PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

My message will be brief, as I seem to have written several lengthy articles already for this issue. Ruth and I have enjoyed a "busman's holiday" for the past few months - with visits to meetings and tours held by the Virginia Canals and Navigations Society, the Pennsylvania and New Jersey Canal Societies; and the Canal Society of Ohio, not to mention our trip by the New Sheraton Cruise into the Universtity of Washington, and the other for the Smithsonian Associates, out of Washington. We also are hoping to take in the Whitehorse Tour in Indiana in October. Everywhere we go, we find increasing interest in the historic canals of the U.S. and Canada, and we do share to fan the flames!

Right now I am having my final negotiations with the printer for the completion of the "160th Anniversary Issue of the Amazing Pennsylvania Canals", which has proven to be a major undertaking, but hopefully a useful one. Perhaps, after I have recovered from the rigors of the summer, I'll have another look at our ACS Project 'CANAL ENGINEERS OF THE 1600'S' - for which too many of us have already accumulated.

Bill Shank

NEW YORK HARBOR TOUR

The Canal Society of New Jersey's July 4th tour of New York Harbor was a snappy experience due to the near-continuous rain the entire day and evening. Spirits of the 80 participants were not entirely dampened. Along the route of Delaware & Florten canal boats - Arthur Kill and Kill Van Kull, many abandoned and historic vessels were viewed, especially at White's Marine Supply yard. When at lower Sant Louis Seaport the Morris Canal basin were inspected and the concrete hull of an abandoned canal boat was seen, and a close up view of 6 visiting NATO warships provided. The highlight of the day was dinner aboard the floating restaurant, Binghamton's at Edgewater, New Jersey. The ferry boat Binghamton, shown above, was built for the Lackawanna Railroad in 1805 and ran between Hoboken, New Jersey and Barley Street in Manhattan until 1967.

Bill Mcovel, Jr.

DESJARDINS CANAL

Desjardins Canal zigzags across the base of the Niagara Escarpment; it was dredged and its pilings driven during the mid-1800's.

The widening and deepening of the 46-mile-long Cleveland and Delaware Canal has been completed, opening the channel to deep draft traffic, the Maryland Port Administration announced. The canal, now 35 feet deep, provides a direct link between the Chesapeake Bay and the Delaware River, eliminating the need for larger vessels to sail around the Virginia Capes.

The canal also provides a shorter, direct link between the ports of Baltimore and Philadelphia. The waterway is operated and maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

C. & D. ENLARGED

An 1825 manuscript has been missing since the 1940's and may have found its way by now into a library or collection. The 430-page work, never published, is by Hugh Paul Taylor, is entitled HISTORICAL SKETCHES OF THE INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS OF VIRGINIA, and was apparently last seen in the Second Auditor's Office in Richmond, Virginia. This is obviously an important early document worth looking for. (From Dr. P.M. Rice's Ph.D. Thesis, "Internal Improvements in Virginia, 1776-1860, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1948, 5,119.)

CANAL MANUSCRIPT MISSING

The day was dinner aboard the floating restaurant, Binghamton's at Edgewater, New Jersey. The ferry boat Binghamton, shown above, was built for the Lackawanna Railroad in 1805 and ran between Hoboken, New Jersey and Barley Street in Manhattan until 1967.

Bill Mcovel, Jr.

DESJARDINS CANAL

Desjardins Canal zigzags across the base of the Niagara Escarpment; it was dredged and its pilings driven during the mid-1800's.

Pressure steamers and 21-metre long Durham boats (boats which were either sailed or paddled) used the canal to travel from Dundos to Hamilton Harbour, or as it was then called Burlington Bay.

The canal was the work of an enterprising settler from France. Pierre Desjardins, who formed a company in 1828 to construct a canal through the marsh between Burlington Heights and Dundas.

Desjardins died before the canal was ready to accommodate commercial shipping. His work was continued by his brother-in-law, Alexis Beague. On August 16, 1837, the Desjardins Canal was officially opened and became instrumental in the sustained growth of the Town of Dundas.

The Desjardins Canal Company located its offices on the Main Street in the Town of Dundas, which continued to flourish in the growing shadow of the larger City of Hamilton.

The Great Western Railroad Company, one of Sir Allan Napier MacNab's greatest achievements for Hamilton, struck a death blow to the canal as freight by rail to Hamilton and Toronto surpassed water at a major rate of transport.

The cleared pilings are still visible from the Niagara Escarpment and a plaque has been erected in Dundas to recognize the importance of the Desjardins Canal to the growth of that town.

(St. Catherine's Historical Museum from Queen, Spring 1981.)
IWA RALLY CLOSUES ACS STUDY-TOUR IN ENGLAND

Dr. Roger Squires (center) presents John Haap and Sir Geoffrey de Fretas (left and right) with ACS Shoulder Patches.

MYSTERY PHOTOGRAPH

The "Mystery Photograph" in the February issue of American Canals was of the High Street (now Wisconsin Avenue) Bridge in Georgetown, District of Columbia on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal in the early 1900's. A C & O Canal freight boat can be seen downstream of the bridge. It is likely that the boat captain is preparing to take on wooden cument barrels from the building to the right of it to be taken to the cement plant at Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

CANAL MUSICAL

Cana enthusiasts and music lovers alike have a treat in store for them in coming months with the preparation of the canal musical, "Towpath to the Stars." The setting is the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal in the 1860's at Shepherdstown Lock (Lock 30). Plans are currently underway to show the production at towns and cities in the Potomac Valley. Watch your area newspapers and the November issue of American Canals for further details. Music by Richard Scott Russell, lyrics for the production are by Jack Zornfeld (noted for his production of "Belle.")

Dr. Tom Hahn is the technical consultant.

MAYO HONORED

Robert S. Mayo, P.E., (left) an ardent canal buff member of both PCS and ACS, is shown here being honored by the Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers as the State's Senior "Engineer of the Year" for 1981. The presentation was made by State President John Logan (right) at a recent PSEPE convention in Hershey, PA. Bob is presently touring China, looking for old canals over there.

ONTARIO CANAL SOCIETY

Louis J. Cahill, Canadian Director for the American Canal Society, has spearheaded further action to form an ONTARIO CANAL SOCIETY as mentioned briefly in the May 1981 issue of AMERICAN CANALS. A meeting was called by Lou to discuss the matter, June 17, 1981 at the St. Catherines Museum. The meeting was attended by John Saynault, of the Welland Canal Preservation Association (Initiator of the idea); Dr. John Erntnek, Colin Dugger and Arden Phair of the St. Catherines Museum; Dr. Wes Turner (of the Museum) and Ald. Denise Taylor, President of the Welland Canal Preservation Assoc. were both in accord with the idea, but unable to attend.

Another meeting is now set for October 31, 1981, with a mailing to interested parties throughout the Province as soon as the mail situation in Canada returns to normal. It was agreed that the letter would be sent on Welland Canals Foundation letterhead as the appropriate body to initiate action on the undertaking, without financial responsibility. Interested parties in Canada (Lady: the USA) are urged to contact Louis Cahill, or other members of the above committee, via Welland Canals Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 745, St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 6Y3.

CHAMPLAIN CANAL

Readers of AMERICAN CANALS may recall the article by Bill Shank in A.C. #34, August 1960, telling of his experiences on the Champlain Canal, aboard the Emilia II. One of Bill's fellow passengers was Carla Davidson, Picture Editor for AMERICAN HERITAGE MAGAZINE. Carla has written the woman's version of this same trip in an interesting, five-page, color-photo-illustrated article, which appears in the July/August 1981 issue of "AMERICANA." The article even includes a map/diagram map of the entire Champlain Route. Get a copy at any newsstand; it's good!
"Y-Bridge" of the Old National Road in Zanesville, where our tour began.

June 5th and 6th, 1981, approximately sixty members of the Canal Society of Ohio gathered at the Quality Inn in Zanesville for their Spring Tour. Their objective was the Muskingum navigation system. Oddly enough, very few canal buffs in Northeastern USA are aware of this beautiful, nearly 100-mile-long, canalized river with its eleven fully-operative locks between Ellis and Marietta on the Ohio River.

Ted Kasper, Tour Conductor and Author of the history of the Muskingum Waterway [to be published in the next issue of AMERICAN CANALS] made sure that all present for the week-end meeting and tour became fully aware of the colorful past of the Muskingum and its present adaptation as a vital part of the State-owned and operated Muskingum River Parkway.

Leroy Ball was Tour Secretary, with CSO President Gale Hartel presiding at the meeting. Friday evening, June 5th, Ted Kasper treated us to a delightful slide-show and lecture with humorous overtones, preparing us for what we would see the next day. Maps and literature were on display, featuring the various canals of Ohio.

Back at the Quality Inn in Zanesville Saturday evening we enjoyed the sociability of the CSO assemblage at their evening banquet, plus a lecture on the 1913 flood and how it affected the Muskingum River.

Bill Shank

Looking across the lower gates of Lock #10 in South Zanesville. In the background is the "Lorona", a restored stern-wheeler, brought in from Arkansas for chartered tours of the upper Muskingum. (Operated by the Zanesville Area Chamber of Commerce.)

Lock Number 4 and Park on the Muskingum at Beverly, 25 miles from the Ohio.

The Lock Tender (in full uniform) at Philo Lock #9 answers questions.

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One of the two CSO Tour Groups inspects Muskingum Lock Number 9 at Philo, 68 miles from the junction with the Ohio River.
THE ALEXANDRIA CANAL


by Vivienne Mitchell

The Alexandria-Georgetown Canal, more commonly known as the Alexandria Canal, played an important part in the history of commercial navigation on the Potomac River. The Potomac Company was organized in 1825 with George Washington as president. His dream since the late 1760's, and the primary objective of the company, was to bypass the falls of the Potomac River above Georgetown by means of a canal. In addition, locks were to be built at Great Falls and Little Falls to lift the barges. In the level stretches of the river, navigation was possible by pulling the barges.

The Potomac Company went out of business in 1828, and its charter and rights were assumed by the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company. The object of this company was to build a continuous canal instead of a series of canals that merely skirted the falls. It would be entirely in the Maryland side of the Potomac River. By 1830, it extended all the way from Georgetown, D.C. to Cumberland, Maryland. Parts of it were navigable from 1831.

Merchants and shippers of Alexandria were anxious to have a canal. They had a ready market for cargo ships sailing past their town to Georgetown, which had become the prosperous port for the nation's capital. They envisioned shipping stopping at the wharves of Alexandria to unload their cargo and pick up goods for export. They also hoped to ship their goods westward on the new Chesapeake and Ohio Canal and to tap the markets of western Maryland.

Alexandria was a part of the District of Columbia from 1791 to 1846, at which time the Act of Proportion was approved and Alexandria again became part of Virginia. Therefore it took an Act of Congress, dated May 26, 1830, to grant a charter to the Alexandria Canal Company for the purpose of building a canal from the terminus of the C & O Canal to a point in the Town of Alexandria.

Old map showing the Alexandria Canal, from Hopkins Atlas of 1871, in which it is mistakenly identified as the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal.

From Rosslyn, Virginia, the canal ran on level land to Alexandria, crossing the Potomac River on a stone aqueduct bridge, and reaching the Potomac River in Alexandria by means of four locks.

The Potomac Aqueduct Bridge, built under the direction of the Army Engineers, was supported by eight solid masonry piers. It was composed of a great engineering feat of its time, and it stayed in operation an important river crossing long after it ceased to be used to carry the canal across the Potomac. It finally went out of operation with the construction of the present-day Key Bridge in 1923.

From its beginning the canal imposed a financial burden on the citizens of Alexandria. On July 23, 1830, the Common Council of Alexandria passed an act "to subscribe 500 shares of one hundred dollars each to the capital stock of the Alexandria Canal Company."

Other acts were passed by the Common Council authorizing further subscriptions, one on May 2, 1833, for five hundred additional shares.

On July 9, 1836, an act was passed to authorize the Common Council's subscription to 2,500 additional shares of stock. Another subscription was authorized on May 2, 1845, and again on February 4, 1845.

Construction of the Potomac Aqueduct Bridge began in 1833 and was completed ten years later. The first canal boat reached Alexandria on December 2, 1843, and the December 4 issue of the Alexandria Gazette described the celebration.

"On Saturday last, the Alexandria Canal, connecting this town with the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, was officially opened for trade and navigation."

"After all the trials and difficulties that have accompanied them, the day at last arrived when the canal boats could float across the Potomac, over a splendid and permanent aqueduct, and be brought to the town of Alexandria, along a canal seven miles long, without a single lock or other interruption."

"The President and Directors of the Canal Co., the Mayor, and a large number of our fellow citizens went up to the Potomac aqueduct in the morning, and there with the Engineers and other officers of the Company embarked in the Canal Boat, Patent, and after a pleasant and short passage of a little upwards of an hour, down the Canal, reached its terminus at the corner of Washington and Montgomery streets. The boat stopped amidst the cheers and congratulations of a large crowd assembled to witness the interesting sight, and the heartiest tokens of satisfaction were given on the ground and throughout the whole town."

"In honor of the event a salute was fired, the national flag was hoisted at the Public Square, and the vessels in port were decorated with flags.

"We repeat, now at the completion what was said at the commencement — May this important work succeed and prosper — may it more than realize our warmest hopes — and may it RESERVE and PERPETUATE THE TRADE AND PROSPERITY OF ALEXANDRIA."

Business flourished for a while on the two canals, and in 1846, the C & O Canal was completed to Cumberland. From then on, coal from the Western Maryland miners became the most important commodity to be shipped via the canals to the Potomac River wharves in Alexandria. These canal shipments continued until the abandonment of the canal, interrupted only by the Civil War. Other typical products shipped by canal were reported in the Alexandria Gazette of July 2, 1847. Shipments included wheat, corn, whiskey, corn meal, and flour.

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Potomac Aqueduct of the Alexandria Canal sometime after 1857, when a highway toll bridge had been constructed above the canal trough, making it a two-tier structure. View from the Virginia side of the river, with the Georgetown University campus in the background. (Library of Congress Photo.)

However, financial difficulties continued because of the frequent need for repair on the canal.

During the Civil War, the canal was forced to cease operations. The occupation of the Virginia side of the Potomac River by Federal troops was essential for the defense of Washington and for the movement of men and supplies. The canal's Potomac Aqueduct bridge played an important part in enforcing this Federal occupation. Colonel Major General J.G. Barnard of the U.S. Army Engineers reported in 1871: "The crossing of the Potomac on the Aqueduct Bridge took place the 23rd of May, 1861, in three columns—one under command of Major Wood, by the Georgetown Aqueduct; another under Colonel H. General Heintzelman, by the Long Bridge; and another under Colonel Ellsworth by water to Alexandria.

Major Wood's troops marched across the aqueduct bridge along the top path of the canal, obviously an inefficient passageway, as Colonel Barnard said in his report: "Two bridges were necessary, even if the liability to destruction of one by accident of the garrison had not been, in itself, a decisive motive. The top path of the aqueduct would indeed furnish a narrow passageway, to pedestrians and footmen, but this was far from adequate to the military exigencies. Accordingly, in the winter of 1861-62, the water was shut off from the aqueduct, its trough converted into a double-track wagon road, the floor being widened with 4-inch planks and long timbers, or trebies, forming connections with the roads on either side.

Traffic on the canal resumed after the Civil War, as Alexandria's economy slowly revived. Shipments of fish, oysters, ice, millwork, grain, lumber, and other items were carried northward on the canal. The forward of the City Atlas of Alexandria, Va. of 1877 describes a flourishing coal trade, with shipments going from Alexandria directly to Arlington from Colton in the Republic of Fanning and San Francisco, for use on the steam ship lines operating in the China and Japan Sails. The atlas reports, "the same facilities afforded at Alexandria for its storage and shipments.

The Alexandria Canal Company continued to be plagued by financial difficulties. During winter months, the water often froze over, and navigation was impossible for long periods of time. The Gazette repeatedly reported repair problems. Whenever repairs were needed, traffic would be stopped, and financial losses would be suffered by shippers and merchants.

In 1846, when Alexandria was sold back to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the Federal Government had refused to assume the debt of the canal company. The Virginia General Assembly, however, purchased a large block of stock and guaranteed some of the company's bonds. In 1866 the canal was leased to Major Henry W. Wewer, William W. Davenport, and Philo Gurney, under the name of the Alexandria Railroad and Bridge Co., for 99 years at $1,000 a year. In 1867, the leases were authorized to construct a highway toll bridge above the canal trough on the Potomac Aqueduct Bridge, making it a two-tiered structure. Although traffic continued on the canal and toll bridge under the administration of the lessees, the operation was never lucrative.

On September 21, 1866, the Alexandria Gazette reported: "A serious break in the Aqueduct bridge occurred yesterday afternoon, which will probably cause a suspension of traffic over the canal for a week at least, ..."

A week later, on September 27, the Gazette stated: "Since the fall of a portion of the Aqueduct canal aqueduct tank there has been considerable anxiety as to the safety of the bridge. They say that in the present condition of the water, the tanks cannot be added to the weight of the bridge."

There is no evidence that the break used the canal after the September 26th break. At that time there was also a great deal of pressure from the citizens of Georgetown for a free bridge across the Potomac in place of the canal toll bridge. Accordingly, the bridge was sold to the Federal Government and from then on became toll free. The wooden structure was removed and an iron bridge was built upon the old stone pier.

On October 22, 1936, the Alexandria Gazette printed this item entitled "List of the Canal," by the Washington Correspondent of the Baltimore Sun.

"The creation of a toll bridge at the Georgetown Aqueduct, under the plan now agreed upon, depresses the Alexandria Canal as a waterway. The toll bridge, and as far as it would go by all hands that the condition of modern transportation are such that the Alexandria Canal has outlived its usefulness..."

It was to substitute horsepower for pole pushing that the aqueduct and the Alexandria canal were made. But modern transportation of steam ships on the river has rendered the canal unnecessary for several years. Now canal boats have passed the outlet lock and come to Alexandria by river... It is now by cumbersome ships that it costs only 28 cents more per ton to go from Georgetown to Alexandria behind a flag than to be dragged by mule along the canal and pay toll..."

Thus the operation of the Alexandria Canal came to an end. For a short time it played an important role in the canal transportation, navigation, but competition from railroads and steam-powered vessels, as well as the high cost of repair, contributed to its failure. During its short existence, the canal satisfied a need in the transportation picture of the region, but it became obsolete as more efficient means of transport appeared.

In November, 1871, a team supervised by Alexandria City Architecturalis, Pamela Crane, cut a trench through the dirt and nubile covering of the outlet lock of the Alexandria Canal. The trench exposed the large, granite stones of the lock which had been covered over many years. The excavation was done at the instruction of the Alexandria Archaeological Commission to confirm that material evidence of the outlet lock still exists. Continued excavation is necessary in order to meet the requirements of the Virginia Landmarks Commission and thus evaluate the important archaeological site to the National Register of Historic Places.

The lock is on the river side of the Ramada Inn, between First and Montgomery Streets in Alexandria. It is the last surviving lock between Pitt Street and the Potomac to lower barges to the river and raise them from the river on their return trip northward.

Because of the rise and fall of the tides in the canal, it was necessary to have an outlet lock which would enable barges to be lowered from high tide level to low tide level. The lock was built as a lock with gates, and each lift or lowered barges approximately ten to twelve feet. The remains of these other locks have been lowered under filled-in level and buildings.

In February, 1981, a grant proposal was submitted to the National Trust for Historic Preservation Maritime Preservation Grant, and was awarded to the City of Alexandria's Department of Planning and Community Development and the Alexandria Archaeological Research Center. In April, 1981.

The purpose of this project is to identify, evaluate, record, document, and plan for the restoration and interpretation of the Alexandria Canal Park. Documentary research will identify the occupants, structures, buildings and land use of the Canal lock tidal and contiguous areas. At present and the over all plan for the development of these findings will be published and a blueprint for the entire park will be made. (Tom Lutz has been retained as a consultant on the project.)

WHITEWATER CANAL TOUR

Members of the American Canal Society in Indiana, Ohio and nearby states are reminded of the annual sponsored tour by ACS and CSC of the Whitewater Canal October 16-17, 1981. John W. Drake, Tour Chairman (2137 West Avenue, Columbus, Ohio, 43202) tells us that the headquarters for the Tour will be the Holiday Inn at Columbus, Indiana. There will be an informal gathering on Friday evening October 16th for a review of the White's history and a preview of the Tour. Saturday's activities will feature a ride on the Whitewater Valley Railroad, whose tracks are laid directly on the old towpath - stopping at points of interest along the way. At the end of the line is Metamora, preserve canal town.

Visitors to West Lafayette, White Water Canal includes two locks, a working mill and a covered wooden aqueduct, with an operating replica replica of the 1853 lock, the first lock in the state. Plans will be discussed at a Sunday evening banquet for the formation of an Indiana Canal Society.

AMERICAN CANALS, NO. 28 - August 1981
Bill and Ruth Shank pose for their photo on the deck of the New Shoreham II.

At the urging of several of our friends who have done it, including the Charles Hartfield of England, Ruth and I finally took the Saguenay River Cruise on the New Shoreham II, out of Warren, Rhode Island. We had found out, in the Spring of 1966, that it pays to "sign up" nearly a year in advance. (The Saguenay Tour is an extremely popular one.) We met George and Joanne Irwin (from Camp Hill, Pa.) at Warren (just southeast of Providence) on June 28th, and returned to Warren on July 10th, after having traveled approximately 1200 miles by water and 350 miles by land.

The New Shoreham II accommodates 72 passengers, and crew, and is a modern and well-equipped vessel with air-conditioned living and dining facilities, as well as a large and comfortable lounge. The crew did everything possible to make our cruise an enjoyable one. The young Chief served us an excellent variety of (not too-heavy) meals, with lots of fruits and vegetables. (Coffee and tea were available 24 hours a day.)

Our cruise included a night tour of Long Island Sound, on early morning lock at Manhasset Bay, and a day-long trip on the Hudson River: passage through the 23 locks on the eastern half of the Erie Canal; the seven locks of the Oswego Canal; and the seven locks of the St. Lawrence River. Not to mention visits to Waterford and Oswego, New York; Alexandria Bay (in the Thousand Islands section); Montreal, Quebec, and the beautiful Saguenay River where the tides run 22 feet in height and the White Whale play at its junction with the St. Lawrence. For a canal and bridge buff (like me) it was a highly enjoyable and educational experience. (I made literally hundreds of photos, in black and white and color, of the many interesting bridges crossing the Hudson and St. Lawrence, and of course interior shots of most of the canal locks. Some of the best of my photos are reproduced here.)

Ruth and I had traveled the Erie Canal a few years ago on the Erie II, so my camera was idle during this part of the cruise, except to get a few more photos of the Little Falls Lock, with its lower Guillotine Gate (the only one like it in North America) and its tremendous lift — 40.5 feet. We had never turned for or seen such the Oswego Canal before, so I was busy with camera and data sheet at every lock. The highest lift-lock on this system is Lock #5 at Fulton, N. Y., with a "drop" of 27 feet (we headed downstream).

I had seen the St. Lawrence locks during construction, prior to their opening in 1959, but had never had the experience of photographing

Interior of the Eisenhower Lock from the stern of the New Shoreham II, looking toward the up-stream gates. Lock dimensions: 80 feet wide by 850 long, with 42' lift.

Photo from the bow of the New Shoreham II, as we approached the unusual Guillotine Lift Gate on the lower side of Erie Canal Lock #17, (40.5-foot lift), from the "inside". They are tremendous! It is interesting also to observe, taking a large, descending freighter slowly emerging from the Gate St. Catherine Lock, above Montreal, with only inches to spare on each side. It finally cleared the lock, allowing us to proceed to Montreal. A table of data on the St. Lawrence Seaway locks is reproduced on page 8, as published in the English-language guide to the Seaway issued on board for us at the Massena (New York) headquarters for the Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (Lachine Lock).

Some of the bridges which I photographed, from the water, included: the Hell Gate Bridge, the Queensboro (Archer Bunker) Bridge and the 100-year-old Brooklyn Bridge at Manhattan; the George Washington, Teapot Zue, Bear Mountain, Newburgh-Brook and Catskill Bridges on the Hudson; The I-81 International Bridge and the Three Rivers Bridge on the St. Lawrence; and the world-famous Cantilever Bridge of 1918 above the city of Oswego.

Bill Shank

AMERICAN CANALS, NO. 38 – August 1981
THE JAMES RIVER AND KANAWHA CANAL (Part III)

By T. Gibson Hobbs, Jr.

In 1869, a French company approached the canal company on taking over its line, assuming its debts and spending $200,000 to complete the line to the Ohio. This would allow exploitation of the mineral wealth along the route and seemed like the answer to the dreams of the canal advocates. The Virginia Canal Company was chartered by the state, but further consideration was halted by the Civil War. Negotiations were resumed after the war, with Virginia and West Virginia both agreeing. However, arrangements were never completed, and the scheme was dropped.

At the war's end, the board pushed necessary repairs to the line. By the end of 1866, the whole system was in relatively good condition. In the meantime, steps were taken to report lost trade and meet the increased threat of railroad competition. Arrangements were made with steamship companies to the north for advantageous contracts. However, in 1866, the proposed merger of the Norfolk and Petersburg, the Southside and the Virginia and Tennessee Railroads, later to become the Norfolk and Western, was vigorously opposed by the company, as it threatened the trade from west to the canal had already been under the latter line. The Norfolk, the Southside, and the Virginia and Tennessee Railroads. These resulted in an arrangement with several of the northern steamship companies for continued rates under an arrangement called the "Virginia and Tennessee Air Line Railway."

To combat this, the canal company in May 1866, arranged to purchase freight boats and also to operate them and haul goods and coal at the rates of $400 per year each. This company-owned freight line, with tri-weekly roundtrips to Lynchburg, went into operation in July. By cutting rates and working with other steamship companies, they were able to salvage much business that would have otherwise been lost. Privately owned freight boats were in operation that year totaling 106, with first class averaging 70 tons, 22 second class of 66 tons, 51 third class of 30 tons, and 22 fourth class boats of 15 tons. Three packet boats were in operation. That same year, the canal tonnage totaled 142,300 tons as compared to a combined total of 130,000 tons for the four railroads terminating in Richmond.

Business increased through 1869. During that year the company bought goods to private operators. The company had never given up its vision of a central water route to bring the great western trade from the Ohio River to the Atlantic. In 1867, Edward Lorraine prepared a new survey plan. Reducing the summit level to 1,700 feet, insuring a better water supply and reckoning greatly, the locks required, would require a tunnel nine miles long. He felt that the tunnel was no problem as vertical shafts would divide it into nine individual tunnels one mile long each. His 99-page descriptive booklet entitled "Central Water Line to the Ohio" attracted widespread attention. The western states were very unhappy at the high freight rates of the railroads. Some vessels half their cargoes were lost because they were not economical to ship them east.

In 1868, Ohio, Kentucky and Kansas, along with other western interests, and Virginia and West Virginia persuaded Congress to study the feasibility of the plan. The Army Corps of Engineers in 1870 and again in 1872 made surveys and presented a modified version of Lorraine's plan for an enlarged canal to cost $50,000,000. However, Congress failed to take any action, though as late as 1870 the Corps of Engineers was making surveys.

In 1870, one of the greatest floods in Virginia history did extensive damage to the canal. This, and the desperate financial situation of the company, made prospects of continuing poor. Navigation was restored to Lynchburg in 2 1/2 months, but it was nearly a year before rebuilding was complete above Lynchburg. Total cost of repairs was $310,000.

With no connection for through traffic above Buchanan, the canal was restricted to local freight. Since support for continuing the canal was not forthcoming, an act of the General Assembly was passed in 1876 for the canal company to form the Buchanan and Clifton Forge Railroad to make connection with the C & O. Major Peyton Handegan was engaged to survey the route, which he reported in July. 1876 would cost $350,000. Minor construction started in late 1876. In June, 1877, the state supplied 325 convicts from Richmond, housed in six hastily erected huts, to push construction. Work proceeded rapidly until November, when a flood equal to that of 1870 again struck the canal.

This devastating blow, with repairs estimated at over $200,000, seemed like the death blow. The board, pleased with the railroad progress, considered a resolution to replace the canal from Buchanan to Richmond with a railroad to be called the Richmond and Clifton Forge Railway Company. However, feeling was strong to continue the canal. As a consequence, the board pushed a bill through the Legislature in a dramatic manner, permitting use of the convict force of the railroad to repair the canal. This brought severe repercussions, but service from Richmond to Lynchburg was restored by February, 1878. Repairs were pushed on the line above Lynchburg. In September, still another, though smaller flood, did much damage to the uncompleted work. With 350 convicts and private contractors, repairs were completed to Buchanan in early 1879.

In late November, 1878, the board, at a special meeting, heard a proposal from the Richmond and Alleghany Railroad Company to take over the canal and replace it with a railroad. On December 7, they voted to vote a bill to the Assembly for approval of such an act. There was much discussion, particularly by canal interests, over this, but the bill finally passed.
JAMES RIVER AND KANAWHA CANAL (Part III)

HISTORIC SALTSBURG

A group in Saltsburg, Pennsylvania, is being incorporated as Historic Saltsburg, Incorporated — a non-profit organization — with the goal of preserving the Saltsburg portion of the Pennsylvania Main-Line Canal. They are currently seeking funding for their project, which is twofold:

1. To preserve the site of the canal for potential future development as an historic park. In chronological order, they plan to restore the Hugh Kenny house and grocery store as a canal history center, conduct an archeological investigation into the boat basin and lock, excavate a major portion of the canal bed, and construct the boat basin. Restore Lock 8 to operating condition, prepare a mock canal for the unexcavated portion of the canal, and build a replica of a canal packet boat, and finish grade and landscape the area.

2. To restore the canal period and post-canal period buildings that surround the site of the canal. Many of these buildings and the canal site within the borough limits are already on the Pennsylvania Inventory of Historic Places. Professor George B. Johnson of the Indiana University of Pennsylvania will lead an advisory group to conduct and coordinate the research and development of this project.

Canal Day in Saltsburg (food, entertainment, stands featuring food, crafts, games, etc.) and related solicitation and lectured was held on Saturday, June 8, 1981.

SEAWAY DATA

There are seven Nine Locks in the St. Lawrence River. The Canada government has recently purchased and added two in the United States, thereby making them all Nine Locks. The Nine Locks (Nos. 1-7) are all in Ontario. All are similar in size. The specific:

- Length, gate to gate: 860 feet
- Width: 60 feet
- Depth over sill: 12 feet
- Locks:
  - St. Lambert: 13 to 20 feet
  - Cote des Carrières: 13 to 18 feet
  - Laprairie: 13 to 18 feet
  - Upper Brossard: 13 to 18 feet
  - Ste. Anne: 13 to 18 feet
  - Enosburg: 13 to 18 feet
  - Montreal: 12 to 20 feet

The locks at the Welland Canal have the same constraints as those in the new Seaway—Minimum to Lake Ontario:

- Length: 7 of the Welland Canal are lift locks. Lock 1 is 11.7 feet. The limit is 12 feet. Locks 2 to 7 are 18 feet high and 116 feet long.
- Width: 76 feet. The maximum is 416 feet. The Seaway locks have a maximum of 33 feet between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie.

The controlling channel dimensions for the Seaway, Lake Erie to Montreal, are:

- Depth: a minimum of 27 feet to permit travel of vessels drawing 26 feet, (wet ice draft),
- Width: 460 feet minimum.
- Elevation:
  - When flooded by one vessel, 20 feet minimum
  - When at an even level, 30 feet minimum
  - Elevation of the Seaway is 450 feet.

A proposal to replace mules on the Miami Canal is being considered. A few weeks ago, the State Board of Public Works contracted with J. W. Fordyce of Detroit to use electric motors and trolleys on the present towpath instead of mules. Later, however, it was discovered that certain parts of the canal could not accommodate heavy traffic; and certain parts of the towpath could not support a system of rails alongside. Another obstruction was the number of light poles already alongside the canal that would obstruct the proposed system. Despite all the problems, it was estimated that the mule on the Miami Canal would be displaced in two years.

May I congratulate you and the editorial staff of American Canals for the quality of this publication. I always amazes me how an organization the size of the A.C.S. produces a well-illustrated, interesting, and varied-newsletter. Keep up the good work (Aron Anheiser-Curator, St. Catharines Historical Museum)

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Jack E. Custer, Steamer SPARCLU, write: "The other day I was walking along in the winter of 1961 of the Memphis excursion Schimmer at 13, Feb 13, and was pleasantly surprised to find something on the Miami land Erie Canal that would be worth while sharing.

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