

Towpath Times

Miami Erie Canal Corridor Association

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Activities Abound for Ohio's Bicentennial

By Ben Richard
Director

Miami-Erie Canal Corridor Association

It's hard to believe we're well into the new year. And this isn't just any new year, it's 2003 - Ohio's Bicentennial!

There will be many events taking place that you won't want to miss. You will want to make plans to join us at the Deep Cut Historical Park on Saturday, June 7 for a special program. Living history characters will take us back to a time when the Miami and Erie Canal was at its peak.

Following the program, you will have the opportunity to take a 1.5-mile, a 5-mile, or a 10-mile hike along the towpath. For more

information, contact the Johnny Appleseed Park District office at 419-221-1232.

Be sure to check out the events listing in this issue of *The Towpath Times* to take advantage of other special happenings in your neck of the woods!

As MECCA starts the new year, we want to thank all those who continue to support this organization and the causes that we share. Whether you give financially or whether you provide needed support, we thank you!

This next year is brimming with opportunity as we push forward with the Corridor Management Plan,

enhance our educational materials, and benefit from work being done along the St. Rt. 66 Scenic Byway.

We will also continue to partner with communities and continue working with our friends within the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Ohio Historical Society, and the Ohio Department of Development.

We want you to be involved! If you enjoy working with people, talking about the rich history of this area, walking the towpath, or helping other people understand what impact the canal had in Ohio, then you probably would fit right in with the rest of us! Give us a call, we would love to have you join us!

Canal Tour Planned

Interested in the Miami and Erie Canal?

Join us as we take a carpool tour of the Miami and Erie Canal on Saturday, May 31.

We will meet at Delphos in the morning and end up at the Johnston Farm in Piqua in the afternoon. We will see the sites along the canal, enjoy a brown bag lunch in St. Marys, take a leisurely ride on the General Harrison canal boat, and have a brief Trustees meeting.

If you enjoy the canal's rich history and you've wondered if you should be a part of our organization, then this trip is for you!

For more information and to pre-register, contact Ben Richard by May 21 at 419-221-1232.



THE NEW LOCK 14 -- Lock 14 is being refurbished with new concrete walls. The project was halfway done before cold weather postponed completion until spring. The project is part of Phase II Canal Improvements by the ODNR Division of Water.

Spencerville Awarded Canal Funding

Hung Thai of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Water announced that in the recently passed state capital budget a \$100,000 line item was included for the "Spencerville Canal Improvements."

Village of Spencerville Officials are working with ODNR personnel in the Divisions of Water and Engineering on what projects to best use the monies. Some of the projects being considered, dredging the canal South of Kolter Rd. and North of Lock 16, shaping and rip rapping the canal banks, constructing a walkbridge and purchasing aerators to be installed in the canal.

Further discussion will be needed to narrow the suggested projects down to specific sites and within budget. Public input is always welcome at Village of Spencerville 419-647-6263 or Division of Water St. Marys Office 419-394-5950.

City of St. Marys Supports MECCA

The City of St. Marys through its Community Improvement Corporation has made its second annual contribution of \$ 2,000 to the Miami-Erie Canal Corridor Association.

"As we continue to grow as an organization, funding is critical," said MECCA President Jim Bernhold. "We are grateful for the City of St. Marys' support toward our objectives and goals."

Trustees Renew Terms on Board

Four members of the MECCA Board of Trustees were elected to new three-year terms at the recent annual meeting. The trustees include Nick Van Schoyck, Kevin Haver, Andy Hite and David Stilwell.

Other current trustees include Jim Bernhold, Stan Davis, Robert Antibus, Neal Brady, Richard Bryan, Bob Ebbeskotte, Tim Metzner, Greg Myers, John Siegel, Lynn Smith, Richard Wallace and Monika Wanamaker.

MECCA, ODNR Planning for Booklet

The Education Committee has been working with ODNR on a special educational booklet and anticipates having it completed before the Summer season begins. The concept and design of the 28-page "mini-booklet" is similar to the latest full-color map which MECCA and the Division of Water put together.

The new booklet will focus more on the individual communities and special sites to see along the corridor. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources has been a leader in the effort to create both the fold-out brochure and the upcoming booklet. The Division of Water has assisted MECCA with funds to print the brochures and the Office of Communications has provided the time and resources to lay-out the publications and prepare them for printing.



6-MILE CREEK AQUEDUCT -- Work is continuing on the aqueduct between St. Marys and Spencerville. The project is expected to be completed this spring.

MECCA Plan to Seek Input from Local Communities

Coming Soon to Your Community... No, we're not talking about the latest movie or pop star! Representatives from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and MECCA will be coming soon to talk with your village or city administrators, public officials and members of the public in general.

In an effort to understand the needs of individual communities and to help each community reach their goals for enhancing the canal corridor, we will be seeking input from community leaders.

ODNR has once again shown its commitment to wise stewardship of the canal lands by assigning a planning specialist from the Division of Real Estate and Land Management to oversee the process. Bill Bopp will be working closely with MECCA to gather information and assist us in compiling it. Once that process is complete, we will have the Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Management Plan.

The plan will take into consideration what resources are available for the public and in what ways the history and the uniqueness of the canal can be shared today.

What can you do to champion the cause of MECCA and raise awareness of the Miami and Erie Canal? The first step you can take is to become a member of MECCA if you haven't already! Your support to help us preserve and enhance the canal corridor is much appreciated.

Secondly, you can let your local leaders and officials know that you believe the canal is an important resource and should be considered a community asset. Last but not least, encourage your leaders to support MECCA and its goals.

For more information, contact us at 419-221-1232 or check out our website at www.meccainc.org.

Piqua Historical Area Features Multiple Themes

By Andy Hite

Site Manager

Piqua Historical Area State Memorial

The Piqua Historical Area State Memorial (Johnston Farm) is one of more than 60 historical sites across Ohio administered by the Ohio Historical Society. It is a site that features three distinct, yet in some ways related themes.

The site tells the story of some of the earliest contact between the Woodland Indian population and our European ancestors. This is done against the backdrop of the Pickawillany village.

Pickawillany was the site of an English trading post established at a Miami village in approximately 1748. The French authorities in Canada were less than pleased with this thorn in their colonial side and in 1752 mounted an attack that destroyed the village, saw most of the British traders taken captive, the chief killed, and the remaining Miami forced back into northeastern Indiana. Museum exhibits trace the results of this European trade on the native cultures, as well as the impact on native contact on the European traders.

The second major theme of the site is life on the frontier of Ohio. Here the story of the Johnston family as they called the Upper Piqua area home beginning in 1811 is the focal point.

Costumed interpreters and craft demonstrators will take visitors back to an earlier Ohio as you tour the

home and outbuildings of Col. John Johnston. Johnston was an early settler, Federal Indian Agent, Ohio Canal Commissioner, and farmer. The land that he called home in the upper Miami Valley was that site of many pivotal events in the settlement of both this area and Ohio. Many of the historical figures that made Ohio what it is walked the land of the Johnston Farm.

In 1825 John Johnston was appointed by the Governor of Ohio to be one of the seven Canal Commissioners who were charged with overseeing the construction and operation what would eventually be nearly 1000 miles of Ohio canals. Museum exhibits help illustrate the construction, use, and ultimate decline of this transportation system.

Visitors can also experience the canal era first hand with a ride on the General Harrison, a replica mule-drawn mixed cargo boat as it plies the restored stretch of Miami and Erie Canal that is a part of the Piqua Historical Area with its costumed crew.

Throughout the season special events are scheduled that present history in its most compelling form - living history. Re-enactors and

demonstrators gather on weekends to help visitors see and take part in many of the activities our ancestors did when they called this land home.

The site is open Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend Wednesday-Saturday, 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Sundays and Holidays noon - 5 p.m. In September and October the site is open



General Harrison Canal Boat at Piqua Historical Area.

on Saturday and Sunday. Admission is \$6.00 for adults and \$2.00 for students. AAA and senior discounts are honored. Admission is free to members of the Ohio Historical Society and those visitors 5 and younger. To receive information about any of the special events help throughout the season call at 1-800-752-2619 or contact us on the web at www.ohiohistory.org/places/piqua/index.html

2003 PROGRAM CALENDAR

For details and additional information about any of the programs, please call 937-773-2522 or 1-800-752-2619.

Sunday, May 25, 1 - 4 p.m.

Textile Day at the Johnston Farm

Vintage Base Ball at the Johnston Farm

Saturday, June 14, Noon - 5 p.m.

The Fine Art of Dying

Saturday, June 21, 6:30 - 9 p.m.

Evening on the Canal and a Dinner

Sunday, June 22, 2 p.m.

Vintage Base Ball at the Johnston Farm

Sunday, July 6, 12 - 5 p.m.

Family Day at the Johnston Farm

Vintage Base Ball at the Johnston Farm

Sunday, July 13, 12 - 5 p.m.

Artifact Identification Day

Sunday, July 27, 12 - 5 p.m.

Woodland Craft Day at the Johnston Farm

Saturday, Aug. 2, 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.

The Miami and Erie Canal: South from the Summit

Sunday, Aug. 10, 2 p.m.

Vintage Base Ball at the Johnston Farm

Saturday, Aug. 16, 9:30 a.m. - 8 p.m.; and

Sunday, Aug. 17, Noon - 5 p.m.

Five Flags Over Piqua

Saturday, Aug. 23, 7:30 - 9 p.m.

An Evening of Music and Stories on the Canal

Saturday, Sep. 27, 9:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Johnston Farm Bluegrass Festival and Fall Celebration

Friday and Saturday, Dec. 5-6, 7 - 10 p.m.

Christmas on the Farm



School Groups Visit Piqua Historical Area.

Support the Miami-Erie Canal Corridor Association Become a Member Today

Established in 1996, The Miami-Erie Canal Corridor Association (MECCA) is a non profit corporation working toward the creation of a heritage corridor and recreational greenway along the Miami & Erie Canal. The Association is working toward the creation of educational programs and developing strong working relationship among corridor stakeholders to preserve and interpret the natural, historical and recreational resources throughout the corridor.



Membership Benefits

- Quarterly Issues of a Newsletter
- Invitations to public meetings
- Invitations to programs and events
- Support the goals of MECCA

Miami Erie Canal Corridor Association (MECCA) Membership Form



Please check membership level desired

\$10 Individual _____ \$20 Family _____

\$50 Sponsor _____ \$100 Partner _____

\$250 Corridor Partner _____

One-time tax deductible contribution of _____

Total amount enclosed _____

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ email _____

Clip and Mail This Form to: MECCA • P.O. Box 722 • St. Marys, Ohio • 45885

**Miami Erie Canal Corridor Association
P.O. Box 722
St. Marys, Ohio 45885**