

American Canal Society Canal Structure Inventory

CANAL <b>Chesapeake and Ohio Canal</b>		STRUCTURE <b>Georgetown Inclined Plane</b> (Mileage 2.28)	HAER CONDITION <b>Scattered rubble</b>
STATE <del>District of</del> <b>XXXX Columbia</b>		DESIGNER(S): <b>William Rich Hutton</b>	CONTRACTOR/BUILDER <b>Potomac Lock and Boat Co. (Georgetown)</b>
CITY/TOWN <b>Washington (Georgetown)</b>		CAISSON EQUIP: <b>Vulcan Iron Works (Balto)</b>	
STREET <b>Canal Road about 3/4 mil above intersection with Foxhall Road</b>		ASSOCIATED WATERWAY <b>Potomac River</b>	
NAME OF 7.5 MIN USGS QUAD <b>Washington West</b>		DATES OF CONSTRUCTION	
UTM COORDINATES <b>18.18690.43083080</b>		START <b>1874</b>	COMPLETION <b>29 June 1876</b>
		REBUILDING <b>NA</b>	ABANDONED <b>1897</b>
HISTORY & USE IN SERVICE; USE SINCE ABANDONMENT: In order to get to the Potomac River at Georgetown and thence to points on the river to discharge cargoes of coal, canal boats had to pass through congested Georgetown, the four lift locks (Locks 1-4), .3 mile of silted Rock Creek, and then through the terminal point of the Tide Lock into the Potomac River. In order to expedite the process, it was proposed first to build an outlet lock above Georgetown, and then later decided to carry out the proposal of Chief Engineer Hutton to build an inclined plane 1.72 miles above Lock 4. In 1878, 1918 boats passed through and the incline was known as the largest in the world, a model being exhibited at the World's Fair in Paris touting that fact. Though the incline was used actively for only a short time, boats passed periodically for several years, one witness testifying to this reporter that he descended the incline in 1892.			
DESCRIPTION (Visible remains at the site): Boats passed through a structure resembling a lock (with no lift) functioning as a stop gate into a caisson 112' long, 16'9" high and 7'10" high which rested on 6, six-wheeled trucks fitted to four iron rails 600' long on a 1:12 slope. The caisson with its load was counterpoised by four wagons loaded with stone, running pairs on a line of way laid with four rails on each side of the incline. The total weight of the caisson, with its load of water and floating canal boat, and trucks, was 390 tons. After a year's operation the water was drained from the caisson to reduce the weight. The incline overcame a difference of elevation of 39'. The stone work at the upper end was all but obliterated by railway construction c1906. There is the semblance of the basin at the lower end of the basin and the lower wall of the basin is intact and in fair condition.			
OTHER WORKS OR EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH SITE: The Georgetown Canal Incline (an alternate name for the Georgetown Inclined Plane--as is the Old Boat Incline) is closely associated with the four lift locks in Georgetown, as the incline was built to circumvent a passage through them. At mileage 2.28 (just below the upper entrance of the incline) is a stop gate, which probably has no relationship with the incline as it was built in the 1830s.			
C&O Canal National Historical Park, National Park Service		U. S. Government U. S. Archives; also National Park Service, National Capital Parks, Washington, DC 20242	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Published, unpublished mss, maps, photographs): "The Georgetown Canal Incline" by Harold Skramstad, TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE, Vol. 10, No. 4, October, 1969. TOWPATH GUIDE TO THE CHESAPEAKE AND OHIO CANAL by Thomas F. Hahn (Vol.1, Rev.) Hutton Papers, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.			
(An archeological dig should be made here--as recommended by the reporter to National Park Service in 1974.)			
AGENCIES, INDIVIDUALS INTERESTED IN PRESERVATION/RESTORATION: <b>Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Association American Canal Society</b>		NATIONAL REGISTER, HAER, OTHER RECOGNITION: <b>On the National Register</b>	
INVESTIGATION MADE BY: ADDRESS: <b>Thomas F. Hahn, IA</b>		DATE: <b>9 May 1976</b>	
RETURN TO: <b>Box 842, Shepherdstown, WV 25443</b> ACS CANAL INDEX COMMITTEE C/O P. HINSHOTT, HAYNES ROAD, MOUNT KISCO, NEW YORK 10549			

IF AT ALL FEASIBLE, A PHOTOGRAPH SHOULD BE ATTACHED TO THE REVERSE SIDE. A SKETCH MAP OF THE SITE IN RELATION TO SURROUNDING AREA WOULD ALSO HELP.