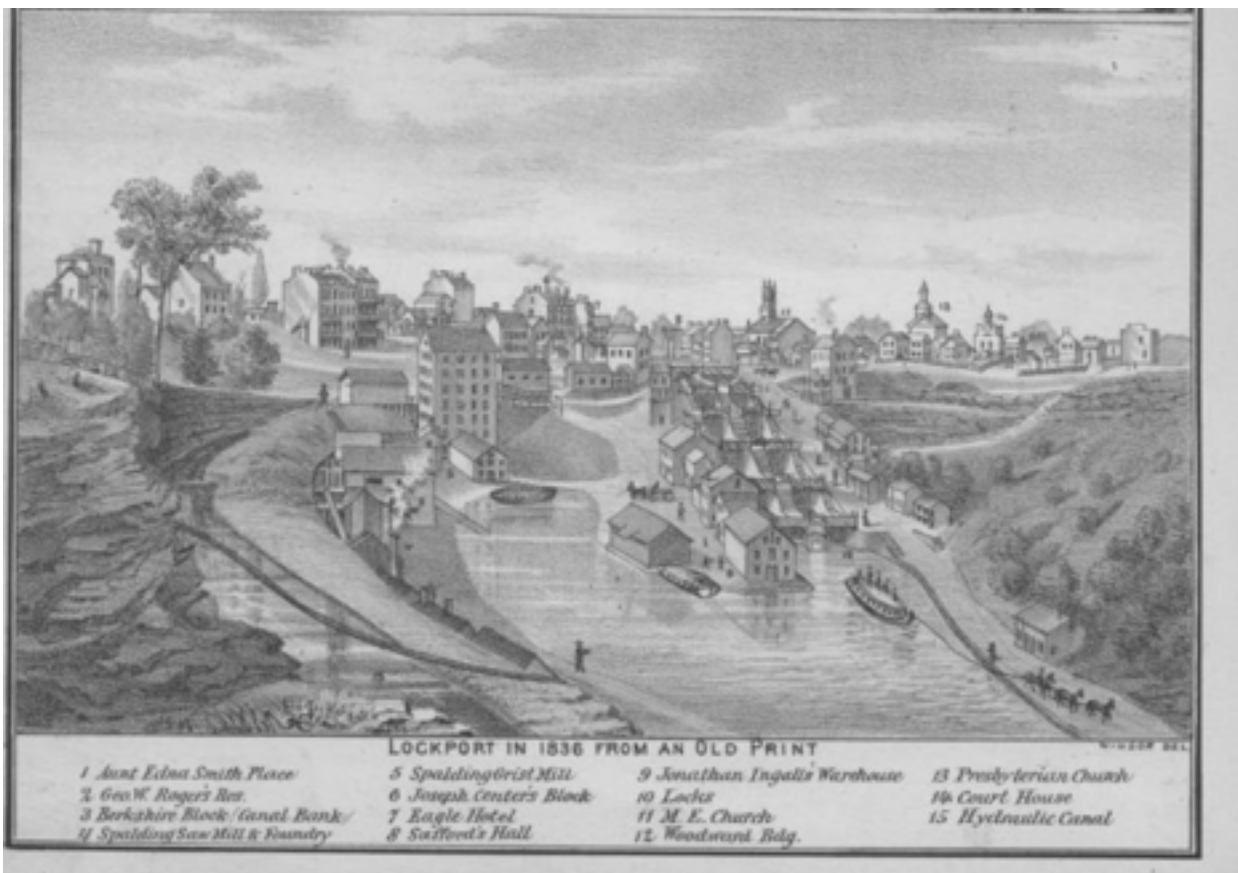


Why Did New York State and the American Nation Need the Erie Canal?

Supporting Questions

1. Where were people moving and settling in the aftermath of the American Revolution?
2. How were people moving and settling before the Erie Canal was built?
3. Who was moving and settling during this time?



Lockport from an old print, 1836, in History of Niagara County, N.Y., with illustrations descriptive of its scenery, private residences, public buildings, fine blocks and important manufactories and portraits of old pioneers and prominent residents, 1878 in New York Heritage: <https://cdm16694.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/VVN001/id/840>

4th Grade Westward Movement and the Need for Improved Transportation

Why Did New York and the Nation Need the Erie Canal?

<p>New York State Social Studies Framework Key Idea & Practices</p>	<p>4.6a Westward Movement and the need for improved transportation. Students will look at maps and census data of the United States and Lockport, NY ca. 1790-1850. Students will also look at primary sources from the NCHC to gain an understanding of how the changing landscape of American foreign and domestic policy, infrastructure, industry, and agriculture following the American Revolution impacted communities like Lockport, NY.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chronological Reasoning and Causation ● Gathering, Interpreting, and Using Evidence ● Comparison and Contextualization
<p>Staging the Question</p>	<p>Brainstorm: Why would people want to move westward at that time? Participate in a discussion about the movement of goods and people across distances, past and present. Option to use a QFT exercise with an item from the Primary Source Set.</p>

<p>Supporting Question 1</p>	<p>Supporting Question 2</p>	<p>Supporting Question 3</p>
<p>Where were people moving and settling in the aftermath of the American Revolution?</p>	<p>How were people moving and settling before the Erie Canal was built?</p>	<p>Who was moving and settling during this time?</p>
<p>Formative Performance Task</p>	<p>Formative Performance Task</p>	<p>Formative Performance Task</p>
<p>Identify and compare changes in land boundaries of the United States from 1783-1815, as well as changes in New York State land boundaries.</p>	<p>Identify modes of transportation and communication before and after the construction of the Erie Canal</p>	<p>Describe the kinds of people moving into places like Lockport, NY before and during the construction of the Erie Canal. What did they need to survive?</p>
<p>Featured Sources</p>	<p>Featured Sources</p>	<p>Featured Sources</p>

Source A:



US Census data in 1790-1850, https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/fast_facts/1790_fast_facts.html

Source B:

Year	Population	Free	Slave	Total
1790	3,900,000	3,900,000	0	3,900,000
1800	3,900,000	3,900,000	0	3,900,000
1810	7,200,000	7,200,000	0	7,200,000
1820	9,600,000	9,600,000	0	9,600,000
1830	12,000,000	12,000,000	0	12,000,000
1840	15,000,000	15,000,000	0	15,000,000
1850	23,000,000	23,000,000	0	23,000,000

Data compiled from U.S. Census reports 1810 to 1850 in the collection of the Niagara County Genealogical Society, Lockport NY

Source C:

Maps showing changes in American land boundaries after the 1783 Treaty of Paris, 1787 Northwest Ordinance, and 1803 Louisiana Purchase.



<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3701sm.gct00483/?st=gallery> (1783 Treaty of Paris map)



<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3701sm.gct00482/?sp=20>

Source A:

Images of overland travel by horse and oxcart:



“Emigration to the Western Country” from *Lossing, Benson John*.

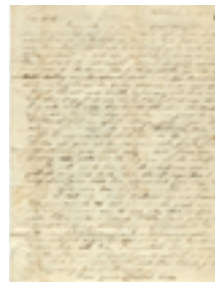
http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/mssc/eriecanal/lossingimages/lossing_our-country-v2-opp%20p1180_emigration-western-country_oxen-pulling-wagons.pdf



Oxcart used by early settlers of Minnesota

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/fsa.8b28218/> and,

Source B:



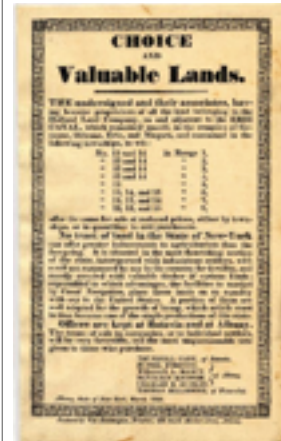
Letter from 11 year old Jane Taft to her sister Frances Taft Root in 1838
Date Created: 1838 (NCHC)

Source C:

Excerpts of recollections from

Source A:

Broadsides advertising Sale of NY Canal Lands:



<https://nysl.ptfs.com/data/Library5/111091.PDF>

Also,



broadside from NYS Archives: <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/education/broadside-advertising-new-york-canal-lands-sale-1823>

Source B:



Painting of people clearing land to farm in Niagara County, NY: *The Pioneer Clearing* painting at NCHC [need link](#)



Summative Performance Task	ARGUMENT Make a claim about the importance of a reliable overland route to the west in America around 1810. What factors led to the decision to build the Erie Canal in New York State? Construct an argument that addresses the compelling question using specific claims and evidence.
	EXTENSION Write an advertisement, enticing people to move west.
Taking Informed Action	UNDERSTAND Collect data about how greater access to markets enhances economic growth ASSESS Brainstorm ideas about how to “market” the Erie Canal today in New York and the nation ACT Create a public service announcement to promote the importance of the Erie Canal to people in New York

Overview

Inquiry Description

This inquiry leads students through an investigation of why the Erie Canal was critical to the growth of both the State of New York and to the United States in the time following the American Revolution. Through examining the events following the American Revolution, when the new nation of states was struggling to survive and build its national economy, students will be prepared to develop arguments supported by evidence that answer the compelling question “Why did New York and the Nation Need the Erie Canal?” Subsequent inquiries could be developed around other “internal improvements” across the country over time (the National Road, Transcontinental Railroad, Interstate Highway System, even the Internet) and their impact on New York and the nation. In addition to the Key Idea expressed earlier, this inquiry covers the following Conceptual Understandings:

- (4.6b) How physical geography determined where to build the canal; impact on Native Americans and; how the canal created communities and how it was used to transport local products across the state and country.
- (4.6c) How improvements in the technology of transportation, manufacturing, and communication affected communities in New York and the nation, including
- (4.6f) How the Erie Canal led to increased industrialization in New York and the Nation

NOTE: This inquiry is expected to take five to six 30-minute class periods. The inquiry time frame could expand if teachers think their students need additional instructional experiences (i.e., supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and sources). Teachers are encouraged to adapt the inquiries to meet the needs and interests of their particular students. Resources can also be modified as necessary to meet individualized education programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Plans for students with disabilities.

Structure of the Inquiry

In addressing the compelling question “Why Did New York and the Nation Need the Erie Canal?” students work through a series of supporting questions, formative performance tasks, and sources in order to construct an argument supported by evidence while acknowledging competing views.

Staging the Compelling Question

To begin the inquiry, teachers might introduce the core concept of movement of goods and people across distances in the past and today (Amazon, FedEx, USPS, UPS), including asking: Who decides what gets moved where? And, “what factors improve movement of goods and services? What would hinder such movement? Students begin to understand there are people making decisions about what gets moved where and how. Stakeholders compete in this process from the standpoint of being producers and consumers, not just of goods and services, but also of the infrastructure needed to make movement possible. This was also true when the new American nation was establishing its economic and political foothold in the nation and abroad. The reason for building the Erie Canal across New York State at that time was not just a matter of geographic feasibility, but of other considerations as well. This activity takes students into a deeper dive of the events surrounding the building of the Erie Canal and its impact on American westward expansion, as well as the expansion of federal authority in political and economic events.