



A Quick History of the Soo Locks

1798 First Lock on St. Marys River

To support the growing fur trade, the Northwest Fur Company built a canoe lock on the north shore of the river. This lock was approximately 40 feet-long and 9 feet-wide.



1855 "State Lock" opens

Built in only two years this tandem lock used two chambers each measuring 350' X 70' and each with a lift of 10 feet to bypass the rapids.

This lock was operated and maintained by the State of Michigan.



1896 Poe Lock opens

Built on the site of the former State Lock, the Poe lock was 800 feet long and 100 feet wide.



1919 Sabin Lock opens

An exact twin of the Davis Lock, it was begun even before the Davis was finished. It is also the only lock on the site named for a civilian, Louis Sabin, the only civilian to ever serve as the Detroit District Engineer.



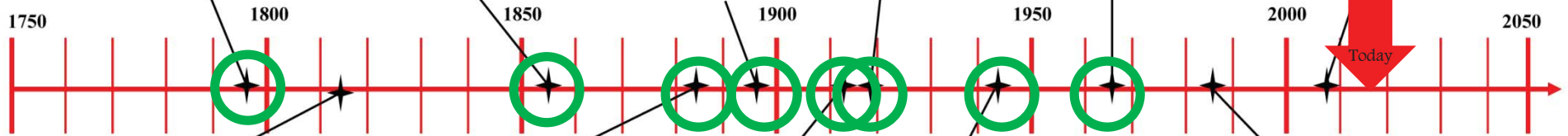
1968 Second Poe Lock opens

As the design for a new lock neared completion it became clear that an even larger lock would be needed as boats measuring 1,000 feet-long were being planned. Originally set to be 1,000 feet-long and 100 feet-wide it was redesigned to its current size of 1,200 feet-long and 110 feet-wide.



2009 Preparatory work for new lock completed

Funds were provided to build coffer dams at each end of the Sabin Lock and to dredge the approach channels to 28.5 feet.



1814 Lock Destroyed

During the War of 1812 American forces destroyed the British lock. Goods had to be unloaded and stored in warehouses at either end of the falls and transported on a railway running down Portage Avenue.



1883 Wietzel Lock opens

This lock was the first one to fill and empty the chamber through openings in the floor, reducing turbulence in the lock.

During its construction in 1881 the entire facility was transferred from the state to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



1914 Davis Lock opens

At 1,350 feet-long the Davis lock held the honor of being the longest lock in the world when it opened.



1943 MacArthur Lock opens

Opening of a new, deeper lock became a matter of national security during World War II and the MacArthur Lock was built in 15 months. During the war thousands of soldiers were stationed at the Soo to protect the locks and the flow of iron ore.



1986 New Lock Authorized

As part of the Water Resources Development Act, Congress authorized the construction of a new lock to be built on the site of the Sabin and Davis Locks. This new lock will be the same size as the Poe Lock.



It has been nearly 50 years since a new lock was built at the Soo