

## THE AUGUSTA CANAL

With due credit to Mr. L.W. Richardson ACS., and his fine article on the Augusta Canal. Re;-ACS Bulletin #8. I wish to use a few of his remarks on certain sites relative to this lock and dam on the Savannah River in Northwest Augusta, Ga.

On May 8, 1975, I made an exploration and photographic tour of this complete complex, which includes the "Canal & River Park". This is a very popular area during the summer season, rather attractive setting high on the river bank, with the dam, canal and lock at its lower level. This section was either restored or up-graded by the City of Augusta in 1932. Parking is provided at the upper level, no cars are permitted to the recreation area below.

### HISTORY

Construction began on the Augusta Canal in 1846, was completed in less than a year. Canal was nine miles long. The upper or navigable portion less than seven miles. It actually began at the dam above Bull Sluice Dam (known as Stevens Creek Dam today) a distance of about 1-2 miles between dams on the Savannah River. In that era, the Old Canal was 40ft. wide at the top, 20ft. at the bottom and 5ft. deep. And without a doubt hugged the riverbank on its southwest side. In this manner it appears to me that the old double stone walls which are still there (may have been) the original lock. Am I right or wrong, Mr. Richardson?

After crossing that section on a foot bridge, the gate controls can then be seen that are associated with that section, only a few there. From this point on (Be Cautious!) as some of the planking is ~~is~~ poor, also the handrails are not too secure either. Avoid accidents!

### CANAL ENLARGEMENT

In 1874 the canal was enlarged and a great deal of massive stonework was involved for other structures at the site. A large spillway was built with ~~9~~ control gates and enclosed. This building was not open to the public. On the river side of the gate house is a single lock which handled all canal traffic. Built of cut stone, has steel gates and steel balance beams. Upper gate several feet higher than the lower gate. This lock is 76 X 11ft. Appears to be in fair condition but not operational. It is well watered, the upper gate remaining open to the river level.

This canal of the 1874 enlargement is by no means a small waterway today. It is 150ft. wide at the top, 106 ft. at the bottom and 11 ft. deep. Quite a contrast to the original canal of 1846. However, it appears to be in excellent shape in 1975.

### ENGINEERING

While this site is not (old) in comparison to many of our Old Canals ~~in~~ in the northeastern section of the United States, it does however, retain its own special characteristics of excellent engineering procedures of a semi-modern project. We cannot help but admire the construction work and design of all works at this "Historical Site". Really remarkable! Now well over 100 years have passed since this project was completed, and it is still intact today. We urge you to visit it soon.