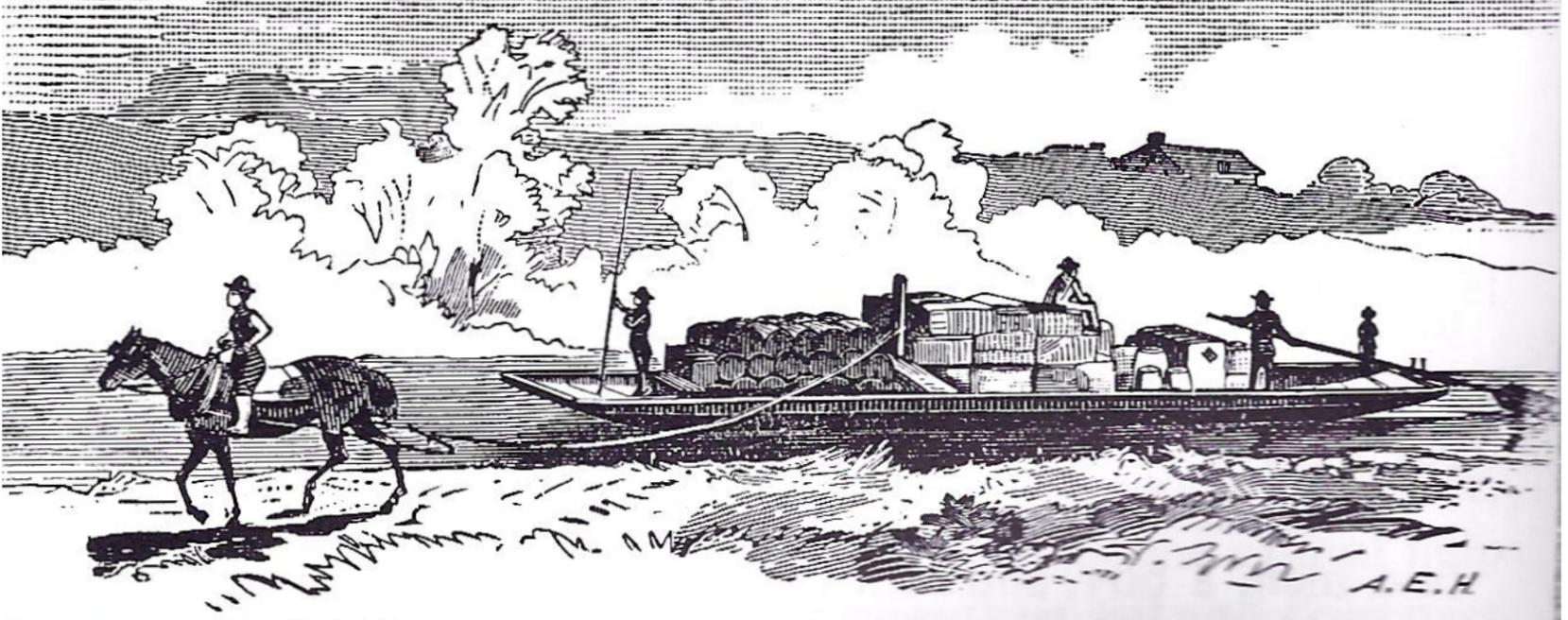


On **Sunday, April 12, 2015**, the Middlesex Canal Association will lead a bicycle tour of the Middlesex Canal. Completed in 1803 after 10 years of digging a ditch 3½' deep, 30' wide and 27 miles long, the canal connected the Merrimack River at Lowell with the Charles River at Boston. It was the greatest work of its kind in the US until the Erie Canal. The canal operated for 50 years, but the one horsepower canal boat finally lost to its competitor, the 30 horsepower steam locomotive.



The ride will start at the the Lowell train station after 10:43 am when the 10 am train from Boston arrives. This year an early group will take the 8:00 am train from North Station to allow more time in Lowell and breakfast at the Owl Diner, a US Historic Place, www.owldiner.com. Ride leaders will be on both trains from North Station, train fare \$4.75. Route visits Lowell canals, River Walk, Francis Gate, and then Middlesex Canal remnants. Lunch at mini-mall in Billerica, Route 3A at Lowell St, around 1 pm. Quick visit to the Canal Visitor Center/Museum, then on to Boston.

Long day, but sunset is late. Cyclists wanting a shorter tour can plan their own start and stop using the Lowell Line schedule available at www.mbt.com. Anderson/Woburn station off 128/I-95 and I-93 is popular. Also N. Billerica because the visitor center is only two blocks from the station and is open noon-4.

The route is pretty flat and level and we will average 5 miles per hour, so the ride will be an easy one 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 engineer of the Canal (for whom the Baldwin apple is named), the two remaining aqueducts (which carried the Canal over rivers and brooks), and the northern end of the floating towpath that carried horses over the summit pond.

The ride will be led by Bill Kuttner of the Shirley Eustis House (617-241-9383, bkuttner@ctps.org) and Dick Bauer of the Somerville Historic Preservation Commission and the Middlesex Canal Commission (857-540-6293, dick.bauer@alum.mit.edu). Helmets required. Steady rain cancels. The map for the bike tour south is in two parts, <http://tiny.cc/wpgqnw> and <http://tiny.cc/csgqnw>.

<http://www.middlesexcanal.org>

BIKE TOUR