

## **The Erie Canal's Bicentennial 2025**

### **Course Description**

The 363 miles of America's first Infrastructure project, the Erie Canal, was built before we had an engineering school, or dynamite, or steam engines, or home-produced hydraulic cement. The amazing accomplishment opened New York to trade and made it the wealthiest of the states, developed the Western United States and left behind lasting economic, political and social effects. The course will look at the glories of the canal as it celebrates its Bicentennial Year while not forgetting the dark underside of the human lives and moral costs of canal "progress".

### **Weekly Layout:**

Topic 1: To Dream the Impossible Dream

Dreamers and Politicians

The resiliency of political resistance

Bicentennial Celebrations

Topic 2: Coming Round the Mountain

The challenging geography

How a Lock should work

Bicentennial Events

Topic 3: Where have all the Natives gone?

The plight of the Iroquois

The Great Confederacy

Bicentennial Events

Topic 4: 16 Tons and What do you get?

Farmers and Immigrants

The high cost of human labor

Bicentennial Events

Topic 5: Low Bridge Everybody Down

Communication: Telegraph and Tell a Canawler

The Press and Literacy

Bicentennial Events

Topic 6: The Mule Called Sal

Mule power and Mule Skinners

Living on a Canal Boat

Bicentennial Events

Topic 7: No fun, no fool, no pets: Time is Money

Uncle George Gives Boxing Lessons

Twinned Locks

Bicentennial Events

Topic 8: Following the North Star

The Underground Railroad on the Canal  
Abolitionists  
Bicentennial Events

Topic 9: Give me that new time Religion

Shifting Metaphysics

Spiritualists & New Awakenings  
Bicentennial Events

Topic 10: Anything you can do ...I can do better

Seneca Falls: Women's Rights  
Social Reformers  
Bicentennial Events

Topic 11: It's a Small World after all

National and International Trade  
City Folks & New Occupations  
Bicentennial Events