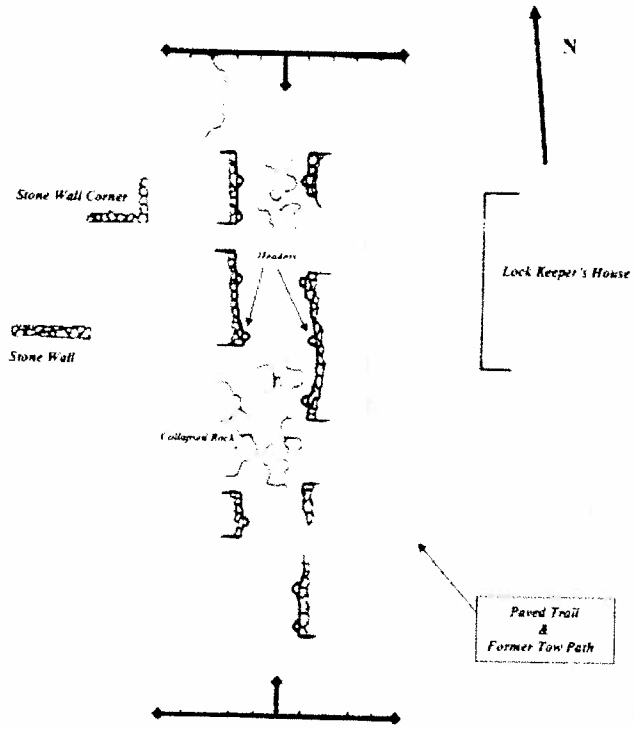
Portion of east wall

West wall of lock

Project Partners

The Farmington Canal Trail and its many structural features, including the house and lock remains, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Funding for the restoration of the Lockkeeper's House and for the Lock 14 survey was provided by the Commission on Culture and Tourism and the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, in cooperation with the Farmington Canal Commission, the Hamden Historical Society and the Hamden Historic Properties Commission.

Figure 15: Lock 14 Site Area



A canal or "packet" boat would enter the lock and the keeper would close the heavy gate door behind it. Depending on the direction traveling, water would be added to the now enclosed chamber to raise the boat to the next level or water would be drained to lower it. The trip from New Haven to Northampton took about 26 hours.

TOWN OF HAMDEN CONNECTICUT

Lockkeeper's House & Lock 14

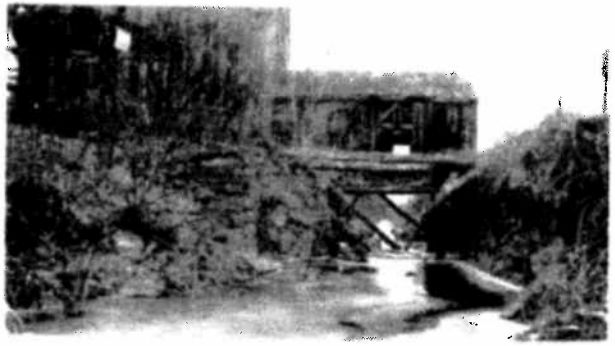
The Farmington Canal was constructed in the late 1820s, providing access from New Haven to Northampton, Massachusetts, and opening up the interior of southern New England to commercial traffic. To accommodate topography, a series of locks, basins, and stops was built to allow barge passage. Lock 14, in the Mt. Carmel section of Hamden, Connecticut, is one such feature.

Lock 14 was one of sixty locks (28 in CT) between New Haven and Northampton; they were needed because the elevation between the two points falls 520 feet over the course of the 87 miles.

Lockkeeper's House north view

The Lockkeeper's House

The Lockkeeper's House at 3908 Whitney Avenue was built c. 1828. It accommodated Lock 14's keeper, the person responsible for opening and closing the gates of the lock for passing canal traffic. The exterior of the Lockkeeper's House is nearly all original. The first floor of the interior has been rehabilitated to include a passive museum, a police substation, and a public restroom. It was opened for use in 2010.

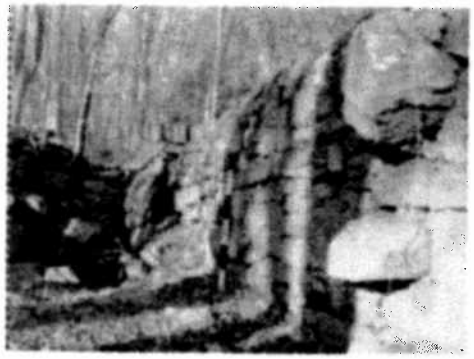


Lock 14 site showing barn and covered bridge over canal

Lock 14

Typical of other lock structures, Lock 14 was made with dry-laid sandstone abutments and walls between 1826 and 1829, with chestnut and oak chambers measuring about 15 feet high, 12 feet wide, and 90 feet long. By the mid-nineteenth century, when the towpath had been converted to a railroad line, the site included a sawmill to the north of the house, and a bridge to the south. An archaeological survey of the site has shown that much of the original stonework survives, which provides the basis for future preservation and partial reconstruction.

Lock structure, looking south



Lock 14 north view

Portion of east wall

Lock 14 structure, looking south