

Wander the Wabash

Self-Guided Tour: Carrollton Road, Towpath, and French Post Park

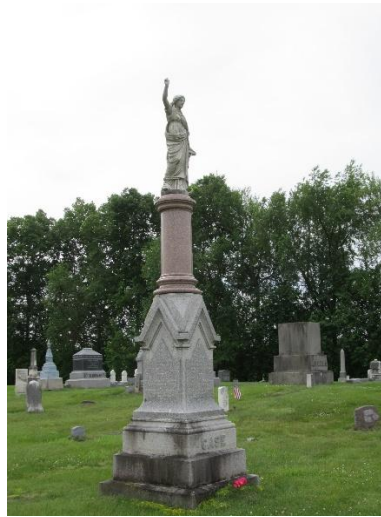
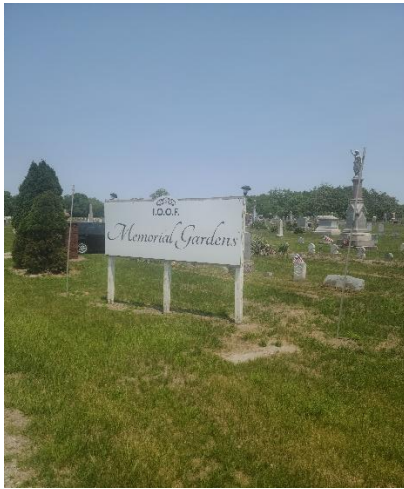
Welcome to this journey along the Wabash Valley in an area which was affected by the Treaty of St. Mary's, which became law on October 6th, 1818. This was the day on which Governor Jonathan Jennings and his rival Benjamin Parke, whose name would later be attached to a county known for a wonderful State Park-Turkey Run-traveled to St. Mary's, Ohio to accept the surrender by the Potawatomi, Wea, Miami, and Delaware of what became known as the New Purchase.

This tract included everything north from the 1809 treaty line to the Wabash River; in addition, the Americans gained two parcels of land, one south of the Vermillion River and the other north of the Wabash and between the Vermillion and Tippecanoe Rivers. In return, the Miami received individual grants of land, \$15,000, a salt annuity of 160 bushels, a grist mill, and a sawmill. The Delaware, however, simply gave up all claims and agreed to move west of the Mississippi River.

1. **Starting Point:** 700 N Washington St. Delphi, IN Pierce Hall (Stone Barn) Now home to the **Carroll County Historical Museum**
 - Constructed by James Pierce for his road building equipment in 1904 on what was called his "Battle Axe" property.
 - Other uses of this unique structure have included a factory, storage building, headquarters of a trucking firm, a roofing company, the senior citizen center, and would you believe---a place for smoking hams!



2. Turning left out of the Museum parking lot onto Adams St, travel 6 blocks to 700 W/Carrollton Road. Turning left at 700 W, you will soon come to the **IOOF Cemetery** on your right.
 - This is the final resting place of many of the City's business pioneers including Reed Case, pioneer banker, canal contractor, pork packer, and grain shipper; William Bradshaw, jeweler; and the Greenups, Samuel and John, who were pioneer contractors and farmers in Tippecanoe Township; and, of course, the late Charles E. Gerard, local historian.
 - We are travelling on the Carrollton Road, which was formerly the Delphi-Logansport Road of 1844.



3. One mile along Carrollton Road, you will come to **4615 N 700 W**. The stately brick home on the right was that of George Shaffer, which is the first dwelling in the Carrollton Road Historic District



4. The white home at **5118 N 700 W** was formerly that of Judge William C. Smith, who constructed the rock fence and also penned a classic book entitled “How to Grow a Hundred Bushels of Corn on Worn Soil” and “The Business of Farming”. . The farm was called “Vetchfalfa Farm”.



5. The smaller home on the right at **5217 B 700 W**, which is now sided blue, was the home of Joseph Peterson’s brother and wife John and Doris Peterson, renown for the “History of Rural Organizations” published in 1979.



6. Approximately 1.8 miles from the first home (#3), progressing toward the Carrollton Bridge on the right we see **6259 N 700 W**, which was originally that of Joseph Sidenbender.

- Much of this jaunt covers the Bondie Reserve, a tract of land granted to the children of Antoine Bondie out of gratitude for his bravery in alerting Major Stickney in command of Fort Wayne to an impending attack and eventual burning by marauding natives.



7. Turning right on 675 North (which eventually becomes 700 North). We then turn left on 350 West and progressing down the road, we view the stately 1852 brick of Absalom Parks at **8014 N 350 W**.

- The entire Parks family was well known for their excursion to the gold fields, the proceeds of which were used to purchase this fine estate.



8. At the point where the road becomes gravel, and before you turn right (see step #9), about one tenth of a mile down the gravel road, you will see the one-room schoolhouse on the left.
- It is known as the Guthrie School due to the prominence of that family's ownership of land in this area of Rock Creek Township.
 - The Guthrie School was well-known for its dances which were held there, one of which was held in June of 1919 "last Saturday night and was well attended. The music was good and as many of five cotillions were in place on the floor. Arthur Shaffer had the refreshment stand. He sold three cases of Coco Colo as well as other soft drinks. Also ice cream and cakes. Rockfield and Delphi were both represented." (Saturday, June 7th, 1919, Carroll County Citizen Times).
 - The schoolhouse was sold in 1927 to Budd Sterrett.



9. About .5 miles from the Parks home, turn right onto 850 N. 1.2 miles down 850 N you will cross Rock Creek.
- This area was no stranger to milling and the corrugated metal shed viewed back the lane along the creek was the mill known as the Daugherty Mill. The mill used power from Rock Creek but a boiler and engine produced steam for dry periods when the stream failed.
 - As we cross the bridge, we view the stately trees planted by Jim Guthrie, former County Agent from South Bend. (See the road sign of 275 W.).



10. Continuing on 850 N, you will come to a curve with a red barn on the right.

- The historic brick home on the right ringed by the fence was originally that of Thomas McDowell, whose daughter Stella was married to John Kerlin who was instrumental in supervising the construction of the present Carroll County Courthouse.
- This was also known as the “Harvey Farm”, and the barn was featured on the Indiana Barn Foundation’s tour during the Bicentennial year.



11. Our prime attraction of the day in this area involves **French Post Park** (9901 N 275 W), about 1.5 miles from the bridge over Rock Creek.

- The park was originally the site of a French trading post pioneered by Jean Baptiste Duret, who came down to this site from Detroit, Michigan (his birthplace is currently that of an automobile plant) as an agent of the American Fur Company dealing in scraped deer hides as well as assorted pelts. Duret later was credited for naming the city of Logansport, which could very well have been named “Mouth of Eel” due to the Eel River’s confluence with the Wabash there.
- 103 years later the area was turned into a park under the direction and inspiration of Ben Stuart, whose daughter Pearl was married to Lahrie Guthrie. There was a gala occasion there involving ringing the courthouse bell representing all thirteen townships(then) in the county, choir presentations, and an address by Rufus Magee, newspaper publisher from Logansport.
- Later Pastor Coleman from the Rockfield Presbyterian Church adopted this site as a project and was very successful in doing so as a Scout outreach work. The Friends of the Parks presently maintains this site.



12. Adjacent to the Park is the grand span which we now know as the **Lockport Bridge**.

- This bridge replaced an earlier span which was swept away by a tragic ice gorge in February of 1936. The current span dates back to 1938.
- This is the general vicinity of the Lafayette to Logansport mail route in pioneer days when travelers were required to ford the Wabash.



RETURN TO DELPHI.

13. From the Park, turn left on 300 W, crossing the Lockport bridge, we view the **village of Lockport** which gives its name to the bridge.

- The village was at one time known as Barnesville, named for James Barnes, who operated a store which functioned on the barter basis. In exchange for merchandise, they took all manner of articles including grain, hides, game, nuts, ginseng, meats, eggs, and butter. They hauled them by wagon and ox team to Cincinnati, Ohio and there exchanged them for merchandise for their store. They went via the Michigan Road to Indianapolis and from there took the National Road whenever they could (Mayhill, Old Wabash and Erie Canal, p. 20).
- With the appearance of the Wabash and Erie Canal and the two locks in the area the name was changed to Lockport. There were at one time four warehouses, a blacksmith shop, a cabinet shop, cooper shop, and a tannery and harness shop. Lockport was known as the greatest grain market between Fort Wayne and Lafayette.
- Coincidentally enough the ill-fated Potawatomi trail of death used the towpath on which we are driving for their march which occurred in 1838. There was a spring at Lockport at which the natives sated their thirst during that dry march which eventually wound its way to Kansas and Oklahoma.
- The Lockport area encompasses the Cicott Reserve, deeded to Zachariah Cicott, scout for General Harrison, as well as his children Baptiste Cicott, Sophia Cicott, and Enubia Cicott in the Treaty with the Potowatomi on October sixteenth, 1826. Cicott was married to a daughter of Perig, a Pottawattamie chief so he was eligible for the land to be granted to him and his children.

14. From 300 W, turn left onto Towpath Rd. Approximately 3 miles from Lockport, on your left, you will pass an Indiana Homestead Farm at **4732 W Towpath Rd.**

- In honor of Indiana's rich agricultural heritage, the Hoosier Homestead Award Program recognizes families with farms that have been owned by the same family for 100 years or more.



15. Approximately .5 miles from the heritage farm, turn left at N 500 W and continue on Towpath Road for approximately 3 miles to the **Carrollton Bridge and Roadside Park** (7198 N 700 W).

- The bridge, a Daniel Lutens structure, was dedicated in 1927 with Governor Ed Jackson in attendance. This was a poured-concrete barrel-vaulted span which replaced a bow-string similar to that of the “red bridge” at Canal Park. The bowstring replaced the original span which was destroyed by a tornado.
- Later it was decimated in an ice gorge and reconstructed using the original parts. It should be pointed out that the second structure was placed on the piers of the first, at the Commissioner’s request—to economize on construction costs.
- The original Carrollton Bridge was a covered structure equipped with a drawbridge (at Logansport’s behest) to allow steamboats clear passage on the river, as well as a mechanical tramway equipped with a car and track to carry the towing lines across the river. This was a Samuel Greenup work which was four hundred feet long.
- This was where the boats would lock back in after having voyaged on the river from Paragon. I have read that the locking-in was quite an adventure and that the current of the river played a large part in this. When the gates of the lock were opened at the other end, if the river was high, the boats would shoot out into the stream at such a rapid speed that the boatmen would have to work hard with poles and oars to keep it straight. The mules would have to gallop through the bridge and down the towpath beside the river in order to reach the canal by the same time that the boat reached it (Mayhill, p. 78).
- Carrollton wasn’t just a bridge, it was a settlement established by the Speeces (Jacob, John, and Peter) as a shipping port where dozens of boats would be lined up. There was also a watering hole and inn managed by Ignatius Mentzer which was well known for its spring water piped in from a spring up the hill. A post office was also established here.



16. To return to Delphi, follow Carrollton Rd/N 700 to Adams St. Turn right. The Carroll County History Museum is ahead/across Washington St.

Don't miss the Wabash and Erie Canal Park. You can get there on foot from the Museum by turning right out of the parking lot and crossing the grey bridge. Or you can turn left on Washington Street and cross the historic John C. O'Connor Bridge. The canal park entrance is on the left.

