

Confluence Contributors

Jessica Chernich is the Historic Resource Supervisor of the Berks County Heritage Center, and has been working at the Heritage Center since 2016. She holds a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in public history from Shippensburg University and the University of Western Ontario respectively. Jessica has digitized photographs and audio recordings as well as assembled displays using materials from the Hiester Canal Center Collection.

Addison Geary ("Shadow River") is a professional photographer and filmmaker from Manayunk, Philadelphia. His website is addisongeary.com

Mary Ellen G. Heckman is Dean of Library Services & Learning Resources at Reading Area Community College (RACC). She is a graduate of Penn State University with a B.A. in American Studies and a Master in Library Service from Rutgers University. She has over 30 years' experience working at RACC and oversaw the digitization of the Schuylkill Navigation System document collection held by the college.

Adam Levine is the historical consultant for the Philadelphia Water Department. He has been researching the city's watersheds, waterways, water supply, and sewers since 1988. His website, [WaterHistoryPHL](http://WaterHistoryPHL.com), covers all aspects of water and drainage history, and includes numerous pages on the Schuylkill Navigation. He has also written five books and hundreds of magazine articles about gardens and horticulture.

Doug Logan is retired after 37 years in Healthcare IT. He's been a long-time canal enthusiast and has been a member of Pennsylvania Canal Society for over 40 years. He was later elected to the board (~2009), becoming president in 2016. Doug is also a member of the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, the Schuylkill Canal Association, the American Canal Society, the Canal Society of New Jersey, the Canal Society of Ohio, and the Canal Society of New York State.

Mitch Martin has thoroughly explored the Schuylkill Navigation and become somewhat of a modern "lock tender" by cleaning up the site at Girard Canal Outlet Lock 57. He lives in Pottstown and builds wooden boats.

Sandy Sorlien is the author of *Inland: The Abandoned Canals of the Schuylkill Navigation* (GFT Books, 2022). She worked as an Environmental Educator for the Fairmount Water Works 2013-2023 after careers in photography, writing, and urban planning. She lived near the Manayunk Canal for 27 years and rowed on the Fairmount and Flat Rock Dam pools.

Ryan Strause has been active with the Leesport Lock House Foundation since 1975, and is currently the Curator. He previously served on the Board as Treasurer and project advisor for various Boy Scout Eagle and Girl Scout Gold Awards.

Kay Sykora was the Founding Director of the Manayunk Development Corporation, when the opportunity existed in the 1970s to define Manayunk in a much broader sense than just the business district. Many of the projects were conceptualized over 30 years ago and just now are coming to fruition. Work started with both local and national designations for the Main Street Historic District, which includes the Manayunk Canal. Projects in the District have included several streetscape improvements, the SRT's Manayunk "towpath" section, the Venice Island Performing Arts & Recreation Center, and numerous canal projects culminating in Flat Rock Betterment, restoring flow in the canal this Spring. The theater, built over a new storm water/sewage capture tank for times of flooding, hosts community events and environmental opportunities, as PWD introduces fresh water mussels and seeks to use the canal as an educational tool.

Mike Szilagyi plans and designs pedestrian and bicycle facilities for Michael Baker International. His decades devoted to implementing Pennsylvania's bicycle trail network are bolstered by deep knowledge of the web of former rail and canal rights-of-way built before the automobile came to dominate the landscape. Szilagyi resides in North Wales, Pennsylvania where he serves on the borough Historic Commission board.

Chari Towne is the author of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network's publication, "A River Again: The Story of the Schuylkill River Project." Towne, who joined the Delaware Riverkeeper Network (DRN) in 1996, now oversees the organization's grants and operations. While continuing to act as DRN's Schuylkill watershed specialist, she also overseeing many of DRN's daily business activities and fundraising. Towne has a B.A. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a M.S. from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Stuart Wells received his MS in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania. His 1989 Master Thesis "The Schuylkill Navigation Company and the Girard Canal" documented the history of the Schuylkill Navigation from its inception to its demise. The study focused on locating, identifying, and documenting the history of all the Girard Canal structures or ruins that remain. For over 35 years Stuart has eagerly shared his enthusiasm for field surveys and his knowledge of historic Schuylkill Navigation Company structures and surviving remnants.

Glenn Wenrich (the late great) was a volunteer docent at the C. Howard Hiester Canal Center for 21 years. He led canal tours along the Schuylkill Navigation and other Pennsylvania canals and generously shared his extensive knowledge with canal historians from all over. Glenn lived on the shore of the Felix Dam pool above Reading.

Larry Whyte is an educator who has explored the entirety of the Schuylkill Navigation, keeping field notes, sketchbooks, charts, and writings about the system. His research supported the National Register nomination of the Oakes Canal in 1988. He has worked with Schuylkill River Greenways and the Schuylkill Canal Association to restore Lock 60. Larry currently lives in Maryland where he is writing a book called *Stream of Providence: A History of the Schuylkill Navigation*.

Dave Willauer is a retired classroom teacher and elementary school principal, as well as an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren. He currently volunteers with the Spring-Ford Area Historical Society in Royersford, PA as its treasurer, and frequently researches and presents programs of local historical interest. Often focusing on programs geared toward children, Dave has implemented an annual series of summer family history programs which is entering its fifth year. Dave lives in Skippack Township and keeps bees, chickens, and a small flock of sheep.

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