

American construction.”

In 1837, Judge Benjamin Wright, one of the first and greatest 19th century canal engineers, had praised Gooding’s engineering judgment in a letter to the Canal Commissioners. “In reviewing the whole line of this proposed canal, the location of it, and the plans proposed to overcome all difficulties, I cannot award too much praise to your engineer. He has shown skill and sound judgment in every part of the line, and I do not think the plans he has laid down for the prosecution of this work can be improved or made better with the material so far discovered.”

Although he pursued other interests while serving as Secretary of the Board of Trustees (including, in the 1850’s, a plan for a tunnel under the Chicago River at State Street), the canal remained his principal interest. He supported various efforts to enlarge it on the lines originally planned. There was even talk during the Civil War of enlarging it to take gun boats to fight the South or Great Britain.

During this period Gooding also served on the Board of Public Works for the City of Chicago. As a consultant to the city in 1871, he helped design a deep cut on the Illinois and Michigan Canal. This was done to reverse the flow of the Chicago River, thereby sending pure Lake Michigan water rushing downstate in unlimited quantities, purging the Chicago River of its

sewage and cleaning the waters of the canal. The major purpose of this venture was to clean the Chicago River, but to Gooding it meant more water power and industry along the canal. He felt that from the first lock at Lockport to the head of Joliet Lake a few miles below Joliet “would be a continuous manufacturing city.”

Inspired by this faith, Gooding’s friend Hiram Norton, owner of a grain warehouse in Lockport, carved out a tunnel underneath the canal. This enabled his plant to take water directly off the canal to run a turbine sunk eight feet below the canal’s surface. The tunnel under the canal would bring the water to a turbine leading to the Des Plaines River.

This water power was used until the early 20th century. Although use of the canal for hydraulic power increased, it never achieved what Gooding had hoped. The level of Lake Michigan fell unexpectedly, and as a result the canal became an extension of the polluted Chicago River.

In the 1870’s Gooding’s health began to fail, and during the winters he traveled to various southern climates to escape the Lockport winters. He passed away on March 14, 1878. As George Woodruff, Will County’s first historian, commented that he was the “...firm friend of the Illinois and Michigan Canal from first to last, its efficient Director, and against whom no suspicion of

jobbery were ever entertained. Fully a master of his profession, prepared for all emergencies, urbane in his intercourse with all, he is entitled to the grateful remembrance of every citizen of this state, for

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By John H. Lamb

Just received the May 1985 issue of "American Canals", and thought it was excellent. But then all the issues are excellent. I noted with interest the item about the proposal to make the Black-stone Canal a National Heritage Corridor. I also know that such a Corridor is proposed for the Hennepin Canal in Illinois. I thought therefore that you might be interested in the progress of the first National Heritage Corridor, the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor.

The bill creating the Corridor along the I. and M. Canal, and its longest feeder, the Calumet-Sag Feeder from Blue Island established a linear corridor about 120 miles in length. The legislation was signed into law by President Reagan last August. At that time some \$260,000 was appropriated for the first year's activities of the Corridor. It was not until May of this year that 18 Commissioners were appointed by the Secretary of the Interior, plus his representative - the Midwest Director of the National Park Service. I was appointed to the commission as was another local canal enthusiast, Mrs. Constance Fetzer. The Commission held its first meeting June 17 and 18, 1985 at Starved Rock State Park (which is

