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BOOK INFORMATION SHEET (6.31.22)

Author (as it should appear on the book): Sandy Sorlien

Title: *Inland*

Subtitle: *The Abandoned Canals of the Schuylkill Navigation*

Contributors: with a foreword by John R. Stilgoe and essays by Mike Szilagyi and Karen Young

Partner: Published in association with the Center for the Study of Place

Book pages: 192

Number and type of illustrations: 103 color photographs by the author, 24 historic drawings, maps, plans, and postcards, and two maps = 129

Trim size: 11.0 x 9.0 landscape

List price: \$45.00

Discount: short discount; trade discounts available for bulk sales

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Interactive e-book? N.A.

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Bookstore categories (list three): Photography/U.S. History/Transportation/Pennsylvania

Audience: To be sure, this book will have regional appeal, but this does not mean a small market. The region is well-populated, from Philadelphia to Pottsville, and the Schuylkill River watershed alone is home to more than 3.2 million people. There are numerous canal societies in Pennsylvania, and each of the five counties of the Navigation has several historical societies, some with bookshops or online shops. Regardless of geography, anyone interested in the history of transportation, America's network of canals, and cutting-edge nineteenth-century engineering will find much to like and admire in this book.

Selling points (list three): (1) The book will be a handsome gift for history buffs, canal buffs, fans of industrial

ruins and landscapes, and residents of Philadelphia and the Schuylkill Valley; (2) the book is an unusual tour of a once vitally important Pennsylvania industrial landscape; and (3) the book will be an important resource for researchers of nineteenth-century American transportation.

Tagline:

A rare photographic river trip revealing the once-celebrated but now-hidden industrial landscapes of Pennsylvania that helped shape the nation.

Description of the work:

The Schuylkill River flows more than 130 miles from the mountains of the Pennsylvania Coal Region to its confluence with the Delaware River. It passes through five counties—Schuylkill, Berks, Chester, Montgomery, and Philadelphia—and its valley is home to more than three million people. Yet few are aware of the hidden ruins and traces left by a pioneering 200-year-old inland waterway that opened in 1825: the Schuylkill Navigation. Some of it is literally buried in their own backyards.

Often called the Schuylkill Canal, this complex navigation system actually boasted 27 canals. The first of the anthracite-carrying routes in America, the 108-mile Navigation shadowed the Schuylkill River for nearly all its length. It once had more than 30 dams and slackwater pools, more than 100 stone locks, numerous aqueducts, and the first transportation tunnel in the nation. They were all built by hand starting in 1816.

The water pollution created by the coal industry, unregulated factory and residential waste, and obstructive dams all but destroyed the river that fed the Navigation. Clogged channels, railway competition, and repeated flood damage meant the end of a way of life for many of the towns that boomed along the canals, and only a few historians have kept its memory alive.

During the 1940s, as part of a massive environmental cleanup of the Schuylkill, this important and influential infrastructure was largely dismantled—but not entirely. Two short sections of the watered canal get plenty of attention: the Oakes Reach at Schuylkill Canal Park near Phoenixville and the Manayunk Canal in Philadelphia. Both are popular recreational destinations. What happened to the rest of it? Photographer Sandy Sorlien resolved to find out.

Over the course of seven years, she repeatedly traveled upriver from her home near the Manayunk Canal, bushwhacking along the riverbanks and rowing and paddling in the river itself. Armed with camera and binoculars, loppers and trekking poles, nineteenth-century maps and modern satellite imagery, and abetted by local historians and an archaeologist, she found all 61 lock sites and explored most of the canal beds. Her photographs reveal a mysterious remnant landscape, evidence of an extraordinary engineering feat that spelled its own demise.

Along with Sorlien's extraordinary color plates and insightful essays, *Inland* features a selection of historic images, rare historic Schuylkill Navigation Company maps, and early Philadelphia Watering Committee plans. The book also includes a foreword by renowned landscape scholar John R. Stilgoe, an essay on regional

transportation history by Mike Szilagyi, former Trails Project Manager for the Schuylkill River Greenways Natural Heritage Area, and an afterword by Karen Young, Director of the Fairmount Water Works Interpretive Center. A sweeping new Schuylkill River map by Morgan Pfaelzer connects it all.

Inland is the first book to present contemporary photographs from a survey of the entire Schuylkill Navigation, becoming an essential resource for historians, preservationists, and communities along the Navigation, offering a resonant visual history of a once-famous place all its own.

Blurbs:

“*Inland* is, most of all, a work of the historical imagination, recovering for the viewer the significance of the long-lost canal system, a once-essential economic resource that was left behind and disappeared from view as transportation technologies changed. To imagine the Schuylkill Navigation as a whole and to realize its importance is itself of considerable importance to the nation and especially to Pennsylvanians, an act of reclamation that is at the same time an act of discovery. To imagine the Navigation as one interconnected series of dams, locks, and canal structures, as one coherent system, is the work of a truly creative artist and historian. The value of such a vision is immense—for the whole of the canal is what gives significance to each of the parts, which would otherwise disappear into the void, as nature overtakes the stones and as properties overcome the remnants of the past. Seeing the whole, and seeing the parts of the whole, changes everything. In *Inland*, Sandy Sorlien achieves a perfect synthesis of documentary and aesthetic modes. I can't think of another who combines the talents of Sorlien.”

—Miles Orvell, author of *Photography in America* and *Empire of Ruins*

“Sandy Sorlien’s *Inland* represents a haunting journey through a critical waterway of Pennsylvania and the now-ruined stone architecture that gave shape to its flow. Her work documents, in remnants of living water, trails, and stone, both an economic and environmental legacy of our region. There could be nothing more important today than to embrace and rebuild the relationship between human activity and the precious, life-giving resource of water as seen in the Schuylkill Navigation.”

—William R. Valerio, Ph.D., Director and CEO of the Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia

“The first time I stumbled upon the Schuylkill Navigation’s Lock 68 in Manayunk while walking along the river, my jaw dropped, for here was this astonishing piece of crumbling architecture covered not only in lichens and moss, but fantastical graffiti. What was this once? And how do we keep it with us? Thankfully, Sandy Sorlien answers the first question with stunning photography and clear, concise text. I hope many Schuylkill residents and walkers like me discover her book. Then it's up to us to answer the second question: How do we preserve this remarkable history?”

—Mike Weilbacher, Executive Director of the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education, Philadelphia

“Working with the tenacity and persistence of a detective, Sandy Sorlien navigated urban and rural landscapes of the present to find the remnants of a past—*our* past—that’s almost invisible and nearly forgotten. In *Inland*, she has puzzled together a story with photographs and words, revealing an astonishing feat of engineering—the Schuylkill Navigation—along with the cultural, economic, and political capital required to complete it. The essays by Sorlien and others shine a light on early indifference to the near-destruction of a major river and its ecosystem, while the photographs act to correct a subsequent indifference to the infrastructure itself. But *Inland* does more than reconstruct a canal system and identify a profoundly troubling environmental past—it offers perspective that informs our present as we consider our current activities and their generational impacts.”

—Byron Wolfe, Professor, Program Head, and Graduate Advisor in Photography, Tyler School of Art and Architecture, and author of *Drowned River: The Death and Rebirth of Glen Canyon on the Colorado* (2017), with Rebecca Solnit and Mark Klett

“Following the Schuylkill or ‘hidden river,’ Sandy Sorlien uncovers the sometimes forgotten but clearly not lost Schuylkill Navigation system. Her book, *Inland*, connects readers with the physical reminders of this influential waterway. We meet the Navigation at a crucial time, examining two centuries of its history even as some towpaths and ruins are repurposed as recreational trails and cultural sites, benefiting many former Schuylkill Canal communities. *Inland* excels at linking the past to the present, celebrating the engineering marvels of the canal era and the mystery of the surviving relics. Anyone who cares about the Schuylkill River—or American rivers and canals in general—will love exploring *Inland*.”

—Daniel Roe, Historic Resource Supervisor, County of Berks Parks and Recreation Department, Berks County Heritage Center, Reading, Pennsylvania

About the Author:

Sandy Sorlien is the author of *Fifty Houses: Images from the American Road* (John Hopkins, 2002). For decades she has traveled America’s back roads and city streets and the length of her native Schuylkill River Valley, photographing the built and natural environment. She has received three Fellowships in Photography from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a Commonwealth Speaker Fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council on the Humanities, and 2020 and 2021 Fellowships from the Charles E. Peterson Fund of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. She taught photography at the University of the Arts and several other Philadelphia-area schools. In 2013, she joined the Fairmount Water Works, the education center for the Philadelphia Water Department, as a watershed educator and environmental photographer. For recreation, competition, and exploration, she rowed an open-water single shell on the slackwater pools of the Schuylkill Navigation. After living 27 years near the Manayunk Canal, Sorlien moved with her husband to Rhode Island, where she rows on Narragansett Bay. Her Website is <https://sandysorlienphotographs.zenfolio.com/>.

About the Contributors:

John R. Stilgoe is the Robert and Lois Orchard Professor in the History of Landscape Development at Harvard University. His ten books on landscape include *What Is Landscape?* (MIT, 2015), *Old Fields: Photography, Glamour, and Fantasy Landscape* (Virginia, 2014), *Train Time: Railroads and the Imminent Reshaping of the United States Landscape* (Virginia, 2007), *Landscape and Images* (Virginia, 2005), *Lifeboat* (Virginia, 2003), *Outside Lies Magic* (Walker, 1998), *Alongshore* (Yale, 1994) and *Common Landscape of America: 1580–1845* (Yale, 1982), winner of the Francis Parkman Prize for best book of American history. Stilgoe is a Fellow of the Society of American Historians and has received the American Society of Landscape Architects' Williams Medal and the American Institute of Architects' Medal for collaborative research, among other awards. Among his research projects are a book on elites and another on suburban adaptation to rapid climate change. He restores antique boats.

Mike Szilagyi, AICP, has served as Trail Project Manager at Schuylkill River Greenways National Heritage Area and as Chair of the North Wales (PA) Historic Commission. He has spent decades devoted to planning southeastern Pennsylvania's bicycle trail network, yielding a deep knowledge of the long-forgotten web of former railroad and canal rights-of-way built before the automobile came to dominate the landscape. A lifelong cyclist, Szilagyi is the author of *Bucks County Trolleys* (Arcadia, 2020) and co-author of *Montgomery County Trolleys* (Arcadia, 2018).

Karen Young is Director of the Fairmount Water Works Interpretive Center, the watershed education arm of the Philadelphia Water Department. Ms. Young has more than 25 years of experience developing and implementing urban environmental programs.