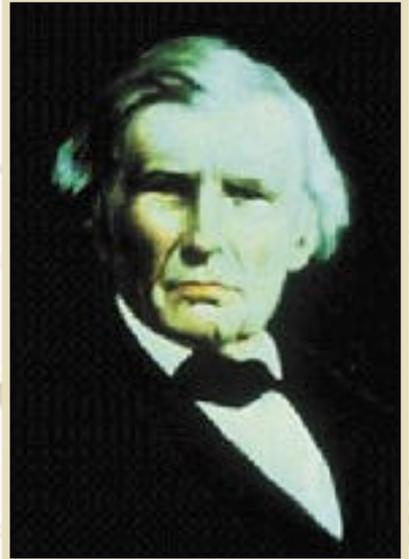


TRADERS POINT, INDIANA Collected Articles

by Ross Reller



TRADERS POINT, INDIANA - A Chronological Outline

Conner's Choice:
William Conner and Traders Point, Indiana

A Backyard Grave in Traders Point, Indiana

Cassilly Adams and Traders Point





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TRADERS POINT, INDIANA

A Chronological Outline



A Traders Point Farm, 2005

Compiled in 2005
by Traders Point resident Ross Reller

1816 Indiana becomes a state.

1818 Traders Point was a part of the area surrendered by the Miami Indian Confederacy in 1818. The treaty reserved the right of the Indians to occupy the region until 1821, and some continued to trap and fish in the surrounding streams as late as 1824. There is much evidence to indicate the area in the western part of the township along Eagle Creek was inhabited by Indians. Many families in the community have arrowheads that were discovered by local farmers while plowing. Some claim the village of Traders Point derived its name because of being a traders point.¹

1820 Indianapolis was selected as the site of the future state capital. Pleasant Hill Cemetery on Moore Road established. James Harman, a soldier in the War of 1812, is first white settler in Pike Township. He settled on the east side of Eagle Creek in the north part of Pike Township in an area now known as the northwest quadrant of I-465 and West 86th Street. It is presumed he had a soldier's land grant. Harman is buried in Cotton Cemetery (West 86th St. Development).

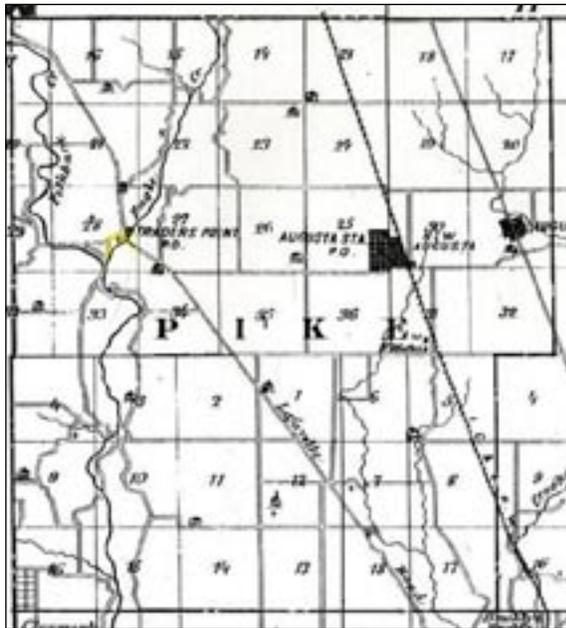
1821 David McCurdy, Sr. was the second white settler in the township. He was advised by Indians at Broad Ripple to go to Eagle Creek to get good farm land and good water. In or about 1821 he did, and eventually acquired 2,580 acres along Eagle Creek from Clermont to Zionsville.²

1822 The first school in the area was taught in the cabin of David McCurdy on land on the west bank of Eagle Creek with George Conard as teacher.³



Site of Noblesville fur trader William Conner's only Marion County land patent⁶





Site of first recorded land patent in Pike Township

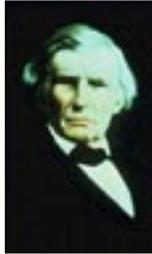


Current aerial with Conner's site outlined

1822 The first recorded land patent in Pike Township was executed on September 16, 1822, for 80 acres patented to Noblesville fur trader, Indian guide and real estate speculator William Conner on Sept. 16, 1822 (Township Section 28, E 1/2, SE 1/4, 80 Acres). This includes the northwest quadrant of Lafayette Road and Eagle

Creek and was likely a spot where Conner believed Indians and fur traders would transact business, and is very likely the origin of the name "Traders Point".

"Albert Hardin learned from his grandfather, who lived in Traders Point since 1845, that white men and Indians traded livestock on Eagle Creek at its bend, thus the name Traders Point.⁴ (2) records of Land Grants⁵



1822 Pike Township platted by order of the county commissioners. John C. Hume was elected first William Conner Pike Township Trustee in 1824.

1825 Wilson family settles near Traders Point. One of the most enlightening accounts of the pioneer days in the area is included in a clipping cut from an Indianapolis newspaper in 1885 that gives an interview with Mrs. Anna Wilson, then eighty years old, whose grandson, Ad Wilson, lives on a large farm west of Traders Point. It gives a vivid picture of the early settlements in the township as follows: "We left Ohio for Pike township where my father had bought two tracts of land in November 1825. Our party included my husband, our two infant children, my sister and her husband and myself. We came in two wagons and brought with us a team of horses, three cows and 100 head of sheep. It took us eight days to reach this county from Preble county, Ohio. We carried a tent in which we slept every night until we reached Indianapolis. We stayed in Indianapolis overnight. Indianapolis at that time had only about 100 houses, nearly all log cabins and only a few stores.

Our party crossed White river in a flatboat at McCormick's ferry, forded Big Eagle Creek and between the creek and Bushs run was our future home. We pitched our tent near the bank of the creek and enjoyed a good night's rest, happy in the thought that we were home. The next morning the men went to work building a cabin of buckeye logs, which was completed in about ten days. It consisted of one big room. There were nightly visitors that killed a good many of our sheep – the wolves. We finally had to sell our flock to save them from being killed by wolves.

I was very much afraid of the Indians, for there was a small settlement in our neighborhood. The men and squaws would frequently come in our door with articles for sale, but they gave us no trouble. Sometimes however the braves would have sham battles along the creek, and we could hear their yells for





miles.” Mrs. Wilson, in her narrative spoke of her husband starting a saw mill, of the “flourishing business” he had, and of her youngest son, hauling logs to town with a team of small oxen at the age of seven.

“At one time, she relates, “three of the children had gone to town with a load of logs and they came very near drowning. Big Eagle Creek having risen while they were in town. The oldest boy had to swim part of the way at the head of the oxen while the other two boys had to hold on to the wagon to keep from being swept down stream.”⁷



Typical Oxen

1831 Lafayette Road is first road through Pike Township. It was surveyed and cleared in 1831 and 1832. By 1831 it had already become a well-traveled horse path route connecting the area to Lafayette, Indiana. It was a corduroy log road.⁸

1834 Traders Point residents Alexander and Mary Miller host a church service in their home in the spring of 1834 where Rev. Jesse Frasier presents organizational papers for The Ebenezer Christian Church. Those in attendance become its charter members: Alexander and Mary Miller, Sally Jones, Annie Wilson, David Barnhill, Elizabeth Barnhill, Lewis Mitchell, Chesley Ray, Jene Ray, and Nicholas Hightshue. The Wilsons offer a plot of ground along Fishback Creek (and Wilson Road) as the site of the new church.

1830s Local settler David McGurdy signed an affidavit swearing that the markings on a beech tree at the top of a ridge overlooking Eagle Creek on his farm were carved by Daniel Boone. The affidavit noted that Boone was working as a “land cruiser” to chart new territories for the US Government in the 1790s. Later, when Eli Lilly bought the property, a notary public put his seal of authenticity on McGurdy’s document. According to some accounts the

reason this vast wildlife area was protected from development was due in part to the tree and the Boone legend. The tree site is 200 yards north of the Eagle Creek Nature Center / Lilly Lodge.¹⁰

1840 Pleasant View Cemetery may be the burial site of Traders Point resident and Revolutionary War veteran John Hume, Pvt Pennsylvania Militia. Hume was born in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in 1761, ran off at the age of 16 and joined the militia to fight several stints as a ranger and fought in numerous battles, records show. After the war he married Mary Barnett and the couple had 10 children. They moved from Lancaster to Rochester NY, then came to Washington County, Indiana in 1804. A son, Thomas, settled in the Traders Point area in the early 1820s, and the elder Hume (his wife having died) joined his son here around 1830. He lived with his son until his death in 1840. According to Betty P. Hosier, Pike Township historian, it’s not certain where Hume was buried. “But many pioneers of the era were buried in Pleasant Hill (on Moore Road), so it is logical to believe he, too, was buried here.”¹¹



Typical corduroy road





1859 Ebenezer Christian Church rebuilds its log cabin in the summer of 1859 near Dandy Trail and Eagle Creek (on the west side of Eagle Creek Reservoir and now under water). On the occasion of the dedication the church, members were joined by circuit riding preacher (rode from church to church on horseback) and former pastor Thomas Lochart who said: "In the twenty-five years that I have been preaching I have labored chiefly in Marion, Hendricks, Hamilton and Morgan counties. I have made a number of evangelistic tours throughout the northern part of the state and have even preached in Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa. I assure you that in all my tours, none has been a greater pleasure than my work here in Ebenezer Christian Church." Next they welcomed former preacher John O'Kane who organized the first church in Indianapolis now known as Central Christian Church (now located at 701 N. Delaware). Finally they paid tribute to the traveling preachers that were no longer with them and their minutes record that: "Of all the preachers who have worked in our midst (since Brother Jesse Frazier 25 years ago), perhaps one of the outstanding characters in the minds of all of us is Blind Billy Wilson. Most of us are familiar with his long tramps through the woods and over the hills to be with us on the Lord's Day."¹²

1861 Traders Point residents Charley Ray, Oliver Vorhis, James Snyder, Josiah Marvel, William Mark, John Button leave home to fight in the Civil War.¹³

1864 Traders Point is laid out by John Jennings and Josiah Coughran, who erected a flour mill with four run of burr, three for wheat and one for corn. The grist mill was at the north end of the original William Conner parcel and was erected on the west side of Eagle Creek north of Lafayette Road.¹⁴ Resident A. W. Voorhis was interviewed in 1930: "I came here in a covered wagon. I

don't remember much about it as I was only about two years old. Things have changed around here since then. I was here when Traders Point was laid out in 1864. The church over in the trees there on the Lafayette road just above the bridge that is now called Church of Christ, was once a flour mill and had four stories, and it stood nearer the creek and a mill race ran along back of it. The race has been plowed in but you can see a hint of it at some places in the fields."¹⁵



1873 C. W. Conarroe builds a general store in Traders Point. "The Front porch is a meeting place for the men of the community, who sit on cracker and break boxes or the old bench."¹⁶

1876 The Traders Point covered bridge, constructed in 1876, previously located over Fishback Creek on West 86th in Traders Point, is still in good condition near Traders Point (southwest quadrant of Interstate 65 and West 86th Street). It was relocated to the D.W. Brown estate (southwest quadrant of Interstate 65 and West 86th Street) in 1960. It is a Howe Truss bridge in good condition built by Josiah Durfee in 1876.¹⁷



Typical four-story grist mill



The Traders Point covered bridge

1886 Ebenezer Christian Church is moved to higher ground in Traders Point on east side of Lafayette Road south of its present location to avoid





repeated flooding of Eagle Creek and is renamed Traders Point Christian Church. Rev. Plunkett is recorded as saying: "Since our new location is more nearly out of reach of the high waters of Eagle Creek, our Sunday attendance can be more or less regular regardless of the weather." The building committee that made the move possible consisted of James Dickerson, James Snyder, Asa Conarroe, Marion Hollingsworth, and Thomas Glidewell.¹⁸

1895 Members of Traders Point Christian Church leave over differences of biblical beliefs and form the Traders Point Church of Christ, now located at 82nd and Lafayette Road.¹⁹

1897 "On May 8, 1897, Mancher F. Glidewell deeded the four-story grist mill known as Rual Mill to the Church of Christ for \$150.00. The mill, built by John Jennings and Joseph Coughran in 1864, was on the east side of Lafayette Road in Traders Point. The deed to the property prohibits all worship practices not authorized by the New Testament. The building was built of hand-hewn timbers cut from the near forest. The foundation was of fieldstone, laid up with mortar four feet thick. In preparation for use as a meeting house, the mill was cut down to one and one-half stories at a cost of \$1,117.60. Two kerosene lamps were installed in the center aisle, and one kerosene lamp was installed in the pulpit."²⁰

Early 1920s "Harlan Marvel, starts the diesel run grist mill. When this mill quit in 1928, the town stopped growing and remained much the same until its death."²¹

Traders Point Christian Church dedicated a new church on the same site on Lafayette Road. The new church has a basement that flooded but it served the church well until they relocated to the top of the hill at Lafayette and Moore Roads in 1968.

1927 "One-armed Harlan Resler starts the first filling station (in Traders Point) and Homer Resler opened the barbershop."²²

1938 Traders Point Elementary School, (north-east corner of Moore Road and Lafayette Road) classes move to a new school at 71st and Zionsville Road.

A description of the modern new school buildings erected in the township to succeed the cabin schools such as McCurdy's

of 1822 are described as: "Several school houses, 18' x 20' high enough for the large scholars to stand erect in, were built. The doors were hung outside, holes were cut in the walls and greased paper over them and called windows. The furniture consisted of split poles with legs in them for scholars, and they were called seats. The teachers were paid from \$6 - \$10 a month and had to board themselves." The school located in the triangle of the Elder farm, at the northeast corner of Moore Road and Lafayette Road, was such a school.²³



2004 Aerial photo of old school site

1957 A severe flood washed water to all the homes at Traders Point and wiped a school bus off the road.



1958 U.S. 52 (Lafayette Road) is selected as the path for a new Interstate 65 but most of the tiny town and its scenic farms are by-passed. Traders Point narrowly avoids being wiped out by progress.

1965 Indianapolis Flood Control Board notified Traders Point Church of Christ that they would take the church (and all the other buildings in the valley) by right of eminent domain. In 1966 they relocated to the former Macedonia Methodist Church property at the corner of 82nd and Lafayette Road. Macedonia had built a parsonage but then decided to sell the property.

A levee was constructed along the western banks of Eagle Creek. Ironically, the levee meant the sites cleared as a part of





the eminent domain process would flood no more. The levee remains a scenic overlook and a reminder of the creek's beauty and size. Progress returns Traders Point to its pre-development appearance.²⁴

1970 Traders Point "was buried, alas, under a bulldozer's edge." Six stone houses, including the Hardin family farmhouse were standing when the bulldozer crept through town. Traders Point remained much the same from the 1930s through the 1960s. Its death was caused by interstate and reservoir construction." Hardin raised two daughters in Traders Point. One lives close by on the hill left them when the interstate cut through his dairy barns.²⁵

1984 Indianapolis Colts move leads to creation of nature preserve in Traders Point. To secure the Indianapolis Colts and the Colts Training facility in Marion County, the city donated a parcel of land to the Colts near 56th and Reed Road. Through a complex maneuver, the parcel's ownership was transferred from the Parks Department to the Department of Public Works and then to the City of Indianapolis before being donated to the Colts for a training facility. But the Parks Department would not stand for a net loss of park land. As an inducement to the Parks Department to surrender this parcel adjacent to Eagle Creek Park on West 56th Street, the city agreed to a simultaneous swap of land

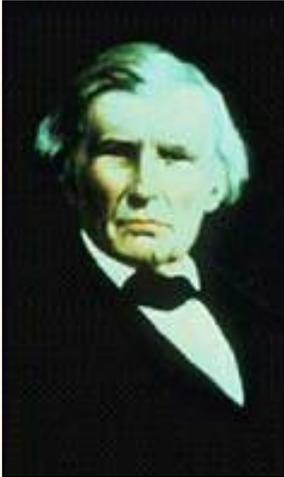
south of 79th and west of Eagle Creek from Department of Public Works to the Parks Department for a nature preserve. Technically it is a part of the Eagle Creek Park but there are no gates, no admission, and no improvements. The only parking and access to the nature preserve is a dirt turnout on the east side of Lafayette Road where some of the homes and buildings once stood in Traders Point. This land transfer effectively cancelled a controversial grant by DPW of mineral rights awarded to Allied/American Aggregates in the 1960s when Allied/American Aggregates was mining gravel in an area now under water in Eagle Creek Park. Had this land transfer not occurred, it is very possible that Allied/American Aggregates would have created a huge gravel mining operation in close proximity to Traders Point. Once again, it was progress that served to preserve the natural character of Traders Point.²⁶

1985 Sunshine Promotions proposed construction of an open-air amphitheater on the site of a former gravel quarry near I-465 and West 86th Street. Neighborhood remonstrators prevailed, and Sunshine selected a site near I-69 and S. R. 238 instead. This quarry is today the "West 86th" residential subdivision.



Conner's Choice: William Conner and Traders Point, Indiana

By Ross Reller



Author's Note:

In the early part of 2005 a nexus was discovered between William Conner and Traders Point, Indiana. A casual review of early land records by this writer revealed the name William Conner as the first land patent owner in Pike Township. A review of the legal description and the township map revealed an exciting clue as to what may have attracted Conner to the area. If the reader agrees, Traders Point should be marked as a place in Indiana history.

"William Conner, for most of his forty-six years, had performed a precarious balancing act between two worlds: Red and White. He spoke the words of both worlds, lived and dressed as both did. He continually walked the knife-edged path dividing the two divergent cultures, never, seemingly, wholly a part of either. As a result, he had intimate knowledge of both societies - and how they interacted with one another. William and his older brother John arrived in Indiana during the winter of 1800-1801 as agents for a Canadian fur trader named Angus Mackintosh. To anyone else it might have been a daunting and foreboding venture, but to the Conner Brothers it must have seemed the reawakening of a vestigial memory. Once again they were beyond white settlement, living and trading among Native Americans. William appears to have eschewed any official role prior to 1811, but increasing conflict and the War of 1812 drew him into government service. The man who had lived and worked with Native Americans most of his life, who had married a Delaware woman, whose children were certainly more "indian" than "American," became a soldier, scout, interpreter and spy for those who were arguably his family's enemies. Among the services rendered by William Conner were maintaining Delaware loyalty during the war and identifying the body of Tecumseh following the Battle of the Thames, the defeat which essentially sealed the fate of Native Americans east of the Mississippi."¹

"For over half a century the Conner family played an important role in treaty making and the removal of Native Americans."²

Traders Point, Indiana barely exists today. Even in its heyday its census population was less than 100 residents. But several area churches, two operating dairies, and an annual horse show are named for this place in northwestern Marion County, Indiana. Nestled within a triangle of three interstate highways; (I-65, I-465 and I-865), Traders Point had a name with unclear roots. Now the origination of this name has been linked to one of the most colorful historical figures of Indiana history: William Conner. The connection between Traders Point and William Conner deserves exploration.

William Conner was the first property owner in Pike Township of Marion County. His choice of a single 80 acre parcel on Eagle Creek in the far northwestern corner of Marion County of Pike Township, an area later known as Traders Point, is curious for a host of reasons. By the year 1822, the year of his Marion County patent, Conner had already acquired 160 acres in Hamilton County. He would eventually acquire thousands of acres in Hamilton County and dozens of parcels in other Indiana counties.³ But this was to be the prominent land baron's only patent in Marion County. Surprising when one considers that Marion County was the center of the speculative fever that Conner would practically pass on it.





As the site for the state's new capitol, Conner may have stayed away from other Marion County parcels out of a sense that he was too late to participate in the land speculation occurring near the new center of commerce and government in the mile square of Indianapolis. Or he may have believed he was too inexperienced. Although he would speculate in land until 1857, he was just getting his feet wet in 1823. He seemed to prefer his backyard of Hamilton County.

His Marion County purchase is also curious because it reveals the contrast between the settler and the speculator in acquiring land. Unlike one who needs the land to provide a place for building a home, farming and raising a family; Conner had no real need for the land he was acquiring. Just as the fur he had traded was more a commodity than a necessity for warmth, the land to Conner was prized more for its currency than its utility in farming.

It is also curious for its ability to illustrate Conner's keen skill in locating the exact spot where trade might be conducted with the remaining Indians, or where commerce with the settler could grow anew.

And there is an aspect of insider trading. It is curious for an illustration of how people with access to information that was not widely available to the general public could act on it for personal gain. Referred to now as "insider trading", we can presume that one could profit immensely from the relationship if one knew a county commissioner or a county surveyor. The ability to review section maps before they were published, or to know of proposed road projects before they were announced, could mean the difference between a mere profit and a windfall to the land investor. For Indiana's first generation of settlers and speculators the rules had not yet been written.

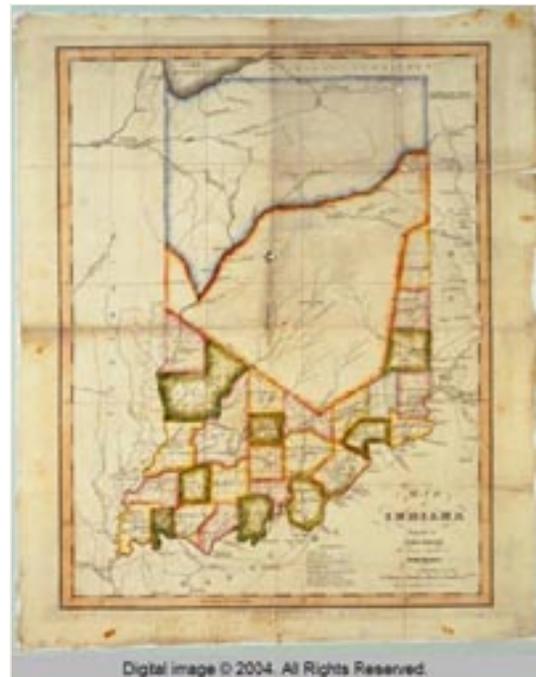
But perhaps most curious in hindsight is that we can guess (in an educated fashion), that Conner already knew this area quite well; from navigating the area's Indian trails as a trader. He saw the site from the perspective of a man who lived in two worlds: Red and White.

To fully appreciate the significance of William Conner's choice of any parcel in Central Indiana, it will be necessary to review the climate of the times and a few facts about the process of acquiring land in pioneer Indiana.

By 1800 negotiations between the United States and the Indians were starting to transform the wild Indian country into a New American settlement area for the white man. In 1801 William Henry Harrison became Governor of the Indiana Territory, serving 12 years. (He would later become the 9th President of the United States). The Miami Indians struck a

deal with Harrison to sell their Indiana land for \$.02 per acre. His prime task as governor was to obtain title to Indian lands so settlers could press forward into the wilderness. When the Indians retaliated, Harrison was responsible for defending the settlements. Conner's brother John was closely aligned with Harrison and few knew the wild unsettled Indian lands of the new state better than the Conner brothers.

These new settlement areas presented an opportunity for William Conner. By 1822 more Indiana counties, including Marion, were being divided into townships. And this new concept of awarding "patents"⁴ of land was working its way



Indiana in 1816

into more of the state, attracting to Indiana some of the sturdy pioneers of the westward migration. It was also creating opportunities for land speculators and Conner transitioned from trading fur to trading land.

Although the land office wanted to award whole sections, half sections and 1/4 sections to encourage settlement of new areas, Conner was evidently not interested in staking such a large position. He was quite content to settle for 80 acres, a mere 1/8 of a section (or 1/288 of the township, a very small fraction indeed! It would be the only patent of land ever awarded to Conner in Marion County. Why would this fur trader, navigator, Indian scout, businessman and real estate entrepreneur want an 80 acre parcel so far removed from his major assemblage in Hamilton County? Conner was an experienced, knowledgeable scout. A skilled horseman who had come to Indiana at the request of Canadians interested





in establishing trade with Indians, William, like his brother John, was comfortable in the wildest and least civilized parts of Indiana. He had lived among the Indians to gain their trust as a trader. He had learned their languages and would assist them in negotiating trades and treaties. He had many years earlier taken a Delaware chief's daughter as his wife. And in 1820 he had accompanied her and their mixed children to the Illinois border after conceding that they could not stay in a post-Indian Indiana.

For Conner the opportunity to patent a site in Pike Township of Marion County may have been like buying stock in a high flyer stock like Amazon or Google before everyone else found out and bid up their value. It must have been like being offered the best lot in a prime subdivision with thousands of beautiful lots, each practically guaranteed to appreciate in value the minute they hit the market and became known to others? It must have been like being in on the ground floor of an opportunity to buy land at a bargain price (although many times per acre what the Indians had been paid). And for Conner, like any investor, the reward appeared to exceed the risk.

So the question for Conner, knowing of the plans to plat the township, and facing a township of twenty three thousand and forty brand-new acres, never before owned or improved by the white man, was: "Out of all that I know, out of all of this opportunity, which parcel do I pursue?" A related question was how many acres do I want to acquire?

Almost any parcel would have the potential to raise horses, or cattle, or corn, or to be subdivided, or held for future gain. As the owner of over one thousand acres in Hamilton County, Conner was not a settler seeking a site for a homestead. So it should not be surprising that Conner chose a parcel with characteristics undesirable to the settler. Government field notes recorded July 8, 1821 by the surveyor for this section of Pike Township confirm this. The surveyor's notes have a shorthand that describe sites for their suitability to farming. A "1st rate" site is flat, and "2d rate land is hilly.

Conner's methodology was driven by other considerations. First, he chose a parcel that was not entirely tillable. In fact, it was cut nearly in half by a creek running through it; meaning that what land was not in the creek would certainly be affected by it. The rains and runoff from upstream would make even less of this parcel usable; forever changing with every rise and fall of the water level. And he shrewdly chose a site that was about to have its farming utility further reduced.

With Eagle Creek coming into the northeast corner of his parcel and leaving near the southwest corner of

his square, a new road was being planned that would enter his parcel on the southeast corner and exit on the northwest corner. Although not formally constructed as a road, Conner knew this parcel was already quartered like an "x" by an Indian trail and it was only a matter of time before this trail might become a road. He must have smiled when in 1831 the county commissioners chose a route for the first highway across the township. It was no coincidence that William Conner's parcel was at that one point in the township where navigable Eagle Creek intersected a busy horse trail.

Today we know this site is where Eagle Creek runs underneath Lafayette Road. For William Conner, his only choice of land in Marion County was a Traders Point.



Townships

Thanks in part to a country founded by surveyors like George Washington, the poor property boundaries like stones and fences also known as "metes and bounds", were replaced with the accurate measurement system we have today based upon meridians, baselines, townships, and ranges.

A county was comprised of townships and townships were divided into 36 sections, each section being exactly 1 mile by 1 mile, and containing 640 acres. To facilitate settlement of this new real estate, the Federal Government established an orderly sale of various size parcels based upon quartered portions of sections.

By 1822 the Marion County Commissioners had ordered the platting of Marion County's Pike Township and in September of 1823 the first patent (4) in Pike Township, was awarded to William Conner. The surveyor's notes for the Conner patent are dated July 8, 1821 per the Marion County Surveyor's records.



A Backyard Grave in Traders Point, Indiana

By Ross Reller

Armed with a piece of paper showing the approximate site of the Cotton Cemetery, I knocked on the door. “Excuse me sir, but do you mind if I walk through your backyard? I believe it leads to an old cemetery up on the hill.”

Now before I tell you how he responded, at the time I thought it was entirely possible that he did not know a cemetery was there. Or if he knew it was there, he certainly did not want his world to suddenly change by how he answered some stranger’s question. Please pause and reflect upon how you might react if confronted with the same question.

The neighborhood is spectacular. The homes are above average in every respect. The lots are well-landscaped and over a hundred of them feature the finest building materials. The developer took advantage of the mature wooded terrain. A creek meanders alongside numerous lots. Some of these lots overlook a large pond created by a long-gone quarry operation. It is a desirable setting for a peaceful residential community. Built by a prominent Indianapolis developer, Sol C. Miller, in the 1990s, the West 86th Street subdivision is one of the more prestigious communities in the township and is home to some very important people in Indianapolis.

The community is deemed far superior to the outdoor amphitheater that almost located here when the property became available in the mid 1980s. After a long



battle with neighbors and the city, music mogul Dave Lucas of Sunshine Promotions knew he was not welcome on this site in Pike Township. But this could have been the site for the Verizon Music Center (formerly Deer Creek), if the neighbors had not been so vocal in their opposition. The nearby Eagle Creek valley would have been ideal for pitching a tent in anticipation of a Grateful Concert the next day. The music might have wafted for miles. But Sol Miller had few remonstrators for his development.

A community like this is home to a variety of successful people. Doctors, lawyers, business owners, accountants and even scientists choose communities like this. I would learn months later that the man facing me had such renowned that his words could be found on the internet, “Beyond target discovery, we expect that proteins will reveal novel biomarkers, which will be important for

new strategies to get a drug in the clinic and could be used in future diagnostics.”

And as I faced him and noticed the backdrop of his formal living room and the Sunday paper spread by a chair, I realized that a wall of windows overlooked the wooded area that was my area of interest. Before he could answer I unfolded the copy of the topo map and tried to show him where I thought the cemetery might be. As quickly as he could say I’m not sure, uh, sure I guess so, I wondered if he regretted it. There was a certain

look on his face of “here goes the neighborhood, the secret’s out.”

In the hour preceding this encounter with the scientist, my wife and our dog and I had been doing etchings of grave markers at another area cemetery, the Hopewell Cemetery. Armed with rolls of paper, crayons, a notebook and a camera we were attempting to get a better understanding of our neighborhood and those buried in it. We had been on hands and knees etching the relief of the headstones with paper and crayon. I was filthy. So my attire was not going to get me an invitation to come in and discuss the matter further. The door closed and I went to my car on the cul-de-sac to get my wife and dog and our supplies.

After crossing a carefully manicured lawn we were in the heavy woods. Just beyond the yard the topography changed. We walked ten or fifteen feet down a steep embankment, over a now dry Cotton



Creek and then back up a similar slope to a flat area in a grove of tall trees where the grave markers were immediately evident. Most of these were broken and were slightly hidden, laying flat under layers of leaves. A couple of stones were still upright. We were approximately two to three hundred feet from the wall of windows in his living room. We realized that it was very possible from this vantage point that the cemetery might not be visible from the house.

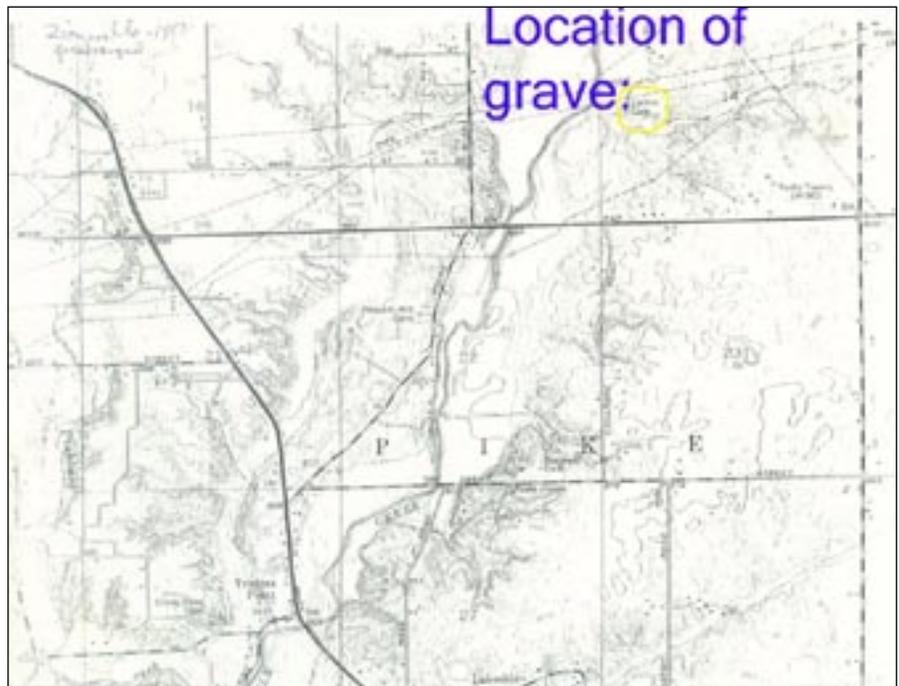
“Harmon’s buried here!” I shouted to my wife. I had just learned a few weeks earlier some of the names of the township’s earliest settlers. Why I would have expected her to have remembered these names I do not know. Hesitantly she said, “Who was Harmon?” as if she was about to be scolded for not knowing. “I think he was the first settler in the township,” I said with all the authority of someone who doesn’t have a clue. “But the graveyard isn’t even marked, isn’t that odd if he’s so important to the

township?” Gwen said. “John Harmon, Born 1767 Died 1825”, she read aloud, “James Harmon, Born Feb. 7 1797, and Died April 11, 1847.

We quietly went about our business of etching Then we went home. The

property owner and his unmarked cemetery would be left alone for another day.

The earliest land records from the National Land Office record that on November 9, 1822: John B. Harmon bought 160 acres, NE ¼, sec 15. This





Harmon Family Genealogy:

Father: John L Harmon

*Born: ABT 1767 - Buried Harmon-Cotton Cemetery,
Marion Co., Indiana*

*Marr: 16 Dec 1787 - on Elk Creek, Montgomery Co.,
Virginia*

*Died: ABT 1825 - Harmon-Cotton Cemetery Marion Co.
Indiana*

Father:

Mother:

Other Spouses:

Son: James Harmon

Born: 4 Feb 1797 - Pulaski Co., Kentucky or Virginia

Marr: 18 Feb 1816 - Brookville, Franklin Co., Illinois

Died: 11 Apr 1847 - Boone Co., Indiana

Father: John L Harmon

Mother: Elizabeth Bird\Byrd

Other Spouses:

site is where the Traders Point Creamery in northwestern Pike Township, Marion County is today. His son, James Harmon, on October 3, 1823 purchased the W ½ NW ¼, sec 14, 80 acres, a site just east of his father's land on the east side of Eagle Creek. James Harmon only enjoyed two years of his father's company on their adjacent farms. But James showed his respect for his father by donating a portion of his smaller farm for a cemetery where his father could be buried. A cemetery that today is anonymous.

Father and Son were two of the earliest settlers in Pike Township. They moved to the area together, settled on it, bought adjacent farms, worked here, died here, and remain here, in a quiet unmarked cemetery in someone's backyard, in Sol Miller's West 86th..

Among the earliest (Pike Township) settlers and perhaps the first thereof was James Harmon who came to the township in 1820, settling on the east side of Eagle Creek near the North county Line. Source: Pike Township Historical Society.

Author's Note: The approximate location of the Cotton Cemetery is shown on the USGS 1953 Quadrangle map that was folded in my pocket. An earlier article, "Conner's Choice", explores Pike township's first property owner, a land speculator by the name of William Conner, who chose an 80 acre parcel where Eagle Creek crosses Lafayette Road. As most Indiana 4th graders know, William Conner chose to settle in Hamilton County and built the county's first brick house.



Cassilly Adams and Traders Point

By Ross Reller

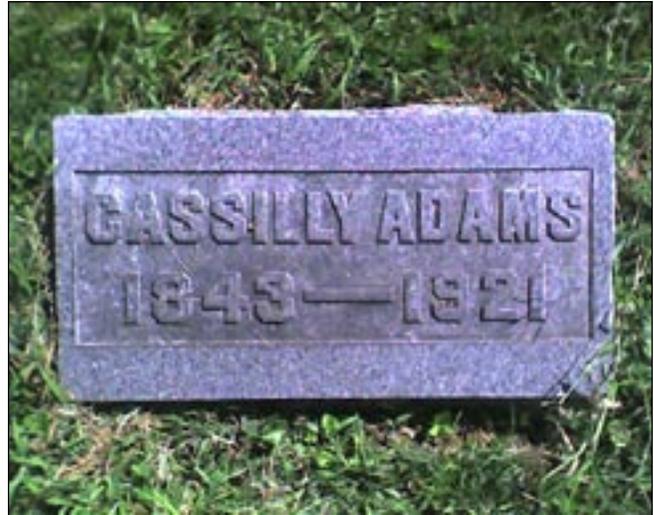
Death Notices: Indianapolis Star, May 09, 1921:

ADAMS - Cassilly, died at his home at Traders Point, Sunday 4 p.m. Funeral from residence Tuesday May 19, at 3 p.m. Burial at Crown Hill.

The brief public notice is the extent of the local press coverage about our former resident.

Cassilly Adams, a civil war veteran, painted many western scenes. But he is best known for his epic work, *Custer's Last Fight*, which he completed in 1885. His rendering of that famous battle at the Big Horn River in Montana eventually was obtained by the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Company, which made thousands of reproductions for advertising and promotional purposes. Lithographs hung in taverns across the nation. (The lithograph can even be seen in the movie, "The Gunfighter" 1950, starring Gregory Peck. The large painting on the wall behind Gregory Peck's chair in a bar room scene is "Custer's Last Fight".)

Anheuser-Busch then produced a lithographic print of the painting and in 1896 gave prints to their distributors, bars, and other



Grave marker at Crown Hill Cemetery, Indianapolis

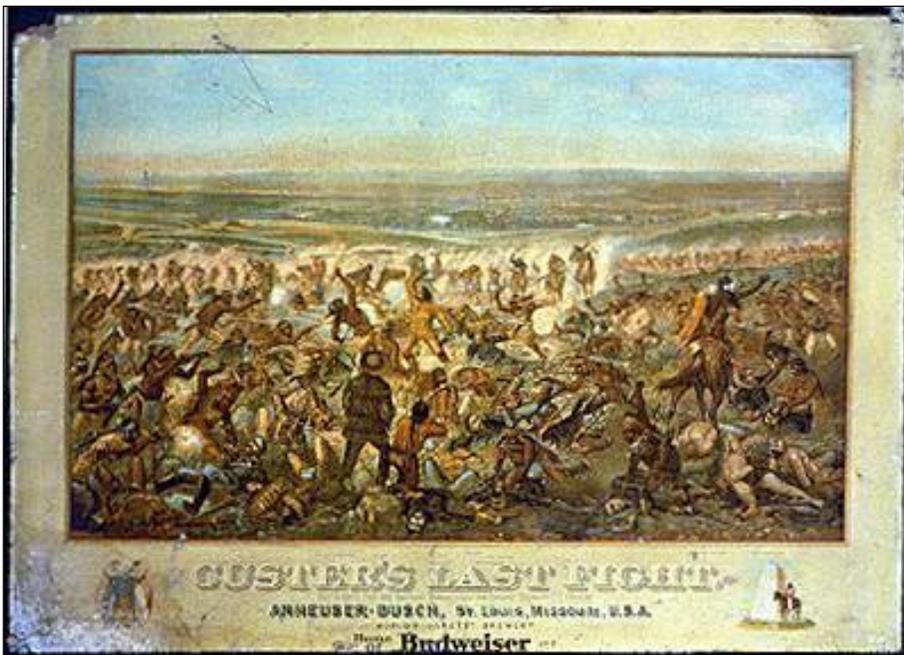
outlets. Through its display, it became widely known to diverse audiences.

Born in Zanesville, Ohio, Adams was the son of William Apthorp Adams, a lawyer who traced his ancestry back to the John Adams family of Boston. The elder Adams was an amateur artist. At an early age, young Adams was interested in art.

He studied at the Boston Academy of Arts, under Thomas S. Noble, and later at the Cincinnati Art School. He served

in the army during the Civil War and was wounded while aboard the U.S.S. Osage at the Battle of Vicksburg. Late in the 1870s, Adams moved to St. Louis where he found work as an artist and engraver.

Custer's Last Fight took one year to complete. As models he used actual Sioux Indians in battle dress and cavalymen in uniforms of the period. The painting, which measured approximately 9 1/2 feet by 16 1/2 feet, was produced for two members of the St. Louis Arts Club, who exhibited the historical canvas around the country, charging a fifty-cent admission fee. The two promoters did not realize the profit they wanted from the venture,



"Custer's Last Fight" by Cassilly Adams



so they sold the painting to a St. Louis saloonkeeper who hung it in his bar-room. When the saloon went bankrupt, the painting was acquired by one of the creditors- Anheuser-Busch Company. At the time it was valued at \$10,000. The brewery gave the painting to the 7th Cavalry, and it was destroyed in a fire at Fort Bliss, Texas in 1946.

Adams is a relatively unknown artist, a victim of circumstance. Most of his illustrations were done for book publishers who did not credit him with the work. Therefore, many of his illustrations were borrowed for other books and were not attributed to him. Actually, he painted many scenes of frontier life, and it is known that he illustrated *Conquering the Wilderness* by Frank Triplet, published in 1883.



"Old Fisherman" by Adams

Adams died at Trader's Point near Indianapolis, Indiana in 1921. "

Taken from *American Western Art* by Dorothy Harmsen

From Kansas Historical Society (1945):

"The Adams painting, done in the middle 1880's, was lithographed in modified version by Otto Becker and published by the Anheuser-Busch Company of St. Louis in 1896 and is still distributed by that concern. Copies can be viewed in barrooms, taverns, hotels, restaurants, and museums throughout the country. It is probably safe to say that in the 50 years elapsing since 1896 it has been

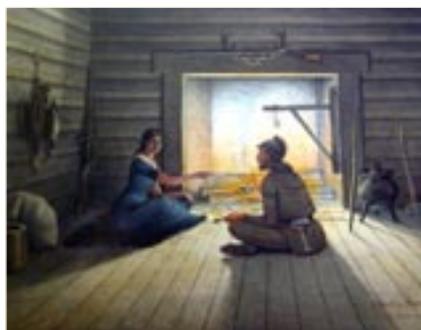
viewed by a greater number of the lower-browed members of society-and by fewer art critics-than any other picture in Amer-



"Chief" by Adams



Photo of the artist and hound



"By the Hearth" by Adams

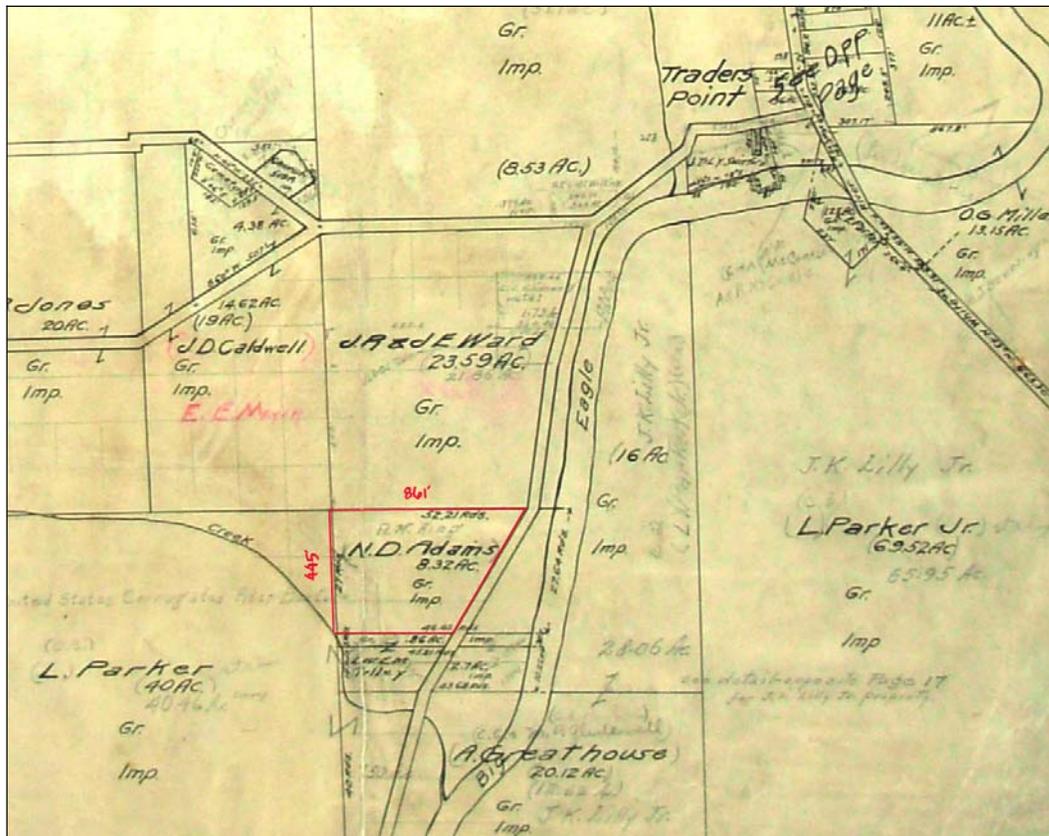
ican history. To be more specific, the writer on a bus trip to St. Louis in the summer of 1940, stopped for rest and refreshment at a tavern in a small mid-Missouri town. On one wall of the tavern, a busy rest stop for bus lines traveling east and west, was "Custer's Last Fight." Each bus that came to rest disgorged its passengers, many of whom found their way into the tavern. As each group entered, some one was sure to see the Custer



"Almost Home" by Adams

picture with the result that there were always several people-sometimes a crowd-around it, viewing it, commenting on it, and then hurrying on. Probably hundreds of people saw this picture every month. When one considers that 150,000 copies have been published and distributed since the picture was first published in 1896, it is evident that "Custer's Last Fight" has been viewed by an almost countless throng. Kirke Mechem, secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, tells me that a reproduction of the painting in the Memorial building close to his work room, is likewise viewed by a constantly changing daily audience. The picture fascinates all beholders, for after viewing it and passing on to examine other pictures and exhibits, return is made to see again "Custer's Last Fight." "It is the most popular by far of all our many pictures," reports Mr. Mechem."





Cassilly Adams and Traders Point, Indiana

By some quirk of fate the Pike Township Assessor's Office has a bound plat book from 1922, the year after Adams died. From this record we learn the parcel was held in the name of his wife, N. D. (Nannie Dennis) Adams. Their parcel would be a choice waterfront site today. Then it would have been bordered on the south by Fishback Creek and to the east, just beyond the scenic Dandy Trail Road, was a narrow Eagle Creek, not yet a flooded reservoir as it appears today. It was an 8.4 acre parcel, and may have consisted of a horse stable and chicken coop in addition to the residence.

This is an area that birders today know well as the site of two ornithology observation platforms. The photos show the plat they owned, fronting on the west side of Dandy Trail (now underwater). But their property is entirely high and dry, with the possible exception of a meandering Fishback Creek that has gobbled up some of their property. Visitors to the site may see remnants of their residence, including a sidewalk leading up to Dandy Trail Road and broken bricks. The parcel, overlaid below onto a current aerial photo, confirms that Adams would have had a "plein air" setting or backdrop that matches up well with his body of artwork featuring pioneer life of the early 1800s.

(*Plein air*, a French word, literally translates as 'open air', and is defined as painting or drawing done outside, in the open air. The equivalent term in Italian would

be *al fresco*. These works were taken directly from nature, and infused with a feeling of the open air. A relatively recent practice, painting outdoors became an important dimension of the landscape work of the Impressionists of the late 1800s.)



About the Author:



Ross is a 1980 graduate of Earlham College. From 1980 to 1982 Ross was employed by Conner Prairie where he developed a keen appreciation for Indiana's first generation of settlers. He resides in Traders Point at 7889 Moore Road where he and his wife Gwen built bought land and built a home 15 years ago. Ross and Gwen are parents to Zach, 16 and Jake, 14 who have walked to school at Traders Point Christian Academy since first grade.

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Author's note: The preceding is not complete. There are numerous additional topics that I have little knowledge of and omissions that I have not intended.

I would welcome source materials, photos, etc. to strengthen this submittal.



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- 2 R.R. Surgrove, History of Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana, Philadelphia: L.H. Everts & Co., 1884. <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/PatentSearch/Detail.asp?Accession=IN0410%5F%5F%2E350&Index=10&QryID=61211.66&DetailTab=1>
- 3 www.inl.org/1930pike.htm
- 4 Northwest Topics, 12/17/1975
- 5 http://www.in.gov/icpr/archives/databases/land/indiana_.html
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www.inl.org/tract.htm
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- 8 Pike Township Historical Society
- 9 Marching Onward, A Pageant Portraying the History of the Ebenezer Christian Church at Traders Point, Indiana, presented on the occasion of the Church's Centennial Celebration: October 13, and 14, 1934.





- 10 American Field Guide / Carving Out a Place in History – http://pbs-afg.virage.com/vss-bin/vss_SR/pbs_afg/search?&template=search.tmpl&query=&query2=&query3=in&search=Search&offset=8
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 - 12 Marching Onward, A Pageant Portraying the History of the Ebenezer Christian Church at Traders Point, Indiana, presented on the occasion of the Church's Centennial Celebration: October 13, and 14, 1934
 - 13 Marching Onward, A Pageant Portraying the History of the Ebenezer Christian Church at Traders Point, Indiana, presented on the occasion of the Church's Centennial Celebration: October 13, and 14, 1934
- and: http://www.traderspointchurch.org/about_Traders_Point.html
- 14 Records of the Traders Point Church of Christ (now located at the northwest corner of 82nd and Lafayette Road):
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 - 16 www.inl.org/1930pike.htm
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 - 21 Northwest Topics, December 17, 1975.
 - 22 Northwest Topics, December 17, 1975.
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<http://www.connerprairie.org/HistoryOnline/connbiol.html>

<http://www.connerprairie.org/HistoryOnline/furdoc.html>

For a complete listing of Conner's Land Patents: <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/PatentSearch/>

<http://www.blm.gov/nhp/facts/index.htm#history> The first generation of Indiana property owners received rightful ownership of their property through a "patent" awarded by the federal government's Bureau of Land Management, (BLM). The BLM's roots go back to the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. These laws provided for the survey and settlement of the lands that the original 13 colonies ceded to the Federal government after the War of Independence. As additional lands were acquired by the United States from Spain, France, and other countries, Congress directed that they be explored, surveyed, and made available for settlement. In 1812, Congress established the General Land Office in the Department of the Treasury to oversee the disposition of these Federal lands. As the 19th century progressed and the Nation's land base expanded further west, Congress encouraged the settlement of the land by enacting a wide variety of laws, including the Homesteading Laws and the Mining Law.





Resources for “Conner’s Choice”

- 1 <http://www.connerprairie.org/HistoryOnline/connbiol.html>
- 2 <http://www.connerprairie.org/HistoryOnline/furdoc.html>
- 3 For a complete listing of Conner’s Land Patents: <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/PatentSearch/>
- 4 <http://www.blm.gov/nhp/facts/index.htm#history> The first generation of Indiana property owners received rightful ownership of their property through a “patent” awarded by the federal government’s Bureau of Land Management, (BLM). The BLM’s roots go back to the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. These laws provided for the survey and settlement of the lands that the original 13 colonies ceded to the Federal government after the War of Independence. As additional lands were acquired by the United States from Spain, France, and other countries, Congress directed that they be explored, surveyed, and made available for settlement. In 1812, Congress established the General Land Office in the Department of the Treasury to oversee the disposition of these Federal lands. As the 19th century progressed and the Nation’s land base expanded further west, Congress encouraged the settlement of the land by enacting a wide variety of laws, including the Homesteading Laws and the Mining Law.



Resources for “A Backyard Grave”

<http://members.cox.net/lkington/gpl70.htm#head3>

Early Land Records Of Pike Township

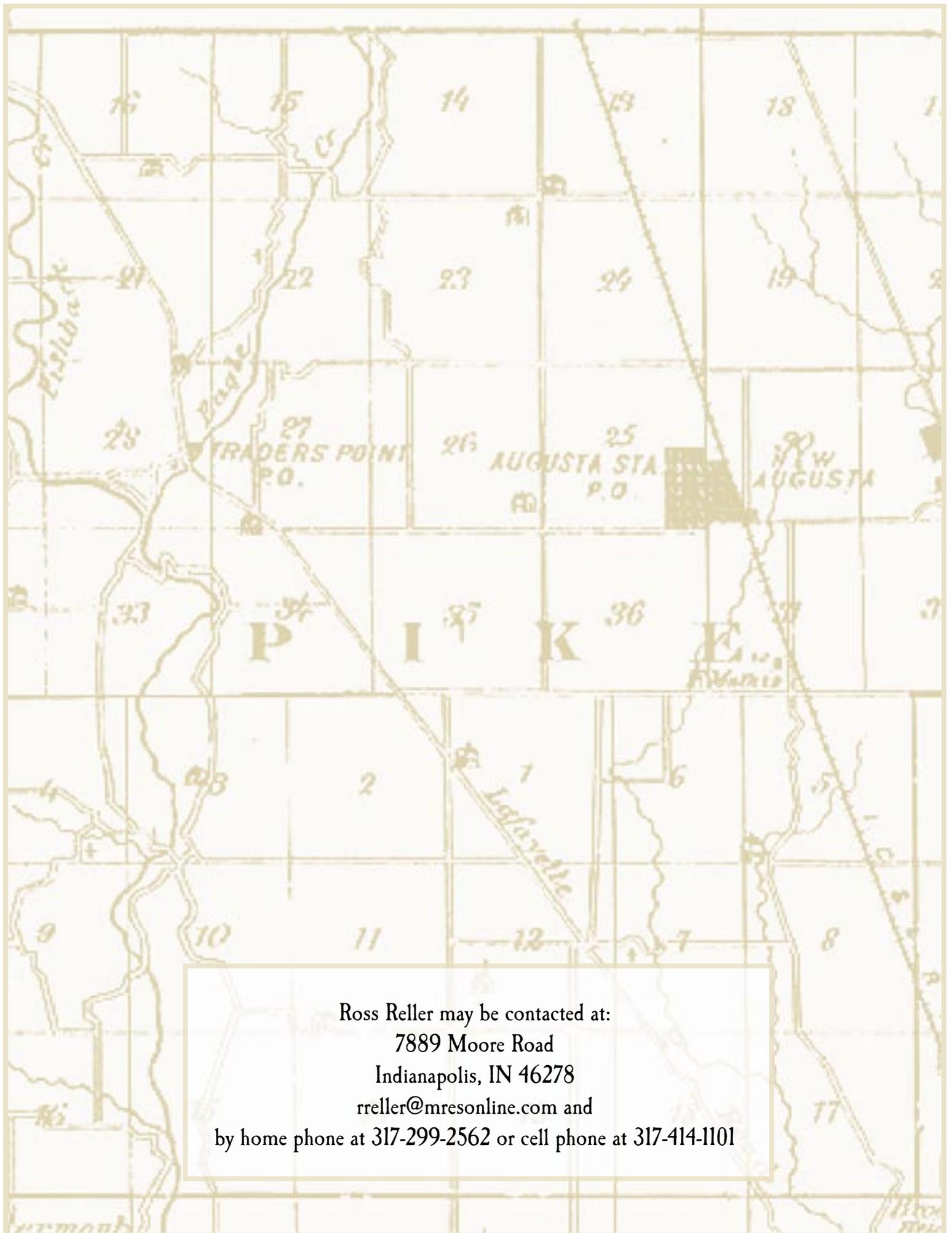
November 9, 1822: John B. Harmon, NE ¼, sec 15, 160 acres, James Harmon, W ½ NW ¼, sec 14, 80 acres

Source: <http://www.inl.org/pike/tract.htm>

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<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~vklein/cemeteries.html> – October 3, 1823





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