

The Logansport and Burlington Turnpike, and Indiana's Toll Road War

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ABSTRACT: On April 3, 1900, a mob of masked men blew up a toll house along the Logansport and Burlington Turnpike in Carroll County, Indiana. The story made news across the state and the nation. Bruce Monroe examines how a fourteen-mile “local road” turned into “a weapon in the commercial rivalry” between two towns in western Indiana. Across the Midwest in the late nineteenth century, toll roads—many built by counties to allow farmers better access to local markets—gave way to free gravel roads, railroads, and, by the turn of the century, interurban lines. The competing interests of county commissioners, business owners, developers, farmers, and taxpayers created disputes that played out in local newspapers and sometimes issued in violence.

KEYWORDS: Michigan Road, history of transportation, interurbans

Today, Indiana Route 29 in Carroll County, from just south of Wheeling north to the Cass County line, is a peaceful two-lane road passing farms and going through the communities of Wheeling and Deer Creek.¹ In 1900, the road was the Logansport and Burlington Turnpike. This article

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¹ The Deer Creek community has also been known as West Sonora and as Henpeck. Juanita Hunter, *Carroll County and the Michigan Road* (Logansport, Ind., 1993), 9–13.

examines the history of the turnpike and how it became a weapon in the commercial rivalry between Delphi and Logansport for the trade of farmers in eastern Carroll County. The rivalry produced a “toll road war”—with masked night riders, burned bridges, and dynamited toll houses—and contributed to the failure of a traction company trying to build an inter-urban line between Logansport and Indianapolis.

In 1827, Congress authorized the Indiana General Assembly to create a road from the Ohio River to Lake Michigan, by way of Indianapolis.² The 1818 Treaty of St. Mary’s had granted the Miami Indians a reserve that included all of present-day Howard County, the northern two-thirds of Tipton County, and parts of Cass, Clinton, Wabash, Grant, Miami, and Madison Counties.³ To avoid the Reserve, the Michigan Road went northwest from Indianapolis to a point one mile west of the southwest corner of the Reserve. There the road turned straight north for twenty-nine-and-one-half miles, through Clinton and Carroll Counties, paralleling the Reserve’s western boundary. At the Cass County line, the road turned slightly northeast for about four miles to Logansport.

Because the western boundary of the Reserve became the eastern boundary of Carroll County, the Michigan Road ran straight north for eighteen miles in Carroll County, one mile west of the county line. At its closest, the road ran more than fifteen miles east of the county seat of Delphi.⁴ The Michigan Road continued north to Logansport, the county seat of neighboring Cass County. When the state turned responsibility for the Michigan Road over to the counties in 1837, the section in Carroll County became a county road.⁵

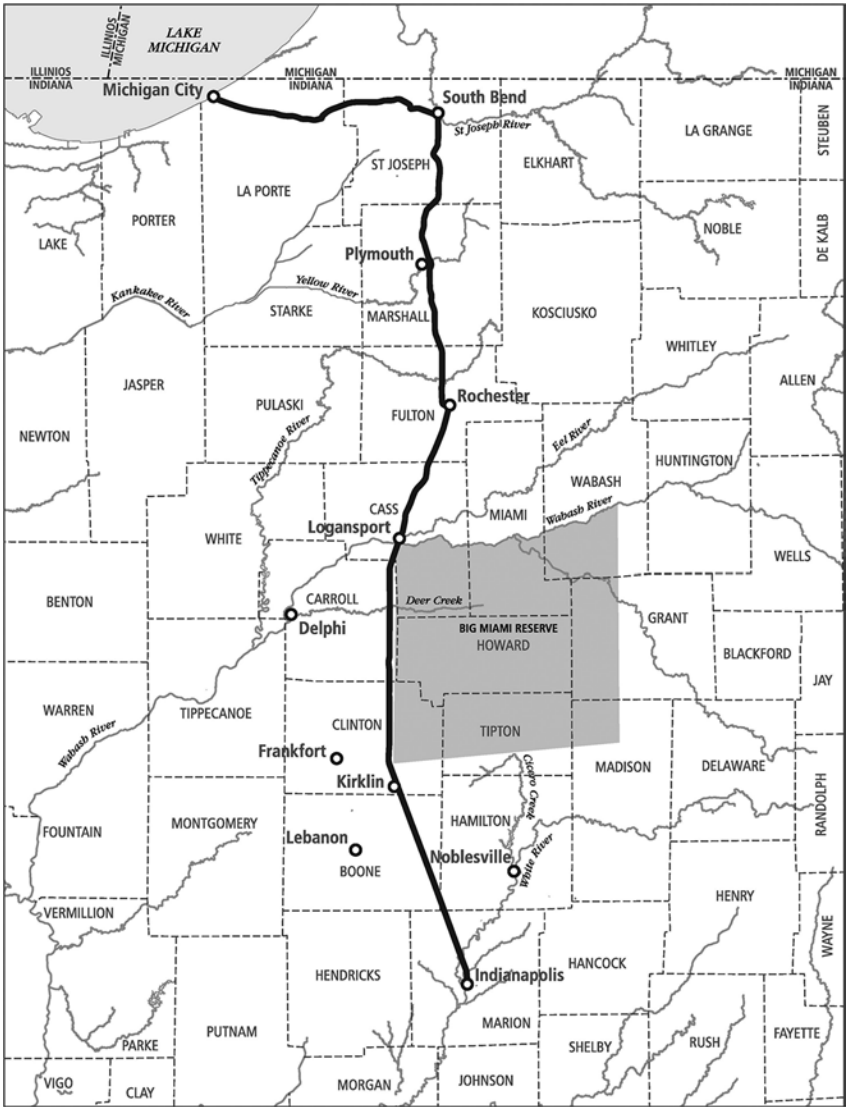
In 1847, when a plank road was constructed on the Michigan Road south of Logansport, the *Delphi Weekly Times* bemoaned that “the

² For the history of the Michigan Road see Geneal Prather, “Struggle for the Michigan Road,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 39 (March 1943), 1–24; Prather, “Construction of the Michigan Road,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 40 (September 1944), 243–79; Juanita Hunter, “The Indians and the Michigan Road,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 83 (September 1987), 244–66; Hunter, *Logansport and the Michigan Road* (Logansport, Ind., 1990); Hunter, *Carroll County and the Michigan Road*; Hunter, *Clinton County and Boone County and the Michigan Road* (Logansport, Ind., 1996); Ethyl L. Montgomery, “The Building of the Michigan Road,” master’s thesis, Purdue University, 1902.

³ Helene F. Heath, *The Great Miami Reserve* (Tipton, Ind., 2006).

⁴ Delphi’s site was selected in May 1828, before the Michigan Road had been surveyed. John C. Odell, *History of Carroll County, Indiana, Its People, Industries, and Institutions* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1916), 73–74.

⁵ Logan Esarey, *Internal Improvements in Early Indiana*, Indiana Historical Society Publications, vol. 5, no. 2 (Indianapolis, Ind., 1912), 59.



The Michigan Road ran from Indianapolis north to South Bend and then west to Michigan City. Through Clinton and Carroll Counties, the road was constructed with a westward bump-out to run along the edge of the Miami Reserve.

Map courtesy of the author

Michigan road, we believe, is now planked from Logansport to the vicinity of Burlington; the consequence is, when the roads are the *least* muddy, the farmers along the East side of the county seek that market instead of this. Delphi is losing a considerable share of her natural trade. The only remedy to the evil is to complete a road to Burlington." The Delphi paper considered the farmers of Carroll County to be Delphi's "natural trade," even though many of them were closer to Logansport. After about five years, the planks began to decay. The owners of the road kept it in fair condition until 1862, when they abandoned it.⁶

DEVELOPMENT OF THE TURNPIKE

Before railroads were built throughout the state, the Michigan Road was heavily used by travelers going to and from Indianapolis. After the arrival of the railroads, long-distance travel and transportation essentially disappeared from the road.⁷ The first railroad reached Logansport in 1855, and by 1860 Indiana was crisscrossed by more than 2,100 miles of track.⁸ Even though the railroads served the major population centers, farmers continued to need local "farm-to-market" roads so that they could come to town to shop and transport their crops to market. Farmers transported their wheat, a widely grown cash crop, by wagon to a local elevator located on a rail line, where it was sorted by grade, loaded into freight cars, and shipped.

In 1863, the poor condition of the Michigan Road led to a series of public meetings. Logansport residents were concerned that, unless the road was improved, their city would lose "the long trains of wagons . . . which has added so much to the wealth and prosperity of our city" to neighboring cities. On March 10, 1866, interested citizens of Cass and Carroll Counties were invited to a meeting to organize construction of a gravel road from Logansport to Burlington. After additional meetings, on May 30, 1867, a group of Logansport businessmen organized the Logansport

⁶ "Michigan Road Company Directors," *Logansport Democratic Pharos*, September 22, 1847; "Michigan Road," *Logansport Telegraph*, November 13, 1847; "Plank Road to Burlington," *Delphi Weekly Times*, December 10, 1852; "Michigan Road Meeting," *Logansport Democratic Pharos*, July 15, 1863.

⁷ Logan Esarey, *A History of Indiana* (New York, 1922), 142–43; Leon M. Gordon II, "Effects of the Michigan Road on Northern Indiana, 1830–1860," *Indiana Magazine of History* 46 (1950), 377–402; Howard H. Peckham, *Indiana: A Bicentennial History* (New York, 1978), 69.

⁸ Thomas B. Helm, ed., *History of Cass County, Indiana* (Chicago, 1886), 285; William J. Watt, *The Pennsylvania Railroad in Indiana* (Bloomington, Ind., 1999), 30; Peckham, *Indiana*, 63; Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era 1850–1880* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1965), 322–49.

Logansport & Burlington Turnpike Road Company.

THE undersigned invite their fellow citizens of Cass and Carroll counties who feel an interest in the construction of a Turnpike, McAdamised or gravel road, on the road of the old Plank Road from Logansport to Burlington, to meet at the Court House in Logansport, on

Saturday, March 10th, 1866,
at 2 o'clock P. M., for the purpose of organizing a Company for the construction of said road.

All who feel any interest in the construction of said road are invited to be present and take a part in the organizing of said Company. No doubt of the success of the enterprise need be indulged in provided the friends of, and those deeply interested in the work come forward in the proper spirit. No such word as failure, or that it cannot be done should be indulged in. Let all come up to the work with a hearty good will and it will be readily accomplished.

TANGUY & BARNHEISEL.
MERRIAM & RICE.
B. S. DUNKIN,
D. D. DYKEMAN,
JOHN BROWN,
J. CULBERTSON,
GEORGE BEVAN,
E. H. BORGES,
J. W. McCAUGHEY,
J. J. PUTERBAUGH,
ISRAEL JOHNSON,
T. H. WILSON,
C. VIGGS,
JOHN LANDES,
W. H. MURPHY,
RICHARD DUNKIN,
JAMES CHENEY,
G. N. FITCH,
A. J. MERDOCK.

Public notice from the *Logansport Weekly Journal*, March 3, 1866. A group of Logansport businessmen formed the Logansport & Burlington Turnpike Road Company to finance a toll road to replace the failing plank road and allow farmers to bring their products to market more efficiently.

and Burlington Turnpike Company.⁹ The company was a product of the local business community and local capital. All of the officers and thirty of the thirty-one investors were Logansport residents and businessmen.¹⁰ The other investor was a Carroll County farmer whose farm was adjacent to the proposed road.

Despite its name, the Logansport and Burlington Turnpike ended about six miles north of Burlington.¹¹ The turnpike ran south from Logansport for fourteen miles to about one mile south of Wheeling, at or near the present-day intersection of Indiana Route 29 and westbound Indiana Route 18. In October 1866, before the Turnpike Company was organized, the Logansport City Council had offered \$500 for each mile of turnpike road completed on certain roads running from the city. One ran south along the Michigan Road for fourteen miles, ten of which were in Carroll County. The willingness of the Logansport City Council to subsidize road building in a neighboring county reveals the importance that the council attached to capturing the trade of eastern Carroll County farmers. In April 1872, the Turnpike Company notified the Indiana Secretary of State that the fourteen miles had been completed. By 1877, the *Logansport Daily Journal* hailed the turnpike as a success, commenting that “the best and greatest improvement in this county during the past seven or eight years, has been on the lie of the Logansport & Burlington turnpike.”¹²

The Logansport and Burlington Turnpike was similar to many others in the state.¹³ It was a relatively short, local road, organized by local businessmen and funded by local capital, to aid local commerce. Logansport

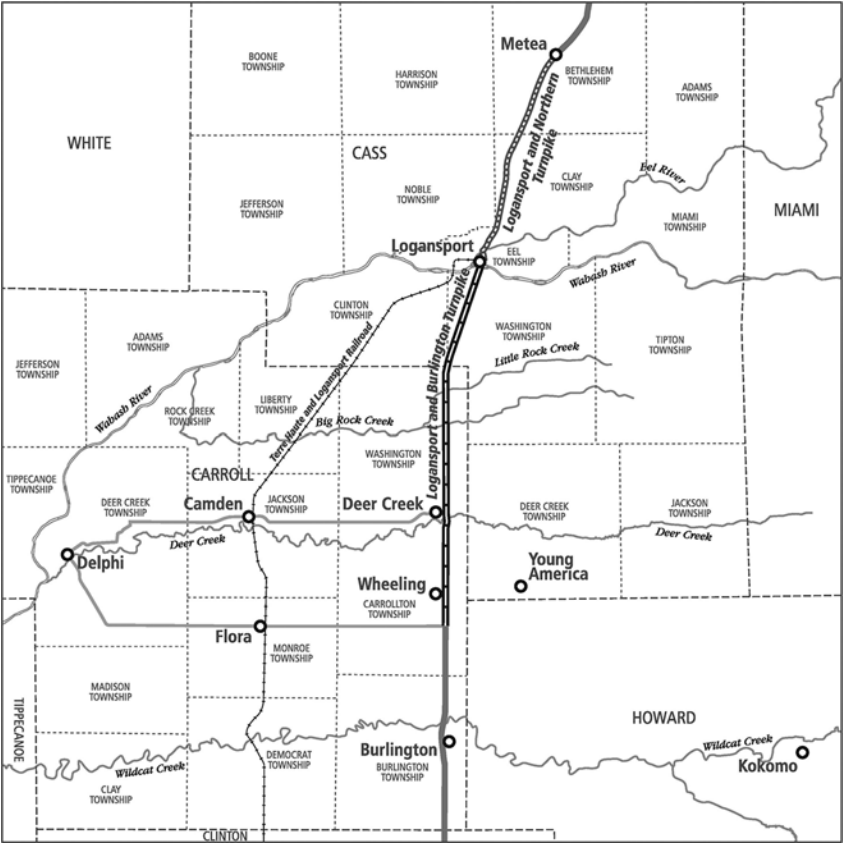
⁹ “Turnpike Road Meeting,” *Logansport Democratic Pharos*, July 29, 1863; “Logansport and Its Needs,” *Logansport Journal*, August 26, 1865; “Logansport & Burlington Turnpike Road Company,” *Logansport Weekly Journal*, March 3, 1866; “Logansport & Burlington Turnpike,” *Logansport Democratic Pharos*, June 5, 1867.

¹⁰ “History of the ‘Rings,’” *Logansport Weekly Journal*, April 3, 1869.

¹¹ “Burlington Pike,” *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, April 7, 1900; “An Active Mob,” *Logansport Journal*, April 6, 1900.

¹² “Council Proceedings,” *Logansport Weekly Journal*, October 12, 1867; “The County,” *Logansport Weekly Journal*, April 27, 1872; “Figure on It,” *Logansport Daily Journal*, November 27, 1877. It is notable that the *Journal* considered the turnpike to be “the best and greatest improvement in this [Cass] county,” even though more than 70 percent of the turnpike was in Carroll County.

¹³ Ray Featherstone, “Horse and Rider One Cent per Mile: Indiana’s Private Toll Roads,” *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History*, 21 (2009), 51–55. By 1880, almost every Indiana county contained toll houses, with 1,458 in the state.



The fourteen-mile-long Logansport and Burlington Turnpike ran between the two towns, through both Carroll and Cass Counties.
Map courtesy of the author

eventually had eight toll roads radiating out in different directions.¹⁴ But the Logansport and Burlington Turnpike was different from the other seven—ten of its fourteen miles ran through a neighboring county.

Public attitudes toward funding roads gradually changed, and the General Assembly responded. Beginning in 1877, the legislature passed a series of laws that provided for the construction of free gravel roads and gave the county commissioners authority to construct such roads.¹⁵ Carroll County quickly constructed a number of roads, including one from the Michigan Road at the Deer Creek community to Delphi via Camden (corresponding approximately to modern Indiana Route 218) and another from the Michigan Road at the south end of the turnpike to Delphi via Flora (corresponding approximately to modern Indiana Route 18). The Michigan Road from the south end of the turnpike south to the Clinton County line was made a free gravel road.¹⁶ Farmers in eastern Carroll County, as well as those in southwestern Cass County, could travel to Delphi, Camden, and Flora on toll-free gravel roads. Both Flora and Camden were on the Terre Haute and Logansport Railroad, and farmers could now ship their wheat from either of these locations without taking the turnpike to Logansport.¹⁷ The *Delphi Times* announced that people in the eastern part of the county now had an opportunity to “patronize their own markets.”¹⁸

Logansport businessmen were well aware of the threat to their commerce posed by these free roads. In 1886, the Logansport *Pharos* reported that, to avoid paying road tolls, farmers from southwestern Cass County were shipping their wheat from Camden rather than Logansport and concluded that the toll road was an “obstacle to be removed” before Logansport

¹⁴ Thomas B. Helm, ed., *History of Cass County, Indiana* (Chicago, 1886), 283–84; “Toll Gates,” *Logansport Reporter*, November 9, 1891.

¹⁵ Logan Esarey, *History of Indiana from its Exploration to 1822* (Dayton, Ohio, 1922), 2:1045–46; Indiana Code Ann. §6855 *et seq.* (Burns, 1894).

¹⁶ “Courts will convene next week,” *Delphi Journal*, October 6, 1887; “Notice,” *Delphi Times*, September 26, 1884; “Bennett & Pierce,” *Delphi Times*, April 2, 1886; “The Michigan Gravel Road,” *Delphi Times*, July 30, 1886; “Doings in Two Courts,” *Delphi Times*, June 11, 1886; “Sale of Gravel Road Bonds,” *Delphi Times*, June 11, 1886.

¹⁷ R.T. Wallis, *The Pennsylvania Railroad at Bay* (Bloomington, Ind., 2001), 61–62, 159–60. Wheat could be shipped directly to the grain markets in Chicago from Camden or Flora. Delphi did not have a direct rail connection to Chicago until completion of the Indianapolis, Delphi, and Chicago (later Monon) in January 1882. Thomas B. Helm, ed., *History of Cass County, Indiana* (Chicago, 1886), 153–54.

¹⁸ “Camden and West Sonora Road,” *Delphi Times*, September 16, 1887.

could become a grain market of much importance.¹⁹ In only nine years, the turnpike, once hailed as the “best and greatest improvement in this county,” had become an obstacle “to be removed.”

PURCHASE OF THE CASS COUNTY SECTION OF THE TURNPIKE

In 1881, a new state law permitted a county to purchase its toll roads and convert them into free roads.²⁰ The law stipulated that when fifty landowners presented a petition to the county commissioners calling for purchase of the toll roads, the commissioners were to submit the question to the voters at any regular spring or fall election, or at a special election to be called if no regular election was near. If the vote was in the affirmative, three viewers (appraisers) were to be appointed to appraise the value of each road. The commissioners were to offer to buy each road at a price not to exceed the appraisal value; the owners could accept or reject the offer.

Cass County had about 53 miles of toll roads, including four miles of the turnpike immediately south of Logansport. At the general election in April 1886, voters defeated, by a margin of nearly two to one, a proposal to purchase the toll roads. Two years later, voters rejected a similar proposal, but the vote was closer, 48 percent for and 52 percent against. Eel Township, which included Logansport, had a majority of 1,720 for the proposal, but the rural townships registered a majority of 1,964 against it.²¹

Purchase of the toll roads was proposed again in 1892, but no regular election was near. A special election was scheduled for February, when travel over rural roads was difficult. The *Logansport Daily Pharos* predicted that the turnout would be smaller in the townships opposed to the purchase—ironically, because of bad roads. In Logansport, business was suspended until 9 a.m. the day of the election to “get out a full vote.”²²

The prediction was correct: voters cast 1,088 fewer votes than in the 1888 election, but the total vote in Eel Township barely decreased.²³ Eel Township residents again voted strongly in favor, giving free roads

¹⁹ “Bad on Logansport,” *Logansport Daily Pharos*, August 7, 1886.

²⁰ Indiana Code Ann. §6871 *et seq.* (Burns 1894).

²¹ “Free Pike Roads,” *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, March 14, 1888; *Logansport Daily Pharos*, April 8, 1886; “The Election,” *Logansport Journal*, April 3, 1888.

²² “Gravel Road Election,” *Logansport Pharos Tribune*, February 18, 1892; “This News is Fresh,” *Logansport Daily Reporter*, February 18, 1892.

²³ “The Official Count,” *Logansport Journal*, February 26, 1892; “Carried!” *Logansport Daily Journal*, February 21, 1892.

a majority of 1,713 votes, enough to overcome the vote from the rural townships, which had a majority of 1,018 against free roads.²⁴

The voting pattern in Cass County was typical of the pattern throughout Indiana. Voters in the county seats came out strongly in favor of free roads, which would make it easier for farmers to come into town to shop. Businessmen in smaller commercial centers opposed the purchase, fearing, correctly, that they would lose most of their business to merchants in the county seat.²⁵ Farmers believed, correctly or incorrectly, that free roads would increase their property taxes.²⁶

On April 29, 1892, Cass County purchased the four miles of the turnpike immediately south of Logansport for \$6,200, or about \$1,550 per mile. The directors offered to sell the entire road, including the portion in Carroll County, for \$15,000 (a little more than \$1,000 per mile), but the county commissioners failed to act upon the offer, apparently because they did not possess legal authority to purchase the portion of the road outside of their county.²⁷ After April 1892, anyone coming to Logansport over the Michigan Road from eastern Carroll County or southwestern Cass County still had to pay the toll on the Carroll County section before getting to the free section in Cass County. Some other counties purchased their toll roads using this procedure, but by 1895 many toll roads remained.²⁸

PURCHASE OF THE CARROLL COUNTY SECTION

In March 1895, the Indiana General Assembly amended the 1881 law to permit county commissioners to purchase toll roads without holding an election.²⁹ When the commissioners had been petitioned by one hundred county landowners, three disinterested viewers would be appointed to appraise the road. The commissioners appointed one viewer, the circuit

²⁴ "Battle for Freedom," *Logansport Pharos Tribune*, February 22, 1892.

²⁵ *Crawfordsville Star*, March 23, 1882, notes opposition to a toll road purchase by the businessmen of Waveland.

²⁶ "Against Free Roads," *Logansport Pharos Tribune*, March 29, 1888; "The Official Count," *Logansport Journal*, February 26, 1892; "Battle for Freedom," *Logansport Pharos Tribune*, February 22, 1892.

²⁷ "Four Roads Purchased," *Logansport Daily Journal*, May 1, 1892; "Buying the Roads," *Logansport Reporter*, April 30, 1892.

²⁸ These counties included Bartholomew, Decatur, and Randolph. "The New Era," *Greensburg New Era*, December 4, 1889; "Indiana Happenings," *Bluffton Chronicle*, December 19, 1889; "No Toll-gates After January 1, 1893," *Greensburg Standard*, December 30, 1892; "What Others Are Doing," *Logansport Journal*, May 3, 1892.

²⁹ Annotated Indiana Statutes §6959a *et seq.* (Burns 1901).

judge a second, and the owners of the toll road a third. The commissioners would then offer to purchase the road for not more than the appraised value, and, as before, the owners could accept or decline.

In September 1895, the Carroll County Commissioners received a petition requesting purchase of the Logansport and Burlington Turnpike. The southernmost mile of the turnpike had apparently been abandoned or turned over to Carroll County sometime before 1895, leaving nine miles, all in Carroll County. The southernmost toll gate was located at Wheeling. The *Logansport Daily Pharos* reported that the turnpike was owned by eighteen persons, all of whom were Cass County residents.³⁰

Carroll County had assessed the road at \$1,000 per mile for property tax purposes, but the viewers appointed by the commissioners and the county circuit judge fixed its value at \$485 per mile. The viewer appointed by the turnpike owners agreed with the assessed value and told the *Daily Pharos* that the property was well worth that sum, but businessmen from Flora, Camden, and Delphi—well west of the road—opposed the purchase, claiming that they would derive no benefit from the deal. The county was making a low offer that they knew the turnpike directors would not accept. The directors refused to sell for less than the assessed value, thus ending the matter.³¹

THE LOGANSPORT & INDIANAPOLIS TRACTION COMPANY

Meanwhile, toll roads were rapidly disappearing throughout Indiana.³² In September 1899, the *Fort Wayne Sentinel* reported that fewer than 200 miles of toll roads remained in the state.³³ From 1895 to 1899, there was no additional effort to make the Logansport and Burlington Turnpike a free road, but in early 1900 the situation changed rapidly. In May 1899, the

³⁰ "Commissioners Court Notes," *Delphi Journal*, September 11, 1895; "Want to Sell," *Logansport Daily Pharos*, September 12, 1895; "Burlington Pike," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, April 7, 1900.

³¹ "Proposition Is Declined," *Logansport Reporter*, September 28, 1900; "Appraisers Disagree," *Logansport Daily Pharos*, October 4, 1895; "Did Not Buy the Road," *Delphi Journal*, October 10, 1895.

³² Counties without toll roads included Fulton, Wayne, Shelby, Marion, Clinton, Delaware, Allen, and others. "Additional Local," *Logansport Reporter*, December 19, 1895; "The County Commissioners," *Rochester Weekly Republican*, December 12, 1895; "From Spooning to Jail," *Indianapolis Sun*, June 2, 1895; *Fort Wayne Weekly Sentinel*, July 16, 1895; "City Life," *Indianapolis Sun*, August 13, 1896; "The Toll Road War is Over," *Kokomo Daily Tribune*, April 26, 1897; "Toll-Gate War," *Indianapolis Sun*, April 26, 1897; "Current News in Old Hoosierdom," *Goshen Daily News*, April 4, 1898; "Allen County Free," *Fort Wayne News*, March 29, 1898.

³³ "Indiana's Roads," *Fort Wayne Sentinel*, September 20, 1899.

Logansport & Indianapolis Traction Company, organized by Indianapolis entrepreneur George J. Marott, proposed building an electric traction line (interurban) from Indianapolis to Logansport along the Michigan Road.³⁴ The Traction Company promised that construction would begin no later than September 1, 1899, and that the road would be completed to Wheeling within one year, and fully completed and in operation within two years.³⁵ Despite this promise, only nominal construction, sufficient to keep the company from losing its franchises, was carried out in 1899.³⁶

In late January 1900, Marott offered assurances that his company had secured the money to build the road. The construction contract would be closed, he said, as soon as it was determined over which line an entrance into Logansport would be made. Marott claimed that the company would prefer to come into Logansport over the Burlington Pike, but added that the owners of the turnpike were unwilling to dispose of their holdings at a reasonable price. The company was now considering coming into Logansport through Young America over the Rock Creek Pike, which would have moved the traction line several miles east, into Cass County. Burlington would, in this proposal, be the only Carroll County town on the line, and the county's farmers, who were anticipating access to an interurban within a year, would be left with the turnpike.

Marott's accusation was false, probably designed to transfer responsibility for his company's failure to begin construction to the Turnpike Company. When the Traction Company had received the Cass County franchise in May 1899, it had negotiated a purchase agreement, reported in the Logansport newspapers, with the Turnpike Company.³⁷ Had additional negotiations with the Turnpike Company been necessary, they would not have prevented the Traction Company from starting construction elsewhere on the line.

The story of Marott's accusation appeared in the *Logansport Pharos Tribune* on Tuesday, January 30, and in the *Logansport Journal* on Wednesday, January 31, 1900. The account appeared in the Carroll County papers, the

³⁴ "Action Expected," *Logansport Daily Pharos*, May 12, 1899.

³⁵ "Smooth Sailing," *Logansport Reporter*, May 17, 1899.

³⁶ In August 1899, four hundred feet of ground were broken in Carroll County and an equal amount in Cass County. "Breaking Ground," *Logansport Pharos*, August 30, 1899.

³⁷ "Taking Shape," *Logansport Daily Journal*, May 12, 1899; "Action Expected," *Logansport Daily Pharos*, May 12, 1899.

Delphi Times, and the *Flora Hoosier Democrat* on Saturday, February 3.³⁸ That same night, an attempt was made to burn the Deer Creek bridge, a three-section wooden bridge and the largest of the three bridges on the turnpike. The fire was quickly extinguished with little damage to the bridge. Three nights later, however, a fire destroyed the center section. The *Flora Hoosier Democrat* remarked: "Now a new bridge will have to be erected to replace the burned one, but it is believed that rather than make the necessary improvement, the owners will sell out to the railway company at a reasonable price."³⁹

On March 5, a petition signed by five hundred residents of eastern Carroll County was presented to the county commissioners, asking them to revoke the Turnpike Company's franchise. The petition alleged that for years the turnpike had been worse than the county's mud roads and that the bridges had not been kept up and were unsafe. The commissioners, who lacked the authority to revoke the franchise, dismissed the petition and referred the petitioners to the circuit court for redress.⁴⁰

On March 6, one of the directors of the Turnpike Company told the *Logansport Reporter* that ice in Deer Creek prevented workmen from repairing the bridge. The bridge would be repaired as soon as conditions were favorable for reconstruction.⁴¹ But the burning of the bridge was only the beginning. On the night of Tuesday, April 3, a mob comprising as many as three hundred masked men blew up the Deer Creek toll house with dynamite.⁴² They also attempted to blow up the bridge over Big Rock Creek, a short distance to the north. Unsuccessful the first night, they returned the following night and destroyed the bridge. The Turnpike Company put a force of men to work on the bridge and had it repaired by early May.⁴³

³⁸ "Young America Route," *Logansport Daily Pharos*, January 30, 1900; "The Road to be Built," *Logansport Journal*, January 31, 1900; "Only Burlington," *Delphi Times*, February 3, 1900; "May Miss Burlington," *Flora Hoosier Democrat*, February 3, 1900.

³⁹ "Burned the Bridge," *Logansport Daily Pharos*, February 6, 1900; "Burned the Bridge," *Indianapolis News*, February 7, 1900; "Bridge Burned," *Logansport Reporter*, February 9, 1900; "The Work of Fire Bugs," *Flora Hoosier Democrat*, February 10, 1900.

⁴⁰ "County Commissioners," *Flora Hoosier Democrat*, March 3, 1900; "After Toll Road," *Delphi Journal*, March 15, 1900.

⁴¹ "Farmers Will Have to Wait," *Logansport Reporter*, March 6, 1900.

⁴² "Toll House Blown Up," *Flora Hoosier Democrat*, April 7, 1900; "Second Attempt," *Logansport Pharos Tribune*, April 5, 1900; "An Active Mob," *Logansport Journal*, April 6, 1900.

⁴³ "Collecting Toll," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, May 12, 1900.

The mob action made national news. The story appeared in numerous newspapers throughout Indiana and the United States.⁴⁴ Indiana governor James A. Mount stated that “such lawlessness should not be permitted. I am determined and fixed against it.”⁴⁵ But Mount did nothing. The governor was in an awkward position: during much of his term, he served as national president of the Horse Thief Detective Association, a notorious vigilante organization.⁴⁶

In early April, turnpike director Dewitt Justice pointed out that nearly one year earlier, in May 1899, the Traction Company had agreed to buy the turnpike for \$10,000; that the agreement had been satisfactory to both parties; and that the Turnpike Company was ready to stand by it. On April 14 and again on June 1, Marott announced that negotiations were in progress that might result in monies being advanced with which to build the road, but his company never obtained the financing.⁴⁷

In May, a petition was filed asking the Carroll County commissioners to buy the turnpike. It alleged that the turnpike was one of only three toll roads remaining in the state. On August 14, the viewers presented their report to the county commissioners, with predictable results. The two Carroll County viewers appraised the road at \$212 per mile. The viewer appointed by the owners appraised the road at \$850 per mile.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ For example, *Fort Wayne News*, April 6, 1900; *Vevay Reveille*, April 12, 1900; *Boston Evening Transcript*, April 4, 1900; *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, April 4, 1900; *Buffalo Courier*, April 5, 1900; *Philadelphia Times*, April 5, 1900; *Wilkes-Barre Record*, April 5, 1900; *Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean*, April 5, 1900; *Deseret News*, April 4, 1900; *New Orleans Times-Democrat*, April 5, 1900.

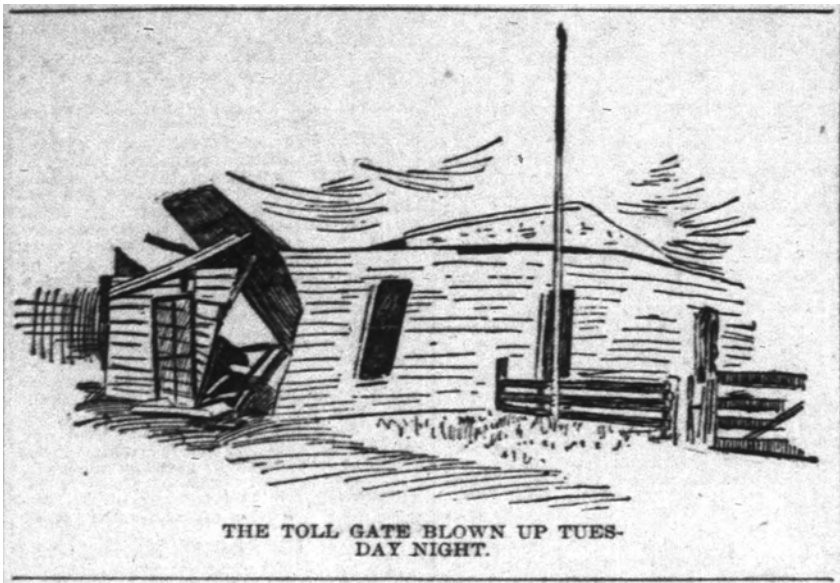
⁴⁵ “Tollraiders Work,” *Indianapolis News*, April 4, 1900.

⁴⁶ Mount was elected president of the National Horse Thief Detective Association in 1891 and served until October 1899; his term as governor ran from January 1897 to January 1901. “Horse-Thief Detectives,” *Lebanon Pioneer*, October 22, 1891; “S.D. Anglin,” *Milford Mail*, October 19, 1899; “Indiana Inklings,” *Indianapolis Sun*, October 4, 1898; “Peace Guardians to Meet,” *Indianapolis News*, October 2, 1899. See also chapter 4 of Erik C. Wade, “Constituting Whiteness: The National Horse Thief Detective Association and Racial Mores in Indiana, 1850–1930” (Ph.D. diss., Purdue University, 2011). Wade concludes that Mount’s role in the association “affected his judgement in regards to extralegal violence, in general” (p. 13).

⁴⁷ “An Active Mob,” *Logansport Journal*, April 6, 1900; “In the Balance,” *Flora Hoosier Democrat*, April 14, 1900; “The Marrott [sic] Line,” *Logansport Pharos*, June 1, 1900; “Another Hitch,” *Logansport Pharos*, June 9, 1900.

⁴⁸ “To Buy Michigan Road,” *Flora Hoosier Democrat*, May 5, 1900; “May Buy Road,” *Logansport Pharos*, May 4, 1900; “Commissioners’ Court,” *Flora Hoosier Democrat*, August 18, 1900.

Attacks on the turnpike continued. On the night of August 21, a mob of twenty-five men blew up the north toll house with dynamite.⁴⁹ The *Indianapolis News* illustrated the story with a drawing allegedly showing the blown-up building.⁵⁰ County authorities took no action. Following this incident, turnpike director Justice wrote to Governor Mount asking for protection from the depredations.⁵¹ After conferring with the attorney general, Mount found the perfect out. He responded that he would not send troops unless they were requested by the Carroll County authorities, knowing that the authorities had no desire to protect the turnpike, had taken no action, and would not ask the state to intervene.



In August 1900, a mob blew up one of the toll houses on the Logansport and Burlington Turnpike. The incident was reported in both state and national newspapers, including the *Indianapolis News*, which included this sketch of the ruined building.

Indianapolis News, August 23, 1900

⁴⁹ "Twas Blown Up," *Logansport Daily Pharos*, August 22, 1900; "A Big Reward," *Logansport Journal*, August 23, 1900; "Dynamite is Used," *Indianapolis News*, August 22, 1900; "Mob of Dynamiters Demolishes Property," *Logansport Reporter*, August 24, 1900.

⁵⁰ "Reward for Dynamiters," *Indianapolis News*, August 23, 1900; "Old Habit in Carroll," *Indianapolis News*, August 23, 1900. The *News* pointed out that these actions were "characteristic of Carroll County" and mentioned a lynching, the "frequent dynamiting of the Burlington saloon," and the dynamiting of a dam on the Wabash River as examples of county residents' lawlessness.

⁵¹ "Use of Militia Discussed," *Indianapolis News*, August 23, 1900.

Both local and state authorities had abdicated their responsibility to suppress lawlessness and protect private property. The Turnpike Company was on its own.⁵² It attempted to protect its property by hiring watchmen, who were powerless against armed mobs, and offering rewards. The mob action again made national news, as did the subsequent inaction of both state and local authorities.⁵³ On August 25, the *Indianapolis News* reported that "the failure of the Indianapolis & Logansport Traction Company enterprise is now saddled on the Carroll County mobs." One of the local promoters had received a letter from an eastern financing firm:

With reference to the electric line, I think it may be safely said that the enterprise is dead. One of the contributing causes is the disposition manifested by the Carroll county people to destroy bridges and toll houses. I have learned that one of the trust companies entirely declined to consider the matter, upon learning, through press reports, of the mob violence of recent occurrence. The reason, and I think properly so, that as long as this lawlessness is tolerated by the citizens along the line, it is as liable to manifest itself against one corporation as another.⁵⁴

The Logansport & Indianapolis Traction Company was dead. No sensible investor was willing to invest where the civil authorities were unwilling to do anything to protect private property.

In September, the Turnpike Company refused the outstanding August offer of \$212 per mile. The company had an agreement to sell the turnpike to the Traction Company for \$10,000, so had no incentive to accept a lesser offer and (depending on the details of the agreement) might have been obligated to sell. But the mobs were not done. On October 24, masked men

⁵² "Reward Offered," *Logansport Daily Journal*, February 17, 1900; "Second Attempt," *Logansport Pharos Tribune*, April 5, 1900; "Adverse to Toll," *Columbus Republic*, April 5, 1900; "Armed Men on Guard," *Indianapolis News*, August 18, 1900; "Reward for Dynamiters," *Indianapolis News*, August 23, 1900; "Blown Skywards," *Logansport Times*, August 24, 1900.

⁵³ For example, *New York Times*, August 23, 1900; *New York World*, August 23, 1900; *Indianapolis Sun*, August 22, 1900; *Philadelphia Record*, August 23, 1900; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 23, 1900; *Washington, D.C. Morning Times*, August 23, 1900; *Louisville Courier-Journal*, August 24, 1900; *Wilmington Morning News*, August 24, 1900; *New York Sun*, August 24, 1900; *Boston Evening Transcript*, August 24, 1900.

⁵⁴ "Carroll County Mobs," *Indianapolis News*, August 24, 1900; "Mob Wars Hurts," *Fort Wayne Sentinel*, August 25, 1900; "Fears the Mob," *Indianapolis Sun*, August 24, 1900.

burned the remains of the toll house at Deer Creek, the last remaining toll house on the turnpike.⁵⁵

By the end of 1900, the mobs had failed to accomplish their objective. They had destroyed the bridges and toll houses and stopped the collection of tolls, but the road's ownership remained unchanged. The county commissioners would not make an offer that the turnpike owners would accept, and the owners refused to accept the low offers made by the county. Rather than assisting the Traction Company, the mobs had helped to kill it.⁵⁶

In January 1901, the Logansport newspapers reported that farmers in eastern Carroll County were threatening to secede from the county and either form a new county or petition the Indiana legislature to be annexed to Cass County.⁵⁷ Governor Mount had been succeeded by Winfield Durbin, who was determined to end lawlessness in Indiana.⁵⁸ In May, negotiations between the Carroll County commissioners and the turnpike owners commenced. The owners offered to sell the turnpike for \$400 per mile, and, after much wrangling, the commissioners agreed. To comply with the law, three new viewers were appointed, who immediately valued the turnpike at the offered price. Although the commissioners admitted that the turnpike's assessed value (\$7,700 or about \$855 per mile) was too high, they refused to remit any taxes.⁵⁹ The commissioners deducted \$176.91 for taxes due and paid the owners \$3423.09 for the turnpike.

⁵⁵ "Burn a Toll House," *Indianapolis News*, October 22, 1900; "Torch Finishes the Work," *Logansport Pharos Tribune*, October 30, 1900.

⁵⁶ In April 1901, reports began to appear in area newspapers that the proposed interurban line would be built. The *Indianapolis News* indicated that the line would cost \$3,000,000 when completed, three times the original estimate. Proposals to build an interurban along the Michigan Road continued for more than a decade. "A Private Right-Of-Way," *Indianapolis News*, April 22, 1901; "Electric Line Outlook," *Kendallville Standard*, May 10, 1901; "Electric Line Output," *Marshall County Independent*, May 17, 1901; "Interurban is a Go," *Logansport Pharos*, July 24, 1901; "New Interurban Projected," *Argos Reflector*, January 22, 1914.

⁵⁷ "Want to Form a New County," *Logansport Daily Reporter*, September 18, 1900; "Still Kicking," *Logansport Daily Journal*, January 11, 1901.

⁵⁸ In his inaugural address Durbin said, "The hope of free institutions, the sanctity of the home, the safety of our citizens, the dignity of our manhood, rests on the respect for and the enforcement of law." "Down to Business," *Hamilton County Democrat*, January 13, 1901.

⁵⁹ "Free Forever," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, May 9, 1901; "Burlington Pike Sold," *Logansport Journal*, May 10, 1901; "Commissioners' Court," *Carroll County Citizen*, May 11, 1901; "Good Bye Toll Roads," *Delphi Journal*, May 9, 1901; "Not Marked by Amity," *Indianapolis News*, May 9, 1901.

THE FREE ROAD

The nine miles of turnpike in Carroll County were now a free road. The Logansport papers opined that the purchase would be of great benefit to their city. The *Daily Reporter* remarked that the purchase “is certain to result to the commercial advantage of Logansport.” The *Journal* observed: “Not alone in Carroll county is the joy confined. Logansport merchants are pleased with the turn affairs have taken.” The *Daily Pharos* predicted that the Burlington pike would “be put in first class condition and maintained at public expense. There is cause for general rejoicing.” The *Indianapolis News* added, “Hundreds of people in the eastern part of [Carroll] county are jubilant.”⁶⁰

The joy, general rejoicing, and jubilation, if any, were short lived. The worst was yet to come. A few days later, the *Daily Pharos* reported that the Carroll County commissioners had no desire to provide “commercial advantage of Logansport.” Rather than put the road in “first class condition,” they ordered the farmers along the road to improve it, but the farmers refused to comply.⁶¹ The commissioners could not compel the farmers to maintain the road, so no one would.⁶²

In October 1902, nearly a year-and-a-half after Carroll County had purchased the turnpike, the trustees of Washington and Carrollton Townships (the townships through which the turnpike ran) filed suit against the county commissioners to compel them to maintain the road.⁶³ Circuit Judge Truman F. Palmer—the same judge who had appointed the viewers who gave low estimates for the turnpike’s value—heard the case. Not surprisingly, he held that the townships were required to take care of the road and, for good measure, assessed costs against the trustees.⁶⁴

In the meantime, the road continued to deteriorate, becoming as bad as the farmers alleged it had been “for years.” In March 1903, it

⁶⁰ *Logansport Daily Reporter*, May 10, 1901; “Burlington Pike Sold,” *Logansport Journal*, May 10, 1901; “A Relic of the Past,” *Logansport Daily Pharos*, May 9, 1901; “Toll Road Troubles End,” *Indianapolis News*, May 8, 1901.

⁶¹ “A Relic of the Past,” *Logansport Daily Pharos*, May 9, 1901.

⁶² The commissioners did appropriate money for a bridge over Deer Creek. “New Bridge at Deer Creek,” *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, July 20, 1901; “Deer Creek Bridge,” *Logansport Daily Pharos*, January 29, 1902.

⁶³ “Want Good Road,” *Logansport Journal*, October 8, 1902.

⁶⁴ “Township Must Repair Road,” *Logansport Daily Pharos*, January 10, 1903; “More About Gravel Roads,” *Delphi Journal*, January 15, 1903.

became impassable. The Deer Creek hack, which made daily trips between Logansport and the Deer Creek community, suspended operation because of the "wretched condition" of the road.⁶⁵ The vehicle had become stuck in the mud and the lone passenger had been forced to walk to Logansport.

The trustees appealed to the Indiana Supreme Court. In February 1904, the court held that the commissioners had a duty to take charge of and repair toll roads purchased.⁶⁶ The *Logansport Daily Reporter* commented: "Logansport will hereafter get a large portion of the trade of southern Carroll county that has for several years been going to Camden, Delphi, and Flora."⁶⁷ Nearly three years after the Carroll County commissioners had purchased the turnpike, they were held to be responsible for its maintenance.

THE TURNPIKE AND THE FAILURE OF THE TRACTION LINE

In May 1899, George Marott had promised to begin construction on an inter-urban line between Indianapolis and Logansport not later than September 1, 1899, and to have the entire line in operation within two years. In January 1900, Marott blamed the delay on the owners of the Logansport and Burlington Turnpike, who, he said, were unwilling to dispose of their holdings at a reasonable price.⁶⁸

Because the Turnpike Company failed to contradict Marott's accusation until after the attacks on the turnpike had begun, Marott won the propaganda war.⁶⁹ His accusation quickly became dogma in Carroll County. Most subsequent county newspaper articles about the mob violence—some of which were reprinted throughout Indiana and the United States—alleged that the turnpike owners had refused to sell to the Traction Company at a reasonable price.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ "Stuck in Mud," *Logansport Journal*, March 15, 1903.

⁶⁶ "Case Appealed," *Logansport Reporter*, January 16, 1903; *State Ex Rel. Shanks et al. v. Board of Comm'rs of Carroll County*, 70 N.E. 138, 141–142, 162 Ind. 183, 192–193 (1904).

⁶⁷ "County Must Repair Roads," *Logansport Daily Reporter*, February 19, 1904.

⁶⁸ "Taking Shape," *Logansport Daily Journal*, May 12, 1899; "Action Expected," *Logansport Daily Pharos*, May 12, 1899.

⁶⁹ "An Active Mob," *Logansport Journal*, April 6, 1900.

⁷⁰ Odell's *History of Carroll County* repeats the accusation and says: "The refusal of [the Logansport & Burlington Turnpike] company to surrender its charter defeated the construction of an electric road on this highway." Odell, *History of Carroll County, Indiana*, 113. Odell says nothing about the mob violence, nor the county commissioners' refusal to maintain the road; he writes that the road became almost impassable and the county took it over.

In fact, when it obtained the Cass County franchise in May 1899, the Traction Company had all the franchises necessary to construct the line from Indianapolis to Logansport. Marott had purchased the Logansport Streetcar Company, which assured the company access to the city's streets of Logansport.⁷¹ The Traction Company had also obtained access to Indianapolis streets and that city's existing tracks.⁷² Only one thing was missing—money to build the line. But no financing was ever obtained.

Why was the Traction Company unable to obtain financing? Its promoters were reputable businessmen, not fly-by-night promoters. President George J. Marott was a successful Indianapolis businessman.⁷³ Vice-President Dr. Michael A. Jordan of Logansport owned a substantial amount of real estate in the city and was president of the Logansport Citizens' Gas Company.⁷⁴ Secretary Dr. Robert C. Light of Broad Ripple had helped organize the Indianapolis & Broad Ripple Rapid Transit Company and the Broad Ripple Natural Gas Company.⁷⁵ Treasurer Horace F. Wood owned a substantial livery business in Indianapolis.⁷⁶ Other investors were also prominent businessmen.⁷⁷

⁷¹ "Changes Hands," *Logansport Daily Journal*, February 22, 1899.

⁷² "The Electric Road," *Logansport Daily Pharos*, May 9, 1899; "A Fifty Year Franchise," *Indianapolis Sun*, January 18, 1899; "Petition is Submitted," *Indianapolis Journal*, January 18, 1900. The Traction Company had obtained a fifty-year franchise from Marion County to lay tracks along the west side of the Michigan Road from the Indianapolis city limit to the Hamilton County line. Within Indianapolis, the cars would operate over the tracks of the Indianapolis Street Railway Company.

⁷³ Marott operated a large retail shoe business in Indianapolis. John J. Harden, "George J. Marott," *System: The Magazine of Business*, April 1917, 410–13; Jacob Piatt Dunn, "George J. Marott," *Greater Indianapolis: The History, the Industries, the Institutions, and the People of a City of Homes* (Chicago, 1910), 2:917–19. Marott is best known for the Marott Hotel, which opened in 1926 at the northeast corner of Fall Creek Parkway and Meridian Street. Greta E. Shanke, "Marott Hotel," *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows, eds. (Bloomington, Ind., 1994), 974–75.

⁷⁴ "Dr. M. A. Jordan," *Logansport Daily Pharos*, May 9, 1894; "Dr. M. A. Jordan," *Logansport Times*, December 19, 1913.

⁷⁵ Dunn, "Robert C. Light, M. D.," *Greater Indianapolis*, 2:870.

⁷⁶ Dunn, "Horace F. Wood," *Greater Indianapolis*, 2:813. Wood's livery business was located at 45–7 Monument Place, now the site of the Circle Theater.

⁷⁷ Incorporators William Bosson and Lewis L. Walker were prominent Indianapolis attorneys. Bosson and Light had been officers of the Broad Ripple Transit Company. "William Bosson to Get City Post," *Indianapolis Star*, July 26, 1924; "Death of Wm. Bosson," *Hammond Times*, December 3, 1934; "L. C. Walker is Dead; Sat Many Years as Judge," *Indianapolis Star*, August 6, 1913; "Lewis C. Walker Dies at Delaware St. Home," *Indianapolis News*, August 6, 1913; "Line to the Ripple," *Indianapolis Journal*, September 15, 1894.

Nationally, the year 1900 marked the beginning of an interurban building boom, with 569 miles of interurban put in service, and 1,015 miles of interurban (most of which was probably funded in 1900) put in service in 1901.⁷⁸ Indiana alone saw nearly two hundred companies achieve operating status, and another two-hundred-plus file papers of incorporation, with as many more organized and funds solicited but not incorporated. Indiana had 678 miles of interurban track at the end of 1900, and more than 2,300 miles by 1908.⁷⁹

Construction of so many interurbans, in Indiana and throughout the country, produced a great demand for construction materials with accompanying price increases. During 1898 and 1899, the price of steel rails more than doubled.⁸⁰ In January 1899, Traction Company secretary Robert Light said the road would cost \$1 million; by July, the cost estimate had increased to \$1.5 million; by January 1900, the estimate stood at \$2 million.⁸¹ This large sum would have to be provided by "eastern capitalists," and with so many interurbans being proposed, investors had to evaluate each proposal and fund the ones that appeared to be the most economically viable.

The Traction Company's proposed route was the shortest between Logansport and Indianapolis, but between these points, the Michigan Road passed through a rich farming area with only a few small communities, which would generate a limited amount of passenger traffic. As part of its franchise agreements, the company had agreed to run at least twelve trains each way per day, to carry passengers for 1½ cents per mile, and to haul freight at not more than one-half the rate charged by the railroads.⁸² Because of these restrictions, the Traction Company would have little freedom to adjust its schedules and pricing should they prove to be unprofitable. In

⁷⁸ George W. Hilton and John F. Due, *The Electric Railways in America* (Stanford, Calif., 1960), 25.

⁷⁹ Jerry Marlette, *Electric Railroads of Indiana* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1959), 6–9.

⁸⁰ Joseph Russell Smith, *The Story of Iron and Steel* (New York, 1908), 150. In 1899, the Philadelphia and West Chester (Pennsylvania) Traction Company abandoned plans to extend its line to Downingtown and Coatesville because the price of rails had increased from \$18 per ton to \$36 per ton, and the price of copper wire had increased from 18¢ per pound to 18.5¢ per pound. "Gossip of the Street," *Philadelphia Times*, November 21, 1899.

⁸¹ "Will Grant It," *Logansport Daily Journal*, January 15, 1899; "Contract Closed," *Logansport Pharos*, July 10, 1899.

⁸² "A Fifty Year Franchise," *Indianapolis Sun*, January 18, 1899; "Favorable Action," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, May 1, 1899; "Taking Shape," *Logansport Journal*, May 12, 1899; "Grant Franchises," *Lebanon Patriot*, March 23, 1899.

April 1900, the *Argos Reflector* remarked: "The line from Logansport to Indianapolis is so burdened with stipulations as to the manner in which it shall be operated that no one cares to invest in something that is so completely under the control of the commissioners of the several counties through which the road passes."⁸³

Throughout 1899 and into early 1900, periodic reports appeared that Marott and/or other Traction Company officers were negotiating financing with some unspecified "eastern capitalists," invariably including an assurance that only a "few details" needed to be worked out before the necessary papers were signed and construction would begin. In November 1899, the *Wall Street Journal*, as well as papers in Indianapolis, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati, reported that the directors of the Traction Company and a representative of "a syndicate of New York bankers" had signed an agreement to build the road. The syndicate would purchase \$2 million of Traction Company bonds, and the loan would be a first mortgage on the property.⁸⁴ Construction would begin as soon as the agreement was "formally ratified." For reasons that were apparently never reported, the agreement was never "formally ratified." In mid-January 1900, Dr. Light was reported to be in New York "promoting the interests of the Company."⁸⁵

At the end of the month, Marott was blaming the construction delay on the turnpike's owners. Was Marott so frustrated by the failure of the alleged agreement of November 1899? Whatever his motives, he never again accused the Turnpike Company of refusing to sell at a reasonable price. But his statement had unforeseeable and unexpected consequences—in particular, the mob attacks on the turnpike.

The Traction Company faced increasing construction costs, competition for financing from other proposed lines, limited potential for online revenue generation, and franchise restrictions that limited its scheduling and pricing options. These disadvantages would have made it difficult

⁸³ "More About the Electric Railroad," *Argos Reflector*, April 26, 1900.

⁸⁴ "New Electric Road," *Wall Street Journal*, November 23, 1899; "New Electric Road," *Indianapolis Journal*, November 19, 1899; "Gossip of the Street," *Philadelphia Times*, November 21, 1899; "Philadelphians," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, November 20, 1899; "Deal Likely Closed," *Logansport Daily Pharos*, November 20, 1899; "The Contract Has Been Let," *Logansport Reporter*, November 20, 1899; "Millions," *Butler County Democrat (Hamilton, Ohio)*, November 23, 1899. According to the *Indianapolis Journal*, the Traction Company had \$200,000 in paid-in capital. With \$2 million in bonds outstanding, the company's debt-to-equity ratio would have stood at 10 to 1.

⁸⁵ "Not Successful," *Logansport Daily Pharos*, November 28, 1899; "Logansport Traction Company," *Indianapolis News*, January 24, 1900.

to obtain financing under the best of circumstances. The refusal of state and local authorities to protect private property destroyed whatever slim chance the company had to obtain financing.

THE CONDITION OF THE TURNPIKE

In 1900, numerous stories in the Carroll County newspapers claimed that the turnpike was in poor condition and that the company refused to maintain it.⁸⁶ The company countered that the turnpike was “by all odds the best highway in the state of Indiana.”⁸⁷ Neither assessment can be relied on. The editors of the *Delphi* and *Flora* newspapers probably had no first-hand knowledge, since the turnpike did not go to either town. The directors, obviously, would claim that their road was in excellent condition.

It is difficult to determine, more than a century later, the condition of the turnpike, but scholars can examine the available evidence. I found no published complaints between October 1895, when the directors refused to sell at a price they considered too low, and February 1900, when the attacks on the turnpike began.⁸⁸ The March 1900 petition to revoke the turnpike's franchise alleged that the road had for years been worse than a mud road and that the bridges were unsafe. If the allegations were true, those who traveled on the turnpike had failed to make their dissatisfaction known for years and had waited until the attacks had begun.

The Turnpike Company was required to file annual financial statements.⁸⁹ I was able to locate summaries of annual statements for fiscal

⁸⁶ For example, “The Work of Firebugs,” *Flora Hoosier Democrat*, February 10, 1900; “Patience and Forbearance,” *Delphi Times*, February 17, 1900; “Flight of a Tollgate,” *Carroll County Citizen*, August 25, 1900.

⁸⁷ “Burlington Pike Company,” *Logansport Daily Pharos*, March 7, 1900.

⁸⁸ I found one complaint about the turnpike's condition in a letter to the editor from a correspondent in the Deer Creek community in 1876. “A Correction—Henpeck—Turnpikes,” *Logansport Pharos*, March 15, 1876.

⁸⁹ According to Odell, “Seven annual reports were filed, reporting receipts at the sum of \$35,856, and the aggregate expenses at the sum of \$14,474.65, leaving an aggregate profit the sum of \$21,331.39.” Odell, *History of Carroll County, Indiana*, 112–13. Odell does not indicate the years these seven reports cover. The average annual revenue, \$5,122 or \$366 per mile, and average net income \$3,047 or \$218 per mile (assuming 14 miles in each case) is consistent with the years before 1881, when the turnpike was relatively new and maintenance would have been lower than in later years. Odell implies that these figures are representative of the turnpike's operation in Carroll County, when they appear to describe its operation in both counties when the road was relatively new.

years (ending on the first day of July) 1876, 1877, and 1881.⁹⁰ In 1900, the company filed four reports covering the fiscal years 1896, 1897, 1898, and 1899—the years after the Cass County section had been sold. The *Delphi Journal* published only the four-year totals.⁹¹

Receipts, expenses, and net income for these years appear in Table 1. Expenses included not only maintenance of the road but also taxes, toll houses, toll gates, toll collectors, and other miscellaneous expenses.

Table 1

Year	Receipts	Expenses	Net Income
1876	\$5,498.63	\$1,894.32	\$3,604.31
1877	\$5,520.15	\$1,790.21	\$3,729.94
1881	\$4,496.68	\$2,382.34	\$2,114.34
1896–1899*	\$1,812.55	\$1,251.47	\$641.08

*Average per year for the four-year period.

Receipts, expenses, and net income per year on a per-mile basis are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

Year	Receipts/mile*	Expenses/mile	Net Income/ mile
1876	\$392.76	\$147.02	\$247.74
1877	\$394.30	\$127.87	\$266.42
1881	\$321.19	\$170.17	\$151.02
1896–1899♦	\$210.28	\$139.05	\$71.23

*Fourteen miles in 1876, 1877, and 1881. Nine miles in 1896 to 1899.

♦Average per year for the four-year period.

Revenue per mile decreased significantly between the earlier years and the years after the sale of the Cass County portion of the turnpike. This decline was due to competition from free gravel roads and to the fact that the Cass County section, which was closer to Logansport, was more

⁹⁰ "Notice," *Logansport Weekly Journal*, July 15, 1876; "Annual Report," *Delphi Journal*, July 19, 1876; "Annual Statement," *Logansport Daily Star*, July 24, 1877; "Annual Statement," *Delphi Journal*, July 18, 1877; *Logansport Chronicle*, July 16, 1881.

⁹¹ "After Toll Road," *Delphi Journal*, March 15, 1900.

heavily travelled than the Carroll County section and produced more revenue per mile.

Table 3 shows receipts, the amount spent on road repairs, the amount spent on road repairs per mile, and road repairs as a percent of receipts.

Table 3

Year	Receipts	Road Repairs	Repairs/ mile*	Repairs/ receipts
1876	\$5,498.63	\$1,051.13	\$75.08	19%
1877	\$5,520.15	\$841.00	\$60.07	15%
1881	\$4,496.68	\$1,496.73	\$106.91	33%
1896–1899♦	\$1,812.55	\$382.53	\$42.50	21%

*Fourteen miles in 1876, 1877, and 1881. Nine miles in 1896 to 1899.

♦Average per year for the four-year period.

The amount spent per mile on road repairs decreased considerably between the earlier years and the period 1896 to 1899. The turnpike required less maintenance because it was not as heavily travelled as it had been earlier (as shown by the decrease in receipts per mile), not because it was being poorly maintained. The amount spent on road repairs as a percentage of receipts (21 percent) was not markedly different from what it had been in earlier years. The company was not, in other words, allowing the road to deteriorate prior to abandoning it.

In August 1900, Cline Brothers, Logansport bicycle dealers, acquired a steam-powered Locomobile, the first locally owned automobile in Logansport.⁹² In September, the *Flora Hoosier Democrat* reported that “Rene Cline, of Cline Brothers, Logansport, came down yesterday with a locomobile, making the trip in fifty minutes.”⁹³ Assuming that the trip was made by the shortest route, it would have covered all nine miles of the turnpike from the Cass County line south to Wheeling, including the

⁹² “No Pushee; No Pullee,” *Logansport Daily Journal*, August 29, 1900. “In the year 1901 the first automobile made its appearance on the streets of Logansport. A traveling minstrel show paraded the streets with a small automobile run by steam.” Jehu Z. Powell, ed., *History of Cass County Indiana*, (Chicago, 1913), 1:205. The occasion is correct, but year was 1900. Hi Henry’s minstrel show, preceded by a noon-time parade led by Hi Henry and his business agent in a Locomobile, played Dolan’s Opera House in Logansport on Wednesday, May 2, 1900. “Hi Henry’s Minstrels,” *Logansport Daily Journal*, May 2, 1900; “Hi Henry Tonight,” *Logansport Pharos*, May 2, 1900.

⁹³ “Local News,” *Flora Hoosier Democrat*, September 13, 1900; “That Locomobile,” *Logansport Daily Pharos*, September 13, 1900 (reprint of the *Flora Hoosier Democrat* article).

missing bridge over Deer Creek. Near the bridge site was a ford, which was not dangerous except in high water, unlikely in August.⁹⁴ The distance from Logansport to Flora by this route is about 22 miles. Assuming the reported time was accurate, the automobile made the trip at an average speed of about 26 miles per hour.

In late October 1900, Hal Reed of the *Indianapolis News* traveled in a Locomobile from Indianapolis, via Frankfort, Lafayette, and Delphi, to Logansport.⁹⁵ Leaving Indianapolis, the Locomobile became mired in clay and gravel attempting to climb the steep hill north of White River on the Michigan Road and needed a tow from a passing farmer in a buggy. The travelers spent the night in Frankfort and the next morning—after three hours to clean the Locomobile, which “was covered with mud from top to bottom”—they drove to Logansport via Lafayette, Delphi, and Camden. Reed described the trip from Delphi to Logansport:

Tuesday's run consisted of a long hard fight with fresh gravel and mud, frequent stops and a terrific strain on the machine. Wednesday's run was through one of the prettiest and most prosperous sections of the state, over fine roads, miles of smooth, level turnpikes. . . . We left Delphi at 4:15 for the run of twenty-eight miles to Logansport by way of Camden and Deer Creek, made famous last year as the scene of the battle between the raiders and toll gate keepers. This was the best run of the day and for seventeen miles a steady gait at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour was kept up.⁹⁶

Reed's trip would have included the northern five miles of the turnpike, from just north of the missing Deer Creek Bridge to the Cass County line. Unlike his comments on his experience in Marion County the preceding day, Reed makes no mention of mud. The trip over the turnpike

⁹⁴ “Burned the Bridge,” *Logansport Daily Pharos*, February 6, 1900; “Burlington Pike,” *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, April 7, 1900.

⁹⁵ Hal W. Reed, “Bad Roads and Big Hills,” *Indianapolis News*, October 31, 1900.

⁹⁶ Hal W. Reed, “Fine Roads and Fast Time,” *Indianapolis News*, November 1, 1900; “Auto Reared into the Air,” *Logansport Reporter*, November 6, 1900 (reprinting the *News* articles). The attacks on the turnpike began on February 3, 1900, and ended on October 24. Reed made his trip on October 30–31. “Turnpike” was often used to refer to any improved gravel road, as Reed used it here. By “last year,” he apparently meant “last summer”.

he declared to be "the best run of the day." The *Carroll County Citizen*, ironically, reprinted part of the *News* article under the headline "Good Roads in Carroll," ignoring the fact that it contradicted stories of the turnpike's terrible condition.⁹⁷

The available information is consistent with the turnpike being in good to excellent condition: a lack of complaints about the road's condition before the mob violence began; evidence that a significant amount of the turnpike's revenue was being spent on maintenance in the period 1896 to 1889; and reports of trips made over the turnpike at speeds that would not have been possible over mud roads.

RE-EVALUATING CARROLL COUNTY'S FAIR PRICE

Carroll County assessed the turnpike at \$1,000 per mile, later reduced to \$855 per mile. In 1895, Carroll County offered \$485 per mile. In August 1900, after the mob violence had begun, it offered \$212 per mile. Finally, in May 1901, Carroll County purchased the turnpike for \$400 per mile. Was this a fair price?

Comparison with the prices paid for other central Indiana toll roads offers limited insight, because the price paid depended not only on the condition of the road but also on how profitable it was and how willing the owners were to sell. For example, between 1895 and 1898, Allen County purchased seven different toll roads from \$1,085 per mile to \$413 per mile. Fulton County purchased the Rochester Gravel Road, which ran for 7 miles along the Michigan Road, for about \$2,785 a mile. Cass County purchased five different toll roads from \$1,522 per mile to \$288 per mile.⁹⁸ Although not as profitable as it had been, the Logansport and Burlington Turnpike was still profitable in 1899. Assuming a 6 percent rate of return, an investment of about \$10,600 would have been required to produce the reported annual income of about \$640. Consequently, the owners had no reason either to abandon the turnpike or to sell it to Cass County for slightly less than \$1,000 per mile. Following the purchase, the *Logansport Journal*, which may not have been unbiased, observed: "The Carroll county

⁹⁷ "Good Roads in Carroll," *Carroll County Citizen*, November 10, 1900.

⁹⁸ "Allen County Free," *Fort Wayne News*, March 29, 1898; "Additional Local," *Logansport Reporter*, December 19, 1895; "The Toll Road Purchase," *Logansport Journal*, April 26, 1892; "Four Roads Purchased," *Logansport Daily Journal*, May 1, 1892; "The Last," *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, September 18, 1894.

commissioners are happy in the fact that they have purchased for their county the best road in the State for a song.”⁹⁹

The Michigan Road in Carroll County remained a county road until July 1, 1923, when the section from the Marion County line north to Logansport became a state highway.¹⁰⁰ After more than eighty-six years as a plank road, a toll road, and a county road, the Carroll County section of the Michigan Road was again part of the state highway system.

⁹⁹ “Burlington Pike Sold,” *Logansport Journal*, May 10, 1901.

¹⁰⁰ “State Takes Over Michigan Road,” *Logansport Pharos-Tribune*, July 3, 1923; “Governor M’Cray’s Help to our Taxpayers Much Appreciated,” *Delphi Journal*, July 5, 1923. The Delphi newspaper thanked the governor for relieving the taxpayers of Carroll County of the \$100,000 cost of paving the road in Carroll County.