeans and Americans made intrusions into Miami territory, the Indians' traditional life style and self-supporting system began to deteriorate. Furthermore, the declining numbers of fur bearing animals, which had provided the Indians with their principal item of trade, forced the Indians to rely increasingly on annuities from the government for the necessities of life. Many Americans were very willing to exploit these circumstances.¹²⁰

Promises of generosity for their land excited many Native People although thoughtful persons, such as Little Turtle, warned against selling Indian land.¹²¹ Piece by piece, the U.S. Government dismantled the Miami lands. The process began with the 1795 Treaty of Greenville and ended with the removal of the Miami in 1846. During this time, land from Fort Wayne to Huntington and throughout the Wabash River Valley passed to the Americans.

On March 2, 1827, land for a canal was granted by Congress (the Treaty of Paradise Spring, signed October 23, 1826, had included a provision for a canal route through the remaining Miami lands).¹²² The waterway was to be forty-feet wide and four-feet deep; the locks ninety-feet long and fifteen-feet wide in the chamber and would be called the Wabash and Erie Canal. In 1828, the Army Corps of Engineers proposed a route from Toledo to Fort Wayne to the Landing Place (the Forks of the Wabash where the Little Wabash River joins the Wabash) and on to the mouth of the Tippecanoe River near Lafayette.¹²³ Near this point the Wabash River was considered navigable by steamboat.

The federal land grant for the canal extended into Ohio in order to connect it with the Miami and Erie Canal. Ohio had a network of canals, and many Ohioans thought the Wabash and Erie Canal would divert commerce away from the Ohio waterway system. Because the Ohio canal system's economic well-being was threatened, many delays were encountered before the channel reached the Indiana-Ohio line.¹²⁴

Financing for the canal was made part of the Mammoth Board of Internal Improvements Act of 1836.¹²⁵ From the beginning, this Indiana legislative action had long-term potential for corruption of officials and for legislative folly. An impatient public placed pressure on state government officials to put too many transportation improvements in place too quickly. When land sales for the canal did not produce the necessary construction funds, bonds were issued which, along with other credits, put the state into debt¹²⁶ and changed the way Indiana would finance state projects.

The State of Indiana nearly went bankrupt in 1850 and did not clear itself of debt until 1903. Because of the financial distress, Indiana established a new state constitution in 1851 that prohibits borrowing except for defense purposes or for casual and temporary debts for state operations.¹²⁷

In February 1832, two important events took place. "The legislature of Indiana, in anticipation of a tide of immigration to the region through which the canal was to be constructed, established several new counties. On February 2, Governor Noah Noble approved an act entitled, 'An Act Establishing the Counties of Huntington, Wabash and Miami.'"¹²⁸ Three weeks later, on February 22, the contract for the twenty-five mile Fort Wayne-Huntington section was let. On that day, a Huntington man, Elias Murray, dug one of the first spades of dirt breaking the ground for the canal.¹²⁹ Washington's birthday was chosen because President George Washington was seen as the foremost promoter of American canals.¹³⁰ Federal officials had another concern as rumors were heard that the settlers west of the Appalachians felt removed and threatened cession.¹³¹

OPENING THE OLD WEST

One of the great engineering feats of modern times, the canal was constructed using ax, saw, pick, spade, auger, chisel, hammer, hand forge, hand drill, gun powder, wheel barrows,

carts and wagons. Power employed was manpower and that of horse and ox.¹³² When finally completed in 1853, the Wabash and Erie Canal reached from Toledo, Ohio, to Evansville, Indiana. The canal was a 468-mile stretch of navigable water that some have called the longest artificial waterway in the world when in fact it was the second longest. As a matter of fact it was the longest¹³³ in America since only China's Grand Canal was longer.

Laborers, who were called "navvies" and who were mainly Irish immigrants, were hired to dig the canal through the swamp and wilderness. Contracts for the construction of the canal were given to various parties. The contractors sometimes had great difficulty in getting laborers and did not care to assume too much responsibility. Working conditions were difficult. The men were plagued by dysentery, cholera and malaria. Disease and accidents caused so many deaths, that in some sections of the canal, a myth circulated claiming one worker dying for every six feet of its construction. To help the workers keep their minds off their hardships, a man called a jigger-boss moved among the crowd of laborers. His job was to supply jiggers of whiskey to the thirsty navvies.

Along with their construction skills, the Irish workers brought a love for the free-for-all scrimmage and for feuding. One such skirmish was particularly memorable:

A few miles [west of] the town of Huntington was a division line between parts of the work done by two contractors. Each contractor had several hundred Irishmen employed. The wages paid each man per day was one dollar cash and a certain number of giggers (sic) ... of whiskey. Nearly all the whiskey was then home-brewed, and not subject to internal revenue tax, therefore selling for twelve and one-half cents per gallon. The contractors bought the whiskey by the barrel and could easily afford to pay salaries partly with whiskey.

Those working east from the point of division called themselves Corkonians, having come from the historic city of Cork and the other gang called themselves the Downians or Fardowns, having come from the district "farther down" in the Emerald Isle.

The Corkonians were receiving six giggers (sic) a day beside the cash and the Downians were only permitted to sip their glass four times a day. A number of Downians left their brethren and were employed on the east part of the channel. To this action, the other Downians objected and demanded their return, saying that the Corkonians were not fit company for their aristocratic blood. The Corkonians resented this and sent back a challenge. Work on the canal stopped and preparations for battle were begun. A number of Indians were begged to join but the interference of the chief kept the redmen neutral. The fever was at blood heat when the Corkonians began their march [intending] to meet their foe somewhere in the vicinity of Lagro. On the march they confiscated every implement of war that could be found and carried impediments of whiskey. When their march through the town [of Huntington] began, woman and children hid... A cave along the Little River seemed a retreat for nearly all the women and children in the town. The cave was located near where the Huntington Light and Fuel company's electric light plant stands. While the women and children were imprisoned in their retreat the march of the Irish continued westward. Passing through they confiscated the cannon brought here by Dr. George Fate¹³⁴ and added it to their fighting equipment.

When the armies met, the scene following was not nearly so bad as was predicted ... neither side had

anything with which to fight except their picks and shovels and the single cannon...Much to the chagrin of the generals, no ammunition for the cannon had been brought, but gravel from the banks of the canal was substitute for "canister" (sic) and a few volleys were fired - not at the enemy, but toward the sky, just to let them know of the presence of the cannon. There were a few skirmishes with fists at the outposts, but the sentinels reported "all's well," and the foremen of the gangs arbitrated the matter satisfactorily.

The Irish returned to their work...The majority of the workmen continued their work "in peace," drinking their jiggers in equal quantities wishing luck to all.¹³⁵

Some Irish canal workers settled in this area, establishing an Irish community that built Saint Mary's Catholic Church in Huntington. The Germans founded the other Huntington Catholic church, Saints Peter and Paul. The Irish and the Germans provided the most distinctive ethnic elements in the Huntington community.

Work on the canal was completed three years after construction began. On July 3, 1835, the flow of water in the canal channel from Fort Wayne reached Huntington and that evening the first canal boat, *Indiana*, docked at Burke's Lock in Huntington. The next day on July 4th, the canal was officially opened from Fort Wayne to Huntington.¹³⁶

It was customary to commemorate such occasions and a celebration took place in Fort Wayne followed by another in Huntington. F.S. Bash described the excitement:

Late in the afternoon, the packet boat *Indiana*, Captain Asa Fairfield, master, arrived at Huntington and tied up at the upper lock, then known as Burk's

Lock. On board was a large and enthusiastic party of Fort Wayne citizens who were met by an equally enthusiastic throng of Huntington people. In anticipation of the arrival of the first canal boat, Dr. George A. Fate had brought a small cannon from Dayton, Ohio, and the little gun now boomed out its noisy welcome. The next day the *Indiana* returned to Fort Wayne, taking the cannon along.¹³⁷

LOCKS OF HUNTINGTON COUNTY

Maribah Hawley gave her recollection in 1895 of the trip to Fort Wayne made on the first packet on the canal that took a day to get to Fort Wayne and another day to return. An 1859 toll sheet issued by the Board of Trustees indicates that this was a distance of twenty-five miles one way:

Yes, I went up to Fort Wayne and back on the first packet. It was on the 3rd of July, 1835, and we returned next day on the 4th. There were about twenty-five of us in the party, and that took pretty near the whole town for it was very small those days. Some of the passengers were Mr. and Mrs. Murray, Dr. Merrill and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, Mr. Burk, Mr. Barker, Dr. George Fate and others.

The only sights along the way were the wilderness woods, prairies covered with water, and in places there were wolves, deer and Indians. I remember we stopped a few miles east of Roanoke at the Vermilyea hotel for dinner. They changed horses there. At Fort Wayne a public dinner was given next day a grand time was had.¹³⁸

Once opened, travel between frontier towns and villages became a bit more convenient, however, the canal was not an easy

enterprise to manage. Paul Fatout gave this description:

[The canal] required round-the-clock attention: to stop a small leak before it became a torrent that crumbled a bank and emptied the channel; to restore banks and bridges washed out by Wabash River floods; to repair locks and aqueducts; to oversee lock tenders and to collectors.

Grass in the channel had to be mowed...several times a summer. The cut stuff prevented lock gates from fitting tightly and caused a loss of water of which, in a dry stream, there was barely enough to float a boat, if that. One packet took three days going from Logansport to Fort Wayne (77 miles), scraping bottom all the way and getting there only by the aid of another boat to "swell her through" on the wash from the blunt bow.

Engineers and superintendents faced a never ending conflict with nature, not to speak of a running fight with human perfidy. Miscreants maliciously cut canal banks and drained reservoirs, sometimes petulantly tore out a dam.

Unscrupulous skippers cooked cargo manifests to swindle toll collectors. The struggle of management against man and the elements was so costly that the W & E never made a profit for the state, which eventually threw in the sponge, millions of dollars in the red.¹³⁹

A typical canal boat was described as being about ninety-foot long and thirteen-foot wide.¹⁴⁰ Because of the fixed dimensions of canal structures, eyewitnesses have told of boats being seventy to eighty-foot long, fourteen feet wide pulled by mules or horses harnessed to a rope up to 200 feet ahead of the boat while others set

the boats' length at eighty-nine- feet and the width thirteen feet. In fact, energy to power the canal boat through the sill-water channel came from the two, sometimes three, mules or horses that were harnessed to a long towline attached to the boat. Prodded by a driver, the animals tugged on the towline from the towpath that was constructed alongside the canal. The mules or horses were stabled on board the boat, and in the later years of the canal boats were built that could pull a cargo of as much as two thousand tons.¹⁴¹

Some canal boats were privately owned by individuals while others were operated by large companies. The passenger boats, called packets, ran on a regular schedule and charged a published rate of fare. Sleek packets were made to go through the water, sometimes at speeds as high as six or seven miles per hour. The twenty-five mile trip from Fort Wayne to Huntington should have taken about five hours, at a rate of five miles per hour. However, the canal boat had to be stair-stepped up hill and down by means of locks, and passing through locks added to the time. "Locking time" for a boat was generally about one minute per foot of depth of water in the lock.¹⁴² Stops were sometimes made at important locks and ports, such as those in Roanoke and Mahon, which added more time to the twenty-five mile journey. The fare to travel on the packets was three cents per mile; to travel on the freighters cost two and one half cents per mile. Meals and lodging were included in the price.

The following account of travel on the canal comes from an 1855 description by J. Richard Beste of England:

The construction of the canal boat was – in miniature – much the same as that of the lake and river steamers. There was no hold or under-deck; but on the deck at the stern, were raised the kitchen, steward's room and offices; in the center of the boat was a large saloon-sitting room of all day, the sleeping room of male passengers by night – adjoining it was the ladies saloon; beyond which

again was a small cabin containing only four berths. This cabin was separated by a door way and curtain from the ladies saloon and on the other side a hand basin, two towels, a comb and a brush, for the use of the ladies.

A flat roof spread over the whole of the saloons; and on it was piled the luggage and here passengers walked up and down or sat to enjoy the view. The view, however as yet 'was naught', the banks were low; the thick wood in which were only clearings, shut us in on both sides.

After tea, we all began a most murderous attack on the mosquitoes that swarmed on the windows and inside our berths, in expectation of feasting upon us as soon as we should go to bed. But those on whom we made war, were soon replaced by others; and the more we killed, the more they seemed to come to be killed. It was as though they would defy us to exterminate the race. At last, we gave up the task as hopeless, and resigned ourselves, as well as we could, to pass a sleepless night.¹⁴³

Life on and around the canal is also described by Paul Fatout in the January, 1971 *Indiana History Bulletin*:

Packets, gleaming white trimmed in red or green, sailed in [to town] with a flourish. Two and three horses or mules, hitched in tandem to a 250-foot hawser of three-inch hemp made fast amidships, pulled the craft at a spanking pace, often exceeding the legal limit of four miles an hour.

...the slower freight boat, called line boat, laden with a cargo that, at capacity, was 80 tons or more,

ambled along at a mile and a half an hour. Five days from Delphi to Fort Wayne was a normal schedule.

At Fort Wayne, the south bankside was a walkway for the fashionable, who showed off their fine clothes and watched the boats come in. At Huntington, Wabash, Peru and Logansport, tradesmen, gawkers, the aimless and the purposeful swirled up and down a broad Canal Street on both sides of the ditch.

The leisurely pace and innocuous routine suited the phlegmatic temperament, but exasperated travelers who preferred more animation and excitement.

With all its drawbacks, however, canaling seemed at the time a fine thing – even, strange as it may seem now, a phenomenon to wonder at the marvel over. People along the line of the Wabash and Erie often took boat rides for the sheer exhilaration of gliding smoothly along at what they thought was a good speed ... For a short span of years the W. & E. gave to sparsely settled northern Indiana a more effective way of getting from place to place than any other available in that part of the state.¹⁴⁴

It is true that freight boats might belong to a canal boat company, or line, much as the business organization of today's railroad and trucking companies. Packet boats too were divided by "packet" and "line" designed to serve two types of public. People wanting swift transportation and willing to pay more could choose a packet. Individuals or a family moving to locations in the West with time not an important consideration could take passage on a line boat.¹⁴⁵

Line boats usually had two cabins. One in front for women and children separated by a wall for men passengers. Fare was

about three-cents per mile plus a toll of one-half cent per passenger. Amidships was usually a stable for two horses to rest while another pair towed the boat. In front and behind the stable was a large space for barrels, boxes and other cargo. In the stern, was another eighteen-foot long cabin for the captain and family members.¹⁴⁶

Packet boats were a more luxurious boat. One of the fanciest was the *Silver Bell* painted silver, had silver bells, and was pulled by three silver-gray mules with silver-mounted harnesses. These animals moved along at three or so miles per hour but could reach the break-neck speed of eight miles an hour. Passengers paid express fare of three-cents for aristocratic treatment, but traveled faster and had better accommodations. For example in 1848, Doyle and Dickey's Daily Packet Line owned 350 towing horses that pulled on three-inch hemp rope 150 to 250 feet in length connected to one of the fifteen line packets. Four of these were comfortable crafts with names such as: *Indiana, Ohio, Illinois* and *Missouri*.¹⁴⁷ Jennie Rader recalled seeing these boats and wrote in her memoirs, "The *Indiana* had a red and black under body, white upper cabin, green shutters. Its twenty-four side windows had red curtains."¹⁴⁸

The Wabash & Erie Canal provided access to and allowed development of the then Indiana backwoods settlements. The canal brought in farmers and carried out their produce as the planners had hoped, but initially the most important economic impact of the new canal had to do with providing goods and services for the construction and operation of the canal. Construction workers were fed and housed, and building materials supplied. Locks, and later canal boats, were built and serviced. Canal properties were maintained, and travelers cares' accommodated. As more people arrived, the area developed, and the need for goods and services continued to grow.

As the canal opened the Huntington area to settlement by whites, it also ended the era of Miami Indian domination. Traveling

on packets of the Indiana Canal Company, and escorted by soldiers, the Miami tribe was moved west in 1846. Many died on the strenuous trip.¹⁴⁹ F.S. Bash described the removal:

Alexis Coquillard was appointed by the government to take charge of the Miamis and conduct them to their new home in the West ... Notwithstanding the fact that the Miamis regarded him [Coquillard] as their friend, they did not willingly leave the hunting grounds where they had passed their lives. Many of them ran away, others claimed to belong to the families or bands of Godfroy and Meshingomesia, which were permitted to remain in Indiana.¹⁵⁰ After much trouble and delay, most of the tribe embarked on canal boats and were taken to Toledo, thence to Cincinnati, and then via the Ohio, Mississippi, and Missouri rivers to their destination.¹⁵¹

Although the Wabash & Erie Canal was ultimately a financial failure after it was included with Indiana's 1835 Internal Improvements Mammoth Act, it was a substantial success in the developing of the northeastern and western portions of the state.¹⁵² In a history of the canal prepared for the Indiana Historical Society, Elbert J. Benton stated:

Before the opening of the canal in 1843, the zone of the Maumee and Upper Wabash valleys had sent towards Toledo only 5,622 bushels of corn. Five years later, the exports from the same region sent to that port reached 2,755,149 bushels. For home consumption, the large number of laborers added to the population increased the demand for produce and much more money than ever before came into circulation.

When the canal was begun, the Upper Wabash Valley was a wilderness. There were only 12,000

scattered population in all that district, but people began to flock in by wagon-loads, so that the number increased to 270,000 by 1840.

...boats that took grain up the canal brought back emigrants and homesteaders from the East. Thirty eight counties in Indiana ... were directly affected by the new waterway. Long wagon trains of produce wended their way to the towns on the shores of the canal. In the year 1844, four hundred wagons in a day were waiting to unload at points like Lafayette and Wabash.¹⁵³

Paul Fatout notes that:

... from canal ports, shippers dispatched millions of barrels, pounds and bushels of flour, beef, butter, lath, shingles, potash, soap, cheese, hops, tanbark, pearlshes and other commodities, including tombstones ... Delphi was a great exporter of canvassed hams. Lagro set a record for shipments of whiskey, over 5,000 barrels in a good year.¹⁵⁴

One Huntington resident recalled that between the years 1847 and 1856, for the community, the canal experienced its best years. They supported this idea with cord wood, lumber, stone, lime, grain and hogs being the chief commodities.¹⁵⁵

By 1852 the canal was beginning to face new difficulties. The Lake Erie, Wabash and St. Louis Railroad (The Wabash System) was completed from St. Louis to Fort Wayne and followed the Wabash River and the canal route. Because the railroad was more efficient and comfortable and could haul greater quantities at higher speeds, the canal steadily lost business. It was finally abandoned in 1873.

The abandoned canal basin was disposed of piecemeal, either by purchase or by condemnation proceedings to electric railway lines and other interests. Historian Bash said: "Such was the ignoble end of the great waterway that was once the hope and pride of thousands of people living in the Wabash Valley. During its existence, perhaps no one agency was of such potent influence in developing the great valley as the Wabash and Erie Canal."¹⁵⁶

TOWPATH TO ROAD

The path of the canal across Huntington County followed the present route of U.S. Highway 24. Entering the county from the northeast, U.S. 24 is virtually atop the old canal channel and snakes back and forth over it into the town of Roanoke. Two miles before reaching Roanoke, a large barn north of U.S. 24 stands at the edge of the old canal where the channel is still visible as a lasting remnant.¹⁵⁷

Next, the highway crosses Calf Creek where the last timbers that served as the base of an arch built to enable the canal to cross over that stream were removed in the mid 1990s. Originally this was Culver No. 34, a large wooden culvert that permitted canal boats to pass over Calf Creek. It was rectangular in shape, two spans each ten feet wide and five feet high. In 1847, the Chief Engineer recommended that a dam be erected below the culvert in the stream so that the entire structure would be submerged, thereby, protecting the wood from decay. The lower foundation timbers were first put in place in 1833. When someone made off with the last timbers, little did they realize that the wood had survived the destruction of weather, the elements, road construction and the like for more than 160 years.¹⁵⁸

In Huntington County alone there were eight locks used to raise or lower freight or passenger boats. Because water seeks its own level, the water locks "stair stepped" boats either up or down



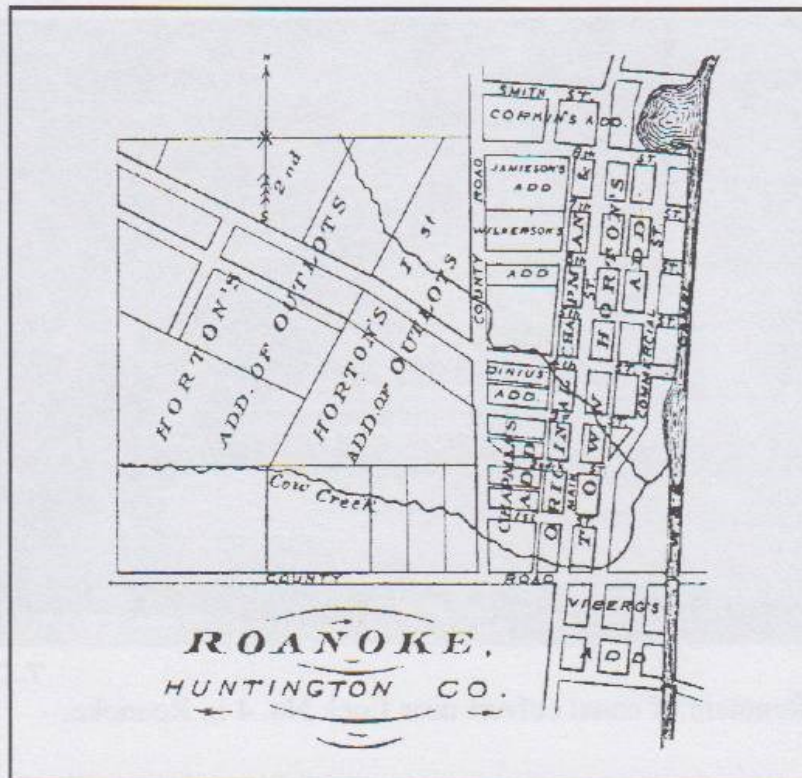
T. Castaldi

Remnant of canal culvert near Lock No. 4 in Roanoke.

hill. It was a slow process, but it worked. Dickey Lock was constructed at Roanoke just west of today's intersection of U.S. 24 and Second Street. It is likely that the two dozen or so timbers running parallel to the highway in the bed of McPherrrens Creek are those of Dickey Lock. Dickey Lock led to the establishment of Roanoke as canal employees settled around a store that had opened in a building near the lock. References of the day indicate that the canal ran parallel one block east of Roanoke's Commercial Street.¹⁵⁹

Dickey Lock, officially identified as Lock No. 4, is described by the chief engineer as capable of raising or lowering boats ten feet, and constructed on a wooden-frame plan. When the report was written in 1847, it was described as the first lock west of Fort Wayne and terminated the Summit level.¹⁶⁰

The Town of Roanoke ... was an outgrowth of the Wabash and Erie Canal and early became not only a prominent shipping point, but also the chief source of supplies for a large area of territory in Huntington, Allen and Whitley Counties, being at



From the *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Indiana*,
Baskin, Forster & Co., 1876

that time the principal trading place between Fort Wayne and the town of Wabash. The construction of the Dickey Lock was the immediate cause that led to the birth of the village ... Among the earliest comers to the place were a number of canal employees, and about the year 1847 a man by the name of Bilby opened a small store in a little frame building that stood near the lock on the east bank of the canal. Lemuel G. Jones, in 1848, purchased the building, and for about three years thereafter, carried on a fairly successful mercantile business, his principal customers being those who ran boats on the canal. Prior to engaging in merchandizing, Mr. Jones erected a saw-mill at the lock, and a couple of years later, built a large flouring-mill on the same spot, which began operations in the fall of 1848. The mill received its motive power from the waters of the

canal, and for a number of years was the largest and most successful enterprise of the kind in Huntington County ... This mill and the store early formed the nucleus of quite a flourishing settlement, and within a couple of years the influx of population was such that the owner of the land, George A. Chapman, determined to lay out a town, which was accordingly done in September, 1850 ... The first four [lots bordered] on the canal.¹⁶¹

Colonel Lemuel Jones, a canal boat captain from Roanoke, Virginia, is said to have named the new town for his native city.¹⁶² Jennie Rader in her memoirs states that it was either named by Colonel Jones, or in 1850, by Chapman who made the original plat of the village. No matter the source of the name, Roanoke became a chief trading port centered around Dickey Lock between Fort Wayne and Lagro.¹⁶³

WABASH & ERIE CANAL LOCK 4

First lock west of summit level of Wabash and Erie Canal (connected Lake Erie with Ohio River in 1853). Known as Dickey Lock. Built as Lock 1, 1834-1835, of wood construction; renumbered Lock 4 as result of canal completion to Ohio line (1840). Remnant of arch culvert nearby. Canal important to founding of Roanoke.¹⁶⁴

Port Mahon, at Mahon Road and U.S. 24, was the site of an important stop on the Wabash and Erie, so important that a sizable town cropped up here, which F.S. Bash described for the *Huntington Press* stating that, "the town of Mahon once teemed with life and vigor. Its mills, stores, dwellings, saloons, sports, and hilarity looming up big on the map of canal days in Jackson Township."¹⁶⁵

For the most part, canal workers who had emigrated from Ireland populated Mahon. Archibald Mahon laid it out on June 30,

1853, at the site of a spring considered the best water available between Toledo and Lafayette. Some ninety-four lots were plated around a public square with seven streets. Water, Main and Wilt streets ran north and south while Hannah, State, Mill and Durbin streets directed traffic east and west.¹⁶⁶ West of Mahon an aqueduct twenty-eight feet long and made of wood with stone abutments was built to span Bull Creek. Five miles away, at the east edge of the town of Huntington, Aqueduct No. 4 was built to cross Flint Creek. It too was a twenty-eight feet long structure supported by stone abutments.¹⁶⁷ On the north side of Business U.S. 24, where First and Tipton streets meet today, Flint Creek disappears under the highway through a stone arch resembling the construction common to early canal structures.

The canal passed through the center of the city of Huntington, Indiana, and the community enjoyed the advantage of three locks. Lock No. 5 was constructed west of Tipton and First streets. From there the route of the canal followed present-day Tipton Street where just south of its intersection with Byron Street, Burke Lock No. 6 was positioned. It was built within the area of today's neighborhood block formed by Guilford, Tipton, Byron streets and Park Drive. It was necessary to erect the lock in 1835 as a wooden device that could raise or lower boats a height of eight feet to overcome a change in elevation.

Before Huntington High/Crestwood school was razed in 2001 and replaced by General Slack Park at the corner of Guilford and Johns streets, an American Bicentennial sign commemorated Burke's Lock. The marker has been moved to the YMCA property on the southwest corner of Warren and East Park Drive.

BURK'S LOCK

1835 – 1873

The canal boat "Indiana" docked here on the evening of July 3, 1835, opening the Wabash and Erie canal to traffic from Fort Wayne to Huntington. This was the first section of the

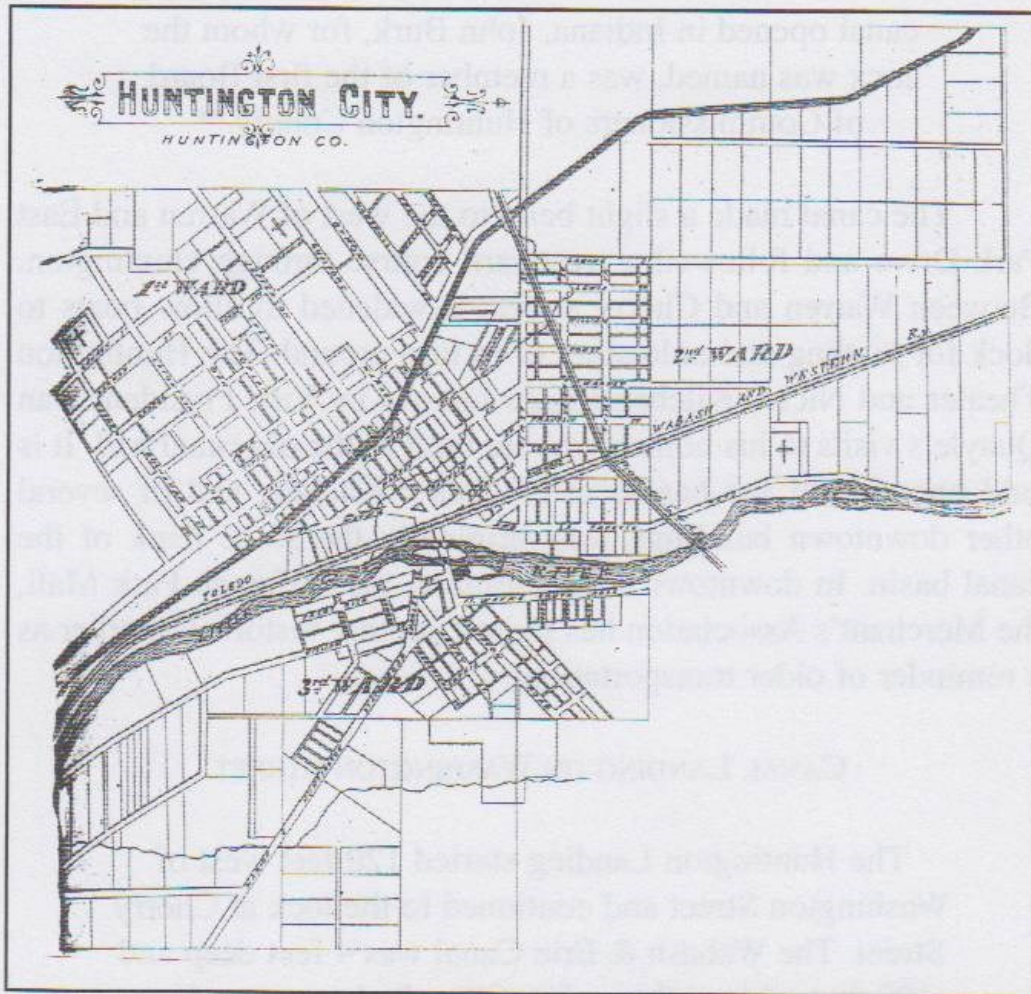
canal opened in Indiana. John Burk, for whom the lock was named, was a member of the first Board of Commissioners of Huntington County.¹⁶⁸

The canal made a slight bend to the west of Warren and East Park Drive and followed a westward course through Huntington. Between Warren and Cherry streets it widened to allow boats to dock for loading and unloading or to turn around. The Huntington Theater and Nick's Kitchen (made famous by Vice President Dan Quayle's visits to his hometown) are built in the old canal bed. It is said one side of the basement of Nick's Kitchen, and of several other downtown buildings, was originally the stone bank of the canal basin. In downtown Huntington on the Jefferson Park Mall, the Merchant's Association has placed another historical marker as a reminder of older transportation:

CANAL LANDING ON WASHINGTON STREET

The Huntington Landing started 120 feet west of Washington Street and continued to the lock at Cherry Street. The Wabash & Erie Canal was 4 feet deep and 100 feet wide at this point. Other locks were at First St. and Byron St. The Canal was completed from Fort Wayne to Huntington on July 4, 1835, and from Toledo to Evansville, 459 (sic) miles, in 1854 (sic). The Canal preceded the railroad to Huntington by 20 years, spurring early settlement. The Canal was abandoned in 1873.¹⁶⁹

Today, in the buildings along the old landing, the basement walls are believed to have been constructed first for the canal and later used as foundations for buildings. The Moore Building, which stands on the northwest corner of Jefferson and Market streets is an example of canal-era architecture and was the first brick building constructed in Huntington. Built in 1844, it was restored to its original appearance by Drs. Willard and Eric Harman.¹⁷⁰



From *Illustrated Historical Atlas of Indiana*,
Baskin, Forster & Co., 1876

Davies Lock, Lock No. 7, located at Washington and Cherry streets, stood at the west end of the loading and turning pool. Westward from downtown Huntington, there was a canal boat works on Canal Street, now known as Crescent Avenue, near Lafontaine Street. On the corner of State and Lafontaine was a swinging bridge across the canal. Not far below this point is the location of Lock No. 8,¹⁷¹ although today there is no indication a structure ever existed.

Half a century after the last boat traveled the canal, a newspaper writer compiled the recollections of a number of Huntington citizens.

A line of boats sometimes filled the canal for fully one-half of a mile, one boat crowding the next, waiting to get through the lock just ahead.

John Kenower, Sr. built four boats just west of the present mill in Huntington. Chas. Thorn had a boat yard where First Street enters Tipton and had as many as five boats under construction at one time. It was a momentous day when a new canal boat was to be launched. There it stood or rested upon its supports, as bright and clean as fresh paint could make it, the name painted on a flat surface at the stern. The long skids reaching into the water smeared with soft soap. When the words 'heave to' were given, the boat slowly slid down to the water, dashing the water over the opposite bank and with a few spasmodic quivers the boat was ready for its life work.

Another citizen mentions buying articles sold from the auction boats tied up at Jefferson Street between what is now the Baker Drug Store and the Theater where there was a basin to load and unload. There was a high bridge over the canal on Jefferson Street and later a swinging low bridge. D.L. Shearer's warehouse was on the north side of the basin and a boarding house for canal men on the south side along Washington Street. ... Eight miles in twenty-four hours was thought perfection for the average canal boat to travel.

The freight boat came slowly, making broad ripples and we did not hurry out, but crawled on the bank just in time to let it go by, but a boat that carried passengers came faster, sometimes with horses trotting, making little choppy ripples and many

more of them was fair warning to us that it was time to get out at once and put on some clothes.¹⁷²

While many written records of the canal are preserved, some physical remains of the old waterway in Huntington County also exist. By following the utility poles, the canal route can be traced. In fact, following the poles from State and Lafontaine streets leads past a point across from Mt. Hope Cemetery where Lock No 9 once functioned.¹⁷³ Moving on, they pass the old two-story home at 1929 West Park Drive that stands across from the entrance to Victory Noll. Built originally about 1840 as an inn for canal boat travelers, the ditch in front of the house is what is left of the old canal channel.¹⁷⁴

Amanda Eichoff, who was raised in this house, said, "Obviously, it was quite a place, but it was not practical to restore. A center hallway separated two large rooms. A kitchen was in back. Upstairs, there were two large rooms measuring fifteen by nineteen feet. These rooms were used as sleeping quarters. When a group



T. Castaldi

Former canal inn west of Huntington, built about 1840 just below Lock No. 9. Residence of Mr. and Mrs. George Eickhoff.

Note line of canal in front of the house.

stopped for the night, one side of the house was for women and the other for men." Mrs. Eichoff's grandparents, John and Catherine Sundermann purchased the home in 1892 from Lambdin P. Milligan. After John and Catherine it was occupied by William and Meta Sundermann, then by Amanda and her husband, Henry Eichoff.¹⁷⁵

Lambdin P. Milligan was a states' right advocate who was discovered in the 1850s holding fugitive slaves awaiting return to the South by bounty hunters. In 1864, he was arrested and tried for treason in Indianapolis by a military court. He was found guilty and sentenced to hang before he was pardoned by Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled, in its *Ex parte Milligan* (1866) landmark decision, that a U.S. civilian cannot be tried in a military court if the civil courts are functioning.¹⁷⁶

CROSSING THE CARRYING PLACE

Reaching the western terminus of the portage or carrying place where the Little Wabash and Wabash rivers meet, known as the Forks of the Wabash, the canal line proceeded into the Miami reserve. The Treaty of Paradise Springs on the Wabash of 1826 provided for its crossing.

However, a concern of the Miami Nation resulted in a change in the direction of the canal. Chief John B. Richardville was prompted to send a letter of protest to the then Secretary of War General Lewis Cass on February 12, 1834, to express his concern that he and his people did not understand that some of their buildings would be in the way of the new canal. Although the Treaty of Paradise Springs, or the 1826 Treaty of the Wabash, was signed it was not understood that some thirteen buildings on the Miami reserve at the Forks were in danger of having to be removed.

General William Marshall the Indian Agent at Logansport took up the cause as well. He mentions to Cass in his letter of March 13, 1834, "The Indians complain that they did not understand at the time of signing the treaty, they ceded a strip of land, six chain wide, through all their reservations, and they allege that it is unjust for their houses built upon that land since the signing of that treaty." The thirteen houses in question were valued at \$2,200.00. Further, the canal was underway and one thousand laborers had been assigned to the task of constructing the canal. He argued, "These people are as ungovernable as the Indians and if the Indians are not satisfied, immediately and should attempt to content for what they conceive to be their right, one can see the difficulties, that may grow out of it."

General Cass replied on March 31, 1834, writing that the treaty "contains an express stipulation for the use of six chains of land, for the purpose of a Canal, this Department can only judge of the intention of the parties, by the terms of the treaty." He went on to say that the Miamis' request for reimbursement for the removal of their buildings was an issue for Congress.¹⁷⁷

It is said that the matter was settled by making a turn in the canal line.¹⁷⁸ Before the "Chiefs' House" was removed from the north side of U.S. Highway 24 to its present location on the south side, it was obvious that had the route continued on the direction as it passed by the Milligan house, it would have cut through the original site of the preserved two-story frame house. From the east the canal line makes a slight angle redirecting the channel to the southwest aligning more parallel with the river. If the water were in the canal today, it would occupy the parking lot in front of the Historic Forks of the Wabash Visitors' Center.

ADDING WABASH WATER

About one half mile below the point where the Little Wabash River joins the Wabash River, known as the Forks of the Wabash, Forks Lock, or Lock No. 10, a nine feet lift built on a design known as the Wooden Crib plan was completed.¹⁷⁹ Because good building limestone was not readily available at the time the lock was being installed and because timber was in abundant supply, the builders chose the material at hand and pushed ahead. It was 1837 before a quarry near Georgetown, eight-miles west of Logansport, was discovered that was thought to contain a supply of good building stone. However, no one had tested it in actual construction.¹⁸⁰ Williams' 1847 Report noted that this wooden crib plan lock has "cribs filled with earth, gravel and stone, and faced with two inch plank." Huntington-area locks 6 and 7 are each eight feet lift, while locks numbers 5, 8, 9 and 10 are each nine feet lift capacity. Williams wrote that:

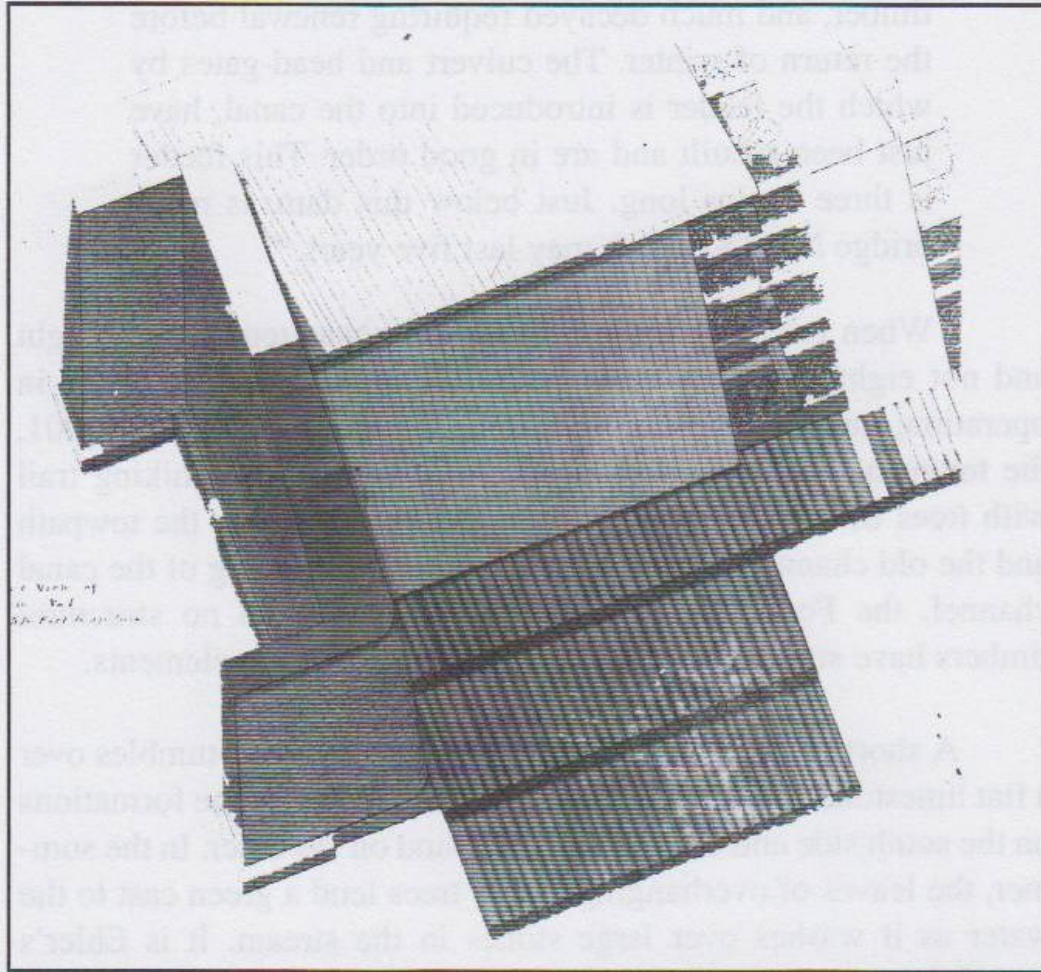
They were constructed in 1835, and the timber is of course, considerably decayed. The upper course in places, and in some parts, the two upper courses, have been renewed. By renewing the remainder of the two upper courses, and in some parts, the third course, during the ensuing winter, it is supposed these locks may last for two seasons more, but after that must be re-built. Between this time and the spring of 1851, the expense of re-building these five locks must be increased. It is proposed to re-build them upon the combined or composite plan, using undressed but strong and durable stone, laid on dry walls – the face of the walls being made water tight by a lining of plank. The cost of re-building a lock on this plan, including the removal of the old structure, will be about \$5,000. The repairs proposed to be made during the ensuing winter, will probably cost \$150, to each of the five locks. Besides this, there is in all this flight of locks, one full set of

lock-gates required to be built the ensuing winter, the other gates are all nearly new and will last perhaps four years.¹⁸¹

South of Lock No. 10, the first dam was constructed across the Wabash River to serve as a feeder to the canal.¹⁸² Chief Engineer Jesse Williams claimed that the Saint Joseph feeder was capable of providing water from the summit in Fort Wayne to Six Mile Reservoir, Ohio, to the east and twelve miles beyond the Forks of the Wabash to the west. Additional feeders were necessary to replenish the stream of water and just below Huntington at the Forks a dam was built for that purpose. In 1833 he wrote to the Board of Commissioners:

A favourable point for introducing a feeder from the Wabash has been selected about a half a mile below the mouth of Little river, where by a dam eight feet high the waters of that stream can be turned into the canal. The bottom of the stream and one of its banks, at the point selected are formed of solid rock. The discharge of the Wabash at this point, at extreme low water, has been ascertained to be about five hundred cubic feet per minute. This, however, will be considerably increased after the canal shall have been put in operation, by the water which will escape from the upper levels, through the banks, a portion of which will reach the bed of the stream. By this augmentation, together with some aid from the St. Joseph feeder, drawn through the summit section, a sufficiency of water will be provided to supply the canal to the point where another feeder can be received, a distance of eleven miles.¹⁸³

Adjacent to the Forks Lock, a feeder was constructed to provide a fresh supply of water into the canal. To capture the water, it was necessary to build a dam across the Wabash which at this point flows parallel to the canal main line. Known as Wabash Dam



Wabash Feeder Dam at the Forks.

A mechanical perspective view of abutment and part of Dam No. 1. Original drawing is in the Indiana State Archives, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Number 1, a description of the structure while in operation is included in Chief Engineer Williams Report of 1847.

The next structure is the Wabash dam No. 1, erected across this river one-half mile below the mouth of Little river, generally known as the "Forks", for the purpose of a feeder. This dam is 220 feet long and 10 feet high, formed of cribs filled with stone, resting on a solid rock bottom. It is in a safe condition excepting the abutments, which being built of

timber, and much decayed requiring renewal before the return of winter. The culvert and head-gates by which the feeder is introduced into the canal, have just been rebuilt and are in good order. This feeder is three chains long. Just below this dam, is road-bridge No. 18, which may last five years.¹⁸⁴

When completed, the finished dam was ten feet in height and not eight feet as planned for in 1833. After several years in operation, much of the exposed timbers were decaying. By 2001, the towpath remained much in evidence serving as a hiking trail with trees of substantial girth encroaching upon both the towpath and the old channel. Except for an apparent deepening of the canal channel, the Forks Lock is no longer visible and no structural timbers have survived the prolonged exposure to the elements.

A short distance to the south, the Wabash River tumbles over a flat limestone bed flowing between banks of limestone formations on the south side and deep deposits of sand on the other. In the summer, the leaves of overhanging maple trees lend a green cast to the water as it washes over large stones in the stream. It is Ehler's Island that today separates the old dam site from traces of the canal and its towpath. What has been referred to as a corduroy road in some written accounts, timbers can be seen when the river water level is low. At one-half mile below the forks of the Wabash and the Little Wabash rivers, seven timbers laid parallel to the river's flow extend into the river on the north bank. Across the river to the south a few feet upstream another four large hewn logs can be viewed as if a corduroy road enters on either side of the river on each bank disappearing under the water's surface and reappearing across the way.

On the south side, the river bank drops sharply from the adjacent farm fields. Just as Jesse Williams reported, the timbers sit on a solid rock bottom. Rocks and boulders cover the bank and on the bed of the river are many smooth and rounded boulders. Stone-filled log cribs at the heart of the dam construction account for the



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Section of canal channel about one mile west of the
Forks of the Wabash Park - 1995

curious scattering of boulders across the width of the stream between the foundation timbers as well as those immediately downstream. Also, visible in the north half of the river are five long timbers that over the decades have washed down along the riverbed. Evidence such as foundation timbers, an occasional iron spike, the steep stone-laden south bank, and the scattered boulders on the riverbed, as well as being the correct distance from the forks of the rivers, helps confirm the position of this important canal structure.

Typical crib construction techniques of the time might be described as a series of log houses, with no roof, filled with sand, stones and any debris that help anchor it in place. Imagine this structure stretching across the river built on a solid limestone bed. The large "log house" timbers were usually faced with long wooden planks two-inches in thickness. As the wood became damp, it swelled causing a watertight surface to hold back the river. Water

was then forced to flow over its ten feet height and through the feeder to the canal.

Lock No. 9. Note line of canal in front of the house. River water was directed to the north through a feeder channel measuring three chains in length. There are no signs today of the feeder, however, there is a depression in the towpath just below the lock site which may be where the feeder once entered the channel of the canal.

During the year 1948, Fred Ahlschwede an 85-year old Huntington, Indiana, resident recalled that from the dam in the river water was sent, "through a square box into the canal." At the time Mr. Ahlschwede thought the box may still be intact but could not say so with any certainty.¹⁸⁵

The area has always attracted a great deal of attention. An early account appears in the December 23, 1868, edition of *The Indiana Herald* that printed a letter to the paper signed "FWG":

In 1833, the canal was let from Fort Wayne down one mile below Huntington, to what is called the Madison Lock. In November, 1838, I paid my first visit to this country and came down from Fort Wayne to Huntington, there being then four or five log houses in the city.

I went down to Silver Creek to where Wm. G. Cambell was then living. As everybody supposed this a wilderness, it was nevertheless alive with human beings. There was an Indian Payment on hand and there were people here from all parts of the earth, trading and groceries and goods and wares of every description, and trinkets and ornaments of all kinds to be afterwards used in trading with the Indians.

In the winter 1838 and spring of 1839, the saw mill was built down on the dam below the Forks and our

County has improved slowly from the time I came to it until the present.¹⁸⁶

On January 2, 1837, a contract was concluded for the use of surplus water to operate a mill here. A lengthy contract was issued for such projects. In part the contract reads:

Wabash river at Dam No 1 near the forks of the Wabash not necessary for the purposes of navigation as will be sufficient when properly applied on an overshot wheel of 8 feet in diameter with the proper gearing to be approved by the Acting Commissioner and Engineer on that portion of the canal, to propel two saws to be applied to the sawing of timber together with necessary apparatus for drawing the logs from the canal to the saws. When the mill shall be in good order and the two saws, with the apparatus above named shall be in full operation, the quantity of water flowing to and used by said mill shall be accurately guaged (sic) by some competent Engineer to be appointed by said Acting Commissioner or other authorized agent of the state, and the quantity of water then formed necessary shall be thereafter considered the amount leased. The water to be taken from the lower end of the Head Gates which have been constructed in the feeder bank for that purpose and the mill, to be erected on the North bank of the river near said Head Gates.

The agreement was authorized by Samuel Lewis who was Acting Canal Commissioner at the time in the services of the Board of Internal Improvements and the contract was made to Jesse Vermilyea and William Stewart. Rent was to be one hundred and twenty-five dollars for each saw for nine months, "the time during which it is supposed there will be a surplus [of] water and in the same proportion for the whole time in each year."¹⁸⁷

One day archaeological investigation may uncover additional dam structure. Timbers near the riverbanks should remain intact if they stay submerged below the water's level. Others will not enjoy these artifacts if they are allowed to be disturbed by unscrupulous persons. There are some who would remove these forgotten structural members hoping to profit by using them as furniture wood and other trinkets.

Beyond the Treaty Grounds, much of the old canal ditch is visible on the south side of U.S. 24, although in some places the highway is built upon the canal. However, under the stewardship of the Forks of the Wabash Historic Park, the site of these remarkable remnants may remain preserved for future generations.

A small settlement west of the town of Huntington was known as "White City" where a dozen houses stood. None were more than twelve or fourteen square feet in size and each believed to be divided into two rooms. Some local citizens such as Fred Ahlschwede thought that they were for "workers who labored in the grist mill ... or by men who worked on the canal." ¹⁸⁸

AN ENGLISH FLOOD GATE

A small stream could pass under the canal through a wooden box culvert, while the larger creeks often required an arch of limestone or timber. For wide streams, a long wooden aqueduct resembling an old-fashioned covered bridge with a water trough instead of a roadbed was built to move a boat to the other side.

Streams such as Clear Creek in west Huntington County had the potential of damaging force and volume and were crossed by constructing a slackwater dam. The top of the dam stretching across



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Floodgate site, located a few rods west of Clear Creek, after 1999 excavation and removal of stones and timbers to make room for the Hoosier Heartland Corridor highway.

the creek was wide enough to enable tow animals to maneuver the crossing. A large pool of “slackwater” formed behind the structure making it easy for the boats to navigate the stream.

Chief Engineer Williams wrote:

The next structure is the dam across Clear Creek, through the pool of which, the canal is taken across this stream. It is 163 feet long and 6 feet high, on a rock bottom. The abutments are of wood, and will need re-building within two years. The towing path across Clear creek, has been recently re-built and will last for seven or eight years, unless carried off by the creek flood.¹⁸⁹

Remarkably until 1999, structural members could be found in Clear Creek beginning on the towpath line extending a full ten-yards downstream. More than a little of the dam's base remained under the surface of the water. Twenty-yards upstream the concrete abutments of the interurban electric train bridge stood on either bank while a few yards off to the north U.S. 24 crossed the water.

A major concern of canal operation was managing the proper amount of water to operate the system successfully. The main source of water was from feeder dams built across a nearby river or stream, channeled into the canal. Crossing these waterways with a canal was challenging.

In the spring, when heavy rains came down from the bluffs north of Clear Creek, torrents of water could suddenly develop, washing away both dam and towpath bank. The canal builders had a solution for this threat, too. A section of the towpath was cut away and a great wooden foundation was put in place. It is described by Chief Engineer Williams in his report of 1847:

A few rods below Clear creek, a floodgate has been constructed in the towing-path which is opened during high water for the security of the canal. It is built upon "English's patent," with permanent stone abutments.¹⁹⁰

In 1995, the "few rods below..." or two hundred forty-eight feet west of Clear Creek along what remained then of the towpath, were the stone abutments that the chief engineer promised would be "permanent". One of the hammer-dressed limestone blocks had survived exposed on the east side of the floodgate opening. Eighteen-feet west, however, were five courses of large twelve-inch thick building stones. An excellent example of a long-past canal structure, about twenty feet of stone construction was visible above the ground.

About the same time, the Indiana Department of Transportation began survey work for a new Hoosier Heartland

Corridor highway to expand and improve U.S. 24. Its new route crossed over both the slackwater dam and the floodgate sites at Clear Creek. The floodgate was in the wrong place, destined to be flattened along with the old towpath and to be paved over with a new highway.

Officials of the Canal Society of Indiana reached an agreement with Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) to save the floodgate. Early in 1999 INDOT began road construction and arranged for the removal of the artifact to nearby Forks of the Wabash Park.¹⁹¹

The old floodgate proved to be buried deeper than anticipated, containing more building stone was previously imagined and sat upon heretofore forgotten thirty by twenty-four feet timber foundation. Originally, it was thought that wooden plank slats inserted between the stone abutments were used to hold or release canal water at a certain level.

Removing or adding planks could control the water level in the canal. It was discovered, however, that a single floodgate was hinged to a horizontal hollow quoin post attached to the base timbers, in line with the towpath, and raised or lowered to release water in times of heavy flooding. Below the east or upstream crib on which the abutment was constructed, a culvert was found that would pass water through an escape trunk into a channel that flowed to the river. At each end of this water passage was a cast-iron frame containing a paddle or wicket, a sort of butterfly valve in a vertical position.

On each end, timbers were built up like small log houses and filled with fieldstones that anchored the structure walls. On the top of these cribs, large quarried limestone blocks were carefully laid in place.

Under the stones on the abutment wall nearest Clear Creek there was something different. Here the engineers used Robert

English's 1841 patent for building the floodgate using his design of a "Canal Lock Gate".¹⁹² An experienced canal contractor from Lagro, Indiana, English understood the problems associated with controlling canal water, and in 1845 his design was installed at Clear Creek.

English's device made the floodgate move up or down, much like a trapdoor. The patent incorporated a watertight box made of metal fastened to the underneath side of the gate that he declared functioned by, "air and water acting sympathetic canal lock gate" In this instance, "sympathetic" meant that the action of opening the gate vertically occurred because of the influence of power that was created by a combination of air and water. Proper amounts of both water and air pressure would cause the gate to swing upward to close when water was allowed to build up under the gate. When too much water was at hand, a small door called a wicket was opened and as the water level fell, the gate would drop.

With Bob Schmidt, Carolyn Schmidt and Jeannie Regan-Dinius, we watched as the structure was carefully and methodically disassembled both by hand and by machinery. Finally, the last of the 33 feet long, 14-inches by 14-inches square foundation floor timbers that consumed a footprint of 33 feet by 24 feet were removed to Forks of the Wabash Park. Standing there in the hot May sun, in muddy water seeping from a level curiously at a depth of the long ago filled-in canal channel, we watched as the construction crew removed the first building stones. Throughout the process to the last foundation timber and plank the emotion did not change. A sense of powerlessness and the re-occurring question, "why did this artifact have to be uprooted and moved away?" Of all the places an expanded highway could have occupied it reached out just far enough to obliterate this canal site. Why, because the canal accomplished its purpose of internal improvements. Better communications and transportation attract more people who demand ease of movement of their ideas, goods, services and themselves.



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Stone arch aqueduct over Silver Creek about five miles west of the Forks of the Wabash Park – 1995.

ARCH OF SILVER

Through here the canal was constructed over what may have been a Miami Indian village site. In 1994, preceding the building of a new U.S. 24 route, an archaeological examination revealed the towpath. It had been protected below plowed ground covering the path. Immediately under the towpath was the evidence of the Miami experience. A new highway, erasing one more stretch of the over one-hundred and fifty year old tow-path and channel, eliminates an additional artifact of the area's unique heritage.¹⁹³

Continuing westward, the engineer's report describes the Silver Creek arch when it was known as Culvert No. 45 over Woodworth's Creek:

Culvert No. 45, a large arch for the passage of Woodworth's Creek, four miles west of Huntington. The arch is a semicircle of 24 feet chord, built of timber. With some repairs to the head walls, this structure will last three or four years, when it must be re-built of cut stone.¹⁹⁴

At one time, a marker erected near the Silver Creek arch by the Canal Society of Indiana noted: "The old ditch may still be traced as it parallels U.S. Highway 24 most of the way between Antwerp, Ohio and Logansport, Indiana".¹⁹⁵ Somehow the old arch survives. Nearby, cuts have been made through the old canal bed near the arch for flood control purposes. From the top of the Silver Creek arch, looking east toward Huntington, the flat grade of the canal bed is very noticeable. Looking west toward Andrews, a farm field has been expanded by filling in the canal basin that once ran near the line of trees that border the river.

The Cheesbro Lock named for Jas. Cheesbro, who came to this county [from New York] for the purpose of building a lock on the Wabash and Erie Canal then in process of construction, was located near the Silver Creek arch.¹⁹⁶ Williams described the lock's condition in 1847 this way:

Lock No. 11, is situated a few rods west of the above described [Silver Creek] arch. It is upon the wooden crib plan, of six feet lift, though the walls are of an equal height with an eight feet lift, as a guard against the floods of Clear creek. The four upper courses of this lock, with the entire set of gates and the hollow quoin posts, to require renewal during the ensuing winter. With this immediate expenditure, the lock will last till, say, 1850.¹⁹⁷

Cheesbro's Lock was once a well known port where all canal craft had to stop and known to early settlers of the Silver Creek area. Historian Bash wrote that the structure was "called Cheesbro's lock merely because a man of that name built it and

afterwards entered a tract of land in that vicinity and cleared up a farm ". In his newspaper article he described one family whose journey ended at Cheesbro's lock: "It was getting dusk when they stepped off the packet, and no one was present to meet them. They were alone in a wilderness land. There was baggage and parcels to tote, besides two youngsters...The gallant young husband said to the anxious and apprehensive wife that he was sure he could find the way through the woods ... for he had made a trip to Indiana some time prior" The young German-born couple headed off in a northwesterly course from the lock. "He led off and carried the larger child and all the luggage. Close at his heels followed the wife with the infant in her arms. They climbed steep hills and crossed deep ravines while the darkness was beginning to fall." Finding themselves in pitch darkness they spent the cold November night in the forrest under the leaves and branches and happy to have avoided the dangers of wolves or snakes. Thus was the experience of early canal travelers such as Henry and Catherine Stephan. It is one family's story of one journey's end at one place on the Wabash & Erie Canal. There are many others lost to history.¹⁹⁸

At the western edge of Huntington County, a new U.S. Highway 24 has replaced the one that once twisted and turned like a roller coaster path along the bluff overlooking the Wabash River. All along the highway, the canal had to be squeezed between the base of the bluff and the adjacent river. When the Hoosier Heartland Corridor was constructed it expanded the old highway from two lanes to four lanes, cut through the bluffs and created long stretches of straight highway. Some canal remnants were eliminated sacrificed to continuing internal improvements while in other places the highway leaves the canal line to more rural routes seeking straight lanes with less curves.

In the towns along the old canal route, street signs with such names as Canal, Basin, Water and Erie are reminders of the canal era. Some locks and segments of the channel still exist. But channel and structural members continue to disappear "in the way of progress". The pressures that are causing the canal to disappear

today are remarkably similar to the pressures that caused the canal to be built and that forced the Indians out of the area.

As a means of transportation, the canal opened up this part of the country, however, it has had lasting effects on the state of Indiana. Robert Wallace Ward wrote that the canal was selected as the means of transporting the Miami tribe when they were moved west.¹⁹⁹ Although many survived the exodus after being placed on packets of the Indiana Canal Company, fortunately for the cultural enrichment of this state, many returned to Indiana and were allowed to remain. In addition, certain tribal leaders and their families were allowed to stay behind before the unfortunate removal.

As the longest man-made waterway in America, the remains of the Wabash & Erie Canal are a great national treasure. When the treasures from our past are removed or buried, we lose touch with our past. It is from the lessons of our past that we learn to deal with



our future. Most of all, however, preserving the past is a gift for those who will follow in future generations. The Wabash and Erie Canal is a treasure from our past that can be discovered simply by looking below our feet.

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Joan Keefer, Huntington City-Township Public Library, May 11, 1990.

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¹ B.J. Griswold, *The Pictorial History of Fort Wayne Indiana* (Chicago: Robert O. Law, 1917), pp. 363-364.

² Wallace A. Brice, *History of Fort Wayne*, (Fort Wayne, Indiana: D.W. Jones, 1868), p.317.

³ Paul Fatout, *Indiana Canals* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1972, reprint ed., 1985), p. 23.

⁴ Michael Hawfield, "Cityscapes: Summit City Grew With Canal," *Fort Wayne News Sentinel*, May 26, 1984.

⁵ Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, p. 242.

⁶ Hawfield, "Summit City Grew With Canal."

⁷ Fatout, *Indiana Canals*, p. 39.

⁸ Hawfield, "Summit City Grew With Canal."

⁹ When John Peter Paul arrived in the Fort Wayne area he "saw nothing remarkable, but drunken and half-naked Indians and an inconsiderable number of such as have a mixture of the Indian and white." Crossing the St. Mary's River, Paul visited "the Widow Hackley" and "found her to be in every respect a lady and was altogether pleased with her." Later, on June 5th, he states that he saw Francois Godfrey, father of Gabriel Godfrey; Jean Baptiste Richardville, successor to Miami Chief Little Turtle, as well as a man he refers to as Lebaum." "All men of fine appearance," he said. John Peter Paul, *We Run the Canal Line, Being the*

Diary of John Peter Paul, a Member of the Party Engaged in the Preliminary Survey of the Wabash & Erie Canal in the Year 1827 (Crawfordsville, Indiana: R. E. Banta, 1933), pp. 1-3, 19-20, Ball State University Library, Muncie, Indiana.

¹⁰ Curtis Krueger, "U. S. 24 Spring from Erie Canal," *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, February 8, 1987.

¹¹ Report of Jesse Williams, Engineer's Office to the Board of Commissioners of the Wabash and Erie Canal, Appendix, Fort Wayne, Indiana, December 6, 1833, Indiana General Assembly, *House Journal*, 1833.

¹² Report of the Commissioners of the Wabash Erie Canal to the General Assembly of the State of Indiana, *Documentary Journal*, 1836, House Report.

¹³ Willis Richardson, "History of the Wabash & Erie Canals," (Master thesis, Indiana University, 1925), p. 53

¹⁴ Williams, Report to the Commissioners, 1833, p. 12 and Jesse Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer Description of the Condition of Canal at the Commencement of the Trust, to the Board of Trustees of the Wabash and Erie Canal: Terre Haute, November 1, 1847, *Documentary Journal*, 1847, Indiana Division State Library.

¹⁵ Jesse Williams reported in his Report of the Principal Engineer, p. 3, December 5, 1837, *Documentary Journal* 1837 that "a quarry [Georgetown] having recently been discovered ... which it is supposed to answer for cut work".

¹⁶ Fatout, *Indiana Canals*, p. 41.

¹⁷ Brice, *History of Fort Wayne*, pp. 304-305.

¹⁸ Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, p. 283. In his 1917 history, Griswold wrote, "The survey, from the town to the St. Joseph river, six miles above Fort Wayne, at a point below the present Robison Park, where the 'feeder dam' was later built, first was undertaken."

¹⁹ Brice, *History of Fort Wayne*, pp. 304-305.

²⁰ Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, p. 283.

Note: In 1830, counties such as Carroll and Cass were reasonably populated, however, farther up the line not as many people could be found. Here much of the land sold for as little as \$1.25 an acre. The commissioners urged that the construction begin in order that a more reasonable value could be gained from the land according to the "Report of Canal Commissioners," December 18, 1830, in *Indiana Senate*

Journal, 1830 [Appendix B], Indiana Division State Library.

Ohio was not acting to complete the Ohio portion of the canal to the Indiana state line, and without that critical connection the line would have to stop at Fort Wayne. A land locked canal would limit commerce. As a result, the Indiana Legislature took no action in 1831 to help to move ahead with the canal project. As a matter of fact, it seemed to be favoring the idea of a railroad over a canal as reported in the "Report of the Commissioners of the Wabash and Erie Canal," *Indiana House Journal*, 1831, Indiana Division State Library. Other than the state legislature passing a bill regulating the sale of lands and organizing a definite fund for the construction of the canal, little information is available about the actual construction work during 1832, *Laws of Indiana*, 16th Session Chapter I, p. 13, Indiana Division State Library. In December of 1832, 13 miles of the middle section between Fort Wayne and the mouth of the Little Wabash River, at a cost of \$89,000, was placed under contract. It took all the revenue from land sales to pay for this effort, prompting commissioners to suggest that additional land sales be undertaken by May 1833. The average price of an acre of land at the time was \$3.05, "Report of the Canal Commissioner," *Indiana Senate Journal*, 1832, Indiana State Division Library.

²¹ T.B. Helm, *History of Allen County, Indiana* (Chicago, Illinois: Kingman Brothers, 1880) p. 110.

²² Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, p. 259.

²³ Brice, *History of Fort Wayne*, pp. 304-305, quoting official proceedings recorded in the *Cass County Times*, March 1, 1832.

²⁴ Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, pp. 304-307.

²⁵ Brice, *History of Fort Wayne*, pp. 304-305.

²⁶ Hawfield, "Summit City Grew With Canal."

Jesse Lynch Williams' grandfather was Judge John Lynch the founder of Lynchburg, Virginia. "Lynch Law" is attributed to the Judge because of his reputation for his harsh treatment of Tories during the Revolutionary War.

²⁷ Howard Stansbury and Jesse L. Williams, *Documentary Journal*, 1835, Report of Altitudes, January 20, 1836.

²⁸ Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer, November 1, 1847.

²⁹ John Ankenbruck, *The Fort Wayne Story, A Pictorial History* (Woodland Hills, California: Windsor Publications, 1980), p. 94.

Robison Park was developed in 1896 by the Fort Wayne Consolidated Railway Company as an amusement park. Connected by a trolley line with downtown Fort Wayne, the park was used to promote electrically powered transportation. Originally, the 265 acre area was named Swift Park but was quickly renamed Robison Park after M. Stanley Robison, the popular general manager of the trolley company. It closed down in 1920 as automobiles were used to travel to and from the park, making the need for the trolley ride obsolete. Admission to the park was free.

³⁰ Markers sponsored by Superior Essex. text prepared by, T. Castaldi, August 16, 1999.

³¹ Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer, November 1, 1847.

³² Richard Bade, conversation on July 31, 1993. Bade worked with Adoph Hofer, a licensed surveyor, to lay out the Turner's property adjacent to the culvert. Hofer had noted that the traction company used the towpath bridge footings and timbers for its bridge because the structure was sound. "There was enough strength to place the tracks right on it and they used the same sub structure. There was no need to replace the pilings".

³³ Myra Mae McFarland, "Canal, Not History, Dry for Canalers," Fort Wayne *Journal Gazette*, April 22, 1981.

³⁴ Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer, November 1, 1847.

³⁵ Richard Bade, conversation on July 31, 1993. Bade noted that his father worked for Wayne Knitting Mills and when the workers went on strike in 1920, many of the employees left for the hosiery mills in Milwaukee. Shortly thereafter his mother died and his father returned Richard to Fort Wayne to live with his grandmother Louise Bade.

³⁶ Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, pp. 304-307.

³⁷ Helm, *History of Allen County*, p. 110.

³⁸ Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, pp. 307-393.

³⁹ Slocum, *Maumee River Basin*, pp. 602-603.(ACPL)

⁴⁰ Roy M. Bates and Kenneth B. Keller, *The Columbia Street Story* (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Fort Wayne Public Library, 1975), p. 14.

⁴¹ Fatout, *Indiana Canals*, p. 119.

⁴² Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, pp. 363-364

⁴³ Charles R. Poinsette, *Fort Wayne During the Canal Era, 1828-1855* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1969), p. 76.

⁴⁴ Robert F. Schmidt, president, Canal Society of Indiana, presented to the Indiana Department of Transportation hearing on the Gronauer

Lock site, Fort Wayne, Indiana, July 18, 1991, *Indiana Canals*, (Journal of the Canal Society of Indiana) 2 & 3 (Winter & Spring 1991).

⁴⁵ Report of Jesse Williams, Engineer's Office, December 6, 1833.

⁴⁶ Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer, November 1, 1847.

⁴⁷ W. J. Ball, Report of Chief Engineer, 1852, *Documentary Journal*, 1852, Indiana Division State Library.

Thomas Meek in an *Indiana Waterways* article discussing types of locks noted that the number of frames required per side is not known, Thomas Meek, "Four Types of Locks Used on the Wabash & Eire Canal," *Indiana Waterways*, 1 (February 1984): 3-4

⁴⁸ Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, pp. 677-678.

⁴⁹ Helm, *History of Allen County*, p. 165.

⁵⁰ Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, pp. 677-678

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Canal Society of Indiana, Spring Tour 1992, Program Guide.

⁵³ Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer, November 1, 1847.

⁵⁴ McFarland, "Canal, Not History, Dry for Canalers."

⁵⁵ "Specifications for Rebuilding the Wooden Locks East of Fort Wayne," preserved in Gronauer family records of John Gronauer.

⁵⁶ *Canal Society of Indiana Newsletter*, 6 (November 1992).

⁵⁷ One week after Craig Leonard's Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society lecture in January 1996, Dr. Richard Gantz, Director of Historic Sites for the State of Indiana Department of Natural Resources, described the preliminary plans for the new Indiana State Museum. It was clear that exhibits were being sought that would set the museum apart as a place to celebrate Indiana's history. The Gronauer timbers could be seriously considered by the planners of the museum to fulfill this possibility. It became apparent that the old lock might have one more purpose to serve. However, before any action could take place to save the timbers and place them in plans for the museum project, all must be agreeable to the people of New Haven. Author advised Canal Society of Indiana President Bob Schmidt of the situation because of the group's unique position to communicate to the principal parties. Along with Craig Leonard, Schmidt worked methodically and thoughtfully with the City of New Haven. Mayor Lynn Shaw received no support from public or private sources and the City Council unanimously voted not to use tax dollars to restore the lock. In the end, the collection of lock remnants was officially transferred to the state.

⁵⁸ Lynn H. Shaw, Mayor City of New Haven letter to Richard A. Gantz, Ph.D. dated July 29, 1996. "Although this was a difficult decision

for us to make, on Tuesday, July 23, 1996, the City council voted unanimously to donate the lock to the Indiana State Museum at White River State Park if the State decides to go forward with this project. The Council's only concern was that the story of all the work put into this project from its discovery should now be a part of the history."

⁵⁹ Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer, November 1, 1847.

⁶⁰ Helm, *History of Allen County*, pp. 141-143.

⁶¹ Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer, November 1, 1847.

⁶² Map of the City of Fort Wayne, Allen County, Indiana, December 1842, Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society.

⁶³ Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer, November 1, 1847.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *A.P. Edgerton Journal 1859-1866*, Trustees Wabash & Erie Canal for use of Contractors of Eastern Division. Fort Wayne, Indiana: p. 63.

⁶⁶ Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer, November 1, 1847.

⁶⁷ Map of the City of Fort Wayne, 1842.

⁶⁸ Report of Angela Quinn, ARCH Executive Director describing the uncovering of Wabash & Erie Canal Culver No. 25 dated November 2, 2000. The report notes that "The 1855 Plat Map of Fort Wayne shows the City Mill on the southwest corner of the Superior/Clinton intersection, and a below ground overshoot emptying into 'Jailhouse Flats' in the same location as the structure. Further, the 1855 Bird's Eye Map shows that the land descended sharply to the west of Clinton Street, and may explain the overall depth of the found structure."

Drawing notes made by Angela Quinn, and Creager Smith included with the Report. "Wood culvert located northwest of the intersection of Clinton and Superior, Lot 9, original plat of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Components of the culvert included: Plank Floor, approximately 1½ inches thick laid in two layers. Approximate width of planks 12 to 18-inches. Small Side Wall Timbers, Approximately 6-inches wide by 6 to 8-inches tall. Approximate length 14 to 16 feet. Large Side Wall Timbers, Approximately 6-inches wide by 24-inches tall. Approximate length 14 to 16 feet. Top Beams. Standard 8-inches thick. Approximately 12 to 16-inches wide. 10½ feet in length. Top of structure was approximately 14 feet below Superior Street. Lumber was sawn, and likely was oak. No evidence found of any joining method. Inner dimension was approximately 31 inches by 8 feet."

ARCH Inc. is the Fort Wayne, Indiana, region's organization for historic preservation. Its mission includes guidance in the historic preservation in the community and to promote the community's awareness of its

heritage and its role in future development.

⁶⁹ John E. Loveland, *The Canal House Story* (Fort Wayne: Allen County Genealogical Society of Indiana, 1977), p. 5.

Note: Downstairs, in the 1870s, William Borgman occupied the place as living quarters while working the canal boats. The Canal House became the property of the Nickel Plate Railroad, which took over the canal bed to build its rail line. After the Nickel Plate became part of the Norfolk and Western, the house became the property of the Fort Wayne Fine Arts Foundation, today known as Arts United. In 1974, the group ARCH and the Fort Wayne Bicentennial Commission undertook the task of restoring the building. Michael Hawfield. "Cityscapes: Seeing Our Past Via the Canal House Door" *Fort Wayne News Sentinel*, September 10, 1983.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p. 16.

⁷¹ "Relic of Canal Days Left Woman, 91, with Memories" *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, no date, Allen County Fort Wayne Historical Society, "Transportation - Wabash & Erie Canal" archive file.

⁷² Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer, November 1, 1847; Map of the City of Fort Wayne, 1842.

⁷³ Winifred J. Randall, *As I Remember*, "Synopsis of the History of the Wabash and Erie Canal, Fort Wayne, Indiana, November 13, 1928, Charles M. Comparet", (Allen County - Fort Wayne Historical Society, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1959), p.15.

⁷⁴ Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, p. 247.

⁷⁵ Alwyn A. Carder, Redkey, Indiana to Castaldi, November 9, 1991.

⁷⁶ Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, p. 254. Alexander M. Orbison and John E. Hill formed a commission merchant business in 1846.

⁷⁷ Winifred J. Randall, *As I Remember*, "The Randall Hotel", (Allen County - Fort Wayne Historical Society, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1959), pp. 5-8.

⁷⁸ Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer, November 1, 1847.

⁷⁹ Canal Society of Indiana, Spring Tour May 23, 1982, Wabash & Erie Canal Tour. Program/Guidebook.

⁸⁰ Patrician Buchanan, "Canal Town, The History of Early Fort Wayne 1820 - 1860" (Masters thesis, St. Francis College, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1968), p. 12.

⁸¹ Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, p. 316.

⁸² *Ibid.* p. 373.

⁸³ *Ibid.* p. 336.

In 1849, the Ohio, Indiana and Illinois Telegraph Company was

organized by Henry O'Reilly and an office was opened in the Fort Wayne *Times* newspaper on the northwest corner of Calhoun and Main streets. Telegraph messages could travel from Cincinnati to Toledo and, then following the canal line, to Evansville with branches from Lafayette to Indianapolis, and to Chicago Helm, *History of Allen County*, p. 105.

During 1845, a mail route made on horseback from Maumee and Piqua, Ohio, was transferred to canal packet boats. In 1848 a daily packet or passenger boat run, operated by the Doyle & Dickey Company, departed Lafayette Monday, March 27 at 10:00 A.M. and arrive Fort Wayne at 6:00 P.M., Helm, *History of Allen County*, p. 110.

⁸⁴ Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer, November 1, 1847.

⁸⁵ Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, p. 368.

⁸⁶ Michael Hawfield, "Cityscapes: Behind Movement Lies Story of Bygone Era in City's History," *Fort Wayne News Sentinel*, August 13, 1983.

⁸⁷ Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, p. 549.

⁸⁸ Hawfield, "Behind Movement Lies Story of Bygone Era."

⁸⁹ Hawfield, "Summit City Grew With Canal."

⁹⁰ Fatout, *Indiana Canals*, p. 119.

⁹¹ Aboite and the *Marais du Perches*, or the Marsh of Perches. Historians tell us that Aboite Township in Allen County, Indiana, took its name from the Aboite River. Some have speculated that the name Aboite comes from a corruption of the French word *Abattoir* meaning "slaughter house". The term refers to the 1780 battle that took place between the Indians and French soldiers led by Lt. Col. August Mottin de LaBalme. The French were overwhelmed on the banks of the stream and so received its grisly name, Helm, *History of Allen County*, p. 145.

John W. Dawson preferred to call this place the *Marais de Peage* or *Prairie du Parsh* and wrote that, "Scarcely any two persons use the same name to designate it." Dawson, a Fort Wayne, Indiana, lawyer, politician and newspaper publisher during the mid-eighteen hundreds, was appointed Governor of the Utah Territory, shortly after Abraham Lincoln's inauguration. Dawson returned to Fort Wayne in 1853 and became owner of the *Times* newspaper. He wrote about the importance of the marsh area as the portage or carrying place from the St. Mary's to the Little Wabash River connecting the Gulf of Mexico with Lake Erie. At the Treaty of Greenville in 1795, Anthony Wayne representing the United States took control of this portage toll road. Dawson understood that the French word *Peage* means toll, tax as collecting toll at a tollgate, and

sometimes used for road, turnpike, &c., and a marsh is called Marais. He said "I have been thus particular to give the early history of the portage, and that it was a toll road for revenue purposes to the Indians, in order to bring out from its corruption the name of Marais de Peage." Dawson, *Charcoal Sketches of Old Times in Fort Wayne*, May 20, 1872.

Another story says that the name "Aboite" comes from a *Bouette* which, in French, means a "river of minnows," Griswold, p. 687. Still another fish-related story suggests that the name is from the French word *Boite*, that is, a box or a container in which fish are kept, Harrap's French and English Dictionary, (Great Britain, 1940). Some local residents say that Native Americans captured fish by trapping them in the low level wetland spaces. These last suggestions, of course, tie well to the *Marais du Perches*, as maybe the best fish story. Today, it is safe to say, that no one knows for certain what "Aboite" in this region means, however, in Allen County, Indiana, it is a name used in daily conversation.

⁹² Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer, November 1, 1847.

⁹³ Report of the Canal Commissioners of the Wabash and Erie Canal, December 19, 1835, State of Indiana *Documentary Journal*, 1835, Indiana State Archives.

⁹⁴ Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer, November 1, 1847.

⁹⁵ Paul Fatout, *Indiana Canals*, p. 124-125. Ralph D. Gray, *Indiana History a Book of Readings* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994) p.125.

Trustees were Charles Butler, Thomas Blake and Nathan B. Palmer. Thomas Blake of Terre Haute assumed administration of all canal business and was resident trustee. In addition to the appointments of Jesse Williams and William Ball, the Board of Trustees assigned Chauncey Carter of Logansport as superintendent of the western division; Stearns Fisher from Fort Wayne became superintendent of the eastern division. Toll collectors for Fort Wayne, Lagro, Logansport, Lafayette and Covington were issued *Orders, Rules, Regulations, and Rates of Toll*. Fatout, pp. 124-125.

⁹⁶ Alwyn A. Carder to Castaldi, November 9, 1991.

⁹⁷ Report of the Canal Commissioners, December 19, 1835.

⁹⁸ Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer, November 1, 1847.

⁹⁹ Henry Wallace Stopher, "John Stopher: Canal Builder," *Indiana Waterways* 3 (October, 1983), excerpts from an autobiography of John Stopher, born 1833, by his grandson Henry Wallace Stopher.

¹⁰⁰ "Canal Group Forms, Commemoration Era," *Fort Wayne News*

Sentinel May 3, 1982.

¹⁰¹ To see more of the towpath and channel, go to the south end of Suburban Avenue off South Bend Drive. Here Suburban meets Taylor Street at the 6100 block. Along Taylor to the 6300 block where it turns north becoming Coleman, what remains of the old water way after more than one-hundred sixty years, can be seen plainly.

¹⁰² Rex M. Potterf, *Wabash and Erie Canal*, (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Fort Wayne Public Library, 1970), p. 4.

¹⁰³ "This portage, or carrying place," according to Dr. Elizabeth Glenn Professor of Anthropology at Ball State University, "was a stretch of land usually described as nine miles in length, that joined the navigable portions of the St. Mary's River (which flows via the Maumee into Lake Erie (and the Little Wabash River) which connects with the Mississippi by means of the Wabash and Ohio Rivers)," E. Glenn, "The Fur Trade, The Long Portage and The Forks of the Wabash" in *The Forks of the Wabash An Historical Survey*, eds. Dwight and Ann Ericsson (Huntington, Indiana: Historic Forks of the Wabash, 1990), p. 17.

¹⁰⁴ Report of the Canal commissioners, December 19, 1835.

¹⁰⁵ Griswold in his *History of Fort Wayne*, state that Jesse Vermilyea, "was one of the influential and active citizens of the early canal days. Born in New York state in 1809, he came to Fort Wayne in the early twenties and engaged in farming and trading with the Indians. He was one of the original directors of the Fort Wayne Branch bank, a contractor on the middle division of the Wabash & Erie canal and a pioneer plank road builder. In his later years he conducted the famous Vermilyea house on the canal about fourteen miles southwest of Fort Wayne," Griswold, p.274. He continues, "The soil of Aboite afforded a substratum of clay under its rich black loam, which was very good for brickmaking, and upon his own farm Mr. Vermilyea, in 1839, made bricks and built with them a new home, the first brick house in the settlement. In this house was installed the first post office, Mr. Vermilyea being appointed postmaster, a position which he held for a long term of years," Griswold, p. 689.

A pamphlet provided by the one-time owners of the home, Jim and Ruth Ellis, describes its interior: "The woodwork in the house is black walnut except for the master bedroom which is butternut or considered a white walnut. There are seven fireplaces, 30 walnut doors (the exterior walls are 18 inches thick). All rooms have north and south windows. There is reportedly a tunnel leading from the basement to the edge of the canal. It is said to have been used in the Underground Railroad. It is also said to have been used to store a summer's ice supply. We have made

several efforts to find this tunnel but to no avail. So, if there is one, it is well hidden.”

Griswold had more to say about the place: “The Vermilyea home was by far the most luxurious in the township - a comparative mansion – and the hospitality of its inmates was far-famed. Many a merry party from Fort Wayne enjoyed gala days there, and it was a center of social life in the settlement, which drew many congenial spirits thither. Mr. Vermilyea died during the cholera epidemic (1846), his wife having preceded him to the Silent Land.” Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, p. 689. New owner Todd Freeland refurbished the landmark home in 2001.

¹⁰⁶ Frank S. Bash, Newspaper Columns Published in the Huntington Herald Press (Fort Wayne, Indiana: Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County, 1968) , vol. 2, 1927-1931, pp. 806-807.

¹⁰⁷ Jesse L. Williams, Principal Engineer, Report of the Canal Commissioners, 1833.

¹⁰⁸ Thomas Meek and Clarence Hudson, *Outdoor Indiana*, February, 1986.

¹⁰⁹ Bash, *Columns in the Huntington Herald Press*, pp. 796-797.

¹¹⁰ Harold Allison, *The Tragic Saga of the Indiana Indians* (Paducah, Kentucky: Turner Publishing, 1968), p. 284.

¹¹¹ Warder Crow, *Indians of Wabash County* (Wabash County Historical Museum, 1985), p. 3.

¹¹² Poinsette, *Fort Wayne During the Canal Era*, p. 65.

¹¹³ Harry Sinclair Drago, *Canal Days in America*, (New York: Bramhall House, 1972), p. 249.

¹¹⁴ Potterf, *Wabash and Erie Canal*, pp. 6-11. Also, Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, p.367. Also, Graham Taber, *History of Logansport and Cass County* (Logansport, Indiana: The Pharos-Tribune, 1947), p.20.

¹¹⁵ George P. Clark, "The Dunking of General Cass, A Hoosier Myth," *Traces*, 5 (Spring 1993): 5-11.

¹¹⁶ Griswold, *History of Fort Wayne*, p. 363.

¹¹⁷ cf. Historical Marker on U.S. Highway 24 near Engle Road, Fort Wayne, Indiana, erected by the Allen County fort Wayne Historical Society.

¹¹⁸ Elbert Jay Benton, *The Wabash Trade Route in the Development of the Old Northwest* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1903), pp. 34-36.

¹¹⁹ Kevin Kilbane, "Indian Nation," *Fort Wayne News Sentinel*, Fort Wayne, Indiana, August 16, 1989, p. 27.

¹²⁰ Mary O'Hair, "Paradise Springs and the 1826 Treaties Held at Treaty Ground," unpublished pamphlet in the library of the Wabash County Historical Museum, Wabash, Indiana, 1962, pp. 2-3.

¹²¹ John Ankenbruck, *Voice of the Turtle*, (Fort Wayne, Indiana: The News Publishing Co., 1974), pp. 142-150.

¹²² O'Hair, "Paradise Springs," p. 1. December 6, 1833.

¹²³ Report of Jesse Williams, Engineer's office, December 6, 1833. For other discussion about publications, see Stan Schmitt, "Wabash River Improvement Project," *Indiana Waterways*, (Winter, 1986) Fort Wayne, Indiana: Canal Society of Indiana, p. 1.

¹²⁴ Benj. F. Stuart, *History of the Wabash and Valley*, (Delphi, Indiana: The Longwell-Cummings, Co., 1924), pp. 37, 42, 46—47, 49-50. Benton, *The Wabash Trade Route in the Development of the Old Northwest*, p. 49.

¹²⁵ Ralph D. Gray, *Indiana History A Book of Readings*, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 122. Logan Esarey, *A History of Indiana from its Exploration to 1850*, (Fort Wayne, Indiana: The Hoosier Press, 1924), 412.

¹²⁶ Harry Sinclair Drago, *Canal Days in America*, (New York: Bramhall House, 1972), p. 249.

¹²⁷ Charles Kettleborough, *Constitution Making in Indiana*, (Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana Historical Commission, 1917), p. 61. Also, Ernest A. Wilkinson, "The Canal Dream Lives On," *Indianapolis Star Sunday Magazine*, Indianapolis, Indiana, April 17, 1966, p. 9. Also, "The Big Part of Indiana History, (Gary Ernest Comments)," *Journal-Gazette*, Fort Wayne, Indiana, March 17, 1977.

¹²⁸ Frank S. Bash, *History of Huntington County*, (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1914), p. 77.

¹²⁹ ___, "Canal Memories Here Are Recalled," unidentified newspaper article, probably dating from the 1920s, in the Canal File, Indiana Room, Huntington Township Public Library, Huntington, Indiana.

¹³⁰ Washington's letter to the president of Congress, Richard Henry Lee dated 14 December 1784 reads, "Would it not ... be worthy of the wisdom and attention of Congress to have the western waters well explored, the navigation of them fully ascertained, accurately laid down, and a complete and perfect map made of the country; at least as far westerly as the Miamies, running into the Ohio and lake Erie, and to see how the waters of these communicate with the River St. Joseph, which empties into the Lake Michigan, and with the Wabash?" On 18 June 1785 Washington wrote these words to Major-General Knox, "The spot marked Miami Village and Fort (Fort Wayne) in Hutchins's Map, I have always

considered as of importance, being a central point between Lake Erie, Lake Michigan, and the River Ohio, communicating with each by water." Jared Sparks, *Washington's Writings*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1858), pp. 80 & 109.

¹³¹ Logan Esarey, *Internal Improvements in Early Indiana*, (Indianapolis, Indiana: E. J. Hecker, 1912), p. 48.

¹³² Stuart, *History of the Wabash and Valley*, loc. cit

¹³³ ___, "The Burke Lock," *Huntington Herald-Press*, Huntington, Indiana, July 4, 1976. Note: Trustees' Report to Governor Joseph A. Wright, "The Trustees are gratified in being able to state to your Excellency that since their last annual report the Canal has been finished, and the connection between Lake Erie and the Ohio River has been finally established." 1853 *Documentary Journal*, p. 832.

¹³⁴ Brought to Huntington for the opening of the canal. "In anticipation of the arrival of the first canal boat, Dr. George A. Fate had brought a small cannon from Dayton, Ohio." Also, *Huntington Herald Press*, Special Centennial Edition, "Tells of trip on First Packet", August 7, 1928.

¹³⁵ ___, "Canal Riot," *Souvenir Edition of Laying of the [cornerstone of the] Huntington County Courthouse*, Wednesday, September 28, 1904, Huntington, Indiana, in a scrapbook labeled "History of Huntington County, 1904," Vol. 1, pp. 28-29, Indiana Room, Huntington Township Public Library, Huntington, Indiana.

¹³⁶ For elevation data see R.M. Bates, *Map and Profile of a Portion of the Ohio and Indiana Canal System*, privately published, 1936, in Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society library. Also, Fatout, *Indiana Canals*, pp. 118-119.

¹³⁷ Bash, *History of Huntington County*, p. 219.

¹³⁸ "Tells of Trip on First Packet," *Huntington Herald Press* Special Centennial Edition, August 7, 1928.

¹³⁹ Fatout, "The Wabash and Erie Canal," originally published by the Ford Meter Box Company of Wabash, Indiana, reprinted in *Indiana History Bulletin*, Vol., 48, No. 1, January 1971, Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Bureau. p. 7.

¹⁴⁰ Jennie E. Brown Rader, *Memoirs to My Family of Today and Yesterday*, pp. 6 and 90a. - 91a. Fatout, "The Wabash & Erie Canal", p.6.

¹⁴¹ Rex M. Potterf, *Old Fort News*, "The Wabash and Erie Canal," Vol. XX, No 3 and 4, October - December, 1957, Fort Wayne, Indiana, Allen County Fort Wayne Historical Society. p. 8.

- ¹⁴² Bates, *Map and Profile*.
- ¹⁴³ J. Richard Beste, *The Wabash: or Adventures of an English Gentleman's Family in the Interior of America*, (London: Hurst and Blackett, 1855), Volume II, pp. 192-196.
- ¹⁴⁴ Fatout, "The Wabash and Erie canal," p. 6.
- ¹⁴⁵ Seymour Dunbar, "Via Canal", *A History of Travel in America*, Chapter 28, Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1943. Allen County Fort Wayne Public Library.
- ¹⁴⁶ *Indianapolis News*, August 6, 1890.
- ¹⁴⁷ Staff of the Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County, *The Wabash-Erie Canal Fort Wayne on the Old Canal*, 1962, pp. 16-18.
- ¹⁴⁸ Jennie E. Brown Rader, *Memoirs to My Family of Today and Yesterday*, pp. 6 and 90a.
- ¹⁴⁹ Robert Wallace Ward, *The Wabash and Erie Canal: A Beautiful Dream*, 1983, pp. 30-31.
- ¹⁵⁰ The Treaty of 1840 exempted Miami chiefs and their families from removal.
- ¹⁵¹ Bash, *History of Huntington County*, p. 43.
- ¹⁵² Drago, *Canal Days*, p. 246.
- ¹⁵³ Quoted by Bash, *History of Huntington County*, p. 220. Note: freight boats carried products the farmers grew or what was made in the mills to far off places where people were happy to pay for the goods. Merchandise from all around the world became affordable to settlers in Indiana because the price of shipping had been reduced.
- ¹⁵⁴ Fatout, "The Wabash and Erie Canal," p. 7.
- ¹⁵⁵ ___, "Canal Memories Here are Recalled."
- ¹⁵⁶ Bash, *History of Huntington County*, pp. 221-222.
- ¹⁵⁷ Robert M. Taylor, Jr., *et al.*, *Indiana: A New Historical Guide*, Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana Historical Society, 1989, pp. 51-52
- ¹⁵⁸ Jesse Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer Description of the condition of Canal at the Commencement of the Trust, to the Board of Trustees of the Wabash and Erie Canal: Terre Haute, November 1, 1847, *Documentary Journal*, 1847, Indiana Division State Library.
- ¹⁵⁹ E.M. Wasmuth, *The Saga of a Hoosier Village*, Roanoke, Indiana: privately printed, n.d., map in front material.
- ¹⁶⁰ Williams, Report of 1847.
- ¹⁶¹ ___, *History of Huntington County*, Chicago: Brant & Fuller, 1887, p. 642.
- ¹⁶² ___, "Canal Memories Here are Recalled."
- ¹⁶³ Jennie E. Brown Rader, *Memoirs to My Family of Today and*

Yesterday, p. 4. Rader also mentions another source for the name "Roanoke" writing: "Perhaps the most far fetched suggestion was that it came from the Indian word 'Ravinauvak' meaning shells, then used for money."

¹⁶⁴ cf. A marker erected in Roanoke, Indiana, on the west side of U. S. highway 24.

¹⁶⁵ F.S. Bash, "Memories of Mahon: All That's Left There," *Huntington Press*, Huntington, Indiana, November 2, 1926.

¹⁶⁶ *Huntington Herald Press*, "Mahon: 'Twas a Bit of Old Ireland," June 18, 1979, Huntington County Historical Museum Scrapbook,

¹⁶⁷ Meek, Thomas and Julia, "Profile of the Wabash and Erie Canal," published by the authors, 1984, Allen County – Fort Wayne Historical Society.

¹⁶⁸ cf. Historical Marker once standing at Guilford and John streets, Huntington, Indiana, American Bicentennial Commission. Note: After removal of Crestwood Middle School building on June 19, 2001, Huntington Board of Parks and Recreation officially named the Guilford Street site *General Slack Park*. Named in honor of James R. Slack, Civil War general, who once lived on the property before it became the location of Huntington High School and Crestview Middle School. Slack came to Huntington in 1840, was elected county auditor, state senator and died in 1881 while serving as circuit judge. The board also gave consideration to naming the park, "Burke's Landing" recalling the lock named for John Burke a member of the first board of commissioners in Huntington County. "General Slack Park" and "The General's due," *Huntington Herald Press*, Huntington, Indiana, June 20, 2001. Note: The historical marker once standing at Guilford and Johns streets, has the lock name spelled "Burk" as it is in the Bash history. In 2001, the marker was removed by the Huntington County Historical Society and re-installed at the YMCA.

¹⁶⁹ Located near the northeast corner of Washington and Jefferson streets in downtown Huntington, Indiana. Note: It is generally recognized that the Wabash & Erie Canal ended in 1876 contrary to 1873 as stated on the marker.

¹⁷⁰ Taylor, *Indiana: Historical Guide*, pp. 51-52.

¹⁷¹ —, "Coming of Canal Gave Rise to Early Settlement of Huntington County," *Huntington Herald-Press*, Huntington, Indiana, June 17, 1973. Lock locations from Canal Society of Indiana and Allen County Fort Wayne Historical Society, Wabash and Erie Canal Tour 1982 Spring Canal Weekend, *Guidebook*.

¹⁷² —, “Canal Memories.”

¹⁷³ “The Burke Lock,” *Huntington Herald-Press*, July 4, 1976. Lock location from 1982 Guidebook. Interview with George Eichoff, April 13, 1966, stated that a work crew while digging approximately 100 yards east of the Milligan-Eichoff residence in the converted inn uncovered lock timbers.

¹⁷⁴ “Coming of Canal,” *Huntington Herald-Press*, June 17, 1973.

¹⁷⁵ Interview with Amanda Eichoff, June 11, 1990.

¹⁷⁶ Darwin Kelley, *Milligan's Fight Against Lincoln*, (Jericho, New York: Exposition Press, 1973), p. 106. In *Ex parte Milligan*: “Martial law cannot arise from a threatened invasion. The necessity must be actual and present; the invasion real, such as effectually closes the courts and deposes the civil administration.”

¹⁷⁷ National Archives, Records of the Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, Indiana Agency, Richardville to Cass, February 12, 1834, Marshall to Cass, March 13, 1834, Cass to Marshall, March 14, 1834. Note: In his letter dated February 12, 1834, Richardville claimed that the Treaty called for no more land than a road and canal through their reserve would be needed. Now as construction began, the commissioners intended to, “lay off two acre lots, six chains in weath (sic) along the Wabash and Erie Canal, where the same pass through the Miami reserve”. Why, he asked, have the Canal Commissioners, “caused houses to be erected...at points where the canal must necessarily (sic) pass and where if such was his views...the houses thus erected would fall to the State of Indiana.” [Unless the Canal Commissioners did not understand the article of] “the treaty to grant, farther than the actual lands, necessary for the road and canal. No longer ago than summer at my request, he marked out the lines of canal at the forks of the Wabash, showing me where it would be located indeed changing it is part of my request pointing out the place of my building and improvements adjacent to the canal, which I have erected and made at great expense, the Indians are much dissatisfied, nor can they commit to much interpretation of the grant, they never so intended nor was it so explained to them, we appeal to you Sir; at the head of the War Department, in hopes you will interfare (sic) with the State authorities, to prevent the survey and cause the proper construction, put in that article, we ask this with more confidence, in as much as you were one of the United States Commissioners at the treaty of 1826 and aware of the intention of the Indians in making the grants, this hasty view of the matter will be forwarded to our Agent, Genl. Wm Marshall at Logansport, to whom, I have also written urging him to go to Washington and present

in person to you and the President, our wishes and views on the matter..."
Respectfully your obt servt. John B. Richardville, Chief Miami Nation,
by A. Hamilton.

The letter was sent along to Lewis Cass by Marshall with the Agent's letter of transmittal dated March 13, 1834, wherein the Agent notes, "The Indians complain that they did not understand at the time of signing the treaty, they ceded a strip of land, six chain wide, through all their reservations, and they allege that it is unjust for their houses built upon that land since the signing of that treaty. The number of houses is thirteen and their value. Twenty two hundred dollars, this claim seems to me, well founded."

¹⁷⁸ Unidentified news article, according to local historian Luke Sheer. "First the Canal Now the Highway".

¹⁷⁹ Meek, "Profile of the Wabash & Erie Canal" map.

¹⁸⁰ Willis Richardson, *History of the Wabash and Erie Canal*, thesis prepared as part of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, May 19, 1925, p. 91, available in the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society library and Cass County Historical Society.

¹⁸¹ Williams, Report of 1847.

¹⁸² Meek, "Profile of the Wabash & Erie Canal" map.

¹⁸³ Report of Jesse Williams, Engineer's Office to the Board of Commissioners of the Wabash and Erie Canal, Appendix, Fort Wayne, Indiana, December 6, 1833, Indiana General Assembly, *House Journal*, 1833, Indiana Historical Society Library.

¹⁸⁴ Williams, Report of 1847.

¹⁸⁵ "Canal Factor in City", *Huntington Herald Press*, August 22, 1948.

¹⁸⁶ Letters From a Country Fireside by an Old Settler, *The Indiana Herald*, Huntington, Indiana, December 23, 1868.

¹⁸⁷ Vermilyea & Stewart Contract for Water From Wabash Dam No. 1, January 2, 1837, available in Indiana State Archives, Indianapolis, Indiana.

¹⁸⁸ "Canal Factor in City", *Huntington Herald Press*, August 22, 1948.

¹⁸⁹ Williams, Report of 1847.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Carolyn Schmidt, Canal Society of Indiana *Newsletter*, "Flood Gate Found", Fort Wayne, Indiana: June 1999, pp. 1-12.

¹⁹² United States Patent Office, Robert English of Lagro, Indiana, Canal-Lock Gate, Patent No. 2,154, dated July 1, 1841.

¹⁹³ Communications with Rob Mann, archaeological investigation of Miami Indian village site in preparation for U.S. 24 Hoosier Heartland Corridor highway expansion west of Huntington, Indiana, near Clear Creek, November 17, 1994.

¹⁹⁴ Williams, Report of 1847.

¹⁹⁵ cf. A marker erected near the Silver Creek arch by the Canal Society of Indiana since removed by unknown parties.

¹⁹⁶ __, *History of Huntington, Indiana*, 1887, p. 602.

¹⁹⁷ Williams, Report of 1847.

¹⁹⁸ F. S. Bash, Newspaper Clippings, "Spot Where Pioneer Family Spent November Night in a Forest Still is in Woods" *Huntington Herald*, October 27, 1923.

¹⁹⁹ Ward, *The Wabash and Erie Canal: A Beautiful Dream*, p. 31. Miami County Historical Society.

