**West Palm Beach Canal**

**Status**: Drainage and commercial

**Location (Endpoints of Canal)**

- Canal Point (Lake Okeechobee) - West Palm Beach

**Dimensions**

- **Lift Locks**: 2
- **Width**: 25 x 150 ft.
- **Lock Chamber**: 25 x 135 ft. (Overall)

**Amenities**

- **Aqueducts**: 0
- **Tunnels**: 0

**Description**

West Palm Beach Canal was the shortest of Main Canals and deepest of all. Served as drainage and commercial use. No towpaths used. Steam power was available. Gasoline later. Both sternwheelers and screw propellers were used. Boats were roughly 70 x 14-18 ft. beam. Passenger boats of larger size were double deckers & shallow draft. Locks in this canal were made of concrete. Width of canal (unknown) but assumed to be from photos about 60-80 ft. Construction on most Main Canals started about 1906. The above canal opened in 1917. At the lake end of each canal in later years was a hurricane gate, weight of 92 tons each. Costing $250,000. Built after 1920. Purpose was to prevent flooding and loss of life which occurred in late 1920's. By 1913, 142 miles of canals had been cut at a cost of $2,000,000.

**Names & Addresses of Groups Concerned with Canal's Preservation & Restoration**

- Everglades Drainage District & Commission
- U.S. Dept of Engineers Corps

**Reporters’ Name & Address**

- M. E. Stoddard - 241 West Palm Beach Blvd. Fort Myers, FL. 33905

**Historical Summary**

- Drainage of all lands south of Lake Okeechobee to the Everglades over a period of years to the southeast towards the Atlantic Ocean. Several engineers were prominent, two were Mr. F.O. Elliot & J.O. Wright. Traffic dates started at once on all canals when opened, continuing to middle 1920's. Canal still open. Present small boat traffic today. The drainage system required to lower the water table. Dr. Wills stated that all canals should be made navigable. Due to lack of highways and railroads in this section of Florida. limestone forced the canal ends in all canals to the best of our knowledge. Mud was the top soil generally used for dikes where necessary. Steam dredges used for excavation work.

**Biographical Summary**

- (Published work relating to canal)
  - Everglades Eng. Corp - Internal Improvement Fund - State of Florida 1913
  - Biennial Report 1927-1928
  - F.O. Elliot Chief Drainage Eng. 44-111-5
  - Area maps by U.S. Dept of Engineers, Eng. Drainage Dist. Reports May 1, 1944

**Unpublished Records, Location of Photos, Drawings & Important Periodical References**

- U.S. Eng. Corps Drawings & maps
- Okeechobee; Okeechobee-Boats & Skippers photos (both books) Fort Myers Public Library

**National Register & MAER (Historic American Engineering Record) Status**

- None as far as I know.

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USE ADDITIONAL SHEETS AS NECESSARY.

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