

Collection #
SC2822

INDIANA CANAL PROJECT DOCUMENTS, 1829–1853

[Collection Information](#)

[Historical / Biographical Sketch](#)

[Scope and Content Note](#)

[Contents](#)

[Cataloging Information](#)

Processed by

Brent Abercrombie
July 2007

Manuscript and Visual Collections Department
William Henry Smith Memorial Library
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

www.indianahistory.org

COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF
COLLECTION: 1 folder

COLLECTION
DATES: 1829–1853

PROVENANCE: Larry LaFoe, Indianapolis, IN, June 28, 2006

RESTRICTIONS: None

COPYRIGHT:

REPRODUCTION RIGHTS: Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained from the Indiana Historical Society.

ALTERNATE FORMATS:

RELATED HOLDINGS: John Law Letters, 1835–1842, SC2809

ACCESSION NUMBER: 2006.0315

NOTES:

HISTORICAL / BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The Central Canal waterway project was a comprehensive system of canals, roads, and railroads designed to improve transportation throughout the Midwest, and specifically the state of Indiana during the 1830s. The goal of the canal project was to connect the upper portions of the Wabash and Erie Canals with the southwestern river town of Evansville. There was also a Whitewater Canal extension near Muncie, the White River waterway in Indianapolis, as well as a “Cross Cut” canal running east from Terre Haute to Worthington. Working along with the canals were a Madison railroad, the Michigan road that ran north and south, and the National Road that went east and west. Jesse Lynch Williams (1807–1886) was the chief engineer in charge of the Indiana canal project. The project was designed to improve transportation to the center of the state. Construction began in 1836 on the 10 million dollar project, but by the end of the decade fraud, ineptitude, and international financial panic led to the defaulting of the loan causing construction to be stopped. The project had failed miserably to provide water transportation. Today only a fragment of the canal is still in use from Broad Ripple to downtown Indianapolis.

John Tipton was born August 14, 1786. His father, Joshua Tipton, died when John was 7 when he was killed by Cherokee Indians. When Tipton was 21, he moved with his mother Jeanette and family to Indiana. His mother died in 1827. John Tipton was known as a great Indian fighter of his day. He served under Governor William Henry Harrison during the Battle of Tippecanoe, and was involved in several more conflicts with Native Americans during this time, rising through the ranks to become brigadier general. When Indiana became a state in 1816, Tipton was twice elected as sheriff of Harrison County. He held that post until 1819, when he was elected a Representative to the State Legislature. He served two terms. Tipton was also appointed to the committee in charge of locating a new capital for the state. In 1831, Tipton was elected and served a full term as Senator. After serving his term as Senator, Tipton retired from politics and returned home to Indiana. Tipton was married twice and had five children (two with his first wife and three with his second wife). John Tipton died on April 4, 1839 at the age of 52. Five years after his death, a town and county were named Tipton in his honor.

Sources:

Larson, John Lauritz. “Central Canal.” *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*. Indiana University Press. 1994. p. 395.

Pershing, M.W. *Life of General John Tipton and Early Indiana History*. Tipton Literary and Suffrage Club. Indiana Historical Society. PamE340.T57P47 1908.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection contains four documents that concern the Indiana canal project. They are in chronological order.

There are three signed letters. First is a letter signed by Joseph [Holmen?] from Ft. Wayne, Indiana to General John Tipton, in Logansport, Indiana on February 5, 1829. In it he discusses the canal project and the Jackson administration. Next is a letter from M. Brown, Jr. of Lafayette, to Henry Huntington dated March 4, 1844 concerning the late opening of the canal and the canal extension to Cincinnati. The final letter was written by Jesse Lynch (J.L.) Williams, of Ft. Wayne, to S. Dodge dated January 7, 1850. In it he makes inquiries about the expenses for repair and construction of bridges for the Wabash and Erie Canal.

The collection also contains a document issued by the Board of Trustees of the Wabash and Erie Canal to Michael Bridgeman, concerning 40 acres of land west of Tippecanoe, dated 1 March 1853.

CONTENTS

CONTENTS

Indiana Canal and Documents, 1829, 1844, 1850,
1853

CONTAINER

Folder 1

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://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, SC2822).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.