



The Washington Aqueduct, the District of Columbia's first water system, epitomizes the entry of the Army Corps of Engineers into the field of public works and consequently into direct involvement in major economic influences. From 1824 with the passage of the Rivers and Harbors Act until the Civil War, the Army Corps developed a special relationship with Congress based on its profound involvement in civil works. The Washington Aqueduct is a superlative illustration of the military influence on the civil sector of antebellum America.

The Aqueduct is a monument of engineering to its designer and developer, Montgomery Cunningham Meigs, future Quartermaster General of the Army. From 1836 until the Civil War, Meigs was involved in engineering fortifications from Philadelphia to Fort Wayne, the Delaware Breakwater, and, ultimately, the dome and the wings of the Capitol. In the Aqueduct, which he counted his favorite project, he left such engineering superlatives as a 12-mile underground masonry conduit utilized to this day; the old Cabin John Bridge, which remained the longest masonry arch in the world until 1903; and the Rock Creek Bridge whose arched cast iron conduit supported the structure.



Washington Aqueduct

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places September 8, 1973

