

## Terre Haute in 1850 <sup>1</sup>

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AS originally laid out in 1816, the site of Terre Haute was a rectangular piece of ground, seven blocks north and south by five blocks east and west. The land was on the east bank of the Wabash river, which there rises some thirty to fifty feet above the water at the point where it is crossed by the National road. One block, exactly in the center, was reserved for a public square, and here, a few years later, the courthouse was built. Besides this, two further sites, each one-fourth of a block in extent, were set apart, one for a seminary and the other for a church. These were located an equal distance, respectively, east and northeast of the courthouse square.<sup>2</sup> The former is today still occupied by one of the city schools, while on the latter was erected the church building known as the old Asbury Chapel, now used as a livery barn. When Vigo became a separate county in 1818, and Terre Haute was made the county seat, an additional tier of blocks was added on the south, making forty blocks in all, and extending from the river east to Fifth street, and from Eagle street on the north to Oak street on the south. It was within this space that, with very few exceptions, the 4,605 inhabitants of Terre Haute in 1850 still lived.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. J. R. Beste, an English gentleman who stopped at the Prairie House, at Seventh and Main, in the summer of 1851, speaks of going to town from there across the commons.<sup>4</sup> The picture in his book which is intended to present the view which he had of the town from the hotel, shows no houses

<sup>1</sup> A paper read before the Terre Haute Literary Club, Feb. 5, 1916.

<sup>2</sup> At the corner of Fourth and Mulberry and Fourth and Poplar streets.

<sup>3</sup> Even in 1858, when the first city directory was issued, and the population had grown to nearly twice what it was in 1850, there were only scattered dwellings as far north as Locust street, and along the roads leading into the country. Outside of these and a small settlement in the neighborhood of Twelfth and Chestnut, the population then lived south and west of the old canal, i. e., the Vandalia and C. and E. B. R. R.

<sup>4</sup> A regular bus ran from the hotel to down, *Wabash Courier*, Dec. 2, 1850.

along Sixth street, except the Congregational church and a few near the crossing of Sixth and Main.<sup>5</sup> His description of the town in 1851 is interesting as a contemporary document.

Prairie House was situated at the entrance of the town and on one side of the National road, and was separated from the town by a common. It did not stand alone, however, as Dr. Ezra Read's house was very near on the opposite side of the road and of a little green. There was also a cluster of other houses or villas in the neighborhood that belonged to the more wealthy of the inhabitants. But from the hotel to the town there was a very disagreeable hot walk in the sun, for it was not bordered by trees. At the end of it began the High street of the town, which was lined on each side by stores. There was a square on the left hand side, where trees shaded the pavement all around from the boiling sun above. On one side of the square was the other hotel of the town, "Browne's House." It was considered to be more noisy and frequented than the Prairie House.<sup>6</sup>

The courthouse of 1850, which stood where the present one stands, is shown by an old illustration to have been a square, two-story building, similar to the old statehouse at Corydon, with a hip-roof surmounted by a slender tower which terminated in a small, round dome.<sup>7</sup> In 1849 the building and its surroundings moved one of the newspapers<sup>8</sup> to say that it was a "handsome piece of architecture surrounded by locusts and enclosed with good palings."<sup>9</sup> The north and west sides of the square were lit up, according to the account, "so as to amount almost to an illumination." That the average citizen also took pride in the square appears from the following editorial of the previous year:

"We cannot answer inquiries of XYZ about the courthouse yard. How much the county gets for pasturing horses, hogs and cows, we know not. Whether the young trees have been skinned as a matter of embellishment we cannot answer. Whether the gates are of patent swing and always closed, is one great proposition which others must answer, and not us."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Beste, *The Wabash*, 2 vols. in which he describes his travels and his stay in Terre Haute.

<sup>6</sup> Beste, *The Wabash*, II, 136-7.

<sup>7</sup> Condit, *The History of Early Terre Haute*, 67.

<sup>8</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Nov. 24, '49.

<sup>9</sup> The locust was the common ornamental tree in Terre Haute at the time, *Terre Haute Express*, May 17, 1848.

<sup>10</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Jan. 29, '48.

In response to a petition that same year, the courthouse bell was rung at noon and at 9 p. m., for which services \$80 a year was allowed.<sup>11</sup> Three years later the ringing of the evening bell was abolished, and the bell-ringer's salary was cut in two.

In 1850 this courthouse was already an old building, as buildings went in those days. For seven years it had not been considered adequate to accommodate all of the county's business, part of which was housed in a second building, known as the Town Hall, which had been put up jointly by the county and the city, near the northeast corner of Third and Ohio.<sup>12</sup> One can imagine that the city's business was not very great in 1850. At least in 1843, when the actual town hall was built, the total income of the city from taxes was \$1,089.14. The tax rate of the previous year had been ten cents on the \$100.<sup>13</sup> The rate for 1850 was fourteen cents.<sup>14</sup>

Some years before the date of our account, the block west of the courthouse square had burned down, and the present brick building had been put up.<sup>15</sup> They give a good idea of the business buildings of the time before 1850, with their long, sloping roofs divided into sections by low brick walls, from which the chimneys rise. A Catholic building, which still stands on the south side of the square, is the old State Bank, with its massive Doric portico, erected in 1834.<sup>16</sup> Fires often led to improvements in those days, and it was one of these in December, 1850<sup>17</sup> which cleared the ground for some of the brick blocks which are still standing northeast of the square.<sup>18</sup> The newspapers speak of the handsome appearance of these buildings and comment especially on the row

<sup>11</sup> April 3, '48. Council records in Oakey, *Greater Terre Haute and Vigo County*, 115.

<sup>12</sup> This latter building, which had been erected, as we read, to furnish fire proof quarters for the public records, burned down in 1864, whereupon the present building on that corner was put up, by the county. Bradsby, *History of Vigo County*, 302.

<sup>13</sup> Bradsby, *History of Vigo County*, 435.

<sup>14</sup> *Wabash Courier*, May 11, '50

<sup>15</sup> In Dec. '41 according to Oakey, *Greater Terre Haute and Vigo County*, 145.

<sup>16</sup> Now used as a museum.

<sup>17</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Dec. 9.

<sup>18</sup> Considerable building activity in this quarter is mentioned in 1850. *Wabash Courier*, Feb. 23 and Sept. 23, '50, May 3 and 31, '51.

of small, square windows in the place of those along the north side of Wabash avenue.<sup>19</sup>

The fire department was one of the most interesting features of Terre Haute in 1850. Each of the five wards had a fire warden, it appears, appointed for five years.<sup>20</sup> To obtain a quick and sufficient supply of water, the common council originally allowed \$3.00 for the first hogshead delivered at a fire, \$2.00 for the second, and \$1.00 for the third, and 25 cents for each succeeding hogshead till the fire was extinguished.<sup>21</sup> This liberal allowance was cut down, however, in 1847, to about half.<sup>22</sup>

Most of the business in 1850 was done on the streets bounding the square. What is Wabash avenue, or Main street, now, was then often spoken of as National Road street, and the present Third street was always called Market street. This street was well suited for the purposes of a market, being one hundred feet wide. In the latter part of 1849 we read of a new brick market house being erected near the canal, which had just been opened, to accommodate the north side of town.<sup>23</sup> An ordinance of the next year fixes the market hours from November till April at twelve to two o'clock, and for the rest of the year at from forty minutes before sunrise to an hour and a half after sunrise.<sup>24</sup>

New city ordinances were rather common in those years. One provided that hereafter no person or persons shall be permitted to feed horses, cows, hogs and other domestic animals upon any of the sidewalks of the town of Terre Haute, under a penalty of one dollar with costs of suit for each and every offense.<sup>25</sup> Soon after this the sign boards hanging across the streets were ordered taken down. It must have been a serious state of things whose abatement moved the editor of the *Courier* to the following effusion: "We can now see daylight from one end of the street to the other. Before it was a hard matter to look through canvas, plank, tin and sheet iron, not to say anything about the danger of

<sup>19</sup> *Wabash Courier*, June 28, '51.

<sup>20</sup> Bradsby, *History of Vigo County*, 450.

<sup>21</sup> Bradsby, *History of Vigo County*, 450.

<sup>22</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, Mar. 3, '47.

<sup>23</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Nov. 24, '49.

<sup>24</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, Mar. 3, '47.

<sup>25</sup> *Wabash Courier*, May 8, 50'.

becoming cross-eyed from the inequality of the posts and lettering."<sup>26</sup> Another ordinance that same summer was to remove the hitching posts from the north side of the square.<sup>27</sup> This was followed promptly by still another against letting horses or cattle stand on the sidewalks, and against hitching them to the paling of the courthouse fence.<sup>28</sup>

There seems to have been an ordinance also against letting your team run away in town. At least we read of two men being fined \$10.00 apiece for that offense, which was later reduced to \$5.00 by the city council, "owing to extenuating circumstances."<sup>29</sup> On August 30, 1848, the *Express* says that frightened horses in harness "split past the office like lightning once a week on the average."

The extent of the city's business is roughly apparent from the fact that in 1843 there were one hundred and twelve establishments carrying on forty-three kinds of business, which ranged, as our informant says, "from gunsmiths to plowers."<sup>30</sup> The great variety of different kinds of business in such a small town is remarkable, but it was part of the necessary condition of things before the time of railroads, when each community had to be more or less self-sufficing. Some kinds of business found in 1850 are extinct, or nearly so, in Terre Haute today. The directory of 1858 still has the following: Boat builder, brass founder, cooper, dealer in cooper's tools, coppersmith, fur and skin dealer, gunsmith, rope maker, soap and candle manufacturer, and a woolen factory. Photographers were just coming in in 1850, but they were usually called Daguerrean artists.

The most extensive business in 1850 was pork-packing, not only in Terre Haute, but at all the towns, large and small, up and down the Wabash river. The meat was packed in barrels, usually, and shipped to New Orleans and other towns on the rivers in flatboats. Altogether, nearly 10,000,000 pounds of pork and lard were said to have been shipped down

<sup>26</sup> May 5, '51.

<sup>27</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Aug. 23, '51.

<sup>28</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Aug. 30, '51.

<sup>29</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, July 12, '48.

<sup>30</sup> Bradby, *History of Vigo County*, 434. The information is from a memorandum deposited in the corner-stone of the town hall, by S. P. Crawford, the treasurer of the town from 1832-1852.

the Wabash in a year.<sup>31</sup> The number of hogs packed in the various towns nearby in the year of 1850-1 is given as follows:

Terre Haute <sup>32</sup> -----	66,600	Montezuma -----	5,000
Graysville -----	13,000	Durkee's Ferry -----	5,000
Vincennes -----	11,000	Hutsonville -----	4,400
Clinton -----	10,000	Merom -----	1,700
Newport -----	5,000	Darwin <sup>33</sup> -----	1,200

The only other town on the Wabash which packed over 10,000 hogs was Lafayette, with 38,600. Nearly 24,000 of the hogs killed in Terre Haute were, according to the toll-keepers of the wagon bridge, driven across the river in the last seven months of 1850, along with over 13,000 beef cattle.<sup>34</sup> The pork-packing establishments in the city were located on the river front, north and south of the bridge, which at that time crossed the river from the foot of Ohio street. The cooperage business was located just east of the slaughter houses. In 1848 the coopers had formed a union here to maintain a uniform price for barrels.<sup>35</sup>

The advertisements of the time give a somewhat vivid picture of the city's business life. A distinct feature was the amount of space taken by firms in wholesale centers, like Louisville, Cincinnati, New Orleans and others, where the merchants of Terre Haute went from time to time to replenish their stock. These advertisements were surpassed in size and impressiveness only by those of patent medicines. But the art of advertising, as we understand it, was not yet highly developed. Only a few as yet used large type, and the illustrations, as a rule, were stecco-typed—a settee and a few chairs with curved legs for furniture, a five-story playhouse for a hotel, a phoenix rising out of the flames for fire insurance, etc. But what the advertisements lacked in typographical display, they often made up in other ways, and, on the whole, they surpassed those of today as a steady diet for reading. The language of the ordinary advertisement strikes

<sup>31</sup> *Wabash Courier*, June 29, '50.

<sup>32</sup> A few years later it was over 100,000, Oakey, *Greater Terre Haute and Vigo County*, 202.

<sup>33</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Feb. 1, '51.

<sup>34</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Jan. 4, '51.

<sup>35</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, Jan. 12, '48. Their example was followed by the carpenters with an agreement not to work for less than \$1.25 a day. *Terre Haute Express*, May 10, '48.

one at present as unnecessarily formal and dignified. It is as if a southern grandee were inviting his friends to a social function or apprising them of a birth or a wedding. It must have been a time curiously distant from ours, if not in years, at least in tone, when a man might hope to get more purchasers for his groceries by beginning them with a Latin quotation. Suppose he had candles made of lard which he wanted people to know were better than those made of tallow. He began in Latin: "Ex porko dare lucem," and continued, seriously enough, without a suspicion that he might be putting forth that which was hog-Latin on at least two counts.<sup>36</sup> Another, appealing to more dignified motives, begins with "Quod contemnitur, saepe utilissimum est," and proceeds to say that "Thos. H. Hearn takes pleasure in notifying his customers that he has just received a large and well-selected stock of confectionery, etc., candies—extracts—fish—toys." He also offers to furnish "bread and bait." His bakery is a place "where wedding cake may be obtained from that kind which suits the most luxurious to the humble sort with which 'love in a cottage' is content."<sup>37</sup> We read in another place:

"The undersigned, thankful for the liberal patronage which he has received, and anxious to merit and receive further favors, would say that he is still manufacturing wagons, carts, drays, and all kinds of heavy vehicles on short notice and of the very best materials the country can furnish . . . Having been raised to the business of blacksmithing and depending on it for a support, I am always willing to work for anything. I agree to take produce in pay, whether calicoes or ribbons or otherwise, and my work shall be equal to that of the biggest blower in the state."

Still another wants "any quantity of otter, deer, mink, wildcat, house cat, fox, coon, wolf, lynx, opossum, martin, and rabbit skins."

It would be a mistake to think that the inhabitants of Terre Haute in 1850 had to go without most of the luxuries of the present age. Here is what one of the merchants has just brought from Cincinnati:

"Domestic and imported candies, nuts in all their variety, mushroom, walnut, John Bull, and lemon sauces; sardines, lobsters, mackerel, cod, salmon, clams, pigeon, oysters, fresh and hermetically sealed; foreign and

<sup>36</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Nov. 29, '51.

<sup>37</sup> *Wabash Courier*, May 26, '49.

<sup>38</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, Dec. 30, '46.

domestic pickles of every kind; Ohio, Kentucky, Baltimore and Boston mustard; Western Reserve, Cream Durham and Pine Apple cheese; perfumery, a complete stock; and figs, raisins, citrons, Zante currants and dates—all fresh etc., etc.,<sup>39</sup>

A detailed statement of how many dozens or hundreds of each article a man had on hand was also a common advertisement—200 dozen thimbles, 20 dozen pocket knives, 50 dozen horn combs, 30 gross suspender buttons, 200 dozen bars of shaving soap, and so on, through a list of some thirty articles. One drug store, in its advertisement, claims to give the exact amount in stock of all different articles it has for sale.<sup>40</sup> This statement of the amount of an article in stock was especially common in the case of the various brands of cigars, or “segars,” as they usually called them at that time.

There were at least nine churches in Terre Haute in 1850, and thirteen in 1858, at the time of the first directory.<sup>41</sup> They tried to raise money much as they do now. We read of permission given the ladies of the Baptist church to have a “strawberry feast” in the town hall. A little later another church obtained the hall for a “raspberry doings.”<sup>42</sup> If in this respect the churches were like our own, they were different in their insistence on dogma. Sometimes a regular debate occurred, such as that between E. M. Knapp and Elder W. Begg in the Universalist church (corner Fourth and Ohio), which was to begin on Monday evening and, presumably, to continue through the week.<sup>43</sup> The great question was, “Do the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament Teach the Ultimate Happiness of All Mankind?” Revivals were common. In December, 1850, we read that “an excitement in the shape of religious inquiry has been going on for many nights at Universalist Jewett’s, Universalist Cheever’s and the Methodist Churches.”<sup>44</sup>

The ministers were called upon to perform the function of public speakers and lecturers to a larger extent than now.

<sup>39</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Jan. 26, '50.

<sup>40</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, May 21, '48.

<sup>41</sup> The memorandum of S. P. Crawford for 1843 says there were nine in that year.

<sup>42</sup> Council records for May, '51, in Oakey, *Greater Terre Haute and Vigo County*, 117.

<sup>43</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Mar. 3, '49.

<sup>44</sup> *Wabash Courier*, May 20, '48.

Some like half of the lectures in the courses given in Terre Haute at the time were by the ministers of the city and nearby towns. When a minister left his charge to go elsewhere, he sometimes preached two farewell sermons, one to the citizens as a whole, and the other to his congregation. Ministers were also called upon to deliver commemorative addresses of one kind and another. For example, upon the request of the city council, Rev. M. A. Jewett delivered a eulogy on J. Q. Adams, which was said by the paper to have been "in his usual style—grand and imposing" and to have "enlisted the profoundest attention of the whole audience."<sup>45</sup>

This Mr. Jewett, who served the Congregational church for twenty-six years, was the immediate predecessor of Lyman Abbott, who came to Terre Haute in 1860. Mr. Jewett was in the habit of handing in his resignation from time to time. This, as his successor explains, was his way of asking for a vote of confidence.<sup>46</sup> He did so in 1849, but the reason was not by all believed to be the one given by Mr. Abbott. The more worldly-minded editor of one of the papers, who may not have known much about parliamentary government, says "the reason was suspicioned to be not money enough."<sup>47</sup> However that may be, Mr. Jewett remained in Terre Haute for another eleven years. He filled a large place in the early church life of the city, among other things conducting a revival here in 1847 with Henry Ward Beecher, who came over from his Indianapolis pulpit to assist him.<sup>48</sup>

The schools of Terre Haute in 1850 would be perhaps harder to recognize than anything else. It seems almost incredible that it was only in 1860 that schools supported by taxation came to Terre Haute to stay.<sup>49</sup> There had been such schools for one year, 1853-4, but the venture was obstructed by injunctions and the like. The city had bought the old seminary building, which stood on the site of the present State normal school, and had rented two houses besides. But the trustees evidently grew sick of their thankless job and gave it up after a year's trial.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>45</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Dec. 21, '50.

<sup>46</sup> Lyman Abbott, "Reminiscences," *Outlook*, Sept. 23, 1914, 207.

<sup>47</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Nov. 12, '49.

<sup>48</sup> Lyman Abbott, "Reminiscences," *Outlook*, Sept. 23, 1914, 207.

<sup>49</sup> Bradsby, *History of Vigo County*, 528.

<sup>50</sup> Bradsby, *History of Vigo County*, 528.

In 1850 education was still on a par with selling soap and bacon. Anyone with the price of an advertisement in his pocket might set up to teach. Sometimes a committee of some sort undertook to establish a school and hired the teachers, or, at least, encouraged them, to embark on the undertaking themselves. The work was carried on much as that of music teachers and business colleges is now. It should be stated that the city provided school buildings which were rented to teachers before it hired the teachers themselves. The seminary building just mentioned is a case in point. This building was nearly completed on September 1, 1847, and in an advertisement of that date is offered for the use of teachers free of charge.<sup>51</sup> Most of the teachers, to judge from the advertisements, seem to have held their classes in the basements of churches.

One of the most ambitious ventures of the kind was the Vigo Collegiate Institute, which was advertised to open on January 10, 1848.<sup>52</sup> The tuition was \$16.00 a term (22 weeks) for elementary pupils. A female department was opened a few weeks later, with a Professor Saule as a preceptor. This gentleman continued as a teacher in Terre Haute for a number of years, and his entry upon his new position was heralded in the advertisement as follows:

"The distinguished reputation which Professor Saule has acquired in this community as a gentleman of literary, scientific and classical attainments will secure for this appointment the cordial approval of an intelligent public."<sup>53</sup>

One month later still, the complete faculty of the institute appears in the advertising columns as follows:

E. Thompson Baird, Esq., president and professor of classical literature, mental and moral philosophy and physical science. John B. L. Saule, professor of belles lettres, English, literature, and general history. William L. Baird, professor of mathematics.

In another three weeks a tutor of German was added and in two months more a tutor in English and an instructor in music.

<sup>51</sup> In the *Terre Haute Express*.

<sup>52</sup> *Wabash Courner*, Jan. 8, '48.

<sup>53</sup> *Wabash Courner*, Jan. 29, '48.

The first catalogue, issued after six months, showed the following students:

Male College .....	33
Male Preparatory .....	20
Female College .....	24
Female Preparatory .....	12

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One term after the opening of the institute they were all to put up a commencement with the usual string of orations and essays. The subjects of these were: Ambition as connected with Vice, Liberty, Genius, America, The Progress of the West.

There were in existence in Terre Haute about the same time a Vigo Female Seminary, a Wabash Female Seminary, a Terre Haute Select School, a select Female School, and a St. Vincent's Academy for young ladies. The last named gave instruction in the elementary branches, German, piano, drawing, oil painting, oriental painting and the making of artificial flowers. The tuition ranged from \$3.00 a quarter for the last named accomplishment to \$8.00 for piano and drawing.<sup>55</sup>

There were a number of individual teachers, also, who offered instruction in various specialties. Whatever the value of their instruction, their ability to advertise their wares was considerable. One Mr. De Grand Val, who obtained the town hall in May, 1848, for instruction in dancing, offered to put the capsheaf on his benefactions in August by bringing a museum to Terre Haute<sup>56</sup> Another, who offered instruction in small sword exercises, conceived of his art broadly, offering "to teach juvenile class in this exercise, connected with oratorical and poetical actions, gestures and positions."<sup>57</sup> Still another offered a course in penmanship with a gold ring as a premium "for the most improvement."<sup>58</sup> A course in English grammar was also offered (\$3.00 for 30 lessons) in the same year by one who had previously advertised an improvement in teaching as follows:

<sup>54</sup> *Wabash Courner*, July 15, '48.

<sup>55</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Jan. 20, '49.

<sup>56</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, Aug. 23, '48.

<sup>57</sup> *Wabash Courner*, Mar. 10, '49.

<sup>58</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Mar. 9, '49.

"Mnemonical Seminary. Great Improvement in the Art of Teaching. The undersigned, having recently made several important improvements in his system of teaching English grammar, geography and natural philosophy, such as singing, which enables the pupil to commit to memory with great facility, reading and reciting in concert, by which stammering and incorrect pronunciation are prevented; and the science of mnemonics which strengthens the memory, so as to enable him to collect with ease the most important dates of history and the offices of the different parts of speech, would respectfully inform the ladies and gentlemen of this place and vicinity that he will commence a course of lectures on the above sciences on Monday next and continue them for three months. Terms, \$2.00 per month."<sup>59</sup>

In May, 1850, Mrs. Leggett's school for girls was advertised to open in the basement of the Baptist church. This had expanded by August into Mr. and Mrs. Leggett's school for young ladies and gentlemen, as well as for misses and boys, which offered to teach geography, arithmetic and grammar for \$3.00 a quarter and history and natural science for \$4.00, and Latin, Greek or French for \$5.00 a quarter in addition. A Terre Haute Institute for Young Ladies was started in 1851, which offered to give them physical instruction and maternal care. St. Mary's of the Woods, now an important institution on the other side of the river, was already well established in 1850, and a long list of the prizes given by it in the different branches was regularly published in the newspapers.

Institutions on the outside also advertised a good deal, among others the Western Military Institute of Georgetown, Ky., and the Memphis Institute, which had a medical and a law department. It is noteworthy that both of these were in the south.

In December, 1851, James Hook, trustee of District number 5, advertised the opening of school for the benefit of that district in the basement of the Baptist church. The instruction was put in charge of a Mr. Tilly and a Miss Young, and "McGuffey's Works" were to be used.<sup>60</sup> This last item seemed like the beginning of a new order.

The old order had, to judge from the evidence, been dominated to a degree by the idea of accomplishments, especially feminine accomplishments. It was, in other words, truly

<sup>59</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, Sept. 1, '47.

<sup>60</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Dec. 27, '51.

southern. In spite of current opinion to the contrary, one is inclined to think that in 1850 the women bulked larger in Terre Haute than they do now—there had been a lecture on “Woman’s Rights,” by a Miss Hunt, as early as 1847—and it is no wonder that we find comments in the papers like the following: “Why is a lady like a locomotive?<sup>61</sup> The answer is: Because she emits sparks, draws a train, transports the males (mails) and says to the tender :Pine (k)not.”<sup>62</sup>

The conundrum business had quite a run at the time. There is an advertisement in the *Wabash Courier* for February 12, 1848, offering “a splendid gold pencil” to the author of the best original conundrum. The offer was made by the agent for the Lable Harmonicas, who was giving entertainments at the Stewart House (Second and Main). All the conundrums were to be read at the evening performance. Of the entertainment, the paper says, a week later:

“Our people have had their laugh, spent their money and learned to make conundrums. Nearly everything is turned into a conundrum, and like many other things in this world, we suppose conundrums will have their day.”

The paper was not mistaken. They did have their day. The following, among others, bears internal evidence of the date of its origin: “Why is a lawyer like a sawyer? Because whichever way he goes, down must come the dust.” Sometimes one of these questions excited an interest which was nation-wide. In 1849 a request ran through the papers asking for an explanation of the passage of Genesis (19,11), where it says that “Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept.” The information sought was why he should have done such an unreasonable thing on such an occasion. The *Wabash Courier* of June 9, 1849, published thirteen reasons which had been given by as many newspapers over the country, each answer being based on the preceding and showing why it must be wrong and its own answer right.

The temperance movement seems to have been strong in Terre Haute about that time also. There were local branches of both the “Sons of Temperance” and the “Cadets of Temperance,” each of which had a hall for its meetings. They

<sup>61</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, Feb. 17, '47.

<sup>62</sup> *Wabash Courier*, April 15, '48.

received considerable attention as organizations, especially the latter. We read of their being especially invited to Sunday school anniversaries,<sup>63</sup> of having Professor Saule read his temperance poem to them, and of voting their thanks for a dinner given them at the Eagle hotel (Third and Mulberry).<sup>64</sup> It is even on record that Harrison township (in which Terre Haute is located) voted against licenses in 1848.<sup>65</sup> In 1843, we are informed by a contemporary, in a document deposited in the corner stone of the old town hall, the saloons, or "coffee-houses," as he calls them, had been reduced to three, "which were scarcely able to pay expenses." A "Washington" temperance society, which had been started the year before, had 500 members in a few days. "Liquor, as a beverage," he says, "is almost unknown."<sup>66</sup>

Among the organizations of Terre Haute in 1850 should be mentioned one called the "Atalantian Litterate." They had well-furnished club-rooms and a library, and maintained a course of lectures during the winter.<sup>67</sup> The course beginning January, 1849, was to contain "six to ten lectures on literary, philosophical and historical subjects," to be given in the society's hall at 7:30 o'clock, and was to cost \$1.00 for a gentleman or a family.<sup>68</sup> Whether single females were admitted free or excluded, is not stated. But, no doubt, they went in with the family, for a boarder always counted as one of the family where he stayed.

The subjects of these lectures and of others given about that time, are of some interest as showing what people wanted or were willing to hear in those days. Among them are "California," "The Mission of America," "Pythagoras," "The History of Epidemics," "The Siege of Troy," "The Age of Chivalry," "The Statesman," "Rome," "The Vision of Daniel," "The Bright and Morning Star," "The Early History of the Wabash Valley," "Poetry: Its Nature and Influence," "Hungary and Kossuth," "The Influence of Discoveries in Physical Science on Civilization." Other societies also maintained

<sup>63</sup> *Wabash Courier*, May 18, '50.

<sup>64</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Mar. 3, '49.

<sup>65</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, June 7, '48.

<sup>66</sup> Memorandum of S. P. Crawford, from Bradsby, *History of Vigo County*, 434.

<sup>67</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, Nov. 1, '47.

<sup>68</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Jan. 20, '49.

courses, as for example, the "Mechanic's Historical Society." Many of the lectures were by local men, ministers, teachers, doctors, and others.

Other entertainments, somewhat less academic, were also frequent. In 1849 a Mr. Jackson gave a series of entertainments at the courthouse consisting of invitations of prominent actors and orators, both political and ecclesiastic. They were reported to be considered "first class" by those who knew the originals, and to have given "great satisfaction to persons who appreciate that class of entertainment."<sup>69</sup>

There was also an exhibition of an oxyhydrogen microscope in the town hall, and a vocal concert by the Higgins family for two nights. These performers were said to have "conducted themselves with great modesty." "It would be good," says the reporter, "to have a conscience as clear as Mrs. Higgins' voice."<sup>70</sup> Then there was a panoramic exhibition of the Hudson river and scenes from Virginia—with 9,400 yards of canvas, which was said to have been "pronounced by artists and critics to be the best work of art ever presented to the public."<sup>71</sup> It was the time when people were interested in phrenology, also, and a certain Anton gave lectures "for a small fee" in Terre Haute on the subject. He also gave charts and examined heads at Browns hotel (on the square), presumably for a larger fee. Of four entertainments about the same time, the lectures on phrenology, a lecture on phonetics, the exhibition of paintings and a company of minstrels, the lectures on phrenology were pronounced the most interesting.<sup>72</sup>

There were a number of concerts, and finally a "Grand Concert," to be given by one Okah Tubbee, an Indian, who was heralded as "the greatest natural musician in the known world." He put up at the Prairie House and was charged 25 cents, and, as the paper puts it, "goes it strong on natural principles and plays exquisitely on several instruments." Nor was this all. He had, in addition, real Indian medicine for sale, which would cure some two dozen of the major ailments of mankind, from bronchitis to cancer and from white swell-

<sup>69</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Mar. 17, '49.

<sup>70</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Nov. 24, '49.

<sup>71</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Mar. 8, '51.

<sup>72</sup> *Wabash Courier*, May 10, '51.

ing and toothache to fits.<sup>73</sup> Though he threatened to stay but a few days, his advertisement appeared in the *Wabash Courier* for several months.

The desire of the people to be humbugged was further satisfied by the circus, the barbecue, the camp-meeting, and last but not least, by patent medicines. There were two or three circuses in Terre Haute each year, and, to judge from their names alone, they must have surpassed each other and everything else. One of them, for example, was Mabel's Grand Olympic Arena and United States Circus. As for political meetings, one was held at Fort Harrison, a short distance north of town in 1848, during the Taylor campaign, at which a crowd was present estimated at from 15,000 to 30,000 people. They were all fed on the grounds, and it took three speakers, addressing them simultaneously, to give them all a chance to hear.<sup>74</sup> General Taylor himself, who had been in command during the "battle" of Fort Harrison in 1812, had been invited to come, but had sent his regrets.<sup>75</sup>

The Fourth of July celebrations usually consisted of processions of the Sunday school children, beginning in some cases as early as seven in the morning, a meeting at which there were songs, the reading of the Declaration of Independence, an oration and prayer, and then a dinner spread in the basements of the churches or in the courthouse yard. There was often a second meeting with speeches later in the day, and even a third, on one occasion at least, in the greenwood north of town, with still another collation. Verily, eating and listening to speeches was the order of the day. The event was usually planned by a meeting of the young men at the town hall several weeks beforehand.<sup>76</sup>

Yet the stimulus furnished by these occasions was, after all, but temporary. They still left some 350 days of the year unprovided for. And with the incredible success of the Laws of Temperance and their like in making Terre Haute a place where "liquor as a beverage is almost unknown" it might have gone hard with the population if they had not had a substitute. But they had, and they had it in amazing abund-

<sup>73</sup> *Wabash Courier*, May 17, '51.

<sup>74</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, Sept. 6, '48.

<sup>75</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Aug. 19, '48.

<sup>76</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Aug. 19, '48.

ance and variety. The only big advertisers of 1850 were the makers of patent medicine. They were the only ones, apparently, who could afford a whole column of space, year in and year out. Their name was liquor, they could cure anything, and they spoke with authority.<sup>77</sup> Other quacks appeared in person and offered to "cure all diseases left uncured by the modern and more fashionable practice" and to guarantee satisfaction for \$10.00.<sup>78</sup>

One gets the feeling in reading the papers of the period that the regular practitioner existed largely by sufferance. He did not have the good sense to collect his pay while the patient was still exhilarated, as the patent medicine man did, and so, frequently, he got none. The papers are full of requests for the payment of doctor's bills. One of them even seems to have thought that he could escape the general fate by foreign travel, at least this is what he put in the paper:

"Fair Warning. Having determined to travel during the next two or three years, those indebted will find it to their advantage to call on me within ten days and pay, or make such arrangements as reason may dictate. All seven or eight year old demands *must* be attended to without delay."

Yet, in spite of these drawbacks, many of the doctors were men of good education and high character. A fine specimen of this class was Dr. Ezra Read, who is said to have been a classical scholar, who carried the *Iliad* about in his pocket, and a generally well-read man, to whom both French and English authors were familiar. It was he who had been recommended as the city's best physician to the English gentleman already referred to, who fell ill at the Prairie House in 1851 and who speaks of him as a bright and intelligent companion and devoted to his profession and his patients. It was, to be sure, rather hard for an English gentleman to become accustomed to the doctor's keeping his hat on when he entered the patient's room and to several other peculiarities which he shared with the professional men of the frontier. Of one of these we shall let him give his own account:

<sup>77</sup> *Terre Haute Express*, June 16 and July 7, '47, June 28, '48.

<sup>78</sup> See, for instance, the statement of the Graefenburg Company in the *Wabash Courier*, Jan. 15, '48, which is only a sample of many.

"Poor Dr. Read! he was a thorough American, and proud of being so. Lying in bed with the door of my room open, owing to the heat of the weather, I used to hear his well-known step and the sounds which denoted that he was clearing his throat and spitting on the stairs before he entered my room. He had found out that we did not like the process to be carried on before us; and after this preparation he was not often obliged to have recourse to it in our presence."<sup>79</sup>

Assuming the attitude of the critical investigator, we are obliged to say that this account is not entirely free from flaws. For what tobacco-chewer ever had to clear his throat in order to spit on the stairs?

Of the hotels of Terre Haute, at least to judge from an old illustration, one is still standing in the same condition as in 1850. This is the one on the east side of South Third street, between Walnut and Ohio, then known as the City hotel and later as Buntin's. In the 50s it was perhaps the most important hotel in town, being the starting point of the stage coaches.<sup>80</sup> The Prairie House at Seventh and Main was, to judge from an illustration, a four-story building with a flat, straight front. In 1850, as we have seen, it stood at a distance from the town. Its location so far away, was no doubt due to the fact that Chauncey Rose, who had, in 1837, bought the half section of land between Seventh and Thirteenth, wanted to draw the town in that direction.<sup>81</sup> What sort of accommodations might be obtained here in 1851 is vividly described in Mr. Beste's book:

"Mr. Bunting, our fat landlord, dressed in the height of fashion, and with carving knife and fork in hand, politely guided us to our places, and then took his own stand at the side-table, which groaned under a profusion of apparently well-cooked joints. Our respectable-looking negro waiter was in the room; and ten or a dozen lads (white) of ages varying from 12 to 15 years, and dressed in white jackets, but without shoes or stockings, ran about the room, and tumbled over one another in their eagerness, looking more like school-boys playing at leap-frog than like waiters at a worshipful dinner table. Immediately one of the smallest of the boys sprang to me and exclaimed in my ear, as fast as he could articulate the words: What will you take? Roast mutton, boiled beef, roast lamb, veal

<sup>79</sup> Beste, *The Wabash*, II, 123.

<sup>80</sup> Of Clark's Hotel (First and Ohio) the lower story is still standing, and now is used as a blacksmith shop.

<sup>81</sup> He had built the hotel soon after the purchase. After a years trial, however, it was obliged to stand vacant for eight years, and was not opened again till 1849. Condit, *History of Early Terre Haute*, 75. An account of its reopening is found in the *Wabash Courier*, May 12, '49.

pie, chicken pie, roast fowls or pigeons? I made my selection out of the few of the words of his gabble that I could then understand and he fetched me something as different as possible from that which I had asked for."<sup>82</sup>

"There was a chambermaid, who, without assistance, made all the beds in the house, and did all the work of a chambermaid; she was a Dutch-woman and went about the house without shoes or stockings. One woman was kept to make all the pastry, pancakes, etc., and another to wash the dishes and cups and saucers. One constant laundress was kept; and on washing days two others were hired to help her. All these, except Mrs. Bunting's own maid, were barefooted. Then here was Anthony, the black cook, the black steward who had charge of the six waiter boys, an Irishman whose only work seemed to be sleeping in the bar and taking charge of the ice, and answering with rudeness when spoken to, and another Irishman, who had to bring wood into the kitchen."<sup>83</sup>

"Every other day when they took the inventory of the hotel plate, a dirty waiterboy rapped at my door and popped his head in, exclaiming: 'Got any spoons?' and if the amount was not easily found below he would venture again and again with the same demand, insisting that we must have two or one, or whatever was the number missing. I never succeeded in catching this little blackguard by the ear, though I often tried to do so and a regular war on the subject of these spoons was established between us."<sup>84</sup>

What did the people of Terre Haute think and talk about, and how did they behave and amuse themselves in 1850? This has been partly answered already, for they think and talk largely about what they see and hear from day to day, and what comes in the way of their business. The highest culture of the people, if we may call it so, was essentially southern. Nearly all of Terre Haute's early commercial dealings and a large number of her people had come from there. In a general way this crops out at many points. For instance, we read a little piece in the paper about the etiquette of the umbrella:

"If you meet a lady in the rain without an umbrella, you should not give her yours, but escort her home. If you meet two, give them your umbrella, but let them go alone. This holds whether you know them or not."

"Christmas Day," we read in another place, "passed off very agreeable. The weather was fine, enabling all to go out who felt inclined. Some went to church and some took eggnog.

<sup>82</sup> Beste, *The Wabash*, II, 3.

<sup>83</sup> Beste, *The Wabash*, II, 74.

<sup>84</sup> Beste, *The Wabash*, II, 67.

Altogether, we believe it was a merry Christmas".<sup>85</sup> Most characteristic are the ever-recurring editorials on spring.

"Spring is coming, spring with her lap full of flowers and her lips ruddy with the enjoyment of maple molasses; spring with warbling birds, frisking lambs and bawling calves; spring with her swelling buds and verdant fields; spring which arouses the husbandman from his winter's lethargy; spring which weakens the joints of the loafer; spring with the house-cleaning, scouring and brushing. This veritable spring is coming, yea, is now here."<sup>86</sup>

Sometimes the editor's exuberance carried him so far that he had to be called down by his rival on the other paper, as in the following editorial, entitled "Sleighbing:"

"Mr. Ruggles of the Pavillion Stables had some fine teams. He drives them six-in-hand with great skill. For several days during the snow Mr. Ruggles' big sleigh and six were seen flying through our streets loaded with ladies and gentlemen. On Saturday last we were politely invited to a seat with a dozen of the real some, and had a delightful time riding two miles out the National road and back. It was capital, and the ease with which the six were turned, just at the driver's will, was admirable."<sup>87</sup>

We do not know just what his rival said to this, but he must have said something, for one week later the writer of the editorial on "Sleighbing" had to take part of it back, while at the same time countering handsomely at his apparent rival:

"Well, we acknowledge the six-horse sleigh, but the editor of the *Journal* was in first. We took him for Martin Van Buren with his whiskers shaved off, just starting on a Free Soil expedition. But the gravity of Martin was soon lost in the frolic. The fact is we never saw a day so brim full of sleigh-poetry. From the rocks of the Canal to Congress Corner it was all one blaze of glory."

Such was editorial amenity in 1850. Or was it all only a brave way of getting over a loss of dignity brought upon them both alike by the redoubtable Mr. Ruggles?

In more ways than one, 1850 was the end of one period and the beginning of another. The time when gentlemen wore stocks and dickeys and strapped their pantaloons under their boots, when "girls on skates would have been a phenomenon," when all men chewed fine-cut and the spittoon stood in the family pew, and where red-nosed deacons were not un-

<sup>85</sup> *Wabash Courier*, April 21, '49.

<sup>86</sup> *Wabash Courier*, February 23, '50.

<sup>87</sup> *Wabash Courier*, December 28, '50.

common, was about to pass away. Quite naturally, in such a time of breaking-up, some extremes of behavior were indulged in. Quite a stir was made at the time, among other things, by a certain Miss Webber's advocacy of male attire for women. Female dress, she said, had been invented by man as part of his tyranny. She advocated that trousers should be worn by women till marriage and by widows till married again.<sup>88</sup> This was evidently an extreme form of the bloomer agitation, which filled the papers of the time. Mr. Beste, surely our most incorruptible witness, says that he actually saw two women wearing bloomers on the streets of New York, but nowhere else. But with the help of his friend and physician, Dr. Read, he is able to give us the following authentic account of the ravages of the epidemic in Terre Haute.

"Now it seems that the ladies of Terre Haute were as anxious as any editor among them to see themselves in the new costume and to decide whether it was as becoming as it was represented to be. About a score of them agreed to have dresses made according to the new pattern; and these were privately sent to Mrs. Read's house, that they might dress themselves there, and together judge of one another's charms. The arrangements were made with much mystery. Mrs. Read was to give a party, but the initiated ladies alone were to be invited. On no account was a pair of male trousers to be admitted.

"The ladies met. Twenty pair of feet cased in the smallest possible shoes, attached to twenty ankles decked in the finest possible silk stockings, peeped from under twenty pair of the largest possible Turkish trousers; twenty parti-colored polkas, waistcoats and jackets, got in twenty as small waists and as swelling busts as Terre Haute could furnish. They were all in high glee, and pirouetted and turned one another about admiringly, half regretting that they had so rigorously excluded anyone of the male sex. The door opened and Dr. Read walked in. Twenty screams uprose from twenty blushing throats.

"'Ladies', said the doctor sententiously, 'It is impossible that you should be judges in your own cause. Surely gentlemen should be admitted to say how the new dress affects them? The screams and pirouettes redoubled. The forty shoes, the forty stockings, the twenty Turkish trousers, ran and skipped about the room—some hiding themselves behind window curtains, some crouching behind sofas—till Mrs. Read kindly pointed the way into her own room. They all betook themselves there and double-locked the door, while the doctor came over to the hotel and told us what sport he had had.'<sup>89</sup>

<sup>88</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Sept. 7, '50.

<sup>89</sup> Beste, *The Wabash*, II, 144ff.

In spite of such temporary aberrations, however, life in Terre Haute must on the whole have been eminently proper. In the winter of 1850-51 it was thought worth recording that a new species of entertainment was coming in, that of "happening in," which was beginning to supersede the old-fashioned parties.<sup>90</sup> Such parties as we read of were extreme in their innocence. One occurred, for instance, at Judge S. B. Gookins' place on Strawberry Hill.<sup>91</sup> This was far outside of town at the time, so that when the judge moved there he had been obliged to resign his seat in the city council. The party was for the Sunday school children of Mr. Jewett's church, together with a number of "more adult folk." There were strawberries, ice cream and cake, a promenade on the lawn, and music. The naughtiness came a little later, and, as the paper hints, surreptitiously. "Perhaps," we read, "in the absence of Mrs. Gookins, and after the stars arose, there may have been a little of the 'light fantastic toe' on the grass. But all was retired and quiet by early bed-time."

Of Mrs. Read and her family we have the following picture by the somewhat prejudiced daughters of the English gentleman whom we have already referred to.

"Mrs. Read was a very good sample of an American lady. She was very languishing, indolent and affected in her way of speaking. She spent most of the day in her white dressing gown and slippers. She spoilt her children dreadfully, and was often ashamed that we should see how little they obeyed her. She was, however, well educated, and played the piano very well, and she was a really kind-hearted, good-natured person, who meant to do everything for the best when she could make up her mind to leave the sofa or the rocking chair, where she spent most of her time. Her daughter was a clever girl. She, too, played and sang very well for her age, and she danced nicely. In the more solid parts of her education her mother used to complain that she was sadly wanting."<sup>92</sup>

This picture is considerably relieved by the fact that another one of the English girls tell us that Mrs. Read had to wash and mend all the clothes of the five children of her husband and of his brother, who was visiting them.

"These two, she said, insisted on having a clean shirt every day. Her help never assisted her in anything except in ironing and in taking the entire charge of the kitchen."<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Feb. 1, '51.

<sup>91</sup> *Wabash Courier*, May 31, '51.

<sup>92</sup> Beste, *The Wabash*, II, 97.

<sup>93</sup> Beste, *The Wabash*, II, 98.

Gum-chewing among the girls was already very common in 1850, and this naturally struck the English girls quite as much as the habit of the men to sit with their chairs tilted back and their feet on the window sill or the table. "All the young ladies at Terre Haute," one of them writes, "and, I suppose, all over America, chew Burgundy pitch, as the gentlemen chew tobacco."<sup>94</sup>

Crime was not common in 1850, to judge from what got into the local papers. We read of several murders, but always out in the country or in adjoining counties. The worst that the papers offered in town is suspected incendiarism and, once, in 1849, the *Wabash Courier* has this editorial:

"We hear of some alarm about town on account of recent attempts to break into dwellings after dark. It is very possible that some fooling is going on, which will lead to the death or disgrace of some one. Fire-arms are prepared, and it may be well not to carry this matter of house-breaking too far, just at this particular time."<sup>95</sup>

The "matter" was really more serious than that, as appears from the fact that the council offered a reward of \$50 for the arrest and conviction of every offender.<sup>96</sup>

As we have said, the old times were beginning to pass away. In 1851, two of the Terre Haute papers, the *Wabash Courier* and the *Express*, started daily editions.<sup>97</sup> It was inevitable that the latter should soon consume most of the editor's time, and the carefully selected clippings with all sorts of odds and ends of information, which had filled the front page of the weekly edition, must soon have largely disappeared. With them, no doubt, went the custom which the *Courier*, at least, practiced consistently, and the *Express* at intervals, of publishing from two to four poems in the first column of each issue. Instead of an institution and a friend, the paper became a convenience, and, while subscriptions were then no doubt more promptly paid, it no longer had a flavor about it which reminded you that there was a common standard of behavior which did not need to be enforced.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Beste, *The Wabash*, II, 92.

<sup>95</sup> Aug. 25.

<sup>96</sup> Council records in Oakey, *Greater Terre Haute and Vigo County*, 116.

<sup>97</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Dec. 6, '51; Condit, *History of Early Terre Haute*, 136.

<sup>98</sup> In the *Wabash Courier* for Jan. 8, '48 the terms of subscription are given as \$2.00 a year if paid within three months of the receipt of the first number, \$2.50 if paid within the year, and \$3.00 if payment is delayed until the year expired.

Nor was it possible, in all probability, for the editor to write and publish novels in his spare moments, as the editor of the *Courier* is reported to have done, while he was in Terre Haute.<sup>99</sup>

The temper of the old regime is still seen undiluted in the following editorial on the "telegraph," which had just reached Terre Haute.<sup>100</sup>

"The telegraph wires, as they pass through the glass of each pole discourse very pretty music. We do not know that this music is resolvable into notes, but it is nevertheless very sweet. On the Wabash bridge particularly are these sounds remarkable. On a clear night the wires stretching across give music closely resembling the Aeolian harp. What a splendid place for young lovers under these wires, any time before midnight, with or without a bright moon."<sup>101</sup>

That which most inevitably changed things in Terre Haute was first, the opening of the Wabash and Erie canal, to the north in 1849, and to Evansville in 1852, and even more, the telegraph in 1850, and the opening of the railroads, east, north, south and west, which followed in quick succession from 1852 on.<sup>102</sup>

The first of these, the opening of the canal to the north, was naturally a time of some rejoicing. The *Wabash Courier* of September 8, 1849, says that the water has been let into it and has come to within a mile and a half of the city. In the issue of October 27 we read that boats are now operating, two having started to load with corn at Otter creek, a few miles north. One of the two first boats to reach town gave a crowd of people an excursion a mile and a half up the canal and back, accompanied by a "band and music" from town. When they returned we are told that they were greeted by the "roaring of cannon." At three o'clock a fine dinner was given at the Prairie House, to which the proprietors of the boat and the other excursionists were invited. There were

<sup>99</sup> The editor's name was Jesse Conard, and the novels were *Stephen Move-land* and *Mount Echo*, Condit, *History of Early Terre Haute*, 135.

<sup>100</sup> *Wabash Courier*, Dec. 21, '50.

<sup>101</sup> The items of most constant interest in the papers of the time were the newly discovered gold in California, together with ways and means of getting there, the cholera epidemic, the trial of Professor Webster in Boston for the murder of Dr. Parkman, and the concert tour of Jenny Lind under the management of P. T. Barnum.

<sup>102</sup> The first station in Terre Haute was at Tenth and Main, where the Vandalia freight office is now.

addresses and toasts, and the boats both returned north on the same day.

There were several breaks in the canal soon after that, one of which delayed traffic for some time. Low water also interfered with the movements of the boats, so that altogether it was not strange that the railroads, with their greater speed and certainty and their direct time to the eastern markets, soon made the canal unprofitable. Nevertheless, for a leisurely trip, there might have been something to say for the canal boat. The arrival of the packet "Ohio," Captain Davis, in May, 1850, was the occasion for the following in the *Courier*:

"The Ohio is a fine boat and has one of nature's noblemen for commander. Everything appears to be in fine order on board, and the significant proportions of the captain strongly indicate the good cheer of the pantry. A number of gentlemen had more satisfactory evidence on this subject yesterday in the shape of an elegant dinner, to which they were invited, in the cabin. At four o'clock the Ohio took the party a few miles up the canal."<sup>103</sup>

A description of one of the canal boats is given by Mr. Beste on the occasion of his departure from Terre Haute in August, 1851:

"The construction of the canal boat was—in miniature—much the same as that of the lake and river steamers. There was no hold or under-deck, but on the deck, at the stern, were raised the kitchen, steward's room and offices. In the center of the boat was the large saloon—the sitting room of all by day the sleeping-room of the male passengers by night. Adjoining it was the ladies' saloon, beyond which again, was a small cabin containing only four berths. This cabin was separated by a curtain from the ladies saloon, and on the other side opened upon the bow of the vessel. In it was a looking glass, a hand basin, two towels, a comb and a brush, for the use of the ladies."

The starting of the boat is thus described:

"At five o'clock in the afternoon, we stepped from the little quay at Terre Haute on board the boat. Three horses were harnessed to a rope, about fifty yards ahead of the boat. They started at a moderate trot, and the town where we had tarried so long was soon lost to sight."<sup>104</sup>

<sup>103</sup> May 25.

<sup>104</sup> Aug. 12, '51.

According to the map in the directory of 1858, the course of the canal through the city was as follows: It entered from the north close to the river bank, at the eastern end of the present Big Four bridge. From here it went straight south along the river bank, where part of its course can still be followed, to the basin on Water street, just south of Eagle street. In its course it passed through the west end of an old cemetery, just south of the Vandalia bridge, where a few badly broken tombstones may still be seen. From the north end of the basin just mentioned it then went northeast to a point near the corner of Third and Chestnut, then straight north, on the west side of Third street, to Canal street, thence straight east, where the Vandalia tracks are at present. In front of where the union station is now it curved around and went south between Ninth and Tenth streets to Livan street, then southeast out of the city, toward Riley (then called Lockport). The basin and docks at Terre Haute were said to be the finest on the whole canal, having steps leading down to the landing, and a railing.<sup>105</sup> Of all this only a few posts and beams in the ground may now be seen near the river bank.

<sup>105</sup> *Wabash Courier*, May 10, '51.