Settlements in Northwestern Indiana, 1830-1860

Leon M. Gordon II*

An old Indian trail that entered Indiana in what became northwestern St. Joseph County and crossed the counties of La Porte, Porter, and Lake to Chicago was surveyed by federal officials in 1825 to form the western end of the United States road from Detroit to Chicago. Originally it was developed for use as a military highway connecting forts at Chicago and Detroit. The principal motive for such action seems to have been implementation of the improved transportation facilities afforded by the Erie Canal to the Great Lakes region.

A few miles west of Bertrand, Michigan, the road crossed the state line and traversed the northwest corner of St. Joseph County, intersected Door Prairie through La Porte to Michigan City, and followed the beach for sixty miles from there to Chicago. In 1832 a stage line made the trip carrying passengers and mail from Detroit to Niles, Michigan, in three days. Tri-weekly stage service was instituted the following year.¹

By June, 1833, the mail route had reached Chicago from Niles. Traveling on horseback once a week, the carrier took two days for the trip and camped wherever darkness overtook him. A Frenchman who formerly carried the mail over the route was rewarded by promotion to the position of driver of the stage, although his lack of skill caused his passengers considerable concern.² The route followed the sandy beach most of the way.

East of Michigan City the road passed through a tract of land which more than one observer considered unsurpassed

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² Charles Roll, Indiana, One Hundred and Fifty Years of American Development (5 vols., Chicago, 1931), I, 438-439; Milo M. Quaife, Chicago's Highways Old and New (Chicago, 1923), 39, 41. The Erie Canal was under construction from July 4, 1817, to November 4, 1825. For a study of that movement and the effect of the canal on the economic life of the Old Northwest see Archer B. Hulbert, The Great American Canals (2 vols., Cleveland, Ohio, 1904), II, passim; and A. L. Kohlmeier, The Old Northwest as the Keystone of the Arch of American Federal Union (Bloomington, Indiana, 1938), passim.
for beauty and fertility of soil. Springs and many lakes from a quarter to a half mile in circumference with dry banks, sand bottoms, and clear water full of fish were frequent along its course.  

The first wagon road from Michigan City to effect a junction with the Chicago to Detroit road was apparently cut in 1830, but six years later the condition of a bridgeless swamp over which the trail passed caused a party of English travelers to return to their hotel while repairs were made. After trees on the opposite side of the wet expanse had been cut, trimmed, and fastened to planks under the water the plunging, rocking wagon crossed safely.  

Regardless of their mode of transportation, most wayfarers were impressed by the novel character of beach scenery, even if they considered it only a dull, monotonous stretch. Although the more compact sand near the water's edge was best for wagons, it was not always possible to stay that close because of danger from quicksand. Horses were particularly plagued by the shifting granules and often bogged down. On cold nights, however, the situation was reversed; the beach became as hard as any macadamized road. Frequently using sand hills which dotted the shore for protection when forced to camp overnight, travelers compensated for the lack of combustible material along the shore by snapping the hammer of a flintlock gun over tinder to start a fire. After such an open air experience transients afterward vividly remembered the fantastic shapes assumed by white undulating sand masses heaped one hundred to three hundred feet high.

Their surfaces were covered with stunted pines, while nearer the beach dwarfish poplars, species of bent grass, and a kind of thistle, and other vines predominated. All growths were stunted due to exposure to salt spray. On the other hand, broad, hot expanses of sand, dazzling under the midday sun and bare except for trailing roses, were often compared to desert wastes. In June, 1836, the wreck of the “Delaware” which sailed between St. Joseph, Michigan, and Chicago was seen offshore, while other wrecks and huge tree trunks were

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3 “Northern Indiana in 1829,” *Indiana Magazine of History* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1905-1907), III (1907), 85.
frequent reminders of lake storms. Relatively desolate stretches increased the mortality of such accidents.  

As settlement increased in the vicinity of the lake, it became clear that a strip ten or twelve miles wide around the southern shore was of very poor quality except where it was well timbered. Cattle were often pastured on the extensive marsh lands back of the sand dunes, but on more than one occasion some would mire in which case quick action was necessary to save the animal. By moonlight the Michigan City to Chicago region seemed mostly hilly and barren in contrast to the rich soil east of the former city.

Uncultivated, sandy areas near the beach contained few settlers and those were mostly innkeepers. Because the ground was not much more elevated than Lake Michigan, scrubby pines and brushwood scattered over the plains and ever-moving sand hills constituted valuable barriers against wind-blown sand and water. Irregular ridges, small swamps, and scrubby timber reminded John Reynolds from Belleville, Illinois, of the barren heath where Macbeth met the witches. Many years later in May, 1855, the railroad from Toledo to Chicago lay to the south of the range of dunes, and passengers were struck by the wider and flatter fine sand beach just east of Chicago.

Aside from the unusual physical surroundings of the beach road, another novelty which startled many travelers was the fact that its location overlooking the expanse of Lake

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5 The following citations indicate how foreign observers were particularly impressed with the beach panoramas which for most of them were new experiences. “Autobiography of Flavel Bascom,” Sweet, The Congregationalists, 239-240; Charles J. Latrobe, The Rambler in North America (2 vols., New York, 1835), II, 141, 143; George David, “A Trip from London to Chicago, 1833,” in Michigan History Magazine (Lansing, Michigan, 1917-1934), XVIII (1934), 64-65; Patrick Shirreff, A Tour Through North America (Edinburgh, 1835), 222; Hoffman, A Winter in the West, I, 231-232; Martineau, Society in America, I, 258.


Michigan allowed an excellent view of the aurora borealis in the days before factory smoke obscured the view. On a September evening in 1833, for example, blood red lightning that shot intermittently from cloud masses over the lake was suddenly paled by a broad luminous arch which rose skyward from the north. Quivering and shifting perpendicular rays trailed from it, swinging back and forth in brilliant color combinations. The striking panorama was reflected in the calm, liquid mirror of the lake until a bursting thunderstorm blotted out the magnificent spectacle. When the skies cleared again, only a few fading rays remained. At other times the "resplendent fires" of the aurora borealis contrasted strikingly with the livid glare from the burning Kankakee marshes to the south.  

Regardless of how intriguing and unusual travel along the beach might have been, shelter was a serious problem. Often, of course, a sand bed was the best to be had. At the ferryhouse across the Calumet River about twelve miles from Chicago a French trader named Bayeaux and his Indian wife kept an inn that was a welcome haven for tired travelers despite many Indian relatives hanging around the place. In 1831 one party from Pennsylvania found them without provisions, however, and one hungry member of the group shot a blackbird which the squaw cooked and served with cranberries and a little coffee. Later the proprietors were able to give the same band better food and a little whisky. Their accommodations, however, left much to be desired, and members of at least one caravan found their fare too unpalatable for consumption. Only because of anticipation of better food in Chicago could they resign themselves to a wretched breakfast.  

Crossing the river itself was not without danger, and it was rather common for pack animals to drown trying to ford the stream. In the spring of 1835 the small ferryhouse on the north side of the river was still functioning, but two years later travelers crossed with pleasure the Long Pole Bridge, 

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sixty-four rods long and made of logs covered with poles, which had been thrown across the river in 1836. By the forties a toll bridge where settlers could get food before moving on to Chicago was a welcome sight. By 1853 the stagehouse on the north side of the Calumet River a half mile from its fork at Hegewisch supplied relay teams for the rest of the journey.¹⁰

Baillytown, on the Calumet about five miles from the mouth of Fort Creek, was the home of Joseph Bailly, a French trader, who built the first house in Lake County there in 1822. With its oak-paneled living room, hand-wrought hardware, a bedroom with wild cherry paneling and wallpaper reportedly imported from England, the house was a showplace in the wilderness. A spacious lawn separated it from the river, and in the rear of the house was the race track where Bailly trained his blooded horses. About 1834 the proprietor made a feeble attempt to plat a town, but no lots were ever bought by white settlers, and it never became more than a trading post and Indian settlement. A third stopping place on the Calumet after 1832 was the Bennett tavern on Lake Michigan near the mouth of the river at the site of the paper town of Indiana City.¹¹

Additional shelters along the beach road were also made use of by weary travelers. A party of four, including the novelist Charles Latrobe, reached two huts near Chicago in the early morning, but no food was available except bread, whisky, and a few potatoes. Every square foot of flooring in both huts was covered with transients. An English farmer, Patrick Shirreff, led another group about the same time who were unable to reach Chicago before nightfall and chased two sleeping Indian girls and a boy from a small hovel. After the natives' hasty departure, Shirreff noted that his companions were soon sleeping peacefully after a meal of bread and whisky in what was inferior to the bed of an East Lothian pig.¹²

¹¹ The Calumet Region Historical Guide (n.p., 1939), 139; Howat, History of Lake County, I, 32, 34.
In June, 1836, Harriet Martineau's group of English travelers heading west from Michigan City stopped at a log house decorated with green boughs and located on a sand bank. It appeared perfectly clean below, and except for the absence of milk the supper was good. At bedtime, however, the ladies found the loft indescribably filthy. This lodging was apparently the Beach House, located twenty miles from Michigan City, which an emigrant who stopped there the next November described as a log cabin close to the lake shore and nine miles from any other habitation. Twenty-three were lodged in the gentlemen's room, in which three-tiered beds covered the floor like steamboat berths. For supper and lodging the proprietor charged each guest fifty cents."

Twenty or thirty miles from Chicago a rude pine cabin in a brake of stunted evergreens about two hundred yards from the water afforded a pleasant interlude for Charles Hoffman, a New Yorker, traveling from Pennsylvania through the Midwest in December, 1833. After prolonged conversation with two westerners, he slept with others on the floor, while the former occupied wooden bunks which were swung down from the ceiling. By the end of that year other shelters which made the most of pioneer conditions included Ward's Tavern, five miles west of Michigan City; one on Sand Creek at the site of City West; one at Bailytown; further west Butler Tavern where the Chicago-Detroit road crossed the Calumet River; the Old Maids' Tavern just east of where the trail crossed Willow Creek; and another one mile west of the present Dune Park station.

Although reports vary, the Gibson Tavern and barns at the present site of Froebel High School in Gary were probably built in 1837 or 1838. The proprietor had come from Columbus, Ohio, in 1835. A two-story, hewn-log house located near Gibson Run was built on a forty-acre tract. It faced east on present Madison Avenue and served as a rest stop for Detroit to Chicago stage drivers until torn down in the late 1860's. Another tavern kept by a Mr. Pierce was south of Lake

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13 Martineau, Society in America, I, 257-258; John Wentworth to his sister, Chicago, November 9, 1886, Chicago Historical Society News Review (Chicago, 1942- ), II (1943), 3.
14 Hoffman, A Winter in the West, I, 233-235; History of Lake County (2 vols., Gary, Indiana, 1929), I, 84-86. These are volumes X and XI of the Lake County Historical Association Publications.
Station (East Gary) between Wood's mills and Centerville (Merrillville). 16

Variations of the beach route were in use by 1837. Going from Chicago to Porter County, for example, it was possible to ferry across the Calumet at the site of Hammond and go to Michigan City by way of Baillytown between the Grand and Little Calumet rivers. Another route ran south of the Little Calumet, crossed the pole bridge, and after passing through Liverpool followed the high sand ridge to the present sites of Highland and Munster. 17

Given a usable beach road from Michigan City to Chicago, settlers were quick to see the potential advantages of connecting the Calumet River, which flowed into Lake Michigan about one and a half miles west of the Indiana line, with the Kankakee River. By February, 1835, a scheme was being publicized to link the two by a canal not to exceed twenty-five miles in length. Cedar Lake, through which it would pass, was praised for the fine mill sites on its outlet and for the abundance of bog iron ore in the vicinity. The Calumet's main channel was considered navigable for steamboats, and enthusiasts felt another usable mouth could easily be made twelve miles west of Michigan City. 17

As for the Kankakee itself, impressions of its utility were varied. An unnamed traveler in 1829 observed that the river flowed through a winding valley four to eleven miles wide. In summer the stream formed a wide swamp which was impassable in most places for man or beast. The river appeared navigable, however, at least part of the year for thirty or forty miles within Indiana, but the land through which it passed was exceedingly poor. 18

Two years later, Amasa C. Washburn, a native of Vermont, and three others traveled almost the river's entire length by canoe. Full of reptiles and decayed vegetable matter, the river alternated between narrow, tortuous channels and more pleasant lakes, of which English was the largest and where wind-driven waves nearly swamped the boat. Only a few dry stretches broke the marshy, wet prairies through

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17 Howat, History of Lake County, I, 32-33.
17 Kellar, Solon Robinson, I, 59-60.
which the river coursed. At times the current was so sluggish as to be scarcely perceptible; sometimes rapids made further progress extremely hazardous. The junction in Illinois with the Des Plaines River was reached in nine days.¹⁰

Four years later the pen of unwarranted enthusiasm characterized the Kankakee as more like a lake than a river and navigable for steamboats drawing three feet at all seasons. Solon Robinson of Lake County admitted, however, that within Indiana it had no banks and little current. Bordered with marsh and timber, the river passed only one or two places with dry land on both sides over which a road could cross.²⁰

Settlers from Jennings County in the winter of 1835 found the Kankakee marsh covered with ice across which they tried unsuccessfully to force their oxen. Luckily, they found logs which had been collected to build a cabin usable for fire material. That blaze and the wagon cover used as a tent protected them from the unimpeded blast which swept over the prairie. Next day the caravan went ten miles out of their way to the miserable hut of a Frenchman and his half-breed family with whom they stayed two days and nights. The Kankakee was finally crossed by covering the ice with hay which froze into it and thus provided greater traction.²¹

Extreme disparagement of the river and the land it drained was expressed by Jerry Smith, a government surveyor, in 1837 when he applied to the region all the stories he had heard about Hades. The head of English Lake and the mouth of Yellow River particularly offended him, but eight years later the calmer head of Henry Ward Beecher compared the river's marshes and mud to the Pontine Marshes in Italy. As viewed from the Kankakee bridge, water seemed to lie a foot or two deep for hundreds of yards on each side of the channel and flowed around strong reedy grass five or six feet high within which thousands of small birds and wild ducks disported themselves.²²

As in the case of the Michigan Road, it would be a mis-

²⁰ Kellar, Solon Robinson, I, 59, 61.
²¹ Rev. T. H. Ball, Lake County, Indiana, from 1834 to 1872 (Chicago, 1873), 26-28.
²² Daniel McDonald, Removal of the Pottawattomie Indians from Northern Indiana (Plymouth, Indiana, 1899), 54-55; The Western Farmer and Gardener (Indianapolis, 1846-1848), I, 564.
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take to assign full credit to the road from Detroit to Chicago for the development of the region which it served. Nevertheless, simultaneously with the heavy use of the latter road, settlers were moving into northwestern Indiana from southern Indiana, Ohio, New England, the Middle Atlantic States, and to a less extent from the South. In common with all population movements, the first concern of the emigrants was the condition of roads they had to traverse and—once they were located—the problems of travel between settlements. Crude roads made over Indian trails were the usual paths, but spring thaws filled every slough on them with water. Coming from the south to Pleasant Grove near the present site of Crown Point in 1835, one emigrant party, for example, plunged through heavy mud and mire that threatened to upset their wagon.\(^\text{23}\) What now corresponds to the Lincoln Highway, formerly a branch of the Old Sauk Trail, was so bad in the winter of 1835-1836 that it mired the oxen of a party headed toward present Merrillville.\(^\text{24}\)

Streams and rivers were especially difficult to cross, and the importance of the Calumet ferry in that respect has been indicated above. In 1838 two bridges were built across Deep River because many horses had been lost in the mire and quicksand while attempting to ford the stream. A more novel means of transportation were bobsleds used in the forties around present Lowell when wagons were an almost unknown convenience.\(^\text{25}\)

Having reached their new homes, emigrants were still faced with dangerous trips over prairie wastes to markets and mills. In April, 1835, along a ten-mile stretch between Hickory Point and Pleasant Grove in Lake County, searchers found a body at the base of a tree around which the victim had worn a furrowed rut in an attempt to keep from freezing. During the winter of 1838-1839, night caught a lone settler on Twenty Mile Prairie between Michigan City and Cedar Lake. Because of heavy clouds, he missed the road in an iso-

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\(^{23}\) Report of the Historical Secretary of the Old Settler and Historical Association of Lake County, Indiana, and Papers (Crown Point, Indiana, 1911), 37-38.


\(^{25}\) Howat, History of Lake County, I, 56; Historical Records of the Lake County Old Settler and Historical Association of Lake County, Indiana, 1924 (n.p., n.d.), 9.
lated section. Although the fleeting glimpse of a star kept him going in the right direction, he spent the night standing between his two horses, a bolt of satinet thrown over them all to share each other's warmth.26

Other men caught under similar conditions were not so fortunate. Two returning from the Danville, Illinois, land office in December, 1836, bucked a piercing gale that turned the snow-covered prairie into a sheet of ice. As the cold grew more intense, one of the horses was killed, its opened carcass affording some protection for the men's arms and legs. By morning, however, one had died and his companion's toes and fingers were later amputated. Not long afterwards between Parish Grove and Sumner's Grove a man caught in a blizzard unsuccessfully used his horse for the same purpose.27

Unusual scenery on the prairies intrigued most observers unfamiliar with such country as much as did that along the beach road. Over two hundred fifty square miles of undulating grasslands lay before them, broken only by isolated groves of softwood trees in the lowlands and varieties of oak on higher ground in barrens or oak openings. Twelve to eighteen inches of dry black vegetable matter over one or two feet of loose clay loam and a hardpan of limestone and pebbly clay promised great soil fertility. The wood-encircled, gently rolling land still impressed its viewers as late as 1859, when Professor Caleb Mills of Wabash College said, referring to Lake Prairie, "I have been thirty years in the west, and have been in every county in the State, and never but once have I seen so beautiful a view."28

Only the previous year the Grand Prairie near Merrillville looked like the Garden of Eden to a new arrival—a flower garden with blooms of every hue accentuated by phlox and the tall resin weed. Large herds of deer, an occasional wolf, blue racers and other snakes, prairie fowl, geese, sand hill cranes, fish, and small fur-bearing animals were all found

26 Howat, History of Lake County, I, 78-79; Ball, History of Lake County, Indiana, from 1834 to 1872, pp. 262-263.
27 John Ade, Newton County, Indiana, from 1855 to 1911 (Indianapolis, 1911), 69-71; Elmore Barce and Robert A. Swan, History of Benton County, Indiana (3 vols., Fowler, Indiana, 1930), I, 133.
28 J. Gould, "Wanderings in the West in 1839," The New England Farmer and Horticultural Register (Boston, 1822-1913), XVIII (1839-1840), 436; T. H. Ball, Lake County, Indiana, 1884 (Crown Point, Indiana, 1884), 104.
in large numbers, not only in northwestern Indiana but throughout the prairie country. In addition small sloughs were thick with varieties of birds and croaking frogs. Over a period of years, however, grazing cattle destroyed the immense natural flower beds.\(^{29}\)

Complicating the paradoxical beauty and danger of the prairies was the ever-present hazard from fires. In the vicinity of Logansport and other grassland areas fires were generally pictured as the greatest single danger, although at least one voice in the wilderness was raised to protest against foolish exaggeration of their threat. The usual description told of a glare that increased along the horizon until the fiery redness, sweeping before dark cloud masses and accompanied by a roaring noise like a hurricane, clothed the landscape in “boiling, churning flames.” The sea of blue stem grass and other combustible material fed one blaze for twenty-five miles in less than two hours, but in such cases men and boys quickly organized fire-fighting squads which by using a backfire generally brought blazes under control before much damage was done.\(^{30}\)

Solon Robinson in December, 1839, decried claims of casualties and heavy damage from prairie fires and assigned such tales to “the great humbug family.” He claimed that unless a wind were blowing with great fury, fires were easily stamped and beaten out, although he did admit that the usual fire descriptions were more valid in marsh country where movements of men and animals were hindered.\(^{31}\)

Having gotten their land under cultivation, settlers were faced with the difficult problem of transporting surplus produce to distant markets at Chicago, Michigan City, Fort Wayne, and St. Joseph, Michigan. To haul grain from Elkhart County to Chicago, for example, took about eight days, and usually five to ten teams composed a caravan. Each member paid his own stabling and lodging expenses and a dollar to a dollar and forty cents a day for his teamster and wagon, depending on the condition of the roads and the weather. Farmers often had to carry their load bag by bag over mud-


\(^{30}\) Hamilton and Darroch, History of Jasper and Newton Counties, I, 328-329; Barce and Swan, History of Benton County, I, 129-132; Mitten, Memories of Union Township, 11.

\(^{31}\) Kellar, Solon Robinson, I, 118-119.
holes through which the horses could not pull the wagons. In the thirties after a forty-mile haul from West Creek to Chicago, settlers sometimes received less than fifty cents a bushel for wheat. Under such conditions the margin of profit was usually slight.\textsuperscript{12}

In the fall of 1838, for example, three men started for Chicago from Eagle Creek in Lake County with thirty bushels of wheat in wagons pulled by seven yoke of oxen. Near Cedar Lake they lost two nights and a day hunting for their animals, and at the site of Dyer had to pay five dollars for damages the oxen had done to the pumpkins in the yard. Northwest of Dyer the wagons got mired to the axeltrees in a swamp that supposedly was a short cut, but the caravan lost a full day carrying the bags of grain eighty rods through tall grass and waist-deep water. On the return trip, the oxen destroyed a quantity of corn and cabbages. For nine days' work the expenses exceeded receipts.\textsuperscript{18}

Those who came from Southeast Grove in Lake County often broke the four-day round trip to Chicago at the Half Way House on Ridge Road near Ross. Even by mid-century when the Michigan Central and Michigan Southern railroads established depots at Hobart, Ross, and Lake Station, settlers from southern and central Lake County had to haul produce over abominable roads to reach them.\textsuperscript{24}

In 1858 a wagon train loaded with shelled corn en route to Kankakee, Illinois, from Morocco in Newton County nearly mired in thawing roads. Above the Kankakee dam at Aroma (Illinois) the load had to be carried across by hand. It was sold for twenty-four cents a bushel, and three days were required for the round trip.\textsuperscript{26}

Besides grain and cattle, some settlers depended on dairying for a living, but in April, 1841, the demand in Lake County was so slight that receipts hardly paid the expense of hiring help. With butter selling for ten cents a pound and poor quality eggs for six cents a dozen some producers fed

\textsuperscript{12} Anthony Deahl, A Twentieth Century History and Biographical Record of Elkhart County, Indiana (Chicago, 1905), 218-219; Ball, History of Lake County, Indiana, 1824, p. 92; Sam B. Woods, The First Hundred Years of Lake County, Indiana (n.p., 1938), 25.

\textsuperscript{18} Crown Point, Indiana, Lake County Star, Centennial Edition, August 17, 1934.

\textsuperscript{24} Historical Records of the Lake County Old Settler and Historical Association, 10; Lester, "Pioneer Stories of the Calumet," Indiana Magazine of History, XVIII, 355; Crown Point, Indiana, Lake County Star, August 17, 1934.

\textsuperscript{26} Ade, History of Newton County, 106-106.
milk to their calves and Berkshire pigs rather than market it.*

Other settlers turned to hog raising to supplement their income, and an observer from New York in 1839 noted that a “miserable breed, long-nosed, long-legged animals” was heavily relied upon. The animals foraged on grass and mast till autumn, then were fattened on corn. Having gained an average of one hundred fifty pounds, they were driven to Chicago and other packing centers to be sold for three to four dollars a hundredweight. Wild hogs were not considered worth catching.17

Normal difficulties associated with establishing a home in comparative wilderness areas were aggravated by periodic outbreaks of ague and fever. Eight of a family of thirteen were prostrated within six weeks after their arrival at West Creek in Lake County from New York in the early forties, and their discomfiture was matched by many others. About the middle of August when the resin flower and other yellow plants bloomed settlers knew they could expect the ague. Low level districts in contrast to high rolling areas were particularly susceptible to influenza-like diseases, but pulmonary disorders were relatively uncommon. Quinine, although it had to be brought from Michigan City or Chicago and was very scarce, remained the standard remedy.a*

As one of the chief publicists of northern Indiana, Solon Robinson deprecated unhealthy conditions and cited his own physical improvement as an expected occurrence. Accidents in addition to disease were an ever-present danger and were often treated in a novel manner. One young child in a caravan headed for the site of present Galesburg, Illinois, cut off two toes, whereupon his mother bound his foot with loaf sugar and catnip, wet it thoroughly with paregoric, and kept it damp with alcohol.8 Apparenty, no ill effects resulted.

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* Harriet Palmer to her sister, Lake County, April 24, 1841, Crown Point, Indiana, Lake County Star, August 17, 1934.
* Ibid., 5; Ball, History of Lake County, Indiana, 1884, p. 89; Hamilton and Darroch, History of Jasper and Newton Counties, I, 94-95; History of Lake County, I, 115, 112. Home remedies of course were of every description. A hardy farmer near Hebron, for example, dosed himself with three live bedbugs inserted under the skin of a raisin.
Population movements into northwestern Indiana lagged considerably behind those into north central Indiana for every counting period between 1830 and 1860. Only scattered notice of the origins of Lake County settlers is found in contemporary accounts, and a definitive study must be based on an analysis of the census returns. Most of the first-hand comments emphasized the role of Yankee settlers there and throughout northern Indiana. Lake County's leading protagonist near the end of 1834 observed that the majority of its settlers were Yankees; two months later he listed six New England States, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, and to a lesser degree, other southern states as the source of the county's population. Three years later, a member of an emigrant train which passed through the county recorded that it was settled mostly by natives of Vermont. There is also an indication that Swedes were in the vicinity of Baillytown in the fall of 1851.40

Except for official figures from census returns, information on the origin of the people or their increase is very scarce. James Hill from Decatur County on an exploring trip in February, 1834, claimed that he found only one family within the bounds of Lake County located near Deep River southwest of present Hobart. Solon Robinson did not arrive near what became Crown Point till November, but slightly less than a year later the La Porte tax collector visited the settlement. In July, Robinson was instrumental in drawing up the constitution of the Squatters' Union which had 476 signatures.41

In March, 1836, he was appointed postmaster at the Lake Court House station, and by the end of 1837 postoffice receipts amounted to over fifty-seven dollars a quarter. Nevertheless, there were "a few scattered settlers" near Merrill-

40 "The Diary of Jerusha Loomis Farnham," in Log City Days, 33; Kelkar, Solon Robinson, I, 56, 61-62; Frances Howe to Rose Howe, Bailly-town, October 4, 1831, MS in Frances Howe Papers, Indiana Division, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana. In a study of emigration from New England Louise K. Mathews concluded the greatest influx into the three tiers of Indiana counties came between 1830 and 1837. She pointed out isolated instances of compact groups such as the New Hampshire settlement on Lake Prairie in Lake County which dated from 1855 and was perpetuated in the town of Lowell. The Expansion of New England (Boston, 1909), 196-206, et passim. See also Virginia Lowell Mauck, Population Movements in Northern Indiana Before 1850 (M.A. Thesis, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 1948).

41 Howat, History of Lake County, I, 34. Robinson has been called the Squatter King because of his championship of landless emigrants to northwestern Indiana. Ball, History of Lake County, Indiana, 1834-1872, pp. 34, 39-48.
ville in the winter of 1835-1836. Not until January, 1837, was the county organized.\textsuperscript{42}

Simultaneously with the laying of the foundation for solid growth at Crown Point and other centers in Lake County, two paper towns excited popular enthusiasm for awhile only to die in the panic of 1837. Reference has been made above to the Bennett Tavern at the site of Indiana City where lots were never sold. Two settlers at Deep River in 1835 reflected the expectations then held for Liverpool, and bought lots there for two hundred fifty dollars apiece. Of the total tax levy in 1836, which amounted to $2,002.77, "lots in Liverpool" accounted for $304.06. In the main, however, sound development prevailed, and by 1840 the county census taken by Lewis Warriner disclosed a total population of 1,468.\textsuperscript{43}

Crown Point contained about ninety people at the time, including one doctor, one lawyer, and three merchants. As time passed the population in the county and its seat of justice continued to increase, though at less than half the rate of LaPorte and St. Joseph counties to the east. Even in 1843 only eight houses and a school building had been built between the square in Crown Point and the far side of Southeast Grove where seven more families lived. Thoughtful settlers complained that few of the county districts had made adequate provisions for schools. North of the county seat Ross, Hobart, and Tolloston received their major impetus from the coming of railroads just after mid-century. By 1860 the county's population had reached 9,145.\textsuperscript{44}

Porter County was organized on January 28, 1836, and increased in population from 2,162 to 10,313 between 1840 and 1860. Reports on Valparaiso, its county seat, are conflicting. A native of Connecticut visited the site in August 1837, and stopped at an isolated farm which consisted of six lots of eighty acres each surrounded by marsh and located six miles east of the town. As a settler remembered the

\textsuperscript{42} Howat, History of Lake County, I, 43; Laws of Indiana, General, 1836-1837, pp. 55-56; Lester, "Pioneer Stories of the Calumet," Indiana Magazine of History, XVIII, 349.

\textsuperscript{43} Ball, History of Lake County, Indiana, 1834-1872, pp. 66, 87; Lester, "Pioneer Stories of the Calumet," Indiana Magazine of History, XVIII, 171; Crown Point, Indiana, Lake County Star, August 17, 1834.

\textsuperscript{44} Eleventh Census of the United States, 1890, Population, I, 18; C. W. Cady, The Indiana Annual Register, 1846 (Indianapolis, 1846), 120.
town's condition in 1839, however, it was covered with hazel brush and inhabited by a lone recluse.\textsuperscript{46}

Valparaiso was dismissed as a "straggling village" in 1850, but the General Assembly incorporated it the following February. On September 16, 1858, when the Methodist state conference was held there, citizens of the town had to meet those who attended at Westville in western La Porte County which was the nearest station of the New Albany and Chicago Railroad. A year later the Male and Female College at Valparaiso was founded and over eleven thousand dollars subscribed for its support.\textsuperscript{46}

Lake and Porter counties were among the slowest of the important ones today to develop from 1830 to 1860, not primarily due to their undesirable characteristics, but because their location in the northwestern corner of the state made them not readily accessible. Without the beach road, there would have been no major route into the area during the pioneer period. The Kankakee swamps effectively blocked emigration from the south and the large majority of home-seekers from the east stopped in Allen County or on the fertile prairies of St. Joseph and La Porte counties.

Ultimately, however, the geographical position of Lake and Porter counties proved a definite asset in their growth because the nascent settlement of Chicago in the early thirties grew with such rapidity that it benefited surrounding areas. Those who traveled the beach road often found what they were seeking before reaching Chicago. That fact and the road's location also largely explain why the northern sections of the two counties developed first. Finally, all the extreme northwestern area of Indiana was greatly boosted by the tireless publicity efforts of Solon Robinson, who wrote extensively in publications like the Albany, New York, \textit{Cultivator}.

Such periodicals were widely read by farmers and others interested in agriculture who composed a large percentage of the emigrants to northern Indiana. The subsequent history of the Calumet region particularly has proved the foresight of men like Robinson and the early travelers who saw more in the area than a succession of sand hills.


\textsuperscript{46} John L. Smith, \textit{Indiana Methodism} (Valparaiso, Indiana, 1892), 477, 266-262.