

Eighth Wonder of the World

ERIE CANAL

BACKGROUND

- ❖ 1810 - DeWitt Clinton, mayor of New York City, proposes building a canal that would link Albany on the Hudson River and Buffalo on Lake Erie
- ❖ Such a canal would facilitate commerce and westward expansion
- ❖ Many thought that constructing a canal of this length was not feasible and would lose money

BACKGROUND

- ❖ 1817 – DeWitt Clinton is elected governor of New York
- ❖ July 4, 1817 – construction on the Canal begins in Rome



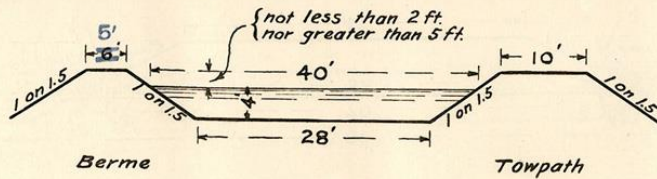
CONSTRUCTION

- ❖ This first section of the Canal from Rome westward through Madison County was completed in 1820

CONSTRUCTION

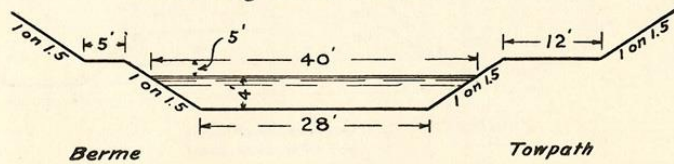
1817

Section of Original Erie in fill or cut of less than 9 ft. according to original specifications.



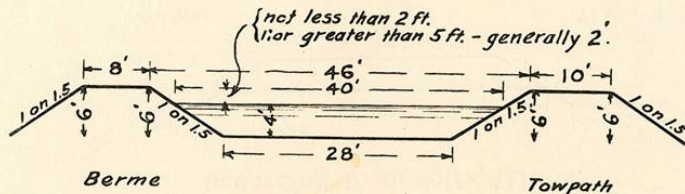
1817

Section of Original Erie in cut greater than 9 ft. according to specifications.



1817

Section of Original Erie as built. Note 8 ft. berme instead of 5 ft. as specified.

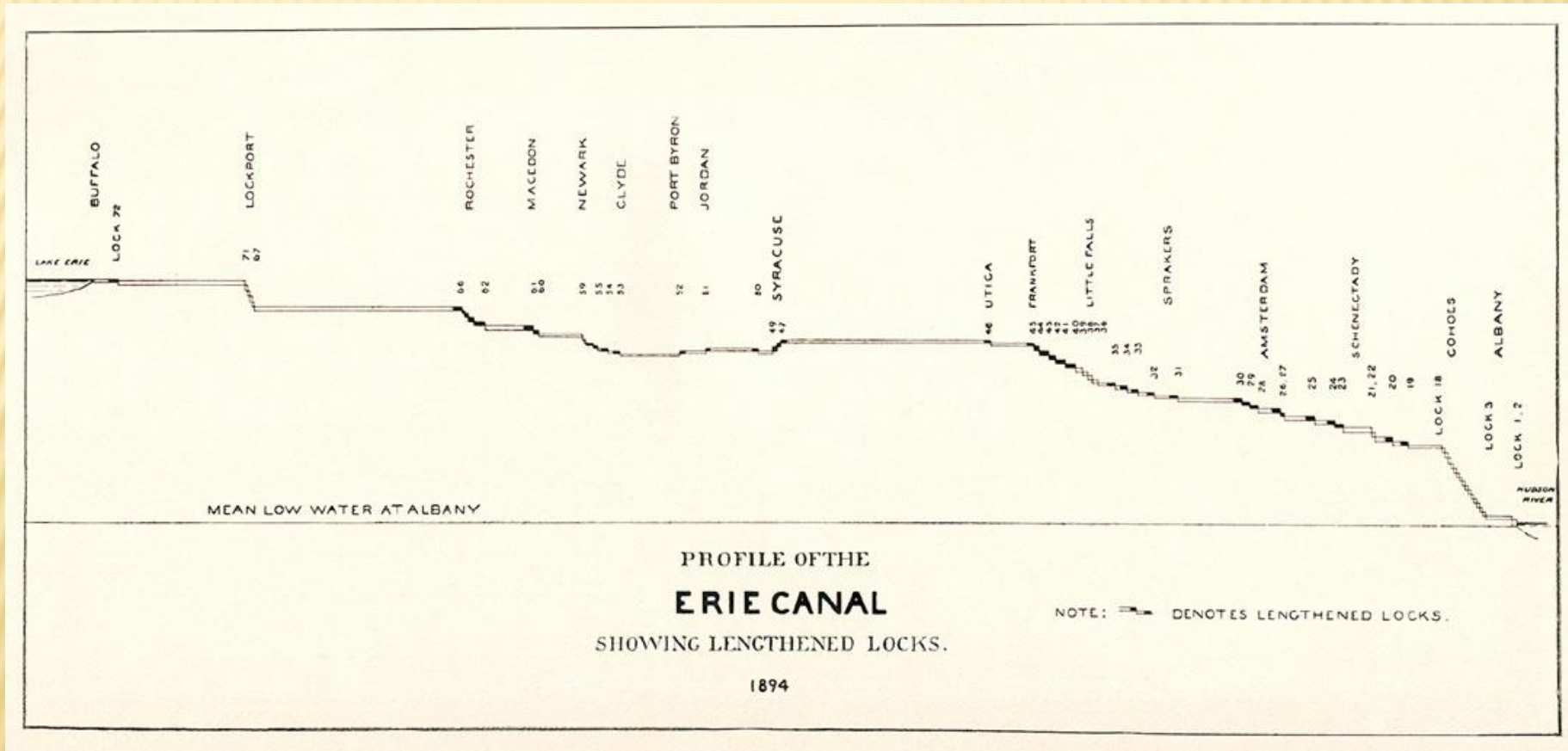


As shown at left, depth of canal was specified at 4', width of 40', towpath at 10'

OBSTACLES

- ❖ The rise in elevation from Albany to Buffalo was 568'
- ❖ 83 locks were required
- ❖ 18 aqueducts were constructed
- ❖ Blasting was necessary to break through rock layer in Lockport (located between Rochester and Buffalo)

OBSTACLES



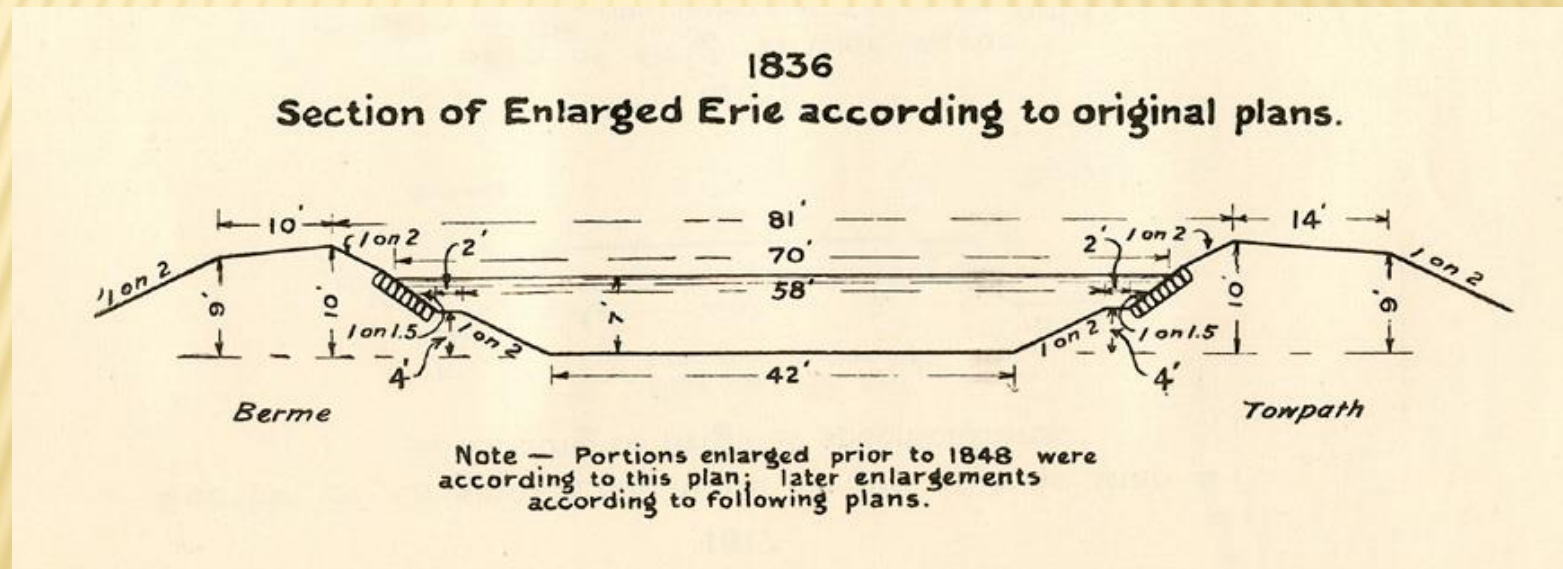
Total rise of 568' over entire length of 363 miles

COMPLETION

- ❖ Construction was completed on October 23, 1825 at a cost of \$7,143,789
- ❖ At 363 miles the Erie Canal was the longest continuous canal in the world

EXPANSION

- ❖ In 1836 a project to enlarge the canal was begun
- ❖ Depth was increased to 7'
- ❖ Width was increased to 70'



EXPANSION

- ❖ Expansion enabled larger boats carrying greater quantities of goods and people to utilize the canal



BENEFITS

- ❖ Reduced shipping costs – cost before the canal \$100/ton, after \$10/ton
- ❖ Reduced time to deliver products, fresh farm produce could be shipped greater distances expanding farm markets, for example
- ❖ Made travel more convenient – one could travel from Buffalo to NYC in about 4 days by canal boat

BENEFITS

- ❖ Contributed to westward expansion and securing the interior of the country
- ❖ Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Canastota, and Chittenango are examples of communities that developed because of the canal. Even today 80% of the upstate population lives within 25 miles of the canal.

EXPLORE

❖ Madison County

❖ Erie Canal Town Museum Canastota

❖ 122 Canal St, Canastota

❖ Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum

❖ 7010 Lakeport Rd, Chittenango

❖ Oneida County

❖ Erie Canal Village – site where the Erie Canal began

❖ 5789 New London Rd, Rome