21. Choosing a Route

Now it is time to try to decide what route Heinrich and Maria would likely have taken in a covered wagon from Cincinnati to Iowa. We will never know for sure what routes they took, but with all the information we are gathering, we can make educated guesses. Today we usually try to take the shortest and most direct route between two places. To get from Cincinnati, Ohio, to Davenport, Iowa, this would correspond to today's highway 74. If they chose this route, they would probably have been able to use some old Indian trails that had become trader's paths, military roads, then migration routes for pioneers, and then finally roads. Ohio, Indiana and Illinois had many old Indian paths, as we have seen. However, as we have also decided, Heinrich and Maria would probably have wanted to travel in some comfort because of their three small children. So rather than choose the shortest and most direct route, I think we need to try to choose the route that would provide them with the greatest safety and comfort. So we will need to look at more routes. We are interested first in the ones that led out of Cincinnati and went north and west. There are many. As we have seen in our discussions of old Indian trails, there is the possibility that they would have gone north to Richmond, Indiana, and then west to Indianapolis instead of taking the diagonal highway 74. This would have added 35 miles to their trip but may have made the trip much easier because from Richmond to Indianapolis, a distance of 75 miles, they would have traveled the National Road, which was by then well-traveled, with bridges and amenities along the way. They might even have decided they wanted to take the National Road from north of Dayton, which would have made the trip longer still but given them an additional 70 miles of travel on the National Road.

There were a great number of Indian trails leading into and out of Cincinnati. Of these there are four that seem likeliest candidates. The first trail/road leads to Miami Town and then on to Harrison, the town that straddles the state border, half in Ohio and half in Indiana. This route is today's highway 74. At Harrison Heinrich and Maria could have chosen to stay on the trails that were the precursors of Highway 74 and traveled on to Indianapolis. This would be the shortest route in miles, about 110 miles from Cincinnati to Indianapolis. The trails, however, were probably more rugged and primitive. I think they may have turned north at Harrison and followed the Whitewater River trail to Liberty, Indiana, and then on to Richmond. If they took this trail, they could have availed themselves of the hospitality of the Quaker settlers in the Whitewater Valley. The second likely possibility also leads to Richmond but follows today's Highway 27 directly to Liberty and then north to Richmond. This route would be about 145 miles to Indianapolis. The third route travels to Hamilton, Ohio on today's highway 127, then veers northwest as highway 177, which then turns into Indiana 227 at the border north of Liberty, and which would eventually connect to the Indian trail that continued up the Whitewater River Valley to Richmond. This route would again be about 145 miles to Indianapolis. The fourth route would travel up the famous Old Miami Trail or Bullskin Road north to just beyond Dayton, Ohio, where it would connect with the National Road to go west to Richmond and Indianapolis. This would be the longest route, at approximately 173 miles from Cincinnati to Indianapolis, but it would probably be the most comfortable because the Old Miami Trail, the Bullskin Road, and the National Road were well-traveled.

Before we can choose the best route for them, I think we need to learn more about rivers and canals and how they could be crossed. Crossing rivers would be the major challenge of the journey, and compounding that challenge would be the proliferation of canals in the early 1800s. Getting farm or industrial products to distant markets drove this effort. At that time shipping was by far the best and cheapest way to send goods, but many of the rivers were navigable only at certain seasons or in certain geographical areas. Canals were seen as the answer, so in many areas Heinrich and Maria would have to cross canals as well as rivers. In some instances, this worked in their favor because as the canals diverted water from a river, the natural river flow was reduced, thereby making it possible to ford the river more easily. Then the trip planning focus would be on bridges that crossed the canals.

In Ohio they would have to cross the Great Miami River, and in Indiana and Illinois they would have many more rivers and creeks and small streams to cross including the Whitewater, Laughery, White, Wabash, and the great Illinois, as well as smaller rivers and creeks. In all they would have to cross about 17 rivers, not counting the smaller rivers and creeks. The Great Miami River had a canal, one of the major canals in Ohio at that time, as we see on the map above. The map on the left below shows the Miami Canal (white line) as it passes through Cincinnati and reaches the Ohio River. (*Cincinnati-transit.net*) We can see that the Miami Canal runs to the right of the riverbed and diverges as they both reach the Ohio. The map in the center and on the right below show the rivers of Indiana and Illinois.

The Great Miami River would be the first river they would have to cross on their journey west to New Vienna. The Great Miami River (also called the Miami River) (Shawnee: *Msimiyamithii*) is a tributary

of the Ohio River, approximately 160 miles long in southwestern Ohio and Indiana. It flows through Dayton, Piqua, Troy, Hamilton, and Sidney. The river is named for the Miami, an Algonquian-speaking Native American people who lived in the region during the early days of European settlement. These natives were forced to relocate to the west to escape European-American settlement pressure.

The region surrounding the Great Miami River is known as the Miami Valley. This term is used in the upper portions of the valley as a moniker for the economic-cultural region centered primarily on the Greater Dayton area. As the lower portions of the Miami Valley fall under the influence of Cincinnati and the Ohio River Valley, residents of the lower area do not identify with the Miami in the same way.

The main course of the Great Miami River rises from the outflow of Indian Lake in Logan County, then flows south and southwest past Piqua and Troy, Dayton, Miamisburg, Franklin, Middletown and Hamilton before reaching Cincinnati. It is joined by a number of smaller rivers on the way: Loramie Creek, Stillwater, Mad and Wolf Creek. Finally it is joined by the Whitewater River about 5 miles upstream from its mouth on the Ohio River just east of Ohio-Indiana state line. The border of Ohio and Indiana was based on where the confluence of the Ohio and Great Miami Rivers was in 1800. Unfortunately, the Greater Miami River was prone to extremely low water levels and to flooding.

Low water records for the Great Miami River are 0.12 feet on 8/2012, .22 feet on 11/2010 and .50 feet on 19/2007. At low tide the river is docile at 2.6 feet depth. We do not know what the depths of the Miami were in 1850, after the canal was built but before a century of silting occurred. The assumption we might make for our story is that Heinrich and Maria crossed the Miami Canal by bridge and then forded the Great Miami Riverbed, which may have been frozen because once its waters were diverted to the canal, its flow was reduced and more sluggish. Now let us talk about the canal itself.

Miami & Erie Canal Ohio was only 21 years old when the Ohio Legislature approved plans authorizing funding for an Ohio Canal system to be built. The year was 1825. This wasn't a spur of the moment decision on the legislature's part. In 1822 the legislature commissioned a study to test the feasibility survey to see if it would be possible to build canals throughout the state to connect to the major waterways namely the Ohio River and Lake Erie.
In 1820 there were estimated to be 580,000 in-state residents, and most of these were involved in agriculture. The problem with modern agriculture of the day was that farmers had more produce than they could use for themselves or sell to others living in the area. The best way to keep the family farm profitable was to sell the excess to places that didn't have so much agriculture. (From *touringohio.com)*

This photo shows the St. Louis of Dayton, a canal boat used to transport freight, as it travels the Miami and Erie Canal near Dayton. *Dayton Photos - The Miami and Erie Canal in the Miami Valley*.

The Miami and Erie Canal connected the Ohio River with Lake Erie and was built through the Great Miami watershed. The first portion of the canal, from Cincinnati to Middletown, was operational in 1828, and extended to Dayton in 1830. Water from the Great Miami fed into the canal. The canal served as the principal north-south route of transportation from Toledo to Cincinnati for western Ohio, driving prosperity for the state, until being supplanted in the 1850s by railroads.

This canal was important to the prosperity Heinrich and Maria found in Cincinnati. If they farmed there, which we think they did, they would have raised hogs and corn, and possibly wheat and tobacco, some of which would have been sent north on this canal. The canal trip from Cincinnati to Dayton took 24 hours. Let's look at a good discussion of how canals came into being in Ohio. They were driven, as is so often the case, by the needs of commerce. This article we will look at appeared in the Bicentennial Issue of the *Dayton Daily News*, Sun., July 4, 1976, and though it is long, it provides a reflective, rolling tableau of the period of history before and during the time Heinrich and Maria lived in Cincinnati. From this tableau we also learn, perhaps unexpectedly, that there was rapid progress with roads and bridges, both of which would have been important factors for Heinrich and Maria's covered wagon routes.

Miami River a highway for local products

Times when water was deeper, swifter were the best times for flatboating

The first group to arrive in Dayton came in what was called a "pirogue," a home-made boat that looked something like a canoe but was bigger. It was too heavy to be paddled like a canoe, so they used long poles and although they poled their boat up the river, against the current, they won the race over two other groups which came by land. When boats went down the river, it was much easier, for the water carried the boat along, and all the men had to do was guide the boat.

There were times when the water was deeper and ran swifter. This was the best time for any kind of boat, especially big flatboats which carried freight. Most flatboats started down the rivers in the spring when the rains came most often. When the waters rose, they could be started off along the streams which flowed into the Miami River.

The farmers in the Miami Valley soon had more corn than they needed for food. They fed this corn to pigs, and then the hogs were butchered. The meat was cured and packed in big barrels. Wheat was ground into flour, which could be shipped in barrels. Corn could be shelled for sale. There was another way to use corn. It was made into whiskey and put in barrels for sale. Animal skins or pelts were tanned and packed. These were the products which farmers had to exchange for money, so that they could buy things which they needed and wanted.

A group of farmers often went together to cut down trees and build a big flatboat. They would choose some of the younger men to take the flatboat down the Miami to the Ohio River. They might pole the boat the 18 miles up from the mouth of the Miami to Cincinnati and sell their load. Much of the time the market was better in New Orleans, so they headed the flatboat on down the Ohio and then down the Mississippi River to that important port city. There they sold their produce, for at New Orleans ships were loaded for Europe. To go to New Orleans by flatboat took eight to 10 weeks. There the flatboat was sold for its lumber, and the crew often walked back home to Dayton.

The first flatboat headed for New Orleans left Dayton in 1799. It was owned by Daniel Lowry. It was loaded with grain, pelts, and 500 venison hams.

In 1810 a line of keelboats was started. Keelboats were narrower than flatboats and could be poled upstream much easier. It took tough men, like Mike Fink, to head the crews. Two Dayton men ran a keelboat line, which carried goods from Cincinnati to Toledo.

Wagons or pack horses carried the goods at portage between the Miami, St. Mary's and Maumee Rivers. The keelboats operated for 10 years, and often many were tied up at Dayton waiting for high water. Flatboats continued to go south. A Daytonian noted that on one day nine flatboats left Dayton for New Orleans. In the spring of 1818 a record shows that 1,700 barrels of flour were shipped on flatboats to the southern port. The trade kept growing less each year after 1820. Each year more mills were built along the streams and rivers. This made it more difficult for the flatboats to go down them. Some farmers even put fish traps in the rivers. The day of the flatboat and keelboat slowly came to an end.

This happened as the roads became better. The big Conestoga wagons carried the farmer's produce to market at any time of the year. Cincinnati was growing and was a market for the produce which its merchants were soon shipping by steamboat down the Ohio and Mississippi River.

Rolling Wheels

At first two roads led up the valley. One followed the Great Miami River and the other followed an old Indian trail and the Little Miami River. These roads were so narrow that pack horses were used as the best way to transport goods. *(Note: these roads were the Old Miami Trail and the Bullskin Road that we have already discussed.)* Later the roads were widened to allow a wagon to make the trip. In the summer it was a dusty trip, and in the winter and spring the wheels cut deep into the thick mud. In some of the worst places, logs were laid crossways in the road to keep the wheels from sinking into the mud, which made for a rough ride. This was called a "corduroy" road because the way it looked reminded someone of corduroy cloth. With so much gravel and sand along the streams, this material was soon put on the roadways. In some places men were required to work on the roads a certain number of days a year.

If a person wished to travel from Dayton to Centerville, Miamisburg, Germantown or even Cincinnati, he might just walk. Horseback was a favorite way to travel. If a man did not have a

horse, but had money, he rented one at a livery stable. Dayton used to have many livery stables where horses and carriages were rented. Wealthy city people could afford to keep their own horses and carriages. In 1818 a weekly mail stagecoach started running between Dayton and Cincinnati. It carried passengers as well as mail. It had so many passengers that another coach was started. It left Cincinnati every Tuesday at five in the morning. The coach reached Hamilton by Tuesday evening, where it stopped overnight. Then up through Middletown, Franklin, Miamisburg to Dayton, which was reached Wednesday evening. The trip to Cincinnati began or Friday morning, with passengers arriving there Saturday evening. The fare was eight cents a mile, which included 14 pounds of baggage.

In 1820 John Crowder and Jacob Musgrove, two young black businessmen, bought the finest coach ever seen in Dayton. It was pulled by four horses and carried 12 passengers. The new coach provided the best and fastest trip to Cincinnati, and everyone wanted to ride in it. By 1827 stagecoaches went from Dayton to Columbus, where they made connections with a stage line to Lake Erie. This trip took four days. Soon 20 regular coaches arrived in Dayton each week from all directions.

The national government saw the need to build better roads for the people. It built the National Road. Dayton citizens tried to get it built so it would pass through the city, but it did not come that far south. The road went through Montgomery County up at Vandalia. Dayton was close to the big road, though, and this helped the city grow.

Ohio's government also started to build roads in 1836. The Great Miami Turnpike was built making a shorter route between Dayton and Cincinnati. This became the main stagecoach line, and beautiful and comfortable Concord coaches were used to make this trip. One such coach is in the wagon shed at Carillon Park, alongside a Conestoga wagon. By 1840 Daytonians traveled on 14 good roads in and out of the city.

Being situated near so many rivers and streams made a special problem for Dayton. The first bridge was built over the Mad River in 1817, and one over the Great Miami was opened in 1819. These first bridges were covered bridges. Roads and bridges were used by all who traveled. The rolling wheels brought people and goods into Dayton and took them out of Dayton. They furnished transportation, which made trade possible.

Canal Barges and Packets

The people of Montgomery County were sorry to see fewer and fewer boats on the Miami River. Some wondered if they shouldn't make the mills take out the dams and then widen the channel. One man even suggested, "Let's improve the Miami, and put steamboats on it between Dayton and Cincinnati." Goods shipped by wagon cost more and the wagons did not carry very big loads. Some Ohioans heard about New York Gov. DeWitt Clinton who was building a canal across New York State. If he could do that, they reasoned, why couldn't a canal be built connecting Dayton and Cincinnati with Lake Erie? In 1821 a group of county citizens met at a Dayton inn and raised money to make a survey of a route between the Mad River and the Ohio River. They found out such a canal could be built and supplied water from the Miami River. With locks on the canal, boats were able to go both ways.

The state decided to build two canals, one in the eastern part of the state, called the Ohio Canal and one in the western part, called the Miami Canal. In 1825 work was started at Middletown, and by 1829 boats were traveling between Dayton and Cincinnati. The canal soon was a busy water highway. While it had taken a flatboat a week or two to reach the Ohio River, it took only 24 hours to go from Dayton to Cincinnati by canal boat. Dayton began to build canal boats; the first one was called the Alpha. During one month in 1829 more than 70 boats arrived in and departed from Dayton.

The canal boats carried farm produce to Cincinnati. Wheat, corn, tobacco, anything the farmer wanted to sell, was delivered in Dayton in large wagons, which often blocked downtown streets as they waited to load their cargo. Some of the cargo was live pigs, chickens and livestock. The boats were towed along the canal by mules or horses. A line called a tow line, stretched between the canal boat and the animals pulling it along the towpath.

The canal boats not only took cargo out of Dayton, but brought it in. Merchants ordered goods in New York City. The goods were shipped across New York State on their canal, which was named the Erie Canal, then across Lake Erie to Cleveland, down the Ohio Canal to the Ohio River and up our canal. This was a distance of more than 1,100 miles. The trip took 20 days. Later the Miami Canal was connected to Lake Erie and became known as the Miami and Erie Canal. This shortened the distance. A Canal boat could carry as much as 80 tons of freight, about as much as a freight car on a railroad. The canal basin on Second St. was a very busy place.

People also traveled by canal boat. Some canal boats carried both freight and people, while many, called packets, were built just to carry people. In many months as many as 1,000 passengers arrived or departed from Dayton. Some of the boats had silk curtains at the windows, and a long table for good meals. Often dances were held on the deck to entertain the passengers. The best packet boats employed talented black musicians to play for the dance or to lead group singing. It was fun to travel on the canal boat.

Children had fun during the canal days. The boys like to swim in the canal. They liked to watch the canal boats go by, and sometimes when one went under the bridge, a boy would jump on and try to hitch a ride. Many of the boys got jobs riding the mules on the towpath. The canal was finally opened to Piqua in 1837 and it reached Toledo in 1845. By then, Dayton was thinking about the railroad.

The canal helped Dayton, Miamisburg and West Carrollton grow, just as it did the other towns along its banks. When the canal opened, Dayton had fewer than 3,000 people, and when canal days were ending it had more than 10,000 people.

Engine Whistles

"Why should we want a railroad. We don't need one. The canal boats go fast enough, and besides they don't make a lot of noise or dirt." That is what one man said at a meeting at City Hall in Dayton in 1846. Other men disagreed. They pointed out that railroads could carry goods four times as fast as the canal boats. One engine could pull several cars, and each car carried as much as a canal boat. It was easier to lay railroad tracks than build a canal, so one day every big town would be connected with others across the United States by the railroad. The men of Dayton agreed to try to get a railroad to the city.

In 1832 the state of Ohio approved the building of a railroad from the Mad River to Lake Erie, but it took many years to get the money to build it. Railroad building finally got under way in the 1840's and during this time railroads were built connecting Lake Erie and the Ohio River, Xenia and Springfield had railroads, but not Dayton.

In 1847 Dayton men provided money to build a railroad from Dayton to connect with the Mad River and Lake Erie Railroad at Springfield. In order to hurry up the work, it was decided to start laying track at Dayton. A work engine, the "Seneca," was taken apart at Xenia, which was on the Little Miami Railroad, and hauled by wagon to Dayton. The engine was set up on tracks at Webster St. to begin its work. The boys carried water from pumps in the neighborhood to fill the big boiler, which took 25 barrels of water. Then the engine was fired up, and before long steam formed. One of the boys pulled a cord and the first railroad engine whistle blew in Dayton. The boys thought they had done something to make the boiler explode and ran in all directions!

In a newspaper, the Dayton Daily Empire, dated Jan. 27, 1851, the following story appeared; "The first locomotive from Springfield to Dayton passed over the railroad connecting the two cities this morning." Two days later a big celebration was held when the first passenger came to Dayton on the railroad. Later the same year, in September, another locomotive came chugging into Dayton over the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad, which followed the valley of the Great Miami River. Within three years, four other railroads were built connecting Dayton with other places all over Ohio. Dayton had become a railroad center. The locomotives looked much different than the diesel engines which roll through Dayton today. At Carillon Park there is the old "grasshopper" engine, as well as a model of the "Cincinnatian" the first locomotive on the C.H. and D. Railroad.

People could now go down to Cincinnati in three hours, while the packet boat had taken 24 hours. Soon everyone was traveling by the "cars" as they were called, and freight was being shipped on the railroad. After 1856 the canal was not used enough to pay to keep it up. It was taken over by a private company, which lost money, and closed it in 1877. However, a few boats continued to use it until the early 1900's. Finally, it was filled up, and in Dayton a big highway was built over it called Patterson Blvd.

The smaller railroads became part of the bigger lines, which is called merging. Today Dayton has three large railroads – the Baltimore and Ohio, the Penn-Central and the Erie-Lackawanna. These are still very important to Dayton and carry most of the products made in Dayton to other places. They also bring in materials used in manufacturing. In 1869 tracks were laid on Third St. for a street railway. The coach was pulled by a horse and these were called horse cars. By 1887 electricity was used to run street railways. An electric railway, called a traction line or interurban, was built through Dayton to connect Cincinnati and Lake Erie. It was called the C&LE. The traction lines lost business when the automobiles became an important means of transportation. The only such car left in Dayton is in Carillon Park.

We could spend a good bit of time now learning about the early building of canals, Little Dear One, because the story is enlightening and interesting, but we won't. Building the early canals was a disjointed, convoluted effort involving legislative action, funding decisions, issuing of notes, surveys, appropriation of suitable land, decisions about bodies of water to be connected, design problems and delays with decisions about locks and dams to solve the sometimes large elevation differences between bodies of water to be connected, engineering challenges with unstable soils or clay that resulted in bank cave-ins or embankment collapse, decisions, decisions and more decisions about exact routes, how much and how many original river beds should be part of the canal, best canal widths and water depths, the constant writing of contracts and hiring of contractors, budget over-runs and mismanagement issues. Let's look at some basic highlights, as told in *Ohio and Erie Canal*, Wikipedia, and *webarchive.org*.

On February 4, 1825, the Ohio Legislature passed "An Act to provide for the Internal Improvement of the State of Ohio by Navigable Canals". The Canal Commission was authorized to borrow $400,000 during 1825, and not more than $600,000 per year thereafter. The notes issued were to be redeemable between 1850 and 1875. Laborers earned on average $5 a month and a daily ration of whiskey.

Construction was authorized for two canal systems in Ohio, along an eastern and a western route. Work on the western route or Miami Canal began in July of 1825.

On July 4, 1825, ground was broken for the canal at Licking Summit near Newark, Ohio.

Contracts were let for the following tasks: Grubbing and clearing, Mucking and ditching, Embankment and excavation, Locks and culverts, Puddling, and Protection.

Initially, contractors in general proved to be inexperienced and unreliable. It was common for one job to receive 50 bids, many of them local to where the work was being performed. The chosen contractor, having underbid the contract, often would abscond leaving his labor force unpaid and his contract unfulfilled. This problem was so bad that many laborers refused to perform canal work for fear of not being paid. As the bidding process was improved, and more reliable contractors engaged, the situation improved.

Workers were initially paid $0.30 per day and offered a jigger of whiskey. As work progressed, and where labor was in shortage, workers could make as much as $15 per month. At that time, cash money was scarce in Ohio, forcing much bartering. Working on the canal was appealing and attracted many farmers from their land.

On July 3, 1827 the first canal boat on the Ohio and Erie Canal left Akron, traveled through 41 locks and over 3 aqueducts along 37 miles of canal, to arrive at Cleveland on July 4. While the average speed of 3 mph may seem slow, canal boats could carry 10 tons of goods and were much more efficient than wagons over rutted trails.

During 1832, the Ohio and Erie Canal was completed, seven years after initial ground-breaking. The entire canal system was 308 miles long with 146 lift locks and a rise of 1,206 feet. In addition, there were five feeder canals that added 24.8 miles and 6 additional locks.

The Miami & Erie Canal was a development and joining of three canals, the Miami Canal begun in 1925 and running from Cincinnati to Dayton, the Miami Extension and the Wabash & Erie Canal. Renamed the Miami & Erie Canal in 1849, it had one summit, the Loramie Summit, also called the Loramie Plateau, which was 374 feet above Lake Erie and 516 feet above the Ohio River, a total lockage of 890 feet. From the Lake to the north end of the summit was 124 3/4 miles, the summit 24 miles and then 100 miles to the Ohio River, totaling approximately 249 miles. It had 19 aqueducts, 3 guard locks, 103 lift locks, 50 to the north of the summit, 53 to the south, all constructed at 90 feet X 15 feet. The system cost $6.7 million or $12,000 per mile.
Several feeders helped supply water to the canal. These were the Wabash & Erie (18 miles from the junction to the Indiana border), the Sidney Feeder (14 miles), Grand Reservoir Feeder (2 miles), Loramie Feeder (1/2 mile), Hamilton Side Cut (3/4 mile), Middletown Feeder (1/2 mile) and the Dayton Feeder (1/3 mile) totaling 36 miles with one guard lock, 4 lift locks with 28 feet of total lockage.

There is some dispute as to which of the two main Ohio canals saw the greater traffic. However, they both seem to have been very productive. It took 64 hours to make the full 249-mile trip. In later years the Miami Canal was slightly more productive than the Ohio & Erie Canal because the larger canal dimensions allowed steamboats to travel the canal.

A company proposed a system for towing the boats between Toledo and Cincinnati using electric locomotives. The "Electric Mule" experiments of the Miami & Erie Transportation Company was a disastrous failure. The company failed before the tracks were fully laid.

The third canal of the Miami and Erie triumvirate, the Wabash and Erie Canal, had its own unique set of problems because it was to straddle the two states of Ohio and Indiana.

Indiana: On March 2, 1827, by an act of the U.S. Congress, every alternate section of what would become the Wabash & Erie Canal was granted to the State of Indiana to help in the construction of a canal from the head of the Wabash River, at the mouth of the Tippecanoe River in Indiana to the foot of the Maummee Rapids in Ohio. This meant that a significant portion (250,000 acres) of the canal in Ohio was in fact owned by Indiana. Construction was to begin within 5 years and be finished within 20 years.
Officials from the two States met to resolve what could have become a major conflict and problem between the two States. In 1829-30 the two States ratified an agreement whereby the government lands within Ohio's borders were ceded to the State of Ohio and Ohio would build the canal from its northern terminus on Lake Erie to the Indiana State Line.
Groundbreaking on the Wabash & Erie took place at Fort Wayne, Indiana on February 22, 1832.

Ohio: The Wabash & Erie Canal of Indiana was 462 1/2 miles (87 1/2 miles on Ohio) and was the longest canal built in the United States.
Ohio was reluctant to build or complete their portion of the canal and managed to delay the canal construction as long as possible fearing the competition from Indiana. (From web.archive.org *Miami & Erie)*

Here is a wonderful old photo from the Piqua Historical Museum of passengers riding on the Miami Canal. Below left is the first Third Street Bridge over the Great Miami River in Dayton, built as a covered bridge about 1840 of piers made of wood covered with limestone. (Dayton Metro Library from *Daytondailynews.com)*
Heinrich and Maria would have traveled on this bridge if they took the Dayton route. The next photo is the Big Darby Canal Bridge built for the C&XXRR in 1854.

This photo on the left shows the Miami Canal as it goes through Piqua, Ohio, a small city that grew quickly once the canal came through, as many of the towns and cities along the canals did. Some of these cities, unfortunately, declined just as quickly once the canals went out of use.

The canals enjoyed a period of prosperity from the 1830s to the early 1860s, with maximum revenue between 1852 and 1855. During the 1840s, Ohio was the third most prosperous state in the country, owing much of that growth to the canal. The canal system reached its peak in revenue generation in 1855. At that time the Ohio canal system consisted of almost 1000 miles. It was at this time that railroads were becoming a cheaper and faster way of transporting goods across the country. Immediately after the Civil War, it became apparent that railroads would take the canal's business. The increased use of the rail system and later the highway system brought a slow death to the canal system.

We are not sure how many canals Heinrich and Maria would have to cross on their journey, but we can safely assume, I think, that they would choose a route where most of the canals would either have a bridge or would be frozen over, as many of them were in the winter. Then they could be walked across. Canals could be destroyed by floods, as eventually the Miami Canal was after Heinrich and Maria had already left Cincinnati. The next canal they had to cross, the Whitewater Canal, was destroyed by a flood while they were still in Cincinnati. It was built from 1836-1847 and ran 76 miles from Lawrenceburg, Indiana on the Ohio River to Hagerstown, Indiana, following the Whitewater River valley. It took a long time to build because it had a steep grade that required 56 locks and 7 dams. Interestingly, the canal was built by Ohio interests from Cincinnati. Construction was temporarily halted in 1842 because of bankruptcy. The section near Harrison was completed in 1843. In 1847 the Whitewater Valley flooded and many sections of the canal were washed out. The section between Harrison and Lawrenceburg was never rebuilt. However, as we will see, there was an old bridge across the Whitewater River itself that Heinrich and Maria could have crossed. The location of bridges or river fording would have been critical for planning the trip, and we are certain of only some of them. In Ohio there were bridges at Harrison, Germantown, Dayton, and we believe at Miamitown. In Indiana there were bridges at Richmond and Indianapolis, and we believe at all other river crossings on the National Road. In Illinois there may have been a bridge at Peoria because of Fort Clark located there.

Because there were so many people traveling to Iowa in 1854, as we have learned, Heinrich and Maria would have paid close attention to the routes chosen by others, weighing the pros and cons of various routes, and always conscious that for covered wagon travel there was safety in numbers. Once they were on their way, they would also have met many new people and may have changed their planned itinerary in order to travel with some of them, or vice-versa. We don't know how much of the information we are gathering was available to Heinrich as he planned their route, but by 1854 there would have been much more information available than the early pioneers had available, gleaned from letters, guidebooks, and other travelers along the way or who had made the trip.

Although we cannot know exactly the route Heinrich and Maria traveled from Cincinnati to New Vienna, Little Dear One, because the reality is that there were many possible routes, and they changed from season to season and year to year as new roads and bridges were built and new paths opened up, nevertheless, you and I have completed an amazing treasure hunt now and have sifted through an enormous amount of interesting information that will give us clues about the most likely routes for the time period we believe they traveled, early spring of 1854. Let's recap these clues:

- Heinrich and Maria would be traveling with three small children, including an infant.
- They would travel between November 28, 1853, and June 1854.
- They would try to avoid dangerous river currents and flooding from spring snow melt.
- They had relatives in New Vienna who would have prepared a place for them to stay, including possibly construction of a house on a farm, with an agreement for purchase of that farm.
- They would take only the bare necessities for the trip itself, keeping the wagon light for swifter and easier travel.
- They would have sufficient money to make the trip in as much comfort as possible.
- Roads and lodging choices were improving greatly year by year at that time.
- They would stay in lodgings whenever it was available, meaning that their covered wagon was usually used as a vehicle to travel in, not as a temporary home.
- They would want to travel with other people and on well-traveled roads for safety.

There were many possible ways to travel from Cincinnati to New Vienna in 1854 and many different routes that could be taken, but we have narrowed the choices significantly, I think. First, we are quite certain they traveled by covered wagon. Second, we can quite comfortably narrow the covered wagon route choices to four main ones, three crossing the river at Davenport, Iowa and traveling 90 miles further to New Vienna, and one crossing the river at Dubuque, Iowa and traveling 30 miles further to New Vienna. Any of these ways could of course have crossed the Mississippi River at other places, like Burlington or Fulton, but given the information we have been able to gather, Dubuque would have been the preferred crossing for the Oregon Trail, and Davenport or Burlington for the other three routes. The latter three routes could, however, have gone north at Indianapolis to Gary, Indiana, and connected to the Oregon Trail, circling under Chicago and finishing the journey west on the Oregon Trail to Dubuque. Those three routes could also have gone due north from Bloomington, Illinois taking the old Indian trails to connect with the Oregon Trail at Rockford, then going west to Dubuque.

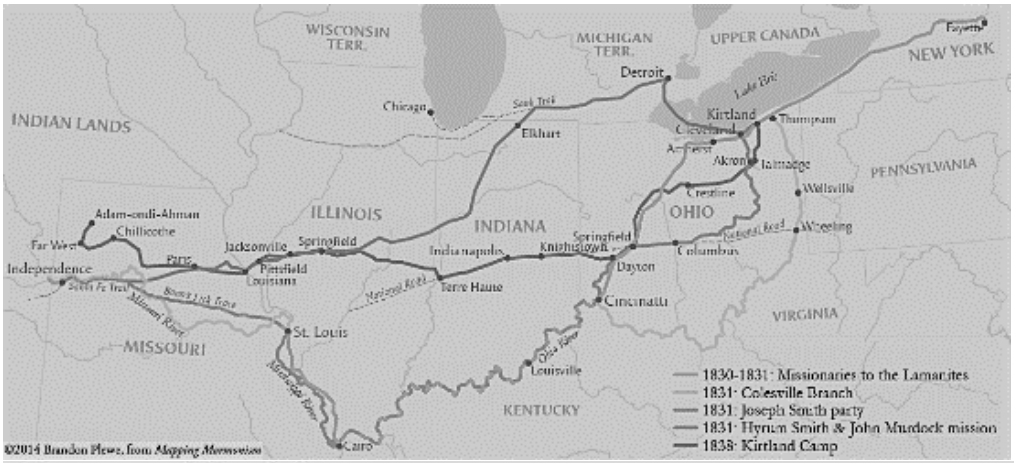
So now we will imagine we are Heinrich. He has read all the letters from the Lammers brothers, talked to as many people as possible who had relatives and friends who made the trip, read all the guidebooks and maps available, studied the weather patterns for the different routes, tried to identify routes where friendly German-speaking people would provide a night's lodging or where there were inns and hotels available, tried to learn about the building of new roads and bridges on the different routes, and probably prayed for guidance. And here are the four routes he, and we, will choose from:

1. Travel due north from Cincinnati to Toledo to connect with the Oregon Trail and take that to Dubuque Iowa, about 605 miles plus 30 miles to New Vienna = 635 total miles.
2. Travel from Cincinnati to Davenport Iowa on highway 74, going through Indianapolis, Indiana, about 422 miles plus 90 miles from Davenport to New Vienna = 512 miles total.
3. Travel to Harrison, Indiana, travel north through the Whitewater River Valley to Richmond, Indiana, travel on the National Road from Richmond to Indianapolis, then proceed on highway 74 from Indianapolis to Davenport, 450 miles plus 90 miles to New Vienna = 540 miles total.
4. Travel up the Miami River Valley from Cincinnati to Dayton, connect to the National Road and take that to Indianapolis, then connect with highway74 to Davenport, 473 miles plus 90 miles to New Vienna = 563 miles total.

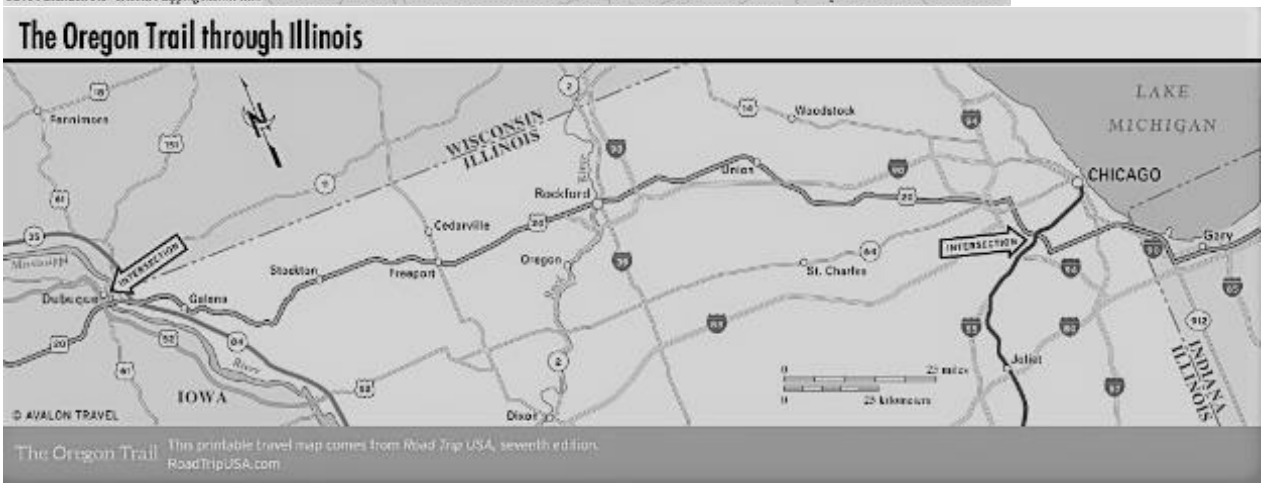
Now let's look at each of the main routes one at a time, starting with the Oregon Trail route, which we have talked about only in fleeting references to parts of it. The usual thinking about this trail is that it is one specific and long trail going from east to west across the country. That is not exactly true. Officially, according to an act of Congress, it begins in Independence, Missouri, and ends in Oregon City, Oregon. To the pioneers and settlers, though, the Oregon Trail was simply a way to get from their old homes in the East to their new homes in the West. All the pioneer trails, like the California, Mormon, Oregon, and all the old trails we have been talking about, were usually combinations of various trails. They changed to suit needs and conditions; they ran together sometimes; they separated and ran together again; they crossed each other, sometimes multiple times. Today our system of roads is very specific, with each road labeled independently, usually. But the Oregon Trail was actually a network of trails, a number of different trails being used to travel in the same general direction. Travelers jumped on the main trunk of the Trail, or jumped off it, took shortcuts or new paths they thought would be better, and rejoined the main trunk of the Trail as they chose. The Oregon Trail is thought to have **started** in 1836, but the main traffic flow on that trail didn't actually start until 1843 and ended about 1869 with the advent of the railroads. By 1854 the main trunk would have been traveled so heavily that it had become more of a real road, not just a trail through the wilderness. It was, then, a road Heinrich and Maria could have chosen to use. They could have taken the Old Miami Trail from Cincinnati to Dayton, then continued north on that trail (75 today) to Detroit, leaving the Miami Trail around Toledo, Ohio to join the Oregon Trail which then crossed northern Indiana (80/90 highway today), skirted under Lake Michigan, and then continued west

across the north of Illinois (highways 90 and 20 today) to Dubuque, Iowa, for the crossing of the Mississippi River. Some of the Mormons followed part of this trail.

The first map here shows the major trails in use in the United States at that time. The Oregon Trail is the heavy line running from the east and under Lake Michigan, near Chicago. The second map shows the major eastern Mormon trails. Most of these trails used portions of various old Indian trails like the important Sauk Trail.



The third map below shows a portion of the Oregon Trail as it crosses Illinois and ends in Dubuque.



Chicago possessed a mail route running south to Danville in 1832, (today's highway 41) and one west to Dixon on the old Sauk Trail in 1834 (today's highway 88). Ottawa and St. Charles were thus connected as early as 1830, and Galena was reached via the Dixon route in 1834. Heinrich and

Maria could have used either of these routes, by using the Oregon Trail via the mail route from Chicago to Galena and Dubuque or the Sauk Trail going down to Davenport. They could also have used the mail route to Galena by going north on the Danville mail route (highway 41) from highway 74. The Sauk Trail was originally a Native American trail running through what are present-day Illinois, Indiana and Michigan. From west to east, the trail ran from Rock Island on the Mississippi River to the Illinois River near modern Peru then along the north bank of that river to Joliet, and on to Valparaiso, Indiana. Then it ran northeasterly to La Porte and into southern Michigan running through Niles, Sturgis, Ypsilanti, and ending at the Detroit River near Detroit. This roughly follows highway 80 from Davenport to Joliet, Illinois, then to Valparaiso, connecting there to highway 2 and going north to Michigan. The northern mail route through Galena would have been interesting because while Galena is a small city of about 3000 people today, in 1854 it was a bustling "metropolis."

If ever there's a place where you can truly step back in time, **Galena** is it. Pass through the floodgates that protect the town from the namesake river (and the US-20 highway), and it's like entering Brigadoon. Spawned by Wisconsin's mid-19th-century lead-mining rush, Galena became the social and cultural capital of the Upper Mississippi basin. In the 1840s, while Chicago was still a mean collection of tents in a swamp around Fort Dearborn, and the Twin Cities were but a trading post in the woods around Fort Snelling, Galena was producing upward of 75 percent of the world's lead, and the town was filled with bankers, merchants, and speculators who built mansions, hotels, and emporiums stuffed with fine goods and furnishings from around the world. This part of the Driftless Region saw some of the greatest wealth and commerce of the upper Mississippi, with Galena alone higher in population—some 15,000 lived here during the Civil War—than the entire Minnesota Territory. (From *roadtripusa.com)*

We do not know if Heinrich and Maria would have been curious to see this city, but I believe it would not have been an important factor in their route decisions because they had their future mapped out as farmers in New Vienna, Iowa. So despite some of the appealing aspects of the Oregon Trail route, we will not spend more time on this route because I do not think Heinrich and Maria went this way. It was the longest route and the most northern one, with more prospects for bad winter weather and uncertain lodging. In addition, they would have to cross the Mississippi River at Dubuque unless they veered off the Oregon Trail and went south on the Sauk Trail to Davenport, losing more time. As we have seen, Davenport or Burlington seemed to be heavily-used crossings. Stories of the Oregon Trail indicate that travel on that Trail usually started in May, so there were probably fewer travelers on the Trail in the months Heinrich and Maria traveled. Their preference was for more travelers, not less, and I think Heinrich would have tried to keep their trip as safe, simple and easy as possible.

Let's move on to the second route option, following highway 74. This route would go through Miamitown, Ohio, to Harrison, Indiana, northwest to Indianapolis, Indiana, on to Peoria, Illinois, and angle north and then west to Davenport, Iowa. The first part of this route would probably have been a relatively easy road to travel because there was a toll road from Cincinnati to Harrison, Indiana (74/52 today). Miamitown, about 17 miles west of Cincinnati, was founded in 1816 on the banks of the Great Miami River, and the Miami Canal passed nearby. Because this route was a toll road, there was probably a bridge at Miamitown crossing the Miami Canal. I think we can safely surmise that Heinrich and Maria probably knew people who lived in this area, with whom they

could spend the night. This first day of travel would be a long one, but the road was good and they would have made good time. In the morning they would cross the canal bridge and ford the iced-over Great Miami River, which was at low water level because its water had been diverted to the canal. Then they would continue west on today's highway 74 to Harrison, 8 to 10 miles from Miami Town, where they would find lodging options and a bridge over the Whitewater River.

The city of Harrison, founded in 1837, is partly in Ohio and partly in Indiana. Eastern Harrison, on the east side of the Whitewater River, was originally a military outpost built in 1810 by General William Henry Harrison, who became a decorated general and state legislator and then the ninth president of the United States. Settlers at West Harrison found numerous Indian mounds, so we know the area was an important location for the Native Americans. The town was one of the few stops on the Whitewater River Canal. An interesting historical note is that on July 13, 1863, Morgan's Raiders, a Confederate cavalry force, invaded Harrison. They passed through the village, taking fresh horses and burning the bridge over the Whitewater River near the southwest part of the city. There is an historic lodging house in Harrison that Heinrich and Maria could have used on their second day on the road.

The Eighteen Mile House near West Harrison, Ohio was built as a tavern between 1800 and 1815. Constructed of brick, the two-and-one-half-story house is covered by a tin roof. Among its most distinctive elements are the gables on the ends, the interior chimneys that rise from above these gables, and a two-story porch on the western front. It was originally erected near a gate on the toll road between Cincinnati and Brookville, Indiana, in the Whitewater River Valley. Its name is derived from its location, approximately eighteen miles from Cincinnati in the city's early years. Besides serving its purpose as a tavern and thus an inn, the Eighteen Mile House operated as a post office in its first years of existence. According to local legend, Abraham Lincoln stayed in the house at least once.

From Harrison Heinrich and Maria would have continued on highway 74 to Lawrenceville, Indiana, about 13 miles. We do not have information about lodging there, but because Lawrenceville was the southern terminus of the Whitewater River Canal, there were probably lodging options even though the canal had been destroyed by then in the flood. On days 4 and 5 Heinrich and Maria would continue on toward Batesville, about 22 miles away. We do not have information about this part of the route. Road conditions and lodging choices may have been limited or more primitive. The situation would not be too much better once they reached Batesville because that town was just starting to develop. It was founded by George H. Dunn, owner of the John Callahan Trust Company. The company bought land and created new towns along rail lines that it began since Dunn was president of the Cincinnati and Indianapolis Railroad. Joshua Bates, who platted the town of Batesville, is thought to be the source of the name. On November 1, 1853, the first train from Cincinnati to Indianapolis passed through Batesville. Once the railway opened, Dunn and Bates constructed more buildings. George Sims laid out Batesville's first addition in 1858. The following year, German immigrant Henry Boehringer became Batesville's first major builder. A

three-story building with a basement on East Pearl Street (formerly known as Broadway Street) became known as the Boehringer Hall because of the dance floor on the third story. The Catholic congregation used the basement before they had built their church. All of this development would have happened after Heinrich and Maria passed through. From Batesville it was 16 miles to Greensburg, Indiana, which was founded in 1822 and opened a post office in 1823. The name originally was Greensburgh. We do not have more information about this town. It is 24 miles from Greensburgh to Shelbyville, which was founded in 1822 and had a railroad connecting it to Indianapolis by the late 1830s. Because of the railroad there was probably lodging available in Shelbyville, but there are no historical buildings designated as such in its Historical District. It is 30 miles from Shelbyville to Indianapolis and we have no information for this segment of the trip. Because we have so little information about the condition of the roads or the availability of lodging for the 90 miles between Harrison and Indianapolis, and because it seems that road and lodging conditions may have been more primitive for this segment of the trip, I think Heinrich would not have chosen Route 2. Routes 2, 3, and 4 all go through Indianapolis, we will discuss the Indianapolis to Davenport segment of the trip when we discuss Route 4.

To help us decide between Route 3 and Route 4 we should be aware of Ohio's advancement in building roads. It seems that Indiana was advanced in building railroads, but Ohio was advanced in building roads. Ohio's government started to build roads in 1836, and the roads were made of layers of broken stone like the Cumberland Road and National Road. These roads were typically wider, thirty feet on average. Usually they followed the course of the old roads. The Great Miami Turnpike was built making a shorter route between Dayton and Cincinnati. At first there was bitter opposition from the travelers on horseback. Traveling by stage in 1825 was still considerably more uncomfortable than on horseback. The next stage of roads, facilitated by the change of conveyance to stagecoach, was the macadamized road. When the Great Miami Turnpike was macadamized, it became the main stagecoach line, and beautiful and comfortable Concord coaches were used to carry passengers on this trip. By 1840 Daytonians traveled on 14 good roads in and out of the city. Being situated near so many rivers and streams made a special problem for Dayton and it made bridge building a priority. The first bridge was built over the Mad River in 1817, and one over the Great Miami was opened in 1819. These first bridges were covered bridges. Because of Cincinnati's commercial importance, I think we are safe to say that Cincinnati also put a priority on building good roads and bridges.

For Route 3 we will propose that Heinrich and Maria traveled on the toll road to Harrison, as in Route 2, but then turned north and continued on that toll road through the Whitewater River Valley to Liberty, Indiana and then on to Richmond, where they joined the National Road. If they took this route, they probably had lodging options on the road itself or with the Quaker settlers in the Whitewater Valley. It is 18 miles from Harrison to Brookville, and there is a historic Old Brick Meeting House in Brookville, built in 1811. If no lodging was available with the Quakers, Heinrich and Maria could have stayed at the Valley House Hotel built in 1852 and known for its excellent accommodations and fine cuisine. They could also have stayed at Ye Olde Shack which was originally a log cabin barroom known as the Canal House until it became a rooming and boarding house. This establishment once boasted the largest outhouse in town – a nine-holer, on the north side of the building. The present building was constructed around the cabin with a livery stable to the west. It is 16 miles from Brookville to Liberty, where there was probably accommodation because of the confluence of roads there. From Liberty to Richmond it is 14 miles and we can be

sure of good roads and accommodations as Heinrich and Maria joined the National Road. Let's look briefly at the bustling city of Richmond.

Richmond was founded by North Carolina Quakers who settled along the Whitewater River in 1806. The town quickly capitalized on its location as a trading and transportation center. The first permanent settlers on the present site of Richmond were John Smith and Jeremiah Cox, two North Carolina Quakers who arrived in 1806, who came by way of Quaker Settlements in Western Ohio. When Smith and Cox acquired land on the site of Richmond, the only part of Indiana Territory open for settlement was east of the old Greenville Treaty boundary. This line ran from Fort Recovery, Ohio, in a southwesterly direction to a point on the Ohio River, opposite the mouth of the Kentucky River. It was established in 1795 by General (Mad) Anthony Wayne in a treaty with the Indians at Greenville. It crosses U.S. 40 about two miles west of Richmond. All land west of this boundary belonged to the Indians when Smith and Cox settled on the eastern bluff of the East Fork of the Whitewater River in 1806. The Indians claimed the Whitewater Valley as their hunting and fishing ground "from time immemorial," in the words of Chief Turtle. In 1809 Governor Harrison signed a treaty with the Indians that opened for settlement a 12-mile strip, paralleling the Greenville boundary line. This was called the Twelve Mile Purchase. The line crosses U.S. 40 in western Cambridge City.

In the summer of 1807 the settlers built a road to Eaton, Ohio to give them a direct connection with the "Wayne Trace," the old military road built by General Wayne from Fort Washington (Cincinnati) to Greenville in his Indiana campaigns. Elkhorn settlers built a road between Elkhorn and Salisbury, the county seat. The only two roads entering Indianapolis in 1826 were the one from Madison, the other from Centerville. In 1817 settlers, living north of town, cut the "Quaker Trace" to Fort Wayne to give them a trade outlet there.

Richmond quickly established itself as a trading center. The National Road, now U.S. 40, was surveyed to Richmond in 1827 and a covered bridge across the Whitewater River at the foot of Main Street was completed in 1836. Other means of transportation were explored with the Whitewater River Canal and railroads. The first locomotive entered Richmond in March 1853. The first post office in Richmond was established in 1818, with mail arriving every two weeks, provided the carrier was not delayed by rain or snow. The first newspaper, the *Richmond Palladium,* was printed January 1, 1831. Two other weekly newspapers were started before 1831. The first bank in Richmond opened in December 1834, a branch of the State Bank of Indiana, and Earlham College was founded by the Society of Friends in 1847 as a liberal arts school. Heinrich and Maria would have enjoyed their time in Richmond and then joined the many travelers on the National Road for the 75-mile journey to Indianapolis, probably completing the journey comfortably in five days. There were a number of other routes they could have taken from Cincinnati to Richmond. One follows today's Highway 27 into Indiana just south of Liberty and then takes the toll road north to Richmond. This is believed to be the route followed by some of the Brethren who were displaced from their lands near Obannon along the Bullskin Road. Another travels to Hamilton on today's highway 127, then continues north to Eaton to connect to the National Road, or veers northwest as highway 177, which then turns into Indiana 227 at the border north of Liberty, then connects to the toll road that continues up the Whitewater River Valley to Richmond. It is possible that Heinrich and Maria may have wanted to avoid stopping at Eaton because of the severe cholera epidemic there in 1849. Another route travels by way of highway 128 via the Old Miami Trail on the west side of the Miami River, going through Miamitown to Hamilton and then going northwest on 177 to Indiana and Richmond. There was an old ridge trail along the west side of the Great Miami River

where it crossed the river at Dunlap and came down to the Ohio River at about Anderson Ferry. The benefit of this route would be crossing the Great Miami River at Miamitown. We do not have information about bridges on the other alternate routes to Richmond.

There could be another alternate route going from Cincinnati to Richmond, but I don't think Heinrich and Maria took this one. We can mention it simply because it is historically interesting. They would have traveled to Miamitown, then traveled along the east side of the river by way of today's Hamilton Cleves Road to the Whitewater Shaker Settlement in the Whitewater Forest three miles west of Fernald and close to Harrison, and then continued north on the toll road to Richmond. This Shaker settlement was established in 1824, and Heinrich and Maria would have heard of this village because of an incident that happened there in 1844, the year before they arrived in Cincinnati. Despite severe early hardship, the small settlement slowly grew as new people joined them, William Miller and his followers being one small group who joined their ranks. Miller predicted the exact moment in April of 1844 when Christ's Second Coming would occur. People wound up their earthly affairs, dressed in ascension robes, and waited. Nothing happened. Miller set another date six months later, but that final judgment day passed, too. His disappointed followers, the Millerites or Second Adventists, were courted by the Shakers who convinced the Millerites that the Shakers had already experienced the Second Coming in a spiritual sense. With the conversion of the Millerites in 1846, the Whitewater village comprised 706 acres in Hamilton County and 190 acres in Butler County on which 200 believers in two families worked the large farm and engaged in a variety of industries including grist mill, sawmill, brewery, manufacture of broom corns, selling of garden seeds and raising apples, currents, grapes, strawberries and silkworms as well as farm-raised fish.

So Route 3 offers a number of interesting options for Heinrich and Maria and seems to offer better roads and more certain accommodations than Routes 1 and 2. Let us look at Route 4. The fourth route would travel up the famous Old Miami Trail or Bullskin Road north to just beyond Dayton, Ohio, where it would connect with the National Road to go west to Richmond and Indianapolis. This would be the longest route, at approximately 173 miles from Cincinnati to Indianapolis, but it might have offered the greatest comfort and security because the Old Miami Trail, the Bullskin Road, and the National Road were well-traveled. If Heinrich and Maria chose to go north to Dayton to connect with the National Road they would have taken some or parts of the old Miami Trail and Bullskin Road up through the Miami Valley, between the Great Miami River and the Little Miami River. The Old Miami Trail had a number of branches. One branch left Cincinnati and followed today's highway 42 to Sharonville, Mason, Lebanon, and Holes Creek east of Dayton and then continued slightly northeast to meet up with the National Road. Another branch followed highway 127 all the way to Eaton to connect with the National Road, going through Fairfield, Hamilton, New Miami, Seven Mile, Summerville, and Camden, a distance of about 60 miles. Another branch followed highway 127 to Hamilton, then veered east and followed highway 4 to Excello, Middletown, Germantown and Dayton before connecting with the National Road north of Dayton. I propose that Heinrich and Maria chose a combination of these trails to follow a route similar to today's highways 42 and 123. We will go into detail about this route, simply as an example of the kinds of factors that would have helped Heinrich choose their route. We will work from several observations and assumptions: Heinrich and Maria would like to travel on the most comfortable roads; they would make use of lodging along the way, whether inns, taverns, stage houses, hotels, or private residences; lodging would be plentiful on some of the roads; they would like to stay with German-speaking people when possible; they would have a light load and with decent roads and weather could travel 15 or more miles a day comfortably, using night lodging to take care of themselves and

their animals, repair or buy wagon wheels and provisions and plan the next day's journey, and staying over longer if bad weather was threatened. So here is an example of detailed planning for one route from Cincinnati to the National Road, showing the towns and villages along the way, distances between them, possible German-speaking people, and the existence of river fords and bridges. It seems the very earliest Obannon Church of the Brethren settlers in Goshen near Cincinnati were displaced from their Hamilton County homesteads (now Clermont and Warren) when the government gave these lands to the Virginia Military District and Ohio land grants were given as bounties to Revolutionary Veterans in lieu of their pay. Local settlers who could not purchase their homesteads had to move. They moved up the Bullskin Road and settled in the villages along the Road or founded new villages. If Heinrich and Maria traveled through the Miami River Valley, they may have stayed with some of these families.

This is the route: Cincinnati to Reading 14 miles, Reading to Mason 16 miles, Mason to Lebanon 8 miles, Lebanon to Franklin 10 miles, Franklin to Germantown 8 miles, Germantown to Gratis 9 Miles, Gratis to Eaton 9 miles, Eaton to National Road 12 miles, approximately 86 miles from Cincinnati to the National Road. This combination of the Old Miami Trail and the old Bullskin Road follow today's highways 42 and 123. Now the detail:

- Cincinnati to Reading 14 miles. Reading was founded by a German immigrant Abraham Voorhees in 1794 and named Voorhees-town. A visitor who became his close friend, Harvey Redinbo, was the son-in-law of William Penn, the Quaker founder of Pennsylvania, so the village was renamed after Redinbo's hometown Reading, PA.
- Reading to Mason 16 miles (founded 1815).
- Mason to Lebanon 8 miles (founded 1802). City legend has it that Lebanon didn't grow as large as Cincinnati or Dayton because of the 'Shaker Curse.' During their migration, the Shakers decided an area outside of town was a suitable place for them to create a homeland for themselves. There was a disagreement with some of the locals and it was said the Shakers placed a curse on the city to hinder the city's prosperity. In reality, the Shakers thrived in the area, and built a settlement about 4 miles west of Lebanon called Union Village. A local man, Malchalm Worley was their first convert. Since the Shakers did not engage in procreation, they relied on converts to increase their numbers. By 1900, there were almost no Shakers left in Ohio.
- Lebanon to Franklin 10 miles (founded 1814). Franklin was on the Miami River that went through town, also on the Miami Canal, and business grew rapidly. By the 1850s, the Franklin area was noted for breeding racehorses. At Franklin there was a ford over the Great Miami and we believe there were Quakers living there. By 1854 there could also have been a bridge over the Miami Canal at Franklin.
- Franklin to Germantown 8 miles. Germantown was established in 1804 by German-speaking settlers from Berks County, Pennsylvania. Philip Gunckel, the only member of the group who spoke English, is recognized as Germantown's founder, who chose the site for a

grist mill and laid out the original town plan in 1814. The covered bridge in this photo was built in 1870, but because Germantown had become such a vibrant center of commerce by the 1850s, we can feel confident that there was an older bridge that Heinrich and Maria could have used to cross the Great Miami River here. In 1847 the Mudlick Distillery was established and, with an output of 30 barrels of whiskey a day, was considered the largest in the country for many years. At one time the Municipality housed up to 12 cigar warehouses and five factories, with the tobacco industry employing many residents.

I propose that Heinrich and Maria spent a day or two of rest in Germantown, staying with a hospitable German family and talking with them about the best way to connect with the National Road. There were two routes that seem most plausible: one going north to Dayton 15 miles and then continuing north from Dayton on today's highway 48 to Englewood about 15 miles. The second one going directly to Eaton from Germanville and then continuing north to connect with the National Road. The routes would be similar in mileage. The road to Dayton would be more traveled and therefore better, and there would be more lodging options available; but traffic in and around Dayton, with all the roads leading into and out of the city may have been worrisome to Heinrich. If their hosts in Germantown assured them that the threat of cholera in Eaton had passed, I think they would have chosen the Eaton route, especially if they had a referral for lodging in Gratis and possibly even in Eaton. The National Road was about 12 miles north of Eaton.

- Germantown to Gratis 9 miles. (Founded 1823.)
- Gratis to Eaton 9 miles. Eaton was founded in 1806 and grew quickly. By 1846, the town had 1000 inhabitants. This growth was primarily derived from the town's location at the strategic junction of two turnpikes. In 1849, Eaton was the site of a cholera outbreak. About half of the inhabitants fled; of the remaining 600 people, 120 died.
- Eaton to the National Road 11 miles, then on to Richmond 16 miles. Heinrich and Maria would probably have taken today's highway 35 northwest out of Eaton to join the National Road since that was the old road between Richmond and Eaton, but their hosts in Eaton would have advised them about continuing north on highway 127 or taking the diagonal route highway 35.

Once Heinrich and Maria were on the National Road, they traveled the 80-85 miles to Indianapolis. Routes 3 and 4 both go through Indianapolis, which, as we will discover, was a bustling center of commerce and travel.

So we will make a choice now between Route 3 and Route 4 before talking about Indianapolis. It is actually hard to choose between the two routes because they were probably similar in quality of roads and availability of lodging and bridges. I recommend we choose Route 4 simply on the basis of the comfort level it would afford for Heinrich and Maria. They would be among more of "their own people" in a geographic region with which they were more familiar. In their eight years in Cincinnati they may have traveled to Dayton by horse and buggy, or even stagecoach. They may have stayed in some of the lodging choices available on the way and may even have had friends and acquaintances living in towns along that route.

Now let us talk about Indianapolis, a major stop on the emigration route to Iowa. Heinrich and Maria would have traveled for five to six days on the National Road and may then have chosen to spend a day or so in Indianapolis to rest, enjoy the culture, and connect with the vibrant German community there. Let's look at the following information about Indianapolis from *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and *Wikipedia*. Indianapolis was founded in 1821 on the White River under an incorrect assumption that it would serve as a major transportation artery. But the river was difficult to navigate and too shallow during much of the year, especially for steamboats. After the steamboat *Robert Hanna* ran aground along the White River in 1831, no steamboat successfully returned to the capital city. Flatboats continued to transport goods along a portion of the river until new dams impeded their ability to navigate its waters. A horse-drawn barge canal was used then to bypass the river to bring goods into the city. The arrival of the National Road in 1827, which crossed right through the city, spurred growth, and the city grew quickly during the years of the western migrations.

American settlement began in Indiana before 1800 and increased substantially after the War of 1812, when the Indians were removed from their lands. The earliest American settlers came mainly from Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Maryland. Abraham Lincoln's father Thomas Lincoln was among the early settlers, arriving there in 1816; but the Lincoln family left Indiana in 1830 when Abe was 21. Beginning about 1830, many settlers came from Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York. Eventually, settlers from the middle-Atlantic states and Ohio outnumbered those from the Southern slave states. Indiana did not attract as many overseas immigrants in the mid-nineteenth century as other Midwestern states. Over half of those who came to Indiana directly from overseas were of German origin, with the Irish a distant second. Before 1850 most immigrants reached Indiana by a water route, such as the Ohio River, which is why most of the settlers were still concentrated in three areas of Indiana up until 1850: in a band along the southern boundary of the Ohio River; along the Wabash River between its junction with the Ohio River and Terre Haute; and along the Ohio-Indiana state line. After 1850, as railroads were built and industrialization took place, the northern cities and counties began to grow.

The state's Mammoth Improvement Act (1836) brought the promise of canal transportation to Indianapolis to solve water transportation problems, but it was never fully implemented. Despite heavy infusions of cash, eight major planned infrastructure projects, and the abundance of water from two rivers, the canal systems were never successful. Unfortunately, however, all that water left Indianapolis prone to flooding. There had been record flooding in 1847 caused by heavy rains. Poor drainage and sanitation caused outbreaks of flu, cholera, smallpox and malaria from mosquitoes. These conditions would have been less severe in the winter, and how much these health hazards were a factor for consideration for Heinrich and Maria we do not know. It may be that the river flooding conditions had improved by 1854.

Road construction proved to be more successful than the state's canal system. Beginning in 1838, stagecoach service connected Indianapolis to Cincinnati, Dayton, and Columbus, Ohio. The first major roads connected Indianapolis to Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1825; to Crawfordsville, Indiana, in 1828; and to Lafayette, Indiana, in 1829. In 1828 the state legislature authorized construction of the Michigan Road, which passed through Indianapolis.

Of even more importance to Indianapolis were the railroads. By 1850 eight rail lines reached the city, ending its isolation from the rest of the country and ushering in a new era of growth. In the 1850s Indianapolis became a transportation hub for the region, which helped improve the city's

commercial trade, increase property values, and encourage further development. Indianapolis's first Union railroad depot, the first of its kind in the United States to serve competing railroads, opened in 1853. Rail transportation spurred further improvements to city streets. In 1853 several blocks of Washington Street were the first in the city to be illuminated with gaslight street lamps; in 1859 a section between Illinois and Meridian Streets became the city's first roadways to be paved with cobblestones.

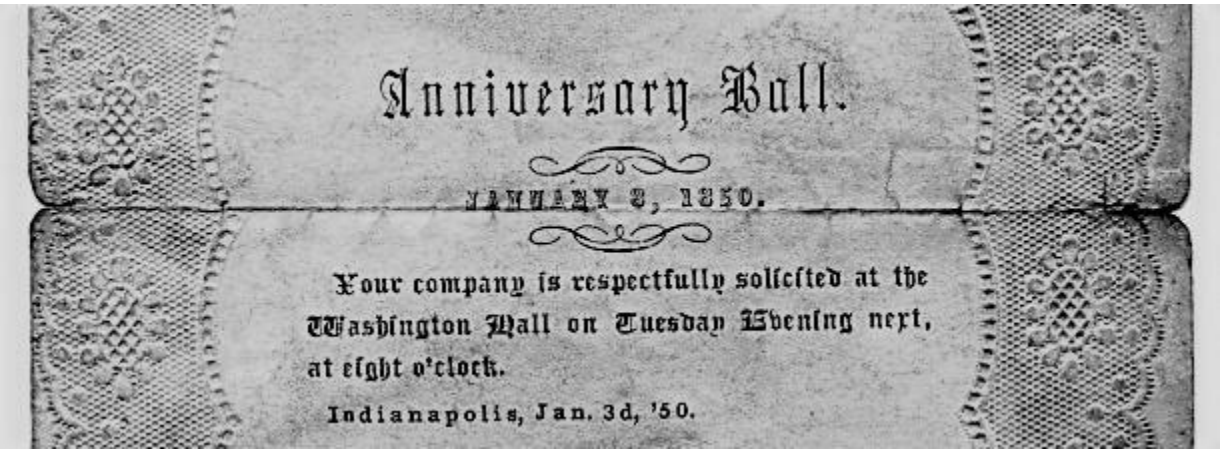
Our perusal of the early history of Indianapolis reveals a number of facts of interest to Heinrich and Maria's journey, most important, perhaps, the very active and obviously large German community in Indianapolis. Here are some highlights followed by yearly details of progress:

- Local entertainment included musical concerts, theatrical performances, and art exhibitions. During the 1850s the city's German community established the first of several German clubs and cultural societies. The Indianapolis Turngemeinde (1851) or Turners, merged with other German clubs and became known as the Indianapolis Social Turnverein. The Indianapolis Maennerchor (1854) is the city's oldest German-language musical club.
- Early residents also had access to public lecture halls and the city's first libraries. By the early 1850s Indianapolis also had several new gathering places, including the Grand Lodge of the Free Masons, the city's first public hall; a new Odd Fellows Hall; the first Bates House hotel; and a Young Men's Christian Association.
- A few local newspapers served the city's German-speaking population, including *Das Indiana Volksblatt* (*Indiana Volksblatt*), which began publication in 1848, and the *Freie Presse von Indiana*, a weekly German-language newspaper that began publication in 1853.
- 1823 The town's first theatrical performance takes place at a local tavern.
- 1841 Zion's Church, the city's first German-speaking Evangelical congregation, is organized on April 18. Its first church is dedicated in 1845.
- 1848 The Central Plank Road Company is chartered to construct plank roads connecting Indianapolis to nearby towns.
- 1848 The city's first telegraph lines link Indianapolis to Dayton, Ohio.
- 1848 The *Indiana Volksblatt*, the city's first German-language newspaper, begins publication in September.
- 1848 Another smallpox scare alarms city residents.
- 1849 The First German Methodist Episcopal Church congregation organizes. Its first church is built in 1850.
- 1851 Indianapolis's first gasworks is completed.
- 1851 Indianapolis Gas Light and Coke Company is chartered by the state legislature in March. The company begins supplying city residents with natural gas for lighting in 1852.
- 1851 The Indianapolis Turngemeinde, the first of the city's German clubs and cultural societies, is established on July 28. It merges with other German clubs and becomes known as the Indianapolis Social Turnverein, or Turners.
- 1852 The Center Township Library opens in the Center Township Trustee's office.
- 1852 The First German Reformed Church of Indianapolis congregation is organized. Their first church is dedicated on June 24.
- 1853 *Freie Presse von Indiana*, a weekly German-language newspaper, begins publication in Indianapolis.
- 1853 The first Bates House hotel opens for business. It is replaced at the turn of the century.

- 1854 The Indianapolis Maennerchor, the city's oldest German-language musical club, is established.
- 1854 The Society of Friends (Quakers) organizes the First Friends Church of Indianapolis. The Society builds its first meetinghouse and school in 1856.

It is pleasant to imagine Heinrich and Maria attending a musical concert or theatrical production while they were in Indianapolis. They would have appreciated the availability of brighter and cleaner gaslight on the streets and in the buildings, and probably would have checked out the new library.

There was at least one tavern in Indianapolis before James Blake and Samual Henderson opened the Washington Hall in 1823. While the Washington Hall did not attain the historical prominence of the later Bates Hotel in Indianapolis, it was an important fixture in the city's lodging and hospitality scene for many years. Heinrich and Maria might have stayed in it, or they may have chosen the highly popular and brand new and modern Bates Hotel. The delightful invitation below was for an anniversary ball in Washington Hall on January 3, 1850.

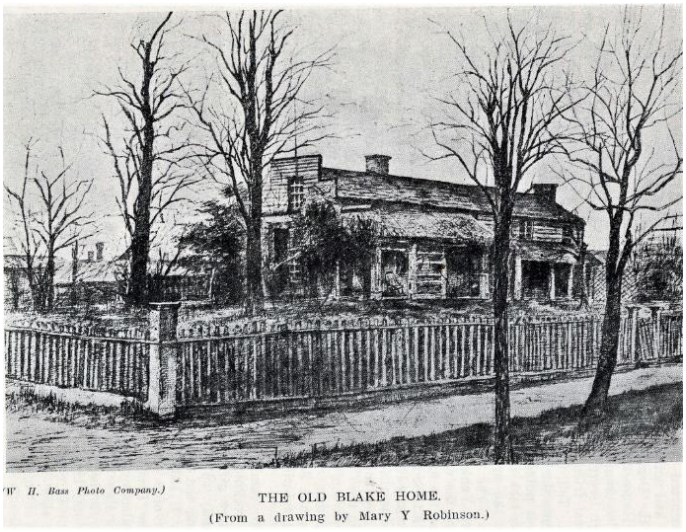

Anniversary Ball.

JANUARY 3, 1850.

Your company is respectfully solicited at the Washington Hall on Tuesday Evening next, at eight o'clock.

Indianapolis, Jan. 3d, '50.

James Blake himself was an interesting pioneer. Here is information written about him that helps us understand not only his life, but early life in Indianapolis. (*From historicindianapolis.com*



THE OLD BLAKE HOME.
(From a drawing by Mary Y Robinson.)

"Old James Blake homestead, N.W. corner of New York and Tennessee St. (now Capitol Ave.)"

Over the past decade, as I've learned about James Blake's role in our city's history, I'm puzzled as to why other history buffs weren't clamoring for the opportunity to buy a pencil sketch of the house that he built for his bride in the late 1820s. It seems that Blake has faded into relative obscurity over the years, at least when compared to his friend Calvin Fletcher, who has been immortalized by both a marble bust in the Statehouse and a coffee shop on Virginia Avenue. But that would probably be all right with Blake. As historian Berry Sulgrove wrote in 1884:

"If Mr. Blake had pursued his own advantage with half the zeal he devoted to the service of others and the good of the city, he might easily have counted his wealth by millions. His ambition to become a useful citizen and a public benefactor outweighed all other considerations. He was not politically ambitious, and never held public office other than that of county commissioner. His desire for power never seemed to extend beyond the command of a Sunday-school procession or the presidency of a charitable meeting."

James Blake rode into town on horseback on July 25, 1821. Over the course of the next decade, he brought the first piano to Indianapolis, built the first plaster and frame house, and introduced his fellow townspeople to oysters, a delicacy which some of the pioneers indelicately compared to a "nasal excretion."

When the entire population of the settlement was stricken with a malaria-like illness during the harsh winter of 1821, Blake made daily rounds to each settler's cabin with food and water, even though he was suffering himself. That same winter, when four traveling rogues from Kentucky drank a barrel of whiskey and started terrorizing the citizenry, Blake volunteered to take on their leader while the other men handled the rest.

When it became apparent after the Christmas Eve incident that the town needed a jail, Blake traveled to Corydon to convince the legislature to carve out a big square of then-Delaware County and create a new county – Marion.

In the earliest days of the city, he shared his large personal library with his fellow settlers and taught the ABCs to their children during Sunday school classes in Caleb Scudder's workshop. As Indianapolis grew, Blake became a tireless advocate for common schools, serving on a blue-ribbon panel that called for a school tax, a superintendent, qualified teachers, and free public education. In short, James Blake was the kind of guy you would want to have around if you were building a city from scratch.

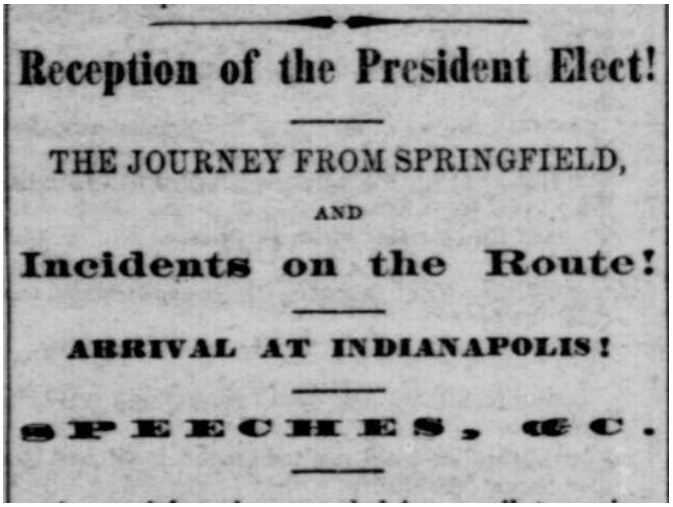
As historian Berry Sulgrove wrote: "His history for fifty years was the history of Indianapolis, and no citizen has ever been more closely identified with the rise and progress of the city and its philanthropic and benevolent institutions than he."

Although Blake brought many important "firsts" to the city, Indianapolis already had at least one tavern when he and Samuel Henderson opened Washington Hall in 1823. Calvin Fletcher opined to his diary that he doubted the venture would be a success, but Blake and Henderson proved him

wrong. Within a few years, the modest frame structure was replaced with a handsome brick building that quickly became the best-known hotel in Indiana.

Originally from Pennsylvania, Blake came to Indianapolis in 1821, because he heard there was money to be made by harvesting native ginseng and selling it to the Chinese. He built a small house on Alabama Street, where the ginseng root was dried and purified, and then sent to Philadelphia for shipment to China. The business thrived until the supply dwindled.
Calvin Fletcher's granddaughter, Laura Fletcher Hodges, reminisced about the Blake homestead in a 1918 address to the Indianapolis Woman's Club:
"The Blake homestead .... was a delightful old place with its sheltered brick-paved porch, its Dutch gable, and the riot of vines over all. When I visited the homestead, Mrs. Blake met me on the porch and taking me by the hand, led me into the quaint old parlor to see her cherished possession, the bridal gift of her husband, the antiquated piano, now stained and darkened with age. It had been brought over the mountains from Baltimore in 1831 and was the first instrument of its kind in the new settlement."
Blake died in 1870, just one year shy of the 50th anniversary of the Ralston plan. At the time, his funeral was said to the largest ever held in the city.

There were doubtless a number of lodging accommodations available in Indianapolis when Heinrich and Maria passed through, but only two are remembered today: the Washington Hall and the Bates House. The Bates house, one of the first hotels in downtown Indianapolis, was established in 1853 and is famous for the first major policy statement given by President Abraham Lincoln to 45,000 onlookers from the hotel balcony.in 1861. This was one of his first stops on his way to Washington, DC.


Reception of the President Elect!

THE JOURNEY FROM SPRINGFIELD,

AND

Incidents on the Route!

ARRIVAL AT INDIANAPOLIS!

SPEECHES, &C.

So important was this event for Indianapolis that the *Indiana State Sentinel* on February 20, 1861, reprinted the whole of President Lincoln's address, which commentators said was "uncharacteristically candid." The Bates House was less than a year old when Heinrich and Maria were in Indianapolis. They may have stayed there just because it was new, modern, and probably luxurious, but I don't think they did. I think they stayed with a German family and may have brought their hosts to the Bates Hotel for a meal, and everyone could enjoy the ambiance and food of a first-class hotel, probably with live music.

After their rest in Indianapolis Heinrich and Maria were ready to resume their journey, knowing that the coming weeks would probably be less comfortable. They went northwest out of Indianapolis on today's highway 74, 49 miles to Crawfordsville. This section of 74 was paved by then, as we have seen. Crawfordsville was founded in 1823 along Sugar Creek, a tributary of the Wabash River. There was a tavern there by 1824 and the area was famous then for fossil-bearing rocks. There

would have been lodging available. We have very little information on road conditions or lodging availability for the 208 miles from Crawfordsville to Peoria, Illinois. These two weeks of travel would probably be the least comfortable part of the trip for Heinrich and Maria, but we can assume that because other travelers had taken this route before them, there would be at least a firm trail or road and some kind of lodging accommodations along the way. From Crawfordsville they continued on highway 74 to Covington, Indiana, founded in 1826, or nearby Danville, Illinois, founded in 1824. There is no information on bridges or accommodations. Their next major stop may have been Urbana, Illinois, founded in 1822, or nearby Champagne, founded in 1833. At Champagne their route would have gone north to Bloomington, founded in 1831, and on to Peoria, Illinois, founded in 1691 on the Illinois River. The Peoria Historical Society goes back to 1839. So we do have some information about Peoria. In 1825 the Illinois General Assembly approved establishing Peoria in the vicinity of Fort Clark, buying land from the federal government. In 1845 Peoria became a town, and then a city. Two of the early settlers in Peoria were from Germany: Frederick Julius Gustorf in 1836, Carl Schimpf in 1849 from Landau, Germany. We can think there was probably a bridge in Peoria because of Fort Clark. So once again Heinrich and Maria may have rested for a day or two with a German family before resuming their trip. From Peoria they would have continued northwest for 45 miles to Galesburg, founded in 1835 and famous for being a stop on the Underground Railroad. Galesburg also was very active in the development of the railroad in the Midwest. From Galesburg they would have gone due north to today's highway 80 and then west to Davenport, a distance of 55 miles. This section of the trip would probably have better roads and more lodging choices, especially once they reached the heavily-traveled highway 80 to Rock Island/Davenport.