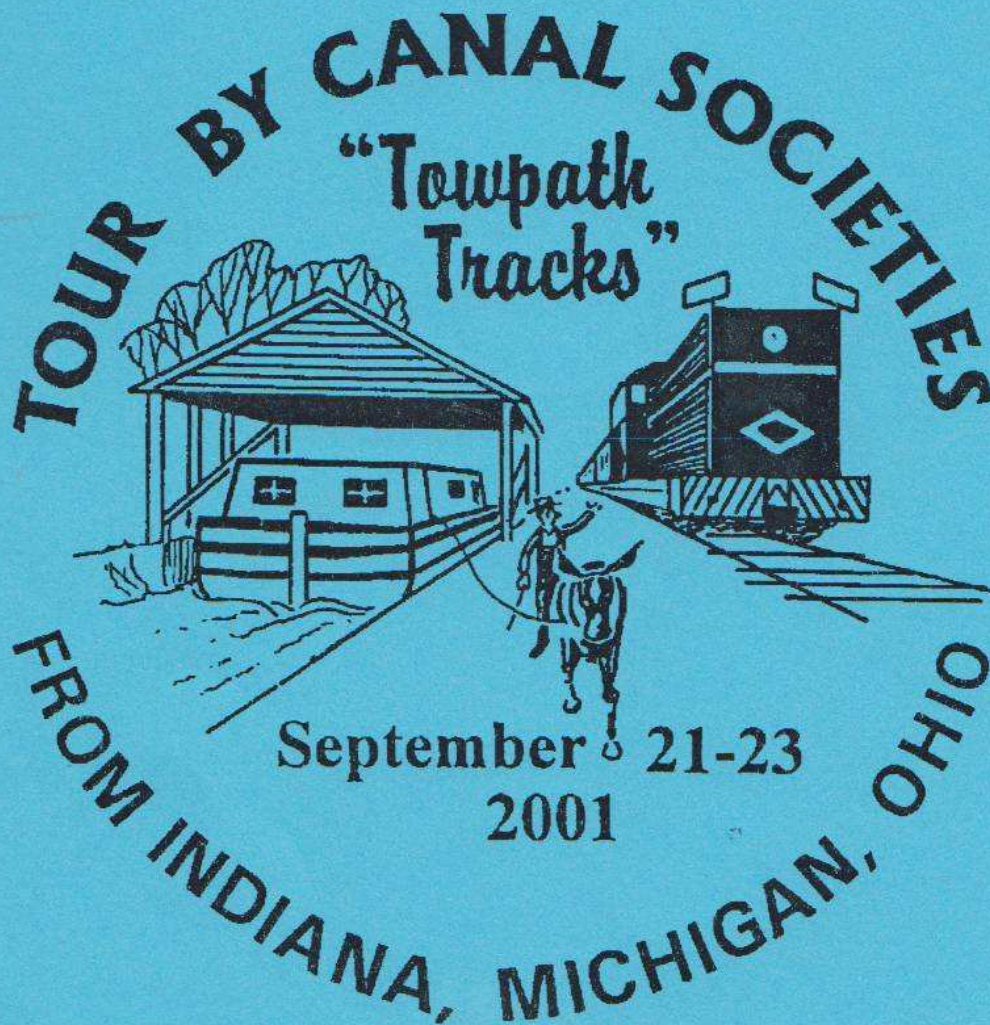


# WHITEWATER CANAL

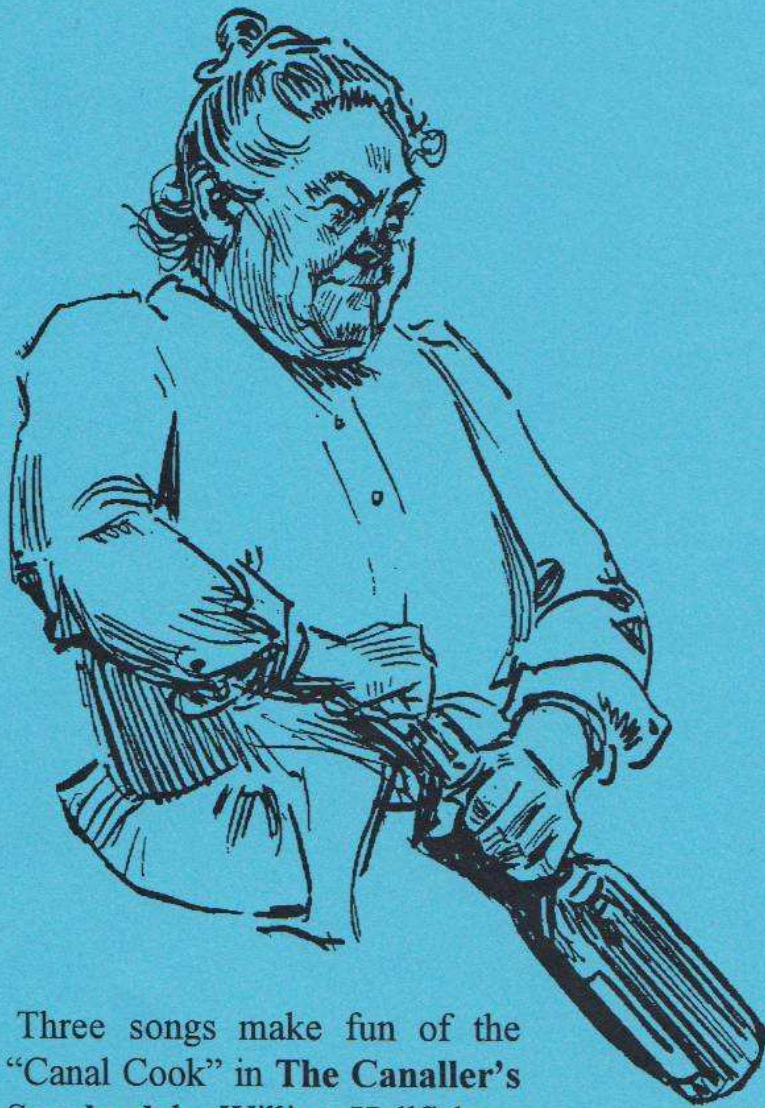
HAGERSTOWN - CINCINNATI & WHITEWATER - CANALS



CANAL SOCIETY OF INDIANA PO BOX 40087 FT WAYNE, IN 46804



# THE CANAL COOK



Three songs make fun of the  
"Canal Cook" in **The Canaller's  
Songbook** by William Hullfish.

## "The Er-i-e"

Our cook she was a grand old gal,  
She wore a ragged dress,  
We hoisted her upon the mast,  
As a signal of distress.

## "A Trip On The Erie"

The cook she's a daisy, she's dead gone on me,  
With her fiery red head, and she's twice twenty-three,  
She's cross-eyed and freckled, a dumpling and a pet,  
And we use her for a headlight at night on the deck.

## "From Buffalo To Troy"

The cook we had on board the deck stood six feet in her socks,  
Her hand was like an elephant's ear, and her breath would open the locks.  
A maid of sixty summers was she, who slept upon the floor,  
And when at night she'd get to sleep, oh sufferin', how she'd snore!

My sincere thanks to those who researched canal sites; contributed newspaper articles; furnished maps, diagrams, picture or photographs; and wrote portions of this book:

**John Hillman and the Whitewater Valley Railroad Volunteers** for the planning tour and tour itself.

**Phyllis Mattheis and the late Jane Lacy** for the use of their articles within the descriptions of Hagerstown, Cambridge City and Milton.

**Brian Migliore** for recent photos of canal sites.

**Mike Morthorst** for the maps showing the area covered on this tour and his tour descriptions.

**Gene Paschka** for his recent photos of canal fixtures.

**Bob Schmidt** for maps showing the locations of Whitewater Canal structures and for recent photos of canal sites..

**Stan Schmitt** for the structure diagrams.

**Stoops Studio** for early photos of canal sites around Connersville.

**Nate Tagmeyer** for the tour logo and canal drawings.

**Charles Whiting Jr.** for his research on Cincinnati & Whitewater Canal, Erasmust Gest and mills.

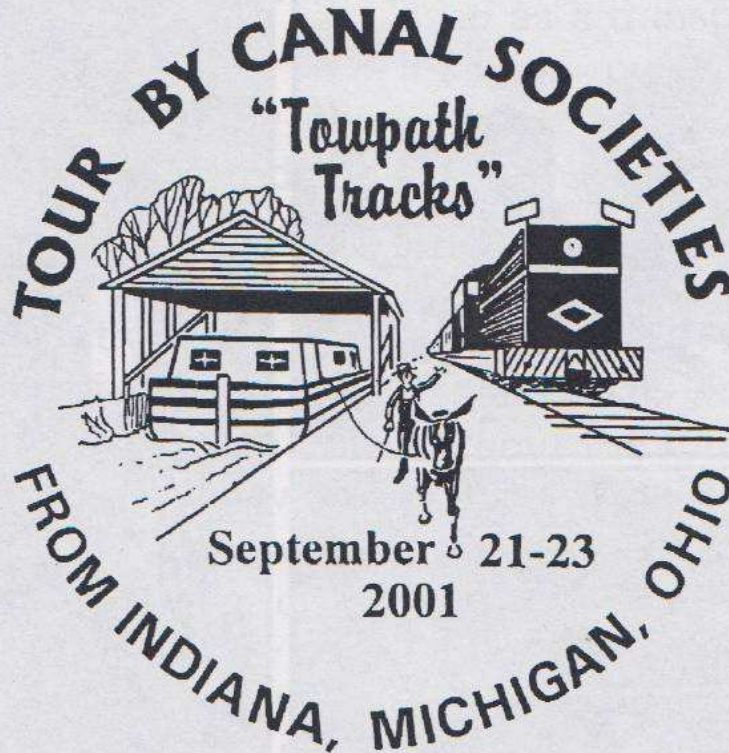
Without all of your help this book would not have been possible.

**Carolyn I. Schmidt**



# WHITEWATER CANAL

HAGERSTOWN - CINCINNATI & WHITEWATER - CANALS



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CAROLYN SCHMIDT  
CHARLES WHITING, JR.

**LOGO DESIGN:**

NATE TAGMEYER

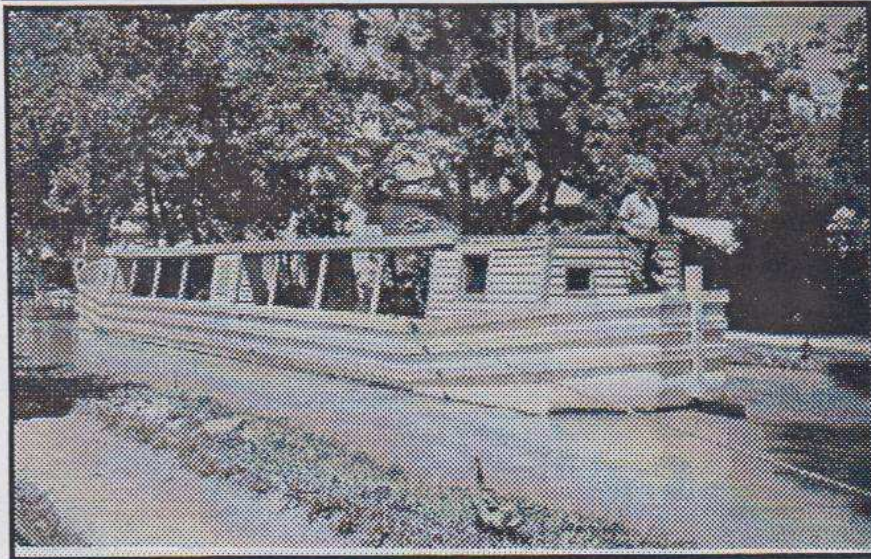
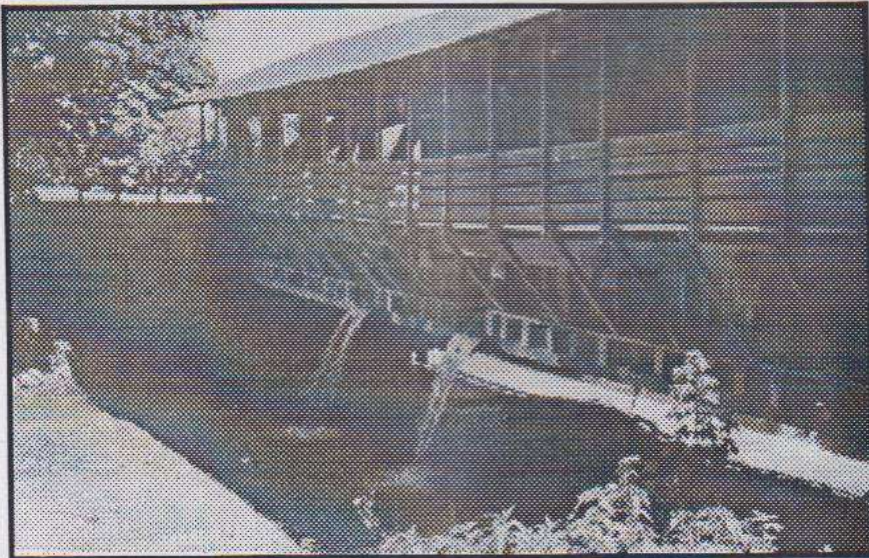
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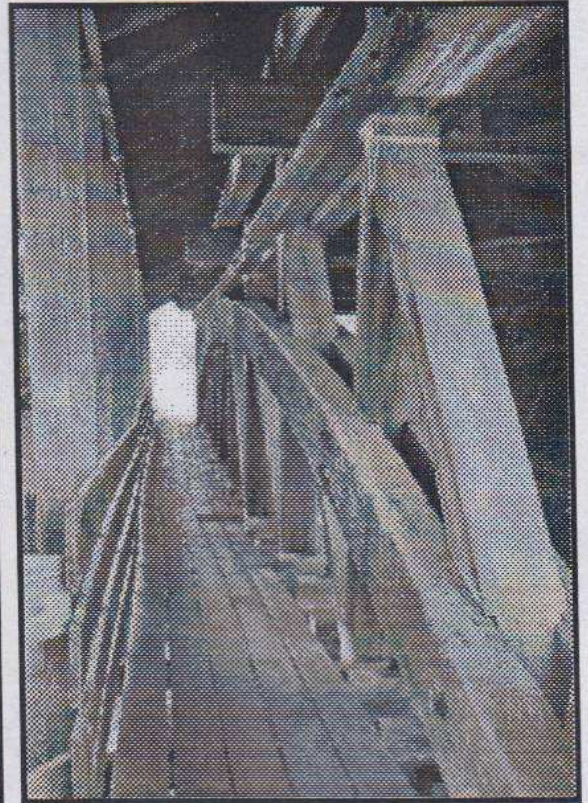
E-mail [INDCANAL@AOL.COM](mailto:INDCANAL@AOL.COM) Website [INDCANAL.ORG](http://INDCANAL.ORG)



## OUR TOUR LOGO



## DUCK CREEK AQUEDUCT



Metamora, Indiana has the only operating covered bridge style aqueduct in the United States. It carries the water of the Whitewater Canal across Duck Creek. Its south side looks like a red covered bridge. Its north side is open and has a walkway for those walking down the berm side of the canal. It has been rebuilt several times. The Whitewater Valley Railroad train uses the old Whitewater Canal towpath alongside the aqueduct. The draft horses that pull the canal boat, Ben Franklin III, also use the towpath. Photos by Bob Schmidt



# FOREWORD

## “Towpath Tracks”

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 Cambridge City and Milton by car, and are headquartered in Richmond, IN.

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 tour is special in that most of the sites visited are not reached 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 1972 they, 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 rotted away.

Sit back, relax, and think back to the 1840s-1870s 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 “Towpath Tracks.”

Welcome aboard!



Carolyn  
Schmidt



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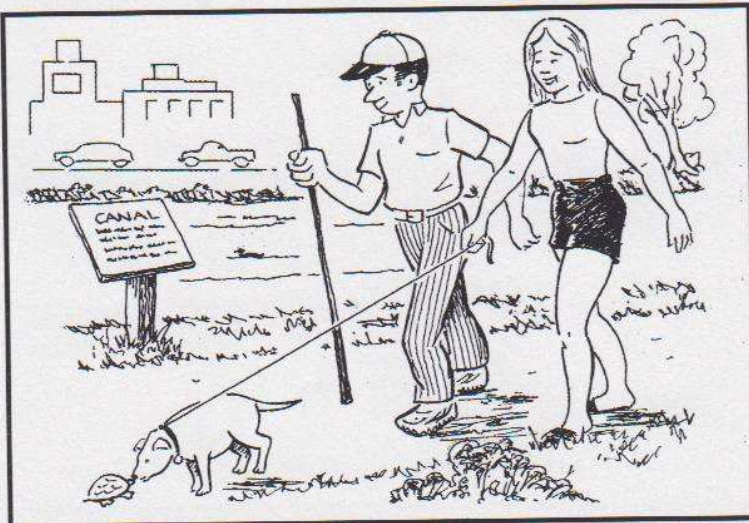
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## CANAL RECREATION

## THEN

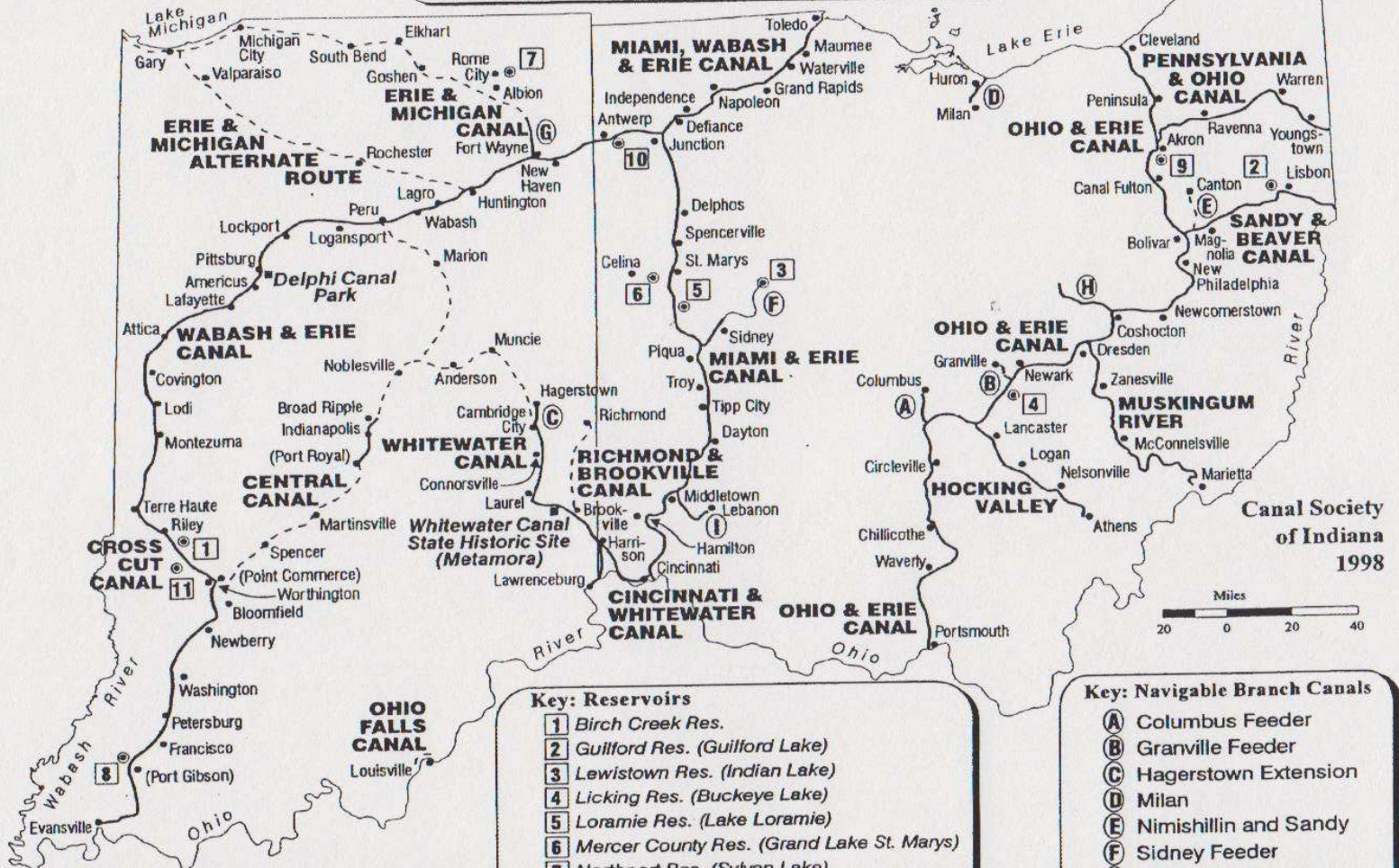


## NOW

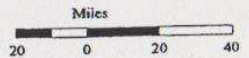
Drawings by Nate Tagmeyer



# Canal Systems of Indiana and Ohio



Canal Society of Indiana  
1998



**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.

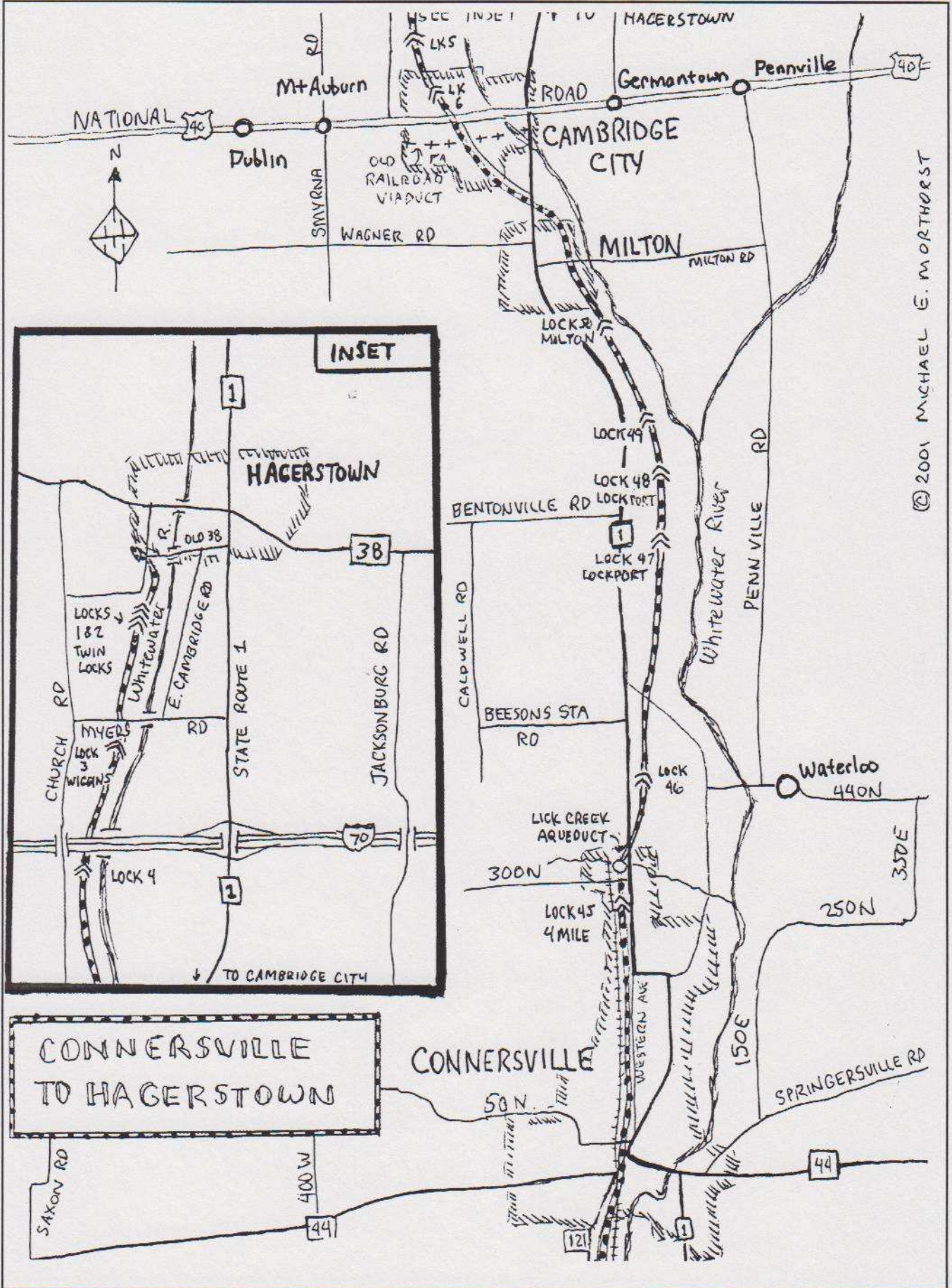
**Key: Navigable Branch Canals**

- 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.



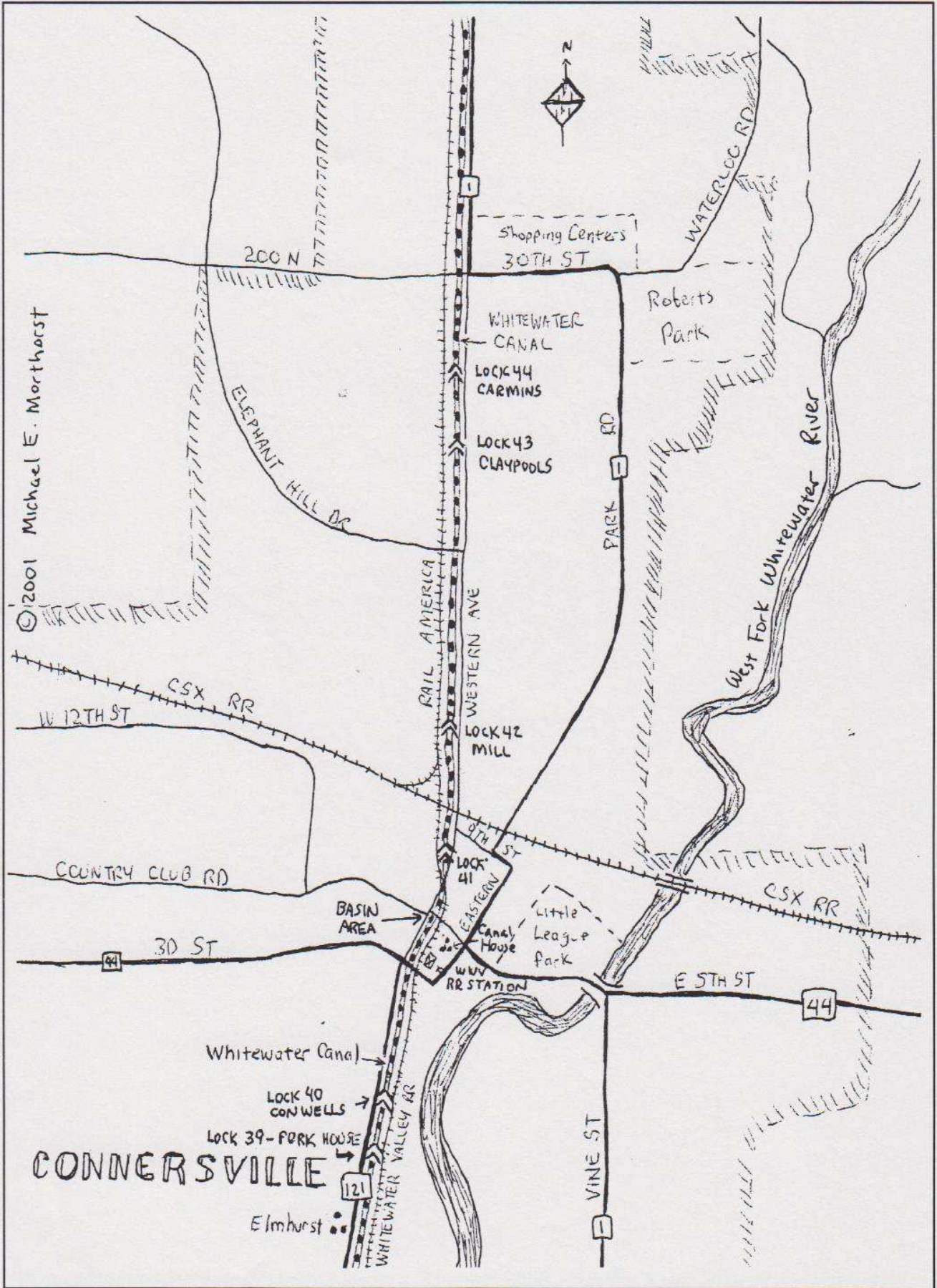
# THE WHITewater CANAL



© 2001 MICHAEL E. MORTHORST

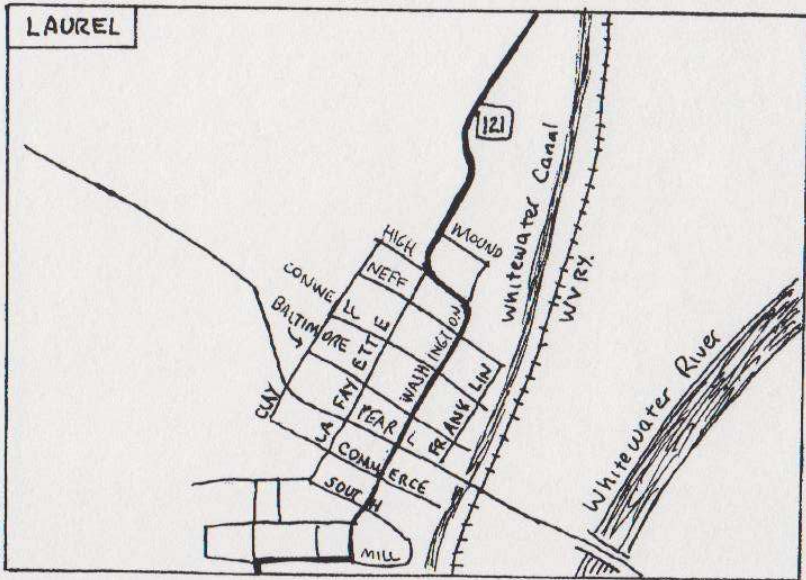
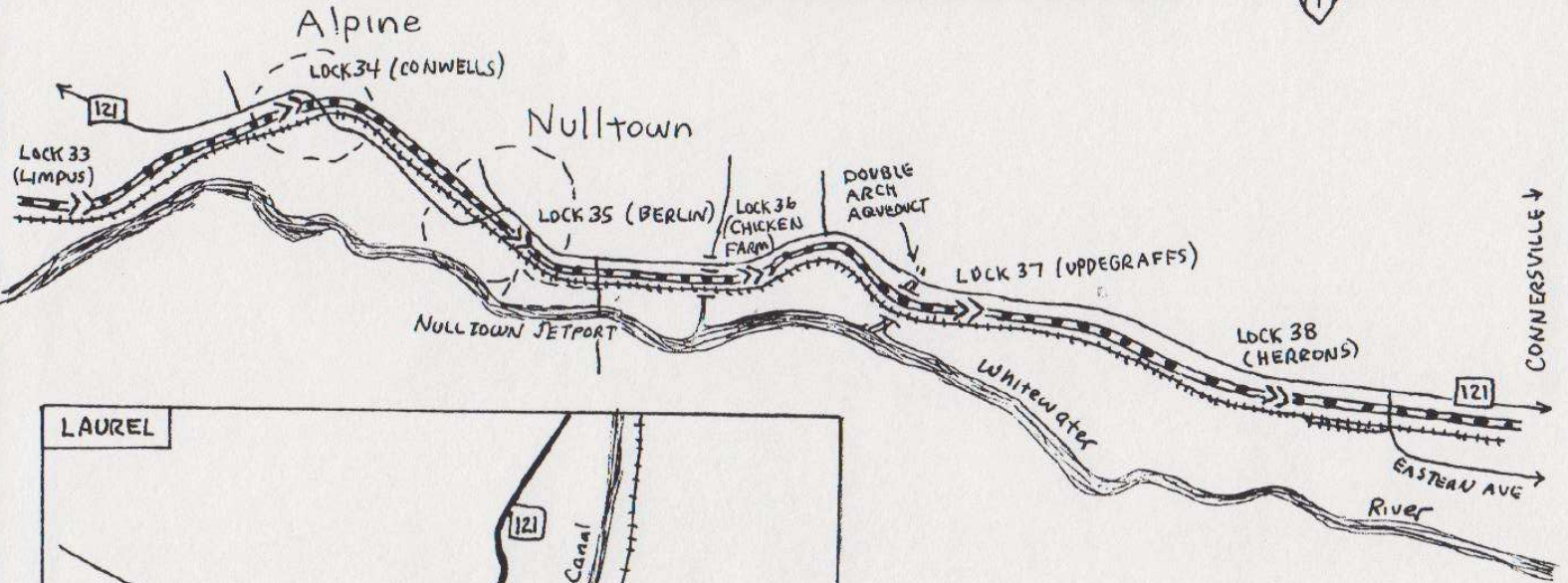
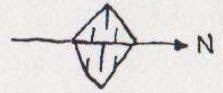


# THE WHITEWATER CANAL





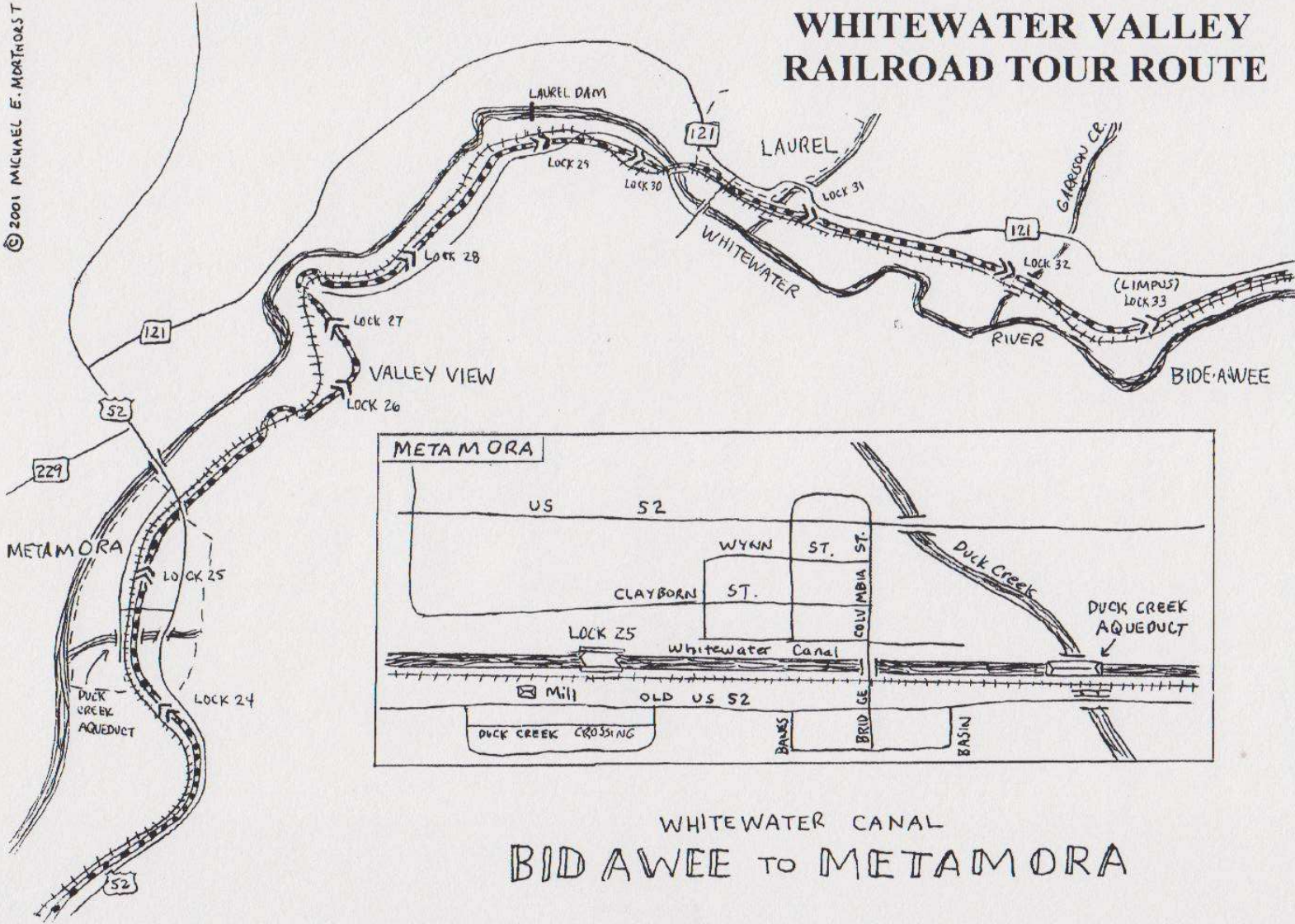
# WHITEWATER VALLEY RAILROAD TOUR ROUTE



WHITEWATER CANAL  
ALPINE TO  
CONNERSVILLE



# WHITEWATER VALLEY RAILROAD TOUR ROUTE



WHITEWATER CANAL  
BIDAWEE TO METAMORA



**HAGERSTOWN CANAL - 8 MILES**

**HAGERSTOWN TO CAMBRIDGE CITY**

<u>NUMBER &amp; NAME</u>	<u>LOC</u>	<u>SEC</u>	<u>CITY OR TWP</u>	<u>DIRECTIONS</u>	<u>TYPE / LIFT</u>
<b>WAYNE CO.</b>					
HEADGATES	NW 1/4	23	HAGERSTOWN	ABOVE FEEDER POND DOESTLER'S MILL	
HAGERSTOWN BASIN			HAGERSTOWN		
STONE CULVERT		26	JACKSON TWP	1/2 MILE SOUTH OF HAGERSTOWN	CAMP WAPI KAMIGI - CAN CRAWL THROUGH
1 TWINLOCK	NW 1/4	35	" " "	1 MILE SOUTH OF HAGERSTOWN	
2 TWIN LOCK	NW 1/4	35	" " "	1 MILE SOUTH OF HAGERSTOWN	
3 WIGGINS' LOCK	SE CN	34	" " "	S - HEINY RD - QUICKSAND	
4 LOCK	NE 1/4	10	" " "	S - FRANK MEYERS RD	
5 LOCK	S 1/2	15	" " "	N - WILLIAMS RD	
AQUEDUCT			" " "	SYMONDS CREEK	
6 CONKLIN'S LOCK	NE 1/4	27	CAMBRIDGE CITY	N. - FEEDER CHANNEL	

**WHITEWATER CANAL - 68 MILES**

**CAMBRIDGE CITY TO LAWRENCEBURG**

<b>WAYNE CO.</b>					
#7 FEEDER DAM/HEADGATES	NE 1/4	27	CAMBRIDGE CITY		
AQUEDUCT			WASHINGTON TWP	SYMONDS CREEK	
CITY RUN CULVERT	NE SEC 2		" " "	CITY RUN	STONE ARCH CULVERT CAVED IN
50 MILTON LOCK	SE 1/4	2	" " "	S.- MILTON OFF OLD MILTON/CONNERSVILLE RD	
49 LOCK	SE 1/4	13	" " "		
48 LOCKPORT LOCK	NE 1/4	24	" " "	N. - INTERSTATE RD	
#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	

**STRUCTURES**



# THE WHITEWATER CANAL

## WHITEWATER CANAL STATISTICS

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

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

## CINCINNATI & WHITEWATER CANAL

Harrison 25 Cincinnati, OH Private Capital

## DATES OF CANAL CONSTRUCTION

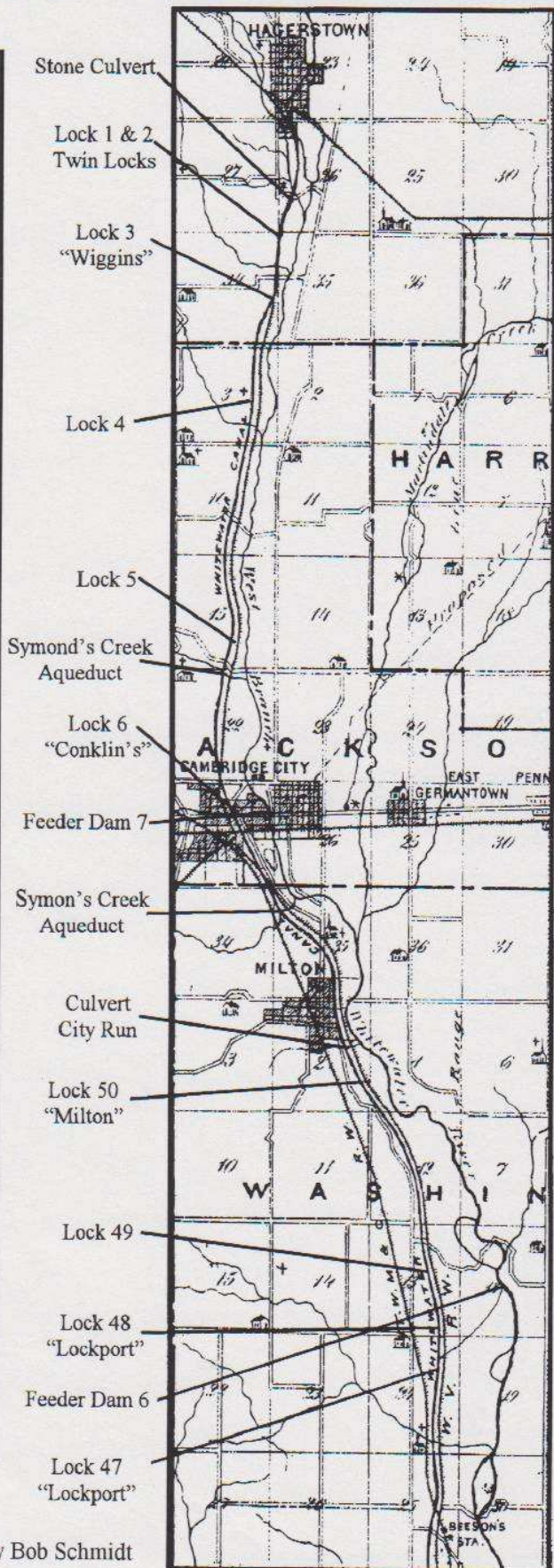
Brookville to Lawrenceburg 1836-39  
To Laurel 1843, To Cincinnati 1843  
To Cambridge City 1846  
To Hagerstown 1847

## 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.



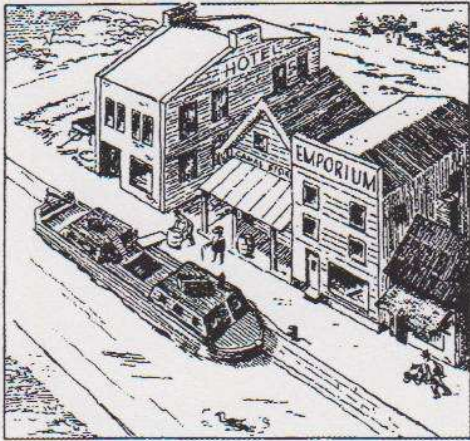
Map by Bob Schmidt



<u>NUMBER &amp; NAME</u>	<u>LOC</u>	<u>SEC</u>	<u>CITY OR TWP</u>	<u>DIRECTIONS</u>	<u>TYPE / LIFT</u>
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	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	16	" " "	S. - DAM RD E.-LAUREL	RESTORED 9' X 372'
28 SIMONTON'S LOCK	SW1/4	22	" " "		COMPOSITE LOCK 8' 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



# THE WHITEWATER CANAL



Drawing by Nate Tagmeyer

## THE OLD WHITEWATER CANAL

How nice to see the water  
In the old canal again;  
'Tis a thing of beauty, neighbor,  
In sunshine or in rain.

How oft 'twas used in days of yore,  
When our good old state was new,  
And the old canal boats went up and down  
With freight and passengers, too.

It is a heritage left to us  
From our ancestors, brave and true,  
It is left for a remembrance, friends,  
Bringing joy to me and you.

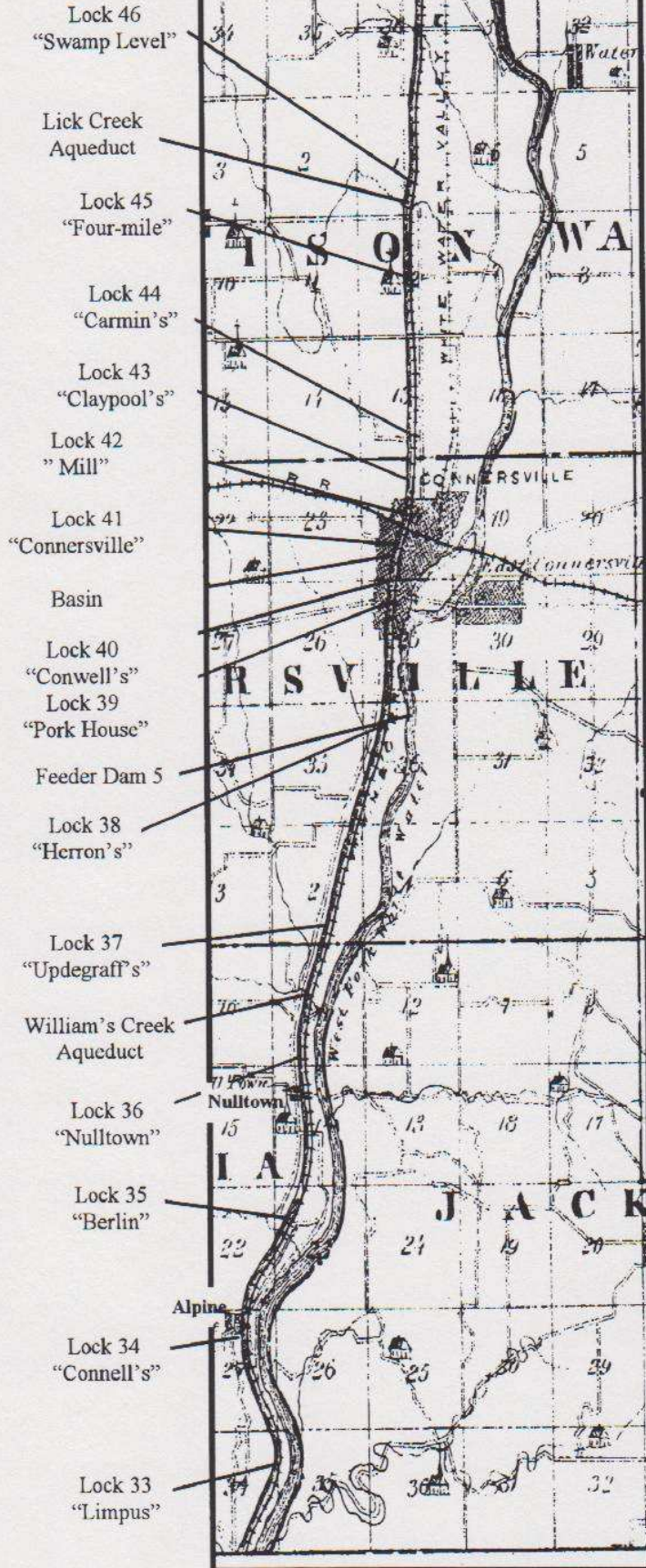
Let's hope it will flow on forever  
In all its beauty, clear and serene,  
Reminding us of those who've gone to rest,  
Whose fields were not always green.

Yes, they worked and toiled long years ago  
To build that old canal.  
If they were here upon this earth,  
Many the stories they could tell.

So flow on and on, old canal sublime,  
Bring joy to the aged and youth;  
Keep the old mill wheel forever turning  
Reminding us ever of peace and truth.

—Alva Chambers LaMont

Map by Bob Schmidt

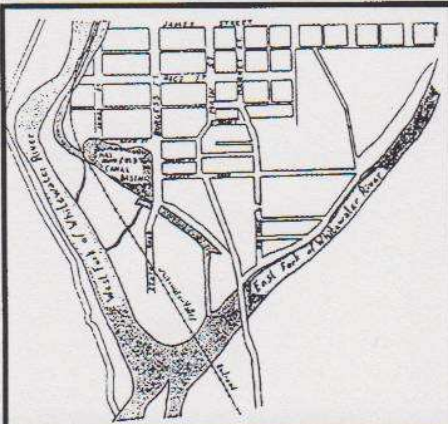
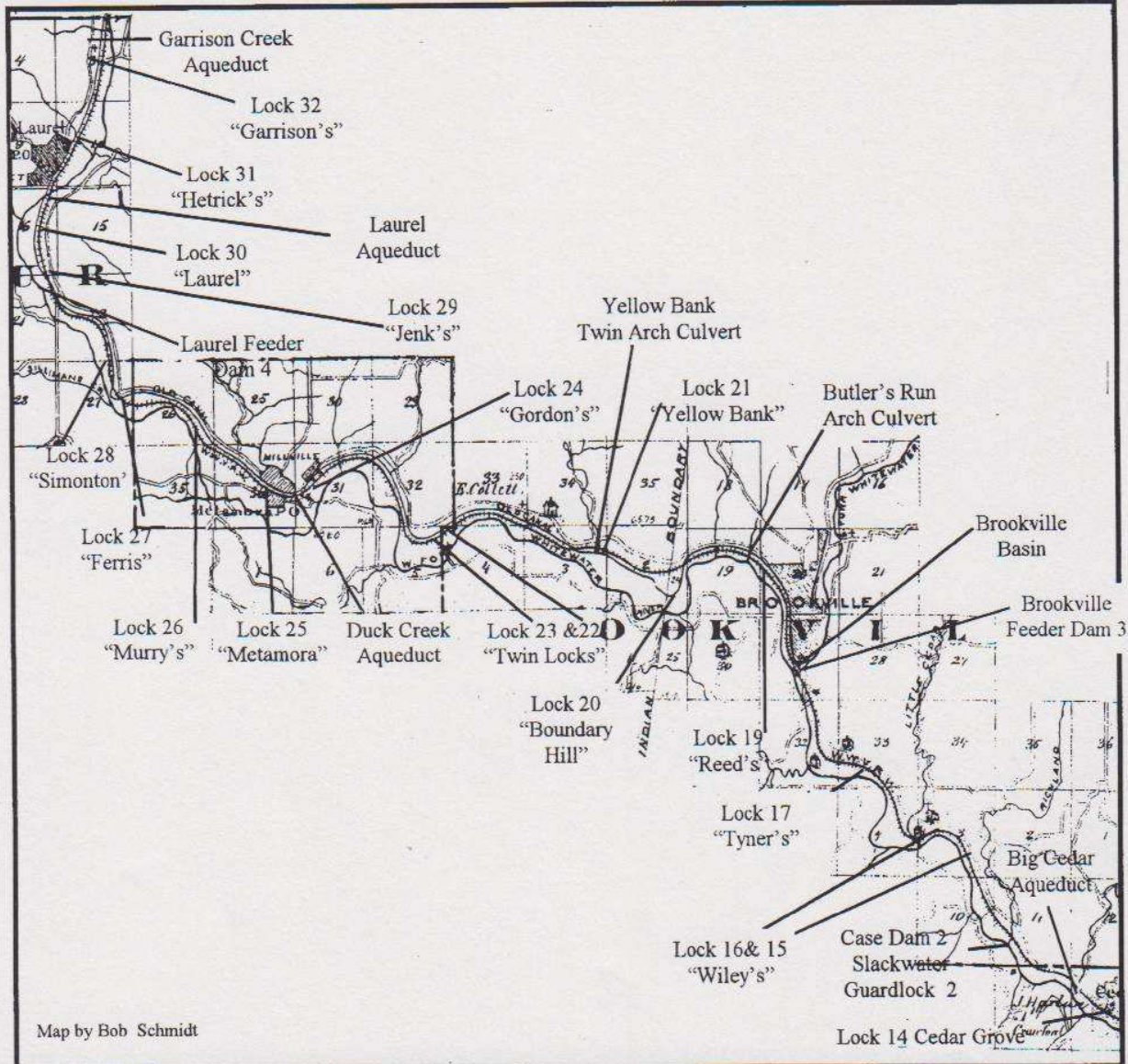




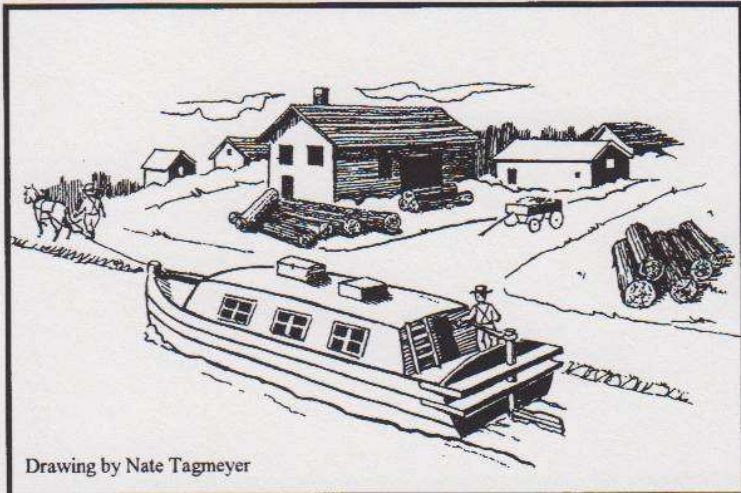
NUMBER & NAME	LOC	SEC	CITY OR TWP	DIRECTIONS	TYPE / LIFT
24 GORDON'S LOCK	NE COR.	31	" " "	U.S. 52	RESTORED CUT STONE LOCK
<del>STONE ARCH CULVERT</del>			<del>BROOKVILLE TWP</del>	<del>U.S. 52 BEHIND PIZZA RESTAURANT</del>	<del>ARCH CAVED IN ON TOP</del>
23 TWIN LOCK	NE COR.	5	" " "	SIDE RD OFF SR 1	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 6' 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
17 TYNER'S LOCK	SW 1/4	33	BROOKVILLE TWP	1 MILE S. BROOKVILLE	8' LIFT
16 WILEY'S LOCK	1/2 E. SEC. LINE	4	" " "		
15 WILEY'S LOCK	SW COR NW 1/4	3	" " "	WILEY FARM	8' LIFT
FEEDER DAM GUARD LOC	SW 1/4	11	" " "		
#2 FEEDER DAM	SW 1/4	11	" " "	W.- RICHLAND CREEK CASE FARM	CONTRACTORS - WILCOX & VAN HORN
WOODEN AQUEDUCT	SE 1/4	13	HIGHLAND TWP	BIG CEDAR CREEK 2 SPAN OF 34'	CONTRACTOR - JOEL PALMER
14 CEDAR GROVE LOCK	SE 1/4	13	" " "	ROCHESTER FIRST ADDITION	8' LIFT
13 LOCK	S1/2 SE 1/4	18	WHITEWATER TWP		9' LIFT
12 RHUBOTTOM LOCK	CENTER	19	" " "		CONTRACTOR - WILLIAM RHUBOTTOM 8' LIFT
11 BARWISE LOCK	NE 1/4	29	" " "	E. - ELKHORN CREEK	10 FT. LIFT
<b>DEARBORN CO.</b>					
10 TRENTON LOCK	NE 1/4	5	HARRISON TWP	BEHIND GRAVEL PIT	COMPOSITE LOCK 9' LIFT
9 FOX'S LOCK	SE COR.	4	" " "		7' LIFT
8 MARSHALL'S LOCK	SE COR.	10	" " "	POSSIBLY MILL SITE	8' LIFT
7 COOPER'S LOCK	NW COR.	13	" " "	E.- JOHNSONS FORK CREEK	CUT STONE LOCK 11' LIFT



# THE WHITEWATER CANAL



This is the canal boat basin at Brookville near the East and West Forks of the White River where a dam created a slackwater crossing for the Whitewater Canal.

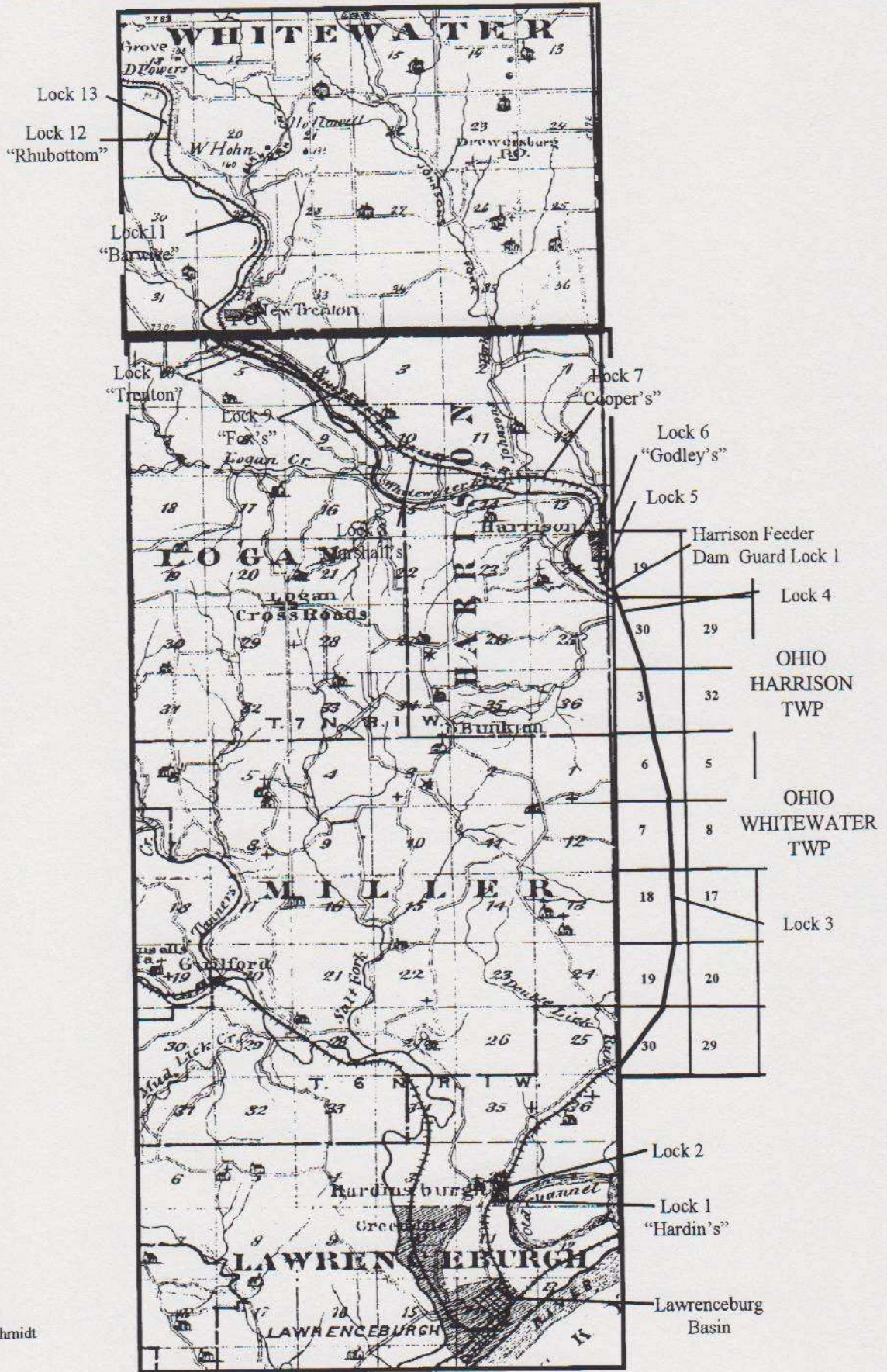




NUMBER & NAME	LOC	SEC	CITY OR TWP	DIRECTIONS	TYPE / LIFT
6 GODLEY'S LOCK	SE 1/4	24	" " "	MILL ST. HARRISON	COMPOSITE LOCK 6' LIFT
5 LOCK	SE 1/4	24	" " "		LOWERED BOATS SLACKWATER POOL DAM #1, 6' LIFT
<b>HAMILTON CO. OHIO</b>					
FEEDER DAM GUARD LOC	NE COR	30	" " "	ST. LINE CROSSES WHITEWATER RIVER	
#1 FEEDER DAM	NE COR	30	" " "	ST. LINE CROSSES WHITEWATER RIVER	TOWPATH BRIDGE 3 SPANS 130' EACH DAM 11' X 376'
4 SIMONSON LOCK	NE 1/4	32	" " "		10' LIFT
3 LOCK	NE 1/4	17	WHITEWATER TWP	S. FOX RUN CREEK	9' LIFT
<b>DEARBORN CO.</b>					
STONE CULVERT	SE 1/4	35	LAWRENCEBURG T	POSSUM HOLLOW RUN	CROSSED BY OBERTING RD.
2 LOCK	S 1/2	2	" " "	HARDINBURG 2 MILES N. - LAWRENCEBUR	8' LIFT
1 HARDIN'S LOCK	S 1/2	2	" " "	HARDINBURG 2 MILES N. - LAWRENCEBUR	7' LIFT
LAWRENCEBURG BASIN			LAWRENCEBURG	BUILT 48' ABOVE LOW WATER OHIO RIVER	
<b>CINCINNATI &amp; WHITEWATER CANAL - 25 MILES</b>					
W HARRISON TO CINCINNATI					
<b>HAMILTON CO. OHIO</b>					
GUARD LOCK	SW 1/4	19	WHITEWATER TWP		
1 GREEN'S	SW 1/4	19	" " "	NEAR STATE LINE 3/4 MILE S. HARRISON O	COMPOSITE GUARD LOCK 4' LIFT
WOODEN AQUEDUCT	SW 1/4	9	" " "	DRY FORK CREEK	4 SPAN - 50'
2 DRY FORK LOCK	NW 1/4	16	" " "	S. DRY FORK AQUEDUCT	8' LIFT
WOODEN AQUEDUCT	N 1/2	22-22	MIAMI TWP	GREAT MIAMI RIVER	
3 MIAMI RIVER CLEVES LOC	N 1/2	21	" " "	SE OF AQUEDUCT	COMPOSITE LOCK 5' LIFT
CLEVES TUNNEL		21-22	" " "	BETWEEN CLEVES & NORTH BEND	BRICK ARCH 24' CHORD 20 1/2 FT. H 1,782 FT. LONG - \$65,523.
AQUEDUCT			CINCINNATI	MILL CREEK	50' SPAN 20' RISE STONE ARCH WOODEN TROUGH
CINCINNATI BASIN			" " "		



# THE WHITEWATER CANAL



Map by Bob Schmidt



## 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, near 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 at the General Assembly, and one to the Whitewater Valley Canal.

The Connersville courthouse was lighted from its basement to its steeple. 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. 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.

### 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 rechristened 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 bankruptcy 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. Vallette, 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 Oct. 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



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

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 Banks lock 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" 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.

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-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.

The canal that was originally to go to Hagerstown was not going to be built by the Whitewater Valley Company. The merchants of Hagerstown banded together and formed the Hagerstown Canal Company about 1846 and completed the canal from Cambridge City to Hagerstown in 1847. Very few boats ever reached Hagerstown. 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 made 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 1850's 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 over two million dollars and was never in operation its entire length for more than four months at a time, was 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 Valley 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 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 a dam built across the White Water River. The total fall of



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

### HAGERSTOWN EXTENSION CANAL CONTRACTORS

Hiram Mendenhall, the man who earlier had presented the anti-slavery petition to Henry Clay when he visited Richmond in 1842, was probably the person who was most instrumental in extending the Whitewater Canal to Hagerstown. His home was one-mile south of the town near the ice pond. He and others contracted with the canal company as follows:

Hiram Mendenhall - Hagerstown to the Tilton farm.

James Puntney - 1/2 mile from Tilton farm to the Heiney farm.

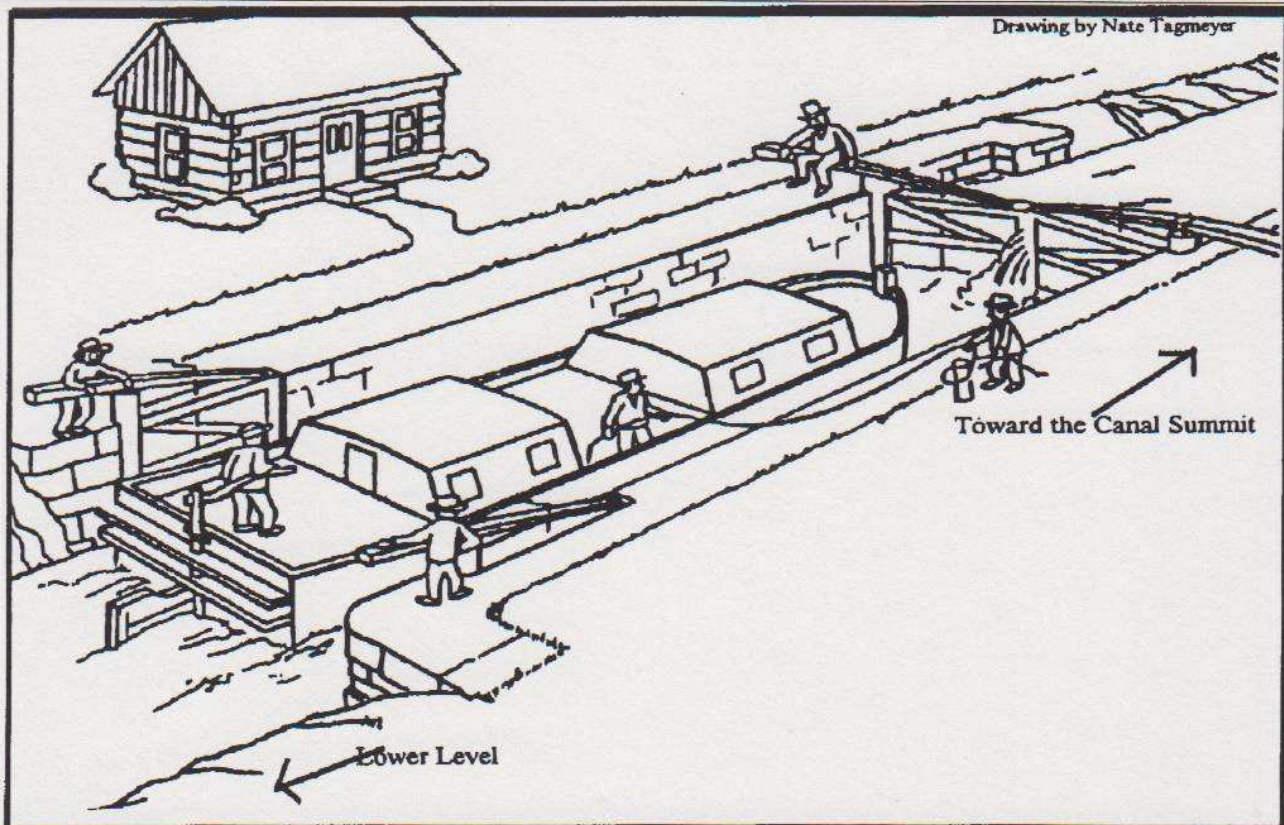
Barney Linderman - from the Heiney farm to Symonds Creek.

Benjamin Conklin - from Symonds Creek to Cambridge City at the National Rd. including Locks #5 and 6

Puntney and Linderman did not complete the portions for which they had contracted. These sections were relet to Andrus Wiggins and Joseph Madden. Wiggins was to install Lock #3, the locks having been numbered 1-6 from Hagerstown to Cambridge City. He encountered an immense bed of quicksand which had to be removed. He first had to build a 4 1/2 mile long drainage canal and use a pump that threw a stream 18 inches in diameter. He hired 80 men to assist with the pumping in order to remove all the sand. Eventually the foundation became so solid that teams of horses could pass over it without danger.

Lock #3 was a treacherous lock, for it lay eight feet below the bed of the West River. The contractor was paid \$1 per cubic yard to remove the soil and sand.

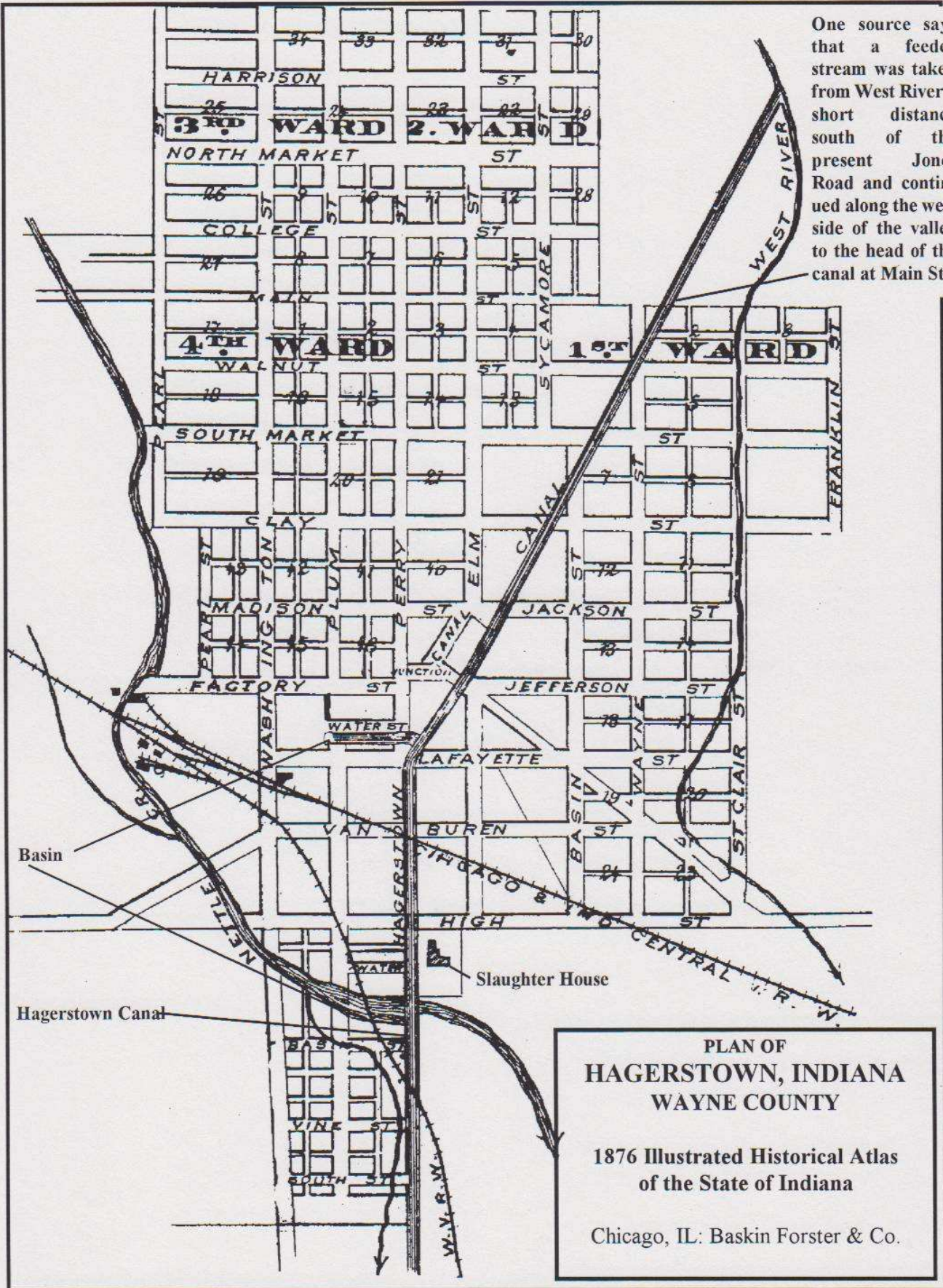
Indiana had some cut stone canal locks on the Whitewater Canal like the one shown here. They had huge gates at either end of the chamber. Boats would come into the lock at the lower level and the gates would be closed behind them. The wickets in the upstream gate would be opened to let water from the higher level come into the lock by gravity flow. When the water in the lock was as high as that in the upper level, the gates were opened and the boat was pulled out of the lock by the mules. The reverse was done going downstream.





# THE WHITEWATER CANAL

One source says that a feeder stream was taken from West River a short distance south of the present Jones Road and continued along the west side of the valley to the head of the canal at Main St..



PLAN OF  
**HAGERSTOWN, INDIANA**  
 WAYNE COUNTY  
 1876 Illustrated Historical Atlas  
 of the State of Indiana  
 Chicago, IL: Baskin Forster & Co.



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

the water from this intake to the tailrace at the Uhi & Snider mill was eighty feet of which 53 feet were actually used. 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. & F.M. Roots Manufacturing Company and the Uhi & Snider flour mill. The canal produced 388 horse-power output and was said to be able to produce as much as 210 more.

### Hagerstown

Early settlers from Kentucky, New Jersey and Tennessee moved into the Hagerstown area beginning in 1814. The first store opened in a hewed log house in 1820. Many more families arrived in the 1820s, some from Pennsylvania, Maryland and the east. The town, named after Hagerstown, MD when laid out in 1832, began to grow and prosper with businesses, churches and a school.

In the early decades of the 1800's, each village was self dependent for the necessities of life. The mill owner contributed greatly to the independence of a community, for his business was the connecting link between the farmer and consumer. Whether he was operating a saw mill, grist mill or carding machine, the miller was a man of means. He was usually paid for his services by his keeping a portion of whatever was being processed.

A good mill site was determined by a nearby stream where the landfall was great enough to assure an adequate supply of water power. The area around Hagerstown had four such streams - Nettle Creek, White Branch, West River and Martindale Creek. Thus mills, with their huge wheels turned by the current of the stream, dotted the landscape of the area for many years.

The Ulrich Mill, operating a carding machine as early as 1827, was probably built by Jacob Ulrich, one of the founders of Hagerstown. The Protection Mill, built around 1858 by Abraham Teeter and his son, Daniel, was a grist mill. A later generation of that family founded Perfect Circle Piston Ring Company, now a division of Dana Corporation. The White Branch Woolen Mills were located on the site of a grist mill constructed by Daniel Ulrich. During the Civil War, when the operation was owned by the Test Brothers of Richmond, the mill supplied material for the Union Army.

In 1839, William Brumback built his grist mill where a saw mill had previously stood. The Brumback building is the only one still standing in the Hagerstown area. Covered with metal siding, except on the east facade where the mill wheel was located, it bears little likeness to the original structure. It is located just north of Indiana 38 on Tidewater

Road west of town.

The proposed Whitewater Canal would also provide hydraulic power to turn the mill wheels. According to the original survey, the Whitewater Canal was to extend from Nettle Creek at Hagerstown to Lawrenceburg on the Ohio River. However, the Internal Improvements Bill placed the northern terminus of that canal at the National Road in Cambridge City. People of Hagerstown were undoubtedly irate over that turn of events, but this really mattered little for in 1839 state construction was stopped and the Whitewater Canal extended only from Brookville to Lawrenceburg.

Activity of canal building resumed in 1842 with the canal reaching Laurel by 1843, Connersville in 1845 and Cambridge City in 1846. As work progressed north, interest in the canal was revived in Hagerstown.

The most commonly accepted report dates the organization of the Hagerstown Canal Company to 1846. Its organizational meeting was held in the drug store of Wesley Williamson. Officers were elected with Jacob Ulrich, president; A. B. Knode, secretary and George Gillespie, general manager of construction. John Minesinger was hired as surveyer and engineer. After the survey was made, right-of-way obtained, and contracts let for construction, Lot 12 and parts of lots 1 and 2 in Wolf's addition to Hagerstown, which were on the south side of Main Street/State Road, were purchased from Calvin and Julian West. At this time canal contracts were let to Hiram Mendenhall for the section from Main Street to Zantor's Mill, which was located a mile below the village, and to Andress Wiggins and Joseph Madden. In 1844 the Hagerstown Canal Company issued a receipt to George Gillespie. It reads: "Hagerstown Canal Office, June 7th, 1844. Received of George Gillespie, Two Hundred & Three Dollars and ninety four cents on his Canal Stock of One Hundred shares subscribed in the Hagerstown Canal Co. (ss) A.B. Knode, Secty., H C Co."

By the mid 1840s the Hagerstown Canal Company had been organized and financial backing for the project assured through the sale of stock at five dollars and \$50 a share. This did not mean, when work began, the company had cash in hand to complete the canal.

The "Cambridge Reveille," a weekly paper published in Cambridge City during the canal period, regularly carried notices to stockholders of the Hagerstown Canal Company that explain how payments were made.

#### *Notice to Stockholders.*

*"The Stockholders of the Hagerstown Canal Company are hereby notified that the 14th installment of two dollars on each share of stock subscribed will be required to be paid in the treasures thereof in Hagerstown on the 15th day of February. A.B. Knode, Secty., H C Co., Nov. 1st, 1846." The next notice to stockholders required the payment of three dollars per share on the 15th installment, due May 15, 1847.*



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

As money came into the office, the dreaming and planning stage was over. It was time to start construction of the canal that would link Hagerstown to the Whitewater Canal and the opportunities of the world.

About midway between the south end of Scout Lake and Heiney Road, the construction of double locks was necessary to handle the 18-foot landfall of the area. Almost 100 feet long, each, remains of cut stone are still to be found at the site.

Unconfirmed reports of an aqueduct on the Hagerstown Canal have long circulated. One possible need for such a structure would have been at Bear Creek, just north of Heiney Road. This would probably have been an open trough of masonry. Going a short distance up the old towpath from Heiney Road are found cut stones, in the creek bed and on each bank. They are obviously the remains of some masonry work of the past, perhaps that of the old aqueduct.

The third lock was located just north of Jerry Myers Road, east of the present Herbert Doerstler residence. Andrew Wiggins had the contract for this section, the land being then owned by Daniel Ulrich. The only indication of the location of Lock #3 is a slight dip in the old towpath. That part later to become the roadbed of the Whitewater Valley Railroad, is used by Doerstler as an access to his farm fields. Some one and one-half miles south of Jerry Myers Road on land owned by Benjamin Conklin, of Cambridge City in 1841, was the site of lock four.

As work progressed south from Frank Myers Road, the Hagerstown Canal Company's finances were completely depleted. Construction costs were greater than expected and it was difficult to collect payments on stock subscriptions. This is verified by a notice published in the "Cambridge Reveille" of June 16, 1847.

*"Hagerstown Canal Co. The delinquent stockholders of the Hagerstown Canal Co. are hereby notified that if such arrears are not promptly paid to the treasures thereof the same will be put into the hands of the proper officers for immediate collection without respect to persons. Purchase and provisions will be received in payment at the highest market price in Hagerstown if delivered before suit is brought."*

Prior to June of 1847, the Hagerstown Canal Company entered into an agreement with Benjamin Conklin whereby Conklin was to complete the canal to the northern terminus of the Whitewater Canal at the National Road, including the construction of two locks, Nos. five and six. In return, Conklin was to be granted perpetual water-rights for the operation of his mills. The "Reveille" of June 12, 1847 says:

*"To Contractors. The undersigned will let out by private contract about 20,000 yards of digging on the Hagerstown Canal immediately north of Cambridge City to be done against the 1st November next. Cash will be paid in fair price for such work. Application should be made soon. Benj. Conklin."*

Conklin then built the canal from some distance north of Goose Heaven Road to the National Road in Cambridge City. This section included Lock # 5. Easily located, masonry remains are found a short distance north of Delaware Street (Cambridge City) on the farm owned today by the Frederick Becker family. Little has been done to disturb the old bed for a short distance north of Delaware Street. The bed of Hagerstown Canal is easily followed from north of Lock 5 south to Delaware Street in Cambridge City.



**Culvert at Scout Lake Hagerstown - Photo Bob Schmidt**

Completion of the canal brought with it a period of excitement and wild speculation. Feeling sure of its success, businessmen borrowed money to build warehouses and canal boats. Farmers, too, were eager to share in the anticipated benefits. One farmer along the canal route is reported to have put out 1,000 peach trees, expecting to realize great profit from peach brandy shipped to Cincinnati.

Reports of the success of the canal and the actual number of boats reaching Hagerstown vary greatly. According to one account, "Three or four boats were loaded and unloaded every day, and the town was regarded as a thriving business center." Another, written in 1872, depicts an entirely different picture, "But a small number of boats, however, ever reached that place (Hagerstown); and the canal soon fell into disuse, except as a source of water power for Conklin's and other mills."

From the beginning, the Whitewater Canal was plagued by costly floods and washouts. Soon after the Brookville to Laurel section was completed, a saturated embankment gave way, draining the canal of water. Spring freshets added greatly to the high cost of repairing and maintaining that canal. While the Hagerstown Canal was rarely subject to flooding, its existence depended on the continuation of the lower waterway.

The letter from James Heron on the next page illustrates just how disastrous a flood was to the Whitewater Canal.



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

Office of the White Water Valley Canal Company  
Feb. 8th 1847

His Ex. James Whitcomb Gov. Etc.

Dear Sir:

I am informed by Messrs. Shoup & Murphy, two of the directors that with a view to the late most disastrous flood which visited this valley you desire some of the prominent facts in reference to the condition of this Co. I accordingly make haste to suggest the following:

By reference to the House Document No. 116, being the report of the Chief Engineer of Dec. 29, 1840, it will be seen that the cost of the work done by the state, on this Canal, at the time they suspended operations was, \$1,002,255.00 and the amount required to finish according to the estimates was \$565,236.00. The work lay in this condition near a year and a half when this Co. was organized to complete the Canal. See their Charter, Local Laws of 1841-42 Page 37.

By the Charter you will see that at least \$400,000.00 of stock had to be taken and \$5.00 on each share paid in before the Co. could be fully organized and take the Canal.

They were then required to complete the Canal within five years from 1st March 1842 and in consideration thereof have all the profits of the Canal for 15 years after the completion. After that the Co. was required to pay to the State all the revenue over and above a net profit of 8 per cent on their Capital Stock.

The State reserves the right to resume the Canal, at any time after the expiration of said 15 years, upon paying the Co. the cost of construction, no amendment of the Charter shall be made within the 15 years to diminish the profits of the Co. Etc.

The Stock was raised with great difficulty in the course of the Spring and Summer of 1842 and the work immediately resumed—within about a year short of the time prescribed, the Canal was completed for all practical purposes and the aggregate of the construction account now stands at the sum of \$471,780.73.

The General Report for July, 1846, herewith sent you, will afford you much valuable matter in reference to the Co.

The original No. of Stockholders was between 14 and 1500—by sales, transfers and delinquencies and the number is reduced to 725.

The stock was subscribed for to be paid in ten equal annual installments, and the amount actually paid in is \$361,710.36.

Besides the stock created to cover construction the Co. now own of the above, the sum of \$25,382.77. Leaving now in the hands of private holders the sum of \$336,327.29. - and these private holders yet owe the Co. on their stock \$46,142.41.

Besides the last named sum, the only available means of the Co. are Real Estate taken for stock appraised to the Co. at \$16,251.00 - worth in case now about half that

sum and due the Co. for Real Estate etc. about #13,000.00.

The present prominent liabilities of the Co. are a debt of \$116,000.00 incurred for construction, drawing interest at the rate of 7 per cent annum, payable semi-annually in the City of New York.

This debt matures in about eight years. The Co. also have out, of their own paper, about \$30,000.00 - the most of which is drawing interest.

And it is supposed that there will be some 10 or 15,000 dollars yet to be paid in assessments of drainages for right of way. There are other debts arising from the extensive repairs of this last season amounting to some \$3,000.00.

The ordinary and extraordinary repairs for this last year amount to over \$20,000.00. This large amount is owing to the fact that no thorough repair had ever been made of that portion of the line finished by the State in 1839 and to the loss of a couple of aqueducts by an unusual flood in August last.

During the year 1846, only about seven months business was done of the Canal and yet the tolls amounted to

	\$28,524.84
And the Water Rents to	6, 212.84
Making an aggregate total revenue of	\$34,737.53

Prior to this last most disastrous flood owing mainly to the fact that there is very little surplus money in this region, seeking an investment in any kind of Corporation Stock, and that no cash dividends had been, or could be, paid on this stock, for about two years to come - the revenue being indispensable for pressing liabilities - this stock could then be readily purchased at a discount of 50 per cent now it cannot be sold for hardly any price.

So soon as the waters subsided after the flood on the 1st of January, last, the Engineer made a reconnaissance of the line and estimated the cost of reconstruction at \$90,000.00. The stock is so depreciated it is impossible for the Co. to throw itself upon that for relief.

The most of the Farmers along the line of the Canal are greatly injured by the flood and require the most of one or two years crops to reinstate their farms, and the businessmen of the Valley have generally taxed themselves about as heavily as they can bear, to finish the Canal in the first instance.

Because of the very large amount of capital invested in Boats, Warehouses, Mills, Factories, etc. along the line and the great change just wrought by the Canal in the agricultural, mechanical and commercial business of this quarter of the State it is obvious that unless the canal is speedily resuscitated incalculable pecuniary loss most speedily ensue - utterly ruining many, injuring all - and largely affecting the State Revenue.

Relief is now beyond the power of the Company, if the Canal is reconstructed the County must, in some form, come to the rescue.

Very respectfully,  
Yours  
James Heron, Secretary.



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

Three years after the Whitewater Canal Company declared bankruptcy (1862), the Whitewater Valley Railroad Company purchased the entire length of the canal (1865), from Hagerstown to the Ohio River, and used much of the old towpath for its railbed.

Had the Hagerstown Canal been worth the work and monies invested in it? When the lower portion was in, at best, a temporary state of repair, the waterway was the desired way to ship. During the sporadic periods of its operation, the canal made and saved money for those using it, but its on-again, off-again history, plus the encroachment of railroads, doomed the project before it was completed.

Construction of the Hagerstown Canal best exemplifies the self-reliance and determination of the people of the period. They felt a strong need, and without seeking or accepting any public funds, they built their canal.

Just as the Hagerstown Canal was being completed the first small brick school building was erected in 1848. It still stands as a residence at 399 North Plum Street. The canal brought prosperity. Woolen and flour mills, a shingle factory, a barrel factory, carriage shops, a foundry, slaughter houses and many more businesses and mills were built.

A weekly newspaper "The Friendly Visitor" was begun in 1873. The present day "Hagerstown Exponent" began publishing in 1875, making it the longest established business in town.

Soon there was a fire department, a gas company, a telephone company, a municipally owned generating plant for electricity (1908) and a water works (1927). The first post office was established in 1829 and became second class in 1924. Due to increasing volume of the Perfect Circle Company, the post office became first class in 1932.

Perfect Circle, the piston ring company, got its start in 1892 when C.N. Teetor invented and produced a railroad bicycle used to inspect rails. In 1902 the name became Light Inspection Car Company. One of these cars is on display in the Hagerstown Museum.

After developing a motor, the company developed the individual cast method of manufacturing piston rings. Every large piston ring manufacturer adopted this method. Perfect Circle (so named in 1926) became one of the two largest piston ring manufacturers in the world, selling to over 80% of car and truck manufacturers.

In 1932 five hundred people were employed in Hagerstown, with an additional 375 at other plants. Perfect Circle's prosperity contributed to the affluent appearance the town still presents. Dana Corporation bought out Perfect Circle in 1963. The plant was eventually closed. The building now

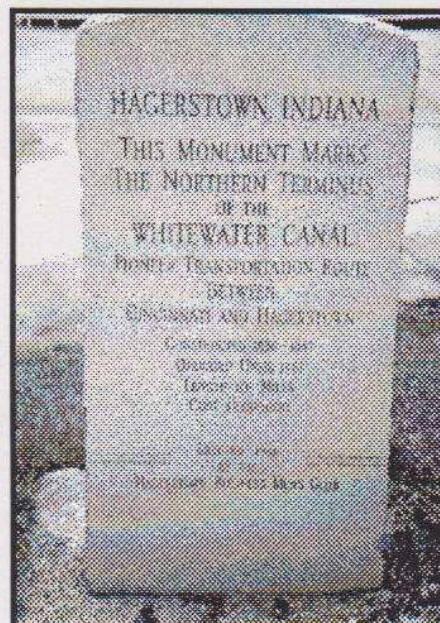
is being used as a warehouse.

The municipally owned airport is just down the street from Dana at the foot of S. Washington. It has a 4000 foot grass runway which is lighted and a 24 hour radio communication system.

Perfect Circle constructed a new plant addition in the area where the canal's Water Street basin was located at the south end of Perry Street. A block long angled street named Canal Street paralleled the canal. Along S. Perry Street are the town's earlier structures.

The Teetor and Hartley families had mansions constructed with their wealth. They also built a fine brick library building on the northwest corner of Plum and College, developed a country club and donated former canal property to the Boy Scouts of America to become an A+ camp with a ten acre lake. Camp Wapi Kamigi (Indian name for white water) has been a Girl Scout camp since the 1950s. The canal was located on the 200 acres of land now owned by the Girl Scouts that extends south to Heiney Road. The office of the Treaty Line Council of Boy Scouts is located in the former Christian Science Church building on South Plum Street.

In 1946, one hundred years after the construction of the canal, the Hagerstown Business Men's Club (now the Rotary Club) erected a stone monument at the southwest corner of the Main Street bridge. The canal was fed from West River about two blocks north of the bridge. Due to flood problems West River on the east side of town has been rerouted over the years.



Hagerstown Whitewater Canal Marker -Photo - B Schmidt







## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

Only small employers provide jobs today: Tedco produces scientific and educational toys making Hagerstown the gyroscope capital of the world, Exponent Publishers, Inc. is a large color printing plant, world famous Abbott's Candy is still produced from their 1910 recipes, and Welliver's Smorgasbord serves hundreds of folks from near and far. On the walls of The Mill Terrace at Welliver's are four drawings by Centerville artist, Paul Hamilton of area mills as they appeared while in operation many years ago.

### Cambridge City

Settlers of English and German descent from Virginia, the Carolinas and Pennsylvania began moving into western Wayne County after the Twelve-Mile Purchase from the American Indians in 1809. A large stone with a brass plaque marks this line at West Main and Boundary Streets, near the railroad in Cambridge City.

When Wayne County was being organized in 1810, the early settlers were dependent on spring rains to float their surplus products on flatboats to markets at Brookville, Lawrenceburg and Cincinnati. Livestock could be driven on foot and produce hauled in wagons, but this was a long and tedious round trip of up to 14 days, given the condition of early roads through the dense forests.

The plat for Cambridge City was recorded in October of that same year (1836) that the Internal Improvement Bill was signed by Governor Noah Noble. Cambridge City is uniquely situated at the crossroads of early transportation, for no other town in eastern Indiana was built on both a canal and the National Road.

As early as 1824 a settlement called Vandalia grew up along the old state road from Centerville to Indianapolis where it crossed the west fork of the Whitewater River. Present day Delaware Street is a remnant of that old state road. The settlement was located near Vandalia Avenue.

When the National Road was surveyed through Wayne County beginning in June 1827, businesses began moving one-quarter mile south to that area, and East Cambridge developed east of the river about 1830. The new town of Cambridge City in 1836 encompassed both of these earlier places, as well as being the head of the new canal.

Canal construction was halted in 1839. In 1842 a charter was granted to the Whitewater Canal Company to finish "within five years" the project that the state had started. A groundbreaking celebration attended by several thousand people was held in Cambridge City on July 28, 1842.

After the canal was completed to the town the first boat arrived accompanied with much fanfare in the fall of 1845. Construction of the canal had brought skilled labor,

immigrants and much prosperity to the western Wayne County area.

With this new transportation available, twenty boats were needed to ship the grain, hay, pork, lard and other goods that farmers hauled from near and far. According to newspaper accounts an incredible amount of produce and manufactured items left the Cambridge City docks for Cincinnati. Transportation time was shortened to as little as three days. Water-powered manufacturing increased the general prosperity and made jobs for many in this area. Saw mills, flour mills, woolen and cotton mills produced goods for shipment. During the winter months, the canal provided ice for the ice houses and a place to skate.

The Vinton House Hotel, built in 1847 on the National Road, was an official stagecoach stop for Americans moving westward, as well as hosting folks from the canal packet boats. It's written that Vinton's daughters sat on the hotel's back steps, watching for the arrival of the canal boats three times a week from Cincinnati to deliver guests to the side door. Then the boats would make a turn in the basin west of the hotel for the return to Cincinnati. Take a walk today down the alley beside the angled west wall of the Vinton House and imagine the canal boats making their turns where the parking lot is located.



Vinton House Cambridge City -Photo Bob Schmidt

The following article gives an insight to the hotel during its heyday.

#### THE VINTON HOUSE INTERVIEW - ELBRIDGE GERRY VINTON

The Indianapolis News, Saturday, April 13, 1907  
ELBRIDGE GERRY VINTON, KEEPER OF ONE  
HOTEL FROM STAGE COACH AND CANAL  
DAYS TO THESE TIMES OF STEAM,  
TRACTION AND AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

OLD-FASHIONED BUILDING AND OLDFASHIONED LANDLORD MAKE AN INTERESTING FEATURE OF LIFE AT CAMBRIDGE CITY, TERMINUS OF A ONCE BUSY CANAL

SALLIE SELLS, AGE EIGHTY, EXPERT COOK OF THE BOAT TIMES - ANOTHER INTERESTING LINK WITH YEARS AGO-CHANGES THAT HAVE PASSED BEFORE THEIR EYES.

(From a Staff Correspondent)

Cambridge City, Ind. April 13-Here dwells Elbridge Gerry Vinton, the prince of gadabouts. He is the living definition of restless spirit. Now in his eighty-third year, it is his boast that he has been able to content himself under one roof only fifty-eight years. He is a rover, indeed.

"I wish I could settle down and be contented with my lot," says the venerable nomad of Cambridge City. "I bought this old hotel in 1849 and have only lived in it ever since. One of these days I'm going to get mad and move, although my friends keep drumming into my ears that a rolling stone gathers no moss."

The old hotel he speaks of is the Vinton House, perhaps the oldest hotel in Indiana in point of continuous service. Opened by Mr. Vinton as a National Road tavern in 1849, its doors have not been closed since and it bids fair to offer welcome to wayfarers for many years to come. Mr. Vinton delights in talking about his "roving" disposition. He would be lost in life's desert anywhere but between the four walls of his old tavern.

Early in 1844 a company of forty-one young Yankees left Boston to journey into the West. One of the forty-one was Elbridge Gerry Vinton. The travelers moved by stage from Boston to Pittsburg. There they took transportation by boat to Cincinnati. Their eyes were turned toward Indiana and when they reached the Ohio city the forty-one made inquiry as to how to get into the heart of the Hoosier wilderness. They were informed that a canal had been dug from Cincinnati to Laurel, Ind., and was being continued to Cambridge City. The canal was called the Whitewater, after the stream that fed it. The Yankee wanderers decided to travel by canal boat from Cincinnati to Laurel and then go by wagon to Cambridge City, where it was said a prosperous little town was springing up in the wilderness. They sat on the deck of the canal boats and glided toward their future home. Only one of the original forty-one Yankees still lives to tell the story. That is Elbridge Gerry Vinton.

When the Yankees reached Cambridge City they sought employment in the village and on the farms. Some had means and bought small tracts of land. Young Vinton found employment as a porter at the White Hall, a famous old National road tavern, in the western part of Cambridge City. It was owned by Gen. Solomon Meredith. Vinton worked at the White Hall about two years and then bought it from his employer on the installment plan. Vinton also conducted the Great Western Hotel, another Cambridge City tavern, but finally centered all his interests in what is now the Vinton House. For several years he called the latter the United States Hotel.

From Stage to Automobile Days,

Mr. Vinton has had an interesting career as landlord of the old Vinton. Under its roof he has given shelter to travelers by stage, canal boat, steam train, electric car and automobile, practically every form of transportation known to American life. At his door have halted caravans of men mounted on ponies bearing heavy saddle-bags and bound for California, the land of gold. Presidents, Senators, philanthropists, actors, lawyers and other history makers have entered the low door of the old Vinton to find shelter or a place at the table.

It is like perusing the pages of a long-written history to hear the octogenarian hotel keeper of Cambridge City relate his experiences. One's thoughts travel back to old stage-coach days and the picture is at a big lumbering stage rattling across the Whitewater bridge at the eastern end of town, the driver's trumpet heralding the approach of the stage. The trumpet's blasts brought the populace hurriedly to the front door of the Vinton House. Out stepped Elbridge Gerry Vinton, mine host, to receive his guests.

He was younger and stronger then than now, for now he sits in an easy chair in the broad, old-fashioned parlor on the second floor of the hotel. He is not the strong, robust fellow of fifty years ago. Affliction has come to tear down a remarkable constitution, but he will withstand its attempts at destruction yet many days, if his doctor's word is good. Several months ago Mr. Vinton suffered an attack of hemorrhage of the brain and it came near bringing about his end, but he rallied and is recovering. He expects to be back behind the desk of the Vinton on his eighty-third birthday, which will be on July 11, next.

"Good. Grand Old Days,"

Mr. Vinton speaks at the times of fifty years ago as "the good, grand old days." He revels in the memory of them. "The people were not dollar-mad then," the octogenarian declares. "Folks did neighborly things for the sake of being neighborly and not for the purpose of blowing about how benevolent they were. Nowadays if anybody does another fellow a kindness he goes and puts it in the paper. You don't hear about latchstrings hanging out any more, do you? Why, in the good, grand old days we delighted in our hospitality and had fun visiting back and forth. Now if you go to visit and the folks aren't at home you leave a card and say "Goody" when you slip it under the door."

Back in the stage-coach days Mr. Vinton was the agent for the stage companies. He represented the telegraph and the United States mail line and his registers tell an interesting story of the business he did with travelers and the stage companies. He not only registered the travelers, but also the amount they paid for fare and their destination. In those days Muncie was called Muncietown and that name frequently appears on the registers. The Vinton House was also a post for the exchange of horses that drew the stages. When the coaches dashed up to the door of the hotel the driver threw the lines across their backs with a sweep. Stablemen quickly unhitched the tired and foaming animals and as quickly swung fresh ones into line for a journey of ten miles east or west over the National road.

A Few Minutes for Refreshments.

While the horses were being changed the travelers would refresh themselves either at the table of the Vinton House or at its once famous old bar. There they would tell of the happenings in the part



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

of the country from which they had just come, at the same time regaling themselves in the brandies that landlord Vinton passed over the bar. When the stage was ready to resume its journey the horn would be blown, the travelers would climb into and on top of the vehicle, the driver would give vent to a howl and sweep his whip over the heads of the horses. Then the thoroughly excited animals would plunge into the middle of the road and dash on their way, the travelers waving farewells to the jovial landlord and his friends back at the tavern.

The opening of the Whitewater canal from Cincinnati to Cambridge City added interest to affairs at the Vinton tavern. The canal ended at the back door of the Vinton. The boats turned in a basin there. During the fifties the canal boats engaged in lively competition for business and one enterprising company established a day line of packets between Cambridge City and Cincinnati. A boat started from each terminal every morning and reached the other end of the canal shortly after dark. The distance of eighty miles was covered by having relays of horses and mules at points ten miles apart. The canal boatmen would send the boats along at a lively pace by compelling the horses and mules to cover the ten miles as fast as they could go.

There is living in Cambridge City today an aged woman who forms an important link in Mr. Vinton's chain of memory. Her name is Sallie Sells, eighty years old. In the fifties Mrs. Sells was the widow Gonzales and was a cook on one of the fast canal boats, the Etna, owned by Captain Valentine Sells. The widow was a great favorite along the route. She was particularly a favorite with the daughters of Mr. Vinton, the Misses Lillieore and Florinne Vinton, who are now conducting the hotel. They were little girls then and when the widow Gonzales' canal boat came to port there was rejoicing among the youngsters, for she was always baking when the Etna reached the Cambridge City end of the canal. The widow always invited the children aboard to enjoy some warm bread, butter and jelly.

It was a sad day for the Vinton girls when the canal was abandoned, for the railroad came to destroy its traffic. Early in the sixties the old canal was closed because the Indiana Central railroad had absorbed its business. The story is told that on the day the Etna made her last trip the widow Gonzales stepped out on the towpath at Cambridge City and confronted Captain Valentine Sells, the owner, with a business proposition. It was something like this:

"Cap'n Sells, you're single. So'm You need a wife. I need a husband. The old canal's done for an' we've got to hustle some other way. Let's hustle together. You need me an' we might as well get married."

### Matrimonial Business Plan.

Cap'n Valentine Sells accepted the proposition in a business-like way and they hustled off to a 'squire and were married. They lived nicely in an humble cottage in Cambridge City until a few years ago, when the old captain died. It is told here that Mrs. Sells used to swell with pride over her achievements as a cook and housekeeper, a thing she had reason to do, and say: "Valentine, you've got an awful good wife." To which Valentine would always laughingly reply: "Yes, Sallie, I have--sometimes."

"Aunt Sallie" Sells, as the later generation knows her, lives in her

little cottage alone now. It is as neat as a pin, the clean floors being almost hidden under beautiful rugs that are her own handi- (Editor's note: Here the article jumps as though something were left out.) reason of the fact that she names them according to their traits as applied to Bible characters. She calls her cat Esau because she can't keep him at home.

Mrs. Sells and landlord Vinton are warm friends. Since his illness she has been a frequent visitor to the hotel and the two octogenarians sit by a sunny window and talk over old times with a work. She clings to old-fashioned customs and delights in telling of the fun she used to have back in canal boat days. She places quaint construction on some parts of the English language and amuses her friends with it. Not long ago she had her picture taken and when asked who made the negative, replied: "My son Enoch took it, Took it with one of these common little krodykes."

She has a number of pets that keep her company and to each of these she has attached a biblical name. She insists that the names are easier to remember by relish. Both live in the past and their reminiscences are frequently productive of much good humor. They can be heard laughing almost any moment they are together. The Misses Vinton enjoy having "Aunt Sallie" as a guest and are continually urging her to "run down and see father because it does him so much good."

The Vinton House is as old-fashioned in its architecture and equipment as its owner. The building is of brick, three stories in height and there are thirty-six guest rooms, each of which contain an old-fashioned bed with a new-fashioned box mattress, a combination that makes the hotel popular. One is impressed with the old-fashionedness of things the moment one enters the office on the first floor. The office desk is paneled and occupies a corner of the room. On the walls are steel engravings of the family of James A. Garfield and of Daniel Webster addressing the Senate during the famous debate on the compromise measure in 1850. Mr. Vinton was a great admirer of Webster and reads everything he can find pertaining to him. On his reading table one may find at all times Everett's biography of the great statesman. In the hall on the second floor are several valuable steel engravings of Abraham Lincoln. In the larger guest chambers the beds have the antique canopies that were popular when grandmother was a little girl.

The rear dooryard of the old Vinton House is an attractive place in summer. Out there the flowers and grass grow in profusion. There the Vinton children used to play while awaiting the coming of the Etna with its cook and her freshly baked bread. Near the dooryard the quiet old Whitewater canal sleeps half-hidden between rows of shops and stores. Between two old frame buildings there is an opening that leads down to a little boathouse. Mr. Vinton built the boathouse years ago for his grandchildren, now grown-ups. There they used to spend many happy hours.

Whitewater canal is fast filling up and will, before many years be lost to all except history. The towpath has almost become lost through the changes of the years. Houses have been built where the horses and mules used to plod along.

### Landlord's Eccentricities

The eccentricities of landlord Vinton are the basis for many a yarn by the "drummers" who have come and gone from the old Vinton



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

House in the long years that it has sheltered them. Cleanliness has been a hobby of the landlord and his family to the same degree that they took pride in their table and beds. A tobacco-chewing guest, one of the kind that is not particular about sanitary rules in parlor or office, always finds chilly welcome at the Vinton, and he frequently finds a little additional charge tacked on to his bill. If he objects he is frankly told why it is there.

A story is told of a fresh young drummer who stopped at the Vinton several years ago. He was one of the sort that complained about everything. Landlord Vinton hustled around and tried to cope with his complaints. The fresh young drummer remained at the hotel one day. His bill should have been \$2. It was \$4. "Why do you charge me \$4 a day and other people two?" he protested. "Four dollars or nothing," answered Mr. Vinton. The drummer paid the bill and went away. He told a friend how he had been "soaked" as he called it. "You must have kept the old man hopping around waiting on you," suggested the friend. "Well, I did demand some attention," he admitted. "Yes, I'll bet you kicked on everything," the other added "That's one hotel where it doesn't pay to be too fresh. The old man made you pay for getting gay."

### Found He Remembered

The same fresh young drummer went back to the Vinton a month later. He was there for a day. He was the world of good nature and didn't ask a single favor. When he asked for his bill he was surprised to hear landlord Vinton say: "Your bill is paid, sir. You paid it last month." The young drummer was not slow to understand and went away happy.

Mr. Vinton is a perfect Chesterfield in manner. He raises his hat to everybody, never calls anybody by anything but the surname and that with the prefix of "Mister," "Madam" or "Miss." He is a prime favorite with the children of Cambridge City. He has always been fond of them. There are grandmothers in Cambridge City today who used to receive candy from his hands when they were little girls.

The landlord has always kept a diary. It contains volumes of data that are interesting to him. He has always kept a weather report in it. When he recovered consciousness after his recent illness the first question he asked was about the temperature so that he might place it in his diary.

He counts every move he makes. His daughters tell that he always counts steps on the stairs when he ascends or descends them. He always counts strokes of pump handles and turns of an ice-cream freezer. He frequently amuses himself by counting the ticks of the clock. He used to count his steps to and from the market.

Mr. Vinton has a remarkable memory for poetry. He can recite poems of great length, and he recites them well. Most of them pertain to youth and old age and have a sentiment that is pleasing to him. He also remembers the witty sayings of guests and repeats them. In the old days Sol Smith Russell was frequently a guest at the Vinton House and he was always welcome because he brought new stories. Mr. Vinton is known for his ready wit, and his "get-backs" at sharp-tongued guests have always been a source of much amusement for the other fellows.

The landlord of the Vinton is of a generous nature, and his family has always profited by it. When he used to make trips to Cincinnati

to buy provisions for his hotel he always returned with presents for the family. One of the treasures of the household today is a handsome silk shawl valued at \$1,000. He bought it for Mrs. Vinton, who has been dead several years. On one of these trips to Cincinnati he entered a store and asked for the finest shawl in the house. The shawl was brought forth. It was of extraordinary size and as beautiful as it was large.

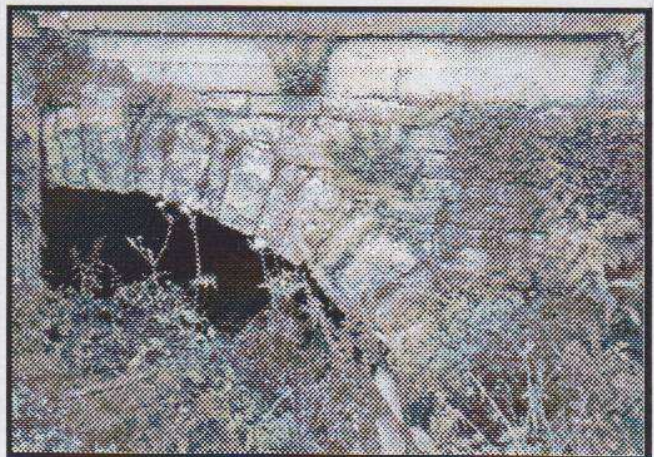
"That's a beautiful shawl," he said to the salesman. "But Katie hasn't got any thing to go with it. Well, I'll take it anyhow, for Katie is a little bit of a thing and it will cover her over so completely that the folks won't see her old clothes."

And he bought it. The shawl is so heavy that a frail woman would be borne down by it. There is also a collection of jewelry in the Vinton House safe that is valuable for its age. There are several old-fashioned cameos that would delight any woman. They were the property of Mrs. Vinton, all gifts from her husband.

No man ever possessed two more faithful daughters than Mr. Vinton. Since their father's illness the Misses Florinne and Lillieore Vinton have taken complete charge of the old hotel and are making it go. They are the soul of devotion to their father and watch over him with loving eyes. Their one dream is his complete recovery and return to the old paneled desk downstairs, a place so familiar to him that he feels he is robbed of one of life's greatest joys when not permitted to be there. For it is behind that desk that he has been at home for fifty-eight years.

**W.M. HERSCHELL**

An old canal boat bell was used to call hotel guests for meals. This bell is on display in the history room of the town's public library, which was built in 1936 on canal right-of-way.



**Culvert Under National Road - Photo Bob Schmidt**

The canal crossed under the National Road between South Center and Foote Streets. The hand-drawn 1836 plat map, framed in the library, shows a through canal from the north edge of town and under the National Road. The top of the stone arch bridge is still visible under Main Street from the alley south of Main. Also drawn on the plat map is an one-



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half block long north-south Hawkins Basin at North Front Street, and a two-block long east-west basin extending west from it to Jones Street. Green Street follows the path of the canal north from the fire station to Delaware, where the tree line indicates the location of the Hagerstown Canal northward.

Many warehouses were built to handle all the merchandise that was shipped. In the center of broad East Church Street was a three-block long canal basin reaching to the river. It is thought that the two and one-half story brick building at One East Church Street, preserved by Dr. James Bertsch and converted into his offices, was one of those warehouses.

The remnant of a canal boat keel was discovered under Church Street during some street work. It is now preserved in the Wayne County museum in Richmond.

Along the west side of South Center Street a 150-foot section of the canal has been preserved, which shows the four foot depth, 30 foot width at the base and 40 foot width at the water level of the canal. A metal marker was placed beside this canal section in 1988 by Western Wayne Heritage, Inc.

The Whitewater Canal never had a full year of business. Floods in the 1840s and 50s caused so much damage to the canal banks, dams and locks that the Whitewater Canal Company could not recoup its losses.

In the meantime railroads were being constructed across the United States. The first steam engine train through Wayne County arrived in 1863 from Indianapolis, and soon a track was built on the towpath of the abandoned canal. In all, four railroads were routed through Cambridge City, creating a nation-wide network for shipping.

Just after the turn of the century the interurban electric railway, chiefly for passengers, transported people to Richmond and Indianapolis for more than 25 years. Tracks were discovered under the blacktop of the Main Street bridge during some recent renovation.

The town's significance as a stop for travelers continued well into the 20th century as auto and truck traffic increased on U.S. 40. All the methods of transportation through the town - the river, the roads, the creek, the canal and the railroads - required eighteen bridges. In addition there is a suspended foot bridge over the river in Creitz Park.

A wooden covered bridge may have been the first to span the river. It is featured in an oil painting by Margaret Overbeck on the cover of the 1936 centennial booklet. The 1836 plat map also shows the two-lane wooden bridge over Whitewater River. The present concrete bridge was built in 1936 and carries a plaque on the northeast corner.

Even though the canal's usefulness for transportation to western Wayne County was less than twenty years, it provided an artery of commerce for mail, passenger, and freight service when none other existed. For an even longer period of time the canal's water provided power for the many mills along its banks until the industrial age. For nearly a century, until 1951, canal water from the Interstate Road feeder dam in southern Washington Township powered the seven hydroelectric stations in Fayette County. The hydros' produced 900 amps maximum per unit at full power. When Connersville rebuilt their water lines and sewer system in the 1950s, utility lines were laid in the canal bed.

In Cambridge City industry and commerce supported a growing business district. Along Main Street are buildings from every period of the town's development, making a virtual history of Indiana architecture dating from 1835-1940. The large brick Conklin-Montgomery House on the southeast corner of East Main and Lincoln is Greek Revival. The tallest four-story brick building on the north side of Main Street is Romanesque Revival. Next to it, the library is Neo-classical. In the middle of the next block is the three story Italianate opera house, and near the west end of the business district is the post office, a Colonial Revival building.

On the south side of Main Street a Chicago style building sits on the southeast corner at Green Street, and just east, the charming yellow brick dwelling is Federal style. The bank building on the southwest corner at Foote Street has Queen Anne details.

The Historic District includes homes, outbuildings, stores, industrial buildings, railroad structures and a small early filling station on West Main at North Walnut. The National Register of Historic Places is America's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. The Cambridge City Historic District, listed in 1991, has a broad range of styles and a high degree of integrity.

Cambridge City was the home of the six Overbeck sisters. Margaret Overbeck studied at the Cincinnati Art Academy (about 75 miles distant) during the 1892-93 term and again in 1898-99 at about the age of thirty. An accomplished artist, she taught drawing, water color and china painting for the next eleven years at DePauw University, Greencastle, IN. Margaret also provided early instruction for her younger sisters, Elizabeth and Mary Frances before they attended art schools.

The eldest sister, Ida, had a photographic studio and was not active in pottery; nor was Harriet, who had studied languages and music in Europe and gave private lessons to local students. But the rest of the sisters were known for their china designs and pottery.



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

Hannah studied in Cincinnati and Terre Haute, then taught briefly in Indiana before poor health forced her to return home. Even though afflicted with chronic neuritis, she became a perfectionist in sketching and water colors.

Between 1903 and 1916 Mary, Hannah and Margaret contributed designs for china painting to **Keramic Studio** magazine, but Elizabeth probably brought the Overbeck's the most fame because of her experimentation and early awards as a Fellow of the American Ceramic Society.

After some experimental work with clay, glazes and firing, these four sisters established Indiana's first art pottery in 1911 in the frame Federal-style house at 520 East Church Street that had been the family home since 1882. Sadly, Margaret died later in that same year from injuries suffered in an automobile accident.

The work was shared among the three women with Elizabeth, the technician, at the potter's wheel and developing their distinctive glazes, artists Mary and Hannah designing and glazing. The sisters chose to remain a small independent studio pottery.

Production and recognition peaked in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Their kiln produced four types of products according to Kathleen Postle's **The Chronicle of the Overbeck Pottery**:

1. The functional or conventional pieces: jars, dinnerware, pitchers, tiles, candlesticks, tea and coffee pots.
2. Representational sculptures; small figurines drawn from real life, models, or photographs of both human and animal subjects, such as a Quaker pair, an historical personage, a family group or pet.
3. Grotesques; caricatured sculptures created with a sense of humor and fantasy, depicting a local personality or well-known figure, or an animal.
4. Vases and bowls; the important pieces made on consignment for presentation gifts.

Through the years Overbeck Pottery took top prizes at the Indiana /state Fair and in numerous other shows around the nation. Commissioned by the Public Works Administration in 1934 were two large vases with covers and stands for the Cambridge City Public Library, a set of five round tiles set in the wall of Central School in Cambridge City and a large tile plaque for Joseph Moore School in Richmond. When that building was demolished, the plaque was framed and now hangs in the school administration building.

All three women were listed in **American Arts Annual**. Mary and Elizabeth were also in **Who's Who in American**

### Art.

After Hannah's death in 1931 and Elizabeth's in 1936, Mary worked on alone. She produced 600 pieces annually. In addition, she designed book plates, illustrated poems, and painted in oil and water color numerous flower studies and birds in various postures. Her death at age seventy-seven in 1955 brought an end to pottery, which was in operation for forty-four years from 1911-1955.

The Overbeck home and contents were described glowingly in a 1932 newspaper account. Had it been preserved intact in the 1950s, the home could have been a treasured example of the arts and crafts environment. After more than 80 years in the Overbeck family, the real estate was sold to an industrialist, and all the family's effects were dispersed at a public auction in 1955.

The Overbeck house itself has an interesting history prior to its becoming an art pottery studio. The frame Federal house was built of brace-frame construction in the 1830s by Ira Lackey, one of the town's founders. Its unusual position at the foot of Pearl Street one block south of the National Road (now US 40) indicates that it was probably constructed before the town plat of 1836.

For the years, from 1844-49, the property was owned by the Whitewater Canal Company. Lot Bloomfield was president of the town board in 1845 and also is referred to as an owner elsewhere in the abstract. It was during this time that the big flood, which spelled disaster for the Whitewater Canal Company, occurred on January 1, 1847.

After John and his wife Sarah died, four of the sisters started the pottery studio. The property remained in the Overbeck family until 1965 when it was purchased by an industrialist. It was saved from the industrialist's wrecking crew shortly before it was to be destroyed.

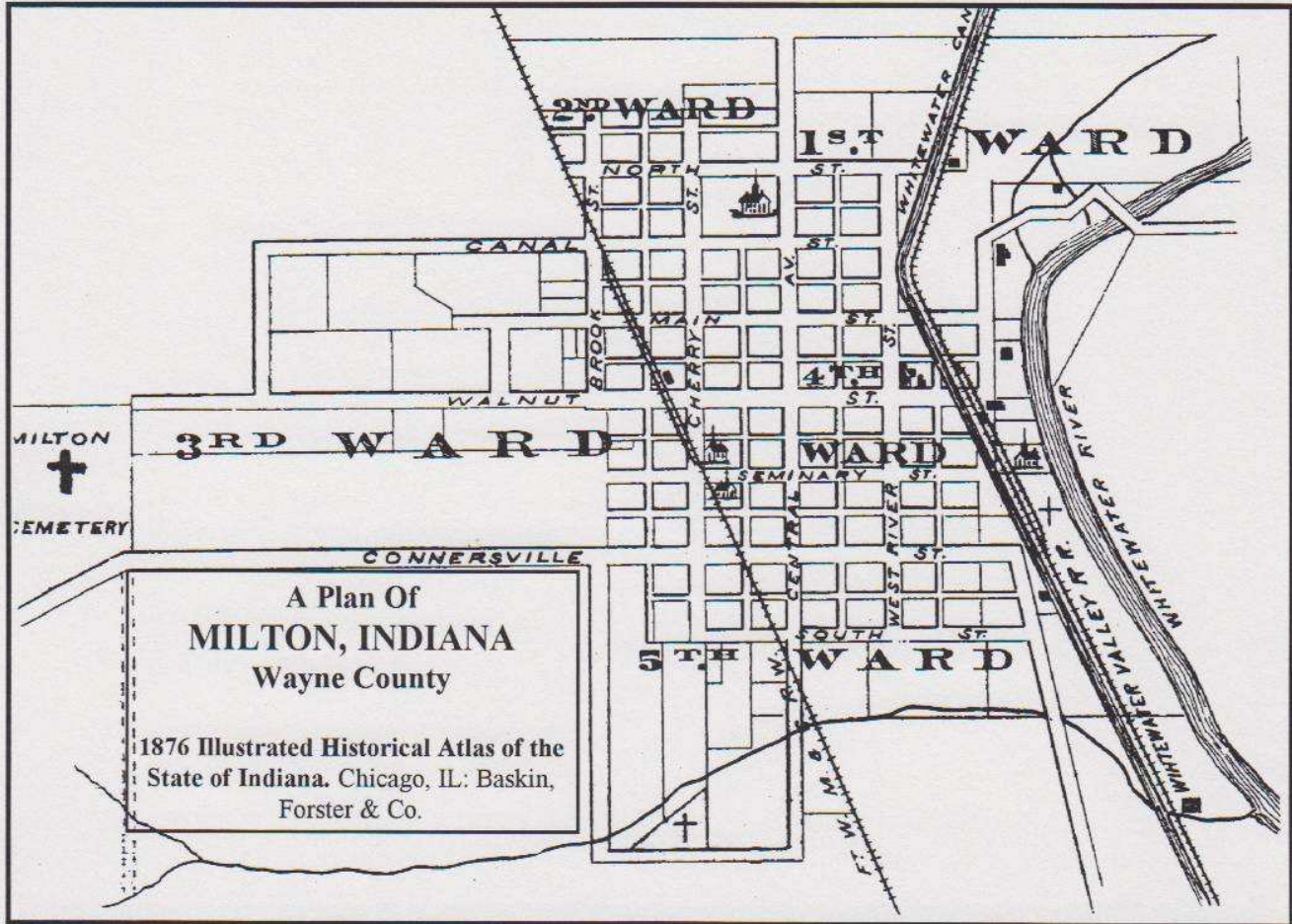
In 1973 the property reverted to private ownership and a restoration of the house was begun. The portable Revelation kiln used by the sisters was repurchased and moved back into the small square kiln house near the southwest corner of the dwelling. The frame kiln house has a fish-scale-design stamped metal roof in pyramidal shape, topped by the smoke stack.

The new owners researched and prepared an application for inclusion of the Lackey-Overbeck House in the National Register of Historic Places. The U.S. Department of Interior placed the house on the register May 28, 1976.

A rose-colored sidewalk, designed by the Overbecks, leads visitors to the Greek Revival entranceway, detailed in an 1832 builder's guide written by Asher Benjamin of Boston. Inset double porches on the east facade lend a southern atmosphere. The dwelling has wide-board ash floors on the



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL



main level and poplar floors upstairs. A cherry banister graces the entrance hall stairway. The poplar or pine woodwork is painted. Much of the glass in the multi-pane sashes is original. Most of the molded doors retain their original brass hardware.

Working fireplaces are located in the front parlor and the studio at the rear. Beneath the studio fireplace is a cupboard lined with zinc used as a damp closet for clays. The School of Pottery held classes in the basement, where the pottery wheel was located. Apparatus for the one-person lift that was constructed to move the invalid Hannah between floors is still in place in an upstairs room.

The present owners of the Lackey-Overbeck House, Jerry and Phyllis Mattheis, have been able to return some of the furniture owned by the Overbeck family to the house. Other furnishings are similar to those used by the Overbecks. Through purchases and the generosity of many, the Mattheis' collection of Overbeck Pottery and art works is growing. Overbeck memorabilia includes paintings, photos, technical books, correspondence, clippings, Overbeck photography studio cabinet cards, family history, and journals of the American Ceramic Society. Also assembled are sieves and tools used for working clays, pyrometric cones used in firings, kiln fixtures, molds, imperfect pieces of pottery from

the kiln, and yard tools. Junior Historians retrieved shards in an archaeological dig around the kiln house.

In 1972 Arthur and Kathleen Postle presented their Overbeck collection towards the establishment of the Overbeck Museum in the Cambridge City public library. In 1983 the basement received lighted glass cases to display the works of the Overbeck sisters, which range from oil paintings to fabrics, pottery to jewelry.

### Milton

Today one must use some imagination to visualize that Milton in Washington Township was the most important Wayne County settlement west of Centerville before the survey for the National Road. Travelers quickly passing through the little town on Indiana 1 are scarcely aware of the quaint charm the village possessed even into the 1960s. Now vacant lots belie the early frame and brick structures that once lined east-west Main Street and north-south Central Avenue in the town's heyday.

The area opened for settlement following the 1809 Twelve Mile Purchase, but during the War of 1812, early pioneers fled to two log blockhouses near the rivers when Indians



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

threatened. One blockhouse was about a mile north of Milton on Martindale Creek and the other was south near Lockport, south of where Greens Fork empties into West Branch. Lockport is just one of the Wayne County settlements that disappeared over time. It probably was located near today's Valley Grove Cemetery along Indiana One about four miles south of Milton. It is written that there were two locks at Lockport.

Settlers were living along the banks of West Branch by 1821. The village of Milton, platted in 1824 on four blocks, was soon prospering and promising.

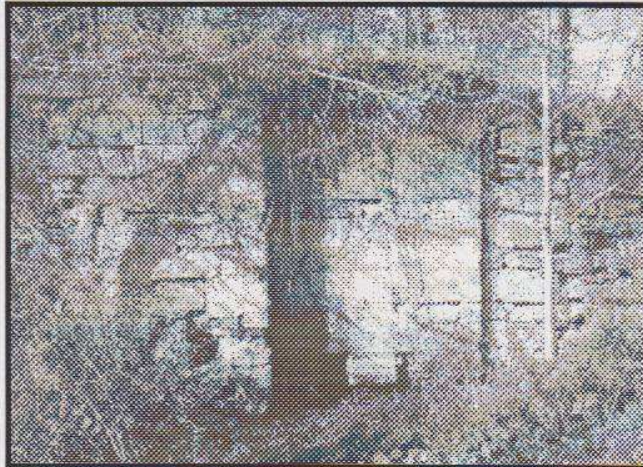
As in most self-dependent communities, early businesses included a grist mill near the river, a blacksmith and a harness shop. Soon there were tanning yards, pork packing, dry goods, grocery and drug stores, a bank, bakery, tin shop, saloon and, most importantly, a post office by 1829. (When a later post office building on East Main was demolished about 1972, the wooden postmaster's window and mail boxes were donated to the Wayne County Museum in Richmond where they can be seen today in the basement as part of the "village.") A hotel, restaurant, doctor and veterinarian provided services for travelers and area residents.

The town's high hopes of becoming a major center of commerce were dashed when the National Road was surveyed and constructed two miles north of the community. Yet, by 1835 there were one hundred houses in town. Some early private schools preceded the first public school, started after 1840. There is record of a newspaper as early as 1841.



City Run Creek Culvert Milton - Photo - Bob Schmidt

The routing of the Whitewater Canal through the village in the 1840s raised hopes and business flourished. Four warehouses were built to accommodate goods brought for shipment. Just southeast of town were two canal structures; a stone arch culvert often called an aqueduct over City Run creek and Lock # 50 about 100 feet long and 15 feet in height.



Lock No. 50 Milton - Photo Bob Schmidt

In 1976 the Indiana Junior Historical Society excavated down to the wooden floor at the south end of the Lock # 50 and found it in a remarkable state of preservation. Today the west side of the south gate wall and both sides of the north gate walls still stand, but the stones of the lock itself have tumbled in between. Part of the stone-arch aqueduct is visible deep below the old towpath. The west bank of the canal has been plowed, but one can easily see the line of the canal by observing the utility poles that march down its path from the 1910 railroad bridge on South Center Street in Cambridge City, through a field, across Indiana One just north of Milton, down through the east side of Milton, across the aqueduct, through the lock and on southward.

In Milton the canal prism can be seen both north and south from the East Seminary Street bridge. A small Friends cemetery is just southeast of the bridge.

Following the demise of the canal, two railroads passed through the town. In 1876 there were 1200 residents, and as many as 140 men were employed in the manufacture of several kinds of agricultural implements.

A seed drill was patented by Joseph Ingels. His business became the Hoosier Drill Company, which prospered in Milton from 1859 to 1877, before it moved to Richmond. A major stockholder in the company, Issac Kinsey was a leading figure in town. Kinsey's Hall was located on the northwest corner of Main and Central in a two-story brick building that houses a local antique shop today.

Kinsey amassed a fortune from the California gold rush and the highly profitable sale of his Hoosier Drill stock. He spent \$80,000 and six years during the 1860s building his magnificent 21-room Italianate mansion "Beechwood" on the prominent knoll south of town on Sarver Road.

Surprisingly, Milton was at the end of a spur line of the state's east-west interurban line which began operating just



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

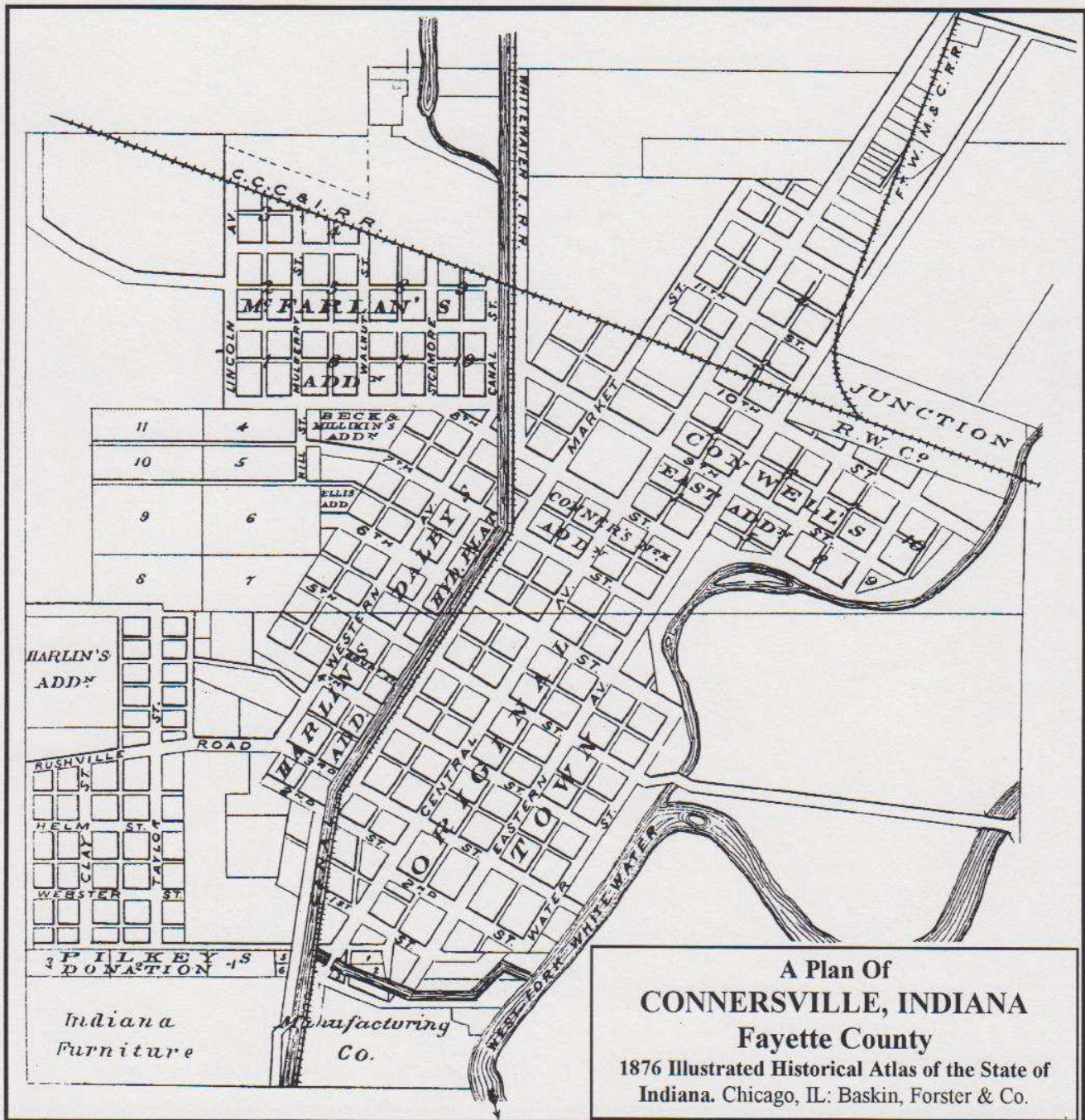
after the turn of the century. George Callaway, a Milton resident, was on the board at Indianapolis that granted a right of way for the line from Indianapolis to Richmond. He insisted on the connection to Milton and as a result, residents could ride the "Dinkey" car to Cambridge City and then take the interurban or train to almost any place in Indiana until about 1941.

Soon Henry Ford's affordable automobiles were taking people elsewhere for pleasure and shopping, resulting in stores and shops closing one by one. Without income, the business buildings and some homes fell into disrepair and were demolished. However, an important early structure,

the Milton-Connersville Pike toll house, is now a charming brick home at the east end of South Street.

Milton's most important social group is the Masonic Lodge, chartered in 1851. In 1870 the lodge purchased a two-story brick building previously owned by the Whitewater Valley Canal Company. Located on West River Street north of Main, it is now stuccoed and continues as the lodge hall.

Organized in 1878, the Milton Cary Club, is the oldest Wayne county club in the General Federation of Women's Clubs and one of the oldest in the state. With a membership of up to 30, it continues as a literary club for the women of





# THE WHITEWATER CANAL

## Connersville THE WATCHMAN January 23, 1836

(Connersville Internal Improvement  
Celebration Accident)

Immediately after the proceedings, whole assemblage repaired to the River Bank east of Town, - the Town being yet in complete illumination - where a number of bonfires were brilliantly lit up - and where it was intended to fire 19 guns, one for each vote in the Senate on the final passage of the improvement Bill. Six or seven rounds were fired, when the awful accident occurred which instantaneously clouded and froze the enthusiasm of the rejoicing multitude.

Whilst the People of Connersville and its vicinity were celebrating the passage of the great Improvement Bill, by the firing of a piece of Artillery - about 9 o'clock on the evening of the 18th inst. - one of the most melancholy accidents happened which has ever occurred in the State. Because of an ineffectual swabbing of the gun, the cartridge ignited whilst the rammer was being withdrawn; by the explosion, Four fine young men were instantly and awfully maimed and wounded. Alexander Saxon, had one of his arms torn off and the other so badly wounded, that both were immediately amputated above the elbow. His eyes were completely blown out of his head, and the face and the head wretchedly lacerated. He was thrown over the bank to the distance of 25 feet. His friends took him to Mr. Atherton's Hotel, where he expired about 8 o'clock the next morning.

Joseph Clark, another very respectable, industrious and enterprising young man, had his right arm blown off so that the Physicians were compelled to amputate it also above the elbow. His face and eyes were likewise badly burned. We are happy to state that there is a fair prospect of Clark's recovery. Abiather Williams and William Worster were likewise very severely burnt and lacerated about the head and eyes. But it is thought that their wounds are not dangerous. The contrast between this calamitous scene, and that of the great rejoicing which immediately preceded it - was awfully striking and melancholy. The sympathies of the whole community were, and are efficiently enlisted in behalf of the sufferers.

On Tuesday at 11 o'clock, the next morning after this fatal occurrence, a large body of the citizens of the village and its vicinity, both young and old, assembled in the Court House to take some measures relative to the mournful occasion. O. H. Smith Esqr. having stated the object of the meeting, upon his motion Gabriel Ginn, Esqr. was called to the Chair. Whereupon Mr. Smith having addressed to the meeting some appropriate observations, offered the following Resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That this meeting deeply deplores the lamentable accident of last evening, by which one of our respected citizens, Alexander Saxon, son of James Saxon, has been taken from amongst us, in the bloom of life - and Joseph Clark, Abiather Williams and Wm Worster, have been seriously injured.

Resolved, That this meeting most sincerely feels for, and sympathizes with, the relative of the deceased.

Resolved, That a Committee to consist of Five persons be appointed by the Chair to take order for, and superintend the Funeral of the deceased, and the erection of suitable Monument over his Grave.

Resolved, That the same committee take measures for procuring relief for such of the injured survivors as may stand in need of assistance; and that the Committee enquire into and publish in "The Watchman," the cause of the Fatal accident.

The Chair then nominated Oliver H. Smith, Esqr. S. W. Parker Esqr. Mark Crane Esqr. Mr. George Frybarger & Dr. Ryland T. Brown to compose the Committee agreed upon.

Mr. Parker then arose and having addressed some remarks, particularly to the younger portion of the meeting, offered the following Resolution, which was unanimously adopted.

Resolved, That the young men of Connersville and its vicinity, do, in an especial manner, deeply lament and deplore the fatal accident which has bereaved them of one of their most worthy and estimable associates - that they feelingly sympathize with their other young associates, who are maimed and wounded - and that they will use all the exertions in their power to alleviate their present distress & promote their future welfare.

About half past 2 o'clock, the corpse of Alexander Saxon, was removed from the Hotel to the Court House, preceded by a Band of solemn music, followed by the relatives and a long procession of citizens. - After a brief but appropriate Funeral Address was made by the Rev. Wilson Thompson - the following order of procession to the grave was formed, John Willey, Esqr. officiating as Marshall.

Clergy  
Pall Bearers (music)  
CORPSE  
Relatives  
Committee  
Seminary Teacher  
His Pupils  
Ladies  
Attending Physicians  
Civil Officers  
Citizens

It is computed that no less than 1000 persons heard the Funeral Discourse, and that from 5 to 7 hundred joined in the procession to the grave. It is thought the whole ceremony was decidedly the most respectable for numbers and appropriate order that has even been witnessed in this portion of the State.

Subscriptions are now being taken for the purpose of erecting, if not a splendid, at least a very respectable Monument, with an appropriate inscription, over the remains of the unfortunate young man, who has deceased of his wounds. As to the propriety of this measure, it is believed that there is but one feeling in this community. The deceased was about 21 years of age - a peculiarly hale, stout, fine looking young man, of the most exemplary and unblemished character, and greatly esteemed by all who knew him. It is designed that this Monument shall not only be a lasting memento of the feelings of this community in reference to the untimely fate of the deceased, which all deplore - but also of the

glad tidings we were celebrating when the catastrophe occurred.

It is likewise the determination of this community to express their sympathy for Mr. Clark, the young gentleman, 23 years of age, who has lost his right arm, in as beneficent a manner as possible. Mr. C. is also a young man of industrious and enterprising habits, of good mind and a very fair reputation. He has accumulated a little property, but not sufficient to meet the great misfortune which has befallen him. It is understood that he now expresses a desire to obtain a good education. This community we trust, will not be backward in backing his dream. Attention is particularly invited to the call which will be seen in this paper for a meeting of young men.

Annexed will be found the official Report that was called for. The Committee appointed to enquire into the cause of the catastrophe of the evening of the 18th inst. Submit the following Report.

1st. Mr. Saxon was not one of the regular gunners, but was permitted to assist in loading the cannon at his own request.

2nd. That he had not assisted in loading previous to the time at which the accident occurred.

3d. That in the hurry, the swab was not passed more than half way down the piece, and that it was not wet at all and further, that Mr. Saxon himself swabbed the cannon.

4th. That the lower end of each Cartridge that had been fired remained in the cannon, as has been ascertained by subsequent examination, and that they were on fire at the time of introducing the cartridge, is indicated by the fact that the gunners saw smoke coming out of the muzzle after the swab was withdrawn.

5th. That the cartridge was rammed down, and the gunners were in the act of drawing the rammer at the moment of explosion.

6th. That Mr. Saxon held the rammer with both hands, but that Mr. Clark had taken his left hand from the rammer, and turned himself around to suffer the person who was to introduce the wad to come up to the muzzle.

The committee wish to say, that a notion prevails generally which is not only erroneous, but highly dangerous. It is, that a cannon will not take fire if the torch-hole be closed - Or in other words, that Gunpowder will not take fire when excluded from the air. This fact is true in relation to most combustible bodies - but it is not true in regard to Gunpowder. Its decomposition furnishes air (Oxygen) to carry on its own combustion. If the cartridges were made of material that would not tear in ramming down, all would be perfectly safe while the air was excluded by holding the torch hole - But with paper cartridges it is not safe when there is evidence of fire in the piece. - A mistake on this subject, was one of the leading causes of the fatal accident, which the Committee have been instructed to inquire into.

S. W. Parker, Chairman



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

Washington Township and beyond.

Sometime prior to the Civil War a Ku Klux Klan was organized and receives credit for pelting the school house with stones and brick bats in 1842 during a public lecture on the national subject of slavery. However, it is recorded that, following a 1922 fire that destroyed the Christian Church, ten klansmen marched into the IOOF lodge where the congregation was meeting and silently presented the pastor with \$100 in cash towards rebuilding the church.

Today Milton has an active volunteer fire department and town board. One company employs a handful of people making special shipping pallets and custom door sills. On Central Avenue (Indiana One) there is a post office, a mini-mart, an antique shop and an elementary school, but the livelihood of many of the 700 residents depends on employment in other communities.

### Connersville

Connersville 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" relates much of Connersville's history. 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.

When Samuel W. Parker lived at the "Old Elm Farm" (1850) he could look out over the Whitewater Canal that ran in front of his home. The canal was completed from Lawrenceburg to Connersville in 1845 and then to Cambridge City in 1846. The first boat reaching Connersville was the "Patriot" commanded by Captain Gayle Ford. When Parker moved to "Old Elm Farm" 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."

"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.

#### OLIVER H. SMITH

Oliver Smith bought 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, that 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 Connersville.

#### CALEB B. SMITH

Elmhurst then became the residence on the Hon. Caleb B. Smith, member of Congress for three terms and Secretary of the Interior under Lincoln. Caleb Smith served in the



Elmhurst - "Old Elm Farm" Photo - Bob Schmidt



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

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.

### **SAMUEL W- PARKER**

Elmhurst then passed through the ownership of James Shaw in 1838 and Nicholas Patterson in 1842 before being purchased by the Hon. Samuel W. Parker in 1850. Parker was a very influential 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. He sold the Canal House on 4th Street, headquarters for the Whitewater Valley Canal Company, where he had previously lived in 1854. 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 and the Cincinnati, and Indianapolis Junction Railroad 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 and built tombs for his family of solid flagstones, brick lined with bottoms of gravel for drainage. He wished 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.

### **JAMES N. HUSTON**

Elmhurst was sold to James N. Huston in 1881 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. 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. He 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. They 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. Huston's name was on our paper currency.

### **DAUM SANATORIUM**

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 that patients and visitors would be met at their train (CH&D, LE&W, 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 (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. J. 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 Co. 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.



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

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

Elmhurst School's enrollment ranged from 24 to 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 combination agricultural and domestic science course for the girls. The school had 26 private rooms for its students and tried 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 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 1935 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.

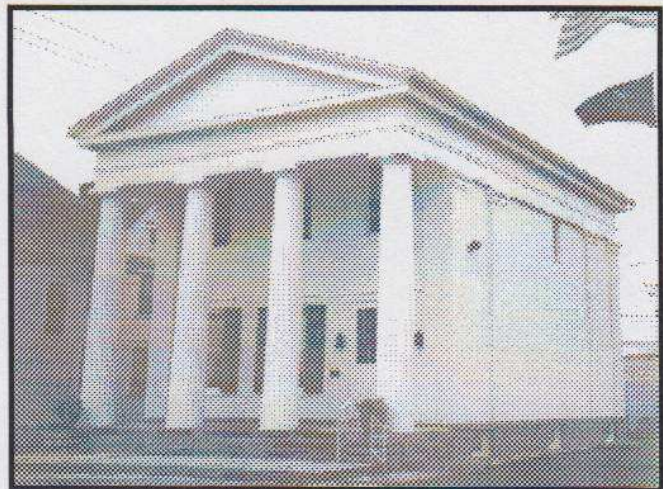
In 1927 Dr. L.O. Lewis of Vallejo, California leased the property for the Pennton Military Institute which would offer junior and senior high courses, a commercial course and vocational training with strict military discipline for boys. This operated for a short time.

Herbert Bard, an Eastern University professor opened a school for boys in 1931. It lasted a short time.

### WARREN LODGE NO. 15

The Mason's took over the building in 1939, made careful plans, and began remodeling in 1940. Partitions of 26 rooms were removed to create a huge lodge hall. The building would be used as a temple by the Masons. They finalized the purchase in 1941 and the building was officially dedicated as Warren Lodge No. 15, Free and Accepted Masons. Work continues to improve the building.

Elmhurst was well-known to both state and national political figures and to the social, business, and fraternal groups. Many prestigious events were held in the home and on the property. Ladies in flowing evening gowns dined and danced with men in formal attire after arriving in shiny carriages pulled by spirited horses. Patients and students came from distant points. The "White House of Indiana" still serves the community today and has tours for interested visitors.



Whitewater Canal Company House - Photo Bob Schmidt

### 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



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

(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 house 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.

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. It 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 have disappeared.

### 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 Hanks 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 Bateman 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, that was surrounded by a paling fence, was a large gate that opened onto 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 Harlan 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.

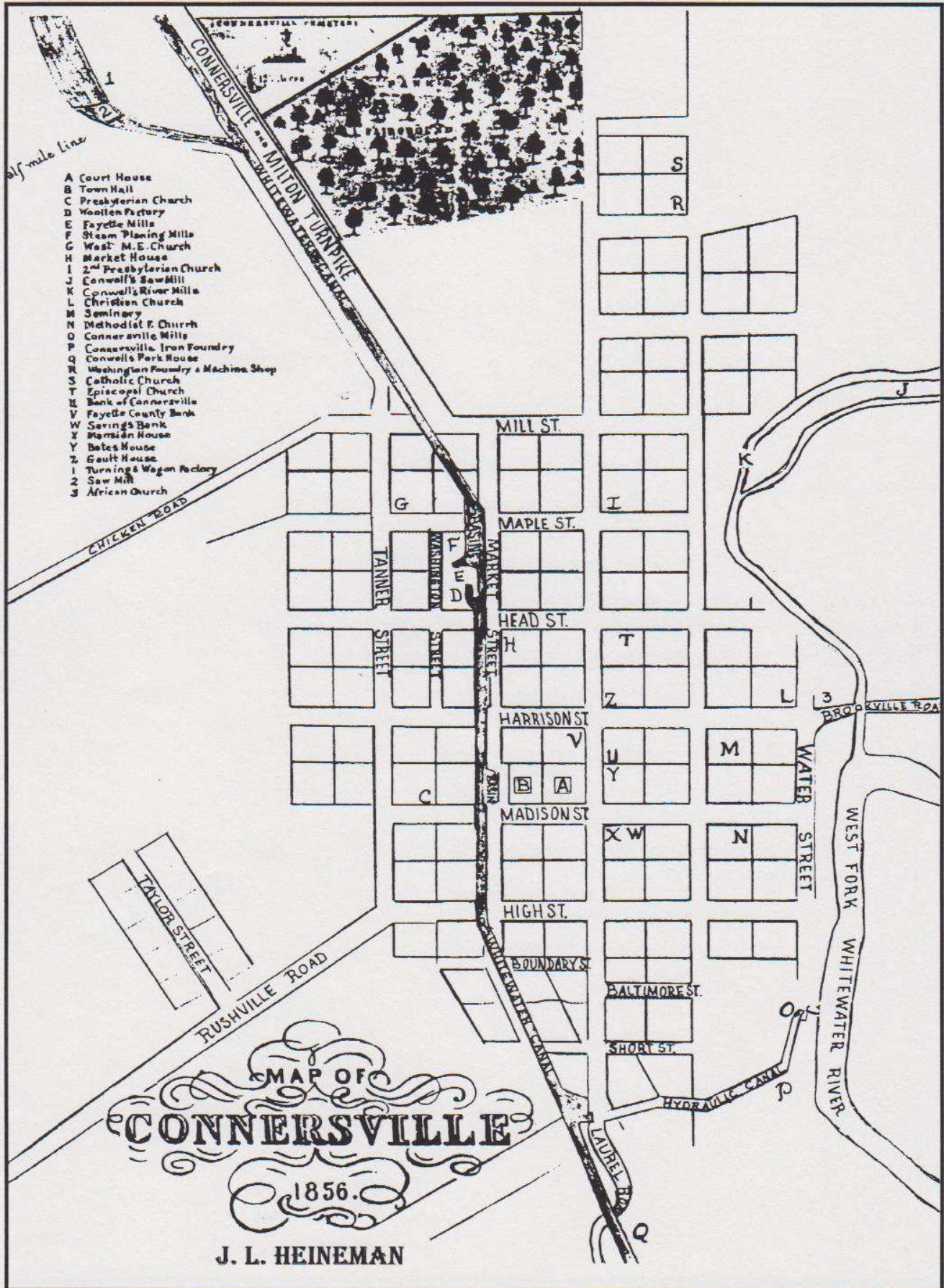
Later when the canal ceased to operate, the home was remodeled with the front entrance changed to Third Street. This often happened in early homes when transportation changed from the rivers to the roads. An excellent example would be the Lanier Home in Madison, Indiana.

### THE 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.



# THE WHITEWATER CANAL



- A Court House  
 B Town Hall  
 C Presbyterian Church  
 D Woolen Factory  
 E Fayette Mills  
 F Steam Planing Mills  
 G West M.E. Church  
 H Market House  
 I 2<sup>nd</sup> Presbyterian Church  
 J Conwell's Saw Mill  
 K Conwell's River Mills  
 L Christian Church  
 M Seminary  
 N Methodist F. Church  
 O Connersville Mills  
 P Connersville Iron Foundry  
 Q Conwell's Park House  
 R Washington Foundry & Machine Shop  
 S Catholic Church  
 T Episcopal Church  
 U Bank of Connersville  
 V Fayette County Bank  
 W Savings Bank  
 X Mansion House  
 Y Bates House  
 Z Gault House  
 1 Turning & Wagon Factory  
 2 Saw Mill  
 3 African Church

MAP OF  
**CONNERSVILLE**  
 1856.

J. L. HEINEMAN



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

The Valentine Billau 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 horses 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 canal towpath. 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 the 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 one of Connersville's early enterprises. He was born on farm in Waterloo township. In 1878 he married Emma Hamilton, a native of Fayette County and a descendant 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 (State Road 1) paid toll for using the roads that were privately owned.

He tired of the grocery business after a few year 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 reenter the flour mill business. He purchase 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 returned to the canal. An unsteady footbridge was built over the canal near the mill so that one 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. The floor sweepings of all kinds of broken and unbroken grains were 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

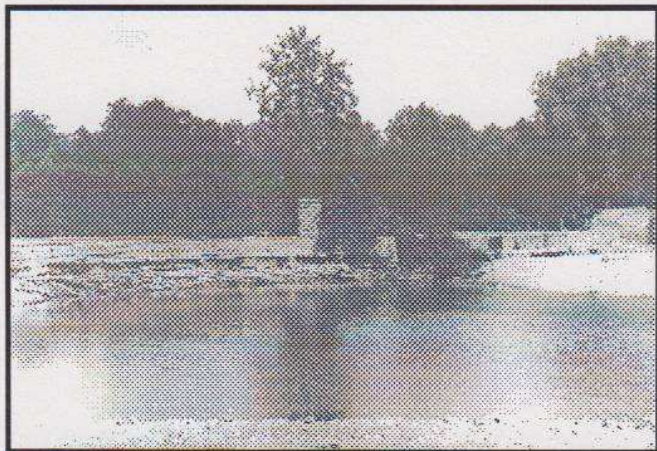
When the Whitewater Canal reached Connersville in 1845 it greatly improved mail, passenger and freight service between there and Cincinnati. Points in between also benefited.

The Whitewater River drops rapidly through the Whitewater Valley making it one of Indiana's fastest flowing rivers. The Whitewater Canal that parallels the river's west fork was also fast flowing. 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



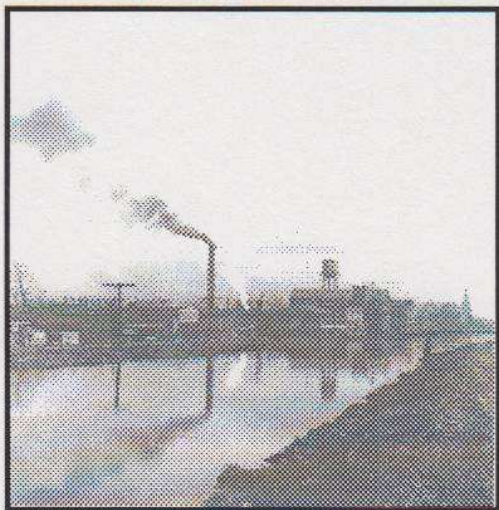
## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

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.



**Canal Feeder Dam on Whitewater River at Connersville**-Photo - courtesy of Stoops Studio, Connersville

This fast flowing current had advantages beyond its disadvantages. The canal waters were used to turn the wheel 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 lights 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.



**The Whitewater Canal Basin at Connersville**  
Photo courtesy of Stoops Studio Connersville

In the early 1920s the Interstate Public Service Co. (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.

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 Root Blower Plant was built in 1893 by the



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

### THE 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.

#### Skating

"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 Heron were among the best prize winners.

#### Historic Value

"...we skated on ice that

would often freeze to the thickness of eight, ten and in extreme cold, as much as fourteen inches.

#### Cutting Ice

"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.

#### Ice Retailers

"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 Ave., 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.

#### Warm Winter

"...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.

#### Elmhurst

"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 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."



1910 Skating on Brookville Basin



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

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.



**Whitewater Canal When Basin Was Still Being Used**  
**Note Canal Lock No. 40 in Center of Picture**  
 Photocourtesy of Stoops Studio Connersville  
 and  
**Same Canal Lock as It Appears in the 1990s**  
 Photo - Bob Schmidt



### Nulltown

Nulltown, a village located about 5 miles south of Connersville, 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 canal and the hydraulic destroyed the power.

When a postoffice 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 the Faikert Brothers who handled farm equipment, coal and building supplies.

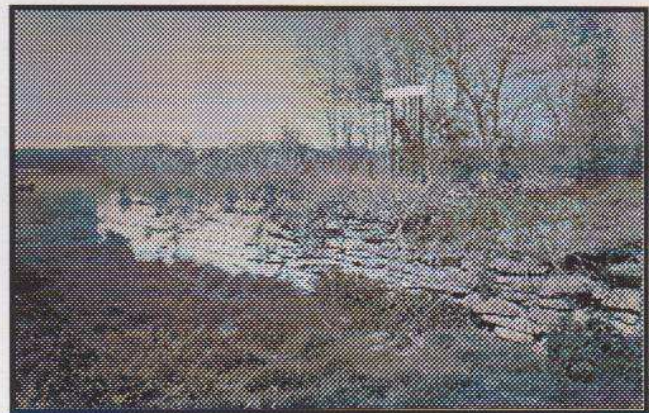
Lock No. 36 of the Whitewater Canal was located at Nulltown. Today only a few of the stones from this lock remain and are difficult to find. Perhaps they were recycled and used as parts of buildings in the area.

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) of 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.

**Berlin Lock No. 35 Is A Composite Lock.**  
**The Iron Tie Rod That Attached Planking To Make**  
**The Lock Chamber Watertight Still Remains.**  
 Photos - Bob Schmidt





# THE WHITEWATER CANAL

## ICE PONDS

Before electricity, ice was important to early Hoosiers and Buckeyes. The Whitewater Valley had its share of ice ponds where water was let into low lying fields during the winter. Once frozen it was cut into blocks and stored in ice houses until needed. It was then shipped by canal boat and later by train to towns in the area.

One of these ice ponds was located at Valley View where the canal and the 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.

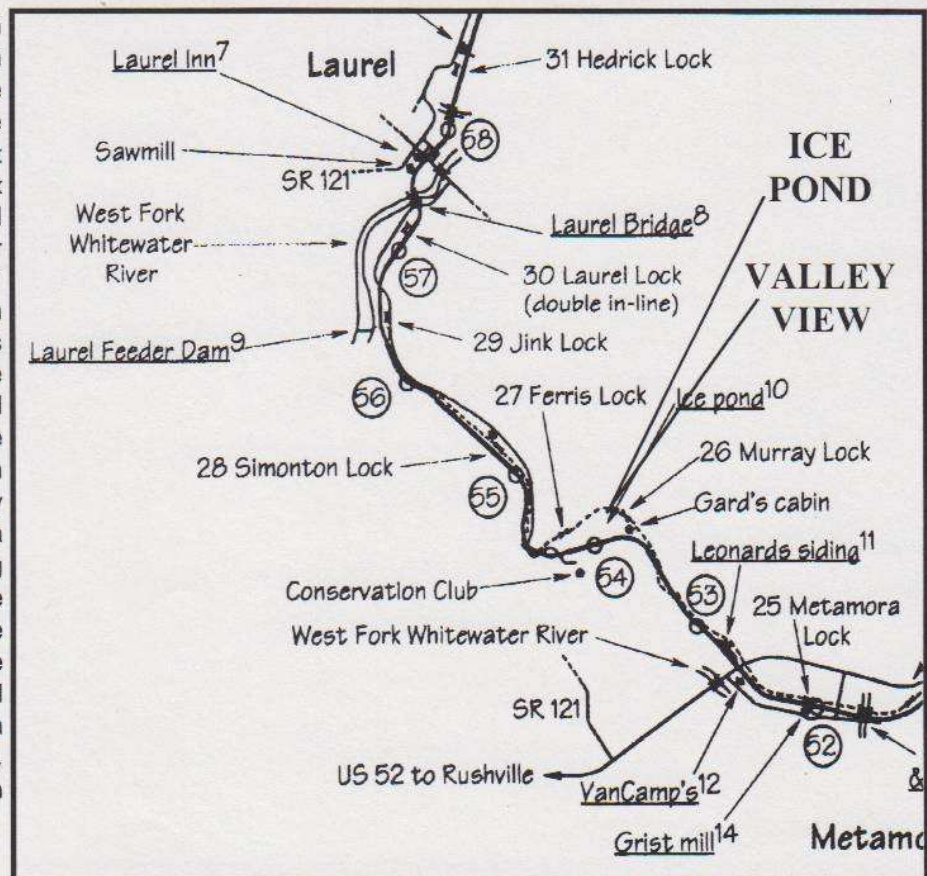
CSI member John Hillman recently located two plat maps that show an ice house stood there from 1882 to the early 1900s. It was known as the Cincinnati Ice Company Ice Houses and had, on one map, a double ended railroad siding on the north side of the main track and, on another map, two single end sidings,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

A Sanborn Insurance map from 1899 for Metamora, IN shows a floor plan of the Cincinnati Ice Co'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 found in *The Miami Canal in Hamilton and Butler Counties, Ohio* by CSI member Mike Morthorst. 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?

Information and map courtesy Whitewater Valley Railroad.





# THE WHITEWATER CANAL

## Alpine

Alpine, located in Columbia township, became a village due to the sawmill erected in 1814 by Allen Crisler at the north end of town. 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, 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.

### WAWASSA PAPER MILL

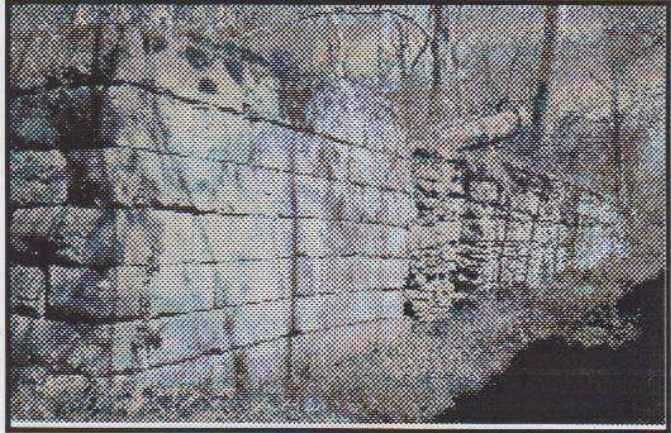
The Wawassa Paper Mill (1865-75) was located one mile south of Alpine on the bank of the Whitewater Canal just north of the Limpus Lock #33. It is a good example of alternate uses of the canal after its decline. The plant stood on Daniel R. Green's farm until it was destroyed by fire in 1875. Wawassa 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. Jute 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 Wawassa Mills 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 Wawassa 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.



**Limpus Lock No. 33 On The Whitewater Canal Located One Mile South Of The Village Of Alpine Is A Good Example Of A Composite Lock Having Mason Cut Stone Entrances And a Rubble Stone Lock Chamber That Was Once Lined With Wooden Planks To Make It Watertight. Note The Row Of Larger Stones Within The Rubble Stone Lock Chamber.**

Photo by Bob Schmidt

## 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 that 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







## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

next to the jail where horses were stabled that pulled the canal boats. The wall at the foot of the 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 Wilson and Byron Forceythe Wilson are buried. Elizabeth was the granddaughter of James Conwell. Wilson was said to be good friends 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.



Whitehall Tavern at Laurel - Photo Bob Schmidt

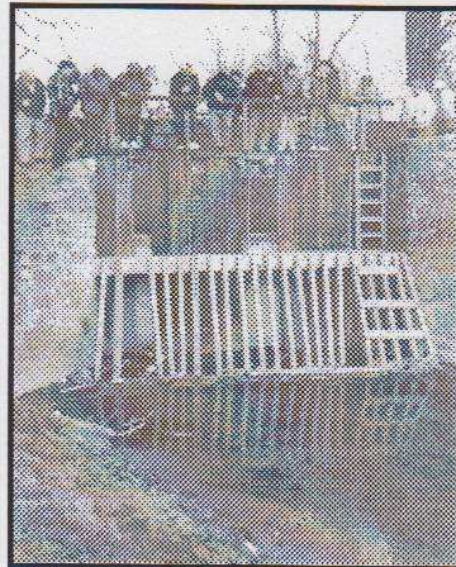
Guests were said to have heard a baby crying and its mother quietly soothing it in a low voice, when there was no mother or child in the tavern. As the old legend tells it, a young woman was on her way west to meet her husband. She stopped at the tavern and gave birth to her first baby. The husband had 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, originally called Hunsinger's Tavern, on Franklin and Pearl Streets. A

little to the south of the bridge near the hotel the canal crossed the Whitewater River by means of a wooden aqueduct. On the east bank of the river is the road to the Laurel Feeder Dam along which two canal locks can be found--Lock 30 Laurel and Lock 29 Jenks at the Feeder Dam. The dam was built in 1843 (restored in 1960) across the West Fork of the Whitewater River to create a reservoir and feed water into the Whitewater Canal.



Laurel Feeder Dam - Photo Bob Schmidt



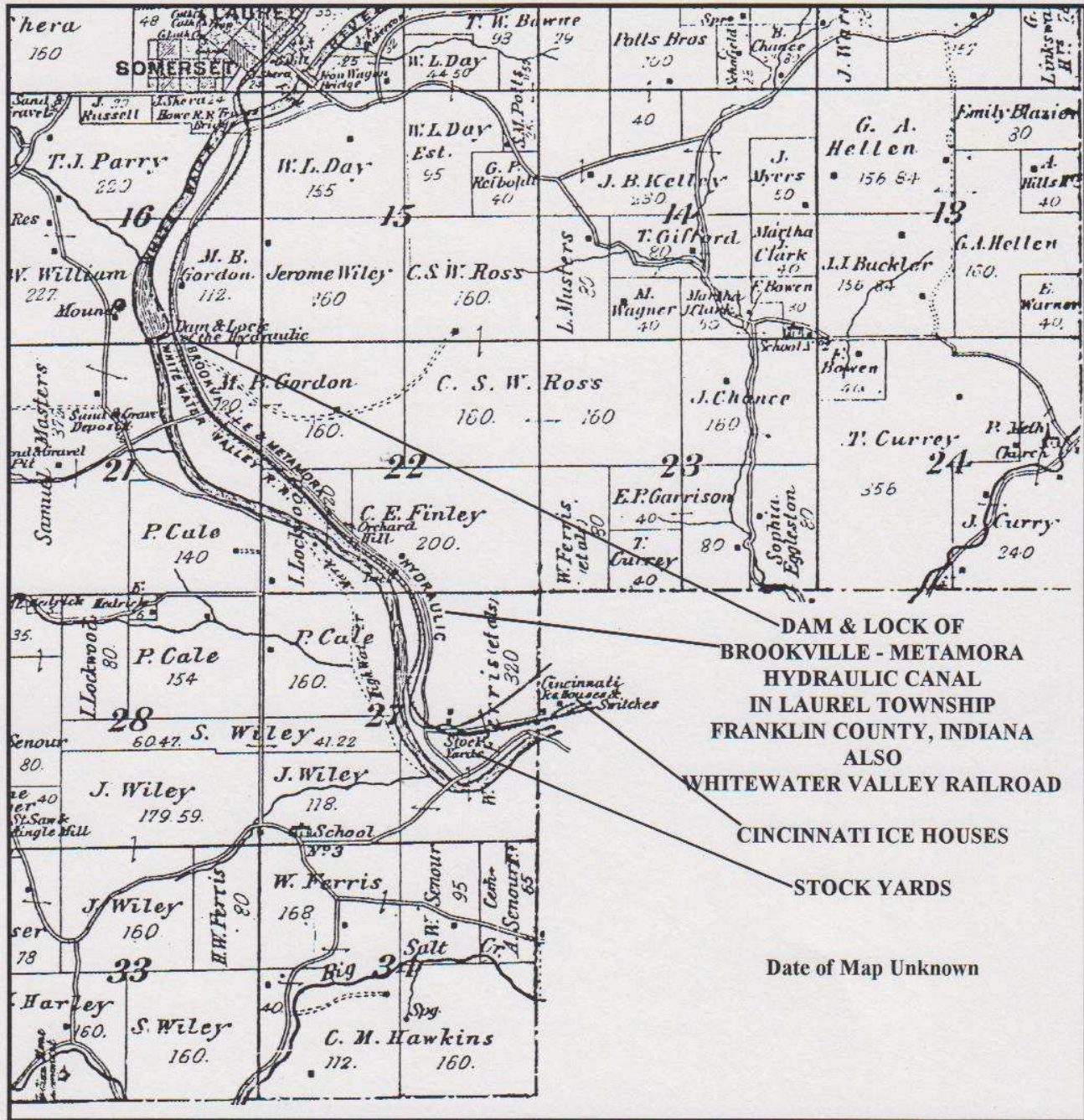
Gate to Feeder Canal off Slackwater  
Photo - Bob Schmidt



Lock 29 at Feeder Dam Photo Brian Migliore



# THE WHITEWATER CANAL



## WHITEWATER CANAL BOAT NAMES

Aetna	Dove	Independence	Lucy Walker	Rover
Abraham Conwell	Eric	Industry	Marie	Senator
Avenger	Express Mail	Isaac Myer	Mayflower	Sevastopol
Banner	Fashion	James Heron	Metamora	Swallow
Belle of Indiana	Favorite	Jenny Lind	Milton Torch Light	Swan
Belle of the West	Gayle Ford	J. M. Weidner	Moselle	Tempest
Ben Franklin	General Wayne	John Q. Adams	Native	Thomas Newly
Brookville Belle	George Frybarger	Laurel	Niagara	Union
Chesapeake	George Hopkins	Laurel Belle	Ohio Avenue	Zephyr
Clara	Golden Gate	Little Mail	Patriot	
Clinton	Harkaway	Little Western	Queen of the West	
Clipper	Henry Clay	Lucy Neal	Rochester Gas Light	



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

### 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 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 equinomical 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 3 1/2 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.

### WHITEWATER CANAL MASONRY SPECIFICATIONS M. S. WEBB

#### HARRISON BRIDGE 1839

Gen. Longs plan Built by J. L. Burley

Holman designed July 16 foot

About 11 feet high or 15 feet Found on this bank

Whole length of bridge 442 feet + 2

Cost \$23.62 per square foot --\$10, 489.50

Pier 20.50 high on two courses of timbers  
Found in the bed of this river.

From comb to foot of lower slope	12 ft.
“ “ “ “ upper slope	14
Total base of crib	36 ft.

From foot of lower slope to end of top trees	9
From this to end of next step	10 1/2
“ “ “ “ “	10 1/2
From Sheet piling to end of trees	66 ft.

Brush to extend below	10 “
Add to upper end	3
	79 ft.

#### DAMS/NO.1

Dams\No. 1 is 375 feet --between abutments at base & 376.75 feet top of comb, 9 ft. from L. Water

No 2 340 ft. long 14 ft. above L.W.

No. 3 is 320 ft. long 10.50 ft. high

Reference

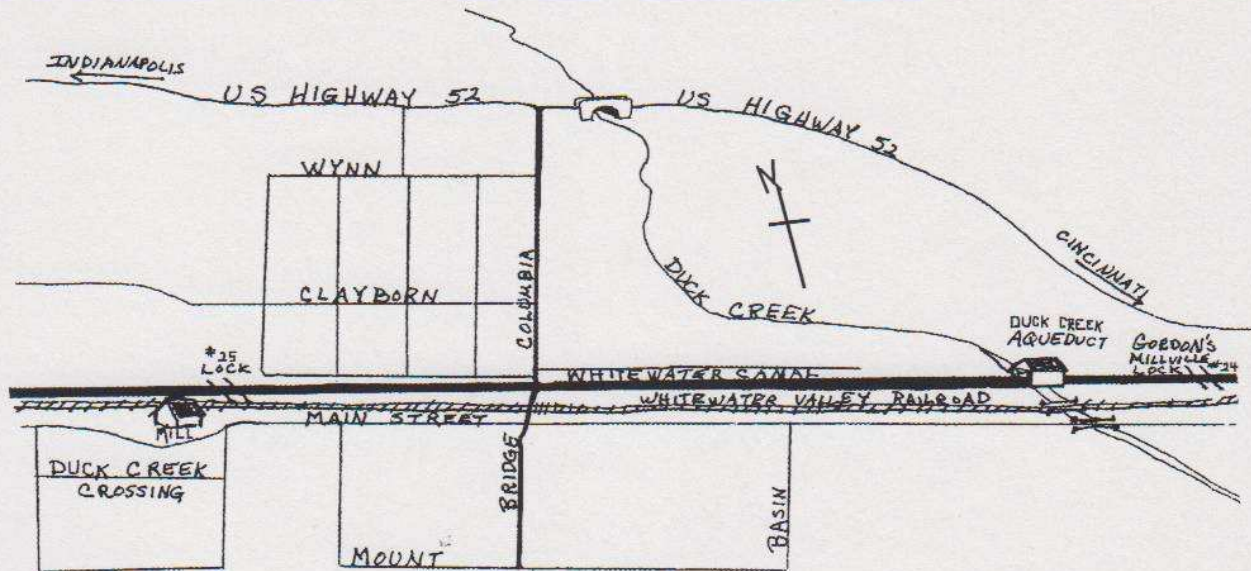
Low water is 4.50B

Top or Comb of Dam 4.00 A

The sheet piling must be perfectly jointed and in no place must it be sunk to a depth less than 4 feet below low water or 8.50 B



# THE WHITEWATER CANAL



## METAMORA

By Carolyn Schmidt

Brookville, Indiana **AMERICAN**  
September 16, 1836

Canal Letting. - The contracting for the Whitewater Canal from this place to Lawrenceburg took place on Tuesday last. We understand that most of the sections were let, and that the heavy sections were contracted for. A few sections were not taken, but will be let next in time to be finished soon as the others. All the sections were bid for, but some were too low to be let.

Brookville **AMERICAN**  
November 2, 1838

Canal Boats. - It will be seen by an advertisement that a boat yard has been established at Rochester in this country, and we are informed by one of the proprietors that they will have a pack boat finished in a few weeks. Gen. Long has also commenced a boat in this place and intends having it ready by the 20th of this month, when the water will be let into the canal from this place to Lawrenceburgh.

Brookville **AMERICAN**  
June 14, 1839

The Canal Oper. - The first Canal Boat, (Ben Franklin) owned by Long & Westerfield arrived at this place from Lawrenceburgh, by the Canal, on Saturday evening last, on which occasion our citizens let loose to their feelings of joy, by the firing of cannons and other manifestations of pleasure, calculated to be experienced at the successful completion of such an enterprise. On

Sunday morning the Packet Boat Little Western, owned by Wood & Woods, arrived, and in the afternoon of the same day, the packet Niagra, owned by Squire Watts arrived. They all left this place on Monday morning, for Lawrenceburgh. We believe it is the intention of some of these boats to ply regularly between this and Lawrenceburgh, but none of the owners have as yet authorized us to state the days or hours of their arrivals or departures.

Brookville **AMERICAN**  
May 5, 1843

A Strike. - We learn that there was strike among the hands on our canal on Monday last, and consequently operations have ceased the whole length of the line. This move is on account of the heavy discount on the money with which they were paid. The hands have determined not to work nor let any person work, until something be done to raise the credit of the money. So far, we have heard of no disturbance of the peace, but the hands are all quiet, and peaceable.

The Brookville **AMERICAN** carried these articles from other papers.

Cambridge City **Reveille**  
October 8, 1845

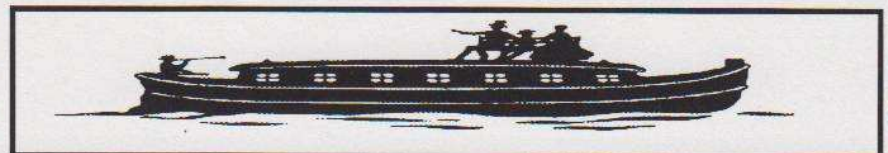
Arrival of Boats. - We have the pleasure of

announcing to our friends, the arrival of boats at this place, from Cincinnati. The "Bell of Indiana," arrived Monday evening last; Capt. Lemmon, her master, deserves great credit for his untiring exertions, and indomitable perseverance in surmounting the obstacles which have so long prevented navigation to this point.

The Springfield, (to be named the "Star of Cambridge City,") arrived yesterday evening, freighted with salt for this place. Both these boats are of fine proportion and large dimensions, and will have their full share of business from this point.

Cincinnati **Com.**  
October 8, 1845

A New Canal Feature. - We understood, on Saturday last, from Captain Paver, that the first packet boat had arrived here on that day by way of the White Water Canal, that ever floated from Hagerstown, which place is situated seven miles beyond Cambridge City, since the canal was made navigable. - There is now an uninterrupted navigation as far as said place, and the canal is in good order. The travel on Capt. Paver's Packets is increasing rapidly, and the merchants and others of that part of Indiana are coming here for supplies.





# THE WHITEWATER CANAL

## Metamora

The town of Metamora sits on land previously owned by the Indians and acquired from them on September 30, 1809. This treaty, the third with the Native Americans, 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 ...

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. 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. Restoration of the grist mill, the Lock 25 at Metamora, and Duck Creek Aqueduct (1948) was begun. 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 Co. Interim Report in September 1978.



**Duck Creek Aqueduct - Photo Bob Schmidt**

By 1966 only three businesses were in operation in Metamora. William Hildebrand and Joe Jackson operated the general stores and Riley 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 which 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.

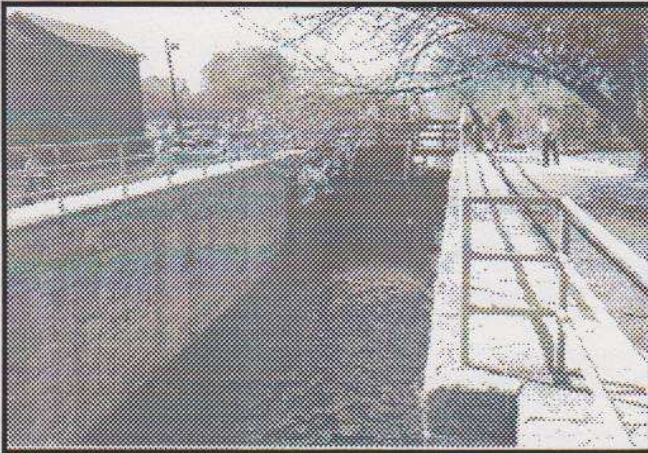
Then in 1971 the Whitewater Valley Canal and Railroad Restoration Association, Inc. leased a 25 mile route along the canal (Connersville to Brookville) from the Penn-Central System. They began operating a passenger service in 1974. The track south of Connersville crosses a small creek and the Whitewater Canal appears to the train's passengers. There is no water in this section of the canal, but one can see over-grown crumbling locks. Past Laurel is the line's longest trestle over the Whitewater River. Then it passes the Laurel Feeder Dam. The track runs between the Whitewater River and the Whitewater Canal. The train



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

stops at Metamora by the grist mill.

The mill built in 1845 and located at Lock #25 was one of several in the area which diverted water from the canal to turn a "tub" water wheel. In the 1860s when the canal was no longer in use the owners installed a more powerful turbine water wheel in the canal lock. The mill burned in 1899 but was rebuilt in 1900. Today's grist mill is operated by a "breast" water wheel that is also located in the lock. 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 grits and whole-wheat flour by a set of 24 inch buhrstones. The mill museum was dedicated by Governor Otis Bowen in 1973. Downstream is the Millville Lock (Lock #24 also known as Gordon's Lock), which is the only lock in operating condition on the canal.



**Lock No. 25 Metamora Note Waterwheel Behind Tree Branch for Mill Photo - Bob Schmidt**

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

The Canal House sits on the north 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 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 1870's. 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 operated the town's hardware store, and Gilbert Van Camp, who founded the Van Camp 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 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.

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. It replaced the old Ben Franklin II. The 75 foot boat was named the Ben Franklin III. The fiberglass boat is designed from drawings of canal boats used on the C and 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 weigh 2,000 pounds. Their load of 80 passengers is much lighter than that of earlier canal boats.



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

### 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 18802, 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.



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL



**Ben Franklin III** Photo Bob Schmidt

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, curried 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 wooden aqueduct in the U.S., visit the canal boat museum built by Canal Society of Indiana member, Paul Baudendistel, and get somewhat of a feeling of life in a Whitewater Valley canal town.



**Lock No. 24 Gordons** - Photo Bob Schmidt

### 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 Thomas's mother. 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



**One of Twin Locks Located Between Metamora and Brookville Note Tumble on Right** Photo Bob Schmidt



**Butlers Run Culvert Brookville Note Light Shining Through Hole in Center of Culvert and 18 Inch Wide Timbers Supporting the Culvert** Photo Brian Migliore



**Hole in Butlers Run Culvert** - Photo Brian Migliore

became the hub of Franklin County, a county with meat-packing 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.



# THE WHITEWATER CANAL

BROOKVILLE, INDIANA

Franklin County

Butlers Run Culvert

Whitewater Hydraulic Canal

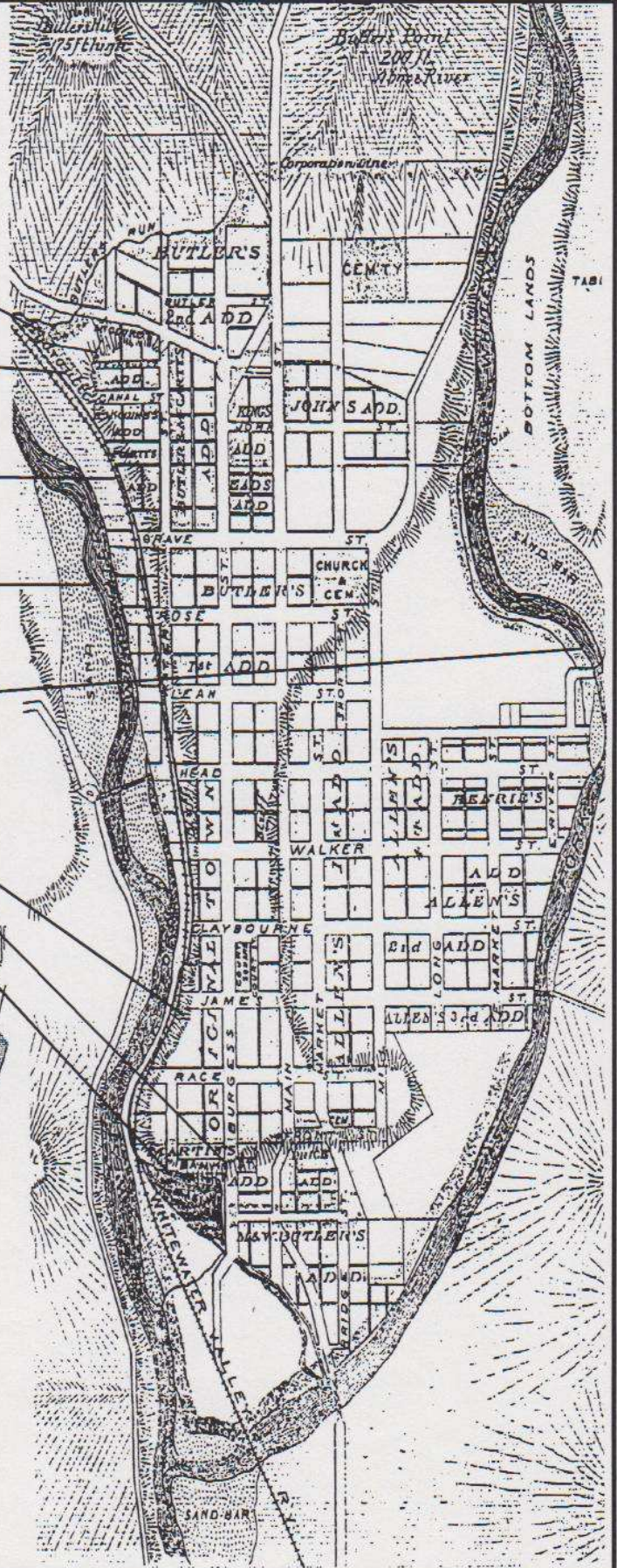
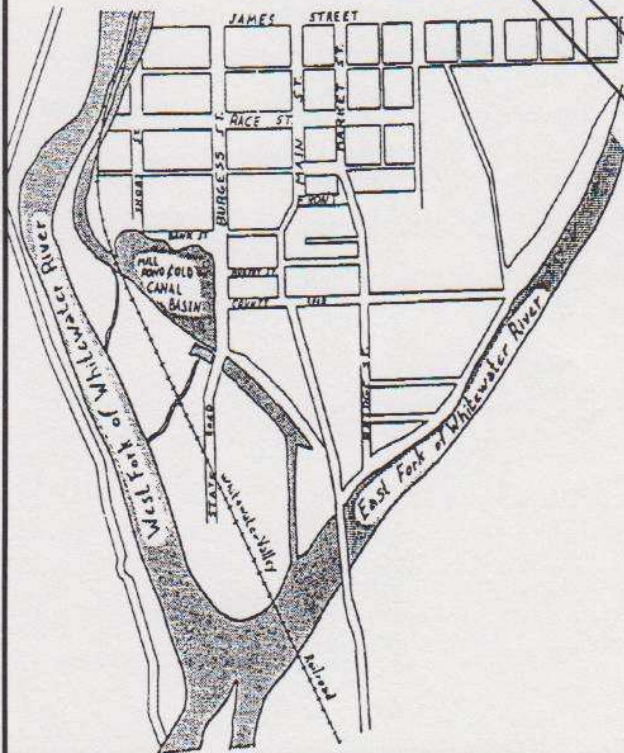
Whitewater Valley Railroad

West Fork of Whitewater River

East Fork of Whitewater River

High Bluff

Mill Pond & Whitewater Canal Basin





# THE WHITEWATER CANAL

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 drunk, 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 four 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



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

inspiring eloquence of David Wallace heard in our hall of Legislation: Our statesmen, aroused from their dream of poverty, began to examine the resource 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 enrol 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 Raridan, 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 drunk, 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.



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

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, governor from 1825-1831; Noah Noble, governor from 1831-1837; David Wallace, father of General Lew Wallace and 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. Brookville once again thrived and was incorporated in 1839 with a population of 1,200.

The Hermitage (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 have 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 (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 pointing out the advantages of the railroad. He predicted that someday Indianapolis would become a great railroad center with lines radiating in all directions. This wrecked his political career.

Historical markers mark 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 the state being 15 miles long and 125 feet deep in some places. The 1937 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 the Whitewater River.

Had the West Fork of the river been chosen for the project we would not be able to view the remains of the Whitewater Canal.

After the demise of Whitewater canal shipping and travel, 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 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.

A site plan of a large old ice house near Metamora on the Whitewater Canal shows a frame structure with double walls insulated with sawdust. Helen Gordon, when interviewed years ago at age 88, described the ice house, "The ice house that I remember was on the head of the canal, right above the handle factory. And it had thirty two chambers to it. And they used to cut ice on the ice pond and put it in those chambers, and would keep it there for all summer. People would go there and get ice to use. And, oh I don't know, (date), they had this so full of ice one time, all thirty two chambers were just full of ice. And it burnt that night. Somebody set it afire and it burnt. And after it burned down there was that ice all stacked up. It stayed for a long time to melt. People used to come there and get ice."

The frozen old canal basins were also ideal for ice skating because there was no appreciable flow to the 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 live mostly in heated



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

### Reminiscences of Josiah McCafferty

Date/Publisher Unknown

*Half way between Brookville and Cedar Grove there lived a few years ago, Joseph McCafferty, one of the last captains to operate a boat on the White Water canal. Some years before his death he reminisced about the days when thousands of tons of produce were hauled up and down the canal.*

"Well, I know a few things about that old canal," said Captain McCafferty, "for man and boy, I have been near it all my life. I used to hide behind trees and throw stones at the Irish laborers who were brought here to dig it. The digging began, I think, in 1836. It was along some time in 1839 that the water was let into it from Lawrenceburg to Brookville, and, if I remember right, it was open to Cincinnati along about 1843. The canal broke in 1847 and again in 1852, and caused considerable damage, but was built up again and business increased for a while and then began to let down.

"The first boat was the 'Ben Franklin.' She had been running on the Miami Canal for a number of years, and it was decided to bring here over here. She was cropped down from the Miami Canal to the Ohio River and floated to Lawrenceburg and put into the White Water Canal. I bought her and changed the name to 'Henry Clay' and there weren't any boats on the canal that could make any better time. I built a number of boats to sell, and always got good prices for them. The first boat built at Cedar Grove, was called the 'Native,' and when she started on her first trip there was a good deal of excitement all along the canal. The 'Native' was a passenger and freight boat and was fitted up in a manner that was gorgeous for those days. There were two cabins and large state rooms ranged on the side, the same as is now seen on passenger steamers. Stephen Coffin was the builder and captain, and when he started out on a trip he always made a good deal of fuss about it.

"Finally I built a boat called the 'Belle of Indiana,' and there was nothing on the canal that touched her anywhere. The Swan Line of packets was put on about that time. They did not carry anything but light freight and passengers, and it was expected then they would make a fortune for their owners. But they did not pay, and after a season or two they were withdrawn. I carried passengers on the 'Belle of Indiana' and some of the most famous men of the day used to ride with me, but I did not pay a great deal of attention to them, for generally I was too busy."

**"There used to be some lively times on the canal, no doubt?"**

"Lively isn't the word for it," chuckled the old captain. "There was an intense rivalry between the boats, and the way they used to race was a caution, and when one boat tried to pass another it was about sure to end in a fight. The crew of a boat was the captain, two steersmen, cook, and driver, and sometimes they all got into it. Down near Cleaves (Cleves), Ohio, one time, two boat crews got into a fight and one of the men was killed—that was the only killing I even knew of, but I saw a whole lot of them beat up."

**"Ever get into a scrap yourself?"**

"Oh, I guess I had my share." And he pulled his tall athletic form up to its height, "But none of them was ever serious. You see, I had one of the fastest boats on the canal, and when I came 'round the bend, the other fellow just took it for granted that I would go by, so he hugged the shore and let me pass."

**"What was the most exciting time you ever had on the canal?"**

"Well, I had a right smart excitement, but the greatest time was when they opened the canal to Cambridge City. We knew for a long time that the canal was to be opened up to that place, but we did not know just when it would be, so we all laid away as much as possible and waited for the word. Several times it was reported the water was coming down, and we would edge up close and get ready for the rush. It was just like the rushes they

made down in the Indian Territory, except we have canal boats instead of horses. At last the word came that the water was in the canal at Cambridge City, and we started.

"There were twenty boats, and every one tried to get by the other, and when we had to make the locks I tell you there was some tall swearing and not a little fighting, but no one was hurt. My boat and all the other packets were crowded with passengers. I had the 'Belle of Indiana' then, and there was such a crowd on the deck that I had to separate them so the steersman could see the bow of the boat. When we got in sight of Milton it seemed as if the whole United States was there. There were two or three cannons fired and the people were shouting and yelling like Indians. John Lemon was Captain of the 'Belle of the West,' and I was pushing him mighty hard, for he was in the lead. But the water was not deep enough for a good race and he beat me into Cambridge City; but I was right behind him.

"The crowd at Milton was not a patching to the crowd at Cambridge City. There were cannons, more bands, the state officers were there and everyone had a great jubilee. They kept it up all night and most of next day, and everyone had any kind of fun he wanted, and did not have to pay for it. I tell you, there is a big difference now and then. Why, we went through the stretches of woods four and five miles long then to get to Cambridge, and it would be hard to find a stretch now half a mile long. Those were great days, though, and everybody made money, but mighty few kept it. It was come easy and go easy.

"Of course, I was around the canal about all my life, but I ran a boat about seven years, and good years they were too. But I saw that the business on the canal was falling off so I sold all my boats, closed out my business, bought a farm and have been a farmer ever since. I'm getting to be a pretty old man, and want a rest. I guess that I am about the only one of the boys who used to run on the canal that is left, and it won't be very long until I tie up forever."



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

### OLDSTERS REVIVE MEMORIES OF INDIANA CANAL DAYS

The Indianapolis Times 18 June 1946

*Three men in their 80's were interviewed. Their comments are quoted from the article.*

#### Walter McCafferty

Son of Josiah McCafferty, well-known boat captain of his day and one of the last captains to make trips on the canal

"I remember the boats and riding on them as well as if it was yesterday. I hope they restore the canal before long."

He said his father Josiah was 14 when work was begun on the canal and he helped in its construction. He later owned and operated boats for about seven years, and also built boats.

"When my father sold his packet he bought a freight boat and hauled wood to Cincinnati. There was a lot of produce hauled on the canal and also a lot of wood."

He describes the Cleves Tunnel - "The horses were unhitched from the tow-rope and led across the top of the tunnel while the boat was pushed through."

He said that boats were built at Rochester, (now Cedar Grove) and that the "Native" was the first boat built there. It was a packet, or passenger boat, one of the finest on the canal in those days. Boats were built at Cambridge City, also.

#### Arthur H. Rockafellar

Mr. Rockafellar said his father owned a tanyard and general store in Cedar Grove and it was there he spent his boyhood. He rode on the canal boats to Brookville, many times. One of the boats he remembers was the "Favorite No. 2."

#### George Moore

"I was just a little fellow, about five years old, when the boats stopped running, but I remember them quite well. And I remember playing in the boat yards. The boats were set on scaffolding while they were being caulked. We liked to play under them and chew the pitch, used in caulking."

Mr. Moore remembered two carpenters, Allen McAfee and George Dent, who worked on the boats. As late as 1865 boats were repaired there. He said his father was a cooper and the barrels he made were used to ship produce on the canal.

The article went on to say that "the 'Golden Gate' and the 'Tom Herron' were two boats that plied the canal before the railroad took precedence. A popular sport of boys in those days was to drop from a foot bridge to the boat deck and ride to the landing. Bridges were just high enough for a boat to clear. This meant passengers must go down into the cabin or lie flat on deck when the boat went under."

"Boats were not large, 60 feet being an average length. Horses or mules were hitched tandem. They were changed every 10 miles, an extra pair being carried on the boat. A large door opened down from the side and horses were brought onto or taken from the tow-path. Boats could make a landing almost any place along the main street of a town by drawing up to the bank and lowering a gangplank."

## MOVING DAY BY CANAL BOAT

"The Hoosier Listening Post." Indianapolis Star. January 24, 1934

"...My first memory of anything is of boarding a packet at Brookville bound for Laurel. It was a remarkably soft, warm day in December. But about half seas over, between Brookville and Metamora, a blizzard struck us nor'west, broadside I reckon, and there that boat stuck till April.

Captain Tom McCarty - Peace be to his ashes - seemed to enjoy the predicament. The boat was loaded with passengers and freight, and we had two cows and several pigs aboard. The cold was intense, snow very deep, and to avoid opening the cabin door too often, the fuel was dropped down the stove pipe into the stove from on deck. Peace and plenty and a good time was had by all, for our quarters were as pretty and home-like as anywhere else could be, and the situation, especially to four or five little ones like myself, was an event. We were on the boat several days when the mail stage, with its own passengers, called for the boat's load. Dark as Egypt and black as the North Pole was the night when we filed out to the stage. We were packed in irregular on the inside, women and children, bombazine and bandboxes, all over the outside was mankind and baggage. The four-in-hand waited not on the order of their going, but went - flew over the frozen knobs - and above the grating of the springs, the cracking of the whip and

tooting of the stage horn I could hear remarks from those men outside which made me conclude they were not church members. We were at the end of our journey when we rumbled up to the door of the White Hall. (Tavern/inn in Laurel)

The kind gentlemanly, model landlord, "Squire Clements," came forth, his kind good face looking out under a perforated tin lantern which he held aloft. Here we found every comfort of the times, bountiful tables, great blazing wood fire in the fireplaces of long ago, and the association and friendship of one of the most charming families we have found if a life time - the Clements family.

The White Hall was the popular tavern and stopping place for travelers and business people, and it had no bar. But it had a ghost.

We remained at the White Hall till the showers and sun of April thawed the boat from its icy mooring and brought down our furniture, cows, pigs, etc., and then we went to live in the home that had been finished and waiting for us over four months.



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

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 parlors."

### Cedar Grove

Cedar Grove was one of three main canal boat building yards on the Whitewater Canal. The other two were located at Manlove Park and Milton. It also had a flouring mill. The town, however, is best known today for the "Little Cedar Grove Baptist Church" which is located three miles south of Brookville on U.S. 52. It is the first Baptist church built in Indiana and one of the earliest in the Mississippi Valley.

Some of the early settlers coming into the Whitewater River Valley were from North Carolina where a society of Baptists was organized in 1805. These early settlers met in their homes as early as 1806. They were said to have become careless in their duties of prayer and praise and were reminded of their neglect by a series of earthquakes in 1811. The Great Earthquake of December 1811 sparked organized religion in the territory. These quakes were centered along the New Madrid Fault and were felt as far as the east coast. The December quake was said to cause rivers to flow backwards and fire to burst up from under the Mississippi River. It was thought that the Whitewater and Ohio Rivers might do the same. Even hardened sinners became scared and began going to church.

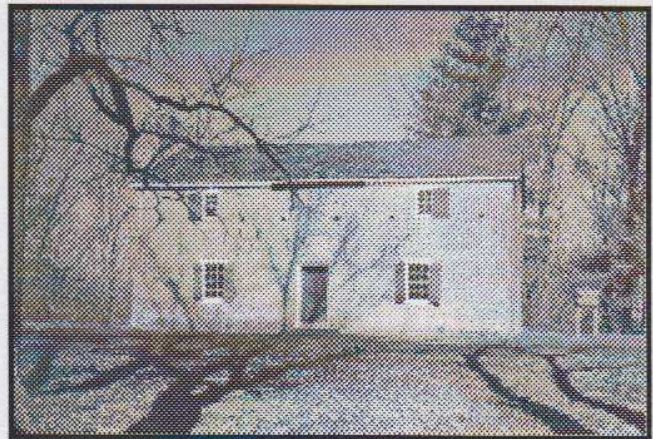
Whether the result of the earthquakes or the fact that the congregation had outgrown its original log structure, the decision to build a larger building was made. Subscriptions of money, corn, pork and many other kinds of produce were taken. Land was purchased from Enoch McCarty. A carpenter and brick mason were hired. Much of the labor was donated by the parishioners. Their oxen kneaded the material for the bricks. Nails were hard to come by and costly since they had to be made by one of the local blacksmiths. The simple brick building was built with a gable roof and a gallery supported by hand-hewn ash columns.

The congregation met in the church for the first time on August 1, 1812 before the interior was finished. The exact completion date is unknown. The Indians were still dangerous at the time so that during cold weather the church was heated by charcoal burning in a pit before the pulpit. This did not produce smoke like a fireplace and would not give away the presence of the worshipers. The "probationers bench" which was also located in front of the pulpit was often used by arriving worshipers as a place to warm their fingers and toes before sitting on the high-backed seats in the congregation.

Early ministers of "rare worth" were the Reverend William Tyner and the Reverend Louis DeWeese. A story illustrating their varied lives is told about Rev. DeWeese. He was met by a couple riding a horse while driving his ox team to the mill. The man asked the minister to turn around and go back to his house to marry the couple. DeWeese asked if they had a license which the man produced. After examining it, he asked, "So you want to be married, do you?" They both nodded. "Then I pronounce you man and wife. Go home now you are married." He cracked his whip and his oxen set off for the mill. The puzzled couple hesitated a moment and then set off for their cabin. They had a happy marriage and many children.

By 1830 the congregation totaled 160 members, but it began to dwindle around the 1840s. Only a few revival meetings were held there after the Civil War.

At one time the church was used as a home. In 1912 the Brookville Historical Society took over the property and did extensive restoration in 1915. It was again restored in 1946 through the efforts of many organizations. A third restoration took place in 1955 and it was rededicated by Indiana Governor Craig as a "memorial to the unfailing faith of the pioneers." The church was put on the National Register in 1990. It is a Federal style building and is significant architecturally. The information marker outside the building reads:



**Little Cedar Grove Baptist Church**

*Little Cedar Grove Baptist Church, Built in 1812. This is the oldest church building still on its original location in the state. Interior shows rifle openings in walls, a balcony and raised pulpit. Burial plot adjoins church.*

*Photo B Schmidt*

The nearby cemetery is marked with crude stones. Hardy pioneers and their children rest there. There was a high death rate among children in those early days.



**West Harrison**  
 Plat of Godley's Addition  
 to The Town of Harrison

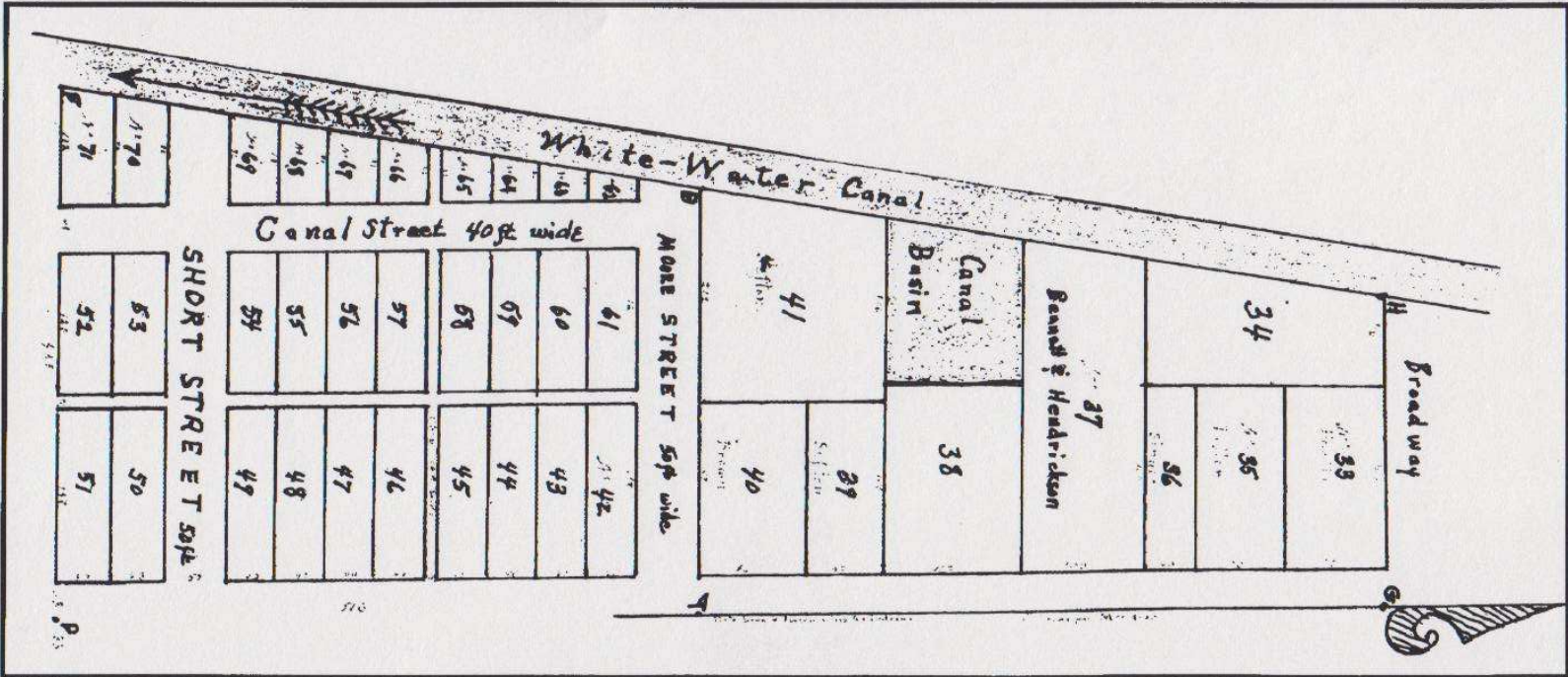
This addition embraces a parcel of ground lying in Section No. 26, of Township 7, Range 1 West of a Meridian drawn from the mouth of the Big Miami River, & in Dearborn County, Ind. described as follows, viz" Beginning at a point in State line Between Ohio and Indiana 552 feet south of the intersection of sd State line with the South line of the Street of Broadway of said town & running thence West 363 feet to the White Water Canal, Thence S. 11½° W. 526 feet to the N. W. corner of land of Bennett & Hendrickson; Thence East 425 feet to State line; Thence with said line North 516 feet to beginning. That portion of plat marked A-B-H-G embraces lots heretofore sold & laid off & lie between the said Godley's addition and the town of Harrison. June 2d, 1859 Ceore W. Hail, surveyor.

Recorded November 22nd, 1859. John Heimburger, Recorder. by Will C. Skinner Deputy.

I, John S. Richards Recorder for Dearborn County, State of Indiana, to hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy made pursuant to Sec. 5905 R. S. 1887, (I.R.S. 1852, p. 152) and completed this ninth day of December, 1890.

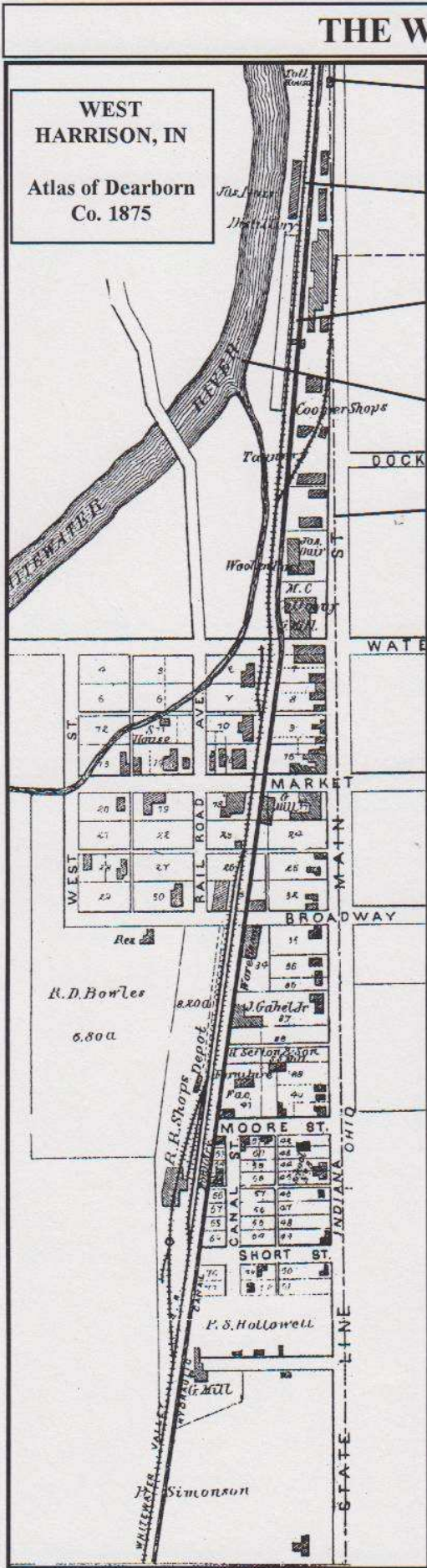
John S. Richard, Recorder

Copied here May 15, 1890 from plat Book No. 1 pages 66-67.





# THE WHITEWATER CANAL



- Toll House
- Whitewater Valley Railroad
- Whitewater Hydraulic Canal
- Whitewater River
- Indiana/Ohio State Line

## Excerpts From The Erasmus Gest Letters

Reprinted with permission from : Gest Family Papers, MssG3931, Cincinnati Historical Society Library, Cincinnati Museum Center, 1301 Western Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio 45203.

Erasmus Gest spent his life working as a rodman, surveyor, and engineer on canals, railroads and street railways. He wrote letters to his sister in 1837-38 while working on the Whitewater Canal at West Harrison, IN/Harrison, OH that give us a glimpse of canal construction life.

Harrison May 8th, 1837

"...I am as well as usual but have had hard times in the eating line, at this house there is the dirtiest cooking of any house that I have ever boarded at yet, but in the Shanties the workmen live ten times as well as we do and we are allways (sic) glad to get out at dinner time and eat with the workmen. When we go up the line which is once or twice a week we stay at Barwise's, he keeps a first rate table and Mrs. Barwise says that the next time we come up She is going to founder us all on codfish, they are both very clever and it appears more like a home than this old dirty house. Jesse William was here about a week ago, he staid (sic) only a day...They are getting along slowly with this canal hands are so scarce that it is most impossible to get a long atal (sic) a great many of the hands get 18 to 20\$ per month and found (room and board) Tell Pa to tell Joseph to send all the Dutch out here that want work there is wanted two or three thousand hands.

"The locks on this canal will be differently constructed from those on the Miami canal these are to be built of wood and stone, the stone in these hills are so bad that they are compeled (sic) to build them so they will not last so long nor look so well as those at Cincinnati. There will be several large culverts built one of 26 feet span. There has been only one lock commenced on our division and that was done day before yesterday by laying the sheet piling at one end..."

June 2nd, 1837

"It is very hot and it rains every day but we have had the good luck not to get wet, but we have a great deal to do we were out the other Sunday the greater part of the day, We have the foundation timbers laid in one of our locks and the rest of the work is going on rappidly, (sic) They have one culvert finished on the division above here under Mr. Noel the man that I was going with at first but it is well that I did not get with him for he is sick all the time with the feaver (sic) & ague and the work on his division is not half attended to. It requires us to be with the contractors all the spare time that we have or they will be sure to slight their work.

"Colnl: Torbert has been up locating the West fork branch of the White Water canal tell Charles that they have finished. There is plenty of paper



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

money here but no silver and what will be done for change I do not know

"Some of the contractors say that they will not take State paper which is the best paper in the United States for if the bank does fail the State is pledged to pay 10 per cent until it is redeemed Next Wednesday is Estimate day and then we will see how they like to take paper money.

"I suppose that the banks in Cincinnati will soon resume payment What success (success) had they with the books of the Branch of the White Water Canal How does the map come on and all the rest of the affairs in general. Has there been any failures."

August 7th 1837

"I was also down too (sic) Lawrenceburgh yesterday They are trying to make it a fine place they are Grading & paving the streets and have laid out some of the farms through which the canal passes into lots and are building houses upon them.

"Our Canal is coming on very well but will not be completed for a year Hands are so scarce that the contractors have to give from 16 to 20\$ per month and board We have two or three locks nearly finished and also several Culverts and one dam commenced which will be nearly finished this fall the dam on our division (at this place) will not be commenced until next year owing to the scarcity of hands We have several Sections finished and a great many more will be completed this fall. Gran — is south Mr. Webb on the lower Division the successor (successor) to Mr. Dare I went with Charles to Brookville the other day when he left for Indianapolis

"To day (sic) has been the great Election day for Governor and Congressmen (Congressmen) it is to decide whether the Engineers shall have any more employment or not but I think that it will go in favor of Improvements or at least I hope so. .... I get the newspapers that are...but they all come together I expect they keep them in the Office till (sic) they get a mail bag full for and then send them in for some times (sic) I get the greater part of the mail Brookville(e) has indeed been very sickly and a great many hands died off but I don't believe that it is the milk sickneff (sickness) but think that is a kind of fever (sic) they have very bad water it is not fit to Drink It is situated upon a big & sandy hill and the river is far below it and there is only one well in the town. We are just beginning to have ripe apples and Green Corn and they are both very scarce Between here and Lawrenceburgh there are corn fields with thousands of acres in them without a single division fence....."

Harrison November 27th 1837

"...We have been preparing the account of the Line for the Board of Internal Improvement, and it has kept us Busy until 11 o'clock at night and Sundays included for the last 3

weeks But now it is all over and we have more time to turn around There has been expended over two hundred thousand Dollars since last winter but it will cost as much more to complete it as far as Brookville(e) The Dam at Brookville(e) is finished and they say that it is a splendid sight to see the water running (sic) over so evenly Our dams are made different from the common dams in this country They are Planked on both sides and the top is mad(e) perfectly level and straight so that the water glides over the sides perfectly smooth (sic) and without much noise We have had some fine weather lately with some snow but it did not fall very deep and to day (sic) it has been thawing and was quite muddy."

Harrison Ohio March 27th 1838

"...it is very warm and the Farmers have commenced to Plough and our Canal is going on slowly No news about the Resident But think that Mr. Holman the Gentleman with whom (sic) Charles H W was with will supply Col Torbets Place he is a very fine man and I presume (sic) he will be capable (sic) to fill the station which Col T held But they ought to have appointed Mr. Coryell for He knows all of the Plans that the Colnl (sic) Established and a Stranger will perhaps alter a great many things (sic) thereby causing the contractors extra trouble which they will not be Paid for And I would have been an Asst in the Place of Mr C

"Harrison is improving very fast as there are several buildings going up this summer and I think that Property will increase (sic) in value very much I was going to buy a lot of I D Moor for \$100 but there is a law in Indiana that will Prevent any Engineer from buying Property within two miles of the canal. I am about selling my horse & think if Pa Bayes (sic) Coryells horse that I can sell old Trig out here"

Harrison In Nov 26th 1838

"I received a line from Holman stating that he would not need my services as Draughtsman on the upper line

"I suppose that I am now out of Employment He did not make me any other offer.

"We have commenced letting the water in the Canal it has got 10 miles below Brookville(e) and we are going to start it to Lawrenceburgh this Evening and will have to be up all night watching the banks and probably every night for 8 or 10 days.

"I will know next Sunday whether they are going to make me any other offer, if they do not I suppose that I will have to leave this Hoosier Nation in a few days as my services will not be wanted here any longer Erasmus Gest"



# THE WHITEWATER CANAL

## New Trenton

The first white man recorded to enter Franklin County was Benjamin McCarty. He settled at the present town of New Trenton in 1803. As early as 1800 John Conner and his wife, who was an Indian, operated a trading post in the same area, but the Conners did not file for their land until 1810.

Also around 1800 three brothers of the Rockefeller family from New Jersey went west. John and Samuel settled in New Trenton in 1804. The third brother settled in Cleveland, Ohio and John D. Rockefeller of Standard Oil came from that branch of the family.

The land Samuel purchased was on the East side of the Whitewater River. He built a log cabin but later moved to the south of a creek on his land into a two story log house with one large room on each floor. The town of New Trenton grew up on his property. He later built a five room brick home with a frame kitchen and dining room with two bedrooms above. He also built a tavern for farmers who drove their hogs, cattle, and turkeys to market. He was the first postmaster in 1817.

John Rockefeller's land was on the West side of the Whitewater River. His first log cabin was replaced in 1816 by a four room log house with another two rooms above those. Double doors were hung between the two front rooms to be opened for church services. He later built a new home of stone. He gave land for a school.



Manwarring Tavern New Trenton - Photo Bob Schmidt

The first brick building in the Whitewater Valley was built by Solomon Manwarring, a Methodist preacher in 1810. Oddly enough, this building was also the first town tavern of which Manwarring was the proprietor. On the first six days of the week he sold liquor from the bar. On Sunday the bar was closed and he preached the gospel using the tavern's stairs as his pulpit. The last sermon preached there was by Thomas A. Goodwin, a Methodist minister from Brookville,

in 1835 when the Methodists moved into a new church.

The town was self-supporting and the farmers became wealthy. With the opening of the Whitewater Canal they could move their products to market faster and more cheaply and could afford to buy things which they earlier had had to make themselves. By 1880 the population was 128.

Today New Trenton boasts several antique and arts and craft shops. One is located in the old Manwarring Tavern.

## West Harrison

The canal closely follows the Whitewater River along most of its route. South of West Harrison, IN and Harrison, OH, a town divided by the state line, the river flows into the Great Miami River which in turn enters the Ohio. The canal, impeded by the high hills in Indiana, follows along the edge of the hills from Harrison flowing for seven miles inside the state of Ohio until returning to Indiana just before the town of Lawrenceburg.

At first Ohio was reluctant to let Indiana build a competitive canal which ran within her state. Her newly built Miami Canal, which ran from Dayton to Cincinnati, had just opened in April 1830. However Cincinnatians saw this as an ideal opportunity to build a connecting canal from Harrison to Cincinnati. This canal could drain off the agricultural bounty of the Whitewater valley before it could reach the Ohio River at Lawrenceburg. The Cincinnati & Whitewater Canal Company was formed in 1837 to build the connecting branch. Due to financial problems and labor shortages, this canal was not completed until 1843, four years after the Whitewater Canal opened to Lawrenceburg (June 1839).

Just above the dam, necessary to create the slackwater pool so that Whitewater Canal boats could cross the river, the Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal branched off toward Cleves, OH. At this spot are the tumbled down abutments of the bridge that Gen. John Hunt Morgan burned as he entered West Harrison. This was the last town he and his 1500 men raided in his infamous foray into Indiana. Four days before Morgan invaded Indiana, Gen. Lee had been defeated at Gettysburg and Vicksburg had fallen to Gen. Grant. Morgan's five day raid was a bold attempt to retrieve a lost cause and gave Indiana a first hand taste of the Civil War.

## Lawrenceburg

Lawrenceburg was the terminus of the Whitewater Canal. The town was founded in 1802 by Captain Samuel C. Vance, a Revolutionary War veteran. He named the new village Lawrenceburgh (Lawrenceburg dropped the final "h" in 1890) for his wife Mary Morris Lawrence. She was the granddaughter of Major General Arthur St. Clair,



# THE WHITEWATER CANAL

## FIRST FLOURING MILLS IN THE LAWRENCEBURG AREA

By Charles Whiting

In 1837, Enoch D. John built the first flouring mill in Lawrenceburg, IN adjacent to the lower Whitewater Canal basin using canal water for power. It had four pairs of buhrs, or stones. **History of Dearborn and Ohio Counties - 1885**

On March 10, 1840, John sells to C. G. W. Comegys one half of mill lot and appurtenances and right of way to river for \$6,000. **Deed Book S p. 130.**

Soon afterwards they added four more pairs of buhrs and a corresponding amount of other machinery so that they had a capacity for the daily manufacture of 300 barrels of flour. These mills were called the Miami Mills, and in a few years this brand of flour became noted for its excellence, not only in the United States, but in the West Indies Islands and South American ports. It was said of it that it would remain sweet for months in tropical climates while other brands would sour. **History of Dearborn and Ohio Counties - 1885**

On November 27, 1841, Enoch D. John founds subdivision in area below and down river from lower canal basin including his mill lot. He had purchased the land down river from Elm St. for \$1,000. **Deed Book T p. 205, Deed Book O pp. 45 & 47.**

On February 17, 1843, Milton Powell, sheriff, sells to Milton Gregg lots 1 through 5 of Johns Subdivision and Wharf Lot 1 for \$3,001, excepting and reserving always the right-of-way for a tail race from the mill owned by Messers. John and Comegys under lot five by an arched culvert of stone and also under the wharf. **Deed Book X p. 54.**

On May 18, 1843, John sells to Comegys his remaining half of the mill plus the rights to waters of the canal and discharge to the Ohio River for assuming notes with a face value of \$8,367. **Deed Book U p. 470.**

On June 16, 1845, John sells to Comegys Lots 14 through 18 and the part of Wharf Lot 2 in front of the lots for \$4,000. **Deed Book X p. 85.**

On December 3, 1845, John sells to Comegys Lots 6 through 9 and Wharf Lot 2 in front of Lots 6 to 13 and the alley. **Deed Book X p. 86.**

On January 27, 1846, C. G. W. Comegys sells to S. Sterret Barr one-half of the Mill Lot containing the Mill and Lots 14 through 25 for \$15,000. **Deed Book W p. 428.**

On July 20, 1846 Comegys sells to Barr the undivided half of the property he retained on January 27, 1846 for \$8,063. **Deed Book X p. 150.**

On September 4, 1846, Barr sells to Christian Febiger one-half interest in his holdings for \$14,500. **Deed Book X p. 326.**

On January 1, 1847, a disastrous flood of the Whitewater River occurs seriously damaging the Whitewater Canal closing the Lawrenceburg end. **Brookville American, Jan. 8, 1847.**

On August 17, 1847, Milton Gregg sells to Levin D. Lewis and William Eichelberger, for \$4,666 the undivided two-thirds of lots 3, 4, and 5 covered by a three story frame building occupied as a flouring mill and an oil mill with the undivided two-thirds of the machinery and fixtures for manufacturing flour therein. **Deed Book Y p. 263.**

In early November, 1847, after only one week of navigation the Whitewater Canal is again severely damaged. The repairs to the Harrison Dam were torn away. **Brookville American, Nov. 12, 1847.**

Nov. 13, 1847, the **Indiana Register, Lawrenceburg** reports:

"Messers. Febiger and Barr had been putting in new stones and making preparations for grinding on a large scale. They have now to sell their wheat or put in an engine.--Messers Lewis and Eichelberger and Gregg and Ewing supplied their Mills with steam engines immediately after the flood last year and will be able to go on undisturbed by the flood, only at considerable more expense in consequence of having to use stream instead of water power."

April 1, 1848, the **Indiana Register, Lawrenceburg** reports:

"The company is so much embarrassed that they cannot command capital sufficient to complete all the repairs.

Under the circumstances, we regard this very important enterprise to our town. If the canal fails, all the mills on it here, must necessarily fail. Lewis and Eichelberger will not rebuild, Gregg will not rebuild, and Barr and Febiger's mill will be idle for want of water. Flour manufacturing by steam cannot come in competition with that manufactured with water, - the expense is too great. Stop all these mills, and our town will be nothing but a neighborhood settlement."

April 15, 1848, it reports:

"We understand from Messers Lewis and Eichelberger that so soon as they ascertain that the canal will be repaired they will commence building a new flouring

Mill, to cost some \$10,000; Mr. Gregg will commence rebuilding his Mills."

Lewis and Eichelberger's Mill burns down in the spring of 1848. **History of Dearborn and Ohio Counties - 1885**

On June 13, 1848, Febiger sells to Barr all that Barr had sold to him for \$14,500. **Deed Book Z p. 355.**

On July 10, 1848, Barr sells his Mill and real estate holdings to Samuel Fosdick for \$20,000. **Deed Book Z p. 258.**

On October 21, 1848, the Sheriff transfers Barr's holdings to Levin B. Lewis for an unpaid debt of \$1,246. (Barr had already sold them.) **Deed Book X p. 416.**

The Lawrenceburg **Indiana Register** reports, March 24, 1849, on an election to take place the following Monday on whether to loan the Canal Company \$6000 to repair the Whitewater Canal. If the company gets the money, the canal is supposed to be open by July. The following newspapers for 1849 are missing.

On April 1, 1849, the **Cincinnati Daily Enquirer** has the following article:

### Lamentations of the Lawrenceburghers

The Lawrenceburgh, Ia., **Register** thus records the calamities of the place;

"We are poor now, and have been unfortunate. We have been downcast. A combination of circumstances, both fire and flood,- have disabled us, and we have for two years been brooding over our misfortunes. We lost our canal by one flood - we lost one of our distilleries by another flood, - we lost one of our best flouring mills and our oil mill by fire - we lost many of our citizens and a great deal of property by the flood of "47." But misfortune has not altogether destroyed hope or banished enterprise, and we are pleased to say, that the prospects of recovery from all the calamities that have been afflicted on it, by both fire and flood, is very cheering.

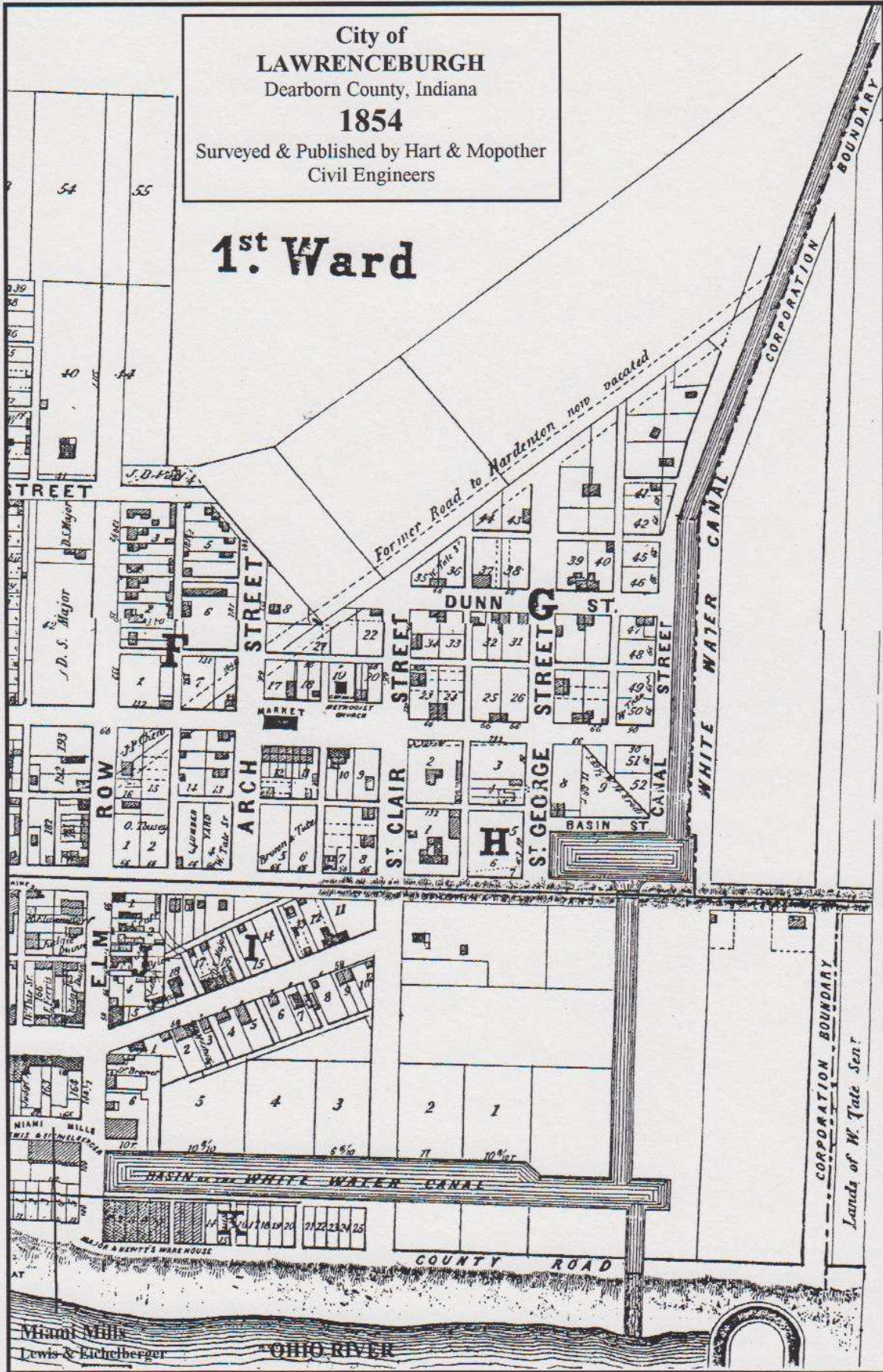
On October 17, 1850, Samuel Fosdick sells to Lewis and Eichelberger for \$9,000 the undivided two-thirds of the Mill Lot with the 20 foot wide adjoining lot together with the machinery and lease for water free and clear of encumbrances. **Deed Book 3 p. 417.**

The Lawrenceburg Mill was rebuilt at a cost of \$25,000. This was a water mill. **History of New Alsace, In.** by A. E. Fette

The **McEvans Lawrenceburg Directory 1859-1860** only lists Lewis and Eichelberger as millers at the canal basin area at the Levee at the foot of Elm Street.



# THE WHITEWATER CANAL



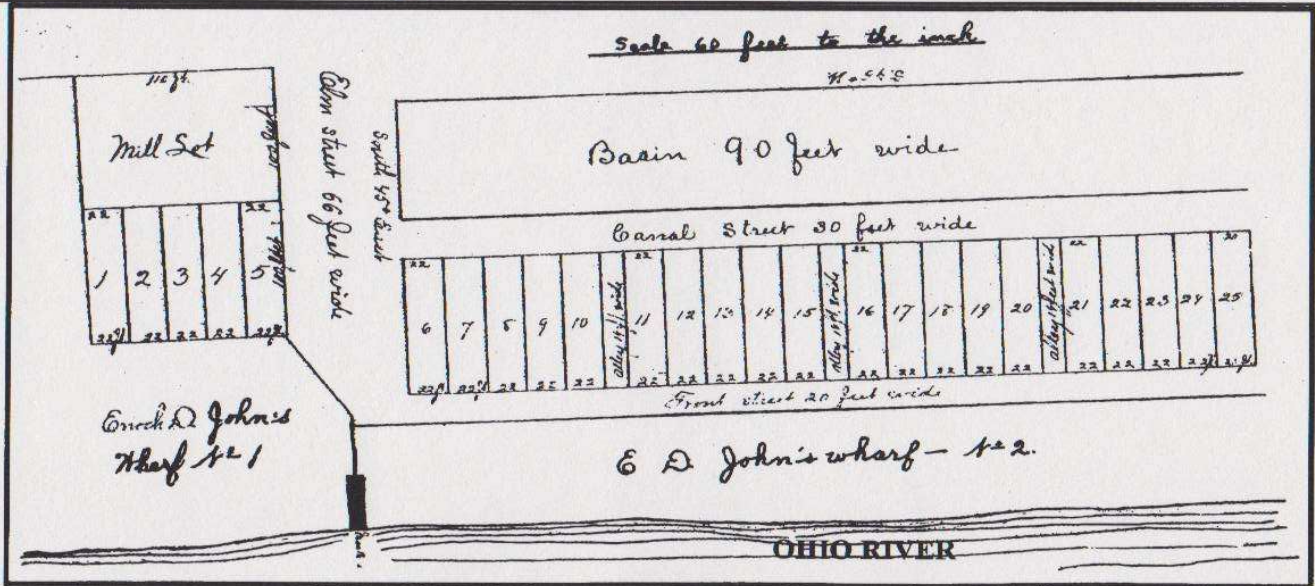


## Lawrenceburgh E. D. John's Subdivision

Plan of Enoch D. John's subdivision of John Elliott's Addition to the Town of Lawrenceburgh, Dearborn county, Indiana, and Enoch D. John's subdivision of part of Out-lots Nos. Four, Five & Six on the Plat of the Town of Lawrenceburgh, afr'd and the streets and alleys designated and marked thereon the said Enoch D. John hereby dedicates to public use as such. And S.R.P. John the wife of the said Enoch D. John hereby releases her dower in the said streets and alleys but the wharves are reserved. Given under our hands & seals this 27th Nov. 1841. E. D. John Seal S. R. P. John Seal  
Subserved & sealed in presence of N. N. John.

Indiana } Before me the subscriber a Notary Public of said county personally this 27th day of November A. D. 1841 Enoch D. John and  
Dearborn County } Sarah R.P. John his wife & acknowledged the foregoing Plan of their subdivision of John Elliott's Addition to the Town of  
Lawrenceburgh, Dearborn county & State of Indiana also their subdivision of part of Out-lots numbered four, five & six on the plan of the Town of  
Lawrenceburgh as laid off by Samuel C. Vance Dec'd & the dedication of the streets & alleys therein mentioned & designated on said plan to be their  
voluntary act & deed, the said S. R. P. John being by me examined separate and apart from her said husband & the full purport & contents thereof being made  
known to her she acknowld the same to be her voluntary act & deed for the uses & purposes therein mentioned. Given under my hand and seal of office at  
the county afs'd this 27th Nov. 1841. P. L. Spooner, Notary Public Seal Rec'd for Record Dec. 20 & Recorded Dec. 22m, 1841, Thomas Palmer, Recorder

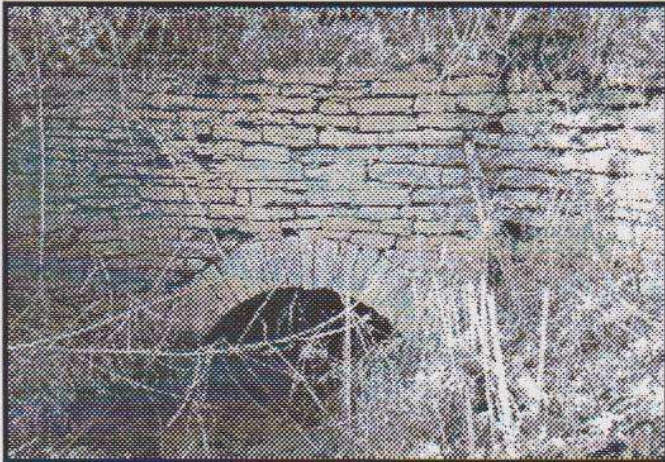
I, John S. Richard, Recorder for Dearborn County, state of Indiana, to hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy made pursuant to Sec. 05 11.S 18 81 (IR.S.1852p. 1&2) and completed this 9th day of December 1870. John S. Richard Recorder  
copied here June 11, 1890 From Deed Record "T", pages 205 and 206. Mapped March 3d 1840 by Edward B. Hunt





## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

Governor of the Northwest Territory. The town, the fourth oldest city in Indiana, has been the county seat of Dearborn Co. since 1846. About 15 years after founding the city, Captain Vance built a mansion, known today as the Vance-Tousey home. The home on West High Street faces the river, has a three floor spiral staircase and is a fine example of Federal architecture. It now functions as the headquarters for the Lotus Warehouse of Joseph E. Seagram & Sons.



**Possum Run Culvert Northeast of Lawrenceburg**  
Photo - Brian Migliore

By 1830 Lawrenceburg's population was about 895 people. In 1832 a devastating flood nearly washed the town away, but the stimulus of opening the Whitewater Canal in 1839 brought the population back to 1,450 by 1840. The proximity of grain, good transportation and cold clear water made this an ideal location for whiskey distillation. The mash was high protein feed for hogs and cattle and most distilleries had their own feed lot. Lawrenceburg became known for its fine whiskey and its pork processing.

As early as 1809 Isaac Dunn and Stephen Ludow established a two-barrel-a-week distillery using horses to turn their mill stone. Once the canal opened, water power was available to grind the grain as well as providing transportation. The history of Lawrenceburg's distilleries is filled with a complexity of consolidations. A major distillery, W.P. & G.W. Squibb Co., was formed in 1868. Surviving prohibition, the firm was acquired by Schenley in 1933 which oversaw operations until the 1960s as the Old Quaker Co. Seagrams started in 1851 from an operation started by John A. Gaff. Seagrams, distillers in Canada since 1857, was incorporated in Indiana in 1933. Today's Seagrams complex has the capability of producing 85,000 gallons of alcohol per day, making it the world's largest distillery.

The first flouring mill was built in 1837 and was situated on the canal basin at the foot of Elm Street near the levee. The mill had four pairs of buhrs. Mr. John, the mill's owner,

soon sold half of the mill to Dr. Comegys, who added another four pair of buhrs and other necessary machinery. These mills were called the Miami Mills. They daily produced 300 barrels of excellent flour which was noted for staying sweet for months in tropical climates. It was shipped to the West Indies and South America. In 1840 Dr. Comegys purchased Mr. John's interest and added a distillery to the mill. Later the mill was sold to Lewis and Eichelberger. In 1852 the great flood washed out the dam at Harrison so the mill put in steam power. When the canal company eventually repaired the canal, the mill had both steam and water power until the final demise of the canal (1861). Miami Mills produced high quality flour for over twenty-three years (1847-1870).

Being located on the Ohio River the town was a popular stop for steamboat captains, mates and deckhands. Gambler's Row was a vice district notorious from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. It extended along the river at the foot of Walnut St. where there is now a 76-foot levee which was built in 1940. The great 1937 flood reached a 82.6 foot crest and turned the city into a ghost town.

George H. Dunn, a promoter of the canal, later became a leader in the promotion of railroad construction between Lawrenceburg and Indianapolis. In 1849 twenty miles of track were laid up Tanner's Creek. By 1853 the line was completed to Indianapolis. This was just part of his grand plan to build a rail link with Charleston, S.C. Later the railroad was called the Indianapolis & Cincinnati. Mr. Dunn was a state senator and congressman and is buried in the Greendale cemetery.

Indiana's first skyscraper is located at Walnut and High streets. This three story structure was awe-inspiring to early settlers. Andrew Jackson was a guest in this former show-place hotel. Nearby is the Presbyterian church where Henry Ward Beecher held his first pastorate in 1837.

Lawrenceburg played a prominent role in the Mexican War. It was a recruiting and equipping center. It provided many officers for several companies.

Abraham Lincoln stopped in Lawrenceburg in February 1861 and gave a brief speech from the train. He was on his way to Washington to assume the Presidency of the nation. Two of Indiana's governors were born in Lawrenceburg, Albert Gallatin Porter (18th) & Winfield Taylor Durbin (24th). Both only lived there a few years.

Today Lawrenceburg founded in 1802 (pop. 4,375) and Greendale founded in 1852 (pop. 3,881) are really two separate towns with their own city governments. Newtown or west Lawrenceburg was originally called Edenborough and was established in 1809 by Pinckney Jones, a shipbuilder from Rising Sun.



# THE WHITEWATER CANAL

TABLE

Showing the amount of tolls charged on the principal articles transported on the White Water Valley Canal from Laurel, to Lawrenceburgh, and also to Cincinnati, on the "White Water Valley" & "Cincinnati & White Water" Canals, and the distance by canal to each place.

Articles	To Lawrbgh.	To Cin.
Flour, on each barrel of 214 lbs.	6.89	8.16
Pork & Beef, 333	12.25	13.79
Whiskey, 330	13.66	14.75
Linseed & Lard Oil, 330	13.66	22.18
Salt, 350	11.27	11.59
Fish, 330	13.66	14.75
Wheat, on each bushel 60	2.21	2.48
Corn, 56	1.80	1.85
Clover & Flax Seed, 56	2.32	2.50
Rye, 56	1.80	1.99
Buckwheat & Barley, 45	1.45	1.60
Oats, 83	1.06	1.17
Potatoes, 60	1.93	1.99
Mineral Coal, 80	1.10	1.19
Lime, 80	1.47	1.85
Bacon & Lard, on each 100	3.68	4.14
Wool, 100	4.14	4.47
Merchandise, 100	9.20	11.60
Iron, Nails & Castings, 100	6.90	8.70
Brick, on each 1000	46.00	58.00
Lumber, 1000 ft. B.M.	46.00	58.00
Shingles & Lath, 1000 ft.	13.80	14.90
Staves for bbls on each 100 of, 375	6.90	7.76
Staves for hogsheads 450	8.28	9.32
Heading for barrels, 450	8.28	9.32
Heading for hogsheads, 560	10.30	11.59
Hoop poles for barrels, 560	10.30	11.59
Hoop poles for hogsheads 1120	20.60	23.18
Hay, on each ton of 2000 lbs.	64.40	66.20
Wood, on each cord,	33.60	41.80
Rough stone, on each perch of 25 cubic feet,	18.40	24.45
Cut stone,	27.60	38.55
Distance from Laurel,	46 miles	58 miles

TABLE

Showing the amount of tolls charged on the principal articles transported on the White Water Valley Canal from Brookville to Lawrenceburgh, and also to Cincinnati, on the "White Water Valley" & "Cincinnati & White Water" Canals, and the distance by canal to each place.

Articles	To Lawrbgh.	To Cin.
Flour, on each barrel of 214 lbs.	4.64	5.91
Pork & Beef, 330	8.26	9.80
Whiskey, 330	9.21	10.30
Linseed & Lard Oil, 330	9.21	17.72
Salt, 350	7.60	7.91
Fish, 330	9.21	10.30
Wheat, on each bushel of 60	1.49	1.76
Corn, 56	1.22	1.27
Rye, 56	1.22	1.41
Clover & Flax seed, 56	1.56	1.75
Buckwheat & Barley, 45	0.98	1.13
Oats, 33	0.72	0.83
Potatoes, 60	1.30	1.36
Mineral Coal, 80	0.74	0.83
Lime, 80	0.99	1.38
Bacon & Lard, on each 100 lbs.	2.48	2.94
Wool 100	2.79	3.12
Merchandise, 100	6.20	8.60
Iron, Nails & Castings 100	4.65	6.45
Pig & Scrap Iron 100	1.55	2.40
Brick, on each 1000	31.00	43.00
Lumber, on each 1000 ft. B.M.	31.00	43.00
Shingles & Lath, 1000	9.30	10.40
Staves for barrels on each 100 of 375	4.65	6.45
Staves for Hogsheads 100 of 450 lbs.	5.58	6.62
Heading for barrels, 450	5.58	6.62
Heading for hogsheads, 560	6.94	8.23
Hoop Poles for barrels, 560	6.94	8.23
Hoop Poles for hogsheads 1120	13.89	16.46
Wood, on each cord,	24.60	32.80
Hay, on each ton of 2000 lbs.	43.40	43.20
Rough Stone, on each perch of 25 cubic feet	12.40	13.45
Cut Stone,	18.60	29.55
Distance from Brookville,	31 miles	43 miles.

The Tolls are calculated in cents and hundredths of cents.



# THE WHITEWATER CANAL

**The Indianapolis News**  
Saturday Evening, November 17, 1928.

## WHITEWATER CANAL RETAINS PICTURESQUENESS DESPITE SURRENDER TO RAILROAD AND HIGHWAY, MODERN ROUTES OF TRAVEL AND SHIPPING

Man-Made Stream in Southeastern Indiana Once Was Gateway to the Markets of the World--Boats Drawn by Mules Did a Thriving Business Between Hagerstown and Cincinnati--In Middle of Nineteenth Century Farmers Drove Their Hogs and Wild Turkeys in Dirt Roads That Threaded Through Wilderness to Wharves of Canal.

Ground-Breaking Ceremony Pertaining to Letting of Contract for Important Segment of the "Ditch" Was Held at Brookville--Packets Attracted Large Throngs as They Raced Down Stream--Passengers on First Boat to Navigate Canal Were Forced to Walk Home as Bank of Stream Burst--Other Interesting Experiences Recalled

METAMORA, Ind., November 17.--Man's mode of travel and his means of shipping his products from one place to another have always been an interesting thread running through the history of progress. Perhaps no place in the country is there a region which so graphically tells the story of transportation as that of southeastern Indiana, where winding through the hills and valleys is the old Whitewater canal, a gateway to the market of the world of nearly a century ago. Beside it now run a railroad and a state highway, facilities of a modern age. Truly a strange contrast!

The scenes and activities that characterized the canal when it was regarded a valuable asset to the state have little in common with this age which stresses above all else large-scale business and rapid transportation. Powerful locomotives and massive trucks, not to mention airplanes, have

put into the discard the little picturesque canal boats that once were drawn by mule back and forth between Hagerstown and Cincinnati, carrying the produce of the fertile Whitewater valley to its market on the Ohio river.

Picture farmers from various parts of Indiana and as far as Illinois driving hogs and wild turkeys along the old dirt roads, hemmed in by dense forests, to the canal wharves where they were loaded on boats, taken down to Cincinnati where the pork was packed and from there shipped over the county. Compare that scene to one in a busy freight yard. They have little in common; they belong to different centuries.



Driving Hogs To Market  
Drawing from an old photo by C. Schmidt

Except that it is without purpose, the old canal flows as it always did through Laurel, Metamora, Brookville and other towns of southeastern Indiana, unaware that beside it run the Whitewater division of the Big Four railroad and State Road 52, rapid transportation facilities of a modern age.

### Canal Opposed by Some

The building of the canal was prompted by the rapidly increasing settlement of the Whitewater valley and the remarkable fertility of the soil which called for a greater market for the farm products. As early as 1822 or 1823, delegates from Randolph, Wayne, Union, Fayette, Franklin and Dearborn counties met to consider the practicability of the construction.

Surprising as it may seem now, the canal movement was strongly opposed by some, so when the Indiana legislature in 1836 passed the bill for internal improvements there was great rejoicing among the champions of the waterway.

September 13, 1836, the ceremony of breaking the ground and letting the contracts for its construction between Brookville and Lawrenceburg was celebrated at Brookville by a barbecue and elaborate program.

Governor Noah Noble was the orator of the day. The following toast was offered by John Finley, editor of the **Richmond Palladium**

There is not to the wide world a valley so sweet  
As the vale where the branches of Whitewater meet  
Oh! the last picayune shall depart from my fob.  
Ere the east and the west forks relinquish the job.

A pick, shovel and wheelbarrow had been provided for the exercises and at the close of the addresses and toasts one of the speakers seized the pick and loosened the ground for a few feet, with the shovel he filled the wheelbarrow, and David Wallace former Governor trundled it a short distance and dumped it. Thus the ground was broken for the canal.

The first boat to reach Brookville from Lawrenceburg was the Ben Franklin, commanded by General Elisha Long. It arrived June 8, 1839 and was drawn by hand from below town up to its landing.

The cost of building the canal from Lawrenceburg to Hagerstown was \$1,567,470. and to construct it to Brookville had cost \$664,665. The debt had become so large that the state could not pay the interest, and the canal was sold in 1842 to Henry S. Vallette, a wealthy man from Cincinnati, who proceeded to complete it. In November, 1843, the first boat, the Native, ran an excursion from Brookville to Laurel.

It goes without saying that there were lively times on that old canal. There was rivalry between boats, and whenever one tried to pass another a



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

race, if not a fight, nearly always erupted. A crew usually included a captain, two steersmen, a cook and a driver and in the event of a "pitched battle" nearly all would be in the thick of it before victory was conceded.

An account of the activity of the early days is preserved in an old history of the building of the canal. All was not work, according to recollections of Captain McCafferty, owner of the Belle of Indiana which carried passengers and light freight up and down the waterway. The extension of the canal to Cambridge City created wide interest, as is shown in the following excerpt from his recorded memories.

"The greatest time was when they opened the canal to Cambridge City. We knew for a long time that the canal was to be opened up to that place, but we did not know just when it would be, so we all laid away as much as possible and waited for the word. Several times it was reported the water was coming down, and we would edge up close and get ready for the rush. At last the word came that the water was in the canal at Cambridge City and we started.

### Boats Vied for Lead

"There were twenty boats and every one tried to get by the other, and by the time we had made the locks I tell you there was some tall swearing and not a little fighting, but no one was hurt. My boat and all the other packets were crowded with passengers. I had the Belle of Indiana then and there was such a crowd on the deck that I had to separate them so the steersman could see the bow of the boat.

"When we got in sight of Milton it seemed as if the whole United States was there. There were two or three cannon fired and the people were shouting and yelling like Indians. John Lemon was captain of the Belle of the West and I was pushing him mighty hard for he was in the lead. But the water was not deep enough for a good race and he beat me into Cambridge

City.

"The crowd at Milton was not a patching to the crowd at Cambridge City. There were cannons, more bands; the state officers were there and every one had a great jubilee. They kept it up all night and most of the next day. Every one had any kind of fun he wanted and did not have to pay a cent for it.

### Dropped Barrel in River

"Those were great days; everybody made money but mighty few kept it. It was come easy and go easy."

One day's episode on the old canal still is vivid to J. T. Hubbell, civil war veteran, who now lives at Everton, a few miles north of Metamora.

When Hubbell was about eighteen years old, he went to Connersville to attend a county fair. The sideshows, exhibitions, etc. proved so entertaining he was loath to leave, even though he had spent all his money. As a means of lengthening his stay, he decided to work a day or two on the canal and earn some extra money. He got a job loading barrels of flour on a boat headed for Cincinnati.

"I had worked about an hour, I guess, rolling barrels down the stage plank when all at once, off went a barrel into the water," Hubbell said. "The boss stepped up and I was fired right then and there. For that hour's work he gave me one dime."

Hubbell, who now is eighty-three years old, served in Company D of the 132th Indiana volunteers.

The picturesque little town of Metamora, changed though. It is by the influx of tourists and the railroad, and retains some of its quaintness. In the heart of town, fronting the canal, is one of the old cottages which stood there when the boats went by. The low, front porch is screened by rambler roses and honeysuckle. "Pinks" and other old-

fashioned flowers grow in the flowerbeds near the edge of the water, shaded by maples and willows.

A short distance beyond is the old aqueduct where Indian (Duck) creek flows beneath the canal. The double-trussed arch bears innumerable dates and initials carved there decades ago.

The boats were pulled along the canal by mules, usually two or three hitched tandem. When the railroad was built the ties were laid along the hard-beaten mule track. The towpath runs along the opposite side of the stream.

### Recalls Boat Arrivals

The festivities attendant on the arrival of popular boats is recalled by Nick Williams, an old resident, who always has taken an active interest in preserving the town as it used to be. A man named Windsor owned a fast going passenger boat and whenever he rounded the bend on a return trip from Cincinnati, just outside Metamora, he would blow an old copper bugle. His daughter, cook on the boat, would come out on deck, the townsmen would line up at the wharf and "she" would "steam" in.

In its day, Metamora was somewhat of an industrial center. Its three grist mills, woolen factory, cabinet shop and tanyard attracted business for miles around. But these, like the boats, ceased to be operated when the canal was superseded by the railway.

The old tavern that once sheltered passengers and steersmen for the night now is a hotel, meeting needs of tourists. The Christian church, where travelers worshipped Sundays, has been converted into a dwelling. The blacksmith shop is a garage.

The pen of Time has written a language of changes across nearly every phase of living and activity within the Whitewater valley, a language that had its origin when two narrow rails of steel took precedence over a stream



# THE WHITEWATER CANAL

Indianapolis Star

July 7, 1929

"A Hoosier Listening Post"

By Kate Milner Rabb

A copy of the **Indiana American** published at Brookville, Ind., on Feb. 5, 1847, in the possession of Mrs. W. J. Chidester of this city, shows that even in those good old days the people were suffering over public improvements and finding fault with those in the seats of the mighty. There was trouble about a turnpike which the citizens wished to have built from Brookville to intersect some one of the turnpikes to Cincinnati. A meeting had been held and, says the editor, "It is the first time we have ever seen any demonstrations upon the subject sufficient to convince us that anything would be done. We now believe that the people are able and willing, if the right direction be given to their wishes."

\*\*\*

The subject of the White Water canal is most important. According to one article (and there are half a dozen on the same subject), the Legislature, before its adjournment, passed a law loaning to the White Water canal the state revenue of the counties of Franklin, Fayette, Wayne, Rush and Henry, amounting, in all, to about \$50,000. This would have put in the hands of the company sufficient ready means to have insured a speedy repair of the canal. But Whitcomb put the bill in his pocket and refused to return it either with or without his signature. The Legislature having adjourned before the elapse of five days, the bill is defeated.

\*\*\*

"Of this act, it is useless to speak. There has been one long, continued and bitter curse uttered from the whole length and breadth of this valley, by both parties, upon that tyrannical scoundrel and villainous despot -- James Whitcomb!" The name is

capitalized. "His acts forbid our respecting him as a private man or as the executive."

\*\*\*

In another column, the public is informed that after the adjournment of the turnpike meeting that week, "those present organized to give some expression relative to our senator and representatives and the action of the Governor on the loan to the White Water Canal Company. A resolution was introduced censuring the Governor for retaining the bill, which was warmly discussed." This meeting adjourned to meet the next evening, when the amended resolution was passed. The first paragraph thanked the senator and representatives for their successful exertions": the second informs the Governor that for his refusal to return the bill to the House that it might become a law, thus preventing the loan which would have enabled the counties, "to make the repairs occasioned by the late disastrous flood--merits our unqualified disapprobation and severe condemnation!!!"

\*\*\*

In another column the news is published that John W. Hitt-- declines serving the White Water Canal Company as secretary at the reduced salary of \$500. The company, as well as states or corporations, never gain anything by reducing salaries so as to drive the best men into private life." ("To drive" is italicized.)

\*\*\*

"John Newman," It is said, was elected president of the company at a salary of \$1,000. "He is a good man," says the editor, "none more worthy or confidence and esteem--none more safe and competent in ordinary times. But he is not the man for the present crises. He is not the man to galvanize the dead carcass, and infuse life, energy and success into the people and resources of

this great valley. It needs a master spirit and almost superhuman power to inspire, collect the means, and carry through this great work."

\*\*\*

The canal is again referred to in a paragraph about the refurbishing of a hotel at Harrison, O. "By reference to our advertising columns it will be seen that our friend Gerard is back at his old tavern stand at Harrison. And, although he has always kept a good house, he has so much improved his premises that his old friends scarcely know him. He has repaired his house thoroughly--purchased new furniture, new beds--and being a real Democrat, he has furnished his house with superior foreign carpets--he has washed his face, put on a clean shirt," read Chesterfield; and now the traveler with him will feel comfortable and at home. This is some consolation in the loss of the canal--if we now have to travel our intolerable roads we know where to get a night's comfortable repose and refreshment."

\*\*\*

Those were the days of the temperance movement, and even though Mr. Gerard is an advertiser, the editor makes bold to add the following conclusion to the above paragraph: "We regret that Mr. Gerard should deem it necessary or proper to keep a bar in his establishment. We hope he will think seriously of it and that his better judgment will prevail."





## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

### Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal

The high point in enthusiasm for canals among the people and in the Legislature of Ohio was reached in 1836 and 1837. The Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal was one of several canal projects being considered by the Legislature in that period. Although undertaken by a private company, the State was to subscribe to \$150,000 of the stock. The General Assembly, by resolution passed March 11, 1836, had directed the Board of Public Works to have the route of the proposed canal surveyed.

The survey was made by Darius Lapham, in December of 1836, for the officers of the Board of Internal Improvement of Cincinnati. Lapham was the Resident Engineer of the Miami Canal, but the expense of the survey was borne by the Cincinnatians. It was quite common at the time for Canal Engineers in the employ of the State, to take employment on other projects when it did not interfere with their regular duties. His report, dated Jan. 23, 1837, was submitted by him to Samuel Forrer, Principal Engineer, who transmitted it to the Board of Public Works and by the Board to the General Assembly.

Darius Lapham's report described in detail the proposed route of the canal, the principal works required, the level, and an estimate of the cost. The unusual feature of his report was his recommendation of a tunnel through the ridge between the Great Miami and the Ohio rivers.

Lapham's survey proposed that the Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal join the Whitewater Canal of Indiana in the pool of the dam three-fourths of a mile South of Harrison, or, by continuing for a short distance into Indiana (if such a provision could be made, a safer connection could be built). The construction of the Whitewater Canal in Indiana had only begun in 1836 and its route below Harrison was not settled, so the point of connection could not be fixed.

Lapham proposed an excavation through irregular terrain below Harrison for about two miles, where he would place the Guard-lock, with four feet of lift. He recommended this position as affording protection against floods in the Whitewater River. From the Guard-lock, the canal was to continue on that level across the Dry Fork on an aqueduct, beyond which another lock would be necessary.

After crossing Dry Fork, the method of crossing the ridge between the Great Miami and the Ohio rivers would determine the amount of lockage required. Here, Lapham proposed a tunnel through the ridge in preference to an open cut. By means of the tunnel, the level of the canal would be brought down to the required level in the Ohio River Valley by one lock and the expense of crossing the Great Miami River would be reduced.

Lapham proposed to cut through the ridge by means of a tunnel 15 chains (990 feet) long, with the arch extended another 12 chain (792 feet) in the open cut, to protect the cut from filling by wash from the banks. According to the proposal, the masonry arch would extend for a total distance of 1782 feet. He estimated the cost of the excavation and the tunnel as \$65,523.00.

Against the estimated cost of the tunnel, Lapham estimated the cost of an open cut at \$91,434.50, involving 246,938 cubic yards of excavation and 11,880 perches of masonry arch. In either case, the arch was considered necessary.

The proposed tunnel was a daring engineering innovation at the time it was made. Only four canal tunnels had been dug in the United States up to that time. The Schuylkill and Union Canals each had one and the Pennsylvania Main Line had two tunnels. James Brindley's Harecastle tunnel on the Trent & Mersey Canal in England had set the example for the use of tunnels in canal construction. The art of tunnel building was new to Ohio, but Lapham was of the opinion that the conditions were favorable and had no hesitation in recommending the tunnel plan over the open cut. The tunnel was built and proved the most lasting work on this canal.

From the southern end of the tunnel, the survey ran the canal along the North bank of the Ohio River, crossing Mill Creek on a masonry culvert, with the termination near the foot of Fifth Street in Cincinnati. The survey pointed out that the canal could be carried through the lower part of the city to connect with the Miami Canal. The level of the Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal as proposed, corresponded with the level between the 5th and 6th locks on the Miami Canal.

### CINCINNATI & WHITEWATER COMPLETED

From the Erasmus Gest Papers.

"Darius Lapham Resident Engineer  
Clement Dare Senior Assistant  
Charles Taylor Assistant Engineer  
Erasmus Gest Assistant Engineer  
Thomas Fallus Rodman  
..... Taylor Rodman Morgan Ruffner Rodman

"\$542,928 total cost at contract price or \$21,890 per mile. Original estimate made in Dec. 1837, per mile \$18,173 or \$454,326.

"The Indiana Canal is tapped on the farm of John Godley, Esq. on the level which receives its supply of water from the foot of the dam.

"After crossing into the State of Ohio it follows along the dividing Ridge between the Whitewater and Miami Rivers



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

North Bend 18th March 1839

Dear Sir

*Unjust, arbitrary and unconstitutional as the charter for making the canal from Cincinnati to unite with that of Indiana certainly is, in some of its provisions, some of the officers of the board are rendering it more so by Disregarding even those feeble and inefficient safeguards, which the charter does Contain for the protection of the rights of Individuals. The cause of my present complaint arises from one of the Engineers having given authority to the Messrs. Dickey to go into my fields without the boundary of the Canal to procure earth for making the embankments. As I understand it the Charter it is as explicit as words can make it that this confiscation of materials to construct the canal cannot be made until after an ineffectual attempt has been made to purchase at a fair price. In the failure of this the remedy is ample enough one would suppose to satisfy the curiosity of any one when there is the necessity of anticipating the regular course by an arbitrary seizure of that which might have obtained by a fair and just bargain? I have the success of this undertaking very much at heart, and I would make any reasonable sacrifice to accomplish it. But I will not suffer the principles of the Constitution to be violated in my person. The Station which I hold in Society and the frequency with which I have taken the oath to support the constitution both of the State and the US alike forbid it. I know that earth must be procured for the embankments to which I have referred and know that it can only be procured from my land.*

*Far from taking the advantage of this circumstance to extort an unreasonable compensation would have been a motive for accepting less than its real value. The Contractors of the Section South of Cleves (who by the by having engaged in similar undertakings in the Atlantic States have learned to respect the right of their fellow Citizens) applied to me on Saturday for leave to dig earth without the limits of the canal and for leave also to waste (?) earth at an other place. Seeing the advantage they would gain by it I at once completed a bargain with them to their entire satisfaction. Nothing would give me more praise than to be obliged to have a Difference of any kind with your board they are without an exception men who I highly esteem and regard as my personal friends, but I entreat therefore that they put a stop to this illegal course of their officers and not oblige me to have recourse to Individual redress. If one of the board will come down I am satisfied that the case in hand can be easily adjusted to the satisfaction of all concerned. I have not yet heard that you have appointed any person to act with Mr. Loudly in assessing the damages done to my property by the Construction of the canal. If you think that the matter can be more fairly arranged when the work is done I have not objection to leave the adjustment until then. Provided the jurors exathe appearance of things as they are at this time and provided also that an advance is made to me for the expense of removing my fences. I have at least three miles of fences to make, the price of which will be greatly enhanced by the necessity of completing it for the planting season.*

*I am with great Respect*

*Yr. Hum Servt*

*W H Harrison*

*M. T. Williams Esq*

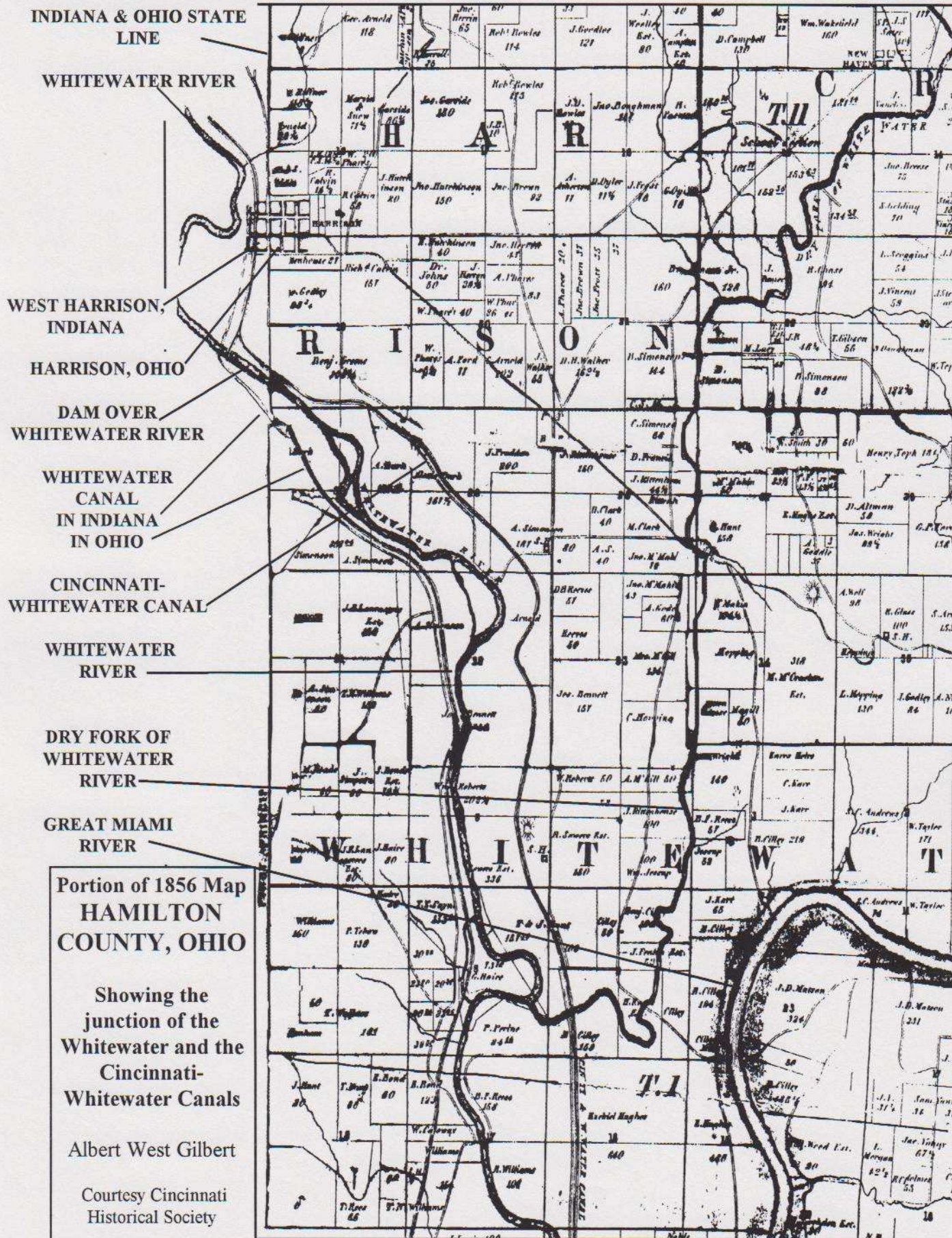
*Presdt Board of Directors*

*Of the C a W W Canal*

Please note that the spelling and grammar in the letter have not been corrected.



# THE WHITEWATER CANAL





## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

until the termination of the same where it crosses the Miami River over an aqueduct of 8 spans of 60 feet each to the town of Cleves.

"From Cleves it passed the hills dividing the Miami and Ohio Rivers through a tunnel of over 1600 feet in length to the left bank of the Ohio River which it follows to the city of Cincinnati.

"The tunnel passed through clay mixed with small water-worn Pebbles and has pieces of limbs of trees also mixed with it. The Arch is made of the Best quality of Brick made by a Machine and burnt in Kilns. It is 24 feet span and rises 12 feet above the Abutments which are 5 1/2 feet high and 3 feet thick.

"Near the State line is a Guard and Lift Lock of 4 feet lift. Just below the Dry Fork Aqueduct is a Lift Lock - 8 feet and at the end of the Miami Aqueduct is another of 5 feet lift. They are built of common limestone laid in Mortar and Grouted and lined with timber and plank similar to those on the White Water.

"There are two Aqueducts: one over the Dry Fork of 4 spans of 50 feet each, one over the Miami of 8 spans of 60 feet each. They are constructed of wood trusses supported by wooden arches and rest on substantial Stone Abutments and Piers founded upon courses of timbers.

"There are several large culverts: one at Indian Creek of 18 feet span; at Muddy Creek, Rapid Run and Bold Face of 30 feet each and one at Mill Creek at the lower end of the canal of 50 feet Span and 20 feet rise. It is an Elliptical Arch and stands upon stone Abutments 10 feet high and 6 feet thick. The abutments are built of common limestone, the Arch of Sandstone brought from Rockport near Portsmouth.

"From there is a descent in the canal of 7/100 to the mile."

Once the tunnel was completed a block house stood near its entrance midway between the river and the foot of the hill. The early residents built their cabins and village around it for protection. The six cornered building was constructed of logs 18 feet long to a height of 10 feet and then a two foot projection was built with port holes.

A 1900 photo was found of the North Bend end of the tunnel before its removal for the building of US 50. In the photo the tunnel entrance was blocked with stone.

In another article from the diary of Jonathan Newman Hamilton of August 13, 1839 was found a complete description of the bricks being made for the tunnel and culvert at General Wm. Henry Harrison's place. He explains how a 60 foot diameter circular building was erected, which was raised 2 1/2 to 3 feet off the ground

except for about 4 feet around the outside, which was left as shelter for the molders. In the center stood a large post, which was attached to a beam. The beam was fixed to a large roller 18 inches thick and nearly 8 feet in diameter. The roller ran in a track about 4 inches deep. Brick molds were placed in this depression - four molds, a one foot space, and four more molds. The molds were lined with iron or steel which was bound at the top edge. The bottom had a lever which the molder operated by pressing with his foot. This would raise the top of the mold and throw out the brick after the large roller had pressed it into the mold.

Over 100 persons worked in the brick operation. Some would dig out the clay and while moist it was hauled and thrown into small holes in the ground. They did not wet or temper it before thrusting it into a box the length and width of the four molds. This was then turned upside down and pressed into the mold very hard. The roller passed over it and the molder smoothed off the top crust of each brick with a concave shovel. He then threw the brick from the mold and placed it onto a board. The hard smooth bricks were taken by the off barer by wheel barrow to the yard to dry. One man was responsible for molding three sets of twelve molds. The roller which was turned by horse power made one revolution in 1 1/2 minutes.

The diary also references that workmen were cutting stone for the lock walls on the Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal. His records also show that some German laborers purchased \$9.20 of clothing from his store boat.

Old canal notes have as a part of their design the tunnel and a canal boat with animals on the towpath pulling it. Also on July 17, 1869, one of the Cincinnati papers carried an item that said Abram Brower had purchased Lot No. 31 from the Harrison estate for \$2,500. On this property was located half of the canal tunnel. At the time of the purchase, the tunnel was really a part of the IC&L Railroad.

By the 1850s the railroad ran alongside the canal and the Indiana portion had fallen into disrepair. On May 5, 1852 the canal water in the Cincinnati branch was let out so the O&M (Ohio and Michigan) Railroad could be laid on the towpath. Then in 1863 when the canal company was so deep in debt, the canal channel was sold to the IC&L (Indianapolis, Cincinnati, and Lawrenceburg, later the Big 4) Railroad for a right of way right through the tunnel between Cleves and North Bend. The tunnel was used by the line for over twenty years. The last passenger train to use it went east on July 4, 1884. The last freight train was a few months later. The last light engine to use the tunnel was No. 59 going west.

In 1873-74 concern was expressed by travelers on the trains as to the tunnel's safety. They were afraid the bricks might cave in. Mr. M.E. Ingalls, Superintendent of the I&C



## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

Railroad had the tunnel examined, found it to be safe, and claimed the rumors were started by another line. Passengers from Lawrenceburg, IN and Cleves, OH had begun taking wagons or omnibuses to North Bend and then boarded the train to avoid the tunnel.



**Cincinnati & Whitewater Canal Tunnel at Cleves, Ohio**  
Photo - Bob Schmidt



**Looking Inside North Tunnel Portal**  
Note Brick Ceiling and That The Tunnel Has Been  
Filled with Dirt and Rocks Photo - Brian Migliore

### Terror in the Tunnel

An article that appeared in the July 7, 1876 Cincinnati Daily Times entitled "Terre in the Tunnel" recorded the following tunnel catastrophe as told to the reporter by 51 year old B.W. Souders of Cleves.

At 6 o'clock on a rainy July day an accommodation train consisting of three passenger coaches and a baggage car left the Plum Street depot from Cincinnati loaded with approximately 150 men, women, and children. The rain was pelting down on the cars all the way to North Bend and began coming down in torrents as they reached the tunnel. The watchman at the tunnel entrance, who watched the

tunnel and was out on the track whenever a train wanted passage through the tunnel, gave the all clear signal for the train to pass. As the train's engineer entered the tunnel he found watering pouring into the tunnel from the northwest end at Cleves. Water from the hillsides and overrun culverts was rapidly filling the tunnel. The engineer tried to reverse the engine, but the furnace fires were extinguished by the water. No match or lamp could be found and it was very dark. Even though the furnace fire was extinguished, the engineer tried to use the steam from the boilers and the three cylinders to take the train through the tunnel. He Failed. The boilers were cold. The passengers were scared of the dark and the cataract of water pouring down on them. When they learned that the Omaha Express was due any minute they feared for their lives. The Express would wreck the accommodation train and lives would be lost.

A brave fellow, G.M. Welsh of Cleves as reported on July 13, 1876 in the Lawrenceburg Press, became a hero that day by throwing his shoes aside, jumping into the 4-5 foot rushing water, and wading or swimming until he reached the mouth of the tunnel and the flag station. In less than a minute the Omaha Express came bearing down the track and was flagged and stopped. A major disaster was thus avoided.

The Omaha Express engineer decided the best way to get the stranded passengers out of the tunnel was to push a freight car, which was standing idle on a side track, into the tunnel, load the passengers onto it, and pull the car out. The waters had begun to subside but the wet passengers were thankful to be pulled to safety.

Before the accommodation train could be removed from the tunnel hundreds of carts or mud and dirt that had been carried in the waters had to be removed. Through extreme efforts the Omaha Express was free to be on its way by 11 o'clock. Thankfully no one was hurt. The conductor Mr. Flowers did have to be rescued when he fell into the water twice.

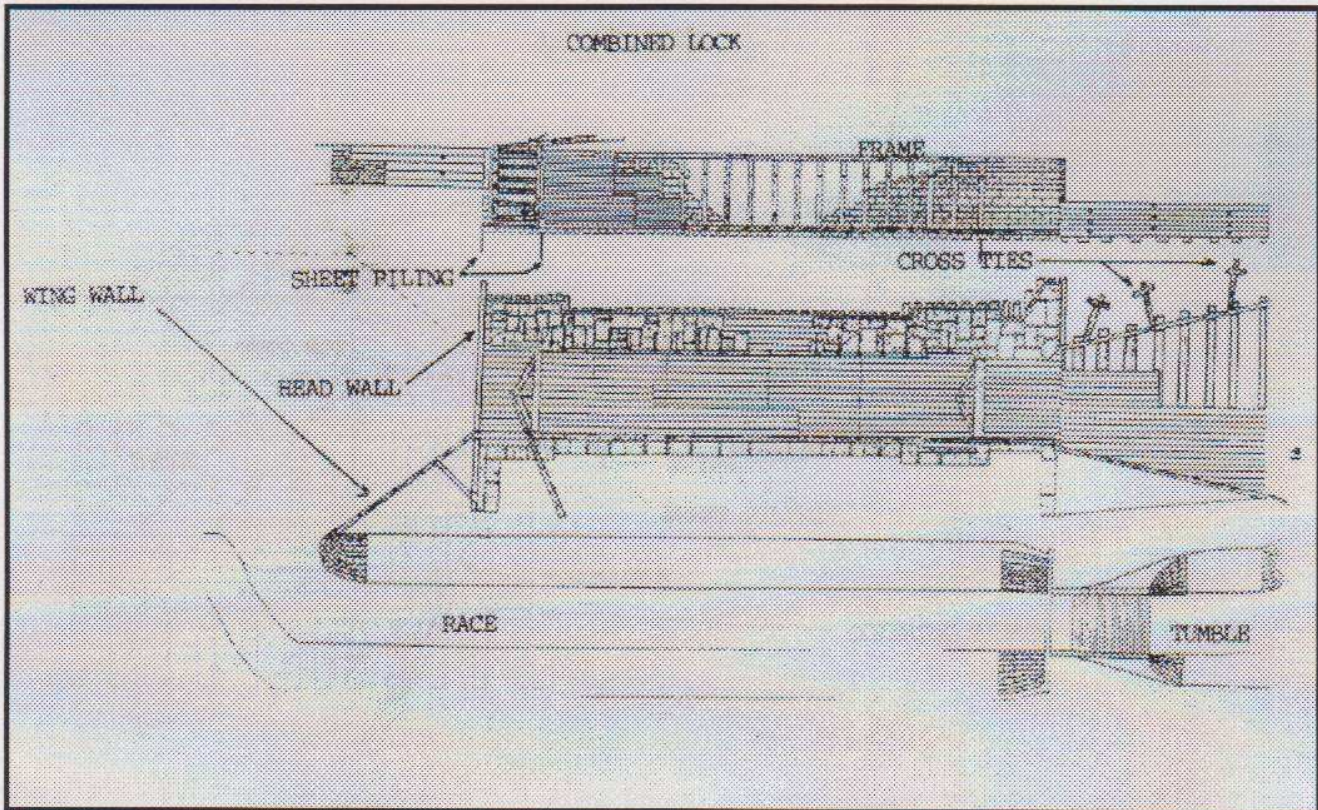
We are unsure about the time when the Cleves end of the tunnel was filled with dirt and rubble letting only the upper portion of the arch visible. It was most likely when US 50 destroyed the North Bend portal. At a time when most tunnels, especially those of the railroads, have been "daylighted" (the tops blown out) it would be a shame to cover this relic of the canal era. There was an attempt to do this in 1996. The plan was to fill in the area by the tunnel with fly ash and build a ball field upon it. Preservationists stopped this from happening. Today the tunnel is on the National Register of Historic Places, has an Ohio format marker giving its history placed at the road from where a path leads to it, and has designs submitted for a proposed park. Some suggest excavating the tunnel.





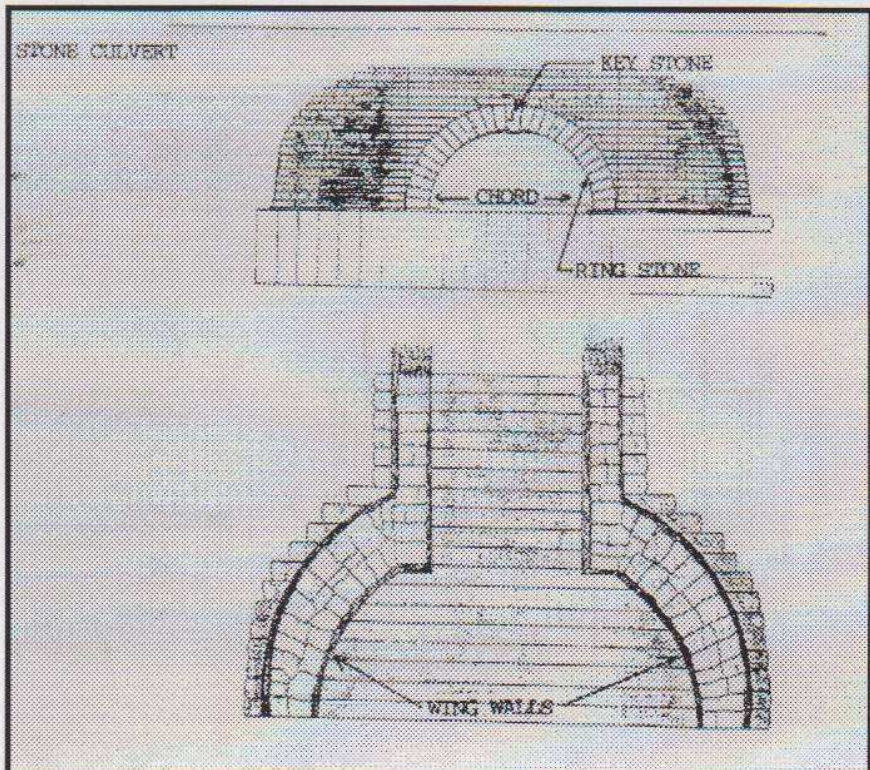


## THE WHITEWATER CANAL



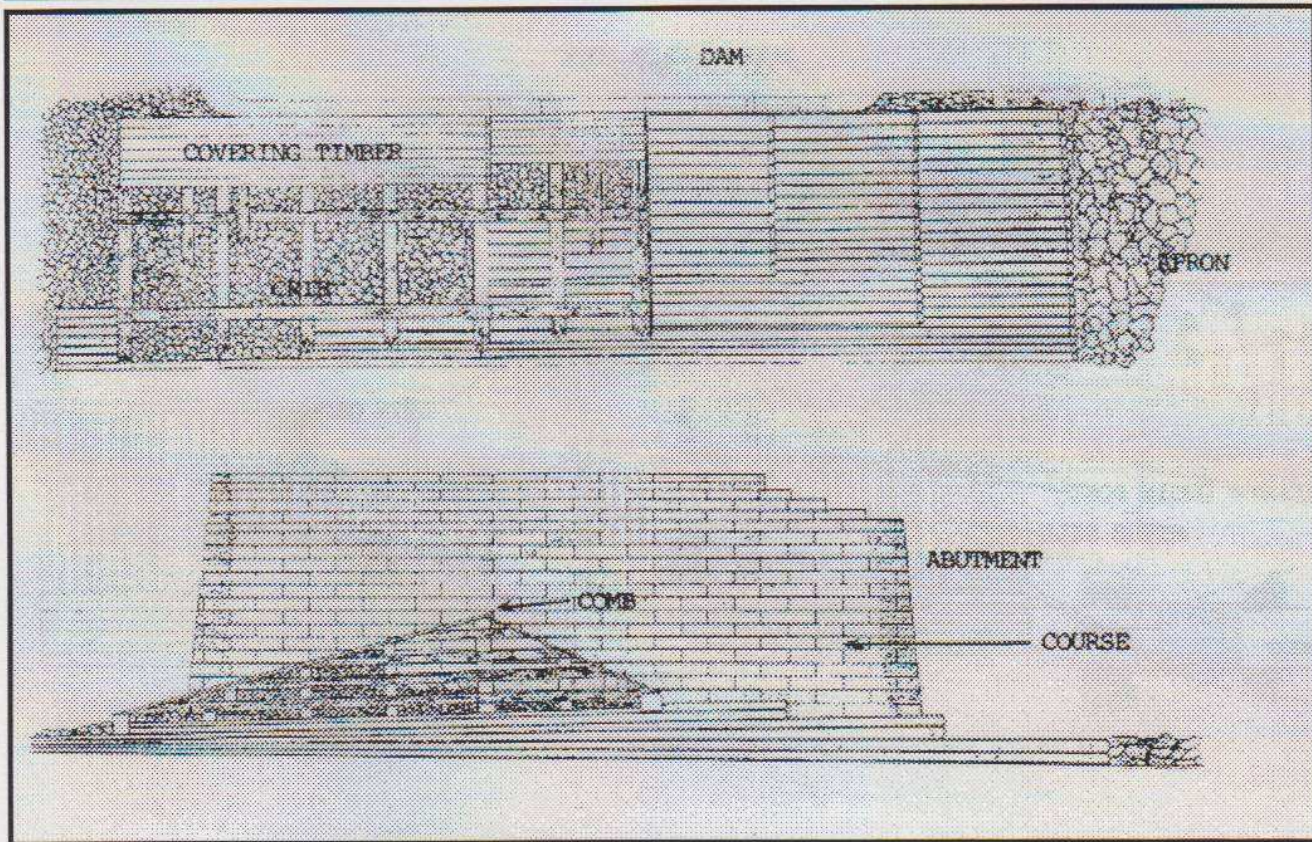
A **COMBINED LOCK** is also known as a **COMPOSITE LOCK**. It consists of a rough stone structure that is lined with planking to make it watertight. It was built upon a timber foundation. This was a cheaper method of construction than the finely dressed stone lock. This type of lock used finely dressed stone in its approaches. Diagram by Stan Schmitt

A **STONE CULVERT** is also known as a **STONE ARCH CULVERT**. Its opening is shaped like one half of a barrel. It was constructed of finely dressed stone and carried the canal waters over the stream below. It was built upon a timber foundation unless bedrock was near the surface. Its wing walls added protection so that it would not wash out when the stream was flooded and running at full force. The canal channel with its towpath and berm were built on top of this structure. Diagram by Stan Schmitt





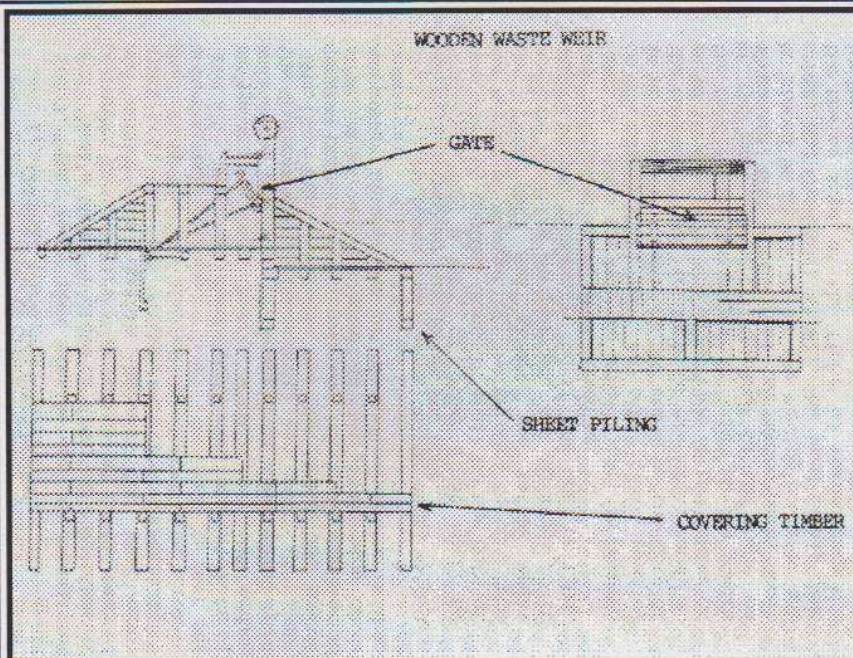
## THE WHITEWATER CANAL



A **DAM**, also known as a **FEEDER DAM**, is a structure built across a stream like a wall that extends from the stream's bottom to a height necessary to create a pool of water to feed into the canal year round. The pool thus impounded is known as slackwater. Whole trees were placed in the stream's bottom with their branches facing upstream. Upon this bed was built a long row of log cabin type structures that were filled with stone and dirt. These were then planked over with a comb on the downstream end to deter undermining of the structure. Diagram by Stan Schmitt

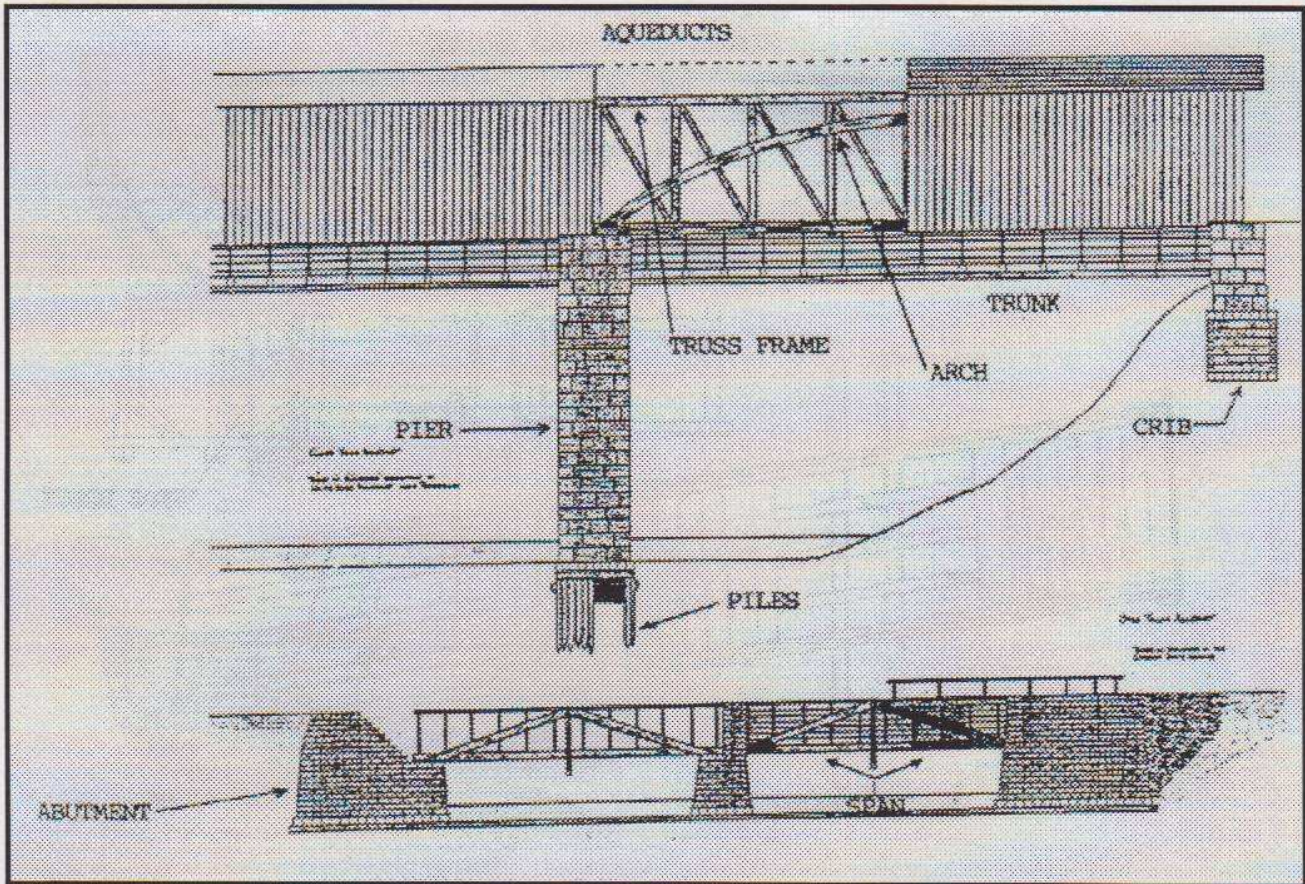
A **WOODEN WASTE WEIR** was a structure that was built into the canal bank to allow a controlled amount of water out of the canal channel. This device kept the channel at the proper depth. When heavy rains came the canal filled up with water and the extra water pressure could cause breaches in the canal if not released. The gates of the wier could be raised or lowered.

Diagram by Stan Schmitt





## THE WHITEWATER CANAL



An **AQUEDUCT** was a structure that carried the canal channel and the towpath across a stream or river that was too wide or too deep for a culvert. Stone abutments and piers were built atop wooden timbers or piles driven into the stream bed. Upon them was constructed a wooden trunk or trough which carried the canal water. The aqueduct at the bottom of the diagram is known as an **OPEN TRUNK AQUEDUCT**. The aqueduct at the top of the picture is covered in the same manner as a covered bridge, thus it is known as a **COVERED BRIDGE STYLE AQUEDUCT**. This superstructure protected the trough from the weather as well as helping to support it. Duck Creek Aqueduct in Metamora, Indiana (shown below) is the only covered bridge style aqueduct in operation in the United States. It was rebuilt a few years ago by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources. Diagram by Stan Schmitt, Photos by Bob Schmidt





## THE WHITEWATER CANAL

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### SOME DIAGRAMS, MAPS & PHOTOS BY CANAL SOCIETY OF INDIANA MEMBERS

Brian Migliore  
Michael Morthorst  
Gene Paschka  
Bob Schmidt  
Carolyn Schmidt  
Stan Schmitt

Lock #25 Metamora before storm. P -B Schmidt

