OLD STAGE-COACH DAYS.

BY E. I. LEWIS.

AT Centerville, a few years ago, two small books were unearthed in a collection of old relics dating back to the halcyon days when Centerville was the center of a stage universe. Both were copies of "Indiana Delineated and Stage Guide for Travelers to the West." The first edition dated back to 1838, prior to the canal days. In the later edition—1847—the canal routes were added to those covered by stage. The old stage maps tell an interesting story of the decline of great traffic centers. Many of the most prominent, such as Merom, Napoleon, Montezuma, Fredonia, Strawtown, Michigantown, Northfield and Putnamville have almost completely been forgotten, while some of the most important centers of travel, such as Salem, Paoli, Jasper, Brookville, Liberty, Burlington and Laketon, have declined in transportation importance, while they have increased in population.

In the old Indiana stage days Philadelphia, instead of New York, was the center of the Eastern world, and the guide books gave information and advice to prospective tourists as to how they should proceed. In 1838 stage travelers were advised to go from Philadelphia to Harrisburg by railroad and canal; or to Harrisburg entirely by railroad; from Harrisburg by Juniata river to Hollidaysburg; by canal and the Allegany river to Pittsburg, and thence down the Ohio river. To travelers from New York and New England was recommended a route to Albany by water, and from Whitesboro to Buffalo by canal; from Buffalo to Cleveland by boat, thence to Portsmouth by the Ohio canal and down the river to Cincinnati or Indiana landings. If bound for northern Indiana they were advised to proceed to Toledo from Buffalo and thence by the newly-constructed canal to the Indiana line and enter via Ft. Wayne.

The time that would probably be consumed by these trips is not given. The all-stage routes, not advised when the traveler was heavily incumbered with baggage or household effects, carried the travelers across Ohio, and in the guide of 1847, is-

sued after the old National Road was opened through, it was the route favored. It and its connections ran from Washington to Hagerstown, Wheeling and Columbus, to Indianapolis, via Terre Haute and Vandalia to St. Louis, and thence with connections to Gallatin, Ft. Leavenworth and the West, a distance of 1,112 miles.

Indianapolis was the State's stage center and the following advertisement of the old stage-coach days is interesting:

"STAGE LINE FROM INDIANAPOLIS TO CRAWFORDSVILLE AND DANVILLE, ILL., THREE TIMES A WEEK.

"Coaches leave Indianapolis every Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning, at 9 o'clock, and arrive at Danville next day, at 5 o'clock p. m., where travelers proceed without delay to Peoria, Ill., and Bloomington, Ia.,* in regular post coaches. At Crawfordsville this line intersects a line of coaches to Lafayette, Ia., where they arrive at 11 a. m., the next day. Connection can be made by the route for Chicago and Wisconsin points and for South Bend, northern Indiana points and Michigan. The distance by the direct line, from Indianapolis to Peoria, is 217 miles, which is traveled in four days without any night traveling, in good coaches, with steady, moral and careful drivers and the best of horses."

The average cost for stage-coach travel, for the entire State, was a little less than 5 cents a mile. The rate of travel in good weather and favorable roads was seven to eight miles an hour. Most of the stages were operated on the plan indicated by the advertisement of the Indianapolis, Crawfordsville and Danville road, with stops for night, and an average of fifty-five to sixty miles a day. On the National Road, however, the stages did not stop for night, and would average 150 or more miles a day, in favorable weather. The ride from Evansville to Logansport took almost a week, and that from Cincinnati to White Pigeon, Mich., was but a day shorter, and took the traveler over the famous old line of Levi Coffin's underground railroad north to freedom for enslaved blacks.

These "fast" schedules, however, are for good weather, favorable season and solid roads. When these conditions did not prevail, and the "corduroy" was often afloat, travel by stage was not only uncertain, but all schedules were abandoned and the "stager" floundered around at a two- or three-mile gait.

*The early abbreviation for Indiana.

T. A. GOODWIN'S EXPERIENCE.

On a Wednesday noon, in 1837, Thomas Goodwin, the well-known veteran Methodist preacher, of Indianapolis, left Brookville for Greencastle to enter old Asbury University. It had been raining. The old four-horse stage lumbered along at a slow rate and reached Bulltown, seventeen miles from Brookville, that night at 7 o'clock. Goodwin put up for the night. The next morning he found a butcher's wagon, without springs, a seat or cover—the stage—waiting at the door for him, and in a rainstorm that had set the corduroy afloat, the start was made for Indianapolis. The fifty miles to Indianapolis was one great quagmire and at 8 o'clock that night, when the "stage" was still six miles from the capital, an axle gave way. The driver took Goodwin's trunk ahead of him on the "off" horse, and the contracting agent, with the mail in front of him and his passenger on behind, rode the "nigh" horse into Indianapolis, arriving at midnight and too late to catch the West stage. Goodwin had a day's lay-over, in which to inspect the new State House and the largest city he had ever seen.

At 10 o'clock that night he climbed on the nine-seated St. Louis limited stage and started for Putnamville. The road was macadamized as far as Eagle creek, but there the bogs were encounted again, and the stage came to a standstill. The eight male passengers were ordered out and sent to the nearby rail fence to get pries. They extricated the stage from the mudhole and were ready to get aboard, when the driver announced that they had better carry those rails on down the road, for they would need them again. Plainfield, fourteen miles out, was reached in time for breakfast, and Putnamville at 4 o'clock. Goodwin reached Greencastle at 9 o'clock the next Sunday morning, having covered 124 miles in a little less than four full days and traveling two nights, at a total cost of about $8 or $9 fare and boarding and lodging.

With the old stages have disappeared the old taverns, with their uniform charge of 25 cents for a bed or meal and a "fip" for a "dram." Though in these days the rate seems low, many good fortunes were made in these old taverns, whose proprietors bought pork at $1.25 a hundred, eggs at 3 cents a dozen,

whisky at 25 cents a gallon, and all other supplies at correspondingly low rates.

EDITORIAL NOTES.—Calvin Fletcher, Jr., thus describes a stage trip to Chicago from Indianapolis, in March, 1848. "It took the first twenty-four hours to reach Kirklin, in Boone county, the next twenty-four to Logansport and the next thirty-six to reach South Bend. A rest then of twenty-four hours on account of high water ahead, then thirty-six hours to Chicago—five days of hard travel in mud or on corduroy, or sand, the whole way. There was," Mr. Fletcher adds, "at that time of the year, no direct route from Indianapolis to Chicago. The Kankakee was impassable, except at the extreme headwaters, between South Bend and Laporte. Lemon's bridge over the Kankakee between Logansport and Chicago was inaccessible on account of water. In the summer passenger coaches went through, but when wet weather came the mud wagon was used to carry passengers and mail, and when the mud became too deep the mail was piled into crates, canvas-covered and hauled through."

As late as the sixties travel in some parts of the State was still of the old primitive character. During that decade and well into the next one, Walker H. Winslow ran a stage—the "Governor Morton," between Anderson and Marion. He was owner, driver and mail conductor for fourteen years. He had to keep eight head of horses for the stage. Four were required during the winter, and occasionally he had to change horses at Alexandria. The stage coach was of the style built before the civil war. It carried twelve people, but it was frequently crowded with sixteen or twenty. Winslow received $300 a year from the government for carrying the mail between Anderson and Marion. On the rear end of the coach was the "baggage booth," where trunks were stored. The mail pouches were carried under the driver's seat. There were not many mail pouches in those days, and the stage generally had to stand at the small towns along the way and wait till the postmaster opened the mail pouch and "made up" the out-going mail. Winslow also filled the exciting role of express-carrier, and one day he carried $30,000. Many times he had to be "diplomatic." Once he had

a large sum of money in gold. It was in two small shot sacks. Stopping at Alexandria for dinner, Winslow says he took off his overshoes while on the stage and slipped a sack of gold into each shoe. He then carried his overshoes into the dining-room and apologized for his absent-mindedness, but he had the overshoes where he could touch them with his feet, and no one at the table knew they were eating over a fortune.

FIRST VINCENNES AND INDIANAPOLIS ROAD.

BY HENRY BAKER.

THESE facts concerning the first wagon road connecting Vincennes with Indianapolis were secured by the writer many years ago from Martin Wines, one of the early settlers of Greene county. The road, or trail, as it was long called, was established in the fall of 1822. An unusual fact connected with it was that it was marked out by dragging a log, or brush, as different reports have it, with an ox team over the entire distance of 120 miles, through the woods, prairies and marshes. The thick, high grass on the prairies and the wild pea vines in the woods so obstructed progress that the dragging of this log or brush was considered the best and cheapest way to mark the route, as mowing would have been too slow. An engineer or surveyor was employed by the State to keep the course, as many variations had to be made from a straight line to suit the lay of the land and the best crossings of the many streams and marshes. The route was directly through the site of Linton, Greene county, and near the home of Martin Wines. Latta's creek marsh, named for John Latta, one of the early settlers, was exactly in the line of the survey, and as Mr. Wines was familiar with the lay of the country he was asked to mark out the best ground to cross the marsh. The way by which he piloted the company became the roadway, and was so used until a few years ago. Along the trail in the woods trees were blazed, and in the prairies tall poles reaching above the high grass were set to guide the travelers.*

*Mr. Baker probably means that these guides were used before the road was marked out.—*Editor.*