

News and historical notes from Mainstreet Lockport

John Lamb

Mainstreet Lockport hopes that most of you enjoyed yourself at the "Experience Old Lockport" last weekend. We hope to make this an annual affair.

Now we look forward to the 8th annual running of the Duck Derby June 22 on the Illinois and Michigan Canal. This is the same site that in the days of yore canal boats used to race down the canal to be first to get locked through at the Division Street lock.

Now ducks paddle around and egrets wade in, but at 2 p.m. on the 22nd, yellow duckies will roar down this historic waterway racing for the \$1,000 prize. That winning ducky could be yours for just \$5.00 a ticket. Derby Day tickets are available at the Mainstreet office or at the Public Landing from Tim and from Mainstreet members. Just call 834-0700!

And up ahead is the annual 1836 event, commemorating Lockport's birth, which will be in September. This event will have entertainment, a silent auction and a general good time. The exact date hasn't been set, but it is coming.

Another coming attraction is the Norton Building fall concert series. These tickets are quickly sold out, so get on the mailing list now, otherwise you may be disappointed. Call Tallgrass Restaurant 838-5566. The three fall concerts will feature a cellist, a string quartet and a piano trio.

Sounds good now, but just wait until you hear them sounds!

[some lines are missing]

... Harry walker and his wife, Mary Walker, in 1939-1941. This indicates that historic landmark designation is not based upon age, but the significance of the building. A public hearing on this proposal will be held at 7:30 p.m., June 18th in Central Square.

As already mentioned, Lockport, the town, started in 1836. Settlers had arrived by 1830, and the Indians were forced by Federal law to depart by 1834.

When it became apparent that construction on a canal would begin, naturally those early settlers sought to take advantage of this and get a town started, this being such a beautiful spot.

This advertisement, placed in the Chicago Democrat on July 20, 1836, by Armstead Runyon would stampede people into investing in the future town of Lockport.

"On Wednesday the third day of August next will be offered for sale 125 lots in the town of Lockport. Lockport is handsomely situated on the east half of the Des Plaines River, immediately on the Illinois and Michigan Canal half a mile above the first lock at the head of the basin.

"The canal is under contract and the work now commenced at this town. This town is

surrounded by many local advantages.

"The road from Chicago down the line of the canal passes through it to the Yankee Settlement one mile to the east; Plainfield is 8 miles west; Naperville 10 miles to the northwest; it is 6 miles north of Juliet (Joliet now) and 31 from Chicago.

"The town is handsomely laid out partly on the Bluff and partly on the flat down to the canal. It will be watered by many valuable never-failing Springs of cold water. The town is surrounded with valuable stone quarries, and on the bluff the most extensive grove of good timber that lies anywhere on the canal. The many local advantages that Lockport has must render it soon a place of great importance.

"The proprietor thinks the best recommendation this town can have is to sell on the ground.

"Sale to commence at ten o'clock a.m. Terms of sale will be made known on the day of the sale, which will be liberal.

"A Public House will be opened before the day of the sale."

Armstead Runyon was the first settler in Lockport. The Public House was the Horace Morse establishment. The site sounds absolutely wonderful, and maybe it was. The story will be continued in future columns.