

PH 0004324

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Maine	
COUNTY: Knox and Waldo	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70-318-0050 0024	DATE 3/5/70

1. NAME

COMMON:  
George's River Canal

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
General Knox Canal

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Upper Falls, Georges River in Warren to Union Town Line, extending thence to

CITY OR TOWN:  
Quantabacook Pond in Searsmont. Towns included-Warren, Union, Appleton, Searsmont

STATE Maine	CODE 18	COUNTY: Knox 013 Waldo	CODE 027
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered in some parts of the canal	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Preservation for historical purposes</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Multiple public and private

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Portions of Warren, Union, Appleton and Searsmont and private property

CITY OR TOWN:  
Above towns and private people from diverse addresses

STATE:  
Maine

CODE  
18

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Knox County Courthouse      Waldo County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:  
62 Union Street      73 Church Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Rockland      Belfast

STATE:  
Maine

CODE  
18

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:  
 Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
STATE:  
CODE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Maine  
COUNTY: Knox & Waldo  
ENTRY NUMBER  
DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent     Good     Fair     Deteriorated     Ruins     Unexposed

(Check One)

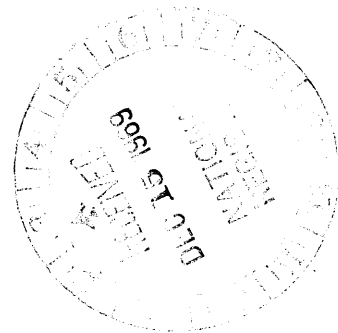
Altered     Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved     Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In the twenty-eight miles of Canal route, several miles were across the ponds through which water of the Georges River flowed. Several more miles were used in the river channel improved by removal of snags or deepening bars. A canal prism originally intended to pass through Round Pond was abandoned and the Beaver Dam at its north end remains to this day. Several stretches of prism have been filled and graded by adjoining homeowners, and several Canal bridges washed out or fallen have been abandoned. Yet there still remains the Knox Lock as rebuilt in stone, but with the gates long decayed. A culvert diverted to serve the powder mill still stands, and embankments are still conspicuous at this location. The Sennebec Lock in Union has been modified and is still crossed by the Dirigo bridge. Upstream, several stretches of embankment and remains of locks are awaiting relocation and clearing to make them available for observation. Reconstruction of Canal structures could be expensive, and might be unjustified in consideration of other water resource uses.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **Constructed 1846**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	<u>Transportation</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Canals for navigation on Georges River had an important influence on the development of the valley. Without roads, the rivers served to connect the seaports with the upcountry sources of local industry. Georges River was early used for access to the rich forest in its watershed, and mills were built at its lower falls.

To enable him to move lumber, Charles Barrett of Hope secured a charter from the Massachusetts General Court March 9, 1793... "to erect locks and open a navigation from upper part of Barrettstown, so called, in the County of Lincoln, with the sea, through Georges River, so-called..." with power of eminent domain, to build bridges for the convenience of the public, and authorized tolls of 1 shilling 6 pence/Ton or per 1,000 board feet of timber. Under this authority Barrett built locks at Upper Falls and Hart's Falls in Warren and conducted navigation through Seven Tree Pond to Union.

Major General Henry Knox retired as Secretary of War in 1794 to conduct his land and business operations in Maine. He purchased the locks from Charles Barrett, and also the sawmill at Hart's Falls from Miles Cobb and William Lermond. He moved the mill to Upper Falls and rebuilt Cobb and Lermond's mill with multiple saws. He raised a grist mill and two houses nearby.

Canal engineering had not been developed in America at that time, except for Colonel Laommi Baldwin's initial efforts on the Middlesex Canal in Massachusetts. Knox's French engineer built locks of sod and wood. A freshet badly damaged all the structures, and Life Wilson was employed in 1796 for repairs using timber. The dam was raised at the Upper Locks of Warren to eliminate the lock at Hart's. With this system, boats ran through the river and Seven Tree Pond to Union. Boats were owned by General Knox and most of the cargoes were his property. At his death in 1806, the canal was abandoned, and without maintenance a few years of decay and freshets destroyed the locks.

Through the prosperity consequent on the Industrial Revolution after the War of 1812, improved transportation reached such popular enthusiasm the period came to be known as "The Canal Era." The overwhelming success of the Erie Canal after 1825, led to the building of thousands of miles of canals. In Maine Cumberland and Oxford Canal was completed in 1830 stimulating the trade in the Sebago area. Lumber out of Maine supplied the coast shipbuilders and supplied a world-wide market, and speculation in Maine pine lands reached a stage of frenzy. In the midst of this, Hall's survey was prepared in 1837 for a canal on Georges River.

The Panic of 1837 ended all talk of construction, but the Aroostook War and subsequent settlement of the Canadian border kept the resources of Maine in public view. The canal idea was kept alive by Valley needs. Letters

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Eaton, Cyrus, Annals of the Town of Warren, Hallowell, (1877) p. 372  
 Mathews, E. A., Horse and Buggy Days in Union, Maine, pp. 20-21  
 Sullivan, James, History of the District of Maine (1795) p. 35  
 Sibley, John L., History of Union, Maine (1851) pp. 112-114  
 Newspaper articles, CARRIER GAZETTE, Rockland, Maine, March 15, April 14 and 21, 1966  
 Starre, A. Alena, Newspaper article, Portland Sunday Telegram, Portland, Maine August 20, 1939

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE				LONGITUDE				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	44°	22'	30"	69°	02'	30"	0°	00'	00"
NE	44°	22'	30"	69°	07'	30"	0°	00'	00"
SE	44°	07'	30"	69°	07'	30"	0°	00'	00"
SW	44°	07'	30"	69°	22'	30"	0°	00'	00"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Maine	18	Knox	013
		Waldo	027

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
 John W. Briggs, Historian

ORGANIZATION: State Park and Recreation Commission      DATE: Dec. 5, 1969

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 State House

CITY OR TOWN: Augusta      STATE: Maine      CODE: 18

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION      NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National       State       Local

Name Lawrence Stuart  
 Lawrence Stuart  
 Title Director

Date 12-11-69

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ernest Allen Connolly  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

MAR 5 1970

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:  
William J. Sawley  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date FEB 1 1970

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Maine	
COUNTY Knox and Waldo	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70-3-18-0024	

(Number all entries) Continuation of Statement of Significance

in the Thomaston RECORDER during the mid-1840's were filled with demands for cheap freight rates, with optimism over prospective cargoes and profits, and calls for action. Estimates of construction under \$50,000 were published in 1845 for locks and canals twenty-eight miles upstream from tidewater, and dividends were confidently predicted. Citizens meetings in Valley towns appointed committees to secure subscriptions, to collect funds, to build the Canal. The Legislature of Maine enacted Chapter 334, approved July 2, 1846, authorizing Georges Canal Company to build from tide water to Stevens Pond in Liberty capitalized at not more than \$100,000 in \$50 shares. Locks were to be of wood, all wood and iron work to be furnished by the Company at the sites. Earthwork excavation and embankment was estimated at 53,000 cubic yards. No rock excavation was required. The RECORDER closed October 1, 1846, drawing a curtain over the activities of such great concern in the Valley during construction of its Canal.

The Canal was opened in the spring of 1847 with traffic between Quantabacook Pond above Searsmont and tidewater at the Lower Falls in Warren. Georges River departed from usual canal practice is using no horses or mules on the towpath. Boats were poled by men in shallow water, and provided with sails to be used in crossing the ponds.

Maintenance costs for the wooden locks and for repairing washouts by the turbulent Georges River consumed the earnings from tolls. The Canal was not a financial success, and shifting of trade and population caused a decline in its traffic. Unlike other canals, the Georges River was not replaced with suddenness by the railroad, which was not built from Warren Station on the Knox & Lincoln RR to Union until 1892. Freshets washed out embankments in Searsmont and Appleton, and traffic was continued only to Sennebec Pond.

With increasing leakage from washouts and decay causing more frequent interruptions to traffic, the last boat went down the Canal in 1870. A number of court judgments and attachments harassed the Company and in the Legislature on February, 1856 the death knell sounded for the canal..."no more right to improve or maintain the Canal."

Through the length of the Valley, mills were built at a number of places for making lumber, window sash, sleighs, grist and lime mills, suited to the times. At Warren, woolen mills were created to supply the Union Army in the Civil War, burned and rebuilt. In September 1865 the dam at Upper Falls was rebuilt and Warren Powder Company rebuilt the Knox Lock to provide Water power and fire protection.

Upper Falls Dam was rebuilt and a hydroelectric generating station was built in 1902 for the Thomaston-Rockland Electric Railroad, which terminated in Warren. The flood of 1936 destroyed the dam, and the site became privately owned. The mill power at the Outlet of Sennebec Pond served mills until incorporated into Dirigo Electric Company hydroelectric station in 1914. Modern stations made the plant obsolete when the Central Maine Power Company was formed from a number of local utility companies. One by one all the plants on the river failed, burned or were washed out in floods. Their use of Canal structures or rout has come to an end.

A rectangle which would enclose the entire Georges River Canal would include the four complete 7 1/2 minute series topographic maps here:

Seaside, Maine  
 SE 1/4 Waldoboro 15' quadrangle  
 MA07.5 - W015/7.5  
 1965  
 AMS 7172 111 NE - Series V511

Searsmont, Maine  
 SW 1/4 Waldoboro 15' Quadrangle  
 MA15-M007.5/7.5

Washington, Maine  
 SE 1/4 Liberty 15' Quadrangle  
 MA15 - W015/7.5  
 1961  
 AMS 7172 SE Series V511

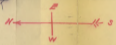
West Duxport, Maine  
 NW 1/4 Rockland 16' Quadrangle  
 MA07.5 - W007.5/7.5  
 1955



# GEORGES RIVER CANAL

Scale 1:62,000

Route of Canal - - - - -



H O P E

W A R R E N

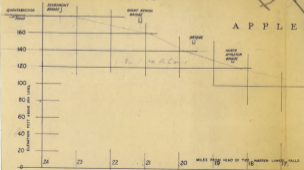
THOMASTON

SEARSMONT

A P P L E T O N

U N I O N

KNOS CANAL



APPLETON BRIDGE

ANNEXED POND

APPLETON BRIDGE

SEARSMONT BRIDGE

APPLETON BRIDGE

APPLETON BRIDGE

Plan by W. B. Howe