

Contents of the Pathways of Resistance Learning Module:

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Introduction

We began developing our Pathways of Resistance tour in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and the following Black Lives Matter movement. During this time, many museums (including our own) began to question how their institutions play a role in upholding harmful dominant narratives. Research fellow Renée Barry was funded by New York State Canals as the Reimagine the Canals fellow and conducted research to create this tour. Below are a list of recommended readings as well as sources consulted in creating the program.

Recommended Readings:

Broyld, dann j. *Borderland Blacks: Two Cities in the Niagara Region during the Final Decades of Slavery*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2022.

Chase, Franklin H. *Syracuse and its Environs*. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1924.

Dann, Norman K. *Practical Dreamer: Gerrit Smith and the Crusade for Social Reform*. Hamilton, New York: Log Cabin Books, 2009.

Dann, Norman K. *When We Get to Heaven: Runaway Slaves on the Road to Peterboro*. Hamilton, New York: Log Cabin Books, 2008.

James, Thomas. *Wonderful eventful life of Rev. Thomas James*. Rochester, N.Y.: Post-Express Printing Company, 1887. James, Thomas, and Daniel Murray Pamphlet Collection. Library of Congress. Washington, D.C. <https://www.loc.gov/item/90898306/>.

Murphy, Angela F. *The Jerry Rescue: The Fugitive Slave Law, Northern Rights, and the American Sectional Crisis*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Northup, Solomon, and D Wilson. *Twelve years a slave. Narrative of Solomon Northup, a citizen of New-York, kidnapped in Washington city in , and rescued in 1853, from a cotton plantation near the Red River in Louisiana*. New York: C.M. Saxton, 1859. Pdf. <https://www.loc.gov/item/13004011/>.

Sernett, Milton C. *North Star Country: Upstate New York and the Crusade for African American Freedom*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002.

Ward, Samuel Ringgold. *Autobiography of a Fugitive Negro: His Anti-Slavery Labours in the United States, Canada & England*. London: J. Snow, 1855. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division. The New York Public Library. <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47db-bc20-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>.

Other consulted sources:

- The National Abolition Hall of Fame in Peterboro, special thanks to Dot Willsey
- Onondaga Historical Association
- Judith Wellman, Professor Emerita from the State University of New York at Oswego
- Craig Williams of the NY Canal Society
- Contemporary newspaper accounts (*NY Herald*, *NY Daily Star*)
- Roster of soldiers and officers who served with the 54th Massachusetts Regiment at some point between March 1863 and April 1865: <https://www.nga.gov/collection/sculpture/fifty-fourth-regiment.html>

- Article from Syracuse.com on Isaac Wales: <https://www.syracuse.com/living/2022/02/syracuses-first-black-resident-paid-80-for-his-own-freedom-helped-dig-the-erie-canal.html>
- National Park Service “Language of Slavery” introductory article: https://www.nps.gov/subjects/undergroundrailroad/language-of-slavery.htm?fbclid=IwAR39XcX_62J9eA7o65TJji5Z2LsdEMkrnx6VNdwSzlIVvaN8VKgi95EbYh0

Title of Lesson: Slavery in New York
Grade: 7th

Central Focus for the Learning Segment: The Erie Canal and the Underground Railroad

Compelling Question for the Learning Segment: Was New York a “Free State?”

Supporting Questions for the Lesson: What was the status and condition of the institution of slavery in New York prior to the Erie Canal?
How and when was slavery abolished in New York?

Learning Objectives

- SWBAT appraise the state of slavery in New York and its gradual abolition
 - SWBAT evaluate the impact of gradual abolition in New York
 - SWBAT identify key dates and concepts in the history of slavery in New York
-

Language function and other language demands:

Vocabulary: gradualism, immediatism, abolition

Materials: Packet containing Copies of New York slave laws, 1799 Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery, 1850 census numbers, Douglass’ “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July” speech, accompanying worksheets, KWL Chart

Differentiation and Adaptations:

- Have black and white topographic maps available for students with colorblindness.
 - If feasible acquire three dimensional topographic maps for students with impaired vision.
-

INTRODUCTION/HOOK:

- Distribute KWL sheets. Have students fill out the K(know) and W(what do you want to learn) sections for the topic of slavery and specifically slavery in New York State.
 - Provide roughly 5 minutes for students to answer
 - Review classes Ks and Ws, which should inform the rest of the class work for the day. Identify major common misconceptions like slavery being a strictly southern institution, New Yorkers being universally opposed to slavery, and northern slavery being more “humane” than in the south
-

BODY OF LESSON:

- Distribute primary source packet and have students open to the first document on New York’s Slave Laws
- Provide students with the context that slavery was first introduced in what is now New York by the Dutch, New York’s first colonizers, in 1626. These laws were passed by the British, who took over New York from the Dutch in the mid 1600s.
- Students should read the laws and answer accompanying questions. This can be done individually or with a partner.
- Review questions and answers as a class, establish that slavery in New York could be just as oppressive as it was in the south and that these conditions pervaded throughout the colonized Americas.
- Explain things began to change following the American Revolution. African Americans served in the Revolution, fought ostensibly for concepts like liberty, justice, and freedom, which stood in stark contrast to the reality of a nation where enslaving other human beings was legal in every state. However, individuals of African descent, both free and enslaved, as well as white allies began agitating for the abolition of slavery. Discuss the founding of the New York Manumission Society in 1785 and its advocating for gradual emancipation, or establishing a gradual system to abolish slavery that ensured enslavers were compensated. Their efforts eventually led to the passage in 1799 of “An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery”
- Have students read and answer questions on 1799 Act, review as a class
- Discuss implementation of the law, how in the War of 1812 African Americans again fought for the same supposed ideals, and were able to then successfully advocate for a new Act, passed in 1817 that accounted for people born before 1799, who were freed on July 4, 1827. Ask “does that mean that slavery was completely abolished in New York in 1827?” Students should recognize that the new law did not account for people born after 1799. Have them review and answer questions for the 1850 census data.

- Discuss how the data shows that slavery persisted in New York officially into the 1840s and add that up to the time of the Civil War, especially in New York City, enslavers were largely allowed to circumvent the state's laws. This leads to a the question of what was New York like for African Americans generally following the abolition of slavery in New York, and for the remaining enslaved people in New York and America after the passage of gradual emancipation. Have students read and answer questions on the excerpt of Douglass' "What, to the Slave, is the Fourth of July" speech.

CONCLUDING ACTIVITY:

- Display 1857 map of the United States and have students examine the key. What is New York considered?
 - Have students write a paragraph answering the question "Was New York a free state?" using evidence from the primary sources.
 - Have students fill out L(earned) section of KWL chart
-

Slave Laws in British Colonial New York, 1664–1731

As the population of enslaved Africans grew, colonial elites in New York passed laws to restrict the activities and movements of black residents. These laws were similar to laws passed in Virginia and Maryland, indicating that white fears of slave rebellion were widespread. Following an attempted slave insurrection in New York in 1712, British authorities passed an even harsher set of laws known as the “Black Code.” The wording of the laws has been changed to improve clarity.

1681-1683

- Enslaved people may not leave their masters’ houses without permission.
- Enslaved people may not own weapons.
- Enslaved people may not gather in groups larger than four.
- White people and free black people may not entertain enslaved people in their homes.
- White people and free black people may not sell liquor to enslaved people.

1692

- Enslaved people who make noise in the street on Sundays will be whipped.

1697

- People of African descent may not be buried in the town cemetery.

1702

- Enslaved people may not gather in groups larger than three.
- Enslaved people who break this law will receive 40 lashes on the naked back.
- Enslavers may punish enslaved people for any misdeed in any way they wish except killing them or cutting off their limbs.

1706

- Enslavers are no longer obligated to free enslaved people who convert to Christianity.
- Children born to enslaved women are enslaved for life.

1707

- Newly freed black people may not own or inherit land.

1708

- Any enslaved person who murders his or her master will be tortured and killed.
- Any enslaved person who plots with others to murder his or her master will be tortured and killed.

1712

- Any enslaved person who plots with others to revolt will be tortured and killed.
- No enslaved person can ever own a gun or pistol.
- No black person who becomes free after 1712 may own a house or pass property on to their children.
- To free an enslaved person, the enslaver must pay a 200-pound bond, to cover the costs should the freed slave ever become a public charge.

1713

- No enslaved person 14 years or older may go out after dark without a lantern.

1722

- Funerals for enslaved people and free African Americans must be held during daylight.

1731

- Enslaved people could not gamble for money
- Enslaved people who rode a horse too fast or dangerously in the city could be whipped
 1. Are there any of these laws that confuse you? Shock you?
 2. Look at the 1713 and 1722 laws: what do they have in common?
 3. What punishments were included in these laws? How did these change after the 1712 insurrection?
 4. What was the intention of these laws?

An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery

New York State, 1799

March 29, 1799, State of New-York, Passed at the Twenty-Second Meeting of the Legislature Begun the Second Day of January, 1799 (Albany, 1799).

Be it enacted ... That any child born of a slave within this state after the fourth day of July next shall be deemed and adjudged to be born free: Provided nevertheless. That such child shall be the servant of the legal proprietor of his or her mother until such servant, if a male, shall arrive at the age of twenty-eight years, and if a female, at the age of twenty five years. And be it further enacted ... That such proprietor, his, her or their heirs or assigns, shall be entitled to the service of such child until he or she shall arrive to the age aforesaid, in the same manner as if such child had been bound to service by the overseers of the poor.

1. Who was granted freedom by this law?
2. What condition was placed on that freedom?
3. Did this Act actually free anyone?

SLAVE POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES.

1. *Aggregate Number.*—The number of slaves in the United States in 1850 was 3,204,313. The number in each of the States at this and every previous census will be found in the following table:

TABLE LXXI.—*Slave Population of the United States.*

STATES AND TERRITORIES.	1790.	1800.	1810.	1820.	1830.	1840.	1850.
Alabama.....				41,879	117,549	253,532	342,844
Arkansas.....				1,617	4,576	19,935	47,100
California.....							
Columbia, District of.....		3,244	5,395	6,377	6,119	4,694	3,687
Connecticut.....	2,753	951	310	97	25	17	
Delaware.....	8,887	6,153	4,177	4,509	3,202	2,605	2,290
Florida.....					15,501	25,717	39,310
Georgia.....	23,264	59,404	105,218	149,654	217,531	280,944	391,622
Illinois.....			168	917	747	331	
Indiana.....		135	237	190	3	3	
Iowa.....						16	
Kentucky.....	11,830	40,343	80,561	126,732	165,213	182,358	210,391
Louisiana.....			34,600	60,064	109,588	168,452	244,609
Maine.....					2		
Maryland.....	103,036	105,635	111,502	107,397	102,094	89,737	90,378
Massachusetts.....					1		
Michigan.....			24		32		
Mississippi.....		3,459	17,088	32,814	65,659	195,211	309,878
Missouri.....			3,011	10,222	25,091	58,240	87,422
New Hampshire.....	158	8			3	1	
New Jersey.....	11,433	12,432	10,851	7,557	2,254	674	230
New York.....	21,724	20,342	15,017	10,088	75	4	
North Carolina.....	109,572	133,225	168,824	205,017	245,601	245,817	288,548
Ohio.....					6	3	
Pennsylvania.....	3,737	1,706	795	211	403	64	
Rhode Island.....	952	381	108	48	17	5	
South Carolina.....	107,034	146,151	195,365	258,475	315,401	327,038	384,924
Tennessee.....	3,417	13,584	44,535	80,107	141,603	183,059	239,430
Texas.....							58,161
Vermont.....	17						
Virginia.....	223,427	345,796	392,518	425,153	460,757	449,087	472,228
Wisconsin.....						11	

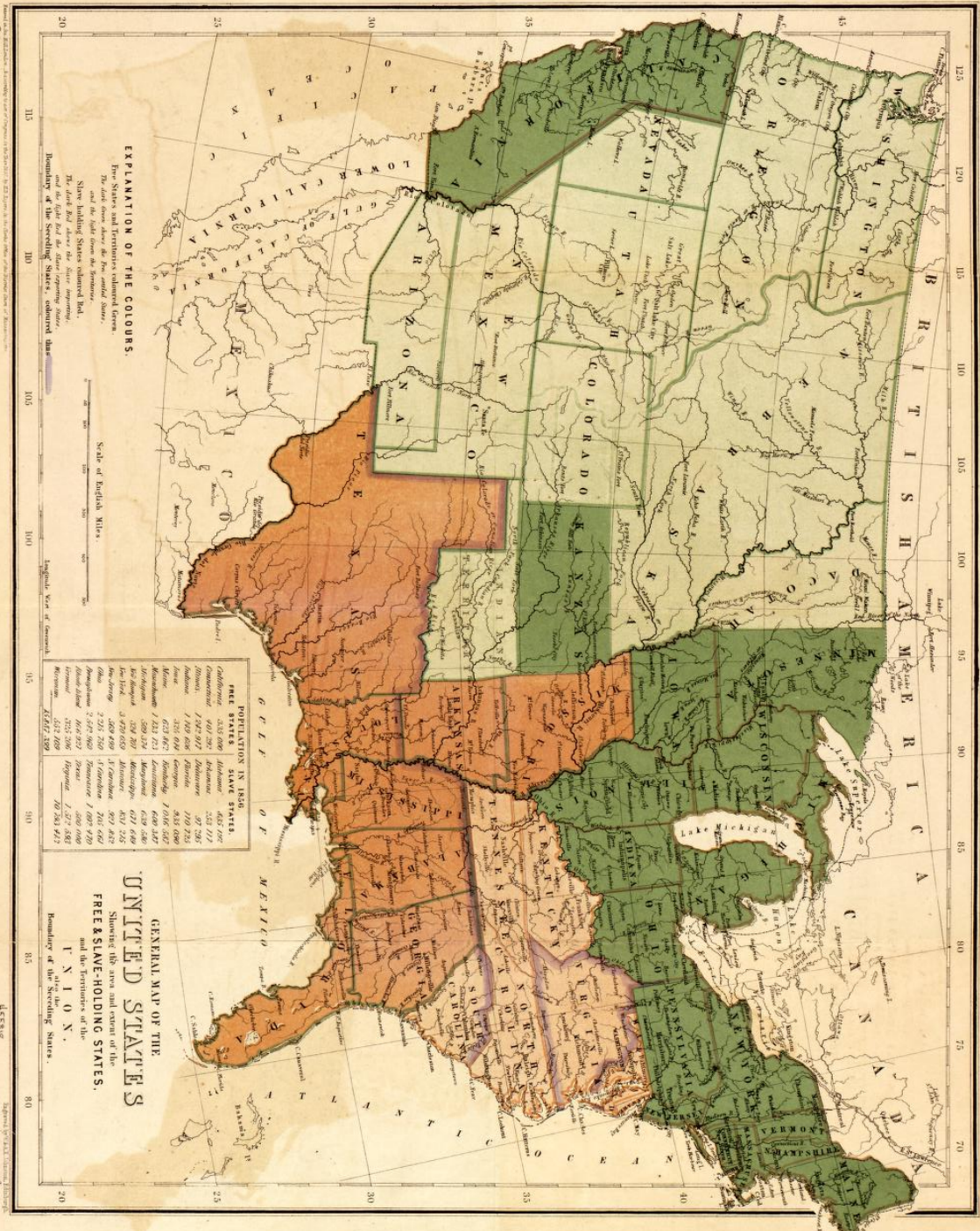
- How many enslaved people lived in New York in 1800, immediately after the first abolition act was passed? How many enslaved people lived in New York in 1820, before the final abolition act took effect? What is the latest year enslaved people are listed in the census for New York?
- Why did slavery continue after the 1817 Act took effect in 1827?
- How many years after the passage of the 1799 Act for Gradual Emancipation was slavery still legal in New York?
- Who benefited from New York's gradual approach to emancipation and at whose expense?

On July 5, 1852, Frederick Douglass was invited to address the citizens of his hometown, Rochester, New York. Whatever the expectations of his audience on that 76th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Douglass used the occasion not to celebrate the nation's triumphs but to remind all of its continuing enslavement of millions of people. Part of Douglass's speech appears below.

“What, to the American slave, is your Fourth of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciations of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade, and solemnity, are, to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy—a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices, more shocking and bloody, than are the people of these United States, at this very hour.

Go where you may, search where you will, roam through all the monarchies and despotisms of the old world, travel through South America, search out every abuse, and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the everyday practices of this nation, and you will say with me, that, for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival. Take the American slave-trade, which, we are told by the papers, is especially prosperous just now.”

1. What is Douglass' opinion of the United States in this speech?
2. Does Douglass believe the Fourth of July is something to be celebrated? Why?
3. What is the main point of this speech?



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Library of Congress

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Historical Background Statement | PAGE 1



Erie Canal, Schenectady, photographed by John P. Papp, 1890, Albany Institute of History & Art Library, 1993.010.10231P

When completed in 1825, the Erie Canal was an engineering marvel. Geographic, political, and financial obstacles were overcome to create the most successful public works project in the nineteenth century.

The Erie Canal spanned New York for 363 miles, included 18 aqueducts crossing rivers and ravines, and required 83 locks to raise and lower boats the 568-foot change in elevation between the Hudson River at Albany and Lake Erie at Buffalo. The work was brutal. Laborers often had to blast through solid rock and used little more than picks and shovels to create the canal bed. There were no engineering schools in the U.S. when the canal was built; problems were solved as the construction proceeded.

When complete, the canal was 4 feet deep and 40 feet wide, with a ten-foot-wide path along one side for the horses and mules to walk as they towed the boat. The animals were rotated in six hour shifts; one set of animals rested, while the other set pulled. The Erie Canal lowered the cost of freight, reduced the travel time across New York State, and opened access to the Northwest Territory for settlement.

When the Erie Canal was first proposed, Thomas Jefferson was the third President of the United States. Jefferson thought it was too soon in our nation's history to undertake such an expensive project. New York State political and business leaders tried over and over to gain federal support. James Madison, the fourth President, vetoed a bill that would have covered the cost of building the canal. Our fifth President, James Monroe, was also against New York's canal. He thought that the cost to build it would be greater than the cost of running the entire U.S. government.

Historical Background Statement | PAGE 2

De Witt Clinton (1769-1828) was the strongest advocate for the Erie Canal. He served in the New York State Legislature, the U.S. Senate, and was Mayor of New York City. He was determined to make the canal a New York State project despite the loss of federal support. In 1816, when he was elected Governor, the act authorizing the building of the canal was passed by the New York State Legislature. On July 4, 1817, the first shovelful was turned. On October 26, 1825, DeWitt Clinton boarded a canal boat in Buffalo called the *Seneca Chief* and traveled across the state on the Erie Canal to Albany. From Albany, he took a steamboat down the Hudson River to New York City. On November 4, he poured water from Lake Erie into the Atlantic Ocean symbolically uniting the east coast to our nation's interior.

The original cost estimate to build the canal was \$7 million. Stock certificates and bonds were issued by the state to finance the canal. Stock and bond holders were promised that they would be paid back by tolls collected on the canal. In the first year the canal was open, \$1 million was collected. By the year 1836 the loan was repaid. In this same year, the state began a massive project to enlarge the canal. When completed, the enlarged canal was 70 feet wide and 7 feet deep.

In the first years of operation, four times as many goods moved east than west on the Erie Canal. By 1852, the number of boats moving west was double the number moving east. In 1853, the Erie Canal carried 62% of all U.S. trade, twice as much as all other water routes combined including traffic on the Mississippi River.

By the end of the nineteenth century, railroads were moving more freight and people than waterways. In 1903, New York State decided to create a larger Barge Canal to compete with the railroads. Opened in 1918, it's boats carried six times the amount of freight. Additionally, motors, not animals, were used to power the boats. If you travel on or visit the Erie Canal today, you will be on this Barge Canal.



The Erie Canal: The Native Americans of New York State

The Native Americans of New York State include the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Valley. They are known for the alliance, or confederation, called the League of the Haudenosaunee, the People of the Longhouse. They were also known as the Five Nations Confederacy. Today they are known as the Six Nations with the inclusion of the Tuscarora.

1. According to the 1747 map to the left, in which British Colony are the Five Nations located?

2. List two lakes located in Five Nations territory:

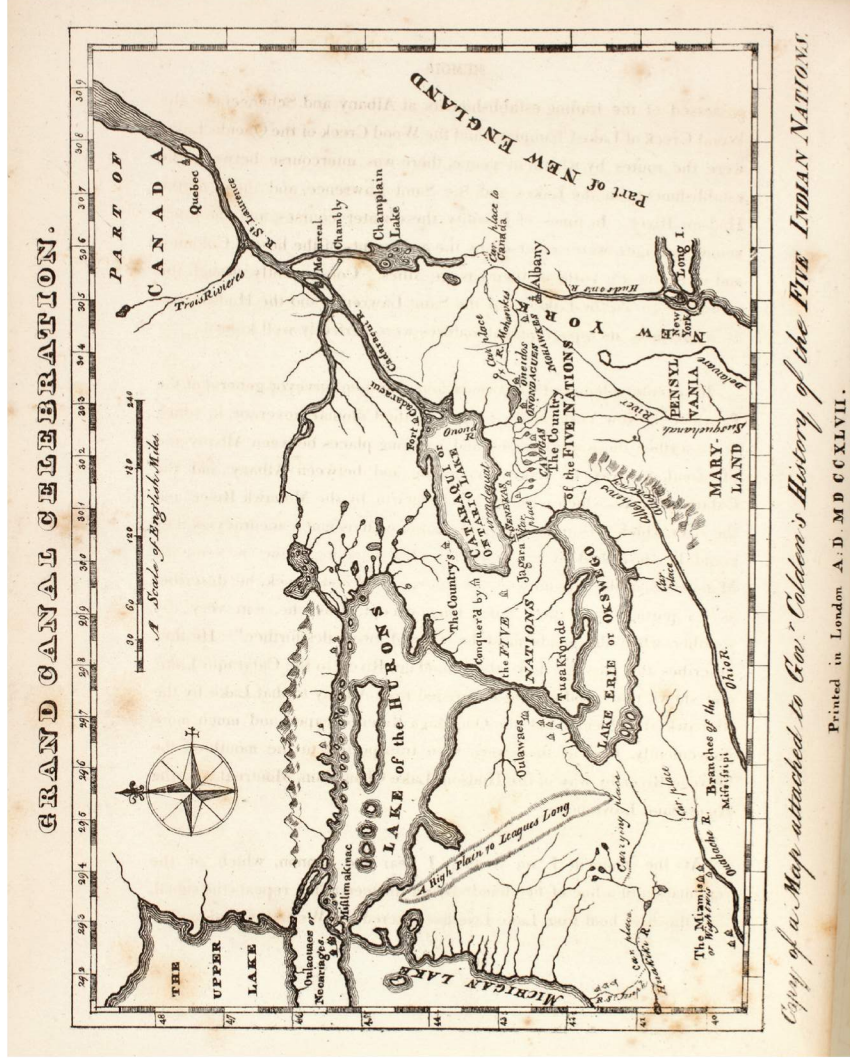
1. _____

2. _____

3. List two rivers located in Five Nations territory:

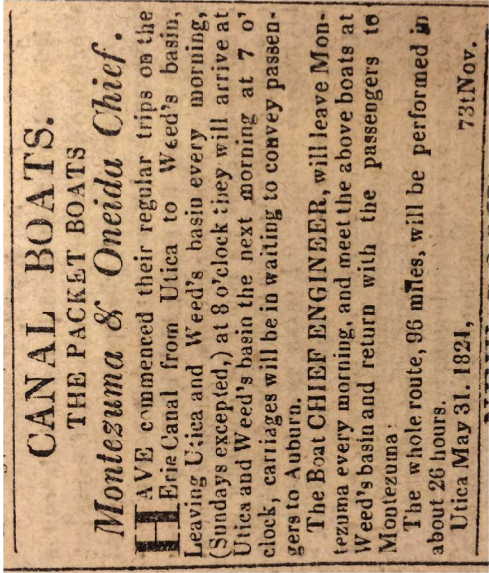
1. _____

2. _____



Copy of a map attached to Governor Colden's History of the Five Indian Nations. Printed in London 1747. Reproduced in Cadwallader D. Colden's memoir, An Account of the Grand Canal Celebration at New York, 1825, Albany Institute of History & Art Library.

The Erie Canal: The Native Americans of New York State



Canal Boats, The Packet Boats, Advertisement, *Albany Argus*, 1821, Albany Institute of History & Art Library



Erie Canal Commemorative Token and Wood Presentation Box, Box attributed to Duncan Phyfe, New York City 1825. Wood and metal with engraved paper label. Gift of Albert B. Roberts, Albany Institute of History & Art, 2006.49.10



Native American names were often adopted by European settlers in the early period of the United States. People living alongside the Erie Canal were no exception, often choosing names from local tribes, as well as, from outside the region.

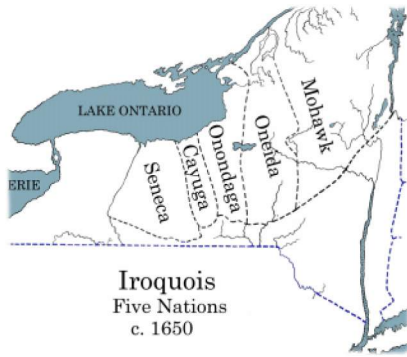
The Iroquois Confederacy in Upstate New York included the Seneca tribe. In 1825, Dewitt Clinton, who lead the effort to build the Erie Canal, traveled in a boat called the *Seneca Chief* from Buffalo to New York City to celebrate the opening of the canal.

The canal boats *Montezuma* and *Oneida Chief*, noted in the 1831 advertisement pictured to the left, drew their names from Native American sources. Montezuma was a well-known Aztec emperor who lived in what is now Mexico. The Oneida are another member of the Iroquois Confederacy.

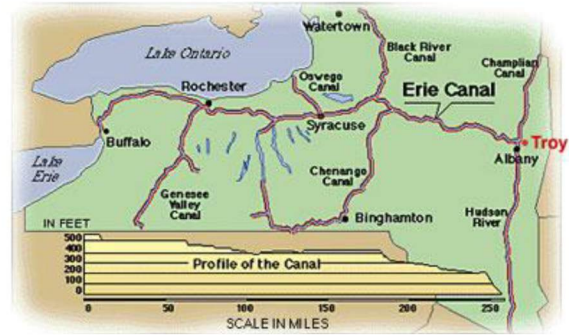
List two reasons why a boat owner might name his boat after one of the Six Nations of the Iroquois Confederacy.

1. _____
2. _____

How the Haudenosaunee Lost their Lands to Make Way for the Canal



Original Lands of the Haudenosaunee



The Erie Canal route through lands lost by treaties

Because of the Appalachian Mountains, the only easy way to reach the middle of our country was to follow the Haudenosaunee trails that started at the Hudson River and went west along the Mohawk River as well as the land. Colonists wanted this route.

Four of the Haudenosaunee nations helped the British during the American Revolution, so George Washington ordered Generals Clinton and Sullivan to attack all the Haudenosaunee villages to burn the crops and longhouses. The American troops destroyed over 40 villages, forcing the men, women and children to walk to safety in British Canada so they didn't die of hunger or freeze over the winter. Unfortunately, it was one of the worst winters and many of the refugees did die because the British did not have enough resources to save them all.

The New York government said that the Haudenosaunee had abandoned the land and therefore it now belonged to the state. To guarantee it, New York State then made many treaties, or legal agreements, with the various nations to make sure that they did not get back their land. In 1797, the Treaty of Big Tree set up the reservation system to give the Haudenosaunee small areas of land that will be theirs as long as the waters flow and the grass is green. The Haudenosaunee still live on most of these reservations today.

Now, with the Haudenosaunee off the land and not able to claim it was still theirs, New York State could start building new villages where there were once had only been Haudenosaunee villages. The surveyors could plan the route across New York that would become the Erie Canal, bringing more people, businesses, and goods to the center and western part of the state.

The Haudenosaunee land claims that are being decided in courts today are from this time, just before the Erie Canal. New York State did some of the treaties without the help of the federal government which means the treaties were not done correctly so they are illegal.

1. Why was the route along the Mohawk River important to the colonists? _____

2. What do you think of the Clinton-Sullivan Campaign? _____
Explain _____

3. How did New York State get the land from the Haudenosaunee?

The Erie Canal: Changing the Map of Our Nation



Map of the United States, "Done by the City of New York to accompany the Memoir of Cadwallader D. Colden," 1825, Albany Institute of History & Art Library

[illegible]

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The Erie Canal: Changing the Map of Our Nation

Look closely at the maps on the previous pages. Based on what you see and the information you read on the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor's website (http://www.eriecanalway.org/learn_history-culture.htm), answer the questions below.

1. What two bodies of water does the Erie Canal connect?

1. _____

2. _____

2. In what city does the Erie Canal begin in the east? _____

3. In what city does the Erie Canal end in the west? _____

4. Name two geographic features that had to be overcome to build the canal:

1. _____

2. _____

5. Identify two ways in which the Erie Canal was a benefit to New York State's business and industry


1. _____

2. _____

The Erie Canal: In the Papers

Before the entire length of the canal was navigable, it was being used for freight and transportation. The middle section opened first, followed by the East, and finally the West. The advertisement below appeared in June of 1824, before the entire canal was even open. Read the transcription of the advertisement and answer the questions on the following page.

**ERIE CANAL
PACKET BOATS.**



THE line of Packet Boats from Schenectady to Rochester, will run **TWICE** each day the ensuing season, by the Utica and Schenectady Packet Boat Company, the Erie Canal Navigation Company, and Western Packet Boat Company, in connection, in the following manner:

A boat will leave Schenectady every morning at 7 o'clock and every evening at 7 o'clock, and arrive at Utica the ensuing morning and evening respectively; immediately on the arrival of which a boat will leave Utica and arrive at Rochester in 46 hours.

A boat will leave Rochester every morning at 7 o'clock and every evening at 7 o'clock, and arrive at Utica in 46 hours; immediately on the arrival of which a boat will leave Utica and arrive at Schenectady in 24 hours.

A daily line will also run from Rochester to Brockport, or further west, should the canal be further navigable in the course of the season.

Stages will be provided to convey passengers from Schenectady to Albany immediately on the arrival of the boats at the former place, and also from Albany to Schenectady on the arrival of the Steam Boats from New York, and from Brockport to Buffalo, Black Rock and Niagara Falls; on the arrival of the boats at Brockport; and also to convey passengers who may wish to go to the principal villages off the line of the canal.

The proprietors assure the public no expense or efforts have been spared to render the accommodations, through the line, ample and satisfactory, and to insure despatch and punctuality in their operations.

Rates of fare from Utica to Schenectady, \$3.50; from Utica to Rochester \$6.40, including board.

EPHRAIM HART,
E. B. SHEARMAN,
E. BACON,

Trustees of the Utica and Schenectady packet boat company.

ROSWELL HART,
S. N. DEXTER,
THEODORE S. GOLD,
JOHN W. STRONG,
CHARLES MOSELEY

Directors of the Erie Canal Navigation Company.

JAMES LYNCH,
J. C. SPENCER,
PETER CLARKE,
THOMAS ROGERS, 2d.
ERASMUS D. SMITH,

Directors of the Western passage boat company.

april 8

TRANSCRIPTION OF ADVERTISEMENT, JUNE 1824:

Erie Canal PACKET BOATS

The line of Packet Boats from **Schenectady** to **Rochester**, will run **TWICE** each day the ensuing season, by the Utica and Schenectady Packet Boat Company, the Erie Canal Navigation Company, and Western Packet Boat Company, in connection, in the following manner:

A boat will leave Schenectady every morning at 7 o'clock and every evening at 7 o'clock and arrive at Utica the ensuing morning and evening respectively; immediately on the arrival of which a boat will leave **Utica** and arrive at Rochester in 46 hours.

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A daily line will also run from Rochester to **Brockport**, or further west, should the canal be further navigable in the course of the season.

Stages will be provided to convey passengers from Schenectady to **Albany** immediately on the arrival of the boats at the former place, and also from Albany to Schenectady on the arrival of the Steam Boats from New York and, from Brockport to **Buffalo, Black Rock, and Niagara Falls**; on the arrival of the boats at Brockport; and also to convey passengers who may wish to go to the principal village off the line of the canal.

The proprietors assure the public no expense or efforts have been spared to render the accommodations, through the line, ample and satisfactory, and to insure dispatch and punctuality in their operations.

Rates of fare from Utica to Schenectady, **\$3.50**; from Utica to Rochester **\$6.40**, including board.

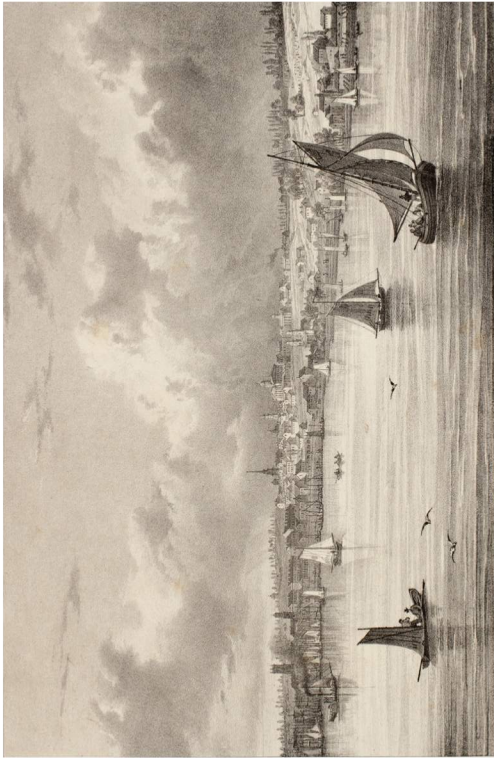
Albany Daily, June 1824, Albany Institute of History & Art Library

The Erie Canal: In the Papers

1. List the cities serviced by the packet boat company in the advertisement on the previous page. Include the cities that are reached by "Stages" at either end of the canal. The "Stages" referred to in the advertisement were large carriages pulled by horses sometimes called Stagecoaches.
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
 4. _____
 5. _____
 6. _____
 7. _____
2. In the year 1824, if you were traveling from New York City to Albany to take a boat on the Erie Canal to Buffalo, what were three methods of transportation you could use to travel between these cities?
 1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
3. What times did the boat leave Schenectady? _____ and _____
4. How long did it take to get from Utica to Rochester? _____
5. How long did it take to get from Utica to Schenectady? _____
6. How much did it cost to travel from Utica to Schenectady? _____
7. How much did it cost to travel from Utica to Rochester? _____

The Erie Canal: Growing Our State and Nation

	Before Erie Canal c. 1820	c. 1850
Cost of ton of freight from Albany to Buffalo	\$100	\$10
Number of days travel Albany to Buffalo	14	6
Number of U.S. States	23	31
Population of Utica	2,972	17,565
Population of Rochester	1,502	36,403
Population of Buffalo	2,095	42,261
Population of Albany	12,630	50,763
Cost of plot of land in Buffalo	\$250	\$20,000



Albany, NY, c. 1820, Albany Institute of History & Art, 1944.22.1.13

Read the chart above. Using your math skills, answer the questions below.

- Which city had the largest increase in population between 1820 and 1850? _____
- How many days of travel were saved by taking a boat on the Erie Canal from Albany to Buffalo? _____
- How much more would it cost to buy a plot of land in Buffalo in the year 1850 than if you had purchased it in 1820? _____
- How many states were added to the U.S. between 1820 and 1850? _____

Intro:

- Towns and cities are themselves historical artifacts and documents. Road layouts, building design and uses, neighborhood composition, schools, parks, and hospitals; they all tell a story. Also in most towns and cities are objects that are intentionally made to tell stories. Monuments, memorials, and interpretive signs all attempt to convey history, but what is the story they're trying to tell? What story does their placement tell as well? Today we'll be exploring 3 blocks of downtown Syracuse which are full of these monuments and markers, which can tell us a lot about the history of both the abolition movement and the Erie Canal in Syracuse. We'll also look closer at these markers and examine the stories they're not telling, as well as why that might be.

Stop 1. Onondaga Nation

Have students read the marker

What story is this marker trying to tell? Who was living in Central New York prior to the Erie Canal's construction? What does this say about the Syracuse area prior to the Erie Canal's construction in 1817?

The marker indicates that there were both members of the Onondaga Nation and 33 settlers, identified as "individuals," living in Salina. This monument clearly shows settler-colonial encroachment onto Indigenous lands, in Syracuse's case those of the Onondaga Nation, one of the six members of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, which encompassed virtually all of Upstate New York. This monument indicates that there was cooperation between settlers and Indigenous people in this borderland but also the persistent encroachment and dispossession of the Onondaga, as the final sentence shows a doubling of the settler population in just one year. Who were these "individuals" though? Mostly salt boilers, both Black and White. Evidence has shown that many of Central New York's most well known early settlers were enslavers, including Asa Danforth, Comfort Tyler, Joshua Forman, and Moses DeWitt. This is a time to discuss the history of slavery in New York, which began in 1626 and continued for the next 200 years. The state began the process of gradual emancipation in 1799 with the "Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery," which freed no one but set stipulations that children born enslaved after July 4, 1799 would be freed at age 25 for women and 28 for men. New York fully abolished slavery in 1827 with a new act freeing everyone born before the 1799 act, though some individuals born under the first act were still required to remain enslaved until the end of the 25/28 year stipulation, meaning that some New Yorkers were still legally enslaved into the 1840s. It's estimated that in 1810 approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of Upstate New York households contained enslaved people.

This leads to the next question.

Who built the Erie Canal, constructed from 1817 to 1825?

The nature of canal contracting makes it difficult to tell who exactly built the Erie Canal but sources indicate that it was primarily locals, with additional immigrant labor, especially in difficult to build sections. But who were "locals"? As we've just discussed, living in the area of the Erie Canal were Indigenous and enslaved people, as slavery was not abolished in New York until 1827. Sources indicate that members of the Haudenosaunee had little interest in participating in canal digging but there is evidence of Black individuals participating in the digging. For the most

part we have no evidence of if they were free or enslaved but we do have information about one Black individual who dug the canal right here in Syracuse.

Provide Isaac Wales document, Syracuse Daily Standard obituary (included below under “Supplemental Material”) or Syracuse.com article on Isaac Wales (<https://www.syracuse.com/living/2022/02/syracuses-first-black-resident-paid-80-for-his-own-freedom-helped-dig-the-erie-canal.html>), included in “Recommended Readings”/“Other Consulted Sources”).

How do you imagine the area was changed by the Erie Canal?

The Erie Canal accelerated the movement of settlers in Upstate New York, further dispossessing the Haudenosaunee throughout New York. By the mid-1800s the Haudenosaunee had been forced onto a handful of reservations throughout the state due to illegal agreements with both the state and private individuals or had been moved out of New York, as was the case for many Oneidas, who were relocated to Wisconsin, and Seneca, relocated to Oklahoma. The canal also created a transformative new transportation system for the area that led to considerable economic growth and a new pathway to Canada. **How might this have impacted the Black individuals living in the area?** Here are some first hand accounts of just a few ways it transformed the region

Provide excerpts from the autobiography of Thomas James (one of James utilizing the surveyed route of the Canal to reach Canada and freedom, the other of his return to NY in Rochester, finding a job in a canalside warehouse, learning to read, and eventually overseeing the company’s freight operation) and Twelve Years a Slave (Solomon Northup’s account of working repairing the Champlain Canal and captaining a lumber boat)

Use these materials and the Isaac Wales piece to facilitate a conversation about how the Erie Canal did offer in some instances a route for freedom seekers to reach Canada and for Black individuals to find economic opportunity, though as we can see in the case of Isaac Wales, it was often in marginalized and low paying industries like sewerage. We will see in other parts of the tour how even with slavery abolished in New York, Black individuals along the Canal, including Northup, were not safe and further evidence of how the Black community was generally marginalized, though we will also see how they continued to resist and work towards freedom and equality.

When was this marker installed? Why was this marker installed? What does it say about the time period it was installed?

Stop 2: Daniel Webster Balcony

Have students read the plaque under the balcony. **What questions does it raise?**

Likely answers will be: Who was Daniel Webster? What was the Syracuse Speech? Why was he giving a speech in Syracuse in 1851?

Daniel Webster was a congressman from Massachusetts who became Secretary of State under President Millard Fillmore, a New Yorker from Buffalo. In September 1850, Fillmore signed the Fugitive Slave Act, which required people living in free states to return freedom seekers to their enslavers, imposed harsh penalties on people breaking the law, and gave people accused of being freedom seekers no legal rights to prove they had not been enslaved. An important example for why this last provision was important can be seen in the story of Solomon Northup, born free in New York and who worked on the Canal System for a time, Northup was kidnapped into slavery in 1841 before legally reobtaining his freedom in 1853. The 1850 Fugitive Slave Act had the potential to make instances like this more frequent and individuals would have even less legal recourse than Northup did. The Act also caused many freedom seekers who had settled in northern towns and cities to head for the safety of Canada. Even this journey, despite being through entirely “free” territory, was by no means safe, as indicated by the story of the Harris family, who left Philadelphia and boarded a canal boat in Albany headed to Rochester and a steam boat across Lake Ontario. The family was subjected to racial abuse by the crew of the boat and passengers as well as threatened with being returned to enslavement, ultimately resulting in the death of their child and the near death of both adults. Clearly, northern whites were not universally opposed to slavery or supportive of freedom seekers. There were, however, people who DID oppose slavery and assist freedom seekers in the north, often with Black individuals in prominent leadership positions in the organizations and networks that formed. A notable example is the Albany Vigilance Committee, founded in the 1840s at the eastern end of the Erie Canal, which was led by Stephen Myers, himself born enslaved, and his wife Harriet. The Vigilance Committee provided freedom seekers with shelter, supplies, and advice for how to continue their journeys, advocated for abolition by speaking and publishing materials like newspapers and pamphlets on the subject, and raising money to support abolitionist activities. After the Fugitive Slave Act was passed more vigilance committees were formed throughout New York, including here in Syracuse, with many formerly anti-abolitionists joining with already established abolitionists like Jermain Wesley Loguen, himself a freedom seeker. Syracuse soon became a hotbed for the abolition movement and the Underground Railroad, with hundreds of freedom seekers passing through Loguen’s house on East Genesee Street on the way to Canada. This prompted Daniel Webster to come to Syracuse on May 26, 1851, where he delivered this speech to a crowd in front of city hall:

Have students read speech excerpt:

“It is treason, treason and nothing else! Depend upon it, the law will be executed in its spirit and to the letter. It will be executed in all the great cities- here in Syracuse- in the midst of the next anti-slavery convention if the occasion should arise, then we shall see what becomes of their lives and their sacred honor.”

What was Webster trying to say with his speech? What actually is treason?

Treason - the crime of betraying one’s country. Webster said it was treason to disobey the Fugitive Slave Act and Syracuse residents needed to stop their abolitionist activities.

What does Webster, from Massachusetts and serving a president from New York, giving this speech say about northern attitudes toward the Fugitive Slave Act?

This indicates that there was a significant split in opinion on abolition and the Underground Railroad, with some of the most powerful and influential northern politicians opposed to

abolitionist activities. However, it also indicates that following the passage of the Fugitive Slave Act there was significant enough opposition to the law from abolitionists that the federal government was forced to react to their actions.

Why preserve the balcony?

We are not sure why it has been preserved but encourage a discussion of potential reasons it may have been.

If your group hasn't reached the Jerry Rescue Monument, have students take note of Webster's warning about "in the midst of the next anti-slavery convention if the occasion should arise, then we shall see what becomes of their lives and their sacred honor."

Stop 3: Hanover Square Interpretive Sign

Have students read the interpretive sign

Hanover Square is considered Syracuse's first commercial district, due largely to all the buildings on the northern side of the Square having direct access to the Canal.

What canalside industries were Black individuals involved in according to the sign?

Largely in the hotel industry as porters, waiters, housekeepers, and cooks. It also indicates that some were involved in the transportation industry as cartmen. Additionally, a lot of the sign's attention is focused on George B. Vashon, the first Black lawyer in New York, who practiced in a canalside building in the early 1850s. Vashon also taught at New York Central College in McGraw, one of the first integrated colleges in America, and was a prominent voice in the abolition movement along with many other Black Syracuseans like Jermain Wesley Loguen and Samuel Ringgold Ward, who published multiple anti-slavery newspapers in Syracuse in addition to being a forceful speaker and writer. However, Vashon was an outlier in Hanover Square's Black working community.

Why were the majority of Hanover Square's Black workers employed in hotels or transportation?

Hotel work and transportation were marginalized, low-status industries to work in, leading to a disproportionate representation of Black workers, who faced discrimination that often prevented them entering other more lucrative fields. Due to the Canal and the increase in travelers that resulted, more and more hotels sprang up, which in turn created a labor crunch for hotels, who needed to serve the increasing number of passengers. As a result they were more willing to employ Black workers. We see this theme on the canal as well, with many Black individuals employed as boatmen and cooks on canal boats.

How might being employed in these industries have impacted abolitionist and Underground Railroad activities?

Employees in hotels could have direct access to enslaved people traveling with their enslavers, as well as more contact with people from throughout the state and country due to the public facing nature of their jobs. As a result they could develop extensive networks of like minded individuals and then utilize those networks for rescue attempts, as they could directly communicate with enslaved individuals on how to take advantage of those networks. Similarly,

transportation workers had jobs that enabled them to do similar things while also being able to directly offer transportation to potential freedom seekers. An excellent example of this was right here in Hanover Square when Thomas Leonard, himself a freedom seeker who at one point worked as a boatman on the Erie Canal, worked as a waiter in the Syracuse House, located where the Onondaga County Savings Bank Building now stands. His wife Jane also worked in a nearby hotel as a cook. Leonard worked in the Syracuse House when in October 1839 the Davenport family, wealthy Mississippi plantation owners, arrived along with Harriet Powell, an enslaved woman. She was approached by Leonard and convinced to take her freedom, moving between several Underground Railroad stations in southern Onondaga and Madison Counties before arriving in Canada about a month later. This was one of Syracuse's first well known Underground Railroad rescues and Leonard's leadership in it shows the extensive networks he was able to develop in part through his profession, utilizing his own marginalized job to effectively resist the systemic racism that had placed him there.

What other types of industries would have existed along the canal and in the “first commercial district?” What goods would have moved on the Canal?

Practically every good traveled down the Erie Canal and a diverse array of industries sprung up. A large industry in canal towns though was the milling of cotton for use in textiles like clothing. Cotton of course was the largest product produced by enslaved labor in the United States. Here is a chart showing how much cotton moved down the Erie Canal in the years prior to the Civil War. The average amount of cotton moving along the Canal in these years was around \$19 million per year. (This chart is also included as a poster-sized handout.)

Year	Tons	Value (\$)
1842	1,608.00	374,913.00
1843	1,880.00	387,000.00
1844	1,406.00	358,519.00
1845	2,278.00	384,227.00
1846	2,387.00	492,398.00
1847	2,481.00	483,711.00
1848	3,427.00	446,900.00
1849	3,156.00	583,358.00
1850	2,167.00	596,890.00
1851	2,357.00	517,305.00
1852	2,541.00	556,615.00
1853	3,345.00	749,257.00
1854	2,908.00	652,755.00
1855	2,869.00	645,366.00
1856	2,457.00	529,473.00
1857	1,289.00	317,101.00
1858	1,716.00	429,054.00
1859	1,366.00	344,922.00
1860	1,529.00	396,067.00
Average 1842-1860	2,271.95	486,622.68

How might this level of trade in cotton have impacted attitudes towards slavery along the Erie Canal?

These numbers show that in the 18 years prior to the Civil War, cotton transportation and processing was a massive industry in Upstate New York, representing millions of dollars in trade. This would have led to many New Yorkers having vested interest in maintaining slavery to keep the prices for this raw material down. Included in this pro-enslaved cotton coalition would include wealthy and powerful cotton mill owners who want better profit margins, employees within the cotton milling industry fearing a loss of employment or wages if mill owners were forced to look elsewhere for cost saving measures, and consumers fearing an increase in the cost of cotton goods and the uncertainty caused by a dramatic change in such a large industry. We see this, along with other anti-abolitionist sentiments, manifested on the sign in the form of the riot that attacked the abolitionist meeting of Samuel J. May and Susan B. Anthony in January 1861 and burnt in effigy. January 1861, it should be noted, is mere months before the start of the Civil War. This is also not the only instance of anti-abolition violence occurring in

Hanover Square, when as far back as 1831 a mob prevented the Onondaga County Anti-Slavery Society from forming in the Square, forcing them to instead go east down the Canal to Fayetteville. However, in these attacks we also see abolitionists in Central New York standing up for what they believe is right, even in the face of serious physical danger, and recognizing that opposing a morally wrong institution is more important than short term financial concerns.

When was the sign built/what does it say about that time period?

Stop 4: Jerry Rescue Monument

Have students read the back of the Jerry Rescue Monument and examine it.

What is the Jerry Rescue? Who was involved?

William “Jerry” Henry was a freedom seeker from Missouri who was working in Syracuse when on October 1, 1851 he was arrested under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 at his cooper shop on Salina St. October 1 was also when the Liberty Party, composed of both Black and White abolitionists, was holding its state convention a few blocks away on Genesee St. Abolitionists initially broke Jerry out of the federal courtroom, approximately where the air conditioning unit for the Atrium now stands, but he was recaptured and sent to Syracuse’s jail, where the Ice Cream Stand is now located across the street. By nightfall a racially diverse crowd of several thousand had gathered in Clinton Square to protest Jerry’s arrest and eventually free him from the jail. The monument depicts Revs. Jermain Wesley Loguen and Samuel J. May escorting Jerry out of the jail but it was in fact two Black Syracuseans, Peter Hollinbeck and William Gray. Loguen and May were not actually present, as the plaque on the back says, instead they played a crucial role in organizing the supporters of the abolitionist cause to get to the Square and the network of local safehouses Jerry was hidden in for approximately a month before being able to reach Oswego and a steam ship that took him to Kingston, Ontario. Also important in organizing the Rescue were Samuel Ringgold Ward and Gerrit Smith. The monument also mentions Enoch Reed, a Black man, being the only person convicted in regards to his actions in the Rescue.

What were the results of the Rescue? Why is it important?

The immediate result was that Jerry was rescued from being returned to slavery. On a larger scale it illustrated to the federal government and the nation as a whole that a significant number of people were willing to resist the implementation of the Fugitive Slave Act and that those people were well enough organized that they could effectively resist it. As the plaque says, 27 individuals, including 12 Black individuals, were indicted for breaking the Fugitive Slave Act. The fact that no one was convicted under the law showed that Fugitive Slave Act would be extremely difficult to enforce. Enoch Reed was the only individual convicted of anything and that was a more minor offense. Reed was a canal boatman at the time of the Rescue, having previously served on whaling ships, including the same boat as Herman Melville, author of Moby Dick. The Jerry Rescue became an important symbol of resistance to the Fugitive Slave Act and slavery in general for years to come, with Syracuse hosting Jerry Rescue Day celebrations on the events anniversary every year, attended by the nation’s most prominent abolitionists. Here is an example from one of Frederick Douglass’ speeches in 1853 that illustrate the importance given to the Jerry Rescue and a similar event, the Shadrack Minkins Rescue, that occurred in Boston:

“But for that resistance, and the rescue of Jerry and Shadrack, the man hunters would have hunted our hills and valleys here with the same freedom with which they now hunt their own dismal swamps”.

When was the monument built/what does it say about that time period?

Stop 5: Soldiers and Sailors Monument

Have students examine the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Clinton Square

What war does this monument commemorate? What was the cause of the war according to this monument?

This monument is dedicated to the 12,265 Onondaga County residents who served in the Civil War. The monument states that they served “that the nation might be preserved and the Constitution maintained.” and for the “preservation of the nation.”

What does this mean though? Why did the nation need preserving?

Following the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860, 11 states attempted to secede from the United States of America and form a new nation. In doing that, the leadership of the Confederacy repeatedly emphasized that this new nation was being created in order to preserve the institution of slavery and that slavery was the founding principal on which they were attempting to secede. Some attempt to argue that slavery was not the cause of the Civil War but the very words of the Confederates reveal that it was.

Provide students with excerpts from the Cornerstone Speech and the “Declaration of the Immediate Causes which Include and Justify the Secession of the State of Mississippi from the Federal Union.” Discuss.

Why then, does this monument not explicitly say that? Why does the monument focus on the preservation of the Union rather than framing the Civil War as a fight over slavery?

The vast majority of the northern population was not abolitionist and would not have supported a war that included abolition as one of its major war aims, at least not at the beginning of the war. As we see at many other stops on the tour in New York alone there was a considerable segment of the population who supported slavery and were against abolition. The Union even contained four states where slavery was still legal. Even White people who were indifferent or opposed to slavery generally believed in some form of white supremacy and would have been against fighting a war on behalf of Black people, thus was born the idea of fighting “to preserve the nation.” Even after the Civil War and the abolition of slavery, the underlying white supremacy that we see here continued and when this monument was constructed in 1910 the same rhetoric continued to be used. Nonetheless, this does not take away from the fact that the Civil War was fought over the institution of slavery but rather shows the deep seeded underlying white supremacist ideas throughout the United States that propagated the survival of slavery for so long in US history. But let’s look more closely at what else the monument can tell us, specifically at how the war was fought and who fought in it.

Who fought in the war? How would the Erie Canal have impacted the Union war effort?

As the monument said, 12,265 residents of Onondaga County served in the war. Overall, New York contributed over 400,000 soldiers to the war effort, the most of any state. New York contributed greatly to the war effort in other ways as well, with transportation systems like the Erie Canal able to much more efficiently supply the Union armies with essential goods like salt, manufactured here in Syracuse. Many canal boatmen also left the Canal to serve the Union military in a number of capacities. Initially, Black soldiers were not allowed in the Union army but as the war dragged on and public opinion became more opposed to the Confederacy and the system of slavery that supported it, the Emancipation Proclamation was issued at the start of 1863, declaring all enslaved people in the rebellious states free and allowing for the recruitment of Black soldiers. In March of 1863 Frederick Douglass and Jermain Wesley Loguen traveled the Canal Corridor recruiting for the 54th Massachusetts Regiment. Here is an excerpt from Frederick Douglass' March 2 speech in Rochester:

"A war undertaken and brazenly carried on for the perpetual enslavement of colored men, calls logically and loudly for colored men to help suppress it. Only a moderate share of sagacity was needed to see that the arm of the slave was the best defense against the arm of the slaveholder. Hence with every reverse to the national arms, with every exulting shout of victory raised by the slaveholding rebels, I have implored the imperiled nation to unchain against her foes, her powerful black hand. Slowly and reluctantly that appeal is beginning to be heeded. Stop not now to complain that it was not heeded sooner. It may or it may not have been best that it should not. This is not the time to discuss that question. Leave it to the future. When the war is over, the country is saved, peace is established, and the black man's rights are secured, as they will be, history with an impartial hand will dispose of that and sundry other questions.

...

The counsel I give comes of close observation of the great struggle now in progress, and of the deep conviction that this is your hour and mine. In good earnest then, and after the best deliberation, I now for the first time during this war feel at liberty to call and counsel you to arms. By every consideration which binds you to your enslaved fellow-countrymen, and the peace and welfare of your country; by every aspiration which you cherish for the freedom and equality of yourselves and your children; by all the ties of blood and identity which make us one with the brave black men now fighting our battles in Louisiana and in South Carolina, I urge you to fly to arms, and smite with death the power that would bury the government and your liberty in the same hopeless grave. I wish I could tell you that the State of New York calls you to this high honor. For the moment her constituted authorities are silent on the subject. They will speak by and by, and doubtless on the right side; but we are not compelled to wait for her. We can get at the throat of treason and slavery through the State of Massachusetts."

What reason does Douglass give for why the war is being fought?

He says the war is being fought for "the perpetual enslavement of colored men."

What is the purpose of this speech?

Douglass is calling on Black men to take up arms to fight for the Union and the end of slavery.

What did Douglass believe would be the end result of the war?

"the country is saved, peace is established, and the black man's rights are secured,"

Did Black residents of the Canal Corridor listen to Douglass and Loguen? Did they enlist in the 54th Massachusetts?

Provide students with 54th Massachusetts Regiment handout showing selection of soldiers from CNY

What were jobs held by members of the 54th Regiment from CNY?

Waiter, laborer, boatman, barber, farmer, cook, hostler

What does this say about the Black community around the Canal and in Central New York?

This data shows a considerable Black population along the Erie Canal corridor occupying a series of varied jobs, largely in the service and transportation industries, including many who were likely employed on the canal itself. This would also just represent a small subset of the overall Black community in the area, as only represented here are men between the ages of 18 and 35 who also were willing and able to travel all the way to Boston to enlist in something that could result in their deaths. This also shows a devotion to the cause of abolition in the CNY Black community and a willingness to fight, even at the risk of severe physical danger, for the end of slavery and a chance at equality.

Ultimately, the Union won the Civil War and in its aftermath the Reconstruction Amendments were passed. The 13th Amendment abolished slavery, the 14th granted Black people citizenship, and the 15th gave Black men the right to vote. However, even with slavery abolished, the white supremacy that sustained it persisted and the Black community in New York and throughout the United States continued to experience racial discrimination all the way up to the present. Nonetheless, the significant Black population that existed along the Erie Canal that we have seen throughout the tour continued to grow over the proceeding century and a half, contributing greatly to the development of the region and its culture and continuing to resist the factors impeding a society with equal rights for all.

When was the monument built/what does it say about that time period?

Supplemental Material

***Life of Rev. Thomas James by Himself* excerpt:**

While I was still in the seventeenth year of my age, Master Kimball was killed in a runaway accident; and at the administrator's sale I was sold with the rest of the property, my new master being Cromwell Bartlett of the same neighborhood. As I remember, my first master was a well-to-do but rough farmer, a skeptic in religious matters, but of better heart than address; for he treated me well. He owned several farms and my work was that of a farmhand. My new master had owned me but a few months when he sold me, or rather traded me, to George H. Hess, a wealthy farmer of the vicinity of Fort Plain. I was bartered in exchange for a yoke of steers, a colt and some additional property, the nature and amount of which I have now forgotten. I remained with Master Hess from March until June of the same year, when I ran away. My master had worked me hard, and at last undertook to whip me. This led me to seek escape from slavery. I arose in the night, and taking the then newly staked line of the Erie canal for my route, traveled along it westward until, about a week later, I reached the village of Lockport. No one had stopped me in my flight. Men were at work digging the new canal at many points, but they never troubled themselves even to question me. I slept in barns at night and begged food at farmers' houses along my route. At Lockport a colored man showed me the way to the Canadian border. I crossed the Niagara at Youngstown on the ferry boat, and was free!

Once on free soil, I began to look about for work, and found it at a point called Deep Cut on the Welland Canal, which they were then digging. I found the laborers a rough lot and soon had a mind to leave them. After three months had passed, I supposed it safe to return to the American side, and acting on the idea I recrossed the river. A farmer named Rich, residing near Youngstown, engaged me as a wood chopper. In the spring I made my way to Rochesterville and found a home with Lawyer Talbert. The chores about his place were left to me, and I performed the same service for Orlando Hastings. I was then nineteen years of age. As a slave I had never been inside of a school or a church, and I knew nothing of letters or religion. The wish to learn awoke in me almost from the moment I set foot in the place, and I soon obtained an excellent chance to carry the wish into effect. After the opening of the Erie canal, I obtained work in the warehouse of the Hudson and Erie line and found a home with its manager, Mr. Pliny Allen Wheeler. I was taught to read by Mr. Freeman, who had opened a Sunday school of his own for colored youths, on West Main street, or Buffalo street as it was then called. But my self-education advanced fastest in the warehouse during the long winter and spring months when the canal was closed and my only work consisted of chores about the place and at my employer's residence. The clerks helped me whenever I needed help in my studies. Soon I had learning enough to be placed in charge of the freight business of the warehouse, with full direction over the lading of boats.

***Twelve Years a Slave* excerpt:**

During the winter I was employed with others repairing the Champlain Canal, on that section over which William Van Nortwick was superintendent. David McEachron had the immediate charge of the men in whose company I labored. By the time the canal opened in the spring, I was enabled, from the savings of my wages, to purchase a pair of horses, and other things necessarily required in the business of navigation.

Having hired several efficient hands to assist me, I entered into contracts for the transportation of large rafts of timber from Lake Champlain to Troy. Dyer Beckwith and a Mr. Bartemy, of Whitehall, accompanied me on several trips. During the season I became perfectly familiar with the art and mysteries of rafting—a knowledge which afterwards enabled me to render profitable service to a worthy master, and to astonish the simple-witted lumbermen on the banks of the Bayou Boeuf.

Isaac Wales Obituary, from *Syracuse NY Daily Standard*, Nov. 3, 1865:

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DEATH OF AN OLD COLORED CITIZEN.—
Isaac Wales, an old and well-known colored
citizen of Syracuse died at his residence in this
city on Wednesday night last, aged about 80
years. Mr. Wales was one of the earliest set-
tlers of Syracuse, and was always noted for his
industry, sobriety and honesty. He was for-
merly a slave in Maryland and came to this
State about the year 1806. He was owned by
a family named Fleming, and the family and
slaves travelled from Maryland to this State by
wagon—the slaves on foot, and settled first in
Scipio, Cayuga county. The whole county was
then an almost untrodden wilderness. After a
few years' residence in Scipio, where the Flem-
ing family did not prosper satisfactorily, the
owner of Isaac Wales removed to Syracuse in
1810. Soon after their settlement in Syracuse,
Isaac purchased his freedom from his master
for \$80. He borrowed the money from Rufus
Stanton, Esq., who is still living, and Wales
earned the money to repay Mr. Stanton, by
working on the Erie Canal, digging in the basin,
in front of the Voorhees House. Isaac's master
(Fleming) afterwards became a perfect sot, and
Isaac frequently took care of his former owner
and saved him from a miserable death in the
streets.

Mr. Wales had few educational advantages,
but he was noted for his industry and frugality,
and accumulated a small property on which he
lived very comfortably. He was a great favor-
ite and was highly esteemed by all our old citi-
zens.

In the "Reminiscences of Syracuse," publish-
ed by Timothy C. Cheney, we find the following
notice of Isaac Wales:

"The only colored family residing in Syra-
cuse in 1824, was the family of Isaac Wales.—
'Uncle Ike' came to Manlius from Maryland as
a slave of the Fleming family, about the year
1810. He worked on the canal while it was be-
ing dug, and soon accumulated enough money
to purchase his freedom. Fifty dollars was
the stipend and price which he paid for him-
self. He married soon after obtaining his lib-
erty, and settled in this place, which has ever
since been his home."

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Excerpts from the Cornerstone Speech:

[Vice President of the Confederate States of America (CSA) Alexander Stephens on the contents of the newly adopted Constitution of the Confederate States of America, March 1861:]

[W]e are passing through one of the greatest revolutions in the annals of the world. Seven States have within the last three months thrown off an old government and formed a new. This revolution has been signally marked, up to this time, by the fact of its having been accomplished without the loss of a single drop of blood.

This new constitution or form of government constitutes the subject to which your attention will be partly invited. In reference to it, I make this first general remark: it amply secures all our ancient rights, franchises, and liberties. ... All the essentials of the old constitution, which have endeared it to the hearts of the American people, have been preserved and perpetuated. Some changes have been made.

The new constitution has put at rest, forever, all the agitating questions relating to our peculiar institution, African slavery as it exists amongst us – the proper status of the negro in our form of civilization. This was the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution.

The prevailing ideas entertained by him [Thomas Jefferson] and most of the leading statesmen at the time of the formation of the old constitution, were that the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature; that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally, and politically.

Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite idea; its foundations are laid, its corner-stone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition. This, our new government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth.

Excerpts from the “Declaration of the Immediate Causes which Induce and Justify the Secession of the State of Mississippi from the Federal Union”:

In the momentous step which our State has taken of dissolving its connection with the government of which we so long formed a part, it is but just that we should declare the prominent reasons which have induced our course.

Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery-- the greatest material interest of the world. Its labor supplies the product which constitutes by far the largest and most important portions of commerce of the earth. These products are peculiar to the climate verging on the tropical regions, and by an imperious law of nature, none but the black race can bear exposure to the tropical sun. These products have become necessities of the world, and a blow at slavery is a blow at commerce and civilization. That blow has been long aimed at the institution, and was at the point of reaching its consummation. There was no choice left us but submission to the mandates of abolition, or a dissolution of the Union, whose principles had been subverted to work out our ruin.

[Hostility to the institution of slavery] has nullified the Fugitive Slave Law in almost every free State in the Union, and has utterly broken the compact which our fathers pledged their faith to maintain. ... It advocates negro equality, socially and politically, and promotes insurrection and incendiarism in our midst.

Utter subjugation awaits us in the Union, if we should consent longer to remain in it. It is not a matter of choice, but of necessity. We must either submit to degradation, and to the loss of property worth four billions of money, or we must secede from the Union framed by our fathers, to secure this as well as every other species of property.

We embrace the alternative of separation; and for the reasons here stated, we resolve to maintain our rights with the full consciousness of the justice of our course, and the undoubting belief of our ability to maintain it.

Value and Quantity of Cotton Moving Along the Erie Canal in the Years Before the Civil War

Year	Tons	Value (\$)
1842	1,608.00	374,913.00
1843	1,880.00	387,000.00
1844	1,406.00	358,519.00
1845	2,278.00	384,227.00
1846	2,387.00	492,398.00
1847	2,481.00	483,711.00
1848	3,427.00	446,900.00
1849	3,156.00	583,358.00
1850	2,167.00	596,890.00
1851	2,357.00	517,305.00
1852	2,541.00	556,615.00
1853	3,345.00	749,257.00
1854	2,908.00	652,755.00
1855	2,869.00	645,366.00
1856	2,457.00	529,473.00
1857	1,289.00	317,101.00
1858	1,716.00	429,054.00
1859	1,366.00	344,922.00
1860	1,529.00	396,067.00
Average 1842-1860	2,271.95	486,622.68

Some Enlistments to the 54th Massachusetts Regiment

Name	Age at Enlistment	Date at Enlistment	Residence at Enlistment	Profession at Enlistment	Rank In/ Rank Out	Fate at Fort Wagner	Muster-Out date
Deforest, Andrew	19	29 Mar 1863	Syracuse, NY	waiter (?)	private/ sergeant	wounded 18 Jul 1863	20 Aug 1865; wounded again 30 Nov 1864 in SC
Ellis, Jefferson	19	4 Apr 1863	Poughkeepsie, NY	boatman	private/ corporal	survived	20 Aug 1865; captured 18 Jul 1863 in SC
Jackson, Horace	29	9 Apr 1863	Glens Falls, NY	boatman (alt.: caulker)	private/ private	survived	3 Jun 1865
Jameson, James	24	29 Apr 1863	Syracuse, NY	barber	private/ private	survived	20 Aug 1865
Knox, Norman	20	9 Apr 1863	Utica, NY	boatman	private/ private	survived	25 Aug 1865
Milliman, Jeremiah	23	9 Apr 1863	Saratoga County, NY	boatman (alt.: farmer)	private/ corporal	survived	20 Aug 1865
Reason, Charles K.	23	29 Mar 1863	Syracuse, NY	laborer	private/ private	wounded 18 Jul 1863	died of wounds, 27 Jul 1863
Robinson, William	19	9 Apr 1863	Sandy Hill, NY	boatman (alt.: farmer)	private/ private	survived	20 Aug 1865
Stanton, Charles	21	14 Apr 1863	Glens Falls, NY	boatman	private/ private	wounded and captured	died in prison Feb 1865
Swails, Stephen A.	31	8 Apr 1863	Elmira, NY	boatman	private/ 1st sergeant	survived	discharged 20 Aug 1865, expiration of service
Winnie, Samuel	27	9 Apr 1863	Fulton County, NY	hostler	private/ sergeant	wounded 18 Jul 1863	20 Aug 1865
Wise, William	21	9 Apr 1863	Auburn, NY	cook	private/ private	survived	20 Aug 1865