

# INDIANA WATERWAYS

Volume II, Issue 4: April, 1983

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## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Society Members:

The wheels have been set in motion for an outstanding meeting of the Canal Society in Fort Wayne on Saturday, 7 May, 1983. You will be receiving detailed information with this issue of **INDIANA WATERWAYS**. As always, the degree of success we achieve is the result of membership participation and I urge you to get your reservation for the meeting to Dan McCain as soon as possible.

Publicizing the Canal Society, its events and activities, needs the assistance and active participation of our membership. We plan an extensive newspaper effort throughout the state to let those who might be interested know about our annual meeting.

Linda and David Freund are heading this publicity committee, but it is up to each of us to 'talk-it-up' and get the 'good word' out in our own community. Our Membership Brochure is an excellent

tool for sharing our organization with others and signing up those who are interested. If you don't have copies of the brochure you can pick up a few at the Annual Meeting.

The program for 7 May is detailed in your announcement. I would like to inform you at this time that the major piece of business during the business meeting portion of our meeting will be the explanation, discussion and adoption of a set of by-laws for the Society. After this has been accomplished we will be moving towards incorporating the Canal Society as a not-for-profit, tax-exempt organization - then we'll be in business officially.

Please bring any ideas, thoughts, program suggestions, project ideas, etc. when you come to Fort Wayne in May. I look forward to seeing you there.

Clarence Hudson, President  
Canal Society of Indiana

## AMERICA'S WATERWAYS: CANAL CORPSES OR LIVING HISTORY?

by Bev Wm. Morant

In my school days I read about the Parthenon of Athens, the Coliseum of Rome, and the Pyramids of Egypt. Many years later I visited these ancient areas. I stared, I touched and walked through these archaeological monuments many times. I felt elated; all these wonderful monuments were *in situ*, the best kind of museum.

One great thing was lacking: No matter how long I stared or how many times I touched or how many times I walked through wonderful monuments of beautiful stonework, yes, something was lacking. I could not become involved in this old archaeology. The people were missing and the buildings static. Oh, yes they told stories, but people could never be involved again.

Then came the Industrial Revolution. -It too disappeared as it left wood, metal and stone monuments. Looking back on this area, we now call this period **Industrial Archaeology**. This type of industry we can put back together again and make it work, whether it be old mills or old industrial canals. So let's do it!

In an old industrial mill, I can take part. I can push that switch, I can slip that belt; and I can get that machine to grind corn, just like my grandfather used to do. Then there are those old canals: I can **restore** that lock, I can **restore** that canal, I can look back at my grandfather and my grandmother working that old commercial canal boat. I am working a canal boat now.

Our historians have done a good job of putting the written words together. Now it is the canal societies who must lead the way and put the locks and canals in a state of restoration. I now can stare, I can touch and now I can use these wonderful old locks and canals for we have restored these canals so I may use them for boating -- I can dream some more -- that is if I go to England!

But what about all the people who can not afford to go to England or do not even care to go to England. What about all the children of generations yet to come? Do we owe them a look at restored working canals or canal cadavers? It is my belief that the children of generations yet to come, in the United States of America have a right to see history in situ and working in such a way that they can take part in hundreds of miles of industrial archaeology as restored working locks and canals for boating, of opening the locks by hand and most of all, the ability to feel that historical living of the old days.

It is only by the restoration of our locks and canals that we can take part again, not in the Parthenon, not in the Coliseum and not in the Pyramids of Egypt, but in that exciting facet of our own history, America's canals.

## CANAL WORK PROJECT UPDATE:

The Whitewater Canal debris removal project is shaping up well. Between six and ten stalwarts are planning to meet at the Laurel Feeder Dam on the morning of Saturday, April 9, ready to work.

## Now is the Time for Restoration!

Most of all this canal industrial archaeology is still in situ for the peak of this industrial development was in the 1860s. Even though our climate is much more severe than that of the Mediterranean, we still have a chance to restore a great portion of our canal system if we start now.

We are aware of good archeological practices. We know that we can use much of the old and mix some new with the old. We know that some of the traces of canals are not to be found easily. We know that much of the traces can be found and resurveyed. We know that there will be political battles. But history, like motherhood, must be continued. We canal societies must lead the way. We say: **'The difficult we do immediately, the impossible takes a little longer.'** If the English can restore their canals, we Americans can restore our canals. Let us form an association with all the canal societies as well as the hikers, fishers, boaters and other groups. We will lose a few battles but we will win most of them. In order to win those battles we must start today. Tomorrow is becoming too late.

**Bev Wm Morant  
Waterways Restoration Association  
61 West Bonita  
Sierra Madre, CA  
91024**

We'll probably be there on Sunday, the 10th. as well. We're informed that there's plenty of stuff to be removed from the channel, so we'll have plenty to do!

We'll report on the project in the June issue of Indiana Waterways.

T.M.

## SURVEYS FOR THE MICHIGAN-ERIE CANAL

by Ben V. Meek

Among the other projects which were a part of the Internal Improvements proposed for Indiana was a canal to connect the waters of Lake Michigan with the Wabash & Erie canal. The first surveys of a route running from Fort Wayne to Lake Michigan were made in the Summers of 1829 and 1830 by Lt. Col. John J. Albert, Topographical Engineer, Engineering Dept. U.S.A.<sup>1</sup>

There were two surveys made at the time. One route was to unite the waters of Lake Michigan with the Wabash River. This was called the 'Southern Route'. It would begin at Benton Harbor on Lake Michigan (in the State of Michigan); go up the St. Joseph River to South Bend in Indiana, then across an old portage to the valley of the Kankakee, thence follow the Yellow River and the valley of the Motemonon to the Tippecanoe and then to connect with the Wabash and Erie. This route would have been 163 miles long and required 37 locks. Water would be obtained from the St. Joseph of the

The second of the 1829 surveys was called the 'Northern Route'. It was to begin at the Wabash and Erie feeder, North of Fort Wayne and go up the valley of the little St. Joseph River about six miles to Fish Creek then following this creek to Deer Lake and then Pigeon Creek through a series of small lakes: Pigeon, Camp, Long, HogBack and Little Fish Lakes. It would follow Pigeon Creek to the Little Elkhart river, and then to the St. Joseph of the Lake into Lake Michigan at Benton Harbor. This route would require 69 locks and several long embankments, also four aqueducts.

Neither of the routes was satisfactory because they both would run through the State of Michigan to gain access to Lake Michigan.

A new survey was made in 1837 by W.B. Mitchell, a civil Engineer employed by the Indiana State Board of Internal Improvements? Construction was started on this route in Green Township, Noble County and also at what is now Rome City, work was begun on the reservoir which was to supply the summit level with water. (This reservoir, now known as Sylvan Lake, is, ironicali, the only canal reservoir in Indiana which is holding water at the present day.) The canal was to begin at the junction of the Wabash and Erie feeder and Spy Run creek in Fort Wayne near State and Clinton Streets. There were to be three locks made of stone near this junction. The canal would run along Spy Run Northwest crossing the headwaters of Eel River and Cedar Creek. Then follow Willow Creek westward into Noble County and switch to the valley of Blue River going North. About two miles of canal was actually dug at this point. The route meandered in a northerly direction around the hills of Green Township. Part of the difficulty in this route was the crossing at right angles of the headwaters of several streams which flowed in different directions. Spy Run feeds into the St. Marys River, Eel River into the Wabash system, Willow Creek into the Maumee watershed, and Blue River into the Tippecanoe and Wabash. The next section of the canal had to be cut through the Elkhart Summit and follow a creek into Long Lake and through the present Chain O' Lakes State Park which has nine lakes more or less joined, and which feed into the Elkhart system.

There were problems in crossing all these headwaters and some deep cuts were required. The Elkhart Summit would have necessitated the removal of 728,806 cubic feet of earth, but much of the balance of the

route would be in the slack water of lakes and rivers.

A dam was to be constructed near Forker Creek and the route was to continue through several more lakes moving in a northerly direction through Port Mitchell and the South Branch of the Elkhart River. The feeder from Sylvan Lake would join the canal about 3 miles North of Augusta, the canal would enter the main Elkhart River in Perry Township. The canal

would follow the Elkhart valley in and out of the river to the St. Joseph of the lake. There the route would turn West to the valley of the Kankakee to Saltcreek where it would turn North and go toward Michigan City via Trail Creek. The basin at Michigan City would be 26 feet above the level of the lake. The total milage would be 187 miles including three feeders, 55 locks, 5 dams, 38 culverts and 4 aqueducts.

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**FIRST BOAT THROUGH!** The Evansville ENQUIRER, of the 23d. Inst. says:

'We had the pleasure this morning of entering the corporate limits of the city of Evansville on the next passenger packet Pennsylvania, Capt. Alexander Sharra. She is the first boat that has ever reached this point from Lake Erie. She came within a short distance of the city yesterday evening, but there was not water enough to let her down further until this morning, when by the aid of a few yoke of oxen, tendered by the proprietor of the saw mill, Mr. Iglehart, she was brought into the city this morning with a good trip of passengers, who had gone up to meet her.

'This boat was built fifty-six miles above Pittsburgh, Pa. and was brought down the canal to the Ohio river, and then down the Ohio to Cincinnati; at Cincinnati she entered the Miami canal and proceeded up that canal to the junction of the Wabash and Erie canal; by that canal she proceeded to Lake Erie, from which point she came direct to this city. At that point she entered the Wabash and Erie canal about the first of last April, and this morning, the 23d day of September, we had the pleasure of boarding her a mile back of town, and entering on board of her on her first trip to this city. She had not, however, been all this time on the one trip--having been engaged in the packet trade above Terre Haute.

'She was recieved to-day at the Main Street bridge, by firing of cannon, and excellent music by the Brass Band, and general cheering and rejoicing from a large crowd of people.

WEEKLY INDIANA STATE SENTINEL  
October 6, 1853

## PLAN CANAL FROM CHICAGO TO TOLEDO

Matter will be discussed at Indianapolis convention.

Fort Wayne, Ind., Nov. 9--Freight by canal from Chicago to Toledo is the ultimate purpose of the Toledo, Fort Wayne and Chicago Deep Waterways association which will hold a convention here this week.

Chicago, Cleveland, New York, Cincinnati, Toledo, Defiance, and other cities will have representatives at the convention. United States Senators Beveridge and Shively of Indiana will be among the speakers.

The Michigan and Erie canal, as planned, from Chicago through Fort Wayne to Toledo, will be 270 miles long and 400 miles shorter than the present all water route from Chicago to Toledo by way of the great lakes. The estimated cost is near \$100,000.

from: Kendallville DAILY SUN  
November 9, 1909

(Thanks to CSI member Russell F. Frehse for this item.)

## 'CANAL BOY 1846 - PRESIDENT 1881'

by Ben W. Meek



Obverse



Reverse

Pictured is a brass political medalet promoting the candidacy of James Abram Garfield for U.S. President in 1880. The inscription reads: 'CANAL BOY 1845-PRESIDENT 1881'. The White House is shown above and a boy riding a horse and towing a boat on a canal appears in the foreground. The obverse side has a bust of Garfield. There is a hole at the top of the medalet so that it could be tied to a coat lapel. At least three different varieties of this medalet were produced.<sup>1</sup>

Garfield was born in a log cabin (The last President in this tradition ...so far) near Cleveland in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, a part of the Western Reserve. His father died when James was two years old and the family had a poor living from their twenty-acre farm. At the age of sixteen he left the farm and joined the crew of the *Evening Star* as a mule driver. His diary tells of a trip from Cleveland to Pittsburgh

with a load of copper ore. He says: 'My business is bowing, which is to get the locks ready, get the boat through, trim the lamps, etc. I get 14 dollars a month.'

Garfield worked for four months and by his count fell into the water 14 times while tending the ropes. He decided that life on the canal was not for him and returned to the family farm. With the aid of his unusual mother he graduated from Hiram Institute in Ohio, and Williams College in Massachusetts. He rose in Republican political circles and was nominated for President. He won the election but was assassinated after serving only six months of his term.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Doyle Dewitt: A CENTURY OF CAMPAIGN BUTTONS 1959 Travelers Press Hartford, Conn.

<sup>2</sup> John M. Taylor: GARFIELD OF OHIO W.W.Norton & Co. New York

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

by Julia Meek

The towns along the Wabash and Erie Canal route came in a variety of shapes and sizes. Except for the distinction they shared in being 'canal towns' and therefore trading centers, each settlement grew with a unique and interesting history.

Some towns, such as Evansville and Petersburg were well established, thriving river towns before the days of the canals. Others, like Fort Wayne and Logansport, were small and ambitious communities just waiting for the transportation boom of the canal era. Still others, like New Haven, owe their very existence to the canals.

In the formation of these towns, one rule did prevail: **If you're going to have a settlement, you've got to name it;** and the place names along the canal are as varied as the towns themselves.

To our delight, a dictionary of Indiana Place Names does exist, thanks to the efforts of Ronald Baker and Marvin Carmony. While they modestly point out that this is a selective dictionary, not a comprehensive Gazetteer, their study includes 2,271 entries, mostly settlements, each with historical, linguistic, geographic and folkloric data. We being true-blue canallers, the pages of our 'Indiana Place Names' which list canal towns are well-thumbed, and the following facts (and a little fiction) are taken from this delightful book.

Only four towns along the Wabash & Erie have borne names connected with the canal itself. Lockport, a village in Carroll County, was originally named for the locks there. Riley, a town in Vigo County, was originally named Lockport, also, and for the same reason, but the post office was called Riley to avoid confusion with the other Lockport; and as frequently happened, the town name was eventually changed to Riley,

too. Millersburg, a village in Warrick County, was named for Philip Miller, but since there were several other Millersburgs in Indiana, the Post Office was called Canal, and 'Canal' remains Millersburg's nickname even today. (Don't know if it's still there, but a few years ago, an ancient and fading painted sign reading: **CANAL LODGE I.O.O.F.** could be seen hanging above the door of the neglected-looking Odd Fellows' Hall in Millersburg.)

Perhaps the most colorful place-name origin derived from the canal is that of **Francisco**, a town in Gibson County. According to regional lore, it was named for a Spanish canal laborer. He was fired, built a shack on the spot, and became the first resident!

The other canal towns? Their names seem to come from a host of sources, some practical, some whimsical.

One of the most popular sources of place names is personal names. **Fountain** (Fountain Co.), **Lafayette** (Tippecanoe Co.), and **Huntington** (Huntington Co.) were named for popular heroes. First and last names of town founders and prominent citizens provided functional names like **Georgetown** (Randolph Co.), **Evansville** (Vanderburg Co.) and **Petersburg** (Pike Co.).

**Pittsburg**, in Carroll County, **Worthington** in Greene County, and **New Haven** in Allen County, are a few of the towns which were named after other towns . . . often the settlers' former homes. The Wabash & Erie was graced with two settlement names right out of Ancient Greek history: **Delphi**, in Carroll County, and **Attica** in Fountain County.

The assortment of Indian-inspired place names ranges from **Montezuma**, (Parke Co.): the last of the Aztec Emperors, to **Lagro** (Wabash Co.) which comes from 'Le Gros', the French nickname of a local Miami Chief which means 'The Fat'. Logans-

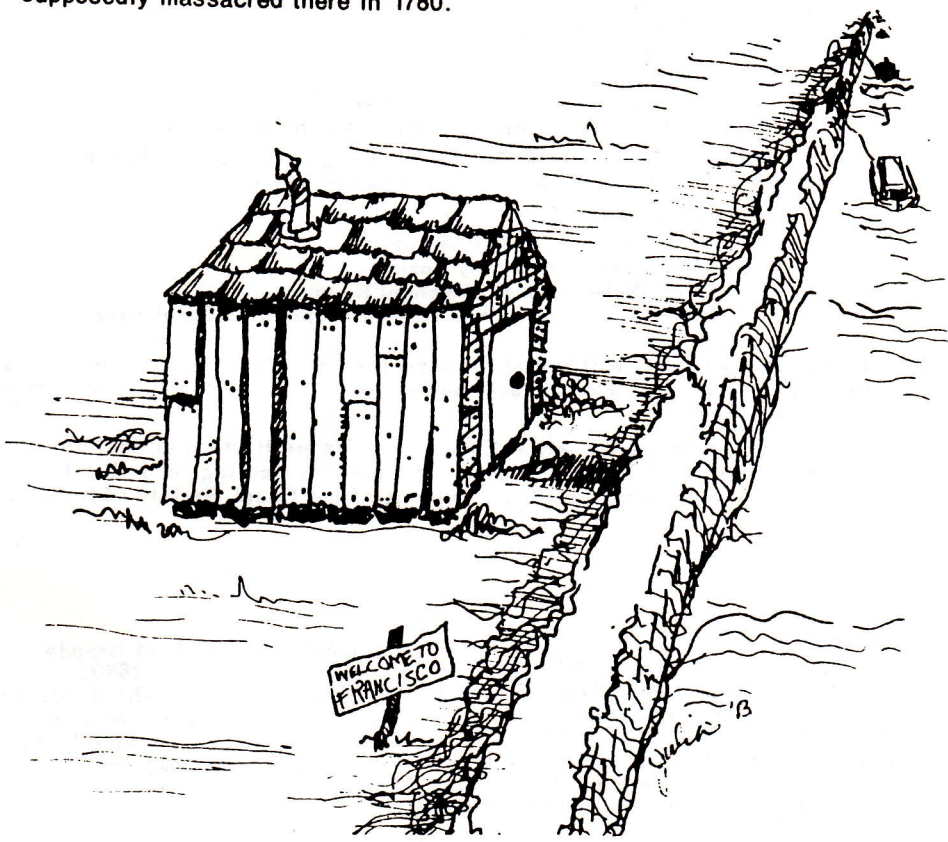
port (Cass Co.) was named for a U.S. Army Captain Logain, a Shawnee.

The name **Roanoke** (Huntington Co.) comes from the Virginia Indians and refers to their shell money.

Among the more creatively-named towns we have **Richvalley** (Wabash Co.), which describes the fertility of the surrounding farmlands; **Terre Haute** (Vigo Co.), French for High Land; **Americus** (Tippecanoe Co) a patriotic salute; and **Aboite Creek**, from the French **Rivere a Boite**, which means 'River of Minnows', a story much more believable than some of the rather bizarre and far-reaching theories which have been put forth by amateur historians and others, such as the idea that Aboite came from the French: 'Abatoire', which means 'a slaughterhouse', this because LaBalme and his men were supposedly massacred there in 1780.

**Waterman** in Parke Co. wins the dubious honor of being the 'most named' canal town. (none of them, by the way, not even **Waterman**, being a canal-derived name!) Originally called **Gilderoy**, it was platted in 1836 as **Fullerton**, but changed in 1837 to **Lodi**, for nearby artesian springs. In 1857 it was changed again to **Waterman**, for a prominent business man who commercially improved the town, and technically it remains **Waterman** today. But local romanticism seems to have won out, for **Lodi** (named for an Italian town, site of Napoleon's victory of 1796) is still most popular among **Gilderoy-Fullerton-Lodi-Waterman** residents.

INDIANA PLACE NAMES by Ronald L Baker and Marvin Carmony; Indiana University Press 1975





# CANAL SOCIETY of INDIANA

## First Annual Meeting

Saturday, 7 May 1983

Fort Wayne-Allen County Historical Society  
302 East Berry Street Fort Wayne, Indiana

### SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

#### SATURDAY

##### SATURDAY A.M.

- 9:00 Registration and Coffee  
9:30 Welcome and Introductions  
9:45 Hudson Wabash River Expedition  
'An Avenue to History' Clarence Hudson  
10:30 Movie Review of 1982 Tour Mark Polloni  
11:00 Indexing and Marking Activities Thomas Meek  
11:30 A Review of the Feeder Canal Julia & Thos. Meek  
11:45 Lunch - on your own

##### SATURDAY P.M.

- 1:00 Board Bus for Guided Tour of  
St. Joseph Feeder Canal  
4:00 End of Tour  
5:00 Gather for Dinner at the Historical Society  
5:30 Dinner  
7:00 Business Meeting - Elections  
7:45 Preview of 1983 Fall Meeting Dan McCain  
8:00 The Wabash and Erie Canal  
'Search for Hidden Hoosier History' Ed O'Brien  
9:00 Adjourn - Fellowship - Meeting of Advisory Board

**SUNDAY (Free for All):** For those wishing to stay over in Fort Wayne the following activities will be available:

- Visit the Old Fort
- A Walking Tour of Fort Wayne
- Visit Historical Society Museum
- Visit Diehm Museum of Natural History
- Auto Caravan to Eastern Indiana & Ohio W&E Canal sites

Advance Reservations will help in planning and ensure the success of the Annual Meeting. Reservations must be received by Tuesday, 3 May 1983 Use the attached form for reservations.

We wish to thank the Allen County-Fort Wayne Historical Society for the use of their Frank Freimann Hall for this meeting, and also for their continuing encouragement and support of the Canal Society of Indiana.

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