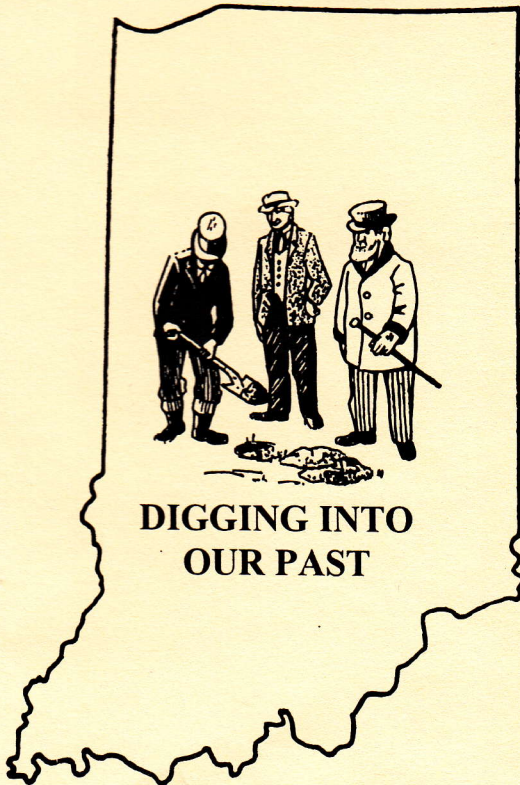


INDIANA CANALS



Journal of the Canal Society of Indiana
Vol. 12 No. 3 Summer 2001

INDIANA CANALS

QUARTERLY JOURNAL PUBLISHED

WINTER.....January 15
SPRING.....April 15
SUMMER.....July 15
FALL.....October 15

EDITORS: Casey Drudge, Carolyn Schmidt
Contributig Editors: Tom Castaldi,
Chuck Huppert, Stan Schmitt

Single Issue: \$2.00

Articles for publication should be typed and/or
on a 3 1/2" Disk in ASCII format. Provide
sources and references. Furnish maps
and drawings if possible. Mail to:

CANAL SOCIETY OF INDIANA
P.O. BOS 40087
FORT WAYNE, IN 46804

The CANAL SOCIETY OF INDIANA
was Founded: May 22, 1982
as a 501 (c) (3) Not-For-Profit corporation.

PRESIDENT
Robert F. Schmidt
(219) 432-0279

VICE PRESIDENT
Charles B. Huppert

TREASURER
James E. Ellis

SECRETARY
Cynthia Powers

Indiana Canals

The Journal of the Canal Society of Indiana

Volume 12, Number 3

Summer 2001

*Devil's
Den,*

*Wright's
Mill,*



*and their
Wabash & Erie Canal
Connections*

BY CHARLES DAVIS

A beautiful, romantic spot known as Devil's Den is located in Penn Township, Parke County, Indiana in the Northwest quarter of the Northwest quarter of Section 36 on the east side of County Road 50 W. No one today knows the name of the branch that flows into Devils Den or if it even had a

name. I call it Campbell's Branch after the first settlers there.

Before Parke County was organized all the country north of Vigo County was in one precinct. After 1821, it was called Wabash County for a while. Liberty and Penn Townships were invaded by pioneer settlers in 1821 such as Jacob Bowsher and Hugh Russell. They settled in section 25 where Shawnee Chief Cornstalk's village was situated. Cornstalk's Indian name was Nenepemeshequa. He is listed among the Shawnee who were to share a grant of land at Wapaghkonetta, made by the treaty of 1817. (**Laws and Treaties**, 2:153, Kappler.) Not far away at the mouth of Sugar Creek was Chief Stone Eater's village.

Inside this issue:

Devil's Den and Wright's Mill
and Their Wabash & Erie Canal Connections

1



And The Winner Is . . .

Canawler's Quiz Winner

30



Canawler's Quiz #2

Another challenge for idle time.

32





This is the site of Rockport Mills located at Devil's Den, Penn Township Section 36, Parke County Indiana.

Photo by Charles Davis, 1999.

Joseph Campbell (b. 5-11-1808; d. 1- 22-1841)

Captain John T. Campbell
(b. 5-25-1833; d. 4-30-1911)

In 1826 Joseph Campbell and his brothers, Harvey and Josiah, came from Ohio with Luther Palmer, who was from New York, to the Wabash River. They came on foot and struck the headwaters of Sugar Creek in Boone County. They followed the creek on ice to its mouth, thence down to Montezuma, IN. They described their first sight of Devils Den saying, "in all its purity, that great chasm was lined with

hemlock on the crest of the cliff." A complete story of the adventure of the Campbells and Palmer can be found in the **Rockville Republican** of September 1889. The title of the article is: "The Sugar Creek of 1826: An Exciting Hunt After Pine Trees During Which Indians and Wolves Are Encountered--A Strange Indian Grave --Attacked At Night." The article was written many years after that first encounter by Joseph's son, John T. Campbell. John carried the title of Captain for he served in the Civil War, Co. "H" 21st Indiana, of which he was elected Captain.

Devils Den got its name at this time because it was over run with rattlesnakes. It retains this title today. As late as 1845, it was still noted for the number of rattlesnakes found there. The pioneers living there had a contest for the belt of champion snake killer with each settler killing as many as ten rattlesnakes in a single raid on the "Devils Den."

Devils Den Saw Mill

In 1833 Joseph Campbell and John Tenbrook bought 80 acres containing Devils Den. They built a water powered saw mill at the head of Devils Den above the falls. Stone cuts in the sandstone walls and creek bed for the mill and dam can be seen today. Capt. John T. Campbell grew up around this mill. He was born in 1833 and died in 1911. His obituary in the **Rockville Tribune** on May 9, 1911 states, "when he was at the age of 4 he fell from the precipice into the gorge below, a distance of 60 feet and was picked up unhurt." Maybe this is what knocked some sense into John for he was a brilliant person!

Bowsher 's Mill

Another mill was built about a mile northeast on Sugar Creek from Devils Den. It was built by Jacob Bowsher's son Joseph in 1840. Jo-

seph Bowsher was the carpenter and the millwright. The mill dam was washed out in 1845. This is one of the mills that has escaped our Parke County historical writers. The mill dam when it was washed out left a pool of water in the shape of a kettle. It was ten feet deep and was a fishing spot for boys living nearby. While swimming there on May 10, 1845 James Rardin and his father were drowned. The incident was witnessed by Hugh F. Russell. The complete story is in the **Rockville Republican** of September 30, 1908 by Hugh Russell and titled "Reminiscences of Sugar Creek." It says that Hamilton Weaver saved Russell from drowning.

At the Sheriff's auction of Joseph Campbell's property on December 16, 1841, his brother Josiah Campbell bought the 80 acres with Devils Den's sawmill. Josiah was Administrator of Joseph's estate. The following year on August 6, 1842 Josiah sold the land to Andrew Tenbrook according to Deed Record 7/529. Joseph and Rachel are buried in the Warner Cemetery in Reserve Township, Section 16.

When Joseph's wife, Rachel Tenbrook Campbell (b. 6-10-1814) died on January 8, 1844, Josiah acted as Administrator of her estate. According to Deed Record 10/18, Josiah sold the saw mill to Andrew and John Tenbrook on August 17, 1846.

At this time the Wabash and Erie Canal Feeder on Sugar Creek was being constructed about 2 miles southwest of Devils Den. John T. Campbell, at the loss of his parents, went to live with his uncle Josiah, who was then living at the Feeder Dam while working on the Wabash and Erie Canal.

Riley Swaim

The dump carts used by the canal workers were made in Parke County by Riley Swaim, a native of Randolph County, NC, who came to Parke County in 1844 at the start of canal construction here. Riley was a

wagon maker by trade. He made the dump carts at Annapolis in Parke County, IN. The Swaims were of Dutch origin. He married Sarah McMasters, daughter of Andrew McMasters of Liberty Township on March 4, 1858. He and his family moved to Labette County, KS in the fall of 1880.

A remarkable accident happened to Swaim while living in Parke County. It happened two miles west of the town of Tangier. William Brown's son and Samuel Osborn's son, in company with some others, were going to the river bottoms to till their corn. The morning was calm and still. Riley Swaim was driving leisurely along in a wagon with the boys riding on horseback behind him. A large forked sour oak fell without a moments warning and crushed them and their horses to the earth. The forks or prongs of the tree passed on either side of Swaim, crushed his wagon, and killed one of his horses that was hooked to the wagon, but he remained alive. Swaim belonged to the regular Predestinarian Baptists and readily explained why he was not hurt. What is to be will be!

Prier Wright (b. 4-1-1809; d. 10-12-1860)

The next person to change the history of Rockport or Devils Den was Prier Wright. He was born in Pittsylvania County, VA. I haven't yet found out who Prier's parents were. Prier married Julia Ann Beard (b. 4-22-1818) on November 10, 1836 in LaSalle County, IL. Julia was a daughter of John Beard (b. 2-20-1779, Hagerstown, Washington County, MD; d. 12-20, 1847, Kanakee, Grundy County, IL). Beard is the one who built the Beard or Starr Mills at the West Union covered bridge. Prier Wright established the first store in Liberty Township in 1830 at Lusk Mill at "The Narrows of Sugar Creek," which was later called Lusk Springs.



This is the gravestone of Prier Wright in Wright Cemetery overlooking Rockport Mills.

Photo by Charles Davis, 1999.

Robert Wright (b. 6-6-1807; d. 5-31-1889)

Prier Wright was in partnership with his brother Robert. Robert Wright was born in 1807 at Pittsylvania County, VA. His first marriage was to Sally, who died September 18, 1874 at the age of 74. He then married Margaret Deen (b. 2-12-1805; d. 1-20-1888) from Mercer County, KY.

Salmon

Lusk

(b. 4-17-1788; d. 8-28-1869)

Lusk Mill was built for Salmon Lusk in 1826. Lusk was married to Mary "Polly" Beard (b. 10-19-1803; d. 9-11-1883) on November 20, 1819 in Vermillion County, IN. Mary was a daughter of John Beard mentioned above. Salmon was buried in Bethany Cemetery, Washington Township.

He came to Parke County in 1826 and helped to build the dam for Lusk Mill. When the dam washed out and all the stores with it, he moved to Section 30 in Penn Township east of Devils Den to farm. His son William P. Wright owned a stove and tin-ware store at Rockville in 1872. Upon his death in 1889, Robert was buried in the Linebarger Cemetery in Reserve Township.

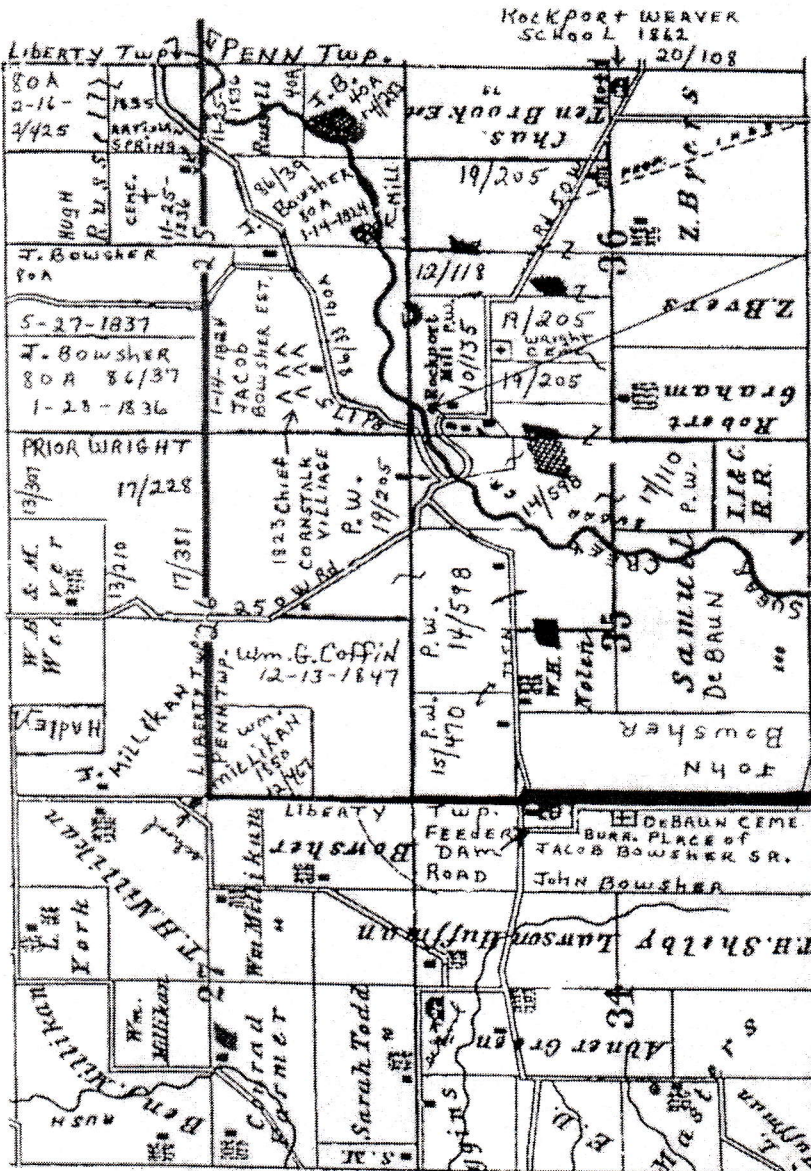
Prier Wright, Nathan Newlin and William Floyd were superintendents for the construction of the first bridge at The Narrows in 1844. William and James Harvey Moore helped to get out the stringers for this bridge.

Devils Den again changed hands when Prier Wright bought the land on which the saw mill is situated on October 10, 1846. Legal description is the West half of the NW quarter, section 36, Twp. 17N R 8W, 80 acres, Deed Record 10/135. When the flood of 1847 washed away Lusk Mill, the dam, Wright's store, Mitchell and Nesmith's store and all others, Prier located at Devils Den in 1848. Prier bought out the William and Sarah Russell Kennedy home place when they moved to Clay County.

Rockport or Wright's Mill

Prier Wright built a flour mill at the mouth of Devils Den on Sugar Creek. It was a large building consisting of two large wheat burrs, one corn burr and one for buck-wheat with all the other necessary machinery. Zachariah Byers was the flour mill's first miller. Thus the village of Rockport was born.

John T. Campbell states in his story previously mentioned, "Prier Wright in 1850 cut the hemlock trees all away when he built the Rockport Mills, and it does not seem inclined to reappear." After 150 years, there are hemlock trees growing again on the chasm crests. An immense amount of business was conducted at Rockport during the operation of the Wabash and Erie Canal. Flat boats were built there and then



WRIGHT'S or ROCKPORT MILL at Devil's Den
 Road to W & E Canal Feeder Dam across Sugar Creek -
 Feeder Dam was located in Section 4
 of Penn Township off this map

1874 Map of Portions of Liberty & Penn Townships
 Parke County, Indiana
 Revised February 2001 by Charles Davis

loaded with produce for markets in New Orleans. The canal boats reached this point by way of the Sugar Creek Feeder Canal. Although this trading center, along with a general store built by Wright, was first called Rockport, the name was changed to "Wright's Mill" because there already was another Rockport within the state. The post office was within "Wright's" general store. All mail was delivered there by horseback. According to a lecture given to the Parke County Historical Society by Paul Carmack in 1945, the post office was established there in 1854 and discontinued in 1868.

Daniel Wright (b. 9-6-1845; d. 5-16-1917)

Prier Wright's son Daniel was born in 1845 at the Narrows of Sugar Creek. He grew up and assisted his father in his business at Wright's Mill at Devils Den. He married Rebecca Jane Bowsher on October 22, 1865. Rebecca's father Joseph built the Bowsher Mill mentioned earlier. Daniel died in Kingman, IN and was buried at Paris, IL by the side of his first wife, Rebecca. While in Parke County and residing at West Union, their membership was in the Linebarger Chapel. Daniel's second wife was Margaret Mendenhall. They were married on September 23, 1915. She was the daughter of Doctor John and Mary Bowsher Heath. John Heath was a grandson of Jacob Bowsher. You can see how throughout this story all of the people were related in some manner to one another.

In the fall of 1930, Dr. Heath visited the old homestead his grandfather Jacob Bowsher (d. 2-21-1842 at the age of 72) where Jacob had planted an apple orchard in 1822. One of the trees was still bearing fruit. The tree was 13 feet 6 inches in circumference at ground level. At the height of seven feet it divided into an east and west fork. The forks had different kinds of apples on them. The tree was 108 eight years old and still bearing fruit! An article about the tree with full details was submitted by Mrs. Wright, Daniel's second wife, to the **Rockville Republican** on March 20, 1920. She got the article from the **Noblesville Daily**

Ledger. I wrote to the Noblesville Southeastern Public Library for the original article. When it arrived it was dated February 13, 1930. Behold it had a picture of the tree. It also listed the survivors of Daniel and Rebecca. Their son Salmon lived in Crowley, Arcadia Parish, Louisiana and was a rice farmer. His two brothers were John B., who lived at West Ridge in Douglas County, IL and Salmon L., who lived at Crowley Arcadia Parish, Louisiana.

Salmon Lusk Wright

(b. 4-26, 1852; d. 2-9-1929)

Salmon Lusk Wright was another son of Prier Wright. I found his obituary in a scrapbook in the Parke county, Rockville, IN. library. It was dated February 9, 1929. "Sol Wright" (Salmon Lusk Wright) a dispatch from Crowley, La., of Feb. 11, announces the death of Sol Wright, age 76, who made a world wide reputation in the development of improved varieties of rice. He was born in Parke County somewhere near West Union." (Rockport)

James Harvey Moore

(b. 11-1-1823; d. 1-30-1904)

James Harvey Moore worked for Prier Wright as a cooper at Wright's Mill in the cooper shop. He was born in Sciota County, OH. As mentioned earlier, he helped get out the stringers for the first bridge at The Narrows of Sugar Creek. For many years he worked for David Connelly in the cooper's trade at Annapolis, IN and made hundreds of barrels for the Rockport Mills (Wright's Mill) and for George Wilkins. During the Civil War he was an uncompromising Union man and at one time fed and housed the entire home guard of Parke County, including their horses, for several days. He died at his home near Annapolis in 1904. Funeral services were conducted by Zimri Maris, former Wabash

and Erie Canal superintendent. He was buried at Cashatt Cemetery.

Saw Mill across from Wright's Mill

Opposite Wright's flour mill on the north side of Sugar Creek was another saw mill of larger proportions. This is not to be mistaken with the small sawmill located at the head of Devil's Den. In connection with the latter saw mill was an iron furnace. It was operated by Hugh Cummingore. The blast flame was furnished by the water wheel of the small saw mill. The water wheel was a large overshot type and was up to date at that time. A small cannon was molded there. However, it blew to pieces when first used at Annapolis. No one knows what the occasion was, but luckily no one was hurt.

The other two industries at Devils Den were blacksmith shops. The village consisted of six or seven houses, five of which were located in a row running in a north and south direction on the west side of the public road opposite the store building. The other two were located on the east side of the den on the high banks of Sugar Creek. The road as now located passes between the second and third building from the south. The fourth building or the one second from the north was last used as a log room for a grange. There were two fords crossing Sugar Creek before the Jackson (Rockport) bridge was built. The upper ford was some distance below the mill dam. The lower was about 20 rods west of the Jackson bridge. Hon. Joseph G. Cannon, ex-Speaker of the House of Representatives, father Dr. Horace Cannon was drowned at the lower ford in August of 1851 during high waters. He was trying to reach a patient's home.

Dr. James P. Tucker

During the period of 1850 to 1858 James P. Tucker was the doctor of this area. He lived in Annapolis, IN. In the early days of Parke County very little was known of or interest taken in pedigreed horses. But in 1840 to 1850 some prominent individuals such as John Ensworth (son-in-law of Wea Indian Christmas Dagenet) brought into the county high bred horses. Dr. Tucker kept a good horse called "Grand Turk," at Wright's Mill.

Prier Wright and his wife Julia sold the mills and over 800 acres on September 26, 1860 to Joseph Milligan, Zachariah Byers, and Calvin H. Graham according to Deed Record 19/205. Just a few weeks after the sale Prier Wright died and was buried on the hill overlooking the village of Wright's Mills. Prier's wife Julia died on January 6, 1892 at Hume IL. She had been living there for several years at the home of her son Daniel. Julia was laid to rest beside Prier.

Prier Wright's sister, Mary (b. 12-23-1814; d. 2-26-1899) also rests beside him. She was born in Virginia and moved to Mercer County, KY with her parents. Mary came to Indiana in 1850 with her family and settled near Rockport. Mary was married to John S. Thompson in 1837. Mary and John had a daughter named Nancy Jane. John died in 1858. Mary's last years before her death were spent in her home in Hillsdale, Vermillion County, IN.

Nancy Jane Thompson married Henry Warner of a prominent Parke County historic family. Ten years after Henry's death, Nancy Jane married Jonathan Milligan. They had a daughter, Mrs. Joseph Bennett.

Joseph Milligan (b. 3-3-1814; d. 4-29-1907)

Joseph Milligan was born in Perry County, VA in 1814 and emigrated to Montgomery County, IN in the 1830s. He also worked in John

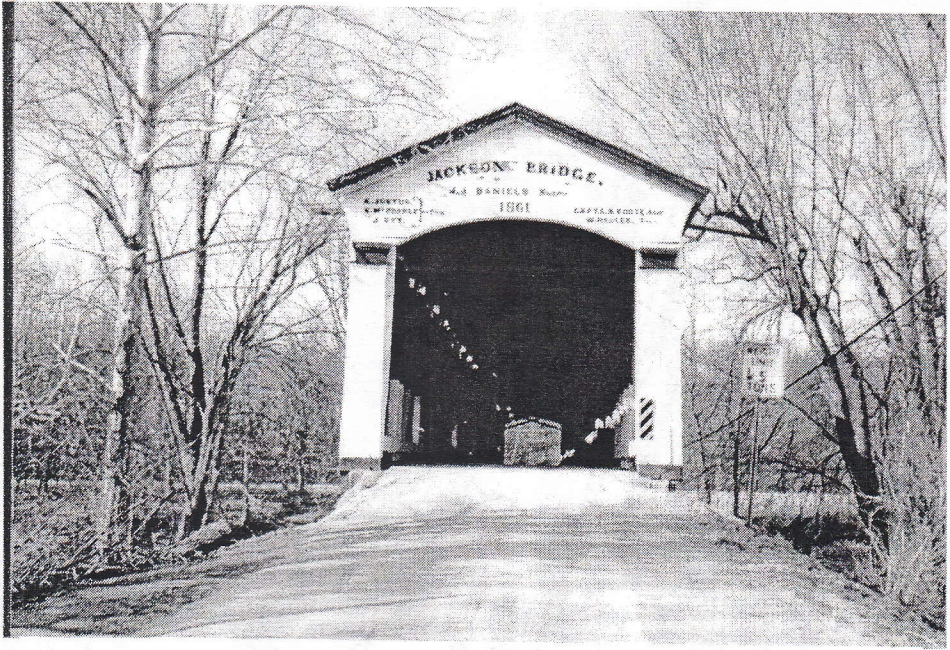
Mitchell (drowned during a flatboat trip to New Orleans and buried on the banks of the Wabash River) and James Nesmith's store at The Narrows of Sugar Creek for a year. He went back to Waveland, IN in 1845 and went into business for himself buying goods in New York and Cincinnati, OH making trips with it to New Orleans. When he bought into Rockport Mills, he assisted in furnishing supplies to the soldiers during the Civil War. He served in the State Senate in 1864. His wife was Harriet N. Fullinwider of Waveland, IN

Zachariah Byers (b.2-24-1816; d. 4-29, 1907)

Zachariah Byers was born at Washington County, MD in 1816. He worked for Prier Wright as a miller for three years. During that time he took 1100 barrels of flour which he manufactured at Rockport to New Orleans on flat boats. In 1862 he sold his interest in the mill and went to Rockville, IN to participate in the mercantile business. Then in 1865 he bought a farm near Rockport consisting of 420 acres and devoted his entire attention to farming and stock raising. He was married first to C. Rinehart of Virginia and later to Elizabeth Brown of New York. His death occurred in 1907.

Mahlon Cox (b. 7-20-1823; d. 3-18-1864.)

On January 1, 1861 petitions were approved by Parke County Commissioners for J. J. Daniels to build a covered bridge across Sugar Creek at Rockport. By September 16 the masonry work for the abutments was completed. The abutments contained a cornerstone on the south upstream side reading, "Builder J. J. Daniels 1861." The histories of the covered bridges of Parke County don't include who cut the timbers for it. I found that Mahlon Cox cut them. Cox was born in Minnesota. He bought the saw mill at Union Bridge on Roaring Creek (bridge on U. S. 41) from John Rubottom on October 8, 1857 according to Deed Record

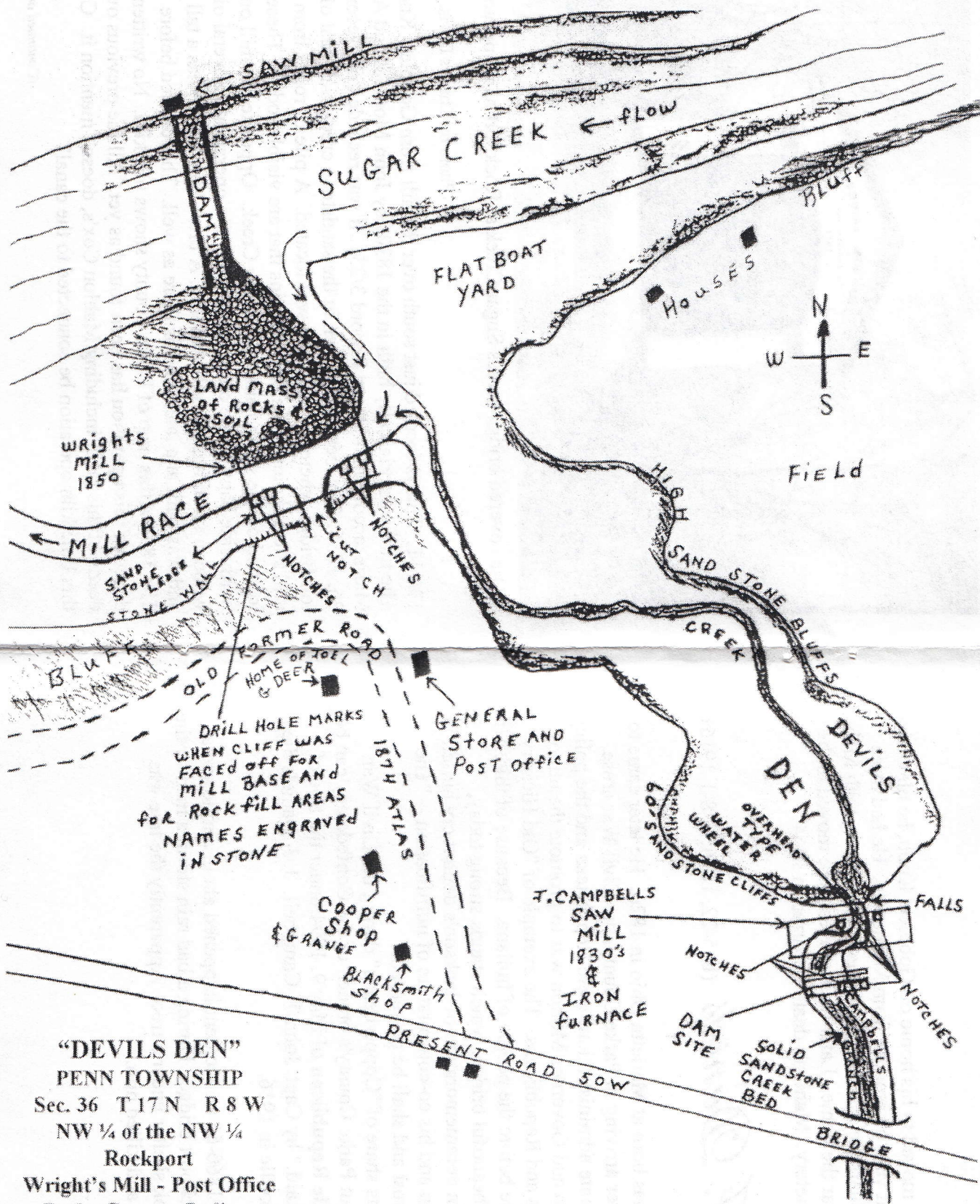


The covered bridge across Sugar Creek at Rockport as it appears today.

Photo by Charles Davis, 2001.

17/111. This is located just south over the hill from Gobblers Knob. The mill was originally built in the 1830s by John Moulder and Aaron Maris according to Deed Record 3/231. It was recorded on December 26, 1836. Notches can be seen in the sandstone creek wall east of Union Bridge where the mill dam was located. A pile of rocks from the mill's foundation is the only remains that are visible today. These are located on the south bank of Roaring Creek. Opposite the mill on the north side bank of the creek was a lime kiln operation. Several old wooden buildings are still standing. A brick kiln, which has a tall stack and was built at a later time, is there as well. This existed before 1874. The 1874 Atlas map of Parke County shows this kiln. No written evidence of this operation has been found as yet. All the previous owner deeds of this land, including Mahlon Cox's, doesn't mention it. Could this lime kiln operation be connected to the canal?

(Continued on page 18)



"DEVILS DEN"
 PENN TOWNSHIP
 Sec. 36 T17N R8W
 NW ¼ of the NW ¼
 Rockport
 Wright's Mill - Post Office
 Parke County, Indiana

Drawn by Charles Davis
 February 2000

(Continued from page 15)

When Mahlon Cox moved to his home on Gobblers Knob, he planted a pine tree in the front yard he brought from Minnesota. He had three daughters - Mary Charlotte, Medona and Ellen - who, along with Mahlon, were buried near the home. Later their graves were moved to the Popular Grove Cemetery. Mahlon's death occurred in 1864.

Joseph J. Daniels (b. 5-22, 1826; d. 8-1-1916)

Joseph J. Daniels was born at Marietta Ohio in 1826. He later came to Indiana. Shortly after arriving in Parke County, the Civil War arose. Both national and state administrations were Republican and the policy of President Lincoln and Governor Morton was to promote the utmost unity of Democrats and Republicans. The example of "Old Hickory" was put everywhere before the people of Indiana. Because of this, Mr. Daniels named the beautiful bridge, which stands strong today, "Jackson Bridge," in commemoration of Jackson's defiant cry hurled in the faces of Calhoun and his co-conspirators of nullification -- "The Federal Union, it must and shall be preserved."

Parke County had its share of "Copperheads" during the Civil War. One such story about Parke County's branch of the Confederacy can be read in the **Rockville Republican** of May 9, 1894 under the title of "The George Lay Raid," by Capt. John T. Campbell. J. J. Daniels died at his home in Rockville in 1916.

Sometime between 1860-65 an accident happened about a mile and a half west of the Rockport bridge. During a bad rain storm a man by the name of Hethco took shelter under a tree. Apparently the tree was struck by lightning and killed him.

James D. Bullock (b.; d. 11-7-1928)

An obituary for James D. Bullock, who died at age 82, said that he was recruited at Rockport for service in the Civil War. At that time he was living at Rockport. His wife was Mary Beaver Bullock (b. 5-2-1847; d. 5-1-1907). They were married on September 29, 1867 at her parents home in Alabama. He served in Co. I 136 Indiana Infantry. There were several mills in Parke County that served as recruiting stations. We can add Rockport to that list after reading his obituary.

Rockport "Weaver" School

The Rockport or "Weaver" school was deeded to the District Trustee, Elwood Siler, from Zachariah Byers on January 31, 1862. Joe Weaver was the teacher as was May Maris. This was School No. 4 located in the Northeast quarter of the Southeast quarter of Sec. 36. It was moved after it was closed to the property presently owned by Larry Hoover at Southeast of the Southeast quarter of Section 36, one-half mile from its original site on County Road 150W.

Fred Thompson was living at the Wimmer Convalescent Home in Clearwater, Florida in 1962. He wrote a history of Annapolis, IN, while there. He was a nephew of Nelson McClure, who sawed the timbers for the Feeder Dam on Sugar Creek. Fred's father taught singing at the Rockport school. His mother Sabina Ewing came to those singing classes. Sabina was the daughter of James Ewing, a later owner of Rockport Mills. Her brother Will Ewing ran the Rockport Mills general store. Sabina used to ride her horse across Sugar Creek before Jackson Bridge was built. She would swim her horse across the stream, drawing her legs up near the saddle to keep them dry. Mr. Thompson also remembered seeing the workers blast clay out of the banks of Coke



The Rockport "Weaver" School of 1862 was more recently used as a storage barn. It is located on Harry Hoover's property, near Devil's Den in Parke County, Indiana.

Photo by Charles Davis, 1999.

Oven Hollow with sticks of dynamite while with his Uncle Alex Lee to get clay for Lee's pottery in Annapolis.

On April 15, 1882 there appeared a statement in the **Parke County Signal** criticizing the Rockport school. "The exhibition at Rockport school house last Saturday night was a complete failure, the performances were vulgar and unbecoming to ladies and gentlemen, it was not a representative of District No. 4."

Zachariah Byers sold his interest in the Rockport Mills to Joseph Milligan and Calvin Graham according to Deed Record 20/220. By this time a new partner was brought in named Andrew Shular.

Wright's Cemetery

On July 31, 1862, Joseph Milligan and Calvin W. Graham deeded to Parke County a "certain piece of ground for the internment of the dead; now occupied as a graveyard situated in the Northwest quarter of Section 36, Twp. 17 R 8, one-half acre," Deed Record 25/243. Prier Wright and his family are buried in this cemetery. The cemetery lies in ruins just like so many other county deeded cemeteries. This cemetery, known as "Wright's Cemetery," used to be frequented years ago by its township citizens. For example, the **Rockville Republican** of May 15, 1889, under the title of "Decoration Day in Penn," said that this cemetery and others were visited by a group of individuals to decorate the graves.

Calvin Graham sold out his interest in the mills to Joseph Milligan and Andrew Shular, then Milligan and Shular sold the mills to Joel Mitchell, Edward Deer and James Ewing according to Deed Record 29/400, November 5, 1867. These men were all from Montgomery County. Ewing later sold out his on January 4, 1870 Deed Record 28/50 to Mitchell and Deer. Joel Mitchell sold his interest to William Canine and Joel G. Deer forming the Deer Brothers, Canine & Co. with Edward Deer already owning an interest.

William Canine (b. 12-25-1815; d. 2-8-1884)

William Canine was born in Shelby Co., Kentucky in 1815. His parents, Ralph and Margaret came to Montgomery County, Indiana in the spring of 1825. They settled in Brown Township, one mile north of Waveland. At the age of 19 William left the farm and went to Parkersburg, where he learned the cabinet markers trade and opened his first shop in his fathers yard. On January 28, 1841 he married Celia

McCord, but she died in December of that year. He was married again on February 26, 1845 to Martha J. Ellis. Through their marriage they had three children. Mary, the eldest, became the wife of John L. Goben. William Canine died in 1884.

Joel G. Deer (b. 1828; d. 2-9-1903)

Joel G. Deer was born in Boone County, Kentucky in 1828. His father Joel Sr. and mother Sarah Barnett were from Culpeper County, Virginia. They were early settlers of Montgomery County, arriving in 1828. Joel Sr. was running a milling plant in 1831 not long after settling on his government section of timber land. Joel G. married Mary E. McGregg in 1849. At the time of this marriage, he received from his father a present of \$1000 with which to start in life, which he invested in land on the banks of Sugar Creek. Some years after his marriage he joined his brother Edmond Deer in a partnership and together they purchased their father's extensive milling interest. The Deer's Mills was known as the oldest enterprise of its kind in the state of Indiana. When destroyed by fire in 1877, the brothers quickly rebuilt the structure and the business. Joel owned 500 acres in Brown Township, Montgomery County where Deer's Mills was located. During his time spent at Rockport Mills, he lived in the house across the road from the mill. He died in 1903.

Rockport Mills enjoyed an immense business during the days of the Wabash & Erie Canal and a few years after the canal closed here in 1874. Other people who lived near or in this village were Rev. Martenius; Miron Gilkerson; Jim Murry; James Ewing; Edmond Deer; Montraville Williams (d. 12-3-1915), who served as Town Marshall for two years; Joshua Sherfy, who died 2-27-1862 at the age of 84 and is buried in Wright's Cemetery; and the Starkey's, who were interested in the enterprises of that place. The **1870 Census** shows Edmond Deer was the miller at Rockport.

DO TELL, HUSBAND!

WHAT

DEER'S PATENT BURR DRESS

Has to do with making the

ROCKPORT FLOUR

SO MUCH

Better than that made at other Mills.

I do not know wife, what, but I know when I take *FIVE BAGS OF GOOD CLEAN WHEAT* to that Mill, I am apt to get *FOUR BAGS OF NO. 1 FLOUR*, and this is enough for me to know, and I am no Miller, and cannot account for the improvement. - Nevertheless, the world moves. Well Mrs. Jones, with your permission, we will explain a little:

It Grinds More Evenly

Than the old Dress,

Killing None of the Flour,

Yet making all fine enough to go thro' the Bolting Cloth, which is one cause of the increased yield. We have also repaired Forebay Wheels and Dam which enables us to work on short notice.

We still pay Flour for Cash, and cash for wheat.

DEER BROTHERS, CANINE & CO.

Rockport Mills, Parke Co., Ind.
Aug 28, 1872

DO TELL, HUSBAND!

WHAT

DEER'S PATENT BURR DRESS

Has to do with making the

ROCKPORT FLOUR

SO MUCH

Better than that made at other Mills.

I do not know wife, what, but I know when I take *FIVE BAGS OF GOOD CLEAN WHEAT* to that Mill, I am apt to get *FOUR BAGS OF NO. 1 FLOUR*, and this is enough for me to count for the improvement. Nevertheless; the world moves. Well Mrs. Jones, with your permission, we will explain a little:

It Grinds More Evenly

Than the old Dress,

Killing None of the Flour.

Yet making all fine enough to go thro' the Bolting Cloth, which is one cause of the increased yield. We have also repaired Forebay Wheels and Dam which enables us to work on short notice.

We still pay Flour for Cash, and cash for wheat.

DEER BROTHERS, CANINE & CO.

Rockport Mills, Parke Co., Ind.
Aug. 28, 1873

Sometimes even the English language can be a chore to read as this Rockport Flour ad of August 28, 1872 shows. The 'translated' version is on the right. Note that it also shows the only way newspapers of this time could 'dress up' an advertisement — by changing the style and size of font used. Picture printing technology had not yet been created for the average newspaper's use.

Rockport Mills began to decline when the Indianapolis, Decatur and Springfield Railroad was built through Bloomingdale in the summer of

1878. High waters in the spring of 1882 washed out part of the mill dam. An article in the **Parke County Signal** of April 15, 1882 says, "It is thought that the Rockport mill dam will be rebuilt as soon as the creek becomes low enough for successful operation." In continues to say, "Mr. Alphonzo Edwards has moved his saw mill a mile farther down Sugar Creek where he has a large amount of poplar timber to cut up." Rebuilding of the dam never happened. The mill couldn't compete with the more modern steam mills and the railroad.

An article appearing the November 29, 1883 **Rockville Tribune** states,

"We have been informed by a gentleman that knows, that an excellent bed of potters clay has been found near the Rockport mill and that the mill property has been bought by some eastern capitalist with the intention of starting a large pottery there. My informant states that those capitalists are confident that the N. and S. S. R. will be completed soon and that it will cross the creek at that point. The Lord grant it."

I guess it wasn't in the Lord's will. The **1874 Atlas** map of Penn Township shows a proposed railroad through section 36 about two-thirds of a mile east of Rockport, but the railroad was not built. Looking through the deed records, there was no eastern capitalist buying the mill nor was a pottery operation ever established at that location. In other words it was a rumor that floated into the newspaper. One source says when work ceased at the mill, the machinery was removed. Where to? it doesn't say. Possibly it went to Deer's Mill.

The mill building sat idle for ten years according to local history. One source says it was torn down in 1892, the other says it was dynamited in 1894. Investigation into this matter proved that it was torn down in 1892. Joseph A. Weaver (d. 7-313-1933, age 72) lived in the Rockport area all his life. He wrote a historical paper, "Rockport" by J. A. Weaver, that he read at the Penn Township Historical Society meeting on March 22, 1929. This paper was sent to the Indianapolis Historical Society in February 1938 by Melvin Davies of Mitchell, Indiana, and

that is how I obtained it. The building referred to earlier that was used as a grange, Mr. Weaver says was

"torn down and put up as an addition to the house on the top of the hill commonly known as the Phine Moore place. The eastern section of the store building was removed to Bloomingdale for a warehouse shortly after the coming of the I. D. and S. R.R. and is still used by the Bloomingdale Milling Company. The mill was torn down and parts of it were used in mill buildings located at Marshall and Kingman. The dressed stone used in the mill race were moved to Annapolis and used by Dr. James Boyd in a warm house."

This indicates Dr. Boyd was an herbal doctor. In March 2000, the owners of the Marshall Mill kindly let me investigate the inside of the structure. It boasts the hand hewed beams of over one hundred fifty years ago. Personally it was a thrill to verify this and see the handy work of Prier Wright.

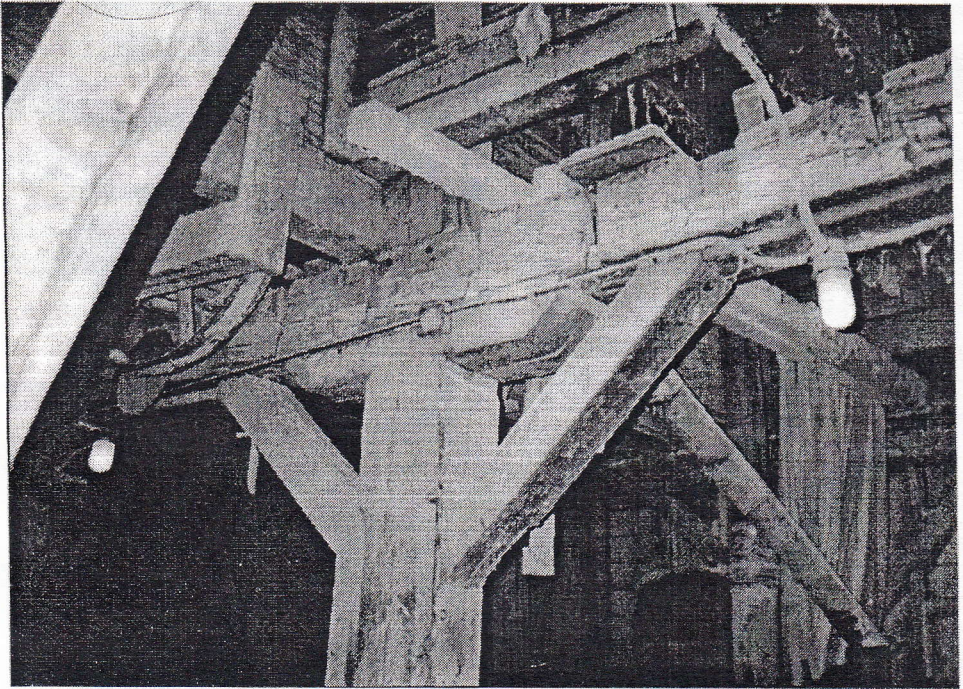
George Fleishauer built the Marshall mill from the structure of the Rockport mill in 1896 according to Branson, **The Archaeological and Historical Survey of Parke County**, 1927. The Marshall mill used steam power.

My next trip was to Annapolis at the residence of Jim Koch where Dr. Boyd lived. The "warm house" is still standing like a monument to the old mill.

Dr. James Boyd (b. 8-23-1847; d. 1925)

Dr. James Boyd was born in Penn Township in 1847 to Harrison and Rebecca Lewis Boyd. James was a physician, surgeon and proprietor of the Annapolis pottery which did business shipping on the Wabash & Erie Canal. He is buried in Bethany Cemetery, Washington Township.

Another trip, this time to the Phine Moore's old home proved that it is

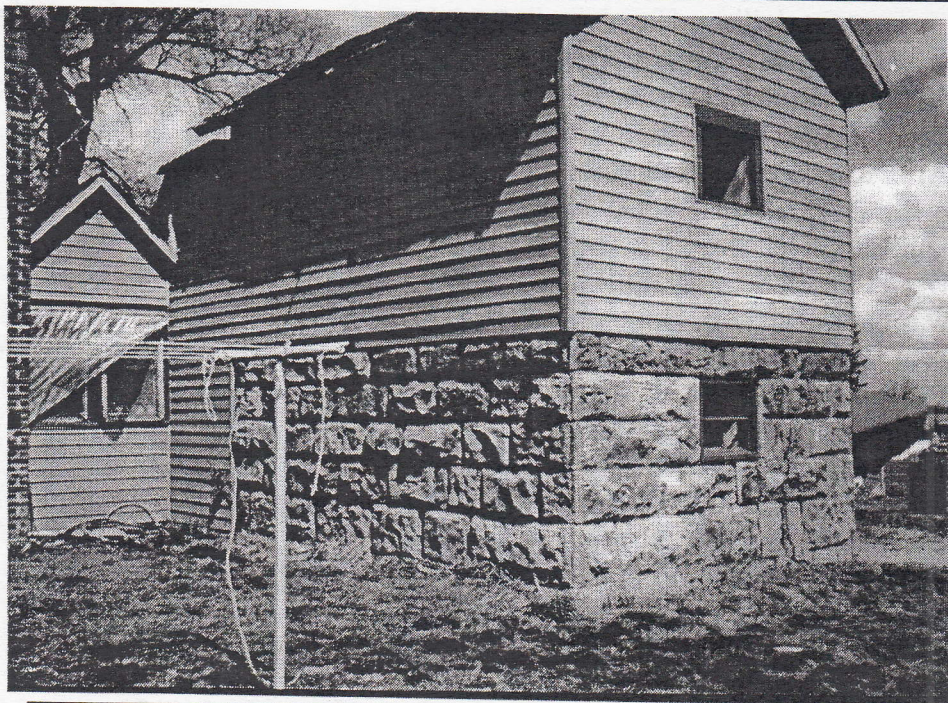


Part of the structure inside the Marshall Mill. This mill was built from materials salvaged from the razing of the Rockport (Devil's Den) grist mill. The Rockport Mill was torn down in 1892.

Photo by Charles Davis, 2000.

also standing. This home was lived in by the Starkey family during Rockport's milling era. Rockport again would make headlines in **Rockport Tribune** on June 4 and June 9 of 1892.

"Lucian Lindley, son of Charles Lindley, of Bloomingdale and Everett Carmack of Camargo, Illinois, were drowned at Rockport Saturday. The two boys, members of the freshman class of the Bloomingdale Academy, had gone to Rockport to spend the Saturday holiday fishing. With four others they crossed the Jackson bridge to the north bank of the creek and passed up to where the old dam had been and went into the creek bathing. Neither Lindley nor Cormack could swim and the



The "Warm House" of Dr. James M. Boyd of Annapolis, Indiana. The stone walls were formerly a part of the Rockport Mill. race.

Photo by Charles Davis, 2000.

creek being up, they were swept out into the current when they stepped off the small sand bar which was near the bank."

On February 15, 1893, the **Rockville Tribune** carried this information in the Rockport column,

"The ice in the creek has gorged on the old aqueduct (No. 11) and has flooded the creek bottoms for four or five miles above. The creek has frozen over again and will cause another gorge when the ice goes out."

John Wesley Allee (b. 6-13-1850; d.

After Rockport Mills or Wright's Mill ceased to exist, the land was still in the Deer family. John W. Allee bought all the land held by the Deer families on February 24, 1893 - Deed Record 54/303; March 29, 1898 - Deed Record 60/586; and August 22, 1899 - Deed Record 60/55. John was born near West Union, Parke County, in 1850 to Linus and Sarah Ann Warner Allee. His mother died when he was four years old. He lived with Abram Maris until his father remarried. When his father died, he was taken in by Jonathan and Julia Maris until he was 14. From age 14 to 18 he lived with his uncle Andrew Linebarger. He was the last of his immediate family and had a half-brother, Parke Allee, who lived at Eugene, Indiana. On February 18, 1880, John married Mary Emily Newlin. Mary (b. 12-17-1856; d. 5-?-1962) was 105 years old when she died. The most interesting part of John Allee's life is that as a boy he drove mules on the towpath of the Wabash & Erie Canal.



The only descendant of the Wright family that I knew of still residing in Parke County was Russell Wright. He lived on a farm three miles northwest of Rockville. His father was George Linebarger Wright and his mother was Martha Ellen Carter. Russell was born October 7, 1899 and was in the army during World War I. He died a few years

ago. Russell's brother, Howard, had a daughter named Martha. Today Martha Wright is a Reference Librarian at the Indiana State Library in Indianapolis and is also a member of the Canal Society of Indiana. She has been very helpful in obtaining information for this story for me.

Today around Devils Den only small reminders of its glorious past remain on the landscape. Except for a few names and notches carved in the sandstone walls around the mill site, you can't tell there was ever a village built there. It has gone back to nature once again and probably appears much like the beautiful gorge that was seen by Josiah Campbell.



Martha Wright, niece of Russell Wright and grand-daughter of Russell and Martha Ellen Wright. Martha is a reference librarian for the Indiana State Library.

Photo by Brian Migliore

Charlie Davis

And The Winner Is . . .

A few issues ago you were challenged to determine the purpose of the concrete ledge running along one side of a culvert. The culvert in question did not happen to be under a canal but it could have been. See photo on the following page. All of you chose to take the easy way out and let

Charlie Davis submit the correct answer. He correctly sur-

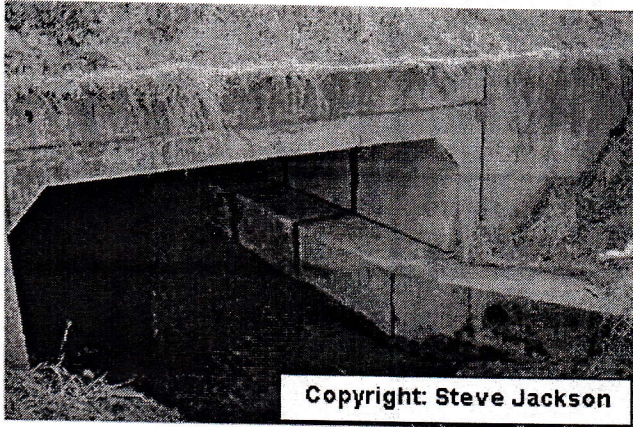
mised that the ledge's purpose was to let land-lubber animals pass from one end of the culvert to the other. Now, the Editor must point out that Charlie did not identify the specific animal for which the ledge was constructed—but that's ok. He's close enough to win the prize.

You probably recall that the first prize (really the **ONLY** prize!) was either an all expense paid trip to Hawaii, or to get your name published in the appropriate issue of Indiana Canals.

A quick check with the treasurer revealed that the CSI Travel Prize Money Account had insufficient funds to allow the Hawaii jaunt, therefore the alternate prize is being awarded to **Charlie Davis**.

Charlie's name is already quite commonly seen within these pages as he has almost single-handedly written the last several issues of this publication. (Hint: he does a fine job - *but we need your help in submitting articles that **you** create!!!*)

For those of you who want to know more about the **BADGER LEDGE** constructed as a part of the culvert, read on.



A sett (badger colony) in Northampton (England) with entrances along a stream bank was to be cut in two by a new road. As a culvert was required for the stream to flow beneath the road, a "badger ledge" was installed on the same side that the sett entrances were located. The purpose is to allow the badgers to get from one side of the road to the other in safety, even when the stream is in flood.

Another badger ledge was installed in a culvert under a new road near Wellingborough, Northants. The engineer asked if we wanted handrails installed too...

This information comes from Brockwatch. The basic aim of Brockwatch (and all the other Badger Groups) is to enhance the welfare and conservation of badgers. Use this internet link to learn more about Brockwatch and their efforts: <http://www.badgers.org.uk/brockwatch/4culvert.html>

The next Canawler's Quiz in on the following page.

Canawler's Quiz

This new Canawler's Quiz is simple in nature. Who is the author of the quote on the left and when was it created? Hint: your first job is to decipher the handwriting. The words are plain English, but that doesn't mean it's easy to read. Prizes? Same as last time.

The Monroe found to the Madam's Lake Erie,
 comided with the Ohio, & the Mississippi! New-
 York, & New Orleans, nice markets for the
 products of a vast portion of the world's people
 West, with easy & rapid communication to
 eastern! Certainly, you are very right in
 regard to this event, as a "new glorio-
 era in the history of the West."

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:

- \$20.00 — 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 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 35 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.