

CANAL Plaquemine Lock		STATUS Abandoned; park		ACS																																	
STATE/PROVINCE: Louisiana				HAER																																	
COUNTIES: Iberville																																					
LOCATION (Endpoints of Canal): At Plaquemine, LA																																					
TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS: Plaquemine LA 7½'																																					
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">ENLARGEMENTS</th> <th rowspan="2">DATES IN USE</th> <th colspan="3">LENGTH</th> <th rowspan="2">LIFT LOCKS No./ SIZE</th> </tr> <tr> <th>CANAL</th> <th>SLACKWATER</th> <th>TOTAL</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>1909; ab. 1961</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1/55x260'</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		ENLARGEMENTS	DATES IN USE	LENGTH			LIFT LOCKS No./ SIZE	CANAL	SLACKWATER	TOTAL	1	1909; ab. 1961				1/55x260'	2						3						4						
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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

PLAQUEMINE (pronounced PLAK-men) LOCK (mile 209, 55x260', 0-55' lift, 1909) is the most picturesque concrete lock in the country. Watch for it to the east in Plaquemine after the LA 1 bridge over the Bayou Plaquemine (Indian for persimmon), made famous in Longfellow's poem "Evangeline": In the mid-1700's, Evangeline and other Acadian exiles from Nova Scotia floated down the Mississippi, then "swerved from their course; and entering the Bayou of Plaquemine, soon were lost in a maze of sluggish and devious waters...."

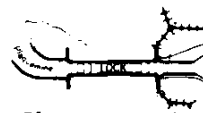
The lock is now the starting point of the annual re-enactment of the voyage during the International Acadian Festival on the last weekend in October every year. The 111-mile route (passing near Bayou Sorrel Lock, over the Charenton Floodgate, and through Keystone Lock) to St. Martinville and the Evangeline Memorial State Park (museum open M-Sat 8:30-4:30, Sun 12:30-4:30) is well described in

CANOEING IN LOUISIANA, available at \$2.20 ppd. from the Lafayette Natural History Museum, 637 Girard Park Drive, Lafayette LA 70501.

The bayou was a natural connection between the Mississippi and the Atchafalaya River basin until 1867, when the local parish constructed a levee across it. The lock restored this connection, and was designed by Col. George W. Goethals of the Corps of Engineers, later Chief Engineer for the Panama Canal. At the time, it had the highest fresh-water lift of any lock in the world. However, the picturesque curve in the bayou (making two right angle bends) was too much for modern barge traffic so in 1961 the lock was replaced by the Port Allen Lock ten miles upriver, and the lock became a park maintained by the Corps. Fortunately, the plans of the LA Dept. of Highways to put a highway across the lock or across the curves of the bayou, have so far been successfully fought by Gary J. Hebert, Editor of the

GREATER PLAQUEMINE POST, who put the lock on the National Register.

When the lock was abandoned the Mississippi levee was continued across the upper end, but the bayou side is still as picturesque as ever, complete with a lockhouse. There are two pairs of miter gates at each end of the lock, double the usual number, for protection from the Mississippi, and there is also a short pair of gates at the lower end, facing the bayou, for times when the river was lower than the bayou, called "reverse head." The levee now covers the upper two pairs of gates but the rest are intact and one can cross the lock on one pair. Plaquemine Lock and the bayou deserve continued protection and are well worth a visit. UTM: 15.669800.3352320, Plaquemine LA. There is a museum in Plaquemine on Martin St. behind the library, open M-Sat 8-5, M&W evenings to 8.



Plaquemine Lock

From THE AMERICAN CANAL GUIDE Part 3, pp.5-6 (1979)

NAMES & ADDRESSES OF GROUPS CONCERNED WITH CANALS PRESERVATION/RESTORATION:

Gary J. Hebert, Editor, THE GREATER PLAQUEMINE POST, 1114 Belleview Drive, Plaquemine LA 70764.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY:

From material supplied by Mr. Hebert.
See also The Delta Engineers by Albert E. Cowdrey (New Orleans District, C of E), and Annual Reports of the Chief of Engineers.

UNPUBLISHED RECORDS, PHOTOS, DRAWINGS (CEHR, HAER, IABS, Local or Regional Historical Societies, Libraries, etc.):

EXISTING OR RECOMMENDED LANDMARK STATUS (CEHR, National Register, etc.):

Lock is on the National Register but there is still strong pressure to run the Great River Road across it, or in a way which will ruin the scenic bayou.

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DATE: **2 Oct 81**

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