

CANAL: Tehuantepec Ship-Railway		STATUS: PROPOSED ONLY		ACS
STATE/PROVINCE: MEXICO				HAER
COURSES: Veracruz and Oaxaca				
LOCATION (Endpoints of Canal): 134 miles across Isthmus of Tehuantepec		ENLARGEMENTS		
TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS:		DATES IN USE:	LENGTH CANAL SLACKWATER TOTAL	LIFT LOCKS No. / SIZE

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:
 An extravagant proposal to speed inter-oceanic travel, and a competing proposal to plans for canals across Panama and Nicaragua. Believed by its proponents to be both feasible and less expensive than excavation for a ship canal. Designing engineer was James B. Eads (1820-1887) and the concept was evidently widely debated during the 1880s. Essentially three parallel standrad-gauge tracks resting on long steel ties ran the 134 miles ^{across} the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. At either end pontoon carriages raised or lowered the ~~h~~ ships into or out of the water. The carriages were pulled along the rails by three locomotives "of great traction power." The length and rigidity of the carriage would allow no appreciable curve in the route; consequently, at points on the line where topography dictated a curve, it was proposed to change direction using a "floating" turntable,

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: Water acting as a bearing when the table was loaded. Five of these floating turntables were proposed for the route. Passing vessels on the route would also be accomplished using these floating turntables and short track spurs. According to its proponents, ~~it~~ its advantages were not only that it was cheaper to construct, it was also nearer to the U.S. than Panama and Nicaragua.

NAMES & ADDRESSES OF GROUPS CONCERNED WITH CANALS PRESERVATION/RESTORATION:

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: James B. Eads, Tehuantepec Ship-Railway. Answer of James B. Eads correcting the erroneous statements of the promoters of the Nicaragua Canal scheme. (Washington, D.C., 1882) [26 pp.]
 Corthell, E.L. "The Tehuantepec Ship Railway," Journal of the Franklin Institute vol. 119 (1885), pp. 457-489. illus.
 London Times 21 August 1884; London Engineering 9 January 1885.

UNPUBLISHED RECORDS, PHOTOS, DRAWINGS (CEHR, HAER, HABS, Local or Regional Historical Societies, Libraries, etc.):

EXISTING OR RECOMMENDED LANDMARK STATUS (CEHR, National Register, etc.):

REPORTER'S NAME & ADDRESS: Stott 9/28/76
 DATE: 28

RETURN TO: CANAL INDEX COMMITTEE, c/o P.H. STOTT, HAINES ROAD, MOUNT KISCO, NY 10549