



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

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NUMBER 3

## HERITAGE HIKE PLANS SET

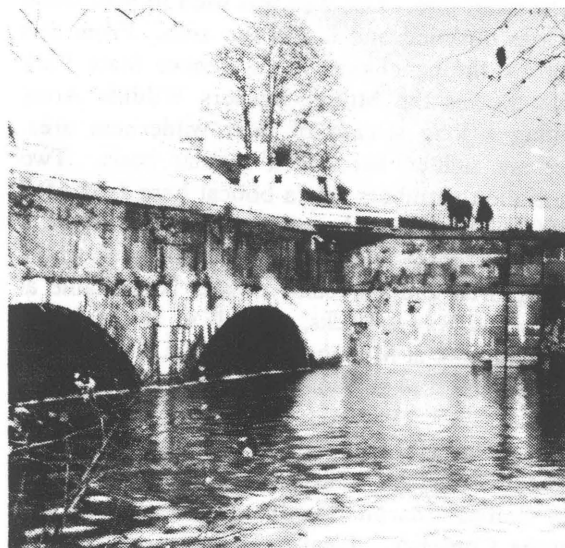
Spend a "haunting" Halloween on the Heritage Hike set for October 31, 1992. No costumes are required - just your hiking "spirits"! You can enjoy the "haunts" of the canal beginning at Swains Lock and ending at Sycamore Landing. The total distance is an "uplifting" 10.57 miles.

Hikers should park at the end of Sycamore Landing Road (directions follow 'Heritage Hike Highlights'). A reservation form appears on the last page of this issue. Buses will depart for the 12-mile trip to Swains lock at 10:15 and 11:00 or 11:15 AM. Passengers will receive a handout describing the historic area.

We plan to stop for "treats" (lunch - bring your own) at Lock 24, Riley's Lock (Milepost 22.82). A good place for those who want an earlier lunch will be Lock 22, Pennyfield Lock (Milepost 19.63).

After the hike, we will have a chance to relax, meet new members, and enjoy the truly unique surroundings and more "treats" at the happy hour and dinner which will be held at the Izaak Walton League on West Willard Road, a short drive from Sycamore Landing. Early arrivals who still have the energy can explore the "bewitching" nature trails at the Izaak Walton Farm before happy hour. The cash-bar happy hour will begin at 4:30 PM and a roast beef dinner buffet starting at 6:00 PM. Dinner will cost \$12.00 per person. **Advance reservations are required.** Reservation forms must be received by October 24, 1992. You will not receive acknowledgement of your reservation. Instead, a list of those who have paid will be checked at the door.

We are looking forward to a "howling" good time!



(NPS Photo, E. B. Thompson collection)  
SENECA AQUEDUCT DURING THE CANAL'S OPERATING PERIOD. Heritage hikers will cross the aqueduct on October 31st.

## HERITAGE HIKE HIGHLIGHTS

This years Heritage Hike extends from long, open stretches with beautiful river views and high, rocky cliffs to a near wilderness area.

Less than a mile from Swains (your last chance to purchase snacks for the hike) is the Washington Suburban Sanitation Commission

## HERITAGE HIKE HIGHLIGHTS -

continued

Filtration Plant. Be sure to take a few minutes to look at the monument describing the physiographic regions of the Potomac River Basin. For the next mile or so, you will pass spectacular cliffs with cedars and trumpet vines which appear to be growing out of the rocks. At Milepost 20, you will come to the Dierssen Waterfowl Sanctuary with its cattail marsh and many species of birds. At Milepost 21, there is a picturesque view of the river and "lovely cedar topped cliffs," as quoted in Thomas Hahn's book, Towpath Guide to the C & O Canal. This area was reportedly Justice Douglas' favorite hiking area. At the Seneca Aqueduct-Riley's Lock (lunch stop), there are several picnic tables located at the water's edge, just past the aqueduct. This spot has a broad-open view of the river. Continuing on less than a mile away, you can see the remains of a stone masonry retaining wall on the canal side. This wall was used to load stone that was quarried and cut in the area. From this point on, the canal runs along Seneca State Park which adjoins the McKee-Beshers Wildlife Area, creating a long stretch of near wilderness area. Deer are sighted here on a regular basis. Two Association members saw a bobcat here in the fall of 1990. The hike ends at Milepost 27.21. Here, a footbridge crosses the canal and leads back to the parking area and our cars. Water is available at Swains and Rileys Locks, as well as at the hiker-biker campsite at Milepost 26. Toilets are available at these sites and at Violettes Lock, Milepost 22.

The Heritage Hike Planning Committee includes Chairman, Sonny DeForge (301-530-8830), Ken Rollins, Sharon Freedman, Helen Shaw, and George Complain. Please refer any questions to Sonny DeForge.

- - Sonny DeForge

### DIRECTIONS TO: SYCAMORE LANDING

Travel west 6-miles on River Road (RT 190), past Potomac Village, located at the intersection of River Road and Falls Road (RT 189). Continue on River Road, 6-miles past Potomac Village to the intersection of Seneca Road.

At this intersection, turn left on River Road. Drive 5-miles to Sycamore Landing Road; see sign "McKee Beshers Wildlife Area." The parking area is at the end of Sycamore Landing Road, 0.8-mile from River Road.

### TO: IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE

Drive back to River Road. Turn left, travel a short distance to the first right on West Willard Road. Continue 0.06-mile and turn left at the Izaak Walton League sign.

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## THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

This has been a very remarkable summer on the Canal.

In June we greeted our British visitors from the Inland Waterways Association with a memorable picnic supper, which we jointly hosted with the Friends of Great Falls Tavern and the Virginia Canals and Navigations Society. It was outstanding to have the three groups together in this, and we look forward to future events with our neighboring organizations.

July brought the long awaited dedication and opening of the new Olmsted bridges and overlook. Now, after twenty years, park visitors can again view the Falls from the Maryland side. This project was a joint venture of the state, county, National Park Service, and the public, showing that they, too, can work together.

August brought us and the Park a big boost with the fine article by Kevin McManus in The Washington Post. The story generated many inquiries about the Association and a slew of new members.

In September, we look forward to the rewatering of the canal at Hancock. This is the first in a series of upgradings planned for upstream communities to be completed.

October, of course, will bring the International Conference on Historic Canals. The meeting is being co-sponsored by the Association

## THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN - continued

and the Park, and we will show off the canal to our counterparts from around the country and Canada. The conference will be followed a week later by the Heritage Hike.

Work continues on the restoration at Williamsport, where rewatering of the Cushwa Basin and the canal down through Lock 44 is scheduled for next year. There is a possibility that this project can be expanded in the future to include restoration of the Conococheague Aqueduct. If funded and carried out, it would become the only operating masonry aqueduct in the country. State Senator Don Munson of Washington County is actively pursuing federal funding to make this possible.

Construction of the Capital Crescent Trail along the canal from Georgetown to the District line is about to begin, and hopefully, Montgomery County will soon also begin its portion, at least as far as Bethesda.

There are many additional projects on the canal that need to be funded and undertaken. Recently discovered weaknesses in Dams 4 and 5 make their prompt repair a matter of public safety as well as historic preservation. High on any priority list, and very expensive, is the rehabilitation of Monocacy Aqueduct, and the removal of the unsightly steel beams that now hold it together. This structure, which withstood attempts by the Confederates to blow it up, must be restored to resist the powers of nature. Other major projects include development and rewatering of the Cumberland terminus, and a solution to the soil problem at Brunswick, so rewatering there can go forward.

The towpath below Lock 15, in the Widewater section, has long been an area of concern and contention. Several hundred yards of towpath, known as the "Logwall," were washed out by floods many years ago and have never been restored. This has been a minor inconvenience to bicyclists, who either had to carry their wheels across or detour on the Berma Road. It has always been passable for pedestrians, and many hikers like it the way it is and hope it will not be changed. There was controversy fifteen years ago when the

Park Service erected the short wooden boardwalk just below the lock, because it was non-historic, but it has not been modified.

In recent years, the towpath break has continued to deteriorate to the point that even hiking now is difficult for many older people, especially where the path crosses the overflow outlet for the canal. Recently Level Walker chair Karen Gray, writing on behalf of the Board of Directors, and Helen Johnston, writing as an individual level walker and park volunteer, brought this problem to the Superintendent. Karen's letter noted that "only the most nimble can leap from rock to rock to continue their towpath walk' at the flooded spot. She stated that "we feel that repairing this piece of the towpath should not be delayed. We believe the Berma Road can't substitute for the towpath experience and that the continuity of the towpath along this heavily-used stretch of the canal is very important." Helen's letter suggested "a temporary extension of the present wooden bridge" to "provide a safe and easy linkage to fill in the break' so that "towpath users would no longer . . . risk a watery tumble."

In 1977, the Association testified in favor of restoration of the towpath at Widewater as it was in the last years of the canal's commercial operation, at the same time enhancing major portions of the scenic rock outcrop. Noting that Widewater is classified as Zone A, calling for major historic restoration where park visitors can see a functioning canal in an historic setting, the Association at that time called for replacement of the wooden footbridge.

Superintendent Hobbs has replied that, although the original work to replace the washed out area was stopped by court action and never pursued thereafter, "it is now time to revisit this issue with the objective of restoring the towpath to its historically functional structure and appearance . . . The subject has surfaced on a number of occasions and it may be timely to seriously revisit the objective of restoring the . . . breach."

There are many potential projects pending along the canal, competing for the highest priority ratings and limited resources available. It is a fact of life that glamorous major projects, like the Olmsted bridges and the Williamsport rewatering,

## THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN -

continued

get done because politicians appropriate special line items to fund them, and the routine, less exciting projects languish because regular operating budgets are insufficient to go around. But as we have seen recently, many improvements are coming to the Park, and Superintendent Hobbs and his staff are aggressively working to accomplish them.

- - David Johnson

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## NEWS FROM MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Association's Board of Directors met on June 28th in Williamsport, and on August 2nd in Glen Echo. State Senator Donald Munson, who represents Washington County and part of Allegheny County in the Maryland legislature, spoke to the Board at the June meeting about his desire to see the Conococheague Aqueduct restored and rewatered as an adjunct to the current canal restoration in Williamsport. He has talked to Superintendent Hobbs and Mayor Slayman, who have both endorsed the proposal. Senator Munson stated that the superintendent had indicated that the work could be undertaken in FY93 if funds become available. Senator Munson plans to work with U.S. Senator Barbara Mikulski to seek an appropriation for this. Washington County members of the C & O Canal Commission, Sue Ann Sullivan and Edward Miller, also attended the Board meeting and enthusiastically support the project. The Board unanimously adopted a motion that the Association endorse the restoration and rewatering of the Conococheague Aqueduct in FY-93.

It was reported to the Board that Dave Johnson and Hal Larsen met with Chief Ranger Keith Whisenant on June 24 to discuss the plan to move the Association's archives to a facility at park headquarters at Ferry Hill. Superintendent Hobbs has offered space at Ferry Hill in the older archives structure where the Park's collections are now held, when those are moved into a newly erected building. We accepted the offer. The space, which has security and climate control, will enable

members of the Association's Archive Committee to work on our files, as well as provide secure storage.

Karen Gray, the Level Walker Chair, reported that at mid-year we had added nineteen new level walkers, bringing the total active to 151. She has received 131 reports on 58 levels, leaving only eleven levels on which no reports have been submitted this year. All levels have at least one walker assigned.

Jim Millar, Chair of the Ad Hoc committee appointed to review the dues structure and membership benefits, reported on the committee's preliminary recommendations. These included modernizing the dues structure, including creation of additional categories of membership, recognizing large donations, and developing additional programs in which the Association might become involved. Because it was an interim report, no action was taken by the Board pending further study and discussion.

Orrin Long, Chair of the Environmental Committee, reported on a Park Service plan to begin a test program to use herbicides on selected masonry structures, such as locks and culverts. (The C & O Canal Commission had approved the program, with only Nancy Long voting in opposition) The Board asked the Environmental Committee to continue to monitor the program and keep it apprised.

The Board authorized the Membership Committee to replace the blue canopy used at fairs and festivals.

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*Along the Towpath* is published in March, June, September, and December by the C & O Canal Association; P.O.Box 366, Glen Echo, MD 20812-0366. Articles for publication should be received by the 15th of the month prior to publication.

- - Editor



## The Vail Agenda - - Part II

Editor's Note - As stated in the July edition, this second series of articles deals with Strategic Objectives and Recommendations of the Vail Agenda. You may recall from the last issue that the National Park Service (NPS) is confronted with a number of challenges including; growing population, changes in visitor levels and demographic mixes, and an increasing workload. The NPS conducted an intensive review and concluded that responsible individuals must NOW make choices and take action and seize the opportunity for change or our common heritage will suffer. I have taken the liberty to provide you with the text as appears in the *Vail Agenda*.

### Strategic Objectives and Recommendations.

*Reform and rejuvenation of the National Park Service must begin with leadership that is capable of enunciating and implementing clear and compelling goals for parks policy and Park Service Management. But what goals? Both within The Park Service and outside, there exists considerable disagreement over both objectives and means of implementation: Should we promote ecological protection? Recreation? International outreach? Involvement in local out-of-park facilities? No in-park facilities? Aggressive marketing of historic and cultural sites? Technical assistance to private and public partners who might need our resources?*

*These are the kinds of questions on which reasonable people can easily disagree, particularly in a society as economically, demographically, ethnically, and culturally diverse as ours. The Steering Committee has approached the task of resolving the challenging questions by first addressing the overriding purposes of the National Park Service.*

*Why would a nation want a system of national parks? If we can answer this question, it will help define the purpose of the National Park Service as it looks beyond its 75th anniversary into the next century. Clearly, the units that make up the National Park System of the United States are beautiful, or interesting, or fun, or restful, or invigorating, or otherwise enjoyable to those who visit them -- but such wants can be, and are, satisfied through numerous other public and private sources. What*

*rightfully distinguishes the NPS from other providers of aesthetic, cultural, recreational, environmental, and historical experiences and makes it the appropriate focus of a unique status and management philosophy?*

*The answer lies in the link between the units of the NPS and those traits of environment, wilderness, landscape, history, and culture that binds Americans together as a distinct people. The units of the National Park System should constitute the sights, the scenery, the environments, the people, the places, the events, the conflicts that have contributed elements of shared national experience, values, and identity to build a national character out of the diversity from which we come.*

*We may disagree among ourselves as to the worth of the consequences of Columbus' landing in the Western Hemisphere, but we can not seriously deny that his landing shaped life and even landscape in the United States. We can debate the larger issues surrounding Anglo-American expansion that Custer's battlefield at Crow Agency symbolizes, but we cannot deny that it symbolizes a defining time in American history. We can argue whether it is ecologically sound to fight fires in Yellowstone National Park, but we can not fail to see that the very disagreement is an expression of values that we place in what we call "natural" environments. It is the ability of unique places, landscapes, environments, events, and people to become part of a national character that constitutes "national significance" and warrants protection within the National Park System.*

*The resources protected by the National Park System harbor lessons that the nation wishes and needs to teach itself and replenish in itself, again and again, visitor after visitor. Thus, just as it is the responsibility of the system to protect and nurture resources of significance to the nation, so must it also convey the meanings of those resources/their contributions to the nation/to the public in a continuing process of building the national community.*

*It is the nature of park resources that their meanings can and should be conveyed in a multitude of ways. For some units, this may occur through acts of restive or active recreation, experiencing the link between park resources and elements of the national identity in ways that words and pictures can not adequately*

## THE VAIL AGENDA - continued

impart.

*A hike in Glacier National Park arguably conveys our heritage of western wildness better than the necessary lecture on the need for bear bells or any other preparatory introductions. For some park resources, on-site interpretive oral, visual, and/or written communication may be appropriate and necessary. How else to convey to the public the intricate ecology of the Everglades National Park or the link between Fort McHenry and all that has followed it period of brief excitement, or Ellis Island and its indelible print on our diverse people? Across the units of the Park System, the methods may vary, but the responsibility to tell each unit's story is inseparable from the reasons we protect the story.*

*The ability of our national historic sites, cultural symbols, and natural environments to contribute to the public's sense of shared national identity is at the core of the purpose of the National Park Service. The vision of the Park Service that necessarily follows is one in which the agency's purpose is to preserve, protect, and convey the meaning of those natural, cultural, and historical resources that contribute significantly to the nation's values, character, and experience. To fully meet the challenge of this vision in the coming decades, the NPS will need uncommon clarity in its policies and compelling leadership in its management. The Steering Committee believes that the Service should be guided in these directions by key strategic objectives that can direct the agency's planning for the future.*

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### NEW COMMISSION APPOINTED

The Secretary of the Interior has announced the appointment of a new C & O National Park Commission. This is the fifth commission appointed since the creation of the park in 1971; each panel has served a term of approximately five years.

The commission consists of nineteen members. Three members, including the chairman, are at-large appointments of the secretary. Two

members are selected from nominations submitted by the governors of Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia, the mayor of Washington, D.C., and the local governments of Montgomery, Frederick, Washington, and Allegany Counties.

Chair Sheila Rabb Weidenfeld of Washington, D.C. was reappointed. The new at-large appointments are Charles J. Weir of Falls Church, VA, and Donna Pope of Alexandria.

Maryland appointments are Terry W. Hepburn of Hancock (reappointed) and George M. Wycoff of Cumberland.

Virginia reappointed Elise B. Heinz of Arlington, and added Jo Ann M. Spevacek of Burke.

New appointments from West Virginia are Laidley Eli McCoy of Charleston, and Mary Elizabeth Woodward of Shepherdstown. (Emmie is a long-time member and former treasurer of the Association.)

Montgomery and Washington Counties reappointed incumbent commissioners who are all members of the Association: Nancy Long of Glen Echo, Joanne Reynolds of Potomac, Sue Ann Sullivan of Williamsport, and Edward Miller of Hagerstown.

Frederick County named Dr. James H. Gilford of Frederick, the only member who has been on the commission continuously since 1971, and Diane C. Ellis of Brunswick.

New members from Allegany County are Bro. James T. Kirkpatrick and Anne L. Gormer, both of Cumberland.

Adam Foster and Barry Passett, both members of the Association, will continue to represent the District of Columbia.

Association members among those retiring from the commission are Minny Pohlmann (Frederick), Robert Ebert (Allegany), Tom Hahn (West Virginia), and Sam Marsh (At-large).

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In the June 1992 issue of *Along the Towpath*, I made reference to an article written by a member who grew up on a canal boat during the last years of operation. We are indeed fortunate that through the efforts of President Dave Johnson and Mr. Walt Wilt that Mrs Lillian Crampton Langdon is among our membership. As you read her memories, I trust that you will feel the same sense of gratitude that I did for her having contributed this article to enlighten and bind us to the past and the "Great Ditch" which we treasure.

- - Editor

### MEMORIES OF MY EARLY CHILDHOOD ON THE C & O CANAL

I was born on Boat #79 during a blizzard on January 16, 1912. My dad named me "Lil" after his favorite mule, who he described as a hard worker, but couldn't be pushed too far. Children living on a boat wore a harness with a long rope attached to a pole on the deck. I fell overboard many times; to this day water and swimming are my favorite things.

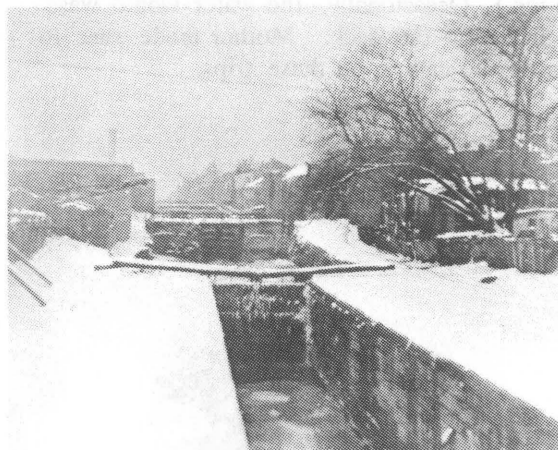
Boat children would play on the towpath and frequently President Wilson, in his high hat would wave as he passed us on the Canal Road. We attended the Threkeld School (Georgetown), which was reached by the stone steps at 36th & M Streets (next to the old street car barn). The movie, "The Exorcist", was filmed in this location. I recognized the steps when I watched the movie.

The canal boats were not operated from late November to March due to freezes. Some of the owners stayed in Western Maryland. Others, including my father, Bud Crampton, tied up (laid over) in Georgetown by the Aqueduct Bridge, which later was replaced by the Key Bridge. From the towpath on the left was Georgetown University; on the right was the Potomac River; and in the distance, the Washington Monument.

The boatmen liked Georgetown because they could usually find winter work at the factories on K Street, near Key Bridge. There was a paper mill, flour mill, cement plant, etc.

On the trips to Cumberland, dad would take flour, sugar, and barrels of herring, netted from the Potomac and salted down. The residents at the locks and towns needed the iodine in the fish to prevent goiters, which were rather prominent then.

The canal at Cumberland is about 600 feet higher than at Georgetown, so the locks were needed. Each boat used a horn, usually made of tin. The boat captain then gave a long blast for the lock tender to either empty or fill the lock, depending on which side the boat approached. The young people loved the locks; there was a little store at almost every lock and we had candy, Cracker-Jacks, and sometimes a small toy. Some of the women would have homemade bread, pies, butter, and milk to sell or trade.



Hahn Collection-  
-- C&O Canal Association File Photo

When we were of school age, my mother would stay in a house between the canal and river so we could attend school in Georgetown. My brother, Frank, would be happy in summer to travel on the boat again. We had a dog, Rover, who traveled with us. He would leave the towpath to hunt and catch up with us later. Once when we tied up for the evening, we heard a disturbance and found Rover holding a twenty pound wild turkey. We took the turkey home and it became our pet. When Thanksgiving came, no one wanted to make him a guest at our dinner table, so we gave him

## MEMORIES - continued

away. Rover went hunting one day and didn't come back, and we had to continue. We grieved for a long time. About six weeks later, we heard a scratching at the door. There was Rover, bleeding, dirty, and exhausted. He had come about 170 miles to find home!

I also remember riding the coal laden boats to Indianhead, Maryland, where the cargo was unloaded for use at the Naval Powder Factory. My mother, Cora Pennyfield Crampton, was terrified of water. The trip down the Potomac was really scary for her. She had never learned to swim. The heavy load would make the boat ride low, the gunnels would be within sixteen to eighteen inches low. (Editor's note - the gunnel, or gunwale, is the upper edge of a boat's side. Therefore, the distance from the water to the deck was 16 to 18 inches under this heavy-loaded condition.) Occasionally, the water would wash over and onto the deck. Mother made sure to stay atop the cabins on these trips.



Hahn Collection-  
-- C&O Canal Association File Photo

My grandfather, Isiah "Ide" Crampton, took my cousins, Roy and Buss, with him on another boat. One morning, they thought



Hahn Collection-  
-- C&O Canal Association File Photo

grandpa was asleep and wanted to surprise him. The mules were routinely hitched two at a time, while two rested. Boys will be boys, so for speed, and to impress everyone, they hitched all four up at once. A captain on another boat noticed and inquired about grandpa. He found him unconscious; he had pneumonia and was in a coma. After taking care of grandpa, other boatmen brought the boat and the boys back to Georgetown. So, it was a good thing the boys did what they weren't supposed to be doing. Otherwise, who knows what would have happened to grandpa?

When the boatmen tied up for the night, everyone would visit each other. We would eat and talk, play. Some would work through the night. Each boat had a large metal bow lamp. It was cleaned and shined every day.

Along the towpath, we found plenty to eat, including apples, cherries, wild plums and grapes, walnuts and butternuts. When we came through Paw Paw Tunnel, daddy would stop the boat. We would pick huckleberries that grew along the bank over the tunnel.

Children would walk with the mules with a stick to chase snakes that were in the path. The mules would stop short until the snakes left. Now and then we would ride the mules; they would let us know when we wore out our



## MEMORIES - continued

welcome. When a mule had an injured leg or hoof, the owners used Sloans or Yeagers liniment to massage the affected part. If the horse flies were bad, we used a leafy branch to smack them from the animals.

Horses were tried on the towpath to pull the boats, but most agreed mules were better. They did not scare as easily, and if turned loose only ate a limited amount. A horse would eat until bloated.

For years after the C & O Canal closed their runs for the canal boats, Uncle Jeff Pennyfield, who was a level walker, was still doing his stint. We could see the towpath from our home since we had settled in a house along the Potomac. We would run and join him. He looked mainly for breaks in the towpath, caused mainly by muskrats.

- - Mrs. Lillian Crampton Langdon

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## 1992 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HISTORIC CANALS

The Association and the C & O Canal National Historical Park will co-host the 1992 International Conference on Historical Canals, which will be held at Harpers Ferry on October 18 through 21, 1992. The conference will bring together representatives of local, state, and national canal societies, parks and resources agencies from the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom. It will feature speakers each morning and afternoon field trips, followed by a dinner meeting each evening.

Among the speakers relating directly to the C & O Canal will be Dr. Dave Gardner of Montgomery College, Barry Mackintosh, historian for the National Park Service (both members of the Association), and John Parsons, associate director of the National Capital Region. Other speakers will discuss the Erie Canal, Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor, the Roanoke Canal Trail, and canals in Canada, England, and Scotland. The field trips will include all three districts of the C & O Canal NHP from Cumberland to Great Falls.

A limited number of seats at the dinners will be available for members of the Association who are unable to attend the full conference. Members who have not registered for the full conference, but who wish to attend one of these dinners are invited to send their checks to the C & O Canal Association, P.O. Box 366, Glen Echo, MD 20812, indicating which date they wish to attend. Reservations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served, space-available basis. The locations and costs of the dinners are as follows:

- Monday, October 19, Holiday Inn, Cumberland, MD - \$15.00
- Tuesday, October 20, Cliffside Inn, Harpers Ferry, WV - \$15.00
- Wednesday, October 21, Normandie Farm, Potomac, MD - \$30.00

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From the *Historic Preservation News*, the official publication of the National Trust for Historic Preservation....

John Frye calls our attention to the July/August edition and an article about the Aldie, VA Mill. After 12-years and \$1.5M in restoration funding, the mill was dedicated as the anchor of the northern boundary of the Bull Run Mountain conservation area. This project is of interest to us because Charles Mercer, the first president of the C & O Canal Company and a U.S. congressman, was the person for whom the mill was built between 1807 and 1809. The complex consists of four buildings which have been restored to their turn-of-the-century condition. According to the article, the mill will soon open to the public and begin producing cornmeal once again.

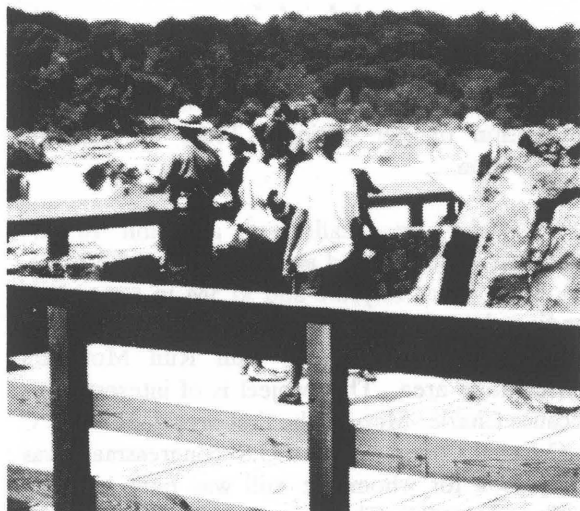
Dave Johnson informs us that the Goose Creek Navigation, which connected with the C & O Canal at Edwards Ferry, was originally intended to go all the way to the Aldie Mill, but unfortunately, never got that far.

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## GREAT FALLS BRIDGES REOPEN

Twenty years after Tropical Storm Agnes cut off access to the falls from the C & O Canal towpath, the view of Great Falls from the Maryland side of the Potomac has been restored.

As early as the 1880's, visitors to the canal could walk on a series of five swinging, wooden footbridges crossing rushing water and deep rock chasms to enjoy the magnificent views of Great Falls. Over the years, the bridges were rebuilt and modernized many times, but in June 1972, Hurricane Agnes damaged most of the bridges beyond repair.



The new overlook at Great Falls  
- Courtesy Dave Johnson

The reconstruction of the Olmsted Island Bridge was made possible by a cooperative funding effort including the Federal Government, the State of Maryland, the Montgomery County Government, and more than 1,200 concerned citizens and private sector donors.

The dedication ceremony and ribbon cutting were held on Friday, July 17, 1992. Following the presentation of colors by the National



Congresswoman Constance A. Morella of Maryland  
- - Courtesy Dave Johnson

Park Service Color Guard, C & O NHP Superintendent Thomas O. Hobbs introduced the distinguished guests, who offered appropriate remarks. These included Congresswoman Beverly Byron (MD 6th); Congresswoman Constance Morella (MD 8th); James M. Ridenour, Director of the National Park Service; Maryland State Senator Lawrence Levitan; Montgomery County Executive Neal Potter; Montgomery County Councilman

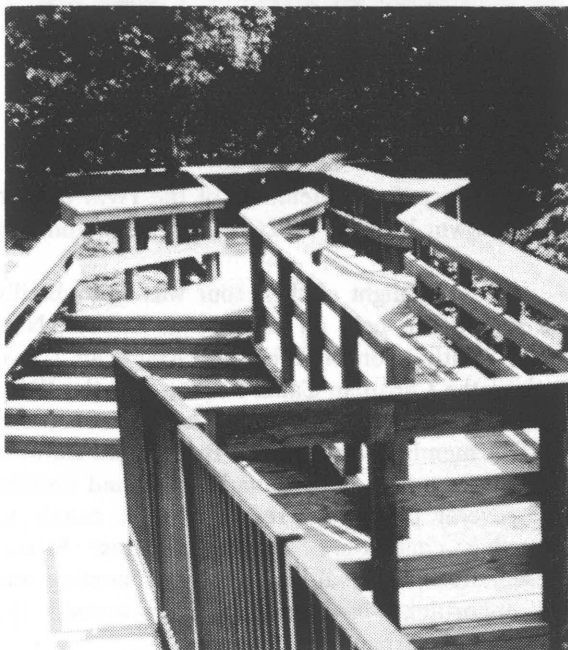


Jane and Hal Larsen renew acquaintances with  
J. D. Young and Donna Donaldson  
- - Courtesy Dave Johnson

## GREAT FALLS BRIDGES - continued

William E. Hanna, Jr.; and Robert Stanton, Regional Director, National Capital Region, NPS. Mr. Potter presented a proclamation from the county to Councilman Hanna in recognition of his tireless effort spearheading the drive for restoring the bridges, and Director Ridenour presented an award to Barry F. Sher, vice-president for public affairs of Giant Food Inc., for his role in raising the public donations for the project.

The new overlook is much closer to the main falls than the overlooks on the Virginia side, and offers a spectacular view, as well as an interesting walk to reach it. The quarter-mile trail from the towpath to the overlook consists of a series of steel and concrete bridges connected by boardwalks. The boardwalks, which were built by Park Service personnel, are designed to protect the fragile environment of the islands; several rare species of plants and birds are found there. Visitors are not permitted to leave the trail to picnic, rock-climb, or wander about on the islands.



An example of the workmanship of the Park Maintenance staff on the new Olmsted Island boardwalk

- - Courtesy Dave Johnson

ALONG THE TOWPATH

The National Park Service has administered Great Falls, Maryland, since 1938, and since 1971 as a part of the Chesapeake and Ohio National Historical Park. Olmsted Island was named in 1960 in honor of the landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., for his public service to the Nation's Capital as a conservationist and member of the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission.

- - Dave Johnson

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## BRITISH GROUP TOURS THE C & O CANAL

Twenty-nine members of Britain's Inland Waterways Association spent three weeks during June touring canals in the United States and Canada, including the Chesapeake and Ohio.

Founded in 1946, the IWA is the umbrella organization for the numerous canal societies in the United Kingdom, and has about 20,000 members. They have campaigned successfully for the restoration, retention, and development of British waterways for recreational and commercial use. The Association supports local restoration work, and has provided volunteer labor and financing for many projects, with hundreds of miles of waterways restored to date.



The IWA tour group poses in front of Lock 33, opposite Harpers Ferry, June 16, 1992

- - Courtesy Dave Johnson

## BRITISH GROUP TOURS THE C & O CANAL - continued

The American tour group arrived in Washington on June 15, and was met by Lee Struble, retired curator for the C & O Canal NHP, Mike and Lynn Howlett, past president and treasurer, respectively, of Virginia Canals & Navigations Society, and Dave Johnson, president of the C & O Canal Association. After stops at the C & O Canal in Georgetown and the Potowmack Canal at Great Falls, Virginia, the group arrived at Great Falls Tavern, where many of them walked down the towpath as far as Widewater. The day ended with a pot-luck picnic supper at the Tavern, jointly hosted by the Association, VC&NS, Friends of Great Falls Tavern, and the Park Service. More than one hundred members of these organizations, including Supt. and Mrs. Hobbs, attended, and the party continued well into the evening. Elie Pisarra, president of the Friends, was overall coordinator for the picnic, and did an outstanding job.



IWA members inspect one of the locks of the Patowmack Company at Great Falls, VA, June 15, 1992  
- - Courtesy Dave Johnson

The following day, the British group visited several other sites on the C & O Canal, accompanied by Hal Larsen and Dave Johnson. Stops were made at Seneca, Monocacy, Point of

Rocks, and Harpers Ferry, before returning to Washington. On June 17, the group went to Paw Paw Tunnel on their way to Johnstown, PA.

The British group's 22-day tour included visits to Lowell, MA; the Blackstone River Navigation; Roebling's Delaware aqueduct; Hugh Moore Park, and the LeHigh and Delaware Canals; Waterloo Village and the Morris Canal, New Jersey; Allegheny Portage NHS; Pittsburg, with its modern river commerce; the Welland Canal in Ontario; and climaxed with a seven-day cruise on Emta II through the Erie Canal.



Lee Struble talks to members of the IWA tour in Georgetown, June 15, 1992  
Courtesy Dave Johnson

A highlight of their tour was undoubtedly the symposium held on June 20 at Buffalo, New York, jointly sponsored by the American Canal Society, the Canadian Canal Society, and the IWA. The meeting featured a series of short presentations by IWA members on canals in Britain and Europe, a talk on the history of Canada's Welland Canals, and several papers on restoring U.S. canals to operating condition. More than just formal presentations, the real benefit of the meeting was the opportunity for canallers from around the country and abroad to get together.

- - Dave Johnson

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ALONG THE TOWPATH



The following paper was prepared for presentation at a joint meeting of the Inland Waterways Association, the Canadian Canal Society, and the American Canal Society in Buffalo, New York, June 20, 1992, by David F. Ross.

## **SOME HERETICAL QUESTIONS ABOUT RESTORATION AND NAVIGABLE CANALS**

*I'm here today to discuss two questions with you: What is restoration? and Why are the English so much better than the Americans? I imagine that the answers are obvious to many of you. You'll want to stay and listen anyway, though, so that when I'm finished you can point out to me and to each other exactly how I'm wrong.*

*The fact that the English are superior to the Americans is well known to members of the American Canal Society. It comes up frequently in newsletter articles, but also, at least in my experience, in conversations and correspondence. The gist of the argument consists of two observations and two conclusions. 1. You can still cruise most of the historic English canals, while most of the historic American canals are dried up, filled in, overgrown, or broken down. 2. English canal society members are constantly involved in voluntary work parties, slogging away at canal restoration, while American Canal Society members limit themselves to reading fine literature and occasionally getting together to cruise English canals. Hence it follows that the superior state of the English canals is due to the superior efforts of English canal freaks. And it follows still further that if American canal freaks would just get off their burns and apply a little good old English-style toil and sweat, if not blood and tears, the historic canals of the United States would soon be functioning again as they were in the good old days.*

*One thing that bothers me about this argument is that it deprecates the work of a lot of local and state canal society members in the United States who do in fact contribute considerable amounts of time and energy to the salvation of their particular canals. It puts these dedicated and selfless workers in a double bind, in fact. It means that their work tends to be overlooked. Then, if this inequity is rectified, it makes their efforts seem well-intended but*

*mis-guided and ineffectual, since they do not result in navigable historic American canals. Americans, in short, are lazy; but if they're not lazy, they're stupid.*

*I believe it is true that English canal society members put in a lot of hard work, and that their work is not only well intended but also well planned and well executed. My heresy is to doubt that the present state of the English canal system can be attributed principally to this volunteer work. I believe that the main difference in condition between the English and the American canals is due to an entirely different circumstance. Of the approximately 4,500 miles of canal that had been constructed in the United States up to a century ago—the universe of historic American canals—half had already been abandoned by that time. Many of those that were still operating in 1890 had fallen to disuse by 1900. Many that were still officially operational in 1910 were little more than relics. To cite just one example, in a report of 1908 it was stated of the still nominally functioning Miami and Erie canal that its condition was so run down that in places a person could step across it. By contrast, I am told that through the 1950s and into the 1960s, most of the English canal system was still carrying freight and hence still being maintained in working order for commercial use, not by dedicated volunteers, but by paid, professional canal workers. The result is that when the volunteers took over, at roughly the same time in the two countries, those in England were taking charge of a system which was still for the most part in working order, while those in the United States were assuming responsibility for one which was so far sunk into decay as to have passed in many instances from the realm of history into the realm of archaeology.*

*This is not meant to detract an iota from the credit widely accorded to, and due, English canal volunteer work parties. Taking on the care of an aging patient just at the point where the professionals have tossed in the sponge is neither easy nor an insignificant job. If the patient survives, and even thrives, under the ministrations of these dedicated amateurs, no conceivable amount of praise is unwarranted. It does not follow that American volunteers are to be blamed if similar ministrations at their hands fail to produce similar results in a patient who is not merely already dead, but reduced to a few skeletal parts.*

*I turn now to the other question, What is*

## SOME HERETICAL QUESTIONS ABOUT RESTORATION AND NAVIGABLE CANALS - continued

restoration? My dictionary tells me that there are two relevant meanings: Putting back into existence or use; and putting back into a former or original state. Ordinarily, however in the antiques trade, the art trade, the architecture trade, or generally when we are dealing with objects considered to be of historical importance, only the second of these meanings applies. We do not restore a Chippendale table by installing a formica top, or restore the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel with a roller and a bucket of latex paint. The effort, in such cases, is to put the object back as nearly as possible the way it was when it was created. My impression is that when canal devotees press for the restoration of historic canals, this is what they generally have in mind. There are no doubt many of us who would rejoice to see a modern canal built between Cleveland, on Lake Erie, and Portsmouth, on the Ohio River--a canal with perhaps 10 or 20 gigantic locks, a canal 9 feet deep and 300 feet wide, with banks of riprap or concrete. I doubt, however, that very many of us, whether among the rejoicers or not, would perceive such a facility as a restoration of the Ohio and Erie Canal. My understanding, when I hear invidious comparisons made between English and American canal restoration work is that the English have a lot of historic canals in operating order that are just like they were 150 or 200 years ago when they were built, while the Americans have let theirs go to rack and ruin. I wonder, though, whether the English canals actually are restorations in this sense, and more broadly I wonder whether there are any substantial canals anywhere in the world that are operating restorations in that sense.

To open up the discussion of this question, I'll cite what is widely supposed to be the one significant exception to the general rule of American neglect, that famous historic waterway out there, the Erie Canal. Only of course that's the whole problem, isn't it, because what's out there is really not the Erie Canal, but the New York State Barge Canal. This is not merely a change in name. Although the present canal follows in a general way the route of the original Erie Canal, it is not the same canal, but the

result of two extensive rebuildings and modernizations, designed not to preserve a historic relic but to attract more commercial traffic. If it is a restoration of the Erie Canal, then Interstate 70 is a restoration of the National Road and the Queen Elizabeth II is a restoration of the Mayflower. In the sense in which the historic Erie Canal has been restored, we also have very busily working restorations of the Illinois and Michigan Canal, the Louisville and Portland Canal, the St. Mary's Falls Canal, and the various canals in the vicinity of Muscle Shoals on the Tennessee, among others. None of these, however, resembles the original, and I have never heard any of them referred to as restorations within the councils of the American Canal Society.

So, how about the English Canals? When a wall caved in or a gate gave out in 1850, or 1885, or 1910, or 1935, was it replaced with an exact replica of the original, or was it replaced in accordance with the technology and economics of the time? Did the people responsible for maintenance and repair on the English canals shun the use of portland cement, reinforced concrete, and steel because these were unknown when the canals were built? Was there historical authenticity or efficient commercial transport? When commercial use eventually ceased, and the canal amateurs took over, were the waterways that passed into their custody 18th and 19th century canals, or were they 20th century canals following routes that had been used since the 18th and 19th centuries? I wasn't there, and I claim no expertise in the economic history of English transportation, but I know that it would be odd indeed if the canals had not been gradually modernized during the decades and centuries when they served as arteries of commerce. We are aware that the English do cling to the old ways more tenaciously than some. They didn't cling to animal power for their canal boats after the diesel engine became available, however, so it does not appear that historical authenticity and the sanctity of tradition were overriding concerns on the inland waterways.

Whether my inference about the English canals is valid or not, however, the facts are manifest concerning those of the United States. With few exceptions, restoration would not mean fixing up, it would mean rebuilding, often repurchasing the right-of-way, redigging the channel, and reconstructing the locks from scratch. To do this in

# SOME HERETICAL QUESTIONS ABOUT RESTORATION AND NAVIGABLE CANALS - continued

*the most economical and efficient way possible would be tremendously expensive—to do it as a historically authentic reproduction of the original would multiply that cost many fold. Could any sane and conscientious person support spending hundreds of millions of dollars to construct a 300-mile canal with a limiting width of 15 feet, a depth of 4 feet, and a lock every two miles? Of what use would it be, other than for canal society field trips? If you already have such a canal, the expense of keeping it operational is a much smaller matter, and may well be possible to justify on educational and recreational grounds, but to build one anew would be mad if not criminal.*

*It is a legitimate complaint that our children ought to have the opportunity to see and to experience how their ancestors reached the frontier and got their produce to market in the primitive days when our nation was young. Emphatically Yes, they ought. But for this purpose we do not need the entire divide-crossing canal. Five miles of watered canal with one working lock will serve adequately as a demonstration, and for something of this modest magnitude, an authentic restoration, utilizing voluntary donations of money and labor, is not impossible. And here we have the kind of thing that American Canal Society members do work on, diligently and effectively, with results which are valuable and impressive if not measured against some wholly inappropriate standard. My suggestion is that we stop beating them over the head for failing to do what would be outrageously impractical if not absolutely impossible, and begin to give just credit for their truly admirable achievements.*

Dr. David F. Ross, the author of this essay is the editor of American Canals, the bulletin of the American Canal Society.



ALONG THE TOWPATH

# NATURE NOTES Along the C & O Canal

What do roadside "verges" in England have in common with the banks of the C & O Canal? The following excerpts are from a British newspaper.

*"I'd like another whole life to devote to wild flowers," says Dr. Margaret Buckle. This retired teacher...has lived in the Yorkshire village of Giggleswick for 40 years. ...She and her friend, Miss Clarice Oddy, have for years made flower counts along the verges bordering the local lanes and roads. ...The flowers they looked for were not all rare. Over a hundred different kinds inhabit the local verges...Dr. Buckle and Miss Oddy were quite as distressed to see the decrease in the more common species as they were in the rarer ones.*

...  
*The basic cause of their decrease was the introduction in the district of mowers. These are used to crop the verges—sometimes as often as four times in a season. The blades are set so low that vegetation is actually torn out of the ground. This leaves bare patches that act as ideal seedbeds for coarse, quick-growing plants such as thistles and dandelions...*

*The fact is, in Dr. Buckle's view, that this pointless attack on the roadside flora is also an attack on the habitat of an astonishing number of equally harmless, equally delightful, and sometimes beneficial birds, insects, and animals. ...Nobody has been able to give Dr. Buckle a satisfactory explanation of the ruthless technique of verge cutting. "Just tidying up the countryside," is the best she has been offered.*

...  
*Her protests have not been altogether in vain. She has persuaded the county authority that at least three or four specific sites, where fine colonies of wildflowers have flourished in previous years, might be left uncropped. ...In several places studies of the problem have been made involving naturalists...with resulting policies satisfactory to all parties. In a few places there has been reseeding and replanting of disturbed species, sometimes with the help of school children.*

...  
*This is all very encouraging to Dr. Buckle since she found earlier that many local people "would say how they missed the flowers but wouldn't themselves write*

**NATURE NOTES**  
**Along the C & O Canal -**  
continued

*any letters...People are extraordinarily timid about making any sort of fuss," she told me. "It's very odd."*

Dr. Buckle and Miss Oddy would find themselves right at home if they strolled along the C & O Canal towpath as the spring mowing starts, to be repeated several times during the growing season. Such relative rarities as columbine and ladies' tresses have sometimes been found, cut down when they were still in bloom. Greatly decreased along the towpath during the last 20 years and in some places completely eliminated are field chickweed, meadow rue, bouncing bet, day lilies, New York iron weed, jewell weed, wild carrot, tickseed sunflower, leather flower, thimble weed, and a host of other flowers, some of them quite rare.

Sometimes the mower's blade scrapes the canal bank bare, leaving it subject to erosion and ready invasion by Japanese honeysuckle and poison ivy--pests with roots undisturbed by mowing and thus ready to spread. Garlic mustard, stinging nettle, and ground ivy are additional ready invaders.

Protecting a public fearful of snakes has sometimes been the reason given for close mowing. No one has informed the snakes. They sometimes crawl from the canal across a completely barren towpath to find sanctuary in nearby woods. Poison ivy and honeysuckle provide them excellent hiding places.

No one would wish for a return to the time 30 or more years ago when the idea of a national park based on the old canal was simply a gleam in someone's imagination. A riot of wildflowers flourished along the towpath in the early spring. By late summer, however, a hiker might be hard pressed to find the towpath as he pressed through head-high annual growth in some places. No need to worry! As thousands now seek refuge in the Park, especially on weekends, the pounding of hundreds of pairs of feet and the treads of hundreds of bicycle wheels are quite effective in keeping down much of the annual growth on the towpath from Georgetown to Cumberland.

Boxelder, sumac, poison ivy, and other woody growth continue to threaten stone structures along the canal and need to be guarded against. Limited mowing probably can be justified around lock-keepers' houses and parking lots. Weed pulling to eliminate uncontrolled honeysuckle, poison ivy and other unwanted invaders would help to clear the way for the return of some of the wildflowers that are now disappearing.

The wildflowers that once flourished more widely in the Park are as much a part of the Park's history as the canal locks and the old lock-keepers' houses. Around the world, native plants are reported to be rapidly disappearing. Stanwyk Shelter, botanist and deputy director, Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, "frets that we're in danger of losing what little remains of the first Eden--remnants that display nature, real nature, in all her wonderful sloppiness..." Perhaps we need more Dr. Buckles!

- - Helen L. Johnston

Editor's Note - The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author. The Park Service was invited to respond.

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**\* \* \* NOTEWORTHY \* \* \***

**FALL CANAL BOAT SCHEDULES  
IN EFFECT**

The GEORGETOWN and CANAL CLIPPER begin fall schedules September 16. The CLIPPER at Great Falls, will offer public trips on Saturdays and Sundays only, through October 25 (10:30, 1 & 3 PM SAT; 10:30, 1, 3, & 5 PM SUN).

The GEORGETOWN Trips will be at 1 & 3 PM WED - FRI; 10:30 AM, 1, 3, 5 PM on SAT; and 10:30 AM, 1 & 3 PM on SUN through October 25.

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**DIRECTORY  
C & O CANAL NHP  
TELEPHONE NUMBERS AND PERSONNEL**

**C & O CANAL NHP HOTRS**

Box 4, Sharpsburg, MD 21782 301-739-4200  
Superintendent - Thomas Hobbs

**PALISADES DISTRICT**

11710 MacArthur Blvd, Potomac, MD 20854  
301-443-0024  
Great Falls Tavern Information 301-299-2026  
301-299-3613

**GEORGETOWN VISITORS CENTER**

1055 Thomas Jefferson St, Washington, D.C.

Boat Information 202-472-4376

The Palisades District begins at Milepost 0 (Tidelock) and continues to Milepost 31 just above Edwards Ferry

**PIEDMONT DISTRICT**

Canal Road, Sharpsburg, MD 21782 (near Antietam Aqueduct) 301-739-4200, x237  
301-739-6179  
After hours 301-739-4204

The Piedmont District begins at Milepost 31 just above Edwards Ferry and ends at Milepost 106 approximately .8 mile below Dam 5.

**ALLEGHENY DISTRICT**

326 East Main St, Hancock, MD 21750  
301-678-5463

Allegheny District begins at Milepost 106 (.8 mile below Dam 5) and ends at the Canal Terminus, Cumberland, Milepost 184.5.

Georgetown Barge Operation 202-472-4376  
Abner Cloud House 202-472-2679  
Fletcher's Boat House 202-244-0461  
Canal Clipper, Great Falls Tavern 301-299-2026  
Swains Lock 301-299-9006  
Western Maryland Station Center 301-722-8226

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**C & O CANAL ASSOCIATION  
1992-1993 Association Officers**

**President:**

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Bethesda, MD 20817  
301-530-7473

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McLean, VA 22101  
703-356-1809

**Second VP & Level Walker Chairperson:**

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**Production and Distribution:** Susan "Butch" Henley, Dave Johnson, Ellen Holway

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## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Event</u>
Sep 12	Sat	AMERICAN DISCOVERY TRAIL-BLAZER DAY
Sep 12	Sat	BIRD HIKE: Contact Pat Schindler (703-281-3399).
Sep 12,13	Sat,Sun	ANNUAL PAW PAW BENDS OVERNIGHT CANOE TRIP: Carl Linden (301-229-2398) or Ken Rollins (804-448-2934).
Sep 19	Sat	LEVEL WALKER HIKE: Contact Karen Gray (202-333-6947).
Sep 19,20	Sat,Sun	HANCOCK APPLE FESTIVAL: <u>Volunteers needed</u> to help - John Popenoe (301-678-6379) or Rita Bauman (703-503-9323) at our booth. CANAL REWATERING DEDECATION CEREMONY, Saturday, 12 noon.
Oct 3	Sat	Volunteers in the Park (VIP) Meet at 9 AM for work on the trails at Great Falls Tavern. Contact Joan Paull (301-384-8584)
Oct 10,11	Sat,Sun	OVERNIGHT BIKE TRIP--Ferry Hill to Jordan Junction with return the next day. Contact Sonny DeForge (301-530-8830) or George Complain (703-573-1728).
Oct 19-21	Mon-Wed	INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HISTORIC CANALS: Harpers Ferry. Contact Dave Johnson (301-530-7473).
Oct 24	Sat	VIP DAY - Carderock - - Montgomery County Community Service Day. Meet at 9 AM. Contact Joan Paull (301-384-8584). (Turn right at stopsign and park in the last lot - Rock climbing lot).
Oct 31	Sat	ANNUAL FALL HERITAGE HIKE: Swains Lock to Sycamore Island. Details elsewhere in this newsletter.
Nov 7	Sat	VIP DAY - Meet at 9 AM at Thompson's Boat House (Virginia AVE and Rock Creek PKWY) for work in the Tidelock area.
Nov 14	Sat	NEW MEMBERS HIKE - ALL WELCOME - ANTIETAM IRON WORKS HIKE: Meet at Antietam Creek Ranger Station at 2:00pm. Join John Frye for a one-mile circle hike of historic Antietam Village, site of iron works from 1763 to 1880. Optional six-mile round trip hike to Lock 37. Contact Karen Gray (202-333-6947).
Dec 5	Sat	VIP DAY - Meet at Great Falls Tavern at 9 am to set up the boat schedule book and to clean the tavern and library. Contact Joan Paull (301-384-8584).
Dec 12	Sat	LEVEL WALKER "FROSTBITE" HIKE: 10 am; Abner Cloud House (at Fletchers Boat House). Karen Gray (202-333-6947) or Ken Rollins (804-448-2934).

## CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS - continued

Feb 6, 1993      Sat      Level Walker Hike - Edwards Ferry.

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### BICYCLE THE TOWPATH WITH PARK RANGERS

A series of ranger-led bicycle trips covering the entire canal, spread over the spring and summer by Park Rangers John Frye (an Association Director) and Fred Viers. Eleven rides from May through September along the 184-mile C & O Canal towpath, beginning in Cumberland and ending in Georgetown will all be on Saturdays, and will be **round trips**, so no shuttles will be necessary. The total daily round-trip riding distances will range from twenty-four to forty miles. Participants are encouraged to ride the entire canal, but those who can't are welcome to join the rides whenever their schedules permit.

All rides **start at 10 am**. Riders bring their own bikes, lunches, and drinking water. Bikers should also carry tools and tire repair kits, sun glasses, sun block and head cover, and a jacket or raincoat if cool or wet weather is forecast. Additional information, including specific parking and meeting locations, is available from Rangers Viers or Frye at the Park Headquarters, 301-739-4200. The schedule of rides:

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TOTAL DISTANCE</u>	<u>ITINERY</u>
Sep 12	34 miles	Edwards Ferry to Great Falls (Goose Creek Locks, Seneca Aqueduct, Dam #2). Meet at Edwards Ferry.
Sep 26	28 miles	Great Falls to Georgetown (Widewater, Cabin John Bridge, Dam #1, Abner Cloud House, Tidelock). Meet at Great Falls (\$3 entrance Fee).

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### SIGHTS AND SOUNDS WALKS

Scheduled on the first and last Wednesday and Saturday each month, these nature walks start with a brief slide show at the Great Falls Tavern, 10 am. Leaders are Betty Bushell, Betty Henson, and Helen Johnson, all members of the Association. In addition, walks for children are scheduled on the first and last Saturday at 2 pm.

### RILEY'S LOCK OPEN HOUSE

While you're hiking in the Seneca area of the C & O Canal, stop in and visit the Girl Scouts at Riley's Lockhouse. The scouts, dressed in period clothing, will lead tours of the lockhouse, telling the story of the lockkeeper and his family in the canal era. Tours are conducted Saturdays and Sundays from 1 to 4 pm through December.

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## THE ASSOCIATION WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

Lawrence W. Abe, LaVale, MD  
 Larry and Sue Anderson, Annandale, VA  
 Robert and Anne M. Asher, Bethesda, MD  
 Corrine Axelrod, Bethesda, MD  
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 Nathaniel P. Breed, Jr., Washington, DC  
 Chip Brown, Boonsboro, MD  
 Melvin L. "Skip" Bullen, Baltimore, MD  
 Christine Cavelli, Columbia, MD  
 Ronald Connelly, McLean, VA  
 Blaise deFranceaux, Alexandria, VA  
 William D. Earley, Rockville, MD  
 Barbara L. Edin, Gaithersburg, MD  
 Dennis E. Frye, Sharpsburg, MD  
 Stanley E. Goldman, Annapolis, MD  
 John D. Hatch II, Arlington, VA  
 Susan Hayes, Bethesda, MD  
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 Luanne James, Washington, DC  
 Bud Jenkins, Pasadena, MD  
 Walton A. Johnson, Jr., Frankford, DE  
 Bill and Pat Juhrs, Rockville, MD  
 Lars G. Karlsson, Alexandria, VA  
 Donald W. Lee, Vienna, VA  
 Herbert J. Lewis, Columbia, MD  
 Betty Mahon, Arlington, VA  
 Marianne Malven, Gaithersburg, MD  
 Jane B. Mandelbaum, Washington, DC  
 Charles D. McElrath, Boonsboro, MD  
 Zygmunt Nagorski, Washington, DC  
 Terri Natter, Harwood, MD  
 Bill Noall, Silver Spring, MD  
 Katherine L. Ollry, Gaithersburg, MD  
 Henry B. Paris, Reston, VA  
 Carl Peckinpugh, Arlington, VA  
 Dr. and Mrs. Michael Rahn, McLean, VA  
 Mary H. Raitt, Washington, DC  
 David Ramsburg, Vienna, VA  
 Lori and Harry Rieckelman, Cabin John, MD  
 Samuel J. and Edith N. Rob, Burke, VA  
 Marty M. Ross, Washington, DC  
 Violet N. Ruggles, Odenton, MD  
 Cay Savel, Gaithersburg, MD  
 Marvin Z. Schreiber, MD, JD, Chevy Chase, MD  
 Mike Seebold, Bethesda, MD  
 Paul C. Shugrue, Washington, DC

Joyce L. Templeton, Silver Spring, MD  
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 Judi Wallace, Baltimore, MD  
 Jean Webb, Falls Church, VA  
 Donale K. Weber, Shillington, PA  
 Janet Williams, Gaithersburg, MD

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### .....FROM THE EDITOR

This issue of *Along the Towpath* contains many interesting and informative articles. Your comments are welcome.

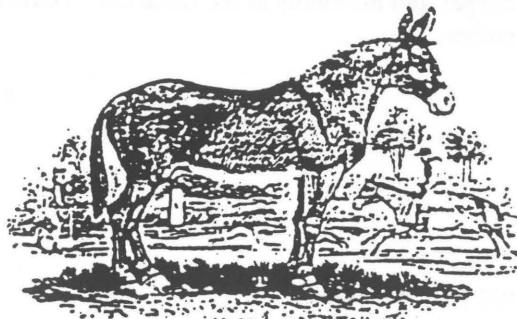
Many significant activities are taking place in the next few months including, to name a few, the Heritage Hike, the International Conference on Canals, and the overnight bike trip. Articles on these events as well as a piece on "fish ladders" and a short history of the Alexandria Canal will appear in the next issue. Please remember the submission date for articles for the next edition is November 15, 1992.

President Dave Johnson informed me that a phenomenal increase in membership and in interest and inquiries about the Association have occurred since Kevin McManus' article appeared in *The Washington Post*. I trust this momentum can be sustained as we strive to maintain the natural and historical environment of the C & O Canal and the Potomac River Basin.

Many thanks to those of you who contributed articles, your time and efforts to make this issue possible.

See you "Along the Towpath."

- - RCP



1 The Mule



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## ON THE LEVEL

*..notes and news on the Level Walker Program*

by Karen Gray, Level Walker Chair

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825 New Hampshire Ave. NW #304, Washington, DC 20036

202/333-6947

### **HIKE SPONSORED BY THE LEVEL WALKER PROGRAM -- EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

**Sat. Feb. 6, 10 a.m. at Edwards Ferry near Poolesville.** We'll walk upstream, distance depending on walkers' preferences. After the hike those who wish will adjourn to an area restaurant for lunch together.

**WE'RE ENTERING THE LAST QUARTER OF THE YEAR which means that those Level Walkers who have not yet reported on their level have only about three short months to do so.** Late November and December is an excellent time to visit your level however. Summer growth and fallen leaves no longer hide much of the litter or parts of masonry structures such as culverts. In addition the winter vistas along the towpath often rival the lush beauty of the growing season.

**THERE ARE NINE LEVELS FOR WHICH WE HAVE NO REPORT YET THIS YEAR** and many others that need more level walkers if a consistent presence around the year is to be provided. In addition, different eyes see different things and the more people reporting, the fuller the picture we are able to get of the level's condition, usage and changes, as well as the easier it is to control litter on the level. So the fact remains that we still need level walkers and anyone interested is urged to contact me. I'll be glad to explain what is involved and to work with you on finding selecting a level that fits your interests and location preferences.

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### **LEVEL REPORTS FOR THE QUARTER MAY - JULY '92 with selected comments (Includes reports received by the TOWPATH deadline only):**

NOTE: NOV. 7 is the DEADLINE for JULY - OCT. Level Walker reports included in the Winter issue.

02: 2.3- 5.0

Boat Incline-L.5

Jim & Gera Millar

Large, red paint graffiti on the concrete apron between river & canal locks, lock 5.

03: 5.0- 7.5

L.5-Cabin John

Dot Johnson, Howard Rosen

Towpath erosion at Little Falls repaired.

04: 7.5- 9.4

Cabin John-L.14

James & Joan Wilson (2), Carolyn Reeder (2)

Lock 9 sign missing. Log jam at upstream portal of Cabin John Creek culvert has been cleared away. Erosion along edge of towpath at various points hazardous to bicycles in particular.

05: 9.4- 12.3

L.14-Cropley

Carolyn Reeder, James & Gera Millar

Towpath edge erosion at several points on this level. Lift lock 9 sign is missing. This area rich in wildlife--black-crowned night heron nest; beaver; and in May, a wood duck with 5 ducklings among those observed.

06: 12.3- 14.3  
Cropley-Gt.Falls

Helen Johnston

Helen's "Sights & Sounds" walks usually glean 2-3 bags of litter as well as enjoying the natural treasures of this heavily used area. Visitation is reported to have increased substantially with opening of the walk to the falls in July. Wild flowers left to bloom on river side as of early May, but day lilies cut down by mowing on canal bank. Eagles appear to have raised one young this spring.

07: 14.3- 16.6  
Gt.Falls-Swains

George & Alice Kinter

Some puddles form along this level in several places when wet.

08: 16.6- 19.6  
Swains-Pennyfield

Paul R. Davis Sr. (3)

Trees in canal near waterworks that blocked canoe passage were removed but another came down in the area subsequently.

10: 22.8- 25.0  
Seneca-10Ft.Is.

Michael & Gloria Werth (3)

Towpath in good condition. Warning about tree leaning over navigable channel on the river near aqueduct.

12: 27.2- 30.8  
Sycamore Land.-Edwards Fy.

Teresa Cummings & Dave Hoerauf

13: 30.8- 33.2  
Edwards Fy.-Harrison Is.

Don Groelsema, Bert Grose

14: 33.2- 35.5  
Harrison Is.-Whites Fy.

Herbert C. Madison (2)

Large waste on this level includes a dump of oil drums and tires on flood plain and sofa on berm side. Work continues on reconstruction at Whites Ferry of masonry culvert. Large scale collecting of fresh-water black-shelled clams near Dickerson from river may be a commercial operation.

19: 48.2- 51.5  
Pt.of Rocks-Catoctin Aq.

John & Susan Anderson, Jack Cook, Lyman Stucker  
Level in excellent condition.

20: 51.5- 55.0  
Catoctin Aq.-Brunswick

Sylvia & Charles Diss

21: 55.0- 58.0  
Brunswick-Weaverton

David M. Johnson

Hole in culvert at mile 57 has been fenced.

22: 58.0- 60.7  
Weaverton-Harpers Ferry

Gill Hill & Carol Galaty, Arthur & Larue Stier

10 wood ducks with ducklings in tow reported in June.

26: 67.0- 69.4  
Mountain L.-Antietam Aq.

- Rick Clement  
Litter includes many beer bottles and used tires.
- 29: 74.0- 76.7  
L.39-Snyders Landing  
Marshall Grotenhuis  
Towpath cleaner than usual.
- 30: 76.7- 79.4  
Snyders Landing-L.40  
Paul C. Redmer
- 31: 79.4- 81.6  
L.40-Marsh Run Culvert  
Barry & Debbie Kistler, Paul C. Redmer  
Hole in canal at 81.3 and in concrete cover of box adjacent to the water pump. Recommends  
litter can at Marsh Run Culvert. Two swans on Potomac near MP 81.
- 33: 84.4- 88.1  
Dam 4-McMahons/Chas.Mill  
Nick & Peggy Weber  
Dam #4 winch house freshly painted and new oak plank walkway built around it.
- 34: 88.1- 91.0  
McM./Chas.Mill-Foremans Fy  
Tom & Linda Perry  
Eroded area at lock 41 protected by fence. Reported finding 2 still-smoldering fires on  
towpath. Scout Troop 1070 of Walkersville, MD did major clean-up here.
- 35: 91.0- 93.0  
Formans Fy.-L.43  
Ruth & Tack Swan  
Lock house and towpath in excellent condition.
- 37: 94.4- 99.3  
Fall.Waters-Williamsport  
Tom Perry, Ellen Holway  
HBO toilet needed supplies & cleaning. Lock 44 at Williamsport will be rebuilt to allow a  
barge through. Work around Cushwa Warehouse and turning basin continues.
- 39: 102.3-105.0  
High Rock Q.-Nessle Br.  
E. R. Dolly Dieter  
Reported a tree down on towpath. Deer remains common in the parking area at the end of  
Gifft Rd.
- 40: 105.0-106.8  
Nessle Bridge-Dam 5  
Edith Poetzschke
- 41: 106.8-108.6  
Dam 5-Four Locks  
Ginny Small  
Lock 45 trashy--includes tires. New stairway from private residence nearby has been built down  
to the canal.
- 42: 108.6-110.4  
Four Locks-McCoys Fy.  
John Ziegler  
Drinking and parking area on berm side at McCoy's Ferry always has much litter.
- 43: 110.4-112.4  
McCoys Fy.-Ft.Frederick  
Sonny DeForge

- Pot holes, sometimes muddy above MP 111.
- 45: 114.5-116.0  
Ernestville-Licking Cr.  
James Doherty  
Most litter on the path from the road to the river.
- 49: 127.4-130.0  
Round Top Mill-L.53  
E. R. Dolly Dieter  
Severe litter along the road. Major rewatering construction in Hancock proceeding. Crushed rock that is hard to walk on, dangerous for bikes was unfortunately used along the towpath in this area. (NPS has been asked to change to smaller size.)
- 50: 130.0-134.1  
L.53-Dam 6  
Gren Whitman & Janice Plotczyk
- 51: 134.1-136.6  
Dam 6-Sideling Hill Aq.  
John Popenoe  
Lock 55 sign missing.
- 55: 149.7-151.2  
L.60-Kasecamp Rd.  
Herb Gunther  
Level in good condition, grass recently cut.
- 56: 151.2-153.1  
Kasecamp Rd.-L.61  
Herb Gunther  
Level in good condition
- 58: 154.5-156.2  
L.63 1/3-Paw Paw  
Judie & Fred Mopsik  
New railing on the towpath at the tunnel's downstream end. During wet period water falling onto the towpath left deep puddles.
- 65: 173.4-175.5  
Spring Gap-North Branch  
Jeanine & Dward Moore (2), Mary Twigg  
Towpath in good condition. Lockhouse at lock 72 needs gutters reset, but otherwise in good condition.
- 66: 175.5-177.7  
North Branch-Mexico Farms  
Jim Sartwell, Mary Twigg  
Crushed stone being using in soft areas of towpath. Concern expressed about possibility of something toxic in the area because there was much dead vegetation and dead catfish in canal the end of July.
- 67: 177.7-180.7  
Mexico Farms-Evitts Cr.Aq.  
Mary Twigg  
Towpath recently graded. Work on prison progressing. Evitts Creek Aqueduct sign missing and aqueduct has been marred by some minor graffiti.

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## **VIOLETTE'S LOCK TO GREAT FALLS CANOE TRIP**

On June 27th, I was joined by 7 new members to canoe the Canal from Violette's Lock to Great Falls. The weather was great, and "good old van" set a new record by carrying four canoes - 3 on top and 1 inside.

All but one were novices to canoeing, so we had a brief introductory course including fundamental hydraulic physics (whatever that may be) on the art and practice of paddlery. All students graduated with honors.

We had a great overview of the "William O. Douglas" level into Pennyfield Lock, a delightful lunch stop at Swain's Lock, and overtook the Park Service excursion boat returning to Great Falls. One who had seen a "lock through" before volunteered to stay with the canoes while the others had a "first" watching the boat lowered through Lock 20.

All but one were new members since our annual reception in May, but they all concluded that they had a much better new members' reception and boat ride.

- - Ken Rollins

## **BRUNSWICK TO MONOCACY CANOE TRIP**

On Saturday, July 27th, the Association Canoe trip from Brunswick to the Monocacy Aqueduct was a merry paddle. Starting at my house in Brookmont, MD, six of us loaded into Ken Rollins' Dodge van with three canoes and equipment with impressive dispatch. Ken's trusty-twenty-seven-year-old(!)-four-wheeled-mechanical-war-horse has seen years of Association service as an all-purpose logistics vehicle. It is still going strong. At the Brunswick put-in, we found ourselves in the midst of an armada of kids on inner-tubes headed for a battle on the river. A cover of clouds shaded us in the morning, but by noon, it cleared into a fine summer's day. Gera Millar surveyed the river scene and said it was a setting for a matisse. At lunch, Aleksandr Gordievsky, "Sasha" for short, our guest canoeist

from Russia provided iced vodka for a toast, of course. Sasha is on the faculty of Russia's diplomatic academy and has paddled the Moscow and Volga Rivers among others. He found the beauty and remoteness of the Potomac and the Canal sheer delight. We found good spots for swims along the way. Kelly Campbell took an impromptu but exhilarating dip when the canoe flipped as Sasha attempted a re-boarding maneuver in deep water. Anne Wright, one of our new members, paired up with Ken, and proved a strong paddler and fine member of our canoe team. By day's end we'd covered an easy twelve miles on a briskly flowing river. Gentle rapids and riffles along the way made navigating interesting. We capped the day with an evening picnic held at the Mohican Pool on the palisade above Sycamore Island and just a half block from the Sycamore Store.

- - Carl Linden

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## **OVERNIGHT BIKE TRIP - FERRY HILL TO WILLIAMSPORT AND RETURN - OCT 10-11, 1992**

An overnight bike trip is planned for October 10 and 11, 1992. We will start at Ferry Hill Saturday morning at 9:00 am and bike the towpath to Williamsport (28 miles), where we will spend the night and then bike back to Ferry Hill on Sunday. The interest is evenly divided between camping and staying in a motel, so we will do both.

Campers will need to bring their own gear and food. All riders need to bring lunch and snacks for Saturday. This will be a leisurely trip with the accent on comradie and learning historical aspects of the C & O Canal. Children accompanied by an adult are welcome.

Campers will stay at Jordon Junction hiker-biker campsite located at milepost 101.28, about 1.5 miles above Williamsport. The hiker-biker campsite has a fireplace, water pump, picnic table, and toilet. For those not equipped to carry their camping gear, transport of gear will be provided. The closest motel, about a mile from the Canal in Williamsport, is the Days Inn at 310 E. Potomac Street (301-582-3500). Trip leaders will be divided between

## OVERNIGHT BIKE TRIP - continued

camping and motel. Motel rates are \$45.00 per night for two. If you call the toll-free number (1-800-325-2525) 29-days in advance, the same room is \$34.00 for two. For the special rate, cancellations must be received 15-days prior to the reservation date. Reservations are recommended since this will be during the fall foliage season and the motel could fill quickly.

For those interested in sharing a room, mail your name, address, phone number, and preference to: Sonny DeForge, 9518 Ewing Drive, Bethesda, MD 20817. A complete list will be compiled and mailed to each person.

If the weather forecasts a 60% or more chance of rain, the trip will be cancelled. If there are any questions concerning the bike ride, you can call Sonny DeForge (301-530-8830), or George Complair (703-573-1728).

A final note -- Use of a bicycle helmet is strongly recommended.

## DIRECTIONS

The Ferry Hill Plantation, now Headquarters of the C & O Canal National Historical Park, is located on Maryland Route 34 on a hill above the Potomac River across from Shepherdstown, West Virginia.

From West Virginia take Route 45 through Shepherdstown; just across the bridge going into Maryland, turn left into Park Headquarters.

From Maryland take Route 34 from Boonsboro through Sharpsburg; turn right into Park Headquarters, just before you get to the Potomac River. (Boonsboro is located on Maryland Alt. Route 40.)

From the Hagerstown area take Route 65 into Sharpsburg; turn right on Route 34 and follow directions above.

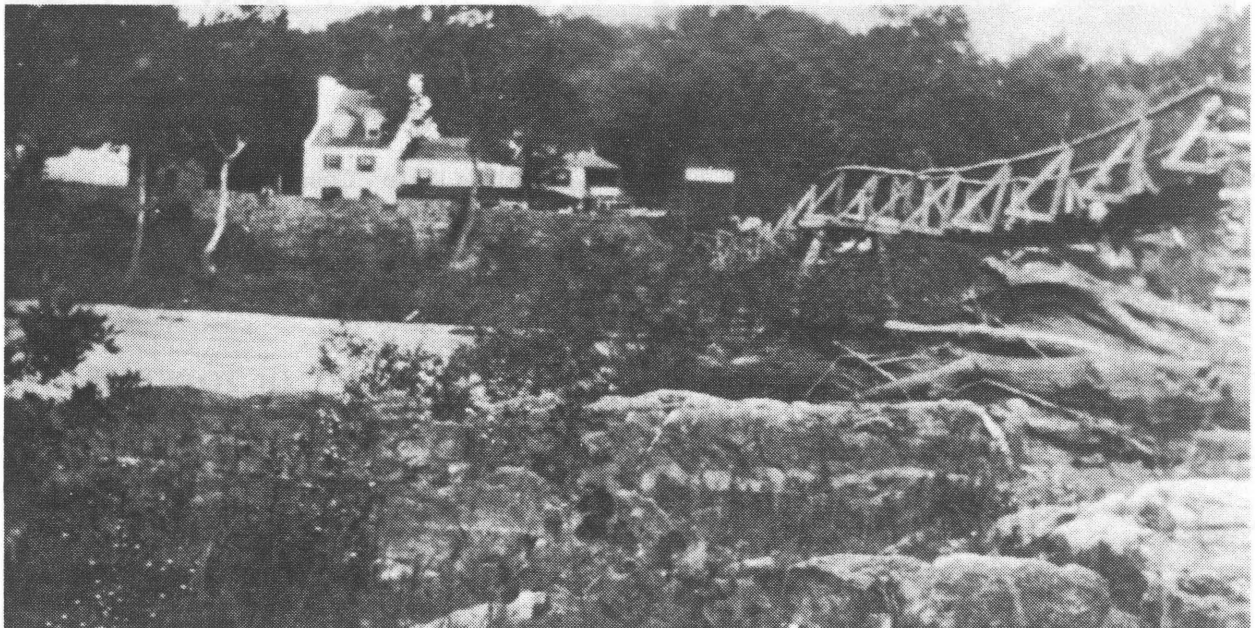
- - Sonny DeForge

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Olmsted Island Bridge shortly before it was carried away by Hurricane Agnes Flood, June 23, 1972.

- - Courtesy David R. Gardner



Great Falls Bridge over a side channel, early 1900's. ---Photos donated by Tom Hahn.





Aerial View of Great Falls and Olmsted Island, 1950. Photo by Abbie Rowe - Courtesy NPS.

## HERITAGE HIKE

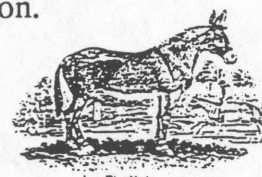
### DINNER RESERVATION

OCTOBER 31, 1992

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ dinners for the Heritage Hike at \$12.00 per person.

Names: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Reservations must received by October 24, 1992.

Please attach checks payable to "C & O Canal Association" to this form and mail to:  
C & O Canal Association, P.O. Box 366, Glen Echo, MD 20812

Dinner reservations will be limited to the first 125 received.