

Hunter College - CUNY
Department of Geography
Nature of New York

EXERCISE 14: Canals of New York State
EXTRA CREDIT OPTION

Due no later than the date of the Final Exam.

PURPOSE: This exercise looks at the site and situation of important historic canals of New York State. The Erie Canal and its segments and the Champlain Canal were built by NYS but the Delaware and Hudson Canal was built by a private company. There are also a number of lesser known public and private canals built during the “Canal Era” of the 1800s.

Visit the following web sites and read about the canals.

<http://www.eriecanal.org> – Erie Canal
<http://www.canals.ny.gov/index.shtml> - NYS Canal Corp. link
<http://www.canals.ny.gov/history/history.html>
<http://www.canalny.com/canal-sections> - Canal New York Alliance
http://www.nycanals.com/Champlain_Canal - Champlain Canal
<http://blackrivercanalmuseum.com/index.htm> - Black River Canal
<http://www.eriecanal.org/texts/Whitford/1906/contents.html> - History of the NYS canal system
<http://www.eriecanal.org/texts/Whitford/1906/Chap17.html> - Chenango Canal
http://www.nycanals.com/Cayuga-Seneca_Canal - Cayuga-Seneca Canal
<http://www.nps.gov/erie/index.htm> - Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor (NPS)
<http://www.eriecanalway.org/> - National Heritage Corridor web site
<http://www.nps.gov/upde/historyculture/dhcanal.htm> - Delaware and Hudson Canal
<http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/exhibitions/enterprising-waters-erie-canal> - NYS Museum site

ASSIGNMENT:

Select one segment of the main Erie Canal or one of the other NYS canals (either active or historic) and do the following.

- 1. Discuss its geographic significance.** What was the purpose of its route; what points did it connect?
- 2. Discuss its geologic setting.** How did the rock type and landforms it passed over affect construction and its maintenance in this segment?
- 3. Discuss the engineering technology needed to overcome aspects of the physical environment.** What characteristics or hardships of the route had to be overcome and how?
- 4. Identify, locate and describe one visitor center or overlook** along the canal where people may visit the site and learn about it. Discuss the significance of this location and how it helps people to understand the canal's site and situation. (Consult a travel guidebook and the *I Love New York* web page (www.iloveny.com – type in the name of a canal into the search box at the top of the page.)
- 5. Include a map** showing the route of the canal or canal segment discussed with the location of the visitor center.

The final product should be at least two pages plus the map.

Education Students check out: www.archives.nysed.gov/projects/eriecanal/index.shtml.