From the President
By David G. Barber

One of the fun parts of canal exploration is finding structures that “everyone” knows are long gone. Many of us who have spent extended time in the woods and poison ivy have our stories. Frequently, the error resulted from a stream or railroad or other reference being relocated while the structure stayed in its former location.

One such structure may be the Cincinnati and Whitewater Canal’s culvert over Mill Creek. Mill Creek flows southward along the west side of Cincinnati and enters the Ohio. There is a very large railroad yard extending north – south along its east bank. As you approach the Ohio River, there are several railroad and highway bridges which cross its course. The abutments of more such structures line its banks. The ACS data sheet for the canal calls the structure an aqueduct. Those who know that canal say all of the aqueducts had wooden trunks. The data sheet further says that the structure is gone under US 50.

However, when you look at the details of the structure, it says “50’ span, 20’ rise, stone arch, wooden trough.” This might be better termed a culvert, not an aqueduct.

As president, I occasionally receive interesting emails from people I have never met. Recently, I received an email from Gwen Marshall of the Mill Creek Yacht Club. The group name is a bit of a put on as the club’s craft are canoes and kayaks. The club has a video on YouTube of a cruise they did in 2014 of the lower mile of the creek. If you go to YouTube and type in “Cincinnati Mill Creek” you will get a list that includes the video.

Near the end of the video, they pass through a flood barrier and then under a railroad bridge. Next,

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For CANAL CALENDAR items and news of local, state, and regional canal societies: c/o Steve Dean, PO Box 132, Saint Leonard MD 20685; 301-904-9068; 184.5_miles@comcast.net

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.

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Other Publications: The Best from American Canals; American Canal Guides, William E. Trout III, editor and publisher

DEADLINE: Material for our next issue must be on the editor’s desk no later than September 15, 2016. Send to Steve Dean, PO Box 132, Saint Leonard MD 20685, Editor, American Canals; 301-904-9068; 184.5_miles@comcast.net

Material submitted to AMERICAN CANALS for publication should be typed and double-spaced or sent by email in WORD format. You may send actual photographs (which will be scanned and returned), or digital versions may be emailed or sent on a CD.

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From the President – continued from p.1

The yacht club people wonder why canallers don’t make more of the structure. It would appear that is because we don’t know it is there. You can only see its details well from a boat. Perhaps this is another canal structure that isn’t really gone.

A truck crosses over the top of the combined culvert.
Gwen Marshall photo
The story of the construction of a technological monument that remains a cornerstone of the North American economy.

This Colossal Project presents an absorbing epic on the building of the fourth Welland Canal, which connects Lake Ontario and Lake Erie and allows ships to bypass Niagara Falls. An immense undertaking, the canal is a vital part of North America’s infrastructure and still functions as an essential part of the St Lawrence Seaway.

Emphasizing the role of vivid personalities including engineers John Laing Weller and Alex Grant, as well as contractors and labourers, in the construction of the canal, Styran and Taylor use archival sources, government documents, newspapers, maps, and original plans to describe a saga of technological, financial, geographical, and social obstacles met and overcome in an accomplishment akin to the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway. A story of Canadian skill, courage, vision, and hardship, This Colossal Project details the twenty-year excavation of the giant channel and the creation of huge concrete locks amidst war, the Great Depression, political change, and labour unrest.

Building on the work presented in Styran and Taylor’s This Great National Object, which told the story of the first three Welland canals built in the nineteenth century, This Colossal Project chronicles an impressive milestone in the history of Canadian technological achievement and nation building.

Robert M. Styran (1927-2015) was a retired assistant professor of history at Brock University. Robert R. Taylor is professor emeritus of history at Brock University.

THIS COLOSSAL PROJECT
Building the Welland Ship Canal, 1913-1932
December 2016 • 368 pages • 6x9
74 photos • 10 maps • 12 diagrams
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The **AMERICAN CANAL SOCIETY 2017 Board of Directors ballot** is enclosed in this issue. The ballot includes the Board of Directors recommendations for board positions. A favorable vote for all of these candidates is assumed unless you respond with a contrary vote on the ballot by November 15, 2016. No return of the ballot is otherwise required.
The Port Maitland On the Grand Historical Association is approaching a major fork in the road in the coming years.

The catalyst for the formation of the group – and one of its ongoing triumphs – is the beautification and maintenance of the historic Port Maitland Lock.

The property has been transformed into a tourist draw and off-the-beaten-path green space by the group thanks to monumental efforts during the past 12 years. Re-discovered as – literally – an overgrown garbage heap in 2003, a group spearheaded by William Warnick cleaned up the 7.9 acres surrounding the stone lock on Feeder Canal Road, southeast of Dunnville.

The property boasts well-maintained lawns, benches lining the cleaned up lock and a couple of information boards featuring local history of the lock.

During a work bee on a recent Saturday to mow the lawn and burn some brush, Warnick said all of it is at risk in the coming years.

“We, for a number of years, kind of squatted on the property,” Warnick said. “We thought the property belonged to (Haldimand County) … and so did the county.”

With use of the property increasing, the historical association was asked to get the deed and insurance for the property. To everyone’s surprise, including the staff at the county, the land didn’t belong to Haldimand.

“It turned out it was owned by (Canadian Pacific Railway),” Warnick said. “They have been good to us and they got us a lease for $1 last year.”

But the lease price went up to $500 this year, will increase to $1,000 next year and then hit and stay at $2,000 in 2018.

“The realty fellow told me it really should be $3,000, but (CPR) is capping it at $2,000 for us,” Warnick said. “We will have to decide what to do next year, but I can’t see us taking it when it gets to $2,000. We simply can’t afford it.”

That said, Warnick said CPR has quoted the Port Maitland On the Grand Historical Association a price for the land – one he would rather not share at risk of spoiling negotiations.

The price is too much for the society, but considering the more than a decade of work they’ve put into the site, Warnick said they aren’t giving up.

“So that’s still the goal now,” he said. “We are looking to raise some funds to see if we can make them an offer.”

The history of the lock is significant. Besides being an integral part of the Feeder Canal for the Welland Canal’s construction in the 1800s, the Port Maitland Lock was the only entry between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie for a period of about five to seven years in the 1840s.

Continued on p. 10
The Six-Mile Dam
By Terry K. Woods

The one crossing of the Walhonding River by the canal of the same name in Ohio was accomplished upon slackwater above a dam constructed for that purpose and to supply the canal with feed water. This dam was located 6 miles above Roscoe in Coshocton County. When completed it was 304 feet long and 4½ feet above the surface of the stream at low water. The dam’s foundation was anchored to solid rock for about half its length, extending from the right bank of the river. The rest of the foundation was composed of successive layers of felled trees laid on the bottom of the river with their tops pointing upstream. Stringers, long squared timbers, were then firmly bolted to the stringers, forming an apron for the dam. A twelve-foot wide crib, built of squared timbers tied together by cross-members every 10 feet, was placed on top of the apron. The crib was filled with stone and covered with four-inch planking. This last woodwork formed the breast, or “tumble” of the dam.

History texts and official state reports do not mention any special arrangements for getting boats across the slackwater pool here. The entrance to the lower canal on the right bank of the river was above and nearly on a line with the mouth of the outlet lock (No. 5) and it has been assumed that boatmen put their towing animals on board and poled their way across the river.

When the original survey for the Walhonding Canal was made in the early 1830s, a floating towpath was suggested for crossing the river here. There is no hint, however, that any such accommodation was ever made. One latter-day historian suggests that towing animals used the top of the dam as a method of crossing the pool, but the entrance to the lower canal was some distance above the dam, making its use as a walkway probably not a viable option.

A windlass and pulley arrangement was discovered anchored to a tree on the "modern" feeder gate side of the river in 1977 by the late canal historian, Ted Kasper. He speculated that this was a remnant of the mechanism by which boatman could ‘hand work’ their craft from one side of the river to the other. Additional research, however, has shown that the windlass was used by workmen of the Roscoe Hydro Electric Plant during the 1940s and 50s to remove debris from clogging the headgates of the Feeder.

The exact method of crossing the river remains guesswork, but it was probably a tedious and, during times of high water in the river, a precarious job of
poling. There is at least one recorded instance of a boat going over the dam while attempting a crossing. The Six-Mile Dam received a bit of maintenance during the first 40 or so years of its life, but apparently didn’t need much. A 10 foot high stone protective wall was torn out after the severe winter of 1875-76.

There was a problem, though, with silt backed up behind the dam entering the lower canal and causing considerable obstructions and bars. A wasteway was constructed in the towpath embankment about 3 miles above Roscoe to allow the channel to be “flushed” from time to time. During the period the lessees ‘ran’ the state canals, they had their dredge in this section several times, but the silting problem was never completely solved.

The Walhonding Canal was never extended to its expected destinations and, foreshortened as it was, never became a major cargo carrier in Ohio’s canal system. The Walhonding canal above Lock No. 5 (about 17 miles) was officially abandoned by the State on Oct. 13, 1896. The Six-Mile Dam and lower channel were retained as a water source to the Ohio Canal and as a power source to one or two minor water power leases.

In 1904 the state legislature made an initial appropriation of $200,000 to refurbish their canal system. Eventually, the Miami & Erie Canal was to be reworked (repaired structures and a deepened channel) and the Ohio & Erie was to have similar work done from Cleveland to Dresden. The federal improvement of the Muskingum River was to be used to allow canal boats to reach the Ohio River.

There was, however, a stipulation to the appropriation. The appropriation was only to be activated when the state’s canal water power leases were increased from the 1904 level of approximately $12,000 statewide, to at least $30,000 per year.

At first, the 6 mile remnant of the Walhonding Canal wasn’t to be a part of this massive project. Then, June 13, 1906, William Himebaugh of Coshocton, entered into a 50 year lease with the State of Ohio at a yearly payment of $2,400 for the first 25 years and $3,000 per year for the last 25. Himebaugh planned to build a hydroelectric plant to supply electricity for the city of Coshocton.

To satisfy the state’s duties under the new lease, the old canal channel was to be dredged to a minimum depth of 5 feet with a minimum width of 30 feet. The state was also to insure the ‘permanent’ stability of the Six-Mile Dam.

The left dam embankment had been repaired in 1904 and a new rip-rap and cut stone wall erected in front of it in addition to a new crib at that end of the dam. All that remained to put the Six-Mile Dam in tip-top shape was to go over the breast and apron woodwork to prevent leaks and insure the dam’s permanence. The state’s resident canal engineer, J.A. Hanlon, took the letter of the lease literally. He decided he had to provide a permanent dam.

That portion of the dam originally constructed on a wooden crib had been undercut by the river over the years and its position had shifted somewhat. Hanlon and his engineering staff feared that a future flood could well cut the dam in half. When Halon advertised for bids for the project, he asked for bids for both repairing the old dam and for constructing a new concrete one using the old dam as a base, as well as for dredging the six-mile-long channel.

Four companies responded with proposals before the July 19, 1906, deadline. The J. A. Kissner Company of West Lafayette, Ohio received the contract for the dredging operation on Aug. 19, 1906. Picking a contractor for the dam, or even deciding what should be done to the dam, was more difficult.

By the time the bids were received, Hanlon was just about convinced that an entirely new dam was required. The location he favored was 60 yards above the old dam, at a point where the entire structure could be anchored to solid rock. Bids for the dam were re-advertised on Oct. 9. Four bids were received, but everyone was above the engineer’s estimates.

State engineers drew up a new plan, one that provided the permanency of a concrete dam, but incorporated the old dam as a base to economize. Bids were again sought and the latest versions received on Nov. 14. The W. H. Schott Company of Chicago
was the design Hanlon preferred, but was $1,300 over estimates. J. A. Kissner was $400.00 under. Kissner received the contract for rebuilding the Six-Mile Dam on Jan. 9, 1907.

The Board of Public Works report for 1907 gives a concise description of the design finally agreed upon.

"Plans were prepared in this office after thorough surveys as to the choice of location, and a design adopted which incorporated the old structure as part of the new – the new concrete work being built against, and on the down-stream side and over the top of the old dam, both old and new anchored together as well as anchored to the rock bottom as far as the rock extends within reach and further, by anchoring to a pile foundation. This plan provides for a substantial and permanent structure with the minimum amount of concrete masonry possible to insure stability and overcome the defects of the old dam."

High water in March 1907 washed out the earthen embankment between the river and canal immediately below the dam for nearly 200 feet. Rebuilding this embankment would have required hauling fill over half a mile in wagons. The rebuilt earthen embankment then would have been just as subject to washouts as the original. The decision was made to extend the right concrete dam abutment of the new dam some 300 feet down the river bank to act as a protective wall. This was probably an excellent decision, but added $7,000 to the cost of improving the Walhonding Feeder. A decision was made in July 1908 to extend the dam 22 feet to its left and another 12 feet to its right. This made the new dam 344 feet long.

The improvements to the Walhonding Feeder were accepted on Oct. 1, 1908. The Himebaugh lease went into effect April 1, 1909. William Himebaugh made his first payment of $1,200, in cash, May 1, 1909.

The new dam complex had cost the state a total of $39,719, nearly $16,000 over estimate. The entire cost of refurbishing the Walhonding Feeder cost the state $63,738.78. Himebaugh reimbursed the state $5,000 toward the cost of the new dam and $1,300 toward the cost of dredging the channel. Thus, it would take the state 24 years to recoup from the water power lease, alone.

And that would be the main income for that stretch of canal that the state would ever see. That fickle whim, public opinion, now took a turn against the canals. No appropriations were made after 1909 and improvements to Ohio's state canals were halted. With the exception of the three locks into the Muskingum River at Dresden, which had been contracted in 1905, the modernization of the Ohio Canal was only completed as far south as Lower Trenton (Lock #16) just below modern-day Tuscarawas. This was a bit north of the coal fields where the bulk of the canal traffic was generated. Long distance commercial traffic never again ran on the Ohio canal.

State canal workers removed the rickety Walhonding Aqueduct in 1912, effectively isolating the Roscoe/Coshocton area from the upper canal. After that, the Walhonding Feeder was needed only to power the Electrical Generating Plant, the Empire Mill at Roscoe, and a mill further down the main canal. Then, in March 1913, many of the newly rebuilt structures along the upper canal were destroyed in a devastating flood. The Six-Mile Dam was badly damaged in the 1913 flood. Repairs were made to the dam relatively quickly as Ohio Senator William Green a $10,000 state appropriation.

Lock 5 - photo courtesy of Terry Woods
The river had also cut across the old canal channel above Lock #5 and threatened to bypass the dam to the left. That section of canal had been sold by the state in 1898 for $57.50. It was purchased back March 6, 1916, from Gilbert McKee (that parcel had changed hands twice in the intervening years) for $1,758.17! That same year (1916) a long stretch of levee was constructed off to the left, parallel to the line of the dam, for nearly 3/8 of a mile. The canal’s berm bank was cut down to provide fill for this levee. An additional channel for the river was cut from the new break along the levee to enter into the old channel just above the dam to provide additional flow cross-section during times of flooding. As a result, the remains of lock #5 and 1/4 mile of the old canal’s towpath now lie on an island formed by the old and new river channels which both remain water-filled year-round.

The lower Walhonding Canal, or feeder, was still needed to provide power for the hydroelectric plant as William Himebaugh had entered into an agreement with the Coshocton Light and Heating Company June 11, 1910. The latter company took over the water power lease from the state and began operating the hydro plant. The Ohio Power Service Company then took over operation and the lease around 1922.

A portion of the cribbing near the left (or north) dam abutment was washed out during the winter of 1934-35. It was repaired with sheet piling and clay back-fill later that year. It was found necessary to extend the north wing of the dam and construct a concrete spill-way in 1941 when the river wanted to continue its wandering to the north. Then, in 1947, another flood tore out sections of the lower feeder’s embankments. These breaks were repaired and the Ohio Service Company continued to operate the hydro, intermittently, until 1952 or 53 when outside generated power made the old hydro obsolete. After that water from the feeder was diverted back into the river at the old canal wasteway and the lower 3 miles of the feeder were allowed to go dry.

The Six-Mile Dam structure and the 3 miles of wet feeder channel were leased by the Ohio Department of Natural resources as a public fishing area in 1970. That lease was canceled in 1975. The banks of the last section of the Walhouding Canal were “mysteriously” cut in 1978 and it went dry, apparently unnoticed.

The Six-Mile Dam has remained. For a while no one seemed to know just who it belonged to. Apparently now they know. It was reported recently that the Six-Mile Dam complex will be “destroyed” sometime in 2017!

I can understand the need to remove a potential flood hazard by breaching the dam. I would think this fine old structure deserves to have at least a portion of it preserved as a memorial to the period, people, and engineering skill that was part of Ohio’s Canal Era.

If anyone is aware of what state agency is now in charge of the Six-Mile Dam, I wish you would give them an “ear-full” of the dam’s history, and please let the author of this paper know.

Note - since this article was written a further update of the fate of the Six-Mile Dam has been made public. Read "The Roscoe Hydraulic Plant" on the next page for this update.

Port Maitland - Continued from p. 6

“It was also the first stone lock they built on the canal," Warnick said. "And it was built by John Brown, the same engineer responsible for the Mohawk Island Lighthouse. Just being his lock makes it historically significant." In the meantime, Warnick and the historical association have their work cut out for them.

“We have at least this year and next to chase some money and make an offer,” Warnick said. “We have to figure it out, maybe hit up some corporations. "We’ve proven the community interest. I can’t get over the number of tourists I see here when I’m cutting the lawn during the summer."

The Roscoe Hydraulic Plant
By Terry K. Woods

The eastern-most 6 miles of the Walhonding Canal survived the rest of the Ohio & Erie system by more than 40 years, thanks to the Roscoe Hydraulic Plant. After 1896, when the upper or western portion of the Walhonding Canal was abandoned by the state of Ohio that stretch from the Six-Mile dam across the Walhonding River to Roscoe Basin acted only as a water feeder to the main canal and as a hydraulic power source to an industry or two at the head of the basin.

As early as 1902 or 1903, William Himebaugh of Coshocton entered into an agreement with the State of Ohio. For $50.00 per year, Himebaugh purchased an unspecified amount of power from the Walhonding Canal. Or perhaps he purchased the rights of future power options – for in 1906, the agreement was altered to a yearly rental for 25 years at an annual payment of $2,500. The agreement was also to extend for an additional 25 years at an annual payment of $3,000! The State's portion of the agreement was to include the rebuilding on the Six Mile Feeder Dam in the Walhonding River and dredging the canal channel below it, was completed in 1909. Himebaugh made his first semi-annual payment of $1,250 on May 30, 1910.

The Ohio Light and Heating Company, incorporated under the laws of New Jersey in 1888, purchased Himebaugh's water right that same year (1910). A new, modern hydroelectric generating plant was constructed a quarter mile above the old Empire Mill at the head of the Roscoe Basin. Powered by water supplied by the rebuilt Six Mile Dam flowing through the channel of the shortened Walhonding Canal, the "Hydro," as it became popularly known, began supplying the electrical needs to many citizens in and around Coshocton beginning in 1912. The Company later changed its name to the Ohio Service Company and it was bought out by the Ohio Power Company in 1923.

The power requirements for the area increased rapidly in the 30s and early 40s, but the "Hydro's" power generating capacity, which peaked at 22,000 Kw of electricity, was still sufficient just before the outbreak of the Second World War, to carry the entire city of Coshocton on the Mid-Night shift. After the war the "Hydro" served only as a voltage regulator, and didn't generate any electricity of its own.

During its 'hey-day' the "Hydro" normally ran two shifts, eight to four and four to 12. A normal shift employed four men plus a stand-by, although as many as 12 men were required one winter to chop ice and remove it from the plant's water intake.

Water from the old canal channel entered a pit that drove an under-shot turbine wheel. The shaft of the turbine wheel, alone, weighed 10 tons! This shaft turned in wooden bearings immersed in oil. The oil was water-cooled, filtered, then used again. These bearings had to be replaced only once in the last 10 years of the plant's life.

Though the State of Ohio, through the Department of Public Works, maintained the Six Mile Dam and shortened canal channel, the responsibility of ensuring a day-to-day supply of water fell upon the crew of the "Hydro." The patrolled the banks of the feeder, cut the grass in the channel, and cleared brush and other floating debris away from the three iron head-gates at the dam. A manually operated winch was attached to a near-by elm tree just above the head-gates. When those gates got clogged up and the water supply was threatened, several members of the "Hydro" crew would go out onto the concrete head-gate supports and drop grappling hooks down into the mass clogging the gates. When a hook caught in something, the brush would be winched back, away from the head-gates. Then, with the use of pike poles, the men would push the brush away from the feeder gates and back into the river to go over the dam and down-stream away from the feeder.
It was also the responsibility of the “Hydro” crew to ensure that the head-gates were closed during times of high water in the river. Once, in 1947, the wasn’t done and the resulting high water in the feeder channel overflowed, tearing out great sections of the embankment. Those embankments were repaired after that incident, but by that time the “Hydro” was no longer of great importance to the electrical needs of the area. The plant remained in operation a few more years, but when the “Hydro” was shut down after its normal four to midnight shift on Jan. 10, 1952, it never operated again and an era ended in the Coshocton area.

The generating plant itself was razed in 1961 to make way for the rerouting of State Route 36 to Warsaw. The Ohio Power Company donated 14 acres immediately north and west of the Roscoe Basin to the City of Coshocton in the 1960s as part of the Lake Park expansion.

A scattered pile of broken concrete lying between Highway 36 and the Walhonding River, plus a small section of the concrete tail race jetting out of the highway fill were the only visible remains on the Roscoe Hydraulic Plant by the year 2000.

Water diverted by the Six-Mile Dam into the feeder channel was shunted back into the river at Hosfelt’s Wasteway some 3 miles above the Roscoe Basin. That three-mile section of the old Walhonding Canal between the dam and the wasteway was administered by the Ohio Board of Public Works through the 1960s. Ohio’s Division of Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) leased the remaining watered portion of the Walhonding Canal in 1970 as a fishing resource. That lease was canceled in 1975. Then, in May or June of 1978, very quietly and very unofficially, the banks of the canal were cut and the last section of the Walhonding Canal went dry.

Now, early fall of 2016, the ODNR has officially taken the position that the Six-Mile Dam will be completely removed, as early as late 2017.

There are plans for an “Historical Report” and possibly a “Kiosk” to be placed somewhere in the vicinity to remind the citizens of Ohio of the important and beautiful structure that once stood there and of the men and women who once labored and created and built during Ohio’s Canal Era.

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2017 World Canals Conference
Syracuse, New York

Planning for the 2017 World Canals Conference is currently in progress. The conference will take place during September 24 through 28, 2017. It will feature formal presentations, study tours of canal sites and communities, Central New York dining experiences and a variety of exciting public events. The full schedule is evolving. Meals will feature local and regional produce and specialty foods, beverages and farm-to-table experiences. Look for full conference details in the spring. Registration opens in early 2017.

An informative web site is located at wcc2017syracuse.com/. The website is frequently updated as details of the conference are confirmed. Guidelines for submission of presentation proposals are available on the website.

Updates to the details for the conference will be provided in American Canals as plans are developed.
The World Canals Conference was held in Inverness, Scotland, September 19–22. American canal interests were well represented, with participants from the Canal Society of New York State, the Canal Society of New Jersey, the Delaware & Raritan Canal Watch, and a large group from the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Association in attendance.

A kilted bagpiper opened the conference. In general, there were lectures in the morning and field trips in the afternoon. Common themes for the presentations included: using canals to rejuvenate communities, engaging young people, climate change and green energy, and financial sustainability. The Trent-Severn Canal in Ontario and the New York State Canals Corporation, for instance, generate income by selling water and hydroelectric power. Managers for several of the watered canals – the Erie Canal, the Rideau, and Scottish Canals – bemoaned the reduction of boating traffic.

On the field trips, one day we climbed around Urquhart Castle and took a cruise on Loch Ness. Another afternoon we visited a staircase of locks on the Caledonian Canal, the route across the Great Glen, the geological fault across Scotland that includes four lochs. A third trip was to Culloden Battlefield, site of the last pitched battle in Great Britain, which essentially ended the struggle between the government of the House of Hanover and the Jacobite rebellion, led by Charles Edward Stuart, Bonnie Prince Charlie.

The climax of the week was the gala dinner. The menu included a whisky toast, haggis, neeps, and tatties, and Scottish beef. The first World Canals Conference awards presentation recognized organizations that showed innovation or leadership in canal restoration. Many of the gentlemen dressed in Scottish garb, perfect for the Ceilidh, the Scottish music and dancing celebration that concluded the evening. The
conference ended with a presentation by next year’s hosts – Syracuse and the Erie Canal – and the announcement that the 2018 conference will be in Athlone, Ireland.

Several of the attendees met up on the pre-conference tours to the Kelpies, huge statues of horses, bracketing a new exit for the Forth and Clyde Canal, and the Falkirk Wheel – a unique rotary boatlift – taking boats up nearly 80 feet from the Forth and Clyde to the Union Canal. The lift replaces eleven locks. A two-day tour of the West of Scotland included stops at Loch Lomond, Inveraray Castle, the Crinan Canal, Glencoe, a ride up a ski lift to the top of one of the highest bens (mountains) of the Highlands, Fort William, and Fort Augustus. A bus tour traveled the length of the Caledonian Canal. Along the way participants saw lots of sheep and a few Highland cattle. They spent the night in Oban, a very active port serving the islands of the Inner Hebrides, and home to a number of good seafood restaurants.

American canal supporters look forward to a shorter trip next year – Syracuse is easily accessed by east coast and midwest residents – and even more participation by canal societies and associations. The hosts for next year’s conference included the director of I (heart) New York, TasteNY, VisitSyracuse, and the CEO of the New York State Canals Corporation. They even brought cases of Empire Beer, New York wine, maple syrup and other edibles to boost attendance at next year’s event.

The Kelpies - Photo by Rod Mackler

Falkirk Wheel and Aqueduct - Photo by Rod Mackler
The Last Voyage of *The Georgetown*

By Rod Mackler

On a brilliant fall day, October 5, a crowd gathered at Lock 4 on the C&O Canal National Historical Park in Georgetown, Washington D.C. The occasion was a farewell to *The Georgetown*, the 30-year-old mule-drawn canal boat, that was a beloved feature Georgetown. Built on a balsawood frame, clad in fiberglass, and now waterlogged, the old boat has been up on blocks in the canal for the past half decade. Park mules Dolly and Eva towed the boat away on her last journey, up the four-mile level to Fletcher’s Cove, where she will be removed.

C&O Canal National Historical Park Superintendent Kevin Brandt recounted the boat’s history and introduced District of Columbia Mayor Muriel Bowser. Mayor Bowser thanked the people of Georgetown for their plan to reinvigorate the canal, capped by the purchase of a new mule-drawn boat in 2018. Joe Sternlieb, CEO of the Georgetown Business Improvement District, in turn, thanked the mayor for the $3 million grant that made the Georgetown renovations possible. Mr. Sternlieb also taught most of the crowd — those who don’t work with him — a new word: “Gon-
goolzer.” That is a British term for a person who enjoys watching activity on canals.

The plan will also include a new non-motorized boathouse on the waterfront, a safer configuration at the end of the Capital Crescent Trail, and perhaps a trolley line down K Street and even an aerial gondola to Rosslyn, Va. Besides the new boat, the restoration will include the rebuilding of Locks 3 and 4. The lower end of the canal will be de-watered for the next 18 months. The canal is the centerpiece of a master plan for the redevelopment of the historic section of the District.

Left - The Georgetown prepares to leave for the last time; Right - Washington D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser discusses the reinvigoration of the C&O Canal in Georgetown - Photos by Rod Mackler

Left - C&O Canal mule and Ranger Rebecca Jameson; Right - The Georgetown passes the Abner Cloud house on the C&O Canal - Photos by Kerry Gruber
Thornport and Navigation on the Licking Summit Reservoir

By Terry K. Woods

As soon as the Ohio Canal was completed through the state from Cleveland to West Portsmouth, residents of those towns, “just off the line” began searching for ways to get “into the action”. When the Licking Summit Reservoir was enlarged in 1839-40, the higher waters came to just over a mile from the small Perry County town of Thornville.

Efforts were immediately initiated to form a new town along the reservoir’s edge and to devise a way to get canal boats from the Ohio Canal’s towpath that passed through the center of the enlarged reservoir to it’s southeastern edge, close to Thornville.

When the initial reservoir had been constructed in the late 1820’s, its waters had been impounded without clearing the walnut forests and brush before the water was let in. Walnut trees are slow to decay, so their carcasses and stumps were still a danger to any navigation of the reservoir, itself. Over the years a number of Legislative Acts had been passed to clear the Reservoir and make it passable for craft. Also, at some date prior to March of 1839 the Ohio state legislature had authorized a sum of $6,000 to complete these various tasks. And, again, prior to March 1839, the Perry Improvement Company had been organized and given the task of improving navigation within the Licking Summit Reservoir.

Then, on March 16, 1839, an act by the Ohio state legislature changed the name of the Perry Improvement Company to that of the Licking Summit Reservoir Navigation Company and authorized them to receive the already authorized $6,000 to ‘improve’ navigation on the Licking Summit Reservoir, just as soon as officers and directors of the company had been appointed and at least $3,000 of stock was sold.

Probably in the same time frame, a town was initiated near the water’s edge of the reservoir a mile or so north-west of Thornville and was given the appellation of Thornport.¹ A large hotel and warehouse were speedily constructed and quite a little town sprang up, "as if by magic."

The Licking Summit Navigation Company cut a channel (boatway) through the eastern port of the reservoir from the feeder (“Hole in the Wall”) some three miles north-east of Millersport on the Ohio Canal to Thornport on the south-east extremity of the reservoir. A two-horse, tread-wheel boat was to tow canal boats to and from Thornport along this cleared channel through the stumps, logs and snags of the reservoir.

According to Colburn’s History of Perry County:

“Things went on swimmingly for a season or so and the strange craft plied regularly between Thornport and the feeder on the Ohio Canal carrying out the surplus grain products of the township and returning with salt, groceries, hardware, dry goods, and other commodities.”

We know from the wreck of the BLACK DIAMOND (CC No. 100) that, by the boating season of 1850, though the Thornport Channel may have been passable if the steersman stayed in it, there was certainly no towboat in evidence. So, just what happened to the grand plan of the promoters of the Licking Summit Reservoir Navigation Company?

First, there appears to have been a considerable amount of dissention between the president and two directors of the Navigation Company and many of the stockholders. As early as January 24, 1843, a number of the latter, asked the state legislature to examine the books and financial transactions of the company. The state appointed a three-man committee to do so, but stated that, first, the complainants must post a financial bond to pay for the examination. Nothing was apparently done about that complaint. So, apparently, by 1843, some stockholders of the
Navigation Company at least, were not receiving the dividends they had expected.

Going back to Colburn may give us a reason why they were not, ... “One day a short flotilla of canal boats was being towed slowly across the delightful, placid waters and all the earth and sky apparently as lovely and serene as the blue waters of the Reservoir itself. A storm suddenly loomed up in the northwestern sky; and almost in a twinkling rain descended in torrents, forked lightenings flashed, and the thunder rolled and jarred until even the large catfish at the bottom of the lake were stunned. Worse than all for the hardy seafarers, the winds blew a fearful hurricane. The waves of the agitated lake tossed and rolled around as fearful as the waters of the Atlantic in mid-ocean. There could be but one result. The frail fleet was not prepared to weather such a gale, and the whole concern was wrecked, the boatmen thankful that they escaped a watery grave. “It is probable that the boatmen who encountered this “storm at sea” carried exaggerated reports of it to the men of the Ohio Canal. It is certain that no Captain of men would venture out into that shallow reservoir again. Thus, ingloriously, ended the inland navigation of Thorn Township.”

The men who wrote county histories in the 1880s invariably did their research in the memories of the resident “old-timers”. Often these tales, told by an oldster to a young, gullible reporter, were more fanciful than factual.

Going back to dry, state records we find that on January 15, 1851, probably less than six months after the wreck of the BLACK DIAMOND, a petition signed by 225 stockholders of the Licking Summit Reservoir Navigation Company were again asking the state legislature to look into the dealings of the company. The petition complained that the president and two directors were running the company with no input from the stockholders. They also stated that:

“... near nineteen years has passed since the completion of this Improvement during which time an immense amount of freight was carried to and from the Ohio Canal. It has now become so filled up and overgrown with vegetation that it is with the greatest difficulty that boats can pass, with 1/4 freight through the channel. Your petitioners are well aware that there are twice the amount of funds in the hands of the

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American Canals, Fall 2016
C&O Canal National Historical Park
Federal Advisory Commission Re-Authorized

The Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park recently announced the first meeting of the park’s re-authorized Federal Advisory Commission. The meeting will take place on Thursday November 9, 2016, at 9:00 a.m. at park headquarters. The meeting is open to the public. C&O Canal park headquarters are located at 1850 Dual Highway, Hagerstown, MD 21703.

The purpose of the Commission is to consult with the Secretary of the Interior, or her designee, on general policies and specific matters related to the administration and development of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park.

Earlier this summer, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell appointed 18 individuals from nominations made by the four Maryland counties that encompass the national park as well as the states of Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Three at-large commissioners, including one designated as the chair, and two representing regularly constituted conservation organizations make up the Commission.

“The Commission is a vital link between the National Park Service and the communities along the canal. I’m thrilled to have these talented and knowledgeable representatives of the community volunteer their time to advise us on the full range of topics and issues that affect the national park,” Superintendent Kevin Brandt said.

The agenda for the meeting will include the introduction of the Federal Advisory Commission members, as well as the history of the C&O Canal Federal Advisory Commission, review of commission charter, review of Federal Advisory Committee Act, and discussion of general policies and specific matters related to the administration of the park.

The 18 Commission members have a wide range of professional backgrounds, volunteer services, community affiliations, and educations; and include the following individuals:

Chairman
George E. Lewis Jr.

Allegany County, Md.
Stephen D. Nelson
Francis O. Zumbrun II

Frederick County, Md.
Joseph A. Adkins
Walter S. Stull III

Montgomery County, Md.
Roger A. Berliner
Paul N. Chod

Washington County, Md.
George F. Franks III

District of Columbia
Thomas L. Birch
Scott A. Walzak

State of Maryland
Angela O. Hummer
Roderick C. Mackler

Commonwealth of Virginia
David G. Brickley
Stella M. Koch

State of West Virginia
Mark T. Cucuzzella
Clifford W. Smith

At Large
Ray E. Dinterman
Evelyn F. C. Williams

— From a National Park Service Press Release
November 17, 2016: Chicago River Bridges: Patrick McBriarty, Public Landing Restaurant, Lockport, IL 815-220-1848, canalcor.org

November 29, 2016: Medical Services on the Canal: Isabel Bachman, 7:00 pm - Welland Public Library. www.canadiancanalsociety.org/


January 21, 2017: Art & Poetry on the Canal: Debra Antoneic, 7:00 pm - Welland Public Library. www.canadiancanalsociety.org/

March 4-9, 2017: Panama Canal Trip: RoadScholar trip number 990RJ "Grit & Glory: Exposing the Panama Canal." Sign up via RoadScholar 877-426-8056. Notify Bob Schmidt at indcanal@aol.com after signing up.

March 28, 2017: Life and Death on the Welland Ship Canal - The Untold Story of the 137 Worker Fatalities: Arden Phair, 7:00 pm - Welland Public Library. www.canadiancanalsociety.org/

April 28–30, 2017: Canal Society of Ohio Tour: Ohio and Erie Canal in Columbus, Ohio. Further details will be in the next issue of American Canals or at www.canalsocietyohio.org/


Licking Summit Navigation - Continued from p. 18

president and directors to put the channel in the best navigable order, and to keep a towboat in readiness."

Obviously someone’s arithmetic is off. Nineteen years before 1851 would have been 1832. The enlargement of the reservoir wasn’t even begun until 1837. We’re guessing the channel improvement was completed in 1842 or 43. We are also guessing that the tread-mill tow-boat was never more than a gleam in a Navigation Company director’s eye at one time.

It seems probable that, when the channel was dug, the spoil was thrown up onto the north embankment of the reservoir to form a crude towpath. That the channel was still known and being used in 1850 can be proven by the one successful voyage and the second disastrous one of the BLACK DIAMOND in 1850. That the stockholders were not getting many, if any, dividends is obvious. But that is probably more to it not being a very profitable operation rather than deceitful management.

So, how much longer than 1850 was that channel available? I don’t know. Perhaps some industrious historian from that area knows, or can find out and will tell us.

In the meantime, we can learn from Colburn that a railroad was begun through Thornport in 1853, but never completed. There wasn’t a successful railroad through that village until 1871, but other railroads in the vicinity probably took most of the grain shipments away from the Reservoir Navigation before the 1860’s took a good hold.

Note:
1. History of Fairfield and Perry Counties, E. S. Colburn, 1883.