

WEST BRANCH PENNSYLVANIA CANAL, LOCK NO. 34
South of Route 664 along north bank of the West
Branch Susquehanna River, 2,000 feet east of the
Jay Street Bridge
Lock Haven Vicinity
Clinton County
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-188-A

HAER
PA
18-LOKHA.V
4A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Northeast Region
Philadelphia Support Office
U.S. Custom House
200 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HAER
PA
18-LOKHA
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

WEST BRANCH PENNSYLVANIA CANAL,
LOCK No. 34

HAER No. PA-188-A

Location: Located on the south side of Route 664, approximately 2,000 feet east of the Jay Street Bridge, Lower Lockport, Lock Haven Vicinity, Clinton County, Pennsylvania

UTM: 18.295090.4336740
Quad: Lock Haven, Pennsylvania

Date of Construction: 1834; Altered 1873-1874

Present Owner: Richard Raible
322 Hobson Street
Mill Hall, Pennsylvania 17751

Present Use: Vacant.

Significance: Lock No. 34 of the Lycoming Line of the West Branch Pennsylvania Canal (see HAER No. PA-188) is a historically significant remnant of the Pennsylvania state-built canal system. This c. 1834 structure was one element of a transportation system that did much to economically develop the valley of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River from 1834 to 1889 and that served to catapult Lock Haven--and neighboring Lockport to a lesser extent--into a center for transporting, processing, and distributing agricultural products, iron and coal, and lumber.

Lock No. 34 is a good example of 1830s and 1870s lock construction along the West Branch Pennsylvania Canal and possesses many of its original features, such as dressed stone walls, flared ends, pockets for the gates, and notches in the wall masonry for wooden cribbing and planking. One of nineteen locks constructed for the West Branch system in the 1830s and 1840s, the lock is typical of West Branch locks due to its standard dimensions and use of standardized construction materials. Expanded and reworked in the 1870s, Lock No. 34 operated until 1889, when the great flood of that year destroyed every man-made waterway in the region. To this day, much of Lock No. 34 is visible above ground and appears to have survived in relatively good condition.

Project Information: Documentation was undertaken in October and November 1991 in accordance with a Memorandum of Agreement between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, and the Lock Haven Area Flood Protection Authority. The documentation serves as a mitigative measure for the treatment of historic properties that were identified and evaluated in a series of studies and that would be affected by the proposed Lock Haven flood protection project. The project calls for a series of floodwalls and

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levees to be constructed around Lock Haven, Pennsylvania. When these features are in place, the resource addressed in this report will be located in an area of induced flooding. The resource will not be demolished or moved but will remain as is in its existing location. Documentation was prepared for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, by the Historic Preservation Group of Kise Franks & Straw, Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: M. Todd Cleveland, project manager; Susan C. Nabors, historian; Martin B. Abbot, historian; and Jill Cremer, graphics. Robert Tucher provided the documentary photographs. Steve Humphrey and Lance Metz of Hugh Moore Historical Park and Museums, Easton, Pennsylvania, conducted much of the research and writing for the preparation of this HAER report.

I. HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

See West Branch Pennsylvania Canal (HAER No. PA-188).

II. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Lock No. 34 of the West Branch Division of the Pennsylvania Canal and the associated lock keeper's house are located on 1.1 acres situated between the West Branch of the Susquehanna River and Route 664, approximately 2,000 feet east of the Jay Street Bridge in the village of Lower Lockport. No other structures survive on this site. (See accompanying site plan.) The lock is overgrown with vegetation; however, the random-coursed, cut-stone construction is visible. Both lock walls are relatively intact and are visible to a depth of approximately ten feet along the entire length of the lock. The western end walls curve convexly and, further into the lock, the walls curve concavely and then extend in a direct line to the east. The lock walls are constructed with vertical offsets at even intervals. These offsets extend from the ground upward to two courses below the top of the walls. The original locations of the gates are visible; however, any evidence of the gates themselves has long disappeared. Several iron clamps connecting the stones are still in place along the top edges of the walls. The floor of the lock is not visible due to the build-up of soil, leaves, and vegetation over time.

III. ARCHITECTURAL, ENGINEERING, AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Lock No. 34 is one of a number of fairly intact locks remaining from the heyday of the West Branch Pennsylvania Canal. One of nineteen locks constructed for the West Branch system in the 1830s and 1840s, much of Lock No. 34 is still visible above ground and appears to have survived in relatively good condition. Its overall dimensions and features, such as dressed stone walls, flared ends, pockets for the gates, and notches in the wall masonry for wooden cribbing and planking, are typical of a West Branch lock that was constructed in the 1830s and subsequently expanded during the 1870s by the Pennsylvania Canal Company. The method of construction used, large stone blocks laid without mortar resting on a floor of wooden beams and planks, is also typical of the West Branch system. (Note: Due to the natural deposition of soil and the growth of vegetation over time, the floor of the lock is not visible; however, it is known that a wooden beam-and-plank floor was typical of West Branch locks, and such a floor was observed in Lock Haven in March 1992 at Lock No. 35 (see HAER No. PA-187).)

Lock No. 34 survives as a historically significant remnant of the Pennsylvania state-built canal system. This structure was one element of a waterway transportation system that did much to economically develop the valley of the West Branch of the Susquehanna River from 1834 to 1889. The system linked the valley with the more populated markets of Eastern Pennsylvania, including Philadelphia with its established trading ties to New York and Baltimore. The man-made water features of the region, consisting of canals, locks, and dams, together with the natural waterway formed by the Susquehanna River's West Branch, were responsible for the creation of Lock Haven (and neighboring Lockport to a lesser extent) as a commercial center. These waterways became the principal routes of commerce in the West Branch valley, and Lock Haven's position at the junction of two canal lines and at the banks of a major river made it a prime trading center for the transport, processing, and distribution of agricultural products, iron and coal, and lumber. Lockport's proximity to the same waterways and to the developing community of Lock Haven across the river led to overall growth and increased prosperity in that village. Prior to the devastating flood of 1889, the fortunes of the Lock Haven area were almost

entirely tied to the logging and lumber-processing industries. Without the river to transport the raw logs and the canals to deliver the finished lumber, the area's prosperity would certainly have never reached the levels it did. The healthy economic climate generated by waterway commerce had a ripple effect on the Lock Haven area as new jobs were created, new residences and commercial structures were constructed, and government and social organizations established themselves in the growing commercial hub of Clinton County.

IV. SOURCES

A. Architectural Drawings:

West Branch Pennsylvania Canal, Lock No. 34, 1873 Historic Site Plan. Taken from West Branch Canal Maps, Pennsylvania Canal Company, in possession of Hugh Moore Historical Park and Museums, Easton, Pennsylvania. ~~Layout by Jill Cremer, Kise Franks & Straw, Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1992.~~

West Branch Pennsylvania Canal, Lock No. 35, 1873 Historic Site Plan. Taken from West Branch Canal Maps, Pennsylvania Canal Company, in possession of Hugh Moore Historical Park and Museums, Easton, Pennsylvania. ~~Layout by Jill Cremer, Kise Franks & Straw, Inc., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1992.~~

B. Historic Views: None

C. Interviews: None

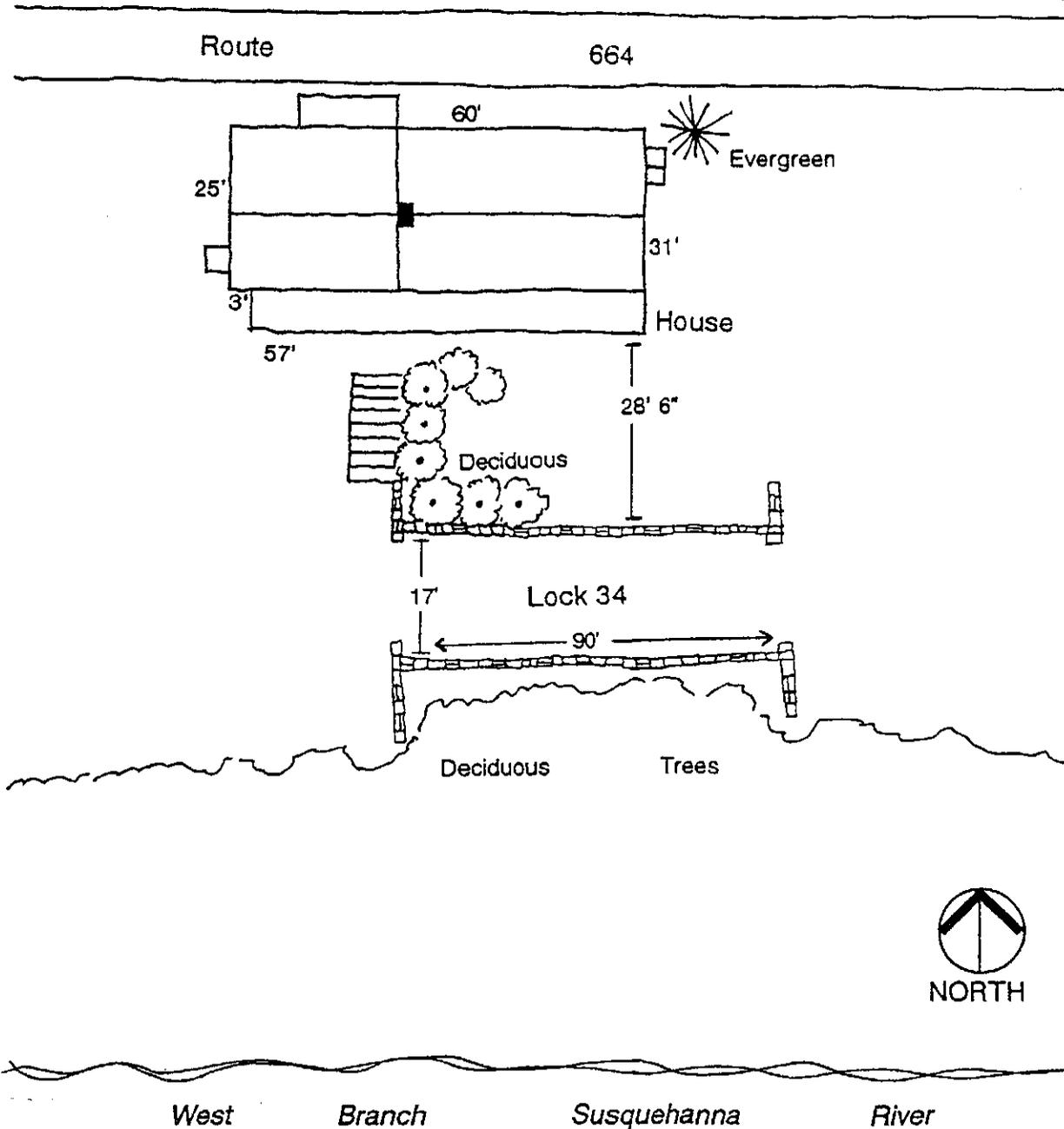
D. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

West Branch Pennsylvania Canal Maps, Pennsylvania Canal Company. 1873. In possession of Hugh Moore Historical Park and Museums, Easton, Pennsylvania.

2. Secondary and published sources: None

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Existing Site Plan
(Not to Scale)

Date Drawn: 1992
Prepared By: Jill Cremer