

Corydon

The Corydon Capitol State Historic Site commemorates Indiana's first state capital and follows the development of Indiana from a territory to a state. Vincennes, the first territorial capital, was left on Indiana's western edge when the Illinois Territory was created, and in 1813, the capital was moved to Corydon, a more central location for Indiana's population at the time.

In June of 1816, 43 delegates met in Corydon to draft the first state constitution. Much of their work was done under the shade of a large elm tree. The trunk of the tree, now known as "Constitution Elm," is still standing. The first state election was on Aug. 5, 1816, in which Jonathan Jennings was elected governor.

In November 1816, the first General Assembly of 29 representatives, 10 senators and the lieutenant governor met in the new capitol building. On Dec. 11, 1816, Indiana was formally admitted as the 19th state. Corydon remained the state capital until the government moved to Indianapolis in 1825.

CAPITOL BUILDING



The square, Federal-style capitol building, built between 1814 and 1816, is located in the heart of downtown Corydon. Workers hauled limestone from nearby quarries to erect the 40-foot square walls, and logs were cut from virgin forests for the ceiling and roof supports.

When the present courthouse was completed in 1829, the old capitol building was restored and opened as a state memorial in 1930.

You can visit the original state capitol building Tuesday-Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The cost is \$6/ person; \$5 for seniors. Indiana State Museum members receive free admission.

Constitutional Elm



Although the tree died of Dutch Elm disease in 1925, its trunk is still preserved. The tree's branches were removed and the trunk was preserved with coal tar and surrounded by a stone monument. Tiny pieces of the branches were sold as souvenirs, and you can still buy them at the town's interpretive center and gift shop, which is across Walnut St. from the town square at the old Corydon Presbyterian Church.

Address: W. High St., Corydon,

The Constitution Elm is almost at the end of the block, on the right.

Blue River and the Hellbender

Blue River, that flows just east of Corydon, has cool, spring-fed waters that drop in elevation from the western slope of the Knobs in Floyd and Clark Counties to its confluence with the Ohio River in Crawford County. The Blue River watershed encompasses portions of seven southern Indiana counties and is defined by the abundant limestone here. This limestone not only forms the caves that feed Blue River, but also supports the diversity of plant and animal life found in the Blue River basin. One of these iconic species is the eastern hellbender, sometimes described as “mud come to life.”

The eastern hellbender, a giant aquatic salamander was once found in rivers throughout southern Indiana. There was a time when these two-foot long amphibians roamed nearly all of the Ohio River tributaries. It is now believed that fewer than 300 remain in the entire state, all in Blue River. Indiana’s hellbenders, like those in other regions, are disappearing at a startling rate; it has been estimated that the Blue River population will be extirpated within 25 years without significant intervention.

The hellbender is generally nocturnal, spending most of the day under rocks on the riverbed, emerging at night to hunt. Its diet is mostly crayfish, supplemented by small fish, other hellbenders, tadpoles, toads and water snakes. After having covered 30-60 feet and eaten up to 4 crayfish in a night, the salamander returns to its home rock by morning. Adults are extremely territorial, usually chasing off any daytime visitors.

