

American Canal Society Canal Structure Inventory

Structure <b>GENESEE VALLEY CANAL TUNNEL</b>		Canal <b>Genesee Valley Canal</b>	HAER/CEHR Condition <b>Dangerous</b>
State/Province <u>New York</u> County <u>Livingston</u>		Designer(s)	
City/Town <u>Portageville</u>		Contractor/Builder	
Street <u>---</u>		Source of Material	
Associated Waterway <u>Genesee River</u>		DATES OF CONSTRUCTION	
TOPOGRAPHIC MAP <u>PORTAGEVILLE</u>		Start <u>1838</u>	Rebuilding _____
UTM Coordinates <u>17.743280.4718980 ?</u>		Completion <u>UNFINISHED</u>	Abandoned <u>1847</u>
History & Use in Service; Use Since Abandonment: <p>The most spectacular portion of the Genesee Valley Canal is between Nunda and Portageville, a distance of about 10 miles with 16 locks, the 72-foot deep cut and a section of canal with its towpath perilously close to the awesome Genesee River Gorge. To construct the canal along the bluff, a shelf, the "Cliff Line," was made by cutting down 100 feet from the top, and 60 feet in from the edge, to make room for a canal 42 feet wide with a towpath along the edge. Originally, however, it was intended to avoid this massive project by building a tunnel through the bluff, parallel to the Gorge. The tunnel, begun in 1838, was to be 1082 feet long, 29 feet wide, and 27 feet high. It was begun from both ends and was apparently holed through, but the rock was so unstable that it had to be abandoned unfinished in 1847 in favor of the cliff line. When constructing the shelf, the ends of the tunnel were cut away...</p>			
Description (Visible Remains at the site): <p>leaving only about 200 feet of the north half of the tunnel intact. The tunnel can now be entered only through a side drift which originally extended from the tunnel, to the sheer face of the cliff, and was used to dump stone from the excavation into the gorge. Most of the drift was cut away by the shelf, so the drift is now only 35 feet long, and is approached from the canal bed. Inside the tunnel there are no headings; however there are post-holes from timbering. A narrow shelf was cut along each wall several feet from the roof, as springers for brick arching which was never begun. Directly opposite the side drift is a chamber some 35 feet deep and of the dimensions of the side drift; the function of this is unknown, though it may have been used in the construction of the drift. There is a considerable amount of roof-fall in the tunnel so it should be considered <u>quite dangerous</u>.</p>			
Other works or events associated with site:			
Present Property Owners:		Location of Deed Description:	
Bibliography (Published, unpublished mss, maps, photographs): <p>Mr &amp; Mrs. J. Hayward Madden, 5847 Decker Road, Livonia, NY 14487  Whitford, Noble E. vol. 1, pp. 708-727, 1010-1014.  Stone, Wm. L., article on the Valley of the Genesee, in the <u>Genesee Valley Recorder</u> (Nunda, NY) 10 December 1840.  NY State Assembly Document No. 96, 6 February 1840, Report of F.C. Mills, C.E., In Relation to the Genesee Valley Canal, pp. 9-12.</p>			
Agencies, Individuals Interested in Preservation/Restoration:		National Register/CEHR, Other Recognition:  none	
Investigation made by: <b>William E. Trout, III</b> Address: <b>1932 Cinco Robles Drive, Duarte, CA 91010</b>			Date: <b>23 Dec. 1973</b>
RETURN TO :			

A sketch map or illustration of the site should be included on the reverse.