

On the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fort Recovery Monument

*The Story  
of the  
Building of the Monument*

through

**Pictures and Annotations**

from

**Jim Wagner**  
Lafayette, Indiana

Son of Charles Wagner  
Grandson of Emil Wagner  
All of Fort Recovery, Ohio

May 5, 2013

# *Photo Collection and Comments*

of

**James Wagner**

5-5-13

Grandson of Emil Wagner and son of Charles Wagner

Emil Wagner, an immigrant from France, started Emil Wagner & Sons Construction Company.\* At the time that the Fort Recovery Monument was built, Emil and his sons Charles and Clarence owned and operated the business and were subcontracted to build the base and do other concrete work.

Following is a collection of pictures of the building of the Monument with comments from James Wagner, grandson of Emil and son of Charles, who contributed them to the Fort Recovery historical Society for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Monument.

\* E. Wagner and Sons constructed the first concrete road in the Western part of Ohio, (the road leading West from Fort Recovery into Indiana), the concrete bridge that crossed the Wabash River on Route 49 on the Northwestern edge of Fort Recovery, and the limestone structure and fireplace in what is now the Fort Recovery State Museum. Charles Wagner was also a licensed stationary steam engineer and worked at the Fort Recovery Waterworks Plant.



2. View looking mostly East

Wagner and Sons Construction was hired by the Amrringe Company to be the local subcontractors to dig the foundation and to do the concrete work. Notice the wheelbarrows in the pictures. How many wheelbarrows of ground were removed to create a base big/strong enough to hold a 101 foot monument?

Think of the attention this construction must have created in the area, not just a big structure but a burial grounds! There must have been a lot of sidewalk-supervisors present every day? The pictures would document that.



23.

Mr. Gates was the overall superintendent of the monument construction. He is pictured in the foreground. Mr. Wagner was not sure of the gentleman's name in the background, but it was thought he was an assistant to Mr. Gates.

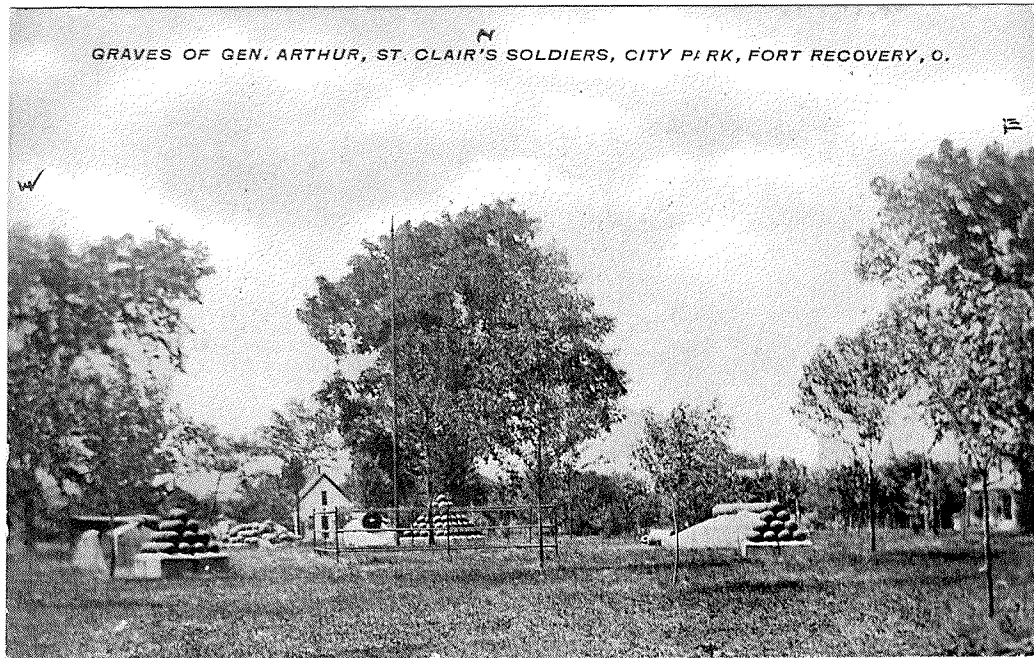




1. View looking Northeast

Wagner Construction prepares to set the footer for the monument. Notice the center where the towering obelisk will sit. The open area in the base is the site of the crypt, in which were placed the remains of the nearly 1000 officers and soldiers killed in the battles of 1791 and 1794.

When first interred in Pioneer cemetery (1851) the remains were placed in 13 coffins and 1 large box, but when transferred to Monument Park in 1891, the remains were put in two very large boxes/coffins. Water had deteriorated these coffins somewhat but officials in 1912 reported that the remains were in good condition, and the marks of tomahawks and scalping knives could still be seen.



27.

This postcard shows the park area before the monument was built. With all the beautiful trees it is certainly easy to understand why this site was chosen. Note the cannons and stacks of cannon balls.



3. looking due North

Notice the E Wagner and Sons cement mixer getting ready to pour the footer for the monument. How much back-breaking labor and time it took to construct this monument in 1912.

Standing in the base/footer area facing the camera is Clarence Wagner, the owner of the Wagner and Sons Construction Company.



#### 4. looking due East

Footer completed, Wagner and Sons Construction begins the actual construction of the central tall portion of the monument. Notice the team of horses and system of pulleys. What a daunting task to complete such a beautiful, strong, lasting edifice without the assistance of computers and lasers!



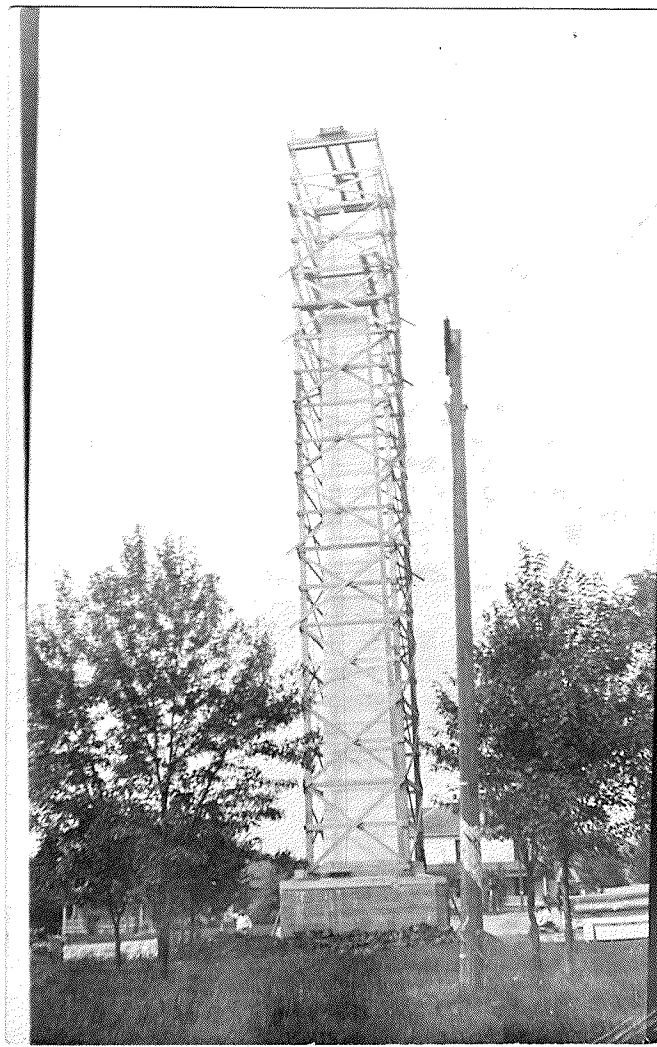
24.

The base and foundation for the monument are taking shape.



25.

The laying of the stone on the obelisk begins. Imagine the excitement of the townspeople when this majestic project began to really take shape.



5. Looking West???

Just the immediate base is completed, but now the obelisk rises high towards the sky. Scaffolding from base on up provides a working environment for the builders. Charles and Clarence Wagner worked all the way to the very top!

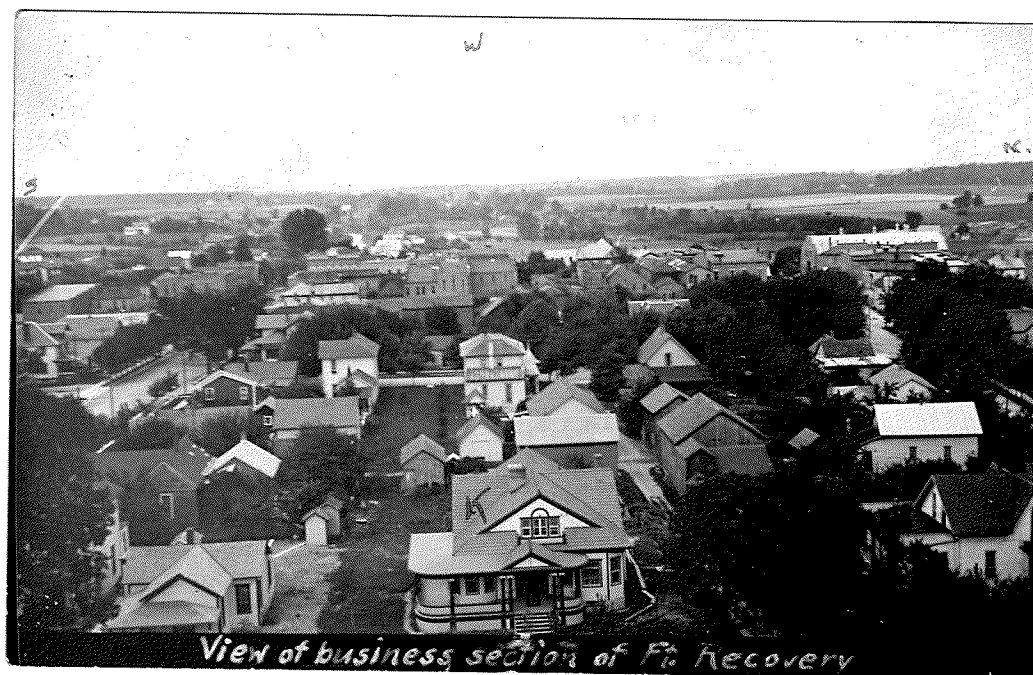
Notice the trees, signaling the passage of time from the beginning of the base to the time in this photo where the monument nears completion.





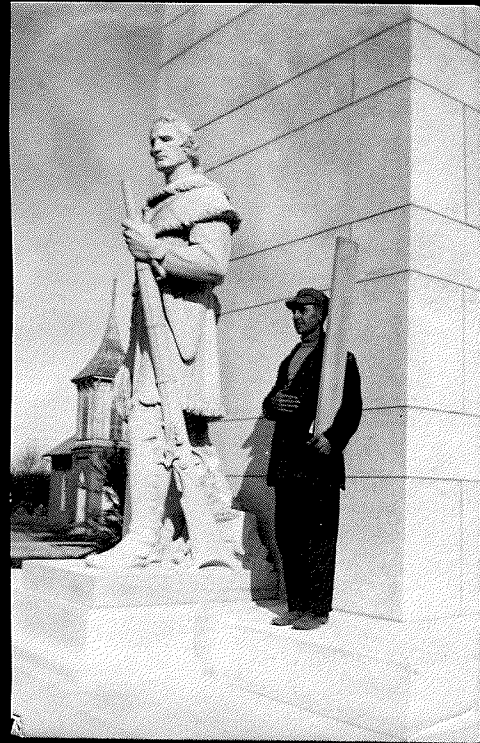
6. looking south **from atop** the monument!

Upon reaching the top of the monument, Clarence Wagner took advantage of his vantage point to take a photo looking south. He noted, " First Christian Church looking south on Elm Street." What a view. Has anyone else from Fort Recovery ever had this view before or since Clarence in 1912?



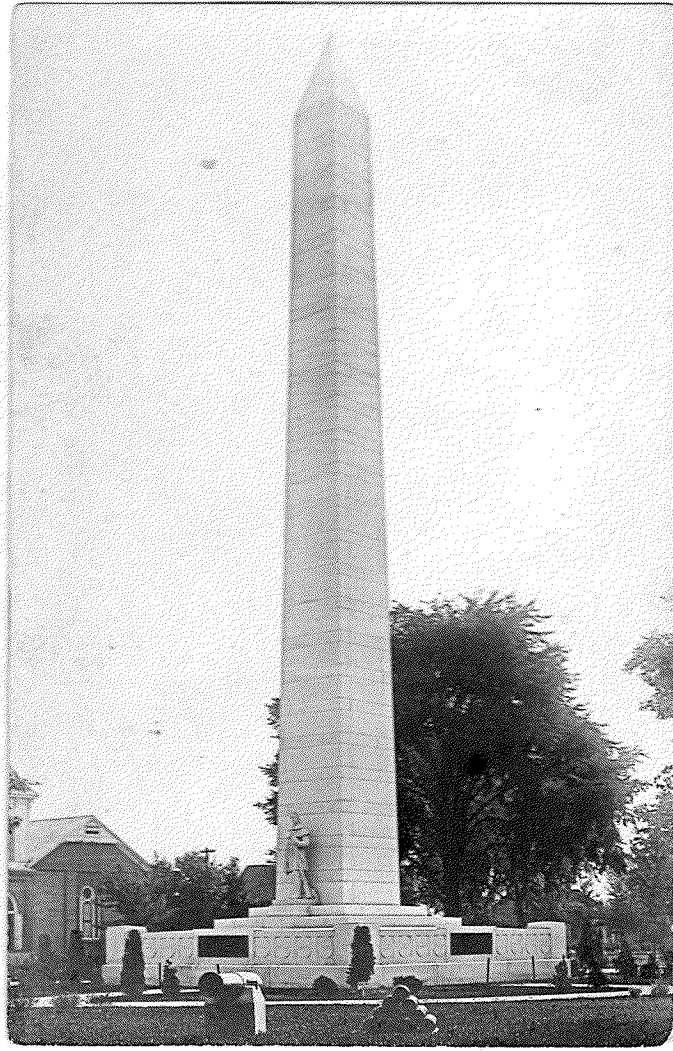
26. Looking west from atop the monument

This is another photo taken from atop the monument. In the foreground is the Koch house, the beautiful home of a prominent Fort Recovery family. The home is presently owned by Steve and Susie McCain and family. In the background is downtown Fort Recovery.



7. Facing the West Side, The Frontiersman

The big jobs finished, time for a little fooling around - playing soldier -by members of the Wagner family who worked for Wagner and Sons. Perhaps Uncle Clarence?



8. looking northeast

The brand new Fort Recovery Monument in all it's glory, ready for dedication in 1913. What lasting memories for all of the descendants of the Emil, Clarence, Charles, and James Wagner families. For the present generations to realize what a hand their Fort Recovery ancestors had in constructing such a magnificent and significant monument must give them great pride. Justly so.



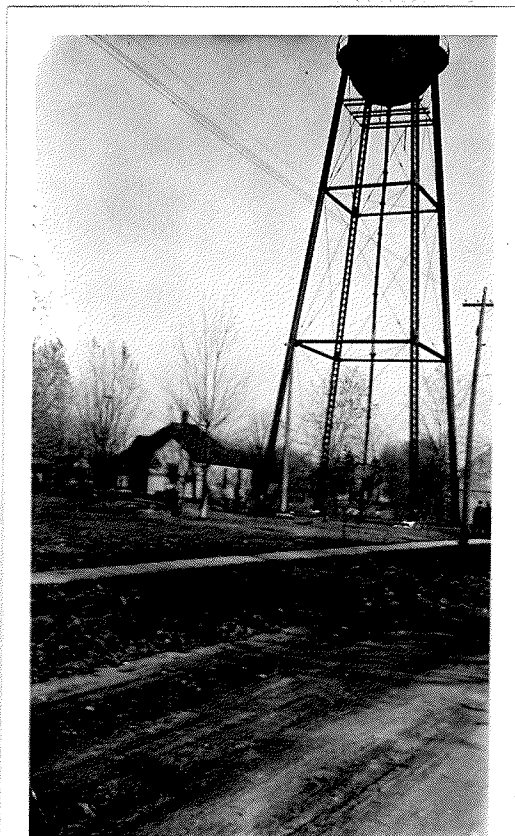
9. view looking east

Before the Fort Recovery Monument was built, the town's water tower stood within that park. When news came that approval was finally given to build a monument in Memorial Park where the soldiers were buried, the decision was made that the water tower had to come down and a new one would be built in another location. This original one stood across from the present day high school.

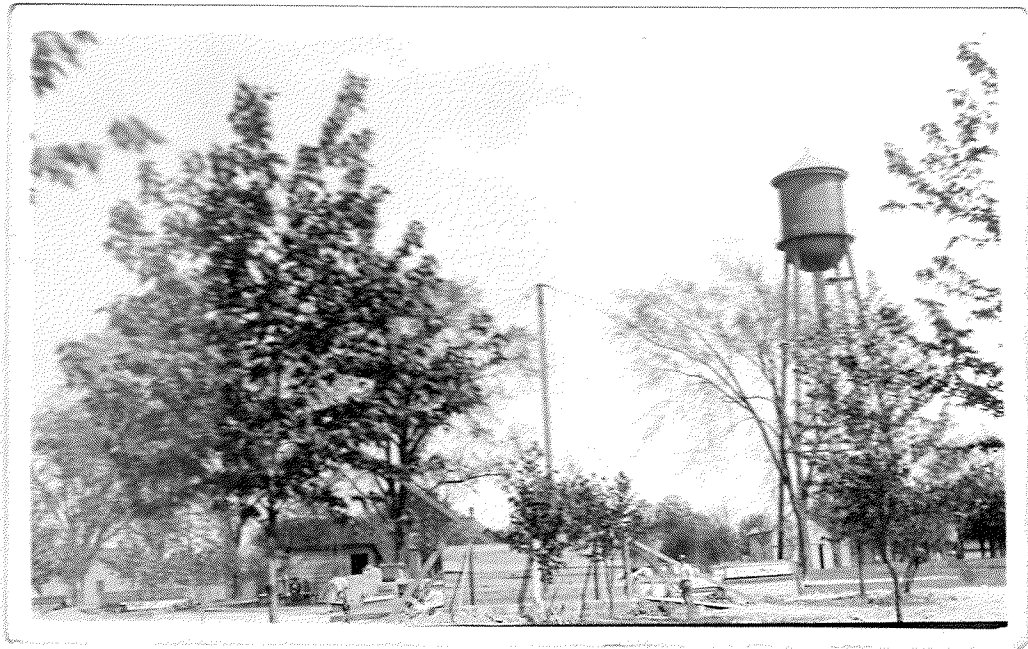


# 10-11

Two views of the old original water tower that would have to be taken down before the construction of the monument began. It was located on East Butler Street across from the Fort Recovery School building, now the high school.







28.

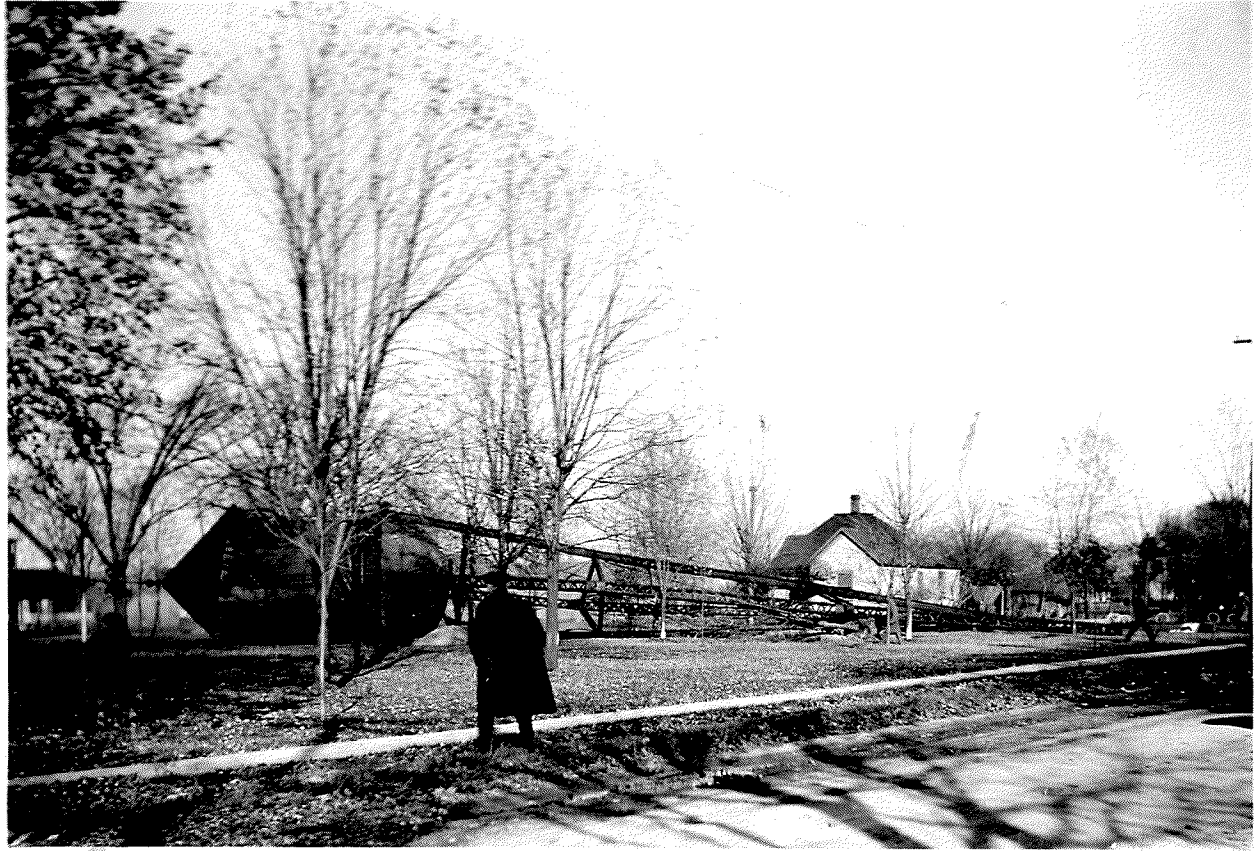
Here is another view of the water tower located on the south east corner of the block. With the school building right across the street this park surely was a very busy place.



#12-13

The two photographs show the process of destroying the old water tower to make way for the Fort Recovery Monument. The construction of this monument was made possible by an act of congress (1910) and by the signing of the bill by President Taft in 1908. \$25,000 was allocated by Congress for the construction of this Memorial.





#14

The water tower is down! What a sight this must have been.



15

Nothing like a downed water tower for a photo-op. Notice the men lined up on the tank and one leg of the tower! Also note the bell-tower of the school in the background.

Once this is cleaned up, Wagner and Sons can begin construction on the long-awaited (60 years) monument.



17.

Shown above is the base of the original flag staff of the Fort of Recovery built in 1793. The flag staff is now on display in the basement Community Room in the Fort Recovery State Museum.

## Other Old Pictures from Jim Wagner Showing Points of Interest in Fort Recovery

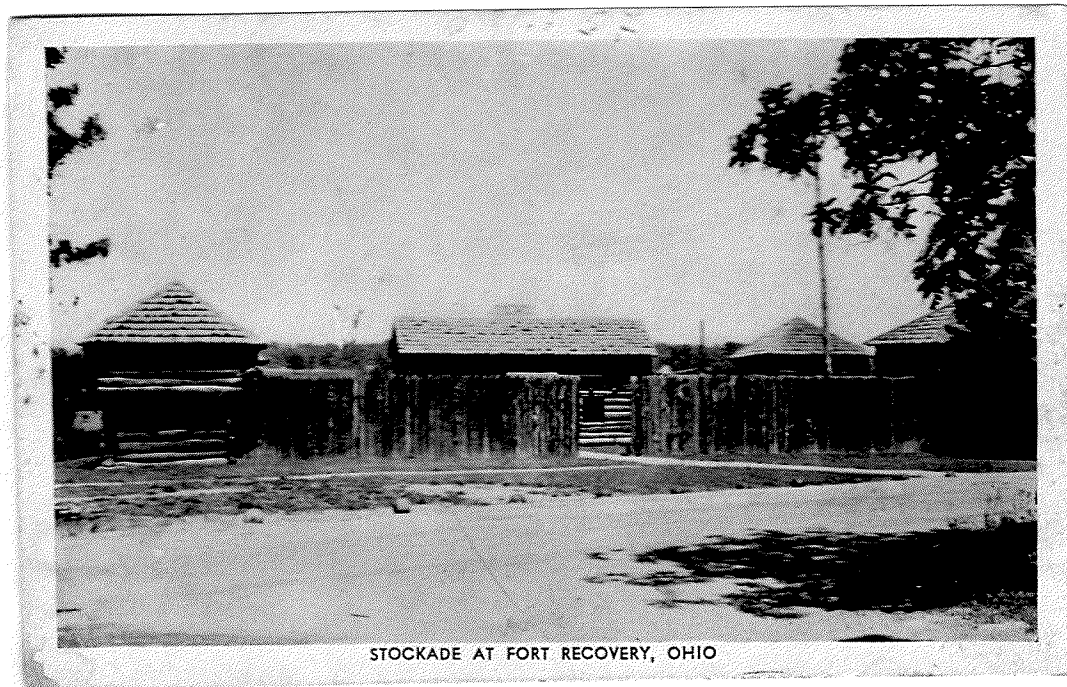


16.

Wagner and Sons helped to construct this building at 1  
Fort Site Street, the current home of the  
**Fort Recovery State Museum!**

This was a WPA project. Wagner Brothers laid all of the  
exterior limestone and the interior fireplace.



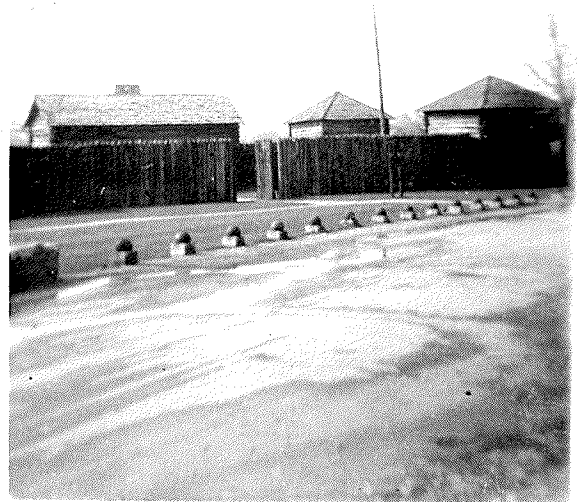


STOCKADE AT FORT RECOVERY, OHIO

18.

In an attempt to bring attention to the important military events that took place on the banks of the Wabash in Fort Recovery, the Fort Recovery Welfare Association (precursor to the present Chamber of Commerce) reconstructed the first fort replica. In order to raise the funds needed they "sold" logs for \$1.00 each to area residents. Wagner and Sons were involved in and supported community efforts.

This photo shows the reconstructed fort around 1937-38. Note the cannon balls that were salvaged from the Monument Park and placed along the street in front of the fort.



29.

In 1938 a library was built adjacent to the reconstructed fort by the WPA. This effort was spearheaded by the Fort Recovery Welfare Assoc. and the Fort Recovery Business and Professionals Women's Club. In 1970 the library became the Fort Recovery State Museum.



30.

Charles P. Rapp Memorial



C. W. W.

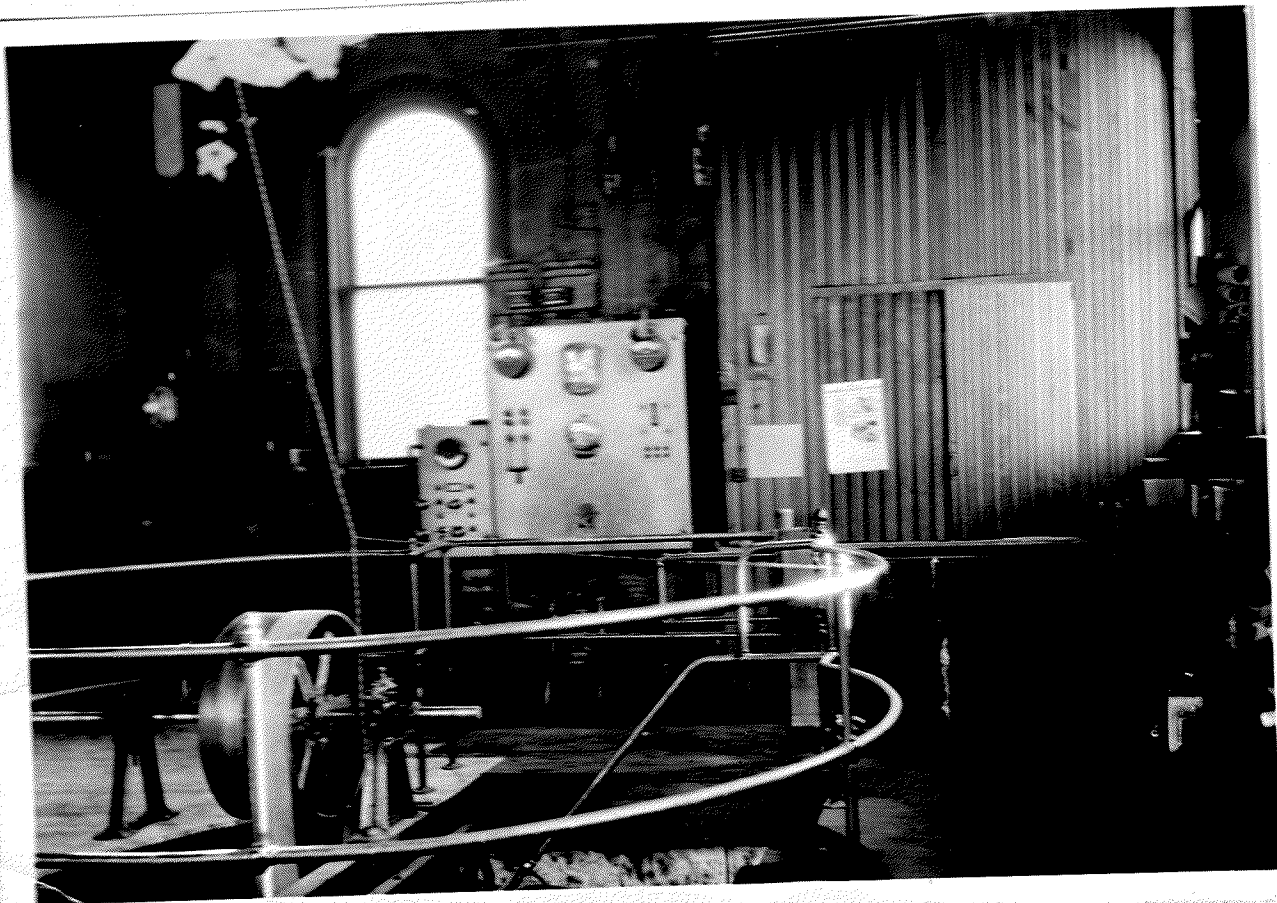
31.

Jim Wagner's dad, Charles Wagner, is shown at the Charles P. Rapp (1859-1945) memorial water fountain that now sits at the north side of the museum. Charles cut and laid the stone and Jim mixed the mortar. This was around 1950.



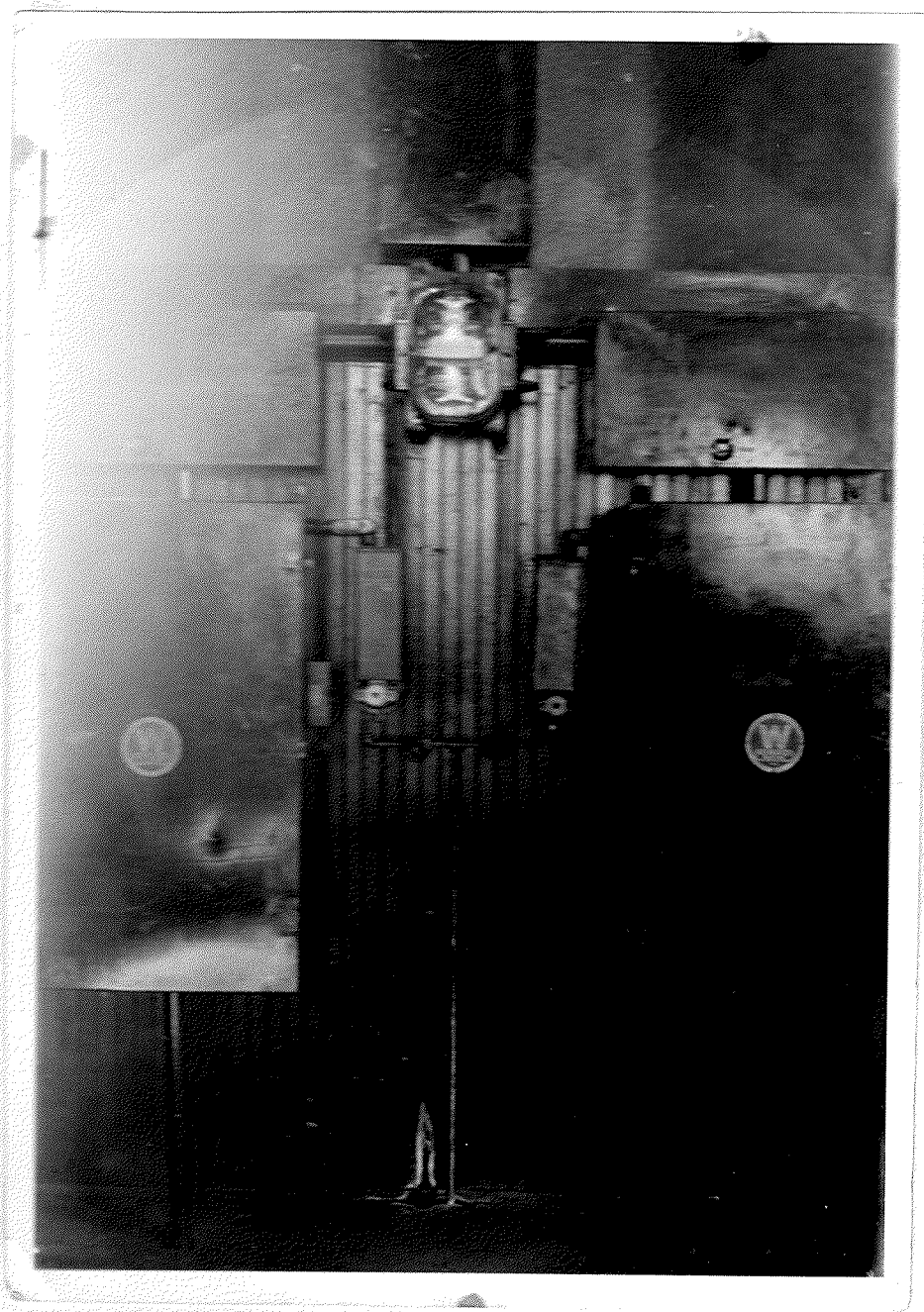
19.

The Fort Recovery Water Works and Light Plant!  
Charles Wagner not only worked for Wagner Construction, he became a licensed stationary steam engineer and worked at the Water Works.



20.

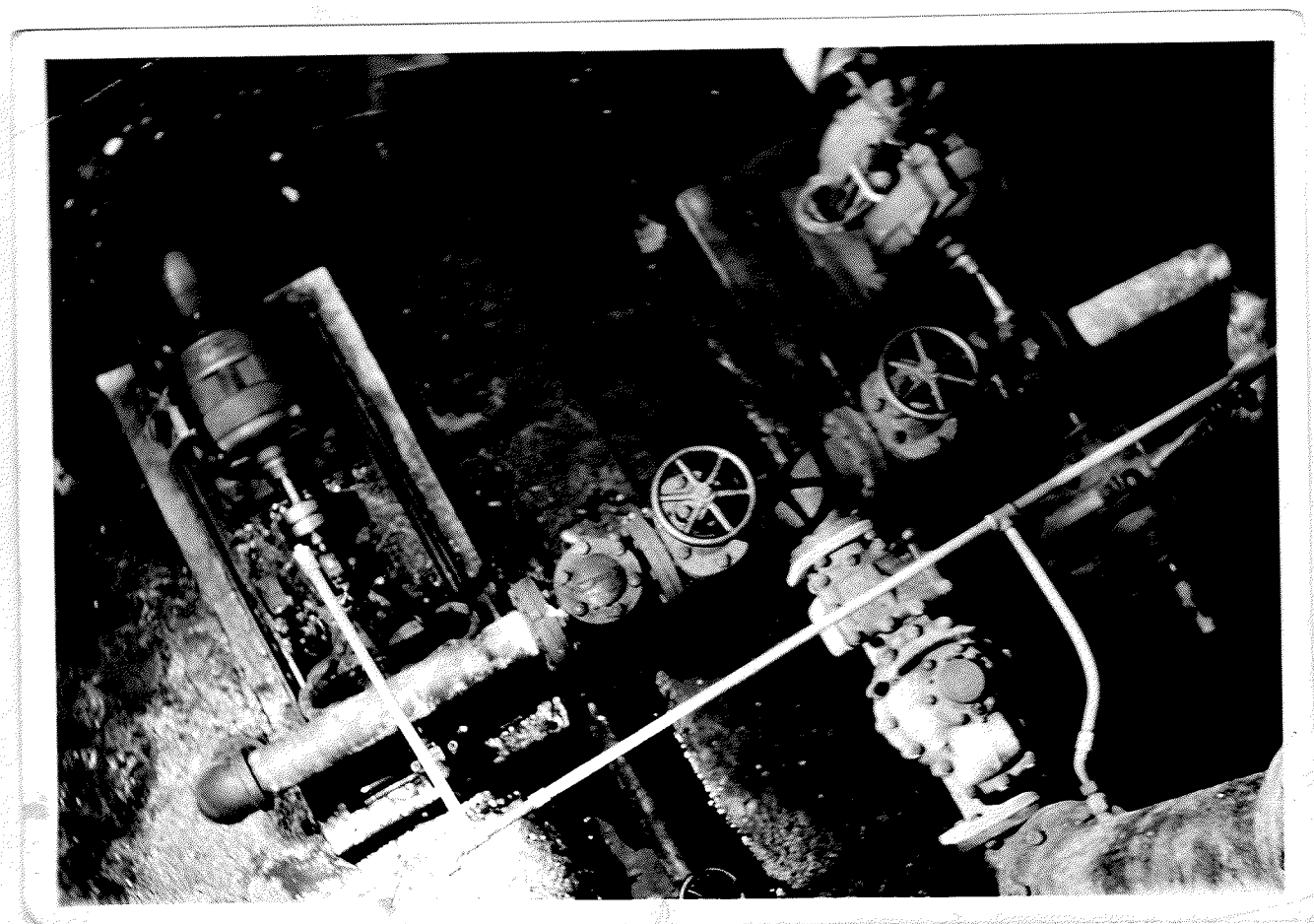
Shown is the interior of the original Fort Recovery Water Works and Light Plant.



21.

Looking at the wall of the Light Plant also located in the Water Works Building of Fort Recovery.





22.

The piping and pump of the Water Works Plant located on North Wayne Street. This is a view looking down into the pit. "It is probably still there!" (Jim Wagner)