

MOBILE HARBOR:

Federal interest in an adequate harbor at Mobile was inaugurated in 1826 through Congressional appropriations which provided for channel improvements to the port. A 10-foot channel was ^{later} constructed across the bars at the mouth of the Mobile River in 1837 and maintained through 1857. After the Civil War the channel was reopened through the bars at the mouth of the river to a depth of 13 feet with completion by 1876. Thereafter, improvements to the ship channel kept pace with the rapid growth of the port. The following tabulation traces the channel improvements within the bay and river:

1880 - 1889	deepened to	17 feet
1889 - 1896	" "	23 feet
1910 - 1914	" "	27 feet
1918 - 1926	" "	30 feet
1930 - 1934	" "	32 feet
1957	" "	36 feet
1964	" "	40 feet

From time to time during this period various side channels and turning basins were added to the project. It is estimated that 400 - 450,000,000 cubic yards of material have been removed during this period of port development in Mobile. Disposal of the material in the bay has been ^{and continues to be deposited} in open water sites adjacent to and paralleling the ship channel. In the extreme upper bay and in the river section, dredged material has been placed on Blakeley, Pinto, and McDuffie Islands to the extent that their present sizes and shapes are largely the result of such deposition over a long period of time.

In the past, dredged material was deposited in these locations at the shortest pumping distance possible to the dredging sites and where easements could be obtained. Although minor diking and/or training of the material was practiced in the 1960's, it was not until the early 1970's that the material has been strictly confined to specific, limited disposal areas. Much land mass within these areas have been accreted. Soil conditions in these areas vary greatly, but for the most part, are extremely soft which ^{somewhat} limits development of an industrial nature, *except in 2000* where large quantities of new work dredged material have been placed.

Blakeley Island continues to support the dredged material disposal needs of the harbor as well as the long-term needs of ALCOA for settling ponds associated with the refinement of ^{alumina} ~~aluminum~~ ore. Over 1,000 acres of this area are committed to these uses. Minor development of accreted lands has occurred with tank farm and lumber activities.

Pinto Island is the location of the Alabama Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Company's office and yards. The company, formed in 1916, continues in the business of ship repair, dry docking and new ship construction. The company has expanded its activities on the island over the years and the easternmost section which has greatly accreted since early channel construction continues to serve dredged material disposal needs for the company and to lesser extent for the Federal navigation channel.

A large portion of the remainder of Pinto Island and Pinto Pass has been planned for a long-term disposal site for Federal channel maintenance. The plan is currently being evaluated under environmental requirements. As a first step toward development of this disposal site, a test section of the dike was constructed over the extremely soft soil conditions existing across the western end of Pinto Pass. The test section consisted of an 800-foot long dike located in the intertidal zone. The dike was

constructed using civil engineering fabric (geotechnical fabric) as tensile reinforcement placed transverse to the dike alignment. The embankment was satisfactorily completed to design width and grade without lateral spreading or rotational bearing failures.

McDuffie Island supports a number of industrial activities and a large municipal sewage treatment plant. The Alabama State Docks McDuffie Terminals Coal Export Facility is located on the island. The island presently serves the Docks dredging and expansion needs for the coal handling facilities. Upon completion of the Docks long-range plan, the island will be fully developed to handle ore imports and coal exports.

