



Marker Text

Side one:

The Whitewater Canal and the Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal joined in Harrison to provide better access to Cincinnati markets and Ohio River. Indiana Internal Improvement Act 1836 authorized Whitewater Canal; completed from Brookville to Lawrenceburg 1839. Nearby Dam No. 1 on Whitewater River created a pool for canal boats to cross the river.

Side two:

Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal incorporated by Ohio General Assembly 1837. Completed seven miles from Harrison (now West Harrison), Indiana to Dry Fork Creek, Ohio 1840. Twenty-five mile canal opened 1843 when 1,782 foot tunnel completed at Cleves, Ohio. Traffic diverted to Cincinnati on this interstate transportation link diminished Lawrenceburg's importance as a market.

Report

This marker certainly meets the current guidelines for state and national significance due to the economic impact upon the state. As a result of the canals, thousands of jobs were provided, hundreds of businesses were created, and Hoosier products were sent beyond the borders of the state.

The Whitewater Canal¹ was authorized by Indiana Internal Improvement Act 1836,² and the Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal was incorporated by Ohio General Assembly April 1, 1837.³ The statement the canal was finished from Brookville to Lawrenceburg in 1839 is confirmed in the engineer's report of that year.⁴ The location of Dam No. 1 is confirmed in the January 23, 1837 report of Darius Lapham, a resident engineer on the Miami Canal, Ohio, who surveyed the proposed route of the Ohio section of the canal.⁵ Lapham's original report is located at the University of Akron.⁶ The statement that the construction for the Ohio section of the canal began in 1838 is correct. An article in the *Brookville Indiana American* newspaper states, "Breaking Ground-A large party of ladies and gentlemen left this city on Saturday morning last in the new and elegant steamboat *Moselle*, to witness the ceremony of breaking ground as a commencement of the Cincinnati and White Water Canal, on the farm of Gen. Harrison, at North Bend."⁷ The statement that the length from Harrison to Dry Fork, Ohio is seven miles and completed in 1840 needs further research in the engineer reports. However, a special 1841 report on the Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal submitted by the Office of Board of Public Works to the Ohio House of Representatives does provide some information on the construction status. It states, ". . . Of the 25¹/₈ miles, the total length of the Canal . . . actually completed . . . twelve miles and seventy-four chains. Of this distance five miles and thirty-four chains extending from the junction with the Indiana Canal to the crossing of the dry fork of White Water will be ready for the reception of water as soon as two bridges are completed which are in progress . . ." ⁸ The same report describes the construction of the tunnel. It states, "The tunnel at North Bend had prosecuted with considerable energy during the past season." It does not give dimensions of the tunnel.⁹ The aforementioned 1966 issue of *Towpaths*,¹⁰ states,



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“According to the proposal, the masonry arch would extend for a total distance of 1782 feet. . . .” The tunnel was placed on the National Register of Historic Places May 25, 2001.¹¹ The entire length of the canal was open in 1843. The *Cincinnati Gazette* forwarded an article to the Brookville newspaper which provided a detailed account and stated, “Yesterday was devoted to the celebration of the opening of the Cincinnati and White Water Canal.”¹²

Additional Sources

Paul Fatout, *Indiana Canals* (West Lafayette, Purdue University Press, 1985) Digitized, June 2, 2010.

Links

Canal Society of Indiana, Accessed <http://www.indcanal.org/>

Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal, Accessed <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=682&nm=Cincinnati-and-Whitewater-Canal>

American Canal Society, Accessed www.americancanals.org/.../Ohio/Cincinnati%20Whitewater%20Canal ...

Cincinnati and Whitewater, Accessed <http://www.oocities.org/heartland/prairie/6687/cinci.htm>

Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal Tunnel, Accessed <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=2689>

Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal Tunnel, Accessed <http://www.northbendohio.org/CanalTunnel.html>

Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal Tunnel, Accessed <http://www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=2689>

The Cleaves Tunnel a Rare Extant Example, Accessed <http://www.cmnh.org/site/Files/InvertPaleo/CleavesTunnel.pdf>

¹ An Act to amend an act, entitled “An act to incorporate the Whitewater Canal Company,” Approved January, 23, 1827, *Laws of Indiana* (Indianapolis, John Douglass, 1827) pp. 28-29; “An ACT to Provide for a General System of Internal Improvements,” Approved January 27, 1836, *Laws of Indiana* (Indianapolis, Bolton and Emmons, 1836) pp. 6-21. Act states, “. . . The Whitewater Canal, commencing on the west branch of the White Water River, at the crossing of the National Road, thence passing down the valley of the same to the Ohio river, at Lawrenceburg, and extending up the said west branch of the White Water above the National Road as far as practicable . . . That if the state of Ohio shall ultimately refuse to grant leave for the construction of that part of the White Water Canal which passes through her territory, the said Board [Internal Improvement] shall construct a Rail Road from some point near Harrison to Lawrenceburg, keeping it wholly in the territory of this state. . . .”



² “An ACT to Provide for a general system of Internal Improvements,” Approved January 27, 1836, *Laws of Indiana* (Indianapolis, Bolton and Emmons, 1836) pp. 6-21.

³ “An Act to permit and authorize the State of Indiana to construct a part of the Whitewater canal within the territory of Ohio,” *Acts of a Local Nature passed at the first session of the Thirty-fourth General Assembly of the State of Ohio* (Columbus, James B. Gardiner, Printer to the State, 1836) p. 268-69, Accessed *Google Books*; “An Act to incorporate the Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal Company,” *Acts of a General Nature, passed at the first session of the Thirty-fifth General Assembly of the State of Ohio* (Columbus, S.R. Dolbee, Printer to the State, 1837) pp. 393-99, accessed *Google Books*; “To amend an act entitled, ‘An act to incorporate the Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal Company,’ passed April 1, 1837.” *Acts of a General Nature, passed by the Thirty-seventh General Assembly of Ohio* (Columbus, Samuel Medary, Printer to the State, 1839) p. 296-97, accessed *Google Books*

⁴ “Annual Report of the Chief Engineer to the Board of Internal Improvement,” November 11, 1839, *Report of the State Board of Internal Improvement of the State of Indiana* (Indianapolis, Douglass and Noel, 1839) Accessed *Google Books*; *Brookville Indiana American*, June 14, 1839, p. 3, c. 1. Article states, “*The Canal Open*—The first Canal Boat, (Ben Franklin) owned by Long and Westerfield arrived at this place from Lawrenceburg, by the Canal on Saturday evening last, on which occasion our citizens let loose to their feelings of joy, by the firing of cannons and other manifestations of pleasure, calculated to be experienced at the successful completion of such an enterprise. . . .”

⁵ “Report of Darius Lapham to Samuel Forrer,” January 23, 1837, Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal, A2 14- *Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal, General Information, Canal Society of Ohio Records*, University Libraries at the University of Akron, Accessed <http://ul.uakron.edu/depts/arch/CSO.php> There is no copy of this document in the IHB Marker Administration File # 15.1999.1 Canal Junction; “Second Annual Report of the Board of Canal Commissioners,” January 21, 1824, *Public Documents Concerning the Ohio Canals which are to connect Lake Erie with the Ohio River* (Columbus, Olmsted, Bailhache & Cameron, 1828) p. 54-55. Report identifies Samuel Forrer as a civil engineer; Neuhardt, David, “Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal,” Part V, *The Waterways of Southwestern Ohio*, (Dayton, Canal Society of Ohio, 1989). Article states, “Lapham started his survey at the Whitewater Canal Dam #1, below Harrison at the point where the state line crossed the Whitewater River. He noted that the dam was about 100 feet southeast of the state line”

⁶ “Report of Darius Lapham to Samuel Forrer,” January 23, 1837, Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal, A2 14- *Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal, General Information, Canal Society of Ohio Records*, University Libraries at the University of Akron, Accessed <http://ul.uakron.edu/depts/arch/CSO.php> A description of Lapham’s report is found in the October, 1966 issue of *Towpaths*,⁶ a Canal Society of Ohio publication.

⁷ *Brookville Indiana Democrat*, April 6, 1838, p. 3, c. 1.

⁸ Darius Lapham, Chief Engineer, “Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal: Report of the Engineer to the Board of Directors of the said Company,” December 31, 1840, Document A, *Journal of the House of*



Representatives of the State of Ohio being the first session of the Thirty-ninth General Assembly (Columbus, Samuel Medary, Printer to the State, 1841) pp. 620. 618-622.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 622

¹⁰ F.W. Trevorrow, *Towpaths*. Article states, “The proposed tunnel was a daring engineering innovation at the time it was made. Only four canal tunnels had been dug in the United States up to that time. The Schuylkill and Union Canals each had one and the Pennsylvania Main Line had two tunnels . . . The art of tunnel building was new to Ohio, but Lapham was of the opinion that the conditions were favorable and had no hesitation in recommending the tunnel plan over the open cut. The tunnel was built and proved to be the most lasting work on this canal.”

¹¹ “Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal Tunnel,” National Register of Historic Places, Hamilton County Ohio, Accessed

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Register_of_Historic_Places_listings_in_Hamilton_County,_Ohio

National Register of Historic Places registration forms are secondary sources of varying reliability depending on the breadth of research performed by the applicant.

¹² *Brookville Indiana American*, December 8, 1843, p.1, c. 1. Article provides a detailed account of the day’s events.