

Historic Bicycle Tour of Middlesex Canal

On **Saturday, September 29, 2007**, the **Somerville Historic Preservation Commission**, the **Middlesex Canal Commission** and the **Middlesex Canal Association** will sponsor the 5th annual historic bicycle tour of the Middlesex Canal. The Canal was the “big dig” of the end of the 18th century. Completed in 1803 after 10 years of construction, the Canal connected the Merrimac River at Middlesex Village in what is now Lowell with the Charles River at Sullivan Square in Charlestown. In many ways it served as a model for later canals including the Erie Canal. The Canal remained in operation for 50 years, providing both passenger and freight service, but could not compete successfully with the Boston and Lowell Railroad which began operation in the 1830’s.



The ride will meet at the Canal plaque at the entrance to the **Sullivan Square MBTA station** at 9:00. The entire ride is 38 miles, getting to Lowell in time to catch the 5:00 train (arriving in Boston 5:43), but people can leave the ride after 20 miles at the Wilmington train station (1:24, arriving in Boston 1:53) or after 28 miles at the North Billerica train station (3:07, arriving in Boston 3:43). We will make a lunch stop in Woburn and we recommend that you bring a lunch, but it will be possible to buy a sandwich there. The route is pretty flat and level, and since the route includes many stops, we will average 5 miles an hour. The ride will be relatively easy for most cyclists.



Along the way we will stop at a number of remnants and restored sections of the Canal, as well as the mansion of Loammi Baldwin, the chief engineer of the Canal, the two remaining aqueducts (which carried the Canal over rivers and brooks), and also the Francis Gate lock on the Pawtucket Canal in Lowell. At the North Billerica millpond, we will see the historic mill village and Canal Museum, and the northern end of the floating towpath that carried horses over the millpond.

The ride will be led by Dick Bauer of the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission, Robert Winters of the Middlesex Canal Association, and Bill Kuttner of the Shirley-Eustis House. Steady rain cancels. **For more information, contact Dick at dick.bauer@alum.mit.edu (617-628-6320), Robert at robert@middlesexcanal.org, or Bill at bkuttner@ctps.org.**

For more information about the Middlesex Canal go to: <http://www.middlesexcanal.org>