

AMERICAN CANALS

BULLETIN OF
THE AMERICAN CANAL SOCIETY

No. 103

Dedicated to Historic Canal Research, Preservation, and Parks

Autumn 1997

PRESIDENT'S LETTER NO. 1

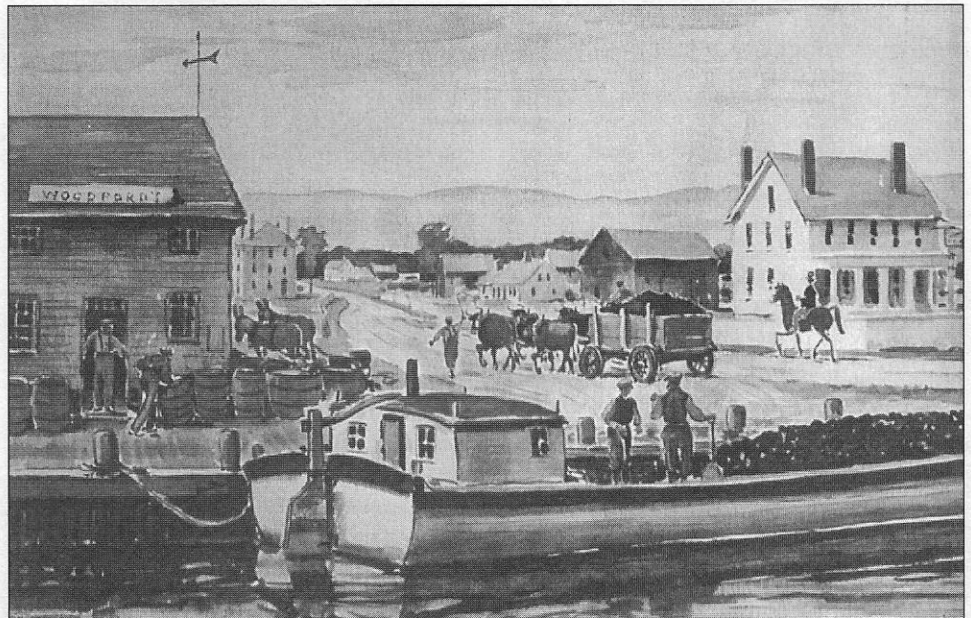
Greetings, I'm Terry Woods, and I'm honored to have been selected as the new president of the American Canal Society, only the fourth president in our over 25 years of existence. Our society is considered by many to be the premier canal-oriented society in the country. I want to thank the men who went before me, Bill Trout, Tom Hahn, and Bill Shank, for getting us to this point. Now it's up to us, all of us, to make our society even better and get us ready to leap into the 21st century.

My address appears elsewhere in this publication. I urge everyone to contact me by letter or phone and let me know what we can do to make the ACS even more of a byword throughout the country and continent. We'd like to be the first thought when any canal-oriented person or individual needs information, help, advice, or assistance about canal history, engineering, archeology, preservation, restoration, boating, hiking, et cetera.

I'd like you all to consider the ACS your organization. If possible, we'd like to run it your way, to achieve the goals you think should be pursued. But we need your input and help. I'll be getting a listing of our committees, their goals and accomplishments, and who is in them, in *American Canals* in the near future. If any of the committees appeal to you, as chairman or member, let me know. If you can think of a committee we need, but don't have, let me know. I don't expect every member of the ACS to be an active committee member, but I believe that every member who wants to be active in the ACS should have the opportunity to do so.

I'd like all of us to be inordinately proud of our society and publicize it whenever we get the chance. A sample news release was included with the Summer 1997 issue of *American Canals*. If you feel the urge to "blow our horn", please use it as a

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An 1840s barge moored at Woodford's Dock on the Farmington Canal in downtown Avon to unload coal for delivery to the Collins Company in Collinsville, Connecticut. Reproduced from a 1971 watercolor by R.J. Holden in the collection of the Canton Historical Society of Collinsville, by their permission. See the related article on pages 4 and 5, below.

basis for a publicity release about our society and its 25th birthday in your local papers.

Until next time-HEADWAY TO YOU!

A SALUTE TO BILL TROUT

There are those who think our departing president is named Dr. William E. Trout III—but are they sure? Would not a more likely name be Dr. Canal C. Canal?—for that is what he is and what he has been for the nearly thirty years that I have known him.

In the beginning of our friendship, when he worked as a research biologist in California, it seemed that he was far way from his home base of Virginia and its canals. But Bill cheerily (and perhaps correctly) pointed out that old Orange

County, Virginia extended to the Pacific Ocean! In his spare time, Bill researched canals on a global basis. In the U.S., his VW Beetle was a veritable canal research center. There are those who say that the canoe on top and the VW itself were occasionally replaced, but I would argue that they are both originals, never mind the year of manufacture.

Bill was not satisfied with just real canals. He could talk just as convincingly about the existence of the Rosewater Canal in Indiana or the Martian Canals. Interestingly, recently on PBS I heard a national expert on space exploration say that one reason Congress could count on the American public to support research on Mars was because in the imagination of many there is a need to explore Mars just to see if its canals really exist.

Dr. Trout readily agreed to and became immersed in our endeavor (along with Bill

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Page One

American Canals

BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN CANAL SOCIETY

Editor: **David F. Ross**

Contributing Editors: **David G. Barber**
Bruce J. Russell
Address

For memberships, subscriptions, change of address, and other business matters:

c/o Charles W. Derr, 117 Main St.,
Freemansburg PA 18017.

For editorial matters:

c/o David F. Ross, 840 Rinks Ln., Savannah
TN 38372-6774.

The objectives of the American Canal Society are to encourage the preservation, restoration, interpretation, and use of the historical navigational canals of the Americas; to save threatened canals; and to provide an exchange of canal information. Manuscripts and other correspondence consistent with these objectives are welcome.

Annual subscription to **American Canals** is automatic with A.C.S. Membership. Annual dues: \$20.00. Single copies \$3.00. Four issues per year. Copyright© 1997 by the American Canal Society. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America.

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(Concluded From Page One)

Shank) to form the American and international canal societies sometime prior to 1972. Bill wins hands down the Spartan Award of canal enthusiast for his intrepid interest in and research on canals in the United States and everywhere.

It has been my pleasure to have worked with Bill through the years. I hope we have his presence to grace our inland waterways for many years to come. After all, "Old rivermen never die, they just drift away."

Tom Hahn

CANAL CALENDAR

December 6. Annual Frostbite Hike, C&O Canal, 10 a.m., Violets Lock to the Cutting Mill above Seneca. Contact: Ken Rollins, 804-448-2934, or Sonny DeForge, 301-530-8830.

March 14, 1998. 17th annual Canal History and Technology Symposium, William E. Simon Center for Economics and Business Administration, Lafayette College, Easton, Pa. Contact: National Canal Museum, 610-559-6613.

March 22-27, 1998. Elderhostel: "Historic Development of the I&M Canal," Illinois Valley Community College, Starved Rock State Park, Ill. For details call Elderhostel at 617-426-8056.

April 18-June 28, 1998. "Prairie Passage," a photo exhibit celebrating the 150-year-old Illinois & Michigan Canal, Chicago Cultural Center. Contact: Christine V. Esposito, Canal Corridor Assn., 312-427-3688.

June 1998. 6 to 8 day trip to Nova Scotia at mid-month, visiting Shubenacadie Canal, St. Peters Canal, and other sites. Contact: Carol Gaspari, Canadian Canal Society, 905-934-0453.

September 1998. Canal Society of New Jersey tour of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal in northern England. Early registration advised. Contact: Bill McKelvey, 103 Dogwood Ln. Berkeley Heights, N.J. 07822, phone 908-464-9335.

Week of September 14, 1998. World Canals Conference, 11th annual meeting, and A.C.S. membership and directors meeting. Holiday Inn Express, Joliet, IL. Papers invited. Contact: Lee Hanson, I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor, 15701 S. Independence Blvd., Lockport, IL 60441, phone (815) 740-2047.

DEADLINE. Items for the next (Winter 1998) Canal Calendar must be on the editor's desk by 2 January 1998.

Back to the United Kingdom in 1998

CANALS, STEAMBOATS, STEAM RAILWAYS, AND TRAMS

Starting mid-to-late September 1998

Tour leader: Captain Bill McKelvey

The tenth European canal tour of the Canal Society of New Jersey will be on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal in northern England, a lovely area of rolling hills and dales. Tentative plans call for 14 days on our own boats and visits to many sites, including steam-train and steamboat rides and several museums. We will see the annual "Illuminations" from double-decker trolleys in Blackpool; the National Railway Museum and other sites in York; and the National Tramway Museum. Other sites are under consideration including an optional three-day

visit to the beautiful Isle of Man for several unusual rail-related rides.

Off-season rates should help keep the tentative cost down to \$2,000 per person. This includes air fare, boat rentals, hotels, admission to attractions, and bus rentals. A deposit of \$500 per person should accompany application, with the priorities for the go and standby lists based on the order in which deposits are received. Send your check, payable to the Canal Society of New Jersey, to Bill McKelvey, 103 Dogwood Lane, Berkeley Hts., NJ 07922-2327. The second payment of \$1,000 per person is due on February 1st, 1998, and the final payment of \$500 per person on May 1st, 1998.

Nonmembers must join the society to go on this trip. Send a separate check for \$15 to membership chairperson Marilyn Craine, 464 Prospect St., Nutley, NJ 07110.

AMERICAN CANAL SOCIETY

President: Terry K. Woods, 6939 Eastham Cor., Canton, OH 44708. (330) 832-4621

Vice President: William E. Gerber, 16 Princess Ave., N. Chelmsford, MA 01863. (508) 251-4971. email bill_gerber@bmugbos.org
William J. McKelvey, Jr., 103 Dogwood Ln., Berkeley Hgts., NJ 07922. (908) 464-9335.

Secretary/Treasurer: Charles W. Derr, 117 Main St., Freemansburg, PA 18017. (610) 691-0956 email deruls@aol.com

Directors: David G. Barber, 16 Ballou Rd., Hopedale, MA 01747. (508) 478-4918 email davidaudreybarber@compuserve.com
Robert Barth, P.O. Box 2552, Branchville, NJ 07826. (973) 875-1508
John Burtiak, P.O. Box 304, Thorold, Ont. L2V 3Z3.

Nancy Dunnivant, 7563 Sambar Rd., Chesterfield, VA 23832-6628

Thomas X. Grasso, 561 E. Brook Lane, Rochester, NY 14618-5222.

Thomas F. Hahn, Box 310, Shepherdstown, WV 25443. email @swifhahn@aol.com

T. Gibson Hobbs, Jr., 3204 Landon St., Lynchburg, VA 24503.

David M. Johnson, 9211 Wadsworth Drive, Bethesda, MD 20817.

Frederica Kleist, 528 W. Cook St., Portage, WI 53901.

Keith W. Kroon, 2240 Ridgeway Ave., Rochester, NY 14626.

John M. Lamb, 1109 Garfield Street, Lockport, IL 60441.

Lance E. Metz, 30 Center Sq., Easton, PA 18042. (610) 559-6613.

David F. Ross, 840 Rinks Ln., Savannah, TN 38372-6774. (901) 925-0099.

William H. Shank, 809 Rathton Rd., York, PA 17403. (717) 843-4035.

Roger W. Squires, 46 Elephant Lane, Rotherhithe, London SE16 4JD, England (171) 232-0987.

Arthur W. Sweeton III, 6 Humphrey Rd., Canton Center, CT 06020. (860) 693-4027.

Dr. William E. Trout III, 35 Towana Rd., Richmond, VA 23226. (804) 288-1334.

Denver L. Walton, 968 Chapel Rd., Monaca, PA 15061. (412) 774-8129.

Committees:

A.C.S. Sales, Keith W. Kroon, chrmn., Canal Archaeology, Mark Newell chrmn., Georgia Archaeological Institute, P.O. Box 984, Augusta, GA 30901.

Canal Boat, William J. McKelvey, Jr. chrmn
Canal Engineering Design, John M. Lamb, chrmn.

Canal Operations and Maintenance, Charles W. Derr, chrmn.

Canal Parks, Elizabeth L. Hahn, chrmn., 106 Horace Greeley Rd., Amherst, NH 03031.

Historic American Canals Survey, William Dzombak, chrmn., 621 Spring St., Latrobe, PA 15650.

Internet, Mark Newell, chrmn.

Navigable Canals, David F. Ross, chrmn.

Other publications: *The Best from American Canals*,

William H. Shank, editor and publisher.

American Canal Guides,

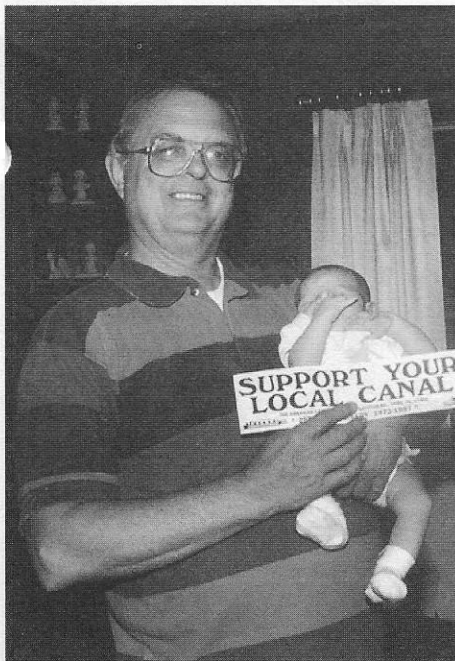
William E. Trout III, editor and publisher.

Web page address:

www.blacksheep.org/canals/ACS/acs.html

Meet Your New President TERRY K. WOODS

Terry Woods, who became president of the American Canal Society in October 1997, is a native of Canton, Ohio. Although he declines to give his age for publication, he admits to having been born there on March 2nd, 1937. His interest in canals goes back almost that far, to the mid-1940s, when his grandfather took him fishing in the Lock #4 area of the Ohio & Erie Canal. He graduated from Canton Timken Vocational High School in 1955, and worked as a carpenter for a couple of years before realizing that college education might make it possible for him to earn a living with less exposure to the rigors of northern winters. He graduated from Ohio State University in 1962 as a B.S. in Mechanical Engineering and a 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Ordnance Corps. He returned to civilian life in 1964 and, after trying out a few other employers, settled down to work for Goodyear Tire and Rubber.



A.C.S. president Terry Woods with the newest member of his support group.

Terry has been married to Rosanne McFarland Woods since 1966. The couple have five children and one (almost new) grandchild, shown in the above illustration. Rosanne heads the basic Adult Literacy Program in Massillon, Ohio, and recently won the nomination of the Greater Canton Chamber of Commerce for Teacher of the Year.

Terry has explored the rewatered sections of the Ohio & Erie and Sandy & Beaver

canals by rubber raft, and has traveled extensively by other means in the eastern United States and Europe. He has been active in both the Ohio and Pennsylvania canal societies, and became a charter member of the A.C.S. in 1972. He has been a director since 1974, and has served as chairman of the Canal Indexing Committee; he is now chairman of the Canal Engineering Design Committee.

For several years, a number of Ohio newspapers carried a column on canal history and lore by Terry Woods. Although no longer facing weekly deadlines, he continues to produce a steady flow of articles, and also has two books on canal history in print. He has helped to build replicas of Ohio & Erie canal boats, and has been a consultant to the National Park Service in connection with its Canal Boat Building Museum in Boston, Ohio, as well as to the universities of Akron and Kent State on canal history. He is a frequent speaker at canal-oriented events throughout the eastern United States. For relaxation, he writes science fiction and mystery stories.

Responding to his selection as the new president of A.C.S., Terry says, "Thank you. I'll try to do a good job helping the American Canal Society leap into the 21st Century, and I hope we all have a good time doing it." Further insights concerning his plans and program can be derived from his inaugural President's message, elsewhere in this issue.

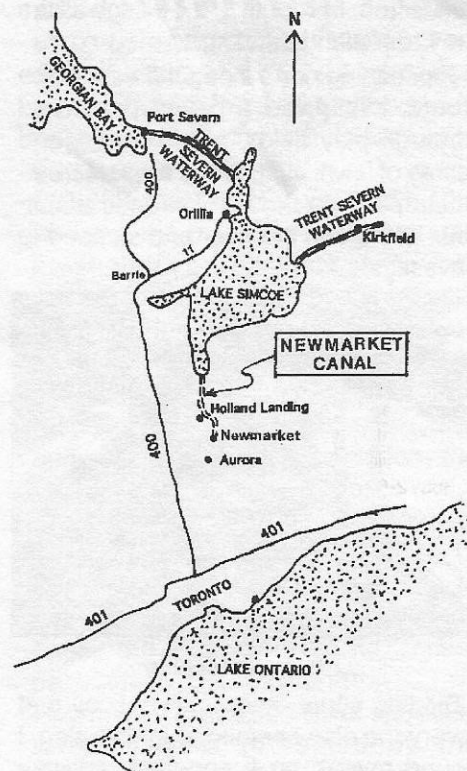
THE NEWMARKET CANAL

by David G. Barber

In *A Respectable Ditch*, the history of Ontario's Trent Severn Waterway, James T. Angus has a chapter on "Mulock's Madness" which is the story of the Newmarket Canal. This canal was a political pork-barrel project and was planned to run south from Lake Simcoe through Newmarket to Aurora. Aurora is near the watershed divide between Lake Simcoe and Lake Ontario, north of Toronto.

This project was built simultaneously with the Trent River Division near Kingston, Ontario. For camouflage purposes, its funding was lumped in with that of the Trent River Division. Apparently, the public was not aware of what was planned until lock construction began on the Newmarket portion. However, once this occurred, the project was very visible to travelers, as the Canadian Na-

tional Railway's main line route west from Toronto is close to the sites. Today, VIA



Rail's Canadian passes within sight of the remains.

From the account, the project was divided into three sections following the East Branch of the Holland River. The first, from Lake Simcoe south to Holland Landing, was a dredged channel at lake level, and was completed and is in use today. The second section extended further south into the village of Newmarket, and involved 3 locks and four swing bridges. This section was completed up to just short of installing gates on the locks. The third section, to Aurora, was planned with seven more locks, but the design was never completed. The project was abandoned in 1912 after a change in federal governments.

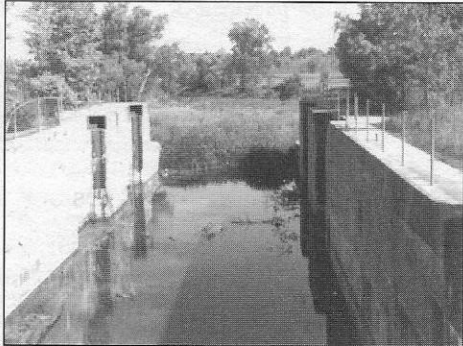
One interesting part of the story is that there is little water available at the proposed summit, and plans for reservoirs were canceled after pressure against the land-taking required, but before lock construction began. Thus active construction began on a canal with no water supply.

Intrigued by the story and being able to arrange extra time during a trip to Toronto, I went to see what might remain.

Beginning in Newmarket, I found a large municipal parking lot in the center of the village where the basin apparently had been. Both north and south of this, park lands extended along the river, appar

ently the descendents of the land purchases for the canal. This park land extends from the south of the village all the way to Holland Landing.

Proceeding north along the east of the route, I followed a paved park road through play fields, picnic areas, and acres of lawn. Just before a waste treatment plant on the left, I noticed a curious rise along the river and stopped to investigate.



Lock 3, looking north

Skirting some "keep out" notices that everyone else seemed to ignore also, I found myself on a concrete spillway structure with concrete Lock 3 at its west end. Both parts of the structure were intact with the river above and below shallow, overgrown, and reed filled.

The lock itself had the remains of a steel frame, wood-faced drop gate at its upper end. The chamber had several sets of gate pockets to allow less water to be used when locking smaller craft. The quoins were steel lined and bollards were on the walls. There was no sign of the miter gates or operating machinery. The floor of the lock was watered. The design lift was eleven feet.

Along the west side of the lock was a well-used dirt bike path that apparently extends from Newmarket to Lock 2.

Continuing north by road, I had to make a big loop to the east through a housing development, but then recrossed the valley on a secondary road. This road had a restricted-weight bridge over the channel which turned out to be the only remaining pivot bridge of the four built. The channel above and below the bridge was shallow and overgrown. A parking and picnic area was on the northwest side of the bridge with the bike path extending through it.

CORRECTION

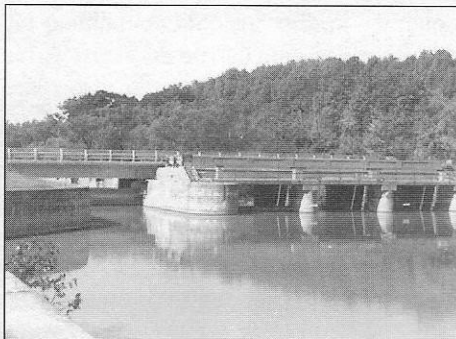
Our note concerning a magazine story about Roscoe Village in the Summer 1997 issue wrongly placed that Ohio & Erie Canal community on the Miami & Erie Canal. We apologize for this inexplicable error.



The only remaining swing bridge

After the bridge, I continued west, crossed the railroad, and then turned north on the first main road, paralleling the river. Soon this road descended a hill, crossed the railroad, and then crossed the river which curved west here. The highway bridge went right across the chamber of Lock 2 and then a spillway structure.

Lock 2 and the spillway were intact except that the former swing bridge just upstream of the lock had been replaced by a concrete bridge over the upper end of the lock and the lock's upper end was plugged by a concrete dam. In contrast to the other two locks, the pool above Lock 2 was flooded and used as a nature preserve.



Lock and dam 2 from above

Above the lock, a concrete-walled peninsula extended into the pool above to guide boats into the chamber. The floor of the chamber was silted in and dry. The stream flowing over the spillway continued west as a shallow, overgrown stream. In the upper end of the chamber, low concrete walls had been added to serve as a stilling weir for water exiting filling tunnels, the outlets of which were visible. Again the design lift of the lock was 11 feet.

Continuing north on the highway, I went uphill and came to an intersection, with a traffic light, where signs indicated Holland Landing to the left. Turning left here, I followed this road across the plateau and then downhill to an intersection with

another north-south road. Just to the left, this road crossed the chamber of Lock 1 on a modern concrete bridge. A small parking area was on the left, just before the intersection and adjacent to the lock.

Lock 1 was intact with the stream flowing through the chamber. Silting of the stream below had left mud flats that made it easy to get a lower view with access down the lock stairs. At the upper end of the lock were remains of the pivot for the former bridge. There were no signs of a spillway structure here, but the dikes to form a pool above were intact. The pool itself was dry pasture land except for a narrow stream. The land of the pool was fenced and posted. In the pool were the remains of part of the upper approach wall. Design lift of this lock was 20 feet.

Below Lock 1, the stream continued shallow and silted in to a point near the cross road. From there it was dredged to the north at the level of Lake Simcoe. At this road were numerous boat docks.

FARMINGTON CANAL BUS TOUR

by Arthur W. Sweeton III

Connecticut residents and canal fans thoroughly enjoyed a guided tour, by bus, of the remains of the Connecticut portion of the Farmington Canal, April 19th, 1997. This was the first of six bus tours to accommodate the flood of persons responding to the announcement of one modest tour. The sponsor was the Farmington Valley Visitors Association, with support of a grant from The Connecticut Humanities Council, Inc.

The bus tour of Farmington Canal sites was preceded by a series of three lectures (January 23, February 20, and March 20, 1997) held at Plainville, Farmington, and Simsbury, respectively, to show and tell of each locality's portion of the canal. The lecturers were Carl Walter and Ruth Hummel. The planners of the series had estimated a registration (at a \$7.00 fee) of thirty persons, more or less; they were overwhelmed by over three hundred registrants.

Carl Walter has been studying intensively the abandoned Farmington Canal, from New Haven, Connecticut to Northampton, Massachusetts, for twenty years, hiking over one hundred miles in his interest to locate, photograph, and understand the waterway and its feeder canals. In 1991, he began a systematic

study of the whole canal, and is currently working on an interactive computer program, compiling a wealth of information available in the fourteen canal towns of Connecticut and Massachusetts. Carl offered insight into why and how the canal was built, and the working of this 1828-to-1848 waterway.

Construction of the Farmington Canal was started in 1825. It started operating over the southern portion to Farmington in 1828. It was gradually completed to the Connecticut River at Northampton by two companies, one in Connecticut and one in Massachusetts.

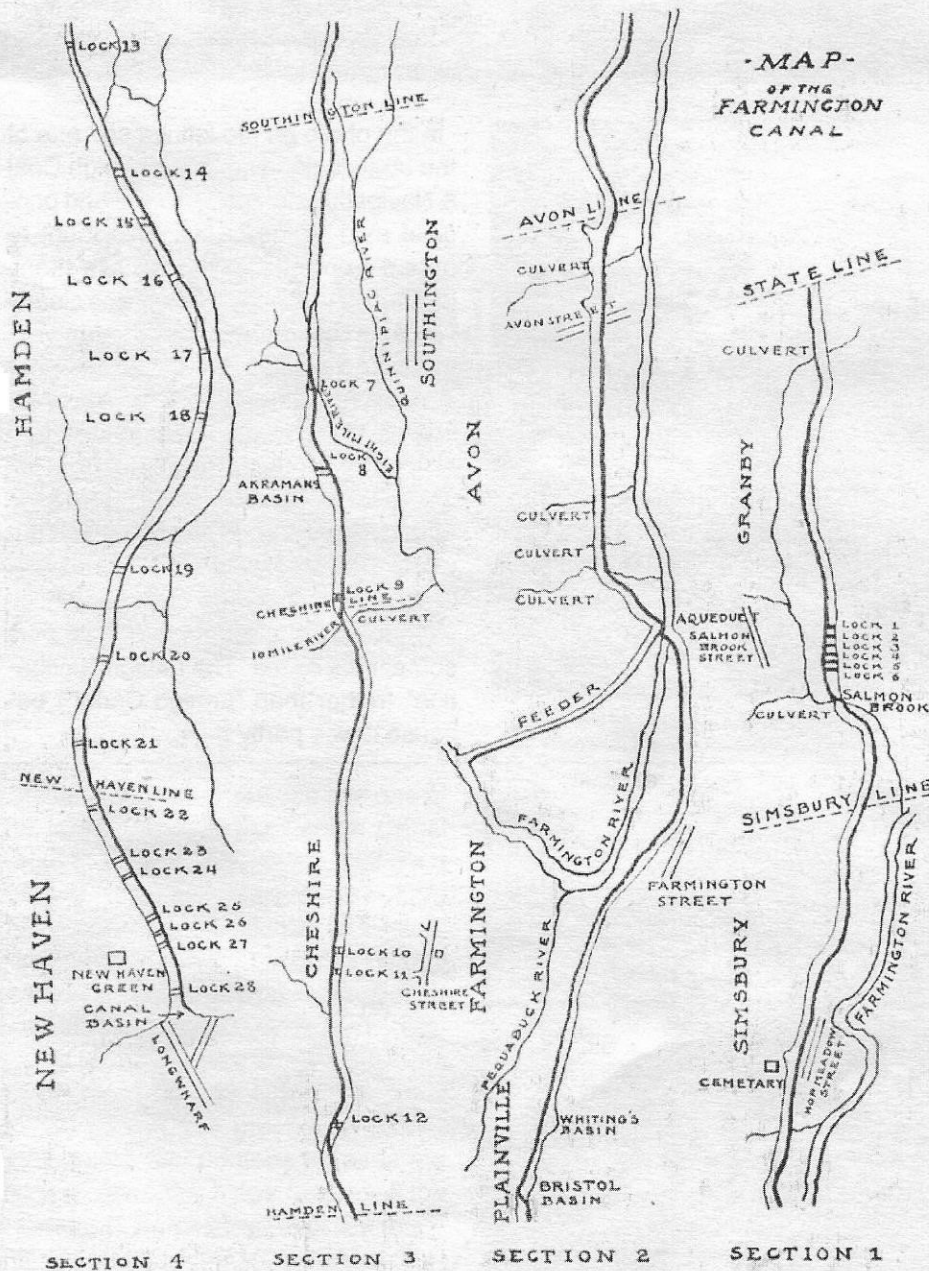
New Haven, Hamden, Cheshire, Southington, Avon, Simsbury, Granby, and Suffield, and the Massachusetts towns of Southwick, Westfield, Southampton, East Hampton, and Northampton. The canal served reasonably well only two decades, until 1848, when the Canal Railroad replaced it with further-improved transportation for the same sectors of Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Ruth Hummel, the collector, is president of the Plainville Historic Society and Plainville Town Naturalist/Historian. She brought flesh to the bones of canal history as she described the life of the horses, the people, and the boats that made the Farmington Canal run in those

lusty, colorful, and exciting two decades. Humorous and illuminating tales added interest to her presentations, which were based on her studies of old diaries, letters, maps, and records during her twenty-five years of research, writing, and lecturing on the Farmington Canal.

After the preparation provided by the lectures, the bus tours completed the presentation. The tours were well guided and interpreted by Carl Walter and Ruth Hummel. Much of the trip was along Route 10, the College Highway (New Haven to Northampton), which roughly parallels the Farmington Canal and its successor transportation, the Canal Railroad. Many glimpses of the canal were pointed out and described. Visits were made to: restored Lock 12 in Cheshire; Norton Park, Plainville, to see a restored watered section of the canal; the Plainville Historic Center, particularly the Farmington Canal Room; the Farmington River aqueduct remains, now protected by the Farmington Land Trust; the center of Avon, to visit canal exhibits at the Living Museum (an old school preserved by the Avon Historical Society); a watered canal section restored by the developer of "Canal Place" residences in Simsbury; and remains of a brownstone masonry culvert under the canal on Ensign-Bickford property, where the manufacture of safety fuse, a Simsbury industry since 1836, is now carried out. Lunch was at the Massacoh Plantation, a complex of nine historic buildings at the Simsbury town center. Next we visited the high canal fill near Lake Basile, Simsbury, and the Hungary Brook section of Granby, and walked along the canal towpath to the Connecticut-Massachusetts state line. Here everyone enjoyed a surprise reenactment of the original ground-breaking ceremony of July 4th, 1825, when Governor Wolcott started construction by digging the first shovelful of earth (breaking the shovel).

Tour-planning credit belongs to members of the Plainville Historic Center, Farmington Historical Society, Stanley Whitman House, Avon Historical Society, Simsbury Historical Society, and Salmon Brook Historical Society of Granby. Everyone agreed it was a most interesting and informative tour.



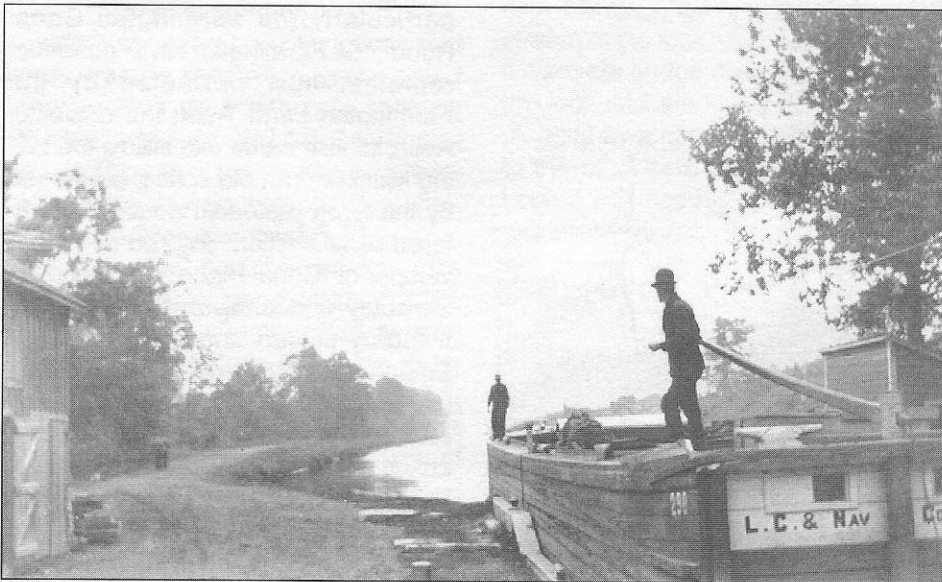
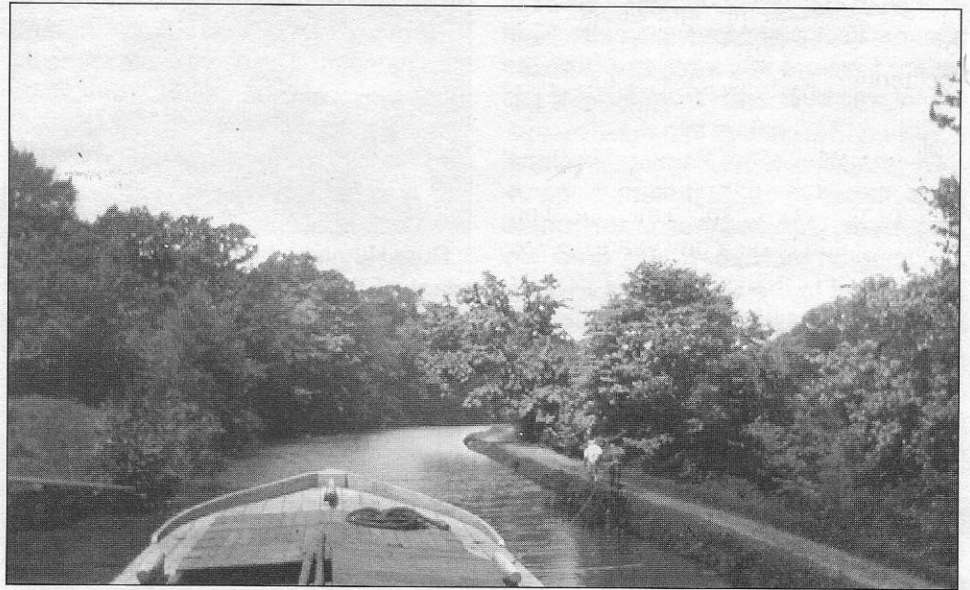
The Connecticut portion of the Farmington Canal from an early map furnished by Carl Walter

1920's VIEWS OF THE LEHIGH CANAL

By Walter Meseck and Bruce Russell

[A group of photographs taken in or around 1925 by the late Walter Meseck, a frequent contributor to *American Canals*, recently came to light in our files. Contributing Editor Bruce Russell has made this selection and provided the running commentary.]

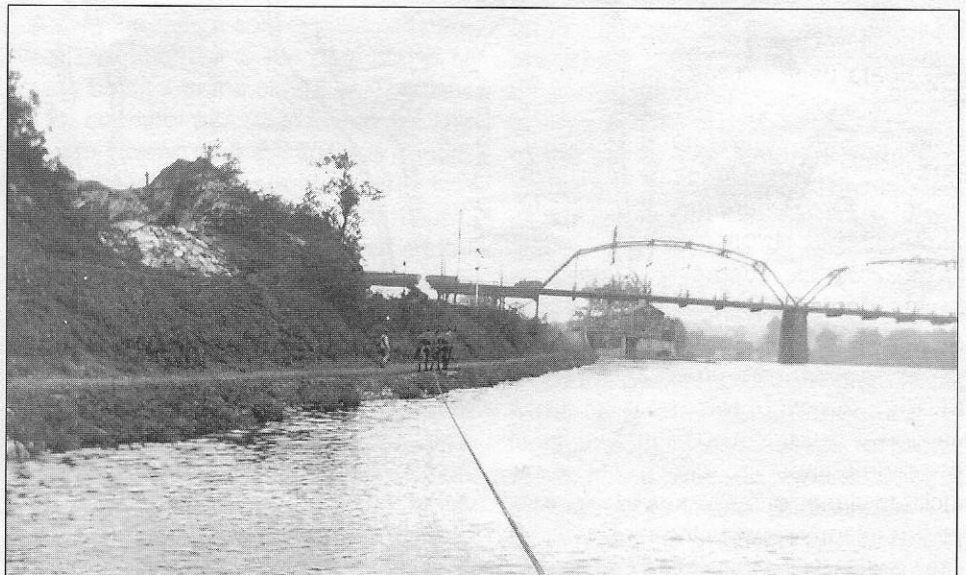
The photograph to the right, taken from the roof of a Lehigh Canal boat, clearly illustrates the tranquility along the waterway, which consisted of a combination of man-made canal (as here) and slack-water segments of the Lehigh River. The principal commodity carried was anthracite coal. In the distance on the right the two-mule team can be seen on the towpath.



In the photo on the left we see one of the boats belonging to the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company, owner and principal user of the canal. It is about to depart from one of the canal's many locks. The company's lettering is clearly visible on the stern of the wooden vessel.

Boats were loaded from a gravity railway at White Haven, Pennsylvania, and pulled by mule 72 miles to Easton, where there was a connection with the Morris Canal east to New York and the Delaware Canal south to Philadelphia. Both of the latter were entirely artificial canals, unlike the Lehigh, which was sometimes called "The Lehigh Navigation" (rather than "Lehigh Canal") because it was partly river.

In the view to the right, somewhere along the Lehigh Canal, two things are obvious. One is that two mules at the far left are having no difficulty moving the boat along. A loaded boat would carry about 150 tons of coal. It was probably covering about five miles per hour, or less. Secondly, this portion of the waterway is what's known as slack-water navigation. Instead of an artificial ditch, the canal at this point is the actual Lehigh River with the towpath alongside it. By constructing a dam, with an associated lock, the engineers converted this stretch of river from a fast-moving stream to a pond.



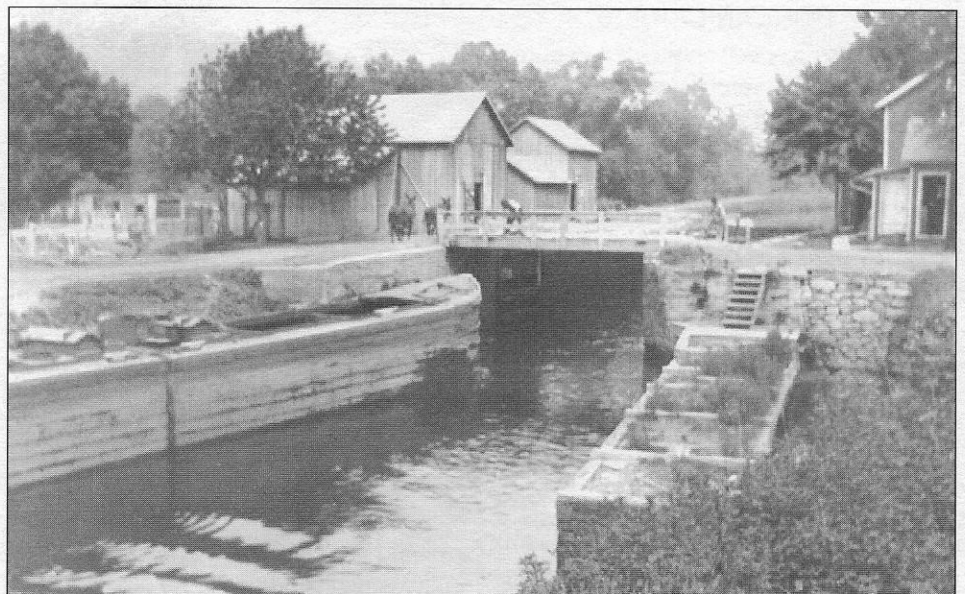
In the photo on the right we see one of the boats inside a lock. The locktender, with his back to the camera, is adjusting the wicket gates controlling the flow of water into or out of the chamber. By 1925, business on the waterway was probably a microfraction of what it had been many years earlier, and the final closure of 1931 wasn't far away. On the right can be seen the modest dwelling of the locktender. Following closure of the Lehigh Canal, some of the tenders continued living in these houses. Another view of a typical Lehigh Canal locktender's house appears in the picture below.



At no point during its life from 1829 until 1931 did the Lehigh Canal rely upon any means of locomotion except mules. In the view on the left we see a mule boy and two of his animals. The lad would lead the two animals along the towpath beside the waterway. These canal boys worked from dawn until dusk, seven days a week, from mid-March to early December, when ice closed the canal for the season.

An authentic replica of a two-story Lehigh Canal mule barn is under construction opposite Lock 44 in Freemansburg. A.C.S. officer Charlie Derr is site coordinator.

In the view on the right, we see one of the boats used on the Lehigh Canal about to enter a lock. Notice that it's a "hinged" type, consisting of two separate vessels hinged together. At Easton, Pennsylvania, where the Lehigh Canal terminated, boats often continued eastward across New Jersey to Jersey City via the Morris Canal. Because the locks on the Morris were shorter than those on the Lehigh, the procedure was to unhinge the two portions for separate locking. Also, the hinge facilitated the passage of these boats over the many inclined planes of the Morris Canal. This picture clearly depicts the hinge.



THE SAVANNAH AND OGEECHEE CANAL

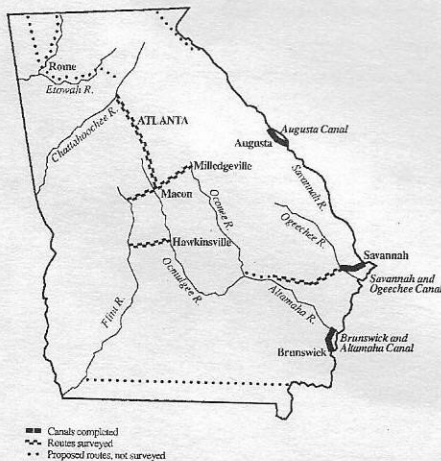
by Mark Finlay

One of the prime relics of the history of southern canals is the Savannah and Ogeechee Canal in Georgia. Beginning with a tidal lock at the Savannah River, the waterway continues through four lift locks as it traverses 16.5 miles, before reaching another tidal lock at the Ogeechee River.¹ Along the way, the canal passes through Savannah's nineteenth-century industrial corridor, former rice fields, timber tracts, and a lush tidal river swamp and adjacent sandhill environment that is the habitat for several unusual species of flora and fauna. Efforts are currently underway to restore and rehabilitate this important piece of America's canal history.

Until recently, little had been known about the canal's history. Virtually every history of this waterway emphasizes its commercial failures, stressing that it was sold at a sheriff's auction in 1836, just five years after its opening. Yet despite frequent adversity, the Savannah and Ogeechee Canal remained an active waterway into the 1890s.

At about the same time that the construction of the Erie Canal sparked nationwide enthusiasm for canals and other internal improvement projects, canal fever also reached its peak in Georgia. Settlement and cotton planting in middle Georgia was increasing rapidly, stimulating demand for improved transportation systems and access to markets. Local supporters envisioned a vast canal system that would link

THE CANAL ERA IN GEORGIA, 1820-1850



the Savannah, Ogeechee, and Altamaha river systems, each of which empties into the Atlantic Ocean, with the Flint and Chattahoochee river systems, both of which empty into the Gulf of Mexico. They hoped the canal could provide access to the rapidly growing settlement of the hinterlands, and lure Ogeechee and Altamaha river traffic away from rival ports in south Georgia at Darien and Brunswick. The intended link with the Altamaha was vitally important. While the Ogeechee is a rather minor river that largely drains the piney woods of southeast Georgia, the Altamaha, formed from the confluence of the Oconee and Ocmulgee, drains the counties of middle Georgia that were the heart of Georgia's cotton country.

Early steps were more modest, however. In 1824, the state granted a charter to build a canal between the Savannah and the Ogeechee rivers to Ebenezer Jenckes, a local turnpike owner. One year later, his charter was extended to permit a further section to reach the Altamaha.

In 1825 and 1826, nearly all news concerning the canal was good. During these early years, Savannah's newspapers aggressively promoted the project with a rhetoric of republicanism and self-help. Supporters claimed the canal would bring countless benefits and even surpass the profits of the New York canals. They predicted the canal would attract a huge trade in cotton, provide plentiful timber that would reduce lumber costs by one third, and generate enough trade with the West Indies to make Savannah the leading port of the South. Promoters even promised that the "climate will be modified, for the swamps will be drained, the forests cleared & the country more open to sea breezes." Thanks to these secondary benefits, Savannahians claimed the canal would still be worth its costs even if it produced no profits.

In the summer of 1825, Jenckes traveled to New York to meet with De Witt Clinton, governor of New York and the Erie Canal's famous champion. Governor Clinton recommended his twenty-year-old son, De Witt Clinton Jr., for the job. After arriving in Savannah in December 1825, Clinton soon found himself in the midst of several controversies. Many questioned his age, experience, style, and recommendations. Notably, the company never followed his suggestion that a sixteen-mile-long feeder canal be used to guarantee an adequate water supply; for decades thereafter, many Savannahians recognized the failure to follow Clinton's advice as a short-sighted mistake. In March 1827, Clinton suddenly resigned as engineer, apparently under unpleasant circumstances. Other engineers with northern canal experience worked on the Georgia project, including Daniel Van Slyke, E.H. Gill, and Alfred Cruger.

STANTON'S NAVY

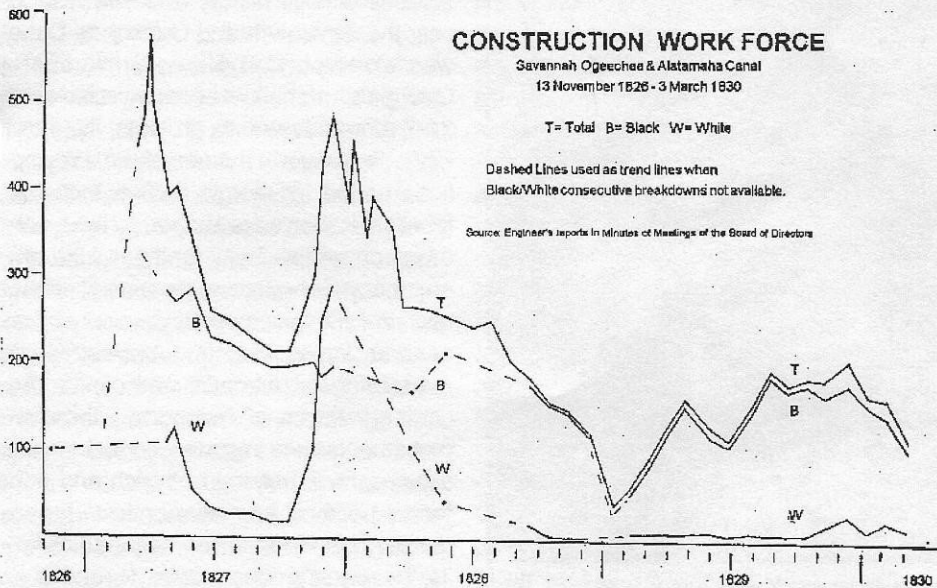
[An imaginative use of canal boats was the inspiration for one of Abraham Lincoln's imaginative similes. Agnes Dzombak has adapted the following account from *Lincoln Talks: An Oral Biography* (New York: 1986, first published in 1939). The volume was edited by Emanuel Hertz and published by Bramhall House, and this material is used with their permission.]

During the Civil War, Secretary of War Stanton was afraid that the Confederate iron-clad ship, the *Merrimac*, would venture up the Potomac River and bombard the city of Washington. The Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Wells, assured Stanton that the *Merrimac* would not be able to navigate over the shoals in the Potomac River. Mr. Stanton, nevertheless, ordered the army to load sixty canal boats with stones and anchor them in the river, ready to be sunk to block the channel and so protect the city from an assault by the *Merrimac*. For several weeks, the boats were seen swinging at anchor, waiting for an alarm that was not sounded. When President Lincoln and a group of friends passed the flotilla of canal boats, someone in the party asked "What are the boats for?" Lincoln answered, "Oh, that's Stanton's navy. Stanton's navy is as useless as the paps of a man to a sucking child. They may be some show to amuse the child but good for nothing in service."

SUBMITTING MANUSCRIPTS TO AMERICAN CANALS

American Canals is interested in publishing material from people who have knowledge about canals, not just from people who are sufficiently affluent to employ professional typists. Hence, unlike most other periodicals, we do not require that material be submitted in a particular format.

However, if you are preparing material specifically for submission to *American Canals*, we do ask that it be at least double spaced, on one side of the paper only, and with generous margins. Your editor and typesetter will both live longer, and commit fewer acts of random violence, to the extent that contributors follow these suggested guidelines.



In the ensuing years, the canal company faced countless hurdles, and the optimism that surrounded the project's beginning had evaporated. Costs continually exceeded the cash on hand, and disputes among engineers, major contractors, subcontractors, the board of directors, and stockholders became remarkably common. Countless investors, including the city of Savannah, were delinquent on stock payments, and about two thirds of the outstanding stock was abandoned altogether. Contractors decided to cut corners, which only led to further delays. At this time, the canal company changed its construction program in important ways, turning increasingly to local planters as subcontractors. As a result, many who owned lands along the canal prospered even before the canal was completed. While slaves received no pay for their labors, the system of leasing slaves permitted investors in the canal company to recoup an immediate return and to generate income in a region starved for capital.

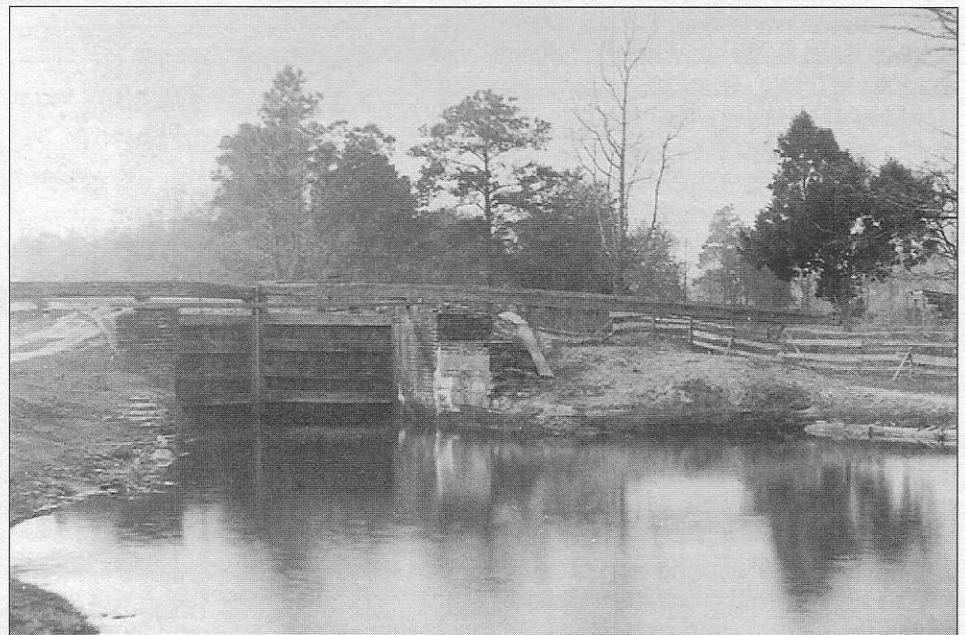
Though records are scant, the history of the canal workers seems an especially compelling story. At its peak in March 1827, the workforce reached 577, the majority of whom were African-American slaves. Some of these slave workers were female. Immigrant Irish laborers also contributed their labor. For over four years, these workers cut timber, cleared paths, built embankments, and constructed locks in the heat, humidity, and pathogenic environment of the Georgia low country. There are also hints of labor unrest when contractors tried to withhold payments to the Irish immigrants.

Finally, in December 1830, workers had completed the sixteen-mile route that linked the Savannah and the Ogeechee Rivers, at a cost of about \$190,000. Despite the promises, however, the canal suffered from numerous problems during these early years. Minutebook records reveal that virtually every board meeting between 1831 and 1835 dealt with placating creditors, seeking funds, and making repairs. By the mid-1830's, the canal suffered from rotten locks, breached embankments, and other technical problems. Just a few years after the canal had opened, even its supporters admitted it was "now but an imperfect affair," while others commonly described it as "the Folly." Moreover, railroad fever had replaced canal fever; the Central of Geor-

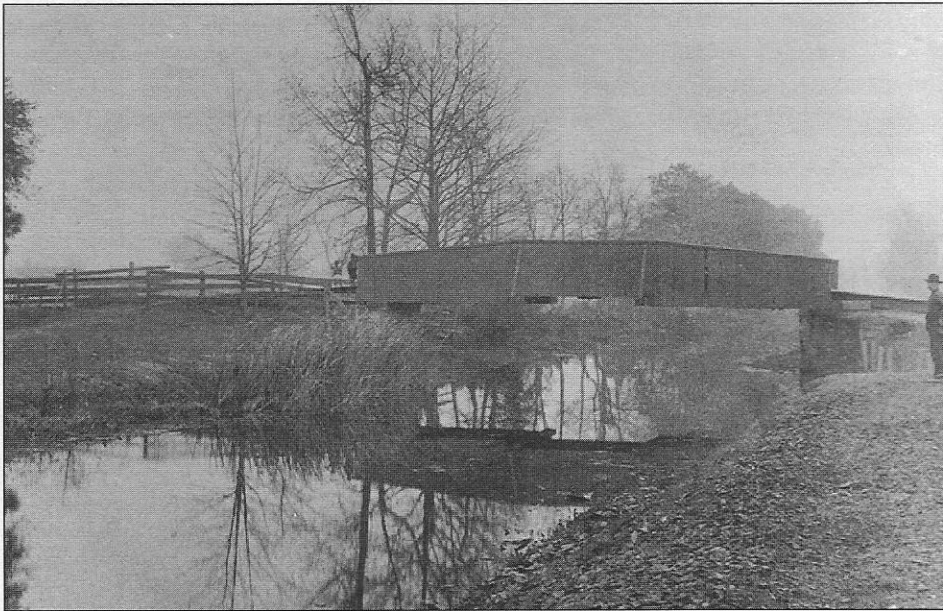
gia Railroad, chartered in 1833, attracted investors who were disgruntled with the canal. Bankrupt, the canal was sold at a sheriff's sale for a fraction of its value in 1836.

Yet the Savannah and Ogeechee Canal did not die from neglect, nor was it killed by the railroad. Instead, its new management revived the canal by replacing the three wooden locks with brick ones, deepening the channel, reworking the embankments and improving the tow-path. By the 1840s and 1850s, the reborn canal was an important element in the south Georgia economy. The canal's impact on the area's lumber trade was especially dramatic as Savannah boasted one of the nation's largest sawmills along the canal basin. Cotton, rice, bricks, guano, naval stores, peaches, and other goods also were shipped by canal, which served as a lifeline for the brickyards, foundries, wharves, and other enterprises on Savannah's westside—most of which relied on industrial slavery for their labor. By the 1850s, the canal company was prosperous, and routinely paid dividends to its investors.

The canal remained operational during most of the Civil War. It lay directly on the route of Sherman's March to the Sea, however, and in December 1864 the canal was the scene of several skirmishes between Union and Confederate soldiers. The canal suffered much damage as a result; banks were cut, lock gates were damaged, trees and other obstructions blocked the channel, and Sherman's troops seized many canal boats for their own operations.



Lock #2, Savannah-Ogeechee Canal, about 1885
Photo courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society



Magazine Avenue bridge over the Savannah-Ogeechee Canal, about 1885
Photo courtesy of the Georgia Historical Society

Yet by March 1866, repairs were made, the canal was fully operational again, and prosperity returned for the canal company. New lumberyards, brickyards, and industries located along the canal basin.

Later in the nineteenth century, the canal suffered a gradual decline rather than a sudden death. As loggers depleted east Georgia's timber resources, the industry moved westward beyond the reach of Savannah's canal. 1876 was a turning point. In June, heavy rains seriously damaged canal embankments and the company suspended operations. The rains were also linked to an even more serious crisis—a yellow fever epidemic in which over 1,000 perished. For the next several years, the canal was as much a public health issue as a commercial one. Public officials suspected that the canal's stagnant waters, overflowing banks, and inadequate drainage were linked to the pestilence. In the 1880's the Central of Georgia Railway and its subsidiary, the Ocean Steamship Company, bought various wharves, warehouses, and canal front properties. In 1888, the railway bought considerable stock in the canal company, using its basin to benefit the Ocean Steamship Company. By the early 1890s, the railroad maintained only the portion of the canal that traversed its properties along Savannah's industrial corridor. More than fifty years after the Central first challenged the Canal Company for cargoes, the railroad's victory was final.

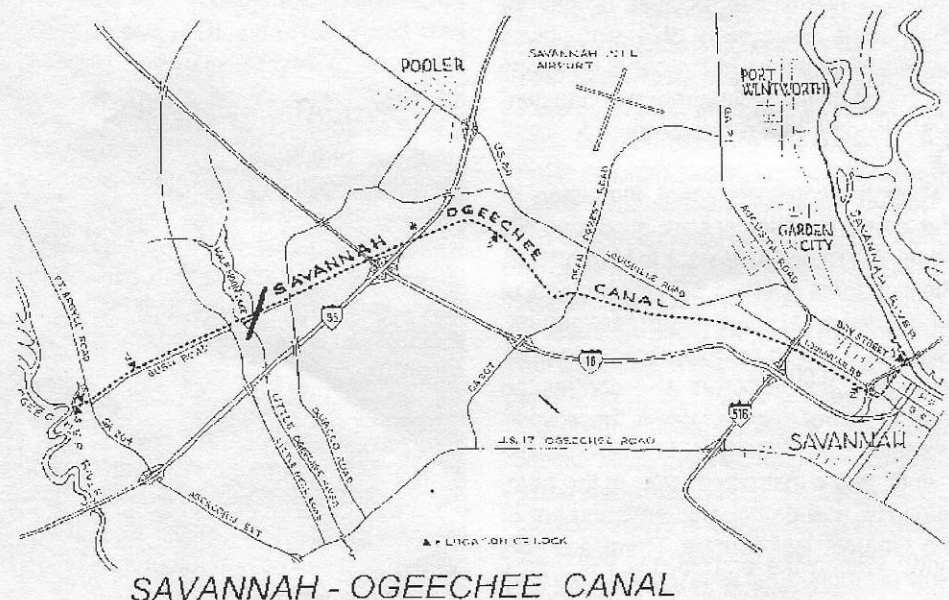
Throughout its history, the canal was more than a medium of commerce, for it has also played a role in the social life and daily affairs of people who lived and worked along

its banks. The canal was used for swimming, washing, bathing, card playing, drinking, fighting and romancing, and rural churches regularly held mass baptisms in the canal. Some tried to make a living along the canal—farming, fishing, or searching for treasures at low water. Tragedy visited often, with records documenting cases of suicide, rape, drowning, industrial accidents, and homicide. And just as today, promoters recognized the canal's appeal for tourism; in the 1870s, Captain Charles Sheftall operated weekly excursions along the canal that including dancing, dining, fishing, and other festivities.

Southern canals have not received the attention of their counterparts in the North, and the Savannah and Ogeechee Canal

has been particularly overlooked. Yet despite its difficult history and frequent crises, the Savannah and Ogeechee Canal was an important element in coastal Georgia's antebellum economy. Like other internal improvements projects, the canal embodied several themes of the early national period. In Georgia, though, these antebellum issues were shaped by the southern economy and environment. Like others, many Georgians were convinced that economic development beyond coastal areas was impossible without investment in road, bridges, railroads, and canals. According to the canal's supporters, these improvements were important components of a democracy, helping both rich and poor foster political and economic independence. This vision of self help had its limits. The canal's construction depended on African-American and immigrant labor, and chattel slavery was the basis for the prosperity of cotton, rice, naval stores, brick, lumber, and shipping operators who used and invested in the canal. Damaged in the Civil War, the canal survived into the late nineteenth century, but prosperous years were uncommon. Like most of its northern counterparts, the Savannah and Ogeechee Canal could not live up to the expectations of the 1820s. The specific reasons for its decline, however, had a distinctly southern flavor. Mirroring postbellum trends throughout costal Georgia, the canal eventually fell victim to a powerful railroad, deforestation, epidemic disease, and fundamental changes in the social and economic relationships of the South.

A century after the canal ceased its commercial operations, local citizens have be



Cartography by Dave Spoolstra

gun to restore and interpret the waterway and its environment. Volunteers have cleared towpaths, protected locks, conducted archeological digs, and researched the historical record in order to bring the canal back to life. In cooperation with the Chatham County Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Department, the Savannah-Ogeechee Canal Society is working to turn the canal into a linear park. While the society plans to develop the area around the terminus in Savannah, most efforts thus far have been at the Ogeechee River end. A small museum and nature center is open to visitors near Lock 5, with displays that highlight both the canal's history and the region's natural history. A half-mile stroll between the museum and Lock 6 on the Ogeechee River provides a perfectly peaceful and beautiful setting to enjoy this unusual waterway.

The museum and nature center is located 2.5 miles west of I-95 Exit 16. Guided tours of the canal, nature center, and surrounding habitat are available. Hours are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. seven days a week. Phone (912) 748-8068.

¹Editor's note. Other authorities, including Ronald E. Shaw, *Canals for a Nation*, (Lexington: U. Press of Kentucky, 1990) p. 123, and William E. Trout III, *The American Canal Guide*, Part 2 (York, Pa.: The American Canal Society, 1975) p. 8, refer to a total of three locks. Asked about the discrepancy, Dr. Trout responded that he was grateful for this more complete information.

BOOK REVIEW

Towns along the Towpath

Kate Mulligan (Washington: Wakefield Press).

Reviewed by Bruce J. Russell, Contributing Editor

The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, extending west from Washington, D.C. to Cumberland, Maryland, a distance of 185 miles, was completed in 1850 and abandoned in 1924 following a disastrous flood after years of slow decline in the face of railroad and highway competition.

In 1938 the federal government took title, and eventually converted the entire 185 miles into a linear park. Today it's used by hikers, nature lovers, and canal historians who come to admire its many attractions.

The opening chapter of *Towns along the Towpath* gives a general history of the C&O Canal but dwells extensively in the famous walk made by former U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas in 1954. At the time there were plans to build a multilane highway along the bank of the Potomac River which would sit atop the canal's alignment. Most of the surviving locks would be

filled in as would the unwatered prism. Justice Douglas was incensed that the *Washington Post* had published an editorial in support of this environmentally disastrous scheme. He invited the paper's editors to accompany him on a two-week walk from Cumberland to the waterway's eastern terminus in the Georgetown section of Washington. The judge, an avid hiker and outdoorsman, had been trekking along the old towpath for many years and was not about to see it lost to what some people refer to as "progress". Let them build their highway elsewhere was his cry. Kate Mulligan, the book's author, tells a lively tale of how those accompanying the jurist were gradually won over to his point of view. Grudgingly at first and later with enthusiasm, the journalists realized that the crumbling locks, aqueducts, and tenders' houses, as well as the weed-grown towpath, were pieces of American history which deserved to remain intact rather than be sacrificed for development. The result was a 180-degree turn by the influential newspaper. It published a follow-up editorial *against* building the road astride the old waterway.

This small paperbound book is not a comprehensive history of the C&O Canal. Instead, as its title implies, descriptions are given of a number of communities which grew up along it and have either remained the same or declined since closure seven decades ago. None of them except for Cumberland possess populations in excess of ten thousand. What all of these towns have in common is a rustic charm and an ample supply of canal-era buildings and structures made of both stone and

ILLINOIS & MICHIGAN CANAL FEATURED IN BOATING MAGAZINE

Noting the usual lack of interest of boating magazines in historic canals, we offered a word of appreciation to *Heartland Boating* in our Spring 1997 issue. Their April issue had carried a story on Roscoe Village, the restored Ohio & Erie Canal community at Coshocton.

Whether or not as a result of our encouragement, *Heartland Boating* has now followed up with a story on the Illinois & Michigan Canal, in the issue for August and September 1997. Illustrated with a map and color photographs, it is a two-page spread by James E. Held.

wood. For instance following abandonment in 1924 people continued living in the lock tenders homes. Many of these 1840s cottages have been maintained in their original architectural style.

Each chapter of *Towns along the Towpath* informs the readers what the various places have to offer visiting tourists. Significant buildings are discussed, local museums and exhibits—some canal related and others not—are enumerated, and anecdotes about the towns are told in a colorful manner. In general all of the villages along the waterway's route have been bypassed by late 20th century prosperity. Interstate highways don't serve them, and they lack the shopping malls and fast-food restaurants so common elsewhere. Kate Mulligan makes it plain that the reason for seeking them out is to experience a slice of Americana now rapidly vanishing in a sea of McDonald's, Rite Aids, and multiplex cinemas.

If you're looking for a detailed narrative covering the entire C&O Canal this isn't the book for you. *Towpath Guide to the C&O Canal* by Thomas F. Hahn is a better alternative for this purpose. However, Ms. Mulligan's book is a useful supplement to Hahn's. It tells the story of how canalside towns initially flourished by supplying food and other essential commodities to C&O employees but later lost their economic viability as people began migrating to larger cities in search of better-paying jobs. What provides income to the remaining residents in the 1990s is running bed-and-breakfast establishments, general stores, and flea markets. The locations and descriptions of quaint bed-and-breakfasts and local museums are given. On page 117, under the heading "Best Bets," three canal-related activities are listed. (1) The C&O Canal Association Douglas Hike, which is a two-week trek done on a yearly basis which replicates Justice Douglas' 1954 journey which saved the canal. Author Mulligan participated in such a walk in 1996, gaining the inspiration to write *Towns Along The Towpath*. (2) C&O Canal Days which is a 3-day festival in Williamsport which includes a picnic, musical show, and other activities with the theme of life on the old waterway. Participants dress in 1850s costumes and sing ballads familiar to canalers everywhere. (3) Canal By Moonlight. This is a stroll organized by the local chapter of the Sierra Club which takes participants along a scenic portion of the C&O during summer, presumably when the full moon is out. The telephone numbers of those

sponsoring these events are listed.

Kate Mulligan has written a volume of medium value to canal enthusiasts. Its modest price of \$14 makes it a bargain for those planning to spend more than a couple of days in the region between Washington, D.C. and Cumberland, Maryland. It is available from Wakefield Press, P.O. Box 23392, Washington, D.C., and at canalside stores in Georgetown and Great Falls.

MIAMI & ERIE LOCK IDENTIFIED?

Our Summer 1997 issue carried, on page 12, a circa-1903 photograph showing a lock on the Miami & Erie Canal at Lockland. Bill Trout's accompanying text asked, "Can anyone tell us more about this picture?"

The responses generated by this plea constitute an embarrassment of riches. First to reply was Dave Bambeck, who remembers the scene from 1940, when he was a youngster, before it was demolished for the construction of the "Wright Highway," which later became the southbound lanes of Interstate 75. He states unequivocally that it is Lock 40, the upper Lockland Lock, at mile 237. He adds that the lock identified as Lock 40 in Jack Geick, *A Photo Album of Ohio's Canal Era* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State U. Press, 1987), p. 146, is actually Lock 43, the Lower Lockland Lock, demolished at the same time (along with locks 41 and 42).

The second reply, from Bob Mueller, Jr., asserts with equal assurance and a similar amount of corroborative detail, that the lock in our picture is Lock 43. He bases this conclusion in part on his identification of the building in the picture as part of the Philip Carey Manufacturing Company. Bambeck agrees that Lock 43 was commonly known as the "Philip Carey Lock" because of its proximity to the company, but evidently not that the building pictured is theirs.

Anyone else care to jump in?

A.C.S. DUES

Bowing at last to the inevitable, the Board of Directors of the American Canal Society has adopted the following revised schedule of dues. The new rates go into effect for 1998 memberships.

Regular	\$20.00
Dual (family)	\$25.00
Sustaining	\$35.00
Patron	\$50.00
Life	\$200.00

GOWANUS CANAL CRUISES

Brooklyn's Gowanus Canal, a linear cesspool well known to local residents with operational olfactory organs, might seem to some an unlikely destination for scenic cruises. The Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment reported, however, that its first cruise, early in August, was fully booked. The center planned to sponsor a number of others.

The canal, a dead-end tributary of Gowanus Bay, was built to serve industry in the Park Slope-South Brooklyn area. It never drained properly, and is now the repository of a century's accumulation of heavy metals, petroleum, chemicals, and, reputedly, human remains. Its murky, oxygen-starved water is hostile to fish and plant life, but has been found to harbor hepatitis and cholera microbes.

The cruises are part of an effort to stimulate community interest in the development of the canal, possibly as a recreational site. There is already a project under way to provide circulation of the now-stagnant water. There are no plans for removing the sediment, however, since it is considered too toxic for dredging.

For information about cruises or the project in general, call John Muir at the Brooklyn Center for the Urban Environment, 718-788-8500. Information for this notice was furnished by A.C.S. member Charles F. Hruska.

WORLD CANALS CONFERENCE AND AMERICAN CANAL SOCIETY 1997 JOINT MEETING

[The following stop-press bulletin was supplied by our special correspondent, Bill Trout. A complete, illustrated report, by contributing editor Dave Barber, will appear in the Winter 1998 issue.]

Thanks to hard work by A.C.S. director Dave Barber and an impressive list of agencies and historical societies, well over a hundred of us had a great time exploring and experiencing the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor—everything from locks and parks to Middlesex Canal beer and canal songs by Pete Seeger in person. Both the Massachusetts and Rhode Island legislatures designated our stay "World Canals Conference Week," and the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council spread the word to the press, even to the Chicago Tribune, half a continent away.

With all this help, the American Canal Society also successfully celebrated its 25th anniversary and the installation of a

ALLEGHENY PORTAGE

RAILROAD MAP AVAILABLE

This 22x35-inch plan and profile map of the Allegheny Portage Railroad shows the route of the original Portage Railroad and also the route of the New Portage Railroad, between Johnstown and Hollidaysburg. To facilitate location of map features, the line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, between Johnstown and Altoona, is shown as a red line; rivers and mountain-side streams are shown as blue lines. Both the Muleshoe Curve and the Horseshoe Curve are delineated in relation to their summit tunnels.

Other items included on the map sheet are the following:

Location of the canal tunnel, 4-miles long, proposed in 1826.

Maps of the canal basins at Johnstown and Hollidaysburg, showing Portage Railroad tracks and canal weigh locks.

A table listing the length and lift of each incline and also gradient and lift of each level on the Old Portage Railroad.

A drawing of the Staple Bend Tunnel portal.

A drawing of the Conemaugh Viaduct.

Location of the two canal reservoirs, one above Johnstown and one above Hollidaysburg.

List of engineers in charge of construction of the original Portage Railroad.

Location of the temporary track (1850-1854) that connected the PRR with the APRR.

Map of Pennsylvania, locating the five divisions of the Pennsylvania Main Line.

The map is printed on heavy paper, suitable for framing.

Retail price: \$4.00/single copy, sold over the counter.

Mail order: Add \$3.00 for mailing tube and postage (for order of 14-maps).

Wholesale price: 1/3 off the retail price.

Minimum wholesale order is one dozen, at \$32/dozen, shipping included in price (maps rolled).

Address orders to:

APRR MAP

Blairsville Historical Society

116 E. Campbell St., Blairsville, PA, 15171-1310

Make checks payable to Blairsville Historical Society (wholesale terms: 30 days)

A companion 22x35-inch plan and profile map of the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Main Line is also available for \$4.00 from the same source. Both maps, mailed in one tube, may be obtained for \$11.00.

new president, Terry Woods. For this special occasion we also presented A.C.S. burgees to international dignitaries, including representatives of British Waterways, the Inland Waterways Association, and Parks Canada. (You, too, can fly our flag on your boat or wall. Just send your order with \$15.00 to Keith Kroon.)

The next World Canals Conference will be on the Illinois & Michigan Canal in 1998. The seed money which A.C.S. contributed to jump-start the Augusta meeting was used again for the Blackstone and will be used again on the I&M. See you there!

Bill Trout