

American Canal Society Canal Index

CANAL SUSQUEHANNA AND TIDEWATER CANAL	STATUS (Abandoned)	ACS HAER																																	
STATE/PROVINCE: Pennsylvania-Maryland																																			
COUNTIES: York County, Pa.; Harford County, Md.																																			
LOCATION (Endpoints of Canal): Wrightsville, Pa. to Havre de Grace, Md.																																			
TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS:																																			
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2" style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">ENLARGEMENTS</th> <th rowspan="2">DATES IN USE</th> <th colspan="3">LENGTH</th> <th rowspan="2">LIFT LOCKS NO. / SIZE</th> </tr> <tr> <th>CANAL</th> <th>SLACKWATER</th> <th>TOTAL</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>1840-1894</td> <td>43</td> <td>0</td> <td>43</td> <td>29 17x170</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			ENLARGEMENTS	DATES IN USE	LENGTH			LIFT LOCKS NO. / SIZE	CANAL	SLACKWATER	TOTAL	1	1840-1894	43	0	43	29 17x170	2						3						4					
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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE: <p>In 1835 Pennsylvania granted a charter to the Susquehanna Canal Company, to build a canal from Columbia to the State line. Maryland had already chartered the Tidewater Canal Company to build her part of the canal from Havre de Grace, north. The two companies were later united under the name "Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal Company."</p> <p>Excavation began in 1836. It was decided that the west bank of the Susquehanna was a more feasible route for the canal. Hence, the river was dammed below Columbia and Wrightsville to form a pool for the canal boats to cross from the Main Line basin at Columbia and also to</p> <p>feed water into the new canal. The Susquehanna and Tidewater entrance basin was located at Wrightsville and the canal was constructed 43 miles south to Havre de Grace, Maryland with approximately two-thirds of the route in Pennsylvania and the remaining one-third in Maryland. The canal was put into operation in 1840.</p> <p>A most interesting wooden covered bridge with a double-deck tow path along the downstream side was constructed between Wrightsville and Columbia, permitting mule teams to proceed both east and west on the bridge without interfering with each other. This bridge, incidentally, was burned during the Civil War by retreating Union forces when the Confederates threatened Philadelphia prior to the battle at Gettysburg. Subsequently steam tugs were substituted to tow the boats back and forth between the two canal systems.</p> <p>Twenty-nine locks were built to overcome an elevation of 231 feet between Havre de Grace and Wrightsville. Avoiding the now obvious error of some of the earlier canals, such as the Union, in building their locks too narrow and too small, locks on the S. & T. were built 17 feet in width and 170 feet in length, thus permitting single boats of 150 tons capacity or tandem boats up to 300 tons capacity per pair to pass the locks easily. The canal channel was designed 50 feet wide at water level by 5 1/2 to 6 feet deep. There was a weigh lock located at York Furnace where tolls were charged. Average dimensions of the double (or tandem) boats using the canal system were 65 feet in length, 16 feet in width and 8 feet in depth, drawing approximately 5 feet of water fully loaded.</p>																																			
PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:																																			
NAMES & ADDRESSES OF GROUPS CONCERNED WITH CANALS PRE																																			
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: <p>"Amazing Pa. Canals" W. H. Shank. Much material including complete maps of the entire route are filed in the records of the Safe Harbor Dam</p>																																			
UNPUBLISHED RECORDS, PHOTOS, DRAWINGS (CEHR, HAER, HABS, Local or Regional Historical Societies, Libraries, etc.): <p>at Conestoga, Pa. in Lancaster County</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Continued on the reverse side)</p>																																			
EXISTING OR RECOMMENDED LANDMARK STATUS (CEHR, National Register, etc.):																																			
REPORTER'S NAME & ADDRESS: Wm. H. Shank, P.E., 809 Rahton Rd., York, Pa. 17403 DATE: 8/8/80																																			
RETURN TO: CANAL INDEX COMMITTEE, c/o P.H. STOTT, HAINES ROAD, MOUNT KISCO, NY 10549																																			