

C&O Canal Association

along the towpath ...

concerned with the conservation of the natural and
historical environment of the C&O Canal and the Potomac River Basin

President: Bonnie Troxell, 612 Montgomery Ave., Cumberland, Md. 21502
Level Walker Chairman: John Howard, 10598 Jason Ct., Columbia, Md. 21043

Volume IX

December 1977

Number 7

Editor: Blanca Poteat R.D. #1 Dickerson, Maryland 20753

HIKES



January 21, 1978 10:00 am Seneca to Sycamore Landing 4 miles

good weather - round trip hike
bad weather - shuttle back to Seneca

Leaders: Ken Rollins and Joan Paull

Mr. Riley has been invited to join the Hikers and tell
about the history of Riley's Lock, named after his father,
where he was born.

March 5, 1978 10:00 am Maryland Heights

Leader: John Frye

details to follow in next issue

Fifteen people, including two new families, hiked from Sycamore to
Edward's Ferry on November 5.

MEMBERSHIP.....

If new friends of the Canal would like to join, or your own membership needs
to be renewed:

Regular membership \$5.00
(with second badge 6.00)
Patron 10.00

Please send annual dues to:

M.E. Johns, treasurer
6233 18th Rd. North
Arlington, Va. 22205

For further information contact:

Mrs. Beverly Rhodes, membership chairman
4955 Butterworth Place NW
Washington D.C. 20016

Minutes of the C&O Canal Association Board Meeting

Nancy Long called the meeting to order at 1 PM, Sept. 25, at the Glen Echo Town Hall. Present were Bill Davies, Tom Hahn, Becky Hedin, John Howard, Nancy Long, Blanka Poteat, Lyman Stucker, Merle Van Horne, Ed Wesely, Bruce Wood, and Barbara Yeaman. Jim Martin and Charles Harm represented the Park Service.

Tom Hahn recommended that the agenda of the C&O Canal Association Board Meetings be shared regularly with the Park Service.

Jim Martin reported that the date for the Wide Water hearing would be set for late November or early December in the Westmoreland Church or the Glen Echo Town Hall. Historical photographs of the area are not available and the relative cost of the alternatives is not known.

Bill Davies noted that the CCC did some restoration in the Wide Water area. Tom Hahn indicated he had a photograph of the area which was taken before the CCC restoration.

Bill Davies said signs noting the depth of water are needed in the Wide Water area.

Tom Hahn suggested that bikers be routed over the Berma Rd while pedestrians continue to use the towpath.

Jim Martin said that Park Service will be designing safety plans for bikers. Both Bruce Wood and Ed Wesely remarked that pedestrians have the right of way. Bill Davies suggested that bikers walk over all aqueducts. Bruce suggested that the streetcar right of way could be considered for a biker route.

Barbara Yeaman recommended that the Board review the alternatives for Wide Water and take a stand for the Association. Ed Wesely suggested publication of a digest of alternatives in "Along the Towpath" along with Tom Hahn's photograph. Membership response to the plans would be sent to Bruce Wood.

Bill Davies moved that a special committee should meet with Bill Failor on a quarterly basis to discuss canal issues. Barbara Yeaman seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Ed Wesely, Bill Davies, Tom Hahn and John Howard were asked to serve on this committee. Nancy Long will set up the first meeting in October or November.

Jim Martin reported that work is continuing on the Town Creek aqueduct. Ferry Hill remains at status quo. Jaycees are clearing dead timber and cleaning up around Lockhouse 7.

Blanka Poteat requested items for "Along the Towpath".

Reports on the Commission meeting indicated a lack of communication between members. Appointments are political and members lack the technical expertise to make decisions about the Canal. Bill Davies suggested that technical data should be presented at least 2 weeks in advance. Discussion rather than verbal reports could follow.

No date was selected for the next Board meeting.

R. L. Hedin

Late Widewater Hearing Notices: Because of the vagaries of the postal service and your editor, many members received their notices too late to attend the hearing. Therefore, the testimony presented by Ken Rollins for the Association is included here in full.



Statement of the C & O Canal Association on NPS Widewater Plans
delivered by Ken Rollins, member of the Board of Directors

The C & O Canal Association has carefully examined the Park Service's proposals for the towpath in the Widewater section along the rocky outcroppings just below Lock 15. The Board of Directors of the Association as well as a number of our members have inspected the area below Lock 15. We have reflected upon and discussed the pro's and con's of what needs to be done or undone along the area in question. Specifically at issue is what is to be done or not done about the massive 80 foot footbridge just below Lock 15 and generally what should be done or not done to the towpath along the nearly 300 feet of rock outcroppings below Lock 15 which was once traversed by the towpath before flooding washed it out some years ago.

We in the C & O Canal Association favor the last of the alternatives listed in the Park Service's environmental assessment - namely, a restoration of the towpath across the rocky area below Lock 15 as it was - both in form and materials used - in the last years of the canal's commercial operations. But the Canal Company's specifications must be reviewed with an eye to preserving and enhancing major portions of the scenic rock outcrop below Lock 15. It should be noted that there are rope burns and drill marks on these rocks - part of canal history - that ought to be surveyed and protected.

Last year, instead of making such a review, and without any forewarning, the Park Service went ahead and built the present footbridge with its concrete pilings, flying buttresses, and high railings. In undertaking this not inconsequential construction, the Park Service violated its own planning policies: by not reviewing the project with the C & O Canal Advisory Commission, nor, as far as we know, with anyone else among the interested public. Park Service spokesmen have repeatedly said they would give advance notice of plans for significant work projects on the canal. Second, in building the footbridge, the Park Service ignored the guidelines set down in its own master plan for the park. Under the plan the Park Service set for itself the goal of stabilizing and restoring the canal and many of its structures. However, the footbridge in question bears no resemblance to any previous canal structure in the section below Lock 15. The old photos of the section in its operating days show no bridge structure of the sort now installed there - only a walled structure. Furthermore, we find it hard to believe that the new footbridge set as it is on concrete pilings was intended to be a "temporary structure."

What we in the Association find most disturbing is not just the unannounced construction of an inappropriate footbridge - this can be corrected without too much difficulty. What is more disturbing is that the Park Service did what it said it would not do - that is, it went ahead with major work without prior notice or consultation through established public channels. We in the Association very much hope that the Park Service's actions do not represent a practice that will be repeated or, in time, become the Park Service's preferred mode of operation in canal development. We hope the present meeting is a good sign that the Park Service harbors no such intentions, but rather intends to revive its goal of consultation and partnership with the public in planning for the canal.

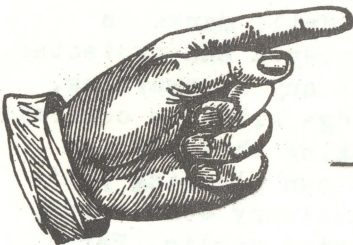
The question before us is what should be done now. Our proposal to the Park Service is this: Go back to history and then to the drawing boards. Make a complete study of how the canal company traversed the rocky outcroppings below Lock 15. See what was done in the years preceding the close of operations in 1924. In other words, do the necessary historic study and draw up new plans for the section consistent with your findings and the integrity of the Widewater area, and then present them to the Advisory Commission and to the public.

Incidentally, it may turn out that all the work on the footbridge need not be undone. Perhaps, the main concrete pilings, at least, might be used for reinforcing the cribbing for the towpath in this section, if that turns out to be the method used by the canal company. Further, it seems evident whatever method was used did not cover over much of the rock outcroppings since the grooves of the barge towropes are still visible in the rocks of the section.

By following our recommendation the Park Service will be doing no more than conforming to its own policy. The general plan calls for working out the plan for each major section of the canal before individual work projects are done in the section. Widewater, as the Environmental Assessment notes, comes under the Zone A Classification. The Assessment emphasizes that this is an area "containing major historic restoration opportunities where the park visitors will be able to see a functioning canal in a historic setting." All the Park Service need do is grasp the opportunities of which it speaks. We in the Association will, in turn, support restoration work that stays within the limits imposed by the original character of the operating canal and the scenic nature of Widewater.

Members who wish to add their comments for Park Service consideration should write to:

Mr. Manus Fish
Director, National Capital Parks
National Parks Service
1100 Ohio Drive SW
Washington, D.C. 20242



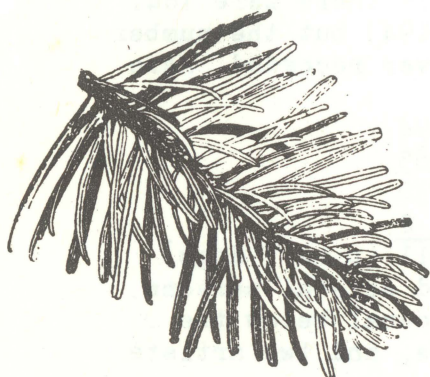
Restoration of McMahon's Mill

(from the Frederick Post)

McMahon's Mill, located south of Williamsport, on Charles Mill Road, was built in 1778 on the Downey Branch stream. The stream enters the Potomac River at Mile 88.1 along the C & O Canal National Historical Park. During its operation, the mill produced flour, feed and plaster. It has been known by several names: Shank's Mill, Charles' Mill, Avis Mill, Shaffer's Old Flouring Mills, Galloway's Mill and Cedar Grove Mill. In 1922, it was closed due to floods. Later in the 1920's the original wood water wheel was replaced by a steel wheel and the waterpower was utilized to generate electricity.

William B. McMahon acquired the Mill in 1965. He has restored portions of the mill, such as the old millstones and the electric generating equipment, to working condition. McMahon operated a marina and snack bar for the public until January 1976, when the C & O Canal Park acquired the property.

The General Plan for the C & O Canal divides the park into 32 sections. Each section is classified as a Zone depending on the planned public use and development. McMahon's Mill is located in "short-term remote" zone. The objective here is to provide the visitor with an undisturbed day in a natural setting. To attain this, all facilities are being removed from the Mill and towpath area and certain restrictions will be placed on the use of the area.

LEVEL WALKERS


Sections from recent level walker reports are reproduced below, as well as a complete (?) list of reports received since the last newsletter. There were several comments that the litter problem is lessening, but shooting near the canal was reported by two walkers.

Copies of the complete reports have been sent to the National Park Service. Park Superintendent William Failor continues to be pleased with the efforts of the level walkers.

Conditions needing immediate attention of the NPS may be called in, or a written report may be sent to Park headquarters at Sharpsburg.

Reports received:**Section:**

Lee B. Lovell	34, 35	McMahon's Mill to Lock 43
Henry & Rhoda Kirsch		Lock 30 to the Aqueduct
Lloyd & Lyn Jonnes	23	Harper's Ferry to Dam 3
Mary & Mildred Heimer	22	Weverton to Sandy Hook
Victor Conrad	34	Charles' Mill to Forman's Ferry
Jeannie Wilkins		Georgetown to Lock 6
J. Randolph Wilson Family	25	Dargon Rd. to Mountain Lock
Joan Paull	8	Swain's Lock to Pennyfield Lock
A.K. McGraw	42	Lock 47 to McCoy's Ferry
Robert Greenberg	5	Lock 14 to Cropley
Jeremy & Christopher Parker	56	Greenridge Station to Lock 61
Dot & Jack Geary	24, 25	Dam 3 to Mountain Rd.
John Frye	28	Shepherdstown to Lock 39
William Clague	9	Pennyfield Lock to Seneca
Jane & Harold Larsen	44	Ft. Frederick to Ernstville
Philip Stone		Brookmont to Cabin John
George Lomas	63	Old town to Kelly's Road Culvert

from Victor Conrad

Charles' Mill to Forman's Ferry

I saw a few wild ducks and several squirrels and cottontail rabbits, some crows and turkey vultures, and many small birds.... The towpath was in good shape, with the exception of the three places within the first half mile upstream from Charles Mill, where the towpath skirts the base of the cliffs. In these places the rocks are rather difficult for the hiker to traverse. Bikes would have to be carried. Each year the flood waters expose more of the rocks. Then, should the river rise only several feet, the rocky path is covered with water, and hip boots are needed to get around the cliffs. The first such area upstream from the mill formerly was provided with a boardwalk, a bit ramshackle, but usable. This has been washed away, and should be replaced. Some similar arrangement should be made at the other two places. In fact, I see no reason why the entire towpath could not be rebuilt at these three places. Certainly, the towpath must have been built up there when the canal was in operation....The authenticity of the towpath need not be destroyed. Caution: there are a few towline grooves worn in the cliff faces at several points. These, of course, should be preserved.

from Philip Stone

Brookmont to Cabin John

USE The 311 recreational users I observed along the canal on a fair, mild Sunday afternoon in late October is the highest number recorded since April, 1972, when I saw 351. In October 1976 there were 164. The number of bicyclists continued to be large (194) but the number of hikers (30) were by far the greatest I have ever recorded. Here is the summary:

Bicyclists	194
Hikers and strollers	85
Joggers	30
Canoeists	2
	<u>311</u> (plus 7 dogs)

While I don't count users of the river, I noticed several persons in kayaks using the slalom course on the feeder canal below the Brookmont dam, numerous fishermen along the shore, and two artists working on oil paintings of river scenes.

from Jeannie Wilkins

Georgetown to Lock 6

The canal just north of Chain Bridge has had two culverts installed with a temporary road (I hope) running across to allow access to the construction work on the river. An emergency water intake is being installed and the work is nearing completion. The water in the river at this point is 90 feet deep even at this season (early October).

The bird life has deteriorated along this stretch of the canal. Just five years ago I had recorded many varieties that now seem to be missing....At Marsden Tract sign an immature white Ibis was seen for the better part of two weeks. This is a very rare bird to be seen in Maryland as they are Florida and Gulf Coast inhabitants. This one was feeding on worms, digging his eight inch bill into the soft mud and coming up with a worm every time.



from Joan Paull

Swain's Lock to Pennyfield Lock

The towpath is a thousand per cent better than our last walk (July 1977). The park has done an outstanding job of bringing in dirt and building up the towpath. Section eight has not looked this good in the three years that we have been reporting. The water level was a little low; however, this did not stop the many people using canoes and boats. At Swain's and Pennyfield's there is a sign warning of hazardous towpath. On the Pennyfield end the construction company has put up a sign that visitor access is restricted.

from William Clague

Pennyfield to Seneca

The surface of this section is in excellent condition. It has been resurfaced with materials superior to what has been used down around Fletcher's and even though we had had quite a bit of rain in the days previous to my visit, the surface was smooth, hard and dry and there were no puddles. I hope this indicates that the surface will not wash out and become a cobblestone road like the resurface section down near town.

The stones of Lock 23 have been numbered evidently in preparation to taking it apart for rebuilding which it very much needs.

A causeway is being constructed from the upper end of the Pennyfield parking area over to the towpath. I can't figure out what they are going to do on the other side of the canal at this point.

Fifth edition - A Collection of Maps of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal

by William Clague

Including sections on the background of the Canal era, the Canal today, an index, a lock list and structure list, and some new photographs, in a pocket-size format more suited to field use. Copies are available for \$3.00, plus 50 cents for postage and handling and 15 cents sales tax for Maryland residents, from:

Mr. William Clague
P.O. Box 604
Glen Echo, Maryland
20768

or

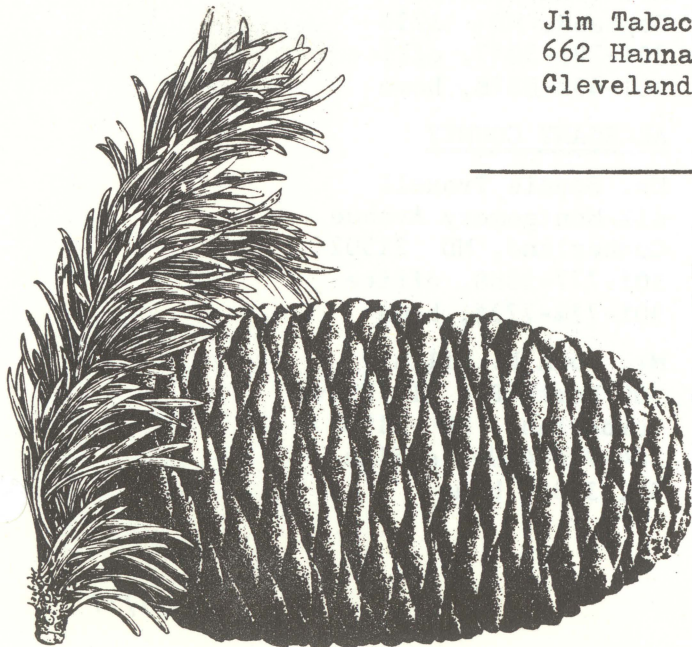
Capt. Tom Hahn
P.O. Box 310
Shepherdstown, W. Va.
25443

The Ohio Canal Sesquicentennial Commission

The Cuyahoga Valley Canal Days were held this past summer to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the opening of the canal's first segment, 38 miles from Akron to Cleveland. Since we only recently received this news, the celebration is over. But if anyone would like more information from the group, write to:

Jim Tabaczynski
662 Hanna Building
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

If you are aware of any Association members who are not receiving newsletters, please notify your ATT editor so the situation (incorrect zip code, change of address or name, inadvertent omission?) can be corrected.



AT LARGE

Mr. Donald R. Frush, Chairman
1002 Woodland Way
Hagerstown, MD 21740
301-733-9012, home

Mrs. Anthony Morella, Vice Chairman
6601 Millwood Road
Bethesda, MD 20034
301-229-6601, home

Miss Nancy Long
6001 Bryn Mawr Avenue
Glen Echo, MD 20768
202-389-6392, office
301-229-0196, home

STATE OF MARYLAND

Hon. Vladimir A. Whabe
Secretary of State Planning
State of Maryland
301 West Preston Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
301-383-2450, office

Hon. James B. Coulter
Secretary, Maryland Department of
Natural Resources
Annapolis, MD 21402
301-269-3043, office

STATE OF VIRGINIA

Mrs. Dorothy Grotos
207 N. Irving Street
Arlington, VA 22201
703-558-2261, office
703-528-7502, home

Miss Margaret Dietz
Route 2
Lovettsville, VA 22080
301-972-0568, office
703-822-5645, home

STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

Mr. Dayton C. Casto, Jr.
Largent Route
Great Cacapon, WV 25422
304-947-7153, home

Mr. Sifas F. Starry
120 East German Street
Shepherdstown, WV 25443
304-876-6410, home

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mr. Lorenzo W. Jacobs, Jr.
Director, Office of Housing and
Community Development
District Building
Washington, DC 20004
202-724-8721, office

Mr. Rockwood H. Foster
Whitelaw Dickens & Co.
Suite 601
910 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006
202-331-7633, office
202-965-3951, home

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Mr. Kenneth S. Rollins
113 Valley Road
Brookmont, MD 20016
202-566-1314, office
301-229-1513, home

Mr. Edwin F. Wesely, Jr.
104 Valley Road
Brookmont, MD 20016
301-229-~~6447~~, home

FREDERICK COUNTY

Mrs. Kenneth Pohlmann
Route 1
Dickerson, MD 20753
301-831-8193, home

Dr. James H. Gilford
Route 7
2202 Glen Court
Frederick, MD 21701
301-663-3131, office
301-663-3966, home

WASHINGTON COUNTY

Mr. R. Lee Downey
P.O. Box 380
Williamsport, MD 21795
301-791-3090, office
301-223-7333, home

Mr. John C. Frye
Gapland, MD 21736
301-791-3037, office
301-432-8878, home

ALLEGANY COUNTY

Ms. Bonnie Troxell
612 Montgomery Avenue
Cumberland, MD 21502
301-777-5888, office
301-724-7725, home

Mr. John D. Millar
300 North Bel Air Drive
Cumberland, MD 21502
304-726-4500, office
301-3136, home

C & O Canal Association Board Meeting

Saturday, January 14, 1978

10:00 am Glen Echo Town Hall

All interested members are welcome to attend.

At its meeting on September 25, the Association Board of Directors voted to appoint a committee to meet at least quarterly with Superintendent William Failor. The following members have agreed to serve on the committee:

Bonnie Troxell

Nancy Long

Ed Wesely

John Howard

Bill Davies

Tom Hahn

The first meeting is scheduled for Saturday, January 21, 1978 from 10:00 am to 12:30 at the Ferry Hill Canal Headquarters.

from the minutes of the November 9, 1977, meeting of the Special Projects Committee of the C & O Canal Advisory Commission:

Widewater area construction project....The ultimate objective of the Park Service is to restore the towpath to historical condition. In the meantime, in an attempt to provide the public with safe conditions following the enormous washouts of devastating floods, construction of a temporary footbridge was begun. Because of strong opposition to the concrete pilings and the footbridge as an intrusion in the area, the construction was halted. Turning basin desilting....Williamsport....Mr. Failor told of plans for restoration of the turning basin and that other archaeological features are being excavated. A half-hour field trip to the turning basin is planned.

from the C & O Canal Advisory Commission Meeting November 19, 1977

A mailing list of interested individuals is being compiled for notification about various committee meetings and their agenda items.

Commission members expressed concern that the Sectional Plan for the Great Falls area (Angler's Inn to Swains Lock) be given the highest priority and be initiated at the earliest possible date. The Sectional Development Plan for this section had been programmed in the Canal's 1978 budget but was dropped back to the 1979 fiscal year. The need for sectional plans before any capital construction begins was stressed.

Next C & O Canal Advisory Commission Meeting

Saturday, February 18, 1978
Williamsport, Maryland

Editor's note:

There is an urgent need for sectional development plans, particularly for the Canal's lower section and other developed areas. With carefully designed guidelines, the Park Service can prevent future projects which are piecemeal, historically inaccurate, or environmentally unsound.

A GREAT AMERICAN

By: Victor P. Conrad (Level Walker No. 34 - Charles Mill
to Formans Ferry)

The big man sat on a bench with his back against the south wall of Great Falls Tavern, his tousled white head bared to the warm sun. Beside him on the bench was a battered tan hat of the western plainsman type and a paper cup of coffee. Between his knees was a sycamore walking stick. In his right hand he held a sandwich, which he was alternately munching and pulling apart to feed bits to the shaggy dog at his feet.

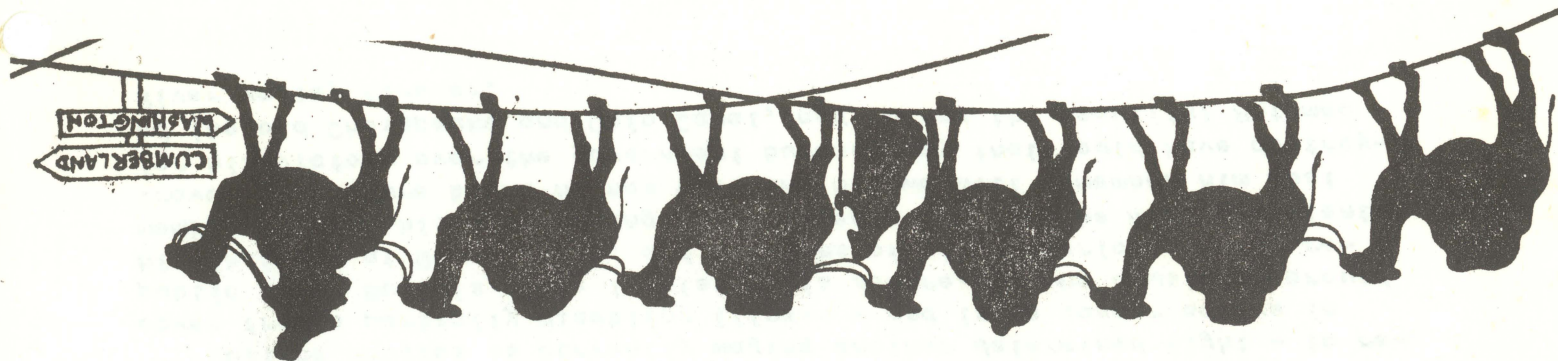
The man appeared to be about seventy years of age. Below the white hair - being ruffled by a light breeze blowing from the direction of the nearby Potomac River - was a broad, smooth-shaven ruddy face, rough featured and somewhat angular, enhanced by a pair of bright, keen blue eyes. His costume matched his beat-up hat; an old pair of khaki pants, a wrinkled khaki jacket, and a well-worn pair of hiking boots.

As he sat there in the sun, the man looked comfortable and completely at ease, seemingly oblivious to the reporters crowding around him and taking his picture. Now and then he stopped chewing to answer a question from one of the onlookers, while reaching out to pat the head of a child or leaning forward to rub the ears of his dog.

This scene was typical of many we had witnessed over the past twenty years, when most of us in the crowd had followed this man up and down the towpath of the historic Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, hard put to match his long strides and five miles per hour walking pace, which often continued for twenty miles or more with scarcely a break. But that day in late April of 1974 was a special occasion. It was the twentieth anniversary of the year he and a small group of newsmen, friends and nature lovers had walked the towpath from Cumberland to Georgetown, to draw attention to its beauty and recreational value. Largely because of his efforts, the old waterway had been saved from destruction which would have resulted from the building of a proposed motor parkway in the canal bed, and high dams in the river. Sitting there in the bright sun, the big man could look back on a hard-fought and successful campaign which had culminated in the preservation of the old canal as a National Historical Park, and the abandonment of plans to construct a high dam in the Potomac at River Bend.

The man on the bench was Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States William O. Douglas. For many years he was a controversial figure on the Court. But friends and adversaries alike agree that he has a brilliant legal mind, and has been one of the most distinguished jurists that ever sat on the Court.

Justice Douglas is currently waging another determined fight - to recover from a partially disabling illness - and is no longer active in public life. But his place in history is secure. We who clustered around him that day at Great Falls, and millions of other Americans, will remember him for his outstanding legal talents and for the many excellent travel and nature books he has written. But we will remember him most for his victory over the government bureaucracy that would have destroyed the old Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, and ruined the beautiful Potomac River valley forever.



"ALONG THE TOWPATH"
C & O Canal Association
P.O. Box 66
Glen Echo, Md. 20768

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
2¢ PAID
Glen Echo, Md.
Permit No. 2486

Mr. John Frye
Gapland Maryland
21736

H A P P Y
N E W
Y E A R !