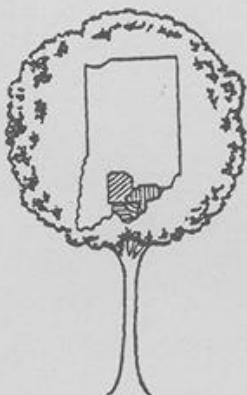


Plank Road, New Albany to Corydon



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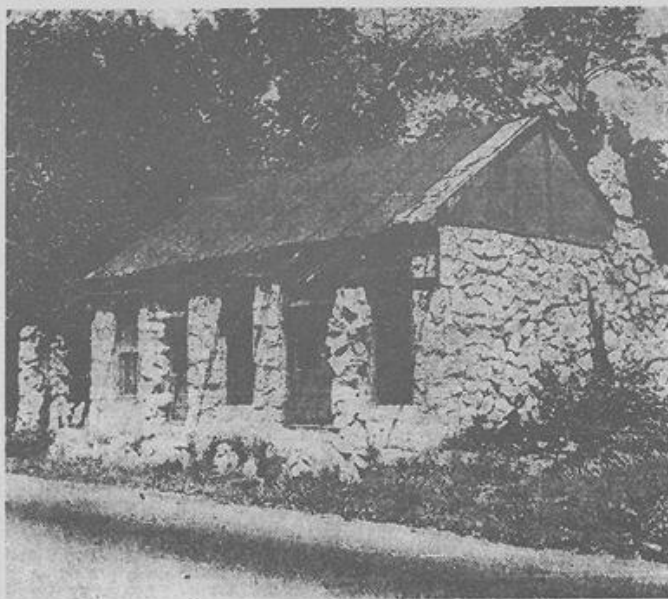
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Cover - Edwardsville Toll House
 for the Plank Road

The early trails and bridle paths in southern Indiana developed into roads as pioneer families traveled west. By the early nineteenth century these muddy roads were being called "horse killers" as "four horse wagon teams often sunk to the girth in mud and country people in the winter were cut off from all grocery supplies by the dreadful condition of the only means of reaching nearby towns." Groups of logs, usually three at a time, were placed over mudholes to allow passage. These were called "corduroy roads."

Robert Dale Owen, founder of New Harmony, proposed to construct a plank road from New Harmony, on the Wabash, to Mt. Vernon, on the Ohio, a distance of fifteen miles. Mr. Owen visited western New York, where plank roads originated in this country, and upon his return a book, "Owen on Plank Roads," was published in New Albany in 1850 by Kent and Norman, Publishers.

The New Albany "Daily Banner" reports on Monday, 10 November 1849 a plank road meeting was held at Georgetown, where it was resolved that "we will form ourselves into an association for the construction of a plank road from the City of New Albany to Georgetown, on the most practicable route."

Those involved: George T. Wolf, James T. Duncan, B. Hudson, George A. Davis, James Burger, Joseph Moore, W. D. Ellis and Sylvester Hudson. Eight-thousand dollars was secured (stock certificates) and an additional two was to be obtained.

On Wednesday, 5 December 1849, the "Daily Banner" again reported on the proposed road, and stated, "our people ... consider whether it would not be advantageous to accept the Georgetown proposition." Fifteen-thousand dollars additional funding was needed.

Plank roads were constructed in Floyd County from 1851 until 1863: the New Albany, Lanesville & Corydon Plank Road, Old Vincennes Road, New Albany-Jeffersonville Plank Road, Slate Run Plank Road and the New Albany and Charlestown Plank Road.

Construction of the roads, generally, was the grading of a twenty-one foot road-bed, with side ditches two feet deep; sluices were built for run-off; stringers four inches square were laid six feet eight inches apart, with planks of eight foot in length and three inches thickness spiked to them.

Edwardsville Toll House (con't)

Toll gate houses were constructed at convenient locations, there being five on the New Albany, Lanesville and Corydon Plank Road: near the old Number 8 Schoolhouse; top of the hill at Edwardsville; Lanesville, east side, then moved to the west side; and Corydon, on east Chestnut Street. They were usually four room houses with a porch at one side and a gate which consisted of a long wooden bar, or pike, which was as long as the width of the road, and was raised or lowered as necessary.

The toll gate keepers became the collectors, not only of fees due, but also community gossip, news, strangers stories, lost animals, a secure income and a comfortable home.

Problems would arise when the "shunpiker," the teamster or traveler, would try to pass the gate without paying the toll, and the colorful Gypsy caravans would try to barter their fortune-telling for free passage. Occasional outright bribery would be commented upon also.

Toll keepers at Gate No. 1 were Otis Chambers, Gordon Paul, Logan Wallace, Nathaniel Evans, Wm. Morris, Jennie Bracken, Mrs. Jennie Staley, Wm. Rowland, C. W. Wright, Geo. Pfrimmer, Samuel E. Wright and John C. Graves.

Gate keepers at Gate No. 2, at the top of Edwardsville Hill (cover photo) were John Miles, James Routh, Matthias Sanger, Wm. H. Routh, James Wilson, James Etheridge, Geo. Pfrimmer, Lyle Brown, Sampson Turley, Frank Routh, Frank Livingston, Sam E. Wright and Lee Kinney.

Our cover picture is of the last toll house that was erected at Gate No. 2 on Edwardsville Hill. It was still standing in 1965, but is now gone.

Although no longer a plank road, the road remained a toll road until 1920, and was the last privately operated road in the state of Indiana.

(Credits: photo - Courier-Journal; information - Indiana Collection, NA-FC Public Library.)

Alberta Brock Baker

The receipt, following, was submitted by Anna McKim Frederick. Her ancestor, William Anderson, was a stockholder in the New Albany, Lanesville and Corydon Plank Road.

NEW ALBANY, LANESVILLE, and CORYDON PLANK ROAD CO.

Stock certificate No. 525, for 3 shares, was issued to John Anderson, "which Stock is transferable only on the Books of the said Company," and was issued 6th day of April 1868. Officers were Ely. J. G. Pfrimmer, President, and I. J. Wright, Secretary. The tax stamp appears to be for \$25.

Anderson & Warren of New Albany were the printers of the Stock certificate.

Submitted by Anna McKim Frederick

New Albany, Lanesville, and Corydon Plank Road Co.

No. 525 3 Shares.

It is hereby certified that *John Anderson* is the proprietor of *Three* Shares in the Stock of the NEW ALBANY, LANESVILLE, AND CORYDON PLANK ROAD COMPANY, which Stock is transferable only on the Books of the said Company.

In Testimony Whereof, the President and Secretary of said Company have hereunto set their hands, this *6th* day of *April* 1868.

Ely J. G. Pfrimmer President.
I. J. Wright Secy.

Anderson & Warren, Printers, New Albany.

