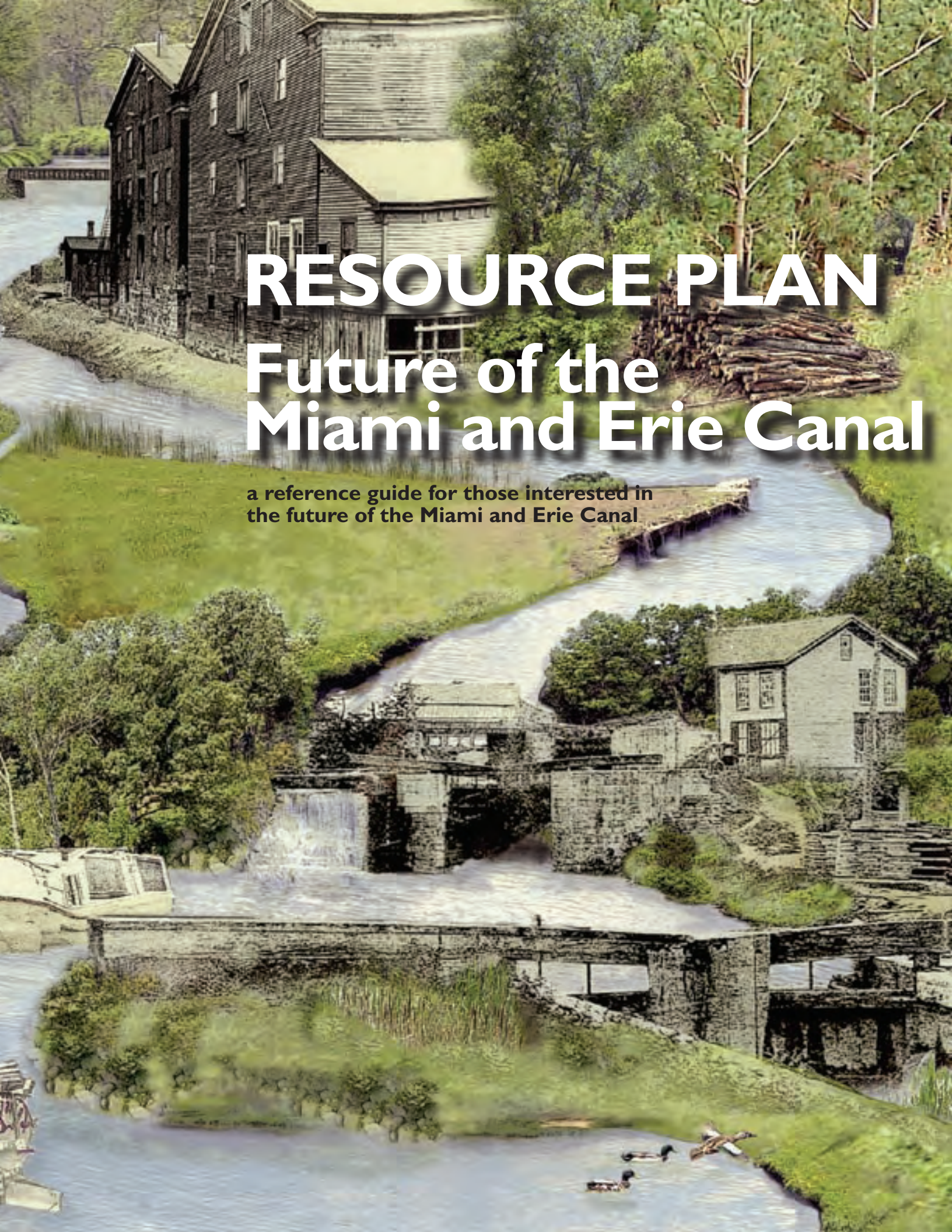

RESOURCE PLAN

Future of the Miami and Erie Canal

a reference guide for those interested in the future of the Miami and Erie Canal

Preface

This resource plan serves as a reference guide for those interested in the future of the Miami and Erie Canal. The plans and ideas detailed in this report resulted from site inventory and analysis by people with interest in the development of the corridor. We encourage individuals to seek additional information on the various issues presented.

The canal resource plan is conceptual and flexible. It does not provide site-specific architectural/engineering design concepts, but does identify issues facing the corridor, from opportunities to constraints, as well as observed trends. The objectives and recommendations presented are aimed at preserving and improving the historic Miami and Erie Canal, developing its natural, historic, and recreational resources from Delphos to Piqua.

Acknowledgement

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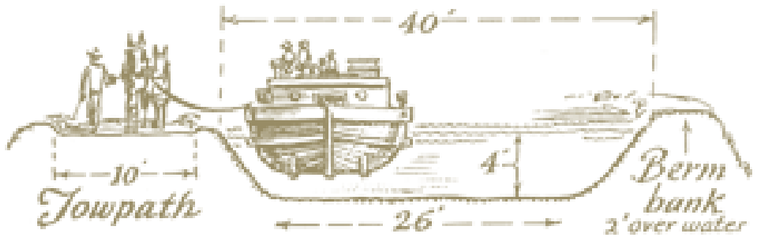
I Introduction

The Miami and Erie Canal was created in the early 1800s to provide farmers in western Ohio with access to markets in the populated regions of the eastern United States. During its active lifetime, the canal was critical to the settlements in the Northwest Territories.

The focus of this plan is the second longest contiguous portion of historic canal in the United States. Only New York's Erie Canal is longer. The 59-mile canal section stretches from Delphos in Allen County south to Piqua in Miami County and has miles of feeders from reservoirs that supply water to the canal. In its glory the canal and its feeders measured more than 300 miles.

The canal region is rich in cultural and architectural diversity. A look back in history reveals the pride of those who built the quaint villages, one-room schoolhouses, magnificent courthouses and rural churches. It was their work ethic, dedication and faith that helped the region prosper.

The region also is blessed with exceptional natural resources and recreational opportunities, making it a playground for outdoor enthusiasts. Its land is among the most fertile in the state. These resources require careful stewardship to ensure they remain in the future. (Feasibility Study: Executive Summary, 1/2000)



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II History

In 1803, legislation went before Congress to carve the first of several states from the Federal Territories. The Northwest Territory north of the Ohio River sought to become a state. And while the requisite number of residents inhabited the area, only an occasional wandering pioneer or frontiersman visited the region.

The seeds of a great civilization had been planted along the Ohio, Miami and Scioto Rivers, yet the interior remained isolated from the avenues of commerce that meant future growth and prosperity. Much of the area consisted of untamed wilderness where the bear, wolf, and cougar were more prevalent than people. Dense forests, so old and thick that the sun rarely shined on their leafy floors, stretched for miles. (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P. 1)

It was the interior of the state, with cheap land, that became the focus of investment in the region. Congress was convinced that by creating the State of Ohio population pressure could be eased, commerce increased and industry given a boost toward the future. In February 1803, Congress passed an act creating Ohio. When the state assembly met that March, among its first items of business was pondering Ohio's potentially profitable interior. Pioneer settlement located far afield from the principal rivers were capable of producing magnificent yields of grain, fruit and livestock; however, the cost of getting those goods to markets along the Atlantic coastline was immense. Even as the New York market clamored for staples and retail prices rose, the cost of flour remained well below the cost of transporting it from Ohio's fertile interior to New York. The young state was desperate for an inexpensive system of delivery. For a time, legislative pressure was applied to the federal government to build a road, resulting in the national highway. But the cost of construction and maintenance of such a road led officials to question the merit of extending it. There was no means yet of transporting large quantities of goods quickly. (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P. 1)

Several surveys were reviewed prior to constructing the canal system. Routes explored were abandoned because of difficult terrain and lack of sufficient water supply to the canal. The Ohio Canal Commission

The gates to Ohio's frontier were opened in the 1790s with the end of the Indian conflicts. Settlements lined the rivers and later the national road (U.S. Route 40), which was completed in the 1820s. Large sections of the state remained unsettled with no reliable forms of transportation to reach them.

CANAL TIME LINE

1803

In February 1803, Congress passed an act creating Ohio.

1820

Ohio had grown to a population of 580,000 residents.

Ohio suffered from a lack of reliable transportation to move its products to eastern markets.

The National Road was completed only from Cumberland to Wheeling and was an expensive method of transportation. The Ohio-Mississippi river route was long and dangerous.

1817

New York broke ground on a canal connecting Lake Erie with the Hudson River and New York City.

1822

Ohio state legislature commissioned the first canal feasibility survey in an effort to bring a modern reliable transportation system to the growing state.

accepted a survey in 1825 and funds were received by the legislature to begin construction. Ohio Governor Jeremiah Morrow turned the first spade of earth at Middletown. Actual construction moved north and south from Middletown with separate crews working to construct the single reservoir, which had been recommended for the canal. With no significant delays, the huge black pit quickly took shape. The legislature mandated that the canal be no less than 24-feet across at the bottom and 40-feet at the top, from towpath lip to berm lip. They wanted a wide clear avenue cut back on either right-of-way. And from there, the Miami and Erie Canal was created using only shovels and horses.

A freight-carrying canal must be flat and drop or raise boats through locks. In areas of incline or decline, economy suggests a minimum number of complex water elevators. The route of the Miami and Erie Canal is filled with twists, turns and curves, but each is meant to alleviate the need for raising and lowering boats. Thus, the canal is often dug to great depth or elevated above the surrounding ground level to provide a level path for the water. Although locks and aqueducts were preferably built of stone, many were constructed from native woods. The complex canal structures built in the earliest period of Ohio's canal boom have survived almost unchanged in spite of official abandonment and neglect.

All canal boats included as part of the "crew" several pairs of horses or mules, a team out on the bank doing the pulling and relief teams on board. The pace would be four miles an hour, the state-mandated speed limit on the canals. The seemingly slow speed eliminated a wake behind the boat, which would wash against the bank, loosening clay and damaging the walls. It also meant that the towing animals would not tire as quickly, allowing them to haul boat and load between sixteen and twenty miles before switching teams. (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P. 7)

The project's engineer reported that the most appropriate course for the canal lay between two low, swampy areas, one to the east of Loramie's Settlement and another to the northwest, near Girty's Town. The latter would become a vast inland sea that would flood the canal for years to come. That reservoir, the Mercer County Reservoir or Grand Lake, was an immense undertaking. Over the effective life of the Miami and Erie Canal, the reservoir gathered the tiny threads of available water into a mighty flood that fed billions of gallons of water into the canal, allowing its effective and economical use. A second, much smaller reservoir, was built just east and south of the village. The reservoir and the village both bear the name of French-Canadian trader Pierre Loramie. Loramie was essential to maintaining adequate supplies of water for the descent from the Summit to the Miami Valley where water from the 7,200-acre Lewistown Reservoir (Indian Lake), located at the head of the Great Miami, assured abundant water for the Dayton to Cincinnati portion of the Canal. (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P. 10)

Work began just as quickly as workers were found, and by late 1831 an emerging towpath provided a firm roadway through what only months before had been impenetrable swamp. Over the entire route huge trees were felled to create a massive scar 120-feet wide. Rivers were dammed and drained to expose

RESOURCE PLAN Future of the Miami and Erie Canal

their rock floor, which was then quarried for buildings stone locks and aqueduct abutments. Although official specifications mandated stone boxes for each lock site, the swampy conditions made transporting stone virtually impossible and construction engineers made regular use of the immediately available oaks to form temporary wood locks. In order to assure future construction of stone works to replace the wood locks, two numbering systems were employed to designate the water elevators, stone locks being given sequential numbers for the entire system, wood locks being numbered in their own sequence.

The Miami and Erie Canal quickly changed the face of Western Ohio. Along side the waterway a rich variety of social levels developed, new industries spawned and cities born. In the south, numerous communities began to prosper, especially Dayton. By 1830, much of the region had been cleared and settled, the older log cabins giving way to magnificent brick and wood frame buildings. Hundreds of mills appeared on the berm path or on parallel races near the locks. Lumber yards sprang up to provide building materials not only for the growing towns, but also for export. The economy of southwest Ohio boomed. On the canal itself, the boats quickly grew to a vast fleet, with improvements and experimentation under way. Canal captains attempted to enlarge cargo capacity by eliminating the draft animals and gave steam power a try. (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P. 16)

The greatest obstacle to completion of the canal was encountered in Putnam County. The size of Grand Lake had been a temporary problem, as was the undertaking at Deep Cut, but it was the "jack wax" clay of Putnam County that proved to be the real test of Ohio's stamina. Mile after mile, thick clay oozed over the land. This was no ordinary clay. This was sticky, heavy unyielding muck in which people, animals and wagons became mired almost to the point of not being able to get free. It was impossible to use drags to move the thick clay and it became necessary to remove each load by hand, from nearly 10 miles of canal. So difficult was the work that it claimed more lives than any other comparable stretch. Incomplete drainage meant working in up to three feet of water, infested with insects and disease. The sections of the canal built through this region were among the last completed. (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P. 14)

The canal was completed in 1844. Numerous locks used little or no stone and attempts to rebuild wooden locks using stone failed. The stone locks from Loramie Summit north to Defiance were the exception. (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P. 13) The Miami and Erie Canal was 244 miles long and had 105 locks, with an average of four miles between lock sites. Locking through required anywhere from eight to 15 minutes, depending on wicket size and the daring of crews in forcing gates when the box was partially empty or full. In general, locking through slowed down the average speed of a boat by 25 percent, to just over 3 mph for the trip from Toledo to Cincinnati. (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P.9) (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P. 20)

Boating was a around-the-clock operation. Boats were equipped with kerosene lanterns or coal oil lamps,

CANAL TIME LINE

1825

July 25, Construction of the first leg of the Canal from Middletown to Cincinnati began.

1827

July 3, 1827-Governor Trimble and the canal commission boarded a canal boat in Akron and the next day arrived in Cleveland.

1828

The Miami Canal was in operation from Middletown to Cincinnati.

1830

17 miles were completed to Dayton.

1832

The entire 308-mile route of the Ohio-Erie was open to traffic.

called "bulls eyes" after the Freznel Lens used to intensify the beam. Both night and day, horns were used to get the attention of people on the bank. As a rule, the towpath was on the west side of the canal for boats going either direction. Disabled or stopped boats steered themselves against the east bank to clear the channel for other traffic. The polite captain of a downstream vessel gave right of way to the upstream traffic, dropping his towrope to the canal bottom to let the other boat pass. (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P. 20)

The boating season ran from March until well into November, at which time the family and crew would return to their home. For many years, the canal was winter-drained and boats had to be parked in convenient wide waters for wintering, leaving the channel clear for any necessary repairs. In the later years, draining the canal was abandoned. Boats left parked in the canal often were damaged by ice and needed to be repaired. As late as 1910 several dry docks still functioned, "parking" boats on heavy timber risers to prevent damage. On the canal, blocks of ice were regularly cut and stored in heaps of sawdust and would be sold through the summer months. Ice-skating over the frozen canal provided both sport and an efficient way to get from town to town. (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P. 21 & 22)

Operating a boat was reserved for relatively well-to-do owners and their hired men. Canal boating on larger vessels quickly became the premier form of travel in Ohio. Travel took four days from Cincinnati to Toledo. Passengers were assured a safe place from storms, comfortable lodging and freedom from unrelenting mud. The boats traded in bumpy wagon seats and uncomfortable saddles for the ease of a chair or bench. Unlike many new forms of transportation, canal boating was relatively inexpensive. A cross-state trip cost $1.20 in 1847, a price thousands gladly paid for the hearty meals, almost bug-free beds and timely arrival. (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P. 22 & 27)

The canal rapidly opened up Ohio's interior to development and for a number of years the freight carried on the canal represented almost the entire output of the state. Even with the introduction of the railroad during the 1840s and 1850s, the Miami and Erie Canal provided for huge shipments of supplies and men for the war effort. Newspapers all across the state heralded them as the very saviors of the Union. The canal made it possible to release rail equipment for use elsewhere without any significant delay in moving war material across the state.

Between 1845 and 1851, canal revenues generated by charging tolls to pass through certain points along the waterways, increased yearly, reaching a high point of nearly $800,000. Tolls began to decline after 1851 as rails replaced the canal as primary freight hauler. In 1861, the legislature approved a 10-year lease transferring the Miami and Erie Canal to private operators, a lease that was renewed in 1867. By 1863 the terminal at Cincinnati was abandoned, its huge wharves and docks filled in so rails could be installed. Within 10 years, terminal wharves in Toledo and Cleveland were transferred. (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P. 28)

The Miami and Erie Canel remained an important local transportation

system, especially in the mill towns that lined the canal. With leased water rights, many an owner resisted efforts to electrify and insisted that the state maintain an adequate supply of water to turn the wheels and provide cooling water for machinery. Between Cincinnati and Toledo a city or town had sprung up every seven to ten miles and each lock site possessed its own variety of mills, shops and houses, most of which were glamorized by the addition of a village name. Hotels, restaurants, and general stores lined the canal in an almost unending procession from Lake Erie to the Ohio River and all did sufficient trade to keep alive the dream that each tiny local would one day become another Dayton or Cincinnati. (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P. 28-29)

State maintenance of the waterway began to decline in proportion to the decreasing traffic and by 1885 only a few companies even attempted the trip from one end of the state to the other. On the local scene, numerous small operators continued to thrive and a new type of vessel, the pleasure craft, began to show up in increasing numbers. These refitted passenger boats served as family recreational vessels in the spring and fall carrying the entire family out for a hunt. During the summer, they provided quick income from providing picnic trips up and down the canal. The Wabash & Erie was abandoned west of Junction as early as 1878 and the end was in sight for the remainder of the waterway. (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P. 29)

By 1904, a devastating flood swept away aqueducts and lock gates. The state was in no position to revive the canal, although local efforts succeeded in bringing parts of it back to life. Sections of the canal underwent wholesale abandonment or were kept in shape only by the efforts of long suffering neighbors and townspeople. In 1912, the entire stretch of the canal between Delphos and Defiance was effectively destroyed when the power company insisted that the state interrupt the flow of water at Jennings Creek Aqueduct to divert canal water into the upper Auglaize. The northern third of the original Miami Extension ceased to exist as water drained through the dynamited floor of the aqueduct. A year later a second flood, worse than that of 1904, swept down the canal, destroying locks, banks, abutments and much of the industrial corridor.

The Palm Sunday Flood in1913 marked the end of the canal and official abandonment was ordered. Along the Toledo to Defiance route, where much of the construction had been in stone, the canal weathered the floods much better and traffic persisted until well into the 1920s, making it the last income producing section of the system. The Dayton to Cincinnati portion, in spite of valiant efforts by the Cincinnati Club Inland Waterways Committee in 1909, was abandoned shortly after that date. Dayton to Delphos survived only a year longer, with the last toll paying boat clearing the locks at Spencerville in 1906. The last boats to pay tolls were a sad copy of those that had been towed over the same waterway less than a century before; aged, leaking, peeling paint. (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P. 29-30)

In its 80-year life span, the Miami and Erie Canal is credited with bringing to Ohio its most exciting period of growth. Historians agree that no other mode of transportation has ever contributed as much, as quick and cheap as the canal

CANAL TIME LINE

1832

1832 a group of German immigrants founded New Bremen near the mid-point of the canal.

1833

The "Miami Extension" to Troy was not started until 1833.

1843

A trading post was established in Spencerville when the canal was being constructed through the area.

1845

To satisfy political demands additional segments were parceled out to contractors until 1845 when the entire canal was open to traffic from the Ohio River to Lake Erie.

1850

The Marguerite was built.

system. The canal corridors of east and west Ohio became vital to the state. The Miami and Erie system had an accounted "cost" in 1845 of $8,062,680.80, of which nearly 25 percent was paid for by the sale of U.S. land within Ohio borders. It has been estimated that to rebuild the canal to its original specifications so that boats 80-feet long and 15-feet wide could again haul goods would cost in excess of $5 billion dollars and that does not include costs for surveys, engineering studies or environmental impact studies. In 1935, as canal lands were being deeded to farmers, cities, railroads and neighbors at an alarming rate, the Ohio Auditor's Office estimated that the Miami and Erie Canal had been, in the long haul, a profitable venture for the state, earning over and above the cost of construction and maintenance almost 15% dividends for the state, an incredible figure in an age when 3% return was considered to be not only adequate, but excellent. The total profit made on and alongside the canal is incalculable, but it is easy to imagine the difference if the corridor had never existed. Perhaps Toledo and Cincinnati would have grown into mighty cities, but places like Middletown, Franklin, Dayton, Sidney, Piqua, Ft. Loramie, Minister, New Bremen, St. Marys, Celina, Delphos, Defiance, Napoleon… might never have existed. Innumerable families have lived by, worked on and played in the Miami and Erie Canal, the larger portion of them attracted to the west coast of Ohio by that self-made body of water. The Miami and Erie, though only remnants, continues to hold a fascination for many residents and visitors alike, which see the corridor as a vital link from the past to tomorrow. (M. & E. Canal, Commerce and History, 1990, P. 30)

CANAL TIME LINE

1851

Revenue receipts were their highest.

At its peak, Ohio's canal system consisted of almost 1,000 miles of main line canals, feeders and side cuts. Located in forty-four of Ohio's eighty-eight counties, the canals touched the lives of all the state's citizens.

1900

After 1855 the impact of the railroads began to be felt.

1903

The Marguerite caught fire and sank in the canal at Delphos.

In 1903, water sales income from selling canal water to businesses and industries exceeded the income from freight carried on the canal.

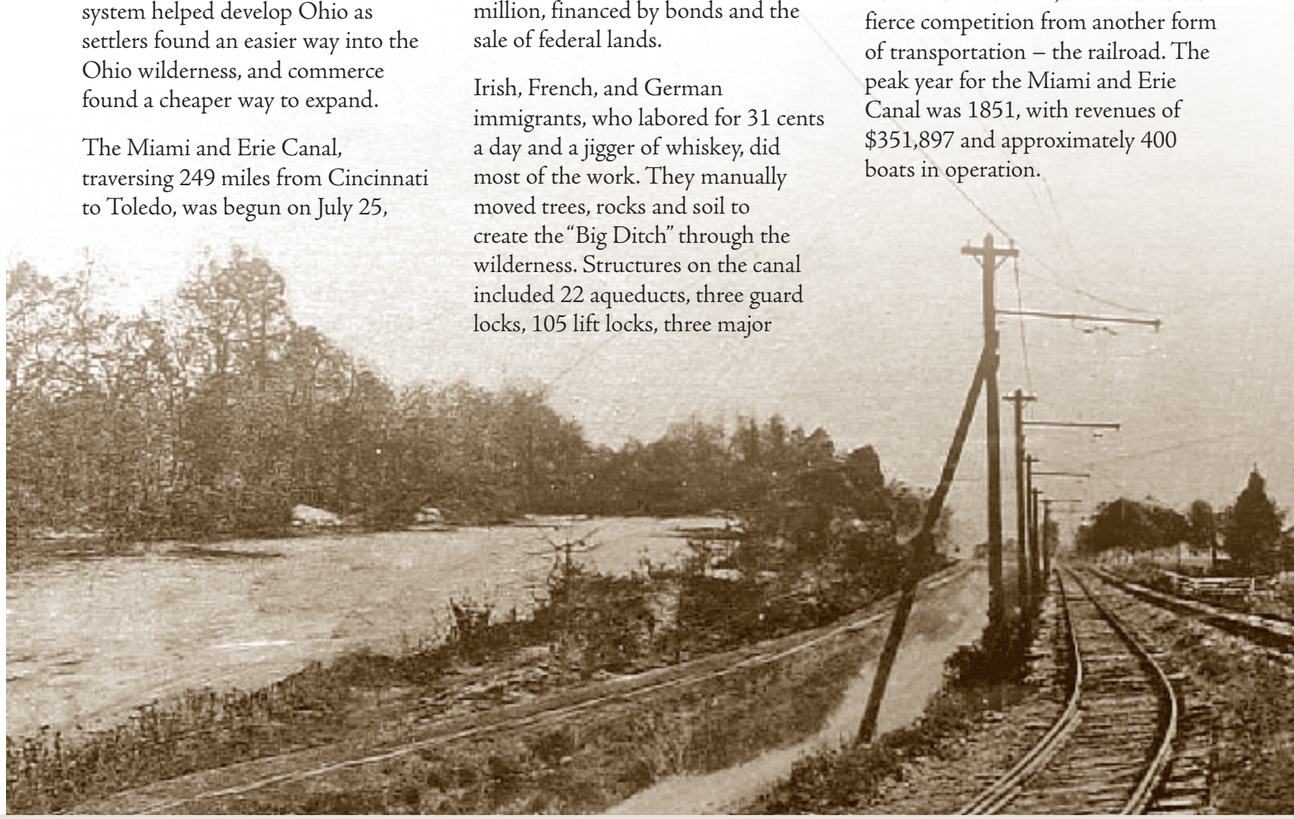
Summary of the Miami and Erie Canal

Nearly 200 years ago, hands dug canals that crossed the state of Ohio. This extended water transportation system helped develop Ohio as settlers found an easier way into the Ohio wilderness, and commerce found a cheaper way to expand.

The Miami and Erie Canal, traversing 249 miles from Cincinnati to Toledo, was begun on July 25, 1825 near Middletown. It was built in sections until completed in 1845. The total cost was more than $8 million, financed by bonds and the sale of federal lands.

Irish, French, and German immigrants, who labored for 31 cents a day and a jigger of whiskey, did most of the work. They manually moved trees, rocks and soil to create the "Big Ditch" through the wilderness. Structures on the canal included 22 aqueducts, three guard locks, 105 lift locks, three major reservoirs, and "Deep Cut" that was 6,600 feet long and 52 feet deep.

But for all this work, the canal faced fierce competition from another form of transportation – the railroad. The peak year for the Miami and Erie Canal was 1851, with revenues of $351,897 and approximately 400 boats in operation.

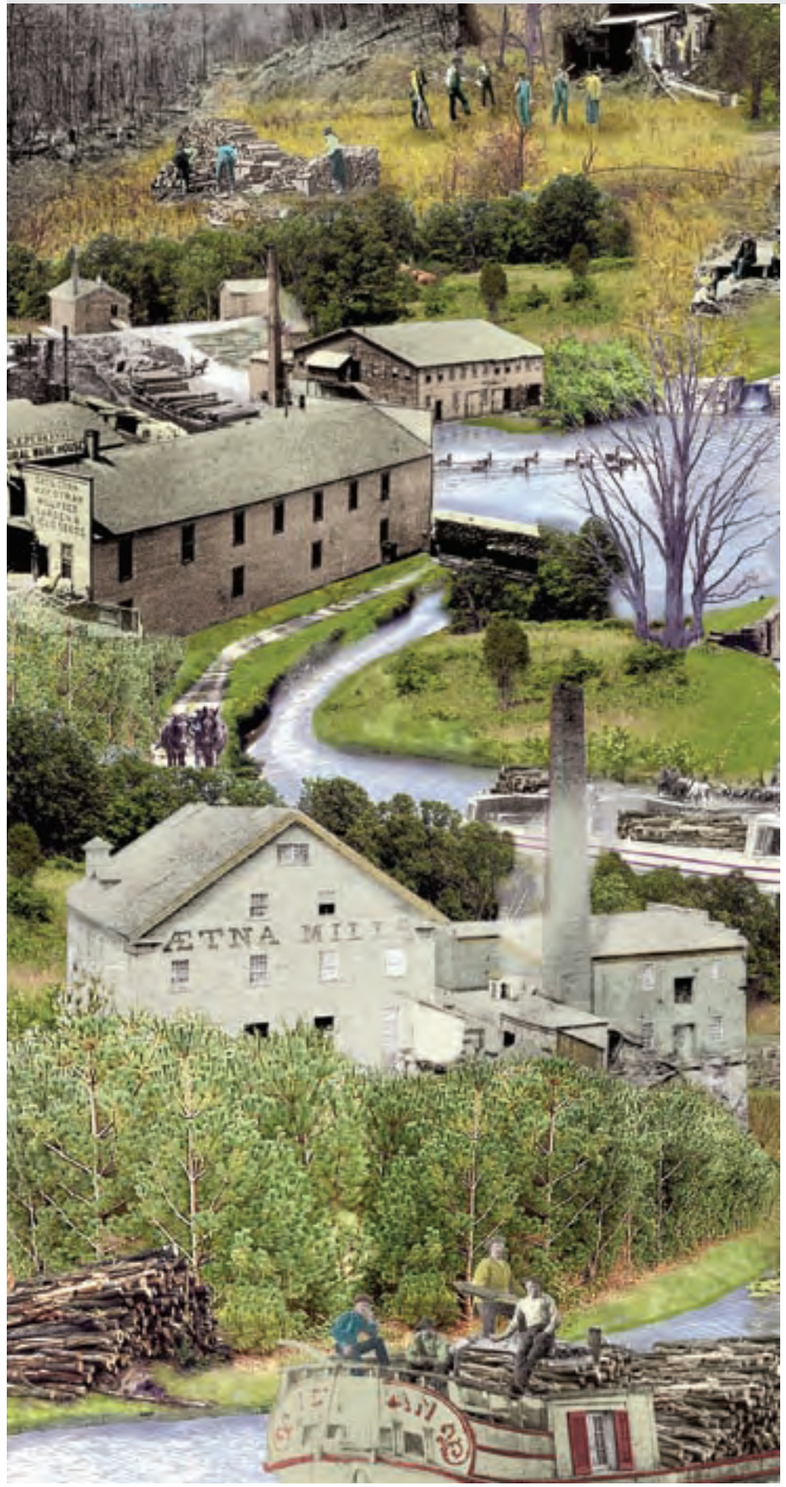


1913

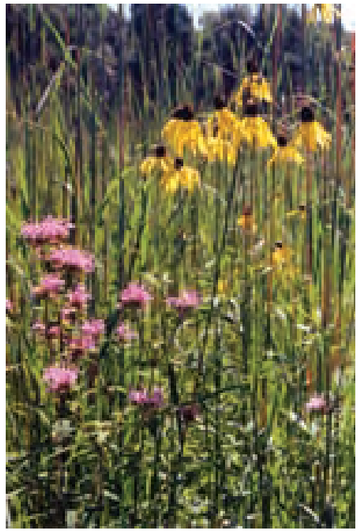
March 23, 1913-Ohio's canal system came to an abrupt end. After a winter of record snowfall, storms dumped an abnormally heavy amount of rain on the state. The flood caused the reservoirs to spill over into the canals, destroying aqueducts, washing out banks, and devastating most of the locks.

1989

In 1989, management and operation of the remaining canal system was transferred from the Department of Administrative Services to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. Responsibility for operations of the hydraulics maintenance and water sales was assigned to the Division of Water.



The canal has a collection of natural and cultural resources from wildlife to recreational facilities.



III Inventory

Natural Resources: Prehistoric/Historic

Ohio's Till Plains are the rich western farmlands. It was here that America's early pioneers first found fertile agricultural land, as they headed west. The region was covered with dense woodlands, with trees growing thickly in response to the same rich soils that would later support corn, soybeans, and wheat.

These soils, in turn, were products of the natural breakdown of the basic geologic materials of the area. Glacial clays, gravels and underlying sedimentary bedrock make up the rich soils. These materials, the glacial deposits, the soils, the plants and animals reveal a part of the history of Ohio that is an essential part of the heritage. (Ohio's Natural Heritage, 1979, p. 199.)

Glaciers

The Ice Age glaciers advanced across the Till Plains several times. Deposits of four major ice advances are recognized, each differentiated on the basis of soils, geographic distribution of materials, and stratigraphic relationships. Smaller differences in these same factors also have been used to identify five different retreated phases of the last ice advance. Of all the main advances, only the last, the Late Wisconsinan, has been dated extensively by radiocarbon means, so that it is known to have reached its farthest point south about 20,000 years ago. These advances of the glacier have carved and shaped Ohio into the state it is today. (Ohio's Natural Heritage, 1979, p. 202.)

Soils of the Till Plains

The Till Plains of Ohio are famous for Miamian soils. To the south are the Miamian soils developed in loam or clay loam till. To the north are soils developed in clay-rich till, for example, Blount soils. The extra clay in this till is believed to have been deposited in a temporary lake formed during glacial retreat and have been picked up and incorporated in the till and deposited by the re-advancing ice. The Miamian and Blount soils are both found in late Wisconsinan high-lime tills, the high-lime characteristic being a result of the influence of the Paleozoic limestone-dolomite bedrock of the Till Plains.

The two main factors affecting the nature of the soils formed in western Ohio tills are the age of the deposit and the nature of the till. Anyone with an understanding of how these factors can affect soil differences not only comprehend soils better, but will find soils a most useful tool in interpreting the glacial story of western Ohio, as well as contributing to a better understanding of the distribution of plants and animals there. (Ohio's Natural Heritage, 1979, p. 205.)

Flora of the Till Plains

Most of the vegetation in the Till Plains today are corn, soybeans, and wheat. Extensive stands of natural vegetation are found only on poorer land and along stream valleys. Even in these areas, the vegetation is frequently brushy and second growth. Locally a few remnants of the original woodland remain. Examples of these are Hueston Woods State Nature Preserve near Oxford, Culberson Woods (Villars Chapel Woods) State Nature Preserve near Wilmington, and Cedar Bog State Memorial near Urbana. The Ohio Department of

Natural Resources, The Nature Conservancy, and the Ohio Historical Society, fortunately, are now preserving many of these remnants.

The original vegetation of the area, before its destruction by settlers, was mostly woodland, composed entirely of species adapted to the local environment. With clearing, draining, and cropping, the environmental conditions have been changed and many of the species that were originally common now occur only locally, having been replaced by crops and weeds. Because roughly 95 percent of the Till Plains is now in farmland or urban areas, the only way to determine the original vegetation is by observing limited remnants and studying early land-survey records, in which surveyors identified sites by their locations relative to specific adjacent trees.

The kinds of trees growing in the original woodland varied from place to place, depending on soils and environment. Beech-sugar maple forests occupied most of the Till Plains, though some areas were a little drier and had stands of oak-sugar maple. Extensive wet areas supported both swamp forest or mixed oaks (wet), and generally also included some wet prairies. Farther south, along the bluffs of the Ohio River, were a few stands of mixed mesophytic forests, composed of many different types of trees requiring good soil aeration.

Beech-maple forests still are the characteristic woodland type on Ohio's Late Wisconsinan Till Plains. Dominated by American beech and sugar maple, this woodland type also generally includes red oak, white oak, shagbark hickory, white ash, and wild black cherry, and occurs on flat to gently rolling till plains, on both ground and end moraine, throughout western Ohio.

Oak-maple woods, in contrast, occur where the land is a little drier, due to somewhat steeper slopes or drier substrate (such as gravel). Oak-maple woodlands are very similar to beech-maple, but lack the beech, which require continuously moist substrates and do not easily withstand the periodic late-summer droughts encountered with this forest type. Growing with sugar maple in this woodland type are black maple, red oak, white oak, and black walnut.

Where the ground is particularly flat and poorly drained, these forests are replaced by wetter woodlands, either swamp forest or mixed oaks. Swamp woods are dominated by American elm (now mostly dead), black ash, red and/or silver maple, blackgum, and shagbark and shellbark hickory. Pin oak is present in places, especially where the soils contain much clay, and swamp white oak is found in the wettest sites. Such woods occur on poorly drained uplands not on floodplains (where sycamore, cottonwood, American elm, honey locust, wild black cherry, green ash, and willow are found). Unfortunately, the Dutch elm disease and phloem necrosis have decimated the American elm, so that live specimen of this species are becoming increasingly less common.



Wet, mixed-oak woodlands are dominated by pin oak, swamp white oak, bur oak, shagbark hickory, and where soil is less wet, by white and red oaks. Both swamp forest and mixed-oak woods may occur on wet sites, and it is not known what determines which of these two woodland communities will be present at any site. Though the mixed-oak woods seem more likely to occur where the land is wetter and the soils have more clay.

Prairies, or treeless areas, occurred in association with all the more extensive stands of mixed-oak woods, wherever conditions were too wet to permit growth of trees. In these areas, the principal plants were wet grasses and sedges, species such as giant reed and bluejoint grass generally dominating and producing what are known as "wet prairies." In areas that tended to become drier toward the end of the summer, other species, considered to be typical of the western prairies, were present including queen-of-the-prairie, purple coneflower, prairie dock, and big bluestem grass.

These were the type of forests found in the Till Plains by the early settlers. This vast country full of bountiful resources helped build the State of Ohio into what it is today. (Ohio's Natural Heritage, 1979, p. 206-208.)

Fauna of the Till Plains

Animal life in the Till Plains is as varied as the vegetation and geology. However, the diversity here is much less than that of the wooded hills of eastern Ohio, because of intense farming, urbanization and the destruction of essential habitats. The best-known animals of the Till Plains include fish, amphibians (frogs and salamanders), reptiles (snakes and turtles), birds and mammals.

FISH

The many streams, rivers and lakes of the region support good populations of fish. Some of the more common species include largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, white bass, sunfish, crappie, channel catfish, and bullhead catfish.

AMPHIBIANS

Amphibians with ranges centered in Ohio's Till Plains are the striped chorus frog and small-mouth and tiger salamanders. Other species, such as spring peepers, bullfrogs, green frogs and American toads are also present.

REPTILES

Of the many reptiles found in Ohio, only a few have their ranges in the Till Plains. Most of these are snakes. These reptiles are the eastern garter snake, Butler's garter snake, eastern plains garter snake, the blue racer, northern copperbelly, the eastern Massasauga (or swamp rattler), and the spotted turtle. Reptiles with wide ranges in Ohio, which also occur in fair abundance

in the Till Plains, include the queen snake, the northern water snake, the snapping turtle, and the painted turtle. The fence lizard and the copperhead, two species found in eastern Ohio, also live in southwestern Ohio, but only in hills along the Ohio River Valley. However, poisonous copperhead snakes are rare there now, just as records for the once-common Massasauga rattler are rare elsewhere in the Till Plains.

BIRDS

Many species of birds are found in the Till Plains. Open plains with brushy margins or forested floodplains provide a natural diversity of habitat, which attracts birds and makes available cover, food, water and nesting areas. Relatively common birds of the Till Plains include the eastern meadowlark, horned lark, red-headed woodpecker, cowbird, savannah sparrow, song sparrow, woodcock, wild turkey and other game birds native to Ohio. Until recent years, the upland plover, boblink, dickcissel, and vesper sparrow were common, but lately these have declined in numbers. Most of these are characteristic of open fields, so they would have been uncommon in the days before the prehistoric woodlands were cut. In addition a number of species are present because humans introduced them. Such species are the house sparrow, starling, pigeon, purple martin, barn swallow, chimney swift, robin, eastern bluebird, house wren, catbird, and ring-necked pheasant.

MAMMALS

Mammals present on the Till Plains today are mostly small. Larger forms require more extensive territories and thus compete, generally unsuccessfully, with people. Mammals common on the Till Plains include red fox, red squirrel, thirteen-lined ground squirrel, whitetailed deer, raccoon, opossum, woodchuck, skunk, rabbit, eastern mole, short-tailed shrew, weasel (long-tailed and least), muskrat, little brown bat, white-footed mouse, deer mouse, meadow vole and prairie vole. Most of these animals are found in scattered wooded areas, and some live in open fields where cover is available. Even where the effects of urbanization are great, two species normally also occur: the house mouse and Norway rat. Two species normally found only in eastern Ohio woodlands, the gray squirrel and the chipmunk, are also found locally in the Till Plains.

All the species listed above are found on Ohio's Till Plains today. However, like the vegetation, different species of animals lived here in the past. During postglacial time, mastodon, mammoth, ground sloth, and giant beaver were present on the Till Plains. All of these became extinct about 10,000 years ago. At the time of the earliest settlers, large animals living in the Till Plains include black bear, wolf, bison, elk, whitetailed deer, mountain lion, bobcat, lynx, otter, porcupine, and beaver. None of these species lasted long after the settlers arrived. Some were killed for meat, and some were killed because they preyed on farm animals or ate crops. In addition, the passenger pigeon, which had been present in Ohio in great numbers previous to settlement, also was eliminated, not only in western Ohio, but throughout the world. (Ohio's Natural Heritage, 1979, p. 209-213.)

Early People

The Palaeo Indians were the first inhabitants of the area. Following the Palaeo Indians were the Archaic, Glacial Kame, Adena, Hopewell, Late Woodland and the Fort Ancient. In the mid-to-late 1700s, the area became a stronghold of the Miami and Shawnee tribes. After General Anthony Wayne's victory at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, the Greenville Treaty of 1795 stripped the Native Americans of their lands. Less than a year after the treaty, the first settlers arrived in the Miami Valley.

It seems that the settlers were attracted to the area because of fertile soils and timber. When the Miami and Erie Canal was completed, the area became quite prosperous. Underlying the rich fertile soils were vast gravel and sand deposits that provided excellent materials for road making. Hundreds of miles of roads were built with these materials, making this part of the state one of the most accessible.

Cultural Resources

The cultural landscape of the corridor remains centered on agriculture and the heritage that remains since settlement. That culture and heritage is predominantly of German descent, with some French in Shelby and Darke counties. Descendants of many Irish who worked on the canal can also be found. The underlying current is the continuity of the families. The majority of families can readily trace their roots back to their European heritage. Once the settlers arrived here, the quality of life provided little reason to leave. This trend continues today and serves as a major factor in the communities along the corridor. Those that do leave, whether for college or professional pursuits, often return because of this high quality of life.

The area along the corridor is comprised of rich farmland with prosperous, well-maintained farms, historical sites and buildings, natural and recreational areas, and many tourist attractions. (Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p.3)

Agricultural Significance:

The region surrounding the canal is considered the finest farmland in the state. Mercer and Darke counties are consistently first and second in Ohio for agricultural production. (Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p.4)

Architectural Landscape:

The architectural landscape consists of various historic buildings with several listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

It should also be noted that in several communities the listing is inclusive of an entire downtown area. Of special note are the courthouses at the county seats of the counties incorporated into the corridor. Although similar, each of the seven courthouses offers a differing concept of architectural style and provides a unique opportunity for study. (Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p.4)

Historic Sites (not all-inclusive) (Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p.5)

Listed alphabetically by county; Bold type indicates National Register- listed sites

ALLEN COUNTY

- Allen County Courthouse
- Allen County Museum
- Macdonnel House (Banta Van Dyke House)
- Deep Cut Historic Site
- The Delphos Canal Museum
- Lima Memorial Hall (Allen County Memorial)
- Marks Family House
- Metropolitan Block
- Round Barns (Delphos and Lima)
- St. John's Catholic Church

AUGLAIZE COUNTY

- Forty Acre pond
- Alfred Rabe House
- Auglaize County Courthouse
- Auglaize County Historical Society – Mooney Museum
- Belle of St. Marys Canal Boat Replica
- Bicycle Museum of America
- Bloody Bridge
- Boesel Julius House (Kuck House)
- Canal Aqueduct
- Downtown St. Marys Historic Area
- Fort Amanda State Historic Site
- Grand Lake St. Marys Bulkhead
- Lock Fourteen
- Lock Eight
- Lock One
- Lock Two
- William Luellman House
- Minster Elementary School
- Six Mile Creek Aquaduct
- St. Augustine Church, Minster
- St. John's Catholic Church
- St. Joseph Church (two – Wapakoneta and Egypt)
- St. Patrick Church (Glynwood Church)
- The Fountain Hotel (Fort Barbee Hotel)
- The Tumbles
- Wapakoneta Commercial Historic District
- Dr. Isaac Elmer Williams House and Office

LOGAN COUNTY

- Brickman Covered Bridge
- Dunns Pond Mound
- First Concrete Street in U.S.
- Lake Ridge Island Mounds
- Logan County Courthouse
- McColly Covered Bridge
- Abrams S. Piatt House and Donn S. Piatt House (Piatt Castles)

MERCER COUNTY

- Celina Main Street Historic Area
- Senator Thomas J. Godfrey House
- Immaculate Conception Church
- Maria Stein Center
- Mercer County Courthouse
- Mercer County Historical Museum
- Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Catholic Church
- Otis Hospital
- Precious Blood School and Rectory
- St. Aloysius Catholic Church
- St. Anthony Catholic Church
- St. Bernard Catholic Church
- St. Charles Center (former seminary)
- St. Frances Catholic Church
- St. Henry Catholic Church
- St. Joseph Church
- St. Mary Catholic Church
- St. Paul Catholic Church
- St. Peter Catholic Church
- St. Rose Catholic Church
- St. Sebastian Catholic Church
- St. Wendelin Catholic Church

MIAMI COUNTY

- Arrowston (William Boal Wood House and Estate)
- Fort Piqua Hotel
- Hobart Circle Historic District
- Jackson African Cemetery
- Miami County Courthouse
- Old Tippecanoe Main Street Historic Area
- Piqua Downtown Historic Area
- Piqua Historic Area State Museum (Johnston Farm State Historic Site)
- Troy Public Square
- Twin Stone Arch Culvert

SHELBY COUNTY

- Botkins Elementary School
- Immaculate Conception Rectory (Botkins)
- Lake Loramie State Park
- Leighy Lake
- Lockington Locks Historic Area
- People's Federal Savings and Loan
- Port Jefferson School
- Sacred Heart of Jesus Rectory
- St. Michael's Catholic, Fort Loramie
- St. Remy Catholic Church
- Shelby County Courthouse
- Sidney Courthouse Square Historic Area
- Sidney Feeder
- Whitby Mansion

VAN WERT COUNTY

- Bredeick-Lang House
- Brumbaugh Library
- George H. Marsh Homestead and The Marsh Foundation School
- Lock 24
- Round Barns
- Van Wert County Courthouse
- Willshire School (Parkway Junior High School)

Archeological Sites

Dunns Pond Mound and Lake Ridge Island Mounds (Logan County) are archeological remains of the Hopewell and Woodland Indians. Occasional digs are conducted on the site of the former Fort St. Marys. (Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p.5)

Natural Resources

Natural resources within the region include abundant water, forests and wildlife. The Mercer County Wildlife Refuge, the Miami Conservancy District (Lockington Reserve), the Indian Lake State Wildlife Area and the Kendricks Woods Metro Park and State Nature Preserve provide opportunities for wildlife observation. (Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p.4)

Recreational Area

Recreational opportunities abound in this area. There are three state parks located within this region. These parks include Grand Lake St. Marys State Park, Indian Lake State Park, and Lake Loramie State Park. Each is visited by thousands of people each year looking for a place to recreate in the outdoors. Each park offers camping, boating, fishing, hunting, picnicking, swimming and hiking.

Grand Lake St. Marys was constructed in 1837. The reservoir was a water source for the Miami and Erie Canal to maintain the canal's 4 foot water depth. Grand Lake was the largest man-made lake in the world. The lake was connected to the canal by a three-mile feeder. The resources at Grand Lake St. Marys include 500 acres of land and 13,500 acres of water.

Lake Loramie was originally constructed in 1824-25 as a storage reservoir to supply water for the Miami and Erie Canal system. A short feeder canal connected Lake Loramie with the main canal. The resources at Lake Loramie include 426 acres of land and 1,655 acres of water.

Indian Lake State Park was built in 1851 as a feeder lake for water supply for the Miami and Erie Canal. The canal system was declining as the work on Indian Lake was completed. The resources at Indian Lake include 652 acres of land and 5,800 acres of water. (Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p.8)

Existing Tourist Attractions and Museums (Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p.8)

- Allen County Historical Museum - Lima
- Auglaize County Historical Society-Mooney Museum - St. Marys
- MacDonnel House (Banta Van Dyke House) - Lima
- Belle of St. Marys
- The Bicycle Museum of America - New Bremen
- Delphos Canal Museum
- Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District
- Kendrick Woods Metro Parks and State Nature Preserve
- Deep Cut Historic Park
- Johnston Farm State Historic Site - Piqua
- The Land of the Cross-Tipped Churches Scenic Byway
- Lockington Locks
- Mad River Mountain Ski Resort
- Maria Stein Heritage Museum
- Memorial Covered Bridge - St. Marys
- Memorial Park - St. Marys
- Mercer County Historical Museum
- Miami and Erie Canal Recreational Trail, Buckeye Trail, North Country National Scenic Trail
- Miami and Erie Canal Scenic Byway
- The Neil Armstrong Air and Space Museum - Wapakoneta
- New Bremen
- New Bremen Historical Museum
- Ohio Caverns
- Piatt Castles
- Ross Historical Center
- Shelby County Parks
- Spencerville Historical Museum
- St. Marys State Fish Hatchery
- Wilderness Trail Museum - Fort Loramie
- Zane Caverns

Major Industries Along the Corridor (Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p.9)

AAP St. Marys Corp.
BP Chemicals
Cargill
Cater Lumber
Central Soya
Clark Oil
Con-Ag, Inc.
Copeland Corporation
Crown Equipment Corporation
Dannon Yogurt
Evenflo
Ford Motor Company
General Dynamics
Globus Printing
Goodyear Tire and Rubber
Hartzell Propeller
Honda of America
Metzer Popcorn
Minster Machine
Omni Manufacturing
Palmer Donovan
Parker Cylinder Division
Post Printing
Precision Strip
Proctor and Gamble
Reynolds and Reynolds
Setex
St. Marys Foundary
Spring Greek Corporation
Van Dyne Crotty, Inc.

Infrastructure Support, Present and Future Needs (Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p.11)

Water, sewer and electrical resources are plentiful for present and future needs within the communities along the corridor.

Transportation
(Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p. 11-12)

ROADWAYS

State Route 66, already designated as the Miami and Erie State Scenic Byway, parallels the canal between Delphos and Piqua. Other significant highways that cross the canal are:

U.S. Route 33, Ohio 119 (The Land of the Cross-Tipped Churches State Scenic Byway), Ohio 29, Ohio 47, Ohio 81, Ohio117, Ohio 197, Ohio 219, and Ohio 274.

The region is also served by Interstate 75, which runs north and south. Interstate 70, which runs east and west, passes along the southern edge of the corridor. U.S. Route 30, which runs east and west, passes along the northern edge of the corridor. U.S. Route 33 runs east and west through the heart of the corridor. The National Road (U.S. 40) runs east and west through the corridor.

Commercial bus transportation is available at Lima and Sidney within the corridor and at Dayton, approximately 20 miles from the southern edge of the corridor.

Rental cars are available through several automobile dealerships within the corridor. Rental cars from the major automobile rental chains are available at Dayton International Airport.

RAILWAYS

R.J. Corman Railroad parallels the canal between Minster and St. Marys, crosses the canal at St. Marys and proceeds northward to Lima.

Indiana High Rail (formerly the Spencerville and Elgin Railroad) crosses the canal at Spencerville.

CSX Transportation crosses the canal and the Sidney Feeder along its east-west route.

A spur from the Norfolk Southern east-west mainline crosses the canal at Delphos.

AIR TRAVEL

County airports in Auglaize, Miami, Mercer, and Shelby counties and a small airport at Delphos are closest to the center of the corridor, while others are more peripheral. Commercial air service is available at Dayton International Airport and Fort Wayne (Indiana) International Airport.

WATERWAYS

The St. Marys River crosses under the canal at the St. Marys Aqueduct. The canal flows over into the Six Mile Creek at Six-Mile Spillway. Other major streams in the area are the Great Miami and Auglaize rivers. Other important waterways are Jennings Creek, Loramie Creek, Painter Creek and Turtle Creek.

BIKEWAYS

Part of the canal towpath, largely between Minster and New Bremen, is usable as a bikeway. A bike path is also available along Ohio 703, on the north side of Grand Lake St. Marys. There are several other bike paths in adjacent counties.

WALKWAYS

The central towpath is also part of the Buckeye Trail, North Country Scenic Trail and an Ohio Department of Natural Resources recreational trail. Along with the walkway between the villages of New Bremen and Minster, these trails represent outstanding opportunities for pedestrian recreation. Since the towpath and its associated trails intersect community parks along their route, parking is available at these locations.

Educational Resources

(Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p. 12)

The region prides itself on its educational resources within its public systems, including workforce and academic training. Regional institutes of higher learning include:

Apollo Career Center, Lima

Bluffton College

Edison State University, Piqua

High Point Adult Programs-Logan

James Rhodes State College

Ohio Northern University-ADA

The OSU – Lima Campus

University of Northwestern Ohio-Lima

Vantage Career Center

Wright State University-Lake Campus, Celina

Land Ownership Patterns

(Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p. 13)

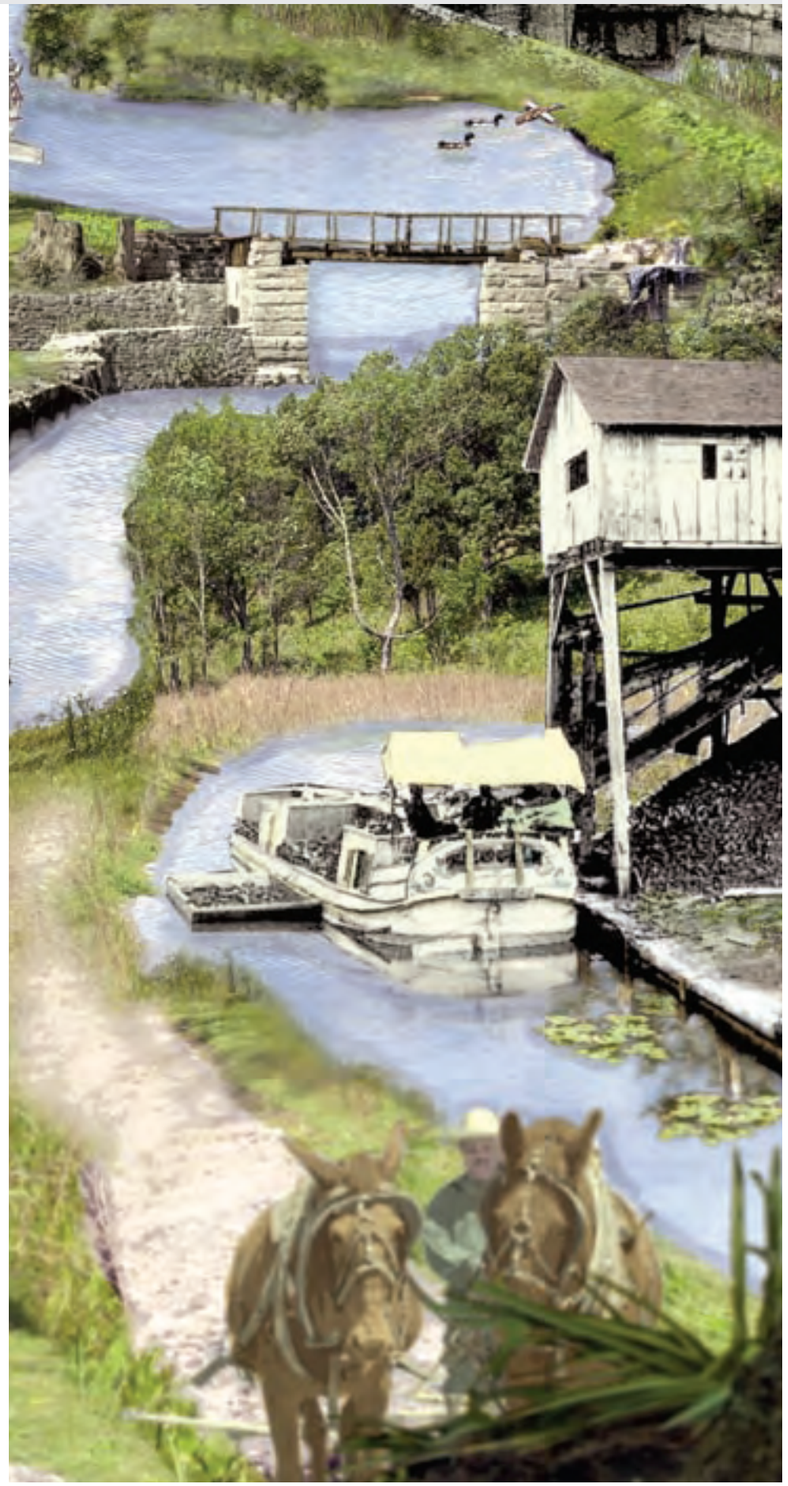
For the most part, ownership of the canal within Allen, Auglaize and Van Wert counties lies with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The only exception is the section passing through the Village of New Bremen, which the village owns.

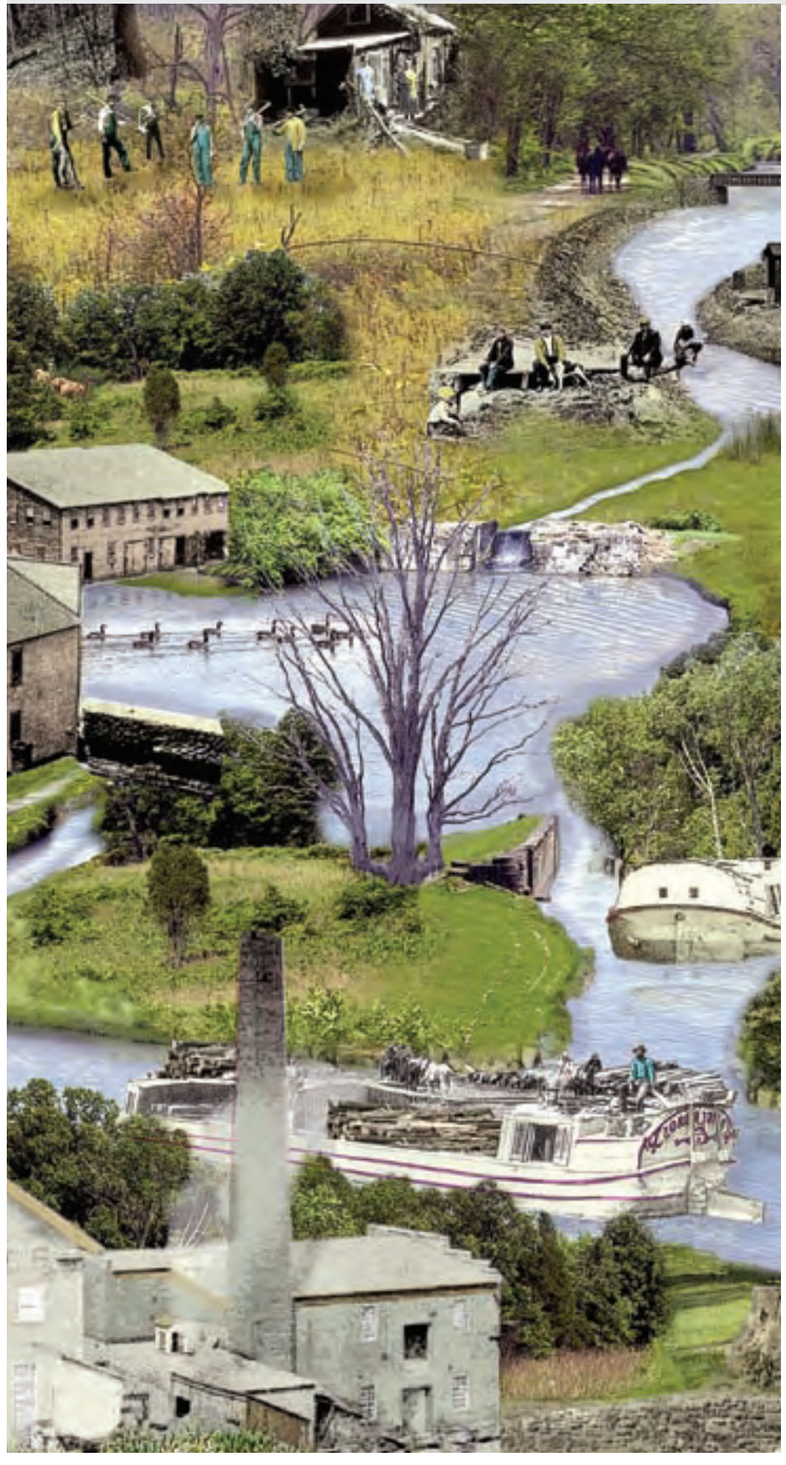
Ownership of the land surrounding the three feeder reservoirs lies with the state parks and private individuals.

Ownership of the canal through Shelby County, including the Sidney Feeder, is mixed. Following the state's abandonment of the canal, many property owners believed the canal properties reverted to the original landowners. Complicating matters were deeds that were executed giving portions of the canal over to private ownership. ODNR states that the more recent deeds provide an access easement along the canal right-of-way. Such easements are defined from the top of the bank to the foot of the slope. Private landowners who believe in a stricter definition often dispute this definition.

The Ohio Historical Society owns the canal from the Johnston Farm State Historic Site in Miami County to the Lockington Locks State Historic Site in Shelby County. South of the Johnston Farm, the state owns the canal right of way through Piqua.

RESOURCE PLAN Future of the Miami and Erie Canal





This part of the plan will explore and illustrate local and regional desires and concerns of the general public, special interest groups and individuals regarding the history, development and recreational opportunities within the corridor. The public input process helps ensure that the issues and recommendations presented in this document take into consideration the desires and concerns of citizens living in the Miami and Erie Historic Canal Corridor.

IV Public Input/ Education

MECCA

The Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Association (MECCA) is a 501 (c) (3) tax exempt, non-profit organization working on the development of the Miami and Erie Canal Heritage Corridor. The association creates educational programs, publications and events, and develops strong partnerships to preserve, interpret, and develop the natural, historical, and recreational resources along the historic Miami and Erie Canal from Delphos to Piqua.

MECCA is dedicated to raising awareness and public support for the abundant resources along the Miami and Erie Canal. The association serves as the regional clearinghouse for canal-related information and events. MECCA serves as the regional voice of canal-associated partners regarding issues at the local, state and federal level.

MECCA seeks to create a multi-use recreational trail along the historic Towpath Trail and build local partnerships for the preservation, interpretation and development of the natural, historic and recreational resources.

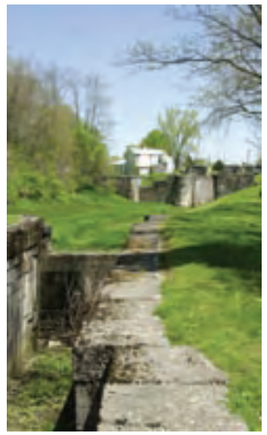
MECCA Facilitates and coordinates informational stake holder's meeting to build concern on the future development of the canal corridor.

MECCA facilitates and coordinates informational stakeholder's meeting to build concern on the future development of the canal corridor. They have maintained a presence with displays at county fairs, conducted "Work Days" to get the public involved in clearing the canal towpath and have given presentations to community groups.

In addition, MECCA also held public open houses in St. Marys, Minster, Spencerville and Delphos in January 1998, to seek approval for its mission. Average attendance at each of these meeting was 30-40 people. Media coverage has also been impressive with representatives from the major communities within the corridor providing coverage of special events.

MECCA publishes a newsletter, maintains a web site (www.meccainc.org) and regularly operates display booths at special events. The organization has plans to construct a mobile museum in the form of a replica canal boat that will travel to special events and share with the public the heritage of the canal. The organization has also developed a promotional video that is used with and without accompanying oral presentations to educate the public on the Miami and Erie Canal and MECCA. (Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p. 19)

MECCA maintains an office in New Bremen Ohio. This office will be developed into an informative and interpretive center of the Miami and Erie Canal Heritage Corridor.



Public Survey

A questionnaire was developed by MECCA to solicit input from local citizens and the general public regarding the Miami and Erie corridor. The survey was looking for input on future development, special features, existing and proposed opportunities, management and financing. **Listed below is a compiled list that represents some of the concerns, thoughts and suggestions made by the public.**

- Create a multi-use recreational trail along the historic Towpath Trail.
- Develop an educational program on the history of the corridor.
- Enhance recreational opportunities: canoeing, fishing, camping, and hiking.
- Develop programs to increase tourism.
- Use as a drainage ditch to control surface water.
- Develop/improve law enforcement in the area.
- Develop the area with the use of public grants.
- Area to be managed by a combination of state, county and local municipalities.

Organized Public Input (Support Groups): (Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p. 20)

Allen County Historical Society

Allen Economic Development Group

Auglaize County Economic Development Office

Auglaize County Historical Society

Heritage Trails Park District

Auglaize-Mercer Counties Convention and Visitors Bureau

Buckeye Trail Association

Celina Department of Parks and Recreation

Celina-Mercer County Chamber of Commerce

Celina Office of Community Development

Delphos Canal Commission

Delphos Chamber of Commerce

Delphos Historical Society

Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District

Lake Development Corporation

Lima-Allen County Chamber of Commerce

Lima-Allen County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Logan County Chamber of Commerce

Logan County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Logan County Economic Development Office

Logan County Historical Society

Marion Community Development Organization

Mercer County Economic Development Office

Mercer County Historical Society

Miami County Economic Development Office

Miami County Visitors and Convention Bureau

Miami-Erie Canal Society

Minster Historical Society

National Park Service, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

New Bremen Historical Society

New Knoxville Historical Society

North Country National Scenic Trail

Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor Coalition

Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks & Recreation

Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of REALM

Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water

Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife

Ohio Historical Society

Ohio Canal Society

Ohio State University Extension

Piqua Area Chamber of Commerce

Piqua Historical Society

St. Marys Area Chamber of Commerce

Shelby County Regional Planning Commission

Shelby County Historical Society

Shelby County Park District

Sidney Department of Parks and Recreation

Sidney-Shelby County Chamber of Commerce

Southwest Auglaize County Chamber of Commerce

Spencerville Area Canal Commission

Spencerville Area Chamber of Commerce

Troy Historical Society

Van Wert Area Chamber of Commerce

Van Wert Convention and Visitors Bureau

Van Wert County Economic Development Office

Van Wert County Historical Society

Wapakoneta Chamber of Commerce

Interpretive Efforts

(Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p. 10)

Currently interpretive services are conducted in Allen County by the Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District through biannual interpretive walks along the canal at Deep Cut. Extensive educational programs, including rides on a replica boat are also conducted at the Johnston Farm Historic Site.

Signage at Deep Cut, Bloody Bridge, Memorial Park in St. Marys and Lock One in New Bremen provides information about the canal at those sites. A new signage program was recently introduced by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to provide identification signs along the Miami and Erie Canal Towpath.

Interpretation of the canal history is also conducted at the Delphos Canal Museum and at the Johnston Farm State Historic Site in Piqua. The Allen County Historical Museum in Lima, although focusing on Lima's rich railroad heritage, has a static one-half inch to foot scale model of a timber canal lock. There is also information at Spencerville, New Bremen, Minster, Wilderness Trail Museum and Ross Historical Center all have can related historical information.

Information Outlets (Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p. 10-11)

- The Auglaize and Mercer Counties Convention and Visitors Bureau Visitor Center at Grand Lake St. Marys State Park
- The Celina-Mercer County Chamber of Commerce
- The Delphos Area Chamber of Commerce
- Indian Lake Area Chamber of Commerce
- Indian Lake State Park
- Lake Loramie State Park
- Lima-Allen County Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Logan County Convention and Visitors Bureau
- The Miami County Visitor and Convention Bureau
- The St. Marys Area Chamber of Commerce
- The Sidney-Shelby County Chamber of Commerce
- Van Wert Chamber of Commerce

Conclusion

The communities along the corridor have indicated mixed responses to the development of the corridor. Most are enthusiastic for the prospects of the project. Others are concerned for the impact of tourism in general, as they want to keep the land to themselves. Fortunately, those in the latter category are few, and those in the former category are highly supportive. One landowner has even chosen to help keep the towpath along the back of his property mowed for public use.

Through the work of MECCA and government agencies such as ODNR, public awareness of the canal has risen over the past few years. Community volunteers regularly join these agencies in scheduled workdays to clear and clean portions of the canal and towpath. The success of these ventures and the publicity they generate has been a great asset, both to the success of the corridor, and to raise awareness of the value of this once- forgotten resource. (Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p. 14)

The canal program was transferred from the Department of Administrative Services, Division of Public Works to ODNR on July 1, 1989. The ODNR Division of Water operates and maintains the canal and canal reservoirs on behalf of the director.

The ODNR Division of Water management issues and concerns with the Miami and Erie Canal:

- Public safety
- Water supply
- Best water practices
- Partnership development with local governments agencies and communities
- Public access for recreational use of the canal corridor
- Wetland and wildlife habitat preservation
- Water movement under the canal and over rivers
- Sediment control and removal
- Eroding conditions of the upland areas
- Management of storm water
- Stability of the canal banks and towpath.
- Operable sound structures
- Water quality
- Historical significance
- Aesthetics

V Hydrologic/ Hydraulics

Current Watersheds

(M & E Canal Study from Fort Loramie to Delphos, 1986. P.II-3)

Watersheds: Although the canal passes through three drainage basins, it hydrologically divides into seven sub-basins. These sections are as follows:

- **Section 1** State Route 119 south to Loramie Creek.
- **Section 2** State Route 119 north though New Bremen.
- **Section 3** From north of New Bremen to the St. Marys Feeder Canal.
- **Section 4** From Grand Lake St. Marys along the Feeder Canal to the St. Marys Power Plant. (Lower Level)
- **Section 5** From the St. Marys Power Plant to the north end of Forty Acre Pond.
- **Section 6** From the north end of Forty Acre Pond to the side spillway north of Spencerville.
- **Section 7** From the side spillway north of Spencerville to Jennings Creek north of Delphos.

Management Issues

With the abandonment of the canal as a transportation mode in 1913, many landowners believed that the state had given up its rights to regulate water entering the canal. While the state had indeed chosen not to enforce these rights, it did not give up the right of future regulation.

Erosion & Sedimentation

Three types of erosion occur along the canal: erosion from the St. Marys River overtopping blockages in the canal; upland erosion; and canal bank erosion. All stretches that receive water from upland surface drainages receive upland erosion contributions.

The entire remaining watered canal suffers from sedimentation problems. The sediment comes from agricultural surface practices, broken tile, urban construction activities, street and parking lot sediments and bank erosion.

(M & E Canal Study From Fort Loramie to Delphos, 1986. P.III-2)

Vegetation

The entire remaining watered canal suffers from uncontrolled vegetation. There are four types of problems:

- Wrong types of vegetation
- Too much vegetation
- Too little vegetation
- Vegetation in the water course

All four problems exist in most areas, but not always together. The canal was designed with a 1.7:1 slope and the side slopes were covered with grasses. A grass/legume critical area seeding mixture is the only type of vegetation that can hold such slopes under current usage conditions. Riprap will be necessary in some areas.

Vegetation problems can be addressed in segments along each section. When funding exists, brushy vegetation that is growing along areas, which are mostly grassed, should be cut and sprayed as an ongoing maintenance program. Brushy vegetation and trees should be cut from the bottom and sides of the banks and the banks replanted with a critical-area stabilization seeding mixture.

Where vegetation is thin or the side slopes are barren, the banks should be reshaped if necessary and the area reseeded with a critical-area stabilization seeding mixture. This work should be done in coordination with the silt removal program in each section to increase water depth in the canal. (M & E Canal Study From Fort Loramie to Delphos, 1986. P.III-2-3)

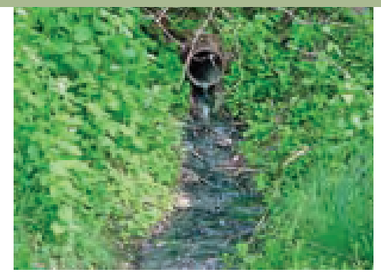
Water Quality

Water quality problems come from many sources: surface, subsurface, lake or river overtopping, open ditches, and point sources. Surface water comes to the canal from agricultural runoff, roads, highways and urban storm water flow. Each type of surface flow is subject to its own set of possible contaminants and causes a number of reactions when it comes into contact with the canal flora and fauna.

Subsurface water is generally limited to agricultural tile drainage. In some areas, the farmer may have connected a septic tank for a home or milking parlor into the outlet. Most subsurface tile water contaminants are limited to nutrients and/or pesticides, which tend to cause eutrophication of the canal during low (normal) flow periods.

Shallow water in the canal can also expedite growth of algae during the dry months. This growth of algae can reduce oxygen and water

clarity. Poor water quality may also contribute to vegetation problems as other undesirable species thrive in shallow water.



Point source pollution contamination normally covers both storm sewer outlets and agricultural tiles. The term point source refers to any pipe outflow coming from a specific point of origin such as a wastewater treatment plant or an industrial discharger. There are several such locations along the canal, mostly in the Minster and St. Marys area. These locations should be tested and monitored on an ongoing basis to assure that they are not contributing pollutants to the water in the canal. (M & E Canal Study From Fort Loramie to Delphos, 1986. P.I-5)

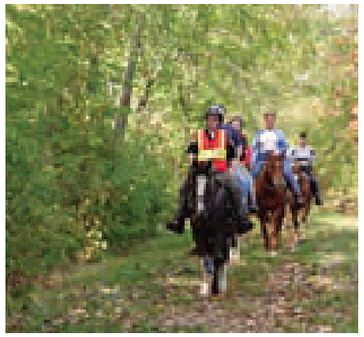
Impact of Current and Future Development

When the canal first became a series of drainage channels, the land use in the region was mostly agricultural with "crop rotation to meadow," the common practice. As agricultural practices have gone "fence-row to fence-row," the canal already has seen its greatest impact from agricultural sedimentation, erosion and vegetation. With upland treatment methods, these impacts could be stabilized or reduced.

Urbanizing impacts pose another issue. Lands adjacent to the canal in growing communities are rapidly developing into subdivisions. As a result, runoff into the canal occurs at a faster rate. There are already land use conflicts in the region. Storm water input must be held at current levels. All jurisdictions should adopt and follow both storm water and sediment/erosion programs to ensure the long-term existence of the canal to reduce runoff flow rate. (M & E Canal Study From Fort Loramie to Delphos, 1986. P.III-3)

Develop a Watershed Protection Management Plan

- **Watershed Planning** The future of the canal.
- **Land Conservation** Identify key features in the landscape.
- **Aquatic Buffers** Flood control, habitat for wildlife, wetland protection and pollution reduction.
- **Better Site Design** Reduce impervious cover, conserve natural areas, and provide storm water treatment.
- **Erosion and Sediment Control** Preconstruction and rural buffers.
- **Storm Water Management** Types: ponds, wetlands. Goals: protect stream channels, reduce storm water pollutants and groundwater recharge.
- **Address Non-Storm Water Discharge** Septic systems, sanitary sewer overflows, industrial discharges, feed lots.
- **Watershed Stewardship** Watershed restoration, monitoring, education.



Outdoor Recreational Opportunities

The canal corridor can provide many opportunities for outdoor recreation in the form of products and services. The use and preservation of our natural resources is at the heart of our efforts. Differing perceptions of the words "use" and "preservation" seem to be centered on the degree to which a park or facility is developed and what physical form the development should take. Balancing these differing views presents both opportunities and challenges to those who plan for the future.

Our natural resources provide many outdoor recreational opportunities. According to the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan of 2003 (SCORP): "Recreation means many different things to different people. Recreation is commonly thought of as activity during leisure time that is primarily motivated by the pleasure or satisfaction derived from the activity. Recreation can also be considered as an emotional state that includes a feeling of well being and self satisfaction."

VI Recreational Needs

Recreation can take many forms. It may be spontaneous or planned, active or passive, organized or unorganized, done alone or require others. Recreation for one may be work or boring to another. Outdoor recreation can be defined as enjoyable activities that take place in the outdoors. Besides being fun, outdoor recreation is now recognized for many other benefits it provides to individuals and society.

Current Development

Current economic development plans within the corridor community focus on maintaining and expanding business in contrast to seeking large industries, or focusing on cottage industries. Concerns for the overall purpose for the canal has been addressed through the efforts of MECCA and local historical societies. The issue is not to rebuild the canal, but to preserve the parts of it for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

The communities concerned, owing greatly to their agricultural stewardship, recognize the need for drainage that the canal provides to the surrounding watershed. With this in mind, an economic development plan within the corridor communities would only be enhanced with recognition by the State of Ohio of the importance of the canal and its environs. (Feasibility Study, Wehrhahn, p. 15)

Proposed Recreation

The Federal Recreational Trails Program Act defines a recreational trail as a "thoroughfare or track across land or snow, used for recreational purposes such as: pedestrian activities, including wheelchair use; skating or skateboarding; equestrian activities, including carriage driving; nonmotorized snow trail activities, including skiing; bicycling or use of other human-powered vehicles; aquatic or water activities; and motorized vehicular activities, including all-terrain vehicle riding, motorcycling, snowmobiling, use of off-road light trucks, or use of other off-road motorized vehicles."

The recreational benefits of trails are obvious. Land trails and water trails can enhance the quality of life by promoting health and physical fitness, providing alternate transportation routes, protecting and preserving habitat, and contributing economically to the area. Trails can provide numerous opportunities for interpretation where users can learn about nature, history or culture. Trails can also preserve corridors for future transportation and public utility needs.

The ability of trails to enhance Ohio's economy and increase tourist opportunities is especially attractive. Various studies have shown that property values near trails often increase. Long distance trails can attract visitors to a community or region. These visitors spend money for transportation, lodging, food and equipment rentals. Trails are often associated with greenways that protect wildlife habitat. They may also protect river systems or agricultural lands by providing buffers and conserving soils. These and the other benefits generated by trails must be better promoted and marketed to legislators and other decision makers so trail opportunities are enhanced and needs are satisfied.

The central towpath of the Miami and Erie Canal is part of the Buckeye Trail and the North Country National Scenic Trail. It is an ODNR recreational trail. The towpath and the walkway between the villages of New Bremen and Minster represent outstanding opportunities for pedestrian recreation. The towpath and its associated trails intersect community parks, providing linkages to communities, parks, natural areas, historic and cultural sites and other amenities. (SCORP 2003, Strategic Issues)

The historic towpath is the definition of a recreational trail. The "towpath" is the link to the historic past and the future of the corridor today.

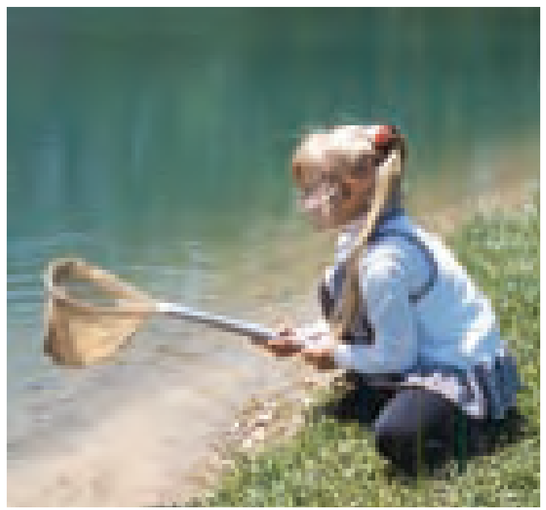
Resource Plan Goals

- Improve and develop recreational opportunities, while ensuring a balance between wise use and protection of our natural resources for the benefit of all.
- Provide a high-quality outdoor experience through the development of facilities that promote education and interaction with the natural environment.
- Improve and develop recreation opportunities while protecting the quality and features of the Miami and Erie Canal.
- Recognize, enhance and protect the historic and cultural heritage of the region in and around the canal corridor.

VII Goals & Recommendations

General Recommendations

- Enhance the "Towpath Trail" from Piqua to Delphos as a multi-use trail.
- Assist in the acquisition of trail easements from property owners along the canal where needed.
- Continued dredging of the canal as needed, clean up banks and control/maintain vegetation.
- Develop and improve interpretive signage along the towpath.
- Renovate Lock One in downtown New Bremen.
- Renovate the dam at Leighty Lake and develop facilities for recreational use.
- Develop water trails. Water trails are small-boat paddling routes that combine recreation and consservation. These routes provide for small-boat launches and shore access. Water trails connect people with places and simultaneously enrich and protect both. By indentifying and interpreting places, both natural and constructed the water trail brings the usere into contact with the whole ecology of the corridor. (N.A. Water Trails)
- Improve recreational opportunities at Forty Acre Pond.
- Develop access to the canal towpath at Deep Cut Historic Site.
- Develop and improve educational opportunities at significant sites along the canal.
- Develop and improve parking and access to the "Towpath Trail."
- Restore one lock to functional operation for demonstrations and educational purposes.
- Continue to develop successful partnerships with regional and local governments and interest groups.
- Comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards when developing new facilities or renovating existing facilities.
- Explore new solutions to user conflict issues.



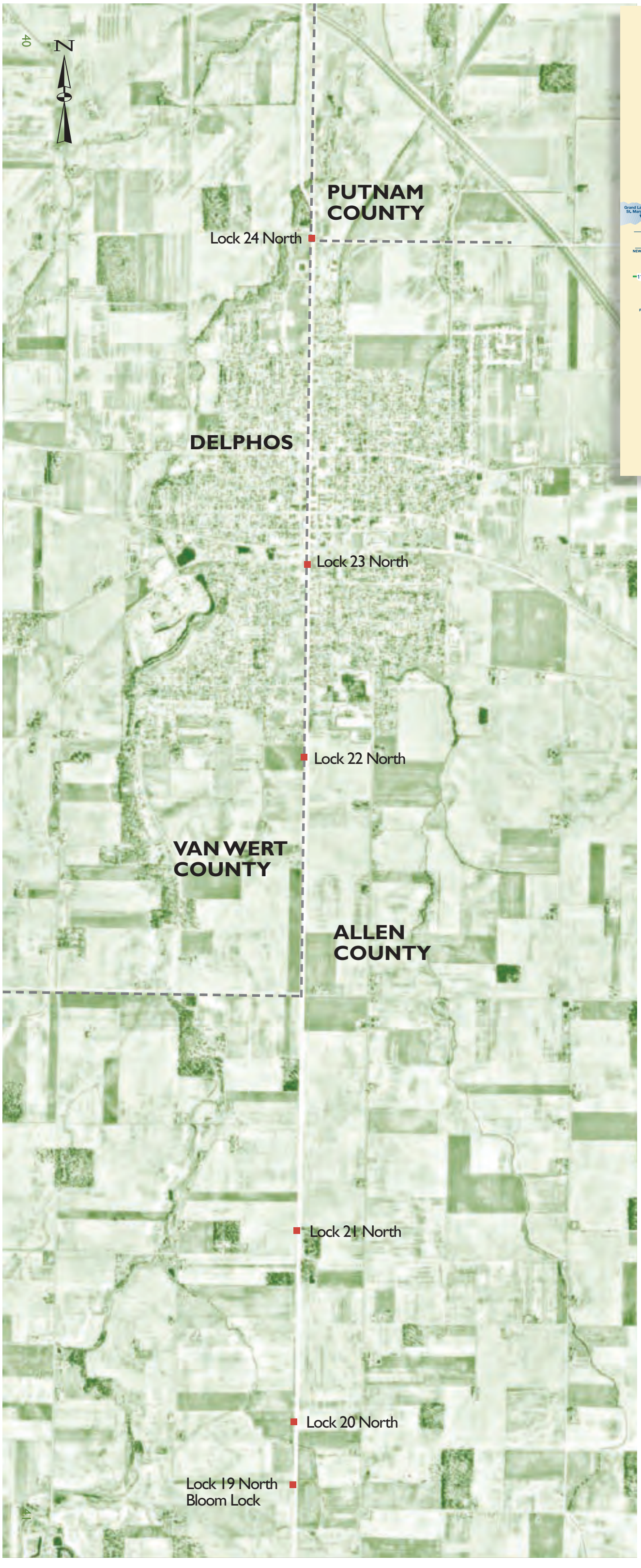
RESOURCE PLAN Future of the Miami and Erie Canal

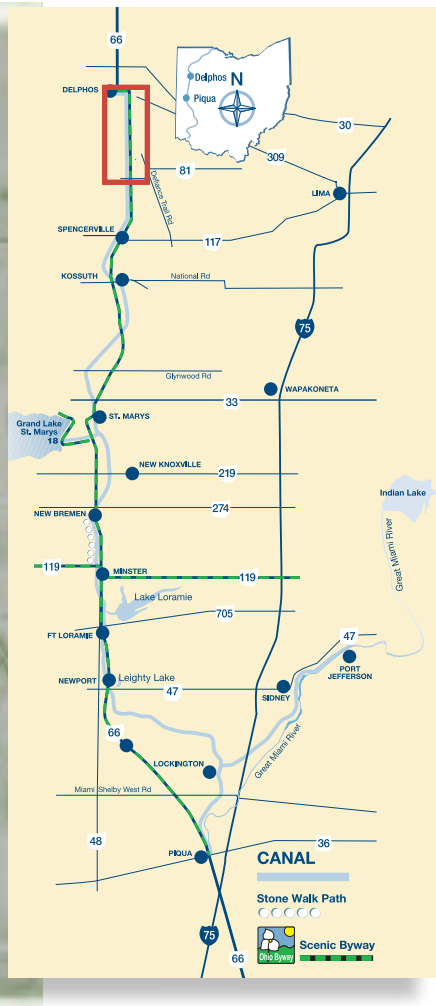
VIII A Driving Tour of the Miami and Erie Canal

We will begin this tour at the Piqua Historical Area located on the former farm of Col. John Johnston. Johnston was an early promoter of the canal, and served as a Canal Commissioner from 1825-1836. This tour will stop at a number of the more significant structures located from here north to Delphos, Ohio.

Included are directions to and descriptions of many of the structures and sites located along this stretch of the Miami and Erie Canal.

The lower case "s" denotes a lock found south of the Loramie Summit, while the lower case "n" tells us the lock is found north of the summit. (Andy Hite, Ohio Historial Society and Mike Morthorst, Canal Society of Ohio)





Jennings Creek Aqueduct

About three-quarters of a mile north of Lock 24n are the ruins of the aqueduct that crossed Jennings Creek. Today only the stone abutments remain.

Locks 23n and 24n

North of Second Street is the remains of the wooden Lock 23n. None of the floor remains, but foundation timbers and footers can be observed. Lock 24n is located at the northern limit of Delphos. It is stone, and in excellent condition. The spillway was partially rebuilt with concrete construction.

Delphos

The canal is located behind the stores on the west side of Main Street. The Lincoln Highway, known locally as Fifth Street, crossed the Miami and Erie Canal in Delphos. St. John's Catholic Church in Delphos, founded by Father John Otto Breidick, is the sixth largest church in the United States by square footage.

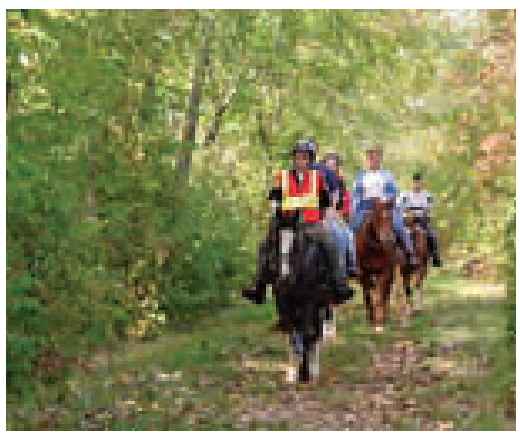
Like Spencerville, Delphos was originally two towns and had two locks. The canal straddles the Van Wert-Allen county line. The Van Wert community was known as Section Ten and the Allen County town was Delphos.

Locks 17n-22n

About a quarter mile to the west, the canal is minimally watered. Six wooden locks were located in this section. Very little remains of these locks save for an occasional mitre sill, a few bolts, and the towpath drop. Lock 19n, Bloom Lock, is located at the now- vanished town of Bloom. Earthworks, the entire lock floor, mitre sills, and remnants of the civilization that was located here can still be observed. At Lock 22n, one half-mile north of State Street, the modernized locktender's house can be seen.

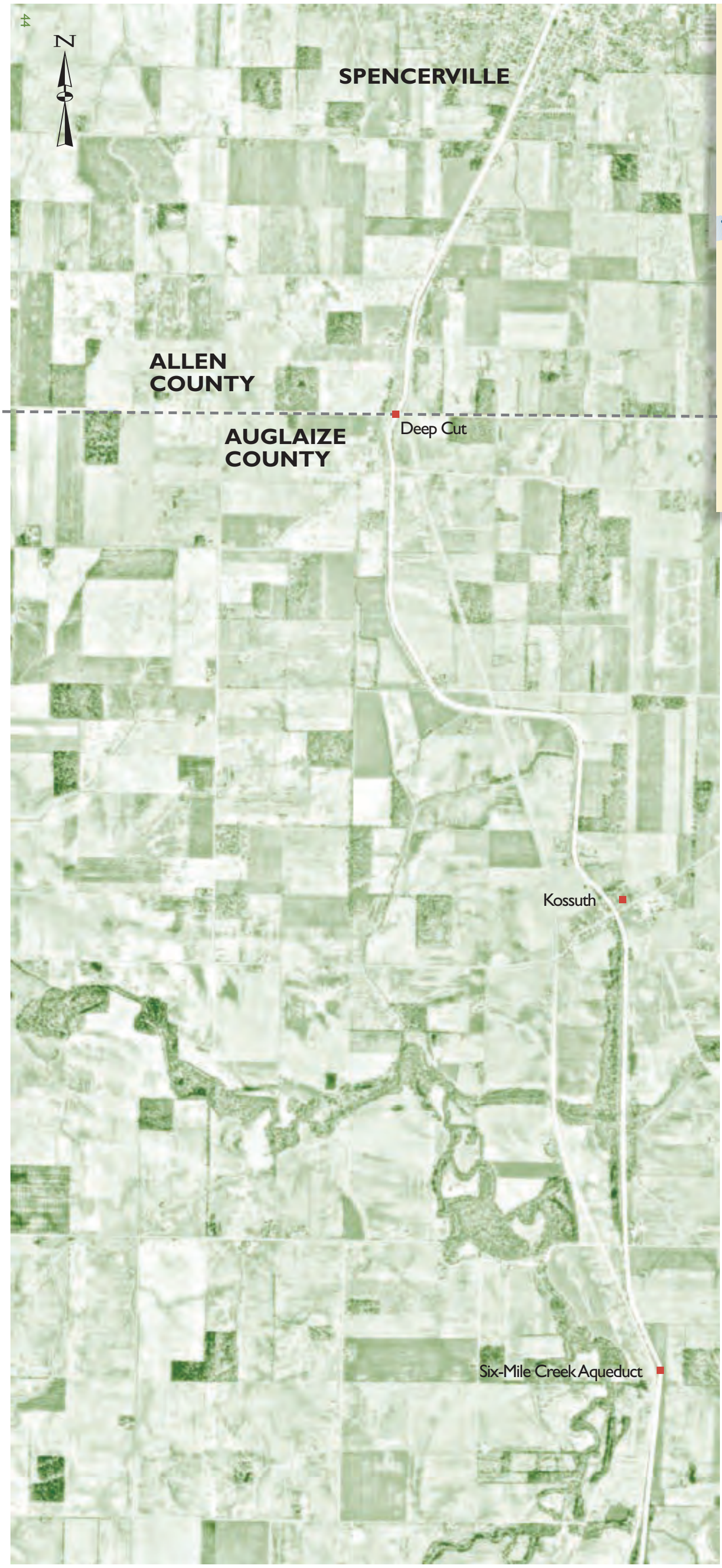
Locks 15n and 16n

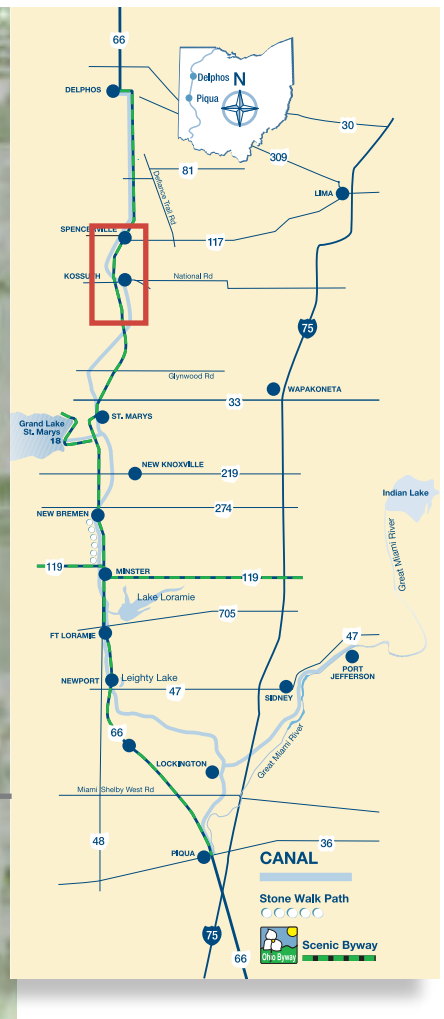
These locks were located at opposite ends of Spencerville. Both locks were wooden structures. There was also a wooden water control fixture just upstream from Lock 15n. A stone monument marks its former location. A water tower stands along the canal where Lock 16n was located. Some wooden foundation remnants of Lock 16n can be observed at low water.



Spencerville

Spencerville is a classic example of a town that grew along the length of the Miami and Erie Canal. The village was originally two hamlets, Spencer and Acadia. They merged in 1866 and became Spencerville.





Deep Cut

This county park commemorates a monumental ditch dug through a glacial moraine. As the canal progressed north, the builders could either go around, through, or over this obstacle. The builders chose to dig a ditch 6,600 feet long and as much as 52 feet deep. Local legend relates that the cut was dug from both ends; one end by Irish Catholics, the opposite by Irish Protestants. When they met, there was a three-day religious riot, resulting in numerous casualties and some deaths.

A small village was once located here. A canal-era school building is still standing on the village site

Kossuth

Named in honor of the Hungarian freedom fighter Louis Kossuth, this small town is located near the southern end of the canal "Deep Cut."

Prairie Creek Culvert

This picturesque structure is located about a mile from the nearest road. It is worth the hike to see it.

Six-Mile Creek Aqueduct

This beautiful structure is a replacement for the original wooden aqueduct. Reputedly this structure was built in 1903.

AUGLAIZE COUNTY

Lock 14 North

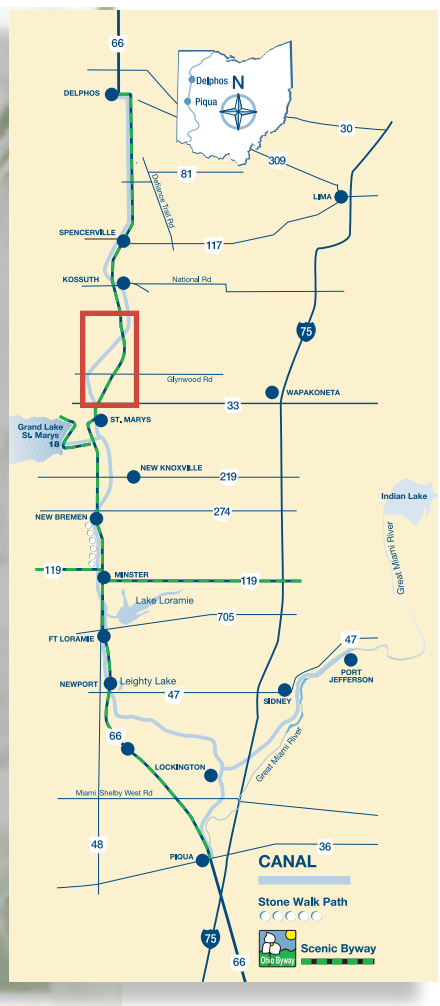
Forty Acre Pond

ST. MARYS

Lock 13 North

Lock 12 North

St. Marys River Aqueduct



Bloody Bridge

Two canal boaters, Bill Jones and Jack Billings, were both in love with the same woman, Minnie Warren. Minnie eventually chose Jack. One night in 1854, Bill Jones surprised Minnie and Jack on the bridge that stood on this spot. A jealous Bill Jones severed Jack's head with one stroke of his axe. In shock, Minnie screamed and fell off the bridge and drowned. Bill also disappeared. Years later a male skeleton was found. No one knows if it was suicide or justice. A stone monument commemorates the incident.

Lock 14n and Saw Mill

This lock was originally made of white oak. In 1905 it was rebuilt in concrete and remains a dominating presence up to the present. This area was the site of a small village, which included two lumberyards, a general store, a church, a school, a lock tender's house, icehouse, and private homes. After the canal declined in importance, many of the commercial buildings were destroyed in a massive fire. Local oral history relates the fire involved arson at the lumberyards.

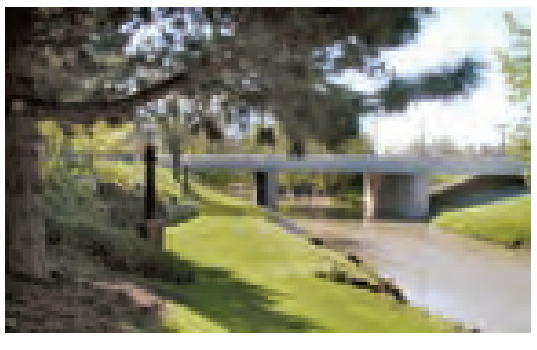
Forty Acre Pond

Forty Acre Pond is a widewater created when the St. Marys River was relocated during canal construction in the 1840s. The towpath is located on the west side of the pond. This pond was used by boats to moor overnight, and was an excellent swimming hole as well. A small village was once here, but has disappeared with the passage of time.

St. Marys, Locks 12n and 13n, Belle of St. Marys

Behind the stores on the south side of Spring Street is a large municipal parking lot, the Chestnut Street Lot. The canal extended across this lot in a northwesterly direction. A turning basin was located where the lot is presently located. Lock 12n, a stone structure, was just behind the stores where Chestnut Street crossed the canal. The lock was destroyed in 1980. Lock 13n, made of concrete, is between Spring and High streets. It is now under the present Woolen Mill. The concrete lower wings can be seen under the East High Street Bridge. A millrace parallels the canal through town. It is possible to hike along the towpath north to Forty Acre Pond. It is quite a scenic walk. There is a small walkway tunnel under US 33.

The Belle of St. Marys canal boat is used for civic functions. The Belle of the St. Marys is on the lower canal level adjacent to Memorial Park.



St. Marys River Aqueduct

Just south of the town of St. Marys, the canal crossed the St. Marys River on a stone and wood aqueduct. This structure collapsed in 1943. It has been modified and now carries water across the river in steel pipes resting on the old stonework.

Mercer County Reservoir (Grand Lake St. Marys) and Bulkhead Lock

The Bulkhead Lock is part of the control structure for the lake. It supplied water to the canal as it headed north toward Toledo. A 3.5-mile feeder takes water to the Miami and Erie Canal southeast of the town of St. Marys. Boats could be lifted into the lake to allow stops at towns on the perimeter of the Reservoir. The lock is larger than standard design, being 20 feet by 120 feet. State Route 364 crosses near the upper end of the lock. Until the construction of Hoover Dam in the 1930s, Grand Lake St. Marys was the largest man-made body of water in the world.

Locks 3n-11n

Along State Route 66, a half-mile to the east, lies the canal. This stretch can be hiked as part of the Buckeye Trail and the North Country National Scenic Trail. There are nine lock sites in this stretch. Since eight locks were made of wood, little remains except anchor bolts, an occasional mitre sill and some wood foundations here and there. Lock 6n located just south of State Route 219, offers an excellent example of earthen remains. The remaining stone lock in this stretch is Lock 8n. It is in excellent condition and features a very large spillway. The stones have a very distinctive design.

Also along this segment of canal are four original mile markers (124, 125, 126, and 127). Just north of Lock 6n you can see the junction of the main canal and an abandoned feeder from the Mercer County Reservoir.

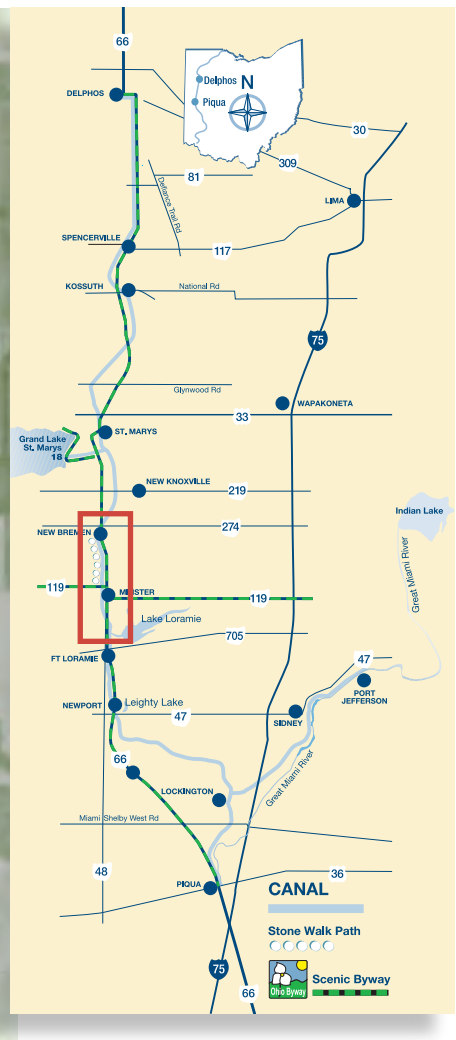
On the third Sunday in October there is a "Walk with Nature," where hikers can walk along the canal trail. There are numerous bus stops along the route to accommodate hikers. The local chambers of commerce can supply additional information.

Lock Two, Lock 2n, and Mill

This small settlement is located at the site of a wooden lock. Wooden, rather than stone locks were built when an adequate supply of limestone was unavailable. Today nothing much remains of the lock except some metal rods and a small rise in the earth. A basin was located between the lock and mill. This town was originally known as New Paris. There was a mill, lumberyard and general store. The larger two-story brick building on the square had a dance hall on the second floor. Places where canal boats moored can be seen on the west wall of the mill.

New Bremen and Lock 1n

Since Lockington, the canal has been on the Loramie Summit, a 14-mile-long level section. This represents the highest point on the canal. Lockington is 512 feet higher than Cincinnati, and New Bremen is 396 feet above Toledo. Lock 1n is located in a park west of State Route 66, near the library in the center of New Bremen. It is of concrete construction and in excellent condition. There was also a lockkeeper's house in New Bremen, which was burned down as a fire department exercise approximately 40 years ago, much to the dismay of local historians. North of the lock, the canal crosses State Route 66 and travels northeast to the hamlet of Lock Two, located about a mile away.



Minster

Minster is one of the communities settled by German immigrants during the Canal Era. It is located near the center of a remarkable concentration of large Catholic churches (originally 45 such structures were situated in a 20 square mile area). Minster itself contains the magnificent two-spired St. Augustine Church. The canal passes through the town on its western side. It is watered, although some of the water is processed through the local water treatment plant. There are no locks, culverts, aqueducts, or other canal fixtures in Minster.

Lake Loramie (Loramie Reservoir)

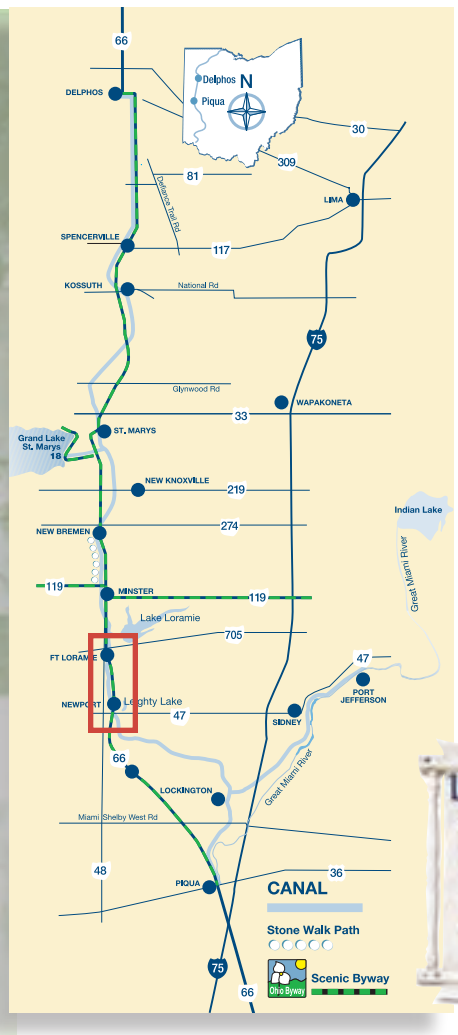
The Loramie Reservoir, now Lake Loramie, actually watered the summit both north and south. An earthen dam across Loramie Creek was built in a natural dip in the summit topography. It creates a lake that encompasses over 1,500 surface acres and 30 miles of shoreline. Of the three summit reservoirs, this was the cheapest to build, costing $22,000. This contrasts with a cost of $600,000 for the Lewistown Reservoir and $582,222 for the Mercer County Reservoir. The lake survived the demise of the canal era and is currently a state park.

Loramie Creek Feeder Junction

Lake Loramie, also known as the Loramie Reservoir, was one of the three summit reservoirs built to supply water for the Miami and Erie Canal. The water from Lake Loramie joined the canal here and supplied the summit level with water. The Mercer County Reservoir, now Grand Lake St. Marys, provided water northward. The Lewistown Reservoir, now Indian Lake, provided water to the south.

Loramie Creek Aqueduct

Smaller but more picturesque than the aqueduct over the same creek at Lockington, this was the northern crossing of the canal over Loramie Creek. The aqueduct is in ruins, though one can still get a good idea of what it looked like from the remains.



Fort Loramie

Located on an ancient Native American portage, this town has been a crossroad for centuries. Peter Loramie, a French-Canadian with strong pro-British feelings established a trading post here in 1769 near a large Native American village. He was suspected of inciting many attacks on arriving settlers. American forces under George Rogers Clark destroyed Loramie's post in 1782. A defensive structure was built in 1795. Settlement began after the War of 1812.

The canal came here in 1841 and brought prosperity. Canal-related ventures sprang up and most of the persons who came here worked in canal-related industries. The original name, New Berlin, indicated the settlers' wishes to build a "New Germany" in western Ohio.

The canal brought importance and wealth to this village. The German Catholic settlers eventually built a magnificent church named St. Michael's. The present structure took seven years to complete and incorporates the earlier church into the structure as the chapel. The foundation stones for this building were brought to the construction site by canal boat from the south. It is one of the largest churches in Ohio. This pattern of large German Catholic churches was repeated in many communities along the canal as far north as Ottoville.

The Fort Loramie name never totally fell from use. Anti-German sentiment at the time of World War I settled the issue of the town name once and for all. Thereafter, it was always known as Fort Loramie.

Newport

This small town was platted for Nicholas Wyant in 1839. The first businesses were a hotel and grocery. Later both a steam sawmill and gristmill were established here. A flax mill was built in 1881. This area was part of a "New Germany" running north through Ft. Loramie (New Berlin), Minster, and New Bremen. Two canal era buildings remain where the canal crossed SR 66. Just before the canal crosses SR 66 is a large widewater that served as a reservoir for this section of the summit level of the canal. It can be reached by following the towpath to the east.

Dawson Station

This small settlement was also known as Patrick Station. It was a railroad stop on the east-west line of the Big Four Line. This area contained many ice ponds, which supplied early refrigeration to towns along the canal. A post office and warehouse was here in 1881. The hamlet has been a religious center for the surrounding area.

Little Painter Creek Culvert

This large culvert rises over ten feet above the surface of Little Painter Creek. A person can easily walk beneath it. There is a large hole in the center of the culvert permitting one to see the sky from the center of the structure.

RESOURCE PLAN Future of the Miami and Erie Canal

Turtle Creek Culvert

Near New Bern was the great double stone arch that carried the canal over Turtle Creek on a high earthen embankment pierced by twin masonry culverts. This method was employed to maintain the grade of the canal without building additional lift locks. This culvert was in existence until it was demolished in 1982. It was feared that the culvert, which had deteriorated badly, might collapse, causing flooding to the north. Today only the wing walls remain at either entrance. The arches were twenty-two feet wide and sixteen and one half feet high. What little remains today is still an impressive sight.

Stone Culvert

This small stone culvert, which carried the canal over a small stream, appears to be in relatively good shape when observed from its eastern side. On the west side, the portal is undermined for some three to five feet. The supporting timbers holding up the stonework are plainly visible.

New Bern

Originally known as Woodbourne, this community is a mix of older, modest homes near Turtle Creek; and on higher ground, homes of more recent vintage. The canal is on top of steep embankment as it turns westward to cross Turtle Creek.

Mill Creek Culvert

This culvert is one of the few that are still on property owned by the state of Ohio, however it can only be reached by passing through private property. This culvert marks the beginning of a large "land causeway" as the canal begins to cross the Loramie Summit.

Loramie Summit

North from Lock 1s to New Bremen fourteen miles away is the summit level of the Miami and Erie Canal. Across this stretch of land there are no locks. The grade was maintained by following the ridges and valleys as the canal crossed the backbone of Ohio.

Within the playground just north of Lock 1s the water from the Lewistown Reservoir (Indian Lake) entered the canal by way of the Sidney Feeder. This canal was navigable by canal boat as far as Sidney, Ohio in Shelby County. You can see the prism of the feeder canal heading northeast if you stand in the playground north of Lock1s.

Loramie Creek Aqueduct

The original aqueduct at Lockington had three spans, with an open timbered superstructure, that rested on dressed stone piers. Later a metal aqueduct designed to be a more lasting structure replaced this structure. However, the waters of the 1913 flood washed this newer structure away.

Lockington

The area around the staircase locks was originally called Locksport, sometimes Lockport. It was platted on land owned by David Mellinger in 1837. The location was chosen because of the junction of the main canal with the feeder canal coming in from Sidney. It was the highest point on the Miami and Erie Canal. The series of six locks and the accompanying drop of 67 feet offered inexpensive and plentiful waterpower.

Previously, in 1830 a man named Steinberger had built a flourmill on the site of a failed sawmill along Loramie Creek where the village now stands. Another sawmill and a woolen mill followed this mill. These mills burned and were rebuilt. Operation of some of these activities continued into the early 1900s. The abandonment of the canal in the early 1900s ultimately spelled doom for these milling operations.

Lock 1s

This is the first lock in the descent south from the Loramie Summit, 512 feet above the Ohio River. It is often called "Big Lock" because its lift was greater than the other five locks in Lockington.

Lock 2s

Between this lock and Lock 1s was a turning basin for boats to wait their turn through the staircase of locks. Just west of the bypass race was a dry dock and repair basin for canal boats. This is still visible to visitors today. This turning basin would have been used for boats waiting their turn to descend south from the Loramie Summit.

Lock 3s

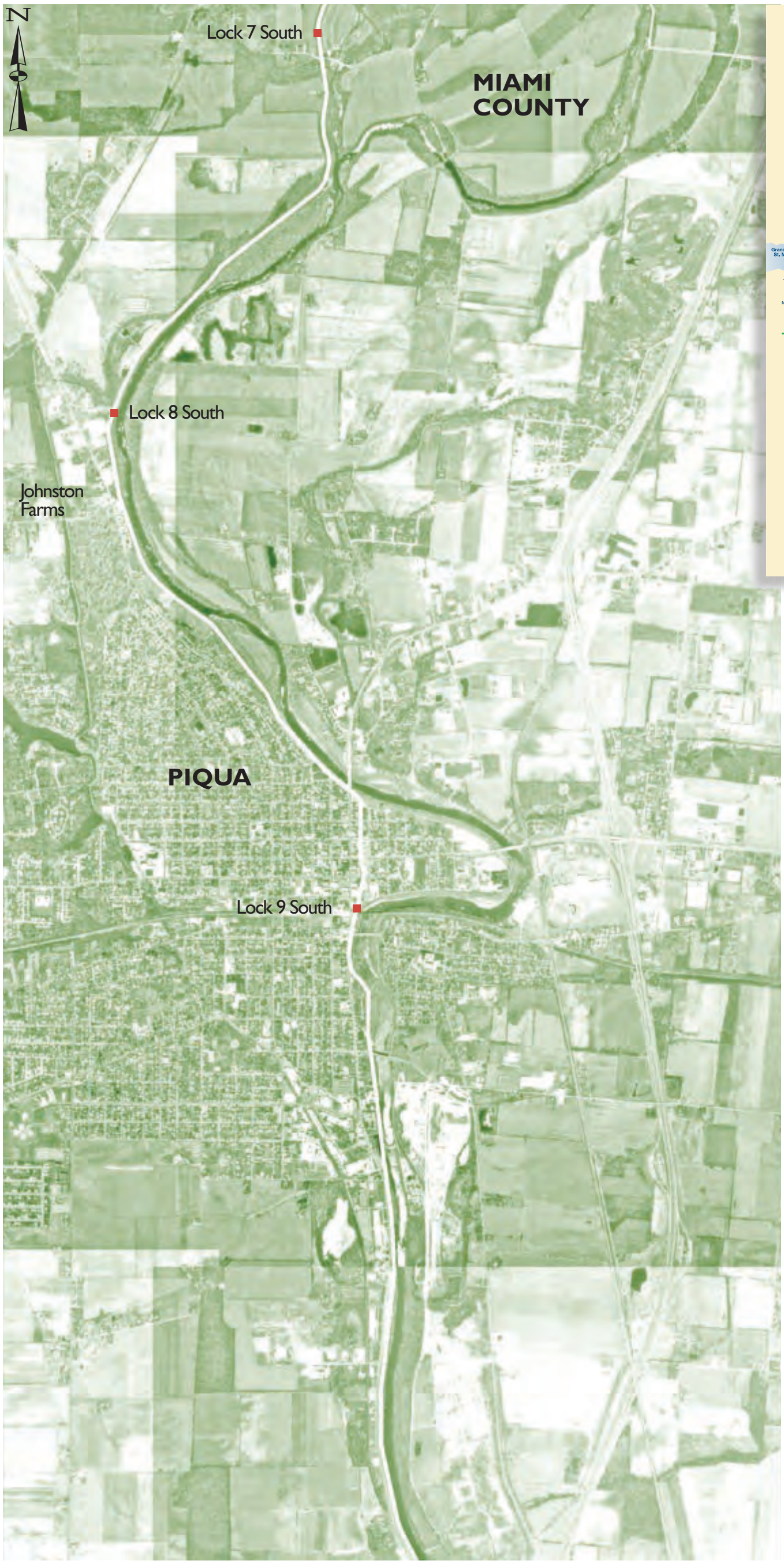
Located astride this lock was a mill, the only one at Lockington directly on the canal. From this lock a visitor can look both north and south and get a great view of the staircase of locks.

Lock 4s

At Lock 4s was the entrance to the Piqua Hydraulic Canal. This entrance was known as Little Falls. The hydraulic canal supplied both water, and waterpower to the industry of Piqua. This system is still watered south of SR 66 as it exits Swift Run Lake.

Lock 5s

This is the last of the staircase of locks on the north side of Loramie Creek. Shortly after exiting this lock heading south the boats entered the channel of the Loramie Aqueduct to cross the creek and enter Lock 6s.



Lock 6s

This lock is also known as "Crooked Lock'" due to the fact that it is not on the same axis as the first five locks, and cannot be directly seen looking down the staircase. It lies immediately south of the Loramie Creek Aqueduct. South of the lock is a widewater, where boats paused while waiting their turn to begin the ascent through the Lockington Locks. From this point, the canal rises 67 feet in approximately one-half mile to the Loramie Summit that stretches 14 miles north to New Bremen, Ohio.

Lock 7s and Landman Mill

This mill has been known over the years both as Landman's Mill and Loramie Mill. It was in use until the early 1900s, which is the primary reason it is still standing. Lock 7s and the canal prism before it are still watered.

Lock 8s and State Dam

Located adjacent to the lock was the State Dam, which created a water supply for the canal as it flowed south. In fact, the structure of the lock was somewhat modified to incorporate a guard lo ck and the dam into its functioning. From the river side of the bank the guard lock is still visible as is the remains of the dam itself. The lock apparently has no bypass race. Bridge abutments and the foundation for a building are just south of the lock site.

X Bibliography

Feasibility Study. Miami-Erie Canal Corridor Association, Heritage Corridor Project, Thomas A. Wehrhahn, Produced 2000.

Miami and Erie Canal, Commerce and History. Delphos Canal Commission, Delphos, Ohio. Copyright 1990.

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Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Authority Questionnaire.

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