

STORIES of New Jersey

Aside from the boatmen, the workmen were mostly lock tenders, plane tenders and towpath walkers. The last were just what the name implies. They walked the towpaths, covering a beat of from 6 to 10 miles, on a sharp lookout for possible leaks which might flood an entire area. The chief enemies of the towpath walker were muskrats who burrowed into the banks to make their nests. A colony would almost honeycomb a bank in a few days if not prevented.

In Newark there are several living reminders of the waterway. Plane Street is the site of one of the planes on the canal. On Orange Street, just below First Street, is one of the old drums used to pull the boats up the rise and over Orange Street. The Newark subway is built on the old canal bed where it ran under Broad Street between the old Post Office and Kresge's Department Store and under the old Center Market, as far as Mulberry Street. Here the boatmen were forced to pole the barges through the dark damp tunnel, ill-smelling and alive with rats.

Near Waterloo, in Sussex County, there is a small section preserved by the State, the only part of the 109 miles that is still in use.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

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