

# ON THE LEVEL



## THE CANAL SOCIETY OF NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS CANAL BOAT

This past May the Canal Society received word of an interesting discovery; a boat had been found beneath a house in the Borough of Highlands, New Jersey, an area previously ravaged by Super Storm Sandy. To protect it from future storm surges, the building was being raised as part of a federally funded project. When the boat was discovered, a stop-work order was issued and experts called in. They found that the boat's measurements and construction matched those of a typical Morris Canal boat. Days later CSNJ president Joe Macasek visited the site to meet with the team of archaeologists who had been brought in to record the discovery. By this time the house had been raised 12 feet off the ground, supported by wooden crib work, and the boat had been removed so the contractor could resume work. Since there was no way to remove the boat in one piece, the bow had been moved intact and the rest of the hull had been carefully cut



Shortly after its discovery, the Highlands Canal Boat is seen here still in one piece, with the house of which it had been a part raised high overhead on wood block cribbing.

into sections and stacked in the back yard of the property, the only space available.

What had been discovered was indeed a Morris Canal boat that had been used as a foundation and part of the framework of a residential structure. When the con-

tractor had cut through the house below the floor joist to raise it, the boat was revealed. An examination of the house, now high above the ground, showed that the ribs of the boat had been used as part of the building.

What remained was the bottom of the bow section of a canal boat in surprisingly good condition. The remains matched abandonment-era drawings of a Morris Canal boat. Although this was not the whole boat, it was a unique find. Of the thousands of boats that once did service, this may be the lone survivor.

In the weeks that followed CSNJ members Bill McKelvey and Bob Barth visited the site to secure the artifact. Bill spoke with property owner Eileen Scan-  
*(Continued on page 2)*

### MEETINGS

Morris County Cultural Center  
300 Mendham Road, Morris Township

**Friday** – January 20, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. – Refreshments at 7:10

#### IRON MINE RAILROADS REVISITED

MIKE DELVECCHIO – *President, TriState Railway Historical Society*

For some there has been a single book that, once discovered, inspires a lifelong interest. *Iron Mine Railroads*, written by Larry Lowenthal in 1981, is that kind of a book. For industrial archaeologists, rail fans, and local history buffs it has been one of the few comprehensive sources of information on North Jersey's industrial and transportation history. For years this book has inspired its readers to do additional research and make new discoveries. In this presentation Mike DelVecchio will focus on some of the newly discovered photos of mines, railroads, and canals that continue to expand our understanding of our industrial past. After 35 years, the book has been republished and made available to a new and wider audience. Copies will be available for purchase at the meeting.

*(Continued on page 4)*

### Thanks for Renewing Your Membership

Dues notices for calendar year 2017 went out in December. Your membership is important. Thanks for being on board!

However, if we haven't heard from you in over two years, this will be your last newsletter.

# HIGHLANDS CANAL BOAT



*The house being raised in the photo was built using the frame of a Morris Canal boat as its foundation and lower wall structure.*

*(Continued from page 1)*

lon and asked her to consider donating the artifacts to the CSNJ. She asked for time to consider her options.

## Transporting the Boat

When Bill McKelvey again contacted Mrs. Scanlon last fall, she agreed to donate the canal boat artifacts to the CSNJ. Now we needed to find the boat a new home where it could be preserved and displayed. Fortunately, our partners at State Parks were also excited about the project and agreed to let us use the space on the first floor of the Samuel T. Smith Carriage House at Waterloo. Then the several tons of artifacts needed to be transported.

In October Bill used his years of experience moving heavy railroad equipment and the resources of Liberty His-

toric Railway, Inc. to plan and fund the move. First he called on long time associate Phil Francis, owner and operator of Shadyside Trucking, to supply the equipment and services. Then, because the narrow streets of Highlands Borough would not allow the large flatbed near Mrs. Scanlon's property, the plan got complicated. Volunteers would prepare the artifacts to be moved. A heavy-duty fork lift would transport the pieces across the sand and through local streets to the truck parked blocks away. First the heavy bow section made the trip while flagmen guided the way. Meanwhile, the volunteers carefully stacked the bottom sections and wrapped the ends in plastic. It took three trips to move all the pieces. By 3:00 PM the artifacts were loaded and the long drive north in Friday afternoon traffic began.

At Waterloo, the procedure was reversed. The pieces were lifted from the truck, driven across the Village, then hand-carried into the carriage house. Several late-afternoon visitors pitched in to help with the heavy work. Finally, as darkness fell, the bow section arrived but, despite several attempts,

it could not be angled through the carriage house door. It was just too heavy and unwieldy.

Fortunately the next day, one of our scheduled Waterloo Heritage days, gave us a chance to solve the problem before cold weather set in. While our regular Waterloo volunteers engaged visitors, CSNJ member Steve Lauf used a circular saw and Sawzall with surgical precision to divide the bow into two pieces without damaging its integrity. Then, at 3:00 PM, we closed the Village so all volunteers and many spectators could gather for the final effort. The work was both strenuous and delicate. Using a block and tackle, rollers, and blocks, twelve strong men carefully lifted and pivoted the pieces through the door. Once inside, the sections were set on blocks and reassembled.

At some time in its history of active service, this boat must have passed through Waterloo long ago. Now, through the effort of many dedicated



*Driver Phil Francis carefully guides his heavy-duty fork lift through the streets of Highlands Borough with a load of canal boat artifacts.*



*This flatbed truck, provided by Phil Francis' Shadyside Trucking, needed to be big enough to transport both the artifacts and the fork lift needed to move them. In this panoramic photo, the load has been firmly secured with straps and chains before starting the journey north to Waterloo.*

The bow section of the Highlands Canal Boat rests temporarily on blocks in front of Waterloo's Samuel T. Smith Carriage House while CSNJ member Steve Lauf considers a plan to move it into the building.



individuals, it is back. Although we have many historic remains of the canal itself, this artifact provides a direct link to the boats that did the work. Our job now is to use this boat to help tell that part of the story. ■

*In the next issue of On the Level we will continue with the story of how the boat came to be under a house and plans to preserve and interpret the Highlands Canal Boat.*

**Logistics and coordinator**

- Capt. Bill McKelvey
- Move funded by Liberty Historic Railway, Inc.

**Equipment and Transport**

- Shadyside Trucking, Phil Francis, owner/operator

**Volunteer Helpers**

- Bob Barth    - Ray Holly    - Joe Macasek
- Bill Haas    - Steve Lauf    - Rich Richter

# SHIPPENPORT

This past October the Canal Society was able to complete the acquisition of the Pfeifer property, a five-acre site along the Morris Canal Greenway in Shippenport. The project was funded by a grant from the Morris County Open Space Trust Fund. Ownership was immediately transferred to Roxbury Township. The property contains a long stretch of canal and towpath causeway at the top of Inclined Plane 1 East.

This acquisition will make it possible to link several nearby historic and open-space assets with the Morris Canal Greenway as a central feature. To the north the trail will connect with the historic Lake Hopatcong Train Station recently acquired by the Lake Hopatcong Foundation. To the south the trail will connect with the site of Plane 1 East, scheduled to be donated to the township, and already-existing township open space containing the newly developed Ice Age Trail. The CSNJ will be working with the Roxbury Open Space Committee to clear a trail through the new site and install interpretive signage. ■



Captain James E. Campbell

## CAPTAIN JAMES E. CAMPBELL

By Tim Roth

James E. Campbell (Camel) was one of several African American canal boat captains who served on the Morris Canal. Born in 1856 as a “free” African American, he became a captain at only 15 years of age. After marrying in 1878, he had 8 children, and settled in a house in Washington, N.J., which still stands. Other black boatmen, such as Joe Taylor and Jim Haines, also resided in Mr. Campbell’s neighborhood.

The poem “Famous Tiller Sharks,” written by Charles Matlock Hummer in 1956, remembers James Campbell as being a happy man (“Happy old

Jim Camel...”). In the book; *Tales the Boatmen Told*, Mr. Campbell’s daughter, Florence Van Horn, remembers that her father was not only a happy man, but also one who would go out of his way to help others. A separate interview with Isabelle Lenstrohm Mann (also the daughter of a canal boat captain) confirms Mr. Campbell’s generosity. When one of the Lenstrohm family’s mules died at Rockport, it was Jim Campbell who lent them one of his own until they could purchase a new mule in

Phillipsburg.

After retiring from boating, James Campbell continued working for the Canal Company until the canal abandonment in the 1920s. He then worked for the water company in Washington until his death in 1932. ■



The Campbell homestead as it looked before being restored by the boatman’s family.



## COMMUNICATIONS

This year Canal Society members will be hearing from us more often. Our new communications coordinator, Tim Roth, will be sending regular e-mail reminders for upcoming meetings and events, as well as news and updates. To be included, we need your e-mail address. Please include your current address on your membership renewal form to be sure you’re on the list. To update your listing, please contact Tim at: [timroth@comcast.net](mailto:timroth@comcast.net)

# MEETINGS

(Continued from page 1)

In addition to this evening's presentation, CSNJ member Deb Wefferling will prepare and serve a light supper and a fine dessert. Deb's culinary skills are well known among members, so please come early to enjoy food and friendly conversation before the meeting.

**Mike DelVecchio** has long been an active railroad historian and preservationist, having written five hardcover books and hundreds of articles on the subject for publications circulated world wide. As a photographer, Mike has taken more than a thousand published photographs. He has led and participated in restoration projects of both steam and diesel locomotives and numerous pieces of rolling stock in many museums. He has presided over the Tri-State Chapter of the National Railway Historical Society for 22 of the past 24 years. Professionally, he is a superintendent on the Morristown & Erie Railroad, having started there nearly 20 years ago as a freight brakeman. As a younger man he was active in the Canal Society of New Jersey with fond memories of staffing the museum at Waterloo.

**Friday – March 17, 2016 at 7:30 p.m.** – Refreshments at 7:10

## A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES

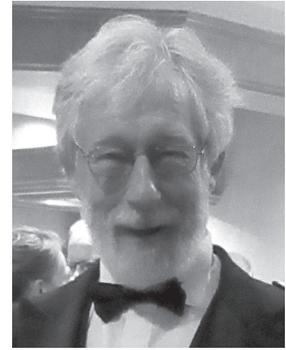
AN ALL-REAL FILM SHOW PRESENTED BY MITCH DAKELMAN

This program will include a selection of films from Mitch's vast collection with an emphasis on canal history and technology. The evening's selections will include *Elblag Canal*, which used inclined-plane technology similar to that used on the original Morris Canal, and *Scouting the Morris Canal*. Mitch will also show *Boat Builds* starring Mickey Mouse and another short if time permits.

**Mitch Dakelman** is the curator of the National Railway Historical Society film and photographic collection, stored in Phillipsburg, NJ. He is a retired college librarian presently working for the Metuchen and Sayreville School Districts as a substitute teacher. Mitch has authored / co-authored six railroad and highway related books. His latest book, *The Glory Years of The Pennsylvania Turnpike*, was co-authored with Dr. Neal A. Schorr in 2016 and published by Arcadia Publications. Mitch has been a CSNJ member since 1982.

# JAKOB FRANKE

(1941 – 2016)



With sadness, we report the sudden death of Jakob Franke on Thursday, November 10, 2016. Jakob was highly involved with the New York-New Jersey Trail Conference for 24 years, and chaired the Long Path South committee. A few days prior to his passing, he received NYNJTC's highest honor, the Raymond H. Torrey Award; and with his wife, Gely, he received the Paul Leikin Extra Mile Award in 2014.

Jakob brought his skills in planning, organizing, and managing trail clearing parties to various sections of the Morris Canal towpath in Morris, Sussex, and Warren counties. Most recently he led a large crew at Inclined Plane 4 West at Waterloo, which had become heavily overgrown due to lack of maintenance. This major canal engineering feature is now visible from across the river and can be interpreted from Waterloo Village.

A native of the Netherlands, Jakob held an MS in biology and retired in 2008 after a career as a research associate at Columbia University. He was the lead author of *The Field Guide to the Morris Canal of New Jersey*, privately published in late 2014.

# ON THE LEVEL



## THE CANAL SOCIETY OF NEW JERSEY

PO Box 737, Morristown, New Jersey 07963-0737

**ON THE LEVEL** is published three times a year by the Canal Society of New Jersey.

### OFFICERS

|                                 |                |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>President:</b>               | Joe Macasek    |
| <b>Vice President:</b>          | Rick Giles     |
| <b>Treasurer:</b>               | Judy Keith     |
| <b>Recording Secretary:</b>     | Dennis Furbush |
| <b>Corresponding Secretary:</b> | Vacant         |
| <b>Past President:</b>          | Vacant         |

### DIRECTORS

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| Bob Bodenstein | Carl Loutzenheiser              |
| Richard Draper | Anita Norris                    |
| Rod Howarth    | Bill Pegg                       |
| Steve Lauf     | Rich Richter                    |
| Jim Lee, III   | Bierce Riley, Newsletter Editor |

973-292-2755 – nj-cnal@googlegroups.com – www.CanalSocietyNJ.org

## We Need Help!

The Canal Society needs an organized person with moderate computer skills to help organize material from our archives for placement in the new Research Library. If you are interested please contact

Joe Macasek at:  
[macgraphics1@verizon.net](mailto:macgraphics1@verizon.net)

# D&R CANAL 2017 WALKS & EVENTS

*These walks and events are sponsored by the D&R Canal Watch. The walks are free, but donations are welcome and appreciated. For additional information contact tour leaders:*

**Bob Barth at 201-401-3121 or bbarth@att.net**  
**Pamela V'Combe at 609-635-2783 or pjvcombe@gmail.com**  
**Frank at 570-234-9945 or fallen1947@yahoo.com**

## **Saturday, January 21 – 10:00 a.m.**

Walk 5.8 miles on the towpath between South Bound Brook and East Millstone, or choose a shorter hike of 2.7 miles. Meet at Lock 11 in South Bound Brook on Canal Road at Madison Street. Leader: Pamela V'Combe.

## **Sunday, January 29 – 2:00 p.m.**

Two-Canal Walk. Meet outside of the Lambertville Station restaurant, near the caboose. We will begin on the D&R Feeder on the New Jersey side and then cross the Delaware River to walk along the Delaware Canal in New Hope. Cookies and hot chocolate await at the locktender's home. Leader: Bob Barth.

## **Saturday, February 18 – 10:00 a.m.**

Walk Through History. Hike 3 miles on the D&R Canal Feeder towpath between Prallsville Mill and Bulls Island. Meet at the Prallsville Mill parking lot. Leader: Frank Allen. Questions? Contact

## **Saturday, February 25 – 10:00 a.m.**

Walk 5.6 miles on the D&R Canal towpath between Griggstown and East Millstone, or choose a shorter hike of 3.5 miles. Meet at the Griggstown Causeway. Leader: Pamela V'Combe.

## **Saturday, March 18 – 10:00 a.m.**

Walk 5.3 miles on the D&R Canal Feeder towpath between Firemen's Eddy and Prallsville Mill, or choose a shorter hike of 2.6 miles. Meet at the Prallsville Mill Complex, Route 29, Stockton. Leader: Pamela V'Combe.

## **Saturday, April 15 – 10:00 a.m.**

Walk 5.3 miles on the D&R Canal Feeder towpath between Fireman's Eddy and Washington Crossing State Park (the meeting place), or choose a shorter hike of 4.1 miles. Leader: Pamela V'Combe.

## **Saturday, April 15 – 2:00 p.m.**

Millstone Valley PC Open House to celebrate its 4th Anniversary; Mule Tender's Barracks. Details to be announced.

# 2017 INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE WALKS

*March through June*

April 1 – **Hibernia**

April 22 – **Split Rock Furnace**

May 13 – **Fort Hancock** – Homeland Security 1895

May 27 – **Mt. Hope Mines & Mineral Railroad**

June 10 – **Finding Moses Hopping's Forge**

*Industrial Heritage Walks are sponsored by the Morris County Park Commission.*  
For information & reservations, please e-mail: [macgraphics1@verizon.net](mailto:macgraphics1@verizon.net) or call 973-292-2755.

# SYMPOSIUM

SAVE THE DATE

## **New Jersey Canals and Local History Symposium**

**Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017**  
**10 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

Frelinghuysen Arboretum  
Haggerty Center

# WATERLOO

SAVE THE DATE

## **Waterloo Canal Day Festival**

**Saturday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017**  
**10 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

*Rain date: Sunday, June 25<sup>th</sup>*

# MORRIS CANAL WALKS

Throughout the year the Passaic County Department of Planning and Economic Development will offer a series of walks to promote the Morris Canal Greenway in Passaic County.

## **Sunday, April 9 – 12:00 p.m.**

**Clifton** – Meet at Clifton Canal Park and explore the Greenway route along Broad Street.

## **Sunday, May 7 – 12:00 p.m.** <sup>NEW</sup>

**Mountain View** – Meet at the Mt. View train station and explore the old village of Mead's Basin and part of the Morris Canal Feeder.

For more information:

[www.passaiccountynj.org](http://www.passaiccountynj.org)

[www.MorrisCanalGreenway.org](http://www.MorrisCanalGreenway.org)

**Joe Macasek**

[macgraphics1@verizon.net](mailto:macgraphics1@verizon.net)

# CANAL SOCIETY RESEARCH LIBRARY

This coming year the Canal Society of New Jersey will be partnering with the New Jersey State Park Service to create a research library at Waterloo Village. The project will be housed in the 1860s tenant house next to the Canal Museum. Despite peeling paint and a dilapidated side porch, the building is sound and serviceable.

So far the State Park Staff has cleaned out the building and the CSNJ has pur-

chased bookshelves and moved in a file cabinet, table and chairs. Over the winter we will be selecting books from our collection to fill the shelves while the building's heating system is put into working order and an alarm system installed. We hope to move in this spring.

The new library will eventually house a collection of books, maps and files belonging to the CSNJ, dealing with all aspects of canal and local history. Addi-



*New library interior.*

tionally, there will be a collection of Waterloo-related files, artifacts, and memorabilia belonging to NJSPS. CSNJ member Janice Escobar will be the librarian and help to keep the collection organized.

Over time we hope to create a place where researchers can access the collection of information we now have in storage, as well as a place for future donations. Please let us know if you have items to contribute. ■



*Despite its present dilapidated exterior appearance, the new library building will soon be safe and secure.*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

|                 |                   |  |
|-----------------|-------------------|--|
| <b>Friday</b>   | <b>January 20</b> | <b>Membership Meeting</b><br>Iron Mine Railroads – Mike DelVecchio<br><i>Morris County Cultural Center, 7:30 p.m.</i>              |
| <b>Friday</b>   | <b>March 17</b>   | <b>Membership Meeting</b><br>Movie Night – Mitch Dakelman<br><i>Morris County Cultural Center, 7:30 p.m.</i>                       |
| <b>Saturday</b> | <b>March 25</b>   | <b>New Jersey Canals and Local History Symposium</b><br>Haggerty Center – Frelinghuysen Arboretum<br><i>10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.</i> |
| <b>Saturday</b> | <b>June 24</b>    | <b>Waterloo Canal Day Festival</b>   |

[www.CanalSocietyNJ.org](http://www.CanalSocietyNJ.org)

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