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|--|------|--|--|
| CANAL The Willis's River Navigation, Virginia  |      | (FOR ACS USE)  |  |
| STATUS Abandoned   |      | DATES OF CONSTRUCTION & CLOSURE<br>c.1774-75;1797;1320;1350's;ab.'70's                       |  |
| LOCATION (ENDPOINTS OF CANAL) 37°25'N, 78°28'W - 37°41'N, 73°07'W<br>Curdsville to the James River through Cumberland County   |      | LENGTH<br>Slackwater & sluice, 40 mi.<br>CANAL _____ SLACKWATER _____ TOTAL _____            |  |
| LIFT LOCKS   | NBR. | DIMENSIONS<br>Unknown number of flash locks for batteaux<br>LOCK CHAMBER _____ OVERALL _____ | AQUEDUCTS<br>NBR. 0 SECTION SIZE _____ |
| TUNNELS<br>0   |      |  |  |
| DESCRIPTION: [Type of navigation, features of note (include USGS coordinates where useful); e.g., feeders (navigable & otherwise), locks other than above, type of locks, use of unusual material or methods of construction, present owner, present use & condition, etc.]  |      |  |  |
| <p>This was a navigation for poled batteaux carrying tobacco hogsheads and other agricultural products from Ca Ira near Cumberland Courthouse, to the James, 30 miles by water, and later extended 10 more miles to Curdsville. The first work on the river took place in 1774-75 when the Willis's to Ca Ira was cleared of obstructions to navigation. By 1797, the navigation had been further improved and extended to Curdsville. Maintenance was by Cumberland County, in a way similar to road maintenance. The navigation was again renewed or rebuilt in 1320 and probably in the 1350's, when the JR&amp;K Company built a river lock at Cartersville to draw trade passing down the Willis's into the James River and Kanawha Canal. Boats were still being poled up the lower reaches of the Willis's in the 1390's.</p> <p>The Willis's is of especial interest because of its locks. Perhaps by 1797, and clearly by 1320, the navigation was furnished with flash locks. These structures were quite successful and were copied on several other navigations in Virginia. They were especially designed for *</p> |      |  |  |
| NAMES & ADDRESSES OF GROUPS CONCERNED WITH CANAL'S PRESERVATION/RESTORATION:   |      |  |  |
| REPORTER'S NAME & ADDRESS:<br>W. E. Trout, III 1932 Cinco Robles Drive, Duarte, California 91010   |      |  | DATE<br>12 June 1973                   |
| HISTORICAL SUMMARY: [Original aims of company, date of incorporation, prominent engineers, cause of closure, significant alterations to structure or route, height of traffic date, transfers of ownership, etc.]  |      |  |  |
| <p>* small streams with a descending trade - batteaux going down loaded, and up almost empty. Although not enough of the remnants of these locks has been located to make an accurate drawing, they were described in the early reports as low dams with a gate in the middle, hinged at the bottom. When the pond formed by the dam was full, the gate was dropped, and boats went down or up on the resulting flood.</p>   |      |  |  |
| BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: [Published works relating to Canal]<br>The Willis's River Navigation", W. E. Trout, unpl. ms., 3pp., maps, 1966. JR&K Canal Library, Reynolds Metals Company, Richmond, Virginia 23218.  |      |  |  |
| UNPUBLISHED RECORDS, LOCATION OF PHOTOS, DRAWINGS & IMPORTANT PERIODICAL REFERENCES<br>Cumberland County Court House records.  |      |  |  |
| NATIONAL REGISTER & HAER (HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD) STATUS:<br>This river should be carefully searched for lock remains, and a representative drawing made of a Willis's River flash lock.   |      |  |  |
| RETURN TO: CANAL INDEX COMMITTEE, c/o P.H.STOTT, HAINES ROAD, MOUNT KISCO, NEW YORK 10549  |      |  |  |

USE ADDITIONAL SHEETS AS NECESSARY.  
TO MAKE AN INDEX CARD SUITABLE FOR FILING, CUT ALONG THE HEAVY LINES AND FOLD BACK ALONG THE DOTTED LINE.