

VLR-12/20/77 NRHP 3/25/80

Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Cat Rock Sluice of the Roanoke Navigation

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

.3 mile W of Brookneal corporate limits; in Staunton (Roanoke) River;
.9 mile NW of U.S. Route 501/State Route 40 bridge over Staunton
(Roanoke) River.

CITY, TOWN

Brookneal

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Fifth (W.C. Daniel)

STATE

Virginia

CODE
51

COUNTY
Campbell/Halifax

CODE
031/083

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE | |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL | <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL | <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: None |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY (2) (see continuation sheet #1)

NAME (1) Mr. J.T. Davis

STREET & NUMBER
P.O. Box 41

CITY, TOWN

Brookneal

VICINITY OF

STATE
Virginia 24528

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Campbell County Courthouse/Halifax County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rustburg/Halifax

STATE
Virginia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE None previously recorded

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Cat Rock Sluice is at Staunton Scenic River Mile 9.85 (9.85 miles below the major Rt. 761 bridge at Long Island, and 0.85 miles above the U.S. 501 bridge at Brookneal). It begins at a deep cut about 10 feet wide, blasted through the south end of a wide rock ledge which extends across the main river channel. Blasting holes are visible at low water. On the south side of the sluice, parallel to the river and at right angles to the rock ledge, are the remains of a substantial stone wall about 6 feet thick and at least 5 feet high, which was probably originally continuous, from about 50 feet above the cut to 300 feet below it. This "towing wall" is still intact except in the vicinity of the rock cut, where it was probably damaged over the years by debris carried through the narrow sluice.

The sluice was designed to permit navigation through the rock ledge by batteaux; the towing wall not only helped to shunt the water into a single channel but allowed the boatmen, when ascending, to get out and pull their boats up the falls with a rope. Between major falls the ascending boats were poled; there was no continuous towpath along the river, only the relatively short towing walls at the major sluices. To force the river into a navigable channel, especially during low water, a large number of low dams of loose river rocks called "wing dams" were constructed along the route. These are only visible during low water and have not yet been mapped.

Most of the major sluices, with towing walls, however, have been mapped. There are at least eight other sites along the eleven miles of falls between Long Island and Brookneal; these are roughly similar to Cat Rock Sluice, with a main channel paralleled by a towing wall or wing dam. Some sites are not completely understood and will need further field work and excavation. In order to map the network of wing dams, low-altitude aerial photographs at extreme low water will be needed. A study of this sluice, towing wall, and wing dam network, probably the most extensive remaining in the country, should reveal a great deal of the techniques of riverbed navigation improvement a century and a half ago - techniques also used before the canal era on the James, Potomac, and many eastern rivers before railways supplanted river transportation in the Piedmont. Cat Rock Sluice is an excellent example of an advanced type (i.e., with a towing wall) of riverbed navigation improvement and can be reached by canoe or viewed from the north bank up river from Brookneal.

WET

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER | | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) | | |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | | | |

SPECIFIC DATES 1827 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Samuel Pannill

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Cat Rock Sluice is one of the best preserved and most accessible components of the most extensive riverbed navigation complex for batteaux now known in this country. The 11-mile network of sluices and associated wing dams and towing walls was constructed by Samuel Pannill in 1827 for the Roanoke Navigation Company to permit the passage of poled river boats, called batteaux, through the falls of the Staunton, opening up the river as far as Salem (above Roanoke, Va.); 177 miles above its junction with the Dan. Constructed in the same substantial style as the stone buildings, walls, walks, and bridges on Pannill's plantation, Green Hill, a National Register property, the navigation works are still in good enough condition to be used by canoes. The major sluices, blasted through rock ledges, are paralleled by substantial stone walls called towing walls, used for hauling boats upstream. At the sluices and shallows along the route through the falls, there were many wing dams of piled river rocks to shunt water into the channel, especially at low water.

As most Piedmont rivers on the east coast, the Roanoke and its branches the Dan and Staunton enjoyed what was termed a "descending trade," with boats loaded with farm and mine products going downstream with the current to coastal markets (in this case, Norfolk). The boats were wooden craft about 60 feet long and 8 feet wide, with rudders or "sweeps" fore and aft and a crew ready to fend off boulders with metal-shod poles as they shot down the rapids and through the sluices. Typically, a proportion of boats would return light upstream with household goods and an augmented crew poling and rowing the entire distance, for there was no towpath for horse towing. Altogether, the Roanoke Navigation Company's works extended over more than 470 miles of river, including the Dan to Madison, N.C., 110 miles; the Banister to Meadville, 25 miles; the Staunton to Salem, 177 miles; and the upper (60 miles) and lower (100 miles) Roanoke River down to Albemarle Sound. In addition, to the sluice complex on the Staunton and a warehouse in Salem, the works included a canal at Danville, two short canals on the Roanoke near the state line, and a very substantial canal around the falls of the Roanoke from Roanoke Rapids to Weldon, N.C., with four locks and an aqueduct, now on the National Register. In addition, the Smith's River Navigation Company improved Smith's River for 50 miles, down to the Dan. The lower reaches of other branches of the Roanoke, Dan, and Staunton were also navigated (Corps of Engineers, 1976), but the full extent of navigation in the Roanoke basin has yet to be worked out, a task requiring more field work and local research.

(see continuation sheet #2)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Commission of Outdoor Recreation (Virginia). "Staunton River, A Scenic River Report to the Governor and General Assembly, "December 1973.
- Ginther, Herman. Captain Staunton's River. Richmond, Va.: The Dietz Press, Inc., 1968.
- Glass, Brent. "Roanoke Canal, Halifax County, North Carolina," National Register of Historic Places Inventory, 1976.
- Pannill, Samuel. "Report to the President and Directors of the Roanoke Navigation Company," (see continuation sheet #1)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

scale: QUADRANGLE: Brookneal, Va. (1:24000)

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 4 Acres
 UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|-------------|---------------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 1 7 | 6 8 4 3 8 0 | 4 1 0 1 3 9 0 | B | | | |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | | | | D | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The 4 acres comprising the area being nominated for Cat Rock Sluice are bounded by a line beginning at a point on the N bank of the Staunton (Roanoke) River approximately 4200' WNW of U.S. Route 501/State Route 40 over said River; thence extending in a straight line approximately 300' SSW to S side of island; thence extending approximately 500' W along S side of said island; thence extending approximately 450' NNE in a straight line to N bank of Staunton River; thence extending approximately 500' SE along said bank to point of origin.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| | | | | | | | |
|-------|----------|------|----|--------|----------|------|-----|
| STATE | Virginia | CODE | 51 | COUNTY | Campbell | CODE | 031 |
| STATE | Virginia | CODE | 51 | COUNTY | Halifax | CODE | 083 |

11 FORM PREPARED BY (1) Dr. William E. Trout, III (see continuation sheet #1)

NAME/TITLE (2)
 and Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission DATE December 1977

STREET & NUMBER 221 Governor Street TELEPHONE (804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN Richmond STATE Virginia 23219

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE *William E. Trout, III*
 TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director DATE DEC 20 1977
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE _____

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: _____ DATE _____

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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CAT ROCK SLUICE OF THE ROANOKE NAVIGATION, Campbell/Halifax Counties, Va.

CONTINUATION SHEET

#1

ITEM NUMBERs 4,9,11 PAGE 1

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

- (2) Burlington Domestics
% Mr. Roger L. Morrow
Plant Manager
Brookneal Plant
Brookneal, Virginia 24528

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1828, ms. in North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, N.C. (Legislative Papers, 1827/28).

Rice, Philip M. "The Early Development of the Roanoke Waterway," North Carolina Historical Review, January 1954.

Roanoke Navigation Company, Annual Reports to the Board of Public Improvements, in North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.

_____, Annual Reports to the Virginia Board of Public Works, in Virginia State Library, Richmond, Va.

Trout, William E., III. "Traces of Early River Navigation Studied," Union Star, Brookneal, Va., August 14, 1975.

_____. "The Roanoke Navigation," 1968, ms. in archives of Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission.

The Union Star, Brookneal, Va., 175th Anniversary, Brookneal Tobacco Market, Souvenir Issue, August 7, 1975.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Wilmington, N.C. District. "Report on Navigation of Streams Tributaries to the Upper Roanoke River Basin, Virginia," May 1976.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

- (1) Dr. William E. Trout, III
American Canal Society
1932 Cinco Robles Drive
Duarte, California 91010

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CAT ROCK SLUICE OF THE ROANOKE NAVIGATION, Campbell and Halifax Counties, Va.

CONTINUATION SHEET

#2

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 1

8. SIGNIFICANCE

The completion of the navigation to Salem was the high point in the life of the Roanoke Navigation Company. Patrick Henry (whose Red Hill plantation is near Brookneal) lent his eloquence to early efforts to incorporate the company in 1783, but it was not until 1815 that both North Carolina and Virginia managed to form a co-operative, interstate company (Rice, 1954). The Virginia legislature was helped by the dramatic 340-mile demonstration voyage of a batteau, laden with barrels of flour, from Brookneal to Norfolk via the Dismal Swamp Canal, thus proving that even without navigation improvements, it would not take much effort to make the Roanoke Navigation a success. By 1823 the Roanoke Canal at Weldon had been completed, and by 1826 the Dan had been made navigable for 82 miles up to Leaksville, through sluices and wing dams and the canal around the falls at Danville. Finally, in 1828, Salem was reached, and Pannill's report to the Virginia Board of Public Works proclaimed: "There is now tolerable good and safe navigation to and from Salem, and this important object has been effected to the great benefit, joy, and gratification of the people in that region of the country... The rough was made smooth, the crooked straight, and the work went on under the general impulse of cheerfulness and anxiety, to reach the long talked of town of Salem."

Unfortunately, Pannill apparently never made a detailed map of the sluices and wing dams on the Staunton, but his manuscript report has been found in the North Carolina Legislative Papers (1827/28, Shelf mark L.P. 401) which includes a statistical summary of the work done and other important details, here transcribed in its entirety:

To the President & Directors of the Roanoke Navigation Company

Gentlemen,

Since my appointment as Superintendent of the affairs of the Company in March last, I have paid all the attention to them that was in my power, and flatter myself that they have gone on as well as could have been reasonably expected. The last summer (1827) has, upon the whole, been tolerable, good for operations on the River. We have, however, in some measure, been interrupted by high water, & very much incommoded & pestered by the hands running away. The hands were stationed in November last on Staunton River, 1½ miles above the ferry at Brook Neal, where they operated during the Winter as well as they could, and as the spring came on they got fully under way at work. We have during the last twelve month, improved the bed of the River by blowing out sluices, forming wing-dams & towing walls from the ferry at Brook Neal to Capt. George Gilbert's fish trap, near the upper end of the Long Island, a distance of about 11½ miles, and in which, by the report of the late Mr. Thomas Moore, there is about 86 feet fall. I have not deemed it necessary to enter into a minute detail of the works effected at the various points comprehended within the limits designated, because such a detail might be considered tedious & uninteresting. A tolerable idea of their magnitude, however, may be formed by stating, generally, that during the season, independent of the great labour

(see continuation sheet #3)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

#3

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

8. SIGNIFICANCE

expended on cutting through the solid ledges of rock to form sluices whenever required, the hands of the Company under the charge of John Shaw have built 1,026 feet of towing walls in length, 7 feet thick at bottom, 5 feet at top, & 6 feet high; 500 feet of towing wall, 7 feet thick at bottom, 5½ feet at top, & 6 feet high; and 366 feet of the same kind of wall, 4½ feet thick at bottom, 3½ feet at top, & 3½ feet high, making together 1,892 feet of towing walls. In addition thereto, the same hands have constructed 9,070 feet of wing dams in length in the strongest and most durable manner, which the stones would admit of, & they were generally very good.

During the summer, we hired a number of hands, who were employed on what is called the Little River, at the Long Island. The most of these hands acquitted themselves remarkably well, particularly Mr. Joseph Davis & his Company. The hired hands worked on the River from Pannill's ferry up to Gilbert's fish trap, a distance of about 3 miles, & in addition to blasting through many ledges of solid rock, for the purpose of obtaining a greater depth of water, they have built 606 feet of towing walls in length, averaging about 5 feet thick & 4 feet high; and have constructed 1,671 feet of wing dams. There is now safe navigation the whole of the distance operated on the present year, which may, however, be a little improved by a few short wing dams at a wide & shallow place in the Little River, to afford a better depth of water in very dry seasons, which dams can be built in 2 or 3 days by the hands of the Company. The ascending navigation will be a little hard in several places, in consequence of the strong current. During the last summer, the earth gave way around one of the Locks at Danville, by which the Lock was much endangered. I therefore thought it prudent, to send Mr. John Shaw, with two hands, tools & provisions, to repair the damage, which he has accomplished in about 12 days; since which all remains safe & snug there. I herewith send you my account, & vouchers, in which is included naped Cottons & ognaburgs (?) for clothing the negroes the approaching winter. Since our last meeting 4 negroes have been purchased, one has died, & 4 very vile runaways have been sold, as will appear by the list of negroes & movable property belonging to the Company hereunto annexed.

The navigation from Brook Neal to the upper end of the Long Island, a distance of 11½ miles, and by far the worst part of the River, having been improved in less than one year, I feel confident that, with the hands of the Company, in two years or less, there may be good & safe navigation obtained, to the Town of Salem, in the County of Botetourt, from 80 to 90 miles above the upper end of the Long Island, the place (see continuation at which the improvements now terminate; and I undertake the liberty sheet #4)

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CAT ROCK SLUICE OF THE ROANOKE NAVIGATION, Campbell and Halifax Counties, Va.

CONTINUATION SHEET #4

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

8. SIGNIFICANCE

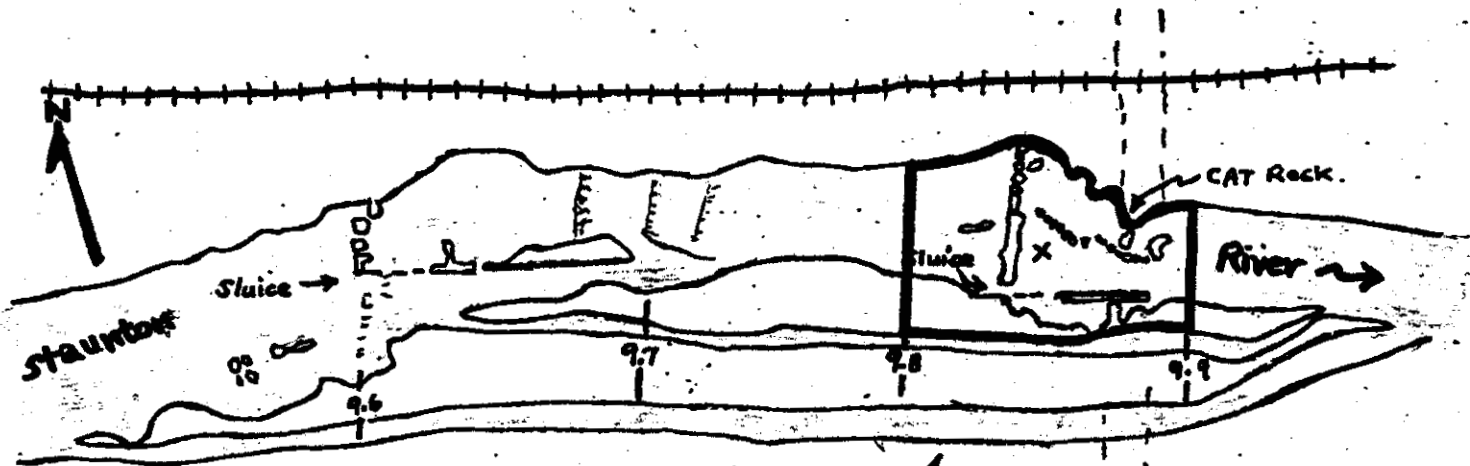
of recommending to your consideration, the propriety of pushing the improvements to that place with as little delay as possible with the hands of the Company. I would further recommend to the consideration of the Board the propriety of employing Joseph Davis, or some other fit person, the next summer, to make such repairs & further improvements as may be found necessary between Brook Neal & Weldon. I further recommend the selling of all the bad runaway negroes, & vesting the proceeds in the purchase of others. And, in conclusion, permit me to say that I am of opinion the affairs of the Company are in a prosperous & flattering situation.

Yours very Respectfully

Saml Pannill,
Superintendent

As is true for most navigation systems, it is not known when the end finally came to regular navigation of the Staunton River Falls sluices. From below the falls, at Brookneal, down to the railway crossing at Randolph, batteaux and even small steamboats probably continued to use the river even after the first locomotive reached Brookneal in 1889. Above Brookneal, however, the sluices through the falls and up to Salem were not officially kept up after 1837, although Pannill surely used them to carry goods down the falls from his plantation near Long Island to Randolph until his death in 1864. This means that the network of sluices, wing dams, and towing walls - the whole Staunton River Falls navigation system - which we see today was all carried out under Samuel Pannill and, except for repairs and modifications by him and silting and damage caused by floods, is essentially as it was when constructed in the summer of 1827.

WET



CAT ROCK SLUICE OF THE ROANOKE NAVIGATION
 Campbell/Halifax Counties, Virginia

Sketch Map - Not to Scale

Credit: Dr. William E. Trout, III
 April 1977

UTM References: 17/681380/4101390

- X - UTM Reference Point
- - Register Boundary

USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale:1:24000)
Brookneal, Va. 1966

CAT ROCK SLUICE OF THE ROANOKE NAVIGATION
Campbell and Halifax Counties, Va.
UTM References:

17/681380/4101390

