



Number 78

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

September 2021

The D&R Canal Watch  
P.O. Box 2  
Rocky Hill, New Jersey 08553

908-240-0488

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

<https://www.facebook.com/dandrcanalwatch/>

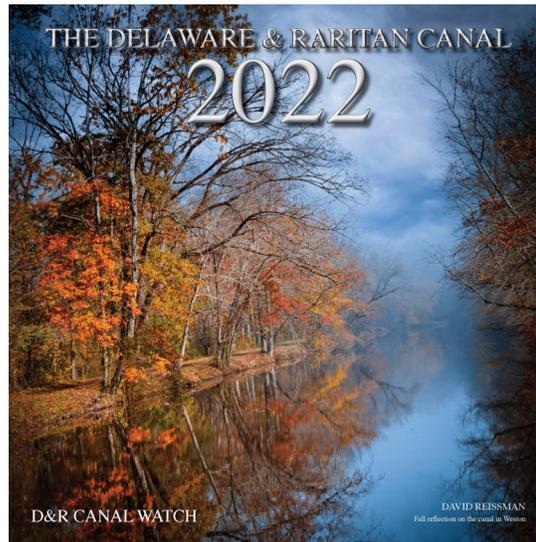
[info@canalwatch.org](mailto:info@canalwatch.org)

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**Our Mission**

The D&R Canal Watch is an independent, nonprofit organization working to engage the public in the protection of the environment and preservation of the heritage of the D&R Canal.



**12" x 12" -- \$20, with all proceeds going to the D&R Canal Watch to purchase items for the park.**

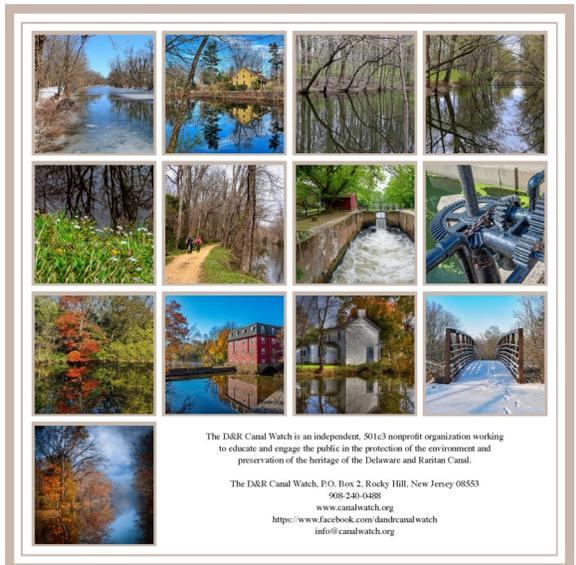
This lovely full-color calendar features images taken by people who visit the towpath. The photographs feature this year's themes: reflections and the workings of the D&R Canal. Enjoy views of our canal in all seasons.

Our calendar includes a map and a history of the D&R Canal.

**2022 CANAL WATCH CALENDAR**

**The brand new 2022 D&R Canal Calendar is now available. Supplies are limited, so order your copy now.**

**To purchase a copy, please email Linda Barth at [barthlinda123@aol.com](mailto:barthlinda123@aol.com). Provide your phone number and your town and she will arrange for delivery.**



**Issues in the Park**

Have you seen a downed tree across the towpath or some other problem in the park?

If so, please contact the D&R Canal Watch at [barthlinda123@aol.com](mailto:barthlinda123@aol.com) or 908-240-0488 and she will forward your concerns to the park superintendent. Or you can report problems to the state park office at 609-924-5705.



## The East Millstone Bridgetender's Station—We've made it!

As we noted in the July issue, the final permits, via the Department of Community Affairs, were submitted for code review. Fortunately, the flood plain application, prepared by our distinguished and hardworking architect Bob Russell, was approved. The package then went back to the code review folks and has been accepted!!

At long last, the project has gone to the Office of Resource Development (ORD). On Thursday, September 2 the ORD sent out the bid packages to three historic restoration contractors who are pre-qualified by the Division of Property Management and Construction (DPMC). Bids are due back by 2:00 p.m. on September 30th.

**The Canal Watch and the state park are deeply grateful for the generous contributions of our friends and members in securing the conditions assessment, the engineering drawings, and the final permits from code review.**

Also on September 2 we received a photo showing that the station had survived the heavy rains and flooding of the remains of Hurricane Ida. There it is in the photo, under the blue tarp.



### Clean-Up Crews Thanked for Their Hard Work



We owe a great deal of thanks to Eric Clark, the head of the SPLASH Steamboat Floating Classroom. When Eric sees graffiti on our signs, he heads over and uses special cleaning cloths to remove the vandalism.



And speaking of cleaning, after the

heavy rains from Tropical Storm Henri on August 22 and 23, our hearty group of volunteers headed for Griggstown to clean the water and mud from the Muletenders Barracks and the Millstone Valley National Scenic Byway Visitor Center. On hand were (left to right) Barbara ten Broeke, Wayne Petko, Ted Chase, and Bob Barth. The team removed the contents, powerwashed the floors, squeegeed the water out the door, and disinfected the building.



Only a few days later, as you all know, Central New Jersey was swamped by the powerful remnants of Hurricane Ida. Canal and river towns like Lambertville, Manville, Franklin, Bound Brook, South Bound Brook, New Brunswick, and Hillsborough were deluged with feet of muddy water.

Beginning on Saturday, September 4, our volunteers began once again cleaning the Barracks and the Visitor Center. We owe a great debt to Lori Savron, Eric Strong, Wayne Petko, park superintendent Patricia Kalleser, park historian Vicki Chirco, Tony Polizzotti, Bob Barth, Barbara ten Broeke and Chuck and Diana Martin. The Martins powerwashed the whole Barracks.

On the following day, the team returned to complete the work on the Griggstown buildings. Eric Strong arrived with three Griggstown firemen. They used their firehoses to swoosh the mud



Photo left: Bob Barth, Tony Polizzotti, and Barbara ten Broeke.

Photo right: Bob Barth  
Next page, top left, Tony Polizzotti

Many thanks to park historian Vicki Chirco for these wonderful images.



from the Barracks.  
We thank Chief Darrell Myers and firemen Mark Sletta and Mike Christiansen, as well as Bob Barth, Ted Chase, and Wayne Petko.

Superintendent Kalleser brought Sidra Kash, Adam Mielse, and Joe Hornsby to the East Millstone bridgetender's home where they did the same type of clean-up with Wayne Petko and Bob Barth. And on the 7th, Bob, Barbara, and Wayne powerwashed the bridgetender's station in East Millstone (see top of p. 2).

**From our hardworking park superintendent: "Thank you all so much for your hard work today. Much to be done, but much done already because of your volunteerism and canal passion!"**





A sinkhole on Quakerbridge Road near the canal in Port Mercer  
Photo by Patricia Kalleser.



Blackwells Mills. Photos by Anna Gerwel.



The back deck of the visitor center in Griggstown was torn off and floated toward the canoe livery.  
Photos by Barbara ten Broeke.





Kingston, September 3. Photos by Charles Martin  
 Top two: parking lots at the Kingston lock. Lower left: road leading to the mill.  
 Rocky Hill, September 3: Photos by Charles Martin  
 Bottom an lower left: Route 518 crossing the canal and river



**More thanks to our state park friends:**

Marsha Appfel was shoveling mud from boat launches and Park Police trainee Matthew Costellow was directing traffic to onlookers trying to do unsafe things.

Michael Ley and Seasonal Steve Young were also out evaluating the Main Canal trail on the UTV yesterday.

Mark Wooden, Colleen Ruzicka, Gregory Gerhard and Erik Appfel were chain-sawing and assessing the Feeder Canal.

Seasonal Theresa Morrow helped the Lawrence Historical Society clean out the flooded kitchen of mud and was assessing the trail condition in Princeton today.

It's been all hands on deck.



Mike Ross, the resident caretaker at the Blackwells Mills Canal House, cleaned the whole building after Ida hit. He is a real asset to the association. Photos by Anna Gerwel.



South Bound Brook towpath heading south from Lock 11. Photo by Linda Barth



South Bound Brook spillway and towpath. Photo by Patricia Kalleser.



The TD Bank Ballpark in Bridgewater, just across the Raritan River from the canal in South Bound Brook.



Wayne Petko, Bob Barth, and Barbara ten Broeke cleaned after Hurricane Henri in August.

The Kingston Mill withstood the flooding remarkably well because of the way the owners restored it after the last flood. While a trace of water did get onto the first floor, the design of the floor and wallboards make the mill resilient. The owners also used their elevator to move items from the first to second floor. (Photo: courtesy of Town Topics)



Our East Millstone bridgetender's station survived quite well inside and out. Our team power washed the interior.



## Ashbel Welch

The Second Chief Engineer of the D&R Canal  
With excerpts from Along the D&R Canal by William J. McKelvey



A visionary engineer who had a key role in construction of the Delaware & Raritan Canal, Ashbel Welch led the construction of the D&R Canal following the death of the first engineer, Canvass White.

A longtime Lambertville resident, Welch was a lifelong innovator, developing new methods of canal building and at the same time improving conditions for the laborers who built the canal, as they faced devastating cholera epidemics.

He later became chief engineer of a number of regional railroads, including the Camden & Amboy and the Philadelphia and Trenton Railroad. He also built the Belvidere and Delaware Railroad. Welch's invention of the block signaling system was adopted by all American railroads and greatly reduced the threat of collisions. His port facility on the west side of the Hudson River sped the transfer of freight and opened up the New York harbor to rail traffic from the south and west. In 1882 he was elected president of the American Society of Civil Engineers.

The building of the upper feeder of the D&R was under the direction of Ashbel Welch. "We learn that a choice of routes has at length been made for the Canal to unite the Raritan with the Delaware River, and that the Millstone route is to be the one. It will come within about 3 miles of this village (Somerville), a few rods east of the mills of W.T. Rogers, Esq. And from thence take an easterly direction towards the Raritan, and probably cross it somewhere near the lower toll-gate. The ground is said to be already staked out, and has been broken near Kingston. *Somerset Messenger*, November 10, 1830; and *Sentinel of Freedom*, November 16, 1830. Note: On November 10<sup>th</sup> ground was broken near Kingston.

Ashbel Welch was born on December 4, 1809, to Ashbel Welch, Sr. and Margaret "Peggy" Dorrance Welch, in Nelson, New York, between Utica and Syracuse.

In 1826, Welch started his engineering career as a rodman on the Lehigh and Delaware Canal, working for his brother Sylvester Welch. In 1830, Welch joined the engineers of Canvass White in Trenton, New Jersey on the construction of the Delaware and Raritan Canal. Two years later Welch was in charge of digging the feeder canal northwestward from Trenton. He selected Lambertville for his headquarters. In 1834, the Delaware and Raritan Canal was completed and opened for business.

That same year Welch married Mary Hannah Seabrook (1813-1874) in Lambertville, New Jersey. They had seven children.

In 1836, at age 26, Welch was appointed the chief engineer of the Joint Companies (Delaware and Raritan Canal Company & Camden and Amboy Railroad & Transportation Company). That same year he was appointed Chief Engineer of the Philadelphia and Trenton Railroad.

In 1843, he earned an honorary degree of Master of Arts from the College of New Jersey at Princeton. In 1844, Welch traveled to England and supervised the construction of an order of guns for the United States Navy. In 1863, he led the efforts on the installation of a block signaling system on the Camden and Amboy Railroad between Philadelphia and New Brunswick. The first in America, this signaling system was later used on all American railroads.

Welch became President of the Bel-Del Railroad and the Flemington Railroad in 1869. Three years later he resigned as President of United Companies and became the superintendent of Bel-Del Railroad under Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) management. Welch maintained his duties as a chief engineer. Lambertville was the home of Ashbel Welch and was probably why the extensive shops of the Bel Del Railroad were built there. Between 1866 and 1872, 17 locomotives were built and one rebuilt in those shops for the Bel Del.

He died on September 25, 1882, in his home on 21 York St, Lambertville, New Jersey. Welch is buried at Mount Hope Cemetery, Lambertville, Hunterdon County, New Jersey.

(continued on the next page)

**Excerpts from “Along the D&R Canal,” by William J. McKelvey:**

**From Delaware & Raritan Canal Co. Directors:** 1871 Directors: Robert F. Stockton, John M. Read, Moses Taylor, John G. Stevens, Richard S. Conover, William W. Shippen, Albert W. Markley, John Jacob Astor, and G. Morris Dorrance. 1872 directors: Robert F. Stockton, John G. Stevens, John Jacob Astor, and **Ashbel Welch**. *Daily State Gazette, May 21, 1872.*

**Delaware & Raritan Canal Grand Opening Celebration, from a letter by the Hon. Ashbel Welch to Solomon W. Roberts, Esq., dated Trenton, June 27, 1834:**

On Wednesday the directors of our canal and railroad companies, and some thirty or more of the principal stockholders, together with the governor (Peter Vroom), and sundry others of our great people, came up the ‘feeder’ as far as Lambertville in a Chesapeake and Delaware canal barge. After dining there all hands got aboard the barge —myself among the number—and started for Trenton about nine o’clock at night... By good luck more than good management, we got to Trenton without wrecking the boat, and after a short nap started off yesterday morning for New Brunswick. The canal banks for the whole distance were lined with people, - that is to say, there were large collections of them at the landings bridges, etc. A more jolly party than ours was in the afternoon you seldom meet. John C. Stevens, James S. Green, and Thomas Biddle acted as fun-makers, and they acquitted themselves admirably... When we arrived at New Brunswick we were greeted with a salute of twenty-four guns, were received by the military with presented arms, stood something less than a half an hour with our hats off while the mayor made a speech and was answered, hurraed in return to their civilities until we were all hoarse, were marched up and down the streets, and a little after dark sat down to a sumptuous dinner, provided at the expense of the canal company. The military, for their arduous services (to wit, waiting under arms four or five hours and being nearly broiled), received their pay partly in champagne, partly in glory.”

**Letters, we get letters**

Hi Linda, was reading the D&R newsletter this week...love the Canvass story layout and the extra story with it! Looks great. Thanks so much for adding it to this edition.

Cheers!

John Prieto



Impressive news! Especially the Mini-Canal Project. Congratulations! If I can give a hand, let me know.  
Barbara

## D&R Canal Watch Memorials are a thoughtful gesture

Often when friends or family members have passed away, people ask where they can make a donation that would be meaningful to the deceased.

If your loved one enjoyed exploring the canal or just found it a peaceful sanctuary, perhaps a gift to the D&R Canal Watch would be appropriate.

All of our funding is used to enhance the park and assist the staff in purchasing necessary equipment.



**TAX-DEDUCTIBLE GIVING TO THE D&R CANAL WATCH**  
Many people consider making charitable contributions for income tax purposes. Remember that the Canal Watch is a tax-exempt organization, so your contributions are tax-deductible.

## D&R Canal Watch 2021 Membership Renewal Form

Membership year: January 1 to December 31

Nonprofit Org \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ Individual \$15 \_\_\_\_\_ Family \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Organization \$40 \_\_\_\_\_  
Supporter \$100 \_\_\_\_\_ Patron \$250 \_\_\_\_\_ Business member \$500 \_\_\_\_\_ Benefactor \$1000 \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form and your check, payable to the D&R Canal Watch, to D&R Canal Watch, P.O. Box 2, Rocky Hill, New Jersey 08553-0002. Dues can also be paid online at <https://canalwatch.org/join/>

For reasons of fiscal and environmental responsibility, newsletters will be posted on the Canal Watch website, [www.canalwatch.org](http://www.canalwatch.org), and emailed to members for whom we have email addresses. If you require a paper copy, please check here \_\_\_\_\_.

Volunteers are needed to lead walks/trips. Do you have computer, photography, or design skills that you are willing to use for the organization? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
Try me \_\_\_\_\_ (circle your skill)

**Class of 2020-2023**

Theodore Chase (Griggstown)  
Tim Roth (Long Valley)  
Jeff McVey (Lambertville)  
Barbara Ross (Princeton)

**Class of 2019-2022**

Linda Barth (Somerville)  
Robert Barth (Somerville)  
Michael Kaplan (Griggstown)

Ellen Kaplan (Griggstown)  
Pamela V'Combe (Trenton), activities chair

**Class of 2021-2024**

Tom Lederer (Princeton), publicity chair  
Carl Hemmingsen, Bordentown  
Marion Munk (Piscataway)  
Wayne Petko (South Bound Brook)

**EVENTS YOU MAY WISH TO ATTEND**



2010 **FARM to TABLE** 2021

at

FARMSTEAD ARTS CENTER

Save the Date

CELEBRATING 11 YEARS

SATURDAY OCT 2nd

6:00 PM-9:00 PM

Join us to enjoy colonial style cuisine & music in our historic restored English barn

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Space is limited so reserve your tickets today.

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This program is made possible in part by funds from the Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission, a partner of the New Jersey Historical Commission.

Social Affairs Permit # 89091

SOMERSET COUNTY Cultural & Heritage COMMISSION



Somerset County's 16th Annual

**JOURNEY THROUGH THE PAST**

Visit select Historic Sites in Somerset County, NJ in person on

**Saturday, October 9, 2021, & Sunday, October 10, 2021**

and virtually throughout October at [www.SCHistoryweekend.com](http://www.SCHistoryweekend.com)

**FREE TO THE PUBLIC!**

Tours • Exhibits • Performances • Arts  
• Family Activities • Trading Cards  
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Made possible with funds from the Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the New Jersey Historical Commission, and the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism.



The D&R Canal Watch is asking for your support for our activities that protect, maintain, and promote the recreational, historical, aesthetic, and environmental qualities of the Delaware & Raritan Canal State Park. Over the past years, the Canal Watch has:

- Led history walks along both the main canal and the feeder, pointing out historic structures and Light Rail study tours
- Led history bike rides along the main canal and star-gazing events
- Sponsored bird watching walks along the main canal and bilingual nature walks
- Sponsored lectures on topics such as “The Role of the Delaware and Raritan Canal in the Growth of Trenton's Industrial Potteries,” “The Operation of the Joint Companies and the Interrelationship of the canal with the state’s first railroad,” “The Roebling Story,” “Photography Along the Delaware and Raritan Canal State Park: Treasure in Central New Jersey,” “Meet Ashbel Welch, the second chief engineer of the Delaware and Raritan Canal,” and Jim Amon on how the canal and the park changed during his tenure with the commission.
- Purchased gifts that the park budget could not provide. These include a digital camera, seven picnic tables, several benches, a laptop computer and software, a desktop computer, an LED projector, an inflatable screen for outdoor viewing of videos, a subscription to the Meetup website, a scanner, printer ink, a water testing kit, an external computer drive, lumber for canoe dock at Griggstown, folding tables and twenty chairs for Bulls Island, development of a new park website, and professional courses for the maintenance staff.
- Canal interpretive signage at locks and spillways
- Activities in 2009 marking the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the Delaware and Raritan Canal. These included “Meet the Canal Authors Day” and “The D&R Canal: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow,” by Richard Hunter” walks, bike rides, canoe and kayak rides, “Hands Along the Canal,” and proclamations from our legislature.
- Examination of Lock 9 to determine the feasibility of reopening the lock to navigation
- Post-flood cleaning of canal structures in Griggstown, Zarephath, and East Millstone
- Painting over graffiti in East Millstone
- Repair of shutters on the East Millstone bridgetender’s home
- Straightening and painting of the outhouse at the East Millstone bridgetender’s home
- Staffing the East Millstone bridgetender’s home during the village’s Canalfest in October
- A photographic exhibit of the homes of bridgetenders and locktenders.
- Services of an information technology consultant for the park’s computers
- Funded classes to certify maintenance staff in small motor repair, applying herbicides, etc.
- Contacted legislators and the governor’s office to keep the parks open and retain the commission
- Facilitated the mothballing of an empty bridgetender’s home by buying lumber and painting the windows.
- Installed Kaya-Arms on docks to facilitate entering and exiting kayaks
- Funding the park’s website and continued updating
- Paying the dues for the Meetup site used for announcing park activities
- **Paying for the conditions assessment and the engineering drawings for the East Millstone bridgetender’s station.**