AMERICAN CANALS

BULLETIN OF
THE AMERICAN CANAL SOCIETY

Vol. XXVII, No. 2 [105] Dedicated to Historic Canal Research, Preservation, and Parks Spring 1998

PRESIDENT'S LETTER NO. 3

Greetings! We had a good response to our listing of the ACS committees in the last issue of *American Canals*. We added a member or two to several of the committees and are considering the addition of two new committees. We do need a new chairman for both the Canal Parks Committee and the Publicity Committee. Volunteers for these posts are certainly welcome.

We'd like to mention again that the ACS is your Society. We work best through our committees, so please use them.

Since we're embarking this year on our second quarter-century of existence, we're taking the time to review our organizational status to determine if it will serve us as well for the next 25 years as it has for the last 25. The *American Canal Society* was incorporated in the State of Maryland in October of 1972. Is incorporation as a nonprofit organization, with all the record keeping that entails, going to serve us well in the 21st century?

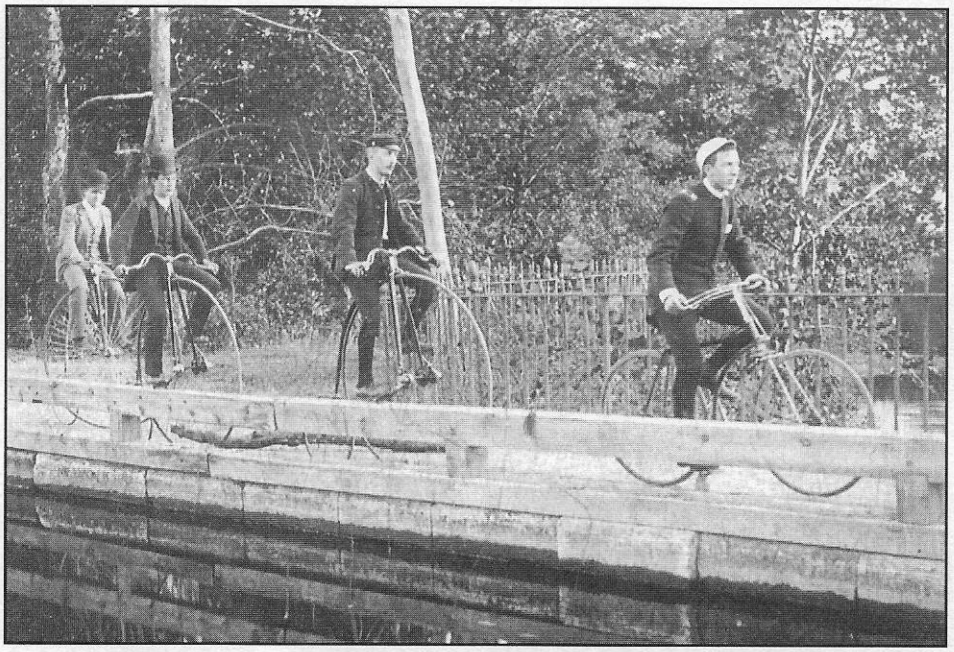
We would like to call on the advice and assistance of any ACS members who may have a working knowledge of corporate law, nonprofit organizations, et cetera. Your president would be happy to obtain your assistance.

Elsewhere in this issue is some preliminary information on the 11th Annual World Canals Conference to be held in Illinois this coming September. We will be holding our annual membership meeting on the morning of Thursday, September 17, with a directors meeting set for that evening. I'd like to offer a personal invitation for all ACS members who are able to attend the membership meeting (all are also welcome to attend the directors meeting). If you are unable to attend, please send me, or one of the other directors, any information, advice, or comments you think would help us direct the society for 1999. Till next time, HEADWAY TO YOU!

Penny K. Woods

ANNUAL MEETING

The 1998 meeting of the American Canal Society will take place on Thursday, the 17th of September, at the Holiday Inn in Joliet, Illinois, in conjunction with the World Canals Conference, which runs from the 15th through the 19th in the same venue. The membership meeting will be at 10:30 a.m.; the directors meeting (at which all members are welcome) will be at 7:00 p.m. Registration is necessary for the World Canals Conference (see **CANAL CALENDAR**); to participate in A.C.S. activities, it is only necessary to show up.



Three "ordinaries" (or "penny-farthings") and a safety bicycle crossing a C&O Canal aqueduct (Evitts Creek?) near Cumberland, Md., in 1889 [reproduced by permission of Director of Learning Resources, Allegany College of Cumberland, Md.] see box below

WHEELS ON THE TOWPATH

by Philip L. Eckman

Until I visited the National Park Service C&O Museum at Cumberland, Md., and found the 1889 bicycle photograph above, I had not associated early bicycles with canal towpaths. Obviously, however, such recreation along the 1880s C&O towpath was allowed. Other photos in the collection show tour boat rides out of Cumberland to the Paw Paw Tunnel and courting couples at such sites as Great Falls and the Monocacy Aqueduct.

Today, the C&O towpath is heavily used by cyclists and hikers, proving what the old wheelmen said: "I guess we've come full cycle."

American Canals

BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN CANAL SOCIETY

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

Annual subscription to ***American Canals*** is automatic with A.C.S. Membership. Annual dues: $20.00. Single copies $3.00. Four issues per year.

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CANAL CALENDAR

Now through October 1998. Trips on *The Volunteer,* replica mule-drawn canal boat, Miami & Erie Canal, Providence Metropark, Grand Rapids, Ohio. Contact: Art Weber or Scott Carpenter, 419-535-3050.

June 5, 1998. Canal Day at Phoenix, N.Y., on the Erie Canal. Contact: Phoenix Village Office, 315-695-2801.

June 6, 1998. Canal Fest Day at Riverbend Farm, Blackstone River & Canal Heritage State Park, Oak St., Uxbridge, Mass. Noon to evening. Hayrides, canoe rentals, guided canal walks, displays, concert. Contact: Dave Barber, 508-478-4918.

June 6-7, 1998. Canal Days at Fairport, N.Y., on the Erie Canal. Contact: Jan Dwyer, 716-388-0124.

June 13, 1998. Canal Boat Captains Ball, Akron, Ohio. Contact: Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor Coalition, P.O. Box 435, Canal Fulton, Ohio 44614.

June 13, 1998. Waterloo Canal Day at Waterloo Village, near Stanhope, N.J. Contact: 973-347-0900.

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

June 18-21, 1998. White Water National Open Canoe Races, Richmond, Va. Contact: Wyn Price, 804-254-2725.

June 20, 1998. Canoe trip on the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, Violettes Lock to Great Falls. Contact: Carl Linden, 202-994-6348 or Ken Rollins, 804-448-2934.

June 20, 1998. Waterfront Festival at Watkins Glen, N.Y., on Seneca Lake. Contact: Schuyler Co. C. of C., 607-535-4300.

June 20-27, 1998. James River Batteau Festival. Contact: Va. Canals & Nav. Soc., c/o Sue Hopper, 1229 Summerfield Dr., Herndon, Va. 22070.

June 21, 1998. Canal Festival Day at Chittenango, N.Y., on the historic Erie Canal. Contact: Madison Co. Tourism, 800-684-7320.

June 28, 1998. National Canal Museum Canal Festival, Hugh Moore Park, 30 Centre Sq., Easton, Pa. 18042-7743. Contact: 610-559-6613.

June 28, 1998. Jersey City Tour, Canal Society of N.J. Contact: 908-722-9556.

July 4, 1998. Sesquicentennial celebration at Lock 14 on the Illinois & Michigan Canal. Contact: I&M Canal Volunteers, c/o Robert Whalen, 1900 Chartres St., LaSalle, Ill. 61301.

July 11, 1998. Erie Canal Classic at Marcy, N.Y. Contact: Roberta Shapiro, 315-736-3036.

July 11-12, 1998. Batteau rides and tour of Mayo's Island. 14th St., downtown Richmond, Va. Contact: Richmond Parks & Recreation.

July 11-12, 1998. Clyde on the Erie Days, Clyde, N.Y. Contact: Steve Groot, 315-923-3971.

July 11-12, 1998. Schoharie Crossing Canal Days, Fort Hunter, N.Y., on the Erie Canal. Contact: Janice Fontanella, 518-829-7516.

July 12, 1998. Delaware & Raritan Canal walk, Canal Soc. of N.J. Contact: 908-722-9556.

July 19-26, 1998. Canal Fest of the Tonawandas '98, Tonawanda and N. Tonawanda, N.Y., on the Erie Canal. Contact: 716-692-3292.

July 19-27, 1998. Annual Ilion Days, Ilion, NY., on the Erie Canal. Contact: Festival Committee, 315-894-2358.

July 25, 1998. Derby Day on the Canal, Macedon, N.Y., on theErie Canal. Contact: Lynn Greene, 315-597-5356 or 315-331-2773.

July 25, 1998. Canoe the Potomac R. from Brunswick to Monocacy Landing, Md. Contact: Carl Linden, 202-944-6348 or Ken Rollins, 804-448-2934.

July 25-26, 1998. Watercraft Race and Canal Days, Spencerport, N.Y., on the Erie Canal. Contact: Jane Sweetney, 716-352-8218.

July 26, 1998. Festival Day in Perinton Park, Perinton, N.Y., on the Erie Canal. Contact: 716-223-0770.

July 16, 1998. Lake Hopatcong Cruise, Canal Soc. of N.J., Contact: 908-722-9556.

August 2, 1998. Open house drive-through on the Illinois & Michigan Canal towpath from LaSalle to Utica, Ill., for handicapped, seniors, and veterans. Contact: I&M Canal Volunteers, c/o Robert Whalen, 1900 Chartres St., LaSalle, Ill. 61301.

August 3-9, 1998. Canal Days, Little Falls, N.Y., on the Erie Canal. Contact: Anthony DeLuca, 315-823-1740.

August 7-9, 1998. Canal Days, Port Byron, N.Y., on the Erie Canal. Contact: Andrea Seamans, 315-776-4582.

August 15-22, 1998. Montgomery County (Md.) Fair with Chesapeake & Ohio Can. Soc. booth. Contact: Nancy Long, 301-320-2330.

August 16, 1998. Delaware & Raritan Canal walk, Can. Soc. of N.J., Contact: 908-722-9556.

August 22-23, 1998. Williamsport, Md., C&O Canal Days. Contact: Tom Perry, 301-223-7010.

August 27 into September, 1998. Can. Soc. of N.J. tour of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal in Northern England. Contact: Bill McKelvey, 908-464-9335.

August 29, 1998. Cavorting on the Canal, Zoar, Ohio. Contact: Ohio & Erie Canal Corridor Coalition, P.O. Box 435, Canal Fulton, Ohio 44614.

Early September, 1998. Inland Waterways International 16 day tour leading up to the World Canals Conference. Includes 9 days by water on the Hudson R. and N.Y. State Barge Canal and 6 days by bus visiting canal sites in Canada, Ohio, and Indiana. To join British canalists for all or any portion, Contact: Can. Soc. of N.J., 908-722-9556.

(Continued on Page 12)

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Other publications: *The Best from American Canals,*
William H. Shank, editor and publisher.
American Canal Guides,
William E. Trout III, editor and publisher.

Web page address:
www.blacksheep.org/canals/ACS/acs.html.

BUILT BY BOAT

by James E. Held

"The Spree still flows through Berlin," went the cabaret song in those heady, hopeless days between Kaiser and Hitler. At that time, Germany's capital was Europe's largest inland port. Through the tumult of Nazi Brownshirts, wartime destruction, and superpower division, canal boats plied its murky, sluggish river and a canal system larger than in Amsterdam or Stockholm. The Allied victory reduced the city to ruins, but these vessels, hauling rubble out and construction material in, were vital in rebuilding Berlin. Even after the erection of the infamous wall, limited boat traffic continued to supply the West Zone with oil and bulk commodities. Then abruptly, the concrete and barbed wire barrier fell to bulldozers and souvenir hunters armed with hammers. In that whirlwind of change, Berlin's rich canal heritage would have vanished as quickly but for a group of insightful and dedicated people in the *Berlin-Brandenburg Ship Organization.*

South Channel Spree at Muehlendamm Lock

Every city's story is one with its geography, but Berlin's could hardly have begun less favorably. Glacial outwash that formed the Brandenburg plain had left layers of barren soil on hard-packed clay. Scripture warns against building on sand, and this outpost languished as an isolated river ford squeezed between the fortified Slavic settlements of Spandau and Koepenick. The first chronicles recorded the tiny, twin towns of *Koelln und Berlin* in 1237, when Augsburg, Hamburg and Nuremberg were proud medieval cities.

The flat terrain, sandy soil, and geographic location were ideal, however, for canal building. Crude sixteenth century locks and channels begun by Elector Joachim II were developed by a succession of kings and emperors into a major system of canals. Stubbornness, if anything, is a Prussian trait, and these men of vision realized the water flowing in, around, and through their city formed, not obstacles, but highways. Canals would give access to the North Sea via the Elbe River and Hamburg, the Baltic Sea through the Oder River and the port of Stettin, as well as inland Silesia's vast coal fields and industries. As Berlin grew into an economic, cultural, and political power, so did its waterways. Five harbors were home port to hundreds of boats. Nature intended the city to become a port, but Prussian might turned it into the capital of an empire stretching from the Rhineland to the far Baltic Sea, with each corner connected by canals. In the center of this watery web stood Berlin.

"The River Spree Flows through Berlin"

Located in the city center, the Maritime Museum established in 1993, is among Berlin's least known attractions. My discovery of it in 1994 was totally by accident. With an hour to idle before my departure to Warsaw, I strolled one spring evening through the restored *Nikolai Quarter.* Tour boats followed the channel confined by the stone embankment of Berlin's oldest neighborhood and passed into the historic Muehlendamm Lock. Then, where *Fisherman Island* divides the river Spree, I saw an entire fleet of historic canal boats and steam tugs moored in retirement. Any museum would envy this collection of twenty-one vessels narrowly rescued from scrap yards. Ironically, G.D.R. economic policy ensured their survival; even dogmatic Marxists needed these privately owned boats to move the G.D.R.'s bulk commerce. In the East, no new boat building took place after the War. However ancient, these sturdy vessels remained economically viable within the country's compact borders until the fall of the wall brought the harsh realities of the free market economy.

I returned in 1997 to where the proud banner, *"Berlin was built by the Canal*

Berlin's historic harbor

Boat," flapped in the breeze. Unfortunately, my posted letter of introduction to the museum had not arrived. Terribly jetlagged, my rusty college German stumbled rather than flowed. Fluent or not, it was our *lingua franca* since Mr. Rainer Roeper, former canal boatman and the staff member on duty, spoke only German. At fifty, he has become a museum piece representing the last generation of families whose lives from birth to death revolved on and around water. By coincidence, a museum exhibition featured canal-boat life.

Herr Roeper explained that boatmen were not rough social outcasts but proud family men who commanded respect and envy from landlubbers. Their mobility gave them little in common with the sedentary communities on the banks. With life in constant motion, locks and harbors gave pause to communicate more than a wave and shout to other passing boat families. Here news was exchanged of family and business. Babies were born in crowded cabins, and growing toddlers played while tethered to the rails. As children grew older, special boarding schools gave them a rudimentary education before they matured into adolescent deckhands, young captains, or wives whose domestic duties included scrubbing decks and making fast lines in lock chambers. For a bachelor or company boat, crews consisted of two or three, captain, engineer, and deckhand, who often helped with the hard work of loading and discharging.

Vessels ended their watery wandering with the freeze-up. Winter gave time for major repairs, temporary jobs ashore, and church, but the season's main event was the annual *Schiffest.* This occasion brought the scattered cousins, acquaintances, and friends together for a long evening of festivities. Dancing in the decorated hall revolved around the ship model in the center, and as a courtship ritual, the names of maidens attending their first ball hung from its masts and spars. A single young captain, ostensibly admiring the model, would wonder which name on paper matched a demure young woman, waiting for an invitation to dance. These balls lasted late because come spring, the merry-makers could scatter east to far Memel or west to the Mosel River, perhaps not to meet again until next winter.

Other exhibitions in the hold of the 1910 vessel, *Renate Angelika*, featured the *Finow Canal,* begun in 1620, brick boats that supplied boomtown Berlin with building material, produce boats loaded with fruit and vegetables that fed the growing population, and a fascinating collection of nautical artifacts of blocks, name boards, bits, and line. The scent of wood and tar lingered in the air, redolent of all things nautical, but those old photographs on display capture not only old vessels. During World War II, the age-old city center was almost leveled. With thousands homeless, historic reconstruction received low priority among Communists flaunting an image of a new, modern Germany. Ironically, vessels from that era survived, but the architecture and aura of old Berlin were reduced by bombing mainly to memories and these old prints on display.

The museum vessels vary. Handsome steam tugs probably towed some of the historic barges moored here. Other boats are self-propelled by steam or diesel engines. Excursion vessels laden with cargos of passengers enjoyed the rivers and lakes of Brandenburg province. In the G.D.R., some boats became improvised floating warehouses, while the stoked boiler of the tug *Andreas* repelled the winter chill by heating canal-side buildings. Within Berlin and other harbors, the masts gracing several vessels were dropped and secured for bridges, but on the open lagoons of the Baltic coast they were stepped with raised sails for an exhilarating passage. Summers, under perfect conditions, these boats still unfurl some canvas to hone rusty sailing skills.

Amazingly, just ten years ago, these boats were part of the active commerce of these canals, with the museum staff part of their captains, engineers, and crew. A melancholy surrounds Mr. Roeper and the other beached boatmen I talked with. Although the war claimed 50 percent of Germany's canal boats, his father's boat survived both the war and communist economics. Rather that continue the tradition, Rainer's way of life ended in what appeared to be the most optimistic of times. These men's private struggles with unemployment and their adjustment to a new era reflect the struggles of the museum. *Die Berlin-Brandenburger Schiffverein* is a private organization and receives meager government support during budget deficits and a severe economic crisis. Still, boat excursions on historic steamers bring in some support. Perhaps too, the well-publicized and popular *Hafenfest,* Harbor Festival, will continue to draw attention to the museum, its vessels, and the organization's mission of preservation.

From the sturdy wood decks, we looked over the harbor where Polish boats laden with coal pull into the locks. Since the fall of the wall, Berlin no longer stands as an isolated island, but rests in the center of Europe. Kaisers, Nazis, Communists, and Democrats all understood how vital canals have been to the country's development, but what rôle will waterways play in the future? If the wall divided, canals now form the bridge of trade between East and West. Still, after languishing through war and division, these channels are outdated, too small for the 1,350-ton standard European boat. The city's industrial base, once fed by canals, has declined, and construction costs for canal enlargement

are staggering. Will the frenzy of reconstruction bypass its waterways? In the last century, no European city had grown and changed so dramatically. If the future continues to be equally restless and uncertain, we can be grateful that its maritime history and heritage were rescued from obscurity, to remind us that fascinating *"Berlin Was Built by the Canal Boat."*

The museum at Bamberger St. 58 is open May to October, Tuesday through Sunday, 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays, 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. weekends. Telephone 030/2138041, Fax 030/2138042. The nearest subway stop is Jannowitzbrucke, close to the historic sites of the St. Nicolas Cathedral and the Nikolaiviertel and Maerkisches Museum. The exhibit is only in German, but younger bilingual staff members can assist English-speaking visitors.

An excursion boat is also a popular and relaxing way of seeing Berlin. The Berlin Tourist Office in the Europa Center or other locations can provide information.

For more background, *World Canals,* by Charles Hadfield, devotes many pages to German waterways.

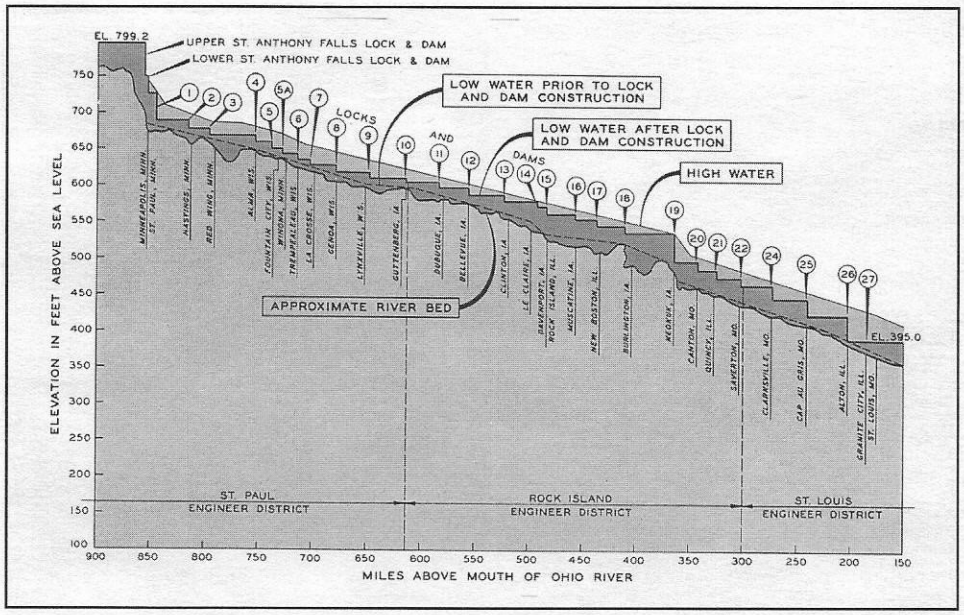
CANAL BOAT FREE-LOADING

We have heard a story, which we believe to be true, of an itinerant merchant, vulgarly called a pedlar, who took passage on board of a canal boat, just before dinner. He made a very comfortable meal, and expressed himself very well satisfied with the accommodation and in particular with the provisions.

After having been two miles on the big ditch, he took a polite and affectionate leave of the captain, regretting that he could no longer enjoy the pleasures of the inland navigation and tendering a sixpence for his passage. The captain said he must pay for his dinner, but the pedlar showed him the rates, which were three cents a mile, including feed, and departed leisurely, to pursue his mercantile speculations.

Pittsburgh Mercury,
20 September, 1826

Submitted by
William Dzombak



Profile of the Upper Mississippi
[Graphics by Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army]

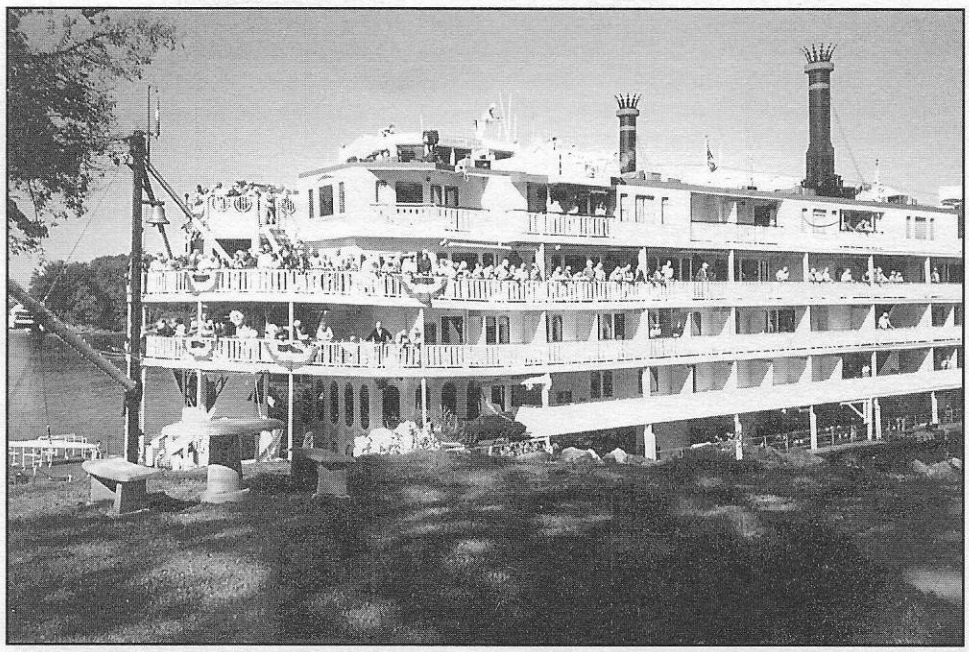
THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI

by Bill Shank

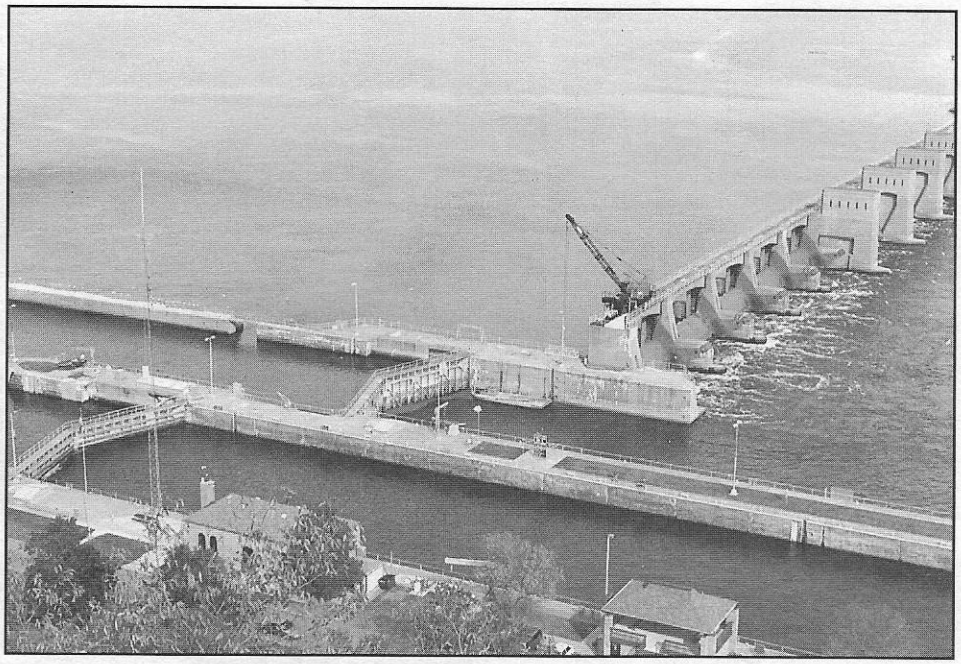
In October 1997 I had a chance to inspect, from the decks of the Mississippi Queen, the recent works of the Army Corps of Engineers on the upper Mississippi River, from St. Louis to Minneapolis / St. Paul. This was my second trip on the Mississippi Queen, the first having been in April, 1992, on a cruise from Memphis to New Orleans. (See pages 64-65 of *The Best From American Canals* No. 6.)

Generally speaking, there is no great problem in navigating the lower Mississippi because of the almost continual supply of water from the west via the Missouri River, and from the northeast via the Ohio River and its many tributaries. Hence year-round navigation is possible for large boats and barge tows.

The same was not true for the upper Mississippi until recent times. The supply of water in that section of the river had always been highly variable, with conditions favorable to navigation occurring only from time to time between floods and droughts. The federal government, aware of the



The Mississippi Queen on a visit to Savannah, Tennessee, editorial headquarters of *American Canals*
[Photo by Emily Ross Mulloy]

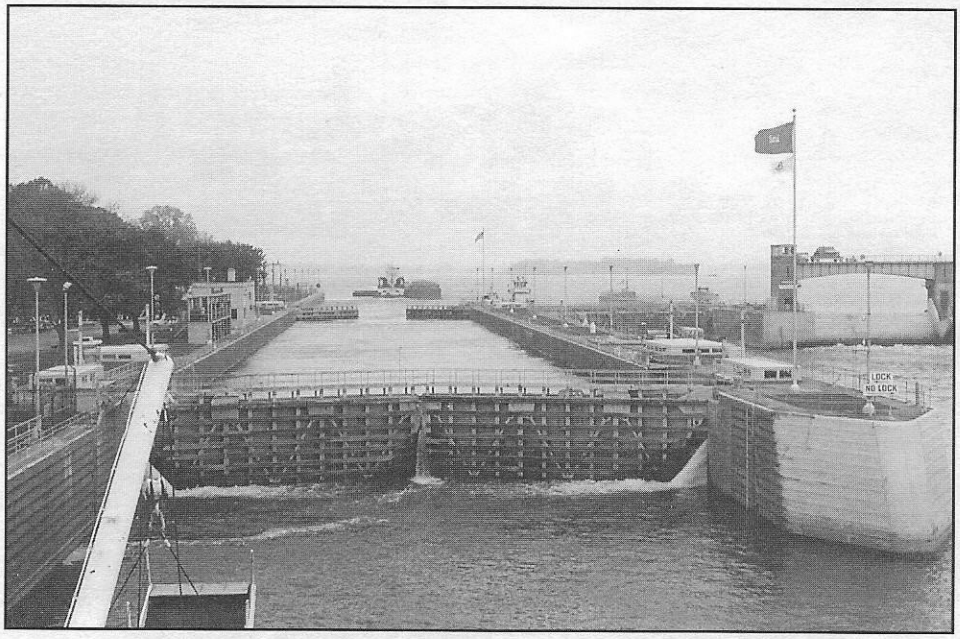


Lock and dam 11 at Dubuque, Iowa

importance of this river for opening up the north central United States, authorized a number of improvements starting in the nineteenth century: a four-and-a-half-foot channel in 1878, a six-foot channel in 1907, and in 1930, a complete system of 26 dams and locks to bring the fully-controlled depth of the river channel to nine feet. The latter project, essentially completed in 1939 but with more recent modifications and improvements, has facilitated the rapid growth of commercial traffic as far north as the Falls of St. Anthony at Minneapolis.

Large flotillas of commercial barges now transport petroleum products up-river from the oil fields of Texas and Louisiana, coal from central and southern Illinois and Kentucky, and grain from the northern states south to lower United States ports and overseas. The locks vary in size from 56 by 400 feet to 110 by 1,200 feet with lifts of 5 feet to 50 feet.

Our group of travelers assembled in a dense fog which delayed many of the planes on which participants were arriving. As a result the Mississippi Queen was hours late leaving St. Louis and never quite caught up on its schedule. Our trip was advertised as the "Fall-Foliage Tour," but we saw *snow* instead, particularly in Iowa and Illinois. We made trips ashore in Hannibal and Dubuque, but eliminated several stops, before being bused to the St. Paul airport to catch our planes home. Of course, our trip aboard the Mississippi Queen made up for the inconveniences. Food was of gourmet quality, and the regular evening entertainment was professional and excellent.



A tow leaves Lock 24, at Clarksville, Missouri as we await our turn to enter

WELLAND CANAL BOOK REPRINTED

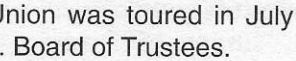
The Welland Canal Company: A Study in Canadian Enterprise, by Hugh G.J. Aitken, published by the Harvard U. Press in 1954, has long been out of print. It has now been reprinted by the Canadian Canal Society, P.O. Box 23016, Midtown Postal Outlet, 124 Welland Avenue, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2R 7P6. For a copy, send $21.95 plus $3.50 postage and handling charge.

A NEW MIAMI & ERIE CANAL TRAIL

A committee has been formed to save a stretch of the Miami & Erie Canal land in Butler County and to develop the tow path as an all-purpose recreation trail. Long term goals would be to see this trail link up with other state and national trail systems that are planned or already in existence. The committee has named itself The Butler County Canal Coalition and will meet regularly to facilitate research on the canal property, grant writing, et cetera. Canal Society of Ohio members of the committee, at present, are Bob Mueller and Nancy Gulick.

Interested groups were called together on November 20th by the Union Township Historical Society to view maps and listen to trail proposals put forth by the City of Fairfield and the Butler County Park District, who own some short stretches of the canal within their boundaries. Other participants in the discussion were The Isaac Walton League, The Mill Creek Valley Restoration Project, as well as the C.S.O.

Plans for the towpath trail call for a 5-7 mile stretch in the southern part of Butler County. Some of this area around Port Union was toured in July by the C.S.O. Board of Trustees.



STEPS IN BUILDING OHIO & ERIE CANAL BOATS

by Terry K. Woods

[Editor's note. Among the other hats he has worn, A.C.S. president Terry Woods has served as a consultant to the National Park Service in the planning of the museum of canal-boat building that is now one of the attractions at the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area between Cleveland and Akron. One of his assignments was to prepare an outline of the construction process as it was typically carried out on the Ohio & Erie Canal. The resulting document is reproduced here, with the acquiescence of the National Park Service. The accompanying photographs of museum exhibits are by the author.]

1. A contract would be entered into with a customer to build a specific type and design of boat, or a boat would be constructed on speculation with no particular customer.

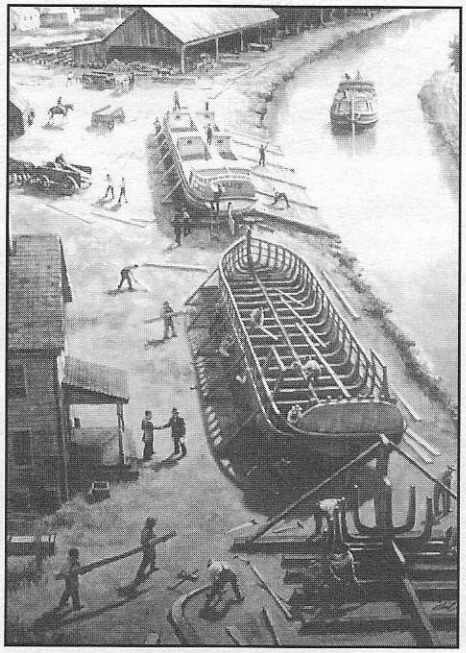
2. When a boat was built to order, the contract would describe, in general terms, the type of craft to be built, generally requiring it to be similar in design to a previous boat by that builder, but with some specific changes or alterations desired by the customer.

3. An area on the floor of the main building in the yard would be cleared to lay out the dimensions of key components of the new boat.

4. Of the 45 to 55 members (ribs) making up the frame of a canal boat,the majority were of identical shape and size. Only the first half dozen or so at the bow and another half dozen or so at the stern were different, to give a pleasing and efficient shape to the bow and stern. So only one mid-ship frame member and three or four key members at both bow and stern were required to be laid out.

5. These ribs, then, were laid out full-size on the floor of the building. The dimensions were obtained, to a large extent, from full-size templates of specific frame member curves and shapes that had been developed over the years by the master of the yard. As a result, boats built by a particular yard master had a telltale shape and style that identified their builder.

6. The shapes of the frame members that were to be laid out were deeply etched into the packed earth of the building's floor with a knife, or more likely, cut into or onto the freshly planed wooden floor of the building or onto the freshly planed wooden surface of a special platform called a scrive board. The dimensions were then transferred from the scrive board to the work piece by measuring with sharp-pointed dividers.



Typical Ohio & Erie boatyard
This painting is available as a poster from the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreational Area

7. While this was going on, a space in the yard was prepared for the erection of the boat. The yard master would have the proper area cleared and make sure that the ground was leveled and sufficiently tamped and solidified to support the total weight of the keel blocks and boat without any of the blocks sinking into the earth. The master also had to ensure that there would be sufficient slope from the top of the keel blocks to the canal for the boat to slide easily down the temporary slipways that would be built at launching.

8. Another of the master's jobs at this time was to obtain the lumber and iron required for the new boat. Ohio & Erie boats generally used about a ton of iron each. This was in the form of deadeyes, rubrails, and fasteners. The type and amount of iron required didn't change much from boat to boat and could be easily acquired from a local blacksmith or one in a nearby larger town if ordered far enough in advance.

The lumber in a canal boat consisted mainly of white oak for the frames and hull planking and pine or poplar for the cabins and decking. Nearly every stick of this was locally grown and milled. The large number of boat yards in the Boston/Peninsula area along the Ohio & Erie canal were there primarily because of the plentiful supply of good timber.

Nearly every yard master either owned a sawmill, was part owner in one, or had a deal with a local mill to supply the proper amount and type of lumber nearly upon demand. So obtaining the proper type and amount of lumber was merely a matter of calculating what was needed, determining what was on hand in the lumber sheds, and ordering the rest from the sawmill.

9. No description has yet been discovered of how local canal boat builders laid a keel or set up a new boat. It is likely that a version of the system employed for years in the construction of small, wooden merchant ships would be employed.

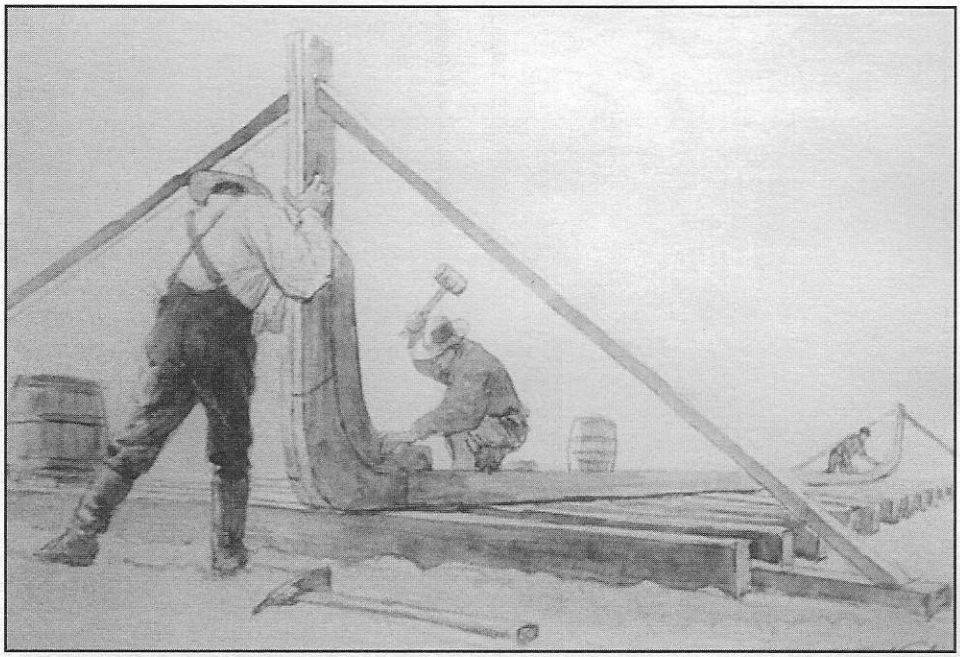
In this system, a series of large, fabricated wooden blocks were laid out along a line where the boat would lie. The tops of these blocks were all leveled and high enough above the ground so workers could have access to the future bottom of the boat for planking.

10. The majority of Ohio & Erie canal boats were constructed with an integral 6" by 6" or 12" by 12" wooden keel. This keel could be rough-sawed from one huge timber, but more than likely was fabricated from shorter pieces (to minimize warpage by proper grain orientation), then winched and manhandled onto the keel blocks, trued and leveled, and clamped into place.

11. The bottom of a typical Ohio & Erie 3-cabin freighter or line boat was a flat or vee bottom with a small dead rise and well-rounded chines (corners). The "floor" portions of the frame members were notched over the keel then, a 6" x 6" or 8" x 8" keelson was placed on top of the keel and frame members and pinned and bolted into a solid unit.

WOODEN NARROW BOATS

A collection of historic wooden canal boats, not normally open to the public, is available for viewing by American Canal Society members visiting England. The collection is located on the "Cheshire Ring" near Manchester in northwest England. To arrange a visit, write the Wooden Canal Boat Society, 5 Oaken Clough Terrace, Oaken Clough, Ashton-under-Lyne 0L7 9NY, England. Membership in the society is also available, and a quarterly newsletter is published at a $10 per annum subscription cost.



Placing the keel

12. The frame members (ribs) were made up of five sawed-to-shape pieces glued and tree-nailed into one member. This was to obtain the rounded chine shape of the hull with a maximum economy of lumber and to minimize warpage by proper orientation of the grain.

13. The necessary shapes for the keel, frames, and planking were sawed out of large timbers on a sawing stand or in a pit. A piece of timber would be positioned in the stand, and wedged and shimmed for the proper sawing angle. Then two men, one on the ground or in a plank-lined pit, the other on a scaffold or the ground, would saw out the complex shapes chalked on the upper and lower surfaces by the yard boss or foreman. The planking and the outer curves of the frame members could readily be sawed to shape. The inner curves would be rough sawed, then interval saw cuts made to the final dimension line. A workman with an ax would remove most of the rough material, then smooth it to dimension (across the grain) with an adz.

14. Key center-frame members would be assembled from the individual pieces in the yard near the erection site, then manhandled into position on the keel with winches and muscle. Their alignment and level would be checked, then they would be locked into position with temporary wooden bracing, then bolted and pinned.

15. Special, smaller frames were used to shape the rounded hull at the bow and at the stern leading up to the transom. These were called "cant frames" and were erected on the sloping keel at the bow and stern. They often had no floor section and, as such, were often made up of just two pieces or sometimes sawed out of a single timber.

16. Each of these cant frames had to have its edge uniquely beveled to provide a smoothly curved exterior planked hull. Key cant frames were rough sawed and beveled with an adz to the approximate angle prior to erection. When all the frames were placed on the keel, thin strips of narrow wood called battens were tacked to the frames longitudinally. The remaining frames to make up the curved bow and stern were then erected and beveled to make the batten form a smooth curve. The amount of final shaping depended upon how much change in the standard bow and stern curves the customer required.

17. Once the boat's skeleton was erected, cross braced where required, and batten tied longitudinally, the keelson could be lifted, lined up with the keel, then placed in position on top of the floor sections of the frame members. The keelson was then bored through using hand augers. The bored hole was a little smaller diameter that of the securing bolts. The bolts were driven through the keelson and frame floors into the outer keel. Sometimes the fastener was a blind fit, like a nail. Sometimes the fasteners were driven completely though the keel.

18. Any bow and stern dead wood, which had already been sawed and shaped, could now be manhandled into position, bored, and fastened with through fasteners clenched over reinforcing washers.

19. Initial planking of the hull could now begin. Scaffolding was assembled, and the steambox fired with sawdust and scrap wood. The master and foreman would put up the shear strake (the topmost plank) and the garboard plank (next to the keel) on each side of the boat.

20. Before the rest of the hull planking was installed, it was necessary to add the deck beams. This tied together the skeleton and made the structure stable so it could not be distorted while the remainder of the hull and deck planking was installed. The main deck in a canal freighter was only a foot or so above the frame flooring, the hull being raised up some three or four feet above loaded waterline. This produced the midship holds or cargo space of a typical Ohio & Erie freighter. Cleats or steps were bolted to the frame side members, then 3" x 12" deck beams were installed.

21. The whole structure of the hull's skeleton was now complete and ready for the final planking. The shaping of the hull planking for a wooden ship, even one as relativelysimple as a canal boat, was a job that required a great deal of skill and experience.

The total planked width of a boat from the keel to the shear strake was greater at the boat's center than it was where the bow and stern were shaped and contoured. The line of each plank could be made up of a number of individual pieces to form a continuous line (like siding a house). The width of that continuous line of plank then, was required to be wider at the middle of a boat and thinner at the bow and stern to make the lines of plank parallel. The width change was normally determined by calculating the number of planks required along the maximum-periphery frame; then figuring how wide the planks would have to be at each tapered frame to use the identical number of planks. The bevels of the planking edges would also have to be determined as the boat's curves were followed. A wedge-shaped gap between planks was required for a caulking-iron and oakum.

The yard master and the foreman would set off the next line of frames (dubbing the frame edges with an adz to the final angle as shown by the battens and previous plank) while others in the yard made the planking from converted timber in the shed and got it steamed.

22. The steambox, itself, was a heavy, oak-planked box about two feet square by 20 or 30 feet long with a brick furnace and

chimney. Steam was let into the box from a boiler alongside. There were doors at both ends of the box. Several planks at a time were inserted into the box, then the doors were closed and any gaps stuffed with rags to keep the thing fairly steamtight.

When thoroughly soaked with steam, planks became very soft and pliable. They would also be very hot when they were drawn out of the box by two or three men and carried rapidly over to the nearby boat skeleton. The carriers had to wear gloves and have thick pads on their shoulders. The planks were then shoved, shouldered, wedged, shored, and clamped into place. This final fitting had to be done at speed, before the planks cooled, dried, and became rigid again.

23. Deck planking was done next. Here there was no need for the steaming process.

24. Before the actual caulking of the hull could begin, the hull planking was faired by hand planing to give a smooth surface to the seams. The pitch for the caulking,in block form, was broken up with hammers and placed into a cast iron pot. The pots were placed on a metal grid over a wood and shavings fire. There might be any number of these glowing fires and pots along both sides of the boat, depending upon how many caulkers were working.

The caulkers themselves would be squatting on low, work-box stools unpacking oakum in long skeins from the bales. Each caulker would be wearing a leather or canvas apron. They would run the oakum skein across their laps and roll it into a thread of uniform thickness, then form the thread into a ball of manageable size. As soon as enough oakum was rolled, a caulker would begin laying a thread into the garboard seam, then to one side and upward, working on a "shift" of seven to eight planks. This was to prevent too muchpressure and oakum being put into one seam and closing up the seam on adjacent planks.

The caulker carried his tools, a mallet and several caulking irons, in his tool box stool. The mallet had a double-ended cylindrical striking head of about two inches in diameter, banded with an iron ring. The handle was about 18" long by 1 1/4" in diameter. Slots were cut through the striking heads to provide a resilient blow rather than a dead one. The irons looked like a cross between a metal chisel and a thick putty knife.

The first oakum thread would be laid as a straight line in the bottom of the seam. The second and third or fourth would be looped in by the forefinger and iron to widen the lay of the thread to fill the seam. Caulking continued up the hull by driving oakum into the wedge-shaped seams with mallet and irons. The density of the oakum packed into a seam was tested by driving a spike iron into the seam. Then the dressing iron was used to compact the oakum and a reeding iron to give a parallel orientation to the dressed oakum.

The caulking was finished at the outside of the seam after reeding and molten pitch was "rolled on" using mop or brushes, filling the seam. After the pitch had hardened, the excess was scraped off leaving a watertight joint.

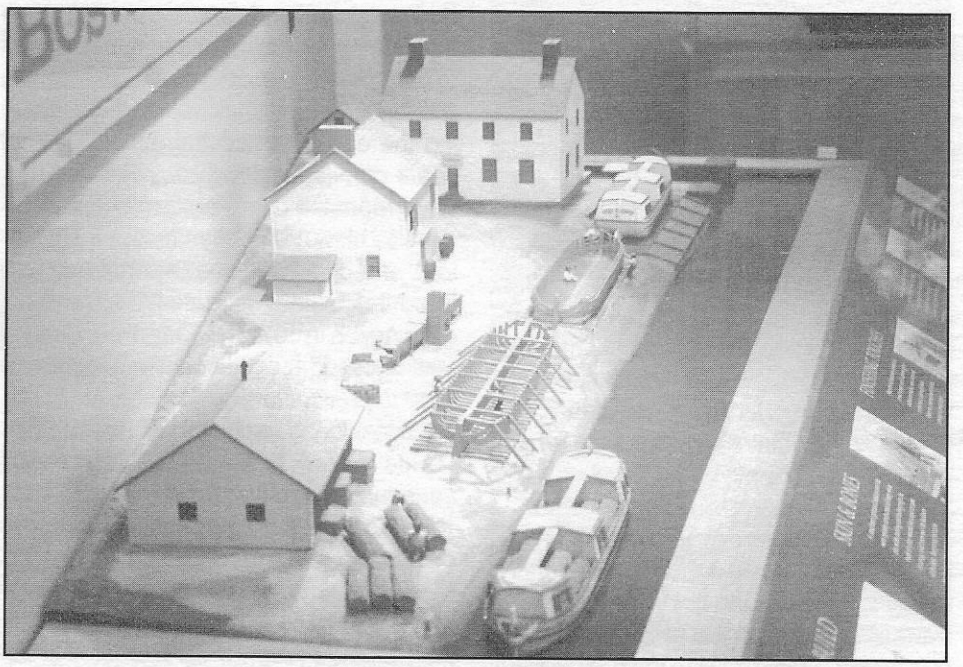
25. Now the cabins or houses were erected on deck. There was more freedom here from what had been done before. Each customer had his own ideas about how he wanted his living and crew quarters and cargo space. Most freighters of this period had a crew's cabin in the bow and a captain's cabin in the stern. The long-haul boats would have a stable cabin in the center. Boats for carrying grain and perishables would have the space between cabins housed over in a long house. Large openings would be installed along both sides for loading and unloading cargo. These could be closed when running with double-hung shutters. For boats carrying bulk cargo, the midship holds would be open and a narrow catwalk would connect the roofs of cabins. Hatches from the top deck or catwalk allowed entry into the cabins. The bow and stern cabins usually sported small windows, closed with double-hung shutters. These windows were sometimes closed with screen, but no glass. The living quarters cabins would be fitted with built-in bunks and cupboards. The stern cabin would carry a coal stove.

26. The priming and painting could begin next. The majority of Ohio & Erie boats had white hulls and cabins with green or black trim. The steel mill near Four Mile Lock south of Cleveland poured so much iron oxide effluent into the canal, however, that many north-end boatmen took to having their boats' hulls painted iron color to

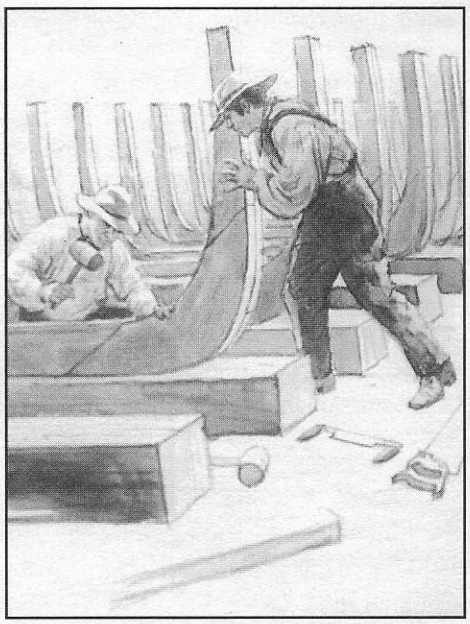
BRITISH CANALBOAT COMMISSIONED FOR BLACKSTONE

The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, coordinator of last year's World Canal Conference, is arranging for the construction and importation of a 38-foot working canalboat, to be put into service on the Blackstone River. The vessel, with a professional crew, will accommodate 14 day-trippers or 4 overnight passengers. Preliminary work on the project has been led by Bob Billington, council president, and Bernard Henderson, chairman of British Waterways. The keel is tentatively scheduled to be laid on the 4th of July, 1998.

Tax-deductible contributions toward the estimated $60,000 cost will be gratefully received and appropriately recognized. For details, call 1-800-454-2882.



Typical boatyard diorama



begin with.

27. The decorative trim and the painting of the boat's name on its transom were often accomplished by a special man, not necessarily attached to a specific boat yard, a universal artist in his own right. As canal freighters became more practical and prosaic, the only chance a boatman had to express his character was in the boat's name and the artwork on her transom.

28. In the Boston/Peninsula yards, at least, all new boats were given a water test prior to launching. Water was pumped from the canal into the interior of the hull and let sit to allow the planking to swell and to check for leaks and squeezed-out caulking. A hole was then bored through the keel and the water allowed to run out. The last step in boat building before launching was to plug this hole in the keel.

29. As a boat approached completion, three 12" x 12" timbers were set crosswise under it, one at either end and the third under the center, all sloping down into the canal. Two planks were spiked to these launching timbers, one on either side and projecting above the upper edge to form a shallow groove. A four-inch-wide, tapering wooden shoe was then placed under the boat on each skid. A wooden cleat was then wedged under each end of the craft to prevent premature slippage down the ways. At the time of launching all external bracing and scaffolding was removed.

When all was ready for the launching, soft soap was smeared in the grooves of the launching timbers. Then, two men with mallets simultaneously knocked out the restraining cleats allowing the boat to slide down the ways into the canal.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Just received the Winter 1998 bulletin and was quite pleased that the New Jersey Canal Society rated our Metropark District's restoration of the section of the Miami-Erie Canal at Lock #44 in Providence Metropark as the "Best in the Buckeye State."

With only three seasons running experience, the Metropark staff and Providence volunteers truly strive to become one of the best canal restorations in the country. We have just hired a new full-time Heritage Resource Specialist Mr. Don Rettig so that we can increase and provide more interesting canal related programming as well as enhance the living history experience for the public at Providence Metropark.

For our younger visitors, our hoagie, Merel has recently gotten a new mule names "Sal."

On behalf of the Metroparks of the Toledo Area, I invite all my fellow canalers to tour our canal restoration site this year. Please let us know if your canal society is coming our way so we can welcome you aboard!

Denise H. Gehring, Programs Manager
Metropolitan Park District, 5100 W. Central Ave., Toledo, OH 43615-2100

Untiring defender

GILBERT GUDE AND THE MONOCACY AQUEDUCT

by Kate Mulligan

[This material was first printed in Montgomery Magazine of Gazette papers, and is used here with their permission.]

Gilbert Gude took on a familiar role when he led a photographer and a reporter on a tour of the Monocacy Aqueduct. The former four-term Maryland congressman (R, 8th Dist.), who once led the battle for the creation of he C & O Canal National Historical Park, is now fighting to save one of the park's most historic structures.

The aqueduct, located near Dickerson, is a beautiful sandstone structure built during the early 19th century to carry canal boats across the Monocacy River. It survived repeated efforts by Confederate soldiers to blow it up but since then, floating logs and debris in flood waters have battered its columns repeatedly. After Hurricane Agnes in 1972, National Park Service staff encased the aqueduct in a steel harness to prevent further damage. Now they are considering options for its restoration.

Gude is quick to tick off the reasons the aqueduct should be saved.

"First is its historic importance. The aqueduct is part of the fabric of a trail that originated with George Washington's vision to open up the west by building a canal along the Potomac River. If we replace the aqueduct with a makeshift bridge, we lose all that history," he says, adding, "In itself, the aqueduct is a monument to the early bridge builders. It's a beautifully engineered, suing classical motifs of the time."

The former politician knows what it takes to pry funds from a deficit-conscious Congress and a financially strapped park service.

"We need to be advocates for the aqueduct. The C & O Canal Association has done a good bit to keep the attention of park service staff focused on restoration but we need to make the aqueduct more visible to the general public. Its out-of-the way location has meant that it has never had the support it deserves."

More than 25 years earlier, Gude led a delegation to the same spot. Then, he was trying to persuade public officials that the area around the C & O Canal should become a national park. He had been elected to Congress in 1967 after serving terms in the Maryland House of Delegates and State Senate and finally had a chance to work at the national level to protect the canal area from development.

Gude's interest in establishing the canal park grew out of his earlier work.

"Suburbia was on it's way," he says. The Parks and Planning Commission was very active. I was interested in stream valley

parks so my attention naturally turned to the Potomac River."

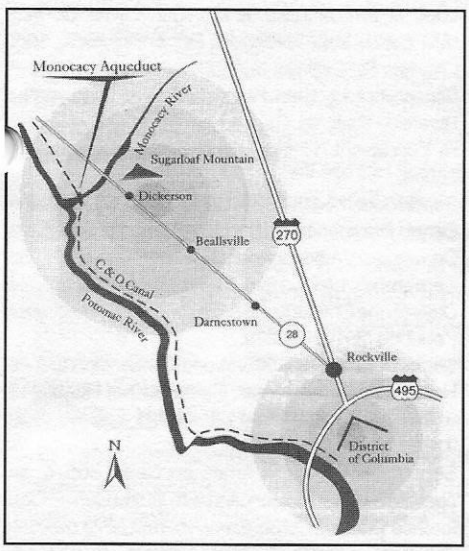
From that subject, it was only a short jump to a concern about the C & O Canal. "I always knew a park would be a good thing," says Gude.

The park, however, was by no means, a sure thing.

"Sometimes, the park history has seemed like the 'Perils of Pauline,' "says Gude.

Today, the battle is to maintain the park and canal structures in the face of frequent flooding. Decades of organizing and advocacy to protect the area's historical character preceded the current struggle.

One of the most publicized of the early adventures occurred in 1954. An editorial in the Washington Post supported a plan to build a scenic parkway along the abandoned bed of the canal. William O. Douglas, then a 55-year-old Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, challenged the Post's editorial writers to walk with him the full length of the canal to discover what would be missed by someone traveling in an automobile.

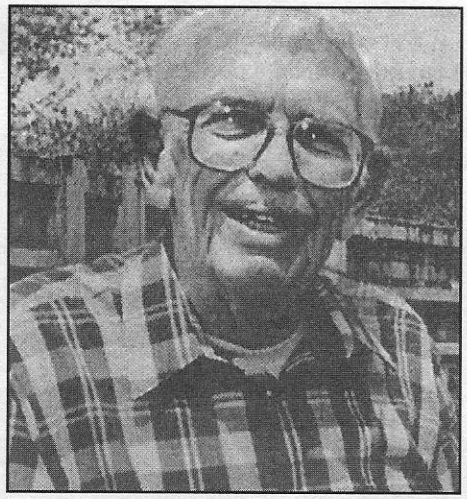


The challenge was accepted and 37 newspaper reporters, conservationists and a few kibitzers set out on a 185-mile walk from Cumberland, Md., to Georgetown. Nine eventually completed the trip. By the end of the journey, the Post's editors favored some sort of compromise between the two views concerning the parkway and had learned some valuable trail lessons.

"Out here, the first signs of spring seem far more important than the antics of self-inflated wild men or what Congress does with the tax bill," they wrote.

Despite that testimonial, the battle for park designation continued for nearly 20 years.

"You have to remember the times. The automobile was revered," says Gude.



Gilbert Gude

Architect Frank Lloyd Wright even created an architectural design for buildings and roadways for Sugarloaf Mountain that promoted the use of cars. The interstate highway system was coming into being and the German autobahns were much admired.

On his last day in office, President Dwight D. Eisenhower designated the park area a National Monument, offering it some protection. However, he also offended the chair of a key Congressional committee by failing to consult about the committee by failing to consult about the designation. Gude and congressional colleagues smoothed over the ruffled feathers and kept up the pressure until the C & O Canal National Historical Park finally was created in 1971.

Gude and Sen. Charles Mathias nominated Connie Morella to serve on the newly formed C & O Canal Advisory Commission. Rep. Morella, who now occupies Gude's former congressional seat, still takes great pride in that appointment.

"It was so nice to be recommended by those two people who had such concern for the environment," she recalls.

"Gilbert's contribution to the quality of life in the region has been enormous," Morella says. "He really bound to nature in the way that Shakespeare used the term. The river, the canal and the wetlands, he's concerned about them all. He's our Theodore Roosevelt, not in the Rough Rider sense, but in his advocacy for the natural environment. He's a gentle version of Roosevelt.

In 1975, Gude made an unconventional decision about how to spend the August congressional recess. Instead of making the rounds of political barbecues, he traveled the 400-mile length of the Potomac River from its origins in the West Virginia mountains.

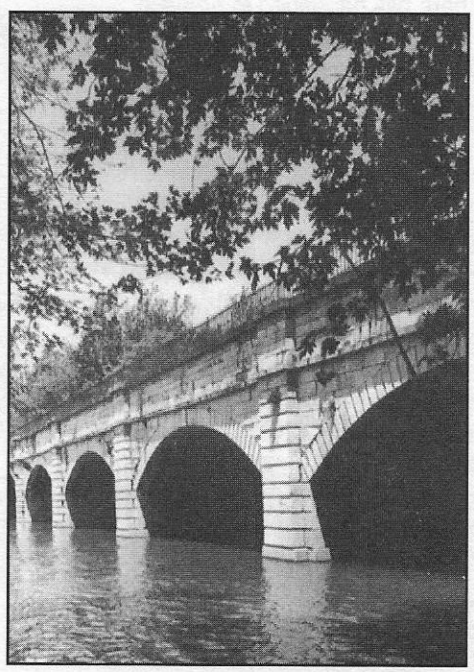
"I was always taking reporters to see different areas of the Potomac River. One of them said, 'You ought to travel the whole length.' I thought it was the dumbest idea I'd ever heard but the thought kept growing in my mind," he says.

The result of that trip was Gude's first book, "Where the Potomac Begins: A History of the North Branch Valley," published in 1984.

"Learning about the Upper Potomac has been, for me, a search for congruence among politics, history, science, literature and poetry," he writes in the introduction. They are big subjects but the book manages to combine elements of all of them in a readable account "Like any congressman, I'd been a careful observer and interpreter of my constituencies, so I was comfortable studying the small valley and talking with its inhabitants," Gude writes. He includes reminiscences of mining on the terrain.

He concludes, "At its beginning and at its end, the Potomac is drawn together by a common history of environmental abuse."

Five years later, Gude published "Small Town Destiny: The Story of Five Small Towns along the Potomac Valley." The book opens with a loving remembrance of his childhood in Rockville, then the quintessential small town. He describes the unleashing of the wrecking ball and bulldozer on downtown Rockville in 1965 and the subsequent loss of small town community and social life. He calls the book an effort "to demonstrate American small town social and cultural reactions and resilience to the



Monocacy Aqueduct

influences of today's world."

After Gude left Congress, he spent the years from 1977 to 1986 as director of the Congressional Research Service. Today, his resume opens with the all-purpose words: writer, lecturer, consultant. At 74, he keeps busy. In addition to working on the Monocacy Aqueduct project, he sits on the boards of the Montgomery County Historical Society, the Maryland Historical Trust and The Accokeek Foundation and is past president of the Maryland Humanities Council.

One activity seems to lead to another. For example, Gude helped found the Potomac River Basin Consortium to bring academics together to look at research concerning the Potomac River.

"A member of the group said, 'You ought to teach a class about this,' "he says.

Gude proposed the idea to the Georgetown School of Continuing Education, which has offered Potomac River Overview for the past six years. The class offers Gude a chance to share his most persistent interests with a wide variety of people. In a series of three field trips, the group travels to the spot where the Potomac River begins, walks through the Paw Paw tunnel on the canal and explores some of the small towns along the Potomac. Ecology, natural and social history and contemporary issues of small town life are all incorporated in Gude's view of the Potomac River.

Gude also remains fascinated with what is happening closer to the Bethesda home where he lives with his wife, Jane.

"Suburbanization has come to Montgomery County," he says. "What has happened here has happened to America."

LOCK FOR SALE

Lock 34 on the West Branch Canal, near Lock Haven, Pennsylvania, is for sale. The 1.1-acre site also includes a well-preserved lock house and Susquehanna River frontage. Due to its flood-plain location, the property may not legally be used for residential purposes; daytime use is permissible, perhaps as a museum, visitors center, or simply historic site.

The asking price is $59,900, but the possibility of a better deal is inferred from the fact that the property has been on the market for a considerable length of time.

For more information, get in touch with A.C.S. member David C. Hill, 2714 Hillside Avenue, Williamsport, Pa. 17701, phone (717) 323-6061.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

[Ref.: "1920s Views of the Lehigh Canal," by Walter Meseck and Bruce Russell, American Canals, No. 103, Autumn 1997, pp. 6-7.]

There are several corrections to the captions of the photos for the issue above. These corrections have been verified by Lance Metz.

Middle photo, page 6: There was no gravity railroad at White Haven which was the head of the upper division. There was a gravity railroad at Mauch Chunk (today's Jim Thorpe) known more commonly as the "Switchback Railroad."

Bottom photo, page 6: Lehigh Canal boats carried a maximum of 90 to 95 tons, not 150 tons. However, these boats could not carry that much on the Morris Canal since the Morris Canal was not as deep as the Lehigh Canal. The boats did not move at five miles per hour. Lance advises that captains on the Lehigh Canal were fined if they went faster than four miles per hour. We usually think of three miles per hour as normal on the Morris Canal.

Bottom photo, page 7: Lehigh Canal and Morris Canal section boats did not have to be "unhinged" to go through the Morris Canal locks. Boats from both canals were disconnected in the plane cars that carried them over the inclined planes of the Morris Canal. Section boats were also convenient for other reasons: separating two different cargos, turning around in the canal where there wasn't room to turn a single boat of the same length, loading or unloading at two different locations, or carrying a smaller cargo with one section only.

Sincerely,
Bill Moss
Canal Society of New Jersey

Canal Calendar - Concluded from Page 2

September 6, 1998. Open house drive-through on the Illinois & Michigan Canal towpath from LaSalle to Utica, Ill., for handicapped, seniors, and veterans. Contact: I&M Canal Volunteers, c/o Robert Whalen, 1900 Chartres St., LaSalle, Ill. 61301.

September 7, 1998. Sesquicentennial celebration at Lock 14 on the Illinois & Michigan Canal. Contact: I&M Canal Volunteers, c/o Robert Whalen, 1900 Chartres St., LaSalle, Ill. 61301.

September 12, 1998. Ferndale Festival, Appomattox Riverside Park, Va. Can. & Nav. Soc. Contact: Nancy R. Dunnavant, 1739 E. Boulevard, Petersburg, V 23805.

September 12-13, 1998. Canal Days, Miami & Erie Canal, Providence Metropark, Grand Rapids, Ohio. Contact: Art Weber or Scott Carpenter, 419-535-3050.

September 12-13, 1998. Hancock, Md. Canal Apple Days on the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal. Contact: John Popenoe, 301-678-6379.

September 15-19, 1998. World Canals Conference, Holiday Inn, Joliet, Illinois. Contact: Kent Haag, 312-814-1409, fax 312-814-1422, 160 N. LaSalle, Suite 916 S., Chicago, Ill. 60601.

September 17, 1998. American Canal Society annual meetings, in conjunction with World Canals Conference (above). 10:30 a.m. – membership meeting: 7:00 p.m – directors meeting. Contact: Terry Woods, 330-832-4621.

September 19-20, 1998. Canal Town Days, Palmyra, N.Y., on the Erie Canal. Contact: Mr. or Mrs. Cooper, 315-597-6700.

September 19-20, 1998. PawPaw Bends canoe trip, Chesapeake & Ohio Can. Soc. Contact: Carl Linden, 301-229-2398 or Ken Rollins 804-448-2934.

October 10, 1998. Sesquicentennial celebration at Utica, Ill., on the Illinois and Michigan Canal. Contact: I&M Canal Volunteers, c/o Robert Whalen, 1900 Chartres St., LaSalle, Ill. 61301.

November 7, 1998. Towpath hike, Jackson Township on the Ohio & Erie Canal. Contact: O&E Canal Corridor Coalition, P.O. Box 435, Canal Fulton, Ohio 44614.

February 26-27, 1999. Illinois Valley Symphony Co cert featuring Illinois & Michigan Canal and wate themes. Contact: I&M Canal Volunteers, c/o Robert Whalen, 1900 Chartres St., LaSalle, Ill. 61301.

DEADLINE: Material for the next Canal Calendar must be on the editor's desk no later than July 1, 1998.