

NOBLE COUNTY'S FIRST HANGING

After a jury convicted John Lechner for the murder of John Farley, Lechner was hung near this spot November 30, 1840.

After an evening of “filling up with cheap whiskey,” and shooting at targets in the village of Rochester (one mile east of Ligonier), a loud argument turned violent and Lechner shot Farley in the chest, killing him.

Lechner's trial was brief, and while awaiting his punishment was held under guard in a hotel in Augusta, the county seat at the time.

The hanging place was recorded as
“a half-mile west of Augusta in a natural amphitheater.”

Erected by the Noble County Historical Society, 2025

ERIE & MICHIGAN CANAL REMNANT

Begun in 1837 as part of an ambitious project adopted by the Indiana Legislature in 1836, the Erie & Michigan Canal was intended to run from Fort Wayne to Michigan City, with part of it to be built through Noble County.

Just yards south of this sign, a remnant of the work done can be seen. For various reasons, including the state running out of money, the project was abandoned in 1839.

Most canal workers in Green Township were Irish immigrants, many of whom subsequently settled in the eastern part of the township.

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BLACKLEGS AT THE TAMARACK

The surrounding area of swamps and lakes was once referred to as “the Tamarack”. It became a known hideout for a local gang of villains, horse thieves and counterfeiters known as “the Blacklegs”.

They were a well-organized outfit who brought terror to the good citizens of Noble County in the 1840s and 1850s.

Led by Bill Hill and Gregory McDougale, the gang was disbanded in 1858 with the lynching of McDougale by “the Regulators”, a group of self-appointed lawmen.

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1760 HORSEWOOD STONE

Alvin Randall, living on this farm in 1880, found a small slate tablet in his field which contained the following message:

*“Taken prisoner by Indians in 1760 by the Delaware tribe and taken west to the Big waters. But here is a white man. He was taken captive five years before me. His name is Allen and that is mine. We was treated hard.
E. Allen. J. Allen.”*

The stone was passed down through the family for generations and is now on display in the Noble County Historical Society’s Old Jail Museum.

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GREGORY MCDOUGLE HANGING

Near this spot, on January 26, 1858, Gregory McDougale, notorious Blackleg gang member accused of murder, counterfeiting, robbery and horse theft, was lynched by the Noble County Regulators before a crowd of thousands of people.

For years the Blacklegs had ruled and terrorized Noble County, but McDougale's hanging brought an end to their power. He is buried in Northport Cemetery north of Rome City.

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SWEET & SKINNER LAKE MOUNDS

The neighborhood around Sweet Church has been home to humans for thousands of years. The early pioneers found several ancient burial mounds containing bones, ash, charcoal, stone implements and copper ornaments on the banks of Skinner and Sweet Lakes.

The pioneers also found two Indian trails (one following CR 415 N), a Potawatomi campsite on the east bank of Sweet Lake and many ancient stone artifacts in the area. Bones and teeth of ancient mastodons and mammoths have been found in both lakes and in low spots nearby.

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