

American Canal Society Canal Index

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|---|--|---|--|------|
| CANAL North Canal, Lawrence | | STATUS Watered, locks abandoned | | ACS |
| STATE/PROVINCE: Massachusetts | | | | HAER |
| COUNTIES: Essex | | | | |
| LOCATION (Endpoints of Canal): In Lawrence | | | | |
| TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS: Lawrence 7 1/2; Guard L. 19.322500.4729880 Head of Flight 19.324000.4730300 | | | | |
| HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE: | | | | |

| ENLARGEMENTS | DATES IN USE | LENGTH | | LIFT LOCKS No./ SIZE |
|--------------|--------------|--------|------------------|-------------------------|
| | | CANAL | SLACKWATER TOTAL | |
| 1 | 1848 | 1 mi. | | 4/20x100' |
| 2 | | | | |
| 3 | | | | |
| 4 | | | | |

Rt. 110 follows the N bank of the Merrimack River from Lowell down to Lawrence. Bear R on Riverside Drive, which turns into Water Street then Canal Street along the North Canal in Lawrence. Park at the traffic light where Broadway St. crosses the river at the Lawrence Dam. The upper end of the stone guard lock is visible from Water St. but the rest has been covered up by the bridge and by railway ties, and it was blocked up in 1961. The lock and the "Great Stone Dam" were built in 1845-1848 by the Essex Company, which established the mill town of Lawrence by building the canal for power. The dam was a marvel of its time, up to 40' high and massively built of stone on bedrock, and has never needed repairs.

Continue down Canal St. along the North Canal to the spillway at the lower end. Just upstream of the spillway some masonry of the 3-lock staircase leading back to the river is still visible, but unfortunately for Lawrence the locks were covered up in 1961. Let us hope that they are still intact underground. If these locks could be uncovered again,

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:
navigation on the Merrimack could be restored again up to the falls at Lowell, where the Pawtucket Canal is being restored to operation.

There is a South Canal across the river from Lawrence, but it was for power only and had no locks.

NAMES & ADDRESSES OF GROUPS CONCERNED WITH CANALS PRESERVATION/RESTORATION:
Essex Company, 6 Essex St., Lawrence

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY:
THE LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER VALLEY, Peter M. Molloy, ed., HAER 1976, p.43.

UNPUBLISHED RECORDS, PHOTOS, DRAWINGS (CEHR, HAER, HABS, Local or Regional Historical Societies, Libraries, etc.):
The HAER study cites the manuscript collection in the Merrimack Valley Textile Museum; the Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Vol.XVI, Water Power; and the Essex Company.

EXISTING OR RECOMMENDED LANDMARK STATUS (CEHR, National Register, etc.):
The North Canal, South Canal, and Dam have been placed on the National Register. An effort must be made to be sure that the lock flight will be intact when it is needed again.

REPORTER'S NAME & ADDRESS: **W.E. Trout, III, 1932 Ginco Robles Drive, Duarte, CA 91010** DATE: **26 Jan 87**
RETURN TO: **CANAL INDEX COMMITTEE, c/o T.K.Woods, 6939 Eastham Circle, Canton, Ohio 44708**