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December 2020

## MS 76 Box 8 Notebook 21 - Guyan River Navigation

Fred Bussey Lambert

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MS 76  
BX 8  
NBK 21

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THE GUYANDOTTE NAVIGATION COMPANY

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Books were to be opened for subscriptions, at Guyandotte, Barboursville, Chapmansville, and Logan. Some of the most prominent men in all these places were named to take the subscriptions.

At Guyandotte, the subscriptions were to be under the direction of John W. Hite, Perceval S. Smith, Henry H. Miller, Nathaniel S. Adams, Alfred M. Whitney, and James Emmons.

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At Logan courthouse, these names are given: Dr. Hugh Bryan, Anthony Lawson, Evermont Ward, William Stratton, Isaac S. Samuels, James Lawson, Evan Ellis, John Dempsey, Joseph Dempsey, and Ulysses Hinchman, or any one or more of them.

Subscriptions were to be taken for \$75,000, at \$50 per share.

The act provided that "as soon as four hundred shares shall have been subscribed, the subscribers, their executors, etc. shall be incorporated in the name and style of "The Guyandotte Navigation Company."

This was to be a joint stock company, in which the State would subscribe three fifths of the stock and private capital two fifths, the Board of Public Works being authorized to subscribe in proportion to the private subscriptions.

The company was authorized buy necessary lands, not to exceed five acres at any one point. They could collect such

tolls as they might decide on, subject to the approval of the Board of Public Works.

The work was to be commenced within five years from the passage of the act, and completed within ten years, or forfeit all their rights.

The names of the incorporators are not known as they seem never to have been reported. Evidently, they expected to raise a considerable amount of subscriptions from local people, but whether they did, so is not known. No list of stockholders has been preserved until June 12, 1860, and not a single local name is found on this list. They all seem to have been eastern capitalists mostly from New York, and there were only a few of them. They were:

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| Edgar J. Barton    | \$12,800 |
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It is perfectly clear that this company and the Guyandotte Navigation Company were, to all practical purposes, one and the same company. Eastern capital was now beginning to see the vast potentialities of the Guyandotte Valley, and Guyandotte was taking on an importance unequalled by many larger places.

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The first lock and dam was located about opposite the present location of the International Nickel Plant, and was not finished at the time of Mr. Roffe's report, but was expected to be finished by the 15th or 20th of November.

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The Engineer and the Board thought it advisable to enlarge the locks to 130 feet in length and 26 feet in breadth, in order to admit, the passage of small steam boats, which would answer the wants of the community much better than "having to rely alone on horse power or manual labor for the transportation of merchandise up and down the river; besides it will do away with the necessity of constructing a tow-path from Guyandotte to Logan courthouse, which was estimated to cost \$21 280." From

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The last dam, then No. 5, but later known as No. 6, was made at the Old Falls, sometimes called the "upper falls." Here a rock bed extended entirely across the river, and there was a ten-foot fall at this place. "This rock dipped slightly to the east or left bank of the stream (ascending) and during a freshed, some thirty or forty years ago, the river washed away the left bank, "opening a new channel along the east side of said, leaving the same in ordinary stages of water, entirely above the surface of the river."

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"The shore pier is upon the head, and about ten-feet high at the foot, and loaded throughout with rock. From the head of this, there extends a winged pier, at right angles, to the east shore, ninety feet long, at the top, and driven into the bank, and well secured by strong sheet piling. This wing pier is thirty-feet wide at the bottom, and twenty-three feet at the top, and is raised some forty feet high, and is above high water, so as effectually to secure the bank from the action of the water. Great pains have also been taken for the same by brushing and graveling the bank, on the east side for a considerable distance above the pier."

"The stream pier is up to the required height at the head, and about ten feet at the foot, and is well-loaded with stone. From this pier, there is also extended, at right angles, a wing pier, about seventy-five feet, entirely across the present channel of the stream, and abutting against the rock above described, which formed the ancient bed of the river. This wing is twenty-eight feet wide at the bottom, and twenty-three feet at the top."

"The lock at this place is wholly planked at the bottom, and at the sides, to the height of about six feet."

"The dam extending from the west end of the wing pier, above mentioned, across the said rock, will be two hundred feet long, and about six feet high and will be built at comparatively little expense, considering its expense, and convenience of its construction over the said table rock."

"This is the upper dam in the course of construction by the company, and it will render the stream navigable for somewhat more than half the distance contemplated in their charter. It is the design of the directors to finish the work thus far during the coming summer, and then take immediate measures for the further extension of the works. For the locks except at No. 2, the castings are all provided and paid for; and considering the difficulties incident to the commencement of a work of this character, which have been already alluded to, the directors believe that this portion of the work will be more expensive than the upper or remaining portion of the improvement."

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Some one who "knew the situation at the Falls, and the great damage that must inevitably result to the works, if left in the condition they were then in, insisted on having the lock finished up and the gates hung."

Mr. Roffe was then authorized to do this work, upon his own responsibility, the directory agreeing to "indemnify him, from any loss, in the event he finishes up the lock, by disposing of any property of the company they may have control of as directors to pay the same." Mr. Roffe finished the work and paid of and discharged the works November 11th.

Mr. Roffe says that the Lock and dam at the mouth of Mud River were begun in May.

Camps for 40 or 50 men were erected at this place, the stone quarry partially opened and some stone prepared for loading the piers and dam. Much timber plank etc, as well as castings for the gates were on the ground but so far nothing had been done on the lock and dam.

Lock No. 3, at Dusenberry Dam was practically finished by August, 1, 1851. It was intended to raise this dam three feet in order to allow boats to pass."

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Mr. Roffe was then authorized to do this work, upon his own responsibility, the directors agreeing to "indemnify him, from any loss, in the event he finishes up the lock, by disposing of any property of the company they may have control of as directors to pay the same." Mr. Roffe finished the work and paid of and discharged the works November 11th.

Mr. Roffe says that the Lock and dam at the mouth of Mud River were begun in May.

quarry camps fully 40 or 50 men were erected at this place, the stone opened and some stone prepared for loading the piers and dam. Much timber plank etc, as well as castings for the gates were on the ground but so far nothing had been done on the lock and dam.

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Rock No. 3, at Dusenberry Dam was practically finished by August, 1, 1851. It was intended to raise this dam three feet in order to allow boats to pass."