

Anna Jester remembered toll gates on plank road

Anna Jester, at the age of 76, wrote some fascinating sketches of Collinsville 65 years before. This, the finale, goes back to the toll road started in the mid-1850s.

On the old plank road which used to be the only road we had to travel at that time, were toll gates, one just as you left Troy.

One on the A. J. Mathews place. The old well is still on the Boeshok place now. One located at the place now called Long's junction better known as the Summer track. Also one gate this side of the old belt railroad crossing on the St. Louis Road. The toll

gate was located about 100 feet this side of, or north of the railroad track.

THESE OFFICES were all located on the right hand side of the plank road going south. The toll gate north of Collinsville and the one west of this city were owned and operated by Dan Collins, the first one who owned them.

(Ed. Note: Dan Collins was the first village president of Collinsville, in 1850.)

On this same road were taverns or inns.

The old Long place out north of town was one tavern

where drovers or traveling men put up for the night and there were corrals at each place for the drovers, who drove their stock through; there were no other accommodations.

Then the next tavern was on the corner of Vandalia and Clay close to the Catholic Church. It was owned and operated by Joe Berka.

THEN COMES the old Schlossar's place where Harold Ostle's place of business is now. The old house was there until a few years ago but gone now. Now comes the William Thompson place known as Grater's property. I remember the big barn and the curious rigs he used to drive.

Then quite a distance between these, goes down to Cap Smith's place, now known as the Mounds Club.

Then next is Bill Drummond's place, just north of the old van road, now is called Allen's place.

Now comes the old Albright tavern north of what is called now Fairmount.

THEN COMES the old Strobble Tavern on St. Clair Ave. In the olden times the place was called Illinoistown, now known as East St. Louis. And the last one just on the approach of the Eads Bridge, was an inn, known as the Greentree at this time.

It will be remembered that we at this particular time didn't have such a thing as a railroad, the stage coach with six horses sufficed.

A driver of the stage coach was Charlie Willoughby, a brother to Bent Willoughby in our city, the harness maker, and another driver was Charles Coats who in after years married our school teacher named Clara Penny.

The toll gate north of Collinsville was operated by J. D. Bostick, the one at Long's Junction by Author Burton, the one at East St. Louis by Nat Warren.

Now the Terry house, the Berry house, the Long place, the Schlossar house, the William Thompson house, the Joe Berka house all had double decker porches and the house that was at the place where Earl Bitzers live had a double decker porch too.