

AMERICAN CANALS

BULLETIN OF
THE AMERICAN CANAL SOCIETY

BULLETIN NUMBER 53

Editorial Address — 809 Rathton Road, York, Pa. 17403

MAY 1985

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I indicated in one of my messages last year there comes a time when we older administrators should step aside for younger men to "take over" and try out their ideas. Enjoyable as the past seven years have been for me at the ACS helm, I feel it is time for me to retire and let some one else pilot the ship. Dr. Bill Trout is eminently qualified to run the Society, as evidenced by the accompanying biography. He will be ably assisted by our two new Vice Presidents — Bill McKelvey and Bill Gerber. Yours truly will continue as Bulletin Editor for the time being. It seems we will have an organization of "Bills" for awhile, altho' we must not discount the fine work done over the past seven years by our Secretary and Treasurer, Charlie Derr, who will continue in that capacity. We will also continue to seek advice and assistance from our Directors in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, (as listed on page 6) not to mention our membership at large in ACS, now numbering about 750 persons.

For me, it has been a rewarding seven years. During my tour as ACS President, our Society has come to be recognized as the prime informational source on the historic canal system in the United States. In the past few years my mail box has been loaded with inquiries on specific canals, and my phone frequently rings with calls from NBC, CBS, BBC and other news media in the USA and the U.K., seeking information on American canals. In the past few years also, I have learned that we must broaden our horizons and concern ourselves with what is happening in the inland waterways field today as well as yesterday. History is like a never ending stream; it runs through the past, present and future. We must concern ourselves with all three of these phases of canal history.

Bill Shank

Dr. William Hullfish of Brockport, New York has just become our latest ACS Life Member, bringing our total number of Life Members to forty-nine. Dr. Hullfish is a Professor of Music at Brockport College and the Author of the recently-published **CANAL-
LER'S SONGBOOK**.

NEW ACS "PREXY"



Dr. Bill Trout is shown here on a recent inspection tour of the Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal route in York County, Pennsylvania. He is standing at the lower end of Lock Twelve in the canal park of the same name, just below the Holtwood Dam.

With the coming of Summer 1985, we announce the installation of a new President for the American Canal Society — Dr. William E. Trout III of Richmond, Virginia. We are most fortunate that Bill has agreed to take the responsibility for the "top spot" in ACS. He has quite recently completed a tour of duty as President of the Virginia Canals and Navigations Society, and has assisted greatly in building up the size and prestige of that organization.

To go back a bit further, Bill a few years ago was the Research Scientist in the Department of Biology at the City of Hope National Medical Center in Duarte, California, a position he had held since completing his Post-Doctoral Fellowship in the Biology Division of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee in 1966. In his professional field of Genetics, he is well known for the dozens of articles he has published.

Bill obtained his B.S. in Biology at University of Richmond in 1959; his A.M. in Zoology at Indiana University in 1964; and his PhD in Genetics at Indiana

U. in 1965. He was Beta Beta Beta in Biology; Pi Mu Epsilon in Mathematics; and has subsequently been listed in "Who's Who in the West"; "American Men and Women of Science"; "Who's Who in the USA"; "Personalities in the West and Midwest"; and "Notable Americans of 1976-77".

But Dr. Bill's extra-curricular activity has been **CANALS** ever since he hiked the old towpath of the James River and Kanawha Canal as a Boy Scout, and tried (without success) to find someone who knew something about the J.R. & K. Since then, he has done his own research on the 1000 miles of historic canals and waterways of Virginia, and has branched out from his native state to examine (in great detail and by personal visits) some of the most interesting canals in the United States, Canada, Europe and the Far East. Today, there is scarcely a canal anywhere in the world that Bill Trout can't tell you about. Bill Trout holds memberships in twenty different canal societies and approximately thirty his-

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American Canals

BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN CANAL SOCIETY

"DEDICATED TO HISTORIC CANAL RESEARCH, PRESERVATION AND PARKS"

AMERICAN CANALS is issued quarterly by the American Canal Society, Incorporated. Objectives of the Society are to encourage the preservation, restoration, interpretation and use of the historic navigational canals of the Americas; to save threatened canals; and to provide an exchange of canal information.

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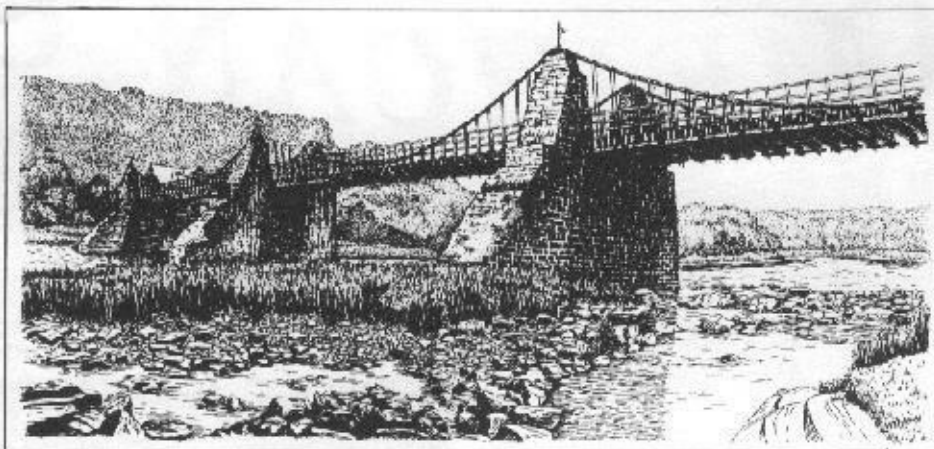
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Exploration Cruise Lines now offers a four or five night trip through the Panama Canal aboard the "Great Rivers Explorer", which includes stops at some of the nearby islands in the Caribbean and Pacific. For details write: Exploration Cruise Lines, 1500 Metropolitan Park Building, Seattle, Washington 98101. Phone: (206) 624-8551.

"Friends of the Roebling Bridge"



This fine sketch of John Roebling's Aqueduct on the Delaware and Hudson Canal was sent us by Architect William T. Jones of Scranton, Pennsylvania. He made this sketch for the "Friends of the Roebling Bridge", a recently formed organization with headquarters at P.O. Box 100, Barryville, New York 12719. When this sketch was made the Aqueduct no longer contained the side walls of the water flume to carry the canal over the Delaware River from Pennsylvania to New York State, but was being used instead as a toll highway bridge.

NEW ACS "PREXY"

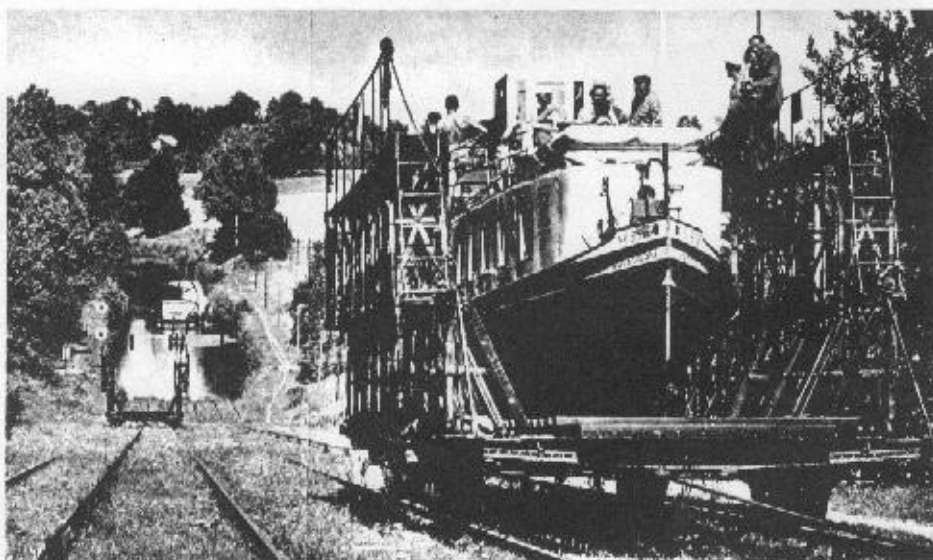
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torical, archeological, or environmental societies or associations in the United States and England.

He has commissioned paintings, canal boat models, lock models and other canal-related artifacts for display in Virginia and California; has placed the Rapidan Dam Canal and the Cat Rock Sluice on the National Register; has assisted various Virginia agencies with their plans for canal parks and has initiated the establishment of the Bailie-Grohman Canal Trail in British Columbia. He has

written thirty-five feature articles on various canals for maritime publications throughout the United States and Great Britain and at least fifty major articles in our own AMERICAN CANALS quarterly. He was one of the three founders of the American Canal Society in 1972 and its first Treasurer.

In his new position as ACS "Prexy", we wish him well. We assure him of all possible assistance in maintaining the position of the American Canal Society as the "Number One" association for the interpretation and preservation of our canal heritage and the dissemination of information on current and future navigational canals and waterways in the United States.



This interesting photo, as published in the September 1958 National Geographic Magazine, was discovered by Bill McKelvey. As you can see, it bears a remarkable resemblance to the Morris Canal Inclined Planes, or even possibly the Marine Railroads on the Trent-Severn. This photo was made on the Elblag Canal near Danzig, Poland. All we know about the picture is the caption, which reads: "From water to water, the Elblag Canal makes an over-the-hill portage on rails." Can anyone of our readers fill us in with further details? What (for instance) is the function of the large wheel in the canal basin below?

ERIE CANAL — 160 YEARS OLD!



Horses pull a passenger-packet boat along a 1.5 mile restored section of the old Erie Canal near Erie Canal Village in Rome, New York. (Courtesy New York State Department of Commerce.)

This year New York State celebrates the 160th Anniversary of the opening of the Erie Canal (1825). This event created, for the first time, a direct navigable water connection between the Atlantic Ocean and the Great Lakes; turned the little town of New York into the nation's leading seaport; and touched off a flurry of canal building in Northeastern United States unequaled anywhere else in the World since the British canal-building era fifty years earlier.

At the turn of the Nineteenth Century, construction of tow-path canals in America had languished. Except for extensive sales of lottery tickets for the Union Canal, and the Albert Gallatin Report of 1808, there was little to maintain public interest in canal building. Money, too, was lacking and the War of 1812 with England diverted attention for several years from internal improvements.

Only in New York State was interest in canals kept alive -- first by such interested parties as Elkanah Watson, who conducted a personal public relations campaign for a water connection between Albany and Lake Ontario; later by General Schuyler and William Weston, who in 1797 made an exploratory tour of upper New York; by James Hawley, a prominent New York Citizen who wrote a series of newspaper articles (1807) on the value to the city of a navigable waterway between the Hudson and Lake Erie; and -- finally -- the redoubtable DeWitt Clinton, mayor of New York City and later State Governor.

A delegation of two New York State legislators, Judge Forman and William Kirkpatrick, had approached President Thomas Jefferson in Washington, after the Gallatin Report had been made public, seeking some of the \$20 million mentioned in the report. Jefferson, who had just signed a bill (1806) to get work started on the famous National Road was cold to the entire idea of the Erie Canal. "It is a splendid project" he said "and may be executed a century hence . . . here is a canal of a few miles, projected by General Washington (The Potomack Canal) which has languished for many years because the small sum of \$200,000 . . . cannot be obtained. And you talk of making a canal three hundred and fifty miles long through a wilderness! It is little short of madness to think about it!"

Geddes Runs Surveys

But there were many prominent citizens of New York who would not give up on the idea. About 1808, the New York legislature appropriated \$600 for a survey, which Judge James Geddes, of Onondaga County, was asked to run. Geddes, a lawyer, with some experience in surveying, ran surveys from Albany to both Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, using the natural waterways as much as possible. When he made his report a year later, Geddes argued that if the Lake Ontario connection were used, much of the trade might be turned aside into the St. Lawrence River, whereas a direct connection with Lake Erie would assure through trade with the western states in the USA. The War of

1812, and the threat of further hostilities to the North, crystallized the determination of the Legislature to pursue an all-American route to Lake Erie.

There was considerable opposition to the Erie Canal, particularly by representatives from New York City, since it now appeared that the full expense of such a project would have to be borne by the State, with no help from the federal government. DeWitt Clinton, the man later to be called "the builder of the Erie Canal" had at first expressed little interest in the project. His friends won him over, and he soon became one of the most vigorous promoters of the Canal. At the close of the War with England, a group of responsible citizens, headed by DeWitt Clinton, met in New York City (1815) and signed a petition explaining the benefits of the proposed canal, which was circulated throughout the State, particularly to those counties through which the canal would pass. As a result the State Legislature, at its next session, received appeals from more than 100,000 of its constituents to get the canal started! They subsequently appropriated \$20,000 for detailed surveys. In the meantime, DeWitt Clinton, who had served previously as Mayor of New York, was elected (1817) Governor of the State, putting him in the most favorable position to see the project through. He predicted that the Canal would be finished in ten years, and was re-elected Governor in 1821, as it became obvious that his ten-year prediction was conservative.

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De Witt Clinton, usually referred to as "The Builder of the Erie Canal". (From Alvin Harlow's "Old Towpaths")

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It was decided that not only would the Canal be built across northern New York State, but that a separate Canal would also be dug to connect the Tidewater Hudson (near Albany) with Lake Champlain, in anticipation of a connection into the St. Lawrence via the Richelieu River. For the final survey work, Benjamin Wright was assigned to the Erie, and James Geddes to the Champlain. While these two men had both had some surveying experience, neither of them could lay claim to the title of Engineer. Yet the two of them assumed the technical direction of the biggest engineering job yet attempted in America.

Canvass White

Canvass White, a young engineer with the Wright survey team, turned out to be the real engineering genius of the Erie Canal. He had studied surveying, mathematics, astronomy and other subjects at Fairfield Academy. His work in running levels west of Rome, N. Y., soon came to the attention of Benjamin Wright, and later, DeWitt Clinton himself, who saw rare possibilities in the young man. At Clinton's suggestion, Canvass White was sent to Europe in the fall of 1817 to inspect the canals of the Old World and to obtain some up-to-date surveying equipment. White walked 2000 miles along the canals of Great Britain, studying every feature. He returned the following year with copious notes and drawings, and new instruments.

In the meantime there was great indecision as to whether to build the locks of wood or stone. Proper cement for the stone could be procured only from Europe, and at great expense; wood would be perishable in a few years. Doubtfully, the decision was made to use stone, putting the blocks together with quicklime mortar, and using the expensive European cement only for "pointing." However White, within a few months after his return from abroad, discovered a deposit of stone near Chittenango, on the line of the canal, from which an excellent grade of hydraulic cement could be made!

The actual work of construction began (July 4, 1817) at the center section of the canal, where the going was easiest. By December of 1817, between 2000 and 3000 men were at work and 15 miles of canal had been completed. A number of Yankee innovations had been developed such as the plow and scraper, dumping wheelbarrows, sharp-edged shovel, etc. to speed up the manual work. An unusual tree-cutter, as well as a stump puller were invented on the Erie Canal. Difficulties were experienced in the Montezuma marshes near Syracuse, where the ground was so saturated with water that excavation was postponed till winter when the ground was frozen. In the summer of 1819, a thousand men died in the same area, of malaria. The lessons of the Panama Canal had still to be learned, and the importance of eliminating mosquitoes! In spite of many set-backs, and constant heckling by the opponents of the canal, the work continued with short sections of canal being opened to boat traffic as they were completed. One of the most difficult feats of the entire project was the climbing of the Niagara Encarpment, a solid-rock ridge at the west end of the route. Here Nathan Roberts pierced a solid mixture of limestone and flint, using black blasting powder to cut a flight of five double locks, each with a lift of twelve feet — thus producing the famed Lockport Locks.

It took two years to do it, but when completed, every man on the job was proud of every lock that they had blasted out of nearly solid rock. This was the major obstacle to join the canal with the waters of Lake Erie, at Buffalo.

When the canal was opened on October 26, 1825, nearly two years earlier than planned, the populace of the entire State declared a holiday, while De Witt Clinton and a triumphal group of dignitaries officially opened the canal with a flotilla, starting in Buffalo and winding up in New York City, preceded by cannon-fire along the entire route, with a "wedding of the waters" ceremony at the New York City end. De Witt Clinton personally dumped a container of Lake Erie water into New York Harbor, symbolic of the all-water connection to the Great Lakes. It was a great day in the history of the State of New York, marking the completion of one of the most ambitious engineering achievements of mankind to that date.

Champlain Canal

Almost overlooked in the excitement of the last few months of the building of the Erie, was the opening in 1823 of the Champlain Canal. The architect of this project was James Geddes, assisted by a French Engineer named Marc Isambard Brunel, who had done the original survey work between the Hudson River and Lake Champlain. Construction on the Champlain Canal began in 1818 and it extended sixty-six miles upstream from two entry points: one, a series of locks off the Hudson River in the village of Waterford; and the other, at the Cohoes Junction with the Erie Canal, via the Waterford southern tier. Northern terminus of the canal was Whitehall, on a navigable arm of Lake Champlain. The Lake extends north across the Canadian border, where it becomes the source for the Richelieu River, running north to the St. Lawrence.



Erie Canal Aqueduct at Rochester, New York, about 1900. (Courtesy William Etchberger, Lebanon, Pa.)

After normal relations had been re-established with the Canadians at the close of the War of 1812, the Legislature of Lower Canada passed a bill (1818) granting authority for a canal to by-pass the Chambly Rapids on the Richlieu. A lock and dam had previously been built at St. Ours, to permit slack-water navigation along the Richlieu to the Chambly area. Numerous delays and financial difficulties beset the Chambly Canal, which was initially opened in 1843, but due to poor construction, had to be rebuilt. It was finally opened to through traffic in 1858, 12-miles in length, with 9 locks.

Thus in 1858, a direct water connection was completed between the Port of New York and the Ports of Montreal and Quebec on the tidewater section of the St. Lawrence River — a major achievement for both countries, and the beginning of expanded trade between them. Needless to say, the economy of the Champlain Valley in northern New York State and Vermont was favorably affected by this new, inland route to upper Canada.

"Wall Street"

The financing of the Erie and Champlain Canals was a colossal undertaking for the State of New York. Refused any help by the federal government, they decided to "go it alone". Banking and investment firms in lower Manhattan were set up whose express purpose was to sell stock and collect money for the financing of the State's canal-building program. The area later became known simply as "Wall Street". For a description of this new financial development in the USA, we quote Thomas Kiernan, author of "The Road to Colossus":

"Not until after the War of 1812 did the Wall Street symbol take shape. Until then, Philadelphia and Boston were the country's main financial centers — Philadelphia because that was where the first federal bank was established, Boston because that city remained the nation's busiest port and chief source of private investment finance and banking. It was only when the state of New York set out in 1817 to raise funds for the construction of the Erie Canal that New York City — Wall Street — began to rise to prominence as a national financial hub. Investment syndicates and banks in Boston and Philadelphia had followed a tradition of aristocratic exclusivity in their private financing operations, limiting participation in important investment schemes to select members of the moneyed classes.

"The financing of the Erie Canal was by far the largest fund-raising endeavor ever attempted. Because the canal was to be a uniquely New York enterprise, designed to improve the economic fortunes of the city and state at the likely expense of



In the early Nineteenth Century the financing of the Erie Canal turned "Wall Street" into the economic center of America. (Courtesy United Airlines Magazine.)

Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, it was roundly resented in those regions and failed to attract significant funds from exclusivist Boston and Philadelphia sources. Thus, almost by default, the financing of the canal became the first instance in which ordinary citizens and organizations invested their money in the hope of future profit.

"The fact that the state guaranteed every individual investment in the canal project sweetened the lure, and the response was overwhelming. Because New York City was the chief locus of the state's private banking, trading, and legal network, most of the financing was conducted from there. Private banks and one-man investment firms were created to broker the canal funding, and storefront offices were established along Wall Street and its tributary lanes to handle the complex handwritten paperwork connected with it. Soon the district was saturated with a dense mix of private banking offices, money exchanges, canal-business firms, and the like.

Canal A Success!

"Wall Street might have remained just another busy small-city Main Street had it not been for the immediate success of the Erie Canal and the resultant canal fever it generated in the rest of the country. The Erie recovered its construction costs out of revenues within a few years and began to pay handsome dividends to its investors. Since Wall Street had demonstrated such expertise in canal financing, canal builders from other regions called upon New York money and brokerage firms to handle their financing.

"The success of the Erie also made New York the preeminent commercial city in

the nation generally, and more and more foreign investment money gravitated to Wall Street. By 1830, New York's stock exchange, dealing primarily in canal securities but also promoting shares in new industrial companies formed to exploit the transport benefits provided by the Erie, far outstripped the Boston and Philadelphia exchanges."

NY Canals Today

Today, even though there is occasional talk of abandonment, which has spawned the formation of such organizations as BARGE (Bi-Recreational Association for the Restoration of the Great Erie) the Inland Waterway System of New York State appears to be alive and well.

The State of New York (Department of Transportation) boasts the only waterway system in the country which, (with the exception of one C.E. lock on the Hudson River), does not depend upon the Corps of Engineers for its operation and maintenance. The entire Waterway consists of the Erie Canal, the Champlain Canal, the Oswego Canal, and the Cayuga and Seneca Canals.

It's commercial transport consists primarily of oil barges (built to fit the locks) and a few other vessels, such as Capt. Olaf Kaldefoss' "M.V. Day Peckenbaugh," carrying cement. There are also sizable passenger-carrying boats, such as Peter Wiles' "Emita II" and the American-Canadian Lines' "New Shoreham II"

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"For full information on the development of the NYC financial district, read "The Road to Colossus" published by William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1985.

Erie Canal — 160 Years Old!

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which make regularly scheduled trips over most of the New York Waterways.

In recent years, the Erie Canal has experienced a huge surge in its use for recreational purposes. In 1984 alone, nearly 100,000 pleasure boats were locked through the 36 canal locks and tour boats provided thousands of passengers with a new appreciation of New York's beautiful landscapes from the unique perspective of a canal cruise. Boating and "locking through" has been free since 1883, when tolls on the canal were dropped.

As of this writing, the following events are planned in connection with the 160th celebration of the opening of the Erie Canal:

On June 10, a one half-hour video documentary, "Carry On, Oh Erie," (The Extraordinary Course of the Erie Canal) will be premiered in Albany. During the summer months, it will be seen on PBS stations throughout the nation. With Burl Ives narrating, the documentary, produced by Van der Broeck Associates Inc., will highlight the Erie Canal's historical significance to New York State and its expanding importance as a recreational waterway and energy resource.

June events include a Rensselaer County Riverfront Festival in Troy on June 1-2, the Empire State Regatta in Albany on June 8-9 and a Village Days Festival in Fairport on June 13-14.



Bill Shank, and party, stopped in recently at the Erie Canal Museum in Syracuse, New York. Extensive construction work is being done in the north section of the Museum, where the old weigh lock is being unearthed and a full-scale replica of an old Erie Canal Boat is being built. The entire project is expected to be completed by the end of 1985. Bill is shown here, with Todd Weseloh (left) — a valued member of the museum staff — in front of one of the many museum displays.

On July 4, the re-enactment of the Erie Canal ground breaking will be staged at the Erie Canal Village in Rome. On July 13, at Van Buren, Onondaga County, an "Anything That Floats Day" observance will be held. A Canal Fest '85 is scheduled at Tonawanda - North Tonawanda on July 21-28.

A Hudson River Festival will be held in Coxsackie, Greene County, on Aug. 3, a Village Sesquicentennial Celebration is planned in Clyde, Wayne County, on Aug. 12-15, and a "Canal Day" observance will occur at the Schoharie Crossing State Park in Fort Hunter, Montgomery County, on Aug. 18.

In September, Canal Days will be staged in Palmyra on Sept. 14-15 and a Towpath Rally will take place at Rochester on Sept. 21.

The 160th Anniversary of the Opening of the Erie Canal will be observed in New York City, Albany and Buffalo on Oct. 26.

Canal Museums

The flavor of the early canal days in New York State, and the role canals played in the nation's social, cultural and economic growth, are recaptured in several museums and reconstructed canal towns in the State.

Chief among these is the Erie Canal Museum located in the Weighlock Building in Syracuse, the last remaining structure of its kind to survive from New York's 19th Century canal system. Constructed in 1849-50, it housed the scales used for determining canal tolls.

The museum's orientation center features lock and boat models, tools, original engineering drawings, prints, paintings and photographs. Special canal-oriented exhibits are changed periodically. A \$400,000 capital improvement program is to be completed by the end of the year. New attractions will include a replica of a full size mid-19th Century canal boat, hands-on exhibits and a slide orientation program.

The Erie Canal Village at Rome, near the spot where the first shovelful of dirt was turned for the Erie Canal, is a circa-1840 canal village reconstructed in a rustic setting. Its principal attraction is a mule-drawn passenger packet ride along a 1.5-mile restored section of the original canal. An 1890-era narrow gauge steam locomotive and train also operates on one bank of the canal.

The Canastota Canal Town Museum, in the Village of Canastota, also offers a glimpse of life in the "old canal days." Open to the public year-round, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday,

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and weekends on request, with no admission. A mid-19th Century building also has been restored to its original condition and includes furnishings, photographs and models from the Erie Canal era.

Erie Canal brochures are available from the State Department of Transportation, Office of Communications, 5 Gov. Harriman State Campus, Albany, N.Y. 12232.

PCS AND VC & NS COMBINED MEET AT GREAT FALLS

Approximately forty members of the Pennsylvania and Virginia (Potomac Chapter) Canal Societies held a combined meeting at Vienna, Virginia April 19 - 20, 1985, featuring lectures and activities on "George Washington's Canal at Great Falls, Virginia", and visits to sections of the C. & O. Canal in Maryland.

Also known as the "Patowmack Company", this enterprise was directed by our first President and resulted in a series of some of the country's oldest canals to by-pass rapids on the lower Potomac River northwest of Washington, D.C. The most spectacular of these canals was the one-mile Great Falls Canal, completed 1785-1802, to overcome a 77-foot drop in the River in Fairfax County, Virginia. Much of the old channel and the remnants of five locks have been stabilized and preserved by the National Park Service at Great Falls Park, on the Virginia side of the river. It was here that the group spent much time during the week-end.

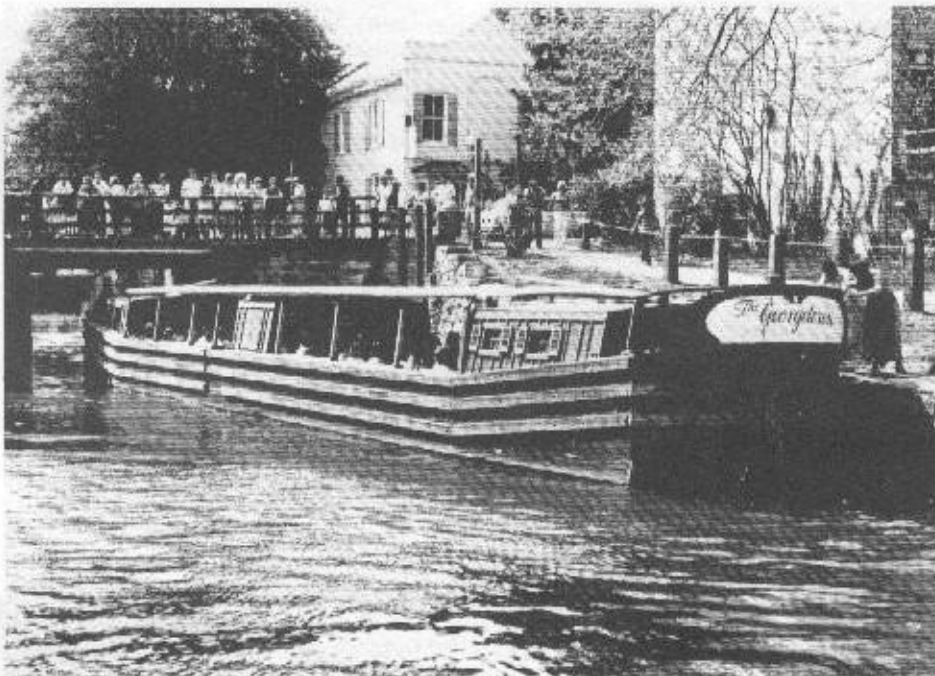
Other activities included lectures by George Higgs, President Emeritus of the Virginia Canals and Navigations Society; by Gilbert Gude, Director of the Congressional Research Service in the Library of Congress; and talks by Sam Hooper, President of the V.C.&N. Society and Eric Deloney, Director of American Engineering Records in Washington. The week-end also included a guided tour of the Little Falls Canal on the Maryland side of the river, conducted by Geologist William Davies, and a ride on the "Georgetown" Canal Boat (back of mules) through a lock and along a section of the C. & O. Canal close to Georgetown University. The weather was good and a great time was had by all present.



Sam Hooper, President of the Virginia Canals and Navigations Society, gives our tour group an explanation of what they are about to see as they stroll along the towpath.



Here is one of the stabilized locks at the lower end of the Great Falls Canal. This is one of the five locks which lowered the boats to the Potomac River downstream from Great Falls. Average drop in the locks was about 16 feet per lock, a total of 77 feet.

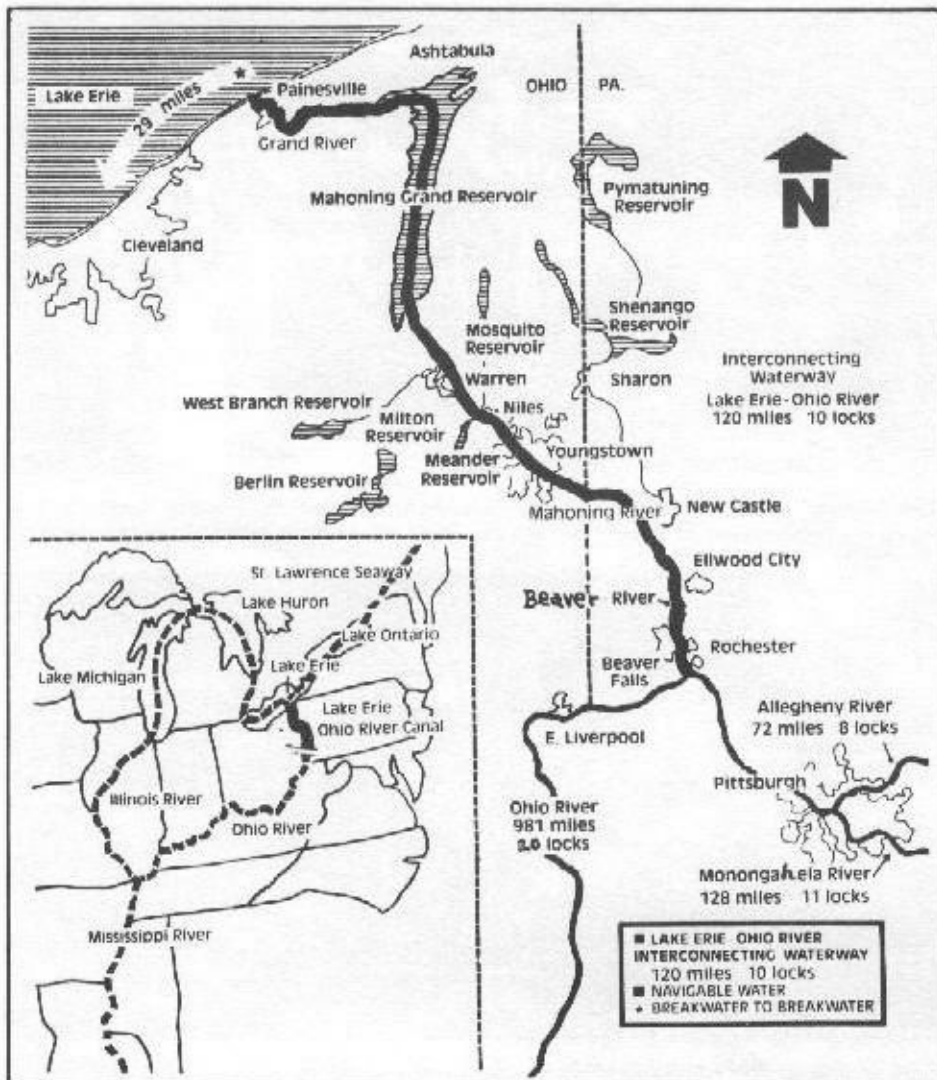


Our party waits on a bridge in Georgetown to board the canal boat, shown here at the lower end of Lift Lock Number Four of the C. & O. Canal.



The final tremendous "cut" through solid rock to get the canal back to the river below the falls. With the crude blasting equipment of the late 1700's this must have been a heart-breaking task!

GREAT LAKES INLAND WATERWAY



We reprint here in full this interesting article, written by Richard Eilers, Staff Writer for the Cleveland "Plain Dealer", as published March 3, 1985. It concerns the activities of one of our ACS members — Ronald D. Reid, P.E. of Tallmadge, Ohio, whose convincing arguments in favor of a Lake Erie — Ohio River Ship Canal have come to the attention of Congressional Representative James A. Traficant, who ardently supports the idea. Congressman Traficant has recently introduced H.R. 1519 in Washington to activate a new study of the proposed canal by the Corps of Engineers, and has also assisted in creating a non-profit organization known as the "Great Lakes Inland Waterway Authority", with headquarters in Youngstown, Ohio. The accompanying map shows how the proposed canal would create a "complete water circle" in central USA to provide inexpensive water transit throughout this heavily industrialized area. The American Canal Society endorses the whole idea. Addresses to which you may write for further information are included at the end of this article. (Editor)

For the past 10 years, he has specialized in topography as a site planner for a Cleveland industrial construction engineering company.

Besides becoming an authority on the lake-to-river waterway, he has contributed engineering studies on old canals to several Ohio historic canal societies.

According to Reid, a canal between the Great Lakes and the Gulf of Mexico, via Lake Erie and the Ohio River, was first suggested by George Washington himself.

The project was studied in detail in the 1950s and 1960s by the Army Corps of Engineers, which recommended the canal in 1967 as feasible and economically beneficial, he said.

From his study of canal histories, Reid believes the lake-to-river canal proposal could have survived the expected, natural opposition of railroads, but not with the added opposition of jealous commercial and political leadership in Pittsburgh and Cleveland.

"Pittsburgh didn't want to share its cheap Ohio River transportation advantage with Youngstown's steel mills, and Cleveland didn't like the Lake Erie end of the canal being 30 miles away at Fairport Harbor," he explained. "Now, maybe the leaders of those cities, and of Ohio and Pennsylvania, will see how everyone would benefit from the increased commerce that would come from linking the St. Lawrence Seaway with the Ohio and Mississippi rivers.

For seven years, Reid has spent hundreds of hours and hundreds of dollars to research and update the canal proposal and write letters trying to stir interest among government and business leaders.

(Concluded on Page Nine)

TALLMADGE, OHIO — The Cleveland-Youngstown-Pittsburgh steel industry would be alive and well today if a shipping canal proposed some 20 years ago had not been scuttled.

That's the economic gospel of civil engineer Ronald D. Reid, who cannot look at a map of the United States without feeling dumbfounded that the long-proposed Lake Erie-Ohio River canal was never built.

"The canal offers such tremendous, obvious benefit to this entire region, I am amazed by the shortsighted opposition that prevented the project from going through," he said.

"The public just doesn't grasp how cheap water transportation is and what that would do to improve commerce and redevelop industry. Water transport of bulk freight (such as coal, ore, oil and grain) is 2½ times cheaper than rail and 10 times cheaper than truck."

Reid's aspirations for the canal were heightened last week when U.S. Rep. James A. Traficant Jr., D-17, of Youngstown, started a campaign to revive the project with grass-roots support.

Reid expects the canal's prospects to be further improved by this year's comple-

tion and opening of the Tenn-Tom shipping canal, a 280-mile, \$2 billion shipping shortcut between the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi River, via the Tennessee and Tombigbee rivers in Mississippi and Alabama.

"While regional politics painted our lake-to-river canal as a 'boondoggle,' the South got behind this project and pushed it through Congress," he said.

"When Pennsylvania and Ohio see the development already taking place along the Tenn-Tom, they will understand why our canal should be built," Reid expects, and hopes, Traficant is the right man at the right time to transform the canal from theory to reality.

"The congressman has the enthusiasm," he said. "And with the collapse of much of the steel industry in the past 10 years, Cleveland and Pittsburgh should be for the canal, instead of against it."

Reid has been a canal buff since he was a student at Youngstown State University 15 years ago. He increased his expertise in the mid-1970s when he was hired to make engineering studies of Ohio flood plains and waterways — some of which include remnants of 1880s canals — for the federal government.

A NEW "TALE OF TWO CITIES"

"Many people are just blown away by the magnitude of the project," he said. "Government leaders are politically shy of something that would run so long and cost so much."

The death of basic steel in Youngstown, and the severe cutbacks of the industry in Cleveland and Pittsburgh, are proof, he said, that the canal was needed.

Reid said the canal would actually be relatively cheap to build, because some parts of the proposal could be scaled down.

"For some reason, the Corps designed it with an 18-foot-deep channel, but it doesn't need more than the 12-foot channel of the Ohio River," he said. "That would save a quarter of the cost of digging, and a third of the cost of building necessary locks and dams."

Ironically, the death of the steel industry in Youngstown reduced the canal's cost, too, Reid said.

"The original proposal included what would have been the tremendous cost to close, dismantle and move the then-operating mills which lined the Mahoning, so the river could be straightened and widened as a canal bed," he explained.

"Now that the mills are closed and abandoned, all that's left is the cost of razing any in the way."

Thus, despite tremendous inflation of the past 20 years, the canal's estimated cost has risen from \$1 billion in 1965 to only about \$2.5 billion or less today, he said.

To obtain further information, or to indicate your support of the proposed ship canal, write the following: Ronald Reid, P.E., 573 Narragansett Drive, Tallmadge, Ohio 44278; the Great Lakes Inland Waterway Authority, P.O. Box 987, Youngstown, Ohio 44501; or Congressman James Traficant, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515.

WATERWAY CRUISES

Two special, chartered cruises are being made through the Welland Canal, June 23 and June 24, 1985, upbound and down-bound. For further information contact Continuing Education Services, Niagara College, Welland, Ontario L3B 5S2. Phone: (416) 735-2211.

Coastwise Cruise Line this year is offering a series of "Mini-Cruises" on the Steam Class "Pilgrim Belle" from Hyannis, Massachusetts, Alexandria, Virginia and West Palm Beach, Florida, which include 7, 8 and 10-day journeys along the New England Coastline; up the Connecticut and Hudson Rivers; along Chesapeake Bay; the Intra-Coastal Waterway; and the Florida East Coast. Write Coastwise Cruise Line, P.O. Box 1630, 36 Ocean Street, Hyannis, Massachusetts 02601. Phone: (617) 778-6996.

The following interesting story (which is fact, not fiction) was sent to ACS Vice President Bill McKelvey by the Secretary of the Steamship Historical Society Collection in Baltimore. It was written by Robert Donavan for the New York Herald Tribune, February 6, 1959. We enjoyed it thoroughly; we think you will too! (Editor.)

WASHINGTON, Feb. 5, 1959 — Vice-Adm. Robert L. Dennison, whom President Eisenhower appointed today to command American Naval forces in the eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean, dearly hopes that his ships will never sail into the total confusion that once overtook the Presidential yacht, Williamsburg, when he was President Truman's naval aide.

Though Adm. Dennison was not in any way to blame, no White House naval aide ever had to endure such a comic opera as unfolded around Mr. Truman and himself as they cruised unsuspectingly up Chesapeake Bay on Sunday, April 23, 1952.

The President was heading back to Washington after a leisurely trip. The Williamsburg, it was estimated, would reach Morgantown, Md., on the Potomac River at 10:30 a.m. Monday and pass under the Morgantown bridge on Route 301.

Whenever a President goes underneath a bridge, in a boat, car or train or on foot, the precaution is taken of clearing it so that no motorist or pedestrian can toss a brick or bomb at him. Accordingly, the Secret Service had a standing arrangement with the state police at Morgantown to notify them when the bridge was to be "secured." It had become a routine matter for the Williamsburg police to radio the White House communications office instructions as to when state police should be ready for the president.

That Sunday evening, therefore, the White House received a message saying in effect: "Tell Morgantown state police President will be coming through in his yacht at 10:30 a.m. tomorrow."

A new man happened to be on duty in the White House that night, which was all right except that he hailed from Morgantown, West Virginia, and took cognizance of no other Morgantown whatsoever.

Dutifully, he picked up the phone and asked for the West Virginia, state police in his home town on the banks of the Monongahela River.

"This is the White House calling," he said. "The President will be through in his yacht at 10:30 tomorrow morning. Take the usual security precautions."

The officer on the other end was speechless, but not for long. A gag, obviously, he thought. He'd wait until the stranger hung up, then he would call the White House himself to prove the whole thing was a prank. When he called,

the White House said of course it had telephoned and get busy on those preparations for the President's safety.

This was the word that set off the greatest frenzy in the modern history of Morgantown, W. Va.

A squad car was rushed to Monongahela River Lock No. 10.

"The President's coming through on his yacht at 10:30 in the morning!" a state policeman informed the lockmaster. The lockmaster was appalled. Somehow or other he ascertained that the 243-foot boat had a beam of thirty-six feet and a draft of fifteen feet.

"We can't squeeze her through," the lockmaster roared. "The river's only seven feet deep above the lock and nine feet deep below."

"The White House says, 'Get her through,' and you get her through," the state policeman commanded, and hurried back to his barracks where calls for reinforcements were already going out to other state police districts.

As the reinforcements began rolling in at dawn, city officials, now on the alert for the President's visit, were beating their brains out trying to figure how the Williamsburg could get to Morgantown. One way, of course, would be to haul the 1,900-ton vessel overland from the Potomac across the Alleghany Mountains with Mr. Truman aboard. The other way was to sail her out into the Atlantic, through the Gulf of Mexico, up the Mississippi to the Ohio and thence into the Monongahela at Pittsburgh.

This seemed an extraordinary journey for the President, but of the alternatives it was the less preposterous, so when the sun rose, the officials, the police, the press and finally the populace began to assemble along the river banks. All were eager and in high spirits, except the lockmaster who waited in despair, wondering what would happen to his pension after the President had become lodged tight in Lock 10. As 10:30 neared, the crowd looked down the Monongahela for the sleek white yacht, but the only vessel in sight was a coal scow.

Then, just as expectation of a great day in Morgantown reached its height, the comedy ended as swiftly as it had begun. Back in the White House the day duty officer checking over the log of the night before, discovered the error. The state police were notified that the President's yacht was not sailing up the Monongahela, but was about to berth in Washington.

Shortly afterward, Adm. Dennison wrote an unofficial report on the incident which so far surpassed the usual literary quality of such documents that, it is said, the editors of "The New Yorker" gave serious thought to publishing it as a feature article.

One of the satisfactory aspects of the Admiral's new command is that there is not one Morgantown on the Atlantic and another Morgantown on the Mediterranean. He expects clear sailing.

CANADIAN-AMERICAN PARTY TOURS THE TRENT-SEVERN



Our tour boat ties up while our party inspects the World's Highest Hydraulic Lift Lock. Minutes after this picture was made our boat entered the 33-foot wide by 140-foot long chamber shown in raised position on the left.

May 17 - 19, 1985 was a bit cool in Peterborough, Ontario, but even a small shower during the Saturday dedication ceremonies did not mar a most enjoyable gathering of some seventy members and guests of the Canadian and American Canal Societies that week end. Our headquarters were at Trent University, just north of the city, from whose campus both buses and boats picked us up and dropped us off during our journeys along the beautiful Trent-Severn Waterway, to as far away as Burleigh Falls, some 30 kilometers north of Peterborough.

During our journeys along The Waterway, we passed through nine lift-locks, including the famous Peterborough Hydraulic Lift Lock - highest such lift lock in the World. Our trip on Saturday was on one of the regular Lift-Lock Cruise



The Captain of our tour boat was also local historian and narrator. He is shown here at the "mike" as we are raised in one of the conventional, mitre-gate lift locks.



The Presidents of the Canadian and American Canal Societies: Colin Duquemin and Bill Shank.



Looking back from the stern of our tour boat as we leave the Peterborough Lift Lock at the upper level of the canal. No complex mechanism is needed to activate the lift - merely an extra foot of water in whichever of the two chambers is in the "up" position; the extra water weight activates the lift.

boats, and on Sunday aboard Lloyd Ackert's "Kawartha Voyageur", a three-deck cabin ship which easily accommodated our group, and on which we were served a sit-down lunch on our voyage to Burleigh Falls.

Other activities of the weekend included a wine and cheese reception Friday evening, at which we were welcomed by officials of the Waterway; a bus trip to Lakefield Saturday, where the official opening ceremonies of the 1985 Trent-Severn navigation season took place; a splendid equestrian show by some thirty members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; and parades and musical entertainment by the Royal Canadian Sea Cadets. On Saturday evening there was a banquet, and we enjoyed lectures and slide shows on the Trent-Severn and its history.

Everything which had been planned came off exactly on schedule, under the capable, guiding hands of Doug Stewart, Central Area Manager for the Trent-Severn Waterway. We all agreed it was a most successful affair and we are tentatively planning a "repeat" gathering for 1987, this time in the USA, probably with headquarters at Syracuse, New York.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The November '84 issue of "American Canals" is a truly splendid issue. Congratulations! Congratulations! Congratulations!

*Franz J. Katz,
33 East End Ave. (1-A) New York, N.Y.
10028*

I have recently been going through my set of AMERICAN CANALS, to prepare a card index to all the canal maps found therein. I read again the "Canal vs. Railroad" letter by Martin Van Buren, A C Feb. '83, p. 7. Sorry to say, I believe this letter to be an obvious hoax.

In January, 1829, not a single steam locomotive had turned a wheel anywhere in the United States. The Sturbridge Lion, on the D & H, made her first trip Aug. 8, 1829. The De Witt Clinton (Mohawk & Hudson) first ran Aug. 3, 1831. Tom Thumb, on the B & O August 1830. Best Friend of Charleston, December 1830. The famous Rainhill trials in England were still to come, in October of 1929. Where, then, did Van Buren get his information about the speed of fifteen miles an hour (not attained until 1831, in the U S)? Not to mention the burning of crops and scaring of livestock. Van must have had a forward-looking crystal ball, or perhaps was gifted with "second sight".

On January 31, 1829 Andrew Jackson was not President of the United States, but merely President-Elect. We may dismiss this as a bit of political flattery, especially since Van Buren was angling (successfully) for a position in Jackson's Cabinet. Van Buren took office as Governor of New York State on 1/1/29, but resigned the position 3/12/29 to accept the post of Secretary of State under Jackson.

My personal opinion is that this letter is a piece of campaign literature, actually written by some political hack, some time in 1836 when Van Buren was running for President. He was President, 1837-41, but was not renominated. The anonymous writer apparently knew about the short term as Governor and so dated the concocted letter accordingly. But he knew nothing about railroad history!

I have seen this letter printed more than once, in various books on railroad history; always attributed to some hard-to-check source. I won't believe it to be authentic until I see it credited to some source earlier than 1836.

As a final shot, let me point out that in New York State politics, Van Buren was always of the opposite party to De Witt Clinton, the "father" of the Erie Canal. How come Van is suddenly a canal advocate?

*James Wilson, P.E.
414 Pelton Ave., Staten Island, N.Y.
10310*

You were very thoughtful to send the extra copy of your last bulletin, and I was pleased that you thought my story would be of interest. I can't help but wonder how many canal buffs might also be Rotarians.

Thanks also for the newspaper clipping. It reminded me of cruising through the city of Nottingham shortly after the reporter interviewed us, when a chap called out from the bank, "It sure beats printing, doesn't it!" It rather astonished me that a complete stranger so far from home would connect me with the printing industry, and I made some comment to that effect. His answer was that he had read about us in the paper. A month or so after that a friend showed us the story you sent.

We really enjoy your bulletin! I have referred to it a number of times when discussing canals with English friends. They are usually amazed that we travel so far to cruise canals, until I explain that in America we let our canals disappear to a large extent. Then they will usually comment that they almost let the same thing happen until the IWA was formed and began putting pressure on Parliament. I also point out that England is a miniature country by comparison where one can cruise for a few miles and find a completely different set of circumstances. But I quickly add that due to the growing interest of canal enthusiasts in America a lot of restoration is going on, plus the formation of museums and exhibits. Perhaps, some day, there will be more canal cruising opportunities too.

*R. A. Mitchell, Jr.,
Kimalia, P.O. Box 298, Volcano, Hawaii
96785*

BLACKSTONE CANAL

ACS Vice President Bill Gerber urges support for the designation of the Blackstone River and Canal as a "National Heritage Corridor". The National Park Service has completed a study of the 45-mile route of the old Blackstone Canal, connecting Providence, Rhode Island and Worcester, Massachusetts, (1928-1848), with its 49 granite locks and 451-foot lift.

Now is the time, says Bill, to obtain federal legislation recognizing the document now on file in Washington entitled: "Blackstone River Corridor Study: Conservation Options Draft".

Such a measure is strongly supported by Richard T. Moore, Chairman of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts Committee on Taxation. Moore points out that a National Heritage Corridor does not involve acquisition of land or buildings, and is therefore far less costly than a National Park. Such designation would provide increased national visibility and federal technical assistance to supplement the efforts of Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

Am enclosing a copy of an essay written by a 7th grade student from St. Mary's Catholic School. It is interesting because he was one of the people who helped in the cleanup day on August 13, 1984. There were over 60 people taking part that day. It is young people such as these who will be the future preservationists. It is so heartening to see the youth participate.

The Portage Canal Cleanup Project is moving ahead. There is 1/2 block done, a new footbridge, a walkway along the water's edge and landscaping. More good news is the fact, that the City has put \$30,000 in the project and will be getting, on July 1st, ten workers from the Wisconsin Conservation Corp. A landscape student will be sketching further landscaping and laying out a hiking trail along the canal. Flowers and trees are being planted.

As to the future, a non-profit corporation will be set up to create the Fox-Wisconsin Heritage Waterway Park. This will be a linear park from Portage Locks to Green Bay. There is even talk that something will be done about the Portage Lock, which needs repair.

Other good news is the fact that the Fox River Locks from Neenah-Menasha to DePere will be kept open from May 15 to October 15th. The State and private sector have come up with necessary funds for this year. There will be a user fee. More permanent legislation is pending.

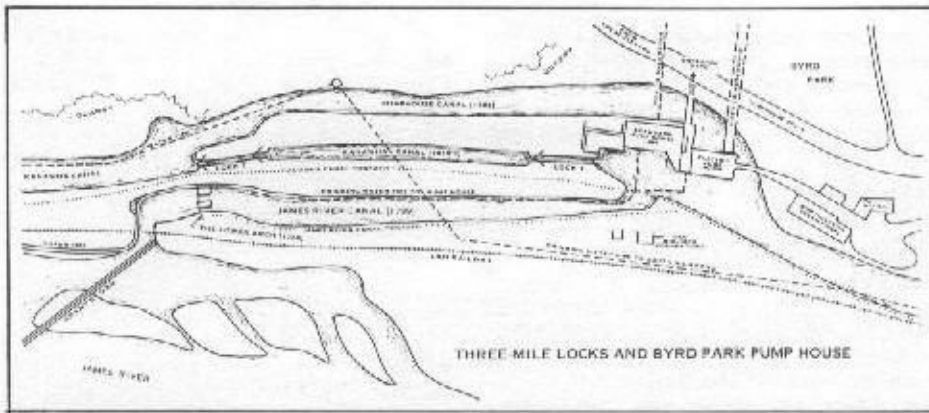
I will keep you informed on the progress of the Fox-Wisconsin Park project as it develops, also, on the marked canoe trail. The Portage Canal Society sponsors an Adult/child canoe race on the canal and the Fox River, a course of 7 miles. There will be prizes and the race will be kicked off by our Senator and Representative from this district. (June 29th)

The essay by Dean Anderson, which took Second Place in the St. Mary's Golden "K" Contest held in May of 1985, follows:

"What I like about my community is the canal cleanup that was held last year. I enjoyed going down to the canal and seeing the people that were really concerned about the cleanliness of our city. It helped me accomplish some projects that I was working on then. My friend and I went down there to help with completing some skill awards for scouts. When I was down there hardly anybody treated us as little kids. They also treated me and my friend as if they knew us even before we went to the canal. It was also fun moving bushes and trying to figure out what we might be able to do with the space that we cleaned out. Sometimes I saw a spot where we could put in a bench or a picnic table. I felt kind of angry and kind of sorry for the people who did the damage to the canal. I'm glad we had a chance to make it beautiful again."

*Frederica Kleist, Corresponding Sec. &
Vice Pres. Portage Canal Society Inc.
528 West Cook St., Portage, WI 53901*

JAMES RIVER CANAL BICENTENNIAL (1785-1985)



One of a number of illustrations in a new brochure entitled "Touring Richmond's Canals" just issued by the Richmond Chapter, Virginia Canals and Navigations Society. Professionally produced, it provides an excellent history and easily-followed driving guide to Richmond's historic canals and waterways. For your copy, send \$1.00 ppd to Bill Trout, 35 Towana Road, Richmond, Virginia 23226, payable to "VC & NS".

The following article was written by Overton McGhee and published in the Richmond (Virginia) Times-Dispatch for April 28, 1985. This event is one which Dr. Bill Trout and a large committee of local canal and bateau buffs had been promoting for some time:

The James River Canal once floated people and goods to Richmond from far-flung parts of Virginia. Yesterday, it drew people to Richmond from around the state to celebrate its bicentennial.

They came to recall an era when the canal dominated commerce in the area, before it bowed to the railroad more than a century ago.

Several hundred people were at the Tredegar Iron Works for at least some of the day's events. They took tours of canal sites, heard speakers and looked at the exhibits that filled the old ironworks building that's been restored by Ethyl Corp.

Many came to see artifacts from the Great Basin archaeological digs downtown, on display for the first time. Next to those was a three-dimensional display of the basin, showing where canalboats were found in the mud below Cary Street on the site of the James Center.

There were also scale-model canalboats made by Theodore Haxall, tracing the development of James River traffic from dugout canoes to 90-foot canal packet boats.

Children gathered around a working model of a boat lock, made by Philip Modjeski. Other exhibits included canal photos by Philip de Vos, a display on restoration work at canal sites near Byrd Park, and, in the center of the room, the 40-foot reproduction bateau Columbia.

Some participants were there for the annual meeting of the Virginia Canals and Navigation Society. The members became interested in canal history for a variety of reasons, and some have become well-known in historical circles for their devotion to canal research and preservation.

Russell Harding became interested in canals through his grandfather, who worked as a boatman on the Morris Canal in New Jersey.

Harding has retired to Mineral, in Louisa County, and has transferred his fascination with the Morris Canal to the James River Canal. He edits "The Tiller," a publication of the canal society.

Gibson Hobbs of Lynchburg discovered an old stone canal lock when he was walking to strengthen his heart after a heart attack. Today, he voluntarily maintains a number of canal sites in the Lynchburg area.

Other participants were from the Rucker Society, many of them descendants of two Rucker brothers who designed the first James River bateau in Amherst County in the 1770's.

Descendant Jean Robinson told the crowd yesterday that Thomas Jefferson was at the launching of that craft and offered years later to testify on behalf of the brothers' defense of their patent.

The last of four speakers yesterday spoke of a similar bateau, the Columbia. Joe Ayers, captain of the reproduction canal vessel, built by volunteers in the village of Columbia last year, spoke with fervor for more use of the James by bateaux modeled after those of two centuries ago.

He advocated that every river town build a bateau. "This is such a good way to see Virginia's beautiful rivers," Ayers said. "For a quiet ride, you can't beat it."

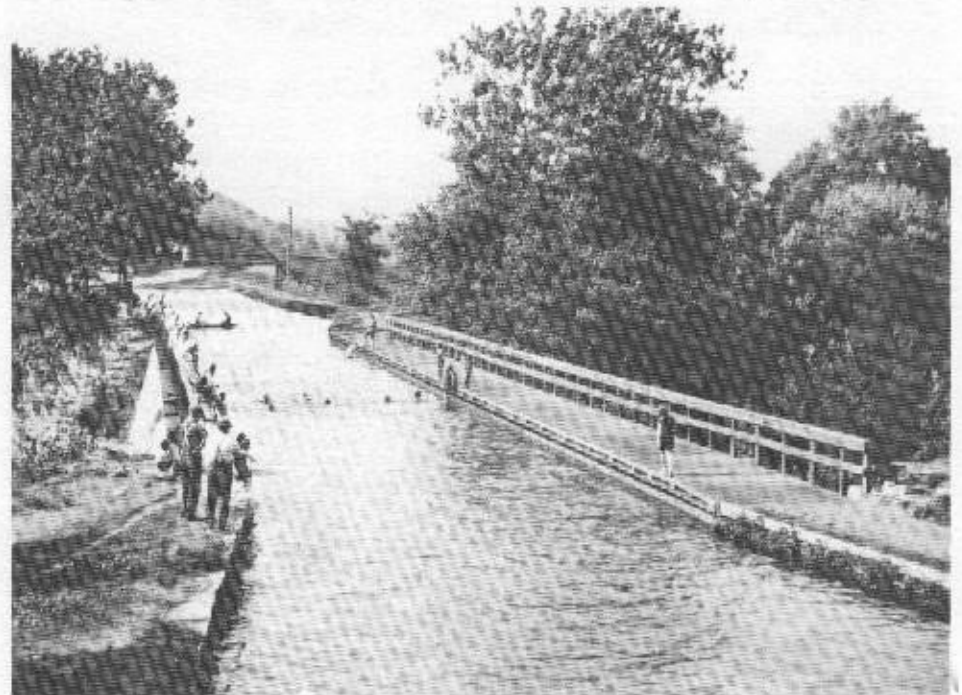
"Cities want to have these parties," he said. "Richmond has its June Jubilee. We have too many generic festivals. They need local flavor."

"For Lynchburg's bicentennial, next year, we plan the first great bateau race from Lynchburg to Richmond."

"In a few years we could have 15 or 20 of these coming down the river, pulling into June Jubilee. This is part of our history. We don't need generic festivals anymore."

"When you want to run with the bulls, go to Spain. When you want to float with the bateaux, come to Virginia."

Aqueduct Doubles as Swimming Pool



This interesting photo of the Delaware Canal Aqueduct at Point Pleasant, Pennsylvania was passed along to us by Walter Meseck. It shows a bunch of youngsters in the early 1900's using the Aqueduct flume as a swimming pool. This print was in the original collection of Alvin F. Harlow, author of "Old Towpaths". The towpath, (still much in use when this photo was made), is to the right.