

Pre-Visit Activity Materials

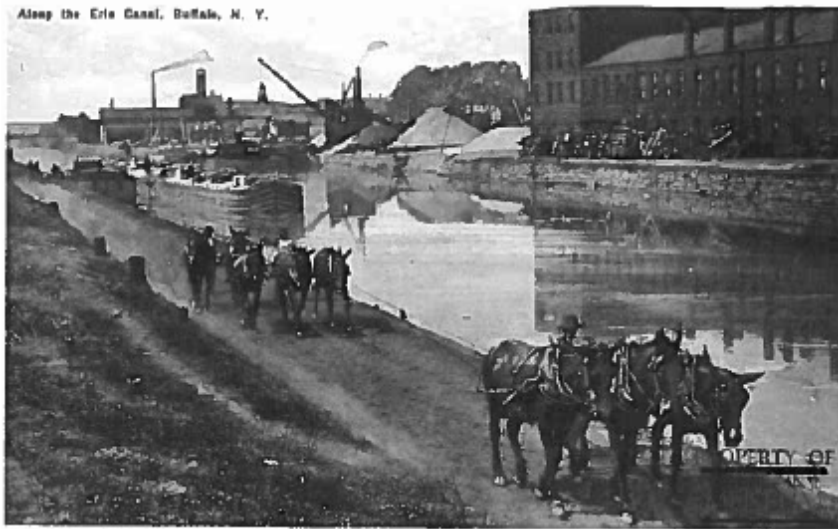


Photo One

- What do the mules appear to be doing?
- What is in the background of the postcard?
- When might this photograph have been taken?
- What is different about the boat compared to ships on the ocean?
- What might the boat be carrying?

In this picture mules are pulling the canal boats down the Erie Canal. Before steamboats or engines, mules moved the boats down the canals and into the locks. Teams of mules like the ones pictured used their strength to move heavy boats full of supplies. Food, wood, medical supplies, animal feed, and clothing all came down the Erie Canal. Boats would be loaded in cities like Buffalo (the city in the background) and pulled down or up the canal to other cities. Boats coming down the canal allowed for the distribution of goods to families and farmers in New York and the United States. The boats that brought supplies on the canal were smaller than boats on the ocean as they needed to fit down the canal and into tight spaces called locks.



Photo Two

- How is this photograph the same (or different) to Photo One?
- Where was this picture taken?
- How many boats do you see in the canal?

This photograph shows one of the locks on the canal. A canal boat going down the water would make its way into the lock where the doors would close and either fill or empty with water. The movement of water allowed boats to go up or down the canal easier and faster than when traveling over hills in the landscape. Not seen in this photograph are mules, as the boat the photographer was traveling on could have been a steamboat. Also seen in the photograph are two other canal boats, buildings, and a town in the background. This boat could be dropping off supplies to Baldwinsville, New York, the location of the photograph.



Photo Three

- What does this building appear to be?
- How do you know the location?
- How is this photograph similar to Photo One?

Taken in Syracuse, New York, this photograph shows a weighlock building and the current site of the Erie Canal Museum. A weighlock building is where boats would be weighed to see how many pounds of cargo they were carrying. A single boat would be allowed into the weighlock, much like a car into a garage. The water would be drained from the lock leaving the boat resting on the scale. The Weighmaster would record the weight of the boat and figure the toll, or fee, required for the boat to continue down the canal. When you visit the Museum, compare how it looks in this picture to how it looks today.

Photo One



Photo Two



Photo Three

