Talk with children about the many different kinds of transportation we now have available to take us from place to place. Have children illustrate their favorite means of transportation and share them with their classmates. Later, allow children to create short adventure stories involving these different means of transportation.

Other videos and films with social studies themes available from Weston Woods include:

ALEXANDER & THE CAR WITH A MISSING HEADLIGHT — by Peter Fleischmann & Morton Schindel

"CHARLIE NEEDS A CLOAK" — by Tomie de Paola

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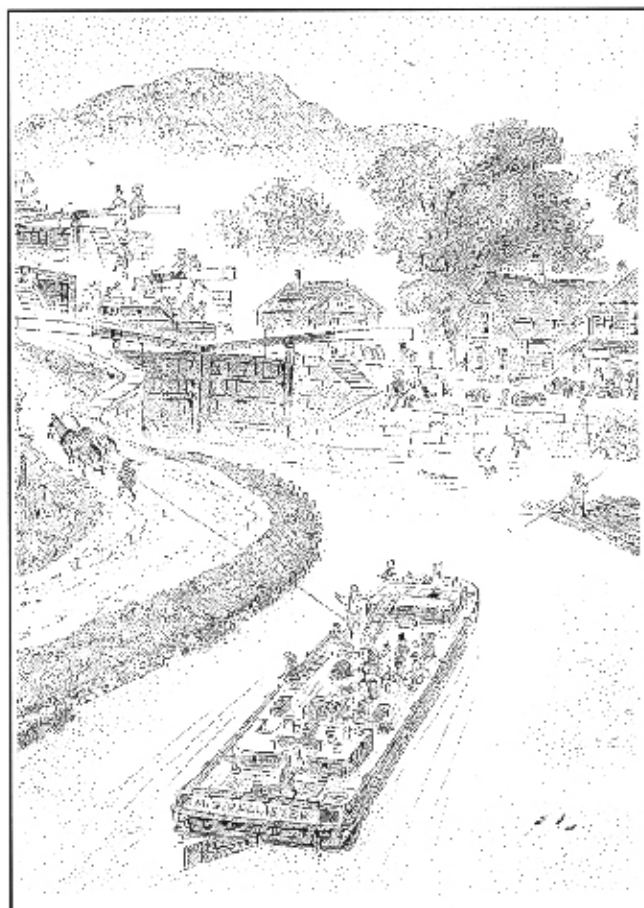
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From the book *The Erie Canal* © 1970 by Peter Spier (Doubleday)

Video/Film Curriculum Guide - 157

for

THE ERIE CANAL

Themes: Social Studies/Songs
Grade Level: K-3
Running Time: 7 minutes, iconographic

SUMMARY

THE ERIE CANAL, told in song, describes the hard labor involved in the creation and navigation of the Erie Canal. The canal, begun at Albany, New York and ending in Buffalo, New York, was considered to be one of the engineering wonders of the world. The canal was created without the help of professional engineers and connected the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean. The canal provided a route through the Appalachian Mountains, creating a link between east and west.

Children will enjoy this rhythmic tale as they watch the relationship of man and beast develop as they work together to pull people and freight along the canal route. Younger children will enjoy singing along, while older children will appreciate the struggle involved in the creation of this important waterway.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will enjoy a story set to music.
- Children will learn about the creation of the Erie Canal.
- Children will explore the way man and animals work together to accomplish tasks.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book *The Erie Canal* with children. Talk with older children about the Erie Canal and the history of its development. Explain to younger children that the Erie Canal was a water route that men made long ago to get from one place to another far away place.

Have children watch carefully to see how animals were used to help people navigate the canal.

Share the song "The Erie Canal" with children. Then supply rhythm band instruments that children can use to accompany themselves. Later, tell children that they will be able to sing along with the video, THE ERIE CANAL. Encourage children to accept the narrator's invitation to join in and sing along at the end.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Supply children with a variety of art supplies including popsicle sticks, wood scraps, scraps of fabric, pieces of styrofoam, pipe cleaners and glue. Have children use the supplies to create their own boats. When finished, allow children to try to float their boats in basins of water. As children float their boats, have them pretend that they are moving along the Erie Canal!

Remind children of the work the horses, mules and oxen did. Encourage children to think about how the animals must have felt about doing this hard and heavy labor. Then explain that long ago, animals were needed to do work that is now done primarily by modern machinery. See how many jobs children can identify that might have been done by animals years ago.