Erie Canal Aqueduct. The remains of the Erie Canal’s Richmond Aqueduct can be seen today in the Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge. It carried canal boats and mules over the route’s largest swamp north of both Cayuga and Seneca Lakes. Photo by Andrew Heinze

Erie Canal Spencerport. The Erie Canal ran 363 miles when it opened. Two expansions of the canal widened the waterway from 40 feet to 70 feet to 120 feet, but shortened the main East-West route . by ten miles. The entire New York State Canal System, with three main secondary canals, totals 525 miles. Photo by WCNY

Boat Through Lock 24. Recreational boating began to return to the Erie Canal in the 21st century. Private craft and tourist charters pass through communities like Baldwinsville, home to the canal’s Lock 24. Photo by Andrew Heinze

Bridges Fall. The Erie Canal meets several rivers as it crosses New York State, beginning with the Hudson in Albany, then the Mohawk River, which allows it to pass through the Appalachian Mountains. The latter day edition of the canal bisects the Genesee River south of Rochester. Photo by Andrew Heinze

Buffalo Terminus, The Erie Canal delivered goods and people to the Great Lakes and the American Midwest at Buffalo. In the 21st century, the canal’s terminus was redeveloped as public. Ruins from the city’s commercial slip stand near replicas of the canal to create a vibrant destination now called Canalside. Photo by Andrew Heinze.

Canal Days Doc Shoot. Thomas S. Allen’s famous song “Low Bridge,” sang of 15 miles on the Erie Canal and remains a universal memory of the canal. Travelers can still duck beneath canal bridges under which their boats pass, including Fairport’s Main Street Bridge. Photo by Andrew Heinze.

Clinton’s Ditch. Upstate New York’s climate allows for the Erie Canal to be open seven months out of the year. Photo by Andrew Heinze.

Fairport Canal Days down bridge. Communities that have redeveloped their canal fronts host annual festivals, like Fairport’s Canal Days. Photo by Andrew Heinze.

Flight of Five. Among the engineering marvels of the Erie Canal is Lockport’s Flight of Five; a staircase of five successive locks that rose and fell more than 60 feet in elevation at Lockport. The Flight of Five was built to raise and lower boats to the Niagara Escarpment, the limestone cliff over which Niagara Falls plummets 20 miles west. Photo by Andrew Heinze.

Lockport Tour Boat. A tour boat leaves Lockport’s twin locks for Erie Canal points east. New York’s expansion of the Erie Canal in the early 20th century included the construction of two giant locks to replace the famous Flight of Five. Photo by Andrew Heinze.

Mohawk River. The Mohawk River is the Hudson River’s largest tributary and allows the Erie Canal to travel west across the Appalachian Mountain range. It passes through foothills cliff formations known as Big Nose (940 feet elevation) and Little Nose at Yost. Photo by WCNY.

Rochester Aqueduct. To carry the Erie Canal over waterways, aqueducts were constructed along the route; none larger than the Genesee Aqueduct at the Genesee River in Rochester. In the 20th century, the aqueduct became a subway tunnel, then a paved bridge for auto traffic. Photo by Andrew Heinze

Erie Canal Rome. Traces of the original Erie Canal can be found in communities across New York State, including Rome, where New York first broke ground on the canal. Photo by Andrew Heinze.

Waterford Hudson River, The Erie Canal connects to the rest of the world when it reaches the Hudson River at Waterford, north of Albany. Nineteenth century canal traffic would load goods and people onto steam ships and travel to and from New York City. Photo by WCNY.