



Steuben County Historical Tour

Steuben County History

Steuben County was named after Baron Frederick von Steuben, a Prussian soldier who served in the Continental Army during the American Revolution, eventually becoming George Washington's chief-of-staff.

The county, which originally was part of LaGrange County to the west, was settled in 1834 in what is now the town of Orland. The town was established as the "Vermont Settlement" because many of the first settlers were from the state of Vermont. Before Orland was settled, the area was a hunting ground for the Potawatomi Indians. The settlers' homes were made of logs. The living, sleeping and eating quarters were all in one room. All the cooking was done over a log fire.

Angola was platted in 1838 and became the county seat. The town was named after Angola, New York, the source of many of Angola's first residents.

Other locales were settled, including Ashley, Flint, Fremont, Hamilton, Helmer, Hudson, Metz, Nevada Mills, Pleasant Lake, Ray and Salem Center.

Steuben County was a stop on the Underground Railroad during the Civil War (1861-1865.) Many homes in the Orland area were used to hide slaves escaping to Canada.



Statue of Baron von Steuben in front of courthouse



Pokagon's toboggan slide in the early 1940's

Steuben County is home to Indiana's most beautiful state park. Pokagon State Park was originally called Lake James State Park when it was proposed to be the fifth Indiana state park in 1925. The name was changed to Pokagon State Park to acknowledge the rich Native American heritage of the state and region. Leopold and Simon Pokagon were father and son and the last two notable leaders of the Potawatomi. The park's Potawatomi Inn takes its name from these Native Americans who made their home in the area. Indiana state parks celebrate their centennial in 2016.

Being one of the state's original parks, Pokagon features the unique work of the Civilian Conservation Corps, whose members lived and worked at Pokagon from 1934 to 1942. The "boys of the CCC" built the beautiful stone and log structures that dot the park landscape and provide accent to the rolling wooded hills, wetlands and open meadows.

Pokagon is also home to the state's only refrigerated toboggan. The CCC built a single toboggan track for their own recreation in 1935. A year after its construction, a new slide was built and the curve was straightened out so riders could get more speed. In 1938, the CCC built a 20-foot tower for the toboggan and a second track was added in 1941. Each season, nearly 80,000 riders enjoy a thrilling trip down the 1,780-foot dual-lane refrigerated slide. Pokagon State Park is located off I-69 Exit #354, just south of the Indiana Toll Road.

lakes101.org

A Self-Guided Tour

Steuben County may be the Home of 101 Lakes, but it also contains a variety of interesting historical sites, including monuments, signs and unique buildings, most of them kept in remarkably original condition.

Use this pamphlet to help you identify the sites, which you may visit in numerical order or any order you prefer. Copies of the Steuben County Historical Tour Guide are free and give complete descriptions of each site. Guides can be obtained at any local antique shop or library, or can be downloaded at www.lakes101.org

History and antiques go hand in hand, and Steuben County is blessed with a good variety of high quality antique stores. Visit www.lakes101.org for a list of local antique shops.



Sites were chosen by the Steuben County Historical Society. They also provided the descriptions. Many of these sites rely on donations for upkeep. Any donations made to the historical society will be forwarded to the individual sites.



1.

Soldier's Monument

Erected in 1917 in downtown Angola, the monument honors the 1,280 county soldiers who fought in the Civil War. Steuben County sent more men per capita than any other county in the state. Columbia stands atop the granite monument and is surrounded by four soldiers representing Artillery, Navy, Infantry and Cavalry.



2.

Steuben County Courthouse

Constructed of materials native to Steuben County, the county courthouse in downtown Angola was built in 1868 at a cost of \$27,000. One of the more unique features is a metal weather vane in the shape of a fish on top of the courthouse.



3.

Old Steuben County Jail

The first jail was replaced by this structure in 1877. The front rooms and upstairs served as the sheriff's office and residence. Two small cells on the main level housed women and children. The main jail was in back, while mentally ill inmates were housed in the basement.



4.

Cline House

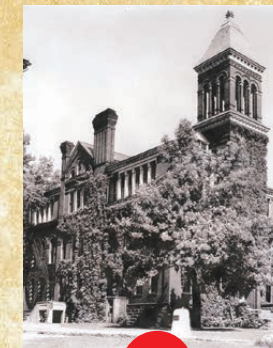
The home, built in 1891, holds treasures from the early 1900's. The Steuben County Historical Society owns the museum at 313 E. Maumee St. in Angola and it's open Sunday afternoons between Memorial Day and Labor Day.



5.

Angola Methodist Church

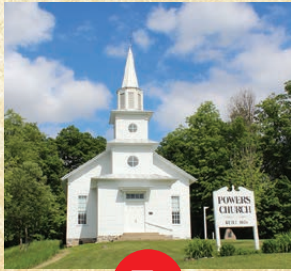
With faith helping it survive several fires, the 1855 church recently celebrated its 155th birthday. The community benefits from the church's many charitable projects.



6.

Trine University

Trine University, founded in 1884, was first called Tri-State Normal College, then renamed Tri-State College in 1906 and Tri-State University in 1975. In 2008, the institution changed its name to Trine University and today is well-known for engineering, business and education. The university is located off U.S. Highway 20, just a few blocks west of Angola's public square.



7.

Powers Church

The non-denominational church was built in 1876 and completely restored a century later. It retained its 1880 wallpaper, kerosene lamps, two cast-iron wood stoves and a pump organ. The church was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. It is still used for weddings, funerals and special events.



11.

Vistula Trail

The trail marker is located east of downtown Fremont at the junction of State Road 120 and Ray Road.



15.

Collins School

The Collins family donated the land for the 1877 public school which closed in 1943. The family then bought and restored the building, which is open summer Sunday afternoons between 2 and 5 p.m.



8.

The Toledo War

The Indiana Northern Border Historical Marker is located on State Road 120 between county roads 700 and 800 East on the north side of the road. Please do not park on State Road 120 to read the marker, which highlights the 1835-36 border dispute between states.



12.

Michael/Sullins home

The private two-story Fremont home of a notable 1848 coverlet weaver is listed on both the Indiana and national registries of historic sites.



16.

Tombstone Corner

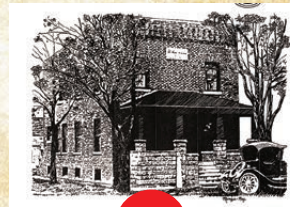
Just a short distance from where John and Jacob Staynor, along with Gideon Langdon, first settled Steuben County in 1831 is a small grave beside the road. It sits along the north berm at the corner of county roads 800 West and 350 North and reads: Fowler E., son of Albert and Lovina Robinson d. July 29, 1848; ae 1 yr. 3 mo. 22 da.



9.

The Unknown Potawatomi

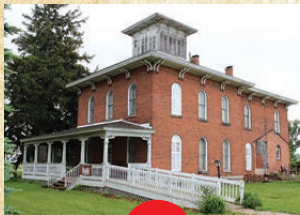
A complete explanation of the site is given on a metal plaque attached to the stone in Covenant Cemetery. The cemetery is located at the corner of county roads 700 East and 750 North.



13.

Steuben County's first hospital

Built in 1914 by Dr. Robert Wade at the corner of Toledo and Pleasant streets in Fremont, this was the first hospital in the county.



14.

The Farnham House

Avery and Erastus Farnham built this residence on the southern edge of Fremont in the 1840's. The home safeguarded fugitive slaves and Sojourner Truth stayed there during a speaking tour.



17.

First Congregational Church, Orland

Four different denominations have worshipped at this 1852 church. The town of Orland was the site of antislavery gatherings and a stop on the Underground Railroad.



10.

Old Mill Shoppes

Several buildings from the small town of Ray, which sits on the Indiana/Michigan state line, were moved to 6770 E. 750 N. in Fremont. A mill, 1914 brick post office and a 1926 farmhouse were added to the original milking parlor and sheep barn. The Old Mill Shoppes are open Friday-Sunday Memorial Day through Labor Day.



18.

Pleasant Lake Van Orden Mansion

Native Americans called this lake Nipcondish, which means pleasant waters. On the west side of the lake is the 1875 Van Orden mansion. His ice house served residents of Fort Wayne, Ind.

