

# AmericanCanals

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Dedicated to Historic Canal Research, Preservation, and Parks

Winter 2009

## From the President

by David G. Barber

In one week in late October, I had the opportunity to visit two underway and widely separated canal restoration projects.

First, while on a business trip to Wisconsin, I visited the lock at Menasha, WI and two of the four locks in Appleton, WI. On the lower Fox River, the Menasha Lock has remained in service despite closure of most of the Lower Fox River locks by the Corps of Engineers and subsequent transfer to the State of Wisconsin. Next to the lock is a museum and the offices of the Friends of the Fox in the former lock tenders house. Unfortunately, the museum was closed during my visit.

Downstream of Menasha, the four Appleton locks were restored by the state in 2007. Also restored more recently were the two moveable highway bridges over the navigation. I could also see Appleton Lock 1, but the sun angle was wrong. Locks 2 and 3 were easy to photograph. Lock 4 was inaccessible due to the ongoing replacement of the elevated College Avenue Bridge. All of these locks are surrounded by chain link fences, probably a legacy of their Corps of Engineer's history. The Corps knows how to fortify a site. Rebuilding continues on the downstream locks.

At the end of the same week, I visited the Erie Canal Park in Millus, NY. There, a 37-year effort by volunteers, with town support, has produced a spectacular park along a several-mile portion of the Enlarged Erie Canal. There are



CSNJ group visits Lock 18 of the Enlarged Erie Canal. Author Dave Phraner (right) continues his story of the tour of NYS canals on p. 5. Photo by Jakob Franke

also pieces with interpretation of the original "Clinton's Ditch." The watered canal is divided into three sections. The west section is used for dinner cruises and is separated from the middle portion by Devoe Road. The middle section is used by park tour boats on Sundays and is separated from the east section by the missing, four-span Nine Mile Creek Aqueduct. You may walk or, in winter, ski along the entire length.

The great news is that after 37 years of effort, in October, contractors dredged the canal on both sides of the aqueduct and also dredged the silt out of the creek at the four spans of the aqueduct. So, water now flows evenly under all of the towpath arches. The best news is that

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## BY CANAL BOAT, CABLE TRAM, AND STEAM TRAIN THROUGH ENGLAND AND NORTHERN WALES

(Part 8, the conclusion)

by Bruce J. Russell

On the following morning we first passed over the Chirk Aqueduct, a 70-foot-high, ten-arch, stone structure that carries the canal across the Ceiriog River Valley. It was begun in 1799, and completed in 1801. Building it avoided the need for flights of locks to bring the canal down to the level of the valley and then back up again. The designer and chief engineer was Thomas Telford, a Scot. His plan for the aqueduct was to insert a cast iron trough within the upper masonry of the structure. Composed of

(continued on page three)

# American Canals

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The objectives of the American Canal  
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of the historical navigational canals of  
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and to provide an exchange of canal  
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correspondence consistent with these  
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individual plates fabricated in a nearby foundry, it carried the canal water at a depth of 5 feet. This was sufficient to permit passage of seven-foot wide narrow boats. Of course, vessels couldn't pass one another, so traffic went first in one direction and then the other. When it opened, people came from great distances to observe and admire it. Telford, his reputation established, was commissioned to design yet another, even grander, aqueduct for the Llangollen Canal at Pontcysyllte. In subsequent years he turned his attention to railways. His ultimate accomplishment was the Britannia Bridge, which still carries trains over the Menai Strait in Wales.

Crossing the Chirk Aqueduct was a fantastic experience. Adjacent to it is a railway viaduct, completed in 1848 by the Scottish engineer Henry Robertson for the Brewsbury and Chester Railway. It's about 30 feet higher than the canal structure and also has ten arches. I was amazed at both of these and tried to envision what it was like during their construction. Stones, quarried nearby and chisled into square blocks, arrived in wagons and were then hoisted into position using primitive pulleys and other devices. The fact that they remain in use is testimony to their soundness. In the United States the closest canal aqueduct, in terms of size, to the one at Chirk is the Monocacy Aqueduct on the abandoned C&O Canal in Maryland. While we were crossing the Chirk in the early morning sunshine, two passenger trains passed by on the adjacent viaduct. Luckily, I had disembarked, had my camera ready, and snapped a picture of the two forms of transportation side by side. (I often think of the

famous photo showing a train on the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and, alongside, a boat on the C&O Canal.)

Just after reaching the south side of Telford's aqueduct, we entered the 1300-foot-long Chirk Tunnel, the longest we had gone through on this tour. Only unidirectional traffic is possible, which means that when entering you must look for the headlamp of a narrow boat coming in the opposite direction. All vessels on the inland waterways are equipped with such a lamp. In days of yore torches or signal flares were probably used. If another vessel has already entered the bore, you must moor and wait for it to get through. Because the coast was clear, the *Swift* went into the dark tunnel and slowly traveled through it. Unlike the much longer Standedge Tunnel on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, the Chirk Tunnel was fitted with a towpath. In earlier times the horses that pulled the boats used it, rather than having to walk up and over via a separate path. Furthermore, the use of leggers was eliminated. Chirk Tunnel, like Standedge, was blasted through rock and soil using black powder, and teams of laborers hauled the debris away in horse carts.

After passage through a short tunnel at Whitehouse, we arrived at the greatest canal aqueduct in all of Britain, the Pontcysyllte. This incredible structure, also designed by Thomas Telford and built between 1799 and 1805, contains nineteen piers and is 126 feet high, about fifty-six feet higher than the Chirk Aqueduct. At 1007 feet in length, it dominates the landscape for miles around. As with the Chirk

Aqueduct, the Pontcysyllte contains an iron trough fashioned out of individual plates bolted together. This occupies the uppermost part of the structure, otherwise made from stone blocks quarried locally and transported to the site in wagons. The depth of the water is five feet, the same as that of the Chirk. At the time of construction, the area was dominated by iron foundries, and several of these received contracts to cast the individual sections of the trough. Once the aqueduct was finished, it acquired the nickname, "the stream in the sky," and became a major tourist attraction. It remains a monument to Britain's Industrial Revolution and continues to be visited by thousands of people every year. In 1987 during a prior canal vacation I saw the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, but reached it not by traveling over the Llangollen Canal but on a bus from elsewhere.

Our narrow boat crossed the aqueduct after waiting for one headed towards Chirk to clear. It was an incredible sensation, floating in a seven-foot-wide boat 126 feet above a river valley. I thought to myself that if this structure hadn't been built, numerous locks would have been required. During the period of the Llangollen Canal's commercial usage, the horses pulling the boats walked alongside the trough on the four-foot-wide towpath. I wonder if the height made them dizzy, or if they were blindfolded.

Once across the aqueduct, we were in Trevor, location of a basin where boats of the Anglo-Welsh Company are rented. Several were moored, and there was also a canal store. We didn't stop, but after making a sharp left turn, continued on toward Llangollen, four miles away. After two more



miles, we came to the point where the waterway becomes very narrow and only one vessel can get through at a time. This section was always subject to flooding, and finally the British Waterways Board reconstructed it inside a concrete trough. What's required is for someone from every vessel approaching this narrow portion to get off and walk ahead to inform any other boat that one is coming. This arrangement can be cumbersome when there is a lot of traffic on the canal, but it's the only way.

After clearing the "narrows," our boat proceeded into Llangollen. Above the canal were trees, and it was snug against a hillside. (In some respects, it reminded me of a section of the Delaware & Hudson Canal known as the "Narrows of the Lackawaxen." Here the D&H was hacked out of a cliff that overlooked the Laxawaxen River, close to where it meets the Delaware, which forms the border between Pennsylvania and New York. Dense trees provided a virtual roof, blocking out the sun's rays.)

Just before reaching Llangollen, we were passed by an excursion, or trip, boat filled with tourists out for a ride. Short of renting a vessel, this is the only way they can get a canaling experience. In addition to this boat, there is also a horse-drawn one that runs in the opposite direction out of Llangollen to Horseshoe Falls, the actual start of the Llangollen Canal. Using a device known as a weir, it takes water from the River Dee. This water flows for forty-six miles through the canal to Hurlston, where it either goes into a reservoir or empties into the Shropshire Union. If the water level in the canal is too high, the weir's gates can be partially or fully closed. If more is needed,

especially during summer, they can be opened to their fullest extent. American inland waterways often used weirs as control devices.

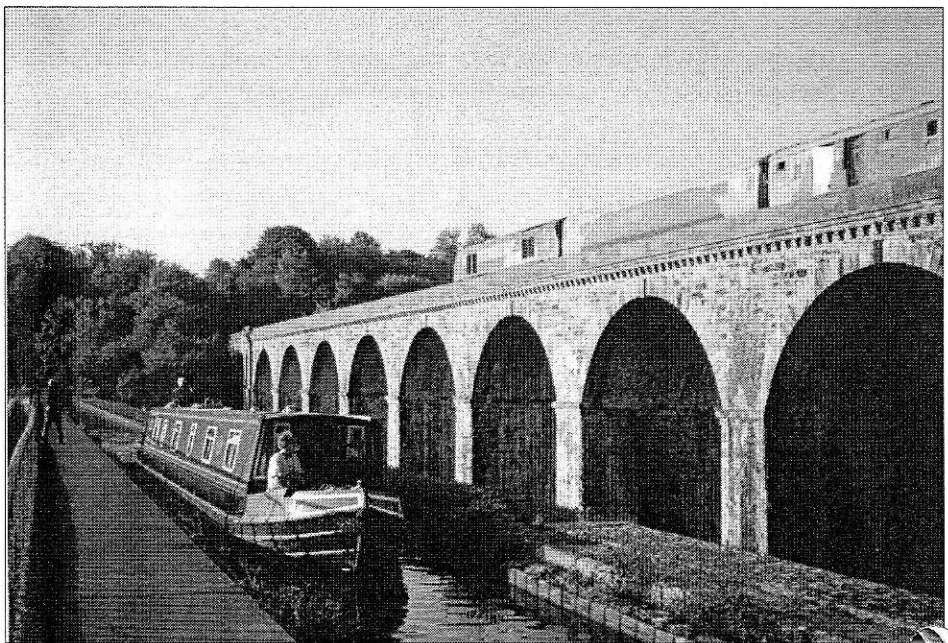
Because Llangollen has become a very popular destination for canalers, it now has a new, enlarged mooring basin that costs five pounds per night or about ten dollars. Space is on an "as available" basis, but fortunately we were able to obtain a berth. When we arrived, it was about half full. After docking, it was early in the afternoon, so most of us decided to walk a short distance into town to explore.

Although Llangollen is in Wales, and all signs are in Welsh as well as in English, I didn't hear that language being spoken. Although efforts continue to keep it alive, in my opinion the battle is a losing one. The same situation prevails in Ireland where, in spite of government policy promoting Gaelic, most everyone converses in English. The Welsh and Gaelic languages are related, both being of Celtic

origin. When the Anglo-Saxons invaded Britain in the 700s, they drove the Celtic peoples to the peripheral regions, meaning Wales, Scotland, and Ireland.

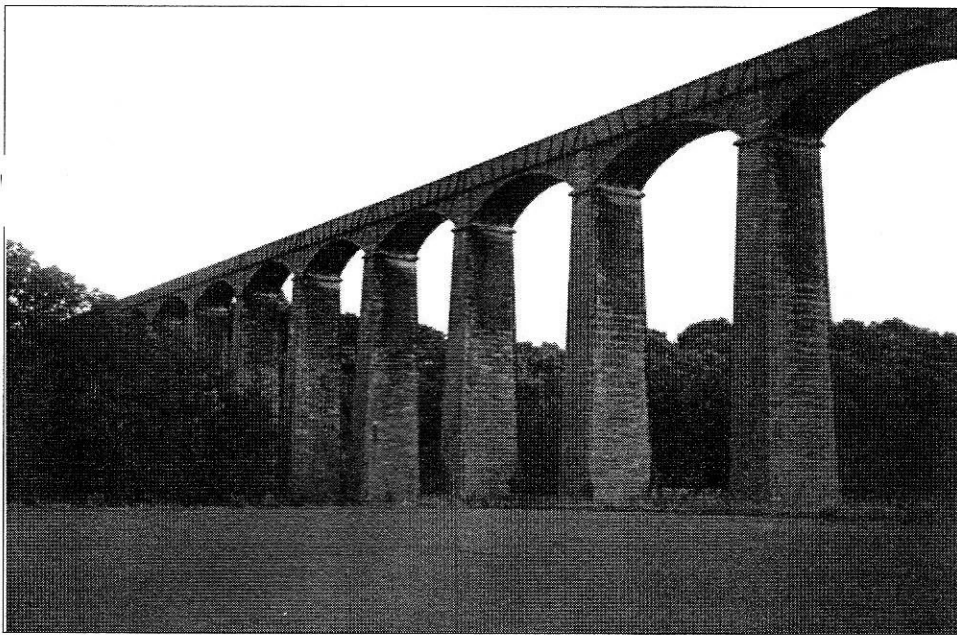
For me, the principal attraction in Llangollen was the Llangollen Railway, a steam-operated tourist line that runs trains over about nine miles of former British Railways trackage through the Dee River Valley. Mainly single-track, it served local communities and did well until the 1960s, when rising automobile ownership and improved highways began to siphon off its traffic. What sealed its fate was a breach in the Llangollen Canal's bank that allowed water to run onto the railroad track and wash it away in a couple of places. Instead of making repairs, final closure was approved.

The only portion of the line saved from the scrappers was the section now used by the Llangollen Railway. Originally consisted of five miles, but in recent years it's been slowly extended to about nine. Because the right-of-way hasn't been built



One of the most thrilling parts of the tour was passing over the 1801 Chirk Aqueduct, which parallels the railroad viaduct, rebuilt in 1858. A British Rail train passed as one of our vessels was crossing the aqueduct. Photo by Bruce Russell





The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. The piers are made of locally-quarried stone, and the trough that carries the water is fashioned from iron. Photo by Bruce Russell.

over, track could easily be put back. The line maintains the former British Railway station in Llangollen, and everything has a 1940s appearance. Inside the waiting room are posters or reproductions of posters from long defunct companies, such as the Cambrian and Great Western railways, showing well-dressed people boarding steam-powered passenger trains. Back then, when men and women traveled, they looked nice. What a contrast to what you now see in airports!

From Llangollen we retraced our steps to Wrenbury Mill, taking two days. We stopped at Whitchurch on the first afternoon. Here they are restoring a three-mile branch of the Llangollen Canal that will once more permit narrow boats to enter its downtown area where there used to be a basin. Navigation on the Whitchurch Branch, or arm, of the Llangollen Canal ceased in 1944, and shortly thereafter most of it was filled in. Now the town wants to be a part of the boom in inland navigation and is in the process of restoring the arm. We saw the

work that's taken place thus far, and I have no doubt that within a few years, narrow boats will swing off the main portion of the Llangollen and navigate into Whitchurch. Canalers will disembark from their vessels and patronize the town's pubs, shops, and restaurants. One scheme actually involves rebuilding an inclined plane that would raise boats from one part of the town to another.

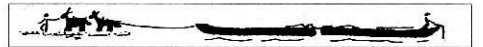
On the final day, returning to Wrenbury, I thought about what a good time I had. Canals are a topic of great interest and also fascinated several authors who wrote books about life on these waterways. In America two good ones are *Rome Haul*, by Harry Edmonds, and *Canal Town*, by Samuel Hopkins. Both are set in the canal era and describe life on the waterways. In Britain there are similar works of fiction where the backdrop is canals. In terms of non-fiction, there are countless books about the British canals, usually well-illustrated with pictures. The canal era in England and Wales was well

documented with black and white photos. Many depict the operation of freight-carrying vessels, showing them alongside warehouses taking on cargo or going through flights of locks. Back then, most boats were pulled by horses, but some had primitive steam engines or early Bolinder diesels. Today the Lister marine diesel is almost universal. Ours had one, and it gave acceptable service.

Upon our arrival at Wrenbury Mill, we cleaned out our vessels and turned them back to the company. I spent time in the gift shop, purchasing a twelve-inch-long model of a narrow boat. Ironically, it was made in China!

Luckily, there were no injuries or mishaps during the trip, and everyone seemed to have enjoyed themselves. The bus transported the group back to a hotel at Manchester Airport, from which we departed the next day, concluding a fortnight of wonderful experiences.

THE END

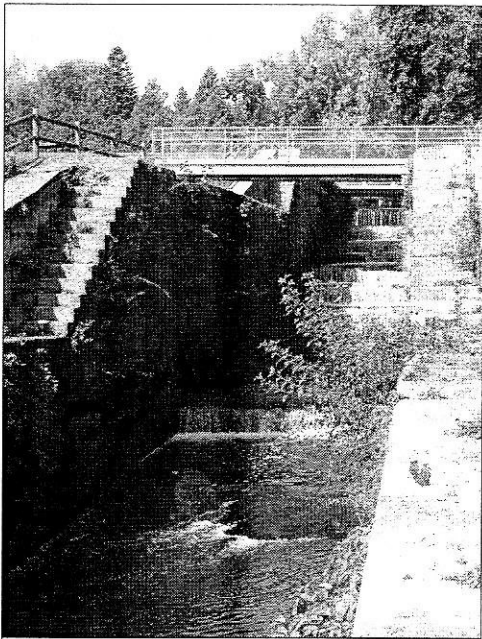


## ELEVEN-CANAL ADVENTURE IN UPSTATE NEW YORK

by S. David Phraner

(This is the third part of a series about the Canal Society of NJ trip to New York State canals.)

Departing the Glens Falls Feeder, we returned south to Waterford and Lock #2. Here we inspected the watered and functioning remains of the old Champlain Canal, a portion of which is used to access the flight of locks descending to the level of the Hudson from the Albany escarpment. The female locktender is also an author of a book on the Champlain Canal and is (along



The Old Champlain Canal still flows through the center of Waterford, New York. The Waterford Sidecut, a system of locks used to bypass a weighlock on the old system, is located next to the current Erie Lock 2. These two older waterways brought canal traffic through Waterford when the actual Erie Canal was located several miles south. At the turn of the century, however, Waterford's busiest canal days still lay ahead. Photo by Jakob Franke

with many of her fellow canal employees), a canal booster and enthusiast. The canal corporation uses the term "operator" in the civil service nomenclature for locktender, though some of the signs and instructions to boaters refer to the operators as lock masters.)

I like the latter traditional canal term better. Jakob allowed over an hour at this delightfully landscaped park, lock, and canal basin site. Bag lunches had been provided the previous evening back in Glens Falls and thankfully, each motel room at the Landmark had a fridge. Most of us ate lunch on the bus motoring back downstream to Waterford. We could (and did) observe a motor-sailer (sloop with stepped

mast) locking through the Waterford flight. A retired canal corporation buoy tender is on historical display, mounted on a trailer, or more appropriately a four-wheeled boat cradle. Here, the Champlain Canal greenway/trailway begins. The old Champlain Canal prism is watered at least a mile north, but navigation is confined to small boats. A humpback bridge crosses the canal, and I observed several (empty) Capital District 35' Gilligs or Orions (buses) rocking over the bridge.

Our next visit was to the place where the main line Erie Canal and the Mohawk River diverge (or converge, if you are traveling westward). The canal at this point skirts the great falls of the Mohawk and several dams at Cohoes. It follows the north bank of the Mohawk, but at a considerably greater elevation than the river at its eastern extremity. Five conventional locks, #2 to #6, and two guard (or guillotine) gates separate the Hudson River from the Mohawk pool near Crescent. The Mohawk pool is very wide at this point and much local recreational boating and boating facilities are present. The canal continues westward from this point mostly in the bed of the river all the way to Rome where the Mohawk and the canal again diverge. (Lock #1 is a federal Army Corps of Engineers lock in the Hudson River at Troy since the river at that point is considered a federal channel.)

We stopped briefly at Guard Gate #2. There we had an opportunity to see the giant counter-weighted gate rise on its gantry. We also stopped at the Lock #6.

This is a unique lock on the canal in that its mitre gates are hydraulically operated. Instead of the conventional gate arms having teeth to mesh with the gear hidden inside the lock walls, Lock #6 had large piston arms, polished to a high sheen by many openings. Lock #6 is one of the greatest single elevation lifts at 37'. (Lock #17 at Little Falls is the highest on the system at over 40' lift.) Locks #5 and #6 are in close proximity, requiring pools to store water and keep the canal water level between the two locks relatively uniform. Imagine the 3.5 million-gallon-outflow from Lock #6 gushing out into the canal within a short distance to downstream Lock #5. Where does all that water go? Side pools were constructed to absorb this added water volume before it is partially dissipated by the emptying of Lock 5. This, of course, is different from the Lock #5 on the Champlain Canal yesterday. I had seen this unusual feature of intervening pools in a flight of locks in England at Devizes on the Kennett and Avon Canal; that flight had sixteen locks in succession and a total of over thirty within a very short distance (why they did not use an inclined plane is beyond me). At each level in the flight of sixteen, there was a side pool to queue boats as well as conserve water.

Returning, we passed Lock #3 which also looked interesting with an old McAllister (at least that was the funnel markings) tug on dry dock and other canal workboats stationed there. As with other locks on the system, the grounds are landscaped in a park-like setting for leisurely observing the passage of boats on the canal.

We returned to Cohoes on the



south bank of the Mohawk near its confluence with the Hudson. Here we inspected the improved Erie Canal. The volume of traffic on the canal at this point was so great that the locks in the improved (not the barge canal) canal were constructed as double locks. One of these locks is in a state of semi-preservation. The old Erie or Clinton's Ditch is hidden beneath these improved canal works or later mill buildings that displaced the original Erie. The town of Cohoes got a grant and placed a paver walkway in a linear park. Unfortunately, this site has fallen through the institutional cracks and the place was neglected and overgrown. Some time earlier in the season, someone had mowed the path up to a point, but there was little evidence of care and the path badly needed another mowing.

We headed west along the river to the great falls of the Mohawk. A park and viewing plaza is behind a series of company row houses built by the mill owners who once ran the town and the mills along the river bank. Water power attracted these textile manufacturers until the industry went south (and subsequently east). Several of the mills remain in adaptive reuse, including condos. The view of the falls is most impressive. Looking downriver, we observed the highway crossing between Waterford and Cohoes and beyond that the D&H deck truss multi-span bridge crossing the river. Unfortunately, no traffic appeared on the rail bridge. I dallied at the spot hoping for a miracle train, but it was not to be.

Continuing west following the south bank of the river, we observed some of the dams and

the great pool, this time from a southern perspective. We crossed the Mohawk to the north bank at the site of the remains of the Rexford Aqueduct. A small park occupies the site of the north bank ruins of the aqueduct. We then followed back roads paralleling the river to Vischer's Ferry. This tiny hamlet is familiar in name only as it appears on a prominent exit sign on the Northway. I had always pondered what the place was like and if there was actually a ferry there (yes, there once was in the 1700s). Lock #7 is located here, but we instead were looking at the old (watered) Erie Canal with a restored and transplanted historic Whipple arch span bridge crossing the canal. From the bridge site at Vischers Ferry, we continued west to Amsterdam where we enjoyed a surprisingly good and varied Chinese buffet in the downtown. Thence, we traveled on to Little Falls and Rome where we put up in the Quality Inn, near

downtown Rome.

Little Falls is worth a short detour off the Thruway, as it contains all the elements of travel history in America compressed into a small site. During the pre-Erie Canal navigation on some of America's rivers, rafts, flatboats, and Durham boats were used to navigate. Eventually short crude canals were constructed around major falls or at frail dams built to create navigable river pools. Great Falls on the Potomac River features one of these early canal works. Called the Patowmack Canal, a flight of locks is preserved in the park on the south bank of the river at the Great Falls. One traverses a former Washington and Old Dominion Railway bridge to get there. The later C&O Canal is preserved on the north bank as a long distance trail (Washington to Pittsburgh, though the canal only went as far as Cumberland). Little Falls, NY, presents us with another example of not only two, but three types of inland navigations, side by side:



This view of Cohoes Falls illustrates why locks were needed to circumvent this obstacle to navigation. Photo by Jakob Franke

## OHIO'S GRAND CANAL A Brief History of the Ohio & Erie Canal

Pre-canal improved river (18th century),  
Towpath canal (19th century),  
Modern river navigation/barge canal (20th century),  
Add the rail modes:  
New York Central Main Line,  
West Shore and Buffalo Main Line (now a bike/ped trail),  
Utica and Mohawk Valley Interurban (NY State Rys.)  
and byways and highways:  
Native American trail, turnpike, State Route 5, and Interstate 90.

We arrived at dusk in Little Falls. Several of our hardy canawlers clambered up to the enormous lock gate. I walked up to the former West Shore right-of-way, now a paved and interpreted trail high on the south bank of the river. Cody parked Minnie Prevost (the bus) next to a nicely preserved (but dry) lock on the improved canal. The original Erie Canal is beneath the roadway. The barge canal is in the river and the 17th-century canal bypassing the falls is on the north bank, but very few traces of it exist. You can spend an entire relaxing day here looking at the trains and boats, hiking on the West Shore, and browsing the shops.

TO BE CONTINUED IN THE SPRING  
ISSUE

### ACS ENGINEERING, MAINTENANCE, AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

John Lamb, committee chairman, writes that he provided advice to the Canal Corridor Committee of the Illinois & Michigan Canal.

Last spring the corridor launched the *Volunteer*, a replica canalboat at La Salle. Before operations began, he advised them as to the feasibility of using an I&M Canal lock and an aqueduct for the boat ride. They did use the aqueduct, but not the ►

“There have been a number of books written about Ohio’s nineteenth-century canal system, especially about the Ohio & Erie Canal, but *Ohio’s Grand Canal* is by far the most meticulously researched account I have ever read.” —Jack Gieck, author of *A Photo Album of Ohio’s Canal Era, 1825-1913*.

By linking Ohio’s two major bodies of water — the Ohio River and Lake Erie — Ohio’s canals, built in the early nineteenth century, caused unprecedented growth and wealth for the fledgling state. The canals opened up Ohio to new markets, new settlers, agriculture, and industry, depositing large sums of money into the region and giving Ohioans a surge of confidence and optimism.

Despite these impressive results, the canals struggled when other modes of transportation, such as the National Road and river steamboats, became serious competitors. The rise in popularity of railroads in the 1850s sparked the beginning of the end for the canals. Over the next decades, the canals declined steadily due to neglect, culminating with a statewide flood in 1913 that effectively rendered most of the Ohio & Erie useless.

*Ohio’s Grand Canal* concisely details the entire history of the canal system. Author Terry K. Woods chronicles the events leading up to construction, as well as public opinion of the canal system, the modifications made to traditional boat designs, the leasing of the waterways to private companies, and the Ohio canals’ legal abandonment in 1929. He also includes a personal look at the 1913 flood through the eyes of a thirteen-year-old boatman who experienced it firsthand.

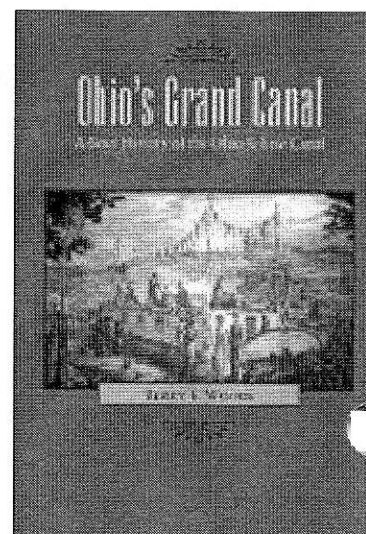
Well-written and thoroughly researched, this single-volume history of the Ohio & Erie Canal will be important to educators and to a general audience interested in Ohio history and canals.

Terry K. Woods in past president of both the Canal Society of Ohio and the American Canal Society. He is the former editor of *Towpaths*, the journal of the Canal Society of Ohio, and is widely recognized as an expert on the Ohio & Erie Canal. He is also the author of *The Ohio & Erie Canal: A Glossary of Terms*. The book is available at book stores along the canal, [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), and by direct mail from The Kent State

University Press, c/o Bookmaster's Inc., 30 Amberwood Parkway, Ashland, OH 44805. Shipping costs are \$6.00 for the first book and \$1.00 for each additional book.

local lock. His information concerned the historic feasibility.

If you know of any site that might benefit from the advice of this committee’s members, please contact John Lamb at 1109 Garfield St., Lockport, IL 60441, 815-536-7316 or Terry Woods 6939 Eastham Circle, Canton OH 44708, 330-832-4621 or [woodscanalone@aol.com](mailto:woodscanalone@aol.com).





## The Story Of James Brindley – U.S. Canal Engineer – 1745-1820

by Yvonne E. Long and Gordon Brindley, B.A. (January 2003)

### A Wilderness Transformed

*‘But the strongest call came from the canal, for the engineers were letting in water for the first time today. As far as you could see, the big ditch ran, like a hill turned down and inside out. An army of Irishmen had scooped it out, cursing at the boys who threw stones at their clay pipes when they laid them on the ground. Now they were gone and the ditch lay new and dry. But God help the dog or cat found in it when the water came down today. They were letting it in from the river. Oh, this would be a day to remember. Folks were coming from twenty miles to see boats floating where there had only been dry earth before.’*

About two years ago, we uncovered references to a canal builder named James Brindley, who (the website claimed) worked on several of the earliest US canal projects such as the **Susquehanna River, James River, and Conewago canals**. Being sceptical by nature, we put the information to one side as mere coincidence, believing it to have no bearing on our more famous English ancestor, James Brindley, the renowned English canal builder.

We were wrong, for later we discovered from the diaries of George Washington and other reliable source material that he was indeed the nephew of James and had trained under his famous uncle on numerous British canal projects from around the age of fourteen.

We all know of George Washington as a wealthy plantation owner, a victorious general, and America’s first president. However, few people realise that he was also a distinguished engineer who pioneered several early American canal projects and who secured the services of James for a number of engineering assignments. In May 1786, Washington stated:

*“Mr James Brindley, nephew of the celebrated person of the same name [James Brindley 1716-1772] who conducted the work of the Duke of Bridgewater [Francis Edgerton, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Bridgewater 1736-1803] and planned others in England, possesses I presume, more practical knowledge of Cuts & Locks for the improvement of inland navigation, than any man amongst us as he was executive officer [he says] many years under his uncle in this particular business.”*

Since that first discovery, the story of James and his family life has gradually unfolded, and we now know that his parents were Joseph and Sarah Brindley. Joseph was the brother of James Sr, and although not achieving the worldwide fame of his sibling, built a meaningful career in Alton, Staffordshire.

### James Brindley (1745-1820) American Canal Pioneer

Little is known of James’s early years in England but comparing his handwriting style with that of his uncle James, they are so similar that we speculate that they may both have been taught to read and write at the Quaker school in Leek which was flourishing during that period. Located at Overton Bank, the school building still exists today. Furthermore, it is within walking distance of Lowe Hill Farm where the Brindley family was living from 1726 onwards.

It is likely that Joseph Brindley had arranged for his son to be apprenticed under his brother, possibly around the age of fourteen, which was normal for the time. If correct, then the young James would have had the opportunity of working under his professional guidance for around thirteen years before his uncle’s premature death in 1772. This would support James’s claimed seniority in his uncle’s business that George Washington mentioned in a letter to William Moultrie dated May 25, 1786. Washington writes *“He was an executive officer (he says) many years under his uncle in this particular business.”*

From existing records, nothing has been found so far in relation to the young James’s canal work in Britain, but most of the notes available are purely technical or financial calculations, so nothing should be read into the absence of record.

The paper trail on James really begins with his arrival in America, an event that was featured in *The Virginia Gazette* on July 7<sup>th</sup> 1774.

*“The Jett from London is gone up the Rappahannock River. In her came John Ballendine, Esq: with about forty ingenious Mechanicks, who landed at Hampton. Mr Ballendine has made a tour of England, Scotland, Ireland, and France, in order to make himself fully acquainted with inland navigation, and has also engaged and brought with him some of the best and most experienced artists in canals, locks etc. that could be had in England; among them **Mr. James Brindley** and **Mr. Thomas Allan**, Nephews to the celebrated Engineer of that name, who were brought up with him, and were well acquainted with all his works until his death.”*

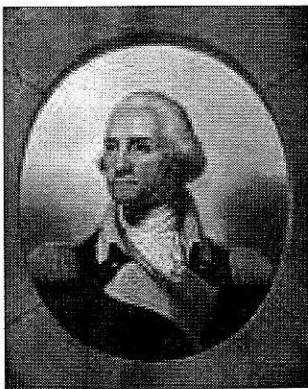
Philadelphians’ interest in canals and roads, or, as they were known later, “internal improvements,” crystalized in the late 1760s. The prime reason for their interest was the rapid development of central Pennsylvania, which, at the end of

(continued on page ten)

the French and Indian War, was open for settlement. Philadelphia merchants naturally looked to this new trading opportunity as their own to control. However, central Pennsylvania's natural trade route, which carried increasing quantities of grain, whisky, lumber, and iron from the interior, was the Susquehanna River. For eons before political boundaries had been drawn, the Susquehanna emptied into the Chesapeake Bay, not part of the Delaware estuary controlled by Philadelphia.

The Quaker merchants soon seized upon a technical solution to their economic problem—they came to believe that the new technology of canals and turnpikes could divert the developing interior trade into their city and between 1768 and 1772, a cluster of individuals brought plans into a coherent strategy. However, attempts had already been made to improve water communications without success; in 1761, the citizens of Berks County wanted to clear the Schuylkill River, which was their natural highway to Philadelphia and collected their own funds to do so. They succeeded in removing rocks at the falls of the Schuylkill only to render the river too shallow to navigate in parts. The plan, like many others, was a failure.

After years of faltering projects, something radical needed to be done, so it was the prominent industrialist and entrepreneur, John Ballendine, who was selected by his peer group to travel to England and systematically study the workings of early European canals. Despite having a rather dubious reputation, he had the support of George Washington who thought him a natural genius and together they shared a passionate determination to progress trade through inland navigation.



Whilst in England, Ballendine was very active and visited the Duke of Bridgewater's canals amongst others in Europe. Ballendine, George Washington, and many other prominent Americans were already well acquainted with the work of James Brindley Senior. For years, his reputation as an innovative engineer and visionary had grown considerably on both sides of the Atlantic.

It is apparent that James was introduced to Washington (portrait, left) almost immediately after his arrival, for they soon began a professional relationship that lasted many years until the former president died in 1799. From Washington's diaries, it is clear that James stayed at his home, Mount Vernon, on several occasions, so he must have known the "first" family well.

After the British defeated the French and their Indian allies in the French and Indian War (1754-1763), new and burdensome taxation laws were introduced, and a serious conflict began to emerge between King George III and the colonies; however, at the time James and his cousin Thomas departed for America, few envisaged that it would result in war.

Just a few short months after their arrival in America, "a shot was fired at Lexington that was heard around the world." Armed colonists tried to resist British seizure of an arsenal, and eight Americans together with 73 British soldiers were killed. The Revolution had begun. The second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia on May 10<sup>th</sup> 1775 and they declared themselves the government. They named George Washington Commander-in-Chief of the newly organized army.

Maryland State papers show that in July of 1777, James wrote to the Governor requesting advice about the possibility of manufacturing iron wire. Whether this request was connected to the war effort or just to his ordinary business activities, we do not know; however, we do know that his father, Joseph, owned a wireworks in Alton, so it was a trade he already knew well.

From *The History of Delaware*, we learn that on the morning of September 11<sup>th</sup> 1777, James hosted George Washington to breakfast just before the General, alongside his good friend the Marquis de Lafayette, led the Continental Army into the Battle of Brandywine. An eyewitness wrote: "On the morning of the battle Washington took his breakfast at the mansion of James Brindley, on the Wilmington side of the river, walking the floor with deep thought or standing with his cup of coffee in his hand, eating little and soon hastening on to Chadd's Ford"

Although the Americans eventually went on to victory, the British under the command of Generals Howe and Cornwallis defeated George Washington that day. Such was the nature of the battle that "the hardest fighting took place between the Birmingham Meeting House and houses of Mrs. James Davis and Mrs. Jones, and for much of the day British troops occupied the entire west bank of the Brandywine" - an area close to the location of the James Brindley house.

From detailed descriptions of the day's events and surviving maps, we can pinpoint the location of his residence to within a few square miles. It was located on the west side of the Brandywine River in Delaware, close to the Pennsylvania/Delaware state line, a few miles south of Chadds Ford.

Although obviously living an affluent lifestyle, the term *mansion* is misleading. James's home no longer survives; however, a mansion of the same era that has been restored stands close by. The house pictured at right is the former home of John Chadd, and it gives us some indication of what the exterior would have looked like.



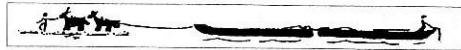


The Brandywine Battlefield is now a national monument and thankfully the area in and around Chadds Ford remains sleepy and reminiscent of rural England. Several original inns and taverns survive and although damaged during the battle of 1777, are still in use today. No doubt James would have visited local taverns such as the Dilworthtown Inn and The Chadds Ford Inn, because they served as important meeting places for the exchange of world news, as well as being pleasant and convenient "watering holes."

James obviously was in sympathy with the colonists because, in 1778, he subscribed to the Oath of Allegiance and Fidelity and joined Captain John Garrett's Militia as a Private 6<sup>th</sup> Class. On October 3<sup>rd</sup> 1781, he was promoted to second lieutenant in the same company. At this point, little is known of his war record but we know he survived to raise his family, dying peacefully at the age of 75.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of April 1779, he married Elizabeth Ogle, a woman five years his senior, at Old Swedes [now Holy Trinity] Church in Wilmington. James was thirty-four when he married Elizabeth and together they had three children, Sarah, Susanna, and James Joseph. Sarah and James *Joseph* were named after James' s parents. Susanna was the name of his paternal grandmother.

**Ed. note: This story will be continued in future issues. Our thanks to Yvonne Long and Gordon Brindley for permission to publish this biography of an important figure in U.S. canal history.**



## TEN REASONS WHY CANAL PRESERVATION IS IMPORTANT

by Richard F. Brown, Jr., AICP

### 1. Historic preservation is a way to show honor and respect for the legacy left to us.

I think this is the most critical element to all historic preservation. Our ancestors built this nation over years of heavy labor with their blood, sweat, and tears. How we treat this legacy reflects directly upon us. Do we value the sacrifices and efforts of our ancestors, or do we discard them like yesterday's newspaper? This is an important question, because if we discard the efforts of our predecessors, then we cannot expect *our* achievements to be treated with any more respect by our successors.

This is not to say that every single site ever built must be preserved, but a throw-away society often wastes much more time, energy, and effort than a society that adapts the historical into the functional. The three tenets of recycling could easily be applied to historic preservation efforts:

- **reuse** of the historic gifts we have been given so that future generations may enjoy and experience them as well;
- reduce** the amount of land, time, money, and energy wasted by building a sprawling society on undeveloped "green" sites, when existing developed sites (historic or not) can be easily adapted for reuse, redevelopment, or rehabilitation; and
- recycle** historic structures in a sensitive manner for functional reuse in our modern world.

In addition, we can learn important lessons from our ancestors. By taking the time to throttle back and explore, study, and understand our legacy, we show honor and respect for the work of those who came before us.

### 2. Preserving historic features is an expression of commitment.

When historic features, such as canals, are preserved, those involved are dedicating themselves to their long-term care and maintenance. This can create a very powerful bond, because the commitment is not to oneself, but to something much bigger. In historic preservation, we are dedicating ourselves to the principle that some significant achievements in our local, state, or national history are worth protecting forever, despite outside pressure to conform, convert, change, or relent to a modern society.

### 3. Historic preservation sets a good example.

By preserving historic canal features, we are providing a positive demonstration to those who are not involved in the project and to those who may become involved in the future. It is especially important to demonstrate this to future generations, whose time is all too often absorbed by sports, television, video games, and computers.

### 4. Historic preservation provides a sense of accomplishment.

Preserving a historic canal provides one with the satisfaction of accomplishing something beyond the ordinary or status quo. All too often, historic features are bulldozed into oblivion. Preserving a historic feature means sometimes taking the road less traveled to successfully complete the effort. In the end, while it may have been harder to do, the sense of accomplishment and pride certainly outweigh the effort expended.

### 5. Preserving historic features is an efficient use of the earth.

Historic preservation and adaptive reuse of historic features are a much more economical and efficient use of the land than wasting money, time, and resources discarding older areas for greener pastures. As temporary residents of this planet, we are all expected to be stewards of the land. Historic preservation of canals and other features is one way of demonstrating our stewardship in a positive way.

(continued on page twelve)

6. Canals are a truly remarkable engineering and construction feat of our ancestors.

Even a novice to engineering, design, and construction would be impressed by the sheer size, length, and magnitude of canals, locks, aqueducts, and related structures built by our ancestors during the first half of the 19th century. The back-breaking work that went into constructing these massive projects is hard to imagine, especially since it was nearly all built without the use of mechanized equipment. Simply put, it is amazing!

7. Canals provide available, pre-existing infrastructure for potential adaptive reuse.

Though canals and canal corridors were originally built for navigation, commerce, or water power, they are often perfectly suited for beneficial adaptation and rehabilitation. Examples include:

- Linear parks, greenways, and greenbelts. It is much easier and more cost effective to utilize an existing historic corridor than to create a new one. Land acquisition costs alone would be staggering.
- An alternate commuting or recreation corridor for pedestrians, bicyclists, roller-bladers, and ice-skaters. In some instances, portions of canals in urban areas could be rehabilitated for short-distance commuting by water taxi. (In London, water taxis connect neighborhoods by using the Grand Union and Regent's canals. Potential examples in North America include the Erie Canal in Rochester, New York; the Rideau Canal in Ottawa, Ontario; the Central Canal in Indianapolis, Indiana; the Lachine Canal in Montreal, Quebec; and the Intracoastal Waterway in Hampton Roads and at numerous locations in Florida.
- Tourism magnets for leisure travel or to draw visitors to specific destinations and enhance the local economy.
- Rehabilitation of remaining hydraulic canals could present a potential homegrown, low-cost, and clean alternative energy source. This has the added benefit or not requiring natural rivers to be dammed to create electricity.

8. Canal preservation provides a foundation for education, knowledge, and understanding about our forefathers.

While non-fiction publications and textbooks may present the facts and figures about history, nothing adequately describes the initial awe of seeing a canal lock or aqueduct up close for the first time. Stories about the people, places, and events, as well as the sacrifices and hardships they endured during the canal-building era provide a unique perspective into our history.

In addition, seeing the remnants of the canal era up close provides one with the perspective of the size, mass, and scale not offered in literature. Preserved canals serve as a tangible link to our forefathers, while the visual images of massive blocks of stone being quarried, cut, moved, and hoisted into place or of thousands of immigrant laborers digging and shaping the prism in the sweltering heat evoke a clearer understanding of life in the early 19th century.

9. Canals are a source of community livability and pride.

One attribute that makes a place special is its accessibility to active and passive recreation. A visit to the Ohio & Erie or the C&O Canal shows these benefits. The corridor also preserves the historic remnants, provides green space, and allows nature to thrive, even in the heart of an urban area.

10. Canal corridors are places where wildlife can thrive.

Former canal corridors provide all the necessary elements for wildlife to thrive where food, cover, water, and space are all present. Combine this with the active and passive recreational opportunities the canal affords and you have a powerful combination of fun, education, and adventure.

Thanks to Carolyn Schmidt for permission to reprint this article from *The Hoosier Packet*.

**JOURNAL OF RIDEAU LOCKMASTER PUBLISHED BY FRIENDS OF THE RIDEAU CANAL**

With the help of many volunteers, the Friends of the Rideau, in Ontario, has published *The Sweeney Diary: The 1839-1850 Journal of Rideau Lockmaster Peter Sweeney*. The printing of this 198-page book was funded by the Rideau Legacy Fund, the first project using this new fund.

Special thanks are extended to Sue Warren who transcribed the diary over 20 years ago and wrote a fascinating piece titled, "The Life and Times of Peter Sweeney" which sets the entire diary into period context. Sue also provided brief biographies of everyone mentioned in the diary; these are listed in the "Who's Who in the Diary" section. The diary is a real Rideau treasure – the only first-hand account of a lockmaster in the 19th century. Peter Sweeney's diary, although somewhat cryptic, is an unfiltered look (he never wrote the diary for public consumption) at daily life at a lockstation.

Parks Canada will distribute a copy of the Sweeney diary to all Rideau Corridor libraries – municipal, high school and university. This will provide easy access to the book for many in the Rideau area, particularly youth who will find this glimpse into their past both interesting and educational. We thank Parks Canada for giving us permission to print the diary, which is available through the website, [www.rideaufriends.com](http://www.rideaufriends.com). If you haven't seen it yet, order your copy now!



## 2009 ELECTION RESULTS:

Returning board members are Dave Barber, Bob Barth, Carroll Gantz, Keith Kroon, Lance Metz, and Roberta Styran.

Abba Lichtenstein was elected to serve the full 2009-11 term, and George Hume was elected to fill the balance of Zip Zimmerman's term for 2009.

The nominating committee recommends that the officers currently serving be elected for another term for 2009.

Dave Barber - President  
Bill Gerber - Vice President  
Mike Morthorst - Vice President  
Dave Johnson - Secretary  
Charlie Derr - Treasurer

## Baptism at Lock #19

By Mark Beech

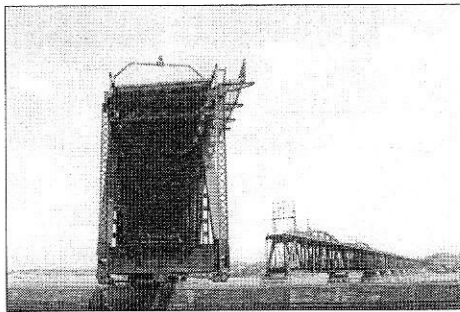
It all started when Linda and I decided to visit Abraham Lincoln's tomb.

Since Lincoln rests in Springfield, Illinois, and we live in Battle Creek, Nebraska, we knew we'd cross the majestic Mississippi River. I was looking forward to seeing it again, and maybe showing Linda a lock or two.

After a long, pleasant drive through southern Iowa, we took a room in the old river town of Keokuk. From there it was a short scenic drive to Nauvoo, Illinois, where the Mormons launched their epic trek to Utah, and a bit longer drive to Springfield to stand in Lincoln's living room and look through gathering tears at the headstone of the man who saved our country.

But first we drove down to the river to check out Lock #19.

Now the following won't make any sense unless you know something about Linda. She has for many years been supportively tolerant of my interest in canals.



Swing section of railroad bridge appears to teeter on lock guide wall as clattering gears pull it closed. Photo by Mark Beech

She enjoyed our trip to explore the Hennepin Canal in northern Illinois. Up to this point, however, you would not call her a canal aficionado. But that was about to change.

Lock #19 has a lot of history. The current lock from the 1950s is its third incarnation. It's 110 feet wide and can take a tow of barges 1200 feet long. It has the highest lift of the Mississippi locks at thirty-eight feet. The dam has a large powerhouse from 1913 that still generates electricity.

The lock runs along the Iowa shore just below the bluffs of Keokuk. The pivot of a classic iron swing bridge sits on the downstream guide wall of the

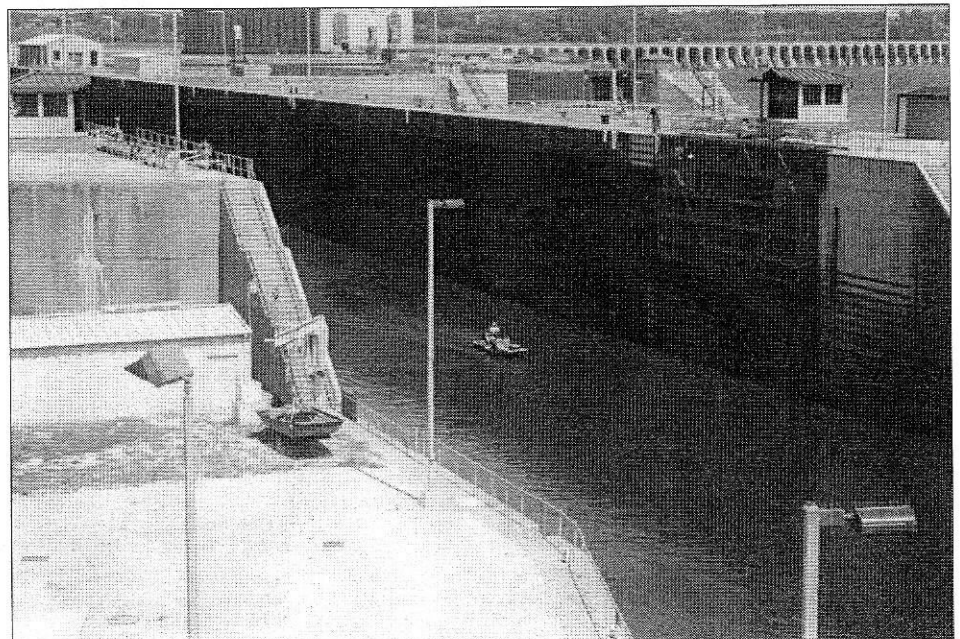
lock. The upper level of the bridge used to carry auto traffic, and its lower level still carries trains. Currently the upper level from the bank to the swing section is an observation platform. You can walk out to the end and look down into the lock and get a good view of the massive lower miter gates. Two or three hundred feet downstream, a big new highway bridge shoots across to Illinois.

Anyway, when Linda and I arrived on the observation platform, not much was going on. We got oriented and took a few pictures. It was a great day, and we were happy just to be out and about.

Suddenly and silently the huge steel gates started to move. Inexorably they swung open and pressed back into the lock walls. In anticipation we leaned forward.

Out of the 1200-foot lock emerged a single sixteen-foot johnboat!!

I was going to explain that shuttling private fishing craft up and down the river is not the primary function of this impressive structure, but then I noticed that the johnboat was



Lock #19 dwarfs fishing boat. Photo by Mark Beech

pretty overloaded. I didn't feel up to diving fifty feet into the Mississippi, so I pinned my hopes on the Corps of Engineers rescue boats positioned at key points around the lock. Luckily the johnboat putted on downstream without incident (at least as far as we could see).

Linda seemed disappointed. But that was about to change.

Tooling back from Nauvoo that afternoon on the big new bridge Linda said, with enthusiasm, "There's a boat in the lock!"

We looped around under the highway and got out on the observation platform just in time to see a full tow of fifteen barges plus a very handsome towboat gracefully settle out of sight in the lock. The gates opened. As big diesels rumbled, the whole spectacle passed right below us.

Linda was fired up now. "That thing really works!!" she exclaimed.

But the adventure was just beginning.

The next day, returning from Springfield in the dark, we were again skimming across the big new bridge into Keokuk. And again, ever vigilant, Linda spotted something. Very excited, she said:

"There's a really big boat in the lock!!" And indeed there was.

We whipped around under the highway and hurried out on the observation platform. An amazing sight presented itself.

The huge *American Queen* stern-wheeler cruise ship, the biggest steamboat in the world, stood high in the lock, ablaze with lights!! All we could clearly see was her bright red paddle wheel as she eased out of the lock and headed upstream into the enfolding darkness.

As we stood in awe, watching the *American Queen* glide silently out of sight, a tow of four-

teen barges came up behind us, also headed upstream. The intense beams of light from her two powerful searchlights flitted here and there over the lock as the pilot held her rock steady, waiting for the gates to open.

And then the tow also slipped away into the darkness.

It suddenly got very quiet and a little lonely on the observation platform. We didn't want the fun to stop. So we decided to chase the *American Queen* up river and catch her going through Lock #18.

Although it was dark, and I was totally unfamiliar with the terrain, it didn't seem like a 400-foot, multi-decked steamboat with all her lights on could hide anywhere.

Well, she can on the Mississippi.

Soon I was badly lost. I went from chasing a steamboat to trying to find my way out of a Burlington, Iowa, suburb. It was very late before we straggled into a motel and distracted the young desk clerk from her studies.

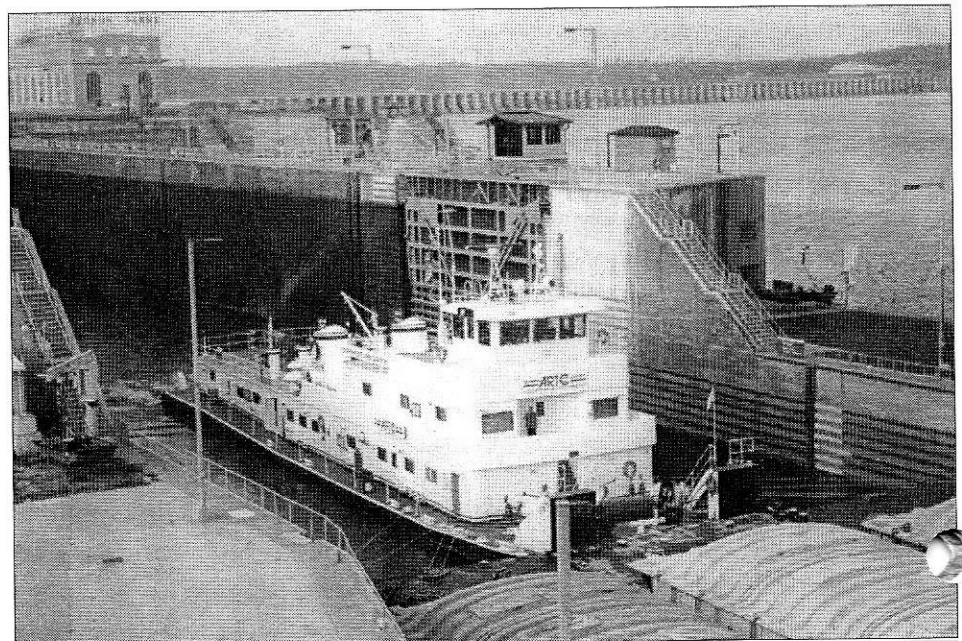
The next morning at breakfast the first person we asked knew

exactly where Lock #18 is.

All in all, our brief sojourn in Iowa, outside the constricting boundaries of everyday routine, meant a lot to us. Linda finally caught the canal bug. And it didn't take long. I'm proud of her for this along with all her other talents.

She has already made some practical suggestions. I am informed that we will not go near the Mississippi again until I know precisely where every lock is and have an accurate schedule for the *American Queen*.

P.S. I originally thought the steamboat we saw could be the *Mississippi Queen*, but after checking on the internet, it seemed that it had to be the *American Queen*. To be sure, I emailed the cruise line. Mr. Alan Fox, chairman & CEO of Vacations To Go, sent us a very thoughtful reply confirming that we had seen the *American Queen*. He also gave us her schedule for the fall of 2008. You can see pictures and specs for the *American Queen* as well as the company's other boats by visiting the website at [www.mississippirivercruises.com](http://www.mississippirivercruises.com).



That's more like it! Fifteen-barge tow exits the downstream gates. Photo by M. Beech



## CANALENDER

**March 7**—Winter Symposium, Monroe Community College, Rochester, NY. Canal Society of NYS.

[www.canalsnys.org](http://www.canalsnys.org)

**March 14**—Canal History and Technology Symposium, Easton, PA. See story in column two.

**April 3-5**—Joint PCS-CSO field trip on the Middle and Eastern divisions of the Sandy & Beaver, Columbiana County, Ohio; for more details, contact Dan Schuster at [DanSchusterCSO@aol.com](mailto:DanSchusterCSO@aol.com) or 440-237-9005.

**April 17-19**—"Wait 'Til You Get To Wabash" is the theme of the Canal Society of Indiana's spring tour on the Wabash & Erie Canal in Wabash County, Indiana.

**April 24-26**—CSNYS spring field trip, Chenango Canal. Canal Society of NYS. [www.canalsnys.org](http://www.canalsnys.org).

**May 16**—Canal Authors Extravaganza to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the opening of the D&R Canal; Griggstown, NJ. For details, contact Linda Barth at 908-722-7428 or [barths@att.net](mailto:barths@att.net).

**May 22-24**—Annual Meeting of the Virginia Canals & Navigations Society; [www.vacanals.org](http://www.vacanals.org).

**June 28**—Canal Day, Schuylkill Canal Association; 610-917-0021; [www.schuylkillcanal.com](http://www.schuylkillcanal.com).

**September 23-25**—World Canals Conference, Belgrade, Serbia. Pre-conference trip, Sept 21-22; post-conference trip, Sept. 26-27. Contact: [www.worldcanalsconference.org](http://www.worldcanalsconference.org).

**October 2-15**—Study tour of south German waterways. Contact [www.canalsnys.org](http://www.canalsnys.org).

**October 16-18**—Canal Society of Indiana's fall tour will explore the Ohio & Erie Canal in New Bremen and Piqua, Ohio.

**September 19-23, 2010**—World Canals Conference, Rochester, NY. Contact: [www.worldcanalsconference.org](http://www.worldcanalsconference.org).

### Canal History and Technology Symposium at Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania

The 28th annual Canal History and Technology Symposium will be held at the William E. Simon Center at Lafayette College on Saturday, March 14, 2009.

Sponsored by the National Canal Museum and Lafayette College, this event features the presentation of research papers on topics of transportation and industrial history.

Topics this year include: the history of Dieter's Foundry in Cherryville, Pa.; moving canal boats between elevation changes without locks; the conflict between the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company and the Beaver Meadow Railroad; the Hulett ore loaders of the Great Lakes; steamboats on the Merrimack River; and building the Potomac Aqueduct on the C&O Canal.

Presenters include Thomas Grasso, President, Canal Society of New York; Emory Kemp, Director of the Institute for Historic Technology and Industrial Archaeology at West Virginia University; William Gerber, President, Middlesex Canal Association; Robert Kapsch, former director of the Historic American Building Survey and the Historic American Engineering Record; and Sean Billings, noted Lehigh

Valley researcher and historian.

The complete text of the selected papers is published in the Canal History and Technology Proceedings, which is part of the registration package. Registration for the symposium, which includes continental breakfast, buffet lunch, and a copy of the Proceedings, is \$60 (\$54 for members of Hugh Moore Historical Park and Museums). All registrations received after February 27th will incur a \$5 late fee. Registrations will be accepted until March 6th. Individual copies of the Proceedings can be purchased after the symposium for \$19.50 (plus tax and shipping).

Registration forms will be mailed in January. Please contact the National Canal Museum at [membership@canals.org](mailto:membership@canals.org) or 610-559-6616.

### An ACS bulletin board or web forum?

Would someone like to set up and run an official American Canals web forum to supplement the ACS web site? We need a place for those interested in American canals to post announcements, to be notified of new additions to the ACS web page, to ask technical and historical questions of American canal buffs, to arrange transportation to meetings, etc.

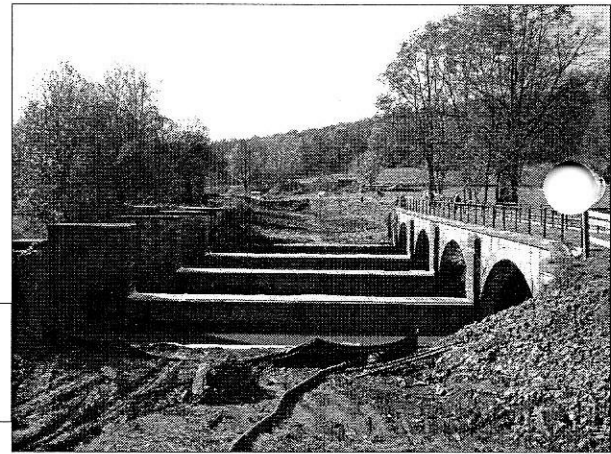
A successful example is the Virginia Canal and Navigations Society's web forum described on <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Batteau>.

Scott Smith can tell you how he set it up and maintains it. You can contact him at [scott@wscottsmith.com](mailto:scott@wscottsmith.com). It's a great place for keeping up with Virginia's canals. We need something like this for America's canals.

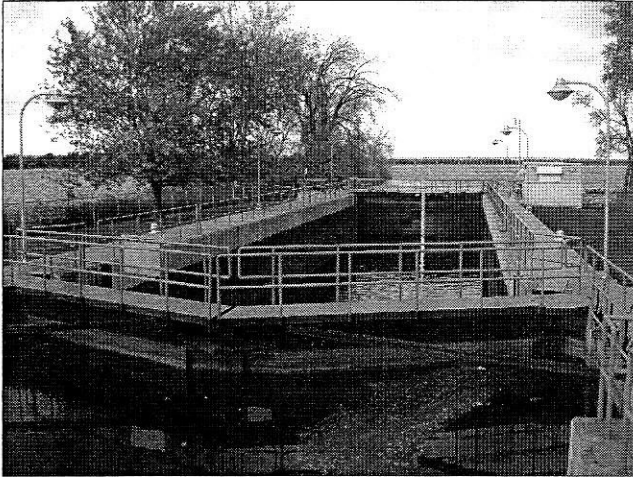
If you're interested, please contact our president, Dave Barber, at [dgbarber@cs.com](mailto:dgbarber@cs.com).

**From the President** (continued from page one)

come spring, aqueduct timbers will again be set across the piers and by fall of 2009, we will be able to cross the aqueduct by boat and continue east one mile farther to the next road. That reopening should be quite an occasion. I congratulate all involved in both of these projects. A few photos of each project are included. More are on our web site, plus a link to more Fox River photos.

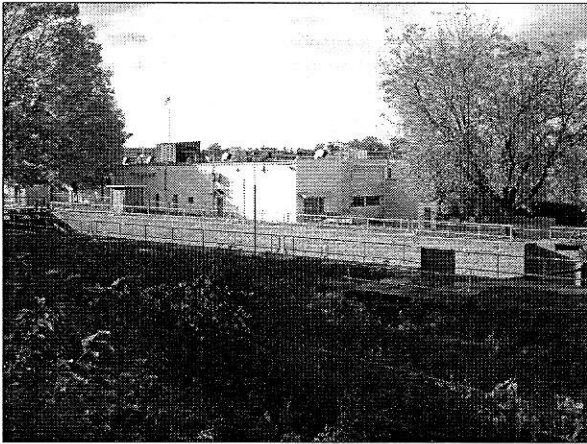


The aqueduct at Camillus, NY. Courtesy David of G. Barber ▶



Menesha Lock, Menesha, Wisconsin. Courtesy of David G. Barber ◀

Appleton Lock 2, Appleton, Wisconsin. Courtesy of David G. Barber ▶



**ACS DIRECTOR ARTHUR SWEETON DONATES CANAL BOAT PAINTING**

Below is Mr. Sweeton's letter to the library board:

I would like to offer my gift to the Simsbury Library of my favorite painting, depicting the southward passage of the canal boat, "Weatogue," in the 1830s along the Farmington Canal and Hopmeadow Street, in front of the Elisha Phelps house, which is now the 1820 House and borders the library.

It is a watercolor painted for me by a Simsbury artist, Helen Galick. It is professionally framed and measures 22 x 28 inches. Its estimated value is one thousand dollars. The title is "Weatogue."

My intention is to have this painting generate an interest in and an awareness of the history of the Farmington Canal. It is, therefore, my wish to have it displayed in an area of the library where it will be easily viewed.

The artist has reserved the copyright and can reproduce copies for sale in the future.

I have had an attraction to canals and railroads long enough to call them my lifelong hobbies. As a boy, I dug canals, with locks, in the

sandbars of our farm's Cherry Brook, in which to sail my homemade boats. In the 1930s, Leland Holcomb and I explored some of the old Farmington Canal from New Haven to its junction with the Connecticut River in Northampton. I learned more about canals studying civil engineering at Yale Engineering School. Throughout our family life together, Eunice and I took trips, observing and boating in the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain. I am a long-time member of the American Canal Society and served for a time as a director.

With this background, one may understand my desire to share my canal interest so that others can visualize canal boating through Simsbury's Main Street around 1823 to 1848.

Very truly yours,  
Arthur W. Sweeton III

**FARMINGTON CANAL EXHIBIT**

Canton Public Library in Canton, CT, is mounting a show titled, "The Farmington Canal in the Farmington Valley" during March and April, 2009. The show will feature the towns of Farmington, Simsbury, Avon, and Granby, towns through which the canal passed, and will describe the canal's influence on nearby Canton.

On Sunday, March 8 at 2:00 PM, Dr. Carl Walters will speak on the Farmington Canal in the Farmington Valley. A reception marking the opening of the show will follow. Dr. Walters is an authority on all aspects of the Farmington Canal and has compiled an extensive collection of images, documents, maps, and information.

