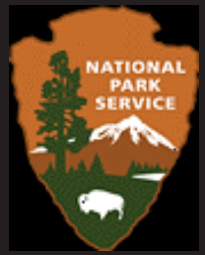


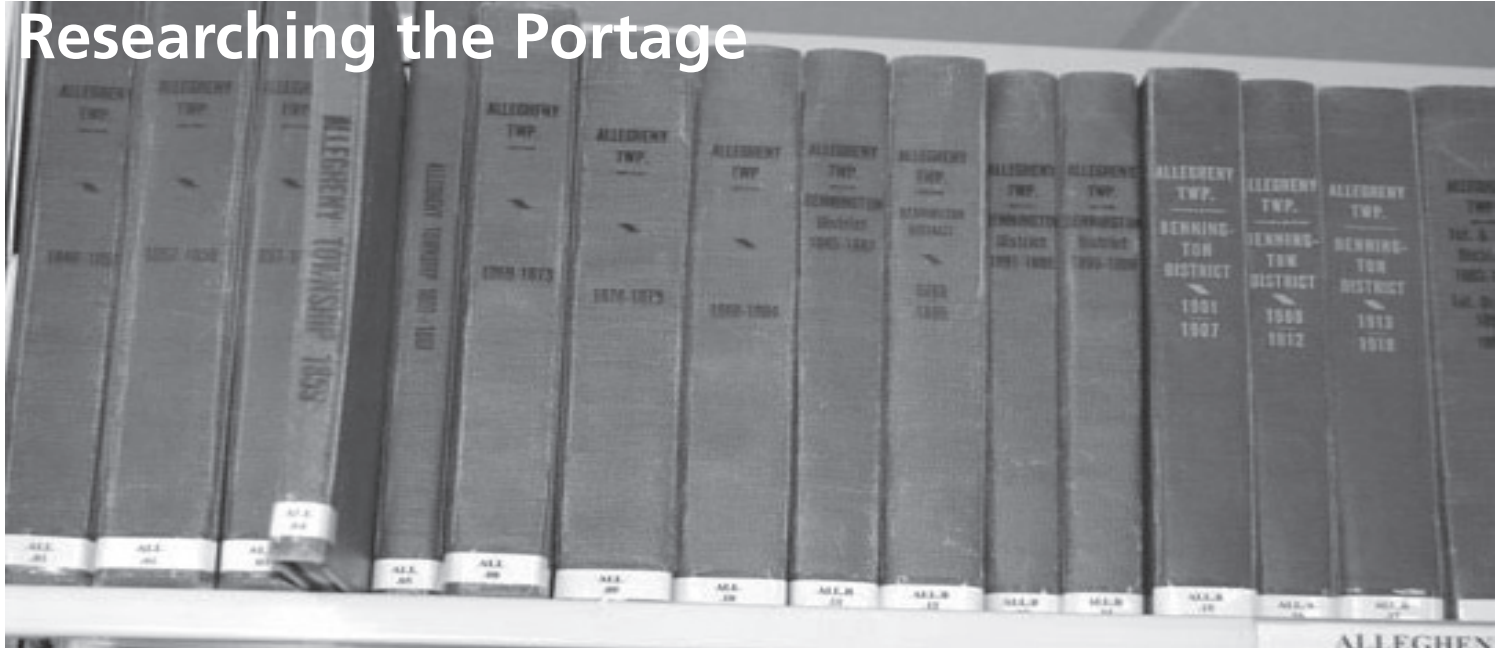
Allegheny Portage Railroad

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Allegheny Portage Railroad
National Historic Site



Researching the Portage



Primary resources are documents, diaries, newspapers, books, magazines, instruction manuals, and other items that were actually used during the time of the Portage Railroad (1834-1854). When doing research for special competitions or projects, most require the use of primary resources. The National Park Service at Allegheny Portage Railroad National Historic Site is NOT a repository for primary resources. The park does NOT house original documents related to the Portage, workers, or associated businesses. The park visitor center, orientation film, exhibits, and ranger staff communicate the basics of the railroad operations and its effect on the nation. The park is open all year, seven days per week, except winter holidays.

Library Resources

Encyclopedias do not usually contain an entry for the Allegheny Portage Railroad. Some mention the Portage with the Pennsylvania Railroad, but this history is seldom found in condensed references. Two books of greater interest would be: the *History of Cambria County* edited by William Storey, or, *A History of Blair County* edited by Tarring S. Davis.

Some writers traveled the Portage and wrote about the experience. The most detailed account is in Charles Dickens' *American Notes for General Circulation*.

Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote an essay about the Pennsylvania Canals. An author using the pen name Peregrine Prolix (Philip Nicklin) wrote *A Pleasant Peregrination Through the Prettiest Parts of Pennsylvania* and a reprint of this book is on sale at the park visitor center.

You might ask at your public library for these books and others listed on the back of this page. If the library does not have them, request the books through interlibrary loan. You will need to consult your local public library about how it handles interlibrary loans.

Nearby Repositories for Primary Sources

Blair County Historical Society
P.O. Box 1083
Altoona, PA 16603
(814) 942-3916

Cambria County Historical Society
615 North Center Street, PO Box 278
Ebensburg, PA 15931
(814) 472-6674

(before Blair County parts of the Portage were considered in Huntingdon County)
Huntingdon County Historical Society
106 4th St., P.O. Box 305
Huntingdon, PA 16652
(814) 643-5449

Blair County Genealogical Society
431 Scotch Valley Rd.
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
(814) 696-3492

Senator John Heinz History Center
1212 Smallman Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
(412) 454-6000

Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission
State Museum Building, 300 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120
(717) 787-3362

Pennsylvania State Archives
Corner of Third and Forster Streets
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
(717) 783-3281

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania
1300 Locust Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 732-6200

Internet Sources

With the changing nature of the Internet it is impossible to list all the websites that might help a researcher. Here are a few highly recommended sites and a guide to evaluating other sites you might discover using your favorite search engine.

Park Website www.nps.gov/alpo
Library of Congress www.loc.gov
National Archives www.archives.gov
PA State Archives www.digitalarchives.state.pa.us/
PA State Library and Interlibrary Loan Searches www.accesspa.state.pa.us/

The "CARS" Checklist for Research Source Evaluation

Credibility: trustworthy source, author's credentials, evidence of quality control, known or respected authority, organizational support.

Goal: an authoritative source, a source that supplies some good evidence that allows you to trust it.

Accuracy: up to date, factual, detailed, exact, comprehensive, audience and purpose reflect intentions of completeness and accuracy.

Goal: a source that is correct today (not yesterday), a source that gives the whole truth.

Reasonableness: fair, balanced, objective, reasoned, no conflict of interest, absence of fallacies or slanted tone.

Goal: a source that engages the subject thoughtfully and reasonably, concerned with the truth.

Support: listed sources, contact information, available corroboration, claims supported, documentation supplied.

Goal: a source that provides convincing evidence for the claims made, a source you can triangulate (find at least two other sources that support it).

Common Titles (Available from the Park Bookstore)

*The Pennsylvania Canals: Historic
Pennsylvania Leaflet #1*
Dr. Hubertis Cummings

The Amazing Pennsylvania Canals
William H. Shank, PE

*The Allegheny Portage Railroad: Historic
Pennsylvania Leaflet #19*
Dr. Hubertis Cummings

Pennsylvania Transportation History
William H. Shank, PE

*Sylvester Welch's Report on the Allegheny
Portage Railroad 1833*
Sylvester Welch

*Chesapeake and Ohio Canal:
Official Park Handbook*
Division of Publications, National Park Service

The Lemon House: A Place in History
Reid Miller

*Canals for a Nation:
The Canal Era in the United States 1790-1860*
Ronald E. Shaw

*The Allegheny Old Portage Railroad 1834-
1854*
Mahlon J. Baumgardner, Floyd G. Hoenstine

*A Picture Journey Along the Pennsylvania Main
Line Canal 1826-1857*
Philip J. Hoffmann, PE

The Juniata Canal and Old Portage Railroad
Harry A. Jacobs

*Common Labor: Workers and the Digging of North
American Canals*
Peter Way

*Pennsylvania Main Line Canal : Juniata and
Western Divisions : special study*
David Fritz, A. Berle Clemensen

Internal Improvement
John Lauritz Larson

Older Titles and Special Reports

Conquering the Alleghenies
Fred E. Long

Saltsburg and the Pennsylvania canal
George B. Johnson

*The Pennsylvania Railroad:
Its Place in History 1846-1996*
Dan Cupper, editor

*Two historic Pennsylvania canal towns :
Alexandria and Saltsburg*
Sara Amy Leach, editor

*Canal in the Mountains : The Juniata Main
Line Canal in the Lewistown Narrows*
Scott D. Heberling

*Two hundred years of water transportation in
Eastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania*
Ronald D. Reid.

Americans on the Move
Russell Bourne

*Canal boat children of the Chesapeake and Ohio,
Pennsylvania and New York canals*
Ethel M. Springer and Thomas F. Hahn

*The Columbia-Philadelphia Railroad and Its
Successor*
William Hasell Wilson, CE

*The Pennsylvania Canal, Indiana and
Westmoreland Counties*
Clarence D. Stephenson

The Pennsylvania Main Line Canal
Robert McCullough, Walter Leuba

*The canals of Pennsylvania and the system of
internal improvements*
Theodore B. Klein

*The Pennsylvania Main Line :
Triumph of Technology, 1826-1857*
Janet F. Mishkin