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NEWS FROM THE WABASH & ERIE CANAL • DELPHI, INDIANA  
August 2023



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**Volunteer  
Highlight: Mark  
Smith**

Each month, we want to highlight one of our many volunteers in recognition of

**A Quick History of "Canal Pork"**



Last weekend, the Carroll County Chamber of Commerce hosted the very popular Indiana Bacon Festival, and it was a terrific time for all who attended. While Delphi is home to Indiana Packers, a prolific pork producer, you may not know that Delphi was also a key player in the industry during the Canal Era!

Long before Indiana Packers opened up shop, Spears, Case & Co. maintained one of the region's biggest pork packing operations. Their warehouse was located on a sidecut of the Wabash & Erie Canal, which made for convenient shipping.

their service and to share ways that you can get involved in our mission of preservation, education, and recreation.

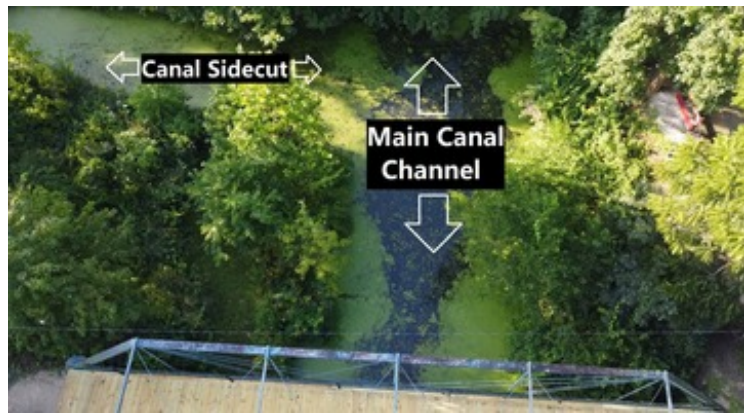
This month, we'll hear from Carroll County Historian Mark Smith.



**What do you do at the Canal?** I'm a docent at the Reed Case House, interpreting the person of Reed Case. He was a very versatile person during the Canal Era. I'm also on the Archives Committee. I divide my time between Canal Park and the Historical Society Museum.

**Where are you from, and how long have you been volunteering at the Canal?** I'm a Carroll County boy, although I live in Brookston. My heart is in Carroll County. I was born in Cutler, and my folks moved to the west of Flora, and later south of Delphi. I have ancestry in various townships.

I've lost track of how many years I've been involved, perhaps a little over 20 years. I helped research for the Interpretive Center and the Reed Case House. I was at the groundbreaking for the Interpretive Center. I've also done research on the McCain family, the Pigman family, and various Canal Era families.



A sidecut is like a small "driveway" off the main canal. Entrepreneurs could use private funding to build a sidecut for efficiency and direct canal access. The sidecut pictured above, used by Spears, Case & Co., is still easily seen from the VanScoy Towpath Trail near the foot of Main Street in Delphi.



One of the company's founders was Reed Case, the same man who oversaw canal construction in Miami County and from Delphi to Lafayette. He was a multi-faceted business tycoon!



**How did you get involved at the Canal?** I credit my late father for that. He had a keen interest in the canal and trails. He would come home talking about how wonderful the developing Delphi trails were, and all about canal boats. When he passed away in 2001, we planted a tree in his honor in the Pioneer Village. His name was Robert Smith.



**What has been a highlight of volunteering at the Canal?** I think the time I orchestrated the proclamation from the Mayor's Office in Toledo, Ohio. I saw a need to celebrate the connection with the Port of Toledo. I corresponded with their office and received a proclamation that's in the Interpretive Center today. Another highlight was working with the Brackenridge family to track down portraits now housed in the Case House. Being acquainted with descendants of Reed Case is also a pleasure; it helps flesh

Hogs were brought to Delphi from across the Midwest, just like today. Newspaper accounts tell us what life was like back then:

**December 1842:** "From the fact that dealers here are giving better prices than Lafayette and Logansport, hundreds of hogs have been 'drove' to this place from Tippecanoe, Clinton, Cass, and White Counties. We candidly believe more business is transacted in Delphi than any town its size in the West. It is astonishing to see the number of people who visit our town daily. It seems to be much easier and more profitable to feed grain to the hogs and thus transport it to market, even for hundreds of miles, than to ship the corn as grain."

**December 1843:** "Slaughter houses in Delphi are very busy--the city is covered with wagon loads of hogs."

**January 1844:** "Pork still keeps up its prices in Delphi. Thousands of hogs have been slaughtered here this season, upward of 10,000. We venture to assert that better pork will not be shipped from any other point--Delphi is bound to be the big town on the Wabash just as sure as shootin'."

Business was so brisk that in 1849, Delphi passed an ordinance which forced the pork packing establishment to be moved further from town. You can imagine the nuisance caused by droves of hogs funneling through city streets!

Thanks to Mark Smith for passing along this research. You can visit him and learn more local history at the Reed Case House on Saturday afternoons through September 9.

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## Fall Classes Continue!

If you are considering joining the educational, hands-on fun for a class at Canal Park, there's no better time to sign up!



Above you can see students of the recent broom-making class proudly displaying their creations. When you take a class with one of our brilliant instructors, you'll not only learn a new skill,

out the family story.

**Do you have a favorite Canal Era fun fact?** I have a strong interest in economic development. Had it not been for the Canal Era, Delphi would hardly be here! When you think about the industries and businesses that are here because of the canal, the homes along Front Street, the buildings downtown, we owe it to the canal.

*Click the link below for more information about volunteering with us!*

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## **VOLUNTEER** **TODAY!**

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## **Upcoming Events**

Here are some ways you can experience the Canal for yourself in the coming month!



**September 2:** Canal Season Saturday, 1-4PM

**September 9:** Canal Season CLOSING DAY, 1-4PM

**September 15-16:** Coopering Tools class, 9AM-5PM

you get to take home your handiwork!

There will be a wide selection of classes for mid-September, and more opportunities for mid-October! Check out the list below for your options:

**Coopering Tools** (September 15-16, 9AM-5PM each day)

**Weaving** (September 16, 9AM-4PM)

**Hand Quilting** (September 16, 9AM-4PM)

**Wool Felting** (September 16, 9AM-2PM)

**Basket Making** (September 16, 9AM-3PM)

**Whitewashing** (September 16, 9AM-Noon)

**Beading** (September 23, 9AM-3PM)

**Coopering Bucket** (October 13-14, 9AM-5PM each day)

**Hearth Cooking** (October 14, 9AM-3PM)



More information and specifics are [available now on our website](#), but you can also get started by checking out the [online registration form at this link!](#)

We hope to see you soon at the Canal for a one-of-a-kind learning experience!

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## **Campground Bustling with Activity**

One of Canal Park's many surprises is that we offer RV campsites,

**September 16:** Weaving, Hand Quilting, Needle Felting, Basket Making, and Whitewashing classes (all start at 9AM).

**September 23:** Beading class, 9AM-3PM

### 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 wifi and can accommodate up to 300 guests!

[Save your date today!](#)



**Thanks to Our  
Business  
Supporters!**

We are fortunate to have

primitive camping, and even rustic log cabins for rent on Airbnb! There has been a steady increase of campers in the past few years, and this season has been no exception!



We intentionally keep the campground small and only take short-term reservations so plenty of visitors can enjoy a peaceful recreational experience. This season we have welcomed guests from all around the world, and the positive reviews have been overwhelming!



In fact, according to RV Life, the most popular online source for trusted campground reviews, Canal Park Campground has the

many generous businesses in the community who place great value on preservation, education, and recreation.

If you have need of any services offered by the businesses below, we strongly recommend you reach out to them! They are all wonderful organizations who care about the community they serve!

#### **Festival Sponsors (\$1000)**

- *Horizon Veterinary Service*

#### **Bronze Supporters (\$500)**

- *Camflo*
- *Carroll-White REMC*
- *Indiana Packers*
- *H&R Block of Crawfordsville*

#### **Community Supporters (\$100+)**

- *Brick & Mortar Pub*
- *Collisions Unlimited*
- *D-K Construction*
- *Deiwert Insurance*
- *Fieldings Jewelry & Time*
- *Helms Lawn Specialists, Inc*
- *Indiana Farm Bureau Insurance*
- *Pizza Hut Delphi*
- *Visit Lafayette-West Lafayette*

If you'd like to add your business to this list, please email:

director@canalcenter.org for information about sponsorships.

second highest rating (9.6/10) among ALL RV parks within a 100-mile radius of Delphi!



A huge reason for this success has been the astounding hospitality and service of Roger and Sherry Circle, our all-star camp hosts. They make the campground a welcoming and delightful space for all to enjoy. Additionally, we have to credit the volunteers and part-time staff who keep the campground looking and functioning its best!



If you would like to camp with us, call our office anytime (765-564-2870). We have sites available year-round. If you don't catch us during office hours, please leave a voicemail and we will get back with you ASAP! You can get more detailed information about each campsite at [our website](#). We can't wait to see you enjoying your own canal camping excursion!

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