

LOCAL HISTORY

The 'Long Level' canal opens

Each week, the Onondaga Historical Association looks back at important events:

196 years ago: In October 1819, the section of the Erie Canal between Utica and Syracuse was completed. Work had begun on July 4, 1817, on the 98-mile section known as the "Long Level," because there were few obstructions and the level surface required no locks. The remainder of the canal was completed by 1825 and ran approximately 363 miles from Buffalo to Albany. The canal was initially 40 feet wide and 4 feet deep, but was later enlarged. Eighty-three locks were used to traverse the 568-foot change in elevation from one side of the state to the other. The Erie Canal, along with the salt industry around Onondaga Lake, would be the single largest catalyst of growth for the city of Syracuse.



Workers loading barrels of salt onto an Erie Canal barge in 1878. (Image courtesy of OHA)



Take a look back at this week in history at syracuse.com/photos

— Dan Connors for the OHA