

JOHN HOLLIS BANKHEAD LOCK AND DAM
Birmingham Industrial District
Thirty-one miles below Port Birmingham
on Warrior River
Kellerman Vic.
Tuscaloosa County
Alabama

HAER No. AL-137

HAER
ALA
63-KELMAN,
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BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
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Location: Thirty-one miles below Port Birmingham on Warrior River, Near Kellerman, Tuscaloosa County, Alabama.

Dates of Construction: 1915, 1936, 1950s, 1970, 1975

Description: The original 1915 dam (the only one of the original 17) remains, though not easily accessible to the general public. The current dam is 1,400 feet wide, 77 feet high with a lift of 69 feet.

Project Information: This report is based upon written documentation donated by the Birmingham Historical Society, reformatted to HABS/HAER guidelines.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The John Hollis Bankhead Lock and Dam is located on the Black Warrior River about 31 miles below Port Birmingham. The uppermost dam on the Black Warrior - Tombigbee Waterway, the first Bankhead Dam was the last to be constructed in the original development begun in the 1890s. Modernization of the original 1915 lock and dam began in 1966. In 1963 Alabama Power Company completed a powerhouse immediately below the dam on the right bank. The new lock was opened in 1975 and completed in 1980.

Lake Bankhead extends to the head of the Black Warrior River and into the Locust, Mulberry and Sipsey Forks for a total length of 65 miles and a total area of 9,200 acres. As it was not the policy of the Federal Government to acquire land at navigation facilities for recreational development when the Bankhead Dam was rebuilt, there are no Corps of Engineers-owned recreational areas about the lake. However, due to the natural beauty of the setting and its location near the Birmingham area, there has been considerable private development on the lake shores. A day-use area with an overlook, comfort station and picnic shelters has been constructed for the public. A fishing deck below the lock and dam is another popular attraction.

Sources Consulted

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mobile District, Water Resources Development in Alabama 1989, p. 8.

Telephone Interview with Clarence Dockery, Bankhead Lock and Dam Employee, 8/20/92.