

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

**(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)**  
(Type all entries complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Ohio</b>
COUNTY: <b>Allen</b>
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Miami and Erie "Deep Cut" Canal**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Miami and Erie Canal**

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**State Route 66 (2 miles south of Spencerville)**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Spencerville**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
**Fourth**

STATE:  
**Ohio**

CODE:  
**39**

COUNTY:  
**Allen**

CODE:  
**003**

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**State of Ohio: Department of Public Works**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**65 South Front Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Columbus**

STATE:  
**Ohio**

CODE:  
**39**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**State of Ohio: Department of Public Works**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**65 South Front Street**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Columbus**

STATE:  
**Ohio**

CODE:  
**39**

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Historic American Engineering Record**

DATE OF SURVEY:  
**n.d.**  Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Historic American Engineering Record**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1100 L Street NW.**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Washington**

STATE:  
**D.C.**

CODE:  
**11**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: **Ohio**  
COUNTY: **Allen**  
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Begun in 1825, the Miami and Erie Canal stretched from Cincinnati to Toledo, by way of Dayton. As shallow as five feet, the Deep Cut section of the Canal ranges at places to 52 feet in depth. This section of the Canal remains in very good condition. The State of Ohio shows a marked interest in its proper maintenance and preservation.

Outside of trees clinging to the banks, the Deep Cut is much the same as when horses pulled barges along the canal. Water fills the ditch and the towpath is clearly visible, especially where the trees are bare. Presently located just north of the intersection of State Route 66 and Mendon Road is a rest stop and public park. The Landmark plaque is located at the southwest corner of a parking lot facing east. It is mounted on a large stone. Interpretive material is located directly facing this same parking lot. There are three major structures located here. They include bathroom facilities, a shed with a water pump drinking fountain and a covered picnic gazebo. Picnic tables are located throughout the area, while benches sit on the banks of the canal for visitors. The atmosphere is most quietening.

Boundary Information and Justification

The Deep Cut extends over a mile. It is bounded on the east by State Route 66, on the south by Mendon Road, on the east by Route 66A and on the north by Henne Road.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**6. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1825-1860**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric         | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry    |  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture         | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture        | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications      | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation        |   |  | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The "Deep Cut" is a fascinating remain<sup>s</sup> of the Miami and Erie Canal one of early Ohio's two major artificial waterways. An amazing, manmade trough through the face of the earth, the Deep Cut is an impressive reminder of the obstacles that Ohio's people, as well as many other Americans, conquered in order to develop their inherently rich land. The Miami and Erie Canal is located approximately two miles south of Spencerville, Ohio. The property is owned by the State of Ohio and is administered by the Department of Public Works, 65 South Front Street, Columbus, Ohio.

History

The Buckeye State possessed one of the most extensive systems of canals in the Union prior to the Civil War. Because of the canal agitation early in the 1820's, Ohio appointed a commission in January to survey possible routes and to supply estimates of the costs for the waterways. By early 1823 the commission had reported its findings. Regardless of the commission's ideas, by 1825 sectional demands compelled the legislature to approve two main north-south canals, one in the east and the other in the west, and decide on the route for the Ohio and Erie Canal, the eastern waterway, and the Miami and Erie Canal, the western waterway. The commissioners soon declared that the western artery would run from Cincinnati to Dayton, then to Toledo.

DeWitt Clinton, the hero of New York's Erie Canal and the nation's most popular groundbreaker at any new canal undertaking, turned the first dirt for the Miami and Erie Canal on July 21, 1825. Unlike some other states, Ohio planned both the Miami and Erie and the Ohio and Erie Canals, which Clinton had begun on July 4, 1825, very well. Because the commissioners proved to be honest and responsible, Ohio escaped major embarrassment or delay in their construction. The builders of the Miami and Erie met some difficulties, of course. Fevers and illness swept through the laborers from time to time, felling many of the men and impeding progress on the canal. Contractors for various sections of the waterway also suffered from a disease, that of trying to extract extravagant sums of money from the commissioners. In spite of these and other troubles, the ditch progressed rather well and by 1832, the Miami and Erie stretched from Cincinnati to Dayton. Almost fourteen years passed, however, before the

(Continued)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Harlow, Alvin F., Old Towpaths, (New York, 1926).  
 Meyer, Henry M., History of Transportation in the United States Before 1860,  
 (Washington, 1917).  
 Randall, Emilius O., and Ryan, Daniel J., History of Ohio, (5 Vols., New  
 York, 1912).

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes Seconds	
NW	UTM °16.722560:4507780	°	°	°	°	
NE	°16.722280:4507780	°				
SE	°16.722480:4507600	°				
SW	°16.722700:4507600	°				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **2+**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Ohio	39	Allen	003
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
		Auglaize	011
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Joseph S. Mendinhall, Historian (Original Form prepared by S.S. Bradford)

ORGANIZATION: Historic Sites Survey, National Park Service DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 1100 L Street NW.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D.C. CODE: 20240 11

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)  
 Designated: 1/29/64 date

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation  
 Boundary Certified: \_\_\_\_\_ date

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief Hist. & Arch. Surveys

ATTEST:  
 Boundary Affirmed: \_\_\_\_\_ date

Keeper of The National Register  
 Acting Director, OAHF

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

(NATIONAL HISTORIC INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM  
LANDMARKS)

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

8. Statement of Significance: (1) Miami and Erie "Deep Cut" Canal

waterway reached Toledo. When the canal touched Lake Erie, it had a total length of 248 miles, a minimum surface width of 49 feet, carried four feet of water and cost \$8,062,680.80.

There was no greater excavation on the Miami and Erie than the Deep Cut, just below Spencerville. Men from nearby farms, immigrant Irishmen and convicts had been brought together during the construction of the waterway to dig a ditch through the ridge of blue clay that separated the St. Mary's and Auglaize water sheds. With their picks, shovels and barrows, plus blasting powder, the diligent workers slowly advanced through the obstacle. Working for thirty cents a day, many of the laborers drank up their wages at night and often became involved in brawls that flaired up in their camps. But in spite of the tough earth, whiskey and riots, the men finally completed the cut. The ditch was 6,600 feet long and from five to 52 feet deep.

The money expended in digging the Deep Cut and in building the rest of the Miami and Erie Canal was amply returned to the State by the waterway. As one author says. "The touch of internal improvements (of which the Miami and Erie was a major one) acted upon Ohio like the mysterious wand of a magician, converting a wide, unimproved, and comparatively poor state, into a profusion of wealth, property and greatness."<sup>1</sup> The Canal by providing cheap, easy transportation, helped to settle western Ohio, raised land values and provided an outlet for farm goods. Thus the Miami and Erie Canal contributed notably to Ohio's swift rise to a leading position in the nation. Railroads greatly lessened the value of the Miami and Erie by the 1860's, but by this date the waterway had done its major work.

<sup>1</sup>Emilius O. Randall and Daniel J. Ryan, History of Ohio, (5 vols.; New York, 1912), III, p. 362.