

PH0003671

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: INDIANA  
 COUNTY: FRANKLIN  
 FOR NPS USE ONLY  
 ENTRY DATE: JUN 13 1973

1. NAME  
 COMMON: Whitewater Canal Historic District  
 AND/OR HISTORIC: Whitewater Canal; Whitewater Canal State Memorial

2. LOCATION  
 STREET AND NUMBER: From Laurel Feeder Dam to Brookville,  
 adjacent to W. Fork of the Whitewater River.  
 CITY OR TOWN: Metamora (principal site)  
 STATE: Indiana CODE: 18 COUNTY: Franklin CODE: 047

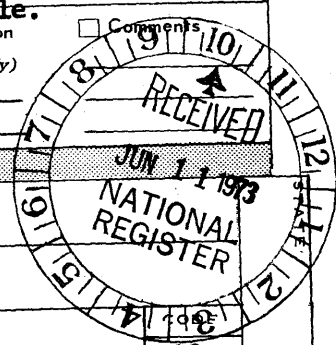
3. CLASSIFICATION  

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted Bldgs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted Trail <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Bldgs restricted
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY  
 OWNER'S NAME: Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
 STREET AND NUMBER: 608 State Office Building  
 CITY OR TOWN: Indianapolis STATE: Indiana CODE: 18

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION  
 COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Deed Records: Vols. 32, 41, 42, 44, 46,  
 Franklin County Courthouse 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55  
 STREET AND NUMBER: 459 Main Street  
 CITY OR TOWN: Brookville, STATE: Indiana CODE: 18

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS  
 TITLE OF SURVEY: Public Lands Survey Plats (LUDLOW)  
 U. S. Surveyor General For Indiana Vol. 1, Page 142  
 DATE OF SURVEY: 1811  Federal  State  County  Local  
 DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: 1. National Archives, Washington D. C. and  
 2. Indiana State Archives, State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana  
 STREET AND NUMBER: (See line immediately above)  
 CITY OR TOWN: Washington D. C. STATE: Indiana CODE: 18



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

COUNTY: FRANKLIN  
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)				
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruins
	(Check One)			(Check One)	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

It is recommended that an area some 15 miles in length be designated as an Historic District. Further, it should be emphasized that the condition of the various structures vary considerably. For instance:

1. The Mill has been Altered (on original site, but not first mill).
2. The Feeder Dam is Fair; has been rebuilt and repaired several times since 1913 Flood.
3. Most Locks are Ruins; they are remains of original construction, however.
4. The Restored Millville Lock is Fair (operating). Restored 1953.
5. The Reconstructed Aqueduct is Fair (on original site).

These, then, are the reasons for checking more than one box in the above DESCRIPTION, CONDITION.

The State of Indiana holds title to approximately 15 miles of the Canal extending from the Laurel Feeder Dam to Butter's Run, Brookville.

The Canal was built 26 feet wide at the bottom and 40 feet wide at the water surface. The water was four feet deep and the "towpath" was ten feet wide. The "berm bank" on the opposite side of the canal from the towpath was five feet wide at the top. The slopes of embankment were made to measure 21 inches horizontally to each 12 inches vertically.

There were 7 feeder dams in the Whitewater River, and 56 canal locks with a total fall of 490 feet. According to records (2) the fall was one of the basic reasons the canal failed. The fall was said to be 77.00 inches per mile, compared to the 8.80 inches per mile of the Wabash and Erie Canal in northern Indiana. The extensive fall resulted in damage each time a flood occurred. In 1847 a flood did \$90,000 damage. Later that year another flood did \$110,000 estimated damage with \$30,000 of it going unrepaired. (No. in ( ) indicates Reference in Section 9 - Bibliography)

At various times it seemed that the Canal must be abandoned. But repairs and operations were continued until 1853 when a third great flood practically put the canal out of business. (3) (See No. 3 in Section 9)

About this time the western movement of railroad construction reached Indiana. The towpath made a ready grade for the iron horse, and the financial -- as well as physical condition of the Canal, practically pushed the transportation phase of the Canal out of existence. The canal flourished; then died with the bankruptcy of the Canal Company and the State of Indiana.

When the Canal failed as a means of transportation, the water rights remained. The Brookville and Metamora Hydraulic Company was organized to maintain the Canal which then functioned as a "mill race".

There were many mills erected along the banks of the Canal since it was constructed for the DUAL PURPOSE OF NAVIGATION AND HYDRAULIC POWER. Between Laurel and Brookville and beyond, a number of mills were erected to manufacture flour and woolen products. On the section of the Canal built into Cincinnati, water was used to power some 90 "runs" of stones. A pair of burrstones was considered a "run". It was simpler and extremely less costly to maintain the canal as a "mill race" than for transportation. Canal locks need not be kept in repair. The four foot minimum depth was non-essential. Primarily a continuous head of water was the prime requirement. Under these conditions the mills along the banks operated into the 1920's.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE INDIANA	
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DESCRIPTION - Continued

Eventually the cost of maintaining the Canal as a "mill race" grew prohibitive, and the development of competing means of power for the mills along the Canal spelled doom for the Whitewater Canal. Locks, banks, canal basins and structures were abandoned. Nature took over and suitable areas were returned to farming.

About 1940 the idea of restoring a section of the Canal for historical and recreational purposes took form. In 1945 the General Assembly approved an Act which authorized the State to accept property from the Whitewater Canal Association. These properties were acquired by the Association from individual owners in order to consolidate a section some 15 miles long, as indicated above.

In addition to real estate, the remains of abandoned locks, a Feeder Dam, an Aqueduct (in poor condition), and a mill of the vintage of 1900 were accepted by the State to become Whitewater Canal State Memorial.

Among the structures deeded to the State was the Metamora Roller Mill in the little town of Metamora. Two mills preceeded it at Lock No. 25. The present mill is 2 story brick, the remains of an earlier one of 3 stories. Fires finally caused its last owners to reduce it to 2 stories. When the State took title to this mill it was repaired but not restored to its prior activity.

One of the Locks, No. 24, called Millville Lock, was restored to operating condition in 1953. It has been kept in repair and operation since that date, being used occasionally to give canal boat riders the thrill and experience of "passing through" a mid 19th Century Canal lock.

In 1949 the State reconstructed the large covered wooden Aqueduct over Duck Creek in Metamora. The original aqueduct was an open trough, however, it washed away in a flood in 1847. Subsequently it was rebuilt and tradition recounts that the builder ingeniously acquired a covered bridge in its early stages of construction and erected it to replace the open trough. At the time of its acquisition by the State, the 1847 Aqueduct had deteriorated to the point where it could not be restored. Only complete reconstruction was the answer, however, the original Burr arches of tulip tree lumber (called yellow poplar in Indiana) were salvaged and re-employed. One relic of the past is a corner post of the old Aqueduct showing grooves cut by tow lines as they were snubbed along by tandem teams of horses or mules. They are a tangible reminder of days gone by.

Work is underway to restore grist mill operations at the Metamora Roller Mill. Antique milling equipment has been acquired and is being set up to produce corn and wheat products.

In 1964, a gasoline engine (powered) canal boat with turbojet propulsion was constructed and launched. Except for one summer when the Feeder Dam washed out, the "Valley Belle" has provided thousands with a short excursion on about a half-mile of the old waterway.

**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian;       16th Century       18th Century       20th Century  
 15th Century       17th Century       19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric         | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                   | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture         | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                 | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture        | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian       | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                   | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications      | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation        |   |  | _____  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Whitewater Valley was the gateway to the interior. The pioneers of the late 18th and early 19th Centuries floated down the Ohio River or came overland from eastern states to open the territory north of the River. They were attracted to the area by the timber and fertile valleys. Water power sites were another prime attraction for the opening of the area to settlers.

The Whitewater Valley in the pioneer period was the most densely settled area in Indiana, and it furnished important political leadership including 4 Governors and 3 U.S. Senators.

To start the Whitewater Canal project, a meeting was held in Harrison (Ind.) in 1823. The U.S. Engineers began their survey in 1824, and construction was begun at Brookville, September 13, 1836. The Canal was completed between Brookville and Lawrenceburg in 1839; to Laurel in 1843; to Connersville in 1845; and to Cambridge City in 1846.

The cost of the Canal from Hagerstown through Cambridge City, Connersville, Laurel, Metamora, Brookville, Harrison, Elizabethtown, Ohio, to Lawrenceburg, Indiana was \$1,164,665. The total distance was 76 miles and the average cost was \$15,000 per mile.

Since the Lawrenceburg branch of the Canal had to be located in Ohio for a distance of 7 miles to get around some high ground in Indiana, it became an interstate project.

The Cincinnati branch of the Whitewater Canal was 25 miles in length measured from the state line in Harrison. It cost between \$800,000 and \$900,000 or an average of \$35,000 per mile.

After completion of the Canal it was employed (1) to transport the products of the region to markets on the Ohio River. But all did not run smoothly. Floods and repair costs were more than the promoters could compete with. The State of Indiana, which backed the project with funds from the Internal Improvement Act of 1836, finally acknowledged defeat, and the litigation which followed eventually ended the Whitewater Canal Company for transportation.

The Canals of Indiana, including the Whitewater, had their place in the development of this State. They failed as a means of transportation because the railroads could go to the business while the canal system had to attempt to bring the business to it. Canal traffic was slow and the railroad traffic was fast, and business is always in a hurry.

The Canal was one of the principal projects in the State-financed system of Internal Improvements of 1836.

Continued on Form 10-300a

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

1. Garman, Harry O., Whitewater Canal, Cambridge City to Ohio River; Indpls. 1944
2. Marlow, William A., Indianapolis Times, "Saga of Indiana", 1946
3. Indiana State Library, Archives, Clippings
4. Franklin County, Indiana, Atlas, 1882
5. Bock, Eugene; Research Paper, "List of Locks and Dams"
6. Reifel, August J., History of Franklin County, Indiana 1915

UTM  
 SW 1/4 655-240/43665-360  
 NW 1/4 655-220/4372100  
 NE 1/4 670-470/4372500  
 SE 1/4 670-580/4365970

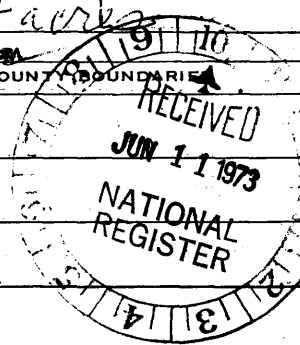
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	39 ° 29 ' 14 "	85 ° 11 ' 35 "				
NE	39 ° 29 ' 14 "	85 ° 01 ' 04 "				
SE	39 ° 25 ' 41 "	85 ° 01 ' 04 "				
SW	39 ° 25 ' 41 "	85 ° 11 ' 35 "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 234.04 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS  
 CD

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Robert D. Starrett, Administrative Officer, Division of Museums & Memorials**

ORGANIZATION: **Indiana Department of Natural Resources**      DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
**State of Indiana**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**202 North Alabama Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Indianapolis**      STATE: **Indiana**      CODE: **18**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION      NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>    State <input type="checkbox"/>    Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name: <u>Joseph D. Cloud</u>                  Joseph D. Cloud, Director</p> <p>Title: <u>Department of Natural Resources</u></p> <p>Date: <u>6/5/73</u></p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p><u>Ernest A. Connolly</u>                  Director, Office of National Historic Preservation                  Professional Services</p> <p>Date: <u>JUN 13 1973</u></p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p><u>Wm. D. Smith</u>                  Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date: <u>6 12 73</u></p>
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(Number all entries)

8. SIGNIFICANCE - Continued

Probably one of the more significant influences of the Whitewater Canal (and others) was its effect on the financial structure of the State of Indiana. The Whitewater had the backing of the State, and when it went bankrupt, the State insolvency followed. As a consequence, the General Assembly drafted a new Constitution (1851) in which it forbade bonded indebtedness except for certain emergencies. To this day the State of Indiana proceeds on a pay-as-you-go basis, rather unique among the 50 states.

