

Vermilya/e/ea/er's...Historically Speaking

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THE VERMILYEA PLACE COVERED BRIDGE ARKVILLE, NEW YORK

by Carl Vermilyea



Vermilyea Place Covered Bridge

A pen and ink drawing by descendant Scott McGlone who drew it from photos and an original painting from the "Spans of Time" by Ward E. Herrmann, who gave permission to reproduce the picture in the VFA Newsletter.

Edwin ("Ed") Vermilyea of Arkville, New York and Sandra Todd, cousins, provided the following information about this unique bridge which was located not far from where they grew up and, if it were still standing, would be near Ed's current home.

In 1914, the bridge was moved from the East Branch of the Delaware River in New York to Arkville where it was used to span the Dry Brook River; connect two pieces of property, one on each side which were owned by Sandra's and Ed's grandfather, William Vermilya; and, provided access to the home and land of a Mr. Kenneth George which abutted William's land. The bridge and road which passed through the bridge were not officially named but as the bridge linked property owned by William, it became known as the Vermilyea Place Covered Bridge. In 1950, flood waters washed away the river banks around it and it collapsed. In 1964, it was dismantled.

Ed says he remembers playing on the bridge some 60+ years ago and now owns a picture of the bridge done by Mr. Ward Herrmann (mentioned above). He also reports that William's home and land was initially sold to a Mr. Kingdon Gould but in recent years it was sold back into the family to one of William's descendants, Jacob Rosa, a great, great grandson through his daughter Della who married Albert Charles Rosa.

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FROM THE STAFF

by Carl Vermilyea

We hope that you all had a wonderful holiday season.



Sandra Todd has moved the Vermilyea Family Reunion Web Site to a new server. She says it is still a work in progress, but the Vermilyea Family Book was updated in January and some other changes have been made. When you get a chance, I suggest you check out the **new site** which is at <http://www.vermilyeafamilyreunion.com>.

We thank those of you who have sent us information about your family this past year and remind everyone that we are always looking for more. Please send Sandra anything you may find or hear about concerning clan members. Even just tidbits of information can dovetail with other pieces of information we have and/or give us a lead for further exploration. It all helps no matter how insignificant it might first appear.

In this issue we have two articles covering “V” places; one about the Vermilyea Place Covered Bridge in Arkville, New York (a “place that was”) and another covering the Vermilyea House, Vermilyea Lock and Vermilyea Cemetery in Aboite, Indiana (the house “is” and the Lock and Cemetery “were”). We thank Ed Vermilyea and Sandra Todd for their contribution to the Covered Bridge article. The length of the House-Lock-Cemetery article is long but I thought you might enjoy reading about our adventure in Indiana and the history and current status of the Vermilyea house. If you are ever in that area, I’d strongly recommend visiting the site and even calling the current owners to see if they could give you a tour of the home. You won’t be disappointed.

There are no plans to hold a VFA-wide reunion in 2006. We do know that some families plan to hold branch or mini-reunions. For those that do, please let us know so that we can give your event some publicity.

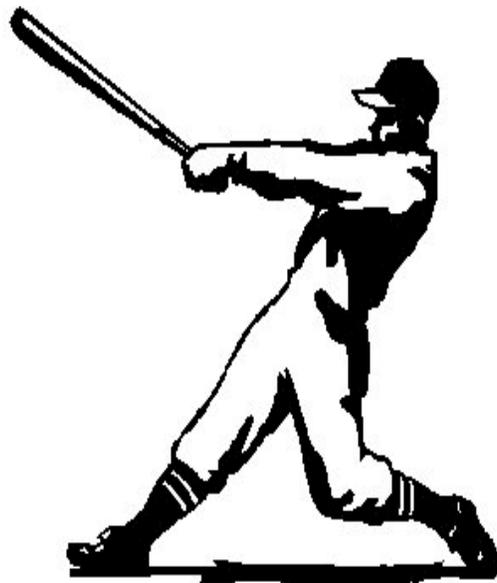
SPORTS – Jamie Vermilyea Moves to the Red Sox Organization

(Extracted from a Boston Red Sox Press Release)

Red Sox select right hander Jamie Vermilyea in Major League phase of Rule 5 Draft —

The Boston Red Sox selected right-handed pitcher Jamie Vermilyea in the major league phase of the 2005 Rule 5 Draft.

Selected with the 10th pick in the first round of the major league phase from the Toronto Blue Jays, Vermilyea is 19-9 with eight saves and a 3.05 ERA (90 ER/265.2 IP) in 99 minor league appearances (22 starts). The 23-year-old split last season between Double-A New Hampshire and Triple-A Syracuse, combining to go 3-3 with one save and a 3.65 ERA (41 ER/101.0 IP) in 43 appearances (eight starts) between the stops. The right hander began the season at New Hampshire and went 3-3 with one save and a 2.60 ERA (19 ER/65.2 IP) in 27 appearances (four starts) before earning a mid-season promotion to Syracuse, finishing his campaign there with a 3-0 record and a 5.60 ERA (22 ER/35.1 IP) in 16 outings (four starts). The 6-foot-4, 195-pounder has walked just 59 batters in 265.2 career minor league innings, an average of only 2.0 walks per nine innings.



A native of Tucson, AZ, Vermilyea played college baseball at the University of New Mexico and was originally selected by Blue Jays in the ninth round of the 2003 June Draft.

(Editorial note: What this all means is that Jamie is on the Red Sox's 2006 spring training roster and will have an opportunity to make the team's final roster. The Official Baseball Encyclopedia contains the name of everyone who has ever been on a major league team. No "V" descendant is listed. So, if he makes the final roster, he'll be the first. If he doesn't make the team, he will probably be sent to the Sox's farm team in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, where he will be immediately available should the Sox need pitching help during the season.)

NEW BOOK BY VFA MEMBER

VFA Charter Subscribing Member Dyckman Vermilye has authored and recently published a new paperback book, *Early Zimbabwe: Memoir of a Quaker at Home in a Jesuit Mission*. Dyck reports:

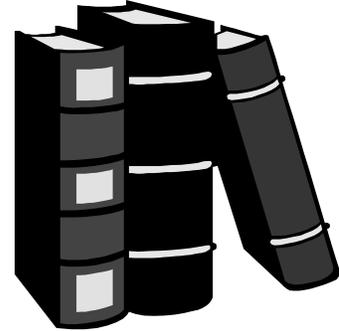
“At 58, I decided that there was more to living life than finishing a career in higher education administration, waiting for the retirement checks to start coming in. I spent a year at Pendle Hill, a Quaker Center for Study and Contemplation in Pennsylvania, and at the end of that time felt led to go to Zimbabwe right after they gained independence from Great Britain. I have pulled my journal entries from those years into a book. I’d like to think you would find it interesting. It is about a piece of my life that was very important to me.

“I arrived in Zimbabwe right after Independence in 1981 with \$600 in my pocket, a ten-speed American bike and the intention to remain for six months, or until I either found a job or spent all my money. After three months, I was “led” to a Jesuit priest who ran a training and development center for the rural poor in the diocese of Harare; he offered me a job as his administrative assistant.

“Even though that solved the money problem, there was another: living with an angry young Army veteran who was filled with unfocused energy and violence. That we came to be good friends is a remarkable part of the story.

“One reader of the manuscript said: ‘The theme of the manuscript is the narrative of your ‘coming to’ sometime in late middle age, a kind of confessional genre. It is a remarkable document of a self-aware man who, after living conventionally for many decades, seems to question everything in the light of faith and service, and who looks for and finds a kind of responsible freedom. You convey this very credibly, partly through your sense of wonder at the process and your sense of humor at some of the predicaments.’

“If anyone wants a copy (*Early Zimbabwe: Memoir of a Quaker at Home in a Jesuit Mission*, paperback, \$15.00; 152 pages), it is available through me (Dyckman Vermilye) at my address: _____, or through Amazon.com. If through me, I’ll cover the postage. Please include your full mailing address.”



IN MEMORIAM

Cynthia Fehlman VerMilyea, wife of John Allen Vermilya⁹, (Charles Herbert⁸, John Willard⁷, Edward⁶, Jesse⁵, William⁴, Abraham³, John², Johannes¹)

Cynthia Fehlman VerMilyea, 94, of Nokomis, Florida, passed away on December 9, 2005, at her residence.

Born July 29, 1911 in Corry, Pa., she came to Nokomis from Warren, Pa. in 1963. She was a homemaker, a life member of the Order of Eastern Star in Warren, Pa. and was a Lutheran. Surviving are her son, Charles A. VerMilyea; four grandchildren, Charles E., Jon K., David A. and Heidi L. Casel; five great-grandchildren and several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her husband, J. Allen VerMilyea in 1981, and one grandson, Allen Roy VerMilyea of Bradenton, Fla. in 2003. Two brothers, Ross and Leighton Fehlman, also preceded her in death. There will be no visitation or services. Burial will be held at the convenience of the family. Memorial donations may be made to Tide Well Hospice and Palliative Care South, 220 Wexford Blvd., Venice, Florida 34293. Ewing Funeral Home in Venice, Florida is in charge of arrangements.

The Post-Journal, Jamestown, New York, dated December 27, 2005.

James Franklin Feamster, husband of Susan Ethel Vermilya¹⁰, (Oakley Ellsworth⁹, George Hyatt⁸, Clarence Oakley⁷, Abraham R.⁶, John⁵, Jacob⁴, John³, Isaac Corssen², Johannes¹)

James Franklin Feamster, 67, died Jan. 5, 2006, at his residence. Born in Alderson, W.Va., he was the son of the late George Samuel Feamster Sr. and the late Lena Karns Feamster. He was a member of the Kitty Hawk United Methodist Church, a Master Mason with Shryock Lodge No. 47 in Ronceverte, W.Va., and a member of the American Legion Post No. 26. Besides his parents, he was preceded in death by a daughter, Barbara Ann Feamster. Mr. Feamster is survived by his wife, Susan Vermilya Feamster of the residence; four sisters, Marjorie Feamster Sharp, Rebecca Feamster Loudermilk, Mary Feamster Phillips, and Rachel Feamster Goodall; and three brothers, Richard Kyle Feamster, Henry Olin Feamster and George Samuel Feamster Jr. A celebration of life will be held Monday at 6 p.m. at the Kitty Hawk United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall by the Rev. Richard Stone and the Rev. Brad Bradshaw. A graveside memorial service will be held in Clifton Forge, Va., at a later date. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Kitty Hawk United Methodist Church, P.O. Box 900, Kitty Hawk, NC, 27949. Twiford's Colony Chapel, Manteo, is in charge of arrangements. Visit www.twifordfh.com to sign the online register.

The Virginian-Pilot, Sunday, Jan. 8, 2006

<http://home.hamptonroads.com/obits/viewall.cfm?date=1/8/2006>

Bradley Carl Binns, son of Joyce Ann Vermilyea⁹, (Robert Wallace⁸ Henry Groves⁷, Abraham Augustus⁶, Philip⁵, Abraham⁴, Peter Martin³, Isaac Corssen², Johannes¹)

WOODSBORO - Bradley Carl Binns, 41, of Woodsboro, died Sunday, Jan. 8, 2006.

He was born March 4, 1964, in Sioux City, Iowa, to Joyce Vermilyea Binns and the late Carl

Olen Binns. He worked for Culligan Water.

Survivors: sister, Tracy Binns Colley.

Visitation will be held prior to the service.

Services will be 10 a.m. Thursday at First Baptist Church, Dr. Jimmy Arnold officiating.

Burial to follow at San Patricio Memorial Gardens in Portland. Moore Funeral Home, Refugio.

Victoria Advocate, Victoria, Texas, January 11, 2006.

Sandra Ann Vermilyea¹⁰, (Robert⁹, Arthur Louis, Sr.⁸, Eugene⁷, Gilbert⁶, Gilbert⁵, David⁴, David³, John², Johannes¹)

Sandy (Vermilyea) Collins

SARATOGA — After a strong and courageous battle, Sandy was called to our Lord for her eternal life on New Year's Eve, December 31, 2005, surrounded by her cherished children at her side, Darrell, Drew and Danielle Corbett, along with family members. Sandy is the beloved daughter of Robert Vermilyea and the late Gladys (Casey) Vermilyea. She is also survived by her siblings, Linda Patton (Rick), Robert, Roy (Lori), Richard (Katherine), Ronald (Sharon) and Diane (Jay) Vermilyea. Sandy is also survived by her many aunts, nieces, nephews and cousins. There will be no viewing hours. A memorial service will be held in Sandy's honor at the Assumption-St. Paul



Church in Mechanicville on January 12 at 10:30 a.m. Family and friends are invited.

Donations can be made to the American Cancer Society in Sandy's name.

Published in the Albany Times Union, Albany, New York on January 9, 2006.

Charles Earnest Vermilyea, Jr.⁹, (Charles Earnest, Sr.⁸, Harry Edward⁷, Gilbert B.⁶, Abraham⁵, Abraham⁴, Peter Martin³, Isaac Corssen², Johannes¹)

SIDNEY CENTER — Charles E. Vermilyea Jr., 70, of Sidney Center entered into rest peacefully Saturday, Dec. 24, 2005, surrounded by his beloved family after a long and brave battle with lung cancer.

Charles was born June 26, 1935, in Cannonsville, son of Charles E. Vermilyea Sr. and Ruth E. (Backus) Vermilyea.

He is survived by his beloved children, two daughters and one son, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas and Debra Feidler; Mr. and Mrs. David and Elnora Jordan; and Mr. Ronald C. Vermilyea. Also surviving are his two sisters and one brother, Mr. and Mrs. Edgar and Beverly Watson; Mr. and Mrs. Gary and Kathie Foster; Mr. and Mrs. David and Sarah Vermilyea; his beloved grandchildren, Rich, Travis, Katrina, Lisa, Brendon, Rachael, Heidi, Nicholas and Kimberly; four great-grandchildren, Brent, Dawson, Dustin and Hailee; special nieces, Mrs. Patti Colone; Ms. Lani Harder; one aunt, Margaret Ford; several cousins, nieces and nephews; and beloved members of the Sidney Center Fire Department.

Charles was predeceased by his beloved wife of 36 years, Dorothy L. (Hunt) Vermilyea; his father, Charles E. Vermilyea Sr.; his mother, Ruth E. (Backus) Vermilyea; and two granddaughters, Melissa Sue Jordan and Fawn Sheree Roloson.

Charles was employed by the Town of Sidney Highway Department for 20 years, retiring in 1998.

Charles was a past chief and 53-year member of the Sidney Center Fire Department.

Calling hours will be from 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 27, 2005, with a memorial service by the Sidney Center Fire Department at 8 p.m. at C.H. Landers Funeral Chapel in Sidney.

Funeral will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 28, 2005, at C.H. Landers Funeral Home in Sidney, Pastor Kip Stratton officiating.

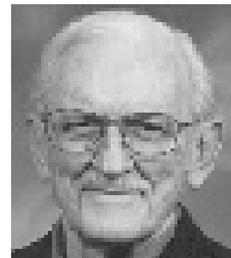
Burial will be in the Highland Hills Cemetery, Sidney Center, in the spring.

Contributions in Charles' name can be made to the Catskill Area Hospice or the Sidney Center Fire Department.

The Daily Star, Oneonta, New York, December 27, 2005.

Robert Welsh Vermilya⁹, (William Ray⁸, Wright⁷, Solomon⁶, Edward⁵, William⁴, Abraham³, John², Johannes¹)

Robert Welsh Vermilya, Sr., M.D., of Mesa, died on November 28, 2005 at 88 years of age. Family visitation will be held Friday, December 2nd from 5:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. at Melcher Mortuary Mission Chapel, 6625 East Main St. in Mesa. Funeral Services will be held Saturday, December 10th at 2:00 P.M. at the East University Church of God, 6630 East



University Dr. in Mesa. Surviving are son, Bill Vermilya and daughter, Lura Vermilya and son Bob, Jr. Bob Sr. was a WWII Veteran, serving as a Captain in the Army Medical Corps from 1944 to 1946 in Europe.

Sign the Guest Book at eastvalleytribune.com

Published in the East Valley Tribune on December 1, 2005.

VERMILYEA PLACES

VERMILYEA HOUSE, VERMILYEA LOCK, AND VERMILYEA CEMETERY, ABOITE, INDIANA

by Carl P. Vermilyea

Although places of distinctly different types, the Vermilyea House, a picture post card estate still standing, and the Vermilyea Lock and Cemetery, both things of the past, have interlocking histories and were located within yards of each other along Redding Road in Aboite, Indiana. It is a bucolic setting of large produce farms, scattered woodlands and a few homes. I recommend that any one in or passing through Fort Wayne area take the time to visit the site.

Directions: From Interstate Route I-69 which runs around the west side of Fort Wayne, exit at Route 24 (Exit 102) and head west toward Ellisville. At about the 3.8 mile point on Route 24, on the right hand side of the road is a sign for Aboite. Take a left onto Redding Road. (Note: Before you reach the Aboite sign, at about 2.4 miles along Route 24, you will see a Redding Road off to your left. Do not take this left; rather, continue along Route 24 until you see the Aboite sign.) The Vermilyea House is the second home on the left; brick, stately and well back from the road. On the front lawn by the road is a large historical marker. The historical marker for the Vermilyea Lock is directly across the road from the House.

My wife and I visited the area in August 2003. As we exited I-69 onto Route 24, off to the right was a relatively new shopping complex with restaurants. It was about 2:00 PM and we needed a late lunch. We selected Sarah's Family Restaurant, which turned out to be a stroke of extraordinary good luck. After being seated, I asked our waiter if he knew the area well as we needed directions. He said no but that the hostess who had seated us had lived in the area for years. He asked her to come to our table - business was very slow. I told Mrs. Mona (Diss) Colclessor what I was looking for and why. With a big smile, she told us that she was born and raised on the large farm which abuts the south side of Redding Road directly across from the Vermilyea House. Mona is a delightful lady; energetic, enthusiastic and a warm personality. Her pronounced country accent left no doubt that she was a native of the area. As a genealogist for her own family, she understood and appreciated my quest. She said she was getting off work in about 20 minutes and told us to eat slowly so she could personally lead us to the Vermilyea House. I told her I didn't want to trouble her and just needed directions. She insisted; so, we ate slowly. She told us that the House had been sold within the past few years. As she wanted to try to get us into the House, a place she often visited when she was young, she made several phone calls. Unfortunately, she was not successful in making contact. After her shift ended, she led us out to the House; and, for the next hour and a half, we had our own personal tour guide and local historian. She had many stories about the area, the House and the Lock. At the end of our visit, Mona said that if any other Vermilyea descendants came to the area they would be welcomed to contact her at the restaurant; an invitation worth accepting.

The House, Lock and Cemetery were named for Jesse Vermilyea (ancestors: Edward, William, Abraham, John, Johannes, Isaac, Jean). Jesse purchased property abutting the Aboite Creek in Aboite and moved there in late 1832 or early 1833. He was among the first of seven families to settle in the area which previously had been named Raccoon Village, an Indian settlement. Prior to making the move, Jesse had served as circuit court clerk and auditor of Grant County. In those positions, he obviously, knew about the construction plans for the Wabash and Erie Canal; and, thus, it was not by chance that he selected for his home this particular piece of property which would border the Canal. He built a large log home and not long afterward, the Wabash and Erie Canal was built along the southern edge of his property. He rented out rooms to canal construction workers and travelers. He built a warehouse and dock along the canal. Later, he built a brick home and, subsequently, it became known as the Vermilyea House, Vermilyea Hotel, Vermilyea Inn and/or Vermilyea Tavern. In addition to running his hotel, he was active in farming and managing his dock and warehouse operation. He also was active in surveying the summit section of the Wabash and Erie Canal, a plank highway system and was one of ten Directors of the Branch Bank of Indiana. In a very few years, he became very wealthy and at one time owned more than 1600 acres (some sources say 2000 acres) in the area. He died in 1846, at age 37, of cholera. His wife died in 1848. They left behind four young daughters.

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The above picture was taken in this August 2003 from the center of the Vermilyea Lock, directly across Redding Road from the Vermilyea House. The House is in the trees in the background. The sign at the left is the historical marker for the Lock. The large white sign nearly center of the picture reads: "OLD VERMILYEA HOUSE Jesse & Maria Vermilyea came to Aboite Township shortly after their wedding at Brownstown, Indiana on July 4, 1832. Their first home on the property was double log cabin. This brick home was completed in 1839, using the clay soil of the farm to mold and fire the bricks. Jesse was appointed postmaster of Aboite Township in 1839, so in finishing the parlor, he had a walnut desk built in the southwest corner to carry out his postal duties. The Vermilyeas were blessed with five children. The first white child born in the Township, their son, was born in the spring of 1833 and departed this earth at 3 months of age. There were four daughters, Marietta - 1834, Adalene - 1837, Ann Elisa - 1840 and Jesse Maria - 1843. Both homes were inns for Wabash and Erie Canal travelers." The small, red-brick structure to the right of the white sign is a monument to Jesse. Although not visible in this photo, on top of it is a large black bell similar to those mounted on old canal barges. The sign on its front reads: "In Memory of JESSE VERMILYEA 1809 - 1846." The driveway to the House is off to the right; not shown.

THE VERMILYEA LOCK

Following the directions given above, as you exit from Route 24 onto Redding Road you will see Aboite Creek on your immediate right. In about fifty yards, the road curves sharply to the left (easterly); and, the Creek continues on in a southerly direction. There is a place to pull off the road and park. I recommend doing so. In the mid-1800s, at that location was an open-truck aqueduct, a bridge filled with water, which spanned the Creek. The Wabash and Erie Canal ran east and west and the aqueduct enabled canal boats to pass over the Creek. Today, you can still see the aqueduct's large, stone abutments on each side of the Creek; and, in the Creek's bed, many large, rotting timbers which were laid across the width of the Creek as a part of the foundation for the abutments and the entire aqueduct structure. The aqueduct, built entirely of timber, was erected in 1833. The Canal officially opened in 1835. The stone abutments were installed from 1846 to 1848 when the aqueduct was widened. For more details about the construction of the aqueduct, go to Internet site: <http://www.terrypepper.com/w&e/aboitecreek.htm>.

Continue driving down Redding Road. Historical documents report that between the aqueduct and the Vermilyea Lock Site marker (pictured below) several hundred yards ahead, there was a large basin which was part of the Canal system. The basin has since been filled in; its profile is not visible. An article from a 1930 edition of *The Huntington Harold* written by Frank S. Bash and covering his interview with a Mr. Daniel W. Simmers, states: "The Vermilyea Basin: In the canal just below the house the channel widened out into a spacious basin in which the boats could be turned or docked for loading and unloading. Vermilyea built a warehouse there for the benefit of the entire neighborhood. Sometimes it was known down the line by 'Ruffner's Basin' for after the days of Vermilyea the Ruffner's occupied the place for some years. The basin was clearly outlined until the traction line was built, at which time it was filled." Other sources mention the basin as "Vermilyea Dock" and state that this is where canal

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This is the Lock's historical marker and what is left of the Canal east of it; essentially, a swale about four to five feet deep. The sign reads:

“The Wabash & Erie Canal.

“The groundbreaking for the Wabash & Erie Canal was at Fort Wayne, In. on February 22, 1832. The first phase of this project, between Ft. Wayne, In. and Huntington, In., was opened to travel on July 4, 1835. This was a day of great celebration, pomp, and ceremony.

“The Wabash & Erie Canal flowed from Ft. Wayne, In. to Evansville, In - America's Longest, man made waterway - 432 miles.

“Vermilyea Lock Site”



There is some doubt that a canal lock, as we now envision a lock, actually existed. One Internet site (www.geocities.com/heartland/valley/7029/canal.html) states: “This is the location of the controversial Vermilyea lock that was said to have existed during the early years of the canal. Most historians discredit the existence of this lock because survey reports bare no mention of it.” Along the path where the canal bed ran, the terrain is flat for miles; and, thus, there doesn't appear to be a geographic contour transition of sufficient height to warrant a lock. However, it is entirely possible that the entrance to the basin from the relatively narrow canal may have been considered a lock at the time.

Official operation of the Canal was discontinued in 1882.

THE VERMILYEA HOUSE

While approaching the Lock's historical sign, you will see the Vermilyea House off to your left.

As is sometimes the case when researching local history, there are slightly different versions of Jesse Vermilyea's settlement in Aboite. Above, under the picture of the house, I have shown the history as written on the sign in front of it. Following is information from other sources.

From *Ghost Towns of Huntington County*, by Doris M. Chambers (Internet Site: www.terypepper.com/w&c/racoon.htm): The area where Vermilyea House and Vermilyea Lock now stand was an Indian village known as Raccoon Village. It “... originally consisted of a brick house with two rooms and a number of log cabins, all erected by the government for the occupation of the Indians. The place was named in honor of Chief Raccoon who occupied the brick house referred to. After the advent of the white people, the land was sold and the brick house passed into the hands of Jesse Vermilyea. When the canal was built, this place became a landing to which farmers hauled their produce for shipment, and spring usually found immense piles of logs and wood here ready for transportation.

The place was also a favorite resort for idlers, and here on a pleasant Sunday in summer, a crowd of men and boys would generally be found smoking and discussing the topics of the day.”

From *The Wabash and Erie Canal Through Huntington County, Indiana* (Internet Site: <http://www.terypepper.com/w&e/Vermilyea.htm>, a research effort by Terry Pepper, and, Internet Site: <http://user.centralnet.net/jjosh/vermilyea.htm>): “Vermilyea – The Maryland Settlement. William Holgate references ‘Vermilliers (sic) 11 miles from Fort Wayne... log establishment ... six or seven different buildings point to the former ‘Maryland Settlement’ and one of its first residents, Jesse Vermilyea. The place was along the newly opened canal at the Aboite River in

(Continued next page)

Aboite Township, Allen County, Indiana. ... The arrival of a colony numbering about thirty persons, in the spring of 1833, quite suddenly broke the solitude of the region, which had not been disturbed by previous settlers. They cleared an area, built early style round log cabins, cut roads and settled in. In July 1835, there were apparently only seven families here. ... Jesse Vermilyea lived in one of the seven log homes. His was a large double-log house where workers boarded during construction of the canal. Jesse had a small stock of goods from which he sold to the settlers and traded with Indians; it was not a store as such, just supplies which he kept on hand. Vermilyea is remembered as farmer, Indian trader, canal contractor, postmaster, pioneer plank road builder, and one of the original directors of the Fort Wayne Branch Bank, who later built the impressive Vermilyea house. Vermilyea invested heavily in land; he purchased 1600 acres, consisting of seven different parcels. In the late 1830's and early 1840's, Jesse sold land to various Indians: to Chapine, land at Raccoon Village; to Shappen, land at the mouth of the Aboite River; to Mae-Shock-con-Wock-Qua, land opposite the mouth of the Aboite River. The soil underlying the area of the settlement is excellent for brick making and upon his farm in 1839, Vermilyea made bricks and built a new home. It was regarded as a veritable palace at the time, and still stands on Redding Road at the Aboite River."



A closer view of the Vermilyea House (August 2003)

The same sources contain the following quote from *Through Indiana by Stage Coach & Canal Boat, Indiana Magazine of History, LXXXV, 1989*: "Ten miles from Ft. Wayne, passed the residence of Mr. Vermilyea, a wealthy farmer. His dwelling house is a splendid one - a large two story brick building, painted white and neatly finished, inside and out. As they tarried here a short time to change horses, we took a strol (sic) about the grounds. We found the garden, shrubbery, fruit trees, &c finely arranged & in the best possible order. All of the inside wood work of the house is of black walnut, highly polished, and presents a very rich and beautiful appearance. There were three fine barns & other out buildings corresponding. Taking it all together, it was by far the most beautiful residence I had seen on the journey. Having obtained a drink of cold water, we returned to the boat, and proceeded on our journey."

Another Internet site (www.geocities.com/heartland/valley/7029/canal.html) states: "The Vermilyea house, built in the early 1800s, served as an Inn for the canal travelers as they entered Allen County from the west. Ruffner's basin was located at the base of this hill and served as a dock and service area. A warehouse was also located at this point for the storage of goods west of Fort Wayne."

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Mrs. Colclessor informed us that the house has a large root cellar which also was used as a part of the underground-railroad to temporarily house slaves escaping from the south. The entrance to the cellar was from the home's kitchen. She said that the cellar may be located under the large grassy knoll in front of the house.

The exact line of ownership of the House and property has not been determined; however, it is known that a Mr. Ruffner bought the property from Jesse Vermilyea's estate. Mr. and Mrs. Darling owned the property from about the 1940s to about 1963 when Mrs. Colclessor was growing up. The Darlings added a garage. After that, the property was owned by Jim and Ruth Ellis for 38 years until 2001 when it was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Todd Freeland.

In September 2004, Mrs. Colclessor sent me an article she had clipped from the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, 7 September 2004, titled *It's All Aboite History* and written by Mr. Rick Farrant. It reads: "Todd and Cathy Freeland, new owners of the Old Vermilyea House, have returned the red-brick, hilltop building to its former splendor inside and out, and added living space on the east end. The house, built in 1839 by early settler Jesse Vermilyea and overlooking the depression of the defunct Wabash & Erie Canal, the wetlands and in the distance the village, has been refurbished with the closest attention to period detail. Todd Freeland ... says he stayed true to the mostly black walnut woodwork, had 88 cedar shutters made in the precise design of the originals, rebuilt some of the seven fireplaces to their intended form, and kept any visual hints of modern-day electrical systems to a minimum. Nineteenth-century furniture has been placed throughout the house, copies of regal portraits depicting Jesse and wife Maria Vermilyea and an original of their daughter Ann Eliza hang on the walls. The built-in desk Jesse Vermilyea used for his postmaster duties is intact in the south parlor and an elaborate floor-to-ceiling wall mural of the Vermilyea house as it might have appeared from the canal has been painted in a first-floor powder room. Even one of the smallest – and most notorious – details remains: A bullet lodged in a closet door just inside the rear entrance. Legend has it the bullet was fired during an altercation of some sort, but Freeland says he prefers to 'think some idiot was cleaning his gun and it went off.' The Freelands, who bought the one-time inn in 2001 and live there with their two children, consider the structure more a community property than a personal possession, and they liberally allow school tours. 'Sharing this place is great,' Todd Freeland says. 'If we would keep this to ourselves, we would be keeping it away from the people who deserve to see it.' "

More recently another article about the House appeared in the Fort Wayne's *New Sentinel, Journal Gazette*. Written by Kelly Soderlund, it can be read at: www.fortwayne.com/mld/fortwayne/13268804.htm. It states, in part: "Homeowners await Historic Register decision - The owner of the Old Vermilyea House in southwest Allen County felt a bit of buyer's remorse after purchasing the 166-year-old house almost five years ago. Now that Cathy Freeland and her husband, Todd, have added 2,000 square feet to the former 4,000-square-foot house and restored it to reflect the period in which it was built, she rests easier. She's also proud that the house has been nominated for the National Register of Historic Places and is eager to hear a decision on whether it's chosen. The National Register is the federal government's official list of prehistoric and historic properties worthy of preservation. The Indiana Historic Preservation Review Board conducted a hearing in October (2005) in Indianapolis to consider the nomination, but the Freelands have not heard the verdict. It was their idea to pursue the status with the help of ARCH, a local preservation group. 'We knew when we bought this house and started working on it this was something we were going to be sharing with the public,' Cathy said. 'We just definitely want to get the word out. We just think Fort Wayne's history, there's so little of it left that we want to save this.' Cathy, ... said she gives about 10 tours a year and allowed more than 300 students to visit the home this spring. The board evaluates buildings nominated for designation by whether they are associated with events that

(Continued next page)

have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history, are associated with significant people, or embody the distinctive characteristics of a period or method of construction. Cathy doesn't know when they will hear the final ruling. If it achieves historical status, the Old Vermilyea House may be eligible for federal grants. The Freelands would also have to allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to comment on any projects affecting the property...."

THE VERMILYEA CEMETERY

Research has revealed that there was a Vermilyea Cemetery near the House and Lock. It was established in 1833 at the junction of Redding Road and Aboite Road which branches south from Redding Road directly across the street from the Vermilyea House. Records do not show if the cemetery was on the House side of the canal or across the canal from the House. The cemetery was closed in the 1860s and the remains of those interred there, including those of Jesse and his wife, Maria, were moved to Lindenwood Cemetery, 2324 West Main Street, Fort Wayne. There was no evidence of the cemetery when we were there.



VFA Treasurers Report

January 23, 2006

<u>Date</u>		<u>Deposits</u>	<u>Withdrawal</u>	<u>Balance</u>	
6/14/2005	Balance			\$3,304.46	
5	New Member Dues	\$30.00		\$3,334.46	
9/9/2005	Barrington Area Library		\$6.00	\$3,328.46	Harry Vermilya Obit.
11/8/2005	George Miller		\$15.00	\$3,313.46	Family Research Information (Pictures, Newspaper articles, etc.)
1/23/2006	Balance			<u>\$3,313.46</u>	

THE VFA

The Vermilyea Family Association (Vermilya, Vermilye, Vermilyea, Vermilyer), or VFA for short, a not-for-profit social club staffed by volunteers, was established on November 27, 1995. We have shared information about the descendants of Johannes Vermelje (the Vermilya, Vermilye, Vermilyea and Vermilyer lines) and, thus, together, learned a great deal about our small, unique, extended family. With the goals of increasing family unity, bonding and fellowship, we encourage you to submit to our Historian your genealogy research plus stories, histories and information about your family, ancestors and descendants. By doing so, we'll all benefit by learning even more; and, from our consolidated records, you might just find that long-lost relative you've been wondering about for years.

BOARD MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

President: Carl P. Vermilyea,
Historian: Sandra Vermilyea Todd,

Newsletter Publisher: Joanne Vermilya MacArthur,

Treasurer: John R. Todd,
Other Board Members:

Dayl Stout,
Tom Vermilye,
Wilma Vermilyer,

SUBSCRIBING MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2006

Anyone who has paid dues to the VFA for any year from 1995 through 2005 will not be charged dues in 2006. Those who were Subscribing Members in 2005 will be carried over into 2006 automatically. Those who were not Members in 2004 and/or 2005 are requested to send a new, updated membership application to our Treasurer.

Anyone who has never been a Subscribing Member (will become a first-time member in 2006) must submit a membership application and pay annual dues of \$6.00 (US) or \$7.50 (Canadian). The same rules apply to gift memberships. If a Subscribing Membership application is received by the Treasurer after February 15, 2006, the applicant will be sent all issues of the newsletter which were published in 2006.

Dues and membership applications must be sent to: **Mr. John R. Todd,**

Please make your check or money order payable to: **John R. Todd; and,** enter "VFA dues" on the memo line on your check.

THIS NEWSLETTER

"Vermilya/e/ea/er's ...Historically Speaking" is published on or about February 15, May 15, August 15 and November 15. The cost of a subscription is included in the Subscribing Membership dues.

Comments concerning distribution may be sent to the Publisher, Joanne V. MacArthur. Comments concerning the content should be sent to the Historian, Sandra V. Todd.

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DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNET?

Check our **VFA Web Page** (maintained by Joanne V. MacArthur) at: <http://members.aol.com/vfa95/vfa.htm>

The VFA's **E-mail address** (staffed by Sandra V. Todd)

ANOTHER WEB SITE OF INTEREST

<http://www.vermilyeafamilyreunion.com>. This is a private, non-VFA affiliated/sponsored web site maintained by Sandra V. Todd. At this site, Sandra reports on family reunions and lists members of the early generations of the Vermilya-Vermilye-Vermilyea-Vermilyer family.