

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT
PART I

ON

LOCKS OF

JAMES RIVER AND KANAWHA CANAL

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

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HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

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U. S. Department of Interior

National Park Service

Blue Ridge Parkway

11-26-63

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

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LOCKS OF

JAMES RIVER AND KANAWHA CANAL

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

A P P R O V A L S H E E T

RECOMMENDED

Sam P. Weems
Superintendent

Date 11-26-63

Eugene DeSilets
Acting Chief, EODC

Date 12-19-63

Elbert Cox
Regional Director, Southeast Region

Date 1-2-64

APPROVED


Assistant DIRECTOR

Date 1/21/64

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1. ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

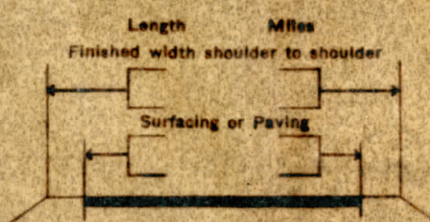
- a. Name of Structure - James River Canal and Locks (no number).
- b. Proposed Use - To be restored to as nearly original condition as feasible and interpreted to the public by aluminum exhibit panels.
- c. Justification - Interpretation of the locks and canal as part of the Parkway scene, where it crosses the Parkway at James River.
- d. Provisions for Operating - This will be a static exhibit, with no operation required.
- e. Cooperative Agreements - None required.
- f. Description of Proposed Construction Activity - Excavation of sediments from the old lock and a major portion of the canal on Parkway lands; reconstruction of the berm bank and towpath; reconstruction of the lock gates; repair work on masonry in the lock structure; reconstruction of the diversion dam across Battery Creek; and construction of water level control gate between the lower (east) end of the reconstructed canal and the river.
- g. Preliminary Cost Estimate - \$28,200.
- h. Photo of Existing Locks - (Attached).
- i. Copy of PCP - (Attached).



Old Lock on James River & Kanawha Canal
Blue Ridge Parkway

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PROJECT CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM PROPOSAL FORM

1. NAME OF AREA Blue Ridge Parkway		LOCATION OF AREA (STATE) Virginia and North Carolina	
2. PROPOSED WORK Reconstruct canal lock, portion of old canal, and build trail from James River bridge to lock site, with exhibits at lock.			
3. DIMENSIONAL DATA 			
4. LAND STATUS AND DATA Government owned.			
5. CONSTRUCTION DATA 930 ft. of canal, 30 ft. wide, with 5 ft. berm, and 12 ft. towpath. One towpath bridge, 60 ft. long, 4 ft. wide, treated timber. 550 ft. of 8 ft. wide surfaced trail, 30 ft. long, 8 ft. wide, treated timber bridge. Two 2'-6" high, 6 ft. long, 4 ft. wide, masonry exhibit bases, with 4 ft. wide, 5 ft. long exhibit panels. 170 ft. of 2'-6" high post and rail fence. Repair of lock walls, construction of 2 lock gates, treated timber with iron fittings.			
6. JUSTIFICATION This restoration is the only place on the entire James River and Kanawha Canal where any restoration or interpretation is planned at present. The historical significance of this canal to the early development of the nation makes it by far the most important, as well as one of the most interesting, spots for historical interpretation along the entire Parkway. See attached sheet for a more complete justification.			
7. MISCELLANEOUS DATA—REMARKS—REPORT REFERENCES References: Report on James River Canal, Sneller, Maurice, Jr., Blue Ridge Parkway. History of James River and Kanawha Company, Dunaway, W. F., New York, 1922. Research data in files of Blue Ridge Parkway.			
8. DATA ON THIS FORM PREPARED BY Name M. D. Henderson Date 4/3/59 Title Landscape Architect Name Earl W. Batten Date 4/3/59 Title Parson's Engineer		9. PCP CROSS-REFERENCES R-524 11. DRAWING NO. Preliminary PKY-ER-1H-2076 Working 12. RECOMMENDED Date APR 16 1959	
		10. ESTIMATE—CLASS C Construction \$ 28,000 Contingencies \$ 1,400 Plans, Surveys, and Supervision \$ 5,600 Grand Total \$ 35,000	
		13. APPROVED (Sgd.) Sam B. Williams Date APR 23 1959 SUPERINTENDENT	
14. NAME OF PROJECT James River Canal Exhibit Route No. 1 Section H Master Plan Drawing No. PKY-ER-OC-2051C		15. LOCATION WITHIN AREA OR TERMINI James River Section 1-H Virginia	
		16. INDEX NO. M-368 BPR ☐ NPS ☐	

PROJECT NO. 100-50-10 DATE 1/1/50 NAME OF PROJECT Trail Bridge		DISTRICT 1-11 SECTION 1-11 COUNTY 1-11		SHEET NO. 1-308 INDEX NO.	
CHIEF ENGINEER D. C. C.		SUPERVISOR D. C. C.			
1. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT Trail Bridge		2. ESTIMATES Trail Bridge		3. VOLUMES Trail Bridge	
4. DETAILS Trail Bridge		5. MATERIALS Trail Bridge		6. CONSTRUCTION Trail Bridge	
7. EXHIBITS Trail Bridge		8. REFERENCES Trail Bridge		9. ESTIMATES Trail Bridge	
10. COMMENTS Trail Bridge		11. NOTES Trail Bridge		12. SIGNATURES Trail Bridge	

PROJECT CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS REPORT FORM

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
 DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 UNITED STATES

PCP M-368 - Justification

Justification for proposed reconstruction and interpretation of a section of the James River and Kanawha Canal, on the Blue Ridge Parkway:

The restoration as described on the attached PCP includes the repair of an existing lock, restoration of adjoining portions of the original canal, including two dams to hold water in the canal, and detailed interpretation of the use of the locks and the canal. General interpretation of the canal will be handled at the interpretation shelter-comfort station at the parking area on the opposite shore of the river.

This lock is one of a series along the James River and Kanawha Canal which represents a very important phase in the history of our country -- that of the canal transportation period. During this time a number of famous canals, such as the C. & O. and the Erie, were built, connecting or attempting to connect the tidewater with the interior valleys, often extending as far as the headwaters of the Ohio River.

This canal, envisioned by George Washington and initiated by Benjamin Harrison, was proposed to be the longest and most ambitious of any along the Eastern Seaboard. A total of 485 miles of canal and stream improvements was planned, of which nearly 200 miles were built and heavily used between 1794 and 1830. The completed sections, from Richmond to Buchanan, Virginia, utilized 90 stone masonry locks similar to this one, having a total lift of 728 feet. Today these locks and the canal have practically disappeared.

Along the Blue Ridge Parkway there are few major points of historical significance. Yet here, adjacent to one of our proposed development areas, is a representation of one important link in the early transportation systems between the interior and the sea. Our proposed restoration of this lock and a short section of the canal will be the only preservation and interpretation of the historic canal in existence. Its contemporary, the C. & O. Canal, has been highly publicized and restored, while the James River and Kanawha Canal has been rapidly fading into oblivion. It is highly important that this work be initiated soon before the few remaining locks disappear and detailed information on their construction is lost forever. One cannot logically place a monetary value on rare or unusual historical interpretations, and we feel that this restoration falls well within this class. In years to come this restoration may well be one of our most prized and popular interpretive exhibits.

Preliminary research on this project has resulted in considerable local interest and cooperation. One notable item is an offer of the Glamorgan Pipe and Foundry Company of Lynchburg, Virginia, to dig up and present to the Parkway the only known remaining set of original lock gates in existence. These gates, though badly deteriorated, will be invaluable in restoration, but the Foundry Company will donate them only on condition that we can make use of them in restoration of the locks on the Parkway.

2. HISTORICAL DATA

*Red for recording
1/15/64
H.C.*

This structure is one of the few remaining locks along the old James River and Kanawha Canal that extended from Richmond, Virginia, to Buchanan in the mid 1800's. Replaced by the railroad in 1880, the canal was soon forgotten.

This lock, like the mountain cabins along the Parkway, is a reminder of the centuries-old pioneer culture that thrived in the area not too long ago.

The lock structure is intact, except that a few stones are out of place and the gates are missing. Intensive search uncovered two gates buried in an old lock at Lynchburg, undoubtedly the only ones remaining along the old canal. These were salvaged and furnish an excellent pattern for reconstructing them.

The canal, itself is only a dim trace, but research reveals the original width, depth, location of towpath and berm, as applied to the canal in general, and undoubtedly to this particular section as well. So far no records have been found pertaining to this particular lock, and it is felt that chances of doing so are practically nil.

There is no record of the architect or builder, although we do know that this section of the canal was constructed by the James River and Kanawha Company between 1845 and 1851.

3. ARCHITECTURAL DATA

This canal and lock are similar, in most respects, to its contemporary, the C&O Canal along the Potomac River. The canal was described as 50 feet wide at the water line, 30 feet wide at the bottom, and carried a minimum of 5 feet of water. It was bordered by a 12-foot wide towpath on the river side, and a 5-foot berm bank on the landward side. At this location a feeder stream entering the canal was contained by a dam of unspecified size and construction.

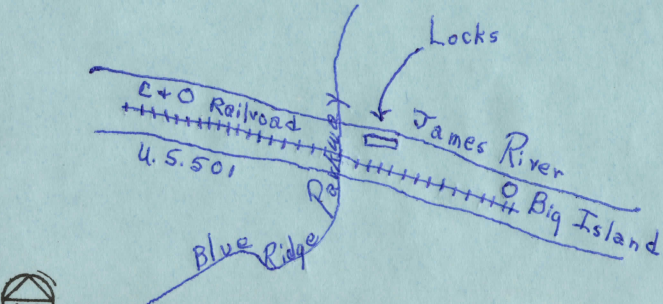
The lock is standard for its type, 100 feet long and 15 feet wide inside the chamber, with a lift of ~~some~~ somewhere between 7 and 9 feet. It was constructed of native stone, with hand operated wooden gates. It appears that the sluice gates in the latter were different from those in the C&O, as indicated by the two gates salvaged at Lynchburg. Excavation may reveal the original iron work as a final answer to this question.

It is felt that sufficient research has been done to enable reconstruction to be started. Due to destruction of company records during the Civil War, it is very doubtful if any specific plans for this particular structure will ever be located, if they did exist. As a

result reconstruction work must be based on existing written records and descriptions of the canal as a whole, supplemented by evidence of the original structure revealed as the river silt is removed from it.

4. LANDSCAPE DATA

There is no record of the original landscaping of the area, but from knowledge of similar structures elsewhere, we can reasonably assume that the area was cleared sufficiently for construction and operation, and the adjoining areas remained in their natural state.

1. STATE Virginia COUNTY Bedford TOWN STREET NO.		HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY INVENTORY	
ORIGINAL OWNER James River & Kanawha Co. ORIGINAL USE None PRESENT OWNER Blue Ridge Parkway PRESENT USE None WALL CONSTRUCTION N.A. NO. OF STORIES N.A.		2. NAME Locks of James River Canal DATE OR PERIOD mid 1800's STYLE N.A. ARCHITECT ? BUILDER ?	
		3. FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS USE	
4. NOTABLE FEATURES, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION		OPEN TO PUBLIC	
This lock is one of the few remaining along the old James River and Kanawha Canal that extended from Richmond, Virginia to Buchanan in the mid 1800's. Replaced by the railroad in 1880, the entire canal was soon forgotten and the locks, including this one, became filled with sediment, the gates rotted down, and growing trees forced some of the rocks from the side-walls. This lock is intact except for a few stones that have fallen out, and the gates are missing. The canal on either side is only a dim trace, sufficient to outline its location and extent. The lock is approximately 100 feet long and 15 feet wide inside the chamber, constructed of native stone, many of which show extraordinary fine craftsmanship in cutting and fitting to the lock gate structure. The adjacent canal apparently was standard for the canal as a whole, 50 feet wide at the water line, 30 feet wide at the bottom, carrying a minimum of 5 feet of water. It was bordered by a 12-foot wide towpath on the river side and a 5-foot wide berm bank on the landward side. At this point, immediately upstream from the lock structure, is a feeder stream that apparently entered the canal at this point, diverted by a dam of unknown size and construction. To date no evidence of the gates has been uncovered, but a pair of gates from an identical lock on the canal at Lynchburg have been uncovered and salvaged for models in possible restoration of this lock. The latter have an unusual type of sluice gates for allowing water to enter the locks.			
5. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE Endangered no Interior good Exterior good			
6. LOCATION MAP (Plan Optional)		7. PHOTOGRAPH	
			
8. PUBLISHED SOURCES (Author, Title, Pages) INTERVIEWS, RECORDS, PHOTOS, ETC.		9. NAME, ADDRESS AND TITLE OF RECORDER	
1. <u>Waterway to the West</u> , Kirkwood 2. <u>From Canoe to Packet Boat</u> , Capron 3. <u>History of James River & Kanawha Co.</u> , Dunaway		Donald H. Robinson Chief Naturalist, Blue Ridge Parkway P. O. Box 1710, Roanoke, Virginia	
		DATE OF RECORD November 21, 1963	