

American Canal Society Canal Index

CANAL Cumberland River Navigation		STATUS Operating; some locks abandoned		ACS																											
STATE/PROVINCE: Tennessee, Kentucky				NAECK																											
COUNTIES:																															
LOCATION (Endpoints of Canal): Above Garthage TN to mouth on the Ohio River, plus section to Burnside KY																															
TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS: See American Canal Guide																															
		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">ENLARGEMENTS</th> <th rowspan="2">DATES IN USE</th> <th colspan="2">LENGTH</th> <th rowspan="2">LIFT LOCKS No./ SIZE</th> </tr> <tr> <th>CANAL</th> <th>SLACKWATER TOTAL</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>1888-1924+</td> <td>300+</td> <td></td> <td>16/52x280'</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>1954-1973+</td> <td>300</td> <td></td> <td>2/110x800'</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2/84x400'</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</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	1888-1924+	300+		16/52x280'	2	1954-1973+	300		2/110x800'	3				2/84x400'	4					
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HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

There have been two lock-and-dam systems on the CUMBERLAND RIVER, one replacing the other. The first, constructed between 1888 and 1924, had a 6-ft. channel and 15 locks and dams called A through F and 1 through 8, with another far up the river in Kentucky called Lock 21. These are now referred to as the "Old Locks." Until 1910 the locks were of cut stone; the last 7 were of concrete, all for steamboats and 52 x 280' in the chamber. Beginning in 1954 this system was replaced by four high dams with locks, the first two 110 x 800 feet, the rest 84 x 400', and a 9-foot channel, with the same head of navigation as before, over 300 miles from the Ohio. The old dams were removed, and because of the narrowness of the river the river-side walls of the old locks were removed, except for Old Locks E,F,3,4 and 8, which are all under 20 or more feet of

water so were left with the operating machinery intact and the gates closed. Industrial archaeologists of the future will have a field day with these navigation time capsules!

Today there are public access areas or parks at the new locks and at most of the old sites. These are marked on recreation maps of Barkley, Cheatham, Old Hickory and Gordell Hull Lakes available free from the Nashville District. Especially useful is the Nashville District Bicentennial history, ENGINEERING ON THE TWIN RIVERS (1978) by Dr. Leland Johnson, available from the district at \$10 ppd. Also very useful is a bound book of navigation charts of the Cumberland, showing the old lock locations, available from them at \$4. See also STEAMBOATIN' ON THE CUMBERLAND by Byrd Douglas (Tennessee Book Co., Nashville, 1961).

From THE AMERICAN CANAL GUIDE Part 3, p.17 (1979)

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

Nashville District, Corps of Engineers, P.O. Box 1070, Nashville TN 37202

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY:

Engineering on the Twin Rivers by Dr. Leland Johnson

For more details see THE AMERICAN CANAL GUIDE Part 3, pp.17-19.

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

Field work for ACS by Minnie B. Morton

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

Old Lock C should become a canal park; also Old Lock 1, the oldest still visible. Old Lock 2 is a park and should have an exhibit; Old Lock 7 is a good park maintained by Smith County and would also be a good place for an exhibit.

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

DATE: 1 Oct 81

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