

A stage coach such as was used in Indiana about 1840.

## TRAVEL IN INDIANA LONG AGO

The first highways in Indiana were waterways. The Indians paddled their canoes along the lakes and rivers. Short paths through the woods connected the waterways. These paths were called portages. The Indians carried their canoes on their backs as they walked along the portage to reach another river. The French explorers followed the portages and rivers to reach the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

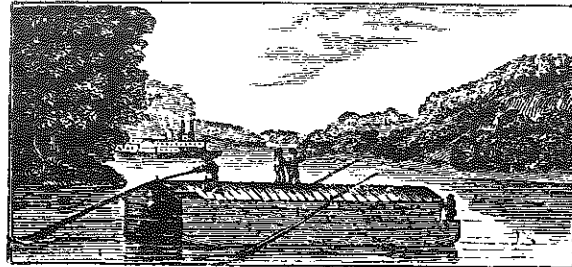
Paths through the woods made by the deer and buffaloes became Indian trails. When American settlers began to move into Indiana, bringing their household goods in covered wagons, the trails had to be widened. Bushes and trees were cut down. Sometimes the low stumps were left in the ground.

The heavy wheels of the wagons made deep ruts in the soft earth. In rainy weather the wagons mired in the mud. Even the horses and oxen that pulled the wagons sank down to their knees.

The first improvement in roads was made by cutting down trees and laying the logs across the low, muddy places. Such roads were called "corduroy roads." The logs kept horses and wagons from sinking into the mud. A later improvement was made by laying planks across the roads. Travelers were saved from some of the dust, mud, and jolts, but the horses slipped on the planks in wet weather. Plank roads were expensive to build and soon wore out. Gravel roads were tried next and they proved to be the best. Water ran off quickly among the small stones, and the gravel packed down into a hard, smooth road.

After Indiana became a state, the national government in Washington helped Indiana build a good gravel road across the state from east to west. It was called the National Road. It passed through Richmond, Indianapolis, and Terre Haute. Covered bridges were built over the rivers it crossed. It took ten years, from 1829 to 1839, to build the National Road across Indiana.

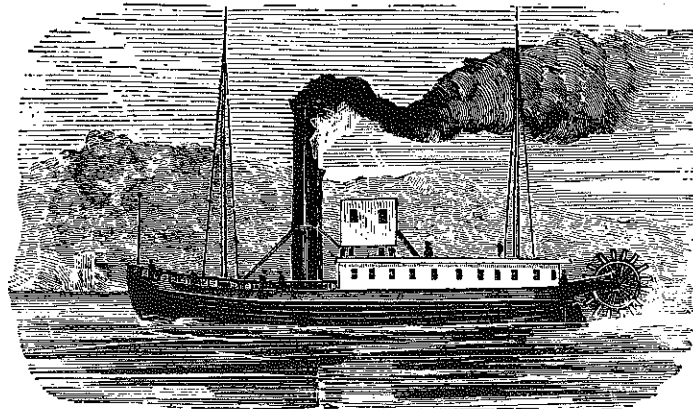
Another highway, running north and south, was built in Indiana by the state government about the same time. It connected Madison on the Ohio River with Michigan City on Lake Michigan, passing through Indianapolis and South Bend. It was called the Michigan Road.



A flatboat on the Wabash.

to protect themselves from highway robbers. The travelers were jolted and tossed about in the stage coach as the horses trotted along the bumpy roads. Everybody was covered with dust in dry weather. If the coach mired in the mud, the passengers climbed out to help push or pry the wheels free with fence rails. Travelers stayed at roadside inns or taverns over night. It took two long days to go by stage coach from Richmond to Terre Haute in the early days.

The driver was expert at handling his four horses that pulled the heavy coach. As he approached a town he blew a horn to let the people know he was coming. Then he whipped up the horses and came galloping into town in grand style. A great cloud of dust followed the coach. All the children and grown-ups in the town ran out to meet the coach and watch the travelers. Sometimes the passengers went into an inn to eat. The mail and boxes of goods were unloaded. The tired horses were changed for fresh horses. The passengers climbed back into the coach, and it was soon on its way to the next town. Traveling a long distance in a stage coach was uncomfortable, but it was very exciting.



A steamboat on the Ohio in 1815.

#### RIVER BOATS

Pioneer families, with their household furniture and sometimes with a few cows, hogs, and chickens, floated down the Ohio River on flatboats to find new homes in Indiana. Early settlers sent their farm crops to market on flatboats. Sometimes the boats went as far as New Orleans at the mouth of the Mississippi River. Abraham Lincoln once made a trip from Rockport to New Orleans on a flatboat loaded with tobacco.

A steamboat appeared on the Ohio River for the first time in 1811. Steamboats could go upstream as easily as downstream. They carried passengers and

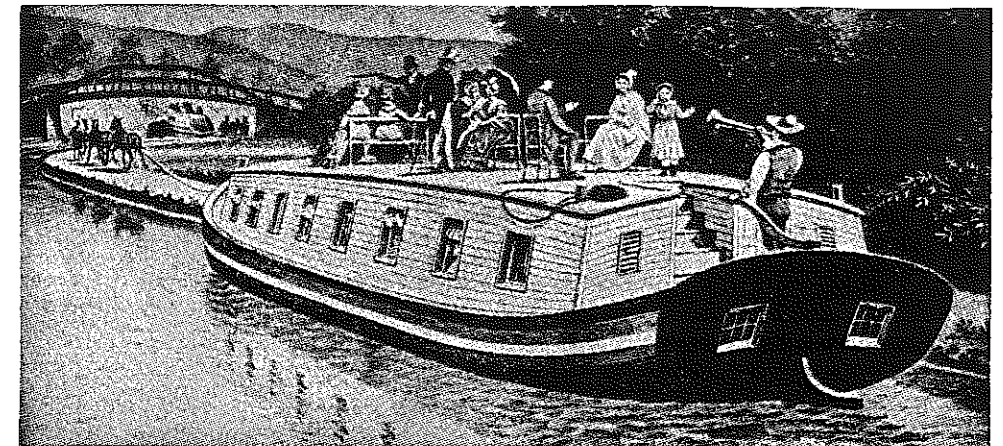
#### STAGE COACHES

Closed carriages, called stage coaches, pulled by four or six horses, carried passengers over the highways. Travelers paid their fares and rode as we do on busses today. The driver also carried the United States mail and a few boxes of goods or freight. The passengers often carried pistols to protect

freight of all kinds. At night the passengers slept in bunks on the boat. Music was often provided to entertain the passengers. It was not long until steamboats were common on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Many famous steamboats were built at Jeffersonville.

Not all the rivers of Indiana were deep enough for steamboats. Once a steamboat made its way up White River to Indianapolis, but there it got stuck in shallow water. Flatboats had to be used on the small rivers.

Men not living along the wide rivers asked the state to dig canals or deep ditches to connect the big rivers in Indiana so that they could send their crops to market by water. Three long canals were planned, following rivers that were not deep enough for large boats. One canal connected Fort Wayne with Terre



Large canal boat, pulled by horses on towpath.

Haute, then went down to Evansville. This canal linked the Maumee River with the Ohio River. Another canal was dug along the Whitewater Valley, to connect Richmond and other towns with the Ohio River. A third canal was planned to connect Peru, Marion, and Indianapolis on the White River. However, it was never finished.

Small boats were pulled along these canals by horses that walked along the bank on a towpath. The boats did not move fast, but they carried much freight and several passengers. The canals always needed repairs after hard storms. The charges made on the boats for using the canals did not pay the cost of digging them. Within a few years railroads were built in the state. The canals were used less and less. Finally they were given up altogether.

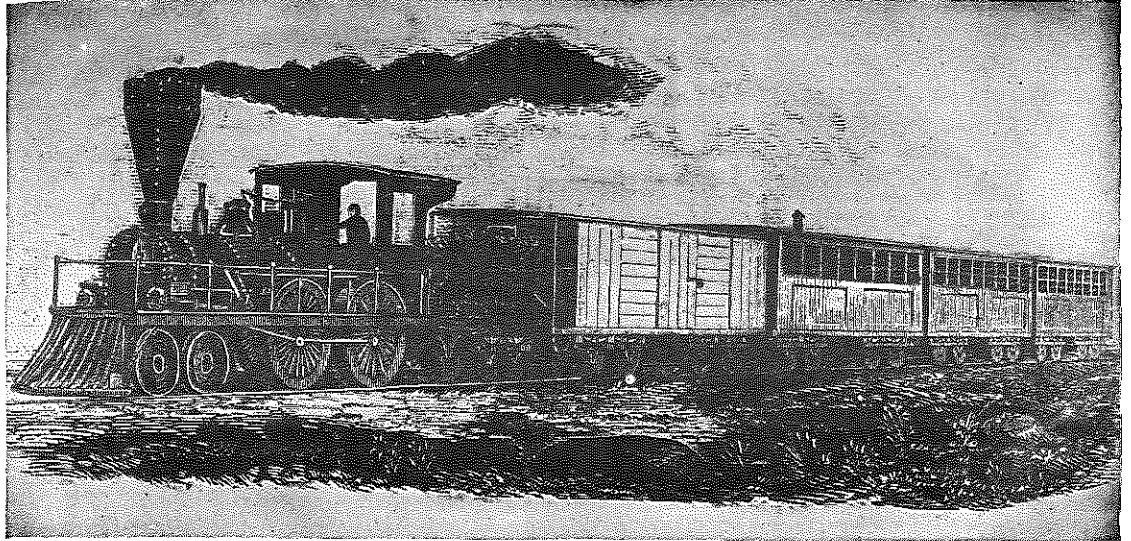
#### EARLY RAILROADS

The first railroad in Indiana was built near Shelbyville in 1834. The track was only a mile and a quarter long. The coach was drawn by a horse. People rode on it for fun, since it did not go any place. It showed people that railroads would be good for Indiana.

The first railroad with a steam locomotive was built from Madison to Indianapolis. Work was started in 1838, and six years later the tracks reached Columbus. The road was finished to Indianapolis in 1847, and a great celebration was held. Trains ran over the line at a speed of ten miles an hour.

After a few years a railroad was built from Jeffersonville to Columbus. Railroads soon connected Indiana with Ohio and places in the East. One road con-

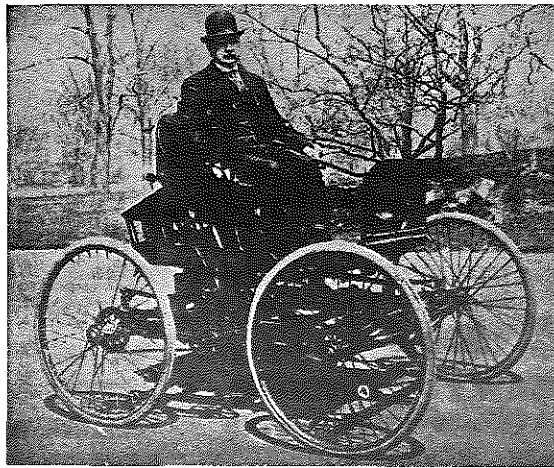




A Madison and Indianapolis Railroad train in 1850.

nected Indianapolis with Terre Haute and the Illinois border. Other railroads were built across the northern part of the state to reach Chicago. Much later Indiana was called the "Crossroads of the Nation" because so many railroads and highways crossed the state.

Large street cars, called interurbans, ran on rails to connect all the little towns with the cities. Indianapolis became the greatest interurban center in the world. By 1930, however, interurbans were out-of-date. Motor busses and trucks had taken their place.



Elwood Haynes seated in his first automobile.

#### THE FIRST AUTOMOBILE

The first automobile in the United States was invented and tried out in Indiana. It was built by Elwood Haynes at Kokomo in 1894. The same year Charles Black made an automobile in Indianapolis. The first automobiles, with a small gasoline engine under the seat and a steering handle, looked like carriages. Since they did not need a horse to pull them, they were called "horseless carriages."

The invention of the automobile made it possible for almost every family to have its own means of transportation. Many miles of paved roads were built in Indiana so that automobiles, trucks, and busses could be driven safely and smoothly. Today Indiana has over 76,000 miles of roads of all kinds.

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