

# WHITEWATER CANAL CONNERSVILLE ~ YELLOW BANK



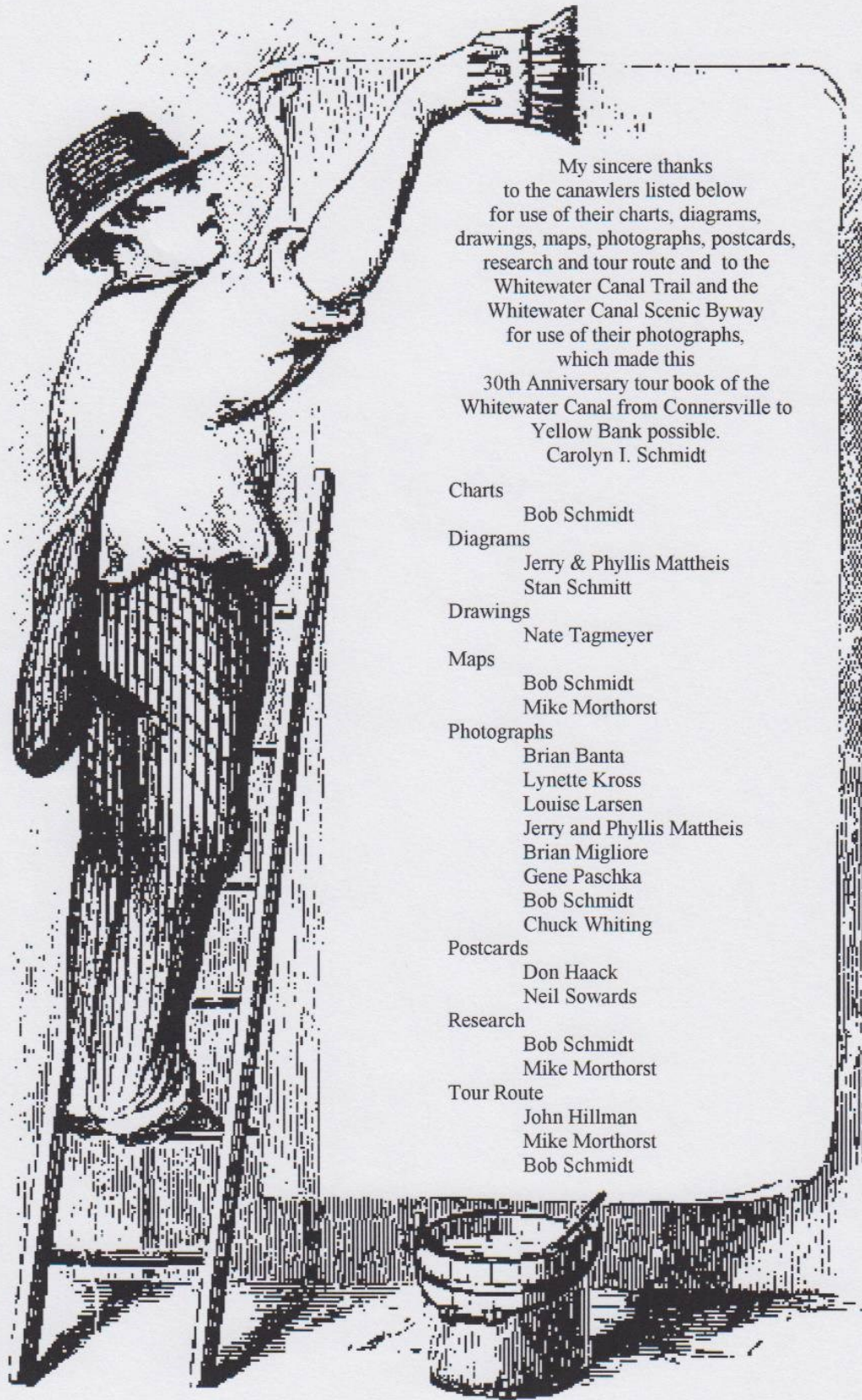
**Whitewater Canal  
Connerville ~ Yellow Bank**

**April 13-15, 2012**

## ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

CANAL SOCIETY OF INDIANA PO BOX 10808 FT WAYNE, IN 46854-0808





My sincere thanks  
to the canawlers listed below  
for use of their charts, diagrams,  
drawings, maps, photographs, postcards,  
research and tour route and to the  
Whitewater Canal Trail and the  
Whitewater Canal Scenic Byway  
for use of their photographs,  
which made this  
30th Anniversary tour book of the  
Whitewater Canal from Connersville to  
Yellow Bank possible.  
Carolyn I. Schmidt

Charts

Bob Schmidt

Diagrams

Jerry & Phyllis Mattheis  
Stan Schmitt

Drawings

Nate Tagmeyer

Maps

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Gene Paschka  
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Research

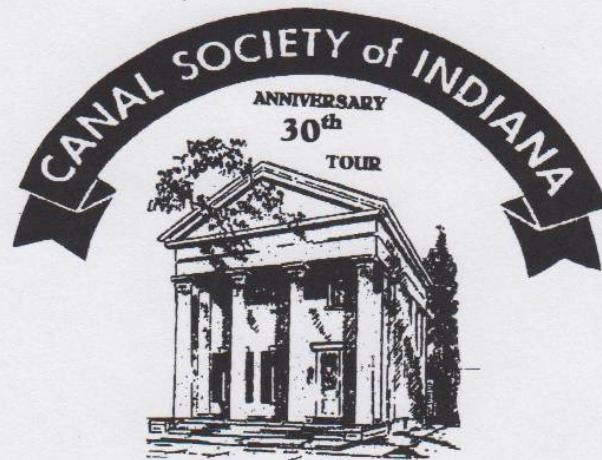
Bob Schmidt  
Mike Morthorst

Tour Route

John Hillman  
Mike Morthorst  
Bob Schmidt



# WHITEWATER CANAL CONNERSVILLE ~ YELLOW BANK



**Whitewater Canal  
Connerville ~ Yellow Bank**

**April 13-15, 2012**

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# FOREWORD

## "30th Anniversary of CSI"

Each tour given by the Canal Society of Indiana attempts to relate the history of the canal and point out the location of its structures in a particular area of Indiana or in a neighboring state. On this tour we visit the Whitewater Canal from Connersville to Metamora by rail, see canal sites in Connersville and beyond Metamora to Yellow Bank by bus, and are headquartered in Batesville, Indiana.

The tours also include other canal related buildings and the early history of the counties and towns being toured. They usually have a theme — something that ties the tour together. This year on the society's 30th anniversary we go back to the Whitewater Canal where our first tour with the Canal Society of Ohio was held in hopes of forming the Canal Society of Indiana.

This tour is special in that most of the sites visited are not accessible by roads. The "Iron Horse," hated by canal men for taking away their livelihoods, is used to reach these sites unless one hikes. After the canal was no longer used as a transportation canal, it was purchased by the railroad, which laid its tracks upon the level towpath. Last used by the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis Railroad in 1872, the tracks like the earlier canal, were abandoned. Without the formation in 1973 of the Whitewater Valley Railroad, a group of hard working volunteers who have saved both railroad and canal history, and some Interstate Transportation grants, these tracks would have disappeared.

Sit back, relax, and think back to the 1840s-70s when canal boats fought for survival against trains. View the lush flora much like that encountered when the canal was first dug, and listen to the clickety-clack as the train passes over the tracks.

Welcome aboard!



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## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

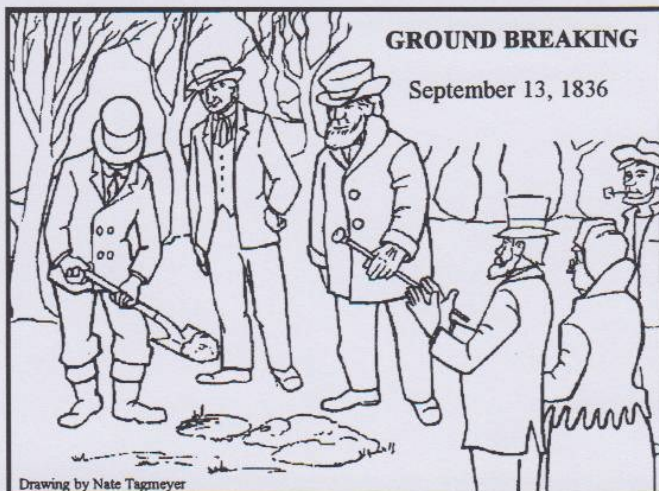
Early Indiana settlers sought improved transportation to markets such as their eastern neighbors in New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio were building. As early as 1822 Alvin (Augustus) Joselyn, editor of the Brookville "Western Agriculturist," agitated for a canal through the Whitewater Valley. A convention of delegates from Dearborn, Fayette, Franklin, Randolph, Union, and Wayne counties was held at Harrison, Ohio. Col. Shriver's Brigade of the United States Engineers was to make a canal survey, but he died before it was completed. His work was continued by Col. Stansbury, who started at the mouth of Garrison's Creek. His cost estimates were so high that they discouraged the canal advocates.

Once again in 1832, the valley citizens petitioned the Legislature for another survey. The Connersville "Watchman" reported in 1834 that "a corps of engineers are surveying the route of the contemplated canal down the valley of the Whitewater." William Goodwin reported on the completed survey to the Legislature on December 23, 1834. The survey began at Nettle Creek, north of Cambridge City, followed the west fork of the Whitewater River to Brookville, then down the river to Harrison, Ohio and from there to Lawrenceburg on the Ohio River. The total length of the surveyed canal was seventy-six miles and its fall was four hundred and ninety feet necessitating seven dams and fifty-six locks. The estimated cost for the entire canal was \$1,142,126 (\$14,908 per mile).

The General Assembly of Indiana passed the Internal Improvement Bill in 1836, which provided for the Whitewater Valley Canal to extend from Hagerstown to Lawrenceburg. The sum of \$1,400,000 was appropriated for its completion. Later a company chartered by the state of Ohio constructed a branch from Harrison, Ohio, to Cincinnati, which was known as the Cincinnati & Whitewater Canal.

The excitement upon the passage of the Internal Improvements Bill was so great that a celebration on the evening of January 18, 1836 in Connersville ended in the death of a young man and the maiming of three others. At dusk the town's cannon was hauled out to the canal line. Six shots were fired to honor the governor, the senator, one for each county representative in the General Assembly, and one to the Whitewater Valley Canal.

The Connersville courthouse was lighted from its basement to its steeple by lanterns. Samuel W. Parker and Oliver H. Smith addressed those gathered there and many toasts were drunk. The group then went to the river bank where bonfires blazed. A piece of artillery exploded prematurely. Alexander Saxon had one arm torn off and the other had to be amputated above the elbow. His eyes were blown out. He died the next morning. Joseph Clark's right arm was blown off. Abiather Williams and William Worster received severe burns.



### Ground Breaking

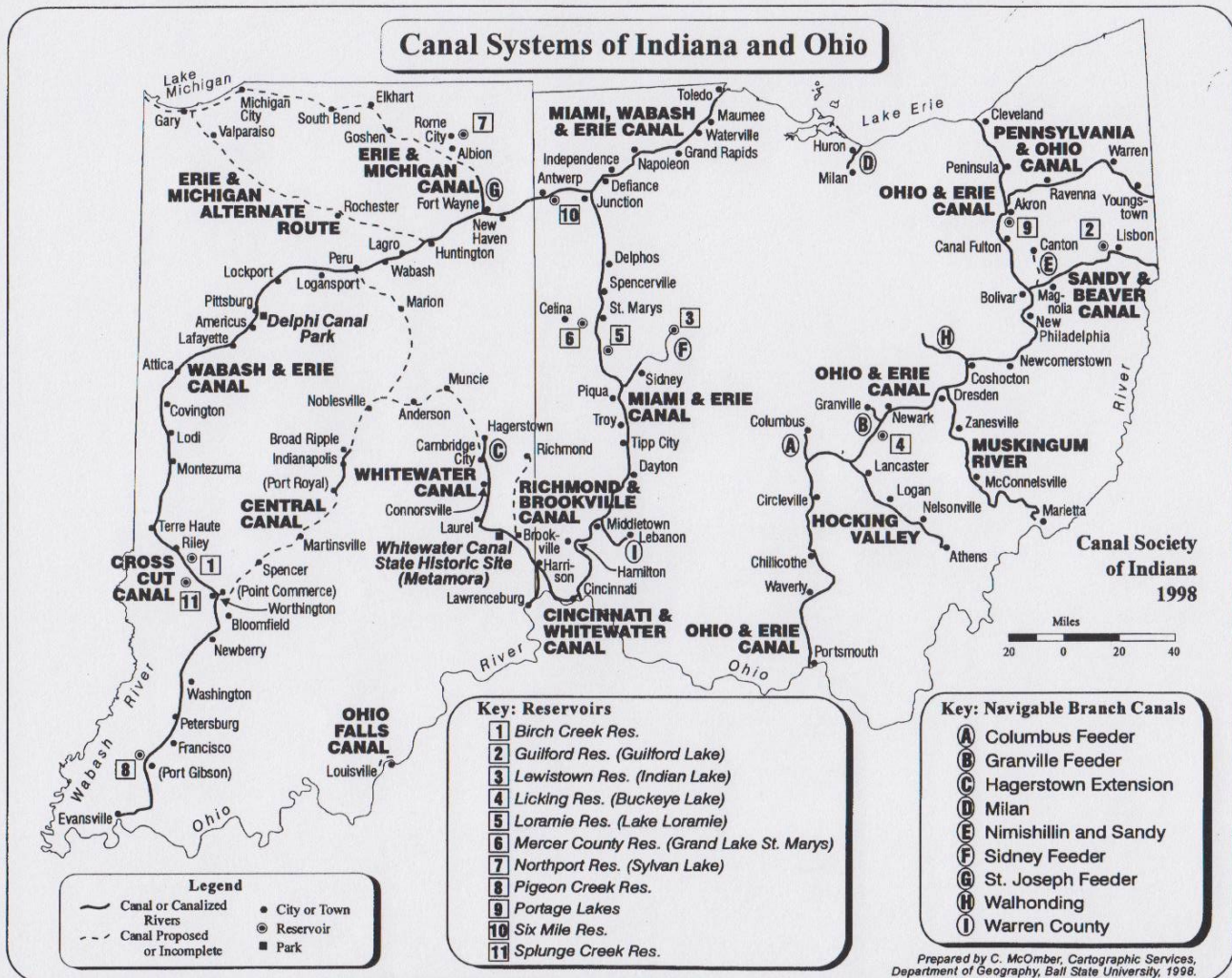
Contracts for building sections of the canal were let at Brookville on September 13, 1836. The Hon. David Wallace, the Lieutenant Governor, was the orator for the joyous occasion. Also participating in the "ground breaking" ceremony were Gov. Noah Noble, ex-Gov. James B. Ray, Dr. Drake of Cincinnati, and George H. Dunn, Esq. of Lawrenceburg. One participant loosened the dirt with the pick for a few feet, another trundled the wheelbarrow along the future canal path, the third filled the wheelbarrow, and Wallace wheeled it off.







### Canal Systems of Indiana and Ohio



Page 2

**Legend**

- Canal or Canalized Rivers
- - - Canal Proposed or Incomplete
- City or Town
- ⊙ Reservoir
- Park

**Key: Reservoirs**

- 1 Birch Creek Res.
- 2 Guilford Res. (Guilford Lake)
- 3 Lewistown Res. (Indian Lake)
- 4 Licking Res. (Buckeye Lake)
- 5 Loramie Res. (Lake Loramie)
- 6 Mercer County Res. (Grand Lake St. Marys)
- 7 Northport Res. (Sylvan Lake)
- 8 Pigeon Creek Res.
- 9 Portage Lakes
- 10 Six Mile Res.
- 11 Splunge Creek Res.

**Key: Navigable Branch Canals**

- A Columbus Feeder
- B Granville Feeder
- C Hagerstown Extension
- D Milan
- E Nimishillin and Sandy
- F Sidney Feeder
- G St. Joseph Feeder
- H Walhonding
- I Warren County

Prepared by C. McOmber, Cartographic Services, Department of Geography, Ball State University, 1998.



### First Section Opened

The superintendent of construction reported December 15, 1837, that the Lawrenceburg-Brookville section was half completed through the labors of 975 men at the cost of \$18 per month per man. He said the section could be completed in two more seasons with the same number of men. December 20, 1838, Superintendent Long reported this section completed, but it was not until June 8, 1839 that the "Ben Franklin" reached Brookville from Lawrenceburg and cannons were fired by the joyous citizens. The "Ben Franklin" was an old canal boat from the Miami and Erie Canal of Ohio, which was purchased by Captain Josiah McCafferty of Cedar Grove. He later re-christened her the "Henry Clay" in honor of the old Whig champion of internal improvements.

The state of Indiana completed the canal from the Ohio River to Brookville (\$664,665) and about one half of the work between Brookville to Cambridge City by 1839. Unfortunately the state had to abandon all public works when its debts rose to \$14,000,000. On August 19, 1839, the canal commissioners reported that the state was unable to spend another cent on its canals. The citizens found this financial collapse hard to believe. No work was done on the canal from the fall of 1839 until the summer of 1842.

The Indiana Legislature in its 1841-42 session sold the canal to Henry S. Valette, a wealthy man from Cincinnati, Ohio, and chartered the Whitewater Valley Company with \$400,000. in capital stock. Samuel W. Parker and J. G. Marshall, then members of the Legislature, were active in securing the charter.

### Canal Building Resumes

On July 28, 1842, over 10,000 persons attended a barbecue in Cambridge City to celebrate the commencement of operations by the canal company. Samuel W. Parker dug the first wheelbarrow of soil giving a witty speech (his more formal address was never completed due to a huge thunderstorm) and the Hon. John T. Elliott of Newcastle dug the second. Letters were read from invited guests, such as Henry Clay, who were unable to attend.

The canal was completed from Brookville to Laurel by October 1843. The "Native," a luxury boat commanded by Captain McCrary and the first boat built in Cedar Grove's yards, was selected to make the first excursion. One hundred persons dressed to the hilt boarded the boat at twelve noon. Cannons boomed, bands blared, and crowds shouted huzzas as the boat headed up the canal. The passengers settled down on the upper deck or in the plush salon. At every lock the boat was met with booming cannon and spectators waving handkerchiefs or silk hats. Upon reaching the Yellow Bank Lock #21 the boat was delayed for two hours by a log raft, which was jammed in the lock.

The boat was late arriving in Metamora. A new team of mules replaced the tired pair. Below Laurel this team broke the tow line and bolted off into the darkness. The gallant gentlemen decided to tow the "Native" upstream into Laurel themselves, but they soon wore out and had to be transported by carriage into town. The townsfolk presented them with a banquet and a dry place to spend the night.

For the return trip the rather worn party boarded the boat the following morning at ten o'clock. They arrived at Metamora by one o'clock. But eight miles later they discovered the canal banks had slipped during the night and the canal was closed for repairs. Some of them walked home to Brookville, but most passengers were transported by carriage and arrived late that night. This is just one example of life on the canal.

The canal was completed to Connersville by June 1845 and to Cambridge City by October 1845 at a cost of \$473,000 to the company. The distance from Lawrenceburg to Cambridge City was sixty-



**WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK**

*11 years in construction  
20 years in operation*

The Whitewater Canal

**Wayne County** required 20 structures:

- 10 locks
- 3 culverts
- 3 feeder dams
- 2 aqueducts
- Hagerstown basin
- Cambridge City basin

**Fayette County** required 18 structures:

- 14 locks
- 2 aqueducts
- 1 feeder dam
- Connerville basin

**Franklin County** required 34 structures:

- 21 locks
- 5 aqueducts
- 3 feeder dams
- 2 guard locks
- 2 culverts
- Brookville basin

**Dearborn County** required 10 structures:

- 8 locks
- 1 culvert
- Lawrenceburg basin

The Cincinnati & Whitewater Canal

**Hamilton County, Ohio** required 13 structures:

- 5 locks
- 1 feeder dam
- 2 guard locks
- 3 aqueducts
- Cleves tunnel
- Cincinnati basin

**WHITEWATER CANAL STATISTICS**

**490 FT. FALL HAGERSTOWN TO LAWRENCEBURG  
7 FEEDER DAMS 56 STONE LOCKS  
COST \$1,164,665**

<u>FROM</u>	<u>MILES</u>	<u>TO</u>	<u>BY</u>
Hagerstown	8	Cambridge City	Private Capital (Often called Hagerstown Canal)
Cambridge City	13	Connerville	Private Capital
Connerville	11	Laurel	“ “
Laurel	7	Metamora	“ “
Metamora	8	Brookville	“ “
Brookville	17	Harrison	State of Indiana
Harrison	<u>12</u>	Lawrenceburg	“ “
<u>Total Mileage</u>	76	7 miles- Ohio/ 69 miles- Indiana	(Includes Hagerstown Canal)

**CINCINNATI & WHITEWATER CANAL**

Harrison	25	Cincinnati, OH	Private Capital
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**DATES OF CANAL CONSTRUCTION**

Brookville to Lawrenceburg 1836-39  
To Laurel 1843, To Cincinnati 1843  
To Cambridge City 1846  
To Hagerstown 1847

**CONSTRUCTED BY:**

1836-39 State of Indiana 29 miles  
1836-43 Cincinnati Whitewater Canal Company 25 miles  
1842-45 Whitewater Valley Canal Company 39 miles  
1846-47 Hagerstown Canal Company 8 miles

Sometimes the portion of the Whitewater Canal north of Cambridge City is called the Hagerstown Canal since the money to build it came from merchants in Hagerstown.

The Whitewater Canal was built into the state of Ohio to go around a ridge of hills. The Cincinnati & Whitewater Canal took advantage of the situation and tapped into the Whitewater Canal at West Harrison, IN and Harrison, OH. This drained of much of the business from Harrison to Lawrenceburg.



eight miles. One of the principal contractors for the State and later for the canal company was Thomas Tyner.

The "Patriot" commanded by Capt. Gayle Ford was the first boat to arrive at Connersville in the fall of 1845. It passed by the prestigious Old Elm Farm later known as Elmhurst.

This was a colorful period in Indiana history. The canal was built by hand labor. It brought the communities along its length exciting new industry and new people. Many of the laborers were wild and went on drinking sprees on pay day at the end of the month. No less wild were the crews of the freight and packet boats who fought using stove wood as weapons as each demanded first passage through the locks.

As each section was completed and opened, grand celebrations were held with excursions on the packets, the terminology given to passenger boats that also carried packets of mail. Usually, a new boat was christened and then floated on the canal.

When the citizens of Hagerstown learned that the canal, which was originally to go to their town, was not going to be built by the Whitewater Valley Company, they were upset. The merchants of Hagerstown decided to band together and form the Hagerstown Canal Company about 1846. Through their initiative the canal was completed from Cambridge City to Hagerstown in 1847. However, because of flooding and damage to the canal downstream, very few boats ever reached the town. The water was mainly used to turn mill wheels on this portion of the canal.

#### Canal Damaged

In January of 1847 the aqueducts across Symon's Creek near Cambridge City and across the West Fork of the Whitewater River at Laurel were washed out by a freshet. Huge channels were cut by the fast flowing water around the feeder dams at Cambridge, Connersville, Laurel, Brookville, Cases, and that at Harrison. The repairs were estimated at \$90,000. Then once again in November 1848 a flood did another \$80,000 in damages. The canal was repaired and operated for several years. Its total cost was reported in 1848 as \$1,920,175.13, much more than the canal ever received in tolls during its years of operation. The last boat to pass through the entire canal (1849) was the "Union" owned by David McCarty.

#### The Railroad

In the 1850s agitation for a railroad down the valley began. This led the canal company to stop spending money on canal repairs even though it was being used for local traffic until 1862. On July 22, 1863, the canal was sold for \$63,000 to H. C. Lord, president of the Indianapolis & Cincinnati Railroad Company by the United States marshal at the Brookville courthouse door. This sale was later set aside even though some track had been laid. The right-of-way was then sold for \$137,348.12 to the White Water Valley Railroad Company. It built its line on the towpath and in some instances in part of the canal bed. Thus the canal, which cost about two million dollars and was never in operation its entire length for more than four months at a time, was now closed to boat traffic.

It is difficult to measure in dollars what the Whitewater Canal contributed to Indiana. It brought thousands of settlers into the state, furnished a cheap means of transporting produce to the Ohio River, and developed settlements along its course.

#### Hydraulic Power

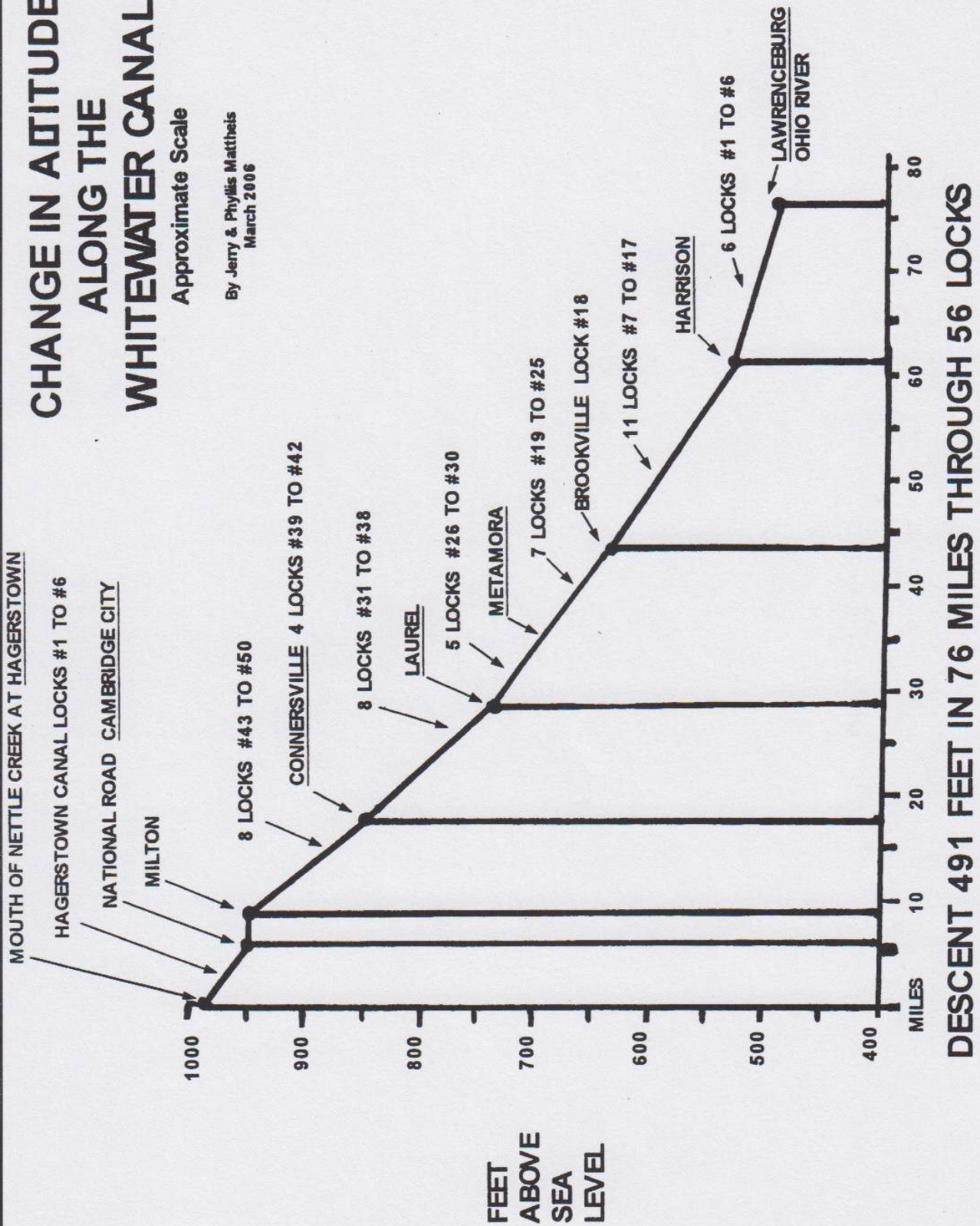
After the canal closed to boat traffic, its hydraulic interest was leased from the Whitewater Val-



# CHANGE IN ALTITUDE ALONG THE WHITEWATER CANAL

Approximate Scale

By Jerry & Phyllis Mattheis  
March 2006





## WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

ley Canal Company in February 1866 by the Connersville Hydraulic Company. The CHC had been organized in December 1865 with \$10,000 of capital stock. The hydraulic extended from Cambridge City, including the feeder dam there and the one at Lockport, to Heron's lock about one mile below Connersville. The company officers were President F.M. Roots, Superintendent and Treasurer F. T. Roots, Secretary E. Woodward, and Directors F.M. , F.T., and D.T. Roots.

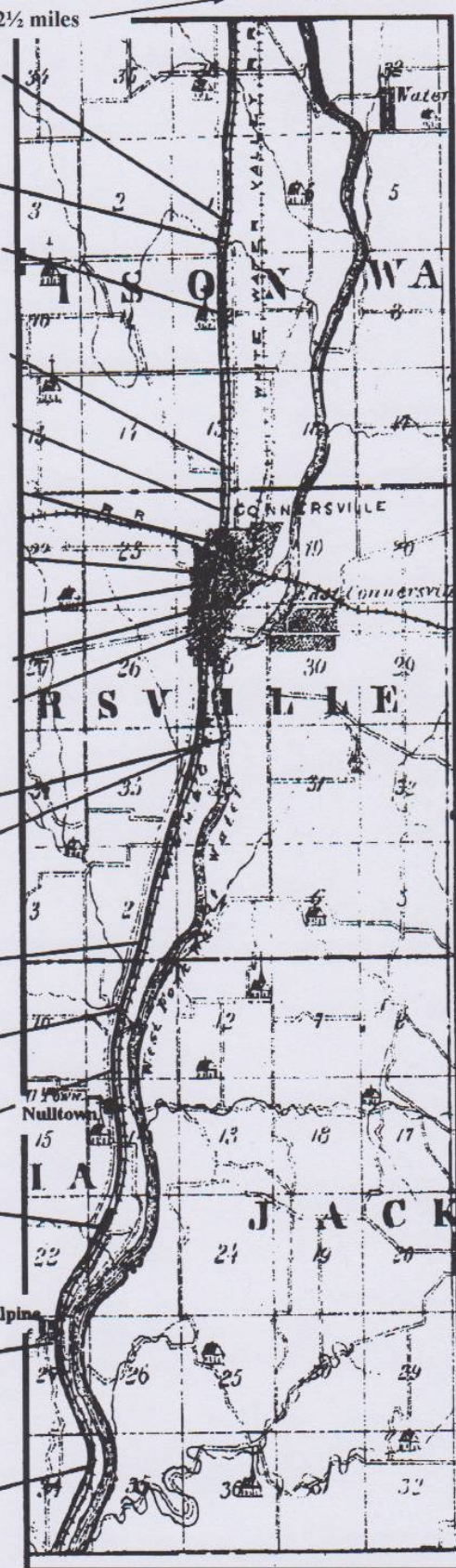
The canal furnished feeder-dam type water power to Connersville, Metamora, and Brookville in Fayette County. Four different companies utilized the power. Seven miles north of Connersville river water was diverted into the canal by Feeder Dam #6 built across the Whitewater River. The total fall from this intake to the tail-race at the Uhl & Snider mill was 80 feet of which 53 feet were actually used to produce power. The water along this route was first used by the Hydro-Electric Light and Power Company and then returned to the canal, then the Connersville Furniture Company used a small portion in its boilers and condensers, then the full portion was used by the McCann Milling Company, and finally the stream was divided and used by the P. H. and F. M. Roots Manufacturing Company and the Uhl & Snider flour mill. The canal produced 388 horse-power output and was said to be able to produce as much as 210 more.

Today an Indiana State Historic Site is maintained at Metamora where visitors can experience a canal boat ride, watch how a mill is operated using water from the canal, and see what a canal town looked like in the 1800s. Trails are being built atop the old towpath that provide hiking/biking opportunities. The Whitewater Valley Railroad carries passengers past many of the old stone locks from Connersville to Metamora.

During this tour we will see some of these locks via the train from Connersville, stop at others for a closer look and see the Laurel Feeder Dam. When we reach Metamora the bus will take us along the canal to Yellow Bank. If we have time we will go to Brookville and see the Whitewater Canal basin.

Feeder Dam #6 2½ miles

- Lock 46  
"Swamp Level"
- Lick Creek  
Aqueduct
- Lock 45  
"Four-mile"
- Lock 44  
"Carmin's"
- Lock 43  
"Claypool's"
- Lock 42  
"Mill"
- Lock 41  
"Connersville"
- Basin
- Lock 40  
"Conwell's"
- Lock 39  
"Pork House"
- Feeder Dam 5
- Lock 38  
"Herron's"
- Lock 37  
"Updegraff's"
- William's Creek  
Aqueduct
- Lock 36  
"Nulltown"
- Lock 35  
"Berlin"
- Alpine
- Lock 34  
"Connell's"
- Lock 33  
"Limpus"





WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

STRUCTURES

FEEDER DAM #6 North of Connerville to FEEDER DAM #3 South of Brookville

TYPE/LIFT

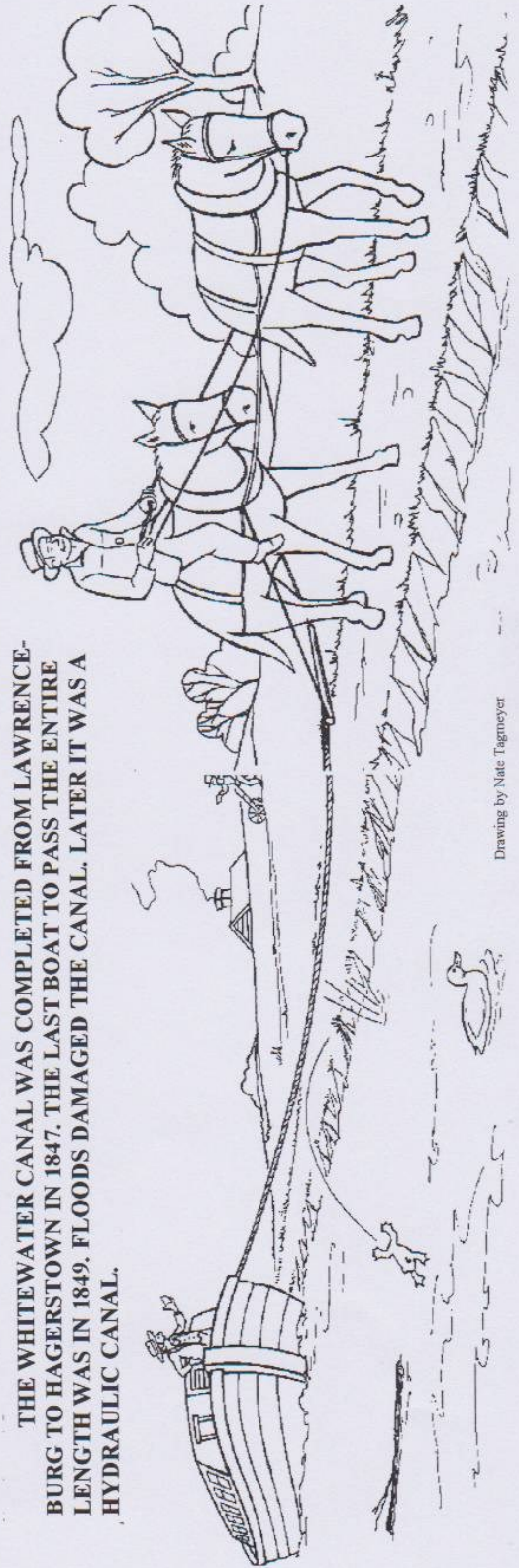
NUMBER & NAME	LOC	SEC	CITY OR TWP	DIRECTIONS	TYPE/LIFT
#6 FEEDER DAM/HEADGATES NE 1/4		24	" " "	END OF INTERSTATE RD AT RR CROSSING	
47 LOCKPORT LOCK	1/2 SEC LINE	24	" " "	S. - FEEDER CHANNEL	
<b>FAYETTE CO.</b>					
46 SWAMP LEVEL LOCK	S 1/2	1	HARRISON TWP.	S.R.1 N.-RR CROSSING	
AQUEDUCT			" " "	LICK CREEK	
45 FOUR-MILE LOCK	S SEC LINE	12	" " "	BETWEEN 31 & 32 ST. CONNERSVILLE	
44 CARMIN'S LOCK	SW 1/4	13	" " "	23 ST. CONNERSVILLE	
43 CLAYPOOL'S LOCK	N 1/2	24	CONNERSVILLE	16 ST.& ILLINOIS CONNERSVILLE	
42 MILL LOCK	1/2 SEC LINE	24	" " "	S. CITY CEMETERY	
41 CONNERSVILLE LOCK	S. SEC LINE	24	" " "	N. - 6TH ST.	
CONNERSVILLE BASIN			" " "	W. - TOWN HALL	
40 CONWELL LOCK	1/2 SEC LINE	25	" " "	3RD OF TRIPLE LOCKS 38-39-40	
39 PORK HOUSE LOCK	1/2 SEC LINE	25	" " "	2ND OF TRIPLE LOCKS 38-39-40	
38 HARRON'S LOCK	NE 1/4	36	CONNERSVILLE TW	1ST OF TRIPLE LOCKS 38-39-40 S.R. 121	
#5 FEEDER DAM/HEAD GATE NE 1/4	NE 1/4	36	" " "	W. ABUTMENT CENTER OF WHITEWATER R 250' L	
37 UPDEGRAFT'S LOCK	SE 1/4	2	" " "	S.R. 121 1/2 MILE N.- WILLIAMS CREEK	
AQUEDUCT			COLUMBIA TWP	WILLIAMS' CREEK	
36 NULLTOWN LOCK	S. LINE	11	" " "	SR 121 1/2 MILE S. NULLTOWN	
35 BERLIN LOCK	W 1/2 N SEC LI	23	" " "	SR 121 CO RD 125E	
34 CONNELL'S LOCK	NE 1/4	27	" " "	SR 121 S.- ALPINE	
33 LIMPUS LOCK	NW 1/4 NW 1/4	35	" " "		
<b>FRANKLIN CO.</b>					
WOODEN AQUEDUCT	NE 1/4	3	LAUREL TWP	GARRISON CREEK	
32 GARRISON'S LOCK	NE 1/4	3	" " "	S.- GARRISON CREEK	COMPOSITE LOCK
31 HETRICKS' LOCK	NW 1/4	10	" " "	SR 121	COMPOSITE LOCK
WOODEN AQUEDUCT	NE COR.	16	" " "	WEST FORK WHITEWATER RIVER - LAUREL	CONTRACTOR - JOEL PALMER
30 LAUREL LOCK	NE 1/4	16	" " "	DAM RD	COMPOSITE LOCK
29 JINKS' LOCK	SE 1/4	16	" " "	E. ABOVE FEEDER DAM	COMPOSITE LOCK
#4 FEEDER DAM/HEADGATES SE 1/4	SE 1/4	16	" " "	S. - DAM RD E.-LAUREL	RESTORED 9' X 372
28 SIMONTON'S LOCK	SW1/4	22	" " "		COMPOSITE LOCK 8' LIFT



WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

NUMBER & NAME	LOC	SEC	CITY OR TWP	DIRECTIONS	TYPE / LIFT
27 FERRIS LOCK	NE 1/4	27	" " "	JOHN FERRIS FARM	COMPOSITE LOCK
26 MURRY'S LOCK	NW 1/4	26	METAMORA TWP		COMPOSITE LOCK
25 METAMORA LOCK		36	" " "	GRIST MILL-METAMORA	RESTORED CUT STONE LOCK 8' LIFT
WOODEN AQUEDUCT		36	" " "	DUCK CREEK - METAMORA	RESTORED
24 GORDON'S LOCK	NE COR.	31	" " "	U.S. 52	RESTORED CUT STONE LOCK
23 TWIN LOCK	NE COR.	5	" " "	SIDE RD OFF SR 1	COMPOSITE LOCK
22 TWIN LOCK	NW COR.	4	BROOKVILLE TWP	SIDE RD OFF SR 1	COMPOSITE LOCK
STONE AQUEDUCT	NE 1/4	3	" " "	YELLOW BANK CREEK	TWIN ARCHES
21 YELLOW BANK LOCK	NE 1/4	3	" " "	E- YELLOW BANK CREEK	COMPOSITE LOCK 8' LIFT
20 BOUNDARY HILL LOCK	E 1/2	24	" " "	LAND FILL RD. - BOUNDARY HILL	COMPOSITE LOCK 8' LIFT
STONE CULVERT	SW 1/4	20	" " "	BUTLER'S RUN NEAR CANOE RENTAL	STONE CULVERT WITH HOLE IN TOP CAN WALK THROUGH
19 REED'S LOCK	SW 1/4	20	" " "	E. BUTLER CREEK RUN	CUT STONE LOCK 15' X 92' 6' LIFT
BROOKVILLE BASIN			" " "	WM. BUTLER ADD. BROOKVILLE	
FEEDER DAM GUARD LOC	SE 1/4	29	BROOKVILLE	WM. BUTLER ADD. E. FORK WHITEWATER RIVER	
#3 FEEDER DAM	SE 1/4	29	" " "	CONTRACTOR - WILCOX & VAN HORN	DAM 11' X 258' & TOWPATH BRIDGE

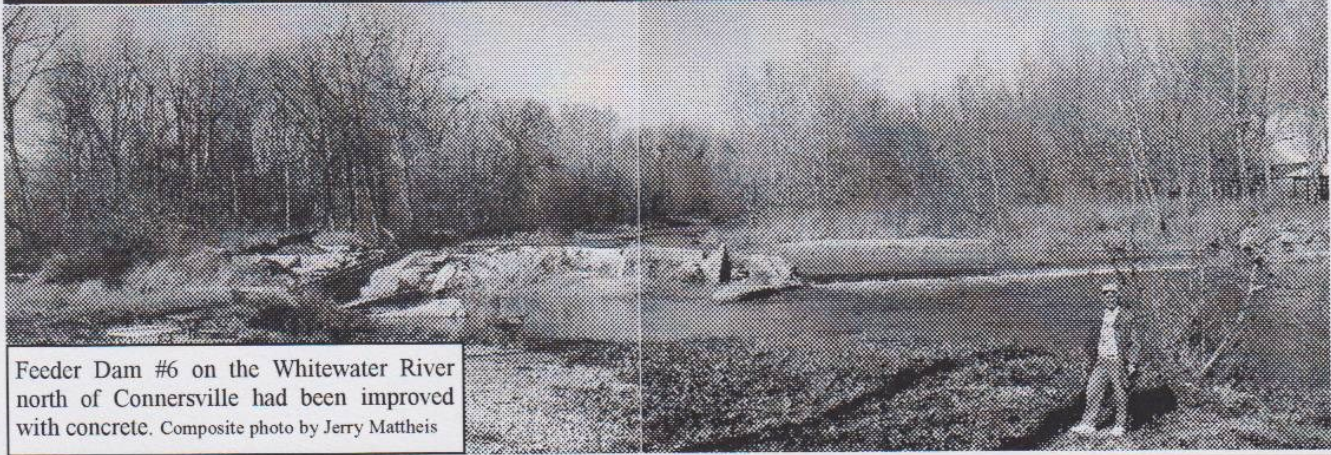
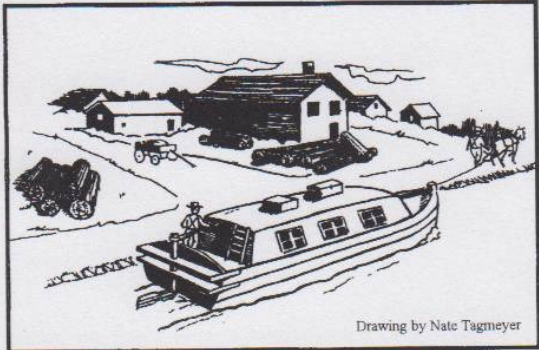
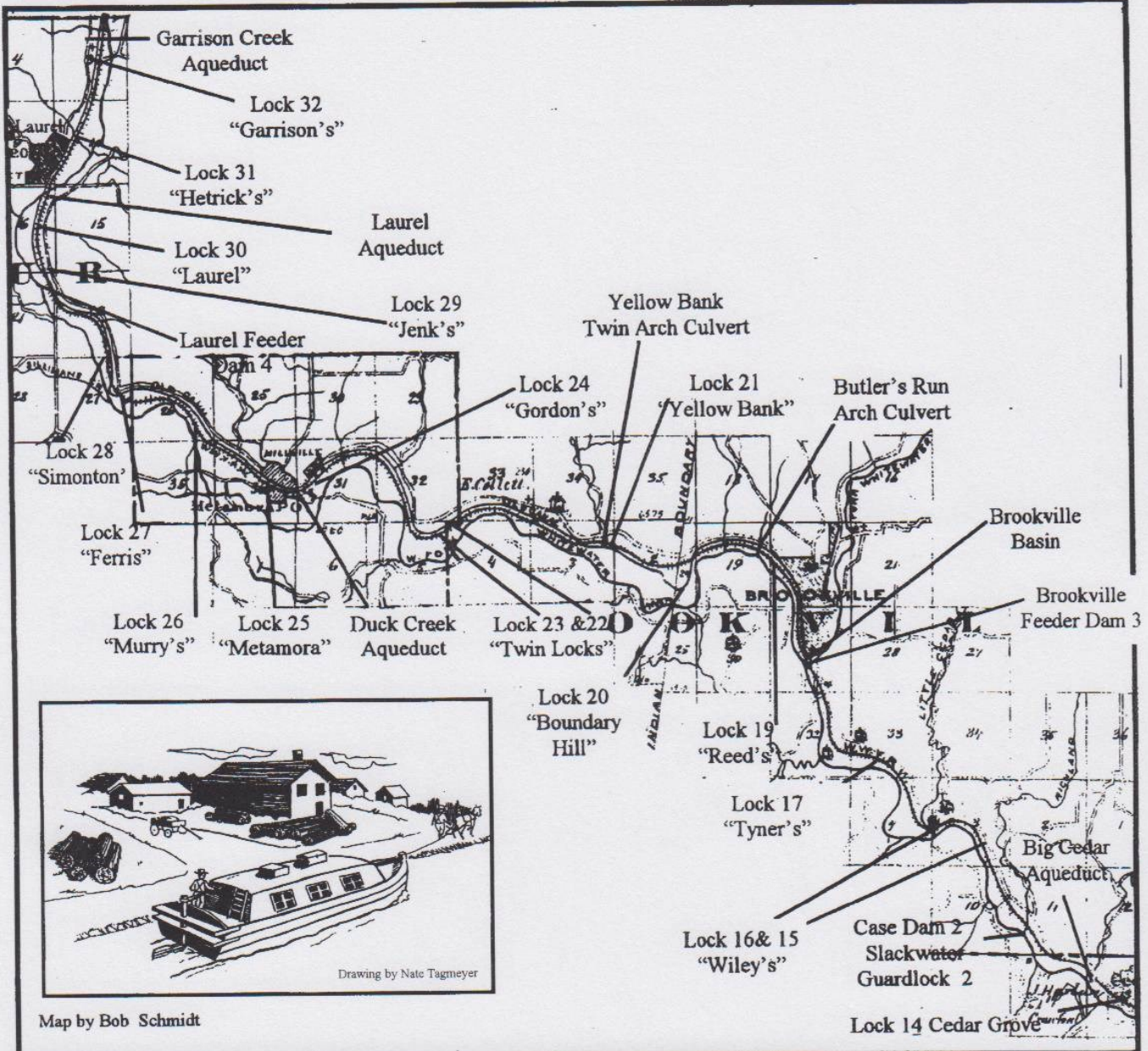
THE WHITEWATER CANAL WAS COMPLETED FROM LAWRENCE-BURG TO HAGERSTOWN IN 1847. THE LAST BOAT TO PASS THE ENTIRE LENGTH WAS IN 1849. FLOODS DAMAGED THE CANAL. LATER IT WAS A HYDRAULIC CANAL.



Drawing by Nate Tagmeyer



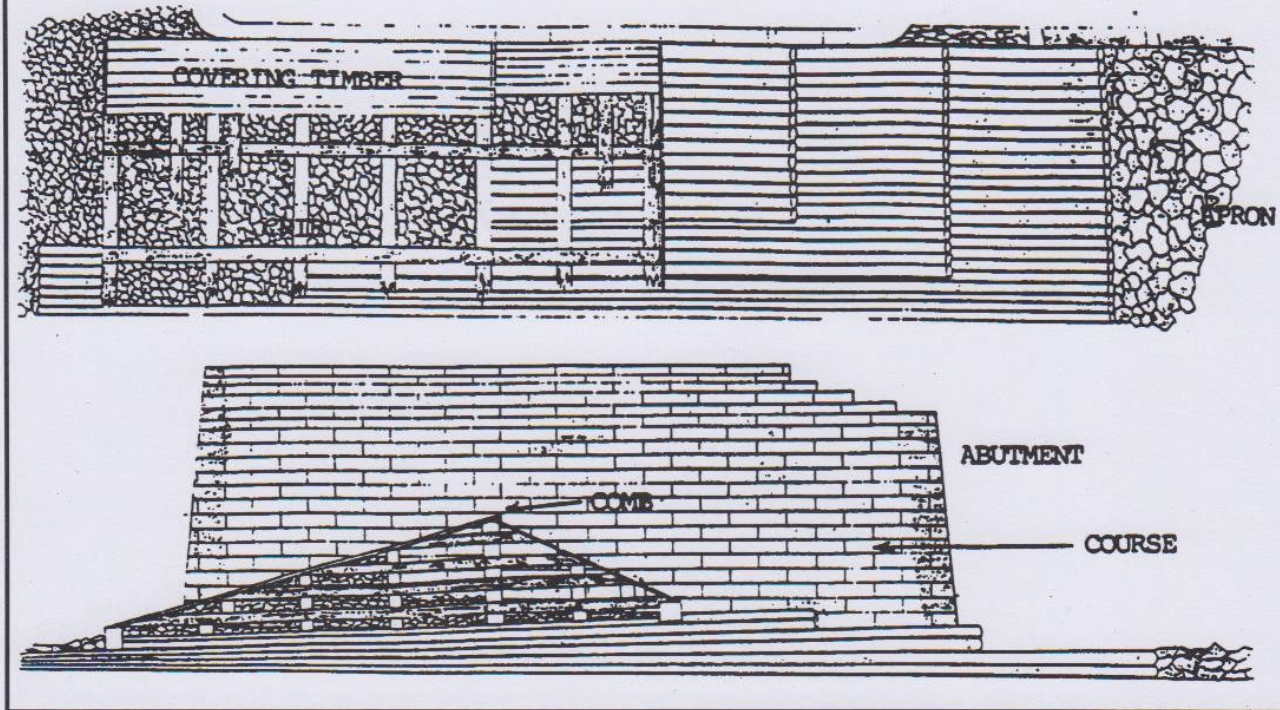
WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK





DAM

By Stan Schmitt



Feeder Dams

Information from a page in a daybook kept by M.S. Webb seen on the right gives a description of how feeder dams were to be constructed on the Whitewater Canal. A simpler explanation is that on the sandy river bottom the felled trees were laid with their branches facing upstream. The branches would catch stones and sediment and become filled in. On top of this platform of tree trunks a row of cribs would extend across the river. It would have looked like a long row of log cabins joined together. On either bank of the river mortared stone abutments were built if stone was available. If not, taller/larger cribs were built as abutments. The cribs were filled with dirt and rocks. Planking was attached over the cribs and an apron extended downstream so that water flowing over the dam would not undercut it.

Canal Society of Indiana members saw Feeder Dam #6 of the Whitewater Canal located north of Connerville in April 2010. The canal was fed through Connerville from the water that is pooled behind this dam. We will not visit the remains at this site or at the site of Feeder Dam #5 on this trip. We will be stopping at Feeder Dam #4 at Laurel. It is an operating feeder dam.

DAMS

WHITEWATER CANAL SPECIFICATIONS

M. S. WEBB'S 1856 DAYBOOK

The height to which dams may properly be raised must depend upon the character of the Stream and particularly upon the nature of its bed, the height of its banks, &c.

If the stream has a gravelly or sandy bottom, a rapid descent, and low banks, Such as W(hite) Water, Big Miami, Mad river, they should be from 3 to 6 feet in height.

But if the rivers of this, be the case Dams from 8 to 12 or 15 ft. high will be found more equinomial (sic) and advantageous.

Dams should be formed of cribs of timber felled with stem, and covered with 4 or 6 in. plank. On Rock Bottom these cribs may be commenced on the bed of the river, with a short apron of hewn timber projecting below. Cost of Dams per square measuring from \_\_\_\_\_.

But on sand or gravel bottoms they should rest on a foundation of brush and logs projecting below so far as to form a sufficient apron, which (foundations?) in high dams may be raised to the height of 5 or 6 feet. The upper slope of the cribs should in all cases, have a base of about 3½ to 1. The lower slope should in some instances, should have the same base, which in others a steeper slope would answer, depending upon the character of the bottom, the height of the apron, &c.

Deep water should be preferred for A \_\_\_\_\_ for the dam if the bottom be sandy.

Dressed abutments will in all cases be raised above the highest floods, and when stone can be obtained be built of grouted masonry. But, if no stone can be found, of hewn timbers put together in form of Cribs.



### 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tour Route

The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary tour begins at the headquarters of the Whitewater Valley Canal Company. In September of 1982, twenty-seven members from Indiana met here on the first CSI canal tour. This headquarters was built in 1842, served as the home of U.S. congressman Finly Gray and today is being preserved by Historic Connersville.

From this point we will explore the canal from Connersville to Metamora via the Whitewater Valley Railroad. At Metamora we will board our buses and travel along the canal to Yellow Bank Lock.

#### Feeder # 6 Interstate Road

The Whitewater Canal was supplied with water from a series of 7 feeder dams. Dam # 6 was explored on CSI's 2006 Fall tour and supplied the canal from 7 miles north of Connersville to just below Herron's Lock just south of town.

#### The Connersville Basin

Slightly north of the railroad station today, the Whitewater Canal Basin was very close to the Whitewater Canal Company headquarters. The first boat, the "Patriot" arrived here in 1845.

#### Lock 40 Conwell's Lock

#### Lock 39 Pork House Lock

Located just at the edge of town the elevation change is quite evident in the canal bed or prism. These locks were located together. Lock 40 is named for businessman Abram B. Conwell. His pork processing business was near Lock 39, which was thusly named Pork House Lock. His mills used the water power of the canal. Each of the Conwell brothers settled in separate parts of the Whitewater Valley. James became the founder of Laurel, William settled in Cambridge City and Isaac choose to live in Liberty.

#### Lock 38 Herron's Lock

About 1 mile out of town is the location of the next lock named for Connersville businessman James M. Herron, who owned land nearby.

#### Feeder from Dam # 5

Water pooled by this dam was introduced into the canal just below Herron's Lock.

#### Lock 37 Updegraff's Lock

Named for a local farmer, this lock is about half a mile above Williams Creek.

#### Aqueduct at Williams Creek - timber

This aqueduct carried the canal across the creek. Today a railroad bridge passes over the creek. Later a couple were married on the bridge.

#### Lock 36 Nulltown Lock

Located just at the base of the old store, is the lock. If you are late for the train you can always catch up here. The lock is named for Isaac & Michael Null, who operated a grist mill.

#### Lock 35 Berlin Lock

Named for Berlin, a town plotted in October 1838, which lay between Nulltown & Alpine. Here we will get out and explore the lock remains. Note the iron hangers for the wooden plank lining.



**Lock 34 Connell's Lock**

This lock is located a few hundred yards south of the town of Alpine just beyond where IN 121 crosses the railroad tracks. It is a composite lock with cut stone approaches and rubble stone lined with plank inside the chamber.

**Lock 33 Limpus' Lock**

Located 1 mile south of Alpine, this lock was named for William T. Limpus, who was the Postmaster of Alpine. It was the site of the Wawassa paper mill (1865-75) that was destroyed by fire. Bide-A-Wee, an old cottage site for summer camping, was located nearby to the west.

**Leave Fayette Co. Enter Franklin County**

**Garrison Creek Aqueduct - timber**

This timber aqueduct carried the canal over Garrison Creek.

**Lock 32 Garrison's Lock**

Named for the creek, this composite lock is not in good condition.

**Lock 31 Hetrick's Lock**

Named for a local resident, this is a composite lock.

**Lunch at the old Laurel Hotel**

**Aqueduct over Whitewater River - timber**

Today we cross over the Whitewater River via the railroad trestle, but during canal times the canal boats crossed the river via a timber aqueduct.

**Lock 30 Laurel Lock**

If you look carefully out the left side of the train a few hundred yards south of the aqueduct you may get a glimpse of this lock through the vegetation.

**Lock 29 Jink's Lock**

Named for a local resident this is a composite lock.

**Dam # 4 & Laurel Feeder**

This dam has been restored and is maintained by the state to feed the canal to and through Metamora. Be sure not to miss the water intake to the feeder canal that catches debris and keeps it from getting into the feeder canal.

**Lock # 28 Simonton's Lock**

Named for a local resident, this is a composite lock.

**Lock # 27 Ferris' Lock**

Named for a local resident, this is a composite lock.

**Lock # 26 Murray's Lock**

Named for a local resident, this composite lock is not easily accessible except by the train.

**Lock # 25 Metamora & mill**

This restored cut stone lock and adjacent mill is part of an Indiana State historic site. Today an overshot wheel has been placed in the lock chamber.



# WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

## Duck Creek Aqueduct

Built in 1843, this is the last remaining covered aqueduct in the United States and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Board the bus for the rest of the tour.

## Locks # 24 Gordon's Lock

Near the Hearthstone Restaurant this is another example of a cut stone lock. They put the Ben Franklin III inside this lock to store it over winter.

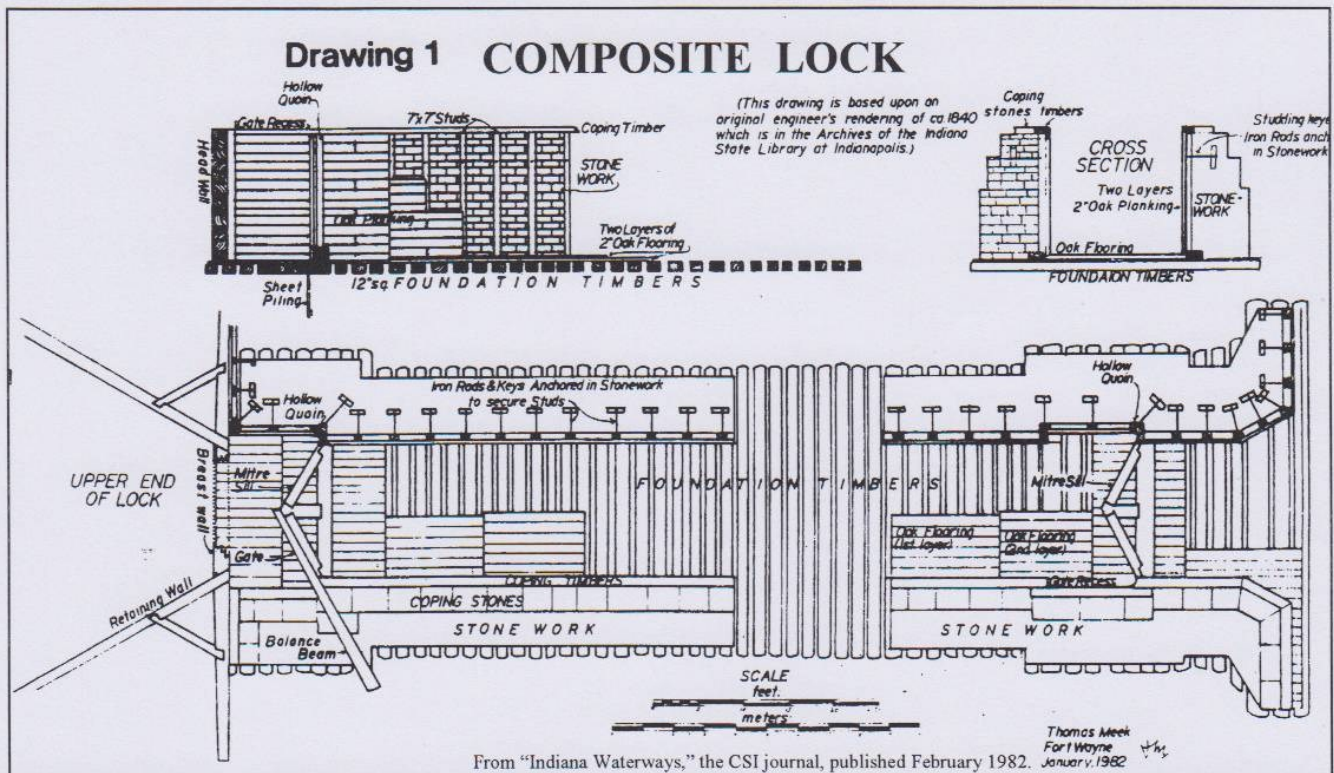
## Lock # 23 & 22 Twin Locks

Seen on earlier tours that used car caravans, the buses can't reach this site. These two locks are in good condition with running water. They are accessible by walking along the beautiful Whitewater Canal Trail.

## Lock # 21 Yellow Bank Lock

This composite lock is on property owned by Moster Turf Farm. The owners have granted right-of-way to Whitewater Canal Trails, who have recently built a trail and cleaned up the lock for visitors to see. When walking through this rough stone lock see if you can find metal hangers that once held the plank lining in the chamber.

If time permits we will go on into Brookville to see where the canal basin was located. Canal boats would load and unload goods and people here. During the winter ice formed and was harvested and stored to be used by local taverns during the summer.

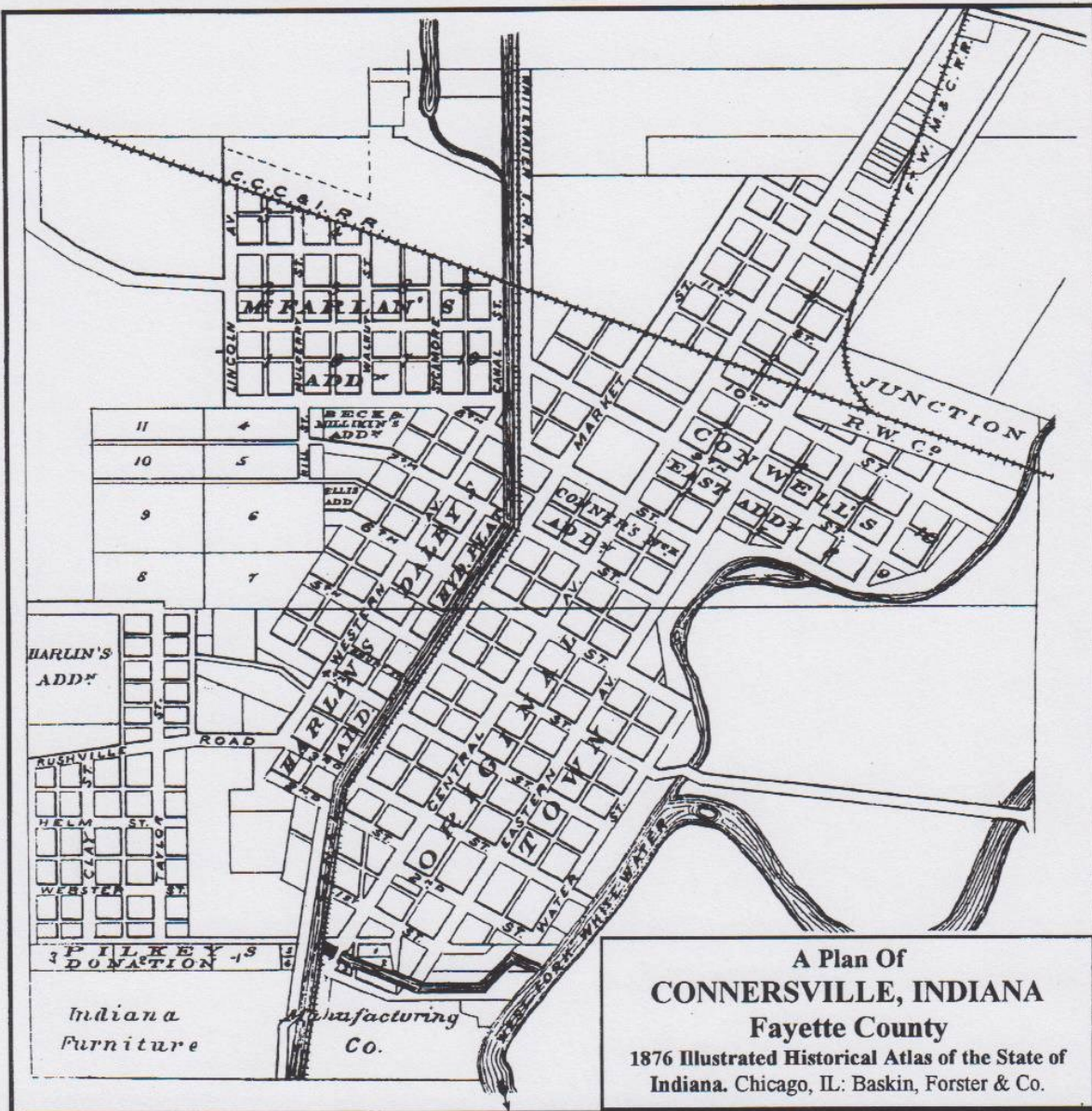






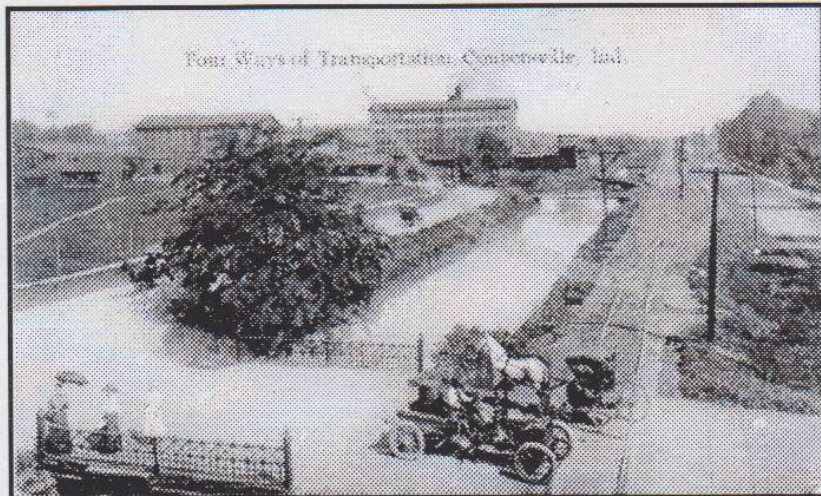


WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK



This vintage postcard shows the Whitewater Canal when it was used as a hydraulic canal. It also shows transportation by automobile, horse & buggy, railroad, and canal.

The large building in the center was a furniture factory where water was taken from the canal at the north side of the building, powered the mill's machinery and then came out the south side of the building and re-entered canal.





## CONNERSVILLE

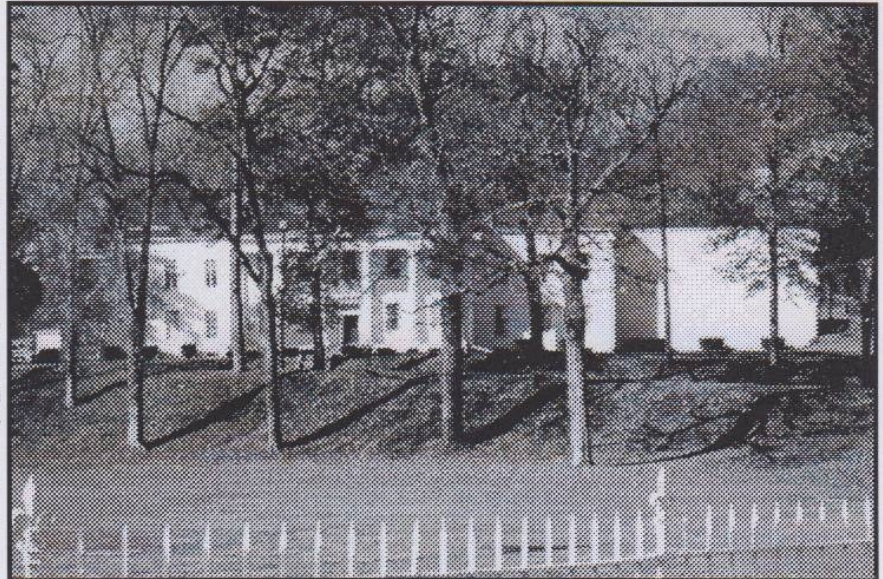
Connerville was platted in 1813 by John Conner around the site of his trading post, which he operated from 1808 to 1815, and his mills. It was named the county seat in 1819 and was incorporated in 1840 shortly before the Whitewater Canal reached it. The canal established it as a major pork-packing, flour-milling and barrel-making center.

The history of Elmhurst "Indiana's Little Whitehouse" is closely tied to the history of Connerville. This stately white mansion that was the home of Samuel W. Parker, president of the Whitewater Valley Canal Company, stands along Grant Avenue. The old home has had quite an interesting history and has been the home of Warren Masonic Lodge No. 15 since 1941.

The Whitewater Canal had been completed from Lawrenceburg to Connerville in 1845 with "The Patriot" commanded by Captain Gayle Ford being the first boat to pass through this portion of it. In 1846 it was completed to Cambridge City. In 1850, when Samuel W. Parker lived at the "Old Elm Farm" he could look out over the Whitewater Canal that ran in front of his home. He hung a bell by his front porch. As the canal boats passed by his residence on their trips between Hagerstown and the Ohio River their captains would toll their bells to salute Parker and often he would ring his in return. Even though weary from trudging the towpath the crew looked forward to saluting "the boss."

### Elmhurst — "Old Elm Farm"

"Old Elm Farm" (Elmhurst) was originally a four-room brick dwelling that was two stories high and had huge chimneys at each end. Behind this part of the home was a frame structure, which housed the kitchen and dining room. It was built in 1831 by Oliver H. Smith. Smith purchased one hundred sixty acres that had a beautiful view of the Whitewater Valley from John Adair of Brookville on January 3, 1831 for \$9 dollars an acre and paid for it in three installments without interest. An old Indian Trail, which led to a



spring and onto the highest point in Fayette County where Indians set signal fires in fire bowls, ran in front of this land. Smith built Elmhurst, befriended the Indians and wrote several books about them. His best known work is "Early Indiana Trails and Sketches" published in 1857. He did not remain at Elmhurst long before moving into Connerville.

The Honorable Caleb B. Smith then took up residence at Elmhurst. He was a member of Congress for three terms and Secretary of the Interior under Abraham Lincoln. Smith served in the Legislature from 1833-1840 and was Speaker of the House in 1835-1836. He was known for his powerful and eloquent speeches. He died in Indianapolis in 1864 and wished to be buried on the estate. It is not known if he was ever buried on it or not.

Elmhurst then passed through the ownership of James Shaw in 1838 and Nicholas Patterson in 1842 before being purchased by the Honorable Samuel W. Parker in 1850. Parker was a very influential



## WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

man in Connersville. He was born in Watertown N. Y. on September 9, 1805, graduated from Miami University in 1828, became the first principal of Fayette County Seminary in 1829 and was admitted to the Indiana Bar in 1831. In 1834 Parker married Susanah Watton, the sister of Caleb B. Smith's wife. He was elected Fayette County Prosecuting Attorney in 1836, to the Indiana House of Representatives in 1839 and 1843, and to the Indiana Senate from 1841-1843. He was in the U. S. Congress from 1851-1855. In 1854 he sold the Canal House on 4th Street, headquarters for the Whitewater Valley Canal Company, where he had previously lived. Returning to Connersville he divided his time between the practice of law and his railroad interests. Later he became president of the Whitewater Valley Canal Company (B&O and C&O System). He backed Henry Clay for president in 1824 and 1832 and entertained him at Elmhurst many times. Parker lived in Connersville from 1828 until his death in 1859.

The first remodeling of Elmhurst was undertaken by Parker. He paneled the lower front rooms with solid cherry. He landscaped the grounds planting dwarf Catalpas and other trees. To the rear of the house he dedicated the Parker cemetery where he built his family tombs of solid flagstones with brick lining the bottoms and gravel for drainage. He wished that his remains never be disturbed. This wish was disregarded when they opened his tomb while looking for Caleb Smith's remains.

According to history, the farm played an important link in the "Underground Railway." The trail divided here with the eastern fork going to Centerville and Union City and the western fork going to Yankeetown. A brick building, which at that time was part of "Old Elm Farm," served as a refuge for slaves escaping from the South.

The Whitewater Canal was faced with many troubles during the few years it operated. It was sold July 22, 1863 thus ending Connersville's first major transportation artery. Elmhurst was not without transportation just outside its doors for long. The officials of the Whitewater Valley Railroad were eager to lay their tracks on the old towpath. The railroad was completed to Connersville by 1863 and on to Cambridge City in 1868. Soon the train would blow its whistle to salute the young ladies at Elmhurst.

In 1881 Elmhurst was sold to James H. Huston by Mrs. Parker. The estate had over 800 acres with an elm grove and a huge elm tree in front of the home. Huston patterned his remodeling of Elmhurst after the White House in Washington, D.C. He added wings at both the north and south ends of the building and huge porch columns across the front. The home soon was called "The White House of Indiana." He continued the paneling in the upper rooms, hall, and dining rooms and added oak stairways for \$44,000. He commissioned a sculptor to carve the likeness of Indian Joe on the front of a huge red sandstone and polished granite fireplace he had built in the lower hall. The artist used an old tintype of the crippled Shawnee Indian boy, who remained in the valley when his tribe was sent to the reservation. While working on the fireplace the sculptor was watched by a dwarf Negro stable boy, who whistled constantly. The sculptor asked Huston's permission to carve the boy's likeness on the opposite side of the fireplace to balance the design. Another huge fireplace was built in the upper hall. It has recessed sections in which to put containers of food to keep them warm.

The Hustons were very good friends with Benjamin and Caroline Scott Harrison. The Harrisons visited frequently and had a bedroom reserved especially for them at Elmhurst. Huston was the political manager for Benjamin Harrison and was appointed United States Treasurer by Harrison when he was elected president of the United States. Huston's name was on our paper currency.

Elmhurst was sold by Huston to Dr. Alonza W. Daum in 1901. Dr. Daum moved his sanatorium from Tipton to the farm in 1899 and it grew so rapidly that he purchased the property and added the north section of the building with 26 patient rooms. He advertised tht patients and visitors would be met at the train (CH&D, LE&E, or the Big 4) by a carriage and then the round trip between Elmhurst and the station would be a mere 50 cents. He asked patients to bring their own hammocks and wheels



## WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

(bicycles). He was a generous man who would take provisions to various homes at Thanksgiving. He died at the age of 33 and was buried at the rear of the sanatorium in Parker's Plot.

The property was sold to Charles Chambers and Ella Porter. They along with Dr. W. U. Porter operated the sanatorium. "Old Elm Farm" was divided with 140 acres remaining with the house. Mrs. Porter named this property "Elmhurst." The estate was then sold to the Connersville Sanatorium Company in 1903. In 1906 it was purchased as a summer home by George B. Market of Hazelton, Pennsylvania. In 1909 it was once again sold. Miss Isabel Cresslar and Miss Caroline Sumner established Elmhurst School for Girls. They wanted to give the Midwest girls the educational opportunities they had received by graduating from Wilson College and Smith College.

Elmhurst School For Girls' enrollment ranged from 24-40 girls. Each morning began with chapel. The students were also required to attend a local Sunday morning worship service in Connersville. There was an academic course, which included English, French, German, Latin, Greek, Mathematics, History, Science and History of Art, and a college course, which included Civil Government, Social Science, Political Science, Logic and Psychology. Students were also instructed in drawing, painting, vocal and instrumental music, dancing, and Home Economics. The 140 acres were developed through a combina-



tion agricultural and domestic science course for the girls. The school had 26 private rooms for its students and tired to keep that enrollment. There were 11 instructors most of whom taught full time, some part time, and two administrators who taught part time. Instruction was highly personalized. The high academic standards prepared the girls for prestigious colleges and universities.

Each girl at Elmhurst was provided a riding horse and an instructor. There was a sunken miniature lake on which they could boat. They attended the Connersville High School Basketball games under the supervision of the two administrators. They were easily distinguishable by their fur coats and leather boots. In order for an Elmhurst girl to date a local blade, a formal introduction must have been made and the boy must have been well informed on the various social graces. Often the young men met the girls at the church services.

Booth Tarkington spoke at commencement in 1921. Mrs. Barry Goldwater, Constance and Joan Bennet silent film stars, and the daughters of the Ball and Kitselma families of Muncie attended Elmhurst. George Ball gave the school a marble drinking fountain while his daughters were in attendance. The school moved to Rye Beach, New Hampshire in 1927, 18 years after opening. The property was temporarily controlled by Manfred Dale.

In 1915 the famous Elmhurst Elm that stood in front of Elmhurst was in hazardous condition and had to be felled. It was 95 feet tall and more than 16 feet in circumference. The wood from the tree heated the building for one winter. It is said that at one time every tree known to grow in Indiana could be found at Elmhurst.



**The Whitewater Canal House**

The "Canal House" as it is known in Connersville was built in 1842 as headquarters for the Whitewater Canal Company. The lot on which it was built at 111 East Fourth Street was originally acquired by John Conner when he platted Connersville in 1813. He purchased it from the U.S. Government's representative, the Federal Land Bank at Brookville. In 1825 Conner sold the land to A. H. Dill for \$500. In 1827 Meredith Helm purchased it and started construction of the building. Helm later sold the property to Daniel Hankins for \$12,000.

The Whitewater Canal Company purchased the building in 1842 and began using it as its headquarters in 1843. When the canal company had financial difficulties, the ownership passed to Samuel W. Parker, president of the company (1848). During its lifetime it has had many different occupants.

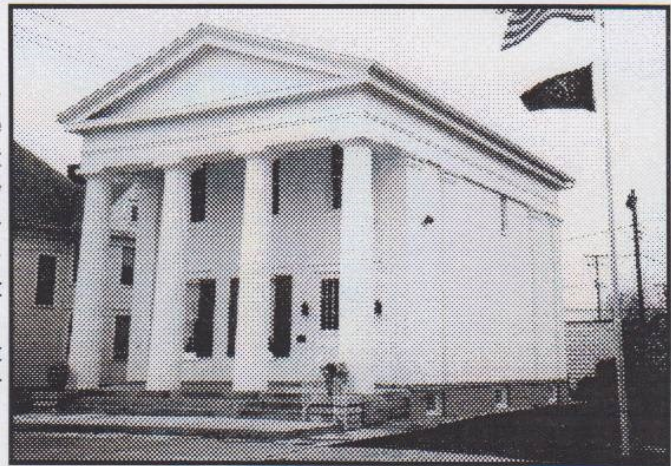
The two-story four-Doric-columned brick structure was sturdily built. The canal was short-lived. In 1854 the Savings Bank of Indiana purchased the building, which was ideal for a bank since it had two large brick vaults, each equipped with double steel doors. The doors had locks weighing 17 pounds each. The original keys were lost many years ago. However, Kennard Leedke has a large 7 inch long key on display that fits the lock on one of the steel doors of the vaults. Paper currencies that the bank issued are now collectibles.

Dr. S. W. Vance was given the building by his father, attorney Elisha Vance, and he and his family lived in or owned it from 1857-1936 for 79 years. He had a kitchen built in the rear in 1859.

When John Waddell died in 1923, his widow and seven boys were living in the Canal House owned by the Vance family. Mrs. Waddell needed to support the family and decided to operate a boarding and rooming house. She had about 25 steady boarders (sometimes up to 33) including telephone office girls, who would help her serve.

In 1928 Dr. Al Clark located his veterinarian business at the Canal House, which was still under Vance ownership. He moved from Andersonville where he had taken care of large animals. His son, Dr. Owen Clark soon joined him and operated the business at the house until 1936. The Clark and Clark small animal hospital picked up and delivered the animals in a converted Model T Ford coupe. On one side of the Model T was painted a dog and a cat was painted on the other side.

Carl Fisher purchased the house in 1936 from Portia Vance Hanson and sold it five months later to Alice G. Gray, wife of U.S. Congressman Finly Gray. She decided to furnish it and refurbish it in 19th century style. The Gray's added the fireplace. Earlier the house was heated by stoves. The home was willed to the Indiana Audubon Society for their headquarters. Lack of funds prevented this from occurring and the building and many furnishings were sold.



**CANAL HOUSE**  
 1842 Built as Headquarters of The Whitewater Valley Canal Co.  
 1854 Savings Bank of Indiana  
 Home of:  
 Dr. S. W. Vance 1857-1936  
 Congressman and Mrs. Finly H. Gray 1936-1947  
 1947-1971 V. F. W. Post 571  
 1971-1973 Restored by Historic Connersville, Inc.  
PRESENTED BY ROBERT BELL, CHAIRMAN  
 NATIONAL SOCIETY, MEMBERSHIP OF AMERICAN COLLECTORS



From 1947 to 1971 the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Glenn H. Sample Post owned and occupied the house. Then in 1971 generous donations and community spirit saved the property when Historic Connersville, Inc. bought and restored the building to its earlier condition. Much of the replacement material had to be specially made, some by hand, or located after a long search. The Canal House includes a spacious room named the Patriot Gallery in honor of the first canal boat "The Patriot," which arrived in Connersville in 1845. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. At one time a second floor balcony was added that was removed in 1974 during the restoration. The iron fence and grassy strip between the sidewalk and curb had disappeared by that time.

#### Helm House

The land on which historic Helm House stands, located at 323 West Third Street in Connersville, was deeded to Meredith Helm from Daniel Hankins in 1843 for \$150. It was originally owned by John Conner. The home was built facing the canal by Meredith Helm. It was Georgian in style with a gable roof, three dormer windows in the front and two in back, six columns on the east side, and hand-hewn posts on each side of double doors that led to an east-west central hall. There were three large chimneys that had double flues. There were five fireplaces that shared the chimneys along with stoves. The hall divided the house with the intention of two families living in it. There were nine rooms on each side of the hall for a total of eighteen. The first family to live on the north side was that of Ebner Batemen, who came to Connersville on the first canal boat to arrive there, "The Patriot," commanded by Captain Gayle Ford.

The yard extended down to Western Avenue and was terraced. An orchard was planted in back of the house. At the foot of the front yard, which was surrounded by a paling fence, was a large gate that opened into a brick walk with brick steps at each terrace. On one side of the front yard was a long grape arbor. Another brick walk led to a spring.

Meredith Helm was born in Kentucky in 1796 and moved to Indiana territory in 1811. He was in the mercantile business with Solomon Harland and John Conner. He was the first president of the Whitewater Valley Canal Company, the first president of the Fayette County Bank of which he was a prominent stockholder and later was chosen president of the Connersville branch of the Bank of the State of Indiana located in the Canal House.

When the canal ceased to operate, the home was remodeled with the front entrance changed to Third Street. This often happened in early homes when transportation changed from the rivers to the roads. An excellent example would be the Lanier Home in Madison, Indiana.

#### Valentine Billau Home

The old Valentine Billau home that stood at 510 Washington Street and also had an entrance on Grand Avenue in Connersville has been razed, but accounts of the home can be found in the local newspaper. The building was constructed with very thick brick walls. The basement had two levels. The lower one was accessible from the outside by a coal chute. The home was two stories tall with fireplaces on both floors. It was located near the Whitewater Canal.

Valentine Billau's family moved to the home from Cincinnati in 1850 and lived in the east end. Their furniture was shipped to Connersville by canal boat taking three weeks to arrive. They came to Cambridge City by train and then to Connersville by horse-drawn hack since the railroad had not yet reached Connersville. The west end of the home was lived in by Theodore Pfafflin and his wife, a daughter of the Billaus. An ice house stood south of the home. When the canal was frozen, ice was cut in large squares, pulled by horse to the ice house, and packed in sawdust to be used the following summer. Also the children spent many joyous hours skating on the frozen canal.



The railroad reached Connersville in 1867 building its tracks on the old Whitewater Canal tow-path. Across the canal and railroad tracks from the Billau home stood the Andre Opera House. David W. Andre was a pharmacist and built a two story 48 by 80 foot building for \$20,000 in 1876. The ground floor housed his drug store. The upper floor had a stage 21 by 46 feet and seating capacity for 60 people. The theatrical troupes came by rail with all their equipment and the rail car was parked across the alley from the stage entrance. The drug store operated until 1881 and the opera house until 1906 when the Auditorium Theatre, which seated 1200, was opened.

#### **McCann Flour Mill by the Whitewater Canal**

James McCann (1849-1918) was the owner of one of Connersville's early enterprises. He was born on a farm in Waterloo township. In 1878 he married Emma Hamilton, a native of Fayette County and a descendant of Indiana pioneers. They had two children. Their son died in infancy. Their daughter lived in the family homestead on the southeast corner of Vine and McCann Streets.

McCann learned his business by thorough study. His first real venture was to take over (1878) a retail grocery store originally started by his father in 1872. It was known as Basil McCann and Son and stood on Fifth and Vine. This site previously was a toll-house where travelers coming to town on the Liberty Road (US 44) or the Brookville Road (SR 1) paid a toll for using the roads that were privately owned.

He tired of the grocery business after a few years and decided to try manufacturing. He bought a flour mill on Second Street in 1890 and learned all he could about how wheat was planted, harvested, threshed and milled. During a violent thunderstorm the mill was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. Dauntless, McCann decided to re-enter the flour mill business. He purchased the Wetherald Flour Mill (1899) that had been inactive since the retirement of Edgar K. Wetherald.

The Wetherald Mill was located along the west side of the Whitewater Canal between Sixth and Seventh Streets. Water diverted from the canal powered the mill. After flowing under the mill the water was return to the canal. An unsteady footbridge was built over the canal near the mill so that onc could reach the business district.

After acquiring the dormant mill, McCann reactivated it and operated it for nearly a quarter century as McCann's Roller Mills. His flour was known by the trade name, the "Belle of Fayette." A beautiful "belle" was pictured on every flour sack. The flour was manufactured in Fayette County. Most of the flour was sold locally with customers paying in silver. McCann would take the silver coins home with him at night in a cigar box and his daughter would build houses with them. The coins were deposited at the bank the following morning.

Little was wasted at the mill. All kinds of broken and unbroken grains were swept up and sold as chicken feed. The mill also sold feed to the traveling circuses for their animals when they came to town. McCann's daughter recalls riding in the buggy to the circus ground to collect for the feed. She held the horse while her father completed the deal, which included complimentary circus tickets. McCann's brother Quincy was with the Van Amburg Circus and the Wallace Circus. He would stop by their home when the circus passed through town. At that time, the circuses moved from town to town with huge draft horses pulling brightly colored wagons and elephants and camels parading behind.

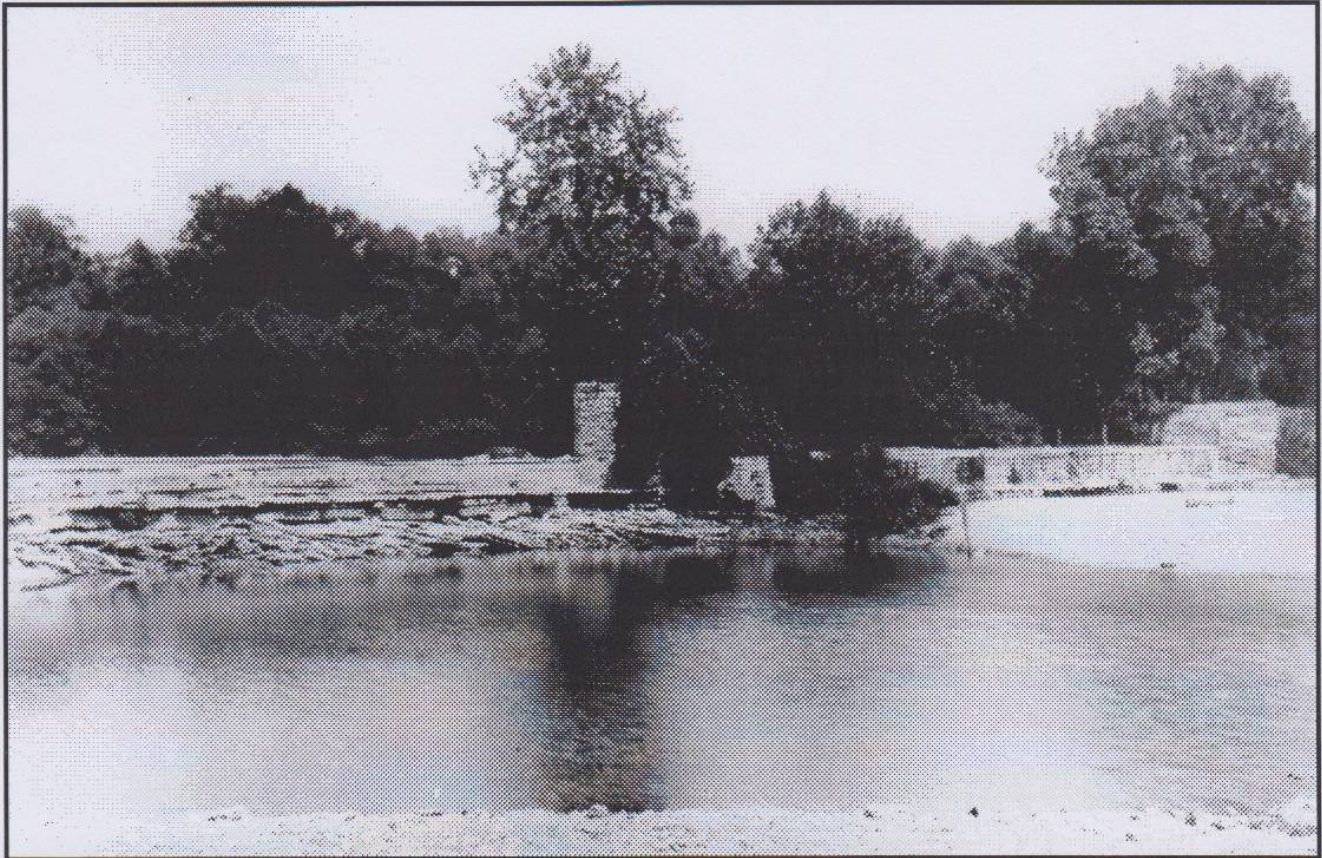
When the mill discontinued operating, the upper part of the building was removed leaving only the ground floor. It became, through the years, the Herman Broedling Garage, the Fielding and York Poultry House, the Scholl Dry Cleaning Plant, and the Risch Dry Cleaning Plant. Electric power replaced the water power. The canal bed was covered over with a parking lot where cars have replaced the slow moving canal boats.



### Whitewater Canal Generates Power

When the Whitewater Canal reached Connersville in 1845 it greatly improved mail, passenger and freight service between there and Cincinnati. Points in between also benefited.

The Whitewater River drops rapidly through the Whitewater Valley making it one of Indiana's fastest flowing rivers. The Whitewater Canal parallels the river's west fork. From Hagerstown to Cincinnati, a distance of 76 miles, the total fall in the canal was 490 feet requiring 56 locks to keep the canal from rushing into the Ohio River. Seven feeder dams were also built along the route to divert water into the canal to maintain a four foot depth. The ravages of frequent floods in the valley led to the demise of the canal. There were very few months that the entire distance was open because repairs were almost continually made on whole sections.



Feeder Dam #6 for the Whitewater Canal at Connersville, Indiana R E Stoops Connersville, Indiana

This fast flowing current had advantages beyond its disadvantages. The canal waters were used to turn the wheels of early industry before steam and later electric power took over. The Connersville Furniture Factory had a huge water wheel turned by canal water. Later, when more power was needed, a steam engine was connected to an additional line shaft. The factory was used to generate the first electric light for Connersville. V.Q. Erwin of Crawfordsville came to install an experimental electric plant in the factory. He attached a small belt-driven generator to one of the factory's line shafts and ran a circuit on poles to the downtown business district. There were twelve arc lights at different locations and in some stores. The canal current could generate electricity, but selling the idea to the public was unsuccessful. The plant was dismantled.



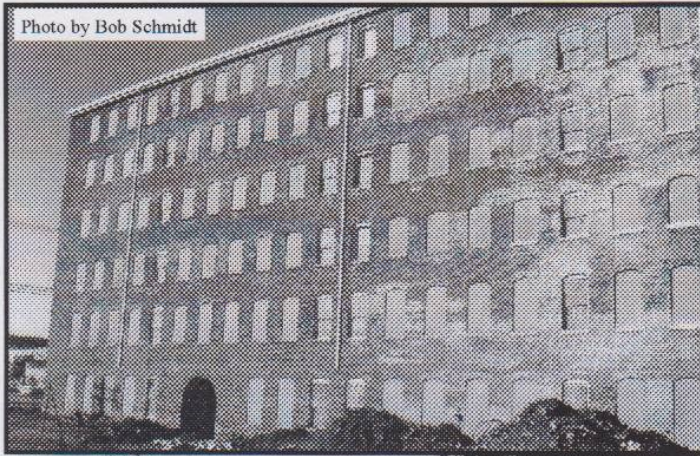


Photo by Bob Schmidt

**Connersville Furniture Factory**

The abandoned furniture factory located next to the canal at 1013 Western Avenue is undergoing restoration for the Community Education Coalition. It was once powered by canal water from the Connersville Hydraulic Company. The head race and turbine were located

Built  
In  
1892

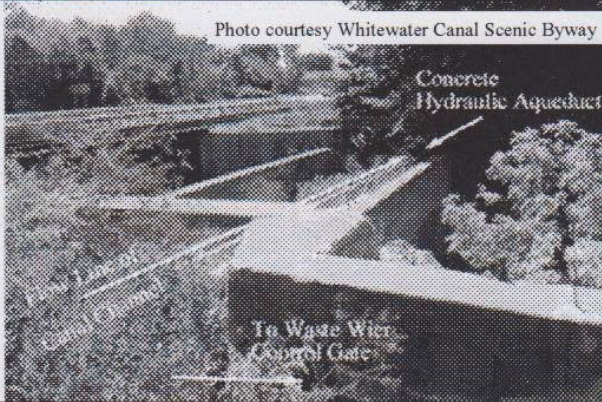
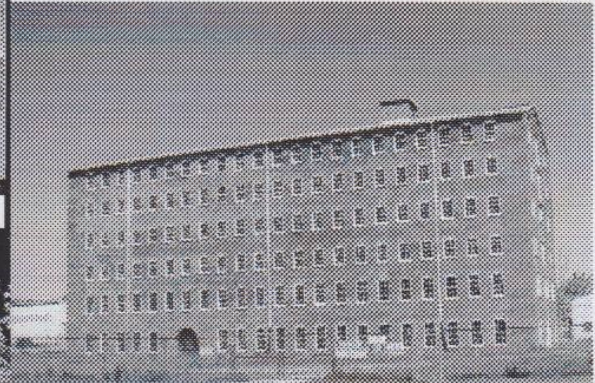


Photo courtesy Whitewater Canal Scenic Byway

Concrete Hydraulic Aqueduct

To Waste Wier Control Gate



**Community Education Coalition Building**

Photo courtesy Whitewater Canal Scenic Byway

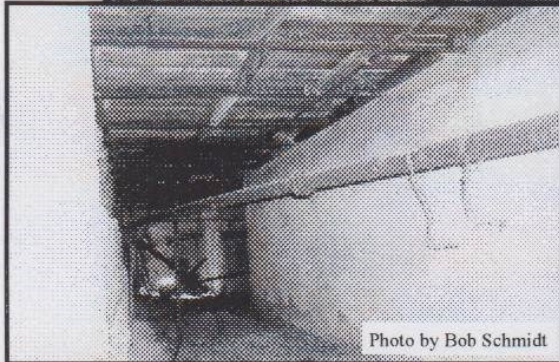


Photo by Bob Schmidt

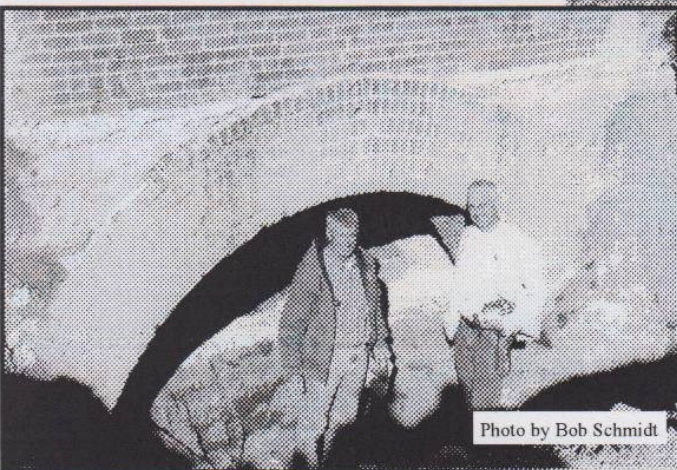
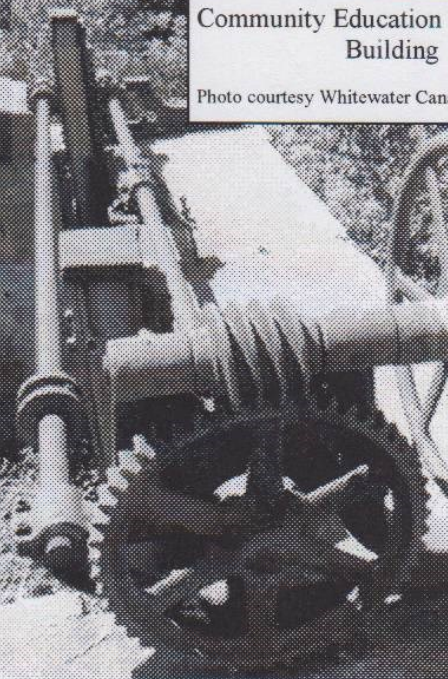


Photo by Bob Schmidt

on the north side of the building where the above machinery is seen. The tail race ran underneath the building through the passage as seen on the left, out the south side of the building through this arch and then it rejoined the canal.

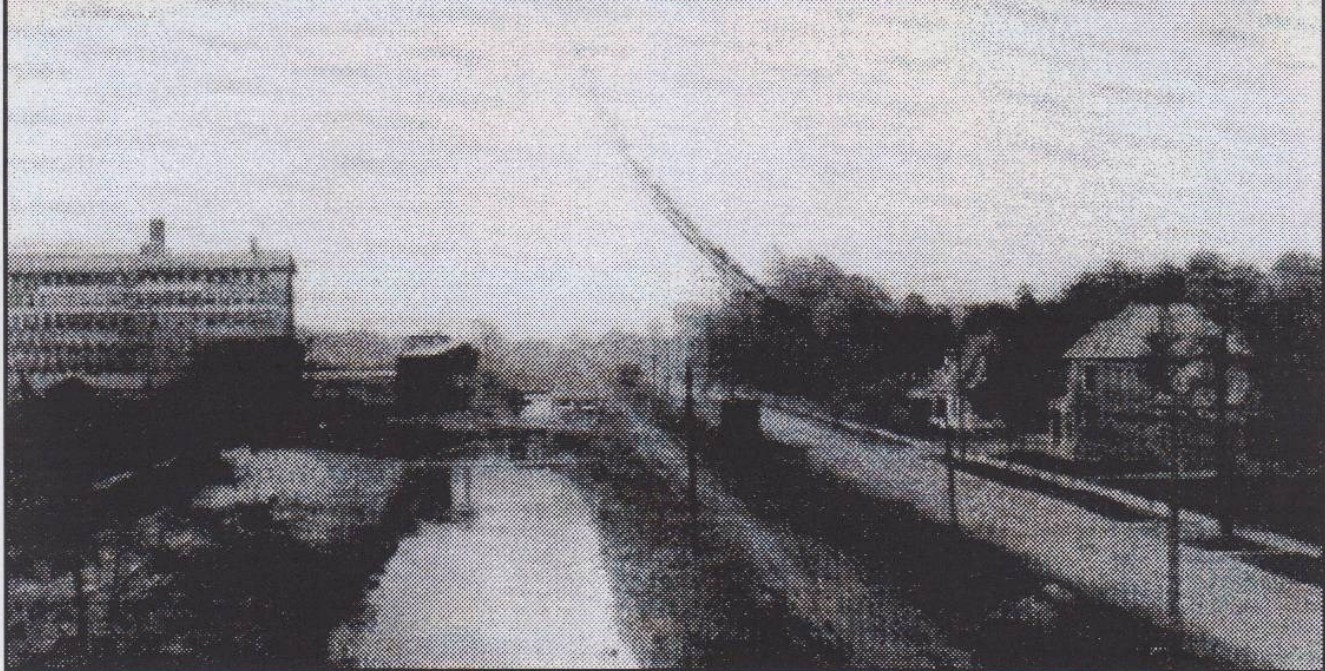


WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

Looking north from 11th Street along the C.C.C. & St. L. R.R. with Whitewater Canal at Connersville, Indiana.



Looking north from 10th St. along Whitewater Canal at Connersville, Indiana E F Williams Photographer Connersville, Indiana



**Historic Photographs of the Whitewater Canal  
in Connersville, Indiana  
Showing the Prominence of the Furniture Factory**



WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

In the early 1920s the Interstate Public Service Company (Public Service Indiana) decided to generate power by putting hydroelectric stations along the abandoned canal. Water was drawn from the river into the canal at a point north of Connersville to a point opposite First Street, where it was returned to the river after passing the last hydroelectric station. The crumbling foundations of these stations are said to be visible near the disintegrating stone locks along the old canal bed.

The stations filled a need but had a limited output. As more was learned about transmitting high voltage current, it became more practical to locate generating plants near coal fields and use steam power. This type of plant can now be found in Lawrenceburg at I & M's Tanners Creek Plant.

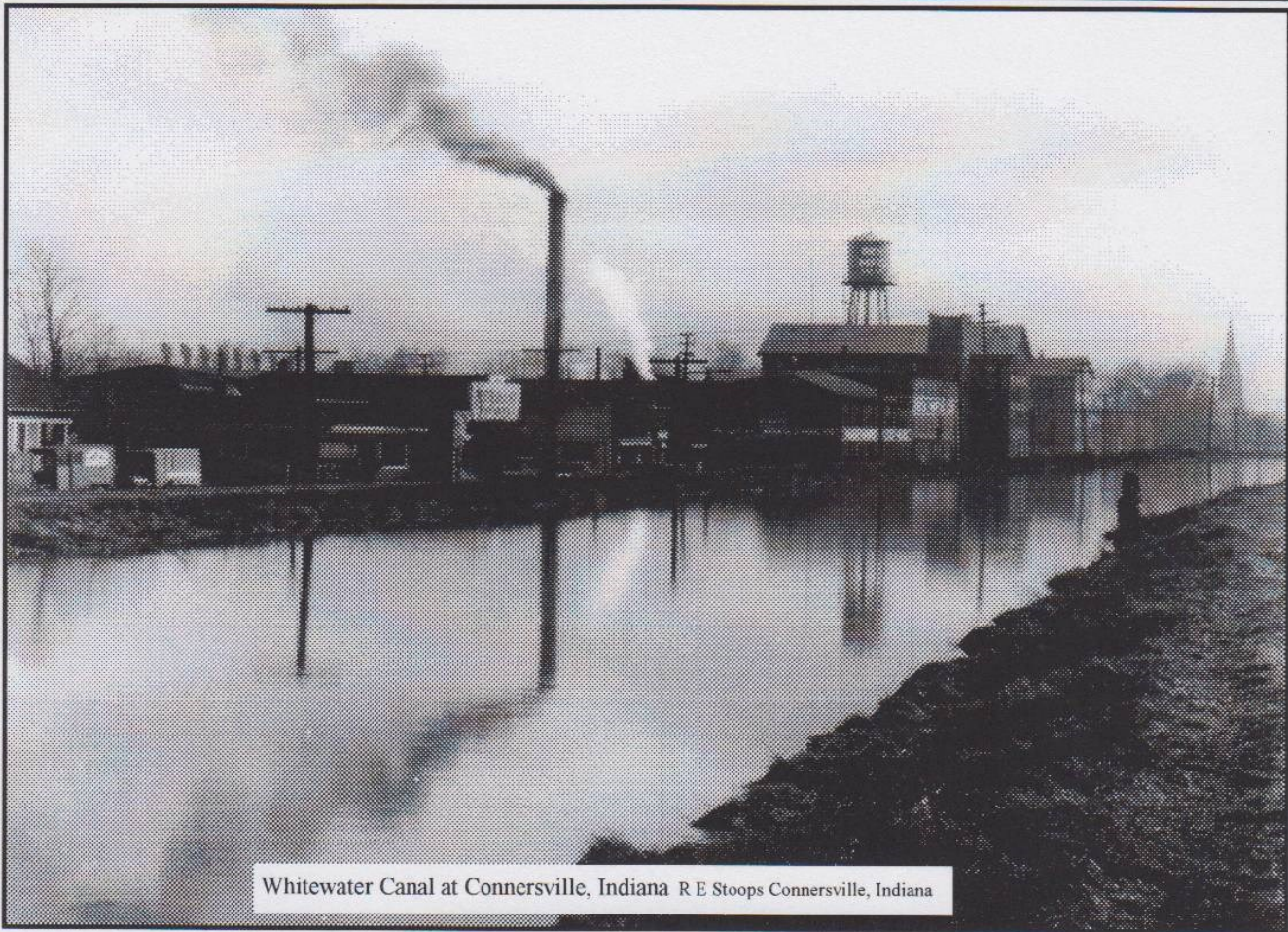
Connersville Hydraulic Company and Water Works on the abandoned Whitewater Canal in Connersville, Indiana Historic Photo



Looking south from 10th St. along Whitewater Canal in Connersville, Indiana C W Williams Photographer Connersville, Indiana







Whitewater Canal at Connersville, Indiana R E Stoops Connersville, Indiana

In the 1870s furniture making grew to become an important industry in Connersville. By the late 1870s the economy was bolstered by wagons, buggies, wheel works, and body shops. This led directly into Connersville's becoming a producer of ten different makes of cars between 1905 to 1937. Those that were most well known are the McFarlan, Lexington, Auburn and Cord. When the auto business declined in the 1920s and 30s, the lines began producing delivery truck and Jeep bodies.

Other businesses included the Krell Auto Grand Piano Company from 1908-15 and the Dan Patch Company, producers of hobby horses, coaster wagons, playground autos, and other wooden items.

Today many precision car parts and air-conditioning components are produced in Connersville. Other noted industries assemble blowers, caskets, dishwashers, and vacuum pumps.

### Roots Blowers

An interesting concept first began in Connersville at the site of the Roots Woolen Mill. Philander and Francis Root started the mill in 1846 to produce a variety of clothing. They used the Whitewater Canal to power the overshot wheel of this mill. In 1854 they began experimenting with a new water wheel and discovered that two wooden lobes shaped like figure-eight paddles operating in opposite directions discharged a force of air - a rotary air blower. Their discovery led to what is now the world's largest producer of rotary lobe and centrifugal blowers. Their blowers have been used in the Comstock lode mine in Nevada for ventilation. But probably the most interesting application of the discovery was when they built the "Western Tornado" and installed it in the New York Subway. It could blow a 22-



seat passenger car to one end of the track and then suck it back. It never caught on.

The original building burned in 1875. The building known as the Roots Blower Plant was built in 1893 by the Connersville Blower Company, a rival of Roots. However CBC merged with P.H. and F. B. Roots when taken over by a conglomerate. Since 1944 they are the Roots Blower Operation of Dresser Industries and produce engines for industries world wide that require the movement of air or gas at moderate pressures.

### The Whitewater Canal in Winter at Connersville

The following excerpts are from an article entitled "The Canal Basin" by Kate Heron that appeared in the Connersville **News-Examiner** found in the files of the Fayette County Public Library. Unfortunately the date of the article was not included.

"The basin of the canal (in Connersville) extended almost to the wall of the "Town Hall" now the City and Masonic hall.

"Before the canal was extended to Cambridge City and Hagerstown, the basin was used for turning the boats south after their trip up the canal to the towns north. The basin was the docking and passing place.

"In winter the basin and Claypool's levy was the Mecca for skaters. The bridges were built high with stone steps on the four sides that led to the floor of the bridge.

"The bridges were built quite a bit higher than the boats permitting them to pass under in safety.

"During the skating season the bridges would be crowded with people of all ages, watching the antics and fancy skating.

"A number of skaters became experts and received prizes given by the merchants for the best skater. Will Hankings and James Herron were among the best prize winners.

"...we skated on ice that would often freeze to the thickness of eight, ten and in extreme cold, as much as fourteen inches.

"Men with long heavy sharp saws would cut the ice into cakes two feet long, sixteen inches wide and if ten inches thick the cake would weigh 200 pounds.

"Ice would form on the river, but not thick enough for commercial value.

"...Houses were built for storing ice for summer use. The cakes were packed in sawdust in which the ice kept perfectly.

"I remember an ice house on Washington street between Fifth and Sixth streets. The ice that was stored there was used for cooling beer made at the Billau brewery.

"The two story brick brewery building has been converted into two dwellings. The east side faces on the canal and the west side on Washington street.

"Joseph Groff and later George Waltz made a business of cutting and storing ice. Their ice houses were at the south end of the Claypool levy, and retailed in the rear of the Groff restaurant and store, which was on the east side of Central Avenue, the second room south of Fifth street. The restaurant was entered from Fifth street.

"All ice that was cut and stored by these men was consumed in Connersville and sold from 3 to 5 cents per pound and you had to carry it home with ice tongs, which the majority of homes owned.

"...The years of 1886 or 7 came very near being a year without a winter. No ice formed until the last of March, then the canal and other streams froze over with ice thick enough to cut for summer use.

"A young man, by the name of Peio, was employed by Miss Cressler in her "Roman School for American Girls," Rome Italy.

"Peio accompanied Miss Cressler and Miss Sumner when they came to Connersville and established the Elmhurst School for girls.

"During the winter, ice on the lake at Elmhurst froze to a thickness sufficient for cutting. Miss Cressler told the Italian to go to the lake and cut a square of ice. She gave him a saw and told him to use it but forgot to tell him to stand on the outside of the piece he was cutting.

"After cutting the three sides Peio stood looking at the partly cut cake. After debating for quite a



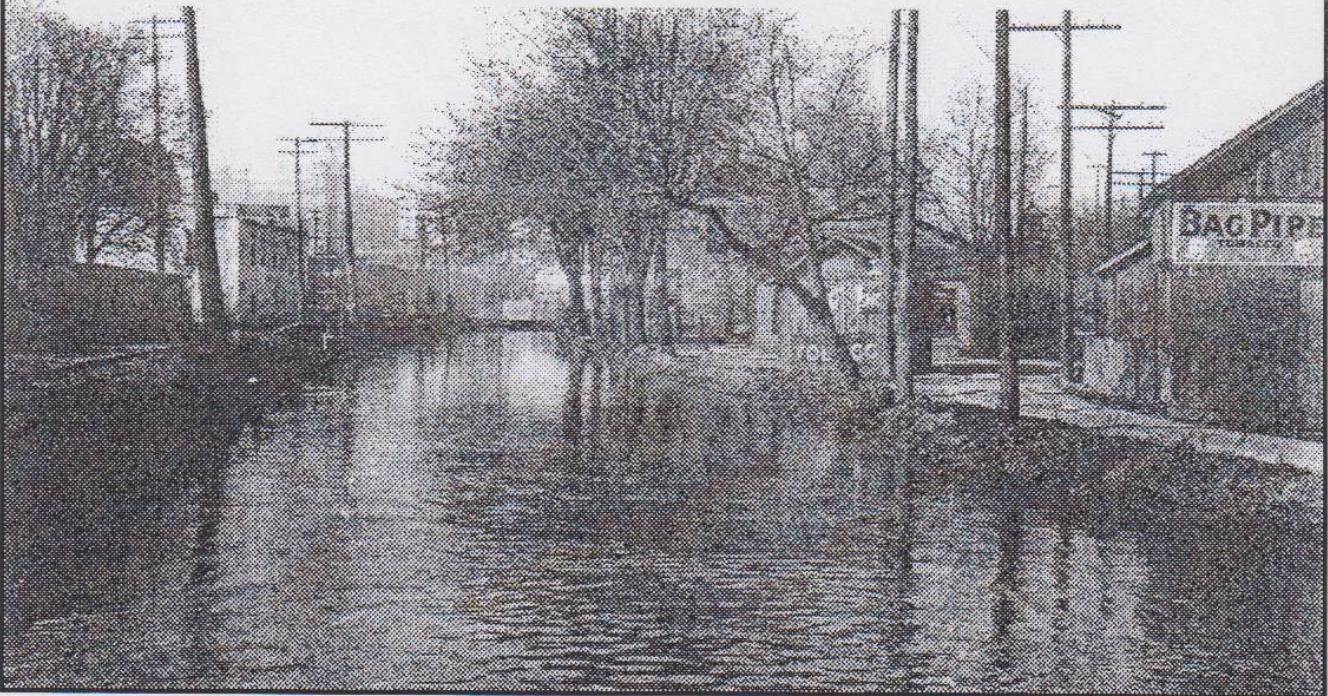
WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

while how to cut the fourth side, he stepped onto the center of the square and cut the fourth side, giving himself a cold lake bath."

Ice is seen on the Whitewater Canal from 7th Street in North Connersville, Indiana. C J Williams photographer, Bloomington, IL.

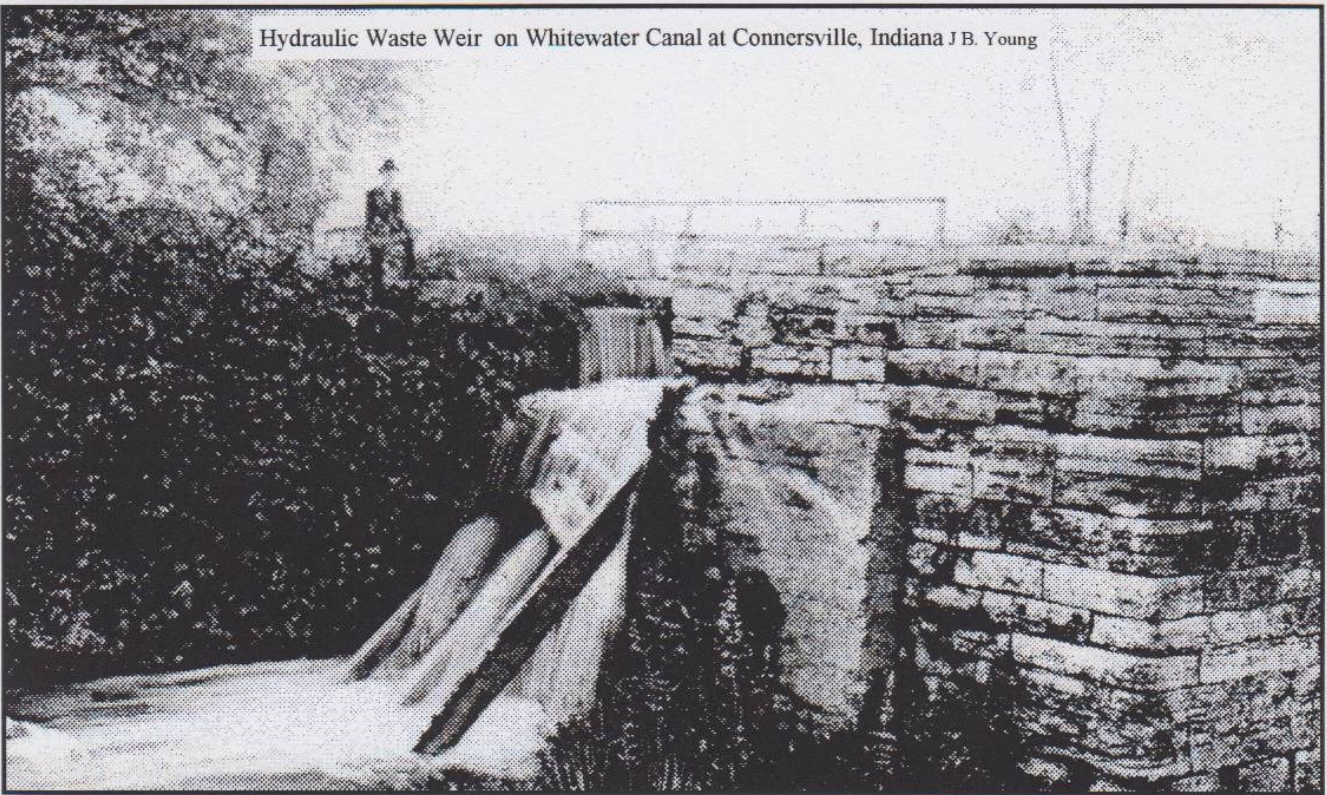


This part of the Whitewater Canal at Connersville, Indiana looking south at 15th Street has been filled in and is now part of Western Avenue. Photo Frank M. Hohenberger. *Indiana Photographs*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. 1993.

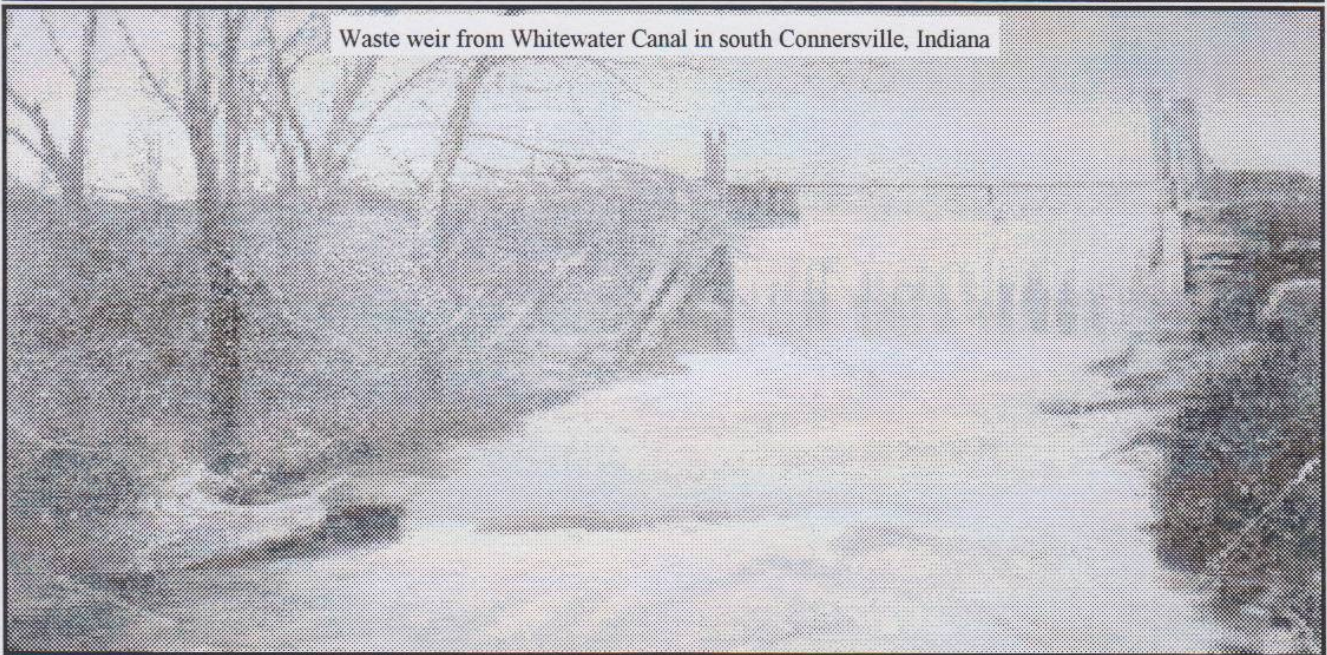




Hydraulic Waste Weir on Whitewater Canal at Connersville, Indiana J.B. Young



Waste weir from Whitewater Canal in south Connersville, Indiana

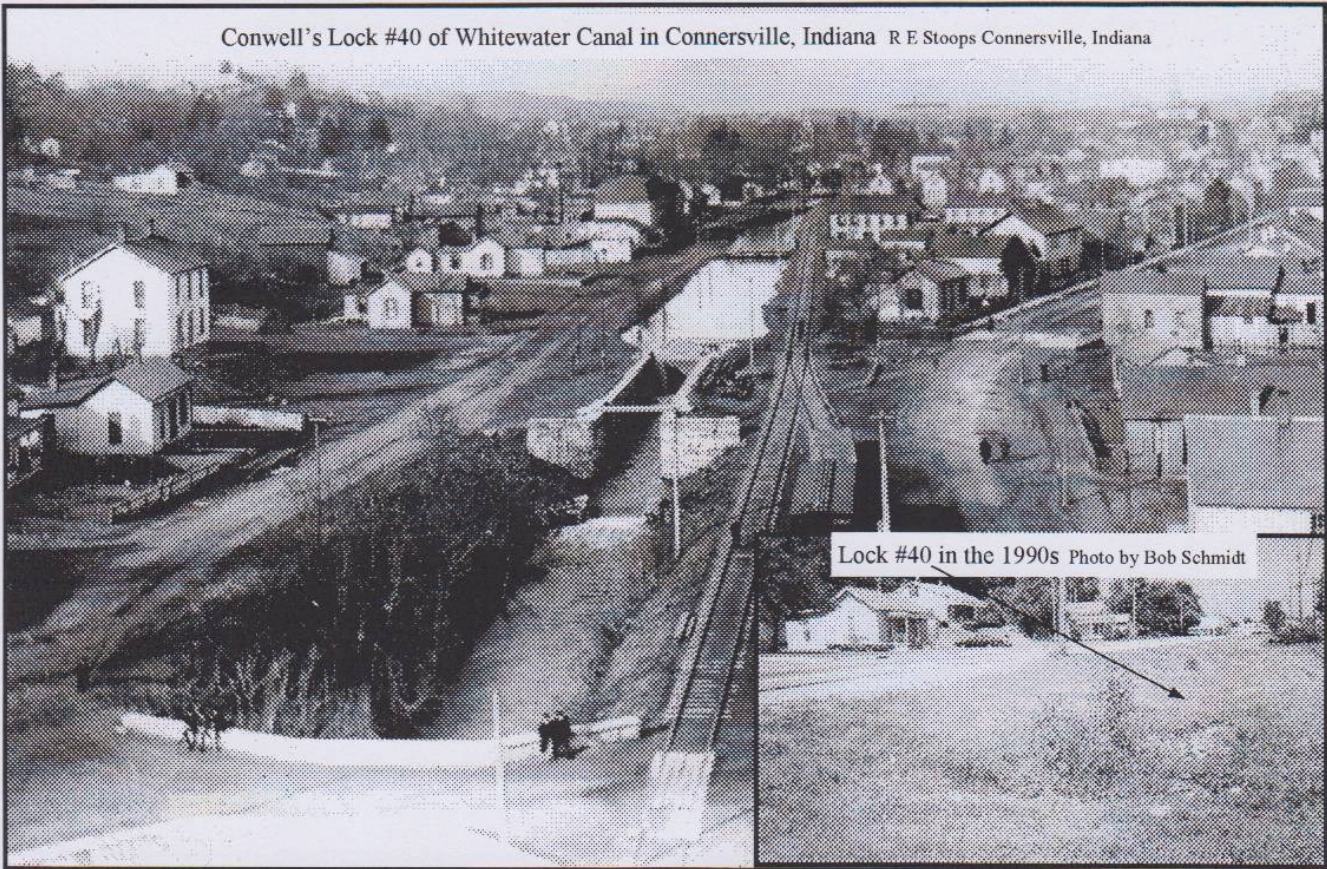


Located at the south edge of Connersville were two locks to compensate for the evident change in elevation. These were Conwell's Lock #40, named for business man Abram B. Conwell, and Pork House Lock #39 named for Conwell's pork processing plant. Conwell's mills used the canal for water power.

Both of these locks and the canal have been filled in. If you look closely at the change in elevation you can see where they were once located.



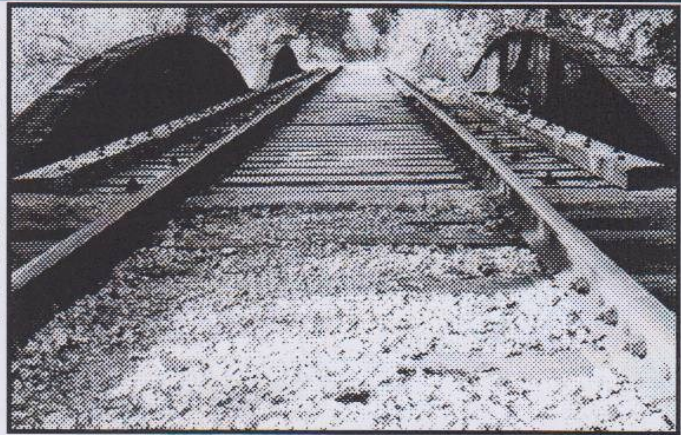
Conwell's Lock #40 of Whitewater Canal in Connerville, Indiana R E Stoops Connerville, Indiana



Lock #40 in the 1990s Photo by Bob Schmidt

About a mile out of Connerville is Herron's Lock #38 named for Connerville businessman, James M. Herron. Herron owned land nearby. Just below this lock water was introduced into the canal from Feeder Dam #5.

Updegraff's Lock #37 is located about a half mile above Williams Creek and was named for a local farmer. At Williams Creek a timber aqueduct carried the canal across the creek. Today a railroad bridge passes over the creek at the site.



A railroad bridge now crosses Williams Creek where an aqueduct was once located. Photo by Lynette Kross

## NULLTOWN

Nulltown, a village located about 5 miles south of Connerville, was the site of an early day saw-mill built by Thomas Silvey, who later sold it to Israel and Michael Null. They added a small grist-mill. After Crisler's mill no longer operated they added a large flouring and grist-mill. These mills did not operate very long for the demise of the canal and the hydraulic destroyed the power.

When a post office was established there on February 26, 1847 the village was called Ashland; however, it later was known as Null's Mills and then simply Nulltown. By 1917 seventy-eight people lived there. It had one store and Faikert Brothers, who handled farm equipment, coal and building supplies.



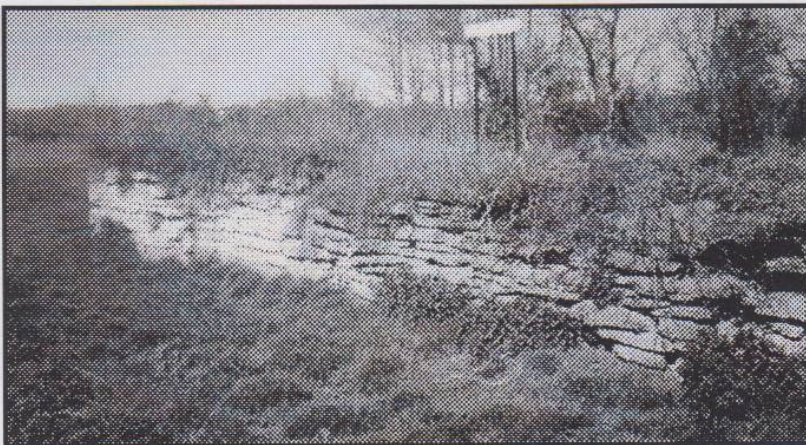
Lock No. 36 of the Whitewater Canal was located at Nulltown. Today only a few of the stones from this lock remain and are difficult to find. Perhaps they were recycled and used as parts of buildings in the area.

The first school building in the township was located just below Nulltown. It was erected in 1815. Gabriel Ginn was the first school teacher. Around 1821 a log school house was constructed about one mile west of Alpine. Its first teachers were Dr. Philip Mason and Daniel McIntyre.

### BERLIN

Anticipating the benefits to be reaped from the Whitewater Canal, Dr. Philip Mason, laid out the village of Berlin and recorded it on October 29, 1838. It was located on the west side of the canal between the villages of Nulltown and Alpine and consisted of (on paper) seventy-three lots. Although the plan was pretentious, not much of a village ever materialized. Morgan T. Vardiman operated a shoe shop in a store owned by S. Brown. There were a few homes, which were served by Dr. John Turner.

The Berlin Lock #35 of the Whitewater Canal was located there. It was a composite lock with cut stone approaches and rubble stone chamber lined with 2 layers of 2 inch planks to hold water and to protect the boat from the rough stone.



Berlin Lock #35		Photos
Top left: Berlin Lock		Bob Schmidt
Bottom left: Berlin Lock & train		Gene Paschka
Right: Iron hanger that supported posts and planking inside lock chamber		Gene Paschka

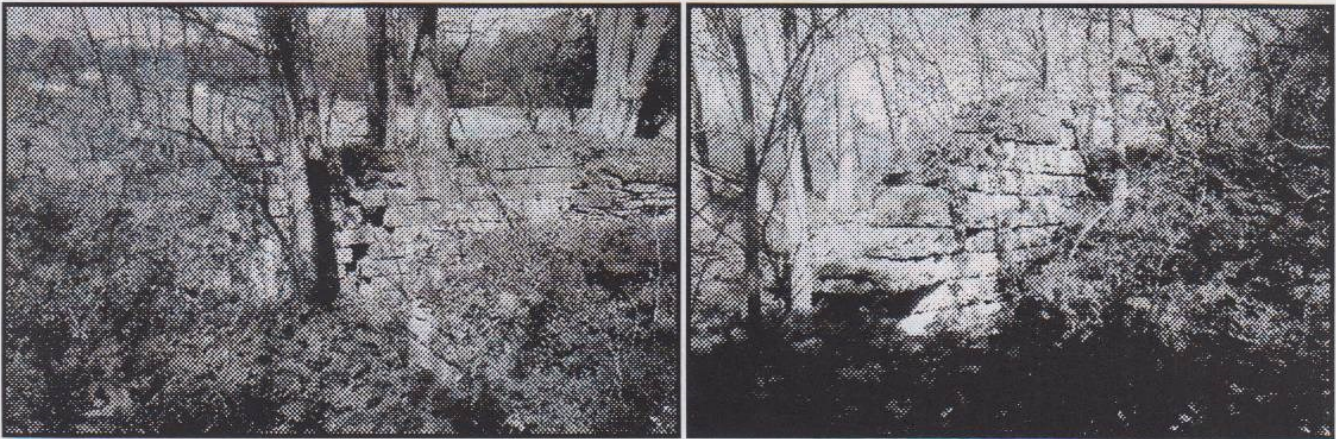


## ALPINE

Alpine, located in Columbia township, became a village due to the sawmill erected at the north end of town in 1814 by Allen Crisler. In 1816 it was purchased by Doctor Mason, who operated a flour-mill in connection to it. Mason later added a still-house and hemp-mill. Colonel Crisler was the manager for all four operations. The river changed its course and destroyed the power of these mills.

A post office was established on February 24, 1868. William T. Limpus was the postmaster. By 1917 sixty people resided in the village. There was a general store owned by E. I. Chance, who was also postmaster and railroad and express agent for the Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland and St. Louis Railroad. There were two saw-mills operated by the Sherwood brothers and by Shuttleworth & Stone.

Located just a few hundred yards south of Alpine beyond where IN 121 crosses the railroad tracks is Connell's Lock #34. It is a composite lock with cut stone approaches and a rubble stone/plank lined chamber. Tree roots are pulling it apart. Its condition is bad.



Connell's Lock #34 and Tumble Photos by Bob Schmidt

## Wawassa Paper Mill

The Wawassa Paper Mill (1865-75) was located one mile south of Alpine on the bank of the Whitewater Canal just north of Limpus Lock #33. It is a good example of alternate uses of the canal after its decline. The plant stood on Daniel R. Green's farm until it was destroyed by fire in 1875. Wawassa is thought by some to be an Indian name. Others say it is a corruption of the original owners initials - W. A. Smith. The mill was the first and only paper mill in Fayette County and was operated exclusively by water power. The mill owner decided to utilize the discontinued old canal. He had a dam constructed across the Whitewater River just above Alpine that diverted river water into the canal bed and on to the mill. Along the river in front of the mill and near the lock was a "barrel" fence made of barrels filled with sand and gravel.

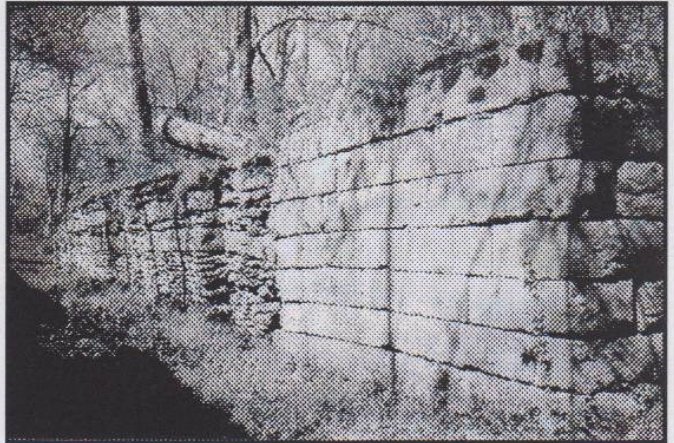
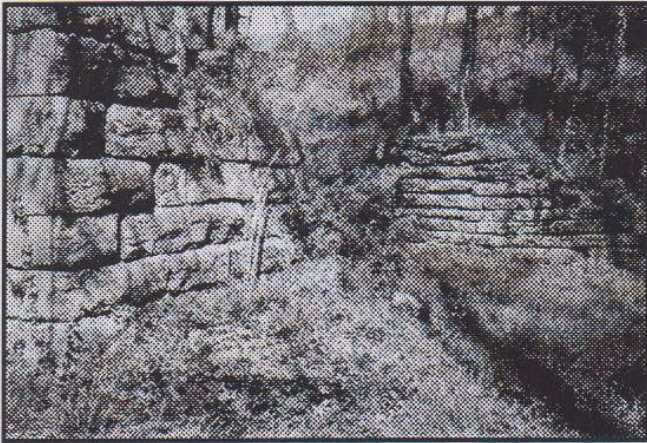
The Wawassa Mill employed from 75 to 150 people and produced hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of paper products in the ten years it operated. At first the mill only manufactured paper from wood grown nearby. The top branches of the poplar trees were used for making paper. The mill owners would purchase tracts of land, cut the poplar trees, use the branches, sell the trunks, market the remaining timber and sell the land. Soon poplar trees became scarce and the paper was made from straw purchased from Fayette farmers at a good rate. When straw became scarce, farmers received a good price for corn stalks, which they hauled to the plant rather than plowing them under. This made a very good grade of paper.



There was a growing demand for a better finished paper. Lute was imported from South America and other raw materials came from Europe. Transporting these raw products was costly and unprofitable. The mill owners decided to use rags for their highest grade paper. The Wassaw Mill's paper products were shipped all around the world. They left Connersville in carload lots on the Whitewater Railroad whose tracks were laid on the old towpath.

The Wassaw Mill was in operation seven days a week both day and night for ten years. Milling paper is a continuous manufacturing process. Around the mill grew a community with a school house a church, a physician and a shoe cobbler. When the mill was destroyed by fire, the community was injured through the loss of jobs and thousands of dollars in sales. The scrap iron left in the mill's remains were sold to Stephen Limpus thus removing the last traces of the mill.

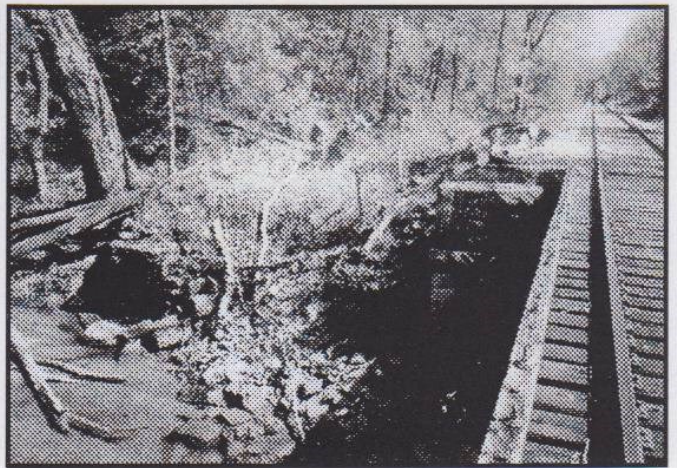
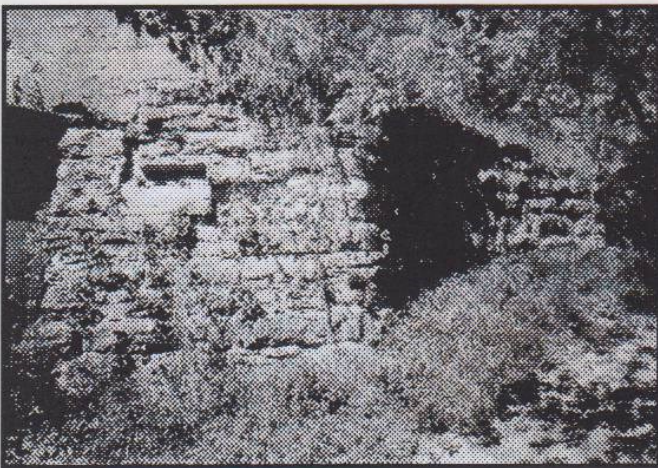
Located one mile south of the village of Alpine on the Whitewater Canal is a good example of a composite lock having mason cut stone portals and a rubble stone chamber that was one lined with wooden planks to make it watertight. The gate recess is even of rubble stone. Portions of the tumble still remain.



Photos by Bob Schmidt

Limpus Lock # 33 and tumble

At Garrison Creek a timber trestle bridge once carried the canal over the creek. Today the railroad bridge sits atop the trestle abutments. Nearby is Garrison's Lock #32 that is also a composite lock.



Photos by Bob Schmidt

Garrison Creek Railroad Bridge sits atop old Abutments







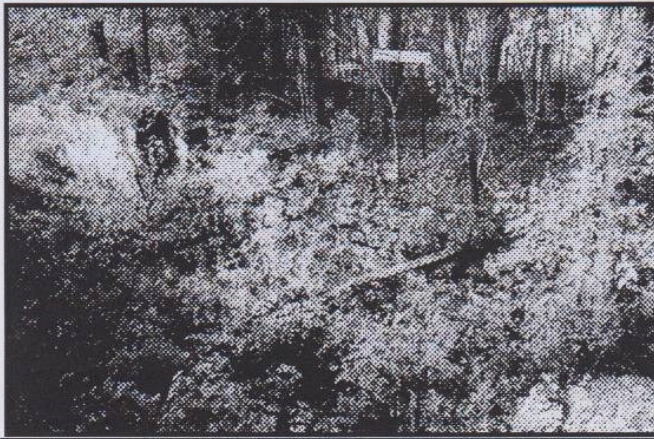


Photo by Lynette Kross

Garrison's Lock #32

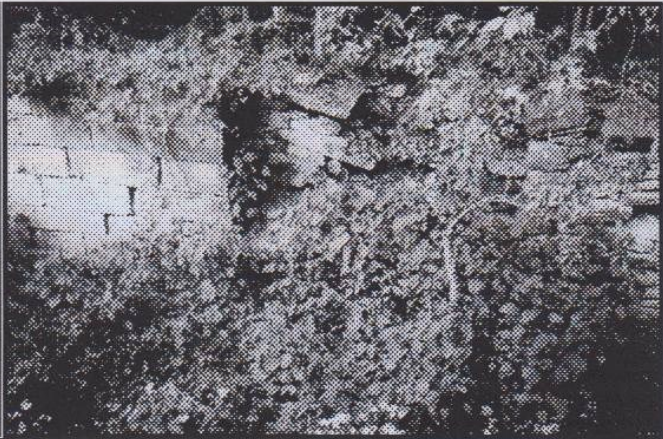


Photo by Brian Migliore

Hetrick's Lock #31 was named for a local resident. This composite lock's condition is not good.

## LAUREL

Laurel encompasses the site of Somerset (1816), which was founded 20 years before Laurel. In that year Jacob Whetzel blazed a 60 mile trace from the tavern to the White River at Waverly [Port Royal] south of Indianapolis, built a road and sold land along it to his friends in the East. When it was later surveyed his accuracy was amazing as it only varied 4 degrees from due west. Later Somerset was incorporated into Laurel.

James Conwell founded Laurel in 1836. The Whitewater Canal provided power and transportation so tht Laurel became a mill town and shipping center. Laurel's fine limestone was used to build the canal locks.

The town has many limestone structures and retaining walls. The old stone jail, one of Indiana's oldest being built around 1850, contains a guard room and a cell. The jail is on the site of the old canal basin. At one time an old stone barn stood next to the jail where horses that pulled the canal boats were stabled. The wall at the foot of Whitehall Tavern is about 300 feet long. It is easy to see how Laurel turned to the limestone industry after the canal era.

On a high hillside is the Laurel Cemetery where poets Elizabeth Conwell Smith Willson and Byron Forceythe Willson are buried. Elizabeth was the granddaughter of James Conwell. Willson was said to be a good friend of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Ralph Waldo Emerson, James Russell Lowell, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. East of the cemetery is an old Indian mound. James Conwell gave this spot to the citizens for a park, which has an overlook.

Charles Murray was born in Laurel on the corner of Washington and Baltimore Streets. He was an Irish comedian who toured with vaudeville performers and later was in both silent and talking pictures.

The Whitehall Tavern stands on the corner of Baltimore and Franklin Streets near the old boat landing in the canal basin. It was an important hotel during the canal era. Squire Clements, the host, was a fat, jovial man known for his hospitality. The tavern was unusual in that Squire Clements served no alcoholic beverages. The tavern was known for its ghost and well as its host.



WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

Guests were said to have heard a baby crying and its mother quietly soothing it in a low voice when there was no mother or child in the tavern. As the old legend tells it, a young woman was on her way west to meet her husband. She stopped at the tavern and gave birth to her first baby. The husband had to be notified when both the mother and baby were too weak to travel. He hastened to them but arrived after they had died. Before her death she was heard to soothe the crying child. Being distraught at being separated from her husband her ghost haunted Whitehall.

Another important hotel was the Laurel Hotel, which is now a restaurant and was originally called Hunsinger's Tavern. It is on Franklin and Pearl Streets. A little to the south of a bridge near the hotel the canal crossed the Whitewater River by means of a wooden aqueduct. Today a railroad bridge crosses close by.

On the east bank of the river is the road to the Laurel Feeder Dam along which two canal locks can be found — Laurel Lock #30 and Jinks Lock #29 at the Feeder Dam. Both are composite locks. Whether traveling by the road or by the train, Lock #30 is hidden in the underbrush.

The Laurel feeder dam across the West Fork of the Whitewater River was built in 1843 and restored in 1960. It creates a reservoir and feeds water into the Whitewater Canal via a feeder canal.



The specifications for these dams are found in Webb's 1856 Daybook on page 11 of this book. They varied in height and length according to the size of the river at each site.



Whitehall Tavern with limestone wall Photo Bob Schmidt



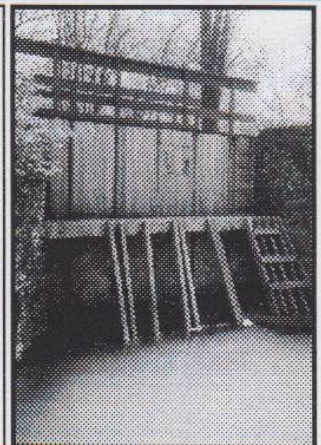
The railroad bridge across the Whitewater River has a pier in the river. The old aqueduct was nearby. Photo by Lynette Kross



Above: Jink's Lock #29 at Laurel Feeder Dam Photo Bob Schmidt

Left: Dam #4 on the Whitewater River near Laurel Photo by Gene Paschka

Right: Water backed up by the feeder dam passes through this structure before entering the feeder canal to go to the Whitewater canal at Mctamora. This structure is still in use. Photo Bob Schmidt



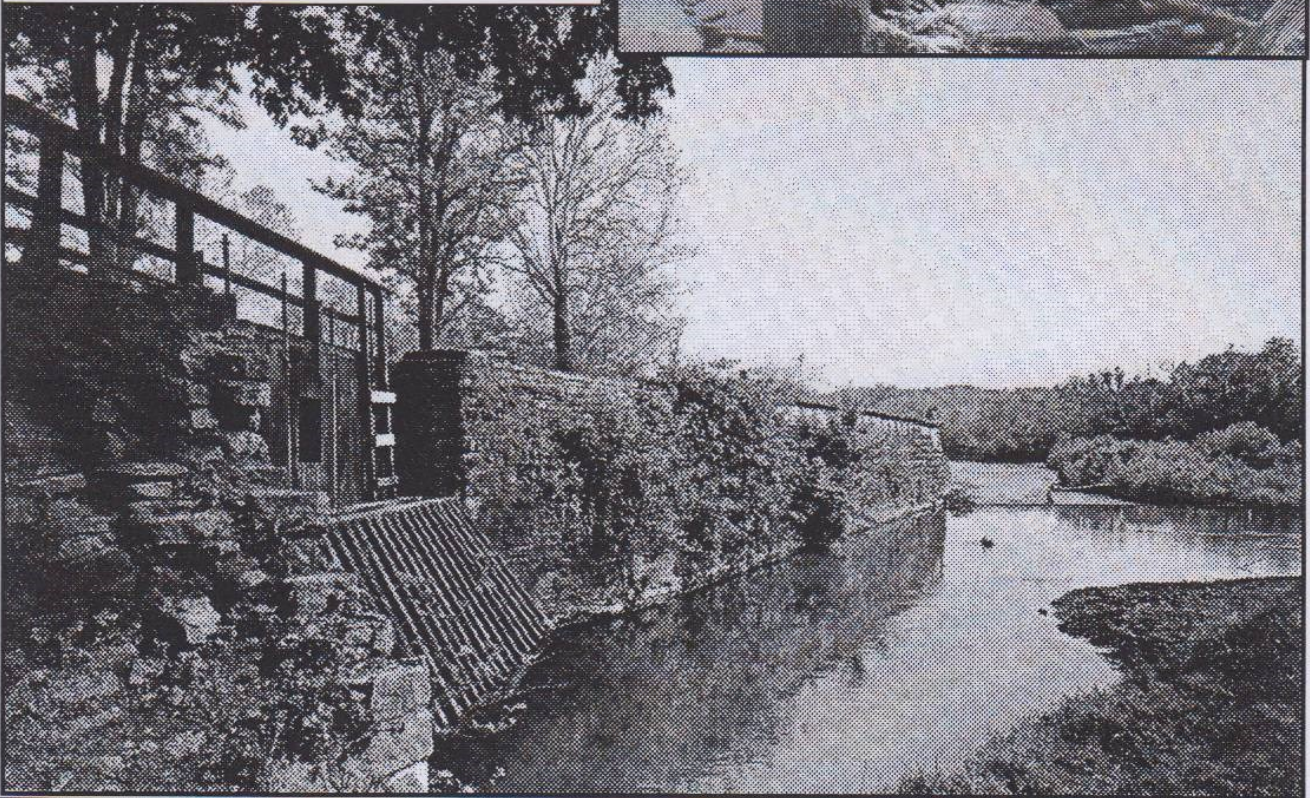


WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK



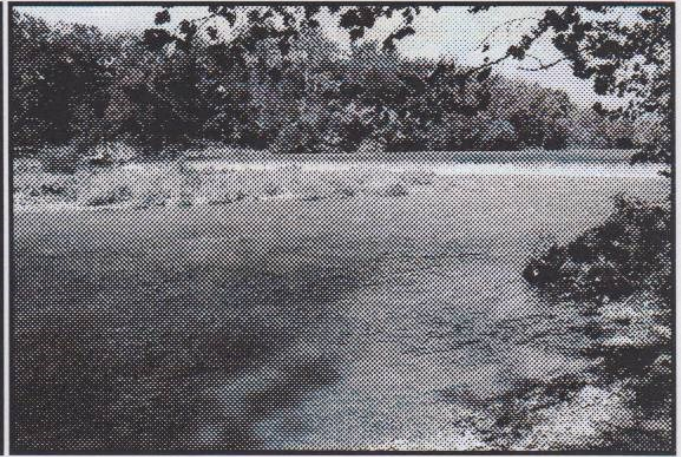
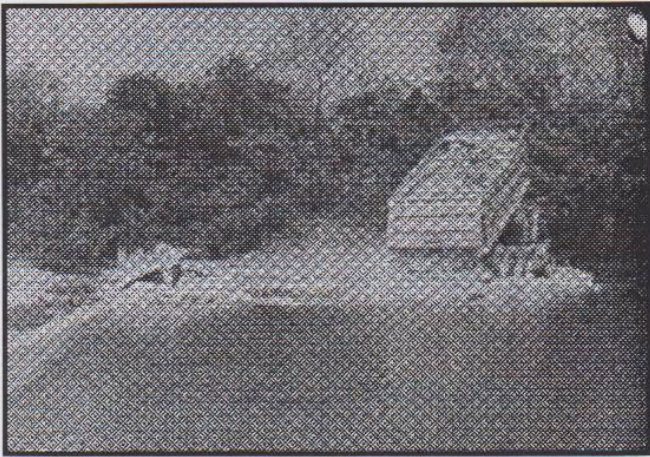
Above: The Laurel Feeder Dam is being repaired in the late 1800s after being breached as shown on the right. The dam is one of seven feeder dams along the original 76 miles of the Whitewater Canal. The wooden cribs were replaced by concrete, which later had to be replaced again. Below: The Laurel Feeder Dam pools water that is fed through this structure into the feeder canal and then to the Whitewater Canal. Fourteen miles of this early transportation system have been restored throughout the rolling hills of east central Indiana.

Historic Photos

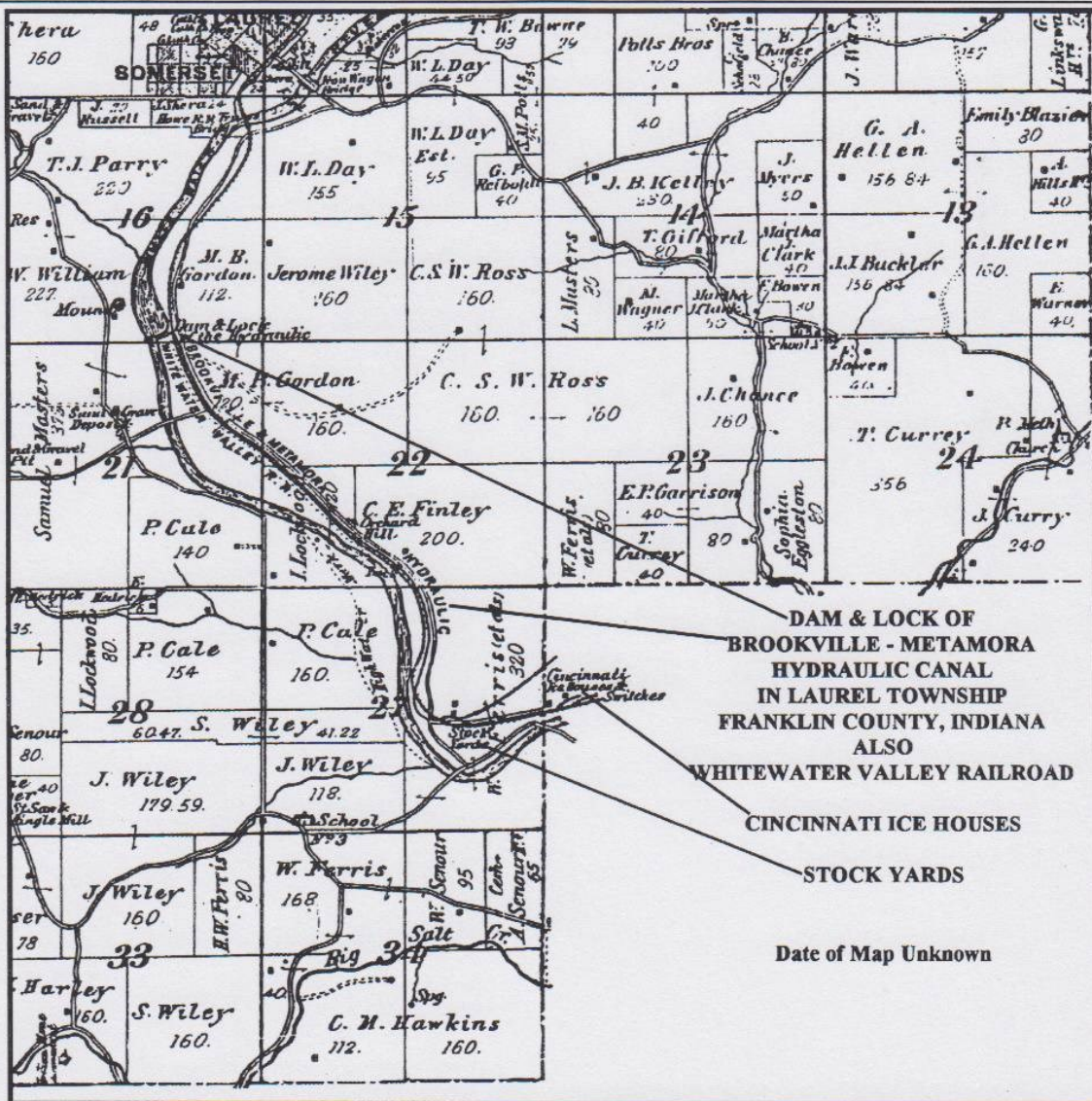




WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK



Left: Rainbow Construction owned by Amos Schwartz of Berne, Indiana, which built the "Ben Franklin II" in 1980-81, also repaired Whitewater Canal structures such as the Laurel Feeder Dam for the Indiana's Department of Natural Resources. Rainbow Const. Right: Below the Laurel Feeder Dam the Whitewater River is shallow. Photo by Lynette Kross



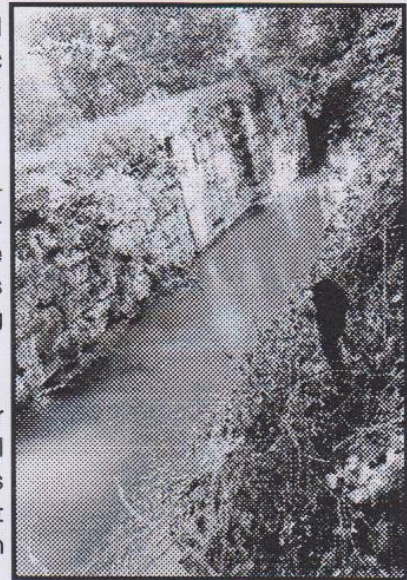


## WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

Laurel Feeder Dam #4 was still useful after the Whitewater Canal was abandoned. It fed water into the Brookville-Metamora Hydraulic Canal. The Whitewater Valley railroad laid its tracks upon the old tow path.

Simonton's Lock #28 was named for a local resident. It is a composite lock and has water in it. These locks were built on timber foundations. As long as the timber is kept wet it will keep the walls of the lock fairly well standing. The walls are placed on the ends of the timbers much like people on a teeter-totter. If it dries out it deteriorates causing the walls to fall in because they are no longer balanced.

Ferris' Lock #27 is also a composite lock. It was located near Valley View where the canal and railroad tracks separate. The canal went around the edge of a large flat field. The rails shot straight across the field near the west fork of the Whitewater River's bank. At that time Valley View was called "Ice Pond." Today it is at milepost 54 on the Whitewater Valley Railroad.

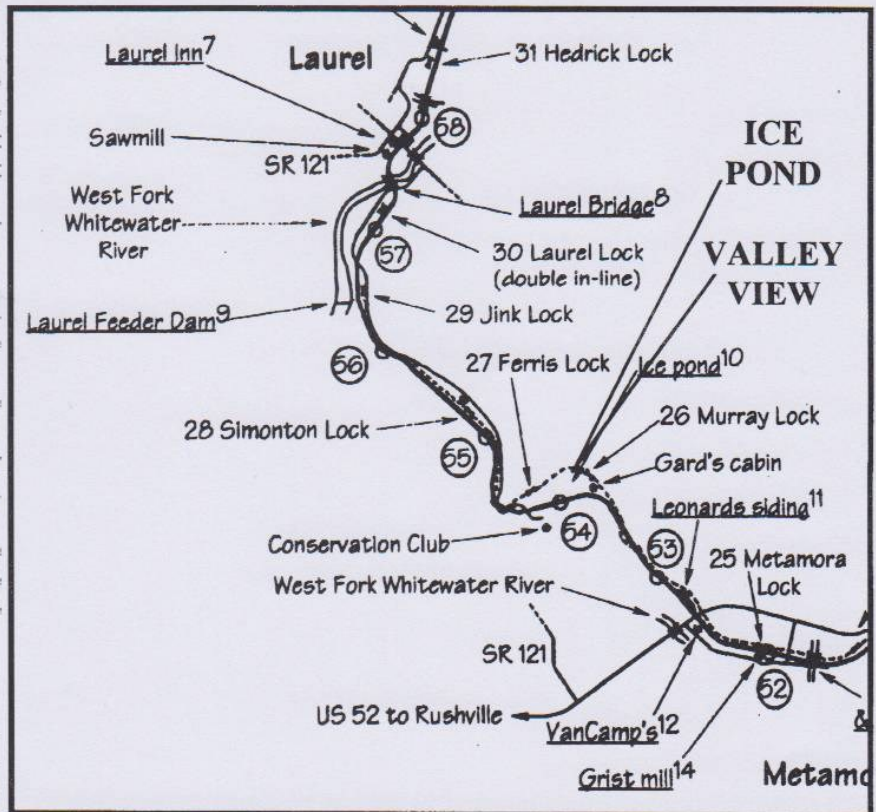


Simonton's Lock #28 P Lynette Kross

CSI member John Hillman located two plat maps that show an ice house stood there from 1882 to the early 1900s. It was known as the Cincinnati Ice Company Ice Houses and had, on one map, a double ended railroad siding on the north side of the main track and, on another map, two single end sidings, both of which were connected to the main track at their west end. One maps calls it Cincinnati Ice Houses & Switches.

A Sanborn Insurance map from 1899 from Metamora, Indiana shows a floor plan of the Cincinnati Ice Company's Ice Houses that were located 2 miles N.W. of Post Office (Metamora). The 110' x 210' building was divided lengthwise with walls into four sections. Each section was 28' high at the eaves and had a gable roof peak running across the building. At the south side of the building was a railroad siding. It approached from the west end and terminated in what appears to be a small jetty that extended into the pond area east of the building. Extending from the pond was an ice slide on the north side of the building. A small engine house about 27' by 36' was located beside the slide. It contained a boiler and a 40 h.p. engine, which had a 42' high iron smokestack.

Although we do not know for sure exactly how the ice house was constructed, a description of one located in Cincinnati is

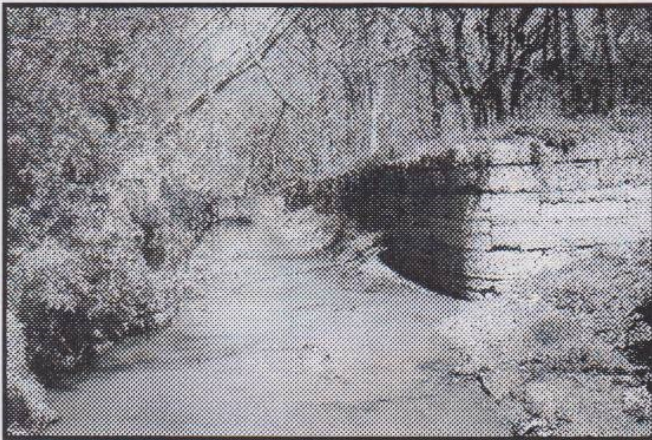




## WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

found in CSI member, Mike Morthorst's, **The Miami Canal in Hamilton and Butler Counties, Ohio**. It says, "The ice houses were built of pine lumber. The walls were deliberately left hollow in order to place sawdust, sand or straw for use as an insulator. Usually these buildings had wood shingle roofs. Ice stored in these buildings would usually last through the summer season, and sometimes even longer." These huge quantities of ice didn't even completely melt without a building, for when the ice house burned one spring at Valley View (Ice Pond), everything was lost except a large unprotected block of ice. It was so massive that it melted slowly and was still seen in late summer.

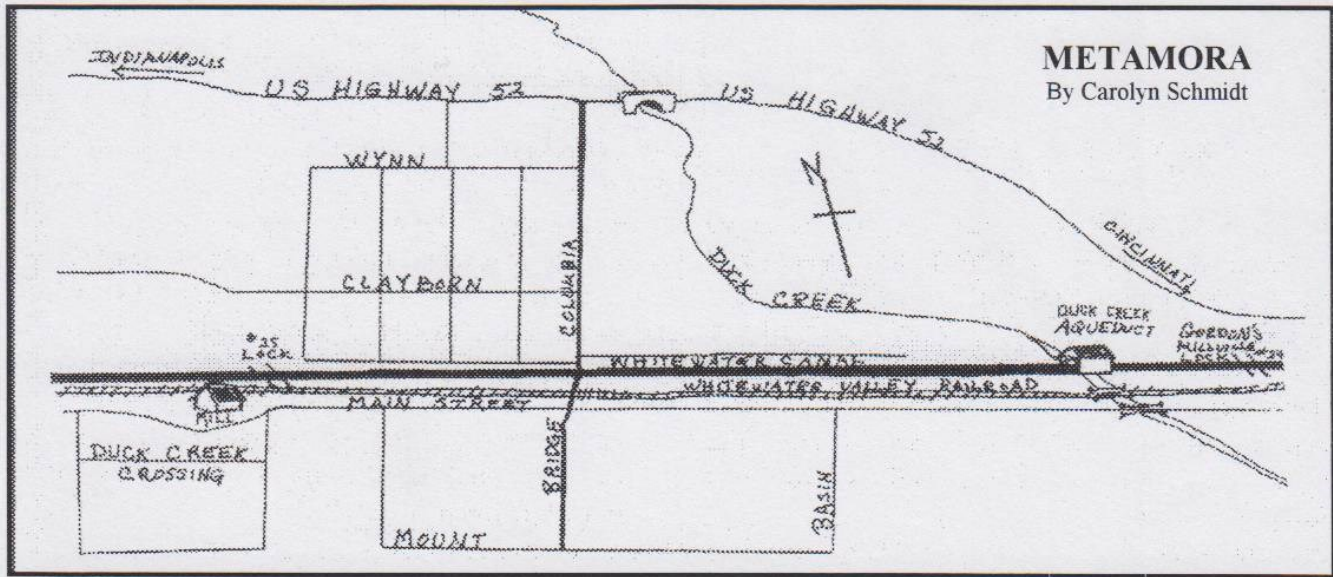
The Cincinnati Ice Company was listed in the Cincinnati directory of 1899. 1904-1906 directories show a Cincinnati Ice Manufacturing and Cold Storage Company. Apparently ice was being made and not cut at that time. It was in existence until 1940 and had some of the same officers until 1919 as the Cincinnati Ice Company. Did the company change its name in the early 1900s or is this another company?



Murry's Lock 26 is just beyond Valley View. P - Bob Schmidt

Murry's Lock 26 is located just beyond Valley View. This composite lock is a short hike from the railroad tracks. It is in a fairly good condition since it is watered, which keeps the timbers on which the lock walls rest from rotting.

## METAMORA





## WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

The town of Metamora sits on land previously owned by Indians and acquired from them on September 30, 1909. This treaty, the third with the Indians, is known as the Twelve-mile Purchase. The land, once passed to the Federal government, was available for settlement. The 160 acres on which Metamora stands was originally issued to Larkin Sims on October 22, 1811 through a government land grant. Then on July 6, 1812 it was assigned to David Mount, a member of the Territorial House of Representatives and later of the Indiana House and Senate. The land soon became the home of Mount, a few other settlers and some 11 "squatters." When the first Post Office was established (April 1826) the town was listed on the register as "Duck Creek Crossing."

Duck Creek Crossing quickly prospered due to the rich farm land of the Whitewater Valley. Many businesses were started. David Mount and William Holland platted the town of three acres on March 20, 1838. The town was divided by 18 alleys with "Main Street" being what is now "Canal" and "Mill" streets. (The Whitewater Canal had not been completed to this point when the town was platted.) Mrs. John A. Matson encouraged that the town's name be changed to "Metamora," which means "beautiful squaw." She chose the name that was fashionable at the time in Illinois, Michigan and Ohio from a successful New York play character of an Indian princess. On June 11, 1838 the town became officially known as Metamora.

The coming of the Whitewater Canal bisected the town from east to west and crossed Duck Creek. In 1843, Duck Creek Aqueduct, a wooden covered bridge style aqueduct, was built 16 feet above the creek. It was described in the October 1932 issue of "Civil Engineering," a publication of the American Society of Civil Engineers, as follows: The clear span on the aqueduct is 70 feet (long) over Duck Creek. The water cross section is 17 feet wide and 3 feet deep, making a water load on the aqueduct of 115 tons...

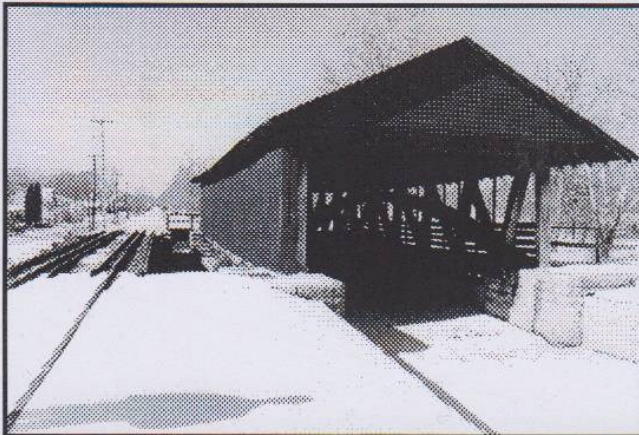


Photo Brian Banta

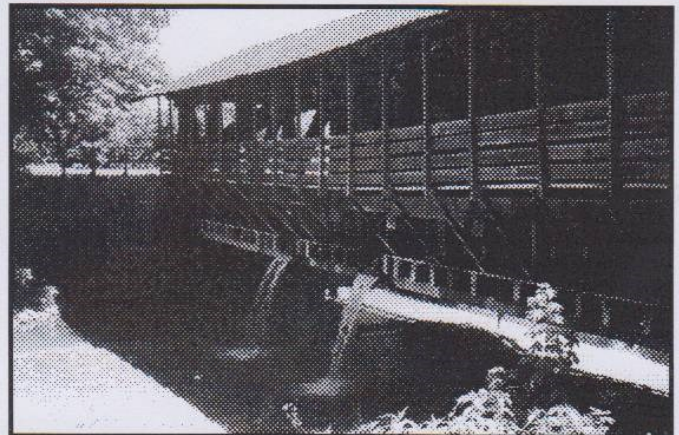


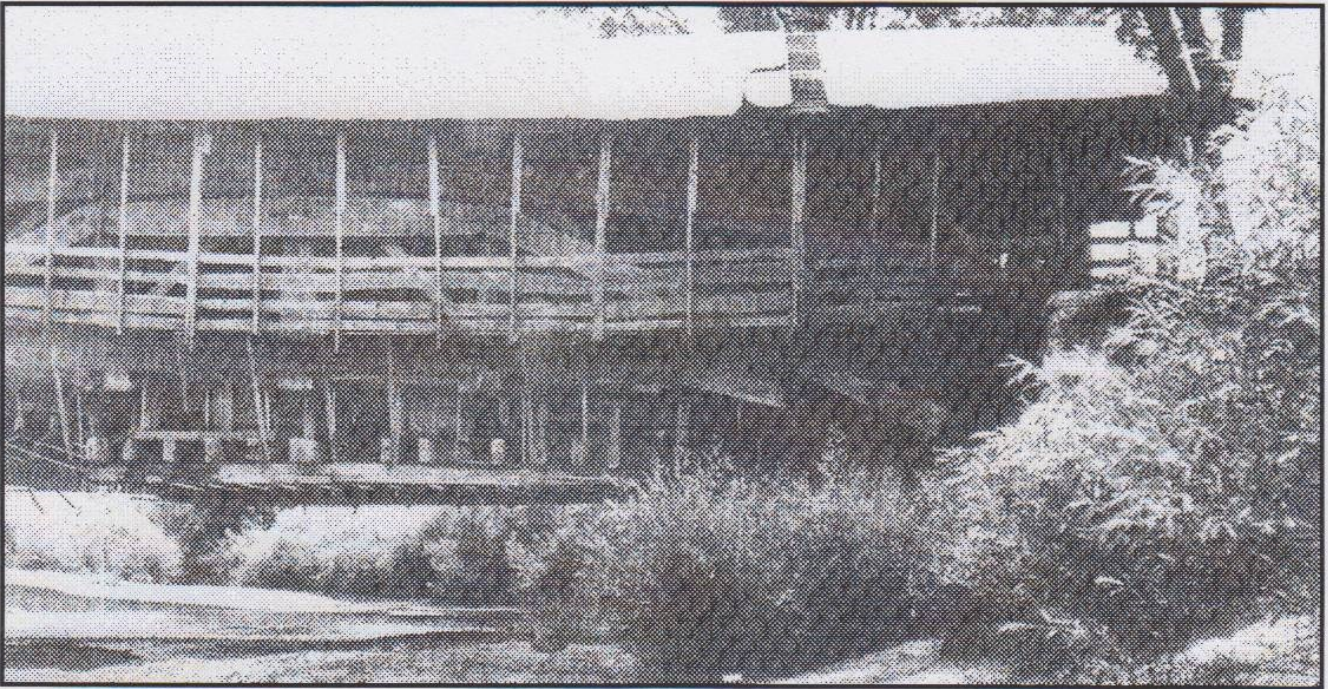
Photo Bob Schmidt

The White Water Valley Railroad Company, which later became part of Penn-Central, purchased the canal in 1866. They laid their rails atop the old towpath and the canal itself fell into disrepair. The flour and woolen mills, which were built from 1845-1848 and thrived for a time, were mostly burned down or in poor repair. The little town lost much of its population. By 1910 only fifteen businesses remained. But things got worse as the passenger trains were discontinued in 1932-1937. Then the main Cincinnati to Indianapolis road that at one time crossed the canal near the aqueduct running along Mill Street was relocated to by-pass Metamora.

Brookville residents, Alfred Brown and John P. Goodwin, along with Walter Lowe, a Greensburg newspaper publisher, saw what was happening to the town and formed the Whitewater Canal Association in 1938. They pushed to have the canal and aqueduct restored. Fourteen miles of the canal (Laurel Feeder Dam to Brookville) were purchased by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources in 1946.



WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK



Duck Creek Aqueduct at Metamora, Indiana. This wooden aqueduct, which carries the Whitewater Canal over Duck Creek, was constructed in 1843 and partially destroyed by flood in 1847. Reconstructed by the State of Indiana in 1948-49, it has a clear span of 70 feet and is 3 feet deep, making a water load of 115 tons. Included in a National Historical Buildings Survey.

Above: As the aqueduct appeared ca. 1935. The polygonal arch was added around 1865 and removed in 1948. Historic Photo

Below: Duck Creek Aqueduct showing overflow on the right to release excess water in the canal to the creek below. Photo by John V. Pontiere, Jr.







Looking through Duck Creek Aqueduct Photo by R. E. Stoops

Restoration of the grist mill, Metamora Lock #25 and Duck Creek Aqueduct (1948) began. The Burr Arch Trusses (10" x 18") used to support the aqueduct were so big that they were thought to be hard to replace, so the engineers decided to reuse the original timbers in the rebuild. The aqueduct is the last of the old wooden canal aqueducts in the United States. It has a flood gate in the center of the span and a sidewalk for pedestrians. It passes 16 feet above Duck Creek. It was listed on the National Registry in June 1973 and was recognized in the Indiana Historic Sites and Structures Inventory for Franklin County Interim Report in September 1978.

By 1966 only three businesses were in operation in Metamora. William Hildebrand and Joe Jackson operated the general stores and Riiley Allen ran an antique shop. Then Bernard LePoris opened an art gallery. Artists of the area began painting. In 1968 the State started operating a small motorized passenger boat (Valley Belle) on the canal. It passed through Gordon's Lock #24 at what was once Millville. That same year Paul Baudendistel and Jim Wendel placed a dozen card tables with sale items around Baudendistel's building and began what has become Canal Days, one of Indiana's largest festivals.

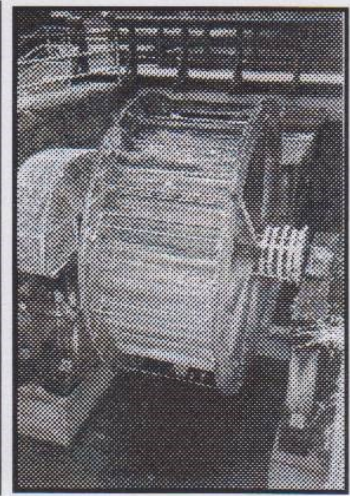
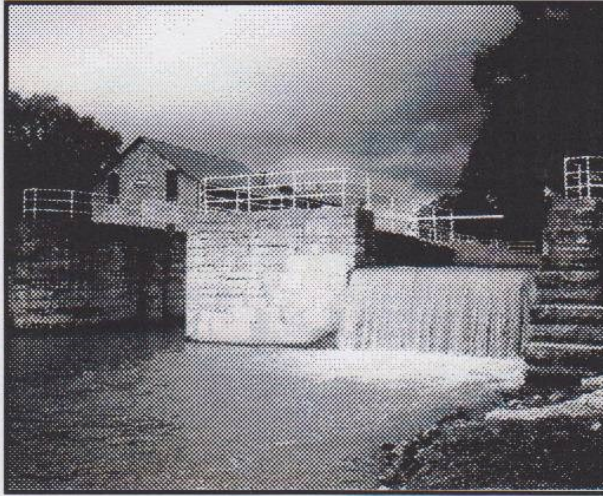
In 1971 the Whitewater Valley Canal and Railroad Restoration Association, Inc. leased a 25 mile route along the canal (Connerville to Brookville) from the Penn-Central System. They began operating a passenger service in 1974. The train passes close by the canal and canal structures giving passengers a good view of them.

A cotton mill was built in Metamora in 1845 by Jonathon Banes and located at Metamora Lock #25. It was one of several mills in the area that diverted water from the canal to turn a "tub" water wheel. It was converted into a grist (flouring mill) in 1856 when the canal was no longer in use. The owners installed a more powerful turbine water wheel inside the canal lock. The mill burned in 1899 but was rebuilt in 1900.

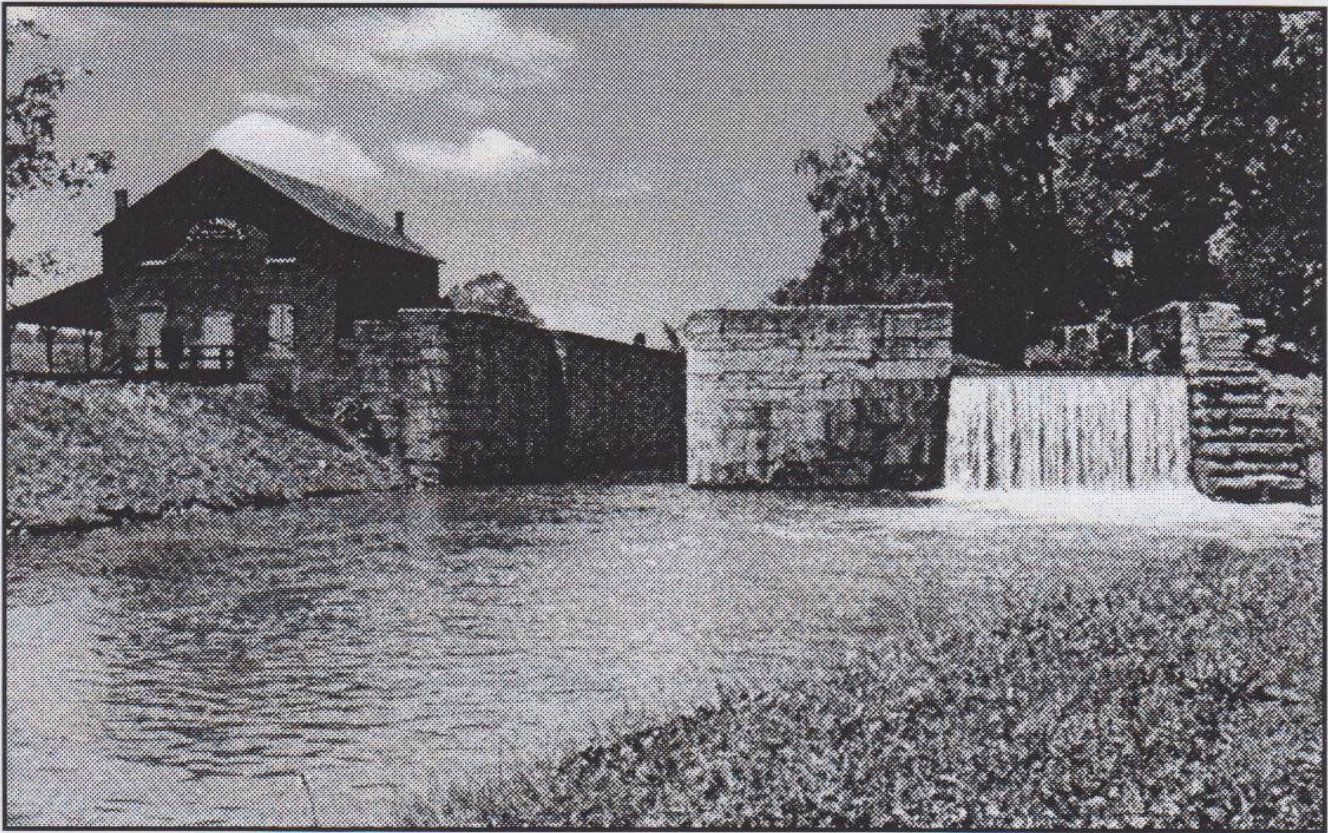


WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

Today's grist mill is operated by a "breast" water wheel that is also located in the lock chamber. The wheel revolves 18 times per minute in a counterclockwise direction generating 50 horsepower. The force is transmitted to the buhrstones through a series of gears and pulleys located in the mill's basement. A set of restored French buhrstones 42 inches in diameter are used to grind corn meal. Wheat is ground into



Metamora Lock #25 today with breast wheel in lock chamber Photos by Bob Schmidt



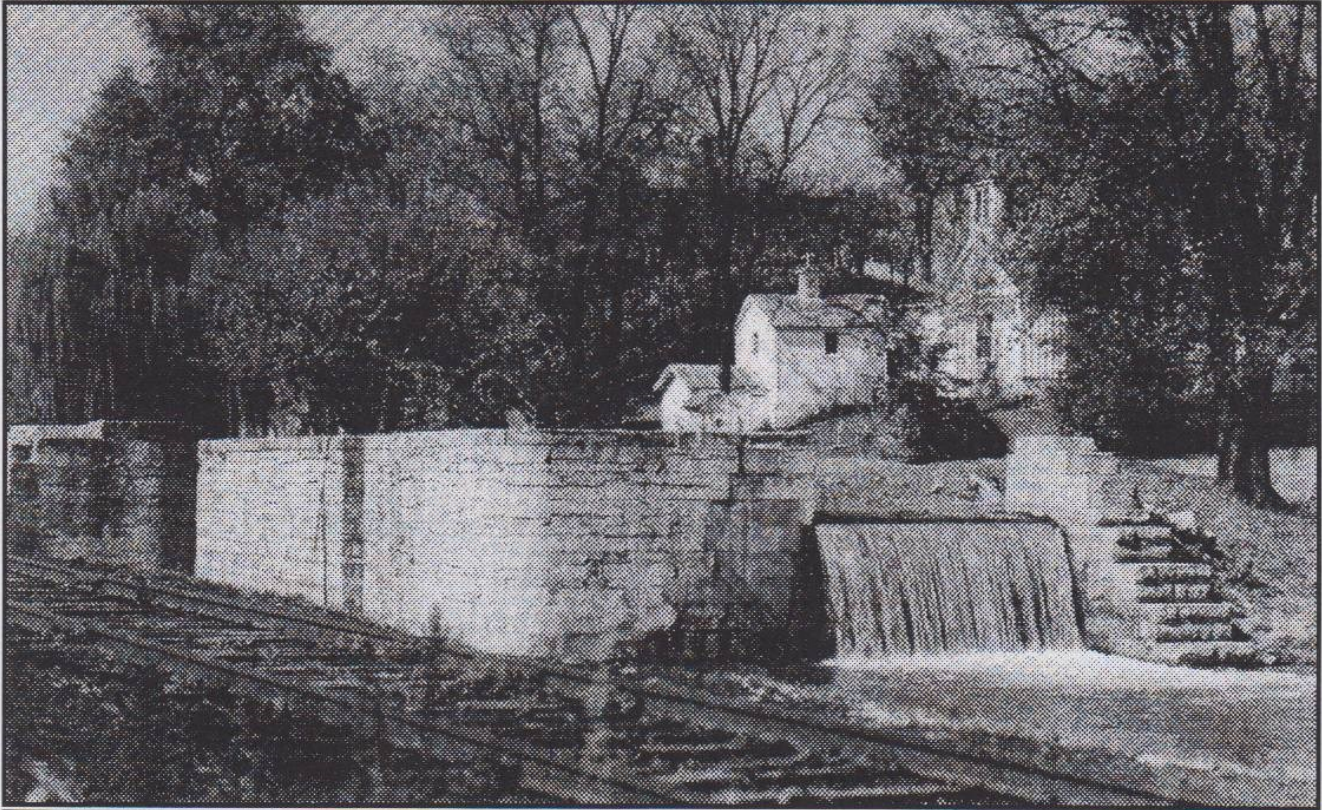
The cotton mill erected by Jonathan Banes in 1845 was the first structure at the lock. It was converted into a flouring mill "Crescent Mills" in 1856 and was rebuilt 1900. Historic Photo

grits and whole-wheat flour by a set of 24 inch buhrstones. The mill museum was dedicated by Governor Otis Bowen in 1973.

Over a period of ten years (1966-1976) the little town of three businesses grew to one of over 100. Craft shops that were only open on weekends in 1968 were soon opened daily. Buildings were restored or replicas built and log cabins were relocated. In 1977 the annual Christmas Walk was started,

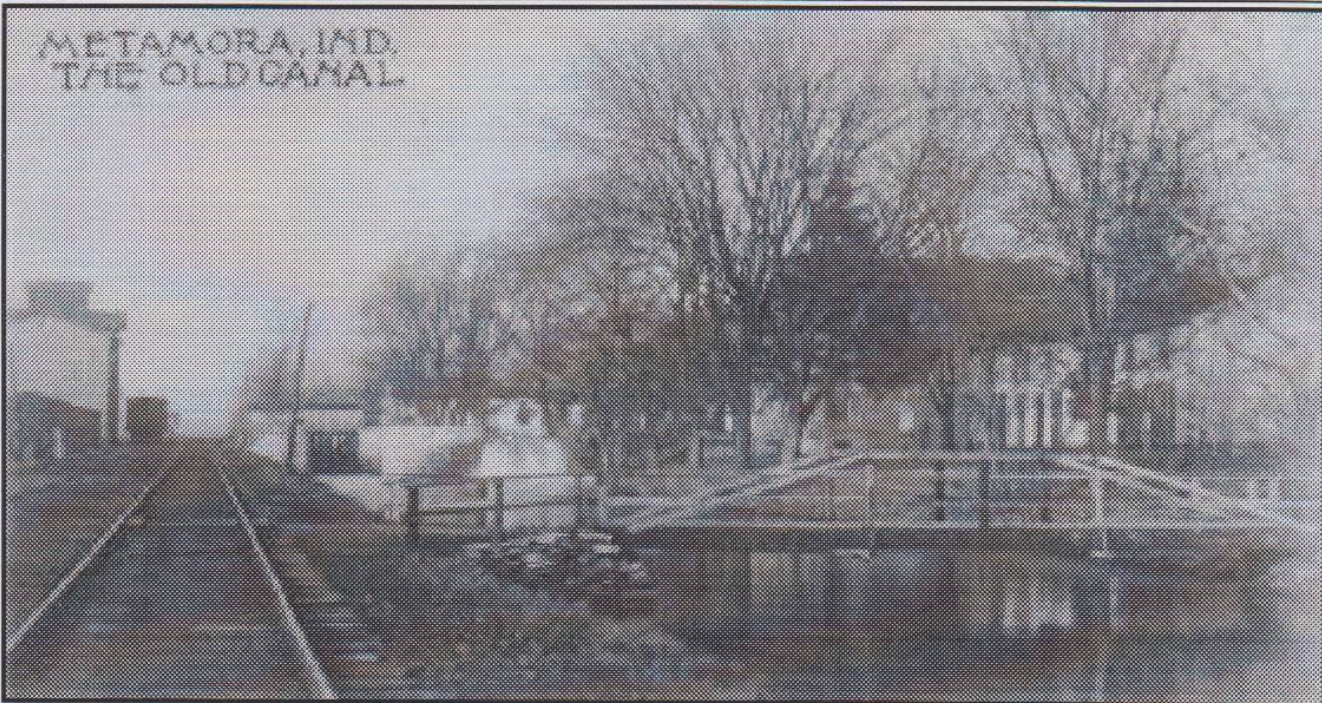


WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK



Above: "The Falls" or bypass tumble as it is generally called is seen in Lock #25 of the Whitewater Canal at Metamora, Indiana. It was built in 1843. This lock was the site of several mills and the present mill is run by water power. Lock #25 is one of 56 locks on the Canal, which had a total fall of 490 feet. The fact that the Canal lay so low and that the Whitewater River was subject to great floods caused its usefulness to be impaired. Historic Photo

Below: This old postcard shows the railroad track laid upon the towpath, the old car bridge across the Whitewater Canal, Lock #25 and the grist mill in the background. Historic Postcard





## WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

which has become one of the nation's top 100 tourist attractions.

The Canal House sits on the south side of the canal at the street bridge. It operated as a drug store from 1840-1916 and then as a hardware store from 1923-1961. The front half of this building was built in the 1840s with the back half being completed just after the Civil War. It was built using stone from Duck Creek.

The General Store was built by Alfred Blacklidge in 1885 and used as a mercantile store. When hard times came in the early 1900s Blacklidge, who had given credit to sharecroppers, was forced out of business when they defaulted on their loans. The building was sold to Ellsworth Martindale and Stephen Jenks General Mercantile in 1910. In 1920 Jenks sold out to Martindale.

The Masonic Lodge, which is noted for its cobalt blue windows and Italianate design, was built in the 1870s. Two buildings east of the lodge were also of Italianate design and were built in the 1850s. Van Camp's Drug Store, which stood between these buildings, has an interesting history. The Van Camp family moved to Metamora in 1851. They opened the drug store. A salesman came to the store selling gasoline, the first there had ever been in the village. Mrs. Van Camp purchased a barrel and placed it in the cellar. The barrel began to leak so she put the gas into jars and crocks to keep it. That night she and her son, Charles, went into the cellar. She held up the lamp while he poured the gas into a different barrel. They were watched by her two grandsons, who were perched on the stairs. As she started up the stairs a blast resulted that tore open the front of the building. All four were burned so badly that they only lived a few hours.

Mrs. Van Camp was the mother of Joseph Van Camp, who founded the Van Camp's Packing Company in Indianapolis in 1861. Van Camp's Pork and Beans fed the troops during the Civil and Spanish American Wars. Soldiers in later wars were fed by "C" rations produced by the Stokley & Van Camp company.

Some other notable structures are the Federal-style Banes house about one block east of the mill that was built by Jonathan Banes, a carpenter and superintendent for the canal company, and the Martindale Hotel built in 1838 by Ezekiel Tyner, a shipping agent for the canal boats. It originally housed Tyner's business, then became a tavern in 1856 and was enlarged into a hotel in 1870 by Amos Martindale.

Left: Jonathan Banes house in Metamora  
Right: Martindale Hotel (left) and other historic buildings in Metamora Photos by Bob Schmidt





## METAMORA'S HISTORIC BUILDING PLAQUES

### BLACKSMITH SHOP AND COTTAGE

Theodore N. Thorpe, wife and seven blacksmith sons settled in Metamora, in 1858, attaching a cottage to the rear of the blacksmith shop, to live in. He and his family left Pennsylvania to go to the California gold fields, but never got any further than Metamora.

### CANAL FRONT DRY GOODS STORE

Two story frame of Federal style built by Jonathan Banes in 1848. First known as the firm of Jenks Banes & Calvin Jones. Harry & Alvin Blacklidge 1852-57, Mahlon & Milton Gordon 1857-92, Wm. N. Gordon started banking business in west half 1910. Later relocating across the canal. East half was Caroline Gordon's candle shop. Back addition was an old icehouse. Upstairs was community hall for dancing, roller skating and yearly traveling medicine show.

### JENKS AND MARTINDALE GROCERY

Alfred Blacklidge was the original owner of this building. The original building burned in 1885. In the early 1900's Blacklidge was extending credit to surrounding sharecroppers, when bad times came, forcing many of the farmers to default on their debts, thus forcing him out of business.

### MARTINDALE HOTEL

Built in 1838 by Ezekial Tyner to house his store room and counting room where he acted as agent for canal trade, housing his family in the addition to the rear. He then purchased the land from David Mount in 1841. Thomas Tague acquired the property in 1858 and ran a tavern until 1870 when Amos Martindale extended the building to the west and operated the Martindale Hotel until 1895. Through many owners a public dining room was maintained in this building for guests of the hotel, travelers by canal, stage, or train.

### METAMORA MASONIC LODGE

This stone building, constructed in the 1840s, was owned and used by a number of families prominent in early history of Metamora. These included Martindale, Watkins, Allison and Wiley. The ground floor was a general merchandising establishment, best known under the name of L. Allison & Son. Second Story first housed the Sons of Temperance, who held title as the Temperance Hall Association. The Metamora Lodge #156 F. & A.M. acquired the hall in 1888. This is believed to be the only lodge in Indiana with most of its original cobalt blue window panes still intact.

### ODD FELLOWS HALL

Erected 1853, built of brick, it is the only three story building in Metamora. Ground floor was a general merchandising establishment operated by 3 generations of the Gordon family: Milton, Noble and Donald. Metamora Post Office once located in Gordon Store. Second floor originally a town hall, later occupied by Knights of Pythias Lodge, Odd Fellows Lodge located on third floor and was instituted by General P. A. Hackleman, Franklin County native and Union general, killed in action in 1862. Local Masonic Lodge formed in this building on May 23, 1857.

### OLD FAULKNER-PIERCE DRUG STORE

Landmark building of the canal era. Drug store 1840 to 1918. Hardware store 1923 to 1981. Front half constructed in 1840s, as canal boats floated by back half built in late 1882, after Civil War. Built of rock from nearby Duck Creek, bears name of Metamora's original canal hostelry, no longer standing. Back room was variously millinery shop, shoe store, barber shop and post office. Top floor was Red Men's Lodge hall. Along west side of this building, under the shade of a huge maple tree, was the town bench where villagers gather to swap yarns. It

was called the "Mourners' bench" or the "liars' bench."

### OLD COBBLER'S SHOP OLD POST OFFICE

Built for Gilbert C. Van Camp about 1854, by 1861 it was the business property of Jesse and Ezekiel Washburn. The second floor of this building was the workshop of Joseph Staub, a harness and saddle maker who in the 1880's advertised boots and shoes made to order. Linnie Banes succeeded Inez Gordon as Post Mistress in 1920 and moved the Post Office to the first floor of this building where it remained until construction of the new postal facility in 1967.

### THE CONFECTIONARY

Lucy Martindale's brothers bought this 1/3 of Lot 29 and built her confectionary in 1907. She operated it until her death in 1930 when the property reverted back to her brothers. In more recent years this building was the home and machine shop of Cecil "Shocky" Wolf, local handyman.

### VAN CAMP'S STORE

This building was built in the 1850's. Mr. Van Camp housed his drug store here, which had the front blown out by a gasoline explosion in 1851. His mother and himself perished in this tragedy. The buildings on either side of this were all part of one lot. All buildings were built one to another.

### JONATHAN BANES HOME

Residence of Jonathan Banes who came to Franklin County in 1837 with Wilcox & Van Horn Consturction Co. of Pennsylvania. He was paid in horses for his work as carpenter superintendent on several sections of the Whitewater Canal below Brookville. He sold them in Pennsylvania. He erected a cotton factory in 1845 on the site of the Metamora Mill. He married Maria Mount, daughter of the town's first settler.



## WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

Memorial Day is given special recognition in Metamora by decorating graves of servicemen and spreading flowers on the waters of the Whitewater Canal. Many Civil War soldiers left for service on the canal boats and returned home on the train. The Tracks were laid on the old towpath while they were away at war.

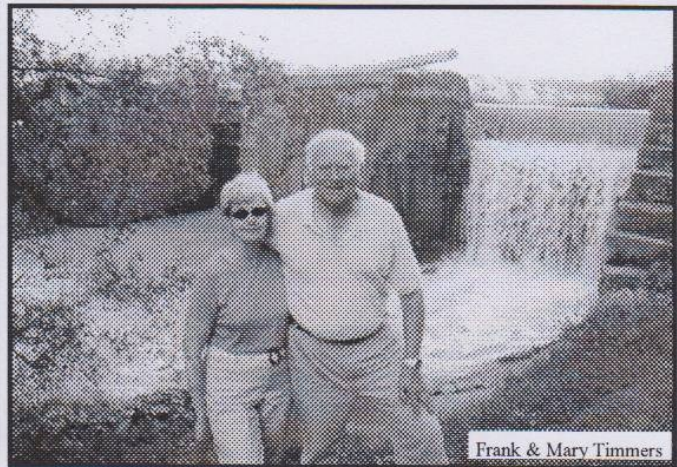
On October 11, 1990, a "facsimile replica" of barges that traveled on the canal in the early 1800s was delivered to Metamora by its builder, Rainbow Construction to replace the old "Ben Franklin II." The 75 foot boat was named the "Ben Franklin III." The fiberglass boat is designed from a drawing of canal boats used on the C & O Canal but only weighs about 15,000 pounds. It is pulled by two Belgian draft horses. They stand 6 feet high at the shoulder and weighs 2,000 pounds. Their load of 80 passengers is much lighter than that on earlier canal boats.



Ben Franklin III and Ben Franklin II Photo by Louise Larsen

During the canal era the boats had to change horses every ten miles or so turning their spent ones in for fresh ones at the livery. Disreputable livery men sometimes washed down the horses, carried their coats and presented them to the next boat as fresh horses. Sometimes the animals were made to work ten days without resting. The canal cargo boats usually carried their own change of horses or mules on board.

Metamora today is designated a State Historic Site. It provides the tourist an opportunity to ride a canal boat, pass through the only existing wooden aqueduct in the U.S., visit the canal boat museum built by Paul Baudendistel, and get somewhat of a feeling of life in a Whitewater Valley canal town.

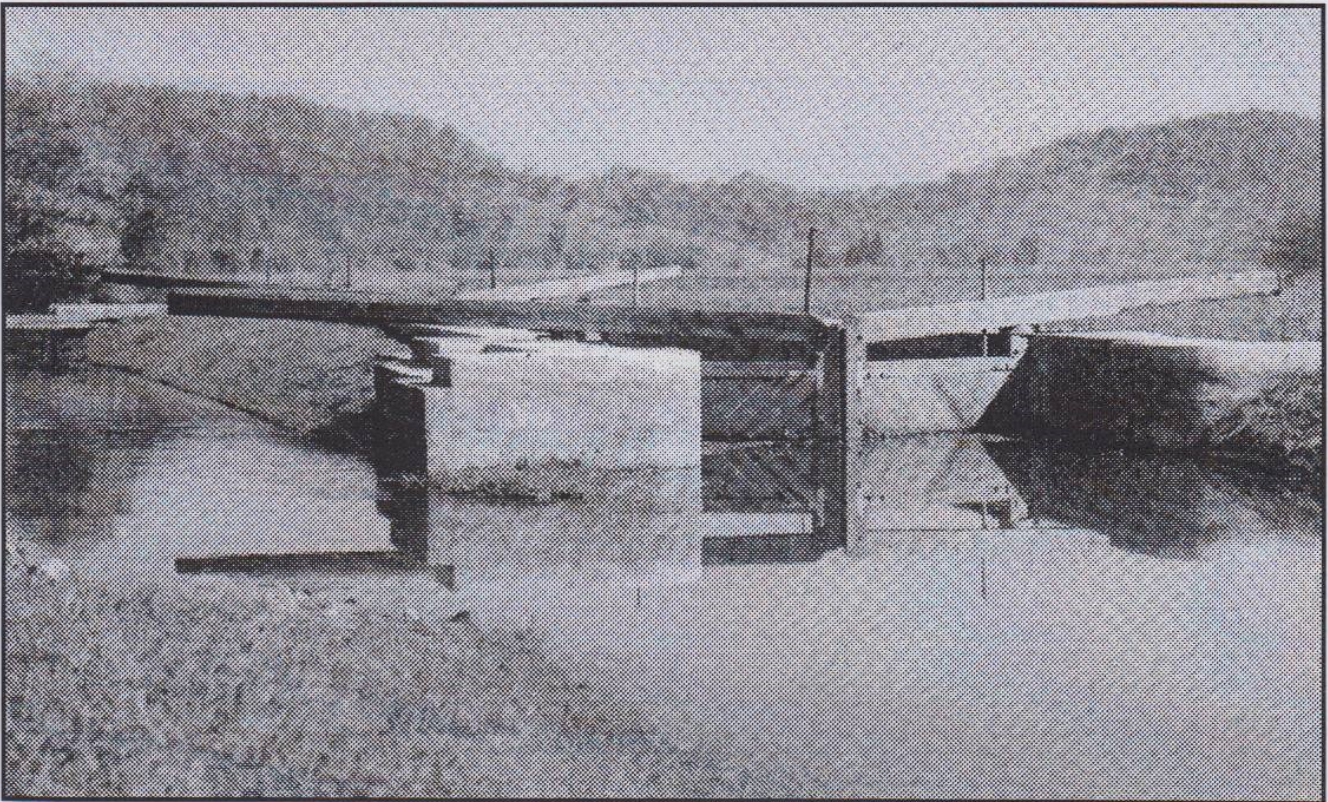


Gordon's (Millville) Lock #24 with boat stored and with excess water falling over the tumble. Photos by Bob Schmidt

Shortly past Duck Creek Aqueduct is Gordon's Lock #24 also known as Millville Lock #24. This restored, fine cut stone lock is the only operable lock on the Whitewater Canal. However, there is not enough water in the canal level below it to float a boat. The canal boat ride from Metamora turns around just before reaching this lock. During the winter, instead of putting the boat in a warehouse, the boat is actually floated into the lock, rests on supports, the water let out of the lock, and the boat covered with tarpaulins to protect it from the weather.



WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK



Above: Gordon's Lock #24, also known as the Millville Lock, on the Whitewater Canal at Metamora, Indiana. The name Millville was bestowed on it from the early mills that stood here. The locks were built in 1842-43 from stone quarried from the Laurel quarry. The original stone was laid without mortar. The masonry rests on a timber foundation of white oak and black walnut. It was restored by the State of Indiana in 1952-53.

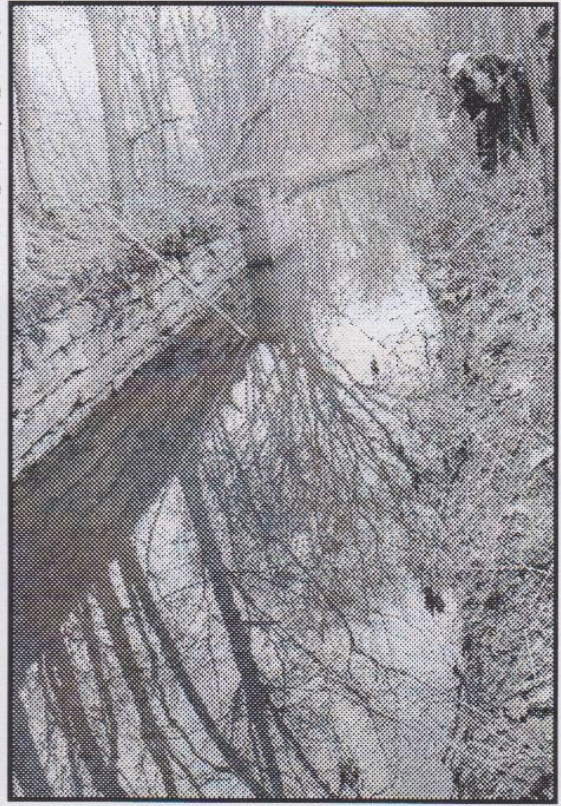
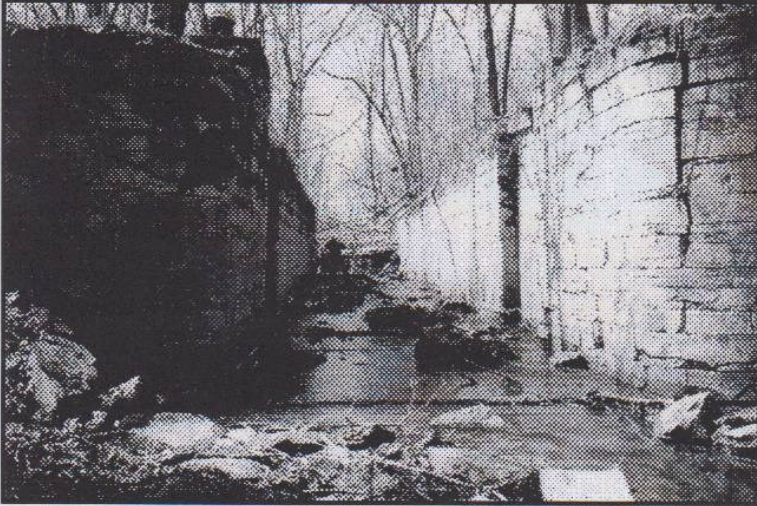
Below: The Whitewater Canal follows the bend in the Whitewater River and is between the river and a lake near Metamora, Indiana. Historic Postcard





## WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

Locks #22-23 are difficult to reach from Highway 52 because they are down a steep incline that a bus would have trouble negotiating. They can best be reached from the Whitewater Canal Trail. The property is posted "No Trespassing," but one of the locks is fairly visible from the trail. Although they are not adjacent to one another, they are called the "Twin Locks" because of their close proximity. They are both composite locks. Water flows through them.



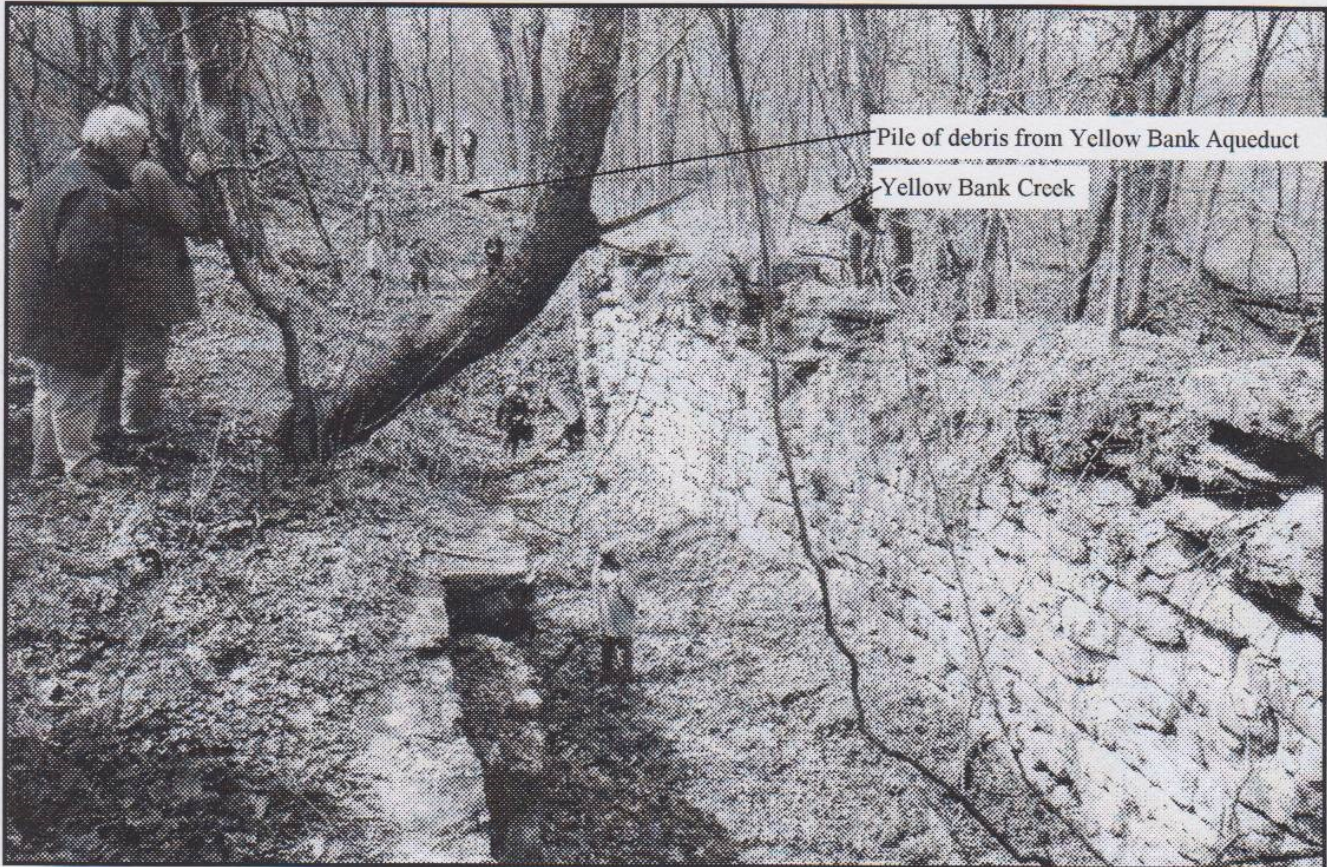
Above: Lock #22 (left) and Lock #23 have water flowing over their foundation timbers. This keeps the timbers from deteriorating and helps keep the lock walls standing upright. These photos were taken years ago before this property was posted. Photos Bob Schmidt  
Below: This double arch stone aqueduct once carried canal boats on the Whitewater Canal across Yellow Bank Creek. Over the years this structure fell into disrepair and the state demolished it for safety reasons. They piled much of its rubble at the end of Yellow Bank Lock # 21. Historic Photo





## WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

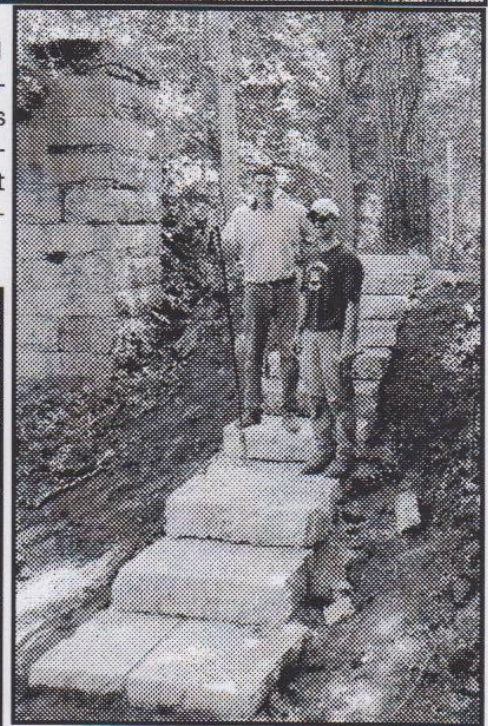
A twin stone arch aqueduct once stood at Yellow Bank Creek. It carried canal boats across the creek. After many years this structure fell into disrepair. The state determined it was unsafe. It was demolished. Debris from this demolition was placed just outside Yellow Bank Lock #21.



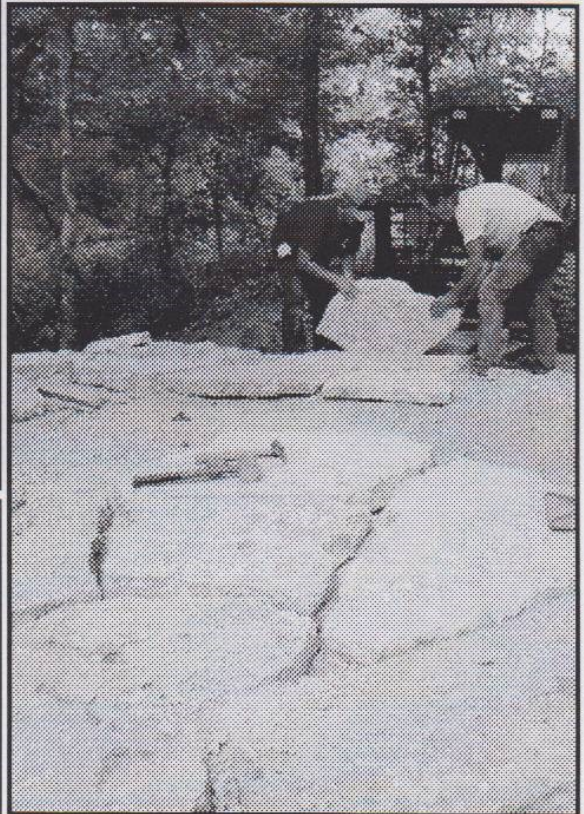
A composite lock with an 8 foot lift, Yellow Bank Lock #21 has been made a tourist attraction. A short trail from the White-water Canal Trail's (WCT) Yellow Bank Trailhead on U.S. 52 takes you to the lock. A viewing platform and stone steps help the visitor to experience the lock from above and then walk down into it to better view its immense size. Iron hangers, which once supported the planking that lined the rough stone interior are visible.

The approaches to the lock are of dressed stone. The lock is on property owned by the Mosters, who have given the WCT the right-of-way.

Photos WCT







Above: Yellow Bank Lock #21 has stone missing at the top. Its walls are straight because the timbers that hold them receive enough water to keep them from rotting. Whitewater Canal Trail photo

Left: Mick (WCT president) & Jennie Wilz with Sara & Eugene Moster (property owners) stand in Lock #21. Sara holds an iron hanger used to hold the planking to the inside of the lock thus covering the rough cut stone and making the lock water tight. Photo Bob Schmidt

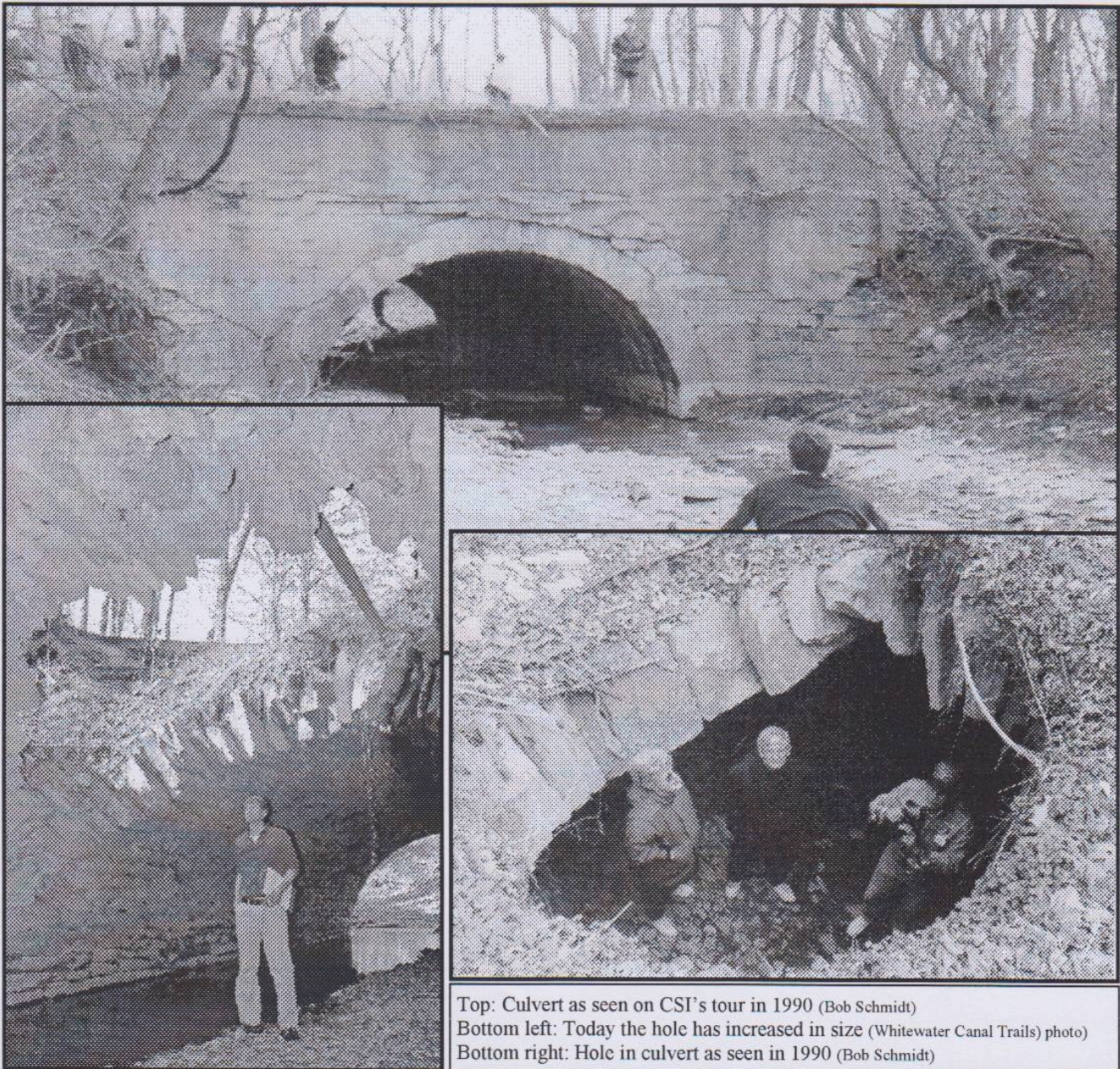
Right: Whitewater Canal Trail volunteers place stones for a stairs to the lock chamber. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held when the new trail opened in November 2011. Whitewater Canal Trail photo



## WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

Just on the outskirts of Brookville off of U.S. 52 is a stone arch culvert over Butler Run Creek. Its arch has caved in on its top leaving a huge gaping hole. Construction of the culvert began in 1839 as part of Whitewater Canal. By the 1840's, the Butler Run culvert served as an aqueduct to carry canal boats over Butler Run Creek. The Whitewater Canal continued to be used for hydraulic power by the Metamora Hydraulic Company supplying water to the Brookville and led to industrial development in the Brookville area until the 1937 flood. Railroads crossed this culvert structure until 1974.

The stone arch is 18 feet wide, 9 feet tall, and 90 feet long. It is the last stone arch aqueduct of this size left in Indiana. A 12-foot-long hole in the top of the arch was destroying this structure and has increased in size. Over the years more and more stones have fallen to the creek bed. Whitewater Canal Trail is trying to get the right-of-way to run the walking trail over the culvert with plans to stabilize it. A law suit has it presently hung up in the court system. It is in better shape than City Run Culvert at Milton, but without stabilization or restoration it will soon look like Milton's culvert.



Top: Culvert as seen on CSI's tour in 1990 (Bob Schmidt)

Bottom left: Today the hole has increased in size (Whitewater Canal Trails) photo)

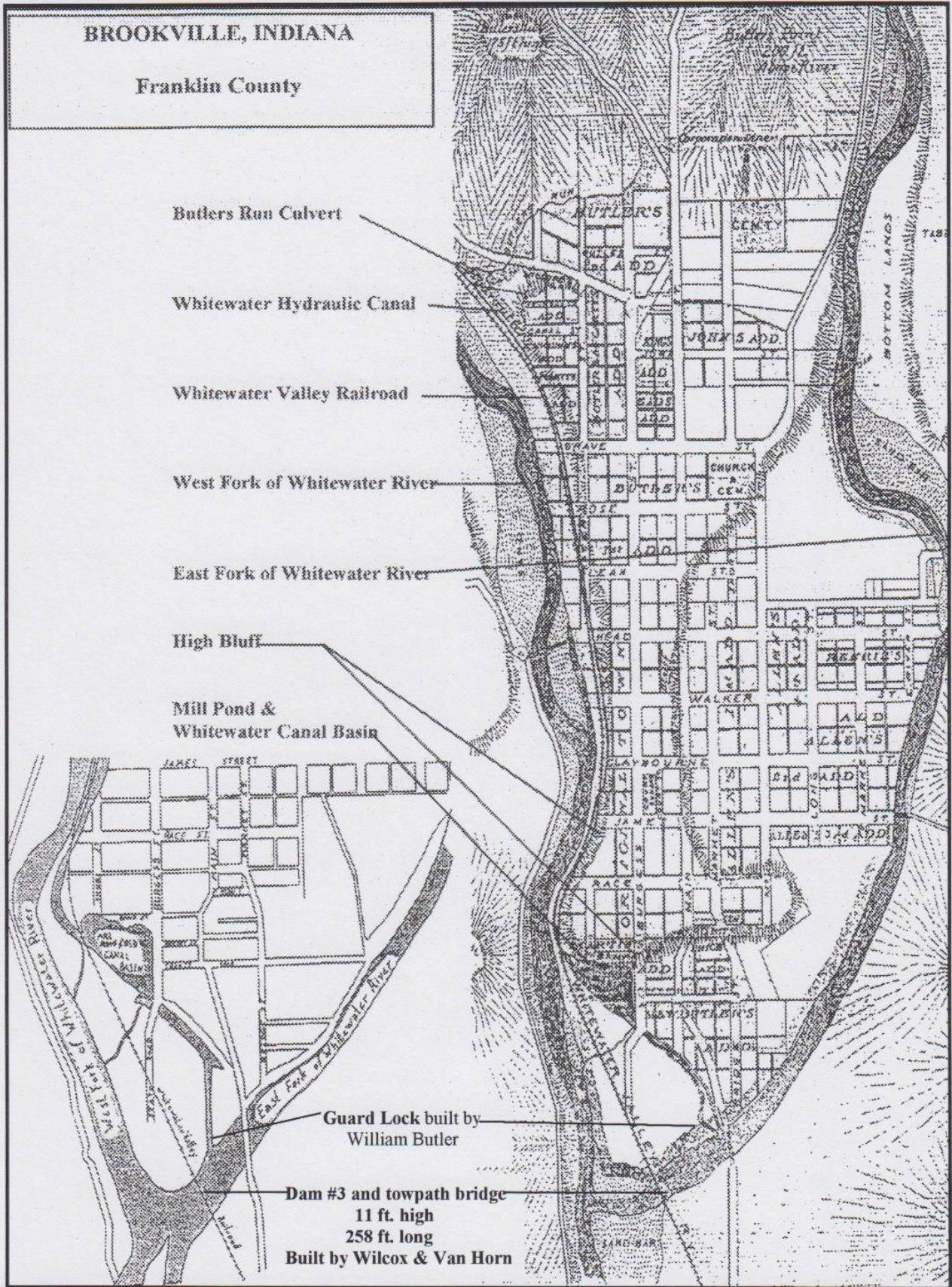
Bottom right: Hole in culvert as seen in 1990 (Bob Schmidt)



WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

BROOKVILLE, INDIANA

Franklin County





## BROOKVILLE

Amos Butler and Jesse Brooks Thomas selected a high ridge between the forks of the Whitewater River to plat the town of Brooksville in 1808 named for the mother of Jesse Thomas. The "s" was dropped three years later. The federal land grant office was opened in 1820 bringing in speculators and immigrants. Brookville had the second branch of the state bank chartered in Vincennes.

Brookville soon became the hub of Franklin County, a county with meatpacking houses, cotton and woolen mills, distilleries and grist, flour, and saw-mills. A set back occurred in 1825 when the land office was moved to Indianapolis and several future governors of the state moved elsewhere.

A group of lawyers came to Brookville and became individually famous for their brilliance. James Noble was a U.S. senator from 1816-1831; James Brown Ray, Indiana governor from 1825-1831; Noah Noble, Indiana governor from 1831-1837; David Wallace, father of General Lew Wallace and Indiana governor from 1837-1840; Robert Hanna, successor of James Noble as U. S. Senator and the first U. S. marshal for Indiana Territory; Isaac Blackford, Stephen Stephens, and James McKinney, justices of the State supreme court, and John Test, representative from Indiana for the 18th, 19th and 21st Congresses. Jesse Brooks Thomas moved away shortly after founding the town, He later became a U.S. senator from Illinois and wrote a portion of the Missouri Compromise of 1820.

In the 1830s there was a great German migration into the Whitewater Valley. Also ground was broken for the Whitewater Canal in Brookville in 1836. This event was accompanied by a grand celebration with many toasts. Brookville once again thrived and was incorporated in 1839 with a population of 1,200.

The Hermitage at the end of 8th street was the home of J. Ottis Adams, who was one of the "Hoosier Group" of painters. The 17 room frame structure was built in 1817 at the bend of the East fork of the Whitewater River by James Speer. Dormer windows had been added in the attic and a long porch runs across the front of the building. T. C. Steel bought it in 1898 and sold it to Adams in 1907.

The Governor Ray home at 210 E. 10th street was built in 1821 during Ray's campaign for governor. He had a Palladian (arched) window put in the second story on the south side of the house and a fanlight over the front door, which almost caused him to be defeated. A picture of the window was published in an Indianapolis newspaper and Ray's opponents said Ray was a man of extravagant habits. He loved to make a display. It is said that when he signed hotel registers he wrote "J. Brown Ray, Governor of Indiana and Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy thereof." He served two terms as governor being elected as the candidate of the Internal Improvement faction. However, Ray did not agree with the supporters of the Wabash and Erie Canal and pointed out the advantages of the railroad. He predicted that someday Indianapolis would become a great railroad center with rail lines radiating in all directions like spokes on a wheel. This wrecked his political career.

Historical markers are placed at the sites of the residences of Abram Hammond and David Wallace, the Franklin County Seminary, an old Indian trading post, etc. Nearby is Brookville Lake, the third largest lake in Indiana being 15 miles long and 125 feet deep in some places. The 1927 flood was so great that a dam was deemed necessary to prevent flooding. It was built by the Army Corps of Engineers by constructing a 3,000 ft. long and 182 ft. high dam and reservoir on the East Fork of the Whitewater River. Had the West Fork of the river been chosen for the project the remains of the Whitewater Canal would have been destroyed.

After the demise of the Whitewater canal shipping and travel in the early 1860s, the canal between Brookville and the Laurel feeder dam was maintained for hydraulic power from 1863-1937. In addition to the canal basins, which were initially constructed, there were low areas adjoining the route of the canal, which were easily flooded to create a series of ice ponds as sources of commercial grade ice. Ice houses were built to store the ice and to meet the needs of the valley.

In the *1882 Atlas of Franklin County* the majority of these ice ponds are labeled as being managed by the Cincinnati Coal and Ice Co., and it is presumed that the ice was exported by the railroad which then owned the canal. An old photograph shows the ice on the canal basin scored off in two-foot intervals and then being sawed into sixteen inch blocks. These ice blocks were floated to the ice house and stacked as necessary to achieve a cake of ice ten inches in thickness. The resulting block 16" by 24" by 10" weighed 100 pounds. The ice blocks



Brookville, Indiana, AMERICAN  
Sept. 16, 1836

**INTERNAL IMPROVEMENT  
CELEBRATION AT  
BROOKVILLE, SEPTEMBER  
13TH, 1836**

In accordance with previous arrangements, the commencement of the White Water Canal was celebrated at this place on Tuesday last. The preceding days, and the day of the celebration, were very favorable for such an occasion, the rain fell in torrents the most of the day, rendering it almost impossible to proceed with the ceremonies. Notwithstanding the elements seemed to conspire against us, yet a very large assemblage of individuals attended from this and the adjoining counties, variously estimated at from 3,000 to 4,000.

At an early hour on Monday (the day previous to the celebration) our public houses were crowded and the citizens very liberally threw open their private dwellings for the accommodation of visiting strangers. Several of the distinguished advocates of Internal Improvements attended; and others were deterred, probably, by the inclemency of the weather, as they had advised the committee of invitation that they would be with us.

On the morning of the celebration, the committee of arrangements selected Gov. Noble, Ex-Governor Jas. B. Ray, Doct. Drake of Cincinnati, and Geo. H. Dunn, Esq. of Lawrenceburgh, as the individuals to perform the ceremony of "breaking ground" on the Whitewater Canal.

About 11 o'clock the rain having ceased a little, a procession was formed on the public square under the direction of the Marshalls, according to the order heretofore published, and marched to a stand erected on the line of the Canal in a grove on the low bottom below the town of Brookville, where his Excellency Lieut. Gov. David Wallace delivered an able and eloquent address, upon which we shall attempt no eulogy at this time, further than to remark, that high as anticipation was, public

expectation was more than fulfilled. Although the address will be published, and our readers will have the pleasure of reading it, yet they will be deprived of the soul-stirring eloquence with which it was delivered; yet it contains much valuable information relative to the history and progress of Internal Improvements in Indiana, and will be sought after by those who were unable to attend the celebration.

At the conclusion of the address, the gentlemen selected for the purpose, amid the deafening cheers and shouts of the multitude, performed the operation of commencing the White Water Canal. This was a proud moment for this rich and fertile valley. Joy beamed in the countenances, and glistened in the eyes of all present.

After which the company repaired to the dinner table spread by Mr Harbin, and 600 or 800 partook thereof. The company then sat down to the toast table, and the following sentiments were drank, and enthusiastically cheered, many of which were responded to by the distinguished gentlemen present. We shall not attempt to give a summary of any of the speeches as they will all be published.

**REGULAR TOASTS**

**No. 1. Internal Improvement.** - The parent of National wealth, and the grand link by which the union of the States may be preserved. May the public mind appreciate its importance, and all the well begun system continue to progress throughout the Union, until the North American confederacy shall outshine, in wealth and enterprise, the dazzling Empires of Europe.

**No. 2. The White-Water Canal.** - A link in the vast chain of Internal Improvements connecting the Atlantic Ocean with the Gulf of Mexico.

**No. 3. The State of Indiana.** - Her youthful strides are rapid and gigantic - rich in Nature, unexampled in spirit and enterprise; soon, very soon, like Venus, in glory and splendor she shall, be eclipse by none of all her fair sisterhood.

**No. 4. Robert Fulton.** - The plaudits of the commercial world, are the reward

of his labor, and its products is the wealth of Nations.

**No. 5. The United States Navy.** - What sea has not borne the Star-spangled Banner, and where is the Nation that dare insult it?

**No. 6. Our Country.** - The vast increase of her population, her unparalleled improvement in every useful art, and her steady progress in refinement and literature, entitle her to an eminent rank amongst the nations of the earth, whilst in respect to her civil and religious rights, she rivals them all; May God protect her from the machinations of Demagogues, and preserve her from the lawless outrages of modern Mobs.

**No. 7. The President of the United States.** - Honored and revered by his country, for whose liberties he gloriously fought - the pen of the historian will preserve, for the admiration of posterity, the memory of Andrew Jackson.

**No. 8. His excellency Gov. Noble.** - Justice, unawed by party strife or party interest, has marked every step of his official career; his enemies admire his prudence; nor has the foul breath of slander ever tainted the atmosphere in which he moves: The cause of internal improvement in this state is deeply indebted to his judicious measures, and Indiana will long cherish sentiments of the most lively gratitude for the able and dignified manner in which he has discharged his official functions.

*(Gov. Noble spoke for 25 to 30 minutes. His speech and the replies to the other toasts are omitted in this book.)*

**No. 9. His excellency Gov. Lucas of Ohio.** - The people elected him to that high and honorable station for the esteem in which they held his virtues, and they were not deceived in the man.

**No. 10 His excellency Gov. Duncan of Illinois.** - We hail him as a co-laborer in the cause of Internal Improvement.

**No. 11. Lieutenant Gov. of Indiana.** - When Internal Improvement, like the theory of Columbus, was regarded as futile and visionary; when he who gravely talked of the poverty of the state, was a popular statesmen, & listened to with applause; then was the



inspiring eloquence of David Wallace heard in our hall of Legislation: Our statesmen, aroused from their dream of poverty, began to examine the resources of the state, and the result of that examination let 1836 proclaim: His fame shall be as imperishable as the improvements he has so eminent aided in producing, and Indiana will never forget the one nor neglect the other.

No. 12. **Hon. Bellamy Storer.** - A star in the west, devoted to Western Interest: Although a citizen of Hamilton Co., Ohio, yet the Mississippi Valley claims him for his enlarged mind; and his laudable exertions in the cause of human happiness cannot be circumscribed by narrow boundaries.

No. 13. **Hon. Robert T. Lytle.** - The lovers of forensic eloquence cannot but admire the Orator, while the wise and good award him meed of honesty and integrity.

No. 14. **Hon. Charles F. Mercer.** - Virginia can boast of a bright constellation of worthies, yet she has none now more worthy than this individual who has grown grey in the cause of his country, for the benefit of future generations; In the cause of Internal Improvements he has no segnoir.

No. 15. **Col. R. M. Johnson of Ky.** - The brave offspring of a noble state. His country admires his valor at the Thames, and will enroll his name among those of her bravest sons.

No. 16. **Gen. Wm. H. Harrison.** - The wise and able Governor of the "Northern Territory." The Hero of the Thames and Tippecanoe: Indiana, under his auspices ushered into being as a state, now in the full tide of her prosperity, looks upon him as her father and benefactor.

No. 17. **Hon. Henry Clay of Ky.** - To call him a patriot, a statesman, or an orator, is but to pronounce a common sentiment: The acknowledged champion of Internal Improvement - the great Apostle of the Right of man, his useful life has been wholly his country's and his bright and brilliant career entirely devoted to her service.

No. 18. **O. H. Smith, Esq.** - A firm friend of those measure which make the "Wilderness blossom as the rose." The

friends of the White-Water Canal cannot this day forget his valuable and efficient aid in bringing round the event we are now celebrating.

No. 19. **Hon. Jona. M. Carty.** - Vigilant and preserving in his conduct; honest and patriotic in his intentions; bold and open in his course: The cause of Internal Improvement is proud of such an advocate.

No. 20. **George H. Dunn.** - The able Lawyer, the enlightened statesman, the gentleman and man of integrity: Whether in the Legislature or in private life, the public good has been his great object; the welfare of the state his first & highest motive: While gratitude inspires our hearts, the name of George H. Dunn will be remembered by the people of Indiana.

No. 21. **Hon. Amos Lane.** - A gentleman of talents and experience, his services to the country are treasured up in sacred recollection, and the friends of education and internal improvement are sensible of his exertions in support of that glorious act of the last Congress, the division of the surplus Revenue.

No. 22. **Hon. Henry Morse, late Senator from Hamilton co., Ohio.** - His exertions in the last Ohio Legislature in behalf of the White Water Canal, will long be remembered and appreciated by the citizens of Indiana.

No. 23. **Dr. Drake of Cincinnati.** - The friends of Internal Improvement in Indiana, cordially greet the able and vigorous advocate of the great work of Improvement; his exertions in behalf of western interest deserve the approbation of every citizen of the Mississippi Valley.

No. 24. **J. L. Williams, Esq.** - Indiana owes his a debt of gratitude for the able manner in which he has discharged the important duty of Principal Engineer in the location of her public works.

No. 25. **James Karidan, Esq.** - The interest of the White-Water Valley is dear to his heart, nor is he idle in exerting his vigorous talents for her cause.

No. 26. **Milton Stapp, Esq.** - Gentlemanly in his deportment, faithful as a public servant, his service in the

field and in the councils of the state, entitle him to the gratitude of an enlightened and generous public.

No. 27. **Caleb B. Smith, Esq.** - The able member and dignified presiding officer of the Legislature which has cast undying luster around their names - a firm and decided friend of western improvement - long may his service be remembered.

No. 28. **Wm. R. Morris, Esq.** - Although his residence is not now with us yet he is not forgetful of the beautiful White-Water Valley which was once his home, but he is ever ready with his talents to defend her honor and advocate her interest.

No. 29. **M. T. Williams, Esq.** - His fame will be as durable as the works which have been constructed with the aid of his unceasing exertions.

No. 30. **Hon. Thomas Corwin.** - In him, looking upon the past, Ohio has much to admire, looking to the future, much to anticipate.

No. 31. **Jeremiah Morrow, Esq. Ex Gov. of Ohio.** - A faithful friend of Internal Improvement relieved from a toilsome and faithful service.

No. 32. **James B. Ray Ex Gov. of Ind.** - His name is identified with the Improvement and prosperity for Ind. (When this sentiment was drank, Gov. Ray rose to reply, but the rain commenced falling in such heavy torrents that the company were obliged to disperse and seek shelter.)

No. 33. **Thomas J. Evans.** - Chairman of the Committee of Canals and Internal Improvement of the H. R. at the last session of the Legislature - His able and faithful services in the cause of Internal Improvement will long be remember by the citizens of the state of Indiana.

(Just as the company was dispersing in the rain, John Finely, Esq. editor of the **Richmond Palladium** offered the following sentiment.)

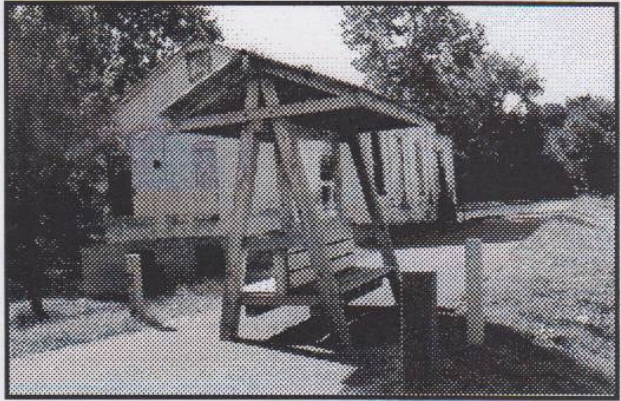
The meeting of the Waters  
There is not in this wide world a valley  
so sweet  
As that vale where the branches of  
Whitewater meet  
Oh! the last picayune shall depart from  
my fob  
Ere the East or West Fork shall  
relinquish the job.



WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

were then slid up a ramp and into the ice house where they were packed in layers of sawdust. During the summer months this ice had a commercial value of three to five cents per pound.

The frozen old canal basins were also ideal for ice skating because there was no appreciable flow of water. They froze faster and to a greater thickness than the water in the channel. The basins were also less monotonous to the skater than going up and down the canal. Distance skating is interesting though, and several folks hold the distinction of having skated from Metamora to the Laurel feeder dam and back. In 1861 the *Franklin Democrat* said, "The canal being locked up with ice, presents a magnificent opportunity for the youngsters of our town to enjoy themselves skating and have a good time. It is however, very doubtful if skating be one of our best exercises. It is not quite free from danger to life and limb, while such rapid motion through a keen, cutting atmosphere, by those who lie mostly in heated rooms is questionable. Every year since skating was known, thousands of lungs have been seriously compromised by this violent change. Skating is excellent for hardy people, and for those much accustomed to exposure, but it is to be used with great caution by all who live in heated places."



The ice house on the Whitewater Canal Basin at Brookville is seen behind the newly built kiosk by Whitewater Canal Trail. Photo by Bob Schmidt



Nate Tagmeyer



Nate Tagmeyer

Above: Sawing ice in the Whitewater Canal basin at Brookville and poling it to the ice house for storage was a business venture, while skating on the basin or the canal was pure pleasure.  
Right: Remains of Dam #3 on East Fork, Whitewater River Historic Photo



Just below the canal basin at Brookville the east and west forks of the Whitewater River come together and from there ran on to Lawrenceburg. The Whitewater Canal followed the east side of the West Fork of the river from



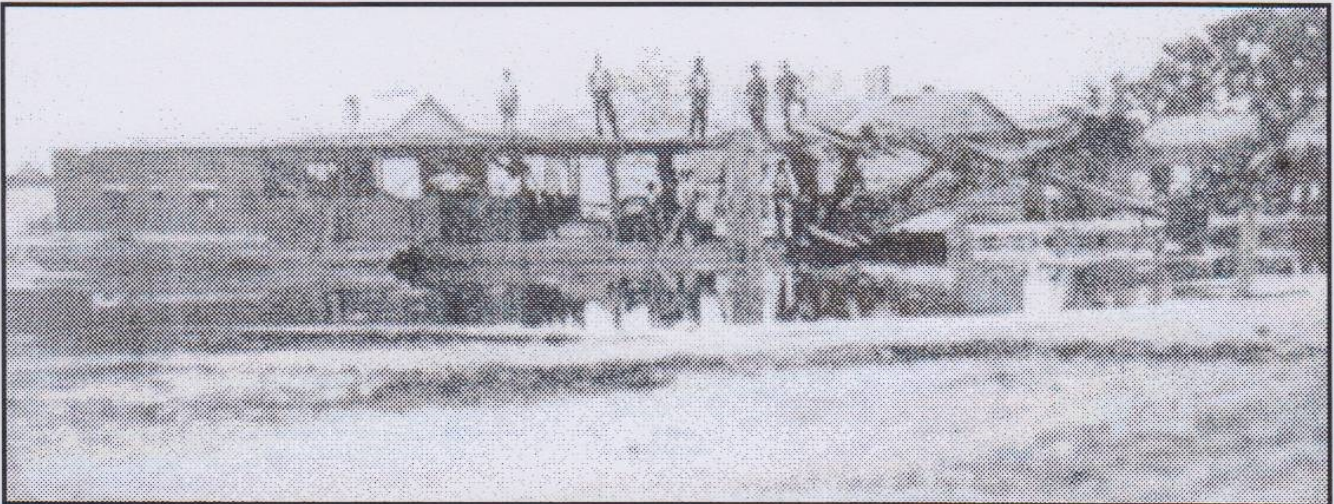
## WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

Laurel to Brookville. When the canal came to the East Fork of the Whitewater River a guard lock was built to prevent its being flooded by the river in times of high water. A dam was built across the East Fork to pool water to feed the canal below this point. This slackwater pool also allowed canal boats to cross at this point to proceed towards Lawrenceburg.

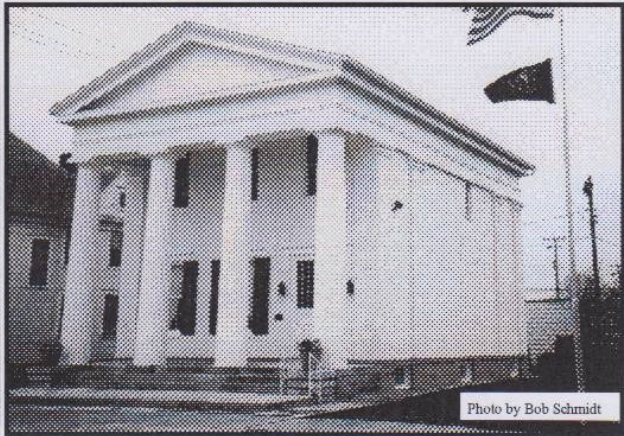
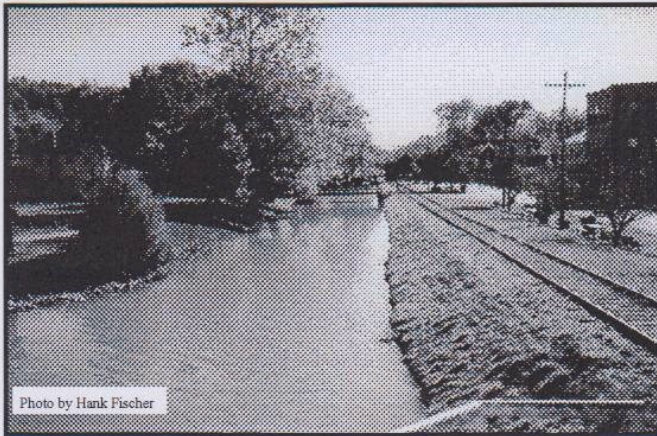


Above: Boats plied the Whitewater Canal whenever it was open, but serious spring floods and insufficient water during the dry months led to its demise. As seen above, telegraph lines were placed on its towing path, and later railroad tracks. Portions of it were used as an hydraulic canal, but even that did not last forever. This old colloidian picture shows the canal around 1851 towards its end. Old photo provided by Chuck Whiting

Below: This is one of the dredges used on the Whitewater Canal to help it maintain its 4 foot depth. Historic Photo







## PRESERVING THE WHITEWATER CANAL AND ITS HEADQUARTERS

Sometimes as we work to preserve canal remains and history, it is easy to become frustrated when more cannot be done at once and we don't have more people interested in our work. Preservation can be a single event that receives funding to preserve a site and expand membership. However, historical preservation generally doesn't operate with a largess of funds or many individuals. It proceeds slowly along from generation to generation as seen in the Whitewater Canal.

The Whitewater Canal was originally built from 1836-47 and operated until the early 1860s. Later the right-of-way was used by the railroad, but the canal itself was still operating in the 1920s for power generation in Connersville. The Brookville and Metamora Hydraulic Company supplied water from the Laurel feeder dam to mills in Metamora and Brookville via the Whitewater Canal. Due to lack of maintenance by the company, the bottom dropped out of Duck Creek Aqueduct in October 1939, stopping the flow of water to Brookville. Local citizens expressed their alarm in an article in the *Indiana Historical Bulletin* Vol. 16 No. 10 in October 1939 saying: "It is apparent that this unique relic of the old canal will before long entirely disappear if steps are not taken to preserve it as a public work. Its disappearance would be a loss to the public as well as to its owners. It is one of the chief attractions of Franklin County and is visited by many people from other parts of Indiana as well as from other states." The article goes on to call for the county to take title of the canal with the hopes of eventually making the canal part of a state historical site like was done southwest of Toledo with the (Miami) Wabash and Erie Canal.

The local citizens took action to save the Whitewater Canal. A small group from Brookville laid pipes across the span of Duck Creek so that water continued to flow beyond Metamora. On May 11, 1941 a group of 70-80 interested citizens led by Charles Wesler of Batesville and Cornelius O'Brien of Lawrenceburg toured the Whitewater Canal as well as the Cincinnati & Whitewater Canal from Cincinnati to Connersville.

Later that year on October 12<sup>th</sup> forty cars filled with one hundred twenty-five people from the Indiana Historical Society toured the Whitewater Valley. Some had picnic lunches but others ate at the Laurel restaurant. The tour concluded with a visit of the home of former congressman Finly Grey and his wife Alice, who lived in the old canal headquarters in Connersville. People came from as far as Florida, Arkansas and Texas to take this tour. After seeing all this interest in the canal the local citizens throughout the valley rallied to the cause of canal preservation and met in Connersville on October 21, 1941 to establish the Whitewater Canal Association of Indiana. Members of the executive committee included Finly Gray, Luther Feeger of Richmond, Cornelius O'Brien of Lawrenceburg, Mrs. Donald Teetor of Hagerstown, John Hillenbrand of Batesville and others representing towns of eastern Indiana. Later in 1947 Eli Lilly became one of the directors of the association.



After several meetings on goals and objectives, the Whitewater Canal Association was officially established on June 10, 1942 as a non-profit organization. In addition to preservation and restoration of the canal, the group sought to have the site made into a state park. There were few state parks in southeastern Indiana at the time, but the Indiana Department of Conservation wanted to acquire, without expenditure to the state, a large, unbroken area with a single natural entrance at which admission fees could be collected. In September of that year, the canal association faced another challenge. A break occurred in the Laurel feeder dam and temporary repairs were required.

Indiana was also wanting to control flooding in the Whitewater valley. Studies were performed and one of the alternatives was to dam the west side of the Whitewater River, which would have destroyed the canal.

The push for a state park changed slightly in 1943 when the National Park Service donated 230 acres for the Versailles state park south of Metamora thus remedying the immediate need for a recreational park in southeastern Indiana. However, there was still a need for flood control.

Brookville, Indiana is the point where the east and west forks of the Whitewater River combine. The great flood of 1913, which destroyed canals in Ohio, almost wiped Brookville off the map. The state finally decided that the east branch of the Whitewater River should be developed for flood control. Eventually the Brookville Dam and reservoir were built and completed in 1974. This dam is farther up-river from the earlier canal feeder dam.

Later in 1943 the Indiana General Assembly authorized a study of the Whitewater Valley for the development of a state park. In December 1944 the Department of Conservation announced its plan for a Whitewater State Park on the east branch of the Whitewater south of Liberty. The plan also included the Whitewater Canal on the west branch. The park would include the canal from the Feeder Dam at Laurel to Brookville. At this point in 1945 the Canal Association, who had acquired ownership of the canal, transferred ownership of this part of the canal to the state. Also that year Governor Gates signed a bill for the restoration of the canal.

Although the Whitewater Canal is designated as a state historic site, it is associated with the Whitewater State Park. Money made from the park helps pay some of the canal's bills.

By 1949 most of the structures on the canal within the site had been repaired and Milford E. Anness, state senator, Columbus attorney and Metamora native, got the Indiana legislature to provide \$10,000 for dredging the canal. Mr. Anness, a charter member of the Canal Society of Indiana, died in 1992.

The headquarters for the Whitewater Canal was built at Connersville in 1842. In 1854 it was sold to The Savings Bank of Indiana and then sold again in 1857 to Elisha Vance whose son turned the building into a private residence. It remained in the Vance family until 1936 when congressman and former Connersville mayor, Finly Gray and his wife, Alice, purchased the home, completed extensive restoration and furnished it with period antique furniture. As mentioned earlier Finly also was instrumental in saving the Whitewater Canal and was a member of the canal association. The Gray's loved the canal and the Whitewater Valley. Their only daughter died in 1940 at age 38. They donated 240 acres south of Connersville to the Indiana Audubon Society in her honor for the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary.

Alice Gray died in 1943 and Finly died in 1947. All three are buried in the Connersville Dale Cemetery. Finly's will provided for an additional 600 acres to the bird sanctuary and gifted the Canal House to the Audubon Society. Unable to justify the expense of the building the society sold it to VFW Glen Sample Post 571, which operated from it for several years.



## WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

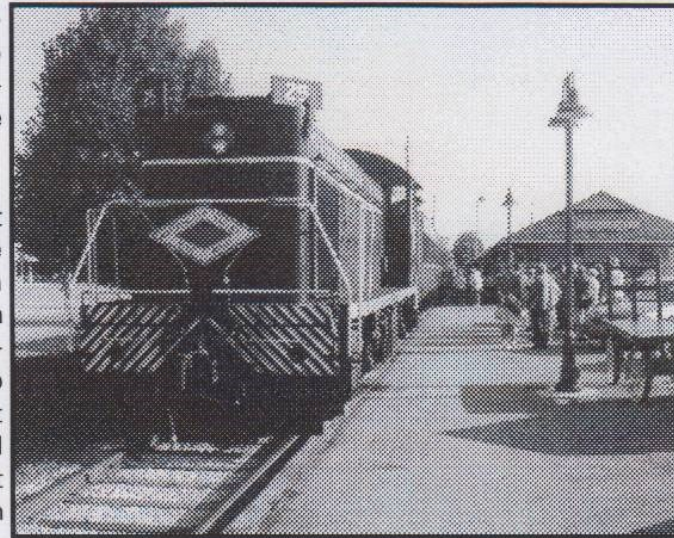
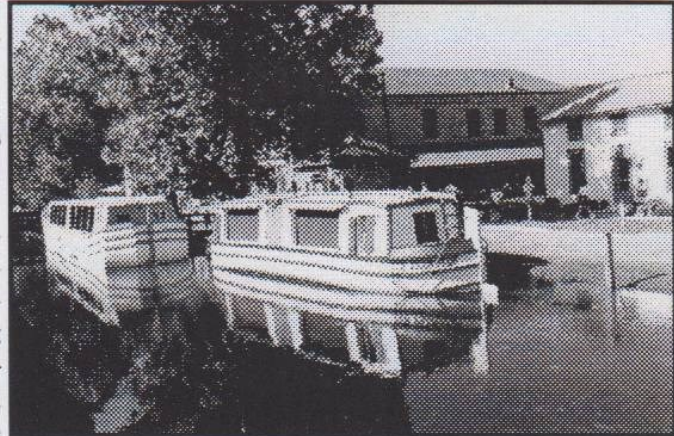
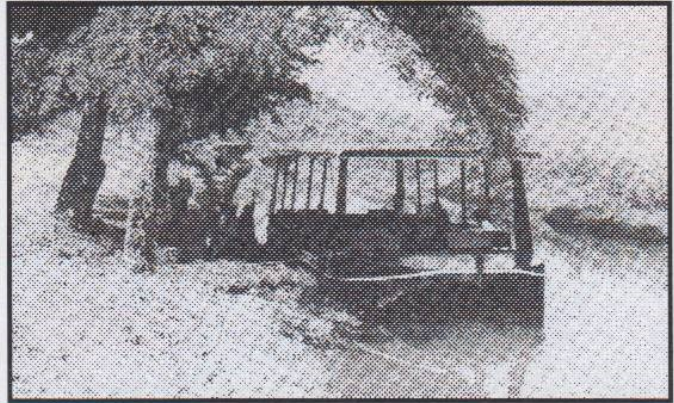
Historic Connersville, a historical preservation group, was organized in 1965 with the objective of acquiring the Canal House from the somewhat reluctant VFW. They launched a statewide effort to raise \$50,000 and successfully acquired it on May 22, 1971. Extensive restoration really didn't get underway until April 1976, when Robert K. Gray, Finly's nephew, retired and was able to lead the project to completion in 1978.

The Canal Society of Indiana had their initial tour of the Canal House on September 17, 1982. Then twenty-seven members of the newly organized state canal society viewed the restored headquarters of the Whitewater Canal Company.

A section of the old Whitewater Canal was saved by local citizen action and turned over to the state. The site was maintained and improved during the 1950s, but there was no historical interpretation with a canal boat on the canal. The first attempt to actually get a boat on the water didn't occur until July 1964. A 30 passenger excursion boat with a gasoline engine took tourists from the Metamora Rest Park just east of Metamora on U.S. 52 up to and through the Millville lock. Although the boat locked through the Millville lock it did not proceed as far as the Duck Creek Aqueduct or into Metamora itself. There was a desire by many persons connected with the canal to provide a more realistic 19<sup>th</sup> century experience.

During the canal era the first canal boat from Lawrenceburg to reach Brookville in June 1839 was named the "Ben Franklin." Although built on a much smaller scale than the original, a boat was built by Rainbow Construction of Geneva, Indiana in 1980. Rainbow Construction also built the hub for the waterwheel at Lock #25, built new gates for Lock #24, and repaired the Laurel Feeder Dam. Rainbow's boat was launched at Metamora in April 1981 and christened the "Ben Franklin II" in honor of that first boat. This 44-ft-long boat was made of wood and lasted about as long as historic canal boats did. After 10 years this boat became water logged and rotten so it was replaced in 1990 with the "Ben Franklin III," a 75-ft-long fiberglass canal boat. It was built in Pascagoula, Mississippi. This canal boat has lasted 20 years and is still in use at the site today.

After 1964 the original Whitewater Canal



Top: The "Valley View," a 30-passenger fiberglass boat was the first boat to operate on the section of the Whitewater Canal State Memorial. It was launched on July 16, 1964. Historic Photo

Center: The "Ben Franklin II" in the foreground was replaced by the "Ben Franklin III," which still operates on the canal in Metamora. Photo by Louise Larsen

Bottom: Whitewater Valley Railroad in Connersville, Indiana. Photo by Gene Paschka



Association felt that their mission to save the canal had been accomplished and disbanded. Other groups have emerged to promote the Whitewater Valley.

In 1972 the Whitewater Railroad was formed as a not-for-profit group. The volunteer group operates a rail line on the old towpath. In 1983 they formally purchased the right-of-way they had been leasing from the Penn Central railroad. Today they operate weekend passenger service from Connersville to Metamora and a shuttle excursion service 2 miles below Metamora.



Vinton House, old National Road and Whitewater Canal Inn in Cambridge City, Indiana. Photo by Bob Schmidt

Western Wayne Heritage was formed in 1986 to promote the canal and the history of Wayne County. In 1998 they undertook the preservation of the Vinton House, a 36-room, three-story brick, stage and canal inn built in 1847-48 in Cambridge City.

In 1991 the State of Indiana proposed developing an 8-mile-long crushed stone Whitewater Canal Trail from Metamora to Brookville through the cooperation of the Department of Natural Resources' Division of Outdoor Recreation and the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites. A study was made and the developmental plan handed out. Some work was done and a dedication held on October 3, 1992 of about 2½ miles of trail. Unfortunately due to land acquisition and funding the trail was never completed.

In 2004 Whitewater Canal Trail Inc. was established to build a biking/hiking trail from Metamora to Brookville. This group has made great progress and continues today completing portions of the trail and sites along the way. This group has placed a marker at the beginning of the trail in Metamora commemorating the original members of the Whitewater Canal Association. The Canal Society of Indiana provided funding for it.

In 2008 Whitewater Canal Scenic Byways Inc. was formed. Its goal was to promote the Whitewater Valley by pulling together preservation efforts being carried through out the valley and to promote tourism.

As we review this history of canal preservation in the Whitewater valley, it is obvious that the work is both carried on from generation to generation and from the local to the state level. As one phase ends another one opens. Always a new group wants to learn more about Indiana's canal era and wants to do their part in preserving its history. Without this continuum our history would be lost to just some dusty pages in a book. Financial funds usually follow local enthusiasm. It is the CSI mission to stoke the fire of canal interest throughout the state.

## RECOGNIZING THOSE WHO INFLUENCED THE WHITEWATER CANAL

The Canal Society of Indiana has been recognizing those who were directly involved with Indiana's canals in a column entitled "Canawlers At Rest" in its news and journal, *The Hoosier Packet*. The following article concerns such men who lived or worked in the portion of the Whitewater Valley covered on this tour. They are but a few who lived, worked, and died on the canal.



## CANAWLERS AT REST

### **JAMES CONWELL**

**b. November 22, 1786  
d. May 10, 1849**

### **GEORGE GROVE SHOUP**

**b. November 11, 1810  
d. July 7, 1853**

**By Robert F. Schmidt**

Indiana's Whitewater Valley is filled with the history of our state and nation. From 1825-43 Brookville (pop. 3,000) was the home of four governors of Indiana in succession — James Ray, Noah Noble, David Wallace and Samuel Bigger. Connorsville (pop. 15,000) was the home of Caleb B. Smith, U. S. Secretary of the Interior in the Lincoln administration. Laurel (pop. 580) also has a place on the national scene. Located about 11 miles south of Connorsville along State Road 121, this sleepy little town is atop a hill overlooking the Whitewater Valley. All of these towns were on the Whitewater Canal.

The Treaty of Greenville in 1795 created a boundary between settlers and Indian territory. This line extended from Fort Recovery, Ohio, to just west of Richmond, Indiana, and on to where the Kentucky River pours its water into the Ohio River. Brookville, established in 1808 by Amos Butler and Jesse Thomas, was in the settler territory. Just west of the town is Boundary Hill, which was named for its location on the treaty line. The treaty delayed settlement to the valley west of this point for several years.

On September 30, 1809, at the Treaty of Fort Wayne, William Henry Harrison negotiated the so called "Twelve Mile Purchase," which extended settler territory further west to just outside of Cambridge City, Indiana, and followed in a diagonal line to the west of most of the Whitewater River. In November 1810 following this treaty, Wayne and Franklin counties were created from the northern portion of Dearborn County.

With the valley opened to settlers, in 1815 Edward Toner established the small village of Somerset on the west side of the Whitewater River and built a tavern. At this point in 1816-18, Jacob Whetzel and his four sons blazed a 60-mile-long trail due west through the primeval forest to Waverly, located just south of Indianapolis on the White River, without using any surveying instruments. Later when Whetzel's trace was actually surveyed, it was found to be off only 4 degrees from due west. Settlers used this route to western Indiana and regions beyond from 1818-1826. After that time other state roadways came into existence and the old trace was soon taken over by private landowners along the way.

In 1818, Abram B. Conwell, originally from Lewestown, Delaware, came to Connorsville. That fall three of his brothers followed him into the region. James Conwell, a Methodist minister, located in Somerset; William Conwell settled at Cambridge City; and Isaac Conwell went to Liberty, Indiana. Each of the brothers became successful merchants in their respective communities.

James Conwell, also from Leweston, was born on November 22, 1786. He had married Mary Hughes in 1809, but Mary died in Delaware in 1817. He then married his first cousin, Winifred Harris



King, on August 10, 1818. Both James and Winifred moved to Somerset in 1820 and James opened up a store in his home while acting as a part-time minister of the gospel. He became convinced that a canal would be of great economic benefit to the valley and to himself as well.

In 1822-23 groups of citizens from six counties met at West Harrison, Indiana, to discuss the feasibility of constructing a canal along the Whitewater River. This was followed in 1824 by some local surveying. On January 21, 1826, the state of Indiana authorized The Whitewater Canal Company. That same year Congress authorized a federal survey and, in July, James Shriver led a team of surveyors up the Whitewater Valley. Shriver died while the survey was in process and his successor, Asa Moore, died shortly thereafter. This was not a good start and the chartered canal company was unsuccessful in launching the new company. In 1829 after doing a second survey, the federal surveyor, Colonel Howard Stansbury, reported that he felt the Whitewater canal was impractical.

In June of 1834 William Goodwin and Jesse L. Williams conducted still another survey with a favorable report. James Conwell calculated that their proposal for a Whitewater Canal would be very profitable. James became the postmaster of Somerset in 1831 and in May 1832 had the town renamed Conwell Mills. He ran for State Representative in 1834 and soundly defeated canal opposition candidate C.W. Hutchen.

On January 16, 1836 the Indiana State legislature approved the Mammoth Internal Improvement Bill. Noah Noble, the Governor who was from Brookville, signed the bill into law on January 27, 1836. James Conwell served in the Senate in 1836 and was a representative from Franklin County in 1840.

Anticipating the growth along the canal, James Conwell platted the area up the hill from Somerset in 1836. At first he was going to name it New Baltimore but later decided upon naming it Laurel after a town from his former state of Delaware. On July 26, 1837, Laurel officially became a town. Later on Somerset was absorbed into Laurel. This same year the two-story Laurel Academy was built and still stands today. Francis Asbury Conwell, James' eldest 25-year-old son, became the new town's first postmaster. On October 12, 1838, George Shoup became its second postmaster.

George Grove Shoup had come to Laurel in 1832 and married James Conwell's daughter, Jane, on May 16, 1833. On March 22, 1834, their first of nine children was born. The boy was named Francis Asbury Shoup after his uncle, Francis A. Conwell, Jane's brother. This was also a good Methodist name and greatly pleased his grandfather James.

Construction of the Whitewater Canal began at Brookville on September 12, 1836 with great celebration and by June 9, 1839 the first boat, "the Ben Franklin," traveled from Lawrenceburg to Brookville. It appeared that the hopes for a canal were about to be realized. Then Indiana's internal improvements suffered from a nationwide financial collapse. The state issued this stop order in November 1839: "That with the exception of the Wabash canal, from Lafayette to the State line, and the dams on other works yet to be preserved, the work at Lawrenceburg and bridges at Harrison, the public works be immediately suspended." Only 30 miles of the canal were completed by the state. Work came to a halt and the future looked dim.

Two years went by with nothing happening on the Whitewater Canal in Indiana, but by the summer of 1840 work had resumed in Ohio on the Cincinnati & Whitewater Canal. The people of the upper Whitewater Valley thought it was time to renew the efforts to extend their canal. Both James Conwell and his son-in-law, George Shoup, were instrumental in calling a meeting at Laurel on April 15, 1841. A resolution was passed to develop a plan to establish a company to complete the canal. George Shoup was one of the seven members of this committee. James Conwell was selected as part of a five man committee to draft the articles of association.



In 1842 the legislature granted a charter for a new private company, the Whitewater Valley Canal Company. James Conwell, acting President, announced that the books would be opened on April 4, 1842, for stock subscriptions. George Shoup was part of the committee to create a barbeque celebration at Cambridge City on July 28, 1842. Crowds of between 7-15,000? people were there to hear speeches by James Raridan and Samuel Parker. The festive atmosphere was interrupted by a great storm that dispersed the crowd.

Work proceeded quickly from the partial diggings of 1839 and the canal reached Laurel on November 17, 1842. The "Native," a boat built in Cedar Grove, was brought to town by its builder and captain Stephen Coffin. The boat glided over smooth waters and the ladies and gentlemen were entertained by the Brookville band. When they left the next day at 11:00 a.m. they were entertained with speeches by George Shoup and John Farquhar. Another celebration was held at Connersville on June 21, 1845, when the "Patriot" commanded by Capt. Gayle Ford arrived.

By October 1845 the canal had finally reached Cambridge City. The final connection to Hagerstown was completed in 1847 by the Hagerstown Canal Company, another private company.

As stated before James Conwell was first married in 1809 to Mary Hughes in Delaware. They had four children, Elizabeth Ann, Francis Asbury, Jane and Mary Hughes Conwell. James' wife Mary died in 1817 and he then married Winifred Harris King, the daughter of his uncle, William King, on August 10, 1818. The family with children from age 1-8 traveled west arriving in Franklin county in 1820. He and Winifred later had 11 children. The youngest child was Frances (Fannie) Olivia, who was born on March 23, 1837.

James was a Methodist Episcopal minister, a merchant and canal promoter. His name will always be associated with Laurel. He died on May 10, 1849, and was buried in the Conwell Cemetery on his farm.

Winifred managed with her teenage family but by 1860 had moved in with her daughter, Fannie, who had married William H. Smith, a physician, on June 9, 1858. They moved to Rushville, Indiana a few years later where Winifred died on June 29, 1883.

#### George Grove Shoup

George Grove Shoup was born November 10, 1810, at Fairfield (Fairborn) OH, Bath Township near Dayton. He was the youngest of nine children of Samuel and Dorothy (Grove) Shoup. Seeking to make his fortune in the new west, he moved into the Laurel area in 1832 at age 22. He apparently began by working in the local mills and became very closely associated with the James Conwell family. In May of 1833 he married Jane Conwell, the daughter of James and Mary Conwell, and then in 1838 he followed Jane's brother, Francis, as the Postmaster of Laurel. He served in this capacity until 1849.

Living in Laurel George Shoup and the Conwells were huge supporters of canals for the White-water valley. Due to their investments and interest in the town it is obvious that they would do everything they could to promote the completion of the canal.

In 1841 Shoup was elected to complete the term of John A. Matson in the Indiana House of Representatives. He continued to be elected for two more terms serving until 1843. After the Whitewater Valley Canal Company had reached Laurel in November 1842, he became involved in boat ownership, mills and pork packing.

During the decade of the 1840s George Shoup was always involved with the canal and earned the respect of the citizens of the valley. The *Brookville American* on November 28, 1847 following a



disastrous flood complained that the board of the canal was not taking decisive action. It said: "If the board were composed of such men as Samuel W Parker, Meredith Helm, **George G. Shoup**, Griffin Taylor, John D. Jones, Benjamin Conklin, James Rariden, James Wood, and R. Tyner, in four months from this date the richly laden boats would float down our valley - the laborer on the canal would receive the pay for his hire, and the public would feel assured that all was right."

It is interesting to note that in January of 1848 there were two factions in the election for the board -the John Newman ticket and the Samuel Parker ticket. George Shoup was on both tickets and won election to the board.

In the spring of 1849 George's father-in-law, James Conwell died. In October 1850 George went to Indianapolis as one of three delegates from Franklin County to attend the called Constitutional Convention to revise the state's governing document. There was a total of 150 delegates at this convention. Debate continued until February 10, 1851. One of the results was the provision to prevent the state from borrowing for capital improvement projects since the earlier projects had driven the state to the verge of bankruptcy. During the debates in Indianapolis an important event occurred at the door of the State Capital - the selling of the Central Canal.

In January 1850 the legislature had authorized the sale of the Central Canal. The auction occurred on November 16, 1850. George Shoup, James Rariden, and John Newman, who were all members of the constitutional convention either left the meeting or it was recessed for a while, for they bid and bought the canal for \$2,425. On February 7, 1851 they transferred it to Francis Asbury Conwell, Shoup's brother-in-law, and some other investors. What the relationships and deals were we don't know. The title of the group was the Central Canal Manufacturing, Hydraulic and Water Works Company. They in turn passed it on and it eventually became the Indianapolis Water Company.

George Shoup returned to Laurel where he died on July 7, 1853, at age 42. His wife Jane lived seven more years, dying just prior to the census of 1860.

We have been unable to find the grave of James Conwell on his farm. We assume George Shoup was buried in Laurel where he died, but we don't know where his grave is located.

The influence that America's first Methodist Episcopal Bishop Francis Asbury (1745-1816) who worked in the Maryland/Delaware area, had on the Conwell family can be seen. James and Mary named their first son Francis Asbury Conwell and as we will see this name carries into the next generation. Two of their grandchildren went on to have lives of national interest and national significance.

Famous Grandchildren of  
James and Mary Hughes Conwell

Their daughter, Jane Conwell, married George Groves Shoup, as noted above. Jane's sister, Mary Hughes Conwell, married Henry Dayton Smith. Each of these children had offspring who excelled.

Francis Asbury Shoup  
The Brigadier General CSA

George Shoup and Jane Conwell's first son, Francis Asbury Shoup, was born on March 22, 1834, about a year after their marriage in May 1833. They named him after Jane's brother Francis Asbury Conwell. Francis Shoup grew up in Laurel at the time of the canal. His grandfather, James Conwell died in 1849 and his father George Shoup died in 1853. His mother Jane was only 39 when she became a widow and Francis was just 19.





**BRIGADIER GENERAL CSA  
FRANCIS ASBURY SHOUP**  
Born near present-day Laurel 1834;  
Attended Indiana Asbury University,  
Greencastle; Graduated 1855 from  
United States Military Academy  
at West Point; served in Federal  
army 1855-1860; resigned to  
pursue law career in Indianapolis  
circa 1860; Died 1896; buried  
at Sewanee University  
Cemetery, Tennessee.

Remembered for service in  
Confederate States of America army,  
1861-1865, and "Shoupade"  
Fortification design; fought in battles  
of Shiloh, Vicksburg, and Atlanta.  
Advocated recruitment of African  
Americans for CSA army. After  
the war, he was a university  
professor, published author, and  
Episcopal rector.

Francis Asbury Shoup  
The Brigadier General CSA

Francis was the first cousin of Elisabeth Conwell Smith (Willson). The two grew up together in Laurel but she was eight years younger having been born in April 1842.

In the early 1850s Francis attended Indiana Asbury (DePauw University) for a time but soon received appointment to the United States Military at West Point. After graduation in 1855 he was assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Artillery and served in Key West Florida 1855-56. He later participated in hostilities with the Seminoles. He was transferred to Charleston and Fort Moultrie in 1858. Francis' mother died in the late 1850s leaving his siblings alone. He resigned his commission in January 1860 after returning to Indianapolis in 1858 to take care of them. He practiced law there and also became the leader for a troop of Indianapolis Zouave militia.

**Zouave** was the title given to certain infantry regiments in the French Army, normally serving in French North Africa between 1831 and 1862. The name was also adopted during the 19th century by units in other armies, especially volunteer regiments raised for service in the American Civil War. The characteristic zouave uniform included short open-fronted jackets, baggy trousers and often sashes and oriental headgear.

In the fall of 1860 Francis became convinced that the election of Abraham Lincoln would lead to war. He greatly feared abolitionism. He knew that he would be forced to serve in the military on one side or the other. Even though he had high prospects for his military career in the north, he moved south before South Carolina seceded. He attended the Secession Convention in Charleston in December 1860.



When Francis declared that he had "aristocratic inclinations and admiration for the South" those in the Indianapolis militia, who loved him as a friend, were shocked. They had given him a special set of revolvers with holsters and trappings believing that he would be an officer in the Union and always ride horses thus needing such a set. However, soon thereafter Francis moved to St. Augustine, Florida, where the Governor commissioned him a Lieutenant in the Confederate Army.

Francis A. Shoup participated in the Battle of Shiloh as chief of artillery under William Hardee. On September 12, 1862, the First Confederate Congress made him a brigadier general. He was captured at the Battle of Vicksburg, later paroled and fought again in the Battle of Atlanta serving in the Confederate Army. He was the designer of the "schoupade" design for fortifications along the Chattahoochee River. He advocated having blacks serve in the army. During the war he wrote texts on infantry and artillery drill. He also served as Chief of Staff for the commander of the Army of Tennessee, John Bell Hood.

After the war, Francis was ordained by the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1868 and wrote books about mathematics and metaphysics. He became a chaplain at the University of the South, in Sewanee, Tennessee, serving from 1869-71. On June 29, 1871, he was married to Esther Habersham Elliot of Beaufort, South Carolina. He continued to serve as a rector in Waterford, NY; Nashville, TN; Jackson, TN; and New Orleans, LA. In 1878 he received his Doctor of Divinity degree from the University of the South and taught there from 1883-96. Upon his death on September 4, 1896, in Columbia, Tennessee, he was buried in the cemetery of the University of the South in Sewanee located about 75 miles west of Chattanooga.

An Indiana State Format Marker was erected in the Conwell Cemetary at Laurel, Indiana, on October 21, 2006, honoring Francis Asbury Shoup, the only Confederate General from Indiana. Fifty people attended its dedication. One wonders how a young man born and raised in Indiana became a general in the southern army. His family was firmly planted in the north in the Quaker region of Indiana that opposed slavery. His family was clearly pro Union. He held a military position in Indianapolis and lived there with his family. They had to be sent to other relatives when he went south. Prior to the war he had spent only about five years in the south

Elisabeth Conwell Smith Willson  
The Poetess

Mary Hughes Conwell was born March 6, 1817, in Seaford, Delaware, and moved with her father, James, and stepmother, Winifred, to Franklin county where she grew up. On March 15, 1836, at 19 she married Henry Dayton Smith, who was 21. They had 3 children, Mary Caroline born in 1837, James Albert born in 1840 and Elizabeth Conwell born April 26, 1842. Henry was listed as a notary in Franklin County in 1840, but little else is known about his occupation.

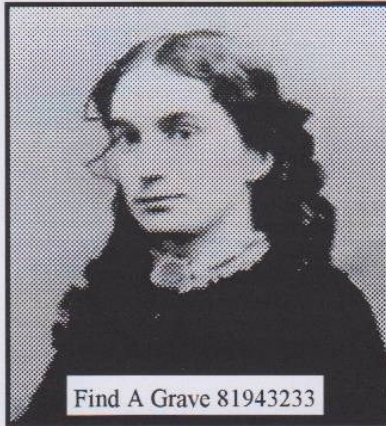
Unfortunately a year after Elisabeth Conwell Smith was born, her father died suddenly in Laurel on June 28, 1843. Her mother struggled to keep the family together and four years later married Richard Howland Cullum on August 18, 1847. This was the only father 5-year-old Elizabeth ever knew.

Tragedy again struck when Elisabeth was 16. Her mother, Mary Hughes Conwell died on November 12, 1858. Elisabeth probably spent the next couple of years at the Laurel Academy finishing her education but by 1862 she had gone to the female academy in New Albany, which was to change her life.

Byron Forceythe Willson was born in Little Genesee, New York, on April 10, 1837. In about 1846 his parents, who were both teachers and very religious, emigrated to Maysville, Kentucky on a flatboat on the Ohio River. His mother died in 1856 and the family again moved west to New Albany,

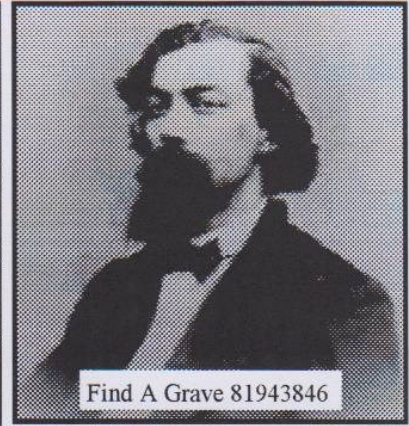


Indiana, in 1858 where his father became a lumber merchant. A spiritual excitement swept the area and many people believed they could communicate with the dead through a medium. Forceythe became very caught up in these beliefs and, after his father's death in 1859, he professed to be in communication with his father's spirit.



Find A Grave 81943233

Elisabeth Conwell Smith Willson



Find A Grave 81943846

Byron Forceythe Willson

Forceythe was the oldest son and was the guardian for the other three living children. He attended Antioch College in Ohio and was under the supervision of Horace Mann. He also attended

Harvard for a time. In about 1861 he had to leave the school and return back to New Albany because of a very severe attack of consumption (tuberculosis). The physicians thought he was in the final stages of the disease but they were able to restore his health. He was able to obtain employment on the editorial board of the *Louisville Journal*, writing pro-Union articles.

In 1862 Forceythe met Elisabeth Smith when she was attending the local DePauw Academy for Women that had been established in 1852 by Washington C. DePauw. Since age 16 Elisabeth had been writing poems. It was through their common interest in poetry that they met and became romantically involved. Some of her poems can be found at Google Book, [1861 Ladies Repository DW Clark](#). Here is a sample of one that relates to her recently deceased mother.

Mother

Speak tenderly to me, sweet mother-saint,  
Let thy dear whispers voice the silent airs,  
O! press me to thy heart, for mine is faint  
With the long loss of mother-love and prayers.  
Etc.

Fall noiselessly upon the twilight flower —  
Ah, they are withered flowers within my heart! —  
Sweet mother, come once more and bless the hours  
In thy dream presence sorrow must depart.

This same sort of sentimentality was very common for the period and can also be found in Willson's works as well as his belief in the communication with the dead. In the summer and fall of 1862 he produced a poem based on the final hours of a soldier who was fatally wounded at Shiloh in April of 1862. The poem entitled "The Old Sergeant" was published in the *Louisville Journal* on January 1, 1863. It is the transcript of a real person, a federal assistant-surgeon named Austin, with whom Willson was acquainted at New Albany, and a dying Sergeant named Robert Burton, who Austin had attended in his last hours. The entire works and some other comments can be found again on Google Book, [Byron Forceythe Willson, Piatt](#).

Here are a few lines from this famous poem:

The Old Sergeant

"Come a little nearer, Doctor, --thank you, -- let me take the cup:  
Draw your chair up, -- draw it closer, --just another little sup!  
Maybe you think I'm better; but I'm pretty well used up, --  
Doctor, you've done all you could do, but I'm just a-going up!  
Etc.

"And the same old palpitation came again in all its power,  
And I heard a Bugle sounding, as from some celestial Tower;  
And the same mysterious voice said: "It is the Eleventh hour!  
Orderly Sergeant --Robert Burton --It is the Eleventh hour!"  
Etc.

This poem is responsible for bringing the Willson's to national attention through a chain of



events. The *Louisville Journal* was a pro-Union newspaper that was often read by President Lincoln. Having read the poem, Lincoln was touched, and asked his friend Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. if he knew the author. Holmes contacted the editor of the *Journal*, George D. Prentice, who identified Willson as the author.

Byron Forceythe Willson married Elisabeth Conwell Smith in Connerville, IN on September 16, 1863. The marriage took place at the home of her aunt and uncle Elizabeth Ann (Conwell) and Martin Updegraff. He and Elisabeth then moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, to support his brother, August Everett Willson, future Governor of Kentucky, who was attending Harvard. They purchased a pleasant old mansion on the Mount Auburn road. This residence was originally the home of Governor Elbridge T. Gerry, the father of gerrymandering, and was later the home James Russell Lowell. Here he associated with Lowell, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Oliver Wendell Holmes. It has been said the he was the only Indiana poet who came in close touch with the New England writers.

James Russell Lowell was the first editor in 1857 of the *Atlantic Monthly*, which published some of Willson's works. Dr. Holmes often read "The Old Sergeant" to his audiences and compared it favorably for human interest to Samuel Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

Elisabeth and Forceythe had a son "Little Dolfi," who died shortly after birth on June 1, 1864. Then, on October 13, 1864, Elisabeth, age 22, who was always in somewhat fragile health passed on. Forceythe grieved but felt that he was frequently in communication spiritually with her. In 1866 he published a small volume of her poetic works.

Forceythe went on to write several other war time poems such as "The Rhyme of the Master's Mate" and "In State." He published a small volume of his works in November of 1866 but none ever achieved the fame of "The Old Sergeant."

In the fall of 1866, at about the time he published his works, he was visiting New Albany, Indiana, when he suffered from a hemorrhage of the lungs. At times following this attack he was heard in communication with his dead wife. After about a month he recovered enough to travel to Alfred Center, New York, where his younger sister and brother were living with an aunt. There on February 2, 1867, he died. His body was then removed to Laurel, Indiana.

The two graves are side by side in the Conwell Cemetery on the northwestern slope in Laurel. "Little Dolfi" is buried with his mother and commemorated on her stone. Her marker is a small obelisk of white marble. Forceythe's is a round-topped marble headstone. From the top of the sloping graveyard you can see several miles north to the cornfields of the Whitewater Valley. These graves have a lovely situation, but the casual passer-by would not suspect that in them two poets and their son were sleeping.

To Each His Own

And part to meet on earth No More;  
We clasp each other to the heart,  
And part to meet on earth No More.  
There is a time for tears to start, --

For dews to fall and larks to soar:  
The Time for Tears, is when we part  
To meet upon the earth No More:  
The Time for Tears, is when we part  
To meet upon the earth No More.

Byron Forceythe Willson (1837-1867)



## WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK

The Willsons' made a lasting impression on Oliver Wendell Holmes for after their death he made a visit to Laurel to visit the grave of his old friends. He wrote at one time about Forceythe saying: "He came among us as softly and silently as a bird drops into his nest. His striking personal appearance had attracted the attention of the scholars and poets who were his neighbors, long before they heard his name or condition. It was impossible to pass without noticing the tall and dark young man with long, curled locks and large, dreamy, almond-shaped eyes, who was often seen walking along the road that leads from the village of Old Cambridge to Mount Auburn." When visiting the Conwell Cemetery today and looking out into the Whitewater Valley, it looks very much like the time that Dr. Holmes visited.



Little Dolfie  
June 1, 1864  
Elisabeth Conwell Willson  
Born  
April 26, 1842  
Died  
October 13, 1864

Byron Forceythe Willson  
Born  
Little Genessee N. Y.  
April 10, 1837  
Died N Alfred N.Y.  
Feb. 2, 1867



Coulter House, Southwest corner Conwell/Lafayette Streets in Laurel Indiana. This is where Oliver Wendell Holmes stopped for a drink on the way to the graves of Forceythe and Elisabeth Willson.  
Photo by Bob Schmidt

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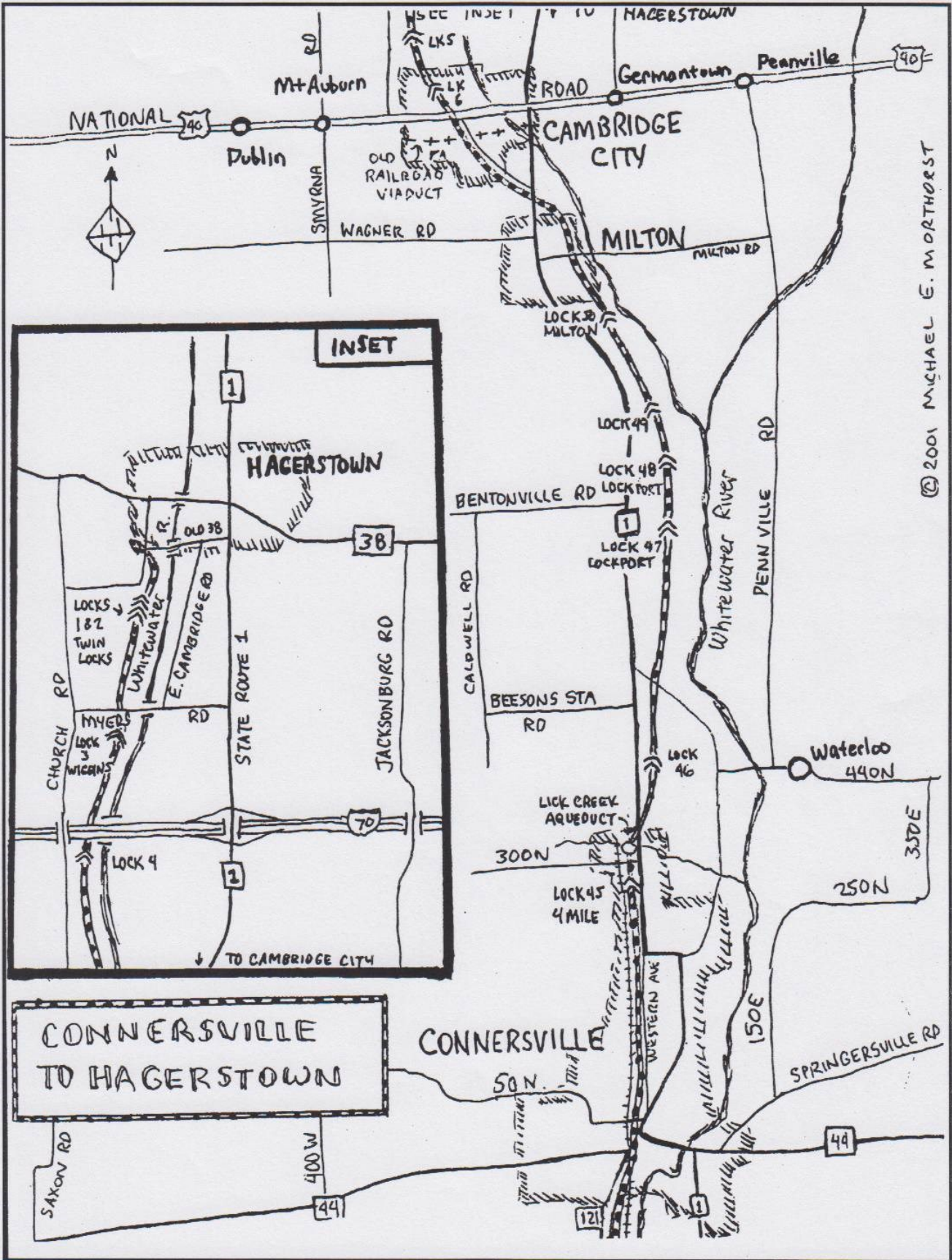
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Special thanks to the Harvard Library for providing pictures of the Willsons to the Laurel Library





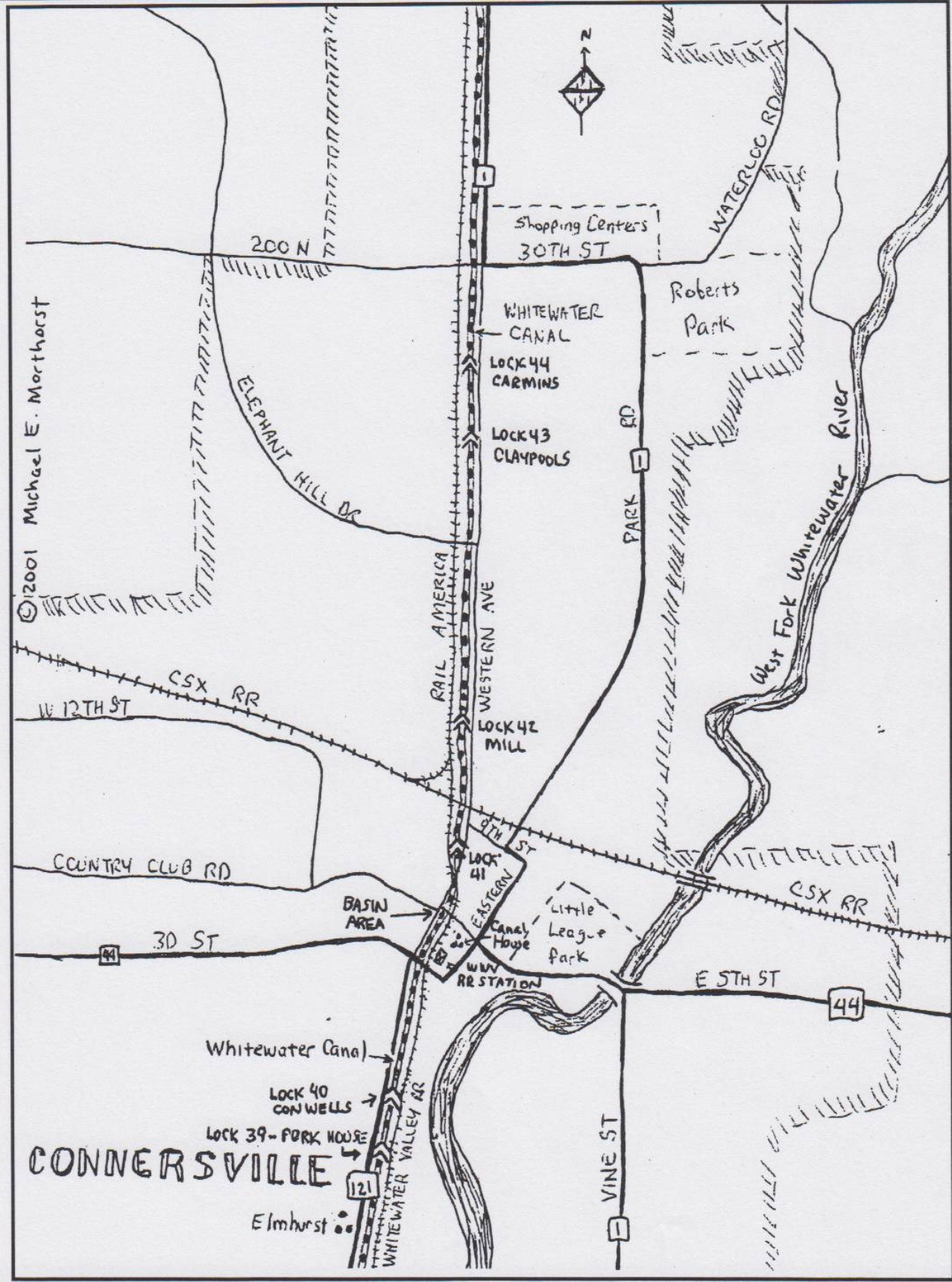
WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK



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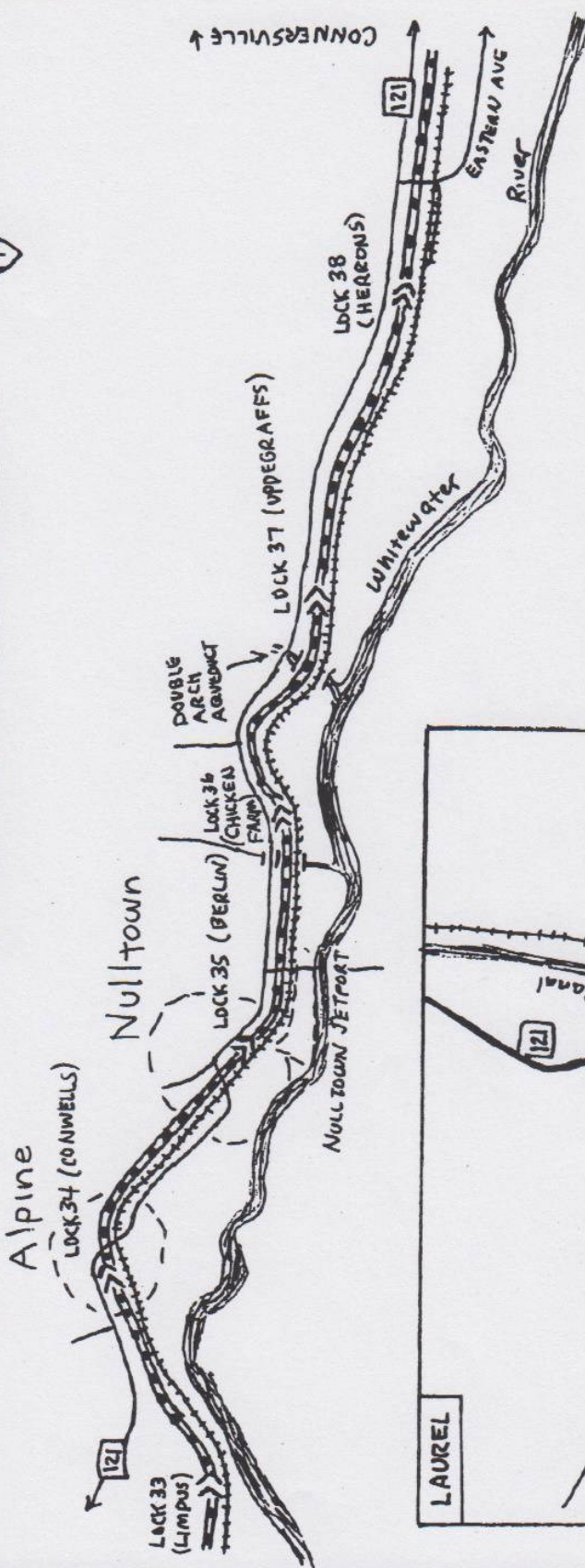


WHITEWATER CANAL: CONNERSVILLE - YELLOW BANK



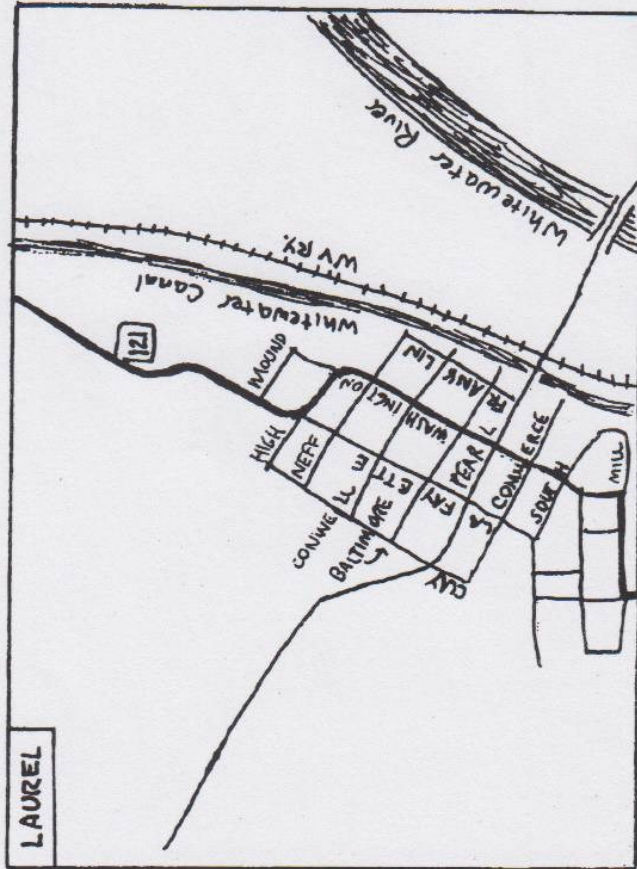


# WHITEWATER VALLEY RAILROAD TOUR ROUTE



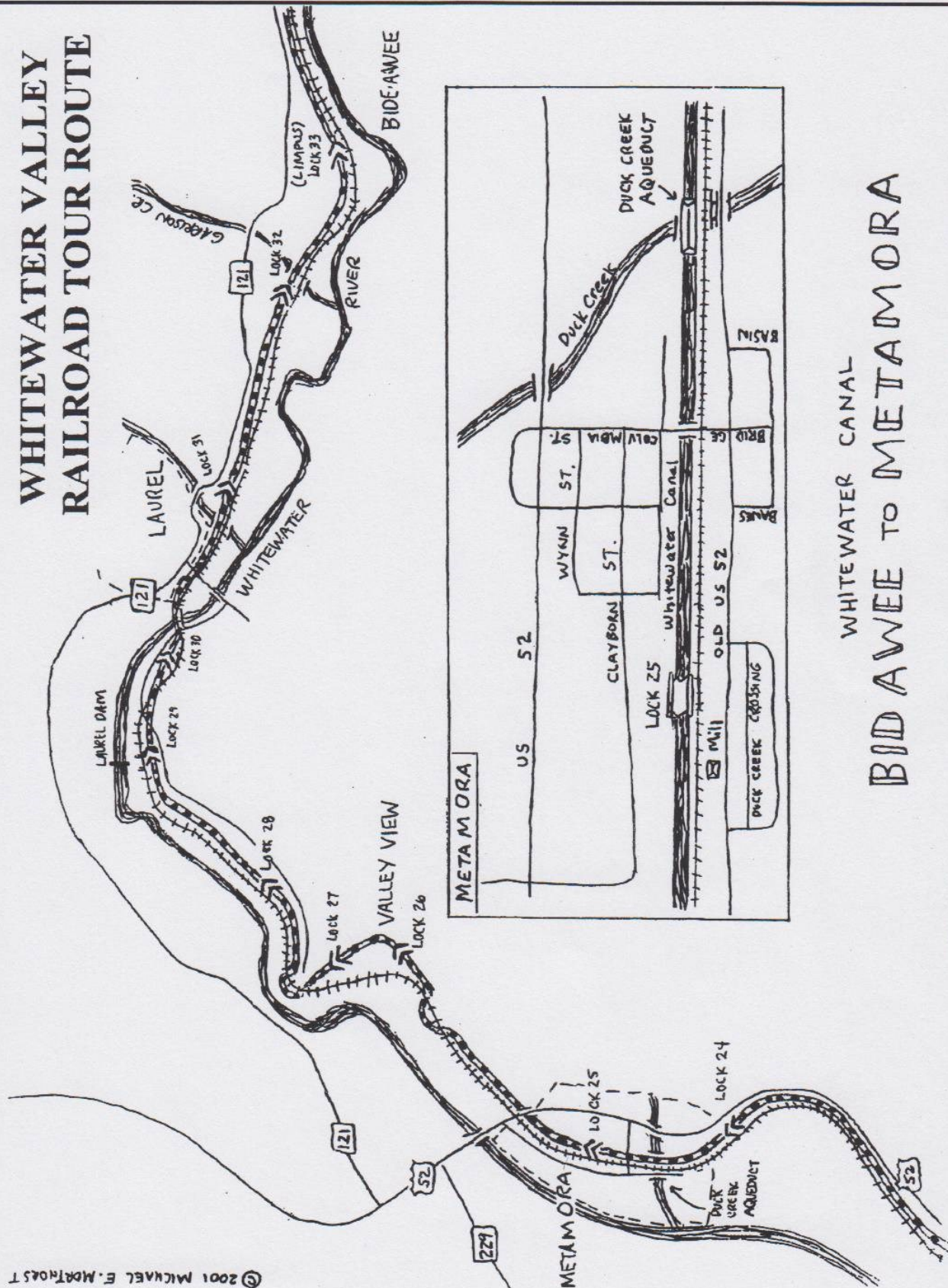
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WHITEWATER CANAL  
ALPINE TO  
CONNERSVILLE





WHITEWATER VALLEY  
RAILROAD TOUR ROUTE



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WHITEWATER CANAL  
BIDAWEE TO METAMORA



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