

ARTI FACT

Passage to Prosperity



WITH ITS REVOLUTIONARY EFFECT on the cross-country delivery of cargo, the Erie Canal was the engineering marvel of its day. But almost from the time of its opening in 1825, there was a problem—it was too small. So began a decades-long expansion. The Schoharie Creek Aqueduct—photographed here arching over the creek as part of documentation done by the Historic American Engineering Record—was erected where the creek met the canal, which during high waters was a turbulent intersection that swept boats downstream. The John Jervis-designed structure, constructed of solid blue limestone, was built between 1839 and 1841, and its 1845 opening was a definite improvement, channeling the canal right over the creek. **TODAY THE STRUCTURE**, located in Fort Hunter, New York—a hamlet along the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor—is a site of distinction among the many aqueducts that still exist along the 363-mile-long canal, lonely relics of a bygone era. It is part of the Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site—the only area where all three phases of the canal can be seen at once. Visible from the site is a small section of the original canal including a guard lock built to shield it from the creek's raging waters, and Lock 20, the only original lift lock left. Also in sight are remnants from the enlarged canal including "Yankee Hill" Lock 28 and "Empire" Lock 29, as well as Lock 12 of the still-operating New York State Barge Canal. The aqueduct is also the only section of the original canal designated a national historic landmark. **ABANDONED IN 1915 AND WITH JUST 6** of its original 14 arches remaining, its span now ends only partway across, a picturesque vision of what used to be. But thanks to its stabilization in 2004—with help from a \$365,000 Save America's Treasures grant—what's still there will be around for a very long time, even weathering Hurricane Irene with minimal damage. **VISIT THE HERITAGE CORRIDOR ONLINE AT** www.eriecanalway.org. The archives of the Historic American Engineering Record are on the web at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/habs_haer/index.html.