

# INDIANA CANALS

JOURNAL OF THE CANAL SOCIETY OF INDIANA

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**WABASH & ERIE**  
*Canal Celebration,*  
ON THE ANNIVERSARY.  
*Of American Independence.*

town and secured; and the hull floated by a short time afterwards, all efforts to land it at this place being unavailing, but it was strongly manned, and we presume, that it was got to shore and secured in a mile or two of town.

The Sarchet was owned by the Dousochet Brothers of Mount Vernon, Indiana, two of whom were on board in the capacity of Captain and Clerk. The wife and two children of the former, were on board also.

There was no insurance on the boat, and her owners estimate their loss at seven thousand dollars.

There was freight (valued in the aggregate at three thousand dollars) on board for several towns and landings between this place and Eugene, Ind, the most of which we presume is a total loss.

It is impossible for us to convey an idea of the frightful and hopeless condition the boat presented as she reeled and surged in the angry water, like a feather in the wind. Chimneys clashing together and tumbling overboard-furniture and freight bursting through windows and doors-the cabin breaking to pieces-men, women and children clinging to whatever they could seize on the hurricane deck to prevent being thrown overboard-steam and smoke enveloping the boat-presented a scene of consternation indescribable. That all on board escaped with their lives is almost miraculous.

The officers and crew lost nearly everything. A number of them are without hats or shoes. The freight book was the only thing saved from the clerk's office.

We presume the fate of the Kate Sarchet will deter boats hereafter from attempting to cross over the dam to avoid lockage. Several boats narrowly escaped destruction, during the present season, in attempting this, at all times a dangerous experiment.

CELEBRATION OF THE OPENING OF  
THE WABASH & Erie Canal

Tuesday, the 4th of July, was a great day for Fort Wayne. On that day thousands of citizens of Indiana and Ohio assembled here to celebrate the opening of our Canal from the Wabash Lake Erie—the uniting, by the best, shortest, and most eligible route, of the navigable waters of the Northern Lakes with those of the Mississippi. A week which we sincerely believe ranks in importance second only to the great New York canal; and one which is destined to create as great a revolution in the route of trade and travel as even that great work itself. Boats have been running from Manhattan to Lafayette ever since the opening of navigation in April last; but the celebration of this auspicious event was postponed until the anniversary of our National Independence. It was a celebration—not by the citizens of Fort Wayne—but those of the whole line of the canal and surrounding country; and our city being on the summit level, and the point where the work was first commenced, was selected as the most eligible for the celebration to be held. Our citizens cheerfully entered into the spirit of the occasion, and made ample preparations to receive and entertain all who might come to participate in the festivities of the day, and interchange congratulations on the consummation of this work, to which we have looked forward so long with such earnest solicitude and fond anticipation. A free dinner was provided, abundantly furnished, by the liberality of the citizens of both country and town, with every thing the country produces, and all made arrangements to accommodate as many guests as their houses would hold, and to furnish homes for all during the time they might remain here. The result was, that of the thousands who that day assembled here, not one, as far as we have heard, failed to be comfortably accommodated, or left here without being satisfied and grateful for the hospitality experienced. We take pleasure in recording this noble conduct of the inhabitants of our city, as showing the spirit which animated every breast, and the buoyant feeling which the completion of this important work excited.

On the Saturday previous, the guests began to arrive, and by Sunday evening the taverns were        wing. On Monday afternoon the canal boats began to line our wharves, and continued without intermission through the night to land their passengers, all anxious to participate in the coming celebration. Each boat was met on its arrival, by the Reception Committee, who took the passengers to the houses they were to make their homes during their visit. On Monday night the Toledo Guards arrived, and having brought their camp equipage with them, pitched their tents on a beautiful green west of the city. On Tuesday morning, about six o'clock, Gen. Cass, the Orator of the Day, arrived in the packet boat Ohio, and was escorted to the mansion of Allen Hamilton, Esq. where he remained during his sojourn among us, and were much pleased with the urbanity and affability of his deportment, and with the boundless hospitality of his host.

Throughout the forenoon, visitors from the interior of the country, remote from the canal line, flocked in by hundreds, on horseback or in wagons and vehicles of every description. We have not learned the exact number of canal boats present; they extended in double tier the whole length of the city, from the upper to lower basin, and being mostly decorated with flags, gave to our wharf a very interesting appearance....

...At eleven o'clock, an immense procession was formed on the Public Square, and marched to a beautiful shady grove on the farm of Col. Swinney, where the exercises of the day were performed. The procession was nearly a mile in length, and was enlivened by several bands of music. The Kekiogue and German bands of our city fully maintained their high reputation, the latter appearing to great advantage in their new and tasty uniforms, with several appropriate banners. The Defiance and Marion bands ably seconded them, and deserve much credit for their attendance....

...On arriving on the ground we found several hundred ladies in attendance. After the bands had played some national airs, the Rev. Mr. Boyd made a fervent and appropriate prayer. H. McCulloch, Esq. read the Declaration of Independence; and Gen. Cass delivered the admirable address which will be found

in our previous columns. As we presume all will read it for themselves, it is needless for us to say any thing in its praise.

The company then proceeded to another part of the ground, and partook of a plenteous cold \_\_\_ation prepared for the occasion; and after drinking the toasts, listening to speeches from some of the distinguished gentlemen present, and replies to letters of invitation from those who could not attend,-returned in the same order to the city, as well pleased with their entertainment. The letters may be found on our 3d and 4th pages. Every thing was conducted with the utmost regularity and decorum, and nothing occurred to mar the pleasure of a celebration, which we predict will long be remembered by all who participated in it.

The number present is variously estimated at from 10 to 15,000. It was allowed by all to be the largest assemblage ever witnessed in Indiana with the exception of the Tippecanoe Convention.

The next morning Gen. Cass left here on his return home. He was accompanied to the first lock by the committees, several citizens, and our bands. He expressed himself highly pleased with the appearance and prospects of our city, and the attention he had received from its inhabitants; and his visit here has made an impression on the minds of all which will not soon be erased....

July 15, 1843. Ft. Wayne Sentinel

Although the work had begun at Ft. Wayne eleven years earlier, it wasn't until the canal's completion to Lake Erie that the Wabash & Erie Canal took on real importance as avenue for commerce. For several years the canal had only been able to move persons and products among the northern Indiana towns along the completed line. With the completion of the Ohio portion of the canal, Fort Wayne felt the time was right for a suitable celebration to mark its new connection to the east. In May of 1843 a series of meetings were held to appoint committees and solicit contributions for a July 4th celebration marking the completion of the Wabash & Erie Canal

from Lafayette to Lake Erie. The resulting celebration, as described in the Ft. Wayne Sentinel, was typical of the 19th century. Invitations were sent out to prominent national politicians such as Martin Van Buren, Winfield Scott, Henry Clay and Daniel Webster. At the celebration their letters of regret and thanks were read to the crowd as if they were there. General Lewis Cass, picked as orator of the day, had his entire speech published, taking up almost a third of the paper. Following his address the traditional toasts and speech making began. The 13 regular toasts were all followed by three to ten cheers and a like number of guns being fired. The toast to the memory of John Tipton was followed by the crowd standing in silence. The 9th toast of the day to "The union of the waters of the Wabash and Lake Erie, by the Wabash and Erie Canal, we now celebrate as a great and glorious achievement--lasting gratitude and honor are due to the Congress of 1827, for their generous grant of land for its construction, and to the States of Ohio and Indiana for their energy and enterprise in consummating the great work," was met with a rousing 20 cheers and guns. With the completion of the regular toasts, there began a series of volunteer toasts from other dignitaries and member of the crowds. As in all celebrations of this type the entire day was laid out in advance. The Ft. Wayne Sentinel of June 17th published the "Order of the Day" for the celebration, which follows.

1st A national salute of 26 guns from the Fort at sunrise. 2d At 9 o'clock A.M. a salute of 13 guns in honor of invited guests and strangers. 3d At 10 o'clock A.M. 3 minute guns will be fired, when the procession will be formed on the Public Square and march to the ground under the direction of the Marshall of the day and his assistants. As a part of the following procession were "100 Miami Warriors in full costume" who were scheduled to perform their war dance. The editor wrote with sympathy of the Miami tribes plight at the hands of the whites and their soon to be "final adieu to the land of their birth and the graves of their fathers and remove beyond the Mississippi," stating that their performance would impress on the minds of the witnesses long after they were swept away by the tide of emigration brought on by the canal.

## Wabash & Erie Canal Mechanical Structures Continued.

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, of wood, 10 feet by 2½ 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.

In Attica, there are two road bridges, Nos.58 and 59-will last five or six years.

An agreement was made by the State officers, and not yet fulfilled, to erect a bridge in the upper part of Attica, in commutation of damages-the cost will be about \$400.

Lock No.35, 6.20 feet lift, of timber, built upon the frame plan, this lock appears to be well built and in good condition, may last six or seven years, the gates will last three years. The large horizontal braces were left out in building this lock and must be immediately added.

Road bridge No.60, for Williamsport road, will last six years.

Culvert No.130, of wood, 11 feet by 2½ feet-submerged.

Road bridge No.61, may last six years.

Aqueduct No.9, over Shawnee creek, one span of 80 feet clear. The trunk and superstructure are upon the same plan with aqueduct No.1, over the St. Marys, to the particular description of which reference is here made. Abutments are of cut stone masonry, the whole work appears to have been well constructed, and may be considered permanent, excepting the trunk, which will need renewal once in 10 years; as a further exception to this remark, it should be stated that the chords on which the whole structure depends are deemed insufficient in strength, and I have advised that additional strength be given it, by adding a strong iron chain or bar extending the length of the chord, and attaching to each foot of the arch. The expense may be \$300, and will be paid in the expenditures of 1848.

At the south end of this aqueduct, the Shawnee feeder is received. It is near one-half mile in length and twelve feet wide at the bottom.

Feeder dam across Shawnee creek, 80 feet long and 8 feet high, built upon the usual crib plan, is in good condition and may be considered a safe structure. The abutments are of timber and may last seven or eight years.

Culvert No.131, of wood, 11 feet by 2½ feet-submerged.

Culvert No.132, over Bear creek, this is a large cut stone arch of 30 feet chord, and being built of very soft sandstone, there may be some doubt of its durability. The stone are not affected by the

weather. The workmanship appears to be good and the culvert is at present in good condition.

Road bridge No.63, may last six years.

Culvert No.133, of wood, 11 feet by 2½ feet-submerged.

Road bridge No.64, will last six years.

Culvert No.134, one-half mile above Covington, of wood, 2 spans, 11 feet by 3-submerged.

Flood gates near the same place, all of wood, will last six years.

Lock No.36, 10 feet lift, built of timber upon the frame plan, not well constructed, but with care and some repairs, may last four or five years, gates will last three years. This lock is in Covington.

In Covington there are two road bridges, Nos.65 and 66, which may last four or five years.

Culvert No.135, 3 spans, 10 feet by 3 feet, built of timber and submerged.

Flood gates, one and a half miles below Covington, of wood, will last six years.

Culvert No.136, of wood, 11 feet by 2½ feet-submerged.

Culvert No.137, of wood, 11 feet by 2½ feet-submerged.

Culvert No.138, of wood, 11 feet by 2½ feet-submerged.

Culvert No.139, of wood, 11 feet by 2½ feet-submerged.

Road bridge No.67, one mile above Perrysville, will last six or seven years.

Road bridge No.68, for Perrysville road, of wood, will last six or seven years.

Lock No.37, 9 feet lift, just opposite Perrysville, built of timber upon the frame plan, workmanship exceedingly bad, with occasional repairs, may last three or four years, gates will last three years.

Towing path bridge across the mouth of Perrysville side cut, not finished but in process of construction.

Road bridge No.69, at head of "swail"-now in progress of construction-embankments finished and timber delivered.

Culvert No.140, of wood-6 feet by 18 inches-submerged.

Road bridge No.70. This bridge is under contract, but not completed.

Road bridge No.71, at Lodi, near the crossing of Coal creek-in good order, and will last 7 or 8 years.

The bridge last described is at the termination of the finished canal, and the commencement of the new contracts let on the 5th August, 1847.



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REPORT FROM THE CANAL COLLECTOR'S OFFICE - FORT WAYNE

- o Canal activity heavy / Volume of canal events increasing
- o Many canawlers have paid \$12 annual tow charge, but we still have some boaters with unsold cargo or just absent minded.
- o Red dot on mailing label means your toll has not reached the Collector's office
- o No dot means your name has cleared the Collector's records and you may proceed toll-free along the Indiana canals for one year.
- o Despite the Panic of '91/92 some canawlers are doing well - sending extra \$ for our Society. Thanks for the support.
- o Please send your toll(annual dues) & reservation for Spring Tour

The Fort Wayne Collector --- February 10, 1992

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Canal Society of Indiana - "News Along the Towpath"

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SPRING TOUR - APRIL 25/26

If you have not finalized your plans to attend our Spring Tour, please do so today. We have paid reservations now for one bus and are beginning to fill the second. If you plan to attend, please send your reservation now!. After March 1 we will begin advertising the tour to other groups in the FTW area.

The tour will leave from Peace Church promptly at 11:00am. The Saturday schedule is outlined in the January Newsletter. In addition to the Vermilyea house tour, we will also be touring the Swinney Homestead. Members of Settler's will be providing historical information about the home and the family. This home is mentioned in this issue of Indiana Canals. This is a unique opportunity to see and learn about these historic homes.

Final information and directions about the tour will come out with the Newsletter in late March. You should be placing your reservations and arranging hotel accomodations. A Civil War Roundtable group will be holding their national convention here that same weekend. Cost for Saturday/Sunday is \$15 for members and guests until March 1. (Sunday only) will be \$6.

Let's celebrate our 10th Anniversary together in Fort Wayne.

SPEAKERS BUREAU

The announcement for our new speaker's bureau has been sent to over 60 historical organizations throughout the state. Responses have been very positive. The Indiana Historical Society will include our new program in their forthcoming lists of speakers on historical topics. They also purchased two videos for their library. Other groups have also ordered this professionally produced tape of Indiana canal history. The VHS will be included in the Spring Catalog of the Indiana Historical Society. Cost \$30 postage included - CSI.

INDIANA HISTORICAL CONFERENCE - McCORMICKS CREEK MAY 1 & 2

The Canal Society has been invited to make a presentation on the events and the historical significance of the Gronauer Lock uncoverly in Fort Wayne. It would be nice to have a good membership turnout of CSI members to support IHS and our program.

Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana has provided a 3-year loan to Our Town - Peru to preserve the site. The Schmidt's and Jerry Getty were at the news conference on Feb. 6. Ms. Karen Kiemnec of Landmarks presented a \$10,000 check to kick off a restoration project that could cost \$60,000. Our Town has already done a super job in restoring an old railroad depot. CSI will keep you informed and help encourage financial support. We will tour the site on the Fall Tour.

#### WHITEWATER CANAL TRAIL

The Society has just learned that the state DNR has announced the creation of an 8 mile hiking & cycling trail from Metamora to Brookville. This trail will follow the railroad and canal towpath. The state plans to begin development this summer. The trail will begin at the Duck Creek Aqueduct and pass beside canal locks and other canal structures. Costs? ( \$210 - \$1 million ) depending on the trail surface treatment. If successful, the trail will be expanded to the Laurel feeder dam. CSI applauds DNR for this positive action.

#### WHITEWATER CANAL

Paul Baudendistel reports that the controversy over a new railroad depot is still a very active subject (Jan Newsletter). The hearing on Jan. 3 centered around two issues: Does the DNR State Historic Preservation Office have authority to allow the depot to proceed? Do the facts justify granting a permit? Some have raised the question: "Is the Whitewater RR really a railroad or a concession?"

As a Canal Society we are concerned about any detrimental impact on the state canal site, but we realize the railroad does bring many tourists to Metamora. We are hopeful a compromise can be reached. Another problem has developed in that the State has been unable to produce the necessary deed to show that they own the towpath. The next hearing is March 4 & 5. Paul keep us informed.

If you are planning an early Spring visit to Metamora, be aware that the canal is dry as repairs proceed on the Duck Creek Aqueduct. The work is to be completed by April 4. On the other hand, a visit now would allow you to see the Aqueduct work in progress.

#### DELPHI CANAL PARK

The Carroll Co. Wabash & Erie Canal Association reached a milestone in Jan. when it became debt free. Final payment was made on a loan from the Charles Bowen family to move the Bowen log house to the Canal Park. The Association has continued to expand the Park as they repaid the loan. Plans for other projects include new restrooms, an entrance sign and historical markers along the trails and canal.

With concern, CSI learned that Jim French has undergone two angioplastic heart procedures, first in December and again in January. Fortunately, the outlook is good. They can't keep an "ole canawler" down.

#### OTHER CONCERNS:

Nate Tagmeyer has just recovered from double heart by-pass surgery in Sep. 1991. He had some rough going this Fall with complications, but it appears he has turned the corner. We are hopeful that Aleda and Nate will be able to join on our Spring Tour as they were unable to be with us at Delphi.