

Restoration at Jones Falls

The Rideau Canal Office held an open house last month at Jones Falls. They unveiled massive plans for development at the Locks for public discussion.

These plans are part of a larger plan for the Rideau, Trent-Severn corridor, to be implemented over the next five years. The purpose of the plan is to preserve and make accessible to the public the blend of natural and historical resources found along the canal corridor.

The following development concepts were presented:

* The Blacksmith Shop on the far side of the basin will be restored. Perhaps as early as next summer the shop will be open to the public, with a live display showing how iron work for the canal was fashioned for over 100 years. A circular trail around the basin will provide access.

* The wooden swing bridge will be restored as a pedestrian crossing from the Lockmaster's Station to the east side of the locks, probably in two years. Rideau Ridge Riders have requested permission to use the bridge as a snowmobile crossing. Mr. Bennett says that as long as no problems arise from such use, he can "see no reason why not."

* The Lockmaster's House is to be restored on the exterior, perhaps to be used for interpretive displays in the future.

* A Visitor Interpretation Centre including public washroom facilities is planned, near the Lockmaster's Station or in the hotel area.

* Viewing areas are to be constructed at both ends of the stone arch dam. Roadway, parking and boat launch ramp are to be relocated; and the chain-link fence will be replaced by a barrier more in keeping with the historic character of the site.

For further details see map of preliminary development concepts on page 20

* Parks Canada will investigate the possibility of acquiring more land as it becomes available. Areas to be considered include: space for visitor parking near the hotel, land on Chipman's Point at the southern entrance to the locks and along the northwest shore to be used for boater and hiker camping.

* Additional docks may be installed at the upstream entrance to the locks, permitting boaters to tie up to explore the locks.

* A trail system around the lock site will be created—the above mentioned trail to the Blacksmith Shop, a canoe portage and nature trail along the overflow water course between Sand Lake and the Fish Sanctuary.

* There are plans to provide a picnic and rest area on Parks Canada lands at Morton Dam. Parking space and pedestrian access to the dam from highway 15 would have to be secured.

Public turnout for the meetings at which these plans were discussed was excellent. Questions were raised, but most were enthusiastic about the plans.

Planner Brian Grimsey encouraged people to contact Mr. Bennett at the Rideau Canal Office in Smiths Falls (273-5170) with any questions. Locally, Mr. John McKinley of Seeleys Bay is area representative on CORTS, the body which decides the future of the canal.

Similar development plans are in the works for Kingston Mills, Newboro, Narrows and Merrickville.

CORRECTION

Please note that the hours of business were incorrect in the Rideau Pizzeria ad in the June issue of the Lantern. The correct hours are: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thurs. 11am - 11:30 pm. Friday 11am - 1 am. Saturday 11am - 1 am. Sunday 12 noon - 9 pm.

Historical Highlights

Reflections of a Lockmaster's Wife

PART ONE

The reminiscences of Alice Warren, wife of Herman Warren, who became lockmaster at Chaffey's Lock in 1925.

Courtesy: "of Steam and Stone", Rideau Canal newsletter.

"When spring arrived in 1925 my husband went to Chaffey's Lock on May 1st. A short time later we moved in to the lockmaster's stone house, Mr. Fleming then retired... After we got all packed to leave Newboro a good friend, a Mr. Gosline, took us women. Herm's sister had come along to look after the baby which was a great help for me. We had a horse and buggy in them days and everything else was moved by lumber wagons.

I felt bad leaving the folks I knew and so did Don who had spent his first year in school at Newboro. Herm had ordered a dinner for us all at the lockman's house where there is now a laundromat...

But in the first few years there was nothing but a wash tub and a board and we had to carry water to do so. I wasn't very happy at the facility when we got there. We had to get busy sweeping up ashes and soot that had been scattered on all the floors...

The upstairs had four rooms and a large storage cupboard where we used to store all our flour, sugar, tea and other staples we had. The place was heated with a large round stove; that and the kitchen range were wood stoves. My range had a tank on the end of it where we heated the water.

Although I didn't like the house so dark when we got it painted and papered I got to love the old house the view was so beautiful looking over the lake. We were kept very busy, had our cow to milk and we also sold milk and cream and ice to the summer people and we grew all the vegetables we could use.

We used coal oil lamps and later on got Coleman lamps which was a great help. Our most pleasant time was when we used the gramophone. It was nice to play the records and it was a very good pastime. The men used to come up to the house and there was some exciting games played in the kitchen.

There was a telephone they used mostly for business with the department.

The campers soon located the beautiful place to camp and they mostly put up tents on May 24th and kept them up all summer until Labour Day and to be frank they became very tiresome. On rainy days the house used to be filled with women and children just keeping warm...

The lockmen had to be on duty all times except for one hour on Sunday all through the season.

NO LANTERN?

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