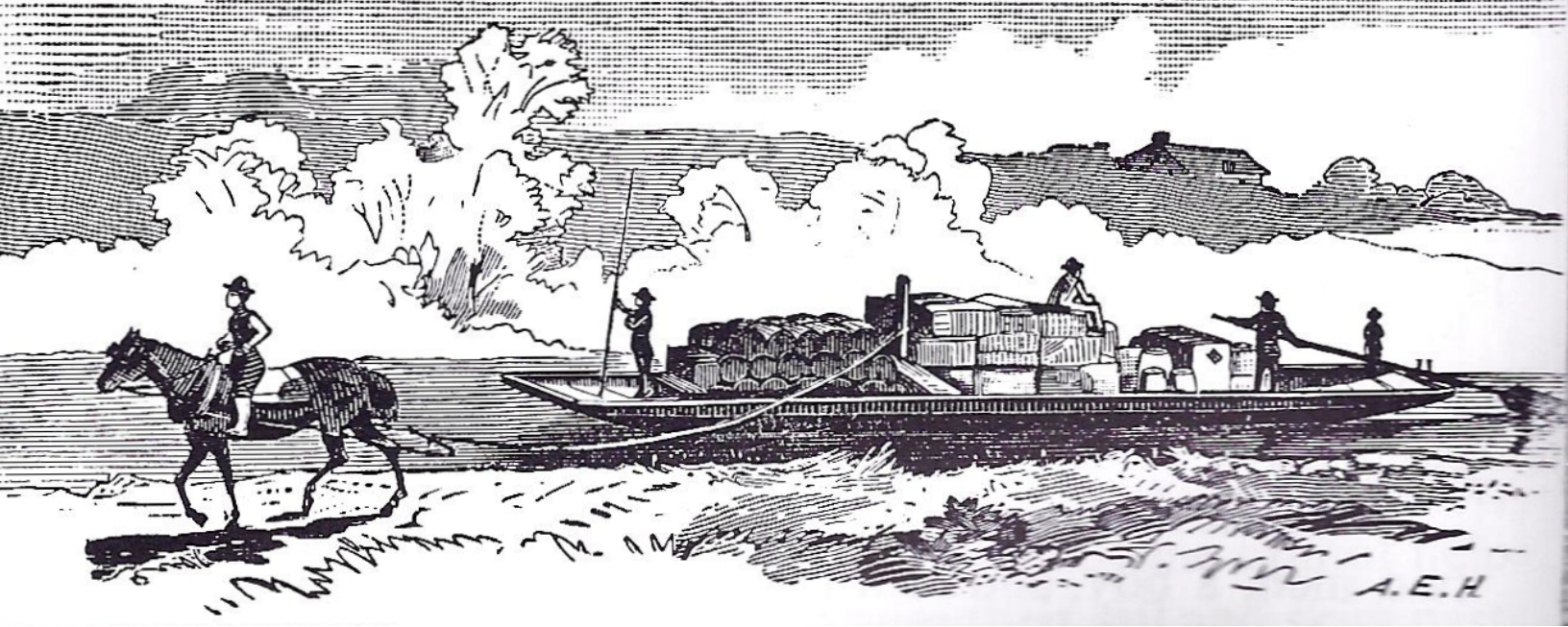


Bike Tour

Saturday, April 14, 2018, the Middlesex Canal Association will lead a bicycle tour of the Middlesex Canal. Incorporated in 1793 with John Hancock as the first proprietor, the canal connected the Merrimack River at Lowell with the Charles River at Boston by a ditch 3½' deep, 30' wide and 27 miles long. It was the greatest work of its kind in the US until the Erie Canal. The canal operated for 50 years, then the one horsepower canal boat quickly lost to a new competitor, the 30 horsepower steam locomotive.



The ride will start at the the Lowell train station after 10:44 AM when the 10 o'clock 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. Train fare is \$10. Tour visits Lowell canals, River Walk, Francis Gate, canal plaque at Hadley Field, then south on route of canal. Lunch at mini-mall, 95 Boston Rd (Rte 3A), Billerica, 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 mbta.com. Anderson/Woburn station off 128/I-95 and I-93 is popular. Also N. Billerica because the visitor center is two blocks from the station and is open noon-4.

The route is pretty flat - the summit pond was 27' above the Merrimack - 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 house of Loammi Baldwin, the engineer of the canal (and propagator of the Baldwin apple), and the two aqueducts with restored granite of the eight built, and the northern end of the floating towpath that carried tow horses over the summit pond.

The ride will be led by Bill Kuttner (617-241-9383, bkuttner@ctps.org) and Dick Bauer (857-540-6293, dick.bauer@alum.mit.edu), members of the state's Middlesex Canal Commission. Helmets required. Steady rain cancels. The map for the bike tour south is in two parts, tinyurl.com/lowellsouth and tinyurl.com/wedgemere.

www.middlesexcanal.org