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ILLINOIS AND MICHIGAN CANAL,
DESPLAINES RIVER GUARD-LOCKS
I&M Canal National Heritage Corridor
Below Lift Lock No. 5
Joliet
Will County
Illinois

HAER No. IL-115

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Location: I & M Canal National Heritage Corridor
3,000 feet below Lift Lock No. 5 at
junction of I & M canal and DesPlaines
River; Brandon Guard Lock east of
Brandon Road
Joliet vicinity, Will County, Illinois

UTM: 16 E.408340 N.45595140
Quad: Joliet

Date of Construction: ca. 1846-48; 1933

Builder: State of Illinois

Present Owner: State of Illinois

Present Use: DesPlaines Guard Lock destroyed; Brandon
still in use

Significance: The Illinois and Michigan Canal
originally crossed the DePlaines River
at Joliet behind a slackwater dam. A
guard lock along the river was built
along with Lift Lock No. 5; with the
completion of the Illinois Waterway in
1933 this guard lock was destroyed and a
new one was built near the Brandon Road
Lock and Dam at Rockdale.

Project Information: The Illinois and Michigan Canal was
designated a National Heritage Corridor
in 1984. The following year HABS/HAER
embarked on an extensive inventory and
documentation project of the 100 mile-
long corridor. Field work for this
project was concluded in 1988. Final
editing of the documentation was
completed in 1992.

Historians: Joseph DeRose and Carolyn Brown, 1986;
Carolyn Brucken, 1992.

The I & M Canal entered the DesPlaines River through Lock No. 5 located in Joliet on the east side of the DesPlaines River. From the lift lock boats entered into the DesPlaines River where waters were navigable over a distance of about two miles. The Guard Lock was built about 3,000 feet below Lift Lock No. 5 and had a lift of only two inches. The canal exited the DesPlaines River through this guard lock. Both the guard lock and the lift lock were obliterated during the construction of the Illinois Waterway. In its place, a new guard lock of reinforced concrete was constructed near the Brandon Road Lock and Dam, at Rockdale, Illinois, several hundred feet downstream from the location of the original guard lock. As part of the Illinois Waterway, the new Brandon Road Lock, containing a lift of 32.8 feet, the second greatest lift along the waterway, was opened to barge traffic in 1933. The new guard lock contains a lift of about 8 feet.

The Brandon lock measures 600' in length and 110' in width, and has a lift of 32.8'. The upper and lower gates are large, electrically operated, steel, double-leaf gates. The lock master's house is a one-and-one-half story, T-shaped building, measuring 30' x 20'. The house has a concrete foundation, Flemish-bond brick walls with limestone belt courses and an intersecting gable roof.

SOURCES:

U. S. Army Engineer District, Chicago, Navigation Structures, Illinois Waterway Locks and Dams--Upper River, Operation and Maintenance Manual (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago, Illinois, 1963.)

Illinois Waterway-Brandon Road Lock and Dam Major Rehabilitation, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, August 1984.

Lester F. Filson, "From Whence Came a City: The Story of Joliet and Will County, Illinois", unpublished ms, 1957, available in the Joliet Public Library.