

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Virginia</b>
COUNTY: <b>Spotsylvania</b>
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE <b>JUL 26 1973</b>

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Rapidan Dam Canal of the Rappahannock Navigation**

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**See Continuation Sheet**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Fredericksburg vic.**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
**Seventh; J. Kenneth Robinson**

STATE: **Virginia** CODE: **51** COUNTY: **Spotsylvania** CODE: **177**

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <b>Woodland</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

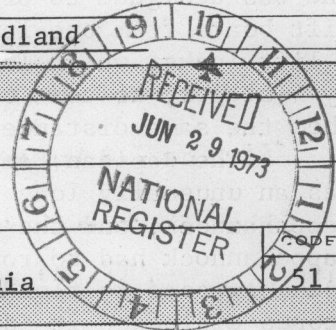
**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**City of Fredericksburg**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Fredericksburg**

STATE:  
**Virginia**



STATE: Virginia

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Municipal Court House**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Fredericksburg**

STATE:  
**Virginia**

CODE: **51**

COUNTY: Spotsylvania

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey**

DATE OF SURVEY: **1968**     Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Room 1116 Ninth Street State Office Building**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Richmond**

STATE:  
**Virginia**

CODE: **51**

ENTRY NUMBER: 111

DATE: JUL 26 1973

FOR NPS USE ONLY

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The Rappahannock Navigation consisted of a series of 20 dams, each with a Guard Lock and usually a short canal with one or more lift locks. The Rapidan Dam Canal is the best preserved and most elaborate of these canals and its remains are representative of the whole Rappahannock Navigation.

The Rapidan Dam Canal parallels closely the right (south) bank of the Rappahannock River from the mouth of the Rapidan to a point 1 1/2 miles below where it re-enters the river through three locks. The canal is now dry, but is intact except for river damage to the Guard Lock; a pipeline trench through the towpath below Lock 9; and some silting in the lower end. The silt however, could easily be removed, and the breach in the towpath provides an instructive cross-section illustrating the construction of a towpath embankment, including rip-rap and clay puddling. There are five locks on the canal, all of stone; primarily broken range rubble masonry. The Guard Lock is situated at the head of the canal, at the mouth of the Rapidan; Lock 9 is 3/8 mile below; Lock 8, 1 mile further; Lock 7, 200 feet further, and Lock 6, the outlet lock to the river, 200 feet further. According to the Company's annual report for 1848, the Guard Lock is of stone laid in mortar; Lock 9 of granite laid in cement, with a lift of 9.2'; Lock 8 of flagstone laid in mortar, 6.75' lift; Lock 7 of granite laid in mortar, 6.75' lift; and Lock 6, the Outlet Lock, of flagstone laid in mortar, with a lift of 8.2'. The lift of the Guard Lock, which opened onto the pond formed by the Rapidan Dam, was variable according to the level of the pond, and was designed to protect the canal from floods, rather than to lower or lift boats from one level to another. The latter function was that of the 4 lift locks, which lowered boats from the level of the Rapidan Dam pond, by 4 stages, to that of Scott's Dam pond, about 31 feet below; or raised them the same distance, when traveling upstream.

The Rapidan Dam, of which only iron pins in the river bed remain, was an unusually long (and expensive) Dam, stretching across both the Rappahannock, and the mouth of the Rapidan. Batteaux going down the Rappahannock had to row across the Rapidan to reach the Guard Lock. This lock, exposed to flood debris, has been badly battered, but even with stones dislodged it is still presentable. Below the Guard Lock, to Lock 9, the towpath embankment, closely paralleling the river, is protected by a long and massive stone wall, making this the most impressive stretch of canal on the river, with the possible exception of the deep cuts at Kelly's Ford. Lock 9, built into a bluff, is one of the most unusual on the river, because the one wall is composed of bedrock (John Couty, who built this lock, used this same technique on the rebuilding of the Rivanna Navigation). Below the lock is a power-line clearing, which crosses the river at right angles to the canal, incidentally affording a view of the site of a flight of wooden locks on the other side of the river-perhaps the only place where the original canals of 1829 have remained undisturbed and were not reconstructed in 1847. A cut through the towpath, just below Lock 9, reveals the construction of a towpath embankment. The canal below Lock 9 passes through the U.S. Gold Mine fields, and in fact has two mine adits in the canal bed, leading into the hillside. These were apparently made after the demise of the canal. A few yards below the adits is the old road to the U. S. Ford, and the sluice-gate and foundations of a mill. The road crossed the canal on a bridge with well-preserved, curving stone abutments. A stone spillway or waste is found further along the canal; this regulated

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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

2.

The Rapidan Dam Canal boundaries are 500' from each side of the Rappahannock River from the mouth of the Rapidan to a point 1 1/2 miles below, where it re-enters the river through three locks.



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(Number all entries)

7.  
the water level. At the lower end of the canal are Locks 6, 7 and 8, 200 feet apart, perfectly preserved and picturesque. From this point, batteaux on the way to Fredericksburg poled downriver, and probably rowed across, to the next canal, at Scott's Dam Guard Lock on the opposite side of the river one mile below the outlet of the Rapidan Dam Canal.

The Register nomination boundaries are 500' from each side of the canal remains.



**3. 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)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Park Planning</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                   | _____   |
| <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 type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   |   |  | _____   |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Rappahannock Navigation is the best remaining example of a batteau lock-and-dam navigation in the U. S., and the Rapidan Dam Canal is the best part of that navigation.

A batteau lock-and-dam navigation represents a compromise, typical in the South, between an expensive continuous canal for horse-drawn canal boats, and an inexpensive but unreliable riverbed sluice navigation for batteaux. Batteaux, sturdy river boats requiring shallow water, were poled and rowed so they needed no towpath, and could use small locks and narrow canals. The lock and dam system, consisting of a series of dams, each with a lock and usually a short canal, bypassed rapids and created ponds of still water. Most of the inland navigations in the South, penetrating the piedmont by way of the river valleys, were for batteaux. These systems involved various proportions of channeled riverbed (sluice navigation), lock-and-dam navigation, and continuous canal.

The next best remaining batteau navigation in the U. S. is the Wateree-Catawba, in South Carolina, but much of that navigation has been inundated by recent water control projects. At the time of its construction (1847-49) the first half of the Rappahannock navigation was judged superior to the other two similar navigations in Virginia, the Appomattox and Rivanna Navigations primarily because most of the locks on that part of the Rappahannock were of stone (the Rivanna navigation was later rebuilt for canal boats, this time with stone locks). Interestingly enough, the engineer of the lower (first) half of the Rappahannock Navigation, John Couty, was then in charge of the Rivanna rebuilding, and was also involved with the construction of the Landsford Canal.

The Rappahannock Navigation was a local project to draw trade to Fredericksburg and to provide the farmers of the region with an economical outlet to market. Construction began in 1829 in Fredericksburg, with an elaborate parade and ceremony. A great deal of money and effort was expended by Fredericksburg and at times by the local farmers, but even with the help of funds from the state Board of Public Works, progress was so slow that the 50-mile navigation was not successfully completed until a complete rebuilding took place in 1847-49, just in time for railway competition to make it useless. This rebuilding was carried out in two phases. The lower half of the navigation, below Kelly's Ford, was constructed first and received the most money and effort; this part of the navigation, which includes the Rapidan Dam Canal, was the most substantial and had almost all locks of fine cut-stone. The civil engineer John Couty was in charge of this part of the navigation. The upper half of the navigation, under Basil Gordon, was constructed more economically; most of

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Rappahannock Canal, by Donald S. Callaham, M. A. thesis, American University, Washington, D. C., 1967, 95 pp.

Map of the Rappahannock Navigation, 1848, Map and Profile of the Rappahannock Navigation and its improvement, 1848. Virginia State Library M S 755.2 H9.

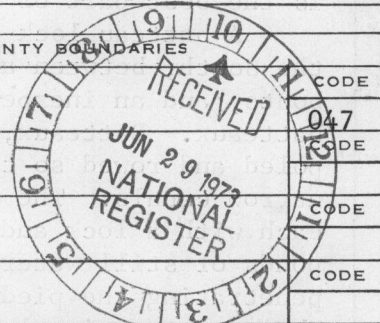
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	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	38°	22'	07"	77°	37'	16"	0		
NE	38°	22'	07"	77°	36'	05"	0		
SE	38°	20'	52"	77°	36'	05"			
SW	38°	20'	52"	77°	37'	16"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 200 acres.

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Virginia	51	Culpeper	047
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE: June, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Room 1116 Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond, STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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 Junius R. Fishburne, Jr.  
Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Director  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
Title \_\_\_\_\_

JUN 19 1973

Date \_\_\_\_\_

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Robert W. Utley  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 7/26/73

ATTEST:  
[Signature]  
Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

NW 18/271020  
 1020112/181M  
 4249780  
 0816424/4247480  
 5318/272640/4247480  
 SW 18/272400/4247480  
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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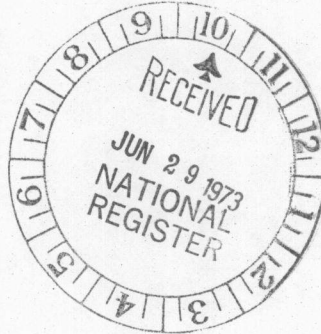
(Continuation Sheet)

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Virginia	
COUNTY	
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8.

the locks were of wood, "of the best heart pine or white oak that a country abounding in these materials could afford", but these have rotted away aboveground. Altogether, there were 26 stone locks, 54 wooden locks, 15 miles of canal and 20 dams. At least 20 of the stone locks are extant.



PROPERTY

Rapidan Dam Canal of the Rappahannock Navigation STATE Virginia

73002063

WORKING NUMBER

6-29-73. 3204

TECH REVIEW

Photos 3

Maps \_\_\_\_\_

Spotsylvania

CONTROL REVIEW

<sup>Carbon</sup>  
~~2~~ copies of photo forms

cm  
7-5-  
73

HISTORIAN

<sup>otherwise</sup>  
to HAER when Eric returns  
next week (for next person?)

OK  
Accept - Amd  
7/12/73

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

with HAER's approval.

Accept  
KHC  
7/12/73

ARCHEOLOGIST

Inventoried by HAER. 7/14/73. Accept Dud  
<sub>fm</sub>

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

BRANCH CHIEF

KEEPER

Accept  
for [unclear]  
7/24/73

National Register write-up 3-27-74

Send-back \_\_\_\_\_

Federal Register entry 9-4-73

Re-submit \_\_\_\_\_

Entered \_\_\_\_\_

JUL 26 1973



Rappa hanuock Navigabris

Lock from NW

Spotsylvania Co. / Va -

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE Virginia	
COUNTY Spotsylvania	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER JUL 26 1973	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON: Rapidan Dam Canal of the Rappahannock Navigation  
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

See Continuation Sheet

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:

Virginia

CODE

51

COUNTY:

Spotsylvania

CODE

177

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE OF PHOTO: 1968

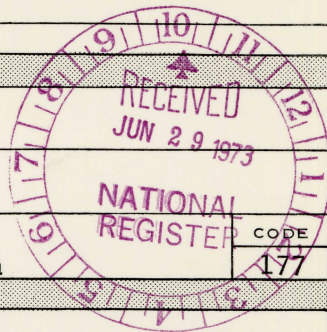
NEGATIVE FILED AT:

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission; Richmond, Virginia

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

1. View of lock from North west.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS



Rappahannock Navigations

Spillway across  
towpath Lock 8, from NE  
Sportsman's C., Va.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE

Virginia

COUNTY

Spotsylvania

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

JUN 26 1973

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1. NAME

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PHOTO CREDIT: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE OF PHOTO: 1968

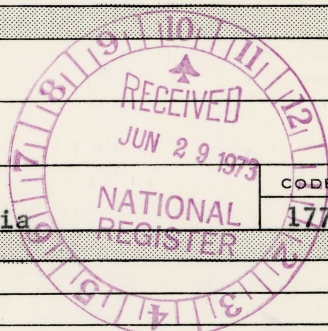
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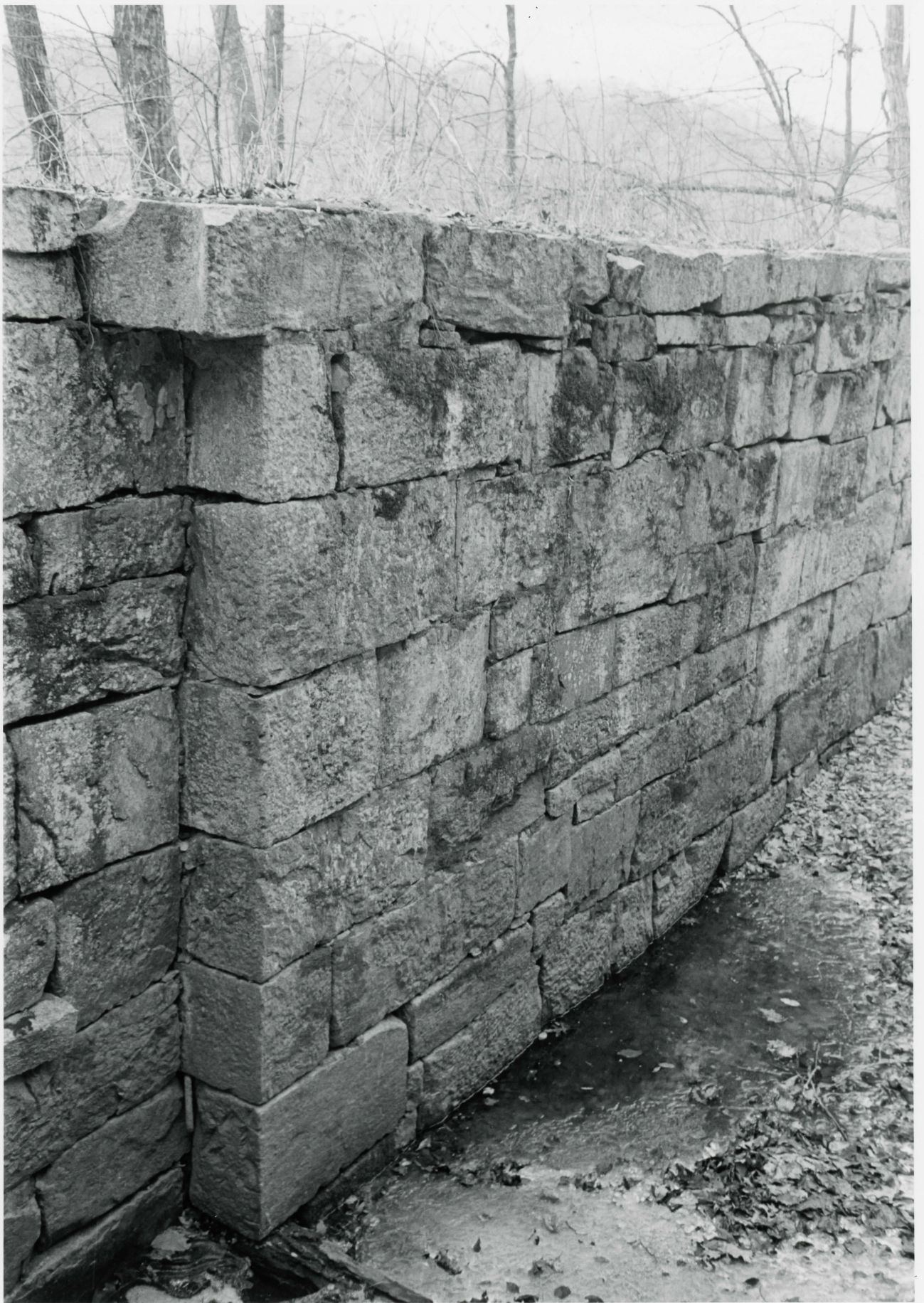
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission; Richmond, Virginia

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

2. View of spillway across towpath Lock 8 from Northeast.





Rappahannock Navigations

Lock 9 - detail of north wall  
of chamber, from the west  
Spotsylvania Co., Va.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE Virginia	
COUNTY Spotsylvania	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
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STATE:

Virginia

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177

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DATE OF PHOTO: 1968

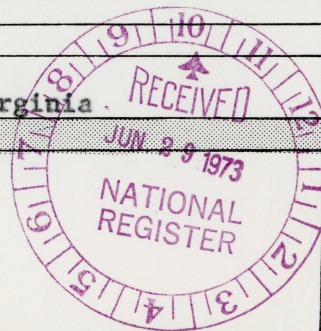
NEGATIVE FILED AT:

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission; Richmond, Virginia.

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

3. Lock 9 - detail of North wall from the West.



Form 10-301  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Virginia	
COUNTY Spotsylvania	
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

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AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

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STATE: Virginia	CODE 51	COUNTY: Spotsylvania	CODE 177
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3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE:

U. S. G. S. 7 1/2' quadrangle Salem Church, Virginia

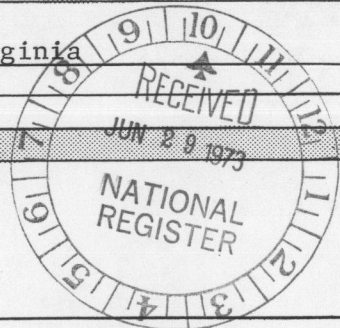
SCALE: 1:24000

DATE: 1966

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.

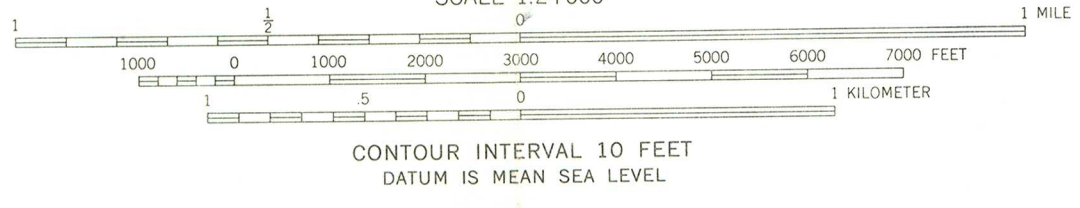
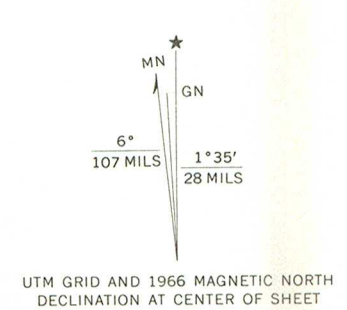


*Rapidan Dam Canal:*  
*Rapidan Dam*  
*Guard Lock*  
*Lock 9*  
*Retaining Wall*  
*Bridge Abutments and Mill*  
*Spillway*  
*Locks 6, 7 & 8*

*NE 12/271 230*  
*4249 780*  
*SW 12/272 400*  
*4247 480*  
*SW 12/272 400*  
*4247 400*  
*NW 12/271 000*  
*4249 780*  
*10*



Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey  
Control by USGS and USC&GS  
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1963. Field checked 1966  
Supersedes Army Map Service map dated 1943  
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on Virginia coordinate system, north zone  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18, shown in blue  
Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Heavy-duty	Light-duty
Medium-duty	Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route	U.S. Route
	State Route

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS  
FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20242  
AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES, CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22903  
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

SALEM CHURCH, VA.  
N3815-W7730/7.5  
1966  
AMS 5460 I SE-SERIES V834

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE VIRGINIA

Date Entered JUL 26 1973

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Harrison, Thomas, House	Harrisonburg (city)
Baldwin, Mary College, Main Building	Staunton (city)
Cherry Hill	Falls Church (city)
L Rapidan Dam Canal of the Rappahannock Navigation	Spotsylvania County

Also Notified

Hon. Harry F. Byrd, Jr.  
Hon. William L. Scott  
Hon. J. Kenneth Robinson  
Hon. Joel T. Broyhill  
Hon. M. Caldwell Butler

State Historic Preservation Officer  
Dr. Junius R. Fishburne, Jr.  
Executive Director  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
State Ninth Street Office Building  
Room 1106  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Director, Northeast Region

PHR MMOTT: pcl 7/30/73