

EARLY HAZLETON, INDIANA

BY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

In 1948 Leland S. Cunningham submitted these articles on the early history of Hazleton and the surrounding area to the White River News for serial publication. They are really reminiscences drawn from a lifetime of contact with pioneers in his own family background and from conversations with old timers in the area. These he augmented with extensive research through old family records, Gibson County records, old newspapers, the minutes of early meetings, old cemetery records, etc. In addition, he visited the places he describes, accumulating bit by bit the wealth of material from which he wrote these stories.

His own purpose is not known. Perhaps in sharing them with us he satisfied his need to teach, and in so doing has made his contribution to the students of history. Whatever his reason, the people of Hazleton are indebted to him for giving to them these glimpses of the past.

For me, the task of getting the material from a collection of yellowed, fading newspaper clippings has been a joy. More and more I realize how much I owe to this man whose great knowledge of history and literature and his orderly sense of things past he shared with me and with many others who spent their teen-age years in Hazleton High School.

I am indebted to Miss Hallie Cunningham, who graciously loaned me her treasured clippings.

Madge M. Steelman

I Early Pioneers	
1. Andrew Cunningham .....	Page 1
2. Stewart and Georgiana Cunningham .....	Page 5
3. David Hazleton .....	Page 9
4. John Reel and Richard Sloan .....	Page 12
II Hazleton	
1. Platting the Town .....	Page 15
2. Additions .....	Page 17
3. Hazleton in the 1850's .....	Page 19
III Early Schools	
1. The Hazleton School of 1846 .....	Page 21
2. The Barnett School .....	Page 23
3. The Main Street and Octagon Schools .....	Page 25
IV Railroads	
1. Early Railroads in Indiana .....	Page 27
2. The Evansville and Crawfordsville Railroad .....	Page 29
3. The Hazleton Railroad Wreck .....	Page 34
V River Traffic	
1. Flatboats .....	Page 37
2. Steamboating on White River .....	Page 43
3. Life on the River I .....	Page 46
4. Life on the River II .....	Page 48
5. Life on the River III .....	Page 49
6. Life on the River IV .....	Page 50
VI Business	
1. Robb's Mills .....	Page 52
2. The Atlanta Flour Mill .....	Page 54

(Continued)

I  
977.235  
CUNNINGHAM

EARLY PIONEERS  
ANDREW CUNNINGHAM

VI Business (Cont.)

3. The Hazleton Milling Company .....Page 54

4. Hazleton's First Grain Elevator .....Page 57

5. The First Cooper Shop .....Page 59

6. The Klein Stave and Heading Factory .....Page 60

7. The Hazleton and Williams Saw Mill .....Page 62

8. The Depauw Mill .....Page 63

9. Hazleton's Early Portable Saw Mills .....Page 65

10. Gervase Hazleton's Cypress Swamp Mill .....Page 67

11. The White River Distillery .....Page 69

VII. Addenda .....Page 71

Andrew Cunningham was the pioneer of that family in the Indiana Territory, and the ancestor of most of the families of that name who live (or have lived) in White River and Washington Townships, Gibson County. Of Scotch-Irish parentage, he was born in County Donegal, Ireland in 1776. He grew to manhood at the old home place, and at the age of twenty-one years married Miss Nancy Shields, born in Ireland in 1778. She, too was probably Scotch-Irish, although folk tales say that she was almost or full-blooded Irish, and that her people were of the well-to-do middle class living at St. Johnston's, County Donegal.

Soon after his marriage the subject of this sketch joined a colony of Scottish and Scotch-Irish folk bound for Georgia. Since most of the immigrants of the above races settled along the Atlanaha River, it is presumed they landed at the port of New Inverness, now Darien, located at the mouth of that river. He remained in Georgia several years, but disliking slavery and the economic system of the south, he decided to emigrate to Indiana Territory. Accordingly, he moved from Georgia in 1803, transporting his family and possessions on horse back and pack mules. When he left the south, two old colored house servants begged to stay with "Marse Andy" and accompany him to a free country, so yielding to their pleas, he brought them along. Quite probably they were the first colored people to reside in Gibson County, and they remained there until their deaths. They lie buried side by side in the NE corner of Marse Andy's lot, and until a few years ago slabs of rough stone marked their graves.

Andrew Cunningham settled in Militia Donation #79, in what is now Washington Township, Gibson County, being one of the first settlers in the Shiloh neighborhood. He cleared away the heavy timber, built a small cabin, developed a good farm, and added to his holdings until they consisted of several hundred acres. His cabin stood beside the old trail

leading from Decker's Ferry, (Giro) on White River to Severn's Ferry on the Patoka. He lived in the cabin several years, then built a larger and more commodious dwelling. Some hewn logs taken from the latter building can still be seen in a hog and sheep shelter across the road from the home of his granddaughter, Louisa J. Elliott.

Andrew Cunningham was proud of his Scotch-Irish ancestry, and spoke the Irish brogue, a peculiar dialogue of the English Language which anyone unused to him could hardly understand. He and the relatives that came after him were Protestants, and firm believers in education. For many years his vacated cabin was used for school and church purposes. Probably the last term there was in 1840, taught by John L. Key, great-great grandfather of John Earl and Margaret Ann Key. It was a subscription school and Andrew Cunningham paid \$1.93  $\frac{3}{4}$  tuition for his youngest daughter, Nancy. A Methodist Church, said to have been the first regularly organized church of that denomination in Indiana was instituted at Shiloh in 1815, and the first Cumberland Presbyterian Church in the state, first called Hopewell and later Mt. Zion was organized there in 1817 by the Rev. William Barnett. Mrs. Cunningham and son Green were active church members, and took active part in the great camp meetings held at Shiloh during the early part of the last century.

The plantation farm of Andrew Cunningham was nearly self-sufficient. The clearings yielded fire-wood for the big fire-places and the house was lit with home-made tallow candles. Food stuffs and raw materials were produced on the farm, and most articles in common use were made in the home or in the workshop. His sheep produced wool which was processed by his wife and daughters and woven into blankets and cloth for winter clothing. Flax raised on the farm furnished fibers for thread and linen cloth used for underwear, shirts, collars, table cloths, sheets, and other household uses.

Beef hides and other tannable skins were sent to the Robert Falls tannery which stood near Seth Hill's home, to be turned into leather for shoes, boots, and other purposes. There was a shoe bench and cobbler's

tools in the workshop, and in case none of the family could cobble an itinerant or a local cobbler was hired to make shoes for the entire family. When everything was furnished them the cobblers charged 25¢ for making children's shoes, and 50 ¢ for making adult shoes or boots. Shoes of that day bore little resemblance to the comfortable footwear of today, but there was one advantage --- you could wear them interchangeably on the feet without discomfort. A blacksmith shop was maintained in connection with the workshop.

During his lifetime Andrew Cunningham followed the peaceful occupation of the farmer and never aspired to political office. However, on the formation of the townships and county in 1813 he and William Price were appointed Overseers of the Poor in White River Twp, which at that time included the present township, Washington Township, and that part of Pike County west of Congress Creek. There was no red tape or paper work connected with relief work then, for the overseer aided the needy at his own expense and filed a statement with the court for reimbursement.

Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham raised a family of eight children, and as they were born pioneers in this county, their names and order of birth are given here: Joseph (1807-1877), Sarah (1809-1846), Samuel, (1811-1865), Green, (1813-1844), Stewart Clark (1815-1867), Eleanor (1818-1865), John (1820-1860), and Nancy (1822-1871). These children reached maturity, married, and raised families.

Mrs. Cunningham died August 29, 1840 and was buried in the family plot near her home. John Thompson was paid \$3.00 for making her coffin. Her burial shroud consisted of five yards of cambric muslin costing \$1.50 was purchased at the David Robb store at Robb's Mill. Mr. Cunningham died October 20th, 1840, having survived his wife less than two months. His coffin was made by John Throm at a cost of \$5.00, and his shroud was bought at Columbia (Patoka) of Hannah and Kurtz. The day

before his death he called in Jonathan Gullick and his son Samuel Cunningham to witness his last will and testament. The will provided that the eldest son, Joseph should administer the estate, and the family doctor, V.T. West, who had treated both Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham through several months of declining health filed a bill for his services amounting to \$45.50 with the administrator.

On Dec. 1, 1840, Andrew Phillips and John Thompson were each paid \$1.00 for appraising his personal estate. Total appraisal was \$1615.78 3/4 which added to the \$1020.25 which he had divided among his children shortly before his death, totaled \$2636.03 3/4. This was no mean sum when common labor was paid 50¢ per day, and skilled labor 75¢ to 1.00. The sale was held Dec. 4th and 5th, and James Milburn, crier, was paid \$1.00 per day. The clerk, Thomas J. Decker, was paid 50¢ per day.

A perusal of inventory and bill of sale shows many interesting things about living conditions and the customs of that time. Stored in his barn were hay, fodder, corn, wheat, wool, flax, potatoes (2¢ per bushel), and tobacco. To utilize the flax and wool there was a flax brake, a flax hatchel, spinning wheel and loom. Domestic animals included horses, oxen (\$35 per yoke), sheep, cattle, hogs, geese (25¢ each), and chickens (\$1.00 per dozen). There was a rifle and accoutrements for hunting, a trot line, hook and gig for taking fish, and three saddles, (one a side-saddle) for travel on horseback. To maintain the "lighting plant" there were candles, tallow, candle wicks, candle molds, candle sticks and snuffers.

In addition to the usual earthen and wooden kitchenware this family was the proud possessor of a set each of pewter plates and Liverpool teas, brought from Ireland and used only on state occasions. Another prized possession was a brass clock. Although the yearly tax on one hundred acres of land was only 40¢, this brass clock, considered a luxury, was taxed 75¢ annually. The entire tax on the estate, real and personal, for the year 1840 was \$8.05.

STEWART AND GEORGIANA CUNNINGHAM

The century-old residence of the late Stewart Cunningham, located about three miles south of Hazleton in the Steelman Chapel neighborhood, was totally destroyed by fire Sunday morning, Dec. 19, 1948. This marked the passing of an old landmark, and recalled to memory the pioneer couple who built it and who lived there so many years.

Stewart Cunningham was born in Edwards County Illinois Aug. 15, 1818, the year that Illinois was admitted to statehood in the Union, and died at his home Jan. 18, 1903, in his eighty-fifth year. His grandfather was John Cunningham, born in Ireland in 1768, and his father was "Buck" William Cunningham, born in Georgia in 1794. His mother died when he was a small boy and his father remarried. Things didn't go well for the lad, and at the age of fifteen he ran away from home, coatless and barefooted. He crossed the Wabash at Mt. Carmel and found shelter with a farmer in Gordon hills, where he spent about a year clearing land, plowing new ground, and hunting. He became a crack shot with the rifle and the most successful deer hunter in all the country. He killed his last deer in Knox County in 1873. When he left the Gordon Hills he went to the home of Smith Miller at Miller's Station and lived there seven years. At the age of twenty-three he married Mrs. Miller's sister, Georgiana Robb, who was three days his senior.

Georgiana Robb was born in White River Township in 1818, and spent her long life of nearly a century within a mile and a half of where she was born. Her grandfather was James Robb, born in County Down, Ireland and her father was James Robb Jr., said to have been born on the ocean while his parents were enroute to this country. Her Grandfather Robb served in the Virginia Militia during the American Revolution, and her father was twice wounded in battles with the Indians. The house in which she was born was built by her father about 1807. It was built of hewed logs, and according to the stories, it was the first two-storey log house built in what is now Gibson County. Mr. Robb threw open his house

to ministers of all faiths. Political meetings and Territorial elections were held there, and it was a rendezvous for the Territorial Militia. A part of this old building, weatherboarded over and with additions added to it is still standing on the original site and is owned by Clarence and Othniel Hitch, great grandsons of James Robb Jr.

Stewart Cunningham and Georgiana Robb were married Feb. 1, 1842 by Samuel a Stewart, a Methodist minister and a former Judge of Gibson County. At the time of their marriage the groom had \$100 and the bride had \$300 which she had inherited from her father's estate. Their cash, however, was not sufficient to buy the place they wanted and set up housekeeping, so Stewart went to see John Brown about a loan of \$300. He took his brother-in-law, James Barr Robb Sr. along to "go on his note". John Brown was a good judge of men and sized up his prospective borrower carefully. He had a liking for men dressed in pioneer garb and this young man in buckskin breeches and fur cap impressed him greatly. As he handed the note over to be signed, Mr. Brown said, "Stewart, you don't need any one to sign with you. Your signature is enough." This unexpected boost made a deep impression on the young man, and from that time on his fixed policy was to help anyone in need, especially those struggling to get a start in life.

With Mr. Brown's loan, the young couple had enough to meet their requirements. They purchased Militia Donation #39 in White River Twp. It was 100 acres at \$3.50 per acre. They set up housekeeping in a small log house near the north end of the tract. He spent a few years improving his land and getting together the timbers for his new home. When all was ready a house raising was held and the two storey house in which they were to spend the rest of their lives was erected.

Uncle Stewart and Aunt Georgie, as they were called by a host of relatives and friends, were noted for their hospitality and generosity. They reared several orphans along with their own children and took in many adults until he or she could find a home or employment. Every year

on August 12th they celebrated their birthdays together by providing a dinner for family and friends. Indded, anybody who wished to come was welcome. They came in buggies, wagons, and on horseback. Some old friends without transportation came a-foot the day before and stayed all night in order to be there. Their son, "Doc" B.F. Cunningham always brought several dozen water melons for the children. Many of them, now past middle age, can vouch for the good food and good cheer.

Stewart and Georgiana lived at a time when the price of existence was hard work, and social security was found only in well-provisioned cellars and smoke houses. By thrift they saved a little each year, and later bought a part of Militia Donation 36, which adjoined their land. This gave them 150 acres, which was about all one man could manage when the work was done with scythes and flails. Later, Stewart purchased land in Knox County, set up a saw mill and launched flatboats along his river front. He sent cargoes of farm products to the New Orleans market. He established what was known as Cunningham's ferry, which operated far into this century until automobiles and the White River bridge made ferries on that river obsolete.

Georgiana Cunningham was a religious woman and rode long distances on horseback to attend services. Her favorite meeting place was Shiloh, a place of worship established in Washington Twp. in the early part of the last century. She rode a side saddle and a long riding skirt which almost touched the ground. The church she attended was on the old Decker Ferry road about a half mile north of the present church. Services often lasted all day and church-goers took food with them. Georgiana would fill a large pocket of her riding skirt with molasses cookies, baked in a brick oven, or on a flat stone before the fire. She often took some boy or girl with her, riding a pillow behind the saddle. Often the pillow rider was her nephew, "Bud" Edwin Robb, who enjoyed the ride, but didn't relish the cakes. He said they were always dark colored, sometimes charred, and never very palatable.

The writer has Mrs. Cunningham's old hymn book, which was used as a reader in the early schools. It is dated 1828, and its thumb-worn pages show the effect of perspiration, rain and time. The book is 5"x3"x1½", bound in leather, and containing about 350 hymns, most of which are no longer sung. The words were not set to music, but the metrical structure of each song is indicated. The singing master of that day knew little of the rudiments of music, but it was his practice to "make up" or improvise a tune. Attuning his voice with a tuning fork, he led the singers to pour forth torrents of melody.

Georgiana Cunningham died Dec. 23, 1915 in her 98th year. Funeral services were held at her home on Christmas Day, the Rev. A.C.Sisson officiating. She was buried beside her husband in the old James Robb cemetery, where as a child she had witnessed the burial of her father eighty-seven years before.

#### DANIEL HAZLETON

When Jarvis Hazleton came here to settle he was accompanied by his father, his mother, Betsy (Elizabeth), and his sister, Deborah. The father purchased Militia Donation # 17 from Captain Toussaint DuBois, the noted scout and Indian fighter of Vincennes, for whom Dubois County is named. This Militia Donation included the Griseamer farm, Buck Catt Hill, the Hudson place, and all that part of town west of Robb Creek. Old timers have said that the land was covered with the finest black walnut and poplar trees in this part of the country.

Daniel Hazleton and his wife assisted their son in operating a tavern and a ferry. Most of the early ferries were nothing more than rafts of logs with puncheon floors, and this ferry was probably no exception. They were propelled with long poles in shallow water, and in deep water with oars pivoted to the ends. When carpenters were available, good boats of hewn or whipsawed lumber were constructed. Carpenters in the area were paid 50¢ per day, and common laborers \$7 per month, with one ration per day in each case. A ration consisted of 1½ lbs. of corn bread, 1 lb. of wild meat, vegetables, and one gill of whiskey. The old Jarvis Hazleton ferry was in operation here until 1826, at which time the County Board of Justice ordered it vacated.

Betsy Hazleton was a well known pioneer woman, noted for her courage and self reliance. She had great strength. She could easily perform a man's work with an axe, and often operated the ferry when they were away.

It was late in the month of March 1800 when David Robb arrived with his wife at the Hazleton Ferry. They had come down the old Red Banks Trail from Vincennes to newly purchased land south of White River. Betsy was acting ferryman that day, and went to set them over. She ruffled the feathers of the young man by demanding

that he pay for the crossing in advance. Being a well bred gentleman, he showed no sign of anger, but jingled the coins in his saddlebag and assured her that he was able to pay the ferrriage. But Betsy was inflexible, and Mr. Robb saw that he must give in or swim the river. In conversation with Betsy on the way over he discovered that she had ferried several over the river, only to find that they had no money, or refused to pay. She had been cheated by others who had offered her undersized pieces of cut money. There was no fractional money minted at that time and silver dollars were cut into halves, quarters (2 bits), eights (1 bit) and sixteenths ( $\frac{6}{16}$ ). A few dishonest persons cut the dollar into five pieces to start with, thus realizing \$1.25 for each dollar.

A warm friendship developed between the two families, and in later years Deborah Hazleton and David Robb's daughters took many trips together on horseback, visiting friends or going to Princeton or Vincennes.

In 1820, realizing that the end was near, Daniel Hazleton had Samuel Hazleton of Palmyra, Ill. to write his last will and testament. It was drawn up on June 23, 1820, and was witnessed by Jacob Jacobus and William H. Sisco. Mr. Hazleton died a few months later, and the will was probated on Jan. 23, 1822. It contained some queer provisions, including one which prevented his wife from cutting any timber except that needed for fire wood or for making Maple sugar. He probably had in mind her skill in using the axe. He left all movable property to his wife until her death or remarriage. In that case the property was to be divided between Deborah Boles, widow, and her brother, Jarvis Hazleton. Mrs. Hazleton died soon after, and the land was divided by a line running east and west through the center of it. This old line can be seen to this day, running over the Buck Catt Hill between the Griesemer and Hudson properties.

Jarvis Hazleton sold his part of the property to his son Daniel W. in 1830. The latter was married in Illinois in 1828 and came here to live on the old Hazleton property. It was probably his rooster that cheered the pilot of the first steamboat on White River. Daniel sold this farm to John Brown in 1834 and moved to Richland County, Illinois. Brown's second addition to the town of Hazleton was part of this property.

The south part of the property went to Mrs. Boles, who later married Joseph Payne. At her death in January 1861 she left it to her daughters, one of whom was Mrs. Robert Fullerton, mother of Mrs. Carrie Fullerton McGinnis, an aged lady now living in California. The census of 1860 shows that Deborah Payne, born in New York in 1787 was then living in Patoka. She was the last survivor of the Hazleton family who settled here in the 1790's.

Daniel and Betsy Hazleton lie in unmarked graves in the old Hazleton cemetery.

## JOHN REEL AND RICHARD SLOAN

Early in the last century John Reel and his family came on horseback and pack horses from near Charleston, S.C. to Kentucky. Sometime prior to 1810 Mr. Reel came to Indiana Territory and obtained titles to Militia Donations 14 and 19, located about 1½ miles south of Hazleton. These farms are now included in the land owned by Mrs. Florence Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lewis, and Mile Weitzel.

John Reel cleared the land on the south end of Militia Donation #10 and built his house there. He built a dam across the south fork of Robb Creek which flowed through his land and erected a water-powered sawmill there about 1820. This mill stood about one eighth of a mile from and almost due east of Brown's Railroad Crossing, and traces of the old dam can still be seen. This and the David Robb Mill (1814) were the first and for a long time the only mills in this part of the country. Mr. Reel died in 1826, and for many years one of his sons and a son-in-law operated the mill. By 1813 John Brown had bought all the land from the heirs, and the improvements thereon.

John Reel reared a family of four sons and three daughters, and it is said that some of the Knox County Reels are his descendants. The father and two sons were in the Battle of Tippecanoe, serving in Captain Robb's company.

Marriages of the Reels were among the first to be performed in Gibson County. Frederick Reel married Rebecca Cole and remained in the old neighborhood, lumbering and sawmilling until his death in 1831. Henry Reel married Katherine Neely, daughter of the Revolutionary soldier, Joseph Neely. He took to steamboating and ran regularly between Evansville and New Orleans. He always promised Katy before he left not to drink a "drap", a promise hard to keep when men used liquor as a beverage and a cure-all.

The old Reel mill proved quite a convenience for the early settlers, providing them with lumber for buildings and flatboats. John Brown operated the mill until his death in 1852, after which it was abandoned.

Several years later, Samuel Milburn, son-in-law of John Brown, built a mill a few yards south of the old site and installed a steam engine. The mill was in use until the 1880's, and at different times Albert McNeece was the head sawyer. In rebuilding the town after the great fire in 1881 Theodore Wheeler built the Shorty Peppers store building from lumber supplied by this mill.

Sometime after the arrival of the Reels, Richard Sloan, great-great-grandfather of the Sloans (merchants) in Patoka came on horseback from South Carolina. The fact that he went directly to the Reel settlement would indicate they had come from the same area of the Palmetto State. Having decided to stay here, he built a cabin and married Nancy Reel, daughter of John Reel. He engaged in farming and long distance hauling. An outfit for hauling was composed of two yokes of oxen and a high wheeled wagon. The high wheels enabled the wagon to pass over stumps and hog-backs in the road. Also, the high wheels would rotate in deep mud where low wheels would slide. In the days before the railroad he hauled goods from Evansville to Vincennes over the Red Banks Road, formerly Red Banks Trail, which had been opened to traffic by the court of Knox County several years before the creation of Gibson County. The goods were brought to Evansville from New Orleans by keelboats and steamboats.

Mr. Sloan eventually located in Patoka Township and in 1841 took part in the organized deer hunt or drive in the bottoms along the Patoka River. While conversing with other hunters he laid his rifle across a stump. When ready to resume the chase, he grabbed his rifle by the muzzle and in some way the gun was discharged,

the bullet passing under the right arm and out through the shoulder. Such a wound today would seem like a minor one, but these were the days before antiseptic surgery.

At an early age both of these men passed from the stage, but while they were here they did their share to overcome the wilderness and the pitiless Indian. John Reel and his sons helped repel the Indian so that settlers no longer feared to come to Indiana Territory, and in a few years the State of Indiana was organized and admitted to the Union December 11, 1816.

John Reel, his wife, and other members of their family are buried in the Brown cemetery on the Nile Weitzel place.

#### HAZLETON

#### PLATTING THE TOWN

Jarvis Hazleton died in Illinois in 1844, leaving three sons as his heirs. Daniel W., the eldest son, was born here about 1807, several years before the family moved to Illinois. Gervase and David, full brothers were born in Illinois in 1827 and 1832, and were half brothers to Daniel.

In 1840 Daniel W. sold his one third interest in the Hazleton Ferry farm to John Brown. The survey line was not run until the death of Mr. Brown in 1852, which event made the survey necessary to settle the estate. The next year Joseph Kimmel set a heavy post on the bank of the river on what is now the White River Sand and Gravel lot, from which a line was run southward through the farm, the Brown heirs taking all the land west of the line and David and Gervase Hazleton the land east of it. From that day to this the old Brown-Hazleton line which runs down the center of Mill Street has been a line from which surveyors often start in locating other boundary lines.

David and Gervase Hazleton were closely associated in business throughout life, and continued to hold their inheritance jointly. David never married, and when living in this part of the country he made his home with his brother's family. During the 1850's David lived in Eldorado and Nevada Counties in California, probably drawn there by the gold rush of 1849. In his absence he granted power of attorney to his brother to sell their holdings in Indiana and Illinois. On July 25, 1855, papers were drawn up to plat the town in the names of Gervase and David Hazleton. The town was named, of course, in honor of the Hazleton family.

Lucius B. French, of Patoka, who had helped to build the railroad, was employed to plat the town. Main Street was to be  $2\frac{1}{2}$  poles

Wide, all other streets two poles wide. A pole is one rod. Main Street began at the river a little over 400 ft. east of the Kimmoms pole, and ran southward parallel to the Brown Hazleton line. There were three full blocks east of Main St. and three west of it, all south of First St. Two fractional blocks lay north of First St. All that is left of the fractional blocks is the land on which the Town Hall is located, and the adjoining Selfe property. Running east and west were First, Second, Third and South St.

The survey of the original town, containing 32 acres, was completed early in 1856, and lots sold readily. The writer has an original deed, written in longhand, signed and sealed by Gervase and Lucinda Hazleton Apr. 1, 1856. It conveys to one Levi Breazentine Lots 5 and 6 in Block 6 in the town of Hazleton, for the sum of \$32. Although these lands have been sold many times, they have never been divided or sold separately, and are now the property of Wood Sprinkle. Lots east of Mill St. between the filling station and the elevator sold for \$30 each and were bought in March, 1856 by pioneer Alexander Bennett, who built on lot #2 what is still known as the Pap Johnson home. Lots on Main St. were higher. The Thorne home, first owned by Jacob Curtis, sold for \$200. In the 1860's Peter Ehlers built a cobbler shop there.

#### PLATTING THE TOWN \_\_\_\_ ADDITIONS

Hazleton's addition was a small one on the north side of town, with nine lots between the railroad and the river and seven lots east of the railroad. Four residences and two grain elevators once stood on the lots west of the railroad, but only one is there today, the Milburn Manning home.

Brown's first addition, recorded July 19, 1865, lay west of Mill St. and extended to the low lands along Robb Creek. Many of the town's early industries were located on this land. There were two sawmills, the distillery, the Atlanta Flour Mill, a packing house and a stave and heading factory.

Brown's second addition lay west of Robb Creek, and was known for years as Arkansas. This addition had two full blocks and two fractional blocks. It grew rapidly for a while, but now only a few families live there.

The Eastern Enlargement, platted by Lunsford J. Thorne and others, was by far the largest addition made to the town. It lay east of the original town and the Hazleton addition and contained 123 lots. Hazleton was growing fast at that time and many non-residents bought lots for speculation.

Thorne's addition, platted by members of that family was quite a large addition, but much of it was never laid out in town lots. It is the extreme eastern part of town and includes both of the Odd Fellow Cemeteries. This addition gave the town an area of 1142 acres.

Brown's second addition was for many years not connected with the town, since it lay across Robb Creek. The people came to town along the old Warth road which forded the creek near the old Cumberland Presbyterian Church. There was also a footlog crossing

for pedestrians. About the year 1881 Second Street was connected with what was called Cuba Island by a wooden covered bridge. The bridge was built by Cunningham Allen, who had emigrated from County Donegal, Ireland. The bridge was condemned in 1896 and a street was opened from Brown Street to Miss Rose Thorne's place. A steel bridge was erected over the creek. When US 41 was made to run through Arkansas another bridge was built over the creek and South Street was opened to the highway.

#### HAZLETON IN THE EIGHTEEN\_FIFTIES

This decade was probably the most important in the history of Indiana. A new constitution of the state became a law Nov. 1, 1851. This, together with a law enacted by the General Assembly in 1852 ushered in a new era in education and provided for the first time free public schools in Indiana. Improved farm machinery was taking the place of the saw and flail, the steam engine was supplanting water power in saw mills and grist mills, and cable ferries were coming into general use.

The Wabash and Erie Canal and the railroad provided cheaper transportation for Gibson County. Hazleton was platted in the midst of these stirring times, and set going with a bright and promising future. Her transportation facilities -- the stage line, steam boats and the railroad gave her many advantages over towns without these facilities.

In 1850 there were only a few cabins here, and except for the small clearings around them Hazleton was an unbroken woodland. The old Red Bank Trail wound its way southward from the ferry to the hill behind the T.T. Thorne home, thence along the hill to the railroad crossing in the south part of town, and from there it followed just about its present course to the Robb Mill and Stage Station. The railroad was built in the early fifties and just about every man in the area worked on this project. Many were engaged in cutting ties and stringers used in building the track and timbers for bridging White River. James Ellis, progenitor of that family here, cut fuel for the old wood-burning locomotives and delivered it to the wood lot at Robb's Mills.

Wages were high during the project and all kinds of produce brought good prices. This made good times, and many a house was built and farms paid for with these earnings. New businesses were started

## THE HAZLETON SCHOOL OF 1846

and old ones expanded, which caused numerous immigrants to locate in Hazleton and the surrounding country.

By the year 1852 nearly all of the original settlers and early leaders had passed on and a new generation was taking over. Gervase Hazleton founder of the town, was born in Illinois in 1827, married Lucinda Wardell in 1849, and brought his family here in 1851. It is said that he lived in the old Hazleton tavern built by his father, Jarvis Hazleton, until he could build his own house. This was a large frame house which was razed to build the school building a few years ago. Gervase Hazleton was brought up in the sawmilling and ferrying business, and soon after coming here he started building a saw mill and a ferry boat.

Others locating in Hazleton during the fifties were James Robb, P.S. Fuller, Thomas Johnson and David Wardord, merchants; John Breedlove and Warren Hudspeth, blacksmiths; William Mc Kinley and Cunningham Allen, carpenters; Ellridge C. Gardner and Daniel Knight, mill managers; Henry Clay Young and John F. Scherer, physicians; Fleming Miller, sawmiller; Ed Sweetland, head sawyer; Jacob Curtis and LaFayette Johnson, teachers; Abraham Westfall, ferryman; Charles Cox, engineer, Elizabeth Phillips, milliner, and Stephen Durkee, grist miller. The Pauls came from Virginia via Tennessee and many laborers came from the Eastern and Southern states along with a few from foreign countries.

One other building was used for school purposes at Robb's Mills. This community was called Robb's Mills until the platting of the town in 1856. The building was a log house similar to the first school building but was a little better constructed. It had been used for flax storage, but sometime around 1840 it was fitted for a school room. It had a puncheon floor and the fireplace was of stone. A few glass windows were installed, and writing shelves were made of sawed boards instead of riven slabs. The school stood across the creek from the home of Noel Krug, where the road crossed the creek. A large beech tree stood on the bank, and from its base flowed a spring of clear water which never went dry. The "drinking fountain" consisted of this spring and a gourd dipper. The trunk of the tree was covered with names, initials, hearts etc. carved with pupils jack knives.

In the year 1846 a young man came to Robb's Mills and decided to stay for a few days. He had a good education for his time, and was endowed with good judgment and understanding, and possessed a lot of good common sense. He was of Jolly disposition, was fond of music, and played skillfully upon the flute and fife.

A teacher was needed at that time and he was encouraged to set up a school. Although all schools were on a subscription basis then, he soon had sixty pupils enrolled, ranging in age from six to thirty years. This was probably the largest enrollment up to that time in Robb school. Geography and History were taught in addition to the three R's and Spelling. There was a feeling of friendship between the teacher and his pupils and the year was a very successful one.

The teacher boarded around among the patrons, but stayed at

the Robb Inn most of the time. The attraction was a young lady who, with her mother, was living there. She became the bride of the young school master, Robert T. Henderson, and the mother of Cash Henderson who will be remembered by most of our citizens.

Near the close of the gay nineties, over fifty years after the closing of the school, the writer was engaged in plowing on the site of the old school building. Upturned brick bats and rocks showed where the old school building had stood. The venerable and beloved Uncle Bobby Henderson came slowly up the road. He was nearly eighty years old. He approached the boy and the plow and said, "I taught a subscription school here in 1846, the year the Mexican War began. He related the story of the school as it is related here, but with many things omitted because they are forgotten.

There are no landmarks left of the old school. Only the creek remains. The spring flowed slower and slower and finally dried up. The beech tree was felled by lightning in 1900. The building was used as a residence until the great flood of 1875 washed it away.

Uncle Bobby Henderson served as musician in Company H, 130th Illinois Regiment during the Civil War, and with his fife, aided by the drummer, cheered the soldiers on their marches.

#### THE BARNETT SCHOOL

The Robb School was abandoned about 1850 It was relocated in a log building owned by John Brown near the location of the C.K.Spafford home. Vincent Barnett was active in the organization of the school and it was named for him. It was the usual log construction with one exception -- there were two doors, one on each side of the building.

In many communities the boys and girls were not allowed to attend the same school. Princeton, Indiana did not allow boys and girls to be educated together until 1854. In most rural schools there was no discrimination of this kind, but even there they were segregated. The two doors in Barnett School proved to be useful in enforcing this custom. The girls sat on the east side and used the East door. The boys sat on the west side and used the west door. The propriety of having both boys and girls in the same school was discussed at the Gibson County Teacher's Meeting in 1870 A majority of the teachers favored grouping the children together in classes and doing away with segregation.

Great strides were made during the 1850's toward the betterment of the schools. In the Barnett School new and better textbooks, including the McGuffey Readers and Ray's Arithmetic were introduced. The course of study was enlarged until it included what was later called the "Eight Common Branches." This old log school was the community center for church and public meetings and remained so until 1863 when the people south of town moved into their new frame school-house. This was the 36 or Spain School.

The last year of the Barnett school was one of strife and turmoil. For some reason the teacher was very unpopular with the pupils and patrons. The pupils took advantage of this state of affairs by annoying the teacher in every way possible. They played truant,

locked him out of the building, tried to smoke him out by putting boards over the chimney, but the teacher refused to leave. The larger boys decided to give him a good thrashing. He took them on one at a time and licked the lot of them. The parents finally stopped the teacher's pay, which meant, of course, that he had to leave. The late Robert Fuller finished out the term.

John Will Brown and George V. Curtis attended this school. When they met in later years they used to talk over old times at the Barnett School.

According to Dr. Howard's diary the school burned in 1866.

#### THE MAIN STREET AND OCTAGON SCHOOLS

Following its founding in 1856 Hazleton began to grow rapidly, so the citizens began to plan a school for their town. The first building was north of the Odd Fellows building and had formerly been occupied by a shoemaker and a cobbler. There were about thirty pupils under the tutelage of Prof. LaFayette Johnson. He was a small man, sinewy and quick-motined, with very black eyes and hair. He was a well qualified instructor, well thought of, and a fairly good fiddler.

The citizens raised money by popular subscription to build a building for school and church purposes. The site was on the hill a little to the northwest of the old P.C. Brice home. The lumber was furnished by the Hazleton-Williams Mill on Mill St. and the Daniel Knight Mill which stood on the Hazleton Flour Mill lot. The late Newton F. Knight, then a boy in his teens, helped haul the lumber to the building site.

Robert F. Fullerton was the architect. The building was eight sided and for that reason was called the Octagon School. The door was in the west wall and there was a window in each of the other seven. The roof formed an octagonal pyramid, the belfry built at the apex, supported by a strong center pole. Wide planed boards were used for a writing shelf along the inner wall. Larger children sat at these "desks" and the smaller children sat on benches in the center of the room. From time to time a few factory made seats were installed, so that eventually the seating in the school was as good as any to be found at that time.

The building was completed during the school year 1860-61. Prof. Johnson led his pupils two by two to the new building. For the first time the Eight Common Branches were taught. Professor Johnson kept his violin at school and often played for the

children at recess. Sometimes when the weather was too bad to go outside the benches were pushed back and the children danced to the music of his fiddle.

The next teacher was a Mr. Jones. He was followed by Mrs. Elaira Williams, wife of Fleming Williams who was Gervase Hazleton's partner in the saw mill. She was the first woman to teach in the community, and was a member of the first Class of Methodists organized by Josiah Kightly in 1864.

The Octagon School was in use from 1860 to 1870.

#### EARLY RAILROADS IN INDIANA

The internal improvement craze struck Indiana about 1835., at which time they began building roads, canals and railroads. They attempted to make even small streams navigable by removing snags and drifts from the channel, by felling trees which leaned over the water and by lopping off overhanging branches. Commissioners were appointed to oversee the work on the Patoka River in 1833.

This article treats briefly of the railroad construction and equipment in Indiana down to the time of the construction of the Evansville and Crawfordsville Railroad through Hazleton. They experimented first with horse drawn cars on wooden rails. In 1834 the Indianapolis and Lawrenceburg Railway had completed a mile or two of this track and were running excursions at 25¢ a round trip so that people could try out the new transportation. On one of these trips the horse made the unheard-of speed of 19 miles an hour (going down hill) which caused several ladies to swoon and strong men to reel giddily.

The early branch railroads were laid with wooden rails with long flat strips of iron spiked to their bearing surfaces. Until the late 1840's the usual locomotives weighed about 15 tons. The tender was a small flat-car carrying two or more water barrels and the wood for fuel. Fuel wood could be bought for 90¢ a cord stacked along the track. There were no regular water stations and leather bags were carried to dip water from ditches along the track. Hence the term "Jerk-water Railroad." Passengers were expected to "water-up" and "wood-up" the tender.

The first steam Railroad of any importance in Indiana was the Indianapolis and Madison Railroad opened in 1838. It was laid with fifty pound iron T-Rails brought all the way by boat from England

via the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. Freight cars were small box-like structures mounted on four wheels and carrying three tons. The average length of a freight train was fifteen cars, and twelve miles an hour was considered a good rate of speed. Passenger cars were also very small, mounted on four wheels and carrying twelve to fifteen passengers. Twenty miles an hour was a good speed for a passenger train with four cars.

By the year 1850 great improvement was made in equipment. In that year the largest locomotive west of the Alleghenys arrived by boat from the Atlantic Coast for the Indianapolis and Madison. All the newspapers announced the arrival of this "Giant of the rails." It weighed 43 tons, with 300 horse-power. Cars were made larger and mounted on eight wheels. Improvement in track, rails, and road bed did not keep pace with the larger equipment, with the result that in the 1850's and 60's there were many wrecks due to the heavy equipment and increased speeds.

By the time the Railroad was built through Hazleton the engineers had learned much about track building. Tracks were laid on wooden stringers. Cross ties and stringers were made of white or burr oak. Grading, bridging and track building made the railroad cost about \$100,000 per mile.

#### THE EVANSVILLE AND CRAWFORDSVILLE RAILROAD

In the beginning the railroad which eventually passed through Hazleton was called the Evansville and Illinois Railroad. It was to be the interstate line connecting Evansville with Olney, Ill. It was to run northward to Princeton and westward to cross the Wabash at Mt. Carmel. The charter was granted in 1849 and the Evansville and Illinois Railroad was organized that same year.

The citizens of north Gibson County bestirred themselves and petitioned the railroad to extend the line north to Columbia, now Patoka. The directors investigated and found that quite a lot of farm produce, especially pork, was produced in this region. There were several sawmills and packing houses along the Patoka River. The annual kill of hogs amounted to 18,000, and all the produce was transported by flatboat on the river. The directors decided that to extend the line into the Patoka and White River basins was a better proposition than extending the line into Illinois. They announced extension of the line from Princeton to Vincennes via Columbia, and the engineers began surveys of the two proposed routes early in 1851.

Then began the rivalry between Hazleton and Buena Vista (Giro) to see which town would get the railroad. Buena Vista was a thriving town, platted in 1848, as large as any to be found between Princeton and Vincennes. They had two packing houses and John L. Key and sons operated a large sawmill there. It was the largest flatboat port on White River. The business men offered to buy stock and grant free right-of-way.

Meanwhile, the Hazleton citizens has not been idle. John Brown gave free right-of-way and offered to buy stock. He had two saw mills and moved more produce on the river than any other exporter. Hames Robb carried a large amount of merchandise in his tavern-store and P.S. Fuller had opened a store on the brown property. Gervase

Hazleton had arrived that year and built a saw mill and a ferry. The Washington-De Pauw mill was under construction. These mills were strong factors in our favor because of the large amount of lumber needed to build the railroad. The deciding factor was Gervase Hazleton's decision to plat a town here. After deciding on the Hazleton route the company announced a decision to extend the line to Terre Haute and Crawfordsville.

To expedite the building the right-of-way was laid off in reaches. These reaches were long or short, depending upon the amount of work to be done. A contractor could take as many reaches as he could supply men to do the work. The flat country north of Evansville was not difficult and the road was completed to Princeton in 1852. A celebration was held there with the arrival of the first train. When the "jubilee special" arrived there people had gathered from all over the country to witness the celebration and to see their first train. The little train, bedecked with flags, came whizzing into town whistling and blowing off steam. The president of the railroad stood on the tender and addressed the crowd.

A little old lady in Fort Branch flagged one of the first trains with a red table cloth. She said she just wanted to see the cussed thing.

The cut through the Miller hill was one of the heaviest works on the line and required a great amount of excavation. At this point a large group of men worked a number of months. The dirt was loosened with a heavy plow drawn by several yokes of oxen. It was then shoveled into carts and dumped on the right-of-way south of the cut where large embankments were required. The spade work was done by Irish workers who lived in shanties west of the railroad. Most of the shanties were small, but the larger sleeping houses contained twenty bunks for lodgers. These workmen were contentious fighters. Feuds sprang up between persons, families,

and groups which came from different parts of Ireland. They fought to a finish with clubs or tools, and sometimes were so badly hurt they could not work for days. Most Americans of that time settled their differences with their fists, and when the battle was over, shook hands and drank to each other's good health. The railroad officials, engineers, contractors and foremen lived in tents east of the railroad and boarded with Mrs. Miller, who at that time earned most of the money to build the "Miller Brick."

The heaviest work was between Hazleton and Decker -- the high embankment and the White River Bridge. These works would require a long period of time and one of the largest camps was set up near Robb's Mills. It was an ideal site for a camp. The ground was high and there was an abundance of water at the dam. The old Vincennes stage line passed the camp, facilitating travel to cities to cities and locations where work projects were located. The Irish were camped along Robb Creek and the other workers located north of town near Thorne's Eddy. The Irish had many strange customs. Often after working all day they would dance all night to the music of the Irish harp and bagpipe. They held wakes over the bodies of their dead, at one time weeping and wailing and at another time it was a festive occasion, eating, drinking and merry-making, all at the expense of the dead.

The track was laid as fast as the grading was completed. Kudsills were used over the marshy places, but on most of the road ties were set on dirt ballast. Strong stringers were used, requiring no support other than the ties. Rails were 50 pound iron T-rails imported from England. Specimens of these rails can still be seen in the old Fields graveyard near Steelman Crossing, where they were used as head and foot stones.

The road was completed to Robb's Mills about 1854. A depot was built there, a turntable installed, and provision made to water-up and wood-up. Most of the track between Vincennes and Terre Haute had been laid. Passengers were transported by stage coach from Robb's Mills to Vincennes and there boarded trains for points farther north. Freight was hauled in heavy ox-drawn wagons. Old records show that Joshua Manning and John B. Dildy hauled freight to Buena Vista for \$1.50 a load.

All business was conducted at Robb station until the depot was built within the town limits. The wood yard remained at Robb's Mills until the locomotives changed to coal burning about 1880.

The station remained at Robb's Mills for many years. Freight was taken there for shipment and passengers entrained at the depot. Many of the "Boys in Blue" departed from there. Uncle Ike Westfall remembered walking out there to board the train, but on returning from the war they detrained at the new station in Hazleton.

The railroad bridge at Hazleton was a fine example of the old covered wooden bridge. Massive wooden arches supported the structure, made of the finest yellow poplar. Most of the timber was supplied by local mills and by John L. Key and sons at Buena Vista. In the latter case the timber was floated down river to the site. Bridge building was slow because there were few labor saving devices. Most hoisting had to be done with ropes and oxen. It took as long to build the trestle work and scaffolding as to build the bridge itself. By the middle of 1855 the bridge was finished, the gap was closed and preparations were made to initiate through service. This bridge was in use until 1892, when heavier trains made it necessary to replace it.

A schedule for through trains was drawn up in July 1855. There were to be four trains a day. A passenger and mail train left Evansville each morning. One departed from Terre Haute about

the same time. The passengers were expected to make 20 miles an hour, the freights 11, but they were seldom on time because of derailments, broken couplings, and hot journal-boxes. There were no night runs, and it is doubtful whether trains were lighted at that time.

Great improvements had been made in the rolling stock and the company bought the best available. It was crude, however, compared with that in use today. The engines were small wood burners with two pairs of driving wheels, enormous cow-catchers and smoke stacks. The latter were inverted cones about three feet across and covered with heavy screen. Wood burners were notorious for scattering fire-brands along the track and causing destructive fires. Passenger and freight cars were small, made mostly of wood and coupled with link and pin. The brakes were hand brakes. Cars were heated with wood stoves, and after 1860 lighted with coal oil lamps. Double windows and vestibules were unheard of, so cars were always filled with smoke and dust and wood ash. Freight cars carried 20 tons, and 25 cars was considered a heavy haul for even the best engines.

Railroading was a far more hazardous occupation than it is today. Many brakemen were maimed or killed in setting brakes or couplings. George Kelte, a brakeman, was decapitated in front of the depot here July 12, 1876. While setting a brake some part of it broke and caused him to fall beneath the train.

In March 1877 the name was changed to the Evansville and Terre Haute Railroad. About 1913 it became the Chicago and Eastern Illinois.

## THE HAZLETON RAILROAD WRECK

At eight o'clock on the morning of March 10th, 1897, fast train #5 was wrecked on the high embankment half way between Hazleton and Decker.

The White River flood of that year was the highest ever known at that time, and the bridge and trestle span at Decker was too narrow to let the waters maintain a level on both the east and west sides of the embankment. As a result, the water piled up seven feet higher on the upper side and exerted a powerful pressure against the embankment. In some way the water trickled through, probably through the burrow of some small animal, and weakened the embankment so that it gave way under the heavy engine. The train buckled and the engine turned over on its side on the east side of the levee. The engineer was running on slow orders, but still running fast enough to telescope the baggage and smoking cars. The old wooden cars completely telescoped except for small spaces at the ends of each car. Each of these spaces saved the life of one man. All who died in the wreck, except for the fireman, were killed in these two cars and the bodies washed away before they could be removed from the wreckage. The ladies car and the sleeper remained on the track and none of their occupants was injured. An engine from Vincennes pulled the ladies car back to Vincennes, but was unable to separate the sleeping car from the saoker.

The breach beneath the wrecked cars was rapidly widened by the current and in the course of a few hours the wreckage broke loose and plunged into the yawning gap. Few people realize the power of impounded water when it breaks its leashes. It tossed the demolished cars about like feathers. When the wreckage washed away and was torn apart by the current, a limp arm in a blue sleeve, supposed to be that of the conductor, George B. Sears, was seen hanging from one of the windows.

When the engine turned over it is supposed to have fallen on the fireman, but the engineer was thrown clear of the wreck and into the deep water beyond. John McCutchan had been an engineer nineteen years and this was his first wreck. He first realized what had happened when he found himself submerged in deep water. The current carried him against the engine. His call to the fireman brought no response. He could see the outline of the embankment and leaped for it, landing on dry ground. Before him lay the mass of wreckage. He called loudly, and this time a voice answered him.

Harry Hill was baggage man on the ill-fated train. There was a large shipment of empty mail sacks in transit and he had piled them in the end of the car. He was dozing in a chair when the crash came, and was thrown against the pile of mail sacks. This probably saved his life. He found himself enclosed in a small space surrounded by broken timbers and twisted iron. He found an opening at the top and had crawled out when McCutchan called. John told him he was on solid ground and told him to jump, but Harry told him there was something between him and the bank. John found a protruding timber and worked it loose until Harry was able to leap to safety. There were no other sounds from the wreck, so the men assumed they were all dead. They walked to Hazleton to report the wreck.

The most harrowing experience was that of "Dutch" Schoultz, the flag man. He was sitting in the seat of the smoking car and the car was smashed to within a few feet of where he sat. He was unhurt, except that one foot was caught between the timbers at the bottom of the car, and could not be pulled loose. The space was too small for rescuers to chop or pry him loose. Rinkey Kinman, Herb Trickett, and several other young men risked their lives to try to rescue this young man. As a last resort,

Dr. Royce Davis was brought from Decker to amputate the foot, but as Dr. Davis and Herb Trickett entered the car the front end began to sink, and both men hurried back into the smoking car. Herb turned to bid the flagman goodby, and almost collapsed when he saw the flagman coming out behind him. The movement of the wreckage had released his foot. Those who heard him said the young man had prayed beautifully and earnestly for deliverance, and his prayers were answered. A few seconds later, the car tore loose and was swept down the river.

The number killed was a matter of conjecture. Some estimates were as high as twelve. Only one body, that of W.H.Lange, a salesman from Fort Wayne, Indiana was ever recovered. For several years after people came on Memorial Day to place wreaths at the scene for relatives who were supposed to have perished there.

#### FLATBOATS

The Mississippi, the Ohio and the Wabash formed the trunk line of our navigation system, and the early history of Indiana is closely connected with the Wabash. Its principal tributary, the White River, was the outlet for the products of the Hazleton area until superceded by the railroad. Our early imports were brought here in keelboats, and our light exports carried away in keelboats, canoes, and other light trading vessels. By the year 1820 the farmers were producing corn and pork, and during the following decade wheat and lumber in exportable quantities. These heavy commodities required stronger boats and in the 1820's numerous flatboats appeared on the river. These were the most colorful of all the modes of transportation.

The early boats were made of sawed or whip-sawed lumber, and as iron nails were not available they were held together with "tree nails", wooden pegs made of white oak. They were square, flat-bottomed barge-like vessels, about sixteen feet wide and eighty feet long. Flatboats were made on heavy sills strengthened sleepers, with sides extending two or three feet above the water line. Usually a roof was built over all or part of the boat, or canvas stretched on stanchions to protect the cargo. A square, shallow box provided a place for a fire when filled with sand. Some boats were equipped with wooden pumps. The rudder was made by tree-nailing a wide board pivoted to the stern. Oars were pivoted to the side and were used to keep to the channel and to make landings. There was no propulsion. Flatboats simply drifted with the current.

Few men made flatboating a regular occupation. Crews were made up of men from all walks of life. Men who did devote their lives to the river were much in demand as pilots because of their

knowledge of the river. A crew consisted of six or seven men, one of whom acted as pilot or captain.

New Orleans was the great commercial capital of the Mississippi, but cargoes could often be sold in Memphis, Vicksburg, and other river ports. Flatboats made a one way journey, and so were sold with the cargoes. Some were set adrift, others broken up for lumber to build sidewalks and houses.

The following is taken from the diary of John Cunningham, pilot of Buena Vista, who sold a boat and cargo to his brother Sam, and then signed on as pilot for the trip.

"Jan. 1, AD 1845. Sold to Samuel Cunningham one flatboat \$85, 368 bu. corn @ 18¢ \$6624, Total \$151.24. Received: Cash \$80.12½ 5 lb beef 75¢. Bal. Due, \$70.36½

Feb. 1845 Landed one flatboat at Memphis and sold it to Charles Beeler. Corn and boat \$600, pork \$200. Cargo 2400 bu. corn and 10,000 lbs. pork.

Paid Capt, George Canada \$40, Wm. McCallister, Henry Miller, Jacob Elliott, John Cunningham each \$25."

In the early days the flatboats carried only corn and pork. Later, the cargoes included wheat, lumber, staves, and shingles. Flatboats reached their peak in 1846-47, when 2,792 boats arrived in New Orleans. In 1850 Indiana accounted for 32% of the boats.

Prior to his death in 1852 John Brown was the largest shipper in the area. He owned much of the land on this side of the river between Hazleton and Cunningham's Ferry and a large acreage in Knox County. His boat yard was on the big bend west of Hazleton on land which is now part of the McFetridge farm. Mr. Brown operated his boats throughout the year, carrying farm goods in season and lumber from his own mill. He bought farm products and shipped them in his boats.

Hazleton became an important port during the flatboat era. Abraham Fields, who lived near Steelman chapel, was an excellent boat builder and supervised the building of many of the boats. Boats were leaving Hazleton every week.

John Sullivan lived East of Hazleton on what is still called the Nancy Sullivan farm. In 1840 he loaded a flatboat with pork and employed Caleb Trippett, an experienced pilot to pilot it to New Orleans. They arrived at Natchez late in the evening, and as a storm was threatening, they tied up for the night. Next morning there were signs of a terrible storm approaching. The crew, except for Sullivan, went to shore and took refuge behind a stone wall. The storm broke, tearing the boat from its moorings and out into the river. As it scudded away, Mr. Sullivan was seen clinging to a stanchion. When the storm abated, the wind drove the boat back to the bank, but John Sullivan was not on board, and he was never seen again. The salvaged cargo was sold at Natchez, and the proceeds turned over to his family. Rhoda Phillips was a member of the crew, and the writer remembers hearing him tell of this ill-fated voyage.

After the Civil War loads of horses, cattle, and poultry were floated down river. "Did" Darius Horrall bought these and other products and transported them. He also ran the Hazleton Ferry, and after the flatboat era continued to ply the river in his own steamboat, the Plankshaw.

Boats owned by the Bingham Brothers, James Cunningham and others left from Cunningham's Ferry piloted by David Hoy. Hoy left his home in Ireland at thirteen and went to sea. He traveled all over the world, and once when in New Orleans, he boarded a steamboat and came to Evansville. He finally settled in White River Township. His stories of far-away places, his songs and

tales of the sea, all told in a rich Irish brogue, were indeed something to hear.

James Cunningham, called "Old Sutterfield" by his friends, was born near Steelman Chapel and began boating when he was a boy. Once he piloted a boatload of miners from the diggings in Montana and Idaho down the Missouri to Omaha, where he stayed for a time sawing timbers for the Union Pacific Railroad. Later, he owned and operated a steamboat between Hazleton and Petersburg.

Although flatboats first appeared on the White River during the nineteenth century, they had been operating on the Ohio and the Wabash since before the Revolution. The government needed them to transport troops and supplies along the river to western outposts. In 1787 Col. Josiah Harmer brought a detachment of these troops to Red Banks, (Henderson, Ky.) and led them over the Redbanks Trail to Vincennes. There was not a white man living in Gibson County at that time. Flatboats, sometimes whole fleets of them, carried produce to New Orleans to be shipped to Eastern ports. They also carried thousands of settlers, but because of the hostility of the Indians north of the Ohio, nearly all of them settled south of the river, so that Kentucky had sufficient population to be admitted to the Union in 1792, long before settlers began coming to Indiana in appreciable numbers. But the Battle of Tippecanoe changed all that. (1811) The Indians were completely routed and settlers began pouring into the country north of the Ohio.

Many early families came as passengers, but some came in their own boats, constructed especially for that purpose, strongly made and fitted for family living, sometimes even with brick fireplaces and chimneys. The boats were loaded with household goods, tools, and even cattle, pigs and poultry. From the East they came down the Ohio from Pittsburg, and from the South via the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers.

If a settler wished to locate on one of the streams the boat was towed to the chosen place and moored to be used for a home until enough land had been cleared for building a house. Then the boat was taken apart and the lumber used for the building.

When Joseph Neely decided to leave Pennsylvania he took his family to Pittsburg and embarked on a flatboat bound for New Orleans. They disembarked at Marysville, Ky. and lived fifteen years at different places in Kentucky. Again they boarded a flatboat and came to the landing where Evansville now stands. (1805) They went on foot to where Princeton is now and after a stay with a settler there went on to Decker's Ferry. (Giro) Neely built his home three miles east of Hazleton. His nearest neighbors were James and David Robb. Their father, James Robb, had come from Ireland in 1773. He served with the Pennsylvania Militia, and after the Revolution moved to Kentucky. From there he brought his family to Indiana Territory. His sons David, John and James, and son-in-law, David Waller, were in the Battle of Tippecanoe.

Waitman Trippett, founder of that family in Gibson County, came down the Ohio from Pennsylvania and settled in Vincennes. Stories say he had a hand in building some of the Territorial buildings there. He later located in Gibson County on land adjoining the farm of James Robb, and reared a family of four sons and one daughter. His descendants, many of them in the learned professions, are scattered throughout the United States.

His son, Caleb Trippett, was a noted river pilot and flatboatman. He was interested financially in many of the packing houses on the White and Patoka Rivers. Caleb Trippett made a fortune in the flatboating business, carrying his own and other merchandise to New Orleans Market.

Edward H. Hitch, a minor and an orphan, left his home in Delaware and came West to seek his fortune. He bought a boat

and went down the Ohio and Mississippi to Natchez, where he operated a wood yard to wood up steamers. After nearly losing a round with yellow fever, he came north by steamboat and took up land near Miller's Station. He spent the rest of his life there, and is the ancestor of the Hitch family in Gibson County. His grandson, William Hitch, died in Hazleton at the age of 101½ years.

John C. Sisson piloted his flatboat down the Ohio and settled with his family in Crawford County. He remained there many years, and then moved to Gibson County by covered wagon. Four of his sons enlisted in the Union Army, and six of his sons qualified for the teaching profession.

Much has been written about the importance in settlement growth, and in the development of the country. Coming down the Ohio, they brought manufactured goods along with new settlers. When the Hoosier Land was a going concern, their own flatboats brought them prosperity.

A flatboat trip south during the ante-bellum days was a trip to a foreign country, and nearly everyone made one or more trips. It has been estimated that 10,000 young men of the upper Mississippi valley made the trip to New Orleans yearly, and as a result of these trips the lives of millions of people were affected. These young men, of whom Abraham Lincoln is an example, saw the evils of the economic system of the old south; they saw the hard lot of slaves, as well as the plight of the poor whites, and many of them, including Lincoln, had seen slaves cruelly beaten. All of this tended to make Unionists and Emancipationists of them. When the struggle came between the North and the South, these men of the middle west decided in favor of the Unionists and human freedom.

#### STEAMBOATING ON WHITE RIVER

White River was called Wah-pe-co-me-ka by the Indians and by the early white men, Shining River Steamboats on White River? Sounds absurd, doesn't it? Any one who has not seen and heard their shrill whistles will be hard to convince that steamboats ever navigated the stream. Great floods that sweep down the river now and the extremely low water at times make navigation impossible now. White River was once a beautiful and well-behaved river, with clean gravel beds and shining bars. The river basin was filled with forest trees and other vegetation extending to the water's edge. Before deforestation the thick, porous topsoil absorbed the rain as it fell and the snow as it melted. Before our drainage system was constructed there were numerous ponds and swampy land that held the surplus rainfall. These waters seeped into the ground and welled up as flowing springs from which flowed small streams and creeks, most of which flowed all summer long. Thus the flow of water was more equable throughout the year, and deep enough for steamboat navigation. Steamboats gradually replaced the rafts and flatboats by which produce had been transported.

The first steamboat was "The Traveler" in 1829, piloted by Capt. William Sanders. His route was on the Ohio down to New Orleans. On arriving there he found that the yellow fever was raging. He hastily unloaded his boat and steamed away without cargo. On arrival at shipping port he found a cargo of salt for shipment to Spencer, Indiana on White River. White River was narrow and winding, but since it was at flood stage, he had no fear of trouble. When he reached Spencer, however, the river had started to fall, which caused the Captain much anxiety. He proposed to the pilots that they make the return trip at night. At first the two pilots refused, but finally agreed to attempt the trip,

alternating each hour at the wheel with cargo and several passengers aboard, they started down stream. After several hours of blind travel on the swift river, the pilot said he heard the most welcome sound he had ever heard --- the sound of a rooster crowing. He knew that the dawn was breaking. About an hour and a half later they glided out upon the Wabash. Where was that rooster? Rinky Kinman, one of the last pilots on the river, says that it was an hour and a half trip from Hazleton to the Wabash, so that must have been a Hazleton rooster.

The steamboat "Cleopatra" was the first to stop at Hazleton. She tied up at the ferry landing in 1834 and people came long distances to see her. For many it was their first sight of a steam engine.

There were three or four boats each year until 1850, when steamboats became more common. It is hard to imagine the rush of steamboats and the jam of shipping which crowded the river before and after the Civil War.

Petersburg had no railroad until 1884, and most of her commerce was carried by steamboat. Regular packets plied the river between Petersburg and Hazleton, carrying mail, freight and passengers. Stops were made at Decker, Buena Vista and Oliphant's Bend. During the 1880's the Petersburg, nicknamed the Summer Coon, owned by W.C.Davenport ran regularly between Hazleton and Petersburg.

At that time James W. Cunningham piloted the Hunter on the river here. Then there was the Trias, owned by Hazleton people one of whom was Edward Jones, engineer.

In 1880 Hugh Ghormely leased the Emma and hired Albert McNeese Robert Fraker and Rinkey Kinman as crew. This was Rinky's first venture on the river, and Ghormely had to get his mother's permission to take him. He followed steamboating several years as engineer or cook.

Packet service discontinued about 1886, but boats continued to ply the river, gathering up grain or other cargo. Tow boats came here and towed great rafts of logs to the mills at Mt. Carmel and Grayville, Illinois. Henry F. Thorne leased the Belleville and operated it for many years.

The following is an incomplete list of the steamboats on White River during the last twenty-five years of their service: Hugh Barr, Garrett Williams, Rosa Belle, Irene, Idlewild, Eugene, Diana, Bernice, Plankeshaw, George T. Frank, and the Betty Gilbert.

Other steamboat men not mentioned before are: Harvey Phillips, Joe A. Davidson, Charles Pearson, Napoleon Gobble, engineers, Charles Knight and Charles McNeese, firemen, George Cain, roustabout, and Charles Shlers, cook.

## LIFE ON THE RIVER.

The life on the river, whether flatboater, keeler, steamboatman, or raftsman was full of danger and excitement. They lived a hard, rough life, and were exposed to injury and death at all times. It was a common thing to lose one or two crewmen out of six. Drowning was a constant peril.

Diseases lurked everywhere, and the boatmen suffered not only the usual ailments, but were exposed to yellow fever, typhoid fever, cholera, and small pox. There would be times when so many rivermen were sick that the hospitals would be crowded, and the government built marine hospitals in the port cities to relieve the situation. The old Marine Hospital in Evansville was discontinued just recently.

The flatboat season was during the flood stages of the river. Drinking muddy river water and the change from the cold in the north to the warm, damp south caused intestinal problems, colds and pneumonia. For this the cure was onion syrup and whiskey. Much suffering was caused by ague for which early doctors prescribed sassafras tea. The boatman's remedy was whiskey mixed with salt and pepper. If they had known that many of these problems were caused by the mosquitoes they might have accomplished more by spraying the mixture on the mosquitoes.

The winters of pioneer days were much more severe than those of the present, and there were weeks of winter during which the rivermen suffered exceedingly from the cold. In an early day during an especially cold winter, (probably the one the Indians referred to as The Great Cold) several flatboats were found adrift in the Ohio with ghastly crews of frozen corpses.

Ice was one of the most destructive agents encountered. Ice often blocked the Ohio and its tributaries for eight or ten weeks

in winter. Often the streams would be frozen so solid that teams, wagons, horse-drawn sleighs and cattle could be driven over them. Spring thaws resulted in break-up of the ice, accompanied by flood waters. The power of great masses of ice carried on the swift current was very great, and did much damage to shipping. Boats, rafts, and other craft were torn from their moorings, crushed, sunk, or carried away. During an ice-flood a boatman would often tie his boat in a sheltered place and fell a tree to protect it from the ice floes. If he allowed his boat to become frozen in the ice and the river fell, leaving it suspended, there was no way to save it.

In anticipation of an ice flood, all boats were taken to the Knox County side away from the swift current, ice floes and drift wood that swept past the Hazleton side of the river. In 1884, Wm. L. Robbins was operating the sawmill at the foot of Mill St. The thaw came earlier than expected that year, and swept away his logs, boats, rafts, and other equipment, leaving him bankrupt. But his high business standards, acquired through honesty and fair dealing, enabled him to keep right on and recoup his losses.

Many years ago, during an ice flood, the Hazleton ferry was tied up on the Knox County landing, attended by Enoch Selfe, veteran riverman, called "Noah" by his friends and the traveling public. A large sheet of ice drifted close enough to touch the boat. If it had been moored against a steep bank it would have been crushed, but the impact merely pushed the boat up the sloping bank undamaged. The river was so full of floating ice that it couldn't even be crossed in a skiff, so the ferryman walked home to get help by way of the railroad bridges at Decker. With each man carrying a screw-jack, Noah led them back the way he had come, and with much time and effort they refloated the ferry boat.

## LIFE ON THE RIVER II

A storm was one of most dreaded perils on the river. Flatboats and rafts could weather a rather rough gale from any direction except upstream. A storm blowing against the current whipped up waves called white-caps by the rivermen, high enough to run clear over a raft or flood a low-gunned flatboat. In this case a pilot was compelled to tie up some place, sometimes for a week or more. Some men would pass the time by hunting in the woods, and others would look for a family nearby to get up a dance.

Caving or sliding of the river bank was another danger. The swift current would under cut the bank and undermine it by erosion. Then, too, the banks were soaked and softened by water, and would slide into the river carrying trees with the slide. Any boat moored there was destroyed, and seldom was a crewman left to tell the tale. Cave-ins, while the greatest danger in themselves, were responsible for that great danger to the rivermen, snags.

When a large tree drifted out into the river the trunk, or bole of the tree floated so low that the tree was almost upright in the water. The bole imbedded in the mud, and the alanting limbs became snags. A sunken tree was known as a planter, and if the free end bobbed up and down with the current it was called a "sawyer." A sleeping sawyer was one so deep in the water that it never broke the surface. Snags were a problem in all the rivers, and were sometimes so thick that navigation was impossible. Snags near Hazleton were once such a a menace that the government sent two snag boats, the Richard Ford and the Osceo to remove them.

Eddies, ranging from small to great whirlpools whirled in the pockets of the winding river. A whirlpool has a tendency to draw all things into its center, and the stronger the current the greater the force. A boat which allowed itself to get caught in one of these eddies must spend a great amount of effort and time to get out.

## LIFE ON THE RIVER III

Islands or masses of driftwood often separated the channel into two or more channels or chutes. A good many years ago there was such a place a mile or so below Hazleton called the "towhead," a riverman's term for a slight obstruction in the stream. There was a projection of land into the river on the Gibson County side, and below it an island made two channels of the stream. A pilot going down stream had to round the point to shoot the chute safely, and going upstream had to stem the current to avoid being thrown against the bank. No trace of the towhead is there now.

Rapids and riffles were other dangers of navigation, the former being more dangerous because the river was filled with obstructions. Kelly's riffles were about a mile below Cunningham's Ferry and was a great hindrance to navigation. The river ran swiftly over rough bottom shallow water, ruffling and fretting the surface. The government succeeded in blasting a channel to minimize the danger, but it was too late to help the steamboat pilots, for soon after, the river ceased to be used for navigation.

Between Cunningham's Ferry and Kelly's Ripples was a dangerous course known as "nine tucks." Here the river ran in a serpentine manner throwing the channel first on one side and then on the other. These dangerous caused many boats to stop at Hazleton and hire an experienced pilot to steer them to the Wabash. A steamboat pilot entering the river for the first time usually turned his boat over to a Hazleton pilot for the whole time he was on the river. The Dorcas Bowman, the last steamboat on the river, was piloted by the veteran pilot, Henry Thorne.

Rivermen gave odd and unusual names to things they saw on the river. A sharp point of land was called a "paddy nose" and Muscle Shoals was so called because of the amount of effort it took to put the boat over the shallows. Dangerous and difficult

places were often named for His Satanic Majesty -- The Devil's Bake Oven, The Devil's Teapot, The Devil's Elbow, etc.

The Indians gave the boatmen plenty of trouble along the Ohio and Wabash Rivers, but there are no records of raids on White River due to the fact that few boats were on the river prior to 1811, the year the power of the Indians was broken at Tippecanoe. In the early days the Indians waylaid the boats, killed the men, looted the cargo and carried off the women and children into captivity.

River pirates infested the area during the flatboat and rafting area. They hid in the forest, on rock bluffs, and on the islands. Many were Tories driven from their homes during the Revolution, some were criminals who had fled the Eastern States to escape punishment. They murdered the crew, took the cargo, and sank the boat. The loot they disposed of by selling it to allies in the river ports.

LIFE ON THE RIVER IV

Rivermen referred to homeward journeys as "Up-river walks." In the early days they walked the entire distance, carrying their own supplies and camping out at night. Each man carried his own emergency ration of a pint of finely ground parched corn, two tablespoons of which was supposed to sustain a man one day. Sometimes two of them would buy a mule and stagger their way home. One would ride ahead ten miles and tie the mule near the trail, then the other would come up and ride the same distance. If they took passage on a keelboat, they actually walked the distance in poling or towing the boat. On all steamboats the passengers were expected to help wood-up the boat.

Because of his skill and reliability Paddy Hoy was paid better than most pilots on the White River-New Orleans run. Consequently, he always came home by steamboat, and could tell many interesting stories of steamboating. Swarms of pick-pockets followed the river,

knowing that all the passengers carried more or less cash. When returning flatboatmen were helping wood up a steamer, they put their valuables under a barrel and took turns sitting on the barrel head armed with a six-shooter. The Missouri boatmen were said to be tough. Whenever they discovered a light fingered gentleman on board they threw him overboard without ceremony.

The life of a boatman was not all hardship and toil, for they had many pleasures and amusements. In down-river floats they often lashed two or more boats together for protection and sociability. In groupings of this kind there were boats loaded with wheat, pork, and sometimes one carrying apple cider and whiskey. The inference is that they ate, drank, and made merry.

In a group of this kind there were always some good fiddlers, singers, dancers, and story-tellers. No crew was complete without a fiddler, who often was accorded privileges not enjoyed by other boatmen. Sometimes he "rozumed" up his bow and sawed a tune while the others danced, sang, set poles, or beat out time with the oars. Hazleton had many old time fiddlers, and three especially good ones. They were Phil Coonce, Gip Phillips, and Bill Lee. These men played by ear, but could play a tune after hearing it. In New Orleans they would hang around the dance halls to hear and pick up the latest music. Their services were in demand for boat dances, private homes and dance halls. The boatmen were fond of dancing and when the boat was tied up for any reason would think first of getting up a dance. The best dances were in New Orleans or Natchez, where there were girls available for partners.

It was said that the Hoosiers and Kentuckians were the best boatmen and the French Canadians the best singers and rowers. The river songs were famous, a popular one being "Floating Down the Ohio". They made the air ring with their singing. The French sang the Canadian songs and songs from their native France. There was a tradition that John Cunningham was the best singer among the White River boatmen.

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## ROBB'S MILLS

About the year 1814 David Robb impounded the waters of the creek that flowed through his land about a half mile south of Hazleton and built a water-powered saw mill. In addition to this mill he later built a small grist mill with one run of stone. This business proving quite profitable, he put in another run of stone making a commercial mill with a large daily output. Before this mill was built the settlers carried their grain to the Kalt mill on the River Du Chien (De Shee) in Knox County. By the year 1817, Robb had both his mills in operation, and from that time until the town was platted in 1856 this community was called Robb's Mills. These were the best mills in the locality until they were supplanted by the steam powered saw and grist mills in the 1850's.

During the 1830's the mills were operated by Mr. Robb's son-in-law, William Mc Clure. He devoted most of his time to sawmilling and specialized in yellow poplar lumber, the finest to be found anywhere. His home, the first frame house to be built here, was built where the Roscoe Cunningham house now stands.

In 1850 John Brown leased the mills from the Commissioners of the David Robb estate for \$200 annually. The lease included the mills, a log lot, and a log house formerly used as a school. Mr. Brown transported most of the lumber from the mill down the river in flatboats. His last river trip before his death was in 1852.

We have reason to believe that the grist miller was Stephen Durkee, who, with his wife, Sally, came to this neighborhood in 1851. The late John Will Brown told of watching the Miller grind the burrs with chisel and mallet. An old borr stone from this mill is now in the yard of the Eagle's Home in Princeton.

Following the death of John Brown the mills were taken over

by John L. Key, who operated a mill at Buena Vista. He sawed a great amount of the lumber used in building the railroad. Mr. Key was an expert sawyer, and supervised the cutting of the slightly rounded timbers used in the arches of the river bridge.

There was quite a settlement at Robb's Mills. The large brick house served as an inn and a stage station. There was a carpenter shop, blacksmith shop, store and distillery. East of the inn was a race track where horse races were held, with stables for race horses and stage horses.

Business began declining at Robb's Mills as business in the new town increased. After the railroad depot was moved to Hazleton and the Atlanta Flour Mill was built, Robb's Mills ceased to be a community center and trade center. The old dam, much of which is still standing, marks the site of Robb's Mills.

#### THE ATLANTA FLOUR MILL

During the years between the founding of the town and 1870 the population of Hazleton increased greatly and the village expanded into an industrial town.

About 1863 the Atlanta switch was laid along Mill Street to the Hazleton Mill lot on the river. A turntable was installed so that tracks could be laid in different directions. One spur led to the flour mill, one to the distillery, and another to the river bank near the Gervase Hazleton Sawmill. A yoke of gigantic black oxen served as a switch engine. These shipping facilities caused most of the industry to be located on Mill Street. Gervase Hazleton was, of course, the leading industrialist, for after founding the town he set up several industries to attract new citizens.

Bingham Brothers ranked next to Hazleton in promoting industrial growth. Gordon and Sylvester Bingham came from Baltimore to Princeton. About the time the railroad was completed to Patoka, the Bingham's located there, built a flour mill and a distillery.

The Atlanta Flour Mill was a three storey building completely equipped with the finest machinery for making high grade flour, meal, and other products. The mill did a lucrative business, supplying the local demand and shipping by rail and steamboat great distances.

By the middle 1870's both the Bingham's were dead and their businesses came to a standstill. The mill changed ownership several times but with little success until it was purchased by Kightly and West. Alex West was a hustling young business man who soon had the flour mill going full blast. He operated

the mill until 1888 when it was destroyed by fire along with 30,000 bushels of wheat. The town was slow to recover from this blow, because it was six years until the mill was replaced by another.

The Atlanta Flour Mill brought a lot of trade and money to Hazleton. Many men and boys were employed and the payrolls were heavy.

#### HAZLETON MILLING COMPANY

After the destruction of the Atlanta Mill the Hazleton people had to depend on other places for breadstuffs. These were the days of custom milling, when grain was taken to the mill and exchanged for flour. The exchange rate was 1-6 for wheat and 1-8 for corn, and the miller gave you the bran. Most farmers were in the habit of depositing their wheat or corn at the mill and taking the flour or meal as needed. The people sorely missed this service. During the years we were without a mill our citizens patronized the mills in Princeton and Patoka, a long and tiresome journey in a two-horse wagon. Most of them went to the old water mill at Patoka, which with its roaring water, tumbling machinery and jooy old Dutch miller, Mr. Weber was an interesting place to visit.

A meeting of interested persons was held here June 28, 1887 to see what could be done about a new mill. The Hazleton Milling Company was organized with five directors. These were Franklin White, Edward Jones, A.B. De Priest, Moses Reedy and Byron Spain, the last named president of the board. They decided to raise \$10,000 by selling stock at \$50 each to build the mill. Over half of the shares were sold at this meeting.

Pages 56 and 57 are missing

When pulled from the water he was shivering with cold and fright, his teeth chattering, his dripping garments covered with grain dust and slime clung to his body, giving him the appearance of a rained-on fowl. He was a comical sight, but nobody laughed openly. A bystander pulled a flask of the universal elixir from his pocket and administered first aid on the spot. Then he led him to the warmth of the boiler fire, wrapped him in gunny sacks, wrung out his clothes and dosed him so regularly with the elixir that the soused man was soon re-soused.

The second Hazleton elevator was also built on this spot, and they also operated a steam boat which carried grain on the river. This elevator was also destroyed by fire in 1883.

#### THE HAZLETON COOPER SHOP

The building of the Atlanta Flour Mill, the Distillery, and the Packing House in Hazleton created a need for kegs and barrels here, and Gervase Hazleton built a Cooper Shop on Main Street. For a long time it was the busiest and most interesting shop in town. It was a long rectangular building lighted with many windows. On one side was a fireplace so large that two sets of dog irons were placed side by side. Barrels intended for the storage of liquor were placed on these dog irons to char the inside, for it was the custom at that time to age liquor in charred barrels. In making the barrels any staves that refused to bend to the hoop were placed over the fire until they could be bent.

Along the north side of the building work space was assigned to each cooper, who was provided with work bench, shaving horse, and keg trestle, but was required to provide his own tools. The management furnished all the materials and the floor was piled high with rough heading and stave timber, hoopoles and stacks of tattail flag. Most of the materials were brought in from the local farms, but large quantities of hoopoles tied in bundles were cut and shipped from Pike and Martin Counties.

Some of the coopers were local men, but many of them came from distant states. James T. Gardner, born in New York State, came to Princeton and then to Hazleton about the time the Cooper Shop was built. He proved to be such a skilled worker that he was made Master cooper and foreman of the shop. Other coopers were James Smith, John Mc Bride, Jefferson Raymond, Eli Woodward, Hart Fellows Wm. Pickrill and Charles Masterson. It was interesting to see them start with rough lumber and finish with a leak proof barrel. Dick Jones and Rinky Kinman remembered hanging around to watch the coopers work.

After the Atlanta Mill burned and the Distillery closed the Cooper Shop was closed in 1885.

#### THE KLEIN STAVE AND HEADING FACTORY

The early cooper had to fashion his hoops, staves and heading out of rough lumber. By the time the cooperage in Hazleton closed its doors machinery for making these barrel parts were on the market.

Early in 1882 Phillip Klein of Evansville proposed to locate a stave and heading factory if the business men of Hazleton would furnish the building site, interest the people who would have timber to sell, and promote the sales of the finished product. On Feb. 22, 1882 a large number of interested citizens met at the home of Theodore Wheeler to discuss this proposition. After discussing the matter fully, it was decided to accept Mr. Klein's offer, and a committee was appointed to purchase the land. They secured the land East of Robb Creek from the river south to Arkansas St. and East to Brown Street.

A factory building large enough to house the boilers and machinery was built along the river. The dry kiln, steam boxes and drying sheds were located on the Brown St. side of the lot. Mr. Ed Gaddis came here about the time the factory was built, and acted as business manager. Mr. and Mrs. Gaddis were quiet, unassuming, and well-liked people. She was a piano teacher, and the old square piano in Miss Rose Thorn's room on the hill was donated to the school from their home. Mr. Gaddis was the writer's first Sunday School teacher in the old Baptist church on the hill. He was superintendent of the stave factory about twelve years, until Mr. Klein, because of ill health, decided to turn the factory over to others.

By the time the factory was in operation there was little demand for its products here, but during the twenty years it was in operation it produced an immense amount of hoops, staves, and barrel heads which were shipped to all parts of the country. The cooper's work was simplified. All he had to do was assemble the parts.

During the 1890's Mr. William Rich came here, leased the plant and installed the latest improved stave cutter, which he had invented and patented. He received financial aid from several local men. This cutter turned out a stave in one operation, cut, trimmed and grooved for the barrel head. The firm flourished for quite a while, when for some unknown reason, it became insolvent and paid out 50¢ on the dollar. Mr. Ed Gaddis and Mr. Jack Haeefele took over the lease and operated the factory until it closed in 1908 for lack of timber.

Charles Mc. Guire has an old painting painted from a photograph by Oliver "Pat" Phillips. The names of those who appear in the photograph, all workers and bosses at the stave factory, are as follows: James Bogard, John McKinley, John Heacock, Bert, Reynolds, Ed. Wilson, Harve Waring, John Lane, Eth Curtner, Fiddler Bill Snyder, Bill Spain, Bona Tremper, Al Harrington, Bill Moore, Carl Keehan, Herb Trickett, Bill Masterson, Bill Rich, Bill Higgons, Pat Phillips, Joe Davidson, Charles Kneir, Tom Brown, Fred Hambarger, Bud Hayes, Jim Brice, Jay Robb, Austin Snyder, Pop Thorne, Brude Cox, Azzie Briner, Sam Felts, Charles Mc. Guire and George Knight.

## HAZLETON AND WILLIAMS SAWMILL

Fleming Williams, partner of Gervase Hazleton in the sawmill, was born in New York in 1825 but had resided in Illinois several years before coming to Hazleton in 1865. In addition to the sawmill he kept a boarding house and was Justice of the Peace for White River Township. His wife was Elmira Wardell, sister of Mrs. Hazleton. Mrs. Williams was a charter member of the Methodist Class organized by Josiah Kightly in 1864. She was a faithful member of church and Sunday School, and taught one or more terms at the Octagon School. Mr. Williams sold his business interest here and moved to Wabash County Illinois, where he died in 1893.

Their son Sammy was a boon companion of the unstudious Billy Hazleton, who, at the Barnett School was picked up, laid on a shelf, and covered with wraps because he wouldn't study his lesson. The teacher evidently thought this was an improvement on the dunce-cap performance. But Sammy Williams, in spite of poor educational opportunities, became the Honorable Samuel Williams, lawyer, legislator, and vice-presidential candidate. Bill didn't do badly, either. He grew up, learned the carpenter trade, and moved to Poplar Bluff, Missouri.

David Hazleton, co-founder of the town, was a silent partner in the milling business. He owned a half interest in the real estate and had several thousand dollars invested in the mill proper. The census of 1860 shows that he had returned from California and was working as a mill hand. He died somewhere in the south in 1861, but the circumstances of his death are unknown. He left \$500 to a friend in Missouri. The rest of his estate went to the minor children of his brother, Gervase. These were Almarine R., Emma S., and Albert Gervase Hazleton.

The Hazleton-Williams Mill stood at the foot of Mill Street on the river bank. It was a two storey building of heavy hewn timbers, covered with yellow poplar and roofed with hand made Cypress shingles. The engine and boiler were on the ground floor, with sawyer machinery on the second floor. A tramway ran from this floor to the river, and logs were hauld on a tram pulled by a long rope and a power windlass. The lumber went by chute to the mill yard. The scaler stood at the foot of the chute and measured each piece as it came from the mill. Push cars on wooden tracks took it to be stacked in the dry yard.

Mr. Hazleton ran the mill until 1882, then leased it to Wm. Robbins, who conducted business there about eighteen years. Then the old mill was abandoned, the building razed, and the machinery junked.

The whistle from the Hazleton Mill called and dismissed workmen for more than fifty years, and it would be impossible to estimate the worth of this mill to the community.

## THE DEPAUW MILL

Washington C. DePauw built a saw mill here in 1850. It was located on the river on the Hazleton Milling Co. lot. The building was similar in structure to the Hazleton-Williams Mill. The lower floor was set against the bank, so that from the front it gave the impression of being a one storey building. A tramway brought the logs from the river, and push carts on tracks carried the lumber to the dry-yard.

In so far as the writer knows, Mr. De Pauw never lived here. He conducted his business through an agent, Mr. Ellbridge Gardner of Vincennes. Mr. and Mrs Gardner lived here five or six years,

and their daughter, Hannah Elizabeth was the first child born in Hazleton after the platting of the town. Their son, Willis Gardner, lived to great age with memory unimpaired and he could tell many interesting stories of early days in Hazleton. He said that when the Gardner family came here there were only log houses in Hazleton, but after the saw mills were in operation new houses were of frame construction. The homes of Gervase Hazleton, Alex West, Abraham Westfall and Elizabeth Martin were all built at the same time, but the Westfall home was the first to be finished. It still stands on the river at the foot of Main Street, and was owned for many years by the Andrew Sisson family.

Eldridge Gardner was the son of Andrew Gardner, founder of the Gardner funeral home in Vincennes. He left here about 1859 to assist his father in the family business. Handed down from father to son, the Gardner funeral home has been in operation about 160 years, involving seven generations of the Gardner family.

Daniel Knight succeeded Mr. Gardner as manager of the DePauw mills. He was in charge fifteen years, or until Mr. De Pauw leased his mill to out of town sawmillers. These were Moredock and Son of Vincennes, and later Kinsey and Butler, also of Vincennes. This firm trained T.J. Ellis in the milling business and put him in charge of the mill. For several years the mill was humming day and night with two shifts of workmen. An old picture owned by Mrs Aurelia Steelman shows the following citizens of bygone days who worked at the DePauw Mill: T.J. Ellis, Newton F. Knight, Frank Hunter, Craig Blythe, Sam Ellis, Boone Reed, Dave Hawkins, Peter LaFair, George Byrd, Tommy McNeece, Albert McNeece, and Lewis Arnold.

The mill was destroyed by fire in 1884 and was never rebuilt.

#### HAZLETON'S EARLY PORTABLE SAWMILLS

The neck of land between the river and the railroad in the north part of town, called the strip, has been the site of several homes, several portable sawmills, and two grain elevators. The river at that time ran closer to the railroad than at present, so that the strip about 300 feet wide ran from the Peter Snyder home to Bridge Street. This street ran east and west under the trestle north of town. The main channel of the river forty feet deep ran close to the Hazleton side, affording good landing for rafts, steamboats, and other craft.

The strip was a handy place for transferring cargoes from boats to railroad cars, and a switch was built along the track for this purpose. Water Street, now washed away, ran from the ferry landing north to Bridge Street, and provided for boat landing along the river front. Washington Avenue, which runs north from the Corner Store to Bridge Street was not opened until 1880. The people used Bridge St. and Water St. for access to the town and to the strip.

From 1865 to 1890 there was usually a portable sawmill or two on the strip. Little is known of these mills, except that they produced a great amount of lumber and the payrolls strengthened the town's economy. Hazleton reached its zenith as a river port and enjoyed its greatest prosperity during the sawmilling era.

The portable saw mill had very little equipment other than the necessary steam engine, log deck, saw and saw carriage, which were set of the ground and covered with slap shelters. Logs were delivered by wagons or by the river. There was no special handling equipment and logs were moved to the mill by oxen.

Captain David M. Lewis and Jasper Phillips, after returning from the Civil War, operated a saw mill here for several years.

Phillips sold out to Samuel Cobb, and the firm operated under the name of Lewis and Cobb.

Henry P. Borders brought a mill here from Petersburg and operated it for several years before moving back to Petersburg.

The best known of these sawmillers was John Drennon, who, with his broad rimmed black hat, black silk neck kerchief, and black boots polished to the tops and pulled over his trousers, was a colorful character. He was a brother of Ben Drennon, who built the Elza Byrd home and reared his family there. Miss Stella Drennon was the last survivor.

#### GERVASE HAZLETON'S CYPRESS SWAMP SAWMILL

This saw mill wasn't located in Hazleton at all, but all the profits went to the Hazleton family and a large part of the payroll to Hazleton workmen, so mention of it here will not be entirely out of place.

The River Du Chien (De Shee or Du Shee) ran in a westerly direction and passed under the railroad about half way between Decker and Vincennes. Throughout its lower course it had a very shallow channel and during the rainy season the flood waters spilled out over thousands of acres of land, forming the great swamps that lay in Johnson and Decker Townships. Most of the water had its outlet in the Wabash, the rest found its way into the White River.

The level land lying along Route 41 from Dicksburg Hill several miles northward was once a swamp timbered with great Cypress trees. A lone Cypress, its top torn out by storm or lightning, stands near the intersection of 41 and Decker Road. This swamp was the fowlers paradise, for during the migrating season it was the refuge for thousands of water fowl, and the ridges teemed with wild turkey throughout the year.

Gervase Hazleton owned about 300 acres of this land. In 1882, in order to devote all of his time to cutting, milling and shipping the timber from this land, he leased his Hazleton mill to Wm. Robbins. He arranged to cut the timber from adjacent swamp lands, and the Railroad built a switch and a station called Cypress to accommodate this venture.

Mr. Hazleton then proceeded to established a logging-  
lumbering camp on his property. There was a primitive road

through his swamp running northward west of Decker. Eastward from this road a road was built to the railroad. Along this new road was the Hazleton camp, with small box houses for the married men and bunk houses for the unmarried. The soft road of the swamp made it impossible to use log wagons, so a sort of sled was used to move logs over the spongy ground.

Many Hazleton men worked at the sawmill. George Knaub, Mr. Hazleton's son-in-law, was the first overseer. After Mr. Hazleton's death his wife and son David finished the job. The cypress lumber was fine and long-lasting. Some of the Hazleton lumber may still be seen in old buildings, but most of it was shipped east to be used in ship building.

After the swamp was de-forested, a levee and new drainage ditch were built, the River Du Chien now running south to carry the water into White River. Thus was claimed some of the finest farm land in Indiana.

#### THE WHITE RIVER DISTILLERY

The White River Distillery, a three storey building much larger than the Atlanta Flour Mill, stood just west of the mill site and was completed in 1865. It was equipped with steam power and the latest approved machinery, and a 90 foot brick chimney conducted the smoke from the boiler fires to the outer air. This old smoke stack was left standing until recently, the only reminder of early Hazleton industry. The old distillery did a thriving business for many years, paid top grain prices to farmers for their grain, and provided employment for many workmen.

Auxiliary buildings erected in connection with the distillery were a liquor house, a bonded ware house, and a pork packing plant. All of these except the packing plant were two storey buildings, sealed inside to keep an even temperature. The rectifying house was located across from the elevator, and was blown down in a wind storm. The liquor house was near the distillery and was consumed by fire at the same time the Atlanta Flour Mill and the Distillery burned. The bonded warehouse was moved to the present Elevator site, where it became the seat of learning known as Hogan's Alley School. The late Lawrence Sullivan learned the rule of three and Roscoe Cunningham perfected his left-handed penmanship there.

In distillation, after the grain is fermented and the alcohol removed, the mash contains considerable nutriment. To utilize this by-product, stock pens were built and the mash piped to the pens. A packing house disposed of the porkers. There was still a demand in the south for our pork products during the time the Bingham operated the packing house, and the lard and processed meats were shipped by rail and flatboat or steamboat.

Kightly and West purchased the Bingham property in 1879, and the distillery was never operated again. The building, neglected and unused, was broken into a number of times and valuable copper utensils and machine parts carried away. Mr. West installed Mr. Lewis Vinyard as night watchman, and in no time he marched two culprits into Justice Knight's court at the end of a shotgun.

With the distillery not operating there was no reason to keep hogs there, but Mr. West operated the packing house in season and farmers often drove their hogs there for butchering. They shared the work, each man to the task for which he was best fitted. Edwin Robb did the shooting, Ben Hayes and Ike Mauck were usually in charge of the lard kettles, and William Collins was known as the fastest meat dresser in the country.

The Bingham enterprises also included a general store and a shipping business to the New Orleans Market. Sylvester Bingham was in charge here. A bachelor, he made his home with the Pap Johnson family. He died in 1871 and is buried in the Presbyterian Cemetery in Patoka.

#### ADDENDA

Mr. Cunningham's stories are mostly concerned with the early settlers of the area and with the business and Education of early Hazleton. This collection should also include an account of the cultural activities of the people. In an isolated community the entertainment and the cultural growth of its people were dependent upon their creative abilities and impelled by their need for social communication. Men, women and children who work hard must also have things to do in their leisure time.

The farmers, lumbermen and construction workers, store-keepers and rivermen came from all sections of the country and from Europe. They brought with them the music from their own culture, along with the smaller musical instruments that could be carried in a back-pack. A newcomer who had a knowledge of music or the ability to play a musical instrument was a welcome addition. Soon there were dances, play-parties, concerts and singing schools attended by people of all ages. Music had moved out of the tavern, the work camps, and the river boats to the homes, schools, churches and meeting halls of the people.

The singing school was a serious effort to learn to read music and to sing four-part harmony by note instead of by ear. Most of the teachers taught music reading by the so-fa- syllable method, but there are a few old singing school books around which have the shaped note system in which each syllable had a different shape. The people attended singing school because of their hunger for music and for the pleasure of singing with a group. The benefits they received carried over into the church, the school, and into their daily lives.

Among the blessings of that early day was the reed organ. The organ was inexpensive and light in weight, so it could be shipped

by boat or rail. Families scrimped and saved to add the organ to the treasured horse-hair furniture in the parlor and young ladies began to take music lessons. A Mrs. Gaddis owned a square rosewood piano and gave lessons at her home at the west end of Second St. The Gaddis family left here about the time the school on the hill was built and she gave the piano to the school. It was installed in Miss Rose Thorne's room and many children were taught to sing with it without realizing how much this old instrument and its owner had contributed to music in Hazleton.

Both men and women were interested in singing and there were some fine quartets in the area. A Mr. Babcock came to Hazleton after having been a member of a professional quartet in New York. He continued to get professional copies of new music from the publishers and the singers worked out their own arrangements of new popular songs. Visiting professional singers were surprised to hear the current melodies being sung in a little Hoosier town.

The "Opera House" over Thorne's Store never saw an opera, but it provided a place for concerts and plays for years. There was a small stage lighted by oil lamps with tin reflectors. The slanted floor made seating uncomfortable until someone thought of sawing off the back legs of the chairs to accommodate the floor slant. Traveling troupes of players and musicians always played to packed houses in Hazleton.

The Lyceum Course brought more sophisticated entertainment by presenting a good quality of music and some fine lectures during the winter. Families bought season tickets to guarantee the success of the program and the events were selected by a booking company in the East. The fact that a small town could support such a venture was a tribute to the cultural interests of its people.

#### THE HAZLETON CONCERT BAND

Many people will remember the Hazleton Concert Band. Albert Trippett remembers a reorganization of that band about 1910, but there must have been an older organization, since Will Sweetland left Hazleton around 1900 to play tuba in professional organizations including the Concert Band of John Philip Sousa. Mr. Sweetland was one of the first to play the Sousaphone. Sousa had designed the wrap-around instrument with the bell facing his audience to replace the upright tuba in concerts.

In the 1910 reorganization the director is believed to have been a Mr. Evans who came from Illinois. When he left, the band was conducted by the first cornetist, Nettleton Johnson. Later the Johnsons moved to Vincennes and they were able to get Walter T. Lee to come to Hazleton to edit the White River News, teach the young replacements in the band and conduct the band in rehearsals and concerts. Mr. Lee was an accomplished musician and his band ranked well in Southern Indiana music. They played weekly summer concerts, as well as out of town parades and the County Fairs in Knox, Gibson and Pike Counties.

Mrs. Lee was also a musician and her Methodist Church Choir will be remembered as one of the finest around.

Some of the members of that early band are as follows: Dr. Harry Gudge, Salvan Pearson, Carl Snyder, Fred Steelman, Gardiner Briner, Albert Trippett, Everett Trippett, Herschel Trippett, H.A. Thorne, Hovey Edwards, Overton Decker, John Thomas, Theo Thomas, Frank Cassidy, Louis Ferguson, Frank Ferguson, and Walter Ferguson. Albert Trippett left to play with show bands and the army band in World War I. He later organized bands in Oklahoma. Pascal Hayes, a later bandman, traveled with circus bands in summer and a minstrel show in winter.

The Hazleton Concert Band was one more bit of evidence of the interest in cultural growth shown by the people of a little town so long ago.

Adams  
     Elizabeth 64  
     Nancy 63  
     Samuel 64,66

Adkison  
     Seth 64

Alcorn  
     Thomas 62

Alexander  
     Charles 64

Allen  
     Clement 64  
     Gersham 64

Alsop  
     James C. 64

A rbutnot  
     Sarah 52

Archer  
     Anna 56  
     Benza 56  
     Calvin 56  
     Catharine 56  
     David 56  
     Elizabeth 56  
     Isabella 56  
     John 56  
     Lucilla 56  
     Margaretta 56  
     Mary 56  
     Nancy 52,56  
     Robert 56  
     Rosa 56  
     Rosanna 63  
     Samuel 56  
     Sarah 56  
     Thomas 56  
     William 56

Armstrong  
     Elsberry 61  
     John 61  
     Miles 61  
     Molly 61  
     Nancy 61

Arnett  
     James 63

Ashby  
     James 64

Ashley  
     Thomas 64

Ayres  
     Azariah 65  
     Betsy 53  
     Henry 53

Baldwin  
     Lemuel 63  
     Sarah 64

Barker  
     Elisha 57  
     Elizabeth 57,63  
     Hiram 58  
     Jesse 57,65  
     John 57  
     Mary J 57  
     Samuel 64  
     Sarah 57  
     William 57

Barnes  
     William 66

Barr  
     Louis 53  
     Margaret 59  
     Martha 53  
     Samuel 62

Bass  
     Howard 65  
     Howell 59  
     Humphrey 65  
     Winnie 64

Beane  
     Russell W 67

Beasley  
     Boswell 64

Beck  
     Phillip 64

Bell  
     Jane k 64

Benson  
     Ellen 56  
     John 56,57  
     Lemira 56  
     Louisa 56  
     Martha 56  
     Sarah 56  
     Sylvester 56,63  
     William 53,56

Blythe  
     Samuel 63

Booker  
     A 65

Boren  
     Abasalom 63  
     John 64  
     John D 65  
     Ruthy 64

Boyd  
     David 64  
     Joel 64  
     Mrs. Mary 63

Bradlove  
     James 65

Braselton  
     David B. 60  
     Elizabeth 60  
     Hannah 60  
     Jacob 60  
     James 60  
     Jane F 60  
     John; 60  
     William 60

Breading  
     Mary 63

Brown  
     Basil 67  
     Elizabeth 60  
     Mary 67

Brownlee  
     George 64  
     Jane 56  
     John 56,64

Burchfield  
     Deliala 64  
     L 64

Burkham  
     Charles 65

Buttner  
     Martha 63

Cairns  
     Hugh 56  
     Sarah 56

Cammack  
   E 64  
   Nancy 64  
   William 64

Campbell  
   James 65

Casey  
   Dr. Joel 56  
   Sarah 56

Cheek  
   Anne 63  
   James 63

Clark  
   Braxton 65  
   Vachel 63  
   William 58

Clement  
   Elizabeth 64

Crockrum  
   James 65  
   James M 65, 67  
   Col James W 66, 67  
   William 67

Cole  
   Rebecca 64

Coleman  
   Henry 64

Colvin  
   William 65

Combs  
   Mary 64

Cook  
   Elizabeth 64

Creek  
   Killian 64

Crockett  
   David 53  
   Col Joseph 53  
   Martha 53

Cross  
   Charles 61

Crow  
   Elizabeth 64  
   Patsy 60

Cunningham  
   Polly 64

Curtis  
   George 66

Davis  
   Nancy 53  
   Mary J 56  
   Samuel 56  
   Uriah 65

Decker  
   Aaron 64  
   Charlotte 64  
   Susan 64

Denton  
   Benjamin 65

Devin  
   Alexander 65, 66  
   Alex Jr. 58  
   Rev Alen 52, 58  
   Catherine 52, 58  
   Elizabeth 58  
   James 58  
   Joseph 50, 58, 66  
   Lucy 58, 63  
   Mary 58  
   Nancy 50  
   Nowlin 58  
   Peyton 58  
   Robert 58  
   Sarah 58  
   Susan 58  
   Virginia 58

Dixon  
   John 49

Douglas  
   Lorenzo D 63  
   Mahala 64  
   Nancy 63

Downey  
   Margaret 64

Drake  
   Daniel 57  
   Elizabeth 57  
   Jane 57  
   Samuel 57

Drew  
   John 65

Dunkin  
   Ann 64

Durley  
   Charity 64

Dutz  
   Elizabeth 64

Dyer  
   Rachel 63

Eckley  
   Joseph 50  
   Nancy 50  
   Susan 50

Edmondson  
   Elizabeth 62

Elliott  
   Polly 64

Ellison  
   Charles 64

Embree  
   David F 62  
   Eleanor 50, 62  
   Elisha 62  
   Judge Elisha 50  
   Elizabeth 55, 62, 64  
   James T 62  
   Joshua 62  
   Louisa 62  
   Maria 62  
   Melton P 62  
   Nancy 64  
   Ophelia 62  
   William 55, 64

Emerson  
   A 53  
   Henry 61  
   James L 61  
   Jesse 61  
   Lucilla 61  
   Nancy 53  
   Reuben 61  
   Thomas 61

Ennes  
   John 64

The index ends with at the beginning of the "E's". Abraham Field appears on page 39 of the book which is page 22 of the online pdf document.