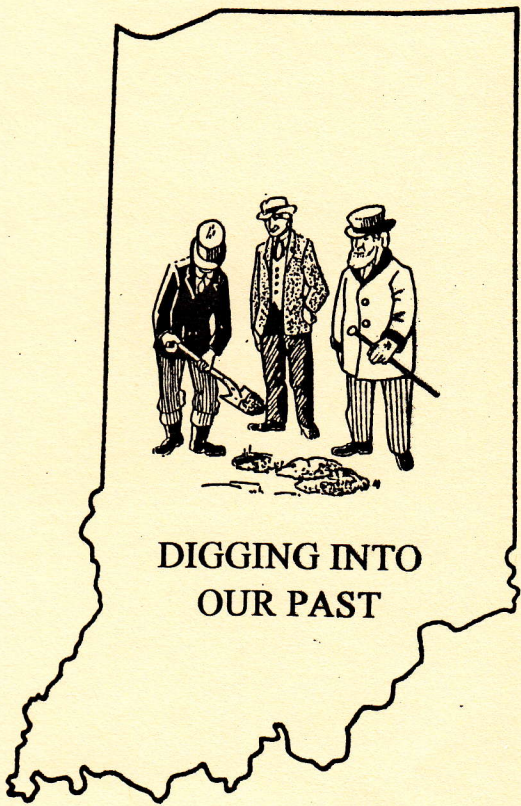


INDIANA CANALS



Journal of the Canal Society of Indiana
Vol. 11 No. 3 Summer 2000

INDIANA CANALS

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Indiana Canals

The Journal of the Canal Society of Indiana

Volume 11, Number 3

Summer 2000

The Erasmus Gest Letters

By Chuck Whiting

As Chuck Whiting, CSI board member from Lawrenceburg, IN was researching the Whitewater and Cincinnati & Whitewater Canals for the marker that CSI erected in West Harrison, Indiana, last summer, he came across the papers of Erasmus Gest.

***These papers are reprinted with permission from:
Gest Family Papers, Mss 63931,
Cincinnati Historical Society Library,
Cincinnati Museum Center,
1301 Western Ave.,
Cincinnati, Ohio 45203***

Within these papers that was folded in the were the following six center. Three sides letters Erasmus Gest were used for the letter wrote to his sister, ter with the fourth Clarissa Gest, in care side used for the address of his father, Joseph dress. The letters Gest, while he was were then folded into working on the White- a packet 3" by 4 1/2" water Canal at West and sealed with seal- Harrison, IN/Harrison, ing wax. The letter of OH. They give us a August 7, 1837 has one glimpse of canal con- page with the lines of struction life from writing at right an- May 1837 to November gles crossing the 1838. lines already written.

The Gest letters were each written on a single sheet of paper

The librarian at the Cincinnati Museum thought this was done to save paper. Note:

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the spelling of Brookville without the letter e, using the letter 'f' in place of 'ss' (acrof instead of across) which was the old way of spelling, sparse useage of periods or other forms of punctuation, and the use of capital letters where they were not needed.

Harrison May 8th, 1837

Dear Sister

I am as well as usual but have had hard times in the eating line, at this house there is the dirtiest cooking of any house that I have ever boarded at yet. but in the Shanties the workmen live ten times as well as we do and we are allways (sic) glad to get out at dinner time and eat with the workmen. When we go up the line which is once or twice a week we stay at Barwise's, he keeps a first rate table and Mrs. Barewise says that the next time we come up She is going to founder us all on codfish, they are both very clever and it appears more like a home than this old dirty house. Jesse Williams* was here about a week ago, he staid (sic) only a day, I suppose Charles is well before now and all the rest of the folks, How is Gran and what is he doing since the examination.

They are getting along slowly with this canal hands are so scarce that it is most impossible to get a long atal (sic) a great many of the hands get 18 to 20\$ per month and found (food?) Tell Pa to tell

Joseph to send all the Dutch out here that want work there is wanted two or three thousand hands.

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

There was a tusk dug up near Brookill(e) (on the line) it is over five feet long and 4 inches in diameter, it was lying against a large rock and was buryed (sic) about ten feet and had the appearance of being washed there.

For all this place is named Harrison it is a Whole Hog Van Buren (there being only three or four Whigs in the place). There is a Cumleite** church here and they baptize ever sunday Has that boy taken the Engine yet I want newspapers sent once in a while, the courier among the rest. It is reported about here that the Franklin bank has stoped (sic) payment.

Are those men to be hung, What did the mob do and how far did Clayton go. We were going to fool the people here. we painted a baloon (sic) on the eye glass of the level, but we forgot it until after class. How does the map come on

*How are they getting along at the Cincinnati Collidge (sic)
since the Examinat and Fair.*

Erasmus

Gest

P.S. Write soon,

***Jesse (Lynch) Williams was Chief Engineer on all of Indiana's Canals. He was in Harrison to oversee the work being done on the Whitewater Canal.**

****Campbellites were a religious denomination formed by U. S. clergyman, Alexander Campbell (1788-1866), who was born in Ireland. He was the founder of the Disciples of Christ. Although his father was a Presbyterian minister, Alexander had his own ideas about what he believed would bring about a period of Divine blessing. The Presbyterians, in particular, feared that the Campbellites were turning people away from the truth through "misrepresentation, satire & abuse."**

June 2nd, 1837

Dear Sister

I am as well as usual and hope that you are the same. It has been a great while since I wrote but you have probably heard from me

by Charles Williams.

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

Cohnl: Torbert has been up locating the West fork branch of the White Water canal tell Charles that they have finished. There is plenty of paper money here but no silver and what will be done for change I do not know

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

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

I herd (sic) the Ohio was very high almost as high as it was in 1832 Mind and send these newspaper regular. (sic)

There will be great time at the fall Election in this State House! the Internal improvements entirely stoped (sic) while others want them classified but this canal will be so far advanced by the time that the Legislatur (sic) meets that they will hardly stop it.

Send the next letter full of Ice cream candy and other sweet matter

E Gest

August 7th 1837

Dear Sister

I know that it has been a long time since I have written to you but it can't be helped now I have had more to do for the last two to three weeks than I have ever had before and therefore had not time to write but notwithstanding the businefs (business) that I have had to do I have had several trips around the Country. One was to the Bath Springs Union County via Brookville It is a fine place but not in good order I saw some Cincinnatians there. There are 3 springs of Different kinds of water

I think if there was one or two thousand Dollars spent for improvements it would become quite a place or resort and would probably surpass (surpass) the Yellow Springs of Ohio.

Along the side of this page was written:

There is no use in such long directions upon (sic) the back of my Newspapers and letters I expect that they will find me with my own name

Continuing on the next page:

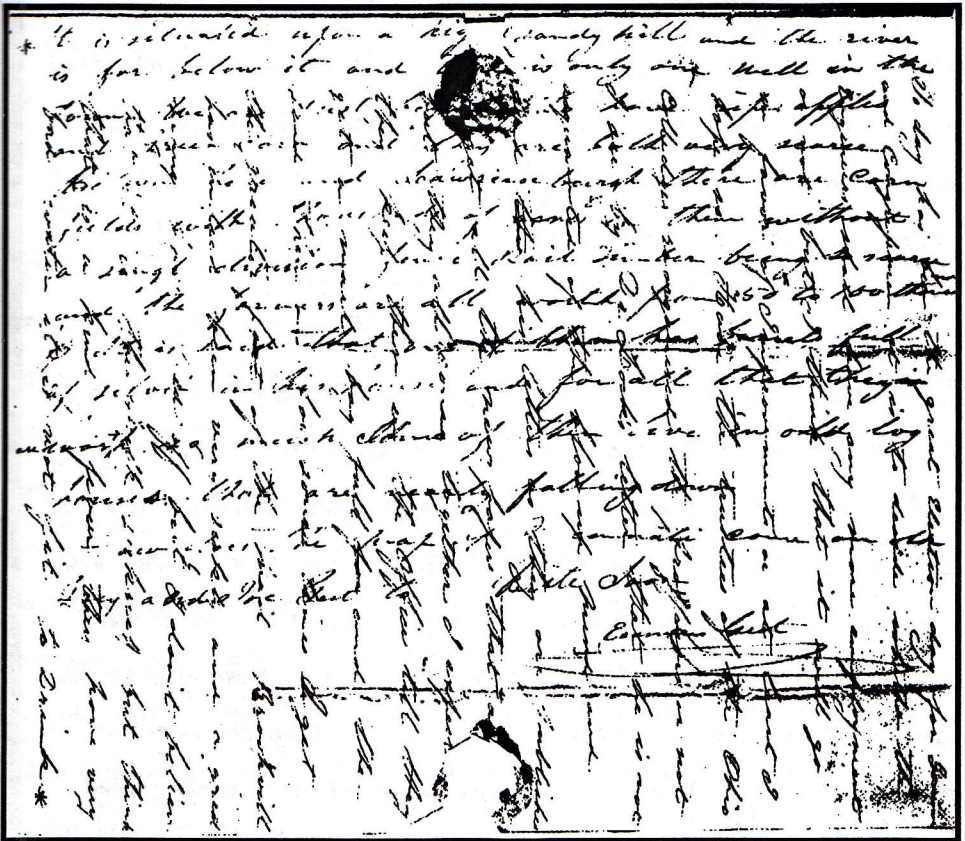
I was also down too (sic) Lawrenceburgh yesterday They are trying to make it a fine place they are Grading & paving the streets and have laid out some of the farms through which the canal passes into lots and are building houses upon them.

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

The following page of the letter had words written in the normal horizontal manner and then the paper was

rotated and the writing continued across the other words so that those lines read vertically:

To day (sic) has been the great Election day for Governor and Congressmen (Congressmen) it is to decide whether the Engineers shall



This page from the third Erasmus Gest letter has writing both horizontally and vertically to save paper.

have any more employment or not but I think that it will go in favor of improvements or at least I hope so. Have the trustees of the Ohio Colledge (sic) reorganized the professors or not I see by Dr. Lock's letter that he is not acquainted of the blow up Mind and send his letters as they are published I get all the news papers that are _____ (letter torn here) but they all come together I expect they keep them in the Office till (sic) they get a mail bag full for and then send them in for some times (sic) I get the greater part of the mail Brookvill(e) has indeed been very sickly and a great many hands died off but I don't believe that it is the milk sickneff (sickness) but think that is a kind of fever (sic) they have very bad water it is not fit to Drink*

The following is written vertically,
on top of the horizontal text:

*It is situated upon a big & sandy hill and the river is far below it and there is only one well in the town. We are just beginning to have ripe apples and Green Corn and they are both very scarce Between here and Lawrenceburg there are corn fields with thousands of acres in them without a single division fence Rail timbers being so scarce and the farmers are all worth from 50 to 100 thousand \$ It is said that one of them has barrels full of silver in his house and for all that they are worth so much clouse (?) of them live in old log houses that are nearly falling down

How does the map of Cincinnati come on old
Grey and Joe Gest to Write Soon

Erasmus Gest

Harrison November 27th 1837

Dear Sister

I received your letter the other day and have not had time to answer it until to day (sic) We have been preparing the account of the Line for the Board of Internal Improvement, and it has kept us Busy until 11 o'clock at night and Sundays included for the last 3 weeks But now it is all over and we have more time to turn around There has been expended over two hundred thousand Dollars since last winter but it will cost as much more to complete it as far as Brookvill (sic) The Dam at Brookvill (sic) is finished and they say that it is a splendid sight to see the water running (sic) over so evenly Our dams are made different from the common dams in this country They are Planked on both sides and the top is mad (sic) perfectly level and straight so that the water glides over the sides perfectly smooth (sic) and without much noise We have had some fine weather lately with some snow but it did not fall very deep and to day (sic) it has been thawing and was quite muddy.

What has been done about the grading of those streets East of

Broadway I see by the papers that some of the Honorables have had a meeting and passed several Resolutions touching some of the citizens and among the rest the City Survey.

I have heard that Cooney was not hung as sentenced but has had a longer time granted and I suppose that it was a great disappoint (sic) to many persons.

How does the lectures and other matters come on particular the Colledge (sic) and the Map of Cincinnati. I suppose that it has not taken another rest.

I receive the Papers regular (sic) now except last wednesdays which did not come until Sunday the Dayton Stage ran away with the mail and left this line without any thing (sic) but an empty mail Bag without any lock

How does Williamses come on and the rest of the folks. I will be down some of these days and will want a good deal of sewing done such as shirt altered & C (etc.).

Give my Respects to the Warders and the rest of the folks and write soon.

I see by the papers that you have a new article of Trade which beats the Buckskin Shirts it is the Chemical Chloride Soap which is good for every thing (sic), as for whiskers take of (sic) freckles and lastly makes good Pills

Erasmus Gest

Harrison Ohio
March 27th 1838

Dear Sister

I received your letter the other day and I am as well as the times will admit of and presume that you are the same and all the rest of the Folks.

There is nothing new here except that it is very warm and the Farmers have commenced to Plough and our Canal is going on slowly No news about the Resident But I think that Mr. Holman the Gentleman with whome (sic) Charles H W was with will supply Col Torberts Place he is a very fine man and I prsume (sic) he will be capeable (sic) to fill the station which Col T held But they ought to have appointed Mr. Coryell for He knows all of the Plans that the Colnl (sic) Established and a Stranger will perhaps alter a great many things (sic) thereby causing the contractors extra trouble which they will not be Paid for And I would have been an Asst in the Place of Mr. C

Tell Pa that I am getting a Rod made for him and will bring it down as soon as I come If he wants the Horse which Mr Coryell has, to let me know as soon as possible I think He can be bought for \$125 or \$130 Colonl (sic) T was offered last fall \$160 and I think that he is cheap He will bring 200 if well taken care of Every body (sic) that sees him thinks that he is the finest horse in this part of the Western world.

There are to be three weddings here soon and they are odder matches than your three that you mentioned.

Harrison is improving very fast as there are several buildings going up this summer and I think that Property will encrease (sic) in value very much I was going to buy a lot of l D Moor for \$100 but these is a law in Indiana that will Prevent any Engineer from buying Property within

two miles of the canal. I am about selling my horse & I think if Pa
buys (sic) Coryell's horse that I can sell old Trig out here

Excuse this bad written letter and the language which it contains
for I have not time to correct and write another one Besure (sic) and
write immediately and let me know Pa's views about the horse and other
matters to (sic) numerous to mention.

So for Coryell I do not know whether he is going East or not but
I expect that you know better than I do

Write soon and excuse haste Yours E Gest

Harrison In Nov 26th 1838

Dear Father

I got here without any trouble that afternoon with my horse
I have been as well as could be expected

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

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

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

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

Erasmus Gest

LODI

(FULLERTON OR WATERMAN)

AND ITS
WABASH AND ERIE
CANAL
CONNECTIONS

By Charles Davis

Lodi, located in Sec. 2 Twp. 17 R.9 or Liberty township of Parke county, Indiana, is only mentioned in a couple of paragraphs in the Parke County History. It was a busy little town during the canal days. The name for Liberty township came from a word very dear to the hearts of the pioneers who came to America.

Lodi was originally called "Fullerton." It was surveyed on April 11, 1836 by Peter Blakebell, Surveyer. The following description of the Plat of Lodi is here in its entirety. It was copied from the Plat Book in the recorders office in the Rockville court house. I wrote in the owners' names per the 1851 tax list, Deeds.



PLAT



OF



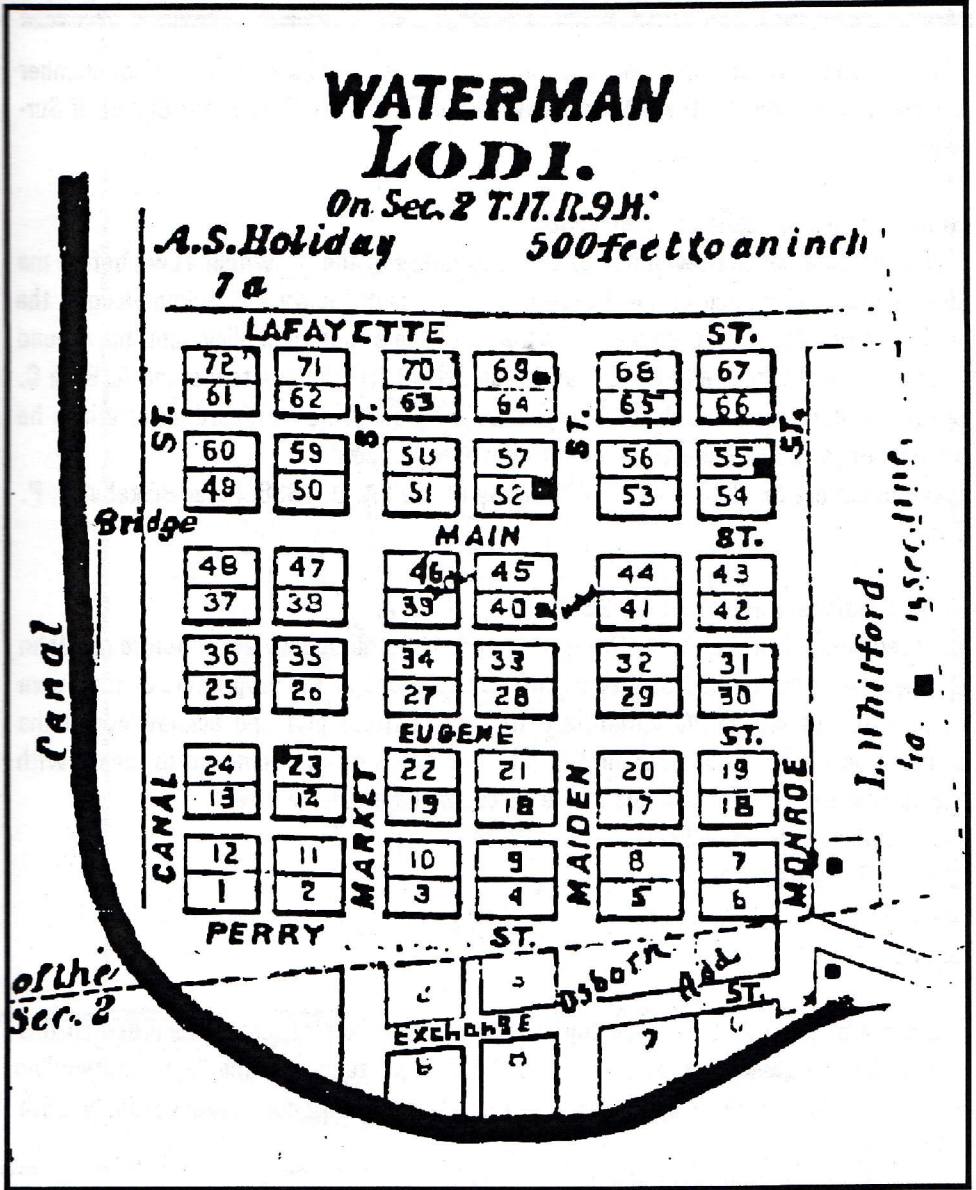
LODI



A plat of the Town of Fullerton in the County of Parke in the State of Indiana and is laid off on the West fraction of section two, in Township seventeen North in Range nine West of the second principal meridian containing seventy two lots & 3 fractional lots marked A. B. & C. Each one hundred and twenty feet long and sixty feet in width, except fractional lots which is (sic) about 72 feet long and about 50 wide the streets are all fifty feet wide and cross each other at right angles. The streets running North and South bars

North seven degrees East the variation being five degrees and fifty minutes East. The alleys are all twelve feet in width and cross each other at right angles. The land between Canal Street and the canal line is given as a donation to the Town of Fullerton except fractional lots marked A. B. & C. as above described and is about fifty feet wide, there is a whinstone buried at the North East corner of lot number twelve

(Continued on page 18)



This map of Lodi can be found in the 1876 Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Indiana published by Baskin Forster & Company. Note the Osborn Addition at the bottom of the map.

and the South west corner of said stone is the North East corner of lot number twelve as surveyed on the eleventh day of April A. D. 1836 by Peter Blakebell Surveyor.

State of Indiana, Fountain County}SS.

This day came Jesse Bowen one of the proprietors of the ___ within Town before me the undersigned justice of the Peace in and for said County and acknowledged the within Town plat to be correct and further that the streets and alleys and the ground between Canal Street and the Canal line all except fractional lots marked A. B. & C. are public donations and desired the same to be admitted to record all of which he acknowledged to be done of his own free will and accord.

Given under my hand and seal this 13th day of April A. D. 1836. Peter Blakebell J. P.
Seal

Sate of Indiana, Parke County} SS.

Be it rememberd that on this 16th day of April 1836 personally come before me John G. Davis Recorder of said County Elijah Thompson one of the proprietors of the Town of Fullerton of which the within is a true and correct plat and acknowledged the same to be his act and deed and desireth that the same be admitted to record with the certificate and explanations of the surveyor thereunder written.

Given under my hand and seal.

John G. Davis Rec'r Seal

Recorded April 16th A. D. 1836.

John G. Davis Recorder.

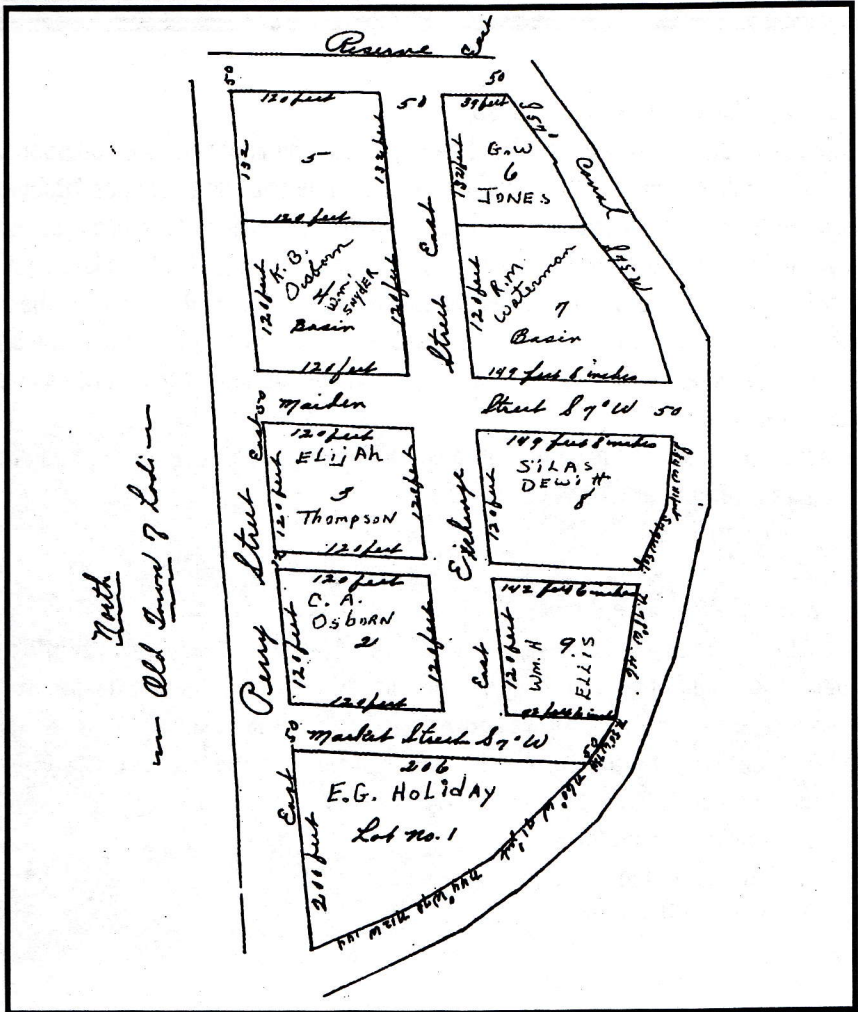
The name of the Town of "Fullerton" as set forth in the plat thereof recorded on this page is hereby changed and recorded as "Lodi" in pursuance of the "act" entitled "an act to change the name of Fullerton in Parke County to Lodi Approved Jan'y 26th 1837.

Done and recorded this 30th day of July 1839.

John G. Davis Recorder. Parke County

Osborn's Addition, South, to Lodi

"Beginning on the East bank of Canal East two chains and eighty links from the N.



OSBORN ADDITION TO LODI, INDIANA This old map of the Osborn Plat of Lodi has had the names of the lot owners added by Charles Davis.

W. corner of the E 1/2 Sec. ___ of S. 2 T. 17 P. 17 R. 9"
William H. Osborn's addition to the town of Lodi, Parke County, Indiana.
July 19, 1849
Solomon B. Gossigns, County Surveyor

State of Indiana, Parke County} SS.

I William H. Osborn, do certify that I have laid out the annexed as an addition to the Town of Lodi in said county of Parke that the same shall be known as "Osborn's addition to Lodi." That the same is situated on the East half of W. quarter section 2 in Town No. 17 N, R 9 W. in the Crawfordsville Land District. That the lots shall forever be known by the number inserted on the face of the said plat. That the streets and alleys shall be public streets and alleys and that the said lots are of the size and description as mentioned in said plat. All of which I do intend to record as and for a plat of the said addition.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and this twenty first day of July in the Year of our Lord 1849.

Wm. H. Osborn Seal

State of Indiana, Parke County} SS.

Be it known that on the 21st day of July A. D. 1849 personally came before me the undersigned the Recorder in and for said County William H. Osborn the proprietor of the said addition to the Town of Lodi in said County and acknowledged the same to be his voluntary act and deed for the uses and purposes above set forth.

Witness my hand and seal the date above written,

Jos B. Cornelius, Recorder Seal

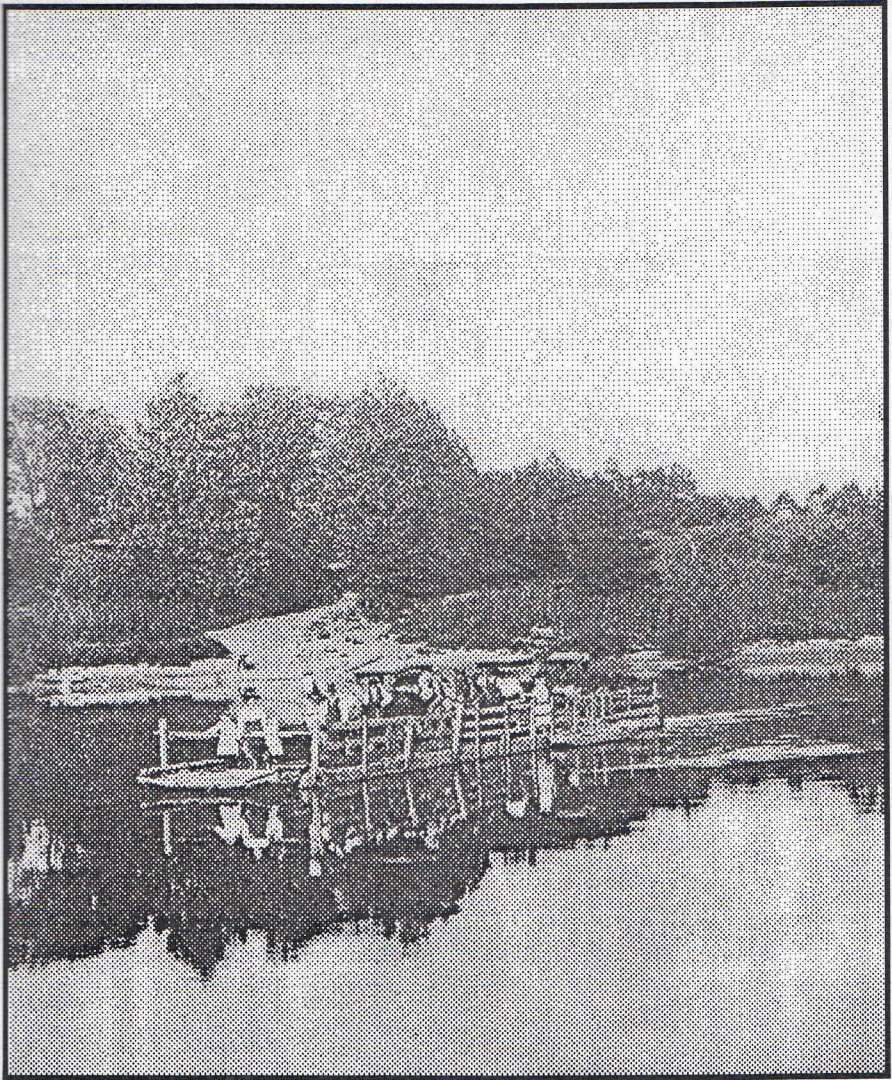
Received and recorded Jul 21," at 2" P.M.

Jos. B. Cornelius Recorder

End

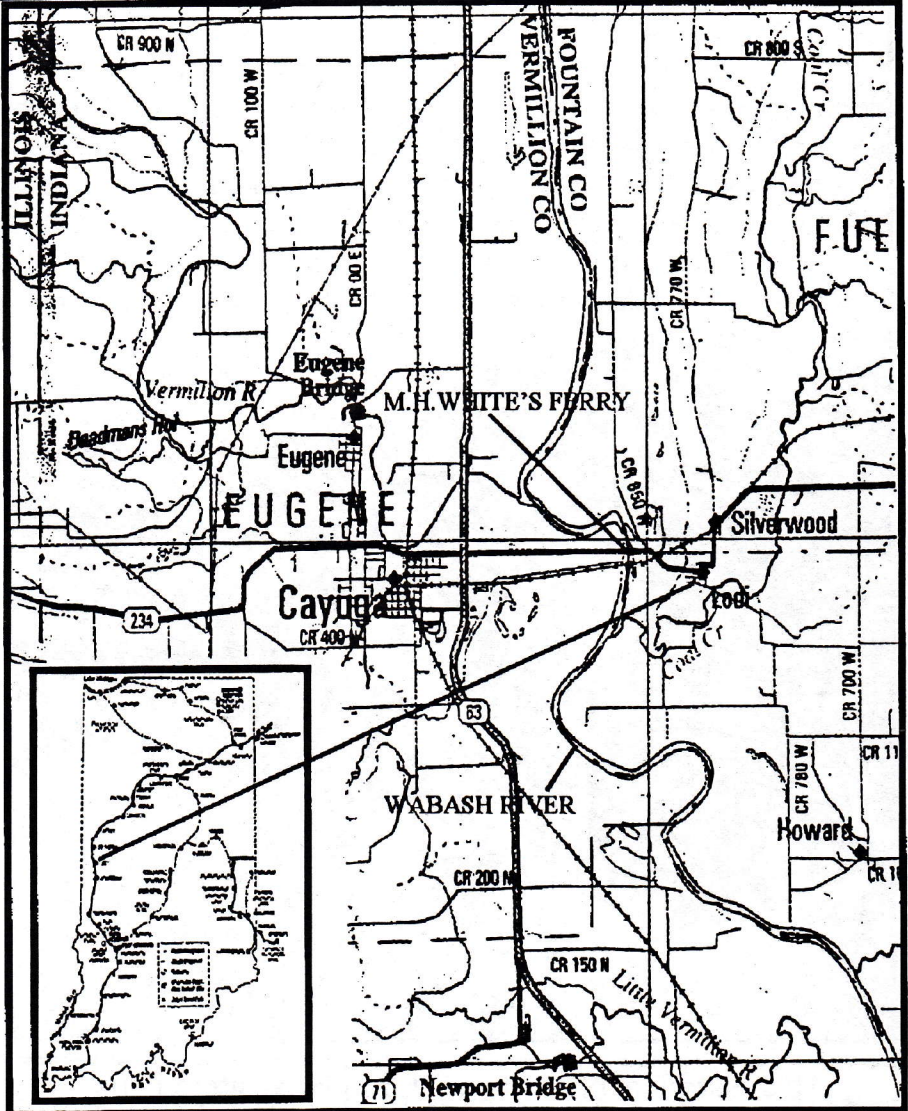
WABASH FERRY AT LODI

The ferry across the Wabash river has an interesting, colorfull, history-filled past. In 1832 Lewis Thomas of Fountain County, Indiana deed to Norburn Thomas of Kanawha County, Virginia, a 50 acre tract of land on the West side of the Wabash, Sec. 3. Also a 25 acre tract in Sec. 34. In the deed, recorded in Newport, Indiana, it



This historical photo is of Milton H. White's Ferry in Eugene Township, Vermillion County, Indiana.

states "including a one half interest in the ferry."



WHITE'S FERRY NEAR LODI was located on the Wabash & Erie Canal on Coal Creek in Eugene township. Nearby was the Wabash River where M. H. White operated his ferry service. The canal wasn't too far from the state of Illinois which used it to ship goods at this point.

Norborn Thomas came to Lodi sometime in the mid 1830s and became sole owner of the ferry. In 1858, Milton H. White took over the operation of the ferry for Thomas. The community at the east end of the bridge was referred to as Whitetown after his family. The ferry house was on the east side bank of the river approximately 300 feet north of where the old iron bridge stood. There was a bell on the post nearby to wake up the ferryman at night. This was an important crossing for canal freight from Lodi bound for points west of the Wabash.

The Daily Clintonian of Monday July 19, 1915, carried Milton H. Whites' obituary. No one could give a better story of Lodi and the ferry than this obituary. Much of this was told by Mr. White when he was living and operating the ferry during the height of the Canal Era and the Civil War.

AGED FERRYMAN'S DEATH STIRS REMINISCENSES

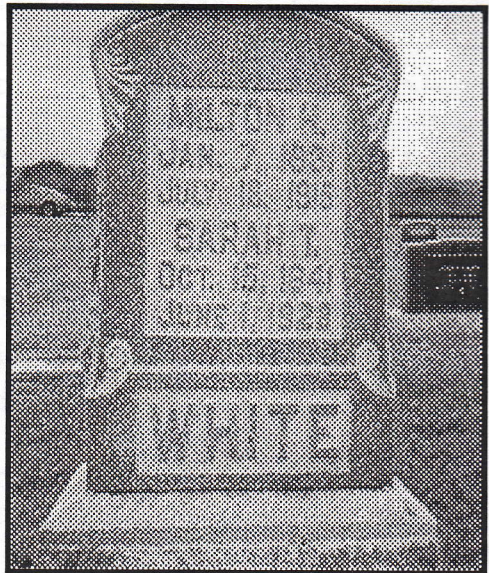
In the death, at Silverwood, of Milton H. White, who was born in Pond Gap, West Virginia, in 1831, one of the best known figures of the north end of Vermillion County has passed. The funeral, which was held Sunday morning, attracted many relatives and friends

who had known the aged man and respected him. As a ferryman, for thirty years, across the Wabash river, at a point about two and a half miles east of the present Army Ford bridge, Mr. White's long service as an across-the-river pilot gave him a wide acquaintance. Among the things he liked to recall, as he reminisced over the Civil War period, was as to how he had fer-

ried the Union soldiers across without charge. It is said that General Harrison and his troops, in the War of 1812, took the Army Ford road through the point at which this ferry was located and that a skirmish fought there left bullets in the trees, some of which have been cut in recent years. The ferry which was in charge of Mr. White for three decades was a connecting link between eastern Illinois and Lodi, then an important grain shipping point on the old Canal.

Lodi, now only a remnant, a quarter of a mile south of Silverwood, at one time boasted a huge warehouse and an active freighting business. The death of the veteran ferryman recalls the days when Eugene (Eugene is located in Vermillion county northwest of Lodi) was a pork packing station that vied with Chicago in the

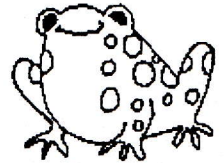
amount of business, for Chicago was a small spot within the memory of some men living, decidedly small when compared to what it has become. Some of the pork packing points along the Wabash and the old Canal where then big compared to their relative im-



portance now. Some old timers who have exchanged reminiscences with Milton H. White have told of recalling the days when Clinton Locks, over the Canal, practically where Lyford now is,

was of some importance, but the present Clinton was hardly noticed. Stage coaches passing through Terre Haute then found the old Terre Haute House out at Seventh and Wabash Avenue so far east of the main portion of old Terre Haute down along the Wabash that they regarded it as "Out on the Prairie." Mr. White and his wife, who came to this county about 1855 and who were married soon afterward, are among those who recalled these former conditions. To Mr. and Mrs. White were born

eleven children, of whom six are living, as follows: Thomas A. and John H. White of Clinton; Theodore of Silverwood; Mrs. Jennie McGuire of Frankfort; Mrs. Virginia Spencer of Perrysville, Tex. and Mrs. Emma Morton of Danville, Ill. Mrs. White who is ten years younger than her husband and who was born in Parisburg, Virginia, also survives. The picture above shows the aged couple as they stood in their yard a few years ago. One sister survives in West Virginia."



The pioneer preacher David Shirk's son, David Jr. took over the ferry in 1904. David Jr., was a veteran of Co. K of the 97th Indiana Volunteers. He had a picnic grove near the ferry. The ferry was in the exact spot as Randolph's boat landing. The Wabash river bridge was built in 1907. The ferry was displaced by the Indiana State highway as late as 1930-32 according to the History of Fountain County 1983. David Shirk Jr. died in 1912. The pioneer Shirk settlement was the last of Lodi.

LODI WAREHOUSE

The last warehouse at Lodi was town down in 1877. This warehouse was on Lot #1 on the Canal. In 1851 the lot had a tax value of \$1.025. The Hoosier State refered to the warehouse as an "old landmark built by E. G. Holiday." The E. G. of his name is Elias Gideon.

CANAL BASINS

Looking at the Plat of the old town of Lodi, it shows it had two basins. Lot #4 and Lot #7. These basins weren't developed for business until the late 1850s. No doubt they were used as dry docks to move freight and boat turnarounds prior to this. Elijah Thompson owned the basin in lot #7 in the early years of the canal. Thompson died in 1858. Wm. Biggs was guardian of Thompson's kids, Olive and David. Oct. Term 1858 Common Pleas Court Book 19 page 318 says this of lot #7: "Said real estate was of no present profit and suffering unavoidable waste." A sale of real estate was ordered by said Court, to be sold in a public sale.

December 4, 1858, lots #7 and #13 were sold to Richard M. Waterman for \$32.00. This is when Lodi changed its name to Waterman, even through most people still call it Lodi today.

Dr. Richard M. Waterman located in Lodi in 1857. Lodi changed its name to Waterman in his honor when he established a pork packing industry and a large general store which were on lots #7 and #13 according to page 91 of the Parke County At-

las.

Kilburn B. Osborn owned a Merchandise Store located on Basin lot #4. Osborn paid \$650. for it according to Deed Book 14 page 288. Some of the other businessmen were Ed. W. Taylor on lot #18. He operated a merchandise store. Boxiles Marks was a vendor merchant. Wm. Hines a merchant. George Seiger sold groceries. Charles A. Osborn was a vendor in spirits and groceries which later became Holaday's warehouse on lot #1.

An interesting note I found in the History of Parke and Vermillion Counties, Indiana., p. 401 is that the first newspaper in Vermillion County had its birth and death at Eugene. It was the News-Letter by Dr. R. M. Waterman, established in 1837, and was out of business six months later.

COAL CREEK SLACKWATER DAM

There was a dam built across Coal Creek for the Wabash and Erie Canal at Lodi. This was located just south east of town. The canal bed is still visible from the Coal Creek bridge looking back towards town. This was used instead of the aqueducts normally used. The dam was 202 feet long and 17 1/2 feet high above low water. Report to Trustees 1853.

BAPTIST CHURCH

A new church was built in Lodi in July 1855. "We learn from Rev. Mr. Jones, of Lodi, that the

citizens are about building a large church in that place, to be used by the regular Baptists. The building is to be 42 by 36 feet and two stories high. The second story will be fitted up in good style, and used by the Masons as their Lodge Room. Mr. Jones informs us that \$1,000. has been subscribed already, and that \$200. more will complete the building. This speaks well for the Citizens of Lodi and vicinity." Parke County Whig, July 12, 1855.

LODI SCHOOL

The land for the Lodi School was bought by the Liberty township trustees on February 2, 1854. Philander Briggs and his wife, Emily, sold this land to the trustees for \$1.00. Here is the original deed.

Deeds

Philander Briggs & Emily Briggs his wife for and in consideration of one dollar to them in hand paid doth hereby Devise Convey and Warrant to the Trustees of Liberty Township, Parke County, Indiana & to their successor in office for a School House scite (sic), a certain piece of land being a part of Section two (2) Town Seventeen (17) North of range nine (9) West. Beginning at the South East corner of a certain three acres Lot of Land conveyed to E. G. and E. M. Holliday by Elijah Thompson deceased, situate (sic) near the town of Lodi: Whence one hundred and twenty (120) feet in a continus (sic) line Southwardly, with the East

line of said three (3) acre lot, Thence Westerly one hundred and twenty (120) feet parallel with the South line of said three Acre Lot, Thence Northwardly One Hundred and Twenty (120) feet to said South Line, Thence along said south line Eastwardly, one hundred and twenty (120) feet to the place of beginning.

Signed, sealed and delivered July 2nd A. D., 1854.

Philander Briggs Seal, Emily S. Briggs Seal

The above entertaining acknowledged
State of Indiana. Fountain County; Sct:

On this day to wit the 2nd of February 1854, personally came to me, John M. Hall Recorder of Covington, Indiana. Philander Briggs and Emily S. Briggs his wife, and severally acknowledged the signing and sealing the above deed of conveyance to be their act and deed for the uses & purposes therein mentioned.

Witness my hand and corporation seal of Covington, Ind. John M. Hall, Recorder

State of Indiana. Fountain County: SS

I Elias C. Wilcox Clerk of the Circuit Court of said County, do hereby certify that John M. Hall, before whom the within acknowledgement was made, was at the date thereof, the Recorder of Covington, and Ex Officio Justice of the Pease within and for Troy Township, said County and that full faith and credit are due all his official acts, and that his signature thereto is genuine.

In Testimony whereof I have unto subscribed and affix the seal of said Court at Covington, this 24th day of April A. D., 1855. Elias C. Wilcox, Clerk
Seal

Received and Recorded May 4th 1855 at 11:00 A.M.
Samuel A. Fisher, Recorder

SILVER ISLAND CEMETERY

There is reported to be a cemetery for the Canal diggers about a quarter of a mile North of the northern end of Silver Island which is just north of Lodi. This Cemetery is called Silver Island Cemetery or Blue Island Cemetery. History of Fountain County 1881 page 421 states: "the Lodi (water) well, as it is known, is the deepest in the United States." The Wabash and Erie Canal passes through the western part, forming with the Wabash river a small section of country known as Silver Island. This is a very high rise of ground, and the legend is it received its name from the Indians, who buried silver on it. The silver has never been found.

CLEAR CREEK FLOOD GATE

An article entitled "Solving History's Mystery" by Allen Vincent about the operation of the Clear Creek Flood Gate removed from the Wabash & Erie Canal near Huntington, IN, in 1999 can be found in the July 2000 issue of the Canal Society of Indiana Newsletter. The ar-

(Continued on page 32)

Once again the question is asked,

WHO

KILLED

SILAS

BOWERS?

only this time there is an answer.

BY CHARLES DAVIS

FURTHER INFORMATION CAME TO LIGHT ABOUT WHO KILLED SILAS BOWERS AFTER PUBLICATION OF THE ARTICLE ON NUMA IN THE SPRING OF 2000 ISSUE OF INDIANA CANALS. CHARLES DAVIS UNCOVERED THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE THAT APPEARED IN THE ROCKVILLE TRIBUNE ON JANUARY 10, 1906. IT WAS WRITTEN BY SAMUEL CATLIN.

"I recall but one event that shadows the fair name of this representative pioneer settlement--the Bowers tragedy. Silas Bowers had settled in the southwest part of Florida township and early succeeded in rendering himself very unpopular, especially among the most influential men of the neighborhood. This I think, grew out of an unfortunate, contentious disposition, that constantly irritated his neighbors, rather than the silence and inaction to mean that he intended holding them personally responsible for the outrage, it was determined that he should leave the country. He was accordingly warned to do

so or suffer the penalty they would certainly inflict. This order he at once took steps to obey. So selling off his property he loaded his household goods into wagons, started for Illinois, his wife and himself riding together in a buggy. They had only crossed the Wabash river, and traveled a mile or two when he was ambushed and shot dead by the side of his wife. This dastardly deed was done by two men, Allen and Fenton, both of whom left the country at once. A year or two afterward I was walking along Canal street, New Orleans, with my old friend, Jack Smith, when we ran across Allen and Smith, who knows him

well had a long, private conversation with him. My companion afterwards told me detailed the whole of his connection with this horrible affair. He and his partner in crime had received two hundred dollars from the hands of Bowers' enemies, whose names he called, to perform the cowardly deed. This completed the tragedy, for no effort was ever made to bring the guilty ones to justice. However be it said to the lasting credit of the good name of my hometown, not one of her citizens participated in this horrible affair."

This is one instance in history where crime does pay. Justice was indeed blind.

(Continued from page 30)

ticle, which would normally have been published in Indiana Canals, our more technical journal, has large diagrams that the format of the newsletter can better accommodate. These diagrams further illustrate the article he wrote for the Fall 1999 issue of Indiana Canals Vol. 10 No. 4 about how he thinks that Robert English's canal lock patent plan was altered when the flood gate was constructed.

CANAL SOCIETY OF INDIANA

Organized on May 22, 1982 as a not-for-profit corporation, the Canal Society of Indiana was established to bring together those who share a common interest in Indiana's historic canals. The Society helps focus attention on these early interstate waterways through a variety of programs. Its aim is to provide interpretation of the era, to preserve canal bed and structural remains, and to support restoration of historic canal related sites.

BENEFITS:

- Canal Society of Indiana Newsletter
- Indiana Canals
- Membership Card
- Spring & Fall Tours of Canal Sites
- Books, Maps, Videos
- New Member Welcome Package

MEMBERSHIP:

\$18.00 -- Single/Family

\$30.00 -- Contributor

\$50.00 -- Patron

\$100.00 -- Frog Prince



Mail membership to:

CANAL SOCIETY OF INDIANA

P.O. BOX 40087

FORT WAYNE, IN 46804

Include name, address with 9 digit zip code,
and phone number.

CANAL SOCIETY OF INDIANA <http://www.indcanal.org>

E mail: INDCANAL@aol.com

INDIANA CANALS

Wabash & Erie Canal 1832-1874 (468 miles)

On March 2, 1827, Congress provided a land grant to encourage Indiana to build the Wabash & Erie Canal. The original plan was to link the navigable waters of the Maumee with the Wabash through the seven mile portage at Fort Wayne. Work began five years later on February 22, 1832 in Fort Wayne. Construction proceeded west as the canal reached Huntington by 1835, Logansport in 1838, and Lafayette in 1841. Work was also performed east toward the Ohio line, but the canal did not open to Toledo until 1843. A second federal land grant enabled the canal to reach Terre Haute by 1849.

At Evansville, 20 miles of the Central Canal had been completed north by 1839. The W & E was extended south in the late 1840s through the abandoned Cross-Cut Canal works to Worthington and then south following the old proposed Central Canal route. The connection with the Evansville segment was completed in 1853 forming the longest canal in the United States. By 1860, portions south of Terre Haute were closed, and the process of decline continued northward. In 1876, the canal was auctioned off by the trustees.

Central Canal 1836-1839 (8 miles/296 planned)

This canal was to extend from Peru, down the Mississinewa River Valley to the White River, through Indianapolis, and on to Worthington. Here it would meet the Cross-Cut Canal and proceed 111 miles to Evansville. Construction stopped with the financial collapse of 1839. The 24 miles from Broad Ripple to Port Royal was watered, but only 8 miles in downtown Indianapolis was operational. The entire 80 miles from Anderson to Martinsville was left in various stages of completion. Today, portions are used as a water source for Indianapolis and have been modernized.

Cross-Cut Canal 1836-1839 (42 miles)

This waterway between Terre Haute and Worthington that connected the Wabash and White Rivers lifted canal waters 78' over a summit level. The Eel River feeder and the Birch Creek and Splunge Creek Reservoirs supplied water for this summit. Begun in 1836, the works were abandoned in 1839 only to later be completed in 1850 as part of the Wabash & Erie Canal.

Erie & Michigan Canal 1836-1839 (7 miles/110 planned)

Authorized by the 1836 Internal Improvement Bill, only the Northport feeder reservoir (Sylvan Lake) and a few miles nearby were constructed. Work stopped in 1839.

Whitewater Canal 1836-1865 (76 miles)

Construction began at Brookville in 1836 as part of the statewide Mammoth Internal Improvement Bill. With its southern terminus at Lawrenceburg on the Ohio River, the Whitewater Valley Canal Co. reached Connersville in 1845. The next year 69 miles of canal were completed to Cambridge City which was on the National Road. In 1847, the merchants of Hagerstown financed their own 7 mile canal extension. At Harrison, the Whitewater also connected with the 25 mile Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal of Ohio, completed in 1843. Destructive floods in the narrow valley, inadequate financial returns, and the railroad doomed the waterway.