AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
FOR
THE ILLINOIS AND MICHIGAN CANAL
STATE TRAIL

Fever River Research
Springfield, Illinois

INTERIM REPORT

February 2001
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by
Christopher Stratton
and
Floyd Mansberger

Fever River Research
Springfield, Illinois

prepared for
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
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COVER ILLUSTRATION: Photograph of a lock and locktender’s house on the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Although the setting of the photograph has not been positively identified, it is believed to be of either Lock No. 11 or 12, located west of Ottawa, La Salle County. The original photograph is on file at the Reddick Library in Ottawa.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many individuals contributed the production of this report. Foremost, we would like to thank Dr. Harold Hassen, Cultural Resource Coordinator for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, for the opportunity to produce the report and his continuing commitment to research on the Illinois and Michigan Canal.

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents a management plan for the historical archaeological resources located within the Illinois and Michigan Canal State Trail recreational area. Owned by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the Illinois and Michigan Canal State Trail is located in northeastern Illinois and follows the route of the historic man-made waterway that joined the Great Lakes region with the Mississippi River Valley (via the Illinois River). The Trail covers the western 61 miles of the canal’s original 97-mile route and stretches from the canal’s western terminus at LaSalle (La Salle County) to Rockdale (Will County). For most of its length, the Trail covers a relatively narrow corridor that measures 240 feet in width, 60 feet of which represents the canal proper while the remaining width is represented by two 90-foot reserves located to either side of the canal. Altogether, the State Trail occupies approximately 2,745 acres of land in Cook, DuPage, Will, Grundy, and La Salle Counties. The towpath that follows the south bank of the canal has been converted into a bike path, and, today, bicycling represents one of the major recreational activities along the Trail. Other popular activities include fishing and canoeing.

Although primarily used as a recreational area, the Illinois and Michigan Canal has a rich cultural heritage that has been recognized as nationally significant. In 1974 the canal was made a National Historic Landmark. A decade later, in 1984, the United States Congress designated the canal and a several-mile-wide corridor adjacent to it the nation’s first National Heritage Corridor. The Illinois and Michigan Canal State Trail represents but a small percentage of the overall area included in the National Heritage Corridor. Despite the Trail’s narrow property lines, however, multiple cultural resources (both above ground and below) are located within its limits. These resources include pre-canal farmsteads, shantytowns occupied by canal workers, canal operation facilities (e.g. locktender’s residences, toll houses, etc.), and industrial/commercial structures.

In the Spring of 2000, the Illinois Department of Natural contracted with Fever River Research to develop a historical archaeological resource management plan for the Illinois and Michigan Canal State Trail. The stated goals of this project were to: (1) present an historical archaeological context for the canal; (2) identify primary documentary sources that can assist in archaeological investigations along the canal; (3) discuss the character of the archaeological resources potentially located there; (4) identify research questions that the potential archaeological resources might provide answers to; and (5) make recommendations for the management of the archaeological resources. The abandoned canal town of Dresden was selected as a case study to illustrate the diversity of documentary and archival resources that are available for lands that are within close proximity of the canal. The majority of the research for this management plan was conducted at the Illinois State Archives. Additional research was carried out at Lewis University’s Canal and Regional History Special Collection (Lockport), the Grundy County Courthouse (Morris), and the Morris Public Library.

The management plan is divided into three broad sections (Parts I, II, and III). Part I details the primary documentary resources that can assist in future archaeological investigations along the canal. Part II discusses the history of Dresden and the character of the archaeological
resources that are potentially located there. Finally, Part III presents a series of research questions and management recommendations for the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Only Parts I and II of the management plan are presented in this interim report. The last section, Part III, will be integrated into a final report that will be forthcoming in the near future.
Figure 1. Map illustrating the route of the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the region through which the canal passes. The heavy dashed line represents the canal line. The Western, Middle, and Summit Divisions demarcated are the three districts into which the canal was divided during the course of its construction.
Illinois and Michigan Canal

Transportation corridors have played a significant role in the settlement of Illinois during prehistoric and historic periods. Early travel between Lake Michigan and the Upper Illinois River Valley (which eventually opened into the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico) required a short, but difficult portage across a low-lying area located at the head of the Chicago River. Additionally, the shallow and rocky nature of the upper Illinois River hindered steamboat travel past the rapids located in the LaSalle-Peru region. To make the upper Illinois River navigable to commercial traffic and connect the Illinois River to the Great Lakes, a relatively long canal was needed.

In northern Illinois, the Illinois and Michigan Canal, which opened for navigation in the summer of 1848, connected the southern tip of Lake Michigan (and the port city of Chicago) with the upper Illinois River valley and greatly influenced the settlement of the northern region of the state. The construction of this commercial waterway helped transform the northern region of the state from a sparsely settled frontier district to a commercial, agricultural, and industrial region that supplied the port city of Chicago with a wide variety of commodities.

In 1829, the State of Illinois organized a board of commissioners that was to oversee the sale of lands included in the 1827 federal grant. Not content to merely sell large tracts of acreage, the commissioners arranged for the platting of towns on canal land at selected points along the projected canal route. The first of these official canal towns to be platted were Chicago and Ottawa, which were laid out in 1830. Chicago’s early platting was hardly surprising, considering its location at the eastern end of the proposed canal route and the presence of a sizable resident population in the area (in association with Fort Dearborn). Ottawa also was gifted with a strategic location, in being laid out at the juncture of the Fox and Illinois Rivers (Conzen 1988:9). Before Ottawa was even surveyed, a store and several homesteads had already been established on, or adjacent to, the town site, and a ferry was operating across the Illinois River at
that point (Guion and Belin 1830). In 1831, Ottawa was selected as the county seat of newly formed La Salle County. For a time, it was thought that the town might also serve as the western terminus of the canal (Conzen 1988:9). Unfortunately, the first sale of town lots in Ottawa and Chicago netted the commissioners less than $18,000, which was far below what was needed to start construction on the canal. Lack of funds, coupled with lukewarm support for the project amongst legislators from southern Illinois, caused the canal’s prospects to dim during the term of Governor John Reynolds (1830-1834). A feasibility survey conducted in 1832 convinced Reynolds, the canal commission, and the Illinois General Assembly that it would be significantly cheaper to construct a railroad than a canal. In March 1833, Congress amended its Act of 1827 in order to allow the state the option of building a railroad through the corridor, if it chose to do so (Howard 1972:195; Spitznagel 1984:4-5).

The political and economic climate shifted back to the canal’s favor after Reynolds left office. His successor, Joseph Duncan (1834-1838), was elected on a pro-canal platform (Howard 1972:195). Furthermore, emigrants were flooding into Northeastern Illinois in the wake of the Black Hawk War (1832) and the subsequent relocation of Native-American tribes from the region to west of the Mississippi River. The majority of these settlers were New Englanders who traveled west by way of Erie Canal and the Great Lakes. A growing population in Northern Illinois meant increased sales of canal land, as well as a louder voice for the region in the General Assembly. Revenues from canal land sales also were enhanced by the speculative “fever” that swept the county in 1834-1837. Surveys conducted in preparation of the canal’s construction encountered farmsteads all along the Upper Illinois and Lower Des Plaines River Valleys. They also found new towns developing along the canal corridor (IMCR Survey and Field Notes). Peru, Marseilles, and Joliet were all platted in 1834. In contrast to Ottawa and Chicago, these three towns were platted by local or private interests on lands not owned by the canal commission (Conzen 1988:9). Chicago’s future as a great inland port also was fixed during this period, when the federal government improved its harbor facilities by widening and dredging the mouth of the Chicago River. Another factor fueling the renewed interest in the canal project was the strong “booster” ethos shared by many Illinois politicians, who wanted to see Illinois keep pace, economically, with her sister states in the East and saw internal improvements as the most effective way of doing so. Construction on the Illinois and Michigan Canal finally was able to move forward after Governor Duncan approved a $500,000 loan to the state. The official groundbreaking ceremony occurred at Chicago, on July 4, 1836 (Howard 1972:195-7). William Gooding was appointed Chief Engineer on the project.

Stretching 97 miles in length, the Illinois and Michigan Canal measured 60-feet wide at its top, 30 feet at its base, and required seventeen locks, numerous aqueducts, water weirs, culverts, and multiple feeder canals to operate. Plans originally called for a water depth of 4 feet, but this was later abandoned in favor of 6-foot channel. Another change involved the “deep cut” channel that Chief Engineer Gooding originally planned to excavate through the 13-foot dividing ridge separating the South Branch of the Chicago River from the Des Plaines River. Due to rising costs, the deep-cut idea was abandoned, and two summit locks were constructed to lift boats over the dividing ridge. The remaining 141-foot descent from Lockport to La Salle was to be negotiated by 15 locks (numbered 1 through 15 from east to west). Water was to be supplied to the canal from the rivers lying close to it. A pumping station was built at Bridgeport to draw water from the Chicago River. The Little Calumet, Du Page, Kankakee, and Fox Rivers were
tapped via feeder canals (Lamb 1987:12-13). Rivers and streams intersected by the canal were
crossed by a number of methods. The Des Plaines and Du Page Rivers were crossed by building
low-water dams that were designed to back up the rivers to the same level of the canal. Through
Joliet, the canal actually co-opted and followed the channel of the Des Plaines. Aux Sable
Creek, Nettle Creek, and the Fox River were crossed by means of aqueducts. Smaller streams
were diverted beneath the canal though culverts. The water level in the canal was regulated by
means of waste weirs. The waste weirs were equipped with control gates that allowed water to
be discharge from the canal when the level rose too high. A number of other support structures
needed to be constructed as well, including road and towpath bridges and locktender’s houses.

For administration purposes, the canal was divided into three main divisions. The eastern
third of the canal was designated as the Summit Division and extended from Bridgeport (now
part of Chicago), on the South Branch of the Chicago River to Lockport. Lockport, which was
located on the Des Plaines River north of Joliet, was platted on canal land in 1836 and served as
the headquarters for the canal commission. The Middle Division of the canal ran from Lockport
to a point just east of the present town of Seneca (platted in 1849). The Western Division
extended to the canal terminus at La Salle (Lamb 1987:12). La Salle was platted by the canal
commission the same year as Lockport (1836), immediately adjacent to the already established
town of Peru. The town plat of La Salle provided for steamboat and canal basins that were
intended to facilitate the trans-shipment of goods from the river to canal (Conzen 1987:9).

Private contractors oversaw the construction of the canal prism and associated structures
according to specifications set by the chief engineer. The entire canal route was broken up into
numbered “sections” that were typically 42 chains (.525 miles) in length. Construction contracts
were let by section, and the bids submitted for each section were based on estimates that had
been drawn up previously by the canal engineers. Contractors also bid on each of the specialized
structures that needed to be constructed along the canal (locks, culverts, bridges, lock houses,
etc.).

Using hand tools, animal power, and a large number of imported Irish laborers,
construction on the canal initially proceeded quickly, only to be interrupted by the economic
Panic of 1837. During the late 1830s and early 1840s, work on the canal progressed slowly due
to difficulty in raising funds. In 1842, construction work stopped completely. In 1845, under
Governor Ford's leadership and with the levy of new taxes directed at repaying the canal debts,
new loans were negotiated with British bondholders to complete the canal (Howard 1972:229-
230). After twelve years of construction and at the cost of nearly 6.5 million dollars, the Illinois
and Michigan Canal officially opened on April 23, 1848. By the end of the first 180-day
navigation season, 162 canal boats had used the system and paid nearly $88,000 in tolls (Howard
1972:239). As Howard (1972:239) notes, "So great was the canal's help in developing northern
Illinois that, of all man-made waterways in North America, only the Erie Canal surpassed it in
importance" (See also Putnam 1918; Clark 1966; Howe 1956).

Many of the Irish canal workers later settled along the canal corridor, improving farms
within the countryside and establishing businesses in the many communities that developed in
the corridor. The Irish represented a large and distinctive minority in the region that otherwise
was overwhelmingly Yankee in character. Settlement of New England families in the canal
corridor, which was well underway even before construction on the canal had begun, accelerated during the late 1830s and early 1840s—a westward movement that was abetted by the Erie-Canal-Great Lakes transportation corridor. Beside the towns already mentioned above, several other communities developed along the canal route. In 1841, the canal commissioners laid out the town of Morris. The last of the “government towns” to be platted, Morris was designated as the county seat of newly organized Grundy County (it was separated from La Salle County that same year). Private interests developed the towns of Channahon (1845), Lemont, and Seneca (1849), and Utica (1867) (Conzen 1987:10). The canal also offered opportunities for mercantile development at more-remote, non-platted hamlets, such as Aux Sable (at Lock No. 8), during its early years of operation. One notable exception from this list of successful canal towns was Dresden in western Grundy County. Platted in 1835, Dresden served as a small rural service center during the late 1830s and 1840s, but never grew beyond this role and ultimately was eclipsed by the towns adjacent to it. The history of Dresden will be discussed in more detail below.

During the early years of navigation along the Canal, packet boats, traveling at the rate of five to six miles per hour, transported passengers as well as a wide range of small commodities. The packets competed successfully with the overland stage and teamster service typical of the period. By the Civil War period, and the introduction of the competing railroad system that paralleled the Canal, the majority of the cargos hauled along the Canal were bulk commodities such as grain, coal, stone, and lumber. These cargo boats traveled slightly slower than the packets had, at a pace of approximately three miles per hour.

The canal era in Illinois was relatively short-lived. Although interest in a railroad system in the state had also been developed with the internal improvement plans of the 1830s, it was not realized until the early 1850s with the construction of the Illinois Central Railroad. By the early 1850s, the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad had established a line from Chicago to Rock Island that effectively competed with the Illinois and Michigan Canal, particularly for the passenger traffic (Howard 1972:246). Revenue collected by the Canal Commissioners peaked in 1866 and declined throughout the remaining decades of the nineteenth century, picking up slightly during the period 1908 through 1918. The greatest tonnage hauled on the Illinois and Michigan Canal occurred in 1882 (Putnam 1918:161).

Although the late nineteenth century was a period of gradual decline in the use of the canal, it continued to transport a wide range of bulk commodities along the corridor (c.f. Mockton 1995). Nonetheless, by the late 1880s, the competition from the railroads had taken its toll and the tonnage hauled along the Illinois and Michigan Canal quickly declined. The economic collapse of 1893 dramatically affected the volume of grain sales, and thus the volume of traffic along the canal declined even further, never fully recovering (Benedetti 1990:12). Coupled with the fact that revenue was declining, the state put little money into canal maintenance during the late nineteenth century, and the canal became clogged with silt hindering transportation. By the middle 1890s, most of the canal boats that had been in use on the Illinois and Michigan Canal had been relocated to duty along the Illinois River. Although several studies aimed at revitalizing and/or expanding the canal were conducted during the late nineteenth century, they ultimately resulted in limited improvements to the waterway with a greater percentage of the canal traffic being relegated to pleasure boating and leisure activity.
One of the final blows to the economic viability of the Illinois and Michigan Canal was the construction of the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (which was initially designed to transport raw sewage from Chicago to the Mississippi River). Beginning in the early 1870s, the City of Chicago had reversed the flow of the Chicago River, depositing the City’s sewerage into the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Although this increased the flow of water through the canal, it did not succeed in eliminating the City of Chicago’s waste problems. Plans were then laid for the construction of a new, larger Sanitary and Ship Canal that would direct Chicago’s sewage down the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers. This plan was opposed by many of the communities that were located adjacent to these rivers, as well as by the Illinois and Michigan Canal Commissioners. Nonetheless, a new canal was constructed and the main channel of the Sanitary and Ship Canal opened for navigation in January 1900. The Sanitary and Ship Canal was extended from Lockport to Joliet between 1903 and 1907. The opening of the Calumet-Sag Canal in 1906 cut through the upper reaches of the Illinois and Michigan Canal forcing canal boat traffic along the upper reaches of the Illinois and Michigan Canal to travel along the Chicago Ship and Sanitary Canal (Kamish 1990).

By the late 1910s, canal boat traffic along the Illinois and Michigan Canal had all but ceased. One of the last efforts to commercially utilize the canal was by the Morton Salt Company, which transported salt over the canal for three years beginning in the spring of 1912. At that time, the firm used “three old canal boats.” Although the water levels were low in the canal, which was heavily silted up at the time and hindered their ability to fully load their boats, the firm was pleased with its efforts and continued transporting salt over the canal through 1914 (Morton 1915). Nonetheless, the last commercial use of the Illinois and Michigan Canal occurred in 1914 with the run of William Schuler’s canal boat Niagara (Lamb 1978:224). As R. F. Burt, General Superintendent of the Illinois and Michigan Canal noted after the 1916 season “while there was not commercial boating of importance on the Canal this season there is no telling to what extent nor how many miles pleasure and motor boats used the Canal” (Burt 1917). Interest in reviving the canal role as a commercial corridor was briefly renewed during the First World War. The war emergency required that every transportation route available be utilized for the shipping of arms and material; this included the Illinois and Michigan Canal, which received long overdue maintenance repairs so that it could accommodate freight traffic once again. The December 31, 1918 issue of the *Morris Daily Herald* (page 8, column 5) noted that on September 22, “Traffic … resumed on Canal after ten years.” Less than two months later, however, the Armistice was signed and the war was over. Hence, the extent of canal traffic in 1918 was fairly inconsequential.

The final deathblow to the canal was the Federal construction of the Illinois Waterway System, which consisted of a series of locks, and dams that maintained a nine-foot-deep channel for navigation on the Illinois River. The Illinois Waterway System opened in 1933 to a much larger series of towboats. That same year supervision of the Illinois and Michigan Canal was passed to the Illinois Department of Public Works and Buildings. In 1935, the canal was officially closed to commercial traffic.
PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON THE ILLINOIS AND MICHIGAN CANAL

The Upper Illinois River Valley has been subjected to fairly intensive archaeological investigations during the twentieth century. The character of archaeological work conducted in the region prior to 1984 is well summarized in “An Inventory and Evaluation of Known Archaeological Resources in the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, Illinois,” a report prepared by American Resources, Ltd. (McNerny and Noble 1984). According to this report, some 333 sites had been identified within the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor by 1984. The level of testing at these sites varied widely. The majority of the sites (n=265) were identified through surveys, but had not been subjected to any form of excavation. Another nineteen sites had been identified through documentary sources alone and had not been field checked. Thirty sites had been excavated to some extent. The preponderance of the sites identified within the corridor, as of 1984, had prehistoric components. Only twenty-seven historic sites had been identified (McNerney and Noble 1984:118-124). Some of the most intensive archaeological testing in the National Heritage Corridor has taken place in the Utica vicinity, at the Grand Village of the Kaskaskia and around Starved Rock.

Although sections of the Illinois and Michigan Canal State Trail and associated IDNR units have been subjected to archaeological surveys in the past, more intensive archaeological testing of historic sites within—or adjacent to—the canal reserve has been relatively limited. Much of the testing that has been done has occurred at industrial/commercial sites that are adjacent to the canal and at facilities associated with the operation of the canal. Several archaeological investigations have taken place in Lockport, in Will County. In 1984, for instance, Midwestern Archaeological Research Center (MARC) conducted archaeological investigations at two sites along the Illinois and Michigan Canal in Lockport. This work was conducted for the Lockport Township Park District and was aimed at determining the function and age of the sites, as well as assessing their integrity. One of the sites investigated was the John Marx Tannery (11WI209), a non-extant industrial complex dating to the second half of the nineteenth century. The other site represented the remains of a late-nineteenth-century boatyard (11WI210). Archeological excavation at the tannery site was limited to four tests, while only one test was excavated at the boat yard (Ingalls, Noble, Trovato 1984). MARC also conducted excavations around the Gaylord Building in Lockport, in an attempt to document and interpret the commercial history of the building (McNerney and Noble 1984:79). During the mid-1990s, David Halpin supervised excavations on the interior of the Norton Building, a large stone warehouse located one block south of the Gaylord Building. Halpin’s investigation was aimed at determining the structure of the water-wheel/turbine that originally powered the mechanical system in the building.

In recent years, a number of archaeological investigations have been carried out at sites located within the state-owned canal reserve under the auspices of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. In 1996, Fever River Research conducted excavations around the Seneca Grain Elevator, in Seneca, that were aimed at assisting in the rehabilitation and interpretation of that structure. The goals of this project included determining the structure of a canal loading dock, the location and dimensions of a non-extant corn crib associated with the elevator, and the
site of a filled-in canal basin (Mansberger 1996). In 1996 the Public Service Archaeology Program (PSAP) conducted an archaeological survey around the Ottawa Toll House (11LS634) in order to assess the site’s National Register eligibility and answer a number of research questions related to the age and evolution of the toll house (Kreisa 1996). Fever River Research conducted additional archaeological testing around the Ottawa Toll House in 1998, in conjuncture with the preparation of a historic structure report on the building (Stratton and Mansberger 1998). Although limited in scope, the investigations at Seneca and Ottawa were directed and produced data contributing directly to the interpretation of those sites. In 1999, Fever River Research carried out archaeological testing at Aux Sable, the site of Lock No. 8. The work at Aux Sable was aimed at assessing the presence and integrity of subsurface archaeological features in the yard area lying adjacent to the extant locktender’s house. It was preceded by a geophysical survey of the area (Stratton 2000; Hargrave 1999).

Excavations have also been conducted within the canal itself in recent years, at the Morris Wide Water Site (11GR205), on the east side of Morris. In 1996, this section of the canal was de-watered after the low-water feeder dam across the Du Page River at Channahon was blown out in a torrential storm. An unexpected result of the de-watering was the discovery of seven canal boats hulls submerged in the mud of the Morris Wide Water. These same boats had been exposed under similar circumstances twenty years before but had only been photo-documented on that occasion. Recognizing the archaeological significance of boats and their potential exposure to looting and vandalism, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources initiated a plan of study and contracted with Fever River Research to document the boats and assess their potential eligibility to the National Register of Historic Places. Field documentation was carried out over two seasons (Fall-Winter 1996 and Summer-Fall 1997) and consisted of mapping the surface remains of all seven boats and the partial excavation of four vessels (see Mansberger and Stratton 1998). The Morris Wide Water Site was placed on the National Register in 2000. In conjuncture with the work on the boats at Morris, limited documentation also was conducted on the City of Pekin, a canal boat that had been set fire to and sunk in the canal basin at Channahon. Its remains were exposed during the same de-watering episode that had uncovered the Morris boats. One result of the discovery of these vessels has been a heightened sensitivity to the possible presence of other boat remains submerged elsewhere along the canal.
TYPES OF DOCUMENTARY RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

There is a wealth of documentary resources relating to the history of the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the region adjacent to it. These resources have been described, summarized, and inventoried in several previous works, the most comprehensive of which is *The Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor: A guide to its History and Sources* (Conzen and Carr 1988). Another source that does so is Volume I of “An Inventory and Evaluation of Known Archaeological Resources in the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, Illinois” (McNerny and Noble 1988). The following discussion is not intended to be as expansive as either one of these thorough works, but rather is meant to highlight a number of primary archival sources that we believe are particularly useful in conducting site-specific research on historical archaeological sites located along the Illinois and Michigan Canal.

**Illinois and Michigan Canal Records:**

The records of the Illinois and Michigan Canal Commission represent the bulk of the primary archival data relative to the canal. These records originally were stored as a single collection at the canal commission’s headquarters in Lockport, Illinois. Following the formal closure of the canal in the 1930s, the majority of the records were relocated to the Illinois State Archives in Springfield. A portion of the materials, however, were left behind in Lockport and subsequently were claimed by the Will County Historical Society after that organization assumed ownership of the headquarters building.\(^1\) Approximately 11 linear feet of the records claimed by the historical society were recovered by the State of Illinois during the 1970s and were moved to Gebhard Woods State Park in Morris; in 1998, these materials were transferred to the Illinois State Archives.\(^2\) The extent to which the canal records have been inventoried varies. The core collection at the Illinois State Archives has been inventoried as Record Group 491 and is divided into 123 different records series. Only a small percentage of these records have been indexed. However, the *Descriptive Inventory of the Archives of the State of Illinois* (1997) does provide fairly detailed synopses of the types of information that are contained in the various series.\(^3\) The canal records formerly held by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources at Gebhard Woods are not included in the Archive’s *Descriptive Inventory* but have been inventoried in a separate report prepared by Claire Fuller Martin, entitled “Illinois and Michigan Canal Archives from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources: An Inventory and Assessment” (Martin 1998). These records currently are maintained as a separate collection, by ultimately will be integrated into the record series that already have been established for the archives’ Record Group 491. Some of the materials moved from Gebhard Woods are on

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1 A long-time Lockport resident recalled that the canal records left behind at the Lockport headquarters were not overlooked by the workmen sent to remove them, but were knowingly left behind simply because it was the end of the work day (Cali 2000).

2 The records formerly stored at Gebhard Woods are cited in McNerney and Noble (1985:130) as the I & M Canal State Trail Archives.

3 The *Descriptive Inventory* is available in print as well as on-line at http://www.sos.state.il.us/depts/archives.
micofiche. A portion of Record Group 491 has been microfilmed as well (see Appendix I for a complete listing of microfilmed records).

A complete inventory of the canal records that presently are held by the Will County Historical Society in Lockport is not available. The society is not known to have ever compiled an inventory, and efforts by non-affiliated researchers to create one have been hampered by the extraordinary restrictions the society has imposed on allowing access to the records. The best assessment we currently have of their holdings is an abbreviated inventory that was compiled in 1976 when several employees of the State Archives were briefly allowed access to the society’s record vault. Although not published, this inventory is on file at the State Archives and is available to researchers. A more thorough understanding of the canal records held by the Will County Historical Society might be achieved by comparing the inventories of the State Archives’ canal records with an inventory that was compiled by a Dr. Pitkin during the 1930s of the records then stored at the Canal Commission’s headquarters. Since Pitkin’s inventory was made prior to the division of the collection, any materials that are listed in his inventory but are not on file at the State Archives most likely are part of the Will County Historical Society’s holdings.

A wide variety of canal records are summarized below, with an emphasis being placed on the site-specific information these records can offer. Figures illustrating the character of the different records follow most of the summaries.

1. Survey and Field Notes:

Multiple surveys were made of the corridor followed by the Illinois and Michigan Canal prior to, during, and after the construction of the canal. A survey of the proposed canal route was conducted during the spring of 1836, several months before construction actually started. This was followed by comprehensive surveys in 1837, 1841, and 1847. Although primarily aimed at tying the canal into the surrounding landscape, these surveys often documented buildings, structures, and field improvements that were located both within the state-owned reserve and beyond it, besides noting the physical characteristics of the land bordering the canal. While in the field, the surveyors wrote down their measurements, notes, and sketches of the canal route in small notebooks (measuring approximately 5”x7”). The field notes were then used to produce more finished, large-scale maps of the canal route. As is typical of note taking, the detail and polish of the field notes and sketches varies from one notebook to the other, depending on the surveyor and period during which it was produced. Even the most hastily drawn field notes, however, can offer a wealth of information about the structural improvements located within proximity to the canal. Considered as a body, the survey and field notes that were compiled prior to the opening of the canal in 1848 offer one of the most detailed pictures we have of settlement-period landscape in northern Illinois, providing sketches of isolated rural sites, as well as unique, pre-canal views of established towns along the canal route. The range of buildings and structures illustrated in the field notes include individual farmsteads, taverns, saw and grist-mills, lime kilns, and urban-based businesses and homes. Many of the buildings illustrated were drawn with elevation views, or in three dimensions, providing a fascinating look at the types of housing that were constructed in the canal corridor during the late 1830s and early 1840s. The sketch
maps and notes from A. J. Mathewson’s 1847 survey are particularly detailed. Although Mathewson did not draw buildings in elevation-view, his sketches are more to scale than those produced during earlier surveys and show field improvements located some distance from the canal. Field notes from surveys conducted post-1848 also can be quite detailed.

The Illinois State Archives has 167 volumes of field notes dating between the years 1836 and 1922. The majority of these are from surveys conducted along the route of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. However, there is one series of volumes that is from an 1860 survey of the Illinois River south of the town of LaSalle. The original field notes have recently been photographed and placed on eight rolls of microfilm. Microfilm copies are on file at the Illinois State Archives, Lewis University, and the University of Chicago. Although none of the field notes have been indexed by the State Archives, they are included in the inventory that was compiled by Dr. Pitkin during the 1930s. This inventory, which has proven very helpful in negotiating the field notes, is located in File 817 of the collection of canal records that were formerly stored at Gebhard Woods.

Another thirty-two volumes of survey and field notes are on file at Lewis University. Unlike the notebooks at the Illinois State Archives, which were produced for the Illinois and Michigan Canal Commission, these volumes were produced during surveys conducted by the United States Corps of Engineers. The Corps of Engineers has placed the volumes on long-term loan to Lewis University (Lamb 2000). Four of the volumes are from an 1868 survey of lock and dam sites along the Illinois River. There are also three other volumes that are from an 1874 survey of the Illinois and Michigan Canal and Illinois River. The remaining twenty-five volumes predominately are from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, although there is one notebook that dates to an 1866 survey of the Illinois River.
Figure 2. The town of Peru (La Salle County), as depicted in a compass book used during an 1836 survey of the Illinois and Michigan Canal route. Peru was located at the western end of the canal. Only three buildings are illustrated in the community, which had been platted only two years before the survey. Note also the ferry crossing the Illinois River, the corn field, and road that are shown. The line marked with dots indicates the proposed canal route (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book K-6 1836). This figure, as well as those that follow it, are orientated so that north is consistently at the top of the page.
Figure 3. The western end of the community of Marseilles (La Salle County), as depicted in 1836. Marseilles was positioned at the “Grand Rapids” of the Illinois River, a location that attracted milling interests from an early date. Note the “old mill” and its associated mill-pond at the right-center of the map. The surveyor who drew the map made a point of indicating that the town then contained only three houses. One of the houses shown—the one owned by Kimball—is clearly drawn as a dogtrot-style log cabin. Of more human-interest is the kneeling figure shown in the oxbow of flag pond, who is engaged in “gathering strawberries” (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book K-5 1836).
Figure 4. Eastern side of Marseilles in 1836. This map is from the same compass book as the previous view and shows some of the same buildings that it did. Unlike the previous view, however, this map provides compass bearing that tie the buildings into the canal line. “Butterfield’s” residence (which was illustrated but not labeled in the previous view) is positioned along the bluff, at the mouth of a ravine. A sign post is shown in front of Butterfield’s, which suggests that the building may have served as a tavern or inn (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book K-5 1836).
Figure 5. Map of a section of the Illinois and Michigan Canal in Marseilles, drawn as part of an 1874 Army Corps of Engineers’ survey. A number of the buildings shown in the view appear to be located in the state-owned canal reserve bordering the canal channel. Few, if any, of the buildings shown in the reserve are probably still standing. Subsurface archaeological remains of these buildings, however, may yet be present in a relatively undisturbed condition (USACE Book 2, 1874)
Figure 6. The town of Ottawa (La Salle County), as depicted in a compass book used during an 1836 survey of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. This illustration provides a unique, three-dimensional view of Ottawa as it appeared only seven years after its plating. Note the diverse range of house-types in the community, ranging from single-story, double-pen log cabins to far-more substantial two-story, double-pile dwellings. Many of the buildings have front-gabled roofs --a characteristic that may be indicative of the northeastern origin of many of the town’s citizens. Also of interest is the shed-roofed shop shown near the mouth of the Fox River (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book K-5 1836).
Figure 7. The town of Juliet (now Joliet, Will County), as depicted in a compass book used during the 1836 canal survey. Like the view of Ottawa, the surveyor made a point of drawing the buildings in the community with elevations, rather than in plan view. The two-story tannery shown at the upper-center of the figure is indicative of the swiftness with which local industry was established along the canal corridor in the years immediately following the Black Hawk War. The proposed canal route shown in this figure ultimately was not adopted; instead, the Des Plaines River was used as the canal channel through Joliet (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book K-6 1836).
Figure 8. Field drawing of the Fox River valley north of Ottawa showing the proposed route of the Fox River Feeder. This sketch was produced during the 1836 canal survey. The feeder was to begin north of the Fox River’s lower rapids and follow the river south towards Ottawa, where it joined up with the main canal. The view shows a cluster of buildings at the point where the Ottawa Road drops down from the uplands into the river valley. These are labeled “Green’s Mill,” Green’s house,” and “Smiths shop.” This rural, industrial enclave may represent the foundation of the modern-day town of Dayton (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book K-5 1836).
Figure 9. Detail of the previous figure. The dashed line represents the road from Ottawa, while the solid line following the bluffs indicates the path of the feeder (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book K-5 1836).
Figure 10. Field drawings often depicted even minor industrial structures in rural areas. This image is from the 1836 survey of the canal route and shows a lime kiln in the bluffs overlooking Pecumsaugan Creek, several miles east of Peru. Note also the house shown to the west (left) of the kiln and the “good spring” to the east of it. Springheads are regularly noted in other field survey sketches as well (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book A-16 1836).
Figure 11. Detail of an 1847 field sketch showing a section of canal located midway between Dresden and Aux Sable (Grundy County). The office and buildings clustered on the south side of canal bear evidence to the high probability of historical archaeological sites being located within rural sections of the state-owned canal reserve. Although the exact usage of the office is not known, its position on the canal, rather than the stagecoach road to the south (not shown in view), is illustrative of the effect the canal had in drawing commercial development away from the earlier transportation routes (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, A. J. Mathewson Surveys, Book 2, 1847).
Figure 12. One of the most common rural businesses depicted in the field notes are taverns. One such establishment was Marys Tavern, which is depicted in the figure above. The drawing was made during an 1841 survey of the section of canal between Dresden and Marseilles. Note the tavern’s relationship to the road and terrace bordering the Illinois River floodplain. The building shown next to the tavern possibly represents an associated barn or perhaps a residence (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book A-38 1841).
Figure 13. Field drawing showing the north end of Buffalo Rock, 1836 (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book K-6 1836). Other field notes and maps refer to this prominent ridge as “Gibraltar,” due to its perceived similarity to the famous Rock of Gibraltar on the southern coast of Spain. The log house shown adjacent to the rock belonged to the Thurston Family, who had settled there in 1834 (IMCR Preemption Applications, Folder 54). The finished map of the canal route that was produced from this field drawing references the log house as “Thurstin’s Tavern” (IMCR “Sectioned Survey Maps of the Canal Route [1837]”).
Figure 14. Close-up of the Thurston residence/tavern from the previous view. The detail provided in this and other sketches of homes in the field notes is remarkable and contributes significantly to our understanding of settlement-period housing along the canal (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book K-6 1836).
Figure 15. Survey and field notebooks occasionally contain personal sketches not directly related to the task of surveying the canal route. The sketch above was drawn on the inside cover of a field notebook by H. A. Wiltse, during the 1837 canal survey. It illustrates Judge William A. Peck's residence, located north of present-day Channahon (Will County). Wiltse and his survey crew camped at Judge Peck’s, and their tents appear to the right of the house. The line with dots represents the route of the canal. Like the previous figure, sketches such as these provide a representative sample of settlement-period house types within the canal corridor. The range of house types illustrated in the survey and field notes is more diverse than might be expected for the period. The Peck House, for instance, has a distinctly different form than the Thurstin House (shown in the previous figure), even though the two dwellings are contemporary with one another (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book A-26).
Figure 16. Field drawing from the 1836 survey of canal route, showing two homesteads. Although separated by some distance, both homes occupy the same type of location, being sited along the bluff-base at a point where a stream breaks into the bottoms (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book K-5 1836). This settlement pattern was common along other sections of the canal route as well. Such a site location provided access to a water source and fertile bottom ground and yet would have been elevated enough to avoid flooding; it also was likely to allow easy access to a public road, since the main roads through the Illinois and Des Plaines river valleys generally followed the bluff-line. The pervasiveness of this settlement pattern (as evidenced in the canal records) provides a basis for site modeling.
Figure 17. Detail of an 1847 field sketch showing "Webbers Shanties" in Section 4 of Township 38 North, Range 13 East, near the town of Summit, Cook County. Shanties, although often mentioned in written records, are rarely depicted on maps, probably due to their temporary occupation. This sketch is the best visual evidence we have (or at least are aware of) that illustrates a shantytown location and layout. It difficult to ascertain from the sketch whether the shanties lie within the canal reserve or just outside of it. Another feature of interest is the mound shown to the right of the shanties. It is not known whether the mound is a cultural or natural feature (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book A-50 1847).
Figure 18. Field notes compiled during surveys of the canal occasionally noted features located well outside of the canal route. This 1836 map indicates the location of Fort Wilborn (shown at lower center), a fortification that was erected opposite Peru during the Black Hawk War. The tick-marked line at the top of the figure represents the western end of the canal at Peru (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book A-16, 1836).
Figure 19. Map of Starved Rock drawn in 1836. Although not located adjacent to the canal, this prominent natural feature attracted curious surveyors to it in the 1830s, even as it draws tourists today (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book K-6 1836).
Figure 20. Survey field sketches also noted prehistoric mounds located in proximity to the canal route. Briscoe Mounds, located south of present day Channahon (Will County), appears on the right of the figure above. Also of note is the ford across the Des Plaines River and the trail that leads north of it. The mouth of the Du Page River is shown to the left of the figure (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book K-3, 1836).
The Illinois and Michigan Canal Records contain numerous plan and profile maps of the canal route that are filed with record series 491.106 (Engineering Drawings and Profile Maps). Some of the maps cover the entire canal route. Others cover particular sections of the main canal or the feeder canals that supplied it with water. Some of the more interesting maps in the record series have been inventoried and are available on microfilm (see Appendix II for list). Much of the record series, however, has not been inventoried. The level of detail found in the different plan and profile maps varies considerably. The 1824 Post and Paul map, for instance, simply shows the prospective canal routes, principal streams, and government land survey lines. The less-complex character of this and other early profile maps is reflective of their role as preliminary planning documents. Profile maps that were produced after the canal route had been finalized and construction was underway generally were drawn at a larger scale and depicted more cultural features. One of the most detailed cartographic resources available is the series of maps referred to as the “Sectioned” Survey Maps of the Canal Route,” which are believed to have been produced ca. 1837. The maps provide a plan view of the canal route as well as a profile, or longitudinal, view (positioned below the plan view) that illustrates the elevation of the canal in relationship to the surrounding terrain. Both views are drawn at the same scale. The “Sectioned” maps were generated from the survey and field notes complied during the 1836 survey, and they illustrate many of the improvements that were observed in those notes. While it is presumed that this map series originally covered the entire canal route, the maps presently on file at the Archives cover only a portion of the route. It is possible that the sheets missing from the series are part of the collection held by the Will County Historical Society.

Another series of detailed maps of the canal route were produced in 1841. These maps cover the western end of the canal route and presumably are based on the field survey that was undertaken that year. One of the 1841 maps has been designated as the “Flagged’ Survey --Dresden to Pinney’s Station.” As is suggested by its name, this map covers the length of canal extending west from Dresden to Pinney’s Station, west of present-day Morris. A companion map, which is referred to as the 1841 “Canal Survey and Profile Map,” covers the canal route between Pinney’s Station to Marseilles. The format followed by these maps is the same as that used on the ca. 1837 “Sectioned” Survey Maps (having plan and profile views), and, like the latter, they have the numbered sections of canal clearly labeled. As mentioned earlier, the construction contracts for the canal were let by section. Hence, the ca. 1837 and 1841 maps are a key reference source in tying those sections into the real landscape and in figuring out which contractor built the canal in a particular locale, such as at Aux Sable. Their utility in this regard is circumscribed, of course, due to the fact that neither map series covers the entire canal route. Determining the locations of sections not covered by these maps can be done using William Gooding’s 1836 “Survey Maps of the Illinois and Michigan Canal Route.” Gooding’s map is not as detailed as the ca. 1837 and 1841 map series but does show the entire canal route in plan and profile and has the sections numbered.

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4 The original title of this map is unknown. The Archives has assigned the name “Flagged” Survey to it, based on the prominent flags that identify the numbered canal sections on the map.
Another map source that is of great use to the researcher is a three-volume plat that covers the entire canal route. The plat is believed to have been compiled ca. 1848, based on A. J. Mathewson’s 1847 survey of the canal. Like the earlier sectional maps, the plat book illustrates private improvements, but, unlike them, it also depicts canal-related structures and the grid-systems of the towns that were platted adjacent to the canal. On a cautionary note, even though the plat and maps described above represent far more polished products than the survey and field notes do, they do not always include all of the structural details shown in the latter. For research purposes, the field notes and scaled maps need to be used in conjunction with one another.

\[5\] A comparison of Mathewson’s field sketches with the plat leaves little doubt that the latter was based on the former. Mathewson conducted his survey in late 1847. An 1848 date for the plat is suggested by the fact that none of the locks are shown with a locktender’s house present. Locktender’s houses were among the last canal-related structures to be erected, and contractors were still submitting bids on their construction as late as the summer of 1848.
Figure 21. Detail from a ca. 1837 profile map of the canal route, showing the town of Marseilles (La Salle County). Although this map represents a far polished product that the field maps upon which it was based, it omits some of the details shown in the latter (see Figures 2 and 3). For example, even though it shows the Kimball and Butterfield residences, it does not show a third house and an old mill that were indicated in the field notes (IMCR “Sectioned” Survey Maps of the Canal Route [1837]).
Figure 22. Detail of an 1841 sectional map of the canal route, showing the future site of Morris (Grundy County). The town, which was platted the same year this map was produced, was laid out adjacent to canal, to the east (right) of Nettle Creek and opposite the mouth of the Mazon River. Note the cultivated fields and the stagecoach road passing through the town site. This figure also captures the future sites of two state parks: the heavily timbered area lying with the ox-bow of Nettle Creek is now Gebhard Woods State Park; and the stretch of land between the Illinois River and the canal, lying east of Nettle Creek, is part of William G. Stratton State Park (IMCR “Flagged” Survey –Dresden to Pinney's Station 1841).
Figure 23. Detail of the 1841 sectional map of the canal route, showing the site of Aux Sable (Grundy County). While the map does not show any homesteads in the area, it does depict the sawmill that was constructed by Salmon Rutherford ca. 1836 as well as the existing road network (IMCR “Flagged” Survey –Dresden to Pinney’s Station 1841).
Figure 24. Detail from the ca. 1848 plat map of the canal, showing the area around Lock No. 8 at Aux Sable (Grundy County). Aside from the canal-related improvements (Lock No. 8, aqueduct, waste weir), the figure also shows the bridge over which the stagecoach road crossed Aux Sable Creek and the new location of Rutherford’s old sawmill. As indicated in the previous figure, the sawmill originally was located south of the canal route. However, the mill was moved north of the canal in order to facilitate construction of the aqueduct. Rutherford sold the mill to John Basye shortly before the mill was moved (IMCR Plat of Illinois and Michigan Canal, Book 2 [1848]).
Figure 25. Detail from the ca. 1848 plat map of the canal, showing the section of canal now known as the Minooka Widewater, north of Channahon (Will County). In this area, the canal followed the route of a pre-existing slough rather than having a completely man-made channel. Note the road following the east bank of the canal and the farmsteads aligned to it (IMCR Plat of Illinois and Michigan Canal, Book 2 [1848]).
Figure 26. Detail from the ca. 1848 plat map of the canal, showing a section of the canal between Lockport and Lemont (Will County). The canal appears in the upper left-hand corner of the figure. This figure well illustrates the character of pre-canal settlement in the area, showing the orientation of farmsteads to the early road network and the propensity of settlers to site their farms close to streams—particularly at the point where those drainages emanated from the uplands into the river bottoms (IMCR Plat of Illinois and Michigan Canal, Book 2 [1848]).
3. Town Plats

Incorporated into the Illinois and Michigan Canal records are plat maps of towns located adjacent to the canal. Filed as record series 491.105, these materials span a period 1830-1899 and represent an excellent resource for researching urban sites along the canal. The record series includes original plats of communities that were developed by the Canal Commission (i.e. Chicago, Ottawa, La Salle, and Lockport), as well as plats of several canal towns that were surveyed by private investors (i.e. Marseilles, Kankakee, Du Page). It also includes plat maps of a number of additions and subdivisions that were surveyed for the Canal Commission. At their most basic, the plats provide a scaled drawing of the town, addition, or subdivision in question, showing the surveyed lot, block, and street boundaries. Lot and block numbers are indicated on the plats, as are the names of streets. Typically, the dimensions of lots and widths of streets are noted. Key physical features, like the Illinois and Michigan Canal and adjacent rivers, usually are depicted as well. In some instances, the plats indicate land use and/or ownership. The plat of Morris, for instance, delegates a number of lots reserved for use by the county (see Figure 26). Other plats denote the names of private owners. Occasionally, buildings and structures located with the area subject to the survey are depicted on the plats. An 1853 plat of a subdivision of canal land at Bridgeport, for instance, illustrates a number of canal-related buildings, including the locktender’s house at the Summit Lock, an associated office (possibly a toll house), engine house, and hydraulic house. A privately owned tavern also is depicted in the area (see Figure 28). Thus, canal plats not only can establish the presence of a non-extant building or structure on a particular tract, but also allow the site of that feature to be located fairly accurately, by tying it into established street and lot lines. The plats also serve as an excellent reference source for determining historic lot boundaries on tracts that have been converted to open green space or recreational use or are occupied by large commercial operations --developments that typically occupy multiple lots and often oblige sections of platted streets to be abandoned altogether. Some of the more interesting town, addition, and subdivision plats are available on microfilm.
Figure 27. Original plat of Morris, 1842. Morris was the last of the towns platted by the Illinois and Michigan Canal Commission and became the county-seat of Grundy County. The canal appears at the bottom of the plat (IMCR Plat of Morris 1842).
Figure 28. Commercial advertisement for the town of “Marseilles at the Grand Rapids of the Illinois River.” The date of publication for the flyer is unknown, though it likely dates to ca. 1836. The town was platted by private investors in 1834. The flyer mentions that the Illinois and Michigan Canal was projected to pass through town, but its route is not depicted on the plat. At a later date, someone sketched in Lock No. 10 on the plat and noted the change in the name of Tolin Street to Canal Street. The text on the flyer emphasizes the town’s superior location for generating water power (IMCR Marseilles at the Grand Rapids [1836]).
Figure 29. (Top) Detail of the Canal Trustee's Subdivision of Blocks 10, 11, 12, and 13 in the southwest quarter of Section 29 (Township 39 North, Range 14 East) showing the canal’s Summit Lock and eastern terminus at Bridgeport, 1853. A locktender’s residence and office are illustrated south of the lock. The hydraulic house and engine house, which drew water from the Chicago River into the canal, also are shown. The surveyor also sketched a tavern on the north bank of the canal (IMCR Trustees’ Subdivision 1853). (Bottom) An 1871 lithograph of the same area, looking east toward Chicago. The locktender’s house and the office appear to the right of the lock (Lamb 1987:13).
Figure 30. Plat of the McKee Tract, drawn in 1888, showing Lock No. 5 and the lower canal basin in Joliet. This plat illustrates key canal structures (lock, bridges, and Dam No. 5 on the Des Plaines River) and also depicts McKee’s old mill adjacent to the lock (IMCR McKee Tract, Joliet 1888).
4. Engineering Drawings and Specifications:

Construction of the Illinois and Michigan Canal involved far more than the excavation of earth and stone and the raising of levees. It also entailed the construction of a wide variety of structures that were necessary for the operation of the canal. These structures included lock chambers, waste weirs, aqueducts, culverts, low-water dams, towpath and wagon bridges, and locktender’s houses. Given the number and diversity of these structures, one might expect to find a whole host of scaled engineering drawings in the canal records on file at the Illinois State Archives. Only a hand-full of such drawings seems to exist, however. One of the more notable canal structures for which drawings exist for is the Fox River aqueduct. This aqueduct was the longest of those built along the canal and represented one of the more challenging projects tackled by the canal engineers. The engineering drawings for the Fox River aqueduct and a number of other canal structures are filed with Record Series 491.106 at the Illinois State Archives. In contrast, the drawings for the aqueduct across Aux Sable Creek, in Grundy County, are found in a small notebook that is filed with the Survey and Field Notes (Record Series 491.108). The same notebook contains scaled drawings for several other structures located at or near Aux Sable (including Lock No. 8, a waste weir, and a stone culvert) and also has transcribed specifications for the construction of canal bridges and lock chambers (see Figures 31-35). These drawings seem to be the exception rather the rule. One possible explanation for the relative paucity of engineering drawings on file at the State Archives is that many of the drawings were never removed from Lockport and are now held by the Will County Historical Society. Several of the people who have gained access to the historic society’s collection, however, were left with the impression that the collection contained few, if any, such drawings (Charles Cali 2000, pers. comm.; John Lamb 2000, pers. comm.). Canal historian John Lamb speculates that there may never have been many engineering drawings to begin with, on account of there being a common knowledge among canal contractors on how to construct common structures like locks and waste weirs. Hence, once the contractors had written specifications in hand, they knew how to proceed without the benefit of scaled drawings (John Lamb 2000, pers. comm.). Written specifications issued by the canal engineers certainly are more common than scaled engineering drawings (see section on Contract Bids below). When available, the drawings offer original construction data that might contribute significantly to the interpretation and/or restoration of canal structures.
Figure 31. Engineering plan of Road Bridge No. 2, which crossed the Illinois and Michigan Canal at Thorton Road (IMCR Bridge at Thorton Road n.d.).
Figure 32. Plan view of Lock No. 8 at Aux Sable, 1847. Unlike the previous figure, which represents an individual loose-leaf rendering, this drawing was included within a notebook of survey and field notes (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book A-50 1847).
Figure 33. Sectional view of the Lock No. 8 and its associated spillway, 1847 (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book A-50 1847).
Figure 34. Elevation, plan, and sectional views of the abutments supporting the Aux Sable aqueduct, 1847 (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book A-50 1847).
Figure 35. Elevation, plan, and sectional views of a waste weir on Section 113 of the canal, east of Aux Sable, 1847 (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book A-50 1847).
Figure 36. Elevation, plan, and sectional views of a stone culvert on Section 112 of the canal, east of Aux Sable, 1847 (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book A-50 1847).
Figure 37. Plan and sectional view of the type of wood culvert that was to be built on Sections 183, 185, and 187 of the canal, 1836. Written specifications were attached to drawing. Aside from providing construction details on the culvert, the drawing also illustrates what the standard canal prism was intended to look like, in section. The drawing and specifications for the wood culvert are filed with the contract bids (record series 491.036), rather than with the engineering drawings and profile maps.
5. Preemption Applications

In 1827, Congress granted the State of Illinois all of the odd-numbered sections of land that were located within five miles of the proposed canal route. Proceeds derived from the sale of these lands were to finance construction of the canal. As was typical of federal land sales in Illinois, the sale of canal lands generally failed to keep pace with the rate of settlement upon them, and it was not unusual for a tract to have been improved for over a decade before it was offered for sale. Settlers who had made improvements upon canal land prior to December 1, 1842 were given the right of preemption to up to 160 acres land when those tracts came up for sale. In order to do so, the claimant needed to file an application that provided the legal description of the tract they wanted to preempt and described the nature of the improvements they had made upon it. The claimant also routinely submitted affidavits from witnesses who attested to the veracity of their application. Details typically provided in preemption applications included the date of settlement, number of acres cleared and/or fenced, and the types—and occasionally, size—of the buildings erected. These are details that rarely are included in federal land patents or in deed records and add much to our understanding of the character of early Anglo-American settlement in the upper Illinois River valley. The preemption applications for canal lands are inventoried as record series 491.014 at the State Archives. Although the series is not indexed by claimant name, it is arranged by township and section, which makes it easy to research a tract if its legal description is known. All of the preemption applications are available on microfilm.

Section 29 of Township 34 North, Range 8 East, in which the hamlet of Aux Sable is located, had multiple preemption claimants, one of whom was James Harvey. Harvey’s preemption application is as follows:

James Harvey Claims the East ½ of NE ¼ of Section 29 T. 34 N. 8

James Harvey swears, that he owns such improvements on the piece of land claimed as are stated in the application of John Sterling and A. O. Conner as being owned by this applicant and in addition to what is stated in the affidavit of said John Sterling. The first containing the said four acres, so stated in the affidavit of John Sterling, is principally on the 80 West, of the claim as in said affidavit mentioned. Also a log dwelling house, 24 by 16 ft. and has been lived in by applicant since 1841 and is believed to stand near the line between the two 80’s, just east of, and if so, knows to be on the south 40. Since the Dec[?] 1842 a log stable also on the said south 40.

James Harvey

Sworn to subscribed before me this 10 day of August AD 1848.

S. S. Randall, J.P.

Mathew Shay swears that the above statements are true.

Mathew Shay

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 10 day of August AD 1848.
John Sterling was another early settler on Section 29. Sterling claimed the 80 acres lying immediately south of Harvey’s claim and submitted the following preemption application:

John Sterling and Ambrose O’Conner the executor of the last will of Peter O’Conner sworn claim the E1/2 NE1/4 Sec 29 T. 34 R.8.

John Sterling swears, that the said applicants (the said Ambrose O’Conner claiming in right of the estate of his deceased brother Peter) own the following improvements on the land above claimed. The said improvements having been made by this applicant and the said Peter O’Conner deceased jointly before the 1st Day of Dec. 1842. To wit– built a log dwelling house, 18 by 25 feet, & moved into it with his family and lived in it until the Spring of 1842 when he built and moved into another house, on the same tract, in which other house he lives yet. The first built house, since this applicant moved out of it, is on the south part of the 80, about 30 rods from the south line of the 80 just north of the canal. The second house is a hewed log 20 by 20 (before 1842) two stories high and stands on the south side of the canal, and 10 or 12 feet from the south line of the 80. Also a log stable near the first house. There were three acres ploughed, furred and cultivated, near the first house on the west side of it. Since Dec. 1842, an addition to the second house 20 by 20. From 15 to 20 acres ploughed and cultivated north of the canal on the east side of the south 40.

here are other improvements on this eighty. James Harvey has a field, principally on the 80 west, which extends onto this, on the south 40 of it, about 4 acres. John F. Basye has a saw mill and stone dwelling house built in May 1847. The house is a dwelling house and occupied as such. The mill and said stone house stand near the first built house, before mentioned, across the creek east of the said house, and on the south 40. Also at the stone house a stable and garden.

No other person sets with any claim to the said 80, except James Harvey, and that founded on the improvements herein mentioned as owned by him.

John Sterling

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 10 day of August AD 1848
S. S. Randall, J.P.

Edward Kinsley swears that he has heard the statements made in the foregoing affidavit of John Sterling and knows them to be true.

Edward Kinsley
X his mark

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 10 day of August AD 1848.
S. S. Randall, J.P.
(IMCR Preemption Applications, Folder 155)
Aside from homestead improvements, preemption applications also make reference to structures and activities directly related to the construction of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Multiple applications reference to the rude “canal shanties” that were erected to house laborers working on the canal. Although occupied only temporarily, the shanties also had cultivated tracts or gardens associated with them in some instances. The preemption application of John Basye, another settler at Aux Sable, describes a cluster of shanties located on the 80 acre-tract claimed by him:

John T. Basye Claims E 1/2 of SE 1/4 Sec 29 T 34 R 8

John T. Basye swears that he owns the improvements now on the piece of land above described and hereby claims that the said improvements were begun by Salomon Rutherford long ago, and said Rutherford sold to this applicant in March 1846. No other person claims this land as he knows of.

Since this applicant purchased this tract, he has purchased and owns as many as five or six canal shanties, and three gardens or truck patches, which are now under cultivation. These shanties and gardens are scattered over the north 40. There are also some other canal shanties and gardens, and one stack yard belonging to John Stirling, and also a garden on said N. 40.

John Basye

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 10 day of August AD 1848
S. S. Randall, J. P.
(IMCR Preemption Applications, Folder 156)

One of the most detailed preemption applications found during our search of the record series 491.014 was that filed by Judge William B. Peck, who settled north of present-day Channahon, Will County, in 1835. In his application, Peck not only described the acreage he had cleared for cultivation on his farm, but also provided a complete list of all of the buildings he erected and elaborated on the orchard and hedge plantings he had made there.

Channahon March 15, 1848

Robert Stewart, Esq.

Respected Sir, In compliance with an order from the trustees of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. I herewith transmit you a description of a track of land on which I reside, as also the facts and circumstances connected therewith, upon which I ground my claim for a preemption thereon.

In the month of may AD 1835 I settled with my family on the South East quarter of Section 5. Town 34. Range 9 E. and have constantly resided thereon ever since.

My improvements are, a common farm House, Log Stable, Poultry House, ash house, corn crib, smoak house, and some coarse cattle sheds --- a picket fence garden, an apple orchard of some fifty trees, about sixty peach, plumb, and cherry trees together with currants and gooseberry bushes, all of which are hedged in with Mulberry, locust, and black Walnut trees.
I have from forty to forty-five acres of arable land under cultivation and enclosed with a rail fence; all of which improvements are on the west half of said quarter section aforesaid except some 6 or 7 acres on the east half immediately adjoining and is a part and parcel of the aforesaid 40 to 45 acres.

The whole of these improvements have been made from a prairie wild by myself and almost in the years 1835-‘36, ’37 and ’38. There has never been any adverse claim set up or made by any person whatever, to any part of the aforesaid quarter section.

All of which is respectfully submitted by your Very Obdt. Servt.

W. B. Peck
(IMCR Preemption Applications, Folder 164)

Despite the relatively short time that they had been settled, some tracts of canal land had already developed a fairly elaborate settlement history by the time the Canal Commission initiated land sales. Improvements made by one settler may have been sold to another party, who improved them further, and sold them yet again before title was formally granted. Similarly, many tracts had multiple farmsteads upon them, which resulted in conflicting claims of ownership. The application of Sarah Thurston illustrates this point very well. Thurston and her husband Benjamin settled at the north end of Buffalo Rock in 1834, established a farm, and eventually operated a tavern along the Peru-Ottawa Road. Even though the Thurstons never sold the rights to any of the acreage ultimately claimed by them, a house was built on their land-claim by another party and ultimately passed through several hands. Sarah Thurston detailed the history of this house’s ownership in the following affidavit:

Sarah Thurston swear, she has heretofore put in her claim to the N. fr. SW fr. ¼ Sec 17 T. 33 R.3. On this same piece of land some years since, before Dec. 1, 1842 A. M. Dunn built a house for the purpose of boarding the hands who worked on the canal. Dunn sold this house to the husband of this affiant. Afterwards one Dennis Skelley wanted to put more[?] the said house, in which to keep a grog shop or grocery and said, that unless he could purchase this house he would build another near it. And her said husband consented to sell him the house, rather than have any more shanties built on his land claimed. Skelley sold it to John Brannon, and Brannon to Marks Moriarty, and lives in it now. Skelley cultivated a small piece of ground, but sold all the rails off before he sold the house. And in all there sales and transfers no land has been sold nothing but the house. Skelley told this affiant, before he sold the house, that he knew she had the best right to the land, and he had a chance to sell the house, and thought he would do it (IMCR Preemption Applications, Folder 54).

Ultimately, only one claimant was given the right to purchase a tract of canal land. Earlier and rival claimants were not acknowledged in deed records and thus would largely be lost to history were it not for the preemption applications. These records offer a history of squatter settlement that is rarely afforded in other parts of Illinois.6

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6The most notable exceptions are those lands in southern Illinois that were settled upon and improved prior to 1813. Preemptions records exist for these tracts but typically are not nearly as detailed as the preemption applications filed for I & M Canal lands.
Figure 38. Drawing submitted with the preemption application of Marks Moriarty, showing his homestead and improvements at the north end of Buffalo Rock in relationship with others in the area, 1847 (IMCR Preemption Applications, File No. 54). Drawings of this sort seem to be the exception, rather than the rule, with the preemption applications. When present, however, they can be of great help in determining both the number and location of homesteads within a specific locale.
Figure 39. An 1848 map showing the improvements of James Moore on Block 6 of North Joliet, a subdivision that was laid by the canal trustees on the NE1/4 of Section 9, Township 35 North, Range 10 East. Moore’s improvements included a dwelling, powder house, and stable. The presence of a powder house on the property suggests that Moore may have been supplying blasting powder for the canal work or perhaps for quarry operations. The bridge shown in the figure crossed the Des Plaines River at the point where it was dammed for use by the Illinois and Michigan Canal (Dam No.1). This map was found in a folder of contract bids from 1836 (record series 491.036), rather than with the preemption records. It provides an excellent illustration of the potential for utilizing the Illinois and Michigan Canal records to identify, and accurately locate, early archaeological sites located adjacent to the canal in urban areas. The map also provides structural details relating to early bridge construction along the canal.
6. Statistics of Laborers

The Illinois State Archives has .25 cubic feet of records that provide statistics of laborers employed on the canal. These documents cover the years 1838-1840 and 1845-1848 and are inventoried as record series 491.045. The statistics are organized in tabular statements that list the section, or project, for which the report is being submitted for, the period of time covered, and the work force (laborers, horses, oxen) employed each day. The number of carts is sometimes listed as well. No index exists. A cursory review of the records at the State Archives suggests that they are not all-inclusive and do not cover every section of the canal. Furthermore, they do not indicate the number or locations of worker camps/shantytowns along the section of canal being reported on. Nonetheless, they represent useful data in respect to understanding the size of the worker population in the various shantytowns. Canal workers represented a very transient population group, and the laborer statistics are one of the best sources we have for an enumeration of them (albeit a very basic one). In the event a shantytown site is ever discovered along a section of the canal that we have statistics for, the statistics could act as a guide in assessing the standards of living (i.e. ratio of workers per shanty –if the individual shanties are discernable in the field) and the character of the material culture among the workers.
Figure 40. Statement of the number of men and teams of horses employed on Sections 45 through 68 of the canal during May 1846. Daily and average tabulations are provided (IMCR Statistics of Laborers 1846).
7. **Supplies Furnished to Laborers**

There are seven volumes on file at the State Archives that list supplies issued by the Canal Commission to laborers. These are inventoried as record series 491.046. The volumes cover only the last three years that the canal was under construction (1846-1848) and a two-year period during which construction and/or repairs were taking place around Channahon (1856-1857). Information provided includes the name of the worker receiving the supplies, type and quantity of materials supplied, and cost of materials. Although some of the listings are organized by canal section, none are indexed. A wide variety of materials were issued to the workers, including foodstuffs (pork, beef, codfish, pickled cod, potatoes, flour, molasses, butter, sugar, pepper, salt, coffee, tea), clothing related items (flannel, calico, socks, shoes, thread), feed (oats, hay), personal equipment (tinware, candles, soap), work-related equipment (wheelbarrows, smith’s bellows), and tobacco. One of the most common expenses incurred by the workmen was the repair of shoes or purchase of new ones, which is not entirely surprising given the rugged nature of their work. These records will prove very helpful in assessing the diet of the canal workers and material goods owned by them. However, they should not be regarded as providing a complete picture in either regard. Workmen undoubtedly had access to other goods as well. Preemption applications for the Aux Sable area, for instance, mention gardens in association with canal shanties, which suggests that some of the workmen were growing vegetables to supplement the foodstuffs purchased from the Canal Commission. Similarly, the supply records do not account for personal items owned by the workers that might be indicative of leisure activities or ideology (religious or political). Examining these records in conjunction with archaeological data recovered from a shantytown site (should that data ever become available) would provide a more complete picture of the canal laborers’ diet and material culture.
Figure 41. List of supplies that were issued to laborers working on Section No. 27 of the canal on December 3, 1846. The items listed include tobacco, coffee, cod fish, molasses, boots, calico, pins, soap, and wood (IMCR Supplies Furnished to Laborers 1846).
8. **Contract Bids:**

Although canal engineers drew up the estimates, specifications, and scopes of work for the canal, private contractors were given the job of actually constructing it. Construction contracts were awarded by project, based on the best bid submitted. The Illinois State Archives has .25 feet of contract bids covering the years 1836, 1838, 1841, and 1846-1848, which is filed as record series 491.036. These materials are all unbound and are not indexed in any manner. Most of the bids on file are for the excavation of the 197 numbered sections into which the canal line was divided. These bids typically were submitted on standardized forms that detailed the costs of grubbing and clearing timber, excavation of earth and stone, digging of side ditches, raising of embankments, and lining and puddling the canal prism. Bids submitted for the construction of structures such as waste weirs, culverts, locktender’s houses, and road bridges over the canal are also present.

There are at least seven bids on constructing locktender’s houses on file in Record Series 491.036. One of the more detailed bids was the one submitted by Randolph Sizer of Ottawa for the construction of residences at Lock Nos. 11 and 12. Sizer offered to build each house for $400 and itemized the following costs per dwelling:

- Plastering (350 yd. @ $.28/yd.) $ 98.00
- Painting $ 40.00
- Lumber, nails, and glass $175.00
- Work/Labor $ 87.00
- **$400.00**

Perhaps fearing that Chief Engineer Gooding would consider the bid too high, Sizer asked Gooding to “Please bear in mind that lumber cost more here than near Chicago” (IMCR Contract Bids, Sizer to Gooding, 11 January 1848). Sizer’s bid stands out in itemizing the projected costs. Other contractors simply listed the total cost, making allowances in some cases for the type of foundation selected. Josiah Pope also bid on the contract for the houses at Locks 11 and 12, but floated a much higher price of $550. This price did not include the cost of the foundations, which Pope assumed were to be furnished by the Canal Trustees. In the event the Trustees did not provide the foundations, Pope agreed to build them at $2.00 per perch (16.5 feet) (IMCR Contract Bids, Pope to Gooding, 12 January 1848). A few of the bids provide some dimensions for the residence to be built. James Smith, for instance, proposed to build a house at Lock No. 5 in Joliet that was to be based “upon the same plan as the ones now built at Lock No. 2, and at Locks No. 3 & 4, to wit, 20 feet wide & 28 ft. long and one & a half story high” (IMCR Contract Bids, Smith to Canal Office, 4 September 1847). Far more often, however, the bids simply state the contractor’s intention to build the residence according to “plan”, “description,” or “specifications” drawn up by the canal engineers. Unfortunately, no original plans or specifications for a locktender’s house have been located, and they perhaps have not survived.
Mixed in with the canal construction bids are a handful of proposals for supply contracts. One of these is a bid by Alson Woodruff of Ottawa, dated June 27, 1848, offering to deliver 500 tons of “good merchantable coal from the Buffalo Rock Coal Mine” to Bridgeport at $3.50 per ton (IMCR Contract Bids, Woodruff to Talcott, 27 June 1848). Another supply bid on file involves a proposal by O. H. P. A. Haven to saw and deliver five to six miles of docking timber (IMCR Contract Bids, Haven to Gooding, 10 September 1847). There are also several bids on building a boat for use by the State on the canal.

Aside from the contract bids, record series 491.036 contains specifications on the manner of constructing lock gates, lock chambers, waste weirs, wooden culverts, and the superstructure of bridges and aqueducts along different parts of the canal. These were issued as notices to the contractors who intended to bid on the projects in question. The only specifications with drawings are those for wooden culverts. The record series also contains several maps of specific locales along the canal that seem out of place. One of these is a plan and profile map of the canal where it crosses Pecumsaugan Creek, while another shows the improvements of James Ryan in Joilet.
Figure 42. Contract bid submitted by Thomas Brock for the excavation of Sections 61 through 64, dated October 20, 1836. Bids on excavation work and the raising of embankments commonly were submitted on standardized forms such as this one (IMCR Contract Bids 1846-1848).
**Figure 43.** Contract bid submitted for the lining of the canal in Sections 27, 30, 31, and 32, dated June 16, 1846 (IMCR Contract Bids 1846-1848).
Ottawa Jan 12th 1848

To William Gowing Esq.

I will build

The lock house at Locks 11 & 12 on the St. Lawrence Canal, in accordance with the plans &
specifications this day shown me by George McGee,
for five hundred and fifty dollars. The foundation to
be furnished by the contractor. As I will cause the
foundation also to be made at $2.00 per square,

Respectfully yours,

Joisah Pope

Figure 44. Contract bid submitted by Joisah Pope for the construction of the locktender residences at Lock No. 11 and 12 at Ottawa, dated January 12, 1848 (IMCR Contract Bids 1846-1848).
9. *Construction Contracts*

The State Archives has three bound volumes and 1 cubic foot of loose-leaf materials that provide basic information on the different construction contracts that were awarded during the construction of the canal. These records are inventoried as record series 491.038 and cover the periods 1836-1847 and 1891-1902. Types of construction projects detailed include canal sections, locks, aqueducts, and bridges. Contracts involving the construction of ancillary structures like locktenders’ houses do not appear to be itemized. The contract book for 1836-1841 is very concise, listing the project name, date the contract was awarded, and the person(s) to whom it was awarded. It also indicates whether the contract was relinquished and had to be re-awarded. The contract on digging Section 109 of the canal, for instance, was awarded to Lafferty McGowan and Company on September 22, 1841 (IMCR Construction Contracts 1836-1841). Some of the loose-leaf material includes correspondence discussing the progress and status of the different projects. Although not very detailed, this record series is essential to finding out which individual(s), among the many submitting bids, actually were awarded the contract on a specific projects.
Figure 45. Register detailing the history of the contract for constructing Section No. 65 of the canal. This contract had a more complex history than most, passing through several contractors’ hands within a span of only three years (IMCR Construction Contracts, Contract Book 1836-1841).
10. Contractor’s Preemption Petitions

Contractor’s who had been granted a canal contract but had not had the opportunity to fulfill it prior to the cessation of canal work in 1842 were allowed to reclaim that contract, by right of preemption, when construction work was resumed in 1845. Contractors who wished to do so filed a petition with the Canal Commission stating the names of the contractor(s), character of the contract in question, date that it was awarded, amount of work completed (if any), and circumstances regarding the abandonment of work on the contract. Sworn affidavits by witnesses typically were attached to the petitions. Petitions were subject to review by the Canal Commission, and in some cases, petitioners were not granted preemption rights. The State Archives has .25 cubic feet of contractor’s preemption petitions, which are inventoried as record series 491.037. The petitions are all loose-leaf and are not inventoried in any manner.

Not all of the petitions in the records series were submitted by individuals who had originally been awarded construction contracts. In some instances, the original grantee had sold their contract rights to another party after work on the canal had stopped. Under these circumstances, the purchaser of the contract rights needed to prove that they had clear title to the contract. One of the more interesting petitions submitted was S. S. Bullock’s. Bullock had not been granted a canal contract during the first construction phase, nor had he purchased the rights to one at a later date. His petition was based on the fact that the construction of the canal through his farm, east of Marseilles, was going to cause him significant material damages and hardship. Besides depriving him of 30 acres of tillable land, Bullock claimed that the canal would divide his landholdings in such a manner to require him to construct and maintain (at his own expense) a bridge across the canal, result in extra daily travel to and from his fields, and, furthermore, require him to construct an extra 726 rods of fencing. Moreover, his land would be “forever exposed to the depredations of Boatmen etc. etc, which evils gentlemen you well know are not few.” In lieu of damages, Bullock proposed to the Canal Commission that he be granted the contract to build Section 151 of the canal, which was to pass through his fenced cultivated field. He believed that he could do the work for less money and cause less damage to his land than if another party was awarded the contract. If that was not agreeable, Bullock suggested a price of $3,000, or any price a jointly appointed two-man committee could agree upon, for a deed of right-of-way. In event an acceptable compromise could not be reached, he informed the Canal Commission that he was prepared to seek damages in court. Bullock included a map of his farm with his petition (IMCR Contractor’s Preemption Petitions, Bullock to Canal Trustees 15 July 1845).
Figure 46. (Left) Map of S. S. Bullock’s farm that was included with his preemption petition for the contract of Section 151 of the canal. This map depicts Bullock’s house, barn, and field improvements (IMCR Contractor’s Preemption Petitions, S. S. Bullock to Canal Trustees 15 July 1845). (Right) The same area, as depicted on a 1841 map of the canal route (IMCR Canal Survey and Profile Map 1841).
11. Register of Canal Expenses

There are 117 volumes at the State Archives that register the various expenses incurred during the construction, repair, and operation of the Illinois and Michigan Canal between the years 1836 and 1941. These volumes are inventoried as record series 491.069. They itemize a wide range of expenses, covering everything from construction-related costs (labor and materials) to the cost of office supplies, legal fees, and advertising. No comprehensive index exists for the record series, which limits one’s ability to find costs for specific projects quickly (particularly for the period 1836-1842). However, volumes dating from the late nineteenth century and later generally are indexed individually. One of the great utilities offered by the expense registers is the ability to determine the date at which specific construction and repair projects were undertaken.

Aux Sable presents a good example. The daybook that records canal expenses for the period 1845-1849 lists five payments made to contractor Michael Neary for work done by his crew on the section of canal running through Aux Sable (Section 114) between October 25, 1845 and October 1, 1846. Neary’s work crew was engaged in the excavation of earth and the raising of embankments (IMCR Register of Canal Expenses 1845-1849: 8, 27, 41, 98). The same daybook lists expenses involved in the construction of the aqueduct, lock chamber, waste weir, and canal bridge at Aux Sable – projects that appear to have been carried out during the period April-October 1846 (IMCR Register of Canal Expenses, 1845-1849: 14, 52, 63-8, 81, 83, 102). The register of expenses for the year 1879 details the costs involved in constructing the existing locktender’s house at Aux Sable. This dwelling, which is the second to have occupied the site, has been tentatively dated to ca. 1880 in past reports (Gregerson 1989, Stratton and Mansberger 2000), but this date has never been substantiated with documentary evidence. We now know that the house was constructed in 1879. That same year, a new locktender’s house was constructed at the town of Marseilles. The house at Aux Sable cost $1,176.50 to build, while the one at Marseilles cost only $819.04. The two construction projects are listed on the inside cover of the 1879 expense register under a heading entitled: “Items included as extraordinary repairs in the report of Dec. 1, 1879” (IMCR Register of Canal Expenses 1879: 24-7). Other work projects at Aux Sable that are noted in the expense registers include: the construction and repair of wing walls associated with the aqueduct in late 1885; repairs on the canal bridge and waste weirs in 1886; repairs to a barn in 1890; and the installation of new lock gates on Lock No. 8 in 1891 (IMCR Register of Canal Expenses 1885: 1, 53, 56; 1886; 1891: 67). The expense registers will be very instrumental in establishing the evolution of state-owned sites along the canal, determining the presence of previously undocumented buildings, and date at which extant structures experienced repairs and/or modifications.

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7 A firm date for the Aux Sable locktender’s house had not been identified in the past. Previous reports discussing the house’s date of construction (Gregerson 1989, Stratton and Mansberger 2000) have offered ca. 1880 as an approximate date. The register of canal expenses has now firmly dated the house’s construction in 1879.
Figure 47. Inventory of expenses involved in the construction of a new locktender's house at Aux Sable (Lock No. 8) in 1879 (IMCR Register of Canal Expenses 1879:26-7).
One utility of researching the property inventories is the ability to determine the historic furnishings at a particular site for interpretive purposes. One site where the inventories would be of great use in this regard is the Ottawa Toll House. In 1914, for instance, W. E. Hemmerle, the collector at Ottawa, reported the following property on hand at the toll house:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 mop</td>
<td>$0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 office safe</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 desks</td>
<td>$7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 brush floor</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 fire extinguisher</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 60-gal. oil can</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 chairs</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hemmerle also listed the collector’s house itself in the inventory (noting its value at $200), as well as two associated outbuildings: a “store house” and a “small house for flatboat” (IMCR Property Inventories, Ottawa 1914). The storehouse referenced by Hemmerle is illustrated on the multiple insurance maps of Ottawa that were published during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Sanborn 1883, 1888, 1907, 1913, 1925; Sanborn-Perris 1891, 1898). None of these maps, however, show the small house, or shed, in which the flatboat was stored.

This omission illustrates a second utility presented by the property inventories, which is the ability to better understand and potentially reconstruct the site structure of non-extant, state facilities along the canal. Many of these facilities are poorly documented in the cartographic and photographic record, and even those that are comparably well documented cannot be fully understood through these sources alone. Lock No. 8 at Aux Sable, for instance, is a site that is depicted in considerable detail on a number of late-nineteenth-century maps. Yet, while these maps show the buildings present at the lock, they do not label them, thus leaving the function of several buildings open to speculation. This problem is alleviated by the property inventories filed for the lock. In 1913, locktender G. M Foster noted that there was one locktender’s house, one barn, one coal shed, and one shop at Aux Sable. The inventory filed two years later also listed a locktender’s house, coal shed, and barn, but noted a watchman’s house instead of
a shop\textsuperscript{8} (IMCR Property Inventories, Aux Sable 1913, 1915). Aside from listing the number and type of buildings present, some of the property inventories detail the dimensions of the buildings. The 1914 inventory for the towpath walker station at Brandon Road (south of Joliet) reported a 1-1/2-story “superintendent’s watch house” that measured 30’x24’x14’ and had a side wing measuring 12’x14’x9.’ The inventory filed for Lock 11 at Ottawa in 1914 also provides building dimensions (IMCR Property Inventories, Brandon Road 1914, Ottawa 1914). This structural data is valuable for comparative purposes, in respect to the number, type, and size of buildings present at the various state-operated facilities along the canal. It also will be invaluable in the event reconstruction of historic buildings associated with these sites is ever carried out.

\textsuperscript{8} It is uncertain whether the shop and watchman’s house represented the same building, which had experienced a change of use between 1913 and 1915, or whether they were two different buildings. If the latter is true, the shop presumably was torn down and the watchman’s house built during the intervening period.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>SIZE OR QUANTITY</th>
<th>FOR WHAT TO BE USED</th>
<th>WHERE LOCATED</th>
<th>VALUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bricks, Pine</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;&quot; Maple</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planh, Pine</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;&quot; Oak</td>
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<tr>
<td>Timber, Pine</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;&quot; Oak</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flooring, Dressed, Studding, Pallets, Brackets, Iron, Steel, Wadsworth, Wormed Iron Rolls, etc.</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yarns and Spikes, Old</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;&quot; Wrought</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oil, Cylinder</td>
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<td>&quot;&quot; Konstant</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;&quot; Lead</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;&quot; Matchbox</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barrels, Old</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sacks and Pistons</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wrote, Good</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;&quot; Writings</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bag</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oats, Ground Feed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixed Paint</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Lumps</td>
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<td>Blending Cotton</td>
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<td>Tobacco</td>
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<td>Snuff, Letter Press</td>
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<td>Waste, Coal</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;&quot; Blacksmith, Lock Iron</td>
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<td>Patterns for Castings</td>
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<td>Suspension Hooks</td>
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<td>Ropes, Shears</td>
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<td>Stops</td>
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<td>Koss, Collector's</td>
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<td>&quot;&quot; Inspector's</td>
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<td>&quot;&quot; Lock Tender's</td>
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<td>&quot;&quot; Superior Day's Wash House</td>
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<td>Washhouse's Office, General</td>
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<td>&quot;&quot; Collector's</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;&quot; Office, Store</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;&quot; Small House for Guard</td>
<td>&quot;&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;&quot; 60 gal. Oil can</td>
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<td>Chairs</td>
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Figure 48. Inventory of property on hand at the Ottawa Tollhouse as of August 1914 (ISA Property Inventories 1914).
Figure 49. Inventory of state-owned property on hand at Lock No. 11 as of August 1914 (ISA Property Inventories 1914). This inventory provides a partial picture of the site structure at Lock No. 11, listing the dimensions of the buildings present and their location relative to the lock chamber.
13. *Tract Books of Canal Land Sales*

The State Archives has 17 volumes of tract books listing the land and town lot sales conducted by the Canal Commission. These are inventoried as record series 491.019 and cover the years 1830 to 1927. None of the volumes are indexed, although some are organized by township and range. Information contained in the tract books includes the name of purchaser, legal description of the property purchased, number of acres, value per acre, total value, purchase price, and the quarterly payment and interest due. The tract books’ primary utility is in determining who, among the sometimes multiple claimants, finally was able to purchase a particular piece of canal land and the date at which the purchase was made.
Figure 50. Representative example of the tract books used to record the sale of canal lands. The lands listed for Township 34 North, Range 8 East, on the lower half of the figure above, are located in Aux Sable Township, in eastern Grundy County (IMCR Tract Books of Canal Land Sales 1841).
14. **Leases**

Even though the canal and the 90’ reserves flanking it belonged to the State of Illinois, local municipalities and private entities were responsible for much of the construction activity that occurred there –particularly during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Aside from leasing parcels of land in the reserve, the Canal Commission regularly signed leases granting the right to draw water from the canal, cut ice during the winter, and build within the reserve. The State Archives has two registers of canal leases, which are inventoried as record series 491.101. Only one of the volumes is indexed. The registers list the name of the lessee, property or right being leased, date of the lease, expiration date, and cost. Leases issued in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century seem to be more numerous (or at least better documented) than those issued at an earlier date. Although very concise, the entries in the lease register detail a wide range of construction activity in the state-owned reserve. One entry, dated 25 October 1884, notes the Chicago Telephone Company’s acquisition of a line of telephone poles, wire, and instruments that the Canal Commission had erected from Lockport to Seneca for $1,000. The public telephone stations at Bridgeport, Lockport, Joliet, Channahon, Aux Sable, and Morris were included in this sale (IMCR Register of Leases, p.58). This entry not only establishes an approximate date for the introduction of telephone service along canal, but also illuminates how the system was set up. In addition, knowing the approximate date at which telephone poles became part of the canal landscape may serve as a benchmark for dating historic photographs lacking firm dates. Bridge construction also is referenced in the lease registers. An April 23, 1909 entry, for instance, notes that the Village of Channahon had been granted the right to construct and maintain a wagon bridge over the Illinois and Michigan Canal, located on the road to Minooka (IMCR Register of Leases, p.42). The register of leases also documents the transition of the canal from a commercial transportation corridor to a recreational area. Many of the leases signed during the early twentieth century involved lots on which vacation homes or boathouses were to be built. As an example, Peter and Theodore Gaine and Hubert Meyer leased a portion of the canal reserve at Aux Sable for the use of a “dwelling house and yard” for a one-year period beginning September 1918. This lease cost only $10 per annum (IMCR Register of Leases). Several other people are known to have leased small house lots land at Aux Sable during the early twentieth century as well (Illinois and Michigan Canal Archives, Folder 588).

Aside from the two registers of leases that are inventoried as record series 491.101, the collection of canal records formerly held by the Department of Natural Resources at Gebhard Woods State Park also contains lease-related materials. These materials include written leases, sketch maps of property leased, and correspondence between the Canal Commission and lessees. The records typically are arranged by location (Aux Sable, Channahon, Ottawa, etc.), which eases site-specific research. Claire Martin’s inventory of the collection should be consulted.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lease Executed</th>
<th>Lease Expires</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4/1/19</td>
<td>4/1/19</td>
<td>L. Storm &amp; Son, Joliet, bill board lease in Ruby St., on W. bank of I. &amp; N. Canal, Rental $5.00 per annum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/15/19</td>
<td>11/15/20</td>
<td>Charles Smith, Joliet, Ill, land lease of portion of land in 16-35-10, Joliet for purpose of dwelling house and garden. $10.00 per annum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/20/19</td>
<td>5/20/20</td>
<td>Mat Stinats, Summit, Ill, land lease of strip of land in Summit, for the purpose of gardening. Sec. 12-38-16. Rental $2.00 annually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/1/15</td>
<td>7/1/18</td>
<td>Mrs. Mary Strong, lease of portion of 90 ft. strip lying on the W. side of the Canal in 9-35-7. Lot for house and garden. Residential and garden. Rental $5.00 per annum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7/1/15</td>
<td>7/1/18</td>
<td>Moses J. Strong, Morris, Illinois, lease of portion of 90 ft. strip in 9-35-7 for house and garden. $10.00 per annum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/25/16</td>
<td>9/25/19</td>
<td>Charles Still, Morris, Ill, land lease of portion of reserved 50 ft. strip in 10-35-7. Purpose of dwelling house and garden. $10.00 rental annually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/25/18</td>
<td>9/25/19</td>
<td>Stevenson Brothers, Ottawa, Ill., fencing privilege, same -in Utica Twp., in the Co. of LaSalle and State of Ill., to build and maintain a fence on the towpath side of I. &amp; N. Canal. Annual rental $5.00.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 51. A page from a canal lease register, listing land leases issued for the 90-foot reserve. The leases listed above illustrate the range of private activities that took place in the reserve during the early twentieth century. The lease register is organized alphabetically by name of lessee (IMCR Register of Leases Volume 2:25).
Figure 52. Correspondence between Jonathan A. Walter and Karl W. Frase regarding the use of an old barn at Aux Sable. Frase leased a portion of the 90-foot reserve at Aux Sable on which he maintained a hunting/vacation “shack,” and he hoped to use the barn as a garage. The barn is believed to have been associated with the locktender’s house at Lock No. 8 originally. The correspondence between Frase and Walter, as well as other lease-related materials concerning Aux Sable, is filed with the Illinois and Michigan Canal Records that were formerly held by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources at Gebhard Woods State Park (IMCR Illinois and Michigan Archives, Folder 588).
**County and Local Records:**

Besides the canal records, there are a multitude of other sources that have the potential to yield information that contributes to archaeological research on the canal. These include photographs, deed records, county surveys, tax records, and probate records. Unlike the records of the Canal Commission, which are located at two repositories, these materials are scattered between colleges and universities, courthouses, libraries, and historical societies. Previous works by McNerney and Noble (1985:134-155) and Carr (1988:55-69) have described the character and utility of these sources in respect to historical research. The following discussion provides a brief overview of the information contained in some of these records and illustrates how they might contribute to archaeological research.

1. **Deed Records**

   Chain-of-title research is an essential part of any thorough documentary research on a particular piece of real estate. Key information offered by deed records includes: name of the person selling (grantor), name of the person buying (grantee), legal description of property being sold, date of sale, and purchase price. Deed records usually do not provide description of the improvements on the real estate being sold. However, they do occasionally make specific reference to building or structures located upon them and in some instance use a building as a survey point (see Figure 53).

2. **County Survey and Plat Records**

   As with the deed records, county survey and plat records do not consistently indicate the locations of buildings and associated improvements. However, they occasionally do so. One advantage of using these records is that a researcher is able to tie the building depicted into an established landmark (i.e. road, street, lot line). Older survey and plat records sometimes are included within deed books, while later ones typically are compiled in volumes of surveyor’s records or plats (see Figure 54).

3. **County Collector’s Books**

   County Collector Books contain real and personal property tax lists and are compiled annually. Real estate is organized by legal description within the books, while personal property is listed alphabetically, by name of resident, for each township and town. Information provided for each property includes the owner’s name, assessed value of property, equalized or adjusted assessed value, breakdown of taxes owed (county, state, etc.), status of payment, and name of person who paid the taxes. One great utilities of using collector’s books in archaeological research is the ability to gauge construction/demolition activity on a particular lot over time, by following trends in its assessed value. A sudden rise in a lot’s assessed value from one year to next likely indicates a new building --or perhaps an addition to an existing building-- having been constructed there during the intervening period (provided, of course, that the jump in value is unique to the lot and does not correspond to a general re-assessment of all real
Correspondingly, a sudden drop in assessed value points to a building potentially having been destroyed on the lot. The assessments on urban lots are more sensitive to these changes than those of large rural tracts, since the latter are more apt to be based on acreage rather than structural improvements. Even with rural lands, however, the collector’s books are great use to the researcher, since they also indicate transfers of ownership and can be used to narrow the date at which a property changed hands to within a one to two-year period. Chain-of-title research can be eased considerably when collector’s books are consulted beforehand (see Figure 55).

The personal property lists in the collector’s books also of are interest. Early collector’s books typically give a categorized inventory of taxable personal property, indicating both the number of items owned within each category and their total value. Property categories subject to tax included wagons/carriages, horses, cattle, sheep, hogs, clocks/watches, and stores (i.e. merchandise). The practice of itemizing personal property in collector’s books seems to have been abandoned generally in Illinois during the early 1850s. Books post-dating that period simply a total assessed value of all personal property. Although these total values lack the depth of the categorized assessments that preceded them, they still represent useful comparative data for assessing economic status. The personal property lists also serve as an abbreviated annual census of sorts, since they include all taxpaying residents of a township or town—not just those owning real estate.

The extent of collector’s book holdings varies from one county to another. Grundy County is exceptional for Illinois, in that it has a complete set of books dating back to the county’s organization in 1842. The books are on file at the county’s annex building in Morris. The character of the holdings Cook, Will, and La Salle Counties have not been assessed as thoroughly as those in Grundy. However, all three of these counties are known to have moved a portion of their collector’s books to the Illinois Regional Archives Depository (IRAD) at Northern Illinois University, in Dekalb. The range of dates provided for these books in the IRAD inventory is not all-inclusive, which suggests that some collector’s books remain on file at the Cook, Will, and La Salle County courthouses. The Illinois State Archives maintains an on-line inventory of county records holdings on file at the different IRADs around the state.

**4. County Probate Records**

Probate records are maintained by the Circuit Clerk of each county and include a variety of materials, including administrator’s books, will books, and estate files. These records have the potential to yield a wealth of site-specific information. The extent of information offered, however, depends largely upon the condition of a landowner’s estate at the time of their death. Estates that were cleanly divided among heirs via a will, or were unencumbered with debts required relatively little paperwork to be filed with the courts. The opposite is true for individuals who had died without a valid will (intestate), were deeply indebted, or had otherwise complicated estates. Even so, the records associated with the even the most rudimentary of estates can provide details such as the date of death of the decedent, an inventory of real estate owned the time of death, value
of real and personal property, and names and residences of heirs. The records of more complex estate contain bills and receipts (some of which occasionally construction work done for the decedent prior to their death) and detailed personal property inventories. Aside from illuminating the material goods associated with the occupants of the site being researched, personal property inventories provide evidence of site structure, since they typically were complied room-by-room, by building.
Figure 53. Conditional deed signed by John McNellis on his distillery tract at Aux Sable, Grundy County in 1869. McNellis was required to sign this deed as a security against him failing to pay the Federal revenue taxes that were due on the liquor he produced. Plagued by fire and financial troubles, the distillery proved to be a relatively short-lived enterprise, though its main building remained a prominent landmark in Aux Sable for years afterward (Grundy County Deed Record 27:222).
Figure 54. The 1848 survey and subdivision of Section 9, Township 33 North, Range 7 East, Grundy County, Illinois (Grundy County Deed Record C:379). The “old Improvement” noted on the survey was made by William E. Armstrong, who established a ferry at this point in 1841. Armstrong’s improvement is located within the boundaries of present-day William G. Stratton State Park. This figure illustrates the utility of using county survey records in archaeological surveys.

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Armstrong provided the following statement in his preemption application: “William E. Armstrong Swears, that he has made and is the owner of the following improvements. Before the 1st Dec. 1842 he had cleared away the bank and dug down the banks of the Illinois River at two different places upon this tract and had a ferry established in 1841. This is all he did before Dec. 1, 1841. Since that time he has built a good ferry house, log, 16 by 18, 1 ½ story high, hewed down on the inside and stone chimney, and cultivated garden thereon. The digging mentioned above was intended to create ferry landings (IMCR Preemption Records, Folder 138).
Figure 55. List of taxable town lots in the Village of Valmeyer, Monroe County, Illinois, taken from a 1920 collector's book. Although Monroe County is located outside of the Illinois and Michigan Canal Corridor, this figure is representative of the information typically provided in county collector's books after they became more standardized post-ca. 1850 (Monroe County Collector's Book 1920).
5. Photographic Collections

Historic photographs represent a particularly rich source of information for canal-related research. These resources, which are most abundant for the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, illustrate buildings adjacent to the canal (both state and privately owned) that are no longer extant, repair/construction projects on the canal, commercial and recreational use, canal boats, and locks. The largest collection of historic photographs covering the canal is the Canal and Regional History Collection (CRHC) at Lewis University. This collection contains over 2,000 images dating from the middle nineteenth century into the 1930s. The photographs are organized by site (i.e. Aux Sable, Marseilles, etc.) and by topic (i.e. locks). Similarly, several personal collections of canal images are present and potentially available for research.

Other visual sources of information relating to the Canal include a wide range of early twentieth century postcards. Some of these are available at the same repositories that hold the photographic images. Research at such holdings as the Curt Teich postcard museum might prove of interest. There are also private postcard collections to which a researcher might be allowed access.
Figure 56. Photograph of the upper lock at Marseilles, from a post card dated 1907 (CRHC Locks vertical file). The white building set close to the lock in the background possibly is a watchman’s house, while those in the foreground potentially are privately-owned structures. All three of the buildings are located within the state reserve.
Figure 57. Photograph of the Ottawa Toll House ca. 1935, after the building had been moved away from the towpath. Images such are useful in determining the evolution and change-through-time of extant buildings along the canal. This photograph is on file at the Reddick Library in Ottawa (Reddick Library, I&M Canal vertical File).
Figure 58. Photograph of a locktender’s house, dated 1920. Although the location of the house has not yet been positively identified, it is suspected to be at either Lock No. 11 or 12, west of Ottawa. Photographs like this may help to determine variability in design of locktender’s houses. The image also offers details of lock gate construction (Reddick Library, I&M Canal vertical file).
Figure 59. Early-twentieth-century photograph of two girls posing on the lock gates at Aux Sable. Even personal photographs such as this can offer structural information about canal structures—in this case, the character of the lock gates (CRHC Aux Sable vertical file, No. AAU-05).
Figure 60. Ca. 1920s photograph of the Aux Sable locks, looking east up the canal. This photograph shows two outbuildings associated with the locktender's house: a barn in the right foreground; and a shop and/or watchman's house to the left of the locks. Both of these structures are mentioned in property inventories (CRHC Locks vertical file, L-05).
Figure 61. Ca. 1920 photograph of the Aux Sable locks, showing the barn adjacent to the towpath. This image also captures recreational activity on the canal. Note the swimmers in the foreground (CRHC Aux Sable vertical file, AAU-06).
Figure 62. 1930s photograph of Lock No. 6 at Channahon. This photograph provides exterior details of the locktender's house and also shows CCC activity on the canal. The canal in the foreground has been dammed in order to facilitate repair efforts on the lock chamber (CRHC CCC photographs, No. 54).
Figure 63. 1930s photograph of the low-water feeder dam across the Du Page River at Channahon, prior to being rebuilt by the CCC. The dam was intended to raise the river level so that water could be directed into the canal channel west of Channahon. Note the planking covering the top of the dam (CRHC CCC photographs, No. 51).
Figure 64. Photograph of the feeder dam at Channahon during the course of its dismantling by the CCC. The photograph illustrates the method of construction utilized for building the dam. The planking covering the top of the dam has been removed, exposing the frame cribbing and stone ballast (CRHC CCC photographs No. 22).
Figure 65. Photograph of the CCC camp near Channahon (CRHC CCC photographs, No. 49). Twentieth-century sites such as these, which once were regarded as “too recent” to be of interest, now fall well within the 50-year benchmark used in assessing National Register eligibility and are receiving increasing scrutiny by archaeologists and other cultural resource professionals.
Figure 66. Photographs also can be used to identify remains of canal boats sunk in the canal. This photograph shows the possible remains of a canal boat in the vicinity of Buffalo Rock (Reddick Library I&M Canal vertical file).
Federal Records

The full extent of canal-related resources on file at the National Archives has not been adequately assessed. One resource that has been of use in previous projects on the canal is the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) project reports, which are inventoried as Record Group 79 at the National Archives’ College Park, Maryland, facility. During the 1930s, the CCC was employed in stabilizing the canal and also was responsible for developing recreational areas along its route. One of the CCC companies involved in this work was based out of a camp located near Channahon. The project superintendent regularly submitted narrative reports to Washington, D. C. describing the character and progress of work being done along the canal. Photographs, showing work-in-progress and before-and-after views, often were attached to the narrative reports or were incorporated into a project album. As mentioned above, some of the CCC project photographs for the Illinois and Michigan Canal are now on file at the Canal and Regional History Collection at Lewis University. Other project photographs, however, are on file at the National Archives. One of the jobs depicted by the National Archives photographs is the lowering of the road bridges across the canal at Aux Sable and Dresden in 1934.

Published Maps and Atlases

County atlases and plat maps represent one of the standard sources consulted when conducting documentary research on a historical archaeological site, and their utility in this regard is described in detail by Carr (1988:55-69) and McNerney and Noble (1985:134-155). Conzen and Carr (1988) and McNerny and Noble (1985) provide complete inventories of the historic atlases and maps that were published for the counties through which the Illinois and Michigan passes. Another excellent and easily accessible source that can be consulted is Illinois County Landownership Map and Atlas Bibliography and Union List (Conzen, Akerman, and Thackery 1991). Several other promising map resources are discussed below.

1. Army Corps of Engineers Maps

The Army Corps of Engineers produced several maps of the Des Plaines and Illinois Rivers during the late nineteenth and very early twentieth centuries. Even though area illustrated by these maps is restricted fairly close to the rivers, the coverage generally extends far enough to include the Illinois and Michigan Canal and improvements immediately adjacent to it. These maps are far more detailed and accurate (in respect to building location and size) than the county atlases and plat maps. They also provide contour lines. The earlier of the Corps maps dates to 1883 and is entitled Map of the Des Plaines and Illinois Rivers from Joliet to La Salle (Benyuard 1883) (see Figure 67). In 1904, the Corps published a Map of the Illinois and Des Plaines Rivers, from Lockport, Illinois to the Mouth of the Illinois River (Woermann 1904).

2. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps represent one of the most promising map resources available for archaeological research. Published by the Sanborn Map Company, these maps were designed for use by the fire insurance industry for risk assessment purposes.
The maps provide a wealth of structural information for every building in the area covered. Aside from illustrating a building’s footprint on its associated lot, the maps note the type of construction (masonry, frame, metal, etc.), number of stories, and use. Outbuildings are also illustrated. Rural areas and small towns are not typically represented on Sanborn maps, unless they happen to be the site of industrial complex of some sort. Coverage also varies within towns there are Sanborn maps for, with commercial/industrial areas and dense residential neighborhoods being more likely to be illustrated than the thinly populated fringes of the community. Once a map had been generated for a given community, they were updated on a regular basis. Hence, larger urban centers typically will have multiple sets of Sanborn maps, running from approximately the middle 1880s through middle of the twentieth century. Ottawa has six sets of Sanborn maps that date to 1888, 1891, 1898, 1913, 1925, and 1949. Having a series of maps like this makes it possible to track modifications to a property through time. In the case of the Ottawa Toll House, the Sanborn maps helped establish the approximate date at which the building was moved away from the towpath (Stratton and Mansberger 1998) (see Figure 68). Sanborn map also exist for Peru, La Salle, Marseilles, Seneca, Morris, Joliet, Lockport, Lemont, and Chicago. Microfilm copies of these maps are on file at the Illinois State Library.
Figure 67. Detail of an 1883 Army Corps of Engineer's survey map of the Illinois and Des Plaines Rivers, showing the village of Aux Sable. The map's depiction of the Aux Sable is far more detailed than that found in contemporary county landownership atlases (Benyaurd 1883).
Figure 68. (Left) A 1925 Sanborn fire insurance map showing the Ottawa Toll House and its environs. The toll house is the building labeled “Office,” located immediately southwest of the bridge. (Right) The same area, as illustrated in a 1949 Sanborn map. These maps illustrate the movement of the toll house south from its original location and the removal of an associated outbuilding between the two publication dates (Sanborn 1925, 1949).
The Dresden town site is located in the N1/2 of Section 26 in Aux Sable Township (Township 34 North, Range 8 East), Grundy County, Illinois. The town site lies at the upper end of the Illinois River Valley, being positioned only one-half mile west of the point where the Des Plaines and Kankakee rivers join to form the Illinois. Towering above the north bank of the Kankakee-Des Plaines confluence are the Kankakee Bluffs, a line of steep bluffs that rise 100 feet or more above the river level. Dresden lies in the saddle of land where the Kankakee Bluffs break away from the river’s edge and begin to fade away to the northeast. The bluffs that decline away from the river and overlook the town site are known as “Dresden Heights.” It was at this point that the old stagecoach road that formerly ran between Chicago, Joliet, Ottawa, and Peru dropped down from the uplands of the Minooka Moraine into the Illinois River Valley (Baskin 1882:294). Although never more than a hamlet in size and relatively short-lived as a community, Dresden is exceptionally well documented in the Illinois and Michigan Canal records and other primary sources, and it serves as a good example of the opportunities afforded for conducting directed archaeological investigations at selected sites along the canal.

**Site Specific History:**

The first Anglo-American settler to occupy the site of Dresden was Salmon Rutherford, a Vermonter who arrived in 1833 and established a farmstead along the prairie-timber border in Sections 23 and 26. Rutherford subsequently erected a two-story, frame tavern on the north side of the stagecoach road, a short distance west of the small creek now known as Dresden Run. The stagecoach line that passed through the area was a rival to the famous Frink & Walker line and the selected Dresden as a point for changing horses (Baskin 1882:294). In addition to his tavern business, Rutherford erected a water-powered sawmill along the east bank of Aux Sable Creek, two and one-half miles west of his tavern in 1836. This sawmill exploited the ample timber resources bordering Aux Sable Creek and provided the first commercially sawn lumber in the area (see Figure 69). Rutherford owned the mill for over a decade, before selling it to John Basye in 1847 (IMCR Preemption Applications, Folder 156).

In December 1834, Rutherford purchased the north fractional halves of the NE1/4 and NW1/4 of Section 26 lying north of the Illinois River from the United States government. These tracts contained 134.34 acres in all (Grundy County, Land Entry Book). A significant portion of Rutherford’s cultivated ground actually lay on the S1/2, SW1/4 of Section 23, but this tract was designated as canal land, and he would not have the opportunity to purchase it --by right of

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10 The Kankakee Bluffs represent the southern extent of the Minooka Moraine and extend for approximately seven miles, running from the mouth of the Du Page River westward towards Dresden.

11 The documentary record provides conflicting dates for the construction of Rutherford’s mill. A preemption record filed by John Baye in 1848 reports that the mill was constructed in 1833. A preemption affidavit filed by Rutherford, however, indicates that he erected the mill in 1836. Considering that Rutherford was the builder, his date would seem to be the more reliable of the two.
preemption— for another fifteen years.\textsuperscript{12} Rutherford described his early improvements on the SW1/4 of Section 23 in the following affidavit, which was drawn up in August 1848:

Salmon Rutherford claims SW1/4, Sec. 23 T. 34 R. 8.

Salomon Rutherford swears, that he made and still owned the improvement on this tract. He commenced them in 1833, and before the 1\textsuperscript{st} Dec. 1842, had fenced 35 acres and cultivated about eighteen acres. The balance was used as a pasture. The ploughed part of it was mostly on the S. 40 of the W. 80 & and extended on to the S. 40 of the E. 80 about 2 acres and the pasture part was all on the S. 40 of the E. 80. This is all except he has continued to cultivate and use this [?] to this time. No other person claims this tract.

Salmon Rutherford

Sworn and subscribed
before me this 10 day of August
AD 1848 S. S. Randall
(IMCR Preemption Applications, Folder 156)

In March 1835, Rutherford arranged for the platting of the Town of Dresden across the north fractional N1/2 of Section 26. The town plat was fairly substantial, containing sixty-three city blocks, and incorporated his tavern and homestead within it (see Figure 70). The Illinois River delineated the southern boundary of the town. East-west streets in the community were named after the principal waterways in the area (Des Plaines, Kankakee, Canal, and Illinois), except for the obligatory Main Street, which was platted out to be 20 feet wider than the other streets in town (80 vs. 60 feet). North-south streets were named after trees (Maple, Cherry, Walnut, etc); the one exception to this was Ferry Street, which ran down to a proposed river crossing. The northern three tiers of blocks (No. 1 through 39) were surveyed with 60 x 132 feet lots, while the southern two tiers of blocks (No. 40 through 63) were left undivided on the plat, perhaps on account of them being prone to flooding (Grundy County Deed Record AA:6-7).

Rutherford’s expansive vision for Dresden was not unique for the period. Real estate speculation in Western lands was running rampant during the middle 1830s, and an uncounted number of towns were being platted across the Illinois frontier. Often poorly positioned and overly ambitious, these developments were placed in a precarious position when the speculative bubble burst during the Panic of 1837. Many of the towns that were platted in Illinois during the middle-1830s never progressed beyond their survey and went down in history as so-called “paper towns.” Dresden at least had the advantage of being positioned along a major transportation corridor. A stagecoach line already ran through the town site. Furthermore, the route of the Illinois and Michigan Canal, although not yet finalized, was projected to pass through it in order to take advantage of the level terrain afforded by the bottomland at the base of the Kankakee Bluffs. The prospects of the town’s success seemed bright enough to convince several Chicago businessmen to become partners with Rutherford in promoting the community. On November 7, 1836, George E. Walker, Gordon S. Hubbard, and Edmund S. Kimberly met

\textsuperscript{12} Rutherford purchased the SW1/4, SW1/4 and SE1/4, SW1/4 of Section 23 on May 10, 1849 (IMCR Tract Books of Canal Land Sales, Volume L-7 1848-1852).
with Rutherford at Dresden and purchased 181 of 246 surveyed lots (74%) and 12 of the 24 whole blocks that had been left undivided on the plat. This acquisition was accomplished through seven separate transactions, each of which involved $500 (Grundy County, Deed Record AA: 531-543). For whatever reason, the official plat of Dresden was not submitted for public record until September 13, 1838, over three years after the town was surveyed. George E. Walker filed the plat on behalf of himself and “as the attorney of Richard M. Young, Sydney Breeze, G. W. Maxwell, Hart Fellows, and Salmon Rutherford and others” (Grundy County, Deed Record AA:6-7).

In 1836 a survey of the proposed route of the Illinois and Michigan Canal was initiated. This was but one of series of surveys that would be conducted over the next eleven years that were aimed at establishing the line of the canal and estimating the work needed to be done on the different sections of it. Canal records indicate that Rutherford’s tavern provided accommodations for several survey parties (IMCR Register of Canal Expenses, Day Book 1845-1849:2; Survey and Field Notes, Book A-10:1). Field notes produced during the canal surveys include a number of sketches of Dresden. Although rude and hastily drawn, these sketch maps usually illustrate the structural developments in the town, and some indicate field improvements. An 1836 survey sketch, for instance, shows four buildings in the town, all of which are positioned west of Dresden Run and south of the line of bluffs (see Figures 71). None of the buildings are individually labeled. The easternmost of the buildings, however, is distinguished from the others by having a roof profile and chimney, which suggests that it may represent Rutherford’s Tavern (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book K-6). A more-polished, large-scale map that is suspected to have been based on the survey sketches and notes compiled during the 1836 survey also illustrates four buildings at the town site (see Figure 72). Another section of this large-scale map depicts Rutherford’s mill along Aux Sable Creek (refer back to Figure 69) (IMCR Untitled “Sectioned” Map [1836]).

A field notebook from an 1837 canal survey includes two sketches of Dresden (see Figure 73). The first sketch shows three large buildings that are aligned along the north side of the stagecoach road. Going from east to west, these are labeled “Dwelling House,” “Barn,” and “Barn.” The dwelling is L-shaped and undoubtedly represents Rutherford’s Tavern. Aside from the tavern and the barns, the sketch also illustrates two gable-roofed structures located further east and south of the canal line. These structures are depicted as being much smaller than the other buildings and possibly represent agricultural outbuildings of some sort. They might also represent the tents of the survey crew (refer back to Figure 15). A field of corn and oats is noted on the south side of the road. The second sketch included in the 1837 field notebook is much like the first, except that it omits the small, gable-roofed structures and indicates an additional building located in between the tavern and westernmost barn. Since this second sketch is not labeled, the function of this fourth building is unknown, although one can reasonably assume that it represents either a dwelling or a barn (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book A-27a 1837). The presence of four buildings is consistent with the sketch drawn in 1836, as well as with a more-finished, large-scale map of the canal route that is believed to be have been produced from the 1836 field notes.

13 Kimberly purchased 47 lots and 2.25 blocks through a single deed. Hubbard bought 44 lots and 2.25 blocks in two deeds. Walker purchased 90 lots and 7.25 blocks.
By 1838, Dresden had been designated as a postal stop along the mail route that ran between Chicago, Joliet, and Ottawa. The terms of the 1838-1839 contract for this route called for mail to be delivered and/or picked-up three times of week (Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday) by a four-horse post coach (Matile 2000:199, 206). Although Rutherford is presumed to have served as postmaster during this period (considering that his tavern was the only building in town at this time, excluding outbuildings), his service in this capacity is not mentioned in any of the documentary sources that have been consulted to date.\(^\text{14}\) The Dresden Post Office was the first post office to be established within the present limits of Grundy County (Brown 1997:52).

Dresden received a second commercial enterprise ca. 1840 when Antoine Peltier erected a tavern immediately to the east of Rutherford’s. Peltier was born in the British province of Lower Canada (now Quebec) in 1811. He left Canada for the United States in 1837, following the suppression of the short-lived rebellions that had broke out in Upper and Lower Canada in November and December of that year.\(^\text{15}\) Prior to rebellion, Peltier and his family were residing in Sorel, a town on the St. Lawrence River that was located midway between Montreal and Three Rivers (Le Baron 1878:760). The district around Montreal was the hotbed of discontent in Lower Canada, and it is quite possible that Peltier was actively involved in, or sympathized with, the 1837 revolt. Rebel leaders who were not captured by British and Loyalist troops fled to the United States. The fact that Peltier left his family behind in Canada suggests that his departure to the United States may indeed have been a precipitous one (Skelton 1919:89-90). He appears to have come to Illinois almost directly and settled at Dresden. A baker by trade, Peltier initially was engaged in baking bread for the Canal Commission --presumably for the distribution to canal workers (Le Baron 1878:760).

Antoine Peltier did not actually purchase any lots in Dresden until the late spring of 1840. On May 5 of that year he bought 30’x40’ parcel in the southeast corner of Lot 9 from Rutherford for $25. The following month, he purchased the adjacent lot to the east (Lot 10) from George Crawford and James Harvey for $100. The same day Peltier acquired Lot 10, he took out a mortgage on that tract and his portion of Lot 9 with Crawford and Harvey for $700 (Grundy

\(^\text{14}\) The early history of the Dresden Post Office is not documented well. Matile (2000) consulted the Listing of Illinois Post offices by County and found that the authors of that publication only knew of the post office having been established prior to 1842. Yet, we know from Matile’s article that the office was in operation at least four years before that date (1838).

\(^\text{15}\) This rebellion was sparked by the British government’s refusal to reform the government of Upper and Lower Canada. Reformers, who included individuals of both French and British descent, wanted to place the government on a more democratic basis by making the upper house of the Assembly and the Legislative Council in the two provinces elective positions. The rebellion in Lower Canada was a poorly planned affair that was snuffed out within three weeks of its starting. The revolt in the Upper Canada, which broke out several weeks later, was better organized and more directed but also ultimately came to naught. After failing to take Toronto, the rebels fled to the state of New York, from which they were able to conduct cross-border raids into Canada for about a year. The United States’ sympathies openly lay with the rebels, and the country was brought to the brink of war with Great Britain when a group of Canadian militia crossed the Niagara River onto American soil and set fire to a steamer that was supplying the rebels. The steamer, named the Caroline, was set adrift after being torched and sent plunging over Niagara Falls. One American was killed during the attack. Tensions between the two countries over the Caroline incident did not fully subside until formal diplomatic explanations were exchanged in 1842 (Skelton 1919:74-92; Holt 1999:97).
County, Deed Record CC:439, 441, 452). This flurry of real estate activity occurred the same year Peltier finally sent for his wife Scholastica (also called Celistie) and son Moses to come join him in Illinois (Le Baron 1878:760). Considered together, these events strongly suggest that he erected his tavern during the middle-to-late 1840. Besides functioning as a hotel and stage house, Peltier reportedly kept a general store in the building. The building also housed the Dresden Post Office, after Peltier took over as postmaster—a position he was to hold for nine years (Le Baron 1878:760; Ullrich 1968:39).

Peltier’s tavern had certainly been constructed by 1841, for it is noted on a sketch map that was drawn during a survey of the canal that year (see Figure 74). The tavern also is illustrated on large-scale map of the canal route that was produced from this survey (see Figures 75 and 76). This map is far more polished than the others previously cited and provides an excellent depiction of the improvements at Dresden for this period. Rutherford’s tavern is shown west of Peltier’s, and beyond that a barn and a house are shown. Two other buildings also are depicted within the environs of the town on the map but are not labeled; one of these is located opposite the taverns, on the south side of the stagecoach road, while the other is located down the road, east of Dresden Run. The map also depicts Salmon Rutherford’s cornfield in the SW1/4 of Section 23. Another fenced field (presumably cultivated) is partially illustrated on the south side of the stagecoach road (IMCR “Flagged” Survey–Dresden to Pinney’s Station).

In 1842, Dresden served as the setting for a painting by Captain Francis Henry Ainslie, a British army officer stationed in Canada. Ainslie toured the western United States in 1842 and produced eleven watercolors of places he had visited during his travels. Most of the paintings were of scenes on Mackinac Island. Three of them, however, were of places or sites in Illinois: Dresden, Dixon (Lee County), and a prairie fire on the Winnebago Swamp outside of Dixon (Angle 1967:75-84). Ainslie’s view of Dresden, which is entitled “Dresden and Rutherford’s Hotel,” looks westward over the town from the slopes of Dresden Heights (see Figures 77 and 78). The town appears on the right-hand side of the view. Rutherford’s and Peltier’s taverns are the most prominent buildings in the painting. The taverns are depicted as being two-story, side-gabled, and having tall sign-posts placed along the road in front of them. Both appear to be Federal in character, with Rutherford’s possibly having a fanlight in each end gable. Contrasting to the taverns are the couple of log houses that appear in the painting. One log house is depicted well east of the taverns, closer to the foreground; this dwelling appears to have been constructed in two episodes and has a large, exterior, chimney complex on its gable end. Another house—possibly of log construction—is shown in the east side yard of Peltier’s. Several other buildings also appear in the view, but are suspected to be barns. One of the possible barns is located immediately north of Peltier’s tavern, while another is shown west of Rutherford’s. The third potential barn is located opposite the taverns on the south side of the stagecoach road (Angle 1967:83).

Noticeably absent from Ainslie’s painting of Dresden is the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Construction on the canal had slowed markedly following the exhaustion of the Canal Fund in 1838, and by 1843 work had ceased altogether, stopping short of Dresden. The contract on excavating the section of canal through Dresden--Section 109-- had been awarded to Lafferty, McGowan and Company on September 22, 1841 (IMCR Construction Contracts, Contract Book 1836-1841). Lafferty, McGowan, and Company also had been awarded the contracts for
building Sections 112, 124, 151, and 153, as well as the culvert on Section 126. These projects were spread approximately twenty-four miles apart from one another: Section 109 was the easternmost job; Section 112 was located approximately 1-1/2 miles west of Dresden; Section 124 ran on the east of Morris; and Sections 151 and 153 were located just east of Marseilles. According to John Lafferty, once these contracts had been awarded, the company “immediately commenced building shanties, stables, etc., on said sections sufficient for one hundred or more men & fifteen or twenty horses, which were soon completed.” With this groundwork laid, Lafferty then traveled to Pittsburgh and purchased $3,000 to $4,000 worth of equipment. Before any excavation could be initiated, however, the company was advised by General G. J. Fry, a Canal Trustee, that it would be best if they would desist, considering the Canal’s deteriorating financial situation. This advice was followed, but the company did not abandon its claim to the contracts. Following of the revival of the canal’s financing in 1845, Lafferty, McGowan, and Company submitted a preemption claim on the contracts it had signed four years before (IMCR Contractor’s Preemption Petitions, John Lafferty et. al., 21 July 1845). This claim apparently was not honored, however --at least in respect to Section 109. Richard Morgan was the contractor who ultimately constructed Section 109. Expense registers indicate that work on the section lasted from the fall of 1845 through spring of the following year (IMCR Register of Canal Expenses, Day Book 1845-1849:8, 12, 26, 40, 59). Morgan is presumed to have constructed some shanties in the vicinity of Dresden to accommodate his work force. An 1878 Grundy County history reports that, “During the construction of the canal, a few temporary buildings gathered about the old hotel [Rutherford’s] and kept it company for a while, but these passed away with the laborers….” (Baskin 1878:294).

Work on the canal through Dresden did not proceed without problems. On October 14, 1846, chief engineer William Gooding notified General G. J. Fry, who was then serving as resident trustee at Lockport, that the contract for building the road bridges on Section 98 and 109 had been forfeited. Gooding noted that “The work upon these bridges has not been progressed at all for a long time and there not the slightest probability that any further progress will be made with the work under the existing contracts” (IMCR Construction Contracts, Gooding to Fry, 14 October 1836). The bridge that Gooding referred to on Section 109 occupied the site of Dresden Bridge.

Antoine Peltier also participated in the canal work. In 1844, he received the contract to construct the Kankakee Feeder, which diverted water from the Kankakee River into the main line of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. The feeder ran along the north bank of the Kankakee River, between the towns of Wilmington and Kankakee in Will County. The latter town was located at the juncture of the Des Plaines and Kankakee Rivers, two miles southeast of Dresden. The feeder project nearly proved the ruin of Peltier when his partner absconded with the funds Peltier had had allocated for the work (Le Baron 1878:760). Canal correspondence also suggests that the feeder construction faced significant cost overruns, which were partially attributable to low construction estimates made by canal engineers (IMCR Illinois and Michigan Canal Archives, File 126, Peltier to Gooding, 2 June 1847). In spite of these problems, Peltier eventually did complete the feeder.

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10 The bridge on Section 109 was located on the same site as the ca. 1911 Pratt pony-truss bridge that is known as the “Dresden Bridge.” The latter structure has been as IL-HAER No. GR-1999-1 (see Stratton 1999).
Late in 1847, A. J. Mathewson surveyed the canal through Dresden, as part of his comprehensive survey of the entire canal route. Unlike the canal surveyors who had preceded him, Mathewson did not depict any of the buildings in Dresden on his field drawings, though he did make an accurate notation of the physical environment and cultivated fields adjacent to the town (see Figure 79) (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, A. J. Mathewson Surveys, Book 2 1847). Mathewson’s field sketches served as the basis of a bound three-volume plat of the Illinois and Michigan Canal (see Figures 80 and 81).

After the canal was opened for commercial traffic, Antoine Peltier went into the warehouse business at Dresden (Le Baron 1878:760). In 1848-9, he constructed a substantial frame warehouse on the very edge of the canal, on Lot 11, Block 19 of Dresden. This warehouse, which still stands today, sat on raised stone foundations so that its main floor was level with the north berm of the canal (see Figures 82 and 83). The origins and use of this building has been a matter of some debate. Charles Hansel, who owned the building from 1921 to 1971 (his father acquired it in 1875), believed that it was erected between 1842 and 1845 and originally served a granary and warehouse (Ott 1963:14; Brown 1997:52). A 1987 Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) report on the building dates its construction to the late 1830s or 1840s (possibly in two episodes of construction) and credits Salmon Rutherford as being the builder. The HABS documentation also raises the possibility of the building being used originally as a mule barn, servicing specifically the mules that were used to tow boats on the canal (Duensing 1987). Other sources also note the building’s suspected use as a mule barn and its association with Salmon Rutherford (Smith 1978; Canal Corridor Association 1993). The true origin and use of the building becomes clearer when one examines the deed and tax records for the property, in conjuncture with Antoine Peltier’s biography. Salmon Rutherford sold Lot 11, Block 19, along with twelve other lots, to Gordon Hubbard on November 7, 1836. One year later, Hubbard sold all of his Dresden lots to Ebenezer Learned of New London, Connecticut for $1,000. If Learned ever expected to gain a profit from this acquisition, he was sorely disillusioned. After holding on to the property for nearly a decade, Learned, on June 23, 1847, sold forty-two lots—including Lot 11, Block 19—and three whole blocks in Dresden to Antoine Peltier for a mere $75 (Grundy County, Deed Record AA:531, BB:510, D:5). This sale price is far too low for a large warehouse (or any other building, for that matter) to have been present on the property, and tax records corroborate the unimproved character of Lot 11, Block 19 at the time Peltier purchased it. In 1848, Lot 11, was given an assessed value of $5, which was the base value of unimproved lots in Dresden. The following year, however, the assessed value of Lot 11 shot up to $1,500. This was the highest assessment given to any lot in Dresden in 1848; as a comparison, the lot on which Rutherford’s tavern was located (Lot 7, Block 8) had an assessed value of $700. If the building had been constructed simply for use as a barn, it is unlikely that it would have been given an assessed value that was more than double that given to a large, two-story tavern such as Rutherford’s. Lots with just an outbuilding upon them—even a large outbuilding such as a barn-- typically were given a much lower assessed value than a lot with a residence upon it. The building’s original use as a warehouse also is supported, circumstantially, by an 1878 history of Will County, which notes that “Mr. Peltier was engaged very extensively in the warehouse business” at Dresden (Le Baron 1878:760).
Although we do not know with any certainty the range of goods Antoine Peltier handled though his warehouse, several plausible options stand out. Given Peltier’s previous career in the mercantile business, it is possible that he stored retail goods in the building. A more likely scenario, however, is that he used it store bulk grain and other agricultural products awaiting shipment on the canal. During this period, rural-based merchants often accepted farm products (grain, pork, etc.), in lieu of cash, as a form of payment for their wares. Depending on the local demand, a portion of these products might be marketed by the merchant out of his store. The bulk, however, typically would be shipped off to a larger, distant market such as Chicago. Storekeepers who participated in this exchange network thus played the dual role of retailer and wholesaler (Cronon 1991:104-5). Any agricultural products that came into possession of the merchant needed to be warehoused locally for a time–regardless of their ultimate market destination. The substantial size of Peltier’s warehouse suggests that he was shipping more than just those products he may have obtained through barter at his store; indeed, it presents the possibility that he entered the wholesale grain business on a fulltime basis following the opening of the canal. The storage and shipping of grain was one of the largest industry’s to be established along the canal, and Peltier possibly saw it being a more profitable venture in long run than operating a rural store. Whereas retail merchants based in the larger, nearby towns of Morris and Channahon presented serious rivals to Peltier’s store by 1848 (reference Figure 84), grain merchants in those communities had a comparably smaller customer radius from which to draw upon –at least initially. A farmer who was willing to travel extra miles to Morris to enjoy the diversity of goods and services offered by its many retailers was not as inclined to haul his bulk grain the same distance if a competitively-priced warehouse or shipping facility were located closer to home. Tax records do hint at Peltier having given up on the retail trade between 1848 and 1849. In 1848, his personal property included $200 worth of “stores” (a category that is presumed to indicate retail goods). The following year, however, he did not have any stores listed in his personal property (Grundy County, Collector’s Book 1848, 1849). Peltier’s occupation is noted as “trader” in the 1850 census, leaving it open to speculation as to whether he was still engaged in the retail trade at this time, or was devoting his energies fully to his warehouse business (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1850). An examination of Peltier’s taxable personal property for the period 1850-1 might resolve this question.

Despite its early promise, Dresden never grew beyond the size of hamlet. Tax assessment records suggest that there were only twelve lots in the platted town that had buildings or structural improvements upon them in 1849. Table 1 lists these town lots and the structural improvements that are suspected to have been located upon them. The type of improvement on a particular lot is verified through documentary records or by extant buildings/structures in some cases. In others, the type of improvement is conjectural, based on the assessed values given to them. The buildings in town were clustered along the stagecoach road, or Main Street –as it was designated on Dresden’s plat. The highest property assessments were given to those lots that were occupied by Peltier’s warehouse ($1,500) and tavern ($500) and by Rutherford’s tavern ($700). Two other lots, which were assessed at $200 and $100, are suspected to have had dwellings upon them. Another lot was assessed at $60; although relatively small, this assessment is still high enough to suggest the presence of a small, rude dwelling such as a log cabin, considering that the base value given to an unimproved lot in Dresden was only $5. There were two lots with an assessed value of $50 that may also have been improved with log cabins, but also could have had a barn, or other substantial outbuilding(s) on them. Rutherford and Peltier
were the principal property owners in Dresden by this date. Rutherford owned two of the improved lots outright and was paying the taxes on three other improved lots whose owners were noted as “unknown,” while Peltier owned four improved lots. Between them, the two men also owned all of the unimproved lots in town. Table 2 details the taxable personal property owned by Rutherford and Peltier in 1848.

### Table 1
**Improved Lots in Dresden**

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<th>ASSESSED VALUE</th>
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<td>$60</td>
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### Table 2
**Personal Property, 1848**

**Salmon Rutherford**

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**Antoine Peltier**

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</tbody>
</table>
The one other property owner in Dresden in 1849 was the Roman Catholic Church, which owned four contiguous lots on the east side of town (Lots 1, 2, 11, and 12 of Block 6). Antoine and Scholastica Peltier had deeded these lots to the Bishop William Quarter of Chicago on July 29, 1847, for the nominal sum of $1. The deed noted that the lots were intended “for the use and benefit of the Roman Catholic Congregation of the Town of Dresden … for the support, aid and maintenance of Religious Worship and for Burial purposes” (Grundy County, Deed Record C:60). The church was named St. Antoine, in honor of the Peltiers’ donation. This was the first Catholic parish organized within the limits of present-day Grundy County. The membership was comprised predominantly of Irish folk who had settled in the township after working on the canal. The parish did not have a resident priest, so Father du Pontaris traveled from Ottawa to conduct services (Brown 1997:50). The cemetery seems to have been established informally a number of years before the Peltiers donated the land. The earliest known burial at the cemetery was that of William Kenney, an Irishman who was buried there in 1841 (Morris Daily Herald n.d.).

Dresden’s fortunes declined markedly after the Chicago and Rock Island Railroad began running through Grundy County in 1852. While the railroad generally ran parallel to the canal and serviced many of the existing canal towns, its route east of Morris angled to the northeast (towards Joliet) and hence bypassed Dresden by several miles. Several years prior to being bypassed by the railroad, Dresden had lost its stagecoach service when the Chicago-Joliet-Ottawa line was terminated in favor of a shorter route. Thus deprived of two transportation links, the town’s economic prospects appeared grim indeed. Dresden’s role as the principal service center within Aux Sable Township came to be challenged by the town of Minooka, which was platted out adjacent to the Chicago and Rock Island, only three miles to the north. Even though Minooka developed slowly during the 1850s, the town ultimately sapped away what little economic and institutional identity Dresden had left as a community. In time, the post office and Catholic Church at Dresden were abandoned, and new ones were established in Minooka (Baskin 1882:294).

Dresden also lost its two leading citizens during the 1850s. In 1855, Salmon Rutherford sold the preponderance of his landholdings in and around Dresden to Benjamin H. Streeter, a Morris merchant (Grundy County Deed Record M:462, O:49, R:17). He afterwards moved to Bates County, Missouri, where he died on March 24, 1858. Rutherford’s heirs confirmed the land sales he had made to Streeter through a series of quit-claim deeds signed in 1858 and 1859 (Grundy County Deed Record U:487-490, V:21). Antoine Peltier sold his rights to the fractional north halves of the NE1/4, and NW1/4 of Section 26 (corresponding to the area covered by the platted town of Dresden) to Michael Rogers, of Will County, in January 1857. As part of the same transaction, Peltier also sold Rogers multiple lots in the Town of Kankakee (Grundy County Deed Record R:270). It is uncertain whether this sale indicates recognition, on Peltier’s part, of Dresden’s fading fortunes or was required to satisfy his creditors -or perhaps both. Court and deed records certainly suggest that the Canadian was having trouble paying his debts after 1848, and there were several occasions when levies were issued against his improved lots in Dresden and other rural real located elsewhere in the county (Grundy County Deed Record R:240; Certificates of Levies A:32, 34, 86-7). Whatever his business failings may have been late in life, Antoine Peltier was said to have been “honored and respected by his fellowman” when he died in 1859. At the time of his death, the Peltier Family was residing in the Town of Kankakee.
On November 12, 1858, Michael Rogers sold his interest in the north fractional halves of the NE1/4 and NW1/4 of Section 26 to Benjamin H. Streeter for $1,000. The only town lots specifically identified in the latter deed were Lot 11, Block 19 and Lots 9 and 10, Block 8, which are the tracts Peltier’s warehouse and tavern were located upon. However, the deed did note that the sale also covered “all other lots to which said party of the first part [Rogers] may have any title in the Town of Dresden” (Grundy County Deed Record U:258).

Dresden is illustrated on an 1863 wall map of Grundy County (see Figure 85). The map shows two residences in the hamlet, which are presumed to represent Rutherford’s and Peltier’s former taverns. A “church yard and church” also are noted (Doran 1863). The local Catholic parish had stopped using this church only the year before (1862), in favor of a new one in Minooka, though it did retain ownership of the lots on which it and the cemetery were located (Baskin 1882). B. H. Streeter is designated as owning the town site and a large amount of acreage adjacent to it (Doran 1863). Streeter is not known to have ever resided at Dresden. The 1860 census lists him as a resident of Morris and his occupation as merchant (U. S. Bureau of the Census 1860:133).

Although Dresden continued to persist as a local place name, it appears to have no longer been recognized as a “town” in any sense by the late 1860s. This is apparent from the sales advertisement Benjamin Streeter issued for his Dresden property in 1867. The ad was listed under the sales columns of Morris real estate agent E. Sanford in the *Morris Herald and Advertiser* and was as follows: “The Dresden Farm, well known as the Streeter Farm, one of the most desirable in the country, well improved, fenced, large dwelling, barn orchard, canal runs through it” (*Morris Herald and Advertiser* 30 March 1867). The improvements mentioned in the ad are partially illustrated by a sketch map that was drawn during an 1867 Army Corps of Engineers survey of the Illinois and Michigan Canal and Illinois River (see Figures 86). A more detailed sketch map of the town site was drawn during an 1874 Corps of Engineers’ survey (see Figure 87).

Historic county atlases published in 1874, 1892, and 1909 also illustrate the site of Dresden, though they do not label it as such in the manner that the 1863 wall map did (see Figures 88, 89, 90). All three of these atlases designate Jacob Hansel of the owner of the majority of the former town site (Warner and Beers 1874; Ogle 1892, Ogle 1909). The Hansel Family used Rutherford’s former tavern as their residence (Ott 1963). During the late nineteenth century, the North West Tile Company purchased a tract at Dresden, located between old stagecoach road and the Illinois River, that they mined clay from. The clay was used for sewer tile production and was shipped to Joliet via the Illinois and Michigan Canal (Smith 1978). The clay mining seems to have been discontinued sometime prior to 1909 (Ogle 1909). During the early twentieth century, a lock and dam were constructed across the Illinois River, directly opposite the Dresden town site. This was named the Dresden Island Dam (see Figure 91).

Dresden also was impacted by the recreational activity that flourished along the Illinois and Michigan Canal during the early twentieth century. In 1918, for instance, Edward A. Hanrahan, of Lemont, was granted the right “to construct a boat house on the towpath side of the canal ½ mile east of the Dresden Bridge opposite the J. Hansel Barn.” Hanrahan signed a two-
year lease with the Canal Commission, at a rate of $5 per annum (IMCR Register of Leases, p. 11).

Dresden’s name was co-opted yet again when the Dresden Nuclear Plant was erected several miles east of the town site in 1961. The nuclear plant is located on the south bank of the Illinois River, at the confluence of Kankakee and Des Plaines Rivers.

Two maps illustrating the Dresden area in the middle-twentieth century—one a 1954 U. S. Geological Survey map and the other a 1950 Division of Waterways—have been included in the report as Figures 92 and 92.
Figure 69. Rutherford’s mill on Aux Sable Creek, as depicted in an 1836 canal survey map. The mill is appears to be two-stories tall. A ford across the creek is indicated at the top of the figure. The solid line with dots represents the proposed canal route (IMCR Untitled “Sectioned” Survey Map [1836]).
Figure 70. Original plat map of the Town of Dresden. Although the town was surveyed in 1835, this plat was not filed with the county clerk until 1838. Note the route of the Illinois and Michigan Canal through the town and the ferry across the Illinois River (Grundy County Deed Record AA:6)
Figure 71. Sketch map of Dresden that was included in the field notes for the 1836 survey of the Illinois and Michigan route. This is the earliest-known graphic representation of Dresden. While not overly detailed, the sketch shows the buildings that then existed in the community and places those structures in relation to known geographic features (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book K-5 1836).
Figure 72. Detail of a map of the Illinois and Michigan Canal that is believed to have been produced from the field notes taken during the 1836 survey. While this map shows the same number of buildings in Dresden as Figure 60, its representation is more detailed. Additionally, the map illustrates a cultivated field lying south of the hamlet and provides some indication of the extent to which the timber in the area had been cleared off (IMCR Untitled “Sectioned” Survey Map [1836]).
Figure 73. Two sketches of Dresden drawn during the 1837 survey of the canal route. The sketch the left illustrates Rutherford’s Tavern (noted as “dwelling house”) and two associated barns. The sketch on the right illustrated these same three buildings, but also shows a fourth structure whose function is unknown (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book A-27a, 1837).
Figure 74. A sketch of the Dresden vicinity made as part of an 1841 survey of the Illinois and Michigan Canal route. The sketch references four buildings in Dresden and ties them into the line of the canal. Two taverns (Rutherford’s and Peltier’s), a barn, and a house are referenced. Other features illustrated include two cultivated fields, the stagecoach road, the bluff line, and stands of timber (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book A-38 1841).
Figure 75. Detail of the finished map produced from the 1841 survey of the Illinois and Michigan Canal, showing Dresden. Rutherford and Peltier’s taverns are illustrated on the map, along with a house and a barn. Another building seems to be illustrated on the south side of the stagecoach road but is not labeled. The fact that the map does not illustrate the platted Town of Dresden is indicative of that community’s slow development (IMCR “Flagged” Survey –Dresden to Pinney’s Station 1841).
Figure 76. Close-up of the previous figure (IMCR “Flagged” Survey –Dresden to Pinney’s Station 1841).
Figure 77. Dresden, as painted by Francis Henry Ainslie in 1842. The view is from slopes of Dresden Heights, looking west. The dark clusters that appear in the distance may represent farmsteads. The heavy timber along Aux Sable Creek is depicted on the horizon (Angle 1967:83).
Figure 78. Close-up of the previous figure. Rutherford’s and Peltier’s substantial taverns contrast with the log dwelling that appears in the foreground. Note the prominent signposts in front of the two taverns (Angle 1967:83).
Figure 79. Two sketch maps of the Dresden area, drawn by A. J. Mathewson during his 1847 survey of the canal. The figure on the left is of Section 26, while that on the right is of Section 23. Unfortunately, Mathewson did not illustrate any of the buildings at Dresden. However, he did note the cultivated field in the area (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, A. J. Mathewson Surveys, Book 2 1847).
Figure 80. Detail from the ca. 1848 plat of the Illinois and Michigan Canal, showing the area immediately north of the platted town of Dresden. The cultivated fields shown belong to Salmon Rutherford. The bridge at the far left of the view is the first Dresden Bridge. This map and the others in the three-volume plat were based in large part on A. J. Mathewson’s 1847 survey of the canal route. Compare this map to Mathewson’s sketch of Section 23 shown in the previous figure (IMCR Plat of Illinois and Michigan Canal, Book 2 [1848]).
Figure 81. Plat of Dresden, as illustrated in the ca. 1848 plat of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Although the plat book does not show structural developments in the community, it is still a useful resource, in that it overlays the town plat over the surrounding landscape (IMCR Plat of Illinois and Michigan Canal, Book 2 [1848]).
Figure 82. Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) drawing of the Rutherford Barn at Dresden (Duensing 1987). Although this building has traditionally been attributed to Salmon Rutherford, documentary research suggests that it was constructed by Antoine Peltier for use as a warehouse.
Figure 83. HABS drawings of the Rutherford Barn, showing floor plans (Top) and longitudinal section (Bottom) (Duensing 1987).
Figure 84. Regional map showing Dresden in relationship to the other nearby towns, 1848. Morris appears on far left, while Channahon (noted here by the name Du Page) is illustrated on the far right. The town of Kankakee, which was platted at the juncture of Des Plaines and Kankakee Rivers, also is shown. The dark lines represent the Illinois and Michigan Canal and the Kankakee Feeder (IMCR Plat of Illinois and Michigan Canal, Book 2 [1848]).
Figure 85. Detail of an 1863 wall map of Grundy County, showing Dresden. The map illustrates two houses, church, and church yard (graveyard). The map places the town about one-quarter mile northwest of its actual location (Doran 1863).
Figure 86. Sketch map of Dresden, from an 1867 survey of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Note the canal wide water just beyond the town (USACE, Survey of Illinois River, Book A-53.5 1867).
Figure 87. Sketch map Dresden from an 1874 survey of the Illinois River and I&M Canal. Unlike the previous figure, this map shows a number of buildings between the road and the canal. The building shown abutting the canal is Peltier’s old warehouse, which now is variously referred to as Rutherford’s Barn or the Dresden Mule Barn (USACE, Survey of Illinois and Michigan Canal and Illinois River, Book 2, 1874).
Figure 88. Detail from an 1874 atlas of Grundy County showing the site of Dresden (Warner and Beers 1874). By this date, the community was no longer being designated by name on published atlases.
Figure 89. Detail from an 1892 atlas of Grundy County showing the site of Dresden. Note the tract owned by the North Western Tile Company (Ogle 1892).
Figure 90. Detail of 1909 atlas of Grundy County showing the site of Dresden (Ogle 1909).
Figure 91. United States Geological Survey map showing the Dresden vicinity in 1918 (USGS 1918).
Figure 92. The Dresden area, as shown in a 1950 map of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. This map emphasizes the canal route and physical features immediately adjacent to it. Hence, buildings located further away --such as the Rutherford Tavern-- are not depicted. The contour interval on the map is 2 feet (Illinois Department of Public Work and Buildings, Division of Waterways 1950:37).
Figure 93. United States Geological Survey map showing the Dresden vicinity in 1954 (USGS 1954).
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES AT DRESDEN

Using the wealth of textual and visual material that exists for Dresden, we have identified nine archaeological sites within the limits of the historic platted town site that date from the 1830s-1840s period. Most of these sites can be located fairly accurately, since they are associated with platted town lots. We have included two figures to help illustrate the locations of the sites. One of the maps overlays of a portion of the Dresden town plat over a topographic map and indicates those lots that are suspected to have been improved--based on tax records and historic illustrations of the community (see Figure 94). The other map indicates the site locations on a recent aerial photograph of Dresden (see Figure 95). The sites identified and discussed here are the ones that are best documented in the archival record. There is a distinct possibility of finding other sites in the area that are not represented as well in the archival record.

**Site 1:** Site 1 is a house site located on Lot 5, Block 9 of Dresden. The site lies north of Hansel Road and east of an unnamed, intermittent stream. No buildings are shown at this location on the maps that were produced during the 1836 and 1837 canal surveys. However, the sketch and finished maps of Dresden that were produced during the 1841 survey both show a house in this area (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book A-38 1841; “Flagged” Survey–Dresden to Pinney’s Station 1841). The assessed value given to Lot 5 in 1843 ($1) does not reflect such an improvement, but the assessment in 1849 ($100) certainly does. The 1849 collector’s book lists the owner of the Lot 5 as “unknown,” though it notes Salmon Rutherford as having paid the taxes on the lot (Grundy County, Collector’s Book 1843, 1849). None of the later maps of Dresden show a dwelling on Site 1, which suggests that it may have been abandoned during the 1850s. By the 1870s, Site 1 was being used an orchard (USACE 1874). It presently is located in agricultural field/pasture (see Figure 96).

**Site 2:** Site 2 is a suspected barn and/or house site located on Lot 11, Block 9 of Dresden. The sketch maps that were produced during the 1836 and 1837 canal surveys show a barn at this approximate location that was owned by Salmon Rutherford (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book K-5 1836, Book A-27a; Untitled “Sectioned” Survey Map [1837]). A barn also illustrated in this vicinity by the canal survey map produced in 1841 (IMCR “Flagged” Survey–Dresden to Pinney’s Station 1841). The improved character of Lot 11 is indicated by the relatively high assessed values given to it in 1843 ($100) and 1849 ($200). These assessments are large enough to suggest that a house may have been erected on the front part of Lot 11 between 1841 and 1843. If so, it would have served as a rental property, since Salmon Rutherford owned it during this period (Grundy County, Collector’s Book 1843, 1849). In the same respect, the higher tax assessments given to the lots in 1843 and 1849 possibly reflect the substantial character of the barn there, rather than being indicative of both a house and a barn. A barn is illustrated on the site by an 1867 survey map (USACE 1867). At present, Site 2 does not have buildings on it and is located in agricultural field/pasture.

**Site 3:** Site 3 is located on Lot 12, Block 9 of Dresden. The sketch maps that were produced during the 1836 and 1837 canal surveys show a barn owned by Salmon Rutherford at this approximate location (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book K-5 1836, Book A-27a; Untitled “Sectioned” Survey Map [1837]). One of 1837 sketch maps also shows another building, whose
function is not noted on the map, located on what would be the front half of Lot 12. Neither of
these buildings is illustrated on the map that was produced from the 1841 canal survey, though
this is not entirely surprising if neither was used as a survey point (IMCR “Flagged” Survey –
Dresden to Pinney’s Station 1841). The front half of the unidentified building shown in the 1837
sketch possibly appears in Ainslie’s 1842 painting of Dresden. Lot 12 was given an assessed
value of $100 in 1843. Like the assessments given to Lot 11, this assessment seems high for a
lot only having outbuildings on it. Yet, one cannot say for certain that the unidentified buildin
g on the front half of the lot was a small house. Whatever the case, the assessed value of Lot 12
decreased to $50 by 1849 (Grundy County, Collector’s Book 1843, 1849). This suggests that
one of the two buildings shown in 1837 had been removed by this date. The building on the
front of the lot seems to be the more likely candidate for removal, considering that the 1867
survey map shows a barn on the site that is located well off the road (USACE 1867). The
collector’s books for 1843 and 1849 both note Salmon Rutherford as the owner of Lot 12, Block
9. At present, Site 3 appears to be grass-covered yard.

Site 4, Rutherford’s Tavern: Site 4 is associated with Rutherford’s Tavern, an extant two-story,
frame residence that stands on Lot 7, Block 8 of Dresden. The history of this building has been
discussed in some detail in the preceding section. Salmon Rutherford erected the tavern ca.
1834-1835, and it is regularly depicted on the historic illustrations of the community. When the
Rutherfords sold their Dresden property to Benjamin Streeter in 1855, the deed identified Lot 7,
Block 8 as being the location of the Rutherfords’ “lot and dwelling house” (Grundy County,
Deed Record M:462). The assessed value of Lot 7 was $600 in 1843 and $700 in 1849 (Grundy
County, Collector’s Book 1843, 1849). During Benjamin Streeter’s period of ownership, a
tenant farmer or farm manager resided in the dwelling. From ca. 1874 onward, it served as the
Hansel family’s residence. An original rear wing (or ell) on the tavern has been removed (Ott
1963) (see Figure 97).

Site 5, Peltier’s Tavern: Site 5 is associated with Antoine Peltier’s Tavern. The tavern itself
was located on a 30’x40’ tract located on the southeastern corner of Lot 9, but Peltier also owned
the adjacent lot to the east --Lot 10. Peltier purchased both of these lots in 1840. The specific
details regarding his acquisition of them have been discussed in the preceding section. Peltier is
believed to have constructed his tavern --a substantial two-story, side-gable, frame building-- in
1840-1841. The tavern is depicted on the 1841 map of Dresden (IMCR “Flagged” Survey –
Dresden to Pinney’s Station 1841). It also appears in Ainslie’s 1842 painting of Dresden.
Besides the tavern, Ainslie’s painting also shows a small, potentially log, building located in the
east side yard of the tavern and a barn to the rear; both of these buildings were likely located on
Lot 10. In 1843, Lots 9 and 10 were given a joint assessed value of $600. Six years later, Lot 9
was assessed at $500, while Lot 10 was assessed at $50 (Grundy County, Collector’s Book 1843,
1849). The small building located east of the tavern possibly served as a summer kitchen or
some type of outbuilding. The difference in assessed value between Lot 9 and Lot 10 in 1849 is
representative of the wide disparity in assessments given to lots improved with residential and
commercial properties versus those having only outbuildings upon them. Peltier’s Tavern also is
illustrated on the sketch maps of Dresden that were drawn during the 1867 and 1874 surveys of
the Illinois and Michigan Canal (USACE 1867, 1874). The building appears to have been
destroyed during the middle twentieth century. A 1963 newspaper article indicates that the
tavern had been “torn down in recent years” (Ott 1963) (see Figure 98).
**Site 6:** Site 6 is located on the south side of Hansel Road and extends across Lots 4, 5, and 6 of Block 19. This character of the structural improvements associated with this site are not understood as well as those on the other sites discussed here, though, historically, they appear to be more agricultural outbuilding related than domestic. The 1841 survey map of Dresden illustrates, but does not label, a building located on the south side of the public road, nearly opposite Rutherford’s Tavern (IMCR “Flagged” Survey –Dresden to Pinney’s Station 1841). Based on this depiction, the building could reasonably occupy Lot 4, 5, or 6 of Block 19. A building also is shown in this general area on Ainslie’s 1843 painting of Dresden. Tax records for 1843 do not suggest that either Lot 4 or 5 were improved in any significant way. Lot 6, however, was given an assessed value of $75, which is high enough to suggest either a small house (i.e. log cabin) or large barn to have been located there. Salmon Rutherford owned Lot 6 at this time (Grundy County Collector’s Book 1843). In 1849, Lots 4, 5, and 6 were assessed at only $5, which was the base assessment for an unimproved lot in Dresden that year (Grundy Collector’s Book 1849). An 1874 survey map illustrates the footprints of two buildings on Site 7, both of which are suspected to be agricultural related. One of the buildings appears to be centered approximately on Lot 5, and –based on its narrow, but elongated footprint—probably represents a corn crib. The second building shown is located slightly east of the first (possibly on Lot 5), has a square footprint, and may represent a barn (USACE 1874). At present, Site 6 is occupied by a corn crib that is centered approximately on Lot 4 (see Figure 99).

**Site 7, Peltier’s Warehouse (Rutherford Barn):** Site 7 is associated with the large building that is known locally as Rutherford’s Barn or the Dresden Mule Barn and has been discussed in this report as Peltier’s Warehouse. The building is located on Lot 11, Block 19 and abuts the north berm of the Illinois and Michigan Canal. As discussed in the preceding section, we believe Peltier to have erected the warehouse in 1848-1849 for use as a storage/shipping facility for goods transported on the canal. After Peltier sold Lot 11 in 1857, the building possibly was converted for use as a traditional barn, though it may still very well have been used as a shipping point for agricultural products produced on the Benjamin Streeter’s large “Dresden Farm.” It would be of interest to find out whether the farm was directly associated with Streeter’s mercantile business in Morris (see Figure 100).

**Site 8, Wittier House:** Site 8 is located on Lot 5, Block 20 of Dresden and lies on the south side of Hansel Road and east of Dresden Run. Andrew Wittier purchased this lot, along with Lot 10 of the same block, from Salmon Rutherford on January 21, 1839, in two separate deeds. Both lots were bought for only $40, which suggests that neither was significantly improved (Grundy County, Deed Record BB:619). Wittier was a resident of Dresden at the time he purchased these lots, and he is believed to have erected a house on Lot 5 within one year of his acquisition of it. The 1840 census of the Dresden area lists Wittier as a “Head of Family” with a total of eighteen people resided in his household. Fifteen of the occupants were male, ten of whom were aged between the ages 20 and 30 (U. S. Bureau of the Census 1840). While it is tempting to speculate that this large group of young males may have been canal laborers boarding with Wittier, it seems unlikely considering that work on this section of the canal route had not yet started. Unfortunately, none of the people in the household are listed within any of the census’ employment categories (The same is true for Salmon Rutherford and Antoine Peltier’s households). The sketch map and profile map produced from the 1841 survey of the canal route
both illustrate a house on the east end of Dresden that is believed to be Wittier’s and to correspond to Site 9 (IMCR Survey and Field Notes, Book A-38 1841; “Flagged” Survey – Dresden to Pinney’s Station 1841). Similarly, it is possible that the double-pen, log house shown in the foreground of Ainslie’s 1842 painting of Dresden may represent the Wittier House. The latter issue is dependent upon how much artistic license Ainslie may have exercised in his depicting the house in question and the stagecoach road, since the house is shown on the north side of the road rather than south of it. The orientation of this house in relationship to the two taverns, however, seems to match Wittier’s (being located on a line just south of the taverns). In 1843, Lot 5 was given an assessed value of $100 and was still owned by Wittier. The 1849 collector’s book lists the lot’s owner as “unknown,” though a note in the margins indicates that the taxes owed “should have been to Walker.” The assessed value of Lot 5 in 1849 was $60 (Grundy County, Collector’s Book 1843, 1849). Chain-of-title research found no deed for the sale of the lot by Wittier to another party. It is possible that the house was occupied into the late 1840s or early 1850s and abandoned thereafter. It does appear on the 1863 wall map of Grundy County (Doran 1863), nor on subsequent depictions of Dresden. At present, the site is undeveloped and located in an open field (see Figure 101).

**Site 9, St. Antoine’s Church and Dresden Cemetery:** Site 9 corresponds to Lots 1-2 and 11-12, Block 6 of Dresden, which are the four lots that were purchased by the Roman Catholic Church in Dresden during the 1840s. Antoine and Scholastica Peltier sold these lots to Bishop Quarter, of Chicago, on July 29, 1847, for the nominal sum of $1, with the intention of having them be used for church and cemetery purposes (Grundy County Deed Record C:60). From 1847 to 1862, a parish church named St. Antoine (also called St. Anthony’s) occupied the site and serviced the local Catholic population. In 1862, the parish abandoned St. Antoine’s and established a new church, named St. Mary’s, in Minooka (Baskin 1882:294). The church and cemetery are both indicated on the 1863 wall map of Grundy County. Later county atlases note the cemetery. It has not been determined with any certainty which of the four lots actually served as the church lot. Based on the topography, however, Lot 11 or 12 seems like the most candidates, given their proximity to the public road and the steep terrain found on Lots 1 and 2. The Catholic Church still owns and maintains the Dresden Cemetery, which has nearly doubled in size since its formal establishment in 1847. At present, the cemetery occupies 1.51 acres. It remains an active cemetery (see Figure 102).

**Likely, but unidentified sites:** There is a distinct possibility that additional historical archaeological sites being located within the Dresden town site. Although the tax records that are available for Dresden are an excellent resource for determining improved lots, they have their limitations. Transient improvements such as those associated with a canal shantytown are not likely to be reflected in assessed values. Other short-term domestic occupations might also leave little trace in the documentary record, particularly if the structural improvements associated with those occupations were limited and the residents were squatters. The number of archivally documented domestic sites discussed above (n=4) seems too small, when one compares it to the number of families that possibly were residing in the community at the time the 1840 and 1850 censuses were taken. The presence of a shantytown somewhere on the town site is suggested by the 1882 county history’s comment that, “During the construction of the canal, a few temporary buildings gathered about the old hotel [Rutherford’s] and kept it company for awhile, but these passed away with the laborers” (Baskin 1882:294). A number of as-of-yet unidentified buildings
also are depicted in Ainsle’s 1842 painting of Dresden. One of these is the cabin described above in the discussion of Site 8. Another unidentified building that appears in the painting is located north of the latter cabin, on the extreme right of the view. In addition, the painting also appears to depict a number of farmsteads located west of the core community of Dresden (refer back to Figures 77 and 78).
Figure 94. Overlay of a portion of the Dresden town plat over a modern topographical map. Lots that are known to have been during the 1840s (based on the 1843 and 1849 tax records and on historic maps and images) have been identified as sites. The sites have been numbered 1 through 9 (Fever River Research 2000).
Figure 95. Aerial photograph of the Dresden area, showing present property lines (Sidwell Company 2000). The nine archaeological sites identified through documentary research have been identified in red, following historic lot or property lines.
Figure 96. (Top) View of Dresden Heights, looking northwest from Hansel Road, immediately north of Dresden. (Bottom) View of the field in which Sites 1, 2 and 3 are located, looking northeast from Hansel Road. The Rutherford Tavern (Site 4) and its associated outbuildings appear in the background (FRR 2000).
Figure 97. (Top) View of the Rutherford Tavern (Site 4), looking south. (Bottom) View of the tavern, looking northwest (FRR 2000).
Figure 98. View of Site 5, the location of Peltier's Tavern, looking northwest. Although the construction of the house (or summer kitchen?) that currently occupies the site undoubtedly impacted the site’s integrity, subsurface features associated with the tavern may yet be present intact closer to the road and the yard surrounding the building (FRR 2000).
Figure 99. View of Site 6, looking southwest. The existing corn crib appears to represent a twentieth-century structure (FRR 2000).
Figure 100. (Top) View of Site 7, Peltier's Warehouse/Rutherford Barn, looking southwest from Hansel Road. (Bottom) View of the warehouse, looking north, across the Illinois and Michigan Canal. The road in the foreground is the old canal towpath, which now serves as the Illinois and Michigan Canal State Trail’s bike path (FRR 2000).
Figure 101. View of the field in which Site 8 is located. Depending on the amount of erosion that has occurred over the years, this site has a high potential for having subsurface features with good integrity (FRR 2000).
Figure 102. (Top) View of the hillside on which St. Anthony's Catholic Cemetery (Site 9) is located, looking northeast. (Bottom) Modern-day marker in the cemetery commemorating the foundation of St. Anthony’s Parish in 1847 (FRR 2000).
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# APPENDIX I

## ILLINOIS AND MICHIGAN CANAL RECORDS ON MICROFILM

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APPENDIX II

INVENTORY OF ILLINOIS AND MICHIGAN CANAL
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