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NEWS FROM THE WABASH & ERIE CANAL • DELPHI, INDIANA January 2022



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19th Century Yelp Review Battles

Outdoor Indiana Highlights the Canal Era



On a spring day in 1996, Sam Lippert of *Outdoor Indiana* and a couple of his friends were walking along Canal Road just outside of the city limits. He thought he saw a metal bridge and saw stone remnants in the canal.

"I'm not really being here," he remembers thinking about the stone. "I'm not sure, there shouldn't be any stone like that here."

The couple got the stone out of his mind. Lippert started to research construction projects in the area and found out the story was the remainder of a culvert from what was once the longest canal in the Northern Hemisphere, the Wabash & Erie Canal. When completed, the canal ran from Toledo, Ohio to Evansville, a total of 400 miles, 300 of them in Indiana, and part of it ran through Terre Haute.

Lippert became enthralled with canals. He wanted all he could about the waterways that ran through the city and how it was built. That's why he was adamant the city buy the historic house that culvert when a construction company dug them up while building the 90th Road 401 bypass around Terre Haute in 2007. The houses are now in Frontier Park, some of them open underneath for preservation, others under a shelter so visitors can view them.

He has found remnants of the canal throughout Vigo County: some abandoned ditches and small rivers have turned out to be parts of the canal and Lippert still goes over every town he finds a new one.

"I'd tell the kids you don't know what you're looking at if you haven't done the research, then you realize there are parts of this canal everywhere," he said.

Remnants of this and other canals can be found statewide. A few places where canals were built are easier to recognize than partially abandoned ones in a river. Indianapolis' Canal Walk is the remains of the Central Canal, which was supposed to link the Wabash & Erie to Evansville. It was named an American Water Landmark by the American Water Works Association in 1975.

The Whitewater Canal State Historic Site, near the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites, has remains of a third canal that would have linked the Whitewater Valley with the Ohio River and Cincinnati. The nearby Duck Creek Aqueduct is a masonry structure that stretched the canal over Duck Creek, the only surviving covered masonry aqueduct in the United States. Both the aqueduct and the canal itself are the National Register of Historic Places, which, in Indiana, is managed by the 19th Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology (DHPA). The aqueduct has also been named a National Historic Land Engineering Landmark.

"These canals help show that canals have shaped the social, physical landscape, but their role in the river history is bigger." The canals of Indiana County would deliver its different had not been canal the way we did," said Paul Dierker, an

If you subscribe to *Outdoor Indiana*, a publication of the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, you may have noticed a feature on the Canal Era of our state's history!

If you are looking for a great overview of the story of canals in Indiana and the "Internal Improvements" craze of the 1800s, this is the resource for you. You can subscribe to *Outdoor Indiana* at [this link](#).

Special thanks to Bonnie Maxwell for putting this on our radar.



OK, so we know that Yelp reviews didn't exist during the Canal Era, but that didn't stop owners of inns and businesses from doing their share of trash talking! Inns and taverns were particularly important along the Canal's route, much like the rest stops that we use along interstates today. Below is a picture of modern markers at Carrollton Bridge which mark the location of a popular Canal Era establishment, the Mentzer Tavern.



The establishment at the center of this particular drama is the Railroad House, an inn that was once owned by a man named Thomas Weakley. When new management took over the inn from Weakley, a glowing review by James B. Newton suddenly appeared in an 1855 issue of the *Delphi Weekly Times*.

Our Audio-Visual System Gets a Serious Upgrade



Thanks to a generous gift from Ken and Julie Pyle and their family, the audio and visual equipment in our conference hall recently underwent a major upgrade! Thanks to this new equipment, we are ready to accommodate any potential client needs, which helps keep the Canal in a strong position to sustainably continue its mission.



Included in the audio upgrades are a new amplifier, mixer, media player, wireless microphones, and wired microphones. For the visuals, we now have a much larger screen that is

Newton stated that the inn had "changed in almost every respect," having been cleaned and furnished properly by the new owner. He even went so far as to state that clients under Weakley's tenure had been "victims of a one-horse monopoly." Obviously, this didn't reflect too well on Weakley's former practices!

In response, Weakley published his own editorial, accusing Newton of having been paid off to write this positive review! He lambasted Newton for "cowardice" and even called out the debts that Newton had left unpaid from when he previously stayed at the Railroad House "when he was attempting to study law without the brains to comprehend the science."

Needless to say, today's internet users are just the latest in the time-honored tradition of using sarcasm and insults to protect one's interests!

Business Meetings at the Canal



If you or someone you know is looking to host businesses in a beautiful space that offers both peacefulness and

motorized, along with a mounted projector that can wirelessly receive HDMI signal. We have already had the chance to use these resources as we serve the community and make our facilities available.



Among other things, picking up some of the equipment gave our director Mike Tetrault a good reason to visit his favorite place in the world: Sweetwater, a music retailer in Fort Wayne. We look forward to using these new tools to advance the mission of the Canal for many years to come!

Plan for Trail Enhancements



A plan for an enhanced trailhead entry in the northeast quadrant of Delphi Historic Trails was unveiled recently. This site along Carrollton Road/700 West just north of town allows parking and entrance to the Belt Railway Trail that leads west to the Red Bridge Settlement along the restored Wabash and Erie Canal. Funding for this enhancement is being sought along

productivity, give us a call!

You can watch a [promotional video at this link](#) to see some of the many amenities we have to offer!

Did you know...?



You can hold your wedding, corporate meeting, or birthday celebration at the Canal Center?



We offer a variety of options for each different type of event. We offer free wi-fi and can accommodate up to 300 guests!

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If you would like to

with several other local improvements unveiled in the four county Wabash River Greenway plan.



Regional representatives from Tippecanoe, Warren, Fountain, and Carroll counties met in Lafayette recently where the Wabash River Greenway trail enhancements were unveiled. Many new exciting hiking and biking connections were presented. Dan McCain represented Delphi Historic Trails, one of the earliest trail systems which began in the West Central Indiana region in the 1980s.

Mapping the Trails

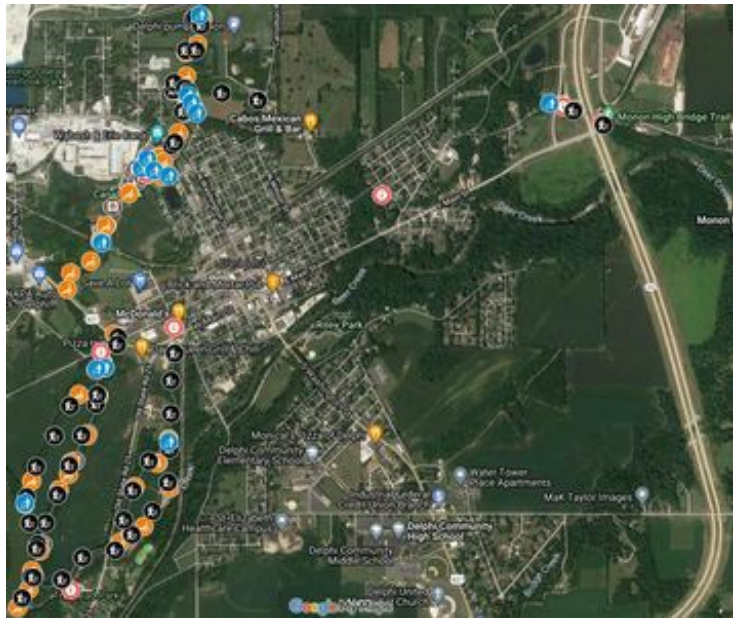


As you probably know, we have the privilege of stewarding over 10 miles of trails throughout Delphi. As the years have gone by, we have accumulated all sorts of resources along our trails, and we are in the process of mapping them all out!

volunteer at the Wabash & Erie Canal please click [here!](#)

For a complete list of activities please visit us at www.wabashanderiecanal.org

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Initially, this was just going to be a simple task to create a small index to make sure all our resources are well-maintained and available for public enjoyment. But as we've combed through the network of paths, we have logged nearly 200 items so far! This includes benches, interpretive panels, waste receptacles, mileage markers, and more.

Our goal is to create an interactive map that can be used for planning purposes, even where the public can see all that we offer on our picturesque trail system!

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