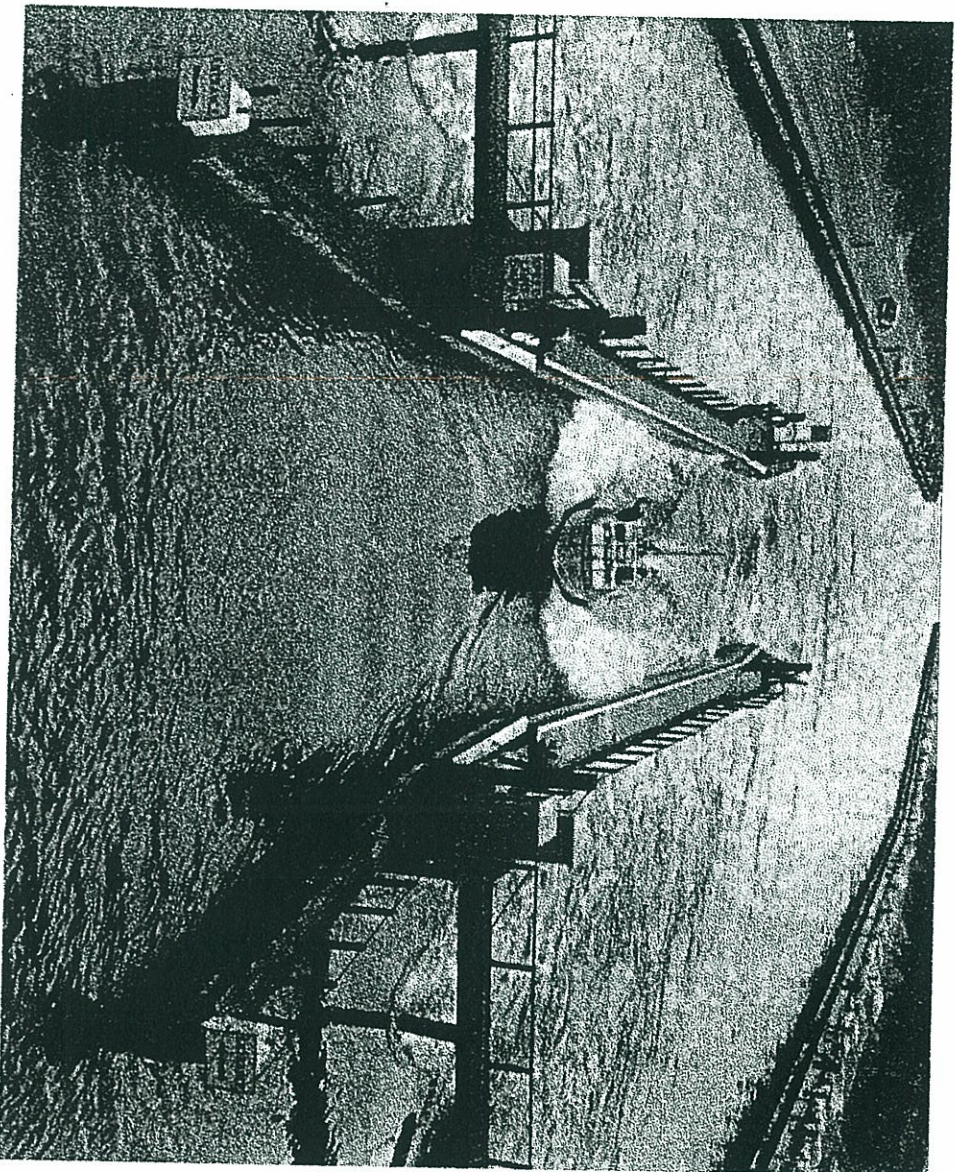


B) History:



*Shinnecock locks looking south towards Shinnecock Bay, April, 1966 **
(* see references)

The origins of the Shinnecock Canal can be traced to pre-colonial days. The present-day canal is located in an area referred to by Native Americans as Niamuck, or Canoe Place; so called because canoes were pulled across this narrow piece of land between Shinnecock Bay and Peconic Bay. It is widely believed that the Native Americans dug a small canal to facilitate this process. The project is said to have been supervised by Chief Mongotucksee, or Long Knife, the chief of the Montauks (Tarduno and Hagemeyer, 1975).

Southampton's colonial settlers also recognized the need for a permanent canal or inlet for Shinnecock Bay, but not strictly for navigational purposes. Shinnecock Bay had an unstable connection with the ocean: inlets were periodically opened in storms and sealed again by wave action. With no salt water connection, freshwater introduction from runoff and groundwater considerably reduced the salinity, harming the marine fisheries in the bay. In 1652, the General Court of the Town of Southampton concluded "that there shall be yet another attempt made for the letting out of Shinnecock water, for the regaining of the salt marsh meadow." (History of New York Canals, 1905) This attempt to construct an inlet or canal was not successful.