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INDIANA CANALS

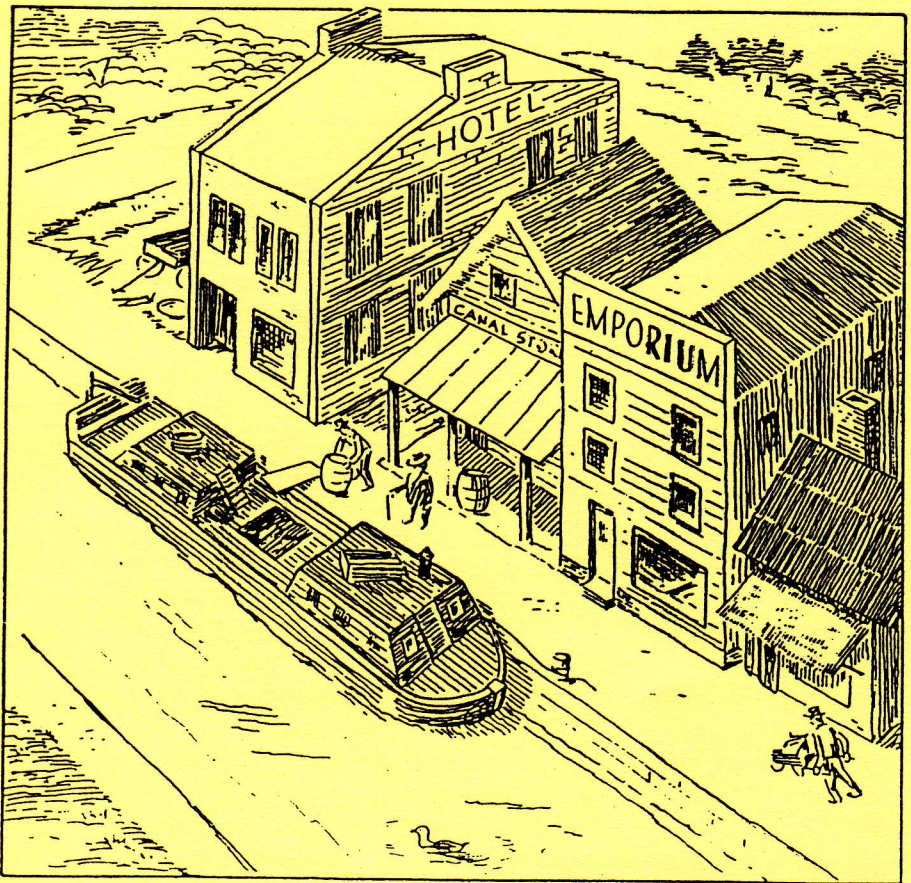
JOURNAL OF THE CANAL SOCIETY OF INDIANA

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INDIANA CANALS is published quarterly. Send articles and comments to the editor Stan Schmitt, 3900 N. Fulton #1F, Evansville, IN 47710.

It's that time again. This issue begins the 7th year of publication for INDIANA CANALS. It also means that is time for another letter from the editor. In each of the previous six letters I had requested input in one form or another from the membership of the Indiana Canal Society. I reiterate that appeal again this year. Both the Indiana Canal Society and INDIANA CANALS need your support, not only to continue, but to grow. In recent years newer members have taken over roles of leadership in the Society, organized tours and participated in other events sponsored by our group. This is good for the long term growth of any group and we should congratulate ourselves in this area. This doesn't mean however, that the rest of us should sit back and assume our activity is not needed. Membership in the Indiana Canal Society offers a wide variety of areas for involvement. We realize that everyone's interests, abilities and free time varies. Become more involved in the Society, you'll find that you get a lot more out of your membership. If you are asked to help out in some way, think about it before you decline. Don't assume that there is always someone else out there who will do it.

As editor of INDIANA CANALS my greatest appreciation comes from membership feedback. This feedback can take a number of forms such as questions, articles, suggestions and additional information. This is also true for the NEWSLETTER. In a recent newsletter Bob and Carolyn Schmidt mentioned what was involved in putting out these two publications. It helps everyone involved when we don't have to do all the writing. Remember that your input is both welcomed and needed. You are the eyes and ears of the Society when it comes to letting us know what's going on. We can't be everywhere or know everything that's going on relating to Indiana's canals around the state. Every recent tour has

brought to light new canal sites or information not generally known to the public. We need this to continue. After the Spring issue of INDIANA CANALS was published I received additional information on an article from one of our readers. That information is being incorporated into this issue. This is something that I would like to see more often in the future. You should not take everything printed in INDIANA CANALS as gospel. Although I try to be as complete and accurate as I can, I readily acknowledge that there is additional information out there. I have yet to have a reader question or ask for additional information on anything appearing in INDIANA CANALS. I would also be interested in the readership telling me what they would like to see in future issues of this journal. Are there specific topics or areas that should be covered? Over the past six years INDIANA CANALS has evolved into a publication covering the more historical and technical aspects of the canal era in Indiana. I hope that the information we have covered is not only of some interest, but has also been of some help in encouraging you to find out more on your own. If possible I would like to add more pictures and drawings to the publication this year. But this, like the expansion of each issue, is dependent on the help I get from the readership. This issue was originally scheduled for publication before the holidays. Unfortunately your editor has had to undergo the thrill of the job search process which has resulted in this delay. The society has a lot planned for 1996. I hope that you will all be able to take an active role in it.

The following letter was received from Dawne Slater-Putt, reference librarian for the Historical Genealogy Department of the Allen County Public Library. I hope this is only the first of many such letters from the readership.

I just finished reading the article on the White Water Canal in Indiana Canals, Vol. 6, No. 3, Spring 1995. I have intended for some time to send for publication some information about the fatal accident mentioned briefly in the article. The victim was a nephew of one of my ancestors.

His name was not "Sexton," as the contemporary article copied in Indiana Canals reported, but Alexander Saxon. He was born 29 April 1815, the son of James and Mary (Whitcom) Saxon of Connersville. He was twenty-one years old when he was killed in the explosion in 1836. Here is the story:

When news of the passage of the Internal Improvement Bill of 1836 reached Connersville, citizens turned out for a great celebration, including the firing of the village cannon six times to honor the governor, the senator, the three representatives in the General Assembly, and the canal itself. In the excitement, young Alexander Saxon, who was not one of the regulars at firing the cannon, gave it a try. It exploded prematurely, maiming him and one other man, and wounding two others seriously. Alexander died the next morning. The Watchman, a newspaper of the time (which, as I understand, was dedicated solely to news of the canal), described the tragedy:

"Whilst the People of Connersville and its vicinity were celebrating the passage of the great Improvement Bill, by the firing of a piece of Artillery - about 9 o'clock on the evening of the 18th inst. - one of the most melancholy accidents happened which has ever occurred in the State. Because of an ineffectual swabbing of the gun, the cartridge ignited whilst the rammer was being withdrawn; by the explosion, Four fine young men were instantly and awfully maimed and wounded. Alexander Saxon, had one of his arms torn off and the other so badly wounded, that

both were immediately amputated above the elbow. His eyes were completely blown out of his head, and the face and the head wretchedly lacerated. He was thrown over the bank to the distance of 25 feet. His friends took him to Mr. Atherton's Hotel, where he expired about 8 o'clock the next morning."

Citizens of Connersville resolved to erect a fitting monument to young Alexander, and perhaps they did, but if so, its location is not known. It is not described in volumes of cemetery transcriptions for the county. Alexander's final resting place is not known.

A copy of the article from The Watchman is enclosed, but it is somewhat difficult to read.

You are welcome to use any of the above as a follow-up to the information published in Vol. 6, No. 3 of Indiana Canals, if you wish. As I said, I had intended to write a proper article about this situation for you, but had procrastinated. The information you published spurred me to at least send you this much.

The following articles come from the January 23, 1836, edition of the Connersville newspaper, The Watchman.

Immediately after the proceedings, whole assemblage repaired to the River Bank east of Town, - the Town being yet in complete illumination - where a number of bonfires were brilliantly lit up - and where it was intended to fire 19 guns, one for each vote in the Senate on the final passage of the improvement Bill. Six or seven rounds were fired, when the awful accident occurred which instantaneously clouded and froze the enthusiasm of the rejoicing multitude.

Whilst the People of Connorsville and its vicinity were celebrating the passage of the great Improvement Bill, by the firing of a piece of Artillery - about 9 o'clock on the evening of the 18th inst.--one of the most melancholy accidents happened which has ever occurred in the State. Because of an ineffectual swabbing of the gun, the cartridge ignited whilst the rammer was being withdrawn: by the explosion. Four fine young men were instantly and awfully maimed and wounded. Alexander Saxon, had one of his arms torn off and the other so badly wounded, that both were immediately amputated above the elbow. His eyes were completely blown out of his head, and the face and the head wretchedly lacerated. He was thrown over the bank to the distance of 25 feet. His friends took him to Mr. Atherton's Hotel, where he expired about 8 o'clock, on the next morning.

Joseph Clark, another very respectable, industrious and enterprising young man, had his right arm blown off so that the Physicians were compelled to amputate it also above the elbow. His face and eyes were likewise badly burned. We are happy to state that there is a fair prospect of Clark's recovery. Abiather Williams and William Worster were likewise very severely burnt and lacerated about the head and eyes. But it is thought that their wounds are not dangerous. The contrast between this calamitous scene, and that of the great rejoicing which immediately preceded it - was awfully striking and melancholy. The sympathies of the whole community were, and are efficiently enlisted in behalf of the sufferers.

On Tuesday at 11 o'clock, the next morning after this fatal occurrence, a large body of the citizens of the village and its

vicinity, both young and old, assembled in the Court House to take some measures relative to the mournful occasion. O.H. Smith Esqr. having stated the object of the meeting, upon his motion Gabriel Ginn, Esqr. was called to the Chair. Whereupon Mr. Smith having addressed to the meeting some appropriate observations, offered the following Resolutions, which were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That this meeting deeply deplores the lamentable accident of last evening, by which one of our respected citizens, Alexander Saxon, son of James Saxon, has been taken from amongst us, in the bloom of life—and Joseph Clark, Abiather Williams and Wm. Worster, have been seriously injured.

Resolved, That this meeting most sincerely feels for, and sympathises with, the relatives of the deceased.

Resolved, That a Committee to consist of Five persons be appointed by the Chair to take order for, and superintend the Funeral of the deceased, and the erection of suitable Monument over his Grave.

Resolved, That the same committee take measures for procuring relief for such of the injured survivors as may stand in need of assistance; and that the Committee enquire into and publish in "The Watchman," the cause of the Fatal accident.

The Chair then nominated Oliver H. Smith, Esqr. S.W. Parker Esqr. Mark Crane Esqr, Mr. George Frybarger & Dr. Ryland T. Brown to compose the Committee agreed upon.

Mr. Parker then arose and having addressed some remarks, particularly to the younger portion of the meeting, offered the following Resolution, which was unanimously adopted.

Resolved, That the young men of Connersville and its vicinity, do, in an especial manner, deeply lament and deplore

the fatal accident which has bereaved them of one of their most worthy and estimable associates - that they feelingly sympathise with their other young associates, who are maimed and wounded-and that they will use all the exertions in their power to alleviate their present distress & promote their future welfare.

About half past 2 o'clock, the corpse of Alexander Saxon, was removed from the Hotel to the Court House, preceded by a Band of solemn music, followed by the relatives and a long procession of citizens.— After a brief but appropriate Funeral Address was made by the Rev. Wilson Thompson—the following order of procession to the grave was formed, John Willey, Esqr. officiating as Marshall.

Clergy
Pall Beares (music)
CORPSE
Relatives
Committee
Seminary Teacher
His Pupils
Ladies
Attending Physicians
Civil Officers
Citizens

It is computed that no less than 1000 persons heard the Funeral Discourse, and that from 5 to 7 hundred joined in the procession to the grave. It is thought the whole ceremony was decidedly the most respectable for numbers and appropriate order that has ever been witnessed in this portion of the State.

Subscriptions are now being taken for the purpose of erecting, if not a splendid, at least a very respectable Monument, with an appropriate inscription, over the remains of the unfortunate young man, who has deceased of his wounds. As to the propriety of this measure, it is believed that there is but one feeling in this

community. The deceased was about 21 years of age--a peculiarly hale, stout, fine looking young man, of the most exemplary and unblemished character, and greatly esteemed by all who knew him. It is designed that this Monument shall not only be a lasting memento of the feelings of this community in reference to the untimely fate of the deceased, which all deplore--but also of the glad tidings we were celebrating when the catastrophe occurred.

It is likewise the determination of this community to express their sympathy for Mr. Clark, the young gentleman, 23 years of age, who has lost his right arm, in as beneficent a manner as possible. Mr. C. is also a young man of industrious and enterprising habits, of good mind and a very fair reputation. He has accumulated a little property, but not sufficient to meet the great misfortune which has befallen him. It is understood that he now expresses a desire to obtain a good education. This community we trust, will not be backward in backing his dream. Attention is particularly invited to the call which will be seen in this paper for a meeting of young men.

Annexed will be found the official Report that was called for.

The Committee appointed to enquire into the causes of the catastrophe of the evening of the 18th inst. Submit the following Report.

1st. Mr. Saxon was not one of the regular gunners, but was permitted to assist in loading the cannon at his own request.

2d. That he had not assisted in loading previous to the time at which the accident occurred.

3d. That in the hurry, the swab was not passed more than half way down the piece, and that it was not wet at all and further, that Mr. Saxon himself swabbed the cannon.

4th. That the lower end of each Cartridge that had been fired remained in the cannon, as has been ascertained by subsequent examination, and that they were on fire at the time of introducing the cartridge, is indicated by the fact that the gunners saw smoke coming out of the muzzle after the swab was withdrawn.

5th. That the cartridge was rammed down, and the gunners were in the act of drawing the rammer at the moment of the explosion.

6th. That Mr. Saxon held the rammer with both hands, but that Mr. Clark had taken his left hand from the rammer, and turned himself around to suffer the person who was to introduce the wad to come up to the muzzle.

The committee wish to say, that a notion prevails generally, which is not only erroneous, but highly dangerous. It is, that a cannon will not take fire if the touch-hole be closed—Or in other words, that Gunpowder will not take fire when excluded from the air. This fact is true in relation to most combustible bodies—but it is not true in regard to Gunpowder. Its decomposition furnishes air (Oxygen) to carry on its own combustion. If the cartridges were made of materials that would tear in ramming down, all would be perfectly safe while the air was excluded by holding the touch hole—But with paper cartridges it is not safe when there is evidence of fire in the piece.—A mistake on this subject, was one of the leading causes on the fatal accident, which the Committee have been instructed to inquire into.

S.W. Parker, Chairman.

NOTICE.

CANAL LETTING.

SEALED PROPOSALS for the construction of EIGHTEEN to TWENTY miles of the Wabash & Erie Canal

Will be received at Miamisport, Miami County, Indiana, on the 28th day of July next.

The work to be let extends from the town of Wabash, westward to a point about 15 miles above Logansport, and embraces

Five or six LOCKS, a number of CULVERTS, and a DAM across the Wabash, below the mouth of the Mississinewa, 8 feet high, and near 500 feet long.

Plans and specifications of the work will be exhibited for four or five days previous to the letting and all necessary explanations in relation to the work will be given by the engineer superintending the same.

Bidders not personally known to the Commissioners or Engineer will be expected to produce satisfactory testimonials of character and qualifications as Contractors.

D. Burr, Saml. Lewis, Jas. B. Johnson.
Commissioners of the Wabash & Erie Canal.
Treaty Ground, 24th May, 1834.

Indiana Democrat, July 4, 1834.

CENSUS OF WABASH

By the census of our Town lately taken by Mr Thomas Roberts, it appears our population is 720-embracing 180 voters, 210 minors and 330 females.

The location of our Town is high, dry, and beautiful. It is surrounded on all sides by fertile lands, and industrious farmers; and being the county seat, and situated on the canal, must soon become a place of importance.

There are seven ware-houses on the canal completed, and two more large ones being built. At the lock is an excellent flouring mill with two runn of burrs, where flour equal to any made in the State, may at all times be had in exchange for either money or wheat. We also have a good saw mill driven by water, and a fine steam one, calculated for two saws in progress of completion. The business of our place may be judged of, from the fact that we have thirteen dry goods, two drug and two tin and stove stores, besides minor trading establishments, and the morality of the place from the fact that our three very respectable public houses, are all temperance houses.

Private buildings are going up in all directions, and everything in our midst bespeaks rapid improvement. Already perhaps this is the most business point between Lafayette and Fort Wayne, and bids fair, soon to become the most populous and wealthy.

Wabash Weekly Gazette, July 18, 1848.

For the Vincennes Gazette

Wabash Improvements

Having once, through your columns, expressed myself favorably to the improvement of the Wabash, I am pleased to see, that there are memorials now in circulation praying Congress for an appropriation of lands for that desirable object. I am rejoiced to find that the spirit of enterprise has not entirely fled from our ancient 'Post.' It has, to be sure, been dormant for a time; and indeed, too a long time. It should have been awake and active for years past, and doing that which it has accomplished for other portions of the community. Our citizens have been negligent and inactive upon this all-important subject, while those of Terre Haute and Lafayette and other towns have been busy beyond measure -- so much so, indeed, as to have obtained for the purpose of constructing canals, large appropriations, which might have been made for the great canal which nature has bestowed upon this section of country -- *le bel Ousbash*. Individuals who have the prosperity of other towns, in whose advancement they feel interested, in view -- who favored, and did all in their power to procure an appropriation for the Wabash and Erie canal, are now equally active

in assailing the liberality of Congress with the hope of receiving another grant, for the purpose of extending that canal from Terre Haute, where it now terminates, to Evansville on the Ohio. -- What can be more inconsistent with the present state of things, than such an undertaking? Wherefore should that work be countenanced while the Wabash is left unimproved and disregarded, the wants and desires of its people postponed -- and the prosperity of trade and commerce suspended? Well may strangers who visit our beautiful 'Old Post' exclaim, *Why how small your town is, to be such an old place!* Well may they marvel. -- And what can be said in return? Ah! we must acknowledge ourselves to have been wanting in all the essential points of character, which are requisite to give impetus to the current of affairs. We must confess ourselves to have been destitute of enterprise and public spirit. Such have we, hitherto, been obliged to admit, until almost every other place of mushroom growth has advanced in population, trade and improvement, at least ten fold. These are charges, which the condition of every thing connected with our town and its interests, will bear me out in making. -- But I am, as I said, rejoiced to see the spirit of enterprise awake from its slumbers; and I must earnestly trust it will not

drop into the same indifference which has hitherto characterized it, or shrink from the glorious object it now has in view.

There are memorials now being circulated praying aid from Congress for the extension of the canal from Terre Haute to Evansville; and one of the grounds urged to recommend it, is the chimera that the Wabash, if the Rapids were provided for, does not contain sufficient water, the greater portion of the year, to admit of steam boat navigation! But Congress will certainly be advised that such a statement is chimerical; for the members from the districts of Indiana and Illinois, bordering on the Wabash, are too well acquainted with its condition, and too much interested in its improvement, to suffer such fallacious representations to be palmed upon that body, to the disadvantage and injury of their constituents, whose interests they are bound to protect. It be compatible with the views and wisdom of Congress to grant appropriations for both objects, well and good; but if not, I do trust the canal matter will be made secondary to the Wabash.

In the original grant to construct a canal to connect the Lakes with the Ohio by means of the Wabash, the most important thing to be considered in view of that end was, as to a *navigable*

point on the Wabash. That done, the canal ought upon fair principles to be carried to that point. When finished to Lafayette, it is found not be the *navigable* point. -- An additional grant is made by Congress to extend it to Terre Haute. Yet it is no more the navigable point than Lafayette, or Vincennes, or any other place above the Rapids. Therefore if the Wabash is not improved, the canal should be made to meet it above the rapids, or else the object of Congress is not accomplished. -- The people in this section of country do not want the canal to come down any further than Terre Haute; (nor should it have, in my opinion, come that far) but they do want the river improved -- and in desiring the assistance of Congress therefor, they only ask what they are entitled to, upon the principle of a connexion of the Ohio and the Lakes, by a canal to a navigable point on the Wabash, which must be below the Rapids if they are not improved. Far be it from me, to disparage the interests, or say a word to postpone any work that would benefit any portion of the country. Against an appropriation being made to continue the canal to Evansville, I have not a word to object. But, I do protest, and would every one who knows the state of the river, &c., against the misrepresentations in the canal

memorial, in regard to the navigation of the Wabash. -- I would not hinder an appropriation for either the canal or the river, but I like to see the arguments in the memorials predicated upon facts; and if the wisdom of Congress sees fit to make a grant of land for only one of the projects, I would say let it be for the improvement of the river. This internal improvement system which was engaged in, with so much precipitancy in years gone by, in its consequences rendered it impossible for the States of Indiana and Illinois inv[?] as they were and now are, in debt [?] anything of themselves, to [?] the enterprise. The only remaining hope there is, that Congress will lend its assistance, in the way of donation of lands. If the Wabash be neglected and the canal made from Terre Haute to Evansville, the whole people living in both Indiana and Illinois between Terre Haute and the Rapids, will have no communication with the Ohio, unless by transporting their produce the best way they can, first to that place, and thence to the Ohio by the canal -- and not that alone, but the people of Illinois must necessarily pass their produce and receive their merchandise thro' the canal at a greater cost and with more delay; and that being the case, they most certainly would prefer the improvement of the river. Let both

works be completed but finish the Wabash first, and if it does not answer the purpose of the people, then they can take the alternative.

The improvement of the Wabash then is all that is necessary, to make a permanent thoroughfare between the Ohio and the lakes -- to furnish the farmer with a ready market for this surplus produce -- the travelling community with an easy and comfortable means of conveyance from place to place -- to revive the drooping prosperity of our town and farming interests; and to give that importance to the Western States to which nature and circumstances or eminently entitle them.

KATOURIE

Nov. 23, 1843

[Published in the Vincennes Saturday Gazette on November 25, 1843, page 2, columns 3 and 4]

Submitted by Chuck Huppert.

WABASH & ERIE CANAL
ORDERS, RULES AND REGULATIONS

Sec.33. Every person who shall sign or deliver to any Collector, a false bill of lading, shall pay, on all property omitted in such false bill, treble the established rates of toll, chargeable thereon, to any Collector who shall be satisfied of such omission, for the whole distance such property is conveyed on the canal.

Sec.34. Every person who shall knowingly sign or deliver a false bill of lading, shall, upon conviction thereof, before any court of competent jurisdiction, pay a sum not less than one hundred nor more than five hundred dollars.

Sec.35. Every collector receiving a bill of lading, may require the master exhibiting it, to verify it by his oath, which oath such Collector is authorized to administer.

Sec.36. Each boat navigating the canal shall have a separate clearance, and no part of the cargo of any boat shall be cleared to a place beyond that to which the boat is cleared.

Sec.37. The tonnage of all articles transported on the canal, on which toll may be charged by the ton, shall be ascertained and charged according to the real weight of such articles, reckoning two thousand pounds to make a ton.

Sec.38. The master of every boat or float shall be liable for the payment of tolls and expenses, chargeable on such boat or float, and its cargo; and it shall be the duty of every Collector to detain all articles on which tolls or expenses are chargeable, and the boat or float containing them, until such tolls and expenses shall be paid.

Sec.39. Every master of a boat shall make out and certify a correct list, for every voyage, of all passengers over eight years of age, which are transported on board of such boat, for any distance during such voyage, stating therein the name of each passenger, and the distance such passenger is transported, and deliver said list to the Collector to whom the clearance of the boat for such voyage is to be delivered; and the same shall be verified by the oath of the master,

if required by the Collector.

Sec.40. Each Collector is authorized when the business on the intermediate portion of the canal between his office and the next office in either direction, shall in his opinion require it, in order to prevent frauds upon the revenue, to issue and sign a permit to the master of any float, to make a voyage or voyages, on such intermediate portion of the canal, with such regulations as will secure the payment of proper tolls, which permit shall answer the purpose of a clearance, and shall authorize the boat or float, in whose favor it is given, to navigate such intermediate portion of the canal: Provided, such permit shall not extend to, nor within two miles of any Collector's office and the master of the boat shall from time to time report to the Collector granting the permit, as he shall prescribe in the permit, the property or persons transported by him on his boat, and account for and pay the tolls according to law.

Sec.41. That in any case where a boat or other float shall attempt to navigate the canal without being legally authorized so to do, it shall be the duty of every Superintendent, lock-tender or other agent of the Board, belonging to the canal, on being notified thereof, to stop and detain such boat or float, until such legal authority to navigate the canal shall be obtained.

Sec.42. That for the purpose of ascertaining whether any boat is navigating the canal, without being legally authorized so to do, it shall be the duty of the master thereof to exhibit his clearance to any Superintendent, lock-tender, or other agent of the Board, when required to do so; and if such clearance or permit shall not be exhibited, such Superintendent, lock-tender, or other agent of the Board, shall stop such boat from proceeding further on the canal until the requisite authority be procured.

Sec.43. Each Collector of tolls shall keep a regular account of the weight or quantity of any or all articles cleared from his office, or passing on the canal, together with the tolls

received thereon, and shall transmit to the office of the Board of Trustees monthly abstracts of such accounts from his books.

Sec.44. All boats, floats or other property belonging to the United States, shall be permitted to be transported free of toll, on the Wabash and Erie canal. Provided, satisfactory proof be furnished the proper Collector, that the same is bona fide the property of the United States; but all such boats, floats, or other property, shall be reported, cleared, and in all other respects subject to the rules, regulations, forfeitures and liabilities imposed by the Board of Trustees, in respect to other boats, floats or property passing on the canal.

Sec.45. That for all damages done to the canal, and for all penalties and forfeitures imposed by the Board of Trustees, other than for offences punishable by presentment or indictment, any Superintendent, or Collector of tolls, is authorized to bring suit, by actions of debt, against the offender or offenders, in the name of "the Board of Trustees of the Wabash and Erie Canal" before any court of competent jurisdiction, and the amount recovered over and above the expense of suit, shall be paid to the nearest Collector of tolls, which shall be by him, paid over in the same manner as the moneys collected from tolls.

Sec.46. That no person shall under any pretence or authority whatever, except with permission in writing from the Board of Trustees, or Chief Engineer or general Superintendent, dig or construct, or cause to be dug or constructed, any drain, or remove or deposit, or cause to be removed or deposited, earth, sand, or gravel or other material so that the effect of such drain or the removal of such earth, sand, gravel or other material, as aforesaid, will be to cause earth, sand, gravel or other material, to be washed into the canal, to the injury of the same.

Sec.47. No person shall put or cause to be put any dead animal into the canal.

To be continued.

CANAL SOCIETY OF INDIANA

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