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## About the Authors

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# Preface

This book was written under a contract between HISTECON Associates, Inc., of Little Rock and the Vicksburg District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. I acted as the principal investigator and wrote chapters 1, 2, 3, 5, and 7. James E. Metzger, president of HISTECON, wrote chapters 4 and 6 and was in charge of all noneditorial matters.

One pleasant aspect of writing recent history is the opportunity it allows one to meet many of the principal actors and learn directly from them. Jim and I visited many offices in Vicksburg, some of them a number of times, and traveled to most of the area offices, lakes, and project sites within the district. Personnel were polite and friendly in dealing with our demands on their time and energy, and conversations with them yielded a great deal of the details and insights on which this book is based.

Three former district engineers submitted cheerfully to lengthy interviews. BG Pat M. Stevens IV, the district engineer in the mid-1980s, provided useful information and also read and criticized the manuscript. His comments on our work, along with those of other district personnel, have greatly improved the final product. The support of succeeding district engineers Col. Francis Skidmore, Col. Stephenson Page, and Col. Stanley Phernambucq is gratefully acknowledged.

Mary Anne Woods and Michael Logue, with whom we worked most directly, were extremely helpful. Pam Grillis provided early guidance through the complexity of the district organization, and Dot Bagby made our office-away-from-home both comfortable and friendly.

On our own staff, grateful acknowledgement is given to Eric Melvin, who assisted in the research and the preparation of the bibliographical citations, and to Jeremiah Gardner, who steadfastly assisted in the final preparation of each draft.

Finally, I particularly remember and appreciate the day that Captain Harvey Bird devoted to teaching me something about the Mississippi River, the boats that travel on her, and the men who pilot them.

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Little Rock, Arkansas