



## CANAL 3D TOURS:

# Canal History

## OVERVIEW:

Students will explore virtual tours of Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site and the Erie Canal Museum to understand the history and impacts of the Erie Canal on New York and the United States.

**Grade Level:** 7-8

**Class Periods:** One to two 45-minute lessons

## OBJECTIVES:

- Students will understand how and why the Erie Canal was built and the ways in which it has changed over time.
- Students will identify the impacts the Erie Canal had on Indigenous Peoples, the natural environment, the spread of ideas and cultures, and the growth of New York State and the United States
- Students will learn about the experiences of those who worked and lived on the Erie Canal.

## LESSON PLAN ACTIVITIES:

- **Activity 1:** Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site
- **Activity 2:** Erie Canal Museum

► **ACTIVITY 1: SCHOHARIE CROSSING STATE HISTORIC SITE**

**DIRECTIONS:** Click the link below to take a virtual field trip to Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site in Fort Hunter, New York. The visitor center includes the exhibit “The Pathways to Empire” which displays artifacts related to the construction and operation of the Erie Canal. Explore the 3D tour and use the artifacts, information panels, and digital tags to answer the questions.

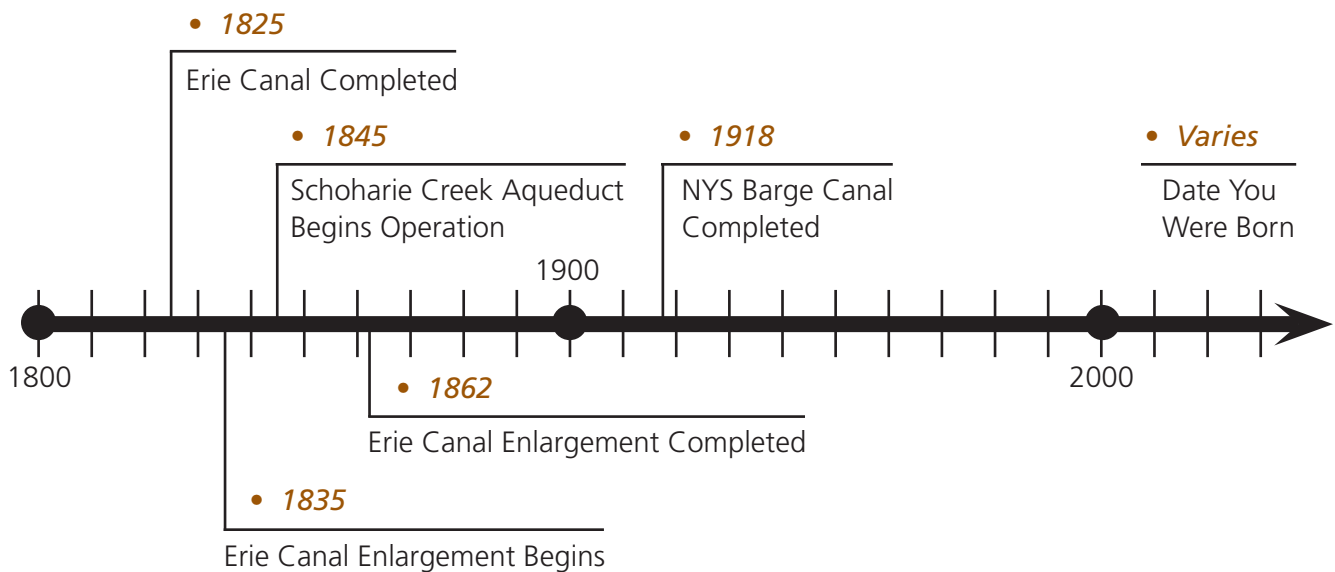
Link to the 3D Tour: <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=Cf2wksMGMG9>

**Welcome to the 3D Tour at Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site!**

As you explore the Visitor Center, scroll on the interactive icons to see details about the site and the objects located within. Circles on the floor allow you to move around from space to space. Zoom in and get a closer look.

**ERIE CANAL TIMELINE**

While exploring the exhibits, you will learn about significant dates related to the Erie Canal. Fill in the dates on the timeline for important events as you discover them.



**HIGHWAYS OF WATER**

New York’s Mohawk River Valley provided the best natural break in the *Appalachian* Mountain chain. For centuries, Indigenous Peoples used this water route connecting the Great Lakes and the Atlantic coast which continued to be used after construction of the Erie Canal.

Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site is located on the ancestral homeland of the *Mohawk*, a nation of the *Haudenosaunee or Iroquois* Confederacy (hint: find the “Fort Hunter” panel located in the Visitor Center).

**SECTION 1: TEACHER KEY**

► **ACTIVITY 1: SCHOHARIE CROSSING STATE HISTORIC SITE**

**SO MANY PASSENGERS**

The opening of the Erie Canal provided an opportunity for many people to move from the Atlantic Coast to the west.

**How is the impact of this westward migration still present in upstate New York today?**

- *80% of upstate New York's population lives within 25 miles of the Erie Canal.*

**AMERICA'S FIRST ENGINEERING SCHOOL**

**Engineer:** A person who designs and builds complex products, machines, systems, or structures.

When construction of the Erie Canal began, the United States did not have a single school of engineering, so its designers and builders learned on the job. Working with only manual labor and animal power, canal builders overcame many obstacles by inventing new tools and materials. Find the examples of tools used to build the canal and complete the graphic organizer:

<b>Tool Name</b>	<b>What was it used for?</b>	<b>Sketch it!</b>
Stump puller	<i>Removing tree stumps</i>	
Surveyor's Compass	<i>Recording a bearing reading (the location of significant land features)</i>	
Leveling Wedges	<i>Leveling and aligning stones</i>	

**SECTION 1: TEACHER KEY**

▶ **ACTIVITY 1: LOCKS**

**LINKING THE NATION**

The Erie Canal linked the Atlantic Ocean with the Great Lakes, allowing greater access to the interior of the United States, while also cutting freight costs by as much as 90%. New York State emerged as an industrial power and New York City surpassed *New Orleans* as the largest port city.

**COMPARING THE CANALS**

There are three phases of the Erie Canal. Learn about the generations of canal construction undertaken by New York State and complete the graphic organizer:

Phases of the Erie Canal	Dates of Construction	Boat Tonnage
Original Erie Canal	<i>1817-1825</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Enlarged Erie Canal</i>	1835-1862	<i>240</i>
<i>Barge Canal</i>	<i>1905-1918</i>	1,650 tons

**FREE EXPLORE**

This is your opportunity to explore the Visitor Center freely. There is a lot more to see! You can learn much more about the people, places, and events that make Schoharie Crossing a significant site in American history.

**List three objects in the exhibits that illustrate the building, operation, and transformation of the Erie Canal:**

*Student answers to the question will vary.*

**What object in the exhibit do you think is the most interesting? Why?**

*Student answers to the question will vary based on selected object.*



SECTION 1: TEACHER KEY

**▶ ACTIVITY 2: ERIE CANAL MUSEUM**

**DIRECTIONS:** Click the link below to take a virtual field trip to the Erie Canal Museum in Syracuse, New York. The museum includes exhibits which explain the history and impacts of the Erie Canal. Explore the 3D tour and use the artifacts, information panels, and digital tags to answer the questions.

Link to the 3D Tour: <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=aLVXnXfeEM1>

**Welcome to the 3D Tour at the Erie Canal Museum!**

As you explore the Visitor Center, scroll on the interactive icons to see details about the site and the objects located within. Circles on the floor allow you to move around from space to space. Zoom in and get a closer look.

**WORKING ON THE CANAL**

After exploring the exhibits, list three (3) examples of jobs or occupations performed during the construction or operation (either historically or present day) of the Erie Canal:

*Example answers: lock tender, weighmaster, mule driver, engineer, surveyor, laborer, boat captain.*

Select one of the jobs you listed above and answer the following questions:

*Student answers to the questions will vary based on selected job/occupation.*

**1. What do you think it would be like to do this job on the canal?**

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**2. What were/are the benefits of doing this job?**

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**3. What challenges might someone doing this job face?**

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**4. Is this a job you would want to do? Why or why not?**

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## SECTION 1: TEACHER KEY

**▶ ACTIVITY 2: ERIE CANAL MUSEUM**

Completion of the Erie Canal had significant impacts on people, places, the natural environment, and historical events. After completing the 3D tour, answer the following questions about the impacts of the Erie Canal.

**What impacts did the Erie Canal have on:****Indigenous Peoples of North America?**

- *Encourage students to consider how building the canal contributed to...*
  - *The division and sale of large homelands where Indigenous Peoples lived.*
  - *The increase of European Americans to New York and the interior of the United States.*
  - *The displacement of Indigenous Peoples to smaller lands and reservations.*

**The environment?**

- *Encourage students to consider how building and maintaining the canal...*
  - *Changed the landscape by clearing large forests.*
  - *Influenced the locations where upstate New York cities/towns/villages were built.*
  - *Increased pollution resulting from increased settlement and industrialization.*

**The spread of ideas and cultures?**

- *Encourage students to consider how the canal...*
  - *Helped news and information spread more quickly and easily.*
  - *Brought people from different cultures together.*
  - *Helped people escaping from slavery travel to freedom on the Underground Railroad.*
  - *Brought women together to discuss ways they could be treated fairly and equally with men.*

**The economy of New York and the United States?**

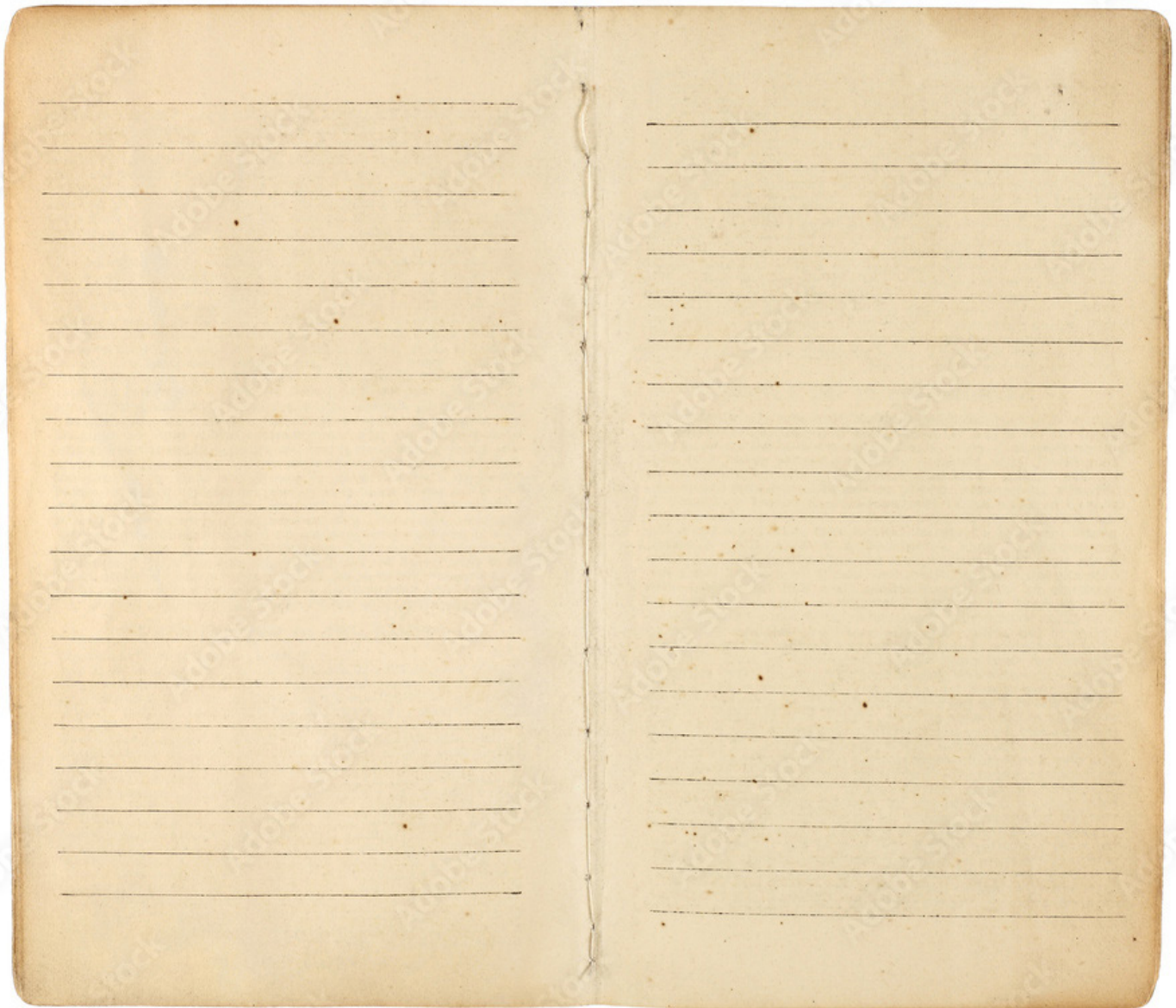
- *Encourage students to consider how the canal...*
  - *Allowed people to transport goods faster and cheaper.*
  - *Connected the Great Lakes and interior of the continent (natural resources) to the Atlantic Ocean (trade routes).*
  - *Led to the growth of cities and towns.*
  - *Made New York City the nation's largest port city.*
  - *Created an industrial boom across its route.*

**SECTION 1: TEACHER KEY**

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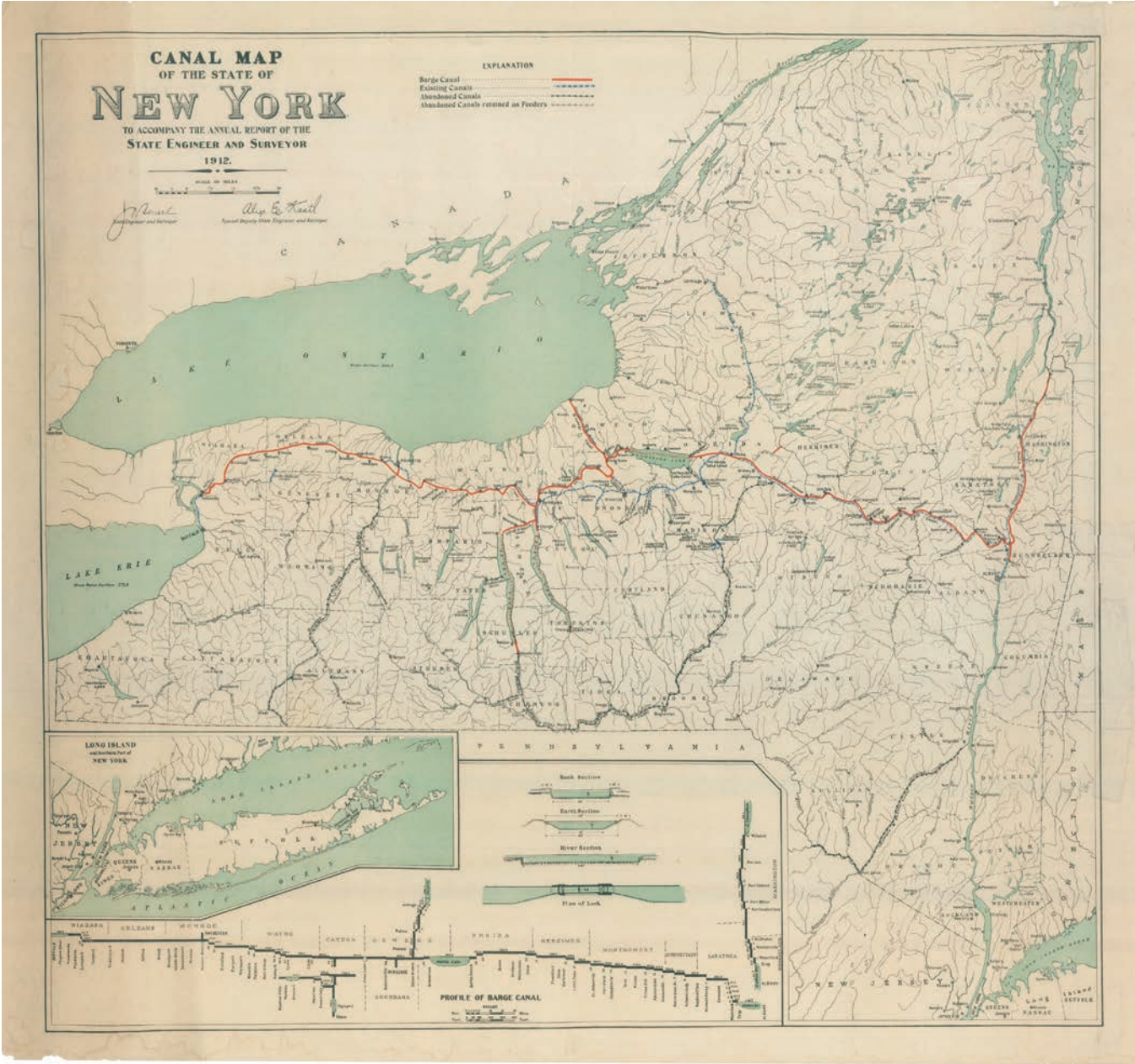
**Canal Boat Journal**

During your virtual field trip, you toured a replica packet boat and learned about the lives of families who lived and worked on these vessels. Imagine you are a child in one of these families. Based on what you discovered in the museum, write a short journal entry describing what your life is like living on a canal boat.





# Student Worksheets





NAME \_\_\_\_\_

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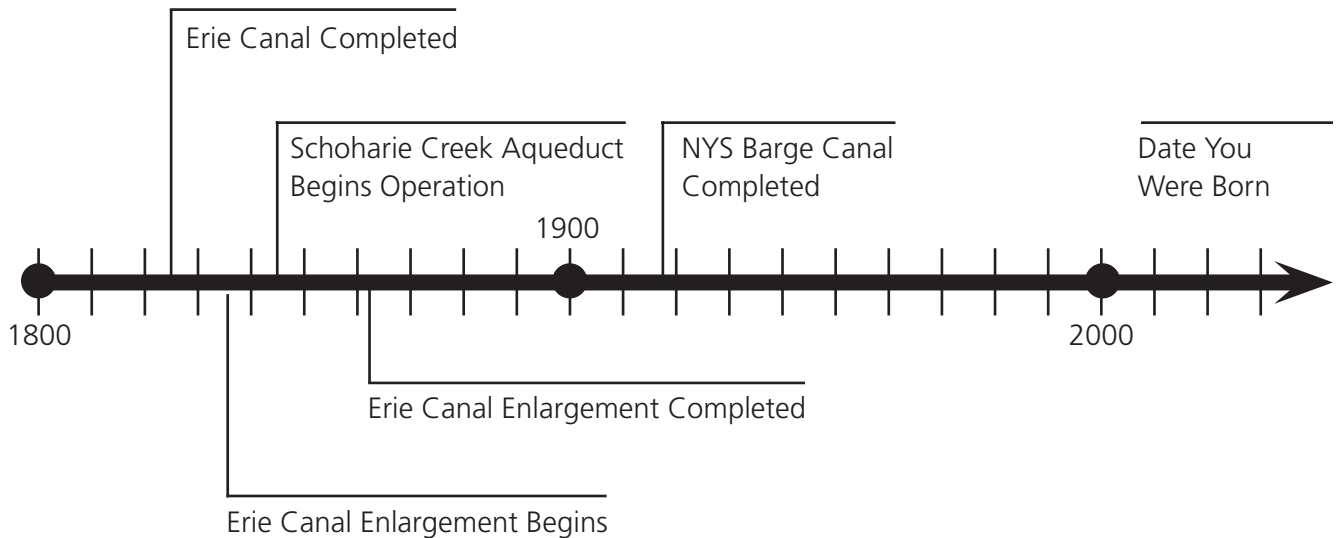
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**2. What were/are the benefits of doing this job?**

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**3. What challenges might someone doing this job face?**

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**The environment?**

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**The economy of New York and the United States?**

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