



Discover Ohio's Miami and Erie Canal

Travel Back in Time

*Visitor's Guide to canal locks, museums, parks
and hiking trails along the historic and scenic
canal corridor in western Ohio*

Miami and Erie Canal Heritage Corridor

This guide is made possible through the joint effort of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water and the Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Association.

Once upon a time in Ohio – when the land was still covered with forests, swamps, and prairies – bumpy, muddy, and barely cleared roads made travel difficult and slow.

But then, in the early 1800s, Ohio’s two great canals were built – an engineering and construction feat of amazing proportions. The “big ditches” revolutionized transportation and became the driving force behind the state’s expansion and prosperity.

In the east, the Ohio and Erie Canal extended from Portsmouth to Cleveland. In the west, the Miami and Erie Canal connected the western interior of Ohio with Cincinnati and Toledo.



Ohio Department of Natural Resources
DIVISION OF WATER
dnr.ohio.gov/water

A brief history of Canals in Ohio

The Miami and Erie Canal was built in sections. Construction of the first leg from Middletown to Cincinnati began on July 25, 1825. Additional segments were parceled out to contractors until 1845 when the entire canal was open to traffic.

Most of the labor on the canal was provided by German, Irish, and French immigrants, who were paid 31 cents a day and a jigger of whiskey. They worked through all kinds of weather

and illnesses, including malaria. Many of these workers settled down in the small towns that sprang up next to the canal they helped build.

The peak year for the canal operations was 1851, with revenues in excess of \$350,000 and approximately 400 boats in operation. Shortly thereafter, in the 1850s and 1860s, the railroads came through, greatly reducing the commercial value of the canals. However, some limited use continued



This massive sesquicentennial quilt can be viewed in the Delphos Historical Museum.

on segments through the early 1900s and even today.

Fortunately, the romance of Ohio's canal days and the history of those bustling years live on. Enjoy this guidebook and visit the historic communities that are the legacy of the Miami and Erie Canal, as you travel back in time.



Featured in the Delphos Canal Museum is a large model of the Marguerite.

DELPHOS

Delphos, named after the Greek word “adelphos” meaning brother, was founded in 1844 on the southern edge of the Great Black Swamp. In spite of fighting malaria from the swamp, the town grew rapidly. The Museum Center offers a visit to the past. Inside, the Delphos Historical Museum showcases memorabilia including the beautiful Sesquicentennial Quilt. The Delphos Canal Commission collection, also displayed here, includes remnants from the canal boat, Marguerite. The original Marguerite was built around 1850. It caught fire and sank in the canal at Delphos in the early 1900s. In 1987, the side rails, bottom ribs, and keel were discovered when the canal was drained for repair work.



Remnants of the Marguerite canal boat



Dining on board the Marguerite



Original tin bathtub from the Marguerite





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Lock 24 North and close up of hydraulic gate used to control water elevation.



3

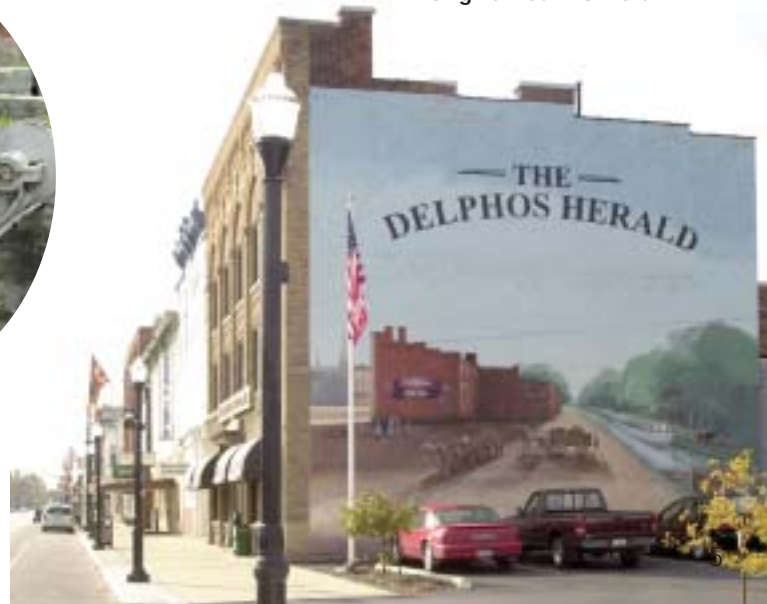
Lock 23 North



Original Lock 23 North



Mural painted in 1994 on Delphos Herald newspaper building.



Kendrick Woods Metro Park and State Nature Preserve

Delphos was located in the midst of a dense forest. Settlers, who complained they “could only see out by looking straight up,” made it their goal to remove “the forest from the face of the earth.” By 1854, the forests had been cleared, and the timber had become a source of wealth. Within a five-mile radius of Delphos, 35 saw mills were constantly cutting and preparing lumber.

After the thick forests had been cut, a few pockets remained — Kendrick Woods is an outstanding example. The preserve features old white oaks, 55 other kinds of trees and shrubs, and 85 species of birds. Old-growth forest mixed with wetland and prairie habitat covers a majority of the 300-acre park.

Kendrick Woods is owned and maintained by the Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District. Call for information on interpretive nature programs. (see back cover for phone number)

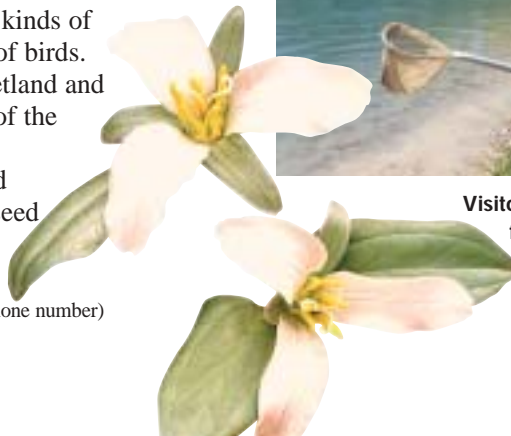


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The woods provides bird watchers with over 85 species to study, including hawks and owls.



Visitors can enjoy hiking, fishing or picnicking.



SPENCERVILLE

In 1843, a trading post was established when the canal was being constructed through the area. A year later, a village was incorporated as Spencer. The first canal boat arrived in 1845. The village was officially named Spencerville in 1867. The last canal boat shipped through in 1906.



Deep Cut

Located on the southern edge of Spencerville, Deep Cut is a continuous ditch from five- to 50-foot deep. It was blasted through the 6,600-foot blue-clay ridge that separates the Auglaize River Valley from the St. Marys watershed.

Six Mile Aqueduct

This unique bilevel structure was built in the 1840s to carry the Miami and Erie Canal over Six Mile Creek.





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Bloody Bridge

A granite monument, erected by the Auglaize County Historical Society, recounts the story of an 1850s tragedy. Two men who worked on canal boats were interested in the same young lady. When she chose Jack, Bill was crazy with jealousy and ambushed them at the bridge.



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40-Acre Pond

40-Acre Pond

During construction of the canal, 40-Acre Pond was created as a result of the canal crossing the St. Marys River floodplain. The pond is a popular site today for horseback riding, fishing, canoeing, hiking, and nature-watching.



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Lock 14 North Originally wooden, this lock was converted to concrete in 1907. The 2003 renovation includes a pedestrian bridge and parking lot.

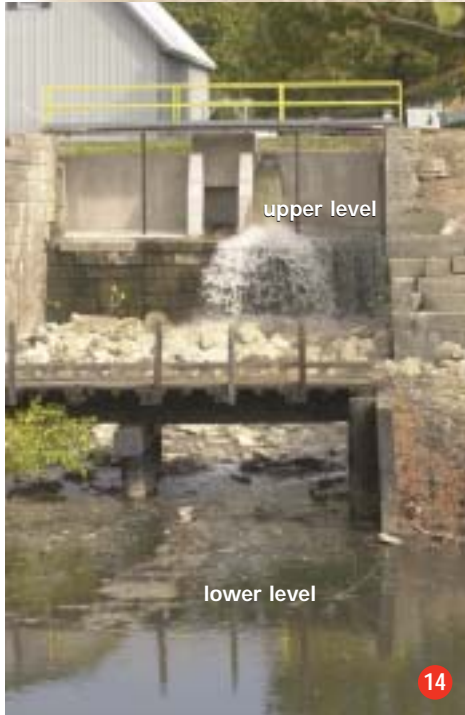


Riders on the path around 40-Acre Pond



The 40-mile Miami and Erie Canal Towpath Trail runs from Delphos to Ft. Loramie along the old canal towpath.

The Towpath Trail in Allen, VanWert, Auglaize, Shelby and Miami counties is part of two other major trail systems, the Buckeye Trail and the North Country National Scenic Trail.



The Tumbles

North of High Street in St. Marys there are actually two canals. The upper level was once the site of a large mill, which used the water to turn its grinding stones. This level now carries water to the power plant, as excess water falls over a quaint little spillway called “The Tumbles”. The lower level was for canal boat traffic.



Covered Bridge



Scenic Grotto



Clock Tower

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Memorial Park St. Marys

A full-scale replica of a 19th century canal boat, the Belle of St. Marys, is docked at Memorial Park. The boat was built and is maintained by the city of St. Marys. The park includes a covered bridge which was built by volunteers, historical markers, a clock tower, scenic grotto, and picnic area.

This is an example of how commercial buildings were constructed adjacent to the canal. The Belle St. Marys is on the canal lower level.





IT TOOK THE HARD LABOR OF 500 MEN TWO YEARS TO BUILD
A 15-MILE STRETCH OF THE 248.8 MILE LONG DITCH.

ST. MARYS

This area was always an important transportation hub. A Native American portage connected the St. Marys and Auglaize rivers, allowing travel from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. It was a natural spot for trading with the French during the 1600-1700s. The Shawnee village Kettle Town was here, as was Girtystown, a hot-spot for the

renegade James Girty.

Fort St. Marys was erected by General Anthony Wayne in 1794 in the war against the Indians. The Treaty of St. Marys of 1818 opened the way for more settlers and many soldiers returned to St. Marys to make it home.

The village was founded in 1823 with work on the canal beginning several years



St. Marys River Aqueduct as seen in 1909



The Aqueduct as seen today

later. Using only picks, shovels and wheelbarrows, men worked from sunrise to sunset to construct the canal.

Today, canal water is used by the power plant to cool power-producing machinery.

Miami and Erie Canal Heritage Corridor



Locations and mileage listed North to South.
Red dots identify photo sites.

| | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 1 | Jennings Creek Aqueduct–Van Wert/Putnam County Line | |
| 2 | Lock 24 North, Stone–Delphos/Stadium Park | 0.4 |
| 3 | Lock 23 North, Wood/Concrete Spillway–3rd Street Delphos | 0.8 |
| 4 | Lock 19 North, Wood–Bloomlock Road, Allen County | 4.4 |
| 5 | Kendrick Woods Metro Park and State Nature Preserve Defiance Trail/St Rt 81, Allen County | 2.2 |
| 6 | Well Site Village Park–Spencerville | 2.4 |
| 7 | Lock 16 North, Wood/Concrete Spillway–North Canal St, Spencerville | 0.4 |
| 8 | Lock 15 North, Wood/Concrete Spillway–South Canal St, Spencerville | 0.5 |
| 9 | Deep Cut Historical Park–Deep Cut Road/St Rt 66 | 1.7 |
| 10 | Six Mile Creek Aqueduct–Salem-Noble Road/St Rt 66 | 4.3 |
| 11 | Bloody Bridge–County Road 182/St Rt 66A, Noble Twp | 0.7 |
| 12 | Lock 14 North, Concrete–Lock 14 Road, West of St Rt 66 | 1.5 |
| 13 | 40-Acre Pond–Glynwood Road, West of St Rt 66 | 1.7 |
| 14 | Tumbles, Stone–North of High Street, St. Marys | 3.3 |
| 15 | Upper/Lower Canal & Canal Boat–Memorial Park, St. Marys | 0.1 |
| 16 | St. Marys River Aqueduct–Greenville Road, K.C. Geiger Park | 0.6 |
| 17 | Grand Lake St. Marys Feeder Canal–Aqueduct Road | 0.5 |
| 18 | Feeder/Lake Bulkhead, Stone–St Rt 364/Grand Lake State Park | 2.6 |
| 19 | Lock 8 North, Stone*–Poppe Road, East of St Rt 66 | 4.0 |
| 20 | Lock 7 North, Wood–St Rt 219, East of St Rt 66 | 0.8 |
| 21 | Lock 2 North, Wood–Lock 2 Road, East of St Rt 66 | 2.9 |

| | | |
|----|--|------|
| 22 | Bremenfest Park— <i>Jefferson St, New Bremen</i> | 0.8 |
| 23 | Lock 1 North, Concrete, Lock 1 Park, Historic Bridge <i>St Rt 66, New Bremen</i> | 0.5 |
| 24 | Jaycee's Park— <i>Plum Street, New Bremen</i> | 0.2 |
| 25 | Seventh St Park— <i>Minster, Seventh Street</i> | 2.3 |
| 26 | Lake Loramie Feeder Canal— <i>Canal Road/Lake Loramie State Park</i> | 2.7 |
| 27 | Loramie Creek Aqueduct— <i>East of St Rt 66, North of Fort Loramie</i> | 0.1 |
| 28 | Loramie Village Park— <i>St Rt 66, Fort Loramie</i> | 0.6 |
| 29 | Leighty Lake/Shelby County Park Trail— <i>St Rt 47, East of St Rt 66</i> | 4.6 |
| 30 | Painter Creek Stone Culvert*— <i>Cynthian Twp, Shelby County</i> | 1.6 |
| 31 | Stone Culvert*— <i>Washington Township, Shelby County</i> | 4.0 |
| 32 | Mill Creek Stone Culvert*— <i>Stangel Rd, Shelby County</i> | 3.3 |
| 33 | Stone Box Culvert*— <i>Miami Conservancy Rd, Shelby County</i> | 1.8 |
| 34 | Lockington Dam & Reserve— <i>Fessler-Buxton Rd, Shelby County</i> | 7 |
| 35 | Indian Lake State Park— <i>Lakeview, Logan County</i> | 36.0 |
| 36 | Sidney Feeder Canal— <i>Port Jefferson to Lockington</i> | 35.5 |
| 37 | Lock 1-5 South & Loramie Aqueduct— <i>Lockington, County Rd 111</i> <i>or Museum Rd, Shelby County</i> | 0.2 |
| 38 | Lock 6-7 South, Stone & Landman Mill*— <i>Landman Mill Rd,</i> <i>Miami County</i> | 0.8 |
| 39 | Lock 8 South, Stone, Canal Boat Ride, Piqua Historical Site, <i>Johnston Farm—Hardin Road, Miami County</i> | 1.6 |
| 40 | Lock 9 Park— <i>Water Street, Piqua</i> | 1.1 |

* Contact the local landowner to visit these sites

ON THE TRAIL

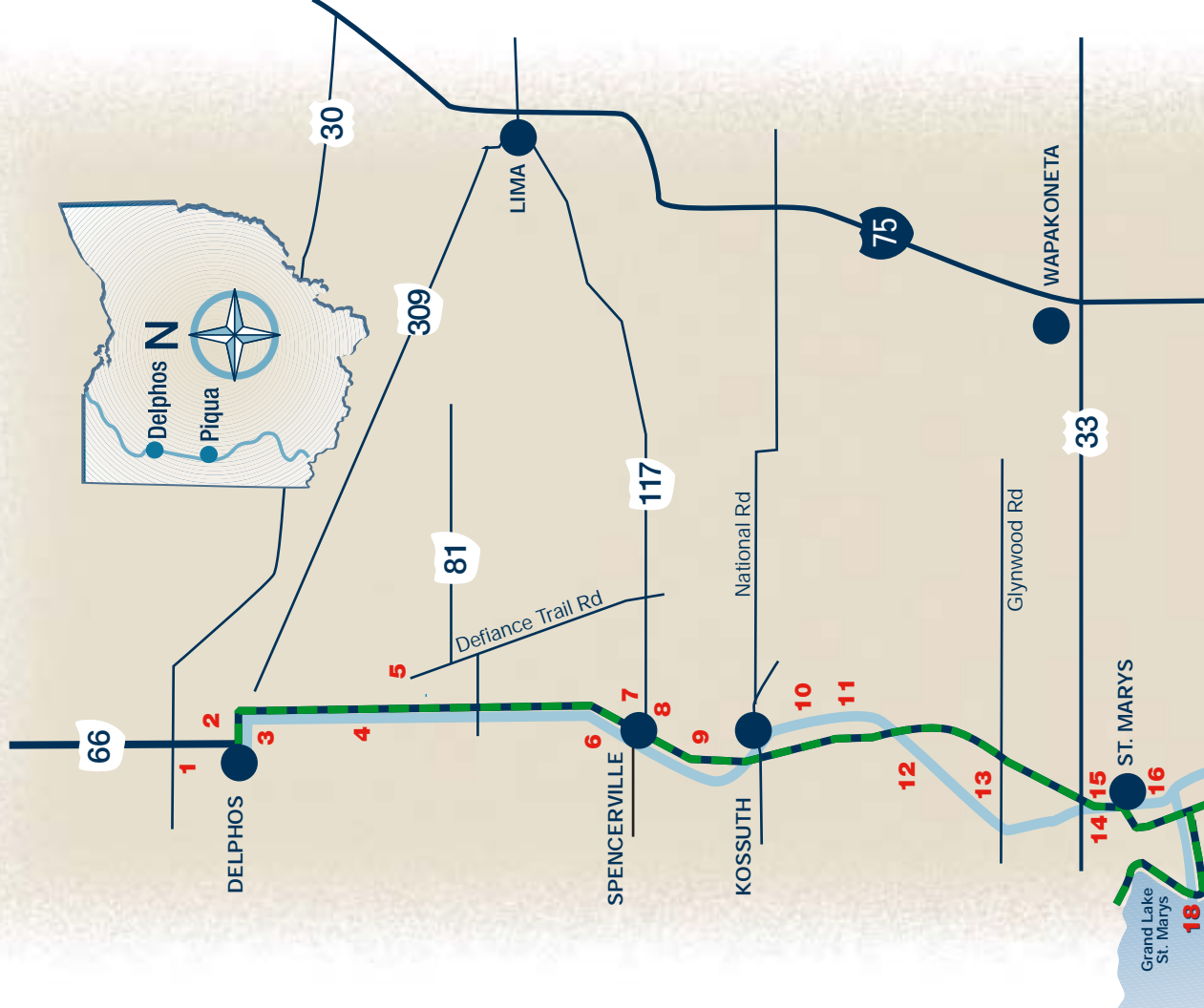
Route 66, following the historic path from Piqua through Delphos, was designated the Miami and Erie Canal Scenic Byway. An Ohio Byway is a road deserving special recognition because of its importance to the state – whether for scenic beauty, natural qualities, historic significance, cultural, recreational or archeological importance.

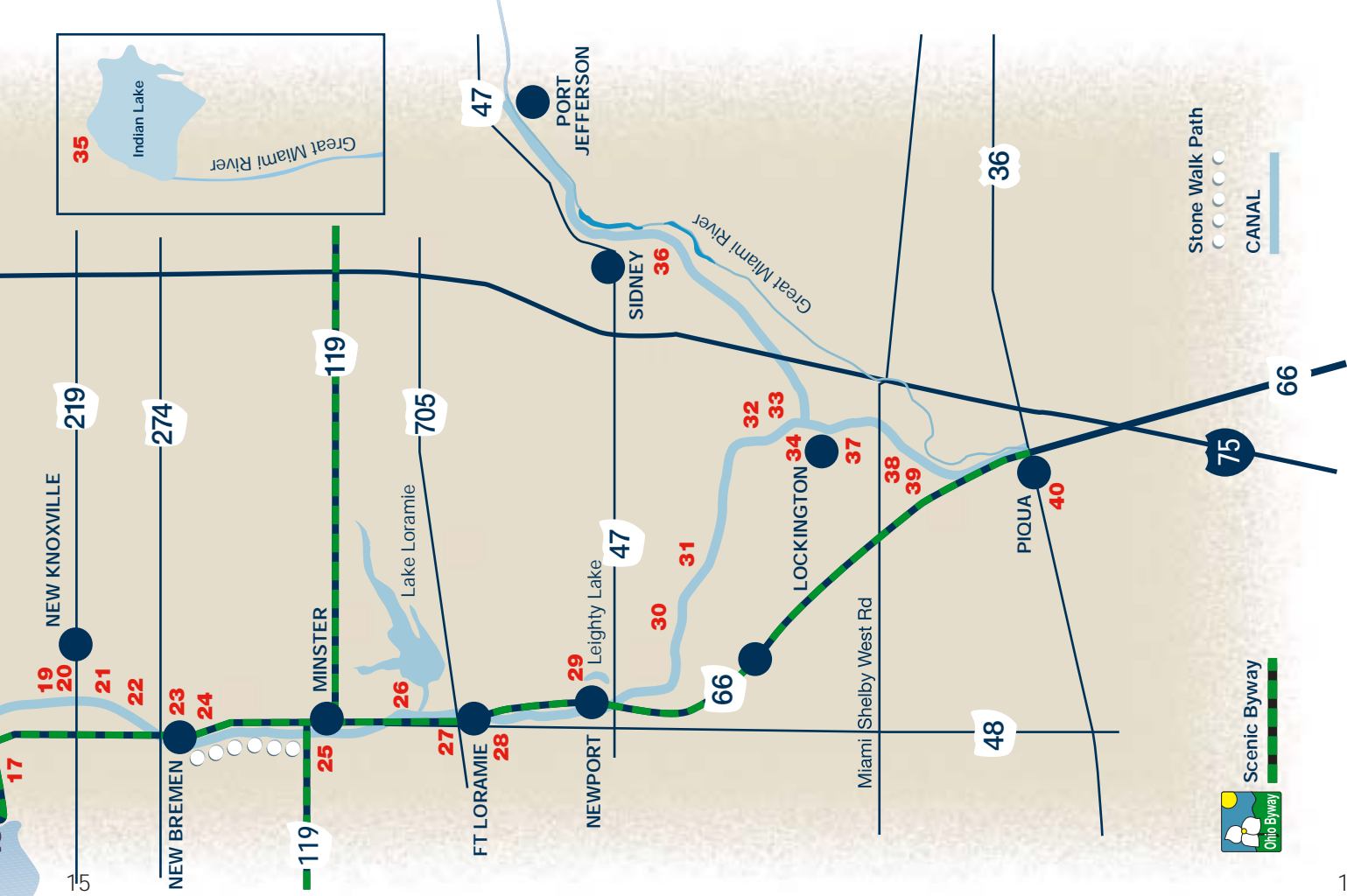
The 40-mile Miami and Erie Canal Towpath Trail runs from Delphos to Ft. Loramie along the old canal towpath. The canal is still mostly intact, with many historic structures, bridges, aqueducts, and cuts along the way.

The Towpath Trail in Allen, VanWert, Auglaize, Shelby, and Miami counties is part of two other major trail systems:

- The Buckeye Trail, signified by the blue blazes, circles Ohio for 1,200 miles. It is the longest loop hiking trail in the United States. (www.buckeyetrail.org)
- The North Country National Scenic Trail is a 4,600-mile trail stretching from New York to North Dakota. (www.northcountrytrail.org)

Miami and Erie Canal Heritage Corridor







Grand Lake St. Marys



Bulkhead Lock

Grand Lake St. Marys

Grand Lake St. Marys was constructed as a reservoir to maintain the canal's four-foot water depth. Work on the 13,500-acre lake began in 1837 and was completed in 1845 at a cost of \$600,000. Grand Lake was connected to the canal by a three-mile feeder, providing water for the northern leg of the canal. For many years, the reservoir was the largest artificial body of water in the world, and is still the largest one built without the use of machinery. Grand Lake St. Marys became a state park in 1915.

The bulkhead lock controls the water drawn from Grand Lake, flowing through the feeder canal into the main canal. Hydraulic controls, including canal lock gates, spillways, and aqueducts, maintain water levels and divert rain water and drainage, helping prevent floods and breaches of the banks.

Lock 8 North is a good example of a stone lock. It has remained virtually undisturbed for the past 100 years, and is considered one of the best preserved canal locks in the U.S.



Lock 8 North



New Bremen has many restored canal-era brick structures in its historic downtown.

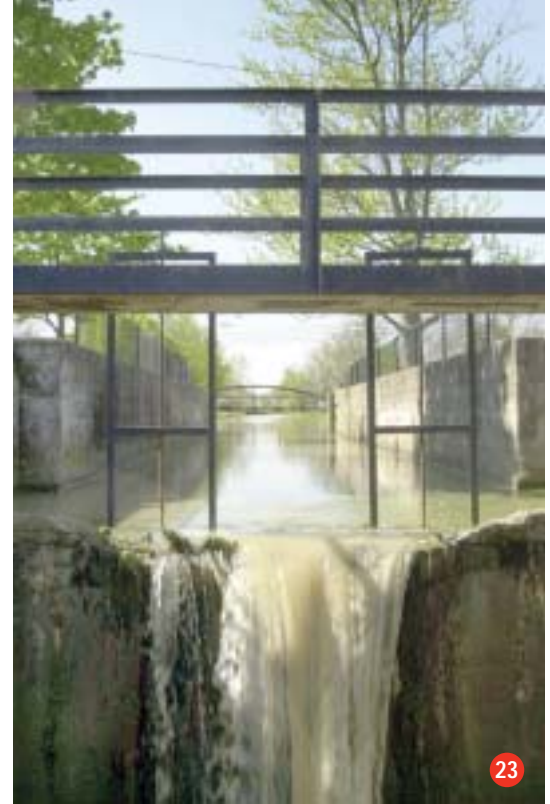


1864 Cast Iron Bridge is the oldest bowstring girder bridge in Ohio.

NEW BREMEN

In 1832, a group of German immigrants founded New Bremen near the mid-point of the canal. Lock 1, located in the center of town, was built at the north end of the Loramie Summit. The canal brought great prosperity to the village. There were grist mills, woolen mills, sawmills, and several pork packing plants and grain warehouses along the canal.

The legacy of those German pioneers — strong faith, hard work, and a dedication to excellence — continues today.



Lock 1 North in downtown New Bremen – locks on the Miami and Erie Canal were numbered north and south from the Loramie Summit.



New Bremen Historic Museum

Begun in 1837 and enlarged to its present size by 1846, the museum is one of the oldest structures in town. It is a timber braced frame house lined with bricks, mud and straw, a construction style common with the German immigrants. Tour not only the museum itself, which contains many local artifacts, but also the brick summer kitchen and vaulted bake oven.

New Knoxville Heritage Center

The New Knoxville Heritage Center includes five restored 19th century structures filled with canal-era artifacts including a vertical saw blade used to cut timber for the canal locks. New Knoxville is located three miles east of the canal on State Route 219.



The Bicycle Museum of America, near Lock 1 North on the canal, is dedicated to the history of cycling and features more than 200 vintage bikes.





New Bremen–Minster stone walk path

MINSTER

In 1832, a group of German immigrants led by Francis Joseph Stallo formed a settlement that became known as Stallstown. When the village was incorporated in 1839 the name was changed to Muenster and later anglicized to Minster.

The Minster Historical Society has created a 20-foot long plat map exhibit detailing the canal, its structures, and historic buildings along the canal in Minster and Ft. Loramie. The exhibit is located on the second floor of the Stallo Memorial Library.

Although no longer an artery for commerce, the Miami and Erie Canal remains a scenic recreational asset. The three-mile towpath walkway between New Bremen and Minster is a great place to hike, enjoy nature and discover the canal.



The Dutch Mill once received deliveries from canal barges directly through a side door.



The landmark in Minster, without doubt, is the twin-spired St. Augustine Church — one of the region's earliest Catholic parishes, established in 1835.



Canal Mile Marker 116

FORT LORAMIE

In 1769, a French-Canadian trader named Peter Loramie established a trading post at Loramie Creek. His store became the center of Indian activities against the settlers, so in 1782, General George Rogers Clark destroyed the post and the nearby Indian village.

When the canal was built, Lake Loramie was constructed as a reservoir to supply water to the canal. A short feeder canal connected the lake with the main canal.



Wilderness Trail Museum

Part of the history of the museum building is that it was used as a lodging house for people traveling along the canal. The first floor was a tavern with bedrooms upstairs.



Today visitors can browse the realistic barroom, parlors featuring Native American and military artifacts as well as a woman's shop with vintage clothing on the first floor.



Military Display



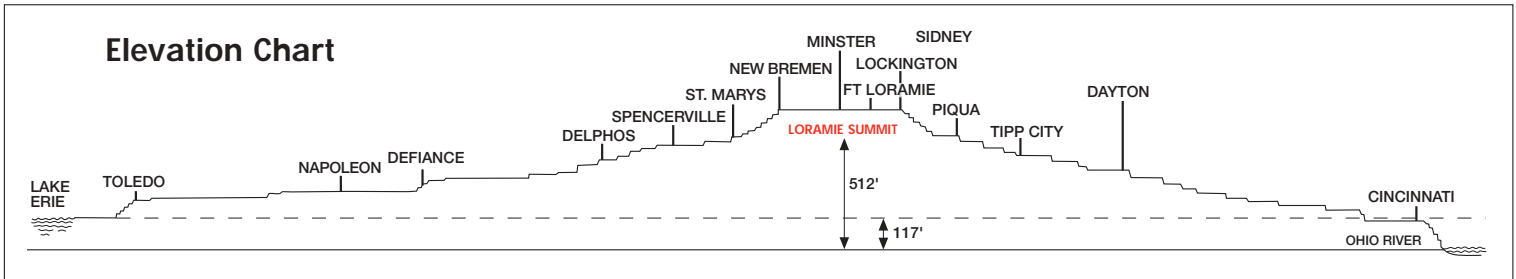
Woman's Shop



Victorian Dining Room

Upstairs are Victorian-style bedrooms, dining rooms, parlors and a doll room.

Loramie Summit, from New Bremen to Lockington, is the highest point between Lake Erie and the Ohio River. The tract of land is 21 miles long, 512 feet above the Ohio River and 395 feet above Lake Erie. For the engineers who built the Miami and Erie Canal, their most daunting task was getting boats over this high ground. A series of 105 locks was the answer.





Five locks enabled canal boats to be raised or lowered a total of 67 feet at the southern edge of the Loramie Summit. The locks stepped down to Loramie Creek, where a sixth lock and an aqueduct were built. These stair-step locks were the most extensive and spectacular series of structures on the canal.

LOCKINGTON

The town of Lockington, originally named Locksport, was founded in 1837 just as the canal construction was moving north from Piqua. It was hoped that Locksport, with its six locks on the Loramie Summit, would become the "new Cincinnati."

Waiting to use the locks was a slow process that took several hours, giving passengers time to go ashore and enjoy the wild canal boomtown. In the 1850s, the town settled down, becoming more family-oriented.



37



Lock 2 South



Hussey's restaurant sits on the edge of the canal in Port Jefferson.



A Memorial to fallen heroes is located in the Monumental Building.



Ross Historical Center has a series of displays which document the rich local heritage including the history of the canal.

Sidney 36

At Port Jefferson, water from the Lewistown Reservoir (Indian Lake), via the Great Miami River, entered a feeder canal that ran through Sidney and joined the Miami and Erie Canal at Lockington. This feeder was constructed through Shelby County in the mid-1830s and brought much growth and prosperity.

The Sidney Court House Square is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. You will want to allow some extra time to examine the People's Federal Savings and Loan Association building, the Monumental Building, Shelby County Courthouse and more.



People's Savings and Loan building was designed by world famous architect Louis Sullivan.

Piqua Historic Area

The Piqua Historic Area State Memorial celebrates Ohio's rich history from prehistoric Indians to Ohio's canal era. The focal point of the peaceful 250-acre park is John Johnston – farmer, Ohio Canal Commissioner, and United States Indian Agent for western Ohio from 1812 to 1829. Here Johnston's numerous contributions to the growth of early Ohio and settlement of frontier America are presented in a truly unique and beautiful setting.

Today, the Johnston Farm takes you back to the early 19th century, with costumed interpreters and craft demonstrations. Preserved buildings include the original two-story mixed Dutch Colonial/Georgian farmhouse and a unique two-story spring house. A mammoth double-penned log barn, constructed in 1808, is reputed to be the oldest and largest of its type in Ohio, and is still in use on the grounds.



Summer kitchen



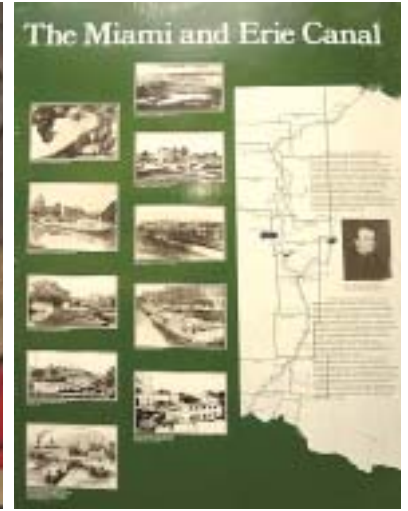


Historic Indian Museum



Not far from the Johnston Farm is a museum which was constructed to resemble the blockhouse style of Fort Piqua, General Anthony Wayne's 18th century supply post. Exhibits trace the story of the Eastern Woodland Indians of Ohio. Artifacts from Ohio's canal era are also on exhibit.

The patio portion of the museum building allows visitors the opportunity to view a restored mile-long section of the Miami and Erie Canal.





Lock 8 South

At the end of its route, the canal boat turns directly in front of Lock 8, giving visitors a close-up view.



General Harrison Canal Boat

This replica of a mule-drawn mixed-cargo canal boat provides rides to the public on a restored mile-long segment of the canal.



Today, Lock 9 South is a memorial park, with a beautiful view of the Great Miami River.



Wall of historical facts and photos



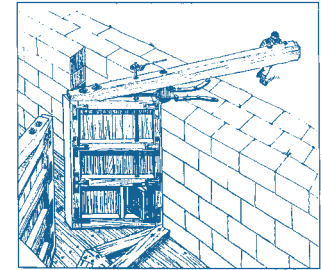
Reproduction of wooden canal lock doors



40

Piqua Lock 9 Park

Completed in 1837, Piqua Lock 9 South was the site of a German immigrant settlement and industries that used canal water power to produce flannel, flour, and flax seed. In the 1860s, canal traffic began fading slowly away, but heavy cargoes such as coal, lumber, and stone were shipped on it until 1912.



A canal boat entered a lock, and when the back gate closed, water was allowed to run into the front end of the lock and fill the enclosed area. When the water was high enough, the second gate was opened and the boat floated forward.



TOURISM INFORMATION:

Lima - Allen County Convention and Visitors Bureau 888-222-6075
Van Wert Convention and Visitors Bureau 419-238-2999
Auglaize and Mercer Counties Convention and Visitors Bureau 800-860-4726
Greater Logan County Area Convention and Tourism Bureau 888-564-2626
Sidney Visitors Bureau 866-892-9122
Miami County Visitor and Convention Bureau 800-348-8993
Delphos Canal Commission Museum 419-695-7737
Johnny Appleseed Metro Park District 419-221-1232
Daniel F Mooney Museum (St. Marys) 419-394-4611
New Bremen Historic Museum 419-629-0313
Bicycle Museum of America (New Bremen) 419-629-9249
New Knoxville Heritage Center 419-629-0313
Minster Historical Society (Stallo Memorial Library) 419-628-2925
Wilderness Trail Museum (Ft. Loramie) 937-295-3855
Ross Historical Center (Sidney) 937-498-1653
Piqua Historical Area 800-752-2619
1-800-BUCKEYE



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meccainc.org