

# **THE AMERICAN CANAL GUIDE**

**A Bicentennial Inventory of America's Historic Canal Resources**

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**DRAFT**

**Midwest**

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## **MIDWEST CANALS**

### **Illinois**

- Calumet Sag Channel
- Chicago Sanitary & Ship Canal
- Fox River
- Hennepin Canal (Illinois & Mississippi)
- Illinois & Michigan Canal
- Illinois Waterway
- Kaskaskia River
- Kankakee Navigation
- North Shore Channel
- Ohio River
- Wabash river

### **Michigan**

- Crystal Lake Outlet
- Keweenaw Waterway
- North Michigan Waterway
- Saginaw - Grand River
- St. Mary's River (Soo Canal)
- Clinton - Kalamazoo Canal

### **Minnesota**

- Pelican River
- Sandy Lake

### **upper Mississippi River**

### **Wisconsin**

- Fox River Navigation
- Milwaukee Rock River Canal
- Oconomowoc Lakes
- Portage Canal
- Sturgeon Bay Ship Canal
- Yahara River
- Wisconsin River

## HENNEPIN CANAL by Gary Wagle

The Hennepin Canal, in Illinois, can be imagined as an inverted "T." The Feeder forms the stem of the T; and the Main Canal, with its 32 locks, forms the cross line of the inverted T. The water that fills the Canal comes from the Rock River, located at the top of the inverted T's stem, where there is the Guard Lock, which is in Rock Falls. The water from the Rock River flows down the Feeder, with no locks, for 29.3 miles where it joins the Main Canal just West of Sheffield. The water then flows both East and West. The water flowing East spills into the Illinois River at Bureau Junction at Lock 1. The water that flows West spills back into the Rock River at Colona, Lock 29.

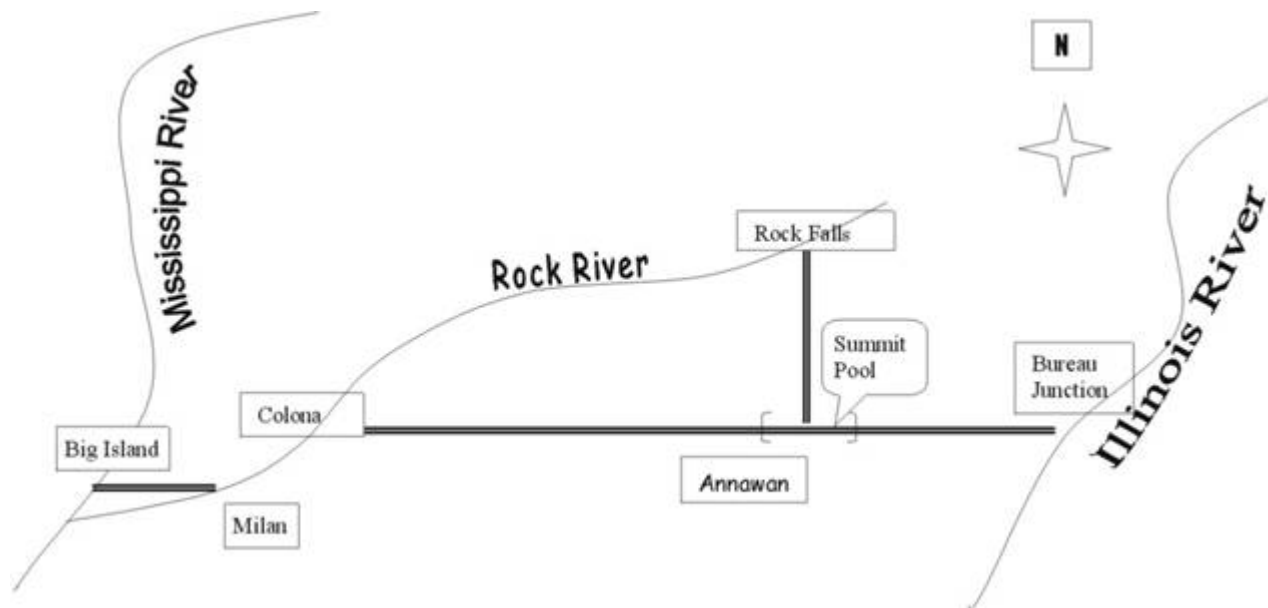
The area where the Feeder junctions the main Canal is called the Summit Pool, and the Summit Pool, located between locks 21 and 22, is 11 miles long. The distance East from the Summit Pool to the Illinois River is 18 miles and the drop down to the Illinois River is 196 feet, which is stepped down through 21 locks. The distance West from the Summit Pool to the Rock River at Colona is 32.9 miles and the drop down to the Rock River is about 90 feet, which is stepped down through eight locks.

Canal boats traveling West that wanted to travel the Mississippi River would, after leaving Lock 29 at Colona, travel down the Rock River to Milan where they would reenter the Canal at Lock 30, just upstream of the Steel Dam. The Canal continues from Lock 30 to the Mississippi River at Lock 32, located on Big Island, West of Rock Island.

The Main Canal, including the 8.8 mile trip on the Rock River is 75.2 miles. The combined distances of the Main and Feeder Canals is 104.5 miles

### Map of the Hennepin Canal

by Gary Wagle



The Hennepin Canal (or Illinois and Mississippi Canal) connects the Illinois River coming from the Chicago area at the point it changes from a westward direction to southward flowing to the Mississippi

River near Rock Island. It was planned to haul Midwestern grain and reduce the travel distance between the upper Mississippi River and Chicago. It was proposed for many decades, but not constructed until 1892 - 1907 by the Corps of Engineers. It was built with concrete locks 35 feet by 170 feet long. When opened, it connected at the east end with the Illinois and Michigan Canal which had much smaller locks and later with the Illinois Waterway which had much larger locks. As such, it never lived up to its expectations. It was the last U.S. towpath canal built. Its locks were closed to navigation in 1951, but it remains watered throughout as a state park.

**Revised 2/9/10**