

New York State Canals

Erie Canal.



Today over 500 miles of interconnected canals, rivers and lakes are open to navigation from May 1 through November 15. Built between 1817 and 1825, the original Erie Canal traversed

363 miles from Albany to Buffalo. It was the longest artificial waterway and the greatest public works project in North America. Originally four feet deep and 40 feet wide, the Erie Canal cut through fields, forests, rocky cliffs, and swamps; crossed rivers on aqueducts; and overcame hills with 83 lift locks. Since its opening the Erie Canal has been enlarged twice to accommodate larger vessels and more traffic.

Time Frame	Canal & Lock Sizes
1825 Original Erie	4 ft deep 40 ft wide lock 90 ft long
1862 Enlarged Erie	7 ft deep 70 ft wide lock 110 ft long
1918 – Present	12-23 ft deep 120-200 ft wide lock 310 ft long

Waterford, NY

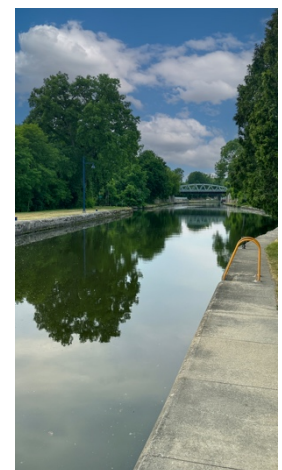
While in Waterford, Exhale and Tonto tied up to the Free Wall in front of the Erie Canal Visitor Center. Sue & Dean, Gulf Harbour friends, were at one of their summer homes about an hour drive from Waterford. They joined us for lunch. A pleasant afternoon and it was great to see them.



We were able to see some of the original canal and where the locks used to be. Mules and horses were used to power canal boats. Attached to the boats by a rope, the animals walked along a towpath next to the canal, pulling the boats behind them as they went. Teams of horses or mules worked in shifts. When they were off duty, they rested inside a stable located on the boat.



Quiet a difference between the old canal and the current canal right beside it.



Flight of Five

As we left Waterford Locks E2 – E6 made up a flight of five locks. As you were leaving one lock you could see the entrance to the next lock. You had to clear all five locks at one time because there was no room to stop between the locks.



Exhale is exiting Lock E-2 and you can see the entrance to Lock E3. This flight of locks was the roughest locking that we experienced in the New York Canal System. From an Erie Canal presentation we saw in February this year, we were expecting a much rougher ride in the locks. David & I were pleasantly

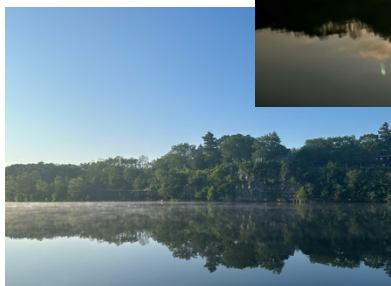
surprised. Mary & Rick did 156 locks in 2018 on the Great Loop and they said this was the roughest they had ever experienced. They were not so pleased!

Schenectady Yacht Club

We spent one night at the Schenectady Yacht Club. It reminded us of a motorboat version of the Austin Yacht Club. Very casual with a kitchen for potluck group dinners, work yard, picnic tables, etc.

They even had a pig roasting pit! We had a full moon that evening and beautiful sunrise in the morning.

View from the bow of Tonto's Reward. All SYC photos are courtesy of David.



Amsterdam, NY



Prior to settlement by Europeans, the region which includes Amsterdam was inhabited for centuries by the Mohawk tribe of the Iroquois Confederacy, which dominated most of the Mohawk Valley. In the 19th century, the city of Amsterdam was known for carpet, textile, and pearl button, manufacturing.



Rick & David went exploring and came upon the Amsterdam Castle, also known as the Amsterdam Armory. It was built in 1895 by Isaac G. Perry in the castellated Late Victorian style as a National Guard Armory for the 46th Separate Company of the New York Army National Guard. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994. The armory was decommissioned in 1994 and purchased by the Diana family from the State of New York in 1995. The property is currently in use as a private residence, bed and breakfast and distribution facility. Of the 100 armories built in New York at the turn of the century, only several dozen are still in use as active armories, and Amsterdam Castle is the only armory converted into a private residence.



The most important part of our stop in Amsterdam was that Sandy joined us. It is always fun to have her on board. Not only is she a good friend and great company, but she is also an excellent crew.

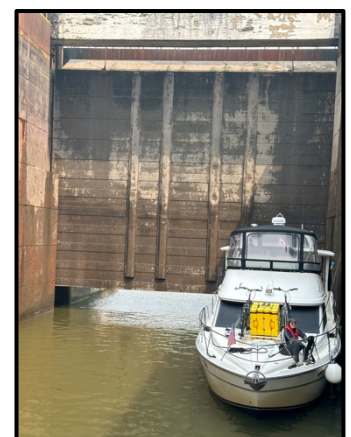
Locks & Gates



Note the gloves required for locking. All the lock lines were grungy!

Most of the locks we went through had miter gates at each end. These gates pivot around the end next to the lock wall and meet with a mate at the center of the lock forming a "V" pointed upstream when closed. In the closed position, the gates also seal against a miter sill on the lock floor. The "V" formed by the pair of gates causes

water pressure to wedge them closed and transfer forces through the gate to the hinge forcing it into the lock wall. Deep locks often use guillotine gates at their lower end that open vertically. We went through one lock with a guillotine gate.



Oneida Lake

Sylvan Beach & Verona Beach are on either side of the canal at the east end of Oneida Lake. Sylvan is a lakeside summer resort town. However, it is not summer yet in NY. This meant not much was open. Kids are still in school until around the 20th of June. I graduated from Horesheads High School on 21 June 1969. We always considered July and August to be summer!

The firm of Lupfer & Remick of Buffalo commenced work in 1916 on three concrete lighthouses for Lake Oneida. One of the towers was erected at Brewerton, to mark the juncture of the western end of the lake with the Oneida River; another tower was constructed at Verona Beach to mark the entrance to Wood Creek Canal from the eastern end of the lake; and the third tower was placed on Frenchman's Island, to mark a pair of islands in the southwestern portion of the lake. All the towers are still active today, although tall trees obstruct Fisherman's Island Lighthouse and nearby bridges over the Oneida River have essentially replaced the functionality of Brewerton Lighthouse.



We stopped at Ess-Kay Yards in Brewerton for two nights. Met up with friends, Caryl and Ray on Lit'l Houlegan, a Rosborough 246. Sandy did homemade Maryland crab cakes one night and Ray grilled lamb chops the other night. Everyone else filled in the sides and wine. A great time was had by all!

Buttercup wanted someone to play with her!

Leaving Brewerton, Lit'l Houlegan headed west on the Erie Canal. Exhale and Tonto turned north at Three River Point for the Oswego Canal.

Part of the fun on a trip like this is meeting up with friends at various points along the way.



Oswego Canal

The Oswego Canal connects the Erie Canal at Three Rivers to Oswego Harbor at Lake Ontario. Though the Oswego Canal is fairly short, only 23 miles, it drops 188 feet with seven locks.

The Village of Phoenix is the first village you come to heading north on the canal. It dates from the 1750s. Industry and commerce expanded when the Oswego Canal opened in 1828.



The Bridge House Brats are a group of local volunteer kids who strive to make their community better. They serve food from the local restaurants to boaters and anyone who wants to come join them from land. They host events throughout the summer for all to enjoy, they keep the streets cleaned and full of fresh flowers.

Their mission statement states that they will, by the effective use of the resources available to them, enhance the quality of life of all who participate in and or take advantage of their efforts.

The Culvert Street (bascule) Lift Bridge north of Lock O-1 in Phoenix was broken in the down position stopping all Oswego Canal traffic. All the Brewerton marinas were over loaded with transient boats that could not continue to Oswego. Fortunately, the bridge was fixed and back in operation on Friday, 9 June. The morning before we planned to head that way. It was still a little nerve racking as we went under the bridge.



Lock O-2 and O-3 are just a half mile apart and the same lock tender runs both locks. At least that is the way it was Saturday. Maybe in summer with more transit traffic they might staff two different lock tenders. There were four boats already in O-2 when we arrived. They were waiting for the lock tender to finish with O-3 and return to O-2. There was room for Exhale to go to the starboard side and Tonto to go to the

port side. It was tight, but we all fit just fine. Because of the short distances and slow speed limits along the Oswego Canal, the six of us stayed together all the way to Oswego Marina. In Oswego, we enjoyed a very nice dinner at La Parrilla Grill & Wine Bar. It was Sandy's last night with us.



Fort Ontario

Sunday morning, the five of us walked over to tour Fort Ontario. First established in 1755 by the British during the French & Indian War. It is located at the mouth of the Oswego River on the east bank overlooking Lake Ontario.



The original British fort, named “Fort of the Six Nations”, was erected in 1755, during the French & Indian War. It was destroyed by the French under the Marquis de Montcalm in August 1756, along with all other British defenses at Oswego. Construction of a second British fort at this same location began in 1759. The second Fort Ontario was a large earth and timber fortification built according to the latest

European military technology. In 1778 the second Fort Ontario was destroyed by American troops. The British reoccupied Oswego in 1782 and rebuilt Fort Ontario for the third time. In 1796, the fort was turned over to the United States. The Americans did little work on the fort before and during the War of 1812. Undermanned and possessing only six condemned cannons, Fort Ontario was attacked and destroyed by overwhelming British land and naval forces in May 1814. The threat of another war with Great Britain and a possible invasion from British-held Canada caused the United States to regarrison the ruined post in 1838. Between 1839 and 1844, the present-day Fort Ontario was built of earth and timber with a sloping outer face. It was occupied by the U.S. Army through World War II. From 1944 to 1946 the fort served as the only refugee camp in the United States for mostly Jewish victims of the Nazi Holocaust under an Executive Order from President Franklin



D. Roosevelt. In 1946 Fort Ontario was transferred to the State of New York and housed World War II veterans and their families until 1953. It opened as a state historic site in 1949 and has been restored to the 1868-1870s period.



After a quick lunch at The Press Room Sports Bar, Sandy had to catch an Uber. Monday Tonto and Exhale made a side trip to Katlynn Marine at Sodus Point, NY on Lake Ontario west of Oswego.