

THE
HOOSIER-PACKET

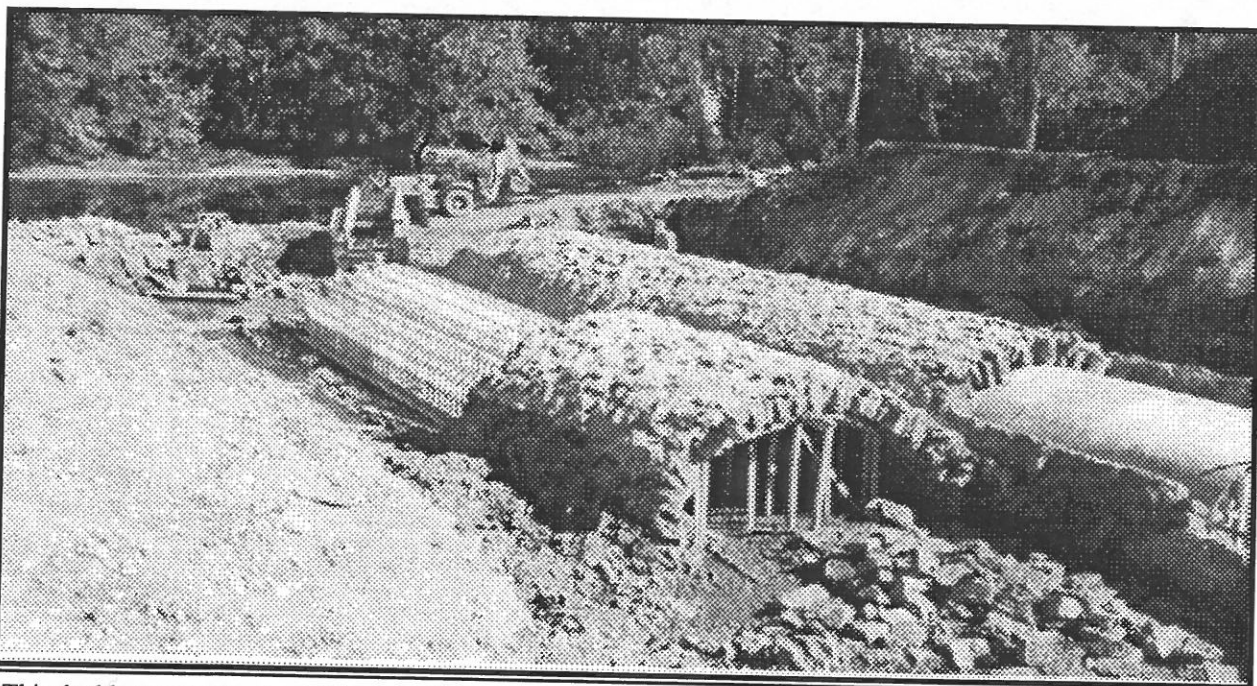


VOL. 2 NO. 4

P.O. BOX 40087 FORT WAYNE, IN 46804

APRIL 2003

DOUBLE ARCH STONE CULVERT



This double stone culvert, which once allowed water from a stream to pass beneath the Miami and Erie Canal near Troy, OH, is being rebuilt instead of being replaced by a concrete culvert.

Photo by Mike Morthorst

Features

1. Double Arch Stone Culvert Rebuilt In Ohio
4. Canawlers At Rest: William Rockhill
5. Early Recollections Of The Lagro Dam & Environs
13. Welcome New Members
13. 2003 Contributions To CSI
13. Thank You From Western Wayne Heritage
14. We Get Letters
15. Straightening The Ropes
16. News From Delphi - Canal Museum, Gate Construction, Time Capsule, Volunteers Build Gunwhales
21. In The News - Canal Tour Ft. Wayne to Napoleon, Finding Erie Canal Lock No. 1, Miami-Erie Through Maumee, OH, Ice Skating In Grand Rapids, OH, Electric Mule on Miami-Erie Canal, Gronauer Timbers Returned, History Group To Save Treasurers, Francis Becker House
24. How Did Canal Boats Pass? Canal Books

DOUBLE ARCH STONE CULVERT REBUILT IN OHIO

By Carolyn Schmidt

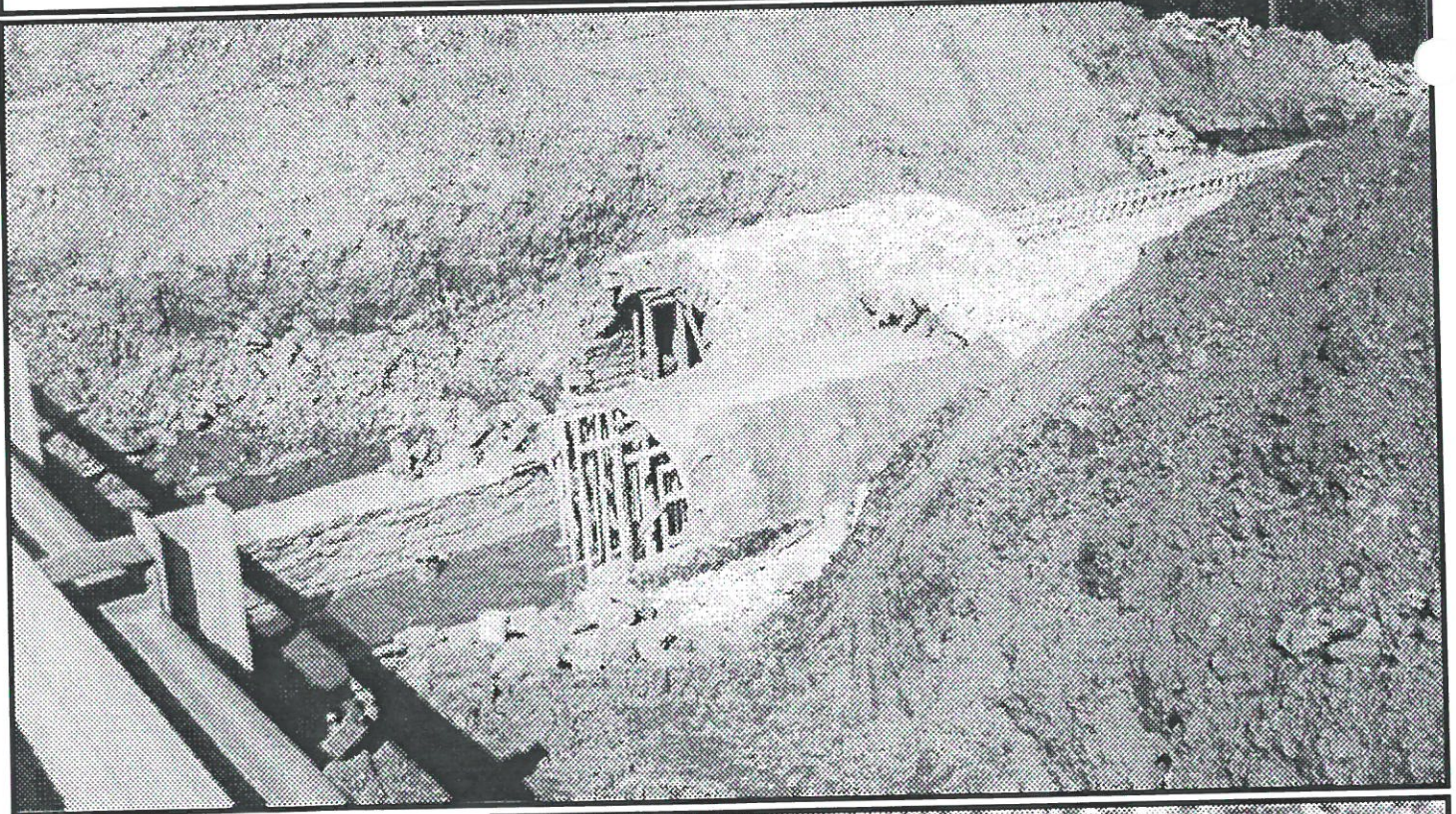
The double arch culvert that carries the waters of Howell Ditch beneath the Miami and Erie Canal was rebuilt by Midwest Maintenance of Piqua, OH. The \$369,456. project is located north of Troy, OH along the east side of Miami County Road 25A.

What is a culvert? A culvert as described in **Canal Terminology of the United States** by Thomas Swiftwater Hahn and Emory L. Kemp, 1998 is as follows:

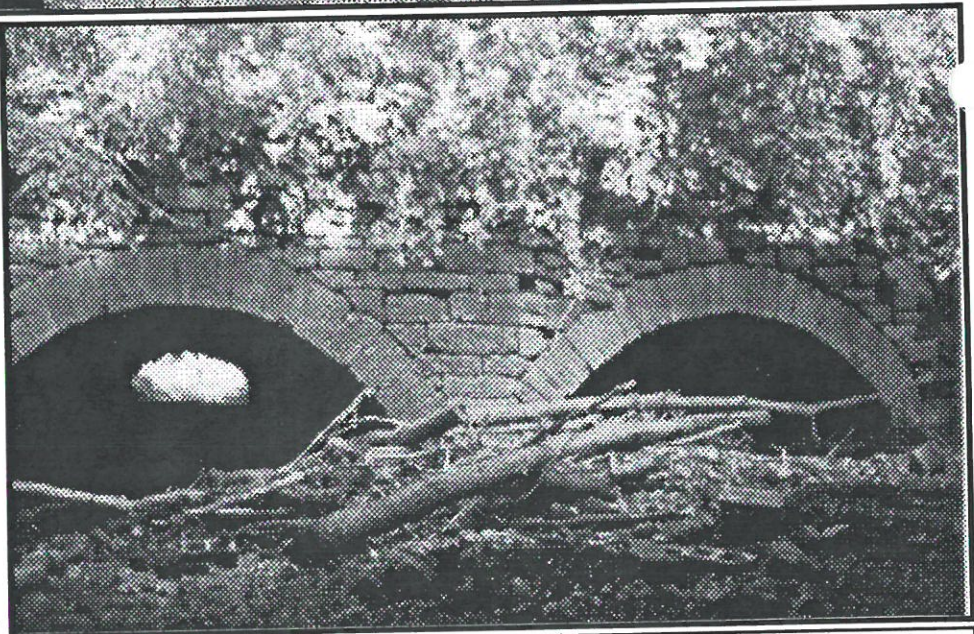
EDITOR: CAROLYN SCHMIDT

5205 WAPITI DR. FT WAYNE IN. 46804

260 432-0279



"1. A short span structure for carrying a stream under a canal and towing path, usually formed of a long (perhaps 80 feet or more) stone barrel arch built on a timber or stone foundation. They were over 108 feet long on the James River and Kanawha Canal (Va.). The timber foundations were below stream level, underground, where they were kept wet. This stone, brick, wood, or concrete structure was covered with earth so that the width of the canal and the towpath was maintained throughout the crossing. Culverts had parapets or abutments at both ends extending up to contain dirt."



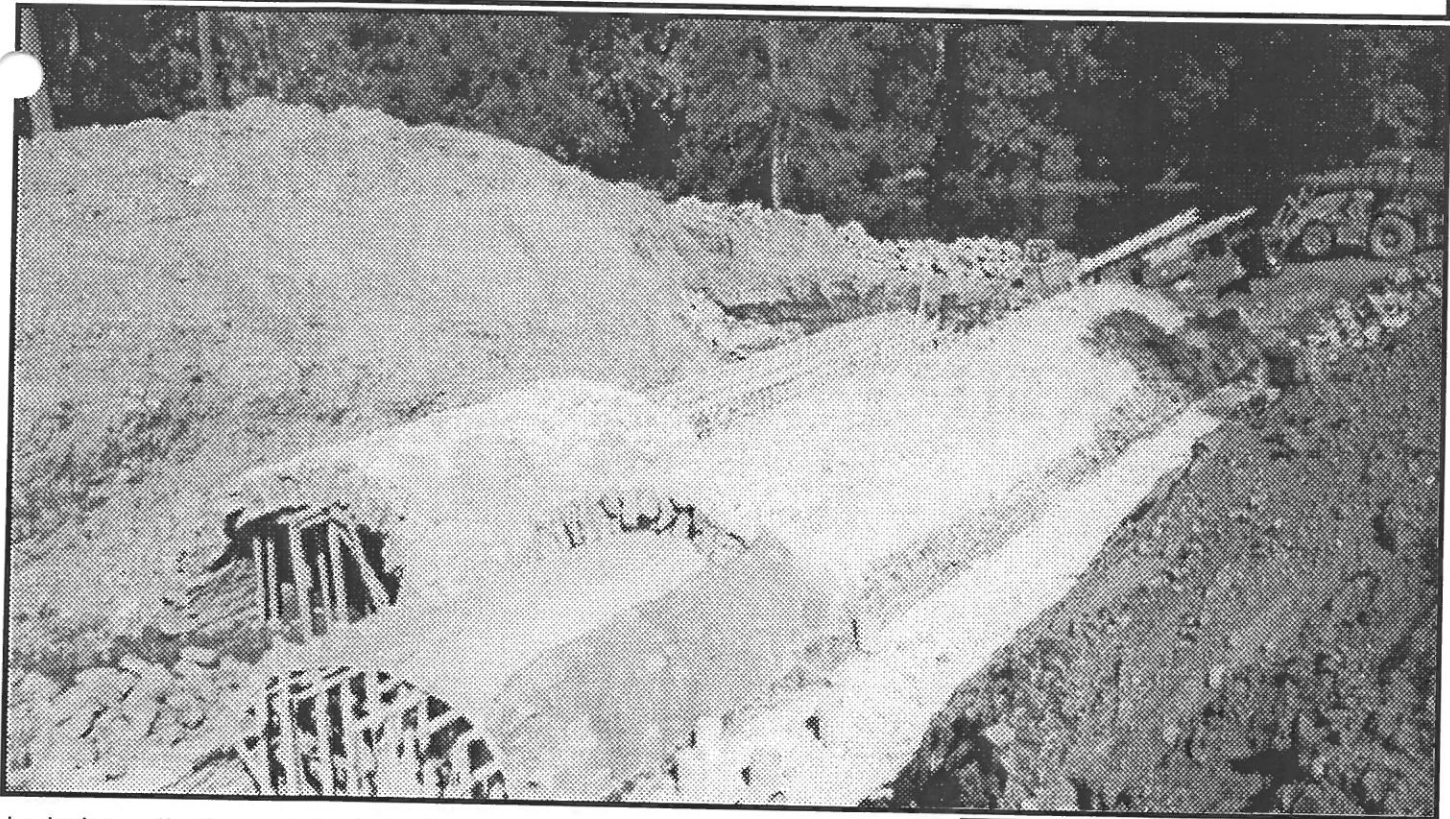
Above: Note the wall that was built, the falsework with the covering over it, and the stones covered with concrete in the double arch culvert. Photo by Mike Morthorst
 Below: This photo, which was taken during the CSI "South of the Summit" tour, shows how the culvert appeared in 1997. Photo-Bob Schmidt GPS:40°05.19n, 084°13.46w

The canal engineers in this case built two stone arch culverts side by side. The stream was shallow and wide.

Mike Morthorst, Canal Society of Indiana (CSI) board of

directors and president of the follows:
 Canal Society of Ohio, described the condition of this double arch culvert in his book **The Miami & Erie Canal and the Sidney Feeder Canal in Miami County, Ohio and Shelby County, Ohio** (1997) as

This culvert "is in excellent condition. It is similar to the former Turtle Creek Culvert in that it is double arched, though it is much smaller. The west side



includes all the original facing stonework. On the east side the stonework has eroded away."

The condition of the culvert must have deteriorated even more and was not thought to be sufficiently strong enough to carry a bike path to be so completely rebuilt. This process takes much longer than just tearing out the culvert and replacing it with a modern concrete one.

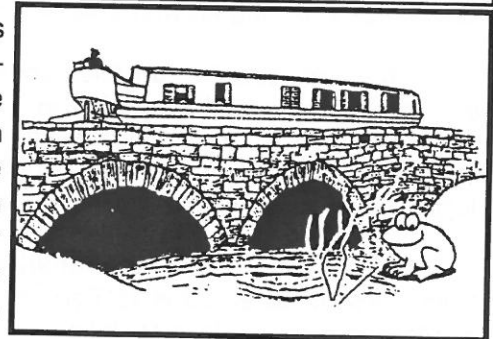
To reach the culvert when traveling north on Dixie Highway (25A), "pass the I-75 interchange and proceed for two miles. The culvert is south of the Farrington-Peterson Road in the southeast quadrant of the intersection."

To repair the structure all the dirt was removed above the arches. The old structure's hand-cut limestone was dismantled and saved for the rebuild. Your editor does not know if the culvert

was built on a rounded or squared timber foundation or on bedrock. A solid foundation was necessary to keep the stones from shifting and the culvert from falling apart.

Wooden removeable forms called false work were constructed on which to build the arches. Some type of thin covering was placed over the false work and the stones laid in place. It appears that the lower courses were laid like a wall by placing flat stones on top of each other until the wall reached the curve of the arch. Then the stones rested on the covering placed over the falsework and were locked in place by a keystone. After the stones were in place, a layer of concrete was poured over them. Concrete was not used at the time the original culvert was built. It will seal the stones so that water can't penetrate through and erode them.

Above: This photo shows the various stages in the construction of the double arch culvert Photo by Mike Morthorst
Below: This drawing shows how a canal boat would cross the creek in the canal.
Drawing by Nate Tagmeyer



After the structure is finished, the false work will be removed and dirt will be placed over the culvert to the height of the original towpath. A bicycle path will be laid upon it. It is unknown if the canal prism will be rebuilt over the culvert.

CSI headquarters would greatly appreciate pictures of the culvert when it is completed to publish and to add to the archives.

CANAWLERS AT REST

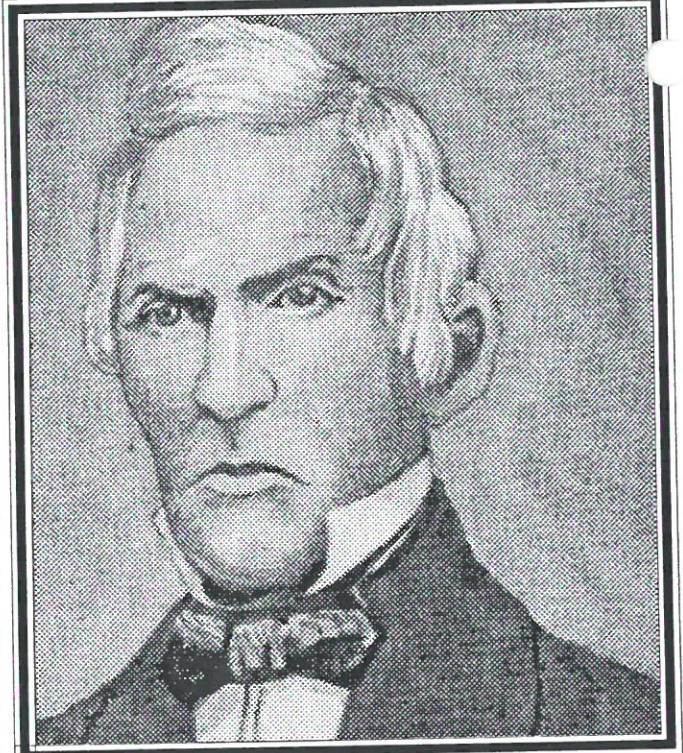
WILLIAM ROCKHILL

b. 1793

d. 1865

By **JAMES ELLIS**

Drawing by Morris R. Perry from *Pioneers Resting in Historic Lindenwood.*



William Rockhill was born in Burlington, New Jersey in 1793. On July 28, 1820 he married Elizabeth Hill of Baltimore, Maryland. They moved to Fort Wayne in 1823 where, for the next forty-two years, he was a leader in politics and the development of commerce. Their original home was located at 1025 W. Berry St. (In the 1980s this home was torn down by St. Joseph Hospital for a parking lot that was never completed.)

Rockhill served as an Allen county commissioner for a three year period beginning in 1824. When Fort Wayne incorporated in 1829, Rockhill was on the board of trustees with Benjamin Archer - president and John P. Hedges - secretary. He held this post for eleven years.

In 1829 the Reverend Charles E. Fuhrman, a Presbyterian minister came to Fort Wayne by invitation of Allen Hamilton. He was followed by Pastor James Chute's arrival in 1831 to organize a church. Forty-four citizens along with Rockhill signed a paper guaranteeing a salary of \$258.00.

In 1832 Rockhill contracted with the canal commissioners to construct the middle division of the Wabash & Erie Canal. He and another canal contractor, Jesse Vermilyea, served on the board of directors of the State Bank of Indiana upon its organization in 1835, the year the canal was opened from Fort Wayne to Huntington, IN. He was on the canal's dedication committee. The committee traveled to Huntington on July 2 on board the "Indiana," the first canal boat to pass through the completed "summit section" of the canal. There they met the guests and brought them to Ft.

Wayne the following day. On July 4th the guests gathered at Washington Hall. From there they went to the canal and boarded boats to take a seven mile trip to the feeder dam on the St. Joseph river. When they arrived at the dam, salutes were fired by the militia and toasts were given. They then returned to Fort Wayne where the Declaration of Independence was read and an oration was delivered by Hugh McCulloch. That night they attended a dance at Zenas tavern owned by Zenas Henderson. There was a great deal of pomp and ceremony both en route and all throughout the evening.

Not long after arriving in Fort Wayne Rockhill acquired large tracts of land in what is now referred to as the Broadway area. It was recorded as "Rockhill additions" on maps. In 1838 Rockhill began construction of a hotel in this area called the Rockhill House. It was located at the southwest corner of Broadway and Main, which was considered as being in the country at the time. Building was delayed and by 1840 only the walls and roof were done. It was dubbed "Rockhill's Folly." The building sat incomplete for thirteen years. During this time it was used for public assembly, various entertainments, fairs, and exhibitions.

Fort Wayne's first fire company was organized in 1839 on Lot 70 of the William Ewing addition at Clinton & Main street. It was later reorganized as the "Anthony Waynes" in 1841. Rockhill was a member of the hook and ladder company. It was the first fire company equipped with apparatus — the Jeffries "Galley" engines with side brakes — a two wheeled cart fitted with 500 ft. of riveted leather hose.

Rockhill along with Samuel Edsall established a two-band sawmill on the north side of Clinton street in 1842. It operated using water from the St. Joseph Feeder Canal. That same year he was instrumental in establishing the local public school system and donated land for the Fort Wayne Female college, a Methodist school, to be located at the end of West Wayne street facing College street. Rockhill, along with Samuel Edsall and P.H. Taylor, was chosen to prepare the building plans.

In 1844 Rockhill was elected a State Senator. He was elected to the House of Representative in 1846.

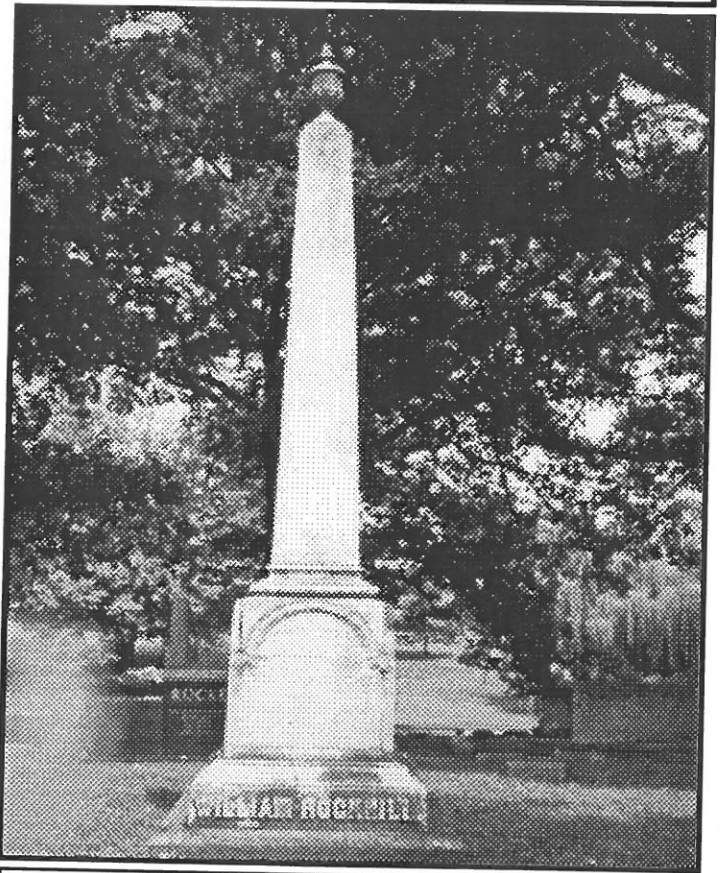
Rockhill served as a director of Fort Wayne's first gas company. B. W. Oakley was its president.

The Rockhill house, which was about a block away from the Wabash & Erie Canal, finally opened its doors as a grand hotel in 1854. A banquet and ball introduced Ft. Wayne society to its comforts such as the omnibus line that connected it with the railway depot. It had 65 of the finest rooms in the region. Philo Rumsey was the manager. He had previously managed the Vermilyea Inn after the death of Maria Vermilyea in 1849.

In 1858 Rockhill began his service on the school board of trustees. He was always interested in education.

The Rockhill House hosted the Old Settlers Reunion in 1860, Those attending were given souvenir canes made from timbers of the old fort. The canes were presented by G. W. Ewing.

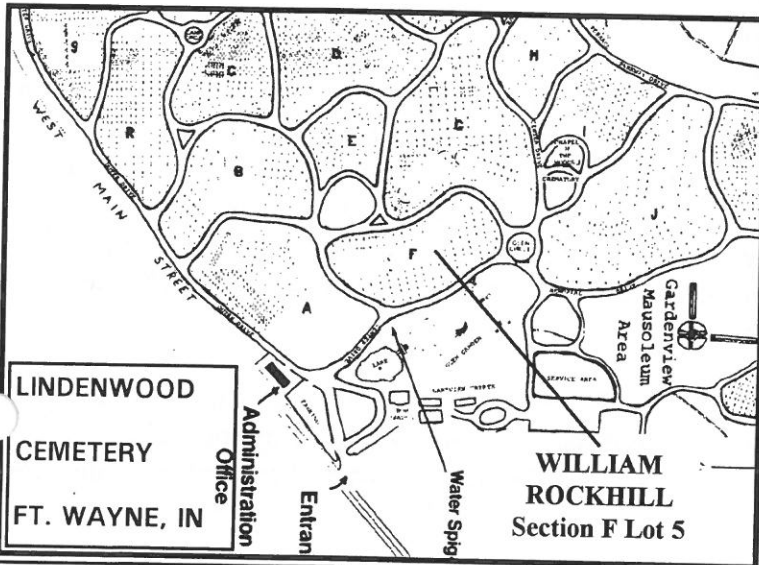
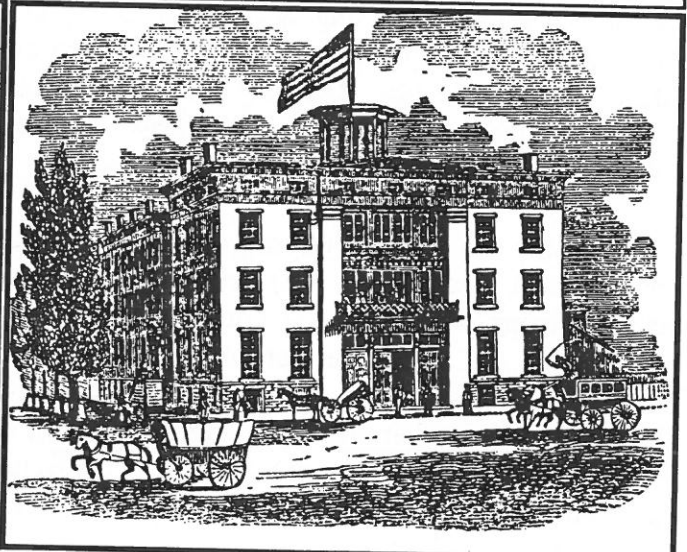
William Rockhill departed this earth on January 15, 1865. He rests in Section F Lot 5 in Lindenwood Cemetery in Fort Wayne, Indiana. His grave is close to those of Samuel and William Edsall.

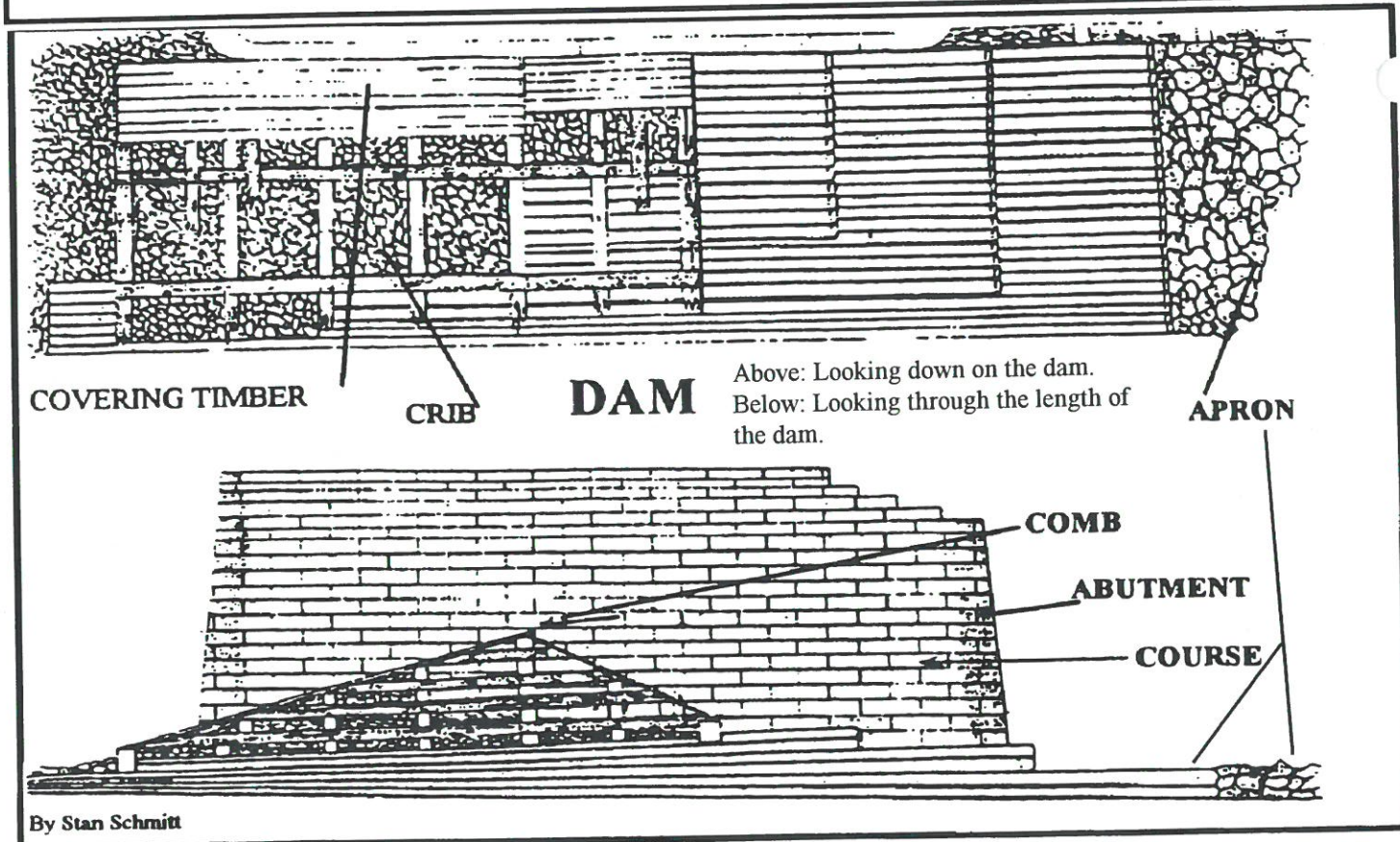


William Rockhill's deteriorated marker in Lindenwood Cemetery is difficult to read. Photo - Jim Ellis

The Rockhill House was closed in 1867. Its location and the building of newer hotels hindered its income. It sat unused until May 20, 1878, when the St. Joseph Benevolent Association purchased the property. At one point an additional story was added to the original building all of which remains as a portion of the present day St. Joseph Hospital.

This woodcut of the Rockhill House was printed in 1858.





By Stan Schmitt

PLEASE NOTE: This article talks about the missing apron of the dam describing it as “an inclined plane of about fifty-five degrees at the bottom of which is a level platform three feet wide that causes the water to flow directly forward and not wash out the river bed in front of the dam.” The author is actually referring to the comb of the dam. An apron is the wooden floor in the riverbed below a dam, placed there to prevent scouring of the river bed and undermining of the dam. Sometimes at the floor level on the upstream end of a dam a masonry structure is built that is also called an apron.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LAGRO DAM & ENVIRONS

By Dr. Arch Porter

The following article was found in the Wabash County Historical Society Newsletter Vol. II, No. 4 (Winter 1984).

Delving into the attic for relics of earlier days, to be used in the Wabash County Centennial Celebration caused me to dig into the attic of my brain for incidents and experiences around the Lagro dam [Dam #2] and vicinity. Reaching into some pigeon holes, begrimed with the dust of many years and cobweb covered archives of the 80s, I find that—

In the dim and distant past, when my immature brain (it isn't mature even yet) became cognizant of material things, my first recollection of the dam was that the old girl had lost her apron. It had been in the wash too long. It had washed away. But she was a good old dam yet, doing her stuff sans apron—backing the water for approximately four miles almost to the Belden Dam and creating one of the most beautiful bodies of

water imaginable. The old timbers, which formed the base of the apron, were still in good condition and could be seen only in low water.

The timbers forming the back of the dam remained intact for years but finally gave way to the ravages of time, rushing water, heavy ice and her death blow, the cruelest of all, was given by man with dynamite. The old girl could have battled natural forces for many years more, but she stood no chance with man.

The purpose of the dam was to act as a feeder for the canal; the feeder gates being located just a few feet west of the present Interurban Station. The dam was located directly beneath the river bridge and, if

interested, you may, in low water, still be able to locate some of the sleepers—rugged old hewn timbers that still defy the ravages of time and water.

The (river) bridge was of the old wooden type and at either end was a sign which read “Five dollars fine for driving across this bridge faster than a slow walk.” So you see we had our “Speed Limit” signs in those days also.

Above the dam was an island, the lower end of which was approximately one hundred and fifty feet distant. The current was swift and rowing a boat across the river between the dam and the island wasn't the safest proposition in the world. At the east end of this island, on the south side, was a sort of a bayou, a rather secluded spot where you might swim in your “birthday” clothes. It was at this spot that Leander Stratton, brother of Gene Stratton (Porter), the authoress was drown.

The apron of a dam is an inclined plane of about fifty-five degrees at the bottom of which is a level platform three feet wide that causes the water to flow directly forward and not wash out the river bed in front of the dam. When the apron was gone the water had a direct drop over the back. The continual pouring of these tons of water gnawed at the river bed, scooped out great slabs of stone, piled them up in a neat row about sixty feet below and formed a basin, which between the middle and south piers, was twenty to twenty five feet deep. Between the middle and north piers the rock was apparently harder and did not wash so deeply.

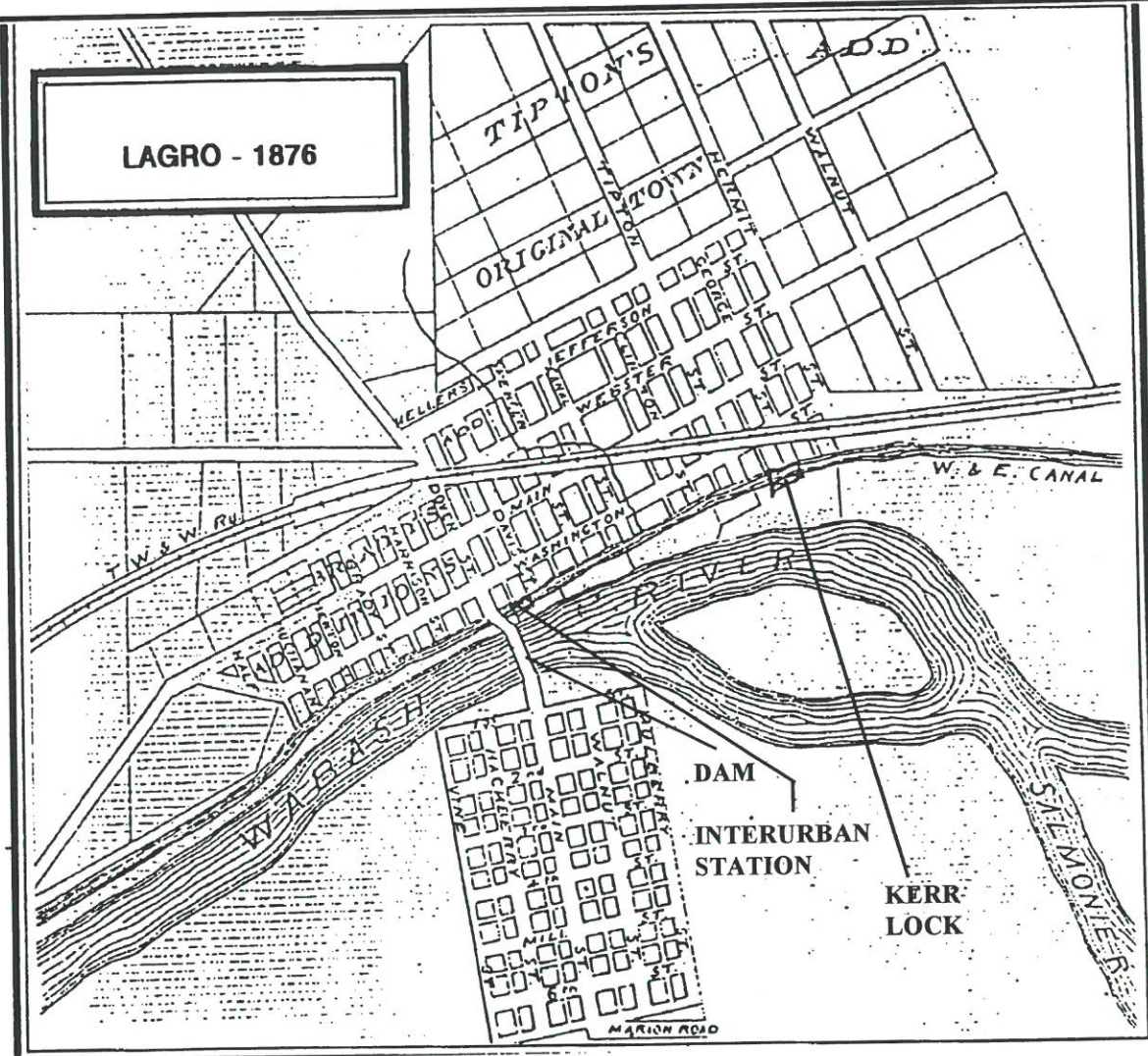
Occasionally, in extremely dry weather, there was little or no water going over the dam except at a place about twenty feet from the south end where it had begun to sag a little. But for the most part of the year there was a heavy flow. (I am speaking of a time when the river was a river and not a creek as it has been for many years.) During the time of heavy flow the water, in going over, broke into two currents; the upper current going out a short distance then washing back toward the dam and the lower current going directly out and rushing over the pile of stone, forming what was locally known as the “riffles.”

Woe unto man or beast that went over the dam and failed to make the lower current, which was seldom. Logs going over would roll in the back wash for hours or until they came back endwise, were upended and driven into the lower current.

Beef cattle and hogs did not ride to market in limousines as they do today; they came under their own power, hitting on all four hoofs. In bringing herds from the south to the Lagro market the bridge presented a sort of a problem to the herd drivers. A congestion at the end of the bridge sometimes caused a stampede. Some unruly animals would break ranks and use their own judgment about crossing. If they decided to cross below the dam, very good. But if they chose to cross above, it was their last bath. Perhaps from the animal's stand point it didn't make much difference since they were going to their death anyway. But they should have had a little consideration for their owners, because a beef or hog rolling in that backwash for hours or a day wasn't worth a lead nickel.

A pal of mine, living south of the river, had a spitz dog. This dog was well taken care of, always washed clean and looked like a living chunk of snow. One day Spitz thought he would show “Old Man Ribber” a thing or two by swimming across above the dam. When “Ole Man” got through with Spitz he was all washed up in more ways than one. He was still in the backwash at dark. I came down early next morning, but the lower current had claimed him sometime during the night and Spitz, by that time, was peacefully wending his way toward the Atlantic Ocean.

One incident stands out in my mind as a perfect exhibition of clear thinking, unlimited nerve and perfect timing. The actor, playing the leading role, was a Negro barber who had a shop on the second floor of the frame building that stood on the site of the present Bank Building. I can not recall his real name, but his nickname was “Chuffy.” Chuffy belonged to the “Brotherhood of Fishermen” and in that brotherhood all are brothers regardless of creed or color. He may not have known his gooseberries, but he knew his “currents,” especially as far as the dam was concerned. He owned a rowboat, such as it was, and kept it in the river above the dam. On this particular day I was fishing below the dam on the south side. I saw Chuffy



rowing across—not a particularly dangerous stunt if nothing happened. About midway between the middle and south pier something happened. He broke an oar square off at the oar lock. He had as much chance against that current with one oar as a bird with one wing has of staying in the air. Chuffy had lost an oar but he didn't lose his head. With the remaining oar he headed the boat directly down stream, kept it so by guiding from the back end. Just before the boat reached the dam he dropped the oar and stepped onto the middle seat. As the boat started to up-end Chuffy took his dive for life. He knew he had to drive his body through the top current into the lower. In what seemed to me an hour, although it was less than a minute, his head appeared above the water below the backwash. The current carried him out onto the "riffles," where the water though rather swift was only about eighteen inches deep. He was safe, but reaction had set in and he was too weak to stand. He sat there with his head just above the water and, my dear reader, he was the

whitest colored man I ever saw. After regaining his strength he waded to shore. The boat was still in the backwash and remained there for quite a while. This little one act play lasted, perhaps, three minutes from the breaking of the oar, but it seemed hours that I stood there paralyzed in my tracks. Ninety-nine men out of a hundred, in the same predicament, would not have lived to tell the tale. Chuffy used his "noodle."

This dam was a fisherman's paradise. There was no stale water. It was clear, sparkling and swift moving, restless as the modern youth, always going places. It was the playground of the fighting, plunging small mouth bass. When you hooked one of those fellows in that swift water you had a fight on your hands. The river at this point was teeming with them. If you couldn't catch four or five nice bass before breakfast you weren't even considered a fisherman. In these days if you catch four or five bass in one day you get your picture in the gravure section of some Metropolitan

Sunday paper.

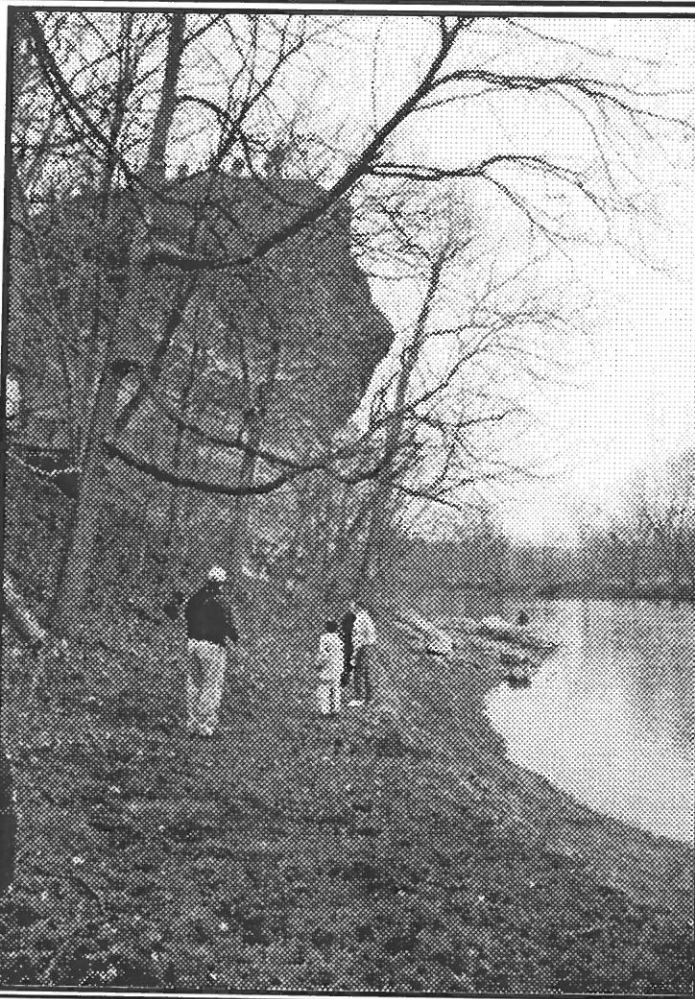
That part of the river above the dam was deep enough that a boat, which did not draw too much water, could ply between Lagro and that once famous resort, the Hanging Rock. Such a boat called the "Monson," after one of its owners C. W. Monson, plied between these two points during the summers for several years. The boat carried as many as twelve to fourteen passengers comfortably. In case some passengers carried excess upholstery, they were equally divided on either side of the boat to maintain an even keel. The other partner in the boat was James Hunt. These two gentlemen comprised the "crew." They were captain, first mate, second mate, chief fireman, steward or what have you? The boat was a side wheeler and wood burner. Should the fireman run out of fuel on the trip it was a case of going ashore and gathering driftwood of which there was plenty. This might throw the running time a half hour or so off schedule, but we weren't living so fast in those days. A half hour meant nothing.

Picnic parties at the Rock were all the rage in the late 80s. If your party was too numerous for all to make the trip at once, you divided, some waiting for the next trip, or if you were in too much of a hurry you could walk. It was only a mile. We thought nothing of a mile walk in those days (this younger generation doesn't think much of it either). Besides you would probably get to the Rock before the boat did anyway.

Row boats were another method of getting to the Rock, but this took an unusual amount of elbow grease and, should your lady friend carry an over supply of avoirdupois, this mode of travel wasn't so hot.

The row boat compared favorably to an automobile as a courting implement. The youth of today parks his automobile in some shady lane to do his "necking", while the swain of yesteryear parked his boat in some shady nook along the river bank. The game was called "courting" in those days, but, although the name has changed, I believe the siren still sings the same song.

In connection with rowboating, some people scoff at the idea of bass jumping into a boat. In the



Hanging Rock on the Wabash River was visited by CSI on the "From The Forks To The Wabash Tour." Photo by Bob Schmidt

early evening when bass were feeding you could row quietly along close to the shore, come on to a weed patch, strike the water sharply with an oar and, if a bass were feeding there, it would jump toward the deeper water. More often they go over the boat but sometimes land inside. Now I already have a reputation of being champion fish liar, so for a verification of jumping bass consult my wife and she will tell you of one instance, on a Sunday evening, when a two pound bass jumped and landed in her lap. She had that fellow for breakfast. The bass may have been embarrassed at landing in a lady's lap, but he had no reason to be chagrined for many a "poor fish" has been landed by the lap method.

Ask my sister, who has been with me several times trying this sort of fishing, about the lunker that went over the boat and slapped her in the face with his tail as he went by. I don't ask you to believe my fish stories, but these two ladies do not lie.

The dam not only furnished excellent sport in the summer but winter as well. A sheet of ice several miles long furnished an ideal place for skating, also a supply of ice to cool the beer in the seven or eight saloons of that day. Lagro had numerous fast and fancy skaters who could compete with any in the country. I belonged to neither class but spent most of my time getting up off the ice and the rest falling on it "Shinny" was the favorite ice game. Shinny played in a cow pasture goes by the dignified name of golf but for real sport "gimmie old time shinny."

Sharp shod horses, hitched to sleighs, driven over the ice gave you a real thrill and a horse with a single tree to which was attach a long rope with all the kids who could get hold hanging on, was another thriller. Boy Oh Boy! and the kids today wonder how we had any fun.

In the spring of the year, when the rains commenced and the river began to raise, we were all agog hoping the ice would go out in the day time. Picture in your mind that block of ice several miles long, bank to bank wide and twelve to fifteen inches thick rousing from its sleep and starting on its westward journey.

Adjectives haven't been coined that would adequately describe this spectacle. The middle pier of the bridge stood directly in its path. With a crunching, grinding roar that could be heard for a mile or more these great blocks of ice battered and battled with the pier, striking it with tremendous force, piling against it in great masses that it seemed nothing could withstand and at times people were forbidden to be on the bridge lest the pier should give way. But, like the Rock of Gibraltar, the old pier stood its ground, defying the wrath of this monster that sought to sweep it aside. To have witnessed this gigantic battle was a sight of a life time and the pier, although in recent years re-enforced with cement, still stands, a monument to the pioneer builders.

There was a wooden bridge across the canal, angling the same as the present road crossing. At the south east corner of this bridge was a dwelling occupied by a Mr. Woods, a Frenchman and of course called "Frenchy." He was a gunsmith, iron worker and ground

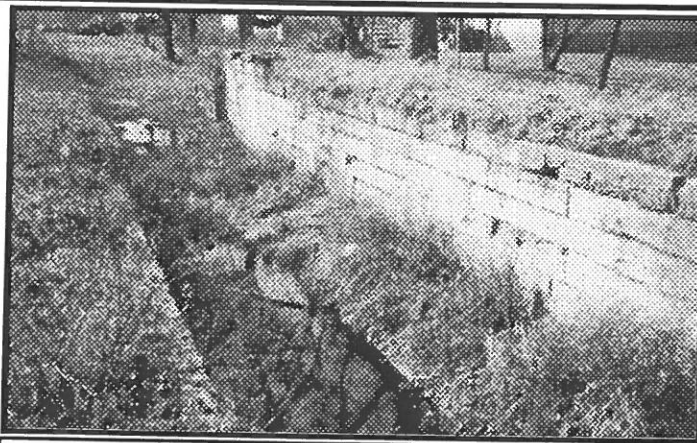
plow points as a side line. His shop stood on the walled bank of the river about fifty feet from the north end of the river bridge on the west. Frenchy needed water power, so he built a flume from close to the dam, running along the base of the wall. From a spur, built out over the wall and attached to the main building was dropped a shaft, upon the end of which was a water wheel. Taken as a whole it was a funny looking contraption. But did she work — she did.

Two personal experiences that naturally would leave their mark on the mind of a youngster.

First, Frenchy had a flock of ducks that had the "grazing rights" of the canal in that vicinity. One day, while fishing under the canal bridge, the ducks came swimming along and in order to keep them from getting tangled up in my fishing tackle I threw my pole and line out on the bank until the parade passed by. A nice old lady duck, with an eagle eye, spied a large juicy fish-worm on the bank. The next thing I knew my pole was moving toward the water. I grabbed it and gave a yank. Bedlam broke loose! Say did you ever catch a duck on a pole and line? If not try it. It is a real interesting experience. A plunging, lunging five pound bass acts like a rheumatic on crutches beside a duck. She took to the air, land and water and was equally at home in either element, quacking forty-seven squawks per minute. Having had no previous experience in duck fishing I resorted to brute strength, which wasn't much, as I had very little on the duck in the matter of size. I finally landed her and, if I remember correctly, she landed from the air without a parachute; anyhow I got a neck hold. (My first experience in necking.) Then came the painful operation of removing the hook. Cutting the line and leaving the hook was out of the question. That was the only hook I had. Hooks cost a penny apiece. I was already carrying a heavy deficit and that hook was needed to balance the budget. All during the operation Lady duck was doing a lot of fancy cussing in duck language and shortly Frenchy came down the bank to ascertain what difficulty the duck was in. Then he joined the duck in the cussing bee and the air was a very deep blue. As a surgeon Frenchy had me beat four ways. He removed the hook while I held the duck. Then he gave me a swift kick in the pants and said something in French, which I did not understand but have no reason to believe it was at all complimentary.

Second, one day in dry season, when water was flowing over only at the sag, I was fishing at the south end, standing directly beneath the dam on a timber that had once been a part of the apron. I fell off the timber into the current running toward the sag. I had tied to my little finger a piece of fish-line some six or seven feet long, for what purpose I don't know. (It is said that a guardian angel watches over the destiny of children. Perhaps the angel told me to do it.) This line was sliding over the timber from which I had fallen and a man named Wire, who was fishing from the top of the dam, jumped down and caught the line. Two questions arose in his mind—Would the line hold? and Would that little finger stand the gaff? Yes to both questions. He drew me slowly against that current until within his reach, otherwise I wouldn't have been here to write this narrative and you wouldn't have missed much if I hadn't. I went home, Mother dressed my little finger which was badly cut by the line, put on my "Sunday go to meeting" pants and waist. Having been given no orders to stay home I slipped away. (That old dam was a magnet. I was a piece of steel. I could not keep away from it.) Instead of going down and crossing the canal bridge to the river I decided to use a foot bridge just a little to the east of our home. This bridge was just two long planks supported by a trestle in the center and built by John Porter to give him easy access to the river. Close to this bridge I found a long cornstalk that gave me an idea. I would see how deep the water was in the canal. At the trestle I shoved the cornstalk down to the bottom, the stalk broke and I pitched head first into the canal. There was no one there to help me (even the guardian angel was disgusted) so I climbed up the trestle to the planks and went home again. Having a son come home like a drowned rat twice in less than a half hour was too much for any mother. She took that bedraggled Sunday suit off of me, then applied an apple butter paddle to that portion of my anatomy where it would do the most good, and put me to bed for two reasons, first because that was the safest place for me and second I had no more clothes. Thus endeth the two personal experiences.

That footbridge served a dual purpose. It was also a fruit stand. Several groceries had their back doors on the canal bank and the canal was a common dump. All refuse was thrown into it, but the refuse we kids were particularly interested in was half rotten oranges.



The Kerr Lock #15 in Lagro is northeast of the dam. It acts as a drain for property nearby in times of rain. Photo - Bob Schmidt

When these came floating down we were on the job at the footbridge fishing them out, cutting the rotten part away and putting the rest where it would do the most good. Germs did you say? Well, yes, perhaps there were as groceries weren't the only kind of building that stood on the bank. In fact there was quite an assortment including two livery stables. What did a small boy know or care about germs. They were not yet invented. A boy has but two mission in life. First to keep his belly full, it matters not about the kind of filling material. Second to keep his pockets full of something — pieces of string, spools, old nails, bolts, a few fish-worms, a dried crawfish or two and maybe a frog in a more or less bad state of repair. The more useless an article is the more priceless it is to the small boy.

The canal was another scene of winter sport. The current was slow and the bank acted as a wind break so the water did not ripple to any extent and it would freeze "as slick as glass." Skating to Wabash was some sport for us as well as to the Wabash boys skating to Lagro.

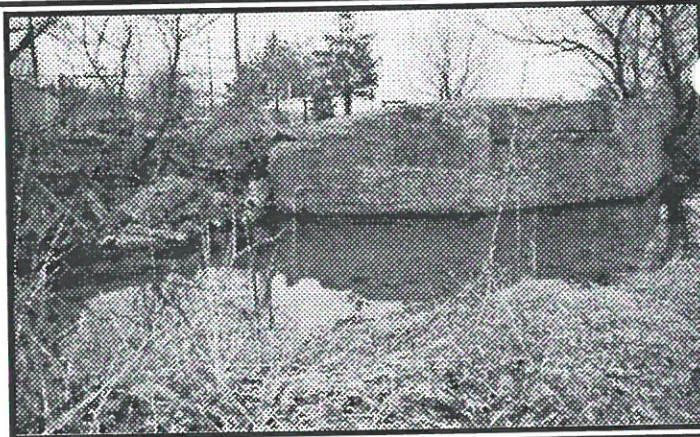
Just south of the present Lagro High School building there was, and still is, a wide place in the canal called the basin. In this basin a freight boat was abandoned and a short distance to the east of it a packet boat was left to its fate. The cabin of the packet was a "rendezvous" (whatever that is?) for older boys and men who wished to indulge in the great American pastime—poker. The packet boat, which was just below the hill from our home, was later taken apart by a man named Watkins and the timber appropriated to his own use. The hull remained visible for many years.

On the night of June 18, 1885 fire was discovered in the McNown furniture factory. The alarm was sounded and hundreds of people gathered at the scene. In those days when a fire alarm sounded everybody grabbed a bucket or two if they had that many. Every able bodied man or woman was a potential fire fighter. The famous Lagro "Bucket Brigade" went into action, forming a line to the river, women and girls on the empty side and men and boys on the other. This Brigade, which had saved the town many times before, was unable to cope with this raging conflagration. Great piles of lumber were being licked up by the flames that were traveling toward a huge warehouse of canal days. Should this building be reached the town was doomed. Appeals for aid were sent to Wabash and Huntington. Reese Eaton, famous fire fighter and driver of his day, responded at once and, driving his noble steeds to their limit, brought the fire fighting apparatus of Wabash to the scene. This apparatus was run by man power. It was driven into the river and crews of men, taking turns at the pump, saved the town. Huntington had been notified that Eaton was on his way. Their apparatus was loaded and "standing by" ready for the call if needed.

These animals, trained to get to a fire with all possible speed, never faltered. They dragged this three and one half ton apparatus over a road typical of that age, up hill and down hill, a distance of six miles in twenty-eight minutes and, if you are asking me, that was making real time. One of those noble creatures gave the "full measure", dying shortly after reaching the scene. The other never fully recovered. Speaking of unsung heroes, monuments have been erected to horses for less heroic deeds.

Years ago I heard some one predict that the day would come when (interurban) cars driven by electricity would travel up and down the old tow path. This sounded like a wild dream yet it came, flourished for a while and a few more years will see its passing due to the pressure of more advanced methods in travel and freight transportation. What changes may come in the next fifty years? Who knows?

The town of Lagro had numerous "famous characters" eccentrics in other words. Joe Simpson (Cheyenne), one time night watchman, as a side line



The concrete abutments of the interurban (right) remain just above the Kerr Lock in Lagro. To the left of it are the remains of the canal aqueduct that crossed the creek. Photo by Bob Schmidt

cleaned up the saloons preparatory to the days business. Jim Smith (Savy), a Civil War veteran had so many bullet holes in his body it wouldn't hold water so he drank whiskey instead. Fitzgerald always wore a red flannel vest winter and summer. Jesse Chamber, an Englishman born in England, had rooms in the Town Hall that are now occupied by the Township Trustee. Chambers was never known to work yet he always had money, which caused a good deal of head and tongue wagging on the part of the wisecracks. Charles Ditton Sr., according to his own statement, "Poured a good farm and threshing outfit down his throat." Hank Stevens, a hog buyer, always had a chew of fine cut tobacco hanging about half way out of his mouth. There were various others with outstanding peculiarities.

Among those helping materially to make Lagro a flourishing town were: Hugh McNown, a sturdy Scotchman, who founded the McNown Furniture Factory about one hundred years ago; Eph Kellar and Andy Egnew - hotel keepers; E. W. Benjamin, who founded a tannery about 1836 and later sold to Charles Brenniger, Sr.; John Wayman - grain dealer; Judge Lowry; Scherschel Bros. (Joseph and Nick), with their stave factory and a number of others who have long ago passed on to their reward but left behind a job well done.

That portion of the town east of the creek was known years ago as Hell's Half Acre and was occupied by several families who had migrated, as they said, from Wildcat Creek and were locally known as "The Cats."

Their indoor and outdoor sport was fighting. They would fight at the drop of a hat and if the hat didn't drop they fought anyway. Both north and south of Lagro lived some "Fighting Irish," who enjoyed a good scrap as much as some folks enjoy strawberry short cake, and the streets of Lagro on a Saturday night were often the scene of a beautiful scrap between some Fighting Irish and Cats. It made no difference who got licked for "a good time was had by all." Any one looking for a fight in those days was accommodated forthwith.

vicinity. These bad men from the bad lands sent word that on a certain Saturday night they were coming in to take the town. Different factions in and around Lagro might fight among themselves, but they "teamed up" on a common foe. The pipeline gang came on schedule, but the working schedule of the gang had to be deferred for about a week afterward to give the gang time to recuperate. Nevertheless, Irish, Cats, Pipeliners and everybody else had a swell time. The pipeline gang was to have received their next pay at Lagro, but they wouldn't come after it. The paymaster had to take their payroll to Andrews and paid off there. The pipeliners had visited Lagro once and probably the water did not agree with them. At least none of them ever came back.

Some years ago a pipeline was being laid, across the county, about five miles east of Lagro by a gang of "foreigners" which meant not natives of Lagro or

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

CSI welcomes aboard the following new members who have joined at the membership level unless otherwise noted.

Dennis Ide - Logansport, IN

2003 Contributions To Canal Society of Indiana (cont.)

\$30 Contributor

Marvin Carmony

Todd & Cathy Freeland

Troy Jones

David Trainer (\$44)

Western Wayne Heritage

\$50 Patron

Dan & Susan Yoder

Western Wayne Heritage
P.O. Box 254
Cambridge City, IN 47327
January 23, 2003

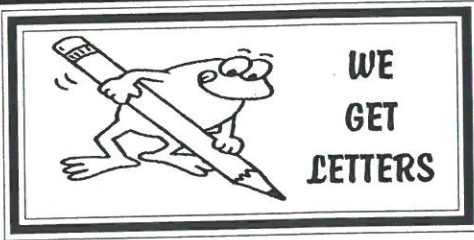
Robert Schmidt, President
Canal Society of Indiana
P.O. Box 40087
Ft. Wayne, IN 46804

Dear Members of the Canal Society of Indiana

Western Wayne Heritage thanks you so much for your generous donation of \$2000. Jerry (Mattheis, CSI board member from Cambridge City) suggested at our November meeting that we paint a mural on the wall where the Whitewater Canal crossed under the National Road. Our group loved the idea. At our January meeting, we set up a committee to look for old Canal pictures and discuss where and how the mural should be done. Many of the members in our group are wary of displaying it on a wall where kids may deface it. At our meeting, someone suggested that we paint the mural on the wall in the front hallway in the Vintner House. We are open to all possibilities and will be waiting for a report at our next meeting. I will keep you updated on any reports that the committee brings to the group. We also welcome your ideas and suggestions.

Thank you again,

Lori Griffin, Secretary
Western Wayne Heritage, Inc.



Dear Sir,

I am searching for information about Francisco, Indiana, which is a little town on the lower (Wabash &) Erie Canal. The people I contacted there knew very little about the history of their town., My ancestors were close by and their last name was Francisco. I believe he worked on the canal. Could you tell me if records were kept of the workmen? I know this is a long shot. Any guidance will be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Linda Francisco Battle
dlbat@nub-z.net

Dear Linda,

In regards to your question about a canal worker named Francisco, I have searched what few census records we have of canal construction camps and nearby towns in Daviess, Pike and Greene counties. Unfortunately I do not have an 1850 census for Gibson county. I would suggest that you check that census since the Wabash and Erie Canal was being built through the county in that year. Francisco is located in Section 19 of Center township in Gibson county.

I found the following information in **Indiana Place Names** by Ronald L. Baker and Marvin Carmony:

Francisco town in Gibson County.

Platted in 1851. According to legend, it was named for a Spanish laborer working on the Wabash and Erie Canal. He was fired, built a shack her, and became the first settler.

The information I found when

writing "The Final Link" tour guide of the Wabash & Erie Canal in Gibson, Pike, Daviess and Greene counties for the Canal Society of Indiana's tour in March 1998 is quoted here:

"From Port Gibson the Wabash & Erie Canal continued northeast through the highlands of Pigeon summit that divides the watershed between Pigeon Creek and the Patoka river. The first settlers in the area near Francisco were William and Catherine Hensley Reavis who came in 1817. In 1818 William's two brothers and their families joined them. David Johnson moved from his original home in Gibson county, where he settled in 1810, to the area around Francisco in 1817. Other families drifted in and settled. But the advent of the canal spurred John Perkins to plat and lay out the town of Francisco in January 6, 1851 on the east side of the canal in Center township. Perkins built several business buildings, two flouring mills and a sawmill. He was also a merchant and a dealer in real estate.

"In the early 1850s there were two established roads that led to Francisco. One was a road that ran south from Hugh Murphy's blacksmith shop to Evansville and the other ran west from that shop to Princeton. Two other winding country roads ran to Somerville and to Oakland City. At that time the village consisted of about 12 homes. A grist mill where John Shanner lived stood on the canal bank. South of it was located the saw mill and lag house, which stood beside the canal bridge. The post office, conducted by John Perkins, was on Main street. The mail arrived and was distributed every Saturday. There was a frame school house (16 ft. x 18 ft.) which also served as a church.

"Aunt Nancy" (Granny McConnell) was called in to help with all illnesses since there was no practicing physician. Her charge for obstetrics was two dollars and fifty

cents. No road was too muddy, no woods too dark, no weather too bad for her to answer the call of someone in need.

"In November of 1857 a tornado set down near the head of the old reservoir, proceeded north-east through heavily timbered land, and hit the town of Francisco. Several buildings were wrecked, some people were seriously injured, but no one was killed.

"By 1858 Francisco boasted three large pork packing houses and warehouses, three large grain warehouses, several general stores and a few smaller businesses. The early pioneer businessmen were Reuben Baldwin, William Moore, S. G. Barnett and Moore & Knowles.

"During the Civil War a stranger came to Francisco, who was thought to be a southern spy interested in Morgan's movement. When some of Francisco's soldiers came home on furlough accompanied by some boys from southern states, it was mentioned that this stranger named Worrell lived among them. He came onto the street at about that time and one of the Tennessee soldiers (Wells) deliberately shot and killed him. Worrell was buried in the Francisco cemetery. Wells was quickly sent to Evansville. There were a few Francisco citizens who held southern sympathies. They were know as "Copperheads" or "Butternuts" and met secretly as the "Knights of the Golden Circle." Some of the women indulged in hair pulling when they heard treasonous words spoken by another woman.

"Getting the news of the war was so important that clubs were formed that met at members' homes to hear the news. Since the mail arrived only weekly, they sent someone every day to Princeton to pick up the mail from the Francisco box and bring back the **Evansville Journal** and the **Cincinnati Gazette** or **Enquirer**. If real important news from

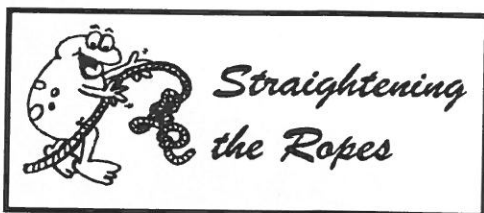
Enquirer. If real important news from the front was to be reported, the church bell was rung outside of regular worship hours. Many learned of the death of a relative in this manner.

"Francisco was incorporated as a town in 1907. The Francisco State Bank was organized in 1908 and its building cost \$1,900 to erect."

The Wabash and Erie Canal was abandoned south of Terre Haute in 1861. Only short stretches were used locally.

I am very interested in what you learn about your ancestor. I will publish your request in *The Hoosier Packet*, our society's news and journal, and ask other members if they have any further information. I would also like to publish what you find.

Carolyn Schmidt, Editor



Charles Davis wishes a correction be made in his article "Those Arabs and Their Wabash & Erie Canal Connections" that appeared in *The Hoosier Packet* Vol. 1 No. 4 August 2002 on page 6 column 1 paragraph 2 line 9. It should read: "Rich was born to William and Sarah F. (Lamb) Davis in Guilford County, North Carolina."

Charles found the following information about Rich Davis in *Montgomery's Park and Fountain Counties, Indiana* published by Chapman Brothers of Chicago in 1893:

"Rich Davis is an example of the sturdy self-made man, having commenced at the bottom round of the

ladder leading to success and having steadily, as the years elapsed, ascended until he has reached a desirable position, both financially and as regards the place he holds in the hearts of his fellow citizens. Since 1844 he has been active in Democratic political circles, though he is not an office seeker. He was elected as Township Trustee just before the war, but refused to serve, preferring to give his attention to his business and home affairs. He owns a well cultivated and improved farm, on Sections 8 and 9, where he has made his home for about half a century.

"Mr. Davis was born September 10, 1820, Guilford County, No. C., and is the son of William and Sarah F. (Lamb) Davis. Grandfather John Davis was of English origin, and was a soldier in the war of the thirteen colonies for their independence. His wife was a Miss Rich, and both died in North Carolina. Mr. Davis was a farmer by occupation. Both he and his wife were members of the Baptist Church. Our subject's father was born in North Carolina, where he died about the year 1825. He followed the trade of a black-smith and wagon-maker, and religiously was a member of the Missionary Baptist denomination.

"Mrs. Davis, who was born in Randolph County, No. C., was the daughter of Benjamin Lamb, of French descent and a member of the Society of Friends. Our subject is one of seven children. John died in Wabash Township, Ind.; Benjamin was killed in a runaway accident; Martin died in the state our subject was born in; Rich is our subject; Mary is the wife of Cidrick Omstott, deceased; William, who served in the Mexican War, died in Missouri; Elizabeth, the youngest, departed this life in the same state.

"After his father's death our subject's mother married Absalom Hayworth, a farmer, and in 1827 they removed by wagons to Vigo County, Ind., where they landed Christmas Day, having been four weeks on the road. In 1820 they settled in Wabash Township, of this county, where Mr. Hayworth entered forty ares of land. In the spring of 1840 he sold his farm and migrated to Yaney County, Mo., where he was killed in 1863 by Kansas Jayhawkers. (Our subject's half brother was killed at the same time.) He was a Democrat in politics. Soon

after his removal to Missouri his wife departed this life. By her second union she became the mother of four children: Ruth, Joab, Rebecca, and Allen (the one killed). She was reared in the faith and was a member of the Society of Friends.

"After receiving only a limited district school education, Rich Davis, at the age of sixteen, commenced carving out his fortune. He began by working in a woolen mill at Mecca, receiving \$12 a month and keeping steadily at work for six years. In 1842 he ran a steam sawmill on Rocky Run, receiving fair wages, and at the expiration of two years he purchased eighty acres of farm land on Section 8, the place which is still his home. He has since increased the boundaries of his farm and he is now the owner of a place of one hundred and sixty acres, the usual size of farms which are thoroughly cultivated and all in use. When he took possession the place had been but little cleared and had but few improvements upon it. All this is now changed and the place has literally been made to "blossom like the rose." For thirty years, during the winter season, Mr. Davis has been engaged in rendering lard for packing houses at Armiesburg and Montezuma, at which occupation he makes \$3 a day.

"Mr. Davis has been twice married, his first wife being Mary Hayworth, daughter of James and Sarah F. (Winn) Hayworth. To them were born a large family of children. Sarah died at the age of two years; Alexander departed this life when four years old; Commodore is a resident of Hoopeston Ill.; Martha died aged eighteen years; Mary died when twenty-three on the home farm; Willard, Charles and Minda, of Terre Haute, complete the list. Minda is the wife of W. Williams, of Terre Haute, in which city Frank also resides; Willard died when one year old. The mother of these children was called to her final rest January 20, 1887. Mr. Davis' present wife is Mary, widow of Henry Bascomb, and daughter of Floyd Burke, who came from Kentucky to Indiana in 1826, and is now deceased."



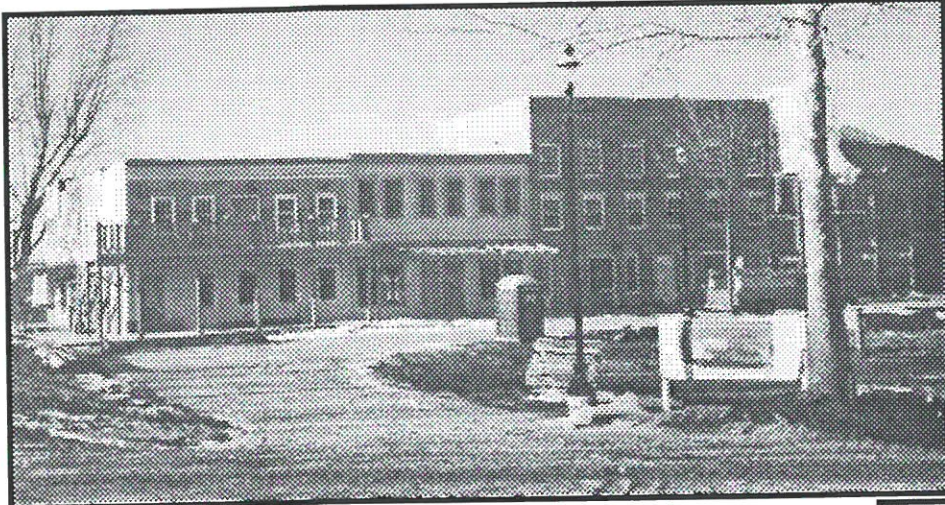
NEWS FROM DELPHI

Text and photographs
by Dan McCain

At the halfway mark the
INDOT / DNR / Community
Foundation funded Wabash & Erie
Canal Conference and Interpretive

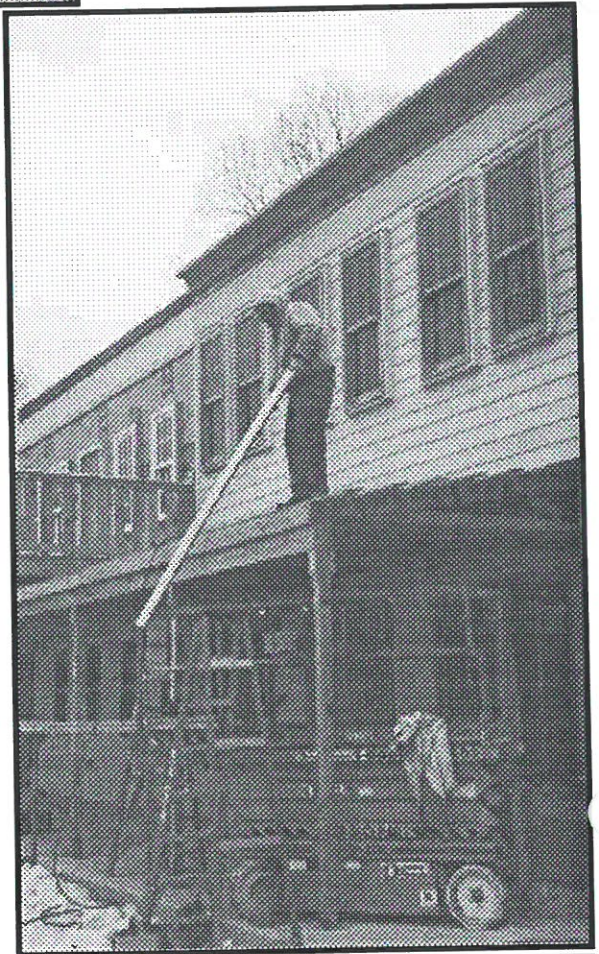
Center building is making a showing.
Individual and business donors are
helping construct the gallery exhibits
and furnishings in time for a grand
opening slated for July 4-5, 2003

The facades represent
buildings in downtown Delphi in the
1850s -- there is a story behind each
of the many storefronts on all four
sides of this 12,000 square foot
community building. The City of
Delphi and the Wabash & Erie Canal
Association are cooperating to make
this a unique "destination point" on
the map.



C
A
N
A
L

M
U
S
E
U
M

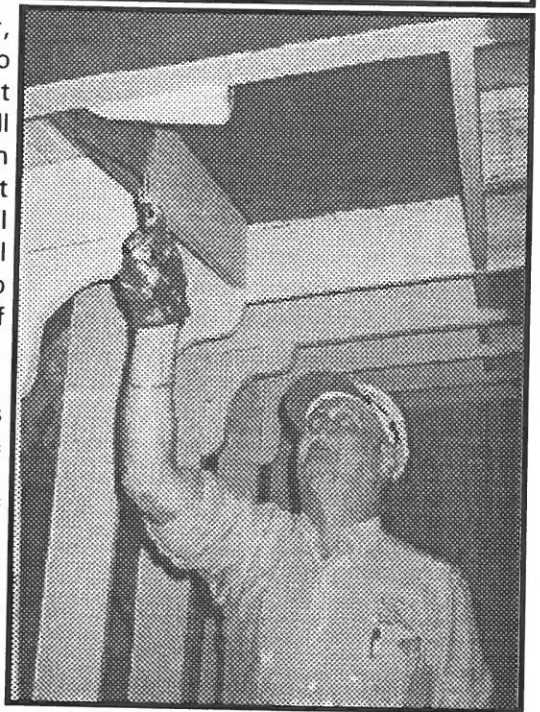


January 29 was a SPECIAL DAY for the Wabash & Erie Canal volunteers working on Interpretive Center exhibits. The massive 9 X 10 foot full scale replica lock gate was uprighted and placed in its position in the new museum. Some of the timbers came from the Forks of the Wabash site near Huntington, IN where a similar structure was unearthed during US 24 highway construction in 1999.

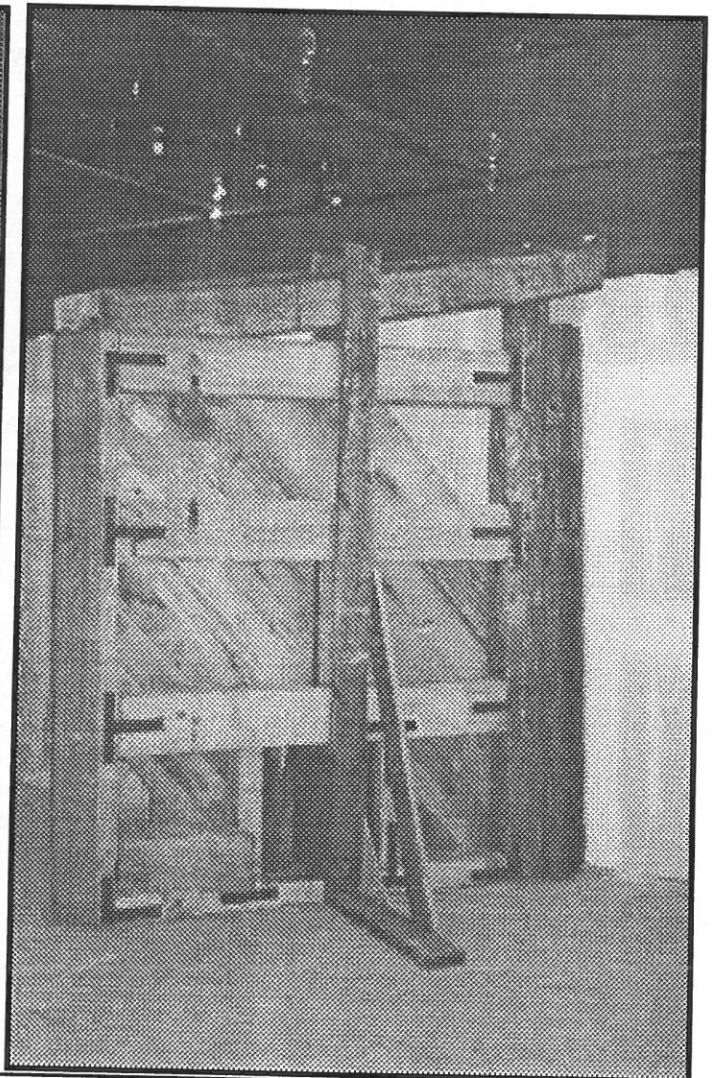
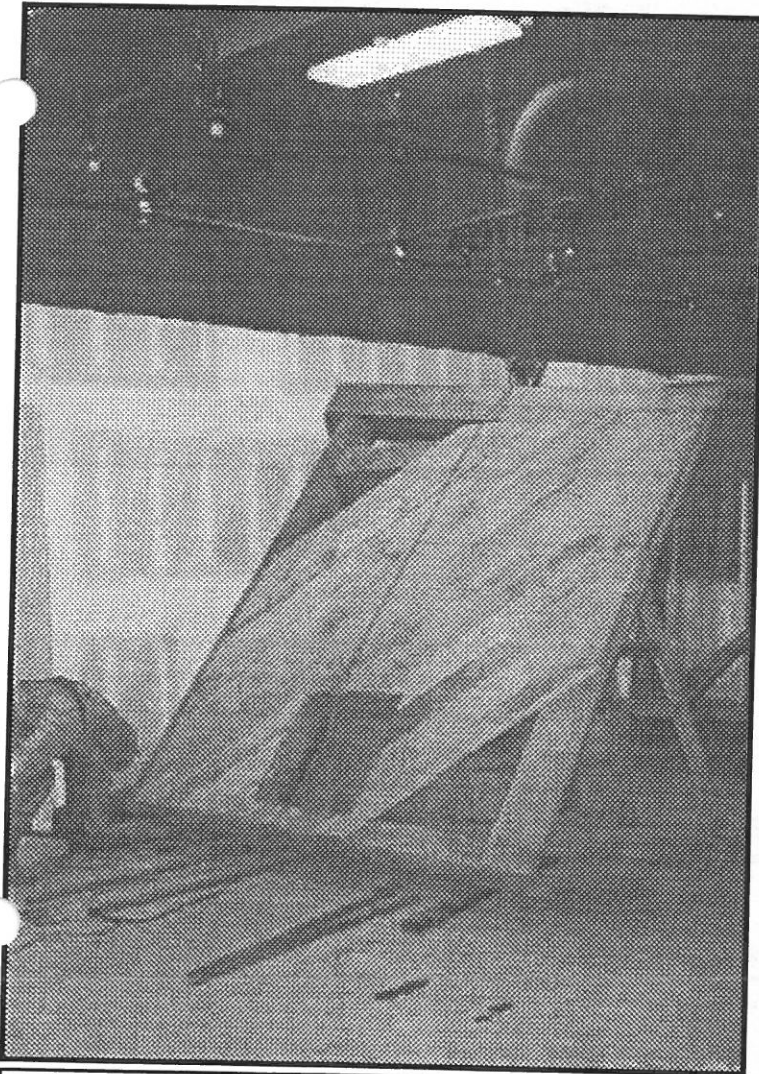
A brand new volunteer, Dieter Hantschel came wanting to help paint. He placed the first coat of primer inside the wooden full scale Canal Boat Cabin. When completed this cabin will sport vivid colors much like the canal boats of yesteryear. The boat will rest on hidden air cushions to provide the visitors an illusion of being on water in a real boat.

Careful planning for lifting this "hefty" object was performed by retiree Roy Patrick from Buck Creek. Four other volunteers came to help just as they do on a rather regular M-W-F schedule to create the many exhibits and displays being crafted to depict the canal era of the 1850s along this nation's longest manmade waterway.

Funding for exhibits is coming from a grant from Wabash Heritage Corridor Funds administered by Indiana Department of Natural Resources' DHPA division, individuals and business donors. Volunteers make the difference in Delphi as they make up most of the required "grant match" with their offer of hundreds of hours of skilled time.



Photos by Dan McCain

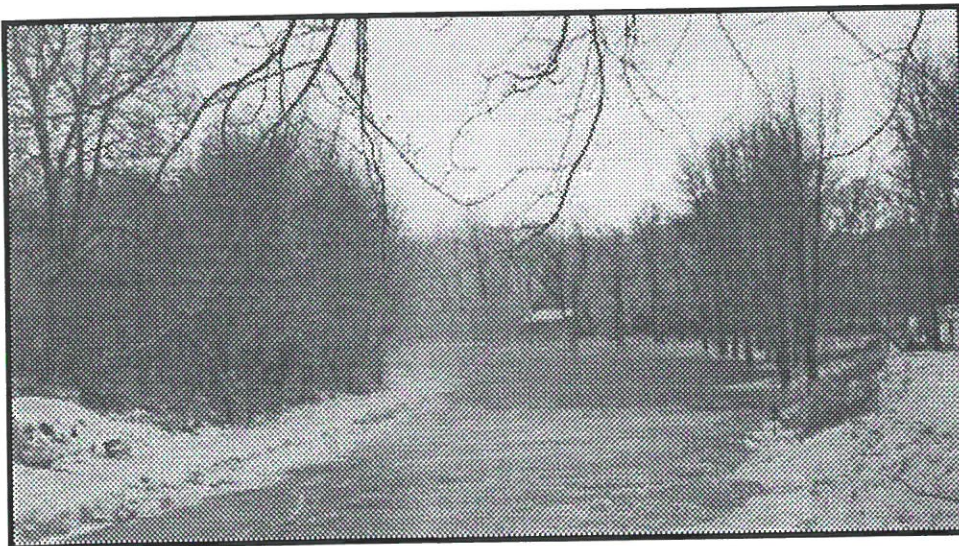
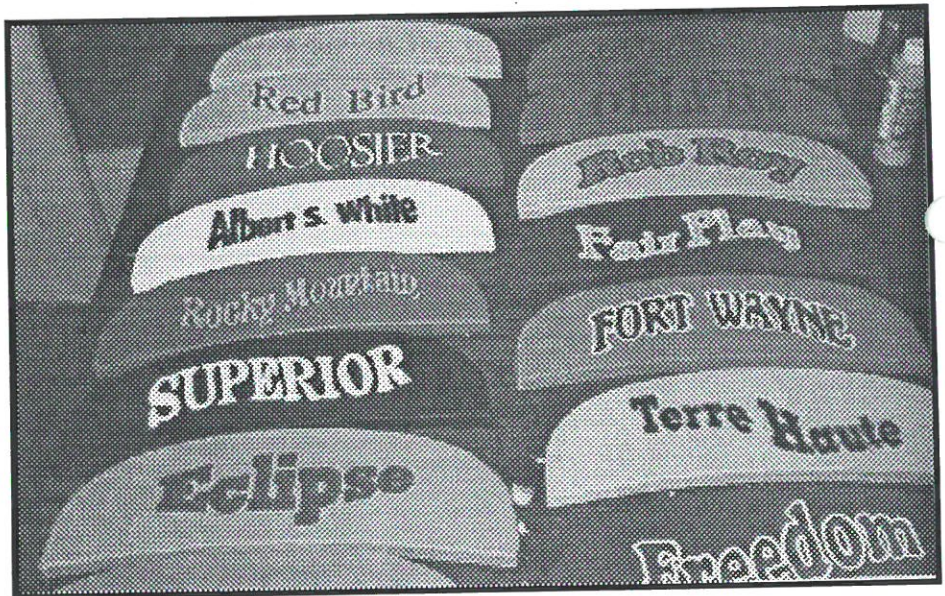


Cindy Calahan volunteered to prepare one of the special parts of an exhibit for the new Canal Interpretive Center. She and a friend have painted shapes cut from poplar boards and smoothed by volunteer Bill Draper. Cindy selected vibrant colors (just like those used on real canal boats of the 1850s) and prepared the unique patterns of names common to the original traveling craft. The exhibit will be one of many in the new museum slated to open beside the watered canal July 4-5, 2003 in Delphi, Indiana.

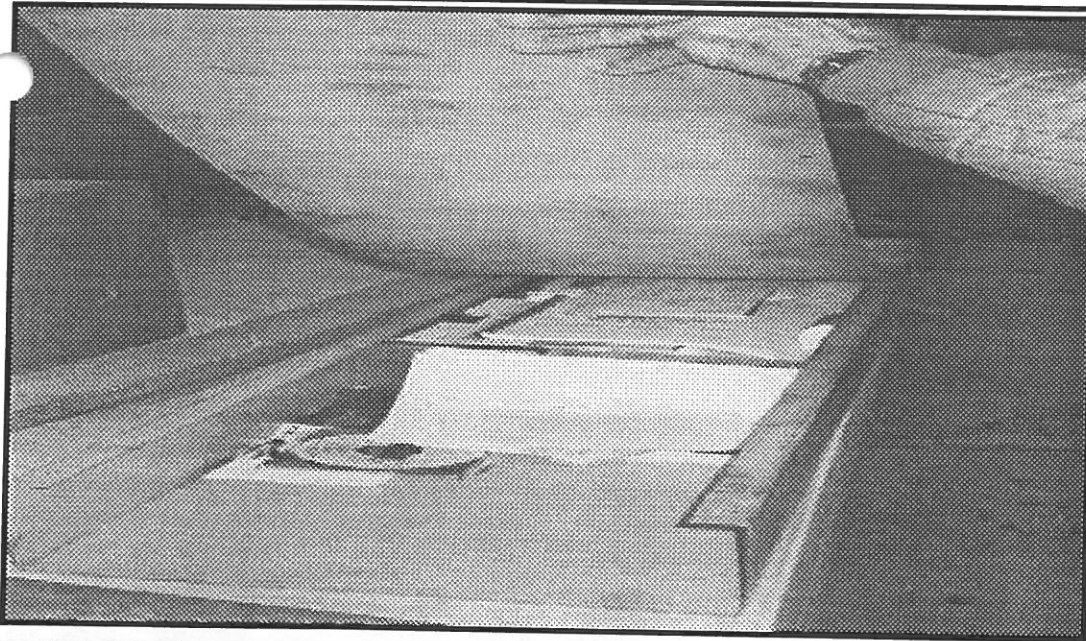


Boats sported their names on large signs about 12-14 feet wide across the back of the craft. Colors in that day were bright and sometimes gaudy as the people of that era were experimenting with color in their lives. The boat brightened the otherwise dingy Wabash & Erie Canal towpath banks as it traversed the 468 miles from Toledo, Ohio to Evansville, Indiana.

Photos by Dan McCain

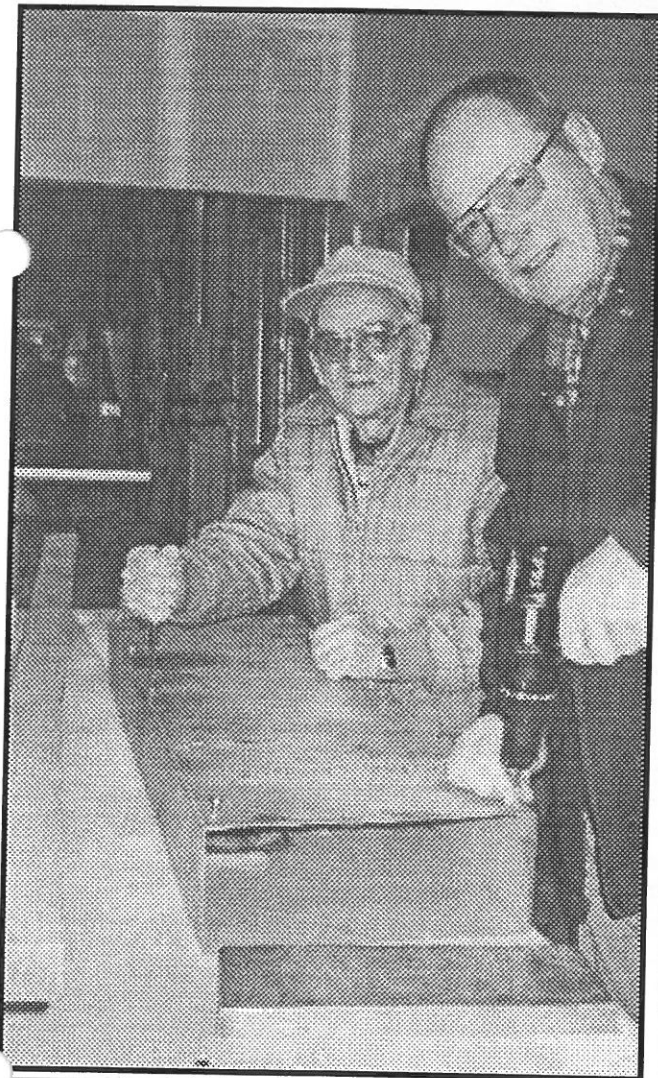


This mid-winter scene is along a portion of the Wabash & Erie Canal in the north end section of Delphi's 2.5 miles of watered and mostly reconstructed canal. It was a busy site in the 1840-1870s. Just above the curve in the towpath trail was a "canal boat turnaround" or turning basin for the 80 foot long boats. The Wabash & Erie Canal was most often constructed 40 feet wide and 4 feet deep. The turnaround was much wider.



T
I
M
E

C
A
P
S
U
L
E



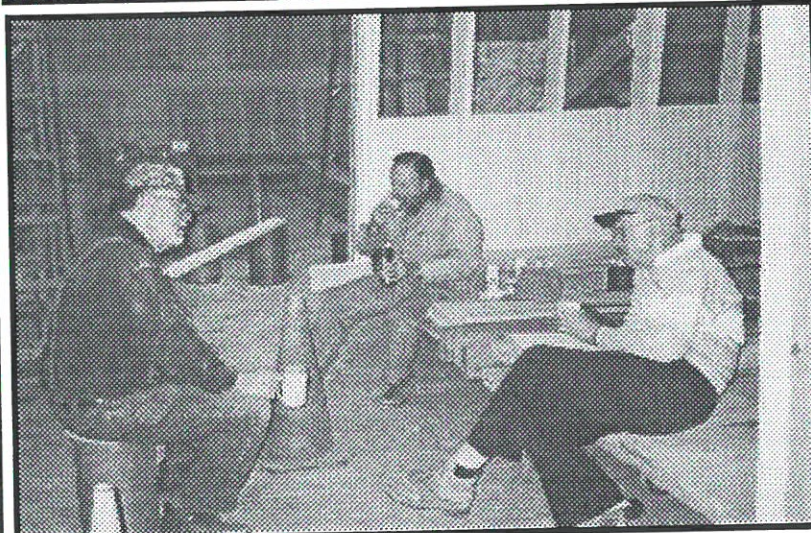
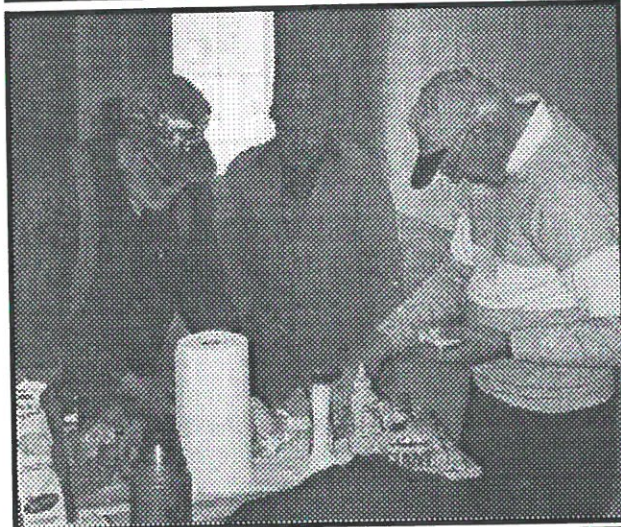
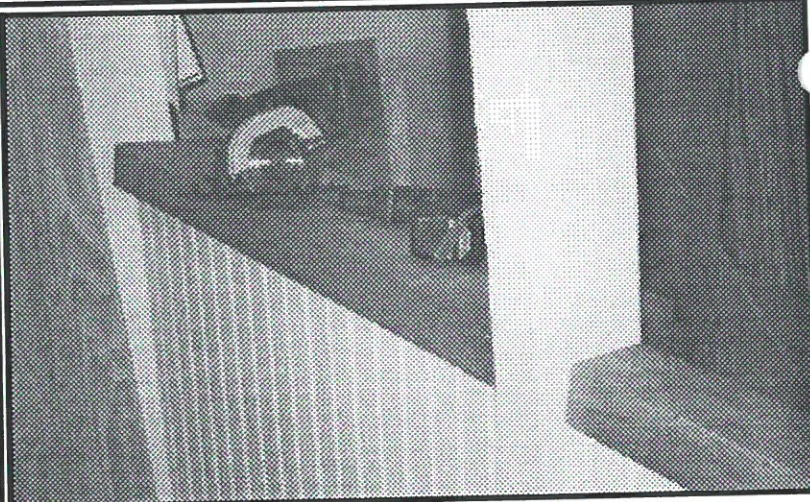
Bill Draper and Dan McCain seal the time capsule.

A "TIME CAPSULE" has been hidden between a wall in the lobby of the new Canal Conference and Interpretive Center. For the next 50 to 100 years the materials placed in this metal case will not see the light of day. The materials donated included coins, documents, newspapers, reports, business cards, etc. that reflect present conditions. The idea for the capsule was promoted by Carroll County Wabash & Erie Canal, Inc. board member Ed Gruber.



Mark Smith, Dan McCain, Ed Gruber & Bill Draper show the time capsule ready to be placed in the wall of the museum.

Photos supplied by Dan McCain



Volunteers work on the walnut gunwales of the canal boat cabin display being built in the Canal Interpretive Museum in Delphi, IN. They break for a lunch of sandwiches and chips and enjoy being together.

Photos by Dan McCain

Construction continues on the Canal Interpretive Center exhibit. Volunteers pour their creative talents into the many displays being built this winter. Working inside the new Center allows for putting exhibits together. This donated time and materials help match the grant money needed for the many other varied materials that must be purchased. When finished a dozen galleries with over 150 exhibits will be in place in this new Delphi attraction.

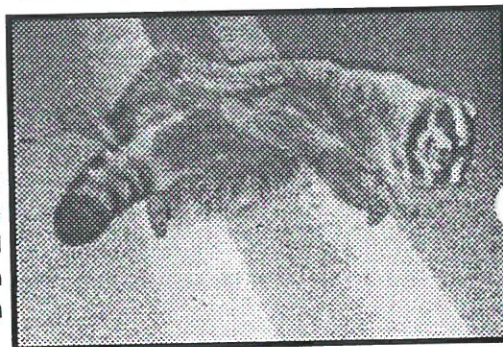
The Canal Boat "Dora Mayhill" will rest on the floor indoors with air bags under it to give the feeling of the boat being on water as the visitor steps from a slightly elevated "dock" into the cabin. The

craftsmen are painting the ceiling and installing the "gunwale" (gun'l) or upper edge of the boat's side. Note the use of real walnut 3 inches thick and a foot wide which later will be sealed and the wood's color left natural. Beautiful walnut logs were given to the Canal Association last summer by the City of Delphi Parks Department. The volunteers helped cut these massive planks and some other dimensional lumber for use in the exhibits. This winter the wood was dried next to a wood furnace in a basement of one of the volunteers.

Many items are built from native wood just as they would have been 150 years ago when the canal was bustling with activity. Rough sawed hardwood posts for use in

other "street scene" displays will be cut soon in Canal Park if the winter conditions permit.

The volunteers are handy craftsmen, who work regularly on Mon., Wed. and Fri. mornings. We can always use more helpers. See the fun they have together at lunch and on breaks. The real volunteers don't take naps as this "bandit" did.



IN THE NEWS

2002

Spring - Maumee Valley

Heritage News, the newsletter of the Maumee Valley Heritage Corridor, carried an article entitled "Canal Tour Covers Fort Wayne to Napoleon, Ohio Section." It said that "Canalabration" was the theme of CSI's 25th anniversary, spring tour. Tour participants saw the beach around glacial Lake Maumee, the new Canal Landing Park in New Haven, IN, and lock sites. They learned two ways a stream can pass beneath a canal and how mule teams crossed the river when the canal switched sides. Other stops included Junction, OH, where the Miami & Erie Canal split for Cincinnati and the Wabash & Erie continued westward; the huge six-mile Reservoir, which fed the canal during dry periods; and Independence Dam State Park for a box lunch overlooking the Maumee River.

November 23 - Albany, NY

"Unlocking The Way West Shovel by Shovel" was the title of an article that appeared on the Internet about archaeological digs on the Erie Canal in New York state. Dr. Stephen Jones, a visiting professor of anthropology at Union College in Schenectady; Dennis Foley, a Union College research professor in anthropology; and their Union College colleagues have been digging for remnants of the original 363-mile-long Erie Canal centimeter by centimeter. They hoped to find the remains of Lock No. 53.

Using maps, charts and careful calculations, the archaeologists have uncovered a weigh lock that was used to determine what

tolls to charge boats, the foundation of a toll collector's house that had grand columns, and granite blocks that topped a wall of a lock from a later expansion of the Erie Canal in an area about a mile from Albany filled with warehouses and vacant lots. This year in a wooded area they found bits of clay pipes probably used by canal travelers and tossed overboard, an iron handle probably from a hay-bale pick, and lots of slag. The slag remains a mystery since there is no industry recorded close by to explain this type of slag.

Foley and F. Andrew Wolfe, chairman of the civil engineering department at Union College started the search for Erie Canal locks several years ago comparing old and modern maps to calculate where the locks had been. However, they have found that the maps were not always reliable. Streetscapes have changed.

They dug a few test holes and found Lock No. 1 beside a parking lot (The locks on the original Erie Canal were numbered east and west from Rome, N.Y.). Old maps showed Lock No. 53 was on the same mile-long basin. Records show that it was a wood and stone structure that raised and lowered boats between the Hudson River and the canal. Finding it has been frustrating.

According to Foley "This (Erie Canal) is the start of everything. The start of the westward movement. This is what made New York the Empire State. This is what made New York City the pre-eminent commercial city in the United States."

The Erie Canal, the first important national waterway to be built in the U. S., came just at the right time. DeWitt Clinton championed building the canal and had been both the mayor of New York City and New York state governor by the time it was completed. To open up the west

canal laborers dug the ditch and built locks installed with the equipment to make them functional at a time when there were no roads over which to haul the supplies they needed.

DeWitt Clinton's enemies derided him calling the canal "Clinton's Ditch." However, when it opened in 1825 and Clinton made an inaugural trip from Buffalo to Albany and then down the Hudson River to New York City amid cannon's booming at intervals all the way, they looked foolish. Shortly thereafter the Erie became a moneymaker. Raw materials could be shipped much cheaper than before and travel time was shortened. A two week trip by wagon between Albany and Buffalo could be done in six days by canal.

Before long, canal mania captured America. Over 4,000 miles of waterways throughout the county were built opening up back-woods areas. Traffic on the Erie itself became so strong that it was modernized several times. Each time the number of locks was reduced (83 to 35) by making higher lifts on those used. The canal was rerouted and, eventually, only short stretches of the original Erie were followed by the New York State Barge Canal.

A 1972 study said that all structures of the original Erie were demolished. Perhaps the archaeologists will find the exact location of Lock No. 53. They are digging in an area where the mules were unhitched from the canal boats and "steam-powered predecessors of tugboats took over for the ride down the Hudson to New York."

Dan McCain, CSI board member, Delphi

December - Maumee, OH

"The Miami-Erie Canal Ran Right Through Maumee" was the title of an article in Bend Of The River. The author, Henry E. Jacobs, reminisces about how the Great Depression hit his family. They went from a life of luxury in Wildwood to

the low-rent district in Maumee, OH.. His father owned a company, which manufactured hot plates, curling irons, fans, ovens and vacuum sweepers and employed several hundred workers, until it went into receivership and he was barred from its doors. The family had to move. They rented a house on Askin Street in Maumee (Miami), Ohio.

The Village of Maumee was born across the Maumee River from Fort Meigs, one of three forts (Meigs, Miamis, & Industry [Toledo]) erected along the river during the French & Indian War. With the coming of the Miami & Erie Canal the small town flourished. The canal passed through the town and had a side-cut and locks that gave canal boats access to the Maumee River. The canal terminated at Toledo.

Arriving in Maumee in the summer of 1931, the family met Mr. Richardson, who was a machine-gun dealer and owner of the house they were renting. The house was located on a corner double lot, which had a huge side yard that was mainly buckwheat; a garage that was two stories high and could hold three cars in length; a barn for chickens with a chicken run; and an outhouse. A small orchard with apple, cherry, peach and pear trees provided his mother with fruit to can to help them through the Depression. They also made a crock of wine from grapes grown on the property.

The house itself was nice, but it was the canal that made the young boy know he could live there. The house was the last house on Askin Street, which dead-ended at the raised towpath banks of the Miami & Erie Canal. One block over stood huge stone and cement walls of the lock and the abandoned lock-tenders

house. There would be much for a young boy to do.

Dick Kudner, CSI member, Perrysburg, OH

December 16 - Grand Rapids, OH

"G. Rapids To Use Canal For Skating" proclaimed the *Sentinel-Tribune* of Wood County, OH. At a city council meeting in early December 2002 it was decided "to lower the (Gilead Sidecut) canal so there would be two to three feet of ice," which could be used for old-fashioned ice skating. It was pointed out that the ice already on the canal had to thaw in order to lower the canal. If it were lowered without the thaw, the new ice would be jagged and have a rough surface.

Once the canal was lowered and new smooth ice formed, it would be available for skating both during the day and at night. It would be lighted by lights installed in the boat dock area. Boats were removed from the water for the winter.

Dick Kudner, CSI member, Perrysburg, OH

2003

January 15 - Hamilton, OH

The Hamilton, OH *Journal News* ran an article entitled "Electric Mule Failed To Kick-start Canal Business." "The Miami & Erie Canal, a 249-mile-long waterway, which connected Toledo on Lake Erie to Cincinnati on the Ohio River, was first opened from Middletown and Hamilton to Cincinnati in 1827. In its peak year of 1851 there were about 400 boats operating on the canal. But within the decade, railroads had siphoned off much of its traffic. Eventually the state stopped operation in 1877 and there was limited use of short sections.

In 1901, an attempt was

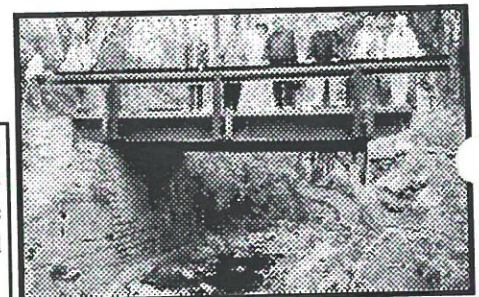
made by the privately-owned Miami & Erie Canal Transportation Company (M&ECTC), under the authorization of the state, to revive the canal from Dayton to Cincinnati through Butler County by electric-powered engines referred to as "electric mules." These 20-30 ton locomotives would replace the horses and mules that pulled earlier boats four miles-per-hour along the towpaths.

The M&ECTC laid tracks along the towpath. Utility poles were erected. Trolley lines were hung overhead to transmit electricity bought from Cincinnati Edison Co. Lighting was installed for night passenger and freight service.

The state of Ohio in February of that year began repair of embankments. It also dredged the canal between Dayton and Cincinnati to a depth of 5 feet.

Those reviving the canal faced many legal obstacles. Middletown filed an injunction in March 1902 against the M&ECTC because it hadn't asked the city for permission to "construct track, poles and wire." Its plan was also opposed by railroad and interurban companies. They thought this was a ruse to eventually establish rival rail service after abandoning the canal. This rivalry was so strong that the Cincinnati, Hamilton & Dayton Railroad never allowed the M&ECTC to cross its tracks south of Middletown. It went so far as to station a locomotive, caboose and crew at the point where the canal was proposed to cross the rails.

The "electric mule" made its first trip between Hamilton and Port



Canawlers stand on a towpath bridge looking toward the Port Union aqueduct of the Miami & Erie Canal on the CSO "Pigs, Paper & Pilsner" tour. They saw a rail from the "electric mule" behind them on the right. CSI members walked the towpath to the aqueduct following lunch on the CSI "Pigs, Paper & Pilsner" tour in the fall of 2002 and did not find the rail.

Photo by Bob Schmidt

Union ("Five Mile Level" that had no locks) in April 1902. It pulled six boats filled with building supplies for the men working on the line.

The general manager of the M&ECTC was not discouraged. In October 1902, even though he was struggling with delays in construction, he wrote: "More freight is offered us than we can handle, and we have now contracted for every pound of freight that our boats can transport this fall. We will work 40 or 50 boats, too, and will enlarge the fleet as fast as necessary and as fast as we can build the boats. Our rates will not be much lower, if any, than those of the railroads, but we believe that by saving the manufacturers along the canal cartage, we will enable them to effect a great saving, enough to make it worth their while to patronize us.

"Our boats will not make the maximum of four miles an hour, which we are permitted to make under the charter, until we are thoroughly acquainted with the conditions we must work under. In any case, we will not haul them fast enough to wash the banks."

Due to the legal hurdles, the project was never completed. The tracks terminated just south of Middletown. They never reached Cincinnati. The "electric mule" plan was officially abandoned on May 3, 1905. Debts over \$2 million remained. Finally a 1912 newspaper reported on November 20th that "a large number of workmen have been busy during the past few days tearing up the tracks of the old electric mule along the Miami-Erie Canal."

John Geyer, CSI member, Hamilton, OH

January 30 - Ft. Wayne, IN

"Canal Lock's Logs Returning To Area After Being Saved" reported Fort Wayne's *The News-Sentinel*. About 30 hand-hewn logs, which are 25-30 feet long and weigh over 1,000 pounds, were put on flatbed

semi-trailers by forklifts January 30 in Indianapolis. The timbers were the rescued and later chemically treated remains of the Grandeur Lock #2 of the Wabash & Erie Canal unearthed in New Haven, IN in 1991. After treatment with polyethylene glycol in South Carolina, they were shipped to Indianapolis to be part of an exhibit on Indiana's canals in the new Indiana State Museum. When the architectural firm designing the museum was let go and another firm took over, plans for the exhibit changed due to the lock's size. Eventually only one end of the lock, which was about the size of an Olympic swimming pool, was displayed. The rest of the treated timbers were stored in an Indianapolis warehouse.

When the lease on the warehouse was nearing expiration, museum officials notified history groups that the timbers would be reburied unless some group would take the timbers. Eventhough the wood was treated, it would deteriorate if left outside or re-buried.

Officials from the New Haven Area Heritage Association and the Fort Wayne History Center found a local businessman willing to provide transportation of the timbers back to the New Haven area and free storage for them in his warehouse until a committee can decide where they will be used. He wishes to remain anonymous.

Two non-profit groups and a person planning to build a family restaurant in New Haven have already expressed interest in the timbers. The committee will consider all the potential users before making a decision.

The Gronauer Lock, one of the most complete wooden canal locks ever found, was uncovered by crews working on the interchange of U.S. 24 at I-69. It is one of the 73 wooden or stone structures that raised on lowered canal boats from

one level to another on the 468-mile-long Wabash & Erie Canal. The canal carried passengers and freight from Toledo, OH at Lake Erie to Evansville, IN at the Ohio river and to points in between.

Bob Schemed, CSI president, Ft. Wayne, IN

January 30 - Ft. Wayne, IN

The News-Sentinel of Fort Wayne carried another article "History Groups Try To Save Other Local Treasures" under the heading of Gronauer Canal Lock. It said that luckily the 165-year-old Gronauer Lock timbers were rescued from destruction by local history groups. However, many other pieces of local heritage have been lost because no one realized the significance of a building or artifact.

Tom Castaldi, CSI advisory council and Allen County Historian, met with over a dozen leaders of local history organizations on January 29. They have agreed to support a project to identify all local historic treasures including such things as archaeological sites, ancient trees and historic buildings. (ARCH, a local preservation group, has already identified most of the buildings and will add them to the project list.) The list may eventually extend to northeast Indiana.

Donn Werling, executive director of the History Center, hopes to establish a Web site where people can "learn more about important pieces of local history and how to see those that are accessible." He wants to create awareness.

Bob Schmidt, CSI president, Ft. Wayne, IN

February/March - Clinton, OH

ECHOES, the Ohio Historical Society newsletter announces the listing of the Francis Becker House, 3010 Hickory St., Clinton, OH on the National Register of Historic Places. It said the house was "built at the height of the canal era, when shipments of coal from Clinton to Cleveland via the Ohio and Erie Canal

exceeded 60,000 tons a year." Becker owned a local coal-mining and warehousing operation. He built this two-story Greek Revival-style house in 1854. It illustrates the prosperity of the canal era in Clinton's history.
Phyllis Mattheis, CSI member, Cambridge City



HOW DID CANAL BOATS PASS?

How did canal boats pass? Did one boat have to pass under the other one's tow rope? What did they do upon meeting another boat coming in the opposite direction since there was only a towpath on one side? *Cynthia Powers*

There were rules on the canal for boats passing one another. When boats approached each other from opposite directions, the hoggee stopped the mules or horses pulling the boat going down stream and the boat continued on carried by its momentum. As the tow rope became slack it fell to the bottom of the canal and the boat stayed on the berm side of the canal as it neared the animals. The boat going upstream kept its tow rope taught, stayed close to the towpath, and the animals stepped across the tow rope of the other boat while the boat passed over the slack tow rope of the other boat. Once the boat was safely across, the hoggee of the boat going down stream whipped up the animals and proceeded on the canal.

The same was true if boats were both going in the same direction and one, say a freight boat, was slower than the other, say a packet

boat. The faster packet had the right-of-way. The hoggee of the freighter stopped his animals and the freighter stayed near the berm side of the canal letting its tow rope sink to the bottom of the canal. The packet stayed on the tow path side, its animals stepped over and the packet passed over the freighter's tow rope. When they cleared, the hoggee of the freighter whipped up his animals and followed the boat that had just passed.

Problems arose when canal boats raced or one boat refused to let another pass. This is when fights between crews took place. The winner was allowed to pass. This problem was solved during one race when, in the dead of night, the hoggee quietly walked the animals around the place where one boat had stopped for the night and the crew poled the boat quietly around the other rehitching the animals once they were well past the other boat.

CANAL BOOKS

Darrell Bakken, CSI member from Indianapolis, has published his book **Now That Time Has Had Its Say** about the Central Canal and the Indianapolis Water Company. Charlie White, CSI member from Auburn, Alabama, writes that he's read the book and found it very informative.

Wanda Willis, CSI board member from Indy, writes that the first chapter in John P. McDonald's new book **Images of America: Lost Indianapolis** is about the Central Canal. It includes several pictures, which are nice. In its bibliography the author references the CSI website.

Cynthia Powers, a CSI board of directors member from Roanoke, IN., writes that she saw reference to a book entitled **Melissa and the Valley Belle** by Lola F. Tague and published by Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co., NY in 1965. She was able to get it at a Fort Wayne library where it was in storage. It's 3rd or 4th grade level reading. Melissa rides on a canal boat called the Valley Belle of which her uncle is the captain. On her first trip she travels to Lawrenceburg, IN. from her home in Metamora, IN. That fall the canal opens to Cambridge City, IN. and a race is held. The boat races from Metamora, through Milton and comes in second at Cambridge City. Reading about this race led to Cynthia's question about how canal boats pass each other.

Carolyn Schmidt, CSI editor from Fort Wayne, IN, found a romance novel set in canal times on the Illinois and Michigan Canal entitled **Canal Fever** by Shirley Reme Carroll published in 1997 by Kappa Books, Inc. The description of the canal, how it operates, travel by canal boat, and life as a locktender is accurate. The book brings to life the class struggles between the Irish and the locals in 1848. It tells of the opening of the canal that leads to the development of the then swampy town of Chicago.

Dr. Charles Gish, right, shows his arrowhead and tool collection during Delphi's "Canal Days." He will speak about Native Americans and their artifacts at the Saturday night banquet on Apr. 5 of the CSI spring "Crossing Waters" tour. Photo- Bob Schmidt

