

American Canal Society Canal Index

<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%; font-size: small;">CANAL</td> <td>WESTERN DIVISION, Pa. Main Line Canal</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="font-size: small;">STATE/PROVINCE:</td> <td>Penna.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="font-size: small;">COUNTIES:</td> <td>Cambria, Indiana, Westmoreland, Armstrong, Allegheny</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="font-size: small;">LOCATION (Endpoints of Canal):</td> <td>A.P.R.R. in Johnstown to Pittsburgh Canal Basin &amp; Grant's Hill Tunnel</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="font-size: small;">TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS:</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	CANAL	WESTERN DIVISION, Pa. Main Line Canal	STATE/PROVINCE:	Penna.	COUNTIES:	Cambria, Indiana, Westmoreland, Armstrong, Allegheny	LOCATION (Endpoints of Canal):	A.P.R.R. in Johnstown to Pittsburgh Canal Basin & Grant's Hill Tunnel	TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS:		<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 10%; font-size: small;">STATUS</td> <td colspan="3">Abandoned</td> <td style="width: 10%; font-size: small;">ACS</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td colspan="3"></td> <td style="font-size: small;">HAER</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="font-size: small;">ENLARGEMENTS</td> <td style="font-size: small;">DATES IN USE</td> <td style="font-size: small;">LENGTH CANAL    SLACKWATER</td> <td style="font-size: small;">TOTAL</td> <td style="font-size: small;">LIFT LOCKS No. / SIZE</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td>1831-1865</td> <td>About 1/3 slackwater</td> <td>105</td> <td>68 15x90</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	STATUS	Abandoned			ACS					HAER	ENLARGEMENTS	DATES IN USE	LENGTH CANAL    SLACKWATER	TOTAL	LIFT LOCKS No. / SIZE	1	1831-1865	About 1/3 slackwater	105	68 15x90	2					3					4				
CANAL	WESTERN DIVISION, Pa. Main Line Canal																																													
STATE/PROVINCE:	Penna.																																													
COUNTIES:	Cambria, Indiana, Westmoreland, Armstrong, Allegheny																																													
LOCATION (Endpoints of Canal):	A.P.R.R. in Johnstown to Pittsburgh Canal Basin & Grant's Hill Tunnel																																													
TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS:																																														
STATUS	Abandoned			ACS																																										
				HAER																																										
ENLARGEMENTS	DATES IN USE	LENGTH CANAL    SLACKWATER	TOTAL	LIFT LOCKS No. / SIZE																																										
1	1831-1865	About 1/3 slackwater	105	68 15x90																																										
2																																														
3																																														
4																																														
<p><b>HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:</b></p> <p>The Western Division Canal was authorized to start at Pittsburgh and run upstream along the Allegheny River from Pittsburgh to a junction with the Kiskiminetas River at Freeport.</p> <p>The same legislative act of February 25, 1826 which had started work on the Eastern Division empowered the commissioners to proceed immediately with construction east from Pittsburgh. However, work did not get underway quite as promptly at this end of the state because there was considerable debate about the selection of a suitable route. Surveys were run on both banks of the Allegheny. The citizens of Pittsburgh favored a south bank route, which would bring the canal into the heart of old Pittsburgh, but the terrain on that side of the river made a north bank route much more feasible. Citizens of the newly incorporated borough of Allegheny on the north side of the river directly opposite Pittsburgh were delighted at the prospect of a canal terminal in their community. They argued that the freight and the passengers could be drayed across the Allegheny River into Pittsburgh at little additional cost. However, Pittsburghers objected vehemently. They indicated that they had not agitated all these years for a canal, to have it terminate in a neighboring borough. A compromise was finally effected in the form of an aqueduct across the Allegheny River, entering Pittsburgh opposite the Grant-Liberty junction. This aqueduct was the longest and most troublesome on the entire Pennsylvania Main Line route. A contract for the aqueduct was let on June 3, 1827, and when completed the structure was 1140 feet long, 14 feet wide at the bottom, 16½ feet wide at the top and 8½ feet deep with a foot bridge on one side, and tow path on the other. Heavy white pine planks 2½ inches thick, laid diagonally in two courses would, it was hoped, hold the great weight of water.</p> <p>Another point upon which Pittsburghers insisted was that the canal should be run south through Pittsburgh to connect with the Monongahela River at a point where the proposed Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was supposed to enter the city. This proved to be a most expensive and difficult engineering feat since a 810-foot canal tunnel had to be constructed under Grant's Hill and a series of four additional lift locks had to be built through the heart of the city to lower the canal to the Monongahela River level. The main canal basin and unloading point for the terminus of the canal, however, was located on the north side of Pitts-</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(Continued on the opposite side)</p>																																														
<p><b>PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:</b></p>																																														
<p><b>NAMES &amp; ADDRESSES OF GROUPS CONCERNED WITH CANALS PROJECTS:</b>                  Pennsylvania Canal Society                  Easton, Pa. (Hugh Moore Park)</p>																																														
<p><b>BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY:</b>                  "Amazing Pa. Canals" 1977                  W. H. Shank, A.C.T.C                  "Pa. Canal in Indiana &amp; Westmoreland Counties"                  Clarence D. Stephenson, 1961                  "Pa. Main Line Canals"                  Leuba &amp; McCullough 1976</p>																																														
<p><b>UNPUBLISHED RECORDS, PHOTOS, DRAWINGS (CEHR, HAER, HAB)</b></p>																																														
<p><b>EXISTING OR RECOMMENDED LANDMARK STATUS (CEHR, National Register, etc.):</b></p>																																														
<p><b>REPORTER'S NAME &amp; ADDRESS:</b> Wm. H. Shank, 809 Rantion Rd., York, Pa. 17403</p>				<p><b>DATE:</b></p>																																										
<p><b>RETURN TO:</b> CANAL INDEX COMMITTEE, c/o P.H. STOTT, HAINES ROAD, MOUNT KISCO, NY 10549</p>																																														