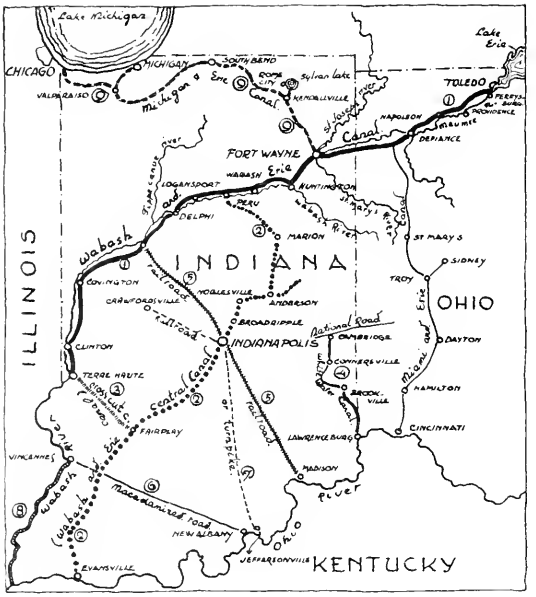

1~ Wabash and Erie Canal under construction in 1835 — 459 miles in length, when completed from Maumee Bay to Evansville.
2~ Central canal, 290 miles ~
3~ Cross cut canal, 42 miles ~
4~ White Water Canal, 76 miles ~
5~ A railroad from Madison to Lafayette ~
6~ A macadamized road from New Albany to Vincennes ~
7~ Railroad or turnpike from Jeffersonville to Crawfordsville.
8~ Improvement of the Wabash River.
9~ Survey of the Erie and Michigan Canal, connecting Chicago with the Wabash and Erie Canal at Fort Wayne ~

CANAL CELEBRATIONS

IN

OLD FORT WAYNE

Prepared by the Staff of the
Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County
1953

One of a historical series, this pamphlet is published under the direction of the governing Boards of the Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County.

FOREWORD

Our pioneer forebears were certain that canals would ensure a prosperous economic future for the western country. The system of waterways from the Atlantic Coast to the Gulf of Mexico would permit free interchange of products, which was destined to bring great prosperity in its wake.

On July 4, 1835, the Wabash and Erie Canal was opened to traffic from Fort Wayne to Huntington, Indiana. On July 4, 1843, the completion of the Canal from Toledo, Ohio, to Lafayette, Indiana, was celebrated. It was deemed fitting that both of these important events in the history of the Canal should be celebrated on the Fourth of July, for it was believed that industrial and economic independence should rank with political independence. One has only to examine the files of the FORT WAYNE WEEKLY SENTINEL and the FORT WAYNE TIMES AND PEOPLE'S PRESS to realize that the birthday of the nation was a great occasion in Fort Wayne before the Civil War. Succeeding celebrations of July 4 were magnified in importance by the extravaganza of July 4, 1843.

General Lewis Cass, a popular figure in the western country and well known in Fort Wayne, delivered the address of the day at the 1843 celebration. He was already a prospective candidate for the Presidency of the United States, and participation in the canal celebration kept him before the electorate. Many of the nation's great wrote letters of regret at their inability to attend. It was, perhaps, the greatest event, by any relative comparison, ever to take place in Fort Wayne.

Although inaugurated with high hopes and great expectations, the Canal proved inadequate to the needs of the area within a few years. However, it continued to be

an integral part of the industry, politics, and mores of the community for many years; and it served as an artery of transportation for more than three decades.

Please permit contemporary accounts to tell the story of the canal celebrations. The language of the orators, of the news reporters, and of the absent guests is prolix and redundant; the various accounts of the history of the Canal differ in some details. But it was thought best to reprint the contemporary materials as originally published.

Most of these accounts appeared in the FORT WAYNE WEEKLY SENTINEL and other periodicals more than a century ago. The "Genesis of the Wabash and Erie Canal" is reproduced from Brice's HISTORY OF FORT WAYNE. Punctuation, spelling, and grammar have been changed to conform to current usage throughout.

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I

GENESIS OF THE WABASH AND ERIE CANAL

On March 2, 1827, by an act of Congress, every alternate section of land equal to five miles in width on both sides of what is now the Wabash and Erie Canal was granted to the state of Indiana for the purpose of constructing a canal from the head of navigation on the Wabash, at the mouth of the Tippecanoe River, to the foot of the Maumee rapids. Construction was to be commenced at the expiration of the five years following the passage of the act and was to be completed within twenty years from that time.

Soon after this grant, the land office commissioners closed the sales and entry of all government lands lying along, and embraced within, the limits of said grant until the state should select and locate her bounty under the grant. For a time, this had the effect of retarding, rather than superinducing and encouraging, settlement in the northern portion of the state and along the region of the intended line of the Canal. A large body of this land, amounting to some two hundred and fifty thousand acres, lay in the state of Ohio. It was eventually ceded to that state by an act of Congress with the consent of the state of Indiana, under certain stipulations: viz., that the Canal should be commenced and completed according to the original grant, and that it should be sixty feet wide on the surface of the water and five feet deep instead of forty feet wide and four deep. The Honorable Jeremiah Sullivan, during 1829, was commissioned to adjust and settle this matter.

In the winter of 1826 and 1827, a board of canal commissioners was created. It was the duty of the board to examine the practicability of a canal route from the

Maumee to the Wabash and to determine if a supply of water therefor could be obtained from the St. Joseph, St. Mary's, Maumee, or Wabash rivers, or all of them. For this purpose $500 was appropriated; and Samuel Hanna of Fort Wayne, David Burr of Jackson County, and Robert John of Franklin County were elected commissioners. It was very difficult to get this board together, but finally it was convened by Governor Ray on July 14, 1828, at Indianapolis. There the board received from him plats, maps, surveys, profiles, notes, etc., from the report of a survey made by a corps of government engineers from the mouth of Little River--at which point a prior survey had been suspended in 1826--thence down the Wabash, and from the summit at Fort Wayne down the Maumee River.

This board of commissioners met at Fort Wayne in the summer of that year (1828). They had no level or any other instrument to work with and no engineer; the $500 of appropriation was insufficient for any practical purpose. Judge Hanna agreed to procure the instruments. He was thereupon dispatched to Detroit, which he reached on horseback in two days. He then proceeded to New York, procured the instruments, and returned in an extraordinarily quick time for that day.

Early in September the board proceeded, with the aid of the engineer, John Smythe of Miamisburg, Ohio, to gauge the St. Joseph, St. Mary's, and the Wabash rivers at the forks. During these observations, Smythe was taken sick; and he left the board members (none of whom were engineers) to carry on the work as best they could. From September 10 to 23, they spent the time in examining the St. Joseph River and the adjacent country for the purpose of locating the feeder for the Canal; and they finally succeeded in locating the dam and feeder lines to the summit. They made their own estimates and adopted the estimates of Colonel Moore, under

whose directions former surveys had been made down the Wabash and Maumee rivers. The latter estimates, in the meantime, had been received from the War Department and enabled the commissioners, after the most diligent work, night and day, to present a report of their labor on December 26, later than was intended by the law creating the commission. So exhausted was Colonel Burr by constant fatigue in calculation that for a time his mental powers were overcome; hence it devolved on Judge Hanna to report, and he did so. His report was replete with liberal suggestions and sound sense. This report was concurred in; and from that day went on a work which has proved so great a benefit to Indiana. In this capacity Judge Hanna served three years. The canal lands were located by the commissioners under the act of January 25, 1829, and platted. A sale opened at Logansport after some delay in October, 1830; and an office opened in the first week of October, 1832, at Fort Wayne.

The sale at Logansport was attended by a large number of persons, and much land was then sold in Cass and adjacent counties. The sale resulted in the attraction of quite an influx of immigrants to that section and to contiguous parts of the state. "But," says C. B. Lasselle, Esq., "owing to the length of credit given on the purchase, the sale availed but little in affording means for the prosecution of the construction of the Canal. It was, therefore, found necessary to appeal to the state. Accordingly, a bill was introduced in the legislature during the sessions of 1831-32 for effecting a loan upon the faith of the state. The loan was to be based upon the moneys arising from the land sales and the interest thereon, together with the tolls and water rents of the Canal. The bill met with fierce opposition on the part of many prominent men in the legislature, but it finally passed. Its success

was duly celebrated by the citizens of Logansport."

The CASS COUNTY TIMES of March 2, 1832, gave the following interesting account of the meeting of the commissioners and the commencement of the work on the Canal at Fort Wayne.

"The commissioners of the Wabash and Erie Canal met at Fort Wayne on February 22, 1832, for the purpose of carrying into effect the requisition of the late law of the legislature of this state, providing for the commencement of said work prior to March 24, 1832. Whereupon, the commissioners appointed the anniversary of the birth of the Father of his Country as the day on which the first excavation should be made on said Canal. By an order of the board, Jordan Vigus, Esq., was authorized to procure the necessary tools and assistance and to repair to the most convenient point on the St. Joseph feeder line at two o'clock on said day for the purpose aforesaid.

"The intention of the commissioners having been made known, a large number of citizens of the town of Fort Wayne and its vicinity, together with a number of gentlemen from the valley of the Wabash, convened at the Masonic Hall for the purpose of making arrangements for the celebration of this important undertaking. Henry Rudisill, Esq., was called to the chair, and David H. Colerick was appointed secretary.

"The procession, having been organized agreeably, proceeded across the St. Mary's River to the point selected. Then a circle was formed, in which the commissioner and the orator took their stand. Charles W. Ewing, Esq., then rose and, in his usual happy, eloquent manner, delivered an appropriate address, which was received with acclamation. Jordan Vigus, Esq., the only canal commissioner

Charles W. Ewing then rose and delivered an appropriate address....

present, addressed the company. He explained why his colleagues were absent, adverted to the difficulties and embarrassments which the friends of the Canal had encountered and overcome, and noticed the importance of the work and the advantages which would ultimately be realized. He then concluded by saying, 'I am now about to commence the Wabash and Erie Canal in the name, and by the authority, of the state of Indiana.' Having thus spoken, he 'struck the long-suspended blow'--broke ground--while the company hailed the event with three cheers. Judge Hanna and Captain Murray, two of the able and consistent advocates of the Canal in the councils of the state, next approached and excavated the earth; then commenced an indiscriminate digging and cutting. The procession then marched back to town in the same manner as it went forth, and it dispersed in good order."

W. A. Brice, HISTORY OF FORT WAYNE (Fort Wayne, Indiana: D. W. Jones, 1868), pp. 303-5.

II

LETTER OF HUGH McCULLOCH

Fort Wayne, Indiana

September 2, 1835

Mr. John Spencer

Dear Sir:

In accordance with your request, I herewith send you a copy of the address delivered by me in this place on July 4 last. It would have been forwarded to you at an earlier day had not other engagements prevented me, until this time, from giving it even a hasty revision.

Soon after its delivery, I heard with some surprise and regret that some passages in it were considered to be of a party character and to give offense to some of the friends of the present administration. If such be the fact, the tenor of my remarks must have been misapprehended. It was foreign from my intention to cast any reflections on the President of the United States or on his administration. Upon the subject of executive patronage, I did indeed speak freely; but if my remarks on this subject are candidly examined, I doubt not that I shall be exculpated from the charge of having availed myself of my appointment as orator of the day to cast censure upon the President or those whose political sentiments do not accord with my own. I am respectfully,

Yours sincerely,

HUGH McCULLOCH

III

ORATION OF HUGH McCULLOCH

Fellow Citizens:

The celebration in which we are now engaged is one of more than ordinary interest. We have, all of us, laid by our usual avocations to commemorate events of no common character. We have assembled as American citizens to celebrate the anniversary of our national freedom and as citizens of Indiana to celebrate the commencement of the navigation of the Wabash and Erie Canal. In both these events, we feel deeply interested. As Americans, we hail with delight and enthusiasm the return of that day which witnessed the commencement of our national existence. On that day, the bold spirits of our fathers refused longer to submit to foreign domination; and the infant colonies, throwing off the chains which bound them to the British throne, rose in the majesty of liberty to take their stand as an independent nation among the nations of the earth. With this event are connected the loftiest and most soul-thrilling associations. To it we are indebted for all that, as a nation, we now are and for all we expect to become, for all the national blessings we now enjoy and for those we look forward to possessing.

The Fourth of July is a day which every true friend of America holds sacred. It is the birthday of freedom not only to the United States but also, we confidently trust, to the world. It is the day to which the American looks with joy and exultation and the European turns with confidence and hope. From it and the events that are connected with it, monarchs may learn how weak is their power when arrayed against those who have the knowledge to understand their rights and the resolution

JUDGE HUGH MCCULLOCH

to defend them. And the people may learn that they are the center of power and that to them is legitimately entrusted the right and the ability to select their own rulers and to become their own masters. To the former, this day is a warning of the fallacy of the doctrine of the divine right of kings; it is a warning of the danger of exercising a power inconsistent with the interests of their subjects. To the latter, it is a day of promise and of hope.

Never may this day lose its interest to the people of the United States. Never may its return cease to be hailed by them with pride and with joy. Never may that day dawn when its recollections shall cease to cause the hearts of the people of this country to throb with patriotic emotion. When that time does come--if come it ever shall--we fear that the sun of our national existence will have been quenched in night. We fear that the star of liberty will have passed away to shed its splendors upon more favored or deserving climes; that our free institutions will have crumbled into dust; and that anarchy or despotism, unbridled passions or slavish fear will be shedding their blighting influences upon the fairest country upon the earth. That day, however, we trust, will never dawn. Year after year, century after century shall roll away. Generation after generation shall pass into forgetfulness. Our whole country, from ocean to ocean and from the Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, will be teeming with people. And yet, we trust that this day will be welcomed as a day of national jubilee and rejoicing. We trust that then, as now, the old and the young will meet together for mutual congratulations and to offer the devotion of honest and patriotic hearts upon the altar of freedom.

The day and the celebration are interesting to us, as citizens of Indiana, for other reasons. We celebrate, on this day, not only our national independence but

also the commencement of the navigation of the Wabash and Erie Canal. We do this in compliance with established custom and because we think the importance of the work justifies and demands it. We celebrate today the full commencement of a noble enterprise in earnest appreciation of the advantages we are one day to derive from the Canal. It is an event interesting to the whole state and particularly interesting to the northern section of the state.

In addressing you upon this occasion, I shall touch successively upon a few of the many topics which seem to be appropriate to the different objects of our celebration.

First, we have assembled to celebrate this day as the Fourth of July; and the question naturally arises, Why do we commemorate this day? Why do we observe, throughout our whole country wherever civilization has been extended, people of all ranks and classes rejoicing at its return? Why is the plow left in its furrow? And why are the shop of the mechanic and the storehouse of the merchant abandoned? Why is the banner of our country floating upon every breeze? And why are manifested throughout our land such signs of universal joy? The subject is a trite one; but it is, nevertheless, one of interest.

Turn back for a moment to the period of 1776, and what arrests your attention? You cast your eyes along the seaboard (for you know that the tide of population had not then begun to flow over the mountains), and your interest is riveted by the scene before you. You see the people of the colonies evidencing, by their abandonment of their usual avocations and by their thoughtful, determined, but still anxious countenances, that events of mighty moment are on the wing. A crisis of awful importance to the country is approaching. Here and there, you see groups of

men collected together, discussing with stern and determined air the affairs of the nation. You listen to their words, and their conversation is of blood. They grow animated in the discussion; their arms are raised in defiance; their eyes sparkle with pride. You listen again, and you hear of Lexington and of Bunker Hill. In other places, you see active preparation for war; all who can bear arms are preparing for the field. The war cry has been raised, blood has been shed, and the watchword which you hear is liberty and revenge.

But there is another scene of far greater interest before you. You see assembled at Philadelphia the representatives of the colonies. Expectation sits upon every face, for an important report is anticipated; anxiety, too, is there, for all feel the tremendous responsibility of their situation. You observe there nothing like popular excitement, no intemperate zeal; you hear no idle bravado; you see no indication of fear or indecision. All is grave, calm, dignified, determined. At length the expected committee appears; the all-important document is presented. It is opened amid breathless silence. As the reader proceeds, every eye is fastened upon him; every face is beaming with interest. The very silence is eloquent; the applause is heartfelt and thrilling. "These United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, Free and Independent States." The sound is caught up by a thousand tongues; it is borne upon every breeze; it spreads from one end of the country to the other and meets an echo in almost every breast.

The scene is changed. Deliberation is at an end. The dogs of war are fairly let loose. The ships of the mother country are pouring their thunders upon our coast. Her armies are in possession of many of the strongholds of the country. Blood is flowing upon a hundred hills. The success of the conflict is for a long time

doubtful. At one time, total and irretrievable defeat seems to threaten the cause of the union of the states. The armies are ill-clad and poorly paid. Dispirited by the power of the enemy and by partial defeat, they are losing, in the stern realities of unsuccessful campaigns, the ardor which had excited them to buckle on the sword and to grasp the musket. Day by day they are dwindling away, while the armies of the invader are continually strengthened by fresh supplies. The hearts of the strongest and most resolute begin to sink within them. Confidence yields to despondency; and the cause of liberty, for which blood had been poured out like water, seems lost forever.

At this moment of general gloom on the part of the states, Fortune again smiles upon their struggle. Victory perches upon the banner of Washington. One advantage is followed by another and another. Hope is again excited in the breasts of the people, and they flock once more around the standard of their noble leader. The Battle of Yorktown closes this scene. The only remaining army of the invader surrenders, and complete and undisputed victory crowns the American cause. There is again heard the song of peace and the hum of industry. The ocean is white with the sails of our commerce. Enterprise pushes its discoveries into every region. Wealth is poured in upon the country. The population spreads itself over the mountains and along the Lakes; and, although great difficulties are inseparable from the formation of a new government, on every hand are seen the unerring indications of prosperity and happiness. Time rolls on; and the United States, in a half-century, becomes what we now behold--a great, powerful, and prosperous nation.

It is because we trace these things to the Declaration of Independence on the Fourth of July, 1776, that we celebrate this day. And is it not good for us to be

here? Is it not meet that this day should be to us a day of national jubilee? Where, on the pages of history, do you find recorded an event more magnificent in itself and more important in its consequences than that which we now commemorate? Had not the Declaration of Independence been signed and published, we might even now be tributary to Great Britain. Previous to this event, there had been but little concert among the colonies. Sectional prejudice had been excited, and local interest had strengthened it. True, there existed throughout the country a settled hostility to the encroachment of the mother country and a determination to resist it; but the spirit of resistance, which everyone cherished, had not then been embodied. The sword had been drawn in the North; it exulted in the success with which its first blood had been attended. But concert of feeling and action was wanting, and this concert was effected by the signing and publication of the Declaration of Independence. It was this that gave force and character to the Revolution, this that suppressed sectional jealousy and united the different and disjointed members of the confederacy into one active, powerful, and efficient mass.

The circumstances under which that instrument was put forth were such as to stamp the names of its signers with immortality. It was not the result of popular excitement, of rashness, or of intemperate zeal. It was the act of those who had seriously reflected upon the consequences, who had sat down and soberly and calmly counted the cost. Dreadful as that cost was likely to be, they had determined to abide the event. It was the act of those who esteemed liberty of more value and importance than anything else, who preferred an honorable death in its cause to an inglorious servitude, and who had deliberately resolved to live in its possession or to die in its defense. The result of the revolutionary struggle stamped their noble act

with eternal glory; and as long as liberty is considered a blessing, and self-sacrifice and moral courage are considered honorable to man, the memories of these men shall be embalmed in the hearts of their countrymen.

I do not purpose, at this time, to enter upon any of the political discussions of the day. Many of them are fraught with interest for all of us; but this is neither the time nor the occasion for discussing them. A few general remarks, however, upon one or two subjects connected with the present state and history of our country, I cannot forbear making.

I am not one of that number who seem to suppose that the elements of our government are about breaking up; that its pillars are shaking to their fall; that our political fabric, erected with so fair proportions and cemented with so much treasure and blood, is already undermined and ready to fall to the ground. And I certainly am not one of that number who act as though they thought that national liberty possesses a self-perpetuating power; that all we have to do is plant it in a propitious soil, and it will then extend its roots deeply into the earth, spread its branches in the air, and live and flourish in spite of the neglect of its friends and the assaults of its enemies. I rejoice to believe that the banner of our freedom is where it was once planted by the hand of Washington upon the ramparts of the Constitution, and that the vital spirit which formerly breathed through our body politic animates it still. But, nevertheless, I feel that constant vigilance and care are necessary on the part of the people. I feel that, as ours is a popular government, those who are its legitimate guardians--the people themselves--should look well that those who are placed in authority neither usurp powers that have not been granted to them nor exercise those powers that they have received in a manner inconsistent with the

rights and the interests of their constituents.

Human nature, modified in some measure by custom and education, is, and ever has been, the same. And the history of the world teaches us that man is not to be trusted; that he is never contented; that if the wealth and power of the world be bestowed upon him, he will still grasp for more. It is this principle of human nature (doubtless implanted in man for wise and noble purposes but very likely to be abused and constantly running into extremes) from which danger is to be apprehended. The more valuable the charge committed to the keeping of others is, the more vigilant should men be in scrutinizing the manner in which that trust is performed. The more we prize our free institutions, the more careful should we be that those whom we place in official situations perform faithfully the duties which devolve upon them; that they act up to the letter and spirit of the Constitution and the law; and that they exercise no power inconsistent therewith.

But danger may be apprehended from another source. The present age is one of liberal thought and free inquiry. The human mind has awakened from the torpor in which it has long slumbered; it is shaking off the lethargy which has clung to its power. Men are beginning to think boldly and to inquire freely. They have lost, or are rapidly losing, their reverence for ancient institutions; and they are breaking from the shackles which usage and long-established custom had thrown around them. And while we rejoice at the manifestation of this spirit, we sometimes fear for what may be its consequences. We are, to a great degree, creatures of impulse. We are governed much by excitement. In breaking from one extreme, we are very likely to plunge into another. In our desire to exercise free inquiry, we are in danger of becoming licentious. In attempting to attain to entire political

freedom, we are in danger of overlooking the landmarks of prudence and safety; we are in danger of falling into anarchy.

Such was the case with the people of France. When they burst from the slavery in which they had long been held, they threw off all necessary restraint and laid by their reverence for the law as they would a garment that was no longer needed. They overturned the very foundations of their government and, mad with excitement, buried the good and the bad of their old institutions in one undistinguishable ruin. At the same time, they inflicted agonies upon themselves and hurled destruction upon all who opposed their mad career. This spirit, when kept within proper bounds, is highly salutary in its influences; when permitted to exceed those bounds, it becomes a spirit of anarchy and misrule. And I think that history warrants the opinion that there is as much danger to political institutions, to say nothing of religious institutions, to be apprehended from an excess of this spirit as from a deficiency of it. There is at present, throughout the United States, an uneasiness in the public mind. There is a disposition to wage war with imaginary dangers while those of a real character are overlooked and disregarded and a tendency to popular violence which threatens the supremacy of the law. In short, there is a restless and turbulent spirit which is entirely incompatible with good order and constitutional government.

The existence of this spirit may be traced to various causes, but it may be traced principally to the absence of a high-toned morality in the breasts of the mass of the people. An immoral nation cannot long be independent. Moral sentiment on the part of the people is as necessary for the existence of a republican government as food is for the support of the animal frame. As long as the people of this country

continue to be moral people, the pillars of our government will remain firm as the hills; when they cease to be so, those pillars will crumble to the ground. I fear that there is a disposition on the part of the people to disregard the claims of morality, to look upon virtue as but a name and upon political integrity as an impediment to one's ascent to political eminence. This disposition must be checked. Public virtue must be aroused. The claims of morality must be regarded; or the people will, ere long, require for their control the strong arm of despotic power.

There are two subjects connected with the present history of our country which particularly deserve our attention. I mean the immense and growing patronage of the executive of the United States and the excitement which prevails upon the subject of southern slavery in some of the northern, middle, and one or two of the western states. In speaking upon the former of these subjects, I know that I shall occupy rather delicate ground. I would, therefore, disclaim all party feeling. I would divest myself of all party prejudice. And I would feel and speak like an American citizen upon a subject in which every American has an interest.

By the patronage of the executive (to which at this time I refer) is meant that power by which the President of the United States holds in his own hands the purse strings of the government. It is that power by which he fills the different offices of the government--offices of honor and profit--with men of his own selection and removes them at his pleasure. There is no surer way of making a man subservient than by rendering him dependent upon you for his livelihood. And I affirm, without fear of contradiction, that the possession of this power by the President is at variance with republican institutions and may become incompatible with the rights of the citizen.

There are now in this country not less, probably, than fifty thousand persons in the employment of the government. All of them are appointed by the President through the instrumentality of his subordinates; and all of them are liable, with a very few exceptions, to be dismissed when he thinks fit to dismiss them. Now, let it be understood by these fifty thousand men in office that the tenure of their offices is their fidelity to their chief; and among that whole number, how many fearless and independent minds could you find? Who of them would dare to think freely and to speak boldly if thinking freely and speaking boldly might deprive him and his family of their customary support? Who would dare to call in question the acts of the President when to do this might be to send himself penniless upon the world? In my judgment, the existence of our government will be coextensive with the free exercise of individual opinion on the part of the people. The unrestrained exercise of enlightened public sentiment is the sacred safeguard of our republic; it is the very groundwork and essence of our popular institutions. Now, this power of the President and practice that may arise under it are indisputably at war with everything of this kind. They check inquiry by holding up to the mind of the man in office the punishment which may be the result of the exercise. They fix the channels in which opinion must flow and the bounds over which it may pass. They prescribe and lay down the result to which all must arrive; and that result may be that the President, like the absolute monarch, can do no wrong.

Let this patronage increase for a few years to come, as it has done for some years past, and the President of the United States may wield a power that is possessed by no crowned head in Christendom. He will have at his command an army of men--officeholders and expectant officeholders--whose numbers and influence

there may not be sufficient strength and independence in the country to resist. He may triumph, if he please, over the rights of the citizen and nominate his successor. He will possess the power of a king; and it will matter little to the people whether this power be drawn from and exercised under the Constitution, or whether it be inherited. It may be just as oppressive to them and just as incompatible with the true spirit of their institutions in the one as in the other.

This is no picture of the imagination. Patronage is power; dependence generates subservience; subservience is a stranger to the free exercise of opinion, which is the very lifeblood of our institutions. But it may be urged that apprehension from this patronage of the President is unnecessary, inasmuch as the people have the power in their own hands. They can elect those for their chief magistrates who will use it only for the advancement of the best interests of the country. In reply, I would merely say that the people themselves may be unable to end patronage; history and experience teach that it is best to entrust to those in authority (who are men and therefore subject to human frailty) as little power as is compatible with the efficient action of government.

I have thus spoken freely, though briefly, upon this subject. I think it one of a highly important character, and one that cannot too frequently be brought to the attention of the people. It is a subject that should not be viewed through the medium of party feeling but should be kept entirely distinct from it. It is a national subject and demands the attention and candid examination of every American citizen.

The other subject to which I would advert is the excitement which prevails in many of the free states upon the subject of slavery in the South. It is to be regretted that this excitement is spreading, inasmuch as it is not likely to improve

Slavery in the South...

the condition of the slave and may seriously affect the friendly feeling and good understanding which should ever exist between the different members of our confederacy. This excitement is particularly unfortunate at the present time. The old differences which have long existed between the free and slave states seemed, a little while ago, to be dying away. Jealousy and animosity, which a supposed inconsistency of interests had excited, seemed to be subsiding; and greater harmony and good feeling than had for a long time existed between them seemed about to be effected. At this moment, so auspicious and so much desired, the immediate abolitionist--doubtless with pure intentions but with much more zeal than prudence--comes forward to excite again this slumbering and dying jealousy, to renew the old sectional strife, and to jeopardize the integrity of the Union.

I am as much opposed to slavery as any man. I lament the existence of slavery in this country as deeply, I sympathize with the slave as sincerely, as anyone else; but I feel no sympathy with the abolitionist. I feel inclined to throw the broad mantle of charity over the errors of mistaken zeal. But I feel little charity for those who, with the full light of experience before them and with the knowledge of that spirit of mutual concession under which our Constitution was adopted by the different members of the confederacy, are throwing firebrands into the southern states. I have no sympathy for those who, by their incendiary publications, are exciting the slave to insurrection and who, by their rash and imprudent exertions for his benefit, are only reviving his chains and adding bitterness to his servitude.

We do not think that the people of the free states are to hold their peace upon the subject of slavery. We consider this a subject of national interest and therefore a subject for cool and dispassionate discussion throughout the Union. But this

discussion should be carried on with due regard to the feelings of the slaveholder and to his constitutional rights. Odium should not be heaped upon him for an evil which has been entailed upon him and which, perhaps, he laments as deeply as others. Nor should his character be assailed for retaining those in servitude whom, consistently with his own safety and their interests, he cannot at once emancipate. It is too late, at the present day, to argue the question of slavery in the abstract. The world has long ago been enlightened upon this subject. Everybody admits, and none more readily than the slaveholder himself, that slavery is an evil and one that ought to be banished from the country. But the trying question is, How shall this be effected? This is a question which, we trust, is receiving the attention of patriotic and enlightened minds throughout the country. It is a question that we feel ourselves unprepared to answer. But we hazard nothing in saying that slavery is never to be abolished in America either by exciting the slave to rebellion or by heaping bitter and unqualified reproach upon his master.

But we deprecate this excitement principally because its movers look forward to an interference with the civil regulations and constitutional rights of the southern states. The subject of slavery may be freely discussed, and its disadvantages and immorality may be fully portrayed. But here the effort on the part of the people of the free states must, for the present, be stayed. If ever our country is to be freed from this evil, the slaveholders themselves must take the lead in the work. Our southern brethern are jealous of their rights and particularly sensitive upon the subject of slavery. Any interference on the part of the general government or of the people of the nonslaveholding states will but aggravate the evil and put in jeopardy the best interests of the country.

We trust in God that slavery will, ere long, cease to sully the otherwise fair fame of our country. We trust that we may soon be freed from the gross inconsistency of styling ourselves the friends of the rights of man while we hold within our own borders millions of human beings in absolute and degrading servitude. We feel that this is a blot upon our national banner. Would to God that we were able to wash it out! We commiserate with the blacks in their deplorable situation. We would gladly extend to them all the aid in our power to improve their condition, to strike off their chains, and to let in upon their minds the light of knowledge and of liberty. But we can extend no aid to those measures that seem to us only calculated to excite sectional discord and to aggravate the servitude of the slave without accomplishing any permanent good.

But the evils to which we are exposed and the dangers which threaten us are small in comparison with the advantages we enjoy and the safeguards we possess. In view of the present condition and future prospects of our country, we have ample cause for congratulation. The people of the United States are the freest, happiest, and most prosperous people upon earth; and if they do not continue so, the fault will be at their own doors. The Constitution under which they live was framed in wisdom; and, although imperfect in some respects (for imperfection clings to everything human), it is the most admirable work of the kind which the world has ever known. If the sun of liberty which now shines upon us with beams of glory shall ever go down in blackness, it will be because the people have neglected their duty and have been false to the high trust that was committed to them by their fathers. And when they shall see the fair fabric of their free institutions tottering and ready to fall to the ground, they can cast no imputation upon its architects or its builders.

They can only exclaim, in the bitterness of their anguish and self-accusation, that the building was fair in its proportions, strong and beautiful in its workmanship; but that they, the keepers, have been wanting. The walls have been undermined while we were asleep. In its fall it must bury beneath its ruins all that we have held dear and the hopes of the world.

But we must turn our attention to subjects of a local character. We celebrate on this occasion the opening of the navigation of the Wabash and Erie Canal. In this event we feel an interest which perhaps we are excusable for not feeling in relation to national subjects. It is an event that comes under our immediate observation, an event to which we have looked forward with the most sanguine expectation.

The navigation of our Canal is fairly commenced. The noble work which reflects so much honor upon our young state is now in operation. The waters of the St. Joseph, destined for the Gulf of St. Lawrence, are wending their way through the Canal to find their outlet, through other channels, in the Gulf of Mexico. It is an event worthy of being commemorated. Let us rejoice together in what it realizes and in what it promises.

The occasion requires some history of this work. I regret that the very short time I have had to prepare myself to address you, my short residence in the state, and the entire absence of documents to which I might have referred for information upon this subject will oblige me to confine myself on this head to a few general statements.

The importance of connecting the navigable waters of the Wabash and the Maumee rivers to the Lakes is said to have suggested itself to the first explorers

of the country. The route now pursued by our Canal, as early as the days of Washington, was considered to be an important thoroughfare. Such is the situation of the country--the lowness of the summit level, the general evenness of the ground, and the importance of the streams to be connected--that one is almost induced to believe that Nature herself had made preparation for the noble work which is now fairly in operation.

In the year 1824, the attention of Congress was turned to the importance of connecting the navigable waters of the Maumee and the Wabash by canal; and an act was passed, authorizing the state of Indiana to survey and mark, through the public lands of the United States, the route of a canal to connect said rivers. For that purpose ninety feet of land on each side of said canal was donated to said state. This act, unimportant in itself, is only interesting from the fact of its being the first law that was passed relative to the projected work.

In the treaty of 1826 between the United States and the Miami Indians, reference is again made to the proposed canal. In that treaty, there is the following section: "It is agreed that the state of Indiana may lay out a canal or road through any of these reservations; and for the use of a canal, six chains along the same are hereby appropriated." This grant has been of some value to the state; but, like the one contained in the act of Congress to which I have referred, it did not offer sufficient encouragement for the state to embark upon an enterprise that would cost, for its completion, $1,200,000 or $1,500,000.

In the session of 1826-27, the claims of Indiana for assistance in commencing the projected work were again brought before the attention of Congress; the result was the passage of the law, approved May 6, 1827, to which we are indebted

for our Canal. By this law was granted to the state of Indiana, to aid her in opening this Canal, a quantity of land equal to one half of five sections in width on each side of the Canal. Each alternate section, from one end of the Canal to the other, was reserved to the United States. The Canal was to be commenced within five years and completed within twenty years from the passage of the act.

This grant of the general government was accepted on the part of Indiana in the following year (not, however, without fierce and bitter opposition), and the state became pledged to commence and go on with the work. A board of commissioners was then appointed. The board's duty was to locate the Canal and to ascertain whether, and on what terms, funds could be obtained for its completion.

By act of the legislature approved January 23, 1829, the line of the Canal was conditionally defined; and the board of commissioners was directed to select the lands donated to the state by the act of Congress of 1827, before referred to. In 1830, the first sales of canal lands were authorized. And the board of commissioners was instructed to employ an experienced engineer of known skill and established character to act as chief engineer of the state. His duty was to proceed to examine, determine upon, and prepare for contract the most eligible line of the summit level section of the Canal--before conditionally established--and to report his progress to the next General Assembly.

In 1832, the final location and reported estimates of the middle section of the Canal, as submitted by the chief engineer, were approved and adopted. A canal fund was constituted, to consist of such moneys as might arise from the sale of land. And the board of fund commissioners was organized and empowered to contract for a loan of $200,000 which, together with the moneys received from the cash

payments on canal lands, was estimated to be sufficient to construct the feeder canal and the middle section of the Canal. In the same year, the canal lands were classed and rated, and the time was fixed for a reopening of the public sale of the same. The canal commissioners were authorized and directed to make a commencement of some portion of the Canal previous to the second day of March of that year to comply with the terms and conditions of the act of Congress of 1827. In pursuance of this authority and direction, in February, 1832, a contract was made by the commissioners for the construction of section one of the middle division. In the following June, fifteen miles, and in the succeeding November, four miles including the dam across the St. Joseph River, were put under contract. In January, 1833, the commissioners were directed to let the balance of the section from the Aboite River to Huntington. This was accordingly done; the whole thus put under contract is not completed.

In 1834, the commissioners of the canal fund were authorized to contract for a loan of $400,000. And the canal commissioners were directed to put under contract that part of the line not then under contract, between the mouth of the Tippecanoe River and the Maumee at the junction of the St. Joseph and St. Mary's, and to keep the expenses within the appropriations before made. At the last session of the legislature, a further loan of $227,000 was authorized; and a letting was directed to be made of all the line not under contract as far west as Georgetown.

The different laws which have passed our General Assembly in relation to our Canal were not carried through that body without great difficulty and severe opposition. There has been, until within the last year or two, a strong party in the legislature which has maintained a steady, and in some instances almost a fatal,

opposition to this noble work. The party lines between the friends and the opponents of the Canal were, I understand, first fairly drawn upon the question of accepting the liberal grant contained in the act of Congress of 1827. The opposing parties were then about equal in numbers. Feeling ran high, and discussion became bitter and heated. Each party had its respective champions, and the result of the question is said to have been for a long time doubtful.

The opposition ranked among its numbers some of the ablest men in the state. Their diversity of talent qualified them for the skirmish of debate or for the more difficult contest of argument with argument. Ridicule and reason, argument and satire were by turns resorted to. The idea of making a canal through a wilderness country was represented as utopian. The grant of Congress was spoken of as unimportant and entirely inadequate to justify its commencement. The value of the lands was underrated. And the expenses of the projected work were foretold as such as to overwhelm the state inextricably in debt.

But the strength of the legislature was not all on the side of the opposition. There were, among the friends of the Canal, men of enlarged minds and liberal feeling who had the sagacity and penetration to foresee what has proved to be the fact--that the commencement of the Canal was the right way to improve the country. It was the right way to make the donated lands valuable to the state, to attract to them the attention of emigrants, and to make the wilderness of which so much had been said the very...of the state. The arguments of the opponents of the Canal were met by the stronger arguments of its friends; and, although every inch of ground was contested, the opposition, after a hard struggle, was discomfited. The better genius of the state triumphed; and the grant, with its accompanying conditions, was accepted.

Well was it for us and for the state that such was the issue of this contest; well was it for us and for the state that when the projected undertaking was weak and comparatively unpopular, patriotic and enlightened minds were enlisted in its support. And while we are celebrating the results of this victory and the victories which were gained in other struggles which arose upon the passage of the different laws for the commencement and extension of the Canal, we should be guilty of ingratitude if we did not remember with gratitude and respect the services of the Canal's supporters.

I have thus thrown a brief glance over the history of our Canal. I regret that circumstances have rendered me unable to make my notice of it more perfect and satisfactory. The work, as far as it has been completed, reflects high honor upon those under whose management it has thus far progressed. It is to be regretted that the unfortunate difficulties which have lately arisen between the United States and Ohio, in relation to her northern boundary, are likely to prevent that state from completing that part of the Canal which is to be made through her territory as soon as is required by the interests of Indiana. The course which Ohio has pursued relative to this work and towards our state generally has been such as to lay us under weighty obligations to her. While we lament that anything should occur to create collision between the general government and any member of the confederacy, and while we regard the Union as of paramount importance to almost everything else and hold ourselves ready to sacrifice everything for its preservation, we cannot at the same time be unmindful of our obligations to Ohio. Nor can we overlook the fact that in the question that is now agitating our sister state the interests of Indiana and Ohio are the same. A decision against the claims of Ohio to the disputed terri-

tory may be seized upon as a precedent by which we may lose an interesting portion of our own state and may be shut out from Lake Michigan. Under these circumstances, the people of Indiana would be blind to their own interests if they did not hope for a termination of this difficulty in favor of Ohio. They should do everything in their power to sustain her in the claim which she asserts and in the attitude which she has assumed.

I do not intend, at this time, to enter upon a discussion of the merits of the question in which we all have a stake. Nor perhaps is this necessary. The subject is well enough understood here, and the people of Indiana need not be told what should be their position in relation to it. I fear, however, that in other parts of the Union there is much misapprehension in regard to this question. The controversy has been spoken of as one between Ohio and Michigan. As was proclaimed in Congress by an eminent eastern statesman, it is a controversy between the powerful state of Ohio with her four and twenty representatives and the humble and powerless Michigan with her single delegate. The chivalry of the nation has been appealed to; and the question has been put, in tones of triumph, whether, in this country of equal laws, power shall lord it over weakness--whether a powerful state shall trespass upon the rights of an unprotected territory. This misapprehension, however, we trust, will be of short continuance. The press is beginning, in many instances, to speak truth and to shed light on the merits of this controversy. It is beginning to be viewed as a controversy between the United States and Ohio in which the territory of Michigan is not a party. Let the subject be fully understood, let it be fairly brought before Congress, and let no party influences there be brought to bear upon it, and we will cheerfully abide the event.

We celebrate, at this time, the commencement of the navigation of the Canal. We look upon this Canal as the first link (if I may so speak) in a chain of improvements which will one day--and at no very remote period--extend from Lake Erie to the Mississippi. Nature herself seems to have prepared the way for such a connection; and in undertaking and effecting this, man will only carry into operation her original designs. And how noble is the prospect which such improvements open before us! How mighty a nation may our country one day become, if it is not shipwrecked by the negligence or misconduct of the people! How mighty have been her strides! To what a dizzy height of glory and power may she not, ere long, attain!

Who that could have taken a survey of our western country but thirty years ago could have anticipated a day like this? Then, as his eye passed over the vast valley of the Mississippi, with the exception of two or three mere specks of improvement, nothing would have met his gaze but one unbroken, illimitable, but magnificent wilderness. Then he looked upon the deep forests, the beautiful prairies, the noble rivers, and the silvery lakes; and he sighed, perhaps, that almost the only inhabitants of so fair a country should be savage men and the prey which they hunted. How little could he have dreamed of a scene like the present. These lakes and these rivers are bearing upon their bosoms the products of every clime; these prairies are converted into smiling fields; these forests are rapidly yielding to the axe and are already dotted with extensive farms and flourishing towns. The whole country, from the Alleghenies to the Mississippi, and far beyond it, is the seat of enterprise, improvement, and prosperity. And hundreds of people are assembled at this place to celebrate the opening of a canal.

The history of our country is an argument in favor of internal improvements

--an argument which no intellect can misunderstand and no sophistry weaken. The objections which are sometimes raised to appropriations being made by the government to aid the states in carrying such improvements into operation are, it seems to me, the result of narrow views and illiberal policy. They are founded principally upon the opinion that such appropriations, inasmuch as it will be difficult, if not impossible, to make a satisfactory distribution of them among the states, will give rise to jealousy and will be creative of endless bickerings and strife. But is there not good reason to believe that sectional feelings are in some measure kept alive by the very absence of such improvements, and that railroads and canals, extending their benefits through large tracts of country, will tend to overcome and destroy them? In my judgment, such improvements, although carried into operation in the different states through the assistance of the general government, are calculated to destroy local prejudice and to unite our whole country in the bands of national attachment. Whatever tends to bring the people of the different states together and creates a community of interests among them acts directly and powerfully to make them liberal in feeling and national in character. We are all American citizens, inheritors of the same privileges which were purchased by the blood of our common ancestors, supporters of the same government. And as the people become more familiar with each other, the peculiarities which distinguish them will become less and less perceptible; and national harmony and good feeling will be produced.

But I have already trespassed too long upon your patience. The event which we now commemorate, the commencement of the navigation of our Canal, will in a short time be forgotten in the realization of its benefits; but, as the beginning of a chain of important improvements in Indiana, it may again be called to mind. A

hundred years may roll away, and the people who then inhabit this country may meet together on this spot to celebrate the commencement of canalling operations in this state. God grant that he who is called upon to speak at that time may address, as I do today, a congregation of free men. And although everything else may be changed but the solid earth and the heavens above them, though the Canal which is now in progress be but a hand's breadth in comparison with the important improvements that shall then be in operation, God grant that the Stars and Stripes, the banner of our country, may float over their heads, an emblem of liberty, union, and prosperity.

INDIANA JOURNAL, September 18, 1835

IV

REPORT ON THE CANAL OPENING

Fort Wayne, Indiana

July 7, 1835

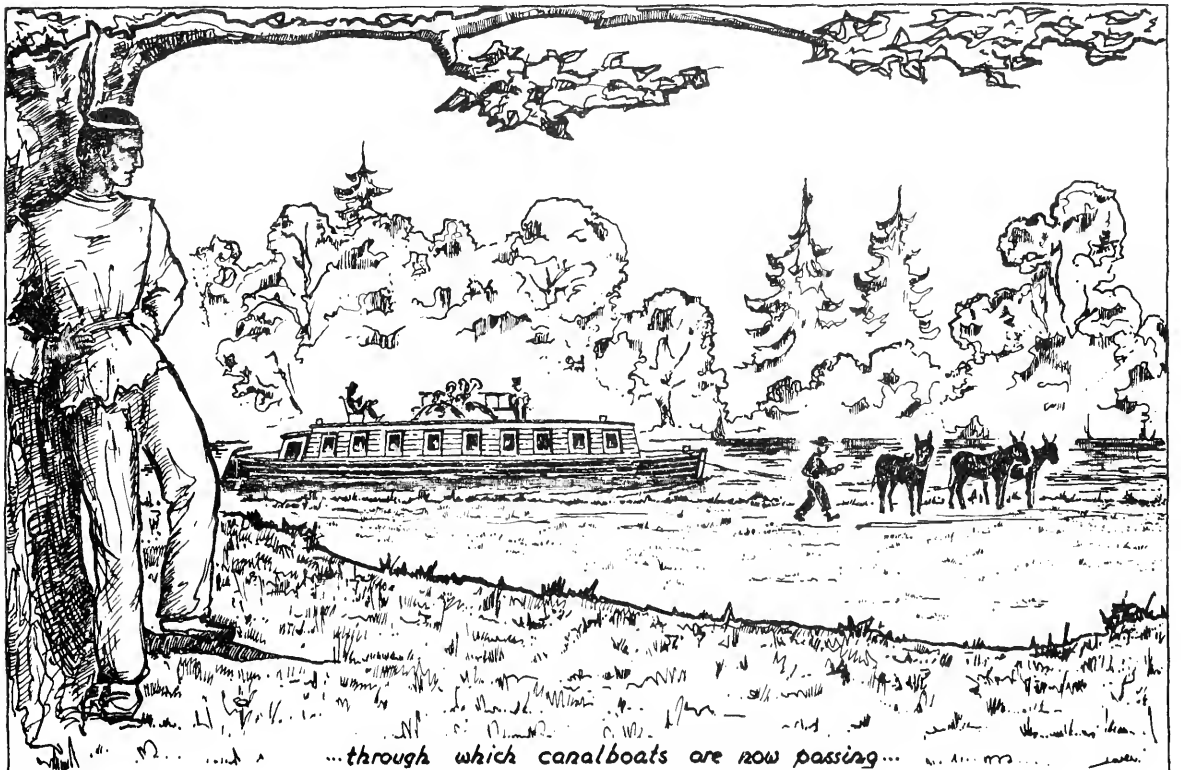
To the Editors:

It may be a matter of some interest to you and your readers to learn that on the fourth of this month the navigation of the Wabash and Erie Canal was most successfully commenced. On the second of July, three canalboats passed from this place to the forks of the Wabash. On the third they returned, crowded with passengers. And on the fourth, the event was celebrated in a spirited and becoming manner by the citizens of the state assembled at this place. Thirty-two miles of the summit section, connecting the keelboat navigation of the Wabash and Maumee rivers, are now in good order; and boats are passing daily.

It is certainly a fact worthy to be noted that this country, through which canalboats are now passing, was purchased of the Indians only eight or nine years ago. It is believed that an instance of such rapid improvement is nowhere else to be found. The credit is due partly to the enterprise of the state of Indiana and partly to the liberal and enlightened policy which prevailed in the general government when the grant of land was made to aid this work. It does appear to me that the great benefit conferred upon the whole country by this grant of land to Indiana ought to remove all doubts in regard to the policy of similar donations in aid of internal improvements. Such donations benefit not only the state to which they are made but also the treasury of the United States. More money has doubtless already been

received into the treasury for the sale of lands in this part of the state than would have been received had the grant never been made.

NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER, July 22, 1835


...through which canalboats are now passing...

V

CANAL CELEBRATION AT DEFIANCE

The Wabash and Erie Canal is now filled with water to Independence, five miles below Defiance, and boats are regularly running to that place. In two or three weeks more, the water will be let in to Florida, some three or four miles below, and at the foot of the Flat Rock ripples. From this point, the Maumee is free from all obstruction and is navigable at all seasons to Providence, at the head of the rapids; and as the Canal is already completed from the latter place to Toledo, we shall have a good water communication with the Lake. It will be but little more expensive now to ship off our produce than if the Canal were already completed. All that will be required will be to transship the loading from the boat in the Canal to another in the river, a distance of but a few rods; this can be accomplished easily without the use of teams. We may, therefore, state that the long-looked-for opening of navigation between Lake Erie and the navigable waters of the Wabash is consummated. This will cause a great revolution in the course of trade. The entire produce of the Wabash Valley will now pass through this place and be shipped on Lake Erie. Formerly, it had to be transported by land seventy or one hundred miles to Chicago or Michigan City; thence it was taken by the circuitous route of the upper lakes to market

Emigrants to many parts of the West will now find this the cheapest, most pleasant, and most expeditious route. There is a daily stage line between Toledo and the present termination of the Canal. There they can enter a canalboat and, in two or three days at an expense of but a few dollars, find themselves at Lafayette

JESSE L. WILLIA
... a large party of ladies and gentlemen....

in the center of the Wabash country. Thence they can embark in steamboats for almost any point in the West or Southwest. Those who prefer can enter a canalboat at Toledo or Maumee and come the whole distance from the Lake by water.

The Canal from Fort Wayne to Defiance is one of which we may be justly proud. It is sixty feet wide and six feet deep, constructed in the most durable and scientific manner; it reflects equal credit on the skill of the engineers and contractors and on the liberality of the states of Indiana and Ohio. We are assured by a competent judge of such matters--a gentleman of well-known talents in that line, who was himself a contractor on many of the public works in Pennsylvania and Maryland--that this portion of the Wabash and Erie Canal is equal, if not superior, to any similar work in the United States.

We have been led into so many remarks on the Canal that we have not much room for the celebration. We will, therefore, briefly state that the first packet boat, the Jesse L. Williams, belonging to Captain Samuel Mahon, arrived in Defiance on Monday night last; it was escorted by the Defiance band and a number of the citizens. It was received with the greatest enthusiasm. The inhabitants of Defiance felt that a new era had dawned upon them as they beheld the consummation of their long-cherished hopes. The next morning, a large party of ladies and gentlemen, accompanied by the band, embarked in the canalboat and took a trip to Independence. All were animated and in good spirits, despite the hardness of the times. On the return of the boat, the gentlemen on board organized a meeting by calling Judge N. B. Adams to the chair and by appointing W. A. Brown secretary; they passed the following resolutions:

RESOLVED, That in the completion of the western division of the Wabash

and Erie Canal, we anticipate a triumph over every obstacle; nothing now can prevent our rapid improvement.

RESOLVED, That to the enterprising contractors, we owe a tribute of gratitude for their steadfast perseverance to the completion of their work on this division of the Canal.

RESOLVED, That we fully appreciate the talents and industry of our worthy commissioner, R. Dickinson, and also our resident engineer on the western division of the Wabash and Erie Canal, S. Medbury; we tender them our united thanks for their services.

RESOLVED, That we still bear in mind the valuable influence of General Hunt of Maumee City in establishing this line of canals; his untiring zeal, while he was a senator in the Ohio Legislature, obtained appropriations for the same.

RESOLVED, That we fully appreciate the importance of the Wabash and Erie Canal as being the connecting link between the Ohio River and Lake Erie; it brings the northern trade into competition with that of the South.

RESOLVED, That the thanks of this meeting be tendered to Captain Mahon for his polite invitation and his attention to the citizens of Defiance and for his gentlemanly deportment on this occasion; his enterprise deserves the encouragement of the citizens of the Maumee and Wabash valleys and is fully entitled to the patronage of a generous public.

RESOLVED, That the proceedings of this meeting be signed by the officers and published in all the papers in the United States that feel an interest in the prosperity of Indiana and northwestern Ohio.

N. B. Adams, Chairman

W. A. Brown, Secretary

FORT WAYNE WEEKLY SENTINEL, July 16, 1842

VI

ANNOUNCEMENT 1

It has been deemed expedient to have a public celebration of the opening of the Wabash and Erie Canal from Lake Erie to Lafayette,

on the FOURTH of JULY next

at some convenient point, to be participated in by the citizens on the whole line. A public meeting of the citizens of Fort Wayne will be held at the American House, on Wednesday evening next, at early candlelight, to take the matter into consideration and to appoint corresponding and other committees. A general attendance is requested.

FORT WAYNE WEEKLY SENTINEL, May 13, 1843

VII

ANNOUNCEMENT 2

"It is an contemplation by the citizens of the vast region of country bordering along the valley of the Maumee, to celebrate in a suitable manner the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal, at Fort Wayne, in the state of Indiana, on July 4 next. And it is intended, we learn, to solicit our distinguished fellow citizen, General Lewis Cass, to deliver an oration on the occasion. No other individual could be selected who would perform such an undertaking in better style. His presence would be most cordially received by the hardy Hoosiers and Buckeyes who will doubtless be there congregated in vast multitudes. He has long been identified with the great interests of the West. He is personally known to thousands of its early inhabitants, although he has been separated from them for a time in the discharge of important public duties. We trust he will not fail to accept the invitation. And it is further hoped that those citizens of Michigan who have leisure and can afford to will likewise participate in the contemplated celebration got up by the hardy border settlers of our sister states."--DETROIT CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRAT.

Our friends at Detroit are rather in advance of the mails. The committee has not yet selected an orator. General Cass has been invited to attend the celebration and, of course, would be expected to address the assemblage. He may, perhaps, be selected as the orator of the day; but the choice is not yet made. The selection of General Cass would be a judicious one and would give general satisfaction.

FORT WAYNE WEEKLY SENTINEL, June 3, 1843

VIII

ANNOUNCEMENT 3

The approaching celebration of the completion of our Canal will, we expect, be numerously attended. We hear, verbally, that the inhabitants of every town along the line feel the liveliest interest and are preparing to participate. The Toledo Guards and the companies in Lafayette and probably other places will be here. We have no doubt that there will be as many come as all the boats on the Canal can accommodate.

The committee of arrangements has selected a grove on the farm of Colonel Thomas Swinney as the place at which the exercises of the day will be held. It is a beautiful site, exactly suited for the occasion, large enough to accommodate the vast crowd which will assemble, and sufficiently shaded from the sun to be pleasant and agreeable.

FORT WAYNE WEEKLY SENTINEL, June 3, 1843

IX

THE ORDER OF THE DAY

The committee of arrangements for the canal celebration announce the following as the

ORDER OF THE DAY

1. At sunrise, a national salute of twenty-six guns from the fort.

2. At nine a.m., a salute of thirteen guns in honor of invited guests and strangers.

3. At ten a.m., the firing of three minute guns. Then the procession will be formed on the Public Square and will march to the ground under the direction of the marshal of the day and his assistants.

The invited guests arriving by boats will be received by the committee of reception with a band of music at the foot of Clinton Street as they arrive. Those who arrive on horseback will be received at the Public Square.

The members of the committees of reception and arrangements and the officers of the day will be designated by appropriate badges.

FORT WAYNE WEEKLY SENTINEL, July 1, 1843

A free dinner was provided.

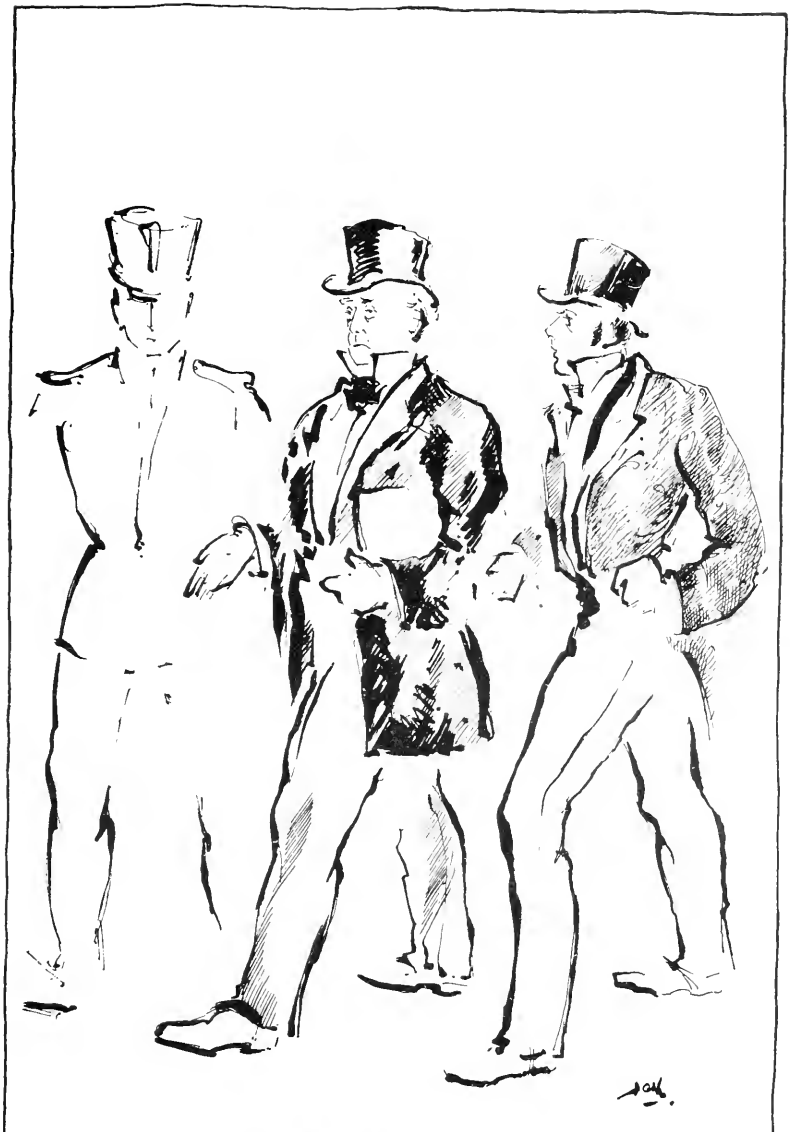
X

THE CELEBRATION (PART I)

Tuesday, July 4, 1843, 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 to Lake Erie. This Canal unites, by the shortest and most eligible route, the navigable waters of the northern Lakes with those of the Mississippi. It is a work which we sincerely believe ranks in importance second only to the great New York canal--a work 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 Manhatten to Lafayette ever since the opening of the 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 only by the citizens of Fort Wayne but also by those of the whole line of the Canal and the surrounding country. Our city, being on the summit level and on the point where the work was first commenced, was selected as the most eligible place 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 to interchange congratulations on the consummation of this work--this work to which we have looked forward for so long with such earnest solicitude and fond anticipation.

A free dinner was provided; it was abundantly furnished, by the liberality of the citizens of both county and town, with everything the country produces. The citizens all made arrangements to accommodate as many guests as their houses



General Cass was escorted.

would hold; they planned 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; not one left here without being satisfied and grateful for the hospitality experienced. We take pleasure in recording the noble conduct of the inhabitants of our city. It shows the spirit which animated every breast and the buoyant feelings which the completion of this important work excited.

On the Saturday previous, the guests began to arrive; and by Sunday evening, the taverns were overflowing. On Monday afternoon, the canalboats began to line our wharves and continued without intermission through the night to land their passengers. All were 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 which they were to make their homes during their visit. On Monday night, the Toledo Guards arrived. They had brought their camp equipage with them and pitched their tents on a beautiful green west of the city. On Tuesday morning about six o'clock, General Cass, the orator of the day, arrived in the packet boat Ohio and was escorted to the mansion of Allen Hamilton, Esq. Here he remained during his sojourn among us; and here he was visited by many of our citizens, who 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 canalboats present; they extended in a double tier the whole length of the city, from the upper to the

lower basin. Being mostly decorated with flags, they gave to our wharf a very interesting appearance.

The following gentlemen officiated as officers of the day: Marshall--S. Edsall; Assistant Marshals--Colonel Sigler, General Curtis, General Hanes, S. S. Tipton, Alexander Wilson, Colonel Pollard, Captain Rudisill, Captain Stophlet, Captain Ferry, Captain Morgan, Colonel Lotz, S. C. Freeman, R. Bird, B. B. Stevens, F. K. Brackenridge, C. S. Evans, and Messrs. Wolkie, Schmitz, and Trentman.

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

ORDER OF PROCESSION

Martial Music

Toledo Guards

Revolutionary soldiers and soldiers of

the late war, with the national colors

Orator--GENERAL LEWIS CASS

Reader--HUGH McCULLOCH, ESQ.

Chaplain--REVEREND MR. BOYD

President--ETHAN A. BROWN

Vice-Presidents--W. G. Ewing, S. Hanna, J. L. Williams, A. Hamilton, R. Brackenridge, A. S. White, E. Q. Hannegan, J. E. Hunt, R. Dickerson, S. Medbury, General Myres, Colonel Pepper, L. B. Wilson, Jesse D. Bright, J. H. Bradley, James Blair, S. Foster, E. Murry, P. Evans, W. W. Barlow, Colonel Rayburn, Judge Keller, Colonel Hanna, General Wiley, General Walker, J. S. Hanna, H. Elsworth, and Messrs. Taber, Pratt, and Robinson.

Ladies

Defiance Band

Invited Guests

Committees

Marion Band

Engineer Corps

German Band

Citizens of Ohio and Other States

Miami Warriors

Kekionga Band

Citizens of Indiana

On arriving at the ground, we found several hundred ladies in attendance. After the bands had played some national airs, the Reverend Mr. Boyd made a fervent and appropriate prayer; Hugh McCulloch, Esq., read the Declaration of Independence; and General Cass delivered the admirable address.

GENERAL LEWIS CASS.

XI

ORATION OF GENERAL LEWIS CASS

This day, fellow citizens, is memorable in the history of man. It is the anniversary of the birth of this great republic. Today we were born into the family of nations. In the calendar of time, there is no event which will produce a more powerful and permanent effect upon the destinies of the world. Our revolution sanctified, by success, the momentous principle of resistance to oppression. It opened to inquiry the whole system of government, with a freedom of investigation and a power of discussion which had never before been united in any practical examination into that great department of the concerns of man.

The threescore years and ten, the term of human life, have not yet passed away; and where are we? From dependent colonies we have become an independent republic. From a small people, thinly scattered over the Atlantic Coast, we have become a mighty nation with a power everywhere acknowledged and respected, with a name known and honored, and with all the elements of present prosperity and of future advancement such as Providence has rarely designed to confer upon man. Within this brief period--brief in the history of societies--the great tide of civilization has passed the Allegheny Mountains and has spread and is spreading over the prairies and forests of our own beautiful West. That tide will not stop till it reaches the boundary of the continent upon the shores of the Pacific. The decree has gone forth and will be fulfilled. The prospects of the future may be seen in the progress of the past. He who runs may read. Neither political jealousy nor mercantile cupidity can stop our onward march. If they could, fellow citizens, our march would

be stopped. Perhaps, while I address you, measures are in progress to wrest from us our territory west of the Rocky Mountains.

Island after island and country after country are falling before the ambition of England. She is planting her standard wherever there is a people to be subdued or the fruits of their industry to be secured. With professions of philanthropy, she pursues the designs of ambition; and she is encircling the globe with her stations wherever she can best accomplish her schemes of aggrandizement. The sun never sets upon her empire. It is my deliberate opinion that no nation since the fall of the Roman power has displayed greater disregard for the rights of others or has more boldly aimed at universal domination.

Our claim to the country west of the Rocky Mountains is as undeniable as our right to Bunker Hill or to New Orleans; and who will call in question our title to these bloodstained battlefields? And I trust our right will be maintained with a vigor and promptitude equal to do justice. War is a great evil, but not so great as national dishonor. Little is gained by yielding to insolent and unjust pretensions. It is better to defend the first inch of territory than the last. It is far better in dealing with England to resist aggression, whether of territory, of impressment, or of search, when first attempted than to yield in the hope that forbearance will be met in a just spirit and will lead to an amicable compromise. Let us have no red lines upon the map of Oregon; let us hold on to the integrity of our just claim; and if war comes, let it come. I do not myself believe it will be long avoided, unless it is prevented by intestine difficulties in the British Empire; and woe be to us if we flatter ourselves that it can be arrested by any system of concession. Of all delusions, this would be the most fatal; and we should awake from it a dishonored, if not a

ruined, people.

It is profitable in the career of life occasionally to pause; to withdraw ourselves from the ever-busy scenes with which we mingle; and to look back upon the progress we have made and forward, as far as it is given to us to look forward, upon the prospect before us. These are high places in the journey of life, whence the region around us is best contemplated and understood. In all time, great events have been thus commemorated. The principle has its foundation in human nature, although it is perverted in its application by power or superstition. And many a monument, which has survived its own history and the objects of its founders, looks out upon the silence around it and finds itself to be the solitary evidence of some great but forgotten event in the fitful drama of life. We have come up today to one of these high places to commune together. We have met from many a portion of our common country; and this great assemblage testifies, no less by its numbers than by the imposing circumstances which surround it, that there is here passing one of those scenes which mark the progress of society and which form its character and oftentimes its destiny. And so it is, and it is good for us to be here. We have not come to fight a battle or to commemorate one. We have not come to worship at the shrine of power or to celebrate the birth or the death of some unworthy ruler--the last step in political degradation. Nor have we come to commence, to complete, or to commemorate some useless but imposing structure erected by pride but paid for by poverty.

I would not, however, be misunderstood. Far be it from us to censure or to check those feelings of love of country or of religion which seek their outpourings in the erection of memorials upon spots which have drunk the blood of the patriot or

of the martyr. The erection of memorials is a tribute to virtue, and it honors the dead and the living. But let it be voluntary; then it will be neither unjust in its object nor oppressive in its accomplishment. It will teach a lesson to afterages; it may stimulate virtue to action and may give fortitude to endure till the day of deliverance comes with its struggle and its reward. Look at the mighty pyramids which rise over the Arabian and Libyan wastes. They cast their shadows far in the desert, mocking the researches and the pride of man. They tell no tale but the old tale of oppression. They speak, in their very massiveness, of pride and power on one side and of misery and poverty on the other.

Little channels which the fellah has diverted from the great river at the bases of the pyramids spread verdure and fertility over the valley that owes so much to God and so little to man. One of those channels is far dearer to the oppressed population than these useless but mighty structures.

Our eastern brethren, with that characteristic liberality and patriotism which make the descendants of the Pilgrims proud of the land of their ancestors, have just completed and dedicated a monument to mark the site of the battle which opened the great contest between a powerful empire and her young and distant provinces. The influence of that battle, if it did not give to the Revolution its fortunate issue, impressed its character upon the whole struggle. We have no such place to hallow; but we have the people to do the deeds by which places are sanctified. We have neither the wealth nor those "appliances" by which the long and imposing procession and the gorgeous pageantry (which a great city can arrange and display) affect and almost subdue the imagination. We have not the Chief Magistrate of the republic with his official counsellors to mark, as it were, with a national character

the occasion of our assemblage. Nor have we constructed an obelisk, simple and severe in its style and lasting as the deeds it commemorates, whose foundation is laid in the graves of martyred patriots and whose summit rises toward the heavens, telling the story of their fall and proclaiming the gratitude of their countrymen. But there are here stout hearts and strong hands. There are here thousands who would devote themselves as did the men of Bunker Hill to the cause of freedom, and who would fight as they fought and die as they died should their country demand the sacrifice. On the face of the globe, liberty has no more zealous defenders, nor patriotism more ardent votaries, than in this great assembly. The people who have made this region their own by all the ties that bind man to his home will defend it and all the institutions which belong to it, by all the means that energy, intelligence, and devotedness have ever brought to the great day of trial.

We have come here to join in another commemoration. We have come to witness the union of the Lakes and the Mississippi and to survey one of the noblest works of man in the improvement of that great highway of nature, extending from New York to New Orleans, whose full moral and physical effects it would be vain to seek or even to conjecture.

And fitly chosen is the day of this celebration. This work is another ligament which binds together this great confederate republic. Providence has given us union and many motives to preserve it. The sun has never shone upon a country abounding more than ours does in all the elements of prosperity. It is needless to enumerate the advantages we enjoy, which give us so distinguished a position among the nations of the world. They are seen and felt in all those evidences of prosperity and improvement which greet the traveler wherever he passes through our coun-

try. Still more striking are they when we contrast our situation with that of the older regions of the world. I shall not enter into the comparison. I could speak of it from personal knowledge, but the task would not be a pleasant one. It would recall many a cause of discontent and many a scene of misery which meet the eye of the most careless observer who exchanges the new hemisphere for the old. An American who does not return to his own country a wiser man and a better citizen, prouder and more contented for all he has seen abroad, may well doubt his own head or heart and may well be doubted by his countrymen.

Still, it is not to be disguised that, from the very constitution of human nature, causes may occasionally exist which tend to weaken (though they cannot sever) the bounds which unite us. Happy is it that these causes may be counteracted and ultimately, we may hope, rendered powerless by measures now in progress which will add the ties of interest to the dictates of patriotism. Our railroads and canals are penetrating every section of our territory. They are annihilating time and space. They are embracing in their folds the ocean and lake frontiers and the great region extending from the Allegheny to the Rocky Mountains through which the mighty Mississippi and its countless tributaries find their way to the Gulf of Mexico. Once this work is completed, we will be bound together by cords which no strength can sunder. The moral and political effects, therefore, of the great work before us are even more important than the physical advantages it promises. This great work will bear upon its bosom the products of a thousand fertile valleys; it will spread gladness and prosperity over regions which have just been rescued from the Indian and from the animals, his cotenants of the forests which minister to his wants. But it will do more than this. It will make glad the heart of the patriot; for

as he sails along it, he will see not merely the evidence and the cause of wealth and prosperity but also one of the ties which knit us together. By a process more fortunate than the alchemist ever imagined, the feeblest element will be converted into the strongest bond. It will bear the boat and its freight to a market where products may be interchanged and wealth acquired; but it will also interchange interests and feelings which no wealth can purchase and for which no price can be paid.

Well then may we rejoice upon this day! The occasion and the time are in unison. And while we thank God for the services and sacrifices which he enabled our fathers to make in the acquisition of freedom and independence, let us thank him, also, that we are able to strengthen their work and to transmit to our children, as they transmitted to theirs, the noblest inheritance that belongs to man. The ark of the Constitution is yet untouched. Withered be the hand that would pollute it.

I did not come here to speak to you of the political questions which divide us. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." It is good that we should find the Sabbath our day of rest--a day when we can put behind us the secular concerns of men, when we can meet and greet one another as brethren of the same family, as the countrymen of Washington and Jefferson and Franklin, as the heirs of their labors and the guardians of their fame. I am no believer in the sinister predictions of those who are perpetually crying, "Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem!" Our Jerusalem is neither besieged nor in danger. It will survive all the dissensions of the day. Whatever other monuments may fall (as they have fallen upon the plains of liberty), this, we may trust, is destined to remain unharmed, a refuge for us and

a guide for others when the waters of oppression are out over the earth.

The foundations of our freedom are too broadly and deeply laid to be easily shaken. They rest upon institutes, upon manners, upon relations, upon all that gives character and energy to the social system. In Europe, government depends for security upon physical force. Here, it depends upon moral force or, in other words, upon public opinion. And this brief contrast explains almost all that is peculiar in the political systems of the two hemispheres. There, large armies, numerous fleets, a powerful police, a heavy debt, and an established religion are essential portions of the machinery by which the engine of government is kept in motion. Here, I need not say, these contrivances by which the few rule the many are utterly unknown. The government is here in the hands of all; and not a day passes in the life of any man--from the cradle to the grave--when it could not be peaceably and legally changed by the general will. This is a state of things to which no parallel can be found in the present condition of the social and political systems of Europe. Nor could it exist there a day. It would lead to convulsion and would end in revolution--a revolution whose consequences are beyond the reach of human sagacity. Here we are educated to a habitual obedience to the law. It is our law, and we are all interested in its observance. There the law is too often a taskmaster to be eluded or opposed as interest or some other passion may dictate. Here an officer, in the execution of his duty, is armed with a small piece of paper which, like a magic wand, ensures the submission of the strongest and boldest. There an officer is attended by an armed party, and the sword and bayonet are conspicuously displayed as the true ensigns of authority. But I shall not pursue this contrast; it is not necessary for any purposes I have in view. I allude to the subject in order to

teach a lesson which may be useful to all; to remind you of the deep debt we owe to Providence for what we possess and enjoy; to inculcate not merely content but also gratitude; to recall to you that you are American citizens, the depositories of your own political fate and, under God, the trustees of liberty for the nations of the earth.

This is not my first visit to this interesting place. I have been here before under other circumstances--under circumstances, indeed, illustrative of the progress of our country and of those wonderful changes which are perpetually going on. Out creations are not due to the magician's lamp; they have a purer origin. They spring from industry and enterprise; they are protected by equal laws and invigorated by a benign religion; and they bring with them their reward. Scarcely two centuries have passed away since a small band of adventurers seated themselves upon the shores of a distant ocean. An interminable forest was around them, and its recesses were occupied by a fierce and vindictive foe. They came to suffer in their day and to become glorious in their generation. And well did they fulfill their mission. Where is now the forest which shut them in? It is laid low. The great wave of civilization has swept onward, bearing down the forest and its tenants, till this little band has become a mighty people who have spread themselves over a great continent. They seemed destined, in the providence of God, still to go on till checked by one of those chastisements by which the moral government of the world is vindicated and the ingratitude of nations punished.

Well may we exclaim, in the language of inspiration, "The lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places; yea, we have a goodly heritage!" when we survey this noble country between the Lakes, the Ohio, and the Mississippi, where we have established our dwelling. There is probably no region upon the globe better fitted for

the residence of man and for the supply of the products which are essential to his wants. All those who participated in its first settlement have not yet passed away, and the survivors find themselves the members of a community of three million people.

I have myself witnessed much of this progress; I have had my share of its toils and rewards. It is forty-three years since I landed upon the northern shore of the Ohio as a youth and an adventurer seeking the land of promise; that land has been to me, as to many others, the land of performance. At that time the territory of Indiana was not organized; and the states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan and the territory of Wisconsin formed one government under the name of the Northwest Territory. I shall not stop to bring before you the incidents of a frontier life or the difficulties and privations and sufferings, in peace and in war, by which the forest is acquired, reclaimed, and finally subdued.

During many years, this region had its full share of troubles. The line of your Canal was a bloody warpath which has seen many a deed of horror. This peaceful town has had its Moloch, and the records of human depravity furnish no more terrible examples of cruelty than were offered at his shrine. The Miami Indians, our predecessors in the occupation of this district, had a terrible institution whose origin and object have been lost in the darkness of aboriginal history. It was continued to a late period, and its orgies were held upon the very spot where we now are. It was called a man-eating society, and it was the duty of its associates to eat such prisoners as were preserved and delivered to them for that purpose. The members of this society belonged to a particular family; and the dreadful inheritance descended to all the children, male and female. The duties it imposed could

not be avoided, and the sanctions of religion were added to the obligations of immemorial usage. The feast was a solemn ceremony at which members of the whole tribe were collected as actors or spectators. The miserable victim was bound to a stake and burned at a slow fire with all the refinements of cruelty which savage ingenuity could invent. There was a traditional ritual which regulated, with revolting precision, the whole course of procedure at the ceremonies. Latterly, the authority and obligations of the institution had declined; and I presume the institution has now wholly disappeared. But I have seen and conversed with the head of the family, the chief of the society, whose name was White Skin. I need not attempt to describe my feelings of disgust. I well knew an intelligent Canadian who was present at one of the last sacrifices made to this horrible institution. The victim was a young American, captured in Kentucky towards the close of our Revolutionary War. Here where we are now assembled in peace and security, celebrating the triumph of art and industry, our countrymen have been thus tortured and murdered and devoured.

But thank God that council fire is extinguished! The impious feast is over; the war dance is ended; the war song is sung; the war drum is silent; and the Indian has departed to find, I hope, in the distant West, a comfortable residence. And I hope also he will find, under the protection and, if need be, under the power of the United States, a radical change in his institutions and a general improvement in his morals and condition.

A feeble remnant of the once powerful tribe which formerly won its way to the dominion of this region by blood--and by blood maintained it--has today appeared among us like a passing shadow, flitting around the places that know it no more.

The miserable victim was bound to a stake.

Its resurrection, if I may so speak, is not the least impressive spectacle that marks the progress of this imposing ceremony. It is the broken column which connects us with the past. The edifice is in ruins, and the giant vegetation which covered and protected it lies as low as the once mighty structure which was sheltered in its recesses. These Indians have come to witness the first great act of peace in our frontier history, as their presence here is the last great act in their own. The ceremonies upon which you heretofore have gazed with interest will never again be seen by the white man in this seat of the former power of the Indians. Thanks to our ascendancy, these representations are but a pageant, but a theatrical exhibition which, with barbarous motions and sounds and contortions, shows how the ancestors of the Indians conquered their enemies and how they glutted their revenge in blood. Today, the last of the race are here; tomorrow, they will commence their journey towards the setting sun. There their fathers have preceded them; and there the red men will find rest and safety.

In coming to this place, I passed along the Canal and marked with delight the beautiful river upon whose bank it is constructed and the charming country to which it gives new life and value. I was forcibly struck with the contrast between this journey and a former one. Nature has been prodigal of her favors to the valley of the Maumee. I can never forget the first time it met my eye. It was at the commencement of the late war when the troops destined for the defense of Detroit had passed through the forest from Urbana to the rapids. The season had been wet, much of the country was low, and the whole of it was unbroken by a single settlement. We had cut our road and transported our provisions and baggage with great labor and difficulty. We were heartily tired of the march and were longing for its

termination, when we attained the brow of the tableland through which the Maumee has made a passage for itself and a fertile region for those who have the good fortune to occupy it. Like the mariner, we felt we had reached a port; like the wanderer, a home. I have since visited the three other quarters of the globe and have passed over many lands and seas. But my memory still clings to the prospect which burst upon us on a bright day in June--the valley of the Maumee; the river, winding away beyond our view; the rapids, presenting every form of the most picturesque objects; the banks, clothed with deep verdure; and the rich bottoms, denuded of timber as though inviting the labor and enterprise of the settler.

In a subsequent journey, led by official duty, I ascended the river in a birch canoe. There is something romantic associated with that mode of conveyance, but it soon palls upon the traveler. During many a weary mile and hour, I have been borne by this aboriginal skiff over the lakes and rivers of the Northwest. I have seen it carried through dense forests, across wild portages, and then floated upon some little stream which, gradually swelled by successive tributaries, became a large river. It was thus I passed from Lake Superior to the Mississippi; I launched my frail bark upon a mere rivulet and descended some days before the peculiar characteristics of the stream announced that we were upon that mighty river which flows from its fountains in the North to the tropical seas.

But I have found the canalboat a more comfortable conveyance than the bark canoe; and this change is not the least improvement which has accompanied the march of the white man. Your valley was then thinly occupied; the settlements were sparsely scattered over it; but the pioneers were moving on. Their task was a hard one; it was met, however, with an energy which deserved the success it gained.

The fruits of that success now greet the traveler in all these evidences of a fertile country and a prosperous people which meet him wherever he moves from the Ohio to Lake Erie.

Here, where your Canal prepares to leave the basin of the Lakes for that of the Mississippi, I left the river with my birch canoe. I placed it upon a wagon, and it was transported to Little River where my faithful voyagers re-embarked in it. They joined me at White Raccoon's Village, to which I had ridden; there I passed the night. My friend, White Raccoon, treated us with great hospitality, but he was a little too hospitable to himself and his kindred. He produced his keg of firewater, to do honor to the arrival of the Che-mo-kee maun [sic]; but, unfortunately, he was too free at his own feast. One of those scenes of intoxication followed which are at once the bane and the attendant of Indian life. I retired to my blanket, leaving my host and his friends at their orgies.

In the morning I embarked upon the Wabash and descended that river to its mouth. I stopped occasionally to examine and admire the beautiful country, unsurpassed probably upon the face of the globe. I refer to these incidents of frontier life to place in bolder relief the change which has rescued this region from the Indian and has crowned it with the precious work of civilization.

The two sister and contiguous states of Ohio and Indiana have projected and completed this great communication. To enter upon the statistics of its cost would not be suited to the present occasion. This is a day not for figures but for results. I know, and we all know, that a great enterprise has been accomplished; and we have come together to rejoice at it. We have come to feel and not to calculate. A stupendous undertaking has been brought to a fortunate termination after many diffi-

culties. It has been accomplished by the energy and perseverence of two new states, the oldest of which has just seen its fortieth anniversary. Another route has been opened, by which the two great issues of our republic are brought together. This Canal gives to the inhabitants of the fertile country along it a choice of markets and a chance of a better price and quicker sale for their products. It is the second mingling of the waters of the Lakes and of the Mississippi. A third route is in progress which, we may trust, will ere long be completed. And there are others, formed by nature, which require but little aid from man to render them useful. They, too, will be undertaken and accomplished; and the tableland which divides these great internal seas from the Ohio and the Mississippi will be furrowed by canals wherever the country permits and its wants require.

That region is peculiarly favorable for these works of internal improvement. Streams which find their outlet in opposite directions have their sources interlocked and may be united with little labor and upon dividing ground, elevated but level, presenting no formidable obstruction to these enterprises. I have traveled along four of these lines of communication--one from Lake Superior to the head of the Mississippi, one from the Fox River to the Wisconsin River, one from the Illinois River to Chicago, and another where your Canal has taken the place of the portage path. Over three of them, by canoe I was carried from one extreme navigable point to the other; but I kept along on the fourth without disembarking and thus passed, by water, from the Mississippi into Lake Michigan.

Near the head of the Des Plaines, one of the principal sources of the Illinois, we found an extensive marsh, which we entered and followed; but, unfortunately, we were too late to reach its termination before the night closed upon us and prevented

our further progress. It was covered with the large lily, and it was impossible to proceed on our route in darkness and equally impossible to find the shore. We passed a comfortless night in our frail lodgment, with the accompaniments of mosquitoes and a thunderstorm. The next morning we made our way laboriously to the northern termination of the marsh, where Lake Michigan broke upon our view. It stretched off to the horizon till it was lost in the distance. We entered a small channel; rapidly descending an inclined plane, we soon found ourselves in the Chicago River, a short distance from the Lake.

Our works of internal improvement were honorable in their conception, and many of them have been vigorously and successfully prosecuted. The system has been checked by temporary causes, but these are gradually passing away, and the great work will again go on. More was no doubt planned than could be immediately constructed. The whole project was too gigantic for prompt execution. But this fault, if fault it be, finds its origin in our national character. There is a reckless energy about us, if I may be allowed the expression, which prompts us to the most gigantic enterprises. This ardor of expectation, this confidence in the result, is at the foundation of all great success. The will to dare must precede the power to do. Even rashness is sometimes wisdom. He who stops, coolly to calculate every step in life, may indeed move forward; but he will soon find himself behind his contemporaries. "Onward" is the great word of our age and country. Never, in the history of man, has human exertion been more displayed and rewarded than in the miracles of improvement which start up around us. These improvements have checkered our land and history from Plymouth and Jamestown to Lake Superior and the Mississippi, from the landing of the Pilgrims to the work whose consummation

we have this day come to hail.

A legend like that of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus would be more illustrative of the progress and change upon this continent than it was of the course of events in Asia Minor. There the young converts to Christianity were thrown into a miraculous sleep. They found, on awakening from their trance, that more than two centuries had elapsed since they had left the world and had taken refuge from persecution in a temporary tomb. Emerging into life, they were strangers in their native city; but they were greeted by the cross, which had supplanted the ensigns of paganism, and were surrounded by brethren of that new faith for which they had suffered and by whose power they had been preserved and rescued.

But no such sleep is necessary to make the changes which come over the face of our country. During a period equal to the seclusion of the Ephesian youths, a continent has been occupied and settled; empires have been founded in regions unknown in Ephesus. That proud city has fallen. Her monuments are in ruins; her people are in the dust; her glory has departed; and her sleepers are sleeping the sleep that knows but one awakening. It is the eloquent historian of the lower Empire who tells this legendary tale; but the story still lives in the traditions of the East. This is a striking proof that brass and marble are far more perishable than popular fables which are transmitted from generation to generation and almost enter into the character of the people.

On the top of one of the most arid hills in Syria, near the renowned city of Sidon, I found the granddaughter of the first Pitt (the niece of the second), Lady Hester Stanhope, who had abandoned, I know not why, her country, her kindred, and her religion. She had sought a resting place for herself in that secluded nook and a

refuge for her conscience in the vile dogmas of Islamism. She alluded to the Ephesian legend and, with true Moslem gravity, asked some questions respecting the young men whose conversion and its consequences the legend records, as though the story were authentic and the actors were yet alive to establish its truth.

It has been but a few years since our attention was systematically turned to the improvement of our means of internal communication. The first impulse was given by the state of New York in the projection and commencement of her great work, which is an evidence of her energy and wisdom and an enduring monument of her perseverance. The whole country is now gathering the fruits of that work. Since then, many other states, unwilling to be left behind in the career of advancement, have followed the same route; and everywhere canals and railroads have sprung into existence. They facilitate the communication between the most distant parts of the country and minister to those wants of intercourse which are at once the cause and the effect of active exertion and of commercial prosperity. Our social and political institutions and our national character, alternately operating upon each other, have never achieved a prouder triumph nor furnished a more irrefutable proof of their tendency to promise human happiness, than in this peaceful victory over the natural impediments which divided us, though they could not separate us. This victory has increased our capacity for defense as much as it has added to our stock of wealth.

The fate of republican institutions is in our hands. If the great experiment that is in progress among us--the experiment of the power of man to govern himself--should fail, ages may pass away before the rights and safety of all are again committed to the custody of all. Fortunate is it, therefore, when the operation of

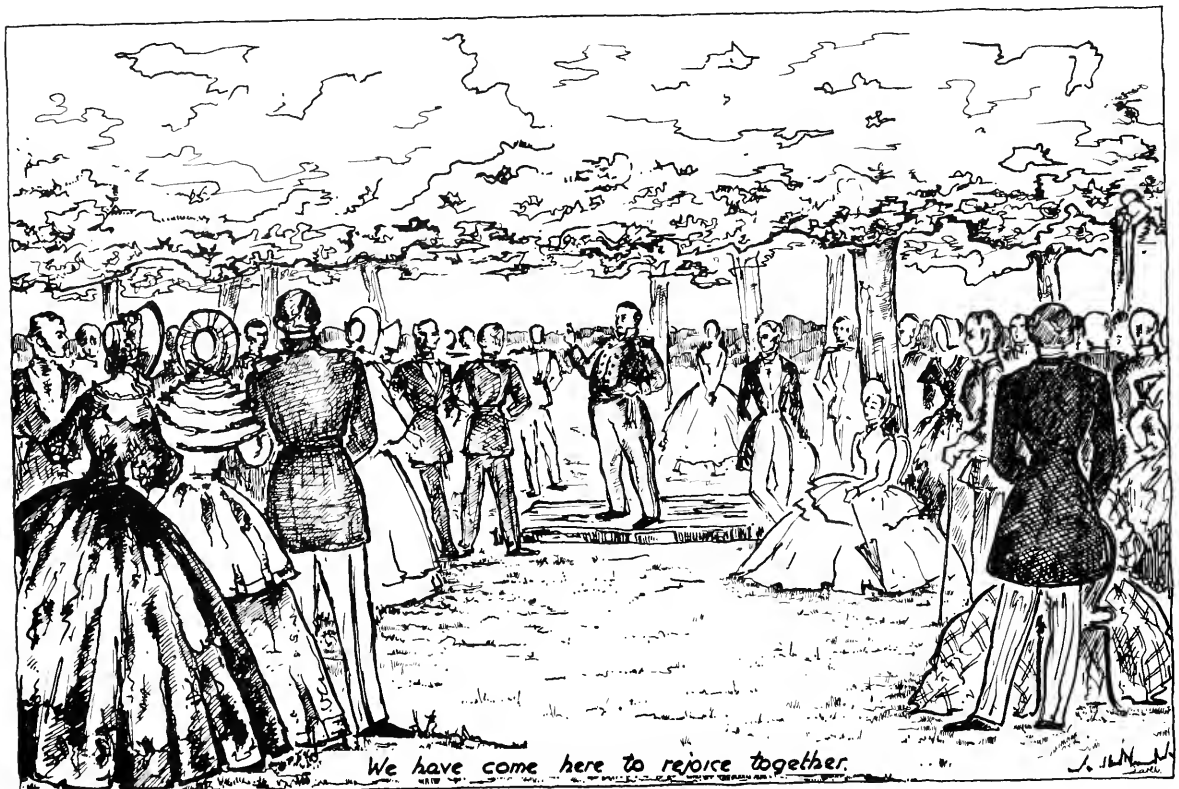
our system can be presented to the Old World in a point of view in which it can be examined and appreciated. It can be brought into comparison with the effects of the institutions that prevail there. No effort of this country in its onward march has awakened more attention or excited more admiration than the successful progress we have made in this great enterprise--this greatest of enterprises in the history of internal improvement.

The geographical maps make known the gigantic features of our confederation; and the statistical tables and the reports of travelers make known the communications, natural and artificial, by which it is knit together. The works, both of nature and of man, are on a scale of proportion unknown in that part of the world--rivers traversing the earth from the Arctic to the tropical regions; lakes, or rather seas, where navies have sailed and victories have been gained; railroads extending from the Atlantic to Lake Erie, a distance of five hundred miles, and intersecting the country in all important directions; and canals penetrating our valleys and ascending our mountains and forming, one after another, great lines of communication which would circumscribe many a European kingdom. And before these works the forests gave way. They are not confined to the more densely peopled portions of our country; but, like the hardy settler, they are marching with the times. Already, they have passed the cabin of the pioneer and the hut of the Indian. They remove from their path the lofty and primeval trees, the relics of a former age and the contemporaries, perhaps, and witnesses of arrangements forever lost to the knowledge of the world. Before these works our primitive people are receding and seeking new homes where the approach of the white man may be delayed but cannot be prevented. It is a popular remark with the Indians, that when the bee comes a-

mong them, it is soon followed by the Big Knives. There is now another precursor which announces to the secluded village that the civilized stranger is at hand. Propelled by some monster whose fearful sound precedes it, the boat ascends the solitary stream, penetrates the recesses of the forest, and proclaims to its inhabitants that, ere long, their council houses will become desolate, and the plow will pass over the graves of their fathers.

In Europe, this is a rate of progress utterly unknown and comprehended with difficulty. If caution would give more certainty of success, it would take from us that energy of purpose and action which has carried us forward in our career, both physically and mentally, with a rapidity unknown in the history of the world; that energy opens to us a future cheering to the heart of the patriot and encouraging to the lover of humanity. It is that energy which, if it commits faults, can repair them. Always operating, it is never discomfited; it accomplishes its projects when practicable and turns to others with equal confidence and perseverance, although checked by insuperable difficulties.

And it is to the operation of freedom that these miracles are due. They are the results of a political system which takes as little and leaves as much of personal liberty as is compatible with general security; the system is not embarrassed, as one of the patriarchs of our republic happily and expressively said, by too much regulation. Regulation is the bane of the Old World. It presses upon the freedom and upon the faculties of man, and it is felt in all the departments of life. It checks enterprise, checks emulation, and multiplies useless restraints till they are as numerous as they are vexatious. Happy would it be for us, if we could learn to know and to appreciate the blessings we now enjoy; if we could differ without bitter-


We have come here to rejoice together.

ness and contend without enmity; if we could maintain our own views, but regard charitably those of others; if we could be American patriots and brethren, while we are political partisans; if we could advocate the principles best fitted, in our opinion, to render the Constitution enduring and the country prosperous; if we could support the men who believe as we do and who would act as we would act. Let us think more of our blessings and less of our complaints. Let us thank God for all we enjoy. While we look abroad upon the nations of the East and compare our lot therewith, let us do so, not in a spirit of envy or of pride, but with feelings of gratitude in our hearts. Let us do so with words of thankfulness upon our tongues for that Providence which guided and guarded our fathers and which has given this precious heritage to their sons.

We have come here to rejoice together. Memorable deeds make memorable days. There is a power of association given to man which binds together the past and the present and connects both with the future. Great events hallow the sites where they pass. Their returning anniversaries, so long as these are remembered, are kept with sorrow or joy, as the events are prosperous or adverse. Today a new work is born--a work of peace and not of war. We are celebrating the triumph of art and not of arms. Centuries hence, we may hope that the river you have made will still flow both east and west; that it will bear upon its bosom the riches of a prosperous people; that our descendants will come to keep the day which we have come to mark; and that, as it returns, they will remember the exertions of their ancestors, while they gather the harvest.

Associations are powerful in the older regions of the eastern continents and sharply affect the imagination. Here, they are fresh and vigorous and belong to the

future. There, hope is extinct; history has closed its record; and time has done its work. Here we have no past. All has been done within the memory of man. Our province of action is the present; of contemplation, the future. No man can stand upon the scene of one of these occurrences, which have produced decisive effects upon the fate of nations and which history has rendered familiar to us from youth, without being withdrawn from the influence of the present and carried back to the period of conflict, doubt, and success which attended some mighty struggle. All this is the triumph of mind and the exertion of intellect which elevates us to the scale of being and furnishes us with another and pure source of enjoyment.

Even recent events, round which time has not yet gathered its shadows, sanctify the places of their origin. What American can survey the field of battle at Bunker Hill or at New Orleans without recalling the deeds which will render those names imperishable? Who can pass the islands at Lake Erie without thinking of those who sleep in the waters below and of the victory which broke the power of the enemy and led to the security of an extensive frontier? There, no monument can be erected, for the waves and water will roll over it. But the patriot and his devoted companions, who met the enemy and made them ours, will live in the recollection of the American people while there is virtue to admire patriotism or gratitude to reward it.

I have stood upon the plain of Marathon, the battlefield of liberty. It is silent and desolate. Neither Greek nor Persian is there to give life and animation to the scene. It is bounded by sterile hills on one side and lashed by the eternal waves of the Aegean Sea on the other. But Greek and Persian were once there, and that dreary spot was alive with hostile adversaries who fought to determine the future

of the world. And I have stood alone upon the hill of Zion in the city of Jerusalem; I have seen the place of our Redeemer's sufferings, crucifixion, and ascension. But the scepter has departed from Judah; and its glory, from the capital of Solomon. The Assyrian, the Egyptian, the Greek, the Roman, the Arab, the Turk, and the Crusader have passed over this chief place of Israel and have shorn it of its power and beauty. Well was the denunciation of the prophet of misfortune when he declared that the Lord had set his face against this city, and not for good, and when he pronounced the words of the Most High, "Then will I cause to cease from the cities of Judah, and from the streets of Jerusalem, . . . the voice of the bridegroom, and the voice of the bride; for the land shall be desolate."

In those regions of the East where society passed its infancy, it seems to have reached decrepitude. If the associations which the memory of past glory excites are powerful, they are yet melancholy. They are without gratification for the present and without hope for the future. But here we are in the freshness of youth; we can look forward, with national confidence, to days of progress in all that gives power and prosperity to the agents of human nature. No deeds of glory hallow this region, but Nature has been bountiful to it in her gifts. Art and industry are at work to improve and extend them. You cannot pierce the barrier which shuts in the past and separates you from the great highway of nations. You have opened a vista to the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico. From this elevated point, two seas are before us; your energy and perseverance have brought them within reach. It is better to look forward to prosperity than backward to glory. To the mental eye, no prospect can be more magnificent than that which here meets the vision. I need not stop to describe it. It is before us in the long West, to the south and north, in all the ad-

vantages which Providence has liberally bestowed and in the changes and improvements which man is making. The frontier is fading and falling; towns and villages are rising and flourishing. And better still, a morally intelligent and industrious people are spreading themselves over the whole face of the country and making it their own and their home.

And what changes and chances await us? Shall we go on increasing and improving, or shall we decay and just add another to the list of the republics which have preceded us and have fallen the victims of their own follies and dissensions? My faith in the stability of our institutions is enduring; my hope for them is strong, for they rest upon public virtue and intelligence. There is no portion of our country more interested in their preservation than this; and none is more able and willing to maintain them. We may here claim to occupy the citadel of freedom. No foreign foe can approach us. And while the West is true to itself and its country, its example will exert a powerful influence upon the whole confederation; and its strength, if need be, will defend it.

XII

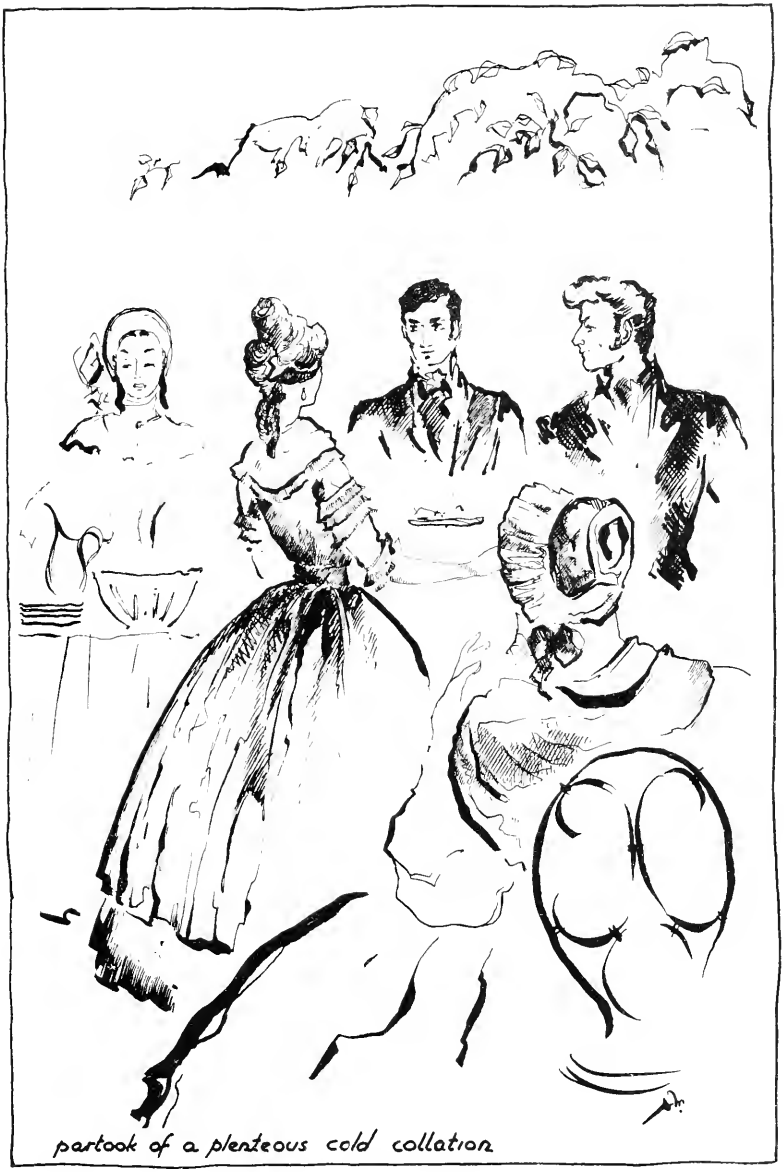
THE CELEBRATION (PART II)

The company then proceeded to another part of the ground and partook of a plenteous cold collation prepared for the occasion. After drinking the toasts, listening to speeches from some of the distinguished gentlemen present, and listening to replies to letters of invitation from those who could not attend, they returned in the same order to the city. All were well pleased with their entertainment. Everything 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 has been variously estimated at from ten to fifteen thousand. It was allowed by all to be the largest assemblage ever witnessed in Indiana, with the exception of the Tippecanoe convention.

The next morning, General 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 effaced.

It might be proper here, did our limits allow, to give some history to the origin and construction of this Canal; but we must forbear. By the letter of General McAfee, it will be seen that the feasibility of this work was ascertained, and its construction was predicted, as early as 1812 by the officers stationed here during the war. We have heard the late Miami chief, Richardville, say that the French



partook of a plenteous cold collation

traders, more than half a century ago, used to ascend the Wabash to the portage on this summit and then descend the St. Mary's and the Maumee to Lake Erie. And he had known instances, when the water was high and the marsh lying between Little River (a branch of the Wabash) and the St. Mary's was overflown, of boats actually being pushed across, thus achieving the voyage from Vincennes to the Lake without unloading.

The question of the Canal early engaged the attention of some of our leading men, even before the adoption of the state constitution. In 1826, General Cass, in a treaty with the Miami Indians, who then owned a large part of the country through which the Canal passes, secured a right-of-way and a strip of land a few rods in width along the whole length of the line for this object. In 1827, Congress made a donation to the state of Indiana of every alternate tier of sections within five miles of the Canal to aid in its construction, provided that the work was completed within five years and opened for navigation. The legislature approved the work; in the ensuing spring, the first letting took place and the work was commenced. That part of the work lying within the state of Indiana was completed more than a year ago and would have been opened two years earlier if Ohio had pushed her portion of the work with corresponding energy. The latter state, however, did not complete her part until the present spring.

The total length of the Canal now completed is two hundred and twenty-five miles; and ninety miles more, from Lafayette to Terre Haute, will be completed next year. The gradient from Lake Erie to the summit at Fort Wayne is two hundred feet, and the descent to Lafayette is about the same. The whole cost of the work has been about two million dollars, one half of which was met by the proceeds of

the funds donated by Congress. From Fort Wayne to the Ohio line, the Canal is sixty feet wide and six feet deep; thence to the Lake, it is fifty feet wide and five feet deep. West of Fort Wayne, it is forty feet wide and four feet deep. The summit is plentifully supplied with water, and some valuable water power is created by a feeder canal from the Little St. Joseph. Feeders are also introduced from the Wabash at the forks of Little River and at several points below; and a large reservoir is constructed in Ohio, near the state line, for the supply of that part of the work.

To any person who will examine the aspects of this work, it will appear evident that when its completion becomes known abroad, nearly the whole inland communication between the Atlantic states and the Southwest will be through.

Packets now run from Lake Erie to Lafayette in two days. Thence to St. Louis can easily be accomplished by stage in two days or more. When the Canal is finished to Terre Haute, the communication between the Canal and St. Louis will be by the National Road. At Terre Haute, the Wabash is navigable at all seasons for steam power.

In conclusion, we will just remark for the information of emigrants that a large part of the country now thrown open to them by this Canal is yet unoccupied; and lands of unequaled fertility may be bought at extremely low prices. These lands, in addition to their fertility, have the advantage of being contiguous to a market.

XIII

REGULAR TOASTS

1. The Day We Celebrate--gloriously consecrated as the justice of our liberty.

(3 cheers--3 guns)

2. The Patriots, Heroes, and Soldiers of the Revolution--their memories are embalmed in the hearts of their countrymen.

(Silent--standing)

3. The Statesmen and Leaders of the Late War--by their outstanding achievements they have added immortal glory to the national independence and the achievement of the Fathers.

(3 cheers--3 guns)

4. The Ex-President of the United States.

(3 cheers--3 guns)

5. The President of the United States.

(3 cheers--3 guns)

6. The Army and Navy--the nursery and school of future heroes whose chivalry will vindicate and sustain the national flag and national honor upon the land and upon the sea.

(6 cheers--6 guns)

7. The Congress of the Union--the people's champion, chosen to vindicate and maintain inviolate constitutional liberty.

(6 cheers--6 guns)

8. The Memory of John Tipton--his mastermind was foremost in discovering the utility and practicability of constructing the Wabash and Erie Canal, foremost in conceiving the design, and foremost in exertions to compass its completion. His memory will be cherished as long as human voices shall be found in this broad valley to speak his name.

(Silent--standing)

9. The Union of the Waters of the Wabash and Lake Erie by the Wabash and Erie Canal--we now celebrate this as a great and glorious achievement. Just gratitude and honor are due to the Congress of 1827 for its generous grant of land for the construction of the Canal and to the states of Ohio and Indiana for their energy and enterprise in consummating the great work.

(20 cheers--20 guns)

10. The Union, by National Thoroughfares, of the Atlantic and the Lakes with the Great Rivers of the West--that union will bind together with imperishable ties the states of our widespread republic; it will consummate their prosperity and preserve forever their most glorious and happy Union.

(6 cheers--6 guns)

11. The Distinguished Orator of the Day and Our Invited Guests--their presence at our jubilee has greatly added to the interest of the day and evinces their deep solicitude for the prosperity of the West.

(10 cheers--10 guns)

12. Ohio and Indiana, Adjoining and Sister States with Kindred Feelings and Interest--may they long continue to act in union and harmony in all great western enterprises.

(6 cheers--6 guns)

13. The Fair--first in our thoughts and hearts, their happiness is invoked whilst we celebrate the independence and prosperity of our country.

(10 cheers--10 guns)

After the seventh toast, the Honorable Albert S. White, Senator in Congress from Indiana, rose to return thanks in behalf of that body. Mr. White spoke for some time, touching upon various topics appropriate to the occasion.

Mr. White then offered the following toast:

Agriculture and Commerce--as the track of the gathered harvest is seen upon the ocean, so Commerce, by her interior channels, penetrates the farthest interior of our country. Both claim the protection of the government.

The Honorable E. A. Hannegan, United States Senator, was called on and addressed the assemblage in a most happy and felicitous manner. He expressed his gratification at being present on this interesting occasion and pointed out the utility and importance of the Wabash and Erie Canal. He passed a deserved eulogy upon General Tipton, to whose perseverance and untiring zeal we were mainly indebted for the grant of land from Congress which enabled the state to accomplish this gigantic work. It was his first visit to this region; and he took the occasion to express how much he had been delighted with the richness of the country and the beauty, activity, and thriving appearance of our growing city. Both had far exceeded his expectations. He sat down amidst the most enthusiastic applause.

He then offered the following sentiment:

The Day and the Occasion--the one is a No. 1 illustration of the other.

After the reading of the thirteenth toast, the Honorable Ethan Allen Brown

rose. In a brief and appropriate manner, he returned thanks on behalf of the invited guests and especially for the honor conferred upon himself in being asked to act as president of the day.

Governor Brown concluded by offering the following sentiment:

Joyous be the nuptials that wed the waters of the North with those of the South on this level, and prosperous be the offering of that union.

The Honorable Henry L. Falsworth, Commissioner of the Patent Office at Washington City, in compliance with a call, entertained the company with a speech full of interest.

XIV

VOLUNTEER TOASTS

By W. G. Ewing: The Several Bands of Music--who have attended our celebration. They richly merit our thanks for their fine music and able assistance upon this thrilling occasion.

By Mr. McCulchen of Ohio: Being with the citizens of Ohio who are present on this occasion, we remember the hospitality of citizens of the beautiful city.

By Samuel Hanna: The Toledo Guards--citizen soldiers, we thank you for your visit and for your able and efficient aid in the ceremonies of the day. We admire your gentlemanly deportment. May the god of battles long protect and guard you; and at the final muster call, may your tents be pitched on the right of the Commander.

By J. L. Habbel: The Wabash and Erie Canal--the great artery of the West.

General Wiley, one of the vice-presidents, had taken the chair, and Mr. J. L. Williams gave the following toast:

The President of the Day--twenty years ago as governor of Ohio, amid the sneers of the skeptical he persevered, year after year, in urging the connection of Lake Erie with the western waters by a canal. He has lived to see two such connections in successful operation. A distinguished piece at this canal festival is his due.

Volunteer Toasts

XV

LETTERS FROM INVITED GUESTS

The following letters were received by the committee of arrangement in reply to invitations to attend the canal celebration on July 4, 1843.

Detroit, Michigan

June 17, 1843

Gentlemen:

I am honored by your polite invitation to be present at Fort Wayne on July 4 next, there to participate in an intended celebration of the Wabash and Erie Canal.

The occasion I consider worthy to be celebrated with appropriate ceremonies and with exultation and rejoicing. Were the results of so great a public work limited even to the agriculturalists of the rich and fertile valley of the Wabash alone, its completion would be worthy of cordial and animated rejoicings. For who can measure its value, especially when boats upon that great Canal shall, by the progressing improvements in the application of steam, be seen propelled along its course by that mighty power! But happily, the benefits of the work are not thus geographically united. The Canal recompenses the industry and brings wealth and gladness to the population of the beautiful country through which it passes. At the same time, in combination with other and similar works now in progress, it stimulates throughout the broad West a spirit of well-balanced enterprise; it gives increased activity, variety, and expression to its business. It pours ample riches along the whole avenue of the Great Lakes. Our interests thus become yours and your interests ours. But do those benefits stop there? Far from it! The bold and gigantic projects of

internal improvement of the British and colonial governments throughout Canada are holding out to the whole West the promise of the advantages of active competition between and markets of Montreal and Quebec on the one side and those of our Atlantic cities on the other. Our clear-sighted and energetic fellow citizens of the East, therefore, will not long fail to perceive that their great interests will be best promoted by fostering and defending ours. They will no longer refuse to protect our commerce, for it will, in some sort, be theirs also; and they will make haste to multiply and perfect the means of cheap and rapid intercourse--commercial and social--between themselves and us. And thus will the East meet us midway; and upon their canals and railways, the East will shake hands with the West!

The Illinois and Michigan Canal cannot long remain unfinished to Chicago. The "Queen City of the West" will not permit the completion of the Miami Extension Canal to be greatly delayed. Lines of intercommunication are rapidly prevading the whole land! A volume would hardly contain the well-reasoned speculations to which the subject may give rise! But among the probable consequences of such a system (not the least important, it may be conjectured), will be that, as the widespread fellow citizens become more intimate, sectional jealousies will merge more in a sense of mutual and common interest. The bitterness of local prejudices will be left without advocates or reasonable apology; motives, new and powerful, will lead us with increasing fervor to cherish the history of our country. Without history's benign and protecting influence, our cheering hopes must become as a blight, and our prosperity be turned into hopeless ruin!

But I have no right, gentlemen, to obtrude these speculations upon you. Having had occasion not long ago, in another place, to investigate the general com-

mercial relations of the country of the Great Lakes, I became more awakened, perhaps, to a consideration of their magnitude. I began to realize their pervading and indissoluble connection with the continuance and the prosperity of the whole Union! In this will, I trust, be found my apology for so long delaying you. The destinies of no people under heaven were ever, it seems to me, more emphatically under the providence of God, in his own keeping, than the destinies of his people. No people ever rose into being among the nations of the earth and into great power more rapidly, none with more grandeur. Upon none were all the elements of happiness and of prosperity poured out more abundantly or in greater variety. It would seem as if, under the providence of God, it remained entirely with the people to determine whether or not their meridian splendor shall be proportionate to the early promise of their beginning, or whether we shall permit their glory to become overcast by our folly, and their prosperity to become extinguished under the dark and dreadful influences of our misgovernment and the reckless obstinacy and wicked profligacy of our administration.

Cherishing sentiments such as these, in the spirit which they inculcate, I respectfully tender to you gentlemen and to our fellow citizens of Ohio and Indiana whom you represent, my cordial congratulations on the occasion which you are about to commemorate. I fear I must be deprived of the gratification which my personal attendance at the celebration would afford me. My remoteness from Fort Wayne, my feebleness of health, and a pressure of duties resulting from my continued absence from home seem to prevent me from attempting such a journey. And if, when the period assigned shall have arrived, I should not be found in attendance, I hope these considerations will plead my excuse. I have the honor to remain,

gentlemen, with great consideration,

Your obedient servant,

W. WOODBRIDGE

Harrodsburg, Kentucky

June 17, 1843

Gentlemen:

Your kind invitation to the celebration at Fort Wayne on July 4 next of the opening of the Wabash and Erie Canal has been received; for it, I return you my sincere thanks. And if I consulted my inclinations alone, I would certainly be with you. My recollections of the condition in which we found that place in September, 1812, when General Harrison's army relieved it from the attacks of the Indians who had burnt and plundered every house outside of the fort, are yet fresh in my mind. I was, at that time, an officer in Colonel R. M. Johnson's mounted volunteers. The contrast which your flourishing town now exhibits must be gratifying to every patriot; I hope few take a deeper interest in it than I do. Being strongly impressed at that time with the admirable locality of the place, I then predicted, and so entered in my journal which I have now before me, that a canal at no very remote period would unite the waters of the Lakes with those of the Ohio and the Mississippi. I now find that prediction realized in a much shorter time than was expected. Fort Wayne must, of necessity, increase in its population and prosperity; and, in a few years, it must take rank among the proudest of our inland cities. Your Canal constitutes one of the great cords which is destined to bind our glorious Union together. Circumstances over which I have no control will prevent my attendance, but my

kindest feelings will be with you. I can only send you the following sentiment:

Fort Wayne, one of the pioneers of civil and religious liberty--may the Wabash and Erie Canal be the great highway of Indiana's prosperity.

Yours with respect,

ROBERT B. McFEE

Indianapolis, Indiana

June 24, 1843

Gentlemen:

It affords me pleasure to acknowledge your very polite invitation, on behalf of your fellow citizens, to be with you at Fort Wayne on July 4 next for the purpose of celebrating with appropriate ceremonials the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal. And while I cannot, under present circumstances, gratify myself with a participation in the festivities of the day, I assure you I must heartily congratulate you on the auspicious event you purpose to celebrate. I have long desired to see the completion of that great work. And I believe that the most sanguine of its friends are wholly unable to make any estimate of its great value to all concerned. I need not assure you that I have felt a lively interest in the prosperity of the beautiful portion of Indiana through which your Canal passes; I have the same interest in every other part of the state. And if any act of mine, as the representative of the state, has contributed in any degree to the result you so justly appreciate, a consciousness of the fact will at all times afford me a peculiar satisfaction.

Accept, gentlemen, the assurances of my high esteem and regard.

Your obedient servant,

O. H. SMITH

Canal Commissioner's Office

Syracuse, New York

June 13, 1843

Gentlemen:

I have received your invitation on behalf of the citizens of Ohio and Indiana who live on the line of the Wabash and Erie Canal to meet with them on July 4 next to celebrate the completion of that important work. It would give me great pleasure to accept the invitation were it possible for me to do so; but my official engagements are such as to compel me to decline it.

I congratulate you and those you represent on the completion of a work of such importance not only to the states of Ohio and Indiana but also to the state of New York, whose citizens have felt a deep interest in the success of that undertaking.

Please accept my thanks for the invitation and the kind manner in which it has been communicated to me.

Yours with great respect,

JAMES EARLL, JR.

Buffalo, New York

June 14, 1843

Gentlemen:

I feel highly honored by being included among those whom you have invited

to join in celebrating with appropriate ceremonies the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal on July 4 next. The importance of this noble work cannot be overestimated; the enlightened judgement which conceived it and the determined and energetic perseverance which has so far consummated it under the most discouraging circumstances are worthy of, and must command, all honor.

If I can possibly so arrange my affairs as to be present, nothing will give me greater pleasure than to be present on this most interesting occasion. I am, most respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

G. W. CLINTON

Rockville, Indiana

June 16, 1843

Gentlemen:

I have the pleasure to acknowledge your letter inviting me to attend the canal celebration at Fort Wayne on July 4 next.

It is out of my power to attend, and I regret that I was ill when I received your invitation and omitted to answer your letter for some days. I had the hope that I might be able to come. It is, however, impossible for me to do so. The people of the Wabash and Maumee valleys have great reason to congratulate each other on the union of the waters of the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence and the opening to them of a water communication with the Hudson. It would surely be pleasant to witness the messages of congratulations from the thousands who are present--it is to be hoped, will be present--at the celebrated event. It will excite in many minds

fervent hopes in reference to the future, and it will serve to dispel those gloomy forebodings so extensively expressed when progress is projected in our state affairs. But I will not trouble you with a long letter; I will content myself with sending a sentiment which may be presented if occasion offers.

The state of Indiana--her resources, her honor, and her honesty are equal to all her obligations and the protection of her fame against every reproach.

Yours truly,

T. A. HOWARD

Madison, Indiana

June 15, 1843

Gentlemen of the Committee:

I have received your kind invitation to be present at Fort Wayne and to participate in the proposed celebration of the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal on July 4 next; and it would give me great pleasure, indeed, to be present with you at that celebration.

This great work is one which I have looked upon as more extensively national in its character, both commercial and political, than any other in the western portion of the Union. It is to commerce one of the main arteries of navigation through the great interior of the United States. It is on the shortest route of internal navigation between New York and New Orleans. And politically, it is the strongest bond of union between the northeastern and southwestern states. And while this work has gone on with steady progress to its completion, it has not been liable to the objections which may justly be made to the system of internal improvements

created for the state; for it is based upon the munificence of the general government in the grant of lands made by Congress in 1827 for its construction.

This grant was made in the furtherance of a wise and sagacious government policy which was adopted by compact as early as the year 1787. This compact declared that the portage near Fort Wayne (where the completion of this work is to be celebrated) should be, and should remain forever, a common highway. It declared that "the navigable waters leading into the Mississippi and St. Lawrence, and the carrying places between the same, shall be common highways and forever free, as well to the inhabitants of the said territory as to the citizens of the United States, and those of any other states that may be admitted into the confederacy, without any tax, impost, or duty therefor."

This compact was made agreeable to the Constitution of the United States; and it is irrevocable unless by common consent. No future regulation of Congress can ever effect, in any way, the great internal navigation. No power of taxation over this work has ever been exerted, or claimed to exist, over this portion of the waters of the United States.

The Wabash and Erie Canal is a work of incalculable value; no one can contemplate the prospective greatness of this republic and view the Canal with indifference. It must always remain an important tributary to the internal commerce of the states and a strong bond of union among them.

The union of the waters of the Mississippi with those of the northern Lakes through this Canal is a grand national spectacle. And no one will behold it with more admiration and pleasure and pride of country than the individual who hereby acknowledges the flattering attention he has received in your kind invitation but

regrets that it will be impossible for him to be with you on the occasion referred to.

With much respect,

WILLIAM HENDRICKS

Upper Piqua, Ohio

June 23, 1843

Gentlemen:

I have duly received your letter of May 24 last, containing an invitation to participate in the festivities of your celebration. By reason of other and imperative engagements, it will be out of my power to attend.

I cannot be indifferent to the occasion of your meeting, for I had the honor of serving for many years on the canal board of Ohio. I was a co-worker with the public men of Indiana in the great work, the completion of which you are about to celebrate. I was also, at a very early period of my life, a resident of Fort Wayne in the public service; and, if it were possible for me to revisit a spot endeared to my mind by so many recollections, I could not forego the pleasure. Of the officers who successively commanded there, I am not aware that a single one now survives. Hamtramck, Hunt, Whistler, Pasteur, Pike, and others, after having served their country with distinguished honor and usefulness, have all long since sunk into the grave; they have left nothing to their children but the inheritance of an honorable fame with the public men of that day. The accumulation of wealth by defrauding the government did not enter into their calculations. The trade in politics was then unknown. The honest and incorruptible Harrison presided over the destinies of Indiana; he always did the thing that was lawful and right himself and caused all others

subject to his authority to do the same.

Gentlemen, it is in the highest degree creditable to your state and my own that, amidst all the fluctuations and revolutions in parties and amidst the base abandonment of principles by public men for the sake of office, the cause of internal improvement has been steadily prosecuted to completion. Public credit has remained inviolate. I trust it can never be said that a single voice will, in all future time, be raised either in the councils of Indiana or in those of Ohio in favor of the accursed doctrine of repudiation. I trust that another McNutt (worse, if possible, than the traitor Arnold) will never be found disgracing the annals of our common country.

It is fifty years since I first set my feet on the soil of Ohio. Then the red men covered the face of the whole country. Now they are gone, and two militias of our race are in their place and stead. Such a change has no parallel in history. The evidences of greatness, wealth, and refinement meet the traveler in every direction. Indiana is fast following our example. May God speed her; my best wishes attend her. My first-born is a native of your town; and now for upwards of twenty years he has been an officer in the United States Navy. He is a gallant spirit who will never bring reproach upon the Hoosier State of his nativity. My second son is an officer in the dragoons now serving in the far West.

Gentlemen, it has fallen to my lot to sit down at the festive board on July 4 at Fort Wayne in years long since passed away; some of the happiest days of my life have been spent there. I cannot refer to the associations connected with your town and country without living over again a life of fifty years. I cannot be with you in person on the occasion which has brought you together; but I shall be with you in

the spirit and in all the anticipations of profit, honor, and glory--public or private --growing out of the completion of the great work which reflects so much credit on the constancy, public spirit, and patriotism of the citizens of Indiana and Ohio.

I beg leave to offer to the company the following sentiment:

The bona fide taxpaying citizens of Indiana and Ohio--by their public spirit and patriotism in the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal, they have reflected imperishable honor on themselves and their posterity as well as on the cause of popular government.

I am, gentlemen, with very great respect,

Your most obedient servant,

JOHN JOHNSTON

Piqua, Ohio

June 30, 1843

Gentlemen:

I received, a few days ago, your kind letter of invitation to a canal celebration to be held in your town on the day of our national anniversary. I thank you for this distinguished mark of favor. The ill health of my family and business engagements combine to render it impossible for me to attend your meeting.

The construction of a canal from the interior of your state through Fort Wayne to the Maumee Bay and the completion of the Miami and Erie Canal from Cincinnati to unite with the Wabash and Erie Canal have been, with me, objects of deep interest for more than fifteen years. When I surveyed Fort Wayne for Messrs. Barr and McCorkle about twenty years ago, with the aid of Mr. Davis and other

gentlemen, I made a survey and level from the waters of the Wabash to the St. Mary's, near Fort Wayne, with reference to a canal. I was convinced then of the practicability and importance of the work; both in public and private life, I have since used all the influence so humble an individual could use in favor of this great public improvement.

The late contracts to finish the Miami and Erie Canal are peculiarly opportune and must give a little additional zeal to your celebration. Although I cannot visit you now, I hope in two years to visit you in a canalboat.

Very respectfully,

ROBERT YOUNG

Lindenwald

Kinderhook, New York

June 5, 1843

Gentlemen:

I have had the honor to receive your letter inviting me to unite with the citizens of Ohio and Indiana upon the line of the Wabash and Erie Canal in celebrating with appropriate ceremonies the completion of that important work. Most cordially, gentlemen, do I subscribe to the opinion which regards the event you propose to honor as making a new and glorious era in the history of the West. Nothing, be assured, could afford me more pleasure than to be favored with an opportunity to express, in person, to the worthy and enterprising inhabitants of the Maumee and Wabash valleys, my heartfelt congratulations on the final accomplishment of an undertaking for which they have so long, so sedulously, and so perseveringly labored.

MARTIN·VAN·BUREN

As a New Yorker, and one, too, who has, to some extent, had it in his power to judge from personal observation of the vast utility of this magnificent work, I feel a more than common interest in an event which cannot fail to be gratifying to every citizen of our extended country.

Circumstances, however, I regret to say, put it out of my power to be with you; and it only remains to thank you for your polite attention and to assure you of the unfeigned respect with which I am,

Your friend and obedient servant,

MARTIN VAN BUREN

White Sulphur, Kentucky

June 12, 1843

Gentlemen:

Your invitation has been received to attend the celebration of the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal on July 4. My previous engagement to meet the Oregon Convention at Cincinnati will prevent me from attending. Fort Wayne is a memorable place in the early settlement of the western country. It is a place at which I was occasionally stationed during the late war, when I had the honor to command the gallant sons of Kentucky in defense of that wilderness frontier, in conjunction with the brave sons of Ohio. It brings to my mind many interesting reminiscences connected with the condition of our country at that day. There is no place in the wide valley of the Mississippi where I should be more gratified to visit; and I regret that it will not be in my power to meet my fellow citizens, as requested.

The Fourth of July is a very appropriate period to celebrate the completion

of that interesting and splendid improvement which opens a safe water communication to the Atlantic and middle states by means of the Lakes and other similar improvements. Each improvement gives strength to our federal union, increases our wealth and happiness, and tends to perpetuate our free institutions.

I sincerely congratulate you and our fellow citizens of Ohio and Indiana in the beneficial results of the consummation of this important Canal. I am, with great respect,

Your friend and fellow citizen,

R. M. JOHNSON

Elizabethtown, New Jersey

June 26, 1843

Gentlemen:

Since I had the honor of receiving your invitation, I have endeavored so to shape my official engagements as to allow me to have the high gratification of being present at your approaching celebration. But I have just been detained nearly a month on special duty at the United States Military Academy, and I am now obliged to hasten back to my office at Washington.

The completion of the Canal uniting the Wabash with Lake Erie is one of those great works which cannot fail greatly to benefit more than one quarter of the Union and to shed joy over the remaining part. It marks the progress of the age. That its results may more than realize the anticipations of its patriotic projectors and supporters is the prayer of your fellow citizen,

WINFIELD SCOTT

Ashland

Lexington, Kentucky

June 23, 1843

Gentlemen:

I duly received your invitation to attend the celebration of the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal on the fourth of next month; and I should be most happy to assist in the ceremonies of such an event which reflects so much honor on the enterprise of the states of Ohio and Indiana. But I regret that I cannot leave home at this busy season of the year; the growing crops on my farm are very much behind in consequence of the extremely unfavorable spring which we have just passed.

Accept, gentlemen, my respectful acknowledgments for your obliging invitation and my wishes that the proposed celebration may realize all your expectations. I am, with great respect,

Your friend and obedient servant,

HENRY CLAY

Boston, Massachusetts

June 9, 1843

Gentlemen:

Circumstances do not allow me to accept your kind invitation to be present at the celebration of the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal; but I partake, nevertheless, in full measure, in the satisfaction which the accomplishment of so noble a work affords to all friends of internal improvement. The Maumee joined to the Wabash! Lake Erie connected with the Ohio and the Mississippi! New York and

HENRY CLAY.

New Orleans, rival markets for the products of a vast portion of the most fertile West with easy and certain communication to either! Certainly you are very right in rejoicing in this event as a new and glorious era in the history of the West! Well may the thousands of inhabitants of these valleys assemble together to give expression to their feelings of exultation and to congratulate one another on the attainment of an object of such high importance.

I am accustomed to regard our whole country as one country and to look with equal interest on the progress of improvement in all parts of it; and I am deeply impressed with a sense of the value of these great lines of communication in the new and rich states of the West. I should, therefore, join in your celebration, if it were possible for me to attend it, with the most sincere gratification. Let the completion of this great work encourage us all. Let us hope (and for myself, I both hope and believe) that the darkest hour in the day of our depression has passed away. And let us trust that an enlightened public spirit, private industry, public and private economy, and the prevalence of just principles and honorable sentiments may, ere long, place the whole country even in advance of any stage of its former prosperity. Believe me, gentlemen, with sincere regard,

Your friend and obedient servant,

DANIEL WEBSTER

Springfield, Illinois

June 10, 1843

Gentlemen:

I have had the honor of receiving your invitation on behalf of the citizens of

DANIEL WEBSTER

Fort Wayne to attend on the Fourth of July next the celebration of the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal. As the Circuit Court of the United States will commence its session at Cincinnati on the first Monday of July, it will not be in my power to attend the celebration. It would afford me peculiar gratification to unite with my fellow citizens of Indiana and Ohio in celebrating such an event which, you justly observe, constitutes a new era in the West.

I recollect that when the illustrious and farseeing Clinton was using all his influence to enlist public sentiment in favor of a system of internal communication by canals, he was opposed strenuously and bitterly by many of the leading men in his own state. Some of them doubted the practicability of the great western canal which he projected. So strong was this opposition that the friends of the system were often brought to doubt whether public opinion would not set so strongly against them as to defeat all their efforts. But the indomitable spirit of Clinton and the influence of his great name triumphed at last; and never was a triumph more glorious to a country. The first and greatest difficulty was overcome. The great canal of New York has been completed, and connecting lines through Lake Erie in Ohio and Indiana have been projected and accomplished. These, by connecting the waters of the Atlantic with the waters of the Gulf of Mexico, give an internal transportion of many thousands of miles through as rich a country as the sun enlightens.

The Wabash and Erie Canal constitutes a most important line in the system. Thirty years ago, no one could have had the temerity to predict that, within so short a time, the Wabash and Lake Erie would be connected by a work so magnificent as that which you are about to celebrate. Along the line of this great work, flourishing villages and towns will rise as if by magic; and the people of the adjacent

country for many miles will find themselves, in effect, brought near to the great marts of the Union. This and other works of internal improvement similar in character and effect will afford means for a rapid development of the exhaustless resources of our country.

But fertile as is our country, and exhaustless as are its resources, three things are necessary to secure to us national prosperity:

1. A sound and equal circulating medium which shall be sufficient for the business of the country

2. A steady policy for the action of the federal government which shall draw from imports, by an enlightened and judicious discrimination, a sum sufficient to meet the public expenditures

3. The payment or satisfactory adjustment of the state debts.

With the greatest respect, I am,

Your friend and fellow citizen,

JOHN McLEAN

Treasury Department

Washington, D. C.

June 2, 1843

Gentlemen:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your kind invitation to unite with my fellow citizens of Ohio and Indiana in celebrating the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal on the Fourth of July next; and I regret extremely that the pressure of official duties will deprive me of the pleasure of being present on that

interesting occasion.

The great importance of those internal improvements uniting the Lakes with the Mississippi has always been regarded by me with the liveliest interest as a source not only of local, but also of national, wealth. It gives me, then, great pleasure to learn that, by the energy and enterprise of their citizens, amid the most perplexing embarrassments, Ohio and Indiana have been able to complete so triumphantly one of the most important works in the country. With assurances of great respect, I remain, gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

J. C. SPENCER

Post Office Department

Washington, D. C.

June 30, 1843

Gentlemen:

I have been honored through you as a committee of the citizens of Ohio and Indiana with an invitation to attend the celebration of the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal on July 4, 1843, at Fort Wayne. I would be much gratified to be present and unite with you on that day--itself consecrated to freedom--in the expression of that joy which all must feel at the completion of a work so pregnant with advantages to the citizens of all the states.

I cannot but reflect that your assembly place and the states whose energies and patriotism have united the waters of the Lakes with those of the Mississippi were uninhabited by civilized man only a few years ago. When I behold your

present power--moral, physical, and political--I am led to inquire what will be the mighty power and energy of those two young giants of the West in a few more years! God speed them in the work of moral, intellectual, and physical culture.

I am compelled to decline the invitation because of the distance from this place, where my official duties so constantly require my whole time.

If the occasion is one which allows the expression of a sentiment, permit me to offer one:

The citizens of Ohio and Indiana--may their interests, sympathies, and opinions unite as harmoniously and as indissolubly as glide the waters of the two states along their Canal, whose completion is this day celebrated.

Your obedient servant,

C. A. WICKLIFFE

Portsmouth, New Hampshire

June 5, 1843

Gentlemen:

Allow me to express warm acknowledgments for the invitation you have given me to attend the celebration of the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal.

Distance and other engagements near July 4 must prevent my acceptance; but I cannot refrain from congratulating you on the event to which your festivities will be dedicated. I sincerely hope that many more arteries and veins will, ere long, help your great work to pour lifeblood and vigor through the remotest extremities of the Union.

Respectfully

LEVI WOODBURY

Indianapolis, Indiana

June 2, 1843

Gentlemen:

Yours of the date of June 22, 1843, was received by me last evening; and I take the earliest opportunity of replying to it.

The union of the waters of Lake Erie with those of the Wabash--and as I fervently hope ere long, of the Lake and the Ohio--has been with me a subject of deep interest as an American, and of much more interest as an Indianian. I feel proud of the energy and enterprise which has effected this great work. As soon as the Canal is opened to the Ohio, we shall have, in my opinion, the best and most direct communication which can be opened between the Lake and the valley of the Mississippi. And the time is not far distant, as I believe, when the whole trade between the mouth of the Green River on the Ohio and the Balize [sic] will find its way to the north, through the Maumee Bay, via the Wabash and Erie Canal. Imagine, for a moment, that the Canal is completed to the Ohio, and that there is a war between this country and Great Britain; suppose a British armed force lies off the mouth of the Mississippi. Could not the whole cotton and sugar crop of Mississippi and Louisiana find its way to the north inland, through our Canal? The event alluded to, a war with Great Britain, it may be said, is not very probable. It is enough for my argument that it is possible. For, assuming the completion of the canal connecting the Illinois River and Lake Michigan, he who looks at the map of

the United States and traces the distance from the Maumee Bay to Chicago (upwards of nine hundred miles of difficult lake navigation), thence down the Illinois to the Mississippi, must acknowledge that even when completed, it will not be as safe, as cheap, or as certain a route as that through our own state from the Maumee Bay to the Ohio River.

Our fathers before us seem prophetically to have foreseen the advantages of the internal communication above alluded to. By the ordinance for the government of the Northwest Territory of July 13, 1787, they declared, "the navigable waters leading into the Mississippi and St. Lawrence, and the carrying places between the same, shall be common highways and forever free." Little did these great and good men, prophetic as they were, imagine that in a little more than half a century their children would meet in the midst of thriving farms, populous villages, and cultivated fields to celebrate at one of these very carrying places the mingling of the waters of the Lake and the Mississippi. Little did they think that in the same period, the footsteps of the last of the Miami would be seen on the sands of the Wabash, as he wended his way before the march of civilization across the Father of Waters. Little did they dream that the mart of commerce, the temple of justice, and the church of the living God would reach their spires to Heaven where then stood alone the wigwam of the Indian and the council house of his nation. Little did they dream that a country inhabited only by the trapper and the Indian would, in 1843, teem with wealth, population, and intelligence and present, in only one third of its area, a state the sixth of the confederacy and a population of 750,000 souls.

The late talented and venerable Colonel Francis Vigo of Vincennes was prob-

ably the first white man to traverse the country between the Wabash and the Maumee by water. He informed me that in 1788 he went from Vincennes to Detroit with peltry, without unloading his pirogues. He went up the Wabash in a high stage of water as far as Little River, thence into the St. Mary's, thence into the Maumee, and down that river to the Lake. His canoes were shoved, without unloading, through from Little River into the St. Mary's where the waters of the two united. In the commencement of the eighteenth century, the French were in the constant habit of passing from the Lake to the Wabash. Their settlements at Vincennes, Ouiatenon (or mouth of the Wea), and I may add, Fort Wayne (for they had a small settlement there in 1750), were visited by ascending the Maumee, crossing the portage, and descending the Wabash. And long before the Ohio had been discovered by the whites, the Maumee and the Wabash had been navigated. In point of antiquity, you see, we rank with the "Belle Rivière."

Accept, gentlemen, collectively and individually, my best wishes, and believe me respectfully,

Your obedient, humble servant,

JOHN LAW

New York, New York

June 28, 1843

Gentlemen:

I had been anticipating much pleasure in accepting your kind invitation to attend the opening of the Wabash and Erie Canal on the fourth of next month, but I am unfortunately detained at home by illness in my family.

I was particularly desirous of being present on this most interesting occasion regarding the completion of this important channel of communication. This celebration is an event of the deepest interest, not only to the great central region which it traverses, but also in fact to every portion of this American Union connected directly of indirectly with the chain of lakes. Upon several occasions, it had fallen to my lot, in the discharge of official duties connected with the public works of this state, to urge upon our legislature and people the important and abiding influence which the junction of Lake Erie with the navigable waters of the Wabash must inevitably exert upon our fiscal and commercial condition. And now that the great work--thanks to the forecast and energy of our fellow citizens of Indiana and Ohio--is happily accomplished, I look with confidence to the rapid development of the advantages it cannot fail to produce.

I beg to be permitted to exchange with our valued fellow laborers in the broad field of internal improvement throughout the West, earnest and fervent felicitations at the consummation of a work destined, as I firmly believe, to open out for years to come a ceaseless stream of prosperity upon our common country. The completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal I had also regarded, for some time past, with still deeper solicitude. It will solve the problem of whether our patriotic and intelligent friends in the interior will sink beneath the disheartening disasters through which the country has been passing and hopelessly abandon their noble systems of physical improvements, or whether they will successfully and honestly persevere amid the difficulties of the times and carry forward those systems to a successful and profitable issue. I cannot but believe that the completion by Indiana of the main stem in the western chain of works must dispel all doubts on this head.

It proclaims to the world that Indiana, at least, is willing and able to struggle through those difficulties and not to falter in her career until the boundless resources of her extensive and fertile territory shall all be adequately developed and the industry of her whole population shall be brought into full and beneficial action.

Need we add how instructively valuable is her example to her sister communities who are still struggling with the embarrassment of extensive and valuable, but unfinished, works--works destined eventually, like the Wabash Canal, to become sources of enduring prosperity and imperishable renown?

Believe me, gentlemen, that I do most deeply regret my inability to be with you in person at the celebration of the interesting event which now calls you together. I beg, however, to express my feelings, though most inadequately, in the following sentiment:

The Wabash and Erie Canal--a signal triumph of intelligence, patriotism, and honest enterprise, amid the disheartening influence of the times. The example is replete with instruction and encouragement.

I remain, with high regard,

Your most obedient servant,

SAMUEL B. RUGGLES

Albany, New York

June 17, 1843

Gentlemen:

It would give me pleasure to accept your polite invitation of June 22, 1843, to unite with you in celebrating the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal on

July 4, 1843; but public engagements in this state will prevent me.

Nearly twenty years of the best period of my life have been devoted to the construction of the public works in this state. And I have become strongly impressed with the utility of roads and canals to develop the resources of a country. Under the influence of the Erie Canal, I have seen western New York rise as if by magic from agricultural despondency to a high state of prosperity.

The rich and productive country bordering on the Wabash and Erie Canal has, in effect, been transferred by public improvements about as near to the Hudson River as the county of Cayuga was before the construction of the Erie Canal.

The completion of your Canal will give new life and vigor to your enterprising population. And the day is not distant when the western states will rise in their majesty above the financial embarrassments with which they have been recently oppressed.

Allow me to present, through you, to your fellow citizens my cordial congratulations for the important event you are to celebrate on the Fourth of July. I am, with great respect,

Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM C. BOUCK

Howard's Hotel

New York, New York

June 27, 1843

Gentlemen:

I am favored with yours of a late date inviting me on behalf of the inhabitants

of the Maumee and Wabash valleys to unite with them in celebrating the completion of the Wabash and Erie Canal at Fort Wayne on the Fourth of July next; and I regret to say that official engagements will detain me here.

The completion of this vast enterprise is an event worthy of the attention it is about to receive at the hands of the generous and patriotic people to whom we are indebted for its design and execution. And the day sacred to American liberty and independence has been appropriately selected for the exchange of congratulations upon a subject so deeply fraught with good to the Union, and especially to the growing West.

Be pleased to accept my acknowledgments for the honor conferred by your invitation, and believe me to be with high regard,

Your friend and fellow citizen,

D. S. DICKINSON

JOHN EWING, Esq., at Vincennes, sent a long letter giving much interesting information in regard to the early legislation of the state on the subject of the Canal and setting forth his claims as one of the originators and earliest supporters of the work. The extreme length renders it impossible for us to reproduce the letter here. He concludes with the following sentiment:

"The Fourth of July and the Wabash and Erie Canal east of Lafayette--the conception of the one emanated from, and is consummated in, the true spirit of the other. May their fruits be reaped in plenty and enjoyed with happiness, and may they amply reward their brave, enterprising, and industrious friends."

FORT WAYNE WEEKLY SENTINEL, July 15, 1843