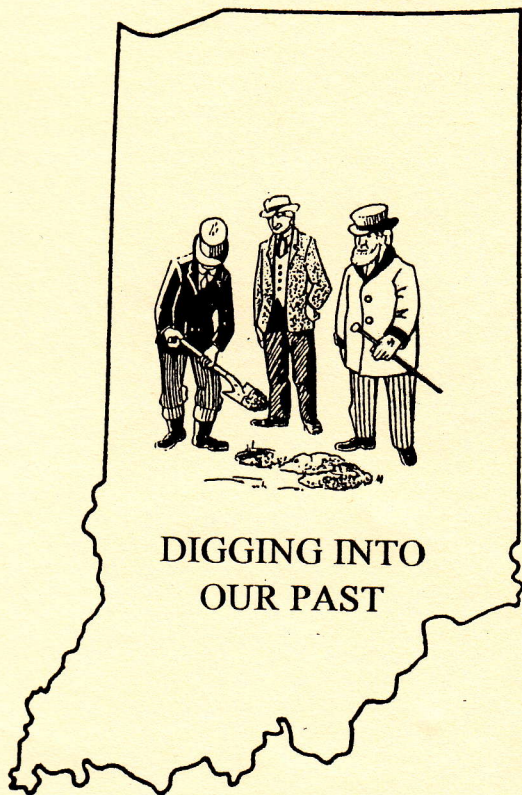


INDIANA CANALS



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Indiana Canals

The Journal of the Canal Society of Indiana

Volume 11, Number 4

Fall 2000



ARMIESBURG

AND ITS CONNECTIONS WITH THE

By Charles Davis

The town of Armiesburg, Indiana was platted November 11, 1830. The Rockville courthouse burned in 1833 and the plat was destroyed. In 1833 Joseph A. Wright, a local brick mason and later governor of Indiana, produced a copy of Armiesburg's original plat according to *Journal* Vol. 1 page 68.

The Armiesburg gristmill site is of special historic impor-



WABASH AND ERIE CANAL

tance. (When this mill is mentioned within this article it usually will be referred to as the "Mill.") The Mill was just above the ripple where General William Henry Harrison's army crossed Big Raccoon Creek and camped in 1811 while on its march to Prophet's town in Tippecanoe County, Indiana. Armiesburg got its name because of this campsite.

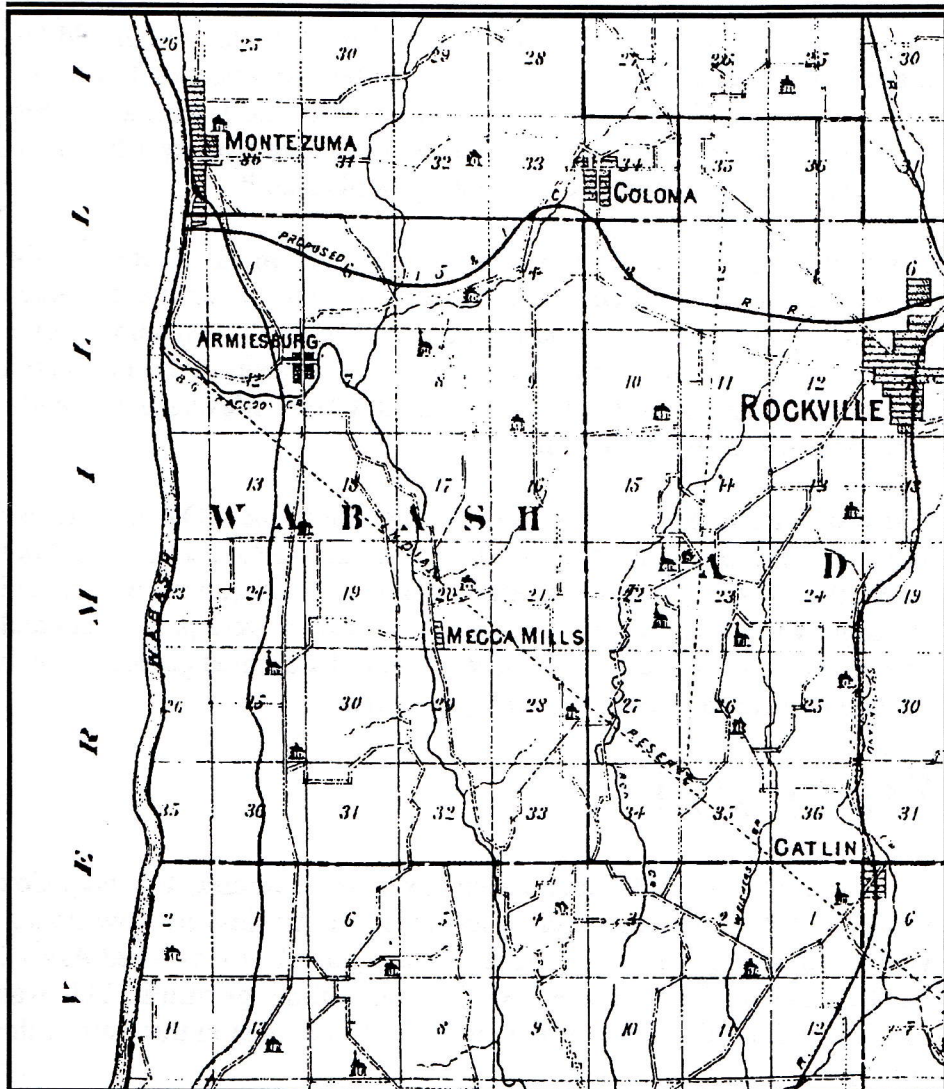
Armiesburg is located in Sections 7 and 12 of Wabash Township. The Wea tribe of the Miamis lived here. There are several descriptions of this area by early pioneers seeking out land in the early 1800s on the unsurveyed Indian reserve. Andrew TenBrook gave one of these descriptions as he had heard it from his father.

In 1822 Andrew's father and uncle crossed Armiesburg ford and made their way to Yankeetown to buy corn of Samuel Brown's land. This story can be read in the **Indiana Magazine of History** entitled "Recollections of Andrew TenBrook." On October 23, 1828, James Burns and his family settled on land one-quarter mile north of Armiesburg. Burns built a log cabin. Its floor was made at Abner Cox's sawmill. The stone that was used to make the chimney was procured from an Indian burial ground. The burial ground was located on the bank of Big Raccoon Creek about 300 feet from where Aqueduct No. 12 on the Wabash & Erie Canal would cross at a later time. Many Indian relics were found there.

Inside this issue:

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By Charles Davis



This portion of Parke County is from the 1876 Illustrated Historical Atlas by Baskin, Forster & Company. Armiesburg is straight west of Rockville.

Joseph Burns, son of James Burns, recalls that as a child he saw Indians visiting Christmas Dagenett (Dazney). Christmas was born Christmas day 1799 to Ambrose Dagenett, a French trader, and Mech-

inguarnesha, a sister of Jacco, chief of the Wea tribe located in Old Orchard Town (Terre Haute). Christmas was born in Orchard Town. He was sometimes called "Noel." He married May Ann Isaacs, a Brotherton Indian, on February 16, 1819. This was Parke County's first marriage. The Baptist preacher Isaac McCoy performed it.

Christmas Dagenett (Dazney) served as the Indian interpreter for the United States Government. For his services, the government granted him one square section of land (Section 1 of Wabash township). Some of the old timers called it the Dazney Farm. Dazney lived in a cabin that stood about where the home of Joe and Janet Meyers now stands. (See map of Wabash Township.)

A row of log cabins was built starting on the north near Dazney's house and running south to near the south line of the section where a school stood that Joseph Burns attended. This row of cabins was called "Stringtown." Dazney's relatives, some of whom were part Indian and French, occupied the cabins. The Wabash & Erie Canal passed through the county near the center of Dazney's section.

The Gristmill

Armiesburg was Park County's second seat of government. Abner Cox was one of the first white men to locate where Armiesburg now stands. He settled there in the early 1820s. As early as 1827 Cox hired Azarial D. Brown (born December 9, 1809) to build him a gristmill. This was the first Mill on that site and the only one of any note in that part of the county.

Azarial Brown was one of the founders of Armiesburg. In 1838 he married Mariah Cox, Abner Cox's daughter. In 1830 he earned enough money to buy a piece of government land in Section 17 to farm. He also engaged in boat building and boating down river. He made several trips to New Orleans in this manner.

The Mill built by Brown consisted of one run of stones. It ground wheat, corn and buckwheat. The stones were all bolted upon the same bolt that was then turned by hand by the party bringing in the grist. The stones or "burrs" were about three and a half feet in diameter and were old French ones. Two were used for grinding wheat and the other one for grinding corn.

Of special importance here is an article found in the **Rockville Tribune** dated June 10, 1880 entitled "Pioneers Day." It was about a Quaker meeting at Bloomingdale. Many early Parke County Pioneers were there giving accounts about early life in the county. There is a series of these articles that relate the history of the area and give the names of people who are not in the history books. This article included Thomas Woody, who lived in Tuscola, Illinois, at the time the article was written.

Thomas Woody was born February 17, 1804, in Orange County North Carolina. As a boy he kept a ferry there on the Han River. He arrived in Montezuma, Indiana, in 1825 before it was a town. At the time it had only two or three houses. The Miami Indian agent, Joseph Nesmith, occupied one house. Woody mentions hunting and fishing with the Miami chief, Johnnie Green. Green was still living in 1880 in Kansas. He was 87 years old. Mr. Woody states, "Early in 1827, Abner Cox built the first house in the present Armiesburg."

That year I made the irons for the mill there for Abner and Jonathan Cox." The latter part of 1826-27 Mr. Woody spent in Rockville where he cleared off the land in company with Duncan Newlin, Abram Hadley and Mr. Bullington, all employed by Lewis Noel and Aaron Hand.

"Early
in
1827,
Abner
Cox
built
the
first
house
in
present

Armiesburg."

These men cut the logs for Rockville's first courthouse that was located on the south side of the square. Woody boarded with Andrew Ray (Ray's Tavern).

The water wheel for the Mill was an old style turning or bucket wheel. The Mill was built of logs that sat on mudsills since there was no solid rock. It had a brush dam. Andrew Chew was also a millwright there. He married Harriet Cox (born February 12, 1810 and died May 9, 1898), the daughter of Abner Cox. Andrew and Harriet were married in 1829. They are buried in Coloma Cemetery. Abner Cox is also buried there in an unmarked grave.

Patterson Buys Mill & Distillery

On August 29, 1833, General Arthur Patterson bought the Armiesburg gristmill and distillery. Local history says Abner Cox retired and sold the Mill. This is not true. **Deed Record Book Vol. 1** page 183 shows that Cox lost the Mill, because of a \$450 debt on a bond. At a public auction in Rockville, on the date above, Patterson bid \$1,580 and got the Mill as the highest bidder plus 20 acres more or less of land with the Mill and distillery on it.

Arthur Patterson made his start in Rockville in 1824. He was in company with James B. McCall. They built their store on the southwest corner of the courthouse square. It was

The Distillery

James and Martin

Chestnut bought government land in Section 6, north of Armiesburg on December 30, 1824. The Chestnut boys built a distillery at the spring about one thousand feet up the creek from the Mill.

The first mechanic was Joseph Bacon, a cabinetmaker who made furniture and coffins.

also known as Steel Corner where Gen. George K. Steel conducted business at a later date. Today the Presbyterian Church stands on this site. Patterson was one of three men who named Rockville the county seat.

When Patterson came into possession of the Mill and distillery, Isaac J. Silliman was sent from Rockville as manager of the business. Silliman built a storehouse and Joseph Potts (died 1870 and buried in Rockville cemetery) was put in it as a salesman. Silliman improved the Mill and distillery and brought in a man from New York named Ruel Ingelbe (died July 19, 1858, and buried in Morgan cemetery at age of 60) to run it.

Flat Boating

Patterson and Silliman commenced packing pork and buying all the pork, grain and other products of the county that were offered to them until, at one time, they were estimated to have handled at least one half of the surplus products of the county. They loaded these products onto flat boats and ran them to New Orleans with the promise to pay upon return.

Flat boats worked well except during dry summer periods when the Wabash River was too low. During summer months it was even too low for steamboats to bring in dry goods, etc. Local merchants had to have goods hauled to them by wagon from Cincinnati, Ohio. John White (died October 19, 1874 and buried in Hixson Cemetery at the age of 84 years), Thomas Cook (died February 26, 1857 and buried in the Old Montezuma Cemetery at the age of 45 years), and John D. Ensworth (died December 20, 1856 and buried in the Old Montezuma Cemetery at the age of 47 years) kept large 4 and 6 horse teams for transporting goods by wagon. John Ensworth, Christmas Dazney's son-in-law, lived on the Dazney farm.

Mill Rebuilt

It is important to note here that when General Patterson took possession of the Mill, he tore it down and built a three-story frame structure on mudsills and a new dam was made of hewed logs. Armiesburg Mill was very strategically located. All the flatboats on Big Raccoon, Little Raccoon, and Leatherwood Creeks passed through here to reach the Wabash River, a mile and a half west of town.

Isaac J. Silliman migrated to Sullivan County, Indiana, from New England when still a boy and taught school. In 1823 he built the first mill at Bridgeton. On December 18, 1844 Silliman sold out his interest in the Mill to Patterson for \$8,000 and returned to Rockville. In 1849 he deeded a plot of ground for a church and cemetery to the trustees of the United Brethren in Wabash Township. This spot is known as "Arabia" today as it was in the early 1820s. Pioneers once hunted it for bear, deer, turkey, etc. Isaac J. Silliman died in 1868 and is buried in Rockville cemetery. When he died the schools were dismissed as a mark of respect.

In failing health Arthur Patterson moved to Terre Haute with his wife around 1846. His hired help maintained the business at Armiesburg. He was born in 1772, County Tyrone, Ireland. In 1789 he, his father, and family crossed the ocean to New York and then went to Virginia. He was married in 1809 to Margaret Chambers. They immigrated to Rockville in 1824. General Patterson was said to possess a vigorous intellect, great decision and an independence of character. He was a man of reading and was pronounced by Hon. Edward Everett, the noted orator, to be the best historian for a private gentleman he had ever known. Patterson's daughter Sarah was married to Judge Demas Deming, who was one of the earliest settlers of Terre Haute. In 1848 Gen. Patterson went to New York in hope of restoring his health. A letter dated August 3, 1848 to his son Chambers describes his health as, "I cannot say that the trip has done me any good. The pains continue in my back and breast—wither it is rheumatism or something worse, I know not." He

talked of going to Saratoga Springs to see a Chancy Warren there that coming Saturday. He did and that is where he died. He was brought back to Terre Haute and buried in Woodlawn cemetery (death date recorded is August 1, 1848). His recorded death day is in error, for his last letter was August 3. The year of his death is when the Wabash & Erie Canal opened up through this area.

Canal Opens Through Area

James Mushett was the first one to run a packet on the canal into Montezuma. He would later (1873) settle in Armiesburg as a grocer after the canal closed there in that year.

When the canal opened up, Armiesburg businesses had a new method of travel for their goods besides the unpredictable Wabash River. At this time Henry C. McCune was working there in the store of Rufus K. Harris and Co. as a clerk on Section 12 Lot #1. He did this for eight years. His father was Alexander McCune, who with Samuel Lowrey built the flourmill at Mecca in 1855.

There were several men who got their business careers started by working at Armiesburg. One man of note was Erastus M. Benson. Benson is the one who ran the Benson's Basin warehouse in Montezuma, Indiana, from the Wabash & Erie Canal's opening there in 1848 to its close. He was in business at Armiesburg with Patterson and Silliman from 1843 to 1846.

James Patterson was the eldest son of Arthur and Jane Patterson. He was born November 10, 1804, in Clayborn County, Mississippi. At the age of 20 he set out on his own and engaged in various business ventures all over the United States. He worked at one time at an iron furnace in Lawrence County, Ohio. He also was a captain of a steamboat on the Ohio River. On October 29, 1850, he married Sherrill Collins of Jefferson County, New York, and brought her home to Armiesburg, where he had lived since 1845. He worked in the Mill for his father as

a miller and was also in the dry goods store business. His brother Chambers Y. Patterson was a judge of a Circuit Court composed of Parke, Vermillion and Sullivan counties.

Chambers Y. Patterson was born in 1824 in Vincennes, Indiana, studied law at Harvard, and went into the office as a lawyer with the Hon. John P. Usher, his brother-in-law. He married Anna E. Law, a daughter of the Hon. John Law. Chambers was actually a half brother to James. James was the only child of Arthur and Jane. When Jane died Arthur married Harriet (last name unknown). Born to them were Chambers and three daughters. One of these daughters, Mary, married David Linton for which Linton, Indiana, was named (source Dorothy Clark).

(Continued on page 12)



The Wabash and Erie Canal embankment can be seen in the right center of this picture as the canal approaches the Raccoon Aqueduct site. The creek follows the tree line. Photo by Charles Davis

Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Wabash And Erie Canal to the Governor, 1853.

Montezuma - Armiesburg - Attica

Road bridge No. 78, one mile above Montezuma

Road bridge No. 79, upper part of Montezuma

Road bridge No. 80. lower part of Montezuma

Culvert No. 142, at Montezuma, length 122 feet , 4 by 1 1/2 feet clear. Top of culvert 10 feet B.

Culvert No. 143, near Armiesburg, same dimensions as No. 142.

Road Bridge No. 81 at Armiesburg.

Raccoon creek aqueduct, No. 12 consists of two spans of 90 feet clear, the top of the pier and abutment being 26 1/2 feet above low water. The pier and abutments are of cut stone masonry, on foundations of timber, protected with stone and brush. The superstructure is similar to that of the Sugarcreek Aqueduct,* except that on top of the main chords there is a second chord, consisting of three thicknesses of 2 inch plank, 12 inches wide. The truss frame is 17 1/2 feet high from the bottom of the chords to the top of the plate. All the aqueducts to this plan are roofed, weather-boarded and painted, to protect the main timbers from the weather.

Note that the Raccoon Creek aqueduct was longer than the Sugarcreek aqueduct described below and stood on taller piers above creek. It was a covered bridge style aqueduct. Sugarcreek aqueduct, No. 11, consists of three spans of 80 feet clear; the chords of the truss frame being 22 1/2 feet above low water. The piers and abutments of this structure are built of cut stone masonry, the foundations of timber being placed about three feet below low water of the creek, and well protected with brush and stone, carefully laid in. The plan of the superstructure is similar to the Shawnee aqueduct, the truss frame being 14 1/2 high from the bottom of the lower chord to the underside of the upper chord or plate. The lower chord is 18 inches deep.

Road bridge No. 82, at Putey's (Puntenney's).

Lock No. 39, of 6 feet lift, 2 1/2 miles below Raccoon creek, is build upon the same plan of that last described.

The waters of Young's branch are received into the canal by a small feeder six or eight chains in length. The dam across the stream is 60 feet long and two feet high, built of timber. Culvert No. 128, over the stone quarry branch, 10 feet by 2 1/2 feet will require an expense of \$10 to submerge it.

Culvert No. 129, in Attica, of wood, 2 spans, 10 feet by 2 feet—submerged.

When Arthur Patterson died, his wife, Harriet bought back some of the property. The land was divided among Arthur's children. **Deed Book 12** page 73 shows that she paid Deming \$3,000 on December 4, 1849, for land in Sections 7 and 12. Her daughter Sarah was Deming's wife. **Deed Book Vol. 12** Page 127, March 1, 1850, shows that James Patterson paid his mother \$2,000 for the undivided one fourth of the land. **Deed Book Vol. 12** pages 316-317 August 8, 1850, shows that Chambers bought land in sections 7 and 12 from this brother-in-law, John Usher, for \$2,000 and his sister Mary Linton for \$500. And again on November 8, 1864, Margaret sold the rest of Sections 7 and 12 she held to Chambers for \$1.00, a patent deed, **Deed Book Vol. 39** Page 200. Now Chambers was in control of three fourths of all the property and the Armiesburg Mill. Even through Chambers owned the principle interest in Armiesburg, he lived in Terre Haute. James farmed the land and conducted the business in the store.

Mildred Burns of Montezuma is in possession of the various account book ledgers and the stores that did business in Armiesburg. The **Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Wabash & Erie Canal to the Governor**, December 28, 1853, gives the construction specs on the Big Raccoon Creek Aqueduct No. 12 there at Armiesburg. Charles Butler was the president of the board. The aqueduct was built in 1848. Road Bridge #81 crossed the canal where the Armiesburg school was located.

Joseph A. Wright was elected Governor of Indiana. His wife Louisa is buried in the Old Montezuma cemetery.

First Bridge

At this time ferries and fords were used to cross the rivers and streams in Parke County. The first covered bridge to be built in the county was at Armiesburg. There was a lot a squabbling going on from the citizens of the county about putting up the funds for bridges and where the first ones were to be located. Rufus K. Harris (died 1856 and buried in

Rockville Cemetery), mentioned earlier, ran for county commissioner on the promise to start the building of bridges.

John G. Puntenny lived one and a half miles south of Armiesburg on a 300-acre farm. His father settled in Wabash Township in 1818. Maurice Murphy, editor of the **Rockville Tribune**, interviewed Mr. Puntenny around 1898. The article is undated but Murphy gives a clue when he states it has been "half a century" since the canal days. Puntenny remembered distinctly as a lad the building and the attending circumstances as well, of the Armiesburg Bridge in 1853-54. In the town of Rockville Mr. Puntenny and his father Aquilla met Justice J. W. Beadle, one of the Whig leaders of the county. The elder Puntenny accosted him with, "Who are you going to run for Commissioner, 'Squire'?" An apparently impertinent question, for Puntenny was a Democrat. "We haven't on anybody yet," the squire replied. Then Puntenny proposed Rufus Harris, said the people of his neighborhood were for him and agreed to work for Harris' election himself if Harris was nominated. "Well then," returned Beadle, "It will be Harris." It was a great mystery to the young Puntenny why his father, a radical Democrat, should bend his whole energy toward the election of Rufus Harris fully as a Radical Whig. However, Mr. Harris was elected and, soon after assuming his office, work commenced on the Armiesburg Bridge.

You can see it was politics in those days too. Part of the wood for the Armiesburg Bridge was sawed at the Patterson mill. Some was sawed by Julius Egbert and Charlton Britton with a whipsaw. A total of \$6,500 was paid out of the county treasury for its construction. The commissioners authorized the bridge to be built in June 1854. It was the Howe truss type and not the Burr type used in the rest of Parke County's covered bridges. It did have an arch that was reused for a Burr Arch at the Cox Ford Bridge at a later date. Henry Wolf was its builder. This bridge stood until 1913.

Accidents

Two accidents happened in the early days of Armiesburg history. A man named William Kilgore was on a raft of lumber in Big Raccoon Creek that was accidentally carried over the Milldam. He was washed off and drowned. Mr. Kilgore was the Parke County Sheriff in 1833-37.

The second accident occurred when two young men were found dead near the Indian encampment not far from Armiesburg. It was thought they had met their deaths at the hands of the Indians, but there was no proof of that. They were buried in the bed of the wagon road, north of Armiesburg.

The Fair

An interesting article found in the **True Republican** newspaper of October 1, 1857, gives this portrait of "The Fair."

"We attended the Fair, held at Montezuma, on Thursday and Friday last, and must say that it was so much better than formerly, that we were agreeably surprised. The weather was delightful, and thou-

sands assembled on the grounds, seemingly enjoyed themselves, highly. Men, women, children, and all, dressed in their 'bib and tucker,' look-

"Men, women, children, and all, dressed in their 'bib and tucker,' looking at the sights."

ing at the sights. Among the paintings and drawings was a pencil sketch of Patterson's Mill and the Ford across Big Raccoon (creek), at Armiesburg, which was the truest and most perfect sketch we have ever seen. It was taken by Mrs. F. F. Keith, of Armiesburg. This sketch gives evidence of a fine talent, and it is hoped she will honor the Fair with many of her pieces."

The artist's full name was Elizabeth A. Keith. Her husband was Fleury F. Keith.

In addition to the farm land and business that Chambers and James owned, Chambers owned the Store House Tavern in Section 12 in Armiesburg. This store was located on the southwest corner of the Lafayette and Canal road. Arthur Patterson and Silliman operated that place in the early 1830s.

In a recent interview, Benny Hesler, a local farmer who grew up in the area, said the old store was torn down years ago and moved to Montezuma. It stood on the spot where the town water tower was later erected.

Armiesburg School

Research of Mr. Hesler's deed abstract reveals the Armiesburg School was not deeded to the township trustees. This is not unusual in this area at the time. Many transactions were not recorded and abstracted. It is known that first there was a school on the Dazney farm in the mid 1820s according to Joseph Burns. Alexander McCune deeded the first Wabash Township school, located in Section 20, to the trustees in 1834. So it is speculated that the Armiesburg School was started in Section 12 after 1834. The deed shows the school trustees sold this school to Samuel Skeeters on March 12, 1910. The school lot contained three acres more or less.

There is a reference to the school lot in **Deed Book 51 Page 479** when

Samuel McCune sold 70 acres to Samuel Skeeter's son on November 24, 1890. John Wolfe entered "land, 80 acres, pt. SE ¼ of the NE ¼ November 10, 1824, Section 12." Abstracts are missing from this date to 1855. Alvin Patterson lived in this home until February of this year when it burned. Mr. Patterson didn't survive. The house foundation was made of hand-hewn logs.

James Elder sold this land to Rufus K. Harris of November 8, 1855 according to **Deed Book Vol. 15 Page 102**. The deed says "all land of the NE ¼, exception of 3 acres and .50 rods sold to Kiger and Patterson. It is believed that this was the school lot. This information was from Alvin Patterson's deed abstract.

After the school closed, it was torn down. The frame was used to build a home on the Lafayette road in Armiesburg. It sets on the east side of the road a few yards north before you get to the Canal Road. The author's mother remembers Mary Broderick living there in the 1930s. Janet and Joe Myers live in it today.

Local Doctor

During the canal days in Armiesburg there was a doctor named Dr. Baldrige. There was only one mention made of him.

Armiesburg Cemetery

The Armiesburg Cemetery is another interesting place. It is situated in Section 1 on the Dazney (Myers) farm and in Sec. 12. Its earliest interment was John O'Conner on October 1818. This is the year the United States Government deeded Section 1 to Christmas Dagenett (Dazney). Most people buried there were from Irish descent. Ann Brady, who ran the Brady Hotel on the Wabash & Erie Canal in Montezuma, is buried there. The last burial was Vina Murphy in 1947.

Samuel Skeeters deeded this cemetery to Rt. Rev. Francis S. Chatard,

Bishop of Marion County, Indiana, on December 16, 1899, containing ½ acres according to **Deed Book Vol. 63 Page 350**. When the Church of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary was established in Montezuma after the Civil War, they used the Armiesburg Cemetery for their burials. Now it is called the Catholic Cemetery.

Mill Property Changes Hands

As the Wabash & Erie Canal was winding down through Armiesburg, the town was dwindling. James and Chambers Y. Patterson were in control of most of the land and the town lots. There was a big dispute between the two men as to who owned what and how much, so they went to court. **Court of Common Pleas Vol. 28 Pages 257-261** gives the full details. A map was even drawn up to show the holdings of each man. Chambers got control of three-fourths of the property with the Mill and tavern store. James got one fourth. Original plats are self explanatory as shown on the 1871 map of the Pattersons' holdings.

The dispute between the Patterson boys took place after their mother died. She died in Terre Haute, of paralysis, at the residence of her son-in-law, Hon. John P. Usher, on January 31, 1868. Mrs. Margaret Patterson was 86 years old.

An extensive collection on the historic family of Arthur Patterson can be read in the Patterson file in the Vigo County Library in Terre Haute. It shows that Mrs. Harriet Chambers Patterson was a contemporary and friend of Gen. Lewis Cass, Gen. George Rogers Clark and other historic people.

Armiesburg's Post Master, Fleury Keith, started selling off his interest to his partner James W. Russell on July 31, 1869 according to **Deed Book Vol. 29 Page 310**. Russell paid Keith \$3,000 for his one half ownership of 20 acres of Section 12 located in the heart of town. Then on September 9, 1869 Keith sold his ½ interest in lots 1 and 2 to Russell. By 1871 James Patterson owned both lots. In the late 1860s to

(Continued on page 20)

Vol 8 pg 261
Aug 11, 1871

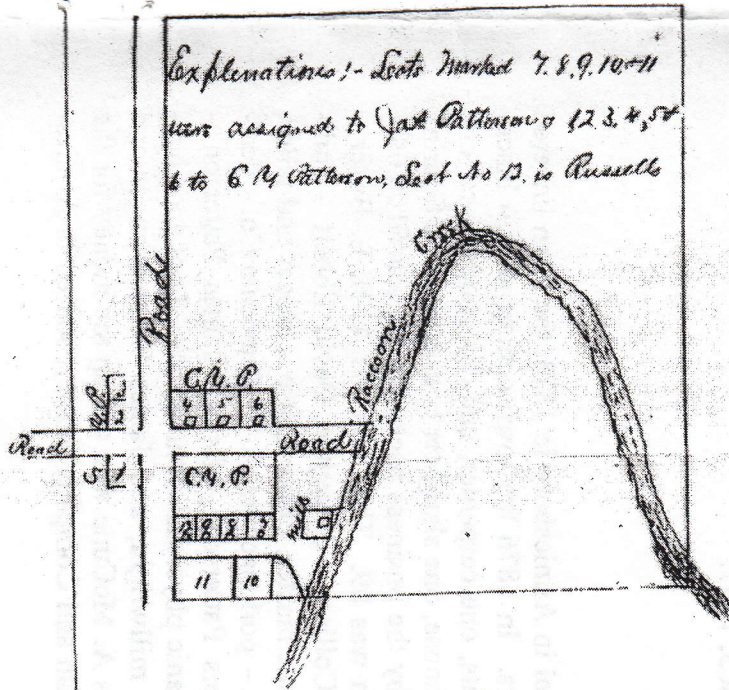
Plat

Rockville Court House
Recorders Office
Deed Rec. Vol. 8,
Pg 261
Armsburg, Ind.



N 1/4 Sec. 12 T. 15. R. 8.

N 1/4 Sec. 7 T. 15 R. 8



Explanation:- Lots marked 7, 8, 9, 10, 11
were assigned to Jas Patterson & 12, 3, 4, 5
& 6 to G M Patterson, Sect No 12, is Russell

Received and Recorded this 11th day of August
1871 at 12 O'clock M
Elwood Hunt Recor
By W. J. White Deputy

The court drew up this map to show each of the Patterson brothers' holdings.

1873 James Russell ran the Mill and the mill store for Chambers Patterson and also packed pork.

James Russell was born in Nelson County, Kentucky, on September 8, 1824. He married Lucinda McCord on February 19, 1848. He lived in Parke County from that date until his death in Rockville on July 30, 1897. His children were A. S. Russell of Rockville, Mrs. R. C. Hanna of Terre Haute, James W. Russell of Sullivan, Mrs. Howard Bryant of Rockville, Frank Russell of Louisiana, Mrs. Wm. E. Henkle of Talledega, Alabama, and Annie Laurie, who died in 1877 according to the Rockville Tribune of August 5, 1897.

Canal Closes

With the closing of the canal in Armiesburg in 1873, the town lingered on for another twenty years. In 1876 the town contained two blacksmith shops, two millwrights, one carpenter, one dry goods store, one grocery, one pork packing house, one slaughter house, and one flouring mill. The capital invested by the business packing pork was \$100,000. The population of the town was 69. This included A. H. L. Baker – practical miller, Elbridge Collins – carpenter, David Ebbert – millwright, Fluery F. Keith – post master, Philip Lease – grocer and tailor, Alexander McCune and Co. – pork packers, A. McCune and Co. – dealers in dry goods, Chambers Patterson – farmer, James Patterson – farmer, Dr. A. Pauley – botanic physician, John Swick – boot and shoemakers, Daniel H. Upp – millwright, and James Waunamauger and Clark – blacksmiths. It was A. McCune who put up the money for the venture of Patterson, Silliman and Company when it started in Armiesburg in the 1830s.

After 1879 Fluery F. Keith left Armiesburg. We do not know where he went. The **Parke County and Federal Census of 1880** does not list him or his wife.

Judge Chambers Y. Patterson died at the age of 57 on January 20, 1881.



These stones are all that remain of the Armiesburg Mill dam in Wabash township, Parke county, Indiana. Photo by Charles Davis

His remains were laid to rest beside his mother and father in Woodlawn cemetery in Terre Haute in Division 47, Section 23 Lot 1. A little over a year later Chambers' wife, Ann, sold the Mill and land to John S. Beach, March 6, 1882.

Aquilla Laverty bought the Mill, storehouse, and lands from John Beach for \$12,000 on November 9, 1882, according to **Deed Book Vol. 42** page 63. Mr. Laverty remodeled the mill, made a stone basement, and installed a new turbine wheel and a steam engine to be used when the water was low. The old burrs were discarded and rollers installed. A new stone dam was constructed on piling to replace the brush dam. Some of this piling and stone can still be seen today.

Mr. Laverty and his miller, James Ghormley, operated the Mill up to

1896. By this time Mr. Laverty owned 3,636 acres in Wabash and Florida townships. He was born in Wabash Township on October 3, 1822. He married Elizabeth Justice on September 12, 1850. They lived on a farm in Section 25. His five children were George W., Irene Casto, Minnie TenBrook, Kit Carson Laverty, and Aquilla Jr.

In failing health, James Patterson made a will on August 21, 1888 according to **Will Record Book 4**. It read, "I bequeath to my wife, Sherrill, all real estate, personal property and at her death, equally divide to all my children. I appoint my wife as executrix." It was probated on February 4, 1892. The 1870 county census gives James' cash value of his farm at \$18,000. His wife sold the store and eleven acres to her daughter, Narcissa Dooley on July 16, 1895, according to **Deed Book Vol. 57 Page 369**.

The **Rockville Republican** of June 6, 1895, says, "James Patterson Jr. returned from a two year stay among the fishing and hunting grounds of Kentucky and southern Illinois. He expects to go back to the south in the fall." James Jr. married Laura Fellows on August 22, 1895. She preceded him in death on November 23, 1896.

James Sr.'s wife Sherrill died in the fall of 1895. Their daughter, Mary Stout inherited all the property that was left. She sold the Patterson home place on October 14, 1914, to George Underwood according to **Deed Book Vol. 84 Page 317**. This house stands today.

Mill Moved

In 1896 Aquilla Laverty decided to move the Armiesburg Mill to his farm and convert it into a steam mill and grain elevator. He built the elevator as we can see from an article on November 25, 1896, that says, "Quill Laverty fell from the top of his grain elevator through the shaft. Dr. Reeder of Montezuma was summoned." Quill was a member of Company A, 31st Indiana, according to the **Rockville Republican**. "Quill Laverty died as a result of an accident. After being carried to the

house he became partially conscious but was not able to talk, relapsing later into unconsciousness out of which he never came, December 2, 1896." Quill died November 30, 1896, according to the **Rockville Republican**.

Aquilla's son Kit Carson Laverty inherited the Mill property consisting of 53 acres. **Deed Book Vol. 74 Page 184** shows that he sold this land to Daniel Lawson on March 2, 1905.

The **Rockville Republican** of October 21, 1897, says, "The Armiesburg public school is preparing a musical and literary entertainment, to be given in the school room at that place Wednesday evening, November 3. The effort is made to add to the library fund. Admission 10 cents." Another article says, "George Underwood has just completed a beautiful and substantial house. His family are pleased at being able to 'move in' this week." Underwood's home is where CSI member Louis Hayworth lives today. Some time later than this date, Mr. Underwood used the Armiesburg Mill's stone foundation for the foundation of his barn and lumber from the pork packing plant for its structure. This barn can be viewed today standing east of the Wabash & Erie Canal Aqueduct site at Raccoon Creek.

Old Mill Pond

The author's mother, Frances Davis, recalls the Armiesburg Mill dam pond in the 1930s. She and his father Charlie used to go there to fish and swim. It was favorite place for the local area people for picnicking, fishing and swimming on hot summer days.

James Patterson Jr. died on August 13, 1913, in New Harmony, Indiana. There was no mention of children. His sister Mary died May 5, 1933, according to the **Montezuma Enterprise** of May 25, 1933. Her obituary reads, "Mrs. Mary Stout Buried Here. Funeral services for Mrs. Mary Stout were conducted in the Oakland Cemetery of this place Friday afternoon following her death at her home in Terre Haute last Wednesday. Mrs. Stout was born in Armiesburg in October 1851, a

daughter of James and Sherrill Collins Patterson. The deceased married Dan Jones for her first husband and following his death married Wm. W. Stout. She is survived by a sister Mrs. Narcissus (sic) Dooley who lives in Terre Haute."

The last child of James and Sherrill Patterson died. Their daughter's obituary from the **Montezuma Enterprise** of Thursday, June 30, 1955 reads, "Burial was held in Oakland Cemetery Saturday, June 25, for Mrs. Narcissa Dooley, age 90 following funeral services at the Mars funeral home in Marshall, Ill. Mrs. Dooley died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Tucker of Marshall. Besides the daughter she is survived by two nieces and one nephew. A former Montezuma resident, Mrs. Dooley was the first wife of the late Dr. Rufus Dooley."

The Church

There is no mention of a church in our published history book of Armiesburg, but it existed. The **Rockville Tribune** of 1895 stated that church services were being conducted in Armiesburg. George W. Uselman was the Sunday school teacher. It is a possibility that the school and church were held in the same building, a common practice in those days.

The Hotel

The **Rockville Republican** of March 1894 shows that Armiesburg had a hotel in its heyday. The article was entitled "Fire at Armiesburg."

"Silas Brown, who lives near Armiesburg, gave The Republican a re-

port of the fire at that ancient village yesterday morning about 4 o'clock, which destroyed the building occupied by the post office and a store and the old hotel building across the street. (These buildings sat on the northwest corner of County Road 550 W.) Miss Mary Broderick is postmistress there and had her savings invested in the store which is a total loss amounting to \$200. or \$300. How the fire originated is not known and it was discovered too late to save anything. The fire communicated to the hotel building in which was stored 1,500 bushels of corn and this was burned. The buildings and the corn burned belonged to Aquilla Laverty."

The Club House

At the turn of the century the village had a community building for social affairs. It was called "Armiesburg Club House." This house was on stilts with large trees surrounding it. This was used for church and Sunday school picnics. To get to this spot, turn west onto Rd. 70 about a mile and a quarter, 70S turns south. It is at this turn you go on west in a southerly direction to the Wabash River. (There is no road to it today.) It is in Sec. 11, owned by Thomas Barr. It too, with its memories of good times, faded into history.

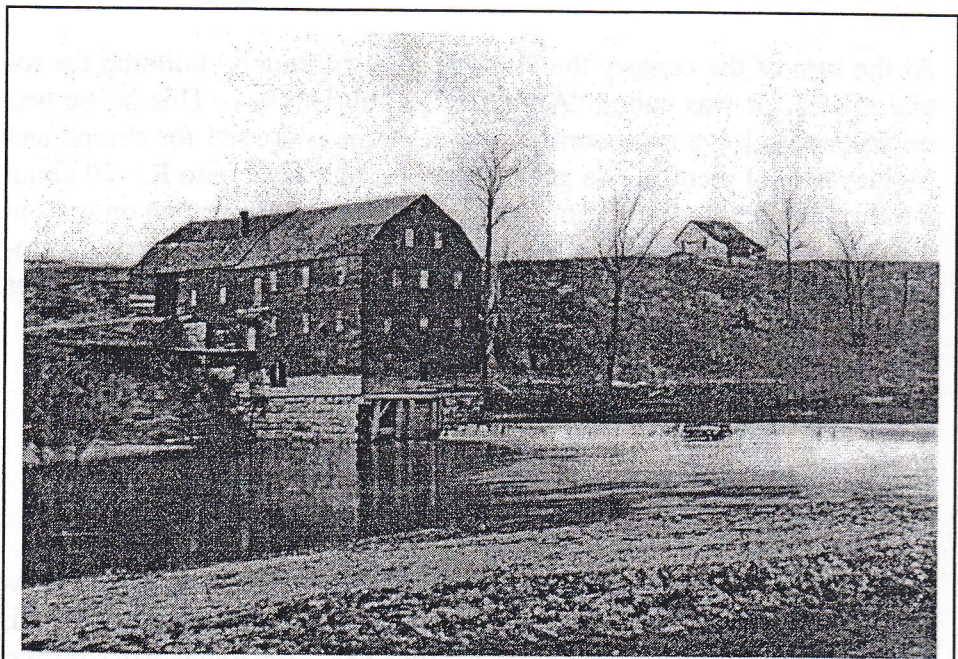
Canal Workers

Parents of Early Teacher

Mary Broderick was born March 14, 1865, in Armiesburg. Mary's father Michael Broderick was born September 1826 in Galway, Ireland, and came to the United States as a stowaway. He found work on the Wabash & Erie Canal. Mary's mother Mary McCarty was born May 18, 1831, in the county of Roscommon, Ireland. When she arrived in America, her shipboard friends found her work as a cook for workmen on the canal. Later she married one of the canal builders, Dan Galogher. They had a son Dan. After Mary's husband died, she lived with

her son at Montezuma where she operated a restaurant until she married Mary's father, Michael Broderick. They bought land and built a house at Armiesburg. Mrs. Broderick died March 26, 1895, and Michael died in the month of July in 1910.

Mary Broderick was a teacher and taught 41 years in the Wabash and Reserve Township schools. She was active in the Parke County Historical Society. She built a home with a porch constructed from different colored and sized stones. Today Joe and Janet Myers live there. It was the old Armiesburg schoolhouse. Mary died May 9, 1941, according to **Parke Place**, September 1983, Vol. C. No.9, Page 15, and the



The Old Mill on Big Racoon Creek near Armiesburg in Parke County. The tradition is that William Henry Harrison encamped here with his troops on his way to the Battle of Tippecanoe (see page 2.) Photo by A. H. Nordyke as published in **Centennial History and Handbook of Indiana 1816—1916**, Max R. Hyman 1915, 45.

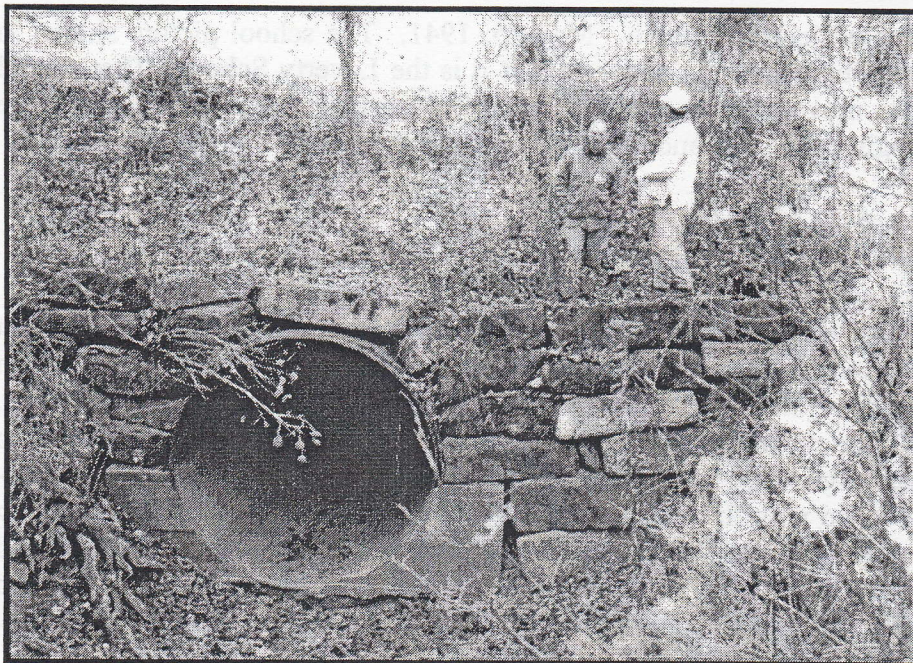
Rockville Republican, May 15, 1941. The school picture shown in the article strongly suggests that it is the Laverty School. That school was moved beside the Mecca covered bridge a few years ago. The original land site and building structure are identical to the picture.

Shipped by Canal

Andrew Scott Russell, the son of James Wakefield Russell and Lucinda McCord Russell, was born in Washington Township, Parke County on February 28, 1853. He died at his temporary home in St. Petersburg, Florida on March 2, 1926. Mr. Russell's business activity began at an early age when as a boy he worked for his father and uncle and later associated with them in a very extensive mercantile, milling and packing business located at Armiesburg. During these years the firm shipped many cargoes of wheat via the Wabash & Erie Canal to Toledo and many large shipments of meat by flat boat to New Orleans. They continued in business until 1875 when the canal ceased operation. A. S. Russell helped load the last wheat shipped to Toledo via the canal and he accompanied the last shipment of meat from this county by boat to New Orleans. As a young man, he assisted in making a survey in Utah for one of the very early irrigation projects of the federal government. For a while he was engaged in an extensive livery business at Danville, Illinois, with associate brother-in-law Clay Hanna. In 1894 he was employed by Nordyke and Marmon of Indianapolis to superintend the construction and establishment of four mills at Montezuma and Newport and elevators at Mecca and West Union in Indiana. (The picture of the Armiesburg Mill in this article was "courtesy of A. H. Nordyke.") Russell was a member of the Presbyterian Church at Montezuma. He is buried in Rockville cemetery.

Canal Structures Sold

The road west from the Armiesburg School, over the canal to the mouth of Big Raccoon Creek and a little north, was the location of Arthur Pat-



Top: Stones from the Raccoon Creek Aqueduct now surround a metal culvert on the south side of the creek. Photo by Bob Schmidt

Bottom: The same culvert from a bit further away. Photo by Charles Davis

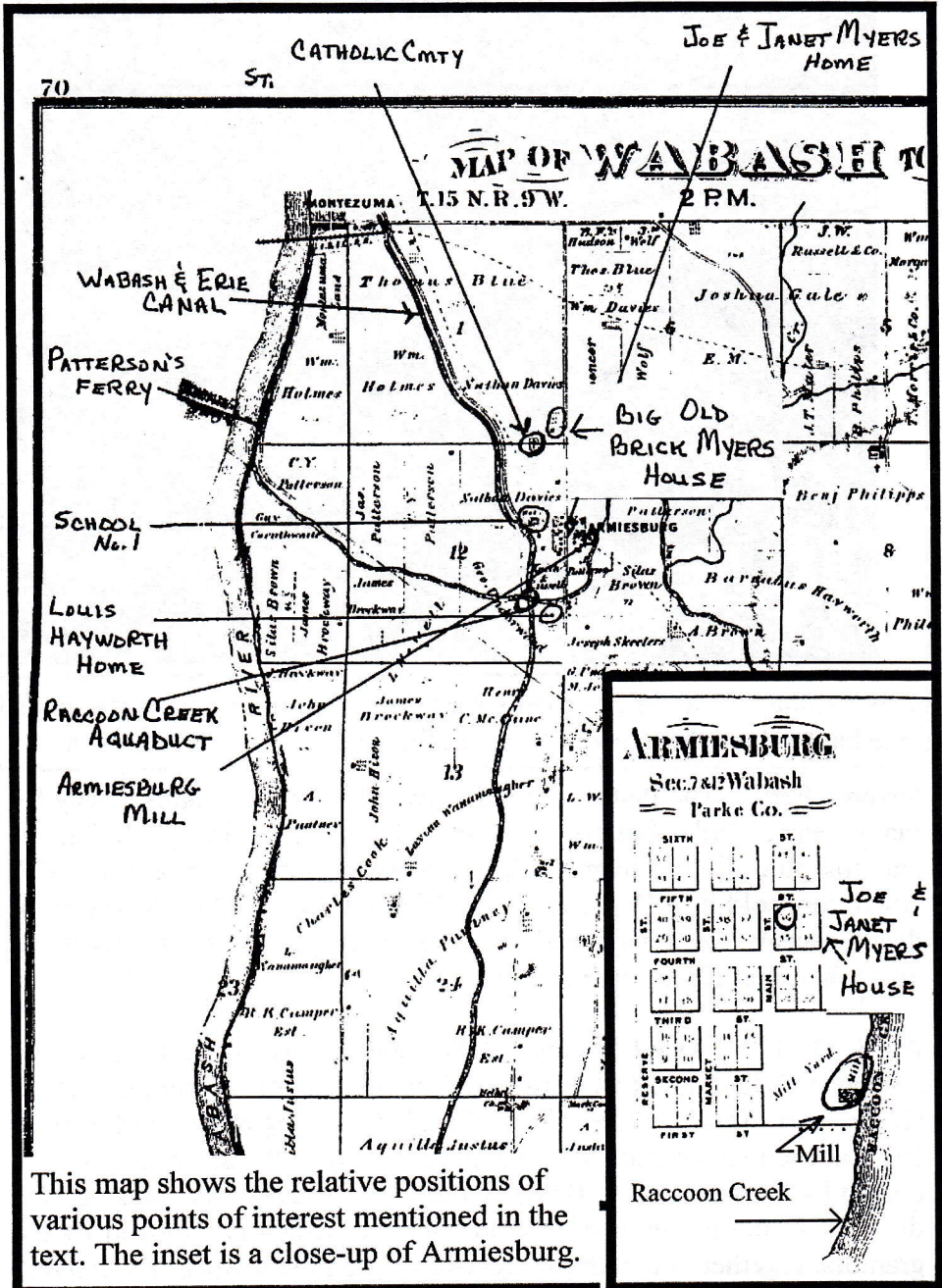


Other stones from the Raccoon Creek Aqueduct are seen on the south side bank where the aqueduct crossed the creek. Photo by Bob Schmidt

terson's Ferry. The Patterson family owned the road's right-of-way for many years. Parke County covered bridge builders, Joseph J. Daniels and Josephus Collett owned this right-of-way until February 4, 1878, when they sold it to Dr. John A. Baldrige, Deed 37/196. Research of deeds reveals what happened to it and who got the canal structures when the canal closed here in 1873.

April 13, 1876, Deed Record 37/295 states "Joseph H. Daniels and Josephus Collett sold to George M. Underwood for the sum of \$18.00 all that part of the Wabash & Erie Canal, beginning at the north side of Big Raccoon Creek and extending northwardly to the south line of land owned by Doctor John A. Baldrige being 36 rods more or less. Except the rock in the masonry of the old aqueduct which is removed by the grantors, together and with the right-of-way on the towpath for conven-

(Continued on page 32)



This map shows the relative positions of various points of interest mentioned in the text. The inset is a close-up of Armiesburg.



The teacher, students, and school officials of the Armiesburg School in about 1891. Mary Broderick, a teacher at this school for 41 years, is pictured here as the center person in the group of three to the extreme left.

ience in removing said rock hereafter.” This explains why there isn’t any stone left on the north side of Big Raccoon Creek from Aqueduct # 12 of the Wabash & Erie Canal.

Again in Deed 35/335-336, it says: “Whereas the Circuit Court of the United States for the District of Indiana in a certain cause there pending wherein Johnathan K. Gapen was complainant and the board of trustees of the Wabash & Erie Canal was defendant did on the twenty-fourth day of December 1875 order, adjudge and decree that the Wabash & Erie Canal with its appurtenances and certain lands and lots and among others that certain tract and parcel of land herein after described and conveyed be sold a public auction at the Court House door in the city of Terre Haute, County of Vigo to the highest bidder by Samuel Gookins Special Master in Chancery and Thomas Dowling Resident Trustee after having given notice of such sale,....at which sale Josephus Collett and J. J. Daniels being the highest bidders became the purchasers of the property for the sum of \$1,900. which sale was on the 23 day of March 1876. Now therefore we Sam B. Gookins and Thomas Dowling in consideration of the premises and of the sum aforesaid paid and in compliance do assign, transfer, convey unto said Collett and Daniels that certain lot price or parcel of land situated in the County of Parke and State of Indiana described as follows to wit. All that part of the Wabash & Erie Canal lying within the said County of Parke including its banks, margins, tow paths, side cuts, feeder basins, right-of-way, locks, dams, water ponds and structures. April 13, 1876.”

What did J. J. Daniels do with the stone masonry and the aqueduct structure? Again it is speculation, but a look at J. J. Daniels’ work in

1876 suggests this: December 1875 the County commissioners instructed Daniels to draw up plans and specifications for a new bridge at West Union. This would be the third bridge on that site. He was instructed to widen and repair the abutments on the existing bridge for \$600.00. Daniels completed this bridge September of 1876. **J. J. Daniels and His Bridges**, pg. 10, 624 C., Rockville Library.

Elevator Built from Mill and Warehouse

Little is left to mark this once thriving town but a few houses and the historical marker. The town was rich in history. A recent conversation with Mike Myers was rewarding. The elevator that Aquilla Laverty built from the old Mill was located on Mr. Myers property. Mike was told that a part of the elevator was built from the old warehouse at Lyford. He could tell the difference in the elevator structure. The warehouse was Walter G. Crabbs building he built at Clinton Locks on the Wabash & Erie Canal. What a coincidence - that two separate buildings with Wabash & Erie Canal connections would be united.



B I B L I O G R A P H Y

All deeds, records, probates, and wills used in this article can be found in the Rockville Court House Recorder's Office or the Circuit Clerk's Office.

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Branson, Archaeological and Historical Survey of Parke County.

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15 May 1941.

Rockville Tribune

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ERASMUS GEST LETTERS

The last issue of **Indiana Canals** Vol. 11 No. 3 Page 3 stated that the old way of **spelling** a double s was by using an fs. It should have said that the old way of **writing** a double letter s was by using what appears to be an fs. Also on the bottom of the same page Chuck Whiting, CSI member from Lawrenceburg, IN, reports that the "and found" in question means, according to Webster's New World Dictionary, "[Colloq.] with room and board in addition to wages."

Dennis McDaniel, CSI member from Harrisburg, PA, wrote that he was glad to see that the Cincinnati Historical Library has letters like those by Erasmus Gest. He would like more information about Gest. The Ohio Historical Society has an inventory of the Erasmus Gest Papers with a biographical resume of Gest's life. We plan to publish an article about his life, especially about his relationship with the Whitewater Canal, in the Winter Issue of **Indiana Canals**.

We would appreciate hearing from anyone who has information about the other names that are mentioned in Gest's letters: Mr. Noel, Col. Torbert, Mr. Webb, Mr. Dare, Charles H. W., Mr. Holman, Mr. Coryell, or I. D. Moor. Please send information to Canal Society of Indiana, P O Box 40087, Ft. Wayne, IN 46804.