

American Canal Society Canal Index

CANAL New Haven & Northampton Canal		STATUS Abandoned		ACS
STATE/PROVINCE: Connecticut and Massachusetts				HAER
COUNTIES:				
LOCATION (Endpoints of Canal): Northampton, Mass. to New Haven, Ct.				
TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS:				
HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:				
<p>The Farmington Canal (in Connecticut) and the Northampton or Hampshire &amp; Hampden Canal (in Massachusetts) together form the New Haven and Northampton Canal, also known as the Northampton &amp; New Haven, and were designed to draw the trade of western Massachusetts and Connecticut down to New Haven, away from her rival Hartford on the Connecticut River. The Connecticut section, 70 miles long with 28 locks, 3 aqueducts and 13 culverts, was chartered in 1822 as the Farmington Canal; and the Mass. section the next year as the Hampshire &amp; Hampden, 20 miles long with 32 locks, 5 aqueducts and 8 culverts. After the completion of the canals in 1835 they merged to form the New Haven &amp; Northampton. After only a decade of activity the company decided to become the New Haven &amp; Northampton RR Co. (now part of the Penn. Central); the canal stock was changed to railway stock and a railway was built along the entire route, sometimes on the towpath or in the canal bed. With the opening of the railway in 1848 most of the canal ceased operation. Unfortunately the thrifty New Englanders found new uses for the lock stones so only two of the locks are still intact, one</p>				
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:				
<p>of which is now the centerpiece of the outstanding Lock 12 Historical Park in Cheshire. The canal line through Connecticut has been the subject of an excellent study, "The Farmington Canal: A Proposal for Selective Restoration" by Mel Schneidermeyer of the Department of Environmental Protection (1976) and is looked after by the Farmington Canal Corridor Association, P.O. Box #24, Plainville CT 06062. In Massachusetts, an effort to make a Bicentennial Park at the Northampton end was foiled by the Lane Construction Company but the route can be traced. A field guide to the major sites is in W.F. Robinson's ABANDONED NEW ENGLAND (Little Brown &amp; Co., 1976). A fictional (not factual) story of the Farmington is Marguerite Allis' WATER OVER THE DAM (Putnam, N.Y., 1947).</p>				
NAMES & ADDRESSES OF GROUPS CONCERNED WITH CANALS PRESERVATION/RESTORATION:				
<p>Farmington Canal Corridor Association Department of Environmental Protection, State Office Bldg., 165 Capitol Ave., Hartford 06115</p>				
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY:				
<p>References above; CONNECTICUT'S CANALS by Charles C. Harte, 54th Annual Report, Ct. Society of Civil Engineers, New Haven, 1938. "Story of the Farmington Canal in Plainville, Connecticut" by Ruth S. Hummel, Farmington Canal Corridor Association. "Hampshire and Hampden Canal" by J.M. Franceschi, AMERICAN CANALS 35:7 (November 1980).</p>				
UNPUBLISHED RECORDS, PHOTOS, DRAWINGS (CEHR, HAER, HABS, Local or Regional Historical Societies, Libraries, etc.):				
<p>See Farmington Canal Room in the Old Town Hall, Plainville, and in the Village Library in Farmington (M-Sat &amp; until 9 P.M. M-W, Sept.-June; turn E on the first cross-street S of Mountain Road). Material from Mrs. Hummel, Dr. C. Keith Wilbur, Canal Bowling, and others.</p>				
EXISTING OR RECOMMENDED LANDMARK STATUS (CEHR, National Register, etc.):				
<p>The lock at Cheshire has been placed on the National Register; the canal in Southington and Simsbury has been declared eligible for the National Register.</p>				
REPORTER'S NAME & ADDRESS:				DATE:
RETURN TO:		CANAL INDEX COMMITTEE, c/o T.K. Woods, 6939 Eastham Circle, Canton, Ohio 44708		