

Stories of the City

The Patterson Boulevard Canal Parkway

The first leg of the Miami-Erie Canal began in Cincinnati & terminated in Dayton for more than a decade in the early 19th century. Meanwhile, workers slowly moved south from Port Toledo to Dayton to eventually connect to the Ohio River. For that magical time Dayton grew from a very small town to an international port city and helped fuel a robust economy.



From the 1820's through the rise of railroads in the 1850's & 1860's & eventually to the Great Flood of 1913, the canal corridor was a center for Dayton's muscular economy. A young man by the name of John Patterson (A true believer in the City Beautiful movement) once was a toll collector on the canal & vowed to shut the open sewer (canal) one day.



The canal was filled in during the 1920's and was beautifully landscaped with parks, flower beds and trees and renamed in honor the late John Patterson. The linear parkway fell out of favor after World War II. The great trees were felled and the green lawns replaced with asphalt to make way for the parking of automobiles.



IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

The promise of the once beautiful parkway was renewed in the 1990's as new Dayton visionaries imagined a once-again green corridor that would connect the River and Riverscape to the Oregon District. The corridor was imagined to be lined with new residences to complement the other changing uses. The Canal Walk connected the river to Cooper Park. Today Five Rivers MetroParks is moving ahead on another phase of Riverscape at Monument as citizens, engineers & planners develop plans to carry on the new streetscape to Fifth Street and on to Greater Rubicon Park as the vision grows larger as the Tech Connect Corridor that will better connect the University of Dayton to Tech Town.