The GULF INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY (GIWW), stretches 1,100 miles from northern Florida to the Mexican border, a sheltered waterway similar to the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, cutting through lowlands and marsh, connecting numerous bays and streams along the Gulf coast. Developed in sections and essentially completed by 1949, it is still undergoing changes.

One of the earliest cuts on the GULF INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY was in Texas, the privately built GALVESTON AND BRAZOS CANAL (1856) between Galveston Bay and the mouth of the Brazos. Although there are a number of locks on the GIWW in Louisiana, the only ones in Texas are the COLORADO RIVER FLOOD LOCKS in Natagordia (75K, 273' in the channel, 0-10' lift, 1957), one on each side of the river where the GIWW crosses it, to keep floodwaters out of the waterway. These were originally flood gates in 1944, later converted into locks by the addition of a second pair of gates for each. This earlier stage is still represented by the BRAZOS RIVER FLOODGATES (1943) at the Brazos River crossing of the GIWW.

Until 1939 there was a concrete tide lock (1916, 80x960', 1' lift) on the SANINIE-NECHE CANAL (1908), now part of the GIWW, 6 mi. above Port Arthur. This lock was intended to keep salt water out of the river-grown region upstream, but proved to be such a bottleneck that it was entirely removed.

A number of nautical charts covering the Louisiana canals and the GIWW are available from the National Ocean Survey, Distribution Division 544, Riverdale, MD 20854. Ask for their free chart catalog #1 (Atlantic). Especially useful are #11354 (Morgan City to Port Allen), #11087 (New Orleans to Calcasieu River, East Section), #11077 (West Section), and #11086 (Mississippi River, Venice to New Orleans).

For an excellent account of the development of the GIWW in Texas see CUSTODIANS OF THE COAST by Lynn M. Alperin (1977), the bicentennial history of the Galveston District, $6 ppd. payable to Treasurer of the United States, from the Galveston District.

The GIWW is also covered by the Southern Edition of WATERWAY GUIDE, $9.45 plus tax ppd. from Waterway Guide, P.O. Box 1406, Annapolis MD 21404.

F L O R I D A

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See also "Gulf Intracoastal Waterway" flyer free from the Galveston, New Orleans or Mobile District; and The Delta Engineers, by Albert E. Cowlery, New Orleans District, Corps of Engineers, Box 60267, New Orleans LA 70160.

Also see Inner Harbor Navigation Canal; Algiers, Harvey, Bayou Sorrel, Bayou Boeuf, Port Allen, Vermilion, Calcasieu, and Colorado River Locks, in the American Canal Guide Part 3.