

TIME LINE OF THE ERIE CANAL

1786

Governor George Clinton urges the New York State Legislature to improve natural waterways.

1811

The state appoints a commission of nine members to consider the matter of improving internal navigation.

1816

Five commissioners are appointed to develop a means of communication by canal and locks between the Hudson River and Lake Erie, and Lake Erie and Lake Champlain.

1817-1821 and 1825-1828

Dewitt Clinton serves as Governor of the State of New York.

1817

Construction is authorized on the Mohawk River to the Seneca River on July 4th. Ground for the canal is first broken at Rome. Fifty-eight miles of the canal are put under contract during the year.

About fifteen miles of the canal are completed in the first year. Work is hindered by epidemics of malaria among the workers.

1820

Regulations for conduct are first established on the canal and tolls are levied on July 1st.

1821

The Canal is completed from Utica to Little Falls.

1823

The first boats from the west and north pass through the canal into the Hudson River at Albany. The Canal is completed from Rochester to Brockport and Schenectady to Albany.

1824

Between Utica and Albany 300 bridges are built and from Utica to Little Falls 80 bridges are completed.

1825

The Erie Canal is completed with a canal length cannon salute. Dewitt Clinton travels from Buffalo to New York Harbor and ceremoniously dumps water from Lake Erie into the harbor. Over 13,000 boats used the canal in the first year and, at least, 4,000 people traveled on the canal.

1835

The canal paid for itself with the collection of tolls.

1836

A project is begun to enlarge the canal to 70 feet wide and 7 feet deep. Double locks are built to help speed up traffic.

1863

The enlargement was declared completed.

1863

Improvements continue with the enlargement of locks to accommodate two boats, steam power was introduced and additional reservoirs and water supplies are developed.

1905

Construction of the Barge Canal is begun.

1917

Navigation is stopped on the old Erie Canal.

1918

The Barge Canal is opened for travel and remains in use to the present.