

# CURRENTS

FALL 2009 NEWSLETTER

*Published quarterly by Wabash & Erie Canal Inc. for its members and friends*

## Historic Lime Kiln Being Rebuilt

In its hey-day, the Wabash & Erie Canal attracted numerous structures producing a wide range of goods for shipping on the canal to distant ports. In Delphi, a prime example is the lime business – a natural consequence of the fact that the city is built on large deposits of limestone.



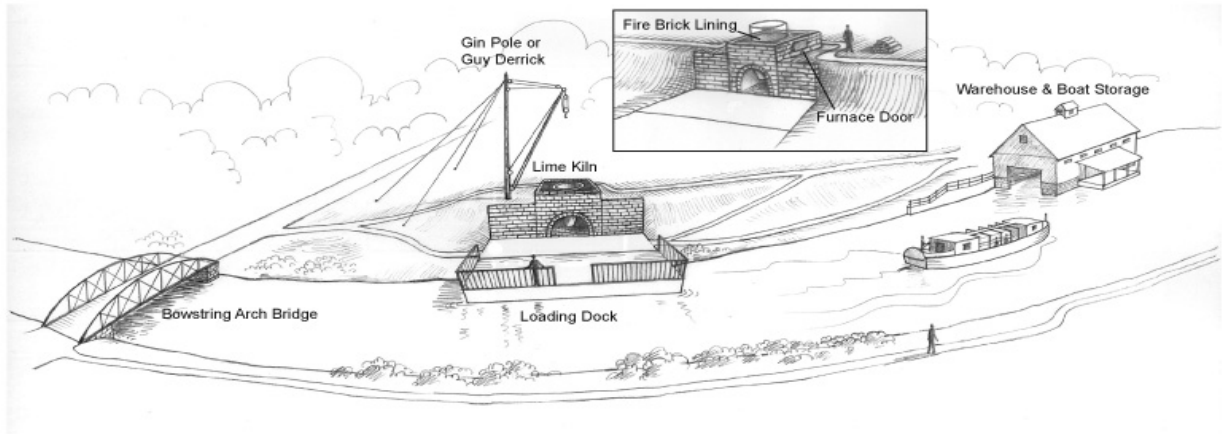
Last fall the structure of an historic lime kiln was donated to the Canal Association by U.S. Aggregates Delphi Quarry. Located on the company's grounds one mile to the north of town, the structure was in the way of its expansion but had potential value to us. Much thanks to the company's generosity. Now this project needs a donor as an interpretive site along the trails.

In 1857 David Harley and Erastus Hubbard's built six kilns where their lime operation began earlier on land abutting the Canal in Annex Park . The placement of their simple masonry kilns took into account the distance from the stone quarry to the kiln processing area, and the distance from the kiln to the nearest transportation. Harley & Hubbard shipped processed lime on the canal, for customers as far away as New York City, and served local needs as well.

The lime processed in Delphi was of high quality and was used in plaster, mortar, whitewash and similar products. Since it also served to break down rag pulp it probably was used by the paper industry that was established along the canal below the Blue Bridge. At the high point of production there were 22 kilns in North Delphi. The last of the lime operations ceased in 1917.

**Proposed Lime Kiln Historic Site**

Wabash & Erie Canal  
Delphi, Indiana

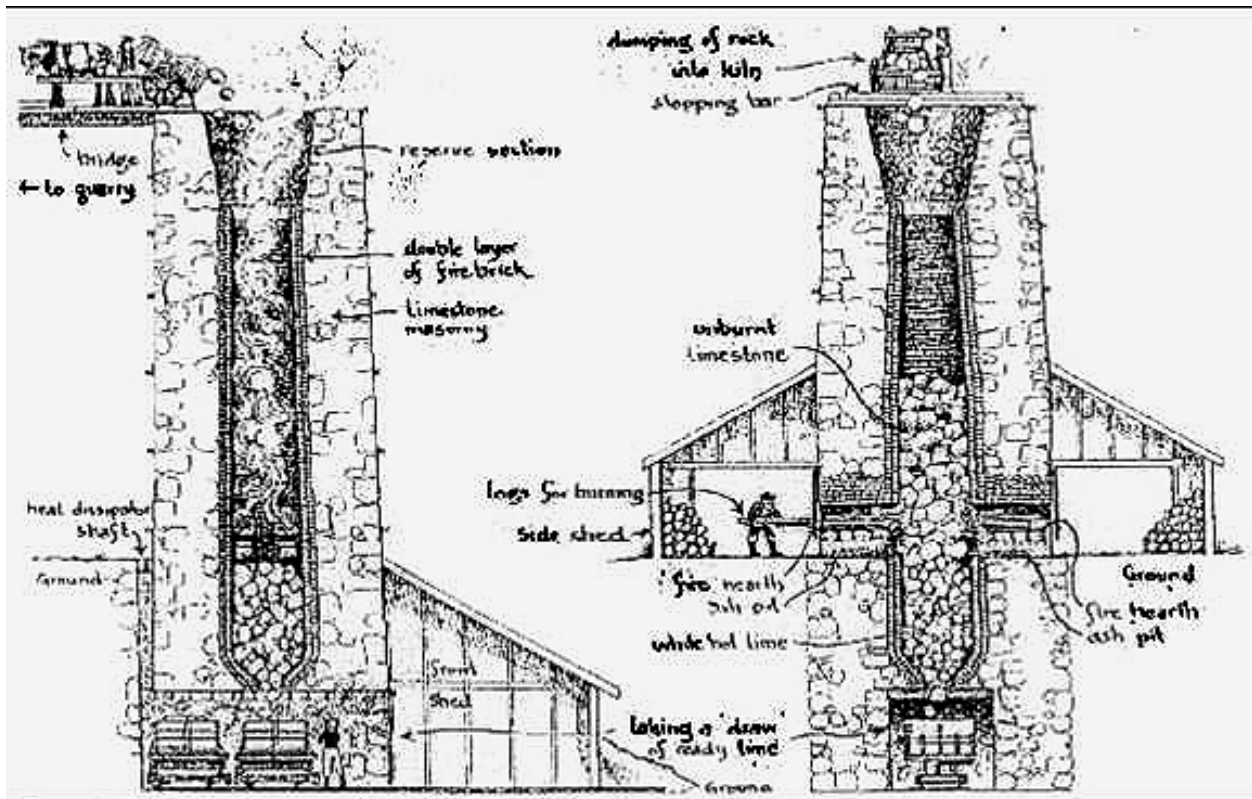


Carroll County Wabash & Erie Canal Inc.  
Delphi, Indiana  
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The beginnings of a BIG new trailside exhibit with a dock to the right is commencing in Canal Park Annex.

The massive stones and iron flume of the last standing kiln in Delphi are being rebuilt by our volunteers. It was one of the more modern "patented" kilns operating in Delphi. It will be placed between the Red Bridge and the Warehouse. The location is not far from the ruins of the Harley & Hubbard "pot kilns," a site along the north trail on the National Register of Historic Places.



A good supply of wood was needed to build a white-hot fire for processing the chunks of limestone into a powder. Firing a kiln was a very technical job. Wood was stacked high and tight in the firebox, and the stone was dumped in at the top. It took about 36 hours to process. The lime had to cool before it could be pulled out and sifted for impurities. Even then, it was so hot it appeared transparent. Harley & Hubbard set up a cooper shop to make wooden barrels for shipping the lime. The product was time sensitive, since it would draw moisture and could harden over time.

## Boat Launch a Time to Celebrate

A spirited crowd gathered on June 20 at Canal Park to celebrate the launching of our canal boat, *The Delphi* – a long-anticipated event. President Dan McCain presided at the dedication ceremony, and The Vintage Brass band provided rousing music. Plaques were presented for mayors Sam Diewert, Lee Hoard and Randy Strasser, acknowledging the Canal Association's thanks for the cooperation of the City of Delphi in our many projects.

Free rides on the boat were offered on Saturday. After many trips in succession, the boat experienced problems in its recharging system for the quiet electric motors that propel it when horses are not used. The boat building company flew in an expert to fix the problem, and it's been easy sailing since, under the watchful eye of Captain Steve Gray and his crew. Full fare prices for the narrated rides went into effect after the 20<sup>th</sup> as the boat continued regular tours on the weekends through Labor Day and when they start again in the Spring.

The water in the Canal will be lowered after September 21 so that construction can start on a permanent dock. The present wooden dock will be moved to complete the exhibit featuring the re-built historic lime kiln near the Canal Park Annex.

The new dock is funded by a grant from INDOT and will be made of concrete. It will have lighting and a new hard surface walk from the Canal Center as well as an ADA hard surface ramp down to the water level. The contractor for this project is LaPorte Construction Company out of LaPorte, Indiana. Next to the dock an information/interpretive area will be built.



If you'd like to join the boat crew or narrate tours, contact Steve Gray at 765-447-1627.

## Canal Days and Boat Launch Draw Crowds

Canal Days on July 4 and 5 drew some of our largest crowds to Canal Park. With the canal boat making more than its usual runs, many were attracted to the chance to view the canal from a different vista. Craftsmen and artisans were at work demonstrating their pioneer-era talents, thanks to Mark Smith and Liz Irwin's work. Families enjoyed tours of the Interpretive Museum as well as walking, hiking, biking and carriage rides up and down the trails.

For Canal Days weekend our sign-in sheets at the Reed Case House (which do not catch everyone, of course) showed that visitors came from a total of 50 Indiana cities and from 10 other states and one country (England). At the boat launch people came from 34 Indiana cities and eight other states and one country (China). For the two events combined, 65 cities, 14 states and two countries were represented at the Case House alone.

## Study Made to Connect Towpath Trails

Landscape architecture students at Purdue University, under Professor Bernie Dahl, have presented a plan to the Wabash-Erie Towpath Corridor group that could connect trails from the Logansport area to Lafayette, basically along the old Wabash & Erie towpath.

The plan includes suggestions for streetscapes when crossing through towns, a park at Burnett's Creek Arch, and a four-foot wide bike trail that they predicted would generate more interest in the towpath trail. The trail would offer historical, educational and health benefits. Once the towpath trail was completed from Logansport to Lafayette, they envisioned that communities north and south would then become interested in connecting their trails to it.

# Biking Along the Canal Just Got Easier



No need to bring your own bike to Canal Park for a ride along the trails or into town. Now rental bikes are available, thanks to Kevin and Jean Howell, operating as Noble Bikes and Concessions LLC. Their bicycle rental service is located at present in a section of the Mule Barn beyond the Interpretive Center. They will operate in months when weather is right for biking, opening only on weekends after Labor Day and until Spring weather .

They offer a variety of bicycle styles to accommodate individuals and families, including a surrey-type bike. Concession items include snacks and soft drinks. They also provide tire repair and supplies and complimentary maps and compressed air. You can also get a cane pole and bait to dangle a line in the canal. Business goes on through the fall on Saturday/Sunday.

The availability of bikes complements the fine service we already have from Moore Carriage Rides which brings its beautiful horse-drawn white carriage and Percheron team to Canal Park for trips along the towpath and even into downtown Delphi. They also hire out for special events like weddings and reunions.

## Canal Volunteers Receive Honors

Four of our hardest working, longest serving volunteers were honored by Carroll County Historical Society at the annual Old Settlers meeting in August. Plaques were presented to Ed Gruber, Dan McCain, Bill Draper and Roy Patrick for their work in preserving and promoting the history of the county. For the first time, the meeting was held at the Canal Center.

Another long-time volunteer, Tom Castaldi, of Fort Wayne, received an Award of Merit from the Leadership in History Award program of the American Association of State and Local History. It was announced at the AASLH meeting in Indianapolis in August. Dan McCain was a featured speaker at this national meeting of museum directors and staff. In 2006 the Canal Association received an award from this same group as “the best new volunteer driven museum in the United States.” Dan’s talk centered on our accomplishments since that time.

## Interpretive Panels for Park and Trails

As a part of our fund-raising campaign to provide a Total Canal Experience for our visitors, we are working on several handsome, informative panels that will be placed at historic spots in Canal Park and along the trails. With information at hand at the very spot, each structure, area or event can be described and illustrated.



An Interpretive Panel can be sponsored with a payment or pledge of \$2,000. They are illustrated by Terry Lacy’s capable hands and professionally produced of durable materials for outdoor use. Several will explain buildings in the Pioneer Village area. We’d like to soon find sponsors for the rest of these buildings so that when no docent is present to tell about them, visitors can learn about their history and function. If you’d like to sponsor a panel, contact a board member or call Annadell Lamb at 765-447-3359 while a good selection is still available.

Outdoor exhibits – the structures themselves such as the Lime Kiln, the Guard Lock, murals on the Warehouse doors, or mile markers for a health walk, to name only a few -- are available for sponsorship from \$30,000 to \$500. Four major exhibits now have sponsors with engraved plaques recognizing the donor. Many more trailside exhibits at lesser costs are available too. Call Dan McCain at 765-412-4308 for more information.

## Thanks for Historical Items

Thanks to Lenard Robison for his gift of two heavy-duty full harness sets. They will be displayed in the Tack Room of the Mule Barn, as a part of this educational display about the animals that provided the power to pull the canal boats. We always welcome good historic items to use in our displays or in our buildings.

## Loss of Long-time Volunteer

We are saddened by the loss of long-time Canal Association volunteer Ina Mabel Moore on August 1, 2009 after several months of illness. Mabel was a member of our extended board of directors, and served as corresponding secretary for many years, tending to the mailing of the minutes and agenda for board meetings and helping in many other ways as well.

## How about joining our organization?

Make checks to Wabash & Erie Canal Inc.  
Send to return address at right

Wabash & Erie Canal Inc.  
50 Redwood Court  
Lafayette, IN 47905

Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ membership

\$\_\_\_\_\_ donation

\$\_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL

Thanks for your support

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

All members and donors receive our newsletter

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 5 Student Membership
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 10 Basic Adult & Family
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 25 Leadership Level
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 50 Contributing Level
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 100 Sponsoring Level
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- \_\_\_\_\_ \$1,000 LIFE Membership (4-5 installments)

**VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT [WABASHANDERIECANAL.ORG](http://WABASHANDERIECANAL.ORG)**

