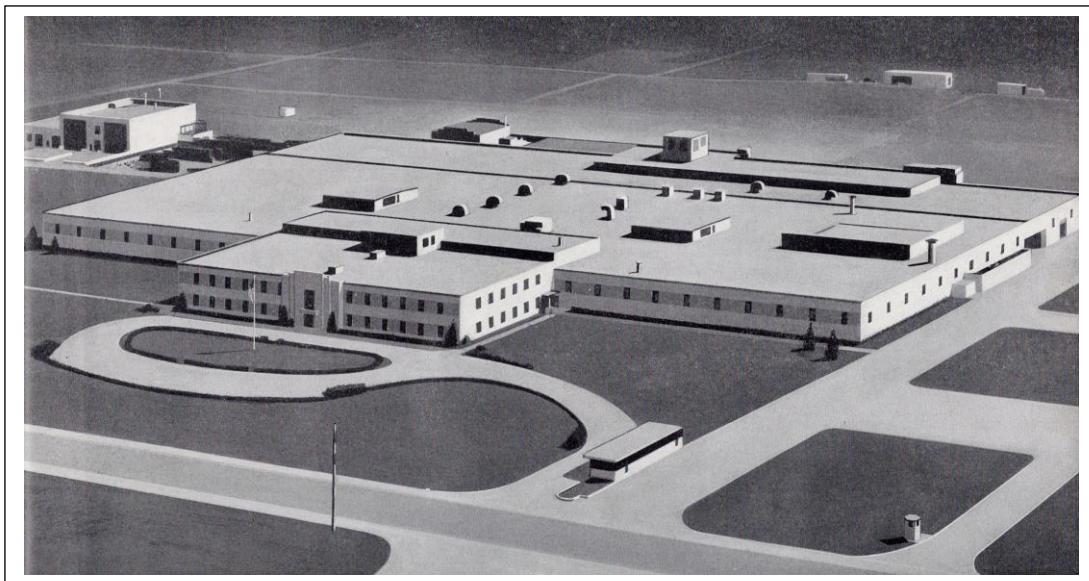


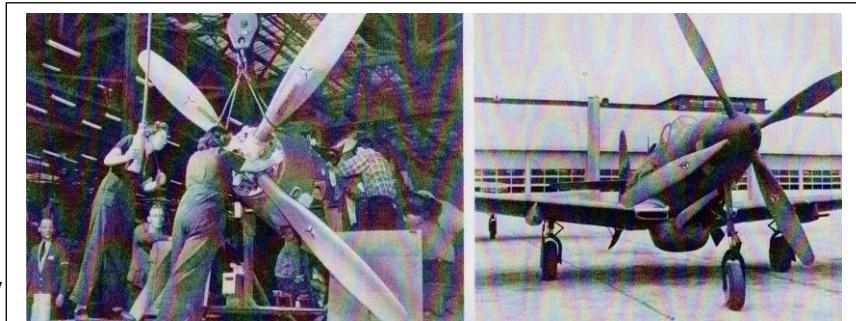


Aeroproducts

Pictured is the Aeroproducts complex that sat on the corner of 25A and what is now Northwoods Blvd (formerly Engle Road). In October of 1940 ground was broken to begin construction. They manufactured airplane propellers and were a division of General Motors. They employed people from every town in the area, including Tipp City.



This picture is of blades produced at Aeroproducts being installed on a Cobra aircraft. This information is from a book titled *Blades for Victory* plus pictures and information provided by Jimmy Charf. For more information regarding these topics, and the Charf's go kart track, visit our museum.



THS Contributes to the Success of the Tippecanoe Home Tour

The Tippecanoe and Christmas Too Home Tour on December 6th was a big success. The beautiful homes on Main Street and one on Fifth Street were a big draw with about 900 people taking the tour. Thanks to the efforts of members Karen Jackson, Karen Kuziensky, Frank Scenna, Barbara Smith and Joe Hammann, lovely history boards were a point of interest at each home. They featured photos, both old and new, and the history of each home. If you missed the tour, below are photos of all the history boards. All the homes are part of our Century Home program.



Letter from the President

Despite the Museum closing its doors for January and February, folks continue to reach out to the Historical Society for information and help. Some examples:

- A recent request had us checking our archives for photos to use at *Milestones and Momentum*, the Annual Meeting & Celebration of Excellence of the Downtown Tipp City Partnership.
- The Century Home program continues to spark interest and requests for information from homeowners of Tipp's historic properties.
- Donated items of historic interest continue to be offered to the Museum for consideration.

But these familiar activities of the Society are occurring against a backdrop of change. Last year, the Constitution and Bylaws were reviewed and revised by Board leadership. (Updated bylaws will be voted on by the membership later this year.) In January, we reached out via direct mailings to update membership information. An active membership is the essential lifeblood of an entirely volunteer organization. We acknowledge that Father Time has taken its toll not only on membership, but also leadership on the Board.

So, in the months ahead a priority will be to recruit new members and actively engage existing ones. We will be reaching out to you to help us identify potential members. This is an opportunity to reinvigorate the Society with fresh ideas, skills, and energy. Also, finance, word processing/computing, and communication skills are needed. Please consider accepting an active role on the Board as a trustee or officer or as a volunteer at the museum or for any of our activities throughout the year.

Heartfelt thanks to Bob Bartley, Howard Earles, George Hackbardt, Ron Re, and Jackie Wahl for their leadership roles and service to the Society over many years.

Barbara Smith

Thank You

Several individuals made monetary donations to the society:

George Hackbardt, Tom and Myra Nichols, Jene Steele, Joe Hammann, and Jackie Wahl . and Thrivent Choice Dollars (through designations by several members).



In Memory

THS lost several members in recent months.

We appreciate their years of membership & contributions to the society and send condolences to their families.

Peg & Hugh Hadden

August 2025

Bob Lenehan

August 2025

Bob Parks

November 2025

Jayne Powell

December 2025

Karen Huntsberger

December 2025

An Epic of Old Tippecanoe – Continued from October '25 Newsletter

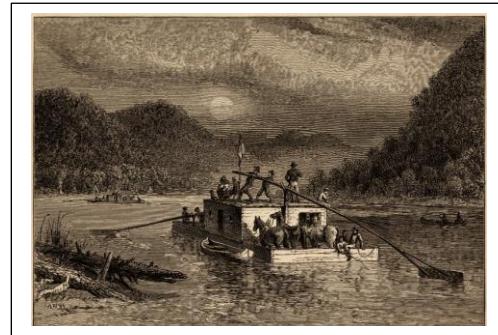
By Ed Merta

In 1817 Miami County, Ohio, was still mostly forest. The farmers and merchants and their hired labor had struggled for more than two decades, since the conquest of this land from the Indians by force of American arms, to clear out tiny enclaves for farmhouses here and there, for fields to grow crops and graze animals, for little clusters of houses that became towns. But mostly the verdant deep of the forest still held sway.

Our young man lived amidst the ancient canopy of green with his family. He had come to that place in a wagon train at age 13, leaving behind the open, neatly tilled fields of his native Maryland, long since settled and cleared. Since then, the deep forest of Ohio trees around tiny fields were all that he had known. The surest way to make a living in this new land was straightforward enough: grow crops, raise animals, and sell the resulting products nearby. Our young man did so, for a while. He grew crops and raised animals, near his log cabin in the vicinity of the stream called Honey Creek. But sometime after his marriage in 1817, the young man decided to try something different. His participation in the mad scheme spoken about by belching, cigar-chomping dreamers in the taverns took shape.

I imagine, although I don't have any proof, that he would have watched someone else do it before trying it himself. If this is correct, he would have watched a fellow farmer of Miami County building a flatboat.

A flatboat was a squat, rectangle-shaped wooden boat designed to carry goods on a river for sale downstream. It typically had a log cabin-like shelter in the middle. The only thing that made it go was the flow of the river itself. A farmer in a backwoods backwater like Miami County, Ohio could make one from the surrounding forest without too much know-how. It just took some common sense and the ability to wield an adze and an ax. An especially large one looked like this:



One day, the young man who is the hero of our story watched a flatboat being made, somewhere near the stream called Honey Creek in Miami County, Ohio. He probably would have done this in the autumn, maybe around 1820, after the crops had been harvested, the animals slaughtered. The products for sale in a distant market would have been ready. Then, in the chill morning air of autumn, the young man would have become a crew member, joining other young men working to tend the animals and guide the flatboat as it slid into the waters of Honey Creek, gliding downstream to the Great Miami River. He would have floated past the fabled outpost of Dayton, Ohio, at the confluence of five rivers, a collection of stockades and stables, log cabins and grinding mills, wagons rolling through the mud. Maybe our young man had seen that place before, not much impressed as he watched it recede behind him.

He might never have seen the likes of Cincinnati, then the greatest of Ohio's towns, a sprawling field of buildings stretching along the Miami River as it emptied into the huge, rushing currents of the mighty Ohio. The giganticness of this new river might have astounded our young man, dwarfing as it did the river that bisected his home county back in the woods upstream.

The wonders kept coming on his Odyssey. The young man would have drifted past the Kentucky metropolis named for a French king destined to lose his head. Mile after mile down the river, wider than the avenues of Heaven, and then to the Father of Waters, the Mississippi. A river as great as the Ocean. I imagine our young man sprawling backward

open mouthed onto his derriere, stupefied with wonder at the sight of such an immensity of water. Maybe he paid little heed to the Missouri city on the far banks, named for a different King Louis than the Kentucky town back upstream on the Ohio. Even stranger sights greeted our young man, not least of them the block-shaped boats propelled by spinning wheels and steel pipes belching smoke as the vessel ploughed against the current, chugging upstream. Revolutions, the young man would have seen, don't come always from armies and mobs. The landscapes we encounter in our youth shape the remainder of our days. Our young man would have seen landscape after landscape beyond dream. Mile after mile after mile forever of oceanic river, surrounded by fields and forests and villages and towns under a sky that would remain free of human-made aerial vessels for another century (although of course that future remained still unknown).

As his flatboat drifted southward, the farms would become plantations. Empires of industrial agriculture, churning out cotton and tobacco for the northern markets and even for the hated empire of Britannia with (in the later words of Dickens) its dark Satanic mills. The young man would have seen what made the plantations go. Human beings with skin darker than the soil, crowding around the river docks, loading crates and bales onto the boats, their flesh pouring out rivers of sweat in the blazing heat of the sun. They labored under the scrutiny of much lighter skinned men, dressed in fine coattails, armed with pistols and whips. They would have screamed at the dark-skinned laborers anytime they wanted. They would have whipped them for any infraction. Or none.

I don't know what the young man thought when he saw such things. Maybe he had already seen them as a boy in Maryland, a slave state. We know he saw them on the Mississippi, because that's what one saw on a journey by flatboat down its waters in those days.

We know that another young man, not the hero of our story, beheld such sights when he traveled by flatboat down the Mississippi around the same time. That other young man was Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln's journey downriver ended at New Orleans. He saw slave markets peddling humans like animal meat, amidst an infrastructure of warehouses like the Tower of Babel and meatpacking plants and smithies riven by catacombs of fire and blood, the resulting fruits of forced labor in the land of the free sold to nations across the ocean, to the ends of the Earth.

We don't know if our young man from Ohio saw New Orleans on his first trip down the river. We know he saw it in time, as Lincoln did. He made many such journeys in his youth, from the shores of Honey Creek and then down the Mississippi to the city by the bayou and the great ocean beyond. We know that after selling the products of his farm, he then sold his flatboat. Local merchants would chop it up and use its fine wood of the northern forests to build houses nearby. It was easy enough for the backwoods boy from Ohio to make another flatboat, when he got back home.

After selling off the flatboat in New Orleans, he walked back to Miami County, Ohio. Mile after mile along the Mississippi, then the Ohio, then the Great Miami, to Honey Creek. It took him three months. He would have trudged homeward, probably, in the dead of winter, icy cold wind cutting his face as he walked up to his cabin. Spring would come. Planting time. Do it all again.



The young man's name was John Clark. He made the trip down the river to New Orleans repeatedly over the course of the 1820s, selling pork and flour. By the 1830s, he accumulated enough money to start buying up land in Miami County. In 1840, he started a town on some of his land, along a recently built section of the Miami and Erie canal.

He named the town Tippecanoe, after a military victory by the general who had twice saved Ohio when John Clark was a boy. In 1840, Clark's hero, retired General William Henry Harrison, campaigned for President of the United States, his running mate an obscure politician from Virginia, a dour, humorless lawyer named John Tyler. Their slogan was, "Tippecanoe and Tyler too."

Seventeen years later, Clark lay dying in the bed of his regal home on Main Street of the city he founded, Tippecanoe. He'd forged that place into being because he believed his mission in life was to bring civilization to the backwoods along the Great Miami River. So suggests one of the surviving testimonies about his life.

Is that what came first to his mind as the shadows gathered around him in the spring of 1857? Or did he drift back to his days on the endless river to the ocean when he was young, encountering the great, wide world, undiscovered country waiting forever out of time?

The town he brought into being still stands. The undiscovered country still waits.

REFERENCES

These are some of the sources I looked at in composing this narrative. Any errors in the text are mine alone.

John Clark, Jr., *A Genealogical and Biographical Record of Miami County Ohio. Compendium of National Biography* (Lewis Publishing Co., 1900), pp. 636-638. Note that the hero of our story was John Clark, Sr.

Susan Furlong, *Legendary Locals of Tippecanoe to Tipp City* (Aracadia Publishing, 2014).

Kevin F. Kern and Gregory S. Wilson, *Ohio: A History of the Buckeye State* (Wiley Blackwell, 2014).

Richard Slotkin, review of Richard Campanella, *Lincoln in New Orleans: The 1828–1831 Flatboat Voyages and Their Place in History* (University of Louisiana at Lafayette Press, 2010), in *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association* 33:1 (Winter 2012), pp. 85-87.

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, February 10th 3:00 pm – Board Meeting – Tipp Senior Center

Saturday, March 7th 10:00 am – 2:00 pm – Museum reopens

Tuesday, March 10th 3:00 pm – Board Meeting – Tipp Senior Center

Tuesday, April 14th 3:00 pm – Board Meeting – Tipp Senior Center

