

MORRIS CANAL FACT SHEET

History and general Information

The Morris Canal, connecting Phillipsburg on the Delaware River with Jersey City on the Hudson River, was a unique canal. In its 102 mile length it went through elevation changes that totaled 1,674 feet. To overcome most of these changes the canal boats were moved over 23 “inclined planes”. The boats were cradled in “plane cars” that moved up or down the plane on rails with the power supplied by water from the upper level of the canal – this water flowing through a “Scotch turbine” located deep underground. This system made the Morris Canal unique. The canal connected the anthracite coal fields of Pennsylvanian’s Lehigh Valley with the New York-New Jersey markets and thus significantly aided in the development of industry and cities in that area. It permitted the revival of the languishing iron industry in North Jersey and generally accelerated the development of the northern part of the state. Farm products, manufactured goods, raw materials and construction materials were also moved. The canal was the primary impetus for these developments because it was the only efficient bulk transportation system in operation in North Jersey during the first half of the nineteenth century. The second half of the nineteenth century saw the development of a more efficient bulk transportation system – the railroads – that eventually put the Morris Canal out of business.

General Information

Length of main canal: 102.15 miles

Length of Pompton Feeder: 4.26 miles

Elevation Changes:

Mean tide at Jersey City to summit at Lake Hopatcong:	914 feet
Summit to low water at Phillipsburg	<u>760</u> feet
Total Change in elevation:	1,674 feet

Number of inclined planes: 23

Number of locks: 23 lift locks and 11 guard locks

Canal dimensions:

Original canal: Surface Width - 32 ft, Bottom Width - 20 ft, Depth - 4 ft
Enlarged canal: Surface Width - 40 ft, Bottom Width - 25 ft, Depth - 5 ft

Time for a one way trip: 5 days

Power source: 2 mules