



Marker Text

Constructed 1832-1853, canal was nation's longest, connection Lake Erie at Toledo with Ohio River at Evansville. Key portion in Carroll County included Deer Creek Lake Dam, constructed 1838-1840 (1 mile west). Various canal structures are still in evidence.

Report

The marker text lacks context, leaving the reader with a number of questions. However, this marker certainly meets the current guidelines for state and national significance due to the economic impact upon the state. As a result of the canals, thousands of jobs were provided, hundreds of businesses were created, and Hoosier products were sent beyond the borders of the state.

Construction on the Wabash and Erie Canal began on February 22, 1832.¹ In 1853, construction reached Evansville.² The Wabash and Erie Canal was the longest canal in the nation.³ Deer Creek Dam⁴ was under construction in 1838 according the chief engineer's report.⁵ The 1839 chief engineer's report⁶ states, ". . . During the past season the contractors for these dams [Deer Creek and Wild Cat] have progressed with praiseworthy energy, and there is now good grounds to believe that both dams may be closed and rendered secure before the return of winter. . . ." The November 11, 1840s report of the Board of Internal Improvement⁷ states, ". . . the Wabash and Erie Canal is now fully ready for navigation from the State line to Lafayette. . . ." The chief engineer's 1841 report⁸ states the dam is complete. The Wabash and Erie Canal Park in Delphi, Indiana has restored parts of the canal and several of its walking trails follow the old canal.⁹

Additional Sources

J. Darrell Bakken, *Now that Time Has Had Its Say: A History of the Indianapolis Central Canal, 1835-2002* (Bloomington, J. Darrell Bakken, Consolidated City of Indianapolis, Department of Waterworks d/b/a Indianapolis, 2003).

Paul Fatout, *Indiana Canals* (West Lafayette, Purdue University Press, 1985) Digitized, June 2, 2010.

"Wabash and Erie Canal Company Records, 1833-1837" (Bulk 1833-1862), Manuscripts and Archives Department, William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana. Collection #M 0758,OM 0392

Links

Canal Society of Indiana, accessed <http://www.indcanal.org/>

The Wabash and Erie Canal: Fort Wayne on the Old Canal, accessed <http://archive.org/details/wabasheriecanalf00publ>

The Wabash and Erie Canal through Huntington, Indiana, accessed <http://www.terrypepper.com/w&e/boats.htm>



08.1992.1 Wabash and Erie Canal
Carroll County
Marker Text Review Report
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Welcome to the Wabash and Erie Canal, [Delphi] accessed <http://www.wabashanderiecanal.org/>

Welcome to Princeton, accessed http://princeton-indiana.com/pages/history/history-pages/wabash_and_erie_canal.htm

Wabash and Erie Canal Trails, Evansville, accessed <http://southernindianatrails.freehostia.com/eriecanal.htm>

Canal Mania in Indiana, accessed <http://www.in.gov/history/2409.htm#transportation>

Canal Construction in Indiana, accessed <http://www.in.gov/history/2409.htm#transportation>

¹ “Report of Canal Commissioners, December 14, 1832,” *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Indiana being the Seventeenth Session of the General Assembly, 1832* (Indianapolis, N. Bolton, State Printer, 1832) pp. 98-104, accessed <http://archive.org/details/journalofhouseof183233indi>. Report states, “. . . on the 22d. day of February last, a commencement of the Wabash and Erie Canal was made”

² “Resident Engineer’s Report to Chief Engineer,” December 15, 1853, *Annual Report of the Board of Internal Improvement, December 28, 1853* (Indianapolis, Austin H. Brown, State Printer, 1853) p. 845-51. Report states, “. . . On Thursday evening, September 22, the ‘Pennsylvania’ charge of Capt. Sharra, arrived at Evansville, having made the first trip through the entire canal”

³ Indiana Historical Bureau’s standard statement. “Canal Society of Indiana,” accessed <http://www.indcanal.org/canals-wabash-erie.html>. States, “. . . By 1853, Wabash and Erie Canal, America’s longest at approximately 460 miles, linked Lake Erie at Toledo, Ohio with Ohio River at Evansville. . . .”; “The Erie Canal,” accessed <http://www.eriecanal.org/> States, “. . . The resulting canal was completed in 1918, and is 12 to 14 feet deep, 120 to 200 feet wide, and 363 miles long, from Albany to Buffalo. . . .”; Canal Lands, Ohio State Parks, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, <http://www.dnr.state.oh.us/parks/canallands/canalhistory/tabid/22230/Default.aspx>. States, “. . . On July 3, 1827, two years after the ground breaking, Governor Trimble and the canal commission boarded a canal boat in Akron and the next day arrived in Cleveland. By 1832 the entire 308 mile route of the Ohio-Erie was open to traffic. . . .”

⁴ Deer Creek Dam—“Report of the Engineer on Canals to the Board of Internal Improvements,” December 13, 1836, Report of the Board of Internal Improvements, December 19, 1836, *Journal of the Senate of the State of Indiana during the Twenty-first Session of the General Assembly* (Indianapolis, Douglass and Noel, Printers, 1836) pp. 131-48, accessed <http://archive.org/details/journalofsenateo183637indi>. Report states, “The Board, in determining the plan of crossing the Wabash river, virtually settled the mode of crossing Deer creek also, inasmuch as the level of the Wabash Dam is too low to admit of any other structure for crossing Deer creek than a dam with a towing-path bridge. . . .” p. 147.



⁵ “Engineer Report to the Board of Internal Improvement,” December 12, 1838, Report of the Board of Internal Improvement, December 19, 1838, Journal of the Senate of the State of Indiana during the Twenty-third session of the general Assembly (Indianapolis, Douglass and Noel, 1838) p 253, accessed <http://archive.org/details/journalofsenateo183839indi>. Report states, “. . . The dams over Deer creek and Wild Cat, I regret to say, have been advanced but little towards completion since my last report. . .

⁶ “Annual Report of the Chief Engineer to the Board of Internal Improvement,” November 11, 1839, Need to locate complete source. The 1838-1839 Senate Journals are confusing.

⁷ Report of the Board of Internal Improvement, November 30, 1840, January 13, 1840 accessed <http://archive.org/details/documentaryjourn18402indi>. Report states, “Work was stopped on most internal improvement projects in 1839 due to lack of state funds. *Indianapolis Indiana Journal*, August 23, 1839, p 2 c 1; *Vincennes Western Sun & General Advertiser*, August 31, 1839, p 1 c 5; *Indianapolis Indiana Journal*, September 7, 1839, p 1 c 1; *Vincennes Western Sun & General Advertiser*, October 5, 1839, p 1 c 4.

⁸ “J. L. Williams’ Report to the Board of Internal Improvement,” November 27, 1841, Report of the Board of Internal Improvement, December 6, 1841, Doc. No. 2, Senate, December 6, 1841, Documents of the Senate at the Twenty-sixth Session of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana, 1842, accessed <http://archive.org/details/documentaryjourn1841indi>. Report states, “Side cut canals, for the purpose of water power at the Delphi dam, have also been constructed as required by law, and a portion of the water power on the west side of the river, has been leased, and the machinery nearly ready to operate.”

⁹ Map of **Delphi's Trail System, Historical Notes on the Wabash and Erie Canal**, accessed <http://www.wabashanderiecanal.org/Trails.html> “Wabash and Erie Canal Park” Carroll County Indiana accessed http://www.carrollcountyindiana.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=274&Itemid=194