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## **Intracoastal Waterway**

Around 1870, Capt. Thomas C. Dunn, an energetic visionary who could see Little River as a major port, planned a canal to connect Little River with the Waccamaw River. Dunn was an ex-Captain of the Yankee Navy and took part in the blockade of Fort Randall during the Civil War. He settled there afterwards with considerable capital.

His plan was a feasible undertaking since Little River and the Waccamaw River are only five or six miles apart at one point. This would have created a safe inland waterway for shipping from Little River to Georgetown on Winyah Bay. Inland Horry District had used Conwayborough (Conway) as the river port from which produce was sent first to Georgetown and then to its destination in northern ports or in Charleston.

Since most of the commerce was with northern businesses, the development of this waterway and of the Little River port would have provided a shipping point much closer than either Georgetown or Charleston. Dunn became distracted by politics and his plan was never carried out.

In 1930 the dream of Thomas C. Dunn to connect Little River with the interior of the county by waterway became a reality. The U. S. Corps of Engineers began to acquire rights of way through the county for an Intracoastal Waterway. The people of Conway argued strongly for following the plan laid down by Dunn to connect Little River to the Waccamaw River by canal, but the Corps of Engineers opted to dig a new waterway 90 feet wide and eight feet deep through high ground from Little River to Socastee Swamp. This section completed the project from New England to Florida. On April 11, 1936 there was a ceremonial opening at the Socastee swing-span Bridge.

Several authors who have written of traveling the Intracoastal Waterway in its entirety have described the section along Socastee Creek and the Waccamaw River, in southern Horry County, as one of the most beautiful sections in its entire length.

Reference: Catherine H. Lewis