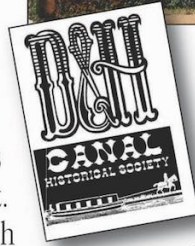
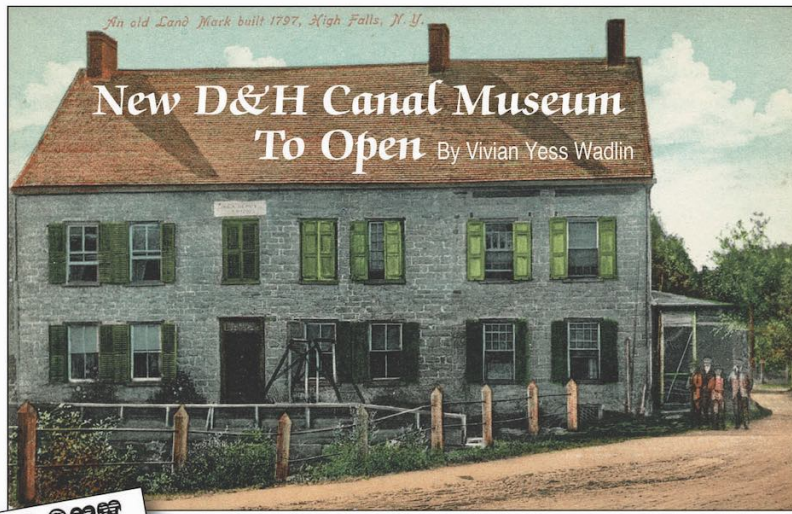


**The** website of the D&H Canal Historical Society makes this simple declaration: “The mission of the D&H Canal Historical Society is to highlight the importance of the D&H Canal and preserve its stories, landscapes, and artifacts.” One of the Society’s important accomplishments was the establishment in 1976 of a museum. They gathered artifacts, ephemera, stories, and enthusiasts.

In almost breathless anticipation, the enthusiasts have watched the progress of the canal museum’s move from its original home, the 1885 St. John’s Church building, (High Falls, NY) to a nearby new site—the spectacular 1797 stone DePuy Tavern building. Upon opening in mid-June, the new site will be known as the “Mid Hudson Visitor Center and D&H Canal Museum.”

In addition to showcasing the canal’s importance to the history of economic development in the Empire State, it will direct visitors to destinations in the Hudson Valley including other area historic sites, outdoor recreation, entertainment, and hospitality venues.

This article is a celebration of the success of the D&H Canal Society in fulfilling its mission. Initiated on March 21, 1966, the society was led by John Novi, President; Trudy Paglaroni, Secretary; Mrs. Edwin Tetlow, Vice-Pres-



ident; and Clarence Hansen, Treasurer. The first directors were Romeo Muller, Dr. Virgil DeWitt, Edward F. Grady, and John Wilkie, Chairman. It was the foresight of these volunteers that brought us over the past 56 years to the event we will celebrate this Spring. I name them here as a belated “thank you.”

Today, the organization is headed Executive Director Jack Braunlein, who is assisted by a small but hard-working staff of four museum professionals. They have stewarded the society’s transition from tiny (but impressive museum) to major regional tourism hub.

In 2018, the Southern Ulster Times published a story by the late Donna Deeprise recapping a Town of Lloyd Historical Society lecture by Bill Merchant, Deputy Director for Collections, Historian and Curator of the D&H Canal Society. Titled “The Origins, Operation, and Impact of the D&H Canal,” Merchant began his talk saying, “Building the Delaware and Hudson (D&H) Canal required

creativity, forward thinking, and the skill and determination to overcome great hurdles.” His narrative continued noting that was just the beginning of what it took to consistently transport the goods along the canal’s route for more than half a century.

As a topic, the canal always draws an attentive audience and Merchant delivered his talk to a packed house. One of the many nuggets Deeprise

found significant and included in her article was that Bill Merchant owns “...a volume of the Correspondence Journal of Russell Farnum Lord, who was chief engineer for the canal for many years.” She wrote that according to the journal’s owner, one could “...actually build a canal boat from what’s in that book.”

In answer to an attendee’s question, Merchant explained the canal was drained in winter and canal workers switched to barrel making for the cement industry and cutting ice for the ubiquitous ice houses by rivers and lakes.

Merchant covered some of the major challenges of the canal’s construction in the 1820s. These included crossing the rivers along its 108 mile length, and the building its 108 locks, five of which (numbers 16-20) today comprise the Five Locks Walk in High Falls—a self-guided stroll through history. The Five Locks Walk meanders along

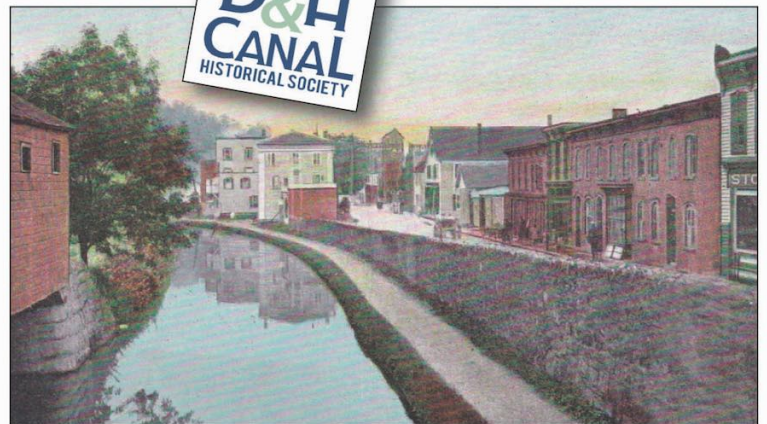
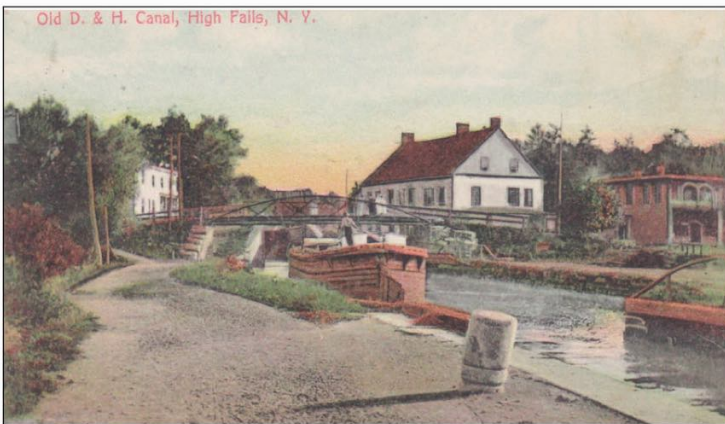
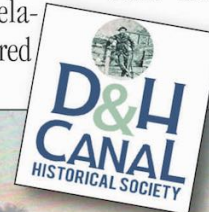


Image top: Postcard DePuy Tavern. White sign reads: S&N DEPUY 1797 AD; old and new D&H Canal logos. Above left: Canal boat at Rosendale. St. Peter’s Church steeple in background. Above right: “Loading a canal boat at the lock, Rosendale.” Top image from the collection of Vivian Yess Wadlin. Lower images courtesy of Gilberto Villahermosa. (Also shown, old and new Canal Museum logos).



Rosendale, N.Y. Looking down D.&H. Canal. Boat waiting for a pull.

the tow paths once traveled by the boys and girls—called “hoggees,” and the mules they guided.

Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1969, the five locks of the walk were actually a re-routing of the canal when it was enlarged to accommodate higher-capacity boats in 1847. The five locks in High Falls lowered boats more than 70 feet in total.

Ten thousand workers toiled for just under three years, using picks, shovels, blasting powder, and mules to build the D&H, the nation’s first one-million dollar private enterprise. The canal was built to move coal from Pennsylvania to the Hudson River, and from there, north and south to ever growing demand in New York State. This was not just any coal, it was the hotter-burning anthracite, providing more BTU’s for the buck—instrumental in selling the project to investors.

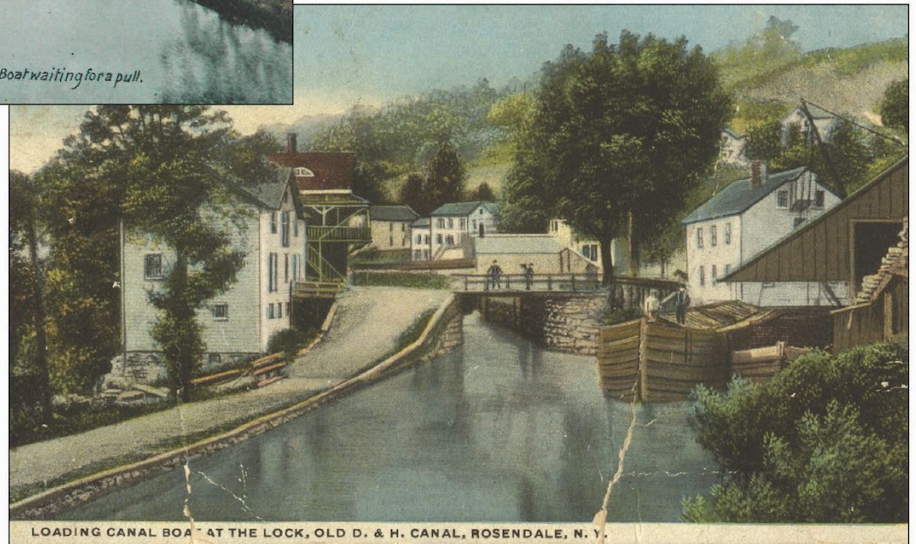
From Honesdale, PA, the canal’s route followed the Lackawaxan and Delaware Rivers to Port Jervis, then went between the Shawangunk Ridge and the Catskills, to the Rondout Creek in Kingston. The Rondout took the cargo to the Hudson and the world.

In 1825, hydraulic or natural cement was discovered while blasting for the canal near Rosendale. Natural cement is exceptionally durable and hardens underwater, making it a “natural” for canal work. It also gave the canal more paying traffic as vast quantities of cement were shipped throughout the United States. “By the second half of the 19th century, about half of all the cement being used in the country was Rosendale cement,” noted Merchant.

The cement industry became so important that in 1844, according to the Rosendale town historian Bill Brooks on the town’s website, the state created a new political entity—the Town of Rosendale. The new township was formed from land taken from other towns—New Paltz,

Hurley and Marbletown. Creating new townships was not uncommon, for instance, in 1811, the Town of Esopus was formed and in 1845, the Town of Lloyd. It seems that as industries developed and communities formed around them, areas became more easily governable by creating institutions more readily responsive to local needs—roads, bridges, and schools, for instance.

In addition to cement, the canal’s route was rich in bluestone, lumber, and the farm products necessary to



feed a force of 10,000 hungry workers. They were not just hungry. According to the late Joe Hill whose family ran a hotel and bar in Rosendale, in an earlier time there was a bar on every block, sometimes more than one, slaking the thirst of those hard-working cement miners and canal men.

Also hard-working were the canal’s younger employees, the mule guides directing the critters along the tow paths and providing the power moving the entire system.

Natural cement wasn’t the only thing new to the times. According to a 2011 brochure of the Canal Museum, the D&H Canal Company used a gravity rail road to move the coal from the mines to the canal, America’s first. It was also the first recorded commercial use of a steam locomotive in the US. The engine, now famous, was the sturdy little Stourbridge Lion built in England in 1829. Unfortunately it was too heavy for the iron capped hemlock tracks and only made two trial runs.

John Roebling (later the design engineer of the Brooklyn Bridge and owner of an iron cable manufacturing conglomerate) designed and provided the cables for four suspension aqueducts for the D&H. These suspended watercourses crossed rivers. One of his cable-suspended aqueducts was in High Falls. Its abutments are still visible. Roebling’s

aqueduct replaced an earlier structure built above stone pillars.

Last winter, as Bill Merchant was directing the physical updates and redesign of the DePuy Tavern space to accommodate its new calling, he gave me a top to bottom tour of the “construction site.” At that visit, the bones of the structure’s original intent were un-sheathed and evident. The basement and attic gave testament to a structure built to last. Evident also were other modifications hinting at the building’s varied uses right up to its last famous incarnation—the celebrated Four-Star DePuy Canal House Restaurant founded by John Novi, first President of the D&H Canal Historical Society. The building had housed stores, restaurants, accommodated travelers and workers, and sheltered tenants as an apartment house.

A 1988 brochure from the New York State Parks and Recreation Association titled, The Delaware & Hudson Canal Heritage Corridor in Ulster County: Past, Present, Future, made the case that the canal and its history were an overlooked asset for the village, town, county, and state. Amen.

The brochure encouraged steps to create a linear park the length of the canal, develop educational programs about the canal and its impact, and to create a unifying theme “...under which a wide variety of economic, cultural and recreational resources in the



Canal corridor can be marshaled for the benefit of all Ulster County residents.”

And so, here we are. Much of that and more

about to be offered to the community at the grand opening event scheduled for mid- June of 2022.

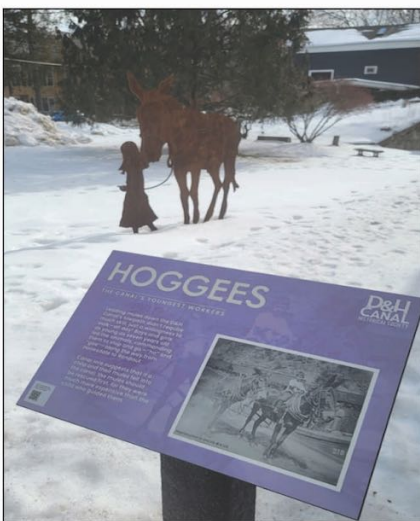
On this page are renderings of a few of the the new museum’s displays. Get ready for the unfolding of history and an almost visceral understanding of the sheer brain-power and will-power it took to conceive of it, build it, run it, and finally to preserve it.

As you can imagine, all of these improvements and expansions have come with a hefty price tag. To augment the D&H Canal Museum budget, you are encouraged to help underwrite the work by becoming a member or by sending a donation to D&H Canal Historical Society, PO Box 23, High Falls, NY 12440. Go to [CanalMuseum.org](http://CanalMuseum.org) for details.

### Hudson Valley Hero Award

Also supporting this project is a major D&H fund-raising event, Inaugural Hero of the Hudson Valley Award Dinner honoring Bob Anderberg and his work through Open Space Institute to preserve cultural and natural resources in the Shawangunk region.

Join us at the Mohonk Mountain House, June 12, 2022, at 6pm. Cocktail hour and dinner. Details including tickets and premium tables are available at our website: [Canalmuseum.org/hudson-valley-hero](http://Canalmuseum.org/hudson-valley-hero)



Center top down: Mural by Achil Pichkhodge. Renderings of exhibits by artist Avery Zucker. The team of Christina Ferwerda of Ferwerda Creative Services and Paul Orselli of Paul Orselli Workshop (POW!) created the exhibit designs. Lower left: Sculpture of a Hoggee and her mule by artist Annie O’Neil. Right: A rendering by artist Avery Zucker showing what will welcome you on your visit to the new D&H Canal Museum and Visitors’ Center. Design work for the museum and exhibits is by the team of Christina Ferwerda of Ferwerda Creative Services and Paul Orselli of Paul Orselli Workshop (POW!).