

Seeing the Land. (April 2-May 22, 1989). Lewis University, Romeoville, 1989.

Lewis University
Art Gallery presents
an exhibit on the
landscape of the Illinois and
Michigan Canal National
Heritage Corridor as depicted
in maps and by landscape
artists from 1824 to the present.

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April 2 to May 22, 1989

Seeing THE *Land*

Note: Numbering irregularities found in the original document have been corrected in this compilation with the author's permission. Landscapes not included due to size or copyright restrictions may be seen in the Canal and Regional History Special Collection at Lewis University.

The collection of landscapes and maps relating to the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor will help the viewer understand the historic development of the corridor which runs from Lake Michigan at Chicago to the Illinois River at Peru, 100 miles southwest of the lake. The maps and the landscapes also complement each other, as both focus as much on the built or man-made landscape as on the natural or wild landscape before the white man came.

As the United States moved west after the American Revolution, it moved into the wilderness, a wild natural area untouched by the white man. But when the prairies were encountered in Illinois, the descriptive simile most frequently used by early travelers was that of a garden with grass, trees and flowers interspersed over the flat landscape. It seemed destined for human habitation, designed by human hands. Mount Joliet, for example, appeared to early travelers to be a work of man rather than of nature. So the corridor was never seen as a wilderness to be tamed by the hand of man, but rather as land ready for cultivation. Schoolcraft in his remarks quoted elsewhere sees Mount Joliet as a natural and ideal place for a private mansion.

The earliest maps, as well as the earliest landscapes, focus on the human aspect. The Indians in Inman's work dominate Mount Joliet, and the earliest maps make much of the human presence known, whether Native Americans or white settlers. None of the landscapes portray nature raw and wild, but all of the portrayals include man's buildings and structures.

The maps of course approach the landscapes as a two dimensional surface seen from above, while the artists render a three dimensional world. The way they portray the area in this exhibit is their joint emphasis upon the built environment, and how it fits into the natural setting. No purely natural landscapes exist.

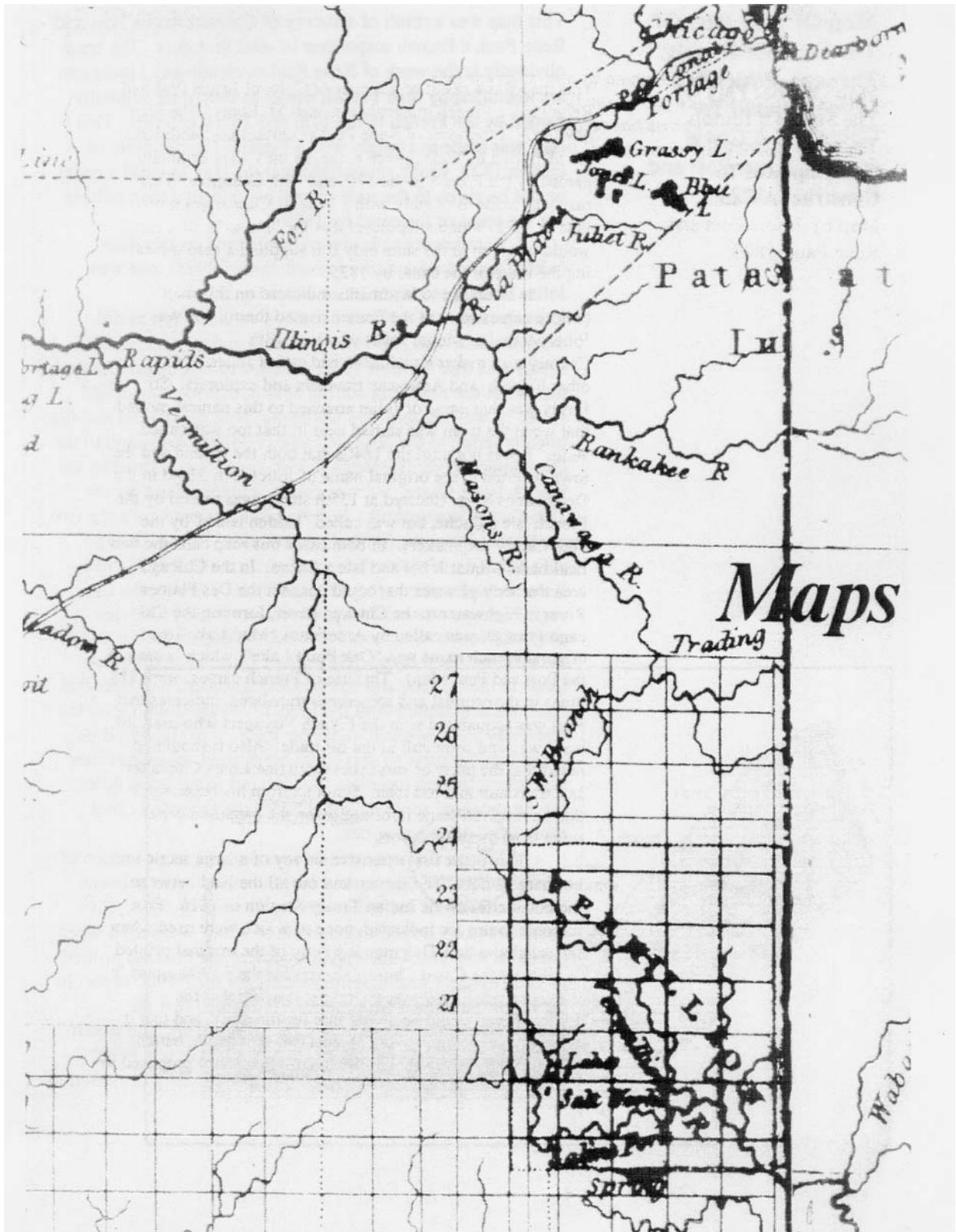
The other facet of the exhibit focuses on the way the landscape has changed over the 160 years covered by this material. The land has changed from a natural garden to an urban and industrial corridor. This story is important and essential in understanding the present landscape of the Corridor. Settlement brought this about in 1836.

The Corps (or team surveying and mapping the Illinois and Michigan Canal whose construction began that year) report in their journal... “July 3, 1836, The Corps lay at Juliet (Joliet) this day, and a part of the Corps attended the Presbyterian meeting held in the new tavern on the East side of the river. Monday July 4, the Corps decamped this morning and moved up to the summit lock on Runion’s townsite (Lockport) near an excellent spring where we pitched our camp. The celebration of the American Independence was held at Juliet, the liberty pole was raised last evening, and several gun[s] discharged.” (Compass Book of the Illinois and Michigan Canal No. 10, 1836: State Archives, Springfield). Then the territory was called the western frontier.

Fifty-two years later, another surveying party found a much different environment. “Monday, October 1, 1888. Left Chicago with party at 9 A.M. and arrived at camp near Lockport at 11 A.M. In the afternoon commenced work at the upper dam at Joliet (the dam at Jackson Street) very windy and dense smoke from the rolling mills delayed work.” (The rolling mills were the steel mills as depicted by Adele Fay Williams)... (Note Book 46, Survey of Waterway, L. L. Wheeler, Ass’t in Charge. Journal Sept. 28 to Nov. 30, 1888, Miscellaneous D No. 46 National Archives, Chicago).

One purpose of the exhibit is to promote the beauty of the Corridor so that the landscape of the Corridor can be seen as a unique environment shaped by nature and man not as familiar, uninteresting part of every day. Since much of the Corridor’s past is preserved in that environment, with an open mind we can work for continuation, despite the changes that circumstances force on us.

The dense smoke of the steel mill is gone, but the steel mill remains an important part of the heritage of the landscape.



**Map Of That Part Of
The State Of Illinois
Through Which It Is
Contemplated To
Construct A Canal**

Map by Justus Post and Rene Paul, 1823

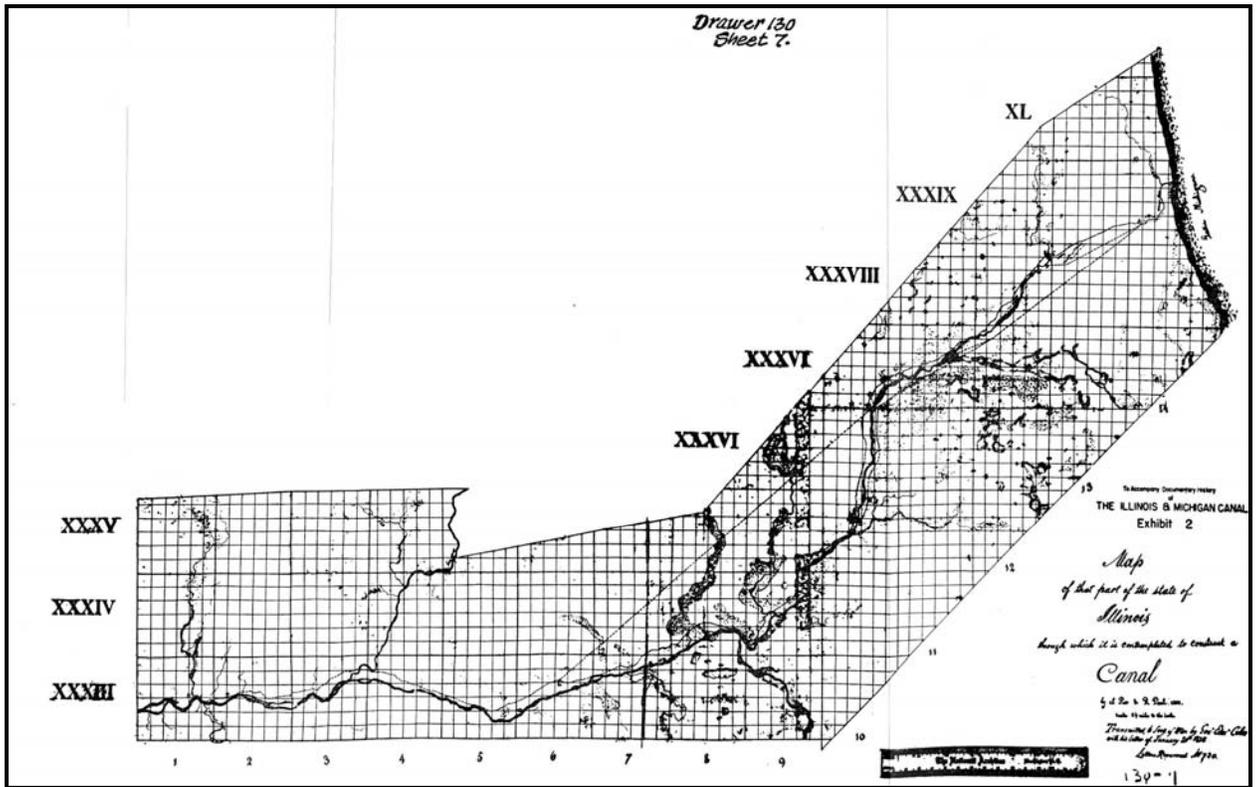
This map was a result was a result of a survey of Colonel Justus Post and Rene Paul, a French map-maker in East St. Louis. The map obviously is the work of Rene Paul as certain key landmarks are identified by their French name, as they were originally named by the French in the 17th and 18th Centuries. This map was made to comply with a Federal Charter grant of land in 1822, which stipulated that the land to build a canal would be given to the state only if it supplied a map indicating the route of the canal by 1825.

In reference to landmarks indicated on this map (whose names were as the French named them), one was Joliet Mound or Mount Joliet which an 18th Century map maker Hutchinson had called Juliet, as did other English and American travelers and explorers. So firmly was that name of Juliet attached to this natural mound that when the town was started near it that too, was called Juliet. It was not until the 1840s that both the mound and the town reverted to the original name of Joliet. An island in the Des Plaines River (located at 135th Street) was named by the French “Isle a [la] Cache”, but was called “hidden island” by the 18th Century mapmakers. In both cases this map calls the two landmarks Mount Joliet and Isle a [la]Cache. In the Chicago area the body of water that could connect the Des Plaines River in high water to the Chicago River, forming the Chicago Portage, was called by the Americans “Mud Lake” (the original French name was “Oak Point Lake”, which is used in the Post and Paul Map). This use of French names, sometimes in the original and sometimes translated, indicated that Paul was acquainted with the French Voyagers who used the waterway and were still in the fur trade. It also should be noted that the party of surveyors hired Louis Chevalier as a translator and rod man. Schoolcraft in his book notes that he received some information on the proposed canal route from these surveyors.

This is the first extensive survey of a large section of northern Illinois. The survey laid out all the land between the boundaries of the Indian Treaty Session of 1816.

Five possible routes are indicated, none of which were used when the canal was built. This map is a copy of the original printed in 1900 by the Canal Commissioners for their 1900 report. In the report published with the map it is noted that the Illinois River would be a vital link for the army, and that it was very navigable, having at least two foot depth, better than the Ohio River above Cincinnati. Stansbury proposed to keep the river open by dredging rather than constructing locks and dams, but this advice was not followed and in the 1870s, two sets of locks and dams were built by the State on the Illinois River at Henry and Copperas Creek.

M1

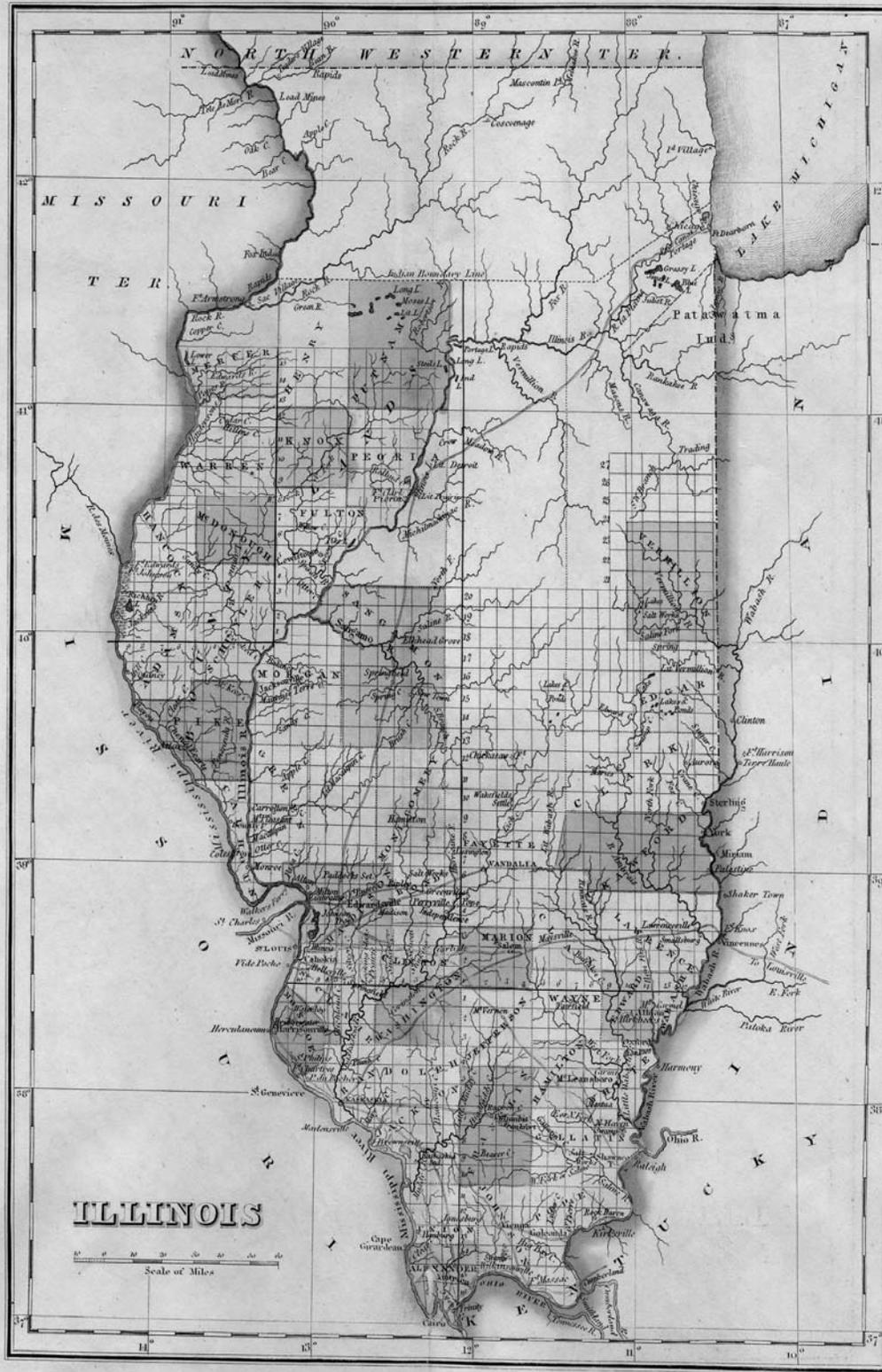


Geographical, Statistical And Historical Map of Illinois Carey and Lea Atlas of 1823

This was one of the maps in the important Carey and Lea American Atlas published in 1823. It not only had a map for each state but bordered it with extensive nature. The map of Illinois was done by J. Yeager.

This map indicates that at an early date, before the first survey of Post and Paul was completed, the proposed Canal was a very important feature in promoting the State. However, the mapmakers thought the canal would only serve to connect the Chicago River and the Des Plaines River across the Chicago Portage. This goes back to the original idea of Joliet after he and Father Marquette crossed the portage in 1673. In his report he suggested a canal to connect the two rivers that even in the dry season were only separated by 10 or so miles. However, a few years after that, La Salle poured cold water on the idea of a canal connecting the two rivers as the Des Plaines he noted was so shallow that navigating with an unloaded canoe was difficult most of the year. It was only after the Des Plaines [River] joins the Kankakee [River], about 50 miles southwest of Chicago, to form the Illinois [River], that navigation by a canoe was possible. The Illinois River was not really navigable by [s]teamboats above the La Salle-Peru point. It is interesting to note that Joliet, himself a mapmaker, was suggesting a canal at about the same time that the French Royal Canal of Languedo[c] was being built.

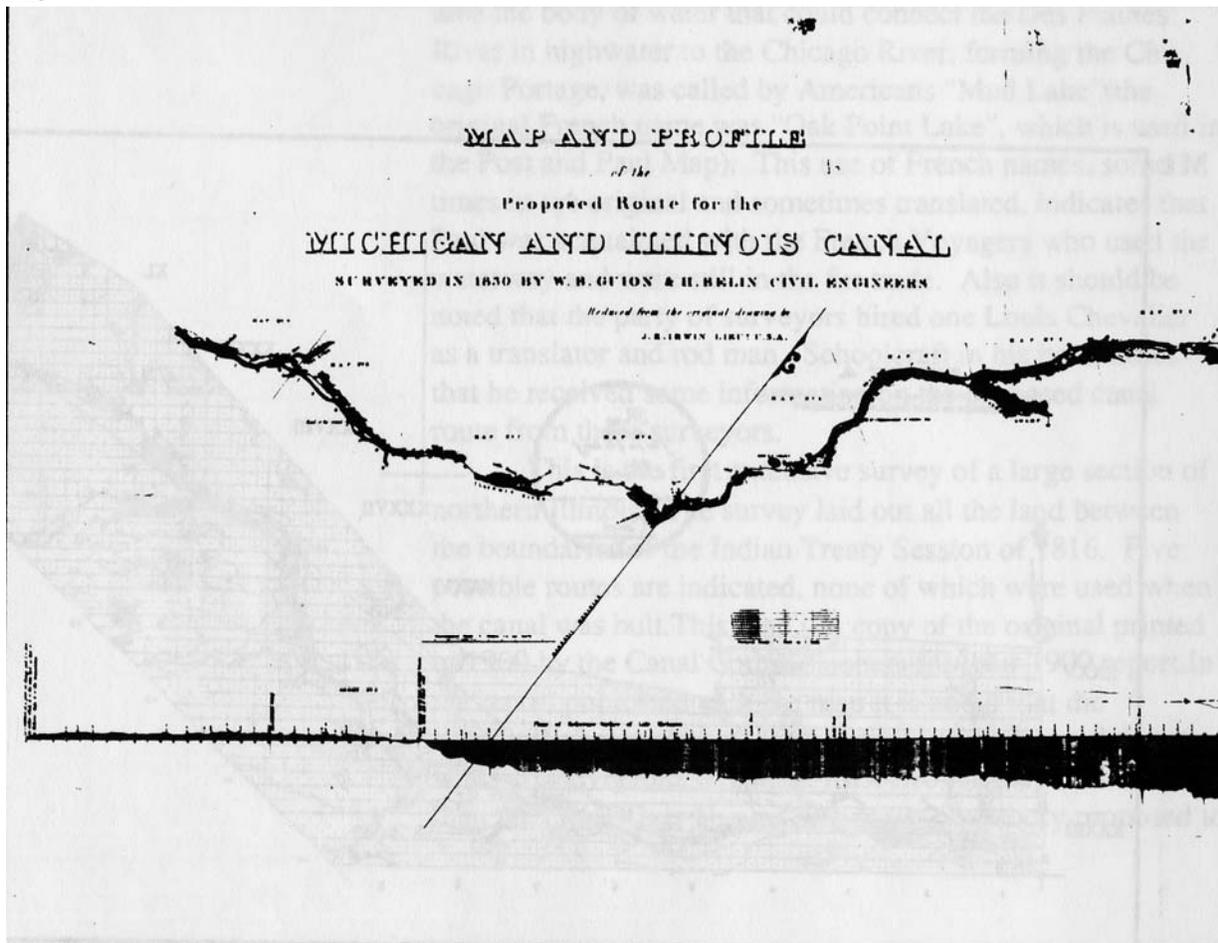
GEOGRAPHICAL, STATISTICAL, AND HISTORICAL MAP OF ILLINOIS.



**Map And Profile Of
The Proposed Route
For The Illinois And
Michigan Canal
J. R. Irwin, Lieutenant
U. S. Army, 1834**

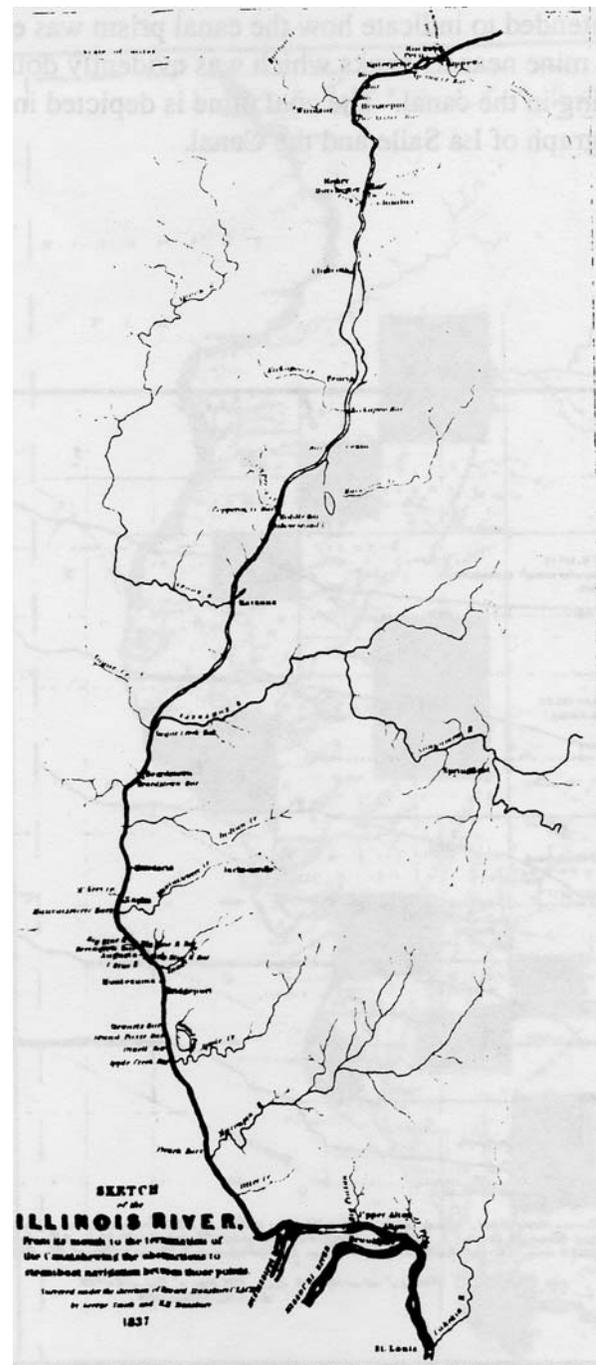
This map is the result of a survey which was done in 1830 by F. Harrison and B. Guion, and completed in 1831 by H. Belin, at least to a point about four miles above where the canal would terminate in 1848 when it was completed. When this survey was made and when it was completed there was a great deal of pressure to build a railroad instead of a canal. Hence this map was published in 1834 to show that the railroad would be impractical because it would cost more and carry less than the canal. The Federal government would not give any financial assistance to the young state of Illinois, but it would give land and encouragement to the young, under-populated state on the frontier of early 19th century America. The state would receive a substantial land grant and assistance in surveying for the project. As this exhibit indicates, that assistance would continue through the 19th and 20th centuries. This culminated in the 1930s when the Federal government, as a result of the Great Depression, would finish the Illinois Waterway, a project started by the State to provide deep navigation from Chicago to the Mississippi via the Illinois and Des Plaines rivers. That waterway opened in 1933. [Note: A large version of this map can be seen in the Canal and Regional History Special Collection at Lewis University.]

M3



**Sketch of the Illinois River
from its mouth to the
termination of the Canal,
surveyed under the direction
of Howard Stansbury by George
Smith and M. H. Stansbury,
1837**

This map was submitted to the U. S. Senate in 1838, and shows the Illinois River between its mouth at the Mississippi [River] and point reached by the Illinois and Michigan Canal on its upper course. It was based on a survey by Howard Stansbury of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and clearly marked such navigational hazards as sandbars. The river was a crucial part of the link between the Great Lakes and the Gulf [of Mexico], and after the construction of the canal, many of its boats had their home ports on it.



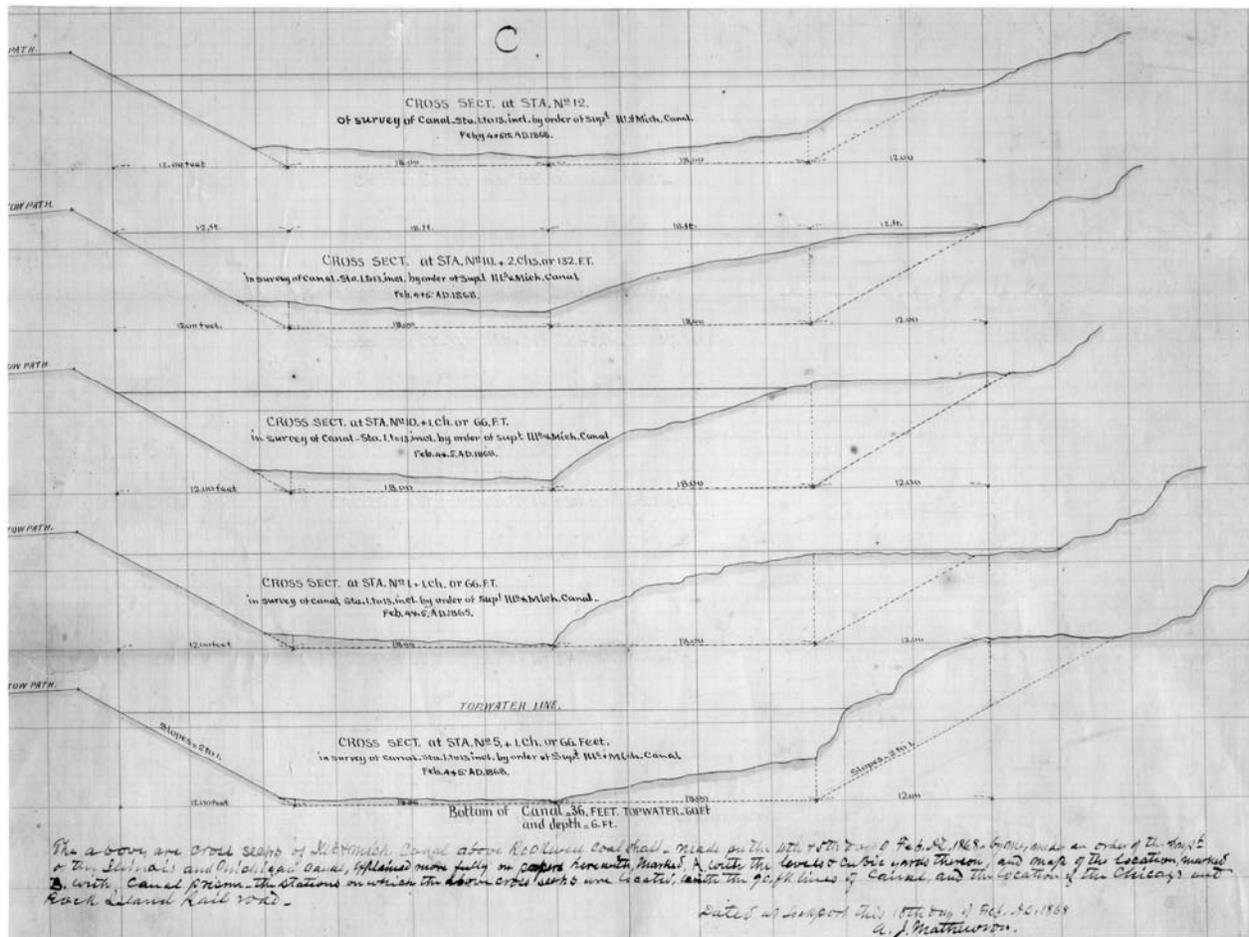
Cross Section Of The Canal Near La Salle

Drawn by A. J.

Mathewson in 1868

Mathewson was the surveyor for the Illinois and Michigan Canal from 1840 until its completion in 1848. He continued to work in that capacity until at least 1870. He was also a map maker who surveyed and drew plats for numerous town developments in Illinois. He is undoubtedly the most important surveyor working on the Illinois and Michigan Canal during the construction phase. He also made at least one Illinois state map or atlas. His mapping of the canal would probably give us considerable knowledge about the development along the Illinois and Michigan Canal if ever published. They are mainly located in the State Archives in Springfield, Illinois. This drawing of a cross section of the canal near La Salle was intended to indicate how the canal prism was affected by a coal mine near its banks which was evidently doing some dumping in the canal. The coal mine depicted is Rawson's photograph of La Salle and the Canal.

M5



Survey Of The Waterway From Lake Michigan to La Salle

1883 Map Of the Area From
Channahon To Morris

This is one of a series of maps for the survey of 1883, published by the government in 1890. The object was to encourage a project to substantially enlarge the canal by enlarging the locks so that large boats could go from Lake Michigan to the Illinois [River]. The survey was conducted by Captain W. L. Marshall of the Army Corps of Engineers. The maps are very large the scale being one inch equals 600 feet. The map was drawn by the Forbes Company of Boston. There is but one section of this survey which has a number.

M6



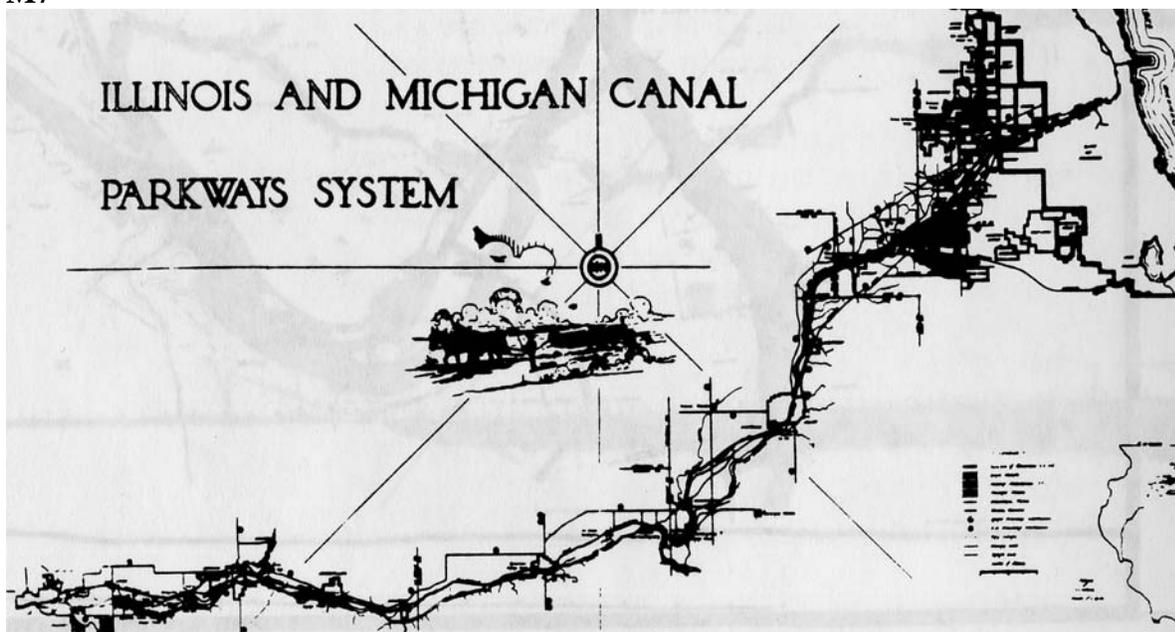
Proposed I. And M. Canal Parkway System 1938

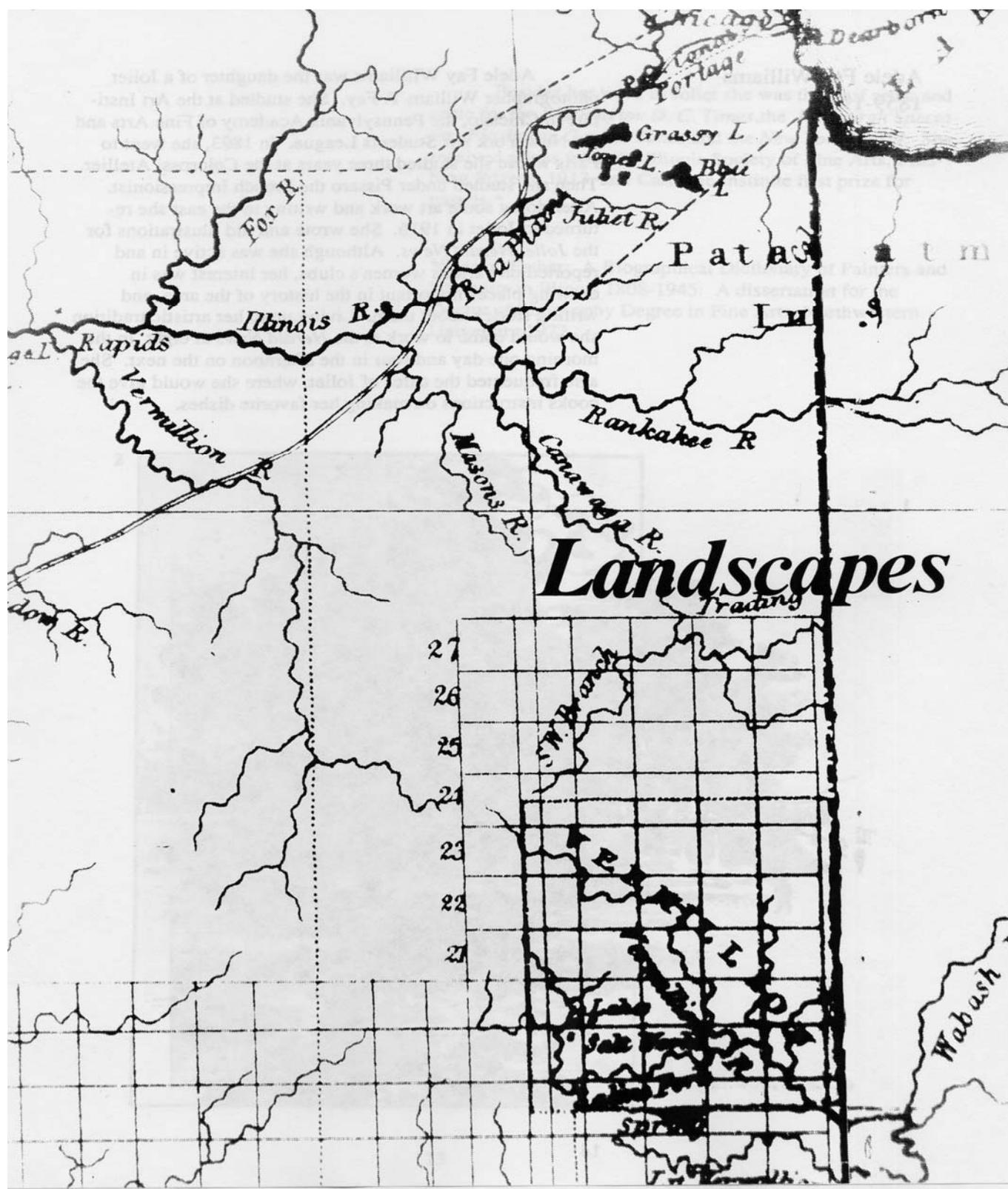
By the 1930s the Illinois and Michigan Canal was no longer used except by a few recreational boats. So it was proposed that it be used for recreational purposes. This map is a sketch of the proposed parkway. The canal was developed for recreational use with boat landings and picnic shelters by the Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.), which also restored some of the locks.

This is not like any of the other maps because it has few geographical details. It was published in the Illinois Area Park Plan, Parkway and Recreational in 1938. Ever since 1920 there were proposals to convert the Illinois and Michigan Canal to recreational uses. In the 1930s the State determined under the direction of Governor Horner that one of its major projects in recreation would be the restoration of the Canal through Federal Programs created by the New Deal and specifically through the C.C.C. The C.C.C. would rehabilitate the canal, restoring locks, building bridges, boat landings and picnic shelters throughout most of the canal. Then the canal could be used for boating and hiking.

During and after World War II most of the C.C.C.'s work was left to rot and fall apart, as the State did nothing for the recreational use of the canal. However, beginning in the 1970s, due to citizen action, more work was done, and in 1984 by Federal law the canal was declared part of the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor. It should be noted that in this map the natural features are almost obscured by the highways and towns. It is obvious that a different form of transportation is beginning its steady path to domination. The automobile and its highways have to pay very little regard to the topography they pass over. [Note: A large version of this map can be seen in the Canal and Regional History Special Collection at Lewis University.]

M7





**Adele Fay Williams
1859-1937**

Adele Fay Williams was the daughter of a Joliet photographer William T. Fay. She studied at the Art Institute in Chicago, the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the New York Students League. In 1893, she went to Paris where she studied three years at the Colorossi Atelier. Then she studied under Pissarro, the French Impressionist. After doing some art work and writing in the east she returned to Joliet in 1916. She wrote and did illustrations for the *Joliet Herald News*. Although she was active in and reported on various women's clubs, her interest was in drawing places important in the history of the area and writing stories about them. Living up to her artistic tradition she would come to work at the *Herald News* at eight in the morning one day, and four in the afternoon on the next. She also frequented the cafes of Joliet, where she would give the cooks instructions on making her favorite dishes.

Besides her work in Joliet she was the staff artist and critic for the *Washington D. C. Times*, *Pittsburgh Spectator*, *Pittsburgh Gazette Times* and the *New York World*. She received prizes from the Illinois Society of Fine Arts, Pittsburgh Prize in 1913, and the Carnegie Institute first prize for pastels*

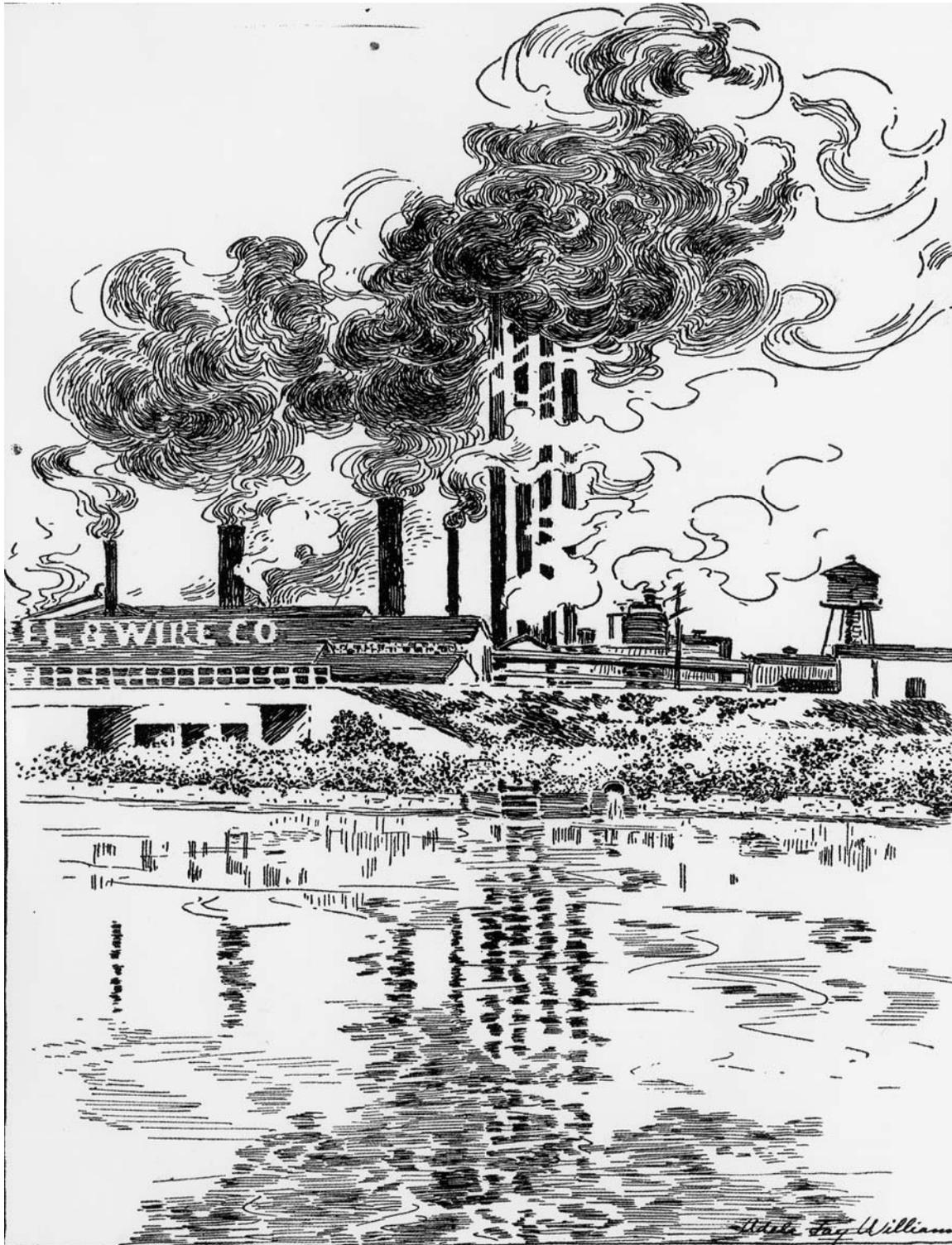
***Sparks, Esther: A Biographical Dictionary of Painters and Sculptors in Illinois 1808-1945: A dissertation for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Fine Arts, Northwestern University, 1972.**

L1.

A drawing in ink and wash of the fire brick kilns at the General Refractory plant located formerly north of Joliet in Crest Hill between Highway [Route] 53 and the river.



L2. A view of the steel mill or wire mill that was formerly located on the Illinois and Michigan Canal as seen from across the river. Steel production at this site started in the late 1860s and still continues though much is diminished.



L3. View of Joliet downtown looking east. Although St. Mary's Church dominates the picture, the Rialto Square Theatre can also be seen. This is an ink drawing.



L4. "Highland Park with Red Mill in the Distance", an ink drawing of the dam across Hickory Creek in the present Pilcher Park.



De Witt S. Rawson

This photographer operated in Peru, Illinois from 1857 to 1867. Sometime between 1867 and 1868, he left Peru for parts unknown. He apparently developed a number of photographic processes. He used the wet plate process, which required immediate development. In the photograph of the Illinois Central Bridge, the wagon used in this process can be seen on the road next to the canal. He trained W. E. Bowman, an early photographer from Ottawa [Illinois], and for a short while was in partnership with Bowman. The two photographs exhibited here were stereographs which when put in a stereopticon give the illusion of three dimensions. They were part of a series he called "The Valley of the Illinois" from Rawson's Stereoscopic Publishing House of Western Scenery in Peru. These two photographs are among the earliest of the canal. They were made between 1864 and 1867. Rawson's use of human figures in his landscapes is certainly distinctive. In addition, he is one of the earliest landscape photographers in Illinois. All in all a very significant early photographer, about whom little is known except during his 10 years in Peru. [Rawson photographs are from the Library of Congress.]

L.5 "Illinois Central R. R. Bridge at La Salle, is one of the longest structures of its kind in the world. The Illinois and Michigan Canal Aqueduct and the Rock Island Bridge over the Little Vermillion River are also included in this view." This is Rawson's title for this scenic view. Rawson is seated on the rocky promontory. His wagon for developing is in the lower center of the picture along with some other people. This is the same area as the cross section of the Canal done by Mathewson (Item M6) the coal mine is just beyond the Illinois Central Bridge.



L6. This view is of Split Rock, the tunnel of the Rock Island Railroad and the Illinois and Michigan Canal. When the Canal was built this escarpment had to be split in two. The canal was completed in 1848, and in 1853 the Rock Island and Pacific Railroad was built along the canal, and here it built the tunnel indicated in the photograph. The tunnel is no longer used by the railroad.



Corabelle Rugger Young
1865 – 1935

Corabelle Young and her sister Jennie Rugger were both painters. They were born in Galesburg, Illinois. Corabelle Young attended Knox College where she was one of the first women students. Both sisters shared a studio in Petoskey, Michigan, where they were able to paint their favorite subject, water scenes. This is [picture of the Des Plaines River] is one painting of only two by Mrs. Young that survived. This painting, which was done about 1910 is of Joliet, [Illinois] where the I. and M. Canal and the Des Plaines River were joined. The view faces west and the church steeple is possibly St. Mary's Nativity Church, located on Broadway Street. The sunken canal boat is a canal grain boat. Whether it was abandoned, or merely sunk to keep it watertight until needed is difficult to say. When this picture was painted, commercial traffic was practically non-existent, but there were pleasure boats, as this watercolor indicates.

L7



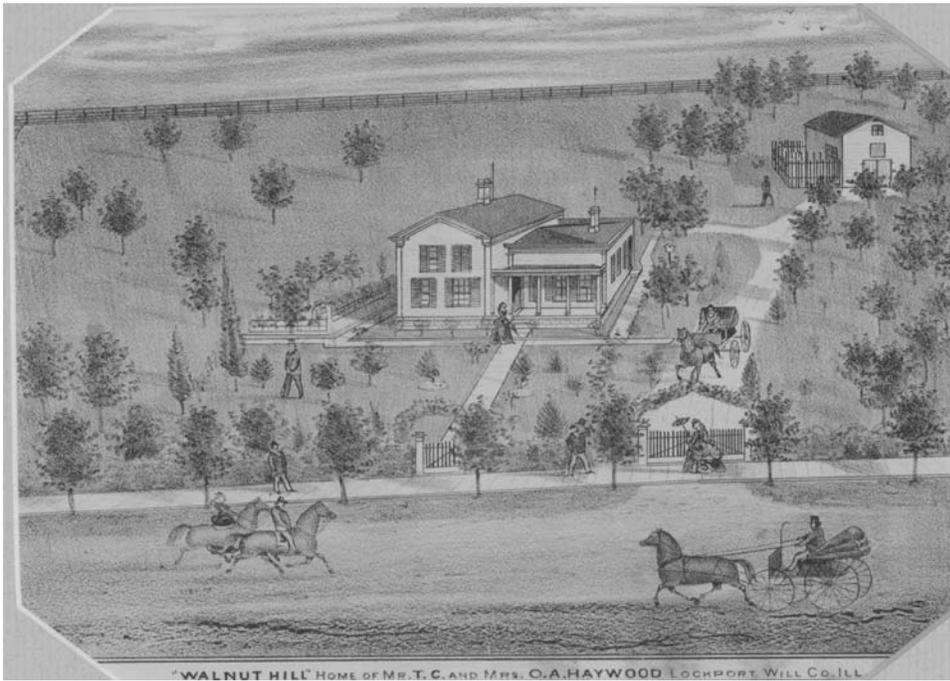
WILL COUNTY 1873 ATLAS

These three prints are from the *Combination Atlas of Will County* published by Thompson Bros. & Burr of Elgin, Illinois in 1873. These county atlases with a multitude of lithographs were a common publication in the Midwest in the 1870s and 1880s. Farmers, businessmen and home owners would pay to have their buildings depicted in a favorable light. The main purpose of the book was to publish the land maps of each township, and plats of each town. The subscribers offset the price of these expensive multi-colored maps by their payment that entitled them to have their properties depicted. The prints were evidently lithographed from photographs by Charles Shaber & Co. Lithographic Company of Chicago. Very few of these prints are initialed, and they were mainly large ones of public facilities like the court house and the State Penitentiary in Joliet. The stylized cows, horses, men and women were applied with liberal freedom to every scene, but structures and buildings were usually rendered quite accurately. They give a view of the times based more on hope than reality. Currier and Ives while sentimentalizing the rural scene, tried to be more realistic than these atlases.

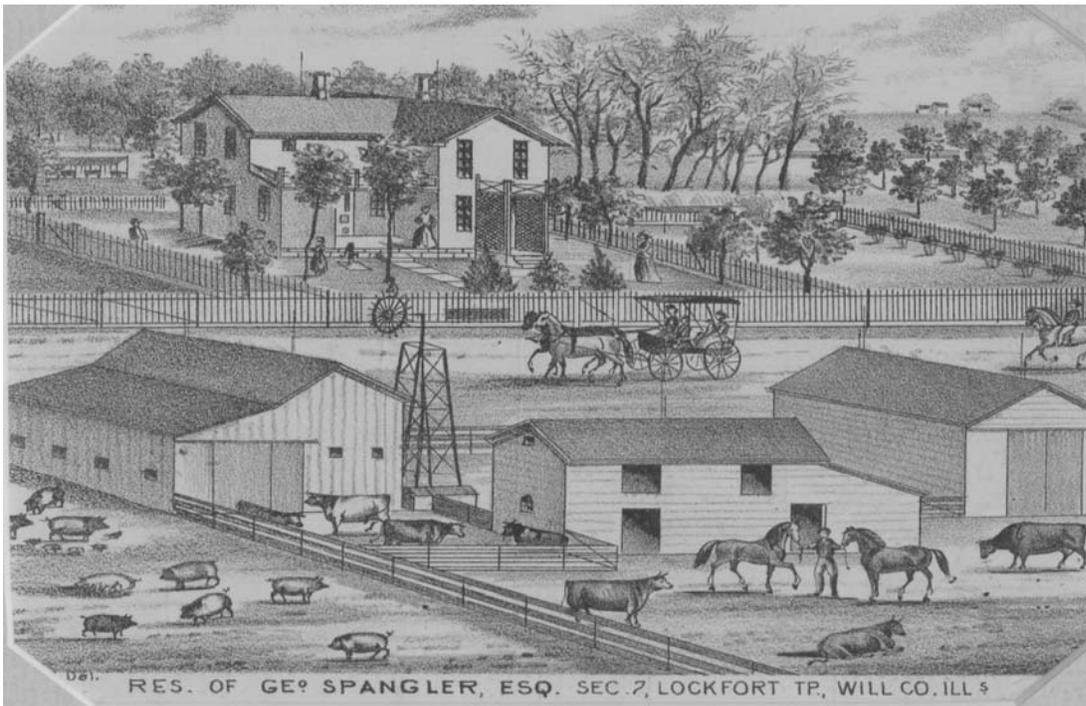
L8. J. J. Fowse Farm



L9. Walnut Hill Home



L10. George Spangler Farm



Henry Inman 1801 – 1846

Mount Joliet was sketched by Henry Inman and engraved by Peter Maverick. It was published in Henry Schoolcraft's book on his travels in the Mississippi watershed. Inman apparently accompanied Schoolcraft on the 1824 expedition and also sketched Starved Rock which was also engraved for Schoolcraft's book.

Mount Joliet was the only landmark named after the first white explorer in the area. It appeared on maps of the 17th century. It was also featured in maps made by Americans in the late 18th century which called it "Mount Juliet". The town of Joliet (originally called Juliet) was named after this well known feature. Schoolcraft says of this vanished landmark... "The view from the eminence is charming and diversified. The forests are all sufficiently near to serve as a relief to the prairies. Clumps of oaks are scattered over the country. The Lake Joliet (actually a widening of the Des Plaines River) about 15 miles long and about a quarter of a mile wide lies in front. There is perhaps not a more noble and picturesque spot for a private mansion in all America. Few persons will choose to pass it without feeling a conviction that it is a work of human hands. (It was actually a glacial creation.)" p. 331 Schoolcraft, Henry R.: *Travels in the Central Portion of the Mississippi Valley*, New York 1825.

In the 19th century Mount Joliet was mined for clay to make drainage tile. All that remains is an historical marker. The print in this exhibit is from a later work, which wrongly identifies the river as the Des Moines instead of the Des Plaines.

L11



Mount Joliet, near the Des Moines River.

**Jonathan Stickney
McDonald
1829 – 1916**

[Jonathan] McDonald was born in Liverpool, New York and came to Will County in 1837. He taught school for a while in Will County, and then in 1849 he joined the gold rush to California and returned with some wealth. He opened a bank in Lockport which failed in 1858-59. With the coming of the Civil War he recruited a volunteer company from Lockport and was badly wounded in the Battle of Stone River.

After returning from the war he worked as a cashier for a railroad company in Chicago from 1865 to 1870. It was during this period that he began painting. Only ten oil paintings and a small selection of drawings and botanical sketches have been located. While this is a small number they depict a wide range of subject matter, including the landscapes in this exhibit, group and single portraits and a curious metaphysical diagram.

McDonald after 1870 started and ran a regional newspaper chain in Lockport until 1891. He also wrote a number of philosophical works in 1870, one entitled *Vital Philosophy: A Survey of Substance and an Exposition of Natural Religion*. He was very interested in Neo-Platonism of Hermes Trismegisties and in 1890, 1891, and 1893 he wrote three volumes entitled *Hermetic Philosophy* under his journalistic pseudonym “Styx”. The two oil landscapes in this exhibit are of Lockport, both looking west across Des Plaines Valley from Lockport. Although they could be called folk art they indicate a degree of training, as well as keen observation. He accurately depicts the buildings of Lockport and the surrounding landscape as it was about 1880. The paintings also have a strange intangible quality that makes them very interesting. Both L12 and L13 can be seen in the Canal and Regional History Special Collection at Lewis University. L12 is also available for viewing at <http://imcanal.lewisu.edu>

L12. A view of Lockport’s main street, probably from McDonald’s office on State Street that includes an awkwardly rendered horse, the Norton Warehouse, and a view of the valley west of the Des Plaines River.

L13. View from a vantage point a few blocks south of L16, again looking west across the river to the western valley rim. What objects are in the foreground is difficult to say. They serve to make the paintings very intriguing.

**John Culik
1926 –**

John Culik was born in Joliet and still resides there. He received his art education at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. His productive career has been principally dedicated to print making. These have covered a wide range of subjects, some of the most significant have been views of Joliet streets, the waterway and farms in the Joliet area. Besides the general landscapes, such as in this exhibit, he has done prints of leaves, trees and many other natural objects. His mastery of a wide range of the print media is not as well indicated by this selection of engravings. These engravings indicate his ability in handling the landscape in a manner reminiscent of Rembrandt, but of course Culick has an excellent eye for those unique features of Illinois landscape, particularly his native city Joliet. [Culik drawings are not reproduced here due to potential copyright restrictions. The drawings can be seen at the Canal and Regional History Special Collection at Lewis University.]

L14. Drawing of the Joliet Waterway: This drawing was made in the early 1960s as the Old Will County Court House can be seen.

L15. “View of Joliet” (1970). This engraving was drawn on the plate on the site.

L16. “The Old Homestead” (1973).

L17. “Mitchell’s Place” (1973). This print and #16 above “The Old Homestead (1973) stand in marked contrast to the idyllic scenes depicted in the lithographs from the 1873 Will County Atlas, however they are a more true and more artistic picture.

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