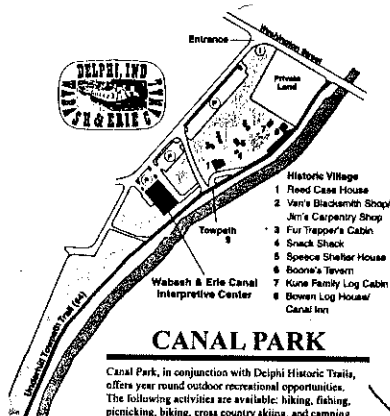


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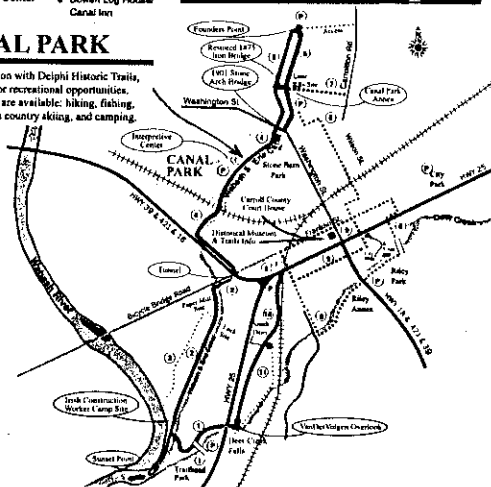
A WALKING GUIDE FOR WABASH & ERIE CANAL PARK AND NORTH END TRAILS

By Mark Smith, Canal Historian



CANAL PARK

Canal Park, in conjunction with Delphi Historic Trails, offers year round outdoor recreational opportunities. The following activities are available: hiking, fishing, picnicking, biking, cross country skiing, and camping.



OUR TRAILS

Delphi Historic Trails now offer more than 7 miles of beautiful trails.

- 1 Robbins Trail • 0.5 mile
- 2 VanSoy Towpath Trail • 0.9 mile
- 3 Obeah Millrace Trail • 0.6 mile
- 4 Underhill Towpath Trail • 0.7 mile
- 5 Founders Towpath Trail • 0.5 mile
- 6 North End Trail • 0.5 mile
- 7 Belt Railroad Trail • 0.3 mile
- 8 Riley-City Trail • 1.5 miles
- 9 Downtown Loop Trail • 1.0 miles
- 10 Interurban Trail • 0.7 mile
- 11 Happy Jack's Loop • 0.5 mile

For more detailed trail information, see our Delphi Trail Guide brochure.

CITY OF DELPHI
Trails & Parks

Coriell County Wabash & Erie Canal, Inc.
DELPHI, INDIANA



Interpretive Center — beside the Underhill Towpath Trail

Samuel Milroy, who gave the City of Delphi its name, originally owned this site. The area later was owned by Samuel Grimes, Milroy's son-in-law, and, ultimately, by Bernard Schermerhorn, Reed Case's son-in-law, and Reed's daughter, Josephine, and their partner, the Greenup Brothers. The home which originally stood here prior to its being burned in a fire approximately thirty years ago was constructed by August Oheim around 1863. The home consisted of two main rooms downstairs, with a side room on the east, two main rooms upstairs, with a view to the Canal. Recent archaeological work along the foundation wall has revealed one coin dating to 1863 and a clay button.

Canal Park Village—

Reed Case, contractor for this section of the Canal, and his business partner, owned this site. James Spears came from Lafayette. Case came from Nelson County, Kentucky, and prior to his coming to Delphi, was superintendent of projects involving the National Road and the Canal from Delphi to Peru. Spears was a banker who served in various capacities in both the State Bank branch at Lafayette and the Commercial Bank in the same city. The site where our village is situated today was much earlier a location of two brick kilns, which were responsible for firing brick for many of the buildings in downtown Delphi. Brick was a vast improvement over the wooden frame structures that were susceptible to fire.

1. The Reed Case House—

The Reed Case House was constructed in 1844 on West Front Street. Case constructed this grand edifice in the early days of his entrepreneurial activity in the Delphi area. His business ventures included banking and grain handling. He also served his country in the Civil War for one year, and supervised the construction of the Rossville-Delphi Plank Road. This house had rooms added and became a tavern/inn for canal travelers. It was moved to the Park in 1983.

2. VanDerVolgen's Blacksmith Shop—

This small but vital part of our campus houses the blacksmith shop dedicated to our late master blacksmith, Lawrence VanDerVolgen. Van's uncle owned the General Store where the spring water tank flows continuously (today) in Pittsburg. Lawrence was a master blacksmith, who could virtually make a piece of iron talk.

3. The Fur Trapper's Cabin—

This small addition to the Canal Park is reminiscent of the Trailblazer Era of Carroll County, when fur traders such as John Duret and the descendants of Antoine Bondie from Fort Wayne tramped the length and breadth of the Wabash and other streams in this area. Phyllis Branch, widow of Rick "Reb" Branch of Galveston, donated this. There are no windows in this cabin to discourage visibility of the trader's valuables.

5. The Speece Shelter—

Lewis Speece and his brothers operated a small but thriving enterprise along the Towpath at Carrollton. This business consisted of both a Canal warehouse and a Canal boat, a kin to the original Speece ancestor operating a whaling boat in Germany. This was a common experience, due to the fact that many of the Canal shippers had been captains on large ships and thus were familiar with maritime enterprises.

Although the Speece warehouse was constructed in 1850, the Canal Park shelter was partially constructed from timbers in 1982, from the estate of Josephine Blanchard, a Speece granddaughter. Josephine was also the granddaughter of Dr. James Blanchard, a Canal-era medical doctor in Delphi.

6. The Robison Smokehouse— known as "Daniel Boone's Tavern"

In the days prior to large-scale packinghouses such as the ones that we know today, used smoke and salt to cure the meat. These were the primary methods of preserving that foodstuff. Not having any refrigeration, all sorts of meat cuts were hung from a peg in the smokehouse and exposed to smoke from woods ranging from hickory to apple. Following that process, the food could be stored either in the smokehouse itself or in barrels salt or dry oats / or bran until needed.

7. The Kuns Cabin—

Jacob and John Kuns settled in Rock Creek Township in the Canal Era, and operated a store from which they both shipped and received goods on the Canal. Their descendants, the Chester Kuns family, donated this edifice to the Canal Association in 1981. At one time, as many as thirteen family members were housed here. Old additions have been removed. The summer kitchen became a refreshment stand, which we now call the "Snack Shack." The Kuns families still come to Canal Park for their reunions.

8. The Bowen Cabin—

The Bowen Cabin came from a farm owned by Charles Bowen. He was a grandson of Abner Bowen, who came here from Ohio. Abner's first enterprise was a shipping franchise on the Canal. The Bowen family was known for its acumen in both farming and banking, the former of which was expressed in farmland which went as far as Missouri, and the latter of which was expressed in the Bowen Bank, located directly across Union Street from Shaffer's Station. The structure originally stood on ground located six miles south of Delphi, just a mile east of the Prince William Road. It was moved in 1987 and restored.

9. Stone Arch Bridge—

The structure you see at the edge of Canal park crossing the Canal is the third such to be placed across the Canal at this location. The first was a wooden span built in 1840. It eventually collapsed into the Canal in 1874. Due to the fact that the Canal was nearly defunct at that time, the County Commissioners were faced with the task of replacing the former wooden structure. This was done with a "bowstring" iron span identical to the one restored two blocks north and known as the "Paint Creek Bridge". The new wrought iron bridge was shipped from Massillon, Ohio, which, ironically, is another Canal City in its own right on the Ohio and Erie Canal south of Akron.

John C. O'Connor erected the current arch bridge on a stone foundation laid in 1901. He was given the bid for several stone structures in this area. Two other notable bridges still present are: one on the Delphi-Camden Road, and the other on West Franklin Street. The original canal structure on West Franklin was a pivot bridge, known as a Folly-Free bridge. O'Connor was an Irish Democrat in every sense of the word, running an unsuccessful campaign against the Republican Charles Harley for State Representative. One of the virulent campaign issues which was battled out in the local papers was Harley's price gouging of lime used for mortar. Mr. O'Connor's initials are in the keystone in the center of the Washington Street arch.

10. Washington Street—

Washington Street was the "interstate highway system" of the Canal Era. It connected the two bustling and teeming Canal towns of Delphi and Pittsburg. It was originally known as the Delphi-Pittsburg Road, and saw much traffic such as wagons, buggies, and by the twentieth century, automobiles. It was later on used as Old SR. 39, prior to the construction of the present thoroughfare in 1939.

12. Bolles Warehouse Site—

William Bolles, the better half of the partnership of Bolles and Colton, constructed a warehouse on a site between the Stone Barn and the Canal just adjacent to the Washington Street Bridge. The partnership of Bolles and Colton was a vital part of the Delphi-Pittsburg business landscape, and there were two buildings used by Mr. Bolles, one on the east side of the square where the present Antique Mall holds shop, and the other in the "Brick Store" in Pittsburg. The partnership, which was similar to that of Sears and Roebuck, ended due to Colton's over-extending himself.

13. Canal Boat Turn-Around—

As you may notice, this section of the Canal, though it has been filled above the old water level of the canal, represents a much wider section than the other reached of the canal you just saw in Canal Park. This is due to the fact that this area was used for turning boats and was ringed with docks for shipping burned lime produced nearby.

14. The Belt Railroad—

In the late 1890's-early 1900's, a group of Delphi merchants, many of whose names you see on street signs in West Delphi, formed a consortium to construct a rail spur. It connected the Monon Railroad on the east near the present Country Club to the Monon Railroad on the Northwest near the Wabash River (where the Stone Company operates).

The Belt Line serviced Harley Coal, the Delphi Ice Plant, Harley Brothers Lime, and the Great Northern Canning Company, which was one of the first such plants to put acidic vegetables in cans.

The trestle spanning the Canal collapsed in 1951 during a flood, and in 1999, with the development of the Delphi Historic Trails, the "Red Bridge" you see from across the Canal replaced the railroad bridge—only now it carries people instead of freight.

15. The Paint Creek Bridge—

This wrought-iron bowstring structure, which was a transitional type between the older wood covered bridges, and the more modern steel spans, was originally built at Massilon, Ohio, and is a virtual twin to that placed over the canal at Washington Street in 1874. The County bought both the same day in October 1873. This particular structure was originally one-quarter of a mile south of SR218 at the east edge of Camden. It was

18. Founder's Point—

The monument was erected to honor the original Canal Association organizers from 1971. These people had a vision that drove the movement, but it took more than two decades before the public could enjoy the fruits of their vision.

19. The Tumble—

The artificial waterfall at the far northern extent of today's canal section comes from the vast stone quarry. The bottom of the quarry must be constantly pumped to operate. US Aggregates owns Delphi Limestone Company. An agreement with the Stone Company, City of Delphi, and Canal Association allows clean groundwater to be discharged into the Canal. Delphi has the longest accessible watered section of the Wabash and Erie Canal in the state of Indiana.

20. Jack's Monument—

Jack Wroten, who came originally from Shelbyville, was an Eli Lilly Laboratory employee who adopted Delphi as his home. He resided in the Yeoman area, but owned the "Little Bit of Country" antique store on the corner of Main and Washington, in a building originally owned by Reed Case himself. Jack had a keen interest in Delphi life, and especially the Trails and the Canal. His love for this area led him to purchase a small farm near Trailhead Park and donate land needed for two trails to the Canal Association.

While working on the Trails in this area March 10, 1999 he suffered cardiac arrest and passed away. His ashes were spread here, July 4, 1999 and this monument stands as a testimony to his work.

21. The Levee—

The high grassy bank you see to the north is a levee constructed for the purposes of flood control in the early 1950's. Prior to its construction by the U.S. Corps of Engineers, almost the entire North end of the City was flooded on various occasions. The floodwaters would enter the City through the Canal, and flood the entire North end, right up to Whiteman's Elevator next to St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church.

previously owned by Wilmer "Stub" Hodges, after being abandoned by the County in the early 1990's.

It took only a bit of persuasion from Dan McCain, Canal Board President, to entice "Stub" to donate this gem of a structure. A grant from the Department of Natural Resources and a lot of sweat equity from nearly 100 volunteers working eighteen months were needed to convert this rusty hulk into a restored showpiece you see now. Only four bolts were broken during disassembly. Total parts exceeded 3,400, and each was cleaned, repaired, and painted before being reassembled in Anderson's warehouse east of Delphi. Re-erected in September 1999 over the Canal, the beautiful structure was dedicated in October 1999 before a large crowd chanting "Hip-Hip-Hooray".. The original structure is painted the same color as the bridge appeared in 1874. The deck utilizes the same kind of wood as was used then—white and red oak. Handrails that were added for safety are painted black, and were not part of the original bridge.

16. Hubbard and Harley Lime Kilns

Erastus Hubbard, the Great-great-uncle and David Rogers Harley, great-great-grandfather of our present day Dan McCain, started the lime business on this site in 1857 as partners. They also acquired the failed Grimes Hotel at the end of the field where McCain lives and made it into a cooperage shop for the purpose of constructing barrels to ship lime on the Canal. This was one of the first industries on this watery means of transportation in the Delphi area. David Rogers Harley came from Abingdon, Virginia via Franklin County, Indiana, and Erastus Hubbard came to Delphi from Chenango County, New York via Tippecanoe County. Together they established the lime, plaster, and whitening business that became Hubbard and Harley. Erastus' sister, Persis, married David Rogers Harley in 1847, but she died the same year they started the lime business. By 1871, all twenty-two kilns in the Delphi area incorporated as the Delphi Lime Company, and were more efficiently operated under common management.

17. The Harley Brothers Lime Kilns—(East of the Red Bridge)

The Harley Brothers Lime Kilns were one set of twenty-two kilns that operated at various sites in the North end of Delphi. The early day kilns, owned by people such as Hutchinson and Olds, were collapsible, and it was necessary to rebuild them at the beginning of each new burn. Others like Cartwright and Mitchell were building more modern patented versions that could be fed fuel and stone continuously. Limestone in its natural state contains some impurities that limit its use. The quality of limestone in this area is such that, when "burned" in the tall kilns produces a very high quality of plaster, lime mortar, or whitewash.

Karst Topography

Karst Topography, a phenomenon usually reserved for the Cave Country in the southern part of the state, is part of a prehistoric ocean reef. Although we have no actual caves such as Meramec, Carlsbad, Mammoth, or Wyandotte, surprisingly enough, there are actual sinkholes that feed into the cavernous limestone at various points along the Canal. In 1996, after a sinkhole drained the canal after its being watered. A year earlier, to prevent water loss, 135 truckloads of clay were dumped and spread in the Canal bed near Washington Street. The sinkhole itself was treated with Bentonite, a high expansion pure clay material from Wyoming. Its high expense precluded Bentonite from being used on any large area so instead 15" of local clay was used. More clay is needed on the sinkholes, which have reappeared recently robbing the Canal of its water. Previously, the natural high water table before quarry expansion prevented sinkholes from being a problem.

Karst topography is a phenomenon characterized by sinkholes which become visible on the surface of the ground, and over many years mildly acidic water percolates through fissures in the limestone and erodes the bedrock underneath, resulting in a series of small cave-like underground holes.

