



Messenger photo by Rick Palsgrove

Nate White tosses a rusty metal pan out of the channel of Ohio and Erie Canal lock #22 in Groveport. White and Boy Scout Troop #71 are removing brush and cleaning trash out of and around the lock as part of his Eagle Scout project.

## Scout tackles job of cleaning old lock

By Rick Palsgrove  
Southeast Editor

As a young boy, Nate White would often ride his bicycle on the grass and cinder path that passed near a piece of Groveport's history, a symbol made of stone that has long been cloaked in brush and debris.

Now a teenager, White has vowed to clean up Ohio and Erie Canal lock #22 as his Eagle Scout project. The lock is a long neglected mass of formidable stone block situated in the old canal channel and located about a quarter mile east of Groveport's Blacklick Park, just north of Groveport Park.

"I've wanted to clean it up for years," said White. "I've worked hard as a scout and I didn't want an easy Eagle Scout project."

So, on April 16-17 White, along with members of Boy Scout Troop #71, gathered up shovels, rakes, saws, and scrapers and tackled the big job of clearing brush and roots from the lock's stones. They got some help from the village of Groveport as Public Works employees took a bush hog and cleared the tangle of brush and briars that surrounded the old lock.

But after the bush hog left there was still a lot of back breaking work ahead for the scouts. Using their muscle and sweat, the boys wrestled and stripped the foliage from atop the lock root by root and branch by branch.

At one point White and fellow scout Marc Gerardi ripped up a thick layer of stubborn sod and roots that had clung fiercely to a stone block and uncovered some of the inhabitants who had made the lock their home - ants - hundreds of them - that came pouring

### about lock #22

- Built of sandstone in the late 1820s as part of a \$2,937 bid by W. H. Richardson to build section 52 of the Ohio and Erie Canal through Groveport.
- The lock is 90 feet long with a 15 foot wide channel.
- The lock's function was to lift and lower canal boats to meet the changing terrain.
- The Ohio and Erie Canal opened in Groveport on Sept. 25, 1831 and operated until the early 20th century. The canal enhanced trade and travel by linking central Ohio to Lake Erie and the Ohio River.

out of the torn up turf scrambling for new cover.

Other animals had also made the lock and the land around it their home over the years, including snakes and groundhogs.

Thick brush atop the lock was not the only challenge White and his crew faced. The lock channel was filled with trash, debris, and even more dense brush. Plus the old lock channel was still doing its job and holding several inches of blackened brackish water in its mucky bottom that the boys had to negotiate.

Within the lock channel White found old tires, a steel watering trough, mangled metal, pieces of rusty old appliances, muddy bottles, broken dishes, a gnarled car door, and twisted wire fencing. All evidence that the lock had been used as a dumping ground for an untold number of years.

As the day wore on April 18, White knew he and his crew had more work ahead of them. He said he plans to come back to the lock in a couple of weeks to complete the clean up.

"It's a big job, but we'll finish it," he said.





Prior to clean up.



After clean up.