

The Legacy of the Huron Docks

1906 Dock Improvements / New Electric Coal Dumper 1937

Information from [The Historical Marker Database](#).



Location - Marker is at the intersection of Main Street and Wall Street, on the right when traveling north on Main Street.

Photographed By J. J. Prats, August 8, 2019

Inscription:

1906 Dock Improvements. In the early 1900s the lake vessels were getting larger and needed more water and room to turn around when

emptied. In 1906 the Army Corps of Engineers widened Huron Harbor from 120 to 180 feet and extended the west break wall. In the same year the Wheeling and Lake Erie Railroad announced it would spend \$1 million on dock improvements, including the construction of a second slip for both ore and coal.

A new slip and winding or turning basin was built on 200 acres of marshland upriver from slip #1. This meant that the Berlin Road Bridge, which connected the east side of Huron with downtown, had to be closed. The bridge was located on the south end of the Wheeling yards and was blocking the expansion of the shipping channel and turning basin. A new bridge was built over the river a little farther south of the docks.



New Electric Coal Dumper 1937. In 1937 the docks were improved by installing a new electric car dumper on the north side of slip #1. It was the most modern coal dumper on the lakes at the time, with a capacity of unloading sixty 70-ton cars per hour.

The turning basin is out of frame on the right.

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Loading the cargo holds with coal was a precise operation. The cars were first moved from the loading yard to the coal dumper. Each car was moved by gravity and had a rider who worked the hand brake to control its speed. A "pig" ran between the tracks and pushed the car up the hill into the hoist mechanism. The coal would fall into a funnel, which directed it into a chute leading into the vessel's hold. The chute on the dumper could be moved to place coal into any part of the cargo hold. This enabled the

men to trim the boat and fill the hold to the maximum. Because coal is relatively light for the volume it occupies a boat's hold could be completely filled.

When a car was emptied it was put back on the track and rolled down away from the dumper up the kickback. The empty car reversed direction on the kickback and rolled through the switch behind it into the empty yard. The dumper handled one car a minute.

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Photograph taken from the end of Huron Dock; Nickle Plate Dock is on the left. This is the mouth of the Huron River, by J. J. Prats of Powell