

Indiana

Canals

JOURNAL OF THE CANAL SOCIETY OF INDIANA

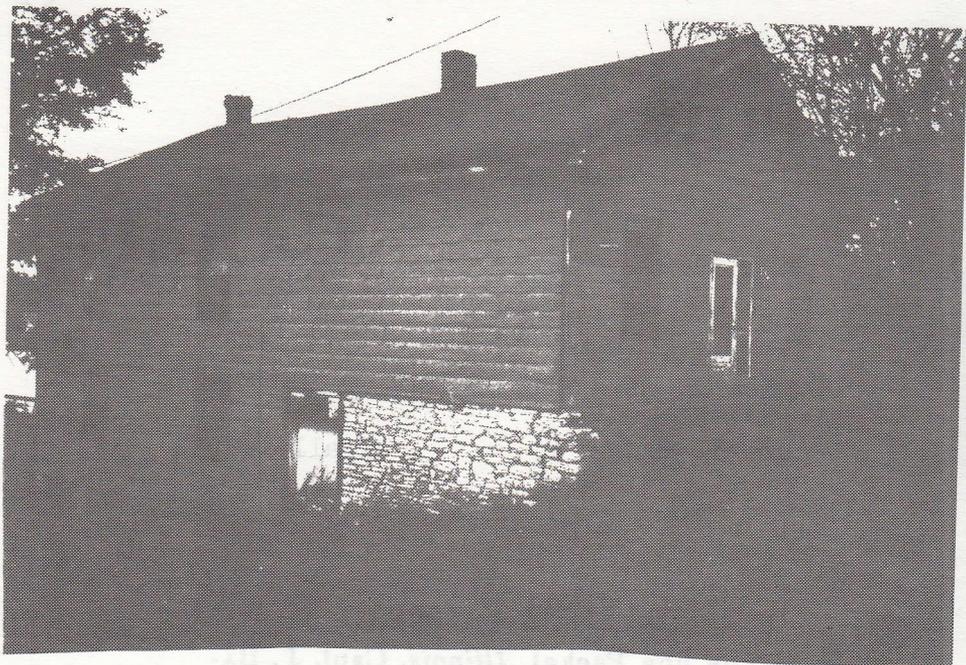
Volume 3, Number 1.

Fall 1991

DOYLE'S PACKETS.

The fine Packet *Illinois*, Capt. J. BAKER, says the *Lafayette Daily Courier*, will leave for the North on Thursday next, the 20th inst., and will be followed by the other-boats of this line.

Mr. NOBLE, the Agent, has received dispatches which inform him that Lock at Logansport will be ready on Wednesday—and that a Packet will start from Ft. Wayne the 22nd., and one from Cincinnati on the 20th., for Toledo. This looks like the opening of spring business, and will be a great convenience to the travelling public. The boats have been all thoroughly repaired, refitted, and are in admirable trim for the spring campaign. We hope that this line will be encouraged by our citizens,— it is an enterprize of vast benefit to our business and social interests.



BURRIS HOUSE (1837-40) LOCKPORT, INDIANA
INN / POST OFFICE / WAREHOUSE
SPRING 1991



One of the stops on the Canal Society of Indiana Fall Tour at Delphi was the Burris House at Lockport.

The following narrative placing the Burris House and Potawatomi Springs on the National Register of Historic Places was supplied to the Society by Ralph Burris.

The Burris House and Potawatomi Spring are situated on either side of the Towpath Road in Lockport, Indiana. Although the Towpath Road generally follows the line of the Wabash and Erie Canal, the remains of the canal can be seen between the Burris House and the road.

The Burris House is a two story simple frame structure of clapboard construction. Constructed sometime between 1837 and 1840, the structure originally served as an inn, post office, and merchandise warehouse. The hand-hewed limestone foundation is a full story on the north end where the building is cut into the canal lock embankment. The building is thirty-one feet wide, forty-five feet long, and twenty-eight and one-half feet high.

The north elevation features three bays with a double-door center entry. The two north windows have six lights while the other windows are double hung with six lights above and six below. The north doors are original, and one still has the mail deposit slot which was used in the nineteenth century.

The side elevations have three bays below and two above. The two upper and lower bays toward the south are twelve light, double-hung windows. The other bay on the side is an entrance. The south elevation has three bays below and two above. The middle entrance bay is set off center.

The medium gable roof features pediment with a returned frieze. One brick chimney is located at the south end and another is located in the interior of the roof. A cement block chimney has been added to the exterior of the south end.

On the interior the massive wood beams attest to the building's solid construction. The inn has fourteen rooms and a wine cellar.

Originally right-angled brackets held the inn's sign on the canal side (north) of the building.

Screen doors have been added on the north and south entrance and asphalt shingles now cover the

roof. A cement block chimney was constructed in the twentieth century. The major alteration of the exterior occurred in 1954 when shingle siding was installed over the original clapboards to protect them. At this time the right-angled brackets for the inn sign were removed.

Ruins of the Canal can be found between the Towpath Road and the old inn. The remains consist of a large earthen ditch about twenty-five feet across at the top and twelve-feet across the bottom. It is about eight feet deep and one hundred feet long.

Across the Towpath Road northwest of the inn is Potawatomi Spring. This is a natural spring located half way up the steep bluff in Lockport. Now the spring is three feet in diameter and approximately four feet deep. Logs and brush cover the spring. In the early nineteenth century when the Indians and early settlers used the spring, it was somewhat larger.

In the nineteenth century, the Wabash and Erie Canal was a physical and historical link between the Burris House and Potawatomi Spring.

The Carroll County area was a wilderness when New York opened the Erie Canal to freight and passenger traffic in 1825. The canal's initial success touched off a canal building craze in other states. Indiana was among the states which became convinced that a network of watercourses would bring economic development and prosperity. A federal land grant in 1827 encouraged state thinking along these lines. The state accepted the grant, although it did not start work until five years later.

Construction of the canal proceeded slowly across the state in the 1830's. Long before the canal was opened in 1840 to Lockport, it had an important impact on the town. James Barnes settled in Carroll County in 1830 and established a small community which was named Barnesville. When two locks were proposed and constructed at Barnesville, the Barnes family officially platted the town in 1836 as Lockport.

The Barnes family was involved in commerce from their arrival in the area. Using a barter system, they collected local products such as furs, hides, nuts, ginseng, and meats and transported the produce by wagons and ox teams to Cincinnati, where they

exchanged it for merchandise. In the early 1830's they expanded their commercial operations by constructing a saw mill and later a gristmill.

To take advantage of anticipated travel and trade, James and William Barnes constructed an inn and merchandise warehouse in the late 1830's. The structure was constructed in the south bank of the south canal lock. The north entrance of the building was located on the canal bank so that travelers and freight would have ready access from the boats.

The inn and warehouse helped insure the Barnes family participation in the prosperity which the canal brought to Lockport. The inn served an important function in providing lodging for canal travelers. The canal brought settlers to the area who in turn brought more commercial activity. The house was one of two warehouses in Lockport. These depot facilities developed the town into a trading

center. Farmers brought grain from a forty mile radius, making the town the largest grain market between Fort Wayne and Lafayette.

The canal brought manufactured goods which farmers purchased with proceeds from their grain sales. Soon the town boasted an apothecary, harness, cabinet, shoe cooper, and blacksmith shops; and a wholesale liquor store. Business methods in the region changed from a barter to a money basis.

A reflection of the important role of the Barnes family in the development of Lockport is the fact that the first post office established in the town in 1838 was located in their inn. James H. Barnes was the first postmaster until 1841 when his brother William took the position and served until 1846.

The railroad killed Lockport's hopes for continued growth and prosperity. The Wabash Railroad which initiated its operations in 1856 bypassed Lockport and cut off its economic base. The town entered a decline which worsened when the canal was finally abandoned in 1874. Today the businesses have left the town and only a few residents remain.

Potawatomi Spring in the nineteenth century was located across the canal from the inn and warehouse building. The Wabash and Erie Canal's connection

with the spring's historical significance is more indirect.

Although Indians and pioneers used the spring as a source of water, its major significance is based on a event in Indian-white relations. In the late 1820's President Andrew started a campaign to remove all Indian tribes to west of the Mississippi River. The Potawatomi Indians in northern Indiana were among the tribes being pressured to give up their home land for western territory.

Settlers attracted by the canal construction added local pressure to federal efforts to remove the Potawatomis. A treaty signed in 1837 required the tribe to give up their Indiana holdings in exchange for land in Kansas territory. Claiming that the agreement had been obtained through bribery, liquor, and threats, most of the Indians refused to move.

Acting on the orders of Governor David H. Wallace, General John Tipton gathered the Potawatomis and started their deportation under the threat of force. On September 4, 1838, 1,500 Indians began the westward march, having had only four days to prepare for the journey. Almost immediately the young, old, and sick began to die from the grueling travel conditions.

The march followed the line of the Wabash and Erie Canal, which was under construction at that time. Hot weather and dry, dusty roads added to the Indian's misery. As the procession passed through Lockport on the morning of September 11, 1838, the Indians were permitted to drink from the spring near the canal bed. This was one of the few comforts that they enjoyed during the journey.

Canal workers and townspeople drank from the spring. It was a source of water for Lockport as late as 1940. While different groups used the spring over a hundred and fifty years, it has become known as Potawatomi Spring from its role in the Potawatomi removal.

The inn and warehouse and spring passed through several owners in the late nineteenth century. In 1910, the present owners (the Burris family) acquired title to both sites. Although the inn has been vacant for many years, the Burris family proposes to restore it.

The Burris House and Potawatomi Spring are important sites associated with the settlement and development of northern Indiana. The house is the last remaining canal inn and warehouse in the region.

It serves as a reminder of the development which accompanied the canal transportation system. The Spring's association with the Indian removal was a result of the settlement encouraged by the canal.

OOPS- Your editor liked Volume 2, Number 3 so much that he used it twice. The last issue of INDIANA CANALS was actually Number 4, Summer 1991. With this issue we begin the third year of INDIANA CANALS. As always your input and articles are greatly appreciated.

Central Canal.-We have the satisfaction to be able to state, that the portion of some twenty-five miles of the canal leading through Indianapolis is nearly completed.--

Some heavy jobs will not be finished until sometime in next month, by the latter part of which it is supposed it will be ready for letting in the water. Much credit is due to the contractors for their efficient manner of carrying on the work. The lock at this place is nearly completed and will be a specimen of architecture that will well compare with the best on the New York Canals. We notice one improvement of no small consequence, and speed to the passage of boats. The upper gates are of the same depth as the lower ones; the abutment being placed back far enough for the gates to open. The paddles in the gates for filling the lock being near the bottom, the water is thus let in under the boat, and raises it, without the inconvenience of the water's pouring upon the bow, as in the case when the upper gates are placed upon the abutment, and the lock is sooner filled, in consequence of the great head of water above the paddle gates.

Much benefit has resulted to our community, during the two years this work has been in progress.

Our farmer's have had a ready market for their produce, and our merchants and mechanics have received no small addition to their business. It has been a time of great pecuniary pressure, but the spending of so much money in our vicinity has much alleviated the distress, that otherwise must have bourne much more heavily upon our citizens. Although we have yet no outlet, but the part finished will immediately be of use. By its completion we have a fine water power added to our other advantages, and machinery will soon be put in motion, and a market at once created for the raw material for the purpose of manufacture. A considerable business will be done in the conveyance of heavy materials to our market, such as wood, lumber, stone , lime,&c. The building of boats, a new branch of business, will be commenced, and various other kinds of business not now carried out here, will soon go into operation; consequently the number of inhabitants will increase, and the demand for the farmers produce will continue, for home supply. By the time our farmers get fairly at work on the improved system of farming, by which they will have larger quantities of produce to spare, Lake Erie will be open to us on the north, and the Ohio on the south,- and a choice of markets will be brought to our door.

Such is a picture of the benefits we may expect to result in consequence of the completion of our canals and rail roads, not only to our section but to all portions of the state.

Indiana Farmer
Brookville American Sept. 21, 1838.

Canal Boats.-- It will be seen by an advertisement that a boat yard has been established at Rochester in this country, and we are informed by one of the proprietors that they will have a packet boat finished in a few weeks. Gen. Long has also commenced a boat in this place and intends having it ready by the 20th of this month, when the water will be let into the canal from this place to Lawrenceburgh. Brookville American Nov. 2, 1838.

Wabash & Erie Canal Mechanical Structures Continued.

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

Guard lock on south side of creek, constructed in the same manner as the other, was injured by the high floods of last winter, but since repaired-may last two years. Upper gates will last four years, lower gates will last two years.

Adjoining this guard lock, a set of culverts are placed under the guard bank with sliding gates at the upper end, through which the feeder is passed, the culverts are submerged, the whole structure recently re-built, having been washed out by the great flood of last winter.

Towing-path, and road bridge across the Wild Cat, this structure was washed away by the floods of last winter. In May last, a contract was made by the State officers for building a new bridge upon "Long's patent," of 160 feet clear span, resting on permanent stone abutments. The total cost will be about \$6,500, and must be paid for in the expenditures of 1847-48.

Culvert No.120, of wood, 10 feet by 18 inches-submerged.

Road bridge No.51, used also for crossing the towing-path from the south to north side, must be rebuilt in 1848.

In the town of Lafayette, are several street bridges, on two of which, State or county roads are said to cross, these bridges, Nos.52 and 53 should be re-built during the coming year.

Culvert No.121, below the paper mill, of wood, 2 spans, 8 feet by 18 inches, not submerged, to place the timber permanently under water, will cost \$20.

Culvert No.122, near large park-house, 6 feet by 12 inches, not submerged-an expense of ten dollars will place it under water.

Guard lock for the protection of the Wea Bluffs, the necessity for this lock will not much longer exist, and therefore it will not require renewal.

Culvert No.123, for Durkees Run, of wood, 3 spans, 11 feet by 3 feet, not fully submerged-an expenditure of \$15.00 required for this purpose.

Aqueduct No.7, over Wea creek, 3 spans 32 feet each,

abutments and piers as well as the trunk, constructed of timber. The foundation was undermined by the great flood of last winter, and the piers were settled as much as two feet. The trunk has been raised to the proper level and the foundation secured with brush and stone. Whether the work will stand in this condition, it is impossible to say, the timber will last six or seven years, when the trunk must be renewed upon the present plan and the abutments and piers re-built of stone.

Lock No.34, 10 feet lift, is located just south of the Wea aqueduct. It is built of timber upon the frame plan, the workmanship very imperfect and wholly unsuitable for canal structures. Owing to the imperfect manner of its construction, this lock with its gates, will probably last but three or four years.

Just below the lock a feeder is introduced from the Wea, it is 25 chains long, constructed with 15 feet width at bottom, the banks of this feeder should be raised one foot throughout to keep out floods.

Wea feeder dam is built upon a temporary plan, being formed wholly of brush and gravel, and will require a small annual expenditure to keep it at proper height, it is about 200 feet long and raised $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet above low water.

To pass through the long level from Wea to Attica, the large quantity of water required below, the upper end of the level must be kept at the height of five feet above the bottom. To meet this requirement, one foot in height must be added to the Wea dam, and this expense, together the raising of the feeder banks, must be incurred in 1848.

Culvert No.124, of wood, 11 feet by $2\frac{1}{4}$ feet-submerged.

Road bridge No.54, at Granville, will last seven years.

Road bridge No.55, two miles below Granville. Of this bridge the embankments only are completed, the wood work under contract at \$250, which will be paid in the expenditures of 1848.

Culvert No.125, of wood, 2 spans, 10 feet by 2 feet-submerged.

Aqueduct No.8, over Flint creek, 2 spans, 32 feet each, trunk of wood, resting on one pier and two abutments, also built of timber, the workmanship imperfect, but the structure will probably last six years, when the whole must be re-built, the trunk with timber and the abutments and pier with stone.

Road bridge No.56 may last seven years.

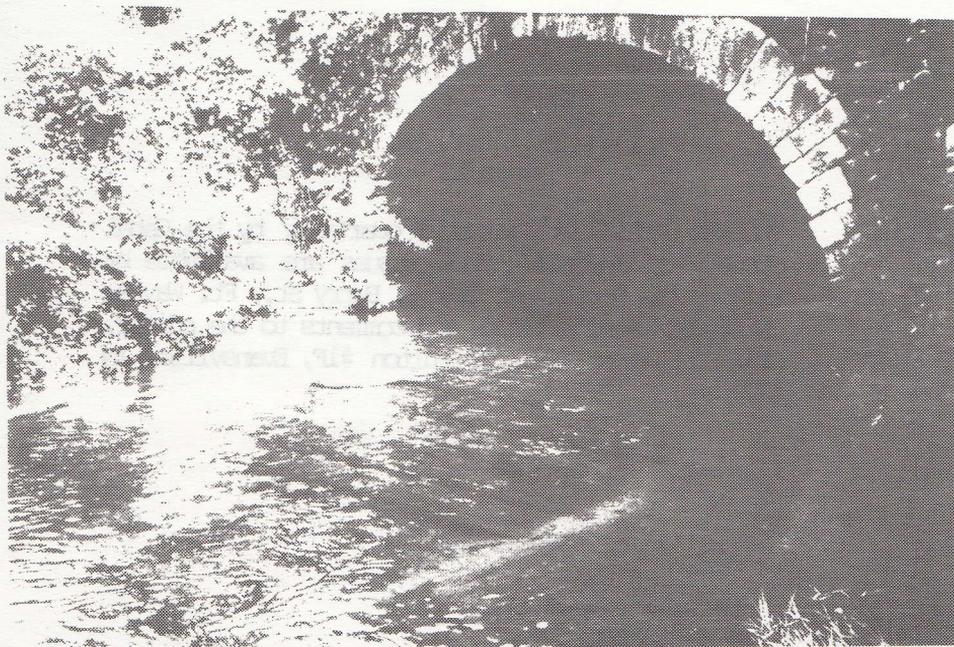
Culvert No.126, 2 spans, 10 feet by 2 feet of wood-submerged.

Culvert No.127, over Young's branch near Maysville, of timber, 4 spans, 10 feet by 3 feet-submerged.

Next issue concludes the 1847 report.



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