

American Canal Society Canal Index

CANAL Gulf Intracoastal WW in Louisiana		STATUS Operating		ACS
STATE/PROVINCE: Louisiana				HAER
COUNTIES:				
LOCATION (Endpoints of Canal): Alabama to Texas				
TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS:				
		ENLARGEMENTS		
		DATES IN USE	LENGTH CANAL SLACKWATER TOTAL	LIFT LOCKS No. / SIZE
		1		
		2		
		3		
		4		

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:** from New Orleans

**ALGIERS LOCK** is ~~40 miles~~ downriver, and also leads into the bayou country. From Harvey, take Bus. 90 east, then E on General de Gaulle Drive; bear L onto MacArthur Blvd., left at the end to the levee, R along the Mississippi past the Chalmette Ferry landing, and R on Blythe Rd. to the lock. Or, just take the ferry (free) from Chalmette. Algiers Lock (75x797', 0-8' lift, reinforced concrete, 1956) has sector gates, which are partially opened to fill or empty the chamber, and can work against a few feet of reverse head when the river is lower than the bayous. Both gates can also be opened at the same time to let fresh water into the bayou country - a benefit for the fishing industry.

**BAYOU BOEUF LOCK** is off US 90 in Morgan City. Turn S on Myrtle St. and follow the C of E signs for 1½ mile. This lock (75x1158', 0-11' lift, 1954) is on the main line of the GIWW and protects the country to the east from floodwaters of the Atchafalaya River. It is similar to the Bayou Sorrel Lock, with concrete sector-gate bays and a huge grassed chamber, the barges being held in the deepest part by timber guidewalls.

**BERWICK LOCK** (45x307', 0-14.5' lift, concrete, 1950) is across the Atchafalaya (another old mouth of the Mississippi) from Morgan City, at the end of Bayou Teche (yet another old mouth), protecting it from floods. Take the US 90 bridge west and turn N (R) immediately after crossing. Follow the C of E signs out of Berwick for two miles. This lock also has sector gates, but a conventional concrete chamber.

Take LA 27 N, then W on LA 384, crossing the GIWW twice, to the **CALCASIEU (CAL ca shoe) LOCK**, on the main line of the GIWW where it crosses the Calcasieu River, about 10 miles S of the city of Lake Charles via LA 384, and 5 miles N of the town of Grand Lake. A ferry crosses the GIWW here; the lock is accessible only from the N side (watch for C of E sign). This is one of the locks protecting the Mermentau Basin, where ¼ of the rice in the U.S. is grown. The lock (75x1205', 0-4' lift, 1950) has sector gates and a turf chamber with timber guide walls. The row of white covers protect fire plugs and hoses.

Take LA 14 W from New Iberia, then S on LA 82 and 333 to the end, through Intracoastal City, to the **VERMILION LOCK** (56x1200', 0-5' lift in either direction, 1933). This is an interesting falling or tumble-gate lock on the main line of the GIWW. The single gates at each end are hinged at the bottom and when open fall flat on the canal bed. In the closed position a wedge holds the gate shut so it can operate against a head in either direction, to protect the rice-growing Mermentau River basin to the west from salt water intrusion, or to maintain the river basin water level, as needed. Other locks with this same function, on the edge of the Mermentau basin, are the Schooner Bayou, Calcasieu and Catfish Point locks. Vermilion Lock is turf-sided with concrete gate bays and wooden guidewalls in the chamber proper. This is an old lock, which the Corps plans to replace with a 110x1200', sector gate, turf-sided lock parallel to it on the south. We hope that as much as possible of the old lock will be retained. (Abbeville LA 15' quad.)

**NAMES & ADDRESSES OF GROUPS CONCERNED WITH CANALS PRESERVATION/RESTORATION:**  
New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers, Box 60267, New Orleans LA 70160

**BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY:**

Above material from **THE AMERICAN CANAL GUIDE**, Part 3, pp.6-11 (1979)  
**The Delta Engineers** by Albert E. Cowdrey (New Orleans District)  
NOS Chart 1050, New Orleans to Calcasieu River, East Section; and Chart 1051 (West Section).  
See also information sheets on the **GIWW (General); GIWW Port Allen Branch; Harvey Lock; and Inner Harbor Navigation Lock.**

**Other Structures NEAR GIWW IN LA.**  
Nine miles W of Berwick, US 90 crosses an outlet canal of the Atchafalaya at Calumet. Turn R before or after the bridge to reach the **EAST and WEST CALUMET FLOODGATES** (1950), respectively, protecting Bayou Teche from floods. These are single pairs of navigable sector gates, not passable when there is a difference in water level. A similar **CHARENTON FLOODGATE** (1948) is in the levee one mile N of Charenton, also protecting Bayou Teche from the Atchafalaya.

Five miles SW of Vermilion Lock, and only reached by water, is the **SCHOONER BAYOU CONTROL STRUCTURE** (a double pair of sector gates 75' wide, side-by-side, no chamber) next to the **SCHOONER BAYOU LOCK** (1913), abandoned in 1951. This lock had a 36x300' turf-sided chamber, 0-3' lift, and wooden tumble gates. It should be possible to visit this lock by renting a boat in Intracoastal City. Schooner Bayou Lock was once on the GIWW main route, which has changed over the years from a series of connected lakes to a continuous canal.

Also only accessible by boat is **FRESHWATER BAYOU LOCK** (84x600', 1968) near the Gulf end of the Belle Isle Canal, 18 miles S of Intracoastal City by water. It has sector gates and an earthen chamber with timber guide walls, and protects the Mermentau Basin from salt water while providing a sheltered waterway for the fishing, trapping and petroleum industries. North of Lake Charles is the **CALCASIEU RIVER SALT WATER BARRIER** (1968), a pair of sector gates in a river cut-off at a dam across the Calcasieu River, designed to keep salt water from moving up the river.

**REPORTER'S NAME & ADDRESS:** W.E. Trout, III, 1932 Cinco Robles Drive, Duarte CA 91010

DATE: 4 Oct 81

**RETURN TO:** CANAL INDEX COMMITTEE, c/o P.H. STOTT, HAINES ROAD, MOUNT KISCO, NY 10549