

A wooden covered walkway with a gabled roof and railings on both sides. The walkway leads to a gravel trail that winds through a wooded area with bare trees. Three runners are visible on the trail: a woman in a pink shirt and black shorts, a man in a dark green shirt and black shorts, and another person in a red shirt further ahead. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Rails to Trails
Robbins Trail

Danville's place in history was written in October of 1845 when the first iron T-rail produced in America was rolled at the Montour Iron Works. By 1850, a seven-mile, narrow rail route to the ore mines and limestone quarries was built to supply the furnaces of the Montour Iron Works (currently the site of Scott's Floral, Gift and Greenhouses on Route 11). Two locomotives ran the route with carload after carload of iron ore and limestone until the mines were closed in 1890.

While iron's influence was waning in the 1890s, bicycling had become a craze in America and the popularity extended to Danville where bicycles had become a common site on the streets. In fact, ordinances were enacted to curb the bicyclists' enthusiasm for speeding down the streets and riding on the pavements.

A few young men who were cycling enthusiasts decided to form the **Danville Bicycle Association** and made plans to lease the old railroad bed, which was then owned by the Reading Iron Company, to make a cycle path. The 150 members of the club each paid a small membership fee and received a tag which they wore to indicate that they were one of the Association members who had the privilege of riding on the private road. The money collected for membership was used to purchase fencing and to grade the path from its start at the north end of Montour Row to its end point in Mausdale.



The club enjoyed this area for a few years before the craze began to dwindle. Although there isn't much information about the club after 1903, the path has remained a favorite trail for **walkers, hikers, fishermen, and bicyclists** throughout the 20th century even though it was privately owned.

There is a renewed interest in the path now that the Montour County Recreation Commission has assumed a leadership role in preserving its history and heritage. Also, the Raup and Robbins families, who previously owned the path, deeded it to the county so it could officially be used by the public. It remains the **oldest Rails-to-Trails** in the United States.

The bicycle path now surrounds a recreation area that is a popular location for baseball, softball, and soccer games. In recent years, there have been many 5-K races along the route and hikers and walkers use the path everyday. Portions of the path are still used by cyclists, but everyone in the community understands where you are going when you tell them you're headed to the **"Bicycle Path."**



Visitors can purchase a replica Bicycle Association pin at our Montour County Visitors Center/Iron Heritage Festival Headquarters.

Visitors can also pick up guides, at either of our offices, for all the trails in Columbia & Montour Counties.