

The Channel

1. Lake Michigan-Portage Lake Channel, south of Second Street, Portage Point



On May 7, 1871, homesteaders from around Portage Lake completed at this point the digging of a ditch 4 feet wide between Portage Lake and Lake Michigan. The level of Portage Lake was lowered from 8 to 14 feet after a torrent of water took out trees and sand along the edges of the ditch, which became a crevice 400 to 500 feet wide varying in depth between 12 to 20 feet.



A project to build a harbor of refuge at Portage Lake, of which the Channel would be a part, was adopted in 1879 by the United States Government. Work began on the wooden substructures of the outer piers in 1883 and continued through 1901. The cement superstructures were added to the outer piers in 1939-1940; the

wooden inner piers were rebuilt of stone and cement in 1939-1940. In 2001, contracts were let to renovate the piers again.