

|   |  |                            |                               |                      |
|---|--|----------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| CANAL<br><b>Roanoke Canal (Weldon Canal)</b>                      |  | STATUS<br><b>Abandoned</b> |                               | ACS                  |
| STATE/PROVINCE: <b>North Carolina</b>                             |  |                            |                               | HAER                 |
| COUNTIES: <b>Halifax</b>  |  |                            |                               |                      |
| LOCATION (Endpoints of Canal):<br><b>Roanoke Rapids to Weldon</b> |  | ENLARGEMENTS               |                               |                      |
| TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS:<br><b>Roanoke Rapids, Weldon 7½" NC</b>         |  | DATES IN USE               | LENGTH CANAL SLACKWATER TOTAL | LIFT LOCKS No./ SIZE |
|   |  | 1 1819-23+                 | 9                             | 4/16x100'            |
|   |  | 2 1835                     | Tidewater connection          | 6/16x100'            |
|   |  | 3                          |                               |                      |
|   |  | 4                          |                               |                      |

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:**

THE ROANOKE CANAL was the focus and funnel of the Roanoke Navigation, over 400 mi. long, extending up the Staunton (Roanoke) River to the Blue Ridge Mountains in Va., and up the Dan River beyond Danville. Most of the navigation improvements were sluices and wing dams, of which an impressive array can still be navigated by canoe near Brookneal (see Virginia). However, the most elaborate and costly part of the navigation was the 9-mile Roanoke Canal (1819-1823) around the falls of the Roanoke, between Roanoke Rapids and Weldon, N.C., complete with an aqueduct and two 2-lock staircases.

The aqueduct is the gem of the canal and will be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. To reach it, go E on US 158 from Interstate 95 (which crosses the canal) for 1.1 mi. and turn L at the "Camping on the Ponderosa" sign (Ponderosa Ranch, Box 712, Weldon, N.C. 27890, (919)536-3125 and 536-4694, tent and trailer camping, open all year). Turn L at the camp, then R. The canal crossed the road between here and the sewage treatment plant. Follow the power line or the camp fence line R (E) to the aqueduct. This is a complex area, perfect for the beginnings of a Roanoke Canal park; and efforts are being made in that direction by Weldon and Halifax County. There are ruins in the creek above the aqueduct, and the abutments further up of the old road bridge to Weldon. From the canal to US 158 on the far (E)

bank of the creek is a line of Civil War breastworks; a path should be cleared along it. Not far away, in the woods opposite 1022 1st. St. is a marker for the resting place of 100 Confederate soldiers. The area deserves some study.

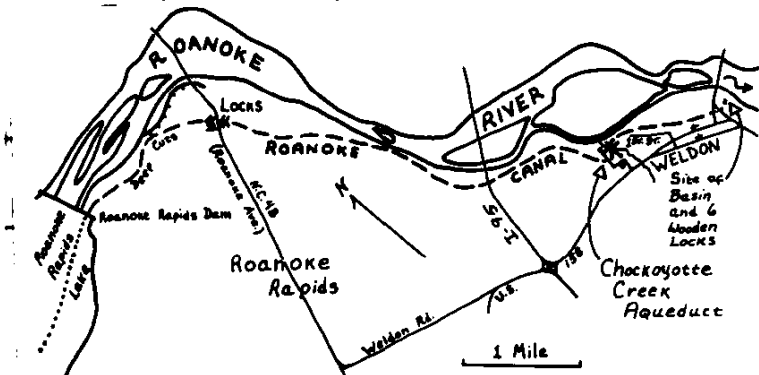
Follow US 158 through Weldon (one-way) around a hairpin turn, and stop at a large brick building on the far side of a large open park next the river on the right. This park may have been the canal basin, and the flight of 6 wooden locks to the river, which lasted less than a year in 1835, may have been behind the building where there is an abandoned hydro plant. Note the historic marker on US 158 on the way back through town.

Take US 158 and then Weldon Rd. west, following the signs to Roanoke Rapids, and then go N (R) on NC 48 down to the flood plain where there is an historic marker next the 2-lock staircase on the hillside, at Jackson St. (The other canal,

closer to the river and still watered, is a separate power canal.) This is a most impressive canal park, maintained by the city. Note the abandoned hydro plant. The other 2-lock staircase is across NC 48, under shrubbery and railway tracks, and will need extensive clearing.

The canal continues west through some deep cuts to Roanoke Rapids Dam, which has inundated the upper 2 miles. However, the remaining 7 miles is perfect for a hiking trail between the picnic area at the dam, and the park at the basin in Weldon, by way of the locks and the aqueduct. Only some brush clearing and a bypass around the quarry are needed to make this an important historical and scenic riverside trail.

For further information see "The Early Development of the Roanoke Waterway" by Dr. P.M. Rice in the North Carolina Historical Review, v.31 #1, Jan. 1954; and an unpublished essay with maps by W. Trout in the Weldon Public Library.



The Roanoke Canal Corridor

UNPUBLISHED RECORDS, PHOTOS, DRAWINGS (CEHR, HAER, HABS, Local or Regional Historical Societies, Libraries, etc.):

Above material from THE AMERICAN CANAL GUIDE Part 2, pp.1-2 (1975)

See also AMERICAN CANALS 4;5;16;1;19;5 and Roanoke Navigation Index Sheet and "The Roanoke Navigation: Taming the River of Death" by W.E. Trout, III, Journal of Rockingham Co. History & Genealogy, Oct.1978 (Box 84, Wentworth NC 27375, \$2.50).

EXISTING OR RECOMMENDED LANDMARK STATUS (CEHR, National Register, etc.):

Chockoyotte Aqueduct is now on the National Register and the building at the Roanoke Rapids locks is used as a playhouse. Entire canal should be on the Register and used as a hiking trail.

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DATE **27Sept81**

RETURN TO: **CANAL INDEX COMMITTEE, c/o P.H.STOTT, HAINES ROAD, MOUNT KISCO, NY 10549**