

Scenic Rustic Views - North Tour

The northern part of the county is full of beautiful woods, rolling hills, and rustic farms and Amish. With the curving roads and thick trees, there is never a dull moment in this part of the county. Enjoy the natural wildlife, livestock farms, and agricultural farms, offering not only an economic value to our county, but a diverse in landscape scenery. Take your time, take in the sights, and breathe in relaxation as you take your journey through our rustic, country paradise.

For this tour, you will be following the Yellow Route (yellow arrow signs are up) to #28 Jackson Covered Bridge. From there, you will no longer have any arrows to follow and you will be taking the Blue Route backwards. We have provided for you turn-by-turn directions along with some history of the areas you will see along the way.

- Leave the north side of the Depot parking lot, turn left on US 36 (Ohio Street). At the second stop light by the courthouse turn right on Market Street. Curving to the left, Market Street becomes Howard Avenue.
 - Howard Avenue was named for General Tilghman Howard. General Howard was a self-educated man who rose to national prominence. As a young man, he studied law by candle light and was admitted to the Tennessee Bar in 1818. He was 21 at that time. General Howard moved to Rockville in 1833. He was a member of the 27th Congress and later was appointed Minister to the Republic of Texas. General Howard died of yellow fever while serving in Texas.
 - You will see on this avenue some excellent examples of early architecture. On the south side of the street at 309 Howard Ave. is a beautiful, old, brick home built in the early 1900's. This is a three story house where the third floor originally served as a ballroom. If you look closely as you pass, you can see the carriage house behind the main house.
 - On the north side of Howard Ave. is a brick home, 316 Howard Ave. (now The Overman House Bed and Breakfast) that dates back to 1865.
 - A little further ahead, just off the avenue south on College St., is the General Beadle home. The house was built about 1875 for General Beadle. The stars that are carved into the woodwork around the windows were put there in honor of the four-star general. The ornamental flowers in the trim above the windows were put there to please his wife. This was also home to Juliet V. Strauss. Mrs. Strauss was a writer; her work appeared regularly in the Ladies Home Journal under the heading of "The Country Contributor". When the heavily wooded area that is now Turkey Run State Park was offered for sale as timberland, Mrs. Strauss was one of the leaders in the fight to preserve the lush woodland and make it into a state park for the benefit of all of the people in Indiana.
- At the stop light, drive across US 41. Howard Avenue becomes Strawberry Road.
 - Strawberry Road was named for the abundance of wild strawberries that grew along it. The wild berries do not bear every year, some years residents are lucky to get a cup full, but in good years they can fill a bucket and the wild berries make the sweetest, tastiest jam. This

road was once the main road from Rockville to Montezuma. Maple trees were planted about every twenty feet along the whole route so that the ladies could drive from town to the other in open buggies without be exposed to the summer sun. A few of the old maples still stand.

- **Following yellow arrow signs, turn right on 10 O'clock Road.**
 - On down the road (past 10 O'clock road that you turn right on) is a little town of Coloma that was settled by the Quakers. Originally known as the Rocky Run Society, their first meeting was held in a log school house in 1830. Legend has it that this was an important station in the Underground Railroad. Escaped slaves were moved in and out of Coloma under cover of darkness, hiding during the day in the cellars of the old houses – some of which still stand.
- **At 4-way stop sign, go straight ahead on 10 O'clock Road.**
 - This is where the little village of West Union resided. This was once a bustling railroad town. A bunch of the C & E I came through here and huge grain storage buildings, a cattle loading platform and an elevator made this an important station for agricultural products.
- **At stop sign turn right on Tow Path Road to #26 West Union Bridge.**
 - The first covered bridge that you come to is the West Union Covered Bridge, #26 on your map. It is the longest covered bridge in Parke County – 315 feet long – built by J. J. Daniels in 1876. It is a double span bridge, the supports and the center post are sandstone. This bridge cost \$16,125 when Mr. Daniels built it in 1876. In 1962-63 the covered bridge was by-passed by the new concrete bridge at a cost of \$223,367. The bridge is safe to walk across and enjoy but do not drive your car onto it. You can drive your car down to the bridge, there is ample room to turn around. This is a favorite fishing spot of local residents. If you want to walk down to Sugar Creek, the paths are on your right on both ends of the bridge. You can get a good view of the underside of the bridge and the sandstone center post from the bank of the creek.
- **Proceed on Tow Path Road then curve right on 525W.**
- **Turn right on 790N (beginning of gravel road area)**
 - This is called Turnpike Hollow. There will be seven turns in the next half-mile. As you go down the hill, look at the magnificent oaks on the right. This is a beautiful woods. Many of the trees that are native to Parke County grow in this woods.
- **Turn left at 450W, then right on 800N to #29 Marshall Bridge.**
 - Marshall Covered Bridge was built by J.A. Britton in 1917. This is a short bridge at only 56 feet long with a very high burr arch. This bridge has nothing to do with the town of Marshall, located many miles away. It may have been named after a local resident, Mahlon Marshall. Mahlon Marshall was a Civil War veteran and was a Parke County Commissioner when the Parke County Courthouse was built. It is more likely that it was named for David W, Marshall who owned the Hill Crest Valley Farm of 132 acres nearby. The Brazil Division of the C&EI Railroad passed near the bridge. The railroad went bankrupt in 1921, and, the railroad was scrapped out in 1943. This structure was the next to the last of the J.A. Britton and the Parke County Covered Bridges. J.A. Britton was 80 the year it was constructed.
- **Proceed on 800N then turn left on English Road. At stop sign, turn left on 900N to #30 Rush Creek Bridge.**
 - The next covered bridge is the Rush Creek Bridge, built in 1904 by William Hendricks. The entrances to this bridge are lower than most of the other covered bridges. The Rush Creek Covered Bridge has a clearance of 12'6". The size of the entrance was determined by the size of a standard load of hay. Levees have been installed and the nearby Fairview Church

moved because of the violent floods. This is the first of three bridges built by William Hendricks. It was followed by Wilkins Mill, in 1906 and Earl Ray in 1907. All three are of similar construction. The portals have an extremely shallow arch. The bridge name is the same as the creek.

- **Proceed to stop sign (end of gravel road area). Turn right on 425W. At next stop sign turn right on 1050N. Stay on 1050N, then turn right on B'dale Road. At this point you will see both yellow arrow signs and blue arrow signs. B'dale Road will have two options at the "T". Turn left on B'dale Road. Stop sign at B'dale Road and 250W, turn right on B'dale Road to #28 Jackson Bridge.**
 - When you start down a big hill, you will notice signs that say "Classified Forest" in the woods on your right. The Classified Forest program is designed to protect and preserve the woodlands. Frazing is prohibited in the Classified Forests and cutting and marketing of timber can only be done under government supervision. Taxes on land in the Classified Forest Program are only about 1/20th of the amount that would normally be paid on the land. However, if you ever want to take your land out of this program, the taxes are refigured and you are asses for a portion of the back taxes.
 - The Jackson Covered Bridge, #28 on your map, Also known as "Rockport Bridge" and "Wright's Mill Bridge" was built by J.J. Daniels in 1861. It is the longest, single span, covered, wooden bridge in the world today that is still in use for automobile traffic. It is 207 feet long and is masterpiece of architecture. The Jackson Covered Bridge is the oldest standing bridge built by Joseph J. Daniels in Parke County. It is not, however, his first bridge since he worked with his father, Stephen Daniels, and had completed some of his contracts. He finished the first of his own building contracts in 1845 at age 19. He built the Hargrave Bridge in 1847 and the Union Township Bridge in 1851 in Parke County. The bridge was built in the unstable political era of the Civil War. Joseph J. Daniels made a clear political statement in naming the bridge after Andrew Jackson in honor of his statement to John Calhoun: "To the Union, it must be preserved." When first built, the bridge portal was lettered: "The Federal Union: It must be preserved."
- **Turn around and follow 250W back to B'dale Road.**
- **At the stop sign, turn right to stay on B'dale Road.**
 - In the mid-1800's, one of the leading industries in Parke County was flatboat building. Several boatyards were located along Sugar Creek in the general area of the Jackson Covered Bridge. The boats were used to transport the products of the mid-west to high paying markets in New Orleans. There was not much local demand for the corn, hogs, wheat, etc. that pioneer farmers produced. Everybody raised their own produce and if – by chance – they needed more than they raised, they were seldom able to pay cash, preferring to trade labor or surplus products of their own for the needed meat or grain. The average flatboat cost \$100 to make. At first (1834-35) they primarily carried corn and pork, but soon the boats carried wheat, flour, lumber, whiskey, potatoes, and even live chickens and hogs.
 - The men that made the trips down Sugar Creek to the Wabash, down the Wabash to the Ohio, down the Ohio to the Mississippi and on to New Orleans (and frequently walked back) were sturdy pioneers. Many of the leaders of our country, including Abraham Lincoln and "Uncle Joe" Cannon made flatboat trips to New Orleans as young men.
 - From the legends of the flatboats comes one possibility explanation of the origin of the famous Indiana nickname, "Hoosier". The men who operated these boats, were, by necessity, tough, hard-fighting men. A common slang term at that time was "husher" meaning a man who ends or finishes a fight. One night in New Orleans a seasoned flatboat

crew from Indiana had just unloaded their cargo when an uncommonly large and vicious fight broke out on the docks. The battle raged on and on until, finally, one Indiana boatman stood alone on the dock. He raised his arms and shouted to the assembled crowd, "I'm a husher!" The next day the New Orleans papers ran the story of the fight and, through misunderstanding or misprint, called the Indiana boatman a "Hoosier". Soon all Indiana Boatmen were referred to as "Hoosiers" and it wasn't long until the term was extended to include all of the people of Indiana.

- **At the stop sign (you'll be in a small town of Sylvania) turn right onto 1050N and follow it to US 41.**
 - Nearby Tangier was preceded by a grain warehouse built in 1855 by William B. Swaim. (Later it was operated by his son, S.B. Swaim, and burned in 1931.) The town was organized and platted on March 16, 1886, after the Brazil Division of the Chicago and Eastern Illinois Railroad was built. The railroad passed the Rush Creek Covered Bridge. The railroad went bankrupt in 1921, was sold in 1922, was closed in 1941, and was scrapped out in 1943. The Post Office was open from 1886 to 1990. Other businesses and buildings included a flour mill, hardware store, hotel, three doctors, three groceries, implement store, harness shop, millinery shop, two barbers, two blacksmiths, sawmill, drug store, three churches, Odd Fellows Lodge, canning factory, telephone company, depot, and schools. The population of Tangier was reported as 300 in 1913, 300 in 1927, and 100 in 1990. As clay and coal mines closed, jobs, and population decreased. The name Tangier was given by the town's surveyor, Captain John T. Campbell. He may have chosen it as a result of his earlier visit to Tangier, Morocco, in Africa. Other names for the town include Long Siding, Liberty Crossing, Swaim's Station, and even Sylvania.
- **At stop sign, turn right onto US 41 headed south.**
 - You are now on US 41. It was built in the mid 1920s at the same time that the government adopted the odd-even highway numbering system in America. Odd numbers are north and south bound roads and even numbers were east and west bound roads. US 41 stretches from Madison, Wisconsin to Miami, Florida. The road was the main north-south highway to the Midwest and was once known as "Killer 41" due to the large number of wrecks on its hills and turns.
- **Follow US 41 to Cox Ford Road (gravel) and turn left (Cox Ford Road is located on the left side of the road right after an old horse stable).**
- **The first bridge that you will cross will be #35 Wilkins Mill Bridge.**
 - The first covered bridge you will come across is Wilkin's Mill Covered Bridge, #35 on your map. Wilkins Mill was built in 1835 by Solomon Jessup and Zimri Hunt. James Moore and Zimri Hunt's log barn and house are up the hill south of the bridge. George Wilkins opened a store there in 1853. A carding mill was operated there by Solomon Jessup and William Hunt. The mill was sold to George Wilkins in 1855. He tore down the old mill and built a new one. This was the source of the name Wilkins Mill. This mill burned down in 1877. A new mill was built, which stood until 1947. Sugar Mill and Green Creek converged below the bridge site. After one flood, the creek changed course leaving the bridge over a dry bed for a period of time. Parke County creeks are still changing course as they have for thousands of years. An eighty-five year old covered bridge won't make a difference. The creeks will go where they wish. This is the second of three covered bridges built by William Hendricks.
- **Continue on Cox Ford Road until you get to #36 Cox Ford Bridge.**
 - Cox Ford was not bridged until 1896. When the County Commissioners advertised for bids, they received lower bids from J.J. Daniels and J.A. Britton, but they chose a more

expensive iron bridge. Iron Bridges were "modern". The iron bridge was washed away in the flood of 1913. The Armiesburg, the Plank Road, and the Hargrave covered bridges were destroyed in the same flood. A contract for a replacement covered bridge at Cox Ford was awarded to J.A. Britton. His bid was contingent on the reuse of the Armiesburg Covered Bridge arches and the iron bridge abutments. He raised the level of the bridge another 5 feet. Today, the abutments are in two segments with 5 feet of poured concrete placed on top of the original hewn stone. Although the water below the Cox Ford Bridge now looks shallow, several very large catfish were pulled out of there. Winfield Catlin and James C. Buchanan went fishing there on June 2, 1920. Mr. Catlin probed the water with a long stick under the larger rocks. He found a large one and called to Mr. Buchanan. Mr. Buchanan immediately tumbled into the water from a 12 to 15 foot cliff (in a new suit of clothes) and tried to "hog" the fish. In the lively struggle both men's hands were cut as they reached into the fish mouth and tried to drag it out of the water. Their trophy fish weighed 47 pounds. They placed the fish in the car and took it to the Rockville Republican newspaper office. They said it wasn't unusual, they had caught them up to 75 pounds. Turkey Run State Park now extends past the Cox Ford Covered Bridge. A public parking lot and a canoe landing are located southwest of the bridge.

- **Continue until you get to a stop sign at State Road 47 and turn left onto State Road 47.**
 - Turkey Run State Park was Indiana's second state park, with the first parcel of land being purchased in 1916 at the cost of \$40,200 when the State Park system was first established during the Indiana state centennial.[1] It hosts the Turkey Run Inn, built in 1919. The origin of the name "Turkey Run" is unknown but the most accepted theory is that wild turkeys would congregate in the gorges (or "runs") for warmth where early settlers in the area would trap them in dead-end gorges and hunt them with ease.
- **Go past the Turkey Run State Park and turn left onto North Narrows Road. Follow blue arrow signs to #37 Narrows Bridge.**
 - The previous Lusk Bridge was destroyed in 1875. When the Parke County Commissioners decided to replace the bridge, iron bridges were becoming popular. The first bids, opened on August 24, 1882, included: Smith Iron Works - \$13.00, \$15.50, \$21.00 per lineal foot; Wrought Iron Bridge Co. - \$20.00, \$21.65 per lineal foot; King Iron Bridge Co. - \$21.20 per lineal foot; Columbia Bridge Works - \$24.00 per lineal foot; G.F. Haynes (Wood) - \$20.00 per lineal foot; J.A. Britton (Wood) - \$3,750 total. All Bids were rejected. J.A. Britton was later awarded the contract for \$3400. This bridge has been acclaimed as the first in J.A. Britton's illustrious covered bridge career. Some purists have criticized the pointed arch joints, J. A. Britton built a Billie Creek Bridge in 1880, but it was probably an open bridge. Joseph A. Britton's first wife died as he was working on the Narrows Bridge. He met his second wife, who was living at a farm not far from the narrows, while working on the bridge. The Narrows bridge is one of the most photographed covered bridges in the state. It is accessible from a public road, three Turkey Run State Park hiking trails, and canoe trips on Sugar Creek. The famous bridges of Turkey Run include two covered bridges still standing over Sugar Creek: Narrows and Cox Ford. There were three earlier bridges at the Narrows and the Turkey Run Bridge, located near Indiana Highway 47 and the Turkey Run State Park entrance. Then there is the famous swinging bridge over Sugar Creek. Sugar Creek was once called Rock River because of its size and rocks. The Pottawatomie Indians called it Pungosecone which may be translated as "the waters of many sugar trees" or "ashes at mouth of stream".
- **Turn around at Henley Road and return to stop sign at State Road 47.**
- **Continue straight onto Marshall Road to Marshall.**

- Marshall was founded in 1877 with the completion of the old I.D. & S. Railroad. Because of the kindness of M.W. Marshall, a pioneer citizen who donated a tract of land for the railroad station, the town was named in his honor. The estimated population in 2003 was 364.
- **At the stop sign you will see the Marshall Arch. Continue driving straight on Marshall Road (Main Street in town).**
 - The wooden arch has a span of 51 feet; it is supported by concrete piers and has a clearance of 17 feet 7 inches at its highest point. Lettering on each side of the arch spells the town's name. The first work by Indiana architect Carroll O. Beeson, the arch was constructed in 1921. The town's business leaders commissioned the arch as a landmark for the town which was intended to improve the appearance of its business district. The arch was formally dedicated on September 30, 1921; the dedication honored the town's World War I veterans, although the arch was not intended to be a memorial. The structure remains in good condition and has become a popular attraction for visitors to the area. The arch was added to the National Register of Historic Places on December 26, 1985.
- **Marshall Road will take you back into Rockville.**
 - Rockville had an estimated population, in 2003, of 2,722. Rockville was laid out in the fall of 1823, and became the permanent county seat of Parke County in 1824. Pervious to that, courts had been held in Roseville and Armiesburg. The donors of the land on which Rockville is situated were the first settlers of the town, namely Arthur Patterson, Andrew Ray, Aaron Hand, and James B. McCall. The circumstance of a large number of rocks of the boulder description, lying on the site, gave it the name of Rockville. It is said that the name was dedicated by breaking a bottle of whiskey on one of those boulders.
 - Several Amish families have moved to Parke County from Pennsylvania to retreat back to a more rural community. The families have purchased many farms in the area. Many families raise dairy cattle. You may also see their horses and mules which are used as their means of transportation as well as the power for their farm equipment. The Amish do not use tractors or cars, nor do they have electricity in their homes. They use gas for their lights, for the engines that run their milking equipment and to pump water. They hold their own church services and have their own school. The children attend school through the eighth grade and then return to the farm. Many stores are located throughout the county and are open daily except Sundays.
 - On this road, as you approach town, Rockville Lake will be located on your right hand side. It is a 400 acre hidden gem of Parke County, Indiana. Equipped with a well-stocked lake of Crappie, bluegill, bass, and catfish, not to mention the bait stealing turtles lurking around, Rockville Lake is a great place to take a boat out on or fish from the shore. Wildlife is of abundance here between fish, turtles, snakes, deer, raccoons, and geese; you will not be without an animal close around. There is a nesting pair of Bald Eagles, as well, that have claimed the park as their home for the past 4 years. You can usually see them flying daily over the lake, and if you're lucky, you can witness them fishing! The lake also has a swimming beach, volleyball net, horseshoe pits, three modern playgrounds, and plenty of grassy areas for relaxing, recreation, or just walking.
- **After Rockville Lake, follow Marshall Road up the hill and it then turns into right into Stark Street. At the stop sign, turn left onto Eerie Street. This will lead you out to US 36.**

Thank you for taking our tour through Northern Parke County!