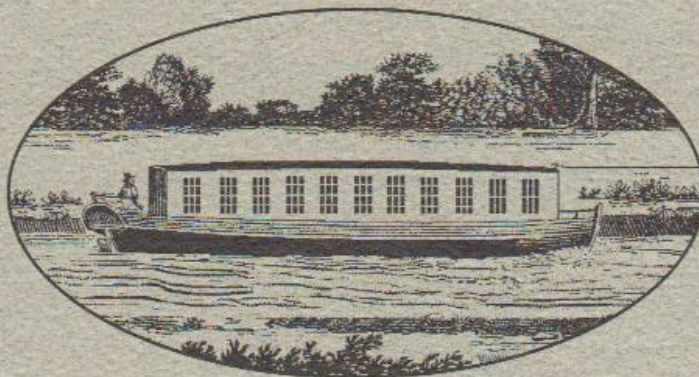


WABASH & ERTE CANAL

N O T E B O O K - II

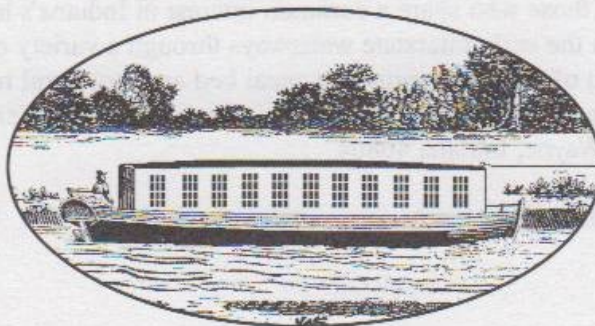
CASS, CARROLL AND TIPPECANOE COUNTIES



THOMAS E. CASTALDI

Wabash & Erie
Canal
NOTEBOOK – II

Cass, Carroll and Tippecanoe Counties of Indiana



by
Thoma E. Castaldi

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WABASH & ERIE CANAL THROUGH CASS COUNTY, INDIANA

From the time of the Woodland Indian and before, people near the confluence of the Eel and Wabash rivers have depended upon water transportation to access this north central Indiana place. The deep forest's trees have been removed and the rivers no longer serve as the main mode of travel. Rather, it is the railroads and the highways that deliver freight and move people to and from their destinations. The transition from river to rail and highway was a man-made waterway, named the Wabash & Erie Canal, that opened the Indiana heartland to the world.

Travel diaries of early canal adventurers to the region help explain some of what had to be endured. In 1765, George Croghan passed through present-day Cass County:

July 25th We sett (sic) out from this place (near Lafayette) for the Miami (Fort Wayne) and travelled the Whole way thro (sic) a fine rich Bottom over grown with Wild Hemp along side the Cuabache (Wabash) till we came to the Eel River where we arrived the 27th about 6 Miles up this River is a Small Village of the Twighteues (Miamis) Situated on a very delightful Spot of Ground on the Bank of the River.

August 1. We arrived at the Carrying Place (Huntington) between the Rivers Maimes & the cuabache which is about nine Miles long in dry seasons but not above halfe (sic) that Length in Freshes (drenching rains) The Head of the Cuabache is about forty Miles from this Place and after a Course of about 760 Miles from its head Spring thro (sic) one of the Finest Countrys (sic) in the World it empties itselfe (sic) into the Ohio. The Navigation from hence to Quiatanon (Lafayette) is very difficult (sic) in low water on account of the many rapids and rifts, but in Freshes which generally happen (in) Spring and Fall Batteaux (sic) or Cannoes (sic) will pass without difficulty (sic) from here to Quiatanon (sic) in three Days which is about 240 Miles and by land about 210 Miles.¹

Another traveler writing in his journal during 1804 noted the natural land bridge that lies between present-day Fort Wayne and Huntington, Indiana:

We also rode to view a prairie which extends from the St. Mary's river (Fort Wayne), a branch of the Wabash. The distance from one to the other is not more than four miles, and the highest ground is not more than five feet above the water in either river. The Indians say that in high freshets they have passed from one water to the other in their canoes. A canal might easily be cut here and at a small expense, by which the waters of the lakes and the waters of the Ohio, (and of course the Mississippi) would be connected ².

As settlers moved west looking for land, support for internal improvements grew in the newly formed America. The idea of a canal took hold, one that would connect the Maumee River across a portage to the confluence of the Little Wabash River with the Wabash. From here it was to extend to the Tippecanoe River where the Wabash was considered navigable. Historian Bert Griswold wrote:

Micajah T. Williams, an elder brother of Jesse L. Williams, surveyed the route of the Miami and Erie canal (in 1824), to connect Lake Erie and the Ohio river, by way of Defiance (Ohio). Congress already had granted to the state of Indiana 3 per cent on sale of all public lands 'to be reserved for making roads and canals.' Through the efforts of Judge (Sam) Hanna and David Burr, congress next assigned a corps of engineers to Fort Wayne to make a preliminary survey. This corps, under Colonel James Shriver, extended the line from the mouth of the Tippecanoe, in Indiana, to the head of the Maumee rapids in Ohio. However, Colonel Shriver and his successor, Colonel Asa Moore, fell victims to malaria while engaged in the work, but the task was carried on to its completion two years later by Colonel Howard Stansbury.³

John Peter Paul a member of the Stansbury survey team chronicled the surveyors' activities. His diary is an account of the party's movement in July of 1827, including their progress through what is now Cass County.

Monday (July 16, 1827) Went on to the line, run two miles and a few chains, chained two lines to the River and crossed the River and descended below the mouth of Pipe Creek to the new encampment at a very fine Spring near the River bank.

18th, Wednesday. Started at B.M. 56, run 1 mile and three-fourths. Started an ordinate to Smith's line, in the meantime killed 7 large rattlesnakes. Returned to camp and there saw a snake that had run under Col. Moore whilst sitting under the fly of his tent. When measured we found it to be five feet and a half long. Stansbury [in his own phrase] most damned tired -- boys went out and cut a bee tree, returned to camp, and on the morning of the...

19th, Thursday, dammed Pipe Creek an another small stream on the other side, gauged the Wabash and finished the ordinate commenced on the 18th. Returned to camp, had supper, retired and were lulled to sleep by the muttering thunder and the pattering rain.⁴

Indiana's legislature passed a joint resolution in 1830 for the removal of the Indians to make way for the proposed construction of the Wabash & Erie Canal. "As a preliminary measure to the removal of the Indians, your memorialists also request that an appropriation may be made in order to extinguish their title to such lands as border on the line of the Wabash and Erie canal, their possession of which greatly

impedes the progress of that important work and arrests the settlement and improvement of the most interesting and desirable part of Indiana". By order of congress, Colonel Abel C. Pepper, Indian agent, and General John Tipton began the removal of the Potawatomis to reservations west of the Mississippi; it was not long until the Miami people suffered the same fate. Work on the canal project proceeded.⁵

New York's Governor DeWitt Clinton, known as the father of the Erie Canal a project that extended from the Hudson River to Lake Erie completed in 1825, was very pleased with the news of a Wabash & Erie Canal. He said: "I have found a way to get into Lake Erie, and you have shown me how to get out of it... You have extended my project six hundred miles." ⁶

In 1834, Canal Commissioners David Burr, Samuel Lewis and J.B. Johnson were authorized to complete the project. Approval was granted by the state legislature to construct the Wabash & Erie Canal from the Maumee, where it forms at the junction of the St. Mary's and St. Joseph rivers, to the mouth of the Tippecanoe on the Wabash.⁷ When completed, the Wabash & Erie stretched 468 miles, well beyond the Tippecanoe River, from Toledo, Ohio's Maumee Bay to Evansville, Indiana, on the Ohio River. It was the product of man and beast digging channels, constructing locks, building culverts and paving towpaths with pick, shovel and wheelbarrow. Ground was broken on the anniversary of Washington's birthday, February 22, 1832, in Fort Wayne, Indiana, at the junction of the St. Joseph River feeder and the main line of the canal.⁸ The *Cass County Times* newspaper is perhaps the only news agency to have covered the story.⁹ First to break ground at this ceremony in Fort Wayne was the man later to become Logansport's first appointed mayor when the town was incorporated in 1838. Jordan Vigas took the first shovel of groundbreaking soil saying, "I am now about to commence the Wabash and Erie Canal, in the name and by the authority of the State of Indiana." ¹⁰

Logansport played several significant roles in the development of this great internal improvement. One such event occurred April 1, 1835, when an announcement was made that the sale of the first canal lands would commence there. John W. Wright's advertisement of the opening of a land agency read in part:

Land Agency.

In Indiana, Illinois and Michigan.

The subscriber offers his services to the public as an agent for the purchase and sale of any lands in the states of Indiana, Illinois or the Territory of Michigan. The counties in which the land now to be sold is situated are on and near the Wabash and Erie canal, and on or near the Michigan road. Speculators and purchasers in general never had a fairer opportunity for profitable investment than is now presented in the state of Indiana, and I can safely affirm that

the inducements west of Lake Michigan are equally attractive. The state of Indiana now offers for sale lands situated on its canal and on the Michigan road, which I will purchase for those who may desire it on the most reasonable terms.¹¹

In the following months after the appearance of such advertisements, 42,000 acres were sold at Logansport and at Lafayette, generating just \$75,000.00 for an average of \$1.78 per acre.¹²

Dedication of the Wabash & Erie Canal did not take place until July 4, 1843, but finally did so in Fort Wayne amid great celebration. Once the waterway was connected with Toledo's Maumee Bay in 1843, shipping was possible to and from ports in New York. It opened the way to the great landlocked canal that had already reached Huntington, on July 4, 1835.¹³ By July 4, 1837, Wabash, was added to a growing list of ports.¹⁴ Peru was connected in July of 1837 and Logansport in September 1838.¹⁵ However, the first canal boat from Ohio to reach Logansport did so in 1843.¹⁶ It was the canal boat St. Joseph out of Manhattan, Ohio, with Captain William Degor in charge that connected Logansport with the Eastern markets and the Atlantic Ocean by continuous waterways. Georgetown was the next port reached in 1839,¹⁷ Pittsburgh in 1840, and the Tippecanoe River in 1841.¹⁸

Even though the Tippecanoe was to be the terminus of the Wabash & Erie, the Indiana State Legislature in 1835 elected to appropriate \$227,000 for the extension of the canal to the town of Lafayette. It did so in 1843,¹⁹ the same year the eastern terminus reached Maumee Bay.²⁰ Finally, in 1847, the decision was made to extend construction of the channel to Evansville that was completed in 1853. Yet, Elbert Jay Benton wrote, "In 1862 it became necessary to abandon the entire canal south of Terre Haute" since through-traffic was impossible in a canal requiring much repair. By 1874, a stock company organized to maintain the line abandoned the canal.²¹ The last boat to clear the line from Lodi near Terre Haute to Toledo was recorded on October 26, 1872.²² Local area chroniclers have written that the last boat remembered having passed through Logansport was the *Rocky Mountain* in 1871 and that the canal was abandoned in 1875. However, Will Ball, local historian, stated that the canal through Logansport was closed late in 1874.²³

Although the canal was not long lived, the canal counties, when compared to those farther away from the canal, developed at a faster rate of growth.²⁴ In general, the success of towns and cities had a direct relationship with how readily they could get goods and services to and from market.²⁵ The Wabash & Erie Canal took advantage of the natural pathway between the Maumee and Wabash rivers. In an earlier time the indigenous people of the area used this route. Later it connected trading posts when the French and then the English dominated this area.²⁶

Elbert Jay Benton wrote in 1903:

Many towns that suddenly sprang into existence as promising centers have passed with the canal, Lagro, Lewisburg, Georgetown, Carrolton (sic), Americus, Lockport, and Pittsburg, once towns of great promise with their prosperous warehouses, are almost forgotten relics of its former influence. Save Lagro, all went down with the ruin of the canal. Other cities, more fortunate, grew up with it and with the coming of the railroads have continued to control the traffic of their respective localities. Fort Wayne, Huntington, Wabash, Peru, Logansport, Delphi, Lafayette, Covington, and Attica are conspicuous. These, owing their first impetus to the canal, are no less certain monuments of its economic place than are those that exist to-day only in ruins.²⁷

John Tipton moved the Indian Agency from Fort Wayne to the mouth of the Eel River where the town of Logansport was eventually platted. On April 5, 1828 while in Fort Wayne, Tipton penned this letter:

His Excy Lewis Cass Detroit

I am authorized by the Dept to remove the Agency from this place to the Indian country and am directed to locate it on the South side of the wabash about 25 miles below the miami mill and 35 miles South East from the Puttowotomie (sic) mill and Blacksmith shop.²⁸

As a temporary headquarters, Tipton took over the log tavern built by Alexander Chamberlain on the south side of the Wabash opposite the mouth of Eel River.²⁹ Tipton proceeded to establish Cass County, with Logansport as its seat of government, the place where the Wabash & Erie Canal would intersect the Michigan Road.

A wagon road stretching from Lake Michigan to the Ohio River, built with the backing of both state and federal funds, became known as the Michigan Road. It was opened from the Ohio River through Indianapolis to Logansport by February 1832. In Cass County, it tracked what is now Indiana Highway 29 or Burlington Avenue, except that it followed a line crossing the Wabash River just west of where Eel River empties into the Wabash. Generally, the road followed the north bank of the Eel River approximating a route following today's Front Street, Wheatland Avenue and Linden Street. When the Wabash & Erie Canal crossed the Michigan Road, it established Logansport as northern Indiana's center of commerce by opening routes to Lake Michigan, Lake Erie, Indianapolis and the Ohio River.³⁰

The Canal Takes Route

The canal entered from Miami County, crossed through Cass and passed into Carroll County on a course that generally follows the north side of the Wabash River. Today, portions of the Wabash & Erie are visible after more than one hundred and fifty years since it first cut through this country in 1838. Its route may be traced using official reports, documents, plat books, diaries, topographical maps, as well as the work of writers who have researched the great waterway project that brought prosperity to the region.

It was through the section of the canal between Logansport and the east side of Peru, that, in 1839, artist George Winter traveled on the canal boat *Columbia*. He was on his way to visit Frances Slocum who as a child was kidnapped by a band of Indians from her Pennsylvania home and brought to the Wabash country. A Logansport trader named George W. Ewing discovered Frances Slocum, then in her sixties, and notified her Pennsylvania family. Winter accepted a commission from the family to paint a portrait of Frances who had adopted the Miami Indian way of life. Later, Winter learned that during his all-night eighteen-mile trip to Peru from Logansport, "We had passed each other on the canal during the night..." Winter was to have met the Slocum family at Frances' home on the Mississinewa River. However, the family had departed for Logansport on their return trip home to Pennsylvania.³¹

Fortunately for 1839 travelers such as artist Winter, the canal made possible a smooth passage floating to Peru rather than a trip in a jolting stage coach or on the back of a horse. Late in 1837, Chief Engineer Jesse Williams told state officials: "The division extending from LaFountain's (sic) Creek (just west of Peru) to Logansport is likewise so nearly completed, that the water has already been introduced, and the passage of boats is prevented only by a few days work, which remain to be performed at two of the locks. It is supposed that there will be nothing to prevent a regular navigation of the canal from Fort Wayne, to Logansport, as soon as the ice may be removed in the spring (of 1838)." During 1837, he had an average of 1,105 men at work from Huntington to Lafayette, of which, 580 were the "Probable number of Europeans (and) 250 Number of Citizens of Indiana". He calculated \$21.00 per month as the "Ave. rate of wages for common laborers exclusive of boarding & etc."³²

Known as the Logansport Section, Williams, in his Wabash & Erie's Chief Engineer Report of 1847, describes the condition of canal structures in Cass County.³³ Covering a distance of some twenty-one miles, the section included the six locks numbered 22 through 27, the Aqueduct Number 5 at Eel River, several culverts and bridges.³⁴

On the western edge of Miami County, immediately to the east of Cass County, the Chief Engineer wrote of the condition of Culvert No. 73 over “LaFontaine’s Creek” which is present-day Prairie Creek. In 1847 the culvert had recently been reconstructed of “stone...of excellent quality...from Georgetown quarry”. Next was Culvert No. 74 made of wood. It was followed by Lock No. 21, located four miles below Peru, and had an eight feet lift. Wood structures remain preserved when submerged below water and not subject to decay caused by exposure to oxygen in the air. Culvert No. 75 was very likely the one that crossed Lowes Ditch, “of wood, 10 feet by 18 inches – submerged.”³⁵

Williams usually made a point of reporting such conditions with recommendations for necessary actions as he did with the first structure within the Logansport Section.³⁶ In the middle of the nineteenth century, this bridge was located at approximately the point where County Road (CR) 1075E, if it were extended to the south, would cross the canal in the Francis Godfrey Reserve. Oftentimes he estimated when replacement would be required such as the next structure in his report: “Road bridge No. 29 will need rebuilding in 1849. Road bridge No. 30, at Lewisburgh, should be rebuilt in 1848.”³⁷

Contractor William W. Haney, an experienced engineer and administrator with eastern canals including both the Pennsylvania Canal and the Delaware & Raritan Canal feeder in New Jersey, moved west to Peru, Indiana, in 1835. He obtained a contract to help build the Wabash & Erie. Next, he opened a stone quarry below Peru for John Cooper, a contractor for the Wabash River canal feeder dam at Peru.³⁸ Later that autumn, Haney contracted for two miles of canal section near Lewisburg. Historian Ben Stuart recorded that Haney also sold whiskey during this period, earning \$30,000, the basis for a fortune he accumulated.³⁹

Before U.S. Highway 24 was opened during October 1929, Lewisburg Road was a common route between Peru and Logansport. Although the canal channel is nearly erased from sight, in places, it can be detected west of the Cass and Miami county line to the south of the Lewisburg Road after passing its junction with CR 1175E.

Traveling west, the towpath and portions of the old channel can be traced for long distances through the trees between the road and the farmers’ fields that lie along the river. At places it is detectable as the now defunct interurban rail bed, that was built atop the original towpath. In other spots the channel serves as the drainage ditch on the south side of the road. About one-hundred yards east of where Lewisburg Road begins an ascent to meet CR 1000E, the canal right-of-way noticeably angles to the southwest clinging to flat, bottomland farm country. In the winter months it can be visually traced along Lewisburg Road, for nearly three-

fourths of a mile, before encountering cultivated fields that have obliterated any evidence of the great transportation project. Yet, at a point south of where CR 900E joins Lewisburg Road, the channel once again appears preserved in a wooded area that reaches west to the town of Lewisburg.

East of present-day Lewisburg along Canal Lane, the towpath and channel are recognizable for a fair distance before disappearing into the underbrush separating farm fields. West Canal Lane extends to just beyond the new Wabash River Bridge. However, in contrast to this village's east side, the community's heritage is, for the most part, replaced by both temporary and permanent housing as well as the bridge's abutment. Symbolic of Indiana's transportation heritage the past connects with the present here at the Hoosier Heartland Corridor Wabash River Bridge. Standing in the path of the canal right-of-way is the towering north pier that helps support the weight of the bridge.⁴⁰

A regular stop for boats on the line, Lewisburg was one hundred and seventy-two miles from Toledo, eighty-eight miles from the Ohio-Indiana state line, nine miles west of Peru and nine miles east of Logansport.⁴¹ It became such a popular stopping place that David Miller built a hotel here during the 1840s.⁴²

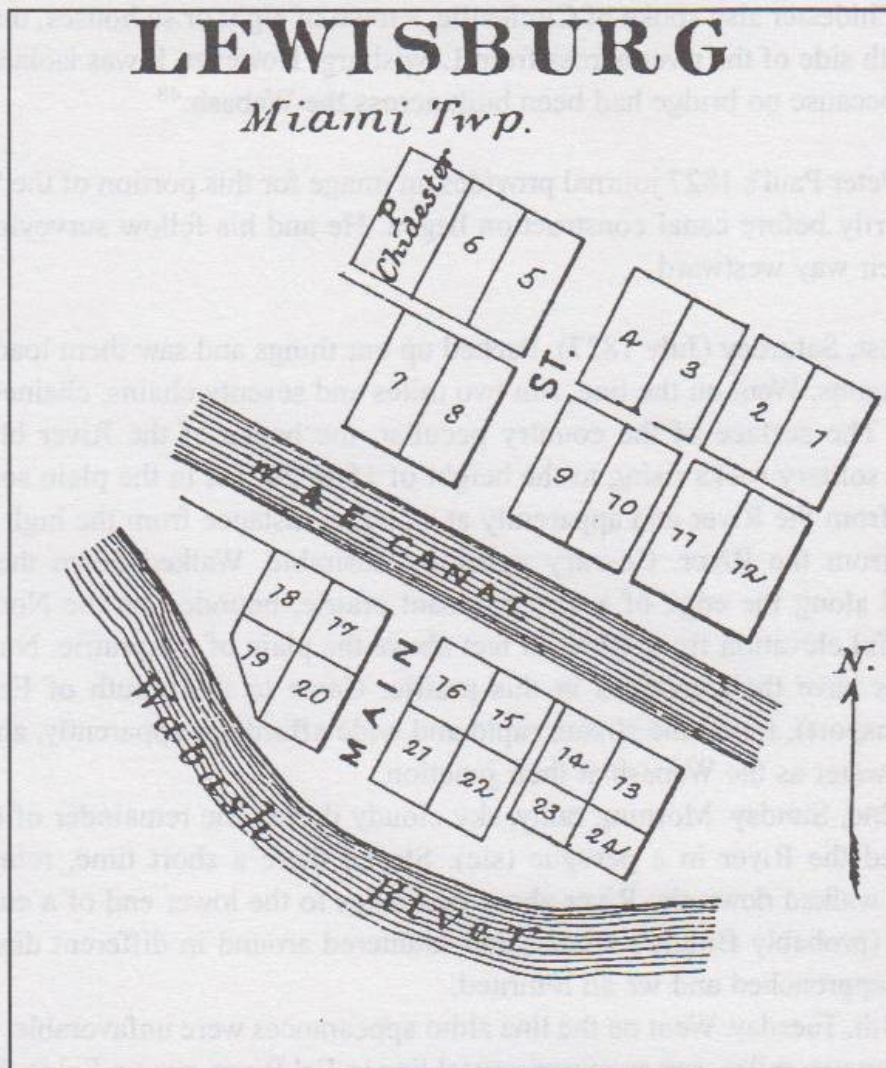
West of Lewisburg, Jesse Williams reported:

Lock No. 22, 7 feet lift, built upon the wooden frame plan. The frame work and the crib down to the water of lower level, must be renewed during the ensuing winter. The gates must be rebuilt immediately.⁴³

According to surviving documents, contracts to rebuild were subsequently let on December 9, 1847, to a man named Ferris for the Lewisburg Lock; on December 13, 1847, to another named Stennbarger for the same lock; and on January 14, 1848, to a man named Harvey for the wooden frame lock.⁴⁴ Surviving too are schedules of water power lots, right-of-way and other real estate records held by the State of Indiana relating to the canal.⁴⁵

Lewisburg was organized as a town some time in 1834 or 1835 by Lewis Bowyer and during the days the canal was in operation it prospered.⁴⁶ Canal officials seemed to favor the spelling of Lewisburg with an "h" added to the end of the name. Others did as well, and on September 24, 1849, George Winter completed a graphite drawing of the canal that he labeled "Lewisburgh, On the Wabash River, and Wabash and Erie Canal".⁴⁷ However, local chroniclers use the Lewisburg form that survives to this day.

An eighty-year resident of the area, Mrs. Chidester, recorded her reminiscences in 1934:



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

It (Lewisburg) was a busy and thriving village, due to the fact that the Wabash Canal passed through the town. Grain and lumber was hauled from all parts of the country to the three large warehouses, to be shipped East as far as Toledo and Cincinnati and West to Terre Haute. There were about twenty houses in Lewisburg at that time, the three warehouses mentioned, a general store, blacksmith shop and grocery and a tavern. My father owned three (canal) boats, one of them named the 'Cynderilla' (sic) for me, and (I forget) another named (the Shoo-Fly). My husband also owned one. These boats were quite expensive, costing about a thousand dollars. When the railroads were built these boat owners were left ... with property on their hands of no value. They could not compete with the railroads ... it took 2 1/2 to 3 hours for an empty boat to travel to Logansport from Lewisburg.

Mrs. Chidester also spoke of Circleville, a town of eight or so houses, that stood on the south side of the river across from Lewisburg. However, it was isolated from the canal because no bridge had been built across the Wabash.⁴⁸

John Peter Paul's 1827 journal provides an image for this portion of the Wabash Valley shortly before canal construction began. He and his fellow surveying team worked their way westward.

21st, Saturday (July 1827). Packed up our things and saw them loaded into the wagons. Went on the line, run two miles and seventy chains, chained to the River. The surface of the country peculiar, the banks of the River bluff and rocky, solitary rocks rising to the height of 15 to 20 feet in the plain some distance from the River and apparently at an equal distance from the high ground back from the River. Country generally desirable. Walked down the River, passed along the edge of a very pleasant prairie, bounded on the North by a beautiful elevation from 40 to 70 feet above the plain of the prairie. Numerous springs have their surfaces in this prairie. Came to the mouth of Eel River (Logansport), found the stream rapid and wide affording, apparently, almost as much water as the Wabash at their junction.

22nd, Sunday. Morning rainy, sky cloudy during the remainder of the day. Crossed the River in a perogue (sic). Stayed there a short time, returned to camp, walked down the River about two miles to the lower end of a cultivated island (probably Biddle's Island) and sauntered around in different directions. Night approached and we all returned.

24th, Tuesday. Went on the line altho appearances were unfavorable. Had no rain, run two miles, run an experimental line to Eel River, run up Eel to the falls. Run down to the mouth, returned to camp without having any adventure worthy of note. (Tuesday run down below Col. Bell's.)⁴⁹

In 1847, the conditions of the mechanical structures between Lewisburg Lock No. 22 and Lock No. 23 at Limekiln to the west were described by Chief Engineer Williams. He also itemized the additional structures necessary for the function of a canal:

Culvert No. 76, rough stone arch, 8 feet chord. (This probably is the passage over Williams Creek.)

Road bridge No. 31 will last 4 years.

Culvert No. 77, of wood, 10 feet by 18 inches – not entirely submerged. To place it permanently under water will cost \$10.

Culvert No. 78, 6 feet chord – arch built of rough stone. It is imperfect and probably will have to be rebuilt of better stone in a few years.

Flood gates, with wooden abutments, solid rock bottom – must be rebuilt in 1849.

Culvert No. 79, of wood, 10 feet by 18 inches – submerged.⁵⁰

Referred to by some as “Bloody Hollow”, this area along the Wabash marks the point where on August 1791, five hundred and twenty-five U.S. troops crossed the river. Led by General James W. Wilkinson, they were marching from Fort Washington (Cincinnati) on their way to destroy the Eel River Miami village of Olde Towne. In a surprise attack, at a time when most of the Miami warriors were away hunting, Wilkinson’s troops killed nine Miami men and women, one child and captured thirty-four others. Olde Towne was then destroyed.⁵¹

At places the canal channel still may be viewed along the north bank of the river. From contemporary topographical maps, it appears that the canal route registers along and under an unimproved road running from Cass Station Road west to the point at which it turns north to Limekiln.⁵²

Today, nothing of Lock No. 23 remains between the Limekiln Quarry south to the river. However, a depression in the ground across railroad tracks on the unimproved road, where it makes a turn from a line parallel to the river, may be the site of the lock. Williams described it this way:

Lock No. 23, 8 feet lift, built upon the combined plan – will require new caps, with new uprights, and planking from the top three or four down, during the ensuing winter. The gates must be renewed in 1849.⁵³

In the Indiana State Archives’ collection, a document listing property belonging to the Wabash & Erie Canal Trust adjoining the canal, Lock 23, is listed as: “Ford’s Lock 4 miles above Logansport”. However, Lock No. 23 is sometimes referred to as “Four Mile Lock”, probably due to its distance east to and from Lock No. 24 in Logansport. Confusing the matter, however, is that Lock No.26 was also four miles distance from Lock 24 but to the west in the opposite direction.

Here, however, are two news stories that report incidences that strongly suggest that Four Mile Lock was the one at Limekiln:

Peter Kelley was found dead near Four Mile Lock on Wednesday April 19, 1871. He had been seen in Lewisburg on Friday the 14th. Apparently he had started for Logansport and fell in while drunk. There were no marks of violence on him.

Later, in June 1871, a second reference to “Four Mile Lock” is made in a news report of a young boy:

...crushed to death between the 15th Street canal bridge and the canal boat his father was using to convey lime from Four Mile Lock to his place of business in Logansport.⁵⁴

Where Two Rivers Meet

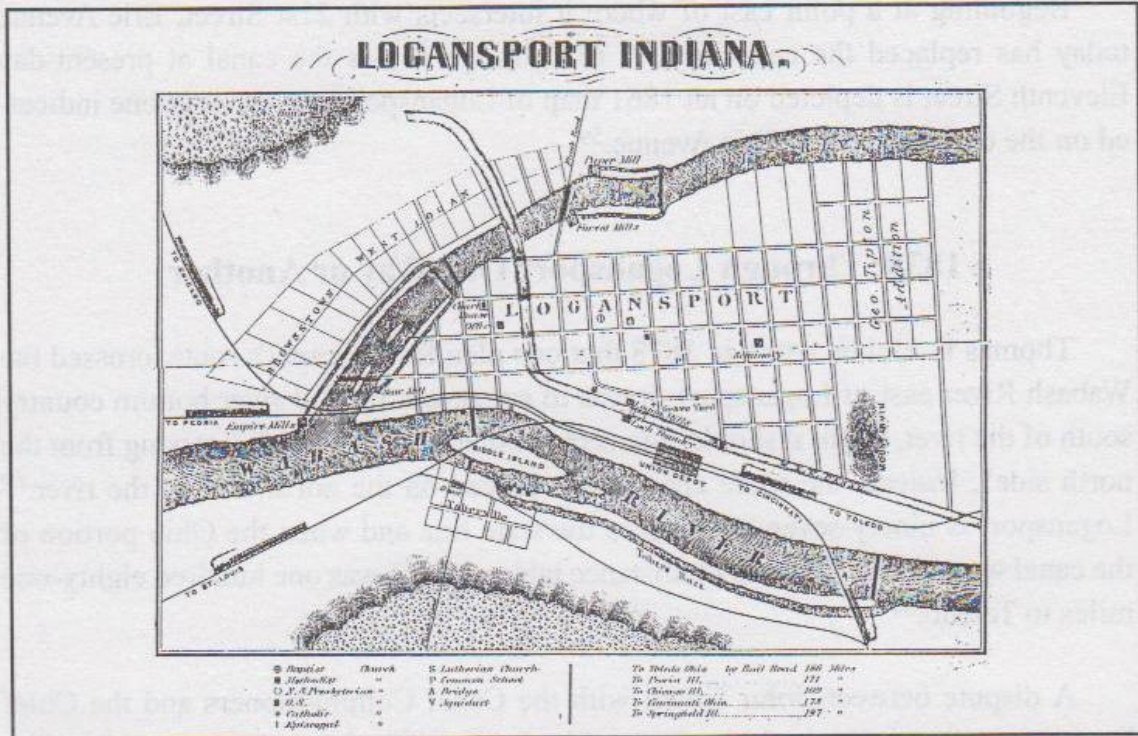
Traveling from Morgan County (now Cass County) Illinois, the Hon. Elijah Hackleman came up the Wabash Valley. He was on his way to Fort Wayne to make a land purchase in Wabash County, Indiana. As he traveled in May of 1836, he wrote this account of his trip between Logansport and Peru.

Leaving Logansport late in the afternoon of Tuesday May 10, 1836, and continuing on our journey up the Wabash a few hundred yards out of town, we passed one of the finest springs I had ever seen. Nine miles out we stopped for the night with a gentleman whose name ... was Lewis Bowyer.

Wednesday, May 11, 1836. - So far as now advised we had again arrived at the border of civilization, for our pocket guide (Mitchell's map, published last year) only located two more towns between here and Fort Wayne, to wit, Miamisport and Canalsburg. A new road had lately been located up the Wabash River...However, we found a broad and commodious road zigzagging along up the bottom near the river, which; had been made by the constant travel of the Indians and the French and English Indian traders for the last two hundred years. But this road had been almost ruined by the location of the canal which crossed it about every two or three hundred yards, making it almost impossible to proceed.⁵⁵

Chief Engineer Williams describes the mechanical structures built by the "canalers" and most likely in the area Hackleman mentions as the "finest spring I had ever seen". Here he reports that: "Road bridge No. 32, requires two new stringers and half new floor, with this repair it will last six years." Williams next mentions the condition of six culverts (Nos. 80 through 85) all of which are constructed of wood and safely submerged under water. Culvert 80 may have been the one about one-half mile east of present-day Miami Bend. Each of these several culverts are either six or ten-feet by eighteen-inches in size.⁵⁶ Culverts enabled the waters of the canal to flow over small streams and ditches encountered along the route from Limekiln to King Street at Erie Avenue in Logansport.

A comparison of contemporary maps with those of a century earlier indicate that Potawatomi Point Road parallels, if not sits upon, much of the vanishing tow-path. All along Potawatomi Point Road, from Miami Bend west, are places where the



Logansport and West Logan, about the year 1838 or 1839,
prepared by Abner F. VanNess.

old channel may be seen. Gradually, development has encompassed all but the most remote sites. About one-half mile before Potawatomi Point Road reaches Logansport's 18th Street, two abandoned concrete bridge abutments can be seen on either side of the railroad tracks. If the traces of towpath immediately to the west can be used as an indication, the northern railroad abutment must be standing in the original canal bed. Here along the main line's sections 147 to 153, contracts were let to Alex Wilson and Thomas Scott. During the week of April 15, 1837, Scott had left the territory, leaving Wilson to settle outstanding debts presumably with laborers and suppliers.⁵⁷ Contracts were written plainly enough concerning who was responsible for paying. Not only did Alex Wilson have the problems of a wilderness environment to confront; he had the human element to deal with as well.

At 21st Street (Graves Street) and Erie Avenue, the old Wabash Rail line turned toward the northeast and crossed the canal.⁵⁸ Today, remnants of two stone structures remain, standing approximately forty yards apart that once served as abutments supporting the rails over the canal. Williams does not mention it in his 1847 mechanical structures report because his writings predate the structure. Well into the twentieth century, inquisitive young people referred to the east abutment as "The Lock". The rock structure, a large pylon standing in an open area, evidently offered a climbing challenge as interesting as any playground apparatus provided by the city's several parks.

Beginning at a point east of where it intersects with 21st Street, Erie Avenue today has replaced the canal bed. A road bridge across the canal at present-day Eleventh Street is depicted on an 1861 map of Logansport and the only one indicated on the entire length of Erie Avenue.⁵⁹

1838: Through Logansport One Way or Another

Thomas B. Helms wrote in 1878 that one plan for the canal's route, crossed the Wabash River east of Logansport. It was to cut across the flat river bottom country south of the river, "until it should intersect another proposed route crossing from the north side". Instead, the route chosen was placed on the north side of the river.⁶⁰ Logansport is ninety-seven miles from the state line and when the Ohio portion of the canal was completed in 1843, distance tables state it was one hundred eighty-one miles to Toledo.⁶¹

A dispute between John Tipton with the Canal Commissioners and the Chief Engineer surfaced over both the delay of letting construction contracts and later the route the canal would take at Logansport. Several letters published in newspapers of the day recount the displeasure each held toward the other. Tipton complained that delaying the contract during critical spring months would cause any available labor to seek work elsewhere in the country. Also, Tipton did not want the canal to cross his lands because officials would confiscate timber Tipton wanted for his farm buildings.⁶² His farm was located in this vicinity including the site of present-day Transco Railway Products on 18th Street. It is generally believed that when the canal builders came, some of Tipton's best trees were cut to build bridges on the line.⁶³

Graham Taber pointed out that the Wabash & Erie reached Logansport in the autumn of 1838 coming, "as far west as Berkley (King) Street, yet were unable to pass through Logansport and cross Eel River until the summer of 1840". He mentions that a malarial epidemic consumed the region. "Along about 1890, when Tenth Street was cut through to Erie Avenue, on the east side of the old Ninth Street Cemetery...the remains of many of the victims of that fateful epidemic were then removed to Mt. Hope and to Mt. Saint Vincent". Many of the dead were laborers who helped build the canal.⁶⁴ Jordan Vigus is among the pioneers buried in the Ninth Street Cemetery. His remains are resting alongside his wife and his Civil War veteran son.⁶⁵

Basin at Berkley

Will Ball stated in his *Pharos-Tribune* newspaper history series that, “it was 1838 before the canal reached Logansport and boats came as far as Berkley Street and its turning basin to the south, somewhere near where the Baker Specialty buildings now stand”.⁶⁶ At the time of the turnaround basin, the limestone building at King Street and Erie Avenue is believed to have been a canal-era warehouse. Ben Stuart also wrote that the canal stopped at Berkley Street in 1838 and, “A pool was made here for the boats to make the return trip.”⁶⁷ On the south side of Erie Avenue west of its intersection with King, stands a long stone wall. The stones are of the canal-building vintage and likely the foundation of a building. However, it is just as likely that this wall served as part of the basin structure.

Basins such as Berkley’s served as important loading and unloading docks. Paul Kroeger, director of the Kroeger Funeral Home, enjoys telling the story of how their facility, originally the Fitch-Coleman home, was finished with English bricks. The structure’s eighteen inch thick brick walls served first as ballast for a ship sailing to America from England. From the East Coast they came west on the Wabash and Erie to Berkley Basin, hauled by horse-drawn wagon up Seventh Street, and finally were laid in place at the Market and Seventh street location.

At the corner of Eighth and Spencer streets (one block north of present-day Erie Avenue) once stood a cottage built at the top of the hill with a lawn that sloped down to the canal. Will Ball described the mid to late nineteenth century scene as having, “a few of the primeval forest trees that had stood there for centuries.” Here the Dickerhoff family lived and enjoyed summer evenings listening, “for the boatman’s horn as he signaled the lock-tender near Seventh to get ready for a west-bound boat.”⁶⁸

Lock No. 24 in Section 164 was contracted to a Mr. Haskins on August 26, 1836.⁶⁹ According to Chief Engineer Williams, Lock No. 24 was a “7 feet lift, built of cut stone – imperfectly made – leaks very much – with some repairs it may answer the purpose of a lock for many years. The gates will last three years. This lock is in the town of Logansport.”⁷⁰

Locks were built in the canal bed as the elevation in the land changed, requiring the boat and the water to be stepped up or down. Made of limestone blocks, the walls for Lock 24, were spaced fifteen feet apart to allow a boat to slip through. It would have extended in length at least ninety feet.⁷¹ If a packet or passenger boat were on its way to Lafayette, a wooden gate at the west end of the lock would be closed until the canal boat was safely tucked inside the lock. After the lock was filled with water the east or upstream gate would be closed.

Small doors, called wickets, located in the lower portion of the west gates were opened and as the water escaped and the level dropped so did the boat. Once the canal's water was at the lower level the big west gates were opened by the lock master and his assistant by manually pushing the gates' balanced beams, one for each gate, on either side of the lock. If the boat were headed east to Peru, the action of the gate handling was reversed.⁷²

Lock gates were not fragile devices. They were designed to withstand the pressure of water when the lock was closed, yet had to be movable for the function they served. Historian Will Ball also noted that lock walls of masonry or timber bore the heavy weight of the lock gates while withstanding the constant pressures of water. The cost of construction and maintenance was a major expense of the canal's operation.⁷³ Ball reminded his readers that, "It was necessary to maintain a constant flow of water in the canal for there were mills here and there that depended on the current to supply power for its operation. A flour mill, on the site now occupied by the Hendricks Printing Company (Fastenal Company in the 1990s)⁷⁴ was known for years as the Lock Mill...it continued to operate until about 1901, when it was completely destroyed by fire."⁷⁵

Graham Taber wrote about this place along the canal when he described the Obenchain-Boyer flour mill just back of, "where the Presbyterian church now stands at the foot of south Seventh Street."⁷⁶ He continued, "The canal locks – where the boats were raised or lowered – were located near the old Obenchain-Boyer flour mill.

"Apropos of this, the Obenchain-Boyer establishment was called: 'The Lock Mills'...Incidentally, each canal boat was about fifty feet long."⁷⁷ An 1862 map of Logansport illustrates the position of the lock in the canal. Immediately downstream from the lock on the north side is "Logan Mills" while directly across the canal is a location entitled "Lock Foundry".⁷⁸

On September 20, 1845, Andrew J. Fields submitted a bid for waterpower at the Lock Mills. He agreed, "to pay for the water power at the lock near Logansport on the Wabash & Erie Canal One Hundred and fifty dollars for sums agreeable to the terms of the letting of said power advertised during the month of September 1845."⁷⁹ The State of Indiana granted the use of water generated by the canal as a means of revenue. A channel, or tumble, dug around the lock allowed excess water, not necessary to raise or lower boats, to be released to the lower level. Water shunted around the lock through a bypass raceway and spillway could be used to turn a water wheel. In Logansport such a wheel provided the power for a mill g to process flour. Men such as Andrew Fields were quick to see the economic advantage of harnessing waterpower. In many places along the canal, locks created jobs that brought

workers who required housing for themselves and their families. In turn these small settlements developed into towns along the line.

Landing in Logansport

Following Erie Avenue west into Logansport, the canal route turned north at Fifth Street and crossed the Eel over a great aqueduct. Maybe little can be seen of these structures, but, even to this day, it is not unusual to hear reports of finding buried artifacts. One incident recalls the discovery made by a Northern Indiana Public Service Company crew that uncovered several large timbers while digging near the junction of Fifth Street and Erie Avenue. One of the timbers unearthed measured twenty feet in length. As solid as the day they were first put in place, these now-exposed wooden relics would soon begin to crumble if left in the open air.⁸⁰

Other structures included road or street bridges for crossing local traffic over the waterway. Jesse Williams in 1847 noted that, "Within the town of Logansport there are three road bridges, Nos. 33, 34, and 35, all of which need rebuilding within the next year."⁸¹ Tabor described the bridges when he wrote: "There were bridges over the canal at Fifth and Market, and Fifth and Broadway, at Berkley (King) Street, at Ninth Street, and at Twelfth Street. All of those bridges either turned, or were raised and lowered – to let the canal boats pass by." Tabor also gave a description of Fifth Street:

To the west (of Lock Mills) was the Pollard-Willson mercantile establishment. Going farther west, and then north on Fifth Street, was another big warehouse (present northeast corner of Fifth and Market streets). And – at Fifth and Broadway – on the site now occupied by Bailey's (Adkins in the 1990s), stood the general merchandise store of the pioneer Thomas Pierce.⁸²

Charles H. Titus noted in his 1843 diary that after leaving Logansport on an eastbound canal boat, the current in the canal was quite rapid. He described the buildings he saw in Logansport as built of limestone "more durable and presenting a finer appearance than brick."⁸³

Other accounts of canal structures are found in such places as family records. A September 9, 1855, notation in Logansport's Dodd Family Bible reads, "At that time they had high bridges over the Canal. As the horse (pulling a carriage) ran up on the bridge the swingle tree came loose and hit the horse's heel. He gave a jump and threw Charlie (Dodds) out. He was killed instantly."⁸⁴

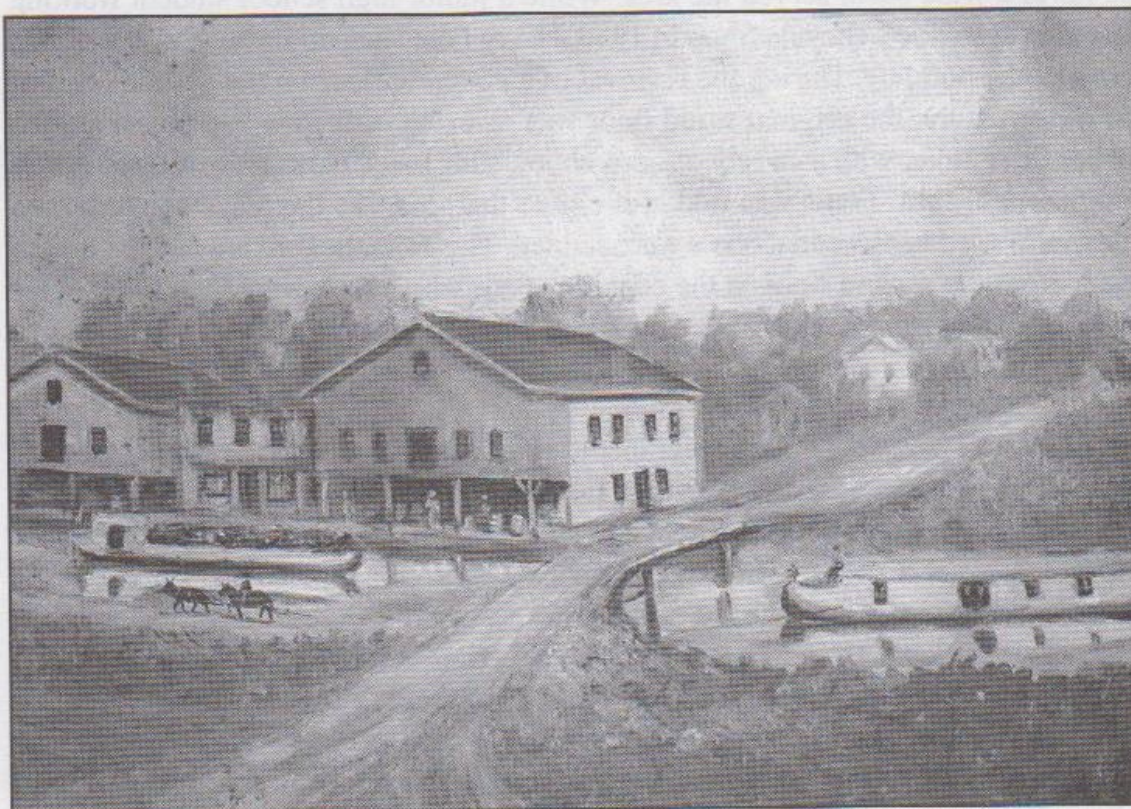


Wabash & Erie at present-day Fifth and Market streets in Logansport

Indiana State Archives records dated November 17, 1849, indicate that the Market Street canal bridge was built by a contractor named Johnson. He also was awarded construction of the Broadway Bridge on June 1851 and the North Street Bridge on February 28, 1853. Economic boom followed for Logansport as well as the other communities along this stretch of the canal line. The Canal Commissioners had begun letting work to several contractors on March 1, 1832, just one day before the land grant deadline. A contract for extending the canal from Logansport to its terminus at the Tippecanoe was given to Valerius Armitage of Lafayette. Upon the death of Armitage, Reed Case of Delphi took over the obligation and saw to its successful completion.⁸⁵

A Wils Berry painting of Fifth and Market streets depicted an 1840s scene of buildings lining the canal. Featured is a feed store building that when torn down years later revealed a water wheel in the cellar. Once water rights were approved for leasing by the Canal Commissioners, canal water provided power to operate gristmills for grinding corn and other grains. When the canal was first opened along the landing, that is now Fifth Street, Logansport citizens celebrated. However, the next

day, merchants up and down the landing found their cellars were filled with water. Porous subterranean soil allowed water to permeate from the canal filling the basements of adjacent buildings.⁸⁶



Wils Berry painted the feed store that stood on the Logansport landing.
Photo by T.J. Smith Studio, Cass County Historical Society.

Along the landing an open-air market developed that provided a place for farmers to sell their fresh produce. In addition to sales, they received news of far away places from packet boat passengers or the tattered old newspapers they left behind.⁸⁷

Logansport was fortunate to have served as a toll collection site. For thirty-five years the canal office stood on the northeast corner of the canal at 500 East Market Street until it was closed on September 21, 1867.⁸⁸ It is presumed that this office collected tolls due from packets and barges using the canal. Other collection points on the main line were at Covington, Lafayette, Lagro and Fort Wayne. Such activity furthered economic growth helping to make these towns important ports along the route.⁸⁹ During the year 1847 alone, the Wabash & Erie Canal moved 117,739 tons of freight and logged 534,354 passenger miles reflecting a sizable business in its own right.⁹⁰

Another address, currently the building occupied by Thompson Music, at 500 North Street on the northeast corner where it intersects Fifth Street served as an important canal stop. A road bridge crossed the canal here and for one-half block to the north a wide basin served the area. While a junior high school student working part time at Bickle's Bicycle Shop in 1950, Harry Fouts helped owner Carl E. Bickle remodel the building. During the removal of a concrete floor on the second level of the old structure, the original wood floor was revealed. Concrete had preserved the earlier floor along with a variety of horseshoes, shoe nails, harnesses and other parts and pieces of tack. Fouts was told at the time that this was the place where horses and mules used to tow canal boats were stabled. The animals were led down a bridge plank from the second floor to the canal towpath where they were then hitched for service. Fouts also remembered hearing that passengers utilized the first floor level as a depot.⁹¹

Historical accounts often reveal the irony of past events and the canal offers its share. It was a canal boat that delivered the first locomotive to Logansport, in 1854, eleven years after the first canal boat landed at Logansport. A railroad steam engine was unloaded at a spot on the landing now recognized as the southwest corner of Fifth Street and Broadway. Using wooden beams as rails, the cargo was hauled by a team of oxen down Broadway to Third Street. Here it turned south on Third and crossed the river where it was transferred to Logansport's first rail tracks. A block east of Burlington Avenue stood a station serving passengers traveling to and from Kokomo. In 1856, a line was graded through and the first locomotive of the Wabash rail company crossed the Wabash River entering Logansport. Efficiency, speed and dependability of year around operation combined, finally helped the railroads replace the canal. From the date of the arrival of that first steam engine on the landing, the days of the canal were numbered.⁹²

Governor James Whitcomb turned the Wabash & Erie Canal over to trustees on July 31, 1847. Led by Alfred P. Edgerton, thirteen members then appointed Jesse Williams chief engineer while naming superintendents for the Eastern, Western and Southern divisions. Chauncey Carter of Logansport was handed the responsibility of Western Division Superintendent.⁹³

In 1859, the canal commissioners decided to privatize the operation and lease the canal to outside interests. The Wabash and Erie Canal Company had Alfred P. Edgerton serve as its general manager until 1868. Such prominent men as Hugh McCulloch, Pliny Hoagland, Ochmig Bird and David F. Compare, to mention a few, took control of the enterprise from the state line to Terre Haute. From Terre Haute to Point Commerce, Chauncey Rose and William Griswold were among those managing the line. Below that point the Southern Indiana Canal Company was headed by Ziba H. Cook, Marvin A. Lawrence and Goodlet Morgan.⁹⁴ Once the railroads

were established alongside the towpath it was but a matter of time, with the help of undercutting shipping rates, that the canal finally collapsed into ruin.

Water over the Bridge

At the corner of Logansport's Fifth and North streets, a state historical marker recalls:

Wabash & Erie Canal
Trade and emigration route
from Lake Erie to Evansville.
Completed through Logansport 1840.
Followed Erie Avenue and 5th Street
crossing Eel River by wooden
aqueduct. Abandoned about 1876.

The engineers who decided that the canal would remain along the north side of the Wabash River at Logansport faced the task of crossing the Eel River. Smaller streams required a culvert, constructed of stone or wood, to carry the canal. Larger streams needed a larger structure such as the aqueduct constructed across the Eel.

In 1847, Williams had this to say about the structure: "Aqueduct No. 5, over Eel river – wooden trunk of 5 spans, 40 feet each, resting on stone abutments and piers, built on solid rock foundation. The stone of durable quality. The trunk was rebuilt last year and the whole structure may be considered permanent for 8 or 10 years to come." His perception that the rock foundation was solid is evident to this day. After more than one hundred and fifty years, the abutments and pier foundation can be seen north of the old brewery where the canal made its Eel River crossing.⁹⁵

Construction of the canal had not faced having to cross a stream as wide as the Eel. Looking east at the structures that had been completed, the first was Aqueduct No. 1 located in Fort Wayne over the Saint Mary's River. It extended one hundred sixty feet with two spans separating a distance of eighty feet. Constructed of wood, the trunk was made virtually watertight. It was then filled with dirt containing high clay content. A wooden superstructure, roofed and sided, it rested on stone abutments and piers. Crossing the Aboite River in Allen County, Aqueduct No. 2, was one hundred twelve feet long with four spans set twenty-eight feet apart and built on stone abutments and piers. It, too, was a wooden superstructure and had an open trunk. Aqueducts that were assigned numbers 3 and 4 crossed Bull Creek and Flint Creek, both in Huntington County. These structures were identical in their wooden construction having a twenty-eight feet single span built on stone abutments with open wooden trunks.⁹⁶

Although designed as the previously mentioned four aqueducts having stone abutments and piers with open wooden superstructure, Eel River Aqueduct No. 5 was two hundred feet long with five spans set forty feet apart. By the time the canal was completed, the aqueduct at Logansport was the third longest of the eighteen completed throughout the entire 468-mile long system.⁹⁷ George Winter commented on the value of the structure when he was in Logansport on October 8, 1841, stating that a good substantial aqueduct, "is a connecting link of the Wabash and Erie Canal, which is a great outlet for the exportation of the produce of the country to the eastern and southern markets, and which will prove the means of incalculable wealth to this important point."⁹⁸

A painting of the old aqueduct by Wils Berry depicts a winter scene during a time when it was still a popular Logansport landmark. A frozen Eel River is shown providing ice skaters a haven beneath the structure enjoying their sport. Overhead a span of the aqueduct is graced with long icicles hanging low from the trunk.⁹⁹

John Peter Paul explored the Eel while establishing lines for the canal route with the early survey party. He mentions Daniel Bell's log house, one of the first of two or three at Logansport, the year before the town was laid out by proprietor Chauncey Carter.¹⁰⁰ Bell's cabin stood about where the Wabash train station served travelers in later years. On Wednesday July 25, 1827, Paul wrote:

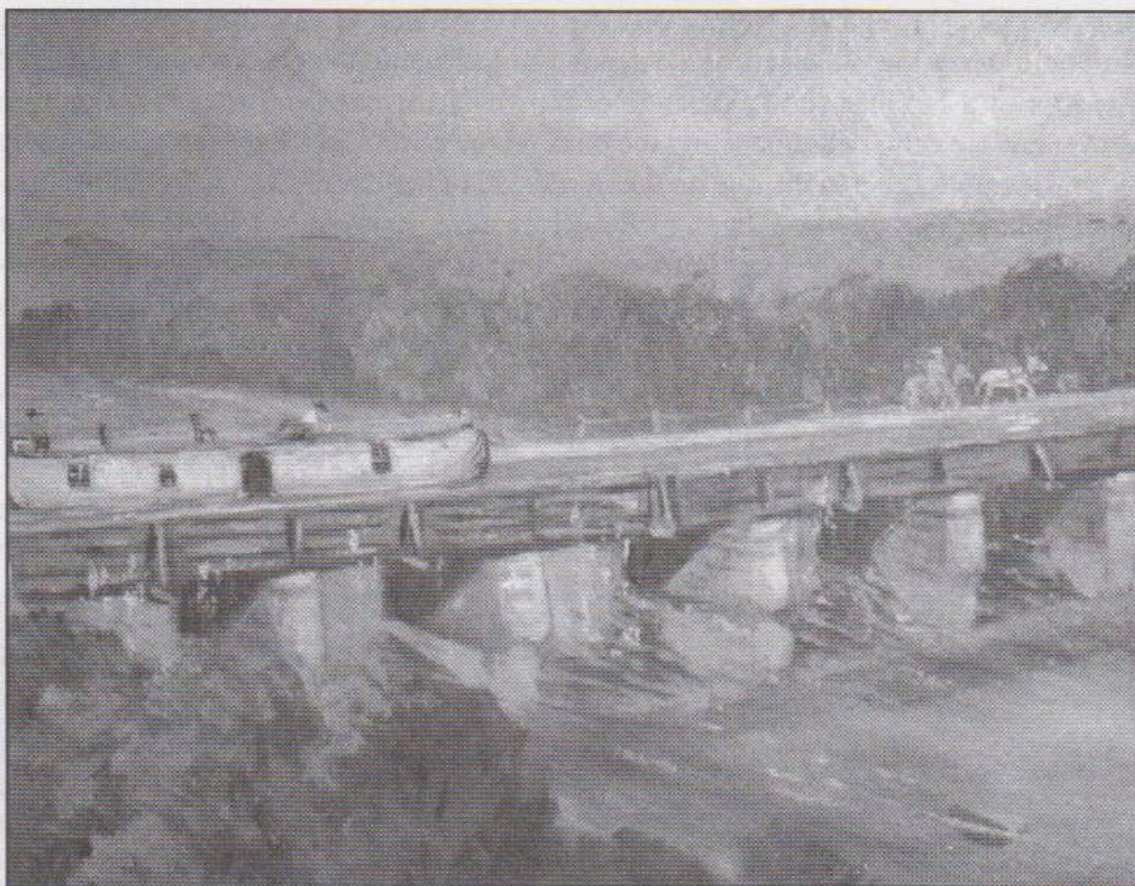
Commenced below Bell's, run down about two miles and three-fourths to the bluffs at the blackberry patch.

26th, Thursday, run a feed line up Eel to the falls. Gauged the River, leveled down to the mouth, crossed over and remained in camp this evening to protract our work and make preparations to move on the morrow.¹⁰¹

Had John Peter Paul taken his sortie up the Eel past the aqueduct site ten years later, he would have witnessed its construction. By 1837, Jesse Williams was busy at work and advised his superiors that except for the aqueduct over the Eel River, the line from Logansport to Georgetown was nearing its completion.

The masonry and timber work of this structure are well advanced, and it is supposed the water may be passed over it, and the navigation extended to Georgetown, by the 1st September next.¹⁰²

If, however, John Peter Paul visited the aqueduct site today he still could see significant canal remnants. He would notice the abutments and each of the aqueduct's piers. Perhaps some of the best masonry work of the canal line can be found standing on the south bank of the Eel where the canal made its two hundred-foot crossing. Great limestone blocks stand in position for anyone who wishes to study canal



A canal boat passes over Eel River.
Wils Berry painting of the aqueduct at Logansport.
Photo by T.J. Smith Studio, Cass County Historical Society.

construction of the Nineteenth Century. Along with the massive support piers, the south abutment is visible on the river between the Third and Sixth street bridges. On the north side a long wall of limestone block indicates where the aqueduct reached its supporting bank.

As late as 1865, a man named Springer was advanced \$500 for repairs to the Eel River aqueduct.¹⁰³ Even if its piers have withstood the ravages of time, the aqueduct bridge at Logansport came to an ignoble end. During the 1870s and later, "...the Eel River aqueduct became a shabby skeleton", wrote Paul Fatout, "siding dropping off, rotten flooring riddled with holes that were man traps for the unwary. A befuddled pedestrian, weaving across on a dark night, fell through into the river and was drowned."¹⁰⁴ While in use, however, the aqueduct served its purpose well.

By 1908, the aqueduct was gone and abutment stones no longer in use were too much of a temptation for local developers. Logansport's *Reporter* newspaper carried a story under the heading, "Tearing Down Old 'Acqueduct' (sic) Canal Boats Once

Used To Go Through It.” Noting that the old aqueduct was used to cross the river and built when the old canal was extended to Lafayette, the old *Reporter* lamented the loss of a familiar site: “After the canal was abandoned the aqueduct was torn down, but the center abutment and the ones on the river banks have remained. There is considerable stone in the one on the north side of the river.” Stones from the aqueduct abutment on the north bank of Eel River were removed in 1908 to be used for a wall back of the Logansport Furniture Company. Just as important to the newspaper was its concern that the habitat of a favorite river bass was being disturbed. Its sub-headline read, “Around this Old-Time Pile in the Eel River, Goggle Eyes Were Wont to Gather and the Sport Was Always Good”. Fishermen, the paper stated, would experience some disappointment: “It is here that goggle eyes have been wont to gather and fishermen have had great sport angling for the sportive finny denizens. And with its demolishment one of the city’s old landmarks passes away.”¹⁰⁵To trace the Wabash & Erie route today, follow Erie Avenue west to Market Street at which



Aqueduct stone abutments on the south bank of the Eel River.

point the two now join Fifth Street. Continue north on Fifth Street three blocks to High Street. At High Street, the waterway made a northwestward turn of nearly thirty degrees to join the line of the aqueduct across the Eel. Turn west on High Street one-half block then north into and across the parking lot to the alley that parallels

the Eel River. Ahead to the east the large abutments of the Aqueduct No. 5 stand vigil.

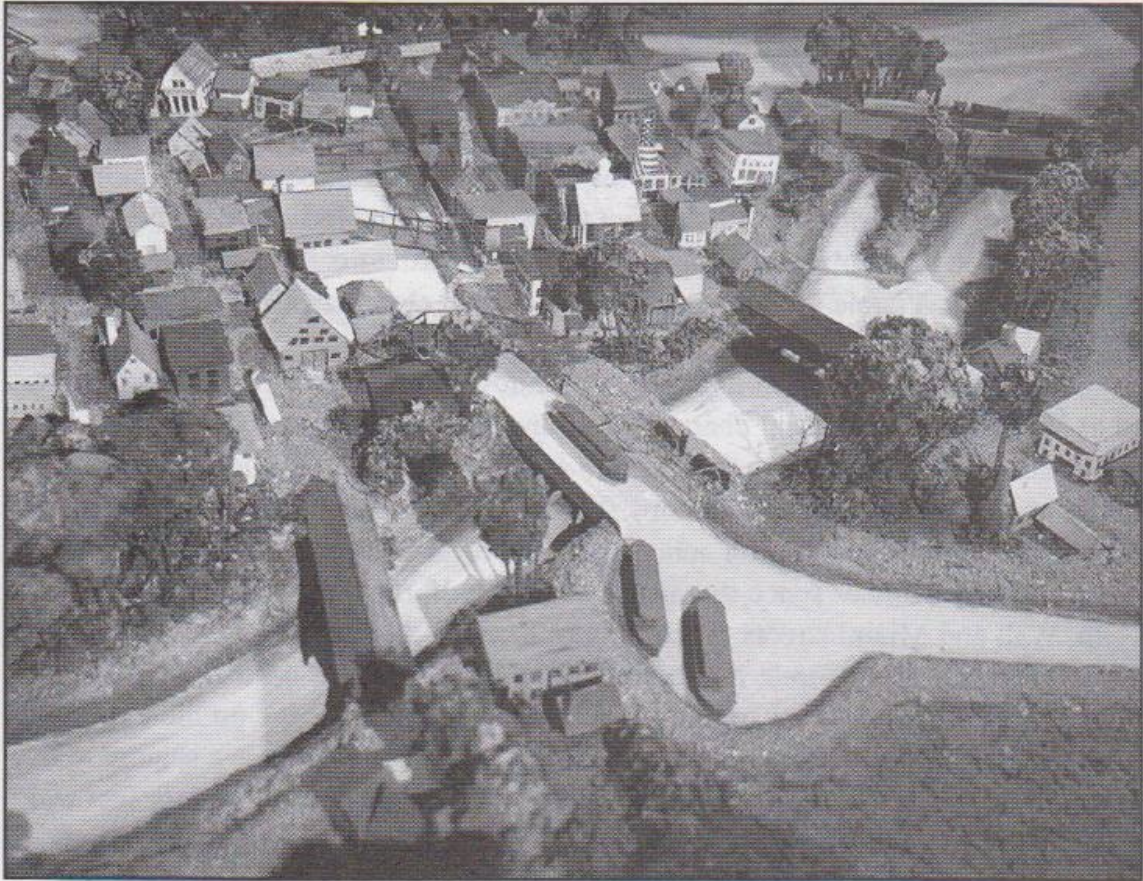
Will Ball, writing about the canal in Logansport noted: "Its course along Fifth was 13 degrees east of North. That is the course of all the streets in the original plat of the town."¹⁰⁶ During the 1980s, two Canal Society of Indiana members Hubert Leslie and Joe Kline placed a sign marking the old structure: "Aqueduct No. 5, completed in 1840. Visible are the remains of piers and abutments."¹⁰⁷

Across the Eel River on its north bank into what was once platted and referred to as West Logan, the canal channel broadened out into a great bay. It was a basin for turning boats, for waiting their turn to cross the river or for holding as cargo was being processed. Not much is recorded of the facility except that it can be viewed on maps of the period and on schematics made for abstract of title documents. It occupied a rectangular space that is the western half of a block enclosed by Linden, Fifth, Wall and Miami streets. According to the West Logan plan, a row of lots platted along North Pearl Street numbering 37 to 42 were, "...all 44 feet wide and running back from Wall Street to within 16 feet of the Water's edge on the Canal with permission to extend the upper story over the 16 feet." It was quite a spacious basin considering that it encompassed the space of at least six lots of forty-four feet width along today's 5th Street, the western portions of lots 37 to 42, ten-foot easements for alley ways and a minimum of sixty-six feet width for adjacent streets.¹⁰⁸

As mentioned, one of the early important cross roads occurred here. Just below the mouth of the Eel River near the site of Chamberlain's tavern, the great Michigan Road crossed the Wabash River. Eventually, the north-south road stretched from Madison, Indiana, on the Ohio River, north through Greensburg, Indianapolis and Logansport to South Bend.¹⁰⁹ Following the north bank of the Eel, the Michigan Road was on about present-day Linden Avenue where it crossed the canal at the basin.¹¹⁰

Chief Engineer Williams does not mention the Michigan Road crossing. However, a circa 1860 map of the area indicates a bridge over the canal between the aqueduct and the basin. An obvious explanation is that one was built during the thirteen years after the 1847 engineer's report was completed.

Canal travelers may have depended on the towpath for mules or horses to pull Wabash & Erie Canal boats north from Evansville on the Ohio River, but there was another traveler using the towpath route in the days before President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Staying out of sight, probably using the cover of night, enterprising people escaping slavery and seeking freedom found their way to the canal towpath and a natural pathway north. It was an ingenious plan. It was



A scale model of Logansport during the canal era in the Cass County Historical Society collection.

Photo by T.J. Smith Studio

an easy-to-follow towpath heading north with “underground railroad stations” along the way where sympathetic Northerners would hide refugees from bounty hunters. Because there were predators determined to capture and return runaways to their owners, the entire enterprise was kept secret. To this day, few records remain to attest conclusively where sheltering stations were located. The Klopp House on Logansport’s Michigan Road is said to have been such a shelter. When a fugitive reached the Michigan Road where it intersected the canal at Logansport, the highway led directly north to South Bend, into Michigan and on to Canada. Canal travelers relied on the towpath to move themselves or their freight independently as they wished. For others a common towpath became a passage to an inalienable right to be free.¹¹¹

Up and down the length of the Wabash & Erie, town after town is imprinted with the canal. Often street or rail lines were built where either the towpath or the once water-filled channel made its way across Indiana. Newcomers to these areas must wonder about the source of street names such as “Canal” or “Water”.

From the great basin, turning to the northwest on a line with today's Water Street, the canal route cut across Ottawa Street just east of where it meets North Pearl. It crossed the Conrail line to Water Street at Third Street. Appropriately named Water Street, for the nature of the route it replaced, the canal headed west until approximately two blocks beyond present-day Holland Street. Here, meeting the foot of a high bluff, its course turned toward the southwest. Today, the approximate location of this site is the west end of Carlisle Corporation's parking lot bordering Water Street. A one hundred-yard long portion of the canal channel leads westward until interrupted by a now-removed rail embankment.

Anyone growing up in Logansport during the 1930s, 40s or 50s may remember the rail embankment known as the "hump" that once carried trains up the steep bluff north of town. Not much remains of the "Panhandle", a nickname given the Chicago Branch of the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railroad, and its steep incline that first crossed over the canal and later became Water Street.

When the rails first were being laid a local newspaper writer, who was around at the time the trestle was being constructed over the canal, wrote about Captain Kendall and his packet boat crew meeting the rail workers: "Approaching the point where the new railroad crossed the canal (the boat's captain) discovered a work train consisting of an engine and several cars standing on the tressle (sic) beneath which they must pass...the mules stopping terror stricken and refusing to pass beneath the monster up there." Since no love was lost between the canalers and the railroaders, a scuffle began with an exchange of not so innocent insults. Clods and gravel from the construction gang above rained down on the boat below that only aggravated the situation. When the canalers began firing shots from their pistols at the railroaders the encounter came to an abrupt conclusion. No injuries were reported and the boat moved slowly on "...headed for Delphi and points west."¹¹²

From the intersection of the "hump" and canal, a line of trees extending southwest today marks the canal right-of-way. As the canal cut across what later became the Kiesling Gardens, traces of the towpath have been obliterated under the plow. On adjacent Joseph Barron Reserve land, E.N. Talbott laid out the town of Dunkirk, in 1873. Dunkirk, a once thriving village, included the north south streets of Delaware, Dakota, Sonora, Nevada and Vermont with Bates and Massachusetts the east west streets. The north boundary of Dunkirk was the Wabash & Erie line and Lock 25 was nearby.¹¹³

Chief Engineer Williams wrote in his 1847 Report:

Culvert No. 86, of wood, all of which need rebuilding within the next year.
Lock No. 25, lift 9 feet built of cut stone. The stone from Laselle's quarry, of very inferior quality, soft and perishable, wholly unfit for lock walls. The

walls of this lock are much dilapidated – the portion of wall from the lower gates around to the end of the wing walls, will probably require to be rebuilt next spring at a cost of some \$2,500. Other portions must be renewed soon, until the whole walls are rebuilt. The gates will last two years.¹¹⁴

A builder by the name of Hoover received a contract on August 26, 1836, to build this lock in “Section 175”. On December 4, 1850, and again on November 7, 1855, contracts were let to a man named McMaster for additional work on this same lock.¹¹⁵ Lock No. 25 was rebuilt using cut stone in 1856.¹¹⁶

Some clues have been handed down in historical accounts that help to pinpoint the location of Lock No. 25, and for Lock No. 26, the next lock to the west. Rev. Thomas Dean Arthington notes, “The locks, between Logan and Georgetown, were completed in June, 1839. These were two and four miles below Logan; one was at Fitch’s Glen.”¹¹⁷ Will Ball stated that “(there was suppose to be) a lock somewhere along the foot of the bluff northwest of the Water Street route”. Ball went on to say that he found nothing along the way but a couple of cut stones.¹¹⁸ Maps of Logansport’s canal days suggest no such structures appear along Water Street. Contemporary topographical maps of the area illustrate what appears to be the canal’s route from Water Street to Fitch’s Glen. Between Water Street and present-day U.S. 35, a change in elevation would suggest Lock 25 was in the vicinity of Dunkirk. Furthermore, Ball’s suggestion that a lock may have been built at the “foot of the bluff northwest of Water Street route”, would seem to place the lock away from the canal right-of-way. Additional information is necessary to help locate Lock No. 25 with any certainty. Normally, the presence of a lock was followed by commerce and soon after clusters of shops and houses appeared. Dunkirk, however, was not platted until 1873. By then, the canal had but a few years of boat traffic left before railroads began dominating the scene. Early settlers of Dunkirk, however, were Italians who moved to America and found work in both of the nearby stone quarries as well as on the railroads.¹¹⁹ It is possible that Dunkirk was platted on this site since the presence of a lifting lock would have encouraged settlement.

Through the Chapultapec

Adjacent to Dunkirk, yet within the Barron Reserve, the canal route turned south moving closer to the Wabash River. Under the U.S. 35 Bypass, at the place where the northbound traffic exits, is about where the canal channel once crossed. With the aid of topographical and Canal Society of Indiana touring maps, Lock 25 is approximately two-tenths of a mile to the east of this exiting point while Lock 26 is approximately one-half mile to the west. Clearly, there was some separation between Locks 25 and 26 because Jesse Williams recorded a road bridge between

the two: "Road bridge No. 36, must be rebuilt during the next winter (1848)". It might well have been situated where U.S. 35 is now routed.¹²⁰

Jacob Williams' newspaper account of Captain Kendall's experiences maneuvering his canal boat packet along known landmarks through this stretch of the canal, helps to define the location of these two locks: "Arriving at Fitch's Glenn (sic), the worthy captain was further aggravated at finding the lock only partly filled." Secondly he states: "Finally clear of the locks and away, they lost another half hour getting past a stone barge which had been loading at the Fitch's quarry, and when the locks were opened, had slipped one mooring rope and floated crossways of the channel." The writer was referring to locks numbered 25 and 26 which suggest that both were east of the old "Blue Hole" which he refers to as "Fitch's quarry". Continuing Jacob Williams' newspaper story: "(they moved) past the beautiful glenn (sic) and the towering cliffs, on and on, at top speed." This is in disagreement with the record located by Reverend Thomas Dean Arthington which reads, "The locks were two and four miles below Logan; one was at Fitch's Glen." tending to place Lock No. 25 east of Fitch's Glen and Lock No. 26 to the west of the Glen. According to the newspaper account of Captain Kendall, locks numbered 25 and 26 both were east of Fitch's Glen or about two miles west of Logansport and only roughly separated at distances of "two and four miles below Logansport".¹²¹ Recounting an actual experience, such as the Captain Kendall story, tends to help pinpoint actual locations rather than a description intended to give approximations. Perhaps hard evidence will surface when some future construction project unearths the artifacts or an accurate map of mechanical structures is found.

From U.S. Highway 35 for one-half mile, the canal route made a sweeping arc that today joins U.S. Highway 24 West near the east edge of the old stone quarry. Throughout its length it appears that the canal bed has been filled and the berm bank has been leveled for farming purposes. However, some of the best examples of tow-path stand deep in a woodlot serving as pathways for deer and other critters. Hidden among the trees along the towpath is an earthen ramp that had been built to load canal boats with limestone from the quarry.¹²² At one point, nearly four-tenths of a mile, the high towpath embankment stops abruptly. Could this be the place where Lock No. 26 was once constructed?

Although the canal route turned to a more southerly direction, it soon headed to the west at U.S. 24 within a half-mile of the "present-day U.S. 35 overpass. Today U.S. 24 rests on the old towpath for the next mile. Unfortunately, the bed of the canal has been filled in until nothing is visible. Continuing to the west near Fitch's Glen, land-filling continues with refuse being dumped into the old channel and a national treasure slowly disappears from sight. Just east of Big Snake Creek - or Forlow's Run as Will Ball called it - that flows over a spectacular waterfall, an old canal warehouse, in the path of an unfortunate land-filling operation, is threatened.¹²³

Sometimes referred to as the "boatman cabin", this structure was perhaps used for grain storage in the days after the canal. Likely, the stone house was used as a transfer station or warehouse. It can be seen from U.S. 24 along Big Snake Creek in this glen that was once named "Chapultepec" by William L. Brown. During canal days, when he owned the land, Brown thought of this place as the Gibraltar of Mexico.¹²⁴

So unique is the naturalness of the area that George Winter painted its scenes and wrote of its natural beauty in his journal:

[T]his ravine and creek of which my painting represents a portion is a natural curiosity and wonder; and were it located in vicinity of a large city it would doubtless become a 'Lion'.

The sides of the ravine are composed of high and perpendicular walls of limestone rock. This rocky solitude is entered by the 'Wabash and Erie' canal, which glides but a few yards from its base; and the Wabash river too flows parallel to it, at but a few hundred paces from it. Broken masses of rock, that have fallen from the cliffs, or washed in from the creek above have accumulated with broken branches of trees, and drift wood, offer partial obstruction to the explorer.¹²⁵

John Peter Paul left this record while surveying through Fitch's Glen:

27th, Friday. Went on the line, run a short distance, came to a small stream and were induced by the roaring of the waters, to a short distance in the direction of the noise where, to our utter astonishment, we beheld a scene grand beyond my feeble powers for description. A deep and narrow hollow, bounded on all sides by perpendicular and projecting rocks with the stream tumbling a vast number of benches, of an acclivity of about 30°, upon which we ascended, pushing under two or three arches formed by the inclination of two shaley (sic) rocks with, in one instance, a third one over the top, to all appearances placed in that situation by some violent convulsion. Continued the ascent until we arrived at the top, walked on the precipice, went out on some of the highest projections of the rocks but could not look down without danger to ourselves.¹²⁶

Engineer Jesse Williams reported, "Culvert No. 87, Rough stone arch - 8 feet chord built of imperfect stone. The arch leaks considerably but may stand for several years."¹²⁷ This probably was the arch at Big Snake Creek and other than a few large cut limestone blocks, no trace remains of the arch. Near its east bank, where it intersected with the canal, are the remains of the Boatmen Cabin warehouse.

E.F. Lucas, General Superintendent, reported: "After the first opening of navigation, the Canal continued in good repair until about the 15th of June (1844), when, by an extraordinary flood, it was nearly destroyed for the season, from Lafayette to Logansport." He continued noting the serious breaches that occurred at near struc-

tures such as Wildcat Creek dam, Lockport's arch, Crooked Creek aqueduct at Georgetown "and near Lasselle's Mill four miles west of Logansport." Lucas' account stated that the break at the crossing of "a small stream where the culvert was insufficient to vent the water, and a very heavy embankment gave way, carrying out a Packet which happened at the moment to be passing; which resulted in the entire loss of the boat, and three passengers were instantly drowned; the remainder of the passengers and crew narrowly escaping."¹²⁸

Logansport *Telegraph*, on June 16, 1844, reported:

Distressing Occurrence. Packet Boat Kentucky Lost and Three Persons Drowned! We stop the Press to announce the painful intelligence of the loss of the Packet Boat Kentucky, commanded by Capt. Hammond, and the death of our esteemed townsman, Mr. Thomas Emerson, and also Mr. Griffin of Fort Wayne, and Mr. Burns from English's quarry, who were all drowned.¹²⁹

Historian Will Ball wrote about Captain Hammond of the packet boat Kentucky. Big Snake Creek carries an enormous amount of water after heavy rains such as the ones the area experienced in June of 1844. As debris pushed down the stream 'lodged against the culvert that carried the canal water and the arch collapsed under the pressure. The Kentucky was swept toward the river and was smashed, against a large tree causing it to break it in two. Tragically, three passengers were lost. Captain Hammond reported in the Logansport Telegraph on June 16, 1844:

Packet Boat "Kentucky" lost and three persons drowned, three and a half miles below this place at 8 o'clock last evening on my passage from Lafayette. The towing path gave way as I was passing the place and I escaped it—but sixty yards beyond, around a short bend there was another. There I was between two breaks at one time only 60 yards apart and both gave way at once. I got the stern line on the firm bank and a line on the tow path but both lines parted in an instant. Away went the boat through the break into the woods, striking a large tree breaking the boat in two, turning her hull upwards and breaking the boat all to pieces.

Will Ball described the Captain's report saying that, "The Captain was a little incoherent, but he had a good excuse. The editor of the 'Telegraph' goes on to add that another immense break had indeed occurred at Birmingham (sic) Bluff, near Lafayette, and that one or two months would be required to make repairs."¹³⁰

"Further Particulars" about the wreck of the Kentucky appeared in the June 15, 1844, Logansport *Telegraph*:

Mr. F. Brown, proprietor of Brown's Hotel of Lafayette was on board at the time the accident occurred and he together with three or four of the boat's crew

were saved almost miraculously. When the Boat left the bed of the Canal and was hurrying to the river with the torrent of water, it broke in two and the part of the Boat that Mr. Brown was on turned completely over, taking him under with it. In turning he caught the railing and by that means he was saved.

He together with the crew, remained on a log all night in the most perilous situation the water around them was some eight or ten feet deep, the place was such that no assistance could be rendered them until morning. Hundreds of our citizens have been on the ground, but as yet, none of the bodies have been found.¹³¹

On June 22, 1844, the Delphi Oracle newspaper reported a "Melancholy Accident" had taken place between Logansport and Delphi:

As the packet boat "Kentucky" was on her upward trip, a small breach occurred in the bank of the canal, caused from the heavy rains for several days previous and then failing, which the driver supposing he could pass, put the horses to their speed, which caused an increased motion of the water, and at the moment the boat came opposite the break, the bank gave way for some distance, forcing the boat entirely out of the canal towards the river, when the unfortunate sufferers became frightened and jumped off on the bank which also gave way, burying them beneath it. The boat, with the captain and crew and several passengers yet on board, was driven among the stumps and trees towards the river, until broken in pieces, those on board saving themselves by clinging to the trees until assistance could be rendered.¹³²

Several days later the newspaper ran the following:

One Further Item. The rain fell in torrents, and so great was the quantity of water, that the culverts could not afford sufficient vent for the passage of the water and it forced its way through the canal. At the place where the Packet Boat *Kentucky* was lost, the water rose about 15 feet in two hours. The body of Mr. Thomas Emerson, was found on last Monday and interred on Tuesday with every attention and respect due the deceased. The body of Mr. Robert Jay Griffin was found below the dam, near Delphi. The body of Mr. Burns has not yet been found.¹³³

Carroll County's Coroner T.C. Hughes, made his report and it was included in the *Delphi Oracle* news item:

An inquest was held on the 21st inst., on the body of R.J. Griffin, taken from the Wabash river afloat at Delphi, Carroll County, Ind., supposed to have been drowned. Deceased was between the age of 20 and 30 years; had on a beaver cloth over-coat, black velvet buttons, and silk braid loops; blue-black dress-coat, red striped vest, black cassimere (sic) pantaloons all much torn. The following articles were found on his person: one horn handled pen knife, one

pitch pipe, five small keys, half an ivory rule, \$16 in money, one black morocco pocket book, and one map of the western States. Said deceased resided in Fort Wayne, Ind., and was lost from the canal packet boat Kentucky, near Logansport, on the 15th inst.¹³⁴

A month after the tragedy, on July 20, 1844, the *Peru Observer* published an editorial about the poor condition of the canal channel. "The water has been eating away the banks for weeks", it read, "and the Assistant Superintendent who has charge of this part of the canal had been informed of the fact; but it would have looked too much like performance of duty had he attended seasonably to the matter and hence the disastrous consequences which have ensued."¹³⁵

Lucas concluded that, "in almost every instance where the embankments were broken, the culverts were found too small or insufficient to vent the water at so unusual a time; an event that could not be foreseen by those superintending the building of the canal - one too, that was as unlooked for as any casual calamity that could have overtaken a public work of its magnitude so soon after its completion, and being brought into use."¹³⁶

Unfortunately, the *Kentucky* represents the more tragic of canal-related incidents. Enion Kendall, a local poet, remembered the fate of the passengers in verse:

The chambermaid and three men more,
Sat all night on a sycamore.
From early light till the rise of sun,
They watched the mighty Wabash run.

Such were the conditions of the times along an especially busy portion of the Wabash & Erie. In 1939 a newspaperman, named Burt Cory, was waging a personal campaign to have the Fitch's Glen area acquired as a state park. He referenced a January 1939 *Outdoor Indiana* article to support his argument that such a facility would create revenue for the community while saving a beautiful portion of the Wabash Valley. In a letter to James R. Jack of Long Cliff, a member of a group amenable to the idea of a state park, Cory spoke of the area's assets pointing to remaining canal features:

Note the old quarry hole at the east edge of the farm and its many possibilities. It could be greatly enlarged as stone is taken from its present walls. The glen (Fitch's Glen) outlet can easily be cleaned out, much loose stone removed, channel deepened and widened. In connection with the damming of the canal bed at the western edge of the property, deepening and widening of the old canal channel east to the quarry hole, a nice body of water would be obtained which would afford boating and fishing."¹³⁷

Today several tons of landfill and rock, concrete and the like have filled most of the old canal channel. Cory wrote about the possibility of forestry projects, rose gardens, peony beds, bird sanctuaries and fish hatcheries. He included in his vision, an observation tower built high enough to afford a view of the “famous Wabash valley”.

In Dr. Fitch’s time splendid stone buildings used as warehouses stood on the canal, but these were torn down by the Casparis (Stone) Co. In October as we drove by on our way home I discovered the fine spring located in the old canal basin. Didn’t have time to leave the car and walk across to see what volume of water still issues therefrom, but it must still live as boards were laid to it. It seems the canal was doubled in width at this point — used as a turning basin by the canal boats. I had failed to find it on my previous visits due to the dense underbrush and feared it had been covered when Road 24 was built on the towpath four years ago. This spring will prove of much value in furnishing much water for the park.¹³⁸

On the north side of the highway the canal channel remains intact between the elevated roadbed and the base of the high bluffs. Along the rocky bluff at least two springs helped furnish water for the canal. Both filled small basins, that when their small gates were opened, dumped their supply into the waterway.¹³⁹ Near the end of the tree-lined highway, a third of a mile west of Big Snake Creek, is Cottonwood Creek. Forty to fifty yards east of Cottonwood Creek the towpath appears and makes a sweeping turn to the northwest. The towpath is all but impossible to detect west of the stream. It seems as if the course of Cottonwood has changed. Following the creek bed a few yards west, a stone arch remains intact. In as pristine condition as possible after nearly one hundred and fifty years, the stone arch is about one hundred and ten-feet long lying in a north-south direction. The south entrance, nearly closed by silt, is visible from U.S. Highway 24 in a crop field west of Cottonwood Creek Bridge. Thanks to farmers over the decades, the arch has not been destroyed.

In 1847, the arch was nearly completed when Jesse Williams made his 1847 report:

Culvert No. 88, 10 feet chord - the arch was built last winter of cut stone from the Georgetown Quarry, of excellent quality, head wall at lower end not built - to finish the work will cost \$75.¹⁴⁰

Of the several arches between Logansport and Delphi, the Cottonwood was second in size to that of Carroll County’s Burnett’s Creek Arch.¹⁴¹ Some of the canal project’s stone arches, although hidden from sight or having escaped development, endure to this day.

Cottonwood Creek Arch is in excellent condition and although its south head wall now is nearly closed with silt, its remote location makes it difficult to approach. Past owners have shown restraint by not destroying this wonderful artifact. However, the entire area of Fitch's Glen including: the Boatman Cabin/warehouse; the high rock walls of the glen; the water cascade of Big Snake Creek; the rocky trail along the berm bank of the Wabash & Erie Canal line; the towpath at Cottonwood Creek; the stone arch; the beautiful glen of Cottonwood Creek's cut, are a gift of nature to be preserved for future generations. Notwithstanding the disruption of U.S. 24 highway, landfill operations and farming activity, the canal and Fitch's Glen are remarkably well preserved. Perhaps it is not too late for Bert Cory's dream to become a reality.

Quarry of the Builder

At places, today's U.S. Highway 24 is constructed over the canal bed. At the place where Georgetown Road meets U.S. 24, CR 400 W heads north. The canal crossed CR 400 W about one-tenth mile north of U.S. 24 under the then Road Bridge No. 37. To follow its course westward, nineteenth-century maps of Noble Township, Section 29, can be compared with that of current topographical maps. It becomes apparent that the railroad crosses the towpath line approximately three-tenths of a mile west of where Georgetown Road meets U.S. 24. Here a noticeable dip in the highway can be seen.¹⁴²

In earlier days, this was land owned by Israel Watts whose farm occupied much of Section 29. On Watts' land, General Hyacinth Lasselle operated a mill and Culvert No. 89 had to be built to pass the canal's water over the water supply to Lasselle's mill.¹⁴³ Culvert No. 89 was made of wood and submerged. Likewise, "Culvert No. 90, of wood, 10 feet by 18 inches - submerged." and "Road bridge No. 37, with new floor may last three or four years." are the entries made in Williams 1847 report.¹⁴⁴

Referring to Jacob Williams' newspaper article about Captain Kendall's packet travels through the area:

Hugging the bluffs to maintain elevation, the waterway west at times close to the Wabash river. Again the valley widened so far back that only an occasional glimpse of the stream was to be had. The crossing under the new T.P.& W. (Toledo Pittsburgh and Wabash) railroad tressle (sic) was peaceful. Like all foresighted persons, Cap (Kendall) sensed the finish for the slow canal boat, the railroads having made it obsolete, slow and expensive.¹⁴⁵



Cottonwood Creek stone arch designated Culvert No. 88
was made of stone from the Georgetown Quarry.

Today the route of the canal can be seen where it crosses south of the railroad line heading west toward and into France County Park. A fair amount of the canal bed remains extant in the park. Visitors have the choice of several walking trails, with one marked "Towpath" that is the actual canal trace. A sign at the beginning of the trail reads, "Erie Canal 1840-1875". To the west about sixty yards on the Towpath Trail, the channel clearly can be seen as it passes through stone walls that may have served as abutments for a road bridge during the active years of the quarry. Hiking through the park is a pleasant experience that can be enriched knowing the significant role this place played in helping to build the Wabash & Erie Canal.

During the early stages of the canal's construction, finding stone suitable for building mechanical structures in the Wabash Valley posed a serious problem. Available timber from the surrounding forests was used with the hope that good building stone would soon be found to replace less durable wood. As long as the wood remained submerged under water, protected from the open air, it served its purpose. Today, wooden structural members found under streams are in remarkably good condition, however, little remains of those timbers that were exposed to the elements. Williams said in 1837:

The manner of building one lock near Georgetown has been changed from the composite plan (that is, the walls formed of stone with timber facing) to cut stone, a quarry having recently been discovered in that vicinity, which it is supposed may answer for cut work.¹⁴⁶

A decade later, as noted in Williams' review of Culvert No. 88, he declared the Georgetown quarry stone to be of excellent quality. By 1855, this quarry was supplying material to replace older wooden structures such as the Huntington County arch at Silver Creek.¹⁴⁷

PawPaw Creek, flowing from the north, cascades over a stone wall before emptying into an old quarry. Exiting at the south end of the quarry, PawPaw Creek crosses the canal, meandering on its way into the nearby Wabash River. Engineer Jesse Williams, in 1847, described the mechanical structures that were built in present-day France County Park: "Culvert No. 91 at the Georgetown stone quarry, built of wood, 2 spans 12 feet by 2 feet - to submerge it fully will cost \$10." No sign of Culvert 91 can be found today. Cass County officials' preservation of our transportation history in France County Park is a rare gift to future generations.

From the France Park entrance, travel west on County Road 50 S to return to the canal's main line. Approximately one and one-third mile, then south on CR 600 W two-tenths of a mile, the road crosses traces of the canal towpath. West of the France Park's Towpath Trail are the cultivated fields of farmers whose lands are sprinkled with a line of wooded islands preserving towpath and channel from the plow. In places between the park and Georgetown, the canal serves as a drainage stream stretching east and west across farmers' crop fields.

Baskin, Forster's 1876 map indicates at least one stream crossing the canal's path in Jefferson Township's Section 25. Williams' 1847 report states: "Culvert No. 92, of wood, 6 feet by 18 inches - submerged Culvert No. 93, a small wooden culvert - submerged."¹⁴⁸

Farmers living in the area tell of a large basin that had been excavated here for loading and turning limestone barges. Across the crop field west, a few hundred feet from the France County Park boundary, on the line of the canal route, in a small wooded area are traces of the towpath. It is possible that this may be the site of a turnaround basin supporting the description given by local residents.¹⁴⁹

Once again referring to Baskin, Forster's map, a now abandoned road – about two-tenths of a mile west of today's CR 600 W – is shown crossing the canal. Could this be the bridge Williams 1847 Engineering Report described as, "Road bridge No. 38 should be rebuilt in 1849"? A December 11, 1850, record on file at the

Indiana State Archives shows a contract, probably for these repairs, made to a Mr. Ferris.¹⁵⁰ Near here may have been the site of an abandoned canal boat mentioned by George L. Straight in a July 1921 Delphi Citizen Times letter to the editor: "...the last boat going east, stranded just about one mile east of Georgetown near where the Curveton road crossed the old canal bed."

George Cicott's Town

When planning the canal route, Williams wrote, "The rocky bluffs on the north bank of the Wabash, between Eel river and Georgetown, have been avoided in the location, by keeping up the level and passing through a range of small wet prairies which extend as far down as Crooked creek in a direction parallel with the river."¹⁵¹ Later in 1837, Williams advised the State Board of Internal Improvements that, "The line from Logansport to Georgetown is nearly ready for the admission of the water." As noted earlier, the aqueduct over the Eel River was holding up progress and navigation was not expected to happen until September of 1838.¹⁵²

John Peter Paul had these observations, as the early survey party continued its work, giving a view of the difficulty travelers endured before the period of internal improvements:

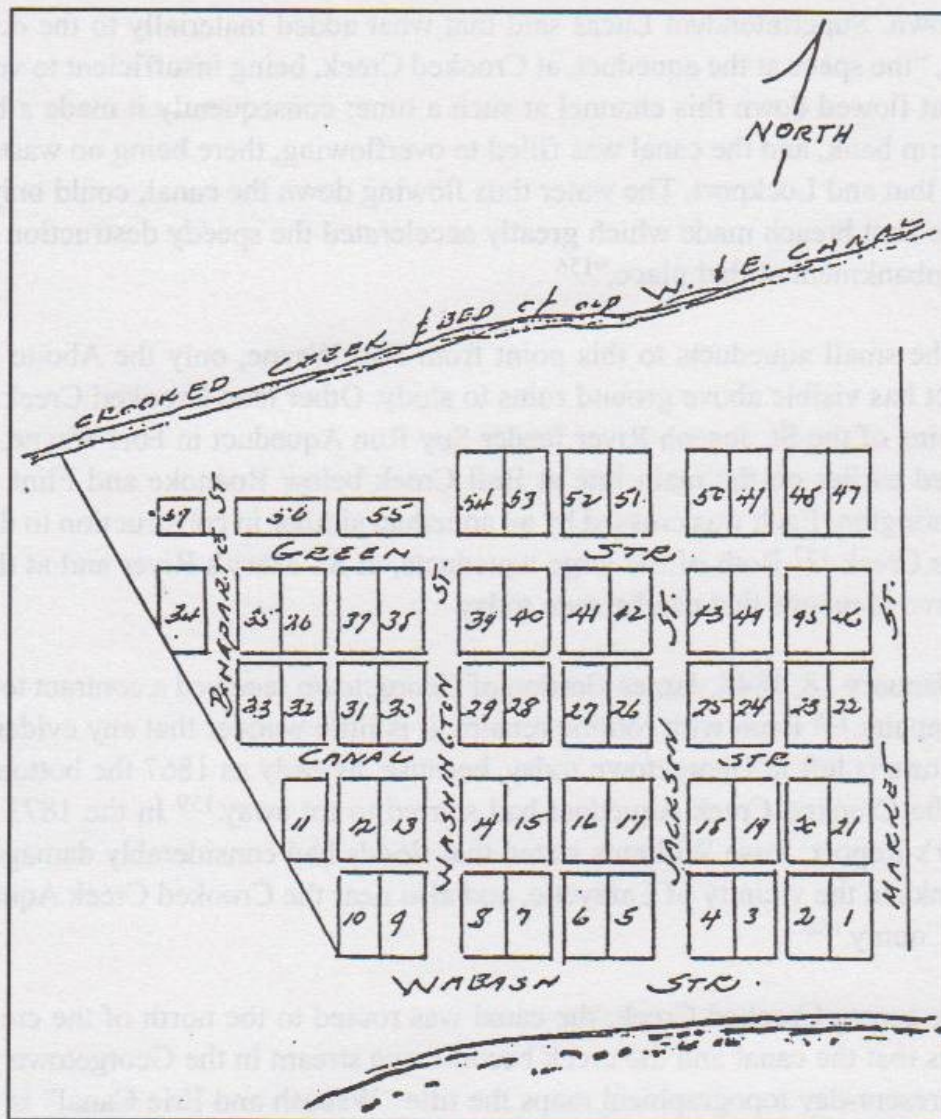
We descended the operations, (from Fitch's Glen) run down to the River, continued our line along the base of a perpendicular rock which rose to the height of thirty or forty feet.

We walked down the River with the expectation of finding the tents pitched near Secot's [Cicott's] when, to our consternation, we met the Col. and his party in the perogue (sic) and learned that the wagons had missed their way and were about two miles and a half from where we had expected to encamp. The sun was down, Mr. Morris and myself started in search, were bewildered in our course and were overtaken in the dense woods by darkness. Groped our way through the brush and woods until we fortunately found a road and with the utmost difficulty kept it until, contrary to our expectations, we found the wagons.

28th, Saturday. (Capt) Morris and myself walked down the River. About a mile and a half below camp we waded the River continued down until we met with blackberries. We ate as many as we could, walked across a dry prairie, passed through a skirt of woods and had presented to our view a landscape of most enchanting beauty: a prairie of considerable width, with a hill on the West, the face of it destitute of trees, lofty and regular in its conformation. Returned to camp, fully compensated for the fatigue and toil we endured –

30th, Monday. Day fair, very hot. Run three miles on the line, run an ordinate to the River below Secot's (sic) farm. Rode down to camp in the perogue (sic). Had an unpleasant ride.

31st, Tuesday, run from above Secot's (sic) a short distance below the camp.¹⁵³



Crooked Creek and the Wabsh & Erie Canal share the same course in a "Town Plate of Georgetown".

Recorded July 5, 1835 in Cass County's Plat Book #1, page 2.

John Armstrong, surveyor, Daniel Bell, proprietor

Wabash & Erie freight rate charts indicate that Georgetown is one hundred and eighty-nine-miles from Lake Erie at Toledo. It lies one hundred and five-miles from the state line and eight-miles from Logansport.¹⁵⁴ North of Georgetown the builders met Crooked Creek on its long southwest winding course to the Wabash. According to Chief Engineer Williams, the canal crossed the stream on: "Aqueduct No. 6, over Crooked creek, one span of 28 feet resting on stone abutments. Trunk of wood - must be rebuilt during the ensuing winter."¹⁵⁵

High waters in the summer of 1844 that figured in the *Kentucky* packet boat tragedy at Fitch's Glen, washed away the channel's berm, or north bank, at

Georgetown. Superintendent Lucas said that what added materially to the destruction was, "the space at the aqueduct, at Crooked Creek, being insufficient to vent the water that flowed down this channel at such a time; consequently it made a breach in the berm bank, and the canal was filled to overflowing, there being no waste weir between that and Lockport. The water thus flowing down the canal, could only pass out at the first breach made which greatly accelerated the speedy destruction of the heavy embankment at that place."¹⁵⁶

Of the small aqueducts to this point from Fort Wayne, only the Aboite Creek Aqueduct has visible above ground ruins to study. Other than Crooked Creek, gone are remains of the St. Joseph River feeder Spy Run Aqueduct in Fort Wayne, those mentioned earlier on the main line at Bull Creek below Roanoke and Flint Creek near Huntington. Each was crossed by an aqueduct similar in construction to the one at Aboite Creek.¹⁵⁷ Both of the large aqueducts, at St. Mary's River and at the Eel River, have remnants that can be seen today.

On January 18, 1848, James Gordon of Georgetown received a contract to make needed repairs.¹⁵⁸ Even with routine repairs, it is little wonder that any evidence of the structure is left in Georgetown today, because, as early as 1867 the bottom timbers of the Crooked Creek Aqueduct had started to rot away.¹⁵⁹ In the 1873 Chief Engineer's Report, Jesse Williams stated that floods had considerably damaged the canal banks in the vicinity of Lafayette, and also near the Crooked Creek Aqueduct, in Cass County.¹⁶⁰

Once across Crooked Creek, the canal was routed to the north of the creek.¹⁶¹ It appears that the canal and the creek become one stream in the Georgetown vicinity. On present-day topographical maps the title "Wabash and Erie Canal" is found marking this portion of the creek's channel.¹⁶² Even though maps indicate that the two are sharing the same bed, there are plat maps depicting the creek visibly apart from the canal. For example, one map dated October 4, 1877, showing a survey at true meridian, has the two waterways separated.¹⁶³

Years earlier canal officials due to the porous limestone conditions through the sections of Fitch's Glen and Georgetown quarry recommended a feeder at Georgetown. Local resident, Don Kistler, recalls hearing stories that Crooked Creek once was turned into the flow of the old canal channel, however, he had never heard when the work was completed nor the reason for doing so. In 1845, Crooked Creek was temporarily redirected as a feeder to the canal and is mentioned in Logan Esarey's *History of Indiana*. Because of a serious shortage of canal water below Lafayette Esarey noted that in 1847 a feeder had to be built, "eight miles west of Logansport at Crooked Creek".¹⁶⁴ Extant maps do depict the Wabash & Erie's route is separate from Crooked Creek and others do not. However, it is also true that the

need for canal water here was acute in some years while too much water was a problem in others.

Too much water is why Captain Kendall's packet boat, "Came to Grief at Georgetown" in Jacob Williams' newspaper story, recounting a late eighteen-hundred's canal boat trip from Logansport to Delphi. At the Eel River Aqueduct Captain Kendall noted the keel scraped the board bottom of the water-filled trough. He held hope that there would be plenty of water once the boat passed the Crooked Creek feeder at Gordon's Warehouse at Georgetown. Yet, after passing the feeder the current was increasing and the water level was dropping. Opposite the feeder gate a break in the towpath was allowing a rush of water to pour into the creek bed below. "The timbered passage beneath the canal bed was washed out, the creek rushing across the canal bed, being assisted in its assault upon the tow path by the canal's water rushing to join it from each side." Captain Kendall declared that the break was so serious it would never be repaired, whereupon, he abandoned the canal business then and there.¹⁶⁵

Historian Ben Stuart did not mention whether or not the creek was routed into the canal bed. He did write that one-half mile east of Georgetown, a lock sat back in the wilderness. Stuart referred to it as, "one of the loneliest spots along the canal. It was here that William Gary...tended lock month after month, and year after year with no companion save his violin and a little white rabbit." Sometime after the late 1860s and living in near isolation, his tiny six-by-twelve-foot house, "stood between what was known as the tail race and the lock". He was reputed to have had many friends and was a good violin player. Each month a Mr. Buckley, the paymaster for the Wabash & Erie, drove down the towpath in a one-horse buggy and paid the lock tender his five dollar monthly pay.¹⁶⁶ Gary was described as a Civil War veteran who had lost one of his legs in that conflict. Lock tending was work he could do as well as play violin. Legend has it that when he played his fiddle it could be heard up and down the Wabash River valley.¹⁶⁷

Originally, Lock No. 27 had been contracted for as a composite of stone walls with facings of timber. Williams mentioned in his 1837 report that the "lock near Georgetown had been changed from the composite plan to cut stone."¹⁶⁸

By 1847 the Chief Engineer noted, "Lock No. 27, 8 feet lift, built of cut stone from Georgetown quarry. The stone are durable but the workmanship very imperfect. The gates are two years old." At the Georgetown Road, Williams recorded, "Road bridge No. 39, may last three years."

In the field, Crooked Creek's meandering flow becomes nearly a straight one indicative of a man-made feature. For the half mile or so distance east of the point at which Georgetown Road crosses Crooked Creek, the stream has a noticeable

straight course. Then, Crooked Creek's naturally winding pattern reoccurs on its final run to the Wabash River.¹⁶⁹

After one hundred years, the Indiana wilds have taken back this course of the old Wabash & Erie. About one-half mile east of Georgetown, along the south side of Crooked Creek, the portions of the towpath may be unchanged and the depression reminiscent of a lock site may be in evidence. However, careful study of both is necessary to be certain. Lock No. 27, the site where canal boats on their east and west journeys, is today away from roads; accessible by a path for farm tractors and kept open by the movement of deer herds. Obviously, the area cannot be as grown over as it might have been with the ancient plants found in the 1840s, however, the trees, thickets, roots and all give a glimpse of what canal shovelmens must have faced over one-hundred fifty years ago.

J. Richard Beste of London, England, traveling with his wife and children on "holiday" through the Wabash valley in the 1850s, gives a good description of the canal when he wrote:

We passed through a great deal of beautiful country. Through scores and scores of miles of woodland that never heard the axe; past thousands of acres where the trees were rotting in the steaming pools collected about them. For the canal sometimes passed along the slope of rising ground, where the water wept through the bank of the lower side; for, whenever hollows were to be passed over, its channel was not formed by being dug out of the earth, but by the piling of the earth on each side to form embankments. These were often broken violently away; and the water, let in through upper locks, trickled over them and formed morasses on each side.

I never saw more magnificent timber than shaded the valleys through which we passed. Great sticks of plank oak shot up straight from the bottoms without a knot or branch, until their heads spread out, some scores of feet above, like the tufted summits of the Italian pine. At times, partial clearings or little prairies opened vistas into the lands beyond, and still the same noble timber everywhere arose. On the banks of the canal, as on mounds of higher earth, the spaces between the trees were filled with wild and untrodden copes. Shrubs with large gorgeous leaves, shot up amid creepers of various hues, and glistened in the sun.¹⁷⁰

"Culvert 94, of wood, 2 spans, 12 feet wide and 2 feet high - submerged" as described by Jesse Williams may have been the structure passing the stream from the since-developed Ridgeview Estates reservoir¹⁷¹ and Williams wrote, "Culvert 95, of wood, 6 feet wide by 18 inches high - submerged." and "Road bridge No. 40, will last 3 years. Culvert 96 of wood, 6 feet by 18 inches-submerged." thus describ-

ing the last of the structures built in Cass County.

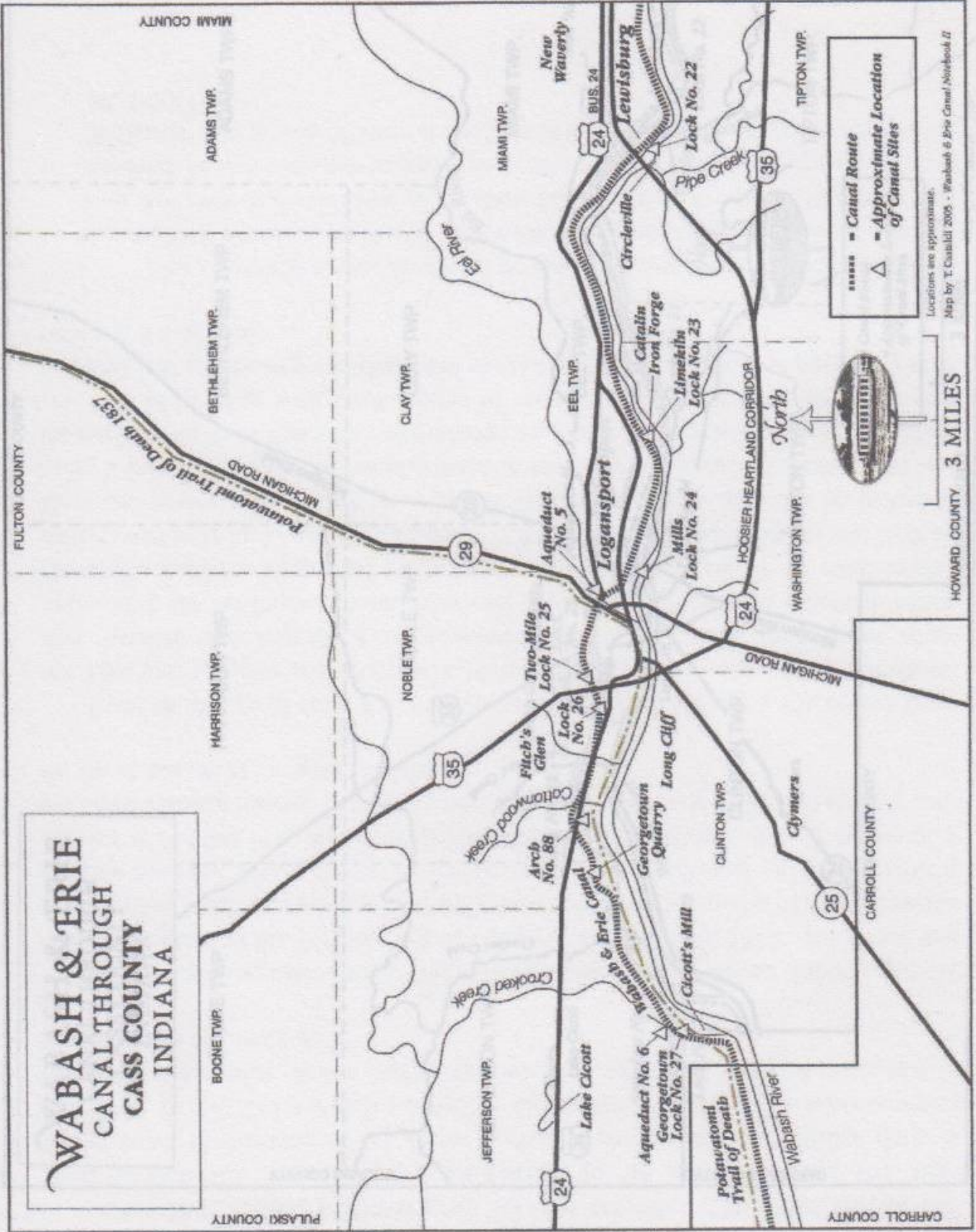
In his 1837 report, Williams gives his cost estimates: "The total cost of line from Section 122 (near LaFountain's Creek), to the end of Section 163, near Georgetown, a distance of 21 miles 4 chains, estimated from similar data, is \$257,091, or \$12,214 per mile nearly."¹⁷² Georgetown served as an important port along the canal route. It was eight miles west of Logansport and five miles east of the next stop at Lockport.¹⁷³

When commissioner Jordan Vigas showed up in Fort Wayne announcing the commencement of the Wabash & Erie Canal on February 22, 1832, and struck that first ground breaking shovel full of soil, there was to be a reaction of an earthquake rocking the land. Not a violent rumbling as the New Madrid of 1811, but rather a crevice 468-miles long that was destined to shape the future. A near bankruptcy occurred causing Indiana to create a new state constitution in 1851 that sharply limits the state's ability to assume debt.¹⁷⁴

Even so, the canal served as the catalyst that helped change a wilderness frontier area into a viable and productive Midwestern American state. Canal construction sparked the beginning of economic development for the region when accounting for the large amount of private capital investment that followed. Mills, foundries, machine shops and factories were possible because of the considerable waterpower near locks and dam feeders.¹⁷⁵ All were improved by steam and later by electrical power. The historic area of the Wabash & Erie Canal can be linked to today's economy driven by employment in manufacturing and supporting service industries. Much of this area's manufacturing supplies automobile and truck makers. It is in keeping with the business of transporting people and the goods they demand, just as passenger packets and cargo canal boats served that purpose a century and a half ago.

*"Cap (Kendall) sensed the finish for the slow canal boat, the rail roads having made it obsolete, slow and expensive. Being naturally of cheerful disposition, however, and now clear of the disturbing railroad menace until Delphi was reached, he was soon humming his favorite song and enjoying his pipe." – Jacob Williams: The Wreck of Mary Anne Last of Canal Boats, Logansport Press May 30, 1932.*¹⁷⁶

WABASH & ERIE CANAL THROUGH CASS COUNTY INDIANA



 = Canal Route
 = Approximate Location of Canal Sites



Locations are approximate.
Map by T. Casaldi 2005 • Wabash & Erie Canal Notebook #1

HOWARD COUNTY 3 MILES

CARROLL COUNTY

FULTON COUNTY

MIAMI COUNTY

BOONE TWP.

HARRISON TWP.

BETHLEHEM TWP.

ADAMS TWP.

NOBLE TWP.

CLAY TWP.

JEFFERSON TWP.

MIAMI TWP.

CLINTON TWP.

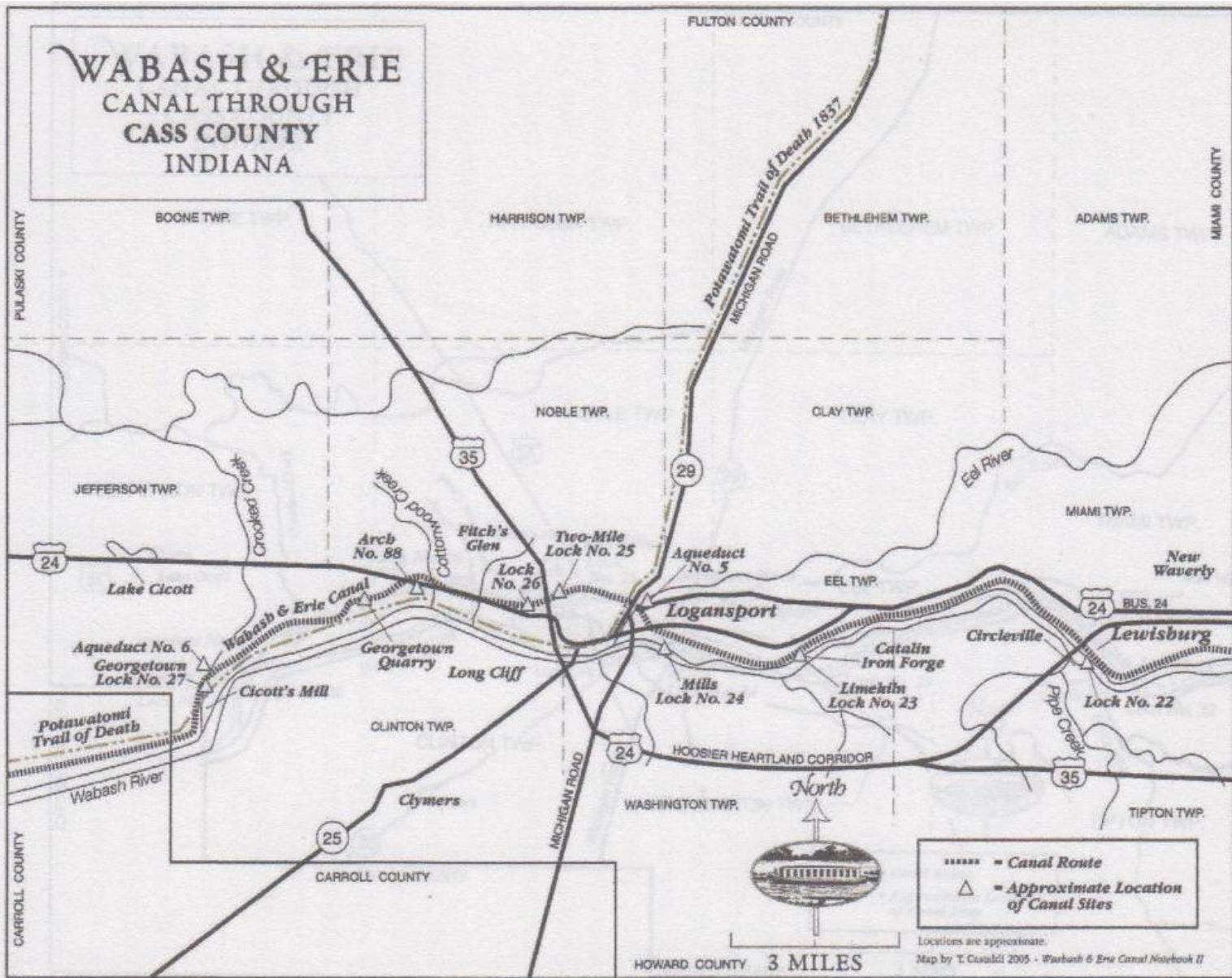
WASHINGTON TWP.

TIPTON TWP.

CARROLL COUNTY

HOWARD COUNTY 3 MILES

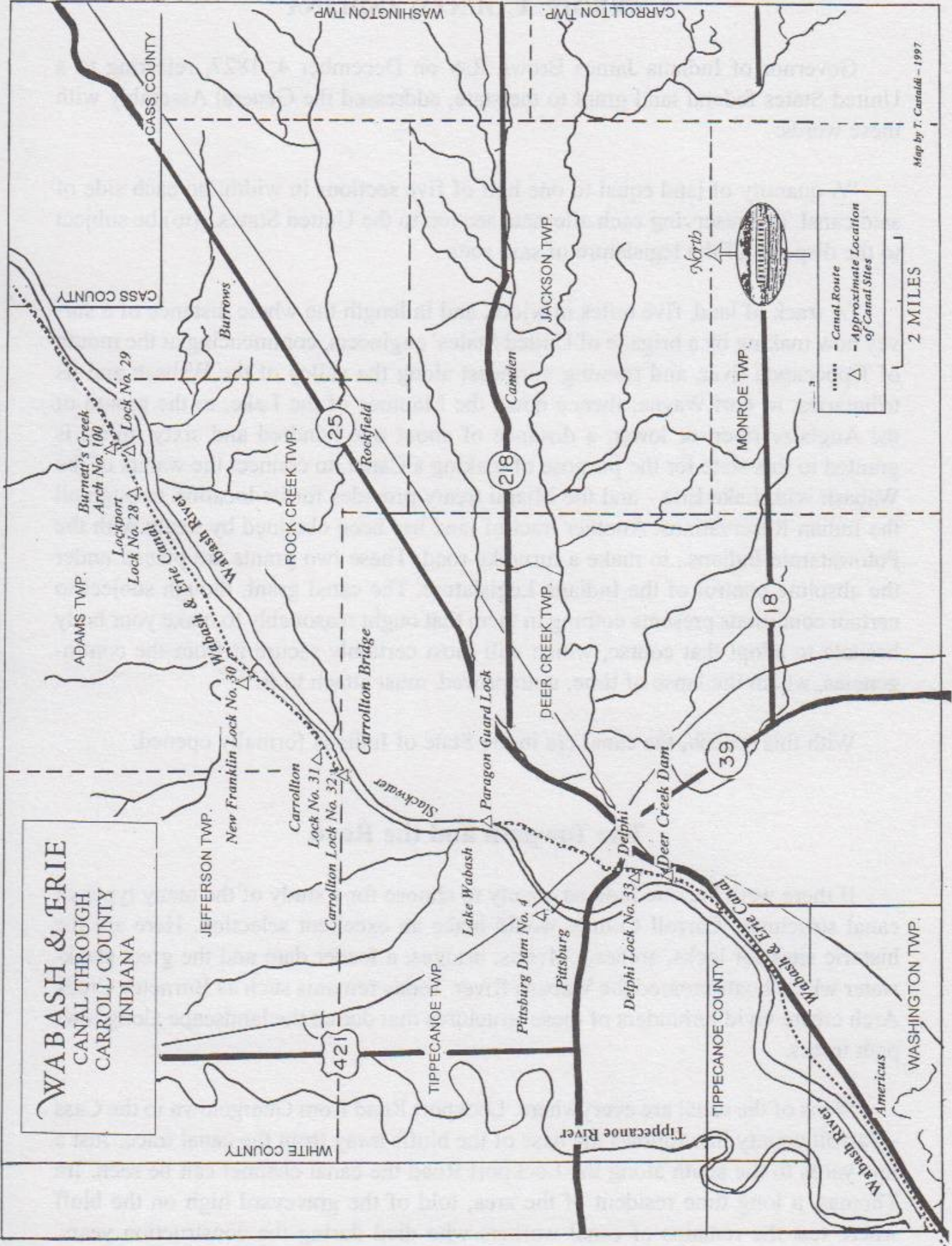
WABASH & ERIE CANAL THROUGH CASS COUNTY INDIANA



----- = Canal Route
 △ = Approximate Location of Canal Sites

Locations are approximate.
 Map by T. Cavalieri 2005 - Wabash & Erie Canal Notebook II

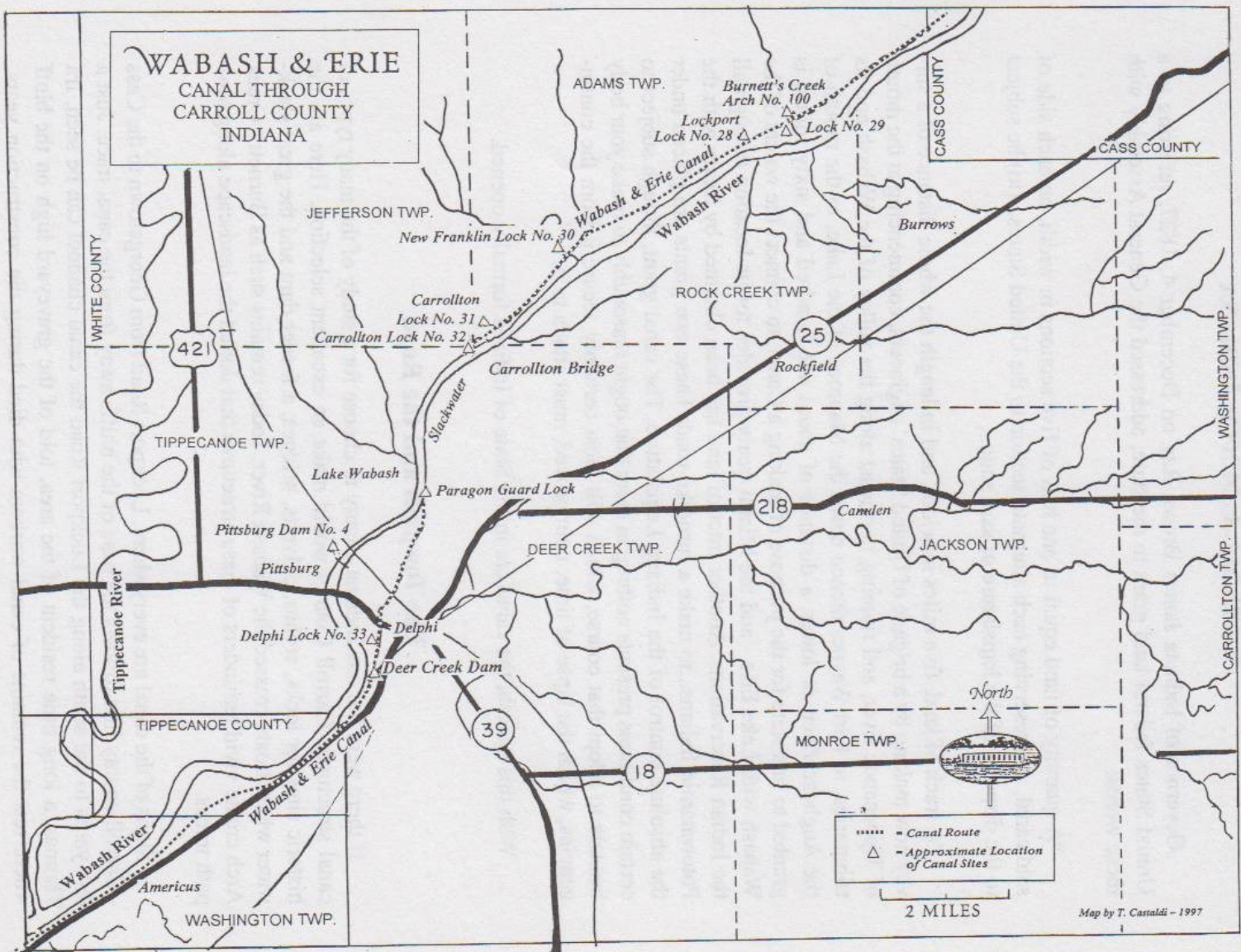
WABASH & ERIE CANAL THROUGH CARROLL COUNTY INDIANA



..... - Canal Route
- Approximate Location of Canal Sites

North
2 MILES

WABASH & ERIE CANAL THROUGH CARROLL COUNTY INDIANA



WABASH & ERIE CANAL THROUGH CARROLL COUNTY, INDIANA

Governor of Indiana James Brown Ray on December 4, 1827, referring to a United States federal land grant to the state, addressed the General Assembly with these words:

“A quantity of land equal to one half of five sections in width, on each side of said canal, and reserving each alternate section to the United States...(to) be subject to the disposal of the legislature of said state...

“A track of land, five miles in width, and in length the whole distance of a survey now making by a brigade of United States’ engineers, commencing at the mouth of Tippecanoe river, and running northeast along the valley of the Wabash and its tributaries, to Fort Wayne; thence down the Maumee of the Lake, to the mouth of the Auglaize river, or lower, a distance of about one hundred and sixty miles, is granted to this state for the purpose of making a Canal, to connect the waters of the Wabash with Lake Erie - and the Miami treaty provides for its location through all the Indian Reservations. Another tract of land has been obtained by treaty with the Potawatamic Indians...to make a turnpike road. These two grants are placed under the absolute control of the Indiana Legislature. The canal grant, though subject to certain conditions presents nothing in them that ought reasonably to make your body hesitate to adopt that course, which will most certainly secure it from the contingencies, which the lapse of time, unimproved, must attach to it.”¹⁷⁷

With this speech, the canal era in the State of Indiana formally opened.

The Towpath and the Road

If there were but one Indiana county to choose for a study of the many types of canal structures, Carroll County would make an excellent selection. Here are the historic sites for locks, arches, culverts, bridges, a feeder dam and the great slack-water where boats crossed the Wabash River. Today remains such as Burnett’s Creek Arch create vivid reminders of these structures that dotted the landscape along tow-path traces.

Signs of the canal are everywhere. Lockport Road from Georgetown to the Cass - Carroll county line follows the base of the bluffs away from the canal trace. Just a few yards to the south along the Lockport Road the canal channel can be seen. Ira Thomas, a long time resident of the area, told of the graveyard high on the bluff where rest the remains of canal workers who died during the construction years.

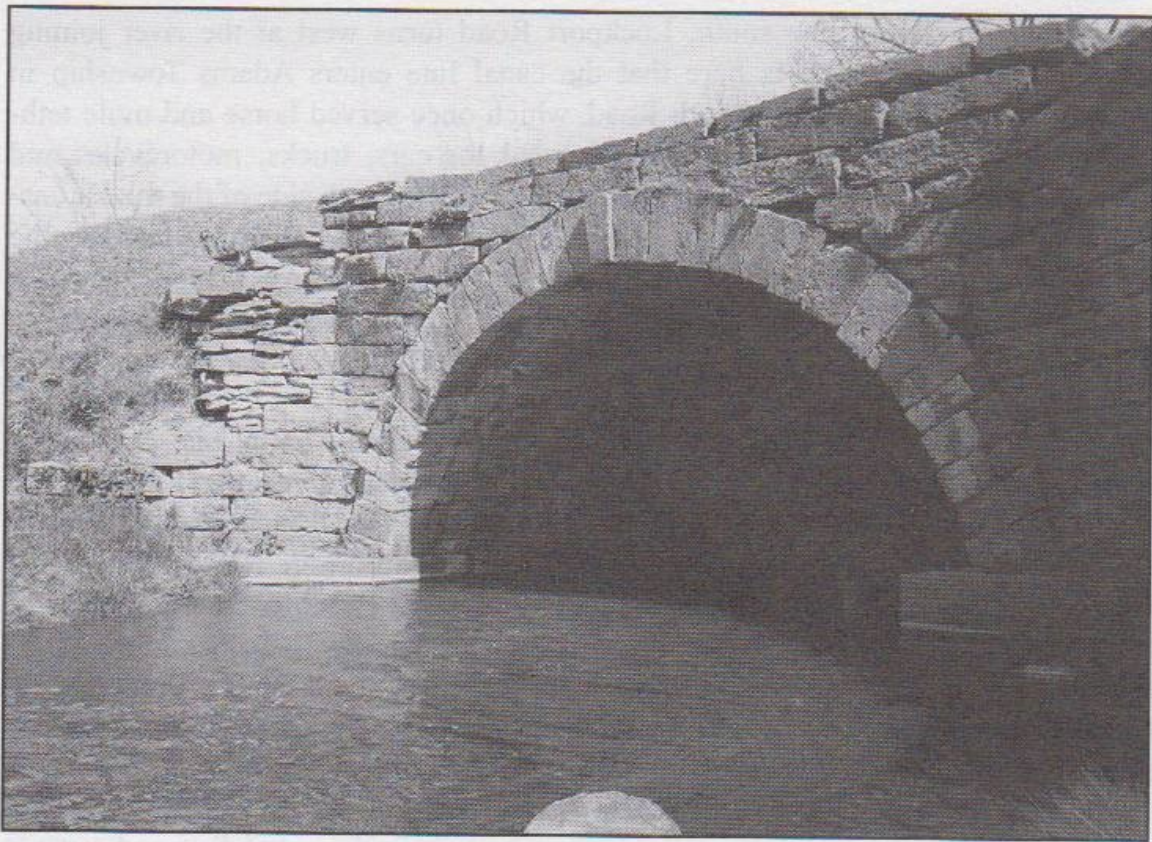
Following the county line south, Lockport Road turns west at the river joining the old canal towpath. It is here that the canal line enters Adams Township in Carroll County. For miles Towpath Road, which once served horse and mule tethered to a canal boat, now is an asphalt road for cars, trucks, motorcycles and bikes. Along the way the silt-filled canal channel on the north side of the road is easily recognized and home to cattails and wild irises. Large sycamores crowding the road near old farmhouses and out buildings create a typical scene along Towpath Road. As saplings, some of these sycamores surely witnessed the last canal boats passing here.

Within the space of two miles distance from the Cass County line, Wabash & Erie Chief Engineer Williams' 1847 inventory of the mechanical structures are no longer here to see: "Culvert No. 96, of wood, 6 feet by 18 inches – submerged. Culvert No. 97, 8 feet by 18 inches – submerged. Road bridge No. 41. – will last three years. Culvert No. 98 of wood, 6 feet wide by 18 inches high, not entirely submerged. Culvert No. 99, of wood, 2 spans each 10 feet by 18 inches high – submerged." The locations of these structures are difficult to determine with the exception of Road Bridge No. 41, which may have served the same road that we know today as CR 100 W.¹⁷⁸

A little over two miles from the county boundary, the canal line and today's Towpath Road lie at the base of a bluff to the north where the valley spreads south to the river. No trace can be found of a chute built here to pass cordwood down the side of a bluff to be loaded aboard waiting canal boats.¹⁷⁹

If, however, there is one piece of Indiana history to pass over, it is Carroll County's Towpath Road and the place where it crosses Burnett's Creek. Although there is no visible evidence of the mechanical structures up to this point, what follows is truly outstanding. It is the celebrated Culvert No. 100, a stone arch over Burnett's Creek where the canal channel was found to be fifteen - feet above the bed of the creek. To make the crossing, a stone arch was chosen as the structure.¹⁸⁰ In some ways this structure represents the antithesis of the entire canal project. Although the canal itself lasted but a few years after its completion failing to meet the financial expectations of its developers, Culvert 100 spanning Burnett's Creek stands today serving travelers each day as a Carroll Country road bridge. Only slightly altered and repaired, the arch stands as it did when first built in 1840.

Jesse Williams wrote in 1847, "Culvert No. 100 over Burnett's Creek, an arch of 20 feet chord, built of hammer-dressed stone – in good repair excepting the ring stone at each end, a part of which are of soft stone and are falling to pieces." Years later, workers encased in concrete the south face of the arch to protect it from deterioration. However, cracks in the ring stones on the north side are still visible in the 1990s.¹⁸¹



Arch No. 100 built for the Wabash & Erie Canal in 1840 to pass over Burnett's Creek, continues to be used as a road bridge today. Near the right of the arch is the site of Lock No. 28.

Good building stone was not available to Williams until the project reached the Georgetown Quarry, which today is the site of France County Park. Structures were made either of decay-prone wood or rough building stone neither of which had much longevity. Later the builders improved some structures when more suitable materials were available. Because the Burnett's Creek Arch is just west of the Georgetown Quarry, it was the first arch made of quality stone when it was originally constructed.¹⁸² Local historian Ben Stuart had spoken with men who had worked on the arch commenting that they said it had taken a long time build, "Those stones were hauled from up where the Casparris (sic) Stone Company is located (Georgetown Quarry), by ox teams. There are timbers laid for a foundation and the arch is built, on them over which the water flows. This arch is twenty feet at the base, 10 feet to apex and ninety feet in length."¹⁸³

At the west edge of Burnett's Creek Arch, a portion of Lock No. 28's cut stone wall can be seen. A plat of canal-era Lockport suggests that the wall may be the south side of the lock or part of a tumble installed to release excess water to a lower level.¹⁸⁴ A contractor by the name of Munson built both locks numbers 28 and 29 at Lockport. A certain Mr. Fitch forged the iron parts used on the locks between

Logansport and Delphi. Peter Bishop and John Hanna had the contract to clear the land for the canal right-of-way east of Lockport.¹⁸⁵ Back in 1847, Williams stated: "Lock No. 28, 10 feet lift, built upon the combined plan, the plank facing renewed last winter – the gates also new."¹⁸⁶ He also wrote that Road Bridge 42 was good for another two or three years, and it may be the one shown on the Lockport plat map located below the lock crossing the channel to Canal Street.

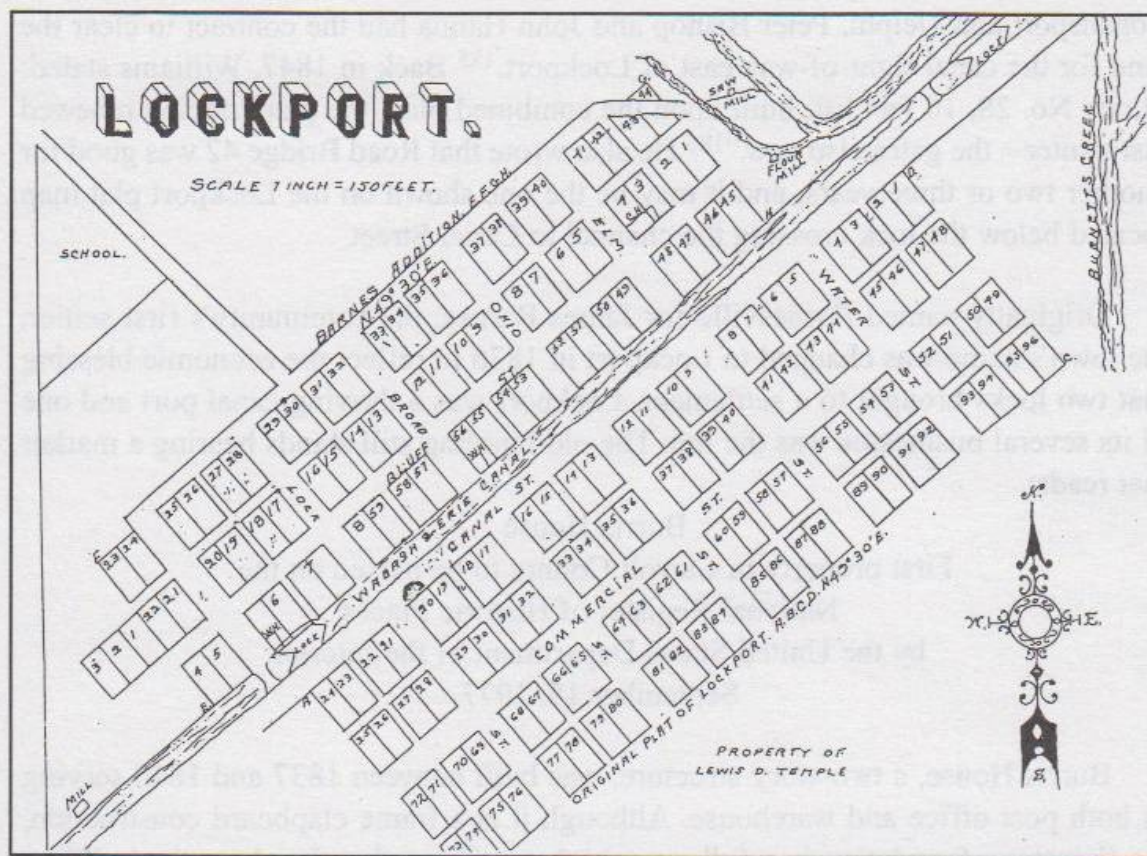
Originally named Barnesville for James Barnes, the community's first settler, the town's name was changed to Lockport in 1836 to reflect the economic blessing that two locks brought to a settlement. Lockport was a thriving canal port and one of its several businesses was the inn. The old building still stands bearing a marker that reads:

Burriss House
First property in Carroll County to be placed on the
National Register of Historic Places
by the United States Department of the Interior.
September 15, 1977.

Burriss House, a two-story structure, was built between 1837 and 1840 serving as both post office and warehouse. Although it is a frame clapboard construction, the limestone foundation is a full story high on the north side where the building faced Canal Street and the canal lock. *Carroll County Comet* wrote about the Burriss House in a 1995 series featuring Carroll County homes listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The house was one of two inns located at the lower canal lock in the historic town of Lockport. The south lock in front of the house was said to be the largest along the canal. The building is 31 feet wide, 45 feet long, and 28 and a half feet high...has 14 rooms and a cellar. Originally, right-angled brackets held the inn's sign on the canal side of the building. The inn passed through several owners in the late 19th century. In 1910, Robert D. and Logan L. Burriss purchased the property for their retired mother and father. The Burriss family are descendants from the earliest 334 settlers in America, arriving in Jamestown, Va., in 1608 on board the ship, *Mary and Margaret*, from England. The Burriss House also has been a part of American military heritage, serving as a home to Burriss family members who served in the Civil War, World War I, World War II, and the Korean War.¹⁸⁷

Today, the lock area consists of a ditch about twenty-five feet across at the top, twelve-feet across at the bottom, approximately eight-feet deep and nearly one-hundred-feet in length.¹⁸⁸ Of course, the Chief Engineer's view of Lock 29 was while it was in use: "9 1/2 feet lift, built upon the combined plan, needs immediately new



Original Plat of Lockport during the days when the Wabash & Erie Canal operated here.

caps and new planking for 3 feet next the top – gates are new.” that is “new” in 1847.¹⁸⁹ According the Lockport plat map a bridge, which may be Road Bridge No. 43, is shown across the channel below the lock at the west edge of the town. James Kirkpatrick is suppose to have been riding the horses that towed the first packet boat through the town of Lockport passing over its arch and through its two locks.¹⁹⁰

Not only was the inn an attractive stop on the canal route, directly north of the lock and part way up the bluff is the natural spring used by the Indians, early settlers, canal builders and latter packet boat travelers. According to Shirley Willard, President of the Fulton County Historical Society, the place later became known as Potawatomi Spring. On September 11, 1838, Indians of the Potawatomi tribe paused here to drink as U.S. Troops forced the native Americans on the infamous march known to history as the Trail of Death.

West of Lockport the Towpath Road runs straight and flat typical of a level canal plain. About one-third mile distance, nine black walnut trees guard the road’s south side and shed hundreds of green hull-covered nuts over the road in late summer. It is not unusual to see the canal system’s traces on the north side of the road at the

base of the bluff that forms the Wabash Valley. Along the way, some of the most scenic country in the region is revealed stretching from the bluffs to the river.

Six-tenths of a mile farther, Towpath Road passes through Possum Hollow. Here flows Possum Run Branch remembered for its promise that anyone who takes a drink from its spring-fed waters is sure to return. Of course, such a promise was conceived before the removal of the forests and the addition of agricultural run off. On the west side of the stream and along the river was once the site of an Indian village, past which, canal freight slowly moved along to world markets.¹⁹¹ Perhaps this is the location where Winamac established his village recorded as being approximately eleven miles west of the Eel River at Logansport.¹⁹² From Possum Run Branch for nearly a mile the drive on Towpath Road is as it must have looked in the mid 1800s with its trees and underbrush encroaching upon the roadway.

About two miles from Lockport the Towpath Road turns sharply to the south. Originally, the canal continued its westward course and some of the canal bed and towpath remain. Chief Engineer Williams noted two structures in 1847: Culvert No. 101 and No. 102 both, "of wood, 10 feet by 18 inches – submerged". Here too was Lock No. 30 that he reported to be a, "7 feet lift, built upon the wooden crib plan. During the ensuing winter (of 1847) the top course and part of the 2nd course with some of the upper planking should be renewed; with these repairs the lock may last 4 years. Gates one year old."¹⁹³

The road heading south soon makes a right angle toward the west and within a half mile rejoins the Towpath Road. Here at this junction may be the site of Road Bridge No. 44 mentioned by Williams. This is the east edge of the small triangular shaped Adams Township Section 27. It is reduced in size because the large James, Henry and William Conner Reserve encroaches from the west. Within the small Section 27 is the site of a town named New Franklin. Established before the canal, no trace of the community exists today. Ben Stuart wrote that it was a busy place with much commerce and social activity. It had a hotel, dance hall and tavern built within its three street wide layout. A street facing the canal was named Canal Street with Main and Franklin streets apparently running parallel.¹⁹⁴

William Conner is the same man who settled north of Indianapolis near Noblesville whose life and times are celebrated today at Conner's Prairie. At the Treaty of Paradise Springs in 1826, the Potawatomi were persuaded to cede their lands in this area. For their efforts, the Conners received a donation of land. William was the son-in-law of Delaware Chief Anderson and served, with his brother John, as an interpreter during a time when Indians occupied the state.¹⁹⁵ Through the Conner Reserve the canal route follows the southwesterly flow of the Wabash. The Chief Engineer mentions that, Culvert No. 103 is submerged wood, 6-feet by 18-inches in size. At Rattlesnake Creek, however, his description of the Culvert No. 104

is more expansive: "Culvert No 104, for the mill race at Rattlesnake, built of wood, 8 feet by 2 feet. The covering timber of this culvert cannot be submerged without backing on the saw mill wheel. It will require renewal in 5 or 6 years."¹⁹⁶

As in the case of New Franklin, there is no visible evidence of a once busy Rattlesnake Village that boasted a sawmill and warehouses serving as a grain-shiping center.¹⁹⁷ The road bridge crossing the canal here was No. 44 and Williams estimated that it, "will last two years" or until 1849. He described Culvert No. 105 crossing Rattlesnake Creek as, "2 arches each 15 feet chord, built of timber. The arches will last 4 or 5 years. The head walls will need some repairs within three years". James and John Carney were paid \$142.62 to repair the bridge years later on March 25, 1861.¹⁹⁸

West of the Towpath Road to this day the old canal channel is often filled with water. The canal depression can be detected in front of the houses such as "Tow Path Cottage" from behind which a cave extends into the bluff. It is likely the cave once served as a refuge for Indians as well as animals that roamed the region.¹⁹⁹ No mention is made, however, that canal workers or passengers ever made use of the cavern.

E.F. Lucas' General Superintendent's Report of 1844 noted that a number of new lock gates had been put in during the past year. Some improvements such as "cast-iron frames for the paddle gates to work in" warranted experimentation:

The gates are the first part of a lock that give way - the reason assigned is, that their strength can seldom be made to correspond with the remainder of the structure, and the gates are the only part of a lock, that is prominently exposed to the depredations of the boatmen.

I cannot here omit to mention, that Mr. Robt. English, long known as a faithful contractor on the Wabash and Erie canal, has invented a new lock gate, for which he has obtained a patent, and which bids fair from present appearances, to supersede all other improvements of the kind, both in point of durability and facilities in navigation. Mr. English was permitted to put in one of his new gates...not without the hope that it would at some time prove to be of public and lasting utility. The invention is highly spoken of by eminent Engineers, both in this and other States. The one now in operation is at the first lock above Carrollton.

The gate can be used in making waste weirs to drain the canal to the bottom when it often occurs that outlets have to be made in the banks at a considerable cost, and always attended with more or less danger.

In the same report Lucas wrote, "The great secret in the management of a canal consists in this: That during floods, to keep the water out of it, and in low water to

keep it in." He then charged all with the management of the canal to therefore, "make all suitable improvements and repairs consistent therewith, from year to year, as the exigency of the case may require."²⁰⁰

Jesse Williams mentioned that Culvert No. 106 crossed a stream through here constructed, "of wood, 6-feet by 18-inches and submerged back in the 1840s." The Towpath Road turns south toward Carrollton Bridge crossing the Wabash River. Here Ballard's Bluff barred the way of the canal builders keeping them from approaching Pittsburg by canal towpath on that side of the river. "Lock No 31, 8 feet lift, built upon the wooden crib plan," according to Williams, "with some slight repairs may last 3 years. The lower gates need renewal in 1849. The uppergate is upon 'English's Patent Plan,' which is submerged."

Finally, this is the place on the line where the great canal project with the aid of an outlet lock met the waters of the Wabash River. Wrote Jesse Williams: "Lock No 32, 9 feet lift, built upon the wooden crib plan with some repairs may last 3 years – gates renewed last year. This is the outlet lock connecting with the slackwater at the crossing of the Wabash."²⁰¹

Searching for Solid Solutions

A great deal of analysis was given to the issue of where to cross the river. Chief Engineer Williams studied the question while preparing detailed reports for the state legislature to ponder.

Extending west into Indiana, the Wabash & Erie Canal met the Wabash River on its north bank at Huntington in 1835. Here it tracked on its way to Logansport and crossed the Eel continuing on its way west on the north side of the great river. However, crossing the river was necessary to make the canal accessible to the interior of the state. Just below Vigo County the Wabash River begins forming the boundary between Indiana and Illinois. If the Wabash & Erie's course extended too far south on the north and west of the river, the Indiana legislature would have required agreements with the State of Illinois to successfully conclude the project.

As Graham Taber mentioned in his *History of Logansport and Cass County*, during 1834 and 1835, the Indiana legislature approved two routes to be surveyed. Both passed through Cass County with one crossing the Wabash east of Logansport. Finally, the builders followed the line on the north bank crossing the Eel River at the foot of Fifth Street. "Just why this latter route was decided upon is a matter of conjecture," laments Taber, for it later proved to be rather impractical in some ways and also very expensive, because an aqueduct (sic) had to be built over Eel river at Fifth Street."²⁰²

Pressure to cross the river, however, came from persons in Delphi and in Lafayette concerned that prosperity would pass them by if the canal did not reach their towns. On the other hand, businessmen in both Peru and Logansport objected to the idea of an aqueduct or dam downstream that would cut off economic development sure to follow the potential of steamboat traffic. Until a canal could open water transportation into the upper Wabash valley, steamboats up the Wabash from the Ohio River with their large cargo carrying capacity were considered vital for both building and sustaining a strong economy. Although history confirmed steamboat traffic above Delphi and Pittsburg was not practical, citizens upriver did not relish the idea of losing such an opportunity.²⁰³

Crossing the canal route to the south bank of the Wabash River had to wait until the canal line extended past Cass County for good reason. Located on the south side of the Wabash was the north boundary line of the Great Miami Indian Reserve. Beginning at its eastern point, a line extended thirty miles from the mouth of the Salamonie River at Lagro. It continued along the south side of the Wabash River to the mouth of the Eel River at Logansport. The Great Reserve formed a square, thirty miles on a side, that was a product of the second article of the St. Mary's

(Ohio) Treaty. Representatives of the United States and the Miami chiefs had signed it on October 6, 1818.²⁰⁴

Not until the treaty signed November 28, 1840, at the Forks of the Wabash, did the Miami Indians cede to the United States all the reservation land on the south side of the Wabash River. The time for removing these native people was placed at five years from the treaty date. Five years was considered time enough to select a place for them in the West and to evacuate the Great Miami Reserve.²⁰⁵

A group of Carroll and Tippecanoe county citizens met to promote an interest they shared. Their purpose was to encourage canal planners to examine the practicality of routing the Wabash & Erie on the south side of the Wabash from the mouth of the Eel River. "There are without question," the commissioners reasoned, "a large number of citizens of the state interested in the construction of the canal on the south side of the Wabash, and if it should be deemed necessary to have such examinations made, as would be sufficient to form a comparison of costs, the canal commissioners will employ an assistant engineer and party, the next year, to make the surveys."²⁰⁶

The Commissioners warned that if the river were to be crossed, it would best be done on a solid-rock river bottom. Seven or eight miles up stream on the Wabash, from the mouth of the Tippecanoe, the bed of the Wabash changes from limestone rock to sand. In 1834, the Commissioners reported to the General Assembly: "If the river is to (be) crossed with the Canal, it should be between Delphi and Logansport, where rock foundations for dams or aqueducts may be obtained."²⁰⁷ Also, John Peter Paul gave a hint about the character of the south side of the Wabash when on July 30, 1827, he wrote of working the survey line in the vicinity of Cicott's farm where Georgetown is presently located. Then on August 2nd: "Moved down to Hick's" Three days later, "5th Sunday. Morning fine. After breakfast Mr. Smith and myself procured (sic) horses and rode down to Deer Creek. Jaunt pleasant, had a view of the most beautiful prairie (sic). Approached the mouth, crossed over, rode through it, ascended the hill back of it, had a commanding view of the circumjacent county."²⁰⁸

On December 31, 1834, a report of the Commissioners to the Indiana General Assembly filed by David Burr, Samuel Lewis and J.B. Johnson in Indianapolis included cost comparisons for routing the canal across the Wabash River to its south bank. In the 1833 report, they stated that both north and south were suitable for the project. At the time because steamboats traveling north from the Ohio River on the Wabash had no difficulty reaching the mouth of the Tippecanoe, the canal was planned to terminate at that point. However, already there was talk of extending the canal line beyond the Tippecanoe.

Several proposals were offered in the 1834 Commissioner's Report. Surveys were made and costs were analyzed for a twenty-eight mile and sixteen-chain route from Logansport terminating above the Tippecanoe River. Because this route followed the north side of the Wabash River, it crossed the Eel River by means of an aqueduct structure.

Actually three plans were considered for crossing the Wabash and appear in the 1834 engineer's report. The first was, "at the island near the upper part of the town of Logansport where two separate aqueducts will be required."²⁰⁹ A 616-foot aqueduct would rest on solid rock, but it would require the expense of building four abutments. Two and a half miles below Logansport another problem faced the planners. Here the canal line encountered Simon's Bluff where the river begins to flow at the base of high rocky points. A great deal of excavation would be necessary. The report states, "A canal crossing the Wabash at Logansport by an aqueduct, and thence (27 miles and 9 chains) following the south side to the termination," would cost \$440,828.13.

Below Georgetown, the high ground recedes from the river and a second plan was considered. Although the river is broader at Georgetown requiring a longer aqueduct over the river, it was considered safer than one at Logansport. "The river rises less, is of greater width, and less subject to obstructions from ice freshets." However, a longer aqueduct trunk would be required to span the Wabash at Logansport and the Eel was yet to be crossed. All tolled, "a canal on the north side to Georgetown, crossing the Wabash on an aqueduct at that place following the south side to termination", covering the 27 miles and 13 chains distance estimated to be \$421,457.62.

A third option eliminated the necessity of an aqueduct by, "crossing the Wabash about five miles above Delphi by means of a dam and towing path bridge." From Logansport west, the canal line was planned on the north side of the Wabash until it reached Ballard's Bluff. Two and one-half miles south at Rock Ripple a dam would be built. At the base of Ballard's Bluff, near present-day Carrollton Bridge, a towing bridge for animals to cross the river was to be built while boats could cross over on a slackwater pool, or lake, formed by the dam.²¹⁰

Of the three plans, the idea of a dam to create a slackwater prevailed. Approximately four and one-half miles downstream at the town of Pittsburg, Wabash Dam No. 4 was constructed. A body of still water creating a lake extended one half miles upriver from the Carrollton Bridge.

Carrollton Crossing

In the northeast portion of the county, the line along the base of the river bluff was cut through heavy timber. Once across the river, however, it passed through a marsh before moving through the prairie lands south and west of Delphi.²¹¹ Jesse Williams wrote: "After crossing the river the same pool would be used as a canal, by making a towing path on the south bank for two miles and sixty-two chains where the canal would enter a bayou, which extends nearly to the mouth of Deer Creek, a distance of two miles and fifty-three chains." Williams had discovered a means to utilize the Delphi bayou and provide adequate surplus water that would power mills yet to be constructed along the canal above Deer Creek.

"One mile and a half below Deercreek the line approaches Falling Spring Bluff, where it unites with the line that crosses at Logansport, and from this point the expense of the two routes is the same." The cost of this 27-miles and 73-chains long project was \$388,897.92. The savings, compared with the cost of crossing the Wabash at Logansport via aqueduct would be \$51,930.00 according to the chief engineer's calculations. It was found that of the two routes, the north side was both less expensive as well as a much safer route than if one on the south side from either Logansport or Georgetown were to be pursued. However, certain risks came with crossing a pool. During times of high water, currents may form and flooding would shut down operations altogether. On the other hand a dam built on a solid rock river bed would, "be a safer structure than an aqueduct across a river subject to dangerous accumulations of ice, as the Wabash is said to be."²¹²

Many people believed that time and energy should be spent on digging rather than surveying. Finally, influential persons such as Commissioner Jordan Vigas agreed that the canal should cross the river on a slackwater or lake created by a dam complete with a lock capable of accommodating steamboats.²¹³ By choosing to cross the Wabash at present-day Carrollton Bridge, and descending the river in a southerly direction until its course turns to the west, the engineers created a shorter route to the mouth of Deer Creek.

Referring to maps of the region, it is evident that the main line was thereby straightened more so than if it were to follow the river's natural flow. Today a depression in the ground is visible on the west side of the Carrollton Road at the north end of the river bridge marking the place where both Lock No. 31 and Guard Lock No. 32 once operated. Boats traveling south were lowered from the canal to the river's level.²¹⁴ Records indicate that as late as December 31, 1864, the trustees paid Allan Myers \$100.00 for "new gates upper lock Carrollton (sic)".²¹⁵ A marker, that once stood about two miles to the east and now relocated at the end of the bridge reads:

CARROLLTON ON THE WABASH

90 lots platted in 1836 on both sides of Wabash - Erie Canal lock.

A Post Office in 1838-39.

The lock passed canal boats into the river on the pool of the Great Dam at Pittsburg five miles below.

The mules carried the towline across the covered bridge to the towpath on the south bank and rehitched.

The Mentzer Tavern stood here until 1915. Speece Bros. Warehouse and the Fort Dearborn Trail were 1/2 mile east.

Stearns Fisher, commissioner for the canal east of Lafayette, reported to the Indiana Senate in December 1843 that, "the contract with R. & M. English for building the towing path bridge across the Wabash river at Carrollton, has been amended, and the work is now progressing in such a manner as to give evidence of its completion during next season. The piers and abutments are being built of an excellent material and in the most substantial manner, and the superstructure will be of the most approved plan."²¹⁶

In the words of Chief Engineer Williams:

Towing path and road bridge across the Wabash River (are) at the head of the slackwater. The superstructure is built upon 'Long's patent' weatherboards and roofed, and is in all respects permanent. The spans are as follows: 3 spans each 94 feet clear, 1 span 105 feet clear, 1 span 70 feet clear, and one span 43 feet clear for a draw, in all 6 spans. The bridge rests upon 5 piers and two abutments, formed of durable masonry. The stone procured from the Georgetown quarry and the workmanship good. The next three miles of the canal are formed by the slackwater in the Wabash River, created by the feeder dam opposite Delphi with a towing path constructed on the east bank.²¹⁷

In his 1924 book, Ben Stuart mentions that the north bridge abutment and the wall on the west side of the road were part of the guard lock. On the east side of the bridge, George Friday and Ignatious Mentzer erected a building in 1840 that was used as a cooper shop prior to being converted to a tavern. Before a road bridge was built here, a ferryboat provided transportation for those moving into and out of Carrollton.²¹⁸ Meanwhile the canal boats were "poled" across using long metal-tipped poles set against the river bottom. When the water level is low, timbers can be seen on the river bottom as a lingering reminder of the first Carrollton Bridge.

Charles Titus confirms the river crossing method in a journal he wrote in 1843. "A short distance above this place [Delphi] we passed into the Wabash and ran up the river four miles, where we crossed it and again entered the canal." Titus referring to the yet-to-be finished Carrollton Bridge said: "The horses were ferried over, and the boat pushed over with poles, the bridge not yet being completed."²¹⁹



Timbers used to support the first Carrollton Bridge remain today on the bed of the Wabash River.

At the insistence of Logansport's townspeople, a drawbridge was constructed as a part of the Carrollton Bridge. Thus, steamboats could pass up river to Logansport and beyond. Started in the season of 1838 and 1839, the bridge was a covered wooden structure with a tram road on its west side to accommodate the mules and horses that towed the boats. Samuel Greenup built the bridge, and when finished it was the first to span the Wabash anywhere in the state.

Ben Stuart gives a description of the lake formed by the dam in his *History of the Wabash and Valley*. A guard lock was built at the north end of the Carrollton Bridge and an entrance to the canal on the south side about one-half mile downstream where another guard lock had been installed.

Miss Bess Wilson, Adams Township court stenographer, detailed the talks made during the excursion Stuart organized and became the basis for Stuart's book.

Hoover Jones spoke about the wooden bridge at Carrollton describing the passageway on its west end:

A dam across the river at Pittsburg raised the river level above Carrollton and when the river was normal it was easy to lower the boats in the locks near the north end of the Carrollton bridge, cross the level water and pass into the mouth of the canal again on the south bank. This was not so easy when the river was high as the swift current would shoot the boats down the stream. To prevent this it was necessary to have a track and car along the side of the bridge and when the current was swift the boats were attached to this car. The horses then pulled the car along the track and of course the boat was kept in its proper course along the bridge. In passing eastward the boats were towed into the canal lock on the river level. Once in the lock, the gate was closed behind it, while the gates ahead were opened. This raised the boat to the regular canal level and it could proceed.

Mr. Jones in describing the bridge also states that there was a drawbridge section to permit steamboats to pass through. This was deemed necessary because at one time the Wabash was considered to be navigable as far as Logansport.²²⁰

Stuart told about the trip westward when a boat came to the river at Carrollton. Once the gates to Guard Lock No. 32 were opened for a boat to enter the river, "if the river was high the boat would shoot out into the current at such a rapid speed that the mules would have to reach the lower lock in time to tow the boat into the canal." Usually the horses or mules could pull a boat into the lock to proceed downstream toward Delphi. During times of high river waters, however, a team of mules could be pulled into the river and drowned if they failed to keep up with the current.²²¹

Payments for rebuilding the towpath bridge are recorded on June 25, 1860, to H.L. Kilborn for \$90.00 and on May 10, 1861, C.E. Kilborn received \$72.00. Wood shingles for covering the bridge cost the canal trustee \$325.00 when H.L. Kilborn was paid on November 8, 1861. All expenses were not for repairs. During the following December, Lalfin Jewett received \$100.00 for the loss of his mule killed at the towpath bridge on the "Carrollton lock wall".²²² The bridge, however, was destroyed during a July 4, 1873 storm. It was replaced by an iron bridge of five spans. By this time the canal's use was gradually slowing and no tram road was included in its design. An ice gorge swept four of its spans downstream in 1879. Its iron pieces were recovered and the re-assembled bridge served road traffic until a concrete bridge replaced it in 1927.²²³

Lake Wabash

Canal officials built the Pittsburg Dam (1838-1881) creating a large lake and slackwater to serve Wabash & Erie packets and freighters as a means to cross the Wabash River. Canal boats were designed as long, narrow crafts capable of negotiating tight-fitting locks and thus might easily capsize in rough waters. It was imperative that a river crossing must be in calm or still waters.

During the construction of the Wabash Dam No. 4 at Pittsburgh, Jesse Williams delivered this 1837 account:

Dam No. 4 near Delphi, has progressed during the past summer with a degree of energy and judgment highly creditable to the contractors, but the low water season proved too short to admit of its completion. The abutments have been nearly finished, and 153 feet of the Eastern portion of the dam has been raised to its full height and covered. Throughout the remaining 437 feet the crib work has been raised four feet above low water, and filled with stone. In this condition it must remain until the low water season of next year (1838). It is to be regretted that the work must be left in this exposed condition. It may not receive great injury, as the bed of the river is composed of solid rock.²²⁴

There are many stories telling of the hard-drinking canal construction worker. It was said that prescription of regular jiggers of whiskey was necessary for any one to be expected to survive the ordeal.²²⁵ Given Jesse Williams' affinity for abstinence, the question might be asked: How much consumption of spirits actually took place especially if Williams were in the vicinity?

When Jesse Williams reported to the canal trustees on December 12, 1838, he wrote: "Although the largest dam which has been constructed in this State yet, it is believed to have been very successfully managed, and finished in a shorter time than any of the larger class of dams."²²⁶

Years later on October 9, 1886, at the funeral of Jesse Williams in Fort Wayne after his long and productive life, the Reverend D. W. Moffat had these words to say about Williams: "He was very careful in making up his judgment ... His judgment once formed, it became an intense conviction, which expressed in words, sometimes had white heat, but expressed in writing, had almost invariably the calmness of a judicial decision."²²⁷

Perhaps Reverend Moffat was referring to statements such as the one that followed the above quoted Williams' 1838 report to the canal trustees:



An unknown photographer shot this view of Wabash Dam No. 4 looking east toward Delphi from the Pittsburg side.

From the Charles E. Gerard photo collection.

It is worthy of remark in this construction, that this dam has been constructed in all its parts, without the use of ardent spirits, affording the conclusive evidence in favor of the belief, that even in the most exposed situation this artificial stimulus is not necessary or useful to the labouring man; a belief, to which an experience of thirteen years in the management of public works, authorizes me unequivocally to subscribe.²²⁸

Originally, the dam at Pittsburg did not call for a steamboat lock and none was installed. However, pressure was placed on the legislature from civic leaders in both Cass and Miami counties to ensure steamboats could reach their respective Wabash River communities. It seems that the agreement to build a lock along side the Pittsburg Dam capable of handling steamboats satisfied the parties. The fact that in prior years cases were recorded of steamboats stranded in the river at both

Logansport and Peru established the fact that the head of the Wabash for such crafts lie somewhere downstream near Delphi or Lafayette.²²⁹

For good reason the people of Logansport clamored for steamer traffic at its river landing. Well before a dam at Pittsburg had been considered, steamboat service had been slightly eluding the pioneer community. Captain John Moon piloted the *Paragon* to the mouth of Rock Creek during March 1830. A mere twelve miles from their docks and he was reporting six and one half feet of water on the bar below Logansport. Captain Towe, in 1834, took the *Republican* up from Delphi and was doing fine until it ran on the Georgetown Bar. It was hauled by oxen teams on to Logansport, but never made a return trip.²³⁰

Citizens of Delphi and down river had always considered Pittsburg to be the practical head of the river for steamboat traffic, but they went along with the legislature's decision to build a suitable lock in the Pittsburg Dam. General Samuel Milroy, Carroll County state representative, did not object to the lock, however, he insisted that no timber from the area should be used in its construction.²³¹

With orders to install a lock in the dam a contractor had to be found to accomplish the task. Reed Case, Sr., formed a partnership with James Spears of Lafayette to build the structure.²³² Although the canal left the river two miles above the dam, canal boats were floated or poled down river to Pittsburg. When they reached the dam the boats could use the millrace on the opposite side of the dam from the steamboat lock to enter town. An original plat map of Pittsburg shows clearly a branch canal parallel to the north or right bank of the river. Pittsburg grew and prospered because of the canal yet the canal did not pass through the town. A side cut channel from the west end of the great dam did extend to the town that was populated with mills, foundries, factories and stores.²³³

Dora Mayhill, historian, wrote that the dam was completed in 1838 just above Pittsburg. The people of Logansport had won their point to have a drawbridge at Carrollton as well as a lock built into the dam making steamboat passage upriver possible. Started in 1839, the steamboat lock was completed in 1841:

When the lock was first put under contract it was the opinion of a great many persons that it was entirely unnecessary and a useless expense. But those who have witnessed the great danger and delay in getting their boats, lumber, saw logs, etc. over the dam are convinced the work was loudly called for. The expense here of unloading, loading, and hauling exceed all other items together in transporting boats to New Orleans. It would be unfair and unjust to subject our friends above to all this unnecessary labor. It is not very likely the lock keeper will be much troubled with steamboats. But it is right they should have a way of going when the interests of those above demand a visit from them.²³⁴

Years earlier in 1838, Jesse Williams informed the General Assembly:

The steam-boat lock designed for the passage of boats around the Delphi dam, is now in progress. It is proposed to construct this lock 175 feet long, and 38 feet wide in the chamber, corresponding with the lock at the Grand Rapids (on the Maumee River). It is to be regretted that nothing more durable than oak timber can be found in the neighborhood, for the construction of this lock. The cost of keeping it in repair will necessarily be great. The canal intended to pass boats from the river to the lock has been completed.²³⁵

Later, at the 1927 dedication of the Carrollton Bridge, William C. Smith said, "It might be interesting to note that only one small steam boat ever passed up the river to Logansport, and it met its fate on the rocks and mud near that city."²³⁶

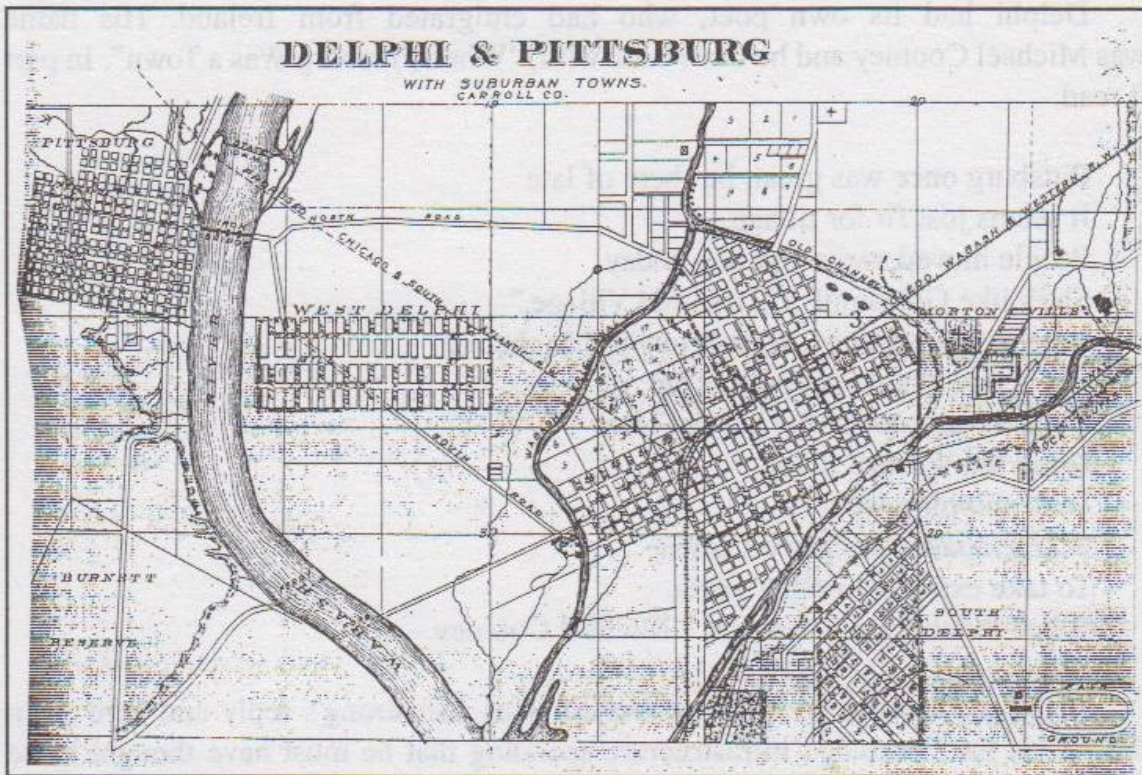
Jesse Williams gave a good description of the Pittsburg Dam in his 1847 report:

Wabash dam, No. 4, opposite Delphi, is 590 feet long and 12 feet high from low water. It is constructed by means of timber cribs – slopes of three to one on the upper and lower sides – filled with stone – the whole resting on rock bottom. The abutments are of timber; the north abutment must be rebuilt during the low water of 1848; and the south abutment during the low water of 1849. This dam answers the double purpose of forming a pool in which the canal crosses from the north to the south side of the Wabash and also of furnishing the chief supply of water from this point to Coal creek, a distance of over 70 miles. In order to pass forward so large a quantity of water, this dam will require raising permanently about one foot. The stone filling is washed out of a small portion of the crib on the lower side, and should be replaced. These improvements and repairs should be made during the low water of 1848.²³⁷

In 1849, a 230-foot portion of the dam was rebuilt on an improved plan with a double fall and horizontal apron. The remaining portion was completed in 1856 using the same plan.²³⁸

Below the "State Dam", the canal branch extended a distance of four blocks to Tippecanoe Street. Along the branch, businesses developed as a writer to the Delphi Journal described in 1851:

Proceeding down the canal, from the dam, the first thing of interest that will arrest the attention, is the Iron Foundry, of Josiah Russell, at which place is manufactured Merchant, Grist and Saw Mill Castings; thrashing machines, corn shellers and castings of improved varieties of pattern to suit; castings for horse-powers, ranging from one to eight, and wagon boxes, of a quality hard to beat any where in the United States."²³⁹



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

At the foot of Tippecanoe Street was a ford that crossed the Wabash River and must have added greatly to the transportation access of the Wabash & Erie.²⁴⁰

All did not bode well between the people of Pittsburg and their nearby neighbors to the east in Delphi. Ron Lockridge, in 1938, prepared an account of historic sites for the Indian State Highway Commission that captured some of the rivalry between the two communities. During the mid 1850s, the Wabash Railroad tracked its route through Delphi and gradually the focus of transportation began moving away from Pittsburg. Lockridge traced a literary battle waged in the Delphi newspaper between poets representing each of the towns. “Poet Laureate of Pittsburg”, William Henry Armstrong lobbed these lines into Delphi:

Far across the surgin waters,
 Tucked away amid the dales,
 Isolated, inland Delphi,
 Evermore her fate bewails,
 No canal to bring her food stuffs,
 Not a boat to take her grain -
 Nothing there to do but whittle,
 Sit around, sigh and complain – William Henry Armstrong

Delphi had its own poet, who had emigrated from Ireland. His name was Michael Coomey and he fired back with, "When Pittsburg Was a Town". In part it read:

Pittsburg once was great, but here of late
It seems just fit for tillage.
People moved away, and now today
She's like Goldsmith's "Deserted Village."
It does seem strange, what brought this change
Her renown must yet outlive her.
It once was known, the busiest town
Upon the Wabash River,
With shipping locks,
Where boats were loaded down
To take exports, to other ports,
When Pittsburg was a town. – Michael Coomey

"City of Pittsburg Vs Town of Delphi" was Armstrong's reply and here are a few of his lines included infrastructure spending that he must have thought to be extravagant. Expenditures for utilities were being made in Delphi while volunteer groups had to raise money to feed the disadvantaged.

You may talk about your cities
And your places of renown
But Delphi is the meanest place
That ever was a town.
Your business men are misers,
Not a dollar will they spend
In the way of manufacture
Or a helping hand to lend
Of course, you've got your 'lectric lights,
Your water works and such,
But after having all of them
You haven't very much.
For even with your luxuries,
With water at your door
You cannot clothe your naked
Nor feed the hungry poor.
You have one man in Delphi
A poet, so they say,
Who works upon the section
For a dollar ten a day.

From early morn till dewey eve
His work he does not shirk -
If he lived here in Pittsburg,
He wouldn't have to work. – William Henry Armstrong

For some time the battle-poetic waged on, and serves as an example of the competitive nature of canal towns during that era. Today these twin communities join to celebrate their canal heritage that once was the source of their mutual discontent.²⁴¹

Pittsburg became as important a canal port as any along the route. Even though head of steamboat navigation, Pittsburg was served with all manner of river craft. Rafts and canal boats could enter or exit the canal's main line as well as reach Pittsburg's business district.²⁴²

A lake of slackwater extended about one and one-half miles up river from the Carrollton Bridge. Even though the steamboat lock was installed on the south end of the dam, local stories persist about small river craft avoiding the lock. Dan McCain of Delphi, recalls hearing tales of boats brought upstream to the Pittsburg Dam and physically rolled over the top of the dam before sending them on their way north.

The town survived the coming of the railroads and the ultimate closing of the canal. J.H. Johnson and A. Ballard had rebuilt the north dam abutment and were paid a sum of \$864.72 for their services on December 8, 1862.²⁴³ After destructive high waters in 1866 caused severe damage, closing down mills, factories and elevators, the firm of Lane, Sampson and Matthews repaired the dam at a cost of \$30,000. Finally, on February 9, 1882, the dam was blown out with dynamite²⁴⁴ because farmers up the river felt it was detrimental to their land.²⁴⁵ In 1995, Pittsburg resident Jason Wortman could identify rock and wooden foundation buttress remnants of Dam No. 4 while viewing them from a since-removed railroad bridge.

Paragon

All along, the plan had been to build a canal that would connect the waters of the Maumee with those of the Wabash. The place chosen at the western terminus was the mouth of the Tippecanoe River, considered to be a dependable destination for steamboat traffic. By 1835, because of the importance of Lafayette as a practical steamboat port and commercial center, the canal commissioners were directed by the Indiana Legislature to extend the canal from the mouth of the Tippecanoe River to Lafayette.²⁴⁶

From Carrollton Bridge, there are several places along the east bank of the river where the towpath can be seen. It was, of course, necessary to have a towpath along the slackwater for pulling the boats. Between the Carrollton Bridge and the guard lock, four wooden culverts, 107, 108, 109 and 110 served to cross the towpath over the small streams or drainage ditches emptying into the river. A natural watershed, caused by the adjacent land sloping downward to the river, required culverts in the towpath eliminating unnecessary pools and marshes. A good example of this feature is on the back of the present-day McCain farm.

High water has presented problems for decades, as this 1843 Carroll *Express* newspaper item explains:

June Flood. – The recent great rise in the Wabash river did considerable damage to the canal in many places. Between this town and Lafayette, several small breaches have been made, and above the Wabash dam, we learn that the path used for slack water towing has been removed several hundred feet and partly swept away. We are fearful that the news from the Maumee division will be still more unfavorable. We notice that the extensive corn fields on the prairie opposite this place, are under water, probably 150 or 200 acres, which must necessarily destroy the present crop there. The Wabash has not been so high since January, 1838.²⁴⁷

At the place where the canal exits the lake formed by the Pittsburg Dam, a lock was installed. Chief Engineer Williams wrote: "...the Wabash guard lock, constructed at the entrance of the canal, where it leaves the slackwater...is constructed of wood upon the crib plan." Here a guard lock was put in place because the canal route left the river and entered the lower elevation to the south and west.²⁴⁸

Approximately three miles down river from the bridge, here the canal channel enters the river on its east bank. Backwater from the State Dam submerged the channel and the ground west and north to the river itself. Canal boats entering the canal could not detect the submerged channel and while on the slackwater its captain had only the towpath for guiding his boat on its journey.²⁴⁹

For years, the location of where the canal departed the slackwater approaching Delphi had been virtually forgotten. From the river south about fifty yards, extant canal channel is visible before it is cut off and covered over by the U.S. Corps of Engineers levee built in the late 1950s. However, members of the Carroll County Wabash & Erie Canal Association rediscovered the site. Lawrence VanDerVolgen confirmed the canal entrance from the river slackwater on a field trip accompanied by Dan McCain. Before his death in December 1994, VanDerVolgen noted that the crossover towpath bridge at the canal guard lock had been located under the present

levee. Further he recalled that his uncle had pointed out the site earlier in the 1920s when the two spent time together fishing from the canal bridge. VanDerVolgen's eyewitness account provided the link pinpointing this important landmark along America's longest canal.²⁵⁰

Near this site, the town of Paragon was established in 1836, but no trace of the town remains.²⁵¹ Here at the exit guard lock the horses or mules used to tow boats crossed over to continue the canal's towpath on the west side. At this change bridge, a significant event took place once the canal passed to the other side of the Wabash. Moving toward Delphi, now the towpath was constructed on the east bank of the canal switching from the left bank side. As a point of interest, all along the upper Wabash the canal channel was built on the north side of the river. Once the canal crossed the river at Carrollton, because the river now courses southward, the canal was constructed on the east side of the river.

Paragon Guard Lock, at least four feet high located at the exit to the lake, may not have been used a great deal. If the Pittsburg Dam collected river water twelve-feet deep providing a slackwater six miles in length, the river's depth at normal level is estimated to have been no more than nine feet at the canal's exit to the lake. Lock No. 33 south of Delphi allowed a four foot freeboard for the lake at flood stage. If conditions were higher during floods, the canal had to be closed at the Paragon guard lock.

Although nothing remains of the Paragon Guard Lock today, Jesse Williams' 1847 accounting of the structures are to the point: "The next structure is the Wabash guard lock, constructed at the entrance of the canal, where it leaves the slackwater. It is constructed of wood upon the crib plan – will need renewal in 1849. The gates will last five years, being new."²⁵² Patrick Sillis (?) was awarded a contract on June 17, 1847, to raise and enlarge the towing path embankment at the Paragon guard lock. A year later on October 19, 1850, Wilson Smith took a contract to rebuild, "The lift Lock at Delphi (probably Lock No. 33), the Wabash Guard Lock at Paragon, the Deer Creek Guard Lock and the South Abutment of the Deer Creek Dam."²⁵³ In later years, H.L. Kilborn received payment of \$255.00 for "Rebuilding Paragon Lock Gate" on June 25, 1861. George Townsend received \$38.72 for 352 feet of hewn timbers for the locks here on February 8, 1862; a \$188.84 draft dated May 1, 1863, was recorded paid to Charles W. Gibson for, "full repair south side Paragon Lock"; and on December 16, 1863, J.W. Davidson rebuilt the west side of Paragon Lock.²⁵⁴

"Just below the guard lock (at Paragon) is Road Bridge, No. 46, used also for changing the towing path from the north to the south side of the canal – will require rebuilding in two years." according to the Jesse Williams' 1847 report.²⁵⁵ Williams

had previously informed the canal commissioners that for two miles and sixty-two chains from the river south to Delphi, the canal route reached a bayou.²⁵⁶ Canal builders spent much of their efforts removing earth to direct water in a defined channel; however, from time to time the contractors faced marshes to be crossed. A towpath on one side and a berm bank on the other could be raised to form levees keeping water in line. When too much water became a problem, canal engineers provided a waste weir or water gate that allowed excess water to pass away from the canal. Officials could open and close the waste weir gates to help keep a constant four foot water depth. No mention of a waste weir was made by the chief engineer in his 1847 report because both the Paragon Lock at the slackwater and the lock south of Delphi were equipped with an overflow guard. Most obvious, however, are the several mills located just before reaching Deer Creek. Mills required water to turn their wheels and excess water supplied by the canal could be released through mill races back into the river.

From Carrollton Road CR 700W at its intersection with CR 400N, the Corps of Engineer's high levee protecting Delphi and surrounding farm land is easily viewed as it runs perpendicular to Carrollton Road. It turns sharply to the southwest paralleling the trees along the Wabash River. Again the levee makes a turn, more nearly due west, following the river and it is in this vicinity that the canal opened from the Wabash Lake. Disappearing in a field, the right of way approaches Carrollton Road to the northwest and is visible where the channel cuts through higher terrain north of the Delphi Limestone Company's service road. Here the canal builder's had to cut through a limestone bluff to meet the canal line level. Tracking the towpath is virtually impossible other than sighting the power lines, as they cross the Corps of Engineers levee west of the IOOF Cemetery. Perhaps the advantage of limestone here is the purpose behind the August 25, 1851 contract signed by Robert Mitchell to deliver, "Seven hundred yards of small limestone rock on the bank of the canal about one-fourth of a mile below Paragon Guard Lock to be neatly corded upon the bank of the canal convenient for loading on a boat, with the privilege of increasing the quantity to one thousand yards".²⁵⁷

South of the present-day levee, the canal course is evident complete with a mysterious sinkhole in the center of the channel. Archaeological or geological studies may explain its origin, however, it remains today one of the interesting features of the great waterway.



The Carroll County Wabash and Erie Canal Association has established a park in Delphi as the center piece for its dedicated mission to preserve and restore the canal.

Delphi

In 1996, the Carroll County Wabash & Erie Canal Association began reconstructing this section of the canal to prepare it for the introduction of water diverted by a twelve inch pipe from the nearby Delphi Limestone Company's quarry. Throughout the area, a system of trails has been established that follows the towpath and recalls the achievements of Indiana pioneers' determination and hard work.

Two thousand feet to the south, a natural slough extends east from the canal channel crossing Wilson Street into the Delphi Country Club grounds. Along the high ground in the north and east quadrant of the intersection formed by the slough and Wilson Street at the north edge of Delphi, General Milroy's son-in-law, Dr. Samuel Grimes built an inn from the pieces collected from his windstorm-destroyed tavern he was building in Delphi. It seemed that the slough was a natural "side cut" for the canal and Grimes' inn was positioned well to do a thriving business. However, the canal never utilized the natural depression that geologists determined was an ancient course of Deer Creek.

General Samuel Milroy, Grimes' father-in-law, played a significant role in the development of the region, never shrinking from his convictions. For example, in

1828, Milroy established Carroll County without first seeking the counsel of John Tipton. Tipton has been compared to a twentieth-century political boss and the charge is somewhat supported in the instance of Carroll County's formation. Taking it upon himself Tipton previously had organized the counties of Huntington, Wabash and Miami.²⁵⁸ The gravity of Milroy's action can be seen in a letter written by Jordan Vigas to John Tipton on January 18, 1828, complete with Vigas' interesting spelling technique.

General Milroy has bean (here) & formed A County on dear creak, & laid out the boundreys for several others including the late purchase generally, & Called it C(arroll).

his name ought to (be) blotted out from amongst the names of honest men as he was paticular called on by you frend & he has promisid & pledg - honr & every thing elce that the within county would secure all the county seats on the wabash to you wishes & Intrest. the General is moste greavously disopinted, he is beat for Can al commissioner. [Samuel] Hanna of F. wayne, [Robert] John in the east & [David] Burr of Brownstown is elected.²⁵⁹

In the mid 1800s it took a Wabash & Erie canal boat days to travel the one-hundred or so miles from Fort Wayne to Delphi. Packet passengers could overnight on the boat since canal travel was a four-mile an hour leisurely made trip. Once travelers passed a town, there were precious few inns along the way for dining or sleeping. Each inn has its unique story to tell, in the days when population was sparse and accommodations were austere. Even though Grimes' inn was not that far from the canal's main line, it was never opened. It sat idle for years gradually decaying with time becoming part of local folklore and known today as "Grimes Folly".²⁶⁰ All that remains of Grimes Folly is its foundation that today has been neatly transformed into a rose garden a few steps behind the McCain homestead on the Carrollton Road extending from Delphi's Wilson Street. In their day, an inn such as the one Grimes planned, was an eagerly awaited respite of Hoosier hospitality and comfort by those who traveled into and out of a wilderness country.

From the levee the canal channel is visible for some distance before it turns to the southwest passing under Washington Street. Today the Carroll County Wabash & Erie Canal Association is celebrating the canal's history by refurbishing a generous portion of the old project. By 1996, the silt and dumping waste had been removed from the channel restoring the canal from the sinkhole at the flood control levee to Washington Street Bridge. Along the east berm bank is a newly constructed pathway, and is a part of the Delphi Historic Trails System. Undisturbed on the west bank, the old towpath has been preserved.

Once a large turning basin was in place at the point where the old Deer Creek slough entered the canal channel. On the east side were limekilns where limestone was burned and a quality plaster lime was produced. D.R. Harley and E. W. Hubbard owned the kilns beside the canal that began production in 1857. Lime was loaded on barges here for shipment to ports in the Midwest and in the East. Archaeologists Wayne Bischoff and Erin Williams located six limekilns while uncovering bricks from the inner circular brick walls.²⁶¹

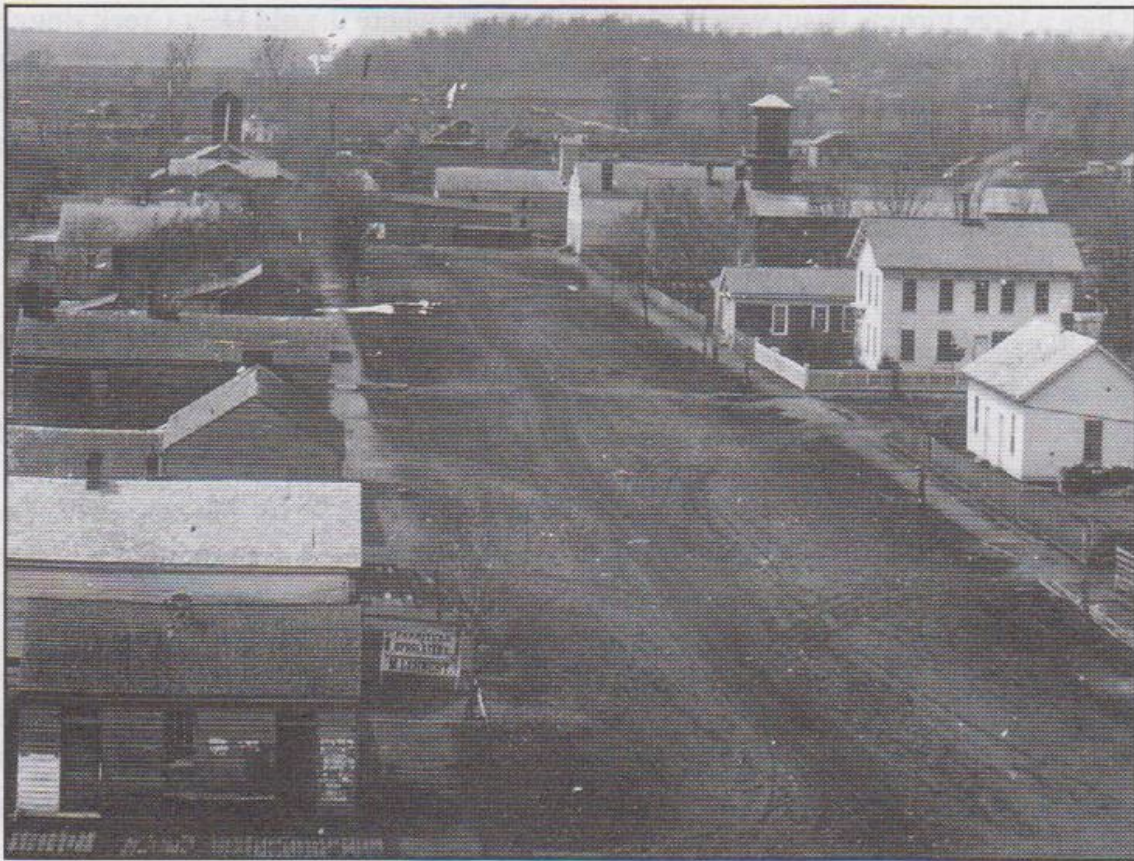
Jesse Williams described a bridge in the area near the present-day flood control levee dissecting the canal: "Road bridge, No. 47, crossing the canal where it occupies the Delphi bayou. This bridge is three times the common length. Will need rebuilding in two years." Then at Washington Street he wrote: "Road bridge No. 48, at Bowles and Colten's warehouse, double length, will last one year."²⁶² On September 1, 1849, a contractor named Andrews was granted a contract for a bridge to be built at Bolles Warehouse.²⁶³ "Bolles" evidently is the name that Williams refers to as "Bowles". Williams predicted that the next structure: "Road bridge, No. 49, at Delphi, will need rebuilding in 1848." This last structure was a pivot bridge crossing present-day Franklin Street.²⁶⁴ Archaeologists have made many discoveries near this point including a slaughter house to the north that may have served Civil War troops with meat products in the 1860s. To the south several mill sites and a very unique find, believed to be an actual canal construction camp, were found.²⁶⁵

By canal route, Delphi port was listed as being 120-miles from the state line and 204-miles from Toledo.²⁶⁶ From Delphi's Main Street, or Indiana Highway 25, turning north on U.S. 421 then making a west turn onto Bicycle Bridge Road for one block, an historical marker erected in 1992 by the Indiana Historical Bureau stands at the canal trace.

Wabash and Erie Canal

Constructed 1832-1853, canal was nation's longest, connecting Lake Erie at Toledo with Ohio River at Evansville. Key portion in Carroll County included Deer Creek Lake Dam, constructed 1838-1840 (1 mile south). Various canal structures are still in evidence.

A towpath trail extends to the southwest for a mile as mentioned in the historical marker. About one hundred yards from the Bicycle Bridge Road a sign notes:



West Main Street in Delphi with the canal and canal buildings in the background.
From the Charles E. Gerard photo collection

From this point a side cut canal took boats to the foot of Main Street.
(Where Hardees is now.)

In March 1840, *Delphi Oracle* noted that if a towpath were to follow Deer Creek it would bring commerce more near the town. Further the editor asked, "When is the canal to be made from the lock to the bluff?"²⁶⁷ To serve the merchants in Delphi, the side cut or "slip" was built from the canal's main line. It extended to the foot of Main Street thus giving Delphi full advantage of the canal and its promising prosperity. For a time, a large pork slaughterhouse occupied the site where Hardees now stands. Passengers and freight could be delivered to Delphi into a spacious turning basin near the present-day rail tracks. On the bluff at the west end of Main Street, Chevalier Richardson built a large inn. It was near the canal landing and was known as the Delphi House.²⁶⁸

In the early 1880s after the close of the old canal, the great Hoosier poet James Whitcomb Riley, befriended Delphi physician Dr. Á Wycliffe Smith. The two spent time exploring scenic Deer Creek country. Although born in Greenfield, Indiana, Riley seemed to have had an affinity for Carroll County. He especially enjoyed horseback riding and no doubt rode along the convenient towpath right of way.²⁶⁹

By January 1842, Delphi had applied for and the state legislature voted in favor of, building a millrace and tailrace west of the canal where Main Street would have intersected the canal. Canal commissioner Stearns Fisher published an advertisement in a Delphi *Oracle* September 1842 edition inviting sealed bids for leasing water power on a proposed race to be constructed, "from the point near where Main (sic Franklin) Street intersects the Canal to the Wabash River." Proposals were due by September 19, 1842. Reed Case and James Spears built the race as well as the privately funded side cut up Main Street to the bluff between Crockett and Hamilton streets.²⁷⁰

An Internal Improvement Contract was awarded to Spears and Case to build the millrun on May 1, 1842. Along present-day Vanscoy Towpath south of Bicycle Bridge Road once stood two large paper mills and six or so warehouse buildings.²⁷¹ Rag pickers would range out in all directions to bring back cloth used in the paper making process. Tons of rags were carted in to Delphi to feed the paper mills located here. Of course, with the rags came buttons, fasteners and other adornment, which were stripped off and tossed aside. Mill power came from the canal's surplus water exiting through the mill's wheel then emptying into the tailrace and then the Wabash. Wayne Bischoff has studied the mill site collecting valuable artifacts and important historical data from the area showing the influences of settlement development. Most of the mill industry physically disappeared when the Wabash River Dam No. 4 at Pittsburg was blown up on February 9, 1882.²⁷² Fires and a wash of water destroyed any evidence of the paper mills. All that remains are buttons and fasteners found in archaeological surveys.²⁷³

Williams in 1847, filed the following review of the lock structure that operated south of Delphi: "Lock No. 33, five feet lift – the walls of extra height to guard against the Wabash floods. Built of wood upon the crib plan – will last three years; gates will also last three years."²⁷⁴ On October 10, 1850, a contractor named Mr. Smith repaired the lock; April 19, 1853, C. W. Gibson worked on the lock's gates and on May 7, 1856, was hired to repair the guard gates.²⁷⁵ During a dry spell in 1991, Canal Society of Indiana representatives Dan McCain and Robert Schmidt discovered the original Lock No. 33 site. Four feet of silt had to be removed before reaching the floor of the old lock.

Tracing Towpaths

One of the few extended levels, or the flatland areas between locks that a canal boat could travel, was the twenty and one-half miles distance between Lock No. 33 and Lock No. 34 beyond Lafayette at Wea Creek.²⁷⁶ At one time during 1841, a towpath along Deer Creek was considered as a means to serve the businesses of

Delphi.²⁷⁷ Through here marks a place of notable transportation history. At Deer Creek south of Delphi between Indiana Highway 25 and the Wabash River, in a stretch of land less than one half-mile wide, passed people from the earliest times. First people traveled by river, Indian trail and pioneer tract. Next, by canal, railroad, interurban and highway. Presently a suspension bridge at Trail Head Park crosses Deer Creek introducing visitors to Delphi Historic Trails. Once across the bridge, visitors can follow the signs directing the way on the Robbins Trail to the Canal Towpath Trail. Not too far along, the path meets the Wabash River. To the north a hiker may follow the Vanscoy Towpath Trail back to Bicycle Bridge Road, or a left turn on the Vanscoy Towpath Trail following the sign leads to "Wabash Sunset Point". In both directions trails have been made on the old towpath with a defined canal channel opposite the river. Of special interest, the towpath which served as the top of a dam, is still very evident. Wabash Sunset Point is the site of the center spillway of the Deer Creek Slackwater Dam. Most of the fill, as well as all of the cribs and stone, have disappeared due to years of flooding.

At the time the first contracts were awarded in the area, canal builders were having concerns about obtaining quality stone for structures such as locks. By 1847, Jesse Williams wrote:

Six of the locks in the vicinity of Delphi, which had been contracted for upon the composite plan, (the walls formed of stone with timber facing) are now being constructed entirely of timber, in consequence of the failure of the stone quarries, relied upon at the time of letting. The manner of building one lock near Georgetown, has been changed from the composite plan to cut stone, a quarry having recently been discovered in that vicinity, which it is supposed may answer for cut work.

The materials of the Deer Creek Dam are chiefly prepared, although but little has been done towards putting them to their place. One abutment has been commenced and raised six feet high. But little has been done towards the construction of the Wildcat Dam, further than the delivery of a part of the materials.²⁷⁸

Jesse Williams gave this description of the dam at Deer Creek:

The next structure is Deer creek dam, erected for the double purpose of a feeder and of forming a pool in which the canal crossed this stream; length 170 feet; height 10 feet from low water; formed of cribs filled with stone, resting on a foundation of brush and trees abutments built of wood and will require renewal in 1849. The dam may be considered a safe and durable structure. The pool of this dam forms the upper end of the Lafayette level, and the place proposed of passing through this level a greater quantity of water for the canal to Coal creek, involves the necessity of adding 15 or 18 inches permanently to its height. Bed of the creek at the dam is sand. Towing path bridge across Deer

creek, a simple wooden structure about 10 feet wide, uncovered, resting on one stone pier in the strongest current, and three timber bents – the bridge is in good order, but the portion which is of timber will require rebuilding in five or six years. Deer creek guard lock – built of timber upon the wooden crib plan – may last until 1850; gates need rebuilding before the winter floods.²⁷⁹

Adding the few inches to increase the capacity of the Deer Creek slackwater dam was misunderstood by the local citizens. Because of an unusually dry season, Delphi residents thought it was designed to increase water supplies to profit mill owners of Lafayette. As soon as the builders increased the height, a group of sixty or so disgruntled townspeople marched to the site and removed the improvement. On September 4, 1847, at a public meeting, Delphi citizens passed a resolution stating that they would, “Resist any attempt to raise Deer Creek Dam higher than is necessary for the purpose of navigation, and will at all times be ready to resort to physical force if necessary, to prevent a conversion of the water from this place to Lafayette, for the purpose of propelling machinery”.²⁸⁰ Sometime later, the addition to the dam was completed without incident.²⁸¹

J.H. Johnson was paid \$170.00 on March 2, 1863, for timber to upgrade the dam. Repairs, again by J.H. Johnson, were made to the lock at a cost to the trustees of \$358.80 on April 25, 1864; the gates were repaired by C.W. Gibson on September 15, 1864 receiving \$76.25 for the completed work.²⁸²

A Deer Creek Culvert was recommended in 1855 and was built in 1857 with gates under the guard bank at the dam to wash sand out of the canal.²⁸³ Later, on November 3, 1859, C.W. Gibson received payment of \$222.09 for rebuilding the Deer Creek Bridge and H.L. Kilborn was paid \$100.00 on April 3, 1862, for his repair work to be completed on the bridge.²⁸⁴

After crossing Deer Creek the canal was channeled very near the river's edge in a narrow space along the base of the high bluff on the south bank of Deer Creek. As early as 1837, Jesse Williams gave this warning: “The construction of the canal along the Falling Springs Bluff, the most difficult point on this line has not progressed so well, in consequence, probably, of the abandonment of the contract by the original contractor. The contractors now engaged in this heavy work will no doubt prosecute it with vigor.”²⁸⁵

Near the lock site No 33, Michigan State University archaeologist Wayne Bischoff's team discovered a lockkeeper's house and what appears to be a canal construction workers' camp. Bischoff recovered ceramic sherds, pipe bowls and stems, shells and buttons during a 1995 investigation. Just west of Lock No. 33 limestone blocks, brick mortar and square nails suggest that a building once stood here.²⁸⁶

Bischoff reported that his survey had indeed unearthed the site of a canal construction camp dating from between 1835 and 1840. Most important among their investigation along miles of towpath was the discovery of a field kitchen believed to be a portion of an Irish canal builders' camp. Stones were found surrounding the hearth brick indicating that the chimney was not on the outside of a structure ruling out the possibility that it was a cabin's hearth. A lack of mortar to hold the bricks together meant it was probably a temporary structure. Now buried under two feet of river silt, the hearth of a central "mess hall" was discovered and documented.²⁸⁷

As planned, the canal followed the course of the Wabash River with the towpath raised as a precaution against river flooding. Jesse Williams mentioned additional structures before reaching the mouth of the Tippecanoe. The first is: "Culvert, No. 111, over Shaker run, of wood – two spans, each 12 feet by 3 feet – submerged."²⁸⁸

Now known as Bridge Creek, old Shaker Run has been redirected and for twelve hundred feet or so it flows in the old canal channel. Wayne Bischoff believes that Culvert 111 is Thayer's Culvert, "Located just under the western most point of the levee where it diverts Bridge Creek."²⁸⁹ Dan McCain recalls having heard stories told by local residents that not far away, approximately half way from the creek to Americus, a farmer unearthed canal timbers. Timbers from this find measured three feet by three feet and were buried about ten feet below the base of the levee.²⁹⁰

Williams continues his report with: "Guard lock at Kites, designed to guard against extreme floods in the Wabash when the river is admitted to flow in – built of wood the cribs will last perhaps four years, gates two years. To pass the enlarged quantity of water some additional sliding gates must be placed in the main gates during the ensuing winter."²⁹¹

Bischoff could not locate Kites guard lock in 1994, however, he concluded that its foundation may someday be discovered under three feet of silt up the canal from Culvert 111. He deduces that the guard gates location is at the center point on the line dividing Section 11 from Section 2 of Washington Township. Kites Ford tree line road is still traceable between the ford and Indiana Highway 25. Westward to Section 10 the canal line can be detected cutting through crop fields where the blue gray clay puddling or channel lining is mixed with natural soils. A contract dated December 1851 indicates that a new lock and two gates, a feeder culvert and race or tumble around the lock was to be constructed.²⁹²

Four more culverts, 112, 114 and 115 which were each 9 feet by 18 inches submerged, and No. 113 which was 6 feet by 28 inches are itemized with this notation: "Each of the last named four culverts is banded with iron, as security against the upward pressure in time of high floods, when the river is higher than the canal. Road bridge, No. 50, at Americus, will last one year."²⁹³

In 1874, the last boat traveling north from Lafayette approached the Deer Creek dam. The old structure could no longer endure the loads and as the team of mules crossed the spillway below, the towpath bridge gave way and both the driver and the mules were swept away and drowned at the confluence of Deer Creek and the Wabash River.²⁹⁴ In a county with so many structures, perhaps it is not so unusual that one should end its service so dramatically. The era of the Wabash & Erie from Delphi to Lafayette came to an end in 1876.

After that incident, short sections such as the level above Lock 33 south of Bicycle Bridge Road up to the Wabash Lake served local commerce as well as supplied a continuous stream of water to operate the paper mills. There were many other short levels in Indiana cutoff and destined for only local use, reminiscent of earlier more prosperous years when washouts caused dissection of the canal.

Terminus Americus

John Peter Paul announced in his journal, "Tomorrow is set apart (sic) for moving to the mouth of the Tippecanoe." On Sunday the 12th, after completing the survey of the Wabash around the prairie, "We walked down the trace to the Tippecanoe, the baggage was carried down in perogues (sic). Then on Wednesday, August 15th he entered: "We completed the survey to the mouth of the Tippecanoe; surveyed the Wabash a short distance below the mouth of the Tippecanoe." Finally, on the 18th the party finished its survey of the Tippecanoe and prepared for their return to Fort Wayne.²⁹⁵

At the western end or terminus of the great canal system, a town was platted in 1832 by Lafayette-founder William Digby. By canal boat, Americus was 127-miles from the state line and 211-miles to Lake Erie.²⁹⁶ A post office was established on December 30, 1833, and survived until it closed October 15, 1902.²⁹⁷ After the 1827 survey to the Tippecanoe this community was destined to become an important place in the then western United States. Was its name celebrating the masculine Latin cognomen for the young nation? Or, did the anticipated terminus of a transportation line planned but not yet constructed encourage a phonetically satisfying Americus as terminus? As a practical matter, Lafayette became the canal terminus until on January 27, 1836, Governor Noah Noble signed into law the Indiana Mammoth Internal Improvement bill. In doing so he authorized the line be extended from the mouth of the Tippecanoe River to Terre Haute then linking with the Central Canal to Evansville.²⁹⁸

C.O. Titus' 1866 Map of Tippecanoe County reveals that a turn basin was constructed in Americus between Lafayette and Basin and between the canal and Main

Street. However, an 1878 Kingman Bros. Atlas map shows no basin. Now, the channel depression that was once four-foot deep is buried in silt and is barely detectable.²⁹⁹

A drawing of John Cunningham's home built in the 1830s appears in the 1878 Kingman Bros. Atlas. Later, his house was converted for use as an inn on the canal and survived until it was razed in 1974. Cunningham's place was located about four miles south on the canal from Deer Creek. Among the features remaining is the Cunningham Cemetery established in the vicinity and found on maps today.³⁰⁰

Historians give this description of the old Americus Inn:

The Inn was originally his (John Cunningham's) homestead and is pictured on page 102 of the 1878 Kingman Bros. Atlas. The springiness, etc., were built at the time the house was converted into an inn. It is made of brick, two stories tall, and measures approximately 40 by 80 feet. I have never seen bricks quite this shade of red and would guess that they were brought in on the canal, from some distant location. Lyda Hilt said that a road led back to the Inn and proceeded on to the springiness where it went under an overhanging porch and stopped.³⁰¹

It is unlikely that the bricks had been shipped in on a canal boat since the canal had not reached this point during the 1830. Cunningham's homestead is depicted in a lithograph shown in the Kingman Bros. Atlas. In the illustration a horse is pulling a carriage over the canal on a road bridge. A stone pier, shaped much like a fulcrum, supports the bridge high above the water. Yet, two additional bridge piers that look to be wooden timbers serve as secondary supports.³⁰²

A survey, to be made "on the southside of the Wabash", from the mouth of the Tippecanoe on to Lafayette was authorized by the state legislature. At the close of 1834, Commissioners David Burr, Samuel Lewis and J.B. Johnson gave a report to the speaker of the House of Representatives disclosing their findings.

At Americus, a short distance below the boundary of the canal grant, a low slate bluff is encountered, which extends about 20 chains. Instead of running the line at the base of the bluff as at those above, a deep cut is here preferred as it will not increase the cost, and the perfect safety of the canal is secured.³⁰³

A survey on the north side of the Wabash was considered unnecessary because of perceived higher costs. Crossing the Tippecanoe, for example, would cost more than building a passage across the smaller Wildcat Creek. Also, the Commissioners reasoned: "there are three expensive washed banks or bluffs: the first of which is the

Erie bluff above the Tippecanoe; the second at the Prophet's town, and the third below Davis' ferry." A savings of about \$80,000 was realized by planning the route of the Wabash & Erie on the Wabash River's south bank.³⁰⁴

Indiana's State Board of Internal Improvement in its Annual Report of December 28, 1838, to the General Assembly wrote:

By October next, the Wabash and Erie canal will probably be completed from Lafayette to the Ohio line; and, as it is expected, the balance of the route also from that point to Maumee bay, as provided for by compact with that state; thereby creating a new and desirable channel for the commerce of the Valley of the Wabash, and a thoroughfare between the eastern and western extremes of the Union, unrivalled in its advantages. The facilities on this route, however, will not be consummated until the entire work is completed as contemplated by law, affording a certain intercourse, by the same means, to the Ohio river.³⁰⁵

During October 1840, the channel had reached Lafayette and canal boat trips were being completed from Lafayette to the Indiana Ohio state line. Boats were making their way six miles into Ohio by May 1841.³⁰⁶ July 4, 1843 marks the date of the canal's opening from Lafayette to the Maumee Bay at Toledo. By 1847, the project was cut well past Lafayette, and Chief Engineer Williams recorded these official remarks describing the mechanical structures to the south from the Tippecanoe River:

Culvert, No. 116 of wood 6 feet by 18 inches – submerged. The next structure is Sugar creek culvert, No. 117, a large wooden arch of 24 feet chord; the arch springing from the slate rock, in good condition – will last five years, when it must be rebuilt of cut stone. Head walls may need some repairs within two or three years. Just above Sugar creek a small wooden culvert was constructed for the passage of a mill - race. The mill having been abandoned, the culvert may be dispensed with. It is therefore not numbered.³⁰⁷

Back in 1834, the survey made by the Commissioners found that, "No other obstacle is found on the route between this point and the Birmingham bluff, except Sugar creek, which will be crossed by a culvert of 24 feet span, and Buck creek by a culvert of 14 feet span, both of which must be built of timber."³⁰⁸

River flooding has caused silt build up filling in the canal channel in the Sugar Creek area. Bischoff's archaeological team probed the bed of Sugar Creek crossing in 1994 and consistently felt resistance at three and one-half foot depths suggesting that perhaps they had found the timbers of Culvert No. 116.³⁰⁹

Beyond Sugar Creek toward Lafayette parallel to Indiana Highway 25, Stair Road lies on the berm side of the canal. About one-half mile on Stair, the road changes to the towpath side. One-half mile before reaching and becoming a part of Indiana 225, Stair Road crosses Buck Creek. Williams refers to the stream in his 1847 Report:

Culvert, No. 118, over Buck creek, of timber, 4 spans, 12 feet by 3 feet, in good order – submerged. Culvert, No. 119, 2 spans, 10 feet by 18 inches – submerged.³¹⁰

At the point where it joins with Indiana Highway 225, a cast aluminum marker once stood at the bend of Indiana 225 just west of Indiana 25 at the base of the bluff. “Jewett’s Port” were the only words on the marker. A trading post named Jewett’s was located on the north side of present-day Indiana 225 and appears on 1866 and 1878 maps north of Jewett’s City. Toll sheets list “Jewittsport” as being 131 miles from the state line and eleven miles from Delphi.³¹¹

Jewetts City or Jewettsville was located at the bend in Indiana 225 spreading back south and toward the bluff below today’s Indiana 25. A road on the 1878 Kingman Bros. Atlas is shown connecting the canal at Jewettsville with the Wabash River. What appears to be a ferryman’s house is indicated to the right of the landing. Jewett’s Port was on the west side of the river. A ferryboat served to transport people and cargo back and forth across the river before a bridge was constructed.³¹² To this day, “Jewittsport” can be found on maps just down stream from the Indiana 225 Wabash River Bridge.³¹³

Stair Road joins Indiana 225 for a few yards before the highway turns toward the river and the bridge. Extending Stair Road southward, a shallow channel impression can be seen that serves as a two-track lane and is all that remains of the great canal route at that point.

A journalist, traveling in 1850 from Lafayette encountering Jewett City, wrote:

On a recent trip up the canal we were surprised to find that a new town had been laid out by our worthy and enterprising friend Doctor Jewett, and we were still more astonished to see that he had erected and was building a large and splendid ware-house, a tasteful and strong bridge across the canal, a hotel, and smaller buildings for the residences of the future citizens of the embryo town.

Further, the writer described the new town as being about seven miles from Lafayette situated on a, “lovely plain, fronting and in view of the River and the beautiful ‘Pretty Prairie’ on the opposite side of the Wabash, and at the base of an



Wildcat Creek Dam south abutment stands today among large cottonwoods and wild underbrush.

elegant bluff, which rises abruptly about one hundred and fifty feet to the upland above, and which is skirted and covered with splendid foliage, shrubbery, and fine forest trees.”³¹⁴

Once again referencing the Commissioners Survey of 1834: About 5 1/2 miles below Americus, the Birmingham Bluff commences and extends 87 chains, forming by far the greatest obstacle to the construction of the canal, found between the boundary of the canal grant and Lafayette. The canal here as at Falling Spring bluff, will be made by forming an embankment in the river which will require protection. As there is no stone convenient to this place, brush protection has been estimated.

The Commissioners estimated that the fourteen miles, five chains, and lockage to account for elevation changes of six feet would cost \$176,964.48. Another \$26,964. was estimated for improvements over the ensuing three years. Stone protection for the Birmingham Bluff was considered possible once canal boats could deliver stone to the site bringing the total to \$203,928.³¹⁵

Heavy rains early in 1841 caused extensive damage at Birmingham Bluffs, however, by the following May repairs were completed. With stone from Georgetown quarry, a mile long distance of brush riprap was replaced.³¹⁶

Three separate contracts are on file in the Indiana State Archives collection between Jesse L. Williams Acting Commissioner and James Spear, Charles Spear and Reed Case. Two of the contracts are dated March 6, 1841, and one May 6, 1841, and each reads:

Delivery on the towing path at the Birmingham bluffs from eight to twelve thousand yards of protection stone, agreeably to the notice and specification contained in the printed advertisement of the letting on file in the Canal office at Delphi". "For stone obtained on, or near the bank of the canal Sixty-two cents (62) per cubic yard - For stone which have to be quarried or hauled from a distance, one dollar & forty cents (\$1.40) per cubic yard.

All parties agreed that the work was to be finished by the following November 1 to satisfy Stearns Fisher or some other competent engineer.³¹⁷

Today it is difficult to discern the canal channel at Birmingham Bluffs. Evidence of the canal cannot be detected until it encounters the vicinity in and around Highway I-65. East Road or Barton Beach Road is built on the berm bank. It follows the canal course south then west. The main line continued west crossing Wild Cat Creek where Barton Beach Road makes its turn to the south about two blocks distance from Indiana Highway 25.³¹⁸

The Canal Commissioners offered the following in its 1834 survey:

After passing Birmingham bluff, the next obstacle presented in the crossing of Wild-Cat, which must be effected by means of a dam; as from the unfavourable nature of the ground above this point, the level cannot be kept sufficiently high to pass this stream on an aqueduct, without involving a very great expense. From the crossing of Wild-Cat, a favourable route for the canal, may be obtained to Lafayette, where it would terminate in a basin, at a point highly favourable for the transfer of freight from the canal to the riverboats.³¹⁹

At Wild Cat Creek a dam was built in 1839 creating a slackwater reservoir that served as one of the larger replenishing feeders on the canal system. Boats floated over the pool and the towpath crossed over on a temporary bridge. Here the towpath changed from the north side of the canal to the south side until it reached Lafayette's Ninth Street."³²⁰ On May 8, 1847, a contract was let to Jesse Beard of Tippecanoe County to, "Construct in a good substantial, and workman-like manner the Abutments for a Towing path Bridge across Wild Cat Creek, together with all the necessary excavations". This included embankment, and timber foundations, "Abutments to be built of Hammer dressed Masonry - the stone to be procured from the Georgetown quarry".³²¹ Presently, the south abutment is standing among large

cottonwoods and wild undergrowth. In the middle of Wild Cat Creek the base of a support pier is visible. A destructive flood in the early 1860s removed the towpath bridge and dam. A new bridge replaced the old one and the concrete abutment across the stream on the east side was built in 1906 when additional bridge work was completed.³²²

J.H. Johnson and A. Ballard delivered 3,998 feet of lumber for repairs to the dam and for which they received a payment of \$400.00 on August 31, 1862. On March 2, 1863, J.H. Johnson was paid \$120.00 by the canal trustees for his estimate for new timber at Wild Cat Dam, and again on August 24, 1863; he was paid \$223.67 for dam abutment timber. A.J. Morley delivered ties for the abutments in September 1864, and on December 20, 1864, was paid \$344.68 to make dam abutment repairs.³²³

When the canal was built, and the mechanical structures were examined in 1847 Jesse Williams wrote:

Flood gates near Wild Cat abutments of wood, not in good order; may last two years. Wild Cat dam, erected for the purpose of a feeder, and also to raise a pool, in which the canal crosses this stream, 221 feet long and 13 feet high from low water. The dam is formed by means of cribs filled with stone, resting on foundation of brush and trees. The bed of the creek is formed of sand and gravel. This dam is in good and safe condition; abutments of wood, and will require rebuilding, one in 1849 and one in 1850.

On each side of Wild Cat, a guard lock is constructed to protect the canal from the floods, built of wood upon the common crib plan. The guard lock on the north side of the creek, is too low, the walls at the upper gates must be raised four feet during the present summer. One pair of the gates to be renewed this season, the other pair will last three years. On the lower end of this lock, is a small bridge on which the towing- path is crossed—will last three years. The walls of the guard lock will need renewing within three years.

Guard lock on south side of creek, constructed in the same manner as the other, was injured by the high floods (sic) of last winter, but since repaired—may last two years. Upper gates will last four years, lower gates will last two years. Adjoining this guard lock, a set of culverts are placed under the guard bank with sliding gates at the upper end, through which the feeder is passed, the culverts are submerged, the whole structure recently re-built having been washed out by the great flood of last winter.

Towing-path, and road bridge across the Wild Cat, this structure was washed away by the floods of last winter. In May last, a contract was made, by the State officers for building a new bridge upon "Long's patent," of 160 feet

clear span, resting on permanent stone abutments. The total cost will be about \$6,500, and must be paid for in the expenditures of 1847-'8.³²⁴

H.L. Kilborn was awarded several contracts for repair work by the canal trustees. On April 3, 1862, he received \$269.00 for "Estimates on Wild Cat lock". A.J. Morley repaired the south guard Wild Cat lock and received \$690.00 on May 28, 1864, and on August 2nd of the following year he collected an additional payment of \$1,300.00 for rebuilding the guard lock once again.³²⁵

Maintenance costs necessary for the upkeep of structures placed great pressure on canal finances. In 1848, a new Wild Cat Creek bridge was completed replacing the temporary one. It was capable of handling wagon traffic as well as providing a north side passageway for the towing horses and mules.³²⁶ H.L. and C.E. Kilborn charged \$250.00 on February 18, 1861 to rebuild Wild Cat bridge. Kilborns then charged \$500.00 on August 7th that year for, "Subscriptions to Wild Cat bridge". George Eston was paid \$268.27 for 26,827 feet of lumber for lock repair on November 26, 1861.³²⁷

Wild Cat Reservoir spread out over thirteen acres of low land cut through by today's Interstate I-65 highway leaving virtually no trace of the backwater feature. Across the stream following Conservation Club Road, the towpath and channel are recognizable until it meets with the Fairfield Construction Company. Archaeologist Bischoff noted in 1994:

The section of canal owned by Fairfield Construction is slated to be removed in the next five years but a section of canal for, about 500 meters north of U.S. 52 to the Wide Water basin will be added to a future recreational area being constructed after the completion of Fairfield's mining operation. This section is heavily forested, but the canal bed has been made into a distinct trail, and the whole canal is in good shape.³²⁸

Doctor William Reser in a 1934 paper mentioned that he had spoken with an eyewitness who described canal construction from Wild Cat Creek to Lafayette. A porous gravel-based soil in the channel bottom caused a serious loss of water when first introduced:

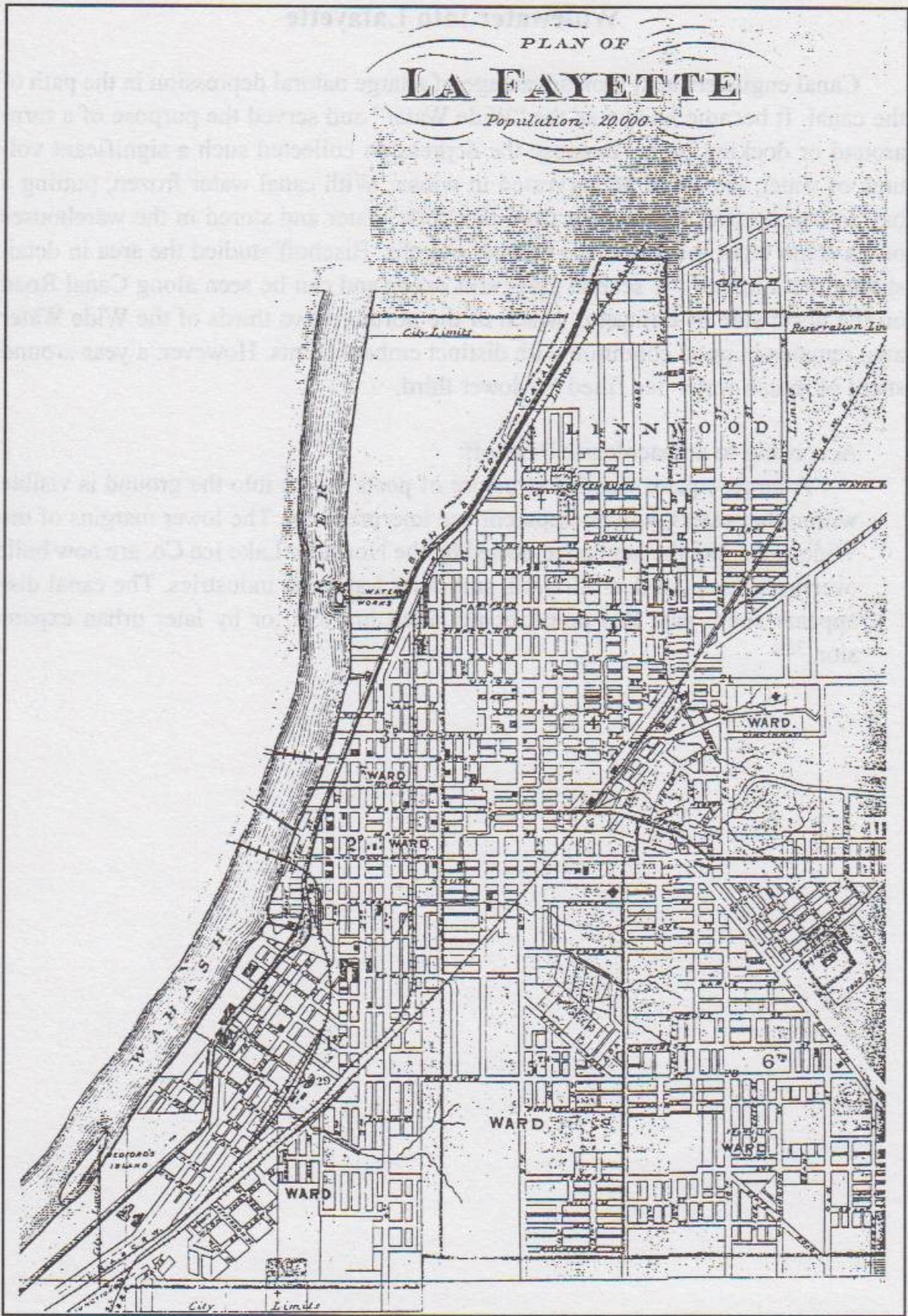
Large bunches of brush or small tree tops, drawn by oxen, were dragged up and down the muddy channel to cause the earth to "puddle" as it is called. When this coating dried and hardened it was almost impervious to water and then the channel was allowed to fill.³²⁹

Widewater into Lafayette

Canal engineers next took advantage of a large natural depression in the path of the canal. It became known as the "Wide Water" and served the purpose of a turn-around or docking basin. Because the depression collected such a significant volume of water, ice could be harvested in winter. With canal water frozen, putting a halt to boat traffic, ice was cut from the Wide Water and stored in the warehouses on its south bank for use in the warmer months. Bischoff studied the area in detail stating that most of the several acres still exists and can be seen along Canal Road on the north side of Lafayette. Much of the northern two thirds of the Wide Water area remains in good condition with distinct embankments. However, a year-around stand of marsh water has filled the lower third.

According to archaeologist Bischoff:

A large, square wooden structure of posts driven into the ground is visible within the waters with no apparent use interpretation. The lower margins of the Widewater, and the land once owned by the Northern Lake Ice Co. are now built over by a scrap yard, a rail yard, and other Lafayette industries. The canal disappears south past this point, being filled in 1895, or by later urban expansion.³³⁰



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

As the main line was continued it made a turn south toward Lafayette. Doctor Reser observed that at Ninth Street the towpath crossed to the west side of the channel over the "Exchange Bridge".³³¹ When Charles E. Kilborn contracted to make repairs on September 2, 1852, the document refers to it as the "Change Bridge": "Rebuilding of one Canal Bridge above Lafayette usually called the Change Bridge".³³² Again on February 28, 1865, H.L. Kilborn was paid \$125.00 for repairs to "Change bridge Lafayette".³³³

Jesse Williams' 1847 report included these comments:

Culvert No. 120, of wood, 10 feet by 18 inches – submerged. Road - bridge No. 51, used also for crossing the towing-path from the south to the north side, must be re-built in 1848. In the town of Lafayette, are several street bridges, on two of which, State or county roads are said to cross, these bridges, Nos. 52 and 53 should be re-built during the coming year. Culvert No. 121, below the paper mill, of wood, 2 spans, 8 feet by 18 inches, not submerged, to place the timber permanently under water, will cost \$20. Culvert No. 122, near large pork-house, 6 feet by 12 inches, not submerged – an expense of ten dollars will place it under water.³³⁴

All along the way through to Tippecanoe County from the Indiana-Ohio state line, contractors built the canal in short sections during the late 1830s and 1840s. As it progressed, settlers followed and state government had to form new counties such as Huntington, Wabash and Miami.³³⁵ By 1840, the project reached Delphi and shortly thereafter to Americus and to Lafayette by 1841.³³⁶ In due time it included Attica, Terre Haute and eventually the Wabash & Erie reached Evansville, Indiana, on the Ohio River.³³⁷

According to the distance tables, Lafayette was 138 miles from the state line and 222-miles from Toledo.³³⁸ A newspaper writer provides a description of the first boat to travel from Toledo to Lafayette.

The Albert S. White, of Lafayette is a new and superb Canal Packet built at this place for the Wabash and Erie Canal Transportation Company. She was to leave port yesterday for Fort Wayne, there to receive her furniture, etc., and we venture the opinion, that when fitted out she will "take the shine off" of any thing in her line to be met with "in these diggins." She is commodious, and her apartments so arranged as that there can be no danger of indiscriminate mingling up of male and female passengers and crew, as is sometimes necessarily the case in boats of bad construction.³³⁹

Commissioner Stearns Fisher in charge of operations east of Lafayette reported to the Indiana Senate in December 1843 that the past season was the first to see uninterrupted navigation between Lafayette and Lake Erie:

Although this is the first season since its entire completion, and the advantages it offers as a thoroughfare, not practically known nor generally appreciated beyond the immediate vicinity of the land, its beneficial influence has been widely felt, not only in enhancing the price and furnishing a ready cash market for every species of the surplus products of the soil, but in enabling the consumers of salt, merchandise, etc., to obtain those articles at greatly reduced prices. The advantages resulting from the use of the canal to that portion of the state through which it passes, has at least equalled former expectations."³⁴⁰

At the turn of another century it is appropriate that Ralph Lehrman chose to depict the *Albert S. White* eastbound at New Haven as the central focal point in his 1994 painting of the "Gronauer Lock-1843". What had begun as a dream of George Washington to connect the Maumee and the Wabash rivers through an ancient overland portage, the idea grew first to complete its terminus on the Wabash at the mouth of the Tippecanoe. With the Mammoth Internal Improvements Bill passed by the Indiana legislature in 1836, the Wabash & Erie was to make its way through Lafayette to Terre Haute and connect with the Central Canal. In 1843, the connecting link was made to Lake Erie at Toledo, Ohio. In 1845, the Ohio portion became the Miami & Erie; however, it is commonly referred to as the Miami, Wabash & Erie Canal. By the project's completion in 1853, it had reached Evansville. It took twenty-four years to build this 468-mile long canal. When completed it was the second longest in the world, yet operated just twenty years in its northern portions before falling into disuse.

In its time, however, the Wabash & Erie served its purpose well. It opened up the magnificent Indiana heartland welcoming settlers to work the land and build industries, delivered Hoosier natural resources to the world, provoked the competition from the railroads, created market centers, proved that transportation facilities builds communities and taught a lesson in financial frugality. Considering these accomplishments most would judge the Wabash & Erie Canal project a success.

"Standing on the tow path of the Wabash and Erie Canal...they do not realize that they are on one of the greatest engineering projects of modern times which history proves." - Benj. F. Stuart, History of the Wabash and Valley - 1924

Wabash & Erie Canal: Cass County Bibliography

Abbreviations

ACFWHS = Allen County Fort Wayne Historical Society

CCHS = Cass County Historical Society

CSI = Canal Society of Indiana, Logansport, Indiana

IDSL = Indiana Division State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana

IHSL = Indiana Historical Society Library, Indianapolis, Indiana

ISA = Indiana State Archives, Indianapolis, Indiana

ACPL = Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana

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Wabash & Erie Canal: Carroll County Bibliography

Abbreviations

- CSI = Canal Society of Indiana, Fort Wayne, Indiana
DPL = Delphi Indiana Public Library
IDSL = Indiana Division State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana
IHB = Indiana Historical Bureau, Indianapolis, Indiana
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- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102. Places such as Canalport, Port Mahon and Edwardsburg have disappeared from the old Wabash & Erie Canal route.
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- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35. In conversations with Richard Wild, Logansport High School retired teacher, it was noted that the current address of Alexander Chamberlain's original Logansport, Indiana, tavern is 505 Cliff Drive.
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- ⁴³ Williams, Report of the Chief Engineer, November 1, 1847, *Documentary Journal*, 1847 (IDSL).
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- ¹³⁴ *Indiana Canals*, Canal Society of Indiana, Vol. 5, No. 2 1993, pp. 8-9.
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- ¹³⁸ *Ibid.* Note: Perhaps as a result of Cory's efforts, an April 17, 1940, Logansport *Press* newspaper noted in a series of photos, "Scenes in the Near New State Road Camp at Fitch's Glen". Three acres were purchased by the state through the cooperation of Russell Tanguy, owner, and the Kiwanis Club. A photo of the old stone house was accompanied by a caption that reads, "This canal days toll house is

falling to ruin and will have to be razed. It stands on the ground the state bought. It is made of stone native to the locality." The area known as Fitch's Glen has since been purchased by private individuals.

¹³⁹ Leslie, "Wabash and Erie Canal in Cass County", 1989.

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¹⁴⁵ Williams, "Williams Tells About Wreck of Mary Anne last of Canal Boats", *Logansport Press*, May 1, 1932.

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¹⁵² Williams, Report of the Principal Engineer, December 5, 1837, pp. 2-3. *Documentary Journal* 1837 (IDSL).

¹⁵³ Paul, *We Run the Canal Line*, pp. 12-14. See "Cedar Rapids" re: Benjamin. Stuart, *History of Wabash and Valley*, p. 203.

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¹⁵⁸ Contracts in Indiana State Archives.

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