

## SECTION 1 - DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT SETTING

The Inner Harbor Navigation Canal (IHNC) and the IHNC Lock were built during the early 1920's. The canal and lock, which are also known as the Industrial Canal and Lock, intersect the Mississippi River at mile 93 above Head of Passes (AHP). They originally connected only Lake Pontchartrain and the river, and were built by the Board of Port Commissioners of Louisiana (now known as the Board of Commissioners of the Port of New Orleans or Dock Board) in response to a need for more port areas to handle increased water traffic in the port. The canal was initially built 200 feet wide and 20 feet deep with approximately 1,000 feet of land on each side of the canal to be used for port and industrial development. The lock was built to dimensions of 640 by 75 by 31.5 feet. Currently, the land on both sides of the canal is fully developed and devoted to industrial use. During World War II, the Federal Government rerouted the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway (GIWW) so that the IHNC lock connected the eastern and western sections of the GIWW, creating a more direct route to locations on the eastern gulf coast. Concurrent with the relocation of the GIWW-East, the Federal Government leased the IHNC lock and assumed its maintenance and operation. The lock was subsequently purchased by the Federal Government in 1986.

During three decades following construction of the IHNC, the Port of New Orleans continued to experience growth and ultimately congestion in the existing port area and entrances to the port. In 1956 Congress authorized construction of the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet (MR-GO) to provide a tidewater channel to new harbor facilities that would supplement the existing port facilities as well as an alternate route to the Gulf of Mexico for oceangoing vessels. Intersecting the IHNC about 2.1 miles north of its intersection with the Mississippi River, the MR-GO was completed in 1967 with project dimensions of 500 feet wide by 36 feet deep. The distance to the Gulf of Mexico from the IHNC lock is about 70 miles, or about 50 miles shorter than the 45-foot depth route to the gulf via the Mississippi River. The provision of direct deep water access to the "Tidewater Port", as it came to be called, allowed the port to enter the era of containerization with competitive strengths that would not have been attainable if only the Mississippi River had been available. Containership operations were better suited to the Tidewater Port where the obstructions to efficient container handling presented by levees are not present.

The period following World War II also saw a period of rapid growth in traffic in the nation's inland waterways

system as public sector investment in improved waterways and private sector investment in more efficient technology enhanced the competitive advantage of water transportation. Always a dominant transportation alternative along the gulf coast, inland water transport in the New Orleans area grew rapidly.

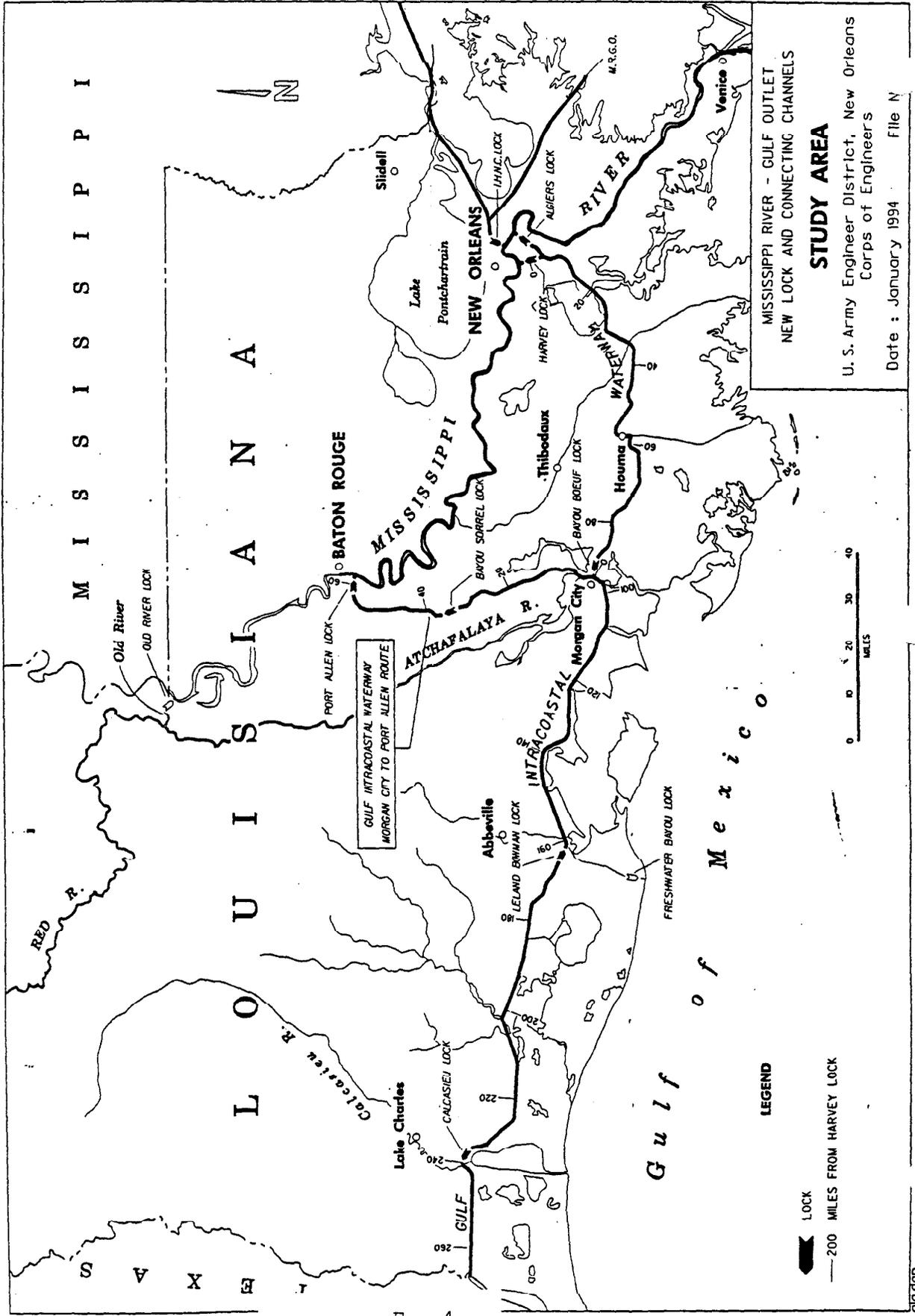
The GIWW, of which the IHNC is a crucial link, also grew rapidly during this period. The GIWW traces the U.S. coast along the Gulf of Mexico from Apalachee Bay near St. Marks, Florida, to the Mexican border at Brownsville, Texas. Mile 0.0 of the GIWW intersects the Mississippi River at mile 98.2 (AHP), the location of Harvey Lock, and extends eastwardly for approximately 376 miles and westwardly for approximately 690 miles. In addition to the mainstem, the GIWW includes a major alternate channel, 64 miles long, which connects Morgan City, Louisiana to Port Allen, Louisiana at Mississippi River mile 227.6 AHP, and a parallel mainstem channel, 9.0 miles long, which joins the Mississippi River at mile 88.0 AHP, the location of Algiers Lock, to the mainstem at GIWW West mile 6.2. Project dimensions for the mainstem channel and the alternate route are 12 feet deep and 125 feet wide, except for the 150 foot width between the Mississippi River and Mobile Bay portion of the GIWW East. Numerous side channels and tributaries intersect both the eastern and western mainstem channels providing access to inland areas and coastal harbors.

There are five primary GIWW navigation locks on the mainstem west: Algiers, Harvey, Bayou Boeuf, Leland Bowman, and Calcasieu, with Port Allen and Bayou Sorrel on the GIWW Morgan City-Port Allen Alternate Route. West of Calcasieu lock, the westernmost lock identified above, there are four additional navigation structures. These include the East and West Brazos River Floodgates located at GIWW West mile 404.1, and the East and West Colorado River Locks located at GIWW West mile 444.8. There are no navigation structures on the GIWW east of the IHNC lock. Table 1 - 1 describes the physical characteristics and locations of the primary GIWW locks and Figure 1 - 1 maps the area that includes these locks.

Table 1 - 1

## System Physical Description of GIWW Locks

<u>Waterway/Lock</u>	<u>GIWW Mile</u>	<u>Miss. River Mile</u>	<u>Length (Feet)</u>	<u>Width (Feet)</u>	<u>Sill Depth (Feet)</u>	<u>Lift (Feet)</u>	<u>Year Opened</u>
<u>GIWW East</u>							
IHNC	0	92.6	640	75	31.5	17	1923
<u>GIWW West</u>							
Algiers	0	88.0	760	75	13	18	1956
Harvey	0	98.2	425	75	12	20	1935
Bayou Boeur	93.3	n.a.	1156	75	13	11	1954
Leland Bowman	162.7	n.a.	1200	110	15	5	1985
Calcasieu	238.9	n.a.	1206	75	13	4	1950
<u>GIWW Alt. Route M.C. - P.A.</u>							
Port Allen	64.1	227.6	1202	84	14	45	1961
Bayou Sorrel	36.7	n.a.	797	56	14	21	1952



MISSISSIPPI RIVER - GULF OUTLET  
 NEW LOCK AND CONNECTING CHANNELS

**STUDY AREA**

U. S. Army  
 Engineer District, New Orleans  
 Corps of Engineers

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FIGURE 1-1.