For a time the WHITE RIVER in Arkansa was considered even more important that the Arkansas; ten locks and dams were authorized between Batesville and Russell Shoals but by 1908 only three were ever constructed, because meanwhile a railway line had been built up the river valley. Although people complained that the fixed crib dams did nothing to control floods, and that the three locks were on the only part of the upper river which had been navigable without, they were in use until 1952 when they were abandoned and sealed.

LOCK AND DAM 1 (mile 299.8 on the 1942 USGS map, 16.8 mile, 1903) is on the left bank at Batesville.

The US 70 bridge into town, R at the first road for a block, then R across the KY tracks and follow the river downstream (L) ½ mi. to the lock, which is on a city park. The dam is still intact; the pond is used by the annual White River Water Carnival each first weekend in August. Except for a steel gate which has been washed 100 yards downstream, the operating equipment is intact. The lock park has rest rooms, water, and a picnic area (no camping).

LOCK 2 (mile 308.3, 134 foot lift, 1905) is on the right bank on the N (5) bank, 1.5 mi. E of Lowcard on AR 25 then 3 mi. NW on secondary roads. LOCK 3 (mile 320.1, 14' lift, 1908) is on the L bank about 9 mi. W of Batesville on AR 106 to Bethedale then N 2 mi. and W 4 mi. on secondary roads. All three were crib dams with concrete locks 36x147' in the chamber and steel miter gates. For details see the 1904 Corps Annual Report, pp. 3750-3763 (Appendix AAA 18), and the Little Rock District history. A White River Trout fishing map, down to Lock 3 is available from the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism, 149 State Capitol, Little Rock AR.

A History of the Little Rock District by Dr. Floyd M. Clay. Annual Reports of the Chief of Engineers, and information supplied by D.R. Rippey of the Little Rock District. See especially the 1904 report, Appendix AAA 18 (pp. 3750-3763) describing the works in detail, as well as early efforts in 1874 to make a riverbed navigation using wing dams. It may be that some of these wing dams are still visible; this possibility needs to be explored.

Material supplied by Fay Lindsey, of the Chamber of Commerce, and Wilson Powell of the Independence County Historical Society.

EXISTING OR RECOMMENDED LANDMARK STATUS (CLHR, National Register, etc.):
Lock 1 should be considered for the National Register.

From THE AMERICAN CANAL GUIDE Part 3, pp.16-17 (1979)

NAMES & ADDRESSES OF GROUPS CONCERNED WITH CANALS PRESERVATION/RESTORATION:
Batesville Area Chamber of Commerce, 409 Vine St., Batesville AR 72501.
Independence County Historical Society, Box 2036, Batesville AR 72501.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY:
A History of the Little Rock District by Dr. Floyd M. Clay. Annual Reports of the Chief of Engineers, and information supplied by D.R. Rippey of the Little Rock District. See especially the 1904 report, Appendix AAA 18 (pp. 3750-3763) describing the works in detail, as well as early efforts in 1874 to make a riverbed navigation using wing dams. It may be that some of these wing dams are still visible; this possibility needs to be explored.

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