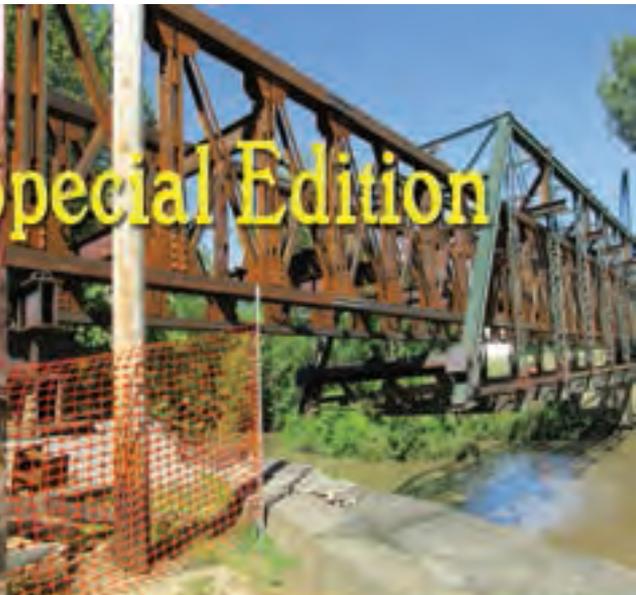
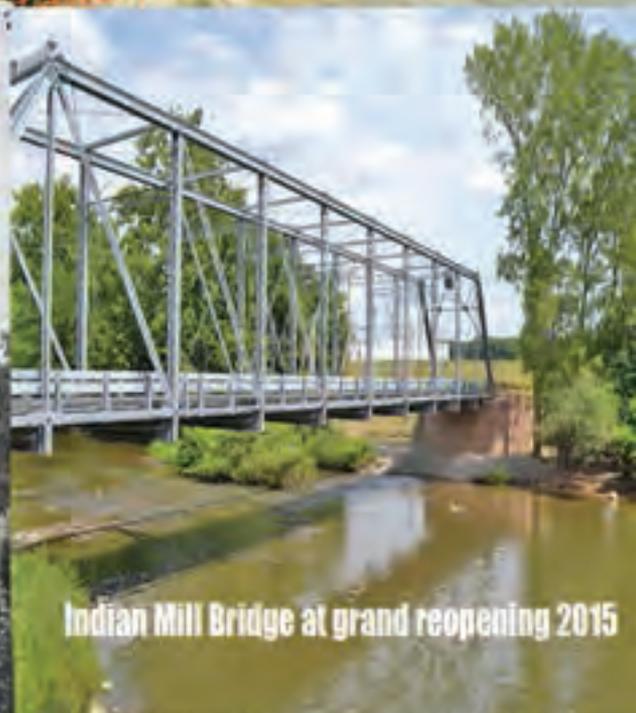


Indian Mill Special Edition



Iron bridge ca. 1920



Indian Mill Bridge at grand reopening 2015





Daily Chief-Union/Alissa Paoella

State memorial

Visitors to the Indian Mill State Memorial in rural Upper Sandusky can walk through the museum, over a historic, newly renovated bridge and into the park area in a shaded pocket of land overlooking the Sandusky River.

Indian Mill State Memorial provides daytime activity for residents, visitors

By ALISSA PAOLELLA
City editor

A visit to the Indian Mill State Memorial, located just north of Upper Sandusky, brings back memories of times long gone. This slice of land along the Sandusky River might look and feel familiar to those who traveled in horse-drawn buggies a century ago.

The nation's first museum dedicated to the history of milling from ancient times to the present, the Indian Mill museum is located in a pocket of forestry near the intersection of CH 50 and CH 47. The museum is open annually from the first Saturday in May through the last Sunday in October.

Owned by the Ohio History Connection and managed locally by the Wyandot County (Continued on page 3)



Daily Chief-Union/Alissa Paoella

100 visitors

One hundred people signed in for visits to the Indian Mill State Memorial last Saturday, said curator Robin Conley (right).

A visit to the Indian Mill museum

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Archaeological and Historical Society, the Indian Mill State Memorial has a rich history in this area. Originally built by the U.S. government as a gift to the Wyandotte tribe for their contributions in the War of 1812, farmers brought their harvests here and processed timber to build the first homes in this area. A full two decades before Wyandot County was formed in 1845, Wyandottes, free blacks and escaped slaves all relied on the mill before the Wyandottes were forced from this area and the mill fell into disrepair, according to the Ohio History Connection.

Lewis Rummel is credited with building a flour mill on the present site of the Indian Mill State Memorial several years after the original sawmill no longer was at the location in 1885. The mill was owned and operated by various people before being purchased by the Ohio History Connection in 1968 and opening as a museum.

The current curators are Betty Brown, who has served at the mill for about 25 years, and Robin Conley. After signing in, visitors can read a variety of signage and see a diverse selection of antique tools that were used in mills.

Inside the historic building, visitors will find a history of the mills used by the Wyandottes to millers who served neighboring farmers. The present three-story structure contains remnants of the original gristmill, made entirely of walnut, according to the Ohio History Connection.

Walking up a flight of stairs, visitors can view large burrs or millstones. After the revolutionary invention of the water turbine, water powered the millstones at the location.

The mill is unique in Ohio because it employs covered bridge-type construction, the Ohio History Connection says. Cross trusses are secured by steel rods and bolts forged on the site.

"A sturdy building was necessary because vibration from the grinding sometimes literally shook mills apart," a brochure about the Indian Mill State Memorial says.

The dam is 2 feet lower today



than the original due to a drop in the level of the Sandusky River.

Outside, history buffs and nature lovers can cross the Sandusky River and listen to the calming waters flow over a dam just below the mill. A picnic area is set in a pocket of wooded area that provides a scenic view for an afternoon or evening outing.

The mill is open from 1-4:30 p.m. Thursdays through Sundays from May to October. Admission is \$2 for adults, \$1 for children ages 4-12 and free for Ohio History Connection members and

children ages 3 and younger.

The Ohio History Connection suggests allowing over an hour for a stop at the Indian Mill State Memorial.

Visitors to the museum may pick up the Ohio History Connections' "Passport to Your Ohio History," a booklet that is stamped at each historical site visited in the state.

Museums and memorials are listed by region, and the Indian Mill State Memorial is the only stop in Wyandot County in the booklet.

Wyandotte chiefs return to ancestors' homeland for grand reopening

By ALISSA PAOLELLA
City editor

Almost 200 years ago, the U.S. government honored the Wyandotte Indians for their contributions during the War of 1812.

On Saturday, two descendants of the Wyandottes joined with area residents to celebrate the grand reopening of the bridge at the Indian Mill State Memorial, the nation's first museum dedicated to the history of milling from prehistoric times to the present.

Head Chief Billy Friend, of the Wyandotte Nation in Oklahoma, and Anderdon Nation Chief Ted Roll of Michigan visit their ancestors' homeland at least once every year. Roll visited the area just last month on a trip dedicated to sharing native stories with public school educators, who will incorporate what they learned during the Journey of Understanding into their school lessons.

"We were the last tribe to leave Ohio (in 1843) and our last reservation was right here in Upper Sandusky," Friend said. "Our ancestors, they loved it here. They were part of this community. The reason we were the last tribe to leave was because we didn't want to leave."

Friend explained the Wyandottes left Upper Sandusky, traveling to what now is Wyandotte County, Kansas, and relocating to what now is Wyandotte, Oklahoma, in 1867.

"Today, we're a thriving nation of over 5,700 tribal citizens scattered all over the United States," Friend said. "It's always an honor — we always love coming back to Upper Sandusky. I've been bringing back groups of tribal citizens, from our tribal elders to our teenagers to our college students each year. ... We appreciate all that the citizens of Upper Sandusky have done (Continued on page 5)



Anderdon Nation Chief Ted Roll



Daily Chief-Union/Alissa Paoella

Over the river

Visitors to the Indian Mill Bridge grand reopening celebration last week stand by the Sandusky River in the park area of the state memorial site.

Wyandotte chiefs return to scenic spot

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to preserve our history, of the Wyandottes who were here.”

In a scenic location along the Sandusky River, the Indian Mill museum was built on the site of an 1861 mill constructed for the Wyandotte Indians. The first mill was finished in 1820 and gifted to the Wyandottes for their assistance in the war, according to the Ohio History Connection.

A historic bridge and park across the river complete the attractions at the scenic spot along the river near the intersection of CH 50 and CH 47.

The Wyandottes and a group of African Americans settled in the area that now is Wyandot County after the War of 1812.

“The Wyandottes, who had always been farmers, worked with the blacks, and the blacks in turn worked with them,” according to the Ohio History Connection website. “Part of this intermingling led to some of the Wyandottes accepting Christianity and forsaking their customs. This in turn led to limited perks granted by the government, including federal money to build a mill.”

A flour mill and sawmill were constructed in 1820 on the banks of the Sandusky River. The mills provided services for Wyandotte farmers, who at the site processed harvests and turned logs into timber to build homes, the Ohio History Connection says.

After the government forced the Wyandottes from this area in 1843, the mill was abandoned and fell into disrepair.

Lewis Rummel rebuilt the flour mill at the present site years later. It was purchased by the Ohio History Connection in 1968.

Today, it is managed locally by the Wyandot



Photo courtesy of Sherman and Sally Stansbery

Original dedication

Upper Sandusky resident Sherman Stansbery took the photograph above while attending the original dedication of the Indian Mill State Memorial in the 1960s. The museum is owned by the Ohio History Connection and managed locally by the Wyandot County Archaeological and Historical Society. The current curators at Betty Brown and Robin Conley.

County Archaeology and Historical Society with curators Betty Brown and Robin Conley.



Public officials give comments

By ALISSA PAOLELLA
City editor

A bridge renovation project at the Indian Mill State Memorial in rural Upper Sandusky was hailed as a good example of a project completed with minimal impact to the scenic Sandusky River by public officials at Saturday's grand reopening celebration.

Northwest Ohio scenic river manager Christina Kuchle said the bridge renovations preserved the important resources of the river, which has been designated as a state scenic river through the state of Ohio.

"This is a great example of a project that preserves history and our water resources," Kuchle said. "This is a nice thing to have in the community."

Wyandot County Commissioner Steve Seitz gave a brief history of the bridge and the Indian Mill museum and park, located near the intersection of CH 50 and CH 47. Seitz described the original mill, which was about 400 feet upstream from the current museum, as being a "reward for loyalty" to the Wyandotte Indians from the U.S. government.

The mill was given at the encouragement of Indian agent William Walker Sr., according to documents about the history of the site. The mill first was built at the site of the current museum constructed in 1861 by Lewis Rummel, who also served as a miller at the location.

Generations of the John Finkle family owned and operated the mill from 1885 to 1943, Seitz said. In 1957, Ward Walton contacted the state of Ohio to offer 2.7 acres and the mill to officials at no cost with the stipulation that it be used as a museum.

That led to the opening of the nation's first museum dedicated to milling.

"The bridge is a vital link between the (park and the museum)," Seitz said.

The bridge was just less than 100 years old when it was renovated beginning about a year and a half ago. The Great Flood in 1913 washed away parts of the



Daily Chief-Union/Alissa Paoella

At the museum

Above: Robin Conley (left) and Betty Brown currently serve as curators at the Indian Mill State Memorial, which is open from 1-4:30 p.m. Thursdays through Sundays from May to October. Below: The Indian Mill Bridge started as a covered bridge overlooking the Sandusky River, as shown in this picture taken by Harry Kinley.



bridge and it took five years to replace, opening in the summer of 1918.

Wyandot County Engineer Mike Kohl said his office is responsible for engineering, construction, future upkeep and funding for the Indian Mill Bridge and about 250 other bridges in the county. The office is funded solely by the state's fuel tax and

fees for license plates.

Kohl noted the office does not receive any sales or property tax funding.

"(The funding structure) makes for a very tight budget," he said. "We apply for supplemental grants at the state and federal levels."

The project essentially took **(Continued on page 7)**

Kohl thanks Rosvanis family

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place just outside the front door of a nearby family, the Rosvanises who live across from the Indian Mill State Memorial. Kohl thanked the family for their patience while the project was underway.

“We felt that with (the bridge) being nearly 100 years old, it warranted preservation,” he said. “You don’t see craftsmanship like this. ... We have a duty to preserve this for future generations. These bridges have a way of disappearing over time.

“Without that past, it’s tough to know where we’re going in the future.”

The total cost of the project was about \$1.1 million.

The first bridge at the location was a covered bridge, officials said. Today, it is about 175 feet long.

The bridge was disassembled piece by piece, nut by nut and bolt by bolt, Kohl said. Even with modern equipment, the project was stalled at times due to inclement weather. The project was a testament to the hard

work of a crew from U.S. Bridge of Cambridge, Kohl said, adding the company came in well under the original estimate.

U.S. Bridge CEO Art Rogovin said the company started in 1936 and he is the second generation of his family to run it. He said the Indian Mill Bridge project was extremely successful.

The company placed what is referred to as a liberty bridge inside the structure and removed the old bridge, hauling it to Cambridge for renovations and then to Columbus to be hot-dipped and galvanized, Rogovin said.

The pieces then were brought back to the site and reassembled to complete the renovations. The project included a new floor and accessories.

“Certainly this is a legacy for future generations to enjoy,” Rogovin said.

Kuchle said normal bridge constructions can disrupt a river system when equipment is placed into the river.

“There was never a single piece of equipment in the river”

during this project, she added, calling the Sandusky River “one of the state’s crown jewels.”

Wyandot County Archaeological and Historical Society Director Ron Marvin Jr. said the state has funded all new exhibits for the Indian Mill State Memorial when it opens next spring.

Ohio scenic river program manager Bob Goble also was in attendance, sharing information about the state program with attendees. He noted Ohio’s legislation to recognize scenic rivers predated national legislation in 1968.

“Ohio really led the way in identification and conservation of our unique river systems,” he said.

The organizations that participated in Saturday’s event included Heidelberg University’s National Water Quality Research Lab, the Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, the Sandusky River Watershed Coalition, the Sandusky County Park District, the Wyandot Soil and Water Conservation District and the Indian Mill Antique Association.



Daily Chief-Union/Alissa Paoellella

Gathering clues

Jeremiah Broters, a member of the Rosvanis family who lives across the street from the Indian Mill State Memorial, tries his hand at skipping rocks in the Sandusky River.

Area residents given opportunity to get feet wet for water quality

By ALISSA PAOLELLA
City editor

As part of the grand reopening of the Indian Mill Bridge this past weekend, area residents had an opportunity to get their feet wet and learn more about the ecology of the Sandusky River, one of the state's 14 scenic rivers.

Ohio's scenic rivers program has been a national leader in preserving river heritage, according to Northwest Ohio Scenic River Manager Christina Kuchle.

The program aims to protect the natural qualities of Ohio's remaining high-quality stream systems for present and future generations, a brochure about the state program says.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Watercraft is responsible for implementing the scenic river program in the state. Ohio's program originated in 1968 and started before a national scenic rivers effort passed later that same year.

Ohio's scenic rivers stream quality monitoring program relies on volunteers from the community to monitor the state's rivers. Biological monitoring is a proven way to determine the quality of rivers and streams, the state says.

Developed in 1983, the stream quality monitoring program uses a variety of sampling techniques to compile information on the quality of the state's scenic rivers and streams. Kuchle said certain bugs and critters can be an indication of a healthy body of water.

Some of those bugs were located when attendees stepped into the water with a large net Saturday. Bugs have differing tolerances of pollution, so surveying can indicate potential water quality problems, the state says.

Macroinvertebrates include aquatic insects, clams, snails,

crayfish and aquatic worms. They are highly effective barometers of a river's health, said Nicole Sarver, northwest Ohio stream quality monitoring coordinator.

Negative environmental changes to macroinvertebrates' stream habitat and water chemistry directly threaten the existence of the sensitive creatures, Sarver said.

Rose Jones said it was her first time participating in a water quality monitoring program, but added she has spent the past 60 years getting in and out of the river.

Using their data collection, volunteers fill out forms and calculate a cumulative index value for each stream station,

according to a brochure about the program. The values rank a stream's health as excellent, good, fair or poor at the time of monitoring, and are a direct result of the diversity of collected macroinvertebrates.

The scenic rivers program uses data for a yearly report, and abnormal changes can indicate potential pollution problems, which would prompt further investigation by the state.

Most volunteers participate during the warmer weather months, usually April through October, Sarver said.

To learn more about the program or to volunteer, call 614-265-6814 or visit www.ohiodnr.com/watercraft.



Daily Chief-Union/Alissa Paoella

Gathering clues

Northwest Ohio stream quality monitoring coordinator Nicole Sarver (left) and Upper Sandusky resident Rose Jones gather clues to the water quality of the Sandusky River during the Indian Mill Bridge grand reopening celebration last weekend.