



American Canals

The Bulletin of the American Canal Society

www.americancanals.org

Vol.LI No.3 Dedicated to the Study of North American Canals and Waterways Summer 2022

Thomas X. Grasso 1940-2022

By now the passing of Thomas X. Grasso is old but still sad news. The response to his death was indeed worldwide, which is a true testament to his life. Maybe the best we can hope for once we are gone is to be well and fondly remembered. If you are one of the few who did not know him, I have included his obit.

In 2016, Tom was interviewed by Bruce Schwendy for *Bottoming Out*, the journal of the Canal Society of NYS. If you keep your past issues it is worth pulling that one back out and giving it another read. At the time Tom was retiring as president and was quite retrospective about his life and times, especially of his time with his Italian immigrant parents in Lackawanna.

Tom was one of the old guard having joined the CSNYS after graduating from Cornell University in 1967. At that time the society was less than 10 years old and this put him in touch with some of the early founders, giving him an appreciation of what the society could offer. These relationships with the founding members also forged a friendship that led to significant donations to the society that continue to resonate to this day.

When Tom accepted the role as president of the CSNYS, the society was fairly inactive and he worked to bring it back to life. He was seemingly tireless in his 40 years as president, refreshing the publication of *Bottoming Out*, restarting the twice a year field trips, or as he liked to call them, study tours. In the 1990s he organized the yearly Winter Symposium and biennial New York State Canal Conference. He was able to convince the city of Rochester to host the World Canals Conference twice, in 2000 and 2010. In 1994 he started down the long road to the creation

of the Port Byron Old Erie Canal Heritage Park. I am sure there is more I missed. After 40 years at the helm of the CSNYS he decided it was time to retire but he never was too far away, accepting the role as Director-Emeritus, where he continued to champion the work of the CSNYS.

In the *Bottoming Out* interview, Tom spoke about how he was introduced to the life of British engineer James Brindley by a notation from James Geddes. This led to a fascination with European canals that would eventually lead to CSNYS sponsored tours of the

continent. Each of these tours has a full color guidebook that is worthy of any canal library. (Mary and I were indeed fortunate to have gone on one of these to Southern Germany.) Later Tom would serve as president of the Inland Waterways International.

I was always in awe of Tom in a crowded room. He appeared to know old canawlers, current tug captains and crews, and politicians, and made all feel equally as welcome. He was comfortable in a crowd or as the star of the show at the lectern.

In Tom's work as a geologist educator, he enjoyed explaining the how the lay of the land would have affected canal construction. He even had adult education classes that focused on the geology of New York and her canals. His guidebooks always began with a section about the geology of the region, and he would often expound on this during his study tours. He seemed to always have his topographical maps with him on the trips. (If you caught a



Tom at the opening of the Port Byron Old Erie Canal Heritage Park

Continued on page 3

American Canals

The Bulletin of the American Canal Society

Website- www.americancanals.org

Facebook-www.facebook.com/AmericanCanals

For memberships, subscriptions, change of address, and other business matters, c/o Charles W. Derr, 117 Main Street, Freemansburg, PA 18017; deruls@aol.com; 610-691-0956

For Canal Calendar items and news of local, state, and regional canal societies: Contact Michael Riley at mriley20@twcnny.rr.com

The objectives of the American Canal Society are to encourage the preservation, restoration, interpretation, and use of the historical navigation 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.

An annual subscription of four issues of American Canals is included with ACS membership. Regular single membership \$25; Family Membership \$35. Single copies of American Canals, \$3.

Copyright © 2022 by the American Canal Society. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. ISSN 0740-588X.

Deadline for materials. American Canals is published quarterly. Every effort is made to include new materials in the next issue. Materials submitted to American Canals for publication should be typed and double spaced or sent by email in MS WORD or Libre WRITER format. You may send actual photographs, which will be scanned and returned, or digital versions may be emailed.

In This Issue

Thomas X. Grasso 1940 -2022	1
Canal Tidbits and News	5
Excavation Equipment	6
Early Railroad Built for Erie Canal	8
Canal Comments	12
Canal Archives	14
D&H Canal Opens New Museum	15
Canal calendar	16

Officers:

President: Michael Riley, 38 Green Street, POB 302, Port Byron, NY 13140 315-704-8874; mriley20@twcnny.rr.com

Vice President: Martha Capwell-Fox, 2750 Hugh Moore Park Road, Easton, PA 18042; 610-923-3548 ext 237; archives@delawareandlehigh.org

Recording Secretary: Michael E. Morthorst, 6914 Ohio Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45236; 513-791-6481; gongoozler@fuse.net

Membership Secretary / Treasurer: Charles Derr, 117 Main Street, Freemansburg, PA, 18017; 610-691-0956; deruls@aol.com

Directors and Affiliations

Paul Bartczak: Eden, NY; Canal Society of NYS;

pjbartczak@earthlink.net

Robert Barth: Somerville, NJ; Canal Society of NJ, PCS, D&B Canalwatch; bbarth321@aol.com

Brian Coffield, Virginia Canals and Navigations Soc, Troy, VA; brian@vacanals.org

William Gerber: York, PA; wegerber@gmail.com

George Hume: Toronto, CAN; george.hume@rogers.com

David Johnson: Bethesda, MD; C&O Canal Association, Pennsylvania Canal Society; dave9211@verizon.net

Dan McCain: Delphi, IN; Wabash and Erie Canal Park; dan.mccain@gmail.com

Robert Schmidt: Fort Wayne, IN; Canal Society of Indiana; indcanal@aol.com

Roger Squires: London, ENG; UK Canals; rogersquires@btinternet.com

Larry Turner: Doylestown, OH; Canal Society of Ohio; towpathturner@aol.com

Director Emeritus

William J. McKelvey, Jr: Berkeley Heights, NJ; wjmckelvey@hotmail.com

glance at the maps, you would see his many handwritten notes about canal features that he had recorded over the years.) As someone once said on one of his trips, "If I say, look at the corn field, no one cares. If Tom says it, people rush to that side of the bus!"

While his trips were great, Mary and I were able to go on a few of his scouting trips which he planned about 6 months prior to the actual trip. These were used to scout any and all of the proposed sites within the scope of the trip. Many times we would pull off to see sites that were not suitable, but Tom wanted to check on its condition and any changes since his last visit. These scouting trips were basically master courses on the canal as you got a one-on-one education from Tom. The only issue was that Tom didn't do things cheaply. He liked to say that "you can't take it with you," and thus he liked to stay at the more expensive hotels and eat at the better restaurants. One time Mary and I drove home with about \$2.00 in our pocket and hoping that we had enough gas in the car after spending all we had at the previous night's dinner.

Tom's lasting mark might be the Port Byron Old Erie Canal Heritage Park. Over the years he had formed a relationship with the VanDitto sisters who owned the Erie House and I think he made some type of promise to them. I am sure that his Italian heritage helped to create this close bond with the two sisters whose parents were immigrants. When the early plans for the park first came around 1994, Tom was there to make certain that the Canal Society would be a part of them. And he was quick to arrange the purchase of the Erie House from the State Council on Waterways (SCOW) in 2001 after they couldn't go forward with their plans. Over the next 20 years Tom was the force both in front and behind the scenes for the park. It is easy to say that Tom's personal relationship with certain politicians made the park happen.

Tom was a force of nature. Driving and driven, he made things happen. He will be missed.

Mike Riley

Thomas X. Grasso Obituaries

Thomas X. Grasso died peacefully at home on Monday, June 6, 2022. He is survived by his loving wife Carola, brother Larry Grasso, sister Johanna Swarcz, sister-in-law Marion (Horst) Wagner, son Thomas Jr., (Kim), daughter Julianne (Michael) Robinson, step daughters Bianka Smith, Alexa Smith and six grandchildren plus many nieces, nephews, and cousins. Tom is predeceased by his father Anthony (Mary) Grasso, brothers Michael (June) Grasso, Anthony (Rosemary) Grasso, Robert (Carol) Grasso, William Swarcz, and Bill Clar.

Tom was one of six children born to Italian parents in Lackawanna, NY. He received a Baccalaureate from the University of Buffalo in Geology and Geography, and a Masters from Cornell University in Paleontology and Stratigraphy. Tom worked at Chevron Oil in New Orleans, LA before accepting a position to join the faculty at Monroe Community College, where he initiated the Geoscience Department and remained its Chair for nearly 30 years.

Tom was deeply involved in canal history, geology, interpretation and preservation. He joined the Canal Society of NYS in 1966, becoming its President and serving more than 40 years in that role. The Board named him President Emeritus in 2016.

Tom also served as Commissioner on the National Park Service's Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor for nearly a decade.

In 1995, Tom attended his first World Canals Conference in Birmingham, England. He soon became a member of Inland Waterways International and was President from 2002-2010. His research and publications led him to become a well-recognized scholar of waterways and canals in Europe. Tom led many international tours of the canals of France, Germany, Great Britain and Belgium and was the author of many guidebooks.

Among his many distinguished accomplishments, he



*Tom with Professor Edo Bricchetti
Courtesy of Andrew Lauren*

Continued on page 4

received the Medal of Honor from the Mayor of Villanueva-sur-Lot in the south of France, brought two World Canals Conferences to Rochester in 2000 and 2010, was the guiding force for 23 years in restoring the Port Byron Erie Canal Heritage Park, earned the Landmark Society of Western New York's prestigious Special Achievement Award and had a park lodge dedicated in his name by Monroe County in 2016. He authored many scholarly publications, and was an engaging and highly sought after speaker.

He will be remembered for his love of family and friends, his joyful spirit, sharp intellect and wise counsel. He is deeply loved and will be missed.

The family asks that gifts be made in Tom's honor to the Canal Society of NYS, 7308 Jamesville Road, Manlius, NY 13104, or Wilmot Cancer Institute Development Office, 300 East River Road, P.O. Box 278996, Rochester, NY 14627.

Thomas X. Grasso, Sr., the longtime president of the Canal Society of New York State and a key advocate for the preservation and development of the Erie Canal, has died.

The cause of his death on June 6 was cancer. He was 82 years old.

Grasso lived a few miles north of the village of Pittsford, one of the canal villages he never tired of promoting. He was likely the world's foremost Erie Canal expert, and certainly its greatest booster. He served as president of Inland Waterways International and brought the World Canals Conference to upstate New York multiple times. He led the effort to restore the and wrote many scholarly and popular works on the Erie Canal as well as canals in Europe and elsewhere.

"When you get out on that canal, you'd never think it's an artificial construct of human kind," Grasso said in 2017. "It's just like it was always here. It's a part of us, and we're proud of it. As we should be."

Born in Lackawanna, Erie County, Grasso earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Buffalo and a master's degree from Cornell University. He helped found the geosciences department at Monroe Community College and served as its chairman for nearly 30 years.

"One he got the geosciences program started at MCC, it's done nothing but grow," said Michael Boester, a

professor in what is now the chemistry and geosciences department. "It's rare to have such a large geosciences department at the community college level. ... Everyone knows if it hadn't been for Tom Grasso, none of this would be possible."

Grasso joined the Canal Society of New York State in 1966. He served as president of the society for more than 40 years.

His canal expertise was wide-ranging: geologic, historical, economic and ecological. Increasing recreational usage and appreciation of the canal was a primary concern.

"He was always looking for linkages on how things all fit together, whether it was a type of wine or food or a piece of shale or a canal in Germany," said Craig Williams, current president of the Canal Society and a longtime friend of Grasso. "He was really at his best when he was

out in the field explaining something to people where they could reach out and touch something."

The Erie Canal was Grasso's greatest passion, but he was an expert on canals elsewhere as well. He led sightseeing tours along canals in Europe, an experience that informed his ideas about what the Erie Canal could become.

"In Europe, they really use (the canals) for everyday pleasure," his wife, Carola Smith-Grasso, said. "After he started traveling to Europe it gave him much better perspective on what could be done over here."

Grasso's courtship with his wife, by the way, began at the Coal Tower restaurant on the canal in Pittsford. "The canal is always in there somewhere," she said.

In 2012, Monroe County named a lodge at Greece Canal Park in his honor.

For decades, Grasso advocated for re-watering the Broad Street aqueduct in downtown Rochester. The city is now taking steps toward such a project.

Grasso is survived by his wife, two children, two stepchildren and six grandchildren, among others.



Tom at Enlarged Erie Lock 52

Canal Tidbits and News

The **Lois McClure**, the replica sailing canal boat built by the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, is now to the point where the cost of maintenance has exceeded her value and the museum is thinking about the next steps. Options include the possible destruction of the craft and selling of the pieces if another solution is not found. The Lois was launched in 2005 after three years of construction. The LCMM will be offering tours of the craft through October 2023, however her touring days are over. The Lois is in the water at the museum and can be seen there.

In related news, the **Denis Sullivan**, a replica Great Lakes Schooner built by Discovery World of Milwaukee, has been sold to the World Ocean School of Boston. The ship was moved in September to its new home port in Boston. Again, the cost of maintenance and operation is a factor in the sale. Happily the ship will remain in use as a teaching school in various programs.

The **Cuyahoga Valley National Park** announced that they had received 14 million dollars to stabilize sites along the river where erosion has endangered the Ohio and Erie Towpath trail and the route of the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad. The work will begin this fall and go through 2025.

The **Friends of the Hennepin Canal** have announced that the **Marion II** has been launched and is available for rides along the old canal. Visit their website for dates and hours or operation.

The **City of Shelton, Connecticut** has announced that they have received funding to continue the revitalization of Canal Street. The funding will go to a walking path along the Housatonic River and the creation of a Canal Lock Park. "The concept will support the historic preservation of Shelton's last remaining canal lock, the environmental restoration of the Shelton canal and the development of public open spaces which will support passive and active recreational opportunities," Mayor Mark Lauretti added. The Shelton Canal was a power and navigation canal that allowed boat to bypass Shelton Falls.

The new headquarters for the **C&O Canal National Historical Park** in Williamsport, Maryland has been opened to the public, at least in part. Although it is not technically a welcome or visitor center, the public will have access to the lobby, a meeting room, and "creative programming" as the rest of the site along the canal is developed. The National Park Service is a renter of the

building and has a lease that will take them up through 2050.

The **Wayne County Historical Society** is building a full size D&H "faux canal boat," which incorporates the pavilion that is located in the basin at Lock 31 near Hawley, PA. The structure is basically an outline of a boat with the bow at one end of the picnic shelter and the stern at the other.

Lock 4 on the Muskingum River has been reopened after being closed for structural repairs. The locks along the Muskingum River were recognized as a National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark in 2001. There are 13 locks in total, ranging from Zanesville to Marietta. Not all are functioning, however, most are open for daily use for recreational and commercial boat traffic.

The 60-mile-long **Delaware Canal State Towpath** trail has been named as Pennsylvania's Trail of Year.

We get mail!

ACS Member Dennis McDaniel reported that; "Recently, Georgetown Heritage has installed, and is operating, a canal boat for rides from Lock 3 (sometimes 4) on the C & O. Not having even been in Georgetown or near the canal for some time--maybe since before Covid--my wife and I went there on a Sunday to ride the thing. It is \$20 on high days and otherwise \$15. I am not certain that I had ever ridden it, but she said that she did as a girl in about 1967 on the previous version. She thinks that at that time they used mules. The present version has two electric motors and weighs, as I gathered, 20 tons.

It goes up one half mile and then returns and takes about one hour. The route is of course all urban, much of it twentieth century though the stone walls along much of the route are much older. During the hour a considerable amount of didactic information is imparted by the young lady guide, all quite good though perhaps a bit elementary for our members.

My wife tends to be generous in spirit and likely to give people an A for effort and I think moreover that she genuinely enjoyed the experience. I am a little more critical and demanding and I did not find it altogether engaging. I of course leave it up to you if you want to report any of this to the membership. As far as I can recall, you may even have reported the reactivation of this offering in the past, but I am not certain.

Thanks for the local reporting, Dennis!

Excavation Equipment of the NYS Barge Canal

The Steam Shovel

By Michael Riley

The steam shovel was perhaps the most ubiquitous machine on construction and mining sites between 1880 and 1930. The earliest steam shovel dates back to 1835 when William Otis designed what was called a railroad shovel. The machine, which included a steam boiler, various steam engines, dipper arm assembly, fuel and water, weighed several tons. At the time the only large construction projects that could use such a machine were in railroad construction so the shovel was mounted to a flatcar and set on standard gauge railroad wheels. The shovel could also be mounted to a barge and used as a dredge but that came later.

The Otis patent ran out in the 1870s, and this allowed many companies to begin the manufacture of their own machines. Well-known brands were the Osgood, Marion, Bucyrus, Barnhart, and American steam shovels. Osgood shovels were produced in Troy, NY, while Marion, Bucyrus and Barnhart were all Ohio companies. Improvements were made to the shovels as they got sturdier, heavier and more powerful.

Shovels were soon at work on railroad projects, canal construction, mining and quarrying, basically anywhere large quantities of materials had to be excavated. But as this is about canal construction, let us take a look at how they were used.

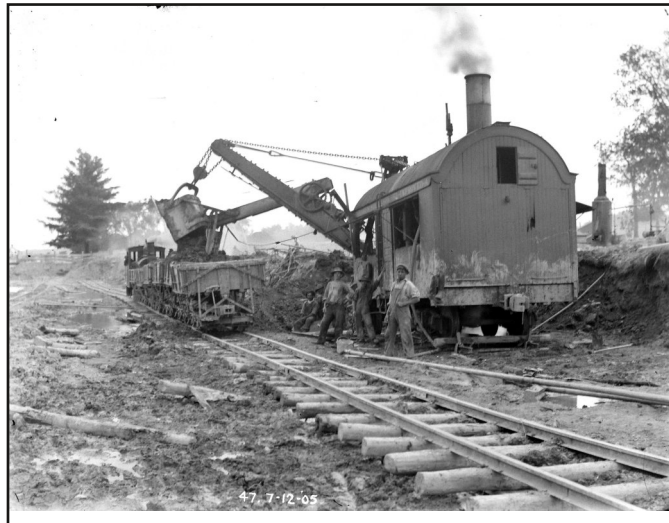
Because the shovels were mounted to railroad trucks and moved on rails, the shovel could only cut level swaths. The shovel would be moved around the site by men laying out temporary rails. Once at the cut, the shovel would extend its outriggers for stability and then begin excavate to its front and sides. The machine could cut about three times its width. All spoils had to be loaded into hopper cars that were set on a narrow gauge railroad. Once the area was cleared to its front, the track team would lay out a new section of tracks and the shovel would slowly crawl forward. If the job was large enough to warrant more than one machine, a second machine would begin to remove earth on a lower terrace, following

behind the first. The tracks also helped to distribute the weight of the machine allowing them to work in wetter areas. However as they were not easy or quick to move, there are many photographs of shovels sitting in flooded work sites.

Shovels could also be mounted to barges and used as dipper dredges. Many of these were site built with the machinery being shipped to the job site and the barge being constructed from locally sourced lumber. Once the job was done the machinery was removed and the barge discarded.

Although good at handling gravel, sand and other aggregate materials, they were not good at moving larger rock. Many times you will find the shovel being used to load skips that were removed by cranes or cable ways.

As they were developed, steam shovels were fitted out with crawler tracks. The only existing shovel of this configuration can be seen in Leroy, NY where a Marion



Model 91 sits in a field. Once the internal combustion engine and hydraulic drives began to be used in construction machinery, the days of the steam shovel numbered. One man could do the work of 4 or 5, and once mounted to crawler tracks instead of railroad tracks, the mobility of the machine made it more useful. Today the hydraulic excavator, a distant cousin of the steam shovel, can be found on almost every job site.

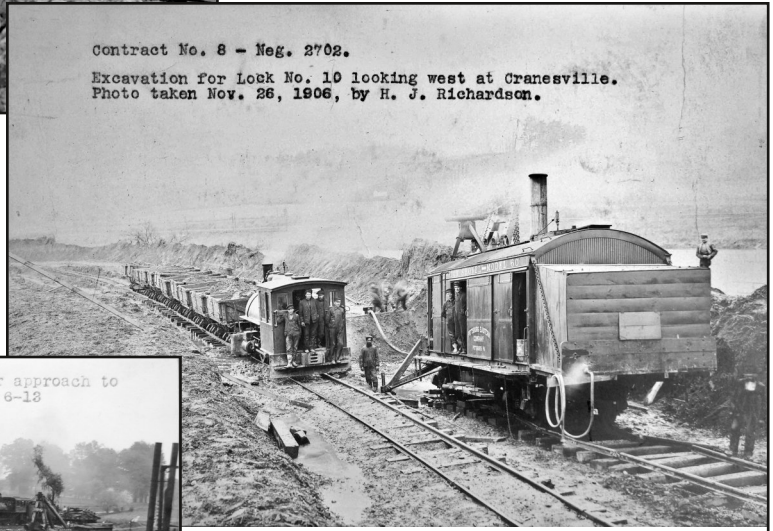
If you are interested in seeing these machines at work, check out the videos of construction of the Panama Canal. Bucyrus and Marion both supplied shovels to this work and were certain to make movies about it. With the clouds and steam and smoke, they make for interesting viewing. Of course the most famous steam shovel might be the Bucyrus in which President Roosevelt posed along the Culebra Cut in the Panama Canal.

All the images are from the NYS Archives, Barge Canal Construction Photographs 11833. Additional photographs can be seen on the ACS website in the News / Blog Posts section.



Facing Page and Top Left – This is likely the same shovel as seen on Contract 1. It appears to be a Marion model Improved -A, an older shovel at the time.

Below Right- A Marion Model 60 and the crew poses for the photographer on Contract 8 at Cranesville. The model number refers to the weight of the machine. This is a 60 ton shovel.



Contract No. 8 - Neg. 2702.
Excavation for Lock No. 10 looking west at Cranesville.
Photo taken Nov. 26, 1906, by H. J. Richardson.



Neg. #42-A-2863 View N. E. Sta. 5646+50. lower approach to lock and vicinity. May 6-18

Above left – A variety of machines can be seen here on Contract 42-A. A Marion Model 60 sits cold in the pool of water while the dredge Mohawk sits just behind on the dry, while a steam pump works to drain the water.

Right- Another Marion Model 60 works on Contract 14. The shovel is digging a pit for a bridge pier.



Early Railroad Built to Deliver Stone to Erie Canal

by Richard Palmer

During the 1820s (or before), it was discovered the quality of limestone located about five miles west of Syracuse was very suitable for building material. The site was situated in the town of Onondaga and would become the Split Rock Quarry. Since the stone was near the surface it was easily accessible and did not require heavy excavation. The expense lay in the cost of haulage from the quarries to Syracuse.

Stone from these quarries had been used in the construction of the five locks between the Salina Branch Canal and Onondaga Canal in 1823, the locks at Lodi, as well as for much of the front stone for the locks on the Oswego canal. After the railroad was built, the quarry furnished stone for the so-called "first enlargement" of the canal.

In a report to the New York State Canal Commissioners, dated March 5, 1836, John B. Jervis and Holmes Hutchinson, two noted civil engineers of the day, wrote that stone from the Onondaga quarries was of "close, firm texture," and many years' trial "has proved it to be equal to the best building material of this kind in New York State." Although the stone was somewhat expensive to cut, it possessed a toughness and durability that rendered it valuable for the construction of culverts, aqueducts and locks. Since the normal mode of wagon transportation was very costly, the report recommended the construction of a railroad from the quarries to the canal in Geddes to "materially lessen the cost of cartage." This would enable the state to procure a supply of stone for public works projects at a reduced price "at nearly if not all seasons of the year."

As it developed, practically all of the stone used in the reconstruction of the canal between Syracuse and Rochester, including the second Rochester aqueduct over the Genesee River between 1836 and 1842, was taken from the Onondaga quarry. The use of the stone in that important structure gave these quarries a great reputation that continued for decades. The deposit was seen as practically inexhaustible, and the material excelled in durability and beauty. At the time the cost of transporting stone by wagon from the quarry to the canal was equal to one half the price of transporting freight on the canal from Syracuse to Rochester, a distance of 98 miles - depending on travel conditions. (1)

The demand for this fine building material induced

some local entrepreneurs to consider building a railroad to connect the quarries with the canal. The result was the passage of two legislative acts on May 13, 1836, that incorporated two companies, each with power to construct a railway from Syracuse to the quarries. The companies were created for a period of 50 years and each was capitalized at \$75,000 with shares of \$100 each. The first was called the "Syracuse Stone Rail-Road Company" and its purpose was to construct a railroad between the village of Syracuse and the stone quarries on the south half of farm lot No. 88 in the town of Onondaga. The line was to begin in the village of Syracuse and run thence to the quarries on such route as might be best adapted to the purpose of transporting stone to the village of Syracuse. The commissioners named in the respective acts were required to open subscription books and distribute stock within one year. The second organization was called the "Syracuse and Onondaga Rail-Road Company." Moses D. Burnet, Eliu Walter, Stephen W. Cadwell, Harmon W. Van Buren and Stephen Smith were named as commissioners. (2)

The quarries sought to be reached by the Syracuse Stone Railroad Company lay on what was then termed "the stone house farm," owned by Henry Benedict, a well-known character in his day, and remembered by the older residents of the neighborhood. These quarries were known as the "Benedict stone quarries."

The Syracuse and Onondaga Railroad Company was incorporated for the same period. Under the terms of its charter it was authorized to construct a railway from the village of Syracuse to "the stone quarries in the town of Onondaga." Vivus W. Smith, Daniel Elliott and Henry Raynor were under the act named as commissioners to open subscriptions for the capital stock and distribute the same, and the first meeting of the stockholders for organizing a company was to be held within one year from the date of incorporation.

Like the first company, it had authority to purchase such stone quarries as might be required for carrying on its operations. The point which this company desired to reach was "Split Rock," which was closer to Syracuse than the Benedict quarries and from which much of the building stone then used was obtained. Those involved in these enterprises were reputable business men. They believed this railroad would be a profitable and safe investment. For several months there was sharp rivalry between the two

companies. This ended by a compromise in which both interests were recognized and the Benedict line was abandoned.

The board of directors, as agreed upon by the combination, was composed of Vivus W. Smith, John Wilkinson, John G. Forbes, Elihu Walter, Moses D. Burnet, Henry Davis Jr., Daniel Elliott, Hiram Putnam and Stephen Smith. Elliott was elected president of the company, Wilkinson as treasurer and Smith, secretary. Elliott superintended the construction of the road, and afterward continued as superintendent for a time. (3)

The Oswego Palladium on July 12, 1837 published this news item:

"It is expected that the railroad from Syracuse to the Onondaga stone quarries - in length about four miles - will be completed about the 15th inst. at an expense of about 50 percent of the capital stock, which is \$75,000. There are employed about the quarries, about 1,500 persons, 1,000 of whom are artisans. The quarries furnish in great abundance the following varies, viz: 1 Grey Lime; 2 Blue Lime; 3 Water Lime; 4 Gypsum. These quarries will furnish the materials for locks, &c. on the Erie canal, and for several locks on the Black River canal near Rome. It is supposed that the stone can be delivered on the banks of the canal ready dressed for building at the price of brick. Watertown Eagle."

A long time elapsed between the date of the company's organization and the completion of the work, the line not having been finally fixed until October 16, 1838. The line began at the berm bank of the Erie at Geddes street and extended to "the stone quarries at Split Rock," following the valley of Harbor Brook most of the way. Midler & Sutherland, contractors, did the work of grading, and about 200 men were employed. The total elevation from the canal to the

quarries was 335 feet. This would require 20 level changes in a distance of four and a half miles.

Since the railroad paralleled the highway, no land purchases were necessary. The line followed what is now South Geddes Street to Grand Avenue, then westward to Taunton, and up the hill and into quarries just above today's Split Rock Elementary School. The men were divided into two gangs, one working near the old toll gate of the Split Rock plank road, and the other above the Rock Spring brewery. James Midler and his son, Philip P. Midler, of Syracuse, well-known local canal contractors, built the line. Philip was foreman of the project. The railroad took about 16 months to complete. The work of grading started a full year before the whole line was actually located by the

company. While grading was progressing a construction car ran off track at a bridge that spanned the brook about two miles from the city, killing a man by the name of Louis Kenyon, a resident of South Onondaga, and another by the name of Russell who lived in Cicero. A man named Marshal was killed on the railroad on Sept. 23, 1837. Midler said in later years that all the original work on the canal, including the most important structures, was well done. Many of them still stand and have withstood the test of time. (4)

As the road progressed, it became evident to many who had become subscribers to the stock that the enterprise might prove a failure financially, and the collection of installments payable on the stock was slow and uncertain. After the election of directors in 1839, Smith was succeeded

in the secretaryship by E. Stiles.

The railroad commenced operation in the fall of 1838. The rolling stock consisted of 10 wagons and four horses. Even though the business was built on stone, it was on



By 1895 a cableway was being used to move limestone from the quarry to the Solvey plant on the bank of the Erie Canal. The route of the 1830s railroad has been added and the quarry circled.

Continues of Page 10

shaky ground financially. Only 55 percent of the stock subscriptions were ever paid in. The wagons cost \$1,200 and the horses, \$400. The depot at the canal cost \$1,000. Other expenses included the purchase of three acres along the road for \$2,500 and land at the stone quarry, \$3,000. In 1839 its indebtedness totaled \$49,250. After deducting the cost of land not connected with the railroad, the total cost per mile was \$9,500.

The company derived its revenues from the operation of the quarries as well as from transportation. Actual quarry work was done by a private concern to which the railroad paid 20 cents per cubic yard. For transporting cut stone the railroad received 75 cents per cubic yard to the canal and \$1 into Syracuse, for which prices the stone must be delivered to the construction site, loading and unloading. In Syracuse the cost of foundation stone (blue limestone) was \$4.50 per cord (128 cubic feet) and for cut stone (ashlar) up to \$50 per cubic yard, depending on the dimensions. Usually two cubic yards of stone were loaded on a wagon and two horses used. A cubic yard weighed 4,500 pounds, so the total load transported at once was nine tons. At the quarries two horses were only able to pull one empty wagon up the hill at a time and had to return for the other one. Usually the horses made two trips a day in both directions.

The total quantity of stone shipped over the railroad in 1838 was about 3,000 cubic yards and was expected to increase to 4,000 cubic yards the following year. Occasionally a passenger rode in the stone cars for a fare of six and a half cents. The annual receipts from that source totaled \$100. Ten platform cars were used on the railroad which was operated by gravitation, controlled by brakes. The horses rode down on the cars and drew them back to the quarry. There was a heavy grade up to the quarries, where an inclined plane was also located. Old timers recalled riding down on the cars as a novelty. An account published in a book called the "New York State Tourist" in 1842 stated:

"By taking a ride by the railroad five miles up the hill to the quarries where a thousand men are seen at work raising stone from the surface and hewing, shaping, modeling, etc., for the new locks that are to be made on the Erie Canal, and in entering the cave or chasm that is here found and enjoying the extensive prospect from the summit, we can promise the explorer and geologist a real treat."

Like most other railroads at that time, construction was dictated entirely by considerations of economy. The roadbed was designed for a single track and was just wide enough to accommodate cross ties. Culverts were made of

rough logs piled atop one another. The rail superstructure was entirely of wood. Rough-hewn blocks of wood 12 inches or more in diameter and eight to nine feet long were embedded firmly in the ground at right angles to the course of the line. The center-to-center distance between these timbers was nine feet on straightaways and six feet on curves. The cross-timbers were mortised to receive stringers, which were secured with wedges. These timbers were also rough logs, simply sawed flat on one side and hewn to square where they were secured in the cross-timbers to ensure they were firmly seated and that the top surfaces formed an acceptable level.

Centered on these stringers were the battens, three inches wide and 1 1/2 inches thick. On top of these were fastened strap rails 2 1/2 inches by 5/8 inch. Both the rails and the battens were fastened to the stringers by iron nails. The track was the standard gauge of 4 feet, 8 1/2 inches. The space between the timbers was filled with dirt up to the wooden areas. (5)

Considerable stone was transported over the road, which had a connection at Geddes street with the Auburn & Syracuse Railroad. It had an arrangement with them to run its cars into the city to any point that was convenient for the delivery of stone. The stone laid in front of the old "Townsend block" at West Water and South Clinton streets which was the first business structure in the city at that time, was brought down to Syracuse on the railroad, having been finished at "the Rock" before shipment.

An accident occurred by which one man was killed, and Elliott, the superintendent, badly hurt. A loaded train standing at Split Rock became loosened from its fastenings, and plunging down the steep incline was upset at the first sharp curve, throwing the brakeman under the wreck and pitching Elliott a distance of 20 feet. Fortunately he landed in a mud hole and his life was saved. The brakeman met instant death.

There seem to have been frequent changes in management. Storrs Barrows appears to have taken over from Elliott. He established a yard at the termination of the line at the canal. In March, 1839 he advertised in the Western State Journal, a local newspaper, that he would contract to deliver the Syracuse and Onondaga Railroad depot, "any quantity of Building, Kettle, Flagging, and Dimension Stone. He will also contract to deliver at said depot, any quantity of first rate plaster." Barrows managed the line at his own risk. He kept the books and if there was a surplus at the end of the year, he remitted it, after first deducting his own salary. The business, however, did not flourish. Generally, expenses exceeded income. There was plenty of stone at "the Rock," and an unlimited market for it in all directions. But the transportation by railroad

proved too expensive.

Railroads constructed of wood also quickly wore out and had to be constantly repaired. Battens and strap rails were difficult to keep in alignment and had to be constantly adjusted. The use of rough logs made it easy for water to penetrate under the timbers, making them vulnerable to rotting. After this railroad was closed, Barrows became superintendent of the Skaneateles Railroad until 1850 when that, too, was abandoned and replaced by a plank road. (6)

There is some confusion over the fate of the property. On December 21, 1838 the board of directors voted to hold a public auction at the Syracuse House on January 2, 1839. Moses D. Burnet bid in some of the property for \$3,898.60. At that time Philo D. Mickles was president of the railroad company and Vivus W. Smith was secretary. Mickles was an inventor and salt manufacturer. His father had owned a furnace on Onondaga Hill and made cannon shot during the War of 1812. John Watson, master in chancery, sold the other property of the company at an auction at the Syracuse House on April 1, 1840, with Eleazer Loomis the highest bidder at \$690. However, it seemed at least for awhile it was business as usual. The Western State Journal published a notice on May 13, 1840 that the annual meeting of the Syracuse & Onondaga Railroad Company would be held at 10 a.m. June 1 to choose nine directors and three election inspectors.

Another record shows that on May 18, 1841 the property was sold at a sheriff's sale that included 56 acres in Lot 70 of the Town of Onondaga, along with the "rails, irons and other fixtures." The high bidder was Henry Davis Jr. What remained was sold to Joseph M. Kasson, a contractor, who attempted to operate the road but unsuccessfully. He had built the Rochester aqueduct and owned quarries at Split Rock, which he hoped to render productive through the agency of the road. In this he was disappointed, and he finally became bankrupt. The iron was then sold to Dean Richmond of Buffalo and others involved in the transportation business, who are said to have secured a franchise to build the Detroit & Pontiac railroad in Michigan. This was a predecessor of the Grand Trunk Railway. Reaching Buffalo by canal, the iron was shipped on a vessel bound for Detroit. It was first thought to have gone to the bottom of Lake Erie in a gale and was never raised. The fact was the vessel safely reached its destination and the iron was delivered to the consignee. However, there were still between 700 and 800 laborers employed at the Onondaga quarries in 1842. (7)

Principal persons involved in the railroad

Philip P. Midler was born in Pompey, August 6, 1819 and died in Syracuse on Oct. 28, 1901. He and his father, James, were canal and railroad contractors in the early days.

-Syracuse Evening Herald, September 3, 1899 and October 29, 1901.

Daniel Elliott was a builder and architect. He was born January 9, 1783 and died April 1, 1842. He came from Auburn to Syracuse in 1837. He built several buildings including the first permanent railroad station in Vanderbilt Square in 1839. A son, Charles Loring Elliott, was one of the most noted American artists and portrait painters of his day. - Syracuse Standard, June 19, 1894.

Storrs Barrows was born October 5, 1802 in Windham, Conn., and died in South Trenton, Oneida County, N.Y. on March 5, 1877, and is buried in Olden Barneveld Cemetery. In the early days he was involved in various railroad enterprises. In later life he was a farmer and was one of the founders of the Trenton Union Agricultural Society. He also took an active interest in meteorology and local history. Utica Weekly Herald, March 13, 1877.

Notes

1. Report of the Canal Commissioners, in answer to a resolution of the Assembly relative to the quality of the stone in the Onondaga quarries. This included the Report of Holmes Hutchinson and John B. Jervis, in relation to the quality of stone in the Onondaga quarries." New York State Assembly Document No. 261, March 7, 1836.
2. Chapters 347 and 348, 59th Session, Laws of New York, passed May 13, 1836, pp 487-493.
3. "The Stone Railroad," Syracuse Sunday Herald, January 20, 1883.
4. Ibid.; Albany Argus, September 26, 1837.
5. vonGerstner, Franz Anton Ritter. Die Innern Communicationen Der Vereinigten Staaten Von NorAmerica (Vol. 1, pp. 155-157 (1842)
6. vonGerstner, op. cit.; Death notice of Storrs Barrows. Skaneateles Free Press, March 17, 1877; Notice of abandonment of Skaneateles Railroad, Skaneateles Columbian, August 29, 1850; P. 27, Palmer, Richard F., Short Lines of Central New York, Central N.Y. Chapter, NRHS, 1996.
7. Mention of Mickles in the Syracuse Journal, March 20, 1939; "Grand Avenue Once Rail Line," Syracuse Post-Standard, September 27, 1936; Syracuse Sunday Herald, op. cit.; Baxter, Albert History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Munsell & Company (1891); Auburn Journal & Advertiser, April 27, 1842.

Terry Woods' Canal Comments

Ed- This column about the New Castle Canals brought in many emails replies and I have included them as they help to inform about the subject.

NEW CASTLE CANALS (1)

Terry's introduction to this column was: Today's column is another "I remember the canal in my home town." It is memories of three canals in the vicinity of New Castle, Pa. in 1923. I'm hoping some of our readers from that state might help add to those recollections. The P & O (Pennsylvania and Ohio) was one of the three canals intersecting in that area.

I've been doing a lot of work on the P & O lately. One of my longtime friends is just finishing a long-awaited book on the P & O. We have hopes that The Kent State University Press will find it worthy of publishing soon. * So, some of my recent research has been on the P & O and several future columns have resulted. I hope I haven't been boring you with that subject.

The Column

James Dawson Newell, of 444 Croton Avenue, is one of the New Castle residents whose recollection of the olden days in New Castle are quite interesting. Mr. Newell told a news reporter some of the interesting recollections of the old canal days during a conservation at his home during the past few days (in January, 1923). Among other things, Mr. Newell related the following:

"My father William and his brother Archibald Newell were in partnership and ran a store in Mahoningtown. This store was located on the south side of the Liberty street tunnel under the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie and B. & O. railroads and is at this time occupied by Saccomani Brother's store, No. 10 South Liberty street.

"In that building I was born, Sept. 17, 1847. In 1848 father was appointed collector of Erie Canal tolls, by the State. (2) His office was at New Castle Junction. He continued to hold that position until 1872. (3) In 1872, no boats were run as the canal had been abandoned. (4) Mr. Colt was the original Superintendent of the Erie Canal which was completed as far as "Western Reserve Harbor" five miles above New Castle in Nov. 1833. W. Reed, a civil engineer, succeeded him as Superintendent. The Erie Canal ran from Erie to Rochester, Pa., and from Rochester to Pittsburgh the boats were towed up the Ohio river by the river tow-boats. (5)

"There was a collector stationed at New Brighton, New Castle Junction, New Castle, Greenville, Meadville, Conneaut, and Erie.

"The business of the collector was to collect toll from all officers in charge of boats, whether the boat was loaded or empty. It has been stated that ten tons was a load for a canal boat. This is a mistake. The average load for a freight boat hauling coal or pig iron was sixty tons and some times they would load up to seventy tons. There was not the depth of water for greater tonnage.

"The toll on such freight as coal from Connoquenessing in the vicinity of Rock Point or Ellwood, was 30 cents a ton. For an empty boat, 3 cents a mile. Freight was classified to some extent and took various rates. The idea was that the canal belonged first to the State and later went into private ownership, while the boats were owned by many persons. The toll collected was for the use of the canal and had nothing to do with the rates charged by the boatmen for transportation.

"Large quantities of coal were mined about Ellwood City and hauled by tramway down over the hills to the canal. Captain C. M. Reed had 40 or 50 boats in the canal trade between Connequenessing and Erie. It would take 8, 9, or 10 days to make a trip to Erie. They would use two or three horses at a time on the tow path. In cases of rush freight they would use four horses at a time. They usually worked the animals about 12 hours, then loaded them on to the boat and would take an equal number off the boat to pull while the others rested. Some boats ran day and night, while others tied up for the night.

"The Pennsylvania-Ohio Canal, called the "Cross Cut" from Cleveland, Warren, Niles, Girard, Brier-Hill, Youngstown, Struthers, Lowellville, Edensburg and Mahoningtown, was finished and opened for traffic in 1838. (6)

"The "Cross-Cut" connected with the Erie Canal at New Castle Junction. The P. & L. E. Railroad Company bought the canal property from Youngstown and Newcastle to the vicinity of Beaver and its tracks are built thereon. There was a large aqueduct across the Shenango river at Mahoningtown where the P. & L. E. and B. & O. now cross. It is claimed by some that there was an aqueduct across the Neshannock river between Mill and South Streets. (7) This is not correct. The dam raised the water to the proper height and the boats were pulled across the Neshannock by the horses.

"There was an aqueduct across Big Run, where the B. & O. and P. & L. E. now cross Gardner avenue, a short distance west of Moravia street. Numerous locks were put in all along the canal, to preserve the level surface of the water and a uniform depth. There was one near the Rosena furnace; Long's lock was below the Gardner avenue

aqueduct; Seaman's lock was at the coal tipple, about one mile north of New Castle Junction. There were two or three locks at Moravia and in addition there was a dry dock at that place where boats were repaired. There was a dam at Hard Scrabble just north of Wampum. These dams were some times called weirs. These are a few of the canal features about here and the same can be said of the entire canal.

"At West Middlesex there was a lock one mile north of the town and a weir about a quarter of a mile south of the lock. Another weir was about a quarter of a mile south of the town. A nice smooth road was built all along the canal for the horses and mules to walk on as they pulled the boats. These roads were called towpaths. The muskrats were very bad along the canal. They would eat holes through the towpath into the canal. These holes would soon cause a bad break in that side of the canal and unless repaired at once would cause all kinds of trouble by lowering the water. Jack Boyer was supervisor from Rochester to here and a man by name of Hurley was the supervisor from here to Sharon. Alex Newell was the first collector at New Castle. He was the grandfather of Samuel J. Frisbee of Detroit.

"There were lots of frogs in the canal. A great many persons like frogs as an article of diet, but I do not care for such eating although it is said that they are very fine.

"It was the custom in canal days before the railroads came into play for passengers to take the packet at New Castle about 7 P. M. and retire for the night. In the morning, about time for breakfast the packet horn would blow for New Brighton and the passengers would transfer to the P. Ft. W. & C. Railway to travel east or west according to destination. In the winter time no boats were operated on the canals and passengers traveled by stage coach.

"Bill Alcorn ran a hack between here and Enon Valley connecting at that place with the railroad mentioned. Captain M. S. Marquis of Edenburg, Pa. owned a boat and used it in the pig iron trade between Brier Hill and Youngstown and Pittsburgh and Wheeling. Captain Jack Frost, Captain Mike Pyle and Captain John Brock of Mahoningtown, each owned a boat and had it in service similar to the Marquis vessel. Captains Al, Jeff, and Frank Garvin of New Castle each had a boat, as did Captain O. H. P. Green of Edenburg, the father of our alderman of that name. All the boats mentioned were in similar use as the Marquis boat. Captain John Sharp of Rochester owned a boat and ran between Warren, O. and Pittsburgh. Other captains of boats as I recall them, were: Hamilton and Jerry Bannon and Henry Shafer. Captain Bender operated a packet between New Castle and Youngstown, and Captain Duffy operated between here and Sharon. Everything that is now hauled by rail was then hauled by canal. You have already heard of Cochran's warehouse

which stood where the New Castle dry goods store now stands.

"Many of the boats would leave there with a load of wheat. Where the New Castle Notion store now stands was a loading platform. There is where the boats were loaded with limestone. The limestone was hauled by wagon from Long's up on the hill. There was no paving in those days and often times the wagons would be in the mud up to the hubs.

Along South Street was pretty much all wharf.

"Mr. Conzat ran a hotel where the Lawrence Transfer Company now is, and he did a good business. A good quality of block stone was mined at Sharon and the same was brought in large quantities by boat.

"The coal was unloaded mostly on a wharf on the side of the canal next to the Rosena furnace and there was a great pile of it extending from the Neshannock down as far as the ore piles are now stacked.

"Sam Wallace had a lumber yard at Mahoningtown some 2,000 feet above the Arlington Hotel. He built canal boats and some of the best ones were of his make."

The Replies

Terry,

Many thanks for the 1923 account by Newel relating to his eyewitness knowledge of operations on the old P&O and Beaver and Erie Canals.

From notes I wrote down by hand at the Arms Museum in 1980 (from the Youngstown toll collectors books they still have, from the 1840s to the early 1870s closing of navigation) I could recognize many of the names of captains and their boats.

Glad the account mentioned Hardscrabble, PA, for it was there that young James A. Garfield fell into the lock, very nearly drowned stuck between the boat and lock walls, and needed over a week to recoup. He understandably gave up canallin' at that point.

I recall studying the canal days period city maps for New Castle around 40 yrs ago in my spare time, and the many canal channels, streams and the river made the town appear as a small " Venice." Had a G-grandmother who was born in Sharon, PA, and I used to have some old newspapers from back in her days as a child, but they have deteriorated.

Ron

Terry,

Based upon original yearly P&O Canal Company reports I copied, the office was in Warren, Ohio. In 1856 Charles Smith was president. In the early 1857 report he stated: "The earnings of your canal the last year exceeded any preceding season...." William Fitch was collector at Youngstown then. Another tidbit is the last boat paying toll at port of Youngstown was the "J. C Heenan" on evening of 8 Nov

Continues on page 16

Canal Archives

Over the past year (2021-2022), the Canal Society of New York State has been waiting on paperwork to clear that would allow them to purchase the old 1896 St John's Catholic Church in Port Byron, NY. The Catholic Diocese had recently closed the church and placed the building up for sale. While the loss of the church building was a blow to the local Catholic community, it was an opportunity for the CSNYS to purchase a home for its extensive archives holdings. Over the past few years, the CSNYS had been working with the Erie Canal Museum in Syracuse to serve as a temporary home where the society could consolidate their collection, and begin an inventory and catalog of what they had gathered over the last 50 plus years. The CSNYS has what has been called a "Smithsonian quality collection" for its extensive holdings and its breadth of subject matter that includes canals worldwide.

Interestingly, the church sits directly on the route of the first Erie Canal, also known as "Clinton's Ditch." The altar lies on the towpath and the parking lot was built over the remains of the first Owasco Creek aqueduct. One arch of the 1820s aqueduct can still be seen if you scramble down the side of the creek bank.

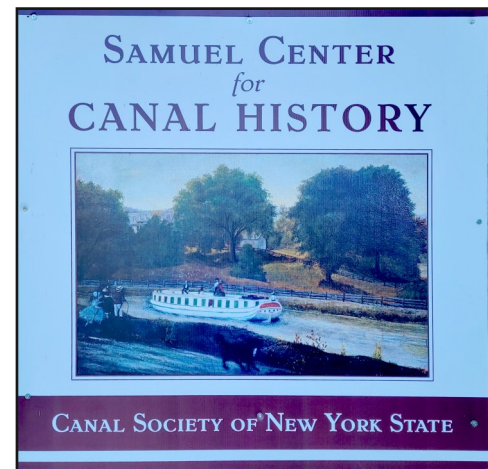
Prior to the purchase, the building was inspected and found to be in very good condition. In addition to the sanctuary, the church has a large side community/gathering room and fully equipped kitchen that were added in the 1960s.

The building was purchased by a local couple and donated to the society. Thus it has been renamed as the

Samuel Center for Canal History in their honor. This building, along with their work at the Port Byron Old Erie Canal Heritage Park, will give the society quite a large presence in the small upstate village. The sanctuary will remain intact and serve as a meeting and program space, while the community room will be named as the Thomas X Grasso Archives and will house the collection and research space. Plans are to move the collection this winter.

This raised the question about other canal archival collections, and so I asked the ACS board, "who has what and where?" I found out that is not an easy question to answer. It first raised the question about what is considered to be a real archives? Does the collection of a small volunteer run historical society qualify, or should we limit any responses to larger collections that are overseen by professional staff? Is one more important than the other?

There is quite a mix. Some of the larger groups and societies have worked with other institutions to house their collections. For instance the Canal Society of Indiana has been working with Ball State University while the Wabash and Erie Canal Park keeps its collection in house. The Pennsylvania Canal Society uses the National Canal Museum. On the other hand, the Canal Society of New Jersey has just announced that they will have a new home for their offices and archives and the Middlesex Canal Association is building a new building that will serve as their archives space. So you can see how difficult it can be to locate and use these resources. So instead of trying to list them here, I will be adding them to the state pages on the ACS website as I learn about them. This will make it easier for you to access and hopefully we can provide a direct link to the archives.



New Museum Highlights the D&H Canal

By Linda J. Barth

New York's Hudson River Valley has an exciting new attraction: the Delaware and Hudson Canal Museum. Notably the museum also houses the Mid-Hudson Visitor Center in High Falls, New York. In 2015 the D&H Canal Historical Society purchased the 1797 DePuy Tavern, which had been a four-star restaurant for decades.

To tell the story of the D&H Canal, the museum's designers created interactive exhibits that can be touched and explored. These include a working lock model with a mirror above that allows visitors to view the lock from a different perspective and a doorbell that allows you to listen to an excerpt of a speech.

On one panel, the visitor drags a torch that causes an explosive sound, mimicking a blasting experience that could result in different outcomes.

This museum is based on the formulas of Washington DC's Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Smithsonian's Museum of African American History and Culture. The visitor center, in the former kitchen of the tavern, features murals highlighting key sites, a carefully curated brochure rack, a gift shop, and an interactive digital concierge system. These amenities enable visitors to quickly access key information to plan visits in the Mid-Hudson area.



On Saturday, June 18, my husband and I attended the grand opening and ribbon cutting, which featured remarks from executive director Jack Braunlein, designer Christine Ferwerda, assistant curator Courtney Conte, and board vice president Allan Bowdery. Wine and cheese were graciously served by museum volunteers.

After the opening, historian and curator Bill Merchant led tours of the Five Locks Trail. The society has also purchased the property across the street, which includes a canal company telegraph building that may be the oldest surviving one in the nation. It is being restored for public access.

Located at 1315 Main Street, High Falls, NY 12440, the museum is open every day 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Admission is free, but donations are always appreciated. For more information and for fall/winter hours, please visit www.canalmuseum.org or contact the museum at 845-687-2000 or www.canalmuseum.org.



1872, carrying limestone for iron furnaces in the Mahoning Valley. The navigation on Beaver and Erie Canal had ended in 1871 after an aqueduct on the Erie Extension fell (or probably dynamited by railroad goons?). Navigation westward to Akron also was similarly not possible by that time, due to lack of repairs and intentional sabotage.

Also, a traveler on packets in 1850s could leave New Castle, PA at 7 PM and arrive in Pittsburgh at 8 AM, costing \$1 each way. A steamboat upstream to Pittsburgh cost another buckaroo.

Better stop now before I write a book. Best wishes

Terry,

I would be interested in getting together with you and your friend sometime to share research on the P&O Canal. I have most of the railroad valuation maps that show the land of the former P&O Canal. Some of the maps include lock locations, the prism and towpath in addition to the property boundaries. Many were purchased from the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, MD. I am donating the digital images to the Canal Society of Ohio Archives at the University of Akron. They will eventually be online through UofA Special Collections.

The New Castle area maps and research on the P&O east of Ravenna are available on my Rails and Trails website. **

Stephen Titchenal

Terry,

Regarding the 1828 vintage "MAP AND PROFILES OF THE PENNSYLVANIA AND OHIO CANAL", I want to stress for the sake of any new researchers out there that this was just a recon preliminary (feasibility) survey only, by the federal govt, and was not as built. It used to hang on the wall at the Portage Co Historical Society in Ravenna, and in the early 1980s I bought a complete copy of the associated maps from the National Archives in DC, only to have it walk off when I lent it to someone. I recall, when starting out in earnest to research the P&O, spending a frustrating day in the field trying to locate the old ditch, but was on the wrong side of the river, so in places that old map can be a bum steer.

In 1835 the essentially privately owned P&O Canal Co quickly did additional tweaking of the route and locks, in order to lower the projected cost, and in the Youngstown and Cuyahoga Falls areas was significantly varied from the 1828 intent alignments. By the time the P&O was being completed in 1839-40, ditch diggers were earning up to 50 cents per day.

Back in the 1830s when there was activity to construct a

branch canal (N & S) north into Canton, and furthermore, the backers had ultimate aims of extending it northward to connect with the P&O Canal, but the "Panic of 1837" stopped all construction, and as you know, some locals filled in the partial ditch work.

Ron

(1) From an article in the New Castle News, January 1, 1923.

(2) James here is referring to the Erie Extension Canal that ran from the "Western Reserve Harbor" about Five miles above New Castle, to Erie.

(3) New Castle Junction was at the intersection of the State-owned Beaver Division Canal and the privately owned Pennsylvania & Ohio Canal.

(4) The privately owned Erie Extension Canal was abandoned in 1872, the Beaver Division continued to operate as a Pennsylvania State Canal until all the State's canals were sold in 1869.

(5) I believe my footnotes have already explained the Erie Extension and Beaver Division Canals. The Beaver Division was completed in 1833. I have no idea where the 1883 date belongs.

(6) The P & O Canal connected Mahoningtown (Junction) on the Beaver Division Canal with Akron, Ohio on the Ohio Canal. Boats had to make a right turn at Akron to get to Cleveland on the Ohio Canal. The first boat traveled the P & O from Junction to Warren on May 9, 1839, but lack of water at the Summit delayed through navigation until April 4, 1840.

(7) We believe this site was on the Beaver Division Canal.

*Terry never said who the friend might be and as of 2022, I don't see any books listed on this subject.

** This website has been added to the Ohio state page on the ACS website. It is worth a look.

Canalendar

As of this printing we have not heard about events in 2023. We will post to the website and social media as soon as we are aware.