

Collection #
M 0758,
OM 0392

WABASH AND ERIE CANAL COMPANY RECORDS, 1833–1877 (BULK 1833–1862)

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Manuscripts and Archives Department
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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	8 manuscript boxes, 1 oversize folder
COLLECTION DATES:	1833–1877
PROVENANCE:	Linda D. Goetze, 157 South, 100 East, Providence, UT 84322
RESTRICTIONS:	

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ACCESSION NUMBER: 2000.0237, 2000.0238

NOTES:

HISTORICAL SKETCH

In March 1827, Congress provided a land grant to the state of Indiana to provide the means to build the Wabash and Erie Canal. Work began at Fort Wayne in 1832 and by 1835 was completed to Largo, Indiana. The original plan was to go as far as Lafayette and then terminate. In 1836 pressure from area businessmen, including Calvin Fletcher, led to the passing of the Mammoth Internal Improvements Act, this extended the Wabash and Erie Canal to Terre Haute. Construction reached Logansport in 1838, Lafayette in 1841, and Terre Haute in 1849. Segments also extended eastward towards Ohio, and the canal opened in Toledo in 1843. The final steps connected the Terre Haute section with the twenty-mile stretch of canal leading from Evansville (the Evansville section had been completed by 1839). This connection to Evansville was completed by 1853 by way of the abandoned Crosscut canal works and the old proposed Central Canal Route. The full route of the Wabash and Erie Canal measured 468 miles long, making it the second longest canal in the world.

Economically, the canal was not a success. The Panic of 1837 caused a depression in 1839 that led to workers' strikes and statewide debt. Expensive canal projects began to slow or die and public sentiment began to turn away from them. In 1846 Charles Butler, representing the canal bondholders, proposed that the state turn responsibility of the canal over to the bondholders in exchange for bondholders assuming half the debt and the land granted for construction. Butler also proposed that the state issue new bonds at 4 percent yearly interest for the other half of the debt, with an option for the state to redeem the certificates at its discretion. This ended state control of the canal and put the Wabash and Erie Canal in the hands of private trustees by 1847.

The most successful years for the canal were between 1847–1856. Its peak year was 1852 when tolls reached \$193,400. Eventually, cheaper, faster, and more convenient trains made the canal obsolete. Portions south of Terre Haute were closed by 1860; the decline continued until 1876 when the canal was officially auctioned off by the trustees and closed.

Sources:

Schmidt, Carolyn I. *Wabash & Erie Canal: Canal Society of Indiana, March 27–29, 1998. Vincennes, IN: The Final Link.* Fort Wayne, IN: Canal Society of Indiana, 1998.

Schmidt, Robert & Carolyn. Canal Society of Indiana (website). www.indcanal.org

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection contains: work certificates for construction and repairs, homesteader's affidavits, a deed of land sale, bank checks from the State Bank of Indiana, three ledger pages, deposit receipts of Wabash & Erie Canal Co., three

handwritten receipts of goods, Treasurer's Office certificates, and a typed transcript of a journal of the surveyors for the Wabash and Erie Canal.

Series 1, 2, and 3 contain work certificates for both construction and repairs of the Wabash and Erie Canal. The work certificates range between 1833–1861; most are from 1833–39 and 1848–56. Most of these are construction work certificates (**series 1** contains construction work certificates from 1833–39 and **series 2** contains certificates from 1848–56.). Repair work certificates begin in 1849 and continue until 1861 (**series 3**). The series are organized by certificate numbers, which are roughly chronological. However, several times the numbers branch into different numerical groups, to designate the start of a new year, the start of a new task, or different commissioners/engineers, etc. This causes some dates to overlap from group to group.

Series 4 contains bank deposits from agents for the Wabash & Erie Canal, primarily from 1847 and 1848. However, there are some scattered bank deposits from 1832–44 as well. Over 220 bank checks from 1843–49 (all but two from 1848–49) are in this series. The deposits and checks are arranged chronologically. Three handwritten receipts for the purchase of goods from 1848, three ledger pages (in an oversize folder), and two certificates from the Treasurer's Office (1843) are also included.

Series 5 contains over sixty homesteader's affidavits from 1847 and 1848 (there are also two from 1875 and 1877), a typescript copy (n.d.) of a journal from the engineer/surveyors of the Wabash and Erie Canal from 1836, and two certificates from the Board of Commissioners from 1833.

SERIES CONTENTS

Series 1: Construction work certificates, 1833–39

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Construction work certificates no. 1–50 (June 2–12, 1833), Group A	Box 1, Folder 1
Construction work certificates no. 52–99 (June 12–July 20, 1833), Group A	Box 1, Folder 2
Construction work certificates no. 100–150 (July 20–Sept. 30, 1833) Group A	Box 1, Folder 3
Construction work certificates no. 151–199 (Sept. 30–Oct. 29, 1833) Group A	Box 1, Folder 4
Construction work certificates no. 200–250 (Oct. 29–Nov. 23, 1833) Group A	Box 1, Folder 5
Construction work certificates no. 251–299 (Nov. 23, 1833–Feb. 6, 1834), Group A	Box 1, Folder 6
Construction work certificates no. 300–350 (Feb. 6–Apr. 2, 1834) Group A	Box 1, Folder 7
Construction work certificates no. 302–399 (Apr. 2–June 12, 1834) Group A	Box 1, Folder 8
Construction work certificates no. 400–451 (June 12–July 18, 1834) Group A	Box 2, Folder 9

Construction work certificates no. 1–50 (June 12–Aug. 18, 1834) Group B	Box 2, Folder 10
Construction work certificates no.51–99 (Aug. 18–22, 1834) Group B	Box 2, Folder 11
Construction work certificates no. 100–150 (Aug. 22–Sept. 27, 1834) Group B	Box 2, Folder 12
Construction work certificates no.151–199 (Sept. 27–Nov. 3, 1834) Group B	Box 2, Folder 13
Construction work certificates no. 200–299 (Nov. 3–26, 1834) Group B	Box 2, Folder 14
Construction work certificates no. 300–359 (Nov. 26–29, 1834) Group B	Box 2, Folder 15
Construction work certificates no. 331–381 (July 9–16, 1836) Group C	Box 2, Folder 16
Construction work certificates no. 404–499 (July 25–Sept. 10, 1836) Group C	Box 2, Folder 17
Construction work certificates no. 500–550 (Sept. 10–Oct. 15, 1836) Group C	Box 3, Folder 18
Construction work certificates no. 551–599 (Oct. 15–Nov. 13, 1836) Group C	Box 3, Folder 19
Construction work certificates no. 600–647 (Nov. 25–30, 1836) Group C	Box 3, Folder 20
Construction work certificates no. 1–31 (Oct 29–Dec. 31, 1836) Group D (engineer, Davis–low numbered sections)	Box 3, Folder 21
Construction work certificates no. 1–23 (Oct. 29–Dec. 31, 1836) Group D (engineer, Davis–high numbered sections)	Box 3, Folder 22
Construction work certificates unnumbered (18 items) (Dec. 31, 1836) Group E (engineer Wilson)	Box 3, Folder 23
Construction work certificates no. 454–489 (Jan. 11–Feb. 16, 1839) Group F (engineer, Jennison #1)	Box 3, Folder 24
Construction work certificates no. 294–325 (Feb. 20, 1839) Group G (engineer, Fisher #1)	Box 3, Folder 25
Construction work certificates no. 276–289 (Feb. 9–25, 1839) Group H (engineer, Jennison #2)	Box 3, Folder26
Construction work certificates no. 96 & 684–699 (Feb. 28, 1839) Group I (engineer, Morris)	Box 3, Folder27

Construction work certificates no. 1–36 (Apr. 10–20, 1839) Group J (engineer Fisher #2)	Box 3, Folder 28
Construction work certificates no. 1–100 (Apr. 27–June 1, 1839) Group K (engineer, Fisher #3)	Box 3, Folder 29
Construction work certificates no. 101–152 (June 9–Aug 10, 1839) Group K (engineer, Fisher #3)	Box 3, Folder 30
Construction work certificates no. 75–82 (July 16–18, 1839) Group L (engineer, Fisher #4)	Box 3, Folder 31
Construction work certificates no. 87–158 (Oct.1–25, 1839) Group M (engineer, Fisher #5)	Box 3, Folder 32
Single construction work certificates that are not part of larger group (1835, 1836 and 1839;15 items)	Box 3, Folder 33

Series 2: Construction work certificates, 1848–56

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Construction work certificates no. 54–99 (July 1, 1848) Group A	Box 4, Folder 1
Construction work certificates no. 100–199 (July 1–June 8, 1848) Group A	Box 4, Folder 2
Construction work certificates no. 200–299 (June 8–Aug. 24, 1848) Group A	Box 4, Folder 3
Construction work certificates no. 300–399 (Aug. 24–Nov. 10, 1848) Group A	Box 4, Folder 4
Construction work certificates no. 400–499 (Nov. 10,1848–Jan. 20, 1849) Group A	Box 4, Folder 5
Construction work certificates no. 501–599 (Jan. 20–May 15, 1849) Group A	Box 4, Folder 6
Construction work certificates no. 600–699 (May 15–June 18, 1849) Group A	Box 4, Folder 7
Construction work certificates no. 700–799 (July 9–Sept. 20, 1849) Group A	Box 4, Folder 8
Construction work certificates no. 800–899 (Sept. 20–Oct. 29, 1849) Group A	Box 4, Folder 9
Construction work certificates no. 901–999 (Nov. 12–Dec. 15, 1849) Group A	Box 5, Folder 10
Construction work certificates no. 1000–1099 (Dec. 15, 1848–Jan. 1850) Group A	Box 5, Folder 11

Construction work certificates no. 1100–1199 (Jan. 31–Apr. 10, 1850) Group A	Box 5, Folder 12
Construction work certificates no. 1200–1299 (Apr. 10–June 15, 1850) Group A	Box 5, Folder 13
Construction work certificates no. 1300–1399 (June 15–Sept. 6, 1850) Group A	Box 5, Folder 14
Construction work certificates no. 1400–1499 (Sept. 9–Dec. 20, 1850) Group A	Box 5, Folder 15
Construction work certificates no. 1500–1599 (Dec. 20, 1850–Feb. 20, 1851) Group A	Box 5, Folder 16
Construction work certificates no. 1600–1699 (Feb. 20–June 20, 1851) Group A	Box 5, Folder 17
Construction work certificates no. 1700–1799 (June 20–Dec. 24, 1851) Group A	Box 5, Folder 18
Construction work certificates no. 1800–1899 (Dec. 24, 1851–Mar. 21, 1853) Group A	Box 5, Folder 19
Construction work certificates no. 1900–1999 (Mar. 22, 1853–July 12, 1856) Group A	Box 5, Folder 20
Construction work certificates no. 2000–2033 (July 12–Apr. 9, 1856) Group A	Box 5, Folder 21
Construction work certificates no. 1–15 (Jan. 1, 1851–July 28, 1854) Group B	Box 5, Folder 22
Additional work certificates –unnumbered or not part of a group (1848 and up; 7 items)	Box 5, Folder 23

Series 3: Repair work certificates, 1849–61

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Repair work certificates no. 1–100 (Aug. 23, 1849–Aug. 25, 1851) Group A	Box 6, Folder 1
Repair work certificates no. 101–200 (Sept. 5, 1851–July 7, 1853) Group A	Box 6, Folder 2
Repair work certificates no. 201–288 (July 17, 1853–June 25, 1855) Group A	Box 6, Folder 3
Repair work certificates no. 311–392 (Apr. 26, 1856–July 25, 1859) Group A	Box 6, Folder 4
Repair work certificates no. 1 and 2 (1854; not part of larger group) Group B	Box 6, Folder 5

Repair work certificates no. 3–92 (June 2–Mar. 21, 1855) Group C	Box 6, Folder 6
Repair work certificates no.10–67 (Sept. 17, 1859–Aug. 7, 1861) Group D	Box 6, Folder 7
Additional repair work certificates including duplicates, unnumbered, and stubs (6 items)	Box 6, Folder 8

Series 4: Banking, 1833–49

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Treasurer’s office certificates (2 items) 1843	Box 7, Folder 1
Bank checks no. 1, 95, 96 and 636–895 (not complete) (1843, 1847 and Mar. 6–Aug. 23, 1848)	Box 7, Folder 2
Bank checks no. 1035–1182 (not complete) (Dec. 7, 1848–Jan. 13, 1849)	Box 7, Folder 3
Bank checks no. 1214–1458 (not complete) (Jan. 16–May 10, 1849)	Box 7, Folder 4
Bank deposits of agent for Wabash & Erie Canal (July 30, 1833–Mar. 2, 1844)	Box 7, Folder 5
Bank deposits of agent for Wabash & Erie Canal (June 6–Dec. 31, 1847)	Box 7, Folder 6
Bank deposits of agent for Wabash & Erie Canal (Jan. 3–Nov. 30, 1848)	Box 7, Folder 7
3 handwritten receipts of goods (1848)	Box 7, Folder 8
3 ledger pages	OM 0392, Folder 1

Series 5: Miscellaneous

CONTENTS	CONTAINER
Indiana. General Assembly. House of Representatives. Committee to Investigate the Transactions of the Different Agents of the State. <i>Report of the Investigating Committee, appointed by the House of Representatives to investigate the transactions of the different agents of the State.</i> Indianapolis : Dowling and Cole, State Printers, 1841. (another copy is in Printed Collections: KFI422 .A2 1842)	Box 8, Folder 1
Deed of land Sale (1862)	Box 8, Folder 2
Board of Commissioner’s certificates (1833)	Box 8, Folder 3

15-page typescript copy (n.d.) of a journal for the surveyors of the Wabash and Erie Canal (original date, 1836)

Box 8, Folder 4

Homesteader's affidavits (May 10, 1842–July 31, 1848) (also one from 1875 and one from 1877); bulk–July of 1848

Box 8, Folder 5

Miscellaneous Wabash and Erie Canal land transaction information: includes patent for land certificate, Canal land Office correspondence, and 2 lists of names (4 items)

Box 8, Folder 6

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://157.91.92.2/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its call number, (in this case, M 0758).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.